

Mastering the Spanish

Daniel King and Pietro Ponzetto

B. T. Batsford Ltd, London

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A BATSFORD CHESS BOOK

Editorial Panel: Mark Dvoretsky, John Nunn, Jon Speelman

General Adviser: Raymond Keene OBE

Managing Editor: Graham Burgess

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We would like to thank the following people for their assistance in the production of this book: Alan Nixon, for his customary painstaking work as translator; Roberto Rivello, for his essential collaboration as co-author of the Italian edition; and Andrew Kinsman and Peter Kemmis Betty for their long-standing support.

Preface

This work has been written with one major aim in mind: to teach *understanding* of the opening. Of course, this cannot be achieved by cataloguing variations, and we have sought instead to explain the key ideas and plans of each player, and to do so quickly and easily with the special Read and Play method which permits the reader to follow the greater part of the text without a chessboard.

Our guiding principle for achieving this ambitious goal is the fact that once the central pawns have stabilized there is a greater strategic and tactical affinity between diverse variations with the same central pawn structure than between different lines of the same variation which lead to different pawn structures. This simple approach instantly enables us to understand the essential ideas of any position whatsoever. This is in marked contrast to what happens in ordinary books of opening theory, where the exigencies of systematization make the process of understanding very difficult.

Having established our starting point the continuation follows logically: we divide the opening not

according to variations but according to 'type of centre' (normally retaining the name of the principal variation), which means that different lines of the same variation may be examined in one or other type of centre according to the pawn structure which arises. Each type of centre is treated in three parts: a full exposition of the strategic ideas (paying particular attention to the most modern), an overview of the recurring tactical themes, and finally some illustrative games with particularly deep annotations in the opening. In examining these games (and for this it is necessary to use a chessboard) the reader will find not only a practical correspondence with the two theoretical parts, but also some additional exemplifying variations. A close reading of the illustrative games is indispensable for full comprehension of the strategic concepts previously expounded.

Whilst it has not been feasible to include every single type of centre which can arise, we have covered all the most important and common structures, which comprise at least 85 per cent of all cases. The few

possibilities not covered (which all derive from minor byways) can be referred to in traditional monographs.

We have tried to be as objective as possible in our approach to the subject and have aimed for an impartial exposition of the ideas in each type of centre, so that the work will be equally useful whichever side the reader intends playing.

This *oeuvre* can be used in various ways by a wide range of players, from beginners and club players seeking to learn the fundamentals of the opening, right up to experts who want to familiarize themselves quickly with different variations or

to acquire the essential grounding for an entirely new addition to their opening repertoire. Naturally, top competitive players, and others who require a more detailed knowledge of the variations and all the latest wrinkles, must use this work in conjunction with a systematic text.

We hope that readers will find our exposition clear, learn soundly and enjoyably, and above all increase their understanding and thereby improve their playing standard: only then will the Read and Play method have hit the mark.

Daniel King
Pietro Ponzetto

Introduction

The Spanish game is the set-up arising after the moves 1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{A}b5$. White's idea is normally to increase the pressure on e5 by the advance d2-d4, often supported by the move c2-c3. Broadly speaking, the aim of this pressure is to achieve some space advantage in the centre by inducing Black to make the capture ... e5xd4. For his part, Black can oppose this plan in two quite different ways: (1) by waiting for White to play d2-d4, attempting thereafter to induce him to opt for a blocked (d4-d5) or an exchange (d4xe5) centre, clarifying the central picture (the so-called 'closed' Spanish); (2) by means of a swift counter-attack on the e4 pawn (the so-called 'open' Spanish with ... $\mathbb{Q}g8-f6x4$ and gambit ideas with ... d7-d5 or ... f7-f5). In order to deploy all his defensive potential, Black normally decides to chase the $\mathbb{A}b5$ by means of the advances ... a7-a6 and ... b7-b5, but this option is not forced and may be omitted completely or applied only in part.

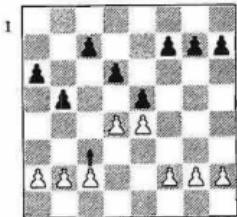
As the material is not classified according to the traditional subdivision

of variations but on the basis of the 'type of centre', the reader might find it useful to have an overview of the topics that will be examined.

The first five chapters are given over to the 'closed' concept of the Spanish game, as follows:

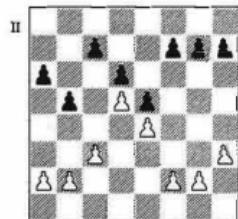
Chapter 1

Tension in the centre: examines the situation of central tension that arises when White plays the advance d2-d4.

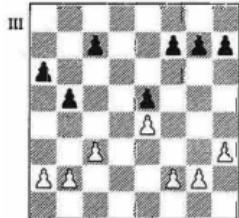


Chapter 2

Blocked centre: examines the situation which arises after d4-d5 (see diagram II).

**Chapter 3**

Exchange centre: examines the situation which arises after $d4xe5$ and ... $d6xe5$.



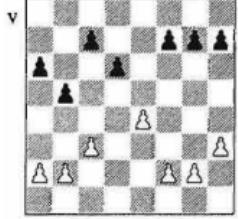
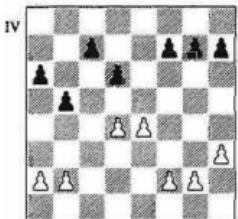
Chapters 4 and 5 cover the cases in which Black decides to capture ... $e5xd4$.

Chapter 4

Mobile centre: White recaptures on $d4$ with his c -pawn (diag. IV).

Chapter 5

Little centre: White retakes on $d4$ with a piece (diag. V).



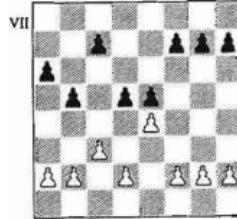
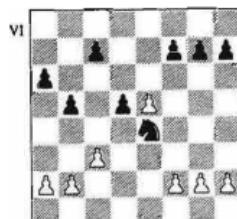
In Chapters Six, Seven and Nine we look at the various developments of Black's other possible approach, namely a swift counterattack against the $e4$ pawn. These three chapters look respectively at the 'open' concept of the Spanish (... $\mathbb{Q}g8-f6xe4$) and the two main gambit ideas (... $d7-d5$ and ... $f7-f5$).

Chapter 6

Open centre: Black plays ... $\mathbb{Q}g8-f6xe4$ (diag VI).

Chapter 7

Marshall centre: Black plays the



move ... $d7-d5$ (diag. VII).

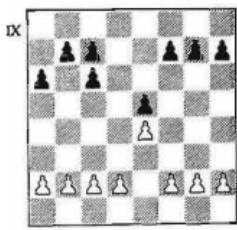
Chapter 9

Schliemann (Jaenisch) Centre: Black plays ... $f7-f5$.

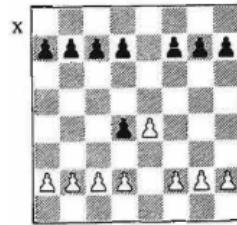
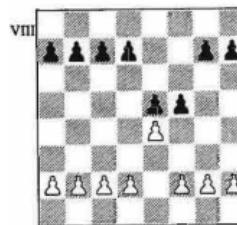
Chapters Eight and Ten, finally, examine the remaining two specific cases when White exchanges $\mathbb{A}b5xc6$ and when Black sidesteps this by ... $\mathbb{Q}c6-d4$ but has to accept $\mathbb{Q}f3xd4$.

Chapter 8

Fischer Centre: White plays $\mathbb{A}b5xc6$ and Black recaptures ... $d7xc6$.

**Chapter 10**

Bird Centre: Black plays ... $\mathbb{Q}c6-d4$ and White exchanges on $d4$ by $\mathbb{Q}f3xd4$.



Which variation should I play?

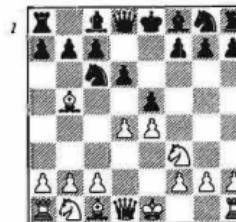
To help you decide which variation is most appropriate for your style we have compiled a table of variations (see pages 245-252) which indicates their level of strategic and tactical complexity. In addition, we have

used a survey of nearly 2000 games played in tournaments of FIDE category 7 and above to extract statistical data concerning the frequency and results percentage of each variation so as to provide a useful overview of their level of risk. Thus you are given all the information necessary to make the most suitable selection according to your needs.

1 Tension in the Centre

Main line: Steinitz Variation

1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{B}b5$ d6 4 d4
(1)



We have chosen this as the 'main line' not because it is the most important to arise from tension in the centre, but because it is ideally suited to our purposes. The omission of the usual advances ... a7-a6, ... b7-b5 and h2-h3 gives us the opportunity to illustrate all the methods whereby the two players are able to keep up the tension in the centre and/or increase it so as to force their opponent to release it in unfavourable circumstances. Apart from this didactic artifice, tension in the centre (the stage where the centres that we shall be examining in the next four chapters

originate) is seen in many of the main lines of the Spanish. For example: 1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{B}b5$ a6 4 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ b5 7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 and now:

Zaitsev Variation
— 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10 d4

Chigorin Variation with ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$
— 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ c5 11 d4

Keres Variation with ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$
— 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 d4

Breyer Variation
— 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 10 d4

Smyslov Variation
— 9 ... h6 10 d4

Or: 1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{B}b5$ and now:

Steinitz Variation Deferred
— 3 ... a6 4 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ d6 5 c3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 6 d4

Taimanov Variation
— 3 ... a6 4 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ b5 5 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 6 0-0 d6 7 d4

Archangel Variation

— 3 ... $a6$ 4 $\mathbb{A}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $b5$ 6
 $\mathbb{B}b3$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ 7 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{B}c5$ 8 $c3$ d6 9 d4

Classical Variation

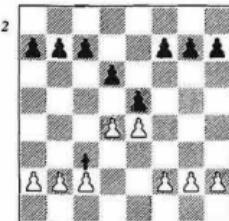
— 3 ... $\mathbb{B}c5$ 4 $c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 0-0 6
d4

Other Variations

— 3 ... $a6$ 4 $\mathbb{A}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{B}c7$ 6
 $\mathbb{E}e1$ b5 7 $\mathbb{B}b3$ d6 8 $c3$ 0-0 9 d4
— 3 ... $g6$ 4 $c3$ d6 5 d4

1 Strategic Ideas

After d2-d4 in all the above variations, a situation of tension is created between the d4 and e5 pawns, hence our chapter heading. The basic strategic characteristics are shown in the following diagram (2):



... but it should be noted that in normal circumstances, White supports the advance of his d-pawn by a prior c2-c3 so that, in the event of ... exd4,

he can reinstate the pair of centre pawns.

To understand what is going on in a situation of tension in the centre, we would recall that general opening principle (though it is more a rule of thumb than an absolute principle) whereby the player who releases the tension in the centre makes a concession to his opponent. This principle, of course, has a very definite strategic foundation, namely the player who releases the tension declares his intentions and generally gives up some influence over the central squares.

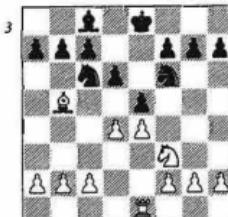
In our present case, therefore, it is in White's interest to wait for his opponent to play ... exd4 (a move which effectively yields territory in the centre whether d4 is recaptured with a pawn or a piece), whereas Black can justifiably wait for dx5 (which leaves the centre in a perfectly balanced state) or even d5 (because in this case too White loses some of his central influence — the pressure on e5 and control of c5 — and provides his opponent with a specific target for counterplay in the form of the pawn chain e4-d5). In conditions similar to those mentioned with regard to diagram 2, a waiting game can be undertaken (which can be dragged on to the twentieth move and more) during which each side endeavours to induce the other to declare his intentions in the centre,

while always being ready to ease the tension when this proves favourable.

This situation of central fluidity is in any case destined to evolve, generally ending up in one of the centres examined in the next four chapters. Nevertheless, during the period of instability both sides have a series of thematic strategic manoeuvres and operations which are also typical for the next four types of centre and justify full exposition in the present chapter.

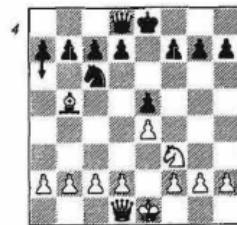
Pressure against the e5 pawn

Pressure against the e5 pawn is the idea behind 3 $\mathbb{B}b5$ and the *raison d'être* of the whole Spanish game. So, if Black does not take countermeasures, this straightforward development of the bishop can turn into nagging pressure against e5, pinning the defender $\mathbb{Q}c6$ or eliminating it (3).



Here, for example, the presence of $\mathbb{B}b5$ forces Black to release the central tension by ... exd4 because his alternative ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ is not sufficient to save the pawn ($\mathbb{A}xc6$ $\mathbb{A}xc6$, $\mathbb{D}xe5$ $\mathbb{D}xe5$, $\mathbb{Q}g4$ is just one possible continuation in this specific situation) while ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ implies acceptance of an evidently inferior pawn structure ($\mathbb{A}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$, $\mathbb{D}xe5$ $\mathbb{D}xe5$ $\mathbb{D}xe5$).

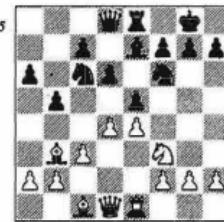
This explains why, in many of the main lines of the Spanish, Black decides to go for a radical solution to the problem by driving the white bishop away with his a- and b-pawns at a very early stage of the game, when the threat to the e5 pawn can still be thwarted by tactical resources (4).



After ... $a6$, the bishop will be forced to release the $\mathbb{Q}c6$ pin ($\mathbb{A}a6$ b5, $\mathbb{B}b3$) because the gain of the e5 pawn after $\mathbb{A}xc6$ is pure illusion: ... $dxc6$!, $\mathbb{D}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ and White cannot defend his $\mathbb{Q}e5$ and e4 pawn at the same time.

The advances ... a6 and ... b5 do have another side to them, however, because they generally weaken Black's queenside (e.g. the squares a5 and c6) and make the a- and b-pawns themselves more vulnerable, as we shall see at the beginning of Chapter 2.

At a more advanced stage of the game, White can put more pressure on e5 by questioning the f-pawn. This operation is sometimes favoured by the action of the KB on the a2-g8 diagonal to which it has been driven after ... a6 and ... b5. Now let's have a look at an example (5).



Here Black, after playing ... $\mathbb{K}e8$, is preparing to shore up his central defences with ... $\mathbb{N}f8$, but his opponent can get in first by playing $\mathbb{Q}g5$, which forces the rook to scuttle back to f8 to protect his f7 pawn. Taken on its own, the knight's foray to g5 does not produce any appreciable result because the attack on f7 is quite

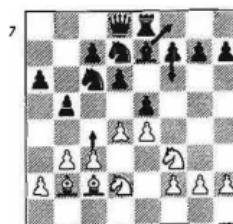
ineffective, but White can make use of it to increase the pressure on e5 by means of the pawn advance f2-f4 (6).



It is clear that White now has an extra argument for inducing his opponent to release the tension, even though it cannot be said that Black is forced to take such a decision. However, so as not to allow White such an opportunity, Black very often plays the prophylactic ... h7-h6 if he intends to move his $\mathbb{N}f8$.

It should be pointed out that when White has played h2-h3, he can prepare the advance f2-f4 by retreating his KN to h2. As we will see in later chapters, this manoeuvre often hides more than one purpose.

Finally, another way to increase the pressure on the e5 pawn lies in a rather more laborious manoeuvre: White can retreat his KB to c2 and prepare a queenside fianchetto (b2-b3 — or a2-a3, b2-b4 — and $\mathbb{B}b2$) and later clear the way for his dark-squared bishop by c2-c4 (7).



If the exchange ... $\mathbb{B}xc4$, $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ takes place, the QN can contribute to the pressure on e5. For his part, Black is certainly not without resources for defending e5 (to those shown in the diagram can be added ... $\mathbb{A}f6$ and, after ... c7-c5 has been played, ... $\mathbb{W}c7$ too). It is therefore fairly unlikely that the opponent's pressure will achieve the effect of forcing the concession ... $\mathbb{exd4}$. Nonetheless, he always has to be extremely careful that there is no ulterior motive. Very often, in fact, the purpose of White's manoeuvres might include the creation of conditions favourable for entering a blocked or exchange centre. At times, therefore, Black has to decide to release the central tension so as to combat this eventuality.

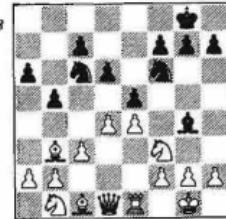
Pressure against the d4 pawn

From Black's viewpoint, the aim of retaining tension in the centre is to

force White to move his d4 pawn. For this purpose, and in similar fashion to White's attitude to the e5 square, he will endeavour gradually to turn the screws on d4.

It should be pointed out that the manoeuvre to fight off the white-squared white bishop (by ... a7-a6 and ... b7-b5) releases $\mathbb{Q}c6$ for its task of countering $\mathbb{Q}f3$ in their respective roles of attacking and defending the e5 and d4 squares.

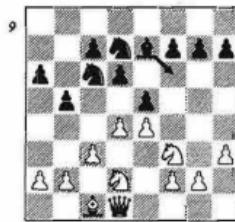
When White omits the usual h2-h3, the pin on $\mathbb{Q}f3$ by ... $\mathbb{A}g4$, together with the above manoeuvre, can lead to a complete reversal in the situation, posing White the self-same problems he intended to cause the enemy when he developed his KB to b5 (8).



In similar circumstances, White can be induced to release the central tension owing to the pressure on his d4 pawn. For this reason, he normally prefers to prevent the pin on $\mathbb{Q}f3$ by means of the prophylactic

$h2-h3$, which is almost always played before $d2-d4$.

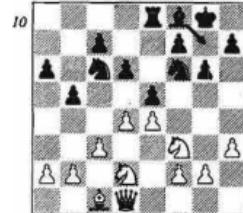
Another direct means of intensifying the pressure on $d4$ is by transferring the KB to the long diagonal $h8-a1$. For this purpose, Black can remove the $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (usually by retreating it to $d7$) so as to leave $f6$ free for the bishop (9).



Although this manoeuvre is common enough to be considered thematic, it does have the disadvantage of giving up the pressure on the $e4$ pawn which, as we will see, represents another important weapon in Black's tension struggle.

Alternatively, Black can resort to the typical opening manoeuvre in which he plays a delayed kingside fianchetto: after castling he plays ... $\mathbb{E}e8$, ... $\mathbb{A}f8$, ... $g7-g6$ and ... $\mathbb{A}g7$ (10).

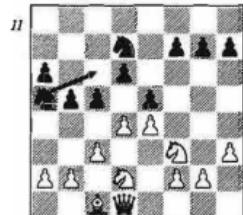
In this event, it should be observed that the action of the bishop against $d4$, however concealed by the presence of the $\mathbb{Q}f6$, can at times



become reality through the implicit tactical possibility of the discovered attack.

It should also be pointed out that all the manoeuvres illustrated in diagrams 8, 9 and 10 also respond to Black's need to protect the $e5$ pawn, so they perform, in creditable fashion, the double roles of attack and defence.

Finally, the pressure on $d4$ can also be augmented, after removing the $\mathbb{Q}c6$, by playing ... $c7-c5$ (11).



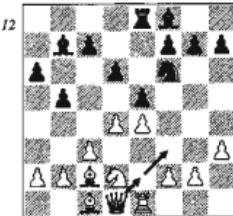
It should, however, be stressed that the removal of the black QN is

often only temporary because after just a few moves, the piece generally resumes its place along with its active role in the central struggle. It is obvious that, after the elimination of the c-pawns by the exchange ... $cxd4$, $cxd4$, the above manoeuvres may become decisive in forcing White to declare his intentions in the centre.

As we have already mentioned in regard to White's operations against $e5$, Black's equivalent ideas against $d4$ may have the purpose of creating conditions favourable for entry into a mobile or dynamic centre. The result is that these operations are quite often crowned by success and force White to take a decision in the centre. One further element to Black's advantage is the comparative difficulty that White encounters in deploying his dark-squared bishop in defence of the $d4$ pawn. Its natural deployment on $e3$ (when it is not prevented by the interference with the $\mathbb{M}el$'s defence of the $e4$ pawn), is often hamstrung by the presence of the QN in $d2$, and it is not always easy for White to remove this knight in time because it can find itself tied to defence of the $e4$ pawn.

troops against the $e4$ pawn. After $d2-d4$, in fact, the $e4$ pawn also finds itself in rather an exposed position because it can no longer be defended solidly with $d2-d3$, while the alternative $f2-f3$ (when this is not prevented, as it often is, by the presence of $\mathbb{Q}f3$) is generally not worth considering because it reduces White's prospects of an attack on the king-side (it blocks the diagonal $d1-h5$, a line of vital importance for bringing the white queen rapidly to the aid of the kingside).

Generally speaking, Black assigns the task of applying pressure on the $e4$ pawn to the KN, the QB and the manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{M}e8$ followed by ... $\mathbb{A}f8$ that we have seen previously (12).



Pressure against the $e4$ pawn

As an alternative to (though more often jointly with) the pressure on $d4$, Black can direct some of his

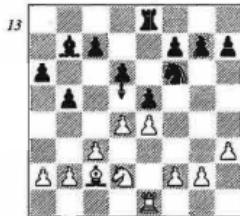
For his part, White does not encounter particular difficulty in setting up the necessary defensive measures ($\mathbb{M}f1-e1$, $\mathbb{A}b3-c2$ and $\mathbb{Q}b1-d2$ are the standard methods, while it is more unusual to bring in

the queen). Still, this set-up can prove to be quite inflexible, particularly as a result of the cumbersome presence of the $\mathbb{Q}d2$ that prevents the development of the $\mathbb{A}c1$ and gets in the way of the queen's defence of the d4 pawn.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the operations carried out by Black against the e4 square can obviously be seen as a prelude for entry to one of the centres arising out of the capture ... exd4.

The advance ... d5

Another purpose of the manoeuvres orchestrated by Black against e4 is to enable him to counterattack in the centre by playing ... d5 (13).



It goes without saying that a lot of thought has to go into such a decision, especially in the light of the likely piece play on both sides that will follow the probable disappearance of the four centre pawns. When,

however, the move proves to be playable, it can represent a radical means for equalizing and putting an end to the struggle for central supremacy.

In the situation shown in diagram 13, for example, Black should go thoroughly into the consequences of both exd5 exd4, and of dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ (... $\mathbb{K}xe5$, f4 followed by e4-e5 could be favourable for White).

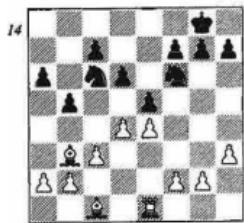
2 Tactical Ideas

In this type of centre, the fluidity of the position in the middle of the board does not make it easy to identify recurrent tactical ideas. It is, however, possible to point to one or two which perhaps occur more often in other types of centre (mention will be made of these in due course) but can also be considered 'typical' of tension in the centre.

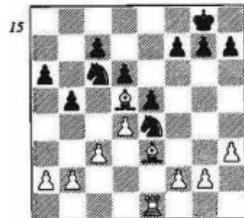
Indirect defence of the e4 pawn

Very often, the weakening of Black's queenside caused by the advances of the a- and b-pawns can make defence of the White centre easier (14).

Here, for example, White can defend his d4 pawn by simply playing $\mathbb{A}e3$ because the interference caused by this move on the action of the $\mathbb{K}a1$ is not a good enough reason for Black to capture the e4 pawn. The



capture ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$ is met by $\mathbb{A}d5$ (15):

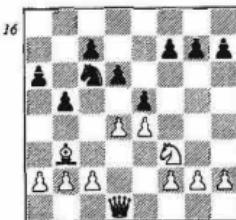


... and one of the Black knights bites the dust.

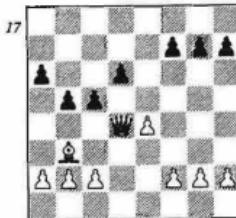
The exposed position of White's light-squared bishop

It is clear that the provocative stance taken by White's light-squared bishop with regard to the enemy queenside ($\mathbb{A}b5$ a6, $\mathbb{A}a4$ b5, $\mathbb{A}b3$) is not without danger for the bishop itself. One such danger can crop up at

an early stage in the game when the bishop has completed its mission but the white pawn structure on the queenside has not shifted from its starting position. The $\mathbb{A}b3$ thus has no flight square and this can lead to its demise at the hands of Black's queenside pawns (16).



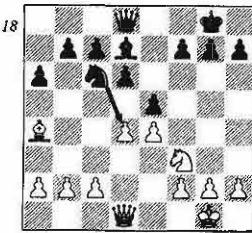
The diagram shows the basic conditions necessary for making this tactical point: after ... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$, $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ exd4, $\mathbb{W}xd4$ c5 (17).



... White cannot stop the further advance ... c5-c4 which traps the

bishop. This idea is popularly known as the 'Noah's Ark' trap.

In other circumstances, when the bishop is still on the a4-e8 diagonal, Black can attempt to exploit its undefended, or inadequately protected position by putting his QB on d7 (18).



Here, for instance, Black wins a pawn simply by ... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$, and it should be pointed out that this can be threatened even when the $\mathbb{Q}a4$ is defended by the queen following the advance c2-c3. In this case, in fact, Black can give the idea another run after playing ... $\mathbb{W}e8$.

3 Illustrative games

Game 1

Smirin-Belyavsky

Odessa 1989

Breyer Variation

1 e4 e5
2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$

3 $\mathbb{Q}b5$

This move was analysed systematically for the first time by the Spanish priest Ruy Lopez, a well-known sixteenth-century player, and it is in his honour that the entire system goes under the name of the 'Spanish Game' or the 'Ruy Lopez', as it is still universally known today.

The fundamental idea is to undermine the defender of the e5 pawn, so continuing the pressure begun with 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$. Very often, Black speculates on the fact that the threat to e5 is not yet effective (3 ... a6 4 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ dx5 5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ winning the e4 pawn) and decides to drive away the annoying bishop by means of ... a6 and ... b5. Nonetheless, the a- and b-pawns thus become vulnerable and White can use them as a secondary target in the later struggle for the centre. This is why Black at times prefers not to compromise his queenside structure and prepares to tackle the situation without involving his a- and b-pawns.

Among the systems that fit in with this thinking, mention should first be made of the solid Steinitz Variation with 3 ... d6. After 4 d4, which establishes the situation of tension in the centre, White renews his threat against e5 and tries to force his opponent, usually successfully, to release the central tension with ... exd4. For example: 4 ... $\mathbb{A}d7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ (owing to the pressure

against e5 this is a logical consequence of White's third move) 6 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 7 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (with the tactical resource of 8 d5 $\mathbb{Q}c5$) 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ exd4 (the only reasonable solution) and Black's position, though marginally inferior, has no structural weakness.

A line that is conceptually similar to the Steinitz Variation is 3 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4 0-0 d6 5 d4, for example: 5 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 7 $\mathbb{M}e1$ exd4 (forced, because the tension in the centre cannot be maintained with 7 ... 0-0? because of 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 9 dx5 dx5 10 $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{W}xd8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ and Black is preferable, for example: 12 $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ etc.) 8 ... a5 9 $\mathbb{M}e1$ with strong pressure on e5; White can increase this even further with the manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}b1-a3-(d2)-c4$.

In future chapters, the reader will find further information on these variations and on those mentioned in the notes below.

3 ... a6
4 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

Black can also maintain a flexible attitude with regard to the advance ... b5 opting for the Steinitz Variation Deferred with 4 ... d6. In this regard, we would only point out here that, compared to the Steinitz Variation mentioned above, the immediate establishment of tension in the centre with 5 d4 is ineffective owing to 5 ... b5, for example: 6 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ exd4 8 $\mathbb{Q}d4?$ (after 8 $\mathbb{W}xd4?$ we see a typical tactical trap: 8 ... c5 9 $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 10 $\mathbb{W}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11 $\mathbb{W}d5$ c4 trapping the bishop) 8 ... $\mathbb{K}b8$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ with equal prospects.

Finally, another line in which Black tries to avoid damage to his

Instead, in the Taimanov Variation, 4 ... b5 5 $\mathbb{B}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$, Black is able to trade off the provocative enemy bishop, but the relinquishing of the e5 point does not permit him to maintain the tension in the centre when it is set up, e.g. 6 0-0 (not 6 $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$) $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 7 axb3 $\mathbb{W}g5$ with advantageous compensation on g2) 6 ... d6 7 d4 exd4 (after 7 ... $\mathbb{Q}g4?$) 8 dx5 $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 9 axb3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 10 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ dx5 11 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ White's advantage in development and the weakness of Black's queenside pawns are evident) 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ and White keeps his advantage in development although he has to pay more than a little attention to the possible advance ... c5-c4, which is, however, not yet possible (8 ... c5 9 $\mathbb{Q}d5$).

5 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$

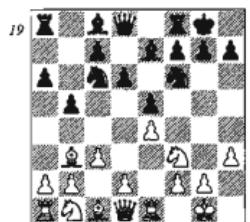
One aggressive alternative is the so-called Archangel Variation, 5 ... b5 6 $\mathbb{B}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 7 $\mathbb{M}el$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$, which aims to whip the black bishops into immediate activity; one continuation could be: 8 c3 d6 9 d4 $\mathbb{B}b6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 11 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ (another fighting interpretation of the position arises out of 11 ... g5? 12 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ — the sacrifice 12 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ hxg5 13 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{W}f8$ is insufficient — 12 ... 0-0? with the idea of continuing with ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ and ... $\mathbb{W}f6$; for the quieter 11 ... 0-0 see the note to Black's fifth move in Game 4) 12 a4 0-0-0 13 axb5 axb5 14 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ g5 15 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ h5 with a very sharp position in which the theme of tension in

the centre is complementary to mutual attacks against the enemy castled position.

6	$\mathbb{M}e1$	b5
7	$\mathbb{B}b3$	d6
8	c3	0-0

It would not be effective for Black to attempt to set up a centre of tension immediately by 8 ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ because White could simply reply with 9 d3, thereafter releasing the pin by the advance h2-h3 followed, in the event of ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$, by the manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}b1-d2-f1-g3$ which gives him a better game on the kingside.

9 h3 (19)



Now, however, after 9 d4 the continuation 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ places Black in the best position to win the central struggle, e.g. 10 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (it is also possible, of course, to refrain from maintaining the tension by 10 d5) 10 ... d5 (here the use of this typical weapon of central tension has been unquestionably facilitated by the pinning of $\mathbb{Q}b3$; another possibility,

which is outside the scope of the present chapter, however, is 10 ... exd4) 11 exd5 exd4 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{B}b4$ and Black has solved all his opening problems.

In view of the formation of a situation of tension in the centre, White wants to prevent ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$, and the prophylactic measure 9 h3 is indispensable if he wants to come out of the central tension struggle as the winner.

The full set of variations that arise out of the position illustrated in the diagram are often lumped together under the title of 'closed' Spanish, as opposed to the 'open' Spanish which is generally used to designate lines of play that arise out of the continuation 1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{B}b5$ a6 4 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$.

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

We are in the Breyer Variation, which involves reshuffling the knight from c6 to d7. This manoeuvre, with its pure hypermodern imprint, serves to defend e5, free the diagonal a8-h1 with a view to possibly placing the QB there, protect the $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (in view of the developing move $\mathbb{Q}g5$) for the purpose of facilitating the regrouping ... $\mathbb{M}e8$... $\mathbb{M}f8$, and finally permit the advance ... c5, everything focused on applying maximum possible pressure on the opposing centre.

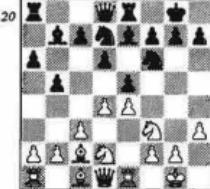
Black has many alternatives at this point: 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ (the Chigorin

Variation with ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$), 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (the Chigorin Variation with ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$), 9 ... $\mathbb{B}b7$ (the Zaitsev Variation), 9 ... $\mathbb{h}6$ (the Smyslov Variation) or even 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and 9 ... a5. All these lines, which address the theme of tension in the centre in different ways, will be specifically illustrated in our comments on the games in the following four chapters.

Here we pay special attention to a minor possibility that normally transposes into the above lines, but which at times triggers conditions that we can consider to be peculiar to a situation of tension in the centre. If Black continues with 9 ... $\mathbb{M}e8$, the alleviation of surveillance on f7 may provide White with the opportunity to breathe heavily on the e5 pawn, although it is still to be demonstrated that this opportunity gives him an advantage, e.g. 10 d4 $\mathbb{B}b7$ (here we transpose to the Zaitsev Variation) 11 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}f8$ 12 f4 (12 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{M}e8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ is a fairly frequent way of bringing proceedings to a close with a rapid draw) 12 ... exf4 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$, with mutual chances after both 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2?$ and after 14 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ 15 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 16 $\mathbb{W}h5$ h6 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$.

- 10 d4 $\mathbb{B}b7$
- 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{B}b7$
- 12 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{M}e8$ (20)

Tension is at its height at this point: Black is gradually increasing his pressure against the e4 pawn in the hope of forcing his opponent to



liquidate the centre, while White wants to be able to get on with his development without having to declare himself in the centre.

13 ♘f1 ♖f8
14 ♗g3

This manoeuvre not only serves to bring the knight to a position from which it will be able to protect the e4 pawn without hindering the development of the ♜c1, but also aims to occupy the f5 square, an element that lays the foundations for a violent kingside attack by White independently of the transformation that will be undergone by the centre. The alternative 14 ♘g5 is the continuation of Game 5.

14 ... g6

With the double aim of keeping an eye on f5 and of rerouting the KB to g7 so as to increase the pressure on the d4 pawn too.

15 ♘g5?

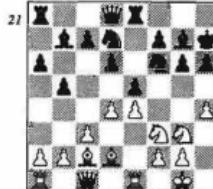
With the idea of inducing Black to weaken his castled position with ... h6, prior to attacking it with the

advance b4-h5. This is an interesting plan but it perhaps shows some overconfidence in the stability of the centre. The more usual 15 a4 is the continuation of Game 3.

15 ... h6
16 ♘d2

After 16 ♘e3 exd4, White, to save his e4 pawn, would be forced to give up his bishop by 17 ♘xd4 c5 18 ♘xf6.

16 ... ♘g7
It was also possible to intensify the tension with 16 ... c5.
17 ♘c1 ♘h7
18 h4 (21)



The critical point: White trusts in the stability of the centre because he reckons that any exchange on the part of his opponent would make the black king's position on the b1-h7 diagonal precarious.

18 ... d5!

Black, instead, quite correctly shows that he is not afraid of deploying a weapon typical of the tension

struggle. Here, this resource proves to be fully in tune with the classical strategic principle that you should react to an attack on the wing with a breakthrough in the centre.

19 exd5

After 19 h5 dxе4 20 hxg6+ fxg6 21 ♘xe4 exd4 22 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 23 ♘xd4 ♘e5 Black assumes a dangerous initiative.

19 ... exd4
20 ♘xd4?

This gives up control of the e5 square, which will prove to be a first-class outpost for Black's QN.

White should have played 20 cxrd4, which would have retained more dynamic chances, e.g. 20 ... ♘d5 21 b5 ♘xf3 22 hxg6+ fxg6 23 gxе3 ♘f8 with mutual chances. Also worthy of consideration was the pawn sacrifice 20 h5!?

20 ... ♘e5!
21 ♘e6

A tactical resource which, however, fails to improve White's situation.

21 ... ♘xd5

The threatening pressure on the long white diagonal is evidence of the correctness of Black's decision on his 18th move.

22 ♘f4 ♘c6
23 b5 ♘ad8?

Black misses a great opportunity: after 23 ... ♘g8! the threat of ... g5 would have left White with few chances to bail out, for example: 24

hxg6 fxg6 25 ♘e4 (25 f3 g5 26 ♘fc2 ♘xf3+ 27 gxе3 ♘xf3) 25 ... g3 26 ♘h3 ♘e4 with a crushing position.

24 hxg6+ fxg6

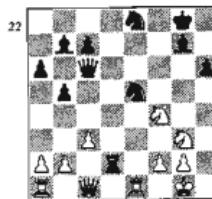
25 ♘b1!

A brilliant resource that re-opens the game.

25 ... ♘xd2
26 ♘xg6+ ♘g8

26 ... ♘xg6? would have led Black to defeat after 27 ♘xg6+ ♘h8 28 ♘f5 ♘d7 (or 28 ... ♘g8 29 ♘e6) 29 ♘e6 etc. Possible was 26 ... ♘h8 because after 27 ♘xe8 ♘c5! (but not 27 ... ♘xe8? 28 ♘xe5! ♘xe5 29 ♘g6+ ♘g7 30 ♘h5+ ♘h7 31 ♘xe5+ ♘e4 32 ♘xe4+ and White slips into an endgame a pawn up) Black retains the better chances.

27 ♘xe8 ♘xe8
28 ♘c1? (22)



The decisive mistake that allows Black to stage a splendid winning combination. Necessary was 28 ♘f5, which would have kept the game in the balance.

- 28 ... $\mathbb{E}x\mathbb{D}!$
 29 $\mathbb{Q}xf2$
 30 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$
 31 $\mathbb{Q}e3$
 32 $\mathbb{E}f1$

A quiet move that underlines the uselessness of White's material advantage.

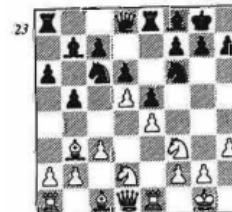
Nor does 32 $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ leave White with any hope.

- 32 ... $\mathbb{Q}c4+$
 33 $\mathbb{Q}f4$
 34 $\mathbb{Q}g4$
 If 34 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{W}e4+$ etc.
 34 ... $\mathbb{A}c8+$
 35 $\mathbb{Q}h4$
 36 $\mathbb{Q}h5$
 37 $\mathbb{Q}h4$
 38 $\mathbb{Q}h5$
 0 - 1

2 The Blocked Centre

Main line: Zaitsev Variation

- 1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{A}b5$ a6 4 $\mathbb{A}a4$
 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{A}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{E}e1$ b5 7 $\mathbb{A}b3$ d6 8
 c3 0-0 h3 $\mathbb{A}b7$ 10 d4 $\mathbb{E}e8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$
 $\mathbb{A}f8$ 12 d5 (23)



White can decide to block the centre in numerous lines and in situations very different from one another, as can be seen in the following list which, although detailed, gives only some examples and is by no means exhaustive.

- 1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{A}b5$ a6 4
 $\mathbb{A}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{A}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{E}e1$ b5 7 $\mathbb{A}b3$
 d6 8 c3 0-0 h3 and now:

Zaitsev Variation

- 9 ... $\mathbb{A}b7$ 10 d4 $\mathbb{E}e8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$
 (or 11 a4 $\mathbb{A}f8$ 12 d5) 11 ... $\mathbb{A}f8$ 12 a4

- $\mathbb{W}d7$ (or 12 ... h6 13 d5) 13 axb5 (or 13 d5) 13 ... axb5 14 $\mathbb{E}xa8$ $\mathbb{A}xa8$ 15 d5

Chigorin Variation with ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$

- 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 10 $\mathbb{A}c2$ c5 11 d4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$
 (or 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 12 d5) 12 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ (or 12 d5) 12 ... cxd4 13 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 $\mathbb{A}b3$
 (or 14 d5) 14 ... a5 15 $\mathbb{A}d3$ $\mathbb{A}a6$ 16 d5
 — 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 10 $\mathbb{A}c2$ c5 11 d4 $\mathbb{W}c7$
 12 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ (or 12 d5) 12 ... cxd4 (or 12 ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13 d5) 13 cxd4 $\mathbb{A}b7$ (or 13 ... $\mathbb{A}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Mac}8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 16 d5) 14 d5

Keres Variation with ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

- 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 d4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ (or 10 ... $\mathbb{A}f6$ 11 a4 $\mathbb{A}b7$ 12 d5) 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{A}f6$
 12 d5

Breyer Variation

- 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 10 d4 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$
 $\mathbb{A}b7$ 12 $\mathbb{A}c2$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ (or 12 ... $\mathbb{A}c5$ 13 d5)
 13 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ (or 13 b3 $\mathbb{A}f8$ 14 d5) 13 ...
 $\mathbb{A}f8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ g6 15 a4 c5 16 d5

Smyslov Variation

- 9 ... b6 10 d4 $\mathbb{E}e8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$
 $\mathbb{A}f8$ 12 $\mathbb{A}c2$ (or 12 a3 $\mathbb{A}b7$ 13 $\mathbb{A}c2$)
 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 14 b4 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 15 $\mathbb{A}b2$ c5 16 d5
 12 ... $\mathbb{A}d7$ (or 12 ... $\mathbb{A}b7$ 13 d5) 13 a3
 a5 14 d5

— 9 ... $\text{h}5$ 10 $\text{d}4$ $\text{B}e8$ 11 $\text{Q}bd2$ $\text{B}f8$ 12 $\text{Q}f1$ $\text{B}b7$ (or 12 ... $\text{Q}d7$ 13 $\text{Q}g3$ $\text{Q}a5$ 14 $\text{B}c2$ c5 b3 $\text{Q}c6$ 16 d5) 13 $\text{Q}g3$ $\text{Q}a5$ 14 $\text{B}c2$ c5 15 d5

Or: 1 $\text{e}4$ e5 2 $\text{B}f3$ $\text{Q}c6$ 3 $\text{B}b5$ a6 4 $\text{B}a4$ and now:

Steinitz Variation Deferred

— 4 ... $d6$ 5 $c3$ $\text{B}d7$ 6 $d4$ g6 (sometimes in the order 4 ... g6 5 $c3$ d6 6 $d4$ $\text{B}d7$) 7 0-0 Bg7 8 Me1 (or 8 d5) 8 ... $\text{Q}ge7$ 9 $d5$

Anti-Marshall System

— 4 ... $\text{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\text{B}e7$ 6 Me1 b5 7 $\text{B}b3$ 0-0 8 a4 b4 9 $\text{B}a5$ $\text{B}b8$ 10 d4 d6 11 d5

Archangel Variation

— 4 ... $\text{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 b5 6 $\text{B}b3$ $\text{B}b7$ 7 Me1 $\text{B}c5$ 8 c3 d6 9 d4 $\text{B}b6$ 10 Bg5 b6 11 $\text{B}b4$ 0-0 12 Wd3 Me8 13 $\text{Q}bd2$ $\text{Q}a5$ 14 $\text{B}c2$ c5 15 d5

Other Variations

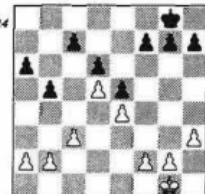
— 4 ... $\text{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\text{B}e7$ 6 Me1 b5 7 $\text{B}b3$ d6 8 c3 0-0 9 d4 $\text{B}g4$ 10 d5

1 Strategic Ideas

All the lines listed above give rise to strategically similar situations, except for certain individual by-ways that will be examined separately.

The main strategic features of the above mentioned variations can be

sumised from a brief analysis of the most frequent pawn structure, paying attention to the position of the kings (24).



Here we can easily point to:
(1) The weakness of the a5 and c6 squares.

(2) The relative weakness of the f5 and f4 squares, due to the position of the two kings.

(3) The central pawn chains and the blocked centre.

It should be observed, on the other hand, that those lines in which Black has not played ... b7-b5 or, on the contrary, has also played the advance ... c7-c5, have independent characteristics that we shall examine separately.

The weakness of Black's queenside

The weakness of Black's queenside does not lie solely in the weakening of the a5 and c6 squares determined

by the advance ... b7-b5, but also in the fact that the presence of the white pawn on d5 fixes the c6 square and isolates the pawns on a6 and b5 by preventing the c7 pawn from participating in their defence.

Should, in fact, either of the two queenside pawns bow out of the game, the remaining pawn would immediately find itself in the position of an isolated pawn.

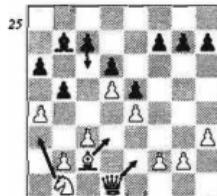
It is therefore evident that, on the queenside, White can pursue more than one attacking objective and so it is logical for White to develop more than one method for accomplishing his purpose.

Before we start looking at White's methods, it would be wise to recall that the positions in which Black has not played ... b7-b5 or has also played the advance ... c7-c5 do not possess these characteristics and will be examined separately.

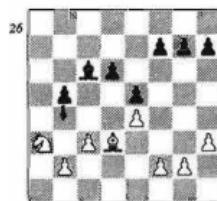
The advance a2-a4

With this advance, White is pursuing a double aim: exerting strong pressure on the b5 pawn and putting himself in the position of being able to open up the a-file.

The pressure on b5 will then be increased, generally after isolating the pawn following axb5 axb5 , by the intervention of the queen and the KB on the f1-a6 diagonal, and sometimes also of the QN from a3 (25).



As Black often develops his QB to b7, he sometimes has to play ... c6 to protect his b5 pawn, but after dxc6 Bxc6 , the large number of possible attacks can make defence of the pawn an arduous task, so much so that Black sometimes decides to sacrifice it by playing ... b5-b4, with the intention of damaging White's queenside (26).



In making this sacrifice, Black must, however, pay attention to the fact that the b4 pawn, although doubled, is passed and can become

extremely dangerous if White manages to advance it.

On other occasions, on the other hand, Black's strategy reaches a successful conclusion and White in some cases can decide to prevent this sacrifice by playing his QN to c2 before settling it on b4 whence it also controls the important points c6 and d5.

At other times, Black more or less voluntarily throws his b5 pawn to the wolves in the hope of obtaining counterplay in other areas of the board. In this case too, however, he gives his opponent a passed pawn on the b-file and it is not even doubled.

As we have said, another purpose of the advance a2-a4 is to prepare the opening of the a-file which White may control by doubling rooks, perhaps with a little help from his dark-squared bishop (27).

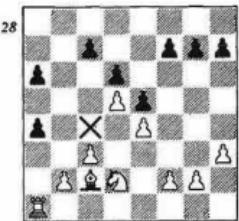


Here White not only has a chance to double rooks first with $\text{Ka}3$ followed by $\text{Ka}1$, but he can also win (29).

32

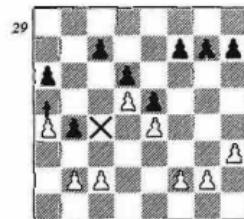
control of the a-file with the manoeuvre $\text{axb}5 \text{ axb}5, \text{Ka}7$ which enables the heavy pieces to double up on the file by restricting the action of the $\text{Ka}8$.

After the advance a4, Black usually has to withstand his opponent's initiative on the queenside and he looks for active counterplay in the centre and/or on the kingside along the lines we shall see later. In the majority of cases, in fact, the drastic decision is to react to a4 with ... $\text{bxa}4$ (28).



This is a case of the remedy being worse than the disease because the move seriously weakens the a6 pawn and abandons control of the $c4$ square which White can easily win with his QN.

When White has not yet played $c2-c3$ one very real alternative possibility is available to Black: to answer a2-a4 with ... b5-b4 , with the clear aim of keeping the a-file closed (29).

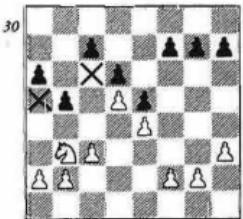


The effect of ... b4 may be the complete immobilization of the queenside (to the benefit of the player who is able to obtain the best prospects in other sectors of the board), and Black must also bear in mind that the strong square $c4$ may fall into his opponent's hands. Furthermore, the reply a4-a5 isolates the b4 pawn and fixes the a6 pawn, making them both possible objects for attack, albeit at the cost of the safety of the a5 pawn.

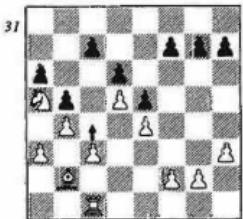
The manoeuvre $\text{Qd}2-\text{b}3-\text{a}5$

Another method employed by White to exploit the weaknesses generated by the advance ... b7-b5 is to try and install a knight on a5 (30).

Although a5 is rather off the beaten track for the knight, in many cases it proves crucial; from here, in fact, the knight gets in the way of piece movements on the queenside, makes the advance ... c7-c6 hard to



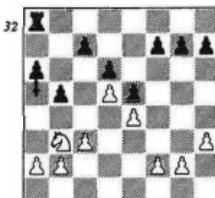
accomplish (the importance of this will be clear later) and threatens to infiltrate the advanced, central weak square $c6$, thus creating even greater problems for the enemy. White is also able to support the pressure exerted by the knight by opening and occupying the c-file after blockading the b5 pawn with the advance b2-b4 (31).



After c3-c4 , the attack on the b5 pawn, together with the alternative possibility of c4-c5 followed by $\text{cx}d6$, practically forces Black to play ... $\text{bx}c4$, so granting White excellent chances on the c-file.

33

Considering the dangers arising out of this knight manoeuvre, Black can best avoid it by responding to $\mathbb{Q}b3$ with ... $a6-a5$ (32).

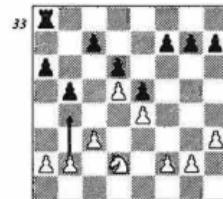


He hopes that compensation for this further weakening of the b5 pawn will be found in the chance to continue with his queenside advance (with ... $a5-a4$ and/or ... $b5-b4$) and so harass his opponent on the queenside and at the same time prepare an offensive in the centre.

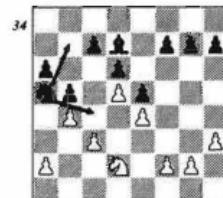
The b2-b4 advance

To prevent this reaction, White can fix the weak square a5 by playing b2-b4, possibly prepared by a2-a3 (33).

The advance of the b-pawn not only provides support to the knight if it is played to a5, but has other qualities too: it immobilizes the b5 pawn, making it easier to besiege, and prevents the sacrifice ... $b5-b4$. It also makes the squares a5 and c5 inaccessible to the black knights

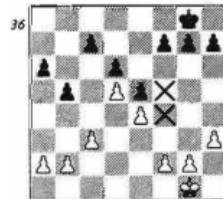
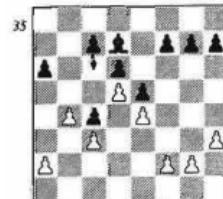


which may mean that Black is induced or forced to play a knight to b7, where it would be cut off from the action (34).



It may happen that in positions of the type illustrated here, Black, rather than meekly withdraw his knight to b7, will prefer the continuation ... $\mathbb{Q}c4$, $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $bx4$, although this lands him with a pawn on c4 which will in all probability become a victim of enemy predators. By playing in this way, he intends to continue with ... $c7-c6$ and hopes to obtain sufficient counterplay in the

centre by exploiting the tempi White will have to consume to take the c4 pawn (35).



Quite apart from the specific situation we are looking at here, it should be pointed out that the advance b2-b4 has the same defects as those caused by ... b7-b5, namely that it weakens the c4 and a4 squares and allows a possible infiltration (for example: ... $\mathbb{Q}d7-b6-c4$ or $\mathbb{Q}d7-b6-a4$). It also weakens the c3 pawn, a factor that can assume a certain importance when Black opens the c-file with the advance ... $c7-c6$.

The weakness of the f5 and f4 squares

Moving on now to scrutinize the situation on the kingside, we note that, as both the pawn structure and the domicile of the king are symmetrical, both players can endeavour to exploit the respective weakness of the f5 and f4 squares (36).

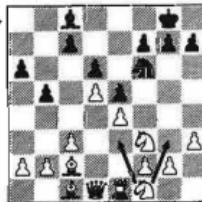
The weakness of these squares is in fact related to the fact that both sides castle short in this type of centre: the defence of f5 with ... $g6$ and that of f4 with $g3$ both weaken the castled position; and in White's case it is even weaker if $h2-h3$ has been played during the period of tension in the centre.

The squares f5 and f4 are ideal outposts for a knight which would be able to contribute (together with other pieces) to the delivery of concrete threats against the enemy's castled position or, as we have already said, to weakening it by provoking the advance of the g-pawn.

The manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}b1-d2-f1-g3$ (-e3)

To threaten occupation of the f5 square, White almost always resorts to the manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}b1-d2-f1$ because from here he can choose whether to play his knight to g3 or to e3 (37).

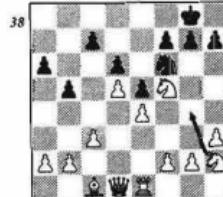
37



playing ... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ because, after $exf5$, White is ready to grind forward with his pawns (g2-g4-g5) which would also bring the $\mathbb{Q}c2$ back to life on the dangerous diagonal b1-h7.

The manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}f3-h2-g4$

If White were successful in his intention of occupying the f5 square, it is easy to imagine that his kingside pressure would not be long in turning into a violent piece attack in which the manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}f3-h2-g4$ might play a key role. On h2 it allows the queen to get into the game on the d1-h5 diagonal and on g4, by attacking $\mathbb{Q}f6$, it contributes to demolishing the black king's defences (38).



Such a plan of attack rarely goes beyond the stage of a latent threat but Black can never afford to forget it. It should be noted that the manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}f3-h2-g4$ is not necessarily a

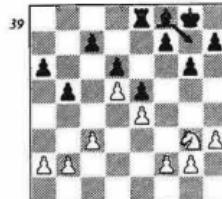
It is more common to go to g3 but both moves have their good and bad points: from g3 the knight controls h5 and so thwarts any ambitions Black might have with the manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}f6-h5-f4$. Its scope is, however, confined to the kingside and Black can also reduce its offensive influence by means of the advance ... g7-g6. From e3, on the other hand, it keeps an eye on the important d5 and e4 squares (control of which can become extremely important after a2-a4 — see diagrams 28 and 29 — and/or after ... c7-c6 — see below, diagram 54) and its influence on the kingside is not limited by the advance ... g7-g6 because in that case it is ready to go to g4 to exploit the weak squares h6 and f6. It does, however, interfere with protection of the e4 pawn and the action of the $\mathbb{Q}c1$.

It should be pointed out that it is not always in Black's interests to go for a drastic solution to the problem of the occupation of the f5 square by

prelude to occupation of the f5 square; in fact White generally has recourse to it so as to exploit the weakening of the f6 and h6 squares if the advance ... g7-g6 has been played.

The defensive manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{K}e8$, ... g6, ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ (-g7)

Generally speaking, to prevent the occurrence of conditions similar to those illustrated in the previous diagram, Black resolves to protect the f5 square with the advance ... g7-g6 and as at least a partial remedy to the consequent weakening of the f6 and h6 squares he moves his dark-square bishop to its original position with ... $\mathbb{B}e8$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ (39).



In effect, from this position, the bishop can be fianchettoed if necessary, the only place from which it re-establishes reasonable control over both the squares weakened by the advance ... g7-g6. Let us not forget

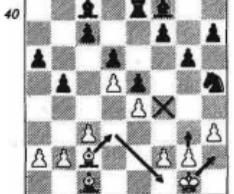
that in a situation of tension in the centre, this manoeuvre serves more than anything else to increase the pressure on the white centre (see diagrams 10 and 12).

The three moves that constitute the kernel of this manoeuvre can be played in different orders: generally speaking, Black plays ... $\mathbb{K}e8$, ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ and then ... g7-g6, but it is also possible to play this earlier.

The manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}f6-h5-f4$

One source of counterplay contained in the advance ... g7-g6 is that it takes the ground from under the feet of the tactical theme we find in the comment to diagram 63 insofar as it protects the h5 square. So, the offensive manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}f6-h5-f4$ is available to Black, and while White can on the one hand congratulate himself on having induced a weakening in his opponent's castled position, on the other he has to be ready to run for cover if he finds himself having to deal with a threatening knight on f4 (40).

Just as happens, with colours reversed, in the case of the f5 square, the occupation of f4, combined with the opening up of the f-file after the advance ... f7-f5 (see below: 'undermining the base of the e4-d5 pawn chain'), can denote the start of a violent piece attack on the kingside. The



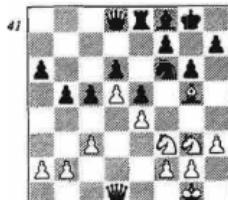
result is that, to protect his king and oust the intruder from f4, White sometimes has to resort to the manoeuvre $\mathbb{A}c2-d3-f1$ followed by g2-g3, supported if necessary by the move $\mathbb{A}h2$, depending on the defensive needs of h3.

As we have already stated with regard to occupation of the f5 square, here too we have to note that it is not worth White's while to eliminate the invader by playing $\mathbb{A}xf4$ because the concession of the bishop pair, the opening of the long diagonal h8-a1 and the clearance of the strong square e5 would evidently be to Black's advantage.

The pinning of $\mathbb{Q}f6$

To return to White's plans, it has to be noted that the weakening caused by the advance ... g7-g6 is enough to guarantee an irksome initiative only in the event of his being able to place a minor piece firmly on h6 (for example: $\mathbb{A}c1-h6$, $\mathbb{Q}f3-h2-g4-h6$ or

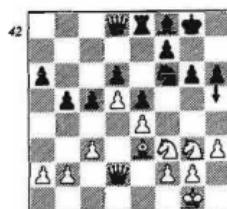
$\mathbb{Q}e3-g4-h6$) which, however, only happens rarely. It is therefore logical that White should generally endeavour to induce further weaknesses by pinning $\mathbb{Q}f6$ with $\mathbb{A}g5$ (41).



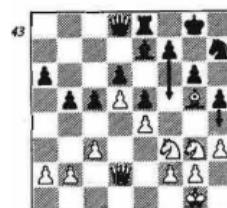
Incidentally, it should be noted that the development of the QB on g5 might have preceded the formation of the blocked centre and it might therefore be necessary independently of the presence or otherwise of the advance ... g7-g6.

Under the circumstances illustrated in the diagram, Black usually decides to rid himself of the irritating presence of the $\mathbb{A}g5$ at the earliest opportunity by playing ... h7-h6, since otherwise the pin could become stabilised with $\mathbb{W}d2$ and its effects extended by the manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}f3-h2-g4$. After ... h7-h6 White usually withdraws his bishop to e3, following which he directs his sights on h6 with $\mathbb{W}d2$ (42).

At this point, Black can defend his h6 pawn by ... $\mathbb{A}h7$. He can also



simply get it out of the way by pushing it up to h5, in this case earmarking the h7 square for the $\mathbb{Q}f6$, with a view to countering the possible return of the white bishop to g5 by ... $\mathbb{A}c7$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ (but the h7 square can also be of use to the $\mathbb{Q}f6$ as a means of countering the White knight's occupying g5) and as a preparation for the advance ... f7-f5 (43).



To be able to play ... f7-f5, Black's idea is to drive off the $\mathbb{Q}g3$ by means of the further advance ... h5-h4. The application of a similar strategy is

closely related to the purposes of the attack on the base of the e4-d5 pawn chain (see below) and therefore sometimes has a real effect on the kingside situation. In other words, Black attempts to make a virtue of necessity by exploiting the positive aspects of what remains fundamentally a considerable weakening in his castled position.

It should also be noted that in some cases, the advance ... h5 can help to prevent the manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}f3-h2-g4$ which, as we have seen, is sometimes part of White's plans.

Attacking methods for exploiting the weakening of Black's castled position

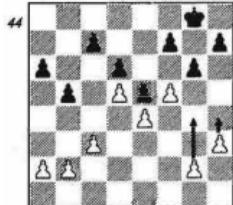
It is clear that, in order to exploit the weakening in Black's castled position, White has to try and open up a kingside file. To achieve this result he has substantially two ways of proceeding: he can mobilize his pawns on the kingside, advancing them until they clash with the enemy front line, or he can sacrifice a piece.

In the first case, he can decide to entrust the task of breaking through to the f-pawn or, in favourable circumstances, to the h-pawn; in the second case, he almost invariably resorts to the positional sacrifice of a knight on f5.

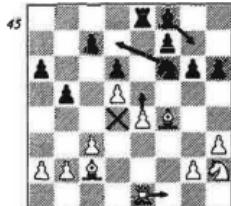
Mobilization of the f-pawn

To mobilize the f-pawn, White must move his $\mathbb{Q}f3$ which, as we have already observed, can mean going to either h2 or b4.

After clearing the way for his f-pawn, White's plan is ideally to stifle the black king's room for manoeuvre on the kingside by means of the pawn advance f2-f4-f5 aided, as required, by the advance of the g-pawn and/or the h-pawn (44).



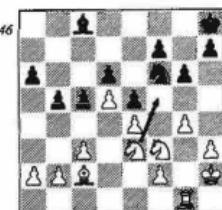
It is obvious that if such a wholesale advance were to be put into practice, the defence would be faced with herculean problems so, after f2-f4, Black almost always decides to liquidate the offending intruder on the f-file by means of ... exf4. In this case, following the disappearance of the e5 and f4 pawns, the strategic situation undergoes a radical transformation (45).



White succeeds in opening up the f-file and controlling the strong square d4, which will be useful for centralizing a minor piece. However, the struggle mainly takes place around e5, it being White's most important strategic aim to make the breakthrough with e4-e5, so completing the demolition of the centre and, above all, to permit the light-squared bishop to get into the game. Black will obviously attempt to prevent this advance by strengthening his control of e5 (for example: ... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ and ... $\mathbb{Qd7}$), so as to install a strong central knight there to paralyse the e4 pawn and so transform it into a structural weakness on an half-open file. At times a similar blocking strategy is crowned with complete success, with the result that White's whole game loses many of its positive aspects and the position can, in some cases, actually turn against him.

The positional sacrifice of a knight on f5

This method of breaking through on the kingside usually follows the preparatory moves g4, $\mathbb{Qh2}$ and $\mathbb{Bg1}$ (played in whatever order is considered best for the situation) so as to create a situation of pressure before actually making the sacrifice (46).



Black can withdraw his king from the hot spot by moving it to h8, but this defensive step does not neutralize the effectiveness of the sacrifice. The idea is to suffocate Black's already cramped kingside position because, if the sacrifice is accepted, White achieves a similar position to that illustrated in diagram 44, albeit at the price of some loss of material.

After $\mathbb{Q}f5$, if Black decides to accept the sacrifice with ... $gxf5$, White can, depending on the circumstances, choose whether to retake with the g-pawn or the e-pawn. In

both cases the presence of a pawn on f5 hamstrings the enemy position and makes defence difficult.

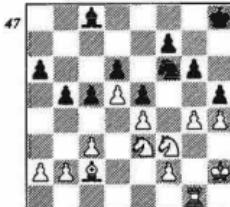
In the former case, White will play above all to exploit the possibilities arising out of the opening up of the g-file; in the second he will try to roll his way forward with his kingside pawns and make use of the offensive capability of his light-squared bishop along the b1-b7 diagonal. In this latter case, however, White must keep an eye open for the possible reply ... e4, especially when it allows his opponent to install a knight on e5, because such powerful centralization can at times be sufficient for beating off the attack.

The mobilization of the h-pawn

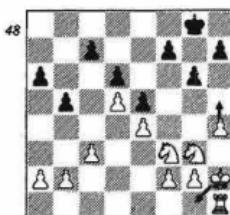
It should be observed that, in situations of the type illustrated in diagram 46, White can also pursue his attack by questioning the h-pawn. In this case, however, he must pay a great deal of attention in case, after h3-h4, Black plays ... h7-h5 (47).

