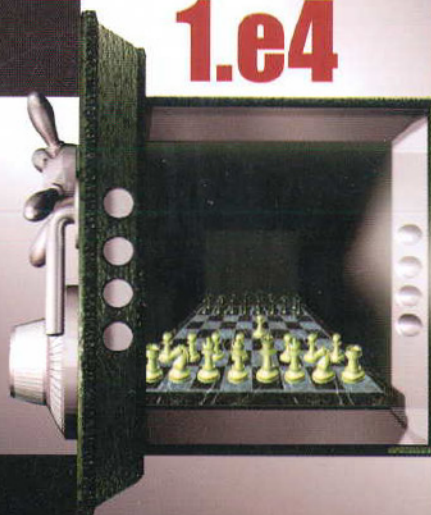


**Opening
for White
according to**

Anand

1.e4



6



Alexander Khalifman





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Translation by: GM Evgeny Ermenkov

Author Khalifman's photograph by Elisabeth Karnazes

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**Opening for White According to
Anand 1.e4**

Book VI

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3

Miscellaneous

3...♘c6 4.♘f3

3...dxe4 4.♘xe4

3...♘f6 4.e5

Alexander Khalifman
14th World Chess Champion

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Contents

Preface	7
-------------------	---

Part 1.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟c3

1	various without 3...♟c6, 3...dxe4, 3...♟f6, 3...♟b4.	10
2	3...♟c6	31

Part 2. Rubinstein Variation

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟c3 dxe4 4.♟xe4

3	various	46
4	4...♟f6	68
5	4...♟d7	89
6	4...♟e7.	109
7	4...♟d7 5.♟f3 ♟gf6 6.♟d3 b6; 6...♟xe4	133
8	4...♟d7 5.♟f3 ♟gf6 6.♟d3 c5	150

Part 3. Steinitz Variation

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟c3 ♟f6 4.e5

9	4...♟g8; 4...♟e4	165
10	4...♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♟f3 various	179
11	4...♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♟f3 ♟c6 7.♟e3 various	193
12	4...♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♟f3 ♟c6 7.♟e3 ♟b6.	205
13	4...♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♟f3 ♟c6 7.♟e3 a6.	227
14	4...♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♟f3 ♟c6 7.♟e3 cd 8.♟xd4 various	247
15	4...♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♟f3 ♟c6 7.♟e3 cd 8.♟xd4 a6	271
16	4...♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♟f3 ♟c6 7.♟e3 cd 8.♟xd4 ♟b6.	284
17	4...♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♟f3 ♟c6 7.♟e3 cd 8.♟xd4 ♟c5 9.♟d2 various; 9...a6.	299

18	4...đfd7 5.f4 c5 6.đf3 đc6 7.đe3 cd 8.đxd4 đc5 9.♣d2 đxd4 10.đxd4 đxd4	307
19	4...đfd7 5.f4 c5 6.đf3 đc6 7.đe3 cd 8.đxd4 đc5 9.♣d2 0-0 10.0-0-0 ♣e7; 10...đxd4; 10...đxd4	316
20	4...đfd7 5.f4 c5 6.đf3 đc6 7.đe3 cd 8.đxd4 đc5 9.♣d2 0-0 10.0-0-0 a6.	329
Index of Variations		342

Dear readers,

You are holding in your hands book six of the series “Opening for White according to Anand – 1.e4”, in which we deal with the majority of the lines in the French Defence after 3.♘c3. The Winawer system (1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4) is so complex from the point of view of strategy and the abