

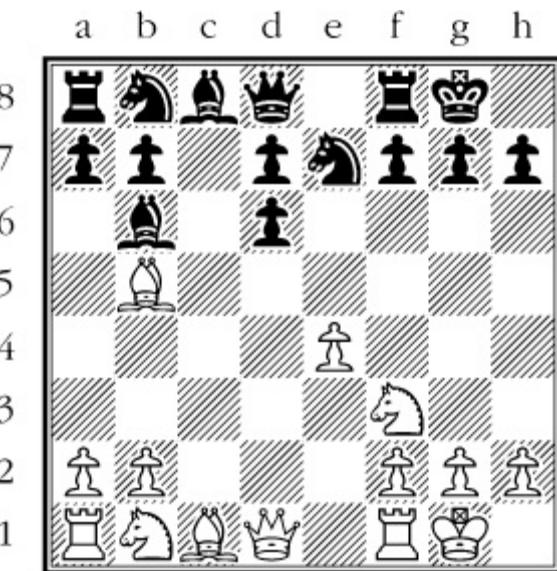
Solutions to Exercises 1-75

1

Morphy – Schulten

New York 1857

(1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5 ♜c5 4 c3 ♜ge7 5 o-o o-o 6 d4 exd4 7 cxd4 ♜b6 8 d5 ♜b8 9 d6! cxd6)



White to move

The American chess genius Paul Morphy (1837-1884) was the first player who really understood the importance of developing the pieces before going all out for an attack.

10 ♜f4

Morphy claimed his 10th move was as an improvement on 10 ♜xd6 which was given in the leading treatises of the day (Hanstein – von der Lasa, in Staunton's "Handbook"). However, this is not true if one consults the computer programs Komodo and Stockfish. It's good to capture the d6-pawn as long as White can maintain pressure on the d-file. What's more is that

there is an even better move, suggested by both computers, namely 10 ♜c3!. This is very interesting since Komodo makes good evaluations and Stockfish is good at deep calculations, but they still come up with the same move!

This simple knight move also follows Lasker's principle that a knight should be developed before the bishop. The idea is to prepare ♜f4 next move without allowing the d-file to be closed after ...d5. Morphy played according to the principle of development so his move is understandable, but the computers' choice is the most precise. Even if we do know that development is on the agenda, we must also think carefully which minor piece to move first.

10...♞c7?

Correct was 10...d5! exploiting the fact that White cannot capture on d5 with a piece. After 11 exd5 d6 followed by ...♝g6 and/or ...♝g4 Black would have a fully playable position.

11 ♜c3

The logical follow-up 11 ♜xd6 would most probably lead to the same position by transposition after 11...a6 12 ♜c4 b5 13 ♜b3 ♜b7 14 ♜c3 etc.

11...a6 12 ♜c4 b5 13 ♜b3 ♜b7 14 ♜xd6 ♜xd6?

This exchange only helps White's development. It was better to play 14...♝bc6.

15 ♜xd6 h6?

15...♝bc6! is correct.

16 ♜ad1 ♜c8?

Black plans the neutralisation of the classical bishop but it's more important to neutralise the knight on f3 with 16...♝bc6.

Another problem with the text move is that f5 becomes a really weak square.

17 ♜f4

It's a matter of taste whether one prefers to focus on f7 as in the game or

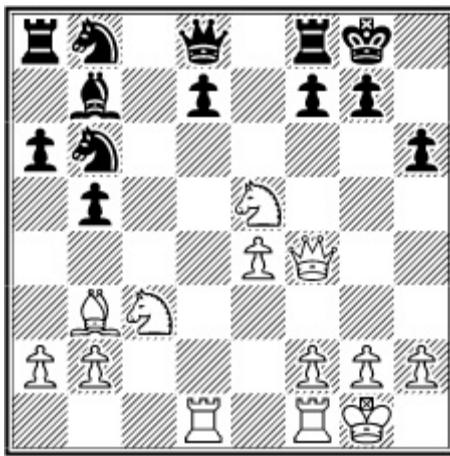
g7 with 17 ♜g3 followed by 18 ♜h4 and 19 ♜f5, because these squares are equally weak when White has so much activity as here.

17...♞b6?

17...♞c6 still ought to have been played. It's pretty clear that Morphy's opponent(s) didn't understand the importance of bringing all their pieces into play.

18 ♜e5

A good move, exploiting the freedom of the knight White has been given, while the f7-pawn is a problem in Black's position which forces him to weaken his position further. But moves such as 18 ♜h4 or 18 ♜d4 followed by 19 ♜f5 were even more devastating.



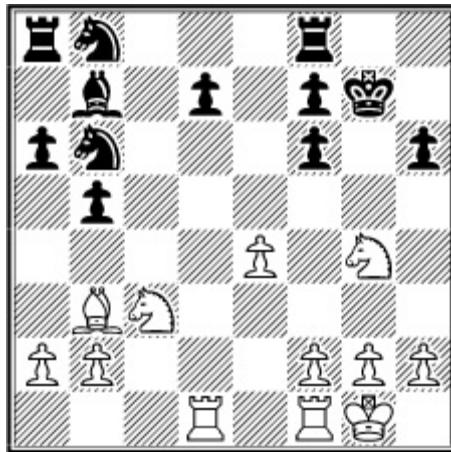
18...♚f6

Because of the weak pawn push on the 15th move Black doesn't have the natural defensive resource 18...♚e7 due to 19 ♜g6. The other alternatives 18...d5 and 18...♞c4 would lose a pawn.

19 ♜xf6

To exchange or not exchange? It was Morphy's trademark to be pragmatic and terminate an attack if he saw an advantageous simplification leading to a winning endgame. Before Morphy, most players would prefer to continue the attack so here 19 ♜g3 suggests itself, which incidentally is the computer's choice.

19...gxf6 20 ♟g4 ♛g7

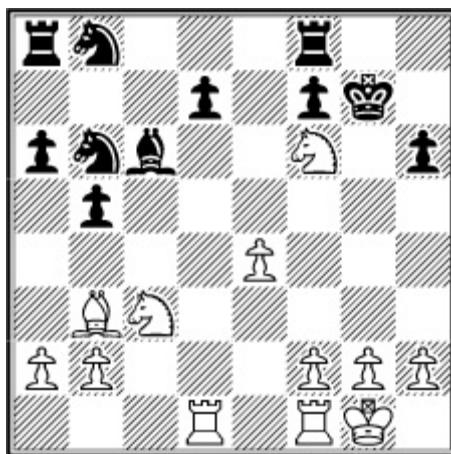


21 ♟xf6

This is the point of Morphy's exchange of queens, exploiting the unprotected knight on b6. More precise however was 21 ♟e3! followed by 22 ♟f5+ and Black will slowly be suffocated. This kind of "strangulation play" was not Morphy's cup of tea. We had to wait for players like Schlechter and Tarrasch at the beginning of the 19th century for that kind of "torturous" play.

21...♛c6?

Better was 21...♛xf6 22 ♜d6+ ♛e7 23 ♜xb6 ♜c6 and White's rook is temporarily trapped. Black can catch it by the manoeuvre ...♛d8-c7 but this is just an illusion after 24 ♜c1 due to the manoeuvring point d5.



22 e5

22 ♜h5+! would simultaneously hit all three weaknesses, the king on g7 and the pawns on f7 and h6. **22...** ♜h7 (**22...** ♜g6 **23** ♜d6+! ♜xh5 **24** ♜d1+ ♜h4 [Or **24...** ♜g5 **25** f4+ ♜h4 **26** ♜xh6 mate] **25** g3+ ♜g5 [If **25...** ♜h3 then **26** ♜xh6 mate] **26** f4 mate) **23** ♜d6 followed by **24** e5 is a tough nut for Black to crack. **23...** ♜c8 is answered by **24** ♜f6 and the f7-pawn is lost.

22...a5 23 ♜d3

Morphy's plan is to play on the g-file rather than the sixth rank.

23... ♜h8 24 ♜cd5 ♜c4 25 ♜xc4 bxc4 26 ♜g3+ ♜f8 27 ♜b6 ♜a7 28 ♜d1 ♜b5 29 ♜d4 ♜c7 30 ♜dg4 Black resigns.

“Winning by force,” says Morphy. “This game has certainly no claims to brilliancy, but illustrates the difficulty of a correct defence to the Ruy Lopez game” (A.C.M. 1858).

Maróczy, however, claims the game as one of Morphy's best performances, owing to the iron precision of his moves. Note that one important reason for Black's loss in this game was a reluctance to develop his b8-knight. In essence Black played a piece down right from the start. It seems that Schulten just forgot about this knight after it returned to the stable with the move **8...** ♜b8.

Don't forget to assimilate games played by Morphy even though he didn't meet the toughest opponents, because his games are nevertheless very instructive. He's one of the most important players in chess history to study in depth and really understand. It's no coincidence that geniuses like Bobby Fischer and Anatoly Karpov regarded him very highly.

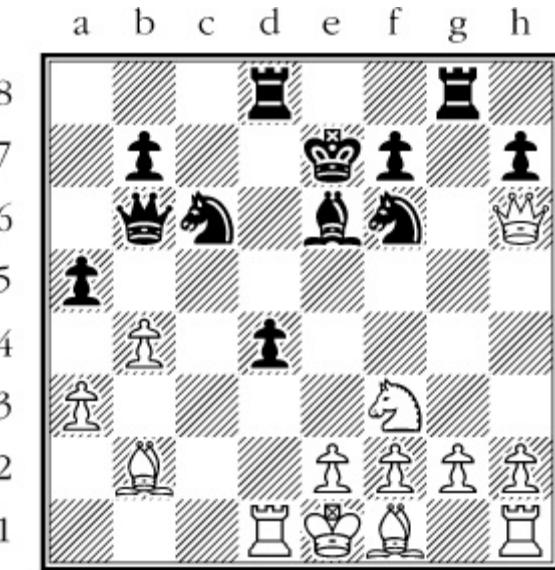
One of the best English language books about his play and contributions is *Paul Morphy – A Modern Perspective* by the Austrian GM Valeri Beim.

2

Bernstein – Spielmann Ostend 1906

(1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♜c3 c5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 dx_c5 d4 6 ♜a4 ♜xc5? 7 ♜xc5

$\mathbb{W}a5+$ 8 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 9 b4 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 11 a3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 13 $\mathbb{W}g5$
 $\mathbb{Q}f6?$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15 $\mathbb{W}h6$ $\mathbb{W}hg8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ a5)



White to move

This hair-raising position has been discussed by several authorities such as Spielmann himself in *The Art of Sacrifice in Chess*, Suetin in *Plan Like A Grandmaster*, Tarrasch in the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* (1883-1945) and Marco in the *Wiener Schachzeitung* (1855-1949). Interestingly, they made the same mistake of overestimating Black's position, probably because of his three-tempo lead in development. However, it's not possible to open the central files, according to Morphy's principles, so White can calmly proceed with...

17 g3!

...followed by $\mathbb{Q}g2$ and o-o and catching up the three tempi he is down on the kingside. Black has no antidote to this simple plan of development. Black's best variation appears to be...

**17...axb4 18 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 19 axb4 $\mathbb{W}xb4+$ 20 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd2+$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xd2$
 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d1$**

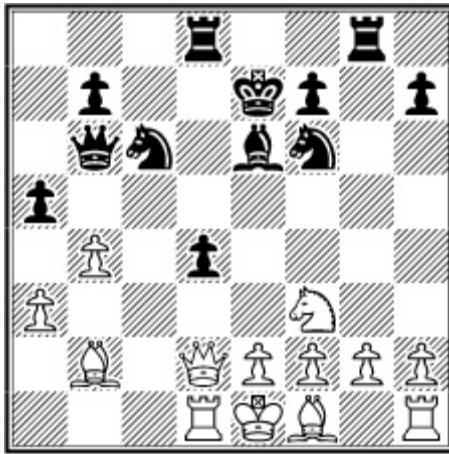
...with a clear advantage to White due to his bishop pair and better pawn structure. Black's initiative evaporates in all relevant variations after...

22... $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$

23... $\mathbb{Q}a2$ is answered by 24 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ d3 25 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 26 e3 while 23...b5?, with the idea of ...b5-b4, fails to 24 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$!.

24 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ etc.

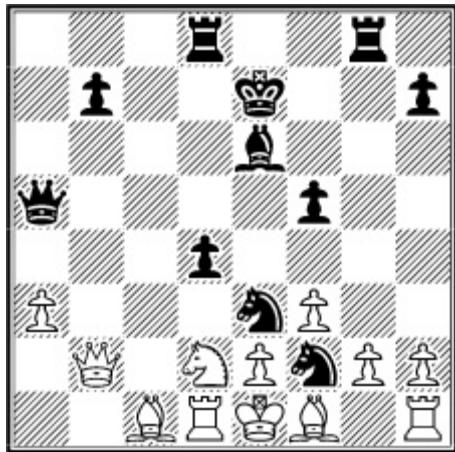
In the game the incomprehensible 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$??



...was followed by 17... $\mathbb{Q}e4$? (17...axb4 should have been played since the reply 18 axb4? would have lost to the devastating 18... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ and then 19... $\mathbb{Q}xb4+$.) 18 $\mathbb{Q}c2$? (White should have returned the queen to h6, because 18 $\mathbb{Q}h6!$ axb4? [Better is 18... $\mathbb{Q}c3$] is met by 19 $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ [19... $\mathbb{Q}f6?$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$] 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$.

Despite the loss of a piece Black has sufficient compensation after 20...bxa3 21 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ etc.) 18...f5 Now Black is completely lost. 19 bxa5 $\mathbb{Q}xa5+$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ In a hopeless position White plans the exchange of queens on b4 to reduce the pressure somewhat. 21... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ After this move, one of the best teachers in chess history, Dr Siegbert Tarrasch (1862-1934), makes the following remark: “One of many good moves which Black has in this customary strong position.”

The direct way to mate (and one must play for no less in such strong positions) in my opinion was 21... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ with the continuation 22 f3 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ (According to the silicon monster Black could play more precisely with the incredible “family fork” 23... $\mathbb{Q}f2$!!.



First the knight forks two rooks and if the knight is taken both king and queen are forked by the other knight. I've never seen anything like this before. White's best according to the computer is 24 $\mathbb{Q}xb7+$ [24 $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$] 24... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 26 axb4. The main variation goes 26... $\mathbb{Q}xh1$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ etc. A funny variation in which all of White's pieces, as well as two of the enemies', end up on the first rank! Sometimes one can discover the most amazing variations with "brute force".) 24 fxe4 (24 $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 25 axb4 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ mate) 24... $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}e1$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}f2$ mate".) 22 f3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (Morphy would probably have played 22...d3 23 exd3 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 24 d4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ and all of Black's six pieces are ready for an attack on the king!) 23 g3 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ "Escaping from 25... $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ but overlooking 25... $\mathbb{Q}xe2+$ " – Hoffer. White resigns.

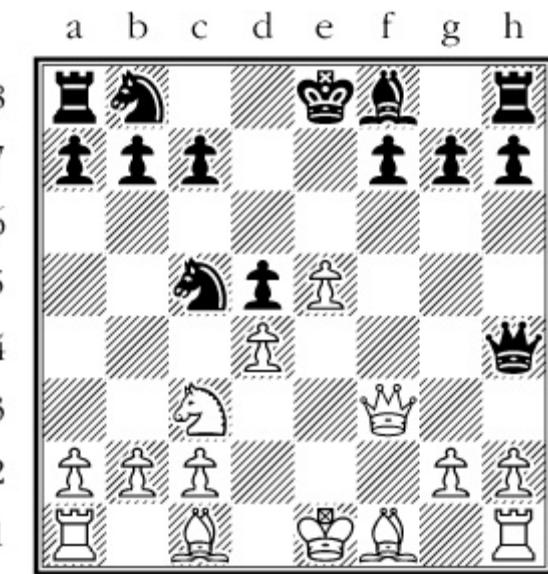
To summarise, one must say that it's surprising that so many highly competent chess players, including the player of the white pieces, Bernstein, missed the simple and logical continuation 17 g3, 18 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ and 19 o-o. However it should also be mentioned that Tarrasch recommended the idea of continuing g3, $\mathbb{Q}g2$ and o-o, but only as a follow-up to his rather passive suggestion 14 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ which he regarded as the best move but which is far inferior to the consequent and correct move 14 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$. I think this position is very illuminating for the fact that it's not enough to be three tempi ahead in development, unless there is an effective way of opening the central lines against the opponent's king. This was Morphy's most important discovery but surprisingly not fully comprehended by the above mentioned respected players and commentators, who underestimated Black's position and

therefore failed to discover the correct continuation.

3

Spielmann – Flamberg Mannheim 1914

(1 e4 e5 2 ♜c3 ♜f6 3 f4 d5 4 fxe5 ♜xe4 5 ♜f3 ♜g4 6 ♜e2 ♜c5 7 d4 ♜xf3 8 ♜xf3 ♜h4+)



White to move

Paul Morphy's great contribution to chess was that a lead in development is the most important element in an open position. The Austrian GM Rudolf Spielmann (1883-1942) therefore played...

9 g3!

9 ♜f2 ♜xf2+ 10 ♜xf2 ♜e6 11 ♜xd5 c6 12 ♜f4 ♜xd4 13 c3 ♜e6 was perhaps the continuation Flamberg expected.

9...♜xd4 10 ♜e3 ♜xe5

Spielmann recommends in his classic *The Art of Sacrifice in Chess* (*Richtig Opfern!*, 1935) 10...♜b4 but it's actually worse because of 11 ♜b5+ ♜bd7 (11...♜c6 12 o-o-o o-o-o 13 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 14 ♜xd5 or 11...c6 12 ♜f1 and

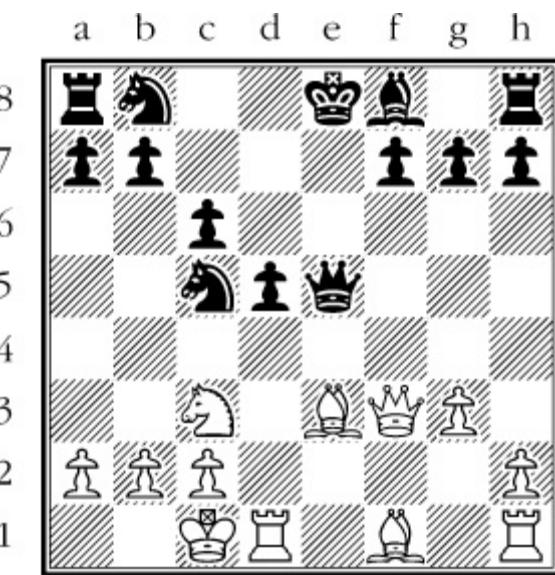
the f-pawn falls.) 12 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 13 ♜xd7+ ♛xd7 14 ♜xd5+ ♛c8 15 o-o-o etc.

11 o-o-o c6 ...

4

Spielmann – Flamborg

Mannheim 1914



White to move

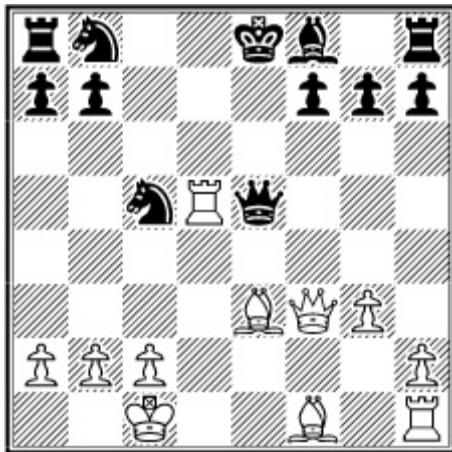
Spielmann maintained that in the majority of cases a lead of three tempi should almost automatically ensure a won position. Here Black needs three moves to connect his rooks but only two to place his king in safety so White must act fast, in the tradition of Morphy, and open the central files.

12 ♜xd5!

This is the most principled move but it was also possible to accelerate his development by playing 12 ♜h3.

12...cxsd5 13 ♜xd5

Stronger was 13 ♜xc5! ♜xc5 14 ♜b5+ ♛f8 15 ♜he1 ♜g5+ 16 ♜b1 ♜c6 17 ♜xd5 ♜d4 18 ♜g2 and White regains his piece with a decisive advantage.



13... ♜e6?

13... ♜e4? was also bad on account of 14 ♜b5+ ♜c6 15 ♜xc5 with the idea 15... ♜xf3 16 ♜xc6+ bxc6 17 ♜e1+ ♜e7 18 ♜xe7+ ♜f8 19 ♜xa7+ ♜g8 20 ♜xa8 mate.

The best defence was 13... ♜c7 when Spielmann planned 14 ♜f4 (Rather than 14 ♜b5+ ♜c6 15 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 16 ♜xc5 o-o 17 ♜xc6 ♜ac8 [17... bxc6 18 ♜xc6] 18 ♜xb7 ♜xc5 19 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 which only wins a pawn.) 14... ♜b6 15 ♜xb8! ♜e7! (15... ♜xb8 is answered by the devastating continuation 16 ♜f4! ♜c8 17 ♜b5+! ♜xb5 18 ♜e1+ ♜e7 19 ♜xe7+ ♜xe7 20 ♜d6+ ♜e8 21 ♜e5+ ♜e6 22 ♜xb5).

According to Spielmann White's attack is then so strong that there would be no question about the result. Presumably he would have continued 16 ♜e5 o-o 17 ♜c4 so he was indeed right when he preferred to continue the attack instead of being satisfied with winning a pawn.

14 ♜c4 ♜e4? 15 ♜xc5 Black resigns.

After 15... ♜xf3 16 ♜e1+ it is mate in three.

5

Osnos – Stein Leningrad 1963

(1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 d6 4 ♜c3 g6 5 e4 ♜g7 6 ♜e2 o-o 7 ♜f3 a6 8 o-o e5

9 dxe6 ♜xe6 10 ♜f4)



Black to move

A common decision during calculation or when choosing openings or strategies is whether one should be active or passive.

10...♝b6!?

Faithful to his style Stein chooses the most active as well as the more risky move. Compare the move played with the continuation 10...♝e8 11 ♜d2 ♜c6 12 ♜fd1 ♜a5 followed by ...♜ad8 which defends the d6-pawn instead of sacrificing it. This more passive continuation was not inferior to the active continuation in the game.

11 ♜xd6?!

Critical was 11 ♜xd6 ♜xb2 12 ♜d2 ♜c6 13 ♜ab1 ♜xc3! 14 ♜xc3 (14 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 15 ♜xc3 ♜xe4 16 ♜a1 is enough for a slight advantage.) 14...♜xe4 15 ♜xg7 ♜xd6 16 ♜xf8 ♜xf8 17 ♜fd1 ♜e7 and Black must fight for the draw. This was the concrete risk Stein took. 11 ♜a4 ♜c6 12 e5 is not as dangerous as it looks. After 12...♜h5 13 ♜e3 dxe5 Black isn't worse.

11...♝d8 12 ♜xc5

An important continuation is 12 e5 ♜e8 13 ♜xc5 ♜c7 14 ♜d4 (or 14 ♜d6 ♜xd6 15 exd6 ♜xd6 when Black has enough compensation for the pawn

deficit due to his bishop pair.) 14... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16 $cxd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}dd8$ 18 e6 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 19 exf7+ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 20 fxe8 $\mathbb{Q}+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$. Black's active pieces secure full compensation for the f-pawn.

12... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

13... $\mathbb{Q}c6$! was the strongest continuation with enough compensation for the two central pawns.

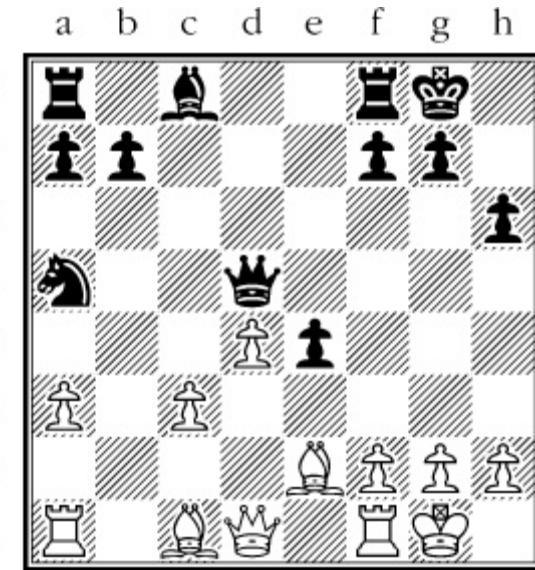
14 $\mathbb{Q}c2$

White is slightly on top but nevertheless lost the game after 42 moves.

6

C. Bergstroem – L. Karlsson Stockholm 1984

(1 c4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e5 4 e3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 d4 $cxd4$ 6 $exd4$ e4 7 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ h6 9 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ d5 10 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ o-o 11 a3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 12 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 14 $cxd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 15 o-o)



Black to move

In my youth I was impressed by Karlsson's play in this game. Which is the best square for Black to develop his bishop? There are three interesting

options.

15...♝d7

Black hopes to be able to exchange the bishop on b5 for the bishop on e2. If this mini-plan succeeds Black has not only split White's bishop pair but has also secured control of the light squares in White's position. 15...♝e6 was also a good move followed perhaps by a future ...♝e6-c4.

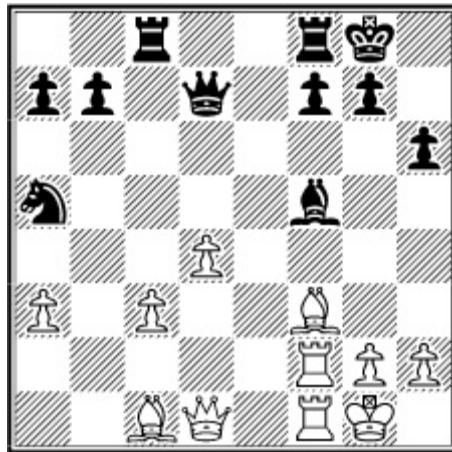
16 f3 ♘f5

Now this is the correct square for the bishop, because Black would obviously be happy to centralise his bishop on e4 if an exchange should occur.

17 ♘b1 exf3

Stronger would be to maintain the tension in the centre by playing 17...a6 followed by 18...♞ac8.

18 ♘xf3 ♕d7 19 ♘b2 ♜ac8 20 ♘bf2



20...♜xc3

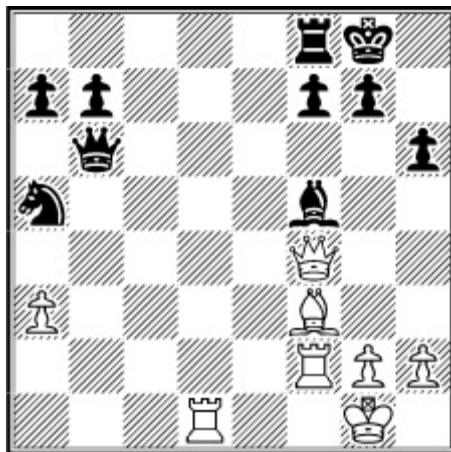
Safer was 20...b6 but, being fond of dynamic and risky play, Karlsson prefers to sacrifice the exchange.

21 ♕e1 ♜xc1 22 ♕xc1 ♜xd4

Quite a brave decision considering the fact that White's pieces are very

active whereas Black's are hanging and don't coordinate well.

23 ♜d1 ♜b6 24 ♜f4



24...♝e6

Definitely the best square for the bishop, where it not only defends f7 but is also defended by the f7-pawn. It's important to have the pieces anchored when the sea is stormy.

25 ♜d6

It was better to play 25 ♜b4 at once.

25...♝c5 26 ♜b4 ♜xb4 27 axb4

From here on it's interesting to note all the important tempi Black gets for free in return for his knight.

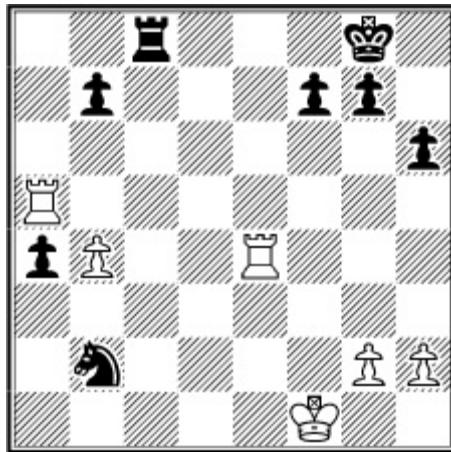
27...♞c4 28 ♜d4 a5!

28...b5 can be met by 29 ♜a2.

29 ♞g4 ♞xg4 30 ♜xg4

30 ♜xc4 ♜e6 31 ♜c7 axb4 32 ♜xb7 b3 33 ♜b2 would end in a draw.

30...♝e5 31 ♜e4 ♜d3 32 ♜f5 a4 33 ♜a5 ♜c8 34 ♜f1 ♜b2



It looks like the knight's only purpose is to defend the pawn on a4 but a hideous trap is contained within this move.

35 b5?? ♜c4

Such a trap makes a stronger impact if one is aware of the fact that b2, b7, g2 or g7 are normally regarded as very bad squares to place a knight. Remember that on an empty board a rook on d4 traps a knight on b2 – but here it proves to be a tricky grasshopper.

36 ♜xa4

Unfortunately for White 36 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 37 ♜a7 will not help. Black plays 37...a3! 38 ♜xa3 (38 ♜xb7 a2 39 ♜a7 ♜c1+) 38...♜b4 39 ♜a5 b6 and remains two pawns up.

36...♞d2+ 37 ♜e2 ♜xe4 38 ♜xe4 ♜c2+ 39 ♜f3 ♜f8 40 h4 ♜c5 41 ♜b4 ♜e7 42 g4 ♜d6 43 ♜e4 ♜e5+ 44 ♜d4 f5 45 gxf5 ♜xf5 46 ♜e3 ♜c5 47 ♜g4 g5 48 hxg5 ♜xg5 White resigns.

7

Carlsen – Van Wely Tata Steel 2013

(1 c4 g6 2 d4 ♜f6 3 ♜c3 ♜g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♜e2 o-o 6 ♜g5 c5 7 d5 e6 8 ♜d2 exd5 9 exd5 ♜b6 10 ♜f3 ♜f5 11 ♜h4 ♜e4 12 ♜xe4 ♜xe4)



White to move

How does White meet the threat against b2 in the best way?

13 f3!

It's important to understand that the developing move 13 o-o-o?? is a serious mistake and alarm bells should ring when one sees that three pieces are pointing in the king's direction and a fourth can be introduced by the knight manoeuvre ... \mathbb{N} b8-a6-b4. Black's attack will be too strong for White to resist since there aren't enough defending pieces on that sector of the board. The game Zukaev – Tal, USSR Championship 1956, continued 13... \mathbb{N} a6! 14 f3 (14 a3 \mathbb{N} b3! 15 f3 \mathbb{N} a2 16 fxe4 \mathbb{Q} a1+ 17 \mathbb{Q} c2 \mathbb{N} xb2+ 18 \mathbb{Q} d3 \mathbb{N} b3+) 14... \mathbb{N} b4! 15 fxe4 (15 b3 \mathbb{N} c3!) 15... \mathbb{N} xa2+ 16 \mathbb{N} b1 (16 \mathbb{N} c2? \mathbb{N} xb2+ 17 \mathbb{N} d3 \mathbb{N} b3+) 16... \mathbb{N} c3+ 17 \mathbb{N} c1 \mathbb{N} xe4 White's queen is overloaded since it has to defend both b2 and g5 at the same time. Black won with the help of the two extra pawns after the moves 18 \mathbb{N} c2 \mathbb{N} xg5.

Note the fast super knight which manoeuvred from b8 to g5 via a6-b4-a2-c3-e4-g5. Such knight manoeuvres can be difficult to predict and that is why one must never underestimate a knight's capability even when it's at home sitting on its original starting square! The lesson to be learned is that one should never forget the concrete nuances of a position, because chess is full of exceptions when there are better moves than pure developing ones.

13... \mathbb{N} xb2?!

The strongest continuation was 13...h6 14 ♜xh6 ♜xh6 15 ♕xh6 ♜xb2 16 ♜c1 ♜c2 with an equal game. 13...♜xb2 was not good due to 14 ♜d1 ♜f5 15 ♜xf5 gxf5 16 o-o and White has good winning chances thanks to Black's weakened kingside.

14 ♜c1 ♜f5 15 ♜xf5 gxf5 16 ♜xb2 ♜xb2 17 ♜b1!

This natural move was actually a novelty when the game was played. Earlier 17 ♜c2 was seen in a high-level game but Black had no problems after 17...♝e5.

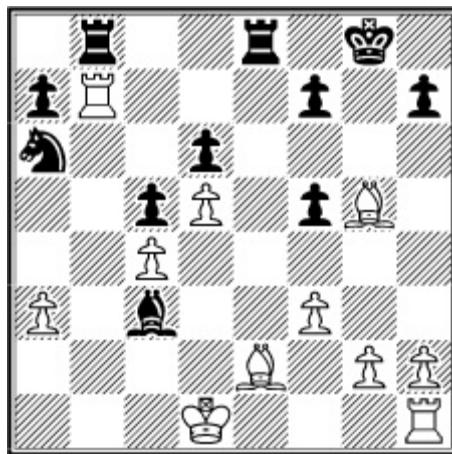
17...♝c3+ 18 ♜d1

White threatens to take on b7 but also ♜e7 is a threat.

18...♜e8 19 ♜xb7 ♜a6 20 a3

Black's knight has to be neutralised!

20...♜ab8



21 ♜xb8

An even stronger continuation was 21 ♜xa7! ♜b1+ 22 ♜c1 ♜b2 23 ♜c2 ♜xc1+ 24 ♜xc1 ♜xc1 (24...♜xe2+ 25 ♜d3) 25 ♜xc1 ♜xe2 26 ♜xa6 ♜xg2 27 ♜xd6 ♜xh2 28 ♜c6 ♜f8 29 d6 ♜e8 30 ♜xc5 ♜d7 31 ♜d5 and White wins the rook ending. The main threat is 32 c5 followed by 33 c6+.

21...♜xb8

If 21...♜xb8 then 22 ♜c2.

22 ♜d3 ♜d7 23 ♜c2

23 ♜xf5? is met by 23...♜e5 24 ♜c2 ♜d4 25 ♜d3 ♜b8.

23...♜d4 24 ♜b1 ♜b6 25 ♜f4 ♜e5 26 ♜e1

A further tactical motif arises, namely the pin on the e-file.

26...♜g7 27 ♜g3! ♜e7 28 f4 ♜f6 29 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 30 ♜e1 h5 31 g3 ♜f6 32 ♜b3 ♜g6 33 h3 Black resigns.

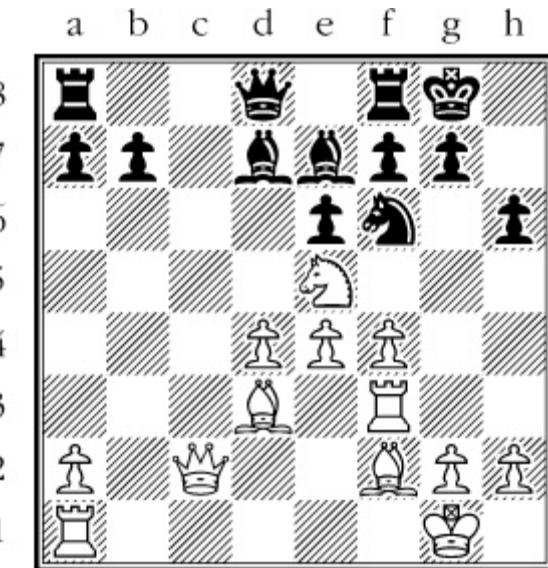
The f5-pawn is pinned by the bishop on d3 so there is nothing to do against g3-g4. A very fine game by Carlsen with many tactical points.

8

Dus-Chotimirsky – Lasker

St. Petersburg 1909

(1 d4 d5 2 ♜f3 ♜f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♜c3 ♜e7 5 ♜f4 o-o 6 e3 ♜bd7 7 ♜d3 c6 8 ♜e2 dxcc4 9 ♜xc4 ♜a5 10 o-o ♜d5 11 ♜g3 ♜xc3 12 bxc3 ♜f6 13 ♜d3 h6 14 ♜e5 ♜d8 15 f4 ♜d5 16 ♜f3 c5 17 e4 ♜f6 18 ♜f2 cxd4 19 cxd4 ♜d7)



White to move

Sometimes the Pillsbury-knight can be exchanged for a bad bishop. Then the advantage of a strong knight is transformed into other advantages such as

the bishop pair and the pawns' desire to attack the kingside. An early example of this idea is the following where Dus-Chotimirsky played the surprising capture (especially in those days before the famous 22 ♜xd7!! in Fischer – Petrosian, Buenos Aires 1971).

20 ♜xd7!

Lasker, who lost this game, confirms the strength of this creative exchange in the tournament book: "White shows splendid judgment of position by playing for the two bishops; this gives him a lasting superiority." Stockfish chooses this as the best move after thinking 15 moves deep which to a high degree confirms the objective value of the exchange. After all, although the knight is stronger than the bishop, the pieces that remain on the board are even stronger. According to the computer White's advantage is actually around 1.5 pawn(s) at this point.

20... ♜xd7 21 h3

This is both a defensive move against ...♝g4 as well as preparation for ♜g1-h2 followed by g2-g4. More circumspect was 21 ♜h1 with the idea 21...♝g4 22 ♜g1.

21... ♜ac8 22 ♜e2 ♜c7 23 f5 ♜h7?

Black must stop the threat of e4-e5 followed by f5-f6. 23...exf5 24 ♜xf5 with an absolute centre was apparently not Lasker's cup of tea.

24 e5 exf5

Lasker gives 24...♝g5 25 f6.

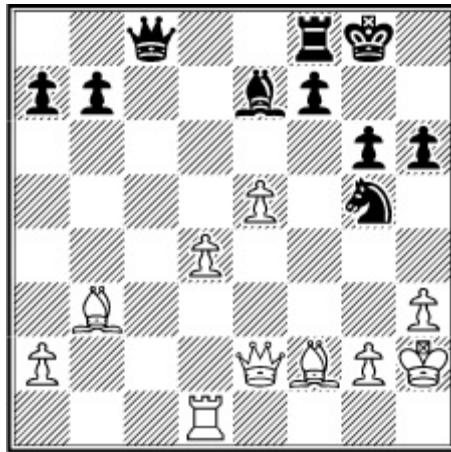
25 ♜xf5 ♜d8 26 ♜d1 g6 27 ♜c2 ♜c8 28 ♜b3 ♜c1 29 ♜h2

There was no need for this circumspect move. More aggressive moves were either 29 h4! to take away the knight's only square or an immediate expansion in the centre with 29 d5.

29... ♜g5

29...♜xd1 30 ♜xd1 ♜g5 was more precise.

30 ♜fd3 ♜xd1 31 ♜xd1



White's pieces act in perfect harmony. Everything is prepared for the pawn push d4-d5.

31...♝d8 32 h4

32 d5! before h3-h4 would effectively shut the knight out of the game.

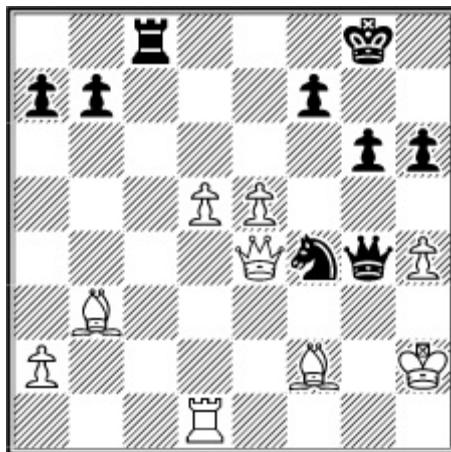
32...♞e6 33 d5 ♜f4 34 ♜e4 ♜g4

Lasker comments: "A swindle. Owing to White's two bishops and the strong passed pawn, Black can defend himself only by counterattack."

35 g3

Simpler and best was 35 ♜g3 g5 36 ♜c2 f5 37 exf6 ♜xf6 38 ♜h7+ ♜f8 39 ♜d4! with the idea that 39...gxh4 is answered by 40 ♜xf4 ♜xf4 41 ♜xh6+ and White wins the rook.

35...♝xh4 36 gxh4 ♜c8



37 ♜d3!

Lasker: “The only, but sufficient, defence against 37...♝c3.” Indeed so, 37 ♜e1?? is met by 37...♝c3!! 38 ♜xc3 ♛xh4+ 39 ♚g1 ♜h3+ 40 ♚h2 ♛xe4 41 ♛xh3 ♜f3+ 42 ♚h2 ♜xc3 43 e6 fxe6 44 d6 (44 dxe6 ♜f8) 44...♜f7 45 d7 ♛c7+ 46 ♚h3 ♜d8 and Black should win with precise play. Dus-Chotimirsky must be very careful not to fall into a Lasker swindle!

37...♝c1 38 ♜f3

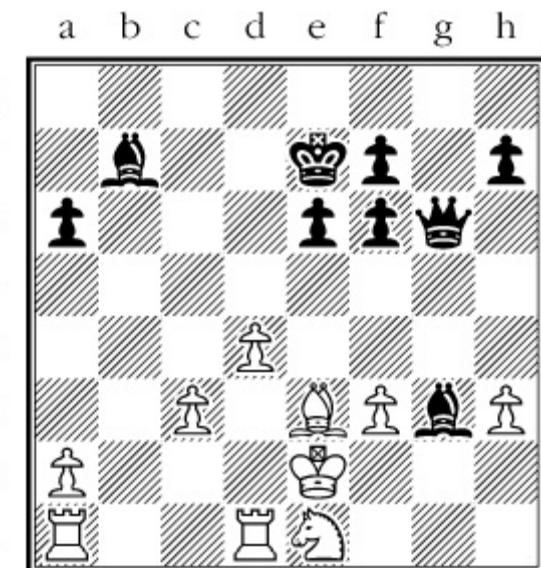
The pawns cry out to be pushed. 38 e6! was the most crushing move.

38...♝f5 39 ♜d4 g5 40 e6! ♜e5 41 ♜e4 ♜d6 42 e7

The pawn runs home so Lasker resigned. Don’t forget the Pillsbury-knight which paradoxically sacrificed its inherent strength for the exchange of a mere bad bishop to make room for the e4-pawn to advance all the way to the dream square e8!

9

Szabó – Euwe
Groningen 1946



Black to move

29... ♕xe1!

A typical advantage when using the full power of the bishop pair, as Steinitz showed in several games (31... ♕g5! and 38... ♕xe2 in Englisch – Steinitz, London 1883), is that the opponent, paradoxically, must be ready for an exchange to take place at any time. Here Euwe yields his bishop pair to exchange the passive, but important, defensive knight so as then to penetrate White's entire position on the light squares with his queen and unopposed bishop. Furthermore what we are going to witness is the way Euwe hounds Szabó's king over all eight ranks and all eight files, and that in itself is an unbelievable and unforgettable achievement!

30 ♕xe1

If 30 ♕xe1 then 30... ♕xf3.

30... ♕g2+ 31 ♕d3 ♕xf3

Of course the opposite-coloured bishop only helps Black's attack.

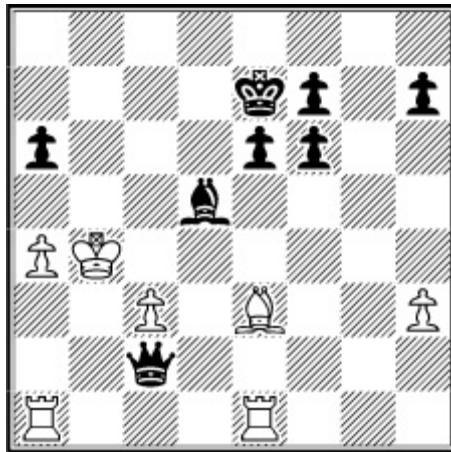
32 a4 ♕e4+ 33 ♕c4 ♕c2

33... ♕c2! threatens mate in three by 34... ♕d5+ 35 ♕b4 a5+ 36 ♕a3 ♕b3 mate. The only way to avoid short-term mates, under nine moves, is by playing 34 ♕eb1 to cover the important b3-square, but this loses a whole rook by force in three moves.

34 d5

White needs some vacant squares around his king, especially dark squares, but it's not enough.

34... ♕xd5+ 35 ♕b4



35... ♜d7

Interestingly, just as Spielmann had with the black pieces in his king-hunt against Rubinstein in San Sebastian 1912 (35...h6 with the idea ...♜h7-g6), Euwe has the same human predilection for bringing his king closer to the enemy king (king-to-king), instead of just tightening the net with readily available active pieces: 35...♜b3+ 36 ♜a5 (36 ♜c5 ♜xc3+ 37 ♜b6 ♜b4+ 38 ♜xa6 ♜c4+ 39 ♜a7 ♜a5+ 40 ♜b8 ♜d5 and it's mate in two by 41...♜a8+ 42 ♜c7 ♜d8 mate.) 36...♜xc3+ 37 ♜xa6 ♜c4+ 38 ♜b7 ♜a5 39 ♜ed1 White prevents mate in three beginning with 39...♜d5+ but after 39...♜a6+ 40 ♜c6 ♜e2 41 ♜b6 ♜f3+ 42 ♜c7 ♜c3+ 43 ♜b8 ♜xd1 44 ♜xd1 ♜b3 Black wins due to his material preponderance.