This defensive measure proves effective when White has failed to prepare the advance of the h-pawn adequately because the weakening of the g4 square can turn out to be very important for the defence.

Another situation in which White can mobilize the h-pawn is when Black plays ... g7-g6 to restrict the



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 $\mathbb{Q}g3$'s room for manoeuvre. Here White can try to prise open the h-file by means of $\mathbb{Q}h2$ and $\mathbb{K}h1$ followed by the advance of the h-pawn (48).

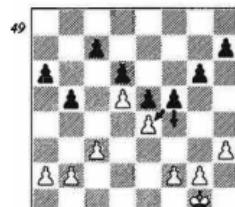


The idea is to liberate the rook by returning to g1 with the king. This manoeuvre, however, only takes place under exceptional circumstances as White has to reckon with the reply ... h7-h5.

Undermining the base of the e4-d5 pawn chain

Black's counterplay will aim at the

occupation of the f4 square and is largely concerned with the destruction of White's central pawn chain. In line with the direction of attack suggested by the pawn chain c7-d6-e5, Black can undermine the base of the white chain e4-d5 by means of the advance ... f7-f5 (49).

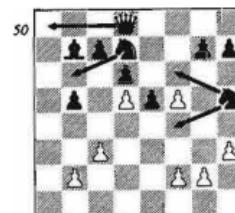


Black normally effects this advance with the support of ... g7-g6 so as to be able to reply to exf5 with ... gxf5 and so prevent the opponent obtaining an advantage from the unexpected clearance of the strong e4 square by installing a stable minor piece on it.

The counterattack may be directed basically at two objectives, depending on whether Black intends to cause the weakening of the d5 pawn or gain space on the kingside so as to open the way for a large-scale pawn offensive.

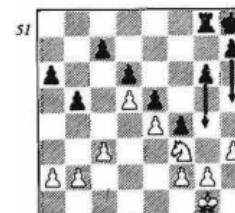
In the former case he can also omit the supporting move ... g7-g6 because the capture exf5 merely

supports his intentions (50).



The attack on the d5 pawn can be executed in various ways, the most common of which are shown in the diagram. It is clear that in a case of this kind, the prospects for White are closely related to the possibility of keeping his d5 pawn protected and of exploiting the e4 square.

In the second case, the space advantage that Black gains after ... f5-f4 creates the opportunity for a massive kingside breakthrough (51).

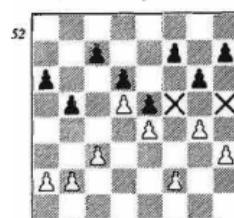


In similar situations, exceptional

though they are, White has to try and stem the advance of his opponent and quickly develop an attack in the opposite sector.

The ambiguity of White's plans

To prevent his opponent from starting counterplay on the kingside with the manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}f6-h5-f4$ or the advance ... f7-f5, White can take prophylactic measures by the advance g2-g4 which gives him control of both f5 and h5 (52).



The reverse side of the coin is the general weakening of his dark kingside squares caused by this advance: Black can try to take advantage of this situation with manoeuvres such as ... h7-h6, ... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}g5$.

In addition to acting as a deterrent against Black's kingside reactions, the g2-g4 advance, as we have seen in diagram 46, may also be a prelude to the positional sacrifice of a knight

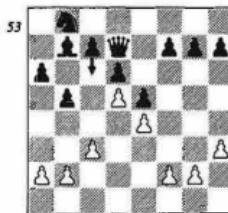
on f5. White may at times base his plans specifically on this deliberate ambiguity: he can hint at a mass attack on the kingside so as to force his enemy to deploy most of his troops in defence of the threatened front, and then abruptly exploit his greater freedom of movement in order to break through on the queenside or, on the contrary, go in for elaborate queenside manoeuvring before switching threats to the kingside.

It should be mentioned that this strategy is not necessarily dependent on the achievement of the g2-g4 advance: White in fact normally resorts to it when operating right across the board with the purpose of leaving his opponent guessing as to the development of future events. This is a typical plan that requires both players to tread carefully.

Attacking the head of the e4-d5 pawn chain

Another ordinary theme of defensive counterplay consists of undermining the head of White's central pawn chain by means of the advance ... c7-c6 (53).

This advance is clearly directed at releasing Black from the oppressive, vice-like hold on the centre set up with the central block which, as we have noted, enables White to undertake attacking ventures on both wings.



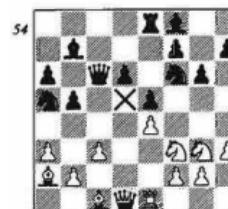
Against this central aggression, White can behave in substantially three ways depending on whether he accepts the partial destruction of his centre that would be brought about by the move dx6, permits his opponent to continue with ... cxd5, or endeavours to maintain the status quo by eventually continuing with b2-b3 and c3-c4. The struggle will take on quite a different complexion depending on which method is selected.

The dxc6 capture and opening the a2-g8 diagonal

If White decides to play dxc6, Black usually recaptures with his bishop or queen rather than the knight since the QN, if located at b8, can make a more appropriate contribution to the fight by going to b6 (to control d5) or to c5 (to exert pressure on e4) via d7; if it is on a5, it will find a better outpost on c4; and finally, if it is on e7, it

is in the best possible position for supporting the advance ... d6-d5.

It will be readily appreciated that the bone of contention is the d5 square, the aim of both sides being respectively to effect and prevent the freeing move ... d6-d5 (54).



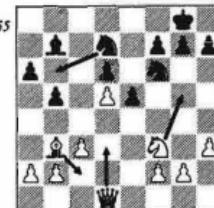
Black will concentrate his efforts on the d5 and e4 points, while White will try to oppose the advance ... d6-d5 by direct or indirect measures. With a view to accepting the exchange of the d5 and c6 pawns he can, for instance, keep his light-squared bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal so that, after a2-a3 or a2-a4, he will be able to withdraw to a2 on the attacking move ... Qa5 (it should be noted, however, that the Qa5 can still take part in the struggle for the d5 square either by moving to c4 or by carrying out the manoeuvre ... Qc4-b6); or he can try and reduce his opponent's control over d5, for example by the simplification Lc1-g5xf6; or, finally, he can exert pressure

against the e5 pawn by threatening to take it in the event of ... d6-d5.

Independently of the success or failure of the opposing strategies, it is clear that the opening up of the a2-g8 diagonal can favour the execution of tactical ideas against f7 so that if, on the one hand, White's position loses space and solidity, on the other it acquires greater thrust.

The capture ... cxd5 and the opening of the b1-h7 diagonal

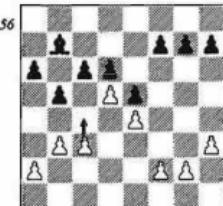
White can react to the attack on the head of his centre chain illustrated in diagram 53 by behaving in another way too, similar in substance to the previous procedure but more aggressive. He can allow his opponent to make the capture ... cxd5 so as to clear the b1-h7 diagonal after exd5, heedless of the fact that the d5 pawn thus becomes an easy target for his opponent (55).



Very often, Black successfully completes his siege of the d5 pawn, so obtaining a material advantage and a strong pair of mobile centre pawns. However, White's position, thanks to the opening of the b1-h7 diagonal, suddenly acquires new dynamics because of the possibilities of attacking Black's castled position.

The advances b2-b3, c3-c4 and the opening of the c-file

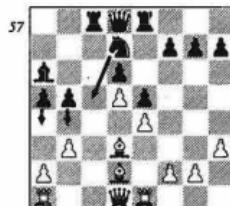
Finally, White is able to react to the advance ... c7-c6 by rushing to the defence of the d5 square with b3 and c4 so as to retain his stranglehold on the centre for as long as possible (56).



The effect of such a strategy is almost inevitably to cause the opening of the c-file following the sequence c4 cxd5, cxd5. It should, however, be observed that this condition is more

often seen before the formation of the blocked centre, while tension rules in the centre, when Black plays the advance ... c7-c5 followed by the exchange ... cxd4.

In the new strategic situation that is created, Black generally tries to expand on the queenside by advancing his a- and b-pawns, supporting this operation with manoeuvres such as ... Ra6, ... Qd7-c5 and, naturally, occupying the c-file with his heavy pieces. In a word, he endeavours to gain the edge from the slight weakening of the queenside caused by the advance b2-b3 (57).



White, on the other hand, can retain control over the crucial entry points c3 and c2, trying, as the need arises, to decide whether it is to his advantage to exchange the heavy pieces off on the open file and get nearer the endgame, or rather stake all his cards on a breakthrough on the kingside in the usual way. It should be noted that one positive

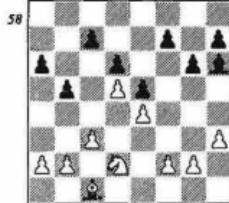
aspect of the advance b2-b3 is that it prevents any black knight incursion on c4, an idea that Black can often consider, particularly after he has exchanged his c-pawn.

The bad bishop

One consequence of the blocked centre is that the action of Black's dark-squared bishop is severely limited by the presence of the d6 and e5 pawns, so that it is reduced to a prevalently passive role. It is logical, therefore, for Black to consider the idea of trading it off with its white counterpart or trying to get it into the thick of the fight by appropriate manoeuvring.

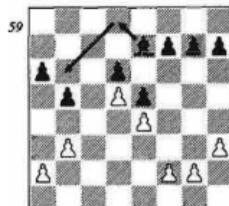
The most direct way of solving the problem of the bad bishop is to try and exchange it by taking control of the c1-h6 diagonal, something that Black can sometimes achieve by, for example, the already mentioned manoeuvre ... h7-h6, ... Qb7 and ... Kg5 (see comment to diagram 52), or, with no need for support, at a moment in which the opponent's dark-squared bishop is blocked by the presence of a knight on d2 or on e3 (58).

We must note, however, that it is almost always disadvantageous for Black to exchange this bishop for a knight because this would cause a serious weakening of the black squares on the kingside, a weakness



that White could accentuate with the advance f2-f4.

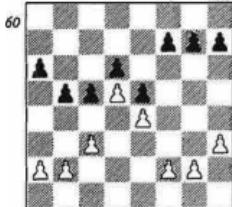
Finally, it should be noted that in positions in which Black has played ... c7-c6, and above all in cases in which the c-file has been opened, this bishop may be reactivated via d8, on the a7-g1 diagonal (59).



It may happen on occasion that Black succeeds in transforming his bad bishop into a real threat on the a7-g1 diagonal, backing up the action of the bishop by placing the queen on a7.

The advance ... c7-c5

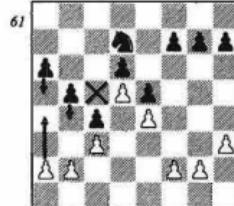
In a large number of important variations of the Spanish, blocking the centre with d5 occurs only after Black has played ... c7-c5 (60).



Having awaited this moment to set up the blocked centre, it is logical for White in this way to avoid the possibility of an attack against the head of his central pawn chain, so paving the way for undisturbed action against the enemy king. In positions of this type, compared to those examined thus far, the strategic conduct of the two sides does not undergo any particular variation as regards the development of manoeuvres on the kingside, whereas the queenside presents us with a new situation.

As he can no longer counterattack in the centre by means of the advance ... c7-c6, Black will endeavour to open a file by advancing his

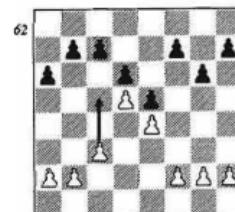
pawns until they clash with the enemy's (... c5-c4, ... a6-a5, ... b5-b4), trying to avoid possible blocking measures and using the c5 square as an outpost for his knight (61).



For his part, White will try to stifle this reaction by means of the advance a2-a4. As well as preparing to open the a-file, White hopes to induce ... b5-b4 before ... c5-c4. Then he has two options: to open the c-file and develop play on the queenside; or to block the queenside completely with c3-c4 and concentrate on the kingside.

The absence of the advance ... b7-b5

White may sometimes decide to set up a blocked centre even when Black has retained a more solid configuration on the queenside by omitting ... b7-b5. The resulting strategic structure will be the following (62).



It is clear that if the advance ... b7-b5 has not been played, White finds himself without the targets for attack on the queenside that we examined at the beginning of this chapter. He is, however, able to organize an attack against the c7-d6-e5 chain in the most classical way, namely by smashing through with his c-pawn (c3-c4-c5xd6). White's aim is to open a file in this sector where he has a space advantage and to create a weak pawn (d6) in his opponent's set-up, albeit on a closed file. If, on the other hand, Black decides to play ... dxec5, White achieves his purpose of weakening the c7 pawn and restoring mobility to that on d5.

In these cases, Black's counterplay also develops more in harmony with the directions of attack suggested by the central pawn chains: he will therefore tend to put more teeth into the kingside counterplay that will arise out of the attack on the base of the e4-d5 pawn chain, rather than exploit what might derive

from the attack on the head of the chain.

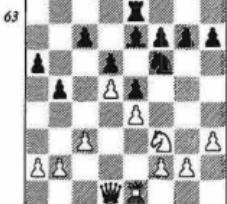
2 Tactical Ideas

Notwithstanding the presence of the blocked centre, which usually does not help the proliferation of recurrent tactical ideas (at least as far as the opening is concerned), in this type of centre it is possible to pinpoint a certain number of tactical ideas that are common to more than one variation. We will mention the more general ones and inform the reader that tactical solutions may become more numerous (although no longer classifiable) in positions in which the centre has been partially broken up following attacks at either the base or the head of the e4-d5 pawn chain.

The undefended position of the ♜h4 (Qh5)

If they are planning to occupy the f5 and f4 squares with the manoeuvres ♜f3-h4-f5 and ... ♜f6-h5-f4, both sides will have to act with circumspection because their respective opponents might take advantage of the knight's undefended position when it moves to the h-file (63).

In the diagram, for example, if Black were to play ... ♜h5? there would follow ♜xe5; on the other

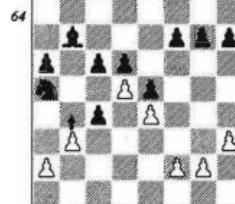


hand, if it were White to move, $\mathbb{Q}h4?$ would be correctly met by ... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ and not ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$ because in this case recapture by $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ would defend $\mathbb{Q}h4$. It should be noted, however, that if the black queen is on d8, this second possibility also becomes correct.

Trapping the $\mathbb{Q}a5$

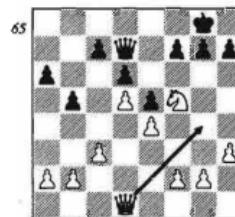
When White gears up to defend his d5 pawn by means of b2-b3 and c3-c4 (as shown in diagram 56) and the black QN is on a5, Black must not fool himself that his control over the c4 square is always sufficient to prevent the pawn advance c3-c4. At times, in fact, White can play c3-c4 even without the necessary protection because the capture ... $bxc4$ could be met by b3-b4 (64).

... so trapping the $\mathbb{Q}a5$. To enable White to put this theme into practice, Black must have developed his QB to b7, so that he does not have the escape square b7 for his knight.



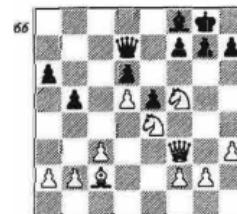
The undefended position of the $\mathbb{Wd7}$

One theme that occurs with unexpected frequency is based on the possibility of exploiting the undefended position of the black queen on d7. White's play pivots round the successful occupation of the f5 square (65).



The essence of the theme is shown in the diagram: White plays $\mathbb{Wg4}$ and wins because of the double threat of $\mathbb{Wxg7}$ mate and $\mathbb{Qh6+}$.

This theme can, of course, also crop up in more sophisticated forms like the following (66).

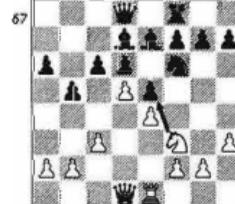


Here White plays $\mathbb{Q}d6$ and Black cannot reply ... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ because of $\mathbb{Wg4}$ and wins. In fact the move ... $g7-g6$ is useless because White can withdraw quietly by $\mathbb{Q}e4$: the knight cannot be taken because of $\mathbb{Qf6+}$.

The breakthrough of the d5 pawn

Generally speaking, this theme is based on the pseudo-sacrifice $\mathbb{Q}xe5$, which has the purpose of freeing the d5 pawn and so allowing it to proceed to d6.

When, for example, the location of the black pieces is such as to stop the $\mathbb{Ae7}$ moving, White may have the chance to change the features of the position to his advantage by exploiting the bottled up position of the black bishop (67).



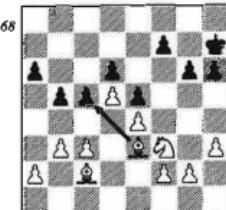
In the situation shown here, White plays $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ and, after ... $dxe5$, continues with d6. After capturing the dark-squared bishop, a pawn structure is created of the type we shall be examining in Chapter 3, in which the lack of the $\mathbb{Ae7}$ and $\mathbb{Af3}$ usually works in favour of White insofar as possession of the pair of bishops and the general weakening of the enemy black squares are advantageous to him.

This tactical idea can also be based on the fork theme: in fact the breakthrough of the d5 pawn can give this result when Black, for example, has played his queen to c7 and has withdrawn his QN to e7.

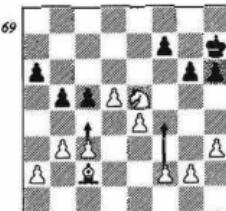
The piece sacrifice to destroy the centre

Both sides have, at times, the chance to operate a minor piece sacrifice for the opponent's d- and e-pawns. The nature of such sacrifices is not precisely tactical, the main objective

being to obtain a dangerous mobile mass of central pawns (68).



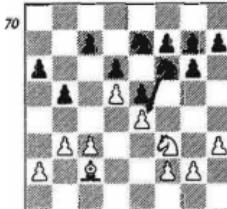
In a situation of the kind illustrated in the diagram, for example, White may play the sacrifice $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (69).



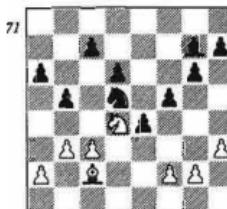
... so as to obtain a complete freeing of his central pawns with the idea of making a mass advance and, consequently, the chance to effectively reactivate his white-squared bishop along the b1-h7 diagonal.

Black can act in similar fashion, sacrificing a knight for the e4 and d5

pawns. The most favourable (but not indispensable) conditions occur when White has already played b2-b3 (70).



In the diagram, Black plays ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$, $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ f5, $\mathbb{Q}c2$ e4, $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (71).



... and achieves the purpose not only of creating a threatening mobile mass of central pawns, but also of dangerously reactivating the bad bishop.

3 Illustrative games

Game 2

Kasparov-Smejkal

Dubai Olympiad 1986

Zaitsev Variation

1	e4	e5
2	$\mathbb{Q}f3$	$\mathbb{Q}c6$
3	$\mathbb{Q}b5$	a6
4	$\mathbb{Q}a4$	$\mathbb{Q}f6$
5	0-0	$\mathbb{Q}e7$
6	$\mathbb{K}e1$	b5
7	$\mathbb{Q}b3$	d6

With this move, Black tells his opponent that he does not intend to enter the complex variations arising out of the Marshall gambit, which would have been the outcome after 7 ... 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$, giving rise to a type of centre that we will examine in Chapter 7.

White can avoid the Marshall gambit by answering 7 ... 0-0 with 8 a4, immediately shifting attention to Black's weaknesses on the queenside. In certain variations positions with a blocked centre arise, for example: 8 ... b4 9 a5 d6 (9 ... $\mathbb{B}b8$ 10 d4 d6 11 d5 $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ — or 12 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ c6 13 dx6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ with a slight advantage to White — 12 ... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ and here the b4 pawn proves to be a source of anxiety and nothing else) 10 d3 (10 d4 would be answered by 10 ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$) 10 ... $\mathbb{B}b8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 12 c3 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 13 d4 (here White cannot benefit from the

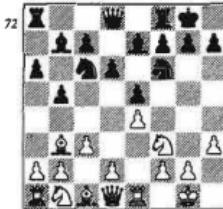
tactical idea 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$?! $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ with a good game for Black) 13 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 14 d5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ with a complex but basically balanced position. Once again, 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ fails to 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ etc.

8	c3	0-0
9	$\mathbb{h}3$	

The blocked centre may often arise out of the line 9 d4 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 10 d5 (for 10 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ d5 see the note to White's ninth move in Game 1, while the pawn sacrifice 10 h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ — 11 gxf3? — 11 ... exd4 12 $\mathbb{W}d1$ dx3 13 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$, designed to obtain a pair of mobile centre pawns, the e- and f-pawns, and attacking chances on the kingside, is interesting but not completely correct) 10 ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ c6 12 h3 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ (having induced White to block the centre, the bishop has fulfilled its purpose and now gets ready to move to the a8-h1 diagonal. However, equally good is 12 ... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ cxd5 14 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}bd5$ and White's initiative is offset by Black's material advantage. Against 12 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$, one option is 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ dx5 14 d6, with a slight but lasting advantage for White. Black can prepare this withdrawal by playing, on the previous move, 11 ... $\mathbb{W}c8$, for example: 12 h3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ c6 etc.) 13 dx5 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ with a balanced game, for example: 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 17 a4 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19 $\mathbb{W}e2$ d5.

9 ...

Kb7 (72)



Opting for the currently fashionable Zaitsev Variation. The text, in connection with the subsequent manoeuvre ... Kb8 and ... Kf8, pursues a thematic objective of tension in the centre: applying pressure on the e4 pawn (after 10 d4) so as to force White to take a decision in the centre. In addition, Black delays a decision on the future placing of the Qc6 which, as we will see, can move in various ways.

Black, of course, has numerous other possibilities in his armoury:

(1) The Smyslov Variation, characterised by 9 ... h6, which also aims to carry out the manoeuvre ... Kb8 and ... Kf8, but only after preventing White's minor pieces landing on g5. Here are some possible developments, confining our attention to the cases in which the blocked centre arises: 9 ... h6 10 d4 Kb8 11 Qbd2 Kf8 and now:

(1a) 12 Qc2 Qd7 13 Qd3 Wb8 14 b3 g6 15 Kb2 Kg7 16 d5 Qd8 17 c4 with a slight advantage for White.

(1b) 12 a3 (with the purpose of permitting Qa2 or, alternatively, the withdrawal Qc2 by preventing the possible reply ... exd4, cxd4 Qb4, and at the same time preparing the advance b2-b4) 12 ... Kb7 13 Qc2 (here 13 Qa2 Qb8 14 d5 is possible, but it would not appear to give White more than equality) 13 ... Qb8 14 b4 (14 b3 Qbd7 15 d5 c6 16 c4 is equally good) 14 ... Qbd7 15 Kb2 g6 16 Wb1 (to defend e4 and free the Qd2) 16 ... Kg7 17 Qb3 Kb8 18 Qa5 followed by d5, with better prospects for White.

(1c) 12 Qf1 Kb7 (after 12 ... Qd7 13 Qg3 Qa5 14 Qc2 c5 15 b3 Qc6 16 d5 White retains a slight advantage) 13 Qg3 Qa5 14 Qc2 Qd4 (or 14 ... c5 15 d5 Qc4 reaching a position that is little seen in practice and about which judgement is suspended) 15 b3 (on 15 a4 a strong move is 15 ... d5! with equality) 15 ... Qb6 16 Qd2 (or 16 a4 bxa4 17 bxa4 a5 with a balanced position) 16 ... c5 17 d5 g6 with equal possibilities.

(2) The Chigorin Variation with 9 ... Qd7 (there are two variations named after Chigorin; the most common, 9 ... Qa5, will be examined in the comment to Game 3). The intention of this withdrawal is to transfer the KN to b6 via d7 so as to control the important white squares on the

queenside and to try, together with ... Qa5 and ... c5, to take the initiative on the queenside; the place of the Qf6 will be taken by the KB which from f6 will strengthen the e5 pawn and so exert pressure on d4. Let's have a look at some examples: 9 ... Qd7 10 d4 and now:

(2a) 10 ... Qb6 (to prevent 11 a4) 11 Qbd2 Qf6 12 d5 Qa5 13 Qc2 c6 14 dxc6 Wc7 15 Qf1 and White has the edge because he is ahead in his usual purposes.

(2b) 10 ... Qf6 11 a4 Kb7 12 axb5 (the immediate 12 d5 is also possible) 12 ... axb5 13 Wxa8 Wxa8 (or 13 ... Wxa8 14 d5 Qa5 15 Qc2 Qc4 16 b3 Qcb6 17 Qa3 Qa6 18 Qh2 c6 with prospects for both sides) 14 d5 (14 Qa3?) 14 ... Qe7 15 Qa3 Qc5 16 Qc2 c6 17 b4 and Black, faced with the plan dxc6, Qd3 and Wc2, will still have a lot to do to reach full equality.

(3) 9 ... Kb6, with the idea of immediately exchanging the opponent's light-squared bishop, whose action is often very effective; in so doing, however, Black further weakens the squares d5 and f5 and allows the enemy free rein on the a-file. One possible continuation might be: 10 d4 Qxb3 11 axb3 (11 Wxb3 is also playable) 11 ... Kb8 12 d5 Qb8 13 c4 with the idea of Qc3 and White is rather better.

(4) The Breyer Variation, 9 ... Qb8, which we have already encountered

in Game 1 and which will be the subject of Game 3.

(5) 9 ... a5, mention of which will be made in commenting Black's ninth move in Game 7.

10 d4 Mb8

Continuing to increase pressure on the e4 pawn to force White to release the tension.

11 Qbd2

The immediate 11 a4 is also possible, for example: 11 ... Kb8 12 d5 Qb8 13 axb5 axb5 14 Wxa8 Wxa8 15 Qa3 c6 16 dxc6 Qxc6 17 Qg5 Qbd7 18 Qc2 followed by Qb4, with slightly superior position for White. For 11 Qg5 see the comment to Black's ninth move in Game 1.

11 ... Mb8

12 a4

Viable alternatives are 12 a3 g6 13 Qa2 Kg7 14 d5, and 12 Qc2 g6 13 d5 Qb8 14 b3 c6 15 c4, with equal prospects in both cases.

12 ... Wd7

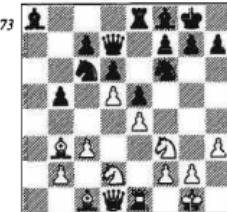
12 ... hb6 is also commonly played: 13 d5 (13 Qc2 exd4 14 cxd4 gives rise to the structure considered in Chapter 4) 13 ... Qb8.

13 axb5 axb5

14 Exa8 Exa8

Wrong is 14 ... Wxa8? because of 15 Qg5 Qd8 16 Qdf3 with a clear advantage for White, for example: 16 ... h6 17 dx5 dxe5 18 Qxf7 Qxf7 19 Qxe5 etc., or 16 ... c5 17 dxc5 dxc5 18 Wxd7 Qxd7 19 Qxf7 Qxf7 20 Qe6 etc.

15 d5 (73)



The pressure against the e4 pawn induces White to block the centre. While this decision might on the one hand be considered a concession to Black, it is clear that, on the other, White obtains more space and limits his opponent's piece mobility.

15 ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$?

With the idea of bringing this knight to c5 via a6. The position shown in the last diagram offers a very clear illustration of the manifold manoeuvring possibilities of the QN in this type of variation of the Spanish game. All the other possible knight moves have, in fact, been tried as alternatives to the text with the exception of the decentralizing 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}a7$. Here are a few possible continuations: 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ h6 17 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ h2 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 19 b4 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ and White obtains good chances on the kingside; or 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ h6 17 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ h2 c6 with a balanced game; or, finally, 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$

16 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ c6 17 b4 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 18 c4 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ with a complicated position.

16 $\mathbb{Q}f1$

The plans of the two players are fairly evident: White wants to weaken his opponent's castled position by threatening or actually carrying out the transfer $\mathbb{Q}f1-g3$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}g5$, whereas Black intends to counterattack in the centre following the advance ... c7-c6.

The attempt to exploit the position of the $\mathbb{W}d7$ and the $\mathbb{M}e8$ on the a4-e8 diagonal with 16 c4 (16 ... bxc4? 17 $\mathbb{Q}a4$) does not make much headway after 16 ... c6 or 16 ... $\mathbb{Q}c8$.

16 ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$??

Black pursues the plan commenced with his previous move. However, postponement of his counterattack in the centre cannot make for a particularly healthy position. The preventive 16 ... h6 followed immediately by ... c7-c6 was worth consideration.

17 $\mathbb{Q}g5$

This move is also useful for indirectly tightening control of the d5 square, in view of the advance ... c7-c6.

17 ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ g619 $\mathbb{W}d2$

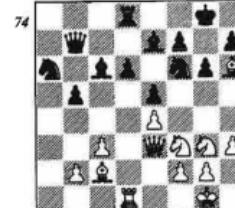
Prevents ... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}g8$, and mobilizes the $\mathbb{M}e1$.

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

Black must once again put off the start of his central counterattack,

because after 19 ... c6 20 dxc6 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 22 $\mathbb{M}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ (22 ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$? 23 $\mathbb{W}xd6$) White's position would be highly promising, for example: 23 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 24 $\mathbb{W}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 26 $\mathbb{M}xd5$ with first-class chances of a win.

20	$\mathbb{M}a1$	$\mathbb{M}a8$
21	$\mathbb{Q}c2$	c6
22	dxc6	$\mathbb{Q}xc6$
23	$\mathbb{M}d1$	$\mathbb{Q}d8$
24	$\mathbb{W}e3$	$\mathbb{W}b7$
25	$\mathbb{Q}h6$ (74)	



weakening his enemy's black squares even further.

26	...	$\mathbb{Q}e6$
27	$\mathbb{Q}xe7+$	$\mathbb{W}xe7$
28	$\mathbb{Q}g5$	$\mathbb{Q}c5$
29	b4	

The struggle for d5 sees White the winner.

29	...	$\mathbb{Q}a4$
30	$\mathbb{Q}b3$	$\mathbb{Q}e8$
31	$\mathbb{M}d2$	
32	$\mathbb{M}e2$	$\mathbb{Q}d7$
33	$\mathbb{Q}f3$	$\mathbb{Q}db6$??

Over-optimistically, Black shifts most of his forces to the queenside, neglecting his weak points in the opposite sector. He might have attempted 33 ... $\mathbb{Q}h8$! so as to permit ... f7-f6.

34	$\mathbb{Q}g5$	$\mathbb{W}c7$
35	$\mathbb{Q}d2$	$\mathbb{Q}g7$
If 35 ... $\mathbb{Q}d4$	36 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$	$\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ and wins.

36	c4	$\mathbb{h}5$
----	----	---------------

Black cannot be saved by 36 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ which would be followed by 37 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ + and then $\mathbb{W}g5-f6$.

37	$\mathbb{Q}xb5$	$\mathbb{W}d7$
38	$\mathbb{W}f3$	

An even quicker win would have followed 38 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ + $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}f8$.

38	...	$\mathbb{M}xc2$
39	$\mathbb{Q}xc2$	$\mathbb{Q}g8$
40	$\mathbb{Q}h3$	$\mathbb{W}xb5$

But there is no hope left.

41 $\mathbb{W}f6$

1 - 0

Mate could not be avoided, for example: 41 ... $\mathbb{R}h7$ 42 $\mathbb{R}xf7$ $\mathbb{R}xf7$ 43 $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ $\mathbb{R}h8$ 44 $\mathbb{R}f6$ mate.

*Game 3***Kavalek-Spassky**

Turin 1982

Breyer Variation

1	e4	e5
2	$\mathbb{Q}b3$	$\mathbb{Q}e6$
3	$\mathbb{R}b5$	a6
4	$\mathbb{R}a4$	$\mathbb{Q}f6$
5	0-0	$\mathbb{R}c7$
6	$\mathbb{R}e1$	b5

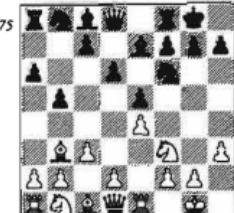
Positions with a blocked centre are also to be found in variations in which Black does not play the advance ... b7-b5. As we have seen, in such circumstances White's strategy on the queenside changes considerably in view of the possible advance c2-c4-c5. A clearer idea of how the game develops can be obtained by examining one or two lines of the Steinitz Variation Deferred, a rather passive system but one which is extremely sound and tenacious and which is coming back into fashion: 4 ... d6 (for 4 ... $\mathbb{Q}ff6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{R}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{R}e1$ d6 see the note to Black's sixth move in Game 6) 5 c3 (alternatives to this move are examined at White's fifth move in Game 8, as well as in a note to Black's fourth move in Game 1) 5 $\mathbb{R}d7$ (5 ... f5 takes us forward to the subject of Chapter 9) 6 d4 and now:

(1) 6 ... g6 (some possible developments of this position are also examined in the note to Black's fourth move in Game 4) 7 0-0 $\mathbb{R}g7$ 8 $\mathbb{R}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}ge7$ 9 d5 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 10 c4 0-0 11 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ h6 (preparing ... f7-f5; 11 ... $\mathbb{R}g4$, with similar intentions, is an interesting alternative) 12 b4 and, sooner or later, White will succeed in advancing to c5, so securing a certain advantage.

(2) 6 ... $\mathbb{Q}ge7$ 7 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}gg6$ 8 d5 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 9 c4 $\mathbb{R}e7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ h6 11 $\mathbb{R}e3$ $\mathbb{R}g5$ with equal chances.

(3) 6 ... $\mathbb{Q}ff6$ 7 0-0 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 8 $\mathbb{R}e1$ g6 9 d5 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 10 c4 $\mathbb{R}g7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 0-0 12 b4 with equal chances.

7	$\mathbb{R}b3$	d6
8	c3	0-0
9	$\mathbb{R}h3$	$\mathbb{Q}b8$ (75)



One fundamental alternative to the Breyer Variation, in addition to those examined in the previous game (see diagram 72) consists of the Chigorin Variation with 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$, with which Black immediately prepares

... c7-c5, indifferent to the decentralization of the QN which will in any case make its presence felt on the queenside. After 10 $\mathbb{R}c2$ c5 11 d4, Black has a number of possibilities, for example:

(1) 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 12 d5 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 13 b3!? (prevents ... c4) 13 ... g6 (prepares ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$) 14 a4 $\mathbb{R}d7$ 15 axb5 axb5 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ dx5 17 d6 and the conversion into an exchange centre is slightly favourable to White.

(2) 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (Keres's move, which defends the e5 point, prepares ... $\mathbb{R}f6$ to apply pressure on the d4 pawn, possibly with the aid of a later ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$, and facilitates the advance ...

f7-f5 in the event of a blocked centre. On the other hand, this move has the defect of stripping some of the defences away from the kingside and losing control over the points e4 and d5, so facilitating manoeuvres such as $\mathbb{Q}d2-f1-e3-d5$) 12 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ (12 d5, though playable, looks rather premature because of the ease with which Black can play ... f7-f5) 12 ... cxd4 13 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 d5 (the commoner 14 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ and 14 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ generally lead to the formation of the dynamic centre) 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 15 $\mathbb{R}b1$ a5 16 a3 $\mathbb{Q}ab6$ 17 b4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 18 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}fl$ with a complex position, open to any result.

(3) 11 ... $\mathbb{W}c7$ (this is the most commonly played move. Here we will give some of the developments, confining our attentions to the positions in which a blocked centre

arises) 12 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ cxd4 (or 12 ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13 d5 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 14 a4 $\mathbb{R}b8$ 15 axb5 axb5 16 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 17 b4 g6!?) with the idea of continuing with ... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ and ... f5, with more or less equal chances) 13 cxd4 $\mathbb{R}b7$ (or 13 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{R}ac8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 16 d5 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 17 $\mathbb{R}b1$ a5 18 a3 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 19 $\mathbb{R}b1$ g6 with complicated play. For 13 ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ see line 2f in the note to Black's ninth move in Game 5) 14 d5 $\mathbb{R}ac8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ f5 17 exf5 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18 $\mathbb{R}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ with a complex position and equal prospects.

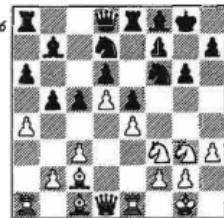
10	d4	$\mathbb{Q}bd7$
11	$\mathbb{Q}bd2$	$\mathbb{R}b7$
12	$\mathbb{R}c2$	$\mathbb{R}e8$

The immediate 12 ... c5 is also possible with the idea of preventing the advance b2-b4. A possible continuation would be, for example: 13 d5 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ g6 16 $\mathbb{R}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 17 a4 $\mathbb{Q}h8$ (so as to drive off the $\mathbb{R}h6$ by means of ... $\mathbb{Q}g8$) 18 b3 with a superior position for White.

13 $\mathbb{Q}f1$

Another plan is 13 b4 $\mathbb{R}f8$ 14 a4 (14 $\mathbb{R}b2$, followed by a2-a3, $\mathbb{R}c1$ and c3-c4, is interesting) 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 15 a5 and the blocking of the queen-side resulting from Black's last move produces a position with equal prospects.

13	...	$\mathbb{R}f8$
14	$\mathbb{R}b2$	g6
15	a4	c5
16	d5	(76)



Usually in this type of position (when the blocked centre is created only after the advance ... c7-c5) the kingside becomes the theatre of White's operations, while Black develops his counterplay on the queenside. It can happen, however, that the defensive measures applied by Black on the kingside can upset the spirit of the position to the point of determining a sudden reversal of the natural attacking fronts.

- | | |
|--------|-----|
| 16 ... | c4 |
| 17 ♜g5 | h6 |
| 18 ♜e3 | Qc5 |
| 19 ♜d2 | h5 |

Black decides on an active defence of the kingside. The solid 19 ... ♜h7 is less compromising, although after 20 ♜h2, intending f4, it cannot be denied that White holds a slight advantage.

- 20 ♜g5

This move made its first appearance in top-level tournaments in this game. An important alternative is 20 ♜g5, although recently the

effectiveness of the reply 20 ... ♜h6 has proved propitious, for example: 21 f4 h4! 22 fx5 ♜xe5 23 ♜f3 ♜xe3+ 24 ♜xe3 ♜xd5 with a complex position that does not appear unfavourable to Black, so much so that to combat the annoying 20 ... ♜h6 White has tried 19 ♜c1? h5 20 ♜g5, so as to answer 20 ... ♜h6 with 21 ♜xc5 dx5 (better is 21 ... ♜xg5) 22 ♜xf7 ♜xc1 23 ♜xd8 ♜xb2 24 ♜xb7 and White has the edge.

- | | |
|--------|-----|
| 20 ... | ♜h6 |
| 21 ♜a3 | |

Preparing to open the a-file. A later attempt to improve the text was 21 ♜h6 with the idea of threatening the advance f2-f4 after ♜h2 (note that 21 ♜h2 does not achieve the objective owing to the strong reply 21 ... ♜h7!), and if 22 ♜h6 then 22 ... ♜g5) and only after 21 ... ♜h7, which wards off this threat but has the defect of decentralizing the knight, switching play to the queenside with 22 ♜a3; however 21 ... ♜h8 looks like a good reply.

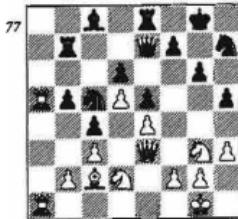
- | | |
|--------|-----|
| 21 ... | ♞b8 |
| 22 ♜e3 | |

Creates the latent threat of ♜xe5 dx5, ♜xf6 followed by ♜xc5, and prepares ♜d2 with the double idea of f2-f4 and axb5 axb5 followed by b2-b3.

- | | |
|---------|-----|
| 22 ... | ♞h7 |
| 23 ♜xe7 | |

At this point too, 23 ♜h6 was worth consideration.

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 23 ... | ♝xe7 |
| 24 ♜e1 | ♞c8 |
| 25 axb5 | axb5 |
| 26 ♜d2 | ♝b7 |
| 27 ♜a5? | (77) |



A useless move. Better would have been 27 b3 cb3 28 ♜xb3 ♜xb3 29 ♜xb3 with pressure on the queenside, although Black's position looks solid enough.

Note that White, who has failed to find any outlets on the kingside, is forced to direct his offensive against the queenside while Black has to react on the opposite side, quite the reverse of what usually occurs in games with ... c5.

- | | |
|---|----|
| 27 ... | h4 |
| Shifts the ♜g3 and allows counterplay with ... f7-f5. | |

- | | |
|---------|-------|
| 28 ♜gf1 | f5 |
| 29 exf5 | gxsf5 |

Threatening ... f4 followed by ... e4.

- 30 f4

After this move the game enters an extremely complicated phase in

which both contestants could perhaps have played better.

- | | |
|--------|-----|
| 30 ... | ♛f6 |
|--------|-----|

The natural 30 ... e4 would have led, after 31 b3, to a highly complex position in which it is by no means clear whether Black will be able to exploit the weakness of the d5 pawn before his opponent strengthens his position by pressuring the c4 pawn.

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 31 ♜xe5 | ♛xd5 |
| 32 ♜h6 | |

Trying to gain from the exposed position of the black king.

- | | |
|--------|------|
| 32 ... | ♝xe5 |
|--------|------|

Probably better was the continuation 32 ... dx5 33 ♜g6+ ♜h8 34 ♜xf5 with a double-edged position.

- | | |
|--------|------|
| 33 ♜f3 | ♛f4? |
|--------|------|

Rather too risky. It was better to deprive the opposing attack of the support of the queen by provoking an exchange with 33 ... ♜f6 even though after 34 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 35 ♜d4, White's position is a little better.

- | | |
|---------|-----|
| 34 ♜g6+ | ♛f8 |
| 35 ♜a7 | |

Too slow would have been 35 ♜d4 because of 35 ... ♜g7.

- | | |
|--------|-----|
| 35 ... | ♞e2 |
| 36 ♜a8 | ♛e7 |

If 36 ... ♜e8 then 37 ♜a7 with clear supremacy for White.

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 37 ♜f6+ | ♛g8 |
| 38 ♜xc8+ | ♛xc8 |
| 39 ♜a8 | |

White must take great care. For example, the hasty 39 ♜d8+ ♜h7

40 $\mathbb{W}xc8 \mathbb{B}xc2$ 41 $\mathbb{B}a8$ would lose after 41 ... $\mathbb{B}xg2+ 42 \mathbb{Q}b1 \mathbb{W}xf3$ 43 $\mathbb{W}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 44 $\mathbb{B}g8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 45 $\mathbb{B}xg2$ $\mathbb{W}xf1+$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}h2 \mathbb{W}f4+$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}h1 \mathbb{W}e4.$

39 ... $\mathbb{B}e8$

40 $\mathbb{B}xf5$ $\mathbb{B}f7$

41 $\mathbb{W}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

42 $\mathbb{B}xc8$ $\mathbb{B}xc8$

42 ... $\mathbb{W}xf5$ does not work because of 43 $\mathbb{W}xd6+$ $\mathbb{R}fe7$ 44 $\mathbb{B}xc5$, winning.

43 $\mathbb{B}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$

44 $\mathbb{B}g4?$

Kavalek could have created many more problems for his opponent by playing 44 $\mathbb{B}e6$ $\mathbb{B}g7$ 45 $\mathbb{W}h5$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 46 $\mathbb{B}g4$, but it was by no means easy to see Black's 45th move.

44 ... $\mathbb{Q}xb2!$

45 $\mathbb{B}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}a4!!$

An excellent positional sacrifice that leads to an original endgame in

which the threat of the passed black pawns on the queenside is sufficient compensation for the piece.

46 $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$

47 $\mathbb{B}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

48 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$

49 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

50 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $b4$

51 $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$

52 $\mathbb{Q}e3$

52 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 53 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $d5$ does not change the result.

52 ... $d5$

53 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $b3$

54 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $d4$

55 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

56 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e2+$

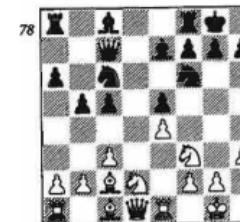
$\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

If 57 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ then 57 ... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ with clear parity. The right result for a fiercely fought game.

3 The Exchange Centre

Main line: Chigorin Variation with ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$

1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{B}b5$ a6 4 $\mathbb{B}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{B}e1$ b5 7 $\mathbb{B}b3$ d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 10 $\mathbb{B}c2$ c5 11 d4 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13 $dxc5$ $dxe5$ (78)



Strategically similar conditions may occur in many other variations and it is not always White that takes the decision. At times, the central configuration under examination arises out of the move order d3 d5, when play continues with ... dxe4, dxe4.

It goes without saying that this type of centre can crop up in both the opening and the middlegame, after the tension in the centre has been maintained over a long period.

Here we give some variations by way of illustration, confining ourselves to cases in which the clarification in the centre takes place at not too advanced a stage of the game.

For example: 1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{B}b5$ a6 4 $\mathbb{B}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{B}e1$ b5 7 $\mathbb{B}b3$ d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 and now:

Chigorin Variation with ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$

— 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 10 $\mathbb{B}c2$ c5 11 d4 $\mathbb{W}c7$ (or 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 dxc5 dxe5) 12 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ cxd4 (or 12 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 dxe5 dxe5) 13 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{B}f1$ $\mathbb{B}ac8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 16 dxe5 dxe5

Breyer Variation

— 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 10 d4 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 15 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ c5 16 dxe5 dxe5

Smyslov Variation

— 9 ... h6 10 d4 $\mathbb{B}e8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{B}d7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 15 b3 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ c5 17 dxe5 dxe5

Zaitsev Variation

— 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10 d4 $\mathbb{B}e8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 12 a3 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 13 dxe5 dxe5

Or, 1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3 \mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{A}b5$ and now:

Steinitz Variation Deferred

— 3 ... a6 4 $\mathbb{A}a4 \mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{A}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{W}e2$ b5 7 $\mathbb{A}b3$ 0-0 8 c3 d6 (or 8 ... d5 9 d3 dxe4 10 dxe4) 9 b3 h6 10 d4 $\mathbb{M}e8$ 11 dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ dxe5

Worrall Variation

— 3 ... a6 4 $\mathbb{A}a4 \mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{A}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{W}e2$ b5 7 $\mathbb{A}b3$ 0-0 8 c3 d6 (or 8 ... d5 9 d3 dxe4 10 dxe4) 9 b3 h6 10 d4 $\mathbb{M}e8$ 11 dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ dxe5

Anti-Marshall System

— 3 ... a6 4 $\mathbb{A}a4 \mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{A}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{M}e1$ b5 7 $\mathbb{A}b3$ 0-0 8 a4 b4 9 d4 d6 10 dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (or 10 ... dxe5) 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ dxe5

Archangel Variation

— 3 ... a6 4 $\mathbb{A}a4 \mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 b5 6 $\mathbb{A}b3$ $\mathbb{A}b7$ 7 $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{A}c5$ 8 c3 d6 9 d4 $\mathbb{A}b6$ 10 $\mathbb{A}g5$ h6 11 $\mathbb{A}h4$ 0-0 12 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{M}e8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 14 $\mathbb{A}c2$ c5 15 dxe5 dxe5

Other Variations

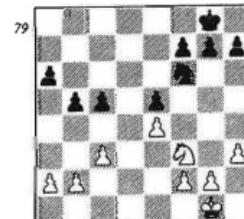
— 3 ... a6 4 $\mathbb{A}a4 \mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{A}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{M}e1$ b5 7 $\mathbb{A}b3$ 0-0 8 d3 $\mathbb{A}b7$ 9 c3 d5 10 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ dxe4 11 dxe4
— 3 ... g6 4 c3 d6 5 d4 $\mathbb{A}d7$ 6 0-0 $\mathbb{A}g7$ 7 dxe5 dxe5

1 Strategic Ideas

In all the above variations, the central configuration is fairly rigid because the e4 and e5 pawns block each other's movements and the d-file is open.

The salient features of the exchange centre can be condensed and shown in the following diagram 79, although it must be observed that differences do exist depending on whether Black has or has not played ... c7-c5, has or has not made the exchange ... cxd4 so opening the c-file, and sometimes also between variations in which Black has placed his KB on the diagonal f8-a3 and those in which he has played it to the long diagonal. We will speak later of the consequences of these differences, when they are of importance. Some small, albeit less significant differences can also be found in those lines in which the pawn structure represented in diagram 79 has arisen after the exchange of a pair of knights on e5 (79).

Here we can pick out the weak squares d5 and d3, both on the open d-file, and (as in the blocked centre) f5 and f4 which are weak for strategic reasons, located as they are in the vicinity of their respective castled positions. As the central structure becomes fixed, the importance of control — and especially of occupation



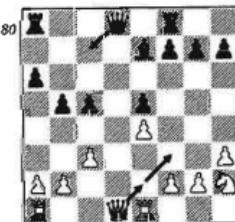
— of the weak squares in enemy territory, becomes more significant. It is easy to imagine the great influence a piece (particularly a knight) could have on later developments if it manages to secure itself in one of these positions. In this regard, it should be mentioned that all these weaknesses are fixed or fixable as the d3 square can also be easily placed under Black's control by means of the advance ... c5-c4. These elements are readily identifiable in diagram 79 and to these can be added another arising out of the presence of the KNs. The standard development of these knights to f3 and f6 suggests another consideration: the e4 and e5 pawns cannot be immediately defended by a pawn. They are therefore in a fairly vulnerable situation and may often be targeted for attack. In such an event, the attacker, whoever he is, pursues the evident purpose of tying the enemy forces, at least temporarily, to the defence of the vulnerable pawn.

After this overview of the situation, we will now go on to look more closely at individual elements.

The d-file and the placement of the queens

In the exchange centre, the most immediate strategic theme is represented by the open d-file, the logistic importance of which, as a central file, is self-evident. Both sides must first move the queen elsewhere if they are to occupy the open file with a rook, because on its home square it is an impediment.

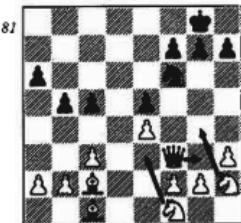
Granted that the problem may sometimes find a drastic solution by means of a rapid exchange of queens, both contestants tend to avoid this simplifying solution so as not to help the enemy occupy the open file with a rook (80).



Whereas Black has in most variations developed his KB to e7 and will tend to place his queen on its

natural c7 square, White can choose between two possibilities: the immediate queen move to e2 (which is sometimes useful in combination with the advance a2-a4 in order to exert pressure on the h5 pawn) or the more aggressive move to f3 which, however, requires more preparation because it implies moving the ♜f3 (usually to h2 whence it can participate in attacking operations on the kingside by moving forward to g4).

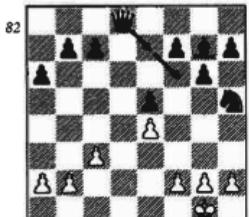
The f3 location is certainly more active as, from there, the white queen contributes to keeping an eye on the two weakest squares in enemy territory (d5 and f5) and boosts attacking chances on the kingside (81).



The joint action of queen and minor pieces enables White to organize serious threats against the Black king (for example: ♜g3 followed by ♜e3-f5 or by ♜h6) or to weaken its defences by endeavouring to exchange off the ♜f6 (for example: ♜g4 or ♜g5).

To obtain the arrangement of pieces shown in the diagram, it often happens that White, in clearing the d1 square with a view to occupying the d-file, engages in a two-stage manoeuvre: when the KN is still on f3 he parks the queen on e2, transferring it to f3 only after finding time to remove the knight.

It should, however, be observed that the placing of the queen on f3 can conceal a danger: Black may at times succeed in exploiting the possible ♜b7-♛f3 confrontation by playing the advance ... f7-f5 at the right time and with due support (see, for example, the tactical ploy highlighted in diagrams 118 and 119). As for Black, it might be said that, in addition to choosing the piece arrangement illustrated in diagram 80, he can also opt for a different development of the KB, fianchettoing it for example (82).



In this case, then, the queen will find a square that mirrors that of her

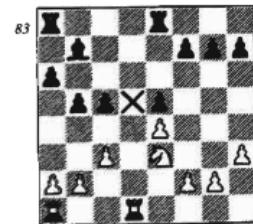
opponent and at times, its location on the kingside, related to occupation of the f4 square (... ♜f6-h5-f4), will offer attacking possibilities in this sector.

It should be pointed out that the e7 square might be available for the queen even when Black has opted to play his KB to c5 or when this bishop has been removed from e7 in a continuing situation of central tension.

To close this discussion of the placement of the two queens, the real strategic objectives connected with the occupation of the d-file must be classified with greater precision. In fact, given the great number of pieces in play, it is practically unthinkable for a player to succeed in exploiting this file and to come into secure possession of the seventh or eighth rank, so the real objective is to make it easier to instal a piece on the enemy's weak squares on the file. So White fights to win an outpost at d5 while Black aims to occupy d3 or, in some cases, as we shall see, d4.

The weakness of the d5 square

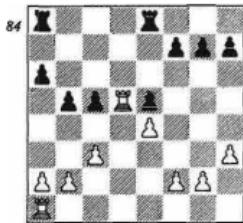
Generally speaking, White tries to occupy d5 with a knight because, in such a centralized position, this piece is highly effective. To reach d5, the knight must be shuttled to e3 (83).



White might have got it to its destination by the most disparate of routes: the normal one is ♜b1-d2-f1-e3, but at times we see ♜b1-a3-c2-e3 or ♜b1-d2-c4-e3, and it should be pointed out that the KN may also be played to e3 by way of manoeuvres such as ♜g1-f3-h2-g4(or -f1)-e3, or ♜g1-f3-d2-c4(or -f1)-e3.

It is clear that the ideal objective pursued by White would be to land on d5 with a knight and put down roots there, on the basis that this piece is usually the best suited for occupying central weak points within enemy territory.

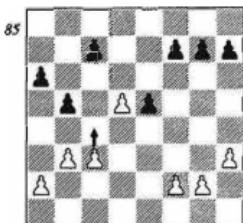
But Black, for his part, cannot permit an opposing knight to settle on d5 without doing anything about it, so he usually decides to exchange it. White will generally try to recapture with a piece so as to continue to exploit the weakness of d5, particularly when the game is nearing the ending, since the d5 square may represent an ideal post for a rook (84).



... which can exert pressure against the black pawns on the fifth rank and also double up on the d-file as a prelude to penetrating the opposing defences.

Recapturing with the e-pawn, releasing potential energy on the e-file and along the b1-h7 diagonal, is the more dynamic option, and can take place in two situations:

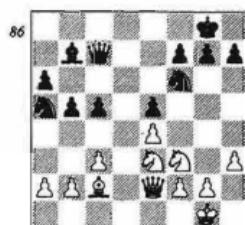
(1) When White is able to support his d5 pawn with the advance c3-c4, after preparation by b2-b3 (85).



In this case, if Black's c-pawn is on c5, White attains his objective of

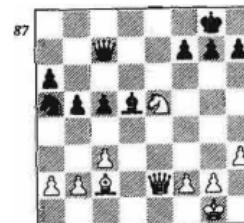
securely protecting the passed d5 pawn, while in situations such as the one illustrated in the diagram, he retains the possibility of continuing a crushing advance with c4-c5 and d5-d6.

(2) When an indirect exchange of central pawns is possible, or in any case when the opening of lines deriving from the capture exd5 (the clearance of b1-h7 diagonal and of e-file) enables White to obtain good attacking prospects against the opposing castled position (86).

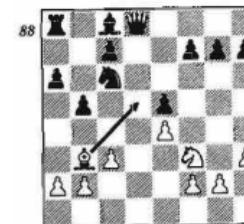


Here, for example, it would seem that d5 is controlled by Black; in fact, White can play $\mathbb{Q}d5$ without hindrance because after ... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$, $exd5 \mathbb{Q}xd5$, he can take out the e5 pawn by means of $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (87).

Our example also clearly shows the attacking prospects arising out of clearing the b1-h7 diagonal: now White can issue threats such as the straightforward $\mathbb{W}h5$ or the pseudo-sacrifice $\mathbb{Q}xb7+\mathbb{Q}xh7, \mathbb{W}d3+$ etc.



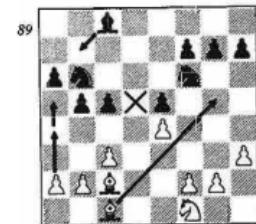
Finally, it might be pointed out that, in certain circumstances, White can effectively occupy the d5 square with his bishop too. This situation is usually seen during the opening, particularly with the intention of making development and the cooperation of the black pieces on the queenside more arduous (88).



Here, by playing $\mathbb{Q}d5$, White places his opponent in an embarrassing situation: as neither ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ nor ... $\mathbb{W}d6$ are possible owing to $\mathbb{Q}xe5$, Black is forced to defend his knight artificially by ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$.

The struggle for control of d5

In view of the previous considerations, it is logical for the two sides to haggle over the d5 square. Quite apart from the action of the rooks on the d-file, Black can attempt to keep an eye on his weak point by means of his KN, his QB and by playing his QN to b6 (... $\mathbb{Q}b8-d7-b6$, but also ... $\mathbb{Q}b8-c6-a5-c4-b6$). For his part, in trying to weaken the d5 defences, White can use his a-pawn to possibly oust the black knight from b6 (if the knight is there) or call up the QB (89).



... with the drastic, radical purpose of eliminating the $\mathbb{Q}f6$. In this regard, however, it should be pointed out that the development of the QB to g5 is not always directed at the elimination of the $\mathbb{Q}f6$, as the next section will clarify.

The developing move Bg5 and the advances ... h6 and ... g5

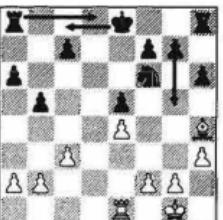
As the exchange of $\mathbb{A}g5$ for $\mathbb{Q}f6$ is only effective when the d5 square can be occupied quickly (and so it must not be carried out too hastily so as not to give up the pair of bishops without compensation), it is logical that, in playing $\mathbb{A}c1-g5$, White should also pursue other objectives and, particularly, should be ready to take a decision in the event of Black responding with the natural ... b7-h6. In fact, quite apart from the general intentions of the developing move $\mathbb{A}c1-g5$ (it gets the QR into the game and sometimes pins the $\mathbb{Q}f6$, so limiting the freedom of movement of the black pieces), it is often his intention to provoke a weakness in the black kingside if Black decides to advance ...h6 and ...g5.

This drastic advance of black pawns on the kingside is a double-edged business, so both contestants must be able to weigh up the consequences of their decisions. Admittedly, the range of situations is so varied and complex that no generally valid cast-iron rules can be suggested. We can, however, point out some extreme cases which help us to keep in mind the specific situations that are favourable to one side or the other.

In principle, we can say that Black

can play the advance ... g5 in a free-and-easy spirit when he is able to win the f4 square by means of the manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}f6-h5-f4$ and/or when he has not yet castled short and so retains the possibility of transferring his king to the queenside (90).

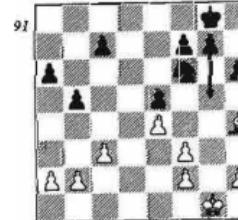
90



In a case of this kind, Black's course of action on the kingside can rapidly turn into a devastating attack thanks to occupation of the f4 square and the further advance of the g- and h-pawns.

Another extreme situation favourable to Black is seen when the advance ... g5 leads to the effective exclusion of White's QB from the game. There is an extremely significant situation when a prior simplifying manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{A}c8-g4xf3$ has forced White to double his pawns on the f-file (91).

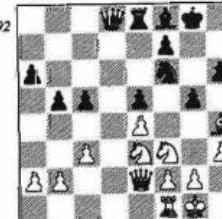
Here, after ... g5, $\mathbb{A}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$, Black is ready to meet the move h2-h4 by establishing a pawn grip with ... f7-f6, freeing the $\mathbb{Q}d7$. It is evident that



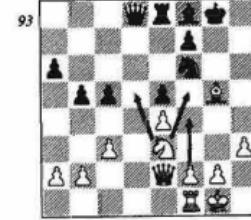
the bishop cannot return to the game without losses of time and material.

On the other hand, White sometimes manages to exploit the weaknesses created by the advance ... g5 (weakening of the castled position and particularly of the squares f5 and h5). This can happen, for example, when Black's reaction can be refuted by sacrificing a piece on g5, obtaining real prospects of attack against the enemy king in exchange (92).

92



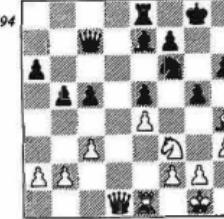
In the diagram, for example, after $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{h}xg5$, $\mathbb{A}g5$ White achieves a very promising position (93).



The $\mathbb{A}g5$ continues to exert its irksome pin on the $\mathbb{Q}f6$ while the other pieces are able to intervene rapidly and effectively to lend a hand to the attack.

Another situation that is usually favourable to White may be seen when the withdrawal $\mathbb{A}g3$ contributes to the exertion of real pressure against the e5 pawn and/or when the $\mathbb{A}g3$ has real prospects of getting back into the game reasonably quickly (94).

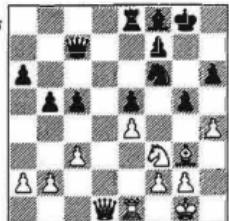
94



Here, after the withdrawal $\mathbb{A}g3$, Black has to protect the e5 pawn, for example with ... $\mathbb{A}f8$, so White finds

the time to commence kingside operations, by playing h3-h4 (95).

95



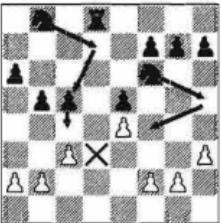
This thrust forces Black to slacken his hold on the black squares, thus contributing to the liberation of the $\mathbb{K}g3$. It is important to note that, in this case, Black cannot react by attempting to occupy f4 because ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ would be met by $\mathbb{A}xe5$, nor, on the other hand, is there much attraction in trying to maintain the hold by ... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ and ... f7-f6 because the black knight would be hemmed in. So, after ... g4, $\mathbb{Q}h2$ h5, White can demolish the kingside block and easily bring his QB back into play by means of f2-f3.

The weakness of the d3 square

In similar fashion to White's strategy regarding d5, Black can try to gain an edge on the d-file in order to achieve the occupation of d3, generally with a knight or a rook (96).

72

96



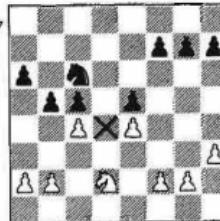
This aim may be achieved by means of systematic manoeuvres fixing the weakness by means of the advance ... c5-c4, or, when possible, by piece support alone (for example: ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ -f4 and ... $\mathbb{R}d3$). While White can sidestep the latter possibility by simply maintaining adequate control over d3, this strategy is rarely enough to prevent fixing and occupation of the weak point. For successful restraint, he will be forced to alter his queenside pawn structure by responding to ... c5-c4 with b2-b4 (in order to make c5 inaccessible) or with b2-b3 (to undermine the c4 pawn), or by trying to parry the black c-pawn advance by playing c3-c4. In these cases, however, Black is able to transfer his target from d3 to d4.

The weakening of the d4 square

When White takes the decision to thwart the fixing of the d3 point by playing the advance c3-c4 himself,

the weakening of d4 is immediately obvious (97).

