

GAMBIT

50 Essential Chess Lessons

Steve Giddins

A modern look at 50 immensely
instructive chess battles



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Steve Giddins

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Symbols

+	check
++	double check
#	checkmate
!!	brilliant move
!	good move
!?	interesting move
?!	dubious move
?	bad move
??	blunder
Ch	championship
1-0	the game ends in a win for White
½-½	the game ends in a draw
0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
(D)	see next diagram

Acknowledgements

As always, Graham Burgess was invaluable as editor, while John Nunn's willingness to act as my unofficial, 24-hour IT helpdesk was all that stood between me and several technical disasters. Thanks are also due to Gerard Welling, who kindly supplied the full score of Euwe-Van Doesburgh, the opening moves of which I had been unable to locate. The customary disclaimer of course applies.

This book is dedicated to my most successful chess pupil (he knows who he is). I suppose I should have written this while I was still coaching you, but better late than never.

Introduction

One of the first chess books I ever acquired was Irving Chernev's *The Most Instructive Games of Chess Ever Played*. This collection of striking positional games proved to be not only a great source of pleasure, but also an excellent initiation into many of the basic elements of positional play. Unfortunately, the book was published in 1966 and although it is still available and remains in many ways a valuable piece of work, it does now appear rather dated. Its descriptive notation has been entirely superseded, while over the past 40 years, chess itself has moved on in many respects. For example, openings such as the Sicilian and King's Indian Defence are barely represented at all in Chernev's book, with the result that some of the most common and important modern-day pawn-structures are not covered. Furthermore, since the latest game Chernev gives was played in 1961, several generations of top-class players since that date are absent.

For these reasons, the idea was born to produce a 21st-century version of Chernev's concept. In putting this book together, I have followed a number of principles:

- 1) In all cases, I have sought to locate games which are particularly clear and didactic examples of the theme concerned. In some cases, this has led to me choosing games that are older than some of those used by Chernev, but the majority are more modern.
- 2) I have tried wherever possible to choose games that are not particularly well-known or widely published. As a result, although many of the world champions and great masters are represented here, it is generally not by one of their most widely-known games.
- 3) In seeking to achieve point 2 above, I have also included a number of games by lesser-known players. These tend in the main to be Soviet players, which reflects not only the dominance of the Soviet school during much of the 20th century, but also my own particular interest, since I have lived in Russia for several years and have an extensive acquaintance with Russian chess literature. I hope that as a by-product of this book, readers to whom such names as Makagonov, Romanovsky, Simagin and others are not well-known, will be sufficiently impressed by the games given here to seek out more examples of the play of these splendidly talented masters.
- 4) I have also tried to be a little more systematic than was Chernev in presenting different aspects of chess. As a result, the games are grouped into chapters dealing with different topics, each of which has an introduction explaining the main points about the topic concerned. This should help readers who wish to use the book to study a particular subject. I have also endeavoured to cover as wide a range of subjects as possible within the space available, including both middlegame and endgame themes.
- 5) In annotating the games, I have concentrated on verbal explanations, and have kept concrete tactical variations down to the minimum that is necessary to make sense of the games. This has been done in the hope of attaining maximum clarity in presenting the positional concepts themselves, without obscuring the message or confusing the reader with long variations. Fortunately, one of the benefits of living in these silicon-enhanced times is that those readers who wish to delve more deeply into concrete tactical variations can, if they wish, use a chess program to assist them in this process.

For maximum instructional benefit, I would recommend that readers follow the advice of such luminaries as Nimzowitsch and Purdy, and cover the moves up with a card, trying to work out each move as if playing the game themselves. However, those of you who lack either the time or the incentive to do this should still be able to learn a good deal from simply playing the games over and reading the annotations. Most of all, however, I hope that you will all enjoy seeing these beautiful

games. If you derive half as much pleasure from reading the book as I have from writing it, my work will not have been in vain.

Steve Giddins
Rochester, UK
2005

1 Attacking the King

Given that the aim of the game is checkmate, attacking the enemy king is the most obvious and direct way to try to win a game of chess. Chess is essentially a war game, and the basic principles of military conflicts frequently apply on the chessboard. In order to attack any particular target successfully, it is necessary to be able to bring superior forces to bear on the target. In chess terms, this means getting more (and more powerful) pieces into the attack than the defender is able to bring to the defence. In addition, any military commander understands that weaknesses in the defensive fortifications are an important element in aiding the success of an attack. On the chessboard, this frequently translates into a weakening of the king's pawn-cover, with an advanced pawn (e.g. on h3 or g3) often providing a target for the enemy attack.

A key element in kingside attacks is the location of the kings. Essentially, there are three possible scenarios. The enemy king can either be in the centre, castled on the opposite side from the attacking side's king, or castled on the same side. These three possibilities usually imply certain modifications of the attacking methods employed, and the three games presented in this chapter exemplify the three scenarios. In all cases, however, the ultimate aim of the attack is the same. The attacker tries to break open lines against the enemy king, so that his pieces can then attack the king directly. This is frequently achieved by sacrifices. As noted above, the important thing in an attack is bringing more pieces to the vital sector than the defender is able to do. If the attacker can achieve this, the fact that the overall material count is against him is usually of little importance. What matters is who has more pieces in the relevant area of the board.

Game 1
Averbakh – Sarvarov
USSR Team Ch, Moscow 1959
 Queen's Gambit Declined, Exchange Variation

In this example, we see an attack carried out in a position where both kings have castled, but on opposite sides of the board. The usual strategy in such situations is to advance one's pawns against the enemy king, so as to break open lines, and this is the strategy illustrated here. As the game shows, speed is of the essence in such situations.

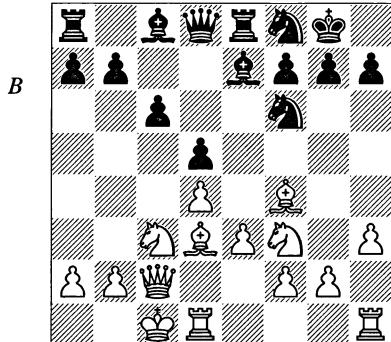
1 c4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♜f3 ♜f6 4 ♜c3 ♜bd7

With this move-order, rather than the more common 4...♝e7, Sarvarov probably intends to head for the Cambridge Springs Variation, after 5 ♜g5 c6 6 e3 ♜a5. However, Averbakh avoids this by exchanging on d5 immediately.

5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♜f4

If White intended to castle kingside, the bishop would usually go to g5. However, as will become clear, White instead plans 0-0-0, followed by an advance of his kingside pawns, in which case the bishop would be in the way on g5.

6...c6 7 ♜c2 ♜e7 8 e3 0-0 9 ♜d3 ♜e8 10 h3 ♜f8 11 0-0-0 (D)



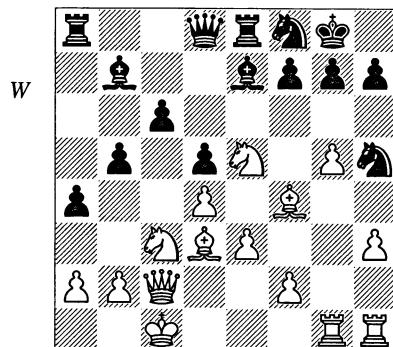
With his last move, White has declared his intentions. By castling on the opposite side from Black, he intends to pursue a direct attack on the enemy king. In such positions, the normal method is by a pawn-storm. Thus, White will throw forward his kingside pawns, aiming thereby to open lines against the black king. Meanwhile, Black himself will not be idle, but will look to carry out a similar process on the queenside, where the white king is located. In such opposite-castling situations, time is usually

of the essence, with victory going to the side which first succeeds in breaking through to the enemy king.

11...b5

This move accords with the idea of a pawn-storm, but paradoxically, it does not prove so effective. Instead, Black has a better way of trying to open lines against White's king. He should utilize the fixed position of the pawn on d4, which gives Black something to 'bite on', by means of the advance ...c5. Preferable therefore is 11...♝e6, followed by ...♜c8 and ...c5, opening the c-file. True, this would leave him with an isolated pawn on d5, but such a consideration is secondary in a case like this, where attacking the enemy king is paramount.

12 ♜e5 ♜b7 13 g4 a5 14 ♜dg1 a4 15 g5 ♜h5 (D)



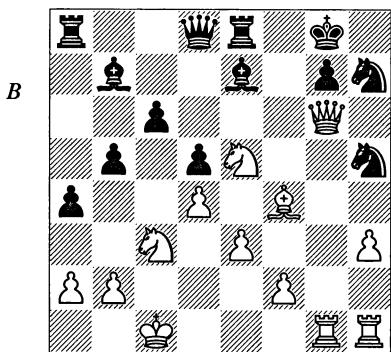
Both sides have pursued the strategy of a pawn-storm against the enemy king, but it is not clear how White can open lines effectively. Usually in such positions, he would continue h4-h5 and g6, but here this is impossible because of the black knight blockading on h5. A slow plan to remove the knight, such as 16 ♜e2, runs the risk of conceding the initiative

to Black, who is ready to press on with his counterplay on the other wing, by ... $\mathbb{W}a5$ and ... $b4$. As pointed out above, time is of the essence in such positions, and Averbakh wishes to prosecute his attack with maximum speed. To this end, he does not balk before a piece sacrifice.

16 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$! $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 17 g6

This is the point of White's play. By means of the sacrifice, he has breached the black king's fortifications. Black is forced to capture on g6, since a knight retreat loses at once to 18 gxf7+.

17...fxg6 18 $\mathbb{W}xg6$ (D)

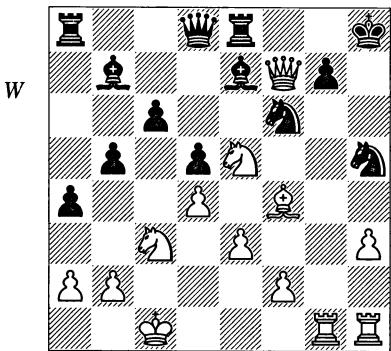


Thus, White has broken through to the black king with his heavy pieces. Although he has only one pawn for his piece, the attack is overwhelming. Black's extra piece is in fact the b7-bishop, which is completely out of the game, so far as the action on the other side of the board is concerned.

18... $\mathbb{Q}f7f6$

The only way to save the h5-knight.

19 $\mathbb{W}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ (D)



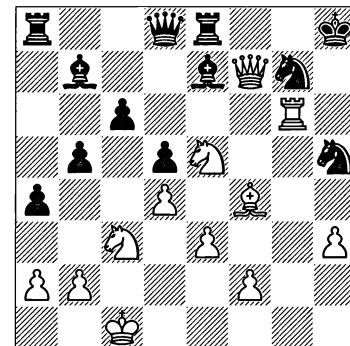
20 $\mathbb{W}xg7!$

Another sacrifice to tear away the last remnants of the black king's defences. Once again, Black's extra material (the b7-bishop and a8-rook) is standing idle on the queenside.

20... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 21 $\mathbb{R}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}fh5$

After 21... $\mathbb{R}g8$, White wins by 22 $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ and 23 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$, when both the g8-rook and the f6-knight are attacked.

22 $\mathbb{R}g6$ (D)



With the decisive threat of 23 $\mathbb{Q}h6\#$. Black can only stave this off temporarily by sacrificing his queen.

22... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 23 $\mathbb{R}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 25 $\mathbb{R}xd6$

White has more than regained his sacrificed material, and now even has a small nominal material advantage. Far more important, however, is the overpowering initiative and exposed black king.

25... $\mathbb{W}e6$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}f8+$ $\mathbb{R}xf8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{R}f6$ 28 $\mathbb{W}e7$ 1-0

The Essential Lessons

- In positions where the kings have castled on opposite sides, the normal strategy is a direct attack on the enemy king, using a pawn-storm to open lines.
- Speed is usually of the essence in such positions. He who first opens up the enemy king usually wins. Such positions therefore generally amount to a race between the opposing attacks, and Devil take the hindmost.
- Don't be afraid to sacrifice material to accelerate the attack. The defender's extra material frequently has no value, if it is out of play on the other wing and cannot come to the aid of his king.

Game 2
Geller – Kotov
USSR Ch, Moscow 1955
 Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Closed

In this game, the kings are both castled on the kingside. This typically has a fundamental effect on the strategy employed, since with his own king on the same side, the attacker must be very careful about advancing the pawns in front of his king. In many cases, this will expose his own king at least as much as the enemy's. The more usual strategy is therefore to attack with pieces, which is what we see here.

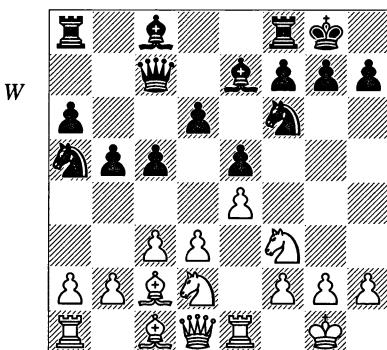
1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5 a6 4 ♜a4 ♜f6 5 0-0 ♜e7 6 ♜e1 b5 7 ♜b3 0-0 8 d3

Black's last move threatened to adopt the infamous Marshall Attack after 8 c3 d5. This line, invented by the great American player Frank Marshall, offers Black strong attacking chances after acceptance of the pawn by 9 exd5 ♜xd5 10 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 11 ♜xe5 c6, followed by ...d6, ...h4, etc. Like many top players, Kasparov included, Geller prefers to side-step the line.

8...d6 9 c3 ♜a5

This move is the start of a typical plan for Black in the Ruy Lopez. The knight drives back the white 'Spanish bishop', and opens the path for the advance of his c-pawn to c5, securing additional space on the queenside. The main drawback of the plan is that the knight frequently finds itself offside on a5, and Black usually has to make some concession in time or central space, in order to recycle the knight.

10 ♜c2 c5 11 ♜bd2 ♜c7 (D)



This position is very typical for the main line of the Closed Lopez, with the small exception that White's d-pawn is on d3, rather than d4, as is more usual. Black has extra space on the

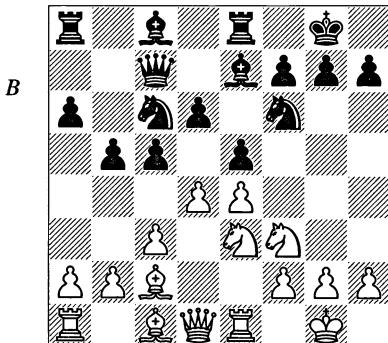
queenside and generally seeks counterplay on that side of the board. White, by contrast, usually tries to build an attack on the black king. However, comparing this position with that arising in Game 1, we immediately see a very important difference, namely that in this game, both kings have castled on the same side. In Game 1, we saw that when castling occurs on opposite sides, the usual attacking plan is to advance one's pawns against the enemy king. Here, however, an analogous plan by White (for example, with h3 and g4) would be quite out of place, because White would run the risk of exposing his own king at least as much as Black's. A quick black counterattack in the centre, based around the advance ...d5, would prove highly dangerous. Instead, where both kings have castled on the same side, the attack is more usually conducted with pieces, rather than by a pawn-storm, and this is the pattern we see in the present game. There are some exceptional cases where a pawn-storm can be carried out in front of one's own king (notably when the centre is blocked, thereby preventing a quick counterattack in the centre), but a piece offensive is far more common.

12 ♜f1

This is a step in White's plan. The knight will come to g3 or e3, from where it may jump to f5, as part of an attack on the black king.

12...♜c6 13 ♜e3 ♜e8 14 d4 (D)

Although it may not seem so, this move too is part of White's plan to attack the enemy king. The pawn advance opens the diagonal of the Spanish bishop, which is lurking on c2, and also attacks the black central pawn on e5. White hopes to induce Black to exchange the e5-pawn, thereby releasing the blockade on



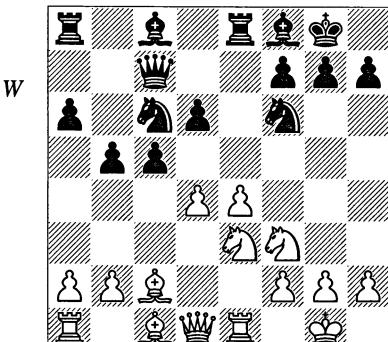
White's e4-pawn. This would in turn create a potential threat of White playing e5, which would both drive away the defending knight from f6, and also open the diagonal of the c2-bishop, all the way to the h7-square.

14...exd4

Black falls in with his opponent's wishes, since he sees the chance to bring quick pressure to bear on White's e4-pawn. However, as the game shows, his plan is risky, because even though Black succeeds in winning the e4-pawn, the resulting opening of lines towards his king exposes him to a dangerous attack. It was safer to take with the c-pawn, and then follow up with something like ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ and ... $\mathbb{B}c8$, trying to use the open c-file for counterplay on the queenside.

15 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ (D)

All part of Black's scheme of attempted larceny. The move opens the line of the e8-rook, which attacks the e4-pawn.



16 b3!

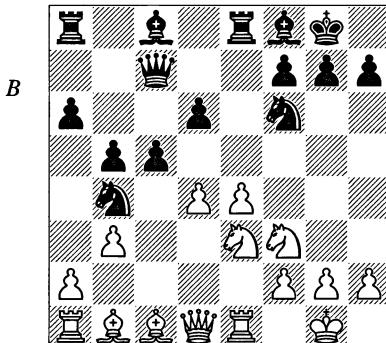
An excellent move. Rather than prevent Black's next with 16 a3, Geller offers a pawn sacrifice and meanwhile prepares to put his queen's bishop on b2, from where it will eye

the black king's position down the long diagonal.

16... $\mathbb{Q}b4$

The immediate capture 16... $\mathbb{Q}xe4??$ would lose a piece after 17 $\mathbb{Q}d5$, but now White is virtually forced to allow the e4-pawn to go.

17 $\mathbb{Q}b1!$ (D)



Preserving the Spanish bishop, which will be a key piece in the forthcoming kingside attack.

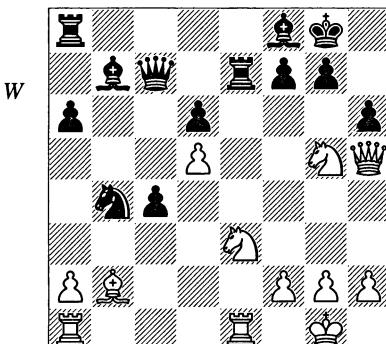
17... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 19 d5!

A powerful move, which at a stroke cuts two black pieces off from the kingside (the b7-bishop and b4-knight). The immediate threat is 20 a3, winning a piece.

19...c4

Black chooses a tactical defence, intending to answer 20 a3 with 20...c3, threatening 21...c2. However, with the black minor pieces temporarily offside on the queenside, Geller is now ready to unleash his attack on the other flank.

20 bxc4 bxc4 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ h6 (D)



24 $\mathbb{Q}f5!$

See the note to move 12. Suddenly almost all of the white pieces are participating in the

attack, whereas the black units on b4, b7 and a8 are just spectators.

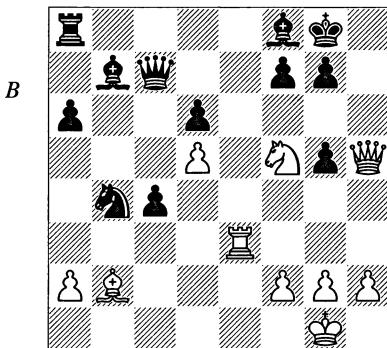
24... $\mathbb{E}xe1?$

In view of what follows, Black should prefer 24... $\mathbb{E}ae8!$. This sacrifices an exchange, but after 25 $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{E}e7$, Black will pick up the d5-pawn and have two pawns by way of compensation, as well as defusing many of White's attacking threats. This type of material sacrifice to break an attack is a typical defensive technique, which we shall look at further in Chapter 2.

25 $\mathbb{E}xe1$ $hxg5$

The threat was 26 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$, followed by 27 $\mathbb{E}e7$.

26 $\mathbb{E}e3!$ (D)

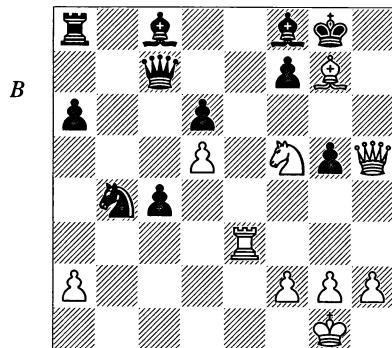


Bringing up the last reserves. As with the latter stages of Game 1, White may be nominally behind in material, but he has far more pieces in action where it matters.

26... $\mathbb{Q}c8$

26...f6 loses to 27 $\mathbb{W}g6$, threatening $\mathbb{Q}h6+$, $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ and $\mathbb{Q}h3$, mating.

27 $\mathbb{Q}xg7!$ (D)



27... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 28 $\mathbb{R}e8+$ $\mathbb{K}f8$ 29 $\mathbb{R}xf8+$ 1-0

It is mate next move.

The Essential Lessons

- When both kings castle on the same side, a piece attack is much more likely than a pawn-storm in front of one's own king.
- Sacrifices are frequently used to open up the enemy king-position.
- The important thing is not who has more material on the board, but who has more material in the vital sector. White's attack above succeeded because he was able to concentrate all of his pieces on the kingside, while Black had pieces offside on the other flank, which were unable to take an effective part in the defence.

Game 3

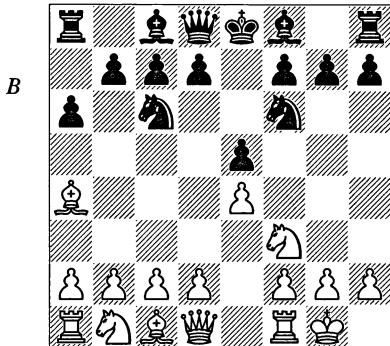
J. Polgar – Mamedyarov

Olympiad, Bled 2002

Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Open

The previous two games have both featured attacks on castled kings. Here we see the black king trapped in the centre of the board. In open positions, this is generally a highly dangerous situation for the king, as he is exposed to the full attack of the enemy pieces, down the open central files. The key feature of such attacks is to retain the initiative, and not allow the defender any time to evacuate his king from the danger zone, or to bring additional pieces into the defence. The attacker must operate with continual threats, to keep the defender off-balance.

**1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5 a6 4 ♜a4 ♜f6 5
0-0 (D)**



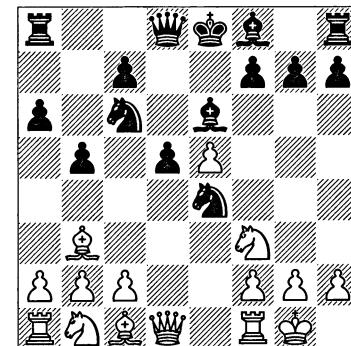
5... ♜xe4

This move characterizes the Open Defence to the Ruy Lopez, championed in the early 20th century by the great German player and teacher, Siegbert Tarrasch. In the Closed Defence, which we saw in Game 2, Black plays 5... ♜e7 and subsequently supports his centre by ...d6. This has the drawback of shutting in Black's king's bishop, and generally cramping his position. Dr Tarrasch abhorred cramped positions, and generally condemned any opening variation which involved such a position. Instead, in the Open, Black secures more space and open lines for his pieces, but this comes at the cost of some weakening of his pawn-structure. Over the decades, the line has generally been less popular than the Closed system, but has always had a core group of die-hard supporters. Former world champion Max Euwe was one such, while in more recent times, Viktor Korchnoi has upheld the variation in numerous games.

6 d4 b5

Capturing another pawn with 6...exd4 is extremely risky. After 7 ♜el the central position of the black king leads to problems.

7 ♜b3 d5 8 dxе5 ♜e6 (D)



This is the basic position of the Open Defence. Black's minor pieces have more activity than in the Closed line, but his queenside pawns are somewhat weak and over-extended. If he can achieve the advance ...c5 in favourable circumstances, Black can potentially look forward to a splendid game, but this is not easy to achieve against accurate play by White.

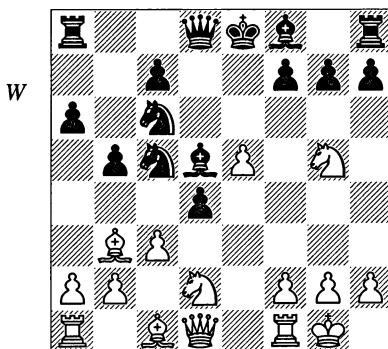
9 ♜bd2 ♜c5 10 c3 d4 11 ♜g5!

A truly striking move, offering a piece sacrifice. White's idea is to answer 11... ♜xg5 with 12 ♜f3, when Black cannot adequately defend his c6-knight in view of the follow-up 13 ♜d5. In fact, this is all well-known theory, with 11 ♜g5 having first been played in a Karpov-Korchnoi world championship game, as far back as 1978.

11... ♜d5? (D)

Mamedyarov hopes to avoid the complications resulting from accepting the piece, but

this move is a serious error in view of White's reply. Much midnight oil has been expended on variations beginning 11... $\mathbb{W}xg5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}f3$ 0-0-0, although practical experience suggests that White's chances are preferable. These days, opening fashions change rapidly, but at the time of writing, Black tends to be avoiding this whole line and preferring 10... $\mathbb{A}g4$, rather than 10...d4.



12 $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$

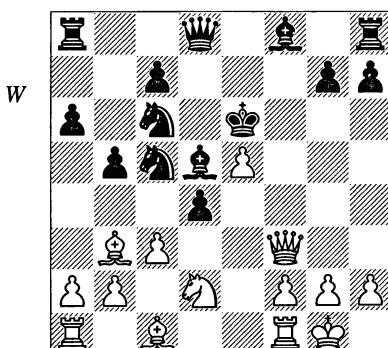
This sacrifice traps the black king in the centre, where it will be subject to a ferocious attack.

12... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

The only move, since after 12... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$, White immediately regains his piece by 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 14 $\mathbb{W}f3+$ and 15 $\mathbb{W}xc6$, remaining with an extra pawn and the black king trapped in the centre.

13 $\mathbb{W}f3+ \mathbb{Q}e6$ (D)

Again forced, so as to defend the d5-bishop. White now has to consider how to prosecute the attack further. Clearly, it will be necessary to bring up some further reserves in due course, but first, Polgar forces Black to make a choice with his king.



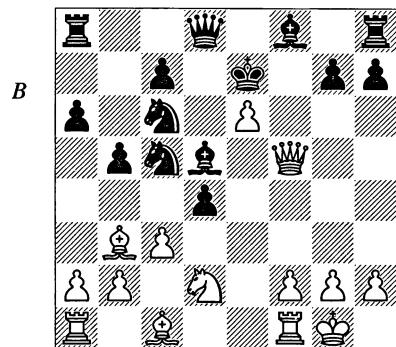
14 $\mathbb{W}g4+ \mathbb{Q}f7??!$

The alternative retreat 14... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is better, but White still has a near-decisive attack. A previous game Svidler-Anand had continued 15 e6!, and White soon achieved a winning advantage.

15 $\mathbb{W}f5+ \mathbb{Q}e7$

If the king goes to e8 or g8, the reply 16 e6 wins immediately, since Black cannot defend both the mate threat on f7 and the attacked bishop on d5.

16 e6 (D)



The most important thing in such positions is not to give the defender any breathing space, and Polgar demonstrates this admirably. Her last move attacks the d5-bishop, as well as lining up a possible check on f7 at some point. Depending on how Black replies, she intends to bring the d2-knight into the attack, in turn opening the way for the c1-bishop to give a potentially deadly check on g5. If Black captures the e6-pawn, this will open the e-file, and allow White's rook to become very active from e1. This is a typical example of how the initiative flows in such positions – by constant threats, the attacker deprives the defender of time to unravel his position and bring additional units into the defence.

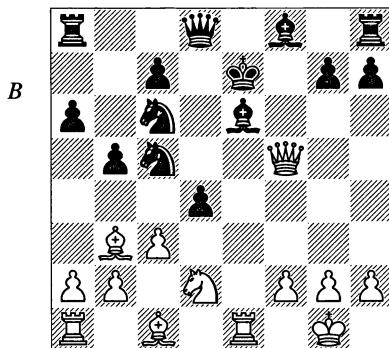
16... $\mathbb{Q}xe6$

As noted above, this opens an important additional line against the black king, but Black had to do something about his attacked bishop. The alternative was 16... $\mathbb{Q}xb3$, which would eliminate one of the attacking pieces. However, this exchange also eliminates one of Black's defensive pieces, and after the reply 17 $\mathbb{Q}xb3$, the white knight would join the attack, and the c1-bishop would also be ready to jump in. Polgar continues the variation by 17... $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 18

$\mathbb{E}e1$ (threatening $19 \mathbb{Q}g5+$) $18 \dots \mathbb{W}c8$ $19 \mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $20 \mathbb{Q}f4+!$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (by these last two moves, White has effectively developed the bishop for free) $21 \mathbb{Q}c5$, with an overwhelming attack; e.g., $21 \dots \mathbb{Q}d8$ $22 \mathbb{E}xe6+!$ and $23 \mathbb{E}e1$, winning.

17 $\mathbb{E}e1!$ (D)

A very striking move, typical of such positions. White could regain the piece, with check, by simply $17 \mathbb{W}xc5+$, but this would weaken the force of the attack after $17 \dots \mathbb{W}d6$.



Polgar prefers to strengthen the attack by bringing another piece into action. In such positions, as we have emphasized before, it is not the nominal piece-count that matters, but the number of pieces that are active in the critical sector of the board. Both of Black's rooks, for example, are dormant in the present position.

17... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}e4$

Continuing the 'no respite' policy. The knight jumps into the attack and opens the diagonal of the c1-bishop, all with tempo.

19... $\mathbb{W}e5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ (D)

Another white piece joins the attack, and Black must now lose his queen. If $20 \dots \mathbb{Q}xg5$, then $21 \mathbb{Q}xg5$, and if $20 \dots \mathbb{Q}e8$, $21 \mathbb{Q}f6+$. Black prefers the third option.

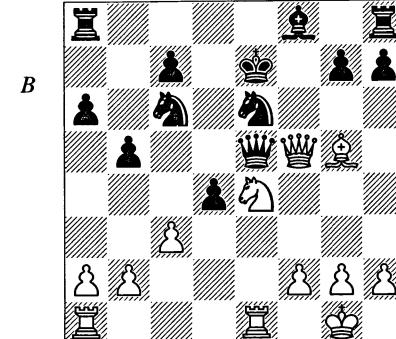
20... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$

Or $21 \dots \mathbb{W}xc5$ $22 \mathbb{E}xe6\#$.

22 $\mathbb{W}f7+$

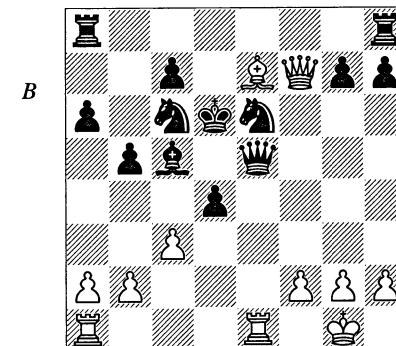
Once again eschewing material gain to pursue the attack to its logical conclusion.

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



$22 \dots \mathbb{Q}e7$ $23 \mathbb{E}xe5$ is no improvement for Black.

23 $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ (D)



1-0

Black resigned in view of $23 \dots \mathbb{Q}xe7$ $24 \mathbb{E}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $25 \mathbb{Q}e1+$, while fleeing with $23 \dots \mathbb{Q}d5$ leads to a nice mate after $24 \mathbb{W}f3+ \mathbb{Q}c4$ $25 \mathbb{B}3\#$.

The Essential Lessons

- A king which is trapped in the centre can be vulnerable to a devastating attack.
- From the attacker's viewpoint, it is frequently worth a sacrifice in order to trap the enemy king in the centre.
- As with all attacks, success depends on getting more pieces into action in the crucial sector of the board.
- It is frequently better to bring additional pieces into the attack than to take material ($17 \mathbb{E}e1!$).

2 Defence

Defence is the natural corollary to attack, and is just as much part of the game, but it is a highly neglected area. It is probably true to say that for every 20 good attacking players, one is lucky to find a single good defender. However, while it is perhaps understandable that attacking should be more attractive, it is nevertheless true that good defence is just as important a part of a player's armoury, and it is therefore a big mistake to neglect this part of the game.

Just as basic military principles can be applied to attacking play, the same is true of defence. The first task of the defender is to recognize that he is on the defensive, and needs to take defensive measures. Many games are lost through players failing to realize this in time. The defender needs to identify the weakest point in his position and take steps to strengthen it, by bringing additional pieces to the relevant area. At each move, he needs to consider what, if any, direct threats exist, and how to deal with them. The other important task of the defender is to seize every opportunity to prepare counterplay, so as to distract the attacker from freely carrying out his plans. Purely passive defence is rarely successful, whereas if the defender can combine essential defensive steps with the preparation of some counterplay, his chances of survival are greatly improved.

In the games examined in this chapter, we see four examples of successful defence. In Game 4, Black falls under an extremely dangerous attack on his king, which requires great ingenuity on his part to keep his head above water. Game 5 features a typical example of a premature attack – Black launches an attack without sufficient grounds, but his threats nonetheless develop dangerously, and White needs to show accurate defence to refute them. Game 6 shows a typical strategic idea, the use of a central counterattack in response to a flank attack. Finally, in Game 7, we see a slightly different scenario. Rather than facing a violent kingside attack, we see a case where the defender is positionally outplayed and reaches a hopeless position, where he faces gradual material loss. Such positions are often more difficult to defend than those where one faces direct threats, and it is most instructive to see how one of the all-time great defenders succeeds in putting obstacles in his opponent's way, even in so apparently hopeless a position.

If there is one single lesson to learn about defence, it is: never give up! The defensive resources in chess are very great indeed, and it is frequently amazing to see the extent to which a stubborn defender can continue to resist in a seemingly hopeless position. However, the main reason that this happens so rarely in practice is because the natural concomitant of a bad position is depression. All too often, the defender becomes demoralized by his situation, annoyed with himself for having got into such a mess, etc., and he consequently fails to put up maximum resistance. Good defenders require strong character and nerves, but practice shows that if the defender can mobilize all his resources, the attacker can frequently himself become demoralized by the difficulty in clinching the win when it appears to be easily within his grasp. Great defenders, such as Lasker and Korchnoi, have won innumerable games as a result of the attacker losing his way when faced with stubborn defence.

Game 4
Padevsky – Kholmov
Dresden 1956
 Scotch Opening

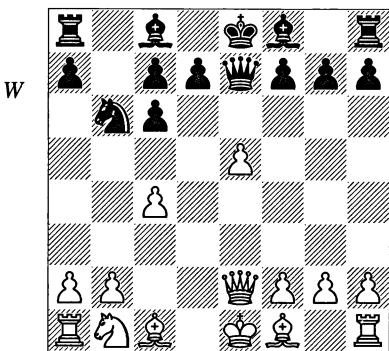
In this game, Black is outplayed in the opening and early middlegame and his king comes under a strong attack. As White's threats develop, it appears that Black will inevitably be mated, or suffer fatal material loss, but Kholmov continues to find defences to White's threats, including a willingness to sacrifice material to break the attack. Faced with such stubborn resistance, White becomes flustered and short of time, eventually erring and finding himself losing.

1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♜xd4 ♜f6 5 ♜xc6 bxc6 6 e5 ♜e7

This variation of the Scotch has become highly popular in recent years, after being reintroduced into master practice by Kasparov. Black's last move looks rather unnatural, but 6...♜d5 7 c4 is known to favour White and the text-move has instead been regarded as best for many years.

7 ♜e2 ♜d5 8 c4 ♜b6 (D)

The alternative is 8...♜a6, relying on the pin to maintain the black knight in the centre. However, after Kasparov's 9 b3, the bishop on a6 frequently finds itself bereft of activity, while the d5-knight remains unstable and often ends up retreating to b6 anyway. It is arguable that Black does better to retreat the knight immediately and reserve his bishop for a potentially more active role on b7.



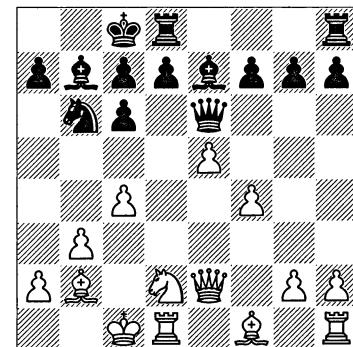
9 ♜d2 ♜b7

With this, Black is preparing to castle queenside, but his king subsequently proves vulnerable there. Kingside castling after 9...♜e6 and 10...♜e7 is an alternative.

10 b3 0-0-0 11 ♜b2 ♜e6 12 0-0-0

This move highlights one of the drawbacks of Black's decision to castle queenside. If he had castled kingside, White would probably have been forced to do the same, since the potential attack with ...a5-a4 would have made queenside castling rather risky.

12...♜e7 13 f4 (D)



Summarizing the results of the opening, we can say that White has emerged with the advantage. Black's position is cramped and his knight is poorly placed on b6. White has a mobile qualitative pawn-majority on the kingside and can prepare the advance f5, while Black lacks active counterplay.

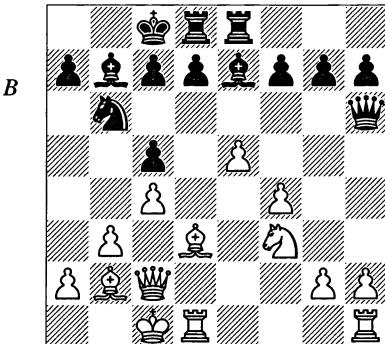
13...♜he8 14 ♜f3 c5

Opening the diagonal for his bishop.

15 ♜c2!

Hereabouts, White pursues his plans logically and energetically. The text-move threatens f5. Black can stop this with 15...g6, but he did not like the reply 16 ♜g5, when after the forced exchange on g5 (else the h-pawn falls), White will be able to exert heavy pressure down the f-file against the backward f7-pawn.

15...♜h6 16 ♜d3! (D)

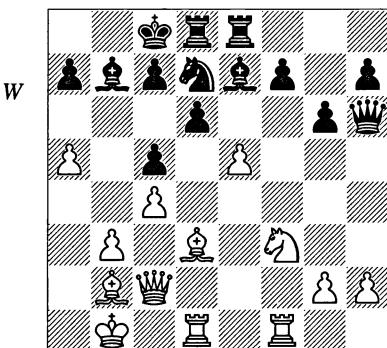


Another energetic move. White is prepared to sacrifice a pawn to increase his initiative.

16...wf4+ 17 qb1 g6 18 hhf1 wh6 19 a4!

With Black standing passively, and all of the white pieces developed, Padevsky turns his attention to Black's king. The a-pawn will be used to drive away the knight from b6, where although it has few active squares to go to, it does at least defend the black king. It is clear that Black is heavily on the defensive. What should he do? There are essentially two tasks confronting the defender in such a situation. The first is to attend to any direct threats, and the second is to prepare some kind of counterplay with which to distract the attacker. Simply sitting passively and waiting for the attack to arrive rarely succeeds. At present, White's threat is 20 a5, which would drive the knight to the terrible square a8. Black's next move frees the d7-square for the knight, while also challenging the strong white pawn on e5, which cramps Black's game.

19...d6 20 a5 qb7 (D)



21 qb4!

Another instructive move, exchanging off the bishop that defends the black king.

21...f5 22 xb7+ xb7 23 b4!

We discussed earlier the fact that where both kings have castled on the same side, it is relatively unusual to see an attack conducted by means of a pawn-storm in front of one's king. Here is one of the exceptions. Despite the pawn advances, the white king remains fairly safe for the time being, although its exposure comes back to haunt White later on.

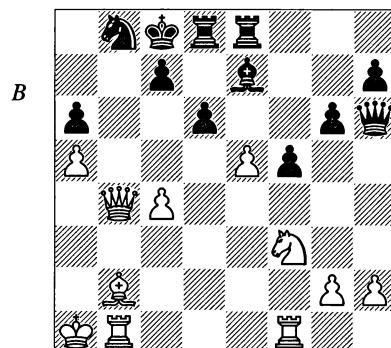
23...qb8!

Taking on b4 would be met by 24 wa4, regaining the pawn. Instead, Black very logically re-routes the knight to b8, from where it protects the squares a6 and c6 – the very squares which have been weakened by the exchange of his queen's bishop.

24 wa4 a6 25 qa1 cxb4

This capture cannot be avoided any longer, since White was ready to exchange on c5 and then play bb1.

26 xb4+ qc8 27 bb1 (D)



27...dxe5!

A splendidly calculated, cold-blooded decision. Black offers White the chance to win a piece by 28 xb8+ xb8 29 qc1+ qc8 30 qxh6. However, in the resulting position, Black has two pawns for his piece, and has also succeeded in exchanging queens and breaking the white attack. He would then be able to seize the initiative by 30...e4, followed by ...qf6+ and ...he5, going after the weak white pawn on a5. Although White would be nominally slightly ahead in material, the position is quite unclear. This type of counter-sacrifice of material to break an attack is one of the most typical defensive ploys, and should be remembered.

28 c5 wf4!

Repeating the offer. Once again, the position would be no more than unclear after 29 xb8+

$\mathbb{Q}xb8$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}a2+$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}da3$, etc. Unable to believe that the exposed black king can survive, Padevsky again prefers to continue the attack.

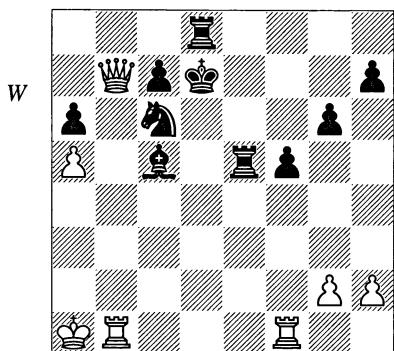
29 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}c3$

It appears that Padevsky is right, after all. The threat of $\mathbb{Q}xb8+$ forces the black king into the centre, where he seems sure to die of exposure. However, not for nothing is Russian GM Ratmir Kholmov known amongst his colleagues as 'The Central Defender', and he proceeds to show that even in the most perilous-looking position, there are also hidden defensive resources.

30... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}b7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}xe5+?$

After 32 $\mathbb{Q}bd1+$! $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}xd6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}d1+$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}xd5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ (Nunn), White is better, although Black has drawing chances.

32... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (D)

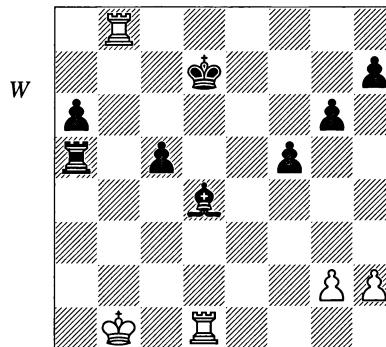


An incredible position. Black has lost his queen and his king has been driven into the centre of the board. It appears as though he should be totally lost, but on closer inspection, we see that things are not so clear. He actually has two minor pieces and two pawns for his queen, not a million miles short of material equality. In addition, his centralized pieces are well placed to defend his king, and also to create counter-threats against White's own exposed king. This is where we see the drawback of White's earlier queenside pawn-storm. Adding into the mix the fact that Padevsky was by now desperately short of time, having invested most of his time allowance in a vain attempt to find a forced mate, it is not so surprising that he collapses in the face of Black's tenacious defence.

34 $\mathbb{Q}b3?$

Losing. The best line was 34 $\mathbb{Q}fd1+$! $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$ (forced, since Black wins after 35 $\mathbb{Q}a2?$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5+$ and 36... $\mathbb{Q}b5+$) 35... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}d5!$, with an unclear position.

34... $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ c5 (D)



With three pawns for the exchange, plus powerfully-placed pieces, the win is elementary.

39 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $axb5$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}a7$ c4 43 $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ b4 44 g4 b3 45 gxf5 c3 46 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ gxf5 47 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ f4 0-1

The pawns march remorselessly down the board, rather in the manner of Space Invaders. Unfortunately for White, his gun is out of ammunition, and he therefore resigned.

The Essential Lessons

- The defender needs to attend to direct threats, but also to use every spare moment to generate counterplay.
- Returning material to break the attack is an essential defensive technique.
- However bad your position, always look for the positives. In the above example, Kholmov never lost sight of the fact that White also had his weaknesses – exposed king, some weak pawns, etc. By making full use of these, Black was able to hang on, even when apparently dangling over the precipice.
- Tough defence can be extremely demoralizing for the attacker, who constantly has to solve new problems, often just when he thought the game was over.
- Remember the old adage, 'The show ain't over 'til the fat lady announces mate'. Even the most hopeless-looking positions contain hidden defensive resources, so *never, ever, give up*.

Game 5
Maroczy – Helling
Dresden 1936
 Scandinavian Defence

Here we see a typical example of an unsound attack being refuted by cool and accurate defence. Right from the opening move, Helling launches himself at his illustrious opponent, even though his queenside pieces remain undeveloped and White has not committed any obvious error. In such positions, the defender needs to remain calm and seize the opportunity to return his extra material to break the attack. The resulting weaknesses in the attacker's position should then come back to haunt him.

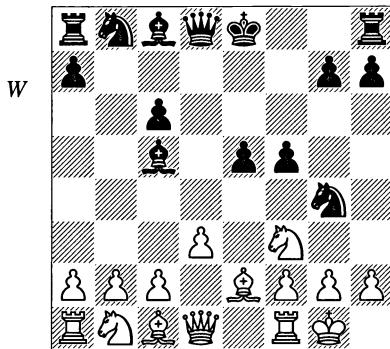
1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♜f6 3 ♜b5+ c6

An unusual move, by which Black gambits a pawn. 3...♜d7 is more usual.

4 dxc6 bxc6

Recapturing with the knight looks more natural.

5 ♜e2 e5 6 d3 ♜c5 7 ♜f3 ♜g4 8 0-0 f5 (D)



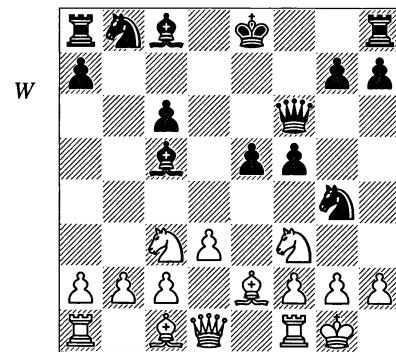
Black makes his intentions abundantly clear right from the start. With no respect at all for his great opponent's reputation (Maroczy had been one of the leading players in the world in the decade or so leading up to World War One), he simply launches himself at the white king. However, White has not so far done anything which can be regarded as a mistake, so logic suggests that Black's attack should not succeed. Having said that, accuracy is always required from the defender, and Maroczy gives a fine demonstration of how to fend off such premature assaults.

9 ♜c3

It may seem tempting to try to drive the knight away by 9 h3, but with his rook still on h8, Black would reply 9...h5. The knight would

then be untouchable, and White would only have weakened his kingside. Instead, Maroczy continues developing.

9...♜f6 (D)



10 ♛e1!

Quite a subtle little move. By placing his queen opposite the black king on the e-file, White creates tactical threats based around the advance d4. The effect is to induce Black to castle kingside, after which the potential attack along the h-file after ...h5 is much reduced.

10...0-0 11 h3

The point of Maroczy's previous move. Black could now retreat the knight, but he would have little to show for his pawn. He therefore continues to play *va banque*, but without a rook on h8, the following sacrifice is unsound.

11...h5 12 hxg4 hxg4 13 ♜g5 g3

Black's threats still look dangerous, but Maroczy has calculated accurately.

14 ♜a4!

Another simple but important move. White forces the exchange of one of Black's principal

attacking pieces, another standard defensive technique.

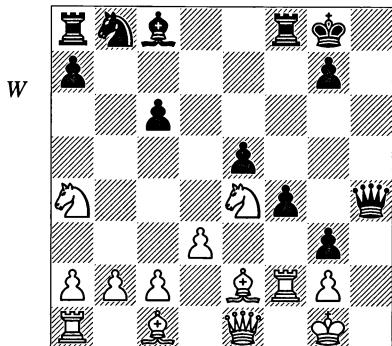
14... $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$

14... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 15 c3 would not help.

15 $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ f4

Helling certainly gets full marks for trying, but he is banging his head against a brick wall.

16 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ (D)



White could now defend with 17 $\mathbb{Q}f3$, but instead Maroczy finds a more effective way to destroy the attack, by remembering the defensive principle we saw in the previous game – returning the extra material.

17 $\mathbb{Q}xg3!$ fxg3 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

Black could regain all of his remaining material by 19... $\mathbb{Q}xa4$, but after 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$, he is completely lost. Apart from his queen, all of his remaining pieces are undeveloped, and his own king is very exposed. After 20... $\mathbb{Q}h4$, White would have a pleasant choice between a highly favourable endgame after 21 $\mathbb{Q}f4+$, and an even more favourable middlegame after 21 $\mathbb{Q}e3$. Recognizing the hopelessness of such a position, Helling leaves White with the extra piece and tries desperately to get some more of his own pieces into the attack, but it is too little, too late.

20 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}h2+$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

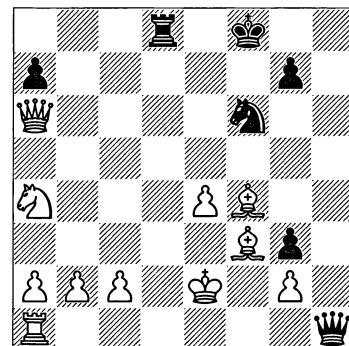
A further check on h1 does nothing, since the white king is totally safe on e2. Black is

quite lost and should resign. Helling prefers to avoid losing a miniature, and drags out the end for a few more moves.

22 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ e4 23 dx e4 $\mathbb{Q}h1+$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6+$

It is true that one doesn't win by resigning, but there are still times when the latter is probably the best move.

25 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ (D)



This is by no means the only move, but it is in keeping with the defensive theme of returning material to break the attack. White gives up the rook in order to move over to a decisive counterattack. Black's remaining wrigglings are not worthy of comment.

26... $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}c4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}g1$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}c1$ 31 exf6 gxf6 32 $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 1-0

An excellent example of how to deal with a premature attack.

The Essential Lessons

- Attacks launched with inferior development and without the opponent having made a mistake are always going to be unsound against correct defence.
- Exchanging off key attacking pieces is a common defensive idea (14 $\mathbb{Q}a4!$).
- Returning excess material to kill the attack is another standard, and highly effective, defensive technique (17 $\mathbb{Q}xg3!$, 19 $\mathbb{Q}f3!$).

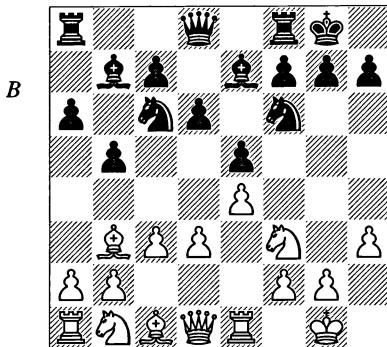
Game 6
Tal – Spassky
Candidates Final (game 11), Tbilisi 1965
 Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Closed

This game illustrates a cardinal defensive principle. In response to a flank attack, a counterattack in the centre is frequently the most effective response. This is what we see here. As Tal funnels pieces to the kingside to attack the black king, Spassky responds by preparing a pawn attack in the centre. His central pawns push through the very heart of White's position, disrupting his attack and eventually bringing his position crashing down.

1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5 a6 4 ♜a4 ♜f6 5 0-0 ♜e7 6 ♜e1 b5 7 ♜b3 0-0

This move-order threatens the Marshall Attack after 8 c3 d5. Tal prefers to avoid such heavily-analysed continuations.

8 h3 ♜b7 9 d3 d6 10 c3 (D)



10...♜b8

Black has a number of possible plans here, but Spassky's choice is similar to the Breyer Variation, which arises after 7...d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♜b8. The black knight re-deploys to d7, from where it still supports the e5-pawn, while at the same time opening the diagonal of the b7-bishop, and freeing the c-pawn for the traditional advance ...c5, gaining space on the queenside. The Breyer proper was always a favourite of Spassky's, so his choice of a similar manoeuvre here is no surprise.

11 ♜bd2 ♜bd7 12 ♜f1

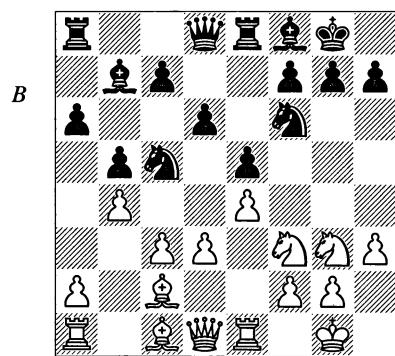
As in Geller-Kotov (Game 2), White's general plan is to attack on the kingside, and so his knight moves over to that sector of the board.

12...♞c5

Black wishes to continue with ...♜e8 and ...♝f8, but if he plays 12...♜e8 immediately,

White has 13 ♜g5. Black therefore drives the bishop back to c2 first. He could instead prevent ♜g5 by 12...h6, but prefers not to weaken his kingside until forced to do so.

13 ♜c2 ♜e8 14 ♜g3 ♜f8 15 b4 (D)



In this way, White restores his king's bishop to the a2-g8 diagonal, but only at the cost of weakening his queenside pawn-structure, which improves Black's chances of counterattacking in that section of the board.

15...♝cd7 16 ♜b3 a5

Black immediately seizes on the drawback of White's 15th move, in order to initiate his queenside play.

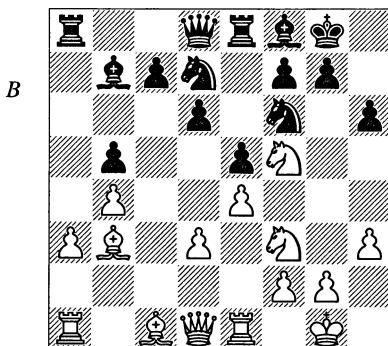
17 a3 axb4 18 cxb4

Now White's backward a3-pawn is a long-term target.

18...h6!?

An important decision. This move stops ♜g5 for ever, but it weakens the black kingside. In particular, it is now much more difficult for Black to evict a white knight from f5, since a subsequent ...g6 is liable to leave h6 hanging. A knight on f5 is frequently a key piece in White's kingside attack in such Lopez positions.

19 ♜f5 (D)



White's attack is beginning to take shape. He intends to follow up with ♜3h4, ♜e3-g3, ♜f3, etc. It is important that Black prepare countermeasures against this.

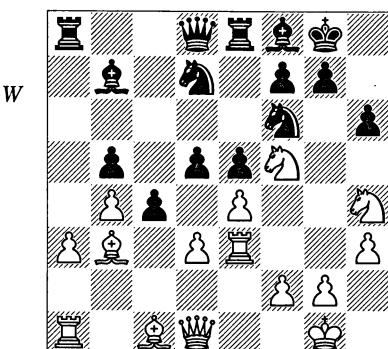
19...d5!

The classic response. It is a cardinal principle of defence that the best reply to a flank attack is to counterattack in the centre. Black starts to do this.

20 ♜3h4 c5!

20...♜xb4 wins a pawn, but although there is no specific tactical objection to this move, Spassky did not even mention it in his notes to the game. White would continue 21 ♜e3, which is part of his plan anyway, and Black would soon have to return the bishop to f8, where it plays a vital role in defending his king. Although Black has won a pawn, he has spent two tempi doing so, without advancing his counter-attack. Spassky prefers to ignore the offer and proceed with his queenside counterplay.

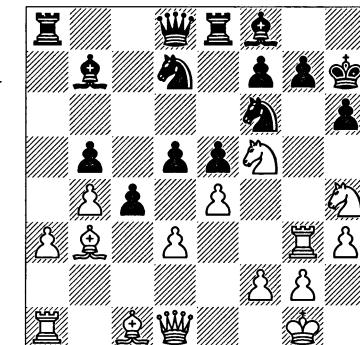
21 ♜e3 c4 (D)



A key part of Black's defensive plan is to use his central pawns to smother the b3-bishop.

22 ♜g3 ♛h7! (D)

Taking the proffered piece would give White excellent compensation following 22...cxib3 23 ♜xh6+ ♛h7 24 ♜xf7. Spassky instead defends against White's threat and relies on his strongly centralized position to ward off the white attack.



23 ♜c2

The bishop steps onto the diagonal of the black king, and thus creates threats of exd5, opening the line. But Black continues his policy of shutting out the bishop with his central pawns.

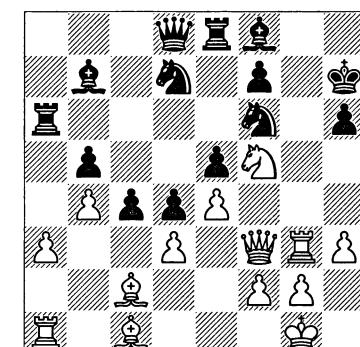
23...d4! 24 ♜f3 ♜a6!

Another fine defensive move. Black's rook guards the kingside along the 3rd rank, while also freeing the a8-square. The significance of this last point soon becomes clear.

25 ♜xh6?

White decides that he already has enough pieces in the attack, and that he does not wish to spend time bringing the last reserves up by ♜d2 and ♜e1. But Black proves excellently prepared for this sacrifice.

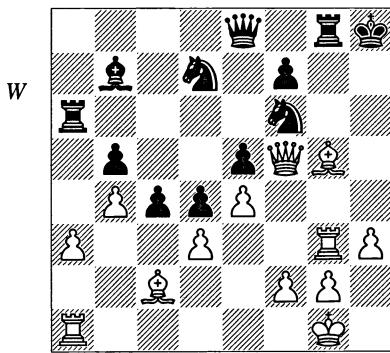
25...gxh6 26 ♜f5 (D)



26...♜a8!

A photogenic, but thoroughly thematic continuation of his defensive plan, which has been to rely on his central counterattack to ward off White's kingside threats. The queen plays into the corner, but in truly Réti-esque style, from there it brings more pressure to bear on White's centre. The threat is simply 27...cxd3 followed by 28... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$, against which White has no effective defence. White wins a second pawn for his piece, but his attack disappears and he is left with a lost position.

27 $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 28 $\mathbb{W}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$
30 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ (D)

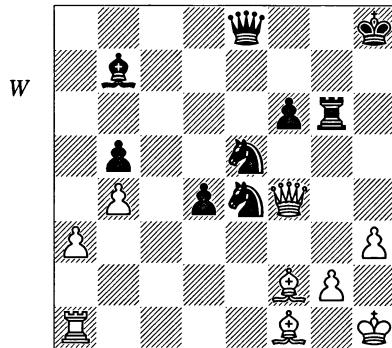


The queen returns to the centre to assist directly in defending the king.

31 f4 $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 34
 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$

It is clear that White's attack is over and he is being pushed back. The end is not far off.

35 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $f6$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $cxd3$ 38
 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ (D)



Fittingly, the last remnants of White's centre have gone up in smoke.

41 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$ 0-1

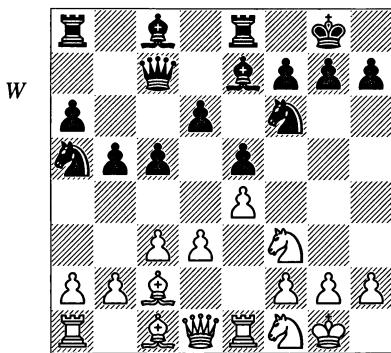
The Essential Lessons

- The best defence to a flank attack is often to counter in the centre.
- Excluding attacking pieces is a typical defensive idea. Here, Black used his central pawns to block out the Spanish bishop.
- Pieces can have a powerful influence on the centre without necessarily being posted in the centre itself (26... $\mathbb{Q}a8!$).

Game 7
Lasker – Duz-Khotimirsky
Moscow 1925
 Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Closed

This is a wonderful example of how to make the most of one's chances in a lost position. After being outplayed for much of the game, Lasker reaches a positionally hopeless situation, but then proceeds to use every resource available to him to make Black's task as difficult as possible. Eventually, Black becomes confused by the problems facing him, and even ends up losing. Note especially how Lasker utilizes the positive features of his position.

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 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ b5 7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ d6 8 c3 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ c5
 10 d3 0-0 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ (D)



Once again, we see a Closed Lopez with White adopting a restrained system with his pawn on d3, rather than d4.

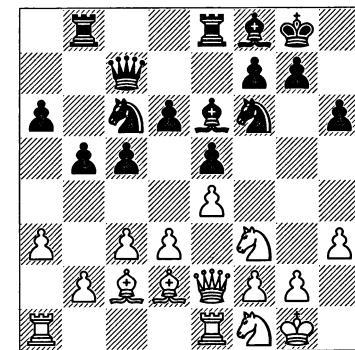
13 $\mathbb{Q}g5??$

It is not clear that the bishop is well placed on this square. The immediate 13 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ looks more logical.

13... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 14 a3??

Another slightly odd-looking move. In this opening, White's play usually lies on the king-side, and it is hard to see what the move 14 a3 achieves, apart from weakening White's position on the flank where his opponent is likely to attack. It is a good general rule of thumb that one should be especially careful in making pawn moves in the area of the board where one stands worse. In the present position, Black is the one who has more space on the queenside and can expect to take the initiative there, so White would be better advised to proceed with his play on the other wing. 14 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ was again the indicated move.

14... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 15 h3 h6 16 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$
 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ (D)



As was occasionally his wont, Lasker has played the opening and early middlegame rather lackadaisically and already stands worse. His position is the more cramped, and all of Black's pieces are well placed. According to the defensive theories propagated so lucidly by Lasker himself, White should accept that he is worse and should concentrate on defending his position and not creating weaknesses by unjustified attacking attempts. However, it is always easier to give advice than to take it, and, perhaps influenced by an excessive desire to win against a lower-rated opponent, Lasker continues to play as though he stands better.

18 a4?

This just weakens the a-pawn.

18...b4 19 c4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ g6

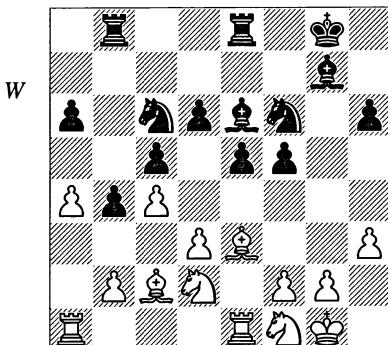
So poorly has White played that Black is even in a position to take over the initiative on the kingside as well.

