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Preface

We have written this book with the intention of teaching, amusing, inspiring and even annoying the reader. Too often chess books, even when they are wise and worthwhile, have a soporific effect after a few pages. Our idea, by contrast, is to oblige the reader to participate as if taking part in a discussion with us about chess strategy and tactics.

In the first part of this work we have tried to analyse the phases through which the player's thought goes in order to arrive at the formulation and execution of a plan. In the first four chapters we analyse five games taken from our own personal tournament experience. These games are frozen in the various phases the thought process traverses: analysis, synthesis, idea, verification. Additionally, in the fifth chapter we have considered the player's thoughts from a defensive point of view. Here two other games are analysed, again taken from our own praxis. The intention of this first part is to give the reader a method of thinking which he can apply in over-the-board play.

In the second part of the book the reader is called to the examination bench. There are thirty tests to be solved and if the reader makes a mistake he must be ready to accept our admonishments!

For the most part the tests are drawn from modern tournament practice. We have carefully selected the games so as to show the widest possible range of strategic and tactical themes.

In solving the tests the reader wins points and thus will be able, at the end, to verify his/her strength in BCF and ELO ratings. The points have been assigned as a result of many practical trials with players of all categories.

We hope that between disappointments our readers will enjoy themselves and, above all, improve their playing strength.

Robert Bellin
Pietro Ponzetto

Acknowledgments

We thank the following people for their assistance in the production of this book: Clive Cubitt, for his customary painstaking proof-reading; Kevin Wicker, for his close reading and critique of the typescript; Bob Wade, for his initial encouragement and stimulating discussion of the idea. We are especially indebted to Alan Nixon who not only triggered the chain of events leading to this Anglo-Italian collaboration but also worked unstintingly as specialist intermediary in a way which was invaluable for the completion of this project.

Foreword

Since the game of chess has been played, the spirit of the times is reflected in recorded games of each period. If we look at the games from different periods we can easily see big differences in the styles and ideas in chess. There have been close connections between chess and the arts, philosophy, social standards in society, and, of course, with science. All progress in chess has been based on profound studies of chess principles, theory of openings and continuous research into new ideas in all stages of the game. Understanding in chess has always been individual and largely dependent on personal philosophy, both of the game and life in general.

This ‘personal understanding’ refers not only to players but writers as well. Thus thousands of different kinds of books for many different levels have been published up to now. The most important thing for the vast majority of chess players is to learn how to improve their play, and the intention of chess writers is always to produce

books which are both useful and entertaining, but unfortunately very few of them achieve both. Moreover, experience has shown that famous chess players are not necessarily the best writers. In front of you is a book written by the Italian master Pietro Ponzetto and English IM Robert Bellin who, although not world famous players, are nevertheless successful and very original writers.

The material presented in this book is helpful and interesting for all playing levels up to national master strength at least. Those beginners who have only just learned the rules will need some chess practice in order to be able to use this book properly and derive full benefit from it. In reading this book you will become acquainted with a method of thinking and a ‘stream of consciousness’ technique by means of which the authors give their ideas on how to improve at chess. You will enjoy the experience all the more if you realise that you are having a private chess lesson from masters!

The authors have chosen games mostly from queen's pawn openings because they are better suited for explaining how to think and select plans correctly. Queen's pawn openings are based on positional play with fewer tactical possibilities than in king's pawn openings. Of course, it is easier to understand tactical methods of play than to grasp positional-strategical principles. Moreover, in modern chess queen's pawn openings are in fashion in tournaments at the highest level.

The book is divided into two parts of equal importance. In the first, the authors methodically analyse certain positions expounding their personal approach to the game, not with any intention to establish the final truth but to

show how flexible chess can be. In the second part, you will find yourself completely caught up in the book because you will be able to co-operate with the authors in testing your positional understanding and analytical abilities. You will discover your deficiencies in play and be able to fight against them. For better training, it is important to pay special attention to those games where you do not give the correct answer! After assimilating the teachings of this book you will play with greater self-confidence as you will have improved your knowledge about chess.

I consider this book to be of exceptional value and an important contribution to chess literature.

Ljubomir Ljubojević

Part One: Theoretical Section

“How should I think?”

1 Analysing the Position: The Elements

There are two types of elements which we may use to assess a chess position: strategic and tactical.

a) The strategic element

The strategic elements present in a position may be static (e.g. a passed pawn, an open file, a weak square etc) or dynamic (e.g. control of the centre, improvement in piece position, pawn mobility etc).

The static strategic element

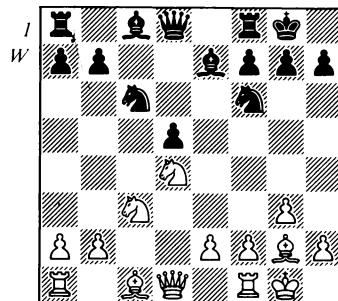
Let us look at the simplest case, namely when a position presents one or more clear-cut static strategic elements. Generally speaking, we determine these elements by analysing the pawn structure.

Consider the following game:

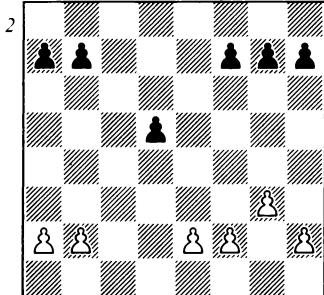
Game 1 *Tarrasch Defence*

- | | | |
|---|----|----|
| 1 | d4 | g5 |
| 2 | f3 | d5 |

- | | | |
|---|------|--------|
| 3 | g3 | e6 |
| 4 | g2 | c5 |
| 5 | 0-0 | cd |
| 6 | x d4 | c6 |
| 7 | c4 | e7 |
| 8 | c3 | 0-0 |
| 9 | cd | ed (1) |

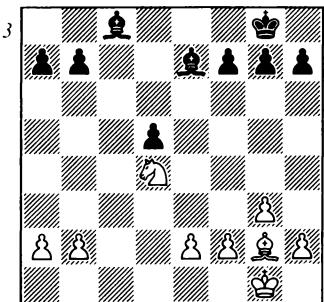


This position would appear to be highly complex because of the large number of pieces still in play. To see if we have any static strategic elements, let us remove the pieces so that we are left with only the pawn structure. We obtain the following position: (2)



Here we see at a glance that the c-file is open, the e- and d-files are half open, the pawn on d5 is isolated, d4 is a strong square and h3 and d6 are weak.

The piece position, and particularly that of the king, can also introduce a new strategic element, or mitigate or aggravate the importance of one of the elements we have just been considering. (3)

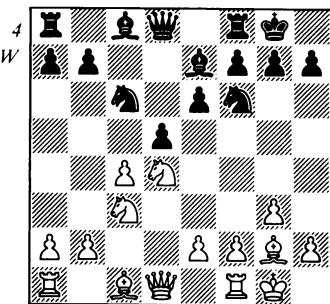


Thus, in Game 1, the bishop on g2 and the bishop on e7 considerably reduce the weakness of h3 and d6 respectively, weaknesses, moreover, which are not fixed. On the other

hand, the knight on d4 is blockading the d-pawn which is therefore fixed and more vulnerable. Finally, the black king on g8 produces a strategic weakness at f5 because defending f5 by the pawn move ...g6 would seriously weaken the black king's castled position. However, the weakness of f5 is mitigated by the presence of the bishop on c8 which offers a reasonable guarantee of control.

Not all positions contain such clearly defined strategic elements as they are usually the end product of deliberate manoeuvring on the part of one of the players.

Look at this position: (4)



We only have to go back one move to observe the absence of many of the strategic elements we have been considering, e.g. the isolated d-pawn, the open c-file, the weak square on f5. But it is White's move and by playing 9 cd he can impose these strategic themes by force since, even if Black plays 9 ...

$\mathbb{Q}xd5$, after 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ ed we find the same themes turning up. The sole difference would be the lack of the knights on c3 and f6, but this would not change the strategic set-up.

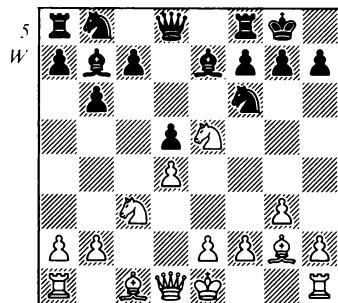
The dynamic strategic element

It often happens that there are no clear static strategic elements, nor is it possible to create any in just a few moves. In this case we have to rely on dynamic strategic elements. For example, in the position at the start of a game our earliest moves follow the fundamental criterion of controlling and occupying the centre. This is the general reason for starting a game by 1 e4 or 1 d4 and not 1 a4 or 1 h4.

Similarly, we may find ourselves playing moves whose purpose is to simplify the position, or reduce our opponent's field of action, or to improve the position of our pieces: these, too, are dynamic strategic criteria.

Game 2 Queen's Indian Defence

1	d4	e6
2	c4	$\mathbb{Q}f6$
3	$\mathbb{Q}f3$	b6
4	g3	$\mathbb{Q}b7$
5	$\mathbb{Q}g2$	$\mathbb{Q}e7$
6	$\mathbb{Q}c3$	d5
7	cd	ed
8	$\mathbb{Q}e5$	0-0 (5)



This position contains only one static strategic element of immediate importance: the weakness of e5, which has already been occupied. White's next move, therefore, is based on the dynamic consideration of reducing the mobility of the opponent's pieces: 9 $\mathbb{Q}a4$. This prevents the development of Black's queen's knight as after 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}bd7?$ he would lose his d-pawn: 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ etc. Black continued with 9 ... c5 which changes the strategic structure of the position as White now has the possibility of giving Black hanging pawns. However, in the opening and in the middlegame such pawns are a strength as they give greater control of the centre and a marked space advantage.

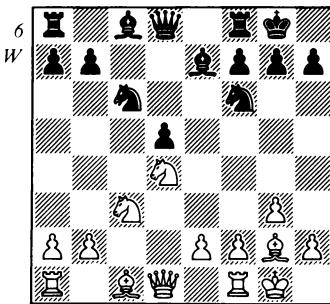
The strategic picture would be quite different if Black tried to relieve the tension between the pawns on d4 and c5. After ... cd Black would leave himself with a

nasty weakness in the form of the isolated pawn on d5. In addition, the advance ... c4 is not advisable as it would enable White to quickly assault the head of Black's d5, c4 pawn chain by playing b3. It is therefore better for White to avoid clarifying the central pawn structure, leaving Black the option of playing ... cd. Thus with his next move White is again guided by dynamic strategic considerations and plays the developing **10 0-0**.

Different value of strategic elements

When a position presents a variety of strategic elements, whether static or dynamic, their real importance has to be assessed. In other words you have to try to identify, where possible, the dominating strategic element or elements.

Let's go back to Game 1. (6)



Here it is clear that White and

Black have more or less the same chances of occupying the c-file, and White has no obvious way to exploit the weakness of f5 with the bishop on c8 watching over it. The other two elements appear to be more important, i.e. the isolated pawn on d5 and the strong square d4 which in this case also fixes the pawn on d5. The occupation of the strong square d4 by the white knight makes the weakness of the d-pawn even more marked because it is thereby immobilised. These, then, are the dominating strategic elements in the position.

The importance of a strategic element can also be assessed on the basis of general strategic criteria. For example, an isolated wing pawn on a closed file is a negligible weakness in the opening and middlegame because the strategic themes being played out – control of the centre and piece development are examples – are more important. In the ending, however, the same weakness can assume greater importance because, with the inevitable simplification of the position, the dominant strategic themes of the middlegame lose importance.

b) The tactical element

Positions often present tactical elements as well as strategic ones. Tactical elements can generally be

divided into three different groups:

- piece position
- piece dynamism
- strategic weakness

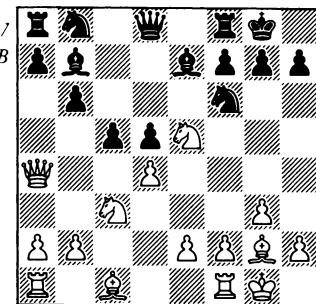
The tactical element created by piece position

The placing of certain pieces may influence the tactical aspect of a position. For example, if we imagine two rooks on the same diagonal, a bishop skewer immediately comes to mind; or if we have a position where the black king is on g8 and the black queen on d7 we will quickly be attracted by the idea of getting a knight to f6. So we can have pieces threatened by a skewer, by a fork, by a pin or by discovered attack; or undefended pieces, or a rook lurking on the same file as the queen or king on an open or even a closed file. All these piece configurations bring into existence tactical elements which can sometimes fit together to make a successful combination.

A combination may also spring from more complex tactical themes such as interference, deflection, overloading, decoying etc. But these complex themes too are based on the particular position of certain pieces.

To assess a position correctly, therefore, we also have to examine the tactical potential it contains.

Let us return to Game 2. (7)



White has just played 10 0-0 to complete the development of his kingside. There is not only a strategic meaning to this move, however. It also conceals the intention of continuing with $\mathbb{E}d1$ so as to bring about the tactical element of opposing rook to queen on the d-file. It should also be noted that the black queen would not be well placed on c7 or c8 because of White's possibility of pursuing his development with $\mathbb{Q}f4$ and $\mathbb{E}a1$.

The tactical element created by piece dynamism

The dynamic value of pieces and pawns is directly proportional to their scope of action and ability to work powerfully.

To appreciate the importance of dynamism we simply have to remember the difference between a blockaded and an unblockaded passed pawn. A blockaded passed pawn is impotent, paralysed,

because correct blockading strategy suppresses its dynamism.

Enhancement of the dynamism of your pieces is a strategic criterion, but the dynamic elements contained in a position often harbour combinational possibilities. Looked at from this point of view, piece dynamism is a tactical element. This is one of the points where strategy and tactics converge.

Game 3 Bird's Opening

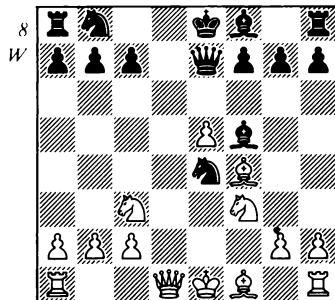
1	f4	e5
2	d3	ef
3	Qxf4	d5
4	Qc3	Qf6
5	Qf3	Qf5
6	e4!	de
7	de	Qe7

Winning the e-pawn is disadvantageous for Black, e.g:

- a) 7 ... Qxd1+ 8 Qxd1 Qxe4 (8 ... Qxe4? 9 Qd5 and wins) 9 Qxe4 Qxe4 10 Qxc7 with a positional advantage.
- b) 7 ... Qxe4 8 Qxd8+ Qxd8 9 Qxe4 Qxe4 10 0-0-0+ Qc8 11 Qg5 Qg6 12 Qc4 with a clear advantage.
- c) 7 ... Qxe4 8 Qxd8+ Qxd8 9 0-0-0+ Qc8 10 Qg5 Qg6 11 Qc4 again with a clear advantage.

8 e5 Qe4 (8)

Here the most obvious tactical idea available to White is the move 9 Qd5. This strengthens the



dynamic potential of the bishop on f4 and the pawn on e5 by setting up the threat of e6. Black, however, can react with 9 ... Qc5 threatening mate on f2, and after 10 Qe3 Qa5+ he has time to play ... c6, displacing the knight from d5.

So, to squeeze the dynamic element out of this position we have to play differently. Specifically, we have to prevent Black gaining a tempo with the check on a5. This we can do by an interference manoeuvre: 9 Qb5+!! c6 10 Qd5 and Black can't continue 10 ... Qc5 because of 11 Qe3 which wins the queen because the bishop on b5 prevents the check on a5, and it can't be taken because of the fork on c7. So Black is forced to play 10 ... Qd8 and White achieves the dynamic element we have looked at by 11 e6!

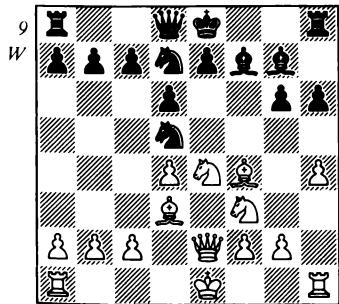
Tactical element determined by strategic weakness

Another motif that may favour

the injection of tactical themes is the presence of strategic weaknesses. For example, the numerous combinational themes available against a weakened castled position are made possible by the inherent weakness of the castled position. The combinations that exploit the weakness of the 7th and 8th ranks are based on strategic weaknesses as are those that exploit the weakness of a diagonal or a file.

Game 4 Dutch Defence

- | | | |
|----|------|---------|
| 1 | d4 | f5 |
| 2 | Qf3 | g6 |
| 3 | Qg5 | Qg7 |
| 4 | h4 | h6 |
| 5 | Qf4 | d6 |
| 6 | Qc3 | Qf6 |
| 7 | e3 | Qe6 |
| 8 | Qd3 | Qf7 |
| 9 | e4 | fe |
| 10 | Qxe4 | Qbd7 |
| 11 | Qe2 | Qd5 (9) |

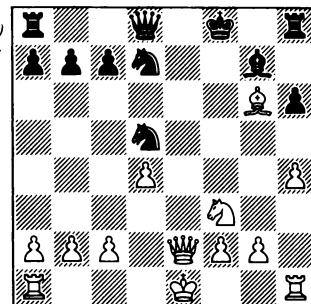


Here White can deploy two types of tactical element: queen-king opposition on the e-file, and the weakness of Black's kingside caused by the absence of the f-pawn combined with the advance of the g- and h-pawns. From these elements White weaves a combination to prise open the black king's position.

Let's have a look:

- | | | |
|----|--------|------|
| 12 | Qxd6! | ed |
| 13 | Qxd6+ | Qf8 |
| 14 | Qxf7 | Qxf7 |
| 15 | Qxg6+! | Qf8 |

If 15 Qxg6 16 We4+ and White would in any case regain material equality after capturing the knight on d5. (10)



At the end of this combination Black has forfeited his castling rights, and his king's position is decidedly precarious. In the follow-up White must try to exploit this theme.

2 Synthesising the Position: The Objective

a) The objective

After identifying the main strategic and tactical elements present in a position we have to select the most important. The reason is simple: we have to direct our moves towards a clear-cut purpose, at least until the strategic set-up of the position is disturbed. From our analysis of the position we thus move on to synthesis, an absolutely necessary process in determining our objective.

The objective may be selected on the basis of either strategic or tactical elements. In the former case we will generally try to achieve a positional advantage, in the latter, a material advantage or mate. Often, however, strategy and tactics blend together so that the realisation of the objective will involve both aspects simultaneously.

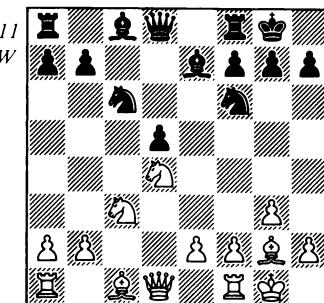
So, the objective springs from the dominating strategic or tactical elements of a position. The clearer these elements are, the easier it will be to pinpoint a specific

objective. For example, in a position featuring a weak pawn our objective will be to attack it, or, if we have to handle our opponent's passed pawn, our objective will be blockade it, etc.

As we saw in Chapter 1, a strategic element may be static or dynamic. We can assume that the same distinction applies to the objective.

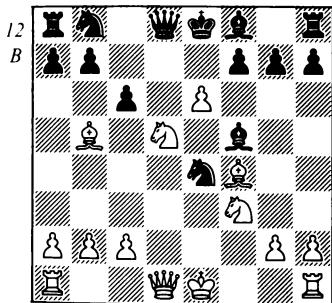
b) The static objective

As we have seen, when a position presents a variety of strategic elements we have to carry out an assessment to pick out the most important. (11)



Thus in this Game 1 position we highlighted among the strategic elements the importance of the isolated d-pawn and the strong square d4. This selection process obviously coincides with our choice of objective. In this case it is, therefore, an easy matter to identify White's objective: attack the isolated d-pawn and keep a grip on the strong square d4.

A clear-out objective can also be derived from a tactical element, as the following example shows. (12)



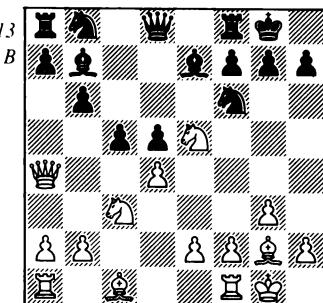
The diagram illustrates the position of Game 3 after the combination that White began by 9 $\mathbb{Q}b5+!!$ The objective of this combination is now evident: Black is doubly threatened with $\mathbb{Q}c7+$, costing him material, and $e7+$ weakening the kingside structure and preventing him from castling.

The correct choice of objective is not always easy or obvious and we cannot lay down hard and fast

rules for making the task easier. Only the study of strategy, and practical experience, can improve individual abilities and limit the margin of error.

c) The dynamic objective

Matters are even more complex when we find ourselves faced with a position that does not present any clear-cut strategic elements from which to choose a clear objective. In such cases we have to base our play on dynamic objectives. We remind you of some mentioned earlier: control of the centre, piece development, improvement of piece placing, reduction of the field of action of your opponent's pieces, pawn mobility, simplification of the position, the fight for the initiative, etc. (13)



Let's return to Game 2. White played 10 0-0 in order to continue with $\mathbb{E}d1$ so as to introduce a tactical element: rook-queen opposition on the d-file.

Simply, White wants to exert pressure on the d-file so as to open an attack against the d-pawn by the exchange dc at the right moment. As mentioned earlier, Black is not interested in resolving the tension between the c- and d-pawns by the blockading advance 10 ... $\text{c}4$?! because of 11 $\text{b}3$ (after 11 $\text{Qxc4}?$! $\text{Qc}6$ 12 $\text{Wd}1$ dc 13 $\text{d}5$ $\text{Qb}7$ 14 $\text{d}6$ $\text{Qxg}2$ 15 de $\text{Wxe}7$ 16 $\text{Qxg}2$ Black stands somewhat better) 11 ... cb 12 $\text{Wxb}3$ with clear positional advantage mainly because of the isolated black d-pawn.

Sooner or later, the increasing pressure on Black's centre could induce him to break the tension by ... cd . This, however, would create a clear-cut objective: attack against the isolated pawn on $\text{d}5$.

Let us look now at the next few moves in this game:

10 ... $\text{Qa}6$

Black contents himself with the only development of the queen's knight possible at the moment since after 10 ... $\text{We}8$ the exchange of queens would produce an ending where White could pressurise the hanging pawns at his leisure, e.g. 11 $\text{Wxe}8$! $\text{Qxe}8$ 12 dc bc 13 $\text{Wd}1$ with a clear advantage.

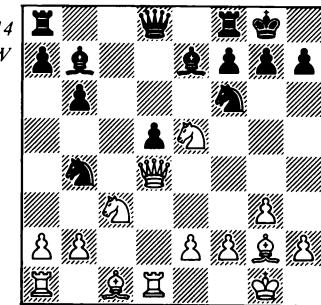
11 $\text{Wd}1$

The introduction of a tactical element immediately creates a threat: 12 dc bc (recapturing with a piece would leave the d-pawn

isolated) 13 $\text{Qxd}5$! $\text{Qxd}5$ 14 $\text{Qxd}5$ and now by either 15 $\text{Wxa}6$ or 15 $\text{e}4$ White regains the piece and keeps an extra pawn. Black sees that defence by 11 ... $\text{Qc}7$ is insufficient to parry this threat, as after 12 dc bc 13 $\text{Qc}6$ White takes the initiative. He therefore decides to react actively by playing

11 ... cd
12 $\text{Wxd}4$ $\text{Qb}4$

Threatening ... $\text{Qc}2$. (14)



The resulting position, however, presents a clear-cut strategic objective: White can concentrate his attack against the isolated pawn on $\text{d}5$. This is due to the fact that Black has been forced to alter his pawn structure to meet a tactical threat.

If we go back carefully over the moves and the reasoning behind this phase of the game, we can deduce a general principle: in positions that do not present a static objective, we can attempt to obtain one by forcing a change in the pawn structure. To bring

about such a change one often uses tactical threats, which brings us to our next subject.

d) The absence of an objective: alteration of pawn structure

Tactics at the service of strategy

The strategic delineation of a position generally springs from the pawn structure which generates most of the important strategic elements. Let us imagine now that we are confronted by a position presenting no tangible weaknesses nor containing any other dynamic elements of particular importance. In sum, a position in which there is nothing to attack.

What do we do in such a case? Evidently, if there is nothing to attack, our opponent's position must perforce be exceptionally sound and his pawn structure will not contain important strategic weaknesses. This balance may, however, be suddenly upset if we manage to provoke a change in the pawn structure. A single pawn move may upset the whole balance of a position and produce weaknesses that will soon give rise to an objective.

A change in pawn structure can be provoked in various ways, the commonest of which are as follows:

- 1) Exchange of a piece which your

opponent is forced to recapture with a pawn.

- 2) The creation of tactical threats which force your opponent to defend with pawn moves.
- 3) The elimination of one or more pawns from the structure. This can be achieved by sacrificing material or exploiting the mobility of your own pawns in a given sector of the board to induce an exchange of pawns.

A typical example of the latter case is the minority attack, so frequently employed that it has come to be considered a strategic element of primary importance.

- 4) A change in your own pawn structure so as to introduce new strategic elements of pressure which did not exist before, e.g. the opening of a file, the fixing of a weak square, the creation of a passed pawn, etc.
- 5) The application of the so-called 'strategy of compensation' consisting of giving up control of certain points so as to gain control over others.

In all these cases, in which efforts are directed at creating an objective, tactics come to the aid of strategy and very often the creation of strategic objectives arises via tactical sequences.

One rule only is of vital importance: *never try to squeeze an attack from a position that isn't*

ready for it.

A game of chess is often a war of nerves and waiting, and before you attack you have got to create an objective.

Game 5 English Opening

1	$\mathbb{Q}f3$	$\mathbb{Q}f6$
2	g3	b6
3	$\mathbb{Q}g2$	$\mathbb{Q}b7$
4	0-0	c5
5	c4	g6
6	d4	cd
7	$\mathbb{Q}xd4$	$\mathbb{Q}c6$
8	$\mathbb{Q}h4$	

So as to reply to 8 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ with 9 $\mathbb{Q}h6$.

8		h6
9	$\mathbb{Q}c3$	$\mathbb{Q}c8$

Defends the bishop on b7 and threatens $\mathbb{Q}a5$ with pressure on c4, or d6 followed by $\mathbb{Q}g4$ to force the exchange of queens.

10 b3!

White anticipates the attack on c4 and prepares a deep tactical combination which Black must avoid.

10 $\mathbb{Q}g7$

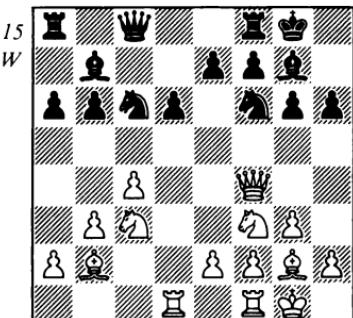
With the threat of g5 which would win a piece.

11 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 0-0

And here the combination would have been triggered by 11 $\mathbb{Q}e4$. Let us see: 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ (if 13 g5 14 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ and wins) 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d6$!

$\mathbb{Q}c7$ (after 15 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ White has huge compensation for the sacrificed material; if 15 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ there would follow 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d1+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ mate) 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d1+$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18 a3 and White wins.

12	$\mathbb{Q}b2$	d6
13	$\mathbb{Q}ad1$	a6 (15)



With his last move Black intends to exploit the mobility of his queenside pawns as the rigidity of his central and kingside pawns rules out any initiative in these sectors. Any move of the e-pawn would seriously weaken the d-pawn.

The threat is now 14 b5, e.g. 15 cb ab 16 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ with advantage.

Black's position is sound and presents no weakness that would constitute a valid objective. And yet it is not completely free from weakness: c6 is a weak square, although it is not fixed by any white pawn and Black still has it

under tight control. On the basis of these considerations, White works out a tactical sequence designed to provoke a fundamental alteration in his own pawn structure.

Let's see:

14 ♜c1! b5

15 ♜a1!!

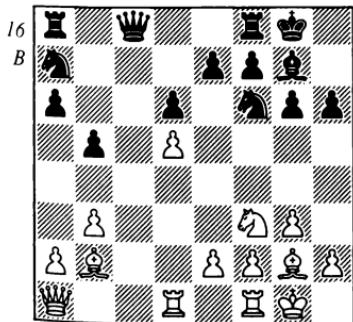
This defends the a-pawn and so attacks the b-pawn; Black cannot continue 15 bc because of 16 ♜d5! ♜d8 (to defend b6 and f6) 17 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 18 ♜xf6 ef 19 bc with a clear advantage.

Black clearly cannot escape scot-free after the invasion of d5 and has to be able to exchange off the knight when it lands there. He is therefore forced to play:

15 ♜a7

16 ♜d5 ♜xd5

17 cd (16)



White has managed to bring about an alteration in his pawn structure and the strategic con-

sequences are as follows:

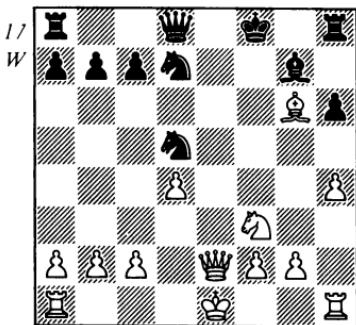
- 1) fixing of the weak square c6
- 2) opening of the c-file
- 3) elimination of the main defender of c6, the bishop on b7.

White has therefore succeeded in setting up a clear strategic objective.

e) Strategy at the service of tactics

As we saw in Chapter 1, the dynamism of pieces and certain strategic weaknesses may foster the achievement of tactical elements and objectives.

There are cases in which strategy is at the service of tactics, when a combination is based on strategic elements which could not otherwise be exploited. (17)



The diagram illustrates the position in Game 4 at the end of the combination that White began with 12 ♜xd6!. This combination, made possible by the weakness of Black's kingside, highlights a clear tactical objective:

to exploit the precarious situation of Black's king.

In reaching this position, White justified his actions strategically by the fact that the sacrificed piece

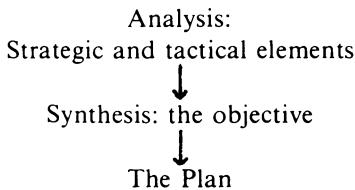
is offset by the three pawns advantage. This factor enabled White to commence operations without needing to calculate a win-forcing line.

3 Planning: The Idea

a) Planning

Planning is a logical consequence of the analysis and synthesis of a position. It involves hypothesising a sequence of moves whose purpose is the achievement of the objective.

We have, then, the following relationship:



It follows that a plan can only be formulated if there is a static or dynamic objective which is the fulcrum of the position. Failing this, we will make moves based on dynamic strategic criteria or moves that aim to create tactical elements. In short, not meaningless moves but moves whose sequence cannot be said to constitute an overall plan.

In general, during a game one

formulates several plans. As the strategic set-up changes so can the objective and consequently the plan as well.

Planning takes in two separate thought stages: formulation and realisation, or idea and verification. In this chapter we will look at the first of these stages.

b) Formulating the plan: the idea and mental order of moves

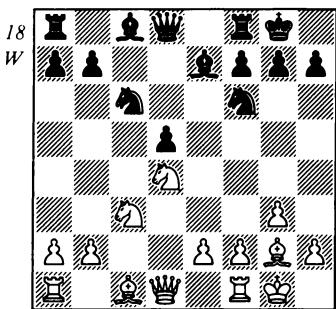
The idea of planning is to project your position a few moves forward without initially considering your opponent's defensive or offensive chances, apart from those easiest and most readily calculated. The sequence of moves proposed should tend to achieve the objective.

Substantially, the idea of the plan answers the question: "What position do I want to reach?"

When you imagine this sequence of moves, the mental order of moves with which you reach the position you want is not important.

You must simply not consider as part of the plan moves that are impossible or obviously unacceptable (e.g. placing a piece on a square controlled by your opponent's pawn). The task of reorganising moves and correcting errors is a function of the second stage of the plan: verification. After having formulated a plan, you should make sure of the validity of the idea by making a quick evaluation of the resulting position.

Let us now consider the position reached in Game 1 and follow the player's thought processes as he formulates his plan. (18)



In this position my aim is to attack the d-pawn and keep control of the square d4.

To get my heavy pieces working on the d-file I have to move the knight on d4, but if I do that I lose control of the square. I might try controlling this square with e3 but I don't like this solution because it

weakens d3 and f3.

At the same time I've got to develop my pieces and my queen's bishop still hasn't seen the light of day. How can the bishop on c1 help to increase the pressure on the d-pawn? – by attacking the knight on f6, one of its defenders. So I think about playing 10 ♘g5 and quickly realise that if 10 ... h6 11 ♖xf6 ♖xf6, I cannot take the d-pawn because the knight on d4 is under fire. Nor is the reply 12 ♗xc6 bc worth considering because Black has a firm grip on d5. However, I'm quite happy about Black playing ... h6 because this weakens his castled position.

I go back to thinking about the knight on d4 which will sooner or later have to move: What is the ideal square for this knight? Evidently e3, from where it exerts further pressure on the d-pawn. However, once the knight on d4 has moved to e3, I will have to deal with the threat of the fork ... d4 resulting from the loss of control of d4.

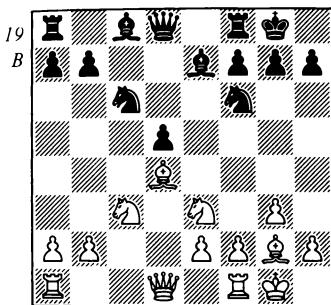
How do I get round this problem? By placing my queen's bishop on d4, the ideal square for blocking the d-pawn and for attacking its defender, the knight on f6.

So the bishop on g5, if attacked, can withdraw to e3 and thence move on to d4. Or why not omit

the move $\mathbb{A}g5$ altogether and simply play $\mathbb{A}e3?$ As far as the idea is concerned, this is a detail and is not of great importance, so I postpone my decision.

However confused the order of my thoughts may have seemed, the idea born out of them is not, and I now have a clear idea of what might be an ideal position.

Let us try to visualise what would happen. (19)



The Idea

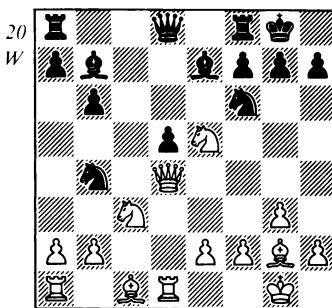
If Black takes ... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$, after $\mathbb{W}xd4$ White would be set to further increase pressure on the d-file by doubling heavy pieces. If Black does not exchange, White can double anyway on the d-file and clear the way for his attack against the d-pawn by taking on f6.

In arriving at this position mentally, it is not important to fix on any precise move order. For example, it could have been:

- 1) $\mathbb{A}g5$, $\mathbb{Q}c2$, $\mathbb{A}e3$, $\mathbb{A}d4$, $\mathbb{Q}e3$.
- 2) $\mathbb{A}g5$, $\mathbb{A}e3$, $\mathbb{Q}c2$, $\mathbb{A}d4$, $\mathbb{Q}e3$
- 3) $\mathbb{A}e3$, $\mathbb{Q}c2$, $\mathbb{A}d4$, $\mathbb{Q}e3$ etc.

The best move order and any modifications that may prove necessary should be worked out in the second phase of the plan – the verification.

Let us now examine the position in Game 2 which, however similar it may seem to the one we have just been looking at, must be handled in a quite different manner. (20)



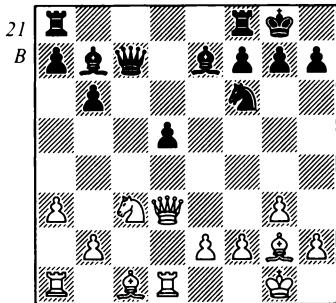
My aim here too is to attack the d-pawn. Control of d4 is less important, at least as long as the d-pawn is pinned against the bishop on b7. The pressure against the isolated pawn is already very strong and the problem is to meet the threat of ... $\mathbb{Q}c2$ without dissipating the action against d5. Once this threat has been neutralised, it is clear that the pawn will fall after a3.

I could play $\mathbb{B}d2$, but such a move would create serious development problems for the bishop on c1. The only other possibility is

$\mathbb{W}d2$, but what if Black plays ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$? Brief analysis shows that after 13 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ de 15 $\mathbb{W}d7!$ Black may have straightened out his pawn structure but White's position is much superior.

In this variation, then, $\mathbb{W}d2$ works all right except that Black will probably reply with ... $\mathbb{W}c7$ so as to attack the knight on e5 and find the time to place a rook on d8. However, the knight on e5 would be well placed on d3, forcing Black, after a3, to exchange the bothersome knight on b4. And after $\mathbb{W}xd3$ the diagonal would be free to develop the bishop on c1. Then again, if Black withdraws his knight on b4, I can bring the knight on d3 back to life on f4 and exert unbearable pressure on the d-pawn.

So the idea starts to take on a concrete form: (21)



The Idea

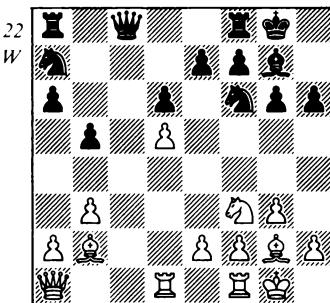
The exchange of knights solves many of White's problems and all his pieces find their best squares:

the queen's bishop on f4 and the queen's rook on c1.

The idea behind this game plan is to simplify the position without fragmenting the action of the pieces concentrated against the d-pawn. The first stage of the plan is completed: whether the plan is actually playable will be determined in the verification stage.

Games 1 and 2 have the same strategic motif although the idea is quite different, for in the latter example White has to combine attack and defence: here the key lines in the elimination of the irritating knight on b4.

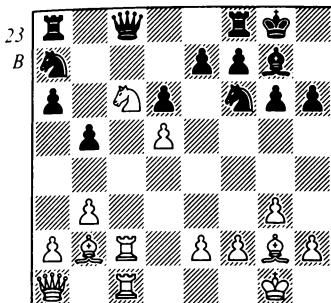
In Game 5 we have reached a position in which the strategic theme seems very clear: (22)



By altering my own pawn structure, I have managed to remove Black's counterplay against my c-pawn, fix the weak square c6 and open the c-file. In addition, Black has had to cede the bishop pair.

The plan here seems fairly self-evident: to double up on the c-file and occupy c6 via the manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}d4-c6$.

Let us picture the position I want to obtain: (23)



The Idea

A further inducement to pursue this plan is the fact that I will gain a tempo because when I play $\mathbb{B}c1$ Black will be forced to move his queen. Having achieved this ideal position I can then contemplate a breakthrough in the centre based on the thrust e4-e5, or aim for complete control over the c-file by controlling the opposition square on the open file (c8) by h4, $\mathbb{Q}h2$, $\mathbb{Q}h3$. I note that the pawn on d5 is automatically defended by the pin on the knight on f6 operated by my bishop and queen on the long diagonal.

Here too, when formulating the idea, the mental order of moves by which I hypothesised arriving at this position is of no importance whatever: the verification will

establish the precise order of moves.

c) Alteration of pawn structure in formulating the plan

The formulation of a plan may be based on a change in the strategic elements present in the position, particularly on an alteration of the pawn structure. In this case, even when formulating the idea, you have to examine your opponent's moves, specifically those that bring about a change in the strategic set-up. Be careful, however: the opponent's moves that cause a strategic change in a position must be *forced*. We must not plan on the hypothesis that our opponent will play in the way we want him to.

If, for instance, we seek an alteration in our opponent's pawn structure by exchanging pieces, we immediately have to check that he will be forced to take back with that particular pawn and not with a piece or with another pawn that would avert the strategic change on which our plan is based.

So, a plan that implies an alteration of the strategic structure of the position as early as the idea stage, must be based on unavoidable, forced moves of the opponent, to bring about the change.

4 Planning: Verification

a) Strategic and tactical verification

Once you have formulated a plan, you have to make sure it is practicable, namely whether or not your opponent can stop you implementing it.

When you start calculating in order to make your verification, you obviously do not consider those moves of the opponent that do not stand in the way of your plan or which give it a push in the right direction.

Your opponent may counter your plan strategically or tactically.

Strategically in two ways:

1) By direct defence aimed at preventing practical implementation of your plan.

Defence of this kind may, however, lead to the creation of new weak points or the retreat from a given sector which may thus become an object of attack. In such an event we could therefore formulate another plan so as to exploit the newly created weak points.

We might say, then, that direct

defence may be:

pure: when it does not create other weaknesses.

impure: when it unfavourably alters the strategic structure.

The utilisation of impure defence is indicated in clearly inferior positions: by this means the defender obliges the attacker to appreciate and come to terms with a strategic change in the position, and this can imply a change in the plan of attack. In these situations it is not easy for the attacker to maintain his equanimity, and such sudden switches – especially in time-trouble – can produce violent changes of fortune.

2) By formulating a counter-plan the effects of which tend indirectly to hinder the realisation of your plan.

Games featuring attack and counter-attack are typical examples.

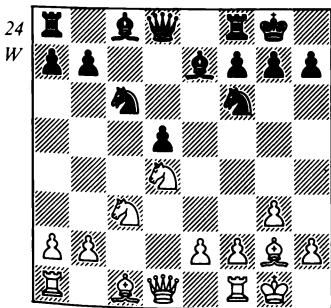
Tactically:

By exploiting a blunder (e.g. an inversion of moves) or otherwise exploiting the tactical elements present in the position.

Verification consists of the precise calculation of variations and should be repeated every move, as our ability to calculate is limited and it is therefore easier to discover new elements as the position develops before us. At the end of each variation analysed, it is necessary to make an evaluation of the resulting position in order to be able to integrate the analysis (necessarily limited) with a broader strategic view.

Another task of verification is to lay down the exact move order by which our plan is to be achieved. Move order is usually of great importance and will frequently determine the success or failure of a plan.

Let us go back to Game 1 and try to monitor the thought processes of a player during this second stage. (24)



10 ♘g5

Inviting Black to weaken his castled position with 10 ... h6. If he

does not play this, I can increase the pressure against the d-pawn by ♘d2 and ♘fd1. In the event of 10 ... h6 11 ♖e3 I am not worried about 11 ... ♗g4 because of 12 ♖xd5 ♗xe3 13 ♖xc6 etc. I have decided to play ♖g5, but equally could have gone ♖e3 straight away.

10 ...	h6
11 ♖e3	♖e5

Up to here everything is going according to plan. Now, however, Black is threatening ♖c4 attacking both the bishop on e3 and the b-pawn.

I immediately reject the continuation 12 b3 because after 12 ... ♗eg4 I would not be able to get to d4 with my bishop. However, I still have to check whether the move played by Black will really stop me pursuing my plan. My analysis: 12 ♖c2 ♖c4 and now the knight on c2 defends the bishop on e3, preventing nasty doubled pawns, and the d-pawn is en prise, as is my b-pawn. There could well be an exchange of pawns. Let's have a look: 13 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 (if Black plays immediately 13 ♖xb2 I could win the knight after 14 ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 15 ♖d4) 14 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 (here, too, after 14 ... ♖xb2 15 ♖b3 ♖f6 16 ♖ab1, the knight on b2 will be in deep water) 15 ♖xd5 ♖xb2 and now I think that 16 ♖b3 will give Black some

problems to save the knight; or 16 $\mathbb{B}ab1$ and perhaps I can regain the b-pawn.

In any case, I believe my position is promising, and at the very worst I am left with material equality and no risk of losing.

I repeat my analysis and, certain that it is free from error, I proceed with my plan:

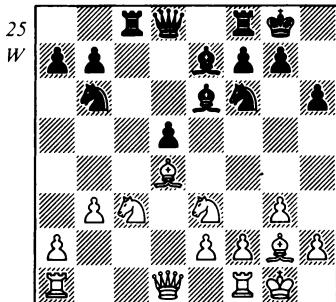
12 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

13 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$

And now I have to defend the b-pawn:

14 b3 $\mathbb{Q}b6$

15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ (25)



My idea has reached fulfilment without any hitches and I could already win the d-pawn by exchanging the bishop on d4 for the knight on b6. Such a summary execution does not convince me, however, because after 16 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}cxd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (not 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ with a nasty pin) 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ I would find myself with bishops of opposite

colour and an advantage of only one pawn. I absolutely reject any idea of releasing the tension in this way and base my decision on the principle of strategy which says that the threat is stronger than the execution.