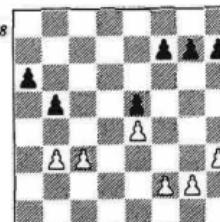
97



Black can plan to occupy d4 especially with his QN, via c6, but sometimes his KN, previously routed in the direction of d3 (for example: ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ -h5-f4), will be trained on the new target (... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ -e6-d4).

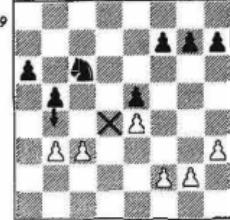
When, on the other hand, White decides to react to the advance ... c5-c4 by pushing his b-pawn to b3 or b4 with the intention that we have mentioned, Black can still reply ... cbx3, so greatly altering the queenside situation. After axb3 we will have the following pawn structure (98).

98



The fact that the pawn on c3 is now without a support, allows Black to devise a plan to weaken the d4 square based on accomplishing the advance ... b5-b4 (99).

99

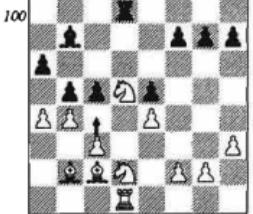


As in the previous case, it is almost always the QN that controls matters from c6, although it should be pointed out here too that the KN (previously sent on its way towards d3 (for example: ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ -d7-c5), can be rerouted to d4 (... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ -e6-d4).

The weakening of the d4 square can also constitute the inevitable price for White to pay when he plays the advance c3-c4 with an active purpose, and not only with the idea of preventing ... c5-c4. This may be played, for example, so as to free the action of the QB when it is on b2, or to force Black to reach a decision about the b5 pawn, or, finally, when it is necessary to strengthen control over the d5 square (100).

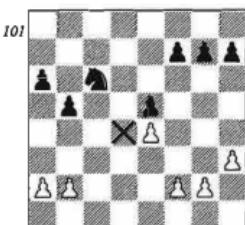
Here, artificially gathered up into a single example, are the situations

73



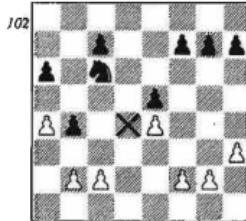
mentioned above: by playing c3-c4 White gives some scope to his ♜b2, he protects the ♜d5 and also attacks the pawn on b5 (for the purpose, for example, of taking possession of the strong square c4 after ... bxc4 and ♜xc4).

Finally, the d4 square remains weak even when Black, in a continuing situation of tension in the centre, has prised open the c-file by means of the exchange ... cxd4 (101)



... or (albeit to a lesser degree) when opening developments have led Black to reply with ... b5-b4 to

the provocative a2-a4 (102).

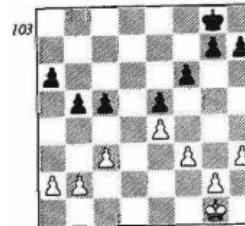


The d4 square can be defended by the advance c2-c3, though White must be careful that Black cannot profit from the opening of the b-file.

The vulnerability of the e4 and e5 pawns

In the exchange centre, another mutual objective for attack, as we said during our comment to diagram 79, is the e4 and e5 pawns. The presence of the knights on f3 and on f6, in fact, stands in the way of the natural supporting advances of the respective f-pawns, which in any case, even when they are possible (for example in those variations in which the KNs have been quickly relocated or exchanged) are certainly not attractive because they help to weaken the kings' positions (103).

The respective weaknesses caused by the advances f2-f3 and ... f7-f6 are even more serious when the h-pawn

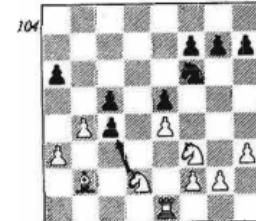


has already been moved. In the diagram, the white king is more exposed than the opposing king. It should not be forgotten, however, that Black also often calls on his own h-pawn when, for example, he wants to force the ♜g5 into making a decision. It should also be remembered that both sides sometimes use the f3 and f6 squares for their queens (see diagrams 80 and 82); this too helps to make the advances f2-f3 and ... f7-f6 unattractive.

Normally, then, both contestants are reluctant — or physically prevented by the presence of the KNs — to mobilize their f-pawns. It follows that the e-pawns are somewhat vulnerable. As these pawns find themselves under attack in the normal course of events by the respective KNs, it is quite common for both sides to decide on an intensification of this attack.

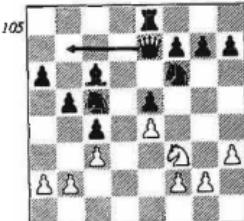
White's manoeuvres hinge around the advance c3-c4 so as to clear the field for the QB after previously

placing it on b2, and to try and force Black into the exchange ... bxc4 with the idea of winning over the c4 square for the QN (104).



The objective of such a strategy (already seen in part in diagram 100) is obvious: to force the opponent into passive defence of the pawn on e5.

By the same token, Black can manoeuvre against e4 by placing his QB (and sometimes his queen as well) on the long diagonal and try to get to c5 with his QN (105).



Pressure plans such as the ones we have just been looking at, or situations which hinge upon occupation of the d5 square (see diagrams 86 and 87) or d4 in Black's case, often lead to an exchange of these 'weaknesses'.

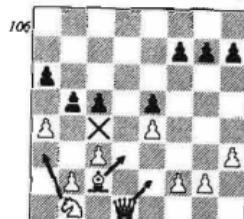
The struggle for the c4 and c5 squares

As we have already had repeated occasion to note, control of the c4 and c5 squares is often an intermediate stage for the attainment of other, more central strategic goals (e.g. pressure on points e5 and e4, occupation of the d3 square), so it is only logical that the two sides should fight for them.

The c4 square is structurally under Black's control. White, therefore, must first remove the pawn on b5 if he is to win it. This he can do in substantially three ways:

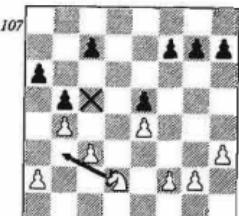
- (1) by attacking it early in the opening by means of the advance a2-a4, so as to force ... b5-b4 (see, for example, diagram 102); (2) fixing it by means of the advance b2-b4 and then attacking it by a2-a4 and/or c3-c4 (see, for example, diagrams 100 and 104); (3) by attacking it, but without fixing it, by means of a2-a4 and increasing the pressure on it with the aid of pieces (106).

These three methods can, obviously, turn up in less pure forms,



mixed up with each other and, as they are not typical only of the type of centre we are examining at present, they may also have their roots in a situation of tension in the centre.

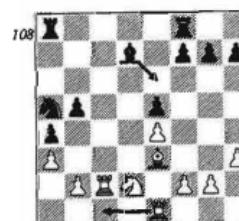
At the start, the c5 square also falls under Black's influence so, to win control of it, White has generally to resort to the advance b2-b4 (107).



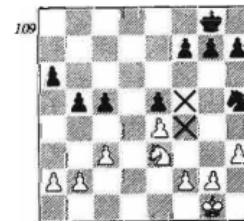
Fixed in this way, the c5 square can represent an alternative objective for the QN, particularly in those variations in which Black has not permanently weakened his d5 square with

the advance ... c7-c5. It should be observed, on the other hand, that in those lines in which Black fianchettoes his KB, White, as a result of the consequent weakening of the diagonal a3-f8, can take over the c5 square by means of the simple manoeuvre ♜c1-e3-c5, even without having to play b2-b4.

When, during a lasting situation of tension in the centre, the c-file has been opened by means of the exchange ... cxd4, the heavy pieces can also take part in the struggle for control of the c4 and c5 squares (108).



on the queenside for control of the c4 and c5 squares is generally secondary to more central objectives, any operations on the kingside can take on quite independent significance, aimed at organising a violent attack against the enemy's castled position. As in the blocked centre, here too the reference point for attacking manoeuvres on the kingside is the strategic weakness of the f4 and f5 squares (109).



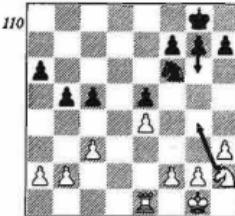
In particular circumstances, the f5 square can provide a useful alternative for the white QN which has got to e3 on its way to d5; whereas the f4 square can be the point of arrival for the black KN even independently of operations such as those illustrated in diagrams 90 and 96.

As in the blocked centre, sometimes both players try to control (directly or indirectly) their weaknesses (110).

Black usually resorts to the move ... g7-g6 (also useful for protecting

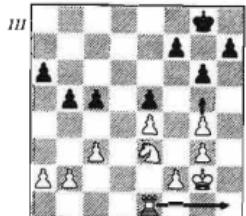
The weakness of the f4 and f5 squares

While the struggle being fought out



the transit of the KN to h5), while White tries to provoke an exchange of the potential invader by manoeuvring his KN to g4 via h2. This manoeuvre can prove effective when there is the idea of exploiting the weaknesses caused by the advance ... g7-g6.

The objectives of both sides' manoeuvres are quite similar to the equivalent situations we have looked at in the blocked centre, so much so that these operations can begin when tension still rules in the centre. One typical situation, generally related to the position of the white queen on the kingside (see diagrams 80 and 81), may occur when Black decides to react to the attacking ♜g4 shown in the previous diagram by capturing ... ♜xg4. In this case it is not impossible that White will implement an ambitious pressure plan on the h-file, recapturing with hxg4 and following with g2-g3 and ♜g2 to permit his rooks access to h1 (111).



The later advance g4-g5 frees the g4 square which can be exploited by the remaining white knight as it heads closer to the enemy king.

In situations of the kind illustrated in diagram 110, unlike what happened in the blocked centre, it is hard for the two sides to undertake successful attacking operations based on the advances f2-f4 or ... f7-f5 (apart from certain specific tactical cases, see later 'The opposition ♖b7/♜b3'). In effect, the further opening of the position (consequent on the inevitable capture exf5 or ... exf4) makes the position of the king of the player who has pushed his f-pawn forward highly delicate.

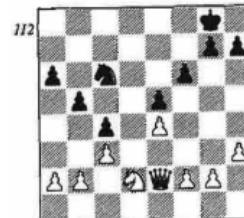
2 Tactical Ideas

Although the simplified nature of the exchange centre gives rise to positions of a prevalently strategic nature, both sides always have to ensure that execution of their plans is

not abruptly prevented by a tactical resource. We will therefore review those tactical manoeuvres which crop up in this type of centre with the greatest frequency.

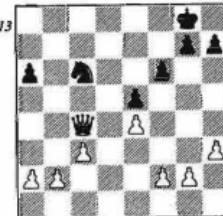
The weakness of the a2-g8 diagonal

In the exchange centre, the diagonal a2-g8 is free, or at the most it is obstructed by a pawn. If we consider that the black king is almost always to be found on g8, it will be readily understood that White can try a number of tactical thrusts hinging on this, themes that are, however, hard to classify. We shall confine ourselves to illustrating a couple which recur time and again (112).



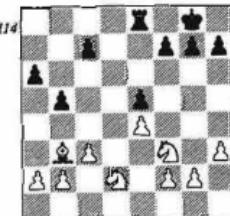
Here the obstruction of the c-pawn is not enough to guarantee safety for Black: White can profit from the undefended position of the ♜c6 and from the fact that the advance ... f7-f6 has been played so as

to put into effect the simplest of tactical ploys: ♜xc4 bxc4, ♜xc4+ (113)



... so recovering the piece and winning two pawns.

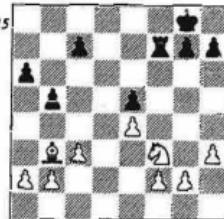
On its own, the pawn on f7 does not guarantee adequate protection for the black king (114).



Here, for example, White can play ♜g5 with the idea, after ... ♜e7 (or ... ♜f8), of making the sacrifice ♜xf7 because after ... ♜xf7, ♜f3 (115)

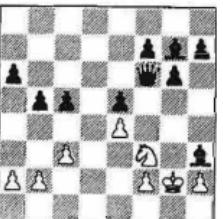
... the threats of ♜xe5 and ♜g5 leave Black in a perilous position.

115



In the diagram, for example, Black plays ... ♕xg2! and, after ♔xg2, continues with ... ♖h3+! (117)

117



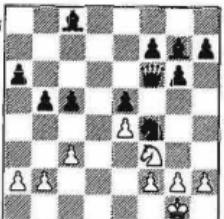
... with a mating attack because ♘xh3 would be followed by ... ♘xf3+, ♖h4 ♖f6 mate.

Sacrifices against the castled position

Both players have the opportunity of implementing a number of typical sacrifices aimed at destroying the enemy's castled position. We have already examined a recurrent case in which Black rearranges the structure of his kingside pawns with the moves ... h6 and ... g5 (see diagrams 92 and 93), but similar themes can also materialize out of the blue.

Often, occupation of f4 (or f5) and the placing of the queen on f6 (or f3) are the premise for such tactical blows (116).

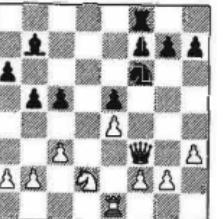
116



The opposition ♖b7/♔f3

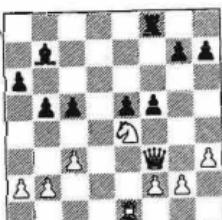
In some cases, on the other hand, the placing of the queen on the kingside can contribute to the success of defensive tactical ploys. This generally happens when the opposition ♖b7/♔f3 is set up on the long light diagonal (118).

118



Here, in spite of the fact that the e4 pawn is defended by three pieces, Black plays ... ♖xe4 because after ♖xe4 f5 (119)

119



... he recaptures the piece winning a pawn.

This theme can assume much more complex forms, but to grasp their essence we need only present it in this extremely simplified form.

3 Illustrative games

Game 4

Mestel-Beliavsky

Lucerne 1986

Smyslov Variation

- 1 e4 e5
- 2 ♕B3 ♕c6
- 3 ♖b5 a6

In our notes to this game we shall also offer an overview of lines that can lead to the exchange centre, with the exception of the Breyer Variation and of the Chigorin Variation with ...

♕a5 which will be examined in the notes to Game 5.

The type of centre under examination can also crop up when Black decides to wander off the beaten track as early as the third move. For example: 3 ... g6 4 c3 d6 (4 ... a6 5 ♕a4 d6 returns to the Steinitz Deferred, while the immediate 4 ... ♖g7 is wrong because of 5 d4 ♕ge7 — after 5 ... exd4 6 cxd4 White has a dominating position in the centre — 6 d5 ♕b8 7 d6 with a clear advantage to White) 5 d4 ♕d7 6 0-0 ♖g7 7 dx5 dx5 (7 ... ♖xe5?! 8 ♖xe5 dx5 9 ♖b3! favours White) 8 ♖e3 ♖f6 9 ♖bd2 0-0 10 ♕c5 (an irritating move, typical of those variations in which Black develops his KB to g7) 10 ... ♖e8 11 ♖e2 and White has a slight edge, although the Black position looks very solid and not without counterplay (the weakness of the f4 square, for example, has been accentuated by the manoeuvre of the white QB).

4 ♕a4 ♖f6

In the Steinitz Deferred, the exchange centre occurs with some frequency, especially in the Alekhine line, a very close relation of the fianchetto line examined in the previous note. After 4 ... d6 5 c3 ♕d7 6 d4 g6, the game might continue: 7 0-0 (less usual is the immediate 7 dx5, against which, unlike the line seen in the previous note, Black can also reply 7 ... ♖xe5; while the line 7 ♖g5 f6 8 ♖e3 has recently come

into fashion, for example: 8 ... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}0-0$ $\mathbb{A}g7$ 10 $h3$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ 0-0 12 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ and although White has caused the weakening of the diagonal a2-g8, Black's position is sound enough to tackle any future central configuration) 7 ... $\mathbb{A}g7$ 8 $\mathbb{E}e1$ (or 8 $dxe5$ $dxe5$ — the continuation 8 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5!?$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $dxe5$ 10 $f4$ $\mathbb{A}xa4$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xa4+$ $b5$ leads to unclear play — 9 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ 0-0 11 $\mathbb{A}c5$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ with more or less equal chances) 8 ... $b5$ (here 8 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6!?$ is doubtful because of 9 $\mathbb{A}xc6$ $\mathbb{A}xc6$ 10 $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 11 $exd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xd6$ $cxd6$ 13 $\mathbb{A}g5$ 0-0 14 $\mathbb{A}xe4!$ $\mathbb{A}xe4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{A}fe8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ d5 17 $\mathbb{D}g3$ $\mathbb{E}e1+ 18 \mathbb{Q}gf1$ with the idea of continuing with $\mathbb{Q}b3$, while playable is 8 ... $\mathbb{Q}ge7$ 9 $dxe5$ $dxe5$ 9 $\mathbb{A}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 10 $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 11 $\mathbb{A}xe5$ $dxe5$ 12 $\mathbb{A}g5$ h3 13 $\mathbb{A}h4$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ with a fairly balanced game.

5 0-0 $\mathbb{A}e7$

The exchange centre occurs fairly often in the Archangel Variation too, for example: 5 ... $b5$ 6 $\mathbb{A}b3$ $\mathbb{A}h7$ 7 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{A}c5$ 8 $c3$ $d9$ 9 $\mathbb{A}b6$ 10 $\mathbb{A}g5$ h6 11 $\mathbb{A}h4$ 0-0 (for 11 ... $\mathbb{W}d7$ and 11 ... $g5$ see the comment to Black's fifth move in Game 1) 12 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 14 $\mathbb{A}c2$ c5 15 $dxe5$ (White can also opt for the blocked centre with 15 $d5$) 15 ... $dxe5$ 16 $\mathbb{W}e6$! with prospects for both sides.

6 $\mathbb{E}e1$

White can also defend his e-pawn by playing 6 $\mathbb{W}e2$ (known as the

Worrall Variation), with the idea of transferring his KR to d1 to support the central advance c2-c3 and d2-d4. It is precisely this rapid placing of the KR on the d-file that can give rise to the exchange centre, for example: 6 ... $b5$ 7 $\mathbb{A}b3$ 0-0 8 $c3$ and now:

(1) 8 ... $d6$ (a quietly sound continuation) 9 $\mathbb{A}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 10 $\mathbb{A}c2$ c5 11 $d4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 12 $\mathbb{A}g5$ $\mathbb{A}g4$ 13 $dxe5$ $dxe5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{W}fd8$ with a balanced position.

(2) 8 ... $d5$ (the most aggressive reaction implying a gambit line) 9 $d3$ (if White accepts the pawn, Black takes the initiative, for example: 9 $exd5$ $\mathbb{A}g4$ 10 $h3$ — or 10 $dxe5$ $e4$ 11 $d4$ $exf3$ 12 $gxf3$ 13 $\mathbb{A}f4$ $\mathbb{A}e8$ with sufficient dynamic compensation for the two pawns — 10 ... $\mathbb{A}xf3$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $c4$ 12 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ with the better position) 9 ... $\mathbb{A}e8$ (the immediate 9 ... $dxe4$ gives White a slight advantage after 10 $dxe4$ $\mathbb{A}g4$ 11 $h3$ $\mathbb{A}h5$ 12 $\mathbb{A}g5$ by virtue of the better prospects on the d-file) and Black can opt to open the d-file when circumstances are favourable.

6 ... $b5$ 7 $\mathbb{A}b3$ $d6$

The immediate 7 ... 0-0 can induce White to opt for the Anti-Marshall System which sometimes gives rise to positions with the exchange centre. For example: 8 a4 b4 9 d4 d6 10 $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 11 $dxe5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{A}b7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{A}h8$ and White must meet the tactical threat of ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ followed by ... f5.

8 c3 0-0 9 h3 h6

This move, which marks the Smyslov Variation, has the main purpose of preventing a white piece getting to g5. In fact, too complacent an attitude on Black's part can sometimes bring sudden dangers. One line of the Zaitsev Variation offers an example. In this, moreover, the exchange centre appears fairly rarely: 9 ... $\mathbb{A}b7$ 10 d4 $\mathbb{W}e8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{A}f8$ 12 a3 $\mathbb{Q}b8!?$ (an attempt to enter a Breyer Variation) 13 $dxe5$ $dxe5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (also worthy of consideration is the sacrifice 14 $\mathbb{A}xf7+!?$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 15 $\mathbb{W}b3$! 14 ... $\mathbb{A}e7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 17 $\mathbb{A}xd1$ c5 18 $\mathbb{A}e6!$ $\mathbb{A}xe4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ with better prospects for White.

10 d4 $\mathbb{A}e8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{A}f8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{A}d7$

The e4 pawn is defended indirectly, on the basis of a tactical device that we examined in the tension situation: 12 ... $exd6!?$ 13 $cx d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$? 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ etc. For alternatives to the text, see the notes to Black's ninth move in Games 2 and 9.

13 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 14 $\mathbb{A}c2$ c5

Another possibility is 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}c4$, for example: 15 b3 $\mathbb{B}b6$ 16 $\mathbb{A}b2$ c5 17 $dxe5$ $dxe5$ 18 c4 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{A}ad8$ 20 $\mathbb{W}e2$ with roughly equal prospects.

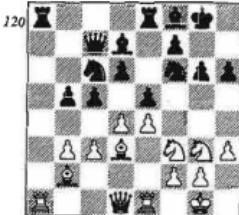
15 a4?!

If it is remembered that one of the purposes of 12 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ is to protect the b-pawn, opening the game against this pawn is not very logical at this point. The conflict is, however, clarified by the fact that in reality this position is arrived at by a different and fairly unusual order of moves: 9 a4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 d4 b6 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{A}e8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{A}f8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 14 $\mathbb{A}c2$ c5 15 b3? If the move order had been as in our text (namely the usual order), White at this point could have continued with 15 b3, for example: 15 ... $cx d4$ (the immediate 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ allows White to set up a blocked centre with 16 d5 in rather favourable circumstances) 16 $cx d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 17 $\mathbb{A}b2$ and the dark-squared bishop has taken possession of a good diagonal, particularly useful if White decides to set up an exchange centre.

15 ... g6

This move gives White time to play his dark-squared bishop to the long diagonal. Black had a good alternative in 15 ... $cx d4$ 16 $cx d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ when White is just about forced to resolve the situation of tension of the centre with either 17 $dxe5$ or 17 d5. In both cases Black has sufficient counterplay due to his control of the b4 square.

16 axb5 axb5 17 b3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 18 $\mathbb{A}b2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 19 $\mathbb{A}d3$ (120)



120 The struggle arising out of the central tension shows no signs of ending. At this point White, who has managed to move his QB in support of the d4 pawn, begins typically diverse operations against b5.

19 ... $\mathbb{B}xal$
20 $\mathbb{W}xa1$

Also possible was 20 $\mathbb{A}x1$, for example: 20 ... $\mathbb{W}b7$ 21 d5 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 22 c4 $\mathbb{B}x04$ 23 $\mathbb{B}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}b3$ (if 23 ... $\mathbb{B}b8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$!, and if 23 ... $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 24 $\mathbb{W}b1$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$!) 24 $\mathbb{W}e2$ with a difficult position.

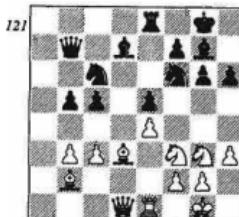
20 ... $\mathbb{W}b7$
21 $\mathbb{W}d1?$

Correct was 21 d5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22 c4, but White probably feared the reply 21 ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ (22 $\mathbb{W}xa5$? $\mathbb{B}a8$), but this could have been effectively refuted by 22 b4 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ (if 22 ... $\mathbb{C}xb4$? 23 $\mathbb{W}xa5$, and if 22 ... $\mathbb{D}b3$?! 23 $\mathbb{W}d1$ c4 24 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ etc.) 23 $\mathbb{A}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}xc4$ 24 $\mathbb{B}xc5$ $\mathbb{d}xc5$. White has temporary difficulties with the bishop on b2, but in the long run, the weak pawns on e5, c5 and c4 will prove too much for Black.

21 ... $\mathbb{A}g7$
22 $\mathbb{d}xc5$

Unsettled by the long-drawn-out tension struggle in the centre, White decides to set up an exchange centre but, as is soon apparent, the black pieces are very well placed for such an eventuality. It would have been better to play 22 d5 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 23 $\mathbb{A}c2$ (23 $\mathbb{c}4?$ is impossible because of the undefended position of the $\mathbb{A}b2$) with chances for both sides.

22 ... $\mathbb{d}xc5$ (121)



Black is ready to weaken White's control of the d4 square by means of the advance ... b5-b4 and to tighten the pressure on the e-pawn by playing his QB to c6; added to this, the white knights are some way from d5, and there is no way of unleashing an attacking operation on the kingside. White now clings on for all he is worth.

23 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $b4!$
24 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{B}xc3$
25 $\mathbb{A}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$

26 $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{A}c6$
27 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}e7$
28 $\mathbb{W}a1$

With the tactical idea of 28 ... $\mathbb{Q}xb3$? 29 $\mathbb{W}a6!$, for example: 29 ... $\mathbb{A}f7$ 30 $\mathbb{W}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 32 $\mathbb{B}b1$ and Black loses a piece. White has found the best defence: he has concentrated his piece action against the pawn on e5 and prepares to oust the strong $\mathbb{Q}d4$ by means of b3-b4.

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

Better was the immediate 28 ... h5, along the lines of what happens in the game.

29 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{B}b8$
30 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{A}a8$
31 $\mathbb{W}a2??$

White would have set more serious problems with 31 $\mathbb{Q}c4$, threatening the advance b3-b4 because of the attack of the queen on the $\mathbb{A}a8$.

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

Black retraces his steps and finds the right plan.

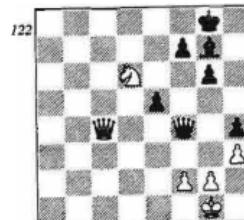
32 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ h5

Threatening ... h5-h4 followed by capture of the pawn on e4.

33 b4

White does not want to defend passively with 33 f3 b4 34 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ which would also seriously weaken his kingside, and decides to give up a pawn to simplify the position and get some relief from the pressure. But when the choice is between two evils, some unpleasantness is inevitable.

33 ... h4
34 $\mathbb{B}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}xb1+$
35 $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ $\mathbb{A}c6$
36 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$
Now the e4 pawn cannot be saved.
37 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$
38 $\mathbb{Q}fd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$
39 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$
40 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$
41 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{W}f4$
42 $\mathbb{W}c4$ (122)



White rests his hopes of a draw in the knight against bishop endgame with pawns on one wing only (the best conditions for a knight), and the continuation shows that his calculation was by no means ingenuous.

It was, however, worth keeping the queen by 42 $\mathbb{W}d5$.

42 ... $\mathbb{W}xc4$
43 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ f5
44 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$
45 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$
46 f3 $\mathbb{Q}f8$
47 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$
48 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$

Now, Black's strategy consists of putting an increasing clamp on the freedom of the white knight until it is forced to do a trade with the bishop. Easy to write, but rather trickier to put into practice.

49 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{B}b6$

50 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{B}d8$

51 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{B}g5$

52 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{B}c5$

53 $\mathbb{Q}b7+$

After 53 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{B}b4$ 54 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $e4+$!

55 $fxe4$ $fxe4+$ 56 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ Black captures the knight.

53 ... $\mathbb{Q}d5??$

Black could have accomplished his plan with 53 ... $\mathbb{B}b4$!, for example: 54 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{B}f6$ 55 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ $\mathbb{B}e7$ 56 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ and the knight has no way out.

54 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{B}e7$

55 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{B}b4$

56 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $e4+?$

After this premature advance, Black can no longer go back on his tracks and carry out the plan we mentioned above.

57 $fxe4+$ $fxe4+$

58 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$

59 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$

60 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$

61 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$

62 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

63 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$

64 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$

Repeating the position seen after the 58th move.

65 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$

66 $\mathbb{Q}d4!$

The natural 66 $\mathbb{Q}f2?$ would have run into an endgame study: 66 ... $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ 67 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 68 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}b2!$ 69 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 70 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $e3$ 71 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $e2+$ 72 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 73 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3!$ and Black wins.

66 ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$

Now 66 ... $\mathbb{Q}c3$ is wrong because after 67 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 68 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $e3$ White has 69 $\mathbb{Q}c1$.

67 $\mathbb{Q}b3?$

A fatal mistake. White would have drawn with 67 $\mathbb{Q}e4$!, for example: 67 ... $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 68 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ $g5$ 69 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 64 70 $hxg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 71 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ etc.

67 ... $\mathbb{Q}c3!$

68 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}b2!$

69 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}g3$

70 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ $g5$

71 $\mathbb{Q}f1.$

There is no salvation in 71 $\mathbb{Q}h7$ because of 71 ... $g4!$ 72 $hxg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 73 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (now 73 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ loses to 73 ... $\mathbb{Q}c1+$) 73 ... $\mathbb{Q}c1$ and again Black wins.

71 ... $e3$

72 $\mathbb{Q}h7$ $\mathbb{Q}c1$

73 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $e2+$

74 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$

75 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}xh3$

76 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$

77 $\mathbb{Q}f2+$ $\mathbb{Q}h2$

78 $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g1$

79 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}e3!$

80 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}g2$

81 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}g3!$

0 - 1

Game 5

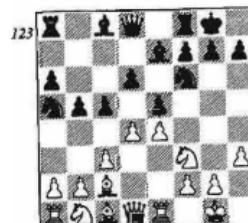
Timman-Garcia Padron

Las Palmas 1981

Breyer Variation

1	$\mathbb{e}4$	$\mathbb{e}5$
2	$\mathbb{Q}b3$	$\mathbb{Q}c6$
3	$\mathbb{Q}b5$	$a6$
4	$\mathbb{Q}a4$	$\mathbb{Q}f6$
5	0-0	$\mathbb{Q}e7$
6	$\mathbb{Q}e1$	$b5$
7	$\mathbb{Q}b3$	$d6$
8	$\mathbb{Q}c3$	0-0
9	$h3$	$\mathbb{Q}b8$

The move that characterizes the Breyer Variation which we have already seen in Games 1 and 3. However, the variation which most frequently generates the exchange centre is certainly the Chigorin Variation with ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$. After 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $c5$ 11 $d4$ we examine a few examples (123):



(1) 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (the Keres line) 12 $dxc5$ $dxc5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $f6$ (this drastic defence of the e-pawn is more or less essential here because the thematic

13 ... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ exposes the queen to the manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}d2-f1-e3-d5$ exactly when the d5 square and Black's castled position have been stripped of defenders by the retreat ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$. This enables White to pursue his manœuvring to achieve the typical exchange of central pawns in favourable circumstances, for example:

14 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18 $exd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ with evident attacking prospects against the castled position)

14 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ (White takes advantage of the interference of the f-pawn on the d8-h4 diagonal to quickly occupy f5, thus obtaining attacking chances on the kingside) 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ (probably better is 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ which prevents the queen coming out to g4 and prepares to continue with ... $\mathbb{Q}ac4$; instead, after 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 16 $exf5$ the weakening of the white squares in Black's territory would be considerably aggravated) 16 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 17 $h4!$ (with the plan: $h4-h5$ and $\mathbb{Q}d2-f3-h4-g6+$)

17 ... $g6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ with advantage to White.

(2) 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ (the immediate 12 $dxc5$ is ineffective because it shows White's hand too early and allows Black to organize his pieces in accordance with his typical strategic objectives, for example: 12 ... $dxc5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ $c4$ followed by the manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}a5-b7-c5-d3$) and at this point Black

has tried every kind of continuation:

(2a) 12 ... ♜b7 13 dxe5 (White sets up the exchange centre only after the developing move ... ♜b7: this makes accomplishment of the above-mentioned manoeuvre ... ♜a5-b7-c5-d3 more problematic) 13 ... dxe5 14 ♜h2 ♜ad8 15 ♜xf3 and White's offensive on the kingside unfolds with greater ease than his opponent's counterplay.

(2b) 12 ... ♜e6 (inviting a blocked centre and getting ready, if this does not take place, to prepare the central liquidation advance ... d6-d5, although White can forestall these ideas and strike at the position of the ♜e6) 13 dxe5 (13 d5 is a good alternative) 13 ... dxe5 14 ♜g5 ♜d7 15 ♜f1 and White is preferable.

(2c) 12 ... ♜d8 (this move too is aimed at liquidating the centre with ... d5, an idea which in the present case does not prove to be particularly effective) 13 ♜f1 d5 14 dxe5 dxe4 15 ♜d2! exf3 16 exf6 ♜xf6 17 ♜xf3 ♜e6 18 ♜e4 ♜e7 19 ♜h5 with very good attacking prospects.

(2d) 12 ... ♜d7 (the Yugoslav System which pursues the idea of playing for time by ... ♜e8 and ... ♜f8 pending White's declaration of intentions in the centre, but which has the defect of leaving White with too much freedom for decision) 13 ♜f1 ♜fe8 and now White can opt for a quick entry into the exchange centre by 14

♛e3 g6 15 dxe5 dxe5, for example: 16 ♜h2 ♜ad8 17 ♜xf3 ♜e6 18 ♜h4 ♜xg4 19 hxg4 ♜c4 (to force the exchange of the dangerous ♜e3) 20 ♜d5 ♜xd5 21 exd5 ♜b6 arriving at a position that, in practice, Black has shown can be held; or else, perhaps more effectively, White can take prophylactic measures against whatever central decision is taken, for example: 14 b3 (to prevent the incursion ... ♜c4) 14 ... g6 15 ♜g5 (to prevent ... ♜f8 and get ready to weaken the d5 square by the exchange ♜xf6) 15 ... ♜c6 16 ♜g3, so conserving better chances.

(2e) 12 ... ♜c6 (a very logical continuation: Black augments his pressure on d4, obliging White to reach a decision) 13 dxc5 (13 d5 sets up the blocked centre, while the pawn on d4 cannot be defended with 13 ♜f1? because the ♜c2 hangs after 13 ... cxd4 14 cxd4 exd4 15 ♜xd4?? ♜xd4 etc.) 13 ... dxc5 14 ♜f1 ♜e6 (counterplay attempted immediately against points f4 and d3 with 14 ... ♜d8 15 ♜e2 ♜h5 would prove inaccurate here because White can thwart such plans: 16 a4 ♜b8 17 axb5 axb5 18 g3! g6 — after 18 ... ♜xh3?? 19 ♜g5 ♜xg5 20 ♜xg5 ♜f6 21 ♜xf6 gxfs White has very evident compensation for the pawn — 19 h4! ♜e6 20 ♜e3 c4 21 ♜g5 with a clear advantage) 15 ♜e3 ♜ad8 16 ♜e2 c4 17 ♜f5 ♜fe8 18 ♜g5 ♜d7 with equal prospects.

(2f) 12 ... cxd4 (with the purpose of opening the c-file and weakening d4) 13 cxd4 ♜c6 (or 13 ... ♜d7 14 ♜f1 ♜ac8 15 ♜e3 ♜c6 16 dxe5 — 16 d5 and 16 a3 ♜xd4 17 ♜xd4 exd4 18 ♜xd4 are other possible central solutions — 16 ... dxe5 17 ♜d5 ♜xd5 18 exd5 ♜b4 19 ♜b3 with mutual possibilities; for 13 ... ♜b7 see the note to Black's ninth move in Game 3) 14 ♜b3 a5 ♜e3 a4 16 ♜bd2 reaching a position in which it is not uncommon for White to decide, normally after a long-drawn-out strategic skirmish, to make the capture dxe5 so setting up the exchange centre. We give one continuation by way of example: 16 ... ♜b4 17 ♜b1 ♜d7 18 a3 ♜c6 19 ♜d3 ♜a5 20 ♜c1 ♜b8 21 ♜e2 ♜e8 22 dxe5 dxe5 with a complex position and chances for both sides.

10	d4	♛bd7
11	♛bd2	♜b7
12	♜c2	♝e8
13	♜f1	♝f8
14	♜g5	

For the more usual 14 ♜g3 see Games 1 and 3. The omission of ♜g3 allows White, after the advance ... h7-h6, to maintain the pin by withdrawing his bishop to h4.

14	...	h6
15	♜h4	c5

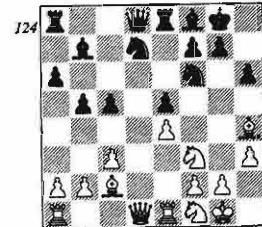
15 ... g6 followed by ... ♜g7 is an interesting alternative, while the idea of winning the e4 pawn with 15 ... exd4 16 cxd4 g5 allows the highly

tempting sacrifice 17 ♜xg5! hxg5 18 ♜xg5 with ♜f1-g3-f5 to follow.

16 dxe5

The best move, bearing in mind that White's pieces are well placed for an exchange centre. The decision to set up the blocked centre with 16 d5 is inappropriate because in this case the position of the ♜h4 considerably reduces White's chances on the kingside.

16 ... dxe5 (124)



Now that the situation in the centre has been clarified, White clearly has a slight edge. The pressure on the ♜f6 in fact, prevents Black from mechanically implementing his natural plan (... ♜c7, ... ♜ad8, ... c4 and ... ♜c5), while White has time to position his queen in the best possible way. He can also take control of the d-file with his rooks with a view to occupying the d5 square. In effect, he can pursue his thematic objectives with greater ease than his opponent.

17 $\mathbb{Q}3h2$

Freeing the excellent square f3 for his queen and, at the same time, preparing the thematic jump $\mathbb{Q}g4$. Note that the harmonious arrangement of his pieces enables White to operate both in the centre and on the kingside.

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

18 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{A}e7$

Black wants to protect his $\mathbb{Q}f6$ so as to be able to remove his $\mathbb{Q}d7$ and oppose rooks on the d-file. One interesting possibility, albeit less thematic, was 18 ... $\mathbb{E}6$ with the idea of possibly fighting for the d-file from the sixth rank.

19 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $g6$

In view of White's attacking possibilities on the kingside, it is prudent for Black to protect his f5 square.

20 $\mathbb{H}ad1$ $\mathbb{H}ad8$

21 $\mathbb{K}e2$ $\mathbb{A}g7$

Defends the $\mathbb{Q}f6$, so releasing the $\mathbb{Q}d7$ from this task.

22 $\mathbb{K}ed2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

Black finally manages to set up some opposition on the d-file. The attempt 22 ... c4 (with the idea of continuing with ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$), which is apparently more active, would have run aground after 23 $\mathbb{Q}hg4$, for example: 23 ... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ (or 23 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{A}xb4$ — 24 ... $\mathbb{Q}eff6$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}hf5+$ — 25 $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 26 $\mathbb{Kxd7}$ and wins) 24 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{K}xe7$ 25 $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 27 $\mathbb{W}h4!$ with a

winning position, for example: 27 ... $\mathbb{gxf5}$ 28 $\mathbb{Kxd8}$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{fxe4}$ 30 $\mathbb{W}f6$ etc.

23 $\mathbb{Q}hg4$ $\mathbb{Q}8h7$

It was perhaps preferable to simplify the position by 23 ... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 24 $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{Kxd2}$ (not 24 ... $\mathbb{Q}xh7?$ because of 25 $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 26 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ and wins) 25 $\mathbb{Kxd2}$ $\mathbb{A}xb4$ 26 $\mathbb{W}xh4$.

24 $\mathbb{Q}g3$

Exploiting the vulnerability of the e5 pawn, White wants to induce his opponent into further weakening his castled position.

24 ... $\mathbb{Q}g5$

Once again it was perhaps better to simplify the position by 24 ... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ f6, in consideration of the fact that after 26 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 27 $\mathbb{h}4$ (27 $\mathbb{Q}xb6!$? $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$) 27 ... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ White cannot play 28 h5? because of 28 ... $\mathbb{gxh5}$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ f5 etc.

25 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Kxd2}$

26 $\mathbb{K}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$

Black cannot take on e4:

(1) 26 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$ 27 $\mathbb{K}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ (if 27 ... $\mathbb{W}c6$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 29 $\mathbb{K}d6$, while if 27 ... $\mathbb{W}c8$ 28 $\mathbb{h}4$ $\mathbb{A}xc2$ 29 $\mathbb{h}xg5$ and White wins in both cases) 28 $\mathbb{h}4$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ and wins.

(2) 26 ... $\mathbb{Q}gxe4?$ 27 $\mathbb{K}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 29 f3 $\mathbb{W}b1+$ (if 29 ... $\mathbb{W}c6$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}d5$) 30 $\mathbb{K}d1$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 31 $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ and wins.

27 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $f6$

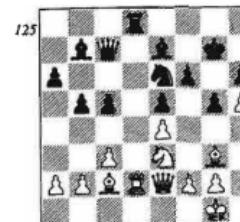
28 $\mathbb{h}4$

White exploits the presence of the knight to provoke a further weakening of the enemy's castled position.

28 ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$

29 $\mathbb{h}5$ $g5$

30 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}d8?$ (125)



32 $\mathbb{exd5}$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

The knight, in view of the artillery that will be trained on the b1-h7 diagonal, is forced to keep an eye on g6 and h7.

33 c4!

Now that the kingside is seriously weakened, White changes the play to the opposite sector and sets his sights on b5.

33 ... $\mathbb{W}b7$

33 ... $\mathbb{bxc4}$ would have weakened the pawns on the queenside. The advance ... b5-b4 would have offered more resistance, here as on the next two moves.

34 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}b8$

35 f3 $\mathbb{Q}d6$

36 $\mathbb{exb5}!$

White finally decides to make this capture which will allow him to organize strong pressure against the c5 pawn.

36 ... $\mathbb{axb5}$

37 b3 $\mathbb{W}7??$

Black trades off his b-pawn for that on h5, but he underestimates the fact that, in so doing, he gives his opponent a passed a-pawn. Black could have offered greater resistance by 37 ... b4, while 37 ... $\mathbb{W}xd5$, after 38 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$, would have met a fate similar to the text.

38 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{W}xb5$

39 a4 $\mathbb{W}f7$

40 $\mathbb{We4}$

White does not forget his opponent's weak points.

40 ... $\mathbb{W}c7$
 41 $\mathbb{K}e2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$
 42 $\mathbb{A}f2$ h5
 43 $\mathbb{K}e3$

Defends b3, restoring mobility to his light-squared bishop.

43 ... h4
 44 $\mathbb{K}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$
 45 $\mathbb{A}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$
 46 a5 $\mathbb{B}b4$
 47 $\mathbb{K}c4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$
 48 a6 $\mathbb{Q}g6$

If 48 ... f5 49 $\mathbb{W}b1$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ 50 $\mathbb{W}a1$ $\mathbb{W}a7$ 51 $\mathbb{W}a5$ (threatens $\mathbb{W}xb4$) 51 ... $\mathbb{B}b6$ 52 b4 and wins.

49 $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$

If 49 ... $\mathbb{W}xg4$ 50 fxe4 $\mathbb{B}b8$ 51 $\mathbb{A}f1$ winning quickly.

50 $\mathbb{K}c1$ $\mathbb{B}b8$
 51 $\mathbb{K}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$
 52 $\mathbb{A}d3$

With the idea of continuing with b5-c6.

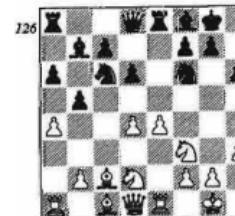
52 ... $\mathbb{W}a7$
 53 b4 $\mathbb{W}f7$
 54 bxc5 $\mathbb{W}a7$
 55 $\mathbb{K}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$
 56 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$
 57 $\mathbb{W}h7+$

1 - 0

4 The Mobile Centre

Main line: Zaitsev Variation

1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{B}b5$ a6 4 $\mathbb{K}a4$
 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{K}c7$ 6 $\mathbb{K}el$ b5 7 $\mathbb{B}b3$ d6 8
 c3 0-0 h3 $\mathbb{B}b7$ 10 d4 $\mathbb{W}e8$ 11 a4 h6
 12 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{R}f8$ 13 $\mathbb{K}c2$ exd4 14 cxd4
 (126)



This type of centre is characterized by the exchange ... exd4 and the recapture by White on d4 with his c-pawn. These conditions can also crop up in many other variations, after the tension has been maintained for quite a while in the centre. For example: 1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{B}b5$ a6 4 $\mathbb{K}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{K}c7$ 6 $\mathbb{K}el$ b5 7 $\mathbb{B}b3$ d6 8 c3 0-0 and now:

Zaitsev Variation

— 9 h3 $\mathbb{B}b7$ 10 d4 $\mathbb{W}e8$ 11 a4 h6
 12 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ exd4 13 cxd4

Chigorin Variation with ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$
 — 9 h3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 d4 $\mathbb{B}b6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$
 exd4 12 cxd4

Other Variations

— 9 h3 a5 10 d4 a4 11 $\mathbb{K}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$
 12 $\mathbb{K}e3$ exd4 13 cxd4
 — 9 d4 $\mathbb{K}g4$ 10 $\mathbb{K}c3$ exd4 11
 cxd4

Or: 1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{B}b5$ and now:

Steinitz Variation Deferred

— 3 ... a6 4 $\mathbb{K}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{K}c7$ 6
 $\mathbb{K}el$ d6 7 c3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 8 d4 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$
 exd4 10 cxd4

Classical Variation

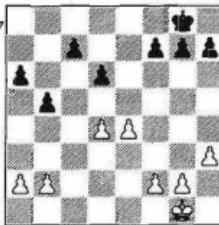
— 3 ... $\mathbb{K}c5$ 4 c3 $\mathbb{Q}ge7$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{B}b6$
 6 d4 exd4 7 cxd4

1 Strategic Ideas

From the structural viewpoint, the formation of the mobile centre is a success for White because it allows

him to achieve the objectives he has been pursuing during the situation of tension in the centre that was outlined in the first chapter. If, in fact, we confine our examination to the pawn structure, this result is evident (127).

127



The pair of central pawns on e4 and d4 assure White a considerable space advantage and more freedom of movement for his pieces, and the demise of the e5 pawn gives his centre the mobility needed for organizing the central breakthrough with the advance e4-e5, a natural prelude to a violent attack against the enemy's castled position.

It is therefore logical that Black should not consider his voluntary setting up of the mobile centre as the point of arrival of his plans, but should see it as an intermediate stage (transitory and short-lived) on a broader horizon, designed to introduce further central transformations that will diminish if not actually

wipe out the effects of his previous concession in the centre.

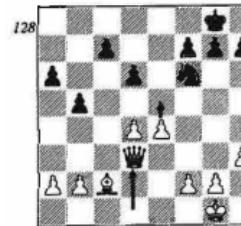
So, he gets ready to alter the strategic cast of the position by means of ... c7-c5 or ... d6-d5 advances, and the developments of the game subsequent to this second stage of his plan are the kernel of the present chapter.

However, it would be advisable first to have a clearer idea of the factors that guarantee an edge for White in diagram 127.

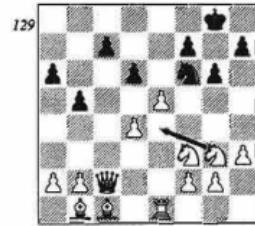
Piece grouping in view of the breakthrough with e4-e5

When the situation shown in diagram 127 persists (for example in the case where the establishment of the mobile centre is not the result of a decision by Black but is the result of White's winning the tension battle in the centre), White can organize a violent attack against the enemy's castled position, grouping his pieces behind the pair of centre pawns and breaking through in the centre at an appropriate moment by e4-e5. The most common way of enhancing the effects of the central breakthrough is the creation of a battery on the b1-h7 diagonal (128).

The diagram shows the ideal set-up, which leaves the first rank free for communication between the



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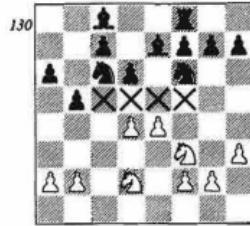
129

rooks, but it is not uncommon for the battery to be formed by ♜b1 and ♜c2. It should be pointed out that the pressure on the b1-h7 diagonal can also be exerted by means of the placements ♜c2 and ♜b1.

As the breakthrough in the centre would produce the disastrous effect of forcing the ♔f6 to give up its defence of h7, it is logical for Black, in view of such an assault, to take steps to meet the situation, generally by advancing ... g7-g6. This, however, does nothing to neutralize the violence of White's attack, which can find new life in the weakening of the enemy's castled position and in clearing the e4 square (129).

In such circumstances, White can aim to exploit the weakening of f6 and h6 caused by the advance ... g7-g6, but he can also renew his attack along the b1-h7 diagonal by the further advance of the e-pawn (e5-e6) or by bringing in the h-pawn (h3-h4-h5).

Nonetheless, in preparing the

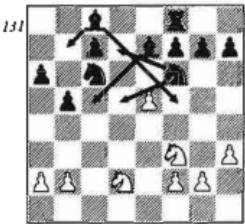


130

Black is thus forced to manoeuvre in cramped central spaces and runs the risk of placing his pieces inadequately with respect to one of the

possible white pawn advances (e4-e5, but also d4-d5).

If, on the other hand, White makes his breakthrough in the centre without adequate preparation by grouping his pieces, then — after e5 dx5, dxe5 — not only does Black win the useful positions d5 and f5, but it will also be of advantage to him to clear the a7-g1 and a8-h1 diagonals and weaken the e5 pawn (131).

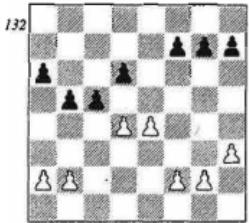


As we can readily note, Black now has available as many as three outposts on the fourth rank (c5, d5 and f5), while the e5 pawn can be targeted not only by the knights but by a combined (and thematic) operation by most of his remaining forces (... Nxe8, ... g6 and ... Rf8-g7).

White therefore has to group his pieces *before* effecting the central breakthrough, in a similar process to that obtained by applying pressure to a spring: the more it is compressed, the greater the potential strength contained in it.

Black changes the centre with the advance ... c7-c5

As the prolongation of the situation shown in diagram 127 is favourable to White, it is logical for Black to take steps to change the appearance of the centre. As we have said, he can achieve this result by playing the advance ... c7-c5 (132).

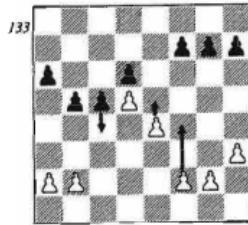


By undermining the d4 pawn, Black's idea is to weaken the opposing centre through exchanges, as happens in the case of ... cxd4 and dxc5, or reduce its mobility in the event of the centre being blocked by d4-d5.

Since ... cxd4 transposes to the material considered in Chapter 5, we are left with the other two possibilities, namely the blockading d4-d5 (see page 97) and the simplifying dxc5 (see page 102).

The d4-d5 advance

Blocking the centre is certainly the most ambitious decision because White retains his space advantage (while he can) and at the same time he does not abandon the idea of a central breakthrough but merely delays it, ready to call in his f-pawn if required (133).

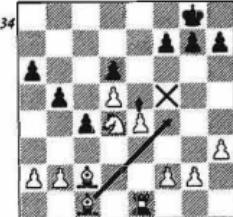


For his part, Black has obtained some compensation: the situation is now much more balanced because the reduced mobility of the White centre goes with a more mobile formation of black pawns on the queenside. When mobilized, these pawns can create immediate targets for counterplay, unthinkable in the conditions shown in diagram 127. The advance ... c5-c4 fixes the weak square d3 and clears the c5 square and the diagonal a7-g1, as well as creating the preconditions for a possible later advance of the pawn

phalanx (... b5-b4 and ... c4-c3) destined to end up in the creation of a passed pawn. It is therefore logical that following the blocking of the centre, the game takes on the character of attack (White in the centre and on the kingside) and counterattack (Black on the queenside). Let us try to highlight the salient points of the manoeuvres of the two sides.

White's objectives: the f5 square, the d6 pawn and the advance e4-e5

As we have said, after blocking the centre, White does not abandon his idea of preparing the breakthrough e4-e5 but, at the same time, he pursues attacking targets similar to those examined in the second and third chapters, for example the occupation of f5 with a knight, here generally made easier by the fact that the KN can get there via d4 (134).

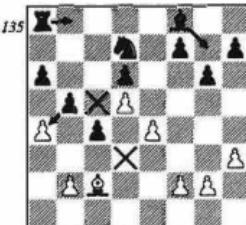


The placing of a knight on f5 may prove useful both in launching an attack against the enemy's castled position and for keeping the d6 pawn under pressure (for example, together with developing the QB on f4), so as to force Black to keep some of his pieces tied to its defence.

Obviously, an important place in White's plans is occupied by preparation of the advance e4-e5 which, by freeing the b1-h7 diagonal, can have disruptive effects whether it is prepared by f2-f4 or whether it is carried through with the sole support of the pieces.

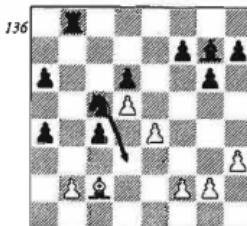
Black's targets: the b2 pawn and the d3 square

The key to Black's counterplay on the queenside consists of the advance ... c5-c4 which highlights a set of objectives of major strategic importance (135).



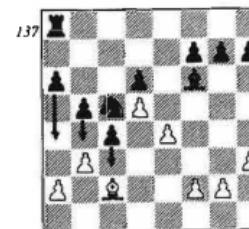
In fact, in addition to fixing the

weak square d3 and clearing the c5 square and the diagonal a7-g1, this advance fixes the b2 pawn against which Black can concentrate the action of his pieces. This may involve taking possession of the long diagonal h8-a1 with his KB (as shown in the diagram or also by means of the thematic manoeuvre ... Qf6-d7 and ... Kf7-f6) and opening the b-file as a channel for the heavy pieces (... Nb8, but also ... Nd8-b6 or ... Nc7-b5) (136).



It should be mentioned, in this regard, that Black is normally able to open the b-file following the move a2-a4 (which is often played with a continuing situation of tension in the centre) whereas on other occasions, when a2-a3 has been played, the file can be opened as a consequence of the advance ... b5-b4. It should, in any case, be noted that the fixing of the b2 pawn achieved by ... c5-c4 is usually equally effective even when White has not moved his a-pawn.

Here the attempt to exchange pawns by b2-b3 could allow Black to create a dangerous passed pawn after the counter-advance ... c4-c3 (137).



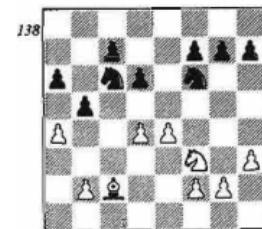
In sum, whatever the initial configuration of white pawns on the queenside, it is difficult for them to counter the mobilization of the black majority effectively, so White has to create chances in the opposite sector.

As regards occupation of the d3 square, it should be pointed out that it is important for two reasons: a knight there not only contributes to the pressure against b2, but also obstructs the dangerous b1-h7 diagonal, so impeding the action of the white KB which was waiting patiently for the chance to give vent to all its power after the planned breakthrough e4-e5.

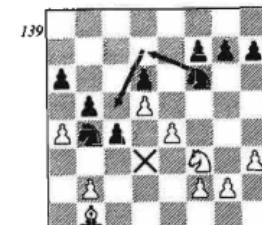
So, depending on the demands of the position, Black can decide to implement a plan for securely occupying d3, converging on it with both knights, or be satisfied with

neutralizing the enemy's KB, accepting the idea of retaking with ... cxd3 if White decides to eliminate the intruder with Kxd3.

In the former case, occupation of d3 must be carefully prepared right from the decision to set up the mobile centre (138).



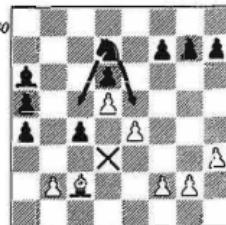
Under similar circumstances, for example, Black can plan a long-term manoeuvre ... Qb4, Kb1 c5 and, if White blocks the centre with d5, then ... c4 (139).



Black may intervene with the

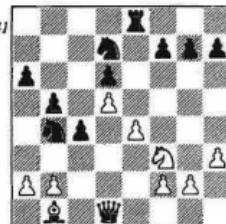
other knight too via d7-c5 (or sometimes d7-e5), and take up stable occupation of the d3 square.

Otherwise, support of d3 can also be supplied by the QB: in this case, Black opens the b-file, for example with ... bxa4, and then pushes his a-pawn to a5 to permit ... ♜a6 (140).

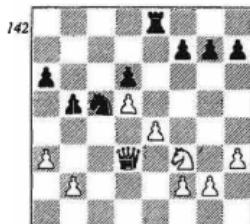


Here, the manoeuvre to occupy d3 does more than attack the b2 pawn; it also serves to block the action of the KB on the b1-h7 diagonal.

Finally, it should be observed that Black can at times deploy tactical means for devising plans regarding occupation of d3 (141).



In the diagram, if White has the move, it would seem that he can prevent the occupation of d3 by playing a3?! Instead, Black can continue with ... ♜d3!, ♜xd3 cxd3, ♜xd3 ♜c5 (142).



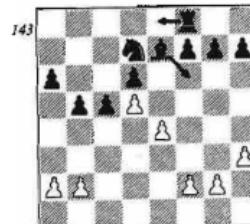
... and Black recovers the e4 pawn after eliminating the spearhead of White's attack.

It should be pointed out that in certain cases, Black can even sacrifice the pawn on d3, especially when its capture demands the expenditure of a certain number of moves (for example, when a knight on d2 gets in the way of the immediate ♜xd3), in the hope of being able to employ these tempi in the interests of a violent initiative.

Containment of the White centre and its destruction

From the defensive viewpoint, the greatest danger Black faces is the effects of the breakthrough advance

e4-e5. He therefore sets up his forces on the kingside so as to keep the e5 point under control for as long as possible. Typical in this situation is the manoeuvre ... ♜f8-e8, ... ♜f6-d7 and ... ♜e7-f6 (143).

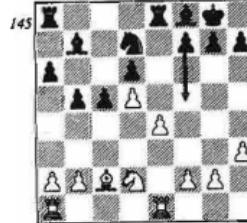


It should be observed that, in the presence of ... g7-g6, the route ... ♜e7-f8-g7 is natural.

At times, such constriction on the enemy centre can herald a counterattack against it, though only under favourable circumstances which are usually encountered when Black, during a persisting situation of tension in the centre, has applied thematic pressure against the pawn on e4 (144).

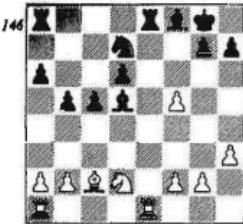
Here, for example, Black has set up a mobile centre after a series of conventional manoeuvres aimed at tightening the pressure on e4 and he can now continue with ... c5, d5 ♜d7 (145)

... with the idea, if circumstances permit, of trying to dismantle the



enemy centre with the advance ... f7-f5. In this case, the aim is to trade off the f5 pawn with the d5 pawn (which, if necessary, can also be assaulted by ... ♜b6), so as to broaden the horizons of the QB and guarantee a potentially unstoppable pawn mass in the centre (146).

However, it is obvious that such a strategy is not free from danger because the position of the black king is greatly weakened. The advisability or otherwise of putting such a strategy into effect, therefore, depends on the real chances of withstanding, without too much damage,



the violent attack that White, counting on the presence of the f5 pawn, will unleash on the kingside.

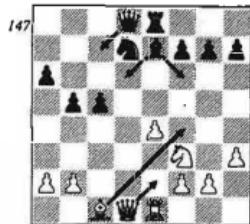
When Black, on the other hand, in implementing a similar strategy, is in a position to recapture the pawn on f5, then it is logical that in his position the advantages will tend to outweigh the disadvantages, as he can focus his attack against the weakened d5 pawn.

The capture dxc5

In diagram 132, as an alternative to blocking the centre, White can decide to simplify with dxc5, a decision that usually brings with it the opening of the d-file following the capture ... dxc5.

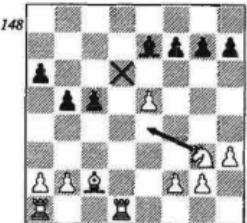
In the ensuing situation, the struggle will be carried on around the e5 square, as the two sides endeavour respectively to make and prevent the advance e4-e5 (147).

So, in addition to his KR and KN, White can count on the action of his

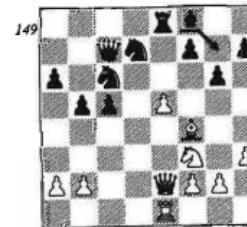


QB and the queen, while Black can bring most of his troops into battle.

Black's principal objective is to place a knight on e5 so as to block the advance of the e-pawn. In fact, although in the present case such an advance cannot be likened to a breakthrough, it is strategically advantageous to White not only because it opens up the b1-h7 diagonal (and hence gives attacking chances on the kingside) but also because it expands the room for manoeuvre for his pieces and fixes the weak square d6 (148).



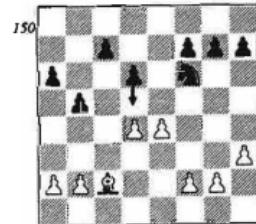
This placing can provide an excellent target for a knight (for example: $\mathbb{Q}g3-e4-d6$) the trading off of which (for example: ... $\mathbb{Kxd6}$) may in its turn help a manoeuvre to double White's heavy pieces on the open file ($\mathbb{Rxd6}$) or lead to the creation of a very advanced passed pawn (exd6). As with diagram 131, it must, however, be mentioned that the advance e4-e5 can turn out to be a double-edged weapon because, under favourable circumstances, Black can concentrate piece action against the advanced white pawn, defence of which is not always easy (149).



generated by the increase in the range of action of his pieces.

Black changes the centre by the advance ... d6-d5

As we have already mentioned in commenting on diagram 127, after setting up the mobile centre, Black, as an alternative to the advance ... c7-c5, can prepare to change the strategic face of the position by playing ... d6-d5 (150).

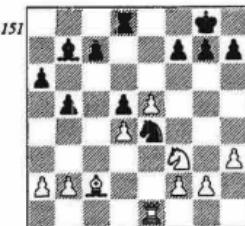


White usually responds to this central advance by advancing his own pawn to e5 because his pieces are almost never placed in the best way for the isolated d4 pawn that would be the outcome of an exchange of the e4 and d5 pawns. There may be exceptions to this behaviour, usually when Black has not yet completed his development, specifically when he has still to castle. Generally speaking, however, after ... d6-d5 and e4-e5, a situation arises

in which the aims of the two sides are fairly evident and the success or failure of the strategic modification brought about by Black depends substantially on the possibility of achieving them.

The most immediate problem that Black has to handle is normally to find a good position for his KN which almost invariably finds itself under attack as a result of the counter-advance e4-e5.

The ideal solution is when it is possible to play ... Qe4, because in that case Black achieves the important result of blocking the dangerous b1-h7 diagonal. This is often possible thanks to the support of the QB on the long white diagonal and/or to the indirect pressure on the d4 pawn (151).



So, in the diagram, after $\mathbb{Q}xe4$, White would lose his d-pawn. Black can then think of sustaining his $\mathbb{Q}e4$ with the advance ... f7-f5, whereas White will try to force him

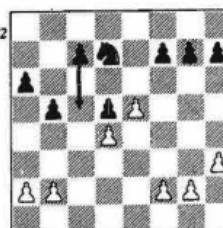
to abandon his position by resorting to the typical manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}h2$ and f3, which can reanimate his prospects of an attack on the kingside, bearing in mind that it makes possible both the jump to $\mathbb{Q}g4$ and the further advance of the f-pawn.