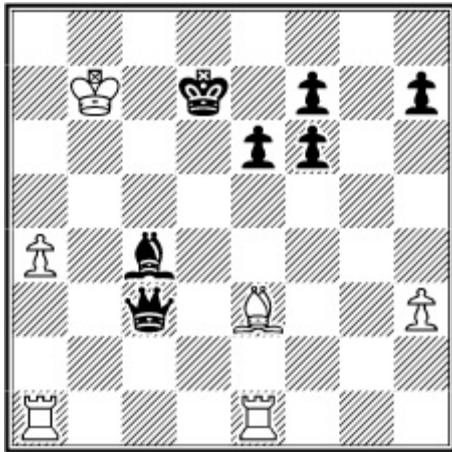
36 c4

This pawn sacrifice creates more empty space for the king but it doesn't increase the constrained area where White's king is most vulnerable, since it is already caught in a mating-net by Black's extremely powerful pieces, including the bold king himself.

36... ♜xc4+ 37 ♜a5 ♜c3+ 38 ♜xa6

38 ♜b6 ♜c7+ 39 ♜xa6 ♜c4 mate.

38... ♜c4+ 39 ♜b7



39... ♜b3+

The fastest and prettiest way to mate was by a queen manoeuvre along the second rank and g-file to c8: 39... ♜b2+! 40 ♔b6 ♜g2+ 41 ♜b8 ♜g8+ 42 ♜a7 ♜c8! and White is powerless against the double threat of 43... ♜c6 followed by 44... ♜b7 mate or 43... ♜a6+ 44 ♔b8 ♜xb6+ 45 ♜a8 ♔d5 mate. In this demonstration of the might of her royal majesty, who shows her diagonal, vertical and lateral power in just one variation, lies the key to gaining a deep understanding of how best to exploit the queen's movements to the maximum!

40 ♔b6 ♜f3+ 41 ♜b8

41 ♜a7 is met by 41... ♜c8!.

41... ♔a6

The human and pragmatic move. Black could once more use the squares on the g-file to decisive effect by playing 41... ♜g3+ 42 ♔b7 ♜g2+ 43 ♜b8 ♜g8+ 44 ♜a7 ♜c8! 45 ♔ed1+ ♜c6.

42 ♔ed1+

A symbolic consolation check which justifies White's 34th move.

42... ♜e8 White resigns.

In his *The Art of Sacrifice in Chess* (Dover 1995) Spielmann makes the following interesting comment about king-hunt sacrifices: "Nowadays, thanks to highly developed technique, king-hunt sacrifices are rather

infrequent.

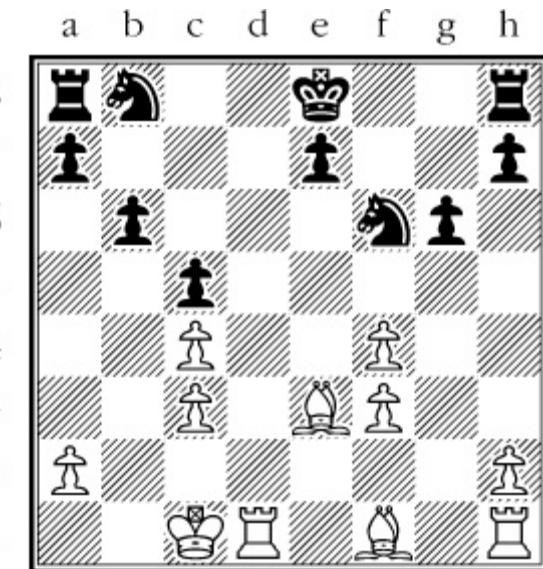
It must be added, however, that this is not to be explained only by the fact that the modern player is much more careful in attending to the safety of his king; rather have the principles of the modern chess strategy – often no doubt misunderstood! – bred a certain pusillanimity in the conduct of an attack.”

10

Spassky – Gheorghiu

Moscow 1971

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 e4 d6 5 f3 c5 6 dx c 5 dx c 5 7 $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 9 o-o-o b6 10 f4 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 11 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 13 e5 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 14 gxf3 f5 15 exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$



White to move

White has the better development as well as the pair of bishops, so it's logical to look for a continuation which provides more scope for these bishops.

16 f5! $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Black could have accepted the pawn sacrifice with only a slightly worse

position after 16...gxf5 17 ♜h3 e6 18 ♜d6 ♛e7 19 ♜hd1 ♛g8! followed by ...♝bd7.

However not at once 19...♝bd7? because after 20 ♜g5 Black cannot avoid loss of material. 19...♝d5 is strongly met by the exchange sacrifice 20 ♜1xd5 exd5 21 ♜h6 and White smashes through with all his pieces.

17 fxg6

This important exchange of the f-pawn for the h-pawn makes the g6-pawn a positional weakness. White can now prepare a new break with f4-f5 and create a passed pawn on the h-file.

17...hxg6 18 ♜g5

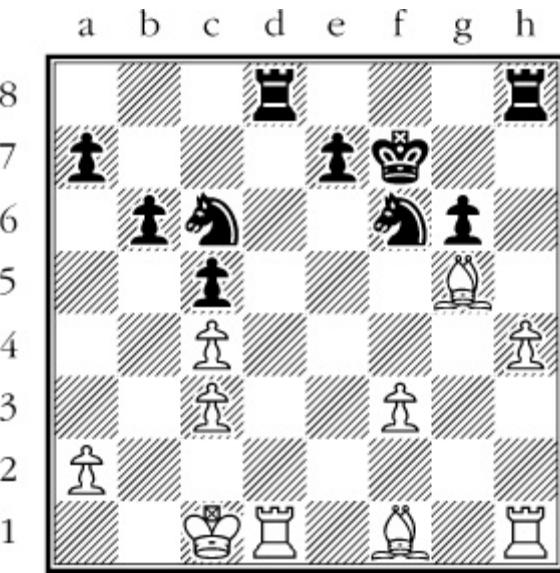
An active and safe square for the dark-squared bishop which now has something to bite on.

18...♛f7 19 h4 ♜ad8 ...

11

Spassky – Gheorghiu

Moscow 1971



White to move

20 ♜e1!

In principle it's wrong to allow Black to exchange a pair of rooks, since the bishop pair is even more dangerous with two rooks on the board. At least Black should have to work for the exchange as in the game.

20... ♜d6! 21 ♜h2

21 ♜h3, to prevent ... ♜e6, doesn't really work due to 21... ♜a5, since the c4-pawn has lost its natural protection.

21... ♜h7 22 ♜d2 ♜f6 23 ♜c2

White shouldn't exaggerate the importance of avoiding an exchange of a pair of rooks because if White prevents this with 23 ♜h3 Black can sacrifice the exchange by 23... ♜xh4 24 ♜e6+ ♜xe6 25 ♜xh4 ♜xe1+ 26 ♜xe1 ♜e5 and win another pawn without standing worse.

23... ♜e6 24 ♜xe6

If White avoids the exchange of the black rook it will control the semi-open e-file and support a knight on e5.

24... ♜xe6

Black has succeeded in carrying out his fundamental plan of exchange.

25 ♜d3 ♜f7 26 ♜f4

White prevents ... ♜e5.

26... ♜h5

Bernard Cafferty, in his book on Spassky, recommends 26...e6 with the idea ... ♜e7-f5.

27 ♜g5 ♜g3

27... ♜e5? is answered by 28 ♜e2 winning a pawn after 28... ♜c6 29 ♜xg6+! ♜xg6 30 ♜e6+ ♜f5 31 ♜xc6 with a winning position.

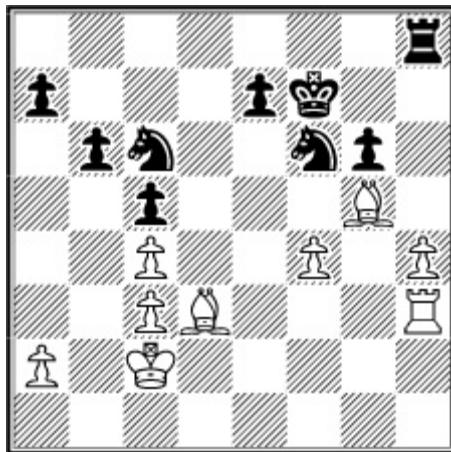
28 ♜h3

28 ♜g2! was more active than the text move.

28...♞h5

28...♝f5 followed by ...♝d6 was also good. If 29 h5 then 29...♛e6 and if White continues 30 h6 then Black has 30...♞e5 with mutual chances.

29 f4 ♞f6



30 ♛g3

30 ♛e3! followed by f4-f5 would have put Black under far greater pressure than the text move, since White not only gets a passed pawn on the h-file but also significant activity for all his pieces in an open position.

30...♞g8

30...♞h7!, with the idea of placing the knight on f8, would have made it hard for White to penetrate Black's position. White can win a pawn after 31 ♜h6 ♜f8 32 ♜xf8 ♜xf8 33 ♜xg6 but if Black replies 33...♝b8 34 ♜g4 ♜d7 35 f5 ♜f6 36 ♜f4 ♜g8 he has sufficient compensation due to White's passive bishop and rook.

31 f5! ♜e5

31...gx f5 32 ♜xf5 ♜d8 followed by ...♜e6 is promptly anticipated by 33 ♜e3 but it was nevertheless a serious option.

32 fxg6+

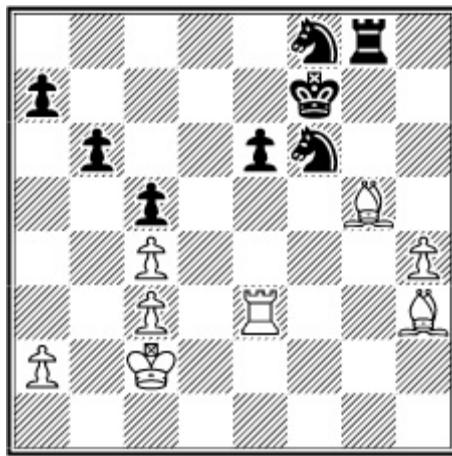
This is the second time an exchange takes place on the magnet g6 square. White establishes a distant passed pawn on the h-file and in combination

with his two bishops this represents a very strong asset for White.

32...♝xg6 33 ♜e3 ♛f8 34 ♜f5

White's rook, bishop pair and rook pawn totally dominate Black's kingside.

34...e6 35 ♜h3



35...♜g6

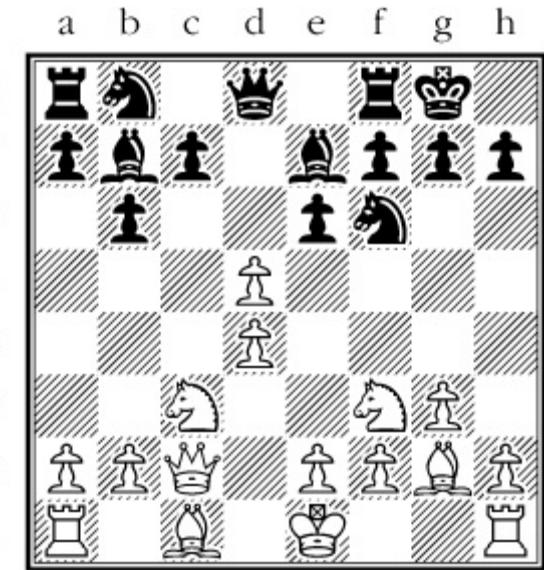
Black could try 35...♜h7 36 ♜f4 ♜h8 37 ♜b3 ♜g6 38 ♜xe6+ ♜f6 when White's best move is 39 ♜h6!. The rook has to be protected otherwise ...♜e8 pins the bishop. After the further 39...♝xh4 40 ♜d5 ♜g5 41 ♜xg5+ ♜xg5 42 ♜e7 ♜f5 43 ♜xa7 ♜h3 followed by ...♝d4+ Black has reasonable drawing chances.

36 a4 ♜h7 37 ♜f4 ♜f6 Black resigns.

12

Karpov – Spassky
USSR 1975

(1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♜f3 b6 4 g3 ♜b7 5 ♜g2 ♜e7 6 ♜c3 o-o 7 ♜c2 d5 8 cxd5)



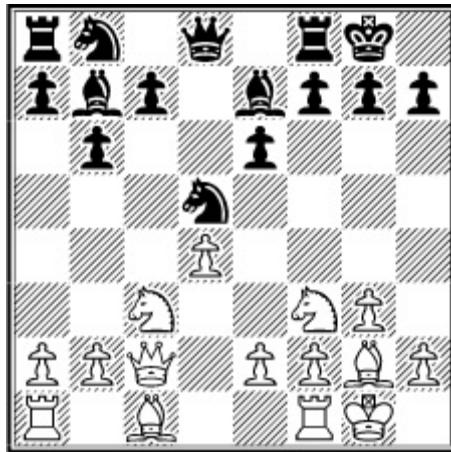
Black to move

In Botvinnik's opinion "the essence of a game of chess is generally exchange. The aim of an exchange is a relative gain of material and positional values." Here Black has to make the very important decision whether to recapture on d5 with the knight or the pawn. According to Karpov it's a matter of taste: "On the one hand, such an exchange is favourable for Black, since with fewer pieces on the board it is easier for him to defend his cramped position. On the other hand, Black has to be prepared for a position with hanging pawns, where a greater number of pieces allows him better chances of fighting for the initiative."

8...♞xd5

Black follows in Tarrasch's footsteps and exchanges a pair of knights to relieve his slightly more cramped position. I believe Capablanca would also have chosen this move but for him it would have been a matter of creating more harmony in the position. Later on it might be possible to exploit the vacant square on f6 by placing the other knight or the bishop there. A player like Alekhine might have chosen the slightly more risky and complicated recapture 8...exd5 which eventually, after a timely ...c7-c5, would probably have led to a position with hanging pawns but with all minor pieces on the board.

9 0-0



9...♞d7

Other good alternatives were 9...♝a6 10 ♜xd5 exd5 11 ♜d1 and 9...c5 10 ♜d1 (10 ♜xd5 would be less precise due to 10...♝xd5) 10...♝xc3 Slightly worse would have been 9...♝xc3 10 bxc3 (Of course not 10 ♜g5?? because of the intermediate 10...♝xe2+! followed by 11...♝xg2 and Black wins.). Now Black has to play the slightly uncomfortable 10...♝c8 to protect the fianchettoed bishop or the anti-positional move 10...f5, since 10...c5?? would run into the famous trap 11 ♜g5! with the decisive double threat on h7 and b7 which wins material by force.

10 ♜xd5

If White constructs a classical centre with 10 e4 Black's position would be fine after 10...♝xc3 11 bxc3 c5 12 d5 exd5 13 exd5 ♜xd5 14 ♜d1 ♜e6 15 ♜e5 ♜xe5! 16 ♜xd8 ♜axd8.

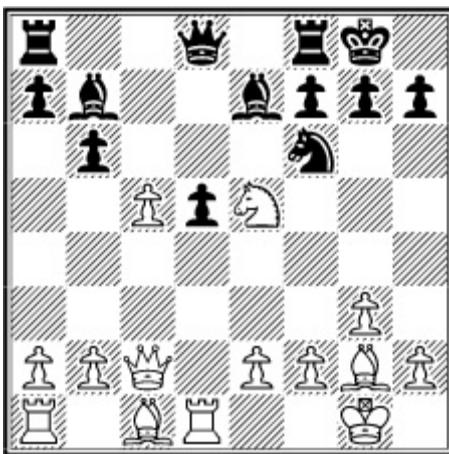
10...exd5

10...♝xd5? 11 e4 ♜b7 12 ♜d1 gives White a clear advantage according to Karpov. It's hard not to agree since Black has no effective way of attacking the classical centre and has to reckon with the central pawn push d4-d5 in various situations.

11 ♜d1

The rook will be usefully placed here after Black has played ...c7-c5. If Black chooses a passive set-up with ...c7-c6 the e4-square will be weakened and he will essentially be playing for only one result.

11... ♜f6 12 ♜e5 c5 13 dxc5



13... ♜xc5

13...bxc5 leads to a position with hanging pawns which is to White's advantage. Not only has a pair of knights been exchanged but all White's pieces will be in excellent positions after 14 ♜g5 followed by 15 ♜ac1 with strong pressure on the hanging pawns.

14 ♜d3

According to Nimzowitsch's famous principles of blockade the knight belongs on d4. With the knight on d3 Black might in the future get the possibility of moving the isolated pawn to d4 with subsequent pressure on the e2-pawn, but that isn't possible now due to the pin on the long light-square diagonal.

14... ♜d6

After 14...♜c8 15 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 Karpov comments that "Black's position is only slightly inferior, but on the other hand...for the entire game." 15...bxc5 16 ♜g5 is totally bad.

13

Karpov – Spassky
USSR 1975



White to move

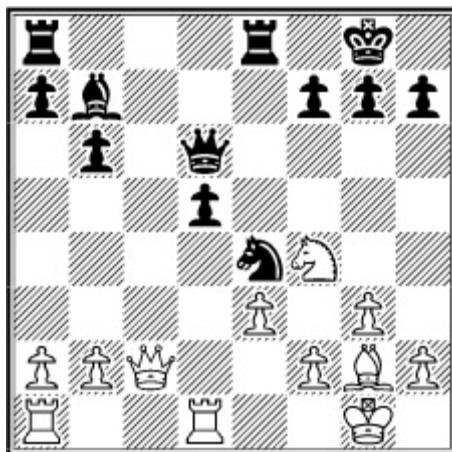
15 ♜f4

Karpov comments: “The exchange of black-squared bishops is one of White’s best plans, since the isolated pawn becomes even more vulnerable.” Nimzowitsch wrote that the true weaknesses of the isolated pawn are the black squares d4, c5 and e5 and the exchange of dark-squared bishops obviously accentuates these dark-square weaknesses.

15...♝e8 16 e3

White needs to protect the e2-pawn after a subsequent ...♚c8 because White wants to reply ♚a4.

16...♞e4 17 ♜xd6 ♕xd6 18 ♜f4



18... ♜ac8

Obviously Black has to parry the threat against e4 but Karpov prefers 18... ♜ad8 which he thinks is a superior move. This is not confirmed by the computer which clearly prefers the move Spassky played in the game. The problem with Karpov's suggestion is that Black's position is too passive and this is clearly visible after 19 ♜d4 followed by 20 ♜ad1. It's understandable that Spassky goes for the more active continuation even though it's a piece of cake for Karpov to deal with Black's attempt to muddy the water.

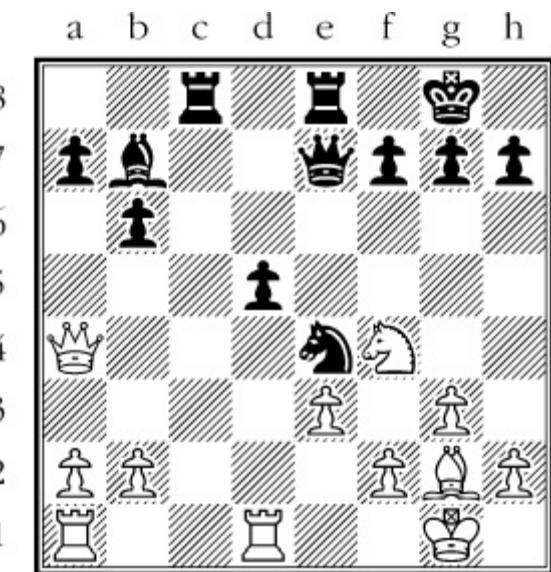
19 ♜a4 ♜e7

Spassky wants to focus on the fact that White's e-pawn is placed on e3 rather than e2 so the knight sacrifice on f2 is always in the air.

14

Karpov – Spassky

USSR 1975



White to move

20 ♜xa7!

Karpov comments: "I thought over this move for quite a long time and convinced myself that I would gain an advantage. White appears to take his

queen away from the main theatre of events, but a more careful examination shows that it can soon be exchanged for its black opposite-number, which is situated on the same rank." The continuation 20 ♕xe4 ♕xe4 21 ♜d4 ♜c2 22 ♜xa7 ♜xb2 23 ♜ad1 ♜a8 24 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 25 ♜xd5 wins a pawn but it's not clear whether it would be enough to win the game.

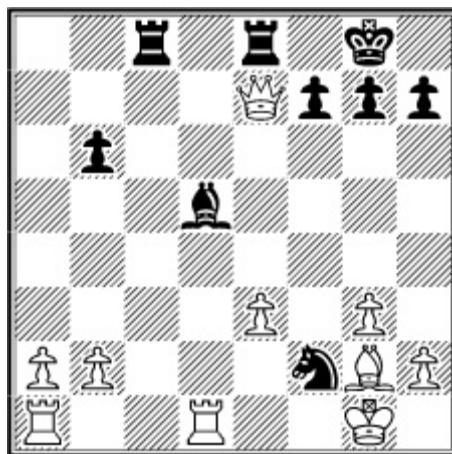
20...♞xf2 21 ♜xd5

Of course not 21 ♜xf2?? ♜xe3+ 22 ♜f1 ♜c2 and White is mated in four moves.

21...♜xd5

Black is forced to accept the exchange of queens because the continuation 21...♝e5 22 ♜xb7 ♜xd1 23 ♜xd1 ♜c2 24 ♜f1 ♜f8 25 b4! ♜xa2 26 b5 would give White the luxury of playing with too many pieces.

22 ♜xe7



22...♞xd1

One can understand that Spassky didn't want to enter the line 22...♜xe7 23 ♜xd5 ♜g4 24 ♜h3 ♜xe3 25 ♜xc8 ♜xd5 26 ♜d1 since the bishop is stronger than the knight and White has a pawn majority.

23 ♜c1

A nice move exploiting Black's weak back rank.

23...♝b8

Karpov gives 23... $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 27 e4 after which Black's position is quite hopeless.

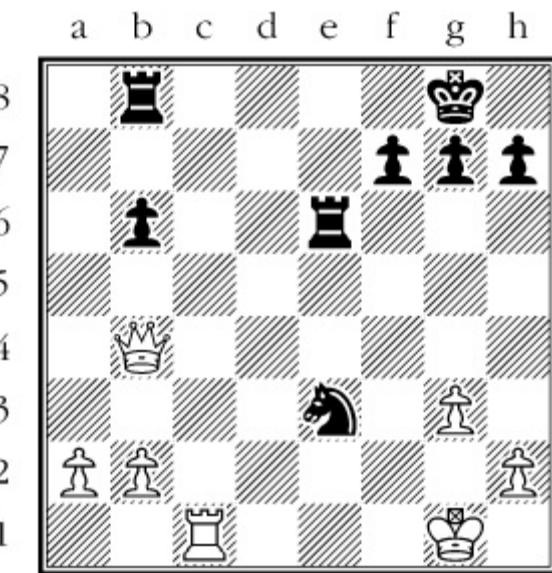
24 $\mathbb{Q}b4$

24 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ leads to a position where White's pieces are slightly entangled.

24... $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3+$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6...$

15

Karpov – Spassky
USSR 1975



White to move

It's useful to assimilate Karpov's pedagogic comments at this technical stage of the game: "Black's drawing chances are associated with the insecure position of the white king, and if he were able to achieve co-ordination between his forces, it might prove difficult for White to realize his advantage. White therefore begins a forcing variation, the aim of which is to exchange off one of the black rooks. In this case the opponent's chances of resisting will be severely reduced."

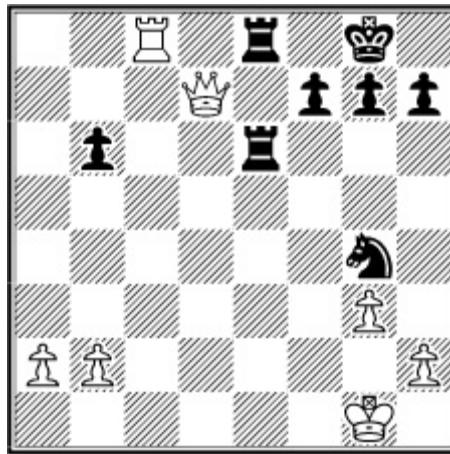
27 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$

If 27... $\mathbb{Q}be8$ then 28 $\mathbb{Q}c7 \mathbb{Q}f6$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xe3!$ and once more Black's weak last rank is exploited.

28 $\mathbb{Q}d4 \mathbb{Q}de8$

28... $\mathbb{Q}ee8$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xb6 \mathbb{Q}d1$ would have cut off the white rook and deserved consideration as the last attempt to save a difficult position.

29 $\mathbb{Q}d7 \mathbb{Q}g4$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}c8$



30... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

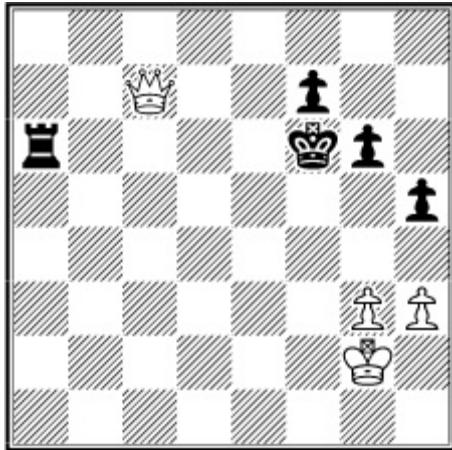
The continuation 30... $\mathbb{Q}e1+$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{Q}1e2+$ is met by 32 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ (32 $\mathbb{Q}f3??$ leads to a neat mate after 32... $\mathbb{Q}xh2+$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}f4 \mathbb{Q}2e4+$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}f5 \mathbb{Q}4e5+$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ g5 mate.) 32... $\mathbb{Q}f2+$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}h4 \mathbb{Q}2e4+$ 34 g4 $\mathbb{Q}xg4+$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ and White wins.

31 $\mathbb{Q}xe8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}b7 \mathbb{Q}e6$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}b8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 34 a4 g6 35 b4 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ h5 37 $\mathbb{Q}g2$

Karpov comments: "There is no reason to hurry, and White can strengthen his position to the maximum extent before commencing the advance of his queenside pawns."

37... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 38 h3 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 39 a5 bxa5 40 bxa5 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 41 a6 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 42 a7

Karpov comments: Of course, after 42 $\mathbb{Q}xc7 \mathbb{Q}xa6$



...Black is lost, but then the game would have dragged out, whereas I wanted to win cleanly.” This is certainly true because there is no fortress. Even with the king on h7 and the rook on f5 the position would have been lost due to the possibility of g3-g4 destabilising the rook at the right moment. Note though that such a position would have been drawn with the white pawn on h4 instead of h3.

42... ♕e7 43 ♜c6+ ♕e5

43... ♕g7 is met by 44 ♜d6 ♕f8 45 ♜d8+.

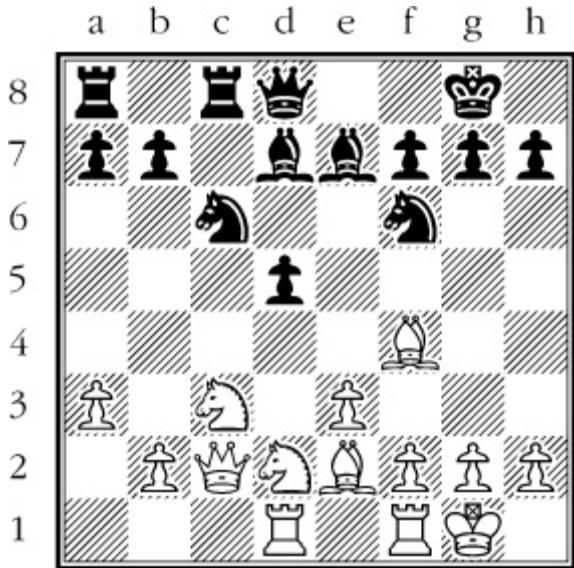
44 ♜f3 Black resigns.

A rewarding game to study due to the number of important positions which focus on exchanges from different perspectives.

16

Karpov – Spassky Montreal 1979

(1 d4 ♜f6 2. c4 e6 3 ♜f3 d5 4 ♜c3 ♜e7 5 ♜f4 o-o 6 e3 c5 7 dxcc5 ♜c6 8 ♜c2 ♜a5 9 a3 ♜xc5 10 ♜d1 ♜e7 11 ♜d2 ♜d7 12 ♜e2 ♜fc8 13 o-o ♜d8 14 cxd5 exd5)



White to move

15 ♜f3! h6

Black wants to rule out the possibility of a knight or a bishop occupying the useful g5-square.

16 ♜e5

Karpov follows the same plan as in the famous game, Botvinnik – Zagoryansky, Sverdlovsk 1943, where Botvinnik played the same knight manoeuvre.

The exchange on c6 will result in weaknesses on the dark d4 and e5 squares which will become important springboards to invade Black's position. Another point of the move is that the light-squared bishop now has access to the f3-square from where it can pressure the black isolani.

16...♝e6

Nimzowitsch said that “it must always be remembered that the bishop on e6 is attached to the d5-pawn as is a nurse to a suckling child!” This famous statement is also essentially an example of over-protection.

However, from a modern perspective, where activity is regarded as the most important element, the placement of the bishop on a square such as g4 is to be preferred, because the essence of playing with an isolated pawn is activity to compensate for the riskier pawn structure.

17 ♜xc6 ♛xc6

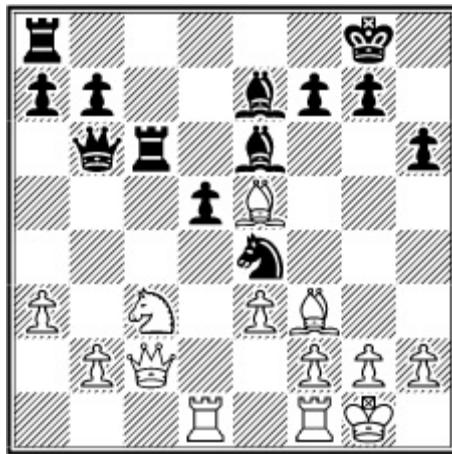
17...bxc6? 18 ♜a6 wins the exchange.

18 ♜f3

After Karpov's clever knight manoeuvre it will be much easier for White to prove that the isolani is more of a static weakness than a dynamic strength.

Firstly White can place the bishop on f3 and secondly the other bishop can use the e5-square to put pressure on the f6-knight. These bishop manoeuvres leave the isolani barely protected rather than overprotected.

18...♝b6 19 ♜e5! ♜e4



20 ♕e2

The most comfortable square for the queen, while at the same time forcing the following exchange of knights. An interesting alternative was 20 ♜d4 ♜c5 21 ♜xc5 ♛xc5 22 ♜xe4 dxе4 23 ♜d4 (23 ♜xe4? does not lead to any advantage because Black can play 23...♝xb2 24 ♜a4 ♛e5! 25 ♜f4 ♛b5! 26 ♜c3 ♛a5 and Black has survived the one-move threats.) 23...f5 24 ♜d2 with positional pressure along the d-file.

There is no significant gain in the pawn-grab 20 ♜xe4 dxе4 21 ♜xe4 because Black can calmly reply 21...♝xb2. After 22 ♛b1 (22 ♜d5? ♛xa3!) 22...♛xa3 23 ♛xb7 ♛ac8 24 ♛b1 ♛c5 (The only move, since the bishop on e7 must be defended.) 25 ♜d4 ♛d6 26 ♛xa7 the position is dynamically balanced despite the fact that Black is a pawn down. Black's pieces are

compactly and harmoniously placed whereas White's are more scattered with pronounced problems in gaining activity for the knight and king's rook.

20...♝xc3 21 ♞xc3 ♜d8

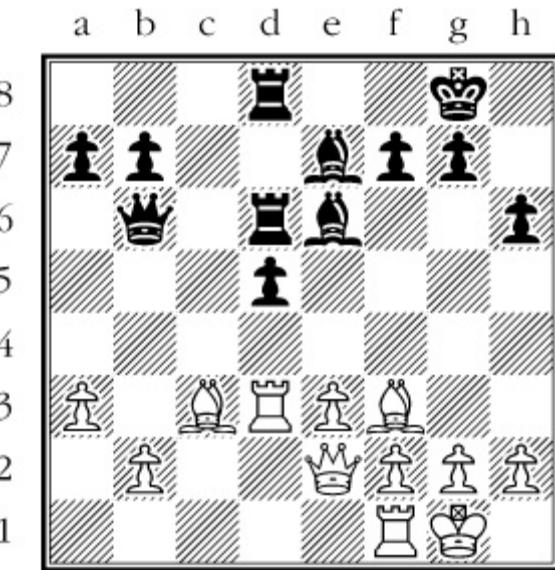
The continuation 21...♝xa3? 22 ♜xg7! ♔xg7 23 bxa3 leads to a position where White doesn't need to play for a second weakness since Black's ruined kingside offers plenty of scope for White's pieces to combine an attack on the isolani with an assault on the exposed king.

22 ♜d3! ♜cd6

If Spassky wasn't interested in the exchange of the dark-squared bishops he could have played 22...♜c7 followed by 23...♜cd7.

17

Karpov – Spassky
Montreal 1979



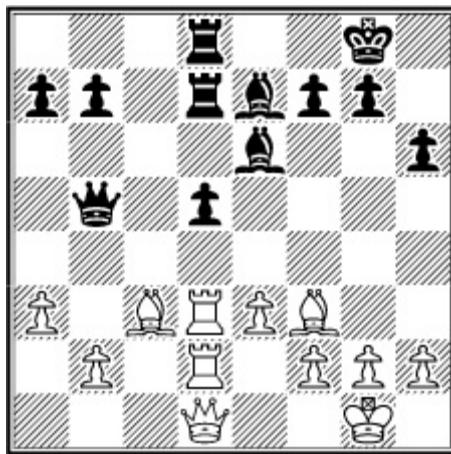
White to move

23 ♜fd1

Interestingly Karpov avoids Spassky's tacit proposal to exchange the dark-squared bishops. A plausible continuation with this logical exchange taking

place is 23 ♜b4 ♛6d7 24 ♜xe7 ♛xe7 25 ♛fd1 ♛ed7 26 ♛d4. The exchange in itself is advantageous and besides that features the same pawn structure and constellation of pieces as in the afore-mentioned Botvinnik – Zagoryansky game. The most vital similarity is the fact that the h-pawn is on h6 which means that White can play for the break g4-g5 so as to create a second weaknesses on the kingside. This is exactly what Botvinnik did but compared with the present game his queen was strongly placed on e5, which made this plan easier to carry out. The different placement of the queens is the most significant difference. However, later in the game Karpov puts his queen on h5 while keeping his dark-squared bishop on the long diagonal. So maybe this is an improvement of Botvinnik's model game or perhaps a matter of postponing the exchange until later?

23... ♛6d7 24 ♛1d2 ♜b5 25 ♛d1



The so-called “Alekhine’s gun” which was popularised by Capablanca and Alekhine in their games. The most famous example is that seen in Alekhine – Nimzowitsch, San Remo 1930. The queue of major pieces concentrated on one file is the strongest weapon which exists in chess. On a diagonal only two pieces can exert pressure. However, when it comes to applying pressure on squares it's a different story.

25...b6 26 g3 ♜f8 27 ♜g2 ♜e7 28 ♛h5!

Karpov activates his queen but compared with the Botvinnik game it's more difficult to carry out the important break g4-g5 due to the fact that the dark-squared bishops are on the board!

28...a6

Just in case Spassky pragmatically defends his queen, then Black will not need to worry about the pawn-push e3-e4.

29 h3 ♜c6 30 ♜h2 ♜b5 31 f4 f6

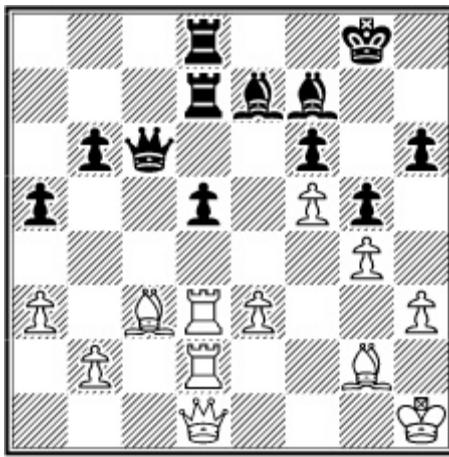
32 ♜d1

Again Karpov triples on the d-file after Black has made a second concession on the kingside.

32...♜c6 33 g4 g5?

A better defence was to play a waiting move with the king by 33...♚h8 so as not to unnecessarily weaken the kingside. If White isn't patient and wants to win the d5-pawn as quickly as possible, then Black gets counterplay after 34 ♜h1 a5 35 f5 ♜f7 36 e4 ♜d6 37 exd5 ♜c4.

34 ♜h1 a5 35 f5 ♜f7



36 e4!

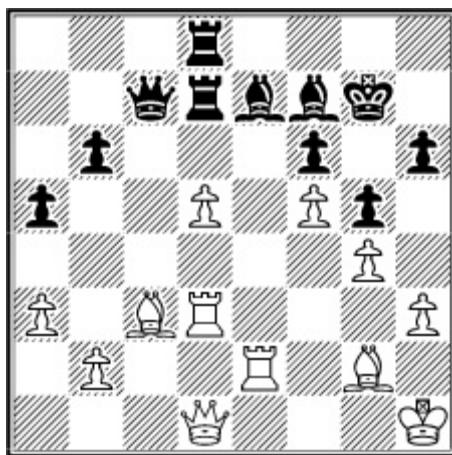
After very skilful manoeuvring, Karpov has managed to win the isolated pawn. It's normally a hard nut to crack but the key in this game was first to exchange the knights and then attack the defenders, which became additional weaknesses for White to focus on. First the bishop on e6 was attacked and after it had to leave the ideal square e6 (remember Nimzowitsch's famous statement!) the d7-rook lost an important protector so White was able to exploit his pressure on the d-file and the fact that the d5-pawn was now

pinned.

36... ♕g7 37 exd5

The most principled move, but an interesting alternative was 37 e5!? fxe5 38 ♜xe5+ ♔g8 leaving White clearly better thanks to his better protected king and more active pieces which can operate on both files and diagonals. Such a continuation is also principled since it attaches importance to the “principal evil”, to use an expression by Nimzowitsch, which is the complex of squares surrounding the isolani, rather than the isolani itself, in this case d4 and e5 which arose from the key exchanging manoeuvre ♜d2-f3-e5xc6.

37... ♜c7 38 ♜e2



38...b5?

Spassky overlooks the isolani's lust to expand or possibly the 41st move. 38...♜d6 was necessary, as the natural protection with 38...♝d6 weakens the kingside thereby enabling White to invade the e6-square by the Russian exchange sacrifice 39 ♜e6! ♜xe6 (or 39...♝e5 40 ♜xe5 fxe5 41 ♜c6) 40 fxe6 ♜e7 41 ♜f3 ♜f8 42 ♜f5 with an overwhelming position.

39 ♜xe7! ♜xe7 40 d6 ♜c4 41 b3! Black resigns.

18

Henley – Schneider

Elekes Memorial, Hungary 1981



White to move

22 ♜ a4!

A creative move, which puts immediate pressure on the most alarming weakness in Black's position, the b6-pawn.

22... ♜ xa4

The only defence. The alternatives lose a pawn which gives White a three-to-one majority on the queenside: 22... ♜ fd7? 23 ♜ xd7 or 22... ♜ b7? 23 ♜ xc5 bxc5 24 ♜ c6 ♜ f8 25 ♜ d8 ♜ d7 26 ♜ e7+ ♜ h8 27 ♜ xc5.

23 bxa4

Even though the pawn structure on the queenside is disrupted the a4-pawn should not be regarded as weak, because there is no way for Black to attack it.

23... ♜ e4

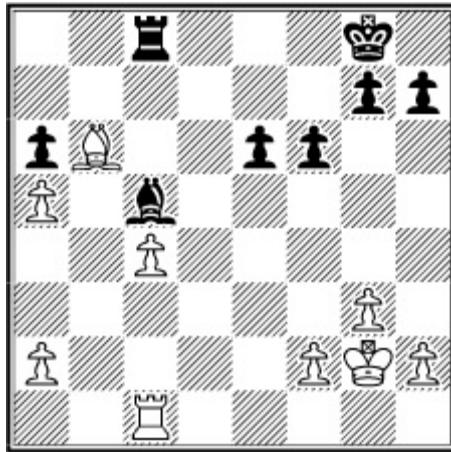
The b6-pawn cannot be held after 23... ♜ b7 due to 24 ♜ b1 ♜ d8 25 a5! b5 26 cxb5 and now 26... ♜ xa5 is met by 27 bxa6! ♜ xb1 28 a7.

24 ♜ xb6 ♜ c8 25 ♜ c1 f6 26 ♜ d3 ♜ c5 27 ♜ xc5

A serious alternative was 27 ♜ xc5 ♜ xc5 28 f4 followed by the

centralisation of the king.

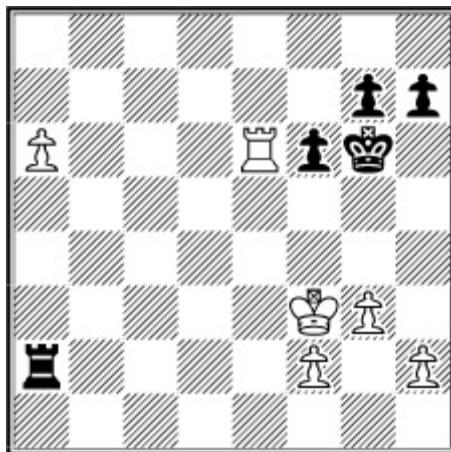
27... ♕xc5 28 a5



Note that the b3-pawn is now on a5 where it helps to anchor the bishop. It's interesting to observe that not only is the knight move to a4 associated with pressure on the b6-pawn but also the b3-pawn is now linked to the b6-square.

28... ♕f7 29 ♕f3 ♕e7

29... ♕c6! 30 ♕b1 ♕f8 wins the c4-pawn but after the forced 31 ♕d1 ♕xc4 32 ♕d7+ ♕g6 33 ♕a7 White wins the a6-pawn. After the further 33... ♕a4 34 ♕xa6 ♕b4 35 ♕a8 ♕c3 36 a6 ♕d4 37 ♕xd4 ♕xd4 38 ♕e8 ♕a4 39 ♕xe6 ♕xa2



...an interesting rook ending arises where White's rook protects the pawn

from the side. Protection from the side is good when the outside passed pawn is on the second or third rank, because then the rook can help to defend the pawns on the kingside.

A famous example is Karpov – Knaak, Baden-Baden 1992 which should be studied by anyone not familiar with it. Here it's difficult for White to approach the a-pawn with the king because of the weak pawns on the kingside, so Black has good drawing chances.

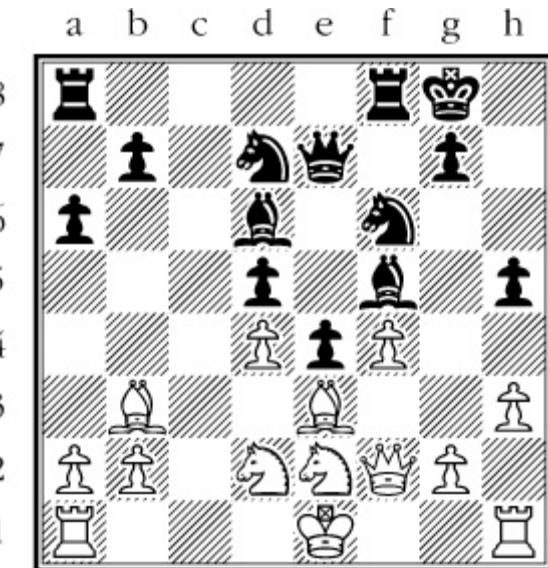
30 ♜e4 ♜c6 31 ♜b1! ♜xb6? 32 axb6 ♜xc4+ 33 ♜d3 ♜c8 34 a4! ♜d6 35 a5 ♜c6 36 ♜c1+ ♜b7 37 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 38 ♜d4 ♜d8 39 ♜c5 ♜d7 40 h3 g6 41 h4! h6 Black resigns.

19

Bruehl – Philidor

London 1783

(1 e4 e5 2 ♜c4 c6 3 ♜e2 d6 4 c3 f5 5 d3 ♜f6 6 exf5? (Staunton) 6... ♜xf5 7 d4 e4 8 ♜g5 d5 9 ♜b3 ♜d6 10 ♜d2 ♜bd7 11 h3 h6 12 ♜e3 ♜e7 13 f4 h5 14 c4 a6 15 cxd5 cxd5 16 ♜f2 o-o 17 ♜e2)



Black to move

Philidor played...

17...b5

...planning ... $\mathbb{B}b6$ and ... $\mathbb{B}c4$. The idea of using pawns to help the pieces take up good squares, so called outposts, originates with Philidor. According to the Russians, a knight defended by two pawns inside enemy territory is a “ring”, just like Pillsbury’s $\mathbb{N}e5$ with pawns on d4 and f4. The Russian chess coach Anatoly Terekhin has baptized this important positional idea, or priyome, after Francois-André Danican Philidor (1726-1795) because of this, his most famous game. 17... $\mathbb{R}ac8$ is answered by 18 o-o followed by $\mathbb{R}ac1$. If the rooks are exchanged the defence will be easier for White. Note that if Black plants a knight on c4 Black’s rooks will become stronger than White’s and that’s why it’s important to place the knight on c4 before trading rooks.

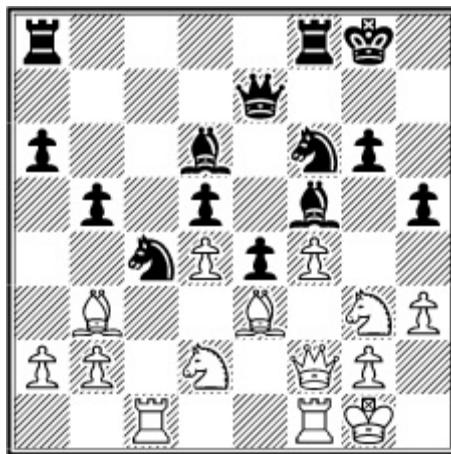
18 o-o $\mathbb{B}b6$ 19 $\mathbb{N}g3$ g6

A modern player would have moved the bishop to one of the five available squares.