Instead I can mobilise my heavy pieces, confident that the d-pawn will fall whatever happens.

16 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$

Here too I could win the pawn but the variation would not be that much different to the one I analysed before. I want to get my rooks into play, so I'll wait for the best moment to capitalise on my advantage.

17 $\mathbb{R}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$

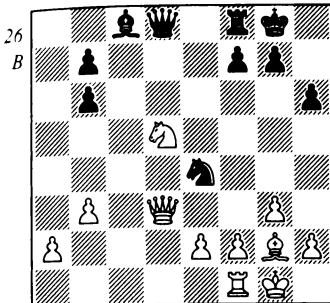
18 $\mathbb{R}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$

Under pressure, Black loses his head. He certainly ought to have played 18 ... $\mathbb{R}xc3$ but in any case either 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ with the idea of following up with $\mathbb{R}d1$, or 19 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ with the threat of $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ would be excellent continuations. Perhaps Black hopes that I will play 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ de 20 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ allowing opposite coloured bishops. I analyse that the correct procedure is 19 $\mathbb{R}xc8$ and if 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}xe4$. If 19 ... $\mathbb{W}xc8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}xd5$, and if 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}xd5$.

19 $\mathbb{R}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$

20 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ ab

Forced, because if 20 ... $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 21 $\mathfrak{Q}xd5$ and White wins a piece.
21 $\mathfrak{Q}xd5$ (26)



So I have achieved my objective. I am a pawn up and the structure of the black pawns on the queenside is compromised. From now on it is simply a matter of technique although I must continue to play with concentration because I have lost too many won positions as a result of relaxing mentally.

21 ... $\mathfrak{Q}c5$

22 $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathfrak{Q}e6$

22 ... $\mathfrak{Q}d7$ would be too passive.

23 $\mathfrak{Q}xb6$ $\mathfrak{W}d4$

24 $\mathfrak{Q}c4$ $\mathfrak{R}a8$

25 e3

Forcing the exchange of the bishop on e6 for the knight on c4 because the black queen is defending the knight on c5 and cannot be withdrawn.

25 ... $\mathfrak{Q}xc4$

26 bc $\mathbb{W}d6$

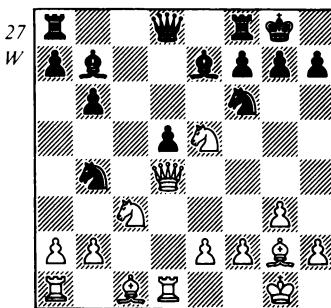
27 $\mathfrak{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}e7$

If 27 ... $\mathbb{E}xa2$ 28 $\mathbb{W}e8+$ etc.

28	$\mathbb{W}b1$	$\mathbb{W}c7$
29	$\mathbb{E}d1$	$\mathfrak{Q}e6$
30	$\mathfrak{Q}xe6$	fe
31	$\mathbb{W}e4$	$\mathbb{W}e7$
32	$\mathbb{E}d2$	$\mathbb{W}h8$
33	$\mathfrak{Q}g2$	$\mathbb{E}a4$
34	$\mathbb{E}b2$	$\mathbb{E}a7$
35	$\mathbb{E}b6$	$\mathbb{E}xa2$
36	$\mathbb{E}xe6$	$\mathbb{W}f8$
37	$\mathbb{E}e8$	$\mathbb{W}xf2+$
38	$\mathfrak{Q}h3$	

1-0

Let us now consider Game 2. (27)



After formulating the idea, I again look closely at the variation 13 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathfrak{Q}e4$ 14 $\mathfrak{Q}xe4$ de 15 $\mathbb{W}d7!$ and, not finding a refutation, decide to pursue the plan.

13 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$

As I foresaw, Black wants to put a rook on d8. Before mechanically playing 14 $\mathfrak{Q}d3$ I have to consider Black's likely replies:

1) 14 ... $\mathfrak{Q}e4$ 15 $\mathfrak{Q}xe4$ $\mathfrak{Q}c2$ (if 15 ... de 16 $\mathfrak{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{E}fd8$ 17 $\mathfrak{Q}d3$ ed 18 ed

and I am a pawn up although Black has some compensation) 16 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (16 $\mathbb{B}b1$ de looks good for Black) 16 $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 17 b3 and, remembering that on 17 ... d4 I have the reply 18 $\mathbb{Q}b5$, I think I would in any case recover the knight on a1 and thus acquire the advantage of two minor pieces for a rook.

2) 14 ... d4 15 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ and I win material.

14 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{B}ad8$

Considering that my plan involves swapping off the knights, I concentrate my attention on the two most obvious moves 15 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ and 15 a3. I quickly note that both moves are faulty:

1) 15 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ and now, threatened with d4, I cannot avoid the exchange ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ which saddles me with an isolated pawn and marks the demise of all my fond hopes of pressure against the d-pawn.

2) 15 a3 d4 16 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ (16 ab dc 17 bc $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$, and Black recovers his pawn, is no good; nor does 16 ab dc 17 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}b8$ convince me because of the doubled pawn) 16 ... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ and I think Black has some dynamic compensation for the pawn.

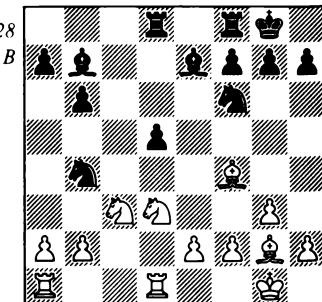
So I decide to look for something better, and only if I fail will I go

back to this second variation and try to find an improvement.

To solve the development problem of my queen's bishop without betraying the concept of simplification underlying my plan, I carefully consider the move 15 $\mathbb{W}f4$, attacking both the queen on c7 and the knight on b4. After 15 $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 16 $\mathbb{W}h4$, Black is left with his knight en prise and is threatened by $\mathbb{Q}b5$. Exchange of the knight on c3 for Black's king's bishop would be good for me because my queen's bishop would be left in absolute control of the black squares. Furthermore, the queen exchange either by 15 $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{W}xf4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ or 15 $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ would solve my queen's bishop development problem without diminishing my chances of pressure against the d-pawn. When the chips are down, this alternative seems best and I decide to play it.

15 $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{W}xf4$

16 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ (28)



Now to carry out my idea, I intend to continue 17 a3 ♜xd3 18 ♜xd3 followed by doubling my rooks on the d-file. To my surprise, my opponent anticipates my intentions.

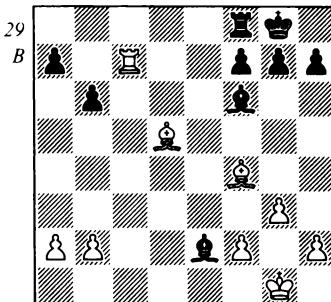
16 ... ♜xd3

A move which helps my plan. There must be a reason, however. After some thought I find the tactical justification: on 17 ♜xd3, Black is going to play 17 ... ♜a6 giving up his d-pawn in exchange for mine on e2.

But . . . wait a moment! My e-pawn is defended indirectly by the skewer on the two bishops - ♜ael. I analyse: 17 ♜xd3 ♜a6 18 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 (if 18 ... ♜xd3 19 ♜xe7+ ♜h8 20 ed, I would win both bishops for a rook) 19 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 20 ♜xd5 and Black can't take on e2 because of ♜el. He can, however, play the intermediate 20 ♜f6 also attacking the b-pawn. But here too, after 21 ♜cl, although Black gets his pawn back, I have time to put my rook on the seventh rank, so shaking up the queenside pawns.

This analysis seems correct, so I decide to play it:

- | | | |
|----|----------|------|
| 17 | ♜xd3 | ♜a6 |
| 18 | ♜xd5 | ♜xd5 |
| 19 | ♜xd5 | ♜xd5 |
| 20 | ♜xd5 | ♜f6 |
| 21 | ♜c1 | ♜xe2 |
| 22 | ♜c7 (29) | |



Now Black can't take on b2 because of ♜c2. At the same time he has to defend the a-pawn and is threatened with ♜d6 which would cause f7 to fall. Therefore, he is forced to play 22 ... ♜h5, but after 23 b3 or 23 b4 it should not be difficult to win a pawn on the queenside. The ending should not present major problems.

But a pleasant surprise awaits me: the classic blunder in desperate positions which makes my task decidedly easier.

22	...	♜xb2?
23	♜c2	♞d3
24	♜xb2	♝d8
25	♞f3	♞c4
26	a3	h6
27	♜d2	♜e8
28	♞e3	♜e5
29	♞d4	b5
30	♞e4	♝xe4
31	♞xe4	a5
32	♞d2	

1-0

b) Change of plan

We have looked at two examples in which the plan was achieved practically in full. This was possible because, in the various phases of the game, the idea constantly met the demands of verification.

What do we do in the opposite event, i.e. when verification shows us that the plan is impractical? If the verification process reveals insuperable tactical or strategical problems we would have to abandon our plan and find a new one. Nor is this the only case where we have to revise or change our plan.

Every time a position changes strategically, as a result of our own or our opponent's efforts, it is good practice to examine carefully whether or not the idea still corresponds to the nature of the position. New strategic elements may have surfaced and these may enable us to prepare a more effective plan or oblige us to abandon our original plan for defensive reasons.

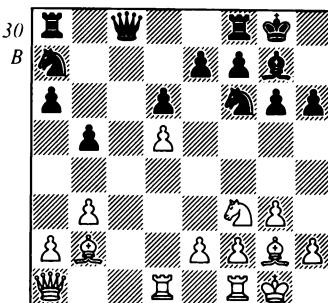
To sum up, we change plans mainly in three situations:

- 1) When the idea fails to stand the test of tactical verification. When, in other words, tactical reasons warn us off.
- 2) When the idea fails to stand the test of strategic verification. For

instance, when the implementation of our plan would leave strategic 'holes', i.e. would give our opponent more important positional advantages than those we are aiming for ourselves. Or, more simply, our opponent may find an effective antidote to our plan and succeed in neutralising its effects or make it unrealisable.

- 3) When a strategic change in the position introduces new offensive or defensive elements that are more important than the original plan.

With all this in mind, let us try and follow the thoughts of the player in Game 5. (30)

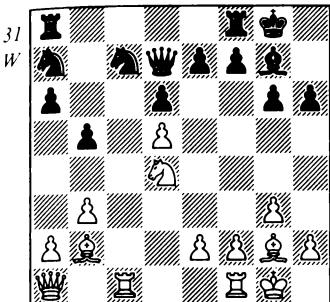


17 ... $\mathbb{Q}e8$

Black proposes an exchange of bishops so as to attenuate the pressure on the long diagonal. If 18 $\mathbb{Q}xg7 \mathbb{Q}xg7$ the knight gets back into the game and my opponent solves the communication problem between his heavy pieces. If I pursue my plan, however, I

can prevent this exchange: 18 ♜d4 and if 18 ... ♜xd4 19 ♜xd4, the bishop pair would give me a big advantage.

- 18 ♜d4
19 ♜c1 ♜c7 (31)



Black wants to counter the occupation of the c-file by ♜fc8. Before continuing the plan with 20 ♜c2 I would be advised to check how effective Black's defensive chances are. My analysis: 20 ♜c2 ♜fc8 21 ♜fc1 ♜e8 22 ♜c6 ♜xb2 23 ♜xb2 ♜xc6 24 ♜xc6 (there's no future in retaking with the pawn because I would never be able to dislodge a blockader on c7) 24 ... ♜xc6 25 ♜xc6 and now 25 ... ♜c8 is not playable because the a-pawn would be left en prise. The position, however, is very simplified and after 25 ... ♜a7 26 ♜c2 ♜c7 I can't see how further progress is possible while my opponent prepares ... b4 followed by ♜b5-c3. I also have to consider the possibility of Black reacting to 20 ♜c2 with

20 ... b4 21 ♜fc1 ♜cb5 and here too I don't think I've gained anything important. If I want to prevent the thrust ... b4, I should play 20 a3 or 20 b4 but my plan would be slowed up and Black would have time to counter the pressure on the c-file.

This analysis persuades me that Black has good defensive chances. My idea has failed to pass the test of strategic verification. So I decide to look for a more effective plan.

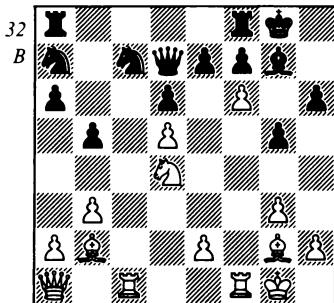
In transferring his king's knight to the queenside, Black has weakened the defence of his castled position. To organise an attack, however, I have to create new weaknesses. If I were able to break up the structure of the pawns guarding the black king by f4-f5 and fg, the e6 square would become weak after the recapture

fg and it would be easy to exploit. Further, I would open up the f-file and weaken the b1-h7 diagonal. These elements would suffice to unleash a violent attack.

I don't believe Black can prevent the breakthrough f5 because after 20 f4 he cannot push his e-pawn because of de with a discovered attack on the rook on a8. Nor can he play 20 f5 because this would also gravely weaken e6 and would offer an object of attack for my later thrust

e4. When I play f5 he will probably continue with ... g5 but then by sacrificing my f-pawn (f6) I would open up the f-file and free the square f5 for my knight on d4. After ... ♖xf6 I will have to work out whether I should also sacrifice the exchange by ♕xf6. In any event, the white squares would be weakened and probably, in the remaining course of the game, I would be able to exploit the weakness of the b1-h7 and h3-c8 diagonals.

The idea of this new plan has therefore taken shape: (32)



The Idea

By opening up the f-file and clearing the f5 square, I ought to obtain good attacking prospects against the weakened black king. On calculation, I find nothing to dissuade me. I consider that the most plausible line is 20 f4 b4 21 f5 g5 22 f6, and at this point, however complex the position may be, I think my prospects are excellent.

20	f4	b4
21	f5	g5
22	f6!	♖xf6

The idea has been realised and Black's weak spots have been exposed; now it is a question of continuing the attack as incisively as possible. As often happens, I get lost in fanciful imaginings:

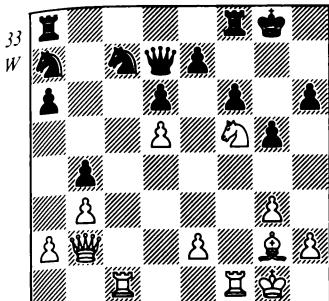
- 1) 23 ♕xf6 ef 24 ♕f1 (to move the knight to f5) 24 ... ♔e8 25 ♕f5 ♖d8 and I grind to a halt here without realising that the game is certainly won after 26 ♕xh6+ ♔h7 27 ♕g4.
- 2) 23 ♕xf6 ef 24 ♕xc7 ♖xc7 25 ♕f5 ♕b5 26 ♕xf6 ♕c3 27 ♕e7+ ♔h7 28 ♖b1+! ♕xb1 29 ♕e4 mate.

It will readily be appreciated that this continuation really grabs me, but unfortunately a flaw can be found. Black can play 25 ... ♖fc8! stopping me from continuing with 26 ♕xf6 on account of 26 ... ♖c1+ which completely saps my attack.

After wasting far too much time, I finally hit on a clear-cut, uncompromising and definitely adequate line: 23 ♕f5 ♖xb2 24 ♖xb2 f6 (forced) and I believe the king's position is dicey to say the least. I have only given up one pawn and I can get it back on h6 whenever I like. A less spectacular, but safe and sound variation.

23	♕f5	♖xb2
----	-----	------

24 $\mathbb{W}xb2$ f6 (33)



I have slowly but surely slipped into time-trouble and I spend a few more precious minutes finding the line that forces the win.

25 $\mathbb{W}c2!$ $\mathfrak{Q}ab5$

26 $\mathbb{W}e4$

With a double attack on e7 and b4.

26 ... $\mathfrak{Q}c3$

27 $\mathfrak{Q}xe7+$ $\mathfrak{Q}h8$

I waste a few more seconds calculating what would happen against Black's other possibilities:

1) 27 ... $\mathfrak{Q}g7$ 28 $\mathbb{W}g6+$ $\mathfrak{Q}h8$ 29 $\mathbb{W}xh6$ mate.

2) 27 ... $\mathfrak{Q}f7$ 28 $\mathbb{E}xf6+$ $\mathfrak{Q}xf6$ 29 $\mathbb{E}f1+$ $\mathfrak{Q}g7$ 30 $\mathbb{W}g6+$ $\mathfrak{Q}h8$ 31 $\mathbb{W}xh6$, mate.

My time-trouble is now dramatic and I am unable to find the obvious winning continuation 28 $\mathfrak{Q}g6+$ $\mathfrak{Q}g7$ 29 $\mathfrak{Q}xf8$ gaining the exchange. Instead, I squander all my efforts in the mirage of winning a pawn.

28 $\mathbb{E}xc3??$ bc

29 $\mathfrak{Q}g6+$ $\mathfrak{Q}g7$
30 $\mathfrak{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{E}xf8$
31 $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathfrak{Q}b5$
32 a4 $\mathbb{W}a7+$

This move had completely escaped me.

33 $\mathfrak{Q}h1$ $\mathfrak{Q}d4$
34 e3 $\mathfrak{Q}c2$
35 $\mathbb{W}xc3$

By now I have resigned myself to a more modest result and my main concern is to come through the time-trouble unscathed.

35 ... $\mathfrak{Q}xe3$
36 $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{E}f7$
37 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathfrak{Q}g4$

The last threat - smothered mate in four.

38 h3 $\mathbb{E}c7$
39 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathfrak{Q}e5$
40 $\mathbb{E}c1$ a5

And draw agreed at the time control.

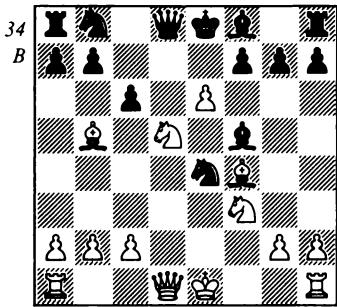
c) The tactical plan

The strategic elements present in a position are not always more important than the tactical ones. It is thus possible that analysis and synthesis of a position lead to a plan based on a predominantly tactical idea.

In this event, formulation of the plan must not ignore the opponent's moves because tactics, by definition, consist of a series of attacking and defensive moves by both players. In a predominantly tactical plan,

the two phases of formulation and calculation have to be telescoped together. The player has to consider idea and verification simultaneously, that is to say threats and counterthreats in the possible variations.

Let us look at Game 3. (34)



My last move has set up the double threat of 12 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ and 12 ef+. Black cannot parry both, so he has to prevent the most serious.

11 ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$

I had calculated that in the case of either 11 ... cb 12 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$, or 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}a5+ 12 c3 \mathbb{Q}d6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 14 ef+ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ (if 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ wins) 15 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ I would have reached a very promising position.

With the text-move Black has warded off the threat of 12 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$, but I must not play 12 ef+ mechanically without checking Black's possible replies because I am running the risk of losing material, since with the king no

longer on e8 the fork of the knight and bishop will become real. I analyse 12 ef+ and now:

1) 12 ... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}c4!$ $\mathbb{Q}a5+$ (if 13 ... cd 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd5+$ with forced mate) 14 b4! is decisive because of 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}xb4+$ is not possible due to 15 $\mathbb{Q}xb4+$.

2) 12 ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ Saving everything because the bishop on d6 is pinned and thus cannot take the bishop on f4; if 13 ... cb I can recover the piece by 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$.

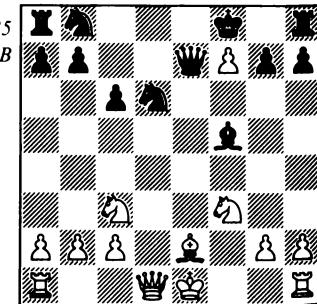
12 ef+ $\mathbb{Q}f8$
13 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$

This move sets up a number of threats although analysis here is easier as moves are practically forced.

14 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6+$

Nor is 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (if 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ and wins due to the threat of 17 $\mathbb{Q}d8+$) 16 0-0 any good for Black.

15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (35)



At the end of this combination (begun with 9 $\mathbb{Q}b5+!!$) I have

saved the last threatened piece and, believe it or not, my position is superior owing to my considerable advantage in development! Black's army has been knocked brutally off balance: he can't castle and his pieces lack co-ordination.

Now I will have to exploit my advantage in development by initiating an attack so as not to give my opponent time to reorganise his forces.

15 ... ♕xf7
16 0-0 ♜f8

Intending to castle artificially. If I let Black play ... ♔g8 next move, a lot of my advantage will go up in smoke. So I have to find an aggressive continuation that exploits the obvious tactical theme of rook on the same file as the king. After some thought I find the most exact sequence.

17 g4! ♜d7

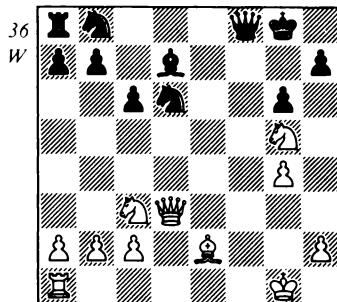
Perhaps not the best retreat, but in any case White's advantage is clear.

18 ♜g5++ ♔g8
19 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8
20 ♜d3!

The point. Now Black is forced to further weaken his king's position.

20 ... g6 (36)

Black has not had time to get his Queen's rook and queen's knight into play, and the only piece



preventing immediate catastrophe is the knight on d6 which controls c4 and e4, vitally important for the decisive assault. All that remains, then, is to force away this last useful defender.

21 ♜d1! ♜b5
22 ♜ce4 h6

A last desperate attempt to fight off the white pieces.

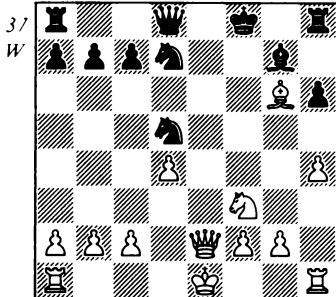
23 ♜c4+ ♔g7

If 23 ... ♔h8 24 ♜f1 wins easily, e.g. 24 ♜e8 25 ♜f7 hg 26 ♜f6 ♜e3+ 27 ♜g2 etc.

24 ♜xd7+
1-0

In Game 4 too, the problem is how to exploit the black king's woes. (37)

The position I have reached at the end of the combination beginning 12 ♜xd6! presents an apparent material balance. However, simplification, especially the exchange of queens, would favour Black for two reasons:



- 1) simplification would make it harder for me to take advantage of the black king's exposed position.
- 2) My pawns are very backward and do not constitute an immediate threat. In the ending, Black would probably have time to show the superiority of his knight over White's three pawns.

Specifically, Black is threatening to simplify with ... $\mathbb{W}e7$ or ... $\mathbb{Q}f4$. For my part, I've got to get my rooks into the game as quickly as possible so as to increase the pressure on the enemy monarch. I calculate that the only move that meets these demands is 16 $\mathbb{Q}e5$. I analyse Black's possible replies as follows:

- 1) 16 ... $\mathbb{Q}f4??$ 17 $\mathbb{W}f3$ winning a piece.
- 2) 16 ... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 17 $\mathbb{W}f3+$ or 17 $f4$ to start moving the pawns up. In each case White's position looks promising.
- 3) 16 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 17 de and apart from the immediate threat of 18 $\mathbb{W}f3+$, I

have opened the d-file, a very important factor after castling long.

- 4) 16 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 17 de with similar considerations.

I also observe that the move 16 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ threatens to fork on f7 and makes way for the king's rook to get into the game with a bang via h3 and the third rank.

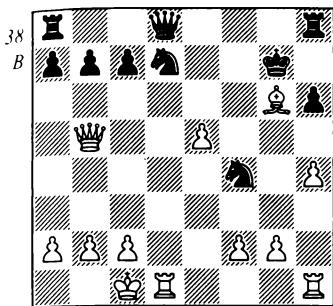
16 $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ **$\mathbb{Q}xe5$**
17 de **$\mathbb{Q}g7$**

By attacking the bishop on g6, Black hopes to gain an important tempo for his defence. I do not even contemplate the idea of pulling back the bishop (of course I avoid the continuation 18 $\mathbb{W}g4?$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$) and instead, pursuing the idea of my previous analysis, I look at 18 0-0-0 immediately as follows:

- 1) 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}xg6?$ 19 $\mathbb{R}xd5$ winning the knight on d7 because of the twin threats of 20 $\mathbb{W}g4+$ and 20 $e6$.
- 2) 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 19 $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 21 $\mathbb{W}g3$ (with the idea of regaining the piece by h5) 21 ... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 22 $h5$ $\mathbb{W}f4+$ and Black is safe.

I am dissatisfied with this second variation, but further thought finally reveals a way to throw Black's defences into crisis: 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 19 $\mathbb{W}b5!$ $c6$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ with a violent attack.

18 0-0-0 **$\mathbb{Q}f4$**
19 $\mathbb{W}b5!$ (38)



38
B This move rewards the tactical idea of opening the d-file begun by 16 ♕e5. Black's position is critical for he cannot prevent the decisive penetration of the rook to the seventh rank.

19 ... ♖xg6

Black has no satisfactory defence, e.g. 19 ... a6 20 ♜xd7+ ♖xg6 21 ♜a4 ♖f8 22 ♖e4+ ♖h5 (if 22 ... ♖f5 23 ♜g7+ etc) 23 ♖f3+ ♖g6 24 ♖g4 mate.

20 ♜xd7 ♖e8

21 g3!

The mating net descends, e.g. 21 ... ♔e6 22 ♜d3+ ♖h5 23 ♜f5+ ♖g5 24 g4 mate.

21 ... a6

If 21 ... ♜h7 22 h5+ and wins.

22 ♜a4 ♖e2+

23 ♜b1 ♖xe5

The conclusion is easy to calculate because all the moves are forced.

24 ♖g4+ ♖f6

25 ♖g7+ ♖f5

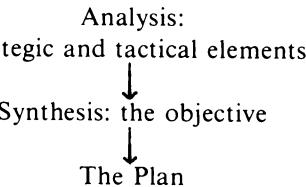
26 ♜f7+ ♖e4

27 f3+ ♖d5

28 c4+ ♖d6
29 ♜d7+ 1-0

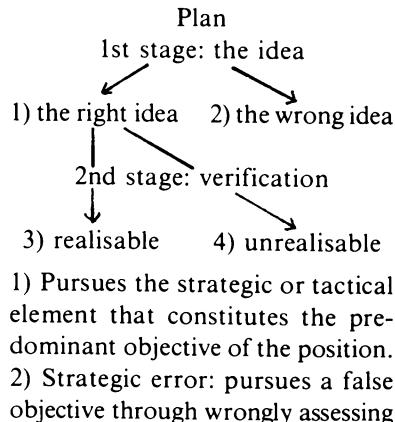
d) Summary

The plan is based on the analysis and synthesis of the position in accordance with the following relationship:



The plan contains the idea and the verification.

We can schematise the logical process of a player's thinking when formulating a plan, and pinpoint mistakes depending on whether they occur at the idea or verification stage.



the position strategically.

Tactical error: pursues a tactical element of secondary importance or whose realisation is actually suicidal.

3) Surmounts the test of strategic and tactical verification.

4) Does not surmount the verification test because it presents

strategic or tactical deficiencies that prove too great.

We must also bear in mind that in a predominantly tactical plan, the two stages of idea and verification are very closely connected as the idea requires immediate practical verification in the calculation of variations.

5 Defence

a) Active and passive defence

Thus far we have been looking at the formulation and realisation of a plan where the position presents a specific object of attack. We are going to look at how one should set up a plan of defence. Here, too, the player's defence develops by way of the idea and verification stages, but the formulation of the idea arises out of the other needs.

To develop the idea of a plan of attack we have to ask the question: "What position do I want to reach?" On the other hand, when the plan is one of defence, the question we have to answer is: "What position does my opponent want to reach?"

The problem first of all, then, is to understand your opponent's threats and intentions. Only after this is it possible to develop an idea designed to counter his plan. However, it is not sufficient merely to ward off a threat or prevent some manoeuvre or other,

for the attacker can modify his plans and reorganise his troops for a fresh assault. For an effective defence that has good chances of success, your plan must contain a hint at least of counterplay so as to keep your opponent under strong psychological pressure. He is well aware that if his attack comes to nought, it is he who will have to defend.

This basic strategic principle is known as "active" as opposed to "passive" defence, highlighting the attitude of the player who confines himself to trying to stem an attack rather than planning a counter-attack as well.

Not all the moves in a plan of defence must necessarily answer to the principle of active defence. It is often impossible. The important point is for the defensive idea to contain a touch of poison so that the slightest letting up on the part of the opponent will find the defender ready to deliver a counter-stroke.

b) Methods of defence

We have already seen (cf. p. 20) that defence can be strategic or tactical, direct or indirect, pure or impure. Along with the concepts of active and passive defence, these distinctions determine the different options available to the defender.

Within these forms, a variety of defensive methods may be distinguished, the principal examples of which we will now examine.

Counterattack

This is usually employed when players' plans develop in different sectors. A typical case is that of games where castling takes place on opposite sides, but it is quite common also for it to be seen in games where the players have castled on the same side and the centre is blocked. The game becomes a race to land a body blow first and defensive moves in the sector under attack have to be weighed on the finest of scales as they all get in the way of the counterattack.

Counteracting

These are straightforward attempts to prevent realisation of a plan, namely to prevent the opponent achieving his aim. For example, the attacker occupies an open file and the defender counters

this by also occupying the file, or the attacker pins a piece and the defender unpins it. These typical defensive manoeuvres pursue the principle of countering.

Prophylactic defence

This covers all defensive moves that prevent attacking threats, rendering them unrealisable or ineffective. If, for example, the attacker threatens to pin the knight on f6 against the queen on d8 by playing $\mathbb{A}g5$, the defender may operate prophylactic defence by playing ... h6 or by removing the knight from f6 or the queen from the d8-h4 diagonal.

Certain well-known strategic principles meet the criterion of prophylactic defence. For instance, the overprotection of a square or the opening of the centre used as a prophylactic measure against a possible flank attack.

Simplification

This is a very common defensive method and is often employed by Black right from the opening. The effect is to pare down the attacking forces. This method can be strategically recommended especially in positions in which the defender is cramped for such positions are easier to defend when there are fewer pieces on the board. Overcrowding of the

defender's troops may easily lead to the collapse of the position.

The blockade

Nimzowitsch's favourite method. he built an entire defensive philosophy around it. The effect of a blockading strategy, whether applied in its purest form against (say) a passed pawn, or used simply to keep lines closed, involves reducing the dynamism of the attacker's pieces by preventing them penetrating the defender's territory.

Change in the strategic structure of the position

Changing the pawn structure is a little like changing cards at poker: all plans have to be looked at again and weighed in the light of the new situation on the board.

The attacker's main wish is to be able to pursue his plan in the desired direction. Having to cope with a different strategic structure thus causes him a major mental upset which may develop into confusion if he is short of time. By this method, the defender can try to distract his opponent from the most important objective, or bring about a strategic alteration that is favourable to him even at the cost of material sacrifice. In such cases the attacker's task is a delicate one because it demands

some sort of review if not a total change in plan.

The king and self-defence

This is how we define all those methods of defence in which the king assumes an important rôle, e.g. by delaying castling or keeping the king in the centre so as not to offer the attacker a specific object of attack. Another example of this defensive method is seen in the 'king's march', a strategic manoeuvre whose usual purpose is to remove the king from the hot spot and transfer him somewhere safer.

c) The plan of defence

We will now analyse two games and follow the player's thoughts to see how a defensive plan is formulated and implemented.

Game 6

Nimzowitsch Defence

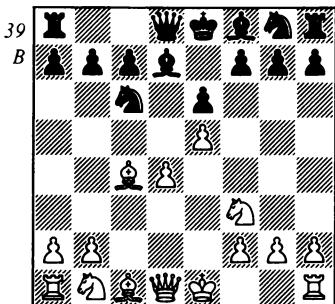
1	e4	¤c6
2	¤f3	e6
3	d4	d5
4	e5	¤d7

A little played defence, and moreover a practically unknown variation of it (4 ... ¤d7), so as to leave the beaten tracks of theory.

5 c4??

Too precipitous, for after the exchange ... dc Black creates a static strategic objective: the strong square d5.

5 ... dc
6 ♜xc4 (39)



One can see that the position already abounds in strategic elements: the semi-open c- and d-files, the backward d-pawn, White's space advantage in the centre and on the kingside, and the strong squares d5 (for Black) and e4 (for White).

As I am rather cramped, the strong square d5 is an excellent reference point for the harmonious development of my pieces. The occupation of this square with a piece is therefore my aim. If White exchanges on d5, I must, however, take back with a piece and not with the e-pawn because in this case I would lose the use of d5 and dangerously enhance White's dynamism in the centre and on the kingside. Further, by taking back on d5 with a piece, I leave the d-file open against the weakness on d4. An element of this kind could prove very useful in the ending, as when the storm's over

I'll be able to organise an attack against the pawn on d4.

Given the extreme importance that I attribute to d5, I consider it wise to apply an overprotection strategy round that point. The first move I consider is 6 ... ♜ge7 with the idea of continuing ♜b4-d5. However, I notice that White can slow me up by 7 ♜g5 or 7 a3. So I also look at the queen on d8 and bishop on d7, because they too can play a part in controlling d5, and it is this reflection that leads me to identify the correct manoeuvre: ... ♜ce7, ... ♜c6 and ... ♜d5. Against this plan the pin ♜g5 would lose its effect because I would be able to unpin by ... ♜d7 and retake on e7 with the knight on g8 if White were to play ♜xe7.

I find this plan fully satisfactory because it falls in with the spirit of active defence; the placing of the queen's bishop on the long h1-a8 diagonal will keep the white king from dozing off once he's castled short.

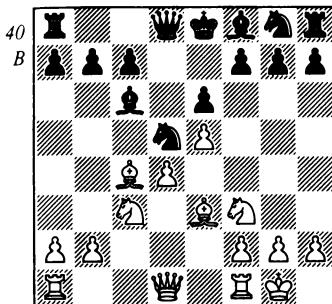
6 ... ♜ce7!
7 ♜c3

I had calculated that White would get nothing after 7 d5 ♜xd5 8 ♜xd5 ed 9 ♜xd5 ♜c6 and the open nature of the position favours Black with his two bishops.

7 ... ♜c6
8 ♜e3

Against 8 $\mathbb{A}g5$ I would have continued with my plan by playing 8 ... $\mathbb{W}d7$.

8 ... $\mathbb{Q}d5$
9 0-0 (40)



I have achieved my aim of securely occupying d5 and now I have to solve the problem of developing my kingside. One idea might be to simplify by exchanging the knight on d5 in order to replace it with the knight on g8. I reject this because no matter how I exchange the knight on d5(... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ or ... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$) White would later be able to control d5 with a pawn (c4 or e4) and this would mean the end of my strong square d5. Also I don't want White reinforcing his d-pawn or opening up the f-file.

So I decide to develop my king's knight in two stages by $\mathbb{Q}e7-g6$, maintaining the possibility of occupying f4 in future, a square that is strategically weak. If White defends it by g3, he will weaken his

king's defences as well as the long diagonal h1-a8. I will then complete my development by playing the king's bishop to e7.

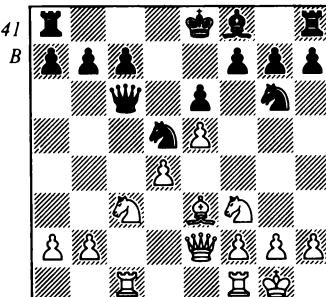
9 ... $\mathbb{Q}ge7$
10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$

The theme of occupying f4 begins to take shape. My threat is 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}df4$ and if 12 $\mathbb{W}d2?$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2!$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ etc. Then again, if White plays 12 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$, after 12 ... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 13 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ I would achieve my aim of simplifying the position without losing control of d5.

11 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$

In the circumstances, White is correct to force the exchange of the dangerous $\mathbb{Q}c6$. As I can't play 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xb5+$ because I would lose the b-pawn, and I can't allow doubled pawns on the c-file, it only remains for me to defend the bishop with my queen.

11 ... $\mathbb{W}d7$
12 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$
13 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ (41)



Again accurately played. Now White is threatening 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 15 $\mathbb{E}xc7$. The first thing that comes to mind is to remove the queen from the c-file, but then I realise that I cannot keep a piece on d5: 13 ... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ ed and White has very good prospects as he can conjure up a breakthrough based on pushing the f-pawn and on the mobility of the e-pawn. Pestilential curses! Nimzowitsch was right when he wrote about the overprotection of strong squares. Is it possible that I didn't cover d5 with enough pieces? After a moment's confusion I get my ideas back into line and realise that if I defend the c-pawn with 13 ... $\mathbb{E}c8$, the discovered attack on the queen does not cause any great trouble, e.g. 14 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ or 14 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ (14 ... $\mathbb{Q}df4$ I will analyse during my opponent's time) 15 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 16 $\mathbb{E}xc5$ and my position is satisfactory because the bishop on e3 is bad. The try 14 $\mathbb{W}b5$ is also fruitless because after 14 ... $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ c6 the a-pawn cannot be taken. Certainly 13 ... $\mathbb{E}c8$ is passive but if I want to hang on to my precious d5 square I have no choice.

13 ... $\mathbb{E}c8!$

Now, while my opponent is thinking, I'll see if I can also meet 14 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ with 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}df4$. For example, 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 16 $\mathbb{W}e3$

$\mathbb{Q}d5$ and now on 17 $\mathbb{E}xc6?$ comes 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ and I gain the exchange.

14 $\mathbb{E}c2??$

In order to exploit the space advantage deriving from his e-pawn, my opponent should have chosen a plan involving pushing the f-pawn. Clearly he has failed to find a satisfactory way of achieving this idea, e.g. 14 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}df4!$ 15 $\mathbb{W}g4$ h5 16 $\mathbb{W}g3$ h4 (16 ... $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 17 bc $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3+$ is not bad for Black either) 17 $\mathbb{W}g4$ h3 and Black has the initiative in a position that is not easy to assess.

I think that the correct way to proceed would be 14 $\mathbb{Q}e1!$ with the idea of f4, and if 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}df4$ 15 $\mathbb{W}d2$ and Black cannot keep control of f4. Once he has played f4 White's attack on the kingside would gain momentum. With the text-move, on the other hand, White inaugurates a dubious plan. He calculates that, to consolidate his position, Black will have to play ... $\mathbb{W}d7$ and ... c6, when the idea is to carry out a kind of minority attack together with pressure down the c-file.

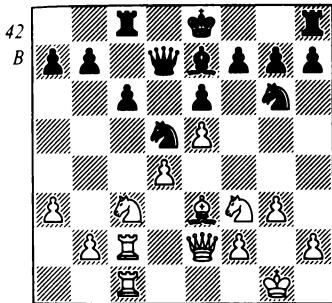
14 ... $\mathbb{W}d7$

14 ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ is pointless because after 15 $\mathbb{E}d2$ White threatens the dangerous sacrifice d5 and the knight on b4 will have to get back to d5 with loss of time.

15 a3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$

16 $\mathbb{E}fc1$ c6
17 g3

My opponent realises that in the event of 17 b4 $\mathbb{Q}gf4$ 18 $\mathbb{W}d2$ (if 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 19 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 20 b5? $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ and White's attack runs aground) 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 19 $\mathbb{E}xc3$ (19 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 20 b5? $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ etc) 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}d5$, the simplification would favour Black because his space problems would be solved. (42)



So with the text move, White decides to inaugurate a new plan (h4-h5) aimed at flooding my kingside position, as would happen after the ugly retreat ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$, or weakening g5 if I decided to oppose the advance of the h-pawn with ... h5.

My main problem, then, is to find a good home for my knight on g6. First I consider f8: 17 ... 0-0 18 h4 $\mathbb{E}fd8$ 19 h5 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20 h6 g6 and I'm not at all happy with this position because of the rigidity of my pawns and the weakness of the dark squares. So I think I'll settle

my knight on h8 and react quickly in the centre with ... f6: 17 ... 0-0 18 h4 f6 19 h5 $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 20 ef $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ (20 ... gf leaves my king too exposed and 20 ... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ runs into 21 $\mathbb{Q}e5$) 21 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ and White's position looks promising to me. I conclude from my analysis that castling is dangerous and that it is preferable to keep my king in the centre, with the protection offered by the closed centre.

All well and good . . . what about my knight on g6? The ideal thing would be to exchange the knight on d5 and replace it with this knight after which simplification my space problems would certainly be solved. However, if I play 17 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$, White would reply 18 bc! thus regaining the possibility of controlling d5 and also being able to get back at my a-pawn if I play 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}xa3$. But if I defend the a-pawn prophylactically by 17 ... a6 and follow with the exchange of the knight on c3, White would be forced to retake on c3 with his rook so as not to lose the pawn. In this way I would retain control of d5 and would be able to substitute one knight with the other. I analyse: 17 ... a6 18 h4 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 19 $\mathbb{E}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ (this move stops h5-h6 because it controls h6, frees e7 for the knight and fits in with the strategy of keeping the king in the centre) 20 h5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$, after

which I can settle my knight on d5 with gain of tempo owing to the attack on the rook.

If White catches on to my intentions, he will play 18 ♜e4 to avoid simplifying and my problems are merely postponed. However, he will probably interpret my move (17 ... a6) as a prophylactic measure to thwart the plan b4-b5 and so will not appreciate my real purpose. Okay, that's what I'll try.

17 ... a6!

18 h4?

As I hoped, my opponent has not realised what I'm up to.

18 ... ♜xc3

19 ♜xc3 ♜f8!

20 ♜g5

Threatening 21 ♜e4 which would stop my knight getting to e7 because of the check on d6. So I must get on with my plan quickly.

20 ... ♜e7

21 g4

With the failure of his plan based on pushing the h-pawn, White tries to break through with the f-pawn (f4-f5). However, the text move seriously weakens the king's defences and gives me the chance to start some counterplay.

21 ... ♜d5

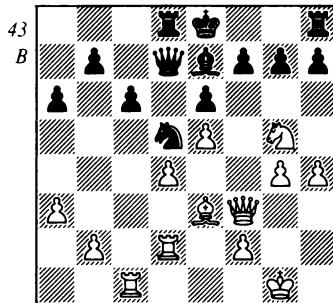
22 ♜3c2 ♜d8

Prophylaxis preventing 23 f4 because of 23 ... ♜xe3 followed by ♜xd4.

23 ♜d2 ♜e7

Another way to make my opponent think twice about f4. If 24 f4 then 24 ... ♜xg5 25 fg (25 hg h6) 25 ... 0-0 and White's attack is over.

24 ♜f3 (43)



My opponent is expecting 24 ... 0-0 25 ♜e4 ♜xg5 (otherwise I have to weaken my defences) 26 hg! with the threat of continuing ♜g2 and ♜h1.

But now the time is ripe for a reaction in the centre by opening the f-file which will blow cold air on the position of White's king.

24 ... f6!

A compromising move because it weakens the e-pawn, but not hard to calculate. If the knight on g5 goes away, after ... 0-0 Black has nothing to fear. If 25 ef ♜xf6 followed by ... 0-0 and it is immediately obvious that Black has a very promising position.

25 ef ♜xf6

26 ♜e4 0-0

27 g5?

A fatal mistake. White does not realise that this move opens the way to an ending of good versus bad bishop. He had to play 27 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ and try to exchange both minor pieces, hoping to save the major piece ending. After the text move I can force simplification into a very favourable endgame.

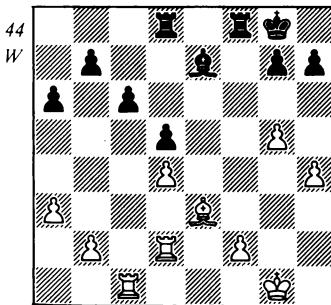
27 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

28 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}d5$

The d5 square is used for the last time. If White refuses to exchange queens, the invasion ... $\mathbb{B}f3$ will give me a decisive advantage.