It should be noted that at times Black, in planning the jump ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$, can also be ready to sacrifice his e-pawn (after $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ dx4) in exchange for compensation that may be tactical/dynamic (weakening of the d4 pawn, achievement of the pair of bishops, chances on the a8-h1 diagonal) or purely strategic (use of the strong square d5: think, for example, of the difference in value — particularly in the endgame — between a black knight on d5 and a white dark-squared bishop).

At times, on the other hand, as the jump ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ is not possible, the $\mathbb{Q}ff6$ has to withdraw to d7 or e8, and in these cases in particular, so as not to stand passively by while his opponent attacks on the kingside, Black has to focus all his energies on the attempt to demolish his enemy's centre. To accomplish this objective, he has to be able to carry through the advance ... c7-c5, a logical consequence of the strategy begun with ... d6-d5 (152).

The elimination of the d4 pawn will appreciably weaken that on e5 which can be put under pressure by joint piece action or removed from

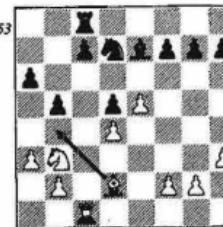
152



the board by a subsequent attack ... f7-f6, whereby Black would complete his work of destruction of the enemy centre.

For his part, White, in addition to exploiting his natural attacking prospects on the kingside, can give rise to a more positional struggle by endeavouring to prevent the realization of his opponent's plan. This he can do by deploying his forces on the queenside and taking advantage of the fact that the c5 square is, potentially, a weak square on an open file (153).

153



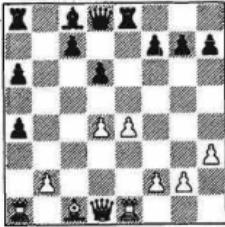
Via d2, the QN can be played to b3, the QR can take possession of the c-file and the QB, supported by a2-a3, can try to simplify via d2-b4. It is evident that the success of a similar strategy of containment would at the same time mean the failure of the plan Black began with ... d6-d5.

The queen's rooks get into the game on the third and sixth ranks

A typical manoeuvre that both sides can carry out in this type of centre involves the queen's rooks and how to get them into the game.

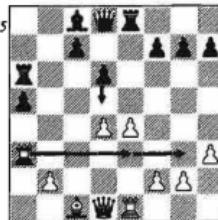
During a continuing situation of tension in the centre, White often begins thematic operations on the queenside with a2-a4 and, once the mobile centre has been set up, it may happen that Black decides to relieve the pressure on his b-pawn by the capture ... bxa4 (154).

154



The situation that arises enables both players to use the a-file and the third (or sixth) rank to transfer their respective queen's rooks. While, in fact, White's manoeuvre is practically automatic ($\mathbb{R}a1xa4-a3$, or $\mathbb{R}a1-a3$ directly), it should be pointed out that Black too, especially when he plans the advance ... d6-d5 can play a mirror-image manoeuvre after making the advance ... a6-a5 (155).

155



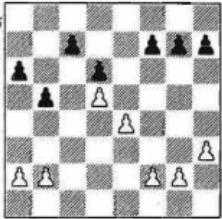
Transfer of the rooks to the centre (to e3 and e6) or kingside (to g3 or g6) is of evident importance in the context of attack and defence, while it should be pointed out that in some cases, the advance of the black rook, by clearing the a8 square, may herald a reinforcement of pressure against e4 by ... $\mathbb{B}b7$ and ... $\mathbb{W}a8$.

White blocks the centre for prophylactic purposes

At times, Black's intention of playing ... d6-d5 may prove so irksome

that White is induced to preempt it by blocking the centre with the advance d4-d5 (156).

156



In this case, White, with respect to the situations shown in diagrams 133 and following, has no reason to fear either the fixing of the d3 square or even less the sudden advance of the black pawns on the queenside and he will immediately be able to use the d4 square. In spite of this, his centre becomes less flexible and weakened because he has yielded the c5 and e5 squares. Moreover, this solution opens the way for the lateral break ... c7-c6, which could force White to transpose to a little centre (with dxcc6) under unfavourable circumstances. Blocking the centre as a prophylactic measure against the advance ... d6-d5 proves to be a double-edged weapon, the validity of which can only be established on the basis of a full and correct assessment of future developments.

2 Tactical Ideas

Although the nature of this type of centre can favour a violent attack by White against the enemy castled position (following the breakthrough advance e4-e5), we are mainly in the realm of combinations playable in the middlegame, so recurrent tactical themes typical of the opening (apart from those already examined in other types of centre) are not too thick on the ground.

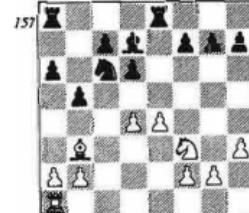
We therefore refer the reader to Chapter 1 for the 'Indirect defence of the e4 pawn' and to Chapter 2 for the 'The undefended position of the $\mathbb{Q}h4$ ' and 'The undefended position of the $\mathbb{W}d7$ ', as these tactical ideas can also occur with some frequency in the mobile centre.

Indirect defence of the e4 pawn

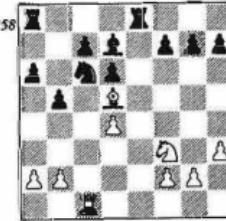
Although this theme has already been considered in its essential form in our discussion of tension in the centre, we should point out that in this type of centre it may crop up in a rather more sophisticated form (157).

In this situation, the e4 pawn cannot be taken because after ... $\mathbb{B}xe4?$, $\mathbb{R}d5 \mathbb{B}ee8$, $\mathbb{R}c1$ (158)

... White is still able to exploit the weakness of the long white diagonal



158

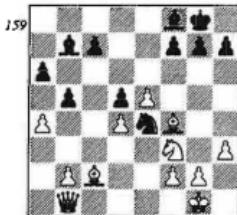


and recover his material with interest.

The precarious position of the $\mathbb{Q}e4$

When Black, following the advance ... d6-d5 and the counter-advance e4-e5 has placed his KN on e4, he always has to pay some attention to his opponent's chances of threatening to trap it (159).

Here, for example, after $\mathbb{Q}h2$, White prepares f2-f3, which not only threatens to capture the knight but also to bring to fruition the pressure



on the b1-h7 diagonal, for example: ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$, f3 $\mathbb{Q}g5$, $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$, $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ etc.

The pressure on the e-file

One possibility that presents itself to Black with some frequency is that of exploiting the pressure that he usually exerts on the semi-open e-file (160).



In the diagram, for example, White cannot put the question to the $\mathbb{Q}g4$ by playing the spontaneous h3? because after ... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ he would be

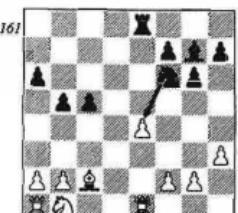
forced to seriously weaken the structure of his castled position with $gxf3$: he cannot recapture $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ owing to ... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$, which takes advantage of the pin on the e4 pawn determined by the undefended position of the $\mathbb{K}e1$.

This theme may, of course, present itself in numerous forms, one of which we will see in the next example.

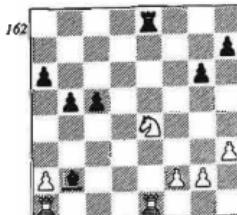
The pressure on the long diagonal h8-a1

After taking possession of the long black diagonal with his KB, Black may sometimes find the inspiration for putting into effect a tactical theme, particularly when the range of action of his bishop has been stretched by the advance d4-d5 or the capture dx5 and when the b2 pawn is undefended.

The most common idea, in its essential form, is a straightforward piece sacrifice operating on the vulnerable undeveloped group a2, b2, $\mathbb{K}a1$, $\mathbb{Q}b1$ (161).



In the diagram, Black plays ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$, and White loses material in the event of the simple $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$, $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ and of the more complex $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ f5, $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$, $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ (162)



... a line of play that also offers us another example of the tactical exploitation of the pressure on the semi-open e-file.

3 Illustrative games

Game 6

Ivanchuk-Karpov

Linares 1989

Zaitsev Variation

- | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | e4 | e5 |
| 2 | $\mathbb{Q}f3$ | $\mathbb{Q}c6$ |
| 3 | $\mathbb{K}b5$ | a6 |

The mobile centre may also arise occasionally in the Classical Variation, specifically in the line: 3 ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 4 c3 $\mathbb{Q}ge7$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 6 d4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ which, after 7 ... d5, is one of

the rare cases in which it is in White's interest to opt for a structure with an isolated queen's pawn by playing $exd5$. This exception is explained by the development of the KN to e7, which prevents White advancing to e5 with the usual gain of a tempo on $\mathbb{Q}f6$. So in this case, the advance 8 e5 would not be appropriate as it would permit 8 ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ with annoying pressure against the d4 pawn. The correct continuation is therefore 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ and, after 8 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 9 $\mathbb{K}e1+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ 0-0 12 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 13 a4, White is better.

A very similar theme occurs in the line 3 ... $\mathbb{Q}ge7$, in which Black intends to fianchetto the KB, concealing the ambitious project of quickly playing the advance ... d7-d5 without having to lose a tempo moving the pawn through d6. For example: 4 0-0 (the immediate 4 d4 forces entry into a little centre but the circumstances are not unfavourable to Black: 4 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ g6 6 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 0-0 with a fairly balanced position) 4 ... g6 5 c3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 6 d4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ d5 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (this decision is dictated by the same reasons as in the previous case) 8 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 9 $\mathbb{K}e1+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ and White retains some advantage.

- | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| 4 | $\mathbb{Q}a4$ | $\mathbb{Q}f6$ |
| 5 | 0-0 | $\mathbb{Q}e7$ |
| 6 | $\mathbb{K}e1$ | b5 |

6 ... d6 transposes into a line of the

Steinitz Variation Deferred in which the mobile centre can arise after 7 c3 ♜d7 8 d4 0-0-0 ♜bd2 exd4 10 cxd4. However, the placing of the black pieces is not particularly favourable in the light of the subsequent strategic changes which the mobile centre will undergo, for example: 10 ... ♜b4 11 ♜xd7 (after 11 ♜f1 ♜xa4 12 ♜xa4 d5! Black easily achieves his objectives related to his decision in the centre, for example: 13 e5 ♜e4 14 ♜g3 ♜xg3 15 hxg3 c5 with good prospects; moreover, White cannot avoid the exchange of his light-squared bishop even by 11 ♜b3, for example: 11 ... c5! 12 ♜f1 ♜b5 13 ♜g3 c4 14 ♜c2 ♜xc2 with equality) 11 ... ♜xd7 12 ♜f1 and now Black does not have a completely satisfactory continuation: 12 ... c5 13 a3 ♜c6 14 d5 ♜e5 15 ♜g3 when White has good prospects on the kingside; or 12 ... d5 13 ♜e5 ♜e6 14 a3 ♜c6 15 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 16 e5 and Black is forced into 16 ... ♜e8, as after 16 ... ♜e4? 17 ♜e3 ♜d7 (not 17 ... f5 18 ♜b3 ♜ad8 19 ♜xf5! ♜xf5 20 ♜xe4 with a decisive advantage) 18 f3 ♜g5 19 f4 ♜e4 20 f5, White has a crushing attack.

7 ♜b3	d6
8 c3	0-0
9 h3	

A mobile centre can also arise after 9 d4 ♜g4 10 ♜c3 (for 10 d5 and 10 b3 see the comment to White's ninth move in Game 2) 10 ... exd4 11

cxd4. Here too, Black can opt for the advance ... d5 or ... c5, for example:

- (1) 11 ... d5 12 e5 ♜e4 13 ♜bd2 ♜xd2 14 ♜xd2 ♜xf3 15 gxfs ♜b4 16 ♜c2 ♜xe1 17 ♜xc6 ♜b4 18 ♜xd5 with advantage to White;
- (2) 11 ... ♜a5 12 ♜c2 and now:
 - (a) 12 ... c5 13 dxc5 dxc5 14 ♜bd2 ♜d7 15 ♜b1 ♜e8 16 e5 ♜f8 and Black's position is sufficiently sound;
 - (b) 12 ... ♜c4 13 ♜c1 c5 14 b3 ♜b6 15 ♜b2 ♜e8 16 ♜bd2 c4 with prospects for both sides.

9 ... ♜b7

The alternatives that can lead to the formation of the mobile centre (9 ... ♜d7 and 9 ... a5) will be looked at in the notes to Game 7.

10 d4	h8
11 ♜bd2	g8
12 a4	h6

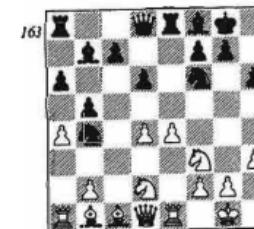
12 ... ♜d7 is the continuation of Game 2, where some alternatives for White at the 11th and 12th moves are also considered.

13 ♜c2

Although numerous alternatives have been tried in this position (13 ... ♜b8, 13 ... ♜d7, 13 ... ♜a5, 13 ... ♜b8 and others again), the text is the most active decision and the one most commonly employed in practice.

Black reasons that his pieces are ideally placed for handling the mobile centre, so he undertakes an immediate central exchange.

13 ...	exd4
14 cxd4	Db4
15 ♜b1 (163)	



(1) he eliminates White's open a-file option and, consequently, he avoids a possible target for attack in the form of the b5 pawn;

(2) he opens the b-file, exposing the b2 pawn to the action of his heavy pieces, even though this results, in contrast, in the weakening of the a6 pawn;

(3) he prepares to continue with ... a5 and ... ♜a6, so as to make effective preparation for changing the situation in the centre with ... d5.

Clearly a waiting policy is inappropriate, for example 15 ... g6 is subject to the reply 16 e5! dx5 17 dxe5, after which White can try to exploit the weakening of the dark squares by playing ♜e4 and looking for a breakthrough based on the further advance of the e-pawn.

15 ... ♜d7 is the only try at improving the text. The idea of postponing the capture is to gain a tempo after 16 ♜a3 bx4 17 ♜xa4. This move, however, has not yet been sufficiently tested.

16 ♜xa4	a5
17 ♜a3	

Also possible is 17 b3 followed by ♜b2, but at the price of relegating the QR to the queenside. With the text, on the other hand, White prepares to transfer the rook to the centre or to the kingside.

17 ... ♜a6

Black prepares the mirror transfer which will become possible after the

advance ... d5, but at the same time he sets up the option of further strengthening his pressure against the e4 pawn with ... $\mathbb{W}a8$.

It should be observed that here 17 ... $\mathbb{W}d7?$ is a mistake because pulling out of the d8-h4 diagonal makes 18 $\mathbb{Q}h4!$ possible (which in the text position, as we will see in the next note, could be refuted by the typical tactical manoeuvre 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$) after which White, thanks to the transfer of the QR, quickly obtains a crushing attack on the kingside, for example: 18 ... $\mathbb{W}b5$ 19 $\mathbb{M}f3$ (threatens 20 $\mathbb{M}xf6$ followed by 21 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ with a winning attack, while the immediate 19 $\mathbb{M}g3?$ would be met by 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$) 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 20 $\mathbb{M}g3$ etc.

18 $\mathbb{Q}h2$

The continuation 18 d5, trying to prevent the advance ... d5 and relegate the $\mathbb{M}a6$ to the queenside, is only a temporary success because Black can immediately demolish the block by 18 ... $c6!$ after which White's attempt must be considered a failure.

Alternatively, after 18 $\mathbb{Q}h4?$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ (19 ... $\mathbb{W}xh4?$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}f6+?$) 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $d5!$ (20 ... $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}h7+$), if White does not want a material loss he is forced to give the piece back with 21 $\mathbb{M}ae3$ (21 $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$ $\mathbb{M}xe1+$ 22 $\mathbb{W}xe1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ and both $\mathbb{Q}h4$ and $\mathbb{M}a3$ are en prise), but after 21 ... $dxe4$ 22 $\mathbb{M}xe4$ $\mathbb{M}xe4$ 23 $\mathbb{M}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ Black obtains a preferable position.

Here we might highlight the flexibility of the plan initiated by Black at his 15th move: although his last three moves might be considered as a preparation for the advance ... d5, he has not shut out the chance of changing the central structure with ... c5, so in suitable circumstances, even this alternative can still be pulled out of the hat. For example: 18 $\mathbb{M}ae3$ a4 19 $\mathbb{Q}h4!?$ (an attempt to improve on the previous continuation) 19 ... $c5!$ 20 $dxc5$ (20 d5?, which might seem to represent the strategically correct way to punish the inconsistency between ... $\mathbb{M}a6$ and ... $c5$, fails tactically to 20 ... $\mathbb{Q}fxd5$) 20 ... $dxc5$ and Black's position, thanks to the intervention of the QR on the sixth rank, is fully defensible.

With the text, White clears the third rank and prepares to assume the initiative on the kingside with the typical manoeuvre of the KN ($\mathbb{Q}f3-h2-g4$) or by advancing the f-pawn.

18 ... $g6$

Now, indirect control of the $\mathbb{M}a6$ on the e6 square makes the text absolutely safe because it thwarts the advance 19 e5 $dxe5$ 20 $dxe5$ followed by the further advance to e6.

19 $f4$

Or 19 $\mathbb{Q}g4$, for example: 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $c5!$ (this advance again) 21 $dxc5$ (here 21 d5? fails to another typical tactical theme: pressure on the e-file, which permits the

simple refutation 21 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$) 21 ... $dxc5$ 22 $e5$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ with equal chances.

The best possibility, however, is 19 $f3!$ preventing the plan which Black will play in the game, reinforcing the centre and freeing White's pieces. For example: 19 ... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 21 $\mathbb{M}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 22 $\mathbb{M}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 23 $\mathbb{W}c1$ and the weakness of Black's pawn structure becomes clear.

19 ... $d5$ (164)



And finally, Black moves on to the implementation of the second stage of the plan he began with his 13th move. In this case, the consequences of this central advance must be calculated with extreme accuracy because they involve the temporary sacrifice of a pawn.

20 e5 $\mathbb{Q}e4!$

Without this move, Black's position would be difficult to hold.

21 $\mathbb{Q}g4$

The key to the defence lies in the fact that after 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $dxe4$ 22

$\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 23 $\mathbb{M}xe4$ $c5!$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ Black wins back the pawn with an excellent position.

21 ... $c5!$ (165)



Black immediately attains another of his goals, this time thanks to the inconspicuous defensive work performed by the QR on the sixth rank.

22 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $dxe4$
23 $dxc5$

Wrong are 23 $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 24 $\mathbb{M}e1$ $f5!$, and 23 $\mathbb{Q}f6+?$ $\mathbb{M}f6!$ 24 $exf6$ $cx d4$ with a decisive advantage for Black in both cases. It is curious to note that in this latter variation, the situation is completely overturned: at the end it is Black who grasps the advantage of a mobile pawn centre!

23 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc5+$
24 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

Retaining the possibility of ... $\mathbb{Q}d3$ as a possible response to the fork on f6.

25 $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{M}xf6$

26 $\mathbb{W}xd8$

After 26 exf6? $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ (not 26 ... $\mathbb{Q}d3?$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ with advantage to White, nor 26 ... $\mathbb{W}xd1?$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 28 $\mathbb{W}xd1!$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ and White wins) 27 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ White cannot avoid the double threat of ... $\mathbb{Q}a4$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ which allows Black to regain the exchange and remain in a superior position.

26 ... $\mathbb{W}xd8$ 27 exf6 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

Now 27 ... $\mathbb{Q}d5?$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ etc. will not work.

28 $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 29 $bxa3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

The ending is balanced after 30 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$, and after 30 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}bb8$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$, for example: 32 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ (33 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$) 33 ... $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 34 $axb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$. Black's handling of the mobile centre in this game is most impressive.

*Game 7***Kasparov-Karpov***Leningrad (game 16) 1986**Zaitsev Variation*

1 e4 e5

2 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ a64 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{E}e1$ b57 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ d6

8 c3 0-0
9 h3 $\mathbb{Q}b7$

The mobile centre may sometimes make an appearance in the Chigorin Variation with ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$, for example: 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 d4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ (or 10 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$, e.g. 11 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$) 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}exd4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}cx4$ d5 13 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ (here 13 e5 does not result in any gain in tempo and, after 13 ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$, Black has excellent prospects) 13 ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and White has but the slightest of advantages.

One possibility that has recently been investigated is the unusual 9 ... a5! As this is a move that often crops up in the mobile centre, it is logical that, as the game develops, Black will frequently aim at this type of centre. Let us look at some possible developments, pointing out, however, that Black's good results may well be related to the element of surprise that has thus far accompanied this variation:

(1) 10 d4 a4 11 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ b4 16 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ and at this point both 16 ... d5 17 e5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$, and 16 ... c5 17 d5 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ look good, with equal prospects in both cases;

(2) 10 a4 b4 11 d4 bxc3 12 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ d5 14 e5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$. Black plans ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ followed by ... c5 and enjoys a sound position.

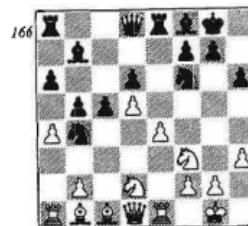
10 d4 $\mathbb{Q}e8$
11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$
12 a4 h6

13 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
14 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$
15 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ c5

The most natural continuation, immediately getting to grips with the newly born centre with a view to removing at least part of its mobility. The alternatives were discussed in the previous game.

16 d5 (166)

Less promising here is 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ above all because Black has not weakened his f6 square by the advance ... g7-g6, so the advance 17 e5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ should prove fairly inoffensive, if not actually premature.



After the text, we have a situation that is typical of the mobile centre: Black has succeeded in partially freezing his enemy's centre pawns and must now worry about keeping an eye on their residual will to expand by exerting sufficient control over the e5 square while at the same time creating his own counterplay as quickly as possible on the queenside.

For his part, White must try to attack on the kingside. He must, in particular, grasp the propitious moment for effecting the breakthrough advance to e5 without which his attack is unlikely to have any weight.

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

This controls e5 and, together with the advance ... c5-c4 aims at the occupation of d3. 16 ... g6 is also possible with the idea blocking the b1-h7 diagonal and occupying the h8-a1 diagonal with the consequent ... $\mathbb{Q}g7$.

17 $\mathbb{Q}a3$

After 17 $\mathbb{Q}f1$, Black can take advantage of the White knight's sluggish manoeuvring to demolish the centre in a moment of comparative passivity for the enemy pieces: 17 ... f5! 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$! (under similar circumstances, it is advisable to keep the f5 pawn blocked to prevent the sudden clearing of the b1-h7 diagonal leading to unforeseen and unpleasant consequences) 19 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ (passive is 19 $\mathbb{Q}d2$?? $\mathbb{Q}bd5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ and Black is preferable) 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}bd5$ with mutual chances and a complex position in which, however, the risks assumed by Black on the kingside seem fully justified by the disintegration of White's centre.

17 ... c4

17 ... f5 is also possible here, but White's pieces are located more actively than in the line mentioned above, so for Black it is more diffi-

cult to find compensation for the weakening of his castled position, for example: 18 exf5 (the interesting 18 $\mathbb{H}ae3$ has also been tried here) 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 19 $\mathbb{A}xe8$ (or 19 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$! $\mathbb{W}xf6$ with a complex position) 19 ... $\mathbb{W}xe8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ and White's position looks more threatening than in the previous note (17 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ f5!).

18 $\mathbb{Q}d4$

A possible alternative is 18 axb5 $\mathbb{A}xb5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ which would have prevented Black's next move.

18 ... $\mathbb{W}f6$!

In the event of 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}e5$? White can achieve practically all his attacking objectives by means of a brilliant sacrifice: 19 axb5 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$! $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 21 $\mathbb{H}g3$ (threatens 22 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ with a devastating attack) 21 ... $\mathbb{A}c8$ 22 b3! $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 23 $\mathbb{A}e3$ and, at the acceptably cheap price of a knight for two pawns, White has deprived his opponent of every target for his counterplay and is now ready to launch a decisive offensive with f2-f4. White's swinging rook is terrifying.

19 $\mathbb{Q}f3$

White would obtain nothing by trying to continue his attack with the aid of pieces alone, because after the intervention of the queen, Black's kingside has become more easily defensible. For example: 19 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 20 $\mathbb{H}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}ed3$ 21 $\mathbb{A}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 22 $\mathbb{H}e3$ $\mathbb{A}xd5$ with advantage to Black.

19 ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$

Black sacrifices his b5 pawn to obtain control of d3 and, as mentioned before, to open lines on the queenside. Also worth considering was 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 20 $\mathbb{A}xd3$ b4 21 $\mathbb{A}xc4$ (after 21 $\mathbb{H}a1$ cxd3 22 $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$

$\mathbb{W}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 32 $\mathbb{H}e3$, and after 28 ... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{D}xe5$ 30 $\mathbb{A}b6$.

The text is a deep defensive move (introduced for the first time in this very game) which involves the sacrifice of the b5 pawn. The most evident idea is to force White to play $\mathbb{Q}2f3$ in order to defend his $\mathbb{Q}d4$, thus preventing the transfer of the QR to the kingside along the third rank and blocking the f-pawn (f2-f4), which might have supported the central breakthrough e4-e5. Apart from pursuing these defensive intentions, 18 ... $\mathbb{W}f6$ aims at counterplay: by way of the sacrifice of the b5 pawn, Black hopes to gain some tempi and prise open the way to the b2 pawn, winning the initiative on the queenside before White has time to effect a central breakthrough.

Another demonstration of White's attacking possibilities can be seen after 18 ... $\mathbb{W}b6$?, for example: 19 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 20 $\mathbb{H}g3$ $\mathbb{A}h7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{A}c8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$! $\mathbb{A}xg7$ 23 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}bd3$ 24 $\mathbb{A}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 25 $\mathbb{H}xg7$! $\mathbb{A}xg7$ 26 $\mathbb{W}xh6$ + $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 27 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 28 $\mathbb{A}d4$ and now White wins after both 28 ... $\mathbb{F}6$ 29 $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{D}xe5$ 31

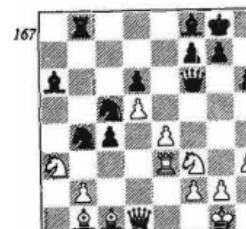
Black has ample compensation for his sacrificed pawn, for example: 23 $\mathbb{W}c4$ a5! etc.) 21 ... $\mathbb{B}xa3$ with mutual chances.

20 $\mathbb{A}xb5$ $\mathbb{A}xb5$
21 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{H}xa3$
22 $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ $\mathbb{A}a6$
23 $\mathbb{H}e3$

This rook can also use the third rank for its journey to the kingside.

23 ... $\mathbb{H}b8$ (167)

23 ... $\mathbb{g}6$? would be quite wrong: 24 $\mathbb{A}d2$! $\mathbb{W}xb2$? 25 $\mathbb{A}c3$ $\mathbb{W}xa3$ 26 $\mathbb{W}d4$ and White wins. On the other hand, 23 ... $\mathbb{Q}bd3$ would appear to be playable, for example: 24 $\mathbb{A}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 25 $\mathbb{A}a4$ $\mathbb{A}ab8$ 26 $\mathbb{A}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 27 $\mathbb{A}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}b1$ + and, although White retains his extra pawn, it is unlikely that this advantage will be enough for victory.



After the text, Black, albeit at the price of a pawn, achieves all the main objectives of counterplay connected with the blockade of the centre deriving from the advance ... c7-c5.

Now it is White who has to find an active way of pursuing the game if he does not want to stand passively by as his opponent takes the initiative.

24 $\mathbb{e}5$!

Kasparov takes advantage of the fact that Black's last move has weakened his control over e5, and achieves the thematic break in the position. Any other road would have doomed White to passivity.

24 ... $\mathbb{d}xe5$
25 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}bd3$?

Natural, so as to activate the rook on the b-file, but the correct move was in fact 25 ... $\mathbb{Q}cd3$! to retain control over the c2 square, as the variation given in the next note will highlight; a possible continuation was: 26 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ (26 ... $\mathbb{W}h4$ also looks playable) 27 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 28 $\mathbb{A}xc2$ $\mathbb{A}d6$! (not 28 ... $\mathbb{W}xd5$? 29 $\mathbb{Q}f6$! $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 30 $\mathbb{H}g3$ + and wins; or 28 ... $\mathbb{A}c5$? 29 $\mathbb{W}f3$! with the double threat of 30 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ followed by $\mathbb{W}g3$ + and 30 $\mathbb{H}e4$) with sufficient compensation for the pawn.

26 $\mathbb{Q}g4$?

Failing to see Black's error. After 26 $\mathbb{W}c2$! White would have defended the f2 pawn and attacked the c4-pawn. After 26 ... $\mathbb{H}a4$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (obviously not 27 $\mathbb{Q}axc4$? $\mathbb{A}xc4$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{A}xc4$ 29 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xf2$ + and wins) 27 ... $\mathbb{E}b7$ 28 $\mathbb{H}e8$ Black is very much on the defensive.

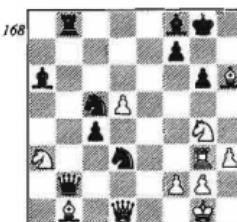
26 ... $\mathbb{W}b6$

Not 26 ... $\mathbb{W}d4?$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}c2 \mathbb{W}xd5$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ and wins.

27 $\mathbb{B}g3$ $\mathbb{g}6!?$

Black feels he is master of the situation and, with great sang-froid, gives up his b-pawn so as to complete the siege of the b-pawn. 27 ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ would have entailed fewer risks.

28 $\mathbb{A}xh6$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ (168)



Considering that after 29 $\mathbb{A}xd3$ $\mathbb{C}xd3$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}a1$ the execution of the $\mathbb{Q}a3$ appears to be inevitable (the main threat is 31 ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$) White would appear to be on his knees. But Kasparov finds safety by leaving the knight to its fate.

29 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7!?$

Black notices that 29 ... $\mathbb{W}xa3$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{W}h5$ 31 $\mathbb{W}h5!$ $\mathbb{R}b1+$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}c1+$ (32 $\mathbb{Q}h2?$ $\mathbb{K}h1+$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xh1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$ and wins) 32 ... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ would have led to perpetual check so, with the text, he boldly seeks another route to the win.

30 $\mathbb{A}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$

31 $\mathbb{Q}h2!!$

The key to the defence: White prevents a capture on b1 with *check* and at the same time sets up the double threat of 32 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ (which, without the text, would have been refuted by ... $\mathbb{W}c1+$) and 32 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{R}xc4$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$.

31 ... $\mathbb{R}b3$

Thwarting both threats, Black continues to hope that, sooner or later, he will be able to send the $\mathbb{Q}a3$ to its doom.

32 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{C}xd3$

After 32 ... $\mathbb{R}xa3$ 33 $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{R}xd3$ 34 $\mathbb{W}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 35 $\mathbb{W}xd7$ $\mathbb{R}xg3$ 36 $\mathbb{R}fxg3$, it does not appear that either player can win. Kasparov himself proposes: 36 ... $\mathbb{A}b7!$ 37 $\mathbb{h}4!$ $\mathbb{A}a8!$ 38 $\mathbb{W}d8$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ 39 $\mathbb{W}xa8$ $\mathbb{W}xg4$ 40 $\mathbb{W}a1+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8!$ with equality.

Karpov is still hoping for the full point but pride goes before a fall...

33 $\mathbb{W}f4$

A move which suddenly throws light on the weakness of Black's king. Now it is Black who has to find a way to safety.

33 ... $\mathbb{W}xa3??$

In time-trouble, Black pays the highest of prices for his decisions at the 27th and 29th moves. He had to play 33 ... $d1\mathbb{W}$, for example: 34 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}f6!$ 35 $\mathbb{W}d6+$ (but not 35 $\mathbb{W}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ 36 $\mathbb{W}xd7?$ $\mathbb{W}f6!$ and Black promotes) 35 ... $\mathbb{A}e8$ (35 ... $\mathbb{Q}g7?$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 37 $\mathbb{W}f8$ and wins) 36 $\mathbb{W}xa6$ $\mathbb{W}xa3$ (safer than 36 ... $d1\mathbb{W}$ to which Kasparov indicates the

swashbuckling continuation 37 $\mathbb{W}a8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}ba1$ 39 $\mathbb{W}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 40 $\mathbb{W}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ — 41 ... $\mathbb{R}gf5?$ 42 $\mathbb{W}d6+$ and wins — 42 $\mathbb{W}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 43 $\mathbb{W}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 44 $\mathbb{R}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 45 $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 46 $\mathbb{R}f3$ considering it favourable to White, although after 46 ... $\mathbb{W}xd5$ nothing seems to justify this opinion) 37 $\mathbb{W}e2+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 38 $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{R}xg3$ 39 $\mathbb{R}fxg3$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 40 $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{W}xf4$ 41 $\mathbb{R}gf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ with equality, owing to the threat of immobilizing

the white knight by ... $f5$.

34 $\mathbb{Q}h6$

Now this move forces the win.

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

35 $\mathbb{R}xg6$ $\mathbb{W}e5$

36 $\mathbb{B}g8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$

37 $d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

38 $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$

39 $\mathbb{R}xe5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

40 $d7$ $\mathbb{R}b8$

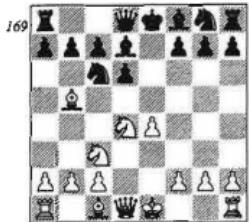
41 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$

1 - 0

5 The Little Centre

Main line: Steinitz Variation

1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5 d6 4 d4 ♜d7 5 ♜c3 exd4 6 ♜xd4 (169).



This type of centre, characterized by the exchange ... exd4 and by White's recapturing on d4 with a piece, is commonly known as the 'little' centre. It may crop up in various lines when Black has taken steps to release the pressure on the a4-e8 diagonal with the usual advances ... a6 and ... b5, and also when the c-file has been opened following the moves c3 c5, d4 exd4, exd4. At times, though much more rarely, this same central configuration can arise after the exchange dxe5, if Black

recaptures on e5 with a piece and the structure is not modified further.

Let us look at a few examples of the variations that most frequently lead to the little centre: 1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5 a6 4 ♜a4 ♜f5 0-0 ♜e7 6 ♜el b5 7 ♜b3 d6 8 c3 0-0-0 h3 and now:

Smyslov Variation

— 9 ... h6 10 d4 ♜e8 11 ♜bd2 ♜f8 12 a3 ♜b7 13 ♜c2 ♜b8 14 b4 (or 14 b3 ♜bd7 15 ♜b2 c6 16 c4 exd4 17 ♜xd4) 14 ... ♜bd7 15 ♜b2 g6 16 c4 exd4 17 cxb5 (or 17 ♜xd4) 17 ... axb5 18 ♜xd4

Chigorin Variation with ... ♜a5

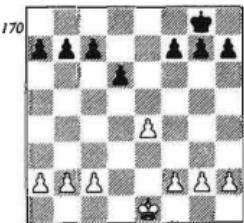
— 9 ... ♜a5 10 ♜c2 c5 11 d4 ♜d7 12 ♜bd2 cxd4 13 cxd4 ♜c6 14 ♜f1 (or 14 ♜b3 a5 15 ♜e3 a4 16 ♜bd2 exd4 17 ♜xd4) 14 ... exd4 15 ♜d4

— 9 ... ♜a5 10 ♜c2 c5 11 d4 ♜c7 12 ♜bd2 cxd4 13 cxd4 ♜d7 14 ♜f1 ♜ac8 15 ♜e3 ♜c6 (or 15 ... ♜fe8 16 b3 exd4 17 ♜xd4) 16 a3 (or 16 dx5 ♜xe5 17 ♜d4) 16 ... ♜xd4 17 ♜xd4 exd4 18 ♜xd4

Or: 1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5 and now:

Steinitz Variation

— 3 ... d6 4 d4 ♜d7 (or 4 ... exd4 5 ♜xd4) 5 ♜c3 ♜f6 6 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 7 ♜d3 exd4 8 ♜xd4
— 3 ... ♜f6 4 0-0 d5 d4 ♜d7 6 ♜c3 ♜e7 (or 6 ... exd4 7 ♜xd4) 7 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 8 ♜e1 exd4 9 ♜xd4



Steinitz Variation Deferred

— 3 ... a6 4 ♜a4 d6 5 ♜xc6 (or 5 ♜d7 6 d4 exd4 7 ♜xd4) 5 ... bxcc6 6 d4 exd4 7 ♜xd4

Taimanov Variation

— 3 ... a6 4 ♜a4 b5 5 ♜b3 ♜a5 6 0-0 d7 6 d4 exd4 8 ♜xd4

Other Variations

— 3 ... ♜ge7 4 d4 exd4 5 ♜xd4

1 Strategic Ideas

From a purely strategic viewpoint, the capture ... exd4 represents a slight concession on Black's part (even when his opponent is only able to recapture on d4 with a piece rather than a pawn): Black has lost the fight created by the tension in the centre outlined in the first chapter. If we only examine the structure, it can be clearly seen that the exchange of centre pawns is favourable to White (170).

White's surviving centre pawn, in fact, is more advanced than that of his opponent and consequently guarantees a certain space advantage and greater freedom of manoeuvre. The action of the e4 pawn, then, is particularly noticeable on the d5 and f5 squares, both of which are weak for strategic reasons, one because the advance ... c7-c6 makes the d6 pawn pseudo-backward and the other because the inevitable presence of the black king on g8 makes it safe to play ... g7-g6 only when the black dark-squared bishop is ready to take possession of the long diagonal h8-a1.

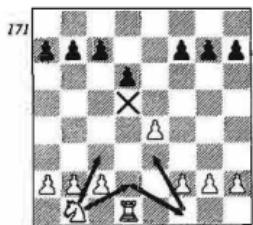
From the dynamic viewpoint, on the other hand, the capture ... exd4 can be understood as the first stage in a plan aimed at the total demolition of the White centre, which would continue with the elimination of the strong e4 pawn by a freeing advance ... d5 or ... f5. Capturing on d4 releases great energy: down the e-file and along the h8-a1 diagonal. It

should be added, however, that the disappearance of the e5 pawn confers *de facto* a certain drive on the e4 pawn, a 'lust to expand' as Nimzowitsch put it.

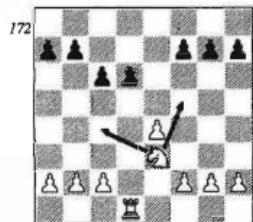
In fact, it is worth noting Nimzowitsch's thoughts on this type of pawn structure. The exact position he discusses arises from the Scotch (1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 3 d4 exd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$) but the basic structure is the same. In *My System* Nimzowitsch says: 'Such a pawn [as the e4 pawn] must be either executed or be put under restraint. Accordingly we condemn the criminal either to death or to imprisonment for life. Or we can pleasantly combine the two ...' As is the case with the mobile centre, in spite of White's superficially better structure, the struggle is highly uncertain.

The outpost d5 and the d-file

As we have said, one immediate consequence of the disappearance of the e5 and d4 pawns is represented by a marked weakening of the d5 square, the occupation of which becomes a strategic objective of primary importance for White. In the main, this task is performed by the QN, either directly with $\mathbb{Q}b1-c3-d5$ or, when this is not possible, by pursuing the classical 'Spanish' route $\mathbb{Q}b1-d2-f1-e3-d5$ (171).

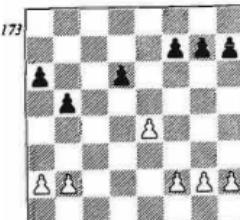


In order to sustain the position of the $\mathbb{Q}d5$, White must be careful to exert pressure on the d-file so as to be able, in case his opponent decides to shake off the unwanted guest by ... $c7-c6$, to exert immediate pressure against the d6 pawn which has become pseudo-backward (172).



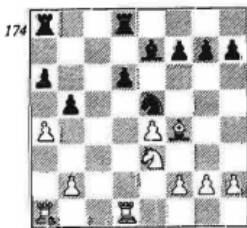
It goes without saying that the attack against d6 can be reinforced by re-positioning the knight ($\mathbb{Q}d5-e3-f5$ or $\mathbb{Q}d5-e3-c4$) or by doubling the heavy pieces on the d-file and placing the dark-squared bishop on the h2-b8 diagonal.

The weakness of the d5 square and that of the d6 pawn are even more immediate and evident when Black is induced to make the advance ... $c5$ or chooses to play it during persisting tension in the centre, in which case the formation of the little centre could only appear after the customary opening of the c-file (173).



It is clear that Black can accept such structural inferiority only if the counterplay he has developed on the queenside, down the c-file, and down the e-file, is such as to guarantee him sufficient dynamic compensation.

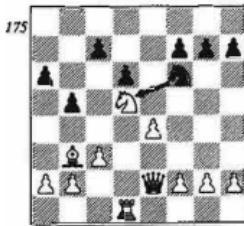
Finally, it should be said that the d6 pawn can prove to be a much more difficult target than it seems at first sight. In fact, Black can defend it directly with his KB and his KR and can block the h2-b8 diagonal and augment surveillance on the c4 square by playing a knight to e5 (174).



Such measures are quite enough to ward off a first assault on the d6 pawn, so White should not place too much faith in his structural superiority, because it could prove more difficult to bring to fruition than, for example, possible Black counterplay down the c-file.

Returning to the d5 square, it should be pointed out that, in the normal course of events, Black cannot hold out for long and without damage if an enemy knight has taken root there because this further cramps his pieces and can favour possible attacking operations by White on the kingside. If he cannot, or does not want to resort to the advance ... $c7-c6$, Black usually decides to eliminate the physical presence of the intruder by exchanging it off with his KN (175).

White can recapture on d5 with either his e4 pawn or with a piece, depending on the circumstances. Recapturing with the pawn may prove advantageous, if he can exploit the



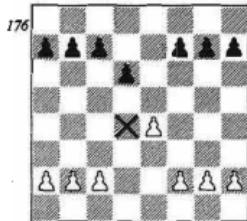
b1-h7 diagonal to unleash an attack against the enemy's castled position; or when he can profit from the space advantage that he thus acquires in the centre-queenside sector.

Recapturing with the piece, on the other hand, pursues the policy of exploiting the weak square d5, and, in this regard, it should be said that although the knight is the piece best suited to occupy such an outpost, a bishop or a rook on that square could also exert irritating pressure.

Finally, it should be pointed out that White only rarely decides to prevent the simplification ... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ by resorting to a trade-off of his dark-squared bishop for his opponent's KN ($\mathbb{A}c1-g5xf6$) — as happens with some frequency in the exchange centre — because here the complete yielding up of the black squares in general and the long diagonal h8-a1 in particular (following the possible recapture ... $\mathbb{A}e7xf6$) can be highly detrimental.

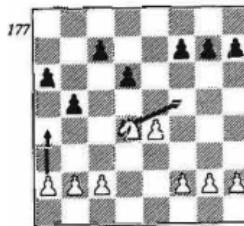
The centralization square d4 and the long diagonal a1-h8

As well as using the d5 square as an outpost, White can also use d4 to effectively centralize a piece (176).



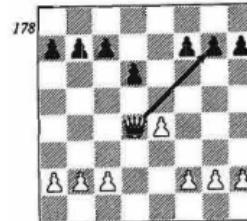
In fact, as in the case of the d5 square, Black can acquire control of the d4 square only by advancing his c7 pawn. This decision, however, would have even more negative effects than those shown in diagram 172: after ... c5 the d6 pawn would be left backward and fixed, and the d5 square would find itself chronically weakened. Although the outpost on d4 is less advanced than that on d5, the constant presence of a white piece on it can be equally annoying for Black (177).

In the specific case of a knight, for example, White can make use of it for exerting pressure against the b5 pawn (in connection with the



advance a2-a4) and for cooperating in an attack on the kingside, with the powerful $\mathbb{Q}d4-f5$.

When, on the other hand, the queen finds herself in a centralized position (at times following the exchange of a pair of knights on d4, at times directly after the trading off of the central pawns), her attacking influence is particularly noticeable along the long diagonal a1-h8 (178).



The pressure against g7 can prove particularly insidious both when Black has already castled and when he still has to mobilize his forces on

the kingside. In the first case, the queen's actions may prove decisive for the purposes of an attack against the castled position, for instance in combination with a knight on f5; in the second case, he can, by preventing mobilization of the $\mathbb{A}f8$, hamper his opponent's development considerably.

Finally, it should be observed that White can also try to occupy the long diagonal with his QB, either centralizing it on d4 or, more frequently, resorting to the fianchetto by b3 and $\mathbb{A}b2$.

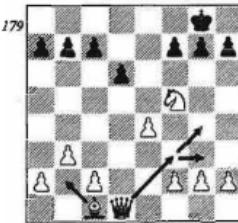
Black should think very carefully before making such structurally compromising moves as ... c5 or ... f6, in order to drive a piece out of the centre or to reduce the pressure. There are two better solutions:

- 1) exchanging pieces in the centre;
- 2) attempting to control the long diagonal himself by an immediate kingside fianchetto, or, if he has already opted for the development ... $\mathbb{A}e7$ and ... 0-0, by operating the typical manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{A}e8$, ... $\mathbb{A}f8$, ... $\mathbb{g}6$ and ... $\mathbb{A}g7$.

The outpost f5 and kingside attacking plans

As we had occasion to say at the start of this chapter, the constant presence of the black king on g8 accentuates the strategic weakness of f5, a factor

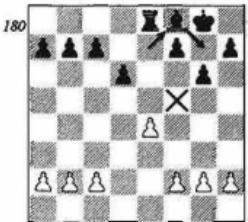
which, moreover, constitutes a constant theme in the types of centre we have looked at thus far. As normal, White will try to establish a knight on the square and, from there, it will play a decisive part in orchestrating all kinds of attacks against the enemy's castled position (179).



It is easy to see that, when combined with the transfer of the queen to the g-file (see chapters 2 and 3), or occupation of the long diagonal, violent piece attacks on the kingside can arise. It should not be forgotten that the knight on f5 can also apply pressure to the d6 pawn, if it has been weakened by the advance of the pawn on c7 (see diagram 172). It should also be remembered that in this type of centre, a white knight can reach f5 not only via the classic Spanish route Qb1-d2-f1-e3-(g3)-f5 but also directly — by way of d4 — following the exchange of the centre pawns.

In view of this, it is logical that in the little centre, Black will often

resolve to protect f5 by means of ... g7-g6, which may take place in a more or less advanced stage of the opening, but which, in any case, is the prelude to the development or to the typical re-positioning of the dark-squared bishop to g7 (180).



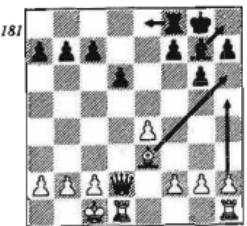
Note that with this manoeuvre, Black attains four different objectives at the same time: he protects his f5 square; gains control of the long h8-a1 diagonal; frees his rook for action against the e4 pawn; and compensates for the weakness in the f6 and h6 squares that the advance ... g7-g6 has created.

A strategy of this kind can have two main drawbacks:

(1) it makes it very difficult to defend the d6 pawn if the advance of the c7 pawn becomes necessary (or indeed if it has already been advanced) — see diagram 174;

(2) it may inspire White to launch an attacking plan based on opposite-side castling and the rapid

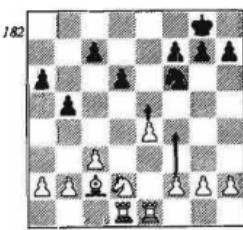
advance of the h-pawn, particularly when Black has opted for the developing move ... $\mathbb{A}g7$ at an early stage of the opening (181).



In this case, Black must be ready to evade the exchange of bishops by removing his KR in time to permit the withdrawal ... $\mathbb{A}h8$. It is vital to preserve the bishop, not only for its great attacking potential, but to maintain control of the weakened squares around the king.

The dynamism of the e4 pawn and the trade-off $\mathbb{A}xc6$

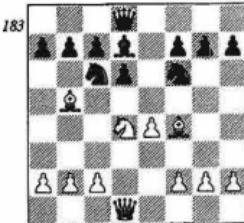
As with the mobile centre, the disappearance of the e5 pawn makes it possible to break through with the e4 pawn. The aims that White can pursue with the e4-e5 breakthrough are varied and actually not too dissimilar to those we pointed out in the previous chapter (182).



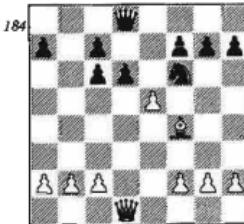
The clearance of the b1-h7 diagonal, the e4 square and the centre files, together with, possibly, the removal of an important defender of Black's castled position and/or the fixing of the f6 square (where the advance ... g7-g6 has been played) are all elements we have already encountered in the mobile centre. Here, the central breakthrough is different not so much with respect to the objectives themselves but in the techniques of achieving them.

In fact, whereas in the mobile centre the advance to e5 is structurally supported by the d4 pawn, here it is possible to achieve a similar situation only if White supports it with the advance f2-f4.

However, it is more often the case that White does without the supporting advance f2-f4, but instead employs tactical methods to force through e4-e5. The most common themes are grouped together artificially in the following example (183).

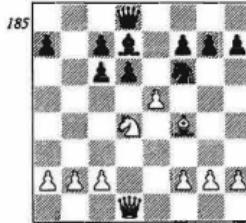


Here White is not in a position to push his e-pawn immediately because his opponent controls the e5 square twice. To achieve the central breakthrough, he does not hesitate to yield the bishop pair by playing $\mathbb{A}xc6$, so as to exploit the pin on the d6 pawn along the d-file in the event of ... $\mathbb{A}xc6$, $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxc6$, $e5$ (184)



... or simply split Black's pawns after ... $bxc6$, $e5$ (185).

We note, in fact, that the presence of the $\mathbb{A}f4$ is not indispensable in diagram 184 whereas it is fundamental in 185.

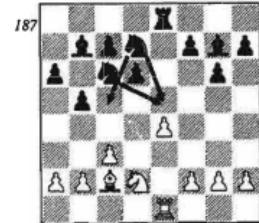
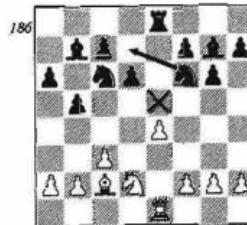


Black need not be too concerned about the doubling of his pawns on c6. In the short term, this strategic alteration can actually be favourable to him because he controls d5 and is able to keep an eye on d4 with ... $c6-c5$ without weakening the d6 pawn. It also offers a line of counterplay on the queenside if a game with opposing castled positions transpires, along the lines of diagram 181.

The blocking square e5 and pressure against the e4 pawn

To curtail the energy of the e4 pawn, Black has only one weapon: to keep a firm grip on the e5 square. This strategy, however, must not be understood as containment pure and simple because in that case White can play the advance f2-f4 and then, exploiting his space advantage, calmly deploy his troops in readiness for the central breakthrough.

So Black must not only concentrate on controlling e5, but also try to exert pressure on e4 to tie down some of White's pieces to its defence (186).



Both knights can easily get to e5, the KN by way of d7, though from there it might be even better to transfer it to c5 so as to continue the pressure against e4.

The transformation of the centre: the freeing advances ... d5 and ... f5

In this example, Black has concentrated three pieces against e4, and is virtually defending e5 five times (after ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$). Under such circumstances, the advance f2-f4 may even prove dangerous for White because, by removing the option of the supporting advance f2-f3, he effectively weakens the e4 pawn which remains pseudo-backward, fixed and placed on a half-open file.

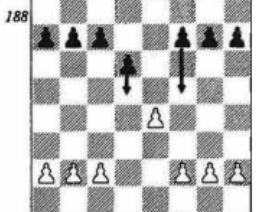
If Black has set up enough pressure against e4, he often tries to provoke White into playing f2-f4 by occupying e5 (188).

The task of occupying e5 is best given to a knight, which from there can also take part in possible attacking operations on the kingside (see, for example, the tactical ideas: 'The combinative ability of the $\mathbb{Q}e5'$).

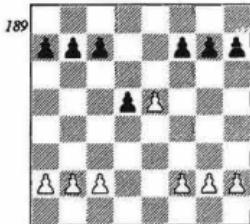
Another target for the defender, as we said at the beginning of the chapter, is to terminate the work of demolishing the white centre begun by ... $exd4$, also eliminating the e4 pawn by the freeing advance ... d5 or ... f5 (188).

Black must pay a great deal of attention when implementing such a strategy because both freeing advances imply positional risks.

The advance ... f5 can involve problems of safety for the king, while the ... d5-d5 advance may be incorrect in two cases, above all: when White becomes more active



after the exchange of pawns, or when the counter-advance e4-e5 gives him an advantageous position (189).



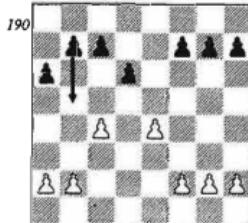
The pawn structure, owing to the presence of mutual majorities in opposing sectors, is practically a mirror image. Therefore the assessment of individual positions depends wholly on the specific placing of the pieces of both sides.

Normally, Black obtains a good game when his forces are arranged in such a way as to allow him to destroy the e5 pawn by means of the freeing

advance ... f7-f6. If the pawn is maintained on e5, then White may be able to use it as a spearhead for a kingside attack.

The prophylactic advance c2-c4

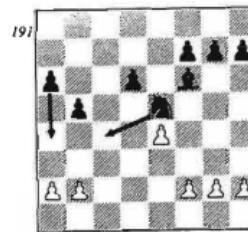
White may find it necessary to prevent ... d5 by playing c4 before Black has played ... b7-b5 (190).



Under such conditions, Black usually tries to loosen White's hold on d5 by playing ... b7-b5 anyway.

The outpost c4 and pressure on the b2 pawn

When the c-file has been opened, Black can often make use of the c4 square. A knight supported at this outpost by the b5 pawn, and perhaps secured by the advance ... a5-a4, can set up strong pressure against the b2 pawn (191).



This plan is based on ideas that are identical to those, examined in the previous chapter, regarding occupying d3 within a mobile centre structure that has developed by ... c7-c5, d4-d5 and ... c5-c4.

2 Tactical Ideas

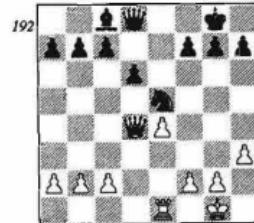
Many of the tactical weapons that occur in the little centre have already been examined in other types of centre, so here we merely refer the reader to the appropriate sections and then look at the only tactical idea peculiar to this type of centre.

The tactical themes already encountered that can sometimes also occur in the little centre are: 'Indirect defence of the e4 pawn' and 'The exposed position of White's light-squared bishop' (see Chapter 1), 'The undefended position of the $\mathbb{W}d7$ ' (see Chapter 2), 'The weakness of the a2-g8 diagonal' (see

Chapter 3), 'The pressure on the long diagonal h8-a1' (see Chapter 4) and we would ask the reader to refer to these.

The combinative ability of the $\mathbb{Q}e5$

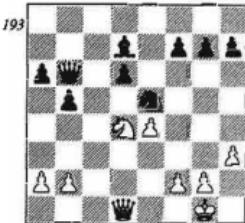
When a knight is strongly centralized on e5, combinations can naturally arise (see diagrams 174 and 187). A fork on f3 is worth watching out for (192).



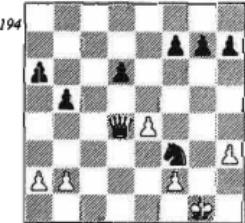
Black plays ... $\mathbb{A}xh3$ winning a pawn: White is unable to recapture with $\mathbb{g}xh3$ owing to ... $\mathbb{Q}f3+$. The intermediate f4 fails to ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ when Black gains a tempo and thus saves both pieces.

It should be noted that White, with the move in the position shown in diagram 192, can thwart the threat by employing a standard tactical resource: he can play $\mathbb{E}d1$ so as to answer ... $\mathbb{A}xh3?$ with $\mathbb{W}xe5$ exploiting the pressure on the d-file.

The same theme can also crop up in rather more sophisticated ways (193).



Here, for example, ... $\mathbb{A}xh3!$ is again possible because after $gxh3$ (if $f4 \mathbb{B}g4$) there would follow ... $\mathbb{W}xd4!$, $\mathbb{W}xd4 \mathbb{Q}f3+(194)$



... whereupon Black recovers all his material with the gain of a pawn.

3 Illustrative games

Game 8

Timman-Spassky

Linares 1983

Steinitz Variation Deferred

1 e4 e5

2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

3 $\mathbb{B}b5$ a6

With the text, Black prepares to chase away the bishop from the a4-e8 diagonal by advancing his queen-side pawns. Considering that the advances ... a7-a6 and ... b7-b5 can, on occasion, leave Black's queen-side vulnerable, the alternative 3 ... d6 (or 3 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4 0-0 d6) — namely the Steinitz Variation — although no longer much played today, has great theoretical importance. The line was once very popular and even today it is held to be a fundamentally sound, if rather passive, defence. Let us look at a few developments of this historic variation:

(1) 3 ... d6 4 d4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (it is almost never in Black's interest to release the tension at such an early stage; here, for example, the immediate 4 ... exd4 permits White to centralize his queen very powerfully: 5 $\mathbb{W}xd4 \mathbb{Q}d7$ 6 $\mathbb{A}xc6$ $\mathbb{A}xc6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 8 $\mathbb{A}g5$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 9 0-0-0 and White's position is more promising) 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ exd4 (for 5 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ see the note in brackets to Black's fifth move in the second continuation) 6 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ g6 7 0-0 (also

interesting is the more fighting 7 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{A}g7$ 8 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 9 $\mathbb{A}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 10 $\mathbb{A}h6$) 7 ... $\mathbb{A}g7$ 8 $\mathbb{A}xc6$ (this exchange has the aim of preparing the central breakthrough with e4-e5) 8 ... $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 9 $\mathbb{A}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10 $\mathbb{A}f4$ (threatening 11 e5) 10 ... c5 11 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ f6 12 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ and White is better, although Black enjoys a very sound position.

(2) 3 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4 0-0 d6 5 d4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (this move order is more accurate than 3 ... d6 4 d4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ which enables White to castle queenside by playing 6 $\mathbb{A}xc6!$ $\mathbb{A}xc6$ 7 $\mathbb{W}d3$ exd4 — Black is forced to give ground prematurely — 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 $\mathbb{A}g5$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 10 0-0-0 0-0 11 f4 when White has a dominating position) 6 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ (once again, yielding of the centre would be premature: 6 ... exd4 7 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 8 $\mathbb{A}f4?$ 0-0-0 $\mathbb{A}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 10 e5 and White has the initiative) 7 $\mathbb{A}xc6$ $\mathbb{A}xc6$ 8 $\mathbb{A}e1$ exd4 9 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 b3 0-0-11 $\mathbb{A}b2$ and White preserves just a tiny advantage.

Another variation in which Black tries to omit the advances ... a7-a6 and ... b7-b5 is 3 ... $\mathbb{Q}ge7$, for which see the note to Black's third move in Game 6.

4 $\mathbb{A}a4$ d6

In the Taimanov Variation, 4 ... b5 5 $\mathbb{A}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ Black makes sure of the elimination of the dangerous light-squared white bishop, but his abandonment of the e5 point forces him to enter the little centre at perhaps

too early a stage in the game. One continuation might be: 6 0-0 d6 7 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (threatens ... c5-c4; on the other hand, after 8 ... $\mathbb{A}b7$ there would follow 9 $\mathbb{A}d2$ c5 10 $\mathbb{A}d5$ $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 11 exd5 $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}e1+$ and White recovers the piece with a clear advantage) 9 $\mathbb{A}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 10 $\mathbb{A}xb3$ g6 11 $\mathbb{A}e1$ $\mathbb{A}g7$ 12 $\mathbb{A}c3$ (a typical theme of the little centre: the struggle for the long diagonal a1-h8) and now Black cannot stop the threat of 13 $\mathbb{A}e6$ with the natural 12 ... $\mathbb{A}f6?$ because after 13 e5 White obtains a crushing position.

5 $\mathbb{A}xc6+$

White gives up the bishop pair, but damages Black's pawn structure.

5 c2-c4 is another possibility. This aims at a complete clamp on the centre before setting up the little centre. It has the drawback of allowing simplification at too early a stage in the game, for example: 5 ... $\mathbb{A}d7$ 6 d4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 8 $\mathbb{A}xd7+$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 9 $\mathbb{W}xd7$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ 10 $\mathbb{A}c3$ $\mathbb{A}b2$ $\mathbb{A}f8$ 0-0-0 12 b3 $\mathbb{A}fe8$ 13 $\mathbb{A}b2$ $\mathbb{A}f8$ with an even game: the exchanges have eased the congestion in Black's position.

For 5 c3 see the notes to Black's sixth move in Games 3 and 6 and to Black's fourth move in Game 4, while for 5 d4 see the note to Black's fourth move in Game 1.

5 ... $\mathbb{A}xc6$
6 d4 $\mathbb{A}xd4$

Black has an unpleasant choice: should he give up the strong-point at e5, or reinforce the centre with the slightly ugly 6 ... f6? Praxis has shown that 6 ... f6 favours White, e.g. 7 $\mathbb{A}e3 \mathbb{Q}e7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}c3 \mathbb{Q}g6$ 9 $\mathbb{W}e2 \mathbb{A}d7$ 10 $\mathbb{h}4$ h5 11 dx5 fx5 12 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ followed by queenside castling.

7 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ c5 (195)

195



Black exploits an advantage of double pawns on the c-file: he can control d4 without weakening the d6 pawn. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the opening of the b-file can also turn out to be useful, especially when the players castle on opposite sides, as this game demonstrates.

8 $\mathbb{W}d3$ g6

8 ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is also possible, with the idea of transferring the knight to c6 or g6 and of developing the KB to e7.

9 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{A}g7$

10 $\mathbb{A}f4$

One interesting alternative, so as to impede Black's piece play, is 10

$\mathbb{A}g5$ f6 11 $\mathbb{A}f4$ (after 11 $\mathbb{A}b4 \mathbb{Q}e7$ 12 0-0-0 $\mathbb{A}e6!$ — wrong is 12 ... 0-0? 13 e5! fxe5 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ etc. — and Black has a good game) with a position that has, however, not yet been sufficiently tried in practice.

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

11 0-0-0 (196)

196



A sharp decision requiring precise play. 11 $\mathbb{W}d2$ 0-0 12 $\mathbb{A}b6$, trading off Black's dangerous bishop, was more flexible. White can decide later where best to place his king.

11 ... 0-0

Black has to take up the gauntlet.