20 $\mathbb{R}ac1$

It’s pointless to place a rook on the c-file since Black will block the file anyway with ... $\mathbb{B}c4$. It was better to play 20 $\mathbb{N}xf5$ gxf5 21 a4.

20... $\mathbb{B}c4$



Black attacks the b2-pawn while sometimes an exchange on e3, according to Fischer’s or Dus-Chotimirsky’s concept, might be good since White loses a good defensive bishop. The c-file is now closed and that means that Black can

increase his terrain on the queenside with ...a6-a5-a4 and add more pressure by doubling rooks on the c-file.

21 ♟xf5

Note that 21 ♟xc4 dxc4 not only gives Black a pawn majority but also a very strong outpost on d5 for his other knight. Philidor, who was the first really great chess genius, discovered a very clever concept indeed, and that was one of the reasons he called the pawns the soul of chess. “Pawns are the soul of the game. They alone create attack and defence, the way they are deployed decides the fate of the game.”

21...gxf5 22 ♛g3+?

The queen is very exposed on the g-file. More defensive opportunities were possible after 22 ♟fe1 followed by ♜h4 and ♜f1.

22...♝g7

22...♝h7! would have been embarrassing for White's queen because of ...♝g8 next move.

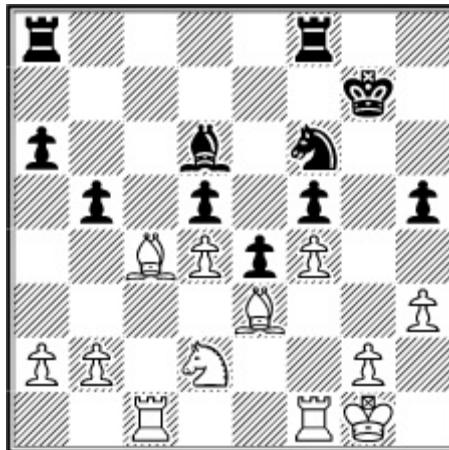
23 ♛xg7+?

23 ♜f2 should have been preferred.

23...♛xg7

The exchange of queens is clearly in Black's favour due to the fact that all his minor pieces and pawns are more actively placed than White's.

24 ♟xc4



Sooner or later the strong knight has to be eliminated since it's hardly possible to play around it or go beyond it.

24...bxc4?

24...dxc4 would have improved Black's position much more. 25... κ d5 could have been played next move, followed by preparing the advance of the queenside pawn majority.

25 g3?

An immediate 25 b3 was more useful.

25... κ ab8?

It was better to place one of the rooks on c8.

26 b3 κ a3 27 κ c2 cxb3 28 axb3

Stronger was 28 κ xb3! and White has a good outpost on c5. However it is not as strong as Black's on c4 because White's outpost is only covered by one pawn.

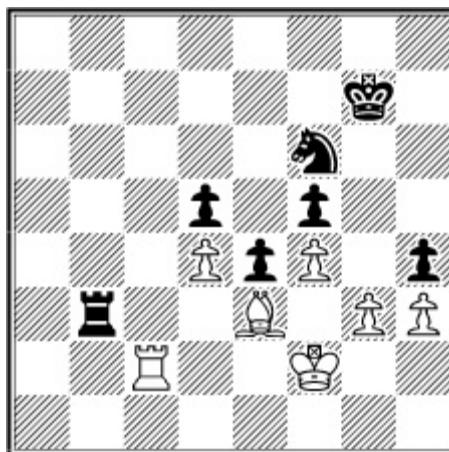
28... κ fc8 29 κ xc8 κ xc8 30 κ a1 κ b4?

30... κ c1+! 31 κ xc1 κ xc1 32 κ f1 κ b2 looks convincing, considering the space Black enjoys and the more active positions of all his pieces.

31 κ xa6 κ c3 32 κ f2 κ d3 33 κ a2?!

The best chance to fight for a draw was 33 κ f1 κ xb3 34 κ e2.

33... κ xd2 34 κ xd2 κ xb3 35 κ c2 h4?



This move looks better than it is. Correct was 35... $\mathbb{Q}f7$.

36 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$

36 $g \times h4!$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 42 $h5$ would have led to an equal rook ending. White's rook has very good squares on g6 and g5.

36... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 37 $g \times h4$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}d7$

Staunton's improvement 38 $\mathbb{Q}c6+!$ is still valid today.

38... $\mathbb{Q}xf4?!$

38... $\mathbb{Q}b2+$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}h2$ was a stronger continuation.

39 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$

If 41... $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ then 42 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}d8!.$

42 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 43 $d5$ $f4$ 44 $d6$ $\mathbb{Q}d2+$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 46 $h5$ $e3$ 47 $h6?$

47 $\mathbb{Q}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 48 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ leads to a draw, for example 48... $\mathbb{Q}f2+$ 49 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 50 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 51 $h6$ $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ 52 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ etc.

47... $f3$ White resigns.

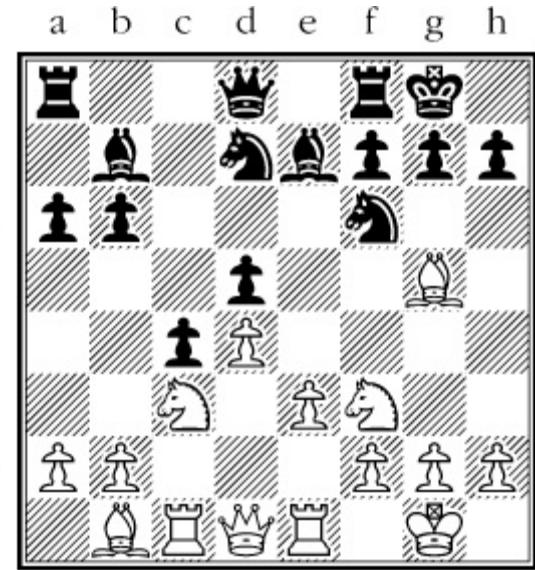
Don't forget the key to Philidor's victory: ... $b5$, ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}c4!$, Philidor's ring!

20

Pillsbury – Tarrasch

Hastings 1895

(1 $d4$ $d5$ 2 $c4$ $e6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $o-o$ 7 $e3$ $b6$ 8 $cxsd5$ $exsd5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10 $o-o$ $c5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $c4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $a6$)



White to move

Probably inspired by Philidor and to a certain extent Labourdonnais, Pillsbury successfully placed a knight on e5, with pawns on d4 and f4, in several games in the Queen's Gambit. Here he plays it for the first time against Tarrasch at Hastings 1895, the tournament which made him immortal.

13 ♜e5!

One of the most famous plans in the Queen's Gambit is Pillsbury's attack beginning with ♜e5, followed by f2-f4 and ♜f3. In this position it's also an effective counter to Black's pawn majority.

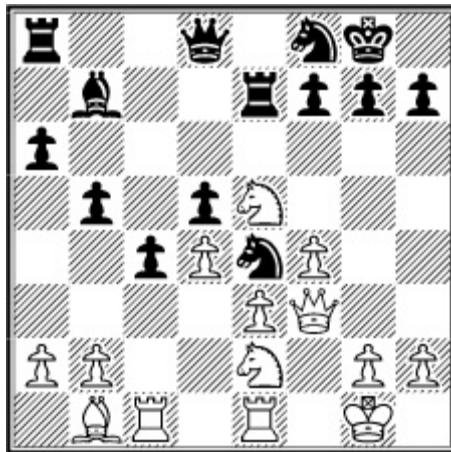
13...b5

Black cannot prevent White from setting up a Pillsbury position since 13...♜xe5 14 dxе5 ♜d7 15 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 16 f4 is too awkward.

14 f4 ♜e8

Black plans a reinforcement of the h7-square with ...♜f8 but this set-up is a little passive. More active was either 14...b4, setting the pawn majority in motion, or centralisation with 14...♜e4 which also reveals the main defect of White's set-up, the e4-square.

15 ♜f3 ♜f8 16 ♜e2 ♜e4 17 ♜xe7 ♜xe7



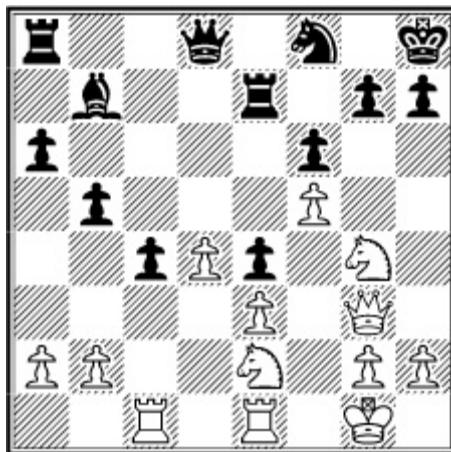
18 ♜xe4!

This thematic exchange was a surprise for Pillsbury's contemporaries but it is better that Black has a pawn on e4 than a strong knight which disturbs White's position more and besides that supports the black queenside pawn majority.

18...dxe4 19 ♛g3!

A good place for the queen to x-ray Black's king.

19...f6 20 ♜g4 ♜h8 21 f5!



The f-pawn shows its teeth by immobilising the black knight while providing a square for the e2-knight as well as the f1-rook on f4.

21...♝d7 22 ♜f1

The position is pretty balanced since White cannot activate the knight on

f4 due to the pressure on f5. Pillsbury managed to win a thrilling game and mated Black's king in the 52nd move.

21

Nimzowitsch – Salwe Karlsbad 1911

(1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 ♜c6 5 ♜f3 ♜b6 6 ♜d3 ♜d7?! 7 dxcc5! ♜xc5 8 o-o f6?! 9 b4! ♜e7 10 ♜f4 fxe5 11 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 12 ♜xe5 ♜f6)



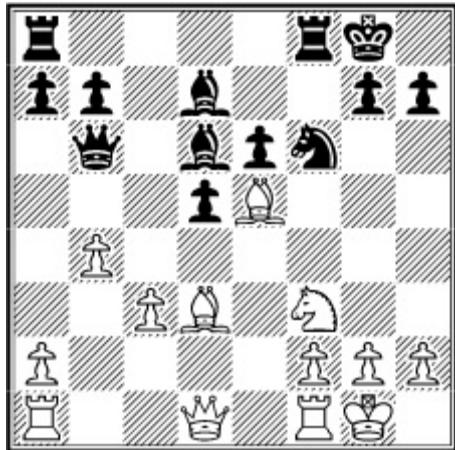
White to move

13 ♜d2

White should permanently blockade the d4- and e5-squares. 13 ♜c2? is a one-move-threat which ignores the important central squares. After 13...o-o 14 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 15 ♜xh7+ ♜h8 16 ♜g6 (16 ♜d3 e5) 16...e5! White has won a pawn but Black has liberated his position and is ready to march on in the centre. White would probably lose the game in the long run.

13...o-o 14 ♜f3! ♜d6

14...♜b5 15 ♜d4 ♜a6 16 ♜xb5 ♜xb5 17 ♜g5 wins the e-pawn.



15 ♜e2!

The idea of extending the blockade, by blockading the d4-square with the bishop and the e5-square with the knight, is doomed to fail after 15 ♜d4 ♜c7 16 ♜e2 ♜g4! 17 h3 (17 ♜xh7+ ♜xh7 18 ♜g5+ ♜g6 19 ♜xg4 ♜f4 20 ♜h3 ♜xg5 21 ♜xg7 ♜g6 22 ♜h6+ ♜f7 23 ♜h7 ♜e8 This incredible variation shows what the defending king is capable of if White doesn't control the centre.) 17...e5. Note that Black exploits the mobility of the e-pawn. This is the reason that White should not have lifted the blockade for a second, since the pawn's lust to expand is executed with all its inherent dynamic energy.

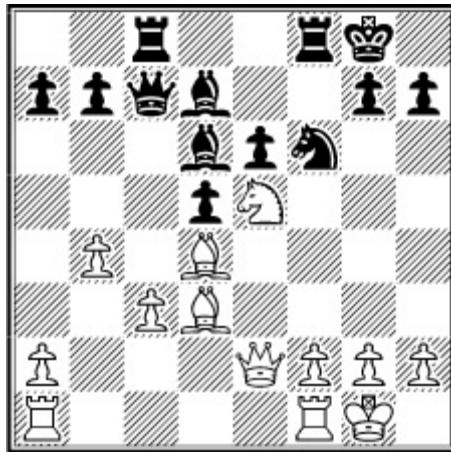
15...♜ac8

If 15...♝xe5 then 16 ♜xe5 ♜ac8 17 c4!..

16 ♜d4!

Now is the right moment to extend the blockade to d4 and e5.

16...♜c7 17 ♜e5



Black is seriously blockaded. Note the bishop on d7 which is suffocated behind its own pawns on e6 and d5. Note also how precisely White had to play to achieve this total blockade in the centre.

17... ♜e8 18 ♛ae1

Overprotection is one of the most important strategic concepts discovered by Nimzowitsch.

18... ♜xe5 19 ♜xe5 ♕c6 20 ♜d4 ♜d7 21 ♕c2

White initiates a decisive regrouping.

21... ♜f7 22 ♜e3 b6 23 ♜g3 ♔h8 24 ♜xh7 e5

Or 24... ♜xh7 25 ♜g6 ♜g8 26 ♜xg7 ♜f8 27 ♜h6 ♜h7 28 ♜f6+.

25 ♜g6

A necessary intermediate move. If 25 ♜xe5?? ♜xh7 and Black's queen controls g6.

25... ♜e7 26 ♜e1 ♕d6 27 ♜e3 d4

Note the pawn's lust to expand!

28 ♜g5 ♜xc3 29 ♜xc3 dxc3 30 ♜xc3 ♜g8 31 a3 ♜f8 32 ♜h4 ♜e8 33 ♜f5 ♜d4 34 ♜xd4 exd4 35 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 36 ♜d3 ♜d6 37 ♜xf6 gxf6 38 h4 Black resigns.

The main idea was to stop Black's central pawns expanding after 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5. If Black manages to liquidate White's pawns on d4 and e5 with

...c5 and ...f6, White has to replace the pawns with pieces. In the game the bishop replaced the pawn on d4 and the knight the pawn on e5.

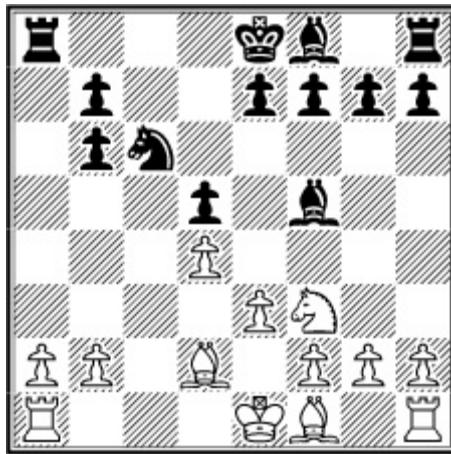
The move 7 dxc5! is regarded as one of the deepest moves ever played since it was the starting-point for a new philosophy regarding the treatment of the centre in the French Defence.

22

Janowsky – Capablanca

New York 1916

(1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜f3 d5 3 c4 c6 4 ♜c3 ♜f5 5 ♜b3 ♜b6 6 ♜xb6 axb6 7 cxd5 ♜xd5 8 ♜xd5 cxd5 9 e3 ♜c6 10 ♜d2



10... $\mathbb{Q}d7$!? An extraordinarily deep move, Capablanca is already preparing Philidor's famous knight manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{N}c6-a5$, ...b6-b5 and ... $\mathbb{N}a5-c4$. This is actually what he wrote in his autobiography *My Chess Career*. 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (11 $\mathbb{N}e5$ would have prevented Black's Philidor-plan and was the critical move to challenge Black's set-up.) 11...e6 12 o-o $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 13 $\mathbb{N}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$! 14 $\mathbb{N}c3$ $\mathbb{N}hc8$ 15 a3 $\mathbb{N}a5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ f5 17 g3 b5 18 f3)



Black to move

18... ♜c4!

Capablanca plays according to Philidor's concept. The knight is so well placed on c4, where it attacks four squares in enemy territory, that sooner or later White will be forced to exchange it, and then Black gets rid of his doubled pawn and will enjoy a space advantage on the queenside.

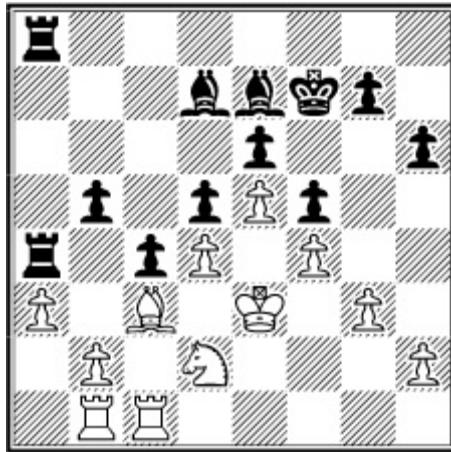
19 ♜xc4?!

19 ♜f2 was the alternative if White can tolerate the bold knight. Otherwise 19 ♜xc4 bxc4 20 e4 was the lesser evil.

19...bxc4

Everything goes according to plan. Black's b5-pawn is now undoubled and he can increase the pressure against the queenside pawns with the key break ...b7-b5-b4.

20 e4 ♜f7 21 e5 ♜e7 22 f4 b5 23 ♜f2 ♜a4 24 ♜e3 ♜ca8 25 ♜ab1 h6



Black's plan is to utilise the greater mobility of his rooks and work with two breaks at the same time, so White has to reckon with both ...b5-b4 and ...g7-g5.

26 ♜f3 g5 27 ♜e1?

The knight was well-placed on f3 so it was correct to benefit from this by playing 27 fxg5 hxg5 28 h4 g4 29 ♜g1 b4 30 axb4 ♜xb4 31 ♜xb4 ♜xb4 32 ♜e2. It would not be a disaster to lose the b2-pawn, due to White's blockading possibilities, so this continuation should definitely have been tried.

27... ♜g8 28 ♜f3 gxf4 29 gxf4 ♜aa8 30 ♜g2 ♜g4 31 ♜g1 ♜ag8 32 ♜e1 b4 33 axb4

Worse would have been 33 ♜xb4? ♜a4! 34 ♜bc1 ♜xb4 35 axb4 ♜b8.

33... ♜a4 34 ♜a1

34 ♜c1 was necessary to stop the decisive bishop manoeuvre ...♜a4-c2-e4, but White has been outplayed anyway.

34... ♜c2 35 ♜g3 ♜e4+ 36 ♜f2 h5

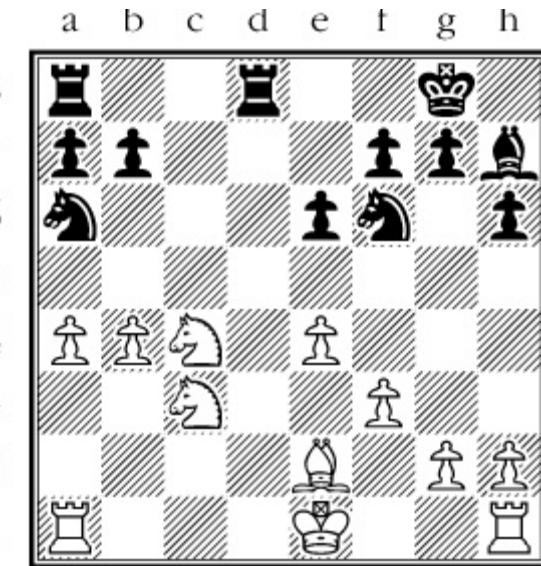
White cannot avoid the loss of material with ...h5-h4 hanging over him.

37 ♜a7 ♜xg2 38 ♜xg2 h4 39 ♜xh4 ♜xg2+ 40 ♜f3 ♜xh2 41 ♜xe7 ♜h3+ 42 ♜f2 ♜b3 43 ♜g5+ ♜g6 44 ♜e7 ♜xb2+ 45 ♜f3 ♜a8 46 ♜xe6+ ♜h7 White resigns.

23

Alekhine – Bogoljubow

Game 5, World Championship, Wiesbaden 1929



White to move

17 ♟a2!

The only way to retain White's positional advantage. It contains an annoying threat since Black has to calculate how to meet 18 ♟a5 ♜ab8 19 ♜xb7!. If instead 17 b5 then Black solves the problem of his badly placed queenside knight by 17...♞c5. 17 ♜b1 would have given Black promising counterplay with 17...♝d5!, thanks to the pin on the h7-b1 diagonal.

17...♝b8

Black intends the knight manoeuvre ...♝b8-c6-d4.

18 ♛f2

18 b5 ♜bd7 gives the queenside knight prospects of a bright future on the fine c5 square.

18...♞c6 19 ♜hd1 ♜d4 20 ♜ac1 ♛f8

Black's long-term-plan is to get the queen's bishop in play after ...♝e8,

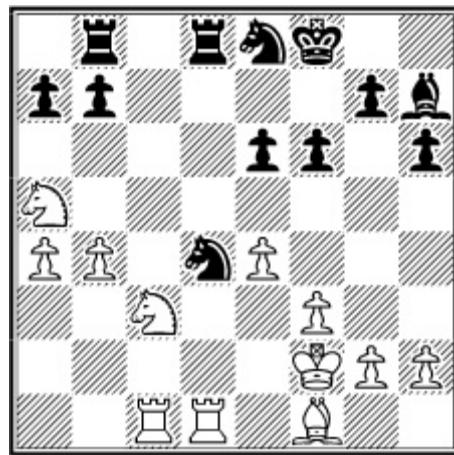
... $\hat{\square}$ g8, ...f6 and ...e5, but in the meantime White will increase the queenside pressure.

21 $\hat{\square}$ f1 $\hat{\square}$ e8 22 $\hat{\square}$ c3

Alekhine wants all his pieces in play before embarking on an attack with $\hat{\square}$ a5.

22...f6 23 $\hat{\square}$ a5 $\hat{\square}$ ab8?

23...b6 was necessary with a slight advantage to White.



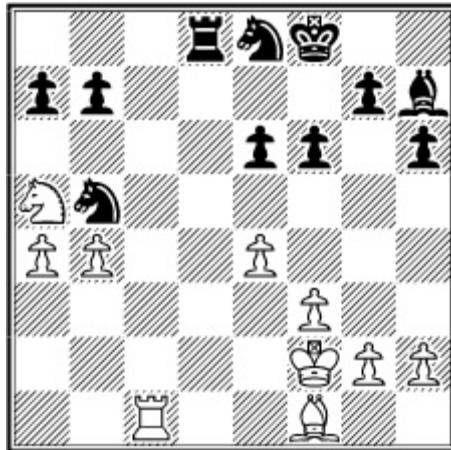
24 $\hat{\square}$ b5!

The seemingly passive a2-knight has a lot of energy in store and clinches the game by winning a pawn by force.

24... $\hat{\square}$ xb5

24...e5 25 $\hat{\square}$ xd4 exd4 26 $\hat{\square}$ b3 and the pawn is lost.

25 $\hat{\square}$ xd8 $\hat{\square}$ xd8



26 ♜xb7!

This intermezzo must have been overlooked by Bogoljubow.

26... ♛b8

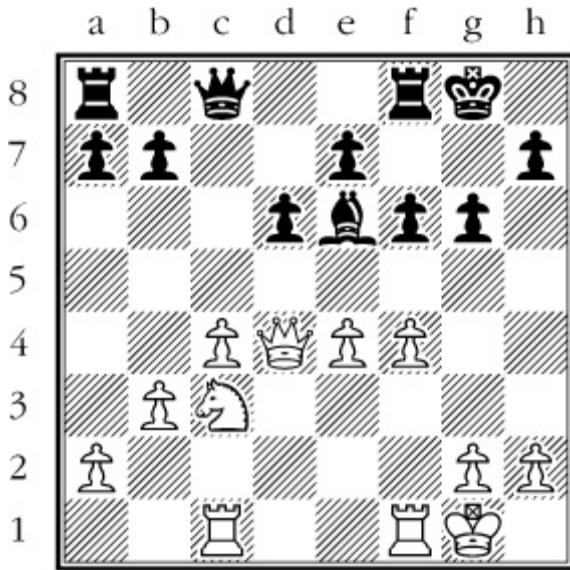
26... ♛d2+ 27 ♛e3 ♜bd6 28 ♛xd2 ♜xb7 29 ♛c8 and 30 ♛a8 would give White two connected passed pawns.

27 ♜c5

This is the point. Black cannot defend against the knight fork on d7 and the capture on b5 so it “is actually a walk-over for White” to use Alekhine’s own expression in his annotations to the game. Black resigned on the 48th move.

24

Pachman – Gunnarson
Vrnjacka Banja 1967



White to move

17 ♕d5

The so called Marco jump is the fundamental drawback of Black's pawn structure. Apart from this idea White can also play for different breaks such as f4-f5, to play on the kingside, or e4-e5 with play in the centre. Also the more unusual c4-c5, focusing on the queenside, is sometimes playable. 17 f5 ♜f7 has the disadvantage that Black can manoeuvre his queen to c5 or e5. 18 ♜f3 (18 ♜h1 ♜c5 19 ♜d2 ♜g7 followed by ♜e5 also gives Black a solid position.) 18... ♜c5.

17... ♜xd5 18 ♜xd5+

After 18 exd5 ♜c5 Black can always defend the e7-pawn with his king after an exchange of queens. 18 cxd5 ♜d7 followed by ... ♜fc8 makes White's space advantage less pronounced after an exchange of rooks.

18... ♜g7 19 c5 dxc5 20 ♜xc5 e6

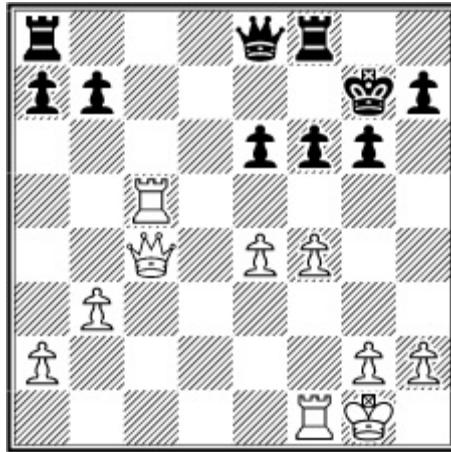
20... ♜b8 is met by 21 ♜d7 followed by ♜c7 but 20... ♜d8! would have dealt with these possibilities.

21 ♜c4

21 ♜d6 was also possible.

21... ♜e8

21... $\mathbb{Q}d8!$, controlling the d-file, was the best square for the queen although White has a comfortable advantage after **22 e5** with his space advantage and active major pieces.



22 e5

An alternative was **22 $\mathbb{R}c7+$ $\mathbb{R}f7$ 23 $\mathbb{R}d1$** making it impossible to capture on c7.

22...f5?

22...fxe5 23 $\mathbb{R}xe5$ $\mathbb{R}f6$ 24 $\mathbb{R}fe1$ and Black has problems holding the e6-pawn since **24... $\mathbb{R}f7$** can be met by **25 $\mathbb{R}c5$** . **22... $\mathbb{Q}d8$** was the best defence but Black's position remains hard to handle in a practical game after **23 exf6+ $\mathbb{R}xf6$ 24 $\mathbb{R}e5$** .

23 $\mathbb{R}d1$

The open files belong to White and the win is only a matter of time.

23... $\mathbb{R}f7$ 24 $\mathbb{R}d6$ $\mathbb{R}d8!?$ 25 $\mathbb{R}c7!$

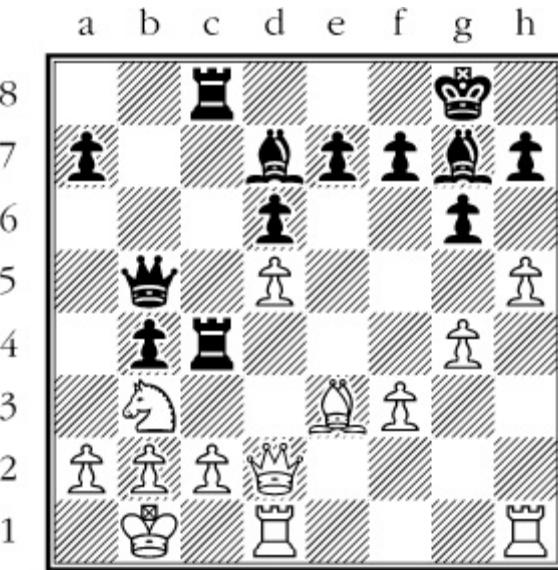
White avoids **25 $\mathbb{R}xe6$ $\mathbb{R}xe6$ 26 $\mathbb{R}xe6$ $\mathbb{R}d1+$** and **25 $\mathbb{R}xe6$ $\mathbb{R}d1+$ 26 $\mathbb{R}f2$ $\mathbb{R}d7$** with counterplay in both variations. White should not give up his files unnecessarily.

25... $\mathbb{R}fd7$ 26 $\mathbb{R}dxd7+$ $\mathbb{R}xd7$ 27 $\mathbb{R}b5$ Black resigns.

25

Jansa – Bilek

1968



White to move

1 ♜ a1!

White plays according to Steinitz' principle of economic defence. Steinitz – Golmayo, Havana 1889, comes to mind where Steinitz played 12 ♖e1 to strengthen the most vulnerable points, the pawns on c2 and g2. Similarly the text move defends the key point c2 which in itself protects the king's position. The original English player Michael Basman once stated that a knight in the corner stands well because all it can do is improve its position! Other moves would have been worse:

(a) 1 ♜c1? The rook is needed in the attack on the black king. Black replies 1...a5 2 hxg6 fxg6 3 ♜h2 h5! 4 ♜d2 (4 gxh5? ♜f5 5 ♜a1 a4 followed by ...b3 and Black's attack is far more dangerous than White's.) 4...♜xd5! 5 ♜xc4 (5 gxh5 ♜e6! 6 b3 ♜c3) 5...♜xc4 6 ♜d2 hxg4 7 fxg4 ♜e6 8 b3 ♜xg4 and Black is slightly better.

(b) 1 hxg6? would have been strongly met by the intermediate move 1...♜xc2! and after 2 gxf7+ ♜xf7 3 ♜xc2 ♜xc2 4 ♜xc2 ♜e2+ 5 ♜d2 ♜a4 the game would be over.

(c) 1 ♜d4? ♜xc2! 2 ♜f4 (2 ♜xc2? ♜xc2 3 ♜xc2 ♜e2+) 2...f6! and Black

is clearly better.

(d) 1 $\mathbb{Q}h2?$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2!$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ $gxh5!$ and Black wins.

(e) 1 $\mathbb{Q}d4?$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 3 $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 4 $hxg6$ $h5!$ 5 $gxf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ (6 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$) 6... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ (8 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$) 8... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ and Black has excellent winning chances with an extra pawn, more active pieces and a bishop of opposite colour.

1...e6?

Stronger was 1...a5!. Direct attacks like 2 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ (If 2 $hxg6$ $fxg6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ then 3... $h5$ 4 $gxh5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $a4$ followed by the decisive break ... $b4-b3$.) don't work due to the surprise move 2... $g5!!$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $a4$ when White's cornered knight looks forever doomed, especially if Black plays ... $a4-a3$ and White answers $b2-b3$.

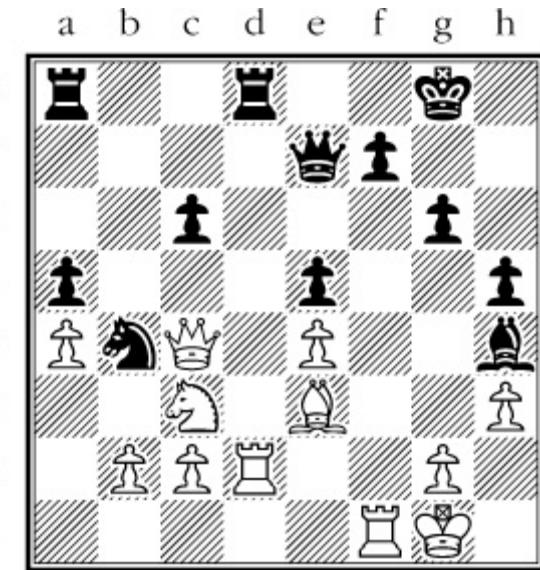
2 $hxg6$ $hxg6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $exd5$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ $f6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}he1+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ and White wins.

26

Karpov – Spassky

Game 9, Candidates match, Leningrad 1974

(1 $e4$ $c5$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $e6$ 3 $d4$ $cxd4$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $d6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 7 $o-o$ $o-o$ 8 $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}b3!$ $a5$ 11 $a4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $g6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $e5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxcc6$ 16 $fxe5$ $dxe5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 18 $h3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ $h5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$)



White to move

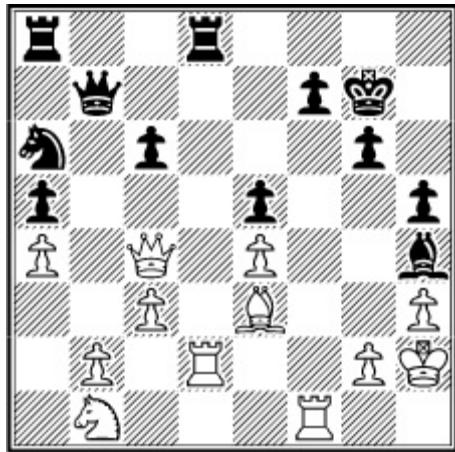
24 ♕b1!!

According to the Russian school, when you don't know what to do an effective plan is to check which of your pieces is the worst placed and then improve it. The knight did nothing constructive on c3, and it stood in the way of the pawn on c2, but now it can manoeuvre to f3 where it has far greater prospects. This kind of manoeuvre has been seen before, the most famous game being Lasker – Pillsbury, Paris 1900, where Lasker practically won a pawn by force after playing the brilliant manoeuvre 22 ♕b1-d2-f3 and then jumping further into Black's position. If you have access to this game you should have a look at it.

24...♝b7 25 ♜h2!

Also the position of the king can be improved!

25...♚g7 26 c3 ♜a6



27 ♜e2!

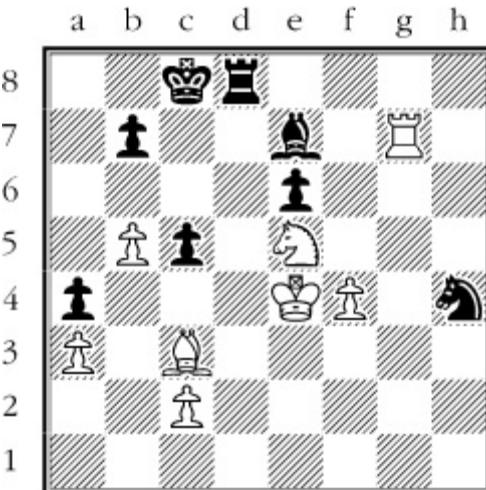
White evacuates the d2-square for the knight while avoiding a rook exchange.

27... ♜f8 28 ♜d2 ♜d8 29 ♜f3 f6 30 ♜d2 ♜e7 31 ♜e6 ♜ad8 32 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 33 ♜d1 ♜b8 34 ♜c5 ♜h8 35 ♜xd8 Black resigns.

Black loses after 35... ♜xd8 36 ♜e7. Note that the manoeuvre of the white knight was decisive since it forced Black to weaken his position by 29...f6, which in turn allowed the white queen to manoeuvre to the heart of Black's position, the e6-square. The Czechoslovakian-born German GM Vlastimil Hort has said that this ninth game of the match was the most impressive one. Hort was impressed by Karpov's ability to exploit weaknesses with the help of just pieces and without needing pawn breaks. This is not as easy as it looks.

26a

Zherebukh – Shirov
FIDE World Cup 2021



Black to move

When I watched the World Cup live I was very impressed by Shirov's knight manoeuvre in the following position.

43... ♜f5 44 ♛h7 ♜d6+ 45 ♜f3

45 ♜e3 was actually more precise in order to avoid the knight check on d4 which comes later in the variation.

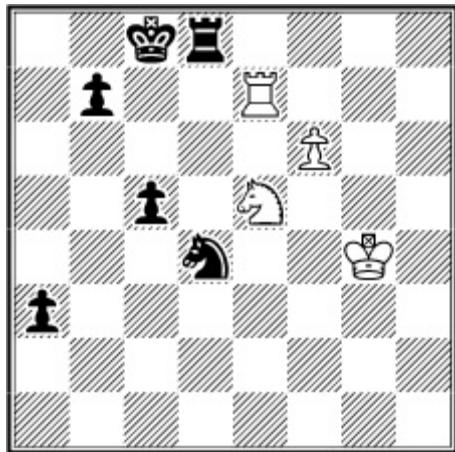
45... ♜xb5 46 ♛xe7 ♜xc3 47 ♛xe6

Here the passed f-pawn looks very dangerous and the white pieces cooperate very well. How is the f-pawn to be stopped? White threatens the simple pawn march to f7 followed by ♛e8. Now look at Black's knight!

47... ♜b5 48 ♜g4?

This natural move is a mistake and should have been replaced by 48 ♜c4.

48... ♜xa3 49 f5 ♜xc2 50 f6 ♜d4 51 ♛e7 a3



52 ♟c4

The point of Black's play is that 52 f7 a2 53 ♜e8 is answered by 53...♞e6!!.. What an incredible knight! It's doing everything in Shirov's hands.

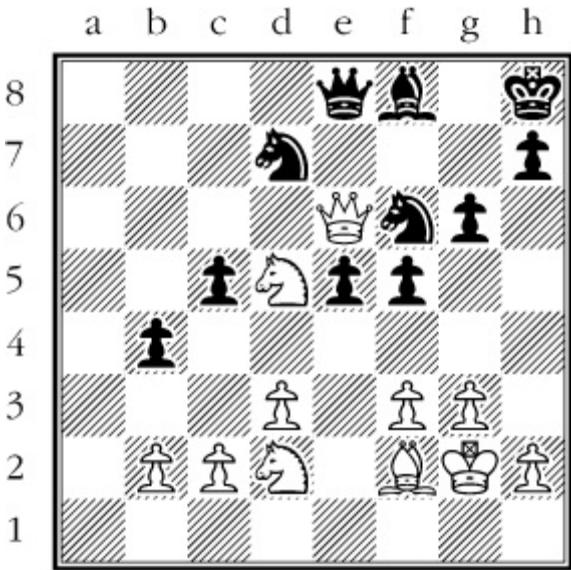
52...a2 53 ♜e1 ♞c2 White resigns.

This is one of the most incredible knight manoeuvres I've ever seen. Remember, it travelled from h4-f5-d6-b5-c3-b5-a3-c2-d4-c2. Five of these moves were gained with tempo thanks to threats on the king, rook and bishop, not to mention the fact that the knight liquidated all the pawns on the queenside and still managed to control the f-pawn.

27

Vukić – Karpov

Bugojno 1978

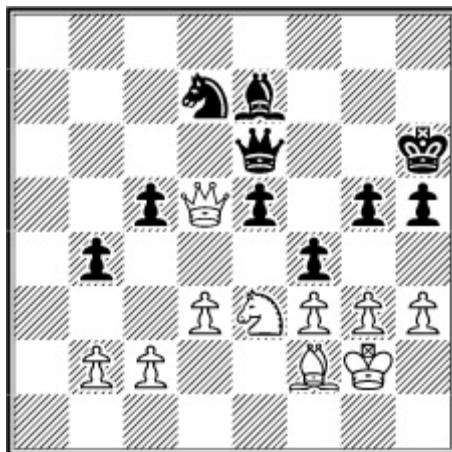


White to move

33 ♜c6?

White overlooked that 33 ♜c7!! wins a pawn by force after 33...♝xe6 (33...♝d8 34 ♜a6! and there is nothing Black can do to prevent 35 ♜b3 winning the pawn on c5.) 34 ♜xe6 ♜e7 35 ♜b3 and the c5-pawn falls.

33...♝xd5 34 ♜xd5 ♜b6 35 ♜b7 ♜e6 36 ♜a6 ♜d6 37 ♜b3 ♜d7 38 ♜b7 ♜e7 39 ♜a5 ♜e6 40 ♜c4 ♜g7 41 ♜f1 g5! 42 ♜g2 h5 43 h3 ♜h6 44 ♜e3 f4! 45 ♜d5?



45 ♜d5 would keep alive some winning chances. After the text move it's a draw.

45... $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $fxg3!$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 48 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 49 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$
 50 c3 bxc3 51 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 52 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 53 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 54 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 55
 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ 56 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $exf4$ 57 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ Draw

28

Mamedyarov – Karjakin Gashimov Memorial 2016

(1 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 b6 3 d4 e6 4 g3 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 5 b3 $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c6 8
 e4 d5 9 exd5 cxd5 10 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 11 o-o $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 13
 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5)



White to move

18 $\mathbb{Q}b8!$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$

18... $\mathbb{Q}d8?$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ and Black has problems with the weaknesses on d5 and c6.

19 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$

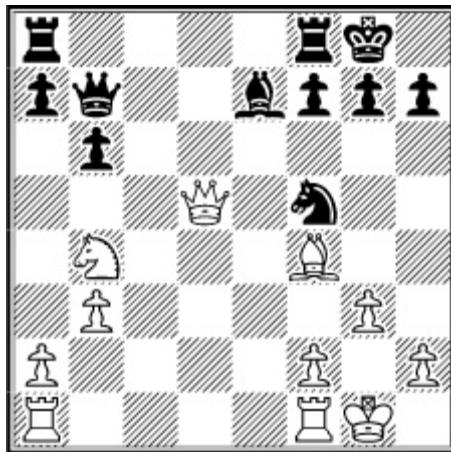
Another idea is 19...g6 20 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}g7$.

20 $\mathbb{Q}a6!$

White has completed a very beautiful and rare V-manoeuvre which is most

common in the endgame of knight and bishop versus a lone king. It's very unusual that a knight resembles a billiard ball. Here it bounces against both sides of the board, first b8 and then a6. Less original would have been 20 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 21 ♜b5+ ♜f8 22 ♜c6 ♜c5 23 ♜e5 ♜d8 24 ♜ac1 a6 25 ♜d3 h5 followed by 26...♜h6 and Black has no problems.

20...o-o 21 ♜b4 d4 22 ♜xd4 ♜f5 23 ♜d5



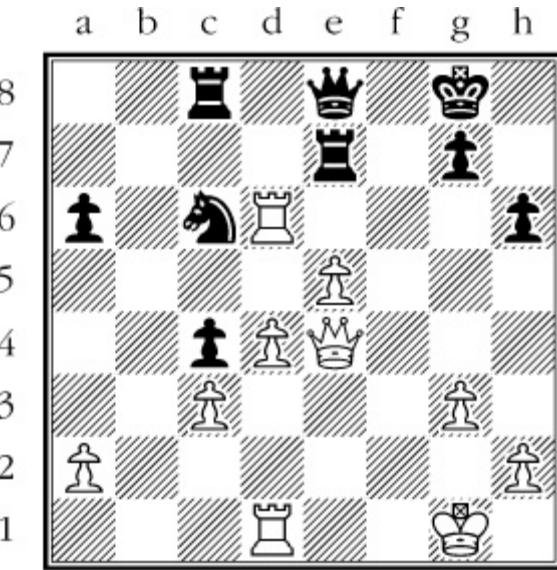
23...♜xd5

If Black avoids the exchange of queens by 23...♝c8? White can return his knight to the c6-square by 24 ♜c6!, thereby completing a c6-b8-a6-b4-c6 manoeuvre in the shape of a cut diamond. This is incredibly rare and proof of Mamedyarov's high creative ability because this manoeuvre was in no way forced.

24 ♜xd5 ♜c5 25 ♜ad1 ♜fd8 26 ♜c7 ♜e8 27 ♜f4 ♜ed8 28 ♜c7 ♜e8 29 ♜f4

Here the players agreed a draw in a completely equal position. This was a so-called “correct” game in which neither of the players made a mistake. However, due to Mamedyarov's highly original play this short draw is well worth knowing and studying. Naturally we will be vigilant and keep an eye on what Mamedyarov's knights have in store in the future!

Miezis – Volkov
Stockholm 2020



Black to move

26...♞a7!

A very elegant knight manoeuvre in the style of Kramnik, who also likes to exploit squares on the edge of the board. Both the a7- and b5-squares are pretty unusual springboards for the knight but the reason is that the c3-pawn is a tactical weakness which Black wants to exploit.

27 ♜xa6 ♞b5 28 ♜c1

In this position one might say that Black plays with three major pieces against two, since the c1-rook is occupied with defending the c3-pawn. Here we see one fundamental drawback of having three pawns versus a knight. White doesn't have enough activity to maintain the balance in the position.

28...♚h8?

Here there is an illuminating variation showing the fragile defence of the white king: 28...♚h5! 29 ♜d5+ ♚f7 30 ♜xb5?. Black then has three winning moves: 30...♜g5, 30...♜f3 and 30...♜e2.

29 a4 ♞c7 30 ♜c6 ♞e6 31 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 32 h4

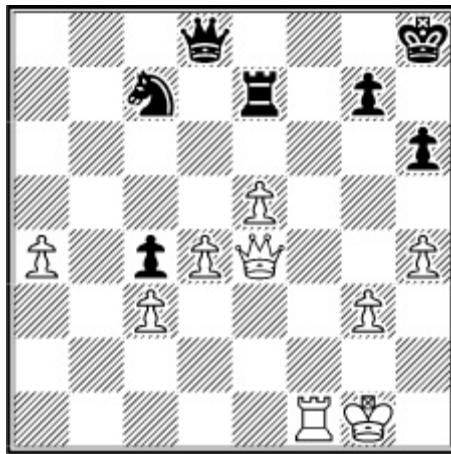
White has managed to take away the b5- and the g5-squares from Black's

versatile knight.

