

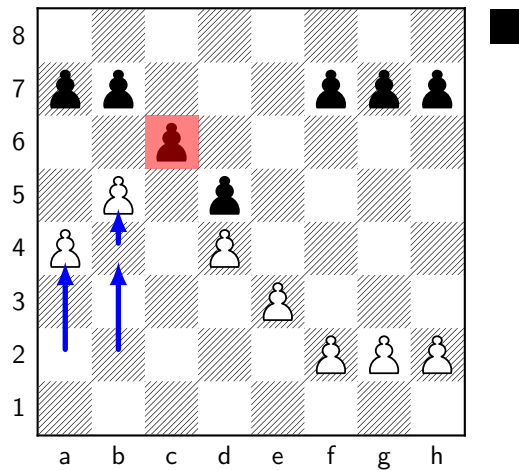
In chess, a minority attack is the advancement of one's pawns on the side of the board where one has fewer pawns than their opponent, intending to use their minority to strategically provoke a weakness (i.e, an isolated or backward pawn) in the opponent's pawn structure. The minority attack is a common middlegame plan that can be played in many pawn structures. The name might be misleading, as the "attack" does not involve tactics planned to produce checkmate or significant material gain, but rather a strategical and structural advantage for the attacking player.

The minority attack can be strengthened by the moving of one or both rooks to the files where the attacking player intends to advance their pawns, planning prophylactically for the opening of the files. Common openings that result in pawn structures where a minority attack is effective include the Queen's Gambit Declined and the Caro-Kann Defense. The minority attack occurs most commonly on the queenside, as players commonly castle kingside in openings where a minority attack is effective, and the advancement of the pawns on the side of the castled king is widely considered to severely weaken the king's safety.

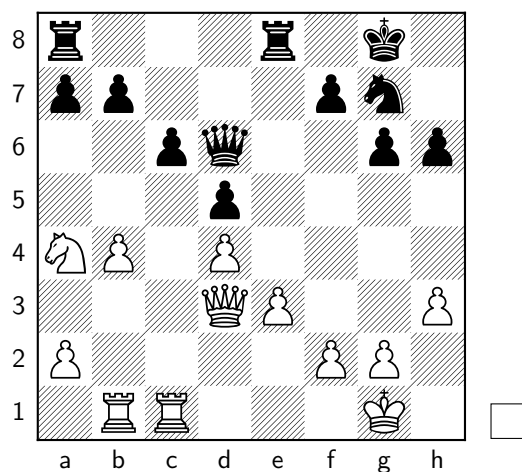
Basic Form

White thrusts a- and b-pawns to create a weakness for black on c6.

1 b4 ZZ... 2 a4 ZZ... 3 b5



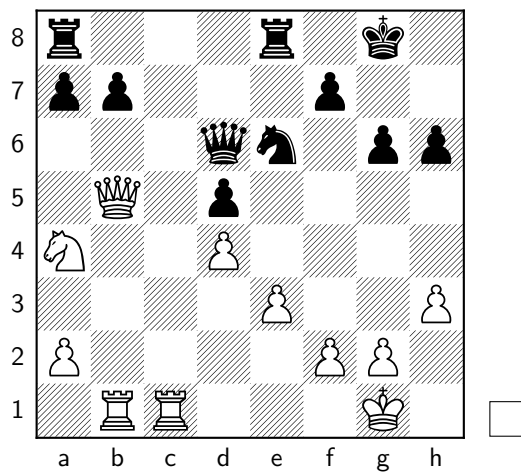
Capablanca–H.Golombek, 1939



23 b5 cxb5

White continues the minority attack and favorably changes the pawn structure. If black allows white to capture on c6, then he will have a backward c6-pawn. If black captures on b5, white will recapture with the queen and can target the isolated d5 and b7 pawn.