29 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ ed

The weakness of the e-pawn didn't last long. (44)



Good bishop versus bad bishop: the part of the game where technique comes into its own. My strategy is straightforward: exchange rooks and penetrate with my king via the white squares.

30 $\mathbb{B}g2$

To prevent ... $\mathbb{B}f3$.

30 ... $\mathbb{B}d6$

31 $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{B}de8$

32 f3

Otherwise Black plays ... $\mathbb{B}e4$.

32 ... $\mathbb{B}e7$

33 $\mathbb{B}ce1$ $\mathbb{B}fe8$

34 $\mathbb{B}f1$ $\mathbb{B}f7$

35 $\mathbb{B}f2$

There is little choice: sooner or later White will have to permit the exchange of the rooks.

35 ... $\mathbb{B}xe2$

36 $\mathbb{B}xe2$ $\mathbb{B}xe2$

37 $\mathbb{B}xe2$ $\mathbb{B}e6$

38 $\mathbb{B}e3$ $\mathbb{B}f5$

39 $\mathbb{B}f2$ g6

Fixing the h- and g-pawns on the black squares.

40 $\mathbb{A}d2$ b6

The queenside majority gets underway to create a passed pawn.

41 b4 c5

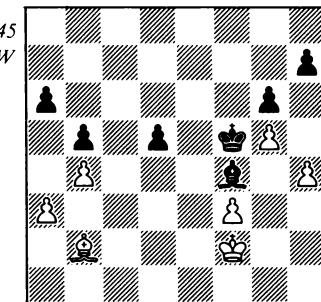
42 $\mathbb{A}c3$

The double exchange on c5 is not on because it would lose the a-pawn.

42 ... cd

43 $\mathbb{A}xd4$ b5

44 $\mathbb{A}b2$ $\mathbb{A}f4!$ (45)



White is in zugzwang. If he moves the bishop, there follows ... $\mathbb{Q}c1$, if 45 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g3$ and if 45 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ d4 47 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ and Black wins.

45	$\mathbb{Q}c3$	$\mathbb{Q}c1$
46	$\mathbb{Q}e2$	$\mathbb{Q}xa3$
47	$\mathbb{Q}d3$	

Or 47 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ d4 etc.

47	...	$\mathbb{Q}c1$
48	$\mathbb{Q}d4$	$\mathbb{Q}e6$
49	$\mathbb{Q}c5$	$\mathbb{Q}e3+$
50	$\mathbb{Q}d4$	$\mathbb{Q}d2$
51	$\mathbb{Q}f2$	$\mathbb{Q}c3$
52	f4	a5
53	ba	$\mathbb{Q}xa5$
54	$\mathbb{Q}xb5$	$\mathbb{Q}d2$
55	$\mathbb{Q}g3$	$\mathbb{Q}e3$
56	$\mathbb{Q}b4$	$\mathbb{Q}f5$

0-1

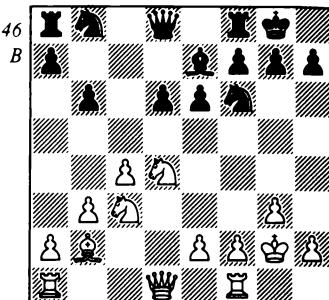
Game 7 English Opening

1	c4	b6
2	$\mathbb{Q}c3$	$\mathbb{Q}b7$
3	$\mathbb{Q}f3$	e6
4	g3	$\mathbb{Q}f6$
5	$\mathbb{Q}g2$	$\mathbb{Q}e7$
6	0-0	0-0
7	b3	c5
8	$\mathbb{Q}b2$	d6
9	d4	cd
10	$\mathbb{Q}xd4$	

A little played variation as it allows Black to relieve the tension on the long diagonal by exchanging bishops. The usual line is 10 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ and if 10 ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$, 11 $\mathbb{W}d2$ followed

by e4.

10	...	$\mathbb{Q}xg2$
11	$\mathbb{Q}xg2$ (46)	



My only real weakness is the pseudo-backward d-pawn. The idea of getting rid of it straight away by 11 ... d5 is not entirely satisfactory because after 12 cd $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ White would have an advantage in development. I think it is more important to get my queen's knight into the game but I cannot play 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ because of 12 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ and, with the disappearance of the king's bishop, the weakness of my d-pawn becomes much more serious.

My position is a bit cramped, however, and this persuades me to develop my queen's knight on c6, aiming for simplification. To achieve this I have to play ... $\mathbb{W}c7$ which would unhappily run up against $\mathbb{Q}db5$. In its turn, the development of the queen must be prepared by the prophylactic

move 11 ... a6, a move that also contains a hint of counterplay because my a- and b-pawns are mobile and, eventually, I could begin an attack on the pawn chain a2-b3-c4 with the thrust ... b5.

- 11 ... a6
 12 e4 $\mathbb{W}c7$
 13 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathfrak{Q}c6$

Implementing the plan of development in the desired way.

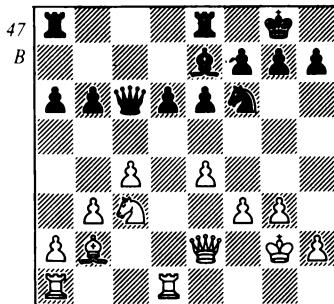
14 $\mathfrak{Q}xc6$

A rather debatable decision as it allows me to simplify and helps me to place my queen on the long diagonal.

- 14 ... $\mathbb{W}xc6$
 15 f3 $\mathbb{B}fe8$

To free f8 for the bishop and so threaten ... d5, a useful alternative to my planned ... b5.

16 $\mathbb{E}fd1$ (47)



White is probably planning to put pressure on d6 by doubling rooks on the d-file and moving the bishop to a3.

Since the d-pawn is not in any

real danger as I can easily defend it with my rooks, I initially decide to continue with my plan of playing on the queenside. My analysis: 16 ... $\mathbb{E}ab8$ 17 $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 18 $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{E}ed8$ 19 e5 de 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ and although it's playable, I am not happy with my position as I have been unable to get in ... b5 and White still has the advantage (albeit small) in the form of a pawn majority on the queenside.

So I decide to oppose my opponent's intentions (pressure on the diagonal a3-f8 and the thrust e5) by the manoeuvre ... $\mathfrak{Q}d7-c5$ followed by ... f6. In this way I reckon I can nullify both his ideas. If he wants to prepare e5 he will have to back it up with f4, thus weakening e4 and the whole long diagonal. If he tries to frighten off the knight on c5 by b4, he will weaken his c-pawn which will become a useful target for counterplay.

- 16 ... $\mathfrak{Q}d7!$
 17 $\mathbb{E}d2$ $\mathfrak{Q}c5$
 18 $\mathbb{E}ad1$ f6!

Thus realising my defensive plan. Another advantage of this move is that it neutralises the action of the bishop on b2 against the black king.

19 $\mathbb{E}c2$

White cannot chase away the knight from c5 by b4 without weakening his pawn structure on

the queenside. The text move not only prevents the reaction $\mathbb{E}ab8$ and ... b5 but also serves to transfer the queen's bishop to the diagonal c1-h6.

- 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$
 20 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{E}ac8$

In order to turn the pressure down the c-file in my favour.

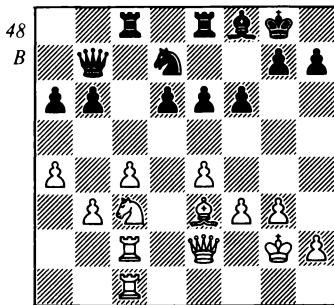
- 21 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

With the two-fold purpose of avoiding an eventual $\mathbb{Q}xc5$, which would leave me with a bad bishop against a knight, and threatening the advance ... b5.

- 22 $\mathbb{E}de1$ $\mathbb{W}b7$

Not 22 ... $\mathbb{E}c7$? 23 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ when capturing on b5 would cost the rook. Nor would 23 ... $\mathbb{E}c8$ be possible because of the fork on a7. I would be forced to continue 23 ... $\mathbb{E}b7$ and after 24 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ my queen would have to abandon the long diagonal.

- 23 a4 (48)



My stealthy strategy has finally

provoked a committal response. White has decided to nip my queenside counterattacking intentions in the bud, but in so doing he has weakened his pawn structure.

My plan now is to force the advance of the b-pawn so as to weaken c4.

- 23 ... $\mathbb{Q}c5!$
 24 b4

Now 24 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ does not work because after 24 ... bc the b-pawn would be a nasty weakness.

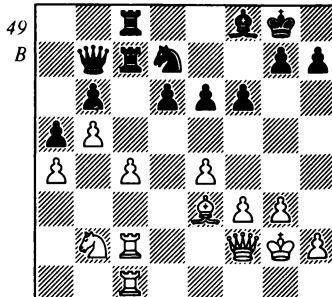
- 24 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$
 25 b5 a5

The price paid by White to put pressure on my queenside position is the backward c-pawn, fixed and lying on the open file. As we shall see, he is counting on tying me, in turn, to the defence of my b-pawn.

- 26 $\mathbb{Q}d1$

Intending to transfer the knight to d3.

- 26 ... $\mathbb{E}c7$
 27 $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{E}ec8$
 28 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ (49)



We have reached a position of mutual immobility. Almost all the white and black pieces are engaged in attacking or defending weaknesses. I analyse that the thrust ... d5 is not possible: 28 ... d5? 29 cd $\mathbb{E}xc2$ 30 $\mathbb{E}xc2$ $\mathbb{E}xc2$ 31 $\mathbb{W}xc2$ ed 32 $\mathbb{W}c6!$ and White wins material. So there is nothing doing on the queenside or in the centre. Shifting my attention to the kingside, I glimpse an attacking possibility. If I could push my g-pawn to g4 White's position would be critical because he would be unable to avoid weakening e4 and the long diagonal. It would, however, be premature to try and realise this idea immediately because my rooks cannot intervene on the kingside and White can thwart my g-pawn advance in many ways. As the knight on d7 is tied to the defence of the b-pawn, the rooks cannot transfer to the kingside via the second rank at the required moment. Therefore I decide to clear my back rank for this transfer, and plan ... $\mathbb{A}e7$ and ... $\mathbb{B}f7$ and then we'll see if I can get an attack going.

28 ... $\mathbb{A}e7$

29 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{B}f7$

With this move I also stop the attack on e6 that could have been triggered by White's $\mathbb{Q}f4$.

30 **h4**

Either my opponent has cottoned on to my intentions or, after having similar thoughts to my own, he is also preparing to launch an attack on the king's wing. Should a file be opened up on this part of the board, I think it would be a good prophylactic idea to have both rooks on the back rank.

30 ... $\mathbb{B}d8$

If White continues to attack on the kingside, I could force him to open the d-file by ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$. My opponent is practically compelled to exchange as otherwise he would be tied to passive defence of the a-pawn.

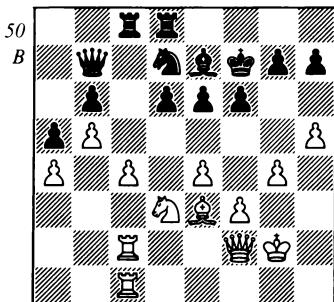
31 **h5**

Revealing his intentions: White will probably continue with g4 and try to achieve the advance g5. If I defend by ... h6 I weaken my g6 square which can easily be reached by the knight on d3. I would like to reply 31 ... g5 setting up the threat of ... g4 but after 32 hg+ hg 33 $\mathbb{E}h1$ it would be White that would gain control of the h-file first. To make this variation playable I simply have to implement my previous idea of linking rooks on the back rank.

31 ... $\mathbb{B}7c8$

32 **g4**

Not 32 h6? g5! leaving a weakness on h6. (50)



I think that White is preparing $\mathbb{Q}f4$ with a view to creating pressure on e6 (e.g. by $\mathbb{W}g3-h3$) or transferring the knight to h3 and following it up by ... g5. I could play 32 ... g5 myself which would even matters on the kingside because in the event of capture *en passant*, I would be able to take a stand on the h-file.

I realise, however, that White's intentions (he's clearly going for more than a draw) could lead to catastrophe. I decide, therefore, to weave a poisonous defensive scheme based on a psychological factor. My opponent is certainly in favour of exchanging his bishop for my knight because I would then be left with a bad bishop.

32 ... $\mathbb{E}c7!$

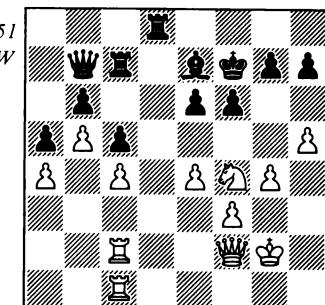
A move that looks like an inexplicable waste of time but which is in fact decisive for doubling up on the d-file!

33 $\mathbb{Q}f4?$! $\mathbb{Q}c5!$

34 $\mathbb{E}xc5?$

The mistake I was waiting for: White has only seen the rook capture which is needed for keeping open the file so as to home in on the weakness on c4. My idea, however, is to recapture with the d-pawn, thus unexpectedly creating a new and vitally important strategic element: the open d-file. The undefended position of the knight on f4 and the weakening of the kingside caused by pushing forward the h- and g-pawns will enable me to extract the utmost from this theme.

34 ... $dc!$ (51)



The opening up of the centre renders White's kingside attack sterile and he has to do something about the pressure on the d-file before it falls completely into my hands.

35 $\mathbb{E}d2$ $\mathbb{E}xd2$

36 $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{E}d7$

37 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}b8!$

Gaining a tempo that lays bare the weakness of the h2-b8 diagonal.

38 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

So as to be able to reply to 38 ... $\mathbb{W}d8$ with 39 $\mathbb{R}d1$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}f2$.

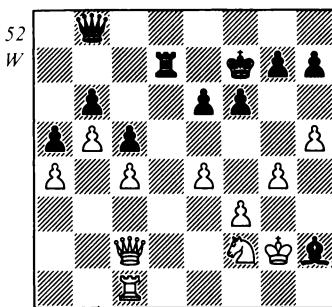
38 ... $\mathbb{Q}d6!$

Threatens 39 ... $\mathbb{Q}h2$ followed by penetration of the queen to g3.

39 $\mathbb{Q}f2?$

Pressured by a growing time problem, White fails to appreciate that he cannot ward off the invasion of the black pieces in this manner. More hopeful was 39 $\mathbb{Q}h1$.

39 $\mathbb{Q}h2!$ (52)



Now 40 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ cannot be played because of 40 $\mathbb{W}d8!$ with a winning attack.

40 $\mathbb{R}d1$ $\mathbb{W}g3+$

41 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{R}d4$

After the exchange of rooks, even the pawn on d4 will prove

useful for the final assault.

42 $\mathbb{R}xd4$ \mathbb{cd}

43 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{W}g1+$

44 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}a1$

Switching the attack to the weak queenside pawns.

45 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}g3$

46 $e5$

A desperate attempt to launch a counterattack against h7. If 46 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}a3!$ and we have a zugzwang, e.g. 47 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{W}a2+$ 48 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}h2$ 49 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}h1+$ 50 $\mathbb{W}g1$ $\mathbb{W}xf3+$ 51 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ with a winning ending for Black.

46 ... $\mathbb{W}g1$

47 $\mathbb{Q}d1$

If $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}e1+$ 48 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}e3$ mate, or 47 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}e3+$ etc.

47 ... $\mathbb{W}e1+$

48 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

The first fruits.

49 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}b4$

After the exchange of queens the ending would be by no means clear: all my opponent's pawns are on white squares and I only have the black squared bishop.

50 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{W}b1+$

51 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}a2+$

0-1

He can't avoid the capture of his c-pawn.

Part Two:

Practical Section

“How should I play?”

Introduction

The following thirty positions are meant to assess one's own strategic and tactical skills and are real chess tests for whoever wants to try. This second part has been divided into three series of tests. The first ten are as a whole easier than the second ten which are in turn slightly easier than the last ten. However, there are some difficult positions in the first and second series.

Each test presents three different plans of which only one is correct. The two remaining plans may contain strategic or tactical mistakes or both types of mistakes together. These two plans may also happen to contain no real mistakes, in which case they are simply inferior to the correct plan. The reader must indicate the plan he would use in a game, and according to how appropriate his choice is he will get in each position a score ranging from 0-10 points as a strategy score. He will always receive 10 points for the correct plan while for the two other plans the score may vary from 0-7.

The reader does not only have to make a strategical choice: if he wants also to obtain the tactical

score he must specify whether, in the plans he rejects, there are any tactical mistakes. These tactical points do not appear in every test but it is worth looking for them in order to increase one's final score and also because no penalty is incurred for indicating incorrect or superfluous tactical variations. To obtain the tactical points it is necessary to note the variation up to the move given in brackets in the solution. Each tactical idea carries from 1-7 points according to level of difficulty.

At the end of the thirty tests all the points, both strategic and tactical, are summed up to give a final score which corresponds to an assessment in ELO, USCF and BCF rating as tabulated at the end of the book.

In order to use the tests properly the reader should note the following:

There are no notes concerning the first part of the game and mistakes may already have occurred. It is best to reach the test position rather slowly, thinking over each move.

Once the position is reached the reader should make up his own plan before looking at those

proposed. Spend no more than ten minutes on this.

At this point the reader can consult the three proposed plans, and should check them from both the strategic and tactical point of view. Any tactical score in the position can be obtained only if the precisely correct variation has been pointed out.

The chosen plan has to be accepted absolutely both for the ideas and the variations given. That is, the reader cannot make changes as he wishes in any variations. The moves given in the analysis are to be regarded as binding and the reader is committed to playing them should his hypothetical opponent carry on in that particular way. Of course, if the opponent plays differently from the given variations, the reader is not obliged to blindly carry on with the proposed idea.

The opponent is obviously not obliged to play the moves made up for him.

The selection of the plan should be made without moving the pieces, as if playing a tournament game. Those who feel they absolutely must move the pieces to help them in their analysis should realise that their final score will be correspondingly inflated.

The reader should spend about thirty minutes per test commencing

with the reading of the plans.

After having given an answer it is advisable to read very carefully the solutions and the continuation of the game which illustrates the effects of applying the correct plan.

It is best not to solve more than three tests in succession as tiredness can play nasty tricks.

The strategic points awarded for each test do not *always* correspond to the objective value of the plan selected. It can happen that one plan is rated higher than another even though from the objective point of view it might be inferior. For example, when a plan might pursue a strategically correct idea but contain tactical drawbacks.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that the score obtained from one test has an absolute value: one would obtain a false rating by doing just one test and then multiplying the score by 30. The scores of all thirty tests have been very finely balanced and calibrated to work together *as a whole* to produce a valid rating.

The highest possible final score is 369 (300 strategy points and 69 tactical points) which corresponds to ELO 2760! Therefore even a grandmaster may make more than one mistake.

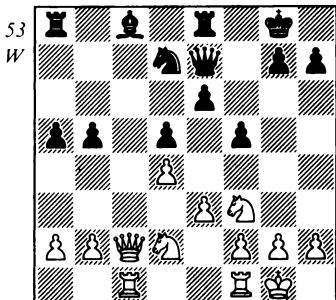
First Series

Tests 1-10

Test 1

QGD Orthodox

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 4 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 0-0 6 e3 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 7 $\mathbb{E}c1$ c6 8 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ dc 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ f5 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}ed2$ b5 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ cd 15 0-0 a5



White to play: select your plan

Plan A: Occupation of Weak Squares c5 and e5

In my opinion, White's advantage lies in the bad bishop on c8, control of the c-file and the weakness of the squares c5 and e5. But these squares are controlled by the black knight so I will have to get rid of the knight on d7 in order to exploit the weakness. Accordingly, I play 16 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ with the idea of continuing $\mathbb{Q}c5$. The aim of this manoeuvre is to exchange a pair of knights so as to have lasting control of e5 with my

knight on f3.

When I have completed this manoeuvre, if Black swaps off the knights, I will recapture with the queen on c5 to keep the c-file open and double my rooks quickly if Black exchanges queens as well. If Black doesn't exchange knights then I will and so in any case will control the c-file and e5. In carrying out this plan I am not worried about simplification since an eventual knight versus bishop ending would be very favourable for White because the black bishop is bad.

Plan B: Creating a Passed Pawn

I am thinking along very similar lines to Plan A, but reckon that the exchange of all the heavy pieces along the c-file will leave White with too small an advantage (good knight versus bad bishop) to be able to win the ending. I therefore decide to prevent the exchange of the heavy pieces by occupying the weak c5 point with a knight via the manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}b3$ -c5. In contrast to the previous plan, should Black exchange knights I intend recapturing on c5 with my pawn in order to keep the c-file closed and also obtain a

passed pawn.

So I will play 16 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ calculating the following likely continuation: 16 ... $b4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 18 dc. In this position I consider I have good chances of obtaining a tangible advantage since Black cannot get the queen's bishop to its ideal blockading square c6 on account of my advance c6.

Plan C: Doubling Rooks on the c-file

I think the dominating theme of this position lies in the fact that Black is threatening to counter my

control of the c-file by playing ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ and $\mathbb{R}ec8$. I therefore consider it a matter of urgency to double the rooks and take advantage of the opportunity to penetrate to the seventh rank. Thus I play 16 $\mathbb{R}b3$ and after the likely reply 16 ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ I intend to continue 17 $\mathbb{R}c7$. Besides allowing me to double rooks, this move also threatens $\mathbb{Q}e5$.

I am not worried about Black exchanging off all the rooks because the bishop on a6 is tied to the defence of the b-pawn and so Black cannot counter on the c-file.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

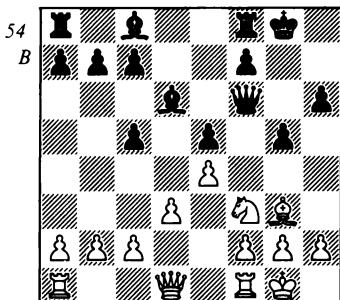
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 2

Four Knights

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6
4 ♖b5 ♖b4 5 0-0 0-0 6 ♖xe6 dc 7
d3 ♖d6 8 ♖g5 h6 9 ♖h4 c5 10 ♖d5
g5 11 ♖xf6+ ♗xf6 12 ♖g3 (54)



Black to play: select your plan

Plan A: Take Advantage of the Bishop Pair

I think the most significant strategic element in this position is possession of the bishop pair against bishop and knight. To get the most from this advantage I must try and open up the game and free my bishop on d6 which is currently trapped by pawns. I would also like to get rid of my doubled pawns on the c-file.

I therefore decide to play 12 ... ♖e6 with the intention of continuing ... ♕ad8 preparing the advance ... c4. The idea is to give the position

a more dynamic character (opening of the d-file and the a3-f8 diagonal) so as to take full advantage of the bishop pair. If, to thwart this plan, White decides to play c4, this would seriously weaken his d-pawn and give me an excellent objective.

Plan B: Attack on the Kingside

In contrast to Plan A, I think I have to keep the centre closed as this element allows me to organise an attack on the kingside using the pawns of my castled position which are in any case well on the way up the board.

However, White's king is solidly protected and there are no breakthrough points. So I decide to play 12 ... ♖g4 with the intention of profiting from the pin on the knight on f3 so as to organise the opening of the f-file, e.g. by ... ♕g7 and ... f5.

To prevent this plan, White will probably answer with 13 h3 on which I intend to continue 13 ... ♖e6 having achieved the goal of weakening my opponent's king's position to create a breakthrough point (h3). My idea then is to prepare the thrust ... g4 by ... ♖h7 and ... ♖g8.

Plan C: Trap the Bishop on g3

The unhappy position of the bishop on g3, which is stymied by my pawns, suggests that I can engineer a simplification favourable to me. As in Plan B, I play 12 ... ♜g4 but after the likely 13 h3 I intend to continue 13 ... ♜xf3 and if White retakes with the queen I

will also exchange queens. In the ending arising out of this simplification, the bishop on g3 will be completely immobile because on h4 I can maintain the pawn vice by ... f6. Thus for the rest of the game I would virtually have an extra piece. To free his bishop, White would have to give up a pawn and waste a lot of time.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

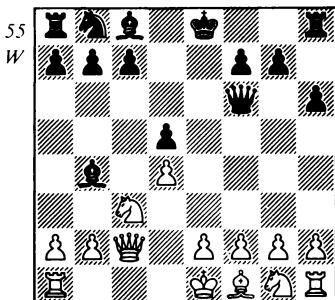
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 3

Nimzo-Indian

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 4 $\mathbb{W}c2$
d5 5 cd ed 6 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 7 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ (55)



White to play: select your plan

Plan A: Take the Initiative by Breaking Open the Centre

The players are ready to castle on opposite sides and consequently the game could easily become one of mutual wing attacks. In such cases the most important thing is to hold the initiative: I intend achieving this by immediately posing Black defensive problems.

In the diagrammed position my d-pawn is attacked whereas Black's is protected by the pin of his bishop on my knight. I can, however, turn the tables with 8 0-0-0 which threatens $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ straight away. I calculate that Black cannot respond effectively

with either 8 ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$, on account of 9 $\mathbb{W}a4+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$, or 8 ... c6, because of 9 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ cd 10 $\mathbb{W}xc8+$ etc. He must therefore defend the pawn by 8 ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ after which I will continue 9 e4 renewing the attack on d5 before he has time to castle. In this way I think I'll have good chances of gaining the initiative.

Plan B: Pursue a Minority Attack

I expect that for defensive reasons concerning c7 and d5 Black will sooner or later have to play c6. The resulting pawn structure will enable White to carry out the typical minority attack on the queenside.

To gain a tempo for this plan and in order to resolve the question of my pinned knight, I decide to play 8 a3. I suspect that Black will not be interested in conserving his bishop pair at the cost of withdrawing the king's bishop to a passive position: after 8 ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 9 b4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 10 e3 the bishop is shut out of the game and I've gained precious time for my plan. My opponent will probably continue 8 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ after which I will play 9 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ with the idea of developing normally on the kingside

(e.g. e3, $\mathbb{Q}f3$, $\mathbb{A}e2$, 0-0) before launching the minority attack.

Plan C: Reinforce and Eventually Control the Centre

As in Plan B, I want to force Black to exchange his bishop for my knight, but here I intend to recapture with the pawn. By this means I will defend the d-pawn and, moreover, obtain a greater number of pawns in the centre than my opponent. I will, therefore, play 8 a3 with the idea, after 8 ...

$\mathbb{A}xc3+$ (if 8 ... $\mathbb{A}a5$, I will follow the variation set out in Plan B) 9 bc, of exploiting my numerical superiority of central pawns by quietly preparing c4 (e.g. by e3, $\mathbb{Q}f3$, $\mathbb{A}e2$, 0-0, c4).

My aim is to force Black to exchange his d-pawn after which my d- and e-pawns will dominate the centre. Nor, after 8 ... $\mathbb{A}xc3+$ 9 bc, do I fear the continuation 9 ... $\mathbb{A}f5$ because of 10 $\mathbb{W}b3$ with a double attack on b7 and d5, for example 10 ... $\mathbb{W}c6$ 11 e4 etc.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

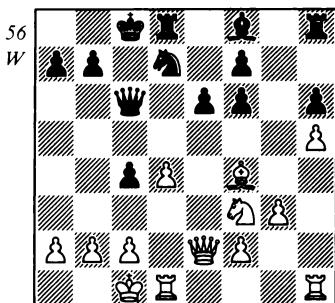
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 4

Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ de 4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$
 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 6 h4 h6 7 h5 $\mathbb{Q}h78$
 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 10 $\mathbb{W}xd3$
 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}gf6$ 12 0-0-0 e6 13
 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 0-0-0 14 g3 c5 15 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c4 16
 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gf (56)



White to play: select your plan

Plan A: Attack the Weak h-pawn

With 17 ... gf Black has strengthened his control of the centre while preventing the lethal $\mathbb{Q}e5$, but now his pawn structure has an obvious weakness in the isolated and fixed h-pawn. Balanced against this, Black has good counterplay on the queenside based on the thrust ... c3.

On the basis of these considerations I decide to halt the c-pawn by 18 c3 and then launch an attack against the h-pawn by $\mathbb{Q}h2-g4$.

The additional intervention of the queen ($\mathbb{W}e3$ or $\mathbb{W}d2$) will then make the isolated pawn's future very bleak. If, after $\mathbb{Q}h2$, Black tries to stop the knight getting to g4 with ... f5, then I can put the knight back on f3 so as to place it on e5. Any attempt to control this square by ... f6 would drastically weaken the e-pawn.

Plan B: Pressure Against the Pawn on c4

As in Plan A, I think that 17 ... gf has reduced the activity of my knight on f3 and that Black has attacking chances on the queenside with ... c3.

I note, however, that by advancing the c-pawn it has also become weak. Thus I decide to blockade it with 18 c3 and tie Black's pieces to its defence by a later $\mathbb{Q}d2$. I analyse: 18 c3 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ (if Black defends his pawn by 18 ... b5 he appreciably weakens his king's position) 19 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ after which Black is tied up as he can't play 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ because of 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ (if 20 ... $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$) 21 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ with a double attack on the rook and f-pawn. I have, therefore, the time to improve my position further with $\mathbb{Q}he1$ and

will play $\mathbb{Q}e4$ when the time is ripe.

Plan C: Alteration of Pawn Structure by Sacrificing the d-pawn

The poor mobility of my knight suggests that I should improve its prospects. I can do this by making the pawn sacrifice 18 d5 which clears the central square d4. I think Black is practically forced to accept the sacrifice because otherwise the

thrust d5 would break open his position at no cost.

After 18 d5 ed 19 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ I will have achieved the two-fold result of strengthening my position and weakening Black's. I have brought about a general weakening of the black pawn structure, the opening of the e-file and the h3-c8 diagonal and the weakening of f5. These elements give me a positional advantage which amply compensates for the sacrificed pawn.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

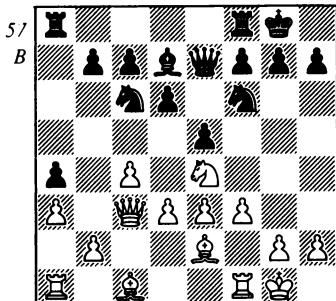
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 5

English Opening

1 c4 e5 2 ♜c3 ♜f6 3 ♜f3 ♜c6 4 e3
♗b4 5 ♜e2 ♜xc3 6 ♜xc3 ♜e7 7 a3
0-0 8 d3 a5 9 ♜e2 a4 10 0-0 d6 11
♗d2 ♜g4 12 f3 ♜d7 13 ♜e4 (57)



Black to play: select your plan

Plan A: Opening the f-file

I consider I have a slight advantage in development because White has yet to link his heavy pieces. I intend using this factor to seize the initiative by opening the f-file so as to get my rooks working before my opponent can reciprocate. Thus I decide to play 13 ... ♜xe4 followed by ... f5.

My analysis shows that White can recapture on e4 in two ways:
1) 14 fe f5 15 ef (after 15 ♜f3 fe 16 ♜xe4 ♜xf1+ 17 ♜xf1 ♜f8+ the attack on the f-file develops very quickly) 15 ... ♜xf5 and here I'm

not worried about 16 e4 as it would seriously weaken d4: after 16 ... ♜d4 I assess my position as clearly superior.

2) 14 de f5 15 ef (15 ♜d3 allows me to increase the pressure on the king's wing by advancing ... f4 at the right moment) 15 ... ♜xf5 and here, too, both 16 e4 ♜d4 and 16 ♜d3 e4 clearly favour Black.

In both variations the opening of the f-file energises my pieces and enables me to increase the pressure on the kingside.

Plan B: Attack on the Queen's Wing

The presence of the pawn on a4 fixes the weak square b3 and suggests that my zone of operations should be the queen's wing. So I play 13 ... ♜fb8 with the idea of opening up the b-file by ... b5. The realisation of this plan will turn the b-pawn into a critical weakness as it will become backward and fixed on an open file.

I also observe that with the manoeuvre ... ♜a5-b3xc1 I could eliminate the main defence of the white b-pawn which would then become my most important target in the position. In addition, White can't prevent ... b5 by 14 d4 because of 14 ... ♜xe4 15 fe ed

winning a pawn.

Plan C: Gaining Space and Time

White's last move, although perhaps not natural, was necessary in order to free the queen's bishop. As in Plan A, I want to use my advantage in development to obtain the initiative but I prefer to gain space and time by playing against the exposed position of the knight on e4.

I therefore continue 13 ... ♕e8

with the idea of playing ... f5. The resulting pawn structure will enable me, depending on circumstances, to break through in the centre with e4 or to weaken White's control of d4 and gain space on the kingside with ... f4. I am unconcerned about the pressure White can build up against my a-pawn because of the speed of my attack on the king's wing, e.g. 14 ♖c2 f5 15 ♦c3 f4 16 ♦xa4 ♜h4 and White's position is critical.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

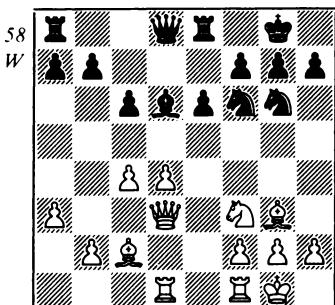
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 6

French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ de 4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$
 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 7 c4
 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ c6 9 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}gf6$ 10
 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 0-0 12 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{E}e8$
13 $\mathbb{E}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 14 a3 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}g3$
 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ (58)



White to play: select your plan

Plan A: Fix and Occupy the Weak Square d6

Black has found an effective way of stemming my pressure on the diagonal b1-h7 without weakening his castled position or his pawns. Nevertheless, I have a good space advantage as a result of the advanced position of my centre pawns. To increase this advantage and fix the weak square d6, I decide to play 16 c5. This move prevents Black from countering in the centre with ... c5 and also renders his queenside pawn structure rigid and immobile.

After the likely continuation 16 ... $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ (Black cannot reply 16 ... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ on account of 17 $\mathbb{W}d2$ winning a piece) 17 hg I intend to occupy d6 by the manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}e5$ -c4-d6. While carrying out this manoeuvre I'm not worried about the exchange ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ because after de I will have a crushing space advantage and total control of the d-file. I consider the doubling of my g-pawns to be in my favour as the knight on g6 is then even more limited.

Plan B: Occupy the Weak Square e5

As above, I want to exploit my spatial advantage. However, unlike Plan A, I think Black's most important weakness is e5. So I decide to occupy it by 16 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ on the basis of the following considerations: 1) I thereby improve the position of the knight on f3, 2) Black cannot take on e5 with his knight because of the fork, 3) if Black takes on e5 with his bishop now or later, after de I will control the d-file and, most important, the excellent support square d6 to help me double rooks and 4) it is very hard for Black to shift the knight from e5 by ... f6 because this move would weaken his castled position and the e-pawn.

I calculate that Black cannot reply 16 ... c5 because of 17 ♜a4 ♕f8 (17 ... ♜e7 lays Black open to the capture 18 dc when the black bishop is pinned against the king) 18 ♜d7 ♜xd7 19 ♜xd6 with a crushing position. In any case, the possibility of my opponent playing ... c5 does not concern me as it would open up the game and asymmetrallyise the pawn structure, elements both in my favour as I have the bishop pair.

Plan C: Occupy e5 after Exchanging Bishops

My reasoning is analogous to

Plan B with the sole difference that I don't like the idea that if Black exchanges on e5, after de my bishop on g3 is hemmed in. So I decide to play 16 ♜xd6 ♛xd6 17 ♜f1 thereby preparing to occupy e5.

I analyse that Black cannot continue with 17 ... e5 as after 18 de ♛xd3 19 ♜xd3 ♜g4 20 ♜xg6 I retain the extra pawn without any problems. Equally, I have no worries about 17 ... c5 18 dc ♛xc5 when the resulting imbalanced pawn structure delineates the advantageous ending to come (thanks to my bishop).

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

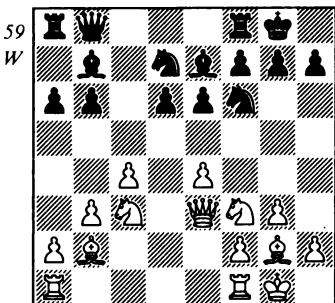
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 7

English Opening

1 c4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e6 4 g3 b6
5 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 6 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 7 d4 cd 8
 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ d6 9 b3 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ a6
11 e4 0-0 12 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{W}b8$ (59)



White to play: select your plan

Plan A: Pressure Against the d-pawn

The pawns on e4 and c4 are very important positionally as they fix the pseudo-backward black d-pawn and prevent the freeing move ... d5. I expect Black will try to undermine my c-pawn by ... b5 and in order to prevent this I will play 13 a4 with the idea of doubling rooks on the d-file and then intensifying the pressure on the d-pawn by $\mathbb{Q}a3$. The reply 13 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ does not bother me because I can defend the pawns on

b3 and e4 by 14 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ or 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$, and later on I can always chase away the knight by b4. Should Black decide to prevent this by playing ... a5, I will then gain control of b5 and by occupying it with a knight I will augment by pressure against the weak pawn on d6.

Plan B: Alteration of the Black Pawn Structure

To my way of thinking, Black's position is a bit cramped but sound enough. I intend, therefore, to effect an alteration of Black's pawn structure by taking advantage of the unprotected the bishop on e7 with 13 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ threatening 14 e5. After the probable reply 13 ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ I intend to continue with 14 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ and now, if Black replies 14 ... dc, after 15 e5 I will have gained a considerable space advantage and also opened the d-file. Alternatively, if Black plays 14 ... bc then again the advance 15 e5 will force the opening of the d-file and the isolation of Black's c-pawn. If Black attempts to avoid playing ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$, then I will be able to intensify the pressure on the

d-pawn by simply doubling rooks on the d-file.

Plan C: Apply Pressure on the Centre

As in Plan A, I think Black's key freeing moves are ... b5 and ... d5, but I don't want to compromise my pawn structure on the queen's wing by playing a4. I consider, in fact, that it is my central e- and f-pawns, rather than those on the queen's wing, which should become mobile. At the same time, I don't think I can do much to exploit the weakness of the pawn on d6 in the

immediate future.

Consequently, I intend to increase my control over b5 and d5 with 13 ♖d4 which simultaneously frees the way for my f-pawn. The idea is to prepare f4 (first clearing the king and queen from the g1-a7 diagonal in order to avoid any unpleasant surprises) so as to break through with a subsequent e5 or f5 according to circumstances. I am not worried about 13 ... e5 because this would seriously weaken the d6 pawn and the squares d5 and f5.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

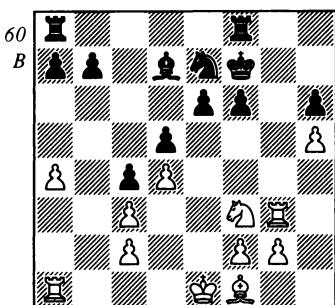
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 8

French Defence

1 e4 ♜c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♜c3 e6 4 ♜f3
♘f6 5 e5 ♜e4 6 ♜d3 ♜b4 7 ♜d2
♘xc3 8 bc ♜e7 9 h4 h6 10 ♜h3
♘a5 11 h5 c5 12 ♜g3 c4 13 ♜f1
♜f8 14 a4 ♜d7 15 ♜c1 ♜c6 16
♘d2 f5 17 ef gf 18 ♜g4 ♜e7 19
♜a3 ♜f7 20 ♜xf8 ♜xf8 21 ♜g6
♘e7 22 ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 23 ♜f3 (60)



Black to play: select your plan

Plan A: Frontal Attack Against the Weak a-pawn

After considering the pawn structure I conclude that White has two weaknesses: the doubled c-pawns and the isolated a-pawn. The most important weakness is the a-pawn because my opponent cannot protect it a second time. My own defensive problems are the weak squares g6 and the isolated h-pawn.

I therefore decide to leave my

knight on e7 to protect g6, and to pursue the attack on the a-pawn by ... ♜c8-c6-a6. Against 23 ... ♜ac8 White could cause some trouble by 24 ♜b1 when both 24 ... b6 and 24 ... ♜c6 would prevent the manoeuvre I have in mind. So I intend to play 23 ... ♜fc8 so that I can answer 24 ♜b1 by 24 ... ♜ab8 25 a5 ♜c6 and the a-pawn will fall. Another possibility is 23 ... ♜fc8 24 ♜h4 ♜c6 25 ♜g6 ♜xg6 26 ♜xg6 ♜h8 27 ♜e2 (if 27 ♜b1 ♜b6) 27 ... ♜a6 28 a5 b6, winning the pawn.

Plan B: First Fix Then Attack the Weak a-pawn

As in Plan A, I decide to attack the isolated a-pawn but I don't want to allow White to advance a5 which would remove his a-pawn from the line of fire of my queen's bishop. First of all, then, I will fix the weakness by playing 23 ... a5 after which I will continue with the manoeuvre ♜c8-b6 and thus win the pawn.

Counterplay from White against by b-pawn does not worry me for after ... ♜ab8 or ... ♜a7 he will be obliged to return to a1 in order to protect his own pawn. On the kingside I don't believe my

opponent can exploit my weaknesses (the g6 square and the h-pawn). I analyse some possible continuations:

- 1) 24 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{H}ab8$ 25 $\mathbb{B}b6$ $\mathbb{A}xa4$ 26 $\mathbb{B}d2$ $\mathbb{A}c6$ and White has no compensation for the loss of the pawn.
- 2) 24 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ (or 25 $\mathbb{E}g6$ $\mathbb{E}h8$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$) 25 ... $\mathbb{E}g8$ 26 $\mathbb{E}f3$ $\mathbb{A}e8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ and White loses the h-pawn.

Plan C: Free the Bad Bishop

In contrast to the two preceding plans, I give great weight to the fact that my bishop is hemmed in by my own pawns. I'm worried, in fact, that the presence of the bad

bishop could give White sufficient compensation for the loss of the a-pawn.

Accordingly, I consider that my most pressing problem is to free my bad bishop and I therefore want to prepare ... e5 by playing 23 ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$. The idea is to get my bishop into the game on f5 in order to control the weak g6 square and put pressure on the c2 pawn. I analyse a possible continuation: 24 $\mathbb{E}g6$ $\mathbb{E}h8$ 25 $\mathbb{A}e2$ e5, with the threat ... $\mathbb{A}f5$. I notice that at this point White cannot continue with 26 g4 because after 26 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ his rook would be trapped.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

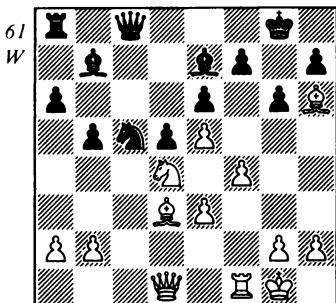
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 9

QGD Orthodox

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5 4 $\mathbb{Q}g5$
 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 5 e3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0-0 7 $\mathbb{E}c1$ c6
8 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ a6 9 cd cd 10 0-0 b5 11 $\mathbb{Q}e5$
 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12 de $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 14
 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}b8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ g6 16 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{E}c8$
17 $\mathbb{E}xc8+$ $\mathbb{W}xc8$ 18 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ (61)



White to play: select your plan

Plan A: Fight for the Initiative on the Queen's Wing

Black threatens to get the upper hand on the queen's wing with 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{W}c4$ since 21 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ is unacceptable as it would give Black a dangerous queenside pawn majority. I think, therefore, that the dominant strategic requirement is to contest Black's pressure on the c-file and try to swing matters in my favour. I intend to achieve this by transferring my rook to the c-file with the manoeuvre $\mathbb{E}f2-c2$. Thus

I play 19 $\mathbb{E}f2$ and calculate two variations:

1) 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 20 $\mathbb{E}c2$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ and here I could also open the d-file at the right moment by the capture $\mathbb{Q}xe4$. This idea could be helpful in maximising the efficiency of my heavy pieces.

2) 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 20 $\mathbb{E}c2$ (a vital intermediate move) 20 ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 21 b4 regaining the piece. In this case, too, I have succeeded in turning the tables on the queenside, e.g. 21 ... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}b3$, or 21 ... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 22 bc with a clearly superior position because of my strong centralised knight and the newly created passed c-pawn.