21 $\mathbb{Q}3d2$ f5 22 exf5 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

Black could have tried to win material here with 23...f4 24 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$. However, this would

have been inadvisable in view of 25 $\mathbb{Q}xh6!$, when 25... $\mathbb{Q}xc2?$ loses to 26 $\mathbb{W}g6+! \mathbb{Q}h8$ 27 $\mathbb{E}e4$, so Black would need to play 25... $\mathbb{Q}xh6$, with an unclear position. In any case, Black's position is so good after the game continuation that there is no need for him to mix things up.

24 $\mathbb{W}g6+ \mathbb{W}g7$ 25 $\mathbb{W}xg7+ \mathbb{Q}xg7$ (D)



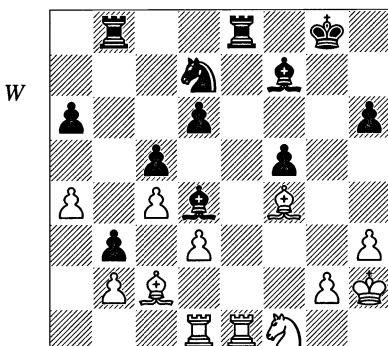
26 f4??

Another dubious decision. Lasker himself later recommended 26 f3, but it is excruciatingly passive.

26... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 27 $\mathbb{M}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}b3$

This soon leads to the a-pawn being cut off, but if White attempts to defend it by 28 b3, he loses material after 28...exf4 29 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$, with the twin threats of ... $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}e2+$.

28...exf4 29 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ b3 (D)



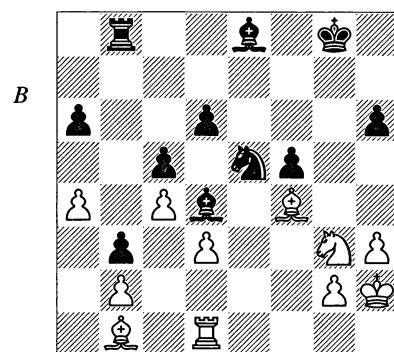
With this move, the a4-pawn finds itself cut off from its colleagues and facing extinction. What with the appallingly passive position of his pieces and the other weak pawn on b2, White is comprehensively lost. Thus far, it is hard to believe that the white player in this game is one of the greatest players of all time.

However, Lasker was famous most of all for his defensive skill, and from this moment on, it is almost as though another player takes over his position. Let us try to follow Lasker's train of thought as he attempts to defend this appalling mess. One of the defensive rules formulated in the previous games was 'Look for the positives in your position'. So what are White's positives here? Well, they are few and far between, but he does have a couple. His f4-bishop is active, and Black has some weak pawns on d6, f5 and h6. It is not much, but it's better than nothing, and it also helps White to choose his next move. If he plays immediately 32 $\mathbb{Q}b1$, Black has the reply 32... $\mathbb{Q}e5$. This shields the d6-pawn, and leaves White unable to defend his b2-pawn, since if either rook moves to the second rank, Black wins an exchange by 33... $\mathbb{Q}f3+$. To save a pawn, White would be forced to exchange on e5, thereby giving up his only active piece. So, to avoid this, Lasker first exchanges rooks on e8.

32 $\mathbb{M}xe8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$

This is forced in order to defend the b3-pawn.

33 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}g3!$ (D)



Again, remembering his positives. Black has a weakness on f5, so Lasker uses it to activate his knight, and also introduce the potential later threat of $\mathbb{Q}e2$, exchanging off the powerful enemy bishop on d4.

34... $\mathbb{Q}g6??$

Up to now, Black's play has been almost faultless, but this is the first inaccuracy. The bishop defends f5, but also takes its eyes off the white pawn on a4. A better move was 34... $\mathbb{Q}d7!$, both defending and attacking. Black would then have the plan of ... $\mathbb{Q}f7$, placing the knight on an

excellent square, from which it defends the weaknesses on h6 and d6, and also allows the bishop a retreat down the d4-h8 diagonal. He could then bring his rook to the open e-file and try to penetrate. Even Lasker's defensive skill would have been unlikely to save him in that case.

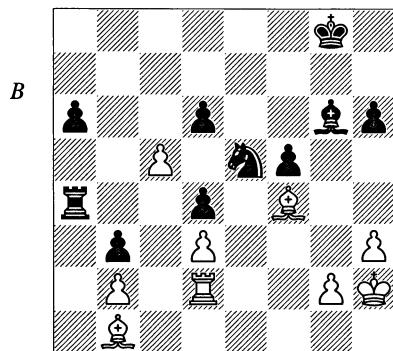
35 ♜d2 ♜b4?

Another, more serious, inaccuracy. As we shall discuss later in this book, a very good rule of thumb in endgames is 'do not hurry'. The a4-pawn is not going anywhere, and rather than try to annex it immediately, Black should attend to White's only threat, by 35...♝f7.

36 ♜e2 ♜xa4?

A third successive error, after which the win has evaporated. Yet again, 36...♝f7 was correct.

37 ♜xd4 cxd4 38 c5! (D)



'Use your positives!' Passed pawns usually mean counterplay, and Lasker seizes his chance to create a passed d-pawn, thanks to the tactical vulnerability of the black knight on e5.

38...♜a1?

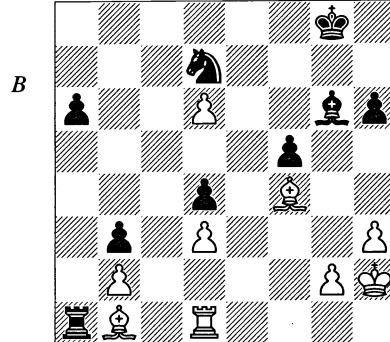
Lasker's tenacious defence seems to have unhinged his opponent completely. The rook would be better acting defensively from a5.

39 cxd6 ♜d7

The knight must block the passed pawn. If 39...♜xb1, then 40 ♜xe5 ♜e8 (forced) 41 ♜e2 and White is winning.

40 ♜d1! (D)

'Use all your positives!' This move both defends the bishop, and threatens the nasty tactical trick 41 ♜c2! ♜xd1 42 ♜xb3+ and 43 ♜xd1.



40...♝f7 41 ♜e1 a5?

No doubt totally demoralized by the unexpected turn of events, Black finally throws away his last drawing chance. He could continue to resist with 41...♜a5 42 ♜e7 ♜f8, although it is clearly now Black who is struggling to draw.

42 ♜e7 ♜c5

42...♜xb1 43 ♜xd7 and the d-pawn will cost a piece.

43 ♜e5! ♜a4

Once again, 43...♜xb1 loses, this time to 44 ♜xd4 ♜e6 45 d7 (threatening ♜xe6) 45...♝d8 46 ♜e8+.

44 ♜c7 ♜e6 45 d7 ♜b4 46 ♜c8+ ♔h7 47 ♜h8+ ♔g6 48 ♜e8!

Clearer than winning a piece by 48 d8♛. The threat is ♜xe6+.

48...♜b6 49 ♜f4!

Again clearer than 49 ♜xe6+ ♜xe6 50 d8♛ ♜x5.

49...♝xf4 50 d8♛ ♜c6 51 ♜e7 1-0

A really tremendous example of how to make the most of one's chances, even in a position which is objectively lost.

The Essential Lessons

- Always look for and use your positives.
- No matter how bad your position, there are always resources, so don't give up.
- Passed pawns mean counterplay!
- A few tenacious defensive moves can work wonders in transforming the psychology of the game, and in demoralizing an opponent who thinks he has an easy win.

3 Piece Power

In this chapter, we are going to look at the qualities of some of the pieces. While the basic material equivalents of each piece are well known, there are many positional factors which affect the relative value of a piece in any given situation. The most typical example is the battle between bishops and knights. While most books agree that the two pieces are roughly of equal value, this can vary greatly, depending on the position. In open positions, bishops are often stronger than knights, especially when the two bishops combine together. However, where the position is blocked, or weak pawns exist and are fixed on squares that the bishop cannot attack, the knight often comes into its own, and can prove much stronger than the bishop. Games 8-13 look at various aspects of the struggle of knights versus bishops.

Another material balance which is frequently seen is that of rook versus minor piece. While the rook is generally stronger, there are also many positions where the opposite is the case, particularly where the rook lacks open lines. Game 14 is a striking example of this. Game 15 shows how rooks and minor pieces can sometimes prove stronger than a queen, where the latter lacks targets in the enemy position. Game 16 is a dramatic example of how even the king can sometimes be a strong piece in the middlegame, while in Game 17, we look at the effective use of rooks, especially the exploitation of an open file.

One point to note is that the effectiveness of pieces is often determined in large measure by the pawn-structure. For this reason, the reader will also find other examples of the battle between bishops and knights in the chapter dealing with pawn-structures – Game 25 is a particularly good example. Similarly, the strength of the bishop-pair often shows to its greatest extent in the endgame, and an example of this can be found in the endgame chapter (Game 49).

Game 8

Makogonov – Keres

Training tournament, Leningrad/Moscow 1939

1 d4 e6 2 c4 ♘b4+

Here we see a classic illustration of the power of the bishop-pair in the middlegame. Having exchanged bishop for knight early on, Black makes the mistake of opening the position up, after which the white bishops slice through the enemy position in devastating style.

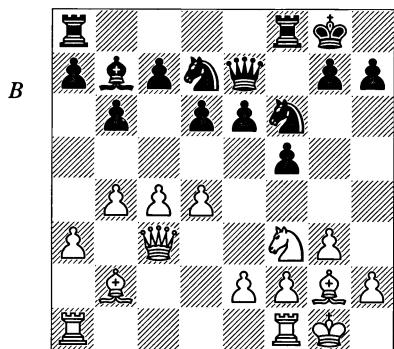
1 d4 e6 2 c4 ♘b4+ 3 ♘c3 f5

This hybrid of the Dutch/Nimzo/Bogo-Indian was a lifelong favourite of Keres, although it failed to achieve much popularity with most other top players.

4 ♘b3

White immediately sets out his stall. He prepares to attack the bishop with a3, without allowing his pawns to be doubled after the exchange on c3. In this way, White can expect to gain the bishop-pair without damage to his pawn-structure, but the price he pays for this is the slowing up of his development. Black exploits this to achieve a harmonious development of his remaining pieces.

4... ♘e7 5 a3 ♘xc3+ 6 ♘xc3 ♘f6 7 g3 d6 8 ♘b3 b6 9 ♘g2 ♘b7 10 0-0 0-0 11 b4 ♘bd7 12 ♘b2 (D)



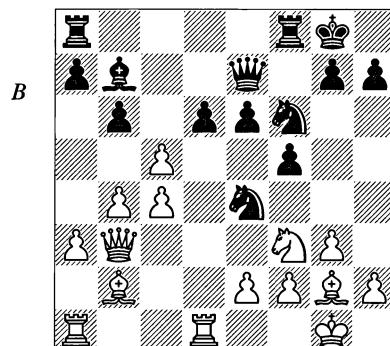
This is a very typical position for this opening. Black has developed his pieces comfortably and has a good grip on the e4-square, which he will occupy with a knight. In the case of passive play by White, he can hope to develop an initiative on the kingside, in typical Dutch Defence fashion. White, on the other hand, has the two bishops and more space on the queenside. He will look to generate play on

the queenside, most obviously by organizing the break c5. At present, the bishops do not look more powerful than Black's knights, particularly in view of the juicy outpost on e4. However, in the longer term, White can hope to arrange f3 to evict the knights from this central outpost, and if he is able to open the position up by a pawn-break such as c5 or d5 (the latter usually only if Black cannot answer ...e5), then his bishops may come into their own. Most grandmasters would consider that White has slightly the better long-term chances in such a position, but to some extent, this is a matter of taste.

12...c5

Black understands that White is going to prepare c5 sooner or later, and therefore takes immediate steps to prevent the move. However, we have noted already that it is often strategically risky to make pawn moves in the area of the board where one stands worse, and Black's plan is open to the objection that it breaks this rule of thumb. In particular, White now has the possibility of the later exchange dx5, opening the long dark a1-h8 diagonal for his b2-bishop. Since White does not at present threaten c5, Black should perhaps have played on the other side of the board with 12... ♘e4.

13 ♘fd1 ♘e4 14 ♘b3 ♘df6 15 dx5 (D)



See the previous note. The b2-bishop now has a splendid diagonal. Recapturing with the d6-pawn would leave a terrible hole on e5 for White's pieces, hence Black's next move is forced.

15...bxc5 16 ♜d2!

An excellent move, challenging the strong knight on e4 and freeing the f-pawn to drive the knight away. In a previous game, Keres had reached an almost identical position against Max Euwe, who had played the weaker move b5. Although it looks tempting to create a queen-side pawn-majority in this way, the release of pressure from the c5-square frees Black's hand to counter in the centre and kingside, and Keres went on to create good counter-chances in that game.

16...♜ab8

By pressurizing White's b4-pawn, Black still hopes to induce the advance b5, but Makogonov refuses to be tempted.

17 f3 ♜xd2 18 ♜xd2 ♜a8?

The start of a series of second-rate moves, which rapidly reduces the black position to rubble. Black should probably try to use his central pawn-majority by 18...d5, eliminating the potential backward pawn weakness on d6 and hoping to follow up with ...d4 and ...e5, establishing a powerful pawn-centre which would stifle the white bishop on b2.

19 ♜e3 f4??

This is again a dubious decision. Tactically, the move is justified by the fact that both captures give Black good play (20 gxf4 ♜h5 or 20 ♜xf4 ♜e4!), but after White's calm reply, the opening of the h3-c8 diagonal comes back to haunt Black later on. Note that Black cannot win a pawn here by 19...cxb4 20 axb4 ♜xb4 because of 21 ♜xa7.

20 ♜d3 fxg3 21 hxg3 ♜fd8 22 ♜e3 cxb4?

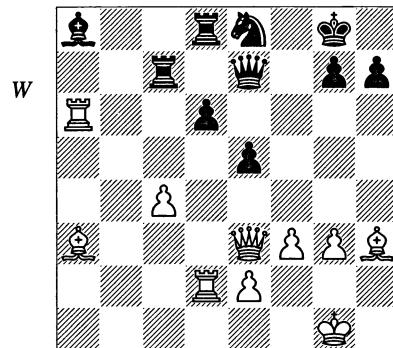
This is the final positional capitulation, opening many more lines for White's pieces, especially his bishops. However, Black's position is already very uncomfortable and it is not easy to suggest a good move for him. White's next move is going to be ♜h3.

23 axb4 ♜xb4 24 ♜xa7 ♜b7 25 ♜a6

If Black hoped that the simplification would help him, he was sorely mistaken. White's

queen's rook is now extremely active on a6, attacking the weakness on d6, and the bishops will soon augment the pressure from a3 and h3 respectively. Black is strategically lost.

25...♜c7 26 ♜h3 e5 27 ♜a3 ♜e8 (D)



A striking illustration of the complete triumph of White's bishop-pair strategy. All of the black pieces have been driven into complete passivity, while the two white bishops slice through the black position from either side of the board. All that remains is to force the decisive tactical breakthrough.

28 c5! ♜c6

After 28...dxc5 29 ♜xc5 the queen cannot defend the rook on d8, while on 28...d5 29 ♜e6 White wins the e5-pawn.

29 cxd6 ♜xd6 30 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 31 ♜xd6

White wins a piece, since the rook cannot recapture without leaving the a8-bishop undefended.

31...♜b7 32 ♜e6+ ♜h8 33 ♜b6 ♜e8 34 ♜xe5 ♜e7 35 ♜a7 1-0

The Essential Lessons

- Possession of the bishop-pair can often constitute a long-term advantage, even where the opponent's knights appear to have good short-term prospects.
- It is frequently risky to make pawn moves in that part of the board where one stands worse (12...c5).
- The player with the bishop-pair generally strives to open the position, while the defender tries to keep it closed. Opening the position is often fatal for the defence (19...f4?!, 22...cxb4?).

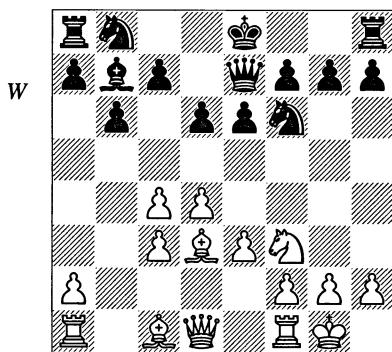
Game 9
Gligorić – Larsen
Manila 1973
 Nimzo-Indian Defence, 4 e3

This is another example where the bishop-pair causes havoc in the middlegame. White manages to open up the position by means of a pawn sacrifice, and once he does this, his bishops prove much more powerful than the opposing knights.

**1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 4 e3 b6 5 $\mathbb{Q}d3$
 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$**

This move may look a little strange, as Black voluntarily surrenders the bishop, without waiting for White to provoke the exchange with a3. However, Black is following a standard Nimzo-Indian plan. By taking immediately, he ensures that he is able to double the white pawns, whereas in the previous game, we saw how White avoided this by protecting the knight with his queen. Black intends to follow up by establishing a pawn blockade in the centre, in the hope of preventing White from opening the position. The idea is that White's bishops will then be unable to develop sufficient activity and Black's knights will prove superior in the resulting blocked position. In the present game, this strategy fails in the face of Gligorić's energetic play, but for a classic example of the same plan succeeding for Black, see Game 25.

7 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ d6 8 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (D)



9 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$

A standard manoeuvre in such positions. Black intends ...e5, which will threaten to win a piece with ...e4. The knight anticipates this threat, at the same time freeing the f-pawn for the follow-up f3 and e4, strengthening White's

central control and killing the black bishop's diagonal. The knight may later transfer to the b3-square, from where it will support pawn-breaks such as a4-a5 or c5.

9...e5 10 e4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b3$

White keeps the central pawn-structure flexible. Note that the advance 11 d5? would be a serious strategic mistake, playing directly into Black's hands. By thus closing the centre, White would rob himself of the chance to open the position for his bishop-pair and would instead create the kind of blocked position where the black knights would be stronger than the white bishops.

11...0-0-0

An interesting decision, but the king proves vulnerable here. However, Black probably did not like immediate kingside castling because of the unpleasant pin 12 $\mathbb{Q}g5$, and even after the preparatory 11...h6, followed by 12...0-0, White can generate strong kingside pressure by f4, opening the f-file. Naturally, Black cannot win a pawn by 11...exd4 12 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$ because of 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ and 14 $\mathbb{Q}e1$.

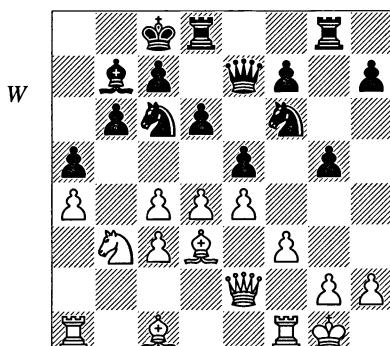
12 f3 $\mathbb{Q}hg8$

With the kings castled on opposite sides, we know from Game 1 above that a mutual pawn-storm against the enemy king is likely. Black's last accordingly prepares ...g5.

13 a4 a5

We have discussed several times already the fact that one must always be careful about making pawn moves on the side of the board where one stands worse. Black's last appears to breach this rule, but in the present case, it is a question of Hobson's Choice. Allowing the a-file to be opened after 14 a5 would be even worse, but even so, the text-move weakens Black's king-position (notably the b6-square) and White soon exploits this.

14 ♜e2 g5 (D)



15 c5!

A typical breakthrough move in such doubled-pawn positions. White has two aims – to open lines for his bishop-pair (he now threatens ♜a6, for example) and to open files in front of the enemy king. The move technically involves a pawn sacrifice, but White would be more than happy to see Black capture 15...bxc5, opening the b-file. White would reply 16 ♜a6, followed by ♜ab1, with a ferocious attack against the black king.

15...exd4

A clever attempt to defend. Larsen's idea is that the immediate 15...dxc5 16 dxc5 only helps White, whereas after the text-move, in the analogous line 16 cxd4 dxc5 17 dxc5, Black now has the move 17...♞b4!, when the knight can play a useful defensive role from the strong b4-outpost. However, Gligorić avoids this and presses on with his plan to open the black king as much as possible.

16 cxb6 dxc3 17 ♜e3 g4

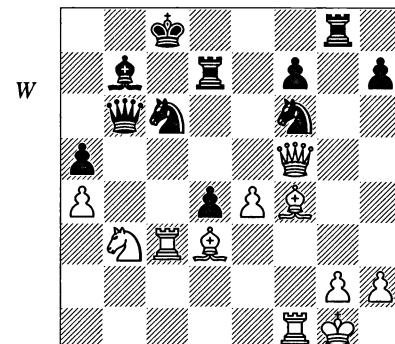
Black seizes every spare moment to press on with his counterplay on the other wing, but one can see at a glance how much greater progress White has made.

18 bxc7 ♜xc7??

This may be the decisive error. Capturing the pawn opens another line for White, and 18...♜d7 may have been a better defensive try. Paradoxically, an enemy pawn directly in front

of one's king often offers a significant measure of protection, by blocking the file. Now White brings a rook to the c-file and it can only be a matter of time before the black king dies of exposure.

19 ♜ac1 d5 20 ♜xc3 gxf3 21 ♜xf3 d4 22 ♜f5+ ♜d7 23 ♜f4 ♜b6 (D)



Comparing this position with that after Black's 14th move, one can see the way in which the position has opened up, and the consequent tremendous increase in activity of the white bishops. Like a boxer trapped on the ropes, the black king desperately tries to cover up, but a couple of neat combinative blows result in a clean knockout.

24 ♜xc6+! ♜xc6

The queen is lost after 24...♜xc6 25 ♜c1.

25 ♜c5 ♜g4 26 ♜b1 ♜a7 27 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 28 ♜c5+! 1-0

Mate follows after 28...♜xc5 29 ♜b8#.

The Essential Lessons

- As in the previous game, we see how the player with the bishop-pair tries to open the position to maximize their activity.
- Where the kings are castled on opposite sides, opening up lines with a pawn advance against the enemy king is the principal strategy.
- Speed is critical in such positions. White won here because his attack was far quicker than Black's.

Game 10

Romanovsky – Smorodsky

USSR Ch, Moscow 1924

Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Exchange Variation

The previous two games have shown how strong a pair of bishops can be if their possessor manages to open the position. In this game, however, White pursues the perfect anti-bishop strategy, keeping lines closed and finding outposts for his knights, deep in the heart of the black position.

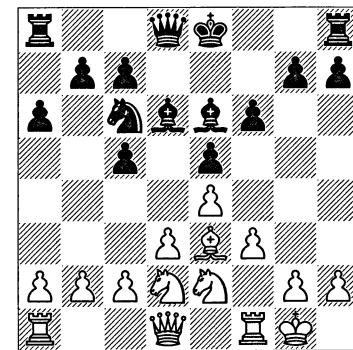
1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5 a6 4 ♜xc6

This move characterizes the Exchange Variation of the Lopez, one of the classic knight vs bishop openings. White immediately surrenders the bishop-pair, in order to double Black's pawns. His usual strategy is to follow up with a quick d4, aiming to secure an exchange of pawns on d4. His idea is that in the resulting pawn-structure, White has a healthy 4 vs 3 pawn-majority on the kingside, which can be expected to produce a passed pawn in due course. Black, by contrast, has 4 vs 3 on the queenside, but since his pawns are doubled, he cannot force a passed pawn from such a structure. Theoretically, therefore, the endgame should favour White, and indeed, many games have been won by White in that fashion. One recent textbook example which I can commend to the interested reader is Rowson-Gormally, Hastings 2003/4. However, the drawback of the Exchange Variation is that Black gets the bishop-pair, and this should, with accurate play, compensate him adequately for his inferior pawn-position.

4...dxc6 5 ♜c3 f6 6 d3

This move, however, announces an entirely different strategy from White. Rather than heading for the favourable endgame structure by d4, he instead plans to keep the position closed. Indeed, one of the objections to playing d4 is that White does thereby open the position up, which helps the black bishops to create greater activity. Romanovsky's plan, which he developed himself and used successfully in several impressive games, is to avoid opening the game, and rely instead on a closed, manoeuvring strategy, where the black bishops will have more difficulty developing active play. Ultimately, however, such a plan should be too slow to guarantee White any real advantage.

6...♜d6 7 ♜e2 c5 8 ♜e3 ♜e7 9 0-0 ♜g4 10 ♜d2 ♜c6 11 f3 ♜e6 (D)



White has completed his development and must now decide on his plan. Romanovsky embarks on a plan to attack the black pawn on c5, by means of c3, a3 and b4.

12 c3 ♜e7 13 a3 0-0 14 ♜c2 ♜ad8 15 b4! ♜d7

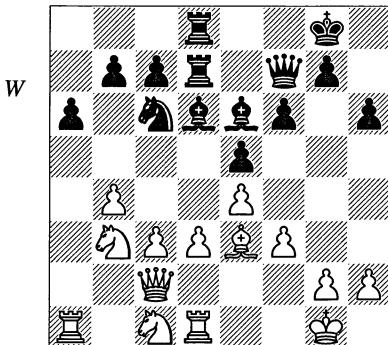
Black spies a weak pawn on d3 and therefore doubles his rooks against it. However, the pawn proves easy to defend and Black's plan therefore achieves little. He should instead react to White's rather slow plan by preparing a counterattack on the kingside, with the advance ...g6 and then ...f5.

16 ♜b3 cxb4

Something has to give, since Black obviously has no desire to incur a weak doubled pawn after 16...b6 17 bxc5 bxc5.

17 axb4 ♜f7 18 ♜ec1 ♜fd8 19 ♜d1 h6?! (D)

Black continues his passive waiting tactics, and as a result, White can gradually strengthen his position without hindrance. The most noteworthy feature of the position is how the black bishops lack any significant activity, a marked contrast to what we saw in the previous two games.



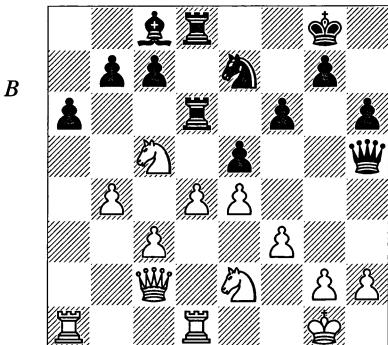
20 ♜c5!

An instructive move. A typical plan when playing against an enemy bishop-pair is to try to exchange one's remaining bishop for its opposite number. By contrast, 20 ♜c5 ♜xc5 would give White nothing.

20...♜e7 21 ♜xd6 ♜xd6?!

Given how much of White's strategy revolves around using the outpost on c5, serious consideration should have been given to 21...cxd6 here.

22 ♜c5 ♜c8 23 ♜e2 ♜h5 24 d4 (D)



White methodically gains space. It was now important for Black to exchange pawns on d4, rather than allowing White's next move. It was perhaps understandable that Black was reluctant to surrender his last central bastion, but after the white pawn gets to d5, he is in a position to push Black off the board.

24...♝g5? 25 d5 ♜g6 26 ♜d2

The exchange of queens reduces the chances of Black getting any counterplay on the king-side, and leaves White a free hand to push home his advantage.

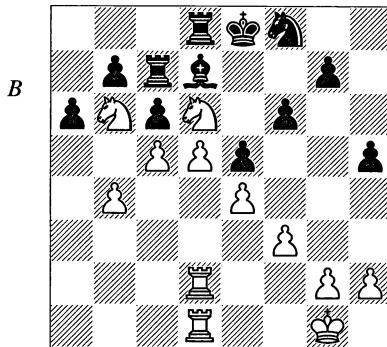
26...♛xd2 27 ♜xd2 ♜f8 28 c4

The pawns continue their march.

28...♚f7 29 ♜c3 ♚e7 30 ♜f2 c6 31 ♜b3 ♜f7 32 c5 ♜d6? 33 ♜a5

The white knights are on their way to dream outposts in the heart of the black position, on b6 and d6. Meanwhile, the black minor pieces, especially his bishop, can only look on helplessly.

33...♜c7 34 ♜d1 h5 35 ♜fd2 ♜cd7 36 ♜a4 ♜e8 37 ♜b6 ♜c7 38 ♜ac4 ♜d7 39 ♜d6+ (D)



Anyone who manages to get a pair of knights to two such outposts deserves a diagram!

39...♚e7 40 ♜b5!

Threatening d6+.

40...♜cc8

The rook is lost anyway.

41 ♜xc8+ ♜xc8 42 ♜d6 ♜b8 43 ♜c4 g5 44 ♜b6 ♜e8 45 d6+ ♜d8 46 d7 ♜f7 47 ♜d6 ♜b3 48 ♜d1d2 ♜h7 49 ♜c8 h4 50 ♜a7 1-0

The threat is 51 ♜xc6, while 50...♜a4 is met by 51 ♜e6 winning. A memorable example of the power of knights which find strong outposts in the heart of the enemy position.

The Essential Lessons

- Knights are usually superior to bishops if the position is, and can be kept, closed.
- Knights are especially powerful if they can find secure outposts, especially in the centre or in the heart of the enemy position.
- If you have the bishop-pair, you usually need to play actively to open the position. Black's mistake here was principally his failure to do this.

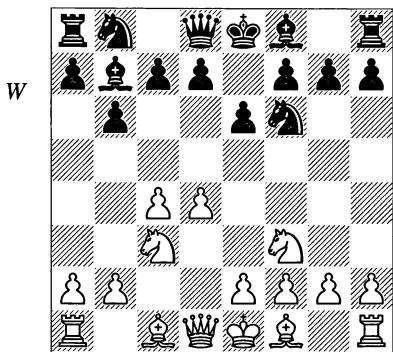
Game 11
Hutchings – Keene
Woolacombe 1973
 Queen's Indian Defence

This is another example where the knight proves superior to the bishop. As in the previous game, the knight finds a huge outpost in the centre of the board, from which it dominates the position. It is also instructive to see how Black breaks through to finish off the game, once he has achieved his maximum positional advantage.

1 c4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ b6

An unusual move-order, which White could try to exploit by 3 e4. Then the threat of e5 would be somewhat uncomfortable, while the move 3...d6 would not really fit in with Black's queenside fianchetto. Instead, White just prefers to develop normally.

3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ 4 d4 e6 (D)



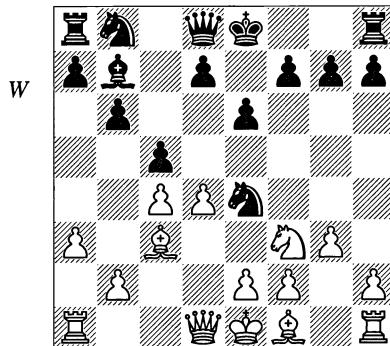
5 g3??!

But this move is already a clear inaccuracy. In the normal Queen's Indian move-order, after 1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ b6, the counter-fianchetto with 4 g3 is White's most common plan. However, in the game, the moves $\mathbb{Q}c3$ and ... $\mathbb{B}b7$ have already been included, and these make the kingside fianchetto inappropriate, because Black is able to pin the knight and threaten to reach a favourable form of the doubled-pawn complex we saw in Gligorić-Larsen (Game 9). White should instead prefer 5 e3, which may well transpose to the aforementioned game, or Petrosian's 5 a3, preventing the black bishop from coming to b4 and threatening to follow up with the pawn advance d5, shutting out the black b7-bishop.

5... $\mathbb{B}b4$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}d2$

White understands that with his king's bishop committed to g2, it would be a mistake to allow the doubling of his pawns after ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$. The c4-pawn would be extremely weak, lacking the protection of the white king's bishop, and it would be quite impossible for White to reach the kind of dynamic central and queenside play we saw in Gligorić-Larsen. However, the bishop move is rather passive and White soon loses the initiative.

6...c5 7 a3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (D)



As in Makogonov-Keres (Game 8), White has secured the bishop-pair without weakening his pawn-structure, but at the cost of time. However, in this example, thanks to the fact that Black has played rather more energetically than Keres was able to in that game, White is unable to maintain his two bishops.

9 $\mathbb{Q}c2??$

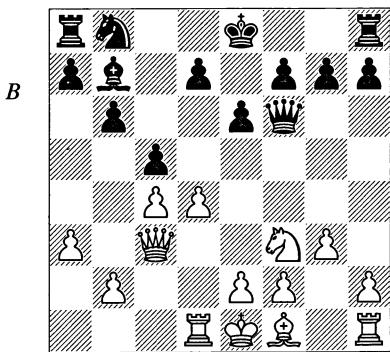
Another inaccuracy. White clearly does not want to allow his pawns to be doubled after the inevitable ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$, but 9 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ was a better way of preventing this.

9... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6!$

Black continues to play energetically to exploit White's opening errors. The pressure on

d4 is uncomfortable (11 $\mathbb{A}g2$ cxd4 costs White a pawn, because of the pin on the long diagonal) and White does not want to play 11 dxc5?, which would involve accepting a wrecked pawn-structure after 11... $\mathbb{W}xc3+$ and 12...bxc5. His next move is therefore forced, but he cannot avoid an almost equally unfavourable exchange on f3.

11 $\mathbb{B}d1$ (D)



11... $\mathbb{A}xf3!$

In the resulting position, Black's knight will be much stronger than White's bishop, chiefly thanks to the fact that the knight will have an unassailable outpost on d4.

12 $\mathbb{W}xf3$

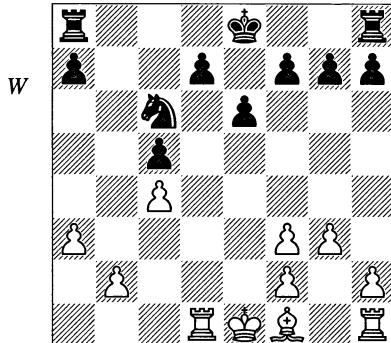
12 exf3 is no better, since after 12... $\mathbb{A}c6$, White would have to allow an exchange of queens on c3, in order to save his d4-pawn.

12... $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 13 exf3 $\mathbb{A}c6$ 14 dxc5?

White was probably somewhat shell-shocked to find himself in such a poor position after so few moves, especially with the white pieces. However, that does not excuse this very bad positional decision, after which his position is strategically hopeless. White should instead prefer 14 d5, even though he still stands badly after 14... $\mathbb{A}d4$.

14...bxc5 (D)

It is clear at a glance that White's position is wrecked. Black has a huge outpost square on d4 for his knight, and the open b-file for his rooks (the latter a consequence of White's mistake at move 14). He will follow up by putting his king on e7 (defending the d7-pawn), his knight on d4 and his rooks on the b-file, pressing against the weak b2-pawn. White, by contrast, has no targets in the black position, and his bishop, although it will occupy an impressive-looking



diagonal, will not in reality have much influence on the game.

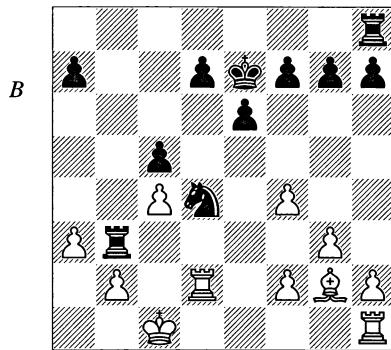
15 $\mathbb{A}g2$ $\mathbb{B}b8$

In any position, no matter how good, accuracy is required. White could only dream of 15... $\mathbb{A}e7$? 16 f4, when the pin would enable him to exchange his bishop for the much more powerful black knight. Black would still be better in the resulting position, but he would have lost a significant part of his advantage.

16 $\mathbb{B}d2$ $\mathbb{B}b3$ 17 $\mathbb{A}d1$

Bringing the king to c1 to defend the b2-pawn, in anticipation of Black's later doubling of rooks on the b-file.

17... $\mathbb{A}e7$ 18 f4 $\mathbb{A}d4$ 19 $\mathbb{A}c1$ (D)



The diagram vividly shows the strength of the centralized black knight, which dominates the position. By contrast, while the g2-bishop may look active, it in fact just controls an empty diagonal, and does not cause Black any inconvenience at all.

19...h5!

A very classy move, and our first example of a theme about which we shall have much more to say later in this book: the principle of two weaknesses. It is a cardinal principle of chess

that a single target is rarely enough to win a game. Just as in military strategy, throwing all of one's forces against a single defensive point is often insufficient to force a decisive breakthrough, and the key to winning the war is frequently to open up a second front. In the present case, despite his problems, White only has one real weakness in his position, namely the b2-pawn, and he is marshalling his forces to defend this. Keene's last move threatens to open a second line into White's position by ...h4, when he would have the constant threat of ...hxg3, opening the h-file. White feels obliged to prevent this, but in so doing, he weakens his g3-pawn, which Black is able to exploit tactically.

20 h4 ♜hb8

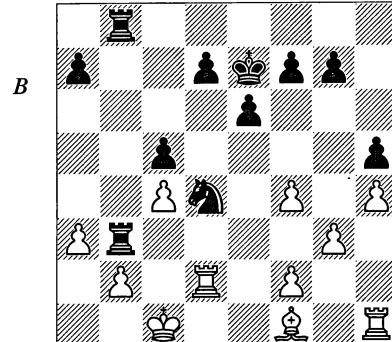
Thanks to the positions of the two h-pawns, this move now carries a concrete tactical threat of 21...♜xg3! winning a pawn, because after 22 fxg3 ♛b3+ 23 ♔c2 ♛xd2 24 ♛xd2, Black has 24...♜xb2+, winning the g2-bishop by a skewer.

21 ♛f1 (D)

Hutchings therefore moves the bishop off the exposed g2-square, but this in turn allows the black rook to swing to the now undefended f3-square.

21...♜f3

Now the threat is ...♛b3+, winning the exchange, and White has no satisfactory defence. The rook cannot go to e2 or c2, and cannot



leave the second rank without dropping the f2-pawn.

22 ♔d1

22 ♔b1 would be answered the same way.

22...♜xa3 0-1

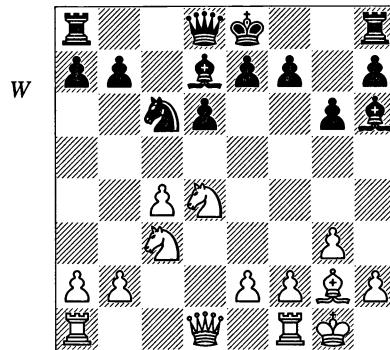
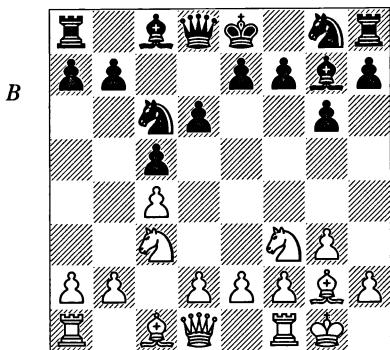
The Essential Lessons

- Again, we see the great power of a knight on an unassailable central outpost. On the other hand, a bishop which has a long, empty diagonal is not always as effective as it looks, if there are no targets to attack on the diagonal.
- The defender must always be careful about opening additional lines to the benefit of his opponent (14 dxc5?).
- Remember the 'two-weaknesses' principle – opening a second front is frequently the way to overwhelm the defence.

Game 12
Andersson – Van der Wiel
Wijk aan Zee 1983
English Opening, Symmetrical

This game provides another example of a knight proving superior to a bishop, but it is rather different from the previous two examples. Here, the knight does not have a strong protected outpost in the centre, nor is the position closed. Instead, the knight proves strong because it has weak pawns to attack, and those pawns are on squares of the opposite colour from the enemy bishop. One of the problems with a bishop is that it controls only squares of one colour, whereas a knight can attack all 64 squares on the board (this, of course, is why two bishops together are so strong – between them, they can control squares of both colours). Although the game is not in the endgame chapter, it also illustrates a number of typical endgame ideas.

1 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 2 c4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 g3 g6 4 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d6 6 0-0 (D) to transform the extra space into something more tangible.



6... $\mathbb{Q}h6?$

This unusual development of the knight is intended to prevent White from playing d4, but as the game shows, White is able to make this advance anyway, due to the tactical vulnerability of the h6-knight. Black should therefore prefer the more natural central development with 6... $\mathbb{Q}f6$, although White has a slight advantage after 7 d4 cxd4 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$, thanks to his extra space.

7 d4! cxd4 8 $\mathbb{Q}xh6$

The point of White's play. At the cost of the bishop-pair, White is able to open the centre and secure some extra space.

8... $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (D)

If White now continued routinely, his small space advantage in the centre would amount to very little and be at least balanced by Black's bishop-pair. However, Andersson has appraised the position very deeply and seen the possibility

10 c5! dxc5

Clearly, Black does not want to allow the exchange on d6, which would leave him with a weak pawn.

11 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ bxc6 13 $\mathbb{Q}c2$

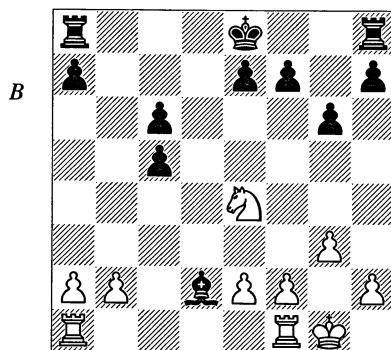
White has temporarily sacrificed a pawn, in order to weaken Black's queenside pawns. The doubled c-pawns are too weak to survive for very long, and White will soon regain the front pawn on c5, leaving Black with an isolated pawn on c6. The last few moves have also had the effect of exchanging off White's remaining bishop for its opposite number, thereby depriving Black of his bishop-pair – exactly the strategy we noted in Game 9.

13... $\mathbb{Q}d2?$

This is a poor decision. Black presumably hoped that the exchange of queens would be in his favour, since rooks and bishops tend to co-operate well together, while queens often work

well with knights. In this case, however, White's knight proves more effective than the black bishop, and the presence of pawn weaknesses on the queenside means that the ending favours White. Ulf Andersson has always been known as an outstanding player of endgames and simplified positions, and here he gives a textbook demonstration of how to handle such positions.

14 ♜xd2 ♜xd2 15 ♟e4 (D)



In this way, White regains his pawn anyway, since 15...♜b4 is no help in view of 16 a3.

15...0-0-0 16 ♜ad1 ♜h6 17 ♟xc5 ♜d5!?

Black hopes to seize control of the d-file, but this plan does not prove effective. He would probably have done better to exchange rooks on d1 and then play 18...♜d8, trying to eliminate both pairs of rooks. His pawn weaknesses would be much harder to attack in the absence of rooks and he should be able to hold the draw without undue difficulty. Instead, Van der Wiel overestimates his position, thinking that the normally strong combination of rooks and bishop should give him the initiative.

18 ♟d3!

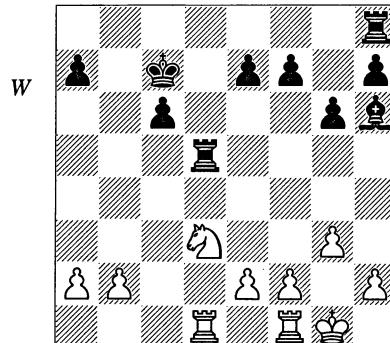
Played with a particular scheme in mind. White wishes to use the knight to prevent Black's rooks from penetrating down the d-file, and to put his own rooks on the c-file to attack Black's weakness. Such 'schematic thinking' is characteristic of good endgame play.

18...♝c7?! (D)

Failing to anticipate White's plan. 18...e5 would have made things harder for White.

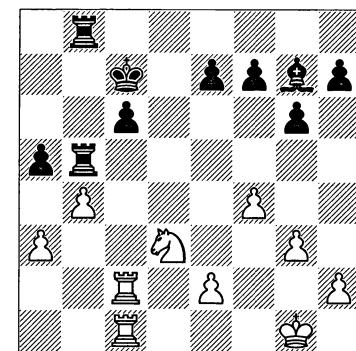
19 f4!

White cannot yet put his rooks on the c-file, because the black bishop controls the c1-square. The text-move cuts the line of the bishop, as



well as creating a potential threat of ♟e5 at some stage.

19...♝g7 20 ♜c1 ♜a5 21 a3 ♜b5 22 ♜c2 ♜hb8 23 b4 a5 24 ♜fc1 (D)



Thus, White has achieved the arrangement of pieces he has been aiming for and it is clear that his rooks are more active than Black's. Note too, the contrasting effectiveness of the minor pieces. White's knight is ideally placed, shutting off the d-file from Black's rooks, defending the b4-pawn, and prepared to jump to e5 or c5 at a later stage. The black bishop, however, has a similar role to the white bishop in the previous game – it surveys a superficially impressive-looking long diagonal, but is not actually taking much effective part in the game.

24...♜8b6 25 ♜g2

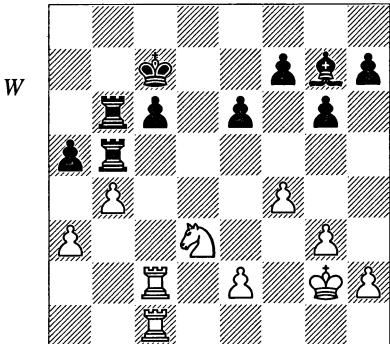
A typically quiet endgame move. Black is not in a position to undertake anything active, so Andersson just brings his king a little nearer the centre.

25...e6 (D)

26 bxa5!

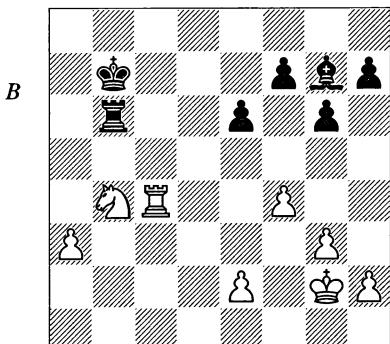
Freeing the b4-square, so the knight can bring further pressure to bear on c6.

26...♜xa5 27 ♟b4 c5



At first sight, it may look as though White has merely allowed Black to exchange off his weak c-pawn for White's a-pawn. However, this is not the case, since after 27... $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xc6!$ (much stronger than capturing with the rook) Black would have no good way to meet the threat of a discovered check; e.g., 28... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}d1+$, 28... $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ and the f7-pawn falls, or 28...f5 29 $\mathbb{Q}a5+$ followed by 30 $\mathbb{Q}c4$, forking the rooks. Meanwhile, Black has no way to defend his c6-pawn, so he must lose a pawn. Note that his bishop is powerless to help, since the c6-pawn is on a light square and cannot be defended by the bishop, whereas the white knight can attack it whatever colour square it stands on – one of the main reasons why a knight can be superior to a bishop even on an open board.

28 $\mathbb{Q}xc5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xc5+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ (D)



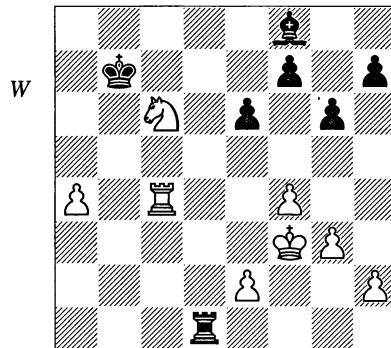
So, White has an extra pawn, but the realization of this advantage is still not easy against best defence.

30... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$

It would be a bad bargain to take on a3 and allow $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ and $\mathbb{Q}xf7$, since Black's remaining

kingside pawns would be weak, especially the e6-pawn.

33 a4 $\mathbb{Q}d1?$ (D)



Superficially active, but the rook proves misplaced here. It should prefer a more defensive position on d6, from where it keeps an eye on the kingside pawns.

34 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ f6 35 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

Earlier in the game, the knight occupied this square to prevent a black rook from penetrating down the d-file, and now it occupies the same square to prevent the rook from going back!

35...h5?

A final mistake, losing another pawn. He could still offer stiff resistance after 35...f5, preventing White's next.

36 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 1-0

The e6-pawn also falls, and Black has no more hope.

The Essential Lessons

- A knight is often superior to a bishop when there are pawn weaknesses to attack, because the knight can attack them regardless of which colour square they stand on. The bishop can only attack or defend squares of one colour.
- An early exchange of queens does not necessarily presage a draw. Where one has positional weaknesses, exchanging queens is often a bad idea, since it reduces the scope to create counterplay (13... $\mathbb{Q}d2?$).
- In endgames, it often pays to think in terms of schemes. Andersson's plan of putting his knight on d3, pawn on f4 and rooks on c1 and c2 is a typical example.

Game 13
Miles – Smyslov
Dortmund 1986
Queen's Gambit, Slav Defence

This game illustrates a relatively rare, but nonetheless important positional idea – locking enemy pieces out of the game. As a result of the manoeuvre carried out by White between moves 17-20, Black ends up with a bishop which is completely imprisoned behind his own pawns, and can never emerge. He is therefore left playing effectively a piece down. Such imprisonment is something to which bishops are much more vulnerable than knights, because of the bishop's inability to jump over obstacles.

1 $\mathbb{Q}f3 \mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 c6

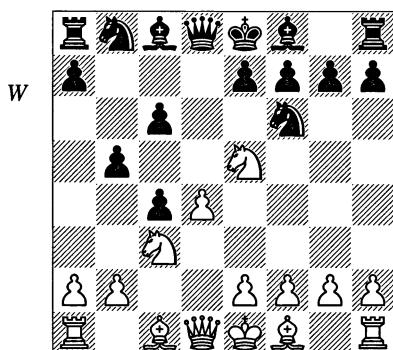
The characteristic move of the Slav Defence. Rather than supporting his centre with 2...e6, Black prefers to use the c-pawn, so as to keep open the diagonal of his queen's bishop. The bishop will usually come to f5 before Black plays ...e6. This defence is one of Black's most solid and popular replies to the Queen's Gambit.

3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5 4 d4 dx c 4 5 $\mathbb{Q}e5!?$

An unusual move. Generally, White plays 5 a4, to prevent Black from hanging on to the extra pawn by ...b5.

5...b5?! (D)

It is naturally tempting to try to punish White for omitting a4, but the text-move is certainly somewhat risky. Simply 5... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ b5 gives Black a good game.



6 g3 $\mathbb{Q}g4!?$

Following the more natural continuation 6... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ White has compensation for his pawn after 7 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 8 a4 a6 9 e4, with good central control.

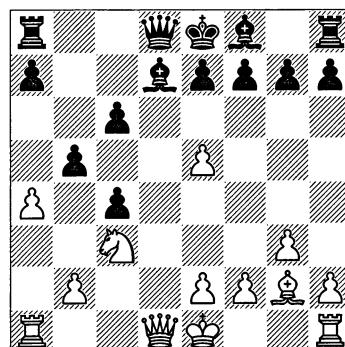
7 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

Now 9... $\mathbb{Q}b7$? can be met by 10 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$, regaining the pawn with advantage.

10 dx e 5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$

And now exchanging queens would again allow White to regain the pawn after 10... $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (or 11... $\mathbb{Q}b7$) 12 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$.

11 a4 (D)



11...b4

This leaves c4 fatally weak, so that White can always regain his pawn, but Black had no good way to hold his queenside together, in view of the continual tactical threat of $\mathbb{Q}xb5$.

12 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 14 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e6$

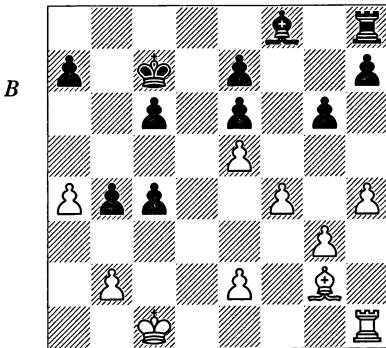
Things have gone very wrong for Black, and with his kingside development so lagging, he is glad to exchange queens. However, it transpires that this leads by force to a position where Black is quite lost. Even so, it was hard to suggest a significant improvement. After 14... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$, his queenside pawns are weak and his king exposed in the centre.

15 $\mathbb{Q}xd8+!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$

The point of White's play. He has seen a method of completely locking Black's king's

bishop out of the game. Black cannot prevent the capture on e6, since both 17... $\mathbb{Q}d5?$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ cxd5 19 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$, and 17... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d1+$ fail to help.

17... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ fxe6 19 h4! g6 20 f4!
(D)

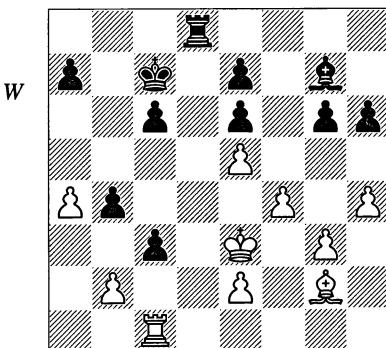


With his last two moves, White has built a prison around Black's f8-bishop. It can never force its way into the daylight, since a subsequent ...g5 by Black will be met simply by h5, keeping the gates firmly shut. For all practical purposes, Black is a piece down. Such exclusion of enemy bishops was a strategic device for which Capablanca was famous, most notably in the game Winter-Capablanca, Hastings 1919. Here Tony Miles, England's first-ever grandmaster, shows that he too had mastered this technique. The remainder of the game consists of White finding a way to exploit his effective extra piece.

20...h6 21 $\mathbb{Q}d2$

Making room for $\mathbb{Q}c1$, followed by $\mathbb{Q}xc4$.

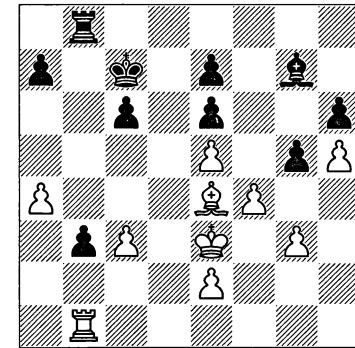
21... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ c3 (D)



The front c-pawn is lost anyway, so Smyslov jettisons it in such a way as to obtain a passed

b-pawn, which he is able to defend for some time. However, his position remains completely lost, and he could, in principle, justify resigning already.

24 bxc3 b3 25 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ g5 27 h5!
(D)



Keeping the enemy bishop locked up.

27...b2

Otherwise, White can win the pawn by 28 $\mathbb{Q}b2$, followed by $\mathbb{Q}d3-c4$.

28 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}c2$

29 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}a3$ would allow Black to win the a-pawn, for which there is no necessity.

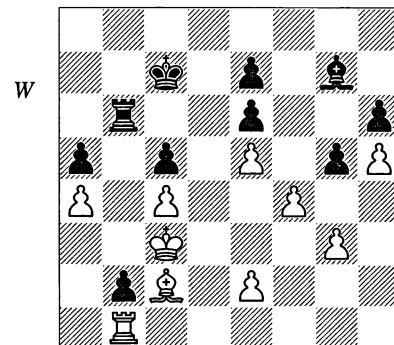
29... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}c2$

The repetition of moves does not spoil anything. White gains time on the clock, and also has more chance to enjoy his position – after all, it is not often that one reduces a former world champion to such a pitiful state!

31... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}c4$

Now $\mathbb{Q}c3$ will finally pick off the b-pawn.

32...c5 33 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ a5 (D)



34 $\mathbb{Q}b3!$

A nice piece of accuracy. Capturing immediately allows the exchange of rooks, and it is not

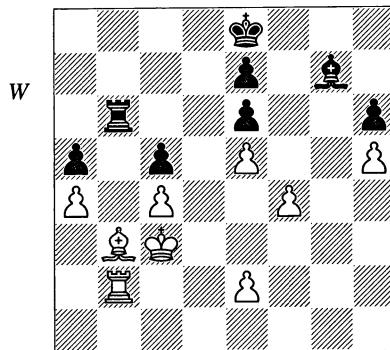
immediately obvious how White would then win, because his king has no clear path into Black's position. Keeping rooks on wins much more easily, because the rook will be able to penetrate along one of the open files. Care is required, even in the most overwhelming positions!

34...gxf4

This makes things easy for White, by opening another file. Black could prolong his resistance by sitting tight, but White can still force the win. One plan is to capture on b2, and then play e3 and $\mathbb{R}f2$. The threat of $f \times g5$ would force Black to place his own rook on f8, whereupon White can transfer his bishop to g4, and win the e6-pawn ($\dots \mathbb{Q}d7$ is always met by $\mathbb{R}d1+$, driving the king away).

**35 gxf4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 36 $\mathbb{R}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ (D)
37 $\mathbb{R}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 38 $\mathbb{R}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 39 $\mathbb{R}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 40
 $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 41 $\mathbb{R}d1$ 1-0**

White's rook penetrates decisively (41... $\mathbb{R}d6$ 42 $\mathbb{R}b1$ and the rook comes down the b-file instead).



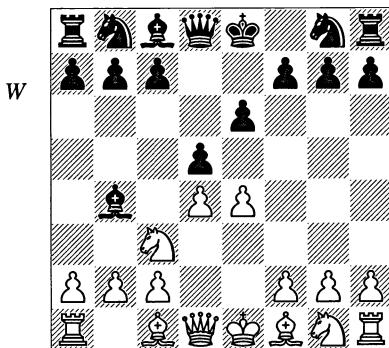
The Essential Lessons

- Having a piece blocked out of the game can prove a fatal disadvantage. In this game, after 20 f4, Black was effectively a piece down.
- Bishops are especially vulnerable to such treatment. The fact that a knight can jump over obstacles makes this piece far more difficult to imprison.
- Even in the most overwhelming position, care and attention to detail are required (34 $\mathbb{Q}b3!$).

Game 14
Hort – Petrosian
European Team Ch, Kapfenberg 1970
 French Defence, Winawer Variation

Here we see the struggle of rook versus knight. Although in general rooks are stronger than knights, they need open lines in order to be effective. In this game, the position becomes blocked right from the opening, and in such a position, rooks often have difficulty achieving full effectiveness. Petrosian, who was famous for his positional exchange sacrifices, finds a way to sacrifice rook for knight, and in the resulting position, his knight, combined with a powerful central pawn-mass, dominates the position.

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♜c3 ♜b4 (D)



The characteristic move of the Winawer Variation of the French Defence. Black aims to exchange bishop for knight, thereby doubling White's queenside pawns. The risk attached to this is that Black will find his dark squares very weak, because his central pawns are all on light squares, and he has exchanged off the dark-squared bishop that could have defended them. The strategic battle in the middlegame usually revolves around White's attempts to open the position and get his dark-squared bishop into action effectively, while Black strives to keep the position closed and exploit White's pawn weaknesses. Bobby Fischer once famously declared that he doubted the Winawer was sound, because it is "antipositional and weakens the kingside". It must be said that, after several decades of popularity, it appears that in recent years most top GMs may have come to share Fischer's opinion, and the line is nowadays less popular than the alternatives 3...♝f6 and 3...dxe4.

4 e5 c5 5 a3 ♜xc3+ 6 bxc3 ♜c7

The main alternative is 6...♜e7, when Black can meet 7 ♜g4 with 7...0-0. However, White then has good chances of an attack on the king-side, and the text-move therefore aims to defend the g7-square in a different way.

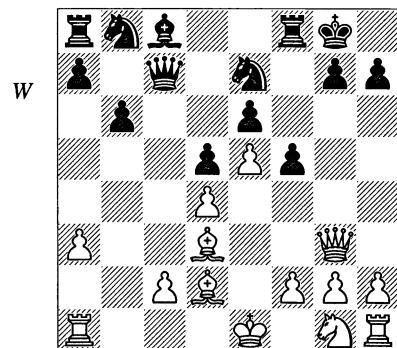
7 ♜g4 f5

This is the point of Black's previous move. From c7, the queen defends g7. However, the move 7...f5 is committal, in that it places another pawn on a light square and also deprives Black of the chance to challenge White's e-pawn with a later ...f6 break.

8 ♜g3 cxd4 9 cxd4 ♜e7 10 ♜d2

Obviously, 10 ♜xg7?? loses material after 10...♜g8 followed by 11...♜c3+.

10...0-0 11 ♜d3 b6! (D)



We see before us a typical Winawer middlegame. Black has the open c-file, an outpost on c4, and a target at c2. White has two bishops, a potentially strong a3-f8 diagonal for his dark-squared bishop, and prospects of a kingside attack. Prospects are roughly equal, although as a matter of taste, I suspect most GMs would prefer to play the white side. Black's last move is a

standard French Defence plan. With his central pawns all fixed on light squares, Black's light-squared bishop is often an ineffective piece in this opening, and the plan of exchanging it for its opposite number is therefore a common idea.

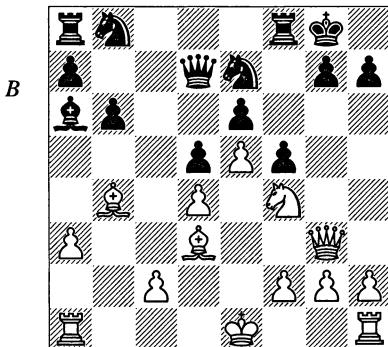
12 ♜e2

This is a more effective development than 12 ♜f3. Black has a weakness on e6, so the white knight heads to f4, from where it attacks that weakness and also has the chance to jump to h5, attacking the g7-square.

12...♝a6 13 ♜f4! ♕d7

One small drawback of exchanging the bad bishop is that Black needs to use his queen to defend the weak e6-pawn.

14 ♕b4 (D)



The dark-squared bishop occupies a powerful diagonal.

14...♞f7?!

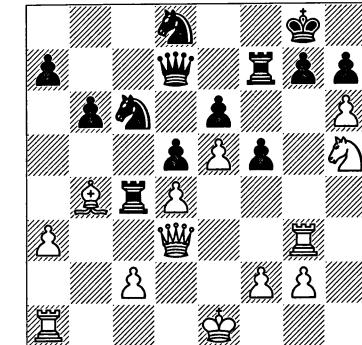
For a number of years, this move was considered essential, since if 14...♜xd3? White has the powerful reply 15 ♜h5!, when Black must surrender the exchange in order to defend against the mate threat on g7. However, in recent years, it has been shown that there is no need to place the rook passively on f7, and that 14...♜c8 is better.

15 h4!? ♜xd3 16 ♜xd3 ♜bc6 17 ♜h3 ♜c8!

18 ♜g3 ♜d8!