32...♞c7 33 ♜f1

White cannot expand his classical centre since 33 d5! is met by the decisive 33...♚h3! and all White's weak pawns are in jeopardy.

33...♛d8!



The d5-square is now in Black's possession. The position remains balanced since Black didn't exploit his chances on the 28th move, although in practice White's position is more difficult to play. It cannot have been easy for Miezis to make the correct decision with little time on the clock, so it's perfectly understandable that his position collapses. Black has three pieces against Black's two and White's passers are under full control.

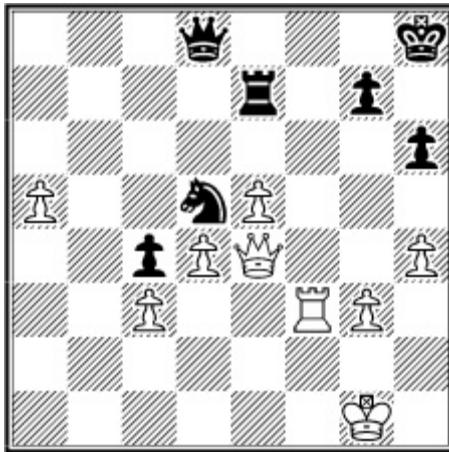
34 a5?

There is a narrow, relatively forced variation to draw. With little time or inclination to calculate, White could calmly play 34 ♜b1 ♞d5 35 ♜f3 and the game is mutually balanced after a further 36 ♜b5, which forces the knight to temporarily abandon the strong blockading square on d5. The relatively forced variation requires precise calculation to the end: 34 ♜g6 ♞d5 35 ♜f7! ♜xf7 36 ♜xf7 ♛xc3 37 ♜xc4 ♜xd4+ 38 ♜xd4 ♛e2+ 39 ♜f2 ♛xd4 40 ♜e3 ♜b3 41 ♜e4 ♛c5 42 ♜f5 ♛xa4 43 e6 ♛g8 44 ♜g6 ♛f8 45 e7+ ♛xe7 46 ♛xg7.

This variation clearly shows Miezis' precarious situation and it's not easy

to go right into the jungle of variations and correctly evaluate all the different stepping-stones.

34...♞d5 35 ♜f3

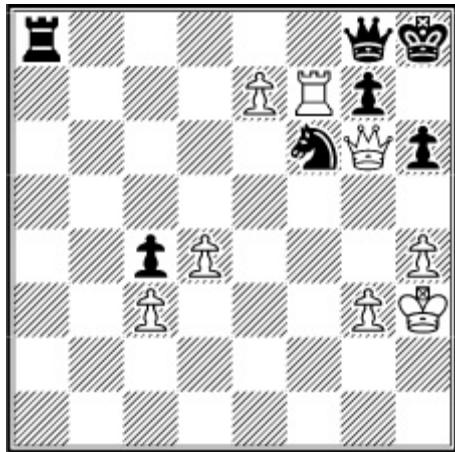


35...♝a7

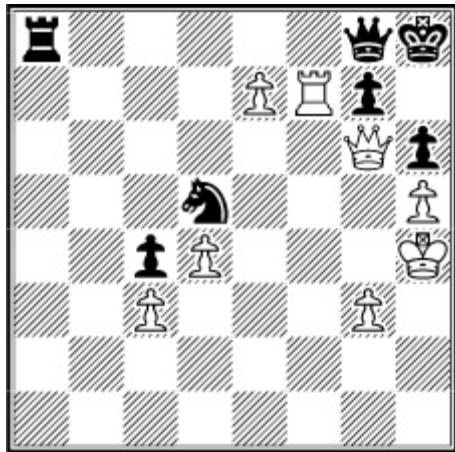
A cooler way to win the a-pawn was $35\dots\ddot{\text{g}}8\ 36\ \text{a}6\ \ddot{\text{e}}6\ 37\ \text{a}7\ \ddot{\text{a}}6$ but I guess a lot of time would have been required to find and play such a variation.

36 ♜e2?

This is also a position where it's easy to go wrong. White has to be active and play $36\ \text{e}6!$. It's such an amazing variation that extra diagrams are required so the true chess lover doesn't miss what shouldn't be missed.
 $36\dots\ddot{\text{x}}\text{a}5\ (36\dots\ddot{\text{f}}6\ 37\ \ddot{\text{e}}5)\ 37\ \ddot{\text{f}}7\ \ddot{\text{a}}1+\ 38\ \ddot{\text{h}}2\ \ddot{\text{a}}2+\ 39\ \ddot{\text{h}}3\ \ddot{\text{f}}6\ 40\ \ddot{\text{g}}6\ \ddot{\text{g}}8\ 41\ \text{e}7\ \ddot{\text{a}}8$



42 h5!! Amazingly this is the only move to win and at first sight it can be difficult to understand why it's so important to protect the queen with a pawn. Let's continue the variation. A waiting move like 42... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ (42... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}h4!!$



...is another incredible move and besides it's the only move which wins. Black is in zugzwang. Unbelievable but true: any moves by the rook or the knight lose. 43... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ [If 43... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ with treble threats on d5, b8 and f8 or 43... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}f5$] 44 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}d6!!$ with double threats on b8 and f8.) is met by 43 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $gxf6$ 44 d5!!.. Here one can really talk about "the pawn's lust to expand" to use Nimzowitsch's famous words or Philidor's that "the pawns are the soul of the game." 44... $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ (44... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 47 e8 $\mathbb{Q}+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 48 $\mathbb{Q}xe8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 49 $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ and the f6-pawn falls as well.) 45 h x g6 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 46 d6 and the d-pawn promotes on d8 thanks to the g6-pawn which controls the important f7-square. It's really beautiful!

46... $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 47 d7 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 48 d8 \mathbb{Q} etc.

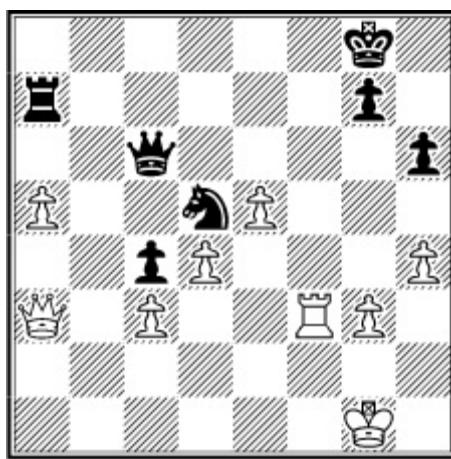
36... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}f1?$

Logical was 37 $\mathbb{Q}a2?$ but here this error was due to time pressure.

37... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Volkov misses yet another good chance to activate his queen with 38... $\mathbb{Q}g4$.

39 $\mathbb{Q}a3$



When I visited this game for the second time during the Rilton Cup 2019/20 this was the precise position. I was surprised at what had happened, since I thought that White had played a dynamic game which should have been rewarded with more than this position. It is not necessary to analyse the check on f8 because Black can play the pragmatic...

39... $\mathbb{Q}a8$

...and be happy because White cannot conjure up anything dangerous.

40 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ h5

Volkov overlooks a strong queen move for the third time in the game. 40... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ followed by 41... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ would have been devastating for White's position.

41 $\mathbb{Q}d6$

Miezis has seen the strong queen move and decides to reluctantly concede to an exchange of queens, but the reality is that Black's queen is far stronger than White's.

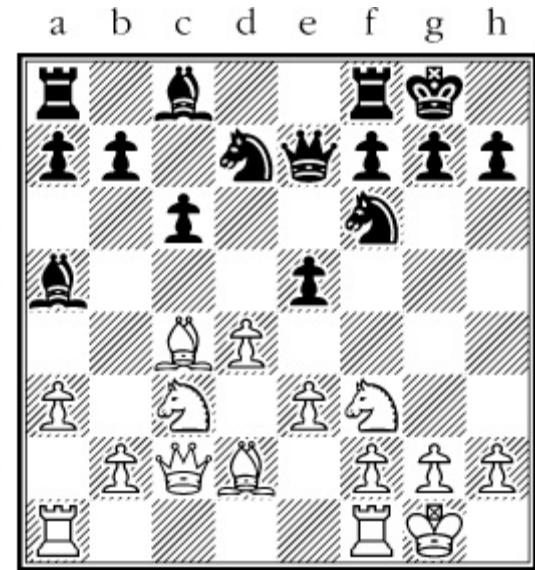
41... \mathbb{Q} xd6 42 exd6 \mathbb{Q} xa5 43 d7 \mathbb{Q} a8 44 \mathbb{Q} f5 \mathbb{Q} f6 45 \mathbb{Q} c5 \mathbb{Q} xd7 46 \mathbb{Q} xc4 \mathbb{Q} a2+ 47 \mathbb{Q} g1 \mathbb{Q} f6 48 \mathbb{Q} c8+ \mathbb{Q} f7 49 \mathbb{Q} c7+ \mathbb{Q} g6 50 c4 \mathbb{Q} c2 51 c5 \mathbb{Q} d2 White resigns.

30

Botvinnik – Euwe

World Championship Tournament, The Hague/Moscow 1948

(1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 \mathbb{Q} f3 \mathbb{Q} f6 4 \mathbb{Q} c3 c6 5 e3 \mathbb{Q} bd7 6 \mathbb{Q} d3 \mathbb{Q} b4 7 a3 \mathbb{Q} a5 8 \mathbb{Q} c2 \mathbb{Q} e7 9 \mathbb{Q} d2 dxcc4 10 \mathbb{Q} xc4 e5 11 o-o o-o)



White to move

12 \mathbb{Q} a2!!

According to the Russian GM Vladimir Simagin (1919-1968) this retreating move is winning for White because there are no satisfactory replies for Black. Although it's a prophylactic idea of the highest order it is somewhat of an exaggeration to say that it's winning, despite being a very cunning and strong move. Black's main strategic plan is the ...e5-e4 advance but at the

moment 12...e4 isn't possible due to the tactical resource 13 ♜xe4, as Black's bishop is unprotected. In the game Botvinnik played 12 ♜ae1 and commented that it was "a cunning move, since it is not easy for Black to find a satisfactory reply." However, in reality this set-up is rather routine, since White is placing his rooks in the manner of Morphy. The plan is to support the advance of the e- and f-pawns but it isn't new as Alekhine demonstrated in his game against Bogoljubow in Budapest 1921. 12...♝c7! Black prepares ...e5-e4 which White obviously has to prevent. 13 ♜e4 ♜xe4 14 ♛xe4 a5! This move prevents White from playing ♜d2-b4. Black position is fine, though Botvinnik nevertheless won after only 32 moves.

12...♝xc3

The best defence according to the computer. Alternatives were:

(a) 12...a6, preparing 13...♝c7, looks logical, albeit slow. White can play the useful 13 h3 and after 13...♝c7 decide whether to play 14 ♜ae1 in the style of Morphy and Alekhine or continue with normal development by 14 ♜ad1 followed by 15 ♜fe1. White is clearly better in both cases.

(b) According to Dvoretsky in *Positional Play* Black's only reasonable move appears to be 12...♝c7 but after 13 ♜b5 ♜b6 14 ♜b4 c5 15 dxc5 ♜xc5 16 ♜fd1 White's position is overwhelming.

(c) 12...♝d8 is simplest and best met by 13 ♜ad1 with a superior position.

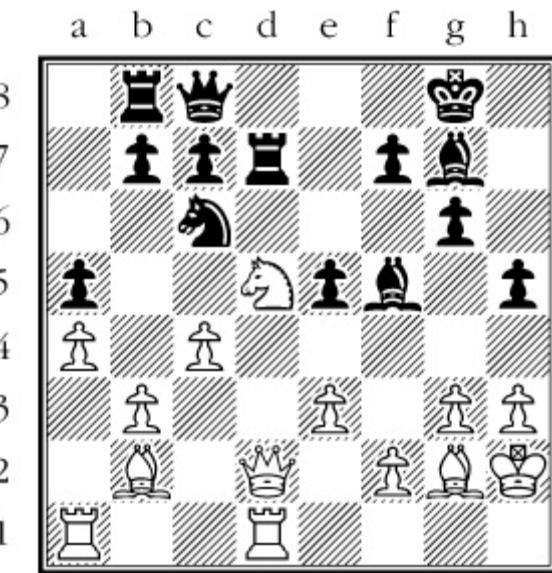
13 ♜xc3 exd4 14 ♜xd4 ♛e4 15 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 16 ♜e1.

As we will learn from Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Budapest 1921, exercise 53, this is clearly an advantageous position for White because he has the possibility of setting up a strong central structure with f2-f3 and e3-e4. White has the bishop pair which will dominate the board thanks to the open centre.

It should be mentioned that the prophylactic move 12 ♜a2!! made a deep impression on Mark Dvoretsky, because it taught him to sense the power and beauty of quiet positional moves.

Polugaevsky – Lutikov
 USSR Championship, Kharkov 1967

(1 c4 e5 2 ♜c3 ♜c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♜g2 ♜g7 5 e3 d6 6 ♜ge2 ♜f6 7 d4 o-o 8 o-o ♜d7 9 h3 a6 10 b3 ♜b8 11 a4 a5 12 ♜b2 ♜e8 13 ♜d2 h5 14 dxе5 dxе5 15 ♜fd1 ♜c8 16 ♜h2 ♜d8 17 ♜d5 ♜f5 18 ♜ec3 ♜d7 19 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 20 ♜d5 ♜g7)



White to move

21 ♜c3!

White plans to set up a battery on the long dark diagonal with ♜b2 and then follow it up with an overprotection of the d5-knight by doubling rooks on the d-file. After this White can consider the central breakthrough f2-f4.

21...♛d8

The queen is better placed on f8 in order to protect the bishop on g7 and prepare the development of the rook to d8.

22 ♜b2 ♜e6 23 f4?

23 ♜d2 followed by 24 ♜ad1 was more logical as it accentuates the activity of his pieces and retains options such as a timely ♜f4.

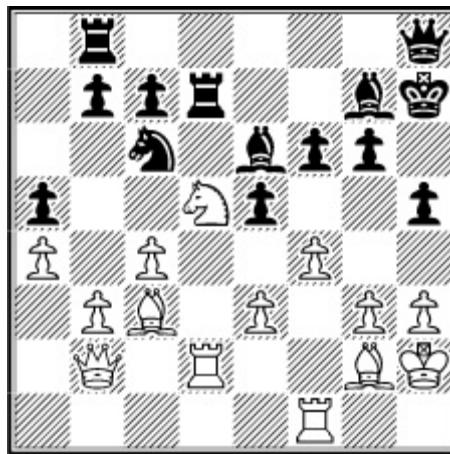
23...f6?

Black plays too passively: 23...h4! 24 g4 ♜b4! would have given Black counterplay. The idea is to meet 25 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 26 ♜xe5 with 26...♜xd5 27 cxd5 ♜c2 28 ♜ac1 ♜e7 and the e3-pawn falls.

24 ♜d2 ♜h7 25 ♜f1

25 ♜ad1! was the right place for the rook.

25...♜h8



26 fxe5

The computer suggests the ingenious pawn break 26 g4!! hxg4 27 hxg4 followed by ♜g3 so as to exploit the uncomfortable “married couple” on the h-file.

**26...♜xe5 27 ♜f4 ♜xd2 28 ♜xd2 ♜d8 29 ♜e2 ♜e8 30 ♜xa5 b6
31 ♜c3 f5 32 e4!**

A very strong and decisive central breakthrough.

32...h4 33 gxh4 ♜c8 34 exf5 ♜xf5 35 ♜e1 ♜d7 36 h5!

36 ♜xe5 would be met by 36...♜e8.

36...♜d3

Despair!

37 hxg6+ ♜xg6 38 ♜xg6 ♜xe1 39 ♜h5+ ♜h6 40 ♜e4 Black resigns.

32

Geller – Andersson

London 1982

1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 e6 6 ♜e2 ♜e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 f4 ♜c6 9 ♜e3 e5 (The Modern Scheveningen) 10 ♜b3 exf4 11 ♜xf4 ♜e8 12 ♜d2



Black to move

12...♝f6

Andersson's ingenious idea is to put the bishop on e5 and follow with ...♝e8-f6. The centralised bishop will exert pressure on h2 and on the c3-knight, which makes the e4-pawn a target for Black's knight on e8. Note that it's cleverer to have the bishop on e5 rather than the knight because the c6-knight is busy marking the b3-knight so it cannot reach the dream d4 square.

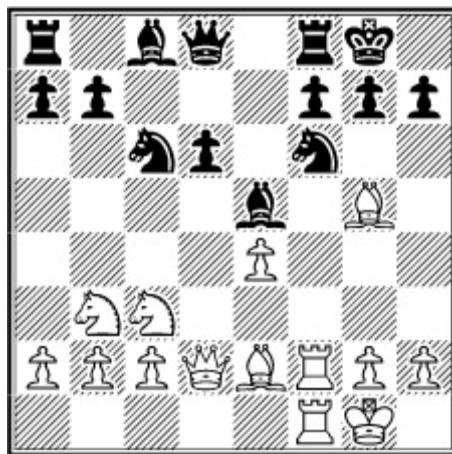
13 ♜f2

In the game Mortensen – Tisdall, Gausdal 1982, White preferred a more centralised strategy with the rooks by 13 ♜ff1 ♜e5 14 ♜d4 ♜f6 15 h3 ♜xd4 16 ♜xd4 ♜e6 17 ♜ad1 ♜c8 with equal play.

13...♝e5

The bishop is like a rock on e5!

14 ♜g5 ♛f6 15 ♜af1?



Geller overlooks a tactical idea. Correct was 15 ♜f3 to defend the e4-pawn.

15... ♜xc3! 16 ♜xc3 ♛xe4 17 ♜xd8 ♜xc3 18 bxc3 ♜xd8 19 ♜d1 ♜e6 20 ♜xd6 ♜c8

Andersson has transformed the active bishop on e5 to a superior pawn structure. He went on to win the game after 49 moves:

21 ♜d3 ♜e8 22 ♜e3 ♜f8 23 ♜b5 ♜e7 24 ♜d2 ♜ec7 25 ♜e2 a6 26 ♜f3 ♜e7 27 ♜dd3 g6 28 ♜d4 ♜f6 29 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 30 ♜g4 ♜e7 31 ♜xe6 fxe6 32 ♜h3 h5 33 ♜hg3 ♜g8 34 ♜f2 ♜c5 35 ♜e2

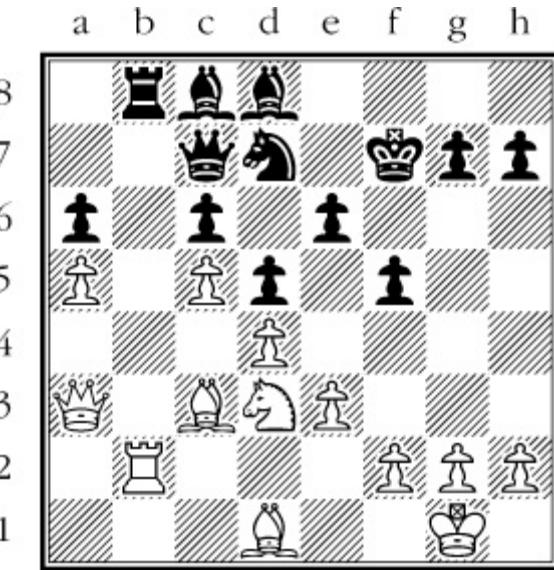
35 ♜d4 ♜gc8 36 ♜xg6 ♜xc3 also loses a pawn.

35... ♜a5 36 ♜d2 ♜xa2 37 ♜d4 ♜a5 38 c4 ♜c5 39 ♜b3 ♜b8 40 ♜g3 g5 41 ♜gd3 ♜f6 42 h3 ♜bc8 43 ♜f3+ ♜e7 44 ♜b3 b5 45 cxb5 ♜xc2+ 46 ♜d3 ♜xg2 47 ♜e4 ♜d8+ 48 ♜c4 ♜c2+ 49 ♜b4 ♜b8
White resigns.

33

Steinitz – Chigorin
World Championship Havana (20) 1892

1 ♘f3 d5 2 d4 ♘f6 3 e3 e6 4 c4 ♘e7 5 ♘c3 ♘bd7 6 c5 c6 7 b4 o-o 8 ♘b2
 ♘c7 9 ♘e2 ♘e8 10 o-o f5 11 ♘c2 ♘ef6 12 a4 ♘e4 13 b5 ♘f6 14 a5 ♘xc3 15
 ♘xc3 a6 16 bxa6 bxa6 17 ♘fb1 ♘f8 18 ♘b2 ♘b7 19 ♘ab1 ♘fb8 20 ♘e1
 ♘c8 21 ♘d3 ♘xb2 22 ♘xb2 ♘f6 23 ♘a4 ♘f7 24 ♘a3 ♘d8 25 ♘d1 ♘b8



White to move

26 ♘b6!

Staunton's famous positional exchange sacrifice 29...♘c4 against Saint-Amant in the 21st unofficial world championship game (Paris 1843) can be regarded as the original archetype of the so called "Russian exchange". It bears a striking resemblance to Petrosian's 30...♘c4!! against Spassky, in the 27th world championship game (Moscow 1969) which suggested to Raymond Keene that they be called "astrally related" in his book *Howard Staunton - the English world chess champion* (B.C.M. 1975). Nearly fifty years after Staunton's positional discovery Steinitz managed to exploit the outpost on b6 with an exchange sacrifice and upset the static values of the pieces from a positional and long-term perspective.

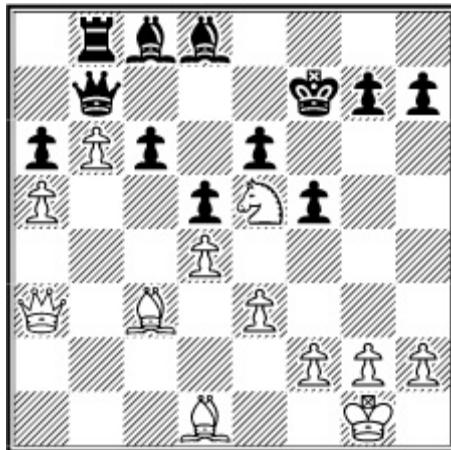
26... ♘xb6

Otherwise the pressure on the a6- and the c6-pawn would be unbearable after moves such as ♘d1-e2 and ♘d3-b4.

27 cxb6!

By recapturing away from the centre White secures the a3-f8 diagonal as well as the c5-square.

27... ♜b7 28 ♞e5+



Note that the knight is stronger than the rook so the normal values of the pieces are not valid here, which is a fact Steinitz was fully aware of since he wrote in *The Modern Chess Instructor* that a rook is a little stronger than a knight and two pawns. According to another authority, Staunton's "Handbook", the knight is worth 3.05 and the rook 5.48, which signifies an enormous difference in mobility. In this position it's clearly seen that the knight is a monster whereas the rook is pretty useless and below its normal strength. This marked difference in mobility is the main reason why a long-term concept like the positional exchange sacrifice works.

28... ♜g8 29 ♞a4 ♜e7

After 29... ♜e7 30 ♜b4 or 29... ♜d7 30 ♜d6 White benefits from the dark-squared a3-f8 diagonal.

30 ♜b4 ♜f6 31 ♜c3 h6 32 ♜d6 ♜xb6

This move proves the rook's true value!

33 axb6 ♜xb6 34 ♜xc6 ♜d8 35 ♜c5 ♜c7 36 ♜g6 ♜h7 37 ♜e7 ♜d7 38 ♜xd8 ♜xc6 39 ♜xc6 ♜xd8 40 ♜f8+ ♜g8 41 ♜xe6 **Black resigns.**

The exchange sacrifice wasn't the order of the day in the 19th century. We

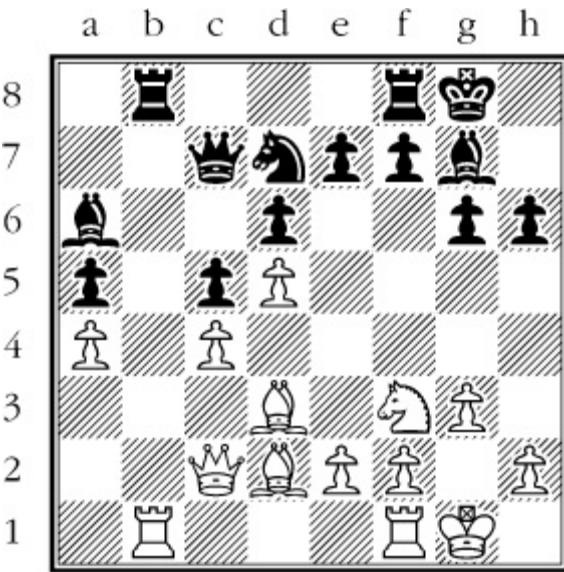
had to await a further development of classical conceptions of strategy. It was Alekhine and especially players who represented the Russian school, who placed the emphasis on dynamic chess and made the exchange sacrifice an accepted and consistent weapon in their games.

34

Selezniev – Alekhine

Triberg 1921

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ b6 3 g3 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ d6 5 o-o $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ h6 7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c5 8 d5 b5 9 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ a6 10 a4 b4 11 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ g6 13 c4 bxc3 14 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 16 c4 o-o 17 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ a5! (Note how Black is preparing the following exchange sacrifice.) 18 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d3$



Black to play

20... $\mathbb{Q}b4!!$

Alekhine writes that the exchange sacrifice is “absolutely correct. The strong passed pawn thus resulting, supported by the bishop on g7, and the possibilities of attack on White’s c4-pawn are, on the whole, worth more than the exchange.” Apart from Staunton and Steinitz, who were too far ahead of their time to be properly understood by their contemporaries, Alekhine was

one of the forerunners of the “Russian exchange sacrifice” before Botvinnik and Petrosian used this brilliant concept repeatedly in their heydays.

In his book *The Development of Chess Style* (1978) Euwe writes that “very long-range sacrifices of the exchange seem to occur more frequently in Russia than anywhere else.” What is interesting though is that here Alekhine, like Steinitz and Staunton, carried it out on the queenside but one square further back if compared with Steinitz’s $\mathbb{R}b6$ and one rank further to the side if compared with Staunton’s ... $\mathbb{R}c4$. Obviously it matters how deep the rook is penetrating the position and how much impact it has on the small central area of the board.

21 $\mathbb{R}xb4$

If the enemy rook is left untouched Black can follow up with ... $\mathbb{R}fb8$ and ... $\mathbb{R}b2$.

21...cxb4

The b-file is now closed, which limits the value of the white rooks and at the same time secures Black control of the strong c5-square for his pieces.

22 $\mathbb{R}d2 \mathbb{R}c5$

It was more logical to maintain the pressure on c4 by 22... $\mathbb{R}c8$ followed by a possible 23... $\mathbb{R}b6$. The text move focuses on the a4-pawn and plans 23... $\mathbb{R}d7$.

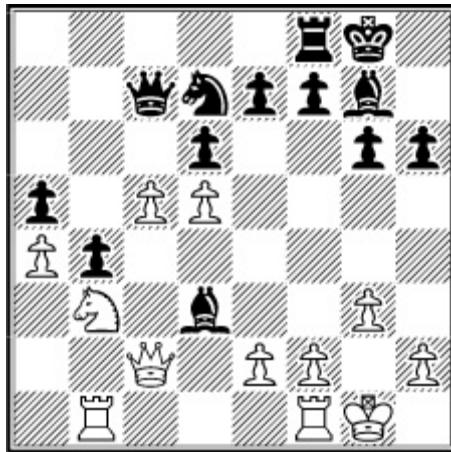
23 $\mathbb{R}b3!$ $\mathbb{R}d7$

23... $\mathbb{R}xa4$? is answered by the strong 24 $\mathbb{R}a2!$ $\mathbb{R}c3$ 25 $\mathbb{R}xa5$ $\mathbb{R}xa5$ 26 $\mathbb{R}xa5$ $\mathbb{R}xb1$ 27 $\mathbb{R}xb1$ $\mathbb{R}b8$ 28 $\mathbb{R}c6$ and White wins the b4-pawn.

24 c5

White utilises the time to rid himself of his weak pawn.

24... $\mathbb{R}xd3$



25 exd3

The strongest recapture according to Alekhine. Against 25... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ Black would have retorted 25... $\mathbb{N}xc5$. Alekhine had actually planned the inferior 25... $dxc5$ in the belief that the passed pawns would decide the game, but it's not so simple after 26 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ when White is even slightly on top.

25...dxc5 26 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{N}e5?$

Simpler was 26... $\mathbb{N}f6$, because the f3-square is easy to control and the knight needs to protect the c5-pawn.

27 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8?$

It was better to admit the mistake and return with the knight. The point is that after 27... $\mathbb{N}d7$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ Black continues 28... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ and the d5-pawn falls.

28 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7?$

28... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ was still preferable.

29 d4?

Here White missed the very strong 29 $\mathbb{Q}e2!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 30 d4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 31 dxc5 with good winning chances.

29... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}e4?$

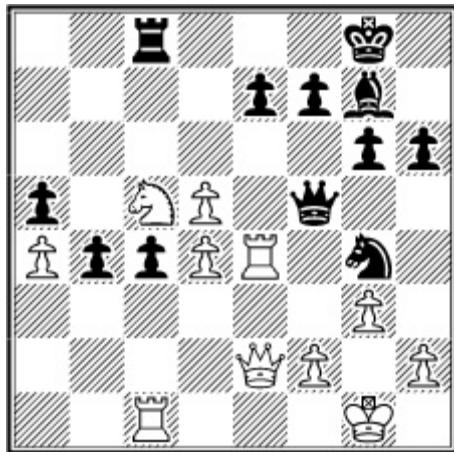
Necessary was 30 $\mathbb{Q}ee1$ c4 31 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ with mutual chances.

30...c4 31 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5!$

This is the reason e4 was a fatal square for the rook, because now White is

unable to capture on c4 due to the pressure on f2.

32 ♜e2



What is Black's strongest continuation?

32...b3?

Alekhine attached two exclamation marks to his move but the strongest continuation was the harder-to-find 32...♝xf2!! 33 ♜xf2 ♜xd5. Despite the fact that Black has only three pawns against White's rook the pawns turn out to be stronger. This is clearly evident after the further 34.♜ce1 c3! when Black plans either 35...f5, 35...c2 or 35...b3. What dynamic pawns!

33 ♜xg4

Alekhine claims that Black has the advantage after 33 ♜xg4 b2 34 ♜b1 ♜xg4 35 ♜xg4 c3 36 ♜d3 ♜c4 37 ♜xb2! ♜b4! 38 ♜e4 ♜f8? (38...cxb2 was correct with enough compensation for the exchange.) but he overlooked 39 d6!! with the idea 39...exd6? 40 ♜be1 ♜xd4 41 ♜d3 and White wins.

33...b2 34 ♜xb2 ♜xg4 35 ♜xc4 h5 36 ♜c2?

The correct defence was 36 h4, intending to meet 36...g5 with 37 hxg5 h4 38 ♜b3 ♜xd4 39 ♜d3 with equal play.

36...h4 37 ♜d3 ♜d8! 38 f3 ♜h5 39 ♜e4 hxg3 40 hxg3 ♜g5 41 ♜g2?

41 ♜f2! ♜d2+ 42 ♜e2 with the idea 42...♝xd4+ 43 ♜f1 was a better

defence.

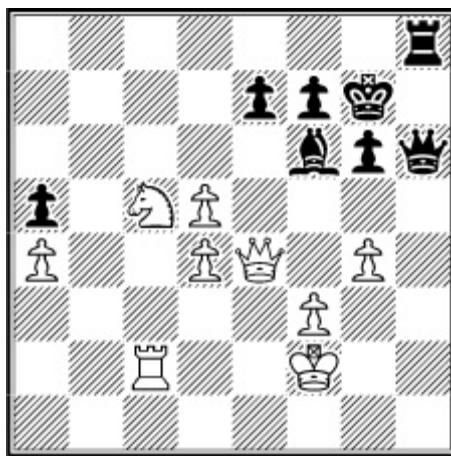
41... ♜d2+ 42 ♜h3 ♜f6!

Alekhine: “In order to occupy the h-file with the rook: the only means of securing the win.”

43 ♜c2 ♜h6+ 44 ♜g2 ♜g7 45 g4

45 f4!.

45... ♜h8 46 ♜f2!



46... ♜b8

Alekhine gives this move two exclaims and it's good enough, but 46... ♜h1! would have focused directly on the king and made more use of the rook's dynamic capability on the h-file (h2 or perhaps later on h1). However Alekhine's focus is first to liquidate the pawn on d4, which is the central heart of White's position, by manoeuvring the rook to the outpost on b4.

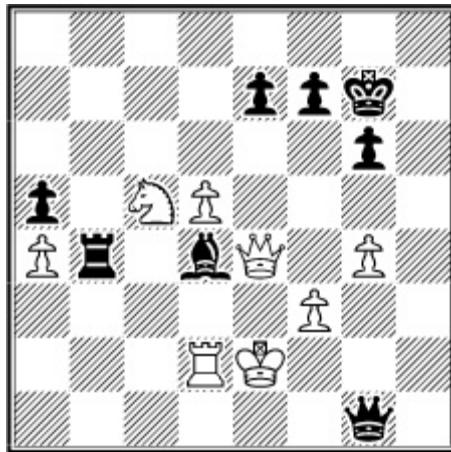
47 ♜e2 ♜b4

Note that this is the same square where the earlier exchange sacrifice took place. It's pretty clear that Alekhine plays artistically rather than using brute force to checkmate the opposing king or win an abundance of material. It's all about colours and exploiting the vital black squares.

48 ♜d2 ♜h2+ 49 ♜e3

If 49 ♜d3 then 49... ♜g1!.

49... ♜g1+ 50 ♜e2 ♜xd4



Not only have the flanks fallen apart but also the centre, thereby leaving White in a completely resignable position.

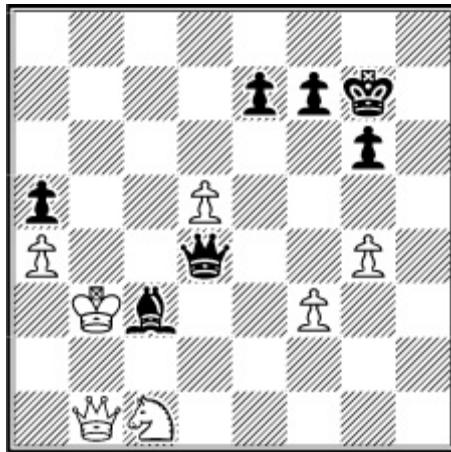
51 ♜d3 ♜b1

Alekhine gives 51... ♜c3! 52 ♜xb4 ♜g2+ as immediately decisive.

52 ♜c1! ♜c3

Unnecessarily prolonging the game when Black could have won in short order by relatively easy means after 52... ♜f2+ 53 ♜d3 ♜f1+! 54 ♜e2 (54 ♜xd4 ♜b4+) 54... ♜b3+ 55 ♜xd4 (55 ♜c4 ♜b4+ 56 ♜d3 ♜b1+ 57 ♜c2 ♜d1+ 58 ♜d2 ♜b3+ 59 ♜c3 ♜xc3!) 55... ♜a1+! 56 ♜c5 ♜a3+ etc.

53 ♜xb1 ♜g2+ 54 ♜d3 ♜xd2+ 55 ♜c4 ♜d4+ 56 ♜b3



56... ♜ a1!

It was this nice bishop manoeuvre that attracted Alekhine when playing
52... ♜ c3.

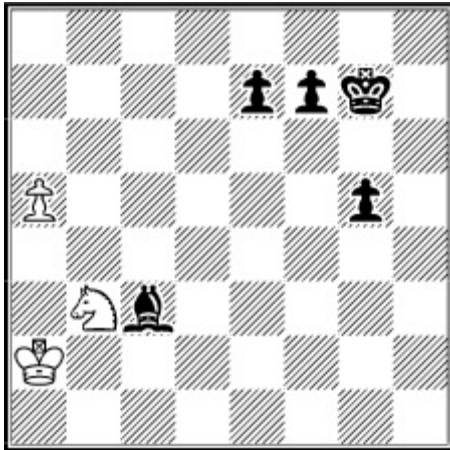
57 ♜ a3

57 ♜ a2? leads to the amusing 57... ♜xa4 mate.

57... ♜c5+ 58 ♜a2 ♜f6

There is no way to defend the d5-pawn due to the sad placement of the knight.

**59 g5 ♜xd5+ 60 ♜b3 ♜xg5 61 ♜e1 ♜g2+ 62 ♜d2 ♜xf3 63 ♜xa5
g5 64 ♜e1 ♜c3 65 ♜xc3 ♜xc3 66 a5**



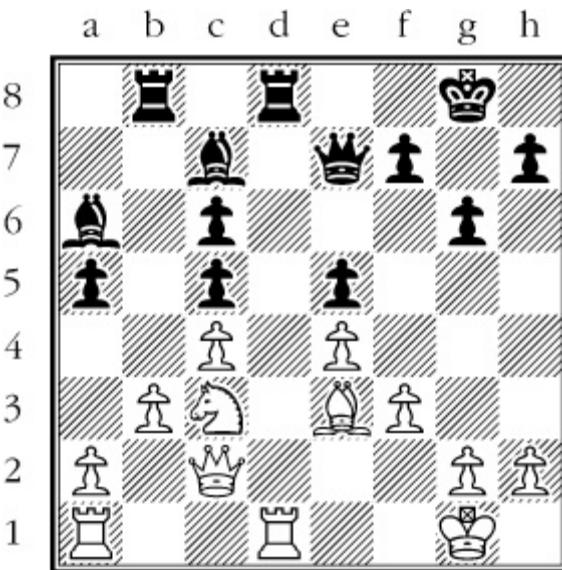
66... ♜xa5!

The main track of the exchange sacrifice is still visible, especially the play on the dark squares on the queenside where White's pieces have been enticed and stranded.

**67 ♜xa5 g4 68 ♜c4 g3 69 ♜d2 ♜g6 70 ♜b2 ♜f5 71 ♜f3 ♜f4 72
♜g1 ♜e3 73 ♜c2 ♜f2 74 ♜h3+ ♜f1 White resigns.**

Alekhine: A very difficult and interesting game in all its phases.

Liublinsky – Botvinnik
Moscow Championship 1943



Black to move

25...♝d4!

Botvinnik's splendid positional sacrifice is displayed in the central area of the chessboard.

He makes the following instructive comment on his successful Russian exchange sacrifice: "This sacrifice could not be delayed. It is possible only if Black retains one rook for the attack. After the exchange sacrifice Black's pawn chain is repaired, he obtains a passed pawn, the closed nature of the position deprives the white rooks of any activity, and what tells is no longer the material, but the positional advantage."

26 ♜e2

If White wants to accept the offer then 26 ♜xd4 should have been played, even though it would have given Black the bishop pair. After 26...cxd4 27 ♜a4 (or 27 ♜e2 followed by ♜c1-d3) 27...c5 28 ♜b2 the knight would have been much better placed on d3, where it effectively blockades the d4-pawn, compared with the future prospects of the bishop as seen in the game.

26...♝c8 27 ♜xd4

It was still possible to continue 27 ♜xd4 cxd4 28 ♜c1 c5 29 ♜d3 with an ideally placed knight on the d3 square.

27...cxd4 28 ♜f2

White should have played 28 ♜d2 because here it can support the two pawn breaks b3-b4 and f3-f4.

28...c5

Botvinnik: “White is completely without counterplay and is obliged to await the development of events.”

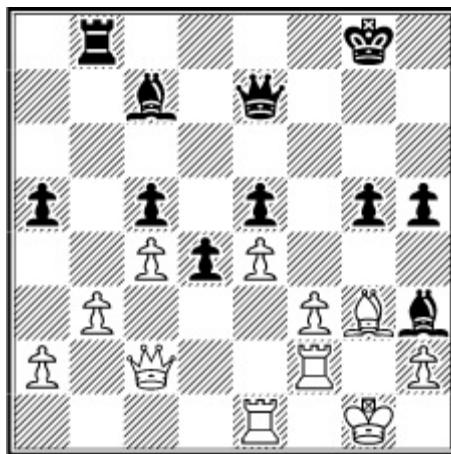
29 ♜f1 f5 30 ♜g3 ♜d7 31 ♜ae1

Botvinnik: “Of course, the exchange 31 exf5 gxf5 was dangerous, since in the end Black would have created two connected passed pawns in the centre. But now he gains the opportunity to restrict the enemy pieces still further and to launch an attack on the kingside.”

31...f4 32 ♜f2 g5 33 g4

Botvinnik: “A vain attempt to forestall the opponent’s assault, although to allow 33...g4 would have been even worse. Now the black pieces are free to take up their most active positions.”

33...fxg3 34 ♜xg3 ♜h3 35 ♜f2 h5



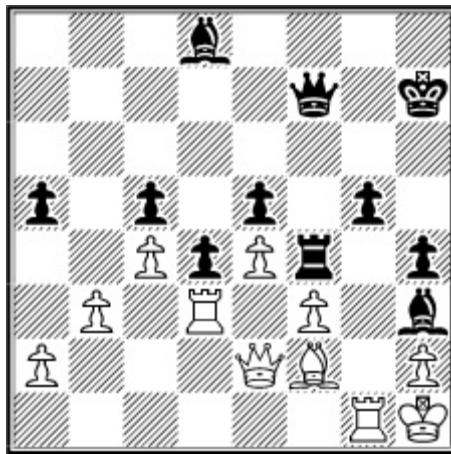
Black is utilising Steinitz’ method, which is applicable when playing with the bishop pair, and therefore restricts the action of the white bishop. It

would have been harder to limit a knight's radius of action on d3.

36 ♜d2?

A cleverer move was 36 ♜d3! because 36...h4? can be met by 37 ♜xe5! ♜xe5 38 f4 ♜xf4 39 ♜xh3, even though Black would have full compensation after 39...♜e5. This was White's best practical chance to hold the game.

36...h4 37 ♜f2 ♜f8 38 ♜d3 ♜f4 39 ♜h1 ♜h7 40 ♜g1 ♜d8 41 ♜e2 ♜f7



42 ♜d1

Botvinnik: "As was shown by home analysis (the game was adjourned) after 42 ♜e1 g4 43 fxg4 ♜xg4 44 ♜xg4 ♜xg4 45 ♜xg4 ♜f1+ 46 ♜g1 ♜xd3 47 ♜g4 ♜f1+ 48 ♜g1 ♜e2 the e4-pawn would have also been lost."

42...♜h5 43 ♜e3

Otherwise Black will decide the game with 43...g4.

43...♜xf3+

An alternative win was 43...dxe3 44 ♜xd8 ♜xf3+ 45 ♜xf3 ♜xf3 46 ♜dd1 g4 followed by a king march to f4.

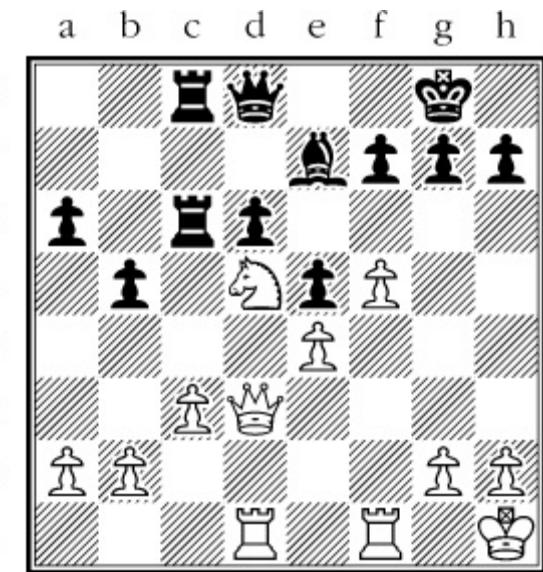
44 ♜xf3 ♜xf3 45 ♜xg5 ♜xd3 46 ♜xd8 ♜e3 47 ♜b6 ♜xe4 48 ♜xc5 ♜e2 49 ♜d1 ♜g4 50 h3 ♜xh3 51 b4 ♜f5 52 ♜d6 d3 53 bxa5 h3

This is a good practical model game showing how a rook and two bishops

can outperform two rooks and bishop when having a significant advantage in space.

36

Fischer – Gadia
Mar del Plata 1960



White to move

The move that one chooses to play in this particular position reveals whether you prefer tactical or positional play. Here Fischer played the amazing...

21 ♜a1!!

The idea is surprisingly to initiate play on the queenside. The mini-plan in itself isn't unusual since it's very common in the Spanish game to make a pawn-push to a4. However, it's unusual to first develop the rook to d1 and then go back to a1, especially when there are tempting possibilities on the kingside. To me this move is a clear sign of genius that Fischer valued the pawn break a2-a4 higher than the "obvious" f5-f6 which probably would have been played by most players, no matter what their level. 21 b4, followed by ♜a1 and a4, according to Nimzowitsch's concept that a weakness should be

blockaded before it is attacked, was also playable.

It's interesting and revealing (Fischer's favourite player by the way was Capablanca) that Fischer didn't play the natural attacking continuation 21 f6 ♜xf6 22 ♜xf6! gxf6 23. ♜f1 ♜h8 24 ♜h3. Black's strongest defence would then have been 24... ♜g8 25 ♜e7 ♜g5 26 ♜xc6! (26 ♜xc8 f5!) 26... ♜xc6 27 ♜d7 ♜c4 28 ♜xf7 ♜c8 but after 29 g3! Black would most likely succumb in a rook ending a pawn down, since the f6-pawn will fall.

Fischer might very well have seen this variation and opted for the clearer and safer text-move.

21...f6?