Plan B: Kingside Attack

Seeing as the pawn configuration and the unassailable knight on d4 give the centre a fixed character, I think the position is typical of attack and counterattack situations where kings are castled on the same side. So I must attack on the kingside and my opponent on the queenside. My initiative on the kingside added to the blocked centre means that I can push my kingside pawns.

I will therefore play 19 g4 preparing the breakthrough f5. If

19 ... ♘xd3 20 ♜xd3 ♜c4 21 ♜d2, and Black's major pieces are prevented from penetrating down the c-file thanks to my knight which controls entry to the seventh rank (c2).

Plan C: Sacrificial Attack on the Kingside

On the basis of the considerations in Plan B, I also think my sector of operations is the kingside. But I believe the time is ripe for sharper methods and I think I can breach Black's defensive wall directly with a bishop sacrifice. I intend to

play 19 f5 having analysed the following variations:

- 1) 19 ... ef (on 19 ... gf there still comes 20 ♜xf5) 20 ♜xf5 gf (if Black declines the sacrifice my attacking possibilities have improved) 21 ♜xf5 with the lethal twin threats of 22 ♜g4+ and 22 ♜xe7+, e.g. 21 ... ♜f8 22 ♜g4+ ♜h8 23 ♜g7+ and wins.
- 2) 19 ... ♘xd3 20 fg ♜xe5 21 gf+, and now if 21 ... ♜xf7 22 ♜g4+ recovers the piece with a winning attack, and if 21 ... ♜h8 22 f8♛+ ♜xf8 23 ♜xf8+ winning the queen.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

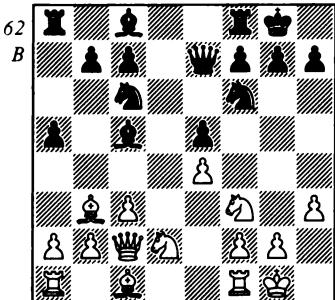
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 10

Two Knights

1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜c4 ♜f6 4 d3
♝e7 5 ♜b3 0-0 6 0-0 d5 7 ♜bd2 de
8 de ♜c5 9 c3 a5 10 h3 ♛e7
11 ♛c2 (62)



Black to play: select your plan

Plan A: Occupy the Weak Square f4

I judge that White is slightly behind in development because he will have to shift his queen's knight again in order to let the queen's bishop out. He probably intends to continue ♜c4 and either ♜e3 to counter the action of my bishop on c5, or ♜g5 followed by ♜e3 with the idea of occupying d5.

My pieces, on the other hand, are all well placed and even the queen's bishop is aimed directly at my opponent's weakness on h3. To exploit this advantage in development and the weakening of White's castled position, I

decide to immediately commence a plan of occupying the weak square f4 by playing 11 ... ♜h5. If I can get my knight to f4 the pressure of my pieces on the king's wing will become enormous. White will probably react by 12 ♜c4 on which I intend to play 12 ... ♛f6 to strengthen my control of f4 and bring my queen into the attack too. This move also creates the immediate threat of ♜xh3, preventing White from completing his development.

Plan B: Seek an Alteration of Pawn Structure

As in Plan A, I want to exploit my advantage in development to obtain an initiative on the kingside. I also, however, have to protect d5 and f5 as both squares could constitute excellent targets for my opponent.

I decide to play 11 ... ♜e6 which prevents 12 ♜c4 because of 12 ... a4 winning a piece. In order to complete his development White will probably decide to play 12 ♜xe6 on which I intend to continue with 12 ... fe changing the pawn structure and thus the nature of the position.

I base this change in my pawn structure on the following reasons:

- 1) the control of the e6 pawn over d5 and f5 greatly reduces the white knights' possibilities of manoeuvre;
- 2) it is very difficult for White to exploit the weakness of the doubled pawns because they are located on a closed file and thus are easy to defend;
- 3) opening up the f-file will accelerate my attack on the kingside.

I calculate a possible development: 12 ♜xe6 fe 13 ♜c4 ♜d7 with interesting attacking chances against White's castled position.

Plan C: Occupy the d-file and Exert Pressure on d3

Unlike the other plans, I think that the dominating strategic element in this position is the presence of the open d-file where

White suffers from the weakness of d3. Although this square is not fixed by any of my pawns, it can become an excellent target as all my pieces can be trained on it, e.g. ... b6, ... ♜a6, ... ♜ad8, ... ♜h5-f4.

I therefore decide to use my advantage in development to occupy the d-file first and start to put pressure on d3. I play 11 ... b6 so as to paralyse the manoeuvre ♜c4 with the pin ... ♜a6 and also bring my rooks into communication.

I calculate a plausible continuation: 12 ♜c4 ♜a6 13 a4 (not 13 ♜d1 a4 14 ♜xa4 b5 and Black wins a piece) 13 ... ♜ad8 14 ♜g5 h6 15 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 16 ♜fd1 and White's pieces are tied up because the knight on c4 can't get to e3 without leaving doubled pawns in its wake.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

Solution of Test 1

PLAN A: This is the correct plan. You must take the opportunity to play 16 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ for if you delay by even a single move, Black would be able to get in 16 a4 so stopping $\mathbb{Q}b3-c5$.

It is also strategically sound to note that if heavy pieces are exchanged off the board, the ending is clearly superior. Indeed, the fight between the good knight and bad bishop would leave Black little hope of salvation and that is why Black cannot contest White's control of the c-file.

PLAN B: Although based on sound strategy (creating a passed pawn) this plan is ineffective here because dc frees Black's centre pawns. He will be able to gain space in the centre by ... e5 thus reducing the knight's field of action and partially freeing the bishop on c8 which can no longer be considered bad because Black will be able to keep pushing his centre pawns. To take full advantage of the bad bishop White must keep the position closed. It is not good policy to give Black control of e5.

PLAN C: This plan is strategically correct but cannot be implemented. You did not notice that after 16 $\mathbb{W}b3?$ Black can continue with 16 ... a4! As the pawn on b5 cannot be taken because of the skewer ... $\mathbb{A}a6$, you could only play actively with 17 $\mathbb{W}d3$, after which 17 ... $\mathbb{A}a6$ would make it impossible for you to put a rook on the seventh owing to the threatened ... b4.

In short, you can't double rooks immediately on the c-file, although this should not worry you as removal of the heavy pieces would be favourable to you as explained in Plan A.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 10 points

PLAN B: 2 points

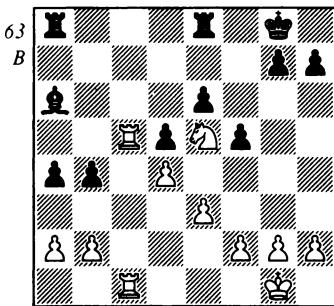
PLAN C: 5 points

Tactical points: 3 points if you saw Black's correct line against Plan C (16 ... a4!).

Alekhine-Yates
London 1922

16 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ a4 (the try 16 ... $\mathbb{A}b7$, with the idea of meeting 17 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ with 17 ... $\mathbb{E}ec8$ in order to force White to recapture on c5 with the pawn,

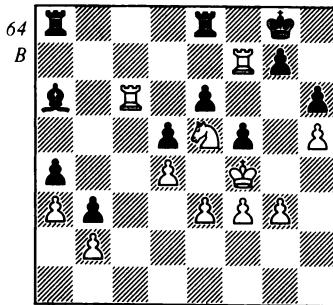
would have been strongly answered by 17 $\mathbb{W}c7$ allowing White to pursue his plan unhindered) 17 $\mathfrak{Q}c5$ $\mathfrak{Q}xc5$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ (if 18 dc? e5! and Black occupies the centre and brings his queen's bishop to life. In addition, here White cannot simply push on with his c-pawn for risk of losing it) 18 ... $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 19 $\mathbb{E}xc5$ b4 20 $\mathbb{E}fc1$ $\mathfrak{Q}a6$ 21 $\mathfrak{Q}e5!$ (63)



White has achieved his strategic goals: the c-file and the e5 square are completely in his control. Also, before contesting the file, Black will have to weigh the consequences of the good knight versus bad bishop ending which would result.

21 ... $\mathbb{E}eb8$ (if 21 ... $\mathbb{E}ec8$ 22 $\mathbb{E}xc8+$ $\mathbb{E}xc8$ 23 $\mathbb{E}xc8+$ $\mathfrak{Q}xc8$ 24 $\mathfrak{Q}c6$ with the double threat of $\mathfrak{Q}e7+$ and $\mathfrak{Q}xb4$) 22 f3 b3 23

a3 $\mathfrak{h}6$ (here too if 23 ... $\mathbb{E}c8$ 24 $\mathbb{E}xc8+$ $\mathbb{E}xc8$ 25 $\mathbb{E}xc8+$ $\mathfrak{Q}xc8$ 26 $\mathfrak{Q}d3$ and Black cannot prevent 27 $\mathfrak{Q}c5$ and the loss of the a4 or e6 pawn. This variation and the preceding one demonstrate that the knight versus bishop ending is hopeless for Black) 24 $\mathfrak{Q}f2$ $\mathfrak{Q}h7$ 25 $\mathfrak{h}4$ $\mathbb{E}f8$ 26 $\mathfrak{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{E}fb8$ (Black can do nothing but wait) 27 $\mathbb{E}c7$ $\mathfrak{Q}b5$ 28 $\mathbb{E}1c5$ $\mathfrak{Q}a6$ 29 $\mathbb{E}5c6$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 30 $\mathfrak{Q}f4$ (White gradually improves his position while smothering Black's) 30 ... $\mathfrak{Q}g8$ 31 $\mathfrak{h}5!$ $\mathfrak{Q}f1$ 32 g3 $\mathfrak{Q}a6$ 33 $\mathbb{E}f7$ (64)



The arrival of both rooks on the seventh rank lets White end with a flourish:

33 ... $\mathfrak{Q}h7$ 34 $\mathbb{E}cc7$ $\mathbb{E}g8$ 35 $\mathfrak{Q}d7!$ $\mathfrak{Q}h8$ 36 $\mathfrak{Q}f6!$ $\mathbb{E}gf8$ 37 $\mathbb{E}xg7!$ $\mathbb{E}xf6$ 38 $\mathfrak{Q}e5!$ 1-0 because if 38 ... $\mathbb{E}ff8$ then 39 $\mathfrak{h}7+$ $\mathfrak{Q}g8$ 40 $\mathbb{E}cg7$ mate.

Solution of Test 2

PLAN A: This plan pursues an erroneous objective. Among the strategic elements present in the position, you have given no importance to the fact that, as a result of the advance ... g5, your castled position is seriously weakened. To open up the game in situations of this type, even if you possess the bishop pair, can become a suicidal strategy because every open line can be utilised by your opponent to underline the precarious position of your own king.

You should also have considered that if White simply stands still, your plan is unrealisable because when you push ... c4, the advance d4 will suffice to undermine the e5 pawn and thus bring back to life the bishop on g3 which is currently in suspended animation.

PLAN B: Strategically, the type of centre we are examining is far from being fixed and immobile: it is easy for White to achieve a breakthrough with c3 and d4. If this occurred, your king would no longer be able to shelter behind a stable centre, thus these conditions are not ideal for organising an attack on the kingside. The thrust

... f5 could also prove highly dangerous, again because it would open up the centre.

Nevertheless, this plan is fairly direct and creates immediate threats which White must meet precisely. Let's see what might happen: 12 ... ♕g4 13 h3 ♘e6?! 14 ♘h2! (prevents the advance of the black h- and g-pawns) 14 ... ♖h7 15 ♘g4 ♖g7 (15 ... ♖xg4 16 hg would mean the blockade of the kingside, weakening of the h-pawn and total loss of control on the white squares) 16 ♘e3 and if you still feel like playing ... f5, then you really are a problem for yourself and your loved ones.

PLAN C: Your reflections are correct: simplification is the safest method to stop White exploiting your weakened king's position while simultaneously underlining the superiority of your bishop. If White decides to keep the queens on the board, after 12 ... ♕g4 13 h3 ♘xf3 14 gf White's castled position would also be seriously weakened and he would still have no compensation for the inefficiency of his bishop on g3. So you could play the remainder of the game by shifting the action over to the

queen's wing where, to all intents and purposes a piece down, White has no chance of saving himself.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 1 point

PLAN B: 4 points

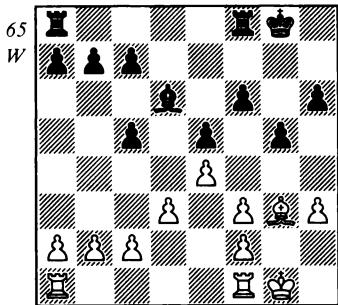
PLAN C: 10 points

Tactical points: No tactical points awarded in this test.

**Winter-Capablanca
Hastings 1919**

12 ... ♖g4! 13 h3 ♖xf3 14 ♕xf3

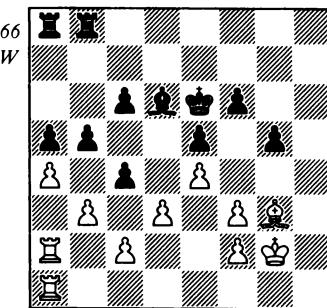
(also after 14 gf ♖e6 Black can maintain his grip, meeting h4 with ... f6) 14 ... ♕xf3 15 gf f6! (65)



The effects of Black's plan are clearly visible: the bishop on g3 is right out of the game. To reanimate it, White would have to play ♖g2, ♖h2, ♖g1, f4 and f3, a sequence taking five moves as well as costing a pawn!

16 ♖g2 a5 17 a4 (trying to block the queenside) 17 ... ♖f7 18 ♖h1 ♖e6 19 h4 ♖fb8 (Capablanca ignores White's operations to

open the h-file and simply prepares to penetrate the fragile defences on the queen's wing) 20 hg hg 21 b3 c6 22 ♖a2 (the attempt to immobilise the black bishop by 22 c4, to make it a prisoner of its own pawns, would have been refuted by 22 ... b5 23 ♖ab1 ♖b7 followed by ... ♖ab8 after which White would be forced to give the b-file, thus allowing a decisive penetration of the black rooks) 22 ... b5 23 ♖ha1 c4! (66)



Finally activating the bishop which up to this point had not seemed any more active than its counterpart on g3.

24 ab (if 24 bc bc 25 dc ♖b4 and Black penetrates) 24 ... cb3 25 cb ♖xb5 26 ♖a4 ♖xb3 27 d4 (or 27 ♖xa5 ♖xa5 28 ♖xa5 ♖xd3 and wins easily. With the text move, White plays his last card to try and free the bishop on g3 but Black does not loosen his grip) 27 ... ♖b5 28 ♖c4 (after 28 de fe! the bird remains in its cage) 28 ... ♖b4 29 ♖xc6 ♖xd4 0-1.

Solution of Test 3

PLAN A: This is a highly dangerous plan which cannot be recommended strategically because in the context of opposite-side castling you have not fully appreciated that without the c-pawn White's castled position is substantially weaker than Black's. Your analysis isn't so good either as your opponent can easily prevent the implementation of your plan and quickly expose further the position of your king. Let's take a look: 8 0-0-0? ♖xc3! 9 ♜xc3 ♜xf2 and now, to recover the pawn, you have to play 10 ♜xc7, and after 10 ... 0-0 the weakness of your castled position is even more evident because of the open c-file.

PLAN B: This is the correct plan. The idea is right and so is the way you intend to go about it. It is important to play 8 a3 immediately to force Black to exchange his bishop on b4 or withdraw it to uncomfortable squares a5 and b6. Delaying this move might allow Black to keep the bishop pair in an active position, e.g. 8 e3 c6 9 ♔f3 0-0 10 a3 ♖d6! etc. Further, by forcing the exchange on c3 and retaking with the queen you prevent Black from gaining a

development tempo with ... ♖f5.

PLAN C: The most important alteration in the strategic set-up which would come about after the recapture bc would be the closure of c-file. This is not at all favourable as the pressure against c7 would come to an end. Black is no longer obliged to passively play ... c6 but can counter-punch effectively in the centre with ... c5, e.g. 8 a3 ♖xc3+ 9 bc 0-0 10 e3 c5! and now the pressure on d4 prevents you playing c4, and, moreover, Black may even be able to play ... c4 himself. Essentially, the idea you are pursuing is too slow to work and Black can easily prevent its execution.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 0 points

PLAN B: 10 points

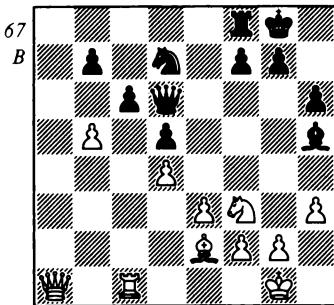
PLAN C: 4 points

Tactical points: No tactical points awarded in this test.

**Larsen-Seirawan
Mar del Plata 1981**

8 a3 ♖xc3+ 9 ♜xc3 0-0 10 e3 c6 11
♔f3 ♖f5 12 ♖e2 ♔d7 13 0-0
(White has completed his development and now gets ready for a minority attack with b4) 13 ... a5?!

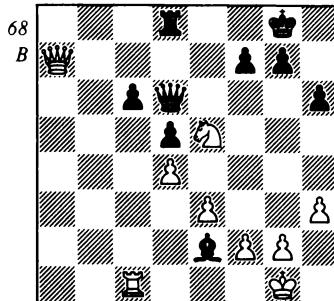
(Black fails to appreciate that the opening of the a-file will help White's plans on the queenside)
14 b4 ab 15 ab ♕d6 16 ♘fc1 ♘g4
17 h3 ♘h5 (it was better to eliminate the knight by 17 ... ♘xf3) **18 b5 ♘xa1 19 ♘xa1!** (67)



The minority attack is proceeding rapidly and the a-file falls into White's hands.

19 ... ♘c8 (after 19 ... c5 20 dc ♘xc5, there is no compensation for the isolated d-pawn) **20 ♘a7! ♘b8?** (a fatal error: it was absolutely essential to play 20 ... ♘xf3. Black had obviously missed the fine move that follows) **21 ♘e5! ♘xe2** (if 21 ... ♘xe5? 22 de ♘xe5 23 ♘xh5 winning a piece) **22 ♘xd7 ♘d8 23 bc bc 24 ♘e5** (68) With a double attack on c6 and f7. The weakness created by the minority attack has fallen.

24 ... ♘h5 25 ♘xc6 ♘f8 26 ♘c7 f6



27 ♘d7 ♘e8 28 ♘c5 ♘f7 (to counter the threat of ♘xg7+ and also to control e6) **29 ♘e7 ♘f8 30 ♘c7 ♘e8 31 ♘d7 ♘a8 32 g4 ♘e8 33 ♘g2 ♘a8 34 h4 ♘e8 35 ♘e7 ♘c8 36 ♘xc8+ ♘xc8 37 h5** (the absence of a passed pawn turns endings of this type into a hard grind) **37 ... ♘f8 38 ♘a7 ♘c6 39 ♘g3 ♘e8 40 ♘d3 ♘d6 41 ♘f4 ♘d7 42 ♘a6 ♘d8 43 ♘g6** (White avoids the exchange of rooks whereas he is happy to offer the exchange of minor pieces: a rook ending here is in fact much easier to win than the knight versus bishop ending) **43 ... ♘c8 44 ♘h4 ♘b7 45 ♘a1 ♘e6 46 ♘f4 ♘c7 47 ♘f5 ♘d7 48 ♘c1 ♘g8 49 ♘c5 ♘e6 50 f3** (finally utilising the extra pawn) **50 ... ♘g8 51 e4 ♘e6 52 e5 fe+ 53 ♘xe5 ♘xf5 54 gf ♘e7+ 55 ♘xd5 ♘e3 56 f4 ♘h3 57 ♘e6 ♘b6 58 ♘f7 ♘d3 59 ♘xg7 ♘xd4 60 ♘c1 1-0.**

Solution of Test 4

PLAN A: At this stage of the game the weakness of the h-pawn is a strategic theme of little importance. There are still too many pieces on the board to pursue such a decentralised strategic objective. You have evidently underestimated the strength of the manoeuvre ... ♜b6-d5. After centralising his knight Black is able to assault your castled position with the advance ... b5-b4.

Let's see: 18 c3?! ♜b6 19 ♜h2 ♜d5 and now if 20 ♜d2 the queen will be unable to participate in the attack on h6 while Black, thanks to his central blockade, will be able to create a violent attack against your king with 20 ... ♛a4 or 20 ... b5. Moreover, if you continue 20 ♜d2, after 20 ... b5 21 ♜g4 b4 you would find yourself in a critical situation.

PLAN B: Here too you have failed to understand the importance of the d5 square and you have undervalued Black's very real offensive chances on the queenside. The square d5 cannot be attacked by your pawns and therefore it is a strong square for Black which he will be able to use to feed his pieces over for the attack against your king.

True, by pursuing this plan you

tie Black's queen and knight to the defence of the c-pawn, but Black can utilise the d5 point with his rook too (... ♕d5-a5). This manoeuvre will cause a lot of trouble for you, e.g. 18 c3?! ♜b6 19 ♜d2 ♕d5! with the threat of ... ♕a5 followed by ... ♛a4. In short, the move 18 c3?! does not stop Black's attack on the queenside.

PLAN C: The correct plan. Sacrificing the d-pawn not only creates a general debility in Black's position but also forces him to occupy d5 in the only ineffective way – with a pawn. If Black can get a piece onto d5 he will give the position the character of a blockade, a situation that greatly enhances his attacking chances on the queen's wing.

By sacrificing the d-pawn you will manage to prevent the central blockade and give the position a more open character: this factor greatly curbs Black's counterplay on the queenside. Then again, the clearance of d4 is of great strategic importance for from this position your knight unleashes its maximum potential.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 2 points

PLAN B: 4 points

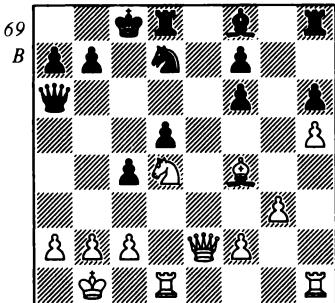
PLAN C: 10 points

Tactical points: No tactical points

awarded in this test.

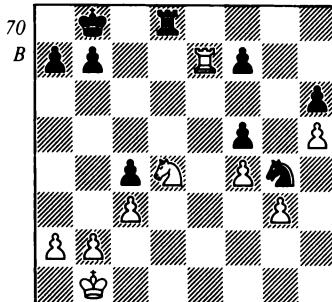
**Tseshkovsky-Kasparov
USSR 1978**

18 d5! ed (18 ... $\mathbb{W}a6$ 19 de fe 20 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ gives White a clear advantage)
19 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ (69)



It is clear that the opening of the centre and the centralisation of the white knight have put paid to Black's chances on the queenside.
20 ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 21 $\mathbb{W}f3!$ (after 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xe6$ fe 24 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ Black has cranked his pawn structure back into shape and has sufficient compensation for the exchange)
21 ... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 22 $\mathbb{W}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (22 ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 25 $\mathbb{W}xf6$ gives White a winning position) 23 $\mathbb{W}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 24 f4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (Black has to return the pawn. Also after 24 ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 25 $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 26 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ White would have regained his pawn with the better game.) 25 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (it is not possible to initiate an attack on

the queenside, e.g. 25 ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 26 $\mathbb{W}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 28 $\mathbb{W}xf6$ with a decisive advantage) 26 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 27 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 28 c3 f5 29 $\mathbb{H}he1$ (after 29 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 30 $\mathbb{H}xd8+$ $\mathbb{H}xd8$ 31 $\mathbb{H}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$, Black could start nursing the idea of a counter-attack. The text move takes control of the e-file) 29 ... $\mathbb{W}c5$ 30 $\mathbb{W}e7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 31 $\mathbb{H}xe7$ $\mathbb{H}he8$ 32 $\mathbb{H}de1$ $\mathbb{H}xe7$ 33 $\mathbb{H}xe7$ (70)



The effects of White's plan are clearly visible even in the endgame. Amazingly, the knight has done all its work without moving from d4 since its arrival on move 19, and its still strong position coupled with the entry of the rook to the seventh rank guarantees White an easy victory.

33 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 34 $\mathbb{H}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{H}d3$ 36 $\mathbb{H}f8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 37 $\mathbb{H}g8$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 38 $\mathbb{H}g6$ b5 39 a3 $\mathbb{H}d1+$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{H}g1$ 41 $\mathbb{H}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 42 $\mathbb{H}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}xb5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 45 $\mathbb{H}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 46 $\mathbb{H}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 48 $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 49 $\mathbb{Q}e3+$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 50 $\mathbb{H}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 51 $\mathbb{H}e7+$ 1-0.

Solution of Test 5

PLAN A: This plan is good although it has the drawback of simplifying the position and opening up the game. As you quite rightly remarked, you have a slight advantage in development but here in order to exploit this you have to keep your opponent as bottled up as you can.

Further, to get the full benefit from your knight on c6 relative to the bishop on c1 it is again in your interest to keep the position closed. After 13 ... ♜xe4 14 de f5 15 ef ♜xf5 the simple move is 16 ♜d2 and, however preferable Black's position may still be, White has solved his development problem, and, most important of all, his rooks are in communication.

PLAN B: You have misunderstood the strategic significance of the black a-pawn. This has been pushed not to launch an attack on the queen's wing but to prevent b4 which would herald the start of an attack by White in this sector.

The direction of your attack is clear from the pawn chain c7-d6-e5. Black should apply a holding strategy on the queen's wing – he must not attempt a breakthrough.

You have also overlooked that White can cross your plan tactically: 13 ... ♜fb8?! 14 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 15 f4! and now if 15 ... b5? 16 cb! and you are in real trouble, e.g. 16 ... ♜xb5 17 fe ♜xe5 18 d4 etc.

PLAN C: Your deliberations are correct: if White wants to win the a-pawn he will come under very strong pressure on the kingside. Also, the advance ... f5 will come with tempo and interfere with White's development.

With this line you exploit the exposed position of the knight on e4 to gain space and time and to leave your opponent in as cramped a position as possible.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 7 points

PLAN B: 1 point

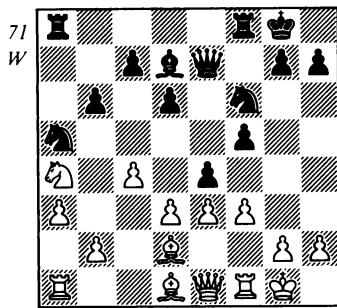
PLAN C: 10 points

Tactical points: 2 points if you saw White's correct line against Plan B (15 f4!).

Smyslov-Romanishin
Tilburg 1979

13 ... ♜e8 14 ♜e1 (Played to prevent ♜h4 and also to organise pressure on the a-pawn by ♜c3 and ♜d1. Another possibility was to try to fight for space

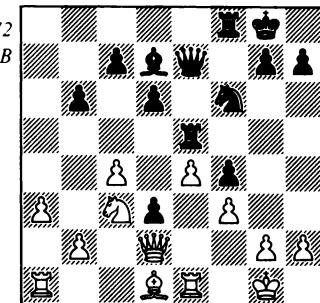
on the kingside by playing 14 f4. However, after 14 ... f5 15 ♜g3 ♜f6 there's no good line for White, e.g. 16 fe ♜xe5 17 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 18 ♜xf5 ♜fg4 and Black has a violent attack in return for the sacrificed pawn, or 16 b4 ab 17 ♜b2 ef 18 ef d5 and Black has fine chances) 14 ... f5 15 ♜c3 ♜f6 16 ♜d2 (16 ♜f2 was better so as to continue with d4) 16 ... ♜a5 17 ♜d1 (after 17 ♜d5 ♜xd5 18 cd ♜b3 Black's advantage is clear) 17 17 ... b6 18 ♜xa4 (18 ♜xa4? fails on account of 18 ... ♜xa4 19 ♜xa4 ♜b3 and Black wins) 18 ... e4! (71) (Black rightly eschews regaining the pawn by 18 ... ♜xc4 in favour of starting an attack while the white pieces are decentralised)



After the text move the pawn

duo d3 and c4 come under heavy fire: the a-pawn is sacrificed on the altar of a central breakthrough.

19 ♜xa5 ♜xa5 20 ♜c3 ed 21 ♜d2 ♜e5 22 ♜e1 f4 23 e4? (72)



Here White fails to find the best defensive line; the closing of the centre allows Black to build a very strong attack on the king's wing. It would have been better to give up the e-pawn by 23 ♜xd3 fe 24 ♜e2.

23 ... ♜e6! 24 ♜xd3 ♜d7 25 ♜a4 ♜c5 26 ♜f1 ♜h4 27 ♜c2 ♜h5 28 h3 ♜g5 29 ♜f2 (or 29 ♜h1 ♜g3 30 ♜e2 ♜xh3 31 ♜xg3 ♜e6+ 32 ♜g1 fg and wins) 29 ... ♜g3 30 ♜e2 ♜xh3 31 ♜f1 ♜xg2! 32 ♜xg2 (if 32 ♜xg2 ♜h3 etc) 32 ... ♜f6 33 e5 ♜h6 0-1.

Solution of Test 6

PLAN A: In this position the advance c5 is a big strategic error as it cedes Black complete control of the d5 square. The c- and d-pawns guarantee you a very useful space advantage as long as they stand abreast, but push either one and you allow your opponent access to centralised squares on the fourth rank. For this reason, it's wrong to think you can control the d-file if Black exchanges on e5 during the manoeuvre you are planning. For example, 16 c5? $\mathbb{A}xg3$ 17 hg and when you play 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ there could follow 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 19 de $\mathbb{W}xd3$ 20 $\mathbb{E}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$, which just goes to show that with Black controlling d5 there's no way at all for you to use the d-file.

PLAN B: This is the correct plan. To exploit your space advantage you have to occupy e5 which is a strategically weak square. Occupation of this square is not based on any specific plan of attack: it is an end in itself.

The factors you have taken into consideration might never actually crop up in the game but they will always be latent possibilities that Black will never be able to ignore. The

continuation of the game is, in fact, very instructive because some of your strategic considerations do come to pass.

PLAN C: There is a strategic error here: to exploit a space advantage you must never simplify the position! A restricted position (like Black's at the moment) is easier to defend with fewer pieces on the board. Your plan just helps Black whose watchword is: simplify! Let's see: 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 17 $\mathbb{E}fe1$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ and now if you play 18 $\mathbb{Q}e5$, Black can quite simply continue 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 19 de $\mathbb{W}xd3$ 20 $\mathbb{E}xd3$ $\mathbb{E}xd3$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ and the usual slight superiority of bishop over knight is virtually neutralised on account of the symmetrical pawn structure.

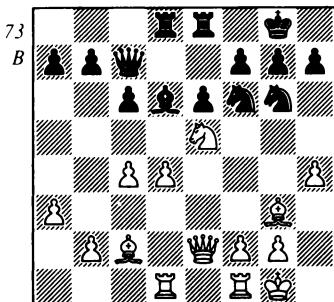
Strategy points: PLAN A: 1 point
PLAN B: 10 points
PLAN C: 5 points

Tactical points: No tactical points awarded in this test.

Gipslis-Djurić
Tallinn 1981

16 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ (if, for example, 16 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 17 de $\mathbb{W}xd3$ 18 $\mathbb{E}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 19 f4 $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 20 $\mathbb{E}fd1$ and White takes

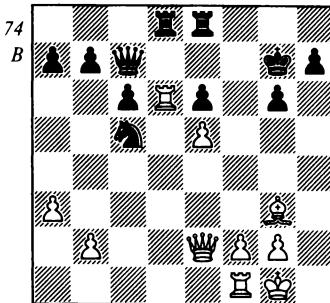
command of the d-file) 17 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 18 h4! (73)



One typical effect of the occupation of a central square is to favour an attack on the wing: here White takes advantage of the position of the knight on e5 to push his h-pawn and weaken Black's castled position.

18 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19 h5 $\mathbb{Q}gf8$ (If 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}gxe5$ 20 de and now Black cannot play 20 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21 $\mathbb{E}xd6$! $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ nor 20 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21 $\mathbb{E}xd7$! $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$. In both cases White wins two pieces for rook and pawn and maintains a strong attack on the kingside. After the text move, it is clear that Black's position is overcrowded) 20 h6 (20 c5! immediately was more precise, with the same idea as in the game) 20 ... $\mathbb{Q}g6$?! (Black had to try 20 ... f5!? here) 21 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$! fg (on 21 ... hg comes 22 h7+ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 24 fg with a big

plus) 22 hg $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 23 c5! (A pawn sacrifice to force Black to exchange on e5. This will open the d-file and also bring the white rooks into the game) 23 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 24 de (now d6 can be used to double rooks) 24 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 25 $\mathbb{E}d6$ (74)



And here we start to appreciate the importance of the bishop on g3. Without its assistance d6 could not be occupied.

25 ... b6 (if 25 ... $\mathbb{E}xd6$ 26 ed and now, because of the threat $\mathbb{W}e5+$, the black queen has to defend the knight on c5. As 26 ... $\mathbb{W}a5$ is impossible because of 27 b4, Black is compelled to play 26 ... $\mathbb{W}b6$ after which there follows 27 $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}d4$! with the decisive threat of 29 $\mathbb{W}e5$) 26 $\mathbb{E}c1$ (threatening b4) 26 ... $\mathbb{W}b7$ 27 b4 $\mathbb{E}xd6$ 28 ed $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 29 $\mathbb{W}f3$! $\mathbb{E}c8$ 30 b5! 1-0 for if 30 ... $\mathbb{Q}b8$, 31 $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 32 $\mathbb{W}f6$ with an easy win.

Solution of Test 7

PLAN A: It's not at all easy to apply effective pressure against d6. Even if White managed to train both rooks and the queen's bishop against d6, Black could neutralise the attack quite simply by $\mathbb{Q}c5$. The idea of chasing away the knight on c5 by b4 can't be recommended strategically because it blocks the action of the bishop on a3 and seriously weakens the c-pawn. It would be pointless continuing b5 because the knight would then resume its position at c5 permanently.

You should also have realised that after 13 a4 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ or 14 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ it will be very hard for you to apply pressure down the d-file because your king's knight will be tied to the defence of the b-pawn (weakened by your 13 a4). Basically, it is in White's interest to keep his queenside pawn structure as sound as possible, and the most solid structure is the chain a2, b3, c4. Thus you must bear in mind that it is only possible to make the queenside pawns mobile at the cost of potentially serious weaknesses.

PLAN B: To exchange the bishop on b2 for the knight on d7 is a decidedly anti-positional solution

which would lead to an overall weakening of the black squares. If, after your projected exchange, Black managed to take control of the long diagonal a1-h8 with his king's bishop, you would live to regret your decision. Moreover, your bishop on b2 has its sights trained directly on the black king and is therefore worth much more than the knight on d7.

This plan is also rather simplistic because it ignores the possibility of Black reacting to 13 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ with 13 ... b5. There might follow 14 cb (not 14 e5 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 15 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}gxe5$ and White has lost an important pawn for nothing) 14 ... ab 15 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ and now after either 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ or 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ the position of White's pieces is extremely precarious.

Last but not least, the execution of this plan would in fact cost White a pawn: 13 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$?! bc 15 e5? $\mathbb{Q}g4$! and the e-pawn is lost no matter where the queen goes, e.g. 16 $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ de etc, or 16 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ etc, or again 16 $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ etc.

PLAN C: The right way. 13 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ prevents the advance ... b5 without weakening the queenside pawn

structure.

Black's position is sound and it isn't easy to attack the pawn on d6. To make headway new weaknesses have to be created. This you can achieve (after due preparation) by pushing the f-pawn to f5. Then, if Black plays ... e5, he will lose space on the kingside and concede a further weakening of the d-pawn and the d5 square. Alternatively, if he does nothing you can simultaneously open the f-file and weaken the pawn on e6 by playing fe.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 4 points

PLAN B: 2 points

PLAN C: 10 points

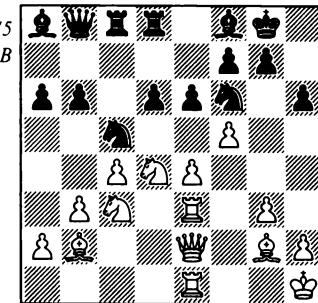
Tactical points: 2 points if you saw Black's correct line against Plan B (15 ... ♜g4!)

**Timman-Portisch
Tilburg 1979**

13 ♜d4 ♜e8 14 ♜ae1 ♜a7 15 ♜d2 ♜a8 16 ♜h1 (White has placed his pieces ideally for f4) 16 ... h6 17 f4 ♜c8 (there are no weak points against which Black can develop counterplay) 18 ♜e2 (on 18 ♜e3 the reply 18 ... ♜g4 would be annoying; White does not want to weaken his g-pawn and castled position by h3) 18 ... ♜c5 19 ♜fe1 ♜f8 20 ♜d1! (controlling g4 so as to triple on the e-file) 20 ...

♜ac7 21 ♜e3 ♜d8 22 ♜e2 ♜cc8?

(In the event of 22 ... d5 23 cd ed 24 e5 ♜fe4 25 b4 ♜xc3 26 ♜xc3 ♜e4 27 ♜xc7 ♜xc7 28 ♜cl, White would retain a clear positional advantage. Black had to play 22 ... ♜b7 so as to be able to answer 23 f5 with 23 ... ♜c8.) 23 f5! (75)



Thus White has achieved his objective and there is now no way for Black to prevent his position from deteriorating.

23 ... a5 (White was threatening 24 fe fe 25 b4 winning the e-pawn) 24 fe fe 25 ♜f1 ♜e8 26 a3 ♜e7 27 ♜cb5 ♜cd7 28 ♜d1 ♜ee8 (on 28 ... ♜e5 comes 29 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 30 ♜f3 recovering the piece and winning a pawn) 29 ♜c3 ♜e5 30 ♜h3! (highlighting the weakness of the e-pawn) 30 ... ♜f7 31 ♜f1 ♜cd8 32 ♜xf6+! ♜xf6 (after 32 ... gf 33 ♜h5+ gives a winning attack) 33 ♜f1+ ♜e7 34 ♜xe6 ♜c8 35 ♜d5+ ♜xd5 36 ed a4 37 ♜f4 ♜d8 38 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 39 ♜e6 ♜b7 40 ♜xe5 de 41 ♜f7+ 1-0.

Solution of Test 8

PLAN A: This is the right plan: you have to strike the right balance in attack (rook and bishop) and in defence (rook, king and knight).

The fall of the a-pawn will give you a material advantage which should be sufficient to guarantee the win. The weakness of the a-pawn, which you have been unable to exploit in the middle-game because of the demands of other strategic themes (White's attack on the kingside), becomes the dominating strategic factor in the ending.

PLAN B: This plan contains a correct idea but a rather artificial way of going about it. In this position, fixing the weakness by 23 ... a5 is not too logical because you prevent your own rooks from joining in the attack. This factor obliges you to intervene with your knight on the queen's wing thus leaving the kingside weaknesses more exposed. Which brings us to the point: you are making a serious error of judgement in thinking that White will be unable to exploit the weaknesses of the h-pawn and the g6 square. This unjustified confidence on your

part could lead you into the following nasty variation which you failed to allow for: 23 ... a5 24 ♜e2 ♜c8 25 ♜g6 ♜h8 26 ♜h2! and, faced with the threat of ♜g4 your plan will run aground because you cannot play 26 ... f5 because of 27 ♜f3! which immediately exploits the hole at e5.

PLAN C: You have not properly grasped the essence of this position. Your bishop isn't bad at all! It's the piece that leads to the win of the a-pawn and, further, firmly defends the e-pawn. If you leave the central pawn structure unchanged you have nothing to worry about, whereas disturbing the status quo merely helps White to fish in murky waters.

Let's have a look at the variation you have imagined: 23 ... ♜c6 24 ♜g6 ♜h8 25 ♜e2 e5?! 26 de! fe (as you will see, 26 ... ♜xe5 is practically forced, but this would leave your pawns loose and weak) and now White can utilise the following tactical possibility which you had not foreseen: 27 ♜d6 ♜e6 28 ♜xc6! bc 29 ♜xe5+ ♜f6 30 ♜xc6 after which Black's winning chances have

vanished into thin air.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 10 points

PLAN B: 5 points

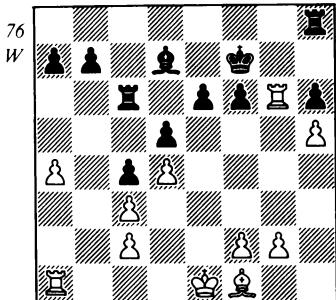
PLAN C: 2 points

Tactical points: 4 points if you saw White's correct line against Plan B (26 $\mathbb{Q}h2!$). 4 points if you saw White's exchange sacrifice against Plan C (28 $\mathbb{E}xc6!$).

Nicevski-Z.Nikolic

Yugoslav Ch 1981

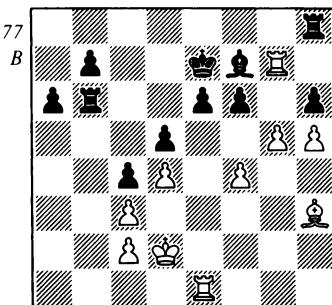
23 ... $\mathbb{E}fc8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{E}c6$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}g6$
 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 26 $\mathbb{E}xg6$ $\mathbb{E}h8$ (76)



Black has encountered no difficulties in carrying out his plan: the a-pawn's fate is sealed.

27 a5 (More resistance would have been offered by 27 $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{E}b6$ 28 $\mathbb{E}xb6$, as even after the fall of the a-pawn Black would have no passed pawns. Still, even then the

ending would be hopeless for White) 27 ... $\mathbb{E}a6$ 28 $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 29
 $g3$ $\mathbb{E}xa5$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{E}b5$ 31 $\mathbb{E}a1$ a6 32
 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 33 g4 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 34 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{E}b6$
35 f4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 36 $\mathbb{E}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 37 g5 (77)



White throws everything into a last-ditch attack and tries a desperate exchange sacrifice.

37 ... fg 38 fg $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 39 $\mathbb{E}xf7+$ (After 39 gh $\mathbb{E}xh6$, the h-pawn would be condemned too. The text move is an extreme attempt to destroy the rock-like central formation of black pawns.) 39 ... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 40 g6+ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ (by forcing the exchange of rooks, Black wins the ending easily) 42 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}xe1$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ $\mathbb{E}b5$ 44
 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{E}xh5$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{E}h3$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}f5$
 $\mathbb{E}xc3$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{E}g3$ 48 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ a5 49
 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ a4 50 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 51 c4 a3 52
 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 53 c5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 54 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{E}g2+$
55 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{E}b2+$ 56 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{E}b4$ 0-1.

Solution of Test 9

PLAN A: You haven't grasped the nature of the position and you are following an erroneous objective which helps your opponent's plans.

The advanced e-pawn, which gives White a space advantage especially on the kingside, and the weakened castled position of the black monarch, should have suggested to you the correct direction your attack should take. The queenside and c-file are Black's: he will try to exchange the heavy pieces along that file so as to draw the sting from your attack on the other wing.

In addition, your analyses are much too optimistic. After 19 $\mathbb{E}f2?$! $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 20 $\mathbb{E}c2$, your opponent can simply play 20 ... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ continuing his strategy of simplification. As you can see, this plan would simply lead into a minor piece ending which is certainly not your best bet as your bishop would remain out of the game for a long time.

PLAN B: Your meditations are correct: to force the position on the kingside you have to break up Black's pawns by f5. The blocked centre allows you to prepare this

thrust by mobilising your kingside pawns.

The fact that the knight on d4 prevents Black's heavyweights getting to the seventh is very important. Without it, Black's activity on the c-file would lead to the exchange of major pieces, thus taking the steam out of your attack.

PLAN C: You are pursuing the correct strategic idea (attack on the king's wing) but your implementation is faulty.