This multi-purpose move is typical of the deep manoeuvring which is required in blocked positions. The knight moves to defend the e6-pawn, thereby freeing the black queen. At the same time, the c-file is unblocked, and Black intends to put a rook on c4, pressurizing White's d4-pawn. The other knight can then increase the pressure by moving to c6.

19 h5 ♜c4 20 h6 ♜ec6 21 ♜h5?! (D)



While Black manoeuvres on the queenside, White continues with his action on the other side, and his last move provokes a crisis. The g7-square is attacked, and there is a tactical threat of 22 ♜xg7+ ♜xg7 23 ♜f6+, winning the queen. It appears that Black is in deep trouble, because the only effective defence is 21...g6, allowing 22 ♜f6+, forcing Black to surrender an exchange. In reality, however, Petrosian has seen this point coming and is well prepared to sacrifice the exchange in order to eliminate White's knight. What he has understood is that in such a blocked position, with few open lines, the white rooks are not such effective pieces. After the exchange sacrifice, Black will pick up the f6-pawn, eliminate White's remaining chances of a kingside attack, and will have a cluster of central pawns which threaten to march down the board. His overall compensation will be more than enough for the small material investment.

21...g6!

Petrosian was famous for his positional exchange sacrifices and this game is only one of many examples. When once asked which of the chess pieces was his favourite, he replied, only half-jokingly, that it was the rook, because he could sacrifice it for minor pieces!

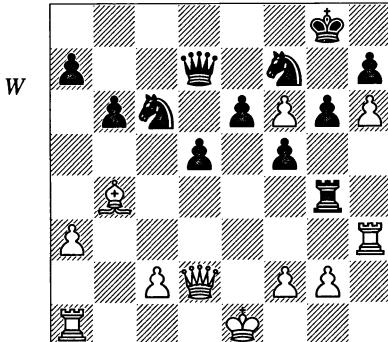
22 ♜f6+ ♜xf6 23 exf6 ♜f7

It is not clear why Petrosian did not take the d4-pawn immediately, but even if White now defends it by 24 c3, Black can take on h6, or play 24...a5, in either case with a clear advantage. White prefers to abandon the d4-pawn.

24 ♜d2 ♜xd4 25 ♜d3 ♜h4! 26 ♜h3 ♜g4 (D)

Black's rook is very active and so Petrosian avoids its exchange and instead continues to harry the uncoordinated white forces.

27 ♜f1 ♜d6 28 ♜e1 ♜f7



A move which underlines the helplessness of the white rooks. The black king is as safe as houses on f7, from where it also defends the e6-pawn and attacks the white pawn on f6. We noted earlier (note to Black's 18th move in Game 9) that an enemy pawn in front of one's king can often be a useful piece of protection, and Black is not in any great hurry to annex the f6-pawn here. By leaving it on the board, it just serves to block the long dark-square diagonal and prevent White from ever generating threats with queen and bishop. The pawn can be picked off at Black's leisure later in the game.

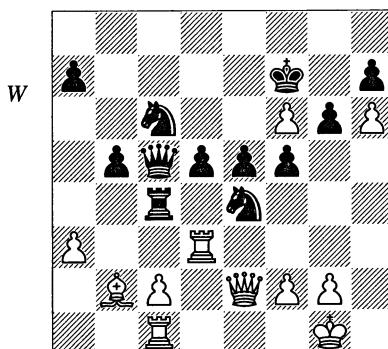
29 ♜c3 ♜e4

Again, we see the power of a centralized knight. Black's basic plan is to improve the position of his pieces and then begin the advance of his central pawns.

30 ♜d3 ♜c5 31 ♜d1 ♜c4 32 ♜b2 b5

Black methodically increases his grip on the position. White has no shred of counterplay and can only wait.

33 ♜e2 ♜d6 34 ♜g1 ♜e4 35 ♜d3 ♜c5 36 ♜c1 e5 (D)

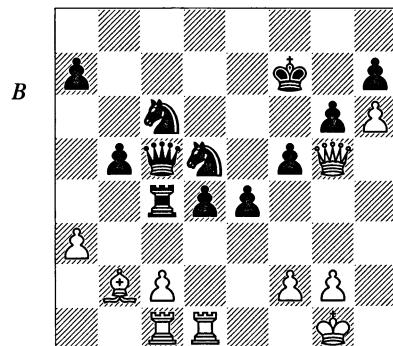


The Space Invaders syndrome appears again. The black central pawns begin an inexorable march down the board, and will crush all resistance before them.

37 ♜e3 d4 38 ♜e2 ♜xf6

Finally taking this pawn is almost a by-product for Black. His main aim is to free the e5-pawn to push on further.

39 ♜dd1 ♜d5 40 ♜d2 e4 41 ♜g5 (D)



Forlornly hoping to drum up some counterplay against the black king, but Petrosian immediately takes action to expel the queen.

41...♜c7! 42 ♜d2 ♜e6 43 ♜h4 a5 44 ♜cd1

White has long ceased to have any sensible moves, and rather than wait for a slow execution, he offers another pawn, in the hope of penetrating with his rook on the c-file.

44...♜xc2 45 ♜xc2 ♜xc2 46 ♜c1 ♜xb2 47 ♜xc6 d3 48 ♜a6 ♜d4!

Preventing a check on a7. The white rook is unable to create any threats, and meanwhile the d-pawn is queening. White had seen enough.

0-1

The Essential Lessons

- Rooks need open files to be effective. In blocked positions, a knight can often be at least as strong as a rook, and a sacrifice of rook for knight can be very powerful in such positions.
- A chain of unopposed central pawns can march down the board and crush all before it.
- Even in a totally winning position, never forget about enemy counterplay. Don't be afraid to take time out to deal with threats (41...♜c7!, 48...♜d4!).

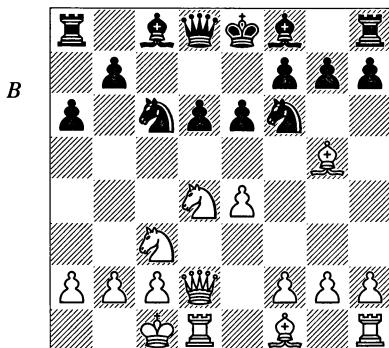
Game 15

Kostro – Simagin

Varna 1966
Sicilian Defence, Richter-Rauzer

It is obviously well-known that the queen is the most powerful piece on the chessboard, but sometimes even she can find herself outgunned by a selection of lesser pieces. In this example, Black's rook and minor piece prove far stronger than White's queen. This is principally because Black's position is solid and has no weaknesses for the queen to attack, whereas White has weaknesses which can be exploited by the combined action of the black pieces.

1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 d6 6 ♜g5 e6 7 ♜d2 a6 8 0-0-0 (D)



The first Open Sicilian we have seen in this book. In this particular variation, named after the great Soviet theoretician of the 1930s, Vsevolod Rauzer, White castles queenside and prepares an advance of his kingside pawns. Black has many different set-ups in response and here he chooses one which involves an immediate attack on the g5-bishop.

8...h6 9 ♜f4

It may look strange to release the pin on the f6-knight, but the fact is that the retreat 9 ♜h4 allows a typical Sicilian tactic: 9...♜xe4! with the idea of 10 ♜xe4 ♜xh4 or 10 ♜xd8 ♜xd2.

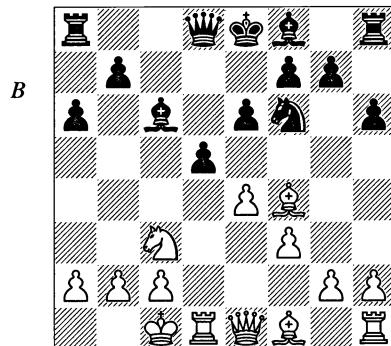
9...♜d7

Black cannot win material immediately with 9...♜xd4 10 ♜xd4 e5? because of 11 ♜xe5, and the d6-pawn is pinned. Now, however, this is a real threat, hence White's next move.

10 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 11 f3

Trading d6 for e4 would not give White anything, but now Black must do something about the threat to his d6-pawn.

11...d5 12 ♜e1 (D)



This move has a subtle tactical point. By introducing a pin on the d-file, White tempts Black to move his queen off the d-file. The natural post is a5, but after 12...♜a5 White has the tactic 13 ♜xd5!, with the idea of either 13...♜xe1 14 ♜xf6+ and 15 ♜xe1, with an extra pawn, or 13...♜xa2 14 ♜c7+ ♜e7 15 ♜b4#. The alternative queen move, 12...♜b6, loses a pawn to 13 exd5 (the e6-pawn is pinned), so Black has no good way to get his queen out of the pin. He therefore resorts to a pin of his own.

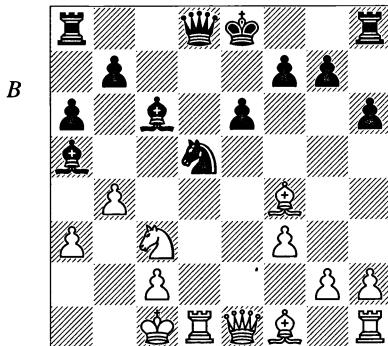
12...♜b4 13 a3 ♜a5!

Up to this point, the game had been following what was at that time known theory. Black's last move was considered bad because of the continuation adopted by White in the game, but Simagin was one of the most original and talented masters of his generation, and had realized that the theoretical judgement could be turned on its head by a positional queen sacrifice.

14 exd5

Kostro follows the theoretical recommendation. The attempt to flex the move-order by 14 b4 fails to a neat tactical line: 14...♜b6 15 exd5 ♜xd5! 16 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 17 c4 ♜f6! 18 ♜e5 ♜e3+! and Black is doing excellently.

14... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 15 b4 (D)



Black appears to be losing material, as if the bishop retreats, White wins a piece: 15... $\mathbb{B}b6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17 c4 $\mathbb{W}f6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}g5+$ 19 f4. However, Simagin now reveals the point of his play.

15... $\mathbb{Q}xf4!$ 16 $\mathbb{R}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$

Black has only rook and bishop for his queen, not normally a full material equivalent. However, he also has some positional advantages, notably the fact that White's king is rather exposed, thanks to the advance of his queenside pawns. Black's king, by contrast, will be safe on the kingside. In addition, Black has no real weaknesses in his position, and it is not easy for White to find objects for attack. The overall assessment is that Black has at least equality, and it only takes one or two inaccuracies by White to turn the position sharply in Black's favour.

17 $\mathbb{Q}e2?!$ (D)

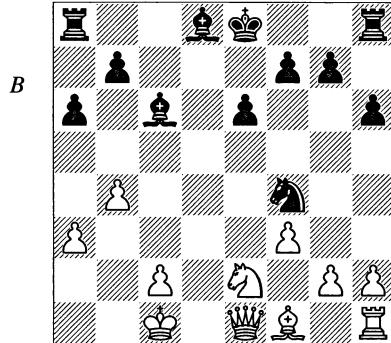
This exchange favours Black. Simagin himself recommended 17 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 0-0 18 c4 as unclear. It may look strange to expose the white king further in this way, but the move 18 c4 takes away the d5-square from Black's pieces, and this is more important. We shall see in the further course of the game that once the black minor pieces find secure squares in the centre, they soon prove stronger than the queen.

17... $\mathbb{Q}xe2+$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 0-0 19 $\mathbb{W}f2$

White frees the path for the rook to come to d1, but it may be that the more energetic 19 h4 was better, hoping to create counterplay by g4-g5, etc.

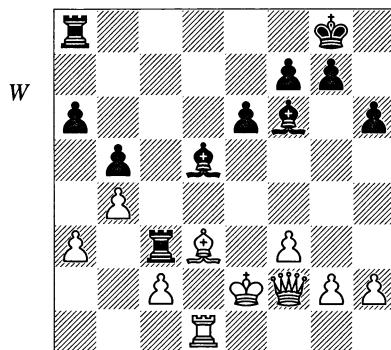
19... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 20 $\mathbb{R}d1$ b5!

This excellent move serves two purposes. Firstly, it prevents White from playing c4 himself, and thereby secures the d5-square for



Black's bishop, and secondly, it fixes the b4-pawn and so threatens to open the a-file by ...a5. White's king is clearly very exposed on the queenside and decides to run away, but it will not prove much safer in the centre. Black has the initiative and stands better, despite his small nominal material disadvantage.

21 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{R}fc8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{R}c3$ (D)



It is worth taking a closer look at this position. The reason that Black's pieces are so much stronger than the queen is threefold. Firstly, the pieces are all very well coordinated. Secondly, Black has secure positions in the centre for his pieces – squares like d5, c3, etc. And, finally, the queen has no targets. If there were significant weaknesses in Black's position, such as weak pawns, or his pieces were on unstable squares where the queen could attack them, it would be a different matter, but here the queen simply has nothing to attack. All of the weaknesses are on White's side, and he can only watch while Black strengthens his position.

24 h4 $\mathbb{R}ac8$ 25 g4

White belatedly tries to drum up some counterplay on the kingside, but it is too little, too late.

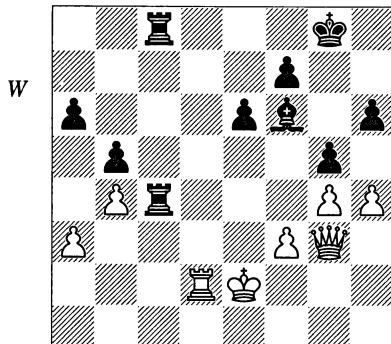
25...♝c4!

The white bishop is the only piece which is holding his position together down the c-file. Once it has gone, the black rooks break through to c2.

26 ♜xc4 ♜xc2+ 27 ♜d2 ♜2xc4

Black has won a second pawn, with no lessening of his overall grip on the position.

28 ♜g3 g5! (D)



Radically preventing White's threatened 29 g5 advance, and fixing the kingside pawns. It may look as though the move exposes Black's king, but White is in no position to exploit this.

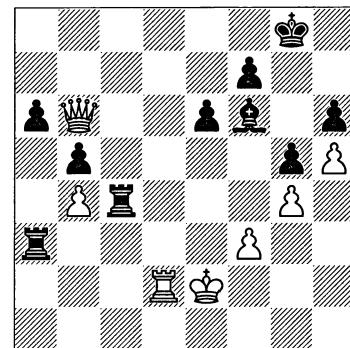
29 h5 ♜c3 30 ♜d6

A last desperate attempt to get counterplay. The passive defence of the a-pawn with 30 ♜a2 would be hopeless after 30...♜b3, followed by doubling rooks on their 6th rank.

30...♜xa3 31 ♜b6 ♜c4 (D)

Even with his queen around the back of the black position, White cannot find any targets.

Meanwhile, his own pawns are dropping like flies.



32 ♜b8+ ♔g7 33 ♜d6 ♜cc3 34 f4 ♜e3+ 35 ♔f1 gxf4 36 ♜c7

Note how safe the black king is on g7.

36...♜a1+ 37 ♔g2 f3+ 0-1

If 38 ♔f2, then 38...♜c3, followed by a bishop check on h4, and the f-pawn will decide.

The Essential Lessons

- Although normally the most powerful piece on the board, the queen needs weaknesses and targets. Without these, its power is much reduced.
- A small material disadvantage can be more than compensated for by positional factors (here, the weak white king, etc.).
- Rooks and minor pieces can prove more powerful than a queen, if they coordinate well together and have secure central outposts.

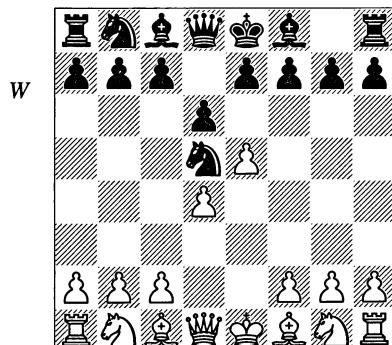
Game 16
Short – Timman
Tilburg 1991
 Alekhine Defence

In the middlegame, in contrast to the endgame, the king is generally a relatively weak piece, which needs to be kept under cover and protected from attack by enemy pieces. However, occasionally, the king is able to march fearlessly out and join the battle, and this game is a perfect example. With his opponent totally tied up, White needs one more piece to complete the mating-net around the enemy king, and it is White's own king which fulfils this role.

1 e4 ♜f6

Alekhine's Defence, one of the more extreme examples of the new opening concepts developed by the Hypermodern School in the 1920s. This group of players, spearheaded by players such as Nimzowitsch and Réti, rebelled against the classical theory that one should always try to establish a broad pawn-centre in the opening. While by no means rejecting the importance of the centre, the Hypermoderns took a deeper view of what constituted central control. They argued that mere occupation of the centre with pawns was not the only, or even the best, form of central control. A pawn-centre which was inadequately supported by pieces could prove a liability, subject to attacks from the enemy pieces, operating from a distance. Alekhine's Defence is an extreme application of these theories. White is invited to establish up to four pawns in the centre, all the while kicking the black knight around the board. Meanwhile, however, White's centre can easily prove vulnerable to counterattack.

2 e5 ♜d5 3 d4 d6 (D)



4 ♜f3

The main attempt at refutation of Black's opening is the so-called Four Pawns Attack, with 4 c4 ♜b6 5 f4. White's gigantic pawn-centre threatens to blow Black off the board. However, experience has shown that accurate counterplay gives Black good chances against the extended white centre. He generally plays such moves as ...dxe5, ...♜c6, ...♝g4 (or ...♝f5), ...e6, ...♝b4, etc. The pawn thrust ...c5 is always in the air, while Black can also nibble at the white centre from the other side, with moves such as ...f6, and even occasionally the extravagant ...g5. While the Four Pawns remains a critical theoretical challenge to Black's opening, most modern grandmasters prefer to avoid such a committal approach in favour of a more restrained set-up. Short's choice is an example of this. White contents himself with two pawns in the centre, on the basis that these will be easier to maintain, and will still confer on White a space advantage, while restricting the scope of Black's active counterplay.

4...g6

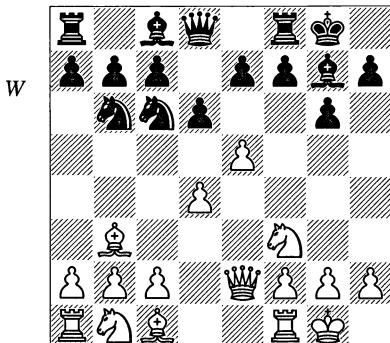
This was for many years a main line here, but games such as this one gradually persuaded Black that it is too slow. Alternatives include 4...♝g4 and 4...dxe5, with the latter being the most popular nowadays.

5 ♜c4 ♜b6 6 ♜b3 ♜g7 7 ♜e2

This move has been favoured by Short. Another, equally good, approach is 7 ♜g5, planning f4, with White reasoning that he is now better prepared to advance f4 than was the case at move 4. Short's move solidly over-protects the e5-pawn, which is the key to White's space advantage.

7...♜c6 8 0-0 0-0 (D)

9 h3!

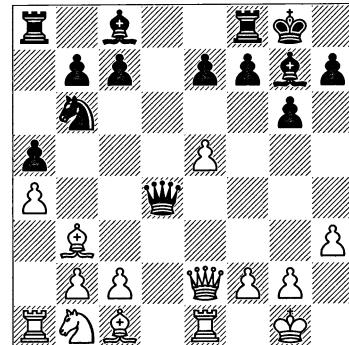


This apparently insignificant move is very important, and is typical of such positions. The main feature of the position is that Black is cramped, because the white pawn duo on d4 and e5 controls more space in the centre. The essence of a cramped position is that one has too little space, relative to the pieces one has. Clearly, it follows from this that there are two cures for a cramped position – take more space, or else reduce the number of pieces one has. The former is not usually possible, so the main method of relieving a cramped position is to exchange pieces. In the present case, Black aims to do this by ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ and a subsequent exchange on f3. True, this would relinquish the two bishops, but the easing of Black's spatial inferiority should outweigh this. In addition, the exchange of the f3-knight would remove one of the key pieces which is supporting the d4-e5 pawn-chain. White wishes to keep this chain intact, because it controls central space and shuts out Black's g7-bishop. In the light of these considerations, the move 9 h3 is perfectly logical. One might therefore wonder why Black did not play ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ last move, before White had time to prevent it. The answer is that before castling, 8... $\mathbb{Q}g4?$ was tactically impossible because of 9 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ followed by 10 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ and $\mathbb{W}xg4$, winning a pawn and leaving Black's king stranded in the centre.

9...a5 10 a4 dx5

Having been thwarted in his hopes of exchanging his queen's bishop for White's f3-knight, Black decides to exchange his c6-knight for the enemy steed. This does not solve his problems, but it is difficult to suggest an alternative plan. His knight is poorly placed on b6 and has few prospects, and the g7-bishop is also shut out of the game.

11 dx5 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{M}e1$ (D)

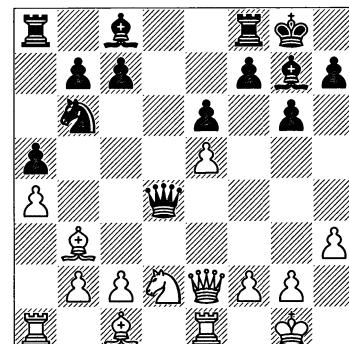


13...e6

This move shuts in the queen's bishop, and also weakens the dark squares around Black's king (notably f6). However, it is difficult to do without, because otherwise the threat of e6 continually hangs over Black's head. In addition, 13...e6 has a concrete plan, namely to relocate the poorly-placed b6-knight to the central post d5. If played immediately, 13... $\mathbb{Q}d5?$ would lose a piece to 14 $\mathbb{M}d1$.

14 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ (D)

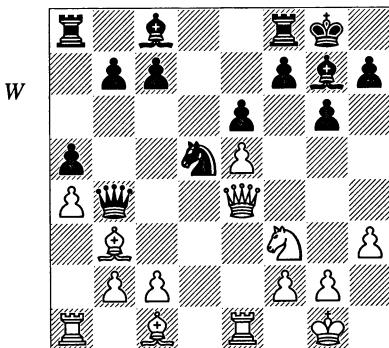
Another very accurate move from Short, and a good example of non-standard development. The more obvious move is 14 $\mathbb{Q}c3$, developing à la Reinfeld, but good players are always looking beyond such 'natural' moves and considering where their pieces will be most effective. We already know that in this position, a white knight is excellently placed on f3, defending the strong e5-pawn. Black has just gone to some lengths to exchange off the knight which previously stood on this square, but now the other white knight is headed there.



14... $\mathbb{Q}d5$

Short's play thus far has been admirable, and it is clear that he knows exactly what he is doing in this position. He was no doubt helped by the fact that he had played all of these moves before! The game Short-Hennigan, British Ch, Swansea 1987, had seen Black prefer the move 14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ here, but he was unable to solve his problems, and was crushed in the following fashion: 15 c3 $\mathbb{W}c5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 21 f4 $\mathbb{W}c4$ 22 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 23 b3 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 24 c4 $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ c6 28 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}ed1$ 1-0.

15 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 16 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ (D)



This is a crucial moment. White has maintained his pawn on e5, and with it his space advantage. Black also still has to find active employment for his queen's bishop, while his other bishop remains shut out on g7. However, despite these advantages, White needs to find a plan. With the pawn on e5, and the weakness of the dark squares around Black's king, the natural plan is to create a mating attack on the kingside. Short's last move started this, as his queen was threatening to go to h4, with the likely follow-up $\mathbb{Q}h6$, $\mathbb{Q}g5$, etc. Timman's last move in turn tries to prevent this, but Short now comes up with a first-rate idea to further his kingside play.

17 $\mathbb{Q}c4!$

This prevents the queen exchange, but it is not immediately obvious how it helps, after Black attacks the bishop.

17... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 18 b3!

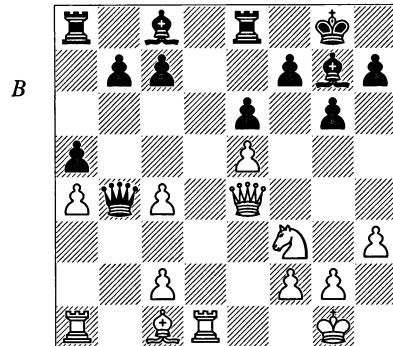
This is the key point. Black can capture on c4, and wreck the white queenside pawn-structure, but he cannot prevent the white queen from

going to h4 and taking part in a winning attack on the kingside. Pawn-structure, although an important element of the game, is only one element of it. Weak pawns usually prove costly in the endgame, but as Dr Tarrasch pointed out, "Before the endgame, the gods have placed the middlegame". Short's point is that Black is not likely to survive to an endgame, because his king is going to be mated long before any endgame is reached. If this is the case, a few weak pawns on the queenside will prove irrelevant. Of course, such a decision requires fine judgement. If the attack fails to break through, the queenside pawn weaknesses could come back to haunt White, so before allowing such a positional transformation, Short had to be fairly sure that his attack would decide the game.

18... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$

Black may as well capture anyway, since apart from everything else, there is also a threat of $\mathbb{Q}a3$, winning the exchange.

19 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d1!$ (D)



Another accurate move. Before proceeding with the attack, Short adds another positional advantage to his growing collection, by seizing the only open file, and in the process, preventing the black queen's bishop from developing to d7. As we shall soon see, the control of the d-file proves crucial to the success of the attack.

20... $\mathbb{W}c5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ b6

Black cannot take on e5 with the bishop, because of 22 $\mathbb{Q}a3$, winning a piece.

22 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}c6$

22... $\mathbb{W}f8$ is probably a better chance, trying to use his queen to defend the kingside, although this would allow the white rook into d7 when the bishop moves to b7.

23 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$

Allowing the bishop exchange would leave the dark squares around his king defenceless.

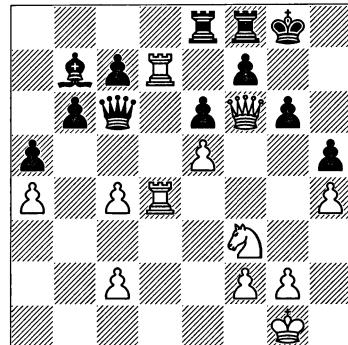
24 $\mathbb{B}d8!$ $\mathbb{B}b7?$

In *Understanding Chess Move by Move*, John Nunn points out that 24... $\mathbb{B}d7!$ was the last chance, and may be enough to hold the draw. Given the size of White's apparent advantage, this is interesting in itself, and an example of the defensive resources which exist in chess.

25 $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $\mathbb{B}g7$

White's last move created the terrible threat of 26 $\mathbb{W}e7!$. Black therefore has to return his bishop to g7, so as to answer 26 $\mathbb{W}e7$ with 26... $\mathbb{Q}xh6$. However, it is too late to ward off all of the threats.

26 $\mathbb{B}8d7!$ (D)



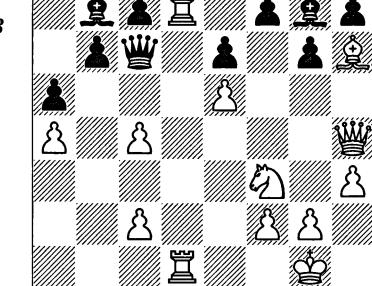
it looks as though White is already doing that. But he has one piece which is not attacking – his king! In time of war, the monarch is usually spared conscription into the armed forces, but on this occasion, Short, like Nelson before him, expects every man to do his duty.

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

Black could have spoilt the spectacle, though not changed the result of the game, by 31... $\mathbb{B}c8$. The fact that there is no longer any mate threat down the long diagonal to White's king means that he can break through by 32 $g4!$; e.g., 32... $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 33 $gxh5$, or 32... $hxg4$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 34 $h5$ and White crashes through. Timman chose to stay passive and allow Short to demonstrate the most photogenic of wins.

32 $\mathbb{Q}g3!$ $\mathbb{B}ce8$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}f4!$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 1-0

After 34... $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}h6$, Black is mated.



This switchback of the rook is decisive.

26... $\mathbb{B}f8$

The threat was 27 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ followed by 28 $\mathbb{W}f6+$, while the attempt to offer a queen exchange by 26... $\mathbb{W}e4$ loses to 27 $\mathbb{B}xf7!!$, when 27... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ wins the queen.

27 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 28 $\mathbb{B}1d4$

The other rook steps into the attack, also preventing Black's defensive resource ... $\mathbb{W}e4$. The white rooks hold Black in a paralysing grip.

28... $\mathbb{B}ae8$ 29 $\mathbb{W}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 30 $h4$

Robin Smith pointed out in *Modern Chess Analysis* that White has a simpler win with 30 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ and 31 $f3$, followed by $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ and $\mathbb{B}h4$.

30... $h5$ (D)

He cannot allow the pawn to march to h6.

31 $\mathbb{Q}h2!$

The start of a fantastic finish. Despite his crushing bind, White still has to find a way to break down the last vestige of resistance. A good rule of thumb when attacking is to involve all of one's pieces in the attack. In this position,

The Essential Lessons

- The player with a cramped position normally seeks to relieve his cramp by exchanging pieces. Conversely, the player with a space advantage usually wishes to avoid exchanges (9 $h3!$).
- When developing a piece, ask yourself where that piece will be most effectively placed, and develop accordingly (14 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$). It is not always correct to put the knights on c3 and f3, the bishops on c4 and f4, etc.
- Pawn-structure is only one aspect of the game, and usually a longer-term, endgame-oriented aspect. If one can achieve a winning attack which is likely to end things in the middlegame, it is worth accepting a few weak pawns, because they will probably prove irrelevant (17 $\mathbb{Q}c4!$).
- The king can be a strong piece even in some middlegame positions!

Game 17

Dragomaretsky – Kalinin

Moscow Ch 1995

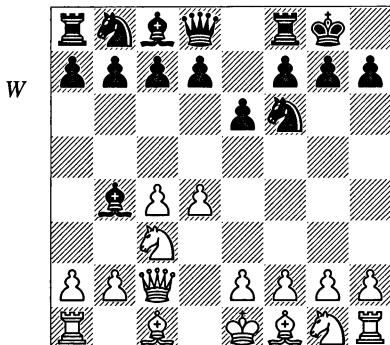
Nimzo-Indian Defence, 4 $\mathbb{W}c2$

In Hort-Petrosian (Game 14) we saw that rooks can prove ineffective if they lack open files along which to operate. The game we examine next illustrates how effective they can be if they have such a file. From a quiet opening, White gives a textbook illustration of how to seize and then exploit an open file.

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 4 $\mathbb{W}c2$

Originally popularized by Capablanca, this move has become the most frequent answer to the Nimzo-Indian Defence in recent years. White avoids his pawns being doubled and prepares to challenge Black's bishop with a later a3. In this way, White can hope to obtain the bishop-pair, but he does so at the cost of some delay in his development.

4...0-0 (D)



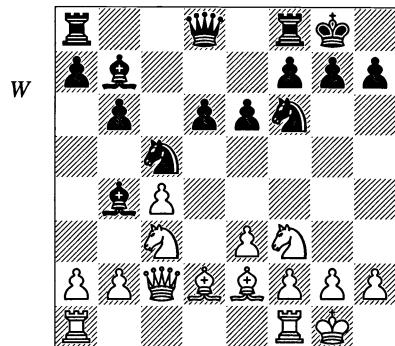
5 $\mathbb{Q}f3$

This is a rather unambitious reply, which allows Black to obtain an easy game. The more critical try for advantage is 5 a3, after which innumerable games have proceeded 5... $\mathbb{Q}xc3+ 6 \mathbb{W}xc3$ b6 7 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 8 f3, with an interesting position where White's two bishops and strong centre are counter-balanced by his tardy kingside development.

5...c5 6 dx5 $\mathbb{Q}a6!$

The theoretically approved recipe. Black exploits the fact that White's 5th move deprived himself of the chance to play f3, so Black can establish a knight on e4.

7 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 8 e3 b6 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10 0-0 d6 (D)



White has chosen a very unpretentious set-up, simply developing his pieces normally and not striving for a significant opening advantage. Black has also been able to develop comfortably and has the e4-square under control.

11 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 12 b3

Black was potentially threatening to liquidate by 12... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}ce4$, when White would be unable to preserve his bishop-pair. The text-move allows the bishop a retreat to b2 in such a variation, but Black is still able to simplify the position and retain easy equality.

12... $\mathbb{Q}ce4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 14 $\mathbb{W}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ d5?!

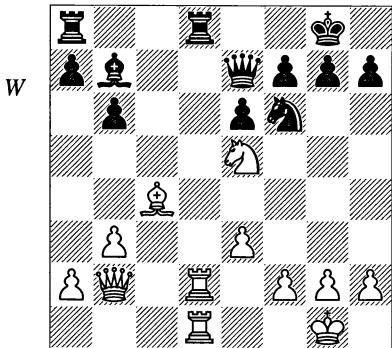
This looks natural enough, but it proves to be the start of difficulties. Black should probably play more patiently with 15... $\mathbb{Q}b7$, followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}fd8$. He cannot be prevented from playing ...d5 within a few moves anyway, after which the position would assume a very drawish character.

16 $\mathbb{Q}e5!$

Exploiting the position of the bishop on e4, which is cut off from the queenside. White threatens f3, sidelining the bishop on the kingside, after which the weakness of the light squares on the queenside (especially c6) would

be felt. Black therefore exchanges on c4, so as to allow the bishop back to b7, but White succeeds in seizing control of the newly-opened d-file.

16...dxc4 17 ♘xc4 ♜fd8 18 ♜ad1 ♘b7 (D)



Superficially, it looks as though the position is still very balanced, but White soon proves the opposite, as he puts on a nice demonstration of how to seize and then exploit an open file.

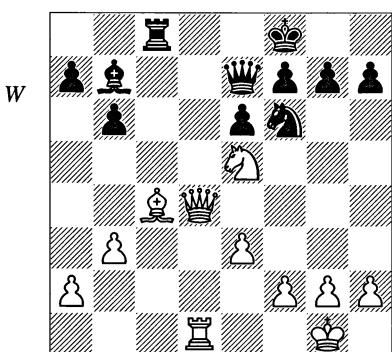
19 ♜d4!

A very characteristic manoeuvre. White prepares to treble his major pieces on the d-file by ♜d2, which will force Black to relinquish control of the file.

19...♜ac8

Of course, 19...♜xd4 will be answered by 20 ♜xd4 (but not 20 ♜xd4? ♜d8).

20 ♜d2 ♜xd4 21 ♜xd4 ♘f8 (D)



In a few moves, the position has been transformed and White has secured a clear advantage. He controls the open d-file, his e5-knight is very active, and Black's position is wholly passive. However, White must now decide how to proceed further. The most obvious way to exploit an open file is to use it to penetrate into

the opponent's position, via the 7th or 8th ranks, but that is not immediately possible here, because all of the entry squares are covered. Dragomaretsky's solution is typical of such positions. He begins a kingside pawn advance, aiming to gain space and threatening to drive away the black knight from f6, after which White can penetrate to d7.

22 f3! ♛c7

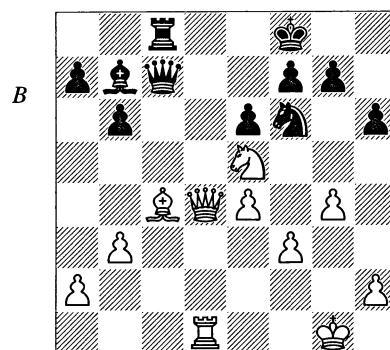
Black hopes to be able to play ...♛e8 and ...♜d8 at some point, but he never has time for this.

23 g4! h6

He must attend to the threat of 24 g5 followed by ♛d7.

24 e4 (D)

Taking away the d5-square from Black's pieces, and further increasing his space advantage. It should be noted that the advance of the white kingside pawns, while superficially appearing to expose his king, does not cause him any real problems in this regard, because his pieces dominate the position and their black counterparts are too passively placed to create any counter-threats.



24...a6?

This proves to be the decisive mistake. Black presumably hoped to play ...b5, driving away the bishop from c4, and allowing Black to penetrate down the c-file, but White does not allow this. The drawback of 24...a6? is that Black weakens his 3rd rank, notably the b6-pawn, and we shall see later that this proves fatal. We have already discussed the importance for the stronger side of trying to create a second weakness in the enemy position. Here, Black himself voluntarily creates such a weakness.

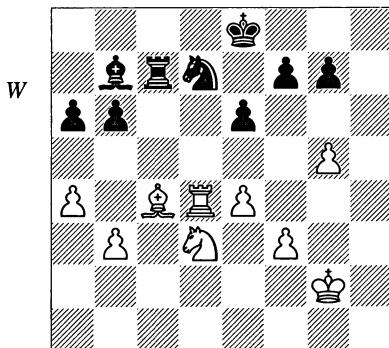
25 a4 ♛c5

The exchange of queens does not really relieve Black's position, but it is hard to suggest a superior alternative.

26 h4

White carries out his plan consistently. A breakthrough with g5 is inevitable eventually.

26... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 28 $\mathbb{R}xd4$ $\mathbb{R}c5$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{R}c7$ 30 $g5$ $hxg5$ 31 $hxg5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (D)



White's planned kingside advance has been brought to fruition, and he now finishes the game off in pleasingly thematic fashion.

32 g6!

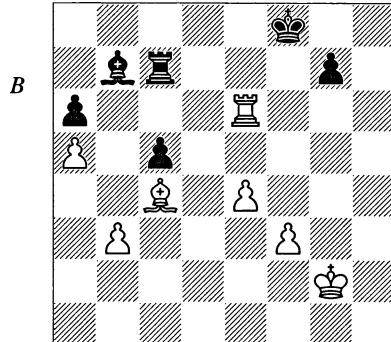
This nice move simply sweeps the carpet from under the black position. The weakness of his 3rd rank, pointed out in the note to move 24, is now seen very clearly. Black's pawn-structure collapses and he cannot avoid material loss.

32... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 33 $gx\mathbf{f}7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 34 $\mathbb{R}d6$

White has been poised since move 21 to enter the black position via the open d-file. That he has finally been able to do so with such effect is due to the preliminary advance of the kingside pawns, which has created additional weaknesses that the rook is now able to exploit via the open file – a classic example of the ‘two-weaknesses’ principle.

34... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $bxc5$ 36 $\mathbb{R}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 37 a5 (D)

There is nothing wrong with taking on a6 immediately, but since the a6-pawn cannot be



defended, and Black can undertake nothing at all, there is no harm in first strengthening the white position even further. We shall see much more of this ‘do not hurry’ principle in the endgame chapter.

37... $\mathbb{R}d7$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 39 $\mathbb{R}xa6$ $\mathbb{R}b7$ 40 $\mathbb{R}b6!$

See the previous note. If White had not put his pawn on a5 before capturing on a6, this move would not be possible. White would still be winning, but slightly less easily than after the text-move. Two pawns down and still bereft of activity, Black saw no reason to prolong the agony.

1-0

A model of how to exploit control of an open file.

The Essential Lessons

- Even in an apparently harmless-looking position, control of an open file can give a paralysing grip.
- If the file cannot be directly exploited, remember the principle of two weaknesses – White’s kingside pawn advance set up additional weaknesses in Black’s position, which then collapsed when the rook finally penetrated.
- In endgames, however easily winning, do not hurry! Strengthen your position to the utmost before taking decisive action.

4 Pawn-Structure

Every chess-player is taught fairly early in his career that “pawns are the soul of chess” (Philidor), and there is no doubt that the pawn-structure is one of the most important elements in evaluating any chess position. The existence of pawn weaknesses can fatally compromise a position, while earlier games in this book have shown how powerful a clutch of central pawns can be, when it begins to roll down the board. We have also discussed how the pawn-position can affect the relative strengths of the pieces. In this chapter, we are going to examine a series of standard pawn-structures, considering their strong and weak points, and illustrating the typical plans for each side.

The first three examples deal with the Isolated Queen’s Pawn, or IQP structure. This is possibly the most important of all such standard structures, because it can arise from a very large number of different openings. Understanding how to handle such positions is therefore vital to any strong player. Games 21-24 then deal with the related structure, ‘hanging pawns’, which, just like the IQP, can be both strong and weak, depending on the position. Games 25 and 26 look at the doubled-pawn structure which frequently arises from the Nimzo-Indian Defence. We have already looked at this from the white side in Game 9 above, and here we have two more examples of the various problems arising in this structure. In Game 25, we see Black’s plan carried out to perfection, but in Game 26, White manages to activate his central pawn-majority and transform this into a winning kingside attack. Game 27 is a classic example of the power of a queenside pawn-majority, whereas in the following game, Black’s central majority proves more important than his opponent’s queenside majority.

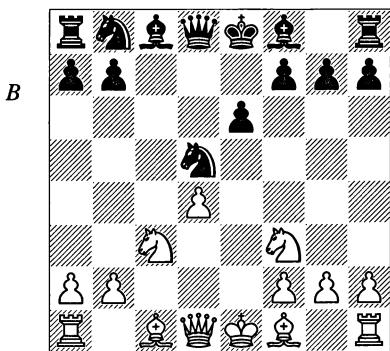
Backward pawns are well-known as a source of pawn weakness, but modern-day chess has many examples of Black playing the move ...e5 in the Sicilian Defence, leaving himself with a backward pawn on d6. Games 29 and 30 look at these structures, while the following two games examine the so-called ‘Carlsbad’ structure, and in particular, the Minority Attack. This is one of the classic standard pawn-structures and is fundamental to a number of openings, most notably the Exchange Queen’s Gambit. In Games 33 and 34, we consider the Dutch structures, including the infamous Stonewall set-up.

Another modern opening which gives rise to very distinctive pawn-structures is the King’s Indian Defence, and this is considered in Games 35-37. Finally, the remaining games in this chapter deal with other miscellaneous structures, including the Maroczy Bind and the Hedgehog, two set-ups whose evaluation has changed significantly over the past 30 or so years.

Game 18
Smyslov – Karpov
USSR Ch, Leningrad 1971
 Queen's Gambit, Semi-Tarrasch Defence

In this game, we see one of the positive sides of the IQP. When its possessor has the initiative, the IQP can be the source of a strong attack, and here Smyslov demonstrates the potential power of the d5 advance, a typical plan in such positions.

1 c4 c5 2 ♜f3 ♜f6 3 ♜c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♜xd5 5 e3 e6 6 d4 cxd4 7 exd4 (D)

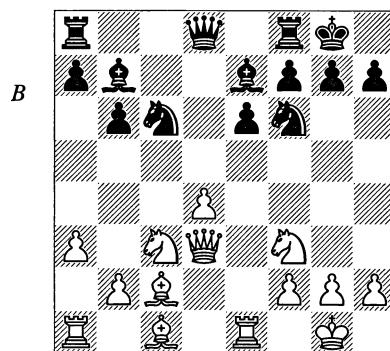


The outline of the game is already clarified. White has accepted an isolated pawn on d4. Such a pawn gives White more space in the centre (it is the only pawn on one of the four central squares d4, e4, d5 and e5) and the possibility to use the outposts e5 and c5. On the other hand, the pawn is potentially weak, and Black has an excellent blockading square on d5. The further course of the middlegame revolves around these features. White's pluses are of a fairly dynamic nature, and he generally seeks to build threats against the black king. Black, on the other hand, enjoys advantages which are more likely to come into their own in the late middlegame and endgame, and he usually has to content himself with defensive measures during the earlier part of the game. Exchanges usually favour the defender in such positions, since they reduce White's attacking chances and move the game more towards an ending, where the weakness of the isolated pawn is likely to become more pronounced.

7...♜e7 8 ♜d3 0-0 9 0-0 ♜c6 10 ♜e1 ♜f6 11 a3

This may not look like a terribly dynamic move, but it is in fact part of White's plan to attack on the kingside. He intends to follow up with ♜c2 and ♜d3, lining up against the h7-pawn, without allowing Black to disrupt him by ...♝b4. There is also a more subtle point to 11 a3. As noted above, Black possesses a fine blockading square on d5 and would like at some stage to transfer his queen's knight to that square. The move 11 a3 prevents the knight from doing that via b4. In general, the d5-square is crucial in IQP positions. One of White's most frequent methods of exploiting his dynamic potential is by the d5 advance, and this is a threat of which Black must be constantly aware. He therefore needs to keep a close watch on the d5-square. This game shows what can happen if he loses control of that square, even for an instant.

11...b6 12 ♜c2 ♜b7 13 ♜d3 (D)



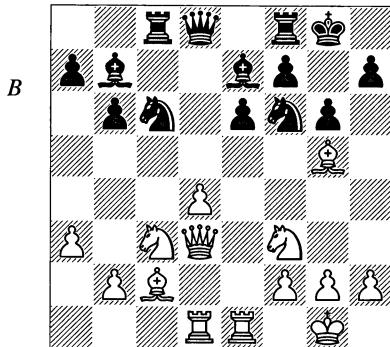
See the previous note. If White had not prefaced this manoeuvre with his 11th move, Black could now answer ...♝b4, which would exchange off the white king's bishop, one of his most important attacking pieces.

13...♝c8 14 ♜g5?!

This move threatens 15 ♜xf6 followed by mate on h7, and therefore forces Black's next.

However, White actually missed the chance to play the immediate 14 d5!, which is very strong here. The main point is that after 14...exd5, 15 ♜g5 creates dangerous threats; e.g., 15...g6 16 ♜xe7! winning material.

14...g6 15 ♜ad1 (D)



With this move, White brings his last piece into play. The formation he has adopted is typical for such IQP positions. All of his pieces have taken up active positions, and he has already provoked a weakening of Black's king-side by the move ...g6. He will now seek to exploit this weakening by such moves as ♜e5, ♜h3, etc. A common theme in such positions is a sacrifice on f7 or e6, opening up the black king.

15...♜d5

Black tries to exchange pieces, his standard defensive plan in such positions.

16 ♜h6

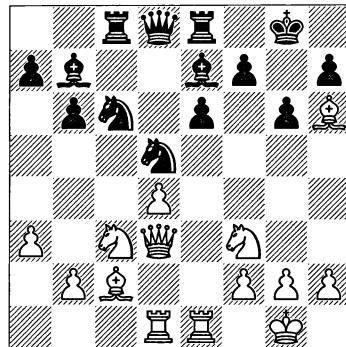
White in turn refuses to cooperate. Capturing on e7 by 16 ♜xe7 would be quite wrong, since after the reply 16...♜cxe7, Black would have freed his position by exchanging a pair of minor pieces, and would have a strong grip on the critical d5-square.

16...♜e8 (D)

17 ♜a4!

Another common theme in IQP positions. The line-up of ♜c2 and ♜d3 has achieved its object, by forcing the weakening advance ...g6. With that accomplished, the bishop no longer has much to do on the b1-h7 diagonal, so it frequently redeploys to the neighbouring diagonal a2-g8 or, as here, a4-e8. The move is also associated with a pawn sacrifice, since if Black now plays 17...♜xc3 White intends 18 bxc3 ♜xa3 19 c4, followed by 20 d5. Such dynamism is

W



typical of these IQP structures. White seeks to release the energy of his pieces from behind the IQP.

17...a6

The pin on the c6-knight is rather uncomfortable, so Black prepares to break it with ...b5.

18 ♜xd5!

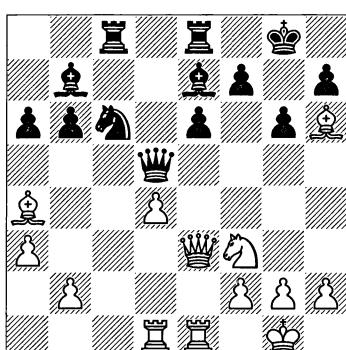
As we have emphasized, White generally wishes to avoid unnecessary exchanges in such structures, but here he has a concrete idea in mind.

18...♜xd5

The alternative recapture 18...exd5 would avoid immediate danger, but would leave Black permanently worse positionally. Although each side would then have an IQP, the black pawn on d5 blocks the action of his queen's bishop on b7. By contrast, White's queen's bishop is very actively posted on h6 and is not hampered in any way by the d4-pawn. Black's position would certainly not be lost, but he would face a long, uphill struggle. Instead, Karpov prefers to keep piece control of the d5-square, but it is well-known that queens tend to be poor blockaders, and that proves to be the case here.

19 ♜e3! (D)

B

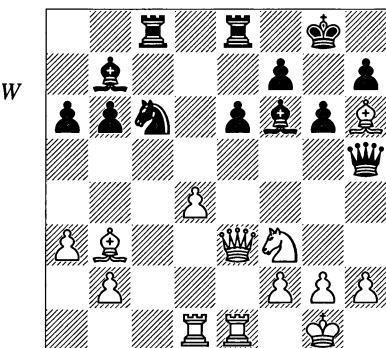


Another fine move. The white queen steps onto the dark squares and defends the h6-bishop. Now the threat is 20 ♕b3, driving Black's queen from the crucial blockading square, and following up with 21 d5.

19...♕f6

Black could also have played 19...♕h5 immediately, after which Smyslov intended 20 d5!. He gives some interesting variations after this move, which are worth examining, since they show some of the ways in which White's dynamic potential in these structures can be transformed into concrete threats. Thus, if 20...exd5 21 ♜xb6 ♜xh6 22 ♜xb7, we have a typical example of the transformation of an advantage from one form into another. White no longer has a kingside attack, but instead, Black's queenside is falling apart and his pieces are hopelessly tied up. On the other hand, if Black answers 20 d5 with 20...♝c5, play could continue 21 ♜f4 exd5 22 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 23 g4! ♜h3 24 ♜g5, and this time it is the black kingside which collapses. It is important to be flexible in chess, and not to be fixated solely on one part of the board, or one form of advantage, and the above variations illustrate this very nicely.

20 ♕b3 ♜h5 (D)



By means of his last three moves, White has driven the black queen from the blockading square on d5, and he now exploits his advantage by means of the typical advance of the IQP.

21 d5! ♜d8

Of course, Black cannot capture on d5 by 21...exd5 because of 22 ♜xe8+ and mate next move.

22 d6

Now we see the complete triumph of White's strategy. His theoretically weak IQP has been transformed into a monster passed pawn, and decides the game in a few moves.

22...♜c5 23 d7 ♜e7 24 ♜f4

Completely decisive. The queen not only attacks the f6-bishop, but also threatens to penetrate to b8.

24...♝g7 25 ♜b8 ♜xh6 26 ♜xd8+ ♜f8 27 ♜e3

Rather a sadistic move. White could of course play 27 ♜xf8+ immediately, but since Black cannot prevent it anyway, White calmly avoids his pawns being doubled by ...♝xf3, and invites Black to resign instead. The young Karpov prefers to add a couple more moves to the length of the game.

27...♝c6 28 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 29 d8♛ 1-0

Black is a piece down and without any hope.

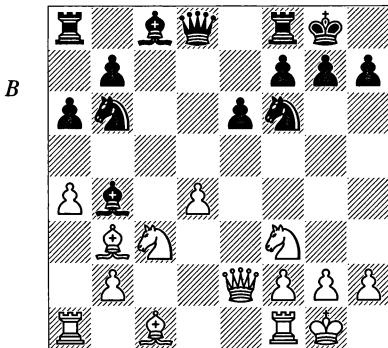
The Essential Lessons

- In IQP positions, the side with the IQP generally seeks to exploit the dynamic potential of his position, while the defender looks to defend against direct threats and exchange pieces towards an endgame.
- The blockading square in front of the IQP (d5 in this example) is always one of the most critical in such structures. Black must always guard this square well and try to prevent the IQP from advancing.
- If White achieves the d5 advance, his pieces frequently spring to life behind the IQP, with devastating results.
- In any position, always be flexible and prepared to exchange one advantage for another. If you are attacking the king, that does not mean every line has to end in mate. Often, it is best to give up the kingside attack in return for a winning advantage elsewhere on the board.

Game 19
Najdorf – Kotov
Mar del Plata 1957
 Nimzo-Indian Defence, 4 e3

This game is another example of the IQP bringing its possessor a winning kingside attack. In this example, Black does not allow the d5 advance, but White is nonetheless able to build up a piece attack on the black king. Having obtained a winning attack, he crowns it with some nice combinative play.

**1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 4 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 5 e3
 0-0 6 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ c5 7 0-0 dxc4 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$
 a6 10 a4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ cxd4 12 exd4 (D)**



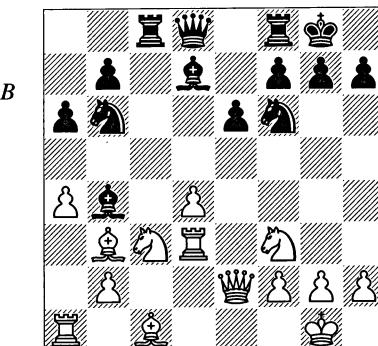
One of the things which makes the IQP structure of such importance is that it can arise from innumerable different openings. The previous game began with the English, while here the same pawn-structure results from a Nimzo-Indian Defence. There are some differences from the previous game. Firstly, White has played the move a4. This holds back Black's b-pawn, which often goes to b5 in such positions, but the move also weakens the b4-square. We saw in the previous game that Smyslov went out of his way to cover b4 by playing a3, since a black knight can often use b4 on its way to or from the key d5-square. In general, therefore, the move a4 probably helps Black a little more than it helps White, although the difference is usually only marginal. A second difference is that Black's queen's knight is on b6, rather than c6. From b6, the knight is on its way to d5, but on the other hand, the knight does not attack the d4-pawn, which makes it easier for White to play $\mathbb{Q}e5$. Thirdly, Black's king's bishop is on b4, rather than e7. In principle, the bishop is

more active on b4, but it does not defend the kingside, and may end up having to lose a tempo retreating to e7, if White pins the black knight with $\mathbb{Q}g5$. Finally, White's king's bishop is on b3, rather than d3. We saw in the previous game that the bishop can be strong on this square, supporting a possible d4-d5 advance, but there the bishop only switched to the a2-g8 diagonal after first provoking the kingside-weakening ...g6. All in all, the various differences just about balance each other out, and the overall assessment is similar to that of many IQP positions – dynamic equality.

12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

Black could play 12... $\mathbb{Q}bd5$, followed by ...b6 and ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$, but the alternative route ... $\mathbb{Q}d7-c6$ is also very common.

13 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (D)



White continues with his natural plan of preparing a kingside attack. The rook is on its way to g3 or h3, after a subsequent $\mathbb{Q}e5$. This manoeuvre utilizes the fact that the white king's bishop is on b3, rather than d3.

14... $\mathbb{Q}bd5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

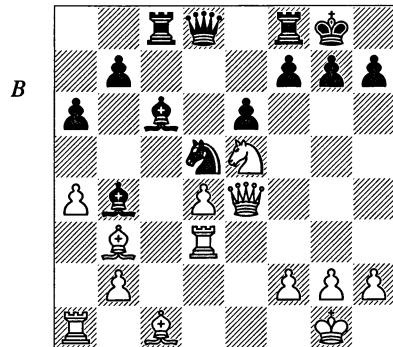
In principle, White does not particularly wish to exchange pieces without good reason, but

here the c3-knight was attacked and White did not wish to make a passive move such as ♖d2 to defend it. However, 15 ♔e4 is a natural alternative, which could lead merely to a transposition of moves after 15...♕xe4 16 ♕xe4.

15...♘xd5

Recapturing with the pawn would just leave Black standing worse in a symmetrical pawn-position.

16 ♕e4 ♘c6 17 ♔e5 (D)

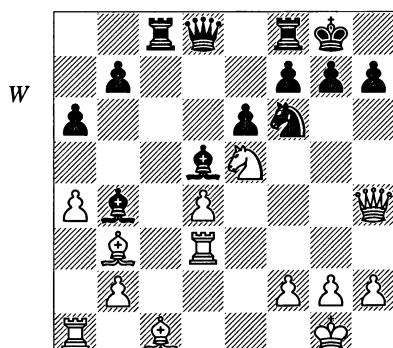


17...♘f6!?

This move and the next are the turning-point of the game. 17...f5 is safer. Such a move looks rather ugly since it creates a nasty-looking backward pawn on e6 and a hole on e5. Nevertheless, it is a common defensive idea in IQP positions. In return for these weaknesses, the move kills off most of White's kingside attacking chances and deprives his pieces of the use of the e4-square, while the e6-pawn can be defended relatively easily. Chances would be about equal after this.

18 ♕h4 ♘d5? (D)

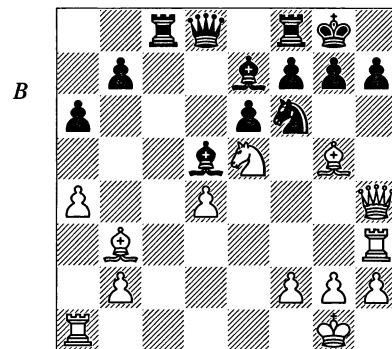
But this is definitely wrong, as the white attack now crashes through. The only way to justify Black's last move was by 18...♘e4!.



19 ♘g5 ♘e7

See the note to move 12. It turns out that the bishop is needed on e7 after all.

20 ♜h3 (D)

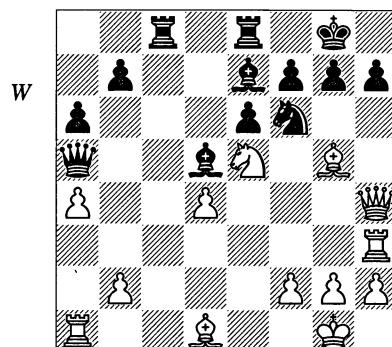


Suddenly, Black is unable to defend his h7-pawn against the threat of ♜xf6. Of course, 20...h6? would invite a winning sacrifice with 21 ♜xh6.

20...♜e8 21 ♜d1!?

An interesting choice. Rather than grab the pawn immediately with 21 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 22 ♜xh7+ ♛f8, which is certainly very strong for White, Najdorf prefers to bring another piece into the attack, hoping to end the game with a quick mate.

21...♜a5 (D)

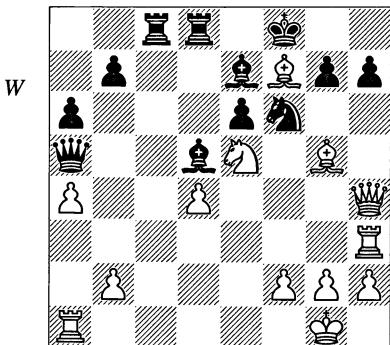


This threatens mate in one, but its main point is to free the d8-square for the rook, which in turn can free e8 as a flight-square for the king. However, the attack is already too strong.

22 ♜h5 ♜ed8

There is no defence. 22...♜xh5 23 ♜xh5 leaves both f7 and h7 hanging, while after 22...♜f8, 23 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 24 ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 25 ♜xh7+ ♛f8 26 ♜g6+ ♛e8 27 ♜g8+ is ruinous.

23 ♜xf7+ ♔f8 (D)



24 ♜h6! ♜e8

The threat was 25 ♜xg7+ ♔xg7 26 ♜h6+ and 27 ♜g6#.

25 ♜f4

Now the threat is 26 ♜xg7+ ♜xg7 27 ♜g6+ hxg6 28 ♜h8#.

25...♜f6 26 ♜xg7+!

White refuses to be denied his sacrifice on g7.

26...♚e7

If 26...♜xg7, then 27 ♜xe8+ ♔xe8 28 ♜f7#, or 26...♚xg7 27 ♜h6+ and 28 ♜g6#, while 26...♜xg7 is met simply by 27 ♜xf6.

27 ♜xe8 ♜xg7 28 ♜xh7 1-0

If 28...♜xe8, 29 ♜xg7+ ♔d6 30 ♜d7#. A splendid example of the kind of kingside attack which can be generated from an IQP position.

The Essential Lessons

- The dynamic potential of the IQP can be reflected in a kingside attack, using the outpost on e5 and the extra space which the IQP grants to its possessor.
- A moment's relaxation by the defender (18...♜d5?) can be enough to permit an overwhelming attack in such positions. As a result, extreme care and accuracy is required from the defending side.
- When attacking, it is important to get as many pieces as possible involved in the attack (21 ♜d1!?).

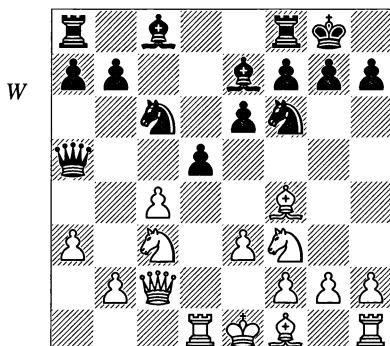
Game 20
Karpov – Spassky
Montreal 1979
 Queen's Gambit Declined, 5 ♕f4

Having just seen two examples where the IQP proved very strong, we now see one where the drawbacks of the structure are demonstrated. Spassky fails to achieve the dynamic attacking play that we saw Smyslov and Najdorf obtain in the two previous games. Once the possessor of the IQP loses the initiative, he faces the danger that his opponent will lay siege to the weakness, which is what happens here. Karpov gives an excellent demonstration of how to exploit the weakness of an IQP.

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♖e7 5 ♘f4

In the Queen's Gambit Declined, this bishop more usually goes to g5, but the text-move has become quite popular over recent years. The main point is to make it more difficult for Black to simplify by an early ...♘e4. Since Black's position is somewhat more cramped, exchanges generally favour him. The drawback of 5 ♘f4 is that it puts less pressure on Black's centre, and so makes it easier to achieve the freeing advance ...c5. When the bishop goes to g5, the extra pressure on the d5-pawn usually forces Black to content himself with the more solid ...c6.

5...0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 ♘c6 8 ♜c2 ♖a5 9 a3 ♘xc5 10 ♞d1 ♖e7 (D)



11 ♘d2

This looks a little clumsy, but again, White is trying to prevent the move ...♘e4 by Black. He also has the idea of following up with ♘b3, which will drive the black queen from its active post on a5.

11...♖d7

Black could, and probably should, prefer 11...e5, but this leads to long forcing variations with which Karpov was familiar, having

reached the same position as Black in a world championship match game against Korchnoi the previous year. Spassky therefore opts for a less well-known alternative, also offering his opponent a pawn sacrifice in the process.