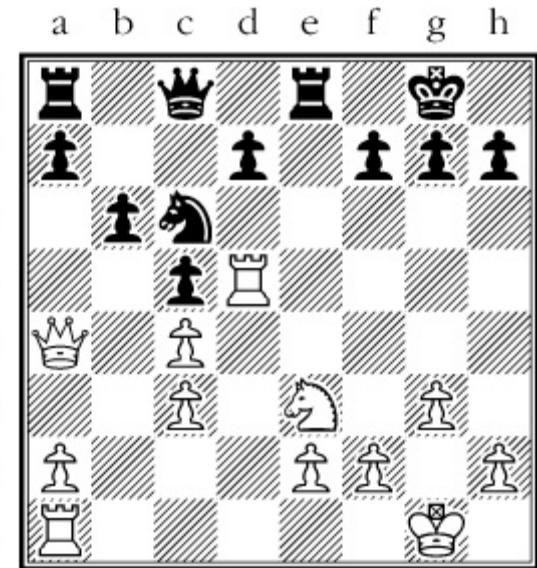
Black doesn't want to have to deal with the f5-f6-possibility and weakens the classic a2-g8 diagonal and seventh rank, as well as making his bishop even worse. Better was 21... ♜f6.

22 a4 ♜b8?

22...bxa4 23. ♜xa4 a5 was a better try but of course Black is clearly lost.

23 ♜xe7+ Black resigns.

The rook falls after 23... ♜xe7 24 ♜d5+. After the game Bronstein asked Fischer how come he had thought of that rook move. Fischer replied: "Tal moves his rooks back and forth, why can't I do the same?"



Black to move

White's last move was the knight transfer from g2 to e3 so the Black's reply must have come as an unpleasant surprise for Benko.

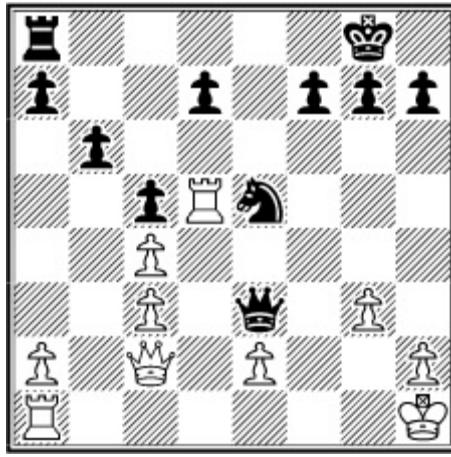
18... ♜xe3!

"A fully justified sacrifice" according to the tournament book and indeed so. Black eliminates the knight, which in the future might have been very strong on one of the squares d5 or f5. Now the game is transformed in such a way that Black has the upper hand, not least psychologically.

19 fxe3 ♕e8 20 ♔c2?!

20 ♔f2? ♕e4! followed by ... ♔e5 would have been very unpleasant for White. A plausible continuation might have been 21 ♔d1 ♕e5 22 ♜xe5. The only way to remove the monstrous knight but after 22... ♜xe5 White's disrupted kingside would be a serious problem with major pieces on the board, as well as the isolated pawns which would be difficult to defend. Best was 20 ♔d3 ♕e5 21 ♔d5 ♔g4 22 ♔d3! since 22... ♜xe3? wouldn't work on account of 23 ♔xd7.

20... ♜xe3+ 21 ♔h1 ♔e5



Thanks to the exchange sacrifice Black has a very nice outpost on e5, since the pawn move to f4 is no longer possible. This beautifully placed knight is reminiscent of the fifth game between Botvinnik and Petrosian in their world title match 1963. In that game Petrosian laid the foundations for winning the game by placing a so-called “eternal knight” on e4.

22 ♜f1 ♜e8 23 ♜f4 f6 24 ♛e4?

24 ♜d1 was better but Black has full compensation since the rooks don't have much play.

24...♞g6

White was hoping for 24...♝xc3? 25 ♜xd7! when he would be back in the game.

25 ♜xe3 ♜xe3 26 ♜xd7

26 ♜f2 ♜e5 and the monster is back on its ideal square. 26 ♜f3 ♜xe2 27 ♜xd7 ♜e5 28 ♜d8+ ♜f7 29 ♜f1 ♜xa2 and White loses in the long run. The super knight controls the important squares d7 as well as f3 so it's hard for White to double his rooks on the seventh rank.

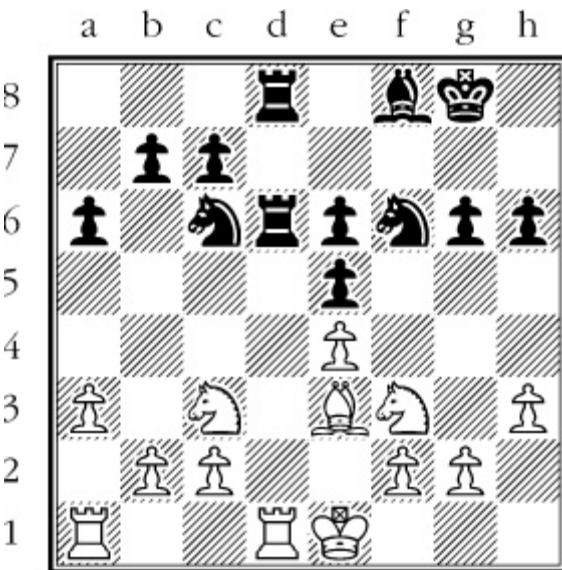
26...♝xf4 27 gxsf4 ♜xe2 28 ♜xa7 ♜f2 29 ♜b7 ♜xf4 30 ♜xb6 ♜xc4 31 ♜b3 ♜f7

Black wins the rook ending easily due to his more active position as well as the possibility of creating two connected passed pawns on the kingside. The remaining moves were:

32 ♕g2 g5 33 ♕f3 ♕e6 34 ♕a3 h5 35 ♕e2 ♕h4 36 ♕a6+ ♕e5 37
 a4 c4 38 ♕c6 ♕xh2+ 39 ♕e3 ♕h3+ 40 ♕d2 ♕d3+ 41 ♕c2 h4 42
 ♕xc4 ♕d8 White resigns.

38

Rozentalis – Ehlvest
 Koszalin 1998



White to move

18 ♕ac1!

A nice prophylactic move which prepares the doubling of the rooks on the d-file. An immediate 18 ♕d2 would have been less sophisticated due to 18...♕xd2 19 ♕xd2 ♕d4 and the c2-pawn would be unprotected.

18...b5 19 ♕d2 g5

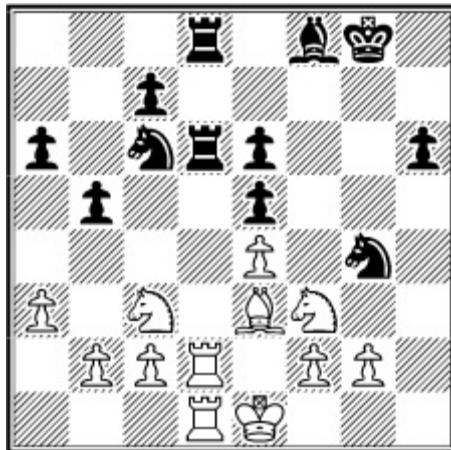
19...♕xd2 20 ♕xd2 ♕d4 21 ♕e2, followed by c2-c3, was another point of placing the rook on c1.

20 ♕cd1 g4

There was no reason to swap off all four rooks commencing with 20...♕xd2, since Black is saddled with the worse pawn structure as well as

the worse bishop. It's also wrong psychologically since one of his goals is the doubling of rooks.

21 hxg4 ♕xg4



Black's pawn structure looks clearly worse with three pawn islands versus White's two, but in this position it doesn't really matter because of his firm control of the central squares, especially d4 and d5.

22 ♕e2 ♕f7 23 ♕d3

White plays with the rooks in the same spirit as Black and retains the option of recapturing with the c2-pawn.

23...♝e7 24 ♝b1 ♝xe3

24...♝g8!? would have forced White to think about the g-pawn.

25 fxe3

Now White too has good control of the centre. The problem with the black position is the idle bishop.

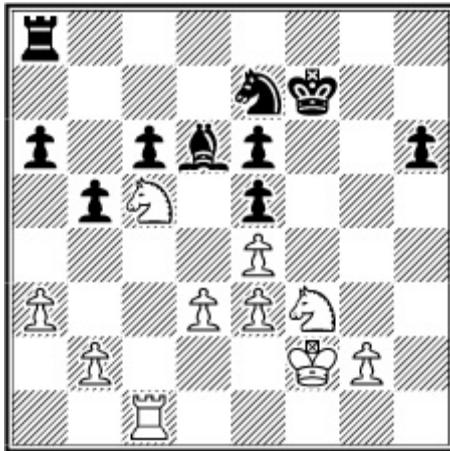
25...♝g8 26 ♕f2 ♕gd8 27 ♝bd2!

Believe it or not this knight is actually on its way to d7 with devastating effect!

27...♝xd3 28 cxd3 ♜d6

Of course not the suicidal continuation 28...♝xd3? 29 ♜c1 ♜d6 30 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 31 ♝xe5+.

29 ♜c1 ♜e7 30 ♜b3 c6 31 ♜c5 ♜a8



32 ♜d7

White wins either the pawn on e5 or, if Black defends it with the knight, the pawn on c6.

32... ♜e8 33 ♜fxe5 ♜d8 34 d4 ♜a7 35 ♜c5

35 ♜f8 was equally good as the text move but optically more devastating and humiliating since White would use the opponent's square on the last rank as if he were playing a game of billiards on a rectangular table with a ball and a cue.

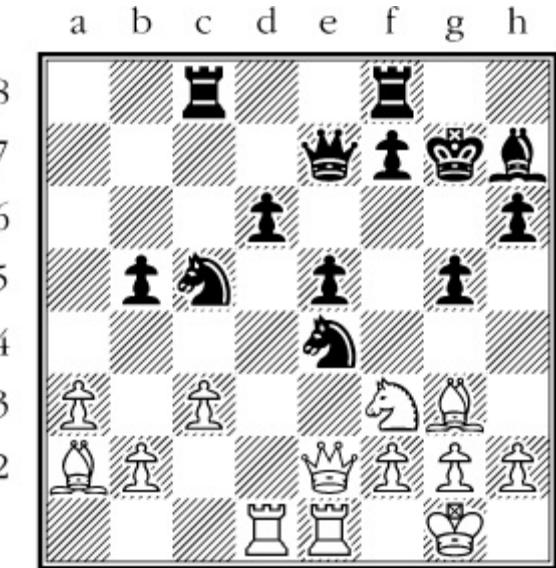
35... ♜xe5 36 dxе5

An instructive and unusual position showing that tripled pawns in the centre can indeed be strong.

36... ♜g6 37 ♜xe6+ ♜d7 38 ♜c5+ ♜e7 39 ♜d3 ♜c7 40 ♜h1 c5 41 ♜xh6 ♜c6 42 e6! Black resigns.

39

Kramnik – Harikrishna
Gashimov Memorial 2017



White to move

White has a difficult positional problem to solve because Black is planning ...f7-f5-f4 to shut the bishop out of the game. Kramnik doesn't want to lose in the style of Winter – Capablanca, Hastings 1919, which is the most famous fundamental model game how to exploit a buried bishop on g3.

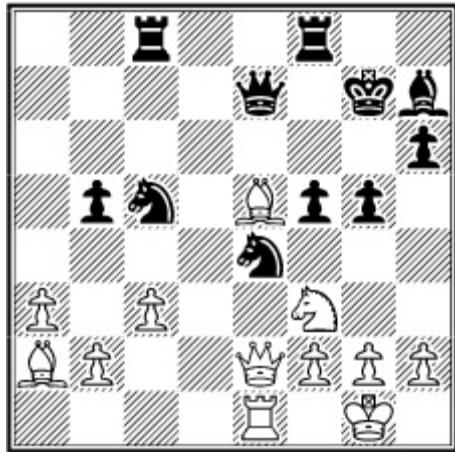
24 ♕d5!?

I followed the game live and when I saw this and the following move I couldn't believe my eyes. It made me think about when Spassky played the famous move 16...♝c6!? (position 148 in *300 Most Important Chess Positions*), despite the fact that there was a white pawn on d5, in a game against Averbakh in the USSR Championship 1956. In that game Spassky, just like Kramnik, was positionally outplayed but managed to turn the tables by changing the character of the game. The same thing is happening here because Kramnik realises that something drastic has to be done to avoid being crushed by the Indian steamroller.

24...f5 25 ♜xe5!?

Quite an amazing sacrifice!

25...dxe5 26 ♜xe5+



The two raking bishops exploit the weaknesses on the classical and long diagonal. Apart from these bishops, working on adjacent diagonals, White will get three pawns. Not such a bad deal for the sacrificed reserve rook!

26...♞f6

The knight on c5 was superfluous, so now it can be placed on e4 while the f6-knight concentrates on defending the king, thereby creating more harmony in Black's position. 26...♝g6 could also have been played but I think most humans would go for the natural text move. A plausible continuation is 27 ♜d4 (27 ♜xb5? g4 loses more material.) 27...♝g8 28 ♜e5+ ♜h7 29 ♜b1 ♜d6 30 ♜xb5 ♜ce8 31 f3 ♜xe5 32 fxe4 ♜b8 33 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 34 ♜e2 ♜xe4 and Black is winning thanks to his strong central position and active pieces.

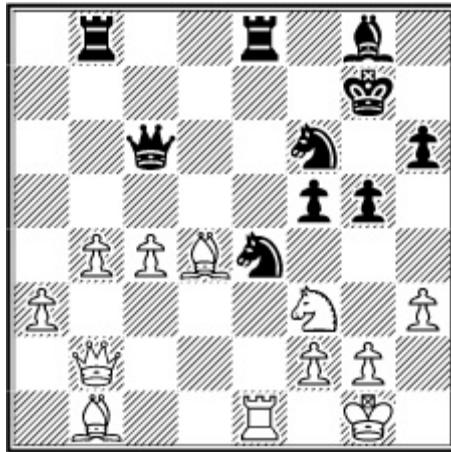
27 ♜xb5 ♜ce4 28 ♜d4 ♜fd8 29 h3 ♜b8 30 ♜e2 ♜g8?

Correct was over-protection of the most important strategic point e4 by 30...♜e8.

31 ♜b1 ♜b7 32 b4 ♜e8 33 c4 ♜c6?

The first major turning point since the incredible rook sacrifice. Correct was the double attack on the c4- and a3-pawn weaknesses by 33...♜a6 with good winning chances.

34 ♜b2



34... ♜bd8?

Note that 34... ♜xc4? doesn't work on account of 35 ♔e5 ♜e6 36 ♜xe4! (But not 36 ♜xc4? ♜xc4 37 ♜xe4 ♜e6!! with a decisive counter-pin. The reserve rook is gone, remember) Best was to step off the long diagonal with 34... ♜h7. The long dark diagonal is generally more dangerous since the white battery controls four squares in enemy territory.

35 c5

Probably a pragmatic choice but the strongest was 35 b5! exploiting the fact that 35... ♜xc4 leads to a lost queen ending after the forced 36 ♜xe4 ♜xd4 37 ♜xd4 ♜xe4 38 ♜xf5+ ♜g6 39 ♜e7+ ♜f7 40 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 41 ♜xg8 ♜xg8 42 b6 ♜e7 (42... ♜b7 43 ♜b3+ ♜f8 44 a4 ♜e7 45 a5 ♜d5 46 ♜g3!) 43 b7 ♜c6 44 b8 ♜xb8 45 ♜xb8.

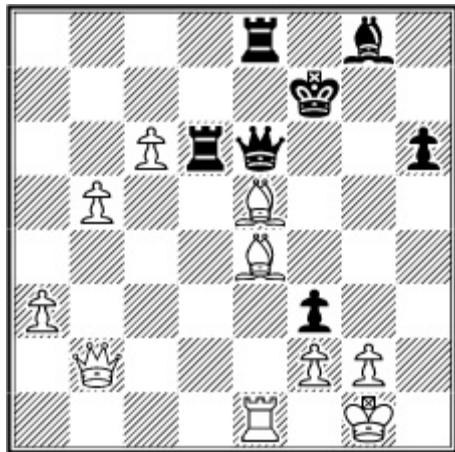
35... ♜e6 36 b5 ♜f8??

The losing move. The only continuation to stay in the game was 36... ♜b3 37 ♜a1 ♜g6 with mutual chances.

37 c6 g4 38 hxg4 fxg4 39 ♜xe4 gxf3

Or 39... ♜xe4 40 ♜xe4! ♜xe4 41 ♜g7+ ♜e7 42 ♜f6 mate.

40 ♜xf6 ♜d6 41 ♜g7+ ♜f7 42 ♜e5 Black resigns.

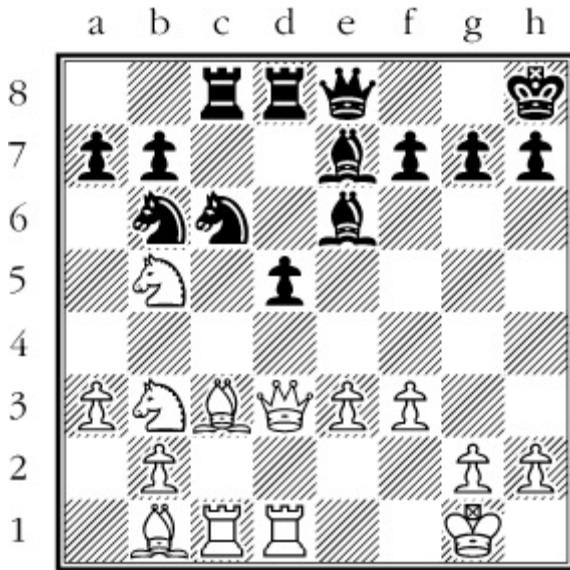


The end position is certainly a triumph for the bishop pair! Thanks to his psychological and tactical acuity, Kramnik managed to overcome the difficult positional problem of his queenside bishop and transform it into a super-bishop which even helped to decide the game in his favour. The price he played was the sacrifice of his reserve rook and in a way he played a handicap game without his a1-rook, as they sometimes did during the romantic period when handicap games were the order of the day to compensate for differences in skill. Today the psychological and pragmatic way of playing chess is even more important, because this kind of play doesn't concern computer programs so much, since a psychological player will focus on his opponent's fear or discomfort rather than striving to find the theoretically best move.

40

Steinitz – Burn

Hastings 1895



Black to move

25... ♕g8!

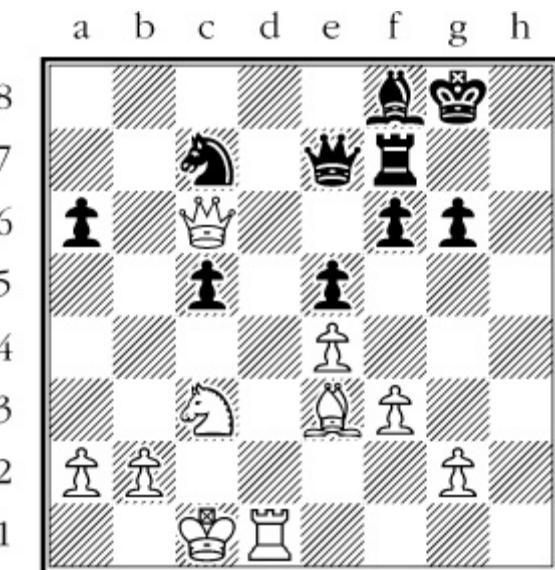
This idea is one of the original defensive manoeuvres which illustrates why Burn had the reputation of being a very strong defensive player. Black's queen is certainly passive but he didn't need to weaken his position with any pawn move as his other pieces, placed in the centre and on the queenside, are ready to attack. After a very exciting game the final result was a draw. However it should be remembered that even if such a defensive strategy is risky against very active and accurate play by White, it's worth remembering because such a manoeuvre can be playable in other positions. Normally one should avoid placing the queen on a passive square but on this particular occasion it worked since it was part of a deep defensive plan where all the black pieces worked in harmony. A position where a queen placement on g8 or g1 can be playable is in the Hedgehog system after for example 1 c4 c5 2 ♜f3 ♜f6 3 ♜c3 e6 4 d4 cxd4 5 ♜xd4 a6 6 e3 b6 7 ♜e2 ♜b7 8 o-o ♜e7 9 f3 o-o 10 e4 ♜c7 11 ♜e3 d6 12 ♜c1 ♜bd7 13 ♜d2 ♜fe8 14 ♜fd1 ♜ac8 15 ♜f1 ♜b8 16 ♜f2 ♜d8 17 ♜h1 ♜c7 18 ♜g1. Here the queen has the defensive function of protecting h2 after a possible ...d6-d5.

41

Spassky – Korchnoi

Candidates match, Kiev1968

In the following position Spassky found a quiet “creeping” move which only slightly changes the piece formation in White’s favour but nevertheless represents a very important redeployment



White to move

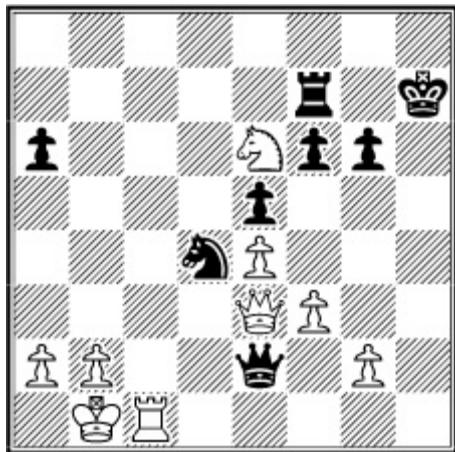
26 ♜b6!

26 ♜d5 ♜e6 would have been weaker.

26... ♜g7 27 ♜d5 ♜e6 28 ♜xc5

This is the point with White’s “creeper” since the c5-pawn could not be taken with the queen on c6. Now the queen is defended by the bishop.

**28... ♜xc5 29 ♜xc5 ♜b5 30 ♜e3 ♜c6+ 31 ♜b1 ♜d4 32 ♜c1 ♜b5
33 ♜c7 ♜e2 34 ♜e6+ ♜h7**



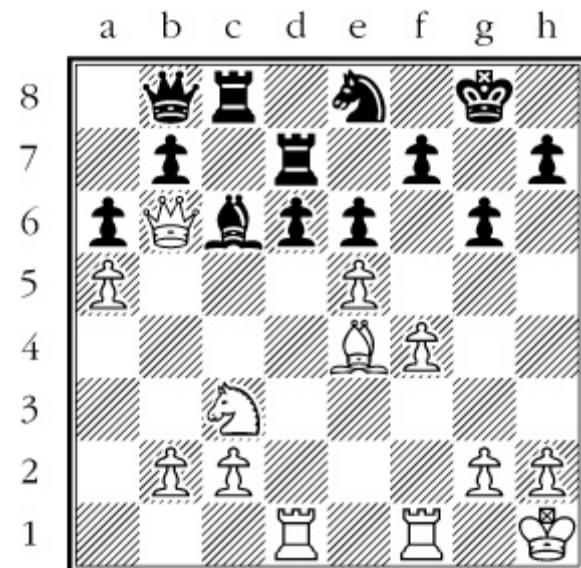
35 ♜h6+! Black resigns.

A pretty finish! White carried out beautiful manoeuvres with his queen. First the gradual one to b6 and then the longer queen moves to h6 via e3. Geometrically the queen manoeuvre b6-e3-h6 represents an upside down pyramid and is very aesthetic.

42

Dolmatov – Plaskett

Groningen 1978



White to move

The question we should ask ourselves is what Black wants to do if it were his turn to move. Well, he wants to exchange bishops on e4 followed by ...d5 and perhaps also play ... $\mathbb{B}c7$. Therefore White made the clever move...

26 $\mathbb{B}b4!! \mathbb{B}c7?!$

The deep idea behind Dolmatov's move was after 26... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ d5 to play the superb and unexpected pawn break 28 c4!! with the idea that 28... $\mathbb{B}xc4?$ is answered by 29 $\mathbb{B}xc4$ dxc4 30 $\mathbb{B}xd7$ and White wins.

27 $\mathbb{Q}xc6 \mathbb{B}xc6$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}a4!$

Thanks to the queen move to b4 White's knight can now go to b6.

28... $\mathbb{Q}c7?$

28... $\mathbb{B}dd8$ was correct.

29 c4! $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{B}xd1$ 31 $\mathbb{B}xd1$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 33 $\mathbb{B}d6$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 34 $\mathbb{B}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 35 $\mathbb{B}d7$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 36 g4 g5 37 b4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 38 $\mathbb{B}e7$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 39 b5 cxb5 40 cxb5 axb5 41 a6 b4 42 a7 Black resigns.

43

Andersson – Partos

Interzonal, Biel 1985



White to move

20 ♔e4!!

This beautiful move cooperates with the knight because of the possibility of ♕f4 and ♕xg6. In this way the value of the queen and the knight increases. Another possibility is ♕b4, especially if it cannot be taken by the bishop. 20 ♕c2 would not have been so effective with the queen on e3 due to 20...♝d4, but this tactical possibility is now removed.

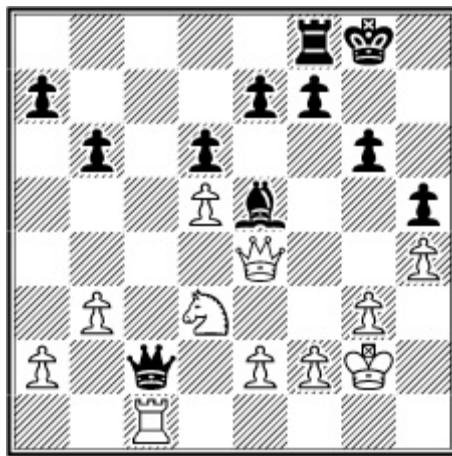
20...♝c7 21 ♕f4!

White attacks the vulnerable g6 square.

21...♝e5

Black's best defence was 21...♝c5!, which would have been met by 22 ♕e6! fxe6 23 ♕xc3 ♕f6 (23...♝xc3?? 24 ♕xg6+ ♜h8 25 ♕xh5+ ♜g7 26 ♕d4 exd5 27 ♕g4+ ♜xg4 28 ♕xg4+ ♜h7 29 ♕h5+ ♜g7 30 ♕g5+ and White wins the e7- or d5-pawn.) 24 ♕xc5 dxc5 25 f3 with a slight advantage to White.

22 ♕d3 ♜c3 23 ♕f4 ♜e5 24 ♕xc7 ♜xc7 25 ♕d3 ♜c2 26 ♕c1



26...♜xa2?

Black could put up stronger resistance by 26...♜d2 27 ♕c7 ♜f6 28 ♕b4 a5 29 ♕c6 ♜xa2 (29...♝e8 30 a4 is too passive for Black.) 30 ♜xe7+ ♜xe7 31 ♜xe7 a4! 32 ♜xd6 axb3 33 ♜xb6 b2 34 ♜b7 ♜xd5+ 35 f3 with drawing

chances.

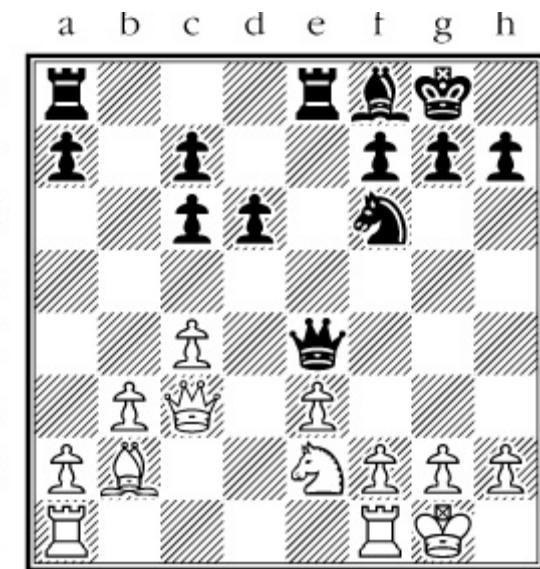
27 ♜xe5 dxe5 28 ♜xe5 ♜xb3 29 ♜c7 e6 30 d6 a5 31 ♜d4!

This centralising move behind the pawn makes the passer more effective!

31...e5 32 ♜xe5 ♜d8 33 d7 Black resigns.

44

Karlsson – Moberg Swedish Team Championship 2015/16



White to move

White is a little better with the more stabilised pawn structure and positional pressure along the long dark diagonal. In such situations it can be difficult to know whether one should play aggressively and embrace Steinitz's attacking principle, which means that one should attack the weakest point in the enemy position, or whether one should continue the activation of the pieces as much as possible before embarking on an attack. Karlsson played the logical...

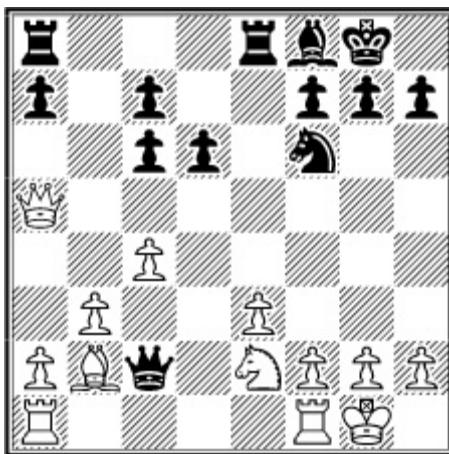
17 ♜a5!

White immediately attacks the weak c7 point and f6-knight as well as

controlling the fifth rank. The player who has the advantage should attack immediately otherwise he risks losing the advantage he has already gained. This principle is also applicable regarding the initiative when we are working with threats on several points. Compare this with an attack which always aims at the weakest point or sector of the board. 17 ♕g3 ♔e5 would make it easier for Black to defend since White is unable to activate his queen as in the game.

17... ♜c2

The pawn sacrifice 17... ♔e7 18 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 19 ♜xc7 ♜ec8 was perhaps the best pragmatic solution for Black to handle White's initiative.



18 ♜xf6

Even stronger was 18 ♜d4! ♔e4 (18... ♜xb2 19 ♜fb1 and Black's queen is trapped, but Black has a counter threat: 19... ♔e5 20 ♜b4 c5 21 ♜b7 ♜c3 22 ♜b5 ♜a5 23 ♜xa8 and White has won the exchange.) 19 ♜xc7 with an active game and an extra pawn.

18... ♜xe2 19 ♜c3 ♜ec8?

Black had to accept playing a pawn down after 19...c5 20 ♜xc7 a5! and focus on pursuing the minority attack with ...a4.

20 ♜f5!

This strong queen move along the fifth rank takes away two important white squares from the black queen.

20...h5!

20...g6 21 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ and mate next move.

21 h3! Black resigns.

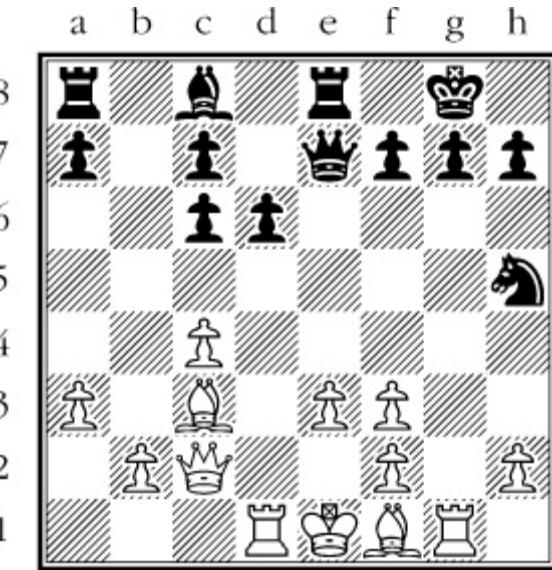
He could have saved his queen with the forced 21...h4 22 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ g6 23 $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ but after 24 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ White nevertheless wins in the long run due to his superior position and extra pawn. Understandably Moberg was not attracted to that option and terminated the game.

45

Urkedal – I. Sokolov

Xtracon Chess Open 2017

(1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ o-o 6 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ d6 7 a3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10 e3 e5 11 d5 e4? 12 dx c 6 ex f 3 13 gxf3 bxc6 14 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}h5?$ (14...c5 and... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ was the correct way to continue.)



White to move

15 $\mathbb{Q}e4!$

This strong centralisation of the queen enhances White's more active position. The queen move has several ideas. It threatens not only the c6-

pawn but also the exchange of queens followed by $\mathbb{Q}g5-a5$ with strong positional pressure. White can make a gradual manoeuvre with the queen to d4 as well, so there are plenty of options and this practically forces Black to swap off the queens.

15... $\mathbb{Q}b8?$

A better try was 15... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 16 $fxe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ but if White finds 18 $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ it's not pleasant to be Black.

16 $\mathbb{Q}e2?$

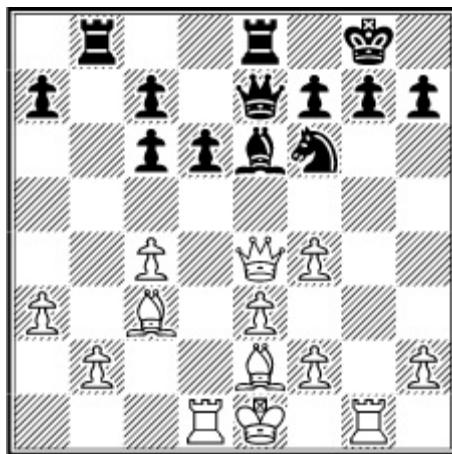
White should have played 16 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ $g6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ with domination over the whole board. This was the cleanest way to win.

16... $\mathbb{Q}e6?$

Black could have defended with 16... $g6$ and sacrificed the a-pawn after 17 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ (If 17 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ then 17... $f5$ and White's rook is cut off from the queenside.) 17... $f6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and White still has to find good moves to win the game.

17 $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6?$

Necessary was 17... $f5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$.



18 $\mathbb{Q}xg7+!$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

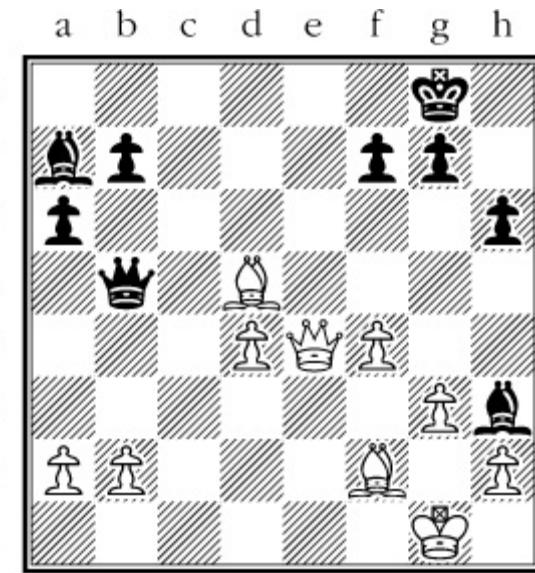
After 18... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}g2+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ the game would be over for Black.

19 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ Black resigns.

The double threat of 20 ♕g8+ and 20 ♕g5 cannot be prevented without material loss. Geometrically the queen manoeuvre to the kingside from the queenside via the centre was very beautiful. This is how to use the full force of the strongest piece on the board!

46

Flohr – Grob Match, Switzerland 1933



White to move

Black's last move was 30...♕b5 and Flohr resigned. A few years after this game Flohr gave an exhibition in Russia. A schoolboy asked him why he had resigned his game against Grob. "Why" said Flohr, "because I was lost." The schoolboy asked quietly whether he had considered...

26 ♔h1

...when White is slightly on top after

26...♝f1+ 27 ♔g1 ♔g4 28 ♔g2

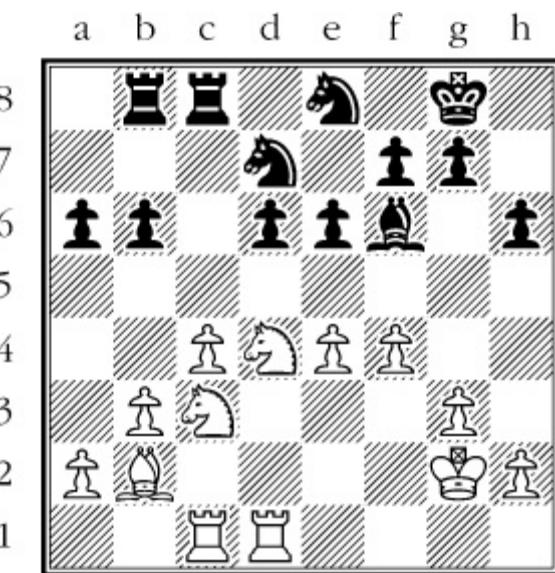
White has parried the deadly threat of 28...♝xd4 29 ♔xd4 ♕f3+! 30 ♜xf3 ♕xf3 mate. Sometimes it's easy to overlook king moves as Flohr did in this famous episode. 20 years after this game Flohr visited Switzerland and

when he encountered Grob he told him: “You know, the game I lost to you 20 years ago – it was a win for me!” However, Grob couldn’t even remember the position!

47

Karpov – Gheorghiu

Moscow 1977



White to move

21 ♔f3!

White overprotects the e4-pawn and liberates the c3-knight for other duties.

21... ♕b7

Gulko recommends 21...♔f8 bringing the king to e7. It works tactically since 22 e5? doesn't work on account of 22...dxe5 23 ♔xe6+ ♔e7. However the problem is 22 ♔a3 when Black's king is uncomfortably placed, especially in conjunction with e4-e5. It's easier for White to activate his king to a useful square than it is for Black and this is one of the advantages of enjoying a space advantage without the light-squared bishop and the queen on the board.

22 ♜ a3 ♛ bc7

Black wants to break with ...b6-b5.

23 ♞ ce2 ♞ c5 24 ♛ d2 g6 25 ♞ c2

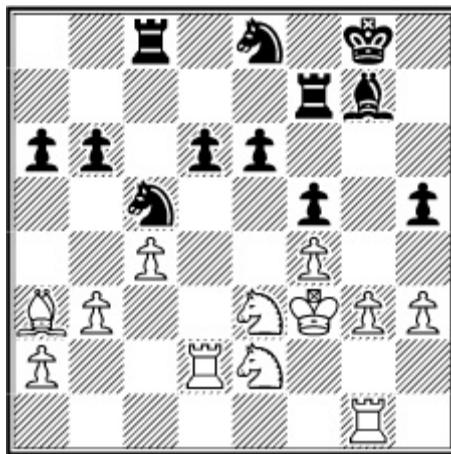
Karpov plans to increase the harmony in his position by manoeuvring his knight to e3.

25...♝ g7

The alternative was to become active on the queenside with 25...b5.

26 ♞ e3 f5 27 exf5 gxf5 28 h3 h5 29 ♛ g1 ♛ f7

29...♛f7 is answered by 30 g4 hxg4+ 31 hxg4 fxg4+ 32 ♛xg4 followed by f4-f5 at an appropriate moment with a clear advantage.



30 g4!

It looks scary to open up the position in front of the white king but Black has no way of increasing the pressure on the f4-pawn. The main function of the king is actually to overprotect the f4-pawn so White is actually playing with an extra piece in the central area of the board.

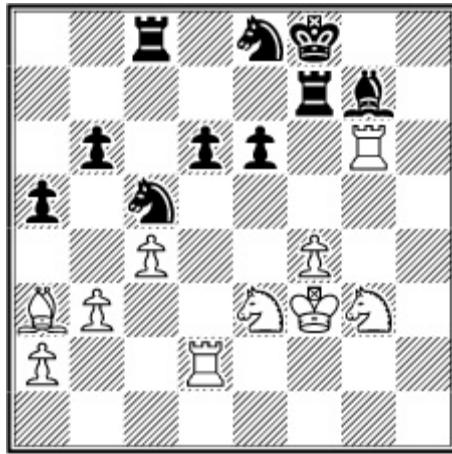
30...hxg4+ 31 hxg4 fxg4+ 32 ♛xg4

The f-pawn is now firmly protected so the e2-knight is free to manoeuvre to the kingside and prepare the important break f4-f5 to penetrate Black's position.

32...♚ f8 33 ♞ g3

Another continuation was to exploit the fact that the other over-protector is free to manoeuvre as well and can be activated along the sixth rank by 33 $\mathbb{B}g6$, attacking Black's small pawn centre. The e6-pawn in particular is weak, since the natural protector on f7 is gone.

33...a5 34 $\mathbb{B}g6$



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

34... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ would probably have been met by the tactical opportunity 35 $\mathbb{B}gf5!$. The over-protector(s) can work wonders, but Black nevertheless has good drawing chances after 35... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 36 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}e2$. The king is no longer well placed on f3 and therefore changes its position to a safe square on the efile where it still protects the knight. Apart from players like Petrosian and Seirawan, Karpov too has on several occasions demonstrated great skill in showing how to play with the king. 37... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 38 $\mathbb{B}f6$ dxе5 39 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{B}xf6$ 40 $\mathbb{B}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{B}xd7$ 42 $\mathbb{B}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ etc.

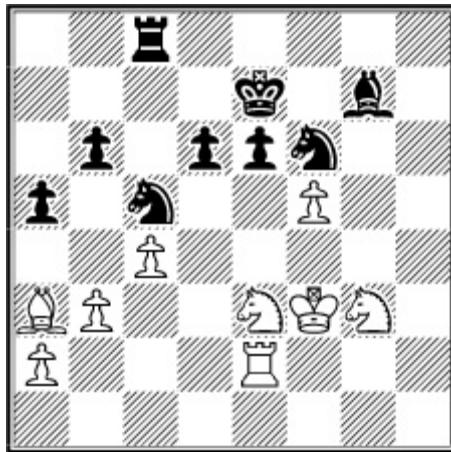
35 f5 $\mathbb{B}f6?$

It was better to parry the threat of 36 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$, followed by 37 $\mathbb{B}xe6+$, by playing 35... $\mathbb{Q}d7$.

36 $\mathbb{B}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6?$

The bishop becomes a target on g7 so better was 36... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$.

37 $\mathbb{B}e2!$



37... ♜f8?

This loses by force. Relatively best was 37... ♜fd7 38 ♜d5+ ♜f7 39 fxe6+ ♜xe6 40 ♜f5 which loses the pawn on d6 but after 40... ♜e5 41 ♜xd6 ♜d4+ 42 ♜xd4 ♜xd6 Black still has some hopes for a draw, because all the pawns are placed on the same side of the board.

38 ♜xc5 bxc5 39 fxe6 ♜xe6

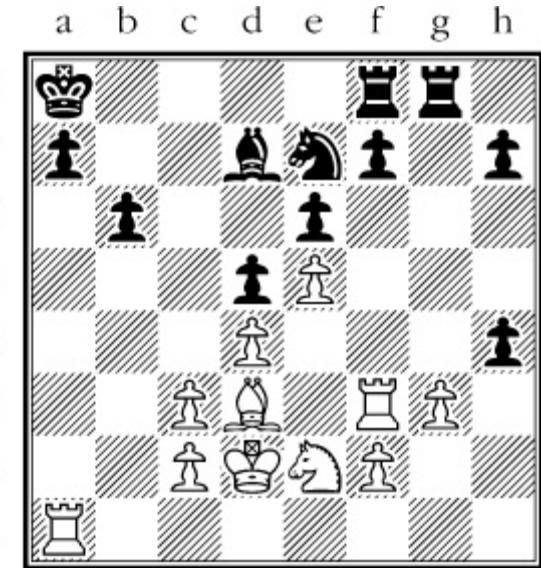
Black has no good discovered check with his knight as White responds with a knight check himself!

40 ♜ef5+ Black resigns.

What stands out in this game is how well placed the king was on f3 even though Black at times had a rook on the f-file targeting it, but nothing ever materialised since White had too many pieces on the kingside. The lesson to be learned is that sometimes it's possible to play with an active king despite the fact that there are many pieces on the board. It's all about the concrete nuances of the position. If one wants to focus on learning how to play with an active king then good teachers are the Chinese players, who generally understand this better than western players – for example GM Wang Hao.

48

Morozevich – Lputian
Sochi 2007



White to move

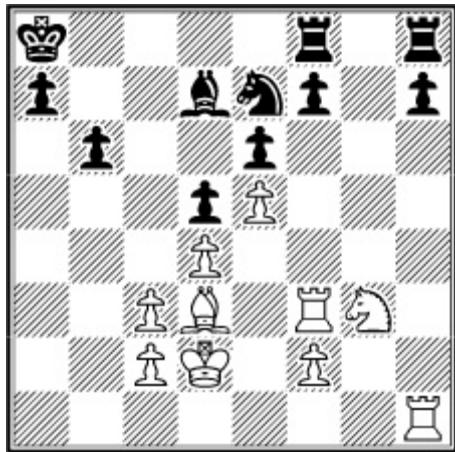
25 ♜ h1!

The creation of manoeuvring space (vacant squares) is sometimes more important than the pawn itself that is situated there. 25 gxh4 makes room for Black's pieces. 25...♜g4 26 ♜h1 h6 27 ♜g3 White's idea is to manoeuvre the knight to f6 but Black has enough manoeuvring space to stop this idea. 27...♝g8 28 ♜h5 f5! 29 exf6 ♜e8.

25...hxg3

The drawback with 25...♜g4 is that it's in White's interest to exchange the queen's rook, since all White's pieces are more active than Black's remaining ones. 26 ♜xh4 ♜xh4 27 gxh4 h6 28 ♜f4 ♜g8 29 ♜g6 and White wins the pawn on f7.

26 ♜xg3 ♜h8



27 ♜h5!

The manoeuvring space is more important than taking the pawn on h7. 27 ♜xh7 ♜xh7 28 ♜xh7 ♜b5 and Black has counter-chances with his a-pawn.