In your second line of analysis you have not considered what happens if Black refuses the sacrifice. Let's take a look: 19 f5 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 20 fg hg! 21 $\mathbb{W}xd3$ and now, even if you still have some hopes of continuing the attack, you have irremediably compromised your pawn structure. This would not have happened if you had prepared f5 with g4 as you will see in the actual game.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 2 points

PLAN B: 10 points

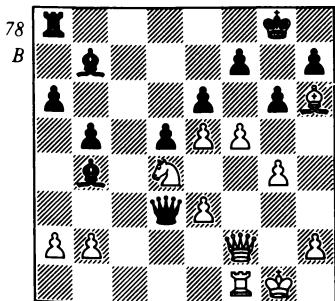
PLAN C: 6 points

Tactical points: 4 points if you saw Black's correct line against Plan C (20 ... hg!).

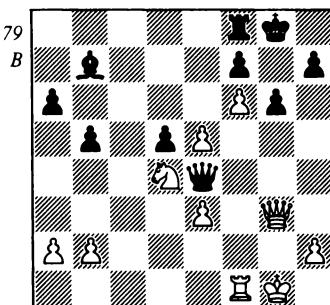
Euwe-Bogoljubow

Utrecht 1928-9

19 g4! $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ (against 19 ... f5 White would have been able to continue positionally with 20 gf ef, or dynamically with 20 ef $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}b1$, in each case with the clearly superior position for White) 20 $\mathbb{W}xd3 \mathbb{W}c4$ (As we will see, Black's idea is to centralise the queen via the b1-h7 diagonal. With hindsight, however, 20 $\mathbb{W}c7$, putting pressure on the e-pawn in order to hold up the f5 advance, would probably have made White's task more difficult) 21 $\mathbb{W}d2 \mathbb{Q}b4$ (21 ... $\mathbb{W}xa2?$ would put the black queen out of play and after 22 f5 White would have a winning attack. Nor does it help Black to eliminate the knight on d4 because after 21 ... $\mathbb{A}c5?$ 22 f5 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 23 ed White's position is crushing) 22 $\mathbb{W}f2 \mathbb{W}d3$ (22 ... $\mathbb{E}c8$ would be useless because c2 is controlled by the knight. With the text move Black is trying to worm his way



into White's territory and bring his queen over to defend the kingside) 23 f5! (78). White has accomplished his plan: now the pressure on the f-file and f7 in particular obliges Black to defend. 23 ... $\mathbb{W}e4$ 24 $\mathbb{W}g3$ (defending the points e5 and g4 and threatening fe) 24 ... ef 25 gf $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{E}xf8$ 27 f6! (79)



This shows very clearly the importance of involving the g-pawn; the two advanced white pawns play an essential role in this position. The threat now is $\mathbb{W}g5-h6$. 27 ... h5 (or 27 ... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 28 e6 and wins) 28 $\mathbb{W}g5 \mathbb{W}g4+$ (after 28 ... $\mathbb{W}h7$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ forces Black to exchange queens and his position would be hopeless) 29 $\mathbb{W}xg4$ hg 30 e6! $\mathbb{Q}h7$ (after 30 ... fe there would follow 31 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{E}f7$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ $\mathbb{E}d7$ 33 f7+ and wins) 31 e7 $\mathbb{E}e8$ 32 $\mathbb{E}c1$ (not immediately 32 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ because of 32 ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$) 32 ... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}e6!$ 1-0.

Solution of Test 10

PLAN A: This is correct because it represents the simplest, most direct strategic line to exploit your advantage in development.

White's pieces are bottled up on the queenside and his castled position, weakened by the advance h3, is in the firing line of the black pieces. Thus the most logical strategy is to attack the castled position when White is not yet ready to defend it. White's manoeuvres to unravel his position are fairly cumbersome and by creating continuous threats you can slow down his development and capture the initiative. The game continuation is an instructive example of this type of strategy.

PLAN B: This plan is too daring as it commits Black to playing all his cards in the attack on the king so as not to pay the penalty for his inferior pawn structure in the ending. In this position Black is already a little better and there is no need to damage your pawn structure. This apart, we should confirm that your strategic remarks on the doubling of the central pawns are correct: in principle doubled pawns of this type give Black a better middlegame because

he cuts White off from his targets d5 and f5 and, by opening up the f-file, adds dynamism to the black position. In an ending from this position White would have the better game, but he cannot easily exploit the debility of the black pawns.

White must not take this plan lightly as it is more insidious than appears at first sight, e.g. 11 ... ♕e6 12 ♕xe6 fe?? 13 ♜c4 ♜d7 14 ♜e3 (if 14 ♜g5 ♜f7 with the idea of continuing ... ♜h5, after which Black's attack becomes really dangerous) 14 ... b5 15 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 16 ♜e3 ♜f4 with chances for both sides.

PLAN C: It is very difficult for Black to gain control of the d-file and make something of the weakness at d3. In fact you have failed to consider that the bishop can easily counter occupation of the diagonal f1-a6. Let's see: 11 ... b6 12 a4! ♜a6 13 ♜c4 and now, to avoid the exchange on a6, which would disrupt the action of your rooks, you yourself would have to swap, e.g. 13 ... ♜xc4 14 ♜xc4 ♜ad8 15 ♜g5 h6 16 ♜h4 and White has solved all his problems as he can fight down the d-file

without difficulty or increase the pressure against the e-pawn by ♜g3.

Such a plan is much more effective in cases where the white king's bishop has been fianchettoed for then the white-squared bishops can only be exchanged at the cost of a potentially serious weakening of the castled position.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 10 points

PLAN B: 3 points

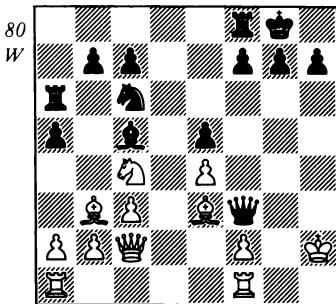
PLAN C: 3 points

Tactical points: No tactical points awarded in this test.

Psakhis-Chekov

USSR Ch 1980

11 ... ♜h5! 12 ♜c4 ♜f6 13 ♜h2??
(Too passive a defence, giving Black a free hand. White should have tried 13 ♜a4!? with the idea of answering 13 ... ♜xh3 with 14 ♜xc6. However, after 13 ♜a4!? ♜e6! Black's position would have been very promising) 13 ... ♜f4 14 ♜e3 (If 14 ♜xf4 ♜xf4+ 15 ♜g1 ♜xh3 etc. Having achieved his aim of getting the knight to f4, Black unleashes a crushing combination against the opponent's king.) 14 ... ♜xg2! 15 ♜xg2 (forced, because after 15 ♜xc5? ♜xf3 it's curtains for White) 15 ... ♜xh3+ 16 ♜xh3 ♜xf3+ 17 ♜h2 ♜a6!! (80)



White's position is critical because the rook's intervention on the third rank gives new vigour to the attack. If now 18 ♜xc5? ♜d4! and wins.

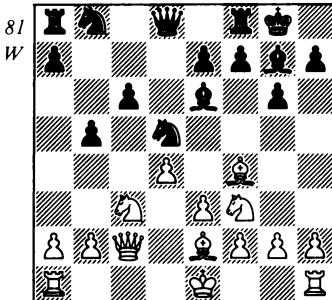
18 ♜d1 ♜xe4 19 ♜g1 (there is nothing better, e.g. 19 ♜h5 ♜xe3 20 fe ♜d8! 21 ♜g1 a4 22 ♜g4 ♜h6 and Black regains his sacrificed material with interest, or 19 ♜xc5 ♜d4 20 ♜h5 ♜f3+ with a winning attack) 19 ... ♜h4+! (Black must continue precisely, e.g. not 19 ... ♜xe3 20 ♜xe3 ♜d4 21 ♜g4 ♜h6+ 22 ♜g3 ♜f5+ 23 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 and for White the worst is over) 20 ♜g2 ♜d4 (threatening 21 ... ♜g6+ 22 ♜f1 ♜h3+ etc) 21 cd ed! 22 ♜g5 (the last attempt to parry the threat of ... ♜g6+ followed by ... ♜h3+) 22 ... ♜xg5+ 23 ♜f1 ♜f5 24 ♜c2 ♜h3+ (a pity, since 24 ... d3, deciding immediately, would have been the appropriate end to this fine game) 25 ♜g2 ♜f6 26 ♜d3 (if 26 ♜g4 ♜xg4 27 ♜xg4 d3 and wins) 26 ... ♜f3 27 ♜xh7+ ♜xh7 28 ♜xh7+ ♜xh7 29 ♜e1 0-1.

Second Series
Tests 11-20

Test 11

Grünfeld Defence

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5 4 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c6
5 e3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 6 $\mathbb{W}b3$ 0-0 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ dc
8 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ b5 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 10 $\mathbb{W}c2$
 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (81)



White to play: select your plan

Plan A: Occupy the Weak Square c5

From my analysis of the position I deduce that the main weaknesses in the black structure are the backward, fixed c-pawn on the open file, and the weak square c5 which here is also the fixing square of the c6 pawn. For his part, Black is threatening ... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ which would seriously damage my pawn configuration. Nor do I like the idea of wasting time withdrawing my bishop from f4 in order to parry this threat.

I decide, therefore, to play 11 $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ for the following reasons: 1) I must not waste a tempo warding off Black's threat; 2) I

eliminate the knight on b8, the c-pawn's defender; 3) later on, the knight on b8 could have contested c5, making lasting occupation of this square more difficult. After 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ I will take immediate steps to occupy c5 by $\mathbb{Q}e4-c5$. The game will presumably continue: 12 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ (Black must defend his c-pawn which is now being attacked by my queen) 13 $\mathbb{Q}c5$, and my position is definitely superior. As the game goes on I will have plenty of time to organise my attack against the c-pawn.

Plan B: Gaining Control of the Centre

As Black's seventh move (7 ... dc) released his grip on the important central square e4, I think the strategic plan that best enters into the spirit of the position is to take control of the centre by e4. After this thrust Black will probably exchange knights (... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$) and after bc I will have strengthened the point d4 which had been weakened somewhat by e4. Before I can implement this plan I must move my bishop on f4 which is under attack from the knight and so I decide to play 11 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ preparing to continue with e4.

A plausible follow-up might be: 11 ... ♜a5 12 0-0 (not immediately 12 e4 ♖xc3 13 bc c5 and Black has counterplay) 12 ... ♖d7 13 e4 ♖xc3 14 bc and White has control of the centre. Only in the event of 11 b4 12 ♜a4 will my aims become identical to those of Plan A (weakness of c5 and the c-pawn).

Plan C: Exploitation of Development by Gaining Central Control or Opening the c-file

As in Plan A, I don't want to waste a tempo withdrawing my queen's bishop but at the same time I'm not too happy about giving up bishop for knight. I think I have a slight advantage in development and I believe I can convert this into a lasting initiative by changing Black's strategic structure.

I decide to play 11 ♖xd5,

which implies two different game plans depending on whether Black retakes with a piece or a pawn:

1) In the event of 11 ... ♖xd5 (11 ... ♜a5 is more or less the same) I want to continue with 12 e4. I will thus achieve the aim of Plan B without having to remove the bishop from f4 and, in addition, having kept open the file on which the weak pawn lies. The reply 12 ... ♜a5+ is refuted by 13 ♖d2 which wins a piece.

2) If 11 ... cd, I will have created a strategic element of primary importance – the open c-file. I believe I will be able to exploit this element because it will be easy to get my rooks to work together and to create pressure against the b-pawn. After 11 ... cd 12 0-0 (not 12 ♖xb5? ♜a5+ etc) 12 ... ♜b6 13 ♜b3 I will beat my opponent to the control of the c-file.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

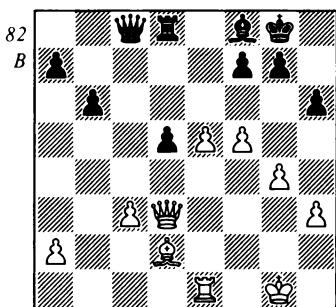
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 12

Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ed cd 4 c4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 e6 6 ♘f3 ♘e7 7 cd ed 8 ♘d3 ♘c6 9 h3 0-0 10 0-0 ♘e6 11 ♘e3 ♘c8 12 ♘e2 ♘b4 13 ♘b1 ♘e4 14 ♘c1 ♘xc3 15 ♘xc3 ♘xc3 16 bc ♘c6 17 ♘d3 ♘c8 18 ♘c1 ♘a3 19 ♘b1 b6 20 ♘c2 h6 21 ♘e1 ♘d6 22 ♘d2 ♘d8 23 ♘b1 ♘f8 24 ♘c2 ♘e7 25 ♘h4 ♘c6 26 f4 ♘d7 27 ♘f3 ♘c8 28 ♘e5 ♘f5 29 g4 ♘xd3 30 ♘xd3 ♘c6 31 f5 ♘xe5 32 de (82)



Black to play: select your plan

Plan A: Break Open the Centre to Exploit the Exposed Position of White's King

Thanks to the pawns on e5 and f5, White exerts considerable pressure on the kingside. However, his king's position is weak because all the pawns that should be protecting it are walking all the way up the board. I decide to use this factor to begin some counter-

play: my idea is to burst through the centre and penetrate into enemy territory with my heavy pieces.

I play 32 .. d4 with the threat of continuing 33 ... dc 34 ♘xc3 ♘xc3 35 ♘xc3 ♘d3 when I would win the h-pawn. After the likely response 33 cd, I expect to achieve my goal by playing 33 ... ♘xd4 because the rook cannot be taken on account of the skewer ... ♘c5.

The opening of the c- and d-files and the long diagonal h1-a8 make the position of the white king even more vulnerable. I consider I have good prospects, even in the ending because I have the queenside pawn majority.

Plan B: Simplify to the Ending

I think I can bring about a favourable ending by exchanging queens. I play 32 ... ♘c4 and calculate that after 33 ♘xc4 dc the altered pawn structure gives me some advantage for the following reasons:

- 1) My rook on d8 is more active than the rook on e1 because it dominates the only open file and can easily penetrate the opponent's territory.
- 2) The queenside pawn majority will quickly give me a passed pawn far from the white king.
- 3) I can easily use my bishop to

block the passed pawn that White can obtain by e6. Further, the proximity of my king neutralises a lot of the danger.

4) White does not have time to close the d-file by placing his bishop on d4 because he would lose his h-pawn, e.g. 33 ♕xc4 dc 34 ♜e3 ♘d3 35 ♜d4 ♘xh3 etc.

Only if White refuses to exchange queens will my objective become the same as in Plan A, e.g. 33 ♕f3 d4, leading to the opening of the centre.

Plan C: Stop the Advance of the White Pawns

White threatens to create a dangerous passed pawn by means of e6, and before commencing counterplay I want to halt the advance of the white pawns. In fact, I don't think it's a good idea to alter the structure of the central

pawns on d5 and c3 because I think that White's c-pawn could well become a good target, especially in view of the advance e6 which would allow me to place my king's bishop on f6.

With these considerations in mind, I decide to play 32 ... ♜e7 and I have calculated the following possibilities:

- 1) 33 e6 ♜f6 34 e7 (if 34 ef+ ♜xf7 the white pawns are neutralised and my position is sound) 34 ... ♜e8 35 ♕xd5 ♘xe7 and my opponent's pawn structure is very weak.
- 2) 33 f6 ♜c5+ (33 ... gf 34 ♜xh6 would be too risky) 34 ♜g2 g5 getting ready to continue with ... ♜e6. In this variation also the fixed centre is favourable to me: the e-pawn is seriously weakened and my opponent cannot attempt 35 h4 because of 35 ... ♕xg4+.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

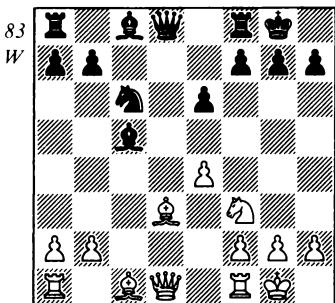
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 13

QGD Tarrasch Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♜c3 ♜f6 4 ♜f3 c5
5 cd ♜xd5 6 e3 ♜c6 7 ♜d3 ♜e7
8 0-0 0-0 9 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 10 e4 ♜d8
11 dc ♜xc5 (83)



White to play: select your plan

Plan A: Occupy the Open c- and d-files

The symmetrical pawn structure does not guarantee me the slightest advantage in the endgame. This is why Black threatens to simplify the position by ... ♜b4 which would force me to accept the exchange of queens. I consider that the principal strategic theme of this position is the presence of the open c- and d-files which I can utilise more rapidly than my opponent, given the easier development of the bishop on c1 compared to the bishop on c8.

On the basis of these con-

siderations, I decide to avoid the queen exchange by 12 ♜e2. This move permits the immediate activation of the rook on f1 on the d-file. My idea is to occupy the two open files as quickly as possible so as to achieve more active piece development than my opponent. Against 12 ... ♜b4 I intend to play 13 ♜c4 getting ready to act on the d-file or push back Black's pieces (a3 and b4) with gain of time.

Plan B: Hinder the Development of the Bishop on c8

Here too I think I can obtain an advantage from occupying the open c- and d-files but, unlike Plan A, I consider that in spite of the symmetrical pawn structure, the exchange of queens is nothing to worry about because I can obtain a definite advantage in development. I can, quite simply, get my heavy pieces into play more easily than Black because the bishop on c8 is hemmed in by its own pawns.

To prevent Black opening the c8-h3 diagonal by ... e5, I decide to play 12 ♜f4 and calculate that in the event of 12 ... ♜b4 13 ♜e2 ♜xd1 14 ♜fxd1 Black would be

seriously behind in trying to counter my occupation of the open files. The threat to simplify the position is thus only an apparent one as Black first has to solve the problem of getting his queen's bishop into the game. He will probably have to fall back on a fianchetto development by 12 ... b6, though this weakens the cover on the c-file provided by the knight on c6.

Plan C: Gain a Space Advantage and then Attack the King

The symmetry of the pawn structure does not prevent me obtaining a considerable space advantage by playing 12 e5. This thrust lays the foundations for an attack against the black king and creates the immediate threat of the

thematic bishop sacrifice on h7. This prevents Black trying to simplify with 12 ... ♜b4, e.g. 13 ♜xh7+ ♕xh7 14 ♜g5+ ♕g6 (if 14 ... ♕g8 15 ♜h5 with a winning attack) 15 ♜g4 with a very strong attack.

So as not to weaken his castled position, Black will probably defend by 12 ... ♜e7 on which I intend to continue 13 ♜e2 in order to increase the pressure on the kingside by ♜e4. The purpose of this manoeuvre is to force my opponent to weaken his king's position. I thus exploit the manoeuvring space gained by the advance e5, and I avoid an exchange of queens down the d-file. As in Plan B, Black will find it hard to get his queen's bishop into action.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

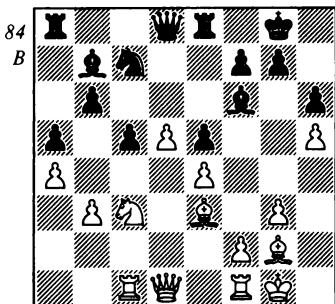
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 14

Queen's Indian Defence

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ b6 4 g3 $\mathbb{Q}a6$
5 b3 $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$
8 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ 0-0 9 0-0 c5 10 d5 ed 11 $\mathbb{Q}g5$
 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 12 cd d6 13 e4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 h4 $\mathbb{Q}c7$
15 a4 h6 16 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$
18 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 20 h5
 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ de 22 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ a5 23
 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (84)



Black to play: select your plan

Plan A: Blockade the Passed Pawn with the Bishop

I consider that the most urgent business is to blockade the passed d-pawn, and therefore decide to play 23 ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ with the idea of continuing with ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$. After setting up the blockade, I intend to get some counterplay on the queenside thanks to my pawn majority there. My idea is to prepare the advance ... b5 (e.g. by ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$) after first defending c5 by

... $\mathbb{W}e7$.

White will probably attempt to force the situation on the kingside by pushing the f-pawn. I think I can stem this attack playing ... f6 when necessary. I analyse some possible developments: 24 f4 (24 $\mathbb{W}g4$ with the threat of $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ is answered by 24 ... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ because the white queen cannot stay on the g-file) 24 ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 25 $\mathbb{W}g4$ (25 fe $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ easily blockading d6 and e5 is no good for White) 25 ... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 26 f5 $\mathbb{Q}h8$, followed by ... f6 after which I can begin some counterplay on the queenside.

Plan B: Blockade the Passed Pawn with the Knight

Here too I want to blockade the passed pawn but instead using the knight on c7 as the blockader. I play 23 ... $\mathbb{N}f8$ to free e8 and prepare the transfer ... $\mathbb{N}e8-d6$. Having reached this position, my knight will be usefully employed in generating counterplay – according to circumstances – either on the kingside (... f5) or queenside (preparing ... c4 and ... b5).

Reaction via ... f5 will help to weaken the white d-pawn as well as open the f-file thus trying to

exploit the weakness of White's castled position. On the other hand, counterplay with ... c4 and ... b5 will have the effect of freeing the a-pawn which could prove useful, especially in an ending.

I envisage a possible continuation: 24 f4 (if 24 d6 ♜e6 and the knight can go to the excellent square d4) 24 ... ♜e8 25 ♜g4 (25 fe ♜xe5 leaves White with many weaknesses on the kingside) 25 ... ♜c8 26 f5 ♜h8 preparing to complete the blockading manoeuvre by ... ♜d6.

Plan C: Get Rid of the Bad Bishop

Unlike the two previous plans, I don't think that the blockade of the passed pawn is the most compelling factor in this position because if it were pushed I would be able to occupy the weak square d4 with my knight (... ♜e6-

d4). I think it is more important to get rid of my bad bishop which could be a big problem in the endgame. As the immediate try 23 ... ♜g5 is refuted by 24 f4, I decide to play the intermediate move 23 ... ♜a6 to force White to move his rook to e1. This finesse will enable me to force the exchange of dark-squared bishops. I calculate as follows: 24 ♜e1 ♜g5 25 f4 ef 26 gf ♜h4 27 ♜f2 ♜xf2+ 28 ♜xf2 ♜h4+ and, to save his f-pawn, White would have to bring his king out to e3. To prevent this continuation my opponent would have to play 24 ♜e2 worsening the position of his pieces. He will probably decide to forego the advance f4 and accept the exchange of bishops in which case I have achieved my aim.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

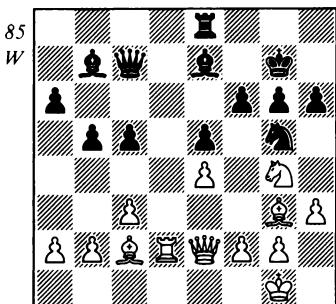
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 15

Ruy Lopez

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 $\mathbb{E}e1$ b5 7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ d6 8
c3 0-0 9 h3 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 10 d4 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 11
 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f1$
 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 15 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ c5 16 de de
17 $\mathbb{Q}3h2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 18 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}e3$
g6 20 $\mathbb{E}ad1$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 21 $\mathbb{E}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22
 $\mathbb{E}ed2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}hg4$ $\mathbb{Q}8h7$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}g3$
 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 25 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{E}xd2$ 26 $\mathbb{E}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$
27 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ f6 (85)



White to play: select your plan

Plan A: Occupation of the Weak Square d5

I consider that in this position the only strategic elements of any importance are the open d-file and the weak square d5. Black already threatens to challenge control of the d-file by ... $\mathbb{E}d8$ when an exchange of rooks would ease his defensive task. In order to prevent simplification by way of these exchanges I think it is necessary to occupy the square d5 by $\mathbb{Q}e3$ -d5.

However, 28 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ is not possible because of 28 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$. And if 28 f3 $\mathbb{E}d8$ allows Black to at least exchange rooks.

I therefore decide to solve the problem of the attack against the e-pawn by chasing away the knight on g5 with 28 h4. This move also pursues another idea: when Black has moved his knight I intend to continue with 29 h5 undermining the pawn on g6. This will lead to a general weakening of the white squares in my opponent's territory, particularly of f5. I calculate that one possible continuation could be: 28 h4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (I would also follow up with 29 h5 against 28 ... $\mathbb{Q}f7$) 29 h5 g5 (29 ... gh 30 $\mathbb{Q}e3$, or 29 ... $\mathbb{E}d8$ 30 hg are even worse for Black) 30 $\mathbb{Q}e3$, with occupation of d5 to come.

Plan B: Prepare a Central Breakthrough

Here too I want to prevent heavy piece simplification, but I think that purpose is best achieved by setting my opponent a more urgent problem. In short, my idea is a central breakthrough by f4.

I decide to play 28 $\mathbb{W}e3$ and calculate that Black cannot counter my plan by 28 ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ because of the pressure on his h-pawn. If 28 ... $\mathbb{E}d8$ 29 $\mathbb{E}xd8$ $\mathbb{W}xd8$ 30 f4 ef

31 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ and my future looks rosy. Also, should Black decide to counter with 28 ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ then he would not be able to simplify down the d-file, and after 29 h4 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ I will be able to prepare f4 by $\mathbb{Q}d1-f1$. Thus I consider that Black's best reply is 28 h5. However, after 29 h4 (necessary to prevent the knight retreating to e6) 29 ... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ (if 29 ... hg 30 hg fg Black's pawn structure is in ruins despite being a pawn up) 30 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ and I am threatening f4 again.

Plan C: Increase Piece Mobility by Sacrificing the Exchange

I consider that the action of my bishops is practically neutralised by the pawn structure and not even the heavy pieces are getting much joy out of the d-file. To increase my piece mobility and exploit the tactical opportunities created by the bishop-queen vis-a-

vis on the h2-b8 diagonal, I decide to sacrifice the exchange by 28 $\mathbb{Q}d5$. This move contains the immediate threat of 29 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$, so an attempt to decline the sacrifice by 28 ... h5 is refuted by 29 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ hg 30 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ etc. Presumably, Black will continue with 28 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ and after 29 ed I think I have excellent attacking prospects on the kingside thanks to the clearing of the b1-h7 diagonal and the possibility of pushing the h-pawn deep into the enemy position.

My sacrifice is not only compensated by these dynamic factors for I also get a positional plus too, in the form of a passed pawn on d5. The closing of the only open file prevents Black getting into the game quickly with his rook. According to my analysis, the most plausible line is: 28 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 29 ed $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 30 h4 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 31 h5 with very good chances.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

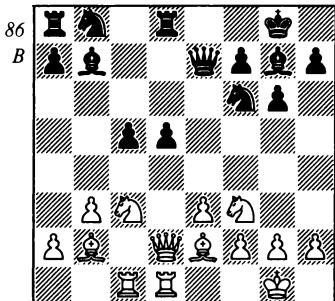
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 16

Reversed Réti

1 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 2 b3 b6 3 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 4 e3
5 d4 g6 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 7 0-0 0-0
8 c4 e6 9 dc bc 10 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 11 $\mathbb{W}d2$
 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ d5 13 cd ed
14 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ (86)



Black to play: select your plan

Plan A: Central Breakthrough with a Pawn Sacrifice

I believe the dominant strategic theme of this position is the presence of hanging pawns in my pawn structure. This configuration gives me greater control of the centre and a marked space advantage, strategic elements which I want to exploit in the middlegame. It also seems to me that the position abounds in tactical elements. Two important examples: 1) the placing of the queen on d2 and rook on d1 on the c1-h6 diagonal which can readily be occupied by my king's bishop; 2) the opposition of rook and queen,

in my favour, on the d-file.

Combining the strategic with the tactical element, I decide to effect a central breakthrough by means of a pawn sacrifice. I play 14 ... d4 and after the probable reply 15 ed I intend to continue with 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$, threatening both ... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ and the recovery of the d-pawn. My analysis shows that White's best defence is 16 $\mathbb{W}f4$ so as to answer 16 ... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ simply by 17 $\mathbb{W}xg4$. However, after 16 $\mathbb{W}f4$ h5 (again threatening ... $\mathbb{Q}h6$) I consider my position to be tactically very promising and I think I can exploit the precarious placing of some of the white pieces, e.g. the queen on f4, the rook on c1 and the bishop on e2.

Plan B: Prepare a Central Breakthrough

As in Plan A, I want to take advantage of my hanging pawns, and the tactical elements present in the position, principally in the middlegame. Here, too, I want to make the push ... d4 but I consider it better to prepare this by completing my development. To guarantee my control over the diagonal c1-h6, I play 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ with the intention of completing the development of the knight on b8 to be followed as soon as possible by the thrust ... d4.

I think the most logical continuation for White is to organise pressure against the hanging pawns by 15 $\mathbb{Q}a4$. This, however, allows me to gain control of e4 with gain of time (15 ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$) and then develop my queen's knight on d7 or c6 depending on whether White has put his queen on c2 or a5. In either event I will follow up with the thrust ... d4.

If White tries to stop this plan, he will have to worsen the position of his pieces, e.g. 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ with a position I consider better for Black.

Plan C: Finish Developing Without Impairing the Structure of the Hanging Pawns

Unlike Plans A and B, I consider that occupation of the c1-h6 diagonal is not an important tactical element and my king's bishop is already busy controlling

the long diagonal a1-h8. I think the most important thing at the moment is to complete my development and get my queen's knight and queen's rook into the game.

Rather than 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$, I decide to play 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ in order to get the most out of the space advantage provided by my hanging pawns. I calculate that White cannot initiate pressure against the c-pawn by 15 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ because of 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ (if 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and White is in trouble, e.g. 17 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$) 16 ... de 17 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 18 ed $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ winning a pawn. My opponent will probably continue 15 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ but then I can gain a tempo by attacking the white queen: 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ and now 17 ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ or 17 ... $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ look like good continuations. Without prematurely altering the structure of the hanging pawns, I can play according to circumstances ... d4 or ... c4.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

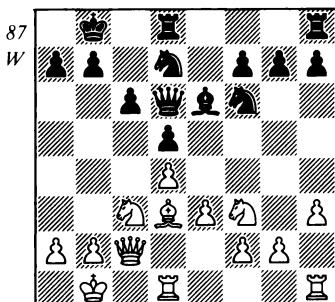
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 17

QGD Exchange

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 4 $\mathbb{Q}c3$
5 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 5 cd ed 6 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c6 7 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$
8 h3 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 10 e3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$
11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 12 0-0-0 0-0-0 13
 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ (87)



White to play: select your plan

Plan A: Minority Attack

This position presents the typical pawn structure that allows White to launch a minority attack and, in spite of both sides having castled long, I decide that this should be my plan.

Generally speaking, I intend to prepare my attack as follows:

- 1) Move my king to a1 for safety reasons and free b1.
- 2) Put my rooks on b1 and c1, for it is down these two files that the pressure of the heavy pieces will be exerted.
- 3) Make the thrust b4 and prepare

b5 by fixing Black's c-pawn with $\mathbb{Q}a4$.

So I play 14 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ and I consider that Black can undertake nothing in the way of preventive defence on the queen's wing (e.g. ... b5 followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ -c4) until I have actually played b4. Nor can my opponent open up the centre as he lacks suitable breakthrough moves. I therefore conclude that a minority attack will assure me of the initiative.

Plan B: Gain Control of the Centre

I think the position is substantially balanced as neither side has any real weaknesses. To break the equilibrium I decide to form a plan aimed at gaining control of the centre by means of the pawn thrusts f3 and e4. My idea is to force Black to make the exchange

de so that I can then gain control of the centre after fe. As implementation of this plan would open up the game and make the pawn structure even more asymmetrical, I decide (with a view to the ending) to enhance my bishop by depriving Black of its counterpart.

I therefore play 14 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ so as to free f3 and swap off the bishop on

e6. Black cannot avoid this exchange nor has he the time to organise the counter advance ... f5 because after 14 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ his knight on f6 is temporarily tied to the defence of the h-pawn. I calculate a likely continuation: 14 ... h6 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 16 $\mathbb{B}h1$ $\mathbb{B}he8$ 17 f3 getting ready to play e4.

Plan C: Pressure on the Kingside

Unlike Plan A, I consider that the fact that both players have castled long mean that both have mobile pawns on the kingside. However, at the moment I do not have a concrete target of attack. To create it, I decide to induce

Black to alter his pawn structure by ... g6.

I play 14 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ threatening to trap the bishop on e6 by f4-f5. In all probability Black will answer with 14 ... g6 permitting me to prepare the opening of a file on the kingside by f4-f5 (maybe backed up by g4). The unhappy position of Black's bishop coupled with the space advantage I can easily win on the king's wing should guarantee the initiative for me. I am well aware that implementation of this plan will lead to a weakening of my e-pawn but I think the fight for the initiative is the most important strategic element in this case.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

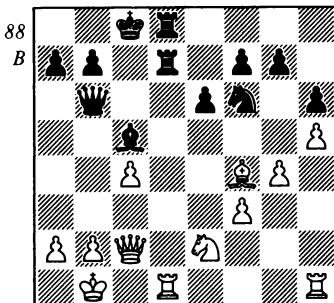
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 18

Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ de 4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$
 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}df6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}2g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$
7 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 9 h4 h6 10
 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ e6 11 h5 $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 13
 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 14 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b1$
0-0-0 16 f3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18 g4
 $\mathbb{Q}hd8$ 19 c4 c5 20 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 21 dc
 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ (88)



Black to play: select your plan

Plan A: Weaken the Black Squares

My pawn configuration seems more compact and less vulnerable than White's whose chain f3-g4-h5 is rigid and whose f-pawn could become a clear objective of attack. For this reason I think I have good chances in the ending, providing I manage to penetrate enemy territory and undermine the f-pawn. I think I can achieve my aim by arranging an exchange of bishops in order to weaken the dark squares and use them as an access route for my

queen.

I therefore play 22 ... $\mathbb{Q}e3$, threatening ... $\mathbb{Q}d2$, and I have calculated the following variations:

- 1) 23 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ with the twin threat of ... $\mathbb{Q}d2$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$.
- 2) 23 c5 $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ winning a pawn.
- 3) 23 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ realising my plan.
- 4) 23 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 24 c5 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (not 24 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ or 24 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$) 25 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ recovering the piece and holding on to an extra pawn. At this point I am not worried about White pushing the c-pawn, e.g. 26 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 27 c6 bc 28 $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ and my king will be safe on e7.

Plan B: Gain Control of the d-file

I consider the dominating strategic element of this position to be the open d-file. But just doubling the rooks is not sufficient to ensure control of the file for White threatens to simply deflate the pressure by exchanging all the rooks.

Following these reflections I decide to play 22 ... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ setting up the tactical threat of ... $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ and the strategic threat of continuing with the threat e5 taking permanent possession of d4. White will probably continue with 23

$\mathbb{Q}xd4$ but after 23 ... $\mathbb{E}xd4$ 24 $\mathbb{E}xd4$ (not 24 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{E}xd1+$ winning the bishop) 24 ... $\mathbb{W}xd4$ I have won control of the d-file. In this variation I also note that Black is left with queen and knight against queen and bishop, a generally favourable element and particularly significant here because White cannot defend his kingside pawns with his bishop.

If 22 ... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 23 c5, I intend to continue 23 ... $\mathbb{W}c6$ abandoning the tactical idea (... $\mathbb{Q}xb2$) but persisting with the same strategic ones (the advance ... e5 or control of the d-file).

Plan C: Fix and Occupy the Weak Square d4

In this position I consider all my pieces to be active except the knight on f6 since the white pawn structure limits its mobility.

Accordingly, I decide to formulate a plan designed to improve the position of the knight. The idea is to fix the weak square d4 by means of ... e5 (if necessary supported by ... f6) and work my knight to d4 via e6. My pawn structure will thus shut off the action of the white bishop on the h2-b8 diagonal.

To implement this plan I decide to play 22 ... $\mathbb{W}c6$ attacking the f-pawn. After 23 $\mathbb{E}xd7$ (forced because otherwise there is no satisfactory way to defend f3) I intend to continue with 23 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ preparing the advance ... e5. I analyse that White cannot parry my idea, e.g.:

- 1) 24 $\mathbb{E}f1$ e5 25 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ f6 preparing to continue with ... $\mathbb{Q}f8-e6-d4$;
- 2) 24 $\mathbb{W}c3$ e5 25 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 26 f4 (forced because of the undefended position of the knight) 26 ... f6 27 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ and the bishop is trapped.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

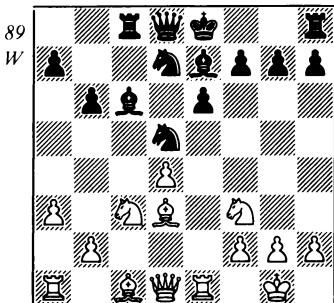
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 19

Queen's Indian Defence

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ b6 4 a3 c5 5 e3 cd 6 ed d5 7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8 cd $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 11 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ (89)



White to play: select your plan

Plan A: Prepare a Kingside Attack

The isolated white d-pawn gives Black the better pawn structure in an ending, but it is favourable to White in the middlegame because it brings with it a certain space advantage and control of the important central square e5. Black's counterplay will be based on the c- and d-files and will look to simplify the position as much as possible. However, I don't think he can pursue this strategy mindlessly. For example, the exchange ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ would not be favourable to him after bc for the white d-pawn would be reinforced and d5 could in future be controlled by

White after c4. At this precise moment, though, the exchange of knights is a real threat because of the continuation 13 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 14 bc $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ winning a pawn.

With the foregoing ideas in mind, I decide to prepare an attack on the kingside seeing as Black will be obliged to castle short. I play 13 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ getting ready to train my guns on the diagonal b1-h7 by $\mathbb{Q}d3$. I calculate a possible continuation: 13 ... 0-0 (13 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 14 bc $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ would now be advantageous to White) 14 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (14 ... g6 considerably weakens Black's castled position) 15 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ with a promising position.

Plan B: Gain Control of the c-file

In view of the fact that Black still has to castle, I think I have a slight advantage in development which could affect the speed with which I get my rooks into communication compared to my opponent. I also glimpse the chance of controlling the opposition square c8 on the open file by $\mathbb{Q}a6$. These ideas suggest I should avoid the exchange $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ because, notwithstanding the strategic considerations of Plan A, as far as I'm

concerned its main effect would be to close the c-file.

I decide to develop a plan whose purpose is to win control of the open file. I play 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ and after the likely recapture 13 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$, I want to continue with 14 $\mathbb{Q}a6$. Black will then be unable to keep his rook on the file because the move 14 ... $\mathbb{R}c7$ would enable me to develop with gain of tempo by 15 $\mathbb{Q}f4$.

The speed with which I can get my rooks working together, plus control of c8, guarantee my future domination of the file – an excellent line of penetration into the opponent's territory.

Plan C: Force Black to Cede the Bishop Pair

As in Plan B, I do not want to allow Black to close the open file and I consider that the weakness of my opponent's white squares

on the queen's wing could become even more pronounced if I obliged him to exchange his queen's bishop for a knight. I think I can achieve this by playing 13 $\mathbb{Q}b5$. This move, which threatens a fork at a7, forces Black to give up the bishop pair because the reply 13 ... $a5$ would, after 14 $\mathbb{Q}a7$, lead to the same result. The elimination of Black's queen's bishop increases the power of my king's bishop and, consequently, my attacking chances on the white squares on both sides of the board. Black's queen's bishop also exerts annoying pressure against my castled position.

I calculate that the most plausible continuation is: 13 ... $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ (threatening $\mathbb{Q}e5$) 14 ... 0-0 15 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{R}c7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ with the idea of continuing with $\mathbb{R}a1$. I consider that my position is superior as moving the knight would give me control of e5.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

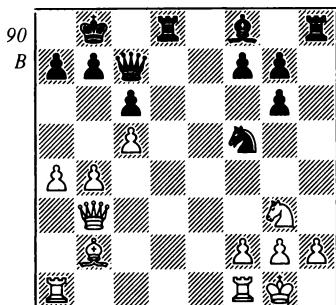
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 20

Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ de 4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$
 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}d3$
e6 8 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 9 c4 0-0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ hg
11 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 12 b4 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b3$
 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14 a4 e5 15 de $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$
 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 18 c5 (90)



Black to play: select your plan

Plan A: Counterattack on the h-file

I think the dominating strategic theme in this position is the fact that castling has taken place on opposite wings. Whereas White has yet to get in his breakthrough b5, I already have a file open on the enemy king. To take advantage of this element I decide to strengthen my attack on the kingside by transferring my queen to the h-file with ... $\mathbb{Q}f4-h4$. My purpose is to force the opponent to weaken his castled position with h3 so as to get something

concrete out of my pressure on the knight on g3.

I play 18 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ and analyse some possible variations:

- 1) 19 b5 (attempting to seize the initiative) 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ (if 20 fg $\mathbb{Q}xc5+$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}xh2+$ and mate next move; or 20 hg $\mathbb{Q}h6$ with unstoppable mate) 20 ... $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 21 hg $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ or 21 ... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ with a favourable position for Black.
- 2) 19 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ and the inevitable fall of the c-pawn solves the last problem of the bishop's development.
- 3) 19 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ realising the plan.

Plan B: Simplify to the Ending

Notwithstanding the opposite castled positions, I consider that the pawn structure is favourable to me in an endgame. White's pawns on the queenside are in fact very advanced and are particularly vulnerable on their fourth rank. The only really active white piece is the bishop on b2 considering that the knight on g3 is tied to the protection of the h-pawn.

I decide to provoke the exchange of the bishop on b2 for my knight by playing 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}d4$. White will

find it difficult to hang on to his bishop because his queen does not have any good square, e.g. 19 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ and wins; 19 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{E}h4$ with the threat of ... $\mathbb{Q}f3+$; 19 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xc7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 22 $f6$ and the ending favours Black because of the debilitated white pawn structure. My opponent will therefore probably continue with 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ and after 19 ... $\mathbb{E}xd4$ I intend to increase the pressure on the b-pawn by ... $\mathbb{E}hh4$, e.g. 20 $\mathbb{E}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21 $\mathbb{E}ad1$ $\mathbb{E}hh4$. I consider that heavy piece exchanges are advantageous for me in view of the possible bishop versus knight ending with pawns on both wings.

Plan C: Attack the Pawn Duo b4, c5

Unlike the other two plans, I think the most urgent problem is to get my bishop into the game

and so activate all my pieces.

The bishop is locked in by the pawn duo b4, c5 and I decide to weaken the vice of the white pawns by playing 18 ... a5. The purpose of this move is to bring about the exchange of the b-pawn so as to weaken the c-pawn. The bishop can thus perform an attacking function without moving from home base. To reinforce the pressure on the b-pawn I intend to continue ... $\mathbb{E}h4$. I don't think I need fear the opening of the b-file unduly promoting White's attack on the queenside.

I calculate some possible developments:

- 1) 19 \mathbf{ba} $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 20 a6 b6 and Black has solved the problem of the development of the king's bishop and has the better pawn structure.
- 2) 19 $\mathbb{E}ad1$ $\mathbb{E}xd1$ 20 $\mathbb{E}xd1$ $\mathbb{E}h4$ forcing White to take a decision.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

Solution of Test 11

PLAN A: You are committing a serious strategic error if you think you are saving a tempo by playing 11 $\mathbb{Q}xb8$. In fact, the exchange of a developed piece (the bishop on f4) for an undeveloped piece (the knight on b8) gives your opponent a gain of tempo, not you!

In the position we have here you have a slight advantage in development insofar as almost all your pieces are developed and you are ready to castle. After 11 $\mathbb{Q}xb8?$! $\mathbb{B}xb8$ the situation rebounds and it is you who still have to castle while Black has already completed his development!

However, this error of judgement is not enough on its own to discredit the plan for occupation of c5 might well be worth the loss of a slight advantage in development. Your analysis did not consider that Black can stop you putting your plan into practice. Let's see how: 11 $\mathbb{Q}xb8?$! $\mathbb{B}xb8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e4?$ $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ making impossible both 13 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ and 13 $\mathbb{W}xc6$. To give some meaning to your attempt to occupy c5 you should then continue with 13 $\mathbb{Q}fd2$ but in this case you will pay dearly for your delay in development: 13 ... e5! 14 de $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ with advantage to Black in view of

the fact that the continuation 15 $\mathbb{W}xc6 \mathbb{Q}b4$ is really reckless.