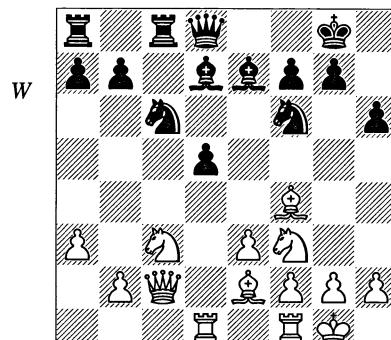
12 ♖e2

True to his style, Karpov declines the pawn sacrifice and settles for a small positional edge. If he had taken the bait by 12 ♘b3 ♖b6 13 cxd5 ♘xd5 14 ♘xd5 exd5 15 ♜xd5, Black would have had the follow-up 15...♖b4+! 16 ♘d2 (16 axb4 ♖xb4 17 ♜d2 ♘xd5 18 ♜xd5 ♖e6 wins for Black) 16...♜ac8, with unclear play. White has the extra pawn, but his kingside remains undeveloped, and his queen is vulnerable along the c-file.

12...♜fc8!

This rook would be placed more naturally on d8, but Black wishes to reserve that square as a retreat for the queen, anticipating the move ♘b3.

13 0-0 ♖d8 14 cxd5 exd5 15 ♘f3! h6 (D)



Once again, we have an IQP structure on the board, this time with colours reversed. However, if we compare this position with that which

arose shortly after the opening in Smyslov-Karpov, we can see at once that it is much less favourable for the IQP side. Whereas Smyslov's pieces were placed very actively, here Black's are much more passive. His bishops are on e7 and d7, rather than d6 and g4. His rooks are on a8 and c8, rather than e8 and d8, and his queen is back on its original square. There is no hint of a threat to the white king, such as Smyslov was able to generate with his much more purposeful build-up. The conclusion must be that White has won the opening battle, and that this version of the IQP structure favours the defender. We already know what his further plan should be: exchange some pieces and increase the pressure on the IQP itself.

16 ♜e5!

Karpov immediately applies the approved recipe. This move aims to exchange the black knight on c6, which currently is the one black piece which attacks the d4-square, the key blockading square in front of the IQP.

16...♝e6 17 ♜xc6 ♜xc6

Of course, Black would prefer to recapture with the pawn, thereby eliminating his IQP weakness. However, 17...bxc6 would fail tactically to 18 ♜a6, winning the exchange. It is always important to blend tactics with strategy – such seemingly insignificant tactical points are the bricks from which strategic monuments are constructed.

18 ♜f3

Following his strategy logically – this move increases the pressure on the d5-pawn. Of course, vacating the f3-square for the bishop was another point of 16 ♜e5.

18...♝b6 19 ♜e5!

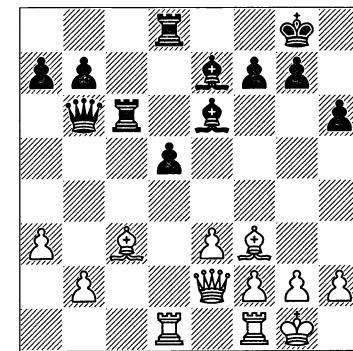
Another move which illustrates complete understanding of the position. The move threatens to win the d5-pawn by taking on f6 and eliminating the defending knight. Black can avoid loss of the pawn by playing the knight into e4, but the result is that the last pair of knights are exchanged, which favours White. Because IQP structures involve outposts (Black has e4 and c4), and because such outposts tend to be especially suitable for knights, it follows that knights are usually effective pieces if you have an IQP. With both knights gone, it becomes more difficult for Black to use the plus-points of his IQP, whereas the negative sides remain.

19...♝e4 20 ♜e2

White cannot win a pawn by 20 ♜xe4 dxе4 21 ♜xe4 because of 21...♜xb2. Such a liquidation would make no sense, because it would just relieve Black of his principal structural weakness. Instead, by unpinning the c3-knight, White really does threaten to win a pawn by taking twice on e4, so Black is induced to exchange knights himself.

20...♞xc3 21 ♜xc3 ♜d8 (D)

21...♜xa3 would be met by the desperado move 22 ♜xg7!. However, Karpov suggests that Black should consider the exchange sacrifice 21...♜xc3?! 22 bxc3 ♜a5. Black would be able to pick up a pawn for the exchange and avoid the type of passive, prospectless defence which awaits him in the game. Such exchange sacrifices are often a useful weapon in the defender's armoury.



22 ♜d3!

Once again, Karpov pursues the classic anti-IQP plan with remorseless logic. He has exchanged off both pairs of knights and secured complete control of the critical d4-square. Now he brings his heavy pieces to bear on the weak pawn. Special note should be taken of the exact formation he adopts. The rooks are to go to d3 and d2, and the queen will tuck in behind on d1. As a general rule, the queen usually belongs behind the rooks in such cases. The formation occurred in several of Alekhine's games, and for this reason, such a line-up is sometimes referred to as 'Alekhine's Gun'. We shall see this again in Game 29.

22...♜cd6 23 ♜fd1 ♜6d7

Black has no chance of active counterplay and can only wait.

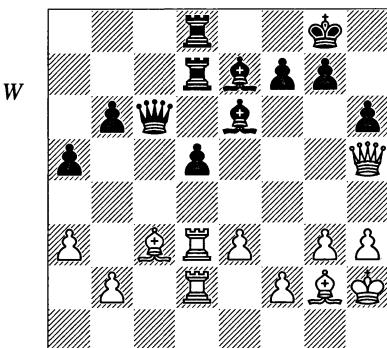
24 ♜1d2! ♜b5 25 ♜d1 b6 26 g3

This is another move which is characteristic of such positions. When the opponent has no counterplay and can only await developments, it pays to make such small strengthening moves, before moving to decisive action. The move 26 g3 simply makes *luft* for the white king, ensuring that there will not later be any back-rank mating threats from the black major pieces. The move is not prompted by any specific variation where such threats arise, but merely out of general considerations. It may prove unnecessary, but it cannot do any harm, and if the opponent cannot in the meantime undertake anything active, it pays White to take the precaution. In addition, one should also take into account the psychological effect of such a move. For the defender, deprived of play and just waiting to see how the opponent will come after him, such quiet, ‘nothing’ moves are highly frustrating, and frequently provoke a panic reaction, which eases White’s task.

26... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}h5!$

Spassky refuses to panic and weaken his position, so Karpov now needs to find new means of increasing his pressure. The text-move creates a pin along the 5th rank, and so threatens 29 e4, winning a pawn. Spassky replies by defending his queen and thereby breaking the pin.

28...a6 29 h3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ a5 (D)



31 f4

Finally revealing his hand. The decisive action is to come in the form of a kingside pawn advance. As we have discussed earlier in the

book, the attacker almost always needs to open (or, at least, threaten to open) a second front, so as to stretch the defences to breaking point.

31...f6

Clearly, action needed to be taken against the threat of 32 f5, winning a piece. The alternative was 31...f5, against which Karpov intended 32 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}e5$, followed by g4.

32 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 33 g4

Now the threat is 34 f5, driving the bishop from the defence of the d7-rook, and after 34... $\mathbb{Q}f7$, 35 e4 exploits the pin on the d-file.

33...g5 34 $\mathbb{Q}h1!$

Tactically accurate to the end. The point of Black’s last move was to meet 34 f5 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 35 e4 with 35...d4!, when White cannot take on d4 because of a queen check on e5. Karpov therefore tucks his king out of the way, and there is no longer any defence.

34... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 35 f5 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 36 e4! $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 37 exd5

The long siege of the d5-pawn has finally borne fruit, and the black position is hopeless.

37... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ b5

Allowing the following sacrifice hastens the end, but the threats were ultimately too much anyway. White will at some point offer the exchange with $\mathbb{Q}e6$ to breach the black defences.

39 $\mathbb{Q}xe7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 40 d6 $\mathbb{Q}c4$

Or 40... $\mathbb{Q}ed7$ 41 dxc7 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 42 cxd8 \mathbb{Q} , winning.

41 b3 1-0

42 dxe7 follows.

The Essential Lessons

- When the side with the IQP cannot create any active counterplay, the isolated pawn becomes a weakness.
- The side opposing the IQP should seek exchanges and build pressure on the weak pawn.
- Knights tend to be useful pieces in IQP positions, and the player opposing the IQP often does well to exchange both pairs of knights.
- Remember Alekhine’s Gun – the queen usually belongs behind the rooks when the major pieces are trebled on a file.

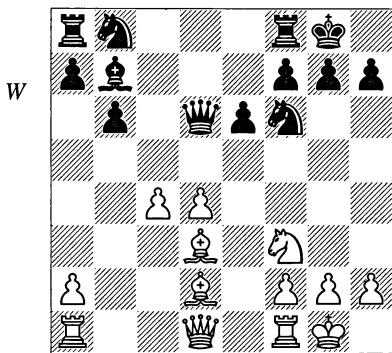
Game 21
Gligorić – Keres
USSR-Yugoslavia match, Zagreb 1958
 Nimzo-Indian Defence, 4 e3

Another common pawn-formation, and one which frequently arises out of the IQP structure, is the ‘hanging pawns’ formation. This involves a pair of pawns on open files, typical d4 and c4. Just as with the IQP, hanging pawns can be both weak and strong. This game illustrates their dynamic potential.

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 4 e3 c5 5 $\mathbb{Q}d3$
 b6 6 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 7 0-0 0-0 8 $\mathbb{Q}d2$

This rather tame move does not offer White any advantage against accurate play. Nowadays, 8 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ is preferred.

8... $\text{cx}d4$ 9 $\text{ex}d4$ d5 10 $\text{cx}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 11 $\text{bx}c3$
 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 12 c4 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ (D)



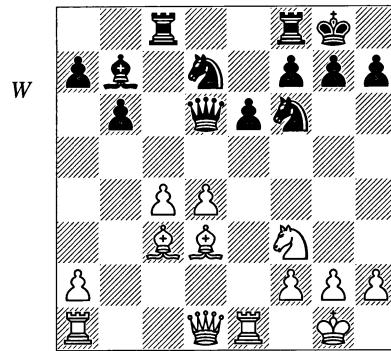
In this position, we see another pawn-structure which is very common in queen’s pawn openings. White’s pawn couplet on c4 and d4 are known as ‘hanging pawns’. Like the IQP, from which structure they often materialize, hanging pawns can be both strong and weak, depending on circumstances. As a static target, they can be a weakness, subject to attack by the black pieces along the open c- and d-files. However, the hanging pawns also contain considerable dynamic potential. For one thing, they control a lot of central squares – here, for example, the pawns control the squares b5, c5, d5 and e5. They also give White greater space, behind which he can group his pieces for an attack towards the black king. Just as with IQP positions, therefore, the player with hanging pawns needs to play dynamically, avoid too many piece exchanges, and look for the chance to energize

his pieces by a sudden advance of the pawns, especially by means of d4-d5. The defender, by contrast, bases his hopes on neutralizing the attacking threats, simplifying the position, and looking to exploit the static weakness of the hanging pawns in the ending.

13 $\mathbb{Q}c3$

White’s two bishops line up along the b1-h7 and a1-h8 diagonals, a typical formation in such structures. It is clear that a later d4-d5 break, opening the path of the queen’s bishop, could potentially create serious threats against the black king, and this is something the defender must watch for very carefully.

13... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ (D)

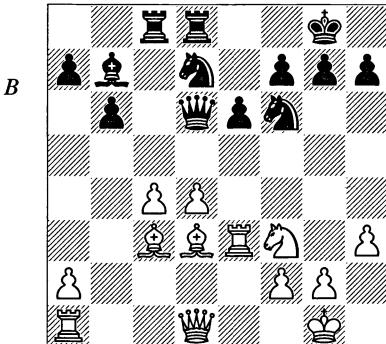


15 h3

This move is prophylaxis against Black’s idea of ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$, threatening ... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ and a queen penetration to h2. It is not clear that this was yet a real threat, but White wishes to bring his rook to e3, preparatory to swinging across to attack Black’s king.

15... $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (D)

Both sides have developed their pieces logically. White has pointed his bishops at the black king and brought a rook out ready to join the



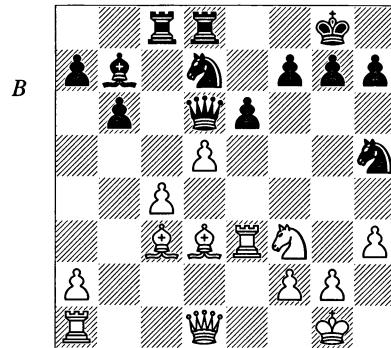
attack, but as yet he has no concrete threats. Black, in his turn, has shored up his king-position with ... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$, and brought his rooks onto the half-open c- and d-files, so as to initiate pressure against the white hanging pawns. Chances are fairly balanced at this moment, but Black now commits the decisive error. As mentioned already, White's position in these hanging-pawns structures usually contains a lot of dynamic potential, and one moment's carelessness by Black can be fatal. Here, he should play the defensive move 16... $h6$, preventing White's knight from jumping into that square. Indeed, just two days earlier in the same event, Gligorić and Keres had reached this same position, and Keres had done just that, going on to draw a balanced struggle. Now, however, two days later, he loses his sense of danger and chooses a more ambitious continuation. Unfortunately, he has underestimated the dynamic potential of White's set-up, and pays a high price. One point to note here is that Black has another positionally very desirable move, 16... $b5$, aiming to force White to fix his pawns and concede the d5-square by advancing 17 $c5$. As we shall see in Game 24, such an idea is one of the fundamental methods of playing against the hanging pawns. However, in this position it is not possible for tactical reasons – White replies 17 $\mathbb{Q}a5$, unpinning the c-pawn with tempo, and then captures on $b5$, with a solid extra pawn.

16... $\mathbb{Q}h5?$

Black would love to get this knight to f4, threatening to exchange off White's important king's bishop, or else drive it back to a passive position on f1 (retreating to c2 or b1 would be impossible because the c4-pawn needs defending). However, the h5-knight is temporarily unguarded or 'loose', and, as one of the Directors

of Gambit Publications has so astutely pointed out, "Loose Pieces Drop Off" (LPDO)!

17 d5! (D)



Like White's analogous advance in Smyslov-Karpov (Game 18), this is the classic breakthrough in hanging-pawns structures.

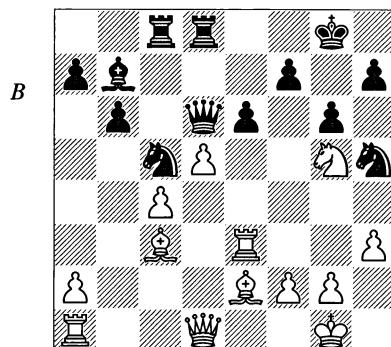
17... $\mathbb{Q}c5$

The first tactical justification of White's last move is that after 17... $exd5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d4!$, the h5-knight hangs (LPDO!) and $\mathbb{Q}f5-e7+$ is threatened.

18 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ g6

Forced, since both the h5-knight and h7 are hanging.

19 $\mathbb{Q}e2!$ (D)



Everything fits together like clockwork. The bishop avoids capture on d3, attacks the h5-knight and opens the path for the white queen to go to d4, with terrible threats down the long dark-square diagonal.

19... $\mathbb{Q}g7$

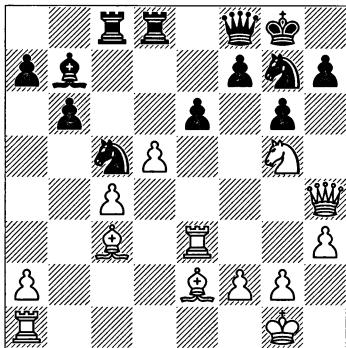
19... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ loses to 20 $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ (clearer than Gligorić's 20 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d4$, when after 21... $f6$ there is no clear win, in view of 22 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $e5!$) 20... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$, when 22 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ is a

threat, and 21...gxh5 loses to 22 $\mathbb{B}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}f3$.

20 $\mathbb{W}d4 \mathbb{W}f8$ 21 $\mathbb{W}h4!$ (D)

Stronger than winning a pawn by 21 $\mathbb{W}xg7+$, when Black would retain drawing chances in the ending.

B



21...h5 22 $\mathbb{Q}g4!$

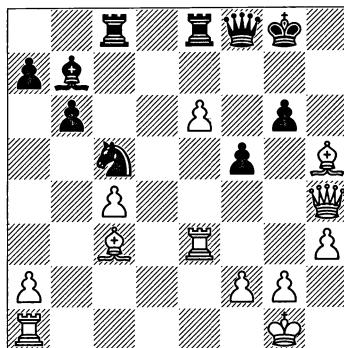
Another powerful blow. Superficially, 22 g4 looks stronger, but it does not actually threaten 23 gxh5 because of the reply 23... $\mathbb{Q}f5$. The text-move prevents the black knight from coming to f5 and attacks e6 again, while clearly the bishop cannot be taken because of mate on h7.

22...f5?

This new weakening accelerates the end. Gligorić suggested that Black could prolong his resistance by 22... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 23 cxd5 $\mathbb{B}xd5$, although after 24 $\mathbb{Q}f3$, White's material advantage should prove decisive. Trying to hold the e6-square by 22... $\mathbb{B}d6$ is also hopeless; for example, 23 $\mathbb{B}ae1$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ and now, amongst other things 24 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{W}xg7$ 25 $\mathbb{W}g3!$ is decisive.

23 $\mathbb{Q}xe6 \mathbb{Q}gxe6$ 24 dxе6 $\mathbb{B}e8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ (D)

B



Black's king-position is collapsing. White wins after 25...gxh5 26 $\mathbb{B}g3+$.

25... $\mathbb{W}h6$ 26 $\mathbb{W}f6$ f4

A time-trouble oversight, but of course the position is long gone.

27 $\mathbb{W}f7\#$ (1-0)

An excellent example of the dynamic attacks which can be generated from hanging-pawns structures.

The Essential Lessons

- Hanging pawns are similar to the IQP – they offer dynamic potential, but can be weak in an ending or if their possessor lacks active play.
- The breakthrough with d4-d5 is a key idea and always needs to be watched for carefully.
- Remember LPDO! An undefended (loose) piece is a tactical weakness. The whole of White's breakthrough here depended on the loose black knight on h5.

Game 22
Sokolsky – Botvinnik
USSR Ch semi-final, Leningrad 1938
 Grünfeld Defence

This game is another example of how hanging pawns can confer an advantage if the opponent does not generate pressure against them. Black's hanging pawns control a large amount of central space, and in the face of passive play by White, Black is able gradually to build up a kingside attack. In the end, the central advance ...d4 leads to the creation of a decisive passed pawn.

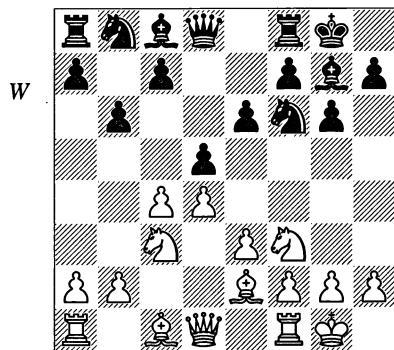
1 c4 ♜f6 2 ♜c3 d5 3 d4 g6

By an indirect route, we have reached the Grünfeld Defence, a long-time favourite of both Fischer and Kasparov. Black offers his opponent the chance to establish a big pawn-centre by 4 cxd5 ♜xd5 5 e4 ♜xc3 6 bxc3, which Black will then attack from a distance with such moves as ...g7, ...c5, ...♜c6, etc. This remains the most critical approach for White, but many players prefer instead to adopt a quieter set-up, as does Sokolsky in the present game.

4 ♜f3 ♜g7 5 e3 0-0 6 ♜e2 e6

Black in his turn meets White's solid play with solid play of his own. The advance 6...c5 is generally considered the simplest way to equalize.

7 0-0 b6 (D)



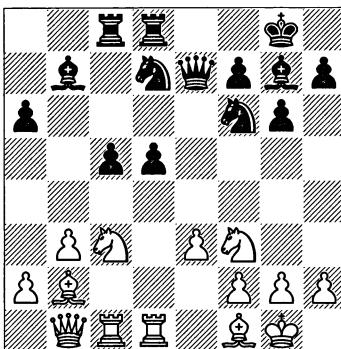
8 cxd5

There was no immediate need for this exchange. A more vigorous line is 8 b4, establishing a space advantage on the queenside. Instead, White adopts a rather routine plan of developing his pieces, and soon falls into an inferior, passive position.

8...exd5 9 b3 ♜b7 10 ♜b2 ♜bd7 11 ♜c2 a6 12 ♜ac1 ♜c8

Both sides develop, but it soon becomes apparent that Black's development is far more purposeful than his opponent's and he soon has the initiative.

13 ♜fd1 ♜e7 14 ♜b1 ♜fd8 15 ♜f1 c5 16 dxc5 bxc5 (D)



Thus, we again reach the hanging-pawns structure we saw in the previous game. This one is somewhat dissimilar, in that Black's pieces are placed slightly differently – in particular, his king's bishop is fianchettoed, rather than being on d6. This means that a rapid kingside attack is less likely, but Black still has the advantage here. His hanging pawn couplet again controls many important central squares, and confers a space advantage. White's pieces are passively placed and do not exert very much real pressure on the hanging pawns. Black's plan is similar to Gligorić's in the previous game, namely the development of a kingside attack, although in this position, the attack is likely to be built more gradually.

17 ♜e2

Unmasking the queen's bishop and perhaps hoping to bring the knight to f4, something Black immediately prevents.

17...♞h6

Now 18 ♜f4? would walk into 18...d4 – that move again! Indeed, it is threatened already, and you will see it yet again later in the game.

18 ♜a3

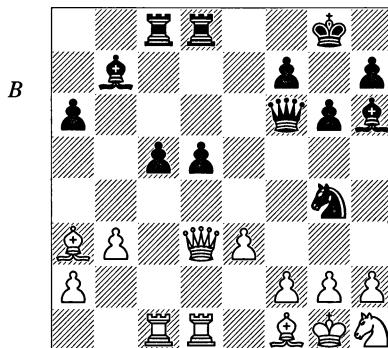
The pin on the c5-pawn means that 18...d4?! now loses a pawn to 19 ♛exd4, but Black continues to build his kingside initiative.

18...♝g4 19 ♜d3

Black was threatening 19...♝xe3.

19...♝de5 20 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 21 ♜g3 ♜f6 22 ♜h1 (D)

A sorry square for the knight, but if White defends the f2-square by 22 ♜c2, there follows 22...♜h4 23 h3 ♜xf2!, winning a pawn.



22...d4!

The standard advance once again. In this example, it leads not so much to an immediate kingside breakthrough as a decisive passed d-pawn.

23 ♜e2 ♜e5 24 exd4

Botvinnik points out that after 24 ♜xc5, Black has the spectacular blow 24...♞f3!, with the idea 25 gxf3 d3! and White must give up the exchange by 26 ♜xd3.

24...cx d4 25 ♜xc8 ♜xc8!

The best recapture, keeping the other rook behind the d-pawn. The strength of the pawn is so great that White's position is already lost.

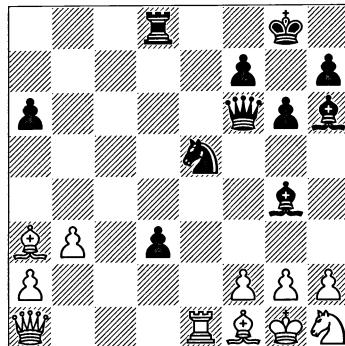
26 ♜e1 d3 27 ♜d1

If 27 ♜xe5, then 27...♜xe5 28 ♜xe5 d2 and White is mated on the back rank if he tries to prevent the pawn from queening.

27...♝g4 28 ♜a1 (D)

28 f3 meets a gruesome end after 28...♞xf3+ 29 gxf3 ♜xf3, with decisive threats.

B

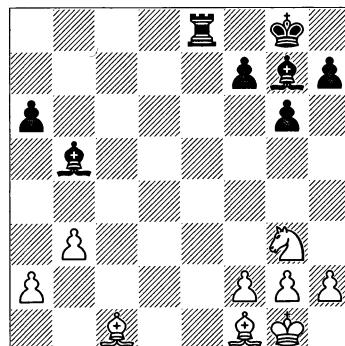


28...d2 29 ♜xe5 d1♛

Thus the d-pawn has gone all the way. With his next move, White eliminates the extra queen, but only at the cost of a hopeless ending, an exchange down.

30 ♜e8+ ♜xe8 31 ♜xf6 ♜e2 32 ♜g3 ♜g7 33 ♜c6 ♜b5 34 ♜c1 ♜xc1 35 ♜xc1 (D)

B



35...♜e1

White's cause is obviously hopeless and he should really resign, but he prefers to struggle on a few more moves.

36 ♜e3 ♜a1 37 a4 ♜d3 38 f4 ♜b1 39 ♜f2 ♜xf1 40 ♜xf1 ♜xb3 0-1

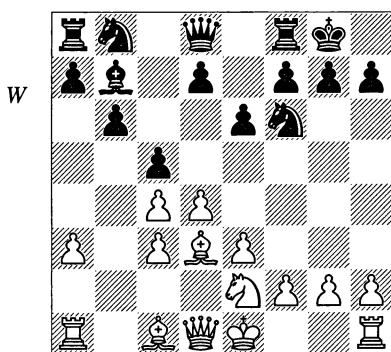
The Essential Lessons

- Once again, we see how the possessor of hanging pawns usually stands better if he has the initiative.
- The basic plan was again to attack the enemy king, by a gradual build-up of forces, using the extra central space and mobility conferred by the hanging pawns.
- Again, the decisive advance was ...d4, this time leading to a winning passed d-pawn.

Game 23
Euwe – Reshevsky
Candidates tournament, Zurich 1953
 Nimzo-Indian Defence, 4 e3

In this game, White obtains a hanging-pawns structure, but unlike the previous examples, he fails to develop a significant initiative. Instead, the pressure grows on his hanging pawns, which eventually brings about the collapse of his position.

**1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 4 e3 c5 5 $\mathbb{Q}d3$
 0-0 6 a3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 7 bxc3 b6 8 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ (D)**



Although starting out as a closed Nimzo-Indian structure, the hanging pawns with which we are familiar will soon materialize.

9 0-0 d6 10 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ d5

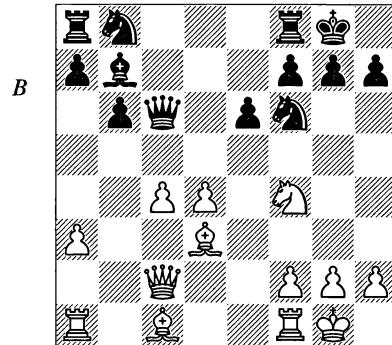
One may be forgiven for wondering why Black should play this advance, just one move after putting the pawn on d6. The most likely explanation is that he was tempted by White's rather passive last move (10 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ is more energetic, following up with f3, e4, etc.). The white queen is not so well placed on c2 in the structure which now arises.

11 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13 c4 cxd4

Black could not win a piece by 13...g5 in view of the *zwischenzug* 14 d5!, after which he would very much regret the weakening of his kingside.

14 exd4 (D)

Again, we have the hanging-pawns structure. This time, however, a closer inspection reveals that the position is slightly less favourable for the possessor of the hanging pawns than were the two previous examples. His knight is misplaced on f4, and the black queen and bishop lined up on the long diagonal restrict

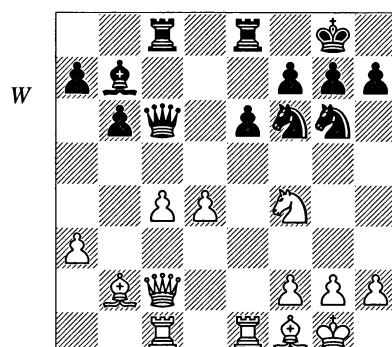


White's freedom of action. Even so, Black's first duty must be to secure himself from any direct attack, and Reshevsky proceeds to develop his pieces with that in mind.

14... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

The other knight moves over to the kingside. The more active position of the black queen on c6 is useful here, in that it guards the f6-knight; hence, White cannot break through with the familiar idea of d4-d5, which would potentially be very strong if it threatened to double Black's pawns by $\mathbb{Q}xf6$.

18 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ (D)



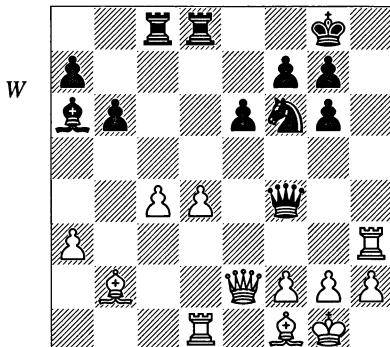
19 $\mathbb{Q}xg6??!$

This looks like a poor decision, but White was probably already beginning to feel uncomfortable, recognizing that this is a position where the hanging pawns are likely to prove a liability. Just on the general grounds that exchanges tend to favour the defender in such positions, it was probably better to retain the knights by 19 ♟d3, although it is clear even then that White's pieces are much less harmoniously placed than in the previous hanging pawn examples we have examined.

19...hxg6 20 ♜e3

Shades of Gligorić-Keres (Game 21), perhaps, but there the similarity ends. White has no real chance of mounting a successful kingside attack here and the initiative is about to pass to Black.

20...♜ed8 21 ♜e2 ♜d6 22 ♜h3 ♜f4 23 ♜d1 ♜a6 (D)



It is clearly apparent how Black has taken the initiative and is now bringing his pieces to bear on the hanging pawns.

24 ♜f3 ♜e4 25 ♜e3 ♜g4

Black would be only too happy to exchange queens.

26 f3

Avoiding the exchange, but weakening his position.

26...♜f4 27 g3

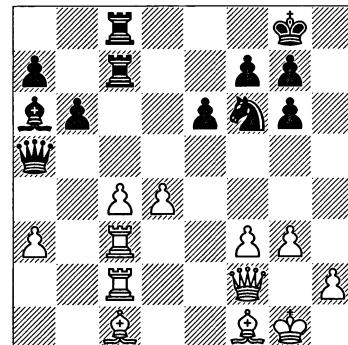
The black queen is a very annoying presence on f4, but this move weakens White's position even further. White's basic problem is that he has no constructive way to continue, and in

such positions, it is notoriously difficult to avoid making weakening moves.

27...♚h6 28 ♜c3 ♜g5 29 ♜f2 ♜d7

Black can increase the pressure at his leisure. Now he plans to double rooks against the c4-pawn.

30 ♜dc1 ♜dc7 31 ♜1c2 ♜a5 32 ♜c1 (D)



White's troubles finally get the better of him and he overlooks a tactical blow which brings his house crashing down. However, it is clear that White was already in great trouble and his hanging pawns are proving a decisive liability.

32...♞d5!

A simple blow which wins material. If 33 ♜b3, the c4-pawn falls. Euwe prefers to sacrifice the exchange in the hope of complicating matters, but to no avail.

33 cxd5 ♜xc3 34 ♜xc3 ♜xc3 35 ♜b2 ♜b3 36 ♜xa6

White looks at first to have won two pieces for the rook, but the next move destroys that illusion.

36...♜c2 37 d6 ♜xf2 38 d7 ♜d5 39 ♜xf2 0-1

The Essential Lessons

- If the possessor of hanging pawns fails to develop the initiative, his pawns soon become a liability.
- The defender, once having seen off any direct threats, can begin attacking the pawns with his pieces.
- Simplification helps the defender.

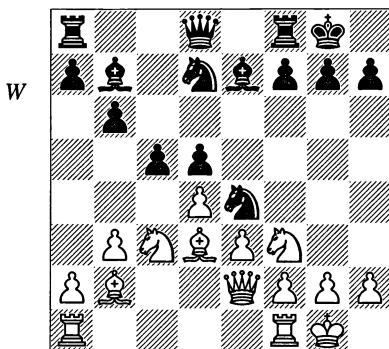
Game 24
Larsen – Radulov
Interzonal, Leningrad 1973
 Queen's Indian Defence

In the previous game, the hanging pawns were attacked and finally demolished by piece pressure. However, such pawns are also vulnerable to attack from enemy pawn thrusts with the b- and e-pawns. The hanging pawns are usually best placed side by side, and if they can be broken up, the position can collapse. This strategy is illustrated perfectly in the present game.

1 c4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e6 3 b3

White avoids an early occupation of the centre with his pawns, but the game soon reverts to a well-known line of the Queen's Indian Defence.

3... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 0-0 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5 6 e3 b6 7 d4 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ c5 9 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 11 cxd5 exd5 (D)



This position is more usually reached via the sequence 1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ b6 4 e3. White aims for an unpretentious development of his pieces, but his position contains a certain amount of sting and requires a careful response from Black. The exchange of pawns which has just taken place creates a number of possible future pawn-structures. If White later takes on c5, Black will have the choice between accepting hanging pawns by ...bxc5, or an IQP by means of recapturing on c5 with a piece. Similarly, Black himself can capture on d4, when White is likely in most cases to recapture with a piece, leaving Black with the IQP. Thus, the central pawn-position is not fully determined, but White has somewhat more flexibility (...cxd4 by Black is rarely good, unless justified by specific tactical features) and so his position is somewhat preferable.

12 $\mathbb{R}fd1$

Black's d-pawn is already weakened, so the rook logically takes up position against it. There are also veiled tactical possibilities involving the *vis-à-vis* of white rook and black queen along the d-file.

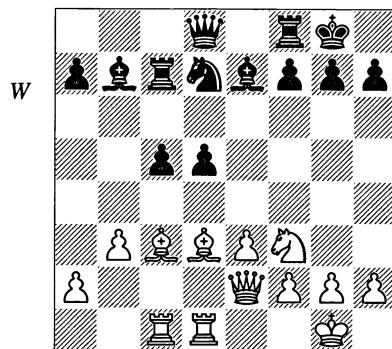
12... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$

Black would prefer to retain his strongly-posted knight on e4 and support it by 12...f5, but he was probably worried about 13 $\mathbb{Q}a6$, exchanging off the bishop and further weakening the d5-pawn, and the light squares in general.

13 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{R}c8$ 14 $\mathbb{R}ac1$

White retains somewhat the better chances, and one of Black's main problems now is to find a safe square for his queen. It can never feel comfortable on the d- or c-files, opposite the white rooks. Radulov comes up with the plan of placing the queen on a8, where it is certainly out of range of White's rooks, but the queen also proves rather distant from Black's centre and kingside.

14... $\mathbb{R}c7$ 15 dxc5 bxc5 (D)



Thus the central pawn configuration has been resolved in the form of hanging pawns. Here, though, Black again lacks the dynamic,

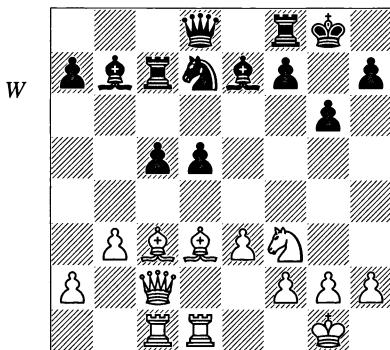
initiative-seeking play which the structure suits. Instead, his pieces are rather passive and White holds the initiative. He immediately transforms this into an attack on the hanging pawns. Black could of course have recaptured with a piece on c5, but the resulting IQP position would also have been unfavourable for him, and the hanging pawns are probably the lesser evil.

16 ♜c2!

Forcing a weakening of the black kingside, as 16...♝f6? 17 ♜a5 costs Black the exchange.

16...g6? (D)

Larsen condemns this and prefers 16...h6, but the position is still difficult for Black after 17 e4.



17 e4!

This is a key move for the defender in hanging-pawn positions. In general, the pawns are best placed alongside one another, where they control the maximum number of central squares. Once one of them is forced to advance, a hole opens up on either d4 or c4, which frequently serves as a strong outpost for the enemy pieces. Thus, inducing the pawns forward or exchanging one off (to leave an isolated pawn) is a standard strategy when playing against the hanging pawns. In this example, the pawn thrusts e4 and b4 are the key levers by which White will destroy the hanging pawn duo. Note that in this particular position, Black cannot reply 17...d4 (which, though undesirable, is probably still the best option positionally) because of 18 ♜xd4, exploiting the pin on the c-file.

17...♜a8 18 ♜d2

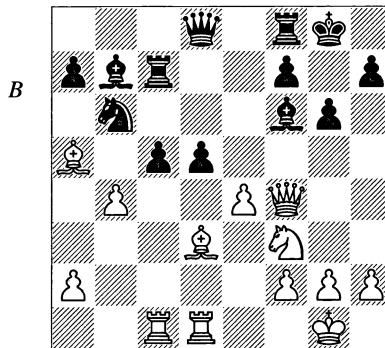
Simply 18 exd5 would give White a clear advantage, but with Black so tied up and his

pieces so far from his king, Larsen sees a way to achieve even more. He will combine the attack on the hanging pawns with threats against the black king.

18...♝f6

Larsen's tactical justification lies in the variation 18...dxe4 19 ♜h6 20 ♜g5 ♜e8 21 ♜xh7!, with devastating threats.

19 ♜f4 ♜d8 20 ♜a5 ♜b6 21 b4! (D)



A position which perfectly illustrates the success of White's strategy against the hanging pawns. It is rare indeed to see White achieve both of the undermining pawn blows e4 and b4 in the same game. Black's structure now collapses in very short order.

21...♝e7

If 21...c4, then 22 ♜xc4, when the queen sacrifice 22...♜xc4 23 ♜xc4 dxc4 24 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 allows Black to play on for a while, but with no realistic chance of saving the game.

22 exd5 ♜d6

Black must lose a pawn, since 22...♜xd5 23 ♜e4 ♜d6 24 ♜h6 is winning for White.

23 ♜h6 exb4

23...f6 would put up a little more resistance, but Black is lost anyway, and Radulov was by now very short of time.

24 ♜g5 f5 25 ♜e6 ♜d7 26 ♜xc7 1-0

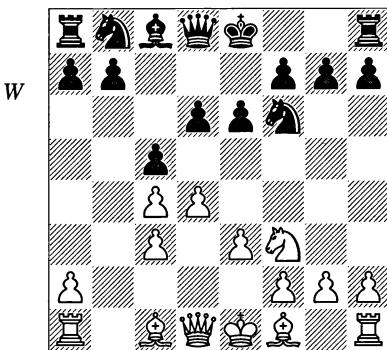
The Essential Lessons

- Again, we see that hanging pawns can be a serious liability if their possessor loses the initiative.
- As well as piece pressure, the pawn thrusts e4 and/or b4 are frequently a strong counter-measure against a hanging pawn duo.

Game 25
Speelman – Agdestein
Hastings 1991/2
 Nimzo-Indian Defence, 4 e3

Game 9 above showed White exploiting his bishop-pair in a Nimzo-Indian structure, where Black had exchanged on c3, giving White doubled pawns. In that game, White was able to open the position for his bishop-pair. This game illustrates, in drastic fashion, the other side of the coin. If Black can succeed in keeping the position closed, and preventing the white bishops from developing any activity, he can gradually manoeuvre to pressurize White's pawn weaknesses, and utilize his knights to maximum effect.

**1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 4 e3 c5 5 $\mathbb{Q}f3$
 $\mathbb{Q}xc3+!?$ 6 bxc3 d6 (D)**



This game features the doubled pawn as the key element of the pawn-structure. This basic structure has already been seen in Game 9, where we saw how effectively White can utilize his bishop-pair by opening the position with the advance c5. In the present game, Black has already, even at this early stage, taken firm counteraction against this plan, by himself playing ...c5 and reinforcing the c-pawn with a pawn on d6. White's task is therefore made much harder, and this game is a gruesome example of the fate which can befall White in such a structure, if he fails to open lines. If the position remains blocked, his bishops will have little scope and his weak doubled pawns will come under fire.

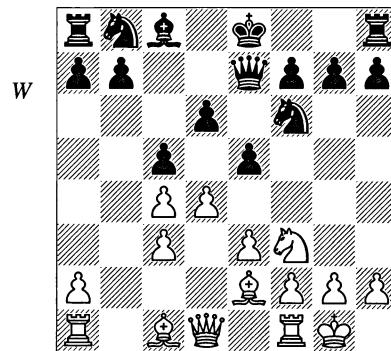
7 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

7 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ would transpose into the more common Hübner Variation. Speelman instead tries to avoid this, but reaches much the same type of position. Black's plan remains the same – to follow up with ...e5, trying to induce White to close the centre.

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

The pure Hübner follow-up would be 7... $\mathbb{Q}c6$, but Agdestein intends a slightly different set-up. His queen's knight will go to d7.

8 0-0 e5 (D)

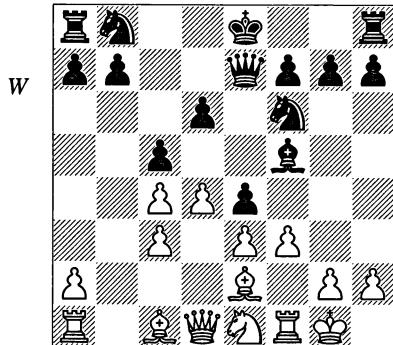


9 $\mathbb{Q}e1!?$

It is not easy to point to any one white move as a clear mistake, but in the course of the opening and early middlegame, White fails to achieve the kind of opening of the position that he desires, and by move 15 it is clear that things have gone very wrong for him. This move does not work out well for him, and looks like one of the main culprits. Black intends to advance his e-pawn to e4 and support it there. If he succeeds in maintaining a blockade on that square (as he does in the game), White will be in trouble, so White needs to fight for this square. To that end, 9 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ would be more thematic. White needs to be prepared to sacrifice material after 9...e4 10 f3 exf3 11 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3+$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e1+$, with unclear play. Speelman may have felt that he did not have enough for his pawns here, but some such line was obligatory, since

in the game, Black succeeds in establishing an unbreakable grip on the centre, after which White is strangled.

9...e4 10 f3 ♖f5! (D)

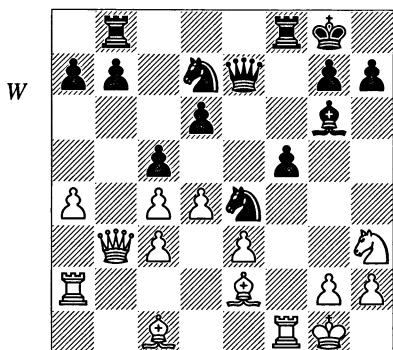


Maintaining a blockade on e4 is the centrepiece of Black's strategy. It would be quite wrong to exchange on f3, when White would probably recapture with the pawn, establishing a powerful pawn-centre. This is exactly the sort of position White would like to reach, when his two bishops could come into their own.

11 fxe4 ♖xe4 12 ♖d3 ♖bd7 13 ♖f2 0-0 14 a4

The alternative was to exchange on e4, but in any case, White's position is unenviable. He has no effective way to relieve the blockade on e4, and unless he can do that, he cannot activate his bishops, especially the one on c1.

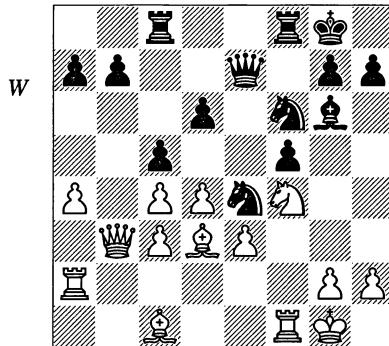
14...♖g6 15 ♜b3 ♜ab8 16 ♜a2 ♖e4 17 ♖h3 f5 (D)



It is clear from the diagram that Black has won the opening battle. He has kept the position closed and prevented White from activating his position by playing c5, or a central pawn advance with e4. White's bishops are

both passive, he has weak pawns on c4 and e3, and he has no active counterplay. The remainder of the game sees Black gradually tighten his grip and squeeze the life out of the white position.

18 ♖d3 ♖df6 19 ♖f4 ♜bc8 (D)

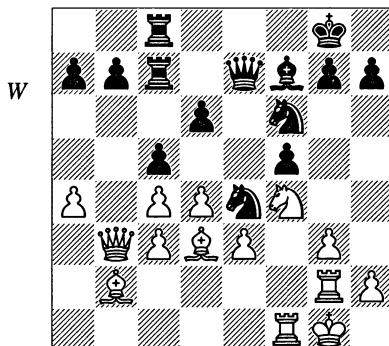


Having secured his grip on e4, the next stage of Black's plan is to deprive White of the only decent square he has for any of his pieces, namely d5. Black would like to force White into playing d5, and to this end, he now piles up the pressure against the c4-pawn. Eventually, the threat of ...cxd4, followed by capturing on c4, will force White to close the position.

20 g3

White cannot jump into d5 immediately because of the variation 20 ♖d5 ♖xd5 21 cxd5 cxd4 and now both 22 exd4 ♜xc3 and 22 cxd4 ♖g3! (threatening ...♜xc1) are extremely good for Black.

20...♖f7 21 ♜g2 ♜c7 22 ♜b2 ♜fc8 (D)

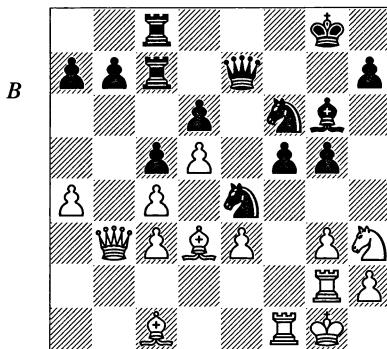


23 d5

Mission accomplished for Black. The threat of 23...cxd4 24 cxd4 ♖xc4 left White no choice, but now he loses his last hope of counterplay.

Black now has a free hand to switch to the decisive attack on the kingside.

23...g5 24 ♜h3 ♜g6 25 ♜c1 (D)



Note the utter helplessness of the white bishops in this position, especially the dark-squared bishop. Its only function is to guard White's weak pawns on c3 and e3, and it has no scope at all. Comparing this with the activity White's bishops developed in Gligorić-Larsen (Game 9), the triumph of Black's strategy in this game is very clear. If White tries to offload one bishop for a black knight by ♜xe4 at some stage, he has to face the awful prospect of Black possibly even recapturing with the pawn, followed by ...♝e5, and the knight will jump into d3 or f3.

25...♝g4 26 ♜e2 h5 27 ♜h1 ♜e5 28 a5 ♜h7

Black has all the time in the world to bring his forces to the kingside and prepare the decisive breakthrough.

29 ♜g1

This poor knight has now made eight moves, in order to return to its starting square. And it gets worse...

29...h4 30 ♜f3 ♜e7 31 gxh4

If 31 ♜g1, 31...h3 traps the rook – a measure of White's plight.

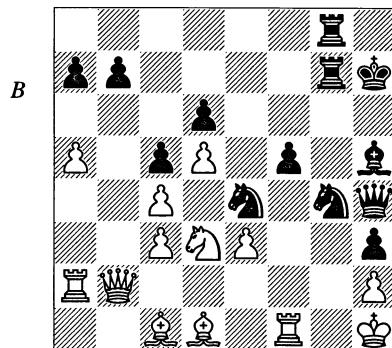
31...gxh4 32 ♜d1 h3 33 ♜a2 ♜g7 34 ♜e1 ♜h4 35 ♜d3

If 35 ♜f3, then 35...♜gf2+ 36 ♜g1 ♜g4#.

35...♜h7 36 ♜b2 ♜cg8

The last reserves join the attack.

37 ♜f4 ♜h5 38 ♜d3 (D)



The workhorse has now made 13 moves, more than a third of all White's moves in this game, but to no avail.

38...♜g5 0-1

There is no defence to 39...♜gf2+ and mate down the g-file. A really drastic example of what Black is hoping for in these doubled-pawn structures, and a (k)nightmare for White.

The Essential Lessons

- In such doubled-pawn structures, White needs to open the position for his bishops, while Black strives to keep it closed, to favour his knights.
- Once Black establishes a blockade, such as here on e4, White can easily find himself totally devoid of any active plan and only able to await slow strangulation.
- Compare the uselessness of White's bishop-pair in this game with the ferocious activity they developed in Game 9. Bishops need open lines – without them, they are crippled.
- Note the logical steps with which Black exploited his advantage here – blockade e4 (moves 7-14), force d4-d5 (moves 19-22), prepare the kingside attack (moves 23-38). The use of such a series of small, step-by-step plans is characteristic of how one should play such blocked positions, especially when the opponent has no counterplay.

Game 26

Furman – Lilienthal

USSR Ch, Moscow 1949

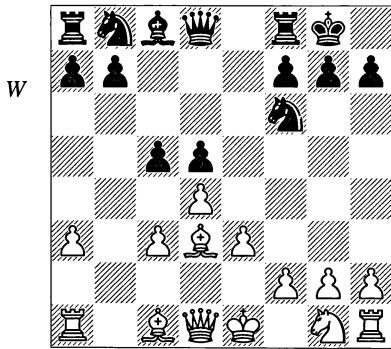
Nimzo-Indian Defence, 4 e3

Here, Black again employs the standard Nimzo-Indian plan of doubling White's pawns by ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$, but then he follows up with a different plan. Rather than block the centre, in the manner of the previous game, Black plays ...d5, allowing White to undouble his pawns and obtain a central pawn-majority. The success of Black's plan depends critically on being able to restrain and blockade White's central pawns. When he fails to do this, the pawn-roller comes through the centre and lays the foundations for a winning kingside attack.

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 a3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 7 bxc3 d5

Thus far, the opening has been similar to the previous game, but with this move, Black fundamentally changes the character of the position. We saw above how Agdestein kept the position closed, by playing ...d6 and ...e5. In this game, Lilenthal chooses a different strategy, instead establishing his pawn on d5.

8 cxd5 exd5 (D)



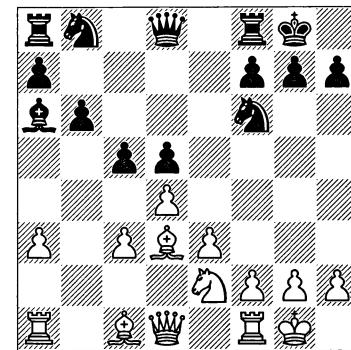
Looking at this position, we can see the consequences of Lilenthal's chosen plan. He has established some pawn control over the e4-square, and also has a pawn-majority on the queenside. However, the drawback is that White has been able to undouble his c-pawns, and himself has a pawn-majority in the centre. This already tells us enough to reveal what the respective side's middlegame plans will be. White will try to advance his central pawn-roller by e4, and use it to build a kingside attack. Black, meanwhile, needs to try to restrain White's central roller as far as possible, while playing on the queenside. Experience with these structures

has shown that White's central preponderance is usually more important than Black's queenside play, and consequently, most players nowadays look on the move 7...d5 with some suspicion, and prefer the ...d6 plan we saw in Speelman-Agdestein (Game 25).

9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

All part of White's plan. He puts the knight here rather than on f3, because he wishes to play f3 and $\mathbb{Q}g3$, to support the advance e4.

9...b6 10 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ (D)

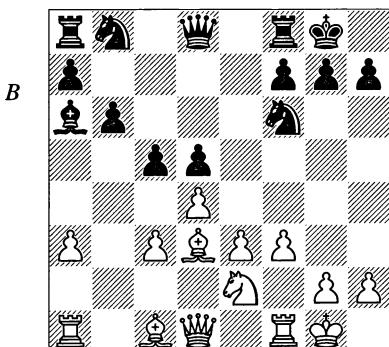


One of the other positional factors here is White's bishop-pair, and we saw earlier in the book that exchanging off his remaining bishop for one of the pair is one of the defender's primary strategic ideas.

11 f3 (D)

In view of the last note, one may wonder why White did not play 11 $\mathbb{Q}c2$, preserving his bishop-pair. The answer is that the black bishop on a6 would then exert awkward pressure on White's position. White wishes to play $\mathbb{Q}g3$ to advance in the centre, and he would not be able to do that without first unpinning by $\mathbb{E}e1$. As

we shall see later in this game, White does not want to remove this rook from the f-file, and so he prefers to get on with his central play as soon as possible. Yes, he loses his bishop-pair, but he gains time, as Black has just spent three moves exchanging off a bishop which has only moved once.



11...Qxd3 12 Qxd3 Qe8

13 e4 was already threatened.

13 Qg3 Qc6 14 Qb2

Now White cannot advance 14 e4 because his d4-pawn would hang after the exchanges in the centre. The b2-bishop looks terribly inactive, which for the moment it is, but it still performs a useful function in defending d4, thus assisting White in achieving the e4 advance. The bishop may later re-enter the game effectively, which indeed it does in this example. The difference between this and the Speelman game above is that Speelman's bishops never had any chance to re-enter the game actively. Furman's bishop is only temporarily inactive.

14...Rc8 15 Rad1 Qa5

Black can no longer hold back the e4 advance, so he transfers his knight to an active-looking post on c4. However, he is not really generating any serious counterplay, whereas White is ready to roll on the other side.

16 e4

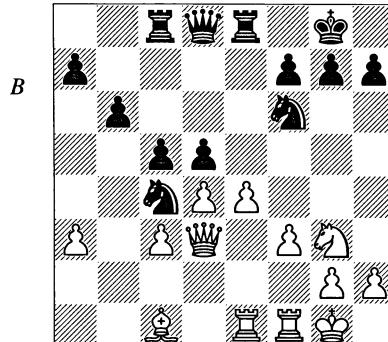
Thus, White has achieved his primary strategic aim.

16...Qc4 17 Qc1 (D)

The bishop has done its job on b2, and now prepares to take part in the kingside action.

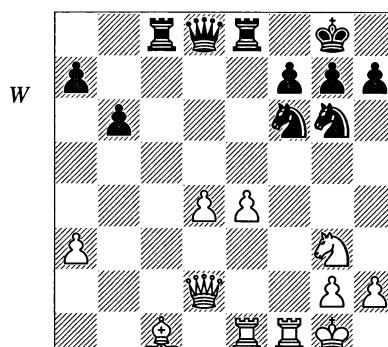
17...cxd4

Whenever White achieves the e4 advance in these structures, the defender faces a fundamental decision about how to react. He can either



exchange in the centre, as Lilienthal does here, or he can sit tight. If he does the latter, White will generally continue e5, followed by f4-f5, trying to blow Black away on the kingside. If he can get his pawns to e5 and f5 unhindered, Black is usually in a bad way. Consequently, Black usually tries to stop the f-pawn when it gets to f4, by himself playing ...f5, trying to block the position. In the present case, such a plan is difficult to implement, because Black lacks control of f5. If he tries 17...g6, with the idea 18 e5 Qd7 19 f4 f5, his kingside is very weak after the further moves 20 exf6 Qxf6 21 f5. Notice in this variation how strong White's queen's bishop has suddenly become – it threatens to jump out onto the weakened dark squares g5 and h6, with great effect. Lilienthal therefore adopts the alternative strategy – exchange pawns in the centre and hope that the white pawns prove vulnerable.

18 cxd4 dxе4 19 fxe4 Qe5 20 Rd2 Qg6 (D)



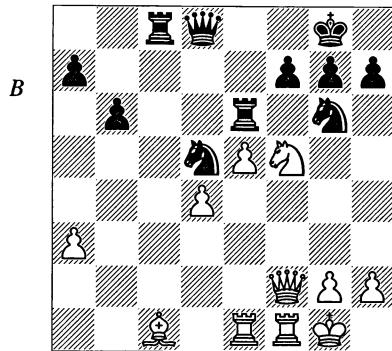
This is the position Lilienthal envisaged. What White has here, of course, is a pair of hanging pawns on e4 and d4. As we know from previous games, hanging pawns can be a target if their possessor does not have the initiative,

but they can also be powerful if he is able to use them for dynamic play. Lilienthal probably thought that in this position, he would stand satisfactorily as Black, because if either white pawn advances, Black gets a juicy-looking square on e5 or d5 for his knights. If the pawns cannot advance effectively, they may become a static target for the black pieces. However, Lilienthal had misjudged the strength of White's kingside play, especially his play down the f-file, and Furman now demonstrates that he has a large, possibly decisive, advantage in this position.

21 e5! ♦d5 22 ♦f5

Black's knight certainly has a nice outpost on d5, but the white knight has a no less attractive one on d6.

22...♜e6 23 ♜f2 (D)



White starts piling up pressure down the f-file. Now we see why Furman was keen to keep his rook on f1 earlier in the game (see note to move 11).

23...♝d7 24 h4!

Black has covered the f7-square, but this move reminds him that he also has a weakness on g7. The threat is ♜g3, followed by h5.

24...f6 25 ♜g3 fxe5 26 dxе5 ♦de7

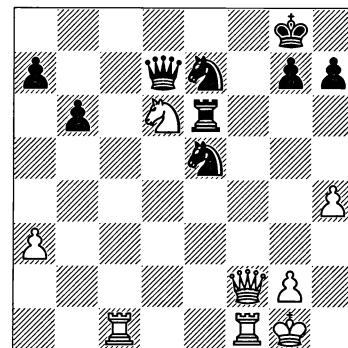
26...♜c3 27 ♜g4 is no help, since the e5-pawn cannot then be taken due to 27...♦xe5? 28 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 29 ♜h6+, mating.

27 ♜d6 ♜xc1

After 27...♜d8, the hitherto dormant white bishop leaps into the game decisively by 28

♞g5! ♜xe5 29 ♜f6, with winning threats, while the natural defence 27...♜f8 fails to alleviate the situation after simply 28 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 29 ♜f1. Lilienthal instead tries a desperate exchange sacrifice to break the attack, but White refutes this by accurate play.

28 ♜xc1 ♜xe5 29 ♜f2! (D)



The f-file remains the Achilles' Heel of Black's position.

29...h6

29...♜f6 30 ♜a2+ is no help to Black.

30 ♜f8+ ♜h7 31 ♜f5 ♜xf5 32 ♜xf5+ g6 33 ♜f8 ♜e8 34 ♜f4

Although Black has one pawn for the exchange, his king is too weak to survive.

34...h5 35 ♜c3 ♜e7 36 ♜e3 1-0

White will just double rooks on the e-file, with decisive effect.

The Essential Lessons

- The pawn-structure frequently determines each side's plan. Here, White had a central pawn-majority, and his plan was to advance this and create a kingside attack.
- Black's plan, begun with 7...d5, depended for its success on halting the white central pawn advance. When he failed to do this, Black was strategically lost.
- Dynamics are often more important than statics. Here, the potential static weakness of White's blockaded hanging pawns after 21 e5 was outweighed by the open f-file and the possibility of a kingside attack.

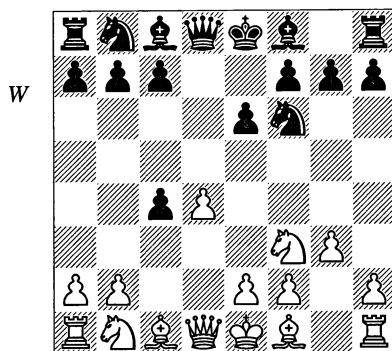
Game 27
Reshevsky – Fine
AVRO tournament, The Hague 1938
 Catalan Opening

Where a pawn-position is unbalanced, with one side having a majority on the kingside, the other on the queenside, the latter can often prove more important. This is because it is easier to advance the queenside pawns in the middlegame, without fear of weakening one's king-position. If the pawns can advance freely, the result is usually an outside passed pawn, which can decide the game. This is what happens here.

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 4 g3

The distinguishing move of the Catalan Opening. White develops the bishop on the long diagonal, intending to exert pressure on the light squares in the centre, and on Black's queenside.

4...dxc4 (D)



One of two main approaches to the defence. This move clears the centre, and thereby allows Black freedom for his pieces, but it does so at the cost of opening the long diagonal for the Catalan bishop. If Black can succeed in developing his queenside pieces (especially the c8-bishop) satisfactorily, he will generally have a good game, but if not, White's g2-bishop can often exert a paralysing grip on Black's queenside. The alternative defensive plan is to hold the d5-pawn with might and main, hoping to blunt the effect of the Catalan bishop, albeit at the cost of a space disadvantage. Both plans are equally satisfactory in principle, and the choice is a matter of taste.

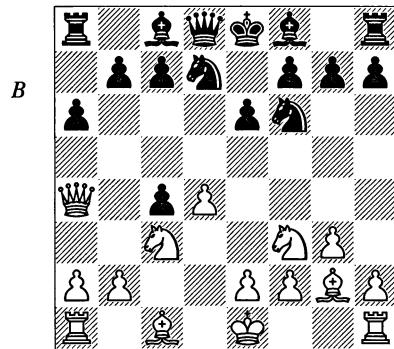
5 $\mathbb{Q}a4+$

At the time this game was played, the Catalan was still in its infancy, and the theory of the

opening was not well developed. Nowadays, it is known that regaining the pawn in this way does not cause Black any great difficulties, and White more often continues in gambit style with 5 $\mathbb{Q}g2$. This allows Black potentially to keep the c4-pawn by moves such as ...b5, but in compensation, White gains in development and can take control of the centre with e4.

5... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ a6 7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (D)

White uses a tactical trick to prevent 7...b5, but the knight is not so well placed here. 7 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ b5 8 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ is more usual nowadays, although White has no advantage here.

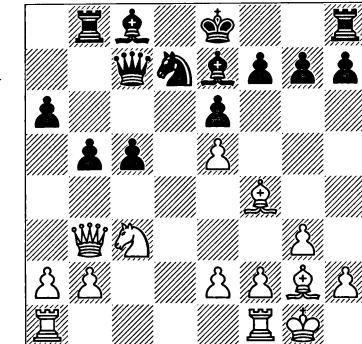
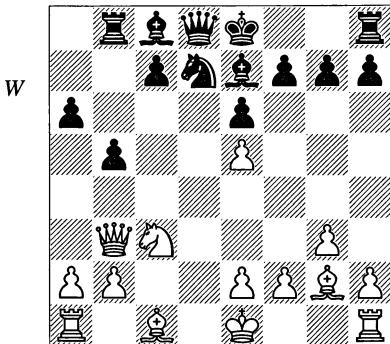


7... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

Obviously, 7...b5? is impossible because of 8 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$, but sooner or later, White will have to recapture on c4, and Black will activate his queenside by ...b5.

8 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ b5 10 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 11 dx e 5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (D)

Once again, the pawn-structure is the clue to what is happening in this position. Black has 3 vs 2 on the queenside, while White has an extra, but doubled, pawn on the kingside. Each side will play on the side of the board where he has



the pawn-majority. Black will push his queen-side pawns, aiming ultimately to establish a passed pawn. White, meanwhile, must utilize his majority on the other side, to try to create counter-chances against the black king. One thing White cannot afford to do is play passively, because if he does so, he is liable to be overrun by the black queenside majority. A queenside pawn-majority can often prove an advantage for its possessor, because the fact that the kings are on the opposite side of the board means that any eventual passed pawn produced by the majority will be far away from the enemy king, and so that much more dangerous in the ending.