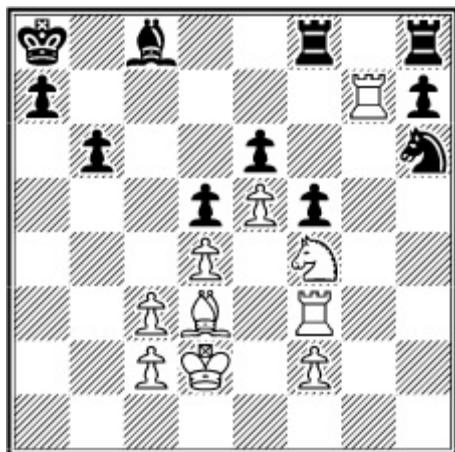
27...♜g8 28 ♜g1

White has a lot of vacant squares to choose from so sometimes there are alternative ways to exploit them. 28 ♜h4 followed by 29 ♜hf4 was also strong.

28...f5 29 ♜g7

29 exf6? ♜e8! and Black is back in the game. It's all about manoeuvring space rather than taking a pawn.

29...♝c8 30 ♜f4 ♜h6



31 c4

31 ♜h3 ♜f7 32 c4! dxc4 33 ♜xc4 ♜d8 34 ♜a3! was also good. Note that the pawn on h7 isn't the most important. More important is the manoeuvring space on the third rank because it will result in the win of a more important pawn on a7 after 34...♜b8 35 ♜gxa7!, on b6 after 35...a5 36 ♜b3 or on e6 after 35...♜f7 36 ♜xf7 ♜xe6. It's all about manoeuvring space!

31...dxc4 32 ♜xc4 ♜d8 33 c3 ♜g4 34 ♜e2

White obviously keeps his beautiful and strong centre intact.

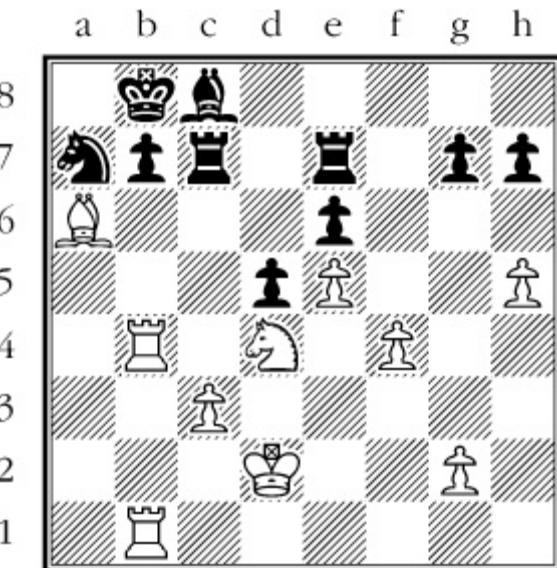
34...♜he8 35 ♜h3 ♜d7 36 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 37 ♜xh7 b5 38 ♜b3 ♜c8 39 f3 a5 40 fxg4 Black resigns.

The domination of Black's knight decides the game.

It's certainly worthwhile not to forget about Morozevich's idea to create empty squares out of nothing because it will turn up again in practical chess as well as later in this book, so beware!

49

Kosteniuk – P. Cramling
Match, Nalchik 2008



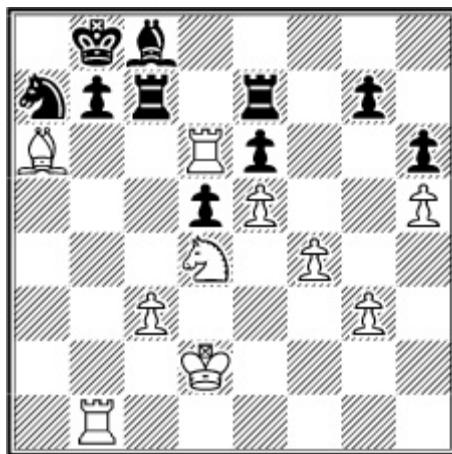
White to move

A fundamental example showing how to play against two weaknesses is the following:

28 ♜b6!

Alexandra Kosteniuk writes in her book *Diary of a Chess Queen*: “The position on the board is a classic example of playing against two weaknesses. Black doesn’t have the resources to defend her weak pawns.” The French pawn (Yes! surprisingly Pia Cramling played the French instead of her beloved Sicilian.) on e6 has become a fixed weakness due to the pressure on the sixth rank and the strong knight on d4. Despite the fact that the b7-pawn is over-protected it constitutes a weakness because Black cannot play the important defensive manoeuvre ...♝d7 followed by ...♞c8. Also the knight on a7 constitutes a weakness because it is unable to move to c6.

28...h6 29 g3 ♜e8 30 ♜d6 ♜ee7



31 ♜f1!

Kosteniuk: “I was very proud of this bishop transfer during the game.” It’s interesting to compare the bishops because their respective mobility is clearly visible and not only that of the rooks and knights. When the attacking player has more space it often implies more manoeuvrability, which is underlined by the fact that the bishop manoeuvres undisturbed from a6-f1-h3-e6. The f1 and h3 squares are like the edges of a pool table. A very beautiful redeployment and who wouldn’t be proud to find and play such a long and decisive bishop manoeuvre?

31...♝d7 32 ♜h3 ♜c8 33 ♜xe6!

Kosteniuk: “It’s no secret that in such overwhelming positions, one often finds the winning combination.” The heroic bishop exploits the awkward position of the black rooks.

33...♝xd6 34 exd6 ♜xe6 35 dxe7 ♜d7

35...♜xe7 is answered by one of the fundamental tricks in chess: “the fork” 36 ♜c6+ or “the pin” 36 ♜e1.

36 ♜f5 Black resigns.

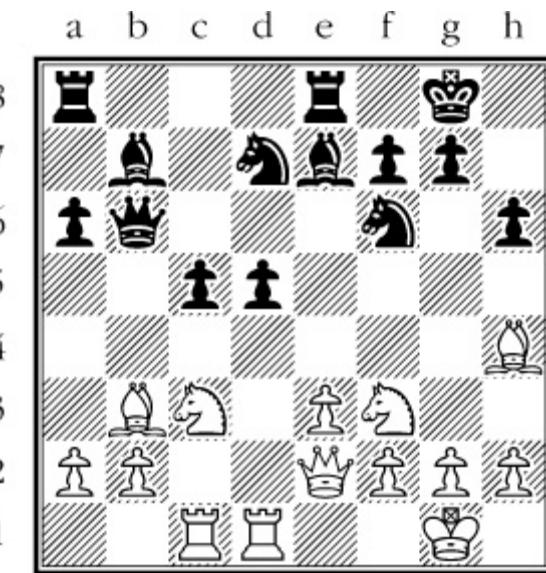
Kosteniuk concludes the game by exploiting the overloaded bishop and after 36...♝e8 37 g4 Black’s position is hopeless.

50

Szabó – Petrosian

Candidates Tournament, Zürich 1953

(1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♜c3 d5 4 ♜g5 ♜e7 5 e3 o-o 6 ♜f3 h6 7 ♜h4 b6 8 ♜d3 ♜b7 9 o-o ♜bd7 10 ♜c1 c5 11 ♜e2 a6 12 cxd5 exd5 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 ♜fd1 ♜e8 15 ♜c2 ♜b6 16 ♜b3)



Black to move

White has chosen a typical plan when playing against hanging pawns – to

provoke one of them to advance.

16...c4!

However, this is quite a good option as Capablanca showed a long time ago. In the classic game Bernstein – Capablanca, Moscow 1914, Capablanca made a similar move which he has described in detail in *My Chess Career*. The important point of Capablanca's revolutionary move is that the e7-bishop becomes an active piece. Another important point is that the b2-pawn becomes a tactical weakness which Black can attack along the b-file. A third important issue is that if White blockades the d5-pawn by placing his knight on d4 the attack on the d-file is temporarily stopped. In addition to these arguments Nimzowitsch wrote in his classic *My System* that a move such as ...c4 makes the hanging pawns relatively secure, because after this move Black has only one weakness instead of two.

17 ♘a4

17 ♘c2 is more precise because on a4 the bishop might later be exposed to an attack by ...♘d7-c5.

17...♝c6

Preferable was 17...♝ed8 with the idea of 18...♞c5.

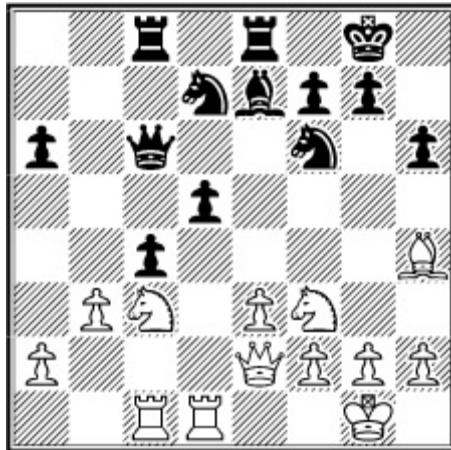
18 ♘xc6

There was no reason to exchange Black's bad bishop which will be further blockaded by ♘d4 but White reasons that the d5-pawn will be weaker after the exchange. More to the point was 18 ♘c2 when White remains slightly more comfortable due to the weak d4 and f5 points.

18...♝xc6 19 b3!

A good move which completely rules out the knight manoeuvre ...♞c5-d3 but has the drawback of increasing the power of Black's bishop.

19...♝ac8



20 ♕a4?

This move only helps Black to improve the placing of his queen on a more commanding post. It would be more logical to utilise the weak d4 square and play 20 ♕d4 ♕b6 21 ♕f3 when Black must decide how to defend the d5-pawn. The position is about equal after the most active continuation 21... ♕a3 22 ♕c2 ♕a5.

20... ♕b5 21 ♔c3 ♕a5 22 ♔xf6 ♔xf6 23 bxc4 dxc4 24 ♔d2

Better was 24 ♕d4 ♕b4 25 ♔e5 ♕c5 26 f4 with about equal play. But not 26 ♕xc4? ♕a3! and several pieces are hanging.

24... ♕c6 25 ♔xc4?

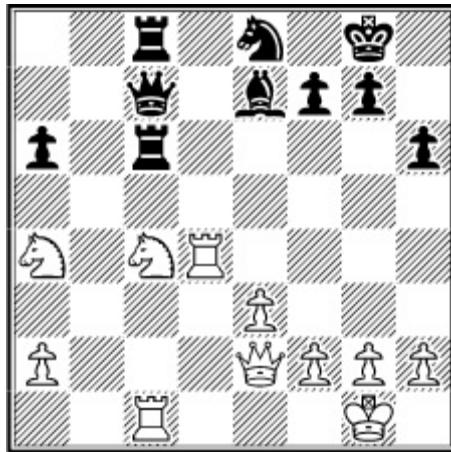
It was Szabó's style to take unnecessary risks. Here the risks involve the unstable knights. There were several solid options available such as 25 g3 or 25 ♕c2 with mutual chances.

25... ♕c7 26 ♔a4 ♕c8

With the help of Alekhine's gun Black has created a triple pin along the c-file. White must play very precisely so as not to lose material.

27 ♕d4 ♔e8

27... ♔h7! followed by ... ♔f8-e6 and ... ♔f6 was more precise.



28 e4??

The only defence was 28 ♕d1 ♔d6 29 ♜ab6 ♜xb6 30 ♜xb6 ♜xc1 31 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 32 g3 with balanced play.

28... ♜f6 29 e5 ♜xe5 30 ♜e4 ♜f6 31 ♜ab6

If 31 ♜xe5 ♜xc4 32 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 33 ♜d1 (33 ♜xc4 ♜xc4) 33... ♜xa4 Black wins with the help of a back-rank motif.

31... ♜xb6 32 ♜xe5 ♜c6

32... ♜xc4 takes advantage of the back-rank after 33 ♜xc4 ♜b1+.

33 ♜e7 ♜xc4 34 ♜e1

If 34 ♜xc7 then 34... ♜xc1+ 35 ♜xc1 ♜xc1+.

34... ♜c6 35 h3 ♜c1 36 ♜xc1 ♜xc1+ 37 ♜h2 ♜c4 38 ♜f3 ♜xa2 39 ♜a7 ♜d5 White resigns.

51

Najdorf – Fischer

Piatigorsky Cup, Santa Monica 1966

(1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♜c3 ♜g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♜e2 o-o 6 ♜g5 c5 7 d5 e6 8 ♜f3 h6 9 ♜h4 exd5 10 cxd5 g5 11 ♜g3 b5 12 ♜d2 a6 13 o-o ♜e8 14 ♜c2 ♜e7 15 ♜ae1 ♜bd7)



White to move

16 a4!

The other natural break 16 f4 is met by 16...gxf4 17 ♜xf4 ♛e5 and Black is relatively okay.

16...b4

A positional mistake would be 16...bxa4 17 ♛c4! ♛e5 18 ♛xe5 dxе5 19. ♛xa4 with a winning positional advantage for White. White has a protected passed pawn and can attack the weak pawns on c5 and a6. Black has a very bad bishop on g7. Fischer wasn't fond of closing the diagonal of his favourite piece.

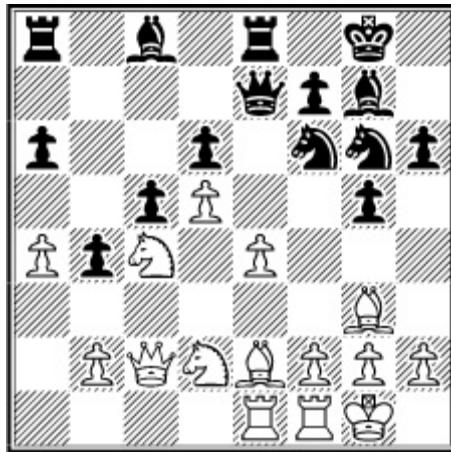
17 ♛d1 ♛e5

After 17...♛xe4? 18 ♛d3 f5 19 ♛xe4 fxe4 20 ♛xe4 White is positionally winning.

18 ♛e3

White has two knights controlling c4 but Black has only one.

18...♝g6 19 ♛ec4



19... ♜f4

19... ♜d8 is strongly met by 20 ♜a5 ♜d7 21 ♜dc4 ♜e8 22 ♜d1 and White is prepared for the central break e4-e5 running over Black's position.

20 ♜xf4 gxf4 21 e5! dxе5 22 ♜f3 ♜f8

22... ♜d7? is met by 23 d6.

23 ♜xe5 ♜b7 24 ♜dc4 ♜ad8

Not 24... ♜xd5? 25 ♜d7.

**25 ♜c6 ♜xe1 26 ♜xe1 ♜e8 27 ♜d1 ♜c8 28 h3 ♜e8 29 ♜6a5 ♜b8
30 ♜f5 ♜d6 31 ♜xd6 Black resigns.**

Note that it wasn't only the c4 square that was exploited by 16 a4! but also the weak pawns on c5 and a6.

Here Fischer had a taste of his own medicine because it's interesting to compare 16 a4! with Fischer – Gadia, exercise 36.

52

Andersson – Miralles
Cannes 1989



White to move

27 a4! bxa4

27...b4 28 a5 is only to White's advantage because the distant passed a-pawn will be more dangerous than the blockaded enemy passer.

28 ♜xa4

The structural advantage for White with this exchange of pawns is that Black is now saddled with two pawn islands, where the c7-pawn in particular is a permanent weakness.

28... ♛a6 29 ♜c2 ♜d6 30 ♜c3 ♜b4 31 ♜e2 ♜g5

Black has problems achieving harmony between his pieces which are scattered around the board without any clear purpose.

**32 ♜xa6 ♜xa6 33 ♜e4 ♜d5 34 ♜a1 ♜b8 35 ♜c3 ♜g5 36 ♜e4
♜d5 37 ♜c3 ♜g5 38 ♜c4 ♜b7 39 ♜b1 ♜c6 40 ♜c5 ♜d7 41 ♜xd7!
♛xd7**

Or 41...♛xc4 42 ♜b8+ ♜f8 43 ♜xf8 mate.

42 ♜e4 Black resigns,

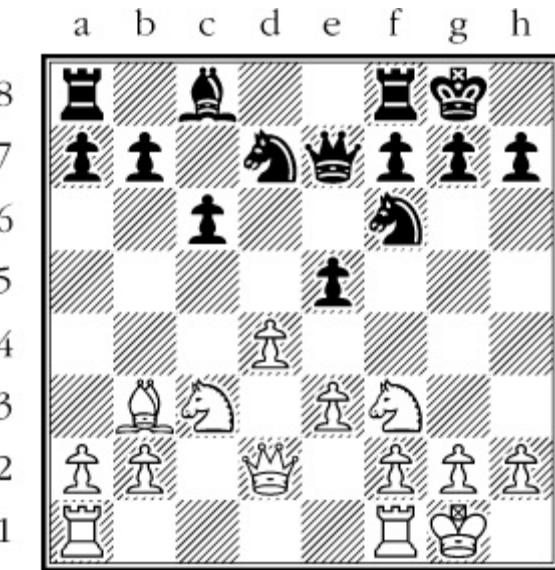
Because of the double threat on g5 and d6 followed by ♜b8+.

53

Alekhine – Bogoljubow

Budapest 1921

(1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e6 3 c4 $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2+$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ d5 6 e3 o-o 7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ c6 9 o-o dxc4 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ e5 11 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$)



White to move

12 e4!

This strong pawn move in the centre not only prevents Black from playing ...e5-e4 but also prepares a future attack with the e- and f-pawn after the inevitable release of the tension in the centre. If that should be the case one might call this kind of pawn play an attack of the three musketeers (= d+e+f-pawn)!

12...exd4 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$

Of course not 13... $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$ due to the deadly pin 14 $\mathbb{Q}e3$.

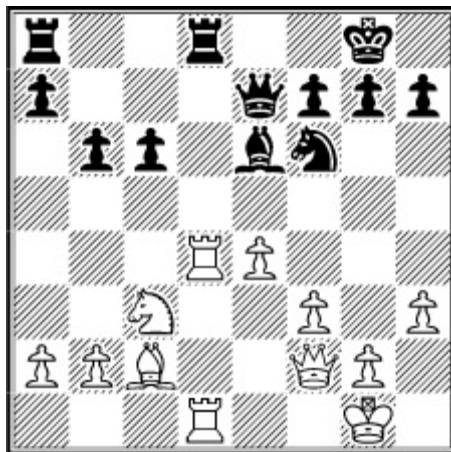
14 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 16 f3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$

19 $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ looks tempting since 19... $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ (19... $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ fails to 20 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ with a clear advantage.) looks awkward but after 20 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ White has only helped Black to exchange queens, which suits him more than his opponent.

19...b6?!

Black defends his a-pawn but more active was 19...a5 followed by ...b5 and ...b4 attacking the knight. Black has a pawn majority on the queenside and should activate it. Just as White is attacking Black's pieces on e6 and f6 Black should do likewise on the other flank and strive for a dynamic balance.

20 h3



Everything is prepared for the advance of the e- and f-pawn now that the g4-square is defended. White's harmonious piece formation gives him real prospects of an attack in the centre and on the kingside.

20...c5?!

Black weakens the d5-square without getting anything in return. 20...b5 was the correct way of mobilising the queenside majority.

21 ♜d2 ♜xd2

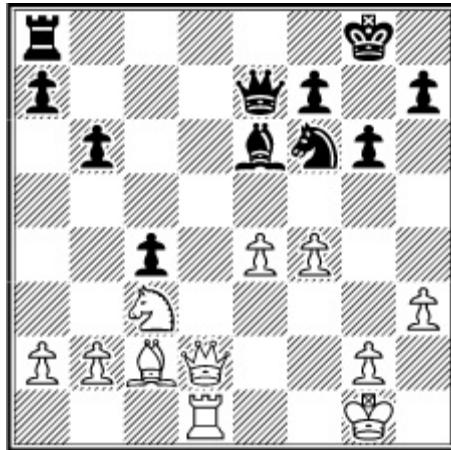
It was perhaps better to take measures against the advance of the e- and f-pawn by 21...♝e8 22 f4 f6 but Black has a difficult position after 23 ♜d5 (or 23 ♜a4!) 23...♝xd5 24 exd5.

22 ♜xd2 c4?

Black's plan to activate the queenside majority is too slow compared with White's attack. The c-pawn has only managed to weaken the d5-square and now the d4-square as well.

23 f4 g6

23... $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}h1!$ is very strong but if White prefers an endgame then 24 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ also leads to an overwhelming advantage.



24 $\mathbb{Q}d4$

Alekhine's centralisation of the queen provokes Black into an exchange of queens. White's tactical idea is that he threatens to win the c4-pawn by 25 f5. However an immediate 24 g4! should have been played, according to plan, so as not to be distracted by the c-pawn which is less important.

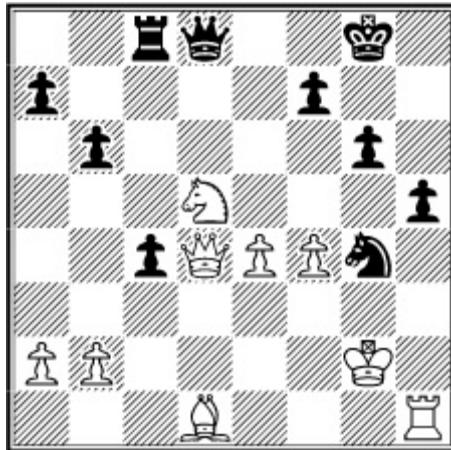
24... $\mathbb{Q}c8?$

It was better to play 24... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ with the idea 25 f5 $\mathbb{Q}c8$.

25 g4

White threatens both f4-f5 and e4-e5 and Black has no antidote to the menacing pawns.

25... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 26 hxg4 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}g2!$ h5 28 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}d1!$

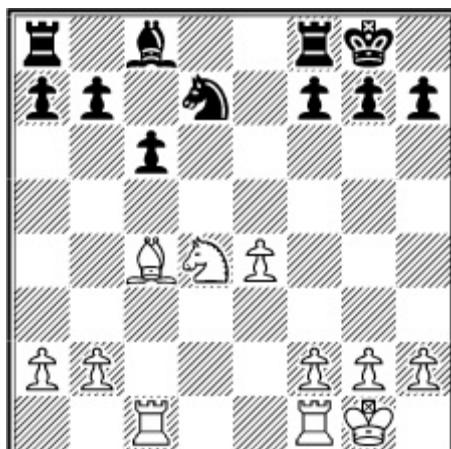


Black resigns.

Alekhine: “An instructive game from the strategic point of view.”

So don't forget this typical plan how to play with a central majority and a majority on the kingside. It can be reinforced by thoroughly understanding this model game.

It's also a good structure with queens off the board. For example Petrosian – Portisch, Santa Monica 1966 began 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♜c3 ♜e7 4 ♜f3 ♜f6 5 ♜g5 0-0 6 ♜c1 ♜bd7 7 e3 c6 8 ♜d3 dxcc4 9 ♜xc4 ♜d5 10 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 11 ♜e4 (Alekhine's continuation in the Orthodox Queen's Gambit) 11... ♜f6 12 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 13 0-0 e5 14 e4 exd4 15 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 16 ♜xd4.



White is slightly better but in this type of position it is White who plays for two results rather than Black who lacks dynamic counter measures. The Slovenian GM Enver Bukic (1937-2017), who was famed for his splendid

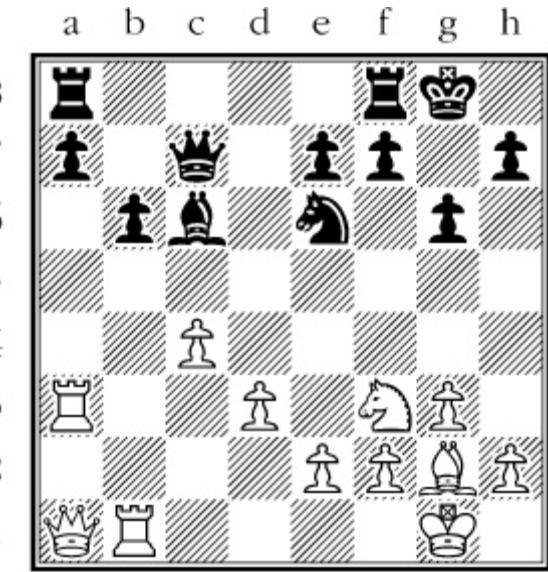
technique and patience, had several victories to his credit utilising Alekhine's ingenious idea. Some of his games can be found in Chess Informant's *Yugoslav Chess Triumphs* (Belgrade 1976) and Chessbase's *Mega Database*.

54

Réti – Rubinstein

Karlsbad 1923

(1 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 2 g3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ g6 4 c4 d4 5 d3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 6 b4! o-o 7 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ c5 8 $\mathbb{Q}b3!$ cxb4 9 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ (9 a3!) 9... $\mathbb{Q}c6?$! (9... $\mathbb{Q}e8!$) 10 $\mathbb{Q}bxsd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ b6 12 a3 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ bxa3 14 $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 17 o-o $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$)



White to play

19 d4!

Réti plays according to “the hypermodern paradox” a term which was coined by the American GM Reuben Fine (1914-93) in his classic book *The World’s Great Chess Games* (Dover 1983).

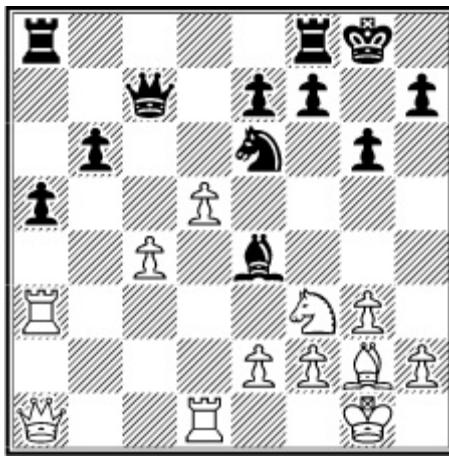
He defines it as follows: “if you occupy the centre immediately, the pawns soon become weakened, and the opponent will then be able to occupy it. This means though that it is not occupation that is bad; it is in many cases

immediate occupation.”

Incidentally Stockfish 11 comes up with the same move if it's allowed to think at least 20 moves deep!

19... ♜e4 20 ♜d1 a5 21 d5!

Obviously “the hypermodern paradox” has a lot of inherent dynamism, because, in the spirit of Philidor, the well-developed pieces are its servants from behind the d-pawn.



21... ♜c5

21... ♜d8? is too passive because after 22 ♜h4 White has the very beautiful intermediate move 22... ♜xg2 23 d6!! showing the full impact of “the hypermodern paradox”. It creates two empty squares on d5 and f6 and the white knight wants to occupy one of these. After 23...exd6 24 ♜xg2 ♜xc4? 25 ♜f4 White has the deadly threat 26 ♜d5. Black's best is 25... ♜e8 but after 26 h4! (26 ♜d5 ♜xe2) White has excellent winning chances.

22. ♜d4 ♜xg2 23 ♜xg2 ♜fd8?

Black thereby only helps White to plant the knight on c6 with a gain of tempo. A better defensive move was 23... ♜d7 when 24 ♜c6 can be met by 24... ♜b8 25 ♜e5 ♜d7.

24 ♜c6

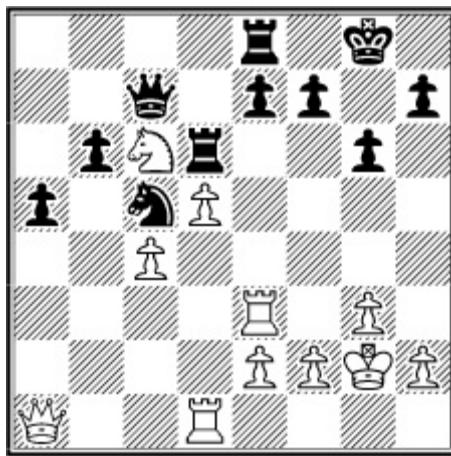
24 ♜b5! is the computer's preference.

24... ♜d6

24... ♜e8! should have been played, calmly preparing ... ♜c5-d7-b8 to challenge the strong knight on c6.

25 ♜e3 ♜e8

25... ♜xc6 26 dxc6 ♜xc6+ 27 f3 would have led to a stable advantage for White but was perhaps Black's best chance to stay alive in the game.



26 ♜e5?!

26 ♜b2, with the idea 27 ♜b1 or 26 ♜b1 followed by 27 ♜b2, was more accurate and would sooner or later have forced the exchange sacrifice on c6. Réti's idea with the queen centralisation is to provoke the weakening ...f6, but it turns out that Black gets a good square for his king on f7. Compare this variation with the game continuation: 26... ♜xc6 27 ♜b5 ♜c8 28 dxc6 and Black cannot defend e7 in a convenient way. He would like to have his king on f7 but there is neither time nor space for that.

26...f6 27 ♜b2 e5?

This was an interesting moment for 27... ♜xc6 because 28 ♜b5! ♜c8 29 dxc6 ♜f7! followed by ... ♜xc6 would lead to a position which might be defendable in a practical game.

28 ♜b5

White makes the capture on c6 less appealing.

28... ♕f7 29 ♔b1 ♔d7 30 f3

Réti's intention is to prevent ...e5-e4 when White's rook is placed on d3.

30... ♔c8 31 ♔d3 e4

White is preparing the completion of the hypermodern paradox with e2-e4 so Black's move is a desperate try to disturb White.

32 fxe4 ♔e5?

It was better to play a waiting game one pawn down with 32...h5 followed by ...♔c8-e8 and ...♕f7-g7.

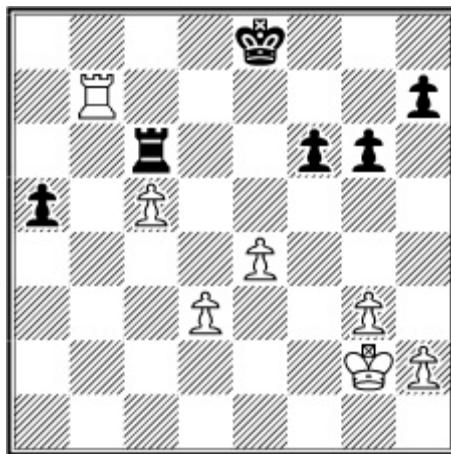
33 ♔xb6!

This exchange sacrifice is the best, simplest and the most aesthetic continuation to decide the game.

33... ♔xc6 34 c5!

This intermediate move is the point.

34... ♔d7 35 dxc6 ♔xd3 36 ♔xc7+ ♔xc7 37 exd3 ♔xc6 38 ♔b7+ ♔e8

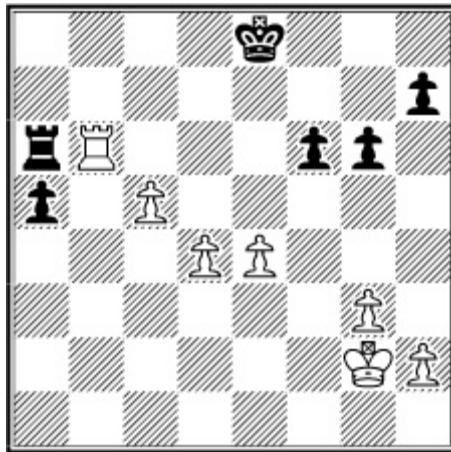


39 d4!

“The hypermodern paradox” is played out for the second time, or perhaps the third time if 32 fxe4 is included in the concept.

39... ♔a6 40 ♔b6!

This move demands precise calculation due to the subsequent transition to a pawn ending.



40... ♜ a8

The following variation leads to a pretty mate with two queens: 40... ♜ xb6 41 cxb6 ♜ d8 42 e5 fxe5 43 dxe5 a4 44 b7 ♜ c7 45 e6 a3 46 e7 a2 47 e8 ♜ a1 ♜ 48 b8 ♜ mate.

41 ♜ xf6 a4 42 ♜ f2 a3 43 ♜ a2 ♜ d7 44 d5 g5 45 ♜ f3 ♜ a4 46 ♜ e3 h5 47 h4 gxh4 48 gxh4 ♜ e7 49 ♜ f4 ♜ d7 50 ♜ f5 Black resigns.

Fine calls this game “One of the earliest triumphs of the hypermodernism”. This classic game has influenced modern chess. For example Stein – Rodriguez Gonzales, Havana 1968 was played according to the plan outlined in Réti – Rubinstein as I have written about in detail in my book *Stein – move by move* (Everyman Chess 2015).

55

Botvinnik – Denker USSR – USA Match 1945

(1 d4 d5 2 ♜ f3 ♜ f6 3 c4 c6 4 cxd5 cxd5 5 ♜ c3 ♜ c6 6 ♜ f4 ♜ a5 7 e3 ♜ e4 8 ♜ b3 e6 9 ♜ d3 ♜ b4 10 ♜ c1 ♜ xc3 11 bxc3 ♜ a3 12 ♜ b1 b6)



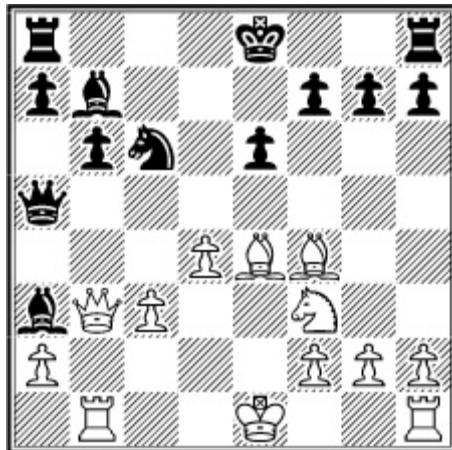
White to play

13 e4!

The right moment for this important pawn break in the centre. White has to forestall 13...♝a6 which was on Black's agenda. Another possibility was the tempting 13 ♜b5 which would have been answered by 13...♝d7 but this loses control of the e4-square and misplaces the bishop, which belongs on d3.

13...dxe4 14 ♜b5

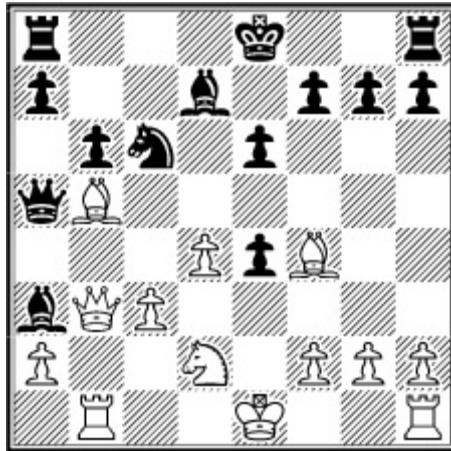
In his annotations to the game, Botvinnik writes that "White is by no means obliged to agree to the routine continuation 14 ♜xe4 ♜b7, after which he would be obliged to parry the threat of 15...♝xd4."



As a matter of a fact after 15 0-0 (15 ♜d2 fails to 15...♝xd4! 16 cxd4 ♜xe4

since the knight is pinned.) 15...o-o (15... $\mathbb{Q}xd4?$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ is suicidal due to 17 $\mathbb{Q}be1!$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 18 c4 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ and White wins material.) 16 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ g6 17 c4 White is clearly better due to his more harmonious position. The hanging pawns are a strength rather than a weakness and they want to move forward!

14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$



15...a6?

The lesser evil was 15...o-o 16 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (It's too early for 16 $\mathbb{Q}c4??$ on account of 16... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $bxa5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ with good winning chances.) 16... $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 20 o-o e5 21 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$. Black can fight on with two pawns for the knight and some play on the light squares.

16 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d6$

Even more crushing was 18 $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ with the idea of 21 c4 trapping the bishop.

18...e3 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb1+$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}b3$

White has won material and can go home and win in a technical manner.

22... $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 24 o-o $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 25 h3 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 26 c4

The isolated pawn couple have been transformed into hanging pawns.

26...g6 27 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}e5+!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 29 $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}d2+$

Black resigns.

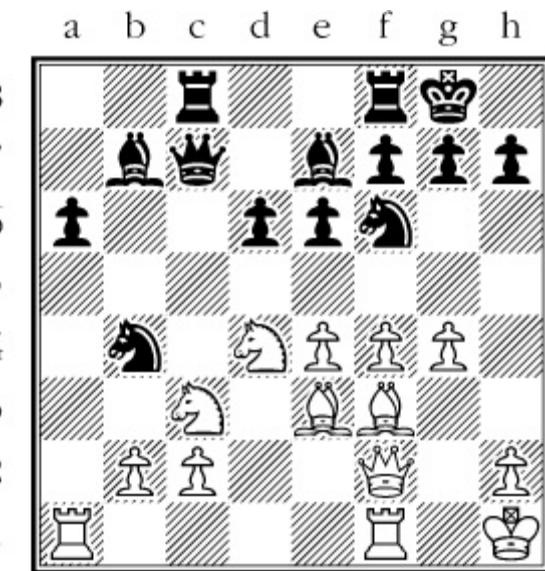
After 30... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ White wins more material.

56

Michel – Ståhlberg

Mar del Plata 1947

(1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d6 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ a6 7 f4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 9 o-o $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ b5 13 a3 o-o 14 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ b4 15 axb4 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 18 g4)



Black to move

18...d5!

The best answer to an attack on the wing is to counter-strike in the centre! This is absolutely true in the majority of cases. It's all about the centre before going for an attack, and that is why, as was discovered by Steinitz and eventually proven empirically, it's so important to conquer or at least *solidify* the centre before starting an operation on the flank. The prototype of this idea appeared in the game Dubois – Steinitz, London 1862.

19 e5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

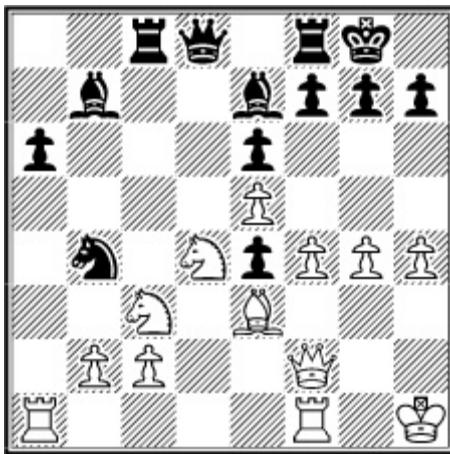
20 ♜xe4? dxe4 21 ♜g2 ♜c5 would give Black strong pressure on the c-file, practically forcing 22 c3 ♜d3 23 ♜d2 ♜fd8 with an overwhelming position.

20...dxe4 21 h4?

This pawn storm is too aggressive. It would be better to improve the placement of the king by 21 ♜g1 with only a slight advantage for Black.

21...♜d8?

Correct was the more active and centralising 21...♜c4! with the same idea as in the game.



22 g5??

The pawn on h4 wasn't important so White should have replied 22 ♜fd1 with mutual chances. 22...♝xh4? would then be bad because of 23 ♜h2 with the double threat of g4-g5 trapping the bishop and the discoverer ♜d4xe6.

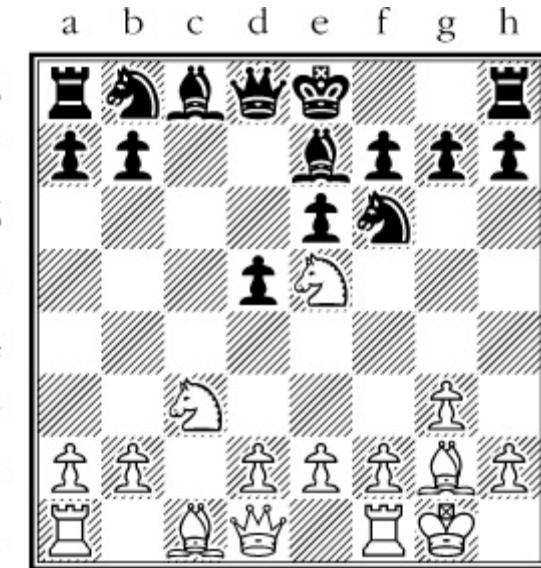
22...♝xd4! White resigns.

After 23 ♜xd4 e3+ Black is a piece up.

57

Smyslov – Darga
Interzonal, Amsterdam 1964

(1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 g3 d5 3 ♗g2 ♗g4 4 c4 c6 5 cxd5 cxd5 6 ♔e5 ♗c8 7 o-o e6 8 ♘c3 ♗e7)



White to play

9 d4

If Black's light-squared bishop is situated behind the pawn chain it's more effective to place the pawn on d4 and prepare a future central break with e2-e4.

9...o-o 10 ♗f4 ♗d7 11 ♗b3! ♗b6?

11...♗c6 is better.

12 ♗xb6 axb6 13 ♗xd7 ♗bxsd7 14 ♗fc1

14 e4 is not effective due to the creation of a vacant square on d5 for Black, which can be immediately exploited after 14...dxe4 15 ♗xe4 ♗d5.

14...♗fc8 15 a3 ♗c6 16 ♗d2!

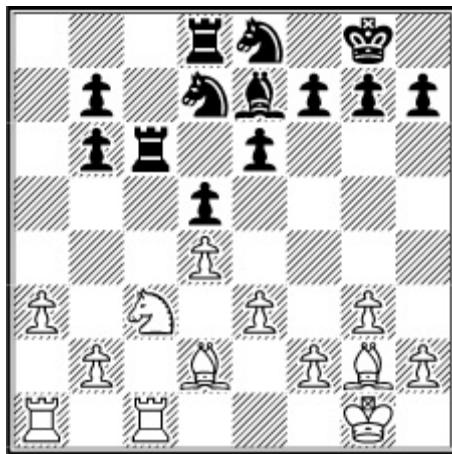
The bishop wasn't doing much on f4 but here it can be exchanged on b4 after the preparatory move ♘c3-a2.

16...♗d8 17 e3!

White improves his position slowly but surely. He hopes to generate the

pawn push to e4 under more favourable circumstances.

17...♝e8?



18 e4!

Smyslov displays perfect timing for this important central pawn break. It serves the two important purposes: to activate the two bishops and at the same time exploit Black's passive pieces.

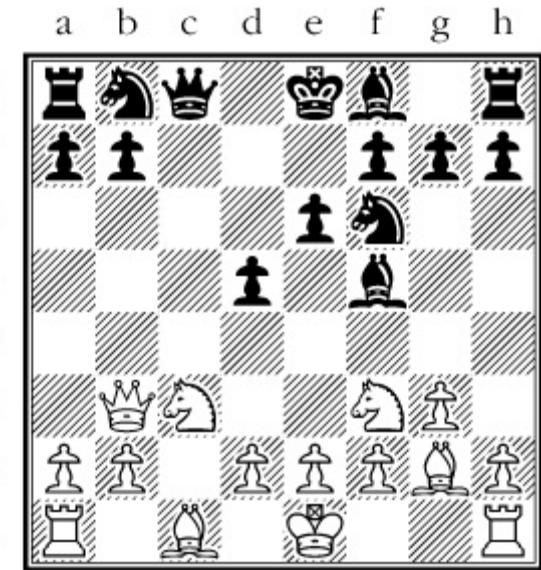
18...dxe4 19 ♜xe4 ♜c4 20 ♜b5 ♜xc1+ 21 ♜xc1 ♜c5 22 dxc5 ♜xd2 23 cxb6 ♜xb2 24 a4! ♜f8 25 ♜c8 Black resigns.

A very instructive game showing that timing of a central pawn break is crucial.

58

Smyslov – Bronstein
USSR 1973

(1 ♜f3 ♜f6 2 g3 d5 3 ♜g2 ♜f5 4 c4 c6 5 cxd5 cxd5 6 ♜b3 ♜c8 7 ♜c3 e6)



White to move

8 d3!

When Black's light-squared bishop is placed on f5 it's more effective to place the d-pawn on d3 rather than d4. This is a dangerous dynamic plan for Black to meet.

8... ♜c6 9 ♜f4 ♜e7 10 o-o

10 ♜c1 would have gained a tempo on the queenside.

10...o-o 11 ♜ac1

Slowly but surely White prepares the opening of the centre by e2-e4, in order to create life out of this seemingly dead variation.

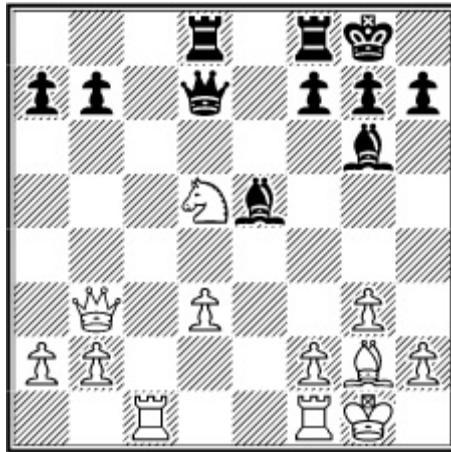
11... ♜d7 12 ♜e5

White opens the diagonal for the g2-bishop.

12... ♜xe5 13 ♜xe5 ♜g6 14 e4! ♜ad8

Or 14...dxe4 15 dxe4 ♜ad8 16 ♜fd1.

15 exd5 exd5 16 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 17 ♜xd5 ♜e5



Bronstein has sacrificed a pawn for the bishop pair but White is simply too active and has a clear advantage.

18 d4! ♜b8

18...♜xd4 is met by 19 ♜cd1 ♜e5 20 ♜f6+.

19 ♜fe1 ♜fe8 20 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8

By forcing the exchange of rooks Black's chances of drawing become more difficult.