12 $\mathbb{W}d2$

The immediate 12 e5? (positionally, a logical move, attempting to isolate the doubled c-pawns) shows how strong Black's counterplay can be in this kind of position: 12 ... $\mathbb{A}f5$ 13 $\mathbb{W}d2 \mathbb{Q}c6!$ 14 exd6 exd6 and now after 15 $\mathbb{W}xd6 \mathbb{W}a5!$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xc6 \mathbb{A}xc3$ 17 bxc3 $\mathbb{A}ac8!$ (with the idea of 18 $\mathbb{W}f6 \mathbb{W}a4$), and after 15 $\mathbb{A}xd6 \mathbb{Q}d4$ 16 $\mathbb{A}xc5$ (or 16 $\mathbb{A}xf8 \mathbb{W}xf8$ 17

$\mathbb{Q}xd4$ cxd4 18 $\mathbb{Q}e2 \mathbb{A}c8$) 16 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc2$, in spite of the material advantage, White has an extremely difficult position. Beware Black's bishops!

12 ... $\mathbb{A}e8$

Black cannot permit the exchange of his fianchettoed bishop.

13 $\mathbb{A}h6?$

White throws himself into a king-side attack, but he has underestimated the ferocity of Black's counterplay. He should have gone for the classic central break 13 e5. Black will probably have to give up a pawn, but he can hope that his bishops will give him good counterplay. 13 ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ looks dubious: 14 $\mathbb{A}g5$ f6 (14 ... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ and $\mathbb{Q}f6+$) 15 exf6 $\mathbb{A}xf6$ 16 $\mathbb{A}xf6 \mathbb{W}xf6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d5$; but 13 ... $\mathbb{A}b7$ or 13 ... $\mathbb{A}g4$ look better.

13 ... $\mathbb{A}h8$

14 h4 $\mathbb{A}b8$

15 $\mathbb{A}b3$

It is only now that White realizes the surprising strength of Black's counterattack. After 15 h5 there would follow 15 ... c6! (threatening ... $\mathbb{W}b6$) and White is hard pressed to defend his king's position, for example: 16 $\mathbb{Q}a4 \mathbb{B}b4$ 17 b3 $\mathbb{A}xa4!$ 18 bxa4 $\mathbb{W}b6$ and Black has a very strong attack. The purpose of the text is to prevent ... $\mathbb{B}b4$, but at the same time it sends out a first, clear signal that White has been excessively optimistic on his 13th move.

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

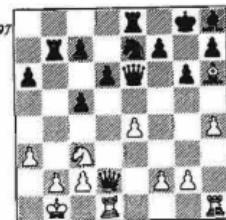
This completes Black's development and paves the way for a possible manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{W}c8-b7$.

16 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}c8$

17 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$

18 $\mathbb{A}b1$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ (197)

197



While White's attack marks time, Black's counterplay develops with unexpected simplicity.

19 $\mathbb{A}a1$ $\mathbb{B}eb8$

20 $\mathbb{A}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Now all Black's pieces take part in the siege on the white king.

21 f4 $\mathbb{A}d4$

21 ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ would have permitted 22 f5 $\mathbb{W}e5$ 23 $\mathbb{A}f4$.

22 $\mathbb{W}d3$

Now, after 22 f5 $\mathbb{W}e5$ 23 $\mathbb{A}f4$ $\mathbb{A}xc3$ Black wins.

22 ... a5

23 $\mathbb{W}h3$ f5

24 $\mathbb{A}he1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$

'Crunch'.

25 axb4 axb4

26 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{A}a7$

27	WB3	c4
28	Wa2	Bba8
29	exf5	Bxa4

0 - 1

Game 9**Timman-Romanishin**

Wijk aan Zee 1985

Chigorin Variation with ... Qa5

1	e4	e5
2	Qf3	Qc6
3	Ab5	a6
4	Aa4	Qf6
5	0-0	Le7
6	El1	b5
7	Ab3	d6
8	c3	0-0
9	b3	Qa5

The little centre can also arise from the Smyslov Variation, for example: 9 ... h6 10 d4 Le8 11 Qbd2 Ab8 12 a3 (for the alternatives 12 Ac2 and 12 Qf1 Ab7 — 12 ... Ad7 see the continuation to Game 4 — and for comment on the Smyslov Variation in general, see the notes to Black's ninth move in Game 2) 12 ... Ab7 13 Ac2 Qbd8 14 b4 (or 14 b3 Qbd7 15 Ab2 c6 — prevents d5 — 16 c4 exd4 17 Axd4 g6 18 Wb1? and White retains a slight superiority) 14 ... Qbd7 15 Ab2 g6 16 c4 (16 Wb1 was considered in Game 2) 16 ... exd4 (at this point Black decides to set up the little centre to stop his opponent closing the position under favourable circumstances; White would in fact be ready to exploit the

opening of the c-file and the weakness of the a5 and c6 squares as well as continuing to advance his c-pawn) 17 cxb5 (the pawn sacrifice 17 Axd4 bxc4 18 Qxc4 Axa4 19 Aa4 has also been tried, but in our opinion this does not promise sufficient dynamic compensation) 17 ... axb5 18 Qxd4 c6 19 a4 (the continuation 19 Ad3 Ag7 20 Ac1 Wb6 21 Ab3 is also very interesting; Black's centre pawns are kept in check by keeping pressure on c6 and b5) 19 ... bxa4 20 Axa4 Wb6 with mutual chances.

10	Ac2	c5
11	d4	Qc6

The text move is perfectly logical: the knight protects the e5 pawn and augments the pressure on d4.

The most frequently played line of the Chigorin Variation is, however, 11 ... Wc7, which can also lead to the formation of the little centre, for example: 12 Qbd2 cxd4 (the interpolation of this exchange gives Black more chances of counterplay, particularly as a result of the opening of the c-file) 13 cxd4 Ad7 (for 13 ... Ab7 see the note to Black's ninth move in Game 3, and for 13 ... Qc6 see line 2f of the note to Black's ninth move in Game 5) 14 Qf1 Ac8 15 Qe3 (15 Ae2 is an interesting possibility, while 15 Ad3 Qc6 16 Ac3 exd4 17 Qxd4 Qe5! 18 Ac2 d5! seems to give Black at least comfortable equality) 15 ... Qc6 (after 15 ... Wfe8 16 b3 exd4 17 Qxd4 Ab8 18

Ab2 Wd8 — if 18 ... Qxe4? 19 Qd5 and wins — 19 Qdf5 White has a superior position because he has achieved many of the objectives typical of the little centre: occupation of f5, pressure on the weak pawn on d6, control of the long diagonal a1-h8 and the mobility of the e4 pawn; it follows that in this line of play, the decision taken by Black on his 16th move is at the very least premature) 16 a3?! (with the idea of threatening the advance d4-d5, having thwarted the response ... Ab4 but, as we shall see, Black can enter a little centre structure under favourable circumstances; for 16 dxe5 dxe5 see line 2f of the note to Black's ninth move in Game 5, while on 16 ... Qxe5, interesting is 17 Qd4; on the other hand, the immediate 16 d5 would have produced a blocked centre) 16 ... Qxd4! (here the setting up of the little centre is favourable to Black because, thanks to a typical tactical ploy, he is able to carry out the freeing advance ... d5 immediately) 17 Qxd4 exd4 18 Wxd4 d5! exposing the hanging position of the Ac2 (19 exd5 Ac5! followed by ... Ac3 and ... Wc2) and allowing Black to achieve the important objective of shaking off the weakness of his d6 pawn and the presence of the e4 pawn. (The reply 19 e5?! would cost White at least a pawn after 19 ... Ac5 20 Wf4 Wfe8 21 Qf5 Ab5 22 Ab3 Acf2+ etc.)

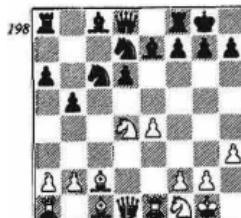
12	Qbd2	cx4
13	cx4	Qd7
14	Qf1	

The QN sets off on the typical 'Spanish run' to d5 or f5. Another possibility is 14 Ab3 (with the idea of continuing with Ad2 followed by d5) 14 ... a5 15 Ac1 a4 16 Qbd2 (also interesting is 16 Ac1, to continue with d5, a3 and Ad3-b4) 16 ... exd4 17 Qxd4 Qxd4 18 Ac4 Qe5 19 Qf1 and White's advantage is minimal.

14		exd4
----	--	------

Black decides to set up a little centre so as to give more activity to his pieces, whose range of action is highly limited by the presence of the e5 and d4 pawns. This plan, of course, entails some risk because if White manages to neutralize the dynamism that the black pieces acquire as a result of the central exchange, he will hold a structurally superior position owing to the presence of the weak pawn on d6.

15	Qxd4	(198)
----	------	-------



The position in the centre has finally been clarified, and now the two sides must join battle to achieve the strategic objectives typical of the little centre: occupation of d5 or f5 and exploitation of the weakness of the d6 pawn and the mobility of the e4 pawn for White; exploitation of e5 and c4, pressure on the e4 pawn and achievement of the freeing advance ... d5 for Black.

15 ... ♜xd4
16 ♜xd4 ♜e5

Threatening a standard tactic: 17 ... ♜xh3 18 gxh3 ♜f3+ etc.

17 ♜d1

A typical indirect save: now 17 ... ♜xh3? is wrong: 18 ♜xe5 dx5 19 ♜xd8 ♜fxd8 20 gxh3 and, although material equality is formally maintained, possession of the two minor pieces assures White of a winning endgame.

The retreat 17 ♜d1 would have facilitated the defender's task, for example: 17 ... ♜f6 18 ♜c3 ♜e6 19 a4 ♜c8 and Black has more than sufficient dynamic compensation for his structural inferiority.

17 ... ♜b7

Black knows that his fate depends on how he manages to take advantage of the dynamism of his position. He therefore has to try and formulate a plan that guarantees immediate, active counterplay. With the text, Romanishin clears the c-file for his heavy pieces and, at the same time,

keeps the e4 pawn and d5 square under surveillance, with a view to grasping any opportunity for accomplishing the freeing advance ... d5. If there is a defect in this plan, it lies precisely in its long-term nature because Black does not achieve any of his immediate counterplay objectives, so his opponent has the time he needs to improve the deployment of his troops.

A less ambitious but more forcing continuation was of 17 ... ♜f6, with the idea of defending the position that occurs after 18 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 19 ♜xd6 ♜c4 20 ♜e6 (20 ♜xf6? is an interesting possibility) 20 ... ♜xb2 although White is left with some advantage.

The natural 17 ... ♜c7, on the other hand, would have been rebutted by 18 ♜e3! ♜xh3 (worthy of consideration is 18 ... ♜e6!) 19 ♜d5! ♜d8 (not 19 ... ♜xc2? 20 ♜d2 and White wins a piece, for example 20... ♜c5 21 ♜xc5 dx5 22 ♜xe7+ ♜h8 23 ♜d5) 20 ♜xe7+ ♜xe7 21 ♜xd6 and White is left with the bishop pair and a more active position.

18 ♜g3

Targeting not only the f5 square but also countering the possibility of ... ♜f6 with ♜h5, as will be clear later.

18 ... ♜c7

Designed to combat the threat of 19 ♜f5: Black gets ready to protect

the d6 pawn with ... ♜fd8. Again, however, the development of the game is rather slow and allows White to improve his position further.

The most active continuation was probably 18 ... ♜f6 (note that 18 ... g6? is met by 19 ♜h6 ♜fe8 20 f4 ♜f6 21 fxe5 ♜xe5 22 ♜e3! — 22 ♜f2? ♜h4 — with a decisive advantage) 19 ♜xd6 ♜c8!, after which it would appear that Black has sufficient dynamic compensation for the pawn, for example: 20 ♜d2 ♜d8 21 ♜e2 ♜c4 with the initiative.

19 ♜b3 ♜fd8

Black continues his plan and prepares to respond to 20 ♜f5 either with 20 ... ♜f8, or 20 ... ♜f6 21 ♜b4 ♜c5, in both cases keeping a sound position that is not without prospects.

20 ♜e3

White does not rise to the bait but first completes his development and prepares to fight for control of the c-file.

20 ... ♜c4 (199)



With this move, Black tries to solve all his problems: he plugs the c-file, he gives further protection to his d6 pawn and he gets ready to win control of the long black diagonal by ... ♜f6. Matters are not that simple, however, and with his next move Timman is able to maintain the centralized position of his queen.

It does not seem, however, that Black has any better move available. In fact, after 20 ... ♜f6? there might have followed 21 ♜b6!, for example: 21 ... ♜xb6 (if 21 ... ♜ac8? 22 ♜xc7 ♜xc7 23 ♜b6, if on the other hand 21 ... ♜d7 22 ♜xc7 ♜xc7 23 ♜xd6 ♜c4 24 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 25 ♜ad1! ♜xe4? 26 b3 with a decisive advantage in both cases) 22 ♜xb6 ♜d7 (if 22 ... ♜dc8 23 ♜xd6 ♜c4 24 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 25 ♜ad1! ♜xe4? 26 b3 etc.) 23 ♜d4 with a clear positional advantage. More solid perhaps would have been 20 ... ♜ac8 but after 21 ♜ac1 ♜b8 it is clear that Black is cramped and White should have no problem assuming the initiative.

21 ♜h5!

White prevents ... ♜f6 and puts his enemy's castled position under pressure.

21 ... ♜f8
22 ♜ac1 ♜ac8

Perhaps it was better to play 22 ... d5. After 23 exd5 ♜xd5 24 ♜g4 ♜h8 (not 24 ... ♜xd1+? 25 ♜xd1 ♜xe3 26 ♜f6+ ♜h8 27 ♜h4 and White wins) White has an evidently

superior position but at the board it would not have been easy to find a way to take concrete advantage of his greater piece activity.

23 $\mathbb{E}c3!$ $\mathbb{W}e7$

Now it is too late to play 23 ... d5? because of 24 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$, for example: 24 ... f6 25 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 26 $\mathbb{E}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 27 $\mathbb{W}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 28 $\mathbb{W}e6+$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}ff6$ mate. With the text, Black aims to counter the dominating position of the enemy queen with ... $\mathbb{W}e5$.

24 $\mathbb{A}h6!$

With this move, as brilliant as it is simple, White's attack really gathers steam.

24 ... $\mathbb{W}e5$

Impossible is 24 ... $\mathbb{W}xe4?$ because of 25 $\mathbb{Q}f6+!$ and wins; on the other hand, after 24 ... $\mathbb{W}h4$ there follows 25 $\mathbb{H}g3$, while on 24 ... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ White forces the position with 25 $\mathbb{Q}xg7!$ $\mathbb{E}xc3$ 26 $\mathbb{A}f6$ etc.

25 $\mathbb{H}g3$ $\mathbb{g}6?$

The decisive mistake. Black could have continued the struggle with the courageous 25 ... $\mathbb{A}xe4!$ for example: 26 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{A}xg7$ 27 $\mathbb{H}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ with complex play.

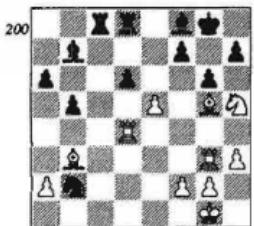
The line 25 ... $\mathbb{W}xd4?$ 26 $\mathbb{H}xd4$ $\mathbb{g}6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ would have led to the game continuation.

26 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$

27 $\mathbb{H}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$

28 e5! (200)

An authentic triumph for the mobile centre pawn which, in its advance, threatens the devastating 29



200

Now great technical mastery is required to win the endgame.

- | | | |
|----|------------------|----------------|
| 37 | ... | $\mathbb{B}b4$ |
| 38 | $\mathbb{H}c2$ | $\mathbb{h}5$ |
| 39 | $\mathbb{Q}e5$ | $\mathbb{d}6$ |
| 40 | $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ | $\mathbb{d}7$ |
| 41 | $\mathbb{Q}d4$ | $\mathbb{d}5$ |
| 42 | $\mathbb{Q}b3$ | $\mathbb{B}b4$ |
| 43 | $\mathbb{Q}c5+!$ | |

With great sang froid, White sacrifices a pawn to deprive his opponent of the dark-squared bishop and make him vulnerable on the black squares.

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|-----------------|
| 43 | ... | $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ |
| 44 | $\mathbb{H}xc5$ | $\mathbb{B}xg2$ |
| 45 | $\mathbb{f}3$ | $\mathbb{d}6$ |
| 46 | $\mathbb{H}c8$ | |

46 $\mathbb{H}c1?$ would have allowed Black to play his king closer to the passed pawn by ... $\mathbb{d}5$, ... $\mathbb{C}4$ and ... $\mathbb{C}5$

- | | | |
|----|-----|----------------|
| 46 | ... | $\mathbb{B}d5$ |
|----|-----|----------------|

Threatening to advance the a-pawn.

47 $\mathbb{H}c1$

Now that d5 is obstructed by the bishop, White can afford to play this move, the implication of which is 47 ... a5? 48 $\mathbb{H}a1$.

- | | | |
|----|----------------|----------------|
| 47 | ... | $\mathbb{B}c6$ |
| 48 | $\mathbb{H}a1$ | $\mathbb{B}b5$ |
| 49 | $\mathbb{Q}f2$ | |

White's king finally comes into the game, using the weakened black squares to penetrate into enemy territory.

- | | | |
|----|----------------|----------------|
| 49 | ... | $\mathbb{Q}e5$ |
| 50 | $\mathbb{Q}e3$ | $\mathbb{d}5$ |
| 51 | $\mathbb{g}3$ | $\mathbb{e}5$ |
| 52 | $\mathbb{b}4$ | $\mathbb{d}5$ |

After 52 ... $\mathbb{d}5$ 53 $\mathbb{H}c1$ Black is no longer able to prevent the enemy king gaining access to f4.

- | | | |
|----|----------------|---------------|
| 53 | $\mathbb{Q}f4$ | $\mathbb{C}5$ |
| 54 | $\mathbb{g}4$ | |

Placing his opponent in front of the unpleasant choice of weakening his h5 pawn following the exchange 55 $\mathbb{gxh}5$ or of granting a potential passed pawn on the h-file after 54 ... $\mathbb{hxg}4$ 55 $\mathbb{fxg}4$.

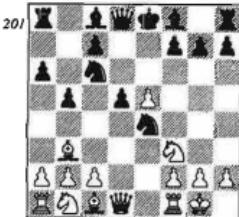
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|----|-----------------|-----------------|
| 54 | ... | $\mathbb{B}b4$ |
| 55 | $\mathbb{gxh}5$ | $\mathbb{gxh}5$ |
| 56 | $\mathbb{Q}g5$ | $\mathbb{e}2$ |
| 57 | $\mathbb{f}4$ | $a5$ |
| 58 | $\mathbb{H}e1$ | $\mathbb{g}4$ |
| 59 | $\mathbb{f}5$ | $a4$ |
| 60 | $\mathbb{H}e7$ | |

1 - 0

6 The Open Centre

Main line: Open Variation

1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{B}b5$ a6 4 $\mathbb{B}a4$
 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 6 d4 b5 7 $\mathbb{B}b3$ d5 8
 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (201)



Although the open centre most often derives from this move order, strategically similar conditions may crop up in other variations too, e.g. 1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{B}b5$ a6 4 $\mathbb{B}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ and now:

Breyer Variation

— 5 0-0 $\mathbb{B}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{M}e1$ b5 7 $\mathbb{B}b3$ d6
 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 $\mathbb{B}b8$ 10 d4 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 11
 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ 12 $\mathbb{B}c2$ $\mathbb{M}e8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ d5
 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (or 14 $\mathbb{dxe5}$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$) 14 ...
 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15 $\mathbb{dxe5}$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

Chigorin Variation with ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$
 — 5 0-0 $\mathbb{B}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{M}e1$ b5 7 $\mathbb{B}b3$ d6

8 c3 0-0 9 h3 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 10 $\mathbb{B}c2$ c5 11 d4
 $\mathbb{B}b7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{cxd4}$ 13 $\mathbb{cxd4}$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 14
 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ d5 15 $\mathbb{dxe5}$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

Other Variations

— 5 d4 $\mathbb{exd4}$ 6 0-0 $\mathbb{B}e7$ (or 5 0-0
 $\mathbb{B}e7$ 6 d4 $\mathbb{exd4}$) 7 e5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
 0-0 9 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ d5

Or 1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{B}b5$ and now:

Berlin Variation

— 3 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 5 d4 $\mathbb{B}e7$
 6 $\mathbb{dxe5}$ d5

Classical Variation

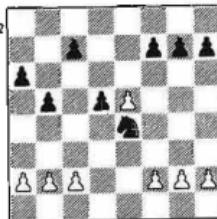
— 3 ... $\mathbb{A}c5$ 4 c3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 d4 $\mathbb{exd4}$ 6
 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 7 0-0 d5 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

1 Strategic Ideas

The main strategic features of the open centre may be deduced from an analysis of the pawn structure in the lines listed above, not forgetting the central posting of the black knight on e4 (202).

There are three main elements to the strategic battle:

202



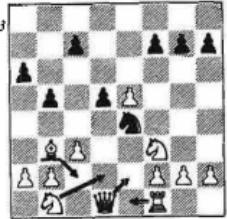
obtains an advantage in that sector.

The reader should bear in mind that strategic conditions on the queenside are rather different in those lines in which Black has not played the advances ... a7-a6 and ... b7-b5, or in those in which c-pawns have been exchanged.

Methods for ousting the knight from e4

To achieve his intention, White has substantially two methods at his disposal, one rather better than the other which is slower and more elaborate. The most direct method is to concentrate piece action against the $\mathbb{Q}e4$ so as to force it into an exchange or retreat (203).

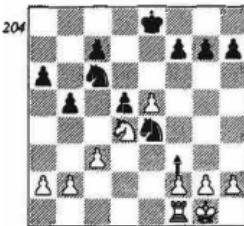
203



White has a number of pieces able to attack the $\mathbb{Q}e4$ by means of development or other natural moves. The concentration of pressure on e4 will often lead Black to either trade off

his knight for his opponent's QN (... $\mathbb{Q}xd2$); withdraw it (... $\mathbb{Q}c5$); or give the knight further support.

The second method is based on the removal of the $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (generally to d4) for the purpose of preparing the radical advance f2-f3 (204).



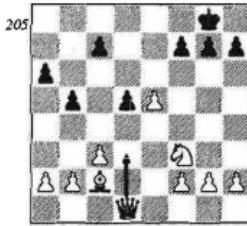
Here, for example, White can use the indirect defence of the e-pawn (... $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$, $\mathbb{M}e1$ followed by f3 winning a knight) in preparing to chase the knight away with f2-f3.

It should, however, be pointed out that the advance f2-f3 has positional drawbacks because it weakens the castled position, specifically the a7-g1 diagonal. In addition, if a further advance of the f-pawn is tried (in order to give greater momentum to White's attacking operations on the kingside or to protect the e-pawn), then e4 would be weakened irreversibly.

For these reasons, the first method is by far the one most commonly adopted, at least in the first instance.

Thematic White attacks on the kingside

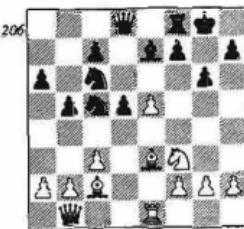
Once the $\mathbb{Q}e4$ has been ousted, the white pieces acquire attacking potential on the kingside. This is due to the presence of the e5 pawn which restricts the field of action of the black pieces in that area and prevents the natural defence of the castled position. In particular, the clearance of the b1-h7 diagonal allows White to try a classical battery theme to bring serious threats against the enemy king's position (205).



The aim is obviously that of forcing Black to make the compromising advance ... g7-g6, which greatly weakens his kingside black squares.

It might be pointed out that, if necessary, pressure on the b1-h7 diagonal may also be exerted by $\mathbb{W}b1$, as we shall see in the following example.

The dynamism of the white pieces may also be increased by advancing the e-pawn, in a sacrifice directed at dismantling the defences of the enemy's castled position (206).



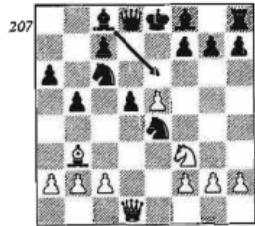
This example artificially groups the effects arising when the knight is pushed off e4. By exploiting the mobility of the e-pawn and the full dynamic potential of his pieces, White unleashes a mating attack by means of $\mathbb{A}h6$, $\mathbb{M}e8$, e6!, $\mathbb{Q}xe6$, $\mathbb{A}xg6!$, $\mathbb{H}xg6$ (or ... $f4xg6$, $\mathbb{M}e6$ with unstoppable threats of $\mathbb{H}xg6+$ and $\mathbb{M}xc6$), $\mathbb{M}e6$, $\mathbb{F}xe6$, $\mathbb{W}xg6+$ and mate next move.

It should, however, be pointed out that it is very difficult for White to achieve such favourable positions. Nonetheless, Black must be constantly alert to the possible advance e5-e6, bearing in mind that at times it might have the sole purpose of clearing the e5 square, usually to pave the way for an aggressive move from the $\mathbb{Q}f3$.

Blockading White's e-pawn and the importance of the b1-h7 diagonal

From our short review of general thematic attacks for White on the kingside, Black's main defensive imperatives are clear: vigorous blockading of the e5 pawn and effective counter-action against White's manoeuvres on the b1-h7 diagonal.

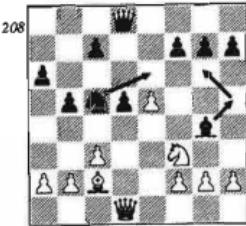
As regards the blockade of the e-pawn, we know that, generally speaking, the most efficient blockader is the knight. This rule would also apply in the present case, were not Black obliged to occupy e6 with his QB at an early stage in the game, in order to protect his d5 pawn from the direct attack resulting from the withdrawal of the 'Spanish' bishop to b3 (207).



In order to fulfil the two defensive tasks mentioned above, the ideal and most immediate placing of the black

pieces would be ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}c5\text{-}e6$, but this sequence is prevented by the attack on the d5 pawn.

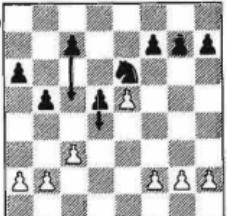
After White has succeeded in dislodging the knight from its central outpost (for example by $\mathbb{Q}bd2$, c3 and $\mathbb{Q}c2$) a situation will arise in which Black will find himself having to remove his bishop to clear the way for his knight. He will not, however, be able simply to play it to f5 because in the meantime White has taken control of the b1-h7 diagonal. He will, therefore, make room for the knight with ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ (208).



208

The support function of the blockading knight and the struggle to shift it

Occupation of the e6 square not only frustrates the possible advance of the e5 pawn and contributes to the defence of the kingside, it helps to mobilize the queenside pawn majority (210).

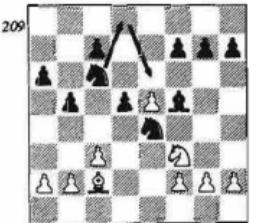


210

At this point he will endeavour to finish off his defensive tasks by completing the blockade of the e5 pawn with ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and setting up some opposition on the b1-h7 diagonal by the manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}h5\text{-}g6$.

We might point out that Black can also employ his QN to blockade the e5 pawn or even maintain the blockade of the QB as shown in diagram

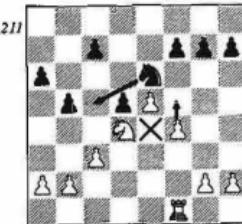
207. He might also use the $\mathbb{Q}e4$ as protection for a foray on the b1-h7 diagonal with a view to its speedy occupation with ... $\mathbb{Q}e6\text{-}f5$ (209).



209

As we have already mentioned, in fact, the advances ... c7-c5 and/or ... d5-d4 are the linchpin of Black's counterplay on the queenside and, if at least one of them is not played, it is unlikely that Black will be able to obtain a dynamically balanced game. Just as Black has every interest in setting up an effective blockade of the e6 square, it is equally logical for White to work towards removing or weakening the position of the blockader.

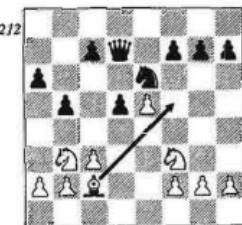
The most direct method for attempting to remove the blockader from e6 is by mobilizing the f-pawn, which presupposes the removal of the $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (211).



211

and, consequently, the advisability of such a plan should be weighed up in the light of specific circumstances.

White may sometimes endeavour to reduce the scope of the blockader by pinning the knight to the queen, which is often placed on d7 (212).



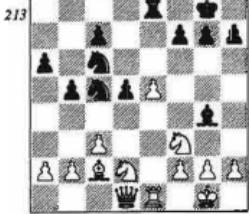
212

The pin on the h3-e8 diagonal with $\mathbb{Q}f5$ may lead to moves that will be embarrassing for Black, such as $\mathbb{Q}c5$, $\mathbb{Q}d4$ or $\mathbb{Q}g5$, and, in the event of ... $\mathbb{g}7\text{-}g6$, may be sustained by simply withdrawing the bishop to h3.

The pin on the $\mathbb{Q}f3$ and pressure on White's e-pawn

As we saw earlier, the pin on the $\mathbb{Q}f3$ often represents for Black a necessary intermediate phase in fulfilling his plan of transferring his light-squared bishop to the key diagonal h7-b1.

Though this is the eventual goal, the bishop on g4 represents an annoyance for White because it continues to keep an eye on any advance of the pawn on e5; immobilizes the $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (and hence the pawn on f2); and, finally, because it sometimes contributes to pointing up the rather exposed position of the pawn on e5 (213).

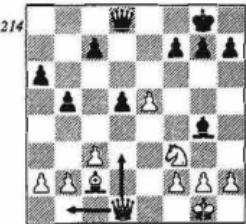


Here, for example, White has managed to dislodge the $\mathbb{Q}e4$ and take possession of the b1-h7 diagonal. Nevertheless, the pin on $\mathbb{Q}f3$ is a nuisance as it adds to the pressure that Black exerts against the e-pawn, which can be supplemented by ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$. Generally speaking, White has no lack of resources to protect the e-pawn adequately. However, it is clear that situations like the one illustrated in the previous diagram may disrupt the coordination between the white forces. It is therefore logical that, in the presence of the $\mathbb{Q}f3$ pin, White should take steps to

free himself so as to restore freedom of movement to his pieces.

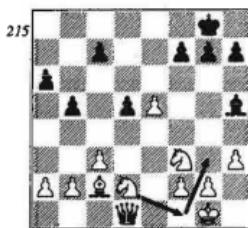
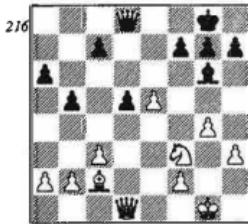
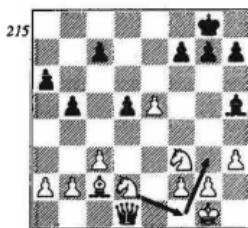
The fight against the $\mathbb{Q}f3$ pin and the struggle for the b1-h7 diagonal

When circumstances permit, White can achieve this result by simply removing his queen — usually to d3 or b1 — and exploiting the thematic threat against h7 (214).



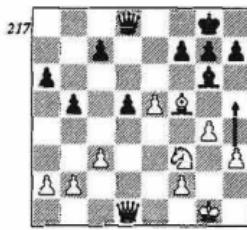
Unpinning by $\mathbb{W}b1$ is sometimes possible because White's queen's knight on d2 prevents Black from damaging his pawn structure by ... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$. White may use the QN on d2 also to complete, after h3 and ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$, the unpinning manoeuvre by means of $\mathbb{Q}f1-g3$ (215).

Both the solutions suggested in the last two diagrams represent less demanding systems than the more drastic method of direct: h3 $\mathbb{Q}h5$, g4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ (216).



In this kind of situation, White is unlikely to obtain anything from the exchange $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ because the opening of the f-file following ... $fxg6$ usually ends up by representing a dynamic factor favouring Black in the middlegame. This is all the more so when White has weakened the structure of his own castled position through the advances h2-h3 and g2-g4. A weakened white castled position, in fact, does not constitute a pre-requisite for Black to exploit the offensive potential of the f-file.

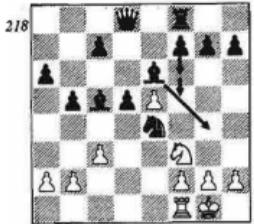
Returning to the position illustrated in diagram 216, if White is to pursue the action undertaken with the advance of the h- and g-pawns, he usually concentrates his attention on the f5 square which he can occupy with a knight ($\mathbb{Q}d4-f5$) or a bishop (217).



Once the f5 square has been occupied — a manoeuvre that may also coincide with moves aimed at weakening a possible blockade of e6, as shown in diagram 212 — a massive attack may also be launched on the kingside based on an advance of the h-pawn. Of course, such a plan also involves risks because the further implicit weakening of White's castled position could prove highly dangerous were Black's pieces in a position to take advantage of the situation. It follows that a strategy of this kind must only be pursued after carefully weighing up Black's chances of turning the situation to his own advantage.

Thematic Black attacks on the kingside

So far we have looked at developments following the dislodging of the $\mathbb{Q}e4$ but it is not absolutely certain that White will necessarily direct his efforts against this knight or that, even if he does, this will be his exclusive aim. In these cases, as we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Black himself might harbour attacking ideas on the kingside, using the powerful knight outpost on e4. Under these circumstances, the KB may be ideally placed at c5, the QB on g4, while the KR and the queen may intervene on the f-file after it has been opened by the advance ... f7-f6 (218).



The diagram illustrates the key points of Black's potential counterplay on the kingside: the aggressive placing of the bishops against the f2 and/or f3 points may be combined,

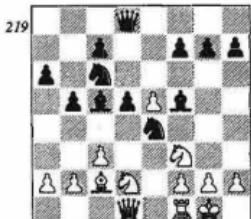
depending on circumstances, with the opening of the f-file or the bolstering of the central outpost.

To complete this brief review of Black's general offensive targets on the kingside, the reader's attention also should be called to Black's chances of exerting pressure against the e-pawn as we have already mentioned (see 'The pin on $\mathfrak{Q}f3$ and the pressure on White's e-pawn').

The support of the $\mathbb{Q}e4$

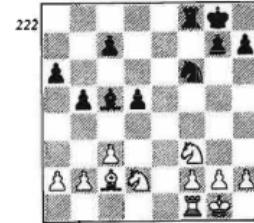
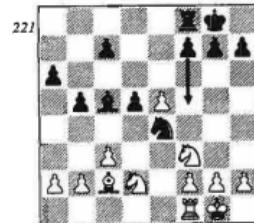
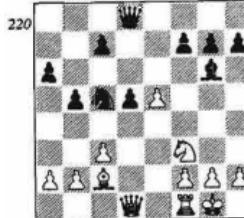
When Black decides to support his knight's position, he has substantially two ways of doing so: by repositioning the QB with ... $\mathbb{A}f5$, or by the advance ... f7-f5.

In the former case, White's attempts to dislodge the knight may be at least temporarily thwarted by the action of the black bishops on the a7-g1 and h7-b1 diagonals (219).



Here, for example, White cannot play $\mathbb{A}c1$ owing to the attack against

f2; nor can he continue his pressure on the $\mathbb{Q}e4$ by $\mathbb{W}e2?$ because in that event Black could profit from the undefended position of the $\mathbb{A}c2$ by means of the simple tactical ploy ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$, $\mathbb{B}xc3$ $\mathbb{A}xc2$. This means that if White is to oust the $\mathbb{Q}e4$ he will have to resort to more elaborate methods such as $\mathbb{A}b3$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}fd4$ and $f3$, or by the exchange on c5 that would take place after ... $\mathbb{A}g6$, $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ (220).

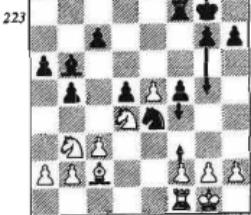


... when he considers his pieces are placed well enough to take the initiative on the kingside; or he can try and proceed with the dislodging of the $\mathbb{Q}e4$ by resorting to the advance f2-f3. In our example, starting from diagram 221, this could take place after ... f5, $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{A}b6$, $\mathbb{Q}fd4$ (223).

When, by contrast, Black is able to support his $\mathbb{Q}e4$ with the advance ... f5, White has a choice between two possibilities (221).

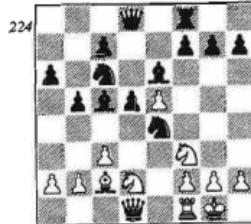
In a situation of this kind, for example, after ... f5 White can decide to play $\mathbb{exf6}$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ (222)

In this case, however, it should be pointed out that the kingside struggle can take on an extremely violent character, because Black — when conditions are favourable — can contemplate a mass advance of his pawns on the kingside.



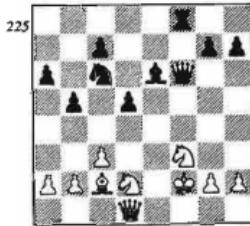
The breakthrough ... f7-f6 and the pressure on the f-file

At times, Black may try to anticipate the attempt to dislodge the $\text{Qe}4$ with an unexpected opening of the f-file, usually related to the typical pressure against f2 (224).



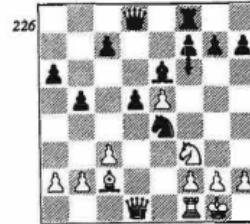
In a case of this kind, Black may try to take advantage of the aggressive development of the KB by means of the straightforward ... $\text{Qxd}2$,

$\text{Qxd}2 \text{ f6, exf6 Qxf6}$, or by the more complicated ... $\text{Qxf2, Qxf2 f6, exf6 Qxf2+}$, Qxf2 Qxf6 (225)



... generating a sharp position. White has to meet a further increase in kingside pressure (for example: ... $\text{Qe}5$ or ... $\text{Qg}4$) with no guarantee that exchanges will give him a good ending. Black's majority of pawns on the queenside can be a very potent force.

The pressure down the f-file can also be linked to an aggressive move on the part of the light-squared bishop. In this case the target of offensive operations will mainly be the $\text{Qf}3$ (226).



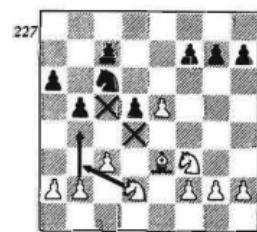
Here, for example, after ... f6, exf6 Qxf6 , the threats of ... $\text{Qg}4$ or ... $\text{Qh}3$ cannot be underestimated, while the elimination of the $\text{Qe}4$ can almost never be considered a satisfactory way of reducing the pressure.

The struggle for control of the c5 and d4 squares

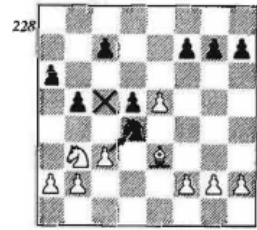
As we mentioned at the start of this chapter, the queenside battle revolves around attempts to make/prevent the advances ... $\text{c}5$ and/or ... $\text{d}4$ by means of which Black can activate his pawn majority on the queenside. The advanced pawns on b5 and d5 leave the $\text{c}5$ square weak and the c -pawn on $\text{c}7$ vulnerable to attack, and Black's strategy is often to free his game with the ... $\text{c}5$ advance.

If White manages to prevent this advance, he will be able to use the $\text{c}5$ and $\text{d}4$ squares as excellent outposts for his pieces, not only for the purpose of paralyzing his opponent's operations on the queenside, but also to make his own life easier on the kingside (a knight on $\text{d}4$, for example, that would come in handy both for keeping an eye on $\text{e}6$ and for transferring to $\text{f}5$ if necessary). For this purpose, White generally makes use of his QB, his knights and sometimes his b-pawn (227).

The c -pawn can also prove useful for this purpose, namely when the simplification wrought by Black on



$\text{d}4$ permits a transfer to that square, so creating a veritable stranglehold on $\text{c}5$ (228).

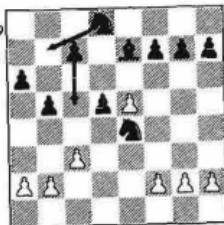


In a case of this kind, speaking from a structural standpoint, recapture with the c -pawn is to be preferred to others because it almost definitively neutralizes Black's pawn majority on the queenside and assures White of a potentially won endgame.

If, by contrast, Black succeeds in making the advance ... $\text{c}5$, then the $\text{c}5$ and $\text{d}4$ squares fall automatically under his control. In this regard,

mention has already been made of the support function of a blockading knight that Black has managed to transfer to e6 (see diagram 210), but it is clear that other forces must take part in the struggle too (229).

229



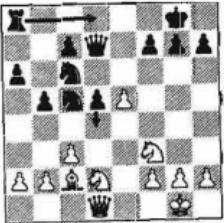
The $\mathbb{Q}e4$ and the KB immediately find themselves in suitable positions for supporting the advance ... c7-c5, but were such supports to be missing or insufficient, Black will not think twice about throwing his QN into the fray, if necessary resorting to the convoluted manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}c6-d8-b7$ (unless, of course, he can play the knight to e6).

The advance ... d5-d4

The advance ... d5-d4 is another story. It may follow on from the ... c5 advance or occur independently. If Black can favourably advance ... d5-d4 he will be in a position effectively and quickly to coordinate his forces; the support action offered by the

$\mathbb{Q}c6$ may be accompanied by the doubling of the heavy pieces on the d-file (230).

230



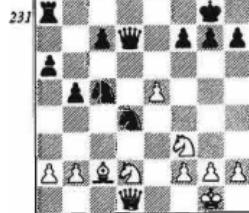
It should be pointed out that Black, for this purpose, may sometimes also make use of his KB after developing it to c5.

In the example given here we have artificially brought together, for the sake of clarity, the pros and cons of such an early central breakthrough.

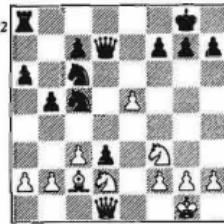
Black has sound reasons for opening up the position: his development is usually better than White's which has been slowed down by the presence of the knight on e4. This becomes clear if, from diagram 230, play continues ...d4, cxd4 cxd4 (231).

Black's pieces are more aggressively placed than White's. It is much rarer, however, for White to permit the further advance ... d4-d3 (232)

... because the pawn has the immediate effect of destroying the coordination of his forces. It is, however, worth pointing out that if



232

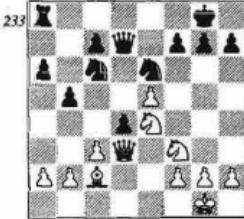


White is able to negotiate this testing moment without damage, the pawn on d3 could in the long term turn into an attractive target for his pieces.

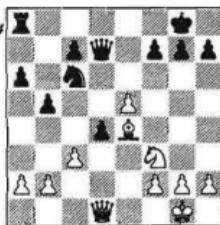
The advance ... d5-d4 does, however, have its drawbacks too and White can endeavour to exploit these to turn the situation to his advantage.

In the first place, Black loses control of the e4 square, a factor that in our example — starting from diagram 230 — would be particularly evident in the continuation ... d4, $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$, $\mathbb{W}d3$ (233).

It will be readily appreciated that, thanks to the centralization of the



234

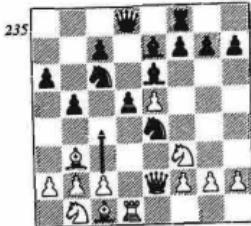


... and Black is unable to meet the threat of $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ followed by cxd4. It should be pointed out that at times

the queen may also contribute to the exploitation of the weakened long diagonal, usually when it is played to f3.

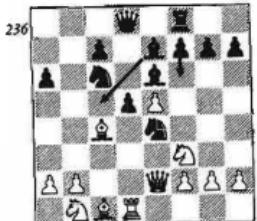
The pressure against Black's d-pawn and the advance c2-c4

The struggle on the queenside assumes particular significance when White decides to concentrate pressure on the d-pawn right from the beginning, on the basis that, as we have already seen (see diagram 207), in the early phase of the opening this pawn is rather exposed. He can pursue this aim by quickly occupying the d-file with his KR ($\mathbb{W}e2$ followed by $\mathbb{H}d1$), so preparing the advance c2-c4 (235).



To put this plan into practice, however, White must of course forgo operations to dislodge the $\mathbb{Q}e4$. In this case Black can quietly await the

advance c2-c4 and accept the trade-off ... $b \times c4$, $\mathbb{A}x c4$, endeavouring in the meantime to bolster the offensive action of his $\mathbb{Q}e4$ by bringing other forces to bear on the white kingside (236).



Since pressure cannot always be applied to the d-pawn and/or the advance c2-c4 made exactly as and when we have just illustrated, the reader should bear in mind some other recurrent possibilities:

(1) White may sometimes increase his pressure on the d-pawn by developing his QN to c3, before or after the advance c2-c4;

(2) Black may choose to defend the pawn on d5 by doubling his heavy pieces on the d-file by ... $\mathbb{W}d7$ and ... $\mathbb{H}ad8$, and at times by removing the QN (e.g. ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$) thus also allowing the advance ... c7-c6;

(3) White may take advantage of the favourable rook-queen opposition on the d-file, perhaps occupying the e4 square with the QN via d2;

(4) to impede such eventualities, Black must generally withdraw his queen from the d-file in time, if necessary resorting to moves like ... $\mathbb{W}c8$ or ... $\mathbb{W}b8$;

(5) the alleviating manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}e4-c5xb3$ (that we can also hypothesize in the position shown in diagram 235, for example in the continuation ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$, $c4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$, $axb3$) leads to a pawn structure that is generally favourable to White because of the vulnerability of the a-pawn and the reinforcement of the c4 square;

(6) at times Black may consider the possibility of replying to c4 with the advance ... d4.

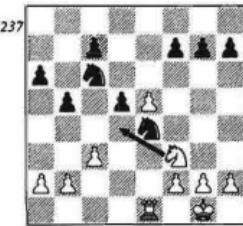
2 Tactical Ideas

In the open centre, Black's minor pieces quickly assume active positions. While they have great dynamic potential, they often look a little loose.

In pointing to the tactical ploys recurrent in the opening phase, it should be noted that it is above all White who is able to take advantage of the comparatively exposed position of Black's pieces. Here we will look at the tactical elements that occur with most frequency, with reference also to those already hinted at during our exposition of the strategic ideas.

Indirect defence of White's e-pawn

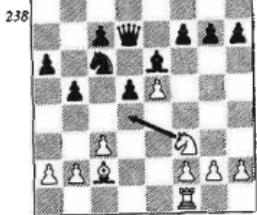
White can very often afford to leave his c5-pawn with no apparent protection, usually by removing its natural defender, the $\mathbb{Q}f3$. This theme may appear in a variety of forms, one of which has already been shown in diagram 204. Very similar, indeed even simpler, is the following (237).



Here White can play $\mathbb{Q}d4$ with complete peace of mind because the capture of the e-pawn would cost Black a knight after ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$, $f3$.

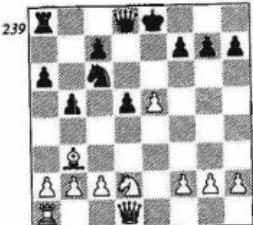
One slightly more complex variation is seen when the invulnerability of the e-pawn depends on the trapping of Black's QB on e6 (238).

Here too White can play $\mathbb{Q}d4$ because after ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$, $f4$, if Black saves his knight, following the subsequent advance $f5$ he will lose his bishop.

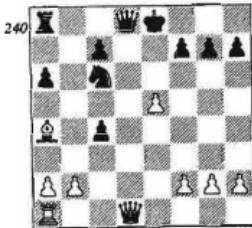


Tactical ploys against the $\mathbb{Q}c6$

The position of the $\mathbb{Q}c6$ can prove to be exposed — particularly when the long white diagonal is laid open following the advance ... d5-d4 — as has already been seen in diagram 234. It would, however, be as well to point out that White can exploit the unprotected nature of the knight by clearing the a4-e8 diagonal (239).



Here, for example, White plays c4!, and after ... dxc4, $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ bxc4, $\mathbb{Q}a4$ (240)

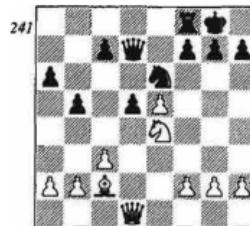


... he recovers the piece in all cases (for example: ... $\mathbb{Wd7}$, $\mathbb{Wxd7+}$ $\mathbb{Qxd7}$, $\mathbb{Md1+}$ etc.), remaining with a better pawn structure.

The knight sacrifice on f6

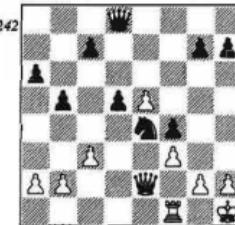
To put this theme into effect, White must first succeed in creating the premises, namely he must occupy e4 with a knight. He can fulfil this condition more easily when Black has made the advance ... d5-d4 (see, for example, diagram 233) but it is sometimes also possible to take advantage of the temporary pin on the Black's d-pawn (241).

In this situation, White is ready to throw his knight to the wolves: $\mathbb{Qf6+!}$ gxf6, $\mathbb{Wg4+}$ $\mathbb{Qh8}$, $\mathbb{Wf5}$ and Black has to choose between getting mated or losing his queen.



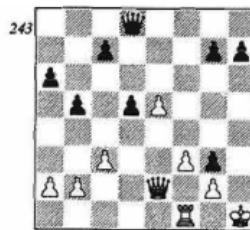
Tactical exploitation of the $\mathbb{Q}e4$

As far as Black is concerned, there are few tactical elements in his favour in the early stage of the game and they are based substantially on tactical exploitation of the strong knight posted on e4. In this regard, we have already mentioned the possibility of sacrificing this knight on f2 (see diagrams 224 and 225). Let us examine another case that crops up with some frequency (242).



The diagram illustrates the essentials of the theme which can in practice appear in many forms, the complexity of which depends on the involvement of other forces and of the specific arrangement of the pieces.

In the case in point, White wishes to force the knight to abandon its central position by means of the advance f2-f3, but Black, taking advantage of the presence of the pawn on f4 and the unhappy positions of the enemy pieces, can reply with ... $\mathbb{Qg3+!}$ because after $\mathbb{hxg3}$ $\mathbb{fxg3}$ (243)



... White cannot parry the threat of ... $\mathbb{Wh4+}$ and ... $\mathbb{Wh2}$ mate.

It should be pointed out that under certain circumstances, the knight may also be sacrificed by simply keeping it on e4, so as to obtain — after $\mathbb{fxe4}$ $\mathbb{dx4}$ — a strong pair of advanced central pawns that may on occasion be more than enough compensation for the material left on the field.

3 Illustrative games

Game 10

Hjartarson-Korchnoi

Saint John (match, 1) 1988

Open Variation

1 e4	e5
2 ♜f3	♕c6
3 ♜b5	a6
4 ♜a4	♕f6
5 0-0	qxе4

Whereas in 'closed' variations Black's main concern in the early stage of the opening is to protect his e5 pawn and so maintain his central defences, in the Open Variation his attitude is radically different: by taking on e4 he agrees to a trade-off of central pawns, so achieving aggressive development at the price of a certain structural weakness.

6 d4 b5

The attempt to hang on to the extra pawn by means of 6 ... exd4 has been shelved by theory after the continuation 7 ♜e1 d5 8 ♜xd4 (with the double threat of ♜xc6 and f3) 8 ... ♜d6 9 ♜xc6 ♜xh2+ 10 ♜h1 ♜b4 11 ♜xe4+ dxe4 12 ♜w8+ ♜xd8 13 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 14 ♜xh2 with an ending that slightly favours White.

7 ♜b3 d5

The same attempt to hang on to the pawn is even less convincing at this point: 7 ... exd4 8 ♜e1 d5 9 ♜c3 ♜e6 (if 9 ... dxc3 10 ♜xd5 ♜b7 11 ♜xe4! ♜c7 — 11 ... ♜xd1? 12

♞xc6+ etc. — 12 ♜e2 with a clear advantage for White) 10 ♜xe4 dxe4 11 ♜xe4 ♜e7 12 ♜xе6 fxе6 13 ♜xd4 0-0-14 ♜g4 and White obtains a much superior position.

8 dxe5 ♜e6 (244)



This position is the first important crossroads in the open Spanish lines. Basically, White can choose from three plans:

(1) aiming for a quick advance c2-c4 by placing his KR on d1 after 9 ♜e2;

(2) immediately dislodging the centralized knight by 9 ♜bd2, albeit at the cost of losing control of d4 and his light-squared bishop;

(3) tightening his hold over d4 and prepare the withdrawal of the light-squared bishop with the more painstaking 9 c3.

The situation arising out of the third plan will be examined in this and the next games. Here are some of the lines seen in the first two plans. We would mention that the

alternatives 9 ♜e3 and 9 a4 are also possible.

(1) 9 ♜e2 ♜e7 10 ♜d1 0-0 (or 10 ... ♜c5 11 c4 — the attempt to exploit the rook-queen opposition on the d-file by 11 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 12 ♜c3 is met by 12 ... ♜c4 13 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 and practice has shown that Black has sufficient compensation for the queen — 11 ... d4 12 cbx5 d3 13 ♜f1 ♜xb3 14 axb3 ♜b4 15 ♜d2 ♜c2 16 ♜xa6 ♜xa6 17 bxa6 ♜xb3 with a position in which theory considers that, with correct play, White can keep a slight edge) 11 c4 bxc4 12 ♜xc4 and at this point Black has succeeded in retaining balanced prospects with both 12 ... ♜d7 and 12 ... ♜c5, usually by bolstering his chances of counterplay with the typical mobilization of the f-pawn.

(2) 9 ♜bd2 ♜c5 (Black cannot ignore the attack on e4, for example: 9 ... ♜e7 10 ♜xe4 dxe4 11 ♜xe6 fxе6 12 ♜g5 with advantage to White) 10 c3 d4 11 ♜xe6 (an interesting idea is the attempt to exploit the undefended position of the ♜c6 with the unexpected 11 ♜g5?!, for example: 11 ... ♜xg5 12 ♜f3 ♜d7 13 ♜xf7+ ♜e7 14 ♜d5 ♜xe5 15 ♜e2 d3 16 ♜w1 c6 17 f4 ♜b6 18 ♜f3!) and White recovers the piece and stays ahead) 11 ... ♜xe6 12 cxd4 ♜xd4 moving into a heavily analysed position for which we offer a couple of examples:

(2a) 13 ♜e4 ♜e7 14 ♜e3 ♜f5 15

♛c2 0-0 16 ♜d1 ♜xe3 17 fxe3 ♜c8 18 h3? ♜d8 19 ♜h2, or

(2b) 13 a4 ♜e7 14 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 15 axb5 ♜xe5 16 bx6 0-0 17 ♜a4, in both cases with a slight advantage to White.

9 c3 ♜e7

9 ... ♜c5 gives rise to the Berlin Variation in which Black, aware of the fact that his centralized knight will sooner or later be forced to relinquish its outpost, uses it immediately to force the ♜b3 back to c2, so releasing his light-squared bishop from the defence of the d5 pawn and allowing it to move thematically to g4. Black will go for this set-up in the present game, but with a different move order. For developments arising out of the important, aggressive alternative 9 ... ♜c5, see game 11.

10 ♜bd2

Various continuations have been tried here, but the text line has been seen most often recently. Against other moves Black must be ready to shape his strategy according to the circumstances that present themselves, for example:

(1) 10 ♜c2 0-0 11 ♜e2 ♜c5 12 ♜d4 ♜d7 13 ♜d2 (13 f4? ♜xd4 14 cxd4 ♜e4 is favourable to Black) 13 ... f6 (less energetic, although playable, is a defensive approach with 13 ... ♜g4 14 f3 ♜h5, preparing to comply with defensive imperatives on the kingside with ... ♜e6 and ... ♜g6; on the other hand, the continuation

13 ... ♕xd4 14 cxd4 ♕b7 forces Black on to the defensive after 15 ♘h5! g6 16 ♘h6) 14 exf6 ♖xf6 15 ♕xe6 ♕xe6 and Black's yielding up of the bishop pair is compensated for by his advantage in development.

(2) 10 ♜e3 ♜c5 11 ♜c2 ♗g4 12 ♘bd2 ♘e6 13 ♘b1 ♘h5 14 a4 b4 15 ♘f5 ♘g6 16 ♘d1 0-0 with substantially balanced prospects.

10 ... ♔c5

Transposing into the Berlin Variation. Alternatively, Black can continue with the straightforward 10 ... 0-0, after which White has two main options, of which we will give some illustrative continuations:

(1) 11 ♜c2 f5 (playable of course are also 11 ... ♜c5 or 11 ... ♘f5) 12 ♘b3 (White's delay in development makes the alternative 12 exf6 inadequate, for example: 12 ... ♖xf6 13 ♘b3 ♗g4 14 ♘d3 ♘e4 15 ♘bd4 ♘xd4 16 ♘xd4 ♘d6 and it is White who has to find a way to meet his opponent's threats) 12 ... ♘d7 13 ♘fd4 ♘xd4 14 ♘xd4 (after 14 cxd4 a5! White can only keep the c5 square fixed with 15 f3 a4 16 fxe4 axb3 17 ♘xb3 fxe4 18 ♘c3 entering a position in which it is extremely difficult to exploit the slight structural advantage) 14 ... c5 15 ♘xe6 ♘xe6 16 f3 ♘g5 17 a4 and White keeps a slight edge because his incipient pressure against the b5 pawn ($\text{W}e2$) will force Black to make rigid his phalanx of queenside pawns.

(2) 11 ♘e2 ♘c5 (as usual 11 ... ♘f5 also comes into consideration; also playable is 11 ... ♘xd2, although it depletes the b1-h7 diagonal rather prematurely: according to theory, White has the better prospects after 12 ♘xd2 ♘a5 13 ♘c2 ♘d4 14 ♘d3 g6 15 ♘h6) 12 ♘d4 (White must never underestimate the offensive thrust of the advance ... d4, for example: 12 ♘c2?! d4! 13 cxd4 ♘xd4 14 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 and Black is better) 12 ... ♘xb3 13 ♘xc6 ♘xc1 14 ♘axc1 ♘d7 15 ♘xe7+ ♘xe7 16 f4 and White has a slight advantage.

11 ♜c2 ♗g4

This attacks the e5 pawn, and at the same time paves the way for the classic defensive plan (... ♘e6, ... ♘b5-g6).

12 ♘e1

This position can also be reached through other move orders, the most frequent of which is 9 ... ♘c5 10 ♘c2 ♗g4 11 ♘e1 ♘e7 12 ♘bd2.

12 ... ♘d7

The alternatives 12 ... 0-0 and 12 ... ♘h5 have also been tried. These lead to game developments similar to those we shall see in the present game, while the possibility 12 ... d4 pursues an independent strategic idea, for example: 13 h3 ♘h5 14 ♘b3 d3 (one of the infrequent cases in which White can permit the formation of this wedge) 15 ♘b1 ♘xb3 16 axb3 ♘g6 17 ♘c3 0-0 18 ♘d4 and White casts a net around the d3

pawn and retains slightly better prospects.

13 ♘f1

At present this move is considered to be more accurate than the alternatives 13 ♘b3 ♘e6 14 h3 ♘h5 and 13 h3 ♘h5 14 ♘f1 ♘d8 15 ♘g3 ♘g6 which, if truth be told, allow Black to improve his position and give him an ideal defensive set-up.

13 ... ♘d8

In view of the coming ♘e3 Black protects his d5 pawn and at the same time tries to keep an option on the future advance ... d4.

14 ♘e3 ♘h5

It was too risky to accept the pawn sacrifice implicitly contained in White's last move: after 14 ... ♘xf3? 15 ♘xf3 ♘xe5 16 ♘g3 ♘g6 17 ♘f5 White's advantage would be alarming. Worthy of consideration, however, is the simpler alternative 14 ... 0-0 15 ♘xg4 ♘xg4 16 ♘e3 (not 16 ♘xh7? ♘xh7 17 ♘g5+ ♘xg5 18 ♘xg5 ♘xg5 with a clear advantage for Black) 16 ... ♘e6, although after 17 a4 White's position would seem to be slightly better.

15 b4!

At first glance it appears that this move simply helps Black's defensive plan, but it should be noted that the necessary withdrawal ... ♘e6 gets in the way of the Black queen's action, so lending a hand to White's attacking ideas on the kingside. Furthermore, it should be pointed out

that the text hinders a future ... c5 advance, the cornerstone of Black's counterplay on the queenside, and fixes the b5 pawn which can be weakened by means of the thematic advance a4 followed by axb5. In short, 15 b4 is a move with a far-reaching strategic purpose that enables White to fight for the initiative on both sides of the board.

15 ... ♘e6

Obviously not 15 ... ♘e4? because of 16 ♘xd5.

16 ♘f5

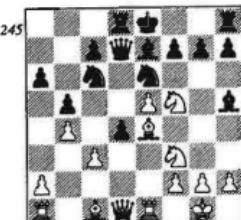
It would also have been possible to implement the ideas contained in the previous move by the more forcing 16 g4, for example: 16 ... ♘g6 17 ♘f5 0-0 18 a4 etc. The text move, which does not permit any reaction on the kingside, contains a trap into which Black stumbles.

16 ... d4?

This thematic reaction comes at the wrong time, when White is in a position to take tactical advantage of its defects. Black should have been patient, continuing with 16 ... 0-0 or 16 ... ♘g6 until his opponent had made a clearer statement of his intentions.

17 ♘e4! (245)

Suddenly Black finds himself in troubled waters: he cannot play 17 ... 0-0? because of 18 ♘xc6 and wins, while White would come through with a clear advantage after both 17 ... g6 18 ♘h6, and 17 ... d3 18 ♘e3



$\mathbb{Q}xf3$ (if 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd3+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ and White recovers the piece and remains a pawn up) 19 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$.

17 ... $\mathbb{Q}g6$

What else? It goes without saying that 17 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$? 18 $\mathbb{W}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ etc. was not possible either.

18 $\mathbb{g}4$

Quite correctly, White prefers to tighten his grip rather than loosen it and win a pawn with 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc6?$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ because Black would have adequate compensation by way of the greater activity of his pieces.

18 ... $\mathbb{h}5$

A desperate attempt at counterplay which gains no relief.

19 $\mathbb{h}3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

Black gives up any idea of castling and tries to wriggle free by preparing the retreat ... $\mathbb{W}e8$, but he will be too late.

20 $\mathbb{a}4$ $\mathbb{h}xg4$

21 $\mathbb{h}xg4$ $\mathbb{W}e8$
22 $\mathbb{a}xb5$ $\mathbb{a}xb5$
If 22 ... $\mathbb{d}xc3?$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1+$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 26 $\mathbb{b}xa6$ White wins easily.
23 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ (246)



White reaps the benefits of the versatile strategy he began with his 15th move and of his opponent's error on the 16th move: Black has been nailed down on both wings without any chance of being able to indulge in counterplay.

23 ... $\mathbb{Q}b8$

After 23 ... $\mathbb{d}xc3$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}a8$ White recovers the queen and is a piece up.

24 $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$

This elimination of the most important defender is the first nail in Black's coffin.

24 ... $\mathbb{fxe6}$
25 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$
26 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{d}xc3$

The point is that after the capture of the knight there would follow

$\mathbb{Q}g5$, recovering the exchange and winning the d4 pawn.

27 $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$
28 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
29 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$

After 29 ... $\mathbb{W}xg6$ 30 $\mathbb{W}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ Black would have to give up his queen.