PLAN B: It is a mistake to think that to gain control of the centre you have to strengthen your d-pawn by bc. Even when this pawn structure has been obtained, you still have to prove that White has an advantage. After your analysis Black can react actively with 14 ... c5 15 d5 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ or try to settle a piece permanently on c4. He can also pursue this strategy more accurately: 11 $\mathbb{Q}g3 \mathbb{Q}xc3$ 12 bc(12 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ does not play a part in your plan and Black in any case has time to prepare effective counterplay, e.g. 12 ... $\mathbb{W}d5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3 \mathbb{B}c8$ 14 e4 $\mathbb{W}h5$ 15 $\mathbb{B}c1 \mathbb{Q}d7$ preparing ... c5) 12 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 e4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ getting ready to take possession of c4.

In positions of this type, White's central supremacy is not as advantageous as it might appear at first sight: the weakness of c4 and the blocking of the c-file are two elements that favour Black. White's pawn structure would be better if the c3 pawn were on b2.

PLAN C: The correct plan. Should Black retake on d5 with a piece, then e4 would enable you to

achieve your aim of winning control of the centre with gain of tempo and without the defects evident in Plan B. If Black retakes on d5 with a pawn, your remarks are correct insofar as that after 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ cd 12 0-0 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 13 $\mathbb{W}b3$ Black has to waste a tempo to defend his b-pawn, thus enabling you to occupy the c-file and prepare to double rooks before Black is ready to dispute the matter.

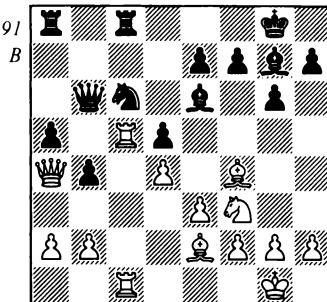
Strategy points: PLAN A: 2 points
PLAN B: 6 points
PLAN C: 10 points

Tactical points: 3 points if you saw Black's correct line against Plan A (12 ... $\mathbb{Q}f5!$).

Tartakower-Frydman Lodz 1935

11 $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ cd (if 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 12 e4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 13 0-0 with clear advantage to White as the d-pawn cannot be taken owing to the continuation 13 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd4?$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ c5 15 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ etc) 12 0-0 (the attempt to win the b-pawn by 12 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ would be pointless because of 12 ... $\mathbb{W}c8!$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ – not 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2?$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ a5 with the unstoppable threat of ... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ – 14 ... $\mathbb{W}axb8$ and Black regains the pawn) 12 ... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 13 $\mathbb{W}b3$ b4 14 $\mathbb{Q}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (14 ... $\mathbb{Q}c8?$ is no good on account of 15

$\mathbb{Q}xc8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xd5$; if 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$, there would have followed 15 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ with the two-fold threat of 17 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ and 17 $\mathbb{Q}c7$) 15 $\mathbb{Q}c5!$ (preparing to double rooks which will make Black's position critical) 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ (or 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 16 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ winning the b-pawn) 16 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ a5 17 $\mathbb{W}a4!$ (91)



White finds a way to penetrate the enemy position via the a4-e8 diagonal, the prelude to a surprise finish on the kingside.

17 ... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ (if 17 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7?$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ wins a piece) 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ (18 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc8?$ is impossible in view of 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 20 $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ and mates) 19 $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (after 20 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ Black is safe) 20 ... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xh7!$ $\mathbb{W}g7$ (or 21 ... $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 22 $\mathbb{W}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 23 $\mathbb{W}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ and wins) 22 $\mathbb{W}xf8+$ $\mathbb{W}xf8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ and with another pawn about to fall, Black resigned.

Solution of Test 12

PLAN A: The idea this plan is based on is correct. Black must not wait passively while White gets on with his attack on the king's wing and, strategically, the best way to neutralise an attack on the flank is by a breakthrough in the centre.

The space advantage White has won on the kingside can only be exploited as a weakness if Black manages to open lines for the penetration of his heavy pieces. Your error is a technical one: after 32 ... d4?! the c-pawn is no longer restrained and White in his turn can play 33 c4! thus avoiding the opening of the centre. Thus Black remains absolutely empty-handed as he failed to open up any central file. Protected by the blocked centre, White can pursue his kingside operations unhindered.

PLAN B: This is the correct plan. If White does not exchange queens, the occupation of c4 assures Black that he can open up the centre with a later ... d4. In this case, the strategic idea is the same as Plan A, but here Black's technique is more forcing. If White does exchange queens, the ending is better for Black for the

reasons you have considered. The greater activity of the black rook and the distance of the white king from the queenside are of particular importance. Thus, exploiting the queenside majority, Black can obtain a passed pawn far from the enemy king and this element is often enough to lead to victory.

The continuation is an instructive example of how this type of advantage can be turned into a win.

PLAN C: The main defect of this plan lies in the idea's passivity. Blocking the advance of the white pawns is essentially a defensive and negative approach to the problems, and the supposed weakness of the c-pawn does not provide sufficiently concrete counterplay. Further, you have failed to realise that in the position in question White is threatening to break through on the kingside in two quite different ways:

- 1) Strategically: by creating a passed pawn after e6.
- 2) Tactically: by destroying your castled position after 33 f6 g6 34 e6! fe 35 ♜xg6+ etc.

It is not surprising, then, that your passive defence idea also

proves inadequate tactically. Let's see: 32 ... ♜e7? 33 f6! ♜c5+ 34 ♜g2 g5 35 e6! with a crushing position.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 4 points

PLAN B: 10 points

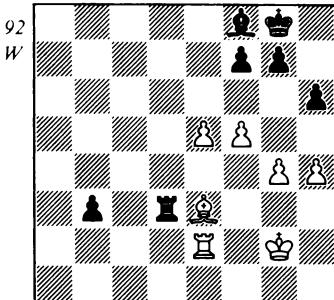
PLAN C: 0 points

Tactical points: 1 point if you saw White's correct line against Plan C (35 e6!).

Balashov-Larsen Buenos Aires 1980

32 ... ♜c4! 33 ♜xc4 (if 33 ♜f3 d4! and Black easily gains the upper hand, e.g. 34 cd ♜xd4+ 35 ♜e3 ♜xe5 etc) 33 ... dc 34 ♜e2 (forced because 34 ♜e3 ♜d3 would cost a pawn) 34 ... b5 35 ♜e3 ♜d3 36 ♜xa7 (Black would answer 36 ♜d4 by 36 ... b4 in order to obtain a passed pawn as quickly as possible) 36 ... ♜xc3 37 ♜g2 (White's king cannot transfer to the queen's wing as he must defend the kingside pawns) 37 ... ♜d3 38 ♜e3 b4 39 h4 (the uselessness of the thrust e6 forces White to try another method of mobilising his pawn majority on the king's wing) 39 ... b3 40 ab cb (92)

Black's plan has succeeded completely. The unfettered black



b-pawn is much more dangerous than the one White can achieve on e6. The difference in value lies in the position of the two kings.

41 ♜c1 ♜b4 42 ♜b2 ♜f8 43 g5 (perhaps 43 h5 followed by f6 would have given White more hope of a draw) 43 ... hg 44 hg ♜c5 45 e6 fe 46 fe ♜d4! (note that Black offers the rook ending only after White's kingside pawns have sufficiently weakened) 47 ♜a3+ ♜e8 48 g6 (if 48 ♜e1 – intending ♜f1-f8 mate – 48 ... b2 and Black wins because the bishop has no good squares, e.g. 49 ♜b4 ♜b3, or 49 ♜d6 ♜c3 etc) 48 ... ♜f6 49 ♜f2 (the last try: White threatens 50 ♜xf6! and wins) 49 ... ♜d5 50 ♜h3 (or 50 ♜f3 b2 51 ♜b3 ♜d2+ 52 ♜f3 ♜d3+! and wins) 50 ... ♜a5 0-1 because of 51 ♜c1 ♜e7 52 ♜e2 ♜a2 with an easy win.

Solution of Test 13

PLAN A: When there is a symmetrical pawn structure, it is the placing of the pieces which determines who has the advantage. In our position here, your only advantage is the fact that the bishop on c8 has problems of development. If you allow Black to play ... e5 (which really would make the pawn structure symmetrical) the position's strategic structure becomes completely balanced. Your pieces would, however, be worse placed than Black's for your king's bishop is blocked by the e-pawn whereas Black's is on its ideal diagonal and also the knight on f3 is exposed to the pin ... ♘g4 while the knight on c6 can readily occupy the weak square d4. Thus the move 12 ♜e2?!, after 12 ... e5!, will take you into a dynamically inferior position.

For these strategic reasons, the occupation of the open files is here an element of secondary importance with respect to the need to prevent development of the bishop on c8.

PLAN B: You have correctly identified the primary problem in this position. The variation you have analysed (12 ♘f4 ♖b4 13 ♜e2 ♖xd1 14 ♘fxd1) clearly

shows that the effective occupation of the open c- and d-files depends essentially on the fact that the bishop on c8 stops the black rooks communicating.

The defect of this plan lies in the fact that Black can exploit the undefended position of the bishop on f4 so as to achieve the freeing advance ... e5. Let's see: 12 ♘f4 ♖f6! (with a double attack on f4 and b2) 13 ♖c1 (if 13 ♘g3 e5!; and if 13 ♘g5 ♖xb2 and the extra pawn compensates for Black's delay in development) 13 ... e5! equalising the strategic set-up.

PLAN C: The correct plan. In spite of the pawn symmetry, White can alter the strategic structure of the position to his own advantage.

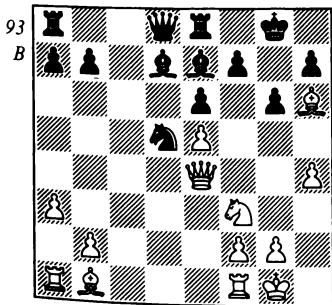
The thrust e5 prevents Black liberating the diagonal c8-h3 and gives White a notable space advantage which becomes the dominant strategic element in the position and can be exploited in the middlegame to organise an attack against the opponent's castled position. The e5 push may also prove useful in an endgame because fixing the weak square d6 on the open file can help in the doubling of your rooks.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 2 points
 PLAN B: 4 points
 PLAN C: 10 points

Tactical points: 2 points if you saw
 Black's correct line against Plan B
 (12 ... $\mathbb{W}f6!$).

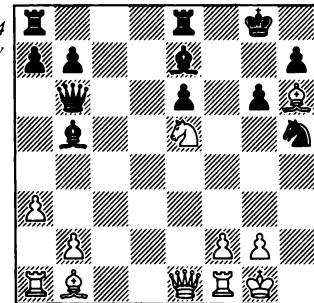
Kasparov-Begun
USSR 1978

12 e5! $\mathbb{A}e7$ (the threat of $\mathbb{A}xh7+$ is immediate – if 12 ... $\mathbb{Q}b4?$ 13 $\mathbb{A}xh7+!$ $\mathbb{A}xh7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{A}g6$ – or 14 ... $\mathbb{A}g8$ 15 $\mathbb{W}h5$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ $\mathbb{A}h8$ 17 $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{A}g8$ 18 $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $\mathbb{A}f8$ 19 $\mathbb{W}h8+$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xg7$ mate – 15 $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ $\mathbb{A}h7$ 17 $\mathbb{A}e3$ with a winning position) 13 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ (somewhat better was 13 ... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ to prevent $\mathbb{W}e4$) 14 $\mathbb{A}b1$ $\mathbb{A}d7$ 15 a3 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 16 $\mathbb{W}e4$ g6 17 $\mathbb{A}h6$ (it is interesting to note that White has completely ignored the existence of the open c- and d-files, instead concentrating all his efforts on Black's castled position) 17 ... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 18 h4 (93)



The effects of White's plan are evident. Black's kingside, cramped by the presence of the e-pawn, is under tremendous pressure.

18 ... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 19 h5! f5?? (Black makes a desperate attempt to do something. Acceptance of the pawn offer would have been very risky, e.g. 19 ... $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 20 $\mathbb{E}a2$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 21 $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{W}a4$ 22 $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{A}f8$ 23 $\mathbb{A}xf8$ $\mathbb{E}xf8$ 24 $\mathbb{E}d2!$ preparing to increase the pressure on the kingside by $\mathbb{E}d4-h4$) 20 ef $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 21 $\mathbb{W}e1!$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{A}b5$ (94)



After the fall of the h-pawn it looks as though Black has come through the worst, but there comes . . .

23 $\mathbb{A}xg6!$ (a surprise conclusion that fittingly crowns White's twelfth move; if now 23 ... hg 24 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{A}f8$ 25 $\mathbb{W}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ and wins) 23 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 24 $\mathbb{A}xh7+!$ 1-0 because if 24 ... $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 25 $\mathbb{W}e4$ wins, and if 24 ... $\mathbb{A}xh7$ 25 $\mathbb{W}b1+$ mates in a few moves.

Solution of Test 14

PLAN A: In this position blockading the passed pawn is indeed the most urgent business at hand, but you must not forget that your king's bishop is bad and is therefore a potential danger for the ending. The manoeuvre you have in mind (... ♕e7-d6) only makes the position of your bishop worse and reduces your chances of exchanging it for the bishop on e3 via g5. A solution of this kind would be worth considering only if the ideal blockader, the knight, couldn't be placed on d6.

Your plan makes poor use of Black's pieces. The knight on c7, for example, serves only to support the thrust ... b5 and, if White does not play ab, it is hard to see what its future role might be. In terms of counterplay also, Black commits himself to putting all his money on the dubious advance ... b5 precisely because from d6 the bishop cannot support counterplay on the opposite wing as the knight can.

PLAN B: This is the correct plan and it would doubtless enjoy Nimzowitsch's unconditional approval. With this plan Black is able to place all his pieces in the

ideal position: the knight on d6 can promote counterplay on both wings, the black-squared bishop does not lose the chance of being exchanged for its counterpart via g5, and the rook on f8 can prove useful for supporting ... f5 or defending the pawn on f7 if the f-file is opened up.

The knight is the best blockader because it exerts its influence beyond the pawn barrier and so performs an active function even though it does not move.

PLAN C: The strategic theme here is not wrong but it is premature as the blockade of the passed pawn is a priority compared to the problem of getting rid of the bad bishop. It is a very dangerous strategy to underestimate the dynamism locked up in an unblockaded passed pawn.

Even though in the present position the advance of the d-pawn cannot be made immediately because it would allow Black to play ... ♕e6-d4, this does not mean that White cannot try to increase the d-pawn's dynamism. He could achieve this aim by unblocking his e-pawn even, if necessary, at the cost of material.

Let's see an example: 23 ... ♜a6 24 ♜e1 ♜g5 25 f4!? ef 26 gf ♜h4 27 e5! ♜xe1 28 ♜xe1 and now you can easily understand why the manoeuvre to blockade the passed pawn was a priority.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 2 points

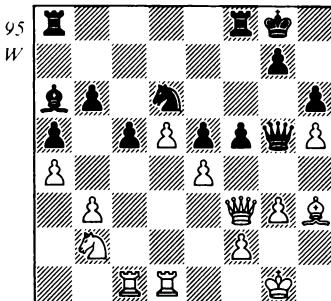
PLAN B: 10 points

PLAN C: 4 points

Tactical points: 4 points if you saw White's exchange sacrifice against Plan C (27 e5!).

Timman-Kavalek Montreal 1979

23 ... ♜f8 24 ♜f3 (White wrongly renounces f4 and prepares to play ♜d1-b2-c4 or -d3) 24 ... ♜e8 25 ♜d1 ♜d6 26 ♜b2 ♜a6 27 ♜fd1 ♜g5! (After blockading the passed pawn Black tries to get rid of the bad bishop, at the same time freeing the road for the f-pawn. It is clear that the black pieces have occupied ideal positions) 28 ♜xg5 ♜xg5 (White will shortly have to pay for the weakness of the h-pawn) 29 ♜h3 f5 (95) Black pursues his plan to the end: the position of the knight on d6 allows him to open the f-file and act on the kingside. Such counterplay is certainly not without risk because it implies the removal of his blockader. Black, however, is ready to take the risk because after the text move the h-pawn is



doomed.

30 ef ♜xf5 31 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 32 ♜e4 ♜af8 33 ♜c2 ♜xh5 34 d6 (with the disappearance of the blockader the passed pawn immediately becomes dangerous) 34 ... ♜f7 35 d7 ♜d8 36 ♜cd2 ♜f3 (forcing the exchange of queens since if 37 ♜xe5? ♜b7! wins) 37 ♜xf3 ♜xf3 38 ♜c4 ♜xc4 39 bc ♜c3 40 ♜e1 ♜xc4 41 ♜xe5 ♜f7 42 ♜d3 ♜xa4 43 ♜f3+ ♜g6 44 ♜e7 ♜d4 45 ♜ff7 ♜g8 46 ♜f4? (Abandoning the struggle. White could still have hoped for an error from his opponent by playing 46 f4 a4 47 f5+, and now if 47 ... ♜g5? 48 f6! a3 - or 48 ... gf 49 ♜e8 and wins - 49 ♜xg7+ ♜xf6 50 ♜ef7+ ♜e6 51 ♜xg8 ♜xf7 52 d8 ♜xd8 53 ♜xd8 b5 54 ♜f2 and White wins as his king stops the black pawns in time. There is, however, nothing to be done against the correct continuation: 47 ... ♜h5! 48 ♜xg7 ♜xg7 49 ♜xg7 a3 and White is done for.) 46 ... ♜xf4 47 gf ♜d8 48 ♜e6+ ♜f5 0-1.

Solution of Test 15

PLAN A: The correct plan. Black is simply threatening to simplify by exchanging heavy pieces along the d-file, after which the ending is unequivocably drawn. This is why it is absolutely essential to block the open file by getting in the manoeuvre ♜e3-d5 in time.

As you have correctly noted, if you play 28 f3 you will not be able to prevent the exchange of rooks which would lead to an impoverishment of the position, e.g. 28 ... ♕d8 29 ♜e3 ♕xd2 30 ♕xd2 ♕d6 31 ♜d5. At this point, pause for a moment and notice that Black could in future free his e- and f-pawns by the exchange ... ♜xd5. This would not occur if your h-pawn were on h5 and the black g-pawn on g5. So, the manoeuvre h4-h5 does not only serve to prevent an exchange of rooks, it also paralyses Black's pawns on the kingside and weakens the b1-h7 diagonal if Black goes for the exchange ... ♜xd5.

PLAN B: In this position, from the strategic point of view, the thrust f4 would bring advantage and disadvantage to both sides: White would certainly increase the mobility of his pieces and his attacking chances against the enemy king. But after ... ef, Black would have

the better pawn structure because of the isolated e-pawn, and hence the better ending.

Unlike Plan A, where the advance h4-h5 procures a strategic alteration favourable only to White, here you would be offering Black future chances unnecessarily. Nor have you allowed for the fact that the thrust f4 would seriously weaken the diagonal g1-a7. Black can in fact lean on this element to stop you implementing your plan. Let's take a look: 28 ♜e3?! h5 (not 28 ... c4 immediately because of 29 h4 ♜c5? 30 ♜xf6! with complications favourable to White) 29 h4 ♜f7 30 ♜h2 c4! and, faced with the threat of ♜c5, your plan turns out to be a complete failure.

PLAN C: You have seen too many Westerns: it is not always possible to make the enemy bite the dust just when *you* want! Quite the contrary, in fact. In this position you need a lot of patience to exploit the minuscule weakness in Black's pawn structure, i.e. the sensitive square d5.

In itself the tactical idea you have in mind isn't so bad, but the pawn structure on Black's kingside is sound and, after ed, the freeing of the f-pawn will allow your opponent to neutralise the action

of your white-squared bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal. Let's see: 28 $\mathbb{Q}d5?$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 29 ed $\mathbb{Q}f7!$ and now the attempt to apply pressure on the b1-h7 diagonal is easily dealt with, e.g. 30 $\mathbb{W}e4$ f5! 31 $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 32 $\mathbb{W}xe5+$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ and the game is lost. And if the game does not go quite like this, Black's material advantage will be decisive in the long run.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 10 points

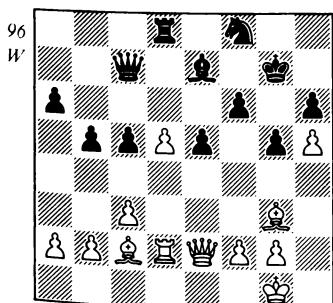
PLAN B: 3 points

PLAN C: 3 points

Tactical points: No tactical points awarded in this test.

Timman-Garcia Padron Las Palmas 1981

28 h4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 29 h5 g5 30 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ (if 30 ... $\mathbb{Q}f4?$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xf4!$ ef – 31 ... gf 32 $\mathbb{W}g4+$ with a winning attack – 32 $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 33 e5! and White wins) 31 $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 32 ed $\mathbb{Q}f8$ (96) (forced in order to defend the entry squares g6 and h7 in view of the manoeuvre $\mathbb{W}e4$)



The effects of White's plan are

very clear but in spite of the holes on the white squares, Black's position on the kingside can stand up to any attack. To win, Timman is therefore obliged to engage in a lengthy battle on the queenside.

33 c4! (opens the hostilities against the b-pawn which Black can't really exchange without seriously weakening the pawns on a6 and c5, and if Black plays ... b4 the d-pawn is strengthened) 33 ... $\mathbb{W}b7$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 35 f3 $\mathbb{Q}d6??!$ (The lesser evil in this position was 35 ... b4. Black does not notice that after the text move White can create strong pressure against c5)

36 cb! ab 37 b3 $\mathbb{W}f7??!$ (Also after 37 ... $\mathbb{W}xd5??!$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ White remains with his trump card of the passed a-pawn. Greater resistance would have been offered by 37 ... b4) 38 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{W}xh5$ 39 a4 $\mathbb{W}f7$ 40 $\mathbb{W}e4$ (suggesting that the knight on f8 had better stay where it is) 40 ... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 41 $\mathbb{B}c2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ h5 43 $\mathbb{B}c3$ (frees the bishop on b5 for action) 43 ... h4 44 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 46 a5 $\mathbb{B}b4$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 48 a6 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ (if 48 ... f5 49 $\mathbb{W}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 50 $\mathbb{W}a1$ $\mathbb{W}a7$ 51 $\mathbb{W}a5$ – threatening $\mathbb{W}xb4$ – 51 ... $\mathbb{B}b6$ 52 b4 and wins) 49 $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ (or 49 ... $\mathbb{W}xg4$ 50 fg $\mathbb{B}b8$ 51 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ with a quick win) 50 $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 51 $\mathbb{B}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 52 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (to continue with 53 a7 $\mathbb{B}a8$ 54 $\mathbb{W}a4$ and then $\mathbb{Q}b5-c6$) 52 ... $\mathbb{W}a7$ 53 b4 $\mathbb{W}f7$ 54 bc $\mathbb{W}a7$ 55 $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 56 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 57 $\mathbb{W}h7+$ 1-0.

Solution of Test 16

PLAN A: Your meditations on the strategic and dynamic nature of the position are correct: the presence of the hanging pawns means that Black has to play energetically to exploit the advantage this pawn configuration offers in the middlegame. However, the immediate realisation of the central breakthrough with 14 d4 is premature. In the position before us you are not yet ready to attack. First you have to complete your development so that you can sustain the attack with all your forces.

You are also guilty of a serious error of calculation: White can in fact refute your plan completely with a move you have not foreseen. Let's see: 14 ... d4? 15 ed $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 16 $\mathbb{W}g5!$ attacking the queen on e7, the knight on g4 and the c-pawn all at the same time. The attempt to recover the d-pawn by 16 $\mathbb{W}xg5$ comes to nought because after 17 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ the knight on g4 is attacked by the bishop on e2.

If you chose this plan you can have little playing experience.

PLAN B: This plan is undoubtedly original and it may seem a little pretentious even to the eyes of the expert. However, in our opinion it deserves full points for the following

reasons:

- 1) With 14 ... $\mathbb{A}h6$ Black makes sure he can make the d4 breakthrough at the right moment, namely not before he has brought his knight on b8 into play.
- 2) Black avoids any possibility of an exchange of black-squared bishops on the long diagonal. Such an exchange would if anything help White who wants to simplify the position so as to press home his attack against the hanging pawns without any risk.
- 3) Occupation of the diagonal c1-h6 is an excellent tactical objective and also punishes the questionable development of the white queen on d2.
- 4) The offensive strategy undertaken by Black is certainly risky, but this is often necessary with hanging pawns because the alternative, exchanging pieces defensively, is to the opponent's advantage.

The continuation of the game is highly instructive and will be a lesson to the sceptical and the cautious, i.e. those who preferred Plan C.

PLAN C: The presence of hanging pawns must be exploited dynamically, that is by introducing as many tactical elements into the position as possible. To delay the

central breakthrough too long can only increase the chances of swapping off some pieces and thus help White.

Let's follow your analysis: 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 16 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 17 $\mathbb{W}b1$. In this position Black has achieved nothing concrete whereas White is ready to begin various operations, e.g. exchanging off the dark-squared bishops and then gaining control of the long diagonal with the queen and chasing away the knight on b4 with a3. This does not mean that you are worse, but the strategy you have followed is all hot air, lacking a concrete aim.

But this plan is not wrong: the only things missing are a little determination and a pinch of imagination.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 2 points

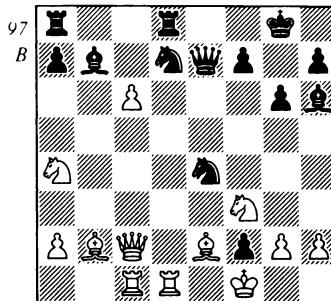
PLAN B: 10 points

PLAN C: 7 points

Tactical points: 2 points if you saw White's correct line against Plan A (16 $\mathbb{W}g5!$).

Taimanov-Psakhis USSR 1981

14 ... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 16 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 $b4!$ (trying to grab the initiative) 17 ... $d4!$ (Black carries out his planned thrust. If 17 ... cb 18 $\mathbb{W}c7$ and White has compensation for the sacrificed pawn) 18 bc de 19 c6 ef+ 20 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ (97) The position is now extremely complicated and demands precise



play from Black. However, it is the white king that is in the greater danger.

20 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc6!$ (not 20 ... $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 21 cb! $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ and White has very good chances) 21 $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 22 $\mathbb{W}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}df6!$ (reinforcements!) 23 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (if 23 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ and the attack continues) 23 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ (trying to get rid of the annoying pawn on f2) 24 ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ (threatening ... $\mathbb{W}h4$ followed by ... $\mathbb{W}xh2$) 25 $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8!$ (with the threat of ... $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ against which it is difficult to find a defence, e.g. 1) 26 $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}h1+!$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}xe2$ 29 $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{W}e1+!$ and mates; 2) 26 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}g3+!$ 27 $\mathbb{W}xg3$ $\mathbb{W}e1+$ and mates next move; 3) 26 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}h4$ 27 $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}d2+!$ 28 $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e1+$ and mate next move) 26 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (probably the variation that offers most resistance, but still insufficient) 26 ... $\mathbb{W}f6!$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ (forced) 27 ... $\mathbb{W}xf4$ 28 gf $\mathbb{Q}xh2+$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}d8!$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ (if 30 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ f1 $\mathbb{W}+$ and wins, or 30 $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ etc) 30 ... $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2+$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ a5 35 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ a4 0-1.

Solution of Test 17

PLAN A: In spite of its originality, this plan merits full points for the following reasons:

- 1) White's minor pieces are all in ideal positions: the knight on f3 is ready to take possession of e5 as soon as the knight on d7 moves, and the knight on c3 and bishop on d3 control e4, occupation of which would allow Black to contest the initiative.
- 2) As it is impossible to improve the position of the light pieces, it is only logical to bring the heavies into the fray.
- 3) The fact that both players have castled queenside does not hinder the minority attack. In fact, White's king would run more risks on the other side of the board!
- 4) Implementation of the minority attack gives the game an attack-counterattack character with same-side castled positions: while White attacks his opponent's king, Black will have to try and break through the centre (... f5-f4). This strategy is slower and less dangerous and therefore White should probably be able to gain the initiative.

PLAN B: If White could carry out this plan completely, that is get in f3 and e4 after exchanging knight for bishop, he would obtain the superior position. But watch out:

the advantage would be a double-edged weapon because after the exchanges on e4 White would be left with hanging pawns, an advantage in the middlegame but a weakness in the ending.

Apart from these considerations this plan contains two faults: 1) the exchange of knight for bishop is not as advantageous as you think: in the position here, the bishop on e6 is passive and blocks the only file on which Black could exert any pressure; 2) Black can easily prevent you realising your plan, e.g. 14 ♕g5 ♔f8 15 f3 h6 16 ♔xe6 ♔xe6 and because of the pressure on d4 you cannot advance e4 while the simplification of the position has greatly eased Black's game.

PLAN C: Mobilisation of the kingside pawns is too compromising an idea because it chronically weakens White's position. Only if Black plays passively and mechanically does he run the risk of remaining bottled up. He can, however, use the fact that the knight on h4 is undefended to simplify. Let's see how: 14 ♕h4 ♕e7! 15 f4 ♔e4 16 ♔f3 (the other possibilities are worse, e.g. 16 ♔xe4? de and White is left with two pieces en prise; or 16 f5?

$\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}xh4$ 18 fe fe winning a pawn; or 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ de and the exchange of the bishop on d3 is not positionally a good deal) 16 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ f6, controlling e5 and making a retreat square for the bishop. After 14 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{W}e7!$ White's only other logical continuation is 15 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ but after 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ g6 17 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{E}he8$, the exit of the bishop on e6, as explained in Plan B, is no drama for Black.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 10 points

PLAN B: 4 points

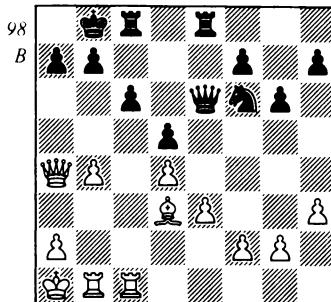
PLAN C: 3 points

Tactical points: No tactical points awarded in this test.

Tukmakov-Ivanov

USSR Ch 1978

14 $\mathbb{Q}a1!$ $\mathbb{E}he8$ 15 $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 16 $\mathbb{E}hc1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ (Black does not want to risk opening the game up with 16 ... c5 because White has not yet committed his pawns on the queen's wing) 17 b4 g6 18 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (If now 18 b5?! c5!, or 18 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ dc 20 e4 $\mathbb{W}f4$ with counterplay. With the text move, White intends to eliminate the bishop on e6 in order to weaken Black's control over c4.) 18 ... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ (on 19 ... fe comes 20 f4 preventing ... e5) 20 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xa4$ (98) The minority attack is ready to unfold and in spite of the simplification White has gained the initiative.



21 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ (threatening ... b5 followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ -c4) 22 $\mathbb{W}a5!$ (so as to meet 22 ... b5 with 23 a4!) 22 ... f5?! (Black's reaction in the centre is too slow; he should have looked for simplification by 22 ... $\mathbb{W}f6!$ followed by ... $\mathbb{W}d8$) 23 $\mathbb{E}b3$ b6 (If 23 ... f4 24 $\mathbb{E}a3$ a6 25 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ ba 26 $\mathbb{W}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 27 b5 with a violent attack. The text move brings the first tangible fruit for White's plan, the weakness of Black's c-pawn) 24 $\mathbb{W}a6$ f4? (Black does not realise that the pressure on the c-pawn will become irresistible) 25 $\mathbb{E}bc3!$ fe 26 fe $\mathbb{E}c7$ (but not 26 ... $\mathbb{W}xe3$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ or 26 ... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ etc) 27 $\mathbb{W}a4!$ b5 28 $\mathbb{W}a6!$ $\mathbb{E}b7$ (Black cannot save his pawn; if 28 ... $\mathbb{E}ec8$ or 28 ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$, there follows 29 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$) 29 $\mathbb{W}xc6$ (forcing the exchange of queens because 29 ... $\mathbb{W}xe3?$ allows 30 $\mathbb{W}c8+$ mating) 29 ... $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 30 $\mathbb{E}xc6$ a6 31 $\mathbb{E}xa6$ $\mathbb{E}xe3$ 32 $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ $\mathbb{E}xb4$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 36 $\mathbb{E}c1!$ 1-0 because if 36 ... $\mathbb{E}c3$ 37 $\mathbb{E}a8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 38 $\mathbb{E}xc3+$ and wins.

Solution of Test 18

PLAN A: This is the most direct method of exploiting the weakness of the white pawns on the kingside which are rigid and hence vulnerable. The elimination of the bishop, White's only really active piece, seriously weakens his position: he will not only have to tie up his queen in defence of the black squares but must also yield control of the d-file. You can therefore find a way to penetrate enemy territory, either down the open file or using the black squares.

Generally speaking, in positions of this type the space won by White on the king's wing in the opening can be exploited by Black in the ending as a weakness because the distance of the white king contributes to making the maintenance of his pawns on the kingside even more tricky.

Your analysis is accurate too. It is very important, during verification, to appreciate that White's counterplay based on pushing the c-pawn is not dangerous.

PLAN B: Exchanging your bishop for the knight is not as advantageous as you think. True, queen and knight work together better than

queen and bishop, but it is also true that in endings with pawns on both wings the bishop is generally stronger than the knight. This will enable White to offer the exchange of queens without fear and it will thus be easier for him to defend his pawns on the kingside than you imagined.

By playing 22 ... ♕d4 you also think you will gain control of the d-file, but this conviction is erroneous and White can, in fact, thwart your plan. Let's see how: 22 ... ♕d4 23 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 24 ♜e5! and now you are practically forced to accept the exchange of all the rooks with an ending that is unlikely to give you anything more than a draw for reasons already given. White's real weakness is the distance of his king from his weak point on f3: if you still have chances of a win, it is thanks to this factor, and definitely not due to the superiority of queen and knight over queen and bishop.

PLAN C: It is incorrect to think that the knight on f6 is badly placed for it exerts pressure against the g- and h-pawns thus keeping White's kingside pawn

structure rigid. Thus the knight is, in fact, ideally placed to exploit the weakness of the f-pawn.

From the strategic viewpoint the advance ... e5 is a double-edged weapon: it is true that in this way you fix the weak square d4, but you also weaken your own white squares. White can profit from this to improve the position of his pieces, e.g. 22 ... $\mathbb{W}c6$ 23 $\mathbb{B}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 24 $\mathbb{B}f1$ e5 25 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ f6 26 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (26 $\mathbb{W}g6$ is also an interesting way to point up the weakness of g6) 26 ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ with a good positional bargain.

Another drawback of the manoeuvre you are planning is its slowness. White could take advantage of this to relieve his position along the d-file, e.g. 22 ... $\mathbb{W}c6$ 23 $\mathbb{B}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 24 $\mathbb{W}c3$ e5 25 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ f6 26 $\mathbb{B}d1$ etc. In any case, removal of the knight on f6 gives back a little mobility to the white pawns on the kingside.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 10 points

PLAN B: 4 points

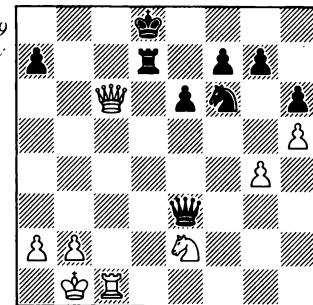
PLAN C: 3 points

Tactical points: No tactical points awarded in this test.

Panchenko-Speelman Sochi 1982

22 ... $\mathbb{Q}e3!$ 23 $\mathbb{B}xd7$ $\mathbb{B}xd7$ 24 c5!?
(Looking for counterplay with the c-pawn. 24 $\mathbb{W}c3$ would have left

Black with control over the d-file, while 24 $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{W}e3$ 26 $\mathbb{B}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ would have been hopeless, e.g. 27 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4+$ 28 fe $\mathbb{Q}e5$ and Black wins a pawn without risk.) 24 ... $\mathbb{W}c6!$ (Forced, but very good. The trap was 24 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc5?$ 25 $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{B}d5$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{B}d4$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ and White wins material.) 25 $\mathbb{Q}xe3?$! (passive defence by 25 $\mathbb{B}f1$ would have prolonged resistance although White's position would still have been critical) 25 ... $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 26 $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{W}xe3$ 27 c6 bc 28 $\mathbb{W}xc6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ (99)



Black's assessment proves accurate. White cannot give his attack any real sting, and meanwhile the pawns on his kingside fall prey to the knight on f6.

29 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 31 $\mathbb{W}c8+$ (or 31 $\mathbb{W}a8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ and once again it is the black knight that has quashed the discussion) 31 ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{B}d5$ 33 $\mathbb{W}b7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 34 b4 a5 35 $\mathbb{W}c7$ ab 36 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}e4+$ 37 $\mathbb{B}c2$ $\mathbb{B}xh5$ 0-1.

Solution of Test 19

PLAN A: The battery of heavy artillery down the b1-h7 diagonal is a classic method of exploiting the space advantage provided by the isolated queen's pawn. Kingside pressure and occupation of e5 are also routine ideas in positions with this type of centre. So, the strategic ideas behind your play are correct.

However, before moving the pieces mechanically you should always try and appreciate the deeper implications of your opponent's moves. Black's last move (12 ... $\mathbb{Q}c8$) sets up the immediate threat of winning a pawn, but stopping this threat does not mean that you have also refuted the subtler idea it conceals.

The strategic alteration that the exchange ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ would bring about is not favourable to you here for Black can win control of c4 and set up heavy pressure against the c-pawn which constitutes as valid an objective of counterplay as the isolated queen's pawn. Let's see: 13 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 14 bc $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ 15 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ and with c4 solidly in his grasp, Black can look forward to a game with balanced chances.

PLAN B: Although uncommon in positions of this type, this is the

correct way to refute Black's last move.

In this position control of the c-file becomes the principal strategic element because White can dominate it thanks to his control of the opposition square c8. The game continuation shows clearly the speed with which this plan can be carried out.

PLAN C: Your idea is good. If White could force the exchange of the bishop on c6 for a knight, the bishop pair and the weakness of the white squares in the opponent's camp would give him much the better game.

The defect lies in the fact that the plan cannot be realised because you have not foreseen one of Black's possible replies. Let's see: 13 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}a8!$ (one of those apparently bad moves one is tempted to exclude automatically; Black has wasted two tempi, but after he has played ... a6 the knight on b5 will have to slink back to c3 and you are all square on the tempi count) 14 $\mathbb{W}a4$ (threatening 15 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$, but the wisest course would be to return to c3 with the knight recognising that the plan cannot be implemented; against 14 $\mathbb{W}c2$, Black simply replies 14 ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ and it is readily apparent that

capturing on h7 would be far too dangerous) 14 ... $\mathbb{W}c8!$ and, faced with the threat of ... a6, there is no way for White to reinforce the pressure or compel the exchange ... $\mathbb{Q}xb5$.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 4 points

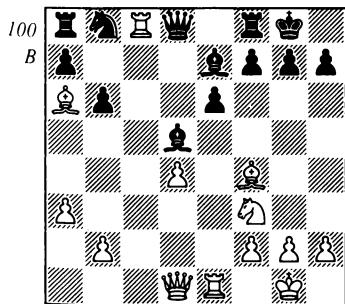
PLAN B: 10 points

PLAN C: 3 points

Tactical points: 2 points if you saw Black's correct line against Plan C (13 ... $\mathbb{E}a8!$).

Timman-Van der Wiel Wijk ann Zee 1980

13 $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}a6!$ $\mathbb{E}a8$ (forced, because if 14 ... $\mathbb{E}c6?$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ and wins) 15 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 0-0 16 $\mathbb{E}c1$ (White's advantage is clear; if 16 ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ with a crushing position) 16 ... $\mathbb{Q}b8!$ (The only defence. Black resolves to give up queen for rook and bishop.) 17 $\mathbb{E}c8$ (100)



White's operations on the c-file have been devastating, but he must not start thinking that the game is already over.

17 ... $\mathbb{W}xc8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{E}xc8$ (In spite

of the material disadvantage, Black's position is sound. The struggle continues and is not without suspense) 19 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 21 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}a2??$ (this, the only way to uncover an attack on the d-pawn, is a risky idea but White fails to refute it because he is mistakenly convinced he can wrap things up quickly and go to the bar) 22 $\mathbb{E}a1?$ (22 $b3!$ was the correct move according to Timman) 22 ... $\mathbb{E}xd4$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8!$ (White was counting on the continuation 23 ... gh 24 $\mathbb{W}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 25 $h4!$ $\mathbb{E}xf4$ 26 hg with a winning attack) 24 $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5?$ (Black misses a good opportunity. He should have played 24 ... $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}e5-$ on 25 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{E}xf4$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ Black has very strong attack - 25 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 26 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 27 $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 29 $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 30 $\mathbb{E}d1$ when, despite his material inferiority, the result of the game is clouded in uncertainty.) 25 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ bc 27 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ (28 ... $c4$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{E}d3$ was better and White's task would still be very difficult) 29 f3 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{E}f8$ (threatening 31 ... $\mathbb{E}xg2+$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{E}xf3$) 31 $\mathbb{E}e1!$ $\mathbb{E}h4$ (if 31 ... $\mathbb{E}xg2+$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{E}xf3$ 33 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{E}c3+$ 34 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}c2+$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ ed 36 $\mathbb{E}e8$ mate) 32 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 33 $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathbb{E}xh2$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (after some heart-stopping moments, White has finally made it) 34 ... $e5$ 35 $\mathbb{W}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 36 $\mathbb{E}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 37 $\mathbb{W}d5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 38 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 39 $\mathbb{E}f4$ 1-0.

Solution of Test 20

PLAN A: When players castle on opposite sides, the game generally turns into one of mutual offensives against the castled positions. However, in the present example, both attacks are marking time. White, before he can play b5, must first defend his c-pawn, whilst Black's attack on the h-file can easily be contained as the following variation shows: 18 ... $\mathbb{W}f4$ 19 $\mathbb{E}fe1$ (threatening 20 $\mathbb{A}e5+$) 19 ... f6 (if 19 ... $\mathbb{W}h4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ is sufficient) 20 $\mathbb{A}e4$ $\mathbb{W}h6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ etc.

Seeing as neither attack is sufficiently violent, the objective of the position needs must shift to other more immediately realisable strategic themes. Thus this plan is badly timed as it is not in tune with the particular demands of the moment. Therefore, without losing sight of the chance to reinforce his counterplay on the kingside, Black must concentrate on another strategic objective.

Tactically you have committed a serious mistake whose consequences are catastrophic. On 18 ... $\mathbb{W}f4?$ comes 19 $\mathbb{W}xf7!$ and you cannot play 19 ... $\mathbb{W}xb4??$ because of 20 $\mathbb{A}e5+$ $\mathbb{A}a8$ 21 $\mathbb{E}a(f)b1$ and wins. Even if you spotted the trap coming you would not be able to remedy the

loss of the f-pawn, e.g. 19 ... $\mathbb{W}h4$ 20 $h3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 21 $\mathbb{A}e5+$ etc.

PLAN B: The idea on which this plan is based is strategically correct. The black pawn structure is compact whereas White's queen-side pawns are weakened through being too advanced. In addition, the distance of the white king and the proximity of the black king contribute to making their weakness even more palpable in an ending. If Black manages to force the exchange of the bishop on b2 for his knight, he would assure himself of another advantage as in the ending the bishop on f8 would prove more useful than the knight on g3.

The fault with this plan is tactical. White is not forced to exchange the bishop on b2 for the knight and can effectively exploit the theme of the skewer on h2-b8 diagonal. Let's see: 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}d4?!$ 19 $\mathbb{W}e3$ and now 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}c2??$ is not possible because 20 $\mathbb{W}e4!$ wins a piece through the threat 21 $\mathbb{A}e5$. Nor can Black support the knight by 19 ... $\mathbb{E}h4$ because he loses material after 20 $f4$. He would thus have to retrace his steps and play 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$, but after 20 $\mathbb{W}e4$ his plan has clearly backfired and

the initiative passes into White's hands.

PLAN C: Although apparently anti-positional, this is the correct plan. In this particular position it is not necessary to wait for the ending before attacking White's queenside pawns; they make a good target in the middlegame too. The need to get the bishop on f8 working makes immediate implementation of the idea mandatory. In fact, this is the only way Black can complete his development!