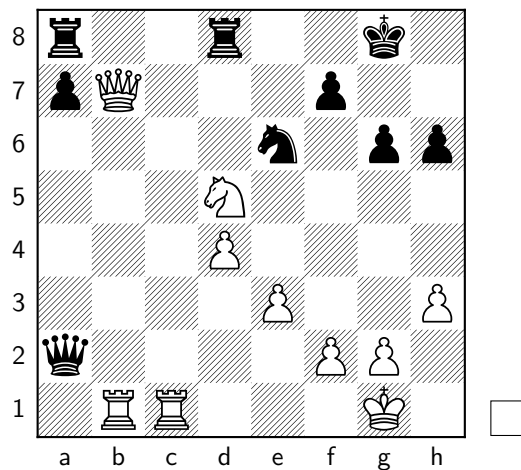
24 ♕xb5 ♖e6



25 ♖c3!

Much better than **25 ♕xb7** which gives black chances after **25... ♖eb8 26 ♕xc6 ♕xc6 27 ♖xb8+ ♖xb8 28 ♖xc6 ♖b1+.**

25... ♖ed8 26 ♕xb7 ♕a3 27 ♖xd5 ♕xa2



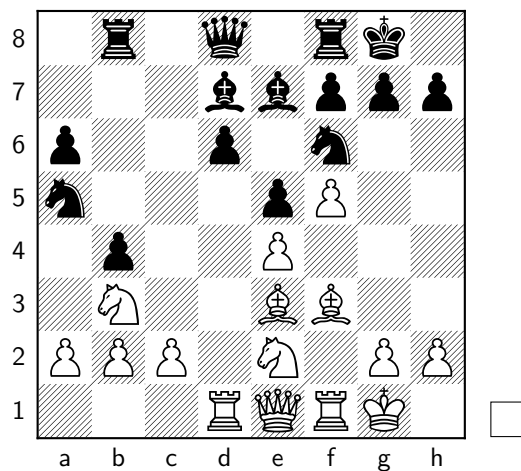
28 ♖b4 ♜a4 29 ♖c6 1-0

For white not only threatens the rook but also the queen with 30 ♜a1.

Black's Minority Attack in Sicilian Defence

The Sicilian Defence minority attack was known in the 1920s, but not so much so that books made mention of it. Later, with the Sicilian Defence explosion, that minority attack became one of the main reasons why White felt obliged to launch attacks at an early stage against Black's position [?].

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4 ♖f6 5 ♖c3 e6 6 ♗e2 ♖c6 7 ♗e3 ♗e7 8 O-O O-O 9 f4 ♗d7 10 ♖b3 a6 11 ♗f3 ♜b8 12 ♜e1 b5 13 ♜d1 b4 14 ♖e2 e5 15 f5 ♖a5



Black wants to tie White down with moves like ... ♗b5 and ... ♖c4, fol-

lowed by ...**a4**, a typical minority attack as White's plan in Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation.

16 ♖xa5 ♗xa5 17 g4 ♜fc8 18 g5 ♞e8 19 ♜d2 ♗xa2 20 ♞g3 ♜f8 21 ♞h5 ♗xb2 22 ♗g3 ♜c3 23 ♜g4 ♗a3 24 ♜e1 b3 25 g6 f×g6 26 f×g6 ♜xe3 27 g×h7+ ♜×h7 28 ♜xe3 ♜×g4 29 ♗×g4 ♗c1+ 30 ♗d1 b2 31 ♜e1 ♗×d1 32 ♜d×d1 a5 33 ♞g3 a4 34 ♞e2 ♜c8 35 c3 a3 36 ♜b1 ♜b8 37 ♞c1 b×c1 ♗ 38 ♜exc1 ♜a8 39 ♜a1 ♞f6 40 ♜a2 ♞xe4 41 ♜ca1 d5 42 ♜c1 ♜c8 43 ♜ac2 ♜xc3 44 ♜xc3 ♞xc3 45 ♜xc3 a2 46 ♜c1 ♜c5+ 47 ♜g2 ♜d4 48 ♜f3 a1 ♗ 49 ♜xa1 ♜xa1 50 ♜g4 ♜g6

References

- [1] John Watson. *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy*. Gambit, 1998.