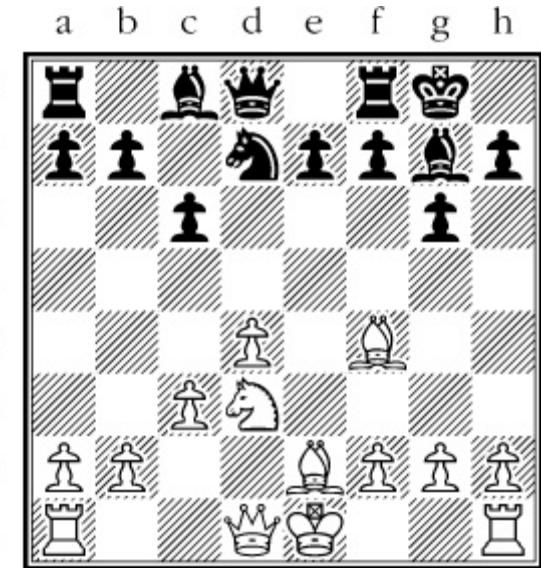
**21 ♜e3 ♜xd4 22 ♜xb7 h5 23 ♜c8 ♜e5 24 ♜c4 ♜e1+ 25 ♜f1 ♜h7
26 ♜xb8 ♜d3 27 ♜d2 ♜e2 28 ♜f3 Black resigns.**

59

Har-Zvi – Speelman

Altensteig 1994

(1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♜d2 dxe4 4 ♜xe4 ♜d7 5 ♜f3 ♜gf6 6 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 7
♜e5 ♜d7 8 ♜d3 g6 9 c3 ♜g7 10 ♜e2 o-o 11 ♜f4)



Black to move

11... ♜a5!?

Speelman's choice is interesting since the liberating move ...e7-e5 is hard to stop, but it's not the strongest. 11...e5! would have equalised at once after 12 dx_e5 (But not 12 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 13 dx_e5 ♜a5! and White cannot hold the pawn on e5 after 14 ♜d4?! ♜e8 15 b4 ♜c7 etc.) 12...♜e7. Surprisingly this simple liberating centralised pawn break has not yet been played. At least not according to *Mega Database 2021*, so a TN (theoretical novelty) is in store.

12 0-0 e5 13 b4 ♜c7 14 ♜g3

White has a slight advantage.

14... ♜d8 15 ♜b3 c5!?

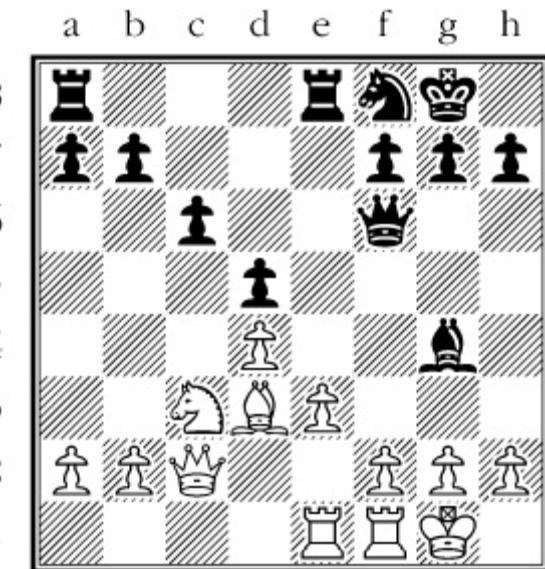
A very creative move by Speelman but unfortunately it's too optimistic.

The game nevertheless ended in a draw after the following moves.

**16 bxc5 b6 17 cxb6 axb6 18 ♜f3 ♜a5 19 ♜fe1 ♜e8 20 ♜ad1 ♜a6
21 ♜b4 ♜c4 22 ♜b1 h5 23 dx_e5 ♜xe5 24 ♜d5 ♜xd5 25 ♜xd5 ♜c5
26 ♜h1 ♜e6 27 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 28 ♜xe5 Draw**

Pillsbury – Showalter
USA Championship 1898

(1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♜c3 ♜f6 4 ♜g5 ♜e7 5 e3 ♜bd7 6 ♜f3 o-o 7 cxd5 exd5 8 ♜d3 c6 9 ♜c2 ♜e8 10 o-o ♜f8 11 ♜e5 ♜g4 12 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 13 ♜xg4 ♜xg4 14 ♜ae1 ♜f6)



White to move

The minority attack is one of the most important motifs in chess and can take place on the queenside or the kingside. However, in practice it's more common on the queenside to avoid exposing the king.

Interestingly the minority attack has been subjected to more detailed analyses than the majority attack, quantitatively as well as qualitatively, because the analyses and methods are more general.

Obviously one should be familiar with the history of the minority attack and the first official game where we can see the embryo of this idea is the move introduced by Pillsbury...

15 a4

Better was 15 f4 with the idea f4-f5 and h2-h3 trapping the bishop.

15...♝e7

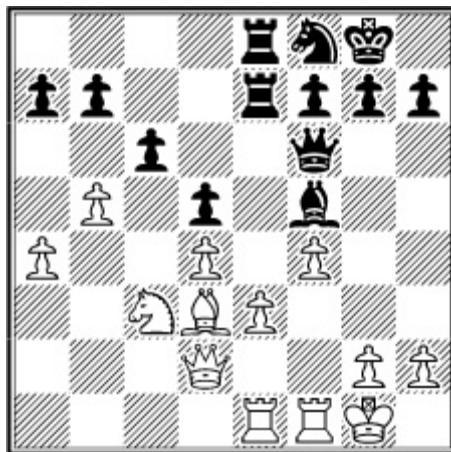
Pillsbury's idea after 15...a5 was probably to play 16 ♜b1 followed by b2-

b4 with pressure on the b7-pawn. However, this kind of minority attack seems less reliable since Black can develop his rook on a8 and place the bishop on c8 and in that way defend the weakness on b7 economically. White has to play a4-a5 followed by ♜c5 to increase the pressure on b7 but if Black has a knight on e6 it's hard to see how White can proceed with the attack.

16 b4

After a transposition of the moves a2-a4 and b2-b4 we now return to a normal minority attack and therefore this game should be regarded as the first embryo or prototype.

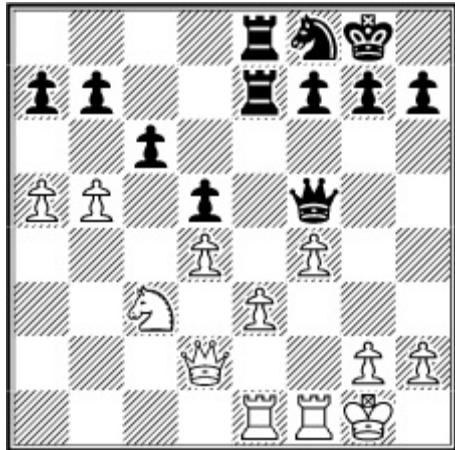
16... ♜ae8 17 b5 ♜g5 18 f4 ♜f6 19 ♜d2 ♜f5



20 a5

Pillsbury has the ambitious plan of creating pawn weaknesses on the queenside and in the centre (the d5-pawn) by a further a5-a6 to crack Black's diagonal of pawns so they fall like dominos. 20 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 21 bxc6 bxc6 22 ♜a2 followed by ♜b4 was correct and in the spirit of the minority attack. From b4 the knight not only attacks the c6-pawn but can also manoeuvre to the ideal square d3.

20... ♜g6 21 ♜xf5 ♜xf5



22 a6

This is the type of minority attack Pillsbury was interested in and we can attribute this double pawn break to him. 22 bxc6 bxc6 23 ♜a2 followed by ♜b4 was still a valid option. The position is balanced due to White's pawn weakness on e3.

22...cxb5 23 ♜xb5 ♜d7 24 axb7 a6

Not 24...♜xb5? 25 ♛b1.

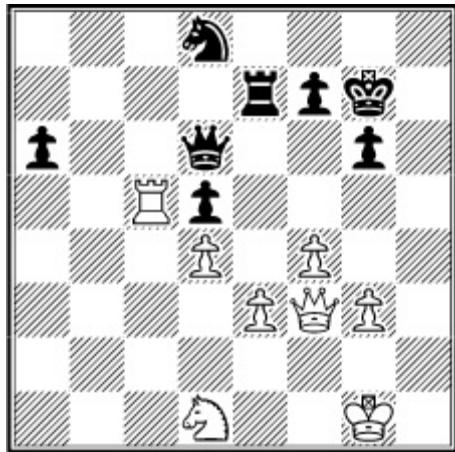
25 ♜c3 ♜xb7 26 ♛b1 ♜c6 27 ♜fc1 ♜d6

27...♜xe3? loses to 28 ♜e4!..

28 ♜d1

White's ambitious plan of a5-a6 has succeeded but due to the weak pawn on e3, which has to be economically defended by the knight, the position is equal. However, Pillsbury managed to win the game after imprecise play by his opponent.

28...♜g6 29 g3 h5 30 ♜e2 h4 31 ♜h5 hxg3 32 hxg3 ♜f8 33 ♜c5 ♜d8 34 ♜bc1 g6 35 ♜f3 ♜e6 36 ♜c8 ♜g7 37 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 38 ♜c5



38... ♜ e6?

38... ♜d7 39 ♜c3 ♜e6 40 ♜xd5 ♜c6 was a better continuation.

39 ♜xd5 ♜b6 40 ♜c1 ♜b4 41 ♜f2 ♜d2?

41... ♜a3 is better.

**42 ♜e5+ f6 43 ♜xf6+! ♜xf6 44 ♜e4+ ♜f5 45 ♜xd2 g5 46 d5 gxf4
47 gxf4 ♜xf4 48 exf4 ♜xf4 49 ♜c5 ♜d7 50 ♜c4 ♜e4 51 d6 ♜d4 52
♜c7 ♜d8 53 d7 ♜d5 54 ♜c8 Black resigns.**

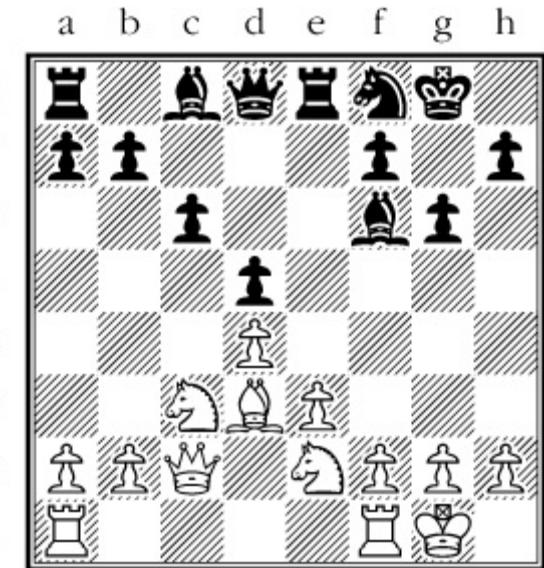
When studying the minority attack I recommend looking at complete games because it is linked to all phases.

Already the exchange 7 cxd5 exd5 prepares the attack which starts with the key move 16 b4. When the position has been clarified on the queenside (28 ♜d1), White will profit from the weaknesses.

61

Steinitz – Lee
London 1899

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♜c3 ♜f6 4 ♜g5 ♜e7 5 e3 0-0 6 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 7 cxd5 exd5
8 ♜b3 c6 9 ♜d3 ♜e8 10 ♜ge2 ♜d7 11 ♜c2 ♜f8 12 0-0 g6



White to move

13 b4

Here this move represents the transitional stage between the opening and the middlegame, because White plans an attack on the c6-pawn with b4-b5 in order to isolate it after b5xc6 ...b7xc6. This game can be regarded as the prototype where a true minority attack was employed. However note that Steinitz lost a tempo by forcing the natural move 8...c6 with 8 ♕b3 and then placed the queen on the right square at move eleven. Steinitz was ahead of his time since according to the Tarrasch school a pawn minority should not advance against a majority. The Hungarian chess journalist Leopold Hoffer, annotator for the tournament book of London 1899, wrote that “the plan of attacking on the left wing, practically four pawns with two should not succeed.”

This clever idea was later taken up by other prominent players such as Capablanca in the world championship match against Lasker in 1921. Capablanca and Alekhine both used the minority attack in their match in 1927. Flohr and Botvinnik played it regularly in the 30s. If you haven't seen the idea before, it might seem strange to attack where Black is stronger but White has an advantage in the semi-open c-file which he wants to exploit. Note that White didn't need to prepare the move with ♘a1-b1 since the exchange on f6 already has taken place to deflect the bishop from the a3-f8 diagonal.

13...a6

It's normally a good idea to get rid of the a-pawns for Black since otherwise the a7-pawn might turn out to be a second weakness after Black has been saddled with a weakness on c6.

14 a4 ♜e7

Hoffer wrote “Black might have played 14...b6 stopping 15 b5, because of 15...c5 and establishing a passed pawn.” However White is clearly better after 16 dxc5 bxc5 17 ♜ad1 with strong pressure on the hanging pawns so the variation chosen by Hoffer, to prove his statement, was wrong. However, one move earlier at move 15 Black should have played the stronger 15...axb5 16 axb5 ♜xa1 17 ♜xa1 c5 18 dxc5 bxc5 19 ♜d1 which would have led to a position in a state of dynamic equilibrium so he wasn’t altogether wrong by suggesting 14...b6.

15 b5 axb5 16 axb5 ♜xa1 17 ♜xa1

The drawback to exchanging the a-pawns is that White gains control of the a-file but nothing is for free in chess, not even getting rid of the a-pawns!

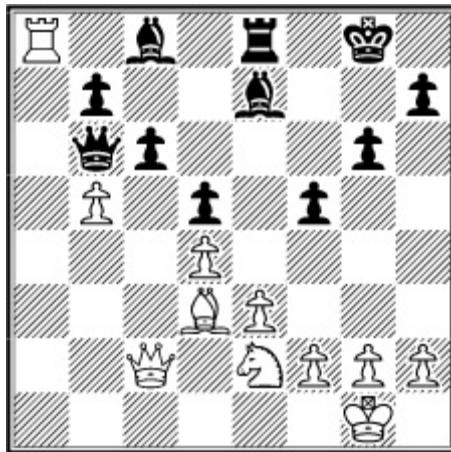
17...f5?

This is too ambitious because it will not be easy for Black to play a minority attack himself with ...f5-f4 or to manoeuvre the knight to e4, due to White’s attack on the queenside. Better was 17...♜e6.

18 ♜a8 ♜d7 19 ♜a4 ♜b6

Black would like to play 19...♞f6 but it doesn’t work on account of 20 bxc6 bxc6 21 ♜xc6 ♜d7 22 ♜xd8 ♜xc6 23 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 24 ♜ac3 and White plays an ending with an extra pawn.

20 ♜xb6 ♜xb6



21 ♟c3?

Steinitz misses the tactical breakthrough 21 g4!! which would have exploited Black's weakened kingside. The pawn is taboo because after 21...fxg4? White plays 22 ♜xg6 hxg6 23 ♜xg6+ ♛f8 24 ♜f4 ♛h4 25 ♜h7 and White mates or wins the queen. I'm pretty sure that from the 1860s Steinitz would have seen this tactical opportunity but by now he was probably too focused on the queenside.

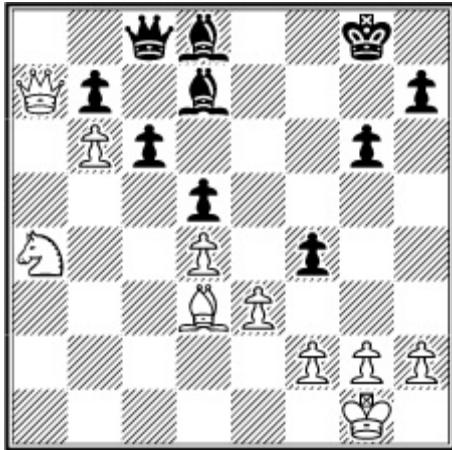
21... ♜d7 22 ♛a2 ♜xa8 23 ♜xa8+ ♜d8?

23... ♜f8 was the correct place for the bishop.

24 ♜a4 ♛c7 25 b6?

Apparently Steinitz wasn't happy with the extra pawn after the forced 25 ♜c5 ♛c8 26 ♜xb7 ♛xb7 27 ♜xb7 ♜b6 28 bxc6 ♜xc6 29 ♜c5. Normally one has to be prepared to play technical endings a pawn up after a successful minority attack.

25... ♛c8 26 ♛a7 f4!



This is the only move to stir the pot. Interestingly Black manages to counter tactically with his own minority attack. This pawn-push is the most logical way to counter White's minority attack but in general it's rare to play the pawn to f4 due to the resulting exposure of his king, especially when there is a bunch of major pieces on the board.

27 ♜c5?

27 exf4 ♛f6 28 ♜c5 ♛xd4 29 ♜b3 was Steinitz's last chance to secure a full point.

27...fxe3 28 ♜xb7

If 28 fxe3 then 28...♛g5.

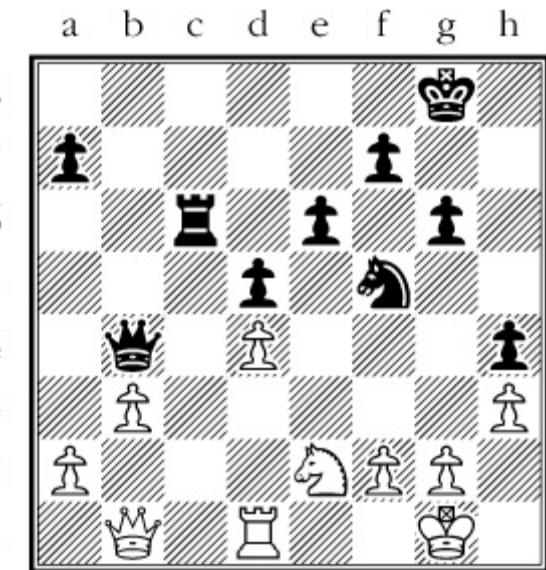
28...exf2+ 29 ♛f1 ♛f5 30 ♜xf5 ♛xf5 31 ♜xd8 ♛d3+ 32 ♛xf2 ♛d2+ 33 ♛f3 ♛d3+ 34 ♛g4 ♛f5+ 35 ♛g3 ♛d3+ 36 ♛h4 ♛xd4+ 37 g4 ♛f6+ 38 ♛g3 ♛e5+ Draw

White cannot escape the queen checks. This wasn't a typical minority attack game since the exchange on c6 never took place. However, the manoeuvre ♜a4-c5 is typical since that is White's strongpoint. Black never took advantage of his strongpoint on e4 and that helped Steinitz to carry out the clever exchange on f6 without even waiting for Black to waste a tempo on ...h6. It's a pity that this was Steinitz's last tournament because he had discovered an important method to combat the Queen's Gambit Declined and brought to life the exchange of the c-pawn for an e-pawn.

62

Lasker – Capablanca World Championship, Havana 1921

(1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♜c3 ♜f6 4 ♜g5 ♜e7 5 e3 o-o 6 ♜f3 ♜bd7 7 ♜c2 c5 8 ♜d1 ♜a5 9 ♜d3 h6 10 ♜h4 cxd4 11 exd4 dxc4 12 ♜xc4 ♜b6 13 ♜b3 ♜d7 14 o-o ♜ac8 15 ♜e5 ♜b5 16 ♜fe1 ♜bd5 17 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 18 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 19 ♜b3 ♜c6 20 ♜xc6 bxc6 21 ♜e5 ♜b6 22 ♜c2 ♜fd8 23 ♜e2 ♜d5! 24 ♜xd5 cxd5 25 ♜d2 ♜f5 26 b3 h5 27 h3 h4 28 ♜d3 ♜c6 29 ♜f1 g6 30 ♜b1 ♜b4 31 ♜g1)



Black to move

31...a5!

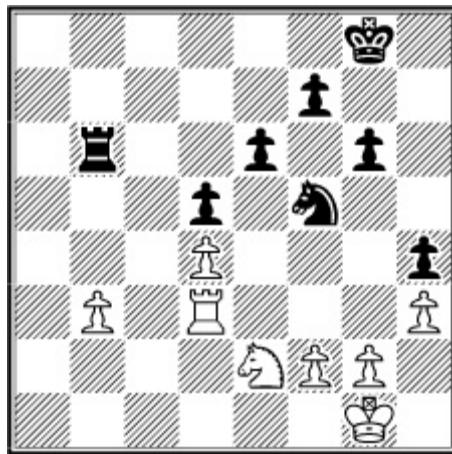
In *Chess From Morphy to Botwinnik – A Century of Chess Evolution* (Dover 1977) Imre König wrote that “Capablanca revived the Minority Attack as Black in the tenth game of the World Championship Match against Lasker, in 1921. He demonstrated with great skill that, contrary to accepted theory, a majority of pawns can be successfully assailed, provided the attacker has an advantage in space for the mobility of the supporting pieces.”

32 ♜b2 a4 33 ♜d2 ♜xd2 34 ♜xd2 axb3 35 axb3

The minority attack has been successful and Black has two weaknesses on which to focus as well as potential ones on the kingside.

35... ♜b6! 36 ♜d3

36 ♜b2 ♜b4 loses a pawn.



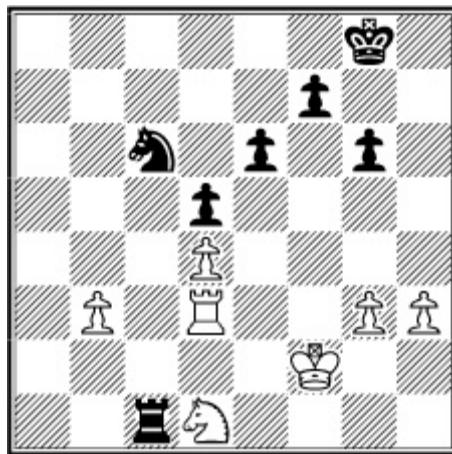
36... ♜a6

For the moment Black cannot win any of the pawns so he should penetrate White's position on the back two ranks with his only major piece.

37 g4 hxg3 38 fxg3 ♜a2 39 ♜c3 ♜c2 40 ♜d1

White must defend against 40...♜xd4 but more active was 40 ♜b5 followed by g3-g4.

40... ♜e7 41 ♜c3 ♜c1+ 42 ♜f2 ♜c6 43 ♜d1



43... ♜b1

Lasker had a devilish trap if Capablanca had continued 43... ♜b4 44 ♜d2 ♜b1 45 ♜b2 ♜xb2?. The knight would have been trapped on b2 after 46 ♜xb2 ♜d3+ 47 ♜e3 ♜xb2 48 ♜d2 and the pawn ending would have resulted in a draw.

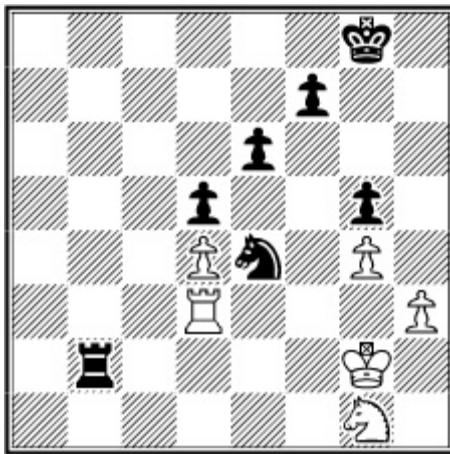
44 ♜e2?

44 ♜e1 ♜a5 45 ♜d2 ♜xb3 46 ♜xb3 ♜xb3+ 47 ♜c3 was a better chance to stay in the game.

44... ♜xb3! 45 ♜e3

If 45 ♜xb3? then 45... ♜xd4+.

45... ♜b4 46 ♜c3 ♜e7 47 ♜e2 ♜f5+ 48 ♜f2 g5 49 g4 ♜d6 50 ♜g1 ♜e4+ 51 ♜f1 ♜b1+ 52 ♜g2 ♜b2+



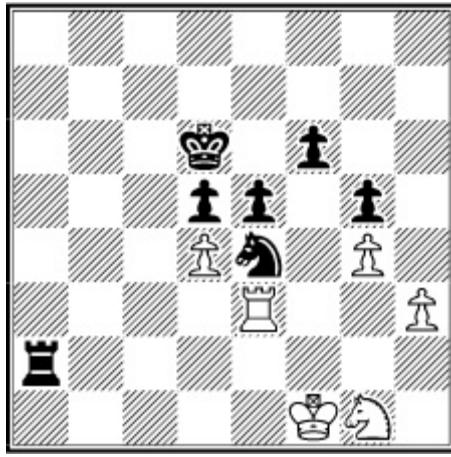
53 ♜f1

53 ♜f3? ♜f2+ 54 ♜e3 f5 would leave White in zugzwang. White loses his rook after 55 ♜d1 f4+ 56 ♜d3 ♜b2 57 ♜f3 ♜f2+ 58 ♜c3 ♜xd1+.

53... ♜f2+ 54 ♜e1 ♜a2 55 ♜f1 ♜g7 56 ♜e3 ♜g6 57 ♜d3 f6!

The key to win is to transfer the king to d6 followed by ...e6-e5 to create a passed pawn in the centre.

58 ♜e3 ♜f7 59 ♜d3 ♜e7 60 ♜e3 ♜d6 61 ♜d3 ♜f2+ 62 ♜e1 ♜g2 63 ♜f1 ♜a2 64 ♜e3 e5!



The decisive central breakthrough!

65 ♜d3 exd4 66 ♜xd4 ♜c5 67 ♜d1 d4 68 ♜c1+ ♜d5 White resigns.

A very important game to assimilate since it does show Capablanca's technical ability in how to exploit tiny advantages such as having fewer pawn islands than the opponent, in this case two versus three. The key method to worsen White's pawn structure was the minority attack, because after the attack had been carried out Black had only one pawn island against White's three.

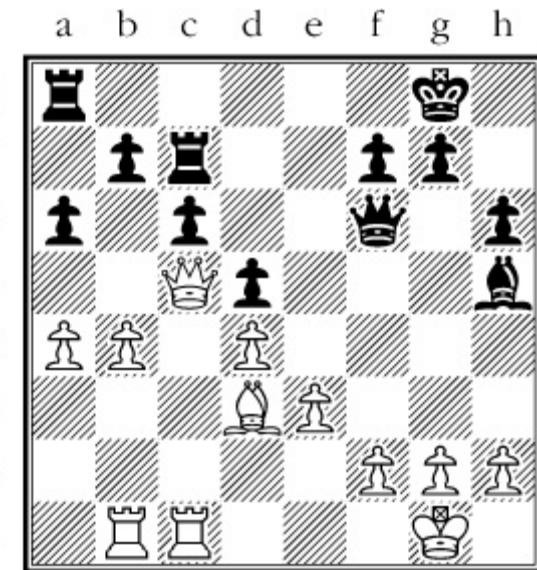
63

Capablanca – Alekhine

Game 25, World Championship, Buenos Aires 1927

(1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♜c3 ♜f6 4 ♜g5 ♜bd7 5 e3 ♜e7 6 ♜f3 o-o 7 ♜c1 a6 8 cxd5 exd5 9 ♜d3 c6 10 ♜c2 ♜e8 11 o-o ♜f8 12 ♜fe1 [Imre König writes that this “seemingly insignificant move” is “in reality a typical conception of Capablanca, who thus retains the option of attacking in the centre, should Black initiate any attack on the king’s wing”. This placement of the rook was later adopted by Flohr and Karpov.] 12...♜e6?! [12...♜e4 or 12...♜g4 followed by ...♜h5-g6 was the right way to handle the position.] 13 ♜a4 ♜6d7 14 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 15 ♜c5 ♜xc5 16 ♜xc5 ♜c7 17 b4 ♜d7 18 ♜c2 h6 19 a4 ♜d6 20 ♜b1 ♜ec8 21 ♜ec1 ♜g4 22 ♜d2 ♜c7 23 ♜b3 ♜h5 24 ♜c5 ♜xc5

25 ♜xc5 ♜f6)



White to move

26 b5?!

This is slightly premature due to the fact that White's useful bishop will be exchanged. It was better to play 26 ♜a1, according to Alekhine's recommendation, before contemplating b4-b5 and answer 26...♝g6 with 27 ♜f1 or 27 ♜e2. On either of these squares the bishop could be used both for the attack on the queenside, by controlling the f1-a6 diagonal, and defence of the kingside. Black's bishop would essentially not do anything useful on the h7-b1 diagonal, because it would not be able to help the defence on the queenside. The control of the e4-square would be small consolation, since a bishop on f1 would easily neutralise any pressure on g2.

26...axb5 27 axb5 ♜g6!

Of course it's in Black's interest to exchange off his inferior bishop. It's surprising that Capablanca allowed this as he had a very deep formula regarding which pieces to keep and which to exchange.

28 ♜xg6 ♜xg6 29 ♜a1 ♜ac8

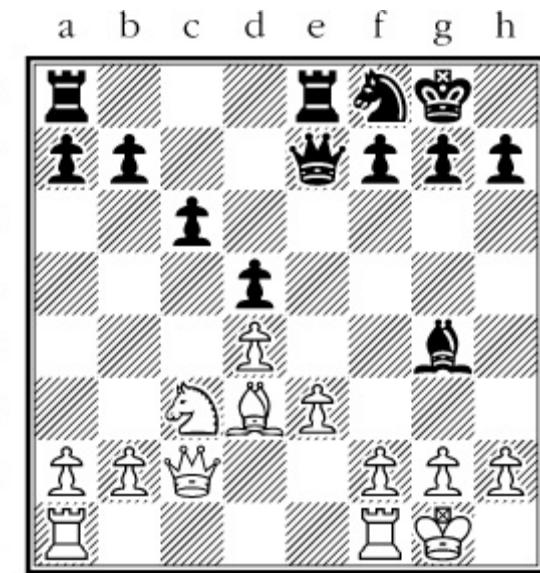
White's only chance to win is if Black captures on b5 as happened in Flohr – Euwe, Amsterdam 1932, exercise 64.

30 b6 ♜d7 31 ♜a7 ♜h7 32 ♜ca1 f5 33 ♜c2 ♜e7 34 g3 ♜ce8 35 ♜a8 ♜e4 36 ♜xe8 ♜xe8 37 ♜a7 ♜b8 38 h4 h5 39 ♜g2 ♜e6 40 ♜d3 ♜g6 41 ♜h2 Draw

64

Flohr – Euwe
Amsterdam 1932

(1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 cxd5 exd5 4 ♜c3 ♜f6 5 ♜g5 ♜e7 6 e3 c6 7 ♜d3 ♜bd7 8 ♜f3 0-0 9 ♜c2 ♜e8 10 0-0 ♜f8 11 ♜e5 ♜g4 12 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 13 ♜xg4 ♜xg4)



White to move

14 ♜fe1

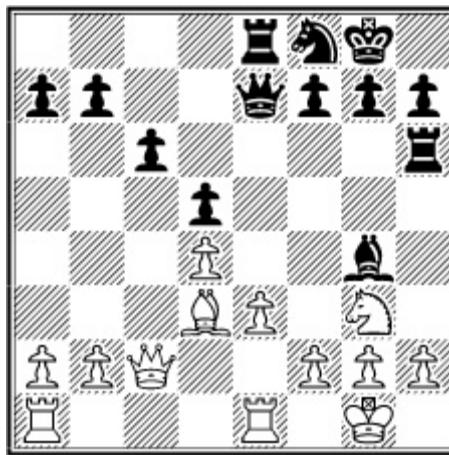
Perhaps inspired by Capablanca's 12th move in exercise 63, the great technician Salo Flohr (1908-1983) plays a more sophisticated move than Pillsbury's 14 ♜ae1. Flohr plans a regrouping of his knight to f1 to secure his kingside against a potential attack.

14... ♜ad8 15 ♜e2 ♜d6

15... ♜xe2 would spoil White's strong knight manoeuvre, but on the other

hand when Black's bishop disappears from the board it will be harder to attack the kingside with one piece less. The white bishop could actually replace the knight on f1 if it should be necessary to cover some light squares near the king, as was discussed in exercise 63. The advantage of having a bishop on f1, compared with a knight, which is purely defensive on that square, is that the bishop could still participate in the minority attack on the queenside by covering the important squares c4, b5 and a6. On principle Black should therefore avoid such an exchange.

16 ♜g3 ♛h6

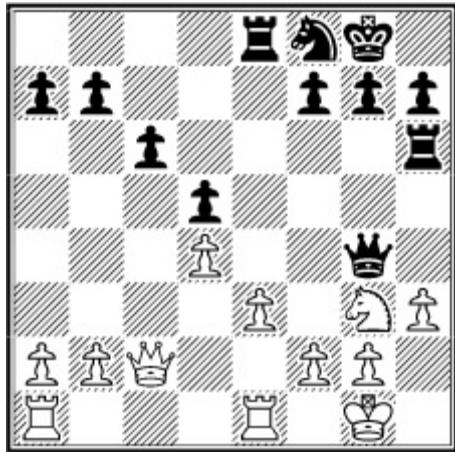


Black prefers to attack with pieces but it will not be so easy to implement in practice, so possibly the pawn push 16...h5!? was a better try to first provoke some weaknesses on the kingside.

17 ♜f5

White's idea is to continue the policy of exchanging potential attacking pieces before embarking on a minority attack. A typical variation, which shows the black bishop's potential, is the following: 17 ♜ab1 ♛h4 18 ♜f1 ♜e6 19 f3 (19 b4?? ♜f3! 20 gxf3 ♜g5 and Black's attack is decisive.) 19...♜h5 (19...♜xf3 20 gxf3 ♜g5 21 ♜g2 ♛h3+ 22 ♜h1 ♜xf3 23 ♜e2 and White wins.) 20 ♛f2 and White stands a little better with his safe kingside.

17...♜g5 18 ♜xg4 ♛xg4 19 h3!



Note that this natural pawn-push is not a one-dimensional move as we will see later in the comments to move 24 and 41.

19... ♜d7 20 b4

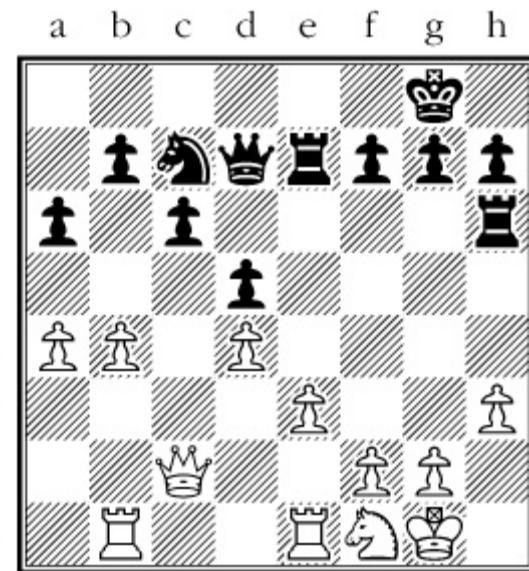
Now, when the kingside is secured from an attack, White begins his own minority attack on the queenside.

20... ♜e6 21 ♜ab1 ♜c7

21... ♜g5 forces White to consider the consequences of a knight sacrifice on h3 and is simplest met by 22 ♜f5.

22 a4 a6 23 ♜f1 ♜e7

65



White to move

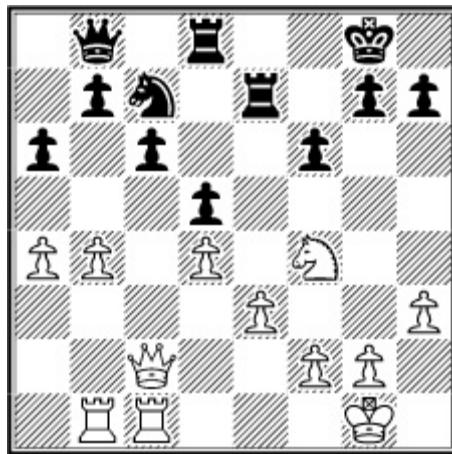
24 ♟h2!!

The strong multi-purpose 19th move makes way for a very beautiful manoeuvre where the vacant h2 square is exploited to the fullest. White plans 25 ♟g4 embarrassing the rook on h6. The unimaginative knight manoeuvre 24 ♟d2 ♜ee6 25 ♟f3 would not work at all, due to 25...♜eg6 and Black is even winning, for example 26 ♜f1 ♜xg2!. If Black has no light-squared bishop to sacrifice on the board the rook will do!

24...♜he6 25 ♟f3 f6

Now Black cannot attack the kingside so this is the right moment to manoeuvre the knight to the queenside.

**26 ♟d2 ♜e8 27 ♟b3 ♜6e7 28 ♟c5 ♜c8 29 ♜ec1 ♜d8 30 ♟d3
♛b8 31 ♟f4**



31...♞e6?

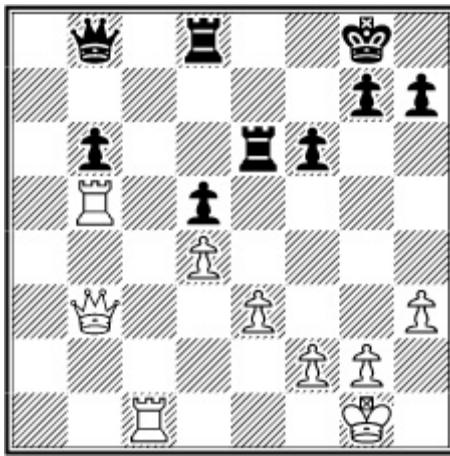
For unknown reasons Black suddenly allows the minority attack. Black could have supported his own minority attack by 31...♜f8 followed by ...g7-g5 and ...f6-f5-f4. Obviously there would have been risks involved, because of the weakening of the kingside and the e5 square, but above all it's an active continuation. In the game Black was doomed to passivity without any counterplay whatsoever. It was Kasparov who said "I used to attack because it was the only thing I knew. Now I attack because I know it works best." He's

certainly right from a psychological point of view, especially if he is referring to an attack on the king, which he probably does. Many players, unless they play the Sicilian Defence, where you actually get used to attacks, feel uncomfortable when their kingside is under fire.

32 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 33 b5 axb5 34 axb5 cxb5?

This is normally bad policy when defending against the minority attack. Black gets two weaknesses on b7 and d5 instead of one as after 34...♛c7 35 bxc6 bxc6.

35 ♜xb5 b6 36 ♛b3



36...♛d6

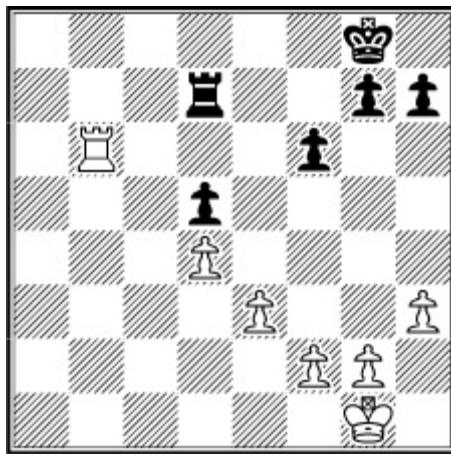
36...♛b7 holds on to the pawns a little longer, but the c-file as well as the seventh or the eighth rank cannot be held, so Black is forced to give up material sooner or later anyway. An illustrative variation, if Black insists on not giving up one of his pawns, is 37 ♜bc5! ♜d7 38 ♜c8+ ♛f7 39 ♜d1! g6 40 ♛f3! ♛g7 (40...♜e8 41 ♜xe8 ♛xe8 42 ♛xf6) 41 h4! h5 (41...b5 42 h5) 42 ♛g3 ♜ee7 (White was threatening 43 ♜1c7.) 43 ♜1c2! (43 ♜b8 ♜c7 44 ♜xc7 ♛xc7 45 ♛xc7 ♜xc7 46 ♜xb6 wins one pawn at least, but White is after the king since he has already penetrated to the eighth rank!) 43...b5 44 ♜b8 ♛a6 45 ♜cc8 ♛e6 46 ♛f4! ♛f5 47 ♜g8+ ♛f7 48 ♛h6 ♛e6 49 ♛gf8! The f6-pawn proves to be the weakest point in Black's "new" residence. 49...♜b7 (49...♜d6 50 ♜fe8! ♜dd7 51 ♜b6+ ♜d6 52 ♛f8) 50 ♛h8 ♜xb8 51 ♜xb8 ♛b1+ 52 ♛h2 ♛f5 53 ♜f8 ♜e6 54 ♛h6! ♜e4 55 ♛g5+ and it's

mate in five moves. These variations clearly show that the main aim of a minority attack, or a queenside attack by other means, is not only a matter of winning a pawn. A higher aim is to invade behind the enemy lines, with the help of the major pieces.

37 ♜b1

White wins a pawn.

37... ♜d7 38 ♜xb6 ♜xb6 39 ♜xb6 ♜xb6 40 ♜xb6



White has an extra pawn, the more active rook and Black has a weak pawn on d5. This is a typical ending after a successful minority attack.

40... ♜f7 41 ♜h2

Here we see another point of the strong 19th move.

41... ♜e7 42. ♜g3 ♜a7 43 ♜f4 g6?

Black unnecessarily weakens f6 which makes it easier for White to win the rook ending. 43...h5 should have been played.

44 g4! ♜a2

If Black is passive with the rook, let's say with 44...♜c7, then 45 h4 followed by g4-g5 will decide. White will get two connected passed pawns in the centre if the pawns are exchanged. Otherwise White gains access to the e5-square for his king.

45 ♜b7+ ♜e6 46 ♜g3 White resigns.

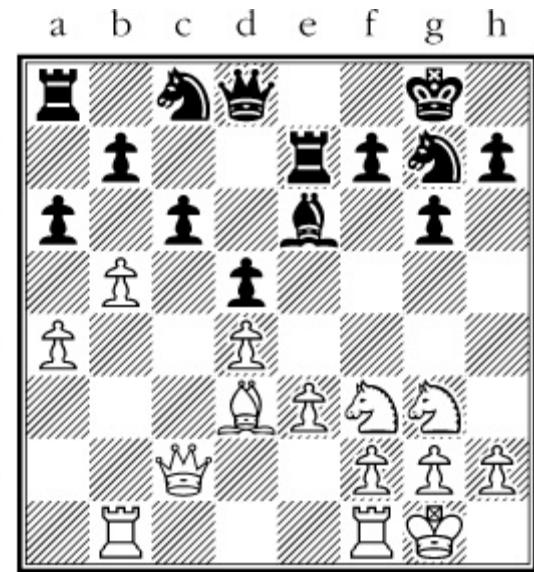
The h-pawn is lost after 46...h5 47 gxh5 gxh5 48 ♖h7.

66

H. Kramer – Fichtl

Vimperk 1949

(1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♜c3 ♜f6 4 ♜g5 ♜e7 5 e3 o-o 6 ♜f3 ♜bd7 7 ♜c1 a6 8 cxd5 exd5 9 ♜d3 c6 10 ♜c2 ♜e8 11 o-o g6 12 ♜b1 ♜b6 13 ♜e2 ♜h5 14 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 15 b4 ♜g7 16 ♜g3 ♜e6 17 a4 ♜c8 18 b5)



Black to move

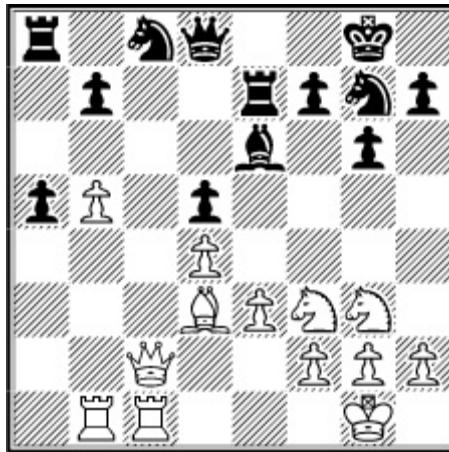
18...cxb5

18...axb5? 19 axb5 ♜c7 20 bxc6 bxc6 would lead to a concluded minority attack where White would dictate terms for a long time to come.

19 axb5 a5

This is a very interesting but more unusual method to meet the minority attack. Euwe/Kramer recommend first 19...♜c7 to take control of the c-file and only then 20...a5. Black has no problems after 20 ♜d2 a5 21 b6 (21 ♜a1 b6 22 ♜e5 ♜e7) 21...♜c6 with mutual chances.

20 ♜fc1



White controls the c-file but Black has enough compensation due to the dangerous passed pawn.

Here Black should have played...

20...♞b6

The knight blockades the hostile b-pawn, supports the a-pawn and controls the c4-square.

Euwe and Kramer have written that “It seems by no means impossible that this scheme – the creation of a passed a-pawn combined with pressure against White’s c4 – may be instrumental in banishing the dread of the minority attack, or at least considerably reducing it.”

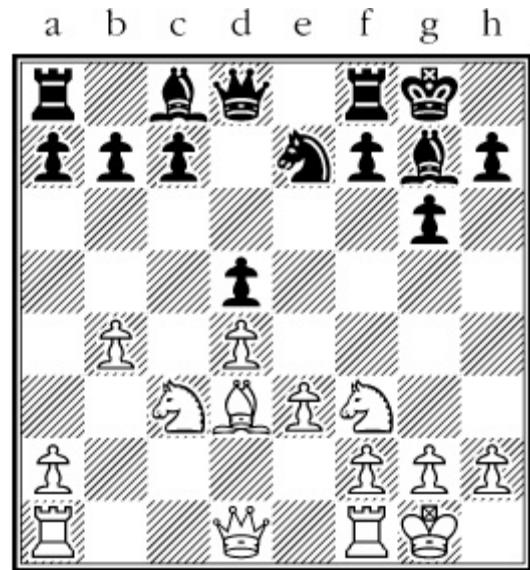
Unfortunately 20...♝d6? was played in the game and Kramer in his turn missed the fact that 21 b6! would have led to a clearly better game for White.

67

Petrosian – Krogius

USSR Championship, Tbilisi 1959

(1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜f3 g6 3 c4 ♜g7 4 ♜c3 d5 5 ♜g5 ♜e4 6 cxd5 ♜xg5 7 ♜xg5 e6 8 ♜f3 exd5 9 e3 o-o 10 ♜d3 ♜c6 11 o-o ♜e7 12 b4)



Black to move

12...♝f5?!