The continuation of the game is highly instructive and shows that Black, although starting counterplay on the queenside, must not forget the intrinsic nature of attack and counter-attack conferred on the position by the opposite side castling.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 2 points

PLAN B: 5 points

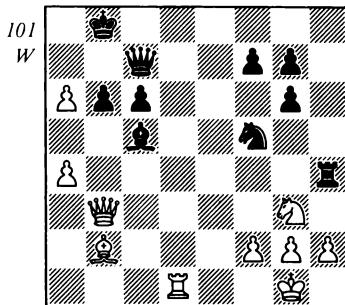
PLAN C: 10 points

4 Tactical points: 2 points if you saw White's correct line against Plan A (21 $\mathbb{E}a/fb1$). 4 points if you saw White's correct line against Plan B (20 $\mathbb{W}e4$!).

Dückstein-Petrosian Varna Ol 1962

18 ... a5! 19 $\mathbb{E}ad1$ (if 19 $\mathbb{E}fe1$ f6 and White's problem is merely postponed) 19 ... $\mathbb{E}xd1$ 20 $\mathbb{E}xd1$ $\mathbb{E}h4!$ 21 ba (If 21 $\mathbb{E}c3$ ab 22 $\mathbb{E}xb4$

$\mathbb{Q}d4$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ with clear advantage to Black. In this variation we can appreciate how the weakening of the c-pawn enhances the action of the bishop on f8) 21 ... $\mathbb{E}xc5$ 22 a6 b6 (101)



Black has achieved his aim: the king's bishop has got into the game and the white pawn structure is seriously impaired.

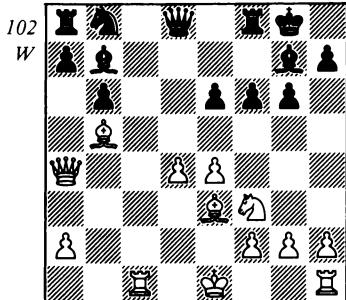
23 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 26 g3 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$! (the sacrifice of the exchange shows that Black has not forgotten that castling has taken place on opposite sides) 27 gh $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 28 $\mathbb{W}d1$ (to stop the check on g4 which would have been devastating) 28 ... $\mathbb{W}d5$ 29 $\mathbb{E}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$! 30 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 31 $\mathbb{W}d3$ f5 32 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ c5 33 $\mathbb{E}e3$ c4 34 $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 35 $\mathbb{E}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 36 h3 f4 37 $\mathbb{W}g4$ (simplification would not have helped White, e.g. 37 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ 38 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 39 $\mathbb{E}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ followed by 40 ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ with an easy win) 37 ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ (the monarch's intervention is decisive) 38 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$! 39 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}c2+$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 0-1.

Third Series
Tests 21-30

Test 21

Grünfeld Defence

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5 4 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$
5 $\mathbb{W}a4+$ c6 6 cd $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 7 e4 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 8
bc 0-0 9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ c5 10 $\mathbb{E}c1$ cd 11 cd e6 12
 $\mathbb{A}b5$ b6 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ f6 14 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{A}b7$ (102)



White to play: select your plan.

Plan A: Creating a Passed Pawn.

From the viewpoint of the pawn structure, White's advantage in the centre is offset by the majority on the queenside that Black will try to exploit in the endgame. I think the most important strategic theme here lies in mobilising my numerical superiority of central pawns so I intend to create a passed pawn by means of d4-d5. I feel I can achieve this immediately and at the same time defend my e-pawn (at the moment under attack by the bishop on b7) by way of a tactical element.

I play 15 d5 and I calculate that, in the event of 15 ... ed 16 ed $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17 $\mathbb{E}d1$, Black can't avoid the double threat of 18 $\mathbb{E}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ and 18 $\mathbb{W}d4$. Given that an attempt to block the centre by ... e5 would impair the efficiency of the bishop on g7, my opponent will probably decide to play 15 ... a6, on which I intend to continue with 16 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ and, in the event of an exchange, I am happy to retake on c6 with the pawn. The presence of such an advanced passed pawn would guarantee me the better game.

Plan B: Gain Complete Control of the c-file.

I think I have some advantage in development due to the fact that Black can't get his QN into play. However, the strategic structure of the position presents a definite predominant element: the open c-file. I want to reconcile these two elements and at the same time defend my e-pawn.

I decide to play 15 $\mathbb{W}c2$ and calculate that Black cannot complete his development by 15 ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ owing to 16 $\mathbb{W}c7$ with a double attack on the $\mathbb{Q}d7$ and $\mathbb{A}b7$. To get his major pieces

working together and prevent the penetration of the seventh rank, Black will probably play 15 ... ♜a6 but in this case too I expect to be able to gain complete control of the c-file by 16 ♜c4 ♜c8 (forced to defend the knight on a6 and the pawn) 17 ♜d3. At this point Black, to defend his queen and the knight on a6, is forced to pin himself by 17 ... ♜c7 which gives me a clear advantage on the c-file.

Plan C: Attack Black's Weakened Castled Position.

I think that, because of the advance f6, Black's king is seriously weakened and I decide to set in motion a plan of attack against my opponent's king based on pushing my h-pawn (h2-h4-h5-

hg). To exploit to the utmost the attacking capabilities of my pieces against the sensitive points of my opponent's structure, I decide to place my KB on the b1-h7 diagonal and my queen on the a2-g8 diagonal. My king can remain in the centre and, if it becomes necessary to link my rooks, my king can move to e2 where it will be well protected by the massive concentration of my pieces.

I play 15 ♜d3 and after 15 ... ♜d7 (the only possible development for the knight) I want to continue with 16 ♜b3. At this point, to defend the e-pawn, Black will probably play 16 ... ♜e8 (because I have 17 ♜c7 against 16 ... ♜e7) and I intend to begin my attack with 17 h4.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

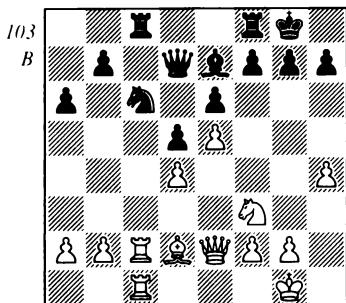
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 22

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 d6 3 ♜b5+ ♜d7 4 ♜xd7+ ♛xd7 5 0-0 ♜c6 6 c3 ♜f6 7 ♜e2 e6 8 d4 cd 9 cd d5 10 e5 ♜e4 11 ♜bd2 ♜xd2 12 ♜xd2 ♜e7 13 ♜ac1 0-0 14 ♜c2 ♜ac8 15 ♜fc1 a6 16 h4 (103)



Black to play: select your plan.

Plan A: Simplify to the Ending.

From an examination of the pawn structure I deduce that I have a slightly superior ending because of the weakness of White's d-pawn. I therefore think that the best strategy is simplification to reach a favourable endgame.

My analysis shows that the natural move 16 ... ♜b4 would prove inadequate because after 17 ♜xb4 ♜xb4 I would not be able to exchange rooks as White can take on c2 with his queen, thus guaranteeing control of the c-file. So I think the best move is 16 ... ♜b4 with two distinct ideas in

mind, depending on whether or not White exchanges bishops:

1) If White swaps bishops I can force the exchange of all the rooks and take the c-file, e.g. 17 ♜xb4 ♜xb4 18 ♜xc8 (forced because of the attack on the a-pawn) 18 ... ♜xc8 19 ♜xc8+ ♛xc8, with an ending I judge to be superior because my queen can penetrate enemy territory.

2) If White avoids the swap, then I will have gained control of a5, an excellent posting for my knight. I calculate that after the plausible continuation 17 ♜e3 ♜a5, I will gain the upper hand on the queenside owing to the weakness of c4. White cannot challenge this by 18 b3 because after 18 ... ♜a3 he would have to yield up control of the c-file.

Plan B: Attack the Front of the Pawn Chain.

Unlike Plan A, I judge that in the ending White would have good chances of eliminating my small advantage, i.e. my better pawn structure. I therefore think it would be better to further weaken his position and at the same time improve the mobility of my pieces.

I think I can profit from the fact that White has placed his rooks on

the queenside by setting up a counterattack on the other side. My idea is to open the f-file and weaken White's centre by 16 ...f6. I analyse that in the event of 17 ef ♖xf6, my pressure against the d4 and h4 pawns plus the opening of the f-file assure me of good dynamic chances in the middle game. Even if White decides to shore up his e-pawn with 17 ♖f4, after 17 ... fe the the same dynamic and strategic elements would emerge.

In any case, with regard to the ending my best chances for a win come from the elimination of the e-pawn and the further weakening of the d4 pawn.

Plan C: Simplify to Heterogeneously Balanced Ending.

I think I can exploit White's last move to enter what I consider to be a favourable endgame. My intention is to give up two minor pieces for rook and pawn by

playing 16 ... ♖xh4. If 17 ♖xh4 ♖xd4 18 ♕d3 ♖xc2 19 ♖xc2 ♖xc2 20 ♕xc2 ♖c8, White would lose rook and two pawns. The most logical variation is 17 ♖xc6, but after 17 ... ♖xc6 I can force the removal of the last white rook and thus gain complete control of the c-file, a line of vital importance for penetrating the enemy camp and beginning a siege of the a- and b-pawns. The white knight on h4 will be out of the game and unable to take part in the defence of the queen's wing, a sector where I could have the better of things because of my superior forces. The crucial point lies in the fact that White has no time to close the c-file by ♖d2-c3. I calculate: 16 ... ♖xh4 17 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 18 ♖xh4 (if 18 ♖xc6 ♕xc6 19 ♖xh4 ♕c2 and I win a pawn) 18 ... ♖xc1+ 19 ♖xc1 and now I think my chances are excellent after 19 ... ♕a4 or 19 ♖c8.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

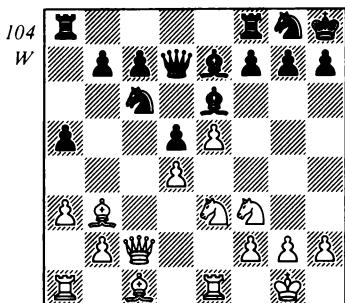
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 23

Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{B}b5$ a6 4 $\mathbb{B}a4$ d6
5 c3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 6 d4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8 0-0
0-0 9 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{B}h8$ 10 a3 a5 11 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ ed
12 cd d5 13 e5 $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$
15 $\mathbb{B}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (104)



White to play: select your plan.

Plan A: Open up the Centre.

I think the principal element in this position is the space advantage I enjoy in the centre and on the king's wing. To exploit this factor I will have to effect the advance f2-f4-f5. I can't, however, move my knight on f3 because it is tied to the defence of the d-pawn. I therefore decide to complete my development with the manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}c1-d2-c3$ and then move my knight on f3 to d2 so as to follow up with f2-f4-f5.

It goes without saying that Black will not hang around

passively while I go ahead with my plan. He will probably try to counter on the kingside by pushing his f-pawn. In this case I think I will obtain an advantage by opening the centre and the e-file. My analysis: 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ f6 (or 17 ... f5) 18 ef $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c3$. At the close of this variation the strategic aspect of the position is greatly changed and consequently I intend to adapt my plan. I want to exploit these elements: the weakening of the black king, the weakness of e5, f5 and g5, and control of the e-file. I don't think Black can close up the game with 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ because of 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ which causes havoc amongst Black's e-file pieces.

Plan B: Force a Weakening of Black's King's Position.

Thanks to my space advantage, I think I am in a position to organise an attack against the black king. My line of thinking is as follows:

- 1) Black's kingside is very cramped but the pawns in front of the king present no weaknesses.
- 2) My pieces are not in the ideal position for commencing the attack because the knight on f3 is tied to the defence of the d-pawn and the bishop is not

yet ready to join in.

With the two-fold purpose of defending the d-pawn and permitting the withdrawal of the bishop on b3 to c2 to force a weakening of the opponent's king, I decide to play 17 $\mathbb{W}d3$. I believe that Black, if he is not to bow passively before the attack on his king, will attempt to generate counterplay on the queen's wing. I calculate a few possible continuations:

- 1) 17 ... a4 18 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ f5 19 ef $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ and I think I can reach a very promising position by 20 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ or with 20 $\mathbb{Q}e5$, e.g. 20 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21 de $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 22 f3 with the idea of mating on h7.
- 2) 17 ... a4 18 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ g6 19 h4 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ with ideas of sacrificing on h7 followed by the thrust h4-h5. In any case, unlike Plan A, I think my queen's bishop could play a part in the attack on the diagonal c1-h6.

Plan C: Paralyse Black's Position.

I think that my opponent's position, albeit cramped, is sufficiently dynamic to create counterplay either on the king's side (based on ... f5) or on the queen's side (... b5). So I decide to paralyse his position with the pin 17 $\mathbb{Q}a4$. This move permits me to control the position over the entire board as it also prevents Black advancing his f-pawn because after ef, the threat of $\mathbb{Q}f3-e5$ would be lethal.

My plan is to intensify the pressure against c6 by $\mathbb{Q}c1-d2$ and $\mathbb{H}a1-c1$ so as to force Black to further defend his $\mathbb{Q}c6$ thus worsening the position of his pieces. I analyse a possible continuation: 17 ... $\mathbb{H}fb8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}ge7$ and Black's position looks more hamstrung and less dynamic. I believe I have good chances of continuing to exert uniform pressure on both sides.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

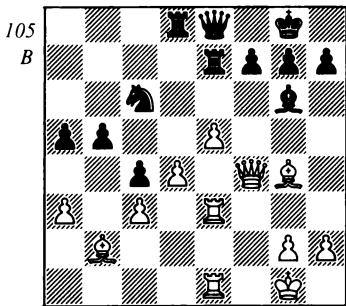
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 24

Nimzo-Indian

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 4 e3 0-0
5 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ d5 6 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 7 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8 a3
 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 9 bc b6 10 cd ed 11 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ c4 12
 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13 $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$
 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 15 $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 16 f3 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 17 e4
 $\mathbb{W}d7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}ae1$ de 19 fe $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 20 $\mathbb{W}f4$
b5 21 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 23 e5
a5 24 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ (105)



Black to play: select your plan

Plan A: Blockade on the Black Squares.

Although my position is inferior, I don't think White can force a win, e.g. 26 e6 fe 27 $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ (or 27 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}8d7$) 27 ... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 28 d5 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 29 de (if 29 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$) 29 ... $\mathbb{W}g6$ and Black is free. To make his central breakthrough more effective, I think White will try to deflect my bishop from the e8-h5 diagonal by means of the advance h2-h4-h5,

e.g. 26 h4 h6 27 h5 $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 28 e6 fe 29 $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 30 d5 with a crushing advantage.

I think I can prevent this plan and stop the advance of the white pawns by playing 25 ... $\mathbb{W}f8$ with the idea of opening a retreat for my bishop by ... f6. My calculation is as follows: 26 h4 f6 27 h5 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 28 e6 (I don't consider it is in White's interest to simplify the position by 28 ef $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$) 28 ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ and, after the stabilising move ... $\mathbb{W}e7$, I can finally begin some counterplay with ... b4. I don't believe White can make the thrust d4-d5 without yielding up the excellent square e5 to my knight on c6, and I think that the queen on e7 and rook on d8 are sufficient guarantee of blockading the passed pawns by controlling the squares e7 and d6.

Plan B: Blockade on the White Squares.

I consider I am in an emergency situation and that the most urgent thing to do is to organise an effective blockade of White's e- and d-pawns on the white squares e6 and d5. Unfortunately my bishop does not control any of these squares so I will have to

move my knight to d5 via e7. Of course it would not be prudent to abandon the e-file by moving my rook on e7, but then again I absolutely must clear e7 for my knight. To reconcile these needs I decide to sacrifice the exchange by 25 ... $\mathbb{E}e6$, calculating that after 26 $\mathbb{A}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ White cannot prevent the manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}c6-e7-d5$ with a total blockade of the dangerous central pawns.

I think that my sacrifice of the exchange is compensated by the following elements:

- 1) the exit from the scene of the bishop on g4 which increases the importance of my own bishop and also leaves a general weakness amongst the opponent's white squares.
- 2) the reduced activity of the white rooks.
- 3) the centralisation of my knight which will occupy a key square, d5.
- 4) the ineffectiveness of the bishop

on b2.

My counterplay will continue to revolve around the advance ... b4 which I can prepare in due course.

Plan C: Blockade on the White Squares with Alteration of Pawn Structure.

Here too, pursuing the same reasoning as Plan B, I decide to sacrifice the exchange with 25 ... $\mathbb{E}e6$. However, after 26 $\mathbb{A}xe6$ I intend to play 26 ... fe so as not to have to use my queen to blockade the e-pawn. I think White will be unable to penetrate my position down the f-file. White cannot prevent the subsequent manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}c6-e7-d5$ leading to the total blockade of the white pawns.

As in Plan B, I think I have enough compensation for the sacrificed exchange and will obtain counterplay with a properly prepared ... b4.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

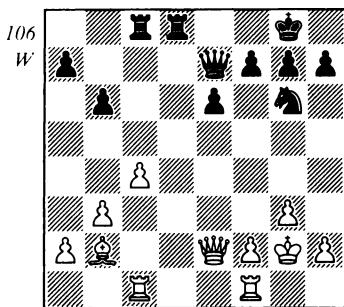
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 25

Catalan Opening

1 c4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e6 3 g3 d5 4 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$
5 0-0 0-0 6 d4 c6 7 b3 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}b2$
b6 9 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e5$
 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12 de $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13 e4 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 14 ed
cd 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$
17 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ (106)



White to play: select your plan.

Plan A: Exchange the Heavy Pieces to Reach a Bishop versus Knight Ending.

It seems to me that my position is preferable because the asymmetric pawn structure gives my bishop a potential superiority over the knight. This advantage can only be exploited later on as at the moment the presence of the major pieces means we are still in the middle game. I conclude, therefore, that the most urgent strategic objective is to challenge control of the open file. My idea is to

exchange all the rooks and also the queens if possible so as to get into a bishop versus knight ending.

So I play 19 $\mathbb{Q}cd1$ and calculate a plausible continuation: 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ (if Black wants to avoid exchanging rooks he would have to cede me the d-file) 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{W}xd8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ with the double threat of 24 $\mathbb{W}a8+$ followed by 25 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ and 24 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ which would force the exchange of queens due to the threat of mate on g7. In the ending I think I have good winning chances because of the speed with which I can obtain a passed pawn on the queenside and because of the superiority of bishop over knight in endgames of this type.

Plan B: Quickly Mobilise my Pawn Majority.

Here, too, I want to exploit my pawn majority on the queen's wing but I think I have better chances by keeping the rooks on. In my estimation, an excessive simplification will ease Black's defensive task because, in an eventual bishop versus knight ending, he will be able to halt my queenside pawns by placing his

knight on c6.

I decide to get my queenside pawn majority moving by playing 19 a3 preparing b3-b4 and c4-c5. Black will probably seek counterplay by doubling rooks on the d-file, but I intend to neutralise this by doubling rooks myself on the c-file (by $\mathbb{R}c2$ and $\mathbb{R}fc1$). In this way I not only defend my two back ranks but also place my rooks ideally to support the advance of the c-pawn.

I analyse the following likely continuation: 19 ... $\mathbb{R}d7$ 20 $\mathbb{R}c2$ $\mathbb{R}cd8$ 21 $\mathbb{R}fc1$ when I am ready to get on with my plan by b3-b4.

Plan C: Attack on the Kingside.

The dominating position of my

bishop on the long a1-h8 diagonal suggests initiating a violent attack against the black king. So I play 19 h4 with the idea of chasing away the knight on g6 by h4-h5. The attacking chances I will obtain after this advance are obvious: $\mathbb{W}e2-g4$ (or $\mathbb{W}e2-e5$), h5-h6 etc. The key to the attack lies in the fact that Black cannot prevent this thrust by ... h5 because the square h5 is controlled by my queen.

Against the probable reply 19 ... $\mathbb{W}b7+$ I will play 20 $\mathbb{W}h2$ (not 20 f3 h5!) renewing the unstoppable threat of h4-h5.

In this plan, too, I want to exploit the superiority of the bishop over the knight, not in the ending but in the middle game.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

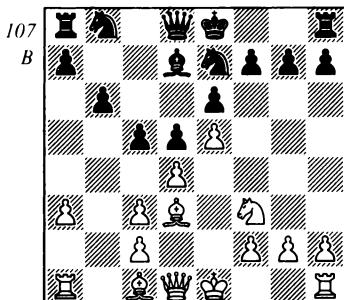
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 26

French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 4 e5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$
5 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 6 a3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 7 bc b6 8
 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (107)



Black to play: select your plan.

Plan A: Keep my King in the Centre and Open the c-file.

My observations on the nature of this position are as follows:

1) Taken together, White's space advantage, the structure of his pawns and the position of his pieces show that he is going to castle short and attack on the kingside.

2) The weak pawns on c3 and c2 are the real targets of my counterplay.
3) I have to work out a plan that includes defence of the kingside and counterplay on the opposite side.

On the basis of these considerations I think I should keep my king in the centre and I decide to commence operations on the queenside by 9 ... cd. My aim is to

open up the c-file on the weak c2 pawn and, after 10 cd $\mathbb{Q}bc6$, to tie the knight on f3 to the defence of the d-pawn to force White to waste a tempo for the development of his attack.

I intend to continue my counterplay by occupying the c-file and possibly c4 (... $\mathbb{Q}c8$, ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ -c4). By this means, I think I can divert White's attention from the king's wing by obliging him to defend on the queenside. I analyse a possible continuation: 10 cd $\mathbb{Q}bc6$ 11 c3 (11 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}ef5$ would favour Black) 11 ... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 13 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ g6 14 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ and I think I can wrest the initiative from my opponent's hands.

Plan B: Prepare a Flight Route for the King and Counterattack c2.

Here, too, I decide to keep my king in the centre but I don't want to play ... cd so as to retain the possibility of forcing away the bishop on d3 by ... c4 should White's attack on the kingside become really dangerous. In view of this possibility, I also think it prudent to open an escape route for my king towards the queenside.

Thus I decide to begin counterplay against the c2 pawn by 9 ... $\mathbb{Q}a4$ on the basis of the following

considerations:

- 1) My king now has d7 as a flight square.
- 2) The attack on the c2 pawn stops White moving his queen to the kingside as the reply ... c4 would mean the loss of the pawn on c2.
- 3) This move smothers White's chances of using his QB on the a3-f8 diagonal.
- 4) If White forgoes his attack on the kingside, I can open up the c-file and lay bare the weakness on c2 any time I choose.

I calculate the following: 10 ♕g5 h6 11 ♔h5 (if 11 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 12 ♔h5+ g6 13 ♖f3+ ♕e8 14 ♖f6 ♘d7 and the king walks to safety) 11 ... g6 12 ♔h3 c4 13 ♕e2 ♖xc2 winning a pawn.

Plan C: Get Rid of the Bad Bishop.

I consider that White's attack on the kingside, although it might be beaten off temporarily by ... h6 and ... g6, can be resumed with

greater intensity later. The key piece in White's attack is the KB which, on d3 or e2 (if Black plays ... c4), controls the white squares on the kingside.

For this reason, and to try and get rid of my bad bishop, I decide to seek the exchange of light square pontiffs by ♘d7-c8-a6. Thus I play 9 ... ♖c8 and calculate some possible developments:

- 1) 10 ♕e2 c4, winning the bishop.
- 2) 10 ♘g5 h6 11 ♔h5 g6 12 ♔h3 ♘a6 and after exchanging bishops White's attack will be less violent and the weakness of the c2 pawn even worse after the c-file is opened.
- 3) 10 a4 ♘a6 11 ♘b5+ ♖xb5 12 ab ♖d7 and the b-pawn is weakened and an eventual ending is risk-free because I have got rid of my bad bishop.
- 4) 10 ♘b5+ ♘d7 11 ♘d3 ♖c8 is a drawing variation, but with Black that is an acceptable result.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

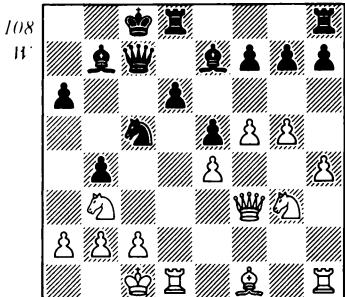
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 27

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d6 3 d4 cd 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5
 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ a6 6 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ e6 7 f4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8 $\mathbb{W}f3$
 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 9 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10 g4 b5 11 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$
 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 12 g5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 f5 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 14 h4 b4
15 $\mathbb{Q}ce2$ e5 16 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}g3$
0-0-0 (108)



White to play: select your plan.

Plan A: Exploit the Space Advantage

I enjoy a considerable space advantage on the kingside and I intend to make the most of this by increasing my pressure there as much as possible. However, Black's counterplay against the e-pawn limits the mobility of some of my pieces. I don't think it is right to try and solve this problem by the exchange 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ because after the recapture 18 ... $\mathbb{W}xc5$ Black would be well placed to carry out a later freeing ... d5 advance.

I therefore decide to defend my e-pawn with gain of time by 18 f6 to clear f5 and permit the

manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}f1-h3+-f5$. I calculate that the likeliest continuation is 18 ... gf 19 gf $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}h3+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f5$. The purpose behind this operation is to release my knight on g3 from defence of the e-pawn and simultaneously put Black's h-pawn under pressure. This latter point will enable me to take control of the g-file since Black cannot oppose rooks without losing his h-pawn.

Finally, if 18 f6 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19 fg $\mathbb{Q}xg7$, Black's pawn structure would be damaged owing to the weakness of d6 and f7, and in any case after 20 $\mathbb{Q}h3+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}hf1$ the pressure on the king's wing would be very strong.

Plan B: Exchange White-squared Bishops to Obtain Good Knight Versus Bad Bishop.

Unlike Plan A, I think the predominant strategic factors in this position are the presence of the bad black KB and the bedraggled pawns in front of Black's king. To exploit both these elements I decide to carry out the manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}f1-c4-d5$. The strategic reason is twofold: by exchanging the white-squared bishops I weaken the position of Black's king, a theme I can try to exploit in the middle game. At the same time, if I can cement

the black pawns on d6 and e5 I promote the possibility of obtaining a knight versus bad bishop ending.

I calculate that I can achieve my goals only at the price of sacrificing a pawn, for after 18 ♜c4 Black can reply 18 ... ♛xe4. Still, after 19 ♜d5 I think I can set up an effective blockade on d5 and e4, and the opening of the long diagonal h1-a8 can contribute to making the position of the black king even more exposed. After 18 ♜c4, if Black does not accept the pawn sacrifice, I intend to continue with the plan based on ♜c4-d5 because the capture on f7 is not a real threat on account of the discovered attack ... ♜xg5+.

Plan C: Double Rooks on the d-file to Pressurise d6.

As in Plan B, I intend to keep the bishop on e7 locked in but at the same time I don't want to ignore my advantage in space on the king's wing. I believe

that the advance f5-f6 would be very effective if I could get my knight on g3 to f5. In this case I would paralyse Black's KB and put considerable pressure on the backward d-pawn.

To these ends, I evolve a plan that develops in three stages:

- 1) control of d5 and attack on the d6 pawn by means of ♕h1-h2-d2.
- 2) defence of the e-pawn by ♜f1-g2.
- 3) the thrust f5-f6.

Before putting my knight on f5 I will have to move the queen so as to keep the e-pawn defended, e.g. to e3 or g4. I analyse that a plausible continuation could be: 18 ♕h2 ♜b8 19 ♕hd2 ♜c8 20 ♜g2 ♕hd8 21 f6 gf 22 gf ♜f8 23 ♜e3 after which I am ready to put my knight on f5. Alternatively, if Black decides sooner or later to play ... f6 in an attempt to counter on the kingside, he would completely shut in his bishop, e.g. 18 ♕h2 ♜b8 19 ♕hd2 f6 20 ♜e3 fg 21 hg h6 22 f6 gf 23 gh with a clear advantage.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

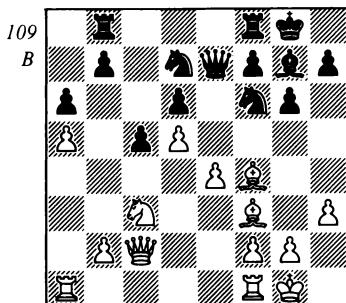
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 28

Modern Benoni

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 c5 3 d5 e6 4 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ ed5
cd d6 6 e4 g6 7 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$
 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 10 $\mathbb{W}c2$ 0-0 11
 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 12 h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$
 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 14 0-0 a6 15 a4 $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 16 a5
(109)



Black to play: select your plan.

Plan A: Kingside Action with ... f5.

White's intention with his last move was to discourage my planned counterplay on the queenside because now, after ... b5, a capture en passant would weaken my a-pawn which would be isolated and on an open file. To avoid compromising my queenside pawn structure, I decide to switch my counterplay to the king's wing. My idea is to occupy e5 with the knight on d7 and then clear the way for ... f7-f5 by playing ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ -d7. Thus I decide to play 16 ... $\mathbb{Q}e5$

creating the immediate threat of ... $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ which would seriously damage White's position. My opponent will probably have to move his bishop on f3, e.g. 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 18 f3 f5 with good chances of obtaining the initiative.

Occupation of e5 is very important for the following reasons:

- 1) for neutralising the pressure from the bishop on f4 on my d-pawn.
- 2) to prevent White getting in the e4-e5 breakthrough.
- 3) to support an eventual ... c5-c4 which frees c5 for the knight on d7.

Plan B: Occupy d4 and Open the d-file.

In contrast to Plan A, I don't think White's last move stops me playing on the queen's wing because after ... b7-b5, and the en passant capture, the weakness of my a-pawn is balanced by that of White's b-pawn. I also consider d4 to be an important weakness in White's camp as it can be occupied by my knight on f6 ($\mathbb{Q}f6$ -e8-c7-b5-d4) or my bishop on g7 ($\mathbb{Q}g7$ -d4).

On the basis of these considerations I elect to transfer my knight from f6 to c7 by playing 16 ... $\mathbb{Q}e8$. When the knight is on c7 I will act according to circumstances as

follows:

- 1) If White prevents me continuing my idea of occupying d4 with the knight (for example by playing $\mathbb{Q}f3-e2$) then I can occupy d4 with my bishop instead and open the b-file with b7-b5. After the capture en passant, the knight on c7 will usefully defend the a-pawn.
- 2) If White fails to control b5, I can continue the manoeuvre with $\mathbb{Q}c7-b5-d4$ seeing as the exchange $\mathbb{Q}c3xb5 \mathbb{a}6xb5$ would be strategically favourable to me.

As a possible development I calculate: 17 $\mathbb{E}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (if 18 $\mathbb{Q}e3$, $\mathbb{Q}b5$ etc.) 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}d4$, getting ready to continue ... b7-b5.

Plan C: Prepare the Advance ... c4.

It seems to me that the most important targets for counterplay in this position are as follows:

- 1) the weakness of d3 and b3 which can easily be fixed by the advance ... c5-c4.

2) the potential availability of the strong square c5 (again following ... c5-c4).

3) the possibility of organising an attack against the pawn on a5 which, by advancing, has become weak, e.g. by ... c5-c4, ... $\mathbb{Q}d7-c5-b3$, or with ... c5-c4, ... $\mathbb{E}f8-c8-c5$, ... $\mathbb{Q}f6-e8$, ... $\mathbb{W}e7-d8$.

Accordingly, I decide to prepare ... c5-c4 by playing 16 $\mathbb{E}fc8$. White can attempt to counter this plan in two ways and I analyse a number of possible continuations:

- 1) 17 b3 c4 18 b4 b5 19 ab $\mathbb{E}xb6$ and I think my prospects are superior because of the weakness of the pawn on b4 and the long diagonal a1-h8, and the presence of the passed c-pawn.
- 2) 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (with the idea of continuing $\mathbb{Q}e2-c4$) 17 ... c4 18 $\mathbb{E}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 19 $\mathbb{E}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}cxe4$ and the opening of the c-file plus the fall of the important e-pawn are favourable to me.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

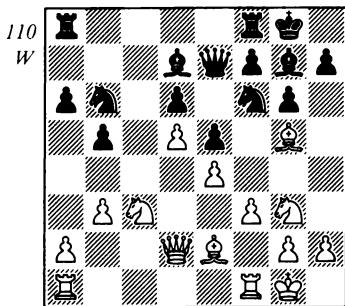
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 29

King's Indian Defence

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 e4
d6 5 f3 e5 6 $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ c6 7 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 0-0 8
 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 9 d5 cd 10 cd a6 11
 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ b5 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 13 b3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14
0-0 $\mathbb{W}e7$ (110)



White to play: select your plan.

Plan A: Gain Control of the c4 square and Occupy the c-file.

From an analysis of the pawn structure I deduce that the fundamental elements in this position are my space advantage in the centre - queen's side and the open c-file.

An attempt to take control of the c-file immediately, however, can easily be neutralised by my opponent, e.g. 15 $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{E}fc8$ 16 $\mathbb{E}c2$ b4 17 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{E}xc2$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xc2$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ etc. Before trying to occupy the file, therefore, I decide to prepare the ground by fixing Black's structure on the queenside with a two-stage manoeuvre:

- 1) attack the undefended knight on b6 by $\mathbb{Q}g5-e3$ so as to shift the attention of an enemy rook from the open file;
- 2) make the thrust a2-a4 (threatening to strangle Black's position by a4-a5) to force Black to play ... b5-b4. My aim is to win the strong square c4 which I will then occupy by $\mathbb{Q}c3-d1-b2-c4$.

My analysis goes as follows: 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{E}ab8$ (defending with the queen or moving the $\mathbb{Q}b6$ would clutter up Black's back rank) 16 a4 b4 (after 16 ... ba 17 ba I judge my position clearly advantageous) 17 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ a5 18 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ intending to occupy the c-file where I have also taken control of the important c4 square.

Plan B: Exchange Black's Fianchette Bishop and Open the f-file.

Contrary to Plan A, I think that in spite of the space advantage on the queen's wing, my sector of operations is the king's wing. I reckon I can launch an attack on the king's side by exchanging Black's fianchettoed bishop and then opening the f-file by f3-f4.

Black will probably try to develop counterplay on the c-file and so, to be free to act on the other side of the board, I have to prevent Black's heavy pieces getting

to the seventh rank. I think I can do this by playing the intermediate move ♜e2-d3, controlling the entry point at c2, and clearing e2 for my knight on c3 whence the knight can jump out to d4 or f4 once the e5 pawn has disappeared.

I must get on with my plan immediately since otherwise Black will be able to prevent the exchange of his bishop on g7 by moving the KR. I calculate as follows: 15 ♜h6 ♜fc8 16 ♜xg7 ♜xg7 17 ♜d3 ♜c5 18 f4 ♜ac8 19 ♜ce2 and now the threat of f4-f5 should force Black to exchange on f4 which will give me excellent attacking prospects against the weakened king's position.

Plan C: Advance the h-pawn to h6 and then Open the f-file.

As in Plan B I want to open the f-file with the thrust f3-f4 but I think I have better attacking chances if I hold on to my dark-

squared bishop because the pin on the knight on f6 is certainly annoying to my opponent. I calculate, though, that it's not in my interest to implement my idea straight away because Black can easily rid himself of the pin, e.g. 15 f4 h6 16 fe (forced because 16 ... ♜h4 would be met by 16 ... ef and ... g6-g5.) 16 ... hg 17 ef ♜xf6 and despite the disarray of his pawn structure, Black has a good game thanks to his complete control over the black squares.

Thus I decide to prevent the reply ... h7-h6 by first pushing up my h-pawn and only later breaking through with f3-f4. I calculate: 15 h4 ♜fc8 (if 15 ... h5 I can implement my plan immediately with 16 f4) 16 h5 ♜f8 17 h6 ♜h8 and I now have the time to take measures to relieve the pressure on the long diagonal a1-h8 before playing f3-f4.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

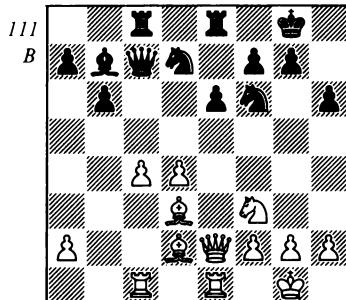
PLAN B

PLAN C

Test 30

Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 4 e3
0-0 5 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ c5 6 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 7 0-0 dc 8
 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ cd 9 ed b6 10 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 11
 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$
 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 14 bc $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 15 c4 $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 16
 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ h6 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ (111)



Black to play: select your plan.

Plan A: Pressure Against the c-pawn.

I think my objective is to put all possible pressure on the hanging pawns in order to force White to defend them and thus restrict the freedom of movement of his pieces. The position of my pieces makes it easier to attack the c-pawn than the d-pawn so I decide to concentrate my forces against c4.

Thus I play 17 ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$, tying the knight on f3 to the protection of g2, and I think I will continue with ... $\mathbb{Q}a4$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$. My aim

is to force White to defend his pawns on c4 and a2 and so distract his attention from his natural zone of attack, the kingside. Later I will be able to increase my pressure on c4 by doubling rooks on the c-file or by the manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}e8-d8$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}f6-e8-d6$.

I calculate a plausible continuation 18 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}ec1$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ and now I am not afraid of the thrust c4-c5 because it would enable me to exchange light-squared bishops and would give me control of the excellent square d5.

Plan B: Alter the Structure of the Hanging Pawns.

The advantage that the hanging pawns give White lies essentially in control of the segment of squares b5, c5, d5 and e5. This makes it impossible for me to occupy central, advanced positions with my pieces.

On the basis of this reasoning, I decide to prepare ... e6-e5 in order to attack White's d-pawn. The purpose of this advance is to weaken the structure of the hanging pawns for no matter how White responds (d4xe5 or d4-d5) the c-pawn will become weaker and I will gain the strong square c5. At the moment, however, ... e5 is prevented because White controls this square

four times.

To achieve my objective, and avoid my opponent shutting in the bishop on b7 by d4-d5, I decide to play 17 ... ♜xf3. I calculate that after 18 ♜xf3 e5 19 d5 (19 de ♜xe5 is favourable to Black) 19 ♜c5, the weakening of the c-pawn, the winning of the c5 square and the blocked character the position has assumed, offset White's advantage of the bishop pair and the passed pawn on d5.

Plan C: Simplify the Position.

The hanging pawns can be exploited as a weakness mainly in the ending, i.e. when the space advantage they confer has lost a lot of its significance owing to the piece simplification. I decide, therefore, to create a tactical threat to force White to simplify for defensive purposes.

I play 17 ... ♜g4 with the threat of ♜xf3 followed by

♛xh2+. I calculate that White cannot parry this threat without permitting a simplification of the position. For example:

- 1) 18 ♜e5 ♜gxe5 19 de ♜c5 and the exchange of knights, the opening of the d-file and the weakening of the c-pawn outline the possibility of entering a favourable ending.
- 2) 18 ♜e4 ♜xe4 19 ♜xe4 ♜gf6 and the exchange of light-squared bishops diminishes White's attacking possibilities on the king's wing and brings the endgame closer.
- 3) 18 d5 ♜c5 (not 18 ... ed? 19 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 20 ♜xe8+ ♜f8 21 ♜b4 and White wins) 19 ♜b1 ♜d7 and the forthcoming opening of the e-file will enable me to exchange at least some of the heavy pieces.
- 4) 18 g3 would enable White to avoid simplifying the position but would seriously weaken the long diagonal h1-a8.

STRATEGY: tick the plan you think correct:

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

TACTICS: note briefly any tactical reasons why you rejected any of the plans.

PLAN A

PLAN B

PLAN C

Solution of Test 22

PLAN A: Generally speaking your strategic evaluations are fairly accurate for it is true that in positions of this type Black has the better ending because of the weakness of White's d-pawn. Remember, however, that the over-simplification you propose in the variation 16 ... ♕b4 17 ♕xb4 ♕xb4 18 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 19 ♜xc8+ ♜xc8 rarely gives anything more than a draw.

Although your strategic idea is correct, this plan contains a serious tactical fault. You have failed to see that White can demolish your idea and win two pieces for a rook. Let's see how: 16 ... ♕b4? 17 ♜xc6! and there's no way out, e.g. 17 ... ♜xd2 18 ♜xc8 ♜xc1 19 ♜xc1 and wins, or 17 ... ♜xc6 18 ♜xc6 ♜xd2 19 ♜d6 and wins. The least evil would therefore be to play 17 ... ♜xc6 18 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 19 ♕xb4 but in this ending the prospects of using the heavy artillery along the c-file are practically nil as White can easily block it by placing his bishop on c3.

PLAN B: The attack on the front of the pawn chain with the thrust ... f7-f6 is a recurrent strategic idea in positions that present a blocked centre of the type in question. However, the chances for success

of this idea generally lie in Black's ability to achieve ... e5 later (after White's e-pawn has disappeared). If he can't, the e6 pawn remains seriously weakened and can, with regard to the ending, represent a weakness much more serious than that of the d4 pawn. It is for this reason that on many occasions, in the event of the exchange e5xf6, Black opts to retake by ... g7xf6, even though it exposes the king to more risks.

If White is able to block the pawn pair e6 and d5, and put a piece firmly on e5, solidly protected by the pawn on d4, Black's strategy can be essentially considered a failure. If you choose this plan you will probably end up in this last situation owing to your superficial analysis. Let's take a look: 16 ... f6?! 17 ♜f4! fe?? 18 ♜xe5! ♜xe5 19 ♜xe5 and the h-pawn cannot be taken because White will seize the seventh rank. You should therefore continue with 19 ... ♜xc2 20 ♜xc2 ♜c8 21 ♜g4 ♜f8 22 ♜e2 with a slight advantage for White.

PLAN C: This is the correct way to take quick advantage of White's mistake on his last move. Very generally speaking, we can say that the exchange of rook and pawn for bishop and knight is

almost always favourable to the player who is left with the two minor pieces, but under exceptional circumstances the rook may prevail. In the present position, the exceptional circumstances consist of the knight on h4 which plays no part in the defence of the queen's wing and the inability of the bishop to block the c-file. White's pieces are therefore unco-ordinated and it is the pawns on the queenside that will pay the price.

Additionally, the distance of the white king aids the penetration of Black's heavy pieces and a latent threat will be the doubling of rook and queen on the eighth rank.

The continuation is highly instructive and we advise the student to examine it closely because it is a model of this rare type of ending.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 4 points

PLAN B: 3 points

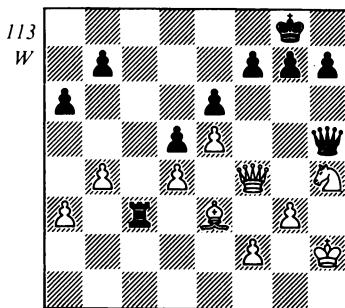
PLAN C: 10 points

Tactical points: 3 points if you saw White's correct line against Plan A (17 $\mathbb{E}xc6$!).

Hort-Hübner West Germany 1982

16 ... $\mathbb{A}xh4!$ 17 $\mathbb{E}xc6$ $\mathbb{E}xc6!$ (Judging the position exactly, Hübner decides to forgo the gain of a second pawn: after 17 ... $\mathbb{A}xf2+?$! 18 $\mathbb{W}xf2$ $\mathbb{E}xc6$ 19 $\mathbb{A}c3!$ White would have been able to

hang on to a rook and block the c-file.) 18 $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ $\mathbb{E}xc1+$ 19 $\mathbb{A}xc1$ $\mathbb{W}a4$ (To force White to weaken his queenside pawns.) 20 $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{W}h8$ 21 a3 $\mathbb{W}c2$ 22 $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{W}g8$ (To defend the f-pawn and release the rook.) 23 b4 (In view of the threat of ... $\mathbb{E}c8$, White is forced to look after his b-pawn.) 23 ... $\mathbb{E}c8$ 24 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{W}d1+$ 25 $\mathbb{W}h2$ $\mathbb{W}h5$ 26 g3 $\mathbb{E}c3$ (113)



With this penetration down the c-file, Black commences the attack against the queenside pawns which have been left to look after themselves.