12 ♜f4?

This is already a step in the wrong direction. White needs to defend the e5-pawn, but the bishop merely gets in the way on f4. White should begin advancing on the kingside by 12 f4. It would still not be so easy to create serious threats on the kingside, and for that reason, Black is already slightly better, but White would have more chances than in the game.

12...c5

Black begins playing his trumps. Note that the greedy attempt to snatch a pawn by 12...g5? would fail, because after 13 ♜e3 the threat of 14 ♜a7, winning the exchange, leaves Black no time to capture on e5. Black would merely have weakened his kingside gratuitously.

13 0-0 ♜c7 (D)

Now, however, it does look as though Black is winning a pawn. White succeeds in avoiding this by tactical means, but his fundamental strategic problems remain.

14 a4! 0-0!

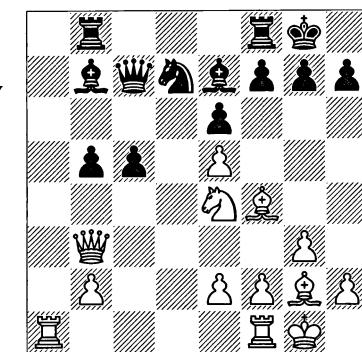
Black refuses to be tempted from the correct strategic path. If 14...b4 15 ♜e4 ♜xe5, White

regains the pawn by 16 ♜ac1 0-0 17 ♜e3, and even holds a slight initiative. Black has no need to fish in such troubled waters.

15 axb5 axb5 16 ♜e4

It seems that during the game, both players assumed that 16 ♜xb5 just lost a piece after 16...♝b6, but in fact this is not so clear. White can save the piece by 17 ♜fd1, thanks to tactical tricks involving ♜c6 after Black takes on b5. Even so, Black can retain the advantage after 17...♝d8 18 ♜a7 ♜xb5 19 ♜xb5 ♜xb5 20 ♜c6 ♜xb2.

16...♝b7 (D)



17 ♜a7

White continues to try to press his temporary initiative, but in the end, he only succeeds in simplifying the position to Black's advantage. Fine himself recommended 17 ♜e3, trying to create some counterplay on the kingside.

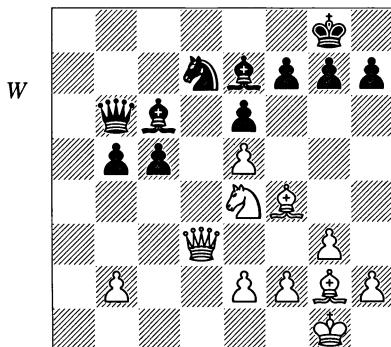
17...♝b6 18 ♜fa1 ♜a8

Black knows that the endgame is winning for him, thanks to the queenside pawn-majority, so he is happy to simplify the position.

19 ♜xa8 ♜xa8 20 ♜xa8+ ♜xa8 21 ♜d3

♜c6 (D)

22 ♜g5



22 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ was an alternative, but does not essentially change anything after 22...c4.

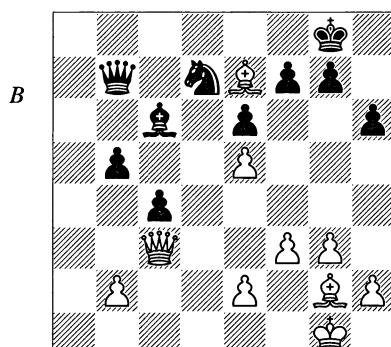
22... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{W}b7$

Not 23... $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$ 24 $\mathbb{W}d6$, when White solves his problems; e.g., 24...h6 25 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$, etc.

24 f3?

This just loses a pawn, after which White is clearly lost. Probably the only chance was 24 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$, although Fine evaluates the position as lost for White in any case. This is not 100% clear, but White would certainly face a difficult fight for a draw. The queenside majority, plus White's crippled majority on the kingside, means that White is effectively a pawn down.

24...h6 25 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ c4 26 $\mathbb{W}c3$ (D)



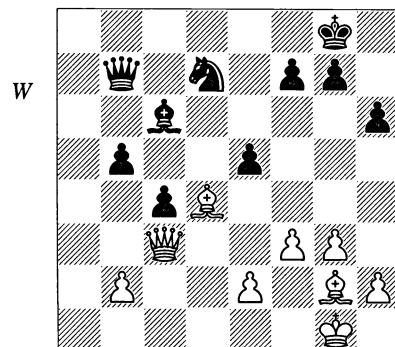
26... $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$

White's e5-pawn has been hanging on by a thread ever since 12 $\mathbb{Q}f4?$, and now it finally falls.

27 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ e5! (D)

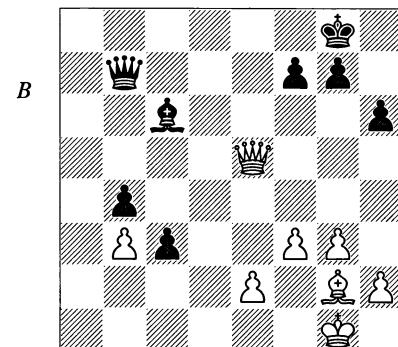
Black gives back the extra pawn to lift the blockade of his queenside majority.

29 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ b4 30 $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 31 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ c3!



With the point that after 32 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ b3, the pawn queens.

32 b3 (D)



The majority has yielded a crushing far-advanced protected passed pawn, which decides the game in short order.

**32... $\mathbb{W}b6+$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ c2 34 $\mathbb{W}b2$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 35 $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 36 f4 $\mathbb{Q}xg2+$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{W}d5+$ 0-1
38... $\mathbb{W}d1$ follows.**

The Essential Lessons

- Other things being equal, a pawn-majority on the queenside constitutes a positional advantage, because of the possibility of creating an outside passed pawn.
- Where the sides each have a majority on opposite wings, it is essential to use one's own majority to create counterplay. White's passive play in the face of his opponent's queenside majority cost him the game.
- The player with a queenside majority should usually be happy to simplify the position, because such a majority is especially strong in the ending.

Game 28

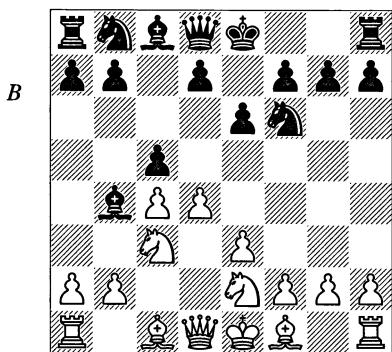
Gligorić – Szabo

Olympiad, Helsinki 1952

Nimzo-Indian Defence, 4 e3

In this game, we once again see a struggle between two opposing pawn-majorities. However, this time the queenside majority becomes blockaded, and it is Black's mobile central pawns which carry the day.

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 4 e3 c5 5 $\mathbb{Q}e2$
(D)



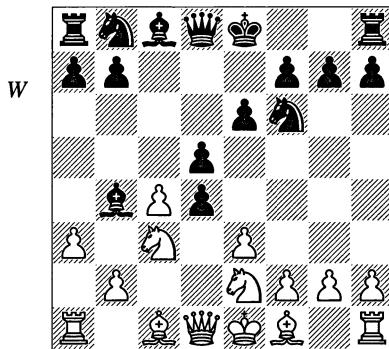
We have already seen in several games that one of Black's main strategic ideas in this opening is to exchange on c3, and then set up a pawn-chain with ...c5, ...d6 and ...e5, trying to keep the position closed and exploit White's doubled c-pawns. Gligorić's last move is directed against this plan. White prepares to recapture on c3 with the knight, avoiding the doubled pawns, and hoping to obtain a position in which he can exploit his bishop-pair. The drawback of the move is that it obstructs the development of White's kingside, and this allows Black to contest the centre more easily and thereby to obtain equal chances.

5...d5 6 a3 exd4!? (D)

Black could also play 6... $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ cxd4 8 exd4 dxc4 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$, conceding the two bishops, but giving White an IQP. The resulting position is also satisfactory for Black, and the choice is largely a matter of taste.

7 exd4

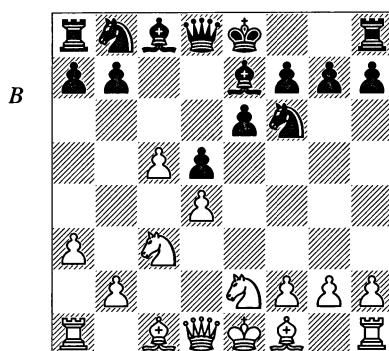
White could insist on the bishop-pair by 7 axb4, but at the cost of broken queenside pawns, and this is not considered as giving White any particular advantage.



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

7.... $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ would transpose into the line discussed in the note to Black's 6th move, but Szabo instead prefers to keep his two bishops. Now he is threatening to isolate White's d-pawn by 8...dxc4.

8 c5 (D)



This is the most critical response. White avoids the IQP and instead sets up a potentially powerful pawn-majority on the queenside. In the middlegame, he intends the simple plan of advancing the pawns with b4-b5, aiming to establish a passed pawn. Black needs to fight against this, because passive play will simply allow White to carry out his plan unhindered.

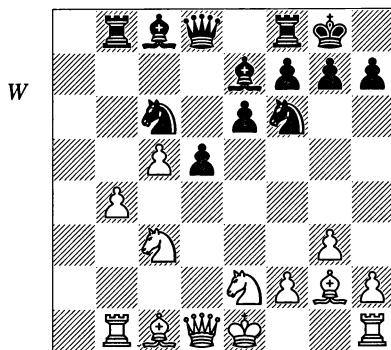
8...0-0 9 b4 b6

The start of Black's plan of counterplay. Normally, one is taught not to move pawns on the side of the board where one stands worse, but Black has an ambitious scheme in mind. He intends to grant White an even larger majority than he already has, in order to obtain a larger central majority himself. The result will then be a battle to see which side's pawn-majority is the more powerful.

10 g3 bxc5 11 dxc5

White takes up the challenge! He could play more quietly with 11 bxc5, but then Black would have easy development by ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$. The passed pawn on c5 would be easily and securely blockaded and Black would have no particular problems. Gligorić's move is more ambitious, and meets Black's idea head-on. Each side must now look to advance his own majority, while simultaneously trying to blockade his opponent's.

11...a5 12 $\mathbb{B}b1$ axb4 13 axb4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ (D)



15 $\mathbb{Q}a3$

Black's play is based on a key tactical point, which is that the obvious 15 b5 rebounds on White after 15... $\mathbb{Q}xc5!$ 16 bxc6 $\mathbb{B}xb1$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ $\mathbb{B}b6$, attacking both b1 and f2. Black will have more than enough for the piece after the further moves 18 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 19 fxe3 $\mathbb{Q}g4!$, with a strong attack. White is consequently forced to defend the b4-pawn passively.

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

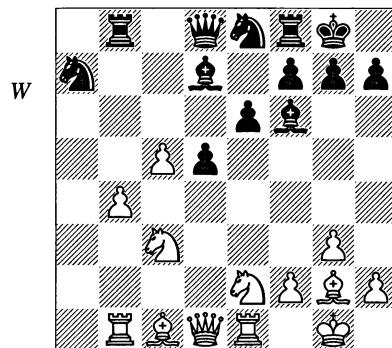
Black continues his plan to blockade the white passed pawns. He intends ... $\mathbb{Q}a7-b5$.

16 0-0

Remarkably, after this move, the white pawns will remain fixed on b4 and c5 until the end of

the game. White's last chance to get them moving was 16 b5, but after 16... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 17 b6 $\mathbb{Q}c4$, followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}c8$, they are again blockaded and are much more vulnerable to attack.

16... $\mathbb{Q}a7!$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (D)



Having at least temporarily halted White's queenside pawns, Black turns to the mobilization of his own majority in the centre.

19 $\mathbb{Q}f4$

This looks a rather odd move, but it contains quite a deep idea. Gligorić understands that the roles have reversed, and that White must now think of how to blockade the black central pawns. His last move aims deliberately to lure the pawns forward to d4 and e5, after which he hopes to arrange a blockade on the light squares. The problem with this plan is that it entails the exchange of light-squared bishops, after which White has some serious weaknesses on the light squares around his king. Szabo himself recommended instead the simple 19 $\mathbb{Q}e3$, followed by $\mathbb{Q}d2$ and $\mathbb{Q}ec1$.

19...e5 20 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ d4 21 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$!

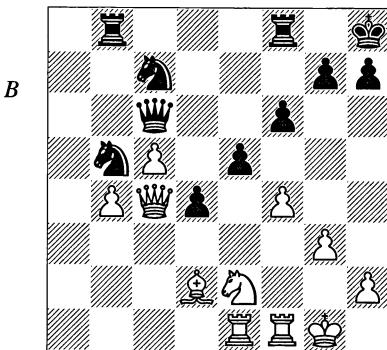
The correct recapture, preserving the blockade of the b5-square and activating the black queen on the weakened central light squares.

24 f4

This is an integral part of White's plan to blockade the black pawns. At present, a blockade on e4 could be lifted by Black playing ...f5, but once White's own pawn reaches f5, or he exchanges by fxe5 (and Black replies ...fxe5), this will no longer be possible, and White has more chance of maintaining a piece blockade on the e4-square. However, 24 f4 has the disadvantage of weakening White's kingside. He is also hampered by the fact that his knight is

misplaced on e2. White would dearly love to be able to get this piece to e4, but it is not apparent how he can do this.

24...f6 25 ♕b3+ ♔h8 26 ♜f1 ♖c7 27 ♕c4 ♖ab5 28 ♜be1 (D)



28...h6?

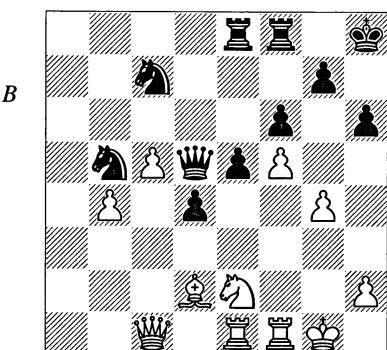
An inaccuracy, which jeopardizes much of Black's advantage. 28...♕d5 is superior.

29 g4!

Freeing the g3-square for the knight, whence it can reach e4.

29...♜be8 30 f5 ♕d5 31 ♕c1? (D)

White returns the favour, after which Black again assumes the advantage. It is hard to understand why Gligorić refused the exchange of queens, having just had to weaken his king-position so markedly. After 31 ♕xd5 ♖xd5 32 ♖g3, we would reach a position where both sides have succeeded in blockading the enemy pawn-majority, and chances would be almost equal.



31...♔h7 32 ♖g3

Now he has lost control of the e4-square, and cannot blockade the pawns.

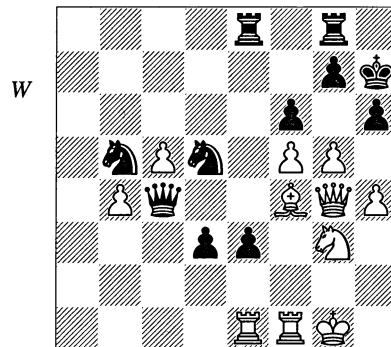
32...e4 33 ♜f4 e3 34 ♜d1 ♜c4 35 h4

A last, futile attempt to create counterplay against the black king.

35...d5

By defending the e3-pawn, Black prepares to advance the d-pawn.

36 g5 d3 37 ♜g4 ♜g8! (D)



Covering g6, thereby meeting the threat of 38 gxh6, and thus extinguishing White's last hope.

38 ♖h5 ♜e4 39 g6+ ♔h8 40 ♜g3

and in this hopeless position, White lost on time.

0-1

The Essential Lessons

- With mobile pawn-majorities in different parts of the board, the game revolves around each side's attempts to advance his own majority, while simultaneously blockading the opponent's.
- Notice how at move 14, Black used tactical points to his advantage, in order to achieve his strategic objective. The manoeuvre begun by 14...♜b8 aimed at a blockade on the b5-square, but its tactical justification lay in the piece sacrifice in the variation after 15 b5.
- Once the blockade is lifted, two connected passed pawns can wreak havoc and crush all resistance before them.

Game 29
Smyslov – Denker
USSR-USA radio match 1946
 Sicilian Defence, Closed

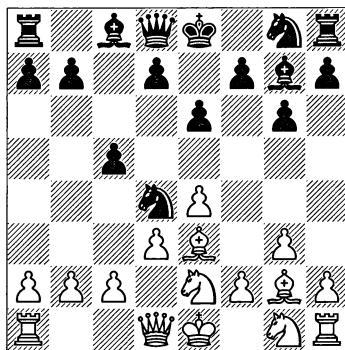
A backward pawn is well-known as a potential pawn weakness. Not only is the pawn itself vulnerable to attack, but the square in front of it frequently represents a hole, which can be profitably occupied by the enemy pieces. In this game, Black emerges from the opening with just such a weakness, and Smyslov gives a virtuoso display of how to exploit it.

1 e4 c5 2 ♜c3 ♜c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♛g2 ♛g7 5 d3 e6 6 ♜e3 ♜d4?!

At the time of this game, the text-move was fashionable, but White's next put it out of business. 6...d6 is better.

7 ♜ce2! (D)

B



This is the rub. White prepares to evict the knight with c3.

7...d6

The line 7...♜xe2 8 ♜xe2 ♜xb2 9 ♜b1 is unfavourable, because White regains the pawn on c5, in view of the tactic 9...♝a5+? 10 ♛d2 ♜xa2 11 ♜xb2 ♜xb2 12 ♜c3 forking the queen and rook.

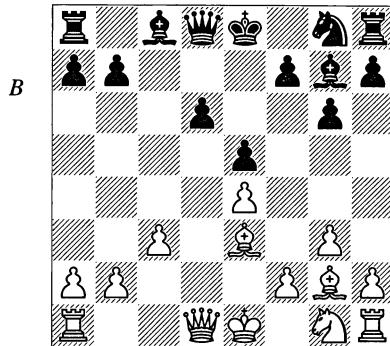
8 c3 ♜c6 9 d4 cxd4 10 ♜xd4!

Better than 10 cxd4. White wishes to target the weak pawn on d6, which is more exposed than usual because the black bishop is on g7, rather than e7.

10...♜xd4 11 ♜xd4 e5?

This is a major positional concession, from which Black's game ultimately never recovers. 11...♝f6 was preferable, when the d6-pawn would remain weak, but at least there would not be a hole on d5.

12 ♜e3 (D)



Positionally, White has achieved a clear advantage from the opening, thanks to the backward pawn on d6 and the hole on d5. If Black could achieve the break ...d5, he would stand satisfactorily, but it proves impossible to achieve this against Smyslov's accurate play.

12...♝e7

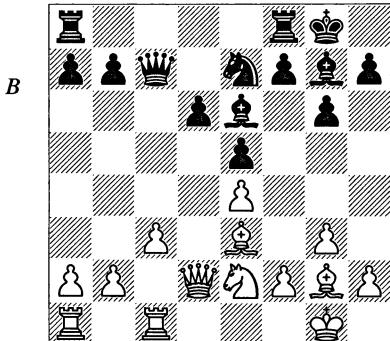
Because his king is still in the centre, Black has no time to force the ...d5 break immediately. Thus, after 12...♝f6 13 ♜e2 ♜e6 14 0-0 d5 15 exd5, he has serious problems however he recaptures on d5 – 15...♜xd5 16 ♜c5 traps the king in the centre, while 15...♝xd5 16 ♜a4+ ♜d7 17 ♜xd7+ ♜xd7 18 ♜ad1 is equally uncomfortable.

13 ♜e2 0-0 14 0-0 ♜e6 15 ♜d2 ♜c7

15...d5? is still impossible because of 16 ♜c5, winning a pawn.

16 ♜fc1! (D)

A very deep move. The main intention is clear enough – White wants to play 17 c4, clamping down on the d5-square once and for all. The depth lies in the tactics if Black stops this with 16...b5. There then follows 17 a4! a6 (17...bxa4 18 ♜xa4 a5 19 ♜c1 leaves another weakness on a5) 18 ♜d1!, and Black has no good way to defend the d6-pawn. If 18...♜fd8,



then 19 axb5 axb5 20 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$, while if 18... $\mathbb{Q}ad8$, 19 axb5 axb5 20 $\mathbb{Q}a7$ wins a piece. This is another small example of the theme of ‘two weaknesses’, which we have discussed before. In these variations, Black cannot defend both the d6 weakness, and the new weakness down the a-file.

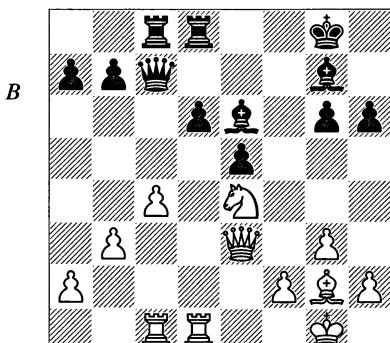
16...f5 17 c4 fxe4 18 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$

Smyslov’s command of tactics enables him to achieve all of his strategic objectives. Thus, 18... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ fails because of the pin on the c-file after 19 $\mathbb{Q}d1$, threatening 20 b3.

19 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ h6 21 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$

Again, 21... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ walks into a dangerous pin by 22 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$.

22 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 23 b3 (D)



The result of the tactical interchanges is that Black has been unable to rid himself of his backward pawn on d6, and White has thus consolidated his positional advantage. The next step is to find a plan to increase it.

23...b6 24 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d5!$

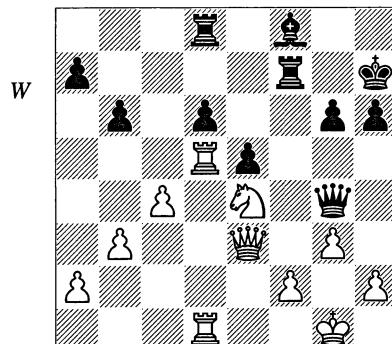
An excellent example of a positionally well-motivated exchange. Black’s central pawns are fixed on dark squares and his light squares are therefore weak. The e6-bishop is the only minor

piece he has which can defend those squares, so White exchanges it off. Once the light-squared bishops disappear, White will be left with a good knight versus a bad bishop, and the central light squares (especially the hole on d5) will be defenceless. Many players would hesitate to exchange off their fianchettoed bishop as White here, but Smyslov’s move illustrates perfectly one of the most important maxims when evaluating an exchange – consider what stays on the board, not what comes off. It is the position after the exchange which matters, and that is clearly in White’s favour.

25... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

Preparing to lay siege to the weakness on d6.

27... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}cd1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ (D)



31 $\mathbb{Q}1d3!$

Again, tactical alertness. Even in such a strong position as this, the defence always has resources and one moment’s carelessness by White can spoil things. Thus, taking the pawn immediately would fall for the tactic 31 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$! 33 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$, when Black has two rooks for the queen and would not stand significantly worse. Instead of falling for this, Smyslov continues to increase the pressure by preparing to treble his heavy pieces on the d-file. And, as we know from Game 20, the best formation for trebled heavy pieces is to have the queen behind the rooks – Alekhine’s Gun!

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

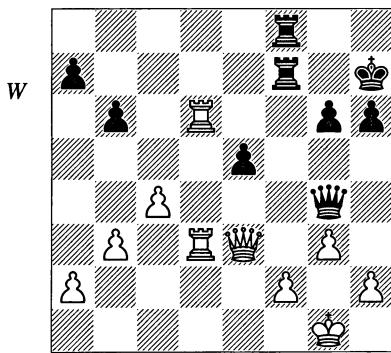
If Black tries to hold the d-pawn by 31... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ (the gun is loaded!) 32... $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ he loses after 33 c5 bxc5 34 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$. He therefore jettisons the pawn, but in so doing manages to exchange his bad bishop for the knight, and give

himself some chances to draw the resulting ending.

32 ♜xd6

White has strengthened his position to the maximum, and has nothing better than taking the pawn.

32...♜xd6 33 ♜xd6 ♜df8 (D)



This is an important moment at which to pause. White's superb strategic and tactical play has brought his plan to fruition – he has won the backward pawn and is now a pawn up in the ending. However, very often in such cases, the win of material comes at the cost of relieving some of the pressure on the black position. Thus, Black no longer has a bad bishop, and he no longer has a weak pawn to defend. Instead, he has been able to go over to a measure of counterattack by threatening the f2-pawn. As White in such positions, it is important to take some time to adjust to the new situation and to form an accurate plan for the further conduct of the game. Smyslov does this admirably. One of the most important factors in endings with queens and rooks is the safety of the kings. Having the safer king can often be more important than having an extra pawn. In addition, having the initiative is also very important. One thing which one does not want in such endings is to cling on to an extra pawn, but at the cost of having one's pieces passively placed, defending one's king. Smyslov's next few moves reflect his understanding of this factor.

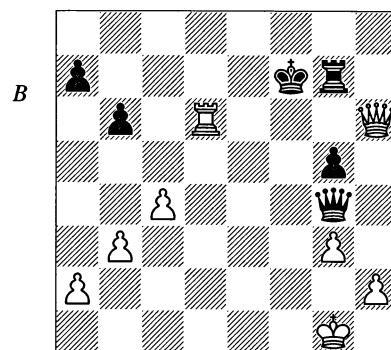
34 ♜xe5!

Rather than the passive 34 ♜d2.

34...♜xf2 35 ♜d7+ ♜f8f7 36 ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 37 ♜d8!

The point of White's play. He seizes the initiative and attacks Black's king, before Black can do the same to White's. A vital point is that Black does not have a single check.

37...♜g7 38 ♜e8 g5 39 ♜h8+ ♜g6 40 ♜d6+ ♜f7 41 ♜xh6 (D)



White has won a second pawn, driven the black king into the open, and still Black does not have a single check.

41...♜f5 42 ♜d1 ♜c5+ 43 ♜g2 ♜e7

Black cannot activate his rook to keep his momentary initiative going.

44 ♜f1+ ♜g8 45 ♜f6 ♜e8 46 ♜f5

The final step is to seize the e-file.

46...g4 47 ♜f2 ♜e7 48 ♜d3 ♜g5 49 ♜e2 ♜f8 50 ♜e4 ♜g7 51 ♜d5+ ♜f7 52 ♜e6! 1-0

Black is two pawns down and has no useful moves.

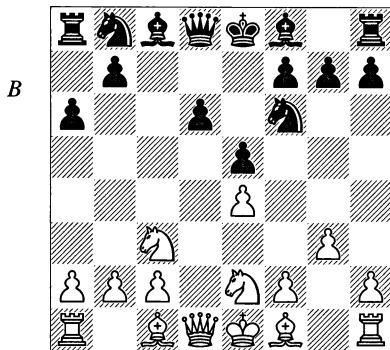
The Essential Lessons

- A backward pawn can be a serious handicap if the opponent can fix it and pile up against it.
- Tactics are frequently vital to maintaining and enhancing a positional advantage (16 ♜fc1!, 18 ♜c3!, etc.).
- In evaluating an exchange, look at what stays on the board, not what comes off (25 ♜d5!).
- Remember Alekhine's Gun!
- In major-piece endings, king safety and the initiative are the critical factors, more than material advantage.

Game 30
Matulović – Fischer
Vinkovci 1968
 Sicilian Defence, Najdorf Variation

The previous game saw Black pay a high price for accepting a backward pawn on d6 in the Sicilian. Here, however, no less a player than Bobby Fischer does the same thing, and wins effortlessly. The key difference lies in the possession of the initiative. Fischer manages to seize and maintain the initiative, as a result of which his opponent is never able to settle down to the exploitation of the static weaknesses on d5 and d6. Instead, Black's d6-e5 pawn-centre controls vital squares, and it is White's own backward pawn on c2 which is the more important.

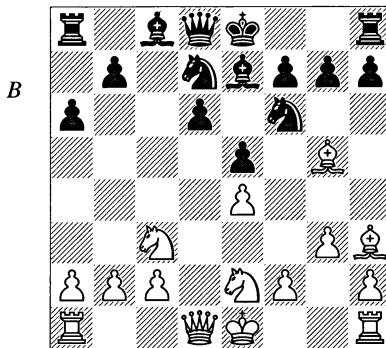
1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 a6 6 g3 e5 7 ♜de2 (D)



After seeing the previous game, you may well be wondering why Bobby Fischer, one of the greatest players ever, should have voluntarily given himself the same backward pawn on d6 and hole on d5 which cost Denker so dearly in the previous game. Indeed, up to the end of the Second World War, most masters would have shared this bewilderment, but in the period from around the late 1940s onwards, a raft of Sicilian lines were developed in which Black plays the move ...e5 early on. The main creator of these systems was the Soviet grandmaster Isaac Boleslavsky, and his successes soon attracted followers, culminating in the development of the Najdorf Variation, which we have before us. Like many of the positional factors we have already looked at, this one comes down to statics versus dynamics. As we saw in the previous game, if the backward pawn can become a target, it can easily cripple Black's game. However, the e5-pawn gives Black a significant measure of central control, depriving

White of the use of the d4-square, in particular. If Black can develop active play, for example along the c-file and in conjunction with the advance ...b5, then White will often not be in a position to settle down to exploiting the theoretical weaknesses down the d-file. In this case, Black can achieve a viable position, and this game is a very good example of that.

7...♝e7 8 ♜g5 ♜bd7 9 ♜h3 (D)



Although this move may look strange, it is very logical. We know from previous games that exchanging off key defensive pieces is a standard strategic idea. In this position, Black's weakness on d5 is covered for the moment by the f6-knight, and White's 8th move prepared to exchange that knight off. In addition, as we saw in Smyslov-Denker, with Black's central pawns fixed on dark squares, his light-squared bishop is a key piece, and exchanging these bishops should in principle be in White's favour. Matulović's last move envisages doing just this, by first exchanging ♜xf6, and then, after Black's obviously-planned recapture ...♜xf6, by ♜xc8. Black must respond actively, in order

to avoid falling into a bind of the sort that crippled Denker in the previous game.

9...b5

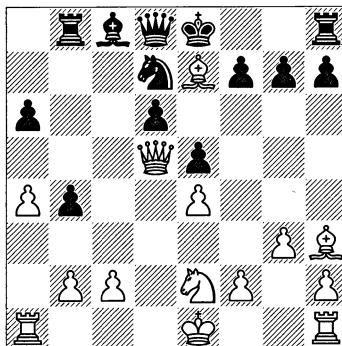
Immediately starting his counterplay on the queenside. Now if White proceeds with his plan, after 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$, White has achieved his favourable exchanges, but Black already has counterplay. He threatens 12...b4, winning the e4-pawn, and after 12 $\mathbb{Q}d3$, he can follow up with such moves as ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$, and a later doubling of rooks on the c-file. The key difference from the previous game is that here Black has counterplay, with which to compensate for his weaknesses on the d-file – Denker never managed to achieve this.

10 a4

This move is part of White's plan to create pressure down the d-file, but it has the drawback of creating a backward pawn on c2. This does not look significant at present, but keep an eye on this pawn – White will later have cause sorely to regret creating this weakness.

10...b4 11 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ (D)

B

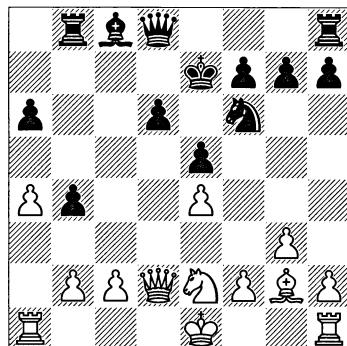


13... $\mathbb{Q}xe7!!$

A really great move, and one for which this game is justly famous. Matulović had presumably counted only on the natural-looking recapture 13... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$, when he can bring pressure to bear against the backward pawn by 14 $\mathbb{Q}d1$. Even this is not clear, but Fischer's move kills all of White's play. Now d6 is defended one more time, and 14 $\mathbb{Q}d1$? would lose a piece after 14... $\mathbb{Q}f6$. This latter move is a threat anyway, and White is forced into retreat. Black's king is not in any danger in the centre, because White cannot open additional lines in short order to get at it.

14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ (D)

B



This bishop does not have a bright future, staring at its own pawn on e4, but after the exchange, White would have serious weaknesses on the light squares.

15... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 17 0-0 a5 18 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}hc8$

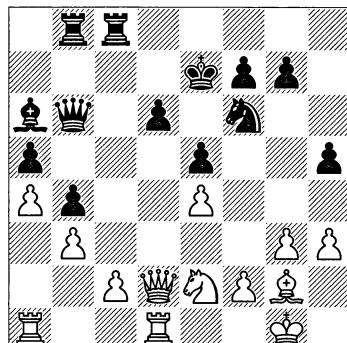
This move threatens 20... $\mathbb{Q}c4$, when the e4-pawn would be indefensible. White tries to create some counterplay by a pawn sacrifice, but Fischer refuses to bite.

20 h3 h5!

White's idea was 20... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 21 g4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}g3$, followed by $\mathbb{Q}f5+$. Fischer prefers to maintain his iron grip on the position, and with that last chance of counterplay denied him, White is now, in order to stop 21... $\mathbb{Q}c4$, forced to play the ghastly...

21 b3 (D)

B



The diagram position is now a tale of two backward pawns. Black still has his on d6, while White now has one on c2. What soon becomes very clear is that while Black's weakness is easily defended and does not hamper his game significantly at all, White's c2-pawn will

cripple his game completely. The difference lies in activity. Black's pieces are very active and he has the initiative. Consequently he is able to attack White's weakness on c2, while the white pieces are passive and cannot attack the d6-pawn effectively.

21...♝xe2!

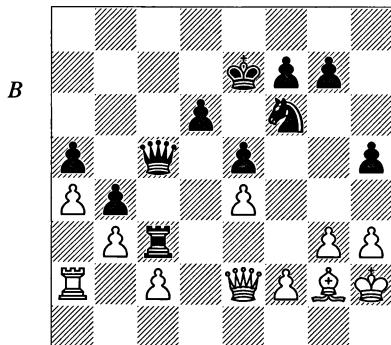
Another excellent example of the theme we discussed in the previous game. This exchange looks illogical, because the bishop is much more powerful than the e2-knight, which has little scope. However, Fischer wants to use the c3-square for his rook, so as to double on the c-file. He also realizes that after the exchange, his remaining knight will be much stronger than White's bad bishop on g2. In other words, it is the same story we saw in Smyslov-Denker – look at what remains on the board, not what comes off.

22 ♜xe2 ♜c3

With the incidental threat of 23...♜xg3.

23 ♜d3 ♜bc8 24 ♜xc3 ♜xc3 25 ♔h2 ♜c5 26 ♜a2 (D)

A dreadful move to have to play, but 26 ♜c1 loses a pawn after 26...♜xb3.



26...g6 27 ♔f1

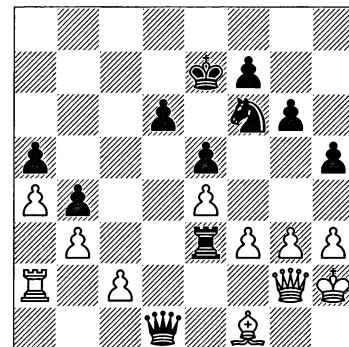
White is totally bereft of active moves, and can only await the execution.

27...♜d4 28 f3

This weakens the position even further. Strictly speaking, 28 ♔g2 was better, but White is so tied up that he was probably begging for

his opponent to find a quick way of finishing him off. Among other things, Black could answer 28 ♔g2 with 28...h4, trying to secure the f4-square for his knight.

28...♜e3 29 ♜g2 ♜d1 (D)



30 ♔c4

As well as the f3-pawn, Black also threatened the embarrassing ...♜b1, winning the hapless rook on a2. Many players would have been induced to resign by now, but Matulović was a notorious bitter-end and struggled on for a few more moves.

30...♜xf3 31 ♜xf3 ♜xf3 32 ♔g2 ♜e3 33 ♜d3 ♜xe4 34 ♔xe4 ♜xe4 35 ♔f2 d5 36 ♜a1 d4 37 ♜d1 ♜e3 38 h4 ♜c3 39 ♜d2 ♜e6 40 ♔g2 f5! 0-1

Enough is enough.

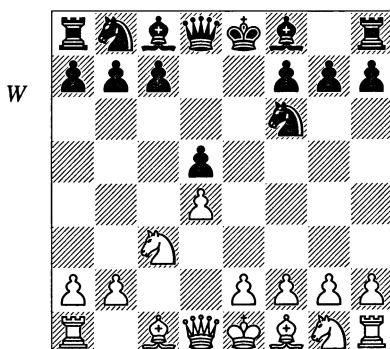
The Essential Lessons

- As with isolated and hanging pawns, a backward pawn can be a serious weakness if its owner has no active counterplay, but may be insignificant if there is enough counterplay to prevent the opponent from attacking it.
- Chess is a very concrete game and there are always exceptions to the rules. Here, Fischer was prepared to leave his king in the centre because he saw that in this particular position it was not vulnerable to attack and played a useful role in defending d6.
- Once again, with exchanges, look at what stays on the board, not what comes off.

Game 31
Filip – Szabo
Bucharest 1953
Queen's Gambit Declined, Exchange Variation

We now move on to a consideration of the ‘Carlsbad’ structure, which frequently arises from the Queen’s Gambit Declined. The classic plan for White here is the Minority Attack, where White attacks on the queenside, despite the fact that he has only two pawns against Black’s three on that side. Filip demonstrates the plan in typical fashion.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♜c3 ♜f6 4 cxd5 exd5 (D)



This exchange of pawns gives rise to the so-called Carlsbad structure. White allows his opponent’s c8-bishop more freedom than would usually be the case in the Queen’s Gambit Declined, but in return, White fixes the central pawn-structure. He has a half-open c-file, and a pawn-majority in the centre. White has three principal plans for the middlegame. One is to castle queenside and attack Black’s king by means of a pawn-storm. This is the plan we saw used in Game 1. Another is to use his central majority, in similar fashion to Furman-Lilenthal (Game 26). In this case, White will usually develop by ♜d3 and ♜ge2. The third main plan is the classic ‘Minority Attack’, in which White advances his b-pawn, aiming to create weaknesses in Black’s queenside structure. The Minority Attack is something of an exception to the general rules of chess strategy, in that it is usually correct to attack on the side of the board where one has a pawn-majority. The Carlsbad structure is somewhat different, however, because although Black has a pawn-majority on the queenside, White’s control of the half-open c-file means that he is the one who is better able

to take the initiative on that side of the board. Black, by contrast, usually looks for counterplay against White’s king, in some cases by means of a minority attack of his own, advancing ...f5-f4.

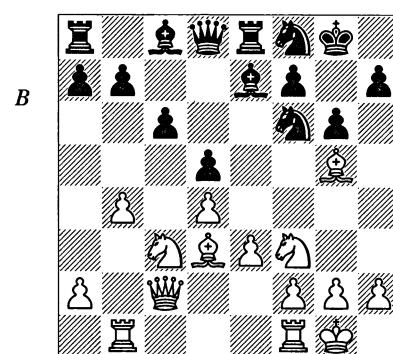
5 ♜g5 ♜e7 6 e3 0-0 7 ♜c2 ♜e8 8 ♜f3

By placing the knight on f3, White signals that he is unlikely to pursue the plan of a central advance.

8...♜bd7 9 ♜d3 c6 10 0-0

And now, by castling kingside, White also rules out the kingside attacking plan seen in Game 1.

10...♝f8 11 ♜ab1 g6 12 b4 (D)



White begins the Minority Attack. His idea is to advance the pawn to b5, and potentially to exchange on c6. If Black recaptures with the pawn, he will have a backward pawn on c6. If he recaptures with a piece on c6, his d5-pawn will be weak, and potentially also the b7-pawn. The same is true if Black captures the pawn when it reaches b5. If permitted, Black will usually answer b5 with ...c5, since even though he thereby obtains an IQP, such positions are often relatively comfortable for Black if the white pawn is on b5. The availability of an

outpost on c4, for example, gives Black more play than he will usually have in IQP positions. However, White will usually be careful to time his b5 advance so that the reply ...c5 is not possible.

12...Qe6 13 Bh4 Qh5 14 Qxe7 Qxe7 15 Qa4

See the last note. The immediate advance 15 b5 would not be so effective here because of the reply 15...c5. Filip therefore plays more slowly, preparing the b5 advance in more favourable circumstances. He first aims to manoeuvre his knight to c5. Black cannot very well prevent this by playing ...b6 himself, since then his c6-pawn would be gravely weakened.

15...Bc7

Since White's last move took control of c5, the advance 16 b5 was a threat.

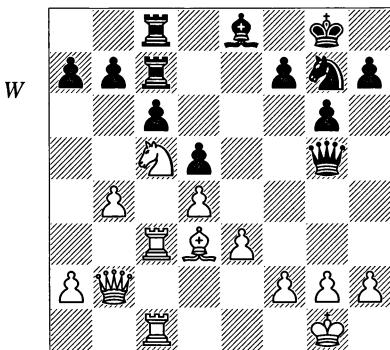
16 Rfc1 Qd7 17 Bb2 Qhg7 18 Qc5 Qe8

Capturing the c5-knight would give White an interesting choice. The most obvious recapture is with the b-pawn, fixing a backward pawn on b7. However, that pawn would not be so difficult to defend, and it may well be that in this particular position, Filip would have recaptured with the rook on c5, still preparing b5.

19 Rc3 Rac8 20 Rbc1

Both sides anticipate the opening of the c-file after White's eventual b5 advance, hence the positioning of the rooks.

20...Qg5 21 Qxg5 Rxg5 (D)



22 b5

The key breakthrough finally comes and Black must decide whether to allow White to capture on c6, or to capture himself. Whatever Black plays, he is in trouble here, because he will end up with weaknesses on the queenside,

and has not managed to create any effective counterplay against White's king.

22...Rxb5 23 Qxb7!

A tactical blow which increases White's advantage. After the exchange of rooks, the black queenside pawns will be weak and exposed to White's pieces.

23...Rxc3 24 Rxc3 Rxc3 25 Rxc3 Rg4 26 Qd6 Qd7

Now the b5-pawn is lost, but 26...a6 27 Ra5 is no better. In such Minority Attack positions, passive defence of the queenside is rarely successful for Black, and he must instead create counterplay against White's king. If, as here, he fails to do this, he is usually doomed.

27 Rc7 Qh5 28 Rxb5

Thus, White has won a pawn, and the remainder of the game presents no difficulties for him.

28...Rd1+ 29 Qf1 Ra4 30 Rd8+ Kg7 31 Re7

Queen and knight are frequently a very potent attacking force, and White is soon able in this case to force the win of further material.

31...Qe6 32 Qe8+ Kg8 33 Rd8 Kf8 34 Qc7+ Kg7 35 Qxe6+ fxe6 36 Re7+ Kh6 37 g4!

Even stronger than taking on e6.

37...Rg7 38 Rh4+

This wins a piece and the game, though he could have forced immediate mate by 38 Ke2.

38...Qh5 39 gxh5 g5 40 Rg4 Rxg4 41 Rxe6+ Rxh5 42 Rh3+ Kg6 43 Qd3+ 1-0

A typical example of a successful Minority Attack. It is not easy to pinpoint any one move as the cause of Black's downfall. Rather, his play between moves 10-20 was too passive, and he failed to create the kingside counterplay necessary to offset White's pressure on the other side of the board.

The Essential Lessons

- In the Carlsbad structure, White is able to attack on the queenside, even though he has a minority of pawns on that side – an exception to the usual rule that one should attack where one has a majority.
- Once White's pawn reaches b5 in such positions, Black usually only has a choice of evils.
- Passive play against the Minority Attack is usually fatal. The best defence is counterattack on the kingside.

Game 32

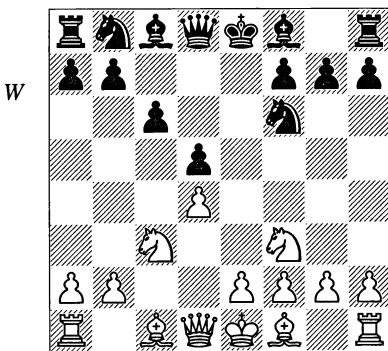
Portisch – Kasparov

World Cup, Skellefteå 1989

Queen's Gambit Declined, Exchange Variation

The last game showed how strong the Minority Attack can be against passive black play. In this game, Kasparov gives a textbook demonstration of exactly how Black should defend against White's plan, both in terms of neutralizing White's Minority Attack on the queenside, and creating a counterattack on the other flank.

1 d4 d5 2 ♜f3 ♜f6 3 c4 e6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♜c3 c6! (D)



By a somewhat different order of moves, we have again reached the Carlsbad structure. However, the specific move-order in this game, with White's knight already committed to f3 very early, is less favourable for White than the order seen in the previous game. Kasparov's play here demonstrates why. One of Black's most effective defences against the Minority Attack is to exchange light-squared bishops early on. This is for two reasons. Firstly, Black's light-squared bishop is generally not a very good piece in the Queen's Gambit Declined. Black's central pawns are fixed on light squares, so the bishop has less scope. Secondly, one weakness of the Minority Attack is that the advance b4 weakens the c4-square, and if Black can get a knight to that square, he deprives the Minority Attack of much of its sting. For example, he can then allow the exchange bxc6 bxc6 to occur, since he can shelter the backward c6-pawn with his knight on c4. For all of these reasons, Black would like to get his bishop to f5 early in this opening, and the move-order in the present game allows him to do this. Kasparov's last move

prepares 6...♝f5, which if played immediately would be well met by 6 ♜b3.

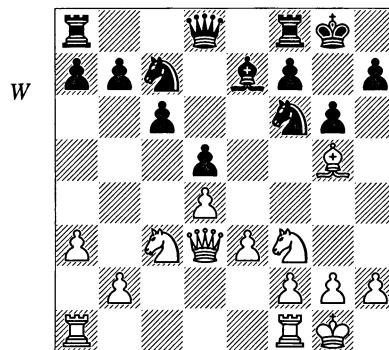
6 ♜c2

Temporarily preventing ...♝f5, but Black is able to force it through.

6...♝a6 7 a3 ♜c7 8 ♜g5 g6!

Ensuring that his bishop will be able to reach f5. The slight weakening of the dark squares on the kingside is of no consequence.

9 e3 ♜f5 10 ♜d3 ♜xd3 11 ♜xd3 ♜e7 12 0-0 0-0 (D)



13 b4

White begins his Minority Attack, but Black is much better placed to react than was Szabo in the previous game.

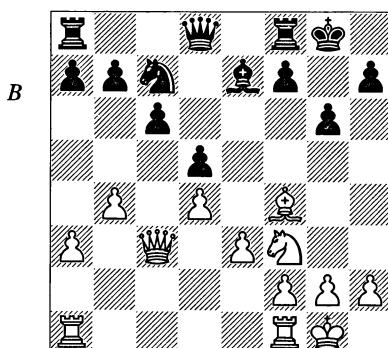
13...♝e4!

Immediately disrupting White's attack. He cannot proceed by 14 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 15 b5? because of 15...♜xc3 followed by 16...♞xb5, winning a pawn. Notice how White is already missing his light-squared bishop – if he had the bishop on d3, as is usually the case, that bishop would support the pawn advance to b5.

14 ♜f4 ♜xc3 15 ♜xc3? (D)

Natural as it seems, this move is a serious positional error. White should have slipped in the

zwischenzug 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc7!$, eliminating Black's knight. Now he will not get another chance.



15... $\mathbb{Q}d6!$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd6 \mathbb{Q}b5!$

A very nice little trick. Black wants his knight on d6, and this enables him to achieve this with tempo.

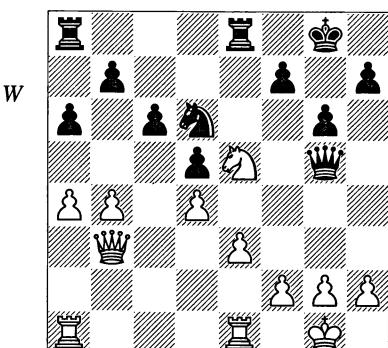
17 $\mathbb{Q}b3 \mathbb{Q}xd6$

This position is just about the ideal formation for Black in the Minority Attack. By exchanging light-squared bishops, he has weakened White's command of the key squares c4 and b5, and thus taken the sting out of the attack. The knight is perfectly posted on d6, eyeing those crucial light squares, and also able to jump into e4, to take part in an attack on White's king. Comparing this position with that which arose in Filip-Szabo (Game 31), the difference is very clear. White's Minority Attack has been completely stymied, and it is now Black's turn to take the initiative on the kingside.

18 a4 a6

White was again threatening 19 b5, but now he can no longer hope to achieve this advance.

19 $\mathbb{Q}e5 \mathbb{Q}e8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}fe1 \mathbb{Q}g5$ (D)



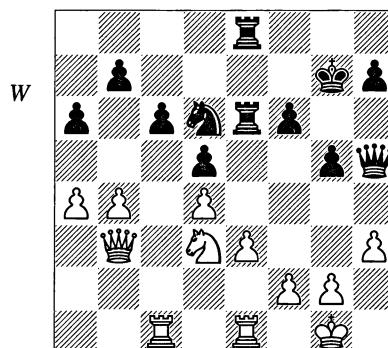
21 h3?!

There was no need for this gratuitous weakening of the kingside.

21... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}c2 \mathbb{Q}e6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}ac1 \mathbb{Q}ae8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}b1 \mathbb{Q}h5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}b3$

It is clear that White cannot find a constructive plan, and is reduced to moving his queen to and fro, waiting to see how events will develop. Black, meanwhile, can build up his kingside attack gradually, undisturbed by white counterplay.

25...f6 26 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ g5! (D)

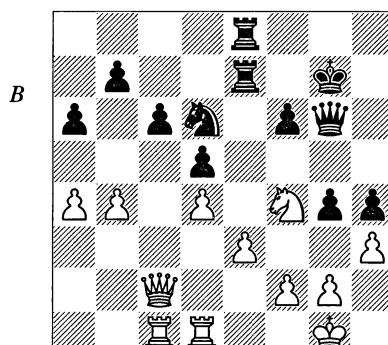


The attack begins in earnest, and White was no doubt regretting his 21st move, which simply helps Black open lines on the kingside. Note that this is one of those exceptional cases where, despite having castled kingside, Black is still able to carry out a pawn-storm in front of his king. This is possible because the central position is stabilized, and White is not able to break open lines to secure counterplay against the newly-exposed black king.

27 $\mathbb{Q}d1 \mathbb{Q}g6$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}c2 \mathbb{Q}e7$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}ed1$ h5 30 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ h4

Not 30...g4 31 h4. Now, with the h3-pawn fixed, 31...g4 is a real threat.

31 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ g4 32 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ (D)



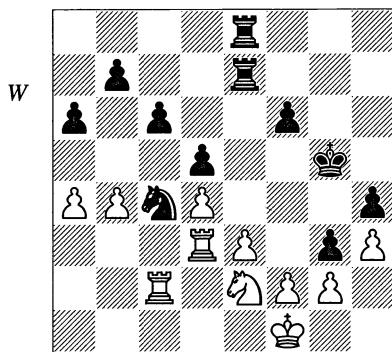
32... $\mathbb{Q}xc2!$

An interesting choice. One would not expect Black to exchange queens in the middle of a kingside attack, but, as has been emphasized repeatedly in this book, flexibility is everything in chess. Kasparov understands that the ending is hugely favourable to him, thanks to the possibility of his next move, so he has no qualms about transforming his attack into a winning endgame. A win is a win, and one does not get any more points for winning in the middlegame than in the endgame!

33 $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ g3!

The point. The base of White's pawn-chain is undermined, and he cannot avoid a chronic weakness on e3.

34 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ (D)



The pressure on e3 mounts inexorably. Now the threat is 37...gxf2, followed by capturing on e3.

37 $\mathbb{Q}cc3$

Saving e3, but losing a4.

37... $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$

The knight calmly prepares to return to the magnificent c4-square. Note how pivotal this square has been – a complete vindication of Black's early play, when he exchanged light-squared bishops, anticipating the later weakness of c4 after White's Minority-Attack advance b4.

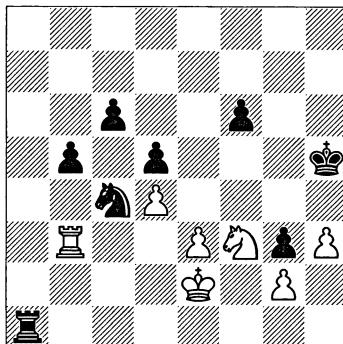
40 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}dd3$

White continues to find ways of preventing his e3-square from collapsing, but now Black starts to make use of his queenside pawns.

42... $a5$ 43 $\mathbb{bxa5}$ $\mathbb{Qa8}$ 44 $\mathbb{Qd1}$ $\mathbb{Qxa5}$ 45 $\mathbb{Qe1}$ $b5$ 46 $\mathbb{Qe2}$ $\mathbb{Qa1+}$ 47 $\mathbb{Qe1}$ $\mathbb{Qea7}$ 48 $\mathbb{fxg3}$

White finally gives in and captures, since 48... $\mathbb{Q}7a2$ was now a threat.

48... $\mathbb{Qxe1+}$ 49 $\mathbb{Qxe1}$ $\mathbb{Qa1+}$ 50 $\mathbb{Qe2}$ $\mathbb{hxg3}$ (D)



The position is totally hopeless for White, and could have been resigned already.

51 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Qa2+}$ 52 $\mathbb{Qd1}$ $\mathbb{Qd2+}$ 53 $\mathbb{Qc1}$ $\mathbb{Qe2}$

Now the e3-pawn finally drops off, something which has been inevitable ever since Kasparov's 33rd move.

54 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Qxe3}$ 55 $\mathbb{Qxe3+}$ 56 $\mathbb{Qe2}$ $\mathbb{Qf5}$ 57 $\mathbb{Qc2}$ $\mathbb{Qh4}$ 58 $\mathbb{Qb4}$ $\mathbb{Qxg2}$ 59 $\mathbb{Qf3}$ $\mathbb{Qh4+}$ 60 $\mathbb{Qxg3}$ $\mathbb{Qf5+}$ 61 $\mathbb{Qf4}$ $\mathbb{Qxd4}$ 62 $\mathbb{Qe3}$ $\mathbb{Qf5+}$ 0-1

An absolutely classic demonstration of how to play against the Minority Attack.

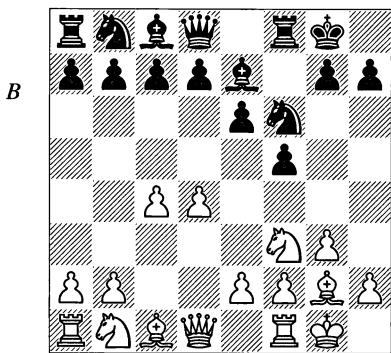
The Essential Lessons

- In the Minority Attack, exchanging light-squared bishops is a key plan for Black.
- A knight on d6 is excellently placed in such positions, eyeing the key squares c4 and b5.
- Black's long-term chances lie in a kingside attack.
- Never be afraid to exchange one form of advantage for another – here, Kasparov traded in his kingside attack for a winning endgame.

Game 33
Portisch – Radulov
Budapest 1969
Dutch Defence, Stonewall

Another of the classic pawn-structures is the Stonewall. In this, Black arranges his central pawns on d5, e6 and f5, thereby seizing some space, but creating potentially significant dark-squared weaknesses. Portisch gives a typical demonstration of how to exploit such a formation.

1 c4 f5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 g3 e6 4 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 5 0-0
0-0 6 d4 (D)



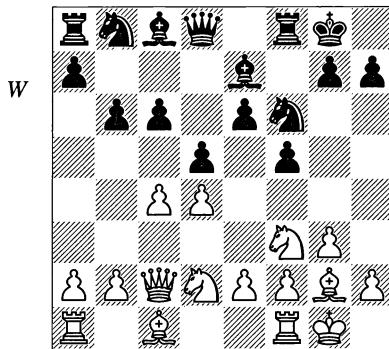
The Dutch Defence is one of Black's most aggressive answers to 1 d4. Black immediately seizes space on the kingside and stakes a claim to control of the e4-square. In many variations, he can create a strong kingside attack, with ... $\mathbb{Q}e8-h5$ being one of his standard manoeuvres. The main drawback of the opening is that Black's pawn-structure obstructs his queen's bishop, and this piece is often his Achilles' Heel.

6...c6

One of Black's main decisions in this opening is the placement of his d-pawn. One system is to play it to d6, hoping to play ...e5 at a later stage. The drawback is that it becomes easier for White to organize the advance e4, which frequently leaves Black with a weakness on e6. We shall see this in the next game. The other plan is the Stonewall, in which Black plays the pawn to d5, and this is the line Black chooses in the present game.

7 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ b6 8 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ d5 (D)

With this move, Black establishes the Stonewall formation. By comparison with the ...d6 structures, the Stonewall gives Black much better control over e4, and makes it harder for



White to achieve the e4 advance. On the other hand, Black severely weakens the e5-square. He also makes the plight of his light-squared bishop even worse. Nonetheless, despite the fact that the opening is not generally trusted by most grandmasters, it has been a firm favourite of some, most notably Botvinnik, who scored many successes with it.

9 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$

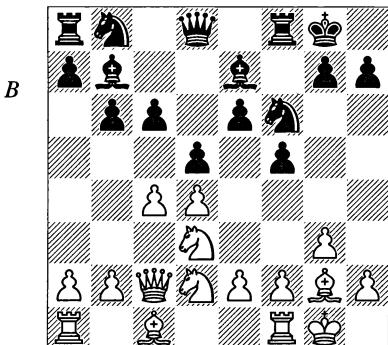
In the early days of the Stonewall, including much of Botvinnik's practice, Black played for a kingside attack with an early ... $\mathbb{Q}e8-h5$. However, experience gradually showed that although dangerous against inaccurate play by White, such attacks could be refuted with correct defence, and the modern interpretation of the Stonewall is to play more in the centre. Placing the bishop on b7 is typical of this approach, although the manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}d7-e8-h5$ is also seen, while the king's bishop often goes to d6 instead of e7.

10 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ (D)

A typical plan. White intends to place his knights on d3 and f3, from where they exert maximum control over the key e5-square.

10... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 11 b4

Announcing his intention of attacking on the queenside.



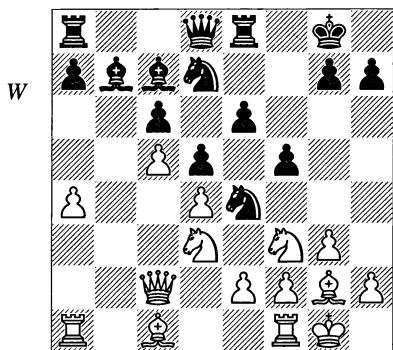
B

11...♝e8??!

Rather a strange move. 11...♝d6 looks more sensible, as too does 11...♞e4, with the possibility of dropping the knight back to d6 and then f7, covering e5.

12 a4 ♘d6 13 ♘f3 ♘e4 14 c5! bxc5

Black would prefer not to open the b-file, which can only be to White's advantage, but if he retreats immediately with 14...♝c7, 15 b5! is very powerful.

15 bxc5 ♘c7 (D)**16 ♘f4!**

By now you should be getting used to this positional idea. Black's chronic weakness in the Stonewall is his dark squares, so it almost always pays White to exchange off Black's dark-squared bishop.

16...♝xf4 17 gxf4!

Again, a thematic move in such Stonewall positions. Although this move appears to expose White's king and doubles his pawns, these factors are not significant. Far more important is the increase in White's grip on the dark squares.

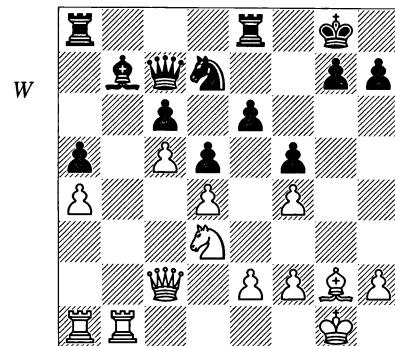
17...♛c7 18 ♘fe5 ♘ef6 19 ♜fb1 a5?

This proves to be the decisive positional mistake. Black wants to activate his bishop by

...♝a6 without allowing the reply ♘b4. However, the move weakens the b6-square, and White is able to utilize this to break through. Despite Black's errors, White would still have found it difficult to make progress after a move such as 19...♜eb8.

20 ♘xd7!

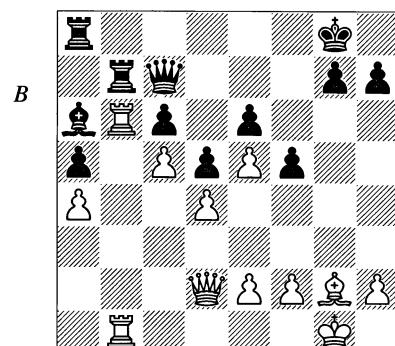
Immediately exploiting Black's mistake, by our now familiar device – exchanging off the two knights which can protect b6.

20...♝xd7 (D)**21 ♘e5! ♘xe5 22 fxe5**

The second black knight has disappeared and now nothing can stop White occupying the b6-square.

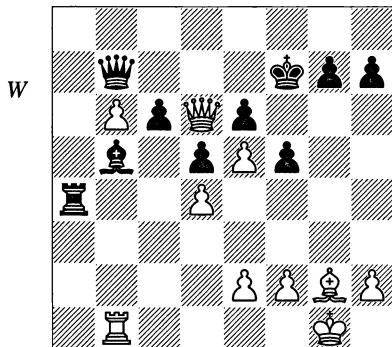
22...♜eb8 23 ♜b6 ♘a6 24 ♜ab1 ♜b7 25 ♜d2! (D)

In this particular position, adopting an Alekhine's Gun formation with 25 ♜b1b3, followed by ♜b2, would not achieve anything, because Black can hold the b7-square. Instead, White forces Black into exchanging on b6 (else the a5-pawn drops), giving White a passed pawn on b6.