Normally it's pointless to exchange the light-squared bishops if Black cannot exploit the c4-square with a knight to block the c-file and in that way combat the minority attack. The normal move was 12...c6 but it seems that Krogius' plan was to avoid moving the pawn on c7 and keep the pawn wall united according to Steinitz' rule. However the minority attack will work nevertheless because sooner or later Black will have to play ...c7-c6 anyway, due to the strong pressure on the d5-pawn and the c-file.

13 ♞xf5 ♛xf5 14 b5

Interestingly Petrosian isn't interested in forcing events with 14 ♜b3, practically forcing 14...c6, as Steinitz was anxious to do. White's choice in the game gives Black more options. The questions Krogius needs to ask himself are related to the placements of the c- and a-pawns.

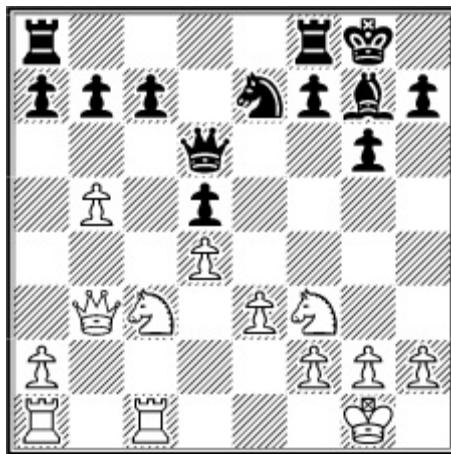
14...♛d6

14...a6 would have been most simply answered by 15 a4. On the other hand 15 bxa6 ♛xa6 16 ♜b3 ♛a5, with the idea 17 ♜xb7, gives Black counterplay after 17...c5.

15 ♜b3 ♛e7

Black still postpones the crucial 15...c6.

16 ♜fc1



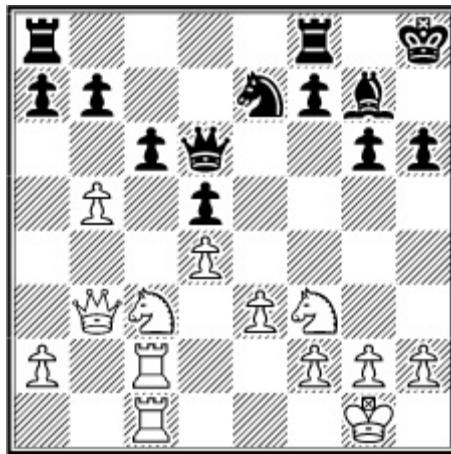
16... ♛h8?

Black's king was perfectly placed on g8. He probably plans his own minority attack with ...f5-f4 but this plan has few chances of success. Black should have taken care of his queenside, so better was 16... ♜fc8.

17 ♜c2 h6

This unnecessary defensive move, which aims to prevent ♜g5 in conjunction with e3-e4, only proves that it was necessary to admit his mistake and go back with 17... ♛g8. One cannot go against the requirements of the position and Krogius' psychological game goes too far this time.

18 ♜ac1 c6



19 ♜a4!

The immediate routine capture 19 bxc6 bxc6 followed by 20 ♜a4 gives the opponent breathing space with 20...♜ab8.

19...♜ab8 20 g3!?

More active was 20 ♜c5. The move played is characteristic of Petrosian's prophylactic style. The move itself is useful and prophylactic, and according to the "no hurry" principle, to show that one is complete master of the situation. It's useful to give the king a square on g2 before opening any lines. This would be prophylactic because it prevents the minority attack ...f7-f5-f4 even before Black has put his pawn on f5! Such a move has a strong psychological impact on the opponent because it means additional pressure, which in turn increases the chances of mistakes.

20...♝h7 21 ♜c5 ♜fd8

21...b6 22 ♜d3 cxb5 23 ♜xb5 ♜fc8 24 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 25 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 26 ♜e8 leads to a win for White, for example 26...♜c7 (or 26...♜e6 27 ♜xe6 fxe6 28 ♜f4) 27 ♜fe5 ♜d6 28 ♜c6 ♜xc6 29 ♜xc6 ♜b5 30 a4 ♜c3 31 ♜xa7 ♜xa4 32 ♜b5 and White wins the d5-pawn by force.

22 bxc6 bxc6 23 ♜a4 ♜f6 24 ♜g2

Also here Petrosian chooses a useful move rather than the active 24 ♜e5.

24...♜a8

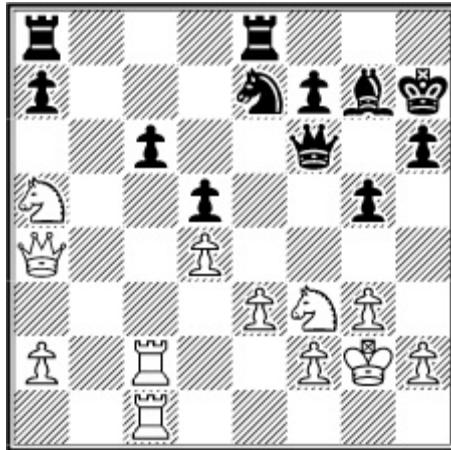
Black defends the a7-pawn but loses the c6-pawn instead.

25 ♜b7 ♜e8 26 ♜a5

The c6-pawn's destiny is sealed.

26...g5

Better late than never, Black tries to do something on the kingside.



27 h3

Another typical Petrosian-move showing that his opponent must dance to his tune. 27 ♜xc6 was winning too but the problem is where to place the knight after 27...g4 since all five reasonable knight moves are winning!

27... ♜f5 28 ♜xc6 ♜e4 29 ♜c5

White wants to exchange queens by ♜c2.

29...f5 30 ♜c2

A beautiful symbolic line-up on the c-file where White has already broken through.

30... ♜xc6 31 ♜xc6 f4

Black's thematic attack comes when White's pieces are already on their ideal locations!

32 exf4 gxf4 33 g4 ♜xd4 34 ♜d2

34 ♜c7+ ♜g7 35 ♜c6 followed by 36 ♜d7 would prolong the harassment on the c-file initiated by the minority attack.

34... ♜g7 35 ♜e1 ♜a4 36 ♜xd5 ♜xe1 37 ♜xe1 ♜f8 38 ♜f3 ♜h8 39 ♜c7 a6 40 ♜b7 ♜g8 41 ♜h4 Black resigns.

68

Shankland – Karjakin

FIDE World Cup, Sochi 2021

(1 c4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 g3 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ d5 4 d4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ o-o 6 o-o dxcc4 7 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ a6 8 a4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ h6 12 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 13 e3 $\mathbb{Q}d6$)



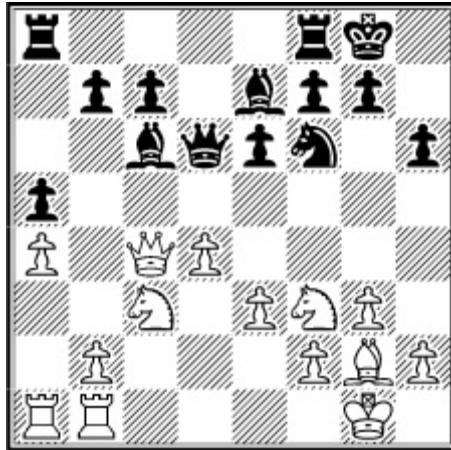
White to move

In the following instructive recent example Shankland shows that sometimes it's possible just to threaten a minority attack to force a weakening of the opponent's pawn structure.

14 $\mathbb{Q}fb1$

White threatens to play b4-b5 with the bishop on c6 as a target rather than a pawn which is the normal target in the minority attack.

14...a5



Black prevents this idea very easily and White even has a hole on b4 now, so what's the justification for Shankland's idea? He wanted to provoke the a6-pawn to a5 and make the important pawn break ...c7-c5 less palatable because it would weaken the b5-square. It's better to play ...c5 with the a-pawn on a7 or a6 but not on a5. After the further...

15 ♜e2 ♜xf3 16 ♜xf3 c6

...the king's rook had fulfilled its purpose of changing Black's pawn structure to a more passive one so the move...

17 ♜d1

...suggests itself. Later in the game Shankland doubled rooks on d3 and d1 and overprotected the d4-pawn in the spirit of Nimzowitsch. He then went on to win a fine game after 45 moves.

69

Gligorić – Klein

London 1951



White to move

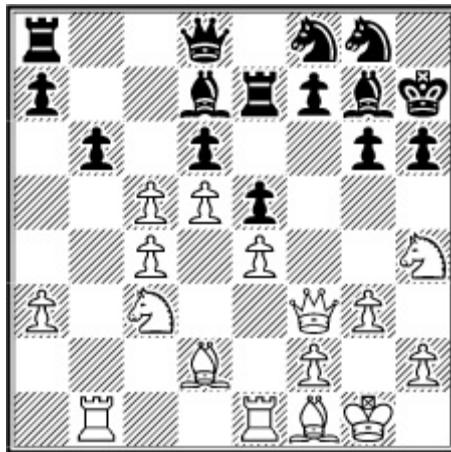
15 a3

Here Black has failed to play the normal as well as crucial break ...f7-f5. Now it will be easier for White to concentrate on opening the queenside. Black's central structure can be difficult to crack since the key to this lies in the seemingly indestructible d6-pawn. It is instructive to study how Gligoric solves this intricate but typical positional problem when dealing with the particular blocked pawn structure. After 15 ♕xf7?? ♔f6 there is no return to the white camp for the queen.

15... ♜e7 16 b4 b6

16...cxb4? 17 axb4 is useless since there is no way to exploit the fact that the c4-pawn is weak.

17 ♜ab1 ♜d7 18 bxc5



18...bxc5

Normally 18...dxc5 is to be preferred if it's possible to place a knight on d6. If White plays the routine move 19 a4 (19 d6? ♜e6 20 ♜xf7 ♜xd6 21 ♜d5 is only in Black's interest after 21...♞f6 with adequate counterplay.) with the continuation 19...♞f6 20 a5 ♜e8 21 ♜b2 ♜d6 Black has achieved his goal. But White has achieved his goal as well due to the strong pressure he exerts on the queenside after 22 ♜a1.

19 ♜d3

White needs the queen on the queenside to exploit the open file where Black has his weaknesses.

19...♝e8 20 ♜b2 ♜b8 21 ♜eb1 ♜b6

Black's idea is that if White exchanges on b6 he will have some counterplay along the a-file. 21...♜xb2 22 ♜xb2 helps White to double on the b-file with ♜b1. This is White's dream position since the main idea with 15 a3 was to open the b-file and then exploit it.

22 ♜xb6

22 a4!? was also an option.

22...axb6 23 ♛c2 ♜a7 24 ♛b3 ♜a6

Here the black rook is both passive and active at the same time.

25 ♜b5 ♜e7

25...♝xb5 26 cxb5 (26 ♜xb5 ♜xa3 27 ♜xb6 gives White possibilities of

applying pressure on d6 but Black has defensive resources after 27... $\text{N}f6$) 26... $\text{B}a7$ 27 a4 followed by a4-a5 at the right moment gives White the advantage.

26 $\text{N}h3$

White prevents the defensive move ... $\text{B}c8$ and practically forces Black to exchange his good bishop.

26... $\text{B}d7$ 27 $\text{N}xd7$ $\text{B}xd7$ 28 $\text{N}g2$

White's knight is no longer needed to prevent ...f5, since Black is busy defending his queenside and cannot create any counterplay on the other flank.

28... $\text{B}c8$

28...f5 29 f3 g5 30 $\text{B}e3$ f4 31 $\text{B}f5!$ $\text{B}xf5$ 32 exf5 only leads to weaknesses on the kingside.

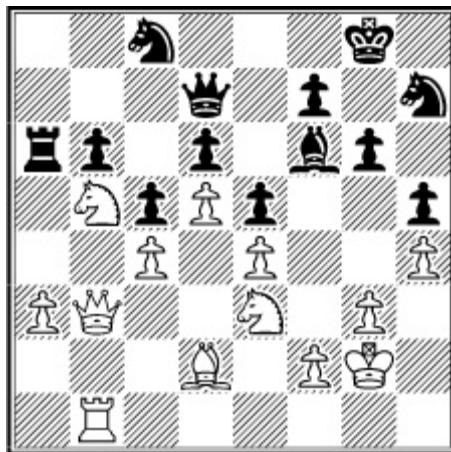
29 $\text{B}e3$ h5 30 $\text{B}d1$ $\text{B}f6$

30... $\text{B}h6$ could be considered.

31 $\text{B}g2$ $\text{B}g7$ 32 $\text{B}e3$ $\text{B}h7$ 33 h4!

The rook-pawn dominates both the bishop and the knight.

33... $\text{B}g8$ 34 a4!



White's plan is to break with a4-a5 and then to penetrate along the b-file.

34... ♜g7 35 ♜c3 ♜a7?

Black wants to prevent the queen penetrating to b5 but better was 35... ♜a5 and let the knight defend the two main weaknesses in Black's position.

36 a5! ♜c8

36...bxa5 is answered by 37 ♜b8+ ♜c8 38 ♜b7 or 36... ♜xa5 37 ♜xb6.

37 ♜a4! bxa5 38 ♜b5 ♜xb5

Or 38... ♜a7 39 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 40 ♜b8 ♜d8 41 ♜b6 etc.

39 cxb5 ♜a7 40 b6 ♜xb6

40... ♜b7 is met by 41 ♜c4.

41 ♜xb6 ♜f8 42 ♜c4 ♜f6 43 f3 ♜d7 44 ♜c6 ♜g7 45 ♜xd6! Black resigns.

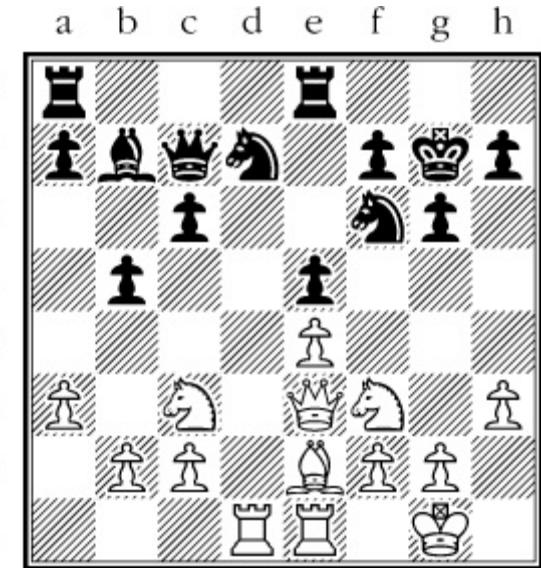
The heart of Black's central pawn structure has at last fallen. An instructive model game, showing how to break through the central structure c5-d6-e5 with a3 followed by b4, with a subsequent decisive penetration on the b-file.

70

Radovici – Stein

Bucharest 1961

(1 e4 d6 2 d4 g6 3 ♜c3 ♜g7 4 ♜e3 c6 5 ♜d2 ♜a5 6 ♜f3 ♜d7 7 ♜e2 ♜gf6 8 o-o o-o 9 h3 ♜e8 10 a3 ♜c7 11 ♜ad1 b5 12 ♜fe1 ♜b7 13 ♜h6 e5 14 ♜xg7 ♜xg7 15 dxе5 dxе5 16 ♜e3)



Black to move

16...a6

Black plans to set his qualitative pawn majority in motion by ...c5 and ...b4 with the objective of attacking the e4-pawn. 16...a5 would not give Black so many options to play with his pawns on the queenside after 17 b4.

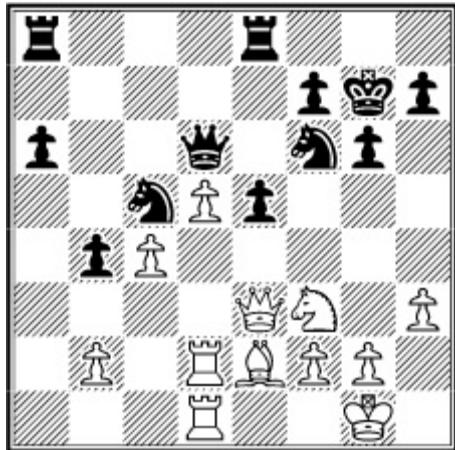
17 ♜d2 c5 18 ♜ed1

18 ♜d5 produces no results after 18...♝xd5! 19 exd5 c4 since White's passed pawn isn't dangerous. If White doesn't push his pawn to d6 then Black can make use of the d6 and c5 squares to manoeuvre his pieces.

18...b4 19 axb4 cxb4 20 ♜d5 ♜xd5!

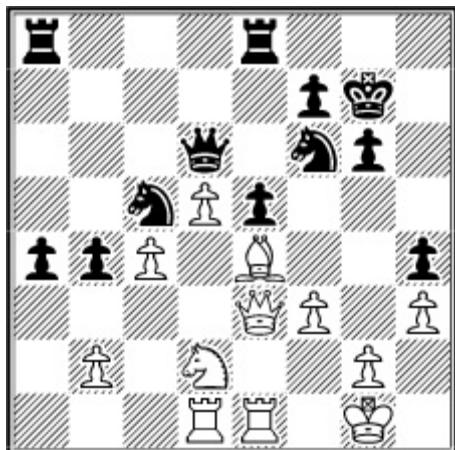
In this position it's correct to keep the knight pair rather than the bishop and the knight.

21 exd5 ♜d6 22 c4 ♜c5



Now we can see why it was so important to exchange the bishop since Black has very strong dark-square control. Note also White's bad bishop and that Black's pawn majority on the a- and b-files is more difficult to stop than the pawns on c4 and d5 which are effectively blockaded.

23 ♜e1 ♜fe4 24 ♜dd1 a5 25 ♜d3 ♜f6 26 ♜d2 a4 27 ♜e4 h5 28 f3 h4



To use a famous expression from Hans Kmoch's *Pawn Power in Chess* (McKay 1959) we have a case of serious "monochromy" on the kingside. For some unclear reasons his nomenclature hasn't been accepted in the chess world. It's difficult to find a better word to describe a complex of dark squares that is weak.

29 ♜c2 b3 30 ♜b1 ♜fd7 31 ♜e4?!

It's technically incorrect to help Black get rid of his superfluous knight so

more precise was 31 ♜f2.

31...♝xe4 32 fxe4?

32 ♜xe4 was the right recapture.

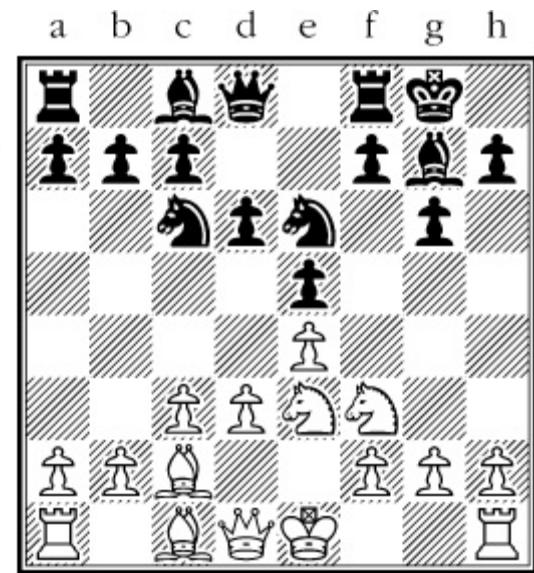
32...♝ec8 33 ♞d3 ♜c5 34 ♜f2 f5 35 ♜e2 f4 36 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 37 ♜a1 ♜f6 White resigns.

71

Steinitz – Chigorin

Game 4, World Championship, Havana 1892

(1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5 ♜f6 4 d3 d6 5 c3 g6 6 ♜bd2 ♜g7 7 ♜f1 0-0 8 ♜a4 ♜d7 9 ♜e3 ♜c5 10 ♜c2 ♜e6)



White to play

11 h4!

Nowadays this is standard procedure with a stabilised situation in the centre. The plan to attack the kingside, by striving to open a file, was first developed by Steinitz with the black pieces in his game versus Dubois in London 1862. It is Steinitz' most important attacking idea.

11...♝e7?!

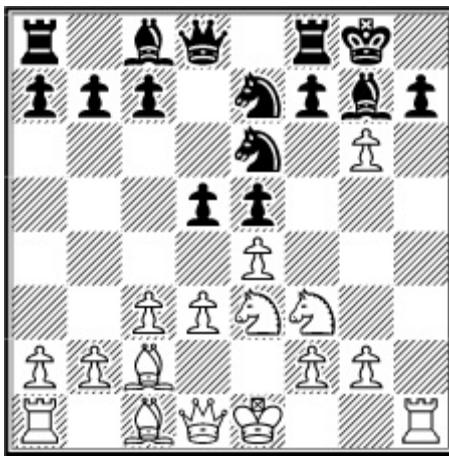
Black wants to respond to the flank attack with a reaction in the centre but White is too strong there.

This is the main idea of starting a flank attack with a closed central structure. 11...h5 or 11... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ would have made it harder for White to open the h-file and was a better practical choice.

12 h5

Now the game is like a self-playing piano.

12...d5 13 hxg6



13...fxg6

Black weakens the classical a2-g8 diagonal but it was hardly better to open the h-file with 13...hxg6 because after 14 $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ dxe4 15 dxe4 $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ f6 17 $\mathbb{Q}b3$, despite the fact that the queens are off the board, White has a small but enduring advantage with his more active minor and major pieces.

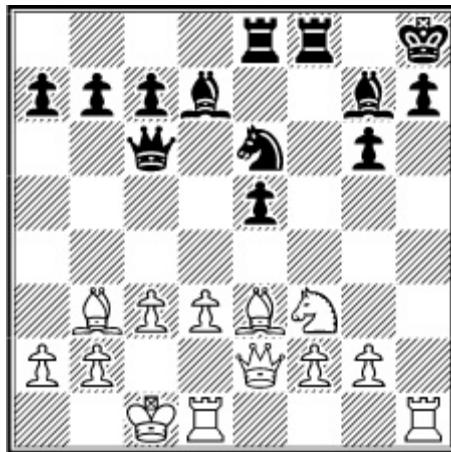
Incidentally, Réti writes in his classic *Modern Ideas in Chess* (Dover 1960) that Steinitz would probably have played 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ since it is part of his strategy to avoid the exchange of queens. After the further 14... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ followed by 16 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ and 17 o-o-o White would have the slightly better chances.

14 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$

One can understand Black's reluctance to place his king on the classical

diagonal but, as the game shows, it is no better placed in the corner. It would be better to start an immediate counterattack with 18...a5!.

19 o-o-o ♜ae8



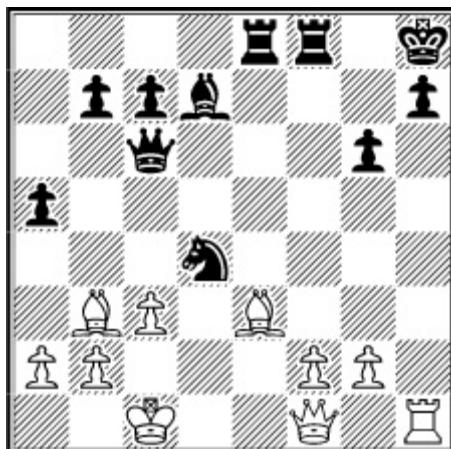
20 ♜f1

Komodo prefers 20 ♜d2!. The plan is to continue either with 23 d4 or 23 ♜h6, depending on Black's reply. Steinitz's move is slightly passive and it was only because of Chigorin's poor defence that it turned out to be a really good one.

20...a5?

More resilient was 20...h5! which could have been met by 21 ♜c2 with the idea 22 d4.

21 d4! exd4 22 ♜xd4 ♛xd4 23 ♜xd4 ♜xd4?



Chigorin makes a mistake in a lost position and gives Steinitz the opportunity to show off.

24 ♜xh7+! ♚xh7 25 ♜h1+ ♚g7 26 ♜h6+

The spontaneous 26 ♜h6+ leads to a fast mate too after 26...♚f6 27 ♜h4+ ♚g7 28 ♜h6+ and 29 ♜xf8 mate.

26...♚f6 27 ♜h4+ ♚e5 28 ♜xd4+ Black resigns.

White mates next move, either with the queen on f4 or the pawn on g4. Which mate would you prefer?

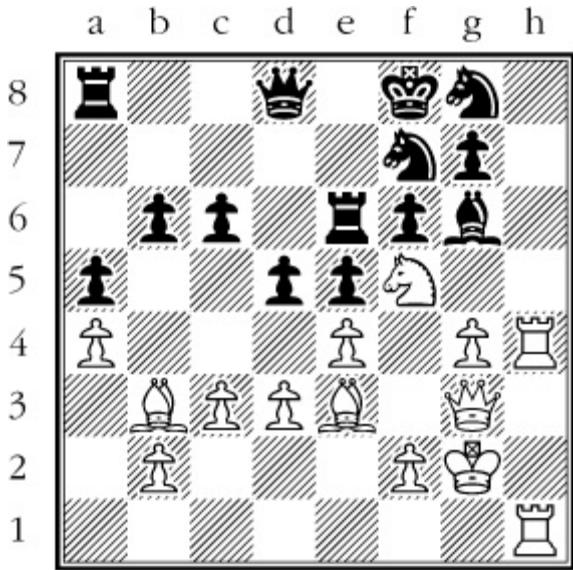
In my opinion this is one of the best classical games showing how to attack with a safe position in the centre. So embrace this fundamental and very important idea and learn the game by heart!

72

Capablanca – Marshall

New York 1909

(1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5 d6 4 c3 ♜g4 5 d3 ♜e7 6 ♜bd2 ♜f6 7 o-o o-o 8 ♜e1 h6 9 ♜f1 ♜h7 10 ♜e3 ♜h5 11 g4 ♜g6 12 ♜f5 h5 13 h3 hxg4 14 hxg4 ♜g5 15 ♜xg5 ♜xg5 16 ♜g2 d5 17 ♜e2 ♜e8 18 ♜h1 ♜e6 19 ♜e3 f6 20 ♜a4 ♜e7 21 ♜b3 c6 22 ♜g3 a5 23 a4 ♜f7 24 ♜e3 b6 25 ♜h4 ♜f8 26 ♜ah1 ♜g8)



White to move

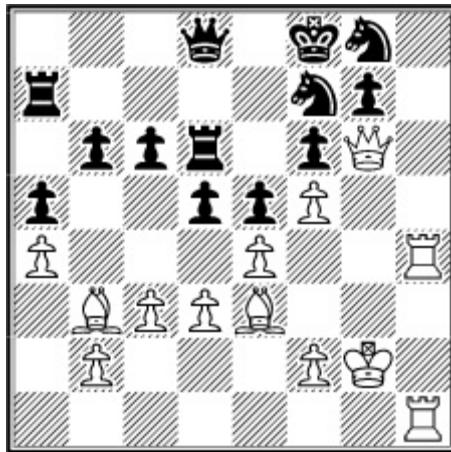
27 ♕f3!

White's pieces harmonise optimally with each other. The rooks control the only open file, the bishops exercise pressure on the key diagonals and the knight is placed on the "optimal attacking square for the knight" according to Kasparov. Meanwhile the queen cooperates with the bishop on b3 to break down the central point on d5. Compare the activity and the coordination of every white piece with the equivalent black piece. It's not so strange that the black position soon collapses!

27... ♜xf5

27...dxe4 28 dxe4 ♜e8 29 ♜h3 followed by ♜h8 wins according to Reinfeld and that is indeed confirmed by Komodo10.

28 gx~~f~~5 ♜d6 29 ♜h5 ♜a7 30 ♜g6!



30... ♜ fh6

30... ♜e7 31 ♜h8+ ♜xh8 (31... ♜g8 32 ♜h7 ♜xh8 33 ♜xh8 gives Black one extra tempo but it doesn't change the result.) 32 ♜xh8+ ♜g8 33 ♜h7 ♜f7 34 ♜xb6 and White wins according to Capablanca, however the computer suggests the even stronger 34 ♜d1! which forces mate in eleven moves.

31 ♜xh6 gxh6 32 ♜xh6+ ♜e7

If 32... ♜xh6 then 33 ♜xh6.

33 ♜h7+ ♜e8 34 ♜xg8+ ♜d7 35 ♜h7+ ♜e7 36 ♜f8 ♜xh7 37 ♜xh7+ ♜e8 38 ♜xa7 Black resigns.

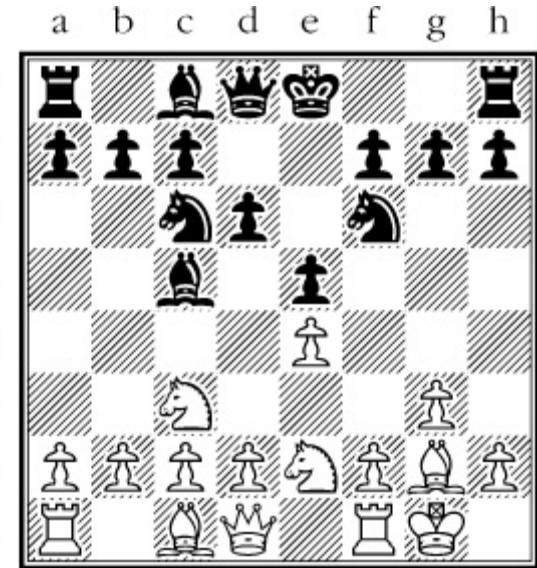
Capablanca comments that this is one of his best games. It looks so easy when he wins like this. Such games are typical for his style. His opponents seem helpless when he manages to coordinate all his pieces. Harmony or cooperation is the key in attacking play. It's not enough to count the number of pieces that are attacking in comparison with those defending, the relative level of activity must also be taken into account.

73

Augustin – Nunn

European Team Championship 1977

(1 e4 e5 2 ♜c3 ♜f6 3 g3 ♜c5 4 ♜g2 d6 5 ♜ge2 ♜c6 6 o-o)



Black to move

6...h5!

A strong and typical move when White has played g2-g3 followed by a fianchetto of his bishop, as well as ♜g2 and o-o. Black's strong control of the d4-square and powerful bishop on the Italian diagonal are also good signs for advancing the h-pawn two steps.

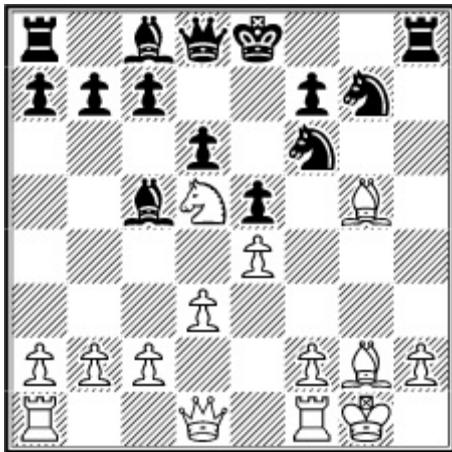
7 d3

7 h3 is answered by 7...h4 8 g4 ♜xg4! 9 hxg4 ♜xg4 and Black has compensation thanks to his attacking chances. One plausible variation is 10 ♜h2 h3 11 ♜h1 ♜h4 12 f3 ♜e6 followed by queenside castling and Black has more activity as well as two pawns for the sacrificed knight. 7 h4 weakens g4 and is answered by 7...♜g4 followed by ...♝d4, ...♛d7 and ...o-o-o with strong pressure on several relevant diagonals.

7...h4 8 ♜g5 hxg3 9 ♜xg3

9 hxg3 weakens g4 and is most simply exploited by 9...♜g4 followed by ...♛d7.

9...♝d4 10 ♜h5 ♜e6 11 ♜xg7+ ♜xg7 12 ♜d5



12... ♜xd5!?

The English GM John Nunn is famous for his enterprising attacking play and was feared by many during his heyday, especially when he had the white pieces. Together with Murray Chandler and Nigel Short he developed the so-called English attack against the Sicilian Defence. Here he sacrifices his queen for a strong offensive.

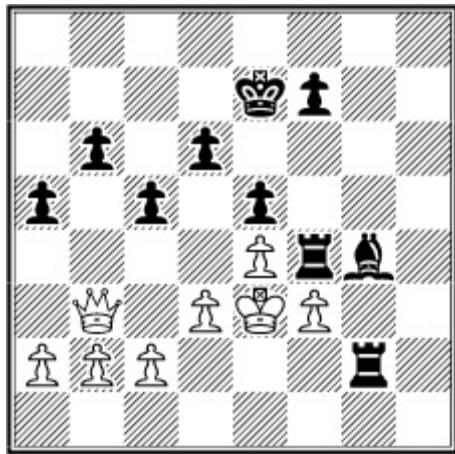
**13 ♜xd8 ♜f4 14 ♜g5 ♜ge6 15 ♜xf4 ♜xf4 16 ♜h1 ♜e6 17 ♜f3
♜h4 18 ♜g1 ♜e7 19 ♜g2 ♜xg2 20 ♜xg2 ♜ah8**



21 ♜d2?!

Drawing the married couple nearer to each other with 21 ♜g1, in the spirit of Steinitz – Burn, Hastings 1895, was the best defence, although Black retains good winning chances with 21... ♜f4 22 ♜f1 ♜g4 etc.

**21... ♜xh2+ 22 ♜g1 ♜2h4 23 ♜e1 ♜g8 24 ♜e3 ♜xe3 25 ♜xe3
♝h3 26 ♜f1 ♜xg2+ 27 ♜e2 c5 28 ♜d2 b6 29 ♜c3 ♜f4 30 ♜a3 a5 31
♜b3 ♜h3 32 f3 ♜g2+ 33 ♜e3 ♜g4! White resigns.**



A nice finish, it's mate after 34 fxg4 ♜gf2 and ... ♜4f3.

74

L. Karlsson – Glimbrandt Swedish Grand Prix 1992

(1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♜c3 d5 4 ♜g5 ♜e4 5 cxd5 ♜xg5 6 h4 e6 7 hxg5 exd5
8 ♜d2 c6 9 ♜f3 ♜e7 10 ♜f4 ♜b6 11 o-o-o ♜e6 12 ♜e5 o-o)



White to move

13 g4!

Much stronger than 13 ♜h2 h5 14 gxh6 ♜d7 and White's attack has lost its momentum.

13...♝d7

13...♝xg4? loses to 14 ♜xe7.

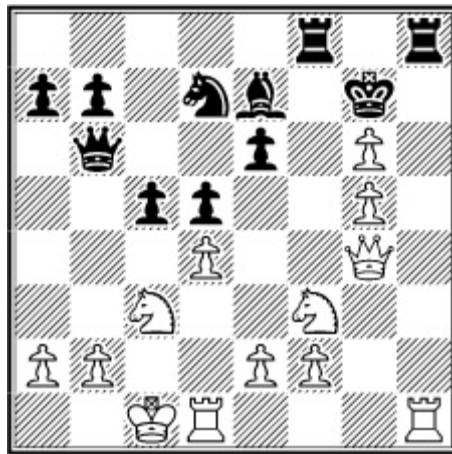
14 ♜h2 h5 15 gxh5 ♜g7 16 ♜h3

If 16 hxg6 then 16...♜h8.

16...c5 17 ♜xe6 fxe6 18 hxg6

Such doubled pawns are indeed a very particular kind of monster for Black's king to deal with.

18...♜h8 19 ♜f4 ♜af8 20 ♜g4



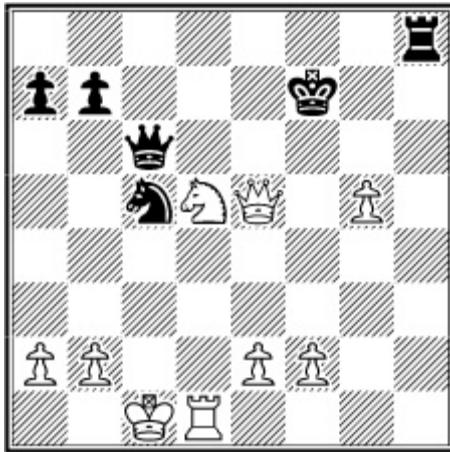
White's nice queen manoeuvre to the light g4 square has created all kinds of threats, e.g. 21 ♜xd5, 21 ♜h7 and 21 ♜h6.

20...cxd4 21 ♜xd4 ♜c5 22 ♜xh8! ♜xh8 23 ♜xd5!

The e6-pawn is the key to Black's defence and is liquidated in stylish fashion.

23...exd5 24 ♜f5+ ♜xg6 25 ♜xe7+ ♜f7 26 ♜xd5 ♜c6 27 ♜f4+

g7 28 e5+ f7



29 g6+!

A very beautiful example of the dynamism inherent in the doubled g-pawns.

The last g-pawn sacrifice exploited the perfect coordination between White's queen and knight.

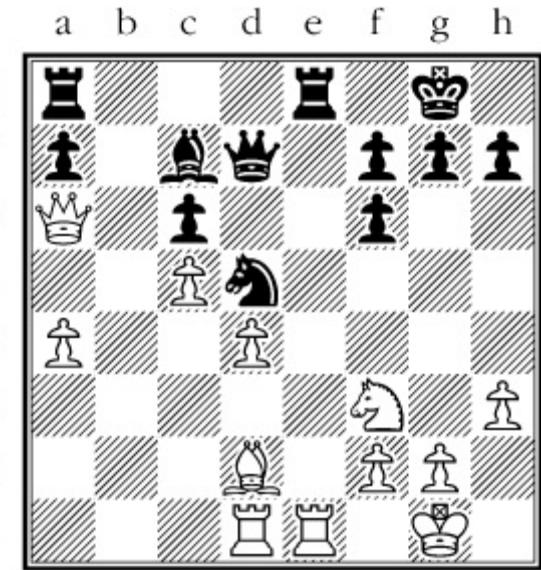
Now 29... xg6 could be met by the fork 30 e7+ but even stronger would have been 30 g1+ f7 31 e7 mate. 29... xg6 is met by 30 e7+ g8 31 f6+ , 29... g8 by 30 e7+ while 29... f8 , the politest way to finish the game, allows the beautiful 30 xh8 mate.

Black resigns.

75

Nepomniachtchi – Carlsen
World Rapid Championship 2016

(1 e4 c6 2 c3 d5 3 f3 dxe4 4 xe4 f6 5 xf6+ exf6 6 d4 d6 7 e2 o-o 8 o-o e8 9 c4 d7 10 d3 f8 11 h3 g6 12 c2 a5 13 c5 b8 14 d2 d8 15 fe1 e6 16 c4 f8 17 ad1 c7 18 b3 xc4 19 xc4 d7 20 b4 g6 21 a4 e7 22 b5 d5 23 bxc6 bxc6 24 $\text{a6})$



Black to move

24...g5!

This pawn-push is typical for Black's system as Korchnoi has shown in a couple of games. Note that White's pawn majority is conveniently blockaded by the c6-pawn and the knight.

25 ♕h2 ♕xh2+!

A beautiful exchange in the spirit of Capablanca. The feeling when playing through this game is that Carlsen honours both the positional ideas of Korchnoi and Capablanca!

26 ♕xh2 ♕g7!

The elevation concept is also part of Capablanca's arsenal of ideas.

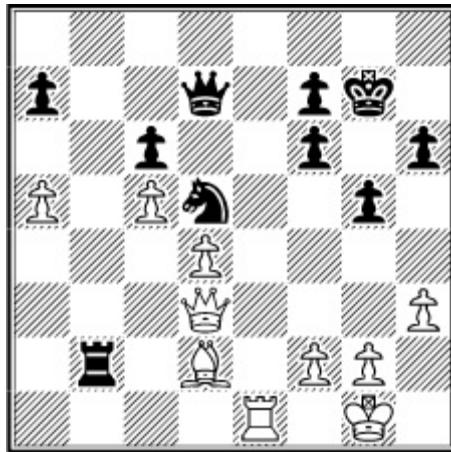
27 ♕g1 ♕xe1+ 28 ♕xe1 ♕b8

Black has squares of infiltration on the b-file but White has none on the e-file. The snare is slowly tightened.

29 ♕d3 ♕b2

Control of the seventh rank (from Black's point of view) is a very important concept which Nimzowitsch discussed in detail in *My System*.

30 a5 h6



Black secures the kingside but ...f5-f4 is not yet necessary since it weakens the kingside. The f-pawn's primary task is to protect the king on the seventh rank and the black squares surrounding it.

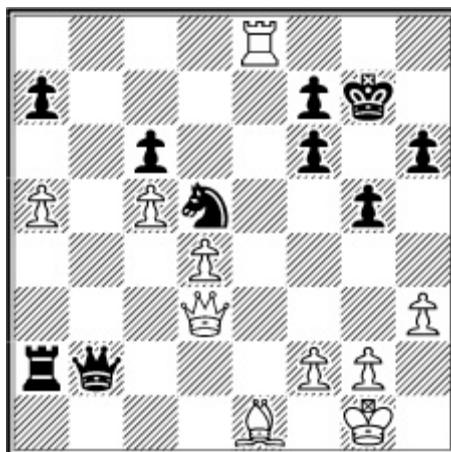
31 ♜c1?

A better defence is 31 ♜b1 but it's in Black's interest to exchange rooks, since queen and knight are stronger than queen and bishop in this position. This is one of the concepts Capablanca is famous for and today such an ending is dubbed a "Capablanca ending."

31... ♜a2 32 ♜d2 ♛b7

Black's threat to penetrate to the seventh rank is heavier than White's lack of threats on the e-file.

33 ♛e8 ♛b2 34 ♜e1!



The bishop has found its correct location from a defensive point of view. The weaknesses on f2 and a5 are simultaneously defended and the rook on e8 protects the bishop.

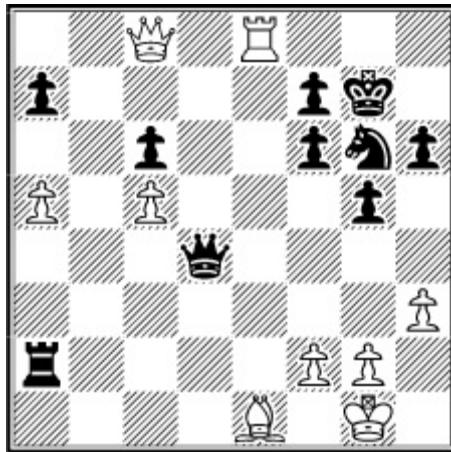
34...♞f4

The versatile knight hits White's position at exactly the right moment.

35 ♛a6

35 ♜f5 ♜a1! 36 ♜c8 ♜g6! 37 ♜xc6 ♜xd4 would have led to the same position as in the game.

35...♜xd4 36 ♜c8 ♜g6



With the knight close to the king it's never mate! Note the mobility from attack to defence. White's bishop is no more than an extra in a movie.

37 ♜xc6 ♜a1

Black concentrates on pinning the defender, the bishop on e1, because otherwise the f2- and a5-pawns are too well protected.

38 ♛e4

38 ♜e3 ♜b4 and Black wins the pawn on a5.

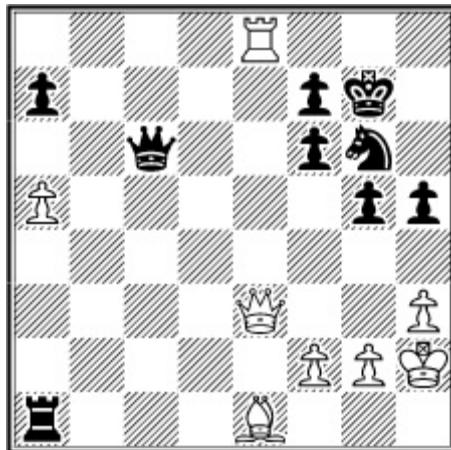
38...♜xc5 39 ♜h2

White's dream is to activate the bishop on c3, followed by a swindle in the spirit of Marshall.

39...h5

The pawn storm in the spirit of Korchnoi starts to take real shape.

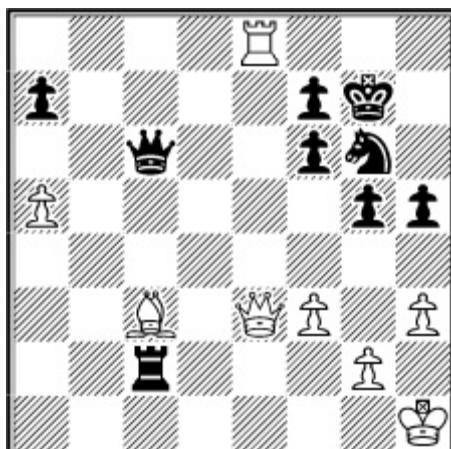
40 ♜e3 ♜c6



41 ♜c3

41 ♜c3 was objectively better, although after 41...♜d6+ Black would provoke the weakness 42 g3 from which he can profit in the sequence 42...♜d1 43 ♜d2 ♜a4 44 ♜e3 ♜a3 45 ♜e4 ♜d7 followed by ...h5-h4. With the queen on e4 Black doesn't gain anything by playing ...♝d7-e5 due to ♜e4-a8 but after 46 ♜e2 ♜e5 (46...h4 is not so good due to 47 ♜e3) is strong as it forces White to sacrifice the exchange, thereby leaving Black with an easy win.

41...♜a4 42 f3 ♜a2 43 ♜h1 ♜c2



44 ♜e1

In a bad position there are only bad moves. The more active 44 ♜d4 would succumb to 44...♝c1+ 45 ♜h2 ♜d1! and White's pieces are hanging and his king is too exposed.

44...♝b5

Black has discovered the weak point on g2.

45 ♜g3

45 ♜d8 ♜e2 46 ♜g1 ♜f4 and the g2-pawn falls.

45...h4 46 ♜h2 ♜b1+ 47 ♜g1 ♜f1 White resigns.

There is no defence to cover g2.