30 $\mathbb{Q}g5??$

An excess of confidence that could have jeopardized the game. He should have played 30 $\mathbb{Q}gh4!$ (30 $\mathbb{Q}g2?$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}xg6$ 32 $\mathbb{W}d8+$ — 32 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ leads to a similar ending to the one that might have occurred in the game — 32 ... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 33 $\mathbb{W}xb8$ $\mathbb{W}d3+$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}d5+$ offers some hope to Black) 30 ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 31 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd2$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ with a won endgame.

30 ... $\mathbb{Q}h6$
31 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6?$

Black could still have given his opponent a hard time with 31 ... $\mathbb{W}d7!$, for example 32 $\mathbb{Q}fxe6$ (32 $\mathbb{W}xc3?$ $\mathbb{W}d1+$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}h1+$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}h4+$ etc.) 32 ... $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$. White should be winning, but it's still tricky. After the text, however, White resumes his control of the game.

32 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}d8$
33 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$
33 ... $\mathbb{W}d1+$ does not help: 34 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}h1+$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{g}5$ (35 ... $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 36 $\mathbb{W}xc7$ with unstoppable threats) 36 $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{g}xf4+$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$.

34 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}a8$
35 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$
36 $\mathbb{g}5$ $b4$
37 $\mathbb{W}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$
38 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $g6$
39 $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$
40 $\mathbb{Q}ed4$

Not 40 $\mathbb{Q}fd4?$ $\mathbb{W}a1$ with counterplay against the unprotected monarch.

40 ... $\mathbb{W}c8$

Now, after 40 ... $\mathbb{W}a1$ 41 $\mathbb{W}xc6$, Black is only left with a few checks.

41 $e6$

Of course not 41 $\mathbb{W}xc6??$ $\mathbb{W}b3+$ and mate next move.

41 ... $\mathbb{Q}d4$
42 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $c5$
43 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$

Or 43 ... $cxd4$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 45 $e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 46 $\mathbb{W}d8+$ etc.

44 $\mathbb{Q}c6$

1 - 0

Black has no way of prolonging the agony, for example: 44 ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 45 $e7$, or 44 ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 46 $\mathbb{W}d7+$.

Game 11

Karpov-Korchnoi

Merano (match, 6) 1981

Open Variation

1 $e4$ $e5$
2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$
3 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $a6$

Although the centre we are examining arises in the vast majority of cases out of the Open Variation, it

may sometimes result from other lines. In such cases, the strategic thinking set out earlier is still similar, although it clearly has to be moulded to the different structures and/or the different development of the pieces.

So, for example, it may crop up in the Classical Variation after 3 ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 4 $c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $d4$ $exd4$ 6 $e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (note the creation of the open centre which in this case is much different to that arising from the Open Variation) 7 0-0 $d5$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ (increases the pressure on $c6$ but above all prepares to dislodge the centralized knight by means of the thematic advance $f3$; also possible is 8 $exd6$ which, however, takes us off our subject, while the recapture 8 $cx d4$ cannot be recommended in this case because Black has not weakened the $c5$ square with the advances ... $a6$ and ... $b5$, and White would not manage to keep control of it even after 8 ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bx c6$) 8 ... 0-0 9 $f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ and, after quickly removing the black knight from $e4$, White is better.

The open centre can also make an appearance in certain variations of the 3 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ line, for example: 4 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ (this line, like the continuation 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ of the Open Variation — see the note to Black's ninth move in the previous game — is known as the Berlin Variation) 5 $d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (5 ... $a6$ may lead back to the Open Variation after 6 $\mathbb{Q}a4$, or lead to a Fischer centre if White goes in for 6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $dxc6$

7 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 8 $\mathbb{H}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9 $dxe5$; inadequate is the attempt to hold on to the extra pawn with 5 ... $exd4$? 6 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ d5 7 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ and White's position is much preferable, for example 7 ... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 9 $c4$ etc.) 6 $dxe5$ d5 7 $e4$ (in the open centre this move is more incisive when Black has omitted the advances ... $a6$ and ... $b5$ as the stability of the $\mathbb{Q}e4$ is immediately undermined) 7 ... $a6$ (after 7 ... $dx c4$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bx c6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ White is better) 8 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $dx c4$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ $bx c6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ with a clear advantage to White.

4 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$
5 0-0

An unusual form of the open centre may occur in a development of the line 5 $d4$ which White can employ if he wants to leave the beaten track. After 5 ... $exd4$ 6 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (this position is more frequently reached after the move order 5 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 6 $d4$ $exd4$) 7 $e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 0-0 9 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ d5. In spite of the evident differences by comparison with lines in the Open Variation, a number of themes typical of the centre we are looking at can be recognized here, for example: 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ (or 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $Qxe7$ 11 $c3$ $c6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ with a substantially equal game) 10 ... $bx c6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 13 $f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 14 $b3$ $f6$ with mutual chances.

5 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

To conclude this overview of the

open centre in lines other than the Open Variation, we must note that such a centre may occasionally be seen in some of the great variations of the Closed Spanish. After 5 ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ b5 7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ d6 8 $c3$ 0-0 9 $h3$, we find some examples:

(1) in the Chigorin Variation with ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$: 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ c5 11 d4 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $cx d4$ 13 $cx d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ d5 15 $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ where, however, the structural alteration proves favourable to White because the disappearance of the c-pawns isolates the d5 pawn and consigns the d4 square permanently into White's hands, for example: 16 $\mathbb{Q}1d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ with a clear advantage;

(2) in the Breyer Variation: 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 10 d4 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ d5! (a radical attempt to resolve the central tension) 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (after 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$? 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$ $dxe4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}b3+$ White has a winning attack) 15 $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ where, however, the different placing of the pieces seems to favour White who can immediately oust the centralized knight and gain the initiative with 16 f3 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}g3$.

6	$d4$	$b5$
7	$\mathbb{Q}b3$	$d5$
8	$dxe5$	$\mathbb{Q}e6$
9	$c3$	$\mathbb{Q}c5$

With this aggressive development of the king's bishop, Black

endeavours to utilize the offensive possibilities of the $\mathbb{Q}e4$, which might be even further boosted by opening the f-file or playing the advance ... $f5$. The text is a more enterprising alternative than 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ or 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$, for which we refer you to the previous game.

10 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$

White starts to concentrate piece action against the $\mathbb{Q}e4$ in order to dislodge it. 10 $\mathbb{W}d3$ is also sometimes played here.

10 ...
11 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ (247)



This position is an important crossroads because Black is called on to take a decision about his $\mathbb{Q}e4$.

Let us look briefly at some developments of alternatives to 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}c2$, which will be considered in the continuation to the game.

(1) 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xd2$ (12 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ allows 12 ... $d4$, with complicated play) 12 ... $f6$ 13 $exf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 14 $b4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 15 $a4$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 16 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $h6$ 17

$\mathbb{A}f4$ $\mathbb{A}g4$ 18 $\mathbb{A}g3$ with a position that theory judges to be slightly favourable to White.

(2) 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}xf2?$! (the Dilworth Variation in which Black tries to get as much as possible out of the aggressive placing of his pieces) 12 $\mathbb{K}xf2$ f6 13 exf6 $\mathbb{A}xf2+$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ (after 15 $\mathbb{A}g1$ Black has obtained first rate prospects with both 15 ... $\mathbb{E}a8$ and 15 ... g5) 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ with a highly complex position in which it seems that Black's piece activity is sufficient compensation for his potential inferiority in the endgame.

(3) 11 ... f5 12 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{A}b6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}fd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ (after 14 cxd4 f4 15 f3 $\mathbb{Q}g3!$ 16 bxg3 fxg3 and to thwart the kingside threats White is forced to sacrifice his queen with 17 $\mathbb{W}d3$ — 17 $\mathbb{A}e3?$ $\mathbb{W}h4$ 18 $\mathbb{A}e1$ $\mathbb{W}h2+$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{A}h3!$ 20 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}h1+$ 21 $\mathbb{A}g1$ $\mathbb{A}xg2+ 22 \mathbb{W}xg2$ $\mathbb{A}xf3+$ and wins — 17 ... $\mathbb{A}f5$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xf5$, but after 18 ... $\mathbb{E}xf5$ 19 $\mathbb{A}xf5$ $\mathbb{W}h4$ 20 $\mathbb{A}h3$ $\mathbb{A}xd4+$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4+$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ Black probably has the better prospects) 14 ... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 15 f3 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ and White has just an edge.

11 ... $\mathbb{A}f5$

Achieving the double purpose of supporting the $\mathbb{Q}e4$ and providing some opposition on the b1-h7 diagonal.

12 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{A}g6$

At one time 12 ... $\mathbb{A}g4$ was popular, but it is now rarely played due to

the continuation 13 h3 $\mathbb{A}h5$ 14 g4 $\mathbb{A}g6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ dx $e4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ ex $f3$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ with a position that practice has shown to be advantageous to White.

It should be pointed out that, here too, as with the previous move, Black can play 12 ... $\mathbb{A}xf2+?$! 13 $\mathbb{K}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{A}xc2$ 15 $\mathbb{W}xc2$ f6 with a position that has not been sufficiently tested to establish the real advantages and disadvantages compared to the Dilworth Variation.

13 $\mathbb{Q}fd4$

Now the double threat of $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ and $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ forces Black to exchange on d4.

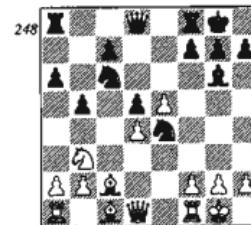
13 ... $\mathbb{A}xd4$

After 13 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 14 cxd4 $\mathbb{A}b6$ 15 f3 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 16 $\mathbb{A}xg5$ $\mathbb{W}xg5$ 17 f4 White is clearly ahead.

14 cxd4 (248)

Or 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ (here we have a case of indirect defence of the e5 pawn: if 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$ 15 f4 and wins) 15 cxd4 c5 16 f3 cxd4 17 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ (after 17 fxe4 dxe4 the strong pair of central pawns represents adequate compensation for the piece) 17 ... $\mathbb{A}g3$ 18 $\mathbb{F}f2$ with a slight advantage for White.

By fixing the c5 square, White has marked up an important point in his favour, a point that Black cannot afford to ignore if he wishes to avoid suffocation under a plan of the type $\mathbb{A}e3$, f3, $\mathbb{E}c1$ followed by occupation of c5 and exploitation of the c-file.



14 ... a5

As long as the $\mathbb{Q}e4$ controls the c5 square, Black has time to jam the works of the enemy pieces and ward off the potential invader, taking advantage of the fact that in the case of 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ dx $e4$! would give Black's queen a good square on d5, and an outpost for the knight on d3.

15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$

15 f4?!! f5 would only have the effect of permanently weakening the e4 square which would then represent adequate compensation for the weakness of c5. Moreover, 15 f3 a4 or 15 a4 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ would give nothing.

15 ... a4

After 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$?! 16 $\mathbb{A}b1$ a4 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ a3 18 $\mathbb{W}c1$! the knight's mission on b4 proves damaging for Black.

16 $\mathbb{Q}c1$

The alternative is 16 $\mathbb{Q}d2$, for example: 16 ... a3 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ axb2 18 $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{A}xe4$ 19 $\mathbb{A}xb2$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 20 $\mathbb{A}d3$ (after 20 $\mathbb{A}xe4$! dx $e4$ 21 $\mathbb{E}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ and Black has cast off any remaining

inferiority) 20 ... $\mathbb{A}xd3$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 22 $\mathbb{A}fb1$ (22 $\mathbb{A}xb5$?? $\mathbb{A}xb5$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 24 $\mathbb{W}b7$ $\mathbb{W}c6$) 22 ... b4 and although Black has failed to wipe out his structural inferiority entirely, his weakness in that department can be considered compensated for by the virtual superiority of the knight by comparison with the potentially bad bishop.

16 ... a3

The aim of the a-pawn's advance is to weaken the enemy queenside in general, and the b4 and c3 squares in particular. The immediate 16 ... f6 is also interesting, engaging in the typical piece sacrifice consequent on 17 f3 fxe5 18 fxe4 $\mathbb{E}xf1$ + 19 $\mathbb{W}xf1$ exd4 which seems to offer Black sufficient prospects of counterplay.

17 b3

White avoids the queenside pressure that would have arisen after 17 bx $a3$ $\mathbb{A}xa3$.

17 ... f6

It was also possible to open the struggle for control of the c5 square with 17 ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 18 $\mathbb{A}b1$ c5 (not 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}c3$? 19 $\mathbb{W}d2$!) but the text is more dynamic because it also serves to activate the kingside forces.

18 exf6

After 18 f3 Black can choose between the knight sacrifice with 18 ... fxe5 (exactly similar to that noted after Black's 16th) and the simpler 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 19 $\mathbb{W}d2$ b4 with mutual prospects in both cases.

- 18 ... $\mathbb{W}xf6$
 19 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$

The immediate 19 ... $\mathbb{W}e7$ is probably more accurate.

- 20 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$

The immediate 20 ... $c5!$? might lead to a draw after 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ (wrong is 21 $dxc5?$) $\mathbb{W}xa1$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ and wins; 21 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 22 $dxc5$ $\mathbb{Q}c2!$ 23 $\mathbb{H}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2!$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ (if 24 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ and Black is better) 24 ... $\mathbb{W}f3+$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}gl$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 26 $fxe3$ $\mathbb{W}xe3+$ with perpetual check.

With the text, Black, while certainly not forgetting that he still has to settle an important structural point (the achievement of the advance ... $c5$), plays to win. Exploiting the consequences of the strategy undertaken with his 17th move, he presses on two fronts, inaugurating pressure play on the e-file aimed at preventing the advance $f3$.

- 21 $\mathbb{W}e1!$

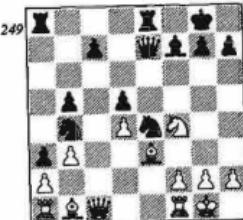
Neither 21 $f3?$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$, nor 21 $\mathbb{Q}f4?$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$, nor, finally, 21 $\mathbb{W}c1?$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2!$ 22 $\mathbb{H}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ 23 $\mathbb{H}xf8+$ $\mathbb{H}xf8$ 24 $\mathbb{H}xb1$ $\mathbb{H}e8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ etc., were possible.

The text is the only way to start chasing off the enemy forces: now the threat is 22 $f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}f4!$ $\mathbb{W}xe1$ 26 $\mathbb{H}fxel$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ with a crushing structural advantage. Black must therefore take steps to counter this.

- 21 ... $\mathbb{H}fe8$
 22 $\mathbb{Q}f4$

Of course not 22 $f3?$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ and Black wins.

- 22 ... $\mathbb{Q}f7$
 23 $\mathbb{W}c1??$ (249)



White plays consistently, to prevent the advance ... $c5$, but the bottled up position of his $\mathbb{Q}al$ offers Black the chance to seize the initiative by sacrificing a pawn. Correct was 23 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ after which the persisting structural advantage would have guaranteed White a slight advantage.

- 23 ... $c5!$

- 24 $dxc5$

Worse is 24 $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 25 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ because of 25 ... $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 26 $\mathbb{H}ac1$ $\mathbb{H}ac8!$ 27 $\mathbb{W}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 28 $\mathbb{H}xc8$ $\mathbb{H}xc8$ 29 $fxe3$ $\mathbb{W}xe3+$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{H}c1$ with a clear advantage to Black.

- 24 ... $\mathbb{W}f6$

- 25 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

White could defend his $\mathbb{Q}al$ indirectly with 25 $\mathbb{W}d1$ or 25 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (both with the idea that 25 ... $\mathbb{W}xa1$ would be followed by 26 $\mathbb{Q}d4$) but the text

is more straightforward and is aimed at holding on to the pawn gained.

- 25 ... $\mathbb{H}xe4$

The greater activity of the black pieces is sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn, and the possible advance of the d-pawn is an unpleasant threat that White has to ward off.

- 26 $\mathbb{Q}e2??$

To relieve the pressure and reinforce his position, White thinks it might be a good idea to move his knight to $g3$ but, as we shall see, this manoeuvre only worsens the knight's position. 26 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ was certainly better (with the idea 26 ... $d4?$ 27 $\mathbb{W}xb4$), but in our opinion Black's position, for example after 26 ... $\mathbb{W}b2$, would have continued to be the more promising.

- 26 ... $d4$

- 27 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{H}ee8$

- 28 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Not 28 ... $dxe3?$ 29 $fxe3$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 30 $\mathbb{H}f4$ and White recovers the piece and holds on to his material advantage.

- 29 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}e5$

- 30 $\mathbb{H}ac1$ $d3$

- 31 $\mathbb{H}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$

The position we have reached is particularly significant because it offers an illustration of the effects of Black's achieving many of his principal counterplay aims in the Open Variation: the $e5$ pawn has disappeared, the $d5$ pawn has thrown off its shackles and has penetrated

deeply into enemy territory. Black's pieces dominate the centre of the board and are much more active than White's. Finally, the presence of opposite-coloured bishops makes attacking operations against the white king in the middlegame more dangerous while the endgame mutes the importance of the material disadvantage that Black has had to pay to achieve his objectives.

The closing phase is marred by some errors — both players were in time-trouble — but this can take nothing away from the depth of the dynamic and strategic content of the game as a whole.

- 32 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{H}e6$

- 33 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}f6$

- 34 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{H}ae8$

- 35 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{H}xe6$

- 36 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $h5!$

- 37 $h3??$

White should have tried 37 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ to prevent ... $h4$.

- 37 ... $h4$

- 38 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}d4$

- 39 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}d5??$

An oversight that could have cost the full point if White had had just a few more seconds to spend on the fatal 40th move. The correct line was 39 ... $\mathbb{W}e5$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ after which Black would have had all the time in the world to tighten the screws on the kingside with moves like ... $\mathbb{Q}e5$, ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}g6$.

- 40 $\mathbb{Q}f1??$

Returning the favour. After 40 $\mathbb{Q}e2!$ it would have been curtains for Black because he would not have been able to save his d3 pawn, for example: 40 ... $\mathbb{B}f6$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 42 $\mathbb{M}d1$ etc.

40 ... $\mathbb{A}e4$
41 $\mathbb{Q}f4$

After 41 f3 $\mathbb{A}xf3$ 42 gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}xf3$ there is no defence for White.

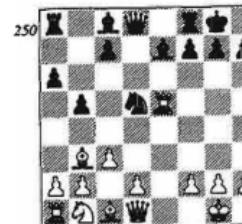
41 ... $\mathbb{A}xg2$
0 - 1

White resigned in view of the continuation 42 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}f3$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{M}e2$.

7 The Marshall Centre

Main line: Marshall Attack

1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{A}b5$ a6 4 $\mathbb{A}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{A}c7$ 6 $\mathbb{M}e1$ b5 7 $\mathbb{A}b3$ 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 11 $\mathbb{M}xe5$ (250).



Though the Marshall centre essentially arises from this move order, strategically similar situations may arise in other lines, for example: 1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{A}b5$ a6 4 $\mathbb{A}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{A}c7$ 6 $\mathbb{M}e1$ b5 7 $\mathbb{A}b3$ 0-0 and now:

Marshall Attack
— 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 e4 10 dx c 6 exf3

Anti-Marshall Systems
— 8 a4 $\mathbb{M}b8$ (or 8 ... b4 9 c3 d5 10 exd5 e4 11 dx c 6 exf3) 9 axb5 axb5

10 c3 d5 11 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13 $\mathbb{M}xe5$
— 8 d3 $\mathbb{A}b7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ d5 10 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12 $\mathbb{M}xe5$
— 8 h3 d5 9 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 11 $\mathbb{M}xe5$

Or: 1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{A}b5$ a6 4 $\mathbb{A}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{A}c7$ and now:

Worrall Variation
— 6 $\mathbb{W}e2$ b5 7 $\mathbb{A}b3$ 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

Trajkowic Variation
— 6 $\mathbb{M}e1$ b5 7 $\mathbb{A}b3$ $\mathbb{A}b7$ 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 11 $\mathbb{M}xe5$

1 Strategic Ideas

For a correct assessment of the compensation that Black obtains following the Marshall pawn sacrifice, mention should be made of a number of elements — common to most of the variations listed above — that can be immediately appreciated in the position shown in diagram 250. These are:

(1) Black's advantage in development, which is clear for three reasons:

— the number of pieces developed and the greater facility with which Black can complete his development;

— the delay in development of White's entire queenside;

— the presence of a white rook in the centre that will inevitably be dislodged, with a further gain in time for Black.

(2) The unprotected position of the white king, due to the sidelining of the light-squared bishop and the exchange of the KN.

(3) The open nature of the position, which enables Black to quickly organize his offensive by exploiting open lines, such as the d8-h4 and b8-h2 diagonals, and sometimes the a8-h1 diagonal, as well as the e-file.

Incidentally, it should also be noted that Black must first address the problem of protecting his Qd5 . He can react basically in three ways — which already imply different decisions on the subject of future methods of attack : protecting the knight with ... c7-c6; protecting it by developing the bishop to b7; or removing the knight.

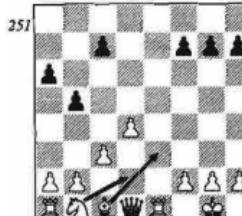
On the basis of the previous comments, it is fairly easy to outline the type of struggle that usually characterizes such positions: Black must

endeavour to transform his lead in development into an attack by bringing concrete threats to bear as quickly as possible against the opponent's castled position with the aim of provoking structural weakening. White, on the other hand, will try to neutralize Black's initiative and eventually make use of his extra centre pawn.

Mobilization of the queenside

In view of his opponent's imminent offensive, White will have to try and bring his queenside forces into the game as quickly as possible so as to transfer them to the defence of his vulnerable castled position.

In this regard, the most common set-up envisages the advance d2-d4 and, following the withdrawal of the rook from its uncomfortable central position (generally to e1, sometimes to e2), the placing of the QB on e3 and the knight on d2 (251).



251

The idea is to subsequently transfer the knight to f3 or to f1 in order to guarantee maximum possible protection for the pawns defending the castled position. Meantime, the queen can be deployed as required to d3 or to f3, so permitting communication between the rooks.

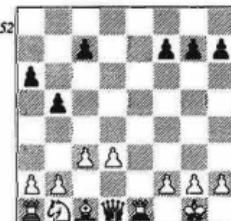
In orchestrating the mobilization of his forces on the queenside, White will follow the best possible order of moves to fit the particular situation, as he can move his bishop, knight or queen first. The sequence most suited to circumstances is not always evident and must be identified by keeping constantly in mind the immediate defensive needs of the castled position.

It should also be pointed out that White's d-pawn is subject to possible attack by ... c5, after which White can rarely contemplate the idea of replying dxc5 because the further opening up of the game can only favour Black who enjoys a more active, immediate development.

Sometimes, albeit more rarely, White opts for a set-up that requires the advance d2-d3 (252).

Compared to the previous case, he loses the chance of playing the queen to d3, but he does not leave his flank open to the previously mentioned advance ... c5 and has the chance to safely use the square e4 for his rook or knight.

252

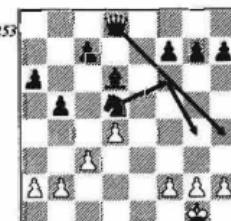


Methods for weakening White's castled position

While White is intent on developing his forces on the queenside in accordance with the criteria that we have outlined above, Black can bring direct threats against the opponent's castled position and produce a permanent weakening in them by forcing the advance of one of the protective pawns.

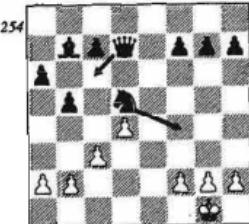
The point most exposed to a rapid attack of the black pieces is White's h-pawn (253).

253



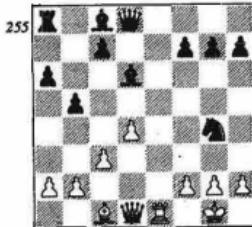
As we have mentioned already, the dark-squared bishop can win the crucial b8-h2 diagonal with gain of tempo on the $\text{He}5$, and its actions against h2 can become a real threat by means of the prompt intervention of the queen and/or the knight. Black's methods discussed previously for thwarting the attack on the $\text{Qd}5$ may influence the choice of the piece to be used in backing up the bishop in its action against b2, the advance ... c7-c6 being more closely linked to the move ... $\text{Wh}4$, while the withdrawal ... $\text{Qd}5-f6$ is linked to the later ... $\text{Qf}6-g4$.

Another point that may become the object of attack is White's g-pawn, usually through the combined action of the QB with knight and/or queen (254).



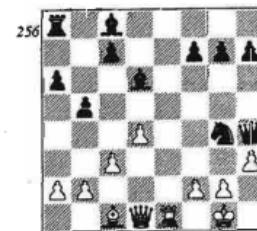
This method may also be linked closely with the previous problem of protecting the $\text{Qd}5$, the developing move ... $\text{Ab}7$ being a natural introduction to applying pressure on g2.

Usually the only way for White to meet threats of this kind is to push forward one of the three pawns protecting the castled position: White's pieces are still on the queenside. Depending on the type of attack orchestrated by Black, he will have to find the most effective advance and then call on his queenside forces to fill his further defensive needs. So, for example, to repulse the attack against h2 brought by bishop and knight (255)

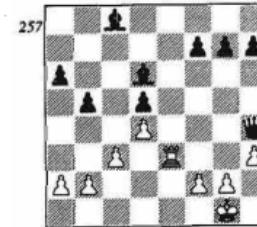


... the advance g3? would be inadequate owing to the devastating sacrifice ... $\text{Qxh}2!$, for example: $\text{Qxh}2 \text{ Wh}4$, $\text{Bg}1 \text{ Qxg}3$, $\text{fxg}3 \text{ Wh}3g4$, $\text{Wh}1 \text{ Qg}4$ etc. The correct reply would be the advance h3, rebuffing the further assault ... $\text{Wh}4$ (256)

... by means of $\text{Wf}3$, without fearing the subsequent sacrifice ... $\text{Qxf}2$ because following $\text{He}2$ the knight is trapped and Black has no way of successfully pursuing his destructive action.

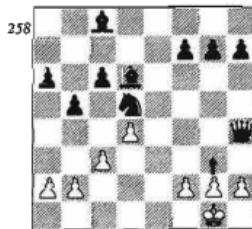


Another set-up that implies the advance h2-h3 envisages the exchange of the light-squared bishop for the knight in order to render the square e3 accessible for the withdrawal of the $\text{He}5$ (257).



protection can be dismantled later by sacrifices such as ... $\text{Qxg}2$ or ... $\text{Qh}3+$.

In practice, the structural weakness that occurs with most frequency is that caused by the advance g2-g3 (258)

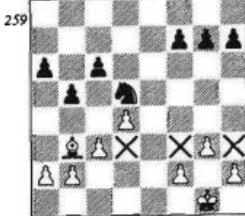


... and we must, therefore, spend some time on this.

The advance g2-g3 and the weakening of the white squares

As the structure that White usually sets up envisages the advances d2-d4 and g2-g3, a general weakness of the white squares in his territory is a fairly common feature (259).

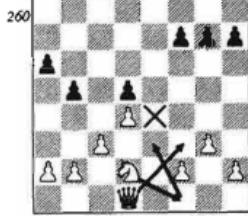
In fact, the squares d3, f3 and h3 can no longer be controlled by pawns and even e2, e4 and g4 may become a target for the incursions of Black's pieces. These squares are particularly weak because the light-squared



bishop has been relegated to the queenside and rarely has time to return to cover the kingside if Black maintains the initiative.

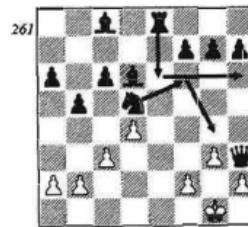
This explains why White often decides to simplify by exchanging it for the knight so as to reduce his opponent's attacking potential, albeit at the price of granting him the bishop pair and of further increasing the weakness of his light squares. On the other hand, this exchange creates a permanent weakness in Black's structure: the isolated d-pawn on the one hand guarantees Black an even greater hold over the light squares, but it is easy to attack, for example with the manoeuvre $\text{Qd}2\text{-f}1\text{-e}3$ or with the straightforward sortie $\text{Wf}3$ (260).

Nonetheless, this structural alteration allows Black to face the endgame with fewer risks. After the recapture ... $\text{c}6\text{xd}5$ his pawn minority is ideally arranged to discourage the white majority and can even inject some venom into the situation



by unleashing a minority attack based on the advance ... $\text{b}5\text{-b}4$.

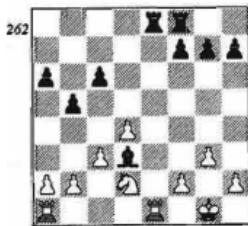
It should be pointed out that if White opts for the advance $\text{d}2\text{-d}3$ (instead of $\text{d}2\text{-d}4$) this provides only a partial remedy to the disarray of the light squares and does nothing to improve those round about the king. Generally speaking Black can install his queen on $\text{h}3$ without difficulty — as a direct consequence of the sortie ... $\text{Wh}4$ — and he will take advantage of this intrusion for renewing his attack against $\text{h}2$ (261).



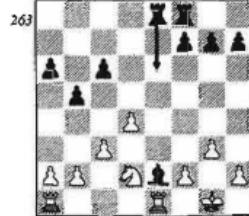
The intervention of a rook (via

$\text{e}6\text{-h}6$) or the knight (via $\text{f}6\text{-g}4$) are the most immediate methods for backing up the queen's marauding activities, but White must also reckon with the possibility that the light-squared bishop is able to gain control of the long diagonal $\text{a}8\text{-h}1$ either directly, for example by ... $\text{Bg}4\text{-f}3$ (a manoeuvre which often has lethal effects) or more subtly, for example by ... $\text{Bb}7$ followed by ... $\text{c}6\text{-c}5$.

The occupation of $\text{d}3$ also frequently forms part of Black's plans. He will generally endeavour to put his bishop there, pursuing aims that are not so direct as those deriving from the occupation of $\text{h}3$ or $\text{f}3$ but not for that reason less effective. From $\text{d}3$, in fact, the bishop not only hinders the already scanty room for manoeuvre of the white pieces, but is also, for example, able to eliminate the knight which has moved to $\text{f}1$ in defence of the castled position, or it may play a decisive role in the struggle for possession of the only open file (262).



Here, for instance, Black would not be able to take stable control of the e-file because the presence of the $\text{He}1$ prevents him doubling up there. Nevertheless, after ... $\text{Be}2$ (263)

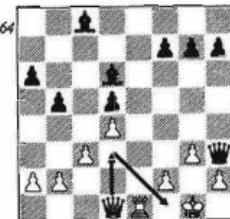


... he will be free to continue with ... $\text{Le}6$ and ... $\text{He}8$, having thus also highlighted the vulnerability of the $\text{e}2$ square.

Manoeuvres to protect the white squares

While Black attempts to exploit white-square weaknesses, White must try to compensate, his primary objective in this direction usually being to dislodge the black queen from her annoying position on $\text{h}3$. Since usually, as we have already said, the light-squared bishop is relegated to the queenside or has been exchanged for the knight, other forces will have the task of moving to the defence of the light squares. In the case in point, this role can be

played by the queen, normally via d3-f1 (264).

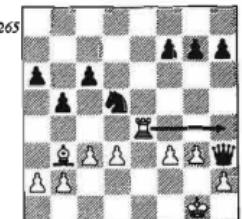


This route is more viable than the analogous e2-f1 or f3-g2 because it is less subject to disturbing action on the part of the enemy pieces, such as the intervention of a rook on the e-file or of the light-squared bishop on the h5-d1 diagonal.

White has also tried to confer greater drive on this method by withdrawing his $\text{Kt}5$ to e2 so that he can transfer his queen directly to f1 along the first rank. However, this solution also has its faults because it leaves the rook more exposed to harassment on the h5-d1 diagonal and weakens control of the f3 square.

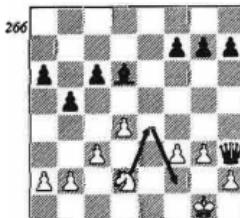
It should be pointed out that, after succeeding in warding off her antagonist, the white queen can take control of the long diagonal h1-a8 by means of Qg2 in the hope of targeting the weakness of any isolated pawn that has resulted from the exchange Qxd5 cxd5 .

Another method White can employ for dislodging the queen from h3 is the intervention of the KR via e4-h4 (265).



We might observe that this system is particularly feasible when White has opted for the advance d2-d3 because in this case the rook is defended (see below, tactical ideas: 'The undefended position of the Rd4 ') and if necessary can also use the d4 square which may be useful for applying pressure against the d5 point whether this is occupied by knight or pawn. Finally, another, more laborious, manoeuvre that White may sometimes try is to transfer his knight to f2 (via d2-e4) after removing the f-pawn by means of the advance f2-f3 (266).

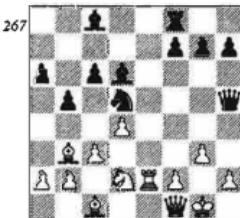
This manoeuvre must not be viewed exclusively from the viewpoint of dislodging the queen from h3 but should be seen in the broader strategic context of the general strengthening of the white squares,



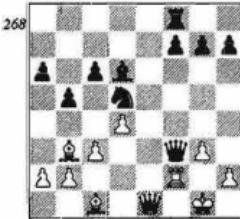
although it should be observed that the advance f2-f3 leads to an appreciable weakening of e3 and g3. This 'remedy' could thus worsen the situation if the circumstances in which it is used are not propitious, for instance when Black is able to make the effective sacrifice ... Qxg3 .

When Black is forced to remove the queen from h3, White should not be lulled into thinking that he has managed to repulse the assault on his light squares. The h3 square, in fact, may become a target for the black light-squared bishop, while the black queen can continue to make her influence felt on the white squares, generally along the h5-d1 diagonal. White can achieve a more concrete result if he is able to simplify by exchanging his knight for the enemy light-squared bishop which is sometimes possible, albeit at the price of giving back his extra pawn (267).

Here, for example, White has no particular reason to fear ... Qh3, Qe1



Qg4 , because after f3! Qxf3, Qxf3 (268)

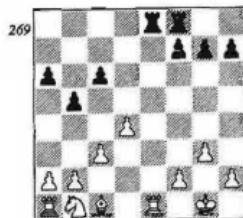


... Black's attack has lost one of its star performers, while, in the long term, the bishop pair may prove to be an important factor.

The e-file and the opening of lines on the kingside

Black's attack cannot rely solely on the action of the queen and of the minor pieces; it also requires a contribution from the rooks at some point, so it is only natural to look to

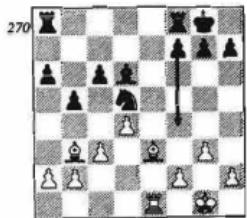
the open e-file. Although this is occupied by White in the first stage of the game, Black is often able to win control of this file by simply exploiting the presence of the white QB on e3 or the difficulty of setting up communications between the opposing rooks (269).



It is, however, only under exceptional circumstances that such a direct strategy is decisive in prising open the defences of the enemy castled position. This may be the case, for example, when Black is able to pinpoint a weakness on White's first and/or second rank, penetrating directly via the open file.

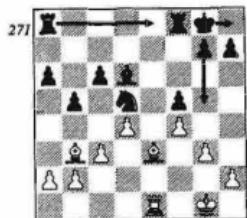
Usually Black's tries to open lines for his rooks by advancing his kingside pawns (270).

In practice, his most common plan is the advance of the f-pawn against g3 which, as may be readily imagined, could have fatal consequences for the safety of the white king. It



should be pointed out that, albeit more rarely, Black can aim for a g3 breakthrough by using his advancing b-pawn.

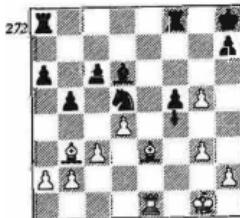
Clearly, White can almost never permit the plan shown in the last diagram, so he will endeavour to prevent it, usually responding to the advance ... f7-f5 with the containing move f2-f4 (271).



Nonetheless, Black has successfully weakened e3 — a factor that may prove decisive in the struggle for dominance of the e-file — and he

may renew his attack by the advance ... g7-g5 or release his knight by the simple unpinning move ... ♘g8-h8.

The aim of these manoeuvres is to increase pressure on points f4 and/or e3 in order to force White into the capture f4xg5, thus renewing his prospects of a breakthrough based on the advance ... f5-f4 (272).

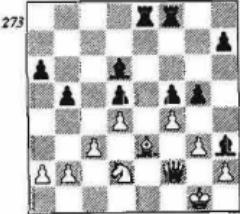


Note that in a situation such as the one represented here, Black may sometimes aim to open the g-file by the advance ... b7-b6.

In conducting the assault on the kingside, Black pays little attention to the number of pawns sacrificed and to the inevitable weakening of his castled position: the former is, in fact, never too high a price to pay for opening attacking lines against the enemy king, and the latter is not a real danger for as long as the advantage in development enables him to retain a solid initiative on the kingside.

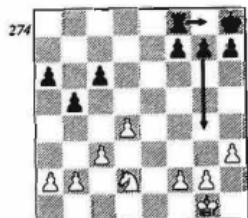
In situations similar to those shown in diagram 271 Black may

also resort to certain typical exchange sacrifices in order to force the opening of attacking lines (273).



Here, for example, Black can destroy his opponent's blockade by ... ♜xe3, ♜xe3 gxsf4, which forces open the g-file, or by ... ♗e4, ♗xe4 fx4, which frees the action of the rook on the f-file whereupon the pressure on the f4 pawn becomes critical.

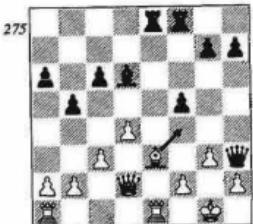
On the other hand, in the event of White having previously played the advance h2-h3 (or f2-f3) instead of g2-g3, Black can mobilize his g-pawn (274).



To prevent this type of breakthrough, White can try to blockade g4 by using manoeuvres such as f3 followed by $\mathbb{Q}e4-f2$, in the hope of discouraging his opponent's intentions after the inevitable simplifications that would take place on g4 if Black were to insist on going through with his plan.

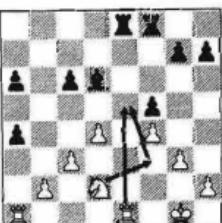
Manoeuvres for keeping kingside lines closed

White's intentions of keeping Black's kingside play under control may be enhanced by manoeuvres designed to plug open lines, a strategy which is typified by an early $\mathbb{A}e3$ to block the e-file. A decision of this kind should not be considered merely as a remedy for preventing Black's penetrating on the e-file but may be a prelude — after solving the problem of queenside development — to active opposition on the open file and on the h2-b8 diagonal (275).



275

276



This function could best be fulfilled by the knight, but Black must not underestimate the opponent's chance to sacrifice the exchange by $\mathbb{A}e5$. The exchange sacrifice is especially dangerous when Black's kingside operations have implied further yielding up of material or when his queenside pawn structure has been jeopardized after the advance a2-a4 and the capture ... $b5xa4$, the price of which may be the loss of a pawn or two on the queenside.

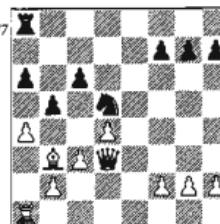
Here is a case in which White is able to counter the intentions of his opponent with the straightforward $\mathbb{A}e3-f4$ which reduces the pressure on the h2-b8 diagonal and reopens the e-file at a more favourable moment.

At times, the blockade idea pursued by means of the advance f2-f4 (see diagram 271) may be completed by occupying e5 with a piece (276).

The advance a2-a4 and the pressure against Black's b-pawn

In this type of centre, White's only target for counterplay is the usual weakness on Black's queenside resulting from the advances ... a7-a6 and ... b7-b5. The pawn on b5 may be targeted by the advance a2-a4 with the direct or indirect participation of White's queenside forces (277).

277



The queen can contribute directly to the pressure on b5 along the f1-a6 diagonal, while the light-squared bishop and the QR take part indirectly, one by deflecting Black's c-pawn if necessary by means of the exchange $\mathbb{A}xd5$ and the other by exerting a veiled pin on Black's a-pawn. It should be noted that the possibility of opening up the a-file by means of $axb5$ $axb5$ must usually

be considered as a real threat even when the $\mathbb{A}a8$ is defended because the simple exchange of White's idle QR must be considered a success insofar as it greatly diminishes Black's offensive potential. Black can normally play in one of three different ways and we will review the implications briefly:

(1) The capture ... $b5xa4$. This decision very often implies the later sacrifice of the pawn on a6, acceptance of which costs White a few tempi and means the relinquishing of the first rank on the part of his QR. Black has in mind to exploit these elements so as to impress greater energy on his kingside counterplay and at times to exert nagging pressure down the b-file. For his part, White acquires the possibility of ousting the $\mathbb{Q}d5$ by advancing his c-pawn to c4 or of exploiting that square so as to engage in the plugging manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}d2-c4-e5$ (or e3).

(2) The advance ... $b5-b4$. The consequences with regard to the c4 square are the same, but this move prevents the opening of the a-file, so reducing the risk of having to give up a second pawn. On the other hand, White's QR is not forced to forgo its protection of the first rank.

(3) The defence ... $\mathbb{A}a8-b8$. This decision keeps the situation as little varied as possible, although it does not prevent the opening of the a-file

and the weakening of the pawn on b5 if White decides to exchange on b5 and d5.

It is clear that there is no absolutely preferential move, so Black has to weigh up the situation every time it arises, taking into full account the specific features of the position.

2 Tactical Ideas

In the Marshall, tactical and dynamic aspects have a considerable influence on the development of the game because White's castled position is subjected from the very beginning to the violent pressure of enemy pieces. White must therefore keep an eye open if he is to avoid falling into one of the many traps such as the ones illustrated in our comment to diagrams 255 and 256. Even at a more advanced stage of the game, tactics may often be deployed at the service of the strategic needs of both sides, as we have had occasion to note when illustrating the typical sacrifices of material shown in diagrams 272, 273 and 276.

Here we will concern ourselves with those recurrent themes that underlie decidedly tactical purposes and that have not therefore been examined during our presentation of the strategic principles.

The interference of the c1-h6 diagonal

Very often, the carrying out of the typical manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{E}e8-e6-h6$ is prevented by the simple fact that the white dark-squared bishop is controlling h6. At times, Black can use tactics to achieve his aims (278).

278

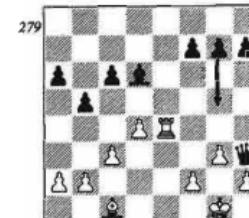


Here, for example, Black can interfere seriously with ... $\mathbb{A}f4!$, threatening both ... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ and ... $\mathbb{B}h6$, and his opponent cannot reply either with $\mathbb{A}xf4$, owing to ... $\mathbb{K}e2$, $\mathbb{W}c2 \mathbb{Q}xf4$, $gxf4 \mathbb{B}h6$ etc., and even less so with $gxf4$ because of ... $\mathbb{B}h6$, for example: $\mathbb{Q}f1 \mathbb{B}f3$ followed by mate.

The undefended position of the $\mathbb{E}e4$

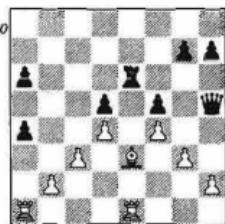
At times, White's attempt to dislodge the enemy queen from h3 by the typical manoeuvre $\mathbb{E}e1(e2)-e4-h4$

can be frustrated by the undefended position of the $\mathbb{E}e4$ (279).



279

280



double attack on e3 and a4 would cost him a piece.

The weakness of the back rank

This element may, in fact, permit Black to make the sacrifice ... $g5$ which stops White transferring his rook to h4. Usually this sacrifice cannot be accepted because $\mathbb{A}xg5?$ would be followed by ... $\mathbb{W}f5$ with a double attack on e4 and g5.

Insufficient protection of the $\mathbb{E}e3$

At times, particularly following the advance of White's f-pawn, the $\mathbb{E}e3$ may be exposed to dangerous combinative ideas, one of which has already been pointed out in our comment to diagram 273. Here we will mention another which, while elementary, occurs with considerable frequency (280).

Black has captured the pawn on a4 by ... $bxa4$, and White has to take care not to recapture $\mathbb{A}xa4?$ mechanically because after ... $\mathbb{W}e8$ the

281

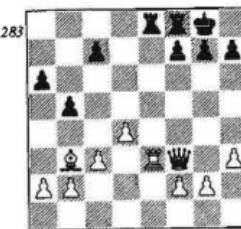


Here is a typical situation: Black plays ... $\mathbb{E}e2$, $\mathbb{W}xe2$, $\mathbb{E}e8$, $\mathbb{W}d1$ (282)



282 ... and now takes advantage of the weakness on White's back rank by means of the dramatic ... $\mathbb{W}xf3!$ which wins immediately.

White too may sometimes play a similar combination (283).

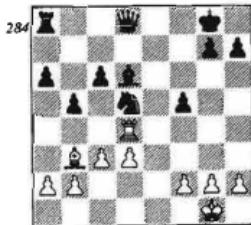


283 Here, for instance, the immediate $\mathbb{W}xf7+!$ unexpectedly exploits the weakness of Black's last rank, even though both rooks are still there.

The a2-g8 diagonal

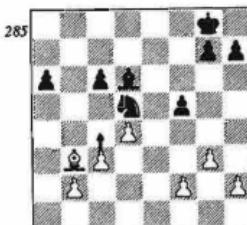
As already implicitly pointed out in the last example, White may at times

find a tactical way of exploiting the presence of his light-squared bishop on the diagonal a2-g8, especially when this has been weakened by the advance ... $f7-f5$ (284).



In this very simple case, Black cannot rely on the indirect defence of $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (i.e. $\mathbb{Q}xd5 cxd5, \mathbb{W}xd5? \mathbb{A}xh2+$) because in effect White can then win a pawn with $\mathbb{W}xd5 cxd5$ (... $\mathbb{A}xh2+, \mathbb{Q}xh2$ $cxd5$ is also a trade-off favourable to White), $\mathbb{Q}xd5+$ followed by $\mathbb{A}xa8$.

At other times, following the elimination of the pawns on a4 and



b5, Black may find himself facing a situation of potential danger along the a2-g8 diagonal (285).

Here White can win a piece with the straightforward $c3-c4$ followed, after the flight of the knight, by the further advance $c4-c5+$.

3 Illustrative games

Game 12

Ljubojevic-Nunn

Amsterdam 1988

Marshall Attack

1	e4	e5
2	$\mathbb{Q}f3$	$\mathbb{Q}c6$
3	$\mathbb{A}b5$	a6
4	$\mathbb{A}a4$	$\mathbb{Q}f6$
5	0-0	$\mathbb{A}e7$
6	$\mathbb{K}e1$	

The conditions for the formation of the Marshall centre can also occur in the Worrall Variation after 6 $\mathbb{W}e2$ b5 7 $\mathbb{A}b3$ 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5, but Black, instead of continuing with 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ — which is probably not enough justification for the gambit (for example: 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe5 \mathbb{Q}f4$ 11 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12 d4 $\mathbb{A}b7$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 14 $\mathbb{W}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 15 $\mathbb{A}xc1$) — can continue more energetically with 9 ... $\mathbb{A}g4$, for example: 10 dxec6 e4 11 d4 exf3 12 gxf3 $\mathbb{A}h5$ with good attacking prospects in exchange for the sacrificed material. White can avoid these complications by choosing the safer 9 d3.

6	...	b5
7	$\mathbb{A}b3$	0-0

The Marshall centre may also crop up in the Trajkovic Variation after 7 ... $\mathbb{A}b7$ 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 11 $\mathbb{A}xe5$, but the black king's continuing location in the centre is a disadvantage that does not appear to be fully justified by the chance to put g2 under pressure, for example: 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 12 d4 $\mathbb{W}xg2$ 13 $\mathbb{W}e2$ and the initiative slips into White's hands.

The text, which holds off the decision on the fate of the d-pawn, may be a prelude to the Marshall Attack, while the more usual 7 ... d6 is a certain indication that Black will be continuing with a closed Spanish.

8 c3

At this point, in order to try to discourage use of the Marshall Attack and at the same time to leave the better trodden paths of theory, White has experimented with various alternatives which are commonly grouped under the heading of 'Anti-Marshall Systems'. However, these lines are not enough on their own to prevent the formation of the centre in question and we will therefore use this opportunity to examine such cases:

(1) 8 a4 $\mathbb{A}b8$ (if Black wants to continue in the spirit of the gambit, this reply is best because after the main alternative 8 ... b4, the premature yielding of the c4 square would

discourage the Marshall centre, for example: 9 c3 d5 10 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ — White also takes the advantage after 10 ... e4 11 dx6 exf3 12 d4 — 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ c6 13 d4 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{W}h4$ 15 g3 $\mathbb{W}h3$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ with the idea of continuing with 17 $\mathbb{Q}f1$. On the other hand, after 8 ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$, to prevent the formation of the Marshall centre, White may continue with 9 d3, with the idea that after 9 ... d5 10 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ control of the f4 square prevents Black from augmenting his pressure on g2 with the thematic ... $\mathbb{Q}f4$, as would happen in the event of 9 c3 d5 10 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$?! $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ with advantage to Black) 9 axb5 axb5 10 c3 d5 11 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 14 d4 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ with game themes exactly similar to those we have considered. It should be mentioned, however, that this is a very much improved version for White as his QR is already in play.

(2) 8 d3 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ d5 10 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ and White protects his castled position without difficulty.

(3) 8 h3 d5 9 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 12 d4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$, again with similar themes to those considered in the present chapter.

8 ... d5

This is the move that inaugurates the Marshall Attack.

9 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

9 ... e4 is the Steiner Variation. It is highly complex but would seem to favour White in the line 10 dx6 exf3 11 d4 (better than 11 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$) 11 ... fxg2 12 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f4$.

10 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

11 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

Now the attack on the $\mathbb{Q}d5$ forces Black to take decisions not only as how to best protect it, but also as regards the method of attack he intends to employ against his opponent's castled position. Support by 11 ... c6 (as we shall see in the text game and easily the most common line of play in practice) intends the subsequent plan ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ and ... $\mathbb{W}h4$, whereas 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ pursues the idea of putting g2 under pressure with moves such as ... $\mathbb{W}d7-c6$ and/or ... $\mathbb{Q}f4$; the withdrawal 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$; on the other hand, presages the later ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$. Let us look at some developments of these alternative possibilities:

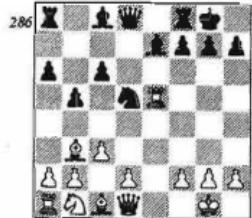
(1) 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ is Marshall's original idea, but is little played today; nonetheless it forces White to defend with great care, for example: 12 d4 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 14 h3 (if 14 g3?!) $\mathbb{W}f6$ with a clear advantage to Black, for example: 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 16 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ etc.; unsatisfactory is the immediate 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}xh2$? because of 15 $\mathbb{W}h5!$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ with murky complications) 14 ... $\mathbb{W}h4$ 15 $\mathbb{W}f3$ (not 15 $\mathbb{W}xh2$?, because of 15 ... $\mathbb{W}h2+$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}h1+$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4+$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

$\mathbb{W}xg2$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ — if 19 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}f3+$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ etc. — 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}e3+$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{W}e4+$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ mate) 15 ... h5 (the enterprising 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ is refuted by the straightforward 16 $\mathbb{Q}e2$, for example: 16 ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 17 g3! $\mathbb{W}xh3$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 19 $\mathbb{W}g2$ etc., while it would be a fatal error to capture the knight immediately with 16 $\mathbb{W}xf2?$ because after 16 ... $\mathbb{Q}h2+!$ — a basic intermediate move to force the White king to move to the f-file — 17 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 18 $\mathbb{W}e2$ — if the king is still on g1, White can deploy the thematic counter-tactic in the form of $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ winning — 18 ... $\mathbb{W}xh3$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xh3$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ and Black wins) 16 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ and White's prospects are slightly better, according to theory.

(2) 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ is also played rather sporadically; White can endeavour to turn the situation to his own advantage on the long white diagonal by playing the unnatural 12 $\mathbb{W}f3$ (it is not the same after 12 d4, for example: 12 ... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$! 15 $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 16 f3 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 17 dx5 $\mathbb{W}f5$ with sufficient compensation for the material sacrificed) for example: 12 ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (13 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ is favourable to Black) 13 ... c6 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ cxds 15 d4 and Black's offensive has been largely quashed.

11 ... c6 (286)

We have now reached an important crossroads: faced with the plan



... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ and ... $\mathbb{W}h4$ White must decide how to organize the defence of his castled position. Apart from the main line (12 d4, which we will look at as the game advances) two other possible set-ups are of particular interest:

(1) 12 d3 (the idea of this move is to retain control of e4 in order to have adequate support available for the knight or rook, as will be clear later) 12 ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{W}h4$ (probably more sound is 13 ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$, after which White must decide whether to give back the pawn to solve his development problems, for example: 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f4!$ — after 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ Black is forced to give up the bishop pair — 15 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ with mutual chances, or whether to try and hang on to his material advantage through the more demanding 14 $\mathbb{W}f3$, for example: 14 ... $\mathbb{W}e8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{W}xe8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}e1+$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f1$) 14 g3 $\mathbb{W}h3$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (and now we see how useful the pawn move to d3 is: White

prevents the foray ... ♜g4 and prepares to dislodge the enemy queen from h3 by transferring his rook to h4; if the d-pawn had been on d4, this manoeuvre would now have been frustrated by ... g5! as we have shown in diagram 279) 15 ... ♕f5 16 ♘d2 ♜g6 and although White has managed to free himself of the cumbersome presence of the enemy queen on h3, Black's attack still has potential.

(2) 12 ♘xd5 (the idea behind this move is to make the e3 square available for the rook in order to guarantee adequate support to the advance b2-h3, which weakens White's castled position to a less evident extent than the alternative g2-g3; the other side of the coin is not just the giving up of the bishop pair, but also the fact that after the recapture ... cxd5 Black's pawns have a better set-up, as we have seen in our comment to diagram 260) 12 ... cxd5 13 d4 ♘d6 14 ♘e3 ♜h4 15 h3 g5 (possible alternatives are 15 ... f5 and 15 ... ♜f4) 16 ♜f3 ♜e6 17 ♜f6 and White has succeeded in putting a temporary brake on Black's kingside pawns, but his delay in development on the queenside allows his opponent time to re-organize his attack.

12 d4 ♘d6
13 ♜e1

The withdrawal 13 ♜e2 has also been explored (the idea being to save a tempo compared to the text,

because now White is in a position to transfer his queen directly to f1 without passing through d3), for example: 13 ... ♜h4 (also good is 13 ... ♜g4 14 f3 ♘h5 15 ♘xd5 cxd5 16 ♘d2 f5 and Black retains sufficient compensation for his pawn, whereas against 13 ... ♜c7? — which threatens 14 ... ♜d6, with the idea of 15 g3? ♜g4 — White has successfully tried both 14 ♘d2 and 14 ♘c2) 14 g3 ♜h5 (or 14 ... ♜h3 15 ♘d2 ♜f5 16 a4 with a very complex position) 15 ♘d2 ♘h3 (after 15 ... ♜g4 16 f3! ♘xf3 17 ♘xf3 ♜xf3 18 ♜f2 White is preferable) 16 f3 with a position in which White is able to effectively activate his knight, at times by way of the advance c3-c4, at times using the e4 square as a transit point for g5 or f2.

13 ... ♜h4
14 g3 ♜h3
15 ♜e3

Now 15 ♜e4? is met by 15 ... g5 (based on the well-known tactic 16 ♘xg5? ♜f5). Nevertheless, this move is sometimes tried, for example: 16 ♜f3 (or 16 ♜f1 ♜h5 17 f3 ♘f5 followed by ... ♜e8 with adequate compensation for the pawn) 16 ... ♜f5 17 ♘xd5 cxd5 18 ♘e3 ♜e4 19 ♘xe4 dxe4 20 ♜f6 with an extremely complex position.

Other possible continuations, though considered inoffensive by theory, are 15 ♘xd5 and 15 ♜d3.

15 ... ♜g4

16 ♘d3 ♜ae8

The pressure on the e-file is of fundamental importance in the later development of Black's attack, whatever turn events happen to take. From this point of view it would appear to be riskier to omit this preparatory measure and immediately commence an all-out attack with 16 ... f5, for example: 17 f4 ♜h8 18 ♘xd5 cxd5 19 ♘d2 g5?! (19 ... ♜ae8 20 ♜f1 ♜h5 takes us back to the game) 20 ♜f1 ♜h5 21 a4 bxa4 22 fxg5 f4 23 ♘xf4 ♜xf4 24 gxg4 ♜f8 25 ♜e5 (a series of exchange sacrifices that falls within the opposing logic of the two sides' opening/closing attacking lines) 25 ... ♘xe5 26 dxg5 h6 27 ♜xa6! hxg5 28 ♜d6! ♜xf4 29 ♜f1 and White emerges from the ruck one sound, decisive pawn up.

On the other hand, 16 ... ♘xe3 relieves the pressure too soon, for example: 17 ♘xe3 c5 18 ♜f1 ♜h6 19 ♘d2 ♜ad8 20 ♘f3 ♘xf3 21 ♘xf3 cxd4 22 exd4 ♘d2 23 ♘d3! and Black cannot retake the pawn because after 23 ... ♜xb2? 24 ♘b1 ♜a3 25 ♘xf7+ he would lose his queen.

17 ♘d2 (287)

The first stage of the struggle is at an end: White has finally managed to get his queenside pieces into the game and he can dislodge Black's queen from h3 by the withdrawal ♘d3-f1, but for his part Black is ready to unleash a second attack against the enemy king.



17 ... ♜e6

17 ... f5 is an important alternative, with the clear intention of exploiting the weaknesses caused by the advance g2-g3 with ... f5-f4, for example: 18 ♜f1 ♜h5 19 f4 ♜h8 20 ♘xd5 cxd5 21 a4 (or 21 ♘g2 g5 — 21 ... ♜e4? — 22 ♘xd5 ♜hd8 23 ♜c6 gxg4 24 ♘xf4 ♜xf4 25 gxg4 ♘e2 26 ♘b1 ♜de8 and although Black's material disadvantage has become more unpleasant, his attacking prospects are perhaps still sufficient compensation) 21 ... bxa4 22 ♜xa4 g5 23 ♜aa1 (not 23 fxg5? ♜xe1? 24 ♜xe3 f4 25 gxf4 ♘xf4 26 ♘g3 ♜e8! with advantage to Black, nor 23 ♜xa6? gxg4 24 ♘xf4 ♘h3 25 ♜f2 ♜xe1+ 26 ♜xe1 ♘xf4 27 gxg4 ♜g4+ and Black wins) 23 ... ♜e6 24 fxg5 ♜fe8 25 ♜f2 f4? with sufficient compensation for the sacrificed material.

18 ♘d1?

An attempt to leave the beaten track. The theoretical debate has centred on 18 a4, with the idea of

opening up the queenside and activating the queen's rook. Let us look at some possible developments of this tried and tested continuation:

(1) 18 ... f5 (18 ... ♖f4? 19 ♖xd5 ♜h6 20 ♖g2 ♜xh2+ 21 ♖f1 ♜b3 22 ♜e4 etc. is not possible, but 18 ... bxa4 19 ♜xa4 f5 is playable, after which White has to be careful to avoid continuing mechanically with 20 f4? — correct is 20 ♜f1 — because this would leave the way open to a tactical ploy similar to the one mentioned above: 20 ... ♖xf4! 21 ♖f2 — if 21 gxf4 ♜g6 22 ♜xd5+ ♜h8! etc. — 21 ... ♜xe1+ 22 ♜xe1 ♜e8 with a winning attack) 19 ♜f1 ♜h5 20 f4 bxa4 21 ♜xa4 (also very common is 21 ♖xd5 cxd5 22 ♜g2) 21 ... ♜b8 (Black, with the threat of 22 ... ♜xb3 23 ♜xb3 ♜xe3, hopes to induce his opponent into capturing on d5 so as not to lose the tempo ... ♜b8 in order to unpin the knight; other interesting lines that theory has subjected to thorough investigation are 21 ... ♜fe8 and 21 ... g5) 22 ♖xd5 cxd5 23 ♜xa6 (23 ♜g2 has also been thoroughly tested) 23 ... ♜e8 with a position that is currently at the centre of the theoretical debate.

(2) 18 ... ♜h5 19 axb5 axb5 20 ♖f1 ♖f5 (a good alternative is 20 ... ♜fe8) 21 ♖d2 ♜fe8 22 ♖xd5 cxd5 23 ♖f4 (it appears that White has managed to set up effective resistance on the main lines of contention,

but Black has not yet run out of resources) 23 ... ♜xe1 24 ♜xe1 ♜xe1 25 ♜xe1 ♖e4! (parrying mate on e8 and threatening ... ♜f3) 26 ♖d2 ♖xf4 27 ♖xe4 dxex4 28 gxex4 ♜g4+ with an equal game.

It should be pointed out that the attempt 18 c4?! would be refuted by 18 ... ♖f4! as White's best chance would now be to enter a slightly inferior endgame with 19 ♜f1 (if 19 gxex4? ♜h6 20 ♜e4 ♜xh2+ 21 ♖f1 ♜e6 etc., if instead 19 ♖xf4? ♜xf4 20 ♜f1 ♜e2+ 21 ♖h1 ♜h6 etc.) 19 ... ♜xe3 20 ♜xh3 ♜xh3 21 cxb5 ♜c2 22 ♖xe6 fxex6 23 gxf4 ♜xal 24 ♜xa1 ♜xf4.

With the text move, White tries to loosen Black's grip on the light squares by exchanging the light-squared bishops rather than trading bishop for knight. Nevertheless, as we shall see, this decision has some unpleasant consequences, including the risk of entering an endgame with a bad, impotent dark-squared bishop against a strong centralized knight.

18 ... ♜xd1

Black cannot exploit the undefended position of the ♜e1 with 18 ... ♜f4 because of the simple reply 19 ♜f1 nor, again, can he allow the exchange of queens by 18 ... ♜f5 because after 19 ♜f1 ♜fe8 20 ♜xh3 ♜xh3 21 ♖b3! White pins the ♖d5 and threatens to set up effective opposition on the e-file with the subsequent sequence ♖f1 and ♖d2, so

preserving his pawn advantage without unwanted consequences.

19 ♜xd1 f5!

In spite of the exchange of the light-squared bishops, Black's attack has not slowed down in any way. Faced with the very serious threat of 20 ... f4 White must defend with the utmost precision.

20 ♖f3!

The only correct defence, 20 c4? would have been poor: 20 ... bxc4 21 ♖xc4 f4 22 ♖d2 ♜h6 with a winning attack, nor 20 f4? ♜fe8 21 ♖f1 ♖xf4 with a clear advantage for Black, nor again 20 ♜f1? ♜h5 21 ♜e2 ♜g6 followed by the inevitable ... f4 with very strong pressure.

With the text move, White threatens ♖g5 and at the same time prepares to grasp the opportunity of blocking the dangerous diagonal b8-h2 by installing his knight on e5.