**25...♜xb6 26 cxb6 ♜b7 27 ♜xa5 ♘b5**

In this way, Black regains his pawn, but the white queen penetrates decisively on the central dark squares. The obvious move was 27... $\mathbb{Q}xe2$, against which Portisch gives 28 $\mathbb{W}xa8+$ $\mathbb{W}xa8$ 29 b7 $\mathbb{W}b8$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}f1$, when he claims that Black cannot defend against the march of the a-pawn to a7. However, this does not appear to be the case after 30... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ (even 30... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ is not entirely clear), and so White should meet 27... $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ with the simple 28 $\mathbb{W}d2$ followed by 29 a5, when he retains a decisive positional advantage.

28 $\mathbb{W}b4 \mathbb{Q}xa4$ 29 $\mathbb{W}d6 \mathbb{Q}f7$ (D)



It appears as if White has spoiled his position, because the e-pawn is adequately defended, and the b6-pawn is attacked. 30 $\mathbb{W}c7+?$ is no help because of 30... $\mathbb{W}xc7$ 31 bxc7 $\mathbb{Q}a8$, but Portisch had prepared a splendid combinative breakthrough.

30 e4!!

Cracking the black position at just the spot where it appears most solidly defended.

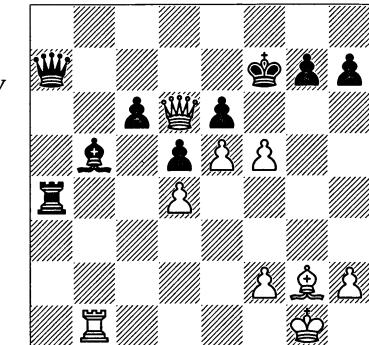
30... $\mathbb{W}xb6$

30...fxe4 loses immediately to 31 $\mathbb{Q}h3$, but 30...dxe4 is more complicated. White wins in fine style by 31 d5! exd5 32 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ g6 33 $\mathbb{W}f6+$

$\mathbb{Q}g8$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}xf5!$ gxf5 35 $\mathbb{Q}h1 \mathbb{Q}e2$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}g1+$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$.

31 exf5 $\mathbb{W}a7$ (D)

31...exf5 32 e6+ wins for White.



32 $\mathbb{W}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ cxd5 34 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 35 $\mathbb{W}c8+$ 1-0

A superbly-finished game by Portisch.

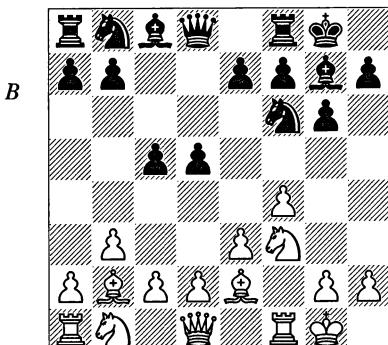
The Essential Lessons

- The Stonewall formation offers its purveyor more space in the centre and the chance of kingside play, but it severely weakens the central dark squares, especially e5.
- The dark-squared bishop is the Stonewall player's key minor piece, and White almost always benefits from exchanging it off.
- Note the pawn recapture 17 gxf4!, a typical idea to increase White's dark-square control in such positions.
- No matter how great one's positional advantage, tactics and combinations are always key to finishing the opponent off. Portisch's finish here was a perfect example. When playing 27 $\mathbb{W}xa5$, he had to see almost to the end of the game.

Game 34
Hodgson – Short
British Ch, Swansea 1987
 Bird Opening

In this game, we see the Classical Dutch formation, where Black (in this case, White, who plays a Dutch with colours reversed) plays his d-pawn forward only one square. This avoids the kind of colour-complex weaknesses inherent in the Stonewall, but makes it easier for the opponent to break through in the centre. Aided by some weak play from White in the early middlegame, Short establishes the thematic grip and never lets go.

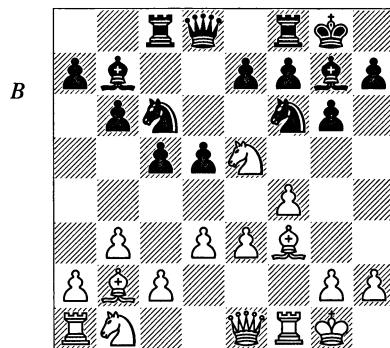
1 f4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 3 b3 g6 4 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5 e3
 0-0 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ c5 7 0-0 (D)



From Bird's Opening, we have reached what is essentially a Dutch Defence structure with colours reversed. Rather than the Stonewall formation seen in the previous game, White chooses to place his d-pawn on d3, the Classical Dutch formation. One difference between this version and the normal Dutch Defence is that White has managed to fianchetto his queen's bishop, thereby solving the problem which that piece usually presents in the Dutch itself. This is possible because of White's extra tempo. If Black tries to fianchetto the bishop in the Dutch, he usually runs into trouble because of an early d5 advance by White, e.g. in a sequence such as 1 d4 f5 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4 g3 b6? 5 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 6 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 7 d5!, with advantage to White.

7...b6 8 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$
 11 d3 (D)

White continues in typical Dutch Defence fashion. The queen prepares to swing to h4, to attack the black king, while White's $\mathbb{Q}e5$ and $\mathbb{Q}f3$ manoeuvre increases his control of the centre and seeks to prepare the advance e4. As



mentioned earlier, the main counter-plan when the white d-pawn is on d3 is for Black to prepare the advance ...e5, which, if achieved in favourable circumstances, will expose weaknesses down the e-file, notably e3.

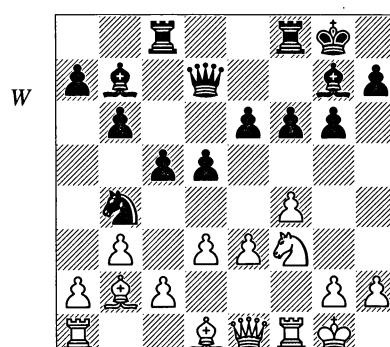
11...e6 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$

White cannot proceed with the immediate 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 13 e4?, because of the tactic 13...dxe4 14 dxe4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$, winning a pawn thanks to the check on d4.

12... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7!$

Exploiting the pin on the long diagonal to evict the knight from e5.

14 $\mathbb{Q}df3$ f6 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ (D)



Accurate play has enabled Black to seize control of the vital e5-square, and he now has a natural plan to prepare ...e5.

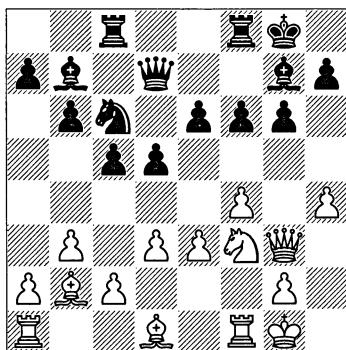
16 h4?

A rash move, which merely weakens the white position. However, it is not easy to find a really constructive continuation. 16 e4? is still tactically unsound because of 16...dxe4! 17 dxe4 ♖xe4! (18 ♕xe4 f5), so White should probably content himself with equality after 16 a3 ♜c6 17 e4.

16...♜c6 17 ♜g3 (D)

White seems to be determined to attack on the kingside, but such a plan has no justification here, and central play with 17 e4 would have been better.

B



17...♞e7!

The knight is on its way to f5.

18 ♜h3 ♜f5 19 ♜c1 h5 20 ♜e2

Now Black gets control of g4, but 20 g4 hxg4 21 ♜xg4 ♜f7! exposes White's king more than Black's.

20...♝h6 21 ♜d2 ♜g4

The knight is a vivid reminder to White of the folly of his 16th move.

22 ♜ad1 ♜ce8 23 ♜de1

White's indecision results from a complete lack of constructive plans.

23...♜c6 24 ♜d1 (D)

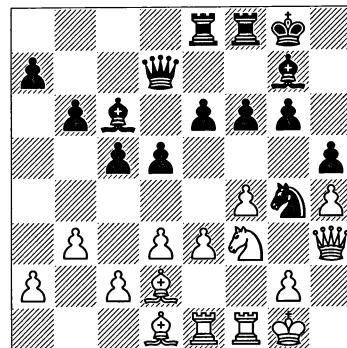
24...e5

The thematic advance.

25 fxe5

This leads to a weak pawn on e3, but if White does nothing, Black has the choice between advancing ...e4, or playing ...exf4 followed by ...d4, securing control of e3 for his pieces. In either case, White would have significant problems.

B



25...♞xe5!

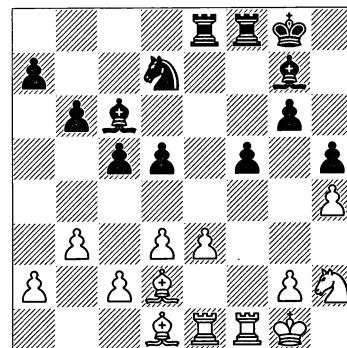
Much better than 25...fxe5. Black wishes to keep the e-file open and attack the weakness on e3.

26 ♜xd7 ♜xd7

The theme of the game from now on is the weakness of a backward pawn. White is tied down to his weakness on e3, which Black now targets systematically. Such structures are the nightmare of every Dutch Defence player.

27 ♜h2 f5 (D)

W



Stopping 28 g4, and also clamping down further on the e3 weakness. White's knight gets the g5-square, but Short judges that this is of less significance, since none of the other white pieces can support the knight. The Russians have an expression for such situations: "One soldier in a field is not an army!".

28 ♜f3 ♜e7 29 ♜g5 ♜e5

There is nothing wrong with doubling rooks immediately, but Short prefers some preliminary regrouping, aiming to disrupt the white pieces further. The immediate threat is 30...♜g3.

30 ♜f3 ♜f6

The knight returns to its ideal post, controlling e4 and looking to jump into g4.

31 $\mathbb{B}ef1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 32 d4 $\mathbb{Q}d6$

Not 32...cxd4? 33 $\mathbb{Q}b4$.

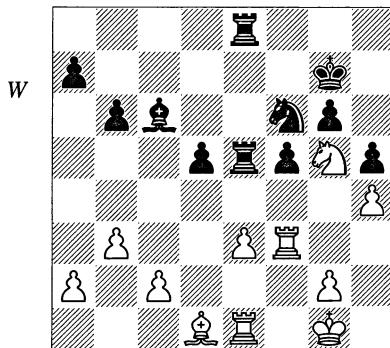
33 $\mathbb{Q}c3$

White has weakened e3 and e4 even more, but at least his bishop reaches an active diagonal. Even this small triumph is short-lived, however.

33... $\mathbb{B}fe8$ 34 $\mathbb{B}e1$ cxd4 35 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$

Ruthlessly exchanging off the now well-placed bishop.

36 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{B}xe5$ (D)



The fate of the e3-pawn is now sealed, since Black threatens to win it by ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ or ...d4.

37 $\mathbb{B}f4$ $\mathbb{B}xe3$ 38 $\mathbb{B}xe3$ $\mathbb{B}xe3$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{B}c3$!

Continuing to play actively and maintain his grip on the position. From c3, the rook ties down the white bishop on d1.

40 $\mathbb{B}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ d4 42 $\mathbb{B}f4$

The minor-piece ending is equally hopeless; e.g., 42 $\mathbb{B}xc3$ dxc3 43 g3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ and if 44 $\mathbb{Q}d3?$ $\mathbb{Q}f2+$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}h1$ Black wins another pawn.

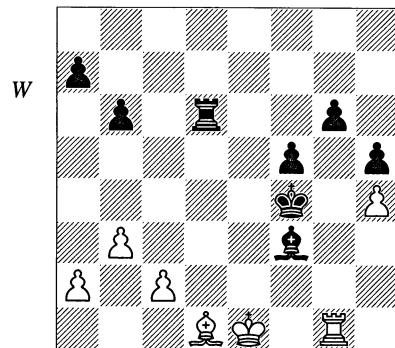
42... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 43 $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 44 $\mathbb{B}d8$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$

Now Black's passed pawns on the kingside will decide the game.

45 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{B}c6$ 46 $\mathbb{B}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 47 $\mathbb{B}e3+$ $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ 48 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{B}xe4$ 49 $\mathbb{B}g3$ $\mathbb{B}d6+$ 50 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$

In addition to his extra pawn, Black also has much more active pieces, especially his king.

51 $\mathbb{B}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (D)



The simplest. Although it is claimed that "all rook endings are drawn", this is one of the exceptions!

52 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 53 c4 $\mathbb{B}e6+$ 54 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ f4 55 b4 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 56 $\mathbb{B}g5$ f3 57 c5 bxc5 58 bxc5 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ 59 $\mathbb{B}d5$ f2 60 $\mathbb{B}d6$ $\mathbb{B}e2+$ 61 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{B}e5$ 62 c6 g5 0-1

Black obtains a second passed pawn, while his rook easily controls the white pawn on c5. A finely controlled performance by Short, which demonstrates very well the standard plan against the Dutch set-up with the pawn on d6 (or, as in this reversed case, d3).

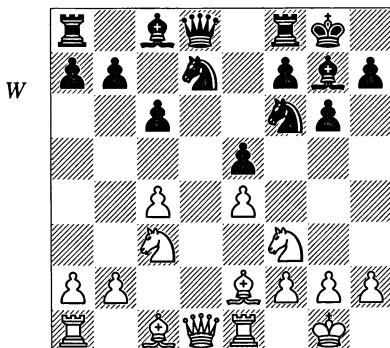
The Essential Lessons

- In comparison with the Stonewall, the Classical form of the Dutch structure avoids the hole on e5, but makes it easier for the opponent to break with e4.
- Once the e4 (or ...e5, as here) advance is achieved, the Dutch player is likely to be left with a weakness on e6 (here, in a reversed Dutch, e3), which can severely hamper his game.
- In such positions, the Dutch player needs to achieve the break ...e5 (here, e4) himself. In this game, it was Hodgson's neglect of this between moves 16-20 that sealed his fate.

Game 35
Golombek – Fuderer
Zonal, Munich 1954
 King's Indian Defence, Classical

The King's Indian is one of Black's most popular defences to 1 d4. A number of different pawn-structures can arise from this opening, and the next few games will focus on these. In the game we are about to examine, White makes the mistake of exchanging pawns on e5 in a situation that is not good for him. The resulting weakness on d4 gives Black good chances, and Fuderer demonstrates the advantages of the black position in typical style.

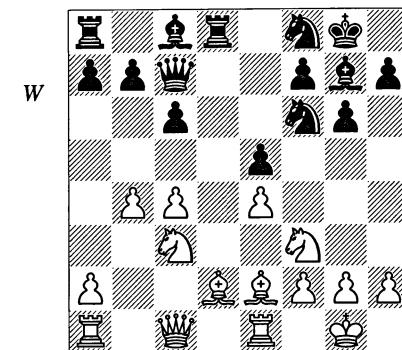
1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 d6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e5 4 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 5 e4
 g6 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 7 0-0 0-0 8 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ c6 9 dxе5? dxе5
 (D)



The King's Indian Defence is one of those opening systems which became hugely popular in the period after World War Two, and has remained so to this day. Rather than aiming at gradual equality by simplification, as Black tends to do in openings such as the Queen's Gambit Declined, the King's Indian enables Black to develop in a degree of isolation from his opponent. Black concedes space, but avoids early simplification, and constructs a solid formation, from which he has the chance of a vigorous counterattack. There are a number of different pawn-formations which can arise from the opening, depending chiefly on how White chooses to oppose the defence. In the position after Black's 8th move, White has essentially three options: to close the position by playing d5, to exchange on e5, or to maintain the tension. In this game, White chooses the second option, but this is often the worst choice. Superficially, it seems attractive. White fixes the black pawn on e5, where it obstructs the King's

Indian bishop, and White also exposes a potential weakness on d6. If White can manoeuvre a knight to that square, he would obtain a potentially crushing grip, and it appears at first sight that he can do so by playing b4, c5, and $\mathbb{Q}d2-c4-d6$. However, in reality, he rarely has the time to achieve this, if Black plays accurately. Worse still, the exchange on e5 leaves White with a hole on d4, and the latter is actually rather easier for Black to occupy. As a result, one rarely sees the exchange on e5 occur in games between modern masters, and the present game is an example of why.

10 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 12 b4 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 13
 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8!$ (D)



A typical move for such positions. Black directs his knight towards the d4-square, via e6.

14 $\mathbb{Q}h6?$

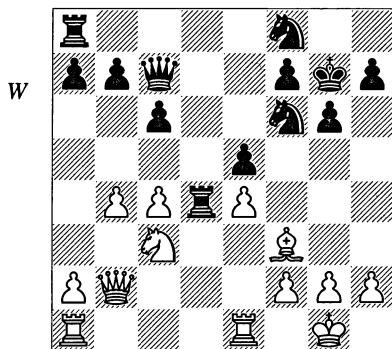
Another positional error, which helps Black. On the face of it, exchanging the fianchettoed King's Indian bishop might appear to favour White, but in fact the opposite is the case. With the pawn fixed on e5, the g7-bishop is often close to being a bad bishop, whereas White's dark-squared bishop is a key piece for defending

the weak square on d4. Consequently, Black is usually happy to see the bishops come off in such a structure.

14...♝g4!

Again, a typical move in such positions, and all part of Black's plan to occupy the d4-square. He intends to exchange off the f3-knight, another of the white pieces that defend d4.

15 ♘xg7 ♘xg7 16 ♖b2 ♘xf3 17 ♘xf3 ♕d4 (D)



It is evident from the diagram that Black's plan has succeeded completely. White has got nowhere in the planned occupation of d6, whereas Black already has his pieces using the d4-square. In addition, White's bishop, obstructed by the e4-pawn, is ineffective, and White has no targets in the black position.

18 c5 ♘e6 19 ♕ad1 ♕ad8 20 ♕xd4 ♕xd4 21 ♘e2 ♕d7 22 ♘g3

It is extremely difficult to find constructive moves for White, but the knight is not well-placed on g3.

22...h5!

Threatening ...h4-h3, weakening the white kingside.

23 h4

This stops Black's pawn in its tracks, but also itself weakens White's king-position.

23...♞d4 24 ♘d1 ♕d8

Strengthening control of the open file, and also eyeing the weak pawn on h4.

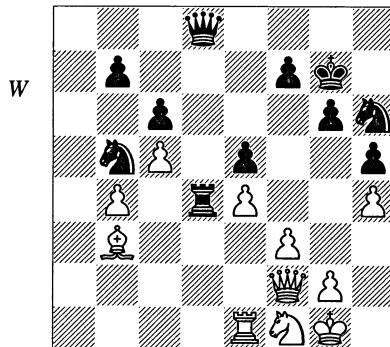
25 ♘f1 ♘g4 26 f3 ♘h6 27 ♕f2 a5!

With White having brought the queen to the kingside to defend, Black immediately strikes on the other wing – the 'two-weaknesses' principle again. White's pawns on c5 and b4 are a clear target.

28 a3 ♘b5 29 ♕b3 axb4

29...♝xa3 30 ♖b2 is unnecessarily murky. Black has complete control and can pick off the b4-pawn at his leisure, so he has no need to allow White any counterplay.

30 axb4 ♕d4 (D)



Sealing the fate of the b4-pawn, after which the c5-pawn will soon follow. Notice how the black pieces take turns occupying the d4-square. First the rook went there, then the knight, and now the rook returns. All of this is the result of White's mistaken decision to exchange pawns on e5 on move 9.

31 ♕g3 ♕e7 32 ♘e3 ♕xb4 33 ♘c4 ♘d4

See the note to move 30. Now it is the knight's turn to return to the d4 outpost.

34 ♘h1 ♕xc5 35 ♘d3 b5 36 ♘h2 ♕h7 37 ♘h3 ♘e6 38 ♘f1 ♕b3 39 ♕f2 ♕d4

Finally, it is the queen which tries out d4 for comfort.

40 g3 c5 0-1

The Essential Lessons

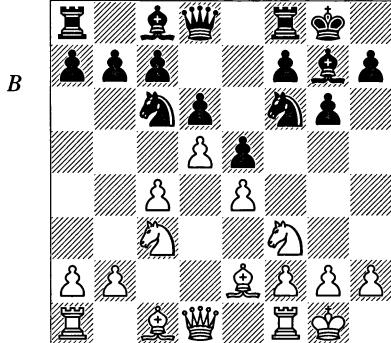
- Exchanging on e5 is OK for White if he can exploit the d6-square, but if not, he runs the risk of handing Black an outpost on d4. In practice, it is usually easier for Black to exploit d4 than for White to exploit d6, so the exchange is usually questionable unless there are specific factors justifying it.
- As usual, the way to exploit a weakness is to exchange off the enemy pieces that defend it. Black did this by ...♝g4xf3, while White cooperated by exchanging dark-squared bishops himself.
- Once Black had control of d4, he was able to use it as a jumping-off spot for a succession of pieces, finally picking off White's exposed queenside pawns.

Game 36
Shamkovich – Nezhmetdinov
USSR Ch, Baku 1961
 King's Indian Defence, Classical

Another strategy for White against the King's Indian is to close the centre by playing d5. In this case, the game usually develops into a race between White's attack on the queenside, and Black's on the kingside. In this example, it is the kingside attack which proves more potent.

**1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 e4 0-0 5 $\mathbb{Q}f3$
 d6 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e5 7 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8 d5 (D)**

By contrast with the game above, here White chooses to close the centre. In this particular position, this is by far the most common plan, although maintaining the tension by 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ is also possible.

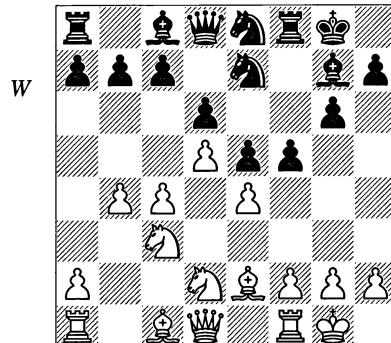


8... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 10 b4

The respective sides' plans are clear. White has more space on the queenside, and intends to exploit this by attacking Black's pawn-chain by preparing the advance c5. This will enable him to open the c-file and penetrate Black's position. Black, meanwhile, will attack on the king-side by ...f5.

10...f5 (D)

At this point, White faces another typical King's Indian decision. In positions where he closes the centre with d5, White must then choose how to meet Black's advance ...f5. He has essentially two options – to capture on f5, or to do nothing, and allow Black either to capture on e4 himself, or to push on with ...f4, followed by a kingside pawn-storm. In many cases, the choice is a matter of taste, but in general, allowing Black to play ...f4 requires good judgement and strong nerves, because



the resulting kingside attack can be extremely dangerous. Objectively, White's chances on the queenside are frequently at least equal to Black's on the other wing, but in practice, it is very difficult to handle the white position. In particular, the consequences of an error tend to be disproportional. If Black commits an error, he may end up losing a pawn or two on the queenside, whereas if White commits one, he is liable to be summarily mated. This makes the black position quite attractive in practice, and many players prefer to avoid such double-edged positions as White. The present game is a good example of how devastating the black attack can be.

11 f3

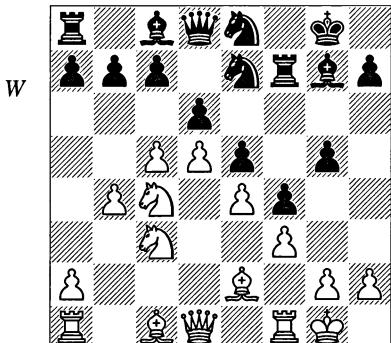
Not really necessary, since the e4-pawn was not threatened. 11 c5 is more consistent.

11...f4 12 c5 g5 13 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ (D)

A typical move in such positions. The rook defends c7 and makes way for the bishop to come to f8. The bishop will defend the potentially vulnerable d6-pawn, while allowing the rook to go to g7, supporting the kingside pawn-storm.

14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$?

This manoeuvre is rather slow. It is more consistent with White's plans to continue 14 a4,

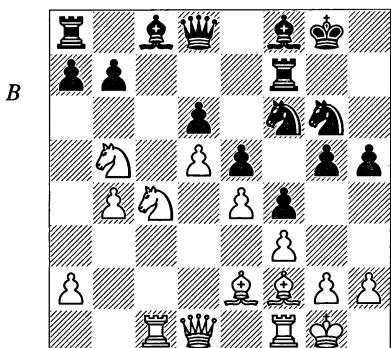


when the bishop can later go to a3, increasing the pressure on d6.

14...Bg6 15 Qe1 Qf8 16 Qf2

White no doubt hoped that from f2, the bishop would both help to defend the kingside, and still play a role in attacking Black's queen-side pawns. In principle, there is much to be said for this, but in such a sharp position, three tempi is rather a high price to pay.

16...h5 17 Rc1 Qf6 18 cxd6 cxd6 19 Qb5 (D)



19...g4!

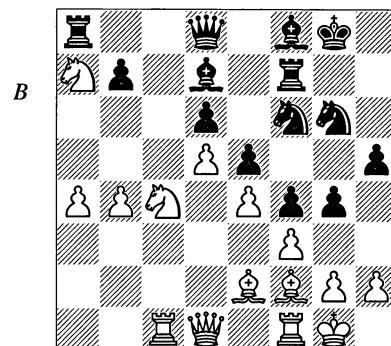
Proceeding with the attack, without worrying about the loss of the a-pawn. Preserving the pawn with 19...a6 would be a mistake because of the weakening of b6 – both 20 Qb6 and 20 Qb5 are strong replies. One important point to note about such positions is that Black must be careful not to allow the exchange of his light-squared bishop, since this piece is an extremely important component in Black's kingside attack, and, once he has removed the light-squared bishop, White is much better placed to resist Black's kingside pawn-storm. Consequently, one of White's standard plans in these structures is to induce the advance ...a6, and then get

his knight into b6, to exchange the bishop. Another method of achieving the same objective is to play Qb5-c7-e6, forcing Black to play ...Qxe6. It is for this reason that the position of the black rook on f7 is so important, since the rook guards the c7-square and so hampers White's plan to play his knight into that square.

20 Qxa7 Qd7

See the previous note. Black preserves the vital bishop.

21 a4 (D)



So as to allow the knight to emerge to b5, but this is a further tempo loss, and Black now throws everything into the attack.

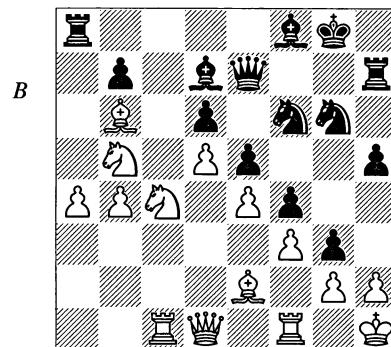
21...g3 22 Bb6

White cannot take twice on g3, because the a7-knight would be hanging.

22...Rg7 23 Bh1

Making room for the bishop to defend from g1, but the immediate 23 Qb5 is perhaps stronger.

23...Rh7! 24 Qb5 (D)



24...Bg4!!

Opening the black queen's path to h4. White cannot play 25 fxg4 hxg4 26 Qg1 because of

26... $\mathbb{B}xh2+$! 27 $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ $\mathbb{W}h4$ followed by mate next move.

25 h3 $\mathbb{W}h4$ 26 $\mathbb{W}d2$

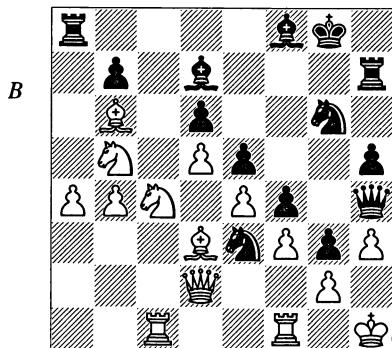
26 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ is answered in the same way.

26... $\mathbb{Q}e3!$

This is more accurate than the obvious move 26... $\mathbb{Q}f2+$, when White has the defence 27 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ 28 $gxh3$ $\mathbb{W}xh3$ 29 $\mathbb{B}xf2$.

27 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (D)

If he takes on e3 (with bishop or knight), 27... $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ is decisive.



27... $\mathbb{Q}xh3!$

The black forces crash through decisively. Note the vital role played by Black's light-squared bishop. If this bishop were not on the

board, Black would have far more difficulty breaking through against the h3-g2-f3 pawn barrier.

28 $gxh3$ $g2+$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $gxf1\mathbb{W}+$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{W}g3+$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 32 $\mathbb{W}f2$

32... $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ was threatened.

32... $\mathbb{Q}exg2$ 33 $\mathbb{W}xg3+$ $fxg3$ 0-1

White is a rook down. A typical example of the devastating attacks that can arise when Black is allowed to play ...f4 in these structures.

The Essential Lessons

- When White closes the centre with d5 in King's Indian structures, the pawn-position generally dictates that White will attack on the queenside, Black on the kingside.
- When Black advances ...f5, White has the choice between capturing on f5, or allowing Black to advance the pawn to f4.
- Once the pawn reaches f4, Black has a natural attacking plan with ...g5 and a kingside pawn-storm, which can often prove very dangerous.
- In such ...f4 structures, Black's light-squared bishop is a key piece, and one of White's major counter-strategies is to try to exchange that bishop.

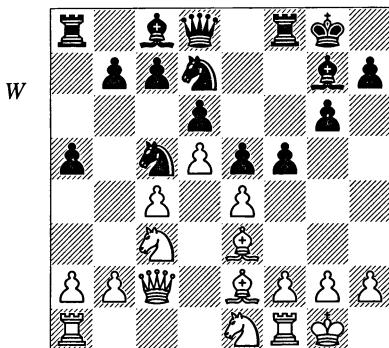
Game 37
Flohr – Suetin
USSR Ch, Moscow 1950
 King's Indian Defence, Classical

In this game, White again closes the centre, but here he reacts to Black's ...f5 advance by capturing on f5. This produces a more positional game than the violence which we saw in the preceding example. After Black recaptures ...gxf5, White continues f4, and we have another standard King's Indian pawn-formation. In this example, Black chooses the wrong method of clarifying the central pawn tension, and suffers an instructive defeat.

**1 $\mathbb{Q}f3 \mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3 \mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 e4 d6 5 d4
 0-0 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e5 7 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 8 d5**

As in the previous game, White chooses to close the centre, albeit here in a slightly different form, with Black's queen's knight committed to d7.

**8... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ a5 10 $\mathbb{Q}e1 \mathbb{Q}fd7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ f5
 (D)**



12 exf5

An important moment. Rather than allow Black's pawn to advance to f4, as we saw in the previous game, White exchanges on f5. This generally leads to a rather quieter type of game.

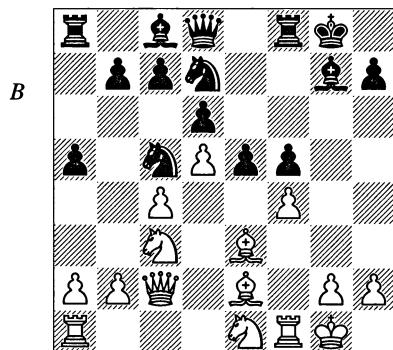
12...gxf5

Recapturing with the pawn is the usual response. Taking back on f5 with a piece is rarely good in such positions, because it allows White the use of the e4-square for his pieces. Where Black can recapture with a knight on f5, and then play the knight into d4, this is sometimes acceptable, but in general, taking with the pawn on f5 is the best reply.

13 f4 (D)

This too is the usual follow-up. White radically prevents any further advance of Black's

f-pawn, and forces Black to make a decision about how to resolve the pawn tension in the centre. He has three main options – to push on to e4, exchange on f4, or maintain the tension, though often, as here, this third option is not available to him.



13...e4?

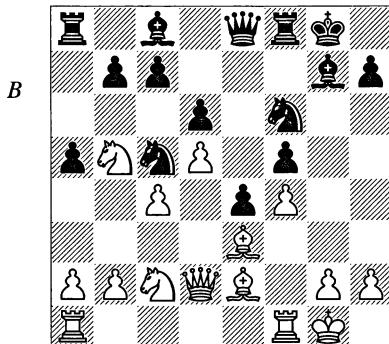
In this particular position, the advance of the e-pawn is a significant positional error. There are no completely hard-and-fast rules about how Black should handle such structures, but a few pointers are available. The advance to e4 gives Black a passed e-pawn, but the pawn is securely blockaded and does not represent a significant threat. More serious for Black is the fact that the advance ...e4 cedes control of the d4-square, which can prove an excellent post for White's pieces. It also gives White the potential plan of preparing the advance g4, undermining the support of the e4-pawn. As a result, Black must take these factors into account when deciding whether to play ...e4. If he can prevent the g4 break, this is one factor in favour of playing ...e4. Another factor is if he can control d4, i.e. if his c-pawn is on c5. In this case, ...e4 is often

the best reaction. The other plan in such positions is to exchange pawns on f4. Superficially, this looks unattractive, because it leaves Black with an isolated pawn on f5, which may well become a target for White's pieces. However, the plus side of the exchange is that Black gains e5 for his pieces, and potentially e4 as well. Thus, the exchange on f4 is based on the idea of using active piece-play to offset Black's structural weakness. In the present position, 13...exf4 was definitely the best option, because after 14 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$, Black has the follow-up 14... $\mathbb{Q}e4!$, exploiting the fact that White cannot win a pawn by taking twice on e4, because his b2-pawn would be hanging. Black can continue ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ with good piece-play to compensate for his weakness on f5. After the text-move, White is able to regroup and use the d4-square to obtain a significant positional advantage.

14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$

Immediately making way for the knight to come to c2.

14... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ (D)



From this square, the knight ties Black to the defence of c7, and is difficult to dislodge because of the weakness of d6.

16... $\mathbb{Q}f7$

Black's position is very unpleasant, but he exacerbates matters by playing planlessly and passively. He should at least have preferred 16... $\mathbb{Q}e7$, defending d6, so that if White continued as in the game with 17 $\mathbb{Q}d4$, Black could hit back with 17...c6.

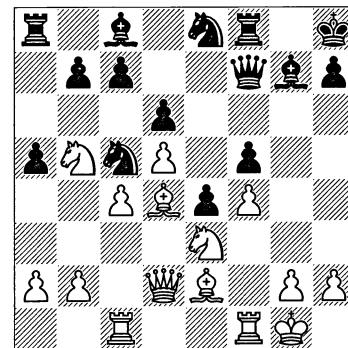
17 $\mathbb{Q}d4$

White's minor pieces are all finding effective posts. From d4, the bishop neutralizes Black's King's Indian bishop, and frees the e3-square for the other knight. From there, it will attack

the f5-pawn and also support a later g4 advance.

17... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 19 $\mathbb{R}ac1$ (D)

With this move, White envisages swinging the queen's rook over to the kingside, via the 3rd rank.



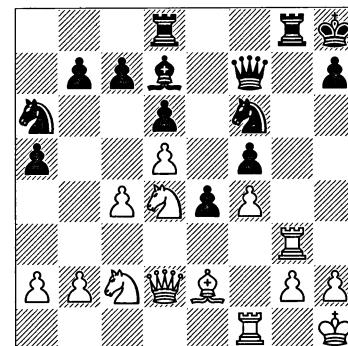
This position amply illustrates the value to White of the d4-square, which Black ceded with his 13th move.

19... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 20 $\mathbb{R}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}bx d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6?$

A tactical oversight, which costs a pawn. 23... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ is better, although White remains firmly in control.

24 $\mathbb{R}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ (D)

He must lose the a5-pawn, because after 24... $b6$ White has 25 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}dx f5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 27 $\mathbb{R}d4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (27... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ loses to 28 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$) 28 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ winning material.



25 $\mathbb{R}xg8+$ $\mathbb{R}xg8$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 27 $g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xa5$

White has won a pawn, for which Black has no compensation at all.

28... $h5$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}g2$

Preventing counterplay by 29... $h4$.

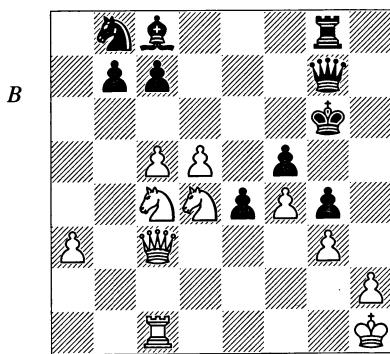
29... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 30 $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 31 b4

White prepares to break through on the c-file by playing c5.

31... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 32 a3 $\mathbb{W}f7$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ hxg4 34 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}g7$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 36 c5 dxc5

If instead he allows White to exchange on d6, White will penetrate on the c-file, and the d6-pawn will soon fall. White's breakthrough down the c-file is a typical plan in these structures.

37 bxc5 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ (D)



Black could already resign with a clear conscience.

38... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 39 d6 cxd6 40 cxd6 $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 41 $\mathbb{W}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ b6 44 $\mathbb{W}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 45 $\mathbb{W}xb6$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 46 $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{W}xd8$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 48 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 49 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ e3 50 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 51 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 1-0

The Essential Lessons

- After the exchange exf5, Black usually does best to recapture with the pawn, after which White generally follows up with f4.
- Black then has a choice between exchanging on f4 or advancing. Advancing is structurally sounder, but is usually only possible if White cannot exploit the d4-square. A lot depends on the location of Black's c-pawn. If it is on c5, controlling d4, then ...e4 is more likely to be playable. When the pawn is on c7, White's control of d4 makes the ...e4 advance more dangerous for Black.
- Capturing on f4 accepts a damaged pawn-structure, but usually offers Black better prospects of active piece-play, which can often compensate for the structural weakness.

Game 38

Epishin – Polugaevsky

Tilburg 1993

Queen's Indian Defence, 4 g3

As we shall see in the endgame chapter, passed pawns are a key factor in endings. However, although they occur less often in earlier phases of the game, a well-supported passed pawn can also wreak havoc in the middlegame. This is demonstrated here. Black loses control of the blockading square d6, after which White's passed pawn proves a decisive weapon.

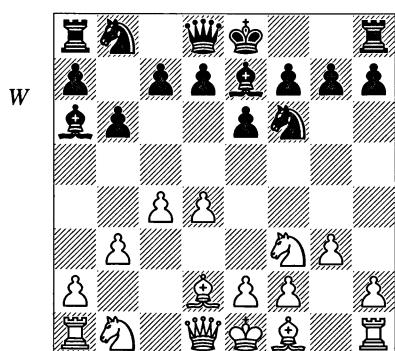
1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ b6 4 g3 $\mathbb{Q}a6$

The start of a very modern treatment of an old defence. Traditionally, the Queen's Indian Defence aims to control the e4-square, with the bishop going to the natural square b7. However, in the 1980s, an alternative plan became popular. The bishop attacks the c4-pawn, forcing White to defend it.

5 b3

The most natural method, although both 5 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ and 5 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ are also possible.

5... $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (D)



Another step in Black's plan. This technically loses a tempo, but Black hopes to show that White's bishop is actually in the way on d2.

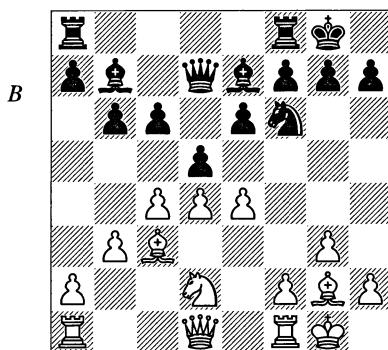
7 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ c6

And this is the final link in the chain. Black will continue with ...d5, attacking White's c4-pawn again, and hoping to induce him to exchange on d5, which would open the f1-a6 diagonal for Black's bishop.

8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$

White, in his turn, anticipates Black's plan, and frees the d2-square for his knight.

8...d5 9 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 12 0-0 0-0 13 e4 (D)



The result of some rather obscure opening manoeuvres is that White has more space, but Black's position is very solid and he has no real weaknesses.

13... $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e1$

14 e5 is an alternative plan.

14...dxe4?!

With this move, Black overlooks a tactical point, and ends up granting White a central passed pawn. Simply 14... $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ is correct, when White retains only a small advantage.

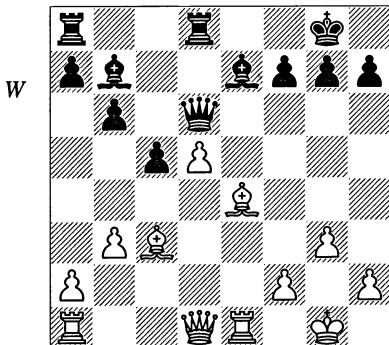
15 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ c5 16 d5! $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

Probably only now did Black realize that he cannot win a pawn by 16...exd5 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 19 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$, because of 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}e8+!$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$, winning. This is a tactical trick worth remembering, as it arises surprisingly often.

17 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ exd5 18 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ (D)

The d-pawn is still immune because the e7-bishop would hang.

As a result of Black's error at move 14, White has obtained a powerful passed pawn on the d-file. If this pawn is permitted to advance any further, it will cause huge disruption to Black's game, and it is therefore essential that he maintains the blockade.



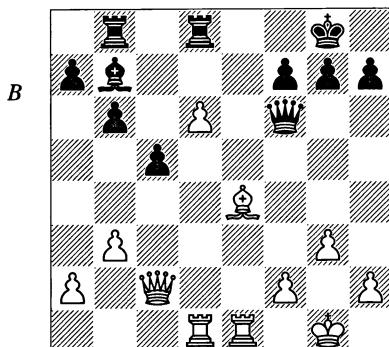
19 $\mathbb{Q}c2 \mathbb{Q}f6?$

A fatal mistake, releasing the blockade, which White exploits ruthlessly. Black was already worse, but 19...g6 offered much better defensive chances (but not 19...h6? 20 $\mathbb{Q}e5!$!).

20 $\mathbb{Q}xf6 \mathbb{Q}xf6 21 \mathbb{Q}ad1!$

Taking on h7 immediately would lose the d5-pawn, but now White threatens both 22 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ and 22 d6.

21... $\mathbb{Q}ab8 22 d6!$ (D)



So strong is the passed pawn that this is even better than just taking on h7, which would allow Black to blockade on d6 with his rook.

22...g6 23 d7 $\mathbb{Q}c6 24 \mathbb{Q}xc6 \mathbb{Q}xc6 25 \mathbb{Q}e7$

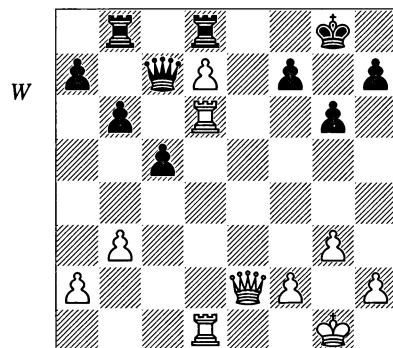
With his monster passed pawn on d7, White has a winning advantage, and only needs to find the key to breaking down Black's last resistance.

As we shall see, the principle of two weaknesses provides the answer.

25... $\mathbb{Q}f8 26 \mathbb{Q}e2$

Threatening 26 $\mathbb{Q}e5$.

26... $\mathbb{Q}f6 27 \mathbb{Q}e5 \mathbb{Q}c6 28 \mathbb{Q}ed5 \mathbb{Q}g8 29 \mathbb{Q}d6 \mathbb{Q}c7$ (D)



30 h4!

This is it. White uses the h-pawn to create threats on the dark squares around Black's king. The need both to defend his king and control the passed pawn will overwhelm the black defences.

30...b5

If Black tries to stop the h-pawn by 30...h5, White replies 31 $\mathbb{Q}e7$, followed by g4 and h5, opening up the black king with decisive effect.

31 h5 $\mathbb{Q}b6 32 \mathbb{Q}e8+ \mathbb{Q}g7 33 \mathbb{Q}e5+ \mathbb{Q}f8 34 \mathbb{Q}h8+ \mathbb{Q}e7 35 \mathbb{Q}f6+ \mathbb{Q}f8 36 \mathbb{Q}e1 1-0$

37 $\mathbb{Q}h8\#$ is threatened, and if 36... $\mathbb{Q}g8$, then 37 h6 and mates.

The Essential Lessons

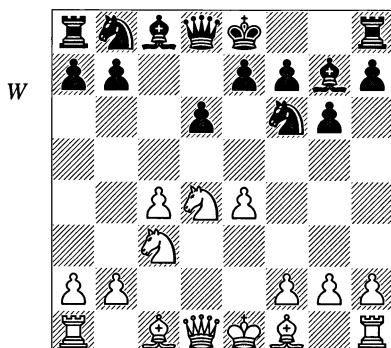
- A passed pawn in the middlegame can be a decisive advantage if the defender fails to achieve a blockade.
- Remember the 'two-weaknesses' principle. Even with his passed pawn on the 7th, it was only the creation of new threats against the black king that enabled White finally to break down the defences.

Game 39
Levenfish – Lisitsyn
Moscow 1935

English Opening, Maroczy Bind

The Maroczy Bind is another well-known central pawn-formation. As the name implies, the formation gives White something of a grip on the centre, and for many years it was regarded as heavily favouring White. In more recent years, Black's defensive resources have been refined, and the bind is less feared than in former times. Even so, Black needs to play accurately to equalize, and this game is an example of the problems he can face if he fails to do so.

1 c4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c5 3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 4 d4 cxd4 5 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 6 e4 d6 (D)



By transposition, we have reached the so-called Maroczy Bind, characterized by the white pawns on c4 and e4. This gives White a strong grip on d5, and for many years, was considered almost strategically winning for White. However, in more recent decades, additional defensive resources have been discovered for Black, and the bind is no longer anything like so dreaded as formerly. Nonetheless, Black must play accurately in order to obtain satisfactory play, and if he does not do so, he can fall into a prospectless position.

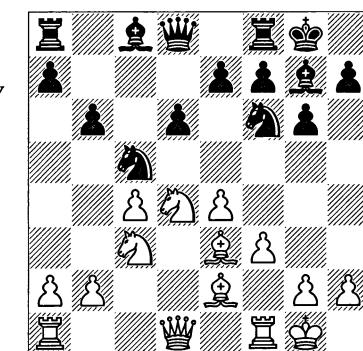
7 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0 8 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$

Rather a passive approach. Nowadays, this knight is usually developed to c6, with the idea of exchanging it for White's knight on d4. Since Black has less space, exchanges help him, by relieving his cramp. If White withdraws his knight from d4 then he loses time.

9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 10 f3 b6 (D)

Again somewhat passive. Levenfish recommended 10... $\mathbb{Q}d7$, when Black can follow up with ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$. In general, Black should try to

prepare a pawn-break, the two possibilities being with ...a6 and ...b5, or ...f5. In both cases, his bishop belongs on d7.



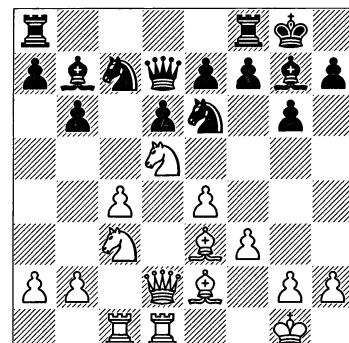
11 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 12 $\mathbb{M}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 13 $\mathbb{M}ac1$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}db5$

Threatening 15 e5.

14... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d5$

White has achieved a powerful-looking formation, but even so, Black's position does not contain any weaknesses, and with patient defence, he can make it difficult for White to increase his advantage.

15... $\mathbb{Q}8c7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}bc3$ (D)



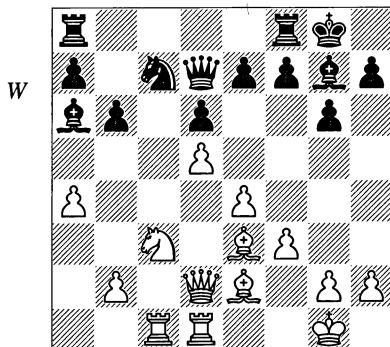
16...♝xd5?

But this is a serious mistake. Black should prefer 16...♝fc8.

17 cxd5

Now Black has a hole on c6, which White can exploit.

17...♞c7 18 a4 ♜a6 (D)



Exchanging the light-squared bishops only makes the hole on c6 even weaker, but White had plans such as ♜b5, or ♜b5-d4.

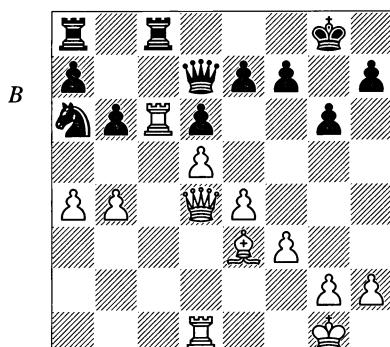
19 b4 ♜xe2 20 ♜xe2

The knight is heading for d4 and then c6.

20...♞a6 21 ♜d4 ♜xd4

Doubtless played with a heavy heart, but the knight cannot be allowed to occupy c6, and 21...♜xa4? was impossible because of 22 ♜a1, winning a piece.

22 ♜xd4 ♜fc8 23 ♜c6! (D)



A typical tactical exploitation of an outpost on an open file. Black cannot take twice on c6 because of 25 b5, winning a piece. He must therefore either grant White a large passed pawn or allow him to double rooks on the c-file. Lisitsyn prefers the former, hoping to blockade the pawn on c7.

23...♜xc6 24 dxc6 ♜e6 25 ♜c3 ♜c7 26 ♜a1

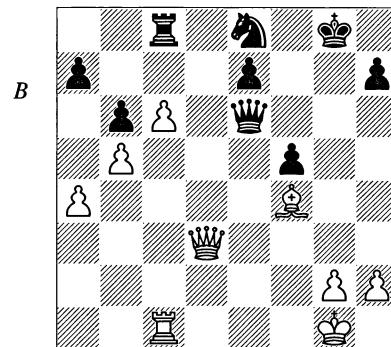
♜c8 27 ♜d3 d5 28 ♜c1 f5

Trying to secure control of d5, for his knight.

29 ♜f4! dxe4 30 fxe4 ♜e8

30...fxe4? loses a piece due to 31 ♜d7, while the rook ending reached after 30...♜xe4 31 ♜xe4 fxe4 32 ♜xc7 ♜xc7 33 b5 is very bad for Black.

31 exf5 gxf5 32 b5 (D)



Black has managed to stabilize his position and White, despite his advantage, still has a good deal of work to do to win the game.

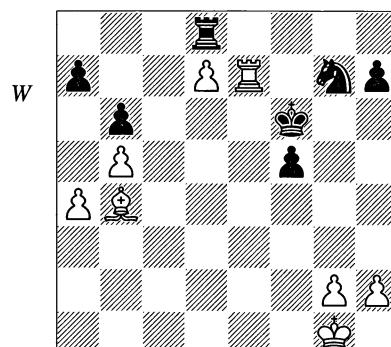
32...♞f7 33 ♜f1 ♜g7 34 ♜d2

Threatening 35 ♜c3, winning the f5-pawn.

34...♜f8 35 ♜e1 ♜c8 36 ♜b4 ♜e8 37 ♜d7!

Forcing a transition into an ending, and winning a pawn, at least temporarily.

37...♜xd7 38 cxd7 ♜d8 39 ♜xe7+ ♜f6 (D)



Sooner or later, Black will regain the pawn on d7, but with White's rook and bishop being much stronger than Black's rook and knight, plus the isolated pawns on f5 and h7, the ending proves winning for White.

40 ♜f2 h6

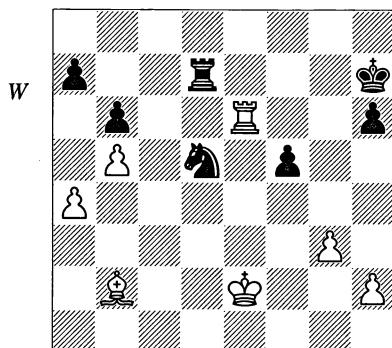
Freeing the knight to move.

41 g3 ♜e6 42 ♕e2 ♜c7 43 ♜a3 ♜d5

Finally winning the pawn back.

44 ♜e8 ♜xd7 45 ♜b2+ ♔g6 46 ♜e6+ ♔h7

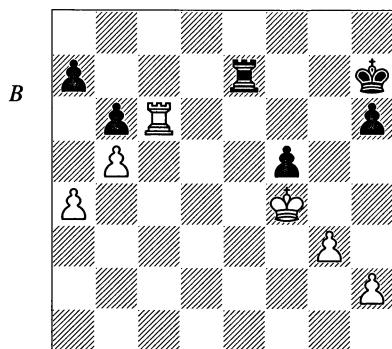
(D)



47 ♜e5!

Preventing 47...♜e7 because of 48 ♜xe7+ ♜xe7 49 ♜b8 ♜c8 50 ♜f3 ♔g6 51 ♜f4, when Black is in zugzwang and must lose a pawn.

47...♜c7 48 ♜c6 ♜d5 49 ♜f3 ♜e7 50 ♜f4
♜xf4 51 ♜xf4 (D)



Black has defended most tenaciously, but White's active pieces and the weak black pawns mean that the ending is still lost for Black.

51...♜f7

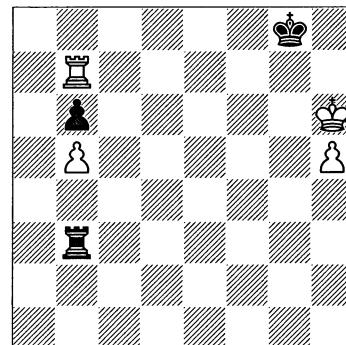
51...♜e4+ 52 ♜xf5 ♜xa4 53 ♜c7+ ♔g8 54 ♔g6 is winning for White, as is 51...♜e2 52 ♜c7+ ♔g6 53 ♜xa7 ♜xh2 54 ♜a6.

52 h4 ♜g7 53 h5

Depriving the black king of the g6-square, and so threatening ♜e6-e5, winning the f-pawn.

53...♜g4+ 54 ♜xf5 ♜xa4 55 ♜c7+ ♔g8 56 ♔g6 ♜g4+ 57 ♜xh6 ♜xg3 58 ♜xa7 ♜b3 59 ♜b7! (D)

A final subtlety, deflecting the black rook to the 5th rank, from where it cannot check the white king. The immediate 59 ♔g6 does not get anywhere after 59...♜g3+.



59...♜xb5 60 ♔g6

Now the difference is clear. The white h-pawn will queen.

60...♚f8 61 h6 ♜e5 62 ♜b8+ 1-0

The Essential Lessons

- The Maroczy Bind gives White a strong grip on the centre, and can confer a significant advantage against planless or inaccurate play by Black.
- Black should strive for the pawn-breaks ...b5 and/or ...f5.
- In the ending, rook plus bishop is often a potent force, and stronger than rook plus knight.
- Even in desperate-looking positions, the defensive resources in chess are enormous. Despite all of his problems, Lisitsyn was able to put up tremendous resistance, and only exceptionally fine play by White (37 ♜d7!, 47 ♜e5!, 59 ♜b7!) enabled him to clinch the game.

Game 40
Dragomaretsky – D. Maximov
Moscow 2005
 English Opening, Reversed Sicilian

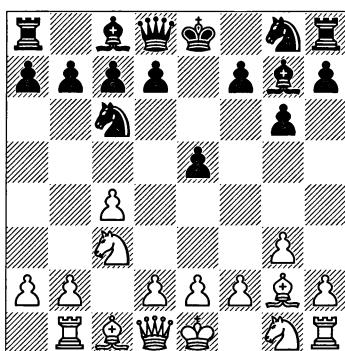
This game illustrates a typical English Opening structure. White holds his central pawns back on e3 and d3, aiming instead to advance on the queenside and attack the central light squares. The normal counter for Black is to attack on the kingside, but here he plays too passively and allows White to demonstrate his standard plan without much interference from Black.

1 c4 ♜c6 2 ♜c3 e5 3 g3

This type of English Opening structure can also arise, with colours reversed, from the Closed Sicilian. White holds back his centre pawns, and instead develops his pieces so as to control the central light squares from a distance. Thus, bishop and knight bear down on the d5-square, and White will often follow up with e3 and ♜ge2, keeping open the bishop's long diagonal. Typically, his d-pawn will only go as far as d3 in the opening, although it may later strike the centre by advancing to d4 in the middlegame.

3...g6 4 ♜g2 ♜g7 5 ♜b1 (D)

B



Another move which is typical of these positions. White intends to attack on the queenside, advancing his pawns to create targets for the g2-bishop and to open lines for White's rooks to penetrate the black position. The usual way to prepare the advance b4 is by ♜b1, as in the game, rather than a3. This is partly for tactical reasons (with Black's bishop on g7, the rook would feel uncomfortable on a1 after a later advance b4) and partly positional. White will often succeed in opening the b-file, so the rook will be well-placed on b1.

5...f5

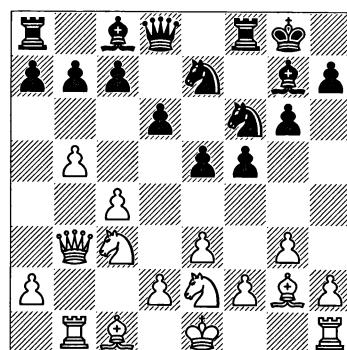
Black in turn sets out his stall. He will play on the kingside, advancing his pawns there to create threats against the white king. This can sometimes prove double-edged, in that the black king itself can also become exposed as a result of the pawn advances, but in general, Black has to seek counterplay to offset White's initiative on the other wing. Black's main mistake in the present game was that he failed to prosecute his kingside play with sufficient vigour, and allowed White to dictate events on the other wing.

6 b4 ♜f6 7 b5 ♜e7 8 ♜b3 0-0 9 e3

The discovered check 9 c5+ does not achieve anything.

9...d6 10 ♜ge2 (D)

B



10...c6

This move is open to the criticism that it permits White to open the b-file at his leisure, but Black needs to do something about the powerful white bishop at g2, which is bearing down on the b7-pawn and preventing Black from developing his queenside pieces.

11 0-0 ♜e6 12 a4 ♜e8??

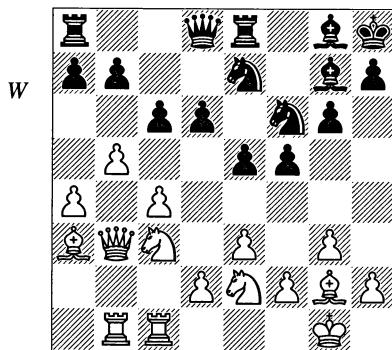
Round this point in the game, Black starts a long period of ineffective drifting, which allows

White to proceed with his queenside plans without hindrance. Black should certainly have considered 12...d5 here. After 13 cxd5 cxd5 14 d4 e4 White perhaps has a small advantage, but it is not very much. Black's weakness on d5 is well-protected, and White's g2-bishop is shut out.

13 ♘a3 ♛h8

Again, 13...d5 looks very logical.

14 ♜fc1 ♘g8 (D)



This manoeuvre ensures that the bishop is now protected, and is not a potential tactical weakness on e6, but it is rather slow. In addition, if Black really wanted to play this way, he could have dispensed with the move 12...♜e8 and saved a tempo.

15 d3 ♜c8 16 bxc6 bxc6 17 ♜b7 ♜c7 18 ♜b4 ♜d7?!! (D)

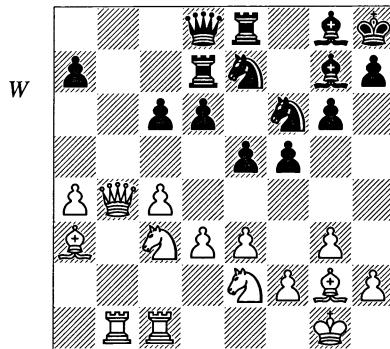
Again, Black opts for passivity. After 18...d5 19 cxd5 ♜exd5, he presumably did not like the weak pawn on c6, but this was probably better than the text-move. In general, this game is a typical example of a player trying to play 'solidly' against a higher-rated opponent. Solidity is fine in itself, but it must not be confused with passivity. Black is so paranoid about creating a possible weakness that he gives White far too much freedom of action.

19 a5!

White, meanwhile, pursues his queenside plans very logically. The a-pawn is coming to a6, securing an entry square at b7 for White's rooks.

19...♝f8 20 ♜a4 ♜c7 21 a6 ♜d7 22 ♜b4!

Step by step, White increases the pressure. Having secured the entry point on b7, White now brings his bishop to a5 to expel the black rook that is guarding that point.



22...♜b8

There was an immediate threat of 23 ♜a5 and 24 ♜b7.

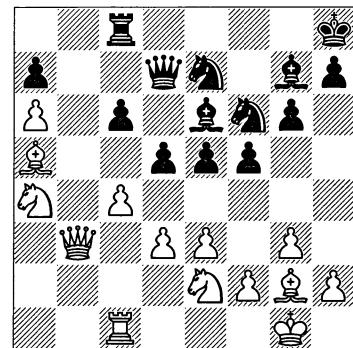
23 ♜a5 ♜cc8 24 ♜a1 ♜g7 25 ♜a4 ♜e6 26 ♜b3

Preparing to double rooks and force an entry down the b-file.

26...♜xb3 27 ♜xb3 d5

Black is finally driven to take some positive action, but by now White has made a great deal of progress on the queenside and his pieces begin to infiltrate the black position.

28 ♜a4 (D)



Immediately heading for the freshly-weakened c5-square.

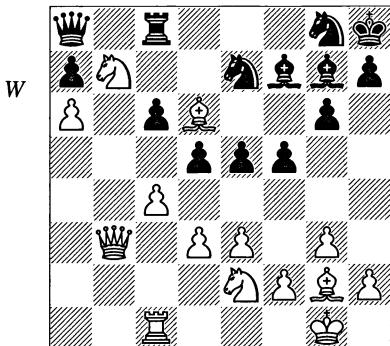
28...♝f7 29 ♜c5 ♜d6 30 ♜b4 ♜b8 31 ♜b7!

The knight is the first piece to make use of the entry point at b7. Black is now in a very bad way, and is unable to prevent the white pieces from crawling into his position.

31...♞fg8

Rather a comical move to have to play, but the threats of 32 ♜xe7 and 32 ♜d6, followed by 33 ♜xe5, were very hard to meet.

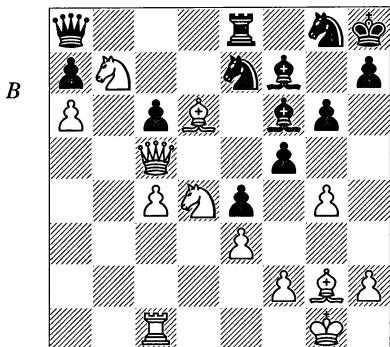
32 ♜d6 ♜a8 (D)



33 $\mathbb{W}b4$

White's position is overwhelming, but he could have decided things even more quickly with 33 $\mathbb{W}b2$, when Black unexpectedly cannot save his e-pawn, since 33...e4 34 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ causes extreme embarrassment down the long diagonal.