27 a4 (Or 27 $\mathbb{A}c1$ $\mathbb{W}d1$ 28 $\mathbb{A}b2$ $\mathbb{E}c2$ and wins.) 27 ... $\mathbb{E}b3$ 28 $\mathbb{W}g2$ (Or 28 $\mathbb{A}d2$ h6 and wins.) 28 ... $\mathbb{E}xb4$ 29 a5 $\mathbb{E}b1!$ (Threatening ... $\mathbb{W}d1$. White is now forced to exchange queens because if 30 f3, h6 wins easily.) 30 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xf3+$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ b6 32 ab a5 (The distance of the white king is decisive.) 33 $\mathbb{A}g5$ a4 34 $\mathbb{A}e7$ $\mathbb{E}xb6$ 35 $\mathbb{A}e1$ $\mathbb{E}b2$ 36 $\mathbb{A}c5$ h5 37 $\mathbb{A}d3$ a3! 38 $\mathbb{A}xa3$ $\mathbb{E}b3$ 0-1

Solution of Test 23

PLAN A: Black's position is only apparently inoffensive. In reality it nurtures considerable dynamism both on the king's wing (... f5) and on the queen's wing where your white squares are not exactly strong. Black is ready to hit you on either front, depending on what action you take.

By following this plan you think you are obliging your opponent to open up the centre with the advance of the f-pawn. But you're wrong: you have underestimated his chances of reacting on the queenside. Let's have a look: 17 ♖d2?! a4! with two possible variations, analysis of which should convince you of how easy it is to lose control of the situation:

- 1) 18 ♜xa4 ♖xd4! 19 ♜xd7 (if 19 ♖xd4 ♜xa4 and Black has an easy time) 19 ... ♖xc2 20 ♜xe6 ♖xe1 21 ♖xd5 ♖xf3+ and White is the exchange down in a difficult ending with chances for both sides.
- 2) 18 ♜a2 ♜a5 19 ♜ad1 b5 20 ♜c3 ♜c4 21 ♜b1 g6 and Black has no problem taking over the f5 square by ... ♜g8-h6-f5.

So this plan is too slow and gives Black the chance to improve his position much faster than you yourself can.

PLAN B: Compared to Plan A,

this one has the advantage of speed of execution and it is easy to be seduced by the vulnerability of the king. Here too, however, you have underestimated the dynamism of Black's position, in this case on the kingside. Let's take a look: 17 ♜d3 a4 18 ♜c2 g6 19 h4 f5! and now, if you want to continue the attack you have to open up the centre, otherwise Black will not waste any time organising counterplay on the queenside. So the game might go on: 20 ef ♜xf6 21 ♜g5 ♜g8 22 ♜d2 ♜h5! and now you have to try and stem the tide of Black's offensive on the king's wing. As in Plan A, the situation has got out of hand: in both cases you would have the unpleasant feeling of having frittered away a position you judged superior.

PLAN C: This is the only way to keep a grip on the whole board: the pin on the knight on c6 puts a cloud over Black's f5 and also prevents counterplay on the queen's wing. So Black is held in a vice and, to defend his knight on c6, he is forced to downgrade the position of his pieces. You can then try to bring about simplification so as to gradually reduce the dynamic potential concealed in Black's position. Only in this way

can c-file pressure produce tangible strategic fruits.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 3 points

PLAN B: 4 points

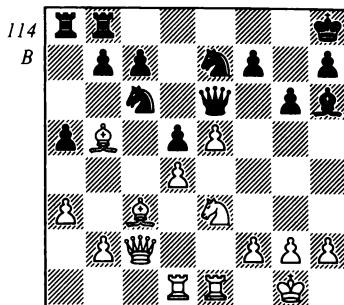
PLAN C: 10 points

Tactical points: 2 points if you saw Black's correct line against Plan A (17 ... a4!).

**Ljubojević-Larsen
Buenos Aires 1980**

17 $\mathbb{Q}a4!$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ (Black should probably have tried 17... f5!? 18 ef $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ — 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$? allows White to exploit the weakness of e5 immediately: 19 $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ and wins — 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bc with a very complicated position albeit structurally favourable to White.) 18 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ (Here 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$?! $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xc6$ bc is not good because c5 cannot be prevented.) 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ (Not 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 19 $\mathbb{W}e2$ c6 20 ab cb 21 ba winning a pawn.) 19 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}ge7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (White's strategy has enabled him to force an advantageous simplification of the position.) 20 ... g6 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ (After 21 ... fe 22 $\mathbb{B}ac1$ Black is practically immobilised whereas White can increase the the pressure by $\mathbb{Q}e3$ -g4 and $\mathbb{Q}d2-g5$.) 22 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (Defends d4 and prepares f2-f4-f5. The reader might note that Ljubojević has whipped life into the strategic idea of Plan A without giving Black a moment's respite.) 22 ...

$\mathbb{Q}h6$ (Played to prevent f2-f4; on 22 ... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 23 f4 f5 24 ef $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 25 g3 followed by $\mathbb{Q}b5-d3$, the vulnerability of Black's king's position is evident.) 23 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ (114)



White has very accurately contained his opponent's possible reactions and has greatly improved his own position. Now he girds himself to crush the kingside by g2-g3 followed by f2-f4.

23 ... $b6$? (A fatal error which allows White to decisively renew his pressure on the knight on c6.)

24 $\mathbb{W}a4!$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ (Not 24 ... $\mathbb{Q}d8$? 25 $\mathbb{Q}d7$.) 25 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ (Threatens 26 $\mathbb{B}c1$ with wailing sirens down the c-file.) 25 ... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ (White rams home his advantage with an original combination)

26 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}c4!$ (The point! Black's bishop has nowhere to go.) 30 ... $\mathbb{W}e4$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}bc6??$ (When you're resigning it doesn't really matter what you move or where you move it.) 33 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 1-0

Solution of Test 24

PLAN A: You have got White's real threat wrong. He is not intending a diversion down the wing ($h2-h4-h5$) but something much more direct — preparing the crushing advance $d4-d5$ with $\mathbb{Q}g4-f3$. His last two moves (24 $\mathbb{E}e3$ and 25 $\mathbb{E}f1$) should have alerted you. White is defending his e-pawn three times (thus countering your threefold attack) not so as to play $e5-e6$ but to prepare $d4-d5$ which would otherwise have been impossible.

If you had understood your opponent's real intentions you would have noticed that no blockade of the black squares is practicable because, by playing ... $f6$, you would give White two united passed pawns which will become irresistible. Against White's real threat your defensive plan is so seriously inadequate that it actually makes matters worse since by moving the queen you leave your knight undefended. Let's see: 25 ... $\mathbb{W}f8?$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ (only the manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}c6-a7-c8$ can give any meaning to the attempt to blockade the black squares) 27 $d5$ $f6$ 28 $e6$ (threatening $d5-d6$) 28 ... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 29 $a4!$ and the game is lost: if 29 ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$, 30 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ and wins; and if 29 ... $b4$ 30 cb ab 31 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{E}b7$ 32 $e7!$ $\mathbb{E}xe7$ 33 $\mathbb{E}xe7$

$\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 34 $d6+$ and wins.

PLAN B: Sacrificing the exchange is the only way to set up an effective blockade of White's central pawns. Retaking with the queen, though, is not the safest line. Committing the queen to blockading the e-pawn drastically reduces her mobility, and if she were ever to abandon $e6$ White would be able to open up the position to his rooks' advantage by $e5-e6$. Thus, following this plan would leave you without your most important piece for generating counterplay. In blockading operations it is always best to commit the least valuable piece. So what better than the pawn?

The game continuation will show the effectiveness of the knight and pawn blockade and the importance for Black of keeping his queen mobile.

PLAN C: The pawn recapture on $e6$ is the correct line. The $d5$ square is thus solidly defended and kept open for future occupation by the knight while the other black pieces, free from defensive tasks, can cooperate in the counterattack on the queen's wing.

You are also quite right to note that White cannot penetrate down

the f-file since tripling is not easy because the ♜g6 can easily control f1 by moving to d3. It is vitally important that the bishop on b2 is bad and ineffective because White can always return the exchange for Black's QB (e.g. when it is on d3) and thus gain a pawn. Black must, therefore, get ready to play an ending a pawn, rather than the exchange, down. The superiority of the knight on d5 over the bishop on b2 will offset the material disadvantage.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 0 points

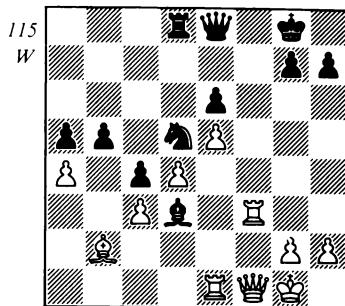
PLAN B: 5 points

PLAN C: 10 points

Tactical points: No tactical points awarded in this test.

Reshevsky-Petrosian Zurich 1953

25 ... ♜e6! 26 a4 (Those who choose Plan B would not know how to meet this move, e.g. 26 ... b4 27 d5 ♜xd5 28 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 29 ♜xc4 and here Black has no compensation for the exchange.) 26 ... ♜e7 27 ♜xe6 (Refusing the exchange offer gives White nothing, e.g. 27 ♜f3 ♜d5 28 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 and with opposite coloured bishops Black has nothing more to fear.) 27 ... fe 28 ♜f1 (To avoid the fork on d5 as well as preparing to return the exchange should Black play ... ♜d3.) 28 ... ♜d5 29 ♜f3 ♜d3 (115)



It can easily be seen that White has no choice but to return the exchange in order to enter an ending a pawn up. If he does not, Black threatens ... b4 with a double attack on c3 and a4. In this position the exchange minus is amply compensated by Black's complete control of the white squares.

30 ♜xd3 cd 31 ♜xd3 b4! (Here we are able to appreciate the vital importance of the e6 pawn. If now 32 c4 ♜b6 and, while the e-pawn holds up d4-d5, the queen and knight together cull the a-pawn.) 32 cb ab 33 a5 ♜a8 34 ♜a1 ♜c6 (In spite of being a pawn down Black's position is preferable. Now, in fact, it is White who has to play accurately for a draw.) 35 ♜c1 ♜c7 36 a6 ♜b6 37 ♜d2 b3 38 ♜c4 h6 39 h3 b2 40 ♜b1 ♜h8 (If 40 ♜xa6 41 ♜c8+ ♜h7 42 ♜c2+ recovering the pawn on b2.) 41 ♜e1 (But not 41 ♜c3? ♜xa6 42 ♜xa6 ♜xa6 43 ♜xb2 ♜b6 etc.) ½-½

Solution of Test 25

PLAN A: This is the positionally most correct way, trying to win without running pointless risks. It is true that the bishop is superior in this ending thanks to the asymmetric pawn structure. Although there is no mathematical certainty that the envisaged ending is won, you have enough cards in your hand to judge it superior.

It is also right to think that as long as the heavy pieces are on the board occupation of the d-file is a priority from the strategic point of view. By exchanging off the four rooks you remove all Black's chances to complicate, as happens in fact in the other two plans.

PLAN B: You are guilty of a strategic error in thinking that it is easier to exploit your queenside majority by holding on to the heavy pieces. Generally speaking, possession of a passed pawn (or the chance of creating one quickly as here) is practically equivalent to having an extra pawn. Therefore the strategy you should follow is that necessary for exploiting a material advantage, namely simplifying as much as possible.

Moreover, your verification of the plan is also faulty because you missed a vital tactical counterblow. Let's have a look: 19 a3? $\mathbb{W}g5!$ with the two-fold threat of 20 ...

$\mathbb{Q}f4+$ and 20 ... $\mathbb{E}d2$. Now you would be forced to continue with 20 f4 but after 20 ... $\mathbb{W}f5$ 21 $\mathbb{E}cd1$ h5, your position would be seriously weakened.

PLAN C: This strategic idea is certainly tempting but you have underestimated Black's defensive resources. The pawn moves you have in mind (h2-h4-h5) appreciably weaken your king's position and, if you fail to wake up in time, you could be in deep trouble. Let's see: 19 h4 $\mathbb{W}b7+$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}h2?$ $\mathbb{E}c5!$ and with this move Black threatens to stop your attack by ... h5, e.g. 21 $\mathbb{E}cd1$ $\mathbb{E}xd1$ 22 $\mathbb{E}xd1$ h5! followed by ... $\mathbb{E}f5$ with a rock-like position. To be consistent with your plan you would then have to continue 21 h5? but a nasty shock would await you: 21 ... $\mathbb{E}d2!!$ and the rook can't be taken because of mate in two! Another disastrous continuation would be 22 $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{E}xb2$ 23 hg hg.

To avoid these tactical ploys you would have to play 19 h4 $\mathbb{W}b7+$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g1!$ but in this case, too, Black has interesting defensive resources, e.g. 20 ... h5!? 21 $\mathbb{W}xh5$ $\mathbb{E}d2$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{E}c5$ 23 $\mathbb{W}g4$ (not 23 $\mathbb{W}xc5?$ bc 24 $\mathbb{E}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ and Black wins) 23 ... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (also 23 ... $\mathbb{E}xa2$ 24 h5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{E}xe5$ 26 h6 f6! is probably playable for Black) 24

$\mathbb{A}xe5 \mathbb{B}xe5$ 25 a4 $\mathbb{E}ee2$ with sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn. These variations show that when your bishop goes so do most of your chances of gaining an advantage.

The moral of the story? If you have two seemingly equally good strategic lines (Plan A and Plan C) always pick the less risky one. At the worst you will have risked winning, not losing!

Strategy points: PLAN A: 10 points

PLAN B: 1 points

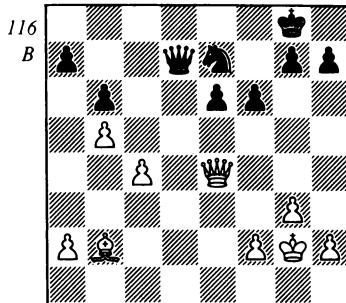
PLAN C: 7 points

Tactical points: 3 points if you saw Black's correct line against Plan B (19 ... $\mathbb{W}g5!$). 7 points if you saw Black's correct line against Plan C (21 ... $\mathbb{E}d2!!$)

Hort-Antoshin Luhacovice 1971

19 $\mathbb{E}cd1$ (Against 19 $\mathbb{E}fd1$ Black would have 19 ... $\mathbb{W}g5$ and if 20 $\mathbb{W}e4$ then 20 ... $\mathbb{E}d2$. The text move prevents this continuation because now if Black continues 19 ... $\mathbb{W}g5$, there would follow 20 $\mathbb{W}e4 \mathbb{E}d2?$ 21 $\mathbb{A}c1$ and wins.) 19 ... $\mathbb{E}c7$ 20 $\mathbb{E}xd8+$ $\mathbb{W}xd8$ 21 $\mathbb{E}d1 \mathbb{E}d7$ 22 $\mathbb{E}xd7 \mathbb{W}xd7$ 23 $\mathbb{W}e4 f6$ 24 b4 (After the simplification the majority takes to the road: it is by no means easy for Black to halt the advance of the white pawns because the

knight on g6 is badly placed.) 24 ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 25 b5! (116) (Not 25 c5? bc 26 bc which allows Black to blockade the pawn at c6.)



The text move illustrates the correct technique in such positions — now the action of bishop and pawns complements each other and the bishop can easily back up a future c4-c5 while the knight can do nothing to stop it.) 25 ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 26 $\mathbb{A}a3 \mathbb{W}f7$ 27 $\mathbb{A}b4$ (With the idea of continuing a2-a4 and c4-c5.) 27 ... $\mathbb{W}d1$ 28 c5 $\mathbb{W}d5$ (If Black doesn't get the queens off the end is not far away, e.g. 28 ... $\mathbb{W}a4$ 29 c6 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 30 $\mathbb{W}d4 \mathbb{Q}xb5$ 31 $\mathbb{W}d7+$ and wins.) 29 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ ed 30 a4 $\mathbb{W}e6$ 31 c6 $\mathbb{Q}d4?$ (31 ... g6 was necessary. The text move allows an elegant conclusion.) 32 f4! (Immobilising the knight, e.g. 32 ... $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 33 f5+! and the c-pawn queens.) 32 ... f5 (On 32 ... g6 there follows 33 $\mathbb{A}c3 \mathbb{Q}b3$ 34 $\mathbb{A}xf6$ and wins.) 33 $\mathbb{A}c3 \mathbb{Q}b3$ 34 $\mathbb{A}xg7 \mathbb{Q}c5$ 35 g4 1-0 because if 35 ... fg 36 f5+ and White promotes one of his pawns.

Solution of Test 26

PLAN A: In positions of this type your worst enemy is the bishop on d3 for the pressure it exerts on the b1-h7 diagonal prevents you castling and getting your rooks into communication. No less dangerous is the QB, sole owner of the black squares. Its action can be destructive on both diagonals c1-h6 and a3-f8. Black's defence against the white bishops is largely based on the pawn on c5. This stalwart obstructs the a3-f8 diagonal and, if the pressure on the kingside gets dangerous, Black can deflect the bishop on d3 by the advance ... c4. Nor must you forget that you have given up the bishop pair and thus opening up the game is good for White.

For these strategic reasons it is definitely wrong to precipitate the exchange ... cd because the white bishops will then dominate the whole board. Let's see what might happen: 9 ... cd? 10 cd ♜bc6 11 ♜d2! ♜c8 12 h4 and Black's counterplay is paralysed, whereas White has all the time he needs to organise pressure on the king's wing (e.g. h4-h5, ♜h1-h3-g3).

PLAN B: Your considerations are correct: you don't have to open the c-file in order to exert pressure on the c2 pawn and, in the event of your king having to flee to the

queenside, it would be wise to block the centre by ... c4.

The presence of the bishop on a4 chokes the bishop on c1 and, depending on circumstances, you can alter the central pawn structure later. Don't, however, think you have the situation completely in hand, because it will not be easy to defend the kingside if White decides to sacrifice his c2 pawn. For example, 9 ... ♜a4 10 ♜g5!? h6 11 ♜h5!? (quieter is 11 ♜h3 with the idea of mobilising the f-pawn) 11 ... g6 12 ♜h3 c4 13 ♜e2 ♜xc2 14 ♜a2 ♜b3 15 ♜b2 and now you would probably be forced to come up with some imaginative king manoeuvre to relieve the kingside pressure: 15 ... ♜f8!? 16 f4 ♜g7 17 ♜f3 ♜g8! with the idea of continuing with ... ♜g7-f8-e8-d7.

PLAN C: The strategic idea behind this plan is not wrong, indeed it is consistent with Black's seventh move. Some comments are due, however:

1) If 9 ... ♜c8 10 a4 ♜a6 11 ♜b5+ ♜xb5 12 ab ♜d7, White can sacrifice his b-pawn and get enough compensation in his domination of the diagonal a3-f8, e.g. 13 ♜e2 c4 14 ♜a3 ♜xb5 15 ♜g5 with a position in which the real importance of the extra pawn is

hard to evaluate.

2) The move ... ♜c8 loses a tempo because White has gained the move ♜f1-d3. This loss would not be important in a closed game, but your opponent could attempt to open things up, e.g. 9 ... ♜c8 10 ♜g5 h6 11 ♜h5 g6 12 ♜h3 ♜a6 13 0-0 ♜xd3 14 cd cd 15 c4! with the idea of gaining e4 for the knight. As you can see from this illustrative variation, the position now is not as closed as it once was and White's better development could be a vital factor.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 2 points

PLAN B: 10 points

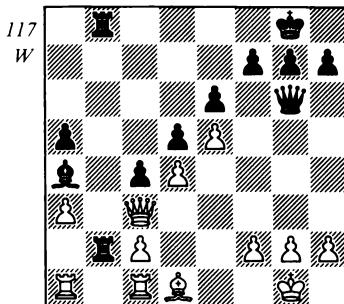
PLAN C: 5 points

Tactical points: No tactical points awarded in this test.

Wedberg-Short Dortmund 1983

9 ... ♜a4 10 0-0 (Perhaps too quiet, making life easier for Black.) 10 ... ♜bc6 11 ♜e1 ♜d7 12 dc?! (Underestimating the danger of opening the b-file. 12 ♜e3 was better so as to force Black to state his intentions in the centre.) 12 ... bc 13 ♜e3 c4 14 ♜f1 ♜b8 15 ♜a2 ♜b7 (Not 15 ... 0-0? because of 16 ♜xc4.) 16 ♜c5 ♜b5 17 ♜b4 a5 18 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 19 ♜d4 ♜xd4 20 cd 0-0 21 ♜d2 ♜fb8 22 ♜c3 ♜b7 23 ♜aa1 ♜b2 24 ♜ec1 (If 24 ♜xa5 ♜xc2 and Black's advantage would be notably increased because of the weakness of the a- and d-

pawns and the presence of the passed c-pawn.) 24 ... ♜e7! (With the idea of continuing ... ♜e7-g5-g6 to force the ♜f1 to come to the defence of the c-pawn.) 25 ♜e2 ♜g5 26 ♜d1 ♜g6 (117)



White is now totally tied down to the defence of his c-pawn because the variation 27 ♜xa5 ♜xc2 28 ♜xc2 ♜xc2 29 ♜b1 ♜f8 30 ♜xc2 ♜xc2 would be favourable to Black. 27 ♜d2 h6 28 ♜c3 ♜8b5 29 ♜d2 ♜f8 (A very instructive position. Black is preparing to bring his king to a6 before forcing the play with ... f6.) 30 ♜c3 ♜e8 31 ♜d2 ♜d8 32 ♜c3 ♜c8 33 h4?! ♜d7! 34 ♜d2 ♜e7 35 ♜c3 ♜e4 36 g3 ♜f8 37 ♜f3 ♜f5 38 ♜d1 g5 39 hg hg 40 ♜d2 ♜g7 41 ♜c3 g4 42 ♜d2 ♜g6 43 ♜e2 ♜b8 44 ♜xg4+ (Sooner or later White will have to agree to this losing simplification in view of the threatened manoeuvre ... ♜h8 and ... ♜h5.) 44 ... ♜xg4 45 ♜xg4 ♜xc2 46 ♜f3 ♜8b3 47 ♜g2 ♜d3 48 ♜h1 ♜xd4 49 ♜h8 ♜g7 50 ♜ah1 ♜d2 51 ♜a8 ♜h7 0-1

Solution of Test 27

PLAN A: Your space advantage on the kingside indicates a sharp position of attack and counterattack. After Black has castled long, the initiative is drained of its main objective — the enemy king.

The exploitation of the g-file and pressure against the h-pawn constitute a strategic theme which hardly ever works at this stage of the game. By decentralising, White helps his opponent's chances of reacting on the queen's wing (... a5-a4) and in the centre (... d5). In addition, your plan allows Black to use his KB on the c1-h6 diagonal, thus neutralising the major part of his inferiority in any endings. After 18 f6 gf 19 gf ♘f8 20 ♘h3+ ♖b8 21 ♘f5, it is hard to see how the knight on g3, with only the squares h5, e2 and f1 available, can get into the thick of the fight, while Black can set up threats with 21 ... ♘h6+ 22 ♖b1 a5. From this continuation, you will readily understand that your plan of controlling the g-file is too slow and fails to hit at the vital points of Black's position.

PLAN B: The correct plan. The fact that the black king has crept away to the queen's wing does not mean that he has found a secure

haven. Also, his defence is now in the hands of the same pieces which have to create counterplay (the knight on c5 and bishop on b7). By eliminating these pieces you will simultaneously wipe out Black's counterplay and seriously weaken his king.

Your observation that the ending would also be favourable to White because of the bad bishop on e7 is very important and constitutes one more reason why you should attempt to exchange off Black's active pieces. The sacrifice of the e-pawn is amply compensated in both the middle and end games by the control of d5 and e4 which you can exploit with your heavy artillery.

PLAN C: The only positional flaw with your plan is the inactive placing of the KB on g2. On the whole, however, the idea is a very good one. If White manages to double rooks on the d-file and get a knight to f5 then his position can be considered strategically won.

The major fault is tactical and, even though not too obvious, it is thematic in positions of this type. White must always remember that his opponent is waiting for the right moment to free his position

with ... d5. Here, you yourself offer him this chance by placing your rook on the diagonal b8-h2, an apparently innocuous one. Let's see: 18 $\mathbb{H}h2$ d5! 19 ed (or 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ with the same idea as the continuation) 19 ... e4! and the pawn cannot be taken because of the undefended rook on h2. Even after 20 $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$, it is not easy for White to satisfactorily solve the problem connected with the pressure on the b8-h2 diagonal and Black's position, albeit at the price of a pawn, has taken on a considerable dynamism.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 2 points

PLAN B: 10 points

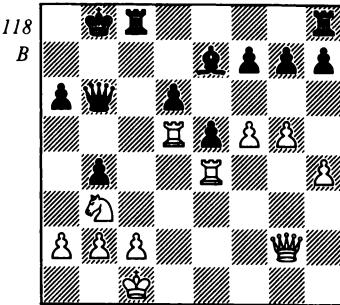
PLAN C: 5 points

Tactical points: 5 points if you saw Black's correct line against Plan C (19 ... e4!).

Ljubojević-Portisch Lucerne Ol 1982

18 $\mathbb{Q}c4!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ (This reply is strategically forced because otherwise White can continue with his plan without losing the e-pawn, e.g. 18 ... f6 19 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ fg 20 $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 21 hg with a crushing positional superiority.) 19 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xg3$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ (Black cannot simplify *ad infinitum* as he would have little hope of salvation in the ending, e.g. 20 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 21 $\mathbb{H}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}c4$ 22 $\mathbb{H}hd1$ $\mathbb{W}f4+$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xf4$ ef 24 $\mathbb{H}1d4$ with an obvious advantage.) 21 $\mathbb{H}he1$ $\mathbb{H}c8$ 22 $\mathbb{W}g2$ (Defending the

mate on c2 and threatening to simplify to the ending by 23 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 24 $\mathbb{W}xb7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 25 $\mathbb{H}e4$ recovering the material. The terror of the good knight versus bad bishop endgame hangs over Black like the sword of Damocles.) 22 ... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 23 $\mathbb{H}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 24 $\mathbb{H}e4!$ (118)



A singular example of a perfect blockade by rooks. The inefficiency of the bishop on e7 is total and its inadequacy aggravates the problem of defending the king.) 24 ... $\mathbb{H}c7?$ (24 ... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ would have saved the b-pawn, but Black's position would in any case have been desperate.) 25 $\mathbb{W}g4!$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ (25 ... $\mathbb{H}b7$ is not possible because of 26 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ etc.) 26 $\mathbb{H}xb4$ $\mathbb{W}e3+$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $h5?!$ (Despair; now White finishes very elegantly.) 28 $\mathbb{W}d1!$ $\mathbb{H}hc8$ 29 $\mathbb{W}f1!$ (Threatening $\mathbb{W}xa6+$ and mate on a5.) 29 ... $\mathbb{Q}a8$ (On 29 ... $\mathbb{H}c6$ 30 $\mathbb{H}d3$ the black queen is captured.) 30 $\mathbb{H}a5$ $\mathbb{H}a7$ 31 $\mathbb{W}h1+$ (Magnificently crowning the idea of clearing the h1-a8 diagonal and weakening the opponent's white squares.) 1-0

Solution of Test 28

PLAN A: In this position your opponent's main objective is to break through in the centre with e4-e5. It will be very hard for him to achieve this without playing the supporting move f2-f4. For this reason, White already intends to remove his two bishops to clear the road for the f-pawn. By playing 16 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ you merely facilitate his plans as you force him to make a move he would have made anyway ($\mathbb{Q}f3-e2$), and you give him the chance to play f2-f4 with gain of tempo because of the attack on the knight.

Generally speaking, we can say that occupation of e5 is effective when White can be kept from playing f2-f4. Otherwise, it is best to exert maximum control over the square without actually occupying it. Moreover, the thrust ... f7-f5 is strategically compromising because it seriously weakens e6. Let's see what might happen: 16 ... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 18 $\mathbb{W}d2!$ (against 18 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ or 18 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ Black could strengthen the position of the $\mathbb{Q}e5$ by 18 ... g5) 18 ... f5?! 19 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 21 f4 with a favourable position for White.

PLAN B: This is correct because it lets all your pieces take part in the game. Clearance of the long

diagonal a1-h8 and opening of the b-file greatly enliven Black's game, and the weakening of the a6 pawn is offset by that of b2.

In a substantially balanced position, like this one, the most important thing is to obtain the initiative so as to distract your opponent from carrying out his plans.

White cannot afford to allow a knight into d4 but, on the other hand, the arrival of the bishop slows up his attack because it pins the f-pawn.

PLAN C: The advance ... c5-c4 is thematic in positions of this type. Sometimes it is played even at the price of a pawn sacrifice provided that Black is able to gain the initiative in return. In your plan, however, the c-pawn cannot be sacrificed because it is required for the securing of the weak squares d3 and b3, and thus essential for a sizeable part of your counterplay. In our position, this thrust is premature and compromising because it offers White an additional object of attack. Moreover, if he manages to capture the c-pawn you will be completely without compensation since your entire plan pivots around this pawn. This, in fact, is exactly what would

happen, owing to a tactical detail you have overlooked. Let's see: 16 ... $\mathbb{E}fc8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ c4? 18 $\mathbb{E}a4$ (at this point the pawn is already lost) 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 19 $\mathbb{E}xc4$ and now you can't restore material equality by taking the e-pawn because if 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}cxe4?$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{E}xc4$ 21 $\mathbb{E}xf6+$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 22 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ and White is a piece up. 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}fxe4?$ is also impossible since after 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ the $\mathbb{Q}c5$ is pinned.

Strategy points: PLAN A: 5 points

PLAN B: 10 points

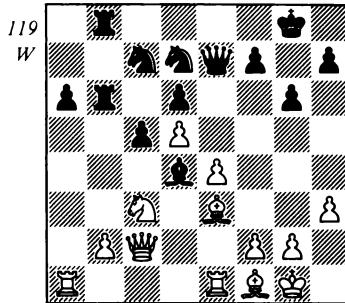
PLAN C: 2 points

Tactical points: 3 points if you saw White's correct line against Plan C (22 $\mathbb{W}xc4$).

Razuvayev-Tseshkovsky
USSR Ch. 1978

16 ... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 17 $\mathbb{E}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (After 18 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ Black would have been able either to continue his manoeuvre to occupy d4 by 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}b5$, or play 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}d4!$? with the idea, after an exchange, of opening the c-file for counterplay.) 18 ... $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ (The move that gains the initiative. White's plan f2-f4 marks time because of the pin on the f-pawn, whereas Black can open the b-file quickly.) 19 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ b5 20 ab (Positionally forced for otherwise Black would trample all over the queenside.) 20 ... $\mathbb{E}xb6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{E}fb8$ (119)

The weakness of White's b2 pawn fully compensates that of Black's a6 pawn; Black, however,



has the initiative and therefore the advantage.

22 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ (Or 22 $\mathbb{Q}a4$, $\mathbb{E}b4$ so as to retake on d4 with the rook.) 22 ... cd 23 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{E}6b7$ 24 b3?! (After 24 $\mathbb{E}ad1$, Black gains a clear advantage by either 24 ... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ or 24 ... $\mathbb{W}f6$. White should have played 24 f4.) 24 ... $\mathbb{W}f6!$ 25 $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 26 $\mathbb{W}d2$ g5 (Definitively preventing f2-f4; the d-pawn cannot be taken because of ... $\mathbb{Q}f3+$.) 27 $\mathbb{E}ed1$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 28 f3?! (White could have put up greater resistance by 28 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{E}xb5$ 29 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{E}xb3$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}c3$. After the text move the situation precipitates because Black can clear d4 and use it as a stopping off point for his troops.) 28 ... d3! 29 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 30 $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{E}xb3$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (If 31 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$, $\mathbb{Q}dx5+32 gf \mathbb{E}xf3$ with a winning attack.) 31 ... $\mathbb{E}8b4$ 32 $\mathbb{E}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2+$ 33 $\mathbb{W}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 34 $\mathbb{E}a2$ $\mathbb{W}d4+$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}e5+$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 37 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ 39 $\mathbb{W}c8$ (Or 39 gh $\mathbb{E}xf3+$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{E}g3+$ with an easy win.) 39 ... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 40 $\mathbb{W}f5$ $\mathbb{W}xf5$ 41 ef $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}xf5$ 0-1

Solution of Test 29

PLAN A: The correct plan. Black's cramped position does not allow him to concentrate his forces on the queen's wing: specifically, his bishop on g7 and knight on f6 will long remain out of the action. This is why it is not important to maintain the pin on the knight on f6. It is very unlikely that this knight will be able to help on the queenside, whereas the dark-squared bishop now on e3 will force Black to use a rook to defend his knight on b6 thus making it possible for you to occupy the c-file. The manoeuvre you want to execute on the queenside (a2-a4) has a very precise aim, for when Black has committed his pawns to b4 and a5 the advent of your knight at c4 will put great pressure on the weak points d6 and a5.

In addition, by drawing forward Black's a- and b-pawns you will open up the f1-a6 diagonal and thus increase the power of your KB.

PLAN B: Strategically this plan has many faults:

1) in this position the bishop on g7 is completely harmless and, moreover, if we are talking about a future ending, it is also bad. Exchanging it for your QB means giving Black a big present;

- 2) Attacking on the kingside is like rowing against the current because your advantage is all on the other side. On the kingside Black has a massed concentration of forces and the outcome of the battle is highly uncertain;
- 3) The advance f3-f4 is not positionally advisable: after the capture ... ef your e-pawn is seriously weakened and Black can generate play from the strong square e5 which you yourself have given him.

By following this plan you would give your opponent excellent counter chances as well as solving his space problems, e.g. 15 ♜h6?! ♜ac8 (leaving the KR to defend the f-pawn in case of the opening of the f-file) 16 ♜xg7 ♜xg7 17 ♜d3 h5! and now it is Black who threatens to take the initiative on the kingside. For example, after 18 h4 ♜h7 the h-pawn falls, and if 18 ♜g5, ♜h8 with the double threat of 19 ... ♜xc3 and 19 ... ♜fxd5, and, finally, if 18 f4 then 18 ... ef 19 ♜xf4 ♜g4 with myriad possibilities.

PLAN C: This plan intends the advance f3-f4 and thus contains the same strategic faults we mentioned with regard to Plan B. Nevertheless, the idea of pushing the h-pawn to h6 is quite appealing

and, if it were practicable, would certainly make it hard for Black to counter on the king's wing. On the other hand, Black would retain his fianchettoed bishop which would become very active with the opening of the long diagonal a1-h8.

The idea of this plan, by comparison with Plan B, has the advantage of not simplifying the position and of really squeezing Black's position on the king's wing. None of this can be realised in practice, however, because Black has a counterblow which has escaped your calculations: 15 h4 $\mathbb{E}fc8$ 16 h5 h6! and the h6 pawn cannot be taken because the $\mathbb{Q}c3$ is hanging. After 17 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{E}ab8$ 18 hg fg, the situation just isn't what you thought it would be and contains chances for both sides.

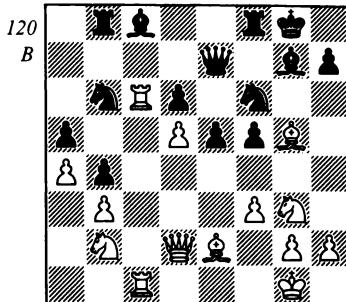
Strategy points: PLAN A: 10 points
PLAN B: 2 points
PLAN C: 4 points

Tactical points: 2 points if you saw Black's correct line against Plan C (16 ... h6!).

Portisch-A. Rodriguez
Toluca 1982

15 $\mathbb{A}e3!$ $\mathbb{E}ab8$ 16 a4 b4 (Positionally forced.) 17 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ a5 18 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{A}c8$! (Black frees the d7 square for the knight on f6 so as to obtain counterplay on the kingside with ... f5. This strategem ignores the c-file but it is the only real chance. In fact, if 18 ... $\mathbb{E}fc8$ 19 $\mathbb{A}xb6$ $\mathbb{E}xb6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ and the a5 pawn is doomed.) 19 $\mathbb{E}ac1$ (Not 19 $\mathbb{A}xb6$?

$\mathbb{E}xb6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ as the a-pawn cannot be taken because of the check on a7.) 19 ... $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 20 $\mathbb{E}c6$ f5 21 ef gf 22 $\mathbb{A}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 23 $\mathbb{E}fc1$ (120)



White's plan has been completely successful: his rooks have pierced enemy territory and the knight on f6 and bishop on g7 have been unable to take part in the defence of the queenside.

23 ... $\mathbb{A}d7$ 24 $\mathbb{E}c7$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}c4$! (The last brick in the plan is pushed into place. Black is forced to exchange because if 25 ... $\mathbb{Q}bx5$? 26 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ with a decisive advantage, or 25 ... $\mathbb{Q}fxd5$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 27 $\mathbb{W}xd6$ with a big advantage.) 25 ... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 26 $\mathbb{E}1xc4$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 27 $\mathbb{E}xc8$ $\mathbb{A}xc8$ 28 $\mathbb{E}c6$! $\mathbb{W}d7$ (28 ... $\mathbb{W}e7$ fails against 29 $\mathbb{W}c2$ with a double attack on c8 and f5.) 29 $\mathbb{A}a6!$ $\mathbb{E}xa6$ 30 $\mathbb{E}xa6$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 31 $\mathbb{E}xa5$ f4 32 $\mathbb{A}xf6$ fg (Black can't allow this knight to reach e4.) 33 $\mathbb{W}g5$! $\mathbb{W}f7$ 34 $\mathbb{A}xg7$ $\mathbb{W}xg7$ 35 $\mathbb{W}xg7+$ $\mathbb{B}xg7$ 36 hg $\mathbb{E}c3$ 37 $\mathbb{E}a7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 38 $\mathbb{E}d7$ $\mathbb{E}xb3$ 39 $\mathbb{E}xd6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 40 $\mathbb{E}b6$ $\mathbb{E}b1+$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ h5 42 a5 b3 43 a6 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 44 a7 $\mathbb{E}a1$ 45 $\mathbb{E}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 46 $\mathbb{E}b7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 47 $\mathbb{E}h7$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 48 $\mathbb{E}e7$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 49 f4 e4 50 f5 e3 51 $\mathbb{E}xe3$ $\mathbb{E}xa7$ 52 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 1-0

Solution of Test 30

PLAN A: Hanging pawns best express their power and give the maximum space advantage when they are side by side. The fight against hanging pawns has to be conducted gradually, provoking a weakening in their structure or simplifying as much as possible. It is unlikely that a direct attacking strategy can give good results because to implement it you have to decentralise at least some of your pieces. In this case your opponent can exploit his space advantage to the full, gaining control of the centre and using it as a base to launch an attack against the weakest sector.

So the main fault of this plan lies in the decentralisation of the pieces. You should also realise, however, that 1) the pawn on a2 cannot be taken because the black queen would be trapped, 2) abandoning the diagonal h2-b8 further weakens the black squares, facilitating the return of the bishop on d2 to the game.

Let's see what could happen if Black followed this plan: 17 ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 18 h3 (the c-pawn is already defended three times and White has no need to protect it by doubling on the c-file; with the text move White prepares $\mathbb{Q}d2-f4$ and frees h2 to prevent ... $\mathbb{Q}f6-h5$) 18

... $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ and White's massive central control can spell danger for Black's kingside, e.g. 20 ... $\mathbb{Q}ed8?$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ mate, or 20 ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5?!$ 21 de $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ with a huge attack on the castled position.

PLAN B: This is the correct plan. Black thus obtains a real weakening of the hanging pawn structure and achieves a first simplification of the position, albeit at the price of granting his opponent the bishop pair against the knight pair.

Paradoxically, after d4-d5 White loses some of his space advantage because he gives Black control of the central squares c5 and e5. After 17 ... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ e5 19 d5 $\mathbb{Q}c5$, Black has a concrete object of attack (the c-pawn) and an equally concrete objective in defence (blockade of the passed d-pawn). In addition, the closed nature of the position is favourable to the knights and the bishop pair can come into its own only if White manages to open up the game.

PLAN C: The idea that this plan is based on is correct because simplification of the position would be in Black's favour.

Strategically, it should be men-

tioned that the alteration that occurs after the continuation 17 ... ♘g4 18 ♜e5 ♘gxe5 19 de, although weakening the structure of the hanging pawns, increases White's space advantage on the king's wing and so makes his attacking prospects even more dangerous, as we have already seen in a possible variation of Plan A. Apart from that there is a tactical defect in this plan because White can easily parry the threat of ... ♜xf3 followed by ... ♜xh2+. Let's see how: 17 ... ♘g4? 18 h3! ♜xf3 19 ♜xf3 ♜h2+? 20 ♜f1 and Black loses a piece because of the threat of 21 ♜f4 ♜h1+ 22 ♜e2 winning the queen. As this variation is not possible, Black must play 19 ♘gf6 with the consequent loss of two tempi.

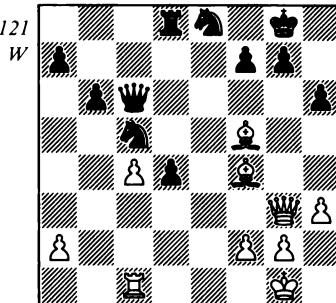
Strategy points: PLAN A: 4 points
PLAN B: 10 points
PLAN C: 5 points

Tactical points: 5 points if you saw White's correct line against Plan C (18 h3!).

Portisch-Karpov
Bugojno 1978

17 ... ♜xf3! 18 ♜xf3 e5 19 ♜g3?
(White does not want to close up the centre and favour the play of the opposing knights and counts on the variation 19 ... ed 20 ♜f4 ♜c6 21 ♜xh6 without realising that after 21 ... ♘h5! the bishop on h6 would be lost. This oversight

costs the loss of the d-pawn without compensation.) 19 ... ed 20 ♜xe8+ (Recognising his error, Portisch tries at least to decentralise the knight on f6.) 20 ... ♘xe8 21 ♜f4 ♜c6 22 ♜f5 ♜d8 23 h3 ♘c5 (121)



The hanging pawns have been destroyed and the loss of the d-pawn is not compensated by the bishop pair. Let's not forget that queen and knight work together better than queen and bishop. If we had forgotten, watch what Karpov does.

24 ♜d1 ♜f6! 25 ♜b1 ♜e6 26 ♜h2 ♜f8 27 ♜e5 (White jettisons his c4 pawn hoping to get back Black's d-pawn, but once again things work out differently.) 27 ... ♜xc4 28 ♜f4 (If 28 ♜g4, ♜e6 29 ♜xe6 ♘xe6 30 ♜f5 ♜d5 with a decisive advantage.) 28 ... ♘e6 29 ♜e4 ♜d5 30 ♜e2 ♘d6 31 a4 ♘c4 32 ♜g3 ♘c5 (The two bishops are impotent against the centralised knights.) 33 ♜a2 d3 34 ♜e1 ♜d4 35 f3 ♘e3 36 ♜d2 ♜e8 37 ♜c1 ♘xa4 38 ♜h1 ♘c5 39 ♜f2 ♜e5 40 ♜b1 ♜g8 0-1

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Rating Assessment

Score	ELO	BCF	Score	ELO	BCF
138	1220		216	1740	
141	1240	80	219	1760	145
144	1260		222	1780	
147	1280	85	225	1800	150
150	1300		228	1820	
153	1320	90	231	1840	155
156	1340		234	1860	
159	1360	95	237	1880	160
162	1380		240	1900	
165	1400	100	243	1920	165
168	1420		246	1940	
171	1440	105	249	1960	170
174	1460		252	1980	
177	1480	110	255	2000	175
180	1500		258	2020	
183	1520	115	261	2040	180
186	1540		264	2060	
189	1560	120	267	2080	185
192	1580		270	2100	
195	1600	125	273	2120	190
198	1620		276	2140	
201	1640	130	279	2160	195
204	1660		282	2180	
207	1680	135	285	2200	200
210	1700		288	2220	
✓ 213	1720	140	291	2240	205