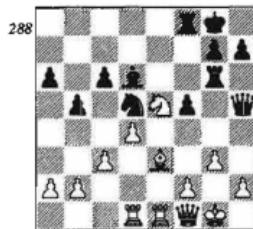
20 ... ♜g6

The most energetic method of pursuing the attack. The alternatives were insufficient: 20 ... f4? 21 ♖g5 and wins, 20 ... h6? 21 ♖e5! ♜xe5 22 ♖f4! ♜xf4 23 gxf4 and White recaptures his piece with a solid pawn advantage and, finally, 20 ... ♜xe3? 21 ♜xe3 ♜xe3 22 ♜xe3 f4 23 ♖g5! ♜xh2+ (23 ... ♜h5 24 ♜e6+ ♜h8 25 ♜e1 fxg3 26 hxg3 ♜xg3? 27 ♖f7+ and wins) 24 ♜xh2 fxex3 25 f4 and the pawn on e3 drops.

21 ♜f1

Again the only defence. Not 21 ♖g5? ♜h5 22 f4 h6 and Black wins the knight, or 21 ♖g5? f4 22 ♖h4 fxg3 23 fxg3 ♜xg3 with a winning attack.

21 ... ♜h5
22 ♖e5 (288)



White has succeeded in his intention of blocking the diagonal b8-h2, but he has been unable to prevent the further advance of the f-pawn which will now inject fresh vigour into Black's attack.

22 ... ♜xe5
23 dxe5 f4
24 ♖c1

After 24 ♖c5? (or 24 ♖d4? c5! 25 ♖xc5) there would have followed 24 ... fxg3 25 hxg3 ♜f4! with the idea that if 26 ♖xf8 ♜h6, while if 26 ♖e7 ♜h3+, winning in both cases.

24 ... ♜h6
24 ... fxg3 25 hxg3 ♜xg3+ 26 fxg3 ♜xf1+ 27 ♜xf1 ♜e5 is not enough to win.
25 ♜g2 f3

26 $\mathbb{W}b1$
 26 g4? $\mathbb{A}g6$ 27 h3 (27 $\mathbb{Q}d4$? $\mathbb{Q}f4!$
 $28 \mathbb{g}xh5 \mathbb{Q}h3+$ and wins) 27 ... $\mathbb{W}h4$
 $28 \mathbb{W}h2$ h5 only makes things worse.

26 ... $\mathbb{A}e6$
 27 h4 $\mathbb{A}xe5?$

In his haste to re-establish material equality, Black lets the white queen back into the game. To preserve better winning prospects he should have prevented White's next move by means of 27 ... $\mathbb{W}f5!$, followed by the capture of the e-pawn with ... $\mathbb{A}fe8$ and ... $\mathbb{A}xe5$.

28 $\mathbb{W}h3$ $\mathbb{A}xe1+?$

Black still hopes to exploit the superiority of his centralized knight over the bishop, but this inaccuracy enables White to redress the balance by bringing his bishop back into the game. To retain any chance of victory, he should have played 28 ... $\mathbb{A}fe8!$, retaining control of the e-file, and with it the passive position of the $\mathbb{A}c1$.

29 $\mathbb{A}xe1$ $\mathbb{A}e8$
 30 $\mathbb{A}e6!$

Black clearly missed this move when he played his 27th and 28th.

30 ... h6

30 ... $\mathbb{W}f7?$ is wrong because of 31 $\mathbb{A}xc6!$ and it is Black's first rank that becomes the weakest.

31 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{A}xe3$

After 31 ... $\mathbb{W}f7$ 32 $\mathbb{A}xe8+$ $\mathbb{W}xe8$ 33 $\mathbb{A}d4$ the active position of the White pieces is enough to guarantee the draw.

32 $\mathbb{A}xe3$ $\mathbb{A}xe3$

33 $\mathbb{A}xe3$

½-½

A word of warning before leaving this chapter. As our short survey of the Marshall Attack shows, Black enjoys an enduring initiative for the sacrificed pawn, even if White reacts correctly; it is possible for White to go down very quickly if he is not familiar with the extensive theory of this variation. So before plunging in, make sure you have a good system prepared.

Speaking personally, I (DJK) have always been terrified of the Marshall! When the situation arises I usually avoid the main lines with $a4$ (the 'Anti-Marshall'). This is a sound continuation with a proven track record.

8 The Fischer Centre

Main Line: Exchange Variation

1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{B}b5$ 4 $\mathbb{A}xc6$
 $\mathbb{dx}c6$ 5 d4 $\mathbb{exd}4$ 6 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ (289)



Strategically similar conditions may crop up in other variations too. For example: 1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{B}b5$ and now:

Berlin Variation

— 3 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 5 d4 $\mathbb{Q}d6$
 (or 5 ... $\mathbb{A}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{W}e1$ — or 6 $\mathbb{A}e1$ — 6
 ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 7 $\mathbb{A}xc6$ $\mathbb{dx}c6$ 8 $\mathbb{dx}e5$) 6 $\mathbb{A}xc6$
 $\mathbb{dx}c6$ 7 $\mathbb{dx}e5$

Exchange Variation

— 3 ... a6 4 $\mathbb{A}xc6$ $\mathbb{dx}c6$ 5 0-0 f6
 (or 5 ... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 6 d4 $\mathbb{exd}4$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$, or

also 5 ... $\mathbb{A}d6$ 6 d4 $\mathbb{exd}4$ 7 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 6
 $d4$ $\mathbb{exd}4$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

Deferred Exchange Variation

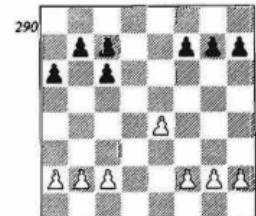
— 3 ... a6 4 $\mathbb{A}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{A}e7$ 6
 $\mathbb{A}xc6$ $\mathbb{dx}c6$ 7 $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 8 d4 $\mathbb{exd}4$
 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

Open Variation

— 3 ... a6 4 $\mathbb{A}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$
 6 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 7 $\mathbb{A}xc6$ $\mathbb{dx}c6$ 8 d4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 9
 $\mathbb{dx}e5$

1 Strategic Ideas

Observation of the pawn structure common to the above variations allows us to pinpoint certain distinctive features of this type of centre (290).



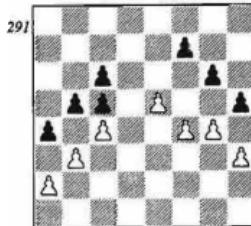
The open d-file divides the board into distinct kingside/queenside sectors where each side has a mobile pawn majority. To this it should be added that White has given up the bishop pair, which represents the most immediate *quid pro quo* for the doubled pawns that Black has been landed with on the c-file.

It should be pointed out that in some variations, the same pawn structure may be seen with the white e-pawn on e5 instead of e4: this tiny detail does not change the broad strategy of the two sides but does involve some slight differences in how the game develops, as we shall see in the course of our discussion.

The endgame favourable to White and the bishop pair

Observation of diagram 290 immediately shows the different make-up of the two pawn majorities, White's being sound (namely able to lead to the creation of a passed pawn) and Black's compromised (namely unable to create a passed pawn). This is easy to check if we imagine mobilizing the two majorities: whereas the three black pawns on the kingside can only delay the formation of a passed pawn, the white pawns on the queenside — presuming they take up the correct formation, such as a2, b3,

c4, or a 'V' formation a3, b2, c3 (a4, b3, c4) — are able to block the progress of their opponents. In this regard, in the position shown in diagram 290, a significant sequence might be: f4 h5, g3 c5, e5 g6, c4 b5, b3 c6, h3 a5, g4 a4 (291)



... where the ineffectiveness of Black's efforts is evident.

From this it can be concluded that White enjoys a clear structural superiority; his advantage, however, is in inverse proportion to the number of pieces on the board: barely perceptible in the opening and middlegame, it increases as the position simplifies, becoming decisive in an endgame of king and pawns.

Piece intervention can, obviously, change things radically. White, therefore, in pursuing a strategy aimed at progressive simplification (facilitated by the open d-file) must be careful to choose piece exchanges (particularly minor pieces) which are appropriate to the pawn structure.

The ideal result of such a simplification process is an endgame in which White is left with a knight and Black with a bishop of opposite colour to the squares on which White's queenside pawns are located.

We must not believe, however, that White can fulfil his intentions without problems. The reasons are as follows:

- (1) when both sides castle short, White's pawns on the kingside have to protect their sovereign and are therefore less mobile than Black's pawns on the queenside. The mobilization of White's majority is therefore much more delicate than that of his opponent;

- (2) if White declares his intentions as to the set-up of his pawns on the queenside too soon, he provides invaluable pointers to the enemy and creates weaknesses down the d-file, factors which bode ill for his middle-game needs;

- (3) as compensation for his doubled pawns, Black has the bishop pair, which prevents White opening the position too much in the middle-game and can also be important in the endgame, especially if exchanges have led to an ending with bishop against knight and pawns on both flanks; if in fact Black manages to break up the pawn structure on the queenside or retain a bishop of the same colour as the squares on which White's queenside pawns are

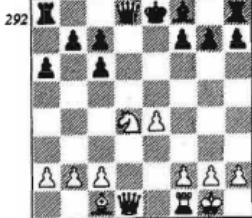
located, White's presumed advantage in the ending could become the cause of his defeat.

The problem of a queen exchange and the position of Black's king

In this type of centre, the presence of the open d-file sets up the ideal circumstances for an early queen exchange. Broadly speaking, this exchange should favour White who has a structurally better endgame. Nevertheless, it should be observed that the elimination of the queens is not enough to ensure that the game has moved into the ending (especially when Black can still exercise the option of castling on the opposite side to his opponent) and it should be observed that the endgame, in the cases covered above, might still harbour some unpleasant surprises for White.

It follows that the range of possibilities is enormous as both sides can decide to exchange queens or hang on to them (depending on how they consider their chances in the endgame) and as Black can decide to castle on the opposite side to White who almost without exception goes for short castling (292).

So, in the situation illustrated here, Black can decide to exchange off his queen with ... c5 followed by



his majority; nonetheless, this does not prevent him — particularly when Black has castled short and queens have been kept on the board — from endeavouring to employ his virtual extra pawn in the middlegame as a weapon in the development of an attack against the enemy king. In this regard, those lines in which White decides to fianchetto his QB are particularly significant (293).

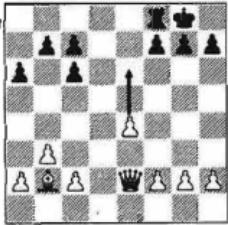
... $\mathbb{W}xd1$ or hold on to it with moves like ... $\mathbb{A}d6$ or ... $\mathbb{W}d6$, with the possibility in either event of choosing between castling long or short. By the same token, White can decide to accept the exchange of queens by keeping his own on d1 or avoid it by means of developing moves such as $\mathbb{A}e3$ and $\mathbb{W}e2$.

If, then, the respective sectors of initiative can be practically taken for granted in the endgame (the kingside for White and the queenside for Black), the same cannot be said for the middlegame, where the position of the black king can affect the strategic thinking of both sides.

Mobilization and containment of the white majority

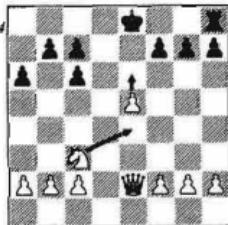
As White needs to take care not to overexpose the position of his king, he normally has to await the endgame before he can freely mobilize

293



... as are those in which the centre we are examining originated with White's e-pawn on e5 and not on e4 (294).

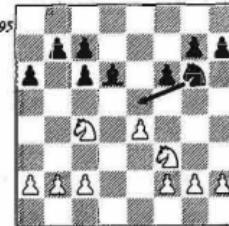
294



In such cases it is quite clear that Black must pay particular attention to the advance of the e-pawn. With this in mind, it is natural that he should agree to play the move ... f7-f6 with good grace, often at a stage of the game in which the Fischer centre is still being formed (namely when White has not yet advanced his pawn to d4).

The advance ... f7-f6 frequently marks the beginning of a strategy to contain the White e-pawn — and the white majority in the broad sense — in which key roles are played by the KB on d6 and the KN sometimes on d7 or f7 (respectively via f6 or h6) but more often on g6 via e7 (295).

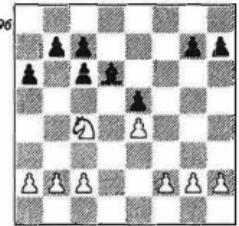
295



It should be observed that Black has no need to fear the exchange of his dark-squared bishop even if this implies loss of the bishop pair because, after ... cxd6, his structural disadvantage would be considerably reduced. In case a blockade of the e5

square becomes necessary (... $\mathbb{Q}e5$) Black need not even fear splitting his kingside pawns if he takes on e5 with his f-pawn ($\mathbb{Q}fxe5$ $fxe5$) because in this case too his structural disadvantage can be considered reduced (296).

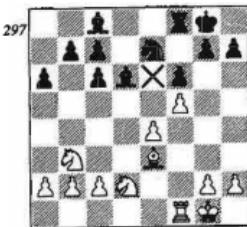
296



Here we can appreciate that, in spite of the isolation of the e-pawn, Black's firm control of the f4 square makes it extremely laborious for White to mobilize his majority.

The advance ... f7-f6, however, also has its drawbacks: first, it offers White's e-pawn a breakthrough point, forcing Black to maintain constant watch on e5. While, on the one hand, this might fall in with his desire to restrain the White majority, on the other it distracts him from mobilizing his own majority on the opposite side, with the possible result of enabling White to take the initiative on the queenside in the way we shall see below; second, it weakens the e6 square which White,

under favourable circumstances, can fix with the apparently anti-positional advance f4-f5 (297).

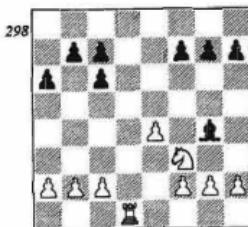


At first sight, such behaviour would appear to be a serious strategic error because, by handing e5 over to Black, it seriously compromises the kingside pawn majority. In fact, it often greatly limits the range of action of Black's pieces (restricting the ♜e7 and handicapping the ♜c8 by forcing it to keep up surveillance of e6). The f4-f5 advance then forces the game into blocked paths in which White can mobilize his majority (by g2-g4) with fewer risks, intending either to hem in his opponent on the kingside (g4-g5) or to repair the defects in his pawn structure by breaking through in the centre (Qc4, ♜f4 and e4-e5).

Of course, such a strategy is not without its dangers, its success or failure being strictly related to how effectively Black's forces are bottled up and how real White's possibilities

are of implementing the later stages of his plan.

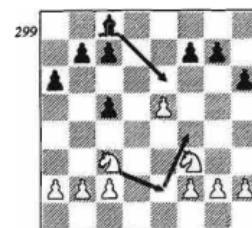
Another means by which Black is able to hamper mobilization of the white majority is through the pin on the ♜f3 by means of the developing move ... ♜g4 (298).



Clearly, when White cannot adequately meet the threat of ... ♜xf3, the recapture gxf3 would seriously damage the chances of exploiting his pawn majority.

This method of constraint may obviously be combined with the advance ... f7-f6, while in those positions in which the centre we are examining originated with White's e-pawn on e5, the light-squared black bishop usually finds more immediate employment as a blockader on e6 (299).

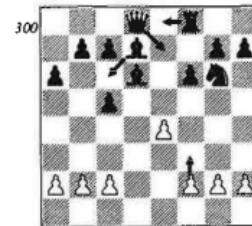
In this regard, if Black is not to yield up the bishop pair, he is well advised to protect his position against the possible inroads of the enemy KN (Qg5 or Qd4), even



though it should be observed that White can also use his QN for this purpose by way of e2-f4.

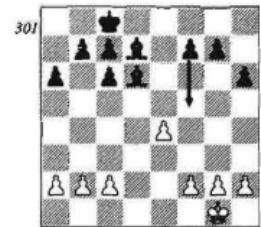
The pressure on White's e-pawn and the advance ... f5

The manoeuvres for restraining the white majority may occasionally be accompanied by some pressure on the pawn on e4, with the aim of inducing White to protect it with the unambitious move f3 (300).



It should, of course, be noted that play involving pressure against e4 is indicated even more in situations in which White has already advanced his f-pawn to f4; in such cases, in fact, the e-pawn is weakened and Black can target it for counterplay.

Another situation in which the e-pawn can be put under pressure crops up when Black has opted to castle long. Such a decision, in fact, contrasts with the plan of fast mobilization of the queenside pawn majority, especially when the queens have remained on the board (because Black must not lay open his king's position) and its logical consequence is therefore the idea of giving as much scope as possible to his bishop pair, so leading to the opening up of the centre by means of the advance ... f5 (301).



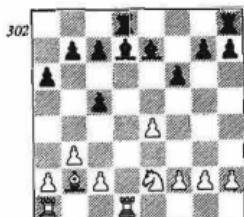
It goes without saying that the exchange of a pair of pawns on the kingside has no negative repercussion on White's majority. Nevertheless, the

disappearance of White's e-pawn lends more strength to the range of action of Black's bishops, a factor that proves useful in both the mid-game and endgame. It must be pointed out that when Black has castled short, the application of such a strategy is only possible in exceptional circumstances.

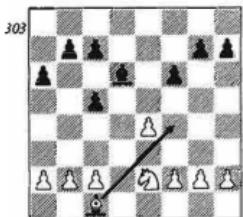
Mobilization and restraint of the black majority

Barring cases shown in the previous diagram, it is clear that the principal target for Black counterplay lies in fast mobilization of his queenside pawn majority. This is often facilitated by the presence of White's KN on d4 because this is open to immediate attack by the advance ... c6-c5. The advance of the black pawns does not only have the aim of trying to get rid of the doubled pawns and re-establish a sound pawn structure on the queenside. It often pursues more general objectives such as that of unhinging the opponent's pawn structure and/or creating weaknesses that can open up enemy territory for pieces (302).

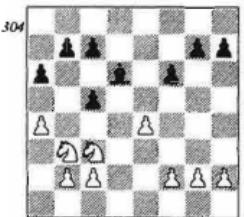
Here, for example, the try ... $\mathbb{A}e6$ (with the idea of continuing with ... c4) would prove ineffective because of c4 b5, $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{A}f7$, $\mathbb{Q}d5$ and White successfully holds the position. The disruptive sacrifice of a pawn with ... c4! however, enables Black to burst



302



303



304

out of his apparently passive position, for example: bxc4 $\mathbb{A}a4!$, $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{A}c5$ with a fully active bishop pair and the threat of recovering at least the pawn by means of the straightforward ... $\mathbb{A}xd4$ followed by ... $\mathbb{A}xc2$. There is also the simple idea of bxc04 $\mathbb{A}e6$, recovering the pawn immediately: the bishops have greatly increased their scope.

From White's point of view, it is therefore logical for him to apply a strategy of restraint against the black majority, not only by using the pawn patterns outlined above (see 'The endgame favourable to White and the bishop pair') but also with the aid of pieces.

In this regard he can plan an exchange of dark-squared bishops, particularly when the advance ... c6-c5 has already been made, even though this involves the undoubling of his opponent's c-pawns (303).

After $\mathbb{A}f4 \times d6$ and ... cx6d, in fact, any benefits to Black's pawn structure are more apparent than real

because the d-pawn is backward, fixed and located on an open file, and the d5 square becomes weak and easily occupied by a white knight. If then White were able to complete his restraint plan by advancing his a-pawn to a5, the rigidity of Black's pawns on the queenside would be practically total. Note the big difference (due to the advance ... c6-c5) between the plan examined here and the possibility of exchanging on d6 illustrated in diagram 295.

Another method for restraining the black majority is represented by the advance a2-a4 aimed at preventing (with the aid of the QN developed on c3) the advance ... b7-b5 (304).

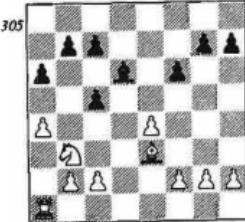
Like the method outlined above, this is also effective after Black has made the advance ... c6-c5 which is, in effect, obligatory in any expansion plan. In the diagram, if Black tries to prepare the advance ... b7-b5 and make up for the temporary weakness of the d5 square with ...

c7-c6, then White could reply with the advance a4-a5, removing flexibility from Black's pawns and fixing b6 with the idea of completing his restraining plan with manoeuvres like $\mathbb{A}a4$ or $\mathbb{Q}d2-c4$. It follows that to achieve his aims, Black would first have to play ... b7-b6, giving rise to a pawn structure that White sometimes tries to induce by applying pressure to the pawn on c5, as we shall see later.

The pressure against the pawns on c5, c7 and b7

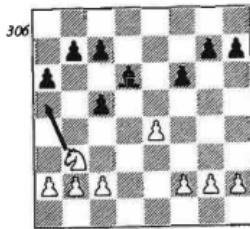
It is obviously White's intention to restrain Black's queenside pawns. In particular, White may combine the restraining move a2-a4 with pressure against the c5 pawn, a manoeuvre generally orchestrated by withdrawing the $\mathbb{Q}d4$ to b3 and developing the QB to e3 (305).

The barely concealed aim is to induce Black to play ... b7-b6 prior to launching an attack on the awkward



queenside pawn configuration by means of the advance a4-a5.

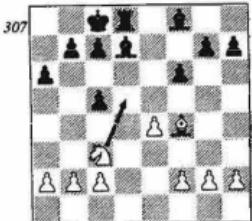
Black's b-pawn is yet another foot-soldier that can become the target for attack (306).



Although at first sight the arrival of the knight on a5 would appear to be a pointless decentralization, it should be stressed that it can prove highly insidious. This is because the natural replies ... b6 or ... b5 often open the way to the annoying incursions $\mathbb{Q}c6$ or $\mathbb{Q}b7$, while the straightforward defence of the pawn with a piece leaves the white knight

the possibility of simply remaining on a5 or of moving to c4 with the purpose, for instance, of transferring to e3 or of effecting a favourable exchange on d6.

Finally, the pawn on c7 may also attract hostile attention, generally in the form of a combined bishop and knight attack (307).



Defence of c7 may prove more problematical than it would seem at first glance: in our example, after $\mathbb{Q}d5$ Black could actually be mated in the event of ... c6?, $\mathbb{Q}b6$ mate, but even the forced ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ is not without unpleasant positional consequences after $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ cxd6, as we saw above.

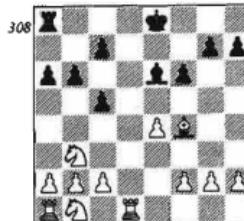
This last example allows us to stress that the themes of pressure against the queenside pawns outlined here may be even more dangerous when Black has castled long, although at the same time they are partially avoided by the fact that the b7 and c7 pawns are protected by the black king.

2 Tactical Ideas

Although the simplified nature of the Fischer centre generates positions in which the strategic components affect the course of the game much more than tactics, some tactical ploys do recur and both sides need to keep them in mind. Some of the traps that follow are really elementary, but we believe that words spent on situations of potential danger are never wasted.

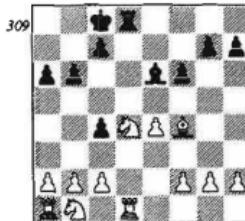
The undefended position of $\mathbb{E}d1$

This is perhaps the theme that crops up with greatest frequency and can be used by Black in more than one way (308).



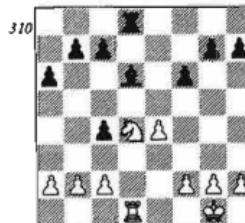
Similar situations as the one shown often occur when Black has decided to exchange queens on the d-file. In such circumstances a natural way to protect the pawn on c7 and complete

the development of the queenside forces lies in castling long, but here this is naturally illegal. Black, instead, can take advantage of the undefended position of the $\mathbb{E}d1$ by playing ... c4, $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 0-0-0 (309)



... without fearing the apparent refutation $\mathbb{A}xc7?$ (with the idea of ... $\mathbb{A}xc7?$, $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$) because of ... $\mathbb{E}xd4!$ which forces White to accept the unfavourable exchange of two minor pieces for rook and pawn.

A potentially dangerous situation, based on the same theme, lies in wait for White when the d-file is apparently

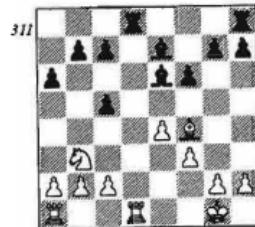


blocked by the black dark-squared bishop on d6 (310).

Here the simple threat is ... c5 followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}xh2+$ after the knight retreats.

The weakness of the a7-g1 diagonal

When White, after castling short, has advanced his f-pawn to f3 or f4, he has to be careful of the consequent weakening of the a7-g1 diagonal (311).

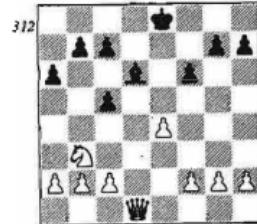


Here, for example, Black can use this theme to activate a favourable simplifying combination. He plays ... c4 and, after $\mathbb{Q}d4$, continues with ... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$, $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ recovering his material and guaranteeing himself a safe endgame with opposite-coloured bishops. Note that White would not have been able to repulse the advance ... c4 with $\mathbb{Q}a5?$, although this is thematic, because the attack on the b-pawn would have

been thwarted by the intervention of the dark-squared bishop on the a7-g1 diagonal: ... $\mathbb{Q}c5+$, $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$, $\mathbb{Q}xb7?$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ and the knight is trapped.

The pseudo-sacrifice $\mathbb{Q}xc5$

This is an elementary theme that Black has to watch out for when he has played the advance ... f7-f6 and the queens are still on the board (312).

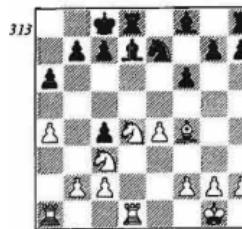


Here White can win a pawn by the simple sequence $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$, $\mathbb{W}h5+$ followed by $\mathbb{W}xc5$. It should be noted that this theme is possible even when the king is on g8: in this case the sequence would be $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$, $\mathbb{W}d5+$ etc.

Attacking themes against the long castled position

We have already seen that White's attacking forays against the queenside

pawns may be particularly lethal when Black has castled long. The following example, although artificial, shows us these forays may be linked with other tactical threats against the black king (313).



Here White plays $\mathbb{Q}db5!$ and the attack against the pawn on c7 has Black in all sorts of trouble, for example: ... $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ (White preserves the attack and obtains a big material and/or positional advantage against any reply: if ... c6?, $\mathbb{Q}a7$ mate; if ... $\mathbb{Q}xb5$, $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$, $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$, $\mathbb{Q}xa6!$ with the implication ... $\mathbb{Q}xf4?$,



a7 and wins; if finally ... $\mathbb{Q}g6$, $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$, $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$, $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ etc.), $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ (314)

... and now, faced with the threat of mate on a8, Black is condemned to a rapid demise after ... b6, $\mathbb{Q}a8$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$, $\mathbb{Q}a1$ etc. or after ... $\mathbb{Q}b8$, b6 etc.

3 Illustrative games

Game 13

Timman-Matanovic

Yugoslavia 1978

Exchange Variation

1 e4 e5

2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

3 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ a6

The Fischer centre can also make its appearance in some lines of the Berlin Variation after 3 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}0-0$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 5 d4, for example:

(1) 5 ... a6 6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 7 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ and against the advantage in development of his opponent, Black has firm control over e6 and the menacing presence of the $\mathbb{Q}e4$;

(2) 5 ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ (7 ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 8 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ gives rise to a practically identical position to that seen in the previous line) 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ and Black hopes that the fact that he cannot castle will not mean a worsening in his position, bearing in mind that in positions with the white pawn on e5 rather than e4, kingside majority containment

operations ought to prove easier, especially without the queens. Nonetheless, White can use the threat of removing his opponent's bishop pair to hinder his opponent's blockading intentions, for example: 9 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{h}6$ 10 $b3$ (or 10 $h3$ $\mathbb{A}e6$ 11 $g4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 $\mathbb{A}f4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}de2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 15 $\mathbb{H}ad1$) 10 ... $\mathbb{A}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{B}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $c5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 16 $\mathbb{H}ad1$ with a slight advantage to White in both cases;

(3) 5 ... $\mathbb{A}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{W}e2$ (or 6 $\mathbb{A}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $dxe6$ 8 $\mathbb{dx}5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{A}e6$ 10 $b3$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 11 $\mathbb{B}b2$ 0-0-0 12 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 13 $h3$ $c5$ 14 $\mathbb{H}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 16 $c4$ with mutual containment of the respective majorities, but White's position offers more room to manoeuvre) 6 ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $dxe6$ (7 ... $bx $$$ c6 is more common, and now 8 $dx $$ e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ gives rise to a variation that has come under considerable theoretical scrutiny, but whose strategic ideas are not the result of the Fischer centre but a kind of hybrid little and open centre) 8 $dx $$ e5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 9 $\mathbb{H}d1$ $\mathbb{A}d7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (White has also tried the disruptive 10 $e6!$? $fxe6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ which, however, does not seem to lead to more than equality after 11 ... $\mathbb{A}d6$, for example: 12 $\mathbb{W}h5$ + $g6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 14 $\mathbb{W}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 15 $\mathbb{W}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 16 $\mathbb{W}h7$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 17 $\mathbb{W}h5$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{W}g6$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 21 $b3$ $e5$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ and Black recovers his

pawn) 10 ... 0-0 11 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ with some supremacy for White.

4 $\mathbb{A}xc6$

The idea of postponing this exchange until Black has played ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ and ... $\mathbb{A}e7$ is interesting. White hopes that such a development of forces will prove to be out of harmony with the thematic operations of containing the kingside pawn majority (... $f6$, ... $\mathbb{A}d6$, ... $\mathbb{Q}e7-g6$). We will give a few continuations to illustrate this line, known as the 'Deferred Exchange Variation': 4 $\mathbb{A}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{A}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $dxe6$ 7 $\mathbb{W}e1$ (to avoid the pin ... $\mathbb{A}g4$ while defending the e4 pawn and attacking the pawn on e5), this move and the alternative 7 $d3$ — which, however, generally implies forgoing a Fischer centre set-up — are the continuations that have attracted most theoretical attention, although other lines such as 7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ and 7 $\mathbb{A}e1$ have also been tried) 7 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (or 7 ... $\mathbb{A}e6$ 8 $b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 $\mathbb{B}b2$ $f6$ 10 $d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ 0-0 12 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $c5$ 13 $dxe6$ $fxe5$ with mutual prospects) 8 $d4$ $exd4$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 10 $\mathbb{W}e3$ 0-0 11 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{A}e8$ 12 $\mathbb{H}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 13 $b4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $cx $$ d6$ and Black has equalized.

The Fischer centre may occasionally arise from the Open Variation: 4 $\mathbb{A}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 6 $\mathbb{W}e2$ (a truly secondary line) 6 ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $dxe6$ 8 $d4$ $Qe6$ 9 $dx $$ e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 11 $h3$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ with dynamic equality.

4 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$
5 0-0

It should be pointed out that the e5 pawn is defended indirectly: after 5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ Black recovers the e4 pawn and takes the bishop pair.

At one stage 5 $d4$ $exd4$ 6 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ was played, but practice has shown that in this line, with correct play, Black has excellent prospects of obtaining fully adequate development. He can also choose on which side to castle, for example: 6 ... $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ (or 7 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ followed by ... 0-0-0) 8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9 $\mathbb{A}e3$ f6 10 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ with dynamic equality.

The text move, revived by Fischer, is an improvement on the old variation because, as we shall see in the game, White effectively gains a tempo. Now the threat on the e5 pawn is a real one (6 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xe4?$ 8 $\mathbb{A}e1$).

5 ... $\mathbb{W}f6$

Easily the most popular reply, but many other moves have been played, for example:

(1) 5 ... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 6 d4 $exd4$ 7 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{A}g4$ 8 $\mathbb{A}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 9 $\mathbb{gx}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 11 $\mathbb{A}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 12 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 13 $hxg3$ and the damage wrought by Black on the White majority is not enough to make it inoffensive;

(2) 5 ... $\mathbb{A}d6$ 6 d4 $exd4$ 7 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $f6$ 8 $b3$ $\mathbb{A}e6$ 9 $\mathbb{A}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $cx $$ d6$ 11 $c4$ 0-0 12 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ and thanks to his firm control over the d5 square

White has reasonable prospects of exerting pressure against the pseudo-backward d-pawn;

(3) 5 ... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 6 $d4$ $exd4$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{A}d7$ 8 $\mathbb{A}e3$ 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 10 $h3$ $\mathbb{W}g6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}f3$ 12 $\mathbb{H}ad1$ $fxe4$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ and the disappearance of a couple of kingside pawns has not changed the characteristics of White's structural advantage;

(4) 5 ... $\mathbb{A}g4$ 6 $h3$ $h5$ (this is a highly complex variation in which tactical complications often have the last word over strategy; the line we give here by way of example shows, however, that strategy may resurface after the storm has passed) 7 $d3$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9 $\mathbb{A}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 10 $d4$ $\mathbb{A}d6$ 11 $hxg4$ $hxg4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ (12 ... $exd4?$ 13 $e5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}h4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd6+$ $cx $$ d6$ 16 $\mathbb{A}f4$) 13 $\mathbb{W}xg4$ (13 $\mathbb{Q}xb2?$ $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ 0-0-0) 13 ... $\mathbb{W}b4$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 16 $dx $$ e5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{A}xe5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ and White has a preferable endgame.

6 $\mathbb{d}4$ $exd4$

The alternative is 6 ... $\mathbb{A}g4$ which can lead to a slightly different version of the centre we are looking at after, for example, 7 $dxe5$ (or 7 $c3$ $\mathbb{A}d6$ 8 $dx $$ e5$ 8 ... $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $fxe5$) (or 8 ... $\mathbb{A}xf3$ 9 $\mathbb{gx}f3$ $fxe5$). Under these circumstances White's structural advantage is less pronounced (or has actually been wiped out in cases where he has had to recapture $gx $$ f3$). Nonetheless, the

weakening of the e5 pawn (which White can target with manoeuvres like $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ -c4 and/or b3 followed by $\mathbb{A}b2$) usually forces Black to play his KB rather passively to d6. Generally speaking, we can say that Black's play is a little safer than the text, but also perhaps more passive. Let us look at some continuations by way of illustration of the situation:

(1) 7 c3 (this keeps more tension in the position) 7 ... $\mathbb{A}d6$ 8 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 10 dxex5 fxe5 11 h3 $\mathbb{A}e6$ 12 c4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 13 c5 $\mathbb{A}e7$ 14 $\mathbb{W}c2$ 0-0 15 $\mathbb{H}d1$ and White has a rather more active position;

(2) 7 dxex5 $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 8 $\mathbb{W}xd1$ fxe5 (or 8 ... $\mathbb{A}xf3$ 9 gxf3 fxe5 10 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{A}d6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 0-0-0 13 $\mathbb{H}d3$ b5 14 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{A}b4$ 15 $\mathbb{B}b3$ with a slight advantage to White) 9 $\mathbb{H}d3$ $\mathbb{A}d6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ b5 11 b3 $\mathbb{A}e7$ 12 $\mathbb{A}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 13 g3 0-0 14 $\mathbb{A}g2$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ with mutual chances.

7 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ c5

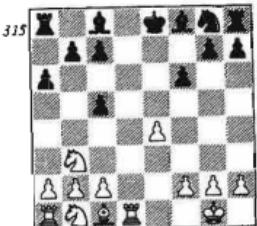
In view of White's appreciable edge in development, the decision to exchange queens has proved the most reasonable in practice. Attempts to keep them on the board have ended up by increasing the defence's difficulties, for example: 7 ... $\mathbb{A}d6$ 8 $\mathbb{W}h5+$ g6 9 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{A}xh2$ + 10 $\mathbb{A}xh2$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 11 $\mathbb{H}d1$ $\mathbb{W}a4$ 12 $\mathbb{A}f4$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 13 $\mathbb{A}b3$, or 7 ... $\mathbb{A}e7$ 8 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{A}d6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 0-0 11 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{A}xe5$ 13 f4 $\mathbb{A}d6$ 14 f5 with a clear advantage for White in both cases.

8 $\mathbb{Q}b3$

8 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ is also possible, with the idea of countering the developing move ... $\mathbb{A}d6$ by $\mathbb{A}f4$. However, the text is much the most popular line.

8 ... $\mathbb{W}xd1$

9 $\mathbb{H}xd1$ (315)



The significance of the improvement on the fifth move compared to the old continuation 5 d4 exd4 6 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ is clear. The positions arising out of the two lines of play are similar, but here White is two clear tempi to the good: he has castled and has occupied the d-file while the advances ... f6 and ... c5 cannot be considered developing moves.

9 ... $\mathbb{A}g4$

The purpose of this move is to force the advance f3 in the hope of weakening the a7-g1 diagonal. Here are some continuations arising out of other possibilities:

(1) 9 ... $\mathbb{A}d6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}a5$! b5 (here it is not possible to make use of the

undefended position of $\mathbb{H}d1$ with 10 ... $\mathbb{A}g4$? 11 f3 0-0-0? because of 12 e5 and White wins a piece) 11 c4! $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12 $\mathbb{A}e3$ and White certainly has the most promising future;

(2) 9 ... $\mathbb{A}e6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ (also worth considering is 10 $\mathbb{A}e3$ b6 11 a4) 10 ... c4 11 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 0-0-0 12 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (not 12 $\mathbb{A}xc7$? for 12 ... $\mathbb{W}xd4$!) 12 ... $\mathbb{A}f7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{A}e8$ 14 $\mathbb{H}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{A}xe7$ 16 $\mathbb{H}ad1$ $\mathbb{H}d8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 18 $\mathbb{H}xd5$ b5 19 $\mathbb{H}xd8+$ $\mathbb{W}xd8$ 20 $\mathbb{H}xd8+$ $\mathbb{A}xd8$ with an endgame that is more promising for White, even though Black has fair prospects of getting some counterplay: his opponent is no longer able to place his queenside pawns on the white squares;

(3) 9 ... $\mathbb{A}d7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 0-0-11 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{A}e6$ 12 $\mathbb{H}xd8+$ $\mathbb{W}xd8$ 13 a4 $\mathbb{A}xb3$ (here there is the chance of an instructive error: 13 ... b6? 14 a5 b5 15 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$! axb5 16 a6 and the pawn promotes) 14 $\mathbb{C}xb3$ and White retains a slight advantage. Note that, in the absence of pieces, his pawn configuration on the queenside is still perfectly able to prevent the formation of a passed pawn.

10 f3 $\mathbb{A}e6$

Compared to second line in the previous note, White has 'gained' the tempo f3 but, as we shall see, this difference is favourable to Black.

11 $\mathbb{A}e3$

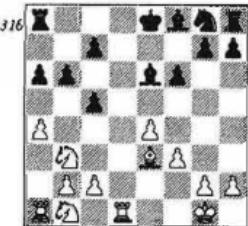
Now, in the event of 11 $\mathbb{A}f4$ c4 12 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ (not 12 $\mathbb{Q}a5$?! $\mathbb{A}c5$ + 13 $\mathbb{A}f1$

$\mathbb{A}b6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$? $\mathbb{A}b8$ and Black wins the knight) 12 ... 0-0-0 13 $\mathbb{Q}c3$, Black can take advantage of the weakening of the a7-g1 diagonal to simplify with 13 ... $\mathbb{A}xd4$ 14 $\mathbb{H}xd4$ $\mathbb{A}c5$ 15 $\mathbb{A}c3$ $\mathbb{A}xd4$ 16 $\mathbb{A}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ moving into an endgame in which the presence of opposite-coloured bishops greatly reduces the disadvantage of his structural inferiority.

11 ... b6

12 a4 (316)

Also worthy of consideration is 12 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{A}d6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (after 13 a4 Black can play both 13 ... $\mathbb{A}f7$ 14 a5 c4 15 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ b5 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{A}xe6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ with an equal endgame, or 13 ... 0-0-0 14 a5 $\mathbb{A}b7$ reverting to the line given in the next note), although after 13 ... 0-0-0 it would seem that Black has solved all his problems of development.



The text move is thematic and is consistent with the previous pressure on the c5-pawn. As a provocation, White invites his opponent to give

up the bishop pair to break up the queenside pawn minority because, as we have noted elsewhere, after 12 ... $\mathbb{A}xb3$ 13 $\mathbb{A}xb3$ White's minority, in the absence of pieces, would still be perfectly well able to prevent the creation of a passed pawn on the queenside.

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

The natural developing move 12 ... $\mathbb{A}d6$ is open to the thrust 13 a5, although after 13 ... 0-0-0 the a6 pawn is defended tactically (14 $\mathbb{A}xb6?$ $\mathbb{A}xh2+$), giving Black time to answer 14 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ with 14 ... $\mathbb{B}b7$, thus obtaining a position that is perhaps sound enough for him to withstand his opponent's assaults, for example:

15 e5! $\mathbb{A}e7!$ (not 15 ... $\mathbb{A}xe5?$ 16 $\mathbb{A}xb6$ $\mathbb{A}xb6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{A}c7$ 18 $\mathbb{A}bxc5+$ etc., or 15 ... $\mathbb{A}xb3?$ 16 $\mathbb{A}xd6$ $\mathbb{A}xc2$ 17 $\mathbb{A}dc1$ $\mathbb{A}g6$ 18 $\mathbb{A}xc7$ etc.). 16 $\mathbb{A}xd8$ $\mathbb{A}xd8$ 17 axb6 $\mathbb{A}xb6$ 18 $\mathbb{A}xc5$ $\mathbb{A}h6$ (not 18 ... $\mathbb{A}xc5?$ 19 $\mathbb{A}xc5+$, or 18 ... $\mathbb{A}xb3$ 19 $\mathbb{A}f8!$) with a position that the defence should be able to hold.

Although theory ignores it, in our opinion the text move is an important improvement.

13 $\mathbb{A}f4$ c4

14 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 0-0-0

15 $\mathbb{Q}c3$

White has switched his attack to the c-pawn, which Black defends with a tactical thematic expedient.

15 ... $\mathbb{A}f7?$

Black undoubtedly saw that he could simplify the position with 15

... $\mathbb{A}xd4$ 16 $\mathbb{A}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 17 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{A}c5$, but realized that after, for instance, 18 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{A}xd4$ 19 $\mathbb{A}xd4$ he would still have a long defensive task ahead of him. If the opposite-coloured bishops were the only pieces on the board then this position would be a draw; but the presence of rooks and knights, combined with White's mobile kingside pawn majority, mean that there is still plenty of play left in the position. Nevertheless, this might have been preferable to the game continuation.

After the text (a pointless loss of time) White establishes a stable initiative.

16 $\mathbb{A}g3!$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$

16 ... g6 looks too slow. White is able to considerably increase his pressure on Black's position with 17 a5: 17 ... $\mathbb{A}b7$ is not good owing to 18 $\mathbb{A}xc7$! $\mathbb{A}xc7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}db5+$ $\mathbb{A}xb5$ 20 $\mathbb{A}xb6+$ etc; nor does 17 ... b5? work because of 18 $\mathbb{A}xb5!$ with a clear advantage for White, for example: 18 ... $\mathbb{A}xb5$ 19 a6 $\mathbb{A}b8$ 20 $\mathbb{A}xc7+!$ $\mathbb{A}xc7$ 21 $\mathbb{A}xb5+$ etc.

17 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{A}xd1+$

18 $\mathbb{A}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$

An unpleasant decision, but to bring his kingside forces into the game Black has to release the pressure on g7 by chasing away the $\mathbb{Q}f5$. 19 $\mathbb{Q}e3$

Now White prepares to exploit d5.

19 ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$

20 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{A}c5+?!$

After withstanding a lengthy period of pressure, Black was probably relieved to be offered the chance to complete his development and possibly remove the dark-squared white bishop from the board... forgetting, however, that in this type of position every exchange serves only to augment his structural disadvantage in the endgame. The correct defence was 20 ... $\mathbb{Q}e5$, while 20 ... $\mathbb{A}d6?$ would have been an error because of 21 $\mathbb{A}xb6+$.

21 $\mathbb{A}f2!$ $\mathbb{A}xf2+?!$

Here he should have realized his mistake and played 21 ... $\mathbb{A}f8$ with the idea of continuing with ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$, but Black was understandably concerned about bringing his $\mathbb{A}b8$ into play.

22 $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{A}e8$

23 h4

White begins to mobilize his sound majority, while Black realizes that he has no active plan.

23 ... $\mathbb{A}b7$

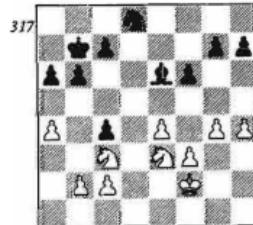
24 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{A}e6$

It might have been better to play 24 ... h5, holding up the kingside majority a little.

25 g4 $\mathbb{A}d8?$

Black contests the open file, but simplification only helps White. It was better to play 25 ... h6, trying to curb the advance of White's majority, but here too White's chances are excellent.

26 $\mathbb{A}xd8$ $\mathbb{A}xd8$ (317)



White is now effectively a pawn up, and in the ending the advantage of a pawn is usually enough to win.

27 g5 c6

28 f4

This prepares 29 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ followed by 30 f5 $\mathbb{A}g8$ 31 e5 $\mathbb{A}xe5$ 32 $\mathbb{A}e4$.

28 ... f4xg5

29 hxg5 $\mathbb{A}c7$

30 f5 $\mathbb{A}g8$

31 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ b5

32 e5

It is instructive to note the contrast between the unstoppable advance of the white majority and the inefficiency of Black's.

32 ... g6

33 e6 $\mathbb{A}xe6$

Faced with the threat of 34 e7, Black is forced to give up a piece because 33 ... $\mathbb{A}d6$ fails to 34 $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 35 $\mathbb{A}f6$ etc.

34 $\mathbb{A}xe6$ $\mathbb{A}xe6$

There is still hope of liquidating all the pawns.

35 $\mathbb{Q}e4$

35 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ would have been more

accurate, preventing the last (although vain) fling from the black majority.

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 35 ... | c3! |
| 36 bxc3 | bxg4 |
| 37 ♜c4 | c5 |
| 38 ♜g4 | ♗c6 |
| 39 ♜f6 | ♕c7 |
| 40 ♜xh7 | qd5 |
- Or 40 ... ♜b5 41 ♜f8 ♜d6 (41 ... a3 42 ♜xg6 a2 43 ♜a5+ followed by ♜b3 with a won ending) 42 ♜d2 c4 43 ♜b1 ♜b5 44 ♜xg6 a3 45 ♜xa3 ♜xa3 46 ♜e5+ ♜d6 47 g6 and wins.
 41 ♜f8 ♜xc3

There is no rescue in the ingenious 41 ... ♜e3+ 42 ♜xe3 a3 (or 42 ... ♜b5 43 c4+ ♜b4 44 ♜d5+ ♜xc4 45 ♜b6+ ♜b4 46 ♜xa4 etc.) 43 ♜c4 a2 44 ♜a4+ ♜b5 45 ♜b3 ♜a4 46 ♜xg6! ♜xc3 47 ♜f4! ♜xc2 48 ♜a1+ ♜b2 49 ♜e2 ♜xa1 50 ♜c1 and White wins.

- | | |
|---------|-----|
| 42 ♜xg6 | qd5 |
| 43 ♜a3 | qe4 |
| 44 ♜f4+ | qe5 |
| 45 ♜d3+ | |

1 - 0

A genuine triumph for the sound kingside majority.

9 The Schliemann (Jaenisch) Centre

Main line: Schliemann (Jaenisch)

Counter-Gambit

- 1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5 f5 4 ♜c3 fxe4 5 ♜xe4 (318).



Classical Variation

- 3 ... ♜c5 4 c3 f5 5 d4 (or 5 exf5) 5 ... fxe4 6 ♜xe5

Steinitz Variation Deferred

- 3 ... a6 4 ♜a4 f5 5 d4 (or 5 ♜c3

- fxe4 6 ♜xe4) 5 ... fxe4 6 ♜xe5

Other Variations

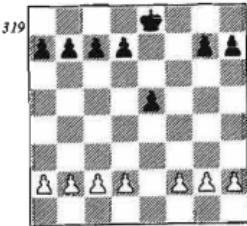
Similar structures may arise in other variations as a result of the captures ... f5xe4 or e4xf5. For example: 1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5 and now:

Schliemann Counter-Gambit

- 3 ... f5 4 d4 fxe4 5 ♜xe5
- 3 ... f5 4 ♜c3 ♜b6 5 ♜e2 (or 5 exf5) 5 ... ♜c5 6 exf5
- 3 ... f5 4 ♜c3 ♜d4 5 ♜c4 (or 5 exf5 or also 5 ♜a4 c6 6 ♜xe5 ♜f6 7 ♜f3 fxe4) 5 ... c6 6 ♜xg8 ♜xg8 7 0-0 ♜f6 8 exf5

Generally speaking, this type of centre arises out of the exchange of the white e-pawn for the black f-pawn. However, it is as well to point out that not all the developments arising out of the above lines lead necessarily to the same pawn structure and it can happen, for example, that Black does not recover the pawn on f5. The difficulty of placing listed variations within a common structural theme has led us to choose as a point of reference the simplest pawn configuration. Apart from any other consideration, it is the one that occurs most frequently and whose intrinsically dynamic nature is the best

starting point for illustrating the possible sudden changes in the unstable pawn centre (319).



The main strategic and dynamic elements inherent in this type of centre are immediately identifiable here:

(1) Black's virtual structural superiority with two mobile pawns in the centre against his opponent's one;

(2) The weakening of Black's king position - the price of obtaining the potential structural advantage.

It should not be forgotten that White normally finds himself with some superiority in development, due in part to the natural advantage of the move and in part to the fact that in many cases the destruction of the pawn on e4 has required the expenditure of a number of tempi.

The struggle for the structural initiative

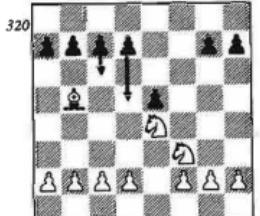
Although superficially Black's pawn centre looks strong, White is able to

apply pressure down the e-file, and hit out with d4. In short, the situation is quite unstable.

In the Schliemann centre, therefore, the two sides are engaged in a real slugging match for domination of the centre. We shall look at some characteristic strategic themes, although the reader should be advised that in practice they rarely crop up in such pure forms as the ones we shall be presenting.

The exposed position of White's minor pieces

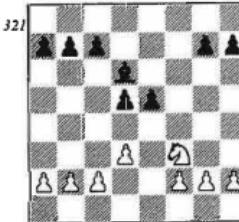
In pursuing his intention of building a strong pawn centre, Black can use a factor that is immediately evident from an observation of diagram 318 and common to a majority of the illustrative lines that we have given: the exposed position of the white knights and the $\text{Nb}5$ (320).



Note that the presence of the QN developed on c6 does not necessarily

prevent Black from making the advance ... c6: this knight can be played to d4, as some of the illustrative variations show. Then again, even the exchange $\text{Nx}c6$, after ... bx $c6$, could have the effect of further strengthening Black's pawn centre.

The ideal objective of such central expansion is represented by the formation of a stable, mobile pawn centre like the one shown here (321).



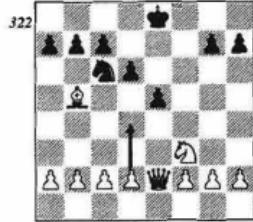
Of course, a result of this kind is only possible when White plays passively.

The pressure against Black's e-pawn and against the $\text{Qc}6$

White's intentions are obviously diametrically opposed, his efforts being directed at making his opponent's centre rigid so as to weaken it by means of a disruptive advance. In pursuing this plan, he can employ two

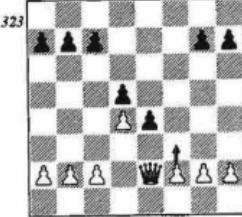
closely related elements: pressure on the e-pawn (for the purpose of inducing Black to make the modest advance ... d7-d6) and pressure on $\text{Qc}6$ (in effect already exerted by the $\text{Nb}5$ which would be further increased following the advance ... d7-d6).

In the next diagram we see what the ideal result would be of such a plan of freezing Black's centre (322).



Of course, this situation, as we have already said in the case of colours reversed in the previous diagram, is also the outcome of passive play by Black. It is therefore unusual to meet either case in practical play.

More commonly seen in practice, instead, is a type of central configuration in which White, by means of the advance d2-d4 for example, has induced his opponent to make the counter-advance ... e5-e4, supported beforehand or afterwards by the advance ... d7-d5 (323).



In this case too, Black's central pawns are frozen and vulnerable because their flank is open to the disruptive advance f2-f3. The fact that an exchange of the e- and f-pawns gives rise to a perfectly symmetrical structure must not lead you to think that the result is a totally balanced situation: in such cases it is the position of the pieces that sanction the advantage of one side or the other. Normally, therefore, White, by virtue of the fact that he has an appreciable edge in development right from the beginning, almost always ends up in a dynamically better position.

The struggle for the dynamic initiative

It is clear that the situation which is usually intrinsically present in the Schliemann centre (advantage in development for White opposed to virtual central superiority for Black) demands from the two sides an energetic handling of the opening;

passivity will only augment the opponent's offensive potential.

It follows that right from the very earliest moves, both sides will endeavour to grab the dynamic initiative with every means in their power, even to the extent of resorting to a whole variety of material sacrifices. Examples of such sacrifices are too varied for us to lay down any patterns unconnected with the specific position and we consider that any such attempt is decidedly inadvisable because in practice it could prove more damaging than useful.

What we might note in this regard — a pure generalization — is that White often sacrifices one of his exposed minor pieces, while Black does not think twice about giving up one of his central pawns; both, moreover, may castle on either flank and there is no lack of cases in which Black does not castle at all or does so artificially.

Nonetheless, from the vast array of variations, often decked out with every kind of sacrifice, it is always possible to extrapolate a few dynamic themes of a general nature. We will confine our investigation to these.

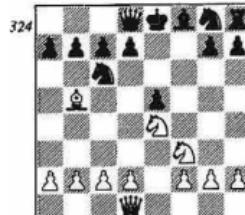
The exposed position of the black king

The principal objective of White's offensive is the enemy king, for the

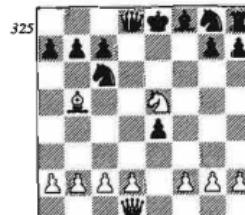
simple reason that the monarch is exposed to the fire of the white pieces along the a4-e8 and h5-e8 diagonals and on the half-open e-file, until castling has taken place.

Nor should the weakness of the e7 square be underestimated, White's minor pieces being able to converge on it with great speed.

The following example gives us a general picture of all these elements (324).

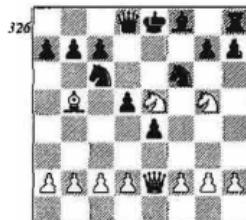


The weakness of the a4-e8 and h5-e8 diagonals immediately strikes



the eye in the continuation ... d5, Qxe5 dxe4 (325).

... while the vulnerability of the e-file and the f7 square are fairly evident if, returning to diagram 324, we hypothesize a sequence like ... Qf6, We2 d5, Qeg5 e4, Qe5 (326).



To complete this brief survey of the main dynamic elements that form the web of White's offensive operations, we should add that the light-squared bishop may sometimes attack the f7-square ($\mathbb{B}c4$) as well as the h5-e8 diagonal ($\mathbb{B}e2-h5$), while for pressure on the e-file White can on occasion also deploy the KR in cases in which he is able to bring it quickly into play with 0-0 and $\mathbb{E}e1$.

The sacrifice of the e-pawn and pressure along the f-file

As for Black, it should be said that in the opening his main imperative is to

complete his development as quickly as possible, paying attention above all to the possibility of tucking his king away safely by castling as soon as the occasion presents itself. In the pursuit of these intentions he should not be too concerned about the possible destruction of his pawn centre because in the Schliemann centre dynamic factors are more important than purely strategic considerations. In short, the player who wins the struggle for the structural initiative may lose the game, while it is very rare for this to happen to the player who has won the dynamic initiative.

If Black succeeds in his intentions, he can exert pressure on his opponent's position, above all, by way of the joint action of his heavy and minor pieces on the crucial points of the f-file, namely f4, f3 and f2.

The following example, which, like the previous one, has a purely illustrative intention, offers us a review of the main dynamic themes on which Black can base his counterplay (327).

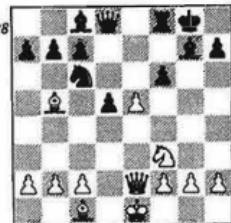
Here, after ... d5, the three different thematic possibilities available to White ($\mathbb{Q}xf6+$, $\mathbb{Q}eg5$ and $\mathbb{Q}g3$) lead to quite different situations that do, however, possess a common denominator: the sacrifice of the e-pawn on the part of Black in order to complete his development and castle.

327



The first illustrative line is $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$
 $gxf6$, $d4 \mathbb{Q}g7$, $dxe5$ 0-0 (328)

328



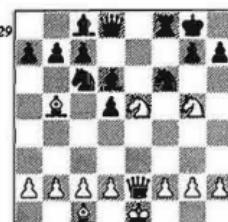
... and Black's rapidity of development is enough to offset the unquestionable damage to his pawn structure.

The second possibility, if we continue to pursue the example of diagram 327, is given by ... d5, $\mathbb{Q}eg5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$, $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 0-0 (329)

... with similar compensation for Black.

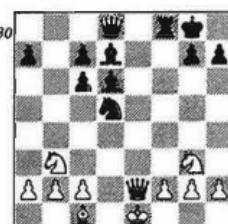
Finally, again starting from diagram 327, the third possibility is also highly instructive: $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $e4$,

329



$\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$, $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxc6$, $d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$,
 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$, $dxe4$ 0-0, $exd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (330)

330



... where to our previous remarks we might add that Black may well be able to use the f4 square for the attack.

For the sake of completeness, we would point out that the KN can sometimes get to the f4 square by way of h5, while pressure on the f-file may at times be increased by pinning the Qf3 with ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ and/or the straightforward developing move ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$.

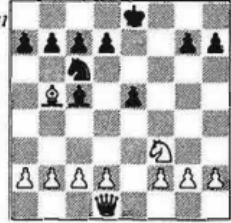
2 Tactical Ideas

As we have already suggested, dynamic factors are often more important than purely strategic components in the Schliemann centre. Here we consider some typical tactical motifs.

The pseudo-sacrifice $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

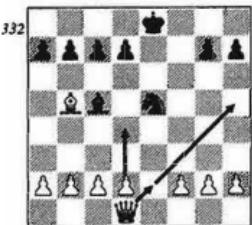
This is a very frequent theme that can crop up in the most varied of forms, some of which are grouped artificially in the following example (331).

331



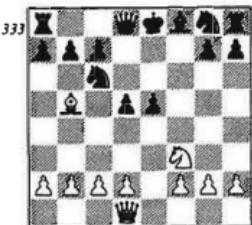
White plays $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ and, after ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$, he has basically three systems for recapturing the piece: the fork with d4, the pin with $\mathbb{W}e2$ followed by f4, and the check on h5 (332).

Here, after $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$, White recovers the $\mathbb{Q}c5$.

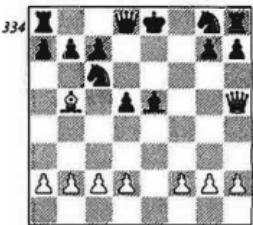


The weakness of the h5-e8 and a4-e8 diagonals; cases in which the $\mathbb{H}h8$ cannot be taken

As we have already noted in the previous example, White's queen is very often able to exploit the weakness of the h5-e8 diagonal (333).



Here, for example, if Black defends his e-pawn with ... $\mathbb{Q}d6?$, there would follow $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$, $\mathbb{W}h5+$ (334)

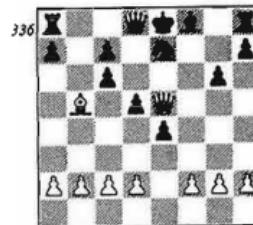


... and White recovers his piece and wins a pawn, for example: ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ (after ... $g6?$, $\mathbb{W}e5+$ and Black would even lose his $\mathbb{H}h8$), $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxc6$, $\mathbb{W}xe5$.

At times, however, such early queen incursions can turn out disastrously if White is blinded by the mirage of some easy material gain and does not weigh up sufficiently the dangers of ending up in a trap. If in the position of diagram 333 Black were to thwart the threat against his e-pawn by playing ... $e4$, White might think, mistakenly, that he has the situation under control after $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (335)

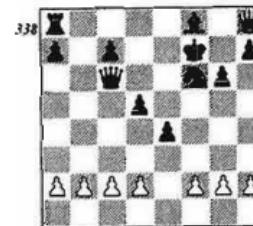


... owing to the combined pressure on the a4-e8 and h5-e8 diagonals, for example: ... $\mathbb{Q}ge7?$, $\mathbb{W}h5+ g6$, $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxc6$ (better is ... $gxf5$, but after $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ Black loses the chance to castle and is left with a damaged pawn structure), $\mathbb{W}e5!$ (336)



... with the decisive threats of $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ and $\mathbb{W}xh8$.

Actually, after $\mathbb{Q}e5$ the correct defence is ... $\mathbb{W}d6!$, and now it would be a serious mistake for White to go hunting for the $\mathbb{H}h8$ by $\mathbb{W}h5+? g6$, $\mathbb{Q}xg6?$ $\mathbb{W}xg6$, $\mathbb{W}e5+$ because the reply ... $\mathbb{Q}f7!$ (337)

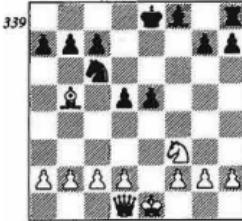


... when the white queen would inexorably fall next move to ... $\mathbb{Q}g7$.

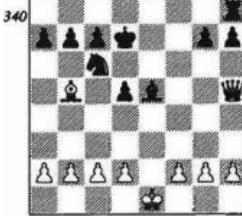
The pin on the e-file

This theme is seen with some frequency because in many lines White delays castling with the intention of increasing his advantage in development and giving greater impetus to his offensive actions. The following example illustrates the theme in its

essentials, but it is as well to note that in practice situations can be much more complex (339).



In order to defend his e-pawn, Black plays ... $\mathbb{A}d6$ and White may fall into the error of believing he can win a pawn with the continuation $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$ (or $\mathbb{A}xc6+$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$, $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$) ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$, $\mathbb{W}h5+$, but after ... $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ (340)



... he would be facing the loss of a piece because $\mathbb{W}e5?$ is not possible owing to the pin ... $\mathbb{E}e8$. Nor is there any solace in $\mathbb{W}f7+$ or $\mathbb{W}f5+$ because of the simple reply ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$.

3 Illustrative Games

Game 14

Timman-Speelman

London (match, 7) 1989

Schliemann Counter-Gambit

- | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | e4 | e5 |
| 2 | $\mathbb{Q}f3$ | $\mathbb{Q}c6$ |
| 3 | $\mathbb{A}b5$ | f5 |

The Schliemann centre arises out of an early advance ... f5, which is also seen in other variations of the Spanish.