33... $\mathbb{B}e8$ 34 $\mathbb{W}c5$ e4 35 dx e 4 dx e 4 36 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 37 g4 (D)



This sudden switch to the other flank is very thematic in such positions. Having infiltrated via the queenside, White quite frequently switches his attack to the weakened black kingside, and undermining blows such as g4 are very common.

37... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 38 gx f 5 gx f 5 39 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 41 $\mathbb{W}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}d6$

Winning material, after which the game could have been resigned already.

42... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 43 $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{W}xe8$ 45 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 46 $\mathbb{B}b8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 47 $\mathbb{B}b7$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 48 $\mathbb{W}c7$

1-0

Poorly played by Black, but a typical example of White's plan in such English positions.

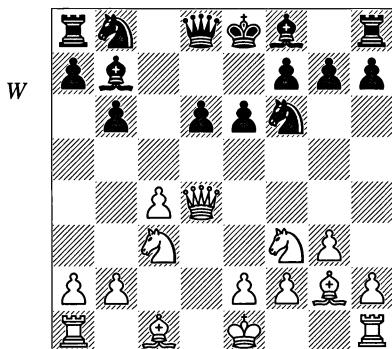
The Essential Lessons

- In English structures, White often holds back his central pawns and relies on pressurizing the central light squares with his pieces, from a distance.
- The queenside pawn advance by b4-b5 is a standard way to gain space and open lines along which to infiltrate Black's position.
- Once White has broken through on the queenside, he is frequently able to switch his attack to the other wing, and exploit weaknesses created by Black having advanced his kingside pawns in search of counterplay.
- In such positions, Black must seek active play on the kingside. Merely sitting still passively and trying to cover his queenside usually allows White too free a hand.

Game 41
Uhlmann – Bönsch
Halle 1976
 English Opening, Hedgehog

During the 1970s, a group of young GMs developed a structure known as the Hedgehog. This involves setting up a row of black pawns on the 3rd rank, and developing his pieces behind them. The idea of this very flexible set-up is to tempt White to overreach himself, in which event Black can hit back with a counterattack based around the pawn advances ...b5, ...d5 and/or ...e5. The system was quite revolutionary, in that it runs counter to the established principle that a cramped position is in itself a disadvantage. The present game is an excellent example of the virulence of the black counterattack that can arise if White plays inaccurately.

1 c4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 e6 4 g3 b6 5 ♖g2
 ♖b7 6 d4 cxd4 7 ♕xd4 d6 (D)



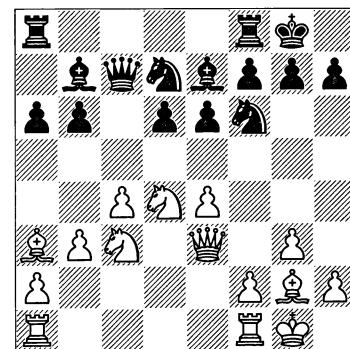
Black's set-up is one which was developed during the 1970s, and has remained popular ever since, under the generic name of the Hedgehog. Black sets up a row of pawns along the 3rd rank and develops his pieces behind them. White enjoys a substantial space advantage, and according to classical canons of positional play, he should have a substantial advantage. However, the Hedgehog formation contains a good deal of hidden dynamics. Black's position rather resembles a coiled spring, which can rebound against the attacker with a great deal of power. Essentially, it is a counterattacking system. White is invited to push forward with his pawns, especially on the kingside, whereupon Black can hit back with a counter based on the pawn advances ...b5 and/or ...d5.

8 0-0 ♖e7 9 e4 ♘bd7

This is all part of the normal Hedgehog build-up. The knight is better here than on c6, where it would obstruct the action of the black

queen's bishop. From d7, the knight protects its colleague on f6, and has the possibility of jumping to c5 or e5 at an appropriate moment.

10 ♕e3 0-0 11 ♘d4 ♕c7 12 b3 a6 13 ♘a3 (D)



Black's most obvious weakness is the d6-pawn, and so this move appears logical. However, the pawn can be easily defended (with the attack from the bishop being blocked by ...♘c5, if necessary), and so the bishop is probably better placed on b2.

13...♗fe8

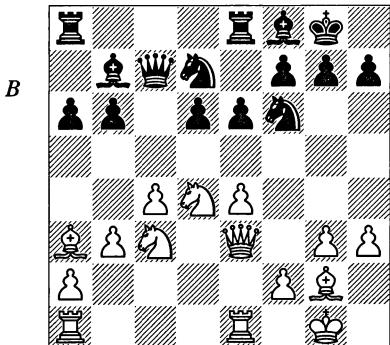
Another characteristic development for this variation. The rook takes up position *vis-à-vis* the white queen, with the idea that a later ...d5-break will create tactical opportunities.

14 h3 ♖f8

Unmasking the rook and defending g7. Quite often the bishop will later redeploy to the long diagonal after ...g6.

15 ♕fe1 (D)

A typical Hedgehog position. Both sides have developed their pieces in a fairly standard

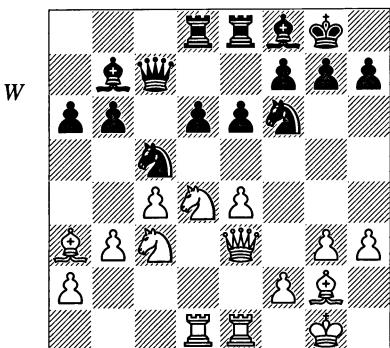


formation, and it is now up to White to decide how to proceed. His natural plan is a kingside pawn advance, but this entails the risk of allowing a black counterattack, and must therefore be carefully prepared.

15...Rad8

This rook more usually belongs on c8 in this variation, but in this particular position, Bönsch sees that it has more future on d8.

16 Rad1 Qc5 (D)



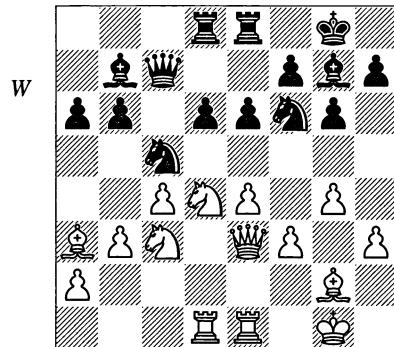
Pressurizing the e4-pawn, and blocking the a3-bishop. White could push the knight away by b4 at some stage, but this would severely weaken the c4-pawn. Provoking such weakening pawn advances is the essence of Black's play in the Hedgehog.

17 f3

White decides to overprotect his e4-pawn, but this move restricts the action of White's g2-bishop, and also weakens the white kingside. Note that the natural-looking 17 f4? would be a serious mistake, because of the reply 17...e5!, when White's e4-pawn would be weak and there would be terrible ideas of ...d5 and ...Qc5, winning material because of the pin along the g1-a7 diagonal. This is a typical Hedgehog

counter, and is a good example of the hidden dynamics contained in the black position.

17...g6 18 g4 Qg7 (D)



Given that White has no serious pressure against the d6-pawn, there is no reason for this bishop to remain on f8, and it therefore transfers to a more active position on the long diagonal. In addition, the move 17...g6 has ensured that the knight can go to h5 in the event of White playing 19 g5.

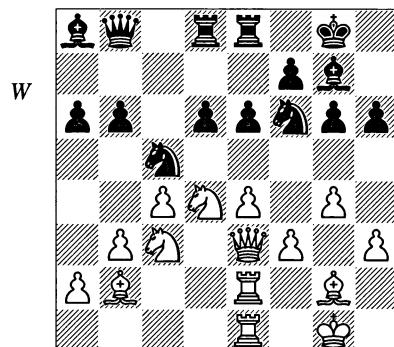
19 Rb2 Ra8

Black continues his cat-and-mouse tactics. The immediate breakout with 19...d5 was not possible because of 20 g5, followed by 21 exd5, exploiting the pin on the e-file.

20 Re2 h6

Securing the position of the knight at f6.

21 Rde1 Rb8 (D)



Again, a typical Hedgehog move. The queen supports a possible ...b5 break at some point.

22 Qd2??

Black's last few moves have prepared the ...d5 break, and White therefore takes action against that move. The regrouping of his major pieces prepares to meet 22...d5?! with 23 cxd5

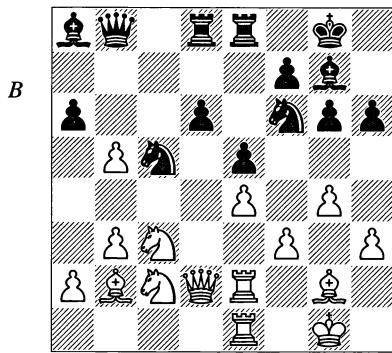
$\text{exd}5$ 24 e5!, when White would stand better – the d5-pawn is isolated and obstructs Black's a8-bishop, while White has a secure blockade on the d4-square. However, Black has an alternative break, with which he seizes the initiative.

22...e5! 23 $\mathbb{Q}c2$

Now we see another point of Black's 17th move, which ensured that White cannot now play his knight into f5.

23...b5! 24 cxb5? (D)

24 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ was safer, as Black now strikes with his other key break in such positions.



24...d5!!

Black rips open the centre, and suddenly the white king's position is beginning to feel distinctly draughty.

25 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

Compared with just five moves ago, the position has been totally transformed. The black pieces now spring into action with a vicious counterattack, which sweeps all resistance before it.

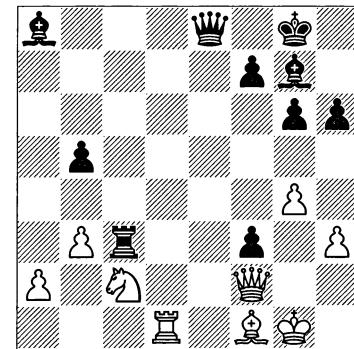
27 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 28 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ e4!

Another black piece springs into play.

30 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 31 $\mathbb{W}f2$ exf3 32 $\mathbb{Q}xe8+$ $\mathbb{W}xe8$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$

In the space of just 10 moves, White's powerful-looking position has been decimated, and all of the black pieces radiate power. The immediate threat is 34... $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 35 $\mathbb{W}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4+$, with a quick mate.

34 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ axb5 (D)



Now Black has a solid extra pawn to go with his positional advantages.

35 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$

Or 36 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$.

36... $\mathbb{Q}c1!$ 0-1

Finally crushing the last resistance, since 37 $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ wins the queen. A typical example of the brutal energy with which Black can break out of his cramped and seemingly passive set-up.

The Essential Lessons

- In the Hedgehog, Black sets up a position within his first three ranks and invites White to push forward, exposing himself to a counterattack.
- The pawn-breaks ...b5 and ...d5 are key ideas for Black.
- White must constantly watch out for tactical opportunities, by which his opponent may break out of his cramped position.

Game 42
Alatortsev – Khavin
USSR Ch semi-final, Moscow 1949
 Queen's Gambit Declined, Orthodox

The previous game showed how a cramped position does not have to be a bad one, if the player concerned has dynamic counterchances. However, it remains true that, other things being equal, more space is usually better than less, and the present game is a reminder of this. Black adopts a classical but rather passive set-up, and soon finds himself seriously cramped, without having any chances for dynamic counterplay. White is able to increase his grip and gradually prepare to break into his opponent's position.

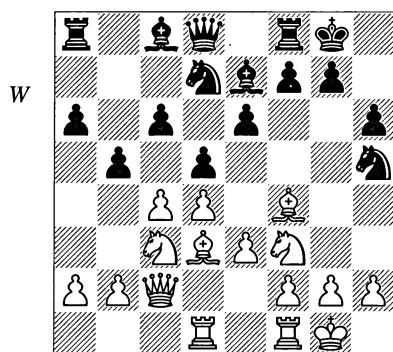
**1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5 4 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 5 e3
 0-0 6 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ a6 8 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c6**

Black's set-up with ...a6 and ...c6 is already a sign that he is prepared to play relatively passively, rather than fight for space at the expense of possible weaknesses. When White commits his queen to c2 this early in the Queen's Gambit Declined, Black should usually look to free his position by achieving a break with ...c5 early on.

9 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ h6 10 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 11 0-0

White would not object to the exchange 11... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 12 exf4, since in return for conceding the bishop-pair, he would have a powerful outpost on e5 and the possibility of advancing with f5.

11...b5 (D)



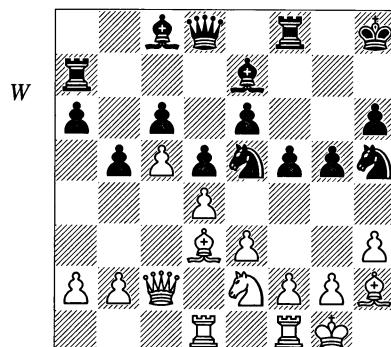
12 c5

White already enjoys a substantial space advantage, but Black's position is solid and does not contain any real weaknesses. Exchanging pawns on d5 would not bring White any benefits, because he cannot exploit the open c-file.

12... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 14 h3 g5

With this move, Black reveals the idea behind his 10th move. Rather than exchanging on f4, he intends to advance his kingside pawns, hoping to generate an initiative on that flank. Having closed the queenside, he reasons that if he can take the initiative on the other side of the board, White will lack counterplay. However, he has appraised the position insufficiently deeply, and White soon finds a way to throw a large spanner in the works.

15 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ f5 16 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (D)

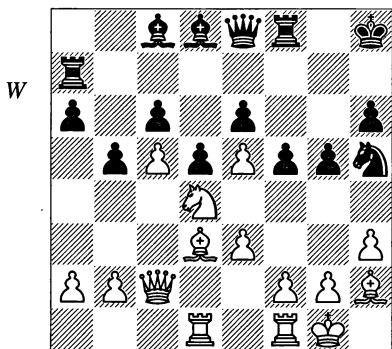


17 dxe5!

The key move. Black has no doubt counted on the superficially obvious 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$, when after 17... $\mathbb{Q}f6$, his a7-rook can swing over to take part in the kingside attack, and White has difficulties finding counterplay. The text-move looks odd, especially with White's dark-squared bishop still on h2, where it is buried behind the e5-pawn. However, it is more important that White obtains the d4-square for his knight, from where it attacks the two now weak pawns on c6 and e6, and radiates influence over the entire centre of the board. The e5-pawn also takes control of

f6, leaving Black's h5-knight without a convenient retreat and looking rather sidelined.

17... ♕e8 18 ♖d4 ♜d8 (D)



19 g4!

With this move, White underlines the fact that it is he, and not Black, who enjoys the initiative on the kingside, and, indeed, over the whole board.

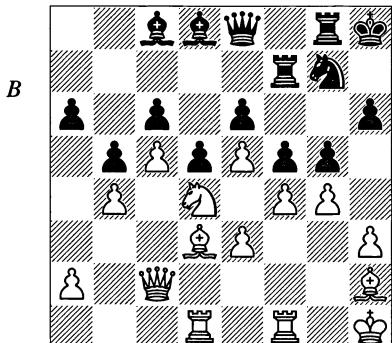
19... ♔g7 20 f4 ♜af7?!

No doubt taken aback by the sudden turn of affairs, Black commits an imperceptible but quite serious error, which White's next move highlights. As we know from previous games, the principle of two weaknesses suggests that White is unlikely to be able to win the game just on the kingside, and will probably at some stage need to open a second front. A likely target is the a-file, by playing b4 and then a4. Black should therefore anticipate this with the prophylactic move 20...a5!, preparing to answer a later b4 with ...a4, and a4 with ...b4, keeping lines closed on the queenside.

21 b4!

White immediately pounces on Black's error.

21... ♜g8 22 ♖h1 (D)

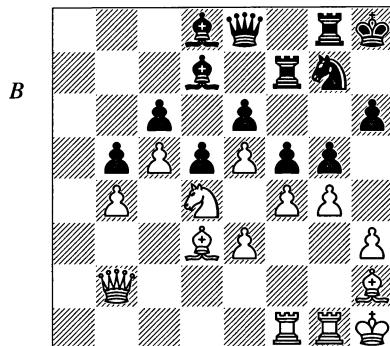


Black tries to create tactical threats against the white king, but is unable to do so. His space disadvantage is now seriously hampering his game. One especial problem is the g7-knight, which is 'dominated' by the white pawn on g4. At present, the knight has no squares at all, and all the while the pawn remains on g4, the knight will only ever be able to retreat to e8, where it does nothing. A similar scenario often arises in the Closed Ruy Lopez, when Black's queen's knight goes to a5, and often ends up on b7, dominated by a white pawn on b4. Contrasting this game with the previous one, we can see why the lack of space is such a problem for Black here, but was not so in Uhlmann-Bönsch (Game 41). The reason is that this position is closed, and Black does not constantly threaten to burst his bonds with a dynamic pawn-break, such as the ...b5 and ...d5 breaks we saw in the previous game. Here Black has no dynamic counter-chances, and White can slowly strengthen his grip, without fear of the position blowing up in his face.

22... ♜d7 23 a4 ♜e7 24 axb5 axb5 25 ♜g1 ♜f8

Black is still searching for counterchances. This moves envisages a possible exchange sacrifice on f4, but White immediately puts a stop to such ideas.

26 ♜df1 ♜e8 27 ♜b2! (D)



The queen takes up position on the long diagonal, eyeing the black king on h8. The diagonal looks securely closed at the moment, but this will change, and we shall see that the queen's position on b2 later proves decisive.

27... ♜ff8 28 ♜a1

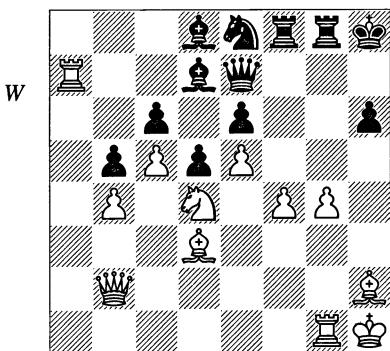
With Black no longer seriously threatening an exchange sacrifice on f4, the rook is free to

occupy the open file, threatening to penetrate Black's queenside.

28...gx f4

As often happens in such positions, the defender loses patience. This double pawn exchange helps White to break the position open decisively, but on the other hand, Black is tired of having constantly to calculate the consequences of White capturing on f5 and/or g5. If he sits still, White will infiltrate with his rook on the a-file and the combined pressure along the f- and g-files, the long dark-square diagonal and the 7th rank will prove decisive.

29 exf4 fxg4 30 hxg4 ♕e7 31 ♖a7 ♔e8 (D)



White has achieved his maximum advantage, and all is now ready for the decisive breakthrough.

32 f5!

Less clear is 32 ♔xc6 ♕xc6 33 ♕xe7 d4+, when Black gets two rooks for the queen. Given White's huge initiative, even this is winning for him, but the text-move is much stronger. Black has no chance of holding his position together.

32...exf5

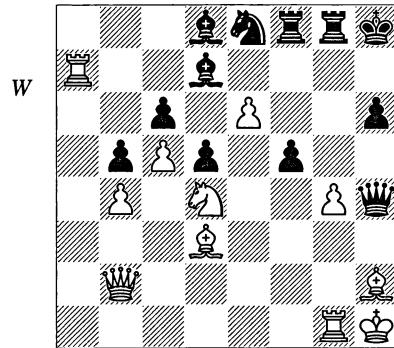
If instead he tries to shore up the e6-square by 32...♔c7, White replies simply 33 f6, followed

by ♔f4, ♕h2, etc., and the h6-pawn falls, with the black king soon to follow.

33 e6

Now a piece is lost, and Black's hopes of creating some confusion are soon dispelled.

33...♕h4 (D)



34 ♔xf5+

See move 27 – now we know why the queen went to b2!

34...♔f6 35 ♔xh4 ♕xb2 36 ♕xd7 ♔f6 37 ♔g6+ ♕xg6 38 ♕xg6 1-0

A drastic example of strangulation.

The Essential Lessons

- A cramped position can contain the seeds of defeat if there is no chance of active counterplay.
- Note White's key positional idea 17 dx e5!. Sometimes, ostensibly weakening one's own pawn-structure can be favourable, if there are other compensations – here, the d4-square, and the offside black knight on h5.
- Once again, the principle of two weaknesses applies – the use of the open a-file was a key part of White's plan to break through on the kingside.

5 Endgame Themes

The remaining eight games in this book explore various aspects of the endgame. This is a stage of the game that many players neglect, possibly believing that by studying the opening, they will win their games without ever needing to reach an endgame. In addition, many players wrongly believe that endgames are boring. In truth, the reverse is the case, and the ending is in many ways the best part of chess.

Of course, the endgame has its own defined theory, with many basic positions worked out in detail. A knowledge of certain of these positions is necessary for good endgame play, but the number of positions which the player needs actually to memorize is relatively small – a matter of 30-40, most of those involving rooks and pawns. Apart from such concrete knowledge, good endgame technique is much more about understanding basic endgame principles, and typical methods of conducting the endgame. The use of the king is one typical endgame device. In most endgames, there is little chance of a mating attack, and so the king can enter the game as a powerful piece. In general, pawn weaknesses are more important in endgames than they are in the middlegame. We have seen many examples in this book of how a static weakness, such as an isolated pawn, can be outweighed by dynamic play. In endgames and other simplified positions, such dynamic play is much harder to achieve, with the result that the static weaknesses tend to grow in significance.

Finally, there is one other principle of endgame play which needs to be emphasized, and which will come through again and again in the examples which follow. This is the principle ‘do not hurry’. In most endgames, the overall pace of the play is slower than in the middlegame. The relative absence of dynamics means that the player with an advantage has no need to rush in trying to exploit it. Instead, he can afford to take his time, strengthening his position slowly but surely, and taking time out to prevent counterplay. This kind of quiet, strengthening play is absolutely characteristic of good endgame technique, and is often the key to successful endgame play. If there is one lesson the reader should take from this chapter, it is the idea of not hurrying, and being prepared to seize every little advantage, no matter how insignificant it may appear to be. Do not be in a hurry to put the opponent out of his misery – the endgame is one area of the game where it definitely pays to be a sadist!

Game 43

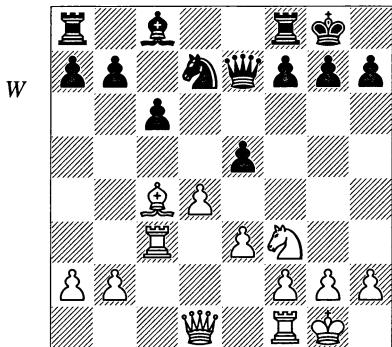
Euwe – Van Doesburgh

Dutch Ch, Amsterdam 1938

Queen's Gambit Declined, Orthodox

Rook endings are the most common type of endgame, and also the most difficult to play well. In this example, we see a world champion demonstrate how to exploit an extra pawn in an ending with a rook each and several pawns. Euwe's methodical play is a textbook example of how to play endings in general, and rook endings in particular.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 5 e3
 0-0 6 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ c6 8 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ dx c 4 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$
 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 11 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ e5
 (D)

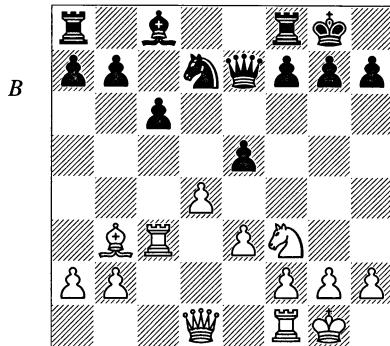


Black has chosen the so-called Orthodox Defence. Nowadays, this is seen less often than other lines, such as the Tartakower Variation, but theoretically it remains very respectable and one of Black's most solid choices. Black plays systematically to free his game, first exchanging a couple of minor pieces by 9... $\mathbb{Q}d5$, and now advancing the e-pawn to liberate the c8-bishop, generally Black's main problem piece in the Queen's Gambit Declined. White has several options now, the main alternative to the game continuation being the Rubinstein Attack, 13 dx e 5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15 f4. Euwe's choice is actually the most popular at the present time, although this was not the case at the time this game was played.

13 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ (D)

White plays a useful semi-waiting move. The bishop moves away from a slightly exposed square, and White waits to see how Black will continue.

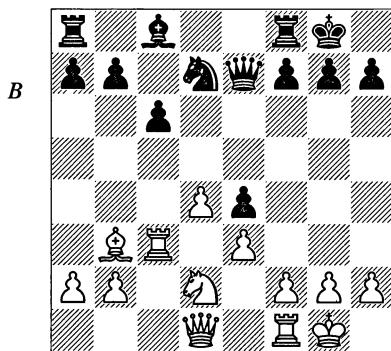
13...e4



A fundamental decision. The alternative is 13...exd4, after which White would recapture with the pawn, producing an IQP structure, but with the difference that Black here has a pawn on c6, rather than e6. This changes the position to a certain extent. In particular, Black's f7-square is more vulnerable than usual, because White can attack it with a knight on e5, supported by the b3-bishop. In addition, the e-file is opened, and White's superior development means that he has good chances of seizing control of the file with his rooks. The fact that his queen's rook is already on the third rank can prove very useful. All in all, modern theory suggests that White has reasonable chances of securing some initiative in the position after the central pawn exchange, but Black's position remains solid, and he should not stand significantly worse. The text-move leads to a different structure. Black aims to hold the pawn on e4, while White will attack it with his pieces ($\mathbb{Q}d2$, $\mathbb{Q}c2$, etc.), and also aim to achieve the pawn-break f3. If White can remove the black e-pawn and get his own central pawns going, he can develop a dangerous initiative. Black must try to hold the e4-square, either with the pawn, or with his pieces, in the event of White playing

f3. In the present game, Black fails completely to cope with this task.

14 ♜d2 (D)



14... ♜f6

14... ♜h8 is a sensible alternative, so as to defend the pawn with ...f5.

15 ♜b1

Better than 15 ♜c2, because White wishes to reserve that square for the bishop, to reinforce the attack on the e4-square.

15... ♜d8?

This just loses the e4-pawn without a fight. Euwe himself pointed out that the pawn could have been defended by 15... ♜f5, since Black has a tactical resource: after 16 ♜c5 ♜g6 17 ♜e5 ♜c7 18 ♜c2?, he has 18... ♜g4 (even better than Euwe's 18... ♜d7), winning the exchange.

16 ♜c5

Threatening 17 ♜e5. Thanks to his 15th move, Black no longer has the resource 16... ♜d7, because the reply 17 ♜f5 hits his undefended f7-pawn, and he cannot defend that pawn as well as the one on e4.

16... ♜e6 17 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 18 ♜e5 ♜d6 19 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 20 ♜xe4

Thus, White is a pawn up for no compensation, and the remainder of the game is a technical exercise in the conversion of the material advantage. Euwe's play is extremely systematic and instructive.

20... g6 21 ♜e7 ♜d7 22 ♜xd7

Exchanging pieces usually favours the side that is material up, and so Euwe is happy to see a pair of rooks come off.

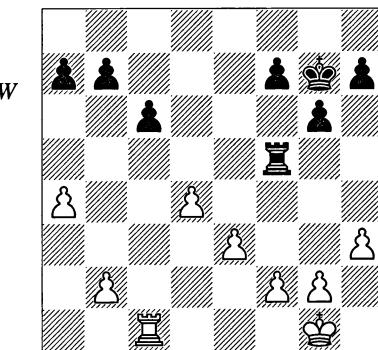
22... ♜xd7 23 ♜c1 ♜e8 24 ♜c2 ♜e6 25 h3

There is no hurry, so White makes *luft* for his king, avoiding any later back-rank problems.

25... ♜g7 26 a4 ♜f6 27 ♜c5

A nice move. In principle, White would like to exchange queens here, as part of his policy of simplification. The text-move attacks the a7-pawn, and if Black defends it (e.g. by 27... a6), there follows 28 ♜e5, setting up an extremely unpleasant pin on the rook. To break this pin, Black would be forced into exchanging queens anyway, so he decides to do so straight away. This is a simple illustration of a valuable lesson. If you wish to exchange a pair of pieces, the most effective way to do so is often to post your own piece in a particularly powerful position. The chances are that the opponent will then feel obliged to exchange it off himself, as being the least evil.

27... ♜f5 28 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 (D)



The rook ending which has been reached shows a structure that receives relatively little attention in endgame textbooks. Most of the quoted examples of how to realize an extra pawn involve positions where White has an extra pawn on the queenside, and in such cases, the winning plan is well-known: create an outside passed pawn, use it to deflect the enemy king, and then break through with one's own king to the other flank. The classical example most often quoted is the 34th game of the Alekhine-Capablanca match, 1927. Here, however, White's extra pawn is in the centre, and it is not so obvious how he should exploit it. It is therefore all the more instructive to watch the systematic manner in which Euwe does so.

29 ♛f1

In principle, White would like to continue simplifying, to reach a king and pawn ending, which is usually the easiest in which to realize an extra pawn. However, the attempt to do so here would be a dreadful mistake. After 29

$\mathbb{R}c5?? \mathbb{R}xc5$ 30 $dxc5 \mathbb{Q}f6$, it is Black who has winning chances, because his king is so much faster getting into action; for example, 31 f4 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}f2 \mathbb{Q}e4$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}e2 \mathbb{Q}d5$ 34 b4? $\mathbb{Q}c4$, etc. Instead, White begins by improving the position of his king, almost always a key element in the endgame.

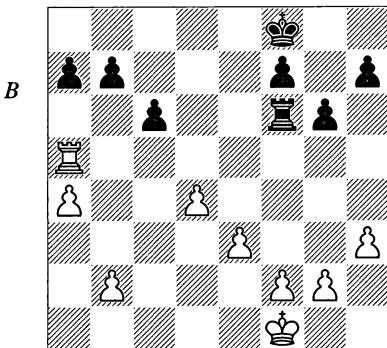
29... $\mathbb{Q}f8$

29... $\mathbb{R}a5$ is met by 30 b3, with the point that 30...b5? is then refuted by 31 $\mathbb{R}c5$.

30 $\mathbb{R}c5$

With White's king nearer the centre, the king and pawn ending would now be lost, so this move has the effect of activating White's rook, while forcing Black's into a more passive position.

30... $\mathbb{R}f6$ 31 $\mathbb{R}a5!$ (D)



One of the key themes in the endgame is that of provoking weaknesses. This move forces Black to weaken his queenside pawns, in order to defend the a7-pawn. If he plays 31...b6, the c6-pawn is weak, while after the game continuation 31...a6, the b6-square is weakened. This may not look significant at present, but it opens the possibility of the white king later infiltrating via c5. This may never happen – indeed, it does not – but the threat hangs over Black's head as another thing to worry about. This is very typical of good endgame technique. There is no hurry, so it pays to accumulate as many small advantages as possible.

31... $a6$ 32 $\mathbb{R}e5!$

Another subtle move. The rook has done its job on a5, and now it takes up its real intended position on e5, where it cuts off the black king. If Black does nothing, White will bring his own king into the centre, and head for the weakened dark squares on the queenside. It is essential for

Black to get his king into the game, and this means removing the white rook. The king and pawn ending after ... $\mathbb{R}e6$ would be hopeless, so this only leaves the plan of ... $\mathbb{R}d6$ followed by ...f6. But herein lies the real subtlety of White's play. Ultimately, to win the game, he will probably need to create a passed pawn out of his central majority, but at the moment, it is hard to see how he can do this. But once the black pawn has been lured to f6, White can continue by advancing his kingside pawns, with the idea that a later g4-g5 will knock out the f6-pawn, thereby leaving White with a passed e-pawn. This method of manufacturing a passed pawn is very important and should be remembered. Note too that if Black had played 31...b6 instead of 31...a6, a similar manoeuvre would have been possible on the queenside – the advance b4-b5 would have eliminated the c6-pawn and left White's d-pawn passed.

32... $\mathbb{R}d6$ 33 $a5!$

Having provoked the weakening of the b6-square, this move fixes it.

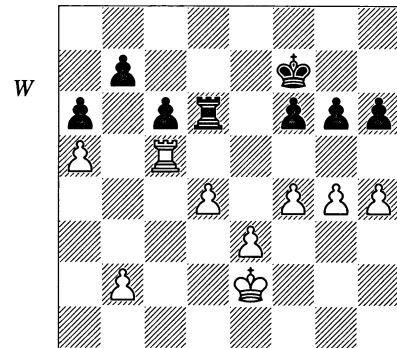
33... $f6$ 34 $\mathbb{R}c5 \mathbb{Q}e7$ 35 g4!

Consistently continuing with the next stage of his plan.

35... $h6$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}e2 \mathbb{R}e6$ 37 f4 $\mathbb{R}d6$

Black has no counterplay and can only await developments.

38 h4 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ (D)



39 h5!

Flexibility is always important! Black has prepared for the advance 39 g5, which would now be met by 39...hxg5 40 hxg5 f5. Euwe therefore switches to an alternative plan, which aims to create additional weaknesses on that side of the board.

39... $gxh5$

This falls in with White's idea, but after 39...g5 40 fxg5 fxg5 (40...hxg5 gives White a passed h-pawn, which is even worse), White obtains his passed e-pawn, and by 41 $\mathbb{Q}f5+!$, he can also force Black to allow his king to be cut off on one side or the other. White would follow up with $\mathbb{Q}d3$ and e4.

40 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$

Black has managed to avoid giving White a passed pawn, but now he has weaknesses at f6 and h6, to go with the weakness at b6 on the other side of the board. As we know already, two weaknesses is usually too much for the defender.

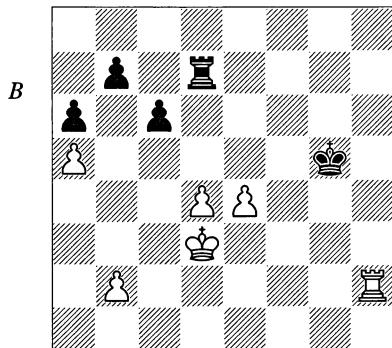
40... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 42 e4 $\mathbb{Q}h7$

White will sooner or later obtain his central passed pawn anyway, so Black provokes an exchange of pawns, hoping that the simplification will help him.

43 g5 fxg5 44 fxg5 $\mathbb{Q}g6$

The point of Black's idea.

45 $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}h2!$ (D)



Threatening to cut off the black king by $\mathbb{Q}f2$, which cannot be permitted.

46... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 47 e5+ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 48 $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$

Here, the king proves vulnerable to mating threats, but Black had little choice. 48... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 49 $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ results in his king being cut off, while 48... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 49 $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ forces the rooks off, with an easy win.

49 b4!

Euwe continues to seize every little advantage and to deprive Black of counterplay. Now ...c5 is prevented, and a mating-net begins to appear around the black king. In fact, Black is already in zugzwang, and must allow the white rook into an even stronger position on the 7th rank.

49... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 50 $\mathbb{Q}h7$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 51 $\mathbb{Q}e7!$

The final touch. White could drive the black king back by 51 $\mathbb{Q}d7+$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ and then bring his own king further forward, and indeed that should win easily enough. But 'do not hurry' is the great principle of good endgame technique, and Euwe finds a stronger move, placing Black in zugzwang. He must lose another pawn.

51...b6

Note one other small point. If Black attempts to activate his rook with 51... $\mathbb{Q}h8$, hoping for 52 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}h3+$ followed by 53... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$, White has no need to spend time calculating whether the resulting ending is a win. Instead, he remembers our beloved rule 'do not hurry', and plays the intermediary check 52 $\mathbb{Q}d7+!$, and only after 52... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ does he capture 53 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$. Then the check on h3 is harmless because the white king can go to c4.

52 $\mathbb{Q}d7+$

Now this is much stronger than on the previous move.

52... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 53 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ 1-0

He loses more pawns, without compensation. A beautifully instructive ending by Euwe – nothing spectacular, but just the sort of subtle and methodical play which is characteristic of good endgame technique.

The Essential Lessons

- When material up in an ending, it generally pays to exchange pieces, but not pawns (although there are some important exceptions to this, as we shall see later).
- The golden rule of good technique is 'do not hurry!'. In endings, the tempo is usually slower, and one should seize every little advantage, even if it is not obvious that the factor concerned will actually matter (31 $\mathbb{Q}a5!$, 32 $\mathbb{Q}e5!$, 49 b4!, 51 $\mathbb{Q}e7!$).
- Provoking and fixing weaknesses is a key part of the previous point (31 $\mathbb{Q}a5!$, 33 a5!, 39 h5!).
- Passed pawns are always a crucial part of endings, and manufacturing a passed pawn from a pawn-majority is an essential part of endgame technique. Euwe's method in the present game is non-standard and well worth remembering.

Game 44
Schlechter – Rubinstein
San Sebastian 1912
 French Defence, Burn Variation

The previous example saw White winning with an extra pawn in a rook ending. This game shows that even when material is equal, a positional advantage can be enough to decide a rook ending. Rooks thrive on activity, and if they are tied down to defending weak pawns, this can be fatal. Here, Rubinstein reaches an ending where White has some weak pawns, and this is enough for the great master of rook endings to fashion a win.

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♜c3 ♜f6 4 ♜g5 dxе4

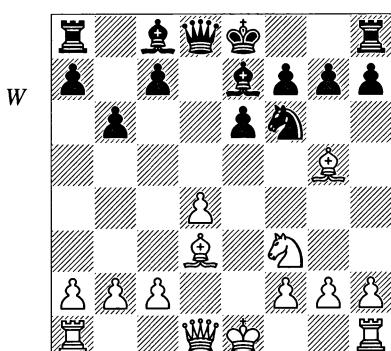
This variation of the French Defence, named the Burn variation after the great English master of the late 19th century, is one of Black's most solid options. Rather than breaking the pin by 4...♜e7, or counterattacking by 4...♝b4, Black surrenders his central outpost, in order to develop soundly within his own camp. White obtains a small space advantage in the centre, but Black hopes sooner or later to free his game by breaking with ...c5. For many years, under the influence of Tarrasch, such an exchange was branded 'the surrender of the centre' and considered inferior, but in recent years, its solidity has been recognized again, and, together with its close relative 3...dxе4, it is one of the most popular lines of the French at the time of writing.

5 ♜xe4 ♜bd7

Another, equally popular, option is 5...♜e7.

6 ♜f3 ♜e7 7 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 8 ♜d3 b6 (D)

This development of the bishop is a standard part of Black's scheme in this variation, and if he can succeed in thus solving the traditional French Defence problem of the 'bad' queen's bishop, he should have good prospects.



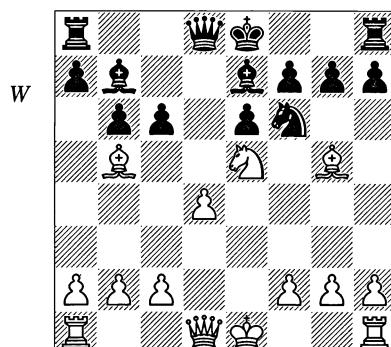
9 ♜e5??!

Schlechter understands the point, and tries to exploit the weakening of the c6-square and the a4-e8 diagonal, but this does not prove successful. In later years, it was established that White should content himself with 9 ♜e2, when he has a small advantage.

9...♝b7 10 ♜b5+

This is the point of White's play. He hopes that Black will be forced to choose 10...♝f8, but it turns out that for tactical reasons, the more desirable move 10...c6 is playable after all.

10...c6! (D)



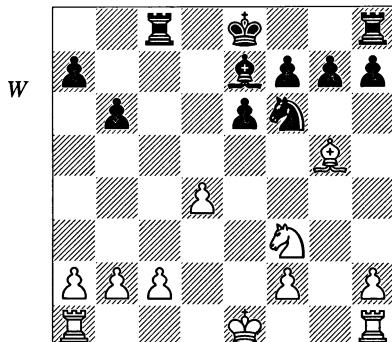
11 ♜xc6+?!

After this, White's pawn-structure becomes compromised. 11 ♜xc6? ♜d5 also favours Black, while 11 ♜f3 ♜d5! gives Black equality, so White would do best to retreat with 11 ♜e2.

11...♜xc6 12 ♜xc6 ♜d5!

This is the key to Black's play. Now he regains the pawn and breaks up the white pawn-structure on the kingside.

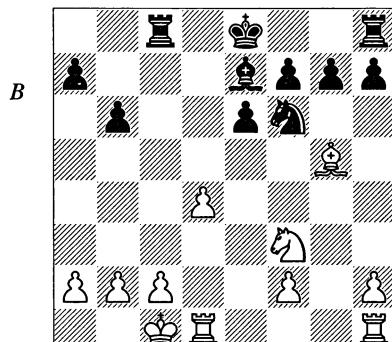
13 ♜e5 ♜xg2 14 ♜f3 ♜xf3 15 ♜xf3 ♜c8 (D)



The outcome of the opening has been very satisfactory for Black. He has achieved an ending where White has two isolated pawns on h2 and f2, for which there is no real compensation. It may appear that these pawns are not especially weak, since neither stands on an open file, but Rubinstein shows how such pawns can nevertheless be a fatal weakness in a rook ending.

16 0-0-0?! (D)

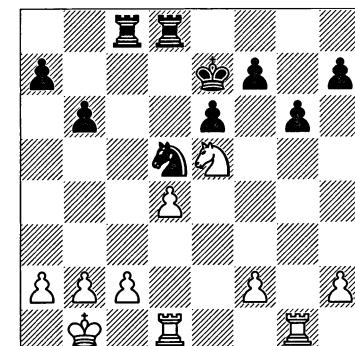
This looks natural, but such routine moves must always be appraised carefully, and this one proves to be a significant positional error. White needs to understand that he stands slightly worse, owing to his kingside pawns, and therefore should start thinking about where his counterplay is going to come from. If he had done this, he would have realized that the queenside advance a4-a5 is his best hope of counterplay, and therefore he should retain his rook on a1. The best move is therefore 16 c3. The white king should stay on the kingside, where it can defend the weak kingside pawns and does not get in the way of his rooks operating on the other flank.



16... $\mathbb{Q}d5!$

Showing a good appreciation of which pieces Black wishes to exchange, and which to retain. In such a position, the isolated white kingside pawns are most vulnerable to rooks, so Black seeks to exchange the minor pieces and produce a pure rook ending.

17 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{R}hd8$ 19 $\mathbb{R}hg1$ g6
20 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (D)



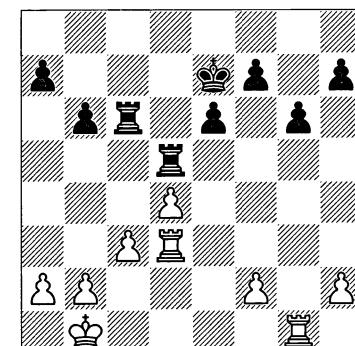
20... $\mathbb{Q}b4$

Rubinstein continues with his plan of exchanging down to a rook ending.

21 c3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xc6+?$

Unlike his opponent, Schlechter fails to appreciate how dangerous the rook ending is for him. He should either retain the knights by 22 $\mathbb{Q}g4$, or defend the knight by 22 f4. Then if Black exchanges on e5, White can recapture with the f-pawn, removing one of his isolated pawns and fixing a black weakness at f7. In fact, Rubinstein would almost certainly not have captured on e5, but White's position would in any case be rather better than in the game.

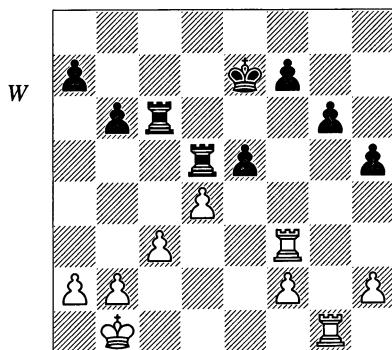
22... $\mathbb{R}xc6$ 23 $\mathbb{R}d3$ $\mathbb{R}d5!$ (D)



Rubinstein now gives a virtuoso display of the advantages of a sounder pawn-structure in

rook endings. The key point about rook endings is activity. More than almost any other piece, rooks thrive on activity, and even with equal material, having a passive rook versus an active one can be a decisive disadvantage. Black's basic plan is to attack White's weak pawns with his rooks, tie down the white rooks to their defence, and then enter with the black king. The text-move starts the first stage of the process, by threatening ... $\mathbb{R}h5$, which White therefore stops.

24 $\mathbb{R}h3$ h5 25 $\mathbb{R}f3$ e5! (D)



A very important move. Black's biggest problem here is how to get his c6-rook over to the kingside. The text-move achieves this by opening the third and fourth ranks.

26 dxe5

As so often, tactics are important in enabling the stronger side to achieve his positional objectives. Here, Black's last move is only possible because the plausible defence 26 $\mathbb{R}g5$ fails to 26... $\mathbb{R}f6$ 27 $\mathbb{R}xf6$ $\mathbb{R}xf6$ 28 f4 exf4! 29 $\mathbb{R}xd5$ f3, and the black pawn queens.

26... $\mathbb{R}xe5$ 27 $\mathbb{R}e3??!$

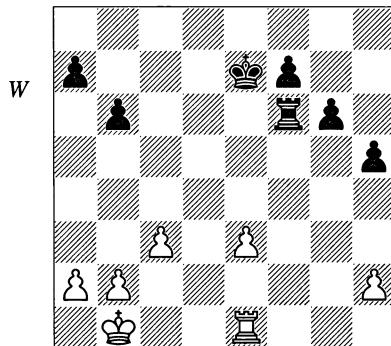
After this exchange, Black wins convincingly, but White's position was already very difficult. The most logical defensive plan is to try to activate his queenside majority with 27 $\mathbb{R}c1$, but as the Russian GM Razuvaev has pointed out, simply 27...g5 leaves White with big problems.

27... $\mathbb{R}xe3$ 28 fxe3 $\mathbb{R}e6$!

Now we see Black's plan carried out with great clarity. Step one is to tie down White's rook to the defence of his weak pawns.

29 $\mathbb{R}e1$ $\mathbb{R}f6!$ (D)

Threatening ... $\mathbb{R}f2$.



30 $\mathbb{R}e2$ $\mathbb{R}e6$

Step one is accomplished. Now step two is to bring the black king into the game.

31 $\mathbb{K}c2$ $\mathbb{R}e5$ 32 c4

32 $\mathbb{R}d3$ would be unavailing because of 32... $\mathbb{R}d6+$ followed by 33... $\mathbb{R}e4$, so White tries to get his majority going, in the hope that he can create a passed pawn and thereby obtain some counterplay.

32... $\mathbb{R}e4$ 33 b4 g5

Step three is to create a passed pawn on the kingside, which will cost White a rook.

34 $\mathbb{R}c3$ g4 35 c5 h4 36 $\mathbb{R}g2$ $\mathbb{R}g6$ 37 $\mathbb{R}c4$ g3 38 hxg3 hxg3 39 $\mathbb{R}b5$

The white king does its best to shepherd his own passed pawn home, but the black rook is ideally placed to prevent this.

39... $\mathbb{R}xc5$ 40 $\mathbb{R}xc5$ $\mathbb{R}f3$ 41 $\mathbb{R}g1$ a6+!

A nice final touch. Black could win by the direct 41... $\mathbb{R}f2$, but remembering the principle 'do not hurry', he looks for and finds an even simpler move. Now the white king cannot get his passed pawn any further forward, and so further resistance is useless.

0-1

The Essential Lessons

- In rook endings, activity is crucial. Even with equal material, a passive rook can be a fatal disadvantage.
- Because of the above, a weak pawn-structure can itself prove fatal, because the defender's rook can be tied down to passive defence of his weaknesses.
- The king is a powerful piece in the endgame, and should be used actively.
- Always remember, 'do not hurry!'.

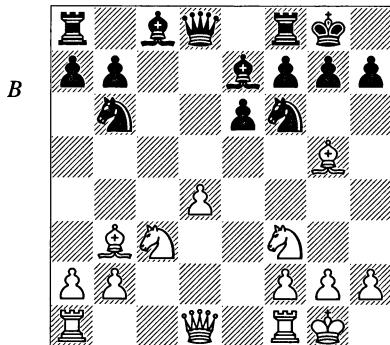
Game 45
Timman – Ree
OHRA tournament, Amsterdam 1984
 Queen's Gambit Declined, Orthodox

Knight endings are generally considered to be the closest to pure king and pawn endings. In both, a powerful king can be a decisive factor in its own right. In this game, White enters a knight ending where his more active king gives him a large advantage, which he converts into victory in instructive style.

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 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

The usual move here is 7 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ (see Euwe-Van Doesburgh above). The text-move is not considered as strong, but it avoids the deeply-analysed main lines of the Orthodox, and usually produces a rather sharper IQP structure. One of the most famous examples of the move was Botvinnik-Vidmar, Nottingham 1936, which the present encounter follows for some moves.

7...c5 8 0-0 cxd4 9 exd4 dxc4 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ (D)



The position is similar to Najdorf-Kotov (Game 19), with the difference that Black's king's bishop is on e7, rather than b4, and neither side's a-pawn has moved.

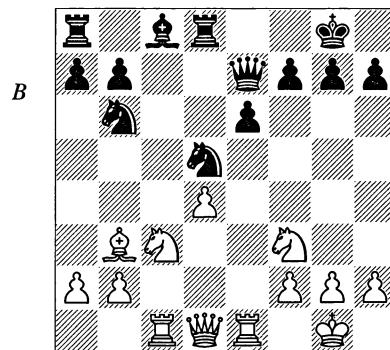
11... $\mathbb{Q}fd5$

In the aforementioned game against Botvinnik, Vidmar preferred 11... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd5$? (12... $\mathbb{Q}fd5$ is better) 13 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ and White was better. Ree's move is motivated by the natural desire to simplify, which is normally in the defender's interest in IQP positions. Indeed, the move was actually suggested by Alekhine as an improvement on Botvinnik-Vidmar.

12 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e1$

Retaining the tension. White could exchange twice on d5 and claim a small advantage, based on the fact that Black's bishop is partially blocked by the d5-pawn, but this would not be very much. Timman's move is more ambitious.

13... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ (D)



14... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$

Black has problems developing his queen's bishop (14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$? 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ loses a piece).

15 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$

15 bxc3 is also possible, when White's d-pawn is no longer isolated. Timman prefers to activate his rook along the third rank for attacking purposes, an idea we have already seen in the Najdorf-Kotov game.

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

Provoking complications. 15... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ looks safer.

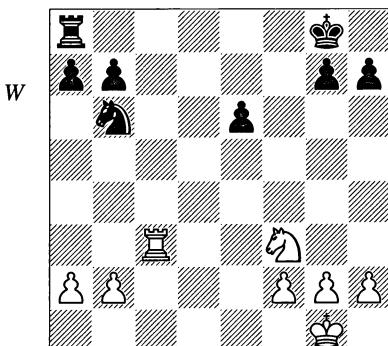
16 d5

Taking up the challenge.

16... $\mathbb{Q}d6$?

Timman recommends 16... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ (preventing the white rook from going to d3 in several lines), with an unclear position. Now White is able to liquidate to a favourable ending.

**17 dxe6 ♜xe6 18 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 19 ♜xe6
♜xe6 20 ♜xe6 fxe6 (D)**



Black has a weak pawn on e6, and White's rook is able to penetrate to the 7th rank.

21 ♜c7 ♜d8

21...♜c8 also leads to a bad knight ending after 22 ♜xc8+ ♜xc8 23 ♜g5.

22 ♔f1 ♜d7 23 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 24 ♜g5!

Knight endings are the closest to pure king and pawn endings, and many of the same principles apply. In particular, king activity is critical, and this ending shows how the more active king can be a decisive factor.

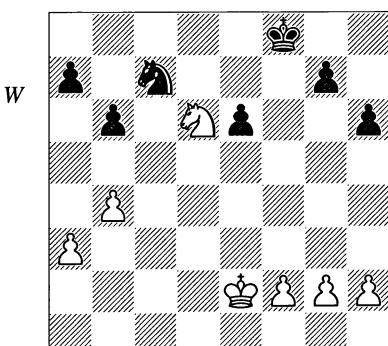
24...♜c5

Black chooses to defend the e-pawn with his knight, presumably fearing that 24...e5 would expose the pawn further. In general, the closer a weakness is to its own camp, the easier it is to defend.

25 b4 ♜a6

The king and pawn ending after 25...h6 26 bxc5 hxg5 27 ♔e2 is winning for White.

**26 a3 ♜c7 27 ♔e2 h6 28 ♜e4 ♔f8?! 29
♜d6 b6 (D)**



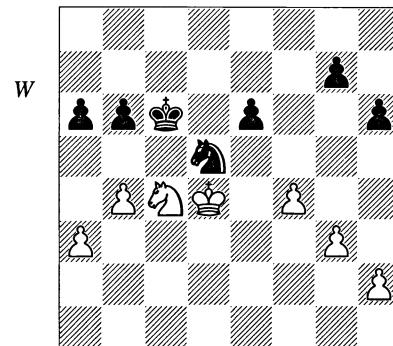
30 ♔d3

This move continues White's plan of advancing his king into the centre, but after Black's inaccuracy at move 28 (28...a6 was necessary), he could actually have won more quickly by 30 ♜c8!; e.g., 30...♜b5 31 a4 ♜c3+ 32 ♜d3 ♜xa4 33 ♜xa7 (threatening 34 ♜c2) 33...♜b2+ 34 ♜d4, and the b6-pawn is doomed.

30...a6 31 ♜c4 ♜d5

Again, the knight defends its pawns. Instead, 31...b5 would fatally weaken the c5-square, via which the white king could penetrate.

32 ♜d4 ♔e7 33 g3 ♜d7 34 f4 ♜c6 (D)

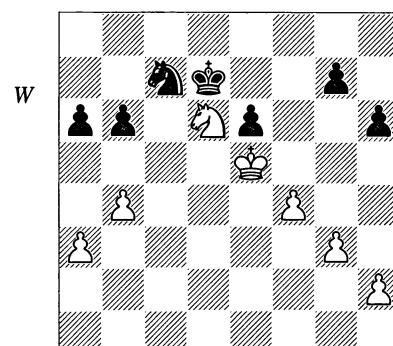


Black understandably seeks to activate his own king, in search of counterplay, but White has things under control.

35 ♔e5 ♜c7

If 35...♜b5, White has the simple move 36 ♜b2!, stopping the black king's progress. Instead, the more aggressive 36 ♜d6+ ♜a4 37 f5 ♜xa3 38 fxe6 looks dangerous, but is less clear; e.g., 38...♜e7 39 ♜f5 ♜g8. Such a position would be very difficult to calculate accurately over the board, whereas 36 ♜b2 stops the counterplay and allows White to strengthen his position more slowly.

36 ♜d6 ♜d7 (D)



37 f5!

An excellent example of the transformation of an advantage. It looks illogical to exchange off Black's principal weakness, but White cannot make further progress in any other way, because his king cannot advance further into Black's position. After the exchange of pawns, White gains the use of the f5- and d5-squares, and this increase in his mobility proves enough to decide the game.

37...exf5 38 ♜xf5 ♜e8 39 g4!

Another example of fixing a weakness. Black would like to free his knight by playing ...h5 and then ...g6, but now he cannot do this, and his knight is tied to e8 to defend the kingside pawns. As a result, he will soon be driven into zugzwang.

39...♜f6 40 h3

White could win more quickly by 40 ♜xh6!, since after 40...♚c6 41 g5 ♜d7+ 42 ♚e6, the knight is still immune in view of 42...gxh6 43 gxh6 ♜f8+ 44 ♜f7 ♜h7 45 h4! followed by 46 ♜g7, winning the knight. This variation also illustrates something very important about knight endings, which is that knights are very bad at fighting against rook's pawns – the proximity of the edge of the board means that the knight soon runs out of squares. Probably because of time-trouble (move 40!), Timman avoids this slightly complicated line, and instead just tightens his grip. Black cannot save the game in any event.

40...h5

If he waits passively with 40...♜e8, simply 41 a4 places him in zugzwang.

41 g5 ♜h7 42 h4 ♜f8

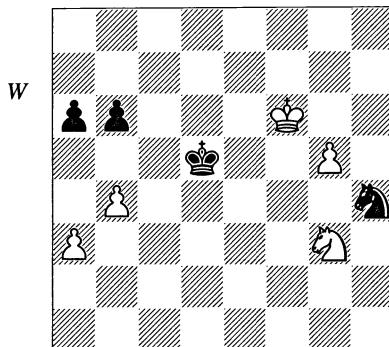
42...g6 43 ♜e3 is equally hopeless for Black. White cannot be prevented from penetrating with his king to f6, after preparation such as ♜d5-f4, for example. In all of these variations, the dominant position of the white king is the key to his victory.

43 ♜xg7 ♜g6+ 44 ♜f6 ♜xh4 45 ♜xh5 ♜c6

46 ♜g3 ♜d5 (D)

47 a4!

Do not hurry! It was still possible to endanger the win by a premature rush with the g-pawn.



After 47 ♜f5 ♜g2! 48 g6? ♜f4! 49 g7 ♜h5+, Black sacrifices his knight for the passed pawn and succeeds in drawing by eliminating the queenside pawns. After Timman's move, however, Black is in zugzwang, and must cede control of the key square e5.

47...b5

47...♚c4 loses in the same fashion as the game: 48 ♜f5 ♜g2 49 ♜e5!, etc.

48 a5 ♜c4 49 ♜f5 ♜g2 50 ♜e5! 1-0

The point – Black's knight cannot get back to stop the g-pawn. The final position neatly underlines the main theme of the whole ending, namely the dominance of the advanced and centralized white king.

The Essential Lessons

- Knight endings are the closest to king and pawn endings.
- The more active king can be a decisive advantage in such endings.
- Always remember the idea of transforming one advantage into another (37 f5!). There is no law which says that if you have a particular advantage, you have to cling on to it for dear life. Frequently, the most effective way to exploit it is to exchange it for some other advantage. Here, Timman swapped his superior pawn-structure for extra central space for his king.
- Knights hate rook's pawns! A passed pawn on the a- or h-file is often the most difficult for a knight to deal with.
- Do not hurry (47 a4)!

Game 46

Yanofsky – Pinkus

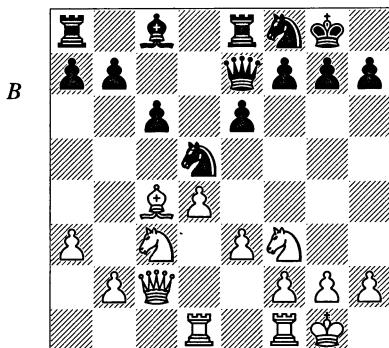
Ventnor City 1942
Queen's Gambit Declined, Orthodox

In endings with same-coloured bishops, it is a fundamental principle that one should try to place one's pawns on squares of the opposite colour from those on which one's bishop travels. Where this is not the case, and pawns are fixed on the same coloured squares as the bishop, this can be a serious, even fatal, disadvantage. In this magnificent ending, Yanofsky demonstrates how to exploit such an advantage.

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 3 c4 e6 4 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 0-0 6 e3 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}c2$

Another means by which White seeks to avoid the main lines of the Orthodox Variation after 7 $\mathbb{Q}c1$. The queen frees d1 for the white rook. Theory considers the best response to be 7...c5, but Black here chooses a more solid option.

7...c6 8 a3 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$?! 10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ dx c 4 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 13 0-0 (D)



Black's play has been rather passive, and he is not able to achieve the usual freeing break ...e5.

13...b6 14 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}ec8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

Black was now ready to free his position by means of the alternative break ...c5, so White clarifies the central pawn-structure.

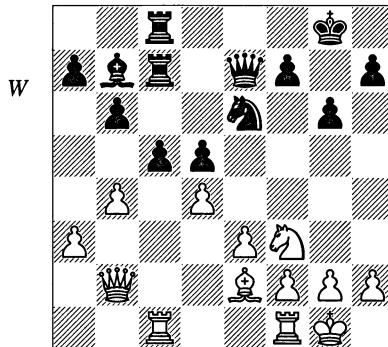
16...exd5

The other recapture 16...cxd5 is also possible, but Black is then slightly worse because of his passive queen's bishop. The recapture with the e-pawn produces a 'Carlsbad' structure, where Black hopes to be able to achieve the pawn-break ...c5.

17 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 18 b4

White immediately takes steps to hamper the freeing break.

18...g6 19 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ c5 (D)



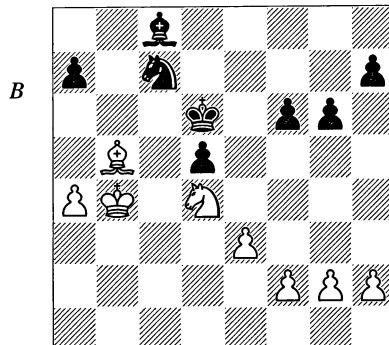
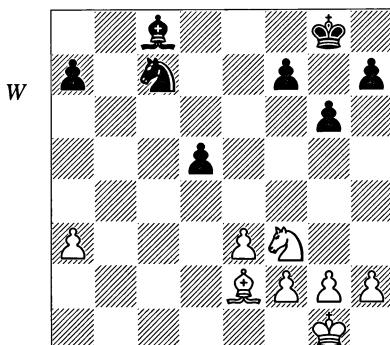
Black forces through the break, but only at the cost of an isolated d-pawn. He hopes that the heavy simplification which now ensues along the c-file will minimize his disadvantage.

22 bxc5 bxc5 23 dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}b4$

White is happy to go along with the simplification of the position, because he realizes that his best chance of exploiting Black's structural weakness is in the ending.

24... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xc8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ (D)

This type of minor-piece ending is typical of positions with an IQP. White has some advantage because of his superior pawn-structure and the fact that Black's bishop is slightly hampered by the d5-pawn. Extensive practical experience suggests that such endings are usually tenable, but they require accurate defence, and in practice, many games have been lost by Black in such positions. Voluntarily chopping

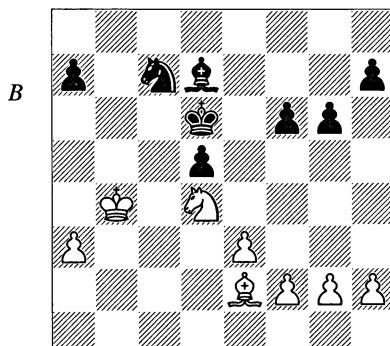


down into such an ending as Black is strictly for masochists only.

29 ♜d4 ♜d7 30 ♛f1 ♜f8

The first step for both sides is to activate their king.

31 ♛e1 ♛e7 32 ♛d2 ♛d6 33 ♛c3 f6 34 ♛b4 (D)



One thing which makes this ending slightly worse than usual for Black is the absence of b-pawns. More often, this structure is reached with each side having a b-pawn, which allows Black to place his pawns on a7 and b6. The b6-pawn then guards the c5-square from entry by the white king, which eases Black's defensive task. Here, Black's king has to perform this role, and the chances of zugzwang are consequently increased.

34...♜e8 35 ♜b5 ♜f7

Clearly forced, since the king and pawn ending after a double exchange would be hopeless, while capturing once on b5 would lose the a-pawn after 36 ♜xb5+.

36 a4 ♜e6 37 ♜b3 ♜c8 38 ♜d4 (D)

38...♜e6

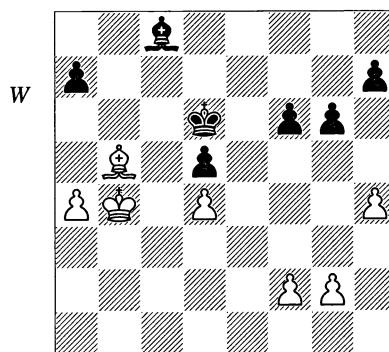
Black has no active plan and can only wait to see how White will attempt to strengthen his

position. Note that the random prodding of the bishop by 38...a6? would be a bad mistake, because after 39 ♜d3 the a-pawn would soon fall prey to the white king after ♛a5. In endings with same-coloured bishops, it is almost always wrong to fix one's pawns on the same colour squares as one's bishop. Rather than making the pawns easy to defend, this merely weakens the squares of the opposite colour, along which the enemy king can penetrate, as well as making one's bishop bad. This theme will become clearer later in the game.

39 ♜d3 ♜d7 40 h4 ♜e6?!

A big decision, and probably a bad one. Tired of waiting passively, and constantly having to calculate the consequences of ♜b5+, Black decides to exchange knights and bring about a pure bishop ending. With hindsight, this can be seen to be wrong, so Black should sit tight, but his position is still very unpleasant, and it is much easier to give such advice than to take it. White can quietly go on improving his position by advancing his kingside pawns to gain space.

41 ♜b5 ♜xd4 42 exd4 ♜c8 (D)



White appears to have a relatively small advantage, and it is certainly hard to believe that

Black is lost. Indeed, Yanofsky records that the game was adjourned at this point, and all of the other competitors in the tournament agreed that it was drawn. However, the superior position of the white king, combined with Black's inferior bishop, prove sufficient for White to fashion an impressive and instructive win.

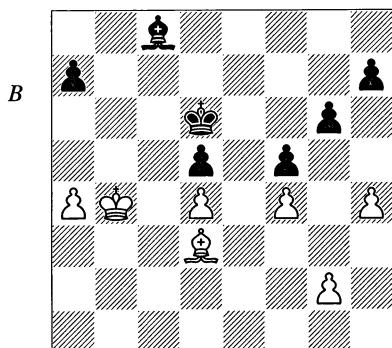
43 ♘d3

The first stage of White's plan is to fix Black's kingside pawns on light squares, thereby making his bishop even worse, and also giving White's king a potential entry route on the weakened dark squares.

43...f5

Cooperative, but White intends g3 followed by h5. Black can try to meet this threat by using his bishop to prevent the h5 break, but then White can switch his attention back to the queenside (two weaknesses again!). Yanofsky gives an instructive sample variation: 43...♗d7 44 g3 ♘e8 (now the bishop has left the queenside and no longer covers the a6-square) 45 ♘b5! ♘f7 46 ♘a5 (heading for the freshly-weakened square) 46...♔c7 (he must defend the a7-pawn) 47 ♘a6 ♘b8 (now Black's king is tied down, and White can arrange to get his own king to c5) 48 a5 g5 (Black is virtually in zugzwang) 49 f4 h6 50 ♘a4 (now there is no 'virtually' about it – zugzwang it is) 50...♗e6 51 ♘e8! and now White is ready for ♘b5-c5, followed by ♘a4-b3, and the d5-pawn falls. This variation is typical of the difficulties Black faces in this ending.

44 f4 (D)

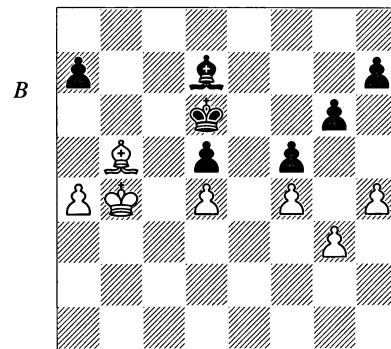


Now the pawns are fixed on light squares. The next stage of White's plan is to play h5. He will then have two options – either to exchange on g6, leaving Black with a weak pawn on g6,

which can be attacked by ♘e8 at some stage, or to play h6, when there would be threats of getting the white bishop round the back to g8, or sacrificing on g6.

44...♗e6 45 g3 ♘d7 46 ♘b5! (D)

The immediate 46 ♘e2 does not get anywhere, because of 46...♗e8. It is clear that Black's bishop is ideally placed on d7, where it can go to either c8 or e8, depending on whether it is needed on the queenside or the kingside. Yanofsky therefore drives the bishop off this key 'pivot' square, as he calls it.



46...♔c8

Now after White's reply, the bishop can no longer get to e8. However, if the bishop had stayed on the kingside with 46...♗e6 (the idea is that after 47 ♘e2 ♘f7, Black again stops White's h5 advance), White's king would then penetrate on the queenside with 47 ♘a5 ♘c7 48 ♘a6, with variations very similar to those examined in the note to move 43. At the risk of repeating myself, White's whole play is based around the principle of two weaknesses.

47 ♘e2

Now 48 h5 can only be prevented by Black himself playing 47...h5, after which White wins easily by 48 ♘b5 followed by ♘e8.

47...♘c6 48 h5 gxh5

Rather than allow a fresh weakness to be created on g6, Black exchanges pawns, but now his f5-pawn is another weakness. He hopes that the f5-pawn will be easier to defend than g6.

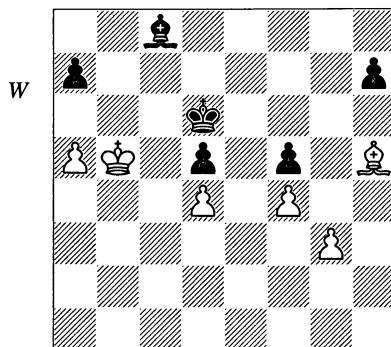
49 ♘xh5 ♘b6 50 a5+ ♘c6

50...♔a6 loses at once after 51 ♘f7 ♘b7 52 ♘e6.

51 ♘e8+

Forcing the black king to give way and allow the white king to inch further into Black's camp.

51... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 52 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 53 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ (D)



White has made substantial progress over the past dozen moves. By the continual use of zugzwang, he drives Black further back and eventually wins a pawn.

54 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 55 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$

Black can only oscillate his bishop between the b7- and c8-squares, since a king move will allow White's king into c5, while any other bishop move will allow it into a6.

56 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $h6$ 57 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$

Zugzwang is accomplished. 57...h5 would lose a pawn after 58 $\mathbb{Q}e2$, so Black must lose material. His last chance is to let the a7-pawn go, with the idea of imprisoning the white king, but this attempt too will be defeated by zugzwang.

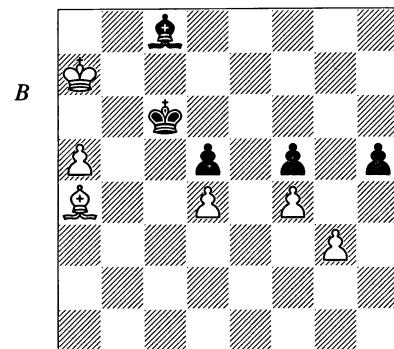
57... $\mathbb{Q}d7+$ 58 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 59 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 60 $\mathbb{Q}c2!$

Zugzwang again. Now 60... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ allows the white king out via a6 and b5; e.g., 61 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 62 $\mathbb{Q}d3$, with another zugzwang.

60...h5

Now the h-pawn is lost.

61 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 62 $\mathbb{Q}a4+!$ (D)



Do not hurry! The h5-pawn is not going anywhere, so White has no need to permit Black to win the a-pawn by ... $\mathbb{Q}b5$.

62... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 63 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 64 $a6$ 1-0

A final zugzwang arises after 64... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 65 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 66 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 67 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 68 $\mathbb{Q}g8!$, when Black must either lose the d5-pawn or allow 69 $\mathbb{Q}b8$, when the a-pawn queens. A superbly-played ending by Yanofsky, which justly won him the prize for the best endgame of the tournament.

The Essential Lessons

- In endings with same-coloured bishops, one should strive at all costs to avoid having one's pawns fixed on the same colour squares as one's bishop.
- The king is a strong piece in the endgame, and the more active king can easily be part of a decisive advantage.
- Zugzwang is a vital weapon in many endings. If Black had been able to 'pass' when he wished, he would not have lost – even the final position of the game would be a draw without zugzwang.
- Do not hurry!

Game 47

Plater – Botvinnik

Chigorin Memorial, Moscow 1947

Sicilian Defence, 2 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

In this game, we return to the theme of bishop versus knight, some middlegame examples of which we examined earlier in the book. In the endgame, similar considerations apply, with the bishop generally being superior when the position is not blocked, and there is play on both sides of the board. This is the case here, and the game also provides more instruction on the value of controlling the only open file with a rook.

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

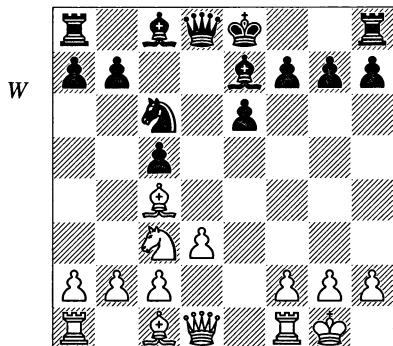
An unusual move, favoured by the great Paul Keres. In some cases, it can transpose back into normal lines, but White also has the option to play 3 g3 and head for a type of Closed Sicilian.

2... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}bc3$ d5

Black avoids a transposition into an Open Sicilian, but this forthright approach is not necessarily best.

4 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}c3$??!

Keres himself demonstrated that Black has some problems to solve after 6 d4. After the text-move, Black secures good control of the centre, especially the d4-square, and White is soon struggling to equalize.

6... $\mathbb{W}d8$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8 d3 e6 9 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (D)**10 f4??!**

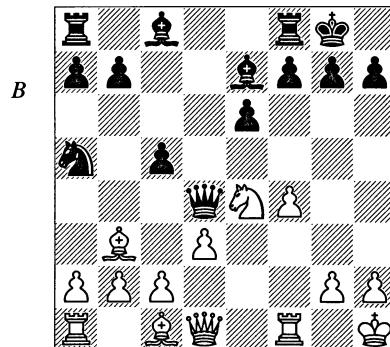
This positionally ugly move aims at a king-side attack, but White has little justification for such expectations. Meanwhile, the move weakens White's central position, and normal development by 10 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ is more likely to retain equality.

10...0-0 11 $\mathbb{Q}e4$?

Missing Black's follow-up, after which White lands by force in an unpleasant ending. 11 a3 is correct, making a bolt-hole for the bishop.

11... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}d4$!!

Black would be doing well after simply 12... $\mathbb{Q}xb3$, annexing the bishop-pair, but this is even better.

13 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ (D)**13...c4**

The point. Now 14 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ cxd3 would leave White with a sickly pawn on d3, so his next move is forced.

14 c3 $\mathbb{W}xd3$ 15 $\mathbb{W}xd3$ cxd3 16 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}e3$

19 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ is even worse due to 19... $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$! and Black secures the bishop-pair.

19... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$

Black seizes control of the only open file and, with it, a clear advantage.

21 $\mathbb{Q}e4$

21... $\mathbb{Q}d2$ was threatened, and 21 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}xd1$ + 22 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ is no help.

21...h6 22 $\mathbb{Q}ae1$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$

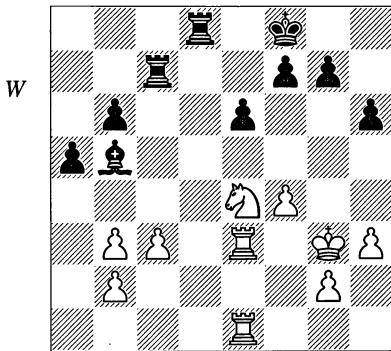
Now that the white rook has left the a-file, Black captures on b3, leaving himself with a

bishop versus a knight. On an open board such as this, the bishop is much stronger.

23 axb3 a5!

A typical move. Black intends to arrange his queenside pawns on a5 and b6. By placing the pawns on the opposite colour from his bishop, Black ensures maximum harmony between bishop and pawns – the former controls the light squares, the latter the dark. White's doubled pawn means that his queenside majority cannot easily manufacture a passed pawn, whereas Black has a healthy majority on the other flank, and can in due course create a passed pawn on the e-file. With these pluses, in addition to his control of the open file, Black's positional advantage is already decisive.

24 h3 $\mathbb{B}ac8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{B}c7$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ b6 (D)



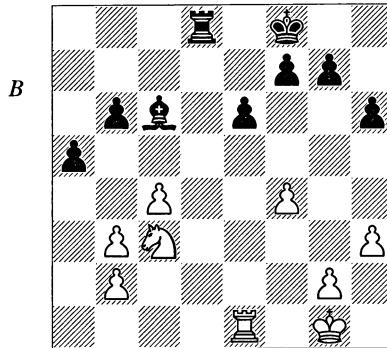
28 $\mathbb{Q}h2$

White cannot centralize his king with 28 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ because of 28...f5 followed by 29... $\mathbb{B}d2+$. Notice how in this line, Black's pawns on b6 and h6 prevent the white knight from jumping to c5 or g5 to attack the e6-pawn. The use of such pawn moves to deprive the knight of good squares is a typical part of the technique of exploiting a bishop versus a knight in an open position.

28... $\mathbb{B}cd7$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{B}d1$ 30 c4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{B}xe1+$

It may seem a little strange to exchange off Black's more active rook for its passive white counterpart, but such exchanges are often necessary in order to increase the advantage. At present, although less active than their opponents, the white rooks defend key squares in his camp, and prevent Black from infiltrating. Once one or both rooks are exchanged, it becomes more difficult to keep the black pieces out.

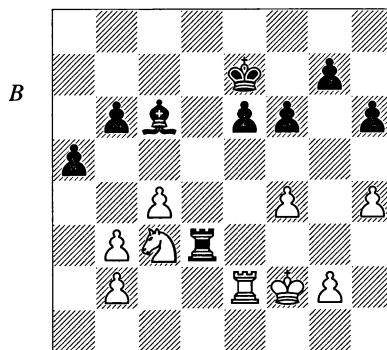
32 $\mathbb{B}xe1$ (D)



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

32... $\mathbb{B}d2$ does not accomplish anything as yet due to 33 $\mathbb{B}e2$, so Black strengthens his position by improving his king. White has no counterplay, so there is no hurry.

33 $\mathbb{B}e2$ f6 34 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{B}d3$ 35 h4?! (D)

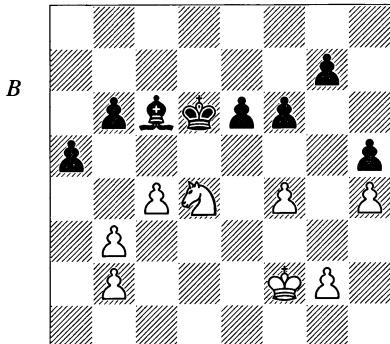


This weakens the g4-square, and exposes the h-pawn to a later infiltration by the black king on g4, but it is not easy to find any constructive moves for White. He probably reasoned that getting the pawn off a light square would make it less vulnerable to Black's bishop.

35...h5 36 $\mathbb{B}e3$ $\mathbb{B}d2+?$

An interesting choice. Black turns down the chance to play 36... $\mathbb{B}xe3$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$, since after 38 $\mathbb{Q}a4$, White regains the pawn. However, continuing this line further, the entry of the black king would then decide the game after 38... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$, when the king gets to b4. In some time-trouble, Botvinnik prefers to take it more slowly, confident that his position is winning in the long term anyway.

37 $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{B}d3$ 38 $\mathbb{B}e3$ $\mathbb{B}d2+$ 39 $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{B}xe2+$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ (D)



41...g6!

Another example of the theme we saw earlier in the game. Black arranges his pawns so as to deprive the white knight of good central posts. The threat now is 42...e5, establishing a passed pawn. If played immediately, of course, White could answer 42 $\mathbb{Q}f5+$.

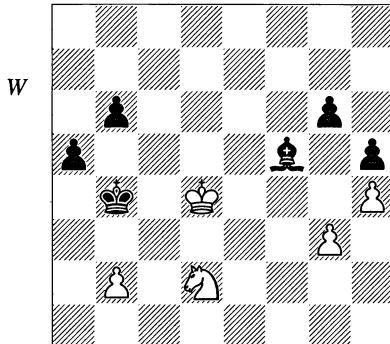
42 g3

White gets his g-pawn off the vulnerable square, so as to free his king, but Black already has a decisive advantage.

42...e5 43 fxe5+ fxe5 44 $\mathbb{Q}c2$

The knight tries to prevent the black king from entering on b4.

44... $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ (D)



The bishop easily protects g6, while still having a major influence on the queenside. This is the great advantage of the long-range bishop on an open board. The knight, by contrast, is effective when the play is all taking place in a localized area, but it cannot influence events from afar.

53 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ b5 54 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ a4 55 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}h3!$

A nice piece of precision. Black could play for ...a3, creating a passed b-pawn, but he prefers to play ...b4 and then ...a3, so that he can recapture on a3 with the pawn. Why? Because knights hate rook's pawns! In order to play ...b4, Black needs to get his king to c5, so he uses the bishop to drive the white king away.

56 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}g2$

Zugzwang. White's king must cede Black access to c5.

57 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 58 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ b4+ 59 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 60 $\mathbb{Q}b1$

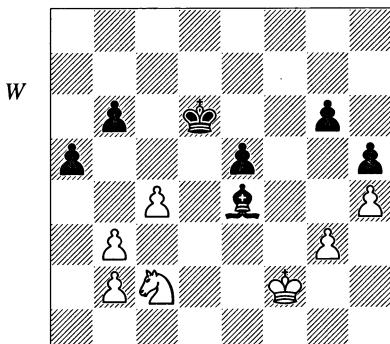
The knight stops ...a3, but is soon driven away.

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

Threatening 61... $\mathbb{Q}f5+$.

61 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ 62 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 0-1

The a-pawn queens.



And Black, in turn, immediately forces the knight away.

45 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 48 $\mathbb{Q}d2$

Taking on e5 would lose both b-pawns, after which the black a5-pawn would decide.

48... $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 49 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 50 $\mathbb{Q}e4$

White's last hope of counterplay is to get his king amongst the black pawns.

50... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 51 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 52 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ (D)

The Essential Lessons

- On an open board, where there is play on both sides, a bishop is usually superior to a knight. This is because its longer range enables it to exert influence on more than one part of the board at the same time.
- Notice how Black used his pawns on the opposite-coloured squares from his bishop to deprive the enemy knight of good squares (21...h6, 27...b6, 41...g6!).
- Knights hate rook's pawns!

Game 48

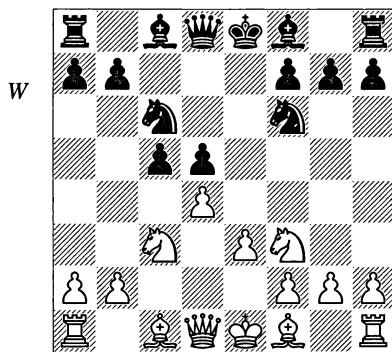
Ribli – Grünfeld

Interzonal, Riga 1979

Queen's Gambit Declined, Symmetrical Tarrasch

Opposite-coloured bishops are a notorious drawing factor, but in contrast to what many people think, they are much less drawish when other pieces are also on the board. In this example, the players also have a rook each, and White is able to win a position with an extra pawn, which would be totally drawn in the absence of the rooks.

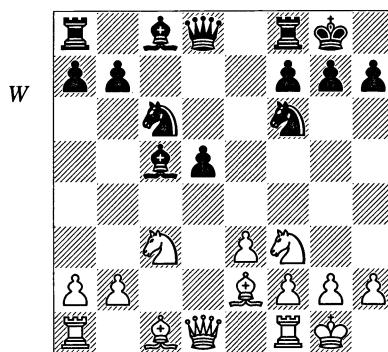
1 c4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 4 e3 d5 5 d4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6 cxd5 exd5 (D)



The game has transposed into a variation of the Tarrasch Defence to the Queen's Gambit, characterized by the early move ...c5 by Black. In this way, Black frees his game far more easily than in the Orthodox Defence and other lines of the opening. However, there is no such thing as a free lunch in chess, and this freedom comes at the price of accepting an IQP. Dr Tarrasch particularly loathed cramped positions, and was always prepared to accept pawn weaknesses, if in return he could achieve activity for his pieces. He insisted that his defence (1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c5) was the only correct response to the Queen's Gambit, but over the years few top players have agreed with him and the line has been regarded with suspicion for most of the last 75 years. Interestingly, though, it has attracted short-term support from two world champions. The defence was instrumental in Spassky winning the world title from Petrosian in 1969, while Kasparov also played it very successfully in his youth. It should be noted that the transposition which has occurred in the present game has enabled Black to avoid what

is regarded as White's strongest set-up against the Tarrasch, namely that with g3 and $\mathbb{Q}g2$.

7 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8 0-0 0-0 9 dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ (D)

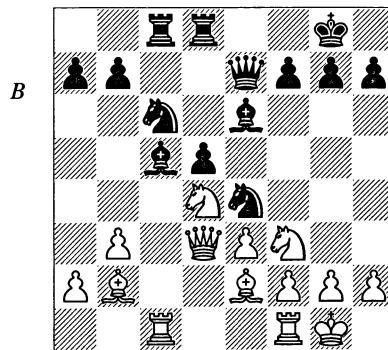


Again, we have the familiar IQP structure, which we have seen several times in this book.

10 b3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}b5$

White directs his pieces towards the d4-square, in thematic fashion.

12... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}bd4$ (D)



15... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$?

This move and the next look suspiciously passive. 15... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ is more natural.

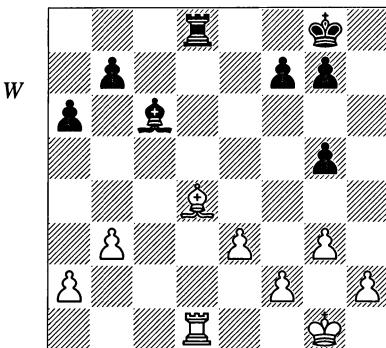
16 ♘xd4 ♖d7 17 ♘f3

We noted earlier in the book (see Game 20, Karpov-Spassky, for example) that the player who is opposing the IQP is often happy to exchange knights. Not only are knights useful pieces in such positions, but the exchange of one pair here has freed the f3-square for White's bishop, from where it pressurizes the IQP. In the earlier game, we saw Karpov play ♘e5 followed by ♘f3, in similar fashion.

17...a6 18 ♕fd1 h6 19 ♕c2 ♖d6 20 g3 ♕xc2 21 ♕xc2 ♖e5?

Black has played unimpressively and simply stands worse, but this move donates a pawn for nothing. It is hard to imagine what Black had in mind, but unless it was a pure oversight, which seems unlikely, then one must conclude that he hoped the opposite-coloured bishops would enable him to draw the ending. If so, he was sorely mistaken, as we shall see.

22 ♖xe4 dxe4 23 ♕xe4 ♖c6 24 ♕g4 ♖xd4 25 ♖xd4 ♕g5 26 ♕xg5 hxg5 (D)



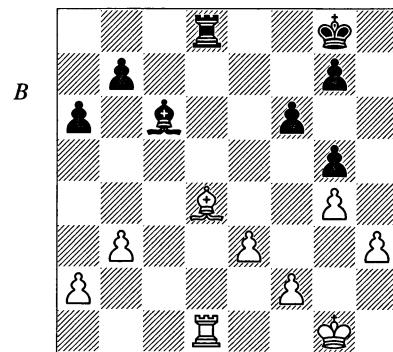
The drawing propensity of opposite-coloured bishops is well known. With the bishops each able to attack squares of only one colour, it is frequently possible to establish a fortress-like position, where the defender is able to blockade a passed pawn on squares which only *his* bishop can control. In such a case, one, two, or occasionally even three extra pawns can be insufficient to win in a pure opposite-coloured bishop ending. In order to win such an ending, the stronger side usually needs to establish two passed pawns, fairly wide apart, in order to break the defence by application of the principle of two weaknesses. However, once one adds additional pieces to the board, this barren picture of drawishness rapidly disappears. Even

one pair of rooks each, as we have here, can make all the difference. Indeed, in many positions, having opposite-coloured bishops in conjunction with other pieces can actually enhance one's advantage, because if the attacker can identify a target which is fixed on squares of the same colour as those on which his bishop travels, he effectively has an extra piece with which to attack it. Taking the present position, White has an extra pawn, and Black's kingside pawns are doubled. Without the rooks, White would not have a vestige of a winning chance, because he cannot create a second passed pawn on the queenside. With rooks on, however, he has much greater chances.

27 h3!

White's long-term plan is to create a passed pawn out of his kingside majority, and so he does not want the majority crippled by Black playing ...g4.

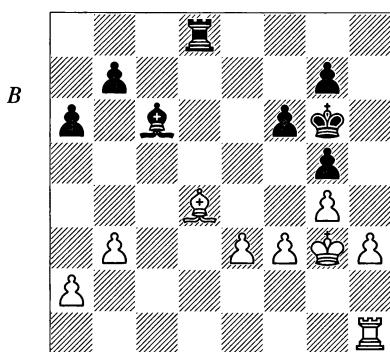
27...f6 28 g4 (D)



In examining the ending Yanofsky-Pinkus (Game 46), we made the point that in bishop endings, one should place one's pawns on the opposite-coloured squares from those on which one's bishop travels. However, in opposite-coloured bishop endings the situation is different. In such endings, the normal advice is to place one's pawns on squares of the same colour as one's bishop. This is part of the 'fortress' mentality which underlies such endings. By placing one's pawns thus, they can be defended by one's bishop, whereas the enemy bishop cannot attack them. So far, so good. But in that case, why does Ribli go out of his way to fix his kingside pawns on light squares, when he has a dark-squared bishop? Well, unfortunately, the rule I have just quoted only applies when the

ending is one of pure opposite-coloured bishops. When one has opposite bishops plus other pieces, such as here, the normal rule applies again – put one's pawns on squares of the opposite colour from one's bishop. This is what Ribli does. He is fixing the black pawns on dark squares, so that he can later attack them with his combined force of rook plus bishop.

28... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{B}d7$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 31 $f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 32 $\mathbb{B}h1$ (D)



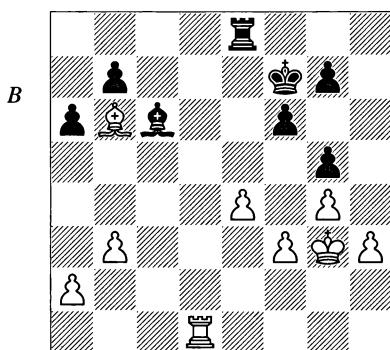
Having first improved his king, White now announces his plan. He wants to play h4, so as to induce Black to exchange pawns on h4. Once the black g5-pawn is thus eliminated, White will continue f4 and then e4-e5, mobilizing his kingside majority and creating a passed pawn on the e-file. Black therefore plays his own rook to the h-file to prevent this plan.

32... $\mathbb{B}h8$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}b6!$

Seize every small advantage! White immediately takes advantage of Black's last move, to seize control of the open d-file.

33... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 34 $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 35 $e4$ (D)

Now that his king no longer needs to defend the f3-pawn, White threatens to return to his plan of playing h4.



35... $\mathbb{B}e7?$!

Black falls in with White's plans. He could stop h4 by playing 35... $\mathbb{B}h8$, but presumably did not like the reply 36 $\mathbb{B}d6$, after which his position is rather uncomfortable. He must constantly worry about White playing e5, since if Black had to exchange on e5, he would be left with serious weaknesses on g5 and g7. In these lines, he would be handicapped by the passive position of his rook on h8. Grünfeld therefore decides to keep his rook active in the centre, even if it means allowing White his intended kingside break with h4.

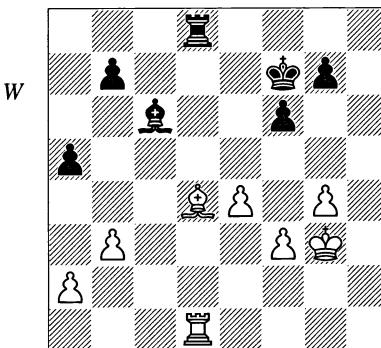
36 $h4$ $gxh4+$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ $\mathbb{B}d7$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}d4$

From our earlier discussion, it is clear that White cannot allow the exchange of rooks.

38... $\mathbb{B}d8??$

Rather passive. In this ending, as with most others, the defender usually benefits from exchanging pawns, so 38...a5 is logical, intending ...a4.

39 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ a5 (D)



Now returning to the right idea, but a tempo down.

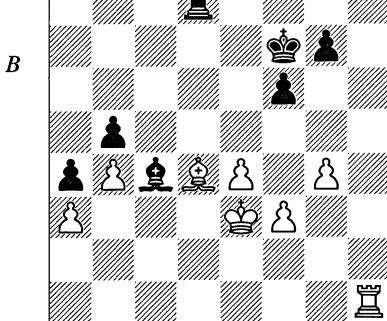
40 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ a4 41 b4 $\mathbb{Q}b5$

Fixing the a2-pawn by 41...a3 is more obvious, but then after 42 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 43 $\mathbb{B}c1$, White prevents the bishop from getting to c4. Note that had Black played 38...a5, White's king would be one square further away, and he would not have been able to play $\mathbb{B}c1$, because the d4-bishop would be undefended. Thus, Black's tempo loss at move 38 proves costly.

42 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 43 a3 $\mathbb{Q}b5$

The next stage of White's plan involves the advance f4-f5, fixing Black's kingside pawns on dark squares.

44 $\mathbb{B}h1!$ (D)

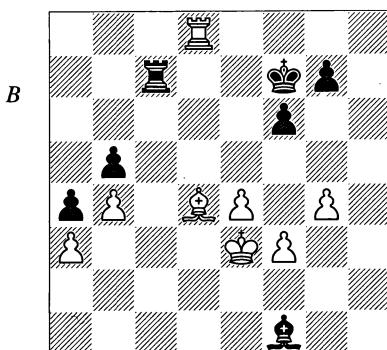


Do not hurry; seize every small advantage! The advance f4-f5 cannot be prevented, so White first seizes control of the open h-file. The file may prove valuable, or it may not, but since White has no need to rush with his kingside pawn advance, it makes sense to take the file anyway, just in case.

44...♜c8 45 ♜h5 ♜f1 46 ♜d5 ♜c7

47 ♜d7+ was a threat, but now the white rook's penetration to the 8th rank is decisive.

47 ♜d8 (D)

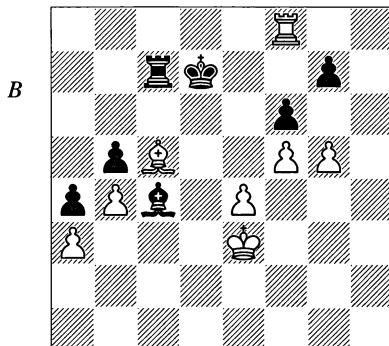


A combination of f4-f5, ♜c5 and ♜f8+ will drive Black's king away from the defence of his kingside pawns.

47...♚e6 48 f4 ♜c4 49 ♜c5!

Suddenly, the black king faces mating threats after f5+.

49...♚f7 50 ♜f8+ ♜e6 51 f5+ ♜d7 52 g5!
(D)



The final blow. Black's kingside collapses and the white pawns come through decisively.

52...♜c6 53 g6

Now the g7-pawn is doomed, in view of ♜f7 and ♜f8.

53...♜c7 54 ♜f7+ ♜c6 55 ♜xc7+

Now, at last, White can afford to exchange rooks.

55...♚xc7 56 ♜f8 1-0

White will take on g7, followed by ♜f4 and e5, forcing two connected passed pawns.

The Essential Lessons

- While pure opposite-coloured bishop endings tend to be drawish, this is much less so when other pieces are on the board.
- Seize every small advantage (33 ♜b6!, 44 ♜h1!).
- In pure opposite-coloured bishop endings, it is usually correct to place one's pawns on the same coloured squares as one's bishop, so that the bishop can defend them. In all other endings, however, including opposite bishops plus rooks, the normal rule applies – place one's pawns on squares of the opposite colour from those on which one's bishop travels.

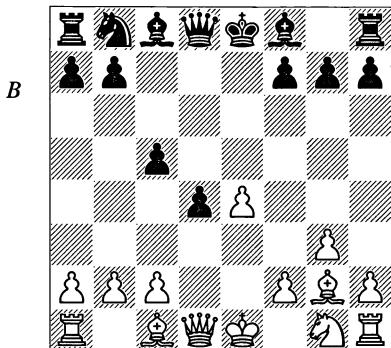
Game 49
Gulko – Kremenetsky
Moscow Ch 1983
 Sicilian, Closed

We examined earlier several games where two bishops opposed a bishop and knight. Here we see the same balance of forces in the endgame. Gulko gives a model demonstration of how to exploit the advantage of the bishop-pair.

1 e4 c5 2 ♜c3 e6 3 g3 d5

Black has chosen a relatively rare, but solid, defence to the Closed Sicilian. Instead of playing in a reversed English style with 2... ♜c6 followed by 3...g6, Black prefers immediate occupation of the centre with his pawns.

4 exd5 exd5 5 ♜g2 ♜f6 6 d3 d4 7 ♜e4 ♜xe4 8 dxе4!? (D)



Recapturing with the bishop would be less good, because White would sooner or later have to lose time returning the bishop to g2. The text-move also unbalances the pawn-structure, producing a more interesting position.

8...♜e7 9 ♜e2 0-0 10 0-0 ♜d7?!

This is rather unnatural, and developing the knight to c6 seems better.

11 c3!

Immediately seizing on Black's inaccuracy to liquidate his centre pawn.

11...dxс3 12 ♜xc3 ♜f6 13 ♜e3!

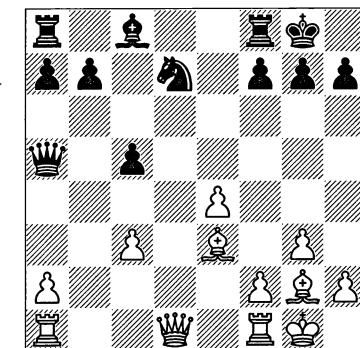
The start of a deeply thought-out plan. The obvious 13 ♜d5 is less effective due to 13... ♜d4 followed by ... ♜b6.

13...♜xc3

This is practically forced, since Black cannot otherwise develop his queenside pieces. The knight is tied to defending the c5-pawn, and the

queen cannot find a suitable square from which to take over this job because of the possibility of White playing ♜d5.

14 bxc3 ♜a5 (D)



15 ♜d5!

An excellent positional pawn sacrifice to develop the initiative. White has the long-term advantage of the bishop-pair, but he also has a short-term advantage, namely a lead in development. Quiet play such as 15 ♜c2 would allow Black to catch up in development with 15... ♜e5, when White would not have very much. Instead, Gulko uses his development advantage to make it hard for Black to develop his pieces, to which end he is prepared to sacrifice a pawn.

15...♜e8

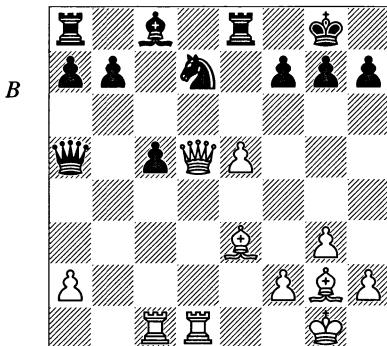
The immediate 15... ♜xc3 is met by 16 ♜ac1 ♜a5 17 e5! (stronger than recapturing on c5), when Black would be very tied up.

16 ♜fd1

Reminding Black that he has back-rank problems. Thus, if now 16... ♜f6, then 17 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 18 ♜xc5, and Black cannot take the e4-pawn because of the back-rank mate.

16...♜xc3 17 ♜ac1 ♜a5 18 e5! (D)

Once again, this is much stronger than tamely recapturing the c5-pawn. Now White's



g2-bishop is tremendously strong, bearing down on Black's immobilized queenside. Of course, the e5-pawn is *en prise*, but for tactical reasons, Black cannot take and keep it, as we shall see. This is another example of using tactics to achieve positional ends. Gulko sees that Black's only method of freeing himself is to take on e5, but this leads by force to an inferior ending.

18...♝xe5

18...♝xe5 loses a piece because of the back-rank weakness: 19 ♜xc5 ♛a4 (else 20 ♜xe5) 20 ♜d4, followed by 21 ♜xe5.

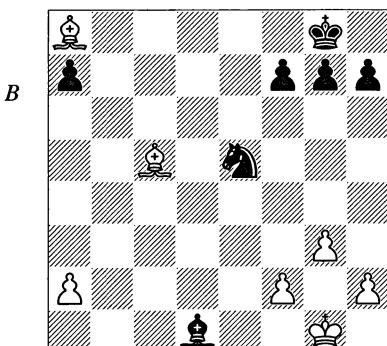
19 ♜xe5! ♜xe5 20 ♜xc5 ♜xc5

Black has no choice but to return the queen, since he must guard against the back-rank mate, and after 20...♜b6 21 ♜xe5, he cannot guard both d8 and e8.

21 ♜xc5 ♜g4

And this is also forced, since if he allows ♜d8+, he will never be able to develop his queenside.

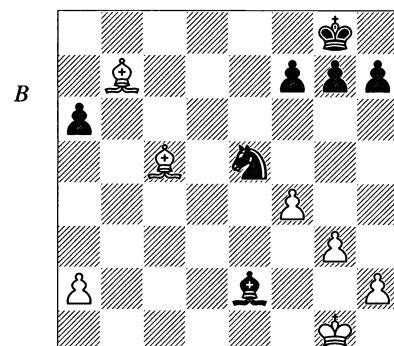
22 ♜xb7 ♜xd1 23 ♜xa8 (D)



This is the ending White had foreseen when playing his 15th move. Thanks to his concrete play over the last few moves, he has obtained exactly the sort of two bishops vs bishop and

knight ending that he wanted. In such an open position, with pawns on both sides of the board, the bishop-pair is often a decisive advantage. Gulko now realizes his advantage in excellent and instructive style, using many of the technical points we have encountered in the previous few games.

23...a6 24 ♜b7 ♜e2 25 f4 (D)

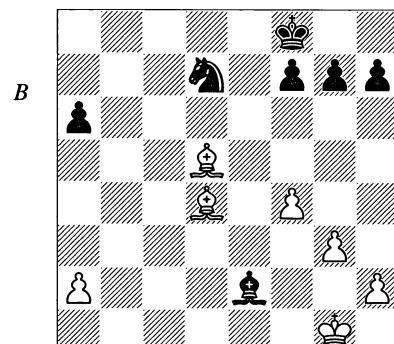


Driving the knight from its active post in the centre of the board. We saw this idea in Plater-Botvinnik (Game 47).

25...♝d7 26 ♜d4!

From this square, the bishop 'dominates' the knight. By contrast, Gulko points out that 26 ♜b4? would be less good, since it allows the black knight to become active: after 26...♝d6 27 ♜f2 ♜c4 28 a3 ♜d5 29 ♜d2 f5!, Black has established a barrier in the centre, keeping out the white king, and the position is drawn. The key lesson is: do not allow unnecessary counterplay!

26...♝f8 27 ♜d5 (D)



Forcing weaknesses. Black must weaken his kingside pawns in order to free his king.

27...g6

Here is the weakness. Now there is a long-term possibility of the white king infiltrating via f6 or h6. It may never happen, but the chance is there (seize every advantage!).

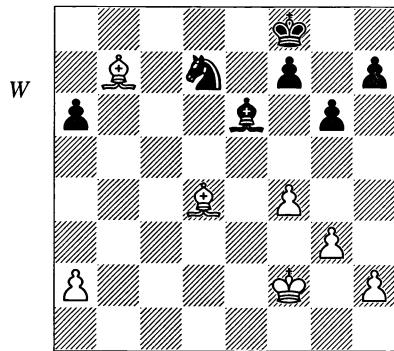
28 ♘f2

Centralizing the king.

28... ♗g4 29 ♗b7!

Do not hurry – always look for the opponent's threats! 29 ♔e3? ♘e6! forces off one of White's bishops, which would reduce his advantage substantially.

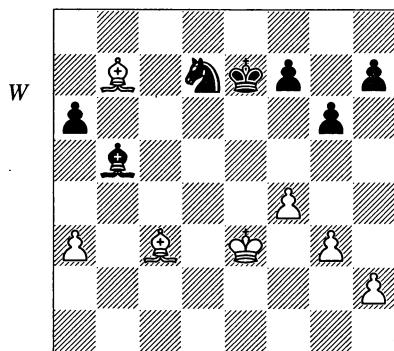
29... ♗e6 (D)



30 a3

This is also an important move. The advantage of bishops over knights is that they are more effective at long range, which means when there is play on both sides of the board. Exchanging a-pawns would leave White with only an insignificant advantage, since all the remaining play would be confined to the kingside, and the knight's short range would not be a problem. White's strategy is not to exchange a-pawns, but to win Black's a-pawn for nothing.

30... ♗c4 31 ♔e3 ♗e7 32 ♗c3 ♗b5 (D)



33 g4!

Absolutely typical for such positions. White aims to increase his space advantage and fix Black's kingside pawns as a weakness. This is another application of our beloved principle of two weaknesses – one weakness is the a-pawn, and White wishes to create another on the other side of the board, so as to stretch the defence to the maximum.

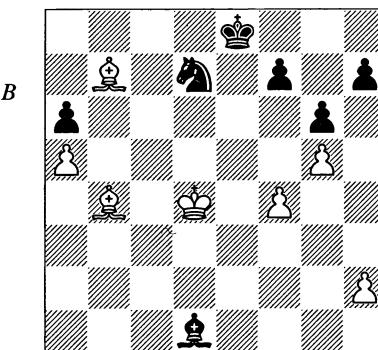
33... ♗e8 34 ♘d4 ♗e2 35 g5

Now the h7-pawn is fixed as a weakness.

35... ♗e7 36 ♗b4+ ♗e8 37 a4

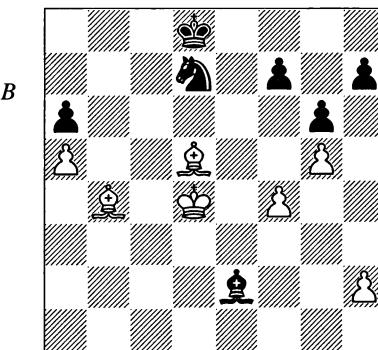
The a-pawn is White's potential queen, so it begins its advance towards the queening square, and also prepares to fix Black's a-pawn.

37... ♗d1 38 a5 (D)



Advancing the a- and g-pawns also had another purpose – to deprive the black knight of the squares b6 and f6. This knight is now a very poor piece, having no active squares to which it can move.

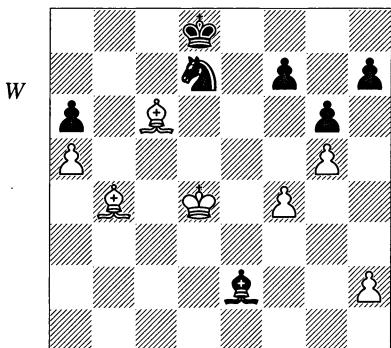
38... ♗e2 39 ♗c6 ♔d8 40 ♗d5 (D)



Forcing the black king back to defend f7, since after 40...f6 41 ♗g8 White wins the h7-pawn, providing another illustration of the value of White's g4-g5 plan.

40...♝e8 41 ♜c6

This repetition of moves is another very typical endgame technique. Not only does White gain time on the clock, but he also puts more psychological pressure on the defender, underlining his helplessness. Very often in such situations, the defender loses patience and commits an error, easing the stronger side's task.

41...♝d8 (D)**42 ♜d6!**

White's basic winning plan is to play ♜d5 and ♜c4, winning the a6-pawn, but before doing so, he first restricts the activity of Black's king (do not hurry – seize every small advantage before undertaking the decisive action).

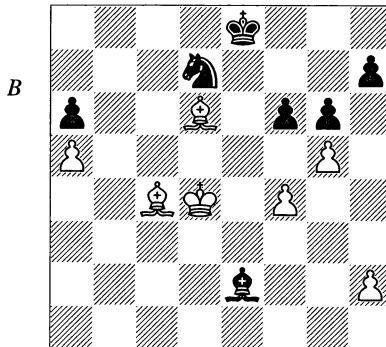
42...♝e8 43 ♜d5 f6

If he plays passively with 43...♝f1, there comes 44 ♜c4 ♜xc4 45 ♜xc4 and the white king wins the a-pawn after 45...♝d8 46 ♜d5 ♜c8 47 ♜c6, etc. Note the important role played in this variation by the position of White's remaining bishop – thanks to 42 ♜d6!, the black king cannot get to c7 in time to keep out the white king, another illustration of the value of

seizing all these small advantages before proceeding with the winning plan.

44 ♜c4 (D)

44 ♜g8 also wins, but Gukko sticks to his original plan.

**44...♜xc4 45 ♜xc4 fxg5 46 fxg5 1-0**

The white king will march in and take the a6-pawn.

The Essential Lessons

- Two bishops versus bishop and knight can be a decisive advantage in many endgame positions.
- The bishops need play on both sides of the board (30 a3). If the play is confined to one side, the superiority of the bishop over the knight is much less marked, if indeed it exists at all.
- Remember the principle of two weaknesses (33 g4!).
- Do not hurry, or allow unnecessary counterplay (26 ♜d4!, 29 ♜b7!, 42 ♜d6!).
- Don't be afraid to repeat moves when the opponent has no counterplay (41 ♜c6).

Game 50
Ciocaltea – Unzicker
Alekhine Memorial, Moscow 1956
 Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Closed

Our final game in this book is a queen and pawn ending. Such endings arise relatively rarely, but they are difficult to play, so some study of the principles involved is valuable. Here Unzicker demonstrates several valuable lessons, for example centralization of the queen and using one's king actively.

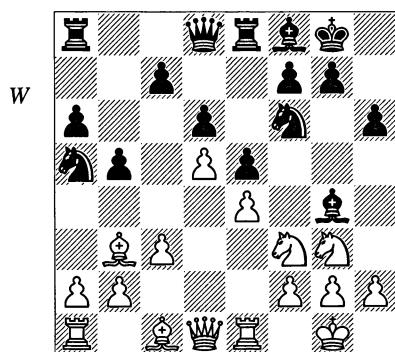
1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5 a6 4 ♜a4 ♜f6 5 0-0 ♜e7 6 ♜e1 b5 7 ♜b3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 d3

Again, White chooses this restrained continuation, which we have already seen several times in this book.

9...♜e6 10 ♜bd2 ♜e8 11 ♜f1 h6

The immediate 11...♜f8 would allow an awkward pin by 12 ♜g5.

12 ♜g3 ♜f8 13 d4 ♜g4 14 d5 ♜a5 (D)



15 h3?

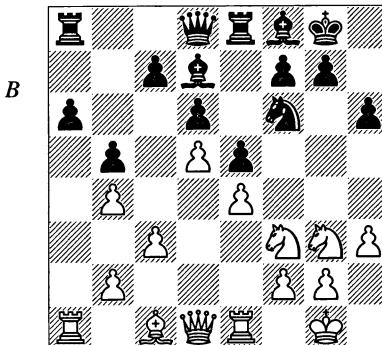
A very strange move, allowing his Spanish bishop to be exchanged off. 15 ♜c2 is more natural.

15...♜xb3 16 axb3 ♜d7 17 b4?! (D)

Presumably, White thought that the backward black a6-pawn would be a weakness, but this move has the drawback of allowing Black to open the position by ...c6, which favours Black's bishop-pair. White should probably have preferred 17 c4.

17...c6 18 ♜h2 g6 19 ♜e3 ♜g7 20 ♜d2 ♜h7 21 f4 exf4 22 ♜xf4 cxd5 23 exd5 ♜b6+ 24 ♜h1 ♜b7 25 ♜xd6

White cannot maintain his d5-pawn by 25 ♜ed1, because of the tactic 25...♜xd5 26 ♜xd5 ♜e1+ 27 ♜hf1 ♜xd5 28 ♜xd5 ♜xa1. This



tactical idea is quite common and is worth remembering.

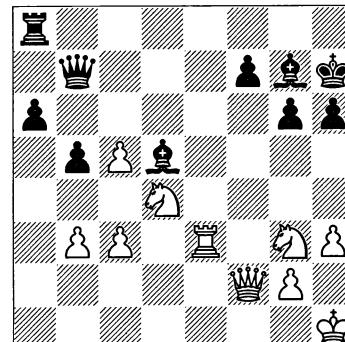
25...♜xd5 26 ♜f3 ♜b6

Black has a clear positional advantage due to his two bishops and healthy kingside pawn-majority; in contrast White's majority on the other wing is hampered by the doubled pawns.

27 ♜c5 ♜c4 28 ♜f2 ♜c6 29 ♜d4 ♜d5 30 b3 ♜e5 31 ♜e3 ♜d7

Ensuring the 'whole' bishop-pair.

32 ♜ae1 ♜xe3 33 ♜xe3 ♜xc5 34 bxc5 (D)

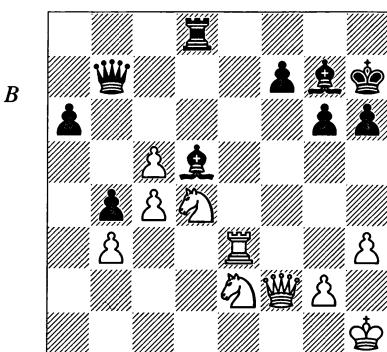


34...b4

Unzicker admitted that he totally overlooked the possibility of winning a pawn by 34...♜c8,

attacking both c5 and h3. However, it is not clear that the text-move is any weaker. After 34... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 35 b4 $\mathbb{Q}xh3+$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}g1$, White has a protected passed pawn on the queenside and it would not be easy for Black to win.

35 $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 36 c4 (D)

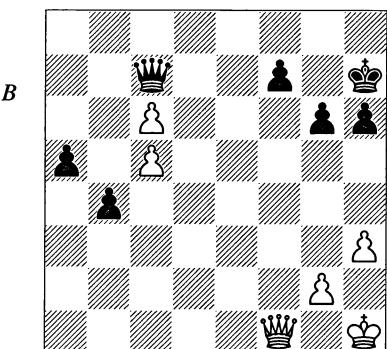


Losing a pawn, but the pressure of the black bishop-pair will produce the same result sooner or later anyway.

36... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 37 c6 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 40 c5 $\mathbb{Q}d1+$?

40...a5 is better, but would have deprived us of a fascinating endgame!

41 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1+$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ a5 43 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ (D)



An unusual ending has been reached. Superficially, one would expect the connected black pawns to be much stronger than White's doubled c-pawns. If this were a rook ending, for example, this would indeed be the case, but queen endings are different, in that an advanced passed pawn of any sort is usually extremely strong. The reason is that a queen, unlike a rook, can force a passed pawn home on its own. Here, for example, if Black did nothing, White could continue $\mathbb{Q}b5-b7$, queening his c6-pawn. The

result is that before very long, Black is forced to trade his connected passed pawns for White's c-pawns.

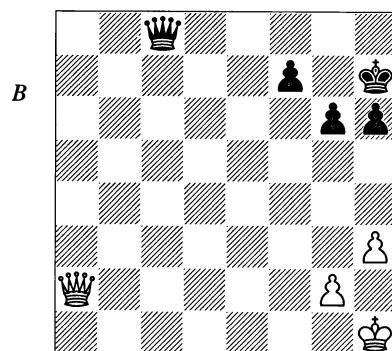
43...a4 44 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 45 c7?

A better defence was 45 $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ $\mathbb{Q}c1+$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}a2!$ $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ 48 g3 $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 49 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 50 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 51 h4! (Nunn), when Black cannot even reach a 3 vs 2 ending, such as arises in the game. White should have no trouble holding this position.

45... $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 47 c6 a3 48 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ a2 49 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}f2$

Threatening 50... $\mathbb{Q}c2$, but White can force the passed pawns off.

50 c7 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 51 c8 \mathbb{Q} $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 52 $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ (D)



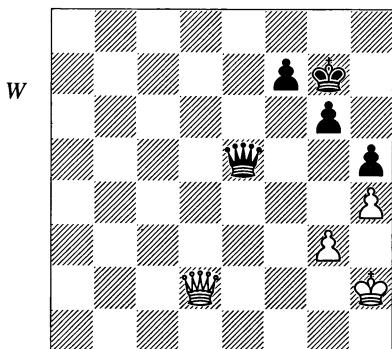
The ending reached is of great interest. Many endings with pawns confined to one side of the board are drawn, even where one side has an extra pawn. Here, for example, with rooks on the board, rather than queens, the position would be a theoretical draw and a fairly easy one at that. However, with queens, the ending is very much more difficult to hold. Black's plan consists of three stages. Firstly, he centralizes his queen, so as to exert maximum influence on the position. Secondly, the black king will march down the board. This might seem illogical, because it exposes the king to checks, but Black has no other way to make progress. The third and final stage is to create a passed pawn. Of course, throughout the ending, Black's prospects are crucially dependent on an exchange of queens leaving him a winning king and pawn ending.

52... $\mathbb{Q}c1+$ 53 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ 54 g3?

A significant mistake. By weakening his king-position, White makes it easier for Black's king and queen to create mating threats, and this

in turn increases Black's chances of forcing a queen exchange. He should play simply 54 $\mathbb{Q}g1$.

54... $\mathbb{W}f3$ 55 $h4$ $h5$ 56 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 57 $\mathbb{W}d4+$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 58 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ (D)



The first stage is completed. Black's queen occupies a powerful central square, from where it will do the maximum to limit checks from the white queen. Now stage two requires that the black king commence its 'long march'.

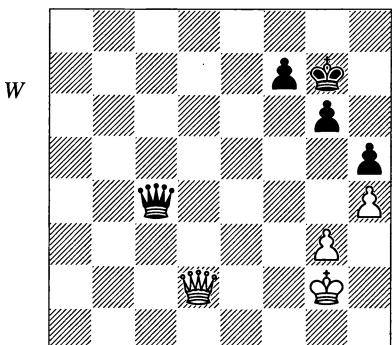
59 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 60 $\mathbb{W}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 61 $\mathbb{W}d7+$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 62 $\mathbb{W}b5+$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 63 $\mathbb{W}d7+$ $\mathbb{W}e6$

Black utilizes the repetition ploy, partly to gain time on the clock.

64 $\mathbb{W}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

64... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 65 $\mathbb{W}e2+$ does not get Black anywhere, so his king returns home for the present.

65 $\mathbb{W}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 66 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}c4$ (D)



Black repositions his queen, in preparation for having another attempt at bringing his king out, but now White could hinder that plan by 67 $\mathbb{W}d8!$. Instead, he plays passively.

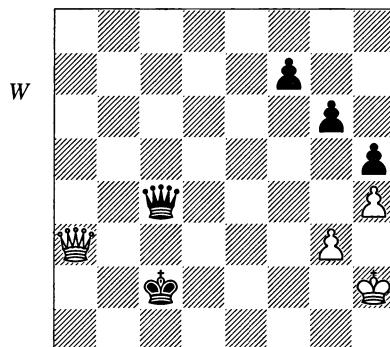
67 $\mathbb{Q}h2?!$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 68 $\mathbb{W}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 69 $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$

The black queen is ideally placed on c4, occupying the centre and defending the f7-pawn.

70 $\mathbb{W}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 71 $\mathbb{W}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$

The black king marches boldly into the enemy camp. A key idea in such queen endings is to place the king near its opposite number, so that a check by the white queen can be met by interposing the black queen, with check, thereby forcing queens off. This is the usual means of averting perpetual check in such endings.

72 $\mathbb{W}a3+$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ (D)



White is temporarily out of checks.

73 $\mathbb{W}e7$ $\mathbb{Q}d1$ 74 $\mathbb{W}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 75 $\mathbb{W}e7+$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 76 $\mathbb{W}b7$

Again, there are no checks.

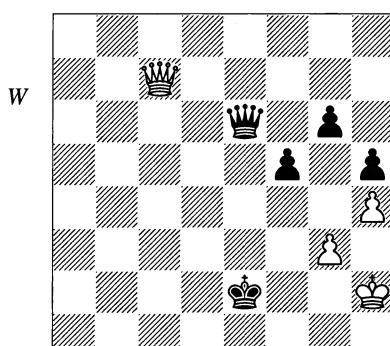
76... $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 77 $\mathbb{W}g2+$ $\mathbb{Q}e1$ 78 $\mathbb{W}g1+$ $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 79 $\mathbb{W}g2+$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 80 $\mathbb{W}f3+$

Not 80 $\mathbb{W}f1+?$ $\mathbb{W}e2+$, a typical example of forcing queens off by means of a cross-check.

80... $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 81 $\mathbb{W}f4+$

And now 81 $\mathbb{W}f2+?$ $\mathbb{W}e2$ would again force the queens off.

81... $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 82 $\mathbb{W}c7$ $f5!$ (D)



The pawn advance serves not so much to create a passed pawn as to shelter the black king from checks along the f-file, and prepare to open White's king up with ...f4.

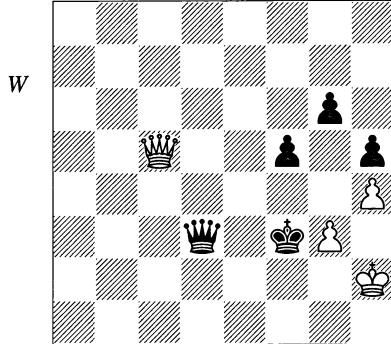
83 $\mathbb{W}c2+$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 84 $\mathbb{W}g2+$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 85 $\mathbb{W}b2$

If White continues checking, we see exactly the point of Black's 82nd move. He continues 85 $\mathbb{W}g1+$ $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 86 $\mathbb{W}g2+$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 87 $\mathbb{W}f3+$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 88 $\mathbb{W}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e2$, and we have reached the same position as after move 81, with the difference that Black's pawn is on f5, rather than f7. The significance of this is shown after 89 $\mathbb{W}c7$, when Black has 89... $\mathbb{W}e4!$ and there is no longer a pawn hanging on f7. Black could then continue ... $\mathbb{Q}f2$, with mating threats.

85... $\mathbb{W}c4$ 86 $\mathbb{W}a3+$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 87 $\mathbb{W}c5+$

This check allows the black king to the f-file, after which he has a forced win. Despite the progress Black has made thus far, it is still not clear that he has a win after 87 $\mathbb{W}a1!$ (Nunn), when White preserves the possibility of checks on g1 or h1 if the black king comes to the f-file.

87... $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (D)

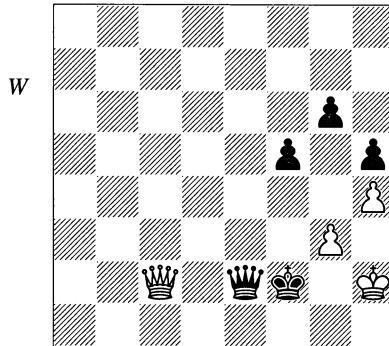


88 $\mathbb{W}c6+$

88 $\mathbb{W}g1$ is a tougher defence. Unzicker's analysis then shows another point of Black's 82nd move. He wins by 82...f4!; e.g., 89 gxf4 (89 $\mathbb{W}g2+$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 90 $\mathbb{W}g1+$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 91 gxf4 $\mathbb{W}e2+$ forces queens off, with a winning king and pawn ending) 89... $\mathbb{W}c2+$ 90 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ 91 $\mathbb{W}g5$ $\mathbb{W}b1+$ 92 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}c2+$ 93 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}c1+$ 94 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}xf4+$, and again the queens are forced off.

88... $\mathbb{W}e4$ 89 $\mathbb{W}c3+$ $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 90 $\mathbb{W}c5+$ $\mathbb{W}e3$ 91 $\mathbb{W}c2+$ $\mathbb{W}e2$ (D)

This line-up of pieces opposite the enemy king is a typical technique in queen endings.



92 $\mathbb{W}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}f1+$ 93 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}g1!$

The culmination of the 'long march'.

94 $\mathbb{W}c5+$ $\mathbb{W}f2$ 95 $\mathbb{W}e3!$

White's last throw, and another typical feature of queen endings. Now 95... $\mathbb{W}xe3??$ would be stalemate.

95...f4!

But Black is up to the task. Now after 96 $\mathbb{W}c1+$ $\mathbb{W}f1+$ (the now-familiar cross-check) 97 $\mathbb{W}xf1+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 98 gxf4 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ the king and pawn ending is winning for Black, despite the equal material.

0-1

The Essential Lessons

- In queen endings, passed pawns are more important than material.
- In order to win, it is usually necessary for the stronger side to bring his king out into the enemy half of the board, despite the fact that this exposes his king to checks.
- The queen generally stands best when centralized, when it controls the maximum number of squares.
- Remember the cross-check technique, a critical means of avoiding perpetual check in such endings.
- Always look out for stalemates!
- Above all, queen endings require patience. The abundance of checks for the defending side means that progress is often by means of long manoeuvres of king and queen.

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Steve Giddins has chosen 50 supremely instructive games – some old, some new, and including many that few readers will have seen before.

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- Defence
- Piece Power
- Endgame Themes

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Steve Giddins is a FIDE Master from England who plays regularly in international events and has frequently contributed to the *British Chess Magazine*. This is his third book for Gambit. He has gained a reputation as a writer who provides useful, no-nonsense advice on topics of genuine practical importance.

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