In the Classical Variation, this centre can crop up after 3 ... $\mathbb{A}c5$ 4 $\mathbb{c}3$ f5, for example: 5 d4 (5 exf5 gives Black the chance to respond with the immediate, annoying reply 5 ... e4) 5 ... fxe4 6 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (more usual is 6 $\mathbb{A}xc6$ dx $c6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ or 7 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$), but the positions that may follow are not strictly the result of the Schliemann centre) 6 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 7 $\mathbb{W}h5+$ and White regains the piece and retains a temporary initiative.

In the Steinitz Deferred, the continuation 3 ... a6 4 $\mathbb{A}a4$ d6 5 c3 f5 (the Siesta Variation) generally develops themes that are typical of the Schliemann centre, for example: 6 exf5 $\mathbb{A}xf5$ 7 d4 (or 7 0-0 $\mathbb{A}d3$ 8 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{E}e7$ 9 $\mathbb{A}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 10 $\mathbb{W}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 11 d4 0-0 — the sacrifice of the e-pawn is a classic expedient when trying to gain the upper hand in the struggle for dynamic initiative — 12 dx c 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ dx $e5$ and White has

to settle for having isolated the e5 pawn because after 14 $\mathbb{A}xe5?$ $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ the advantage in development and the pressure on the f-file would guarantee Black a clear advantage) 7 ... e4 8 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ d5 9 f3 and the fight for structural initiative is in full swing.

The Schliemann centre, finally, may occur in a deferred version of the Schliemann Counter-Gambit after 3 ... a6 4 $\mathbb{A}a4$ f5, for example: 5 d4 (5 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ fx c 6 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$, is also possible, but, compared to the similar position we shall encounter in the game, here Black has the intermediate move 6 ... b5 which, after 7 $\mathbb{A}b3$ d5, forces White to the piece sacrifice 8 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 9 $\mathbb{W}h5+$ if he wants to play more than a passive role in his opponent's central expansion) 5 ... fxe4 (5 ... exd4 6 e5 $\mathbb{A}c5$ is outside the scope of this chapter) 6 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 7 0-0 $\mathbb{A}d6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 9 dx $e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ and, thanks to the thematic tactical idea 10 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 11 $\mathbb{W}h5+$, White recovers his pawn and has the better position.

4 $\mathbb{Q}c3$

White accepts the challenge: he allows the exchange of the e4 and f5 pawns, exposing his minor pieces to the threats of his opponent's pawns, but as compensation he obtains an unquestionable advantage in development.

The quieter alternative is 4 d3 while 4 d4 is more problematic because after 4 ... fxe4 5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 6

dx c 6 White, to save his e-pawn (7 $\mathbb{A}c4$ $\mathbb{W}a5+$ etc.), has to sacrifice his bishop with 7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$, for example: 7 ... cxb5 8 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ d5 9 exd6 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 10 $\mathbb{W}d4$ with sufficient positional compensation.

Acceptance of the gambit does not cause Black too many problems, for example: 4 exf5 e4 5 $\mathbb{W}e7$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ etc.

4 ... $\mathbb{W}e4$

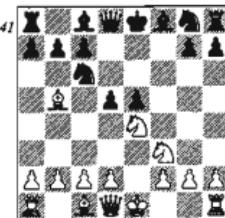
The normal continuation, setting up the conditions for central expansion. The alternatives are less consistent with the idea behind the Schliemann centre:

(1) 4 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 exf5 (in the case of 5 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{A}c5$ 6 exf5 $\mathbb{W}e7$ the gain of the e5 pawn proves only temporary because after 7 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ dx c 8 $\mathbb{W}e5$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 10 d3 0-0 11 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ White is forced to return his booty in order to cool down his opponent's pressing initiative) 5 ... fxe4 (5 ... exd4 6 e5 $\mathbb{A}c5$ is outside the scope of this chapter) 6 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 7 0-0 $\mathbb{A}d6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 9 dx $e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ and, thanks to the thematic tactical idea 10 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 11 $\mathbb{W}h5+$, White recovers his pawn and has the better position.

(2) 4 ... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 5 exf5 (good alternatives are 5 $\mathbb{A}a4$ c6 6 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ fxe4 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 9 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 10 d3 exd3 11 $\mathbb{Q}e1+$ and 5 $\mathbb{A}c4$ c6 6 $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ 7 0-0 $\mathbb{W}f6$ 8 exf5 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 9 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10 d4 with advantage to

White in both cases owing to the exposed position of the black king in the centre) 5 ... $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ d6 7 d4 e4 8 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ g3 and White has both the structural and the dynamic initiative.

5 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ d5 (341)



This position offers a clear picture of the distinctive features of the Schliemann centre: Black has attained the central superiority which he aimed for on his third move, while White enjoys an evident edge in development, although he could easily lose this if his minor pieces remain confined to the rearguard. As the situation is unbalanced, it follows that both sides must try to get the situation back onto balanced lines, even if the cost is to give up something of what they have gained. In other words: Black must endeavour to make up for lost time in terms of development, even if this implies losing ground in the centre, while White must try to destroy the enemy

centre before Black has time to consolidate his position. This theme can also be seen in the alternative 5 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$, for example: 6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ (for 6 $\mathbb{W}e2$ see the example illustrated in diagram 327) 6 ... $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 7 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ dx6 and now in the event of either 9 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 10 $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ or 9 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 10 d3 0-0-0 the sacrifice of the e5 pawn is compensated for by the bishop pair and by Black's better development.

6 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

Taking advantage of the thematic weakness of the a4-e8 and h5-e8 diagonals, White grabs the chance to start taking apart the enemy centre, in accord with what we said above. More passive, of course, is 6 $\mathbb{Q}g3$, for example: 6 ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 7 h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 8 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $gxf6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 13 d4 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ and Black recovers from his temporary king displacement to emerge with a position that is certainly not worse.

6 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

7 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$

The attempt to exploit the weakness of the h5-e8 diagonal with 7 $\mathbb{W}h5+?$ would in this case be a trap for White: after 7 ... g6 8 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ hxg6 9 $\mathbb{W}xh8$ $\mathbb{W}f6$! 10 $\mathbb{W}xg8$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ the advantage in development is much more important than the extra material.

7 ... $\mathbb{Q}g5$

Equally good is 7 ... $\mathbb{W}d5$ which, after 8 c4 (forced) 8 ... $\mathbb{W}d6$ leads to

situations around which the theoretical dispute still rages, for example: 9 $\mathbb{Q}xa7+$ (or 9 $\mathbb{W}b5+$ g6 10 $\mathbb{W}e5+$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ c6 12 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 13 d4 exd3 14 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 15 0-0-0 0-0-0 with equal prospects) 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd7+$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 11 $\mathbb{W}b5+$ g6 12 $\mathbb{W}e5+$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ (after 13 $\mathbb{W}xh8$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ White will soon be forced to give up his queen for the $\mathbb{Q}d8$, entering a highly complex position in which the two pawn advantage is compensated for by the better configuration of the black pieces) 13 ... c6 and Black has some compensation for the sacrificed material.

Definitely wrong, on the other hand, is 7 ... $\mathbb{Q}bc6$? $\mathbb{Q}d7$ because of 9 $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10 $\mathbb{W}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11 f4 exf3 12 0-0 with a clear advantage.

8 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

Necessary to protect the key points e4 and h5. White would obtain a decisive advantage after both 8 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$? 9 $\mathbb{W}xe4+$ or 8 ... $\mathbb{W}xg2$? 9 $\mathbb{W}h5+$.

9 f4

White cannot ignore the attack against the g2 point because the demise of this pawn could cause serious problems for his king, for example: 9 $\mathbb{Q}xa7+?$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xe4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xb7?$ (12 d3 is necessary although after 12 ... $\mathbb{W}b5+$ and ... $\mathbb{W}xa7$ the three pawns are not sufficient compensation for the piece at this stage of the game)

12 ... $\mathbb{W}xa7$! 13 $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathbb{W}xg2$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ with a decisive attack.

9 ... $\mathbb{W}f4$

The immediate 9 ... $\mathbb{W}h4+$ allows White to exploit the f-pawn to back up the return of the knight to e5 and the d-pawn to complete the work of destruction in the centre, for example 10 g3 $\mathbb{W}h3$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ c6 12 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 13 d3 exd3 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd3+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ with a clear advantage.

10 $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ (342)

White has also tried to exploit the discovered check on the a4-e8 diagonal by winning a pawn, for example with 10 $\mathbb{Q}xa7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 0-0-0 13 d4 $\mathbb{W}f6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ c6 15 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$, or with 10 d4 $\mathbb{W}b4+$ 11 g3 $\mathbb{W}h3$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xa7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd7+$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ c6 15 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ (15 ... $\mathbb{W}xd4$ is also possible) 16 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 0-0, but in each case Black has found adequate compensation in his better development and in the ineffectiveness of White's dark-squared bishop.



With the text, White pursues his most logical positional plan: he wishes to guarantee a stable outpost on e5 with the advance d4 and at the same time converge his minor pieces on the key f7 square with the subsequent retreat $\mathbb{A}c4$.

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 10 ... | c6 |
| 11 d4 | $\mathbb{W}h4+$ |
| 12 g3 | $\mathbb{W}h3$ |
| 13 $\mathbb{A}c4$ | $\mathbb{A}e6$ |

13 ... $\mathbb{A}d6?$ would pointlessly give up the chance to castle after 14 $\mathbb{A}f7+$.

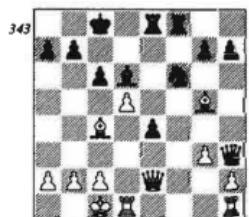
- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 14 $\mathbb{A}g5$ | 0-0-0 |
| 15 0-0-0 | $\mathbb{A}d6$ |

A situation of noteworthy theoretical importance for the assessment of the line 7 ... $\mathbb{W}g5$, Black has solved his development problems and has parried the pressure on f7; at the end of the opening, the only element that can be considered to be in White's favour is the comparative weakness of the e4 pawn which, however, is also passed. Thus far, all attempts by White to prove he has a real advantage (16 g4, 16 $\mathbb{A}b1$, 16 $\mathbb{W}f1$) have lost their momentum against accurate defence.

- | |
|-------------------|
| 16 $\mathbb{D}f7$ |
|-------------------|

Obtaining the bishop pair is the most direct way for attempting to gain a more tangible advantage.

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 16 ... | $\mathbb{A}xf7$ |
| 17 $\mathbb{A}xf7$ | $\mathbb{H}f8$ |
| 18 $\mathbb{A}c4$ | $\mathbb{E}de8$ |
| 19 d5? (343) | |



This advance is a serious strategic error because it helps to block the position to the total detriment of White's light-squared bishop. It would have been better to play 19 $\mathbb{H}hf1$ h6 20 $\mathbb{A}f4!$ $\mathbb{A}xf4$ 21 $\mathbb{H}xf4$ with approximately even chances. Black's e-pawn, though isolated, is well protected and could yet prove its worth.

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 19 ... | c5 |
| 20 $\mathbb{H}hf1$ | $\mathbb{A}b8$ |
| 21 $\mathbb{A}f4?$ | |

21 $\mathbb{A}b5$ was better, followed by 22 $\mathbb{C}4$.

- | | |
|--------|----------------|
| 21 ... | $\mathbb{H}d8$ |
|--------|----------------|

Not, of course, 21 ... $\mathbb{A}xf4?$ 22 $\mathbb{H}xf4$, after which the advance d6 would restore full freedom to the white bishop.

- | |
|-------------------|
| 22 $\mathbb{A}g5$ |
|-------------------|

It is clear that if White were to exchange dark-squared bishops now, he would merely highlight the superiority of the knight and the vulnerability of the d5 pawn. So Timman implicitly proposes a draw

and, understandably enough, his opponent turns a blind eye.

- | | |
|---------------------|-----|
| 22 ... | a6! |
| 23 $\mathbb{A}xf6?$ | |

Faced with the threat of 23 ... b5 White seeks refuge in a position with opposite-coloured bishops, but his problem is that before the ending, the Lord said: 'Let there be the middlegame' — in which opposite-coloured bishops are a destabilizing element, not one that smooths matters out. The lesser of available evils was perhaps 23 $\mathbb{A}b3$, with the idea of answering 23 ... b5 with 24 $\mathbb{C}4$.

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 23 ... | $\mathbb{A}xf6$ |
| 24 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ | $\mathbb{W}xh2$ |
| 25 $\mathbb{H}h1$ | |

25 $\mathbb{H}f3$ would have offered a glimpse of counterplay on the queenside (for example: $\mathbb{B}b3$) but would have left White with an inferior position in any case.

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 25 ... | $\mathbb{W}xg3$ |
| 26 $\mathbb{A}xh7$ | $\mathbb{H}f8$ |
| 27 $\mathbb{W}f5?$ | |

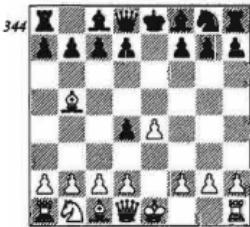
A mistake that leads to a premature conclusion. In any case, White would have had to resign himself to defending position a pawn down without any compensation after 27 $\mathbb{W}h4$ (27 $\mathbb{W}h1?$ $\mathbb{W}f4+$ and then ... $\mathbb{W}xc4$) 27 ... b5 (not 27 ... $\mathbb{W}e3+ 28 \mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{A}e4$ 29 $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 30 $\mathbb{W}g7$) 28 $\mathbb{A}d3$ $\mathbb{C}4$ followed by ... $\mathbb{A}f4+$ and ... $\mathbb{H}xd5$.

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 27 ... | b5 |
| 28 $\mathbb{A}f1$ | |
| Or 28 $\mathbb{A}d3$ $\mathbb{C}4$ 29 $\mathbb{A}c4$ $\mathbb{W}e3+$ etc. | |
| 28 ... | $\mathbb{A}e1$ |
| 29 $\mathbb{W}h5$ | |
| Or 29 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{A}f4+$ 30 $\mathbb{A}b1$ $\mathbb{W}xd3$ etc. | |
| 29 ... | $\mathbb{W}f4+$ |
| 30 $\mathbb{A}b1$ | $\mathbb{W}xf1$ |
| | 0 - 1 |

10 The Bird Centre

Main line: *Bird Variation*

1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5 ♜d4 4 ♜xd4 exd4 (344).



This type of centre, which features early doubled pawns for Black on the d-file following the exchange of knights, arises almost exclusively from the Bird Variation, with few exceptions, among which it is worth recalling: 1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5 and now:

Anti-Marshall System

— 3 ... a6 4 ♜a4 ♜f6 5 0-0 ♜c7 6 ♜e1 b5 7 ♜b3 0-0 8 a4 ♜b7 9 d3 d6 10 ♜d2 ♜d4 11 ♜xd4 exd4

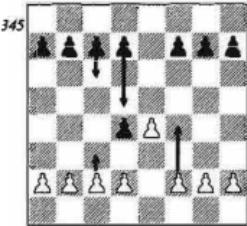
Other Variations

— 3 ... a6 4 ♜a4 ♜d4 5 ♜xd4 exd4

— 3 ... g6 4 ♜c3 ♜d4 5 ♜xd4 exd4

1 Strategic Ideas

Observation of the pawn configuration that characterizes the Bird centre enables us to broadly identify the principal game plans for the two sides, with reference to pawn mobility (345).



When Black does not go for the simple advance ... d7-d6, he generally endeavours to get rid of his double pawns on the d-file by means of the advance ... d7-d5 followed by the trade-off of the e4 and d5 pawns. He is facilitated in this aim by the fact

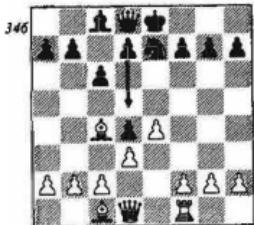
that the light-squared white bishop is exposed to attack by ... c7-c6 (see diagram 344) which also serves as a support for the advance of the d7 pawn. White, on the other hand, can approach the central struggle in two different ways: he can try to exchange the advanced d4 pawn with c2-c3, hoping to restore full mobility to his d2 pawn; or he can play around the d4 pawn, taking advantage of the lack of control over the f4 square to make the advance f2-f4, and so lay the foundations for central and kingside expansion.

From this short, general analysis, it is already clear that the pawn structure shown in diagram 345 is destined to undergo profound changes that can take on various forms depending on how the plans of the two sides interweave. We will therefore briefly review the main pawn configurations that may derive from that shown in diagram 345.

The advance ... d5

The doubled pawns on the d-file cannot be considered a real weakness (the pawn on d4 is in fact rather hard to attack and can be protected without too much difficulty), but it is clear that if Black were able to exchange them, this would be to his advantage. The advance ... d7-d5 hits out at White's centre and prepares to undouble pawns. It is usually

prepared by ... c7-c6 and/or ♜g8-e7, in preference to ... ♜g8-f6 which exposes the knight to the pin ♜c1-g5 and/or the advance e4-e5 (346).

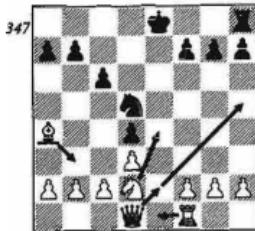


To get rid of the doubled pawns, the contribution of the knight is usually fundamental, as will be readily noted in the example we give, but White can prevent or discourage his opponent's intentions in many ways, such as ♜e1, ♜g5, ♜e2, ♜f3 or ♜h5.

It follows that, depending on the direct or indirect pressure which White exerts on d5, Black will succeed in his aim of getting rid of the doubled pawns (in our example: ... d5, exd5 ♜xd5) or will decide to put up with them (in our example: ... d5, exd5 cxd5), gaining, however, a good grip on most of the central squares.

In the former case (which occurs more often when the ♜b5, following the attack ... c7-c6, is withdrawn to a4) Black even attains some space

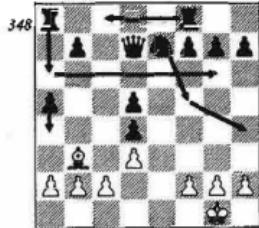
advantage, but White can rely on the faster manoeuvrability of his pieces (347).



Our examination of diagram 344 showed clearly that, once castled, White's heavy pieces can act on the e-file much faster than Black's. Added to this is the possibility of highlighting the vulnerability of Black's king's position after possibly castling short with manoeuvres such as $\mathbb{W}h5$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}e4-g5$ and/or $\mathbb{A}b3$, depending on circumstances.

In the second case, on the other hand, (which occurs more often when the $\mathbb{A}b5$, following the attack ... $c7-c6$, is withdrawn to $c4$, because in this case the capture ... $c6xd5$ gives Black a further gain in tempo), although the resulting pawn structure is superficially inferior to Black owing to the pair of isolated, doubled pawns, he actually has a significant space advantage, giving his pieces much greater freedom to manoeuvre (348).

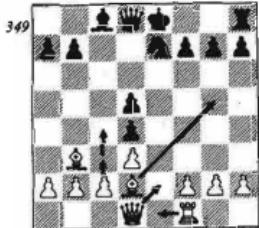
It is, however, important to underline that White's principal positional objective is to put pressure on the pair of isolated, doubled pawns



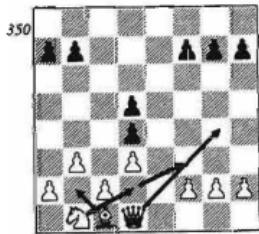
Here we have set out the leading ideas on which Black can base his counterplay: the advance of the a-pawn threatens to trap the $\mathbb{A}b3$; the intervention of the heavy pieces on the c-file is destined to highlight the weakness of the backward pawn on $c2$; and the white monarch cannot consider himself safe given the speed with which Black's forces are able to home in on him.

As for White, it should be said that he can try to exploit the exposed position of the black king on the e-file for as long as it remains in the centre, while at a more advanced stage of the game he will have to resort to the advances $c2-c3$ or $c2-c4$ if he is to clear the attacking diagonals for his bishops, albeit at the price of allowing his opponent to relieve himself of the doubled pawns (349).

It is, however, important to underline that White's principal positional objective is to put pressure on the pair of isolated, doubled pawns

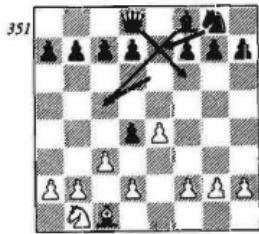


($d4$ in particular) that can be orchestrated by means of $\mathbb{W}f3$ or $\mathbb{W}h5-b4$ in a situation like the one illustrated in diagram 349, but also in other varied ways, depending on the specific circumstances (350).



The advance c2-c3

As the presence of the $d4$ pawn restricts White's d-pawn and gets in the way of the natural development of his queenside forces, it is obvious that Black's early doubled pawns may at times represent for White more a reason for embarrassment than a real target for attack. It is therefore quite conceivable that White will decide to address the problem directly by means of the advance $c2-c3$ (351).

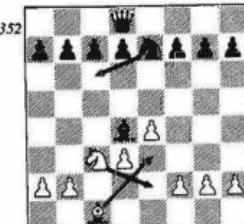


Apart from the systems illustrated here, it would be as well to also mention the option $\mathbb{Q}d2-b3$ (obviously forgoing the advance $b2-b3$) and the option $\mathbb{Q}a3-b5$ that is sometimes possible after the advances ... $a7-a5$ and $a2-a4$.

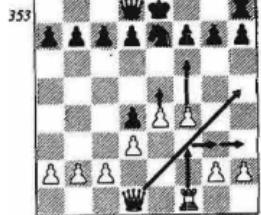
The evident consequence of the disappearance of the $c3$ and $d4$ pawns would be to restore full mobility to the pawn on $d2$ and to White's queenside forces. Therefore it is only under exceptional circumstances that Black can consider the possibility of making the capture ... $d4xc3$, as his efforts are generally aimed at not loosening his grip on the $d4$ square. For this purpose he

can make use of the KB (... ♜c5 and sometimes ... g6 and ... ♜g7), the knight (... ♜e7-c6) and/or the queen (... ♜f6 or ... c6 followed by ... ♜b6) depending on whether the advance ... c6 has been played. It should be noted that over-protection of the d4 pawn is a sound idea, even when White has not played c2-c3; both as prophylaxis against c3; and as a measure to defend the pawn after the advance ... d5. It should also be pointed out that it is rarely worth Black's while to protect the d4 pawn by ... c5, because this would imply a serious weakening of the a4-e8 and a2-g8 diagonals and make it difficult to achieve the freeing advance ... d5 thereafter.

Returning to the situation shown in diagram 351, it is obvious that White cannot succeed in his intentions without continuing to fight for possession of the d4 square. At times, he will insist on trying to force the capture ... d4xc3 by means of manoeuvres such as d2-d3 followed



352



353

The f2-f4 advance may be the prelude to the further thrust f4-f5-f6 (which can, if necessary, be backed up by the e-pawn) and opens the way for the intervention of the KR on the third rank — formidable support for the queen's incursions along the d1-h5 diagonal.

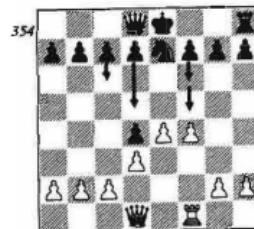
by ♜d2-b3 or ♜a3-c2, but more often he himself decides to effect the capture c3xd4 (352).

We thus have a situation in which in the long term White should come out on top in the fight for d4. Often, however, this involves further simplifications that can impoverish the significance of the plan to win the centre by means of the advance d4.

The advance f2-f4

As we have already observed, White can ignore the presence of the d4 pawn and set in motion a plan of expansion in the centre and kingside based on the advance f2-f4 (353).

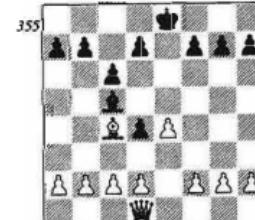
In view of the fragility of his kingside defences, it is clear that Black cannot stand around waiting for his opponent's attack. When he fails to bring his king to safety by castling on the queen's wing, he will therefore try to stifle his opponent's aggressive ideas by means of the advance ... f7-f6 or ... f7-f5 (354).



354

The pseudo-sacrifice ♜xf7+

As we have already had occasion to observe, Black's KB is often developed to c5 to protect the d4 pawn. When White's KB lies on the a2-g8 diagonal, a potentially dangerous situation may arise (355).



355

The diagram shows the simplest case: it is sufficient for White to play ♜xf7+ ♛xf7, ♜h5+ followed by ♜xc5 to win a pawn and prevent Black from castling.

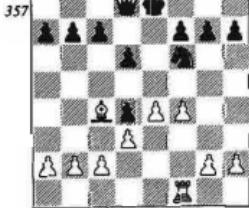
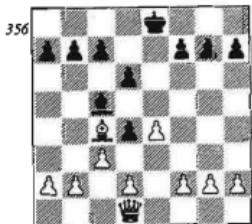
The same theme may occur in a rather more complex form (356).

Here the ♜c5 is protected (so the tactic of diagram 355 is thwarted). Nonetheless, White can inveigle it to a more exposed position: cxd4 ♜xd4, ♜a4+ c6, ♜xf7+ followed by ♜xd4, reaching the same result as in the previous case.

Sometimes the black knight is exposed to attack (357).

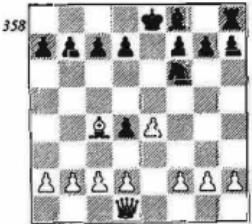
2 Tactical ideas

In this type of centre, a number of simple, recurrent tactical ideas arise. Most of them are based on the fact that the KB (on both sides) finds itself unprotected.



Here, after e5, it would be wrong to believe that it is possible to neutralize the central breakthrough with ... dxe5? (with the aim of answering fxe5 with ... ♜d5) because after ♜xf7+ ♜xf7, fxe5 White recovers his piece and has exposed Black's king.

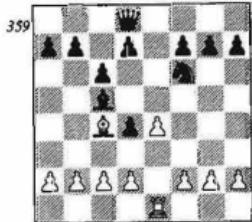
Finally, in the following example, the pseudo-sacrifice on f7 acts as an indirect defence of the e4 pawn (358). After ... ♜xe4?, ♜xf7+ ♜xf7, ♜h5+ Black would be forced to return the piece with ... ♜e7, ♜e5+ followed by ♜xe4, because the alternatives are even worse: ... ♜g8? would run



into ♜d5 mate, and adventures such as ... ♜e6, ♜g4+ ♜e5 cannot be recommended in the opening.

The pseudo-sacrifice ... ♜xe4

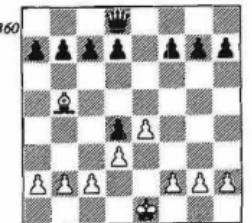
At times it is White who has to keep an eye on the exposed position of his KB (359).



In a situation of this kind, for instance, the simple threat is: ... ♜xe4, ♜xe4 d5 recovering the piece with a clear advantage.

Trapping the white bishop

White also has to keep an eye on his king's bishop in this simple situation (360):



Here White must reply to ... c6 by ♜c4 as ♜a4 is met by ♜a5+ winning the bishop.

3 Illustrative Games

Game 15 Kamsky-Ivanchuk Tilburg 1990

- Bird Variation
- | | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| 1 | e4 | e5 |
| 2 | ♗f3 | ♗c6 |
| 3 | ♗b5 | ♗d4 |

This is the move that distinguishes the Bird Variation although the centre of the same name may sometimes arise out of other lines of play.

In the Anti-Marshall System, for instance, it may occur after 3 ... a6 4 ♜a4 ♜f6 5 0-0 ♜e7 6 ♜e1 b5 7 ♜b3 0-0 8 a4 ♜b7 9 d3 d6 10 ♜d2 ♜d4 11 ♜xd4 exd4 and White can now gain some advantage through a swift attack on the d4 pawn with the advance c3 because Black has no means of providing it with effective support. He therefore has to fall back on the meek ... dxc3.

In the variation with 3 ... g6 this centre may crop up after 4 ♜c3 ♜d4 5 ♜xd4 (not 5 ♜xe5? ♜g5) 5 ... exd4, upon which the game develops in line with the strategic criteria outlined in the present chapter if, after 6 ♜e2, Black opts for the straightforward 6 ... ♜g7; while in the event of 6 ... ♜g5 7 ♜xd4 ♜g7 8 e5 play takes on a unique character.

Finally, we may find a deferred version of the Bird Variation after 3 ... a6 4 ♜a4 ♜d4 5 ♜xd4 (5 ♜xe5?! b5 6 ♜b3 ♜xb3 7 axb3 ♜g5 transposes into a line of the Taimanov Variation mentioned in our comment to Black's fourth move in game 1) 5 ... exd4, but the additional moves ... a6 and ♜a4 are perhaps rather favourable to White as his light-squared bishop is no longer subject to attack by ... c6 while no similar benefit can be noted in Black's position.

- | | | |
|---|------|------|
| 4 | ♗xd4 | exd4 |
| 5 | 0-0 | |

This move, with which White tries to gain an advantage in development,

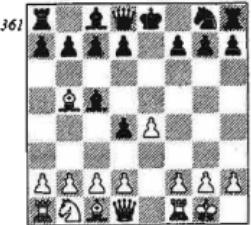
is the most logical continuation and much the most popular. Nevertheless, it is also possible to withdraw the light-squared bishop in time so that it is not left exposed to attack with ... c6, for example: 5 $\mathbb{A}c4 \mathbb{Q}f6$ (here the thematic 5 ... $\mathbb{A}c5?$ would be a serious mistake because of the tactical ploy 6 $\mathbb{A}xf7+\mathbb{W}xf7 \mathbb{W}h5+$) 6 0-0 (after 6 $\mathbb{W}e2$ Black can exploit the tactical expedient of the presence of white queen and king on the same file to complete his development: 6 ... $\mathbb{A}c5! 7 e5 0-0 8 0-0 d5$ with a good position) 6 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc4 7 \mathbb{A}xf7+$ (a thematic tactical resource) 7 ... $\mathbb{W}xf7 8 \mathbb{W}h5+g6 9 \mathbb{W}d5+\mathbb{A}g7 10 \mathbb{W}xe4 \mathbb{W}f6 11 d3 \mathbb{A}c5 12 \mathbb{Q}d2$ with the idea of following up with c3 and White has a slight advantage.

5 ... $\mathbb{A}c5$ (361)

After the immediate 5 ... c6 White finds it rather easier to exploit his advantage in development, for example:

(1) 6 $\mathbb{A}c4 \mathbb{Q}f6$ (slower plans encourage White to exchange the annoying pawn on d4 by c3, for example: 6 ... $\mathbb{Q}e7 7 \mathbb{A}el g6 8 c3 \mathbb{A}g7 9 \mathbb{Q}xd4 0-0 10 d3 d5 11 $\mathbb{Q}c3$, or 6 ... d6 7 d3 $\mathbb{A}e7 8 \mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{Q}f6 9 c3 \mathbb{Q}xc3 10 \mathbb{B}xc3 0-0 11 $\mathbb{A}c2$, or finally, 6 ... g6 7 c3 $\mathbb{A}g7 8 \mathbb{Q}xd4 d5 9 \mathbb{Q}xd5$, with a better game for White in all cases) 7 d3 (White can also continue with the idea of making the advance c3 and defending the e4 pawn with 7 $\mathbb{A}el$) 7 ... d5 8 $\mathbb{A}g5 \mathbb{Q}xe4 9$$$

6 d3



With the text, Black keeps a strong grip on his d4-pawn so as to discourage White from plans based on c3. At the same time he starts to prepare to castle without forgoing his central expansion plan with ... c6 and ... d5. For his part, White can take his pick of whether to continue placing all his eggs in the c3 basket, or consolidating his centre with d3 before undertaking offensive operations on the kingside with the advance f4.

6 d3

On its own this move does not make a statement about White's intention of continuing with f4, because his options still include the plan with c3.

White has other possibilities:

(1) 6 $\mathbb{W}h5 \mathbb{W}e7$ (if 6 ... $\mathbb{A}b6$ 7 $\mathbb{W}e5+$) 7 d3 $\mathbb{Q}f6 8 \mathbb{W}h4 c6 9 \mathbb{A}c4$ (9 $\mathbb{A}a4$ is worthy of consideration) 9 ... d5 10 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5 11 \mathbb{A}g5 f6 12 \mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{A}e6$ with approximately equal prospects.

(2) 6 $\mathbb{A}c4$ d6 7 d3 (against 7 c3), which creates the dangerous tactical threat of 8 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4 9 \mathbb{W}a4+\mathbb{A}d7 10 \mathbb{A}xf7+$ perhaps the soundest line is the straightforward 7 ... c6 followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ and ... 0-0) 7 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6 8 \mathbb{A}g5 h6 9 \mathbb{A}h4 \mathbb{A}e6$ with a lively game in prospect.

6 ... c6

In case of 6 ... $\mathbb{Q}e7 7 \mathbb{W}h5$ Black would not be able to ward off the attack on the $\mathbb{A}c5$ either by ... d6 or ... d5 and he would have to lose a tempo with 7 ... $\mathbb{A}b6$, a factor that would make White's initiative a good deal more effective, for example: 8 f4 c6 9 $\mathbb{A}a4 0-0 10 f5$ with a definite advantage.

7 $\mathbb{A}a4$

The alternative 7 $\mathbb{A}c4$ is also often played, inviting Black to land himself with a pair of isolated, doubled pawns in the centre, for example: 7 ... d5 (7 ... d6 is, of course, also possible) 8 exd5 cxd5 9 $\mathbb{A}b3$ (or 9 $\mathbb{A}b5+\mathbb{A}d7 10 \mathbb{A}xd7+\mathbb{W}xd7 11$

$\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{Q}e7 12 \mathbb{Q}b3 \mathbb{A}b6$ with mutual chances) 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ and practice has found that in this position White encounters considerable problems in proving the significance of his structural superiority, for example:

(1) 10 $\mathbb{W}h5 0-0 11 \mathbb{Q}d2 a5 12 a3 a4 13 $\mathbb{A}a2 \mathbb{A}a6 14 \mathbb{Q}f3 \mathbb{A}g6$ with mutual prospects.$

(2) 10 $\mathbb{A}e1 0-0 11 \mathbb{W}h5 \mathbb{A}e6 12 \mathbb{Q}d2 a5 13 a4 $\mathbb{A}b4 14 \mathbb{A}e2 \mathbb{W}d7 15 \mathbb{Q}b3 \mathbb{A}g4 16 \mathbb{W}g5 \mathbb{A}xf3 17 \mathbb{G}xf3 \mathbb{A}a6$ with advantage to Black.$

(3) 10 c4 0-0 (or 10 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc3 0-0 12 \mathbb{A}el h6 13 $\mathbb{A}f4 \mathbb{A}e6 14 \mathbb{A}d4 \mathbb{A}b4 15 \mathbb{A}e3$ with a slight advantage for White) 11 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5 12 \mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{D}e3 13 \mathbb{F}xe3 \mathbb{D}xe3 14 \mathbb{W}h5 \mathbb{D}xd2+ 15 \mathbb{W}xc5 \mathbb{D}xc1 \mathbb{W}16 \mathbb{H}axc1 \mathbb{A}e6$ with an equal game.$

7 ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$
8 f4

White reveals his intentions. This decision, however, is not the necessary consequence of his sixth and seventh moves: he still had time to opt for the alternative plan involving the c3 advance, for example: 8 $\mathbb{W}h5$ d5 (or 8 ... d6 9 $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{A}e6 10 \mathbb{Q}f3 0-0 11 \mathbb{A}g5 h6 12 \mathbb{Q}xe6 \mathbb{F}xe6 13 $\mathbb{A}d2$ with a slight edge) 9 $\mathbb{Q}d2 0-0 10 \mathbb{Q}f3 11 c3 \mathbb{D}xc3 12 \mathbb{B}xc3 f6 13 \mathbb{A}el \mathbb{A}d6$ with mutual prospects.$

8 ... f5?

This move is the thematic countermeasure for curbing White's ideas of expansion, but it will prove wrong in the present case because the early

weakening of the a2-g8 diagonal will force Black to forgo castling. Black should probably have reacted quickly in the centre with 8 ... d5, endeavouring to give himself room for manoeuvre, for example: 9 f5 dxe4 (not 9 ... g6? 10 f6, nor 9 ... f6? 10 Wh5+) 10 dxe4 d3+ 11 ♜h1 dx2 12 ♜xc2 ♜d4 13 ♜d1 Wh6 retaining the option of castling long.

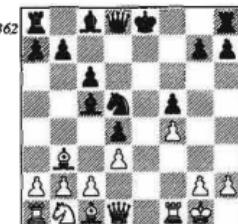
9 ♜b3!

Simple but highly effective. The impulsive 9 Wh5+ g6 10 Wh6 ♜g8! 11 Wh7 Wh6 promises nothing but equality.

9 ... d5

Evidently forced, because now the variation given in the previous note is a real threat, for example: 9 ... d6? 10 Wh5+ g6 11 Wh6 ♜g8 12 ♜xg8 ♜xg8 13 Wh7.

10 exd5 ♜xd5 (362)



Black has managed to achieve the best result structurally, but now the highly exposed position of his king will force him to put up with the

incessant initiative of his opponent. Worth considering was 10 ... cxd5 11 Wh5+ g6 12 Wh6 ♜g8 13 Wh7 Wh6 14 ♜e1+ ♜d8.

11 ♜e1+ ♜d8

After 11 ... ♜f7 12 ♜d2 ♜e8 White could have simplified the position with 13 Wh5+ ♜f8 14 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 15 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 16 ♜xd5 cxd5 before highlighting the weakness of the d4 pawn by 17 ♜f3 ♜d4 18 b3 ♜c8 19 ♜b2 etc.

12 Wh5 g6

Any other move would have allowed White to cause irreparable damage to the black position by exchanging on d5, for example: 12 ... ♜d7 13 ♜xd5 cxd5 14 ♜d2 (14 ♜e5 ♜d6 15 ♜xd5 ♜e6 is unclear) 14 ... ♜f6 15 ♜f3 and the bad position of the ♜h8 together with the weakness of the d4 pawn and the e5 square make Black's position untenable.

13 Wh6+ ♜g8

14 ♜d2 ♜f8

15 Wh3 ♜g7

16 ♜f3 h6

17 ♜e5 ♜f6

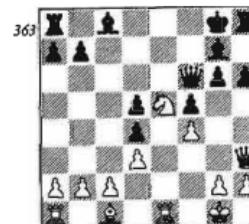
18 ♜xd5+! cxd5 (363)

The objective pursued by White now becomes crystal clear: Black is not in a position to give adequate support to his weakened d4 pawn which can be easily attacked by b3, ♜b2 and ♜f3-f2.

19 b3 ♜b7

20 ♜b2 ♜b6

21 Wh3 ♜e8



22 Wh2?

White continues his plan of rounding up the pawn on d4. The resulting ending should be a fairly comfortable win: he has an extra pawn and great positional advantage. It was also possible to grab the pawn on d5: after 22 Wh5d5 ♜d8 23 ♜f7 Black is very tied up.

22 ... ♜xe5

23 ♜xe5 ♜xe5

24 ♜xd4

A necessary intermediate move. 24 fxe5? would have blocked the lines of action of the white pieces and helped Black's defensive task.

24 ... ♜e2

To force the exchange of queens.

25 ♜xb6 ♜xf2

26 ♜xf2 ♜g7

Necessary to prevent the white rook penetrating down the e-file. The opposite-coloured bishops are not enough to give Black hopes of a draw while there are still rooks on the board.

27 a4!

The beginning of an accurate plan aimed at hemming in the black pawns on the queenside and smoothing the path for the king's intervention on the g1-a7 diagonal.

27 ... ♜e6

28 a5 a6

Evidently forced so as to mobilize the rook.

29 ♜d4+ ♜f7

30 ♜f2 ♜c8

31 ♜a2 g5

32 ♜e5 ♜g6

33 ♜e3 ♜h5

Black tries not to stand cap in hand in the face of the plan ♜d4 followed by c4.

34 ♜d2??

A slight inaccuracy: it would have been better to march into d4 straightaway.

34 ... ♜g8

35 g3 ♜g4

36 ♜e3 ♜h3

37 c3

Now, after 37 c4 ♜d8, White's king is one tempo too late to continue his progress down the g1-a7 diagonal, for example: 38 fxg5 hxg5 39 ♜f6 ♜e8 40 ♜d4 dxc5 41 bxc4 f4.

37 ... d4+?

Seeing his kingside counterplay rebuffed, Black makes a last desperate attempt to continue his siege of the h2 pawn, but passive defence with 37 ... ♜c8 (38 ♜d4 ♜d8 39 ♜c5 ♜d7) would have held the fort a little longer.

38	$\mathbb{Q}xd4$	$\mathbb{E}d8+$	example: 43 ... $\mathbb{A}xd3$ 44 $\mathbb{E}xb6+\mathbb{Q}g4$
39	$\mathbb{Q}e3$	$\mathbb{A}xb3$	45 b3 mate.
40	$\mathbb{E}b2$	$\mathbb{A}d5$	43 ... $\mathbb{Q}g2$
41	c4	$\mathbb{A}g2$	44 d4 g4
42	$\mathbb{E}b6$	$\mathbb{A}f1$	45 c5 $\mathbb{A}c4$

If 42 ... $\mathbb{A}xh2$ 43 $\mathbb{E}xb6+\mathbb{A}xg3$ 44 $\mathbb{F}xg5+\mathbb{Q}g4$ 45 g6 $\mathbb{A}g5$ 46 $\mathbb{E}b2$ followed by g7 and $\mathbb{E}h8$.

43 $\mathbb{E}xh6+$

43 $\mathbb{A}f2!$ won straight away, for

1 - 0

After 46 ... $\mathbb{A}xh2$, there would follow 47 $\mathbb{A}f2$ $\mathbb{E}h8$ 48 $\mathbb{E}xf5$ $\mathbb{A}h3$ 49 $\mathbb{E}g5$ $\mathbb{A}e6$ 50 f5 with an easy win.

Table of Variations

This is a rather special table of variations, for which some explanation will be helpful.

On the left-hand side we have given the variations in their traditional divisions, sub-divided into minor variations. While these minor variations may be grouped here under one main variation, they will often be found in different chapters, according to their common type of centre.

The first percentage column gives victories for White, draws, and wins

for Black, in that order. (As these statistics have in some cases been compiled from additional related variations to those alongside which the figures appear, they are meant as no more than a useful guide.) The next column gives the level of complexity of the variations from the point of view of strategy first, tactics second. The scale ranges from one to five. Finally there comes the percentage frequency with which the variations are played.

SPANISH

		%		%		%		%	
		+	=	Strategy Tactics		frequency		Chapter	
Variations and illustrative lines									
$1.e5 \mathbb{d}5 2.\mathbb{d}f3 \mathbb{d}xc6 3.\mathbb{d}b5$		26	52	22	●●●	★★★	2.7		1,4,6,9
Classical Variation: 3... $\mathbb{d}c5$									
(a) - 4. $\mathbb{c}3 \mathbb{d}f6$ 5.0-0 $\mathbb{d}b6$ 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4		26	57	17	●●●	★★★★	1.8	1,4,6,9	
- 4. $\mathbb{c}3 \mathbb{d}f6$ 5.d4 exd4 6.e5 $\mathbb{d}xe4$ 7.0-0 $\mathbb{d}xf5$ 8. $\mathbb{d}xf5$							0.9	-	
(b) - Other lines		-	-	-	-	-			6,8
Berlin Variation: 3... $\mathbb{d}f6$									
(a) - 4.0-0 $\mathbb{d}xe4$ 5.d4 $\mathbb{d}xe7$ 6.dxe5 d5		36	44	20	●●●	★★★	5.6		
- 4.0-0 $\mathbb{d}xe4$ 5.d4 $\mathbb{d}xe6$ (or 5... $\mathbb{d}e7$ 6. $\mathbb{d}xe2$ [or 6. $\mathbb{d}xe1$] 6... $\mathbb{d}xe6$ 7. $\mathbb{d}xc6$ 8. $\mathbb{d}xe5$) 6. $\mathbb{d}xc6$ dx $\mathbb{d}6$ 7.dxe5									
(b) - Other lines		27	50	23	●●●	★★★	3.0		
Schliemann Counter-Gambit: 3... $\mathbb{d}f5$									
(a) - 4. $\mathbb{d}c3$ (or 4. $\mathbb{d}d4$ $\mathbb{d}xe4$ 5. $\mathbb{d}xe5$) 4... $\mathbb{d}xe4$ (or 4... $\mathbb{d}f6$ 5. $\mathbb{d}e2$ [or 5. $\mathbb{d}xf5$] 5... $\mathbb{d}c5$ 6. $\mathbb{d}xf5$; or also 4... $\mathbb{d}d4$ 5. $\mathbb{d}c4$ (or 5. $\mathbb{d}xf5$; 5. $\mathbb{d}ad4$ 6. $\mathbb{d}xe5$ 7. $\mathbb{d}xe5$ 8. $\mathbb{d}xe4$) 5. $\mathbb{d}xe4$		48	36	16	●●●	★★★★	2.6	6,8	
(b) - Other lines		42	44	14	●●●	★★★★	3.0		
Bird Variation: 3... $\mathbb{d}d4$									
- 4. $\mathbb{d}xd4$ exd4		46	36	18	●●●	★★★★	1.7	9	
(b) - Other lines		47	40	13	●●●	★★★★	1.9	1.3	
		47	40	13	●●●	★★★★	1.9	1.9	10

		%		%		%		%	
		+	=	Strategy Tactics		frequency		Chapter	
Variations and illustrative lines									
Exchange Variation: (3... $\mathbb{d}6$) 4. $\mathbb{d}xc6$		15	72	13	●●●●●	★★★	4.8		8
(a) - 4... $\mathbb{d}xc6$ 5.0-0 (or 5.d4 exd4 6. $\mathbb{d}xf5$) 5... $\mathbb{d}f6$ (or 5... $\mathbb{d}e6$ 6.d4 exd4 7. $\mathbb{d}xf4$, or also 5... $\mathbb{d}d6$ 6.d4 exd4 7. $\mathbb{d}xf4$) 6.d4 exd4 7. $\mathbb{d}xf4$		11	78	11	●●●	★★★	3.4	8	
(b) - Other lines		25	54	21	●●●	★★★	8.5	1.4	-
Deferred Stein's Variation: (3... $\mathbb{d}6$) 4. $\mathbb{d}xf6$		29	52	19	●●●	★★★	8.5	1.5,9	
(a) - 5. $\mathbb{c}3$ $\mathbb{d}d7$ 6. $\mathbb{d}4$ g7 0-0 (or 7. $\mathbb{d}xe5$) 4... $\mathbb{d}f6$ 5... $\mathbb{d}xe5$ (also with the order 4... $\mathbb{g}6$ 5... $\mathbb{d}d6$ 6.d4 exd4 7. $\mathbb{d}xf4$) 8... $\mathbb{d}ge7$ 9.d5		33	55	11	●●●	★★★	1.6	2	
(b) - 5. $\mathbb{c}3$ $\mathbb{d}d7$ 6. $\mathbb{d}4$ g7 0-0 (or 7. $\mathbb{d}xe5$) 4... $\mathbb{d}f6$ 5... $\mathbb{d}xe5$ 8. $\mathbb{d}xe5$ dx $\mathbb{d}5$ 9... $\mathbb{d}g7$ 8. $\mathbb{d}cl$ (or 8. $\mathbb{d}xe5$ dx $\mathbb{d}5$) 8... $\mathbb{d}ge7$ 9.d5		23	56	21	●●●	★★★	2.5	3	
(c) - 5. $\mathbb{d}xe6$ (or 5.c4 $\mathbb{d}d7$ 6.d4 exd4 7. $\mathbb{d}xe4$) 5... $\mathbb{d}xe6$ 6.d4 exd4 7. $\mathbb{d}xf4$		36	50	14	●●●	★★★	2.5	5	
(d) - 5. $\mathbb{c}3$ $\mathbb{d}d7$ 6.d4									
4... $\mathbb{d}f6$ 5.0-0 (or 5. $\mathbb{c}3$ $\mathbb{f}5$ 6. $\mathbb{d}xf5$) 5... $\mathbb{d}e7$ 6. $\mathbb{d}cl$ 6.d7 c3 $\mathbb{d}d7$ 8.d4 0-0 9. $\mathbb{d}bd2$ exd4 10.exd4		14	50	36	●●●	★★★★	1.3	1,4,9	
(e) - Other lines		-	-	-	-	-	0.6	-	
Open Variation: (3... $\mathbb{d}6$) 4. $\mathbb{d}f6$ 5.0-0		25	52	23	●●●	★★★	8.6	6	
(a) - 6.d4 b5 7. $\mathbb{d}b3$ d5 8. $\mathbb{d}xe5$		26	51	23	●●●	★★★	8.2	6	
(b) - Other lines		-	-	-	-	-	0.4	-	

Variations and illustrative lines	+	%	=	-	Strategy Tactics	% frequency	Chapter
Worrell Variation: (3 ... $a6\ 4\ \mathbb{Q}ad\ \mathbb{Q}f6\ 5\ 0-0\ \mathbb{Q}e7$)	30	45	25	●●●	★★★	1.2	3,7
6 $\mathbb{W}e2$							
- 6... $b5\ 7\ \mathbb{Q}b3\ 0-0\ 8\ c3\ d6$ (or 8 ... $d5\ 9\ \mathbb{Q}f5\ dxex5$							
dxex5)							
- 6... $b5\ 7\ \mathbb{Q}b3\ 0-0\ 8\ c3\ d5\ 9\ exd5\ \mathbb{Q}xd5\ 10\ \mathbb{Q}xe5$							
- Other lines	30	45	25	●●●	★★★	1.2	3,7
Anti-Marshall Systems: (3 ... $a6\ 4\ \mathbb{Q}ad\ \mathbb{Q}f6\ 5\ 0-0$	30	45	25	●●●	★★★	1.2	3,7
$\mathbb{Q}e7\ 6\ \mathbb{Q}e1\ b5\ 7\ \mathbb{Q}b3\ 0-0\ 8\ a4\ 8\ d3\ 8\ h3$	39	42	19	●●●●	★★★	5.9	2,3,7,10
(a) - 8 $a4\ b4\ 9\ \mathbb{Q}b8\ 10\ d4\ d6\ 11\ d5$							
- 8 $a4\ b4\ 9\ \mathbb{Q}ad\ 10\ dxex5\ \mathbb{Q}dxex5$ (or 10 ... $dxex5$)							
11 $\mathbb{Q}dxex5\ dxex5$							
- 8 $a4$ (or 8 $d3\ \mathbb{Q}b7\ 9\ \mathbb{Q}bhd2\ d5\ 10\ exd5\ \mathbb{Q}xd5$							
11 $\mathbb{Q}dxex5\ \mathbb{Q}dxex5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}dxex5$; or also 8 $b3\ d5\ 9\ exd5$							
$\mathbb{Q}xd5\ 10\ \mathbb{Q}dxex5\ \mathbb{Q}dxex5\ 11\ \mathbb{Q}dxex5$) 8 ... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ (or							
8 ... $b4\ 9\ c3\ d5\ 10\ exd5\ e4\ 11\ dxex5\ exf3\ 9\ axb5$							
$axb5\ 10\ c3\ d5\ 11\ exd5\ \mathbb{Q}xd5\ 12\ \mathbb{Q}dxex5\ 13\ \mathbb{Q}xe5$							
- 8 $a4\ \mathbb{Q}b7\ 9\ d3\ d6\ 10\ \mathbb{Q}ad\ \mathbb{Q}a4\ 11\ \mathbb{Q}xd4\ exd4$	52	32	16	●●●●	★★★	2.3	2,3,7,10
(b) - Other lines	31	48	21	●●●●	★★★	3.6	—

Variations and illustrative lines	+	%	=	-	Strategy Tactics	% frequency	Chapter
Marshall Gambit: (3 ... $a6\ 4\ \mathbb{Q}ad\ \mathbb{Q}f6\ 5\ 0-0\ \mathbb{Q}e7$)	35	42	23	●●	★★★★★	2.8	7
6 $\mathbb{M}e1\ b5\ 7\ \mathbb{Q}b3\ 0-0\ 8\ c3\ 8\ ... d5$							
(a) - 9 $exd5\ \mathbb{Q}xd5$ (or 9 ... $e4\ 10\ dxex6\ exf3\ 10\ \mathbb{Q}xe5$	36	43	21	●●	★★★★★	2.6	7
$\mathbb{Q}xe5\ 11\ \mathbb{Q}xe5$							
(b) - Other lines	—	—	—	—	—	0.2	—
9 d4 Variation: (3 ... $a6\ 4\ \mathbb{Q}ad\ \mathbb{Q}f6\ 5\ 0-0\ \mathbb{Q}e7\ 6$	26	45	29	●●●●	★★★★★	3.6	1,2,4
$\mathbb{M}e1\ b5\ 7\ \mathbb{Q}b3\ 0-0\ 8\ c3\ d6\ 9\ d4$							
(a) - 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}b4\ 10\ d5$	27	50	23	●●●●	★★★★	1.3	2
(b) - 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}b4\ 10\ \mathbb{Q}e3\ exd4\ 11\ cxdd4$	17	46	37	●●●●	★★★★	1.7	4
(c) - Other lines	—	—	—	—	—	0.6	1
Smyslov Variation: (3 ... $a6\ 4\ \mathbb{Q}ad\ \mathbb{Q}f6\ 5\ 0-0\ \mathbb{Q}e7\ 6$	31	53	16	●●●●	★★★	1.1	1,2,3,5
$\mathbb{M}e1\ b5\ 7\ \mathbb{Q}b3\ 0-0\ 8\ c3\ d6\ 9\ ... h6$							
- 10 $d4\ \mathbb{Q}b3\ 11\ \mathbb{Q}bdd2\ \mathbb{Q}f8\ 12\ \mathbb{Q}c2$ (or 12 $a3\ \mathbb{Q}b7$							
13 $\mathbb{Q}c2\ \mathbb{Q}b8\ 14\ b4\ \mathbb{Q}bd7\ 15\ \mathbb{Q}b2\ c5\ 16\ d5$; or							
also 12 $\mathbb{Q}f1\ \mathbb{Q}b7$ (or 12 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7\ 13\ \mathbb{Q}g3\ \mathbb{Q}as5\ 14\ \mathbb{Q}c2$							
$\mathbb{Q}c2\ c5\ 15\ b3\ \mathbb{Q}bd6\ 16\ d5\ 13\ \mathbb{Q}g3\ \mathbb{Q}as5\ 14\ \mathbb{Q}c2$							
$c5\ 15\ d5\ 12\ ... \mathbb{Q}d7$ (or 12 ... $\mathbb{Q}b7\ 13\ d5\ 13\ a3\ a5\ 14\ d5$							
- 10 $d4\ \mathbb{Q}e8\ 11\ \mathbb{Q}bdd2\ \mathbb{Q}f8\ 12\ \mathbb{Q}f1\ \mathbb{Q}d7\ 13\ \mathbb{Q}g3$							
$\mathbb{Q}a5\ 14\ \mathbb{Q}c2\ \mathbb{Q}c4\ 15\ b3\ \mathbb{Q}bd6\ 16\ \mathbb{Q}b2\ c5\ 17\ dxex5$							

Variations and illustrative lines	+	=	-	Strategy Tactics	% frequency	% Chapter
- 10 d4 $\blacksquare e8$ 11 $\blacksquare b6$ 12 $\blacksquare a3$ $\blacksquare b7$ 13 $\blacksquare c2$ $\blacksquare b8$ 14 $\blacksquare b4$ (14 b3 $\blacksquare b7$ 15 $\blacksquare b2$ $\blacksquare b6$ 16 c4 exd4 17 $\blacksquare xcd4$) 14 ... $\blacksquare b7$ 15 $\blacksquare b2$ g6 16 c4 exd4 17 exb5 (or 17 $\blacksquare xcd4$) 17 ... $\blacksquare b5$ 18 $\blacksquare xcd4$ Chigorin Variation with ... $\blacksquare d7$: (3 ... a6 4 $\blacksquare a4$ $\blacksquare f5$ 0-0 $\blacksquare e7$ 6 $\blacksquare e1$ b5 7 $\blacksquare d5$ 0-0 8 c3 d6 9 h3) 9 ... $\blacksquare d7$ - 10 d4 $\blacksquare b6$ (or 10 ... $\blacksquare f6$ 11 a4 $\blacksquare b7$ 12 d5) 11 $\blacksquare b4$ 12 $\blacksquare f6$ 12 d5	31	53	16	●●●	★★★	1.1 1,2,3,5
- 10 d4 $\blacksquare b6$ 11 $\blacksquare b7$ exd4 12 exd4	39	48	13	●●●	★★★	1.3 1,2,4
- Other lines	39	48	13	●●●	★★★	1.3 1,2,4
Chigorin Variation with ... $\blacksquare a5$; (3 ... a6 4 $\blacksquare a4$ $\blacksquare f5$ 0-0 $\blacksquare e7$ 6 $\blacksquare e1$ b5 7 $\blacksquare b3$ 0-0 8 c3 d6 9 h3) 9 ... $\blacksquare a5$	26	59	15	●●●	★★★	9.6 2,5 1
(a) - 10 $\blacksquare c2$ c5 11 d4	15	80	5	●●●	★★★	1,2,3,5
(b) - 10 $\blacksquare c2$ c5 11 d4 $\blacksquare c7$ (or 11 ... $\blacksquare c6$ 12 d5; or 11... $\blacksquare d7$ 12 $\blacksquare b7$ [or 12 d5] 12 ... $\blacksquare c6$ 13 cxd4 $\blacksquare b5$ 14 $\blacksquare b2$ [or 14 d5] 14 ... a5 $\blacksquare d3$ $\blacksquare a6$ 16 d5) 12 $\blacksquare b7$ (or 12 d5) 12 ... $\blacksquare c6$ 14 (or 12... $\blacksquare c6$ 13 d5) 13 cxd4 $\blacksquare b7$ (or 13 ... $\blacksquare d7$ 14 $\blacksquare f1$ $\blacksquare a8$ 15 $\blacksquare e3$ $\blacksquare d6$ 16 d5) 14 d5	32	49	19	●●●●●	★★★	3,7 2

Variations and illustrative lines	+	=	-	Strategy Tactics	% frequency	% Chapter
(c) - 10 $\blacksquare c2$ c5 11 d4 $\blacksquare c7$ (or 11 ... $\blacksquare d7$ 12 dxc5 dxc5) 12 $\blacksquare b7$ exd4 (or 12 ... $\blacksquare c6$ 13 dxc5 dxc5; or 12 ... $\blacksquare d7$ 13 dxe5 dxe5) 13 cxd4 $\blacksquare d7$ 14 $\blacksquare f1$ $\blacksquare a8$ 15 $\blacksquare e3$ $\blacksquare d6$ 16 dxe5 dxe5	24	62	14	●●●	★★	1,7 3
(d) - 10 $\blacksquare c2$ c5 11 d4 $\blacksquare c7$ (or 11 ... $\blacksquare d7$ 12 $\blacksquare b7$ 12 ... $\blacksquare b7$ 13 cxd4 13 cxd4 14 $\blacksquare c6$ 14 $\blacksquare f1$ (or 14 $\blacksquare b3$ a5 $\blacksquare e3$ a6 15 $\blacksquare b7$ 12 $\blacksquare b7$ exd4 14 ... exd4 15 $\blacksquare xcd4$) 12 $\blacksquare b7$ 13 cxd4 $\blacksquare d7$ 14 $\blacksquare f1$ $\blacksquare a8$ 15 $\blacksquare e3$ $\blacksquare d6$ (or 15 ... $\blacksquare e8$ 16 b5 exd4 17 $\blacksquare d4$) 16 ad (or 16 dxe5 $\blacksquare d4$ 17 $\blacksquare d4$) 16 ... $\blacksquare xcd4$ 17 $\blacksquare xcd4$ 18 $\blacksquare xcd4$	31	45	24	●●●	★★★★	1,7 5
Breyer Variation; (3 ... a6 4 $\blacksquare a4$ $\blacksquare f5$ 0-0 $\blacksquare e7$ 6 $\blacksquare e5$ 7 $\blacksquare b3$ 0-0 8 c3 d6 9 h3) 9 ... $\blacksquare d8$	20	69	11	●●●●	★★★	7,3 1,2,3,5,6
(a) - 10 d4	6	93	1	●●●	★★★	1,9 1
(b) - 10 d4 $\blacksquare b7$ 11 $\blacksquare b2$ $\blacksquare b7$ 12 $\blacksquare c8$ (or 12 ... $\blacksquare c5$ 13 d5) 13 $\blacksquare f1$ (or 13 b3 $\blacksquare f8$ 14 d5) 13 ... $\blacksquare f8$ 14 $\blacksquare g3$ g6 15 a4 c5 16 d5	25	65	10	●●●●	★★★	3,1 2
(c) - 10 d4 $\blacksquare b7$ 11 $\blacksquare b2$ $\blacksquare b7$ 12 $\blacksquare c2$ $\blacksquare e8$ 13 $\blacksquare f1$ $\blacksquare f8$ 14 $\blacksquare g5$ h6 15 $\blacksquare h4$ c5 16 dxe5 dxe5	19	67	14	●●●●	★★	1,2 3
(d) - Other lines	32	36	32	●●●●	★★★	1,1 5,6

Variations and illustrative lines	%	=	-	Strategy	Tactics	%	frequency	Chapter
Zaitsev Variation:(3 ... a6 4 ♜a4 ♜f5 0-0 ♜e7 6								
 [1] e1 b5? ♜b3 0-0-8 c3 d6 9 h3) 9 ... ♜b7	25	63	12	●●●	★★★★	14.7	4.8	1,2,3,4
(a) - 10 ♜d4	10	85	5	●●●	★★★★	—	—	1
(b) - 9 ... ♜b7 10 d4 ♜e8 11 ♜bd2 (or 11 a4! ♜f8 12 d5) 11 ... ♜f8 12 a4 (or 12 d5) 12 ... ♜d7 (or 12 .. b6 13 d5) 13 axb5 (or 13 d5) 13 ... axb5	39	55	6	●●●	★★★★	—	4.4	2
14 ♜xa8 ♜xra8 15 d5	30	50	20	●●●●	★★★★	—	3.3	4
(c) - 10 ♜d4 ♜e8 11 a4 b6 12 ♜bd2 ♜f8 (or 12 ... exd4 13 cxd4) 13 ♜c2 exd4 14 cxd4	21	53	26	●●●●	★★★★	—	2.2	3
(d) - Other lines	25	53	22	—	—	17.4	—	I-X
Unusual lines								
(a) - included in Chapter 1	22	56	22	●●●	★★★★	—	1.6	1
(b) - included in Chapter 2	21	38	41	●●●●	★★★★	—	1.4	2
(c) - included in Chapter 4	43	19	38	●●●●	★★★★	—	1.2	4
(d) - included in Chapter 5	31	51	18	●●●●	★★★★	—	2.3	5
(e) - included in Chapter 3, 6-10	22	65	13	—	—	—	2.3	3,6-10
(f) - Other lines	22	57	21	—	—	8.6	—	—
TOTAL	28	54	18	●●●●●	★★★★	100	100	I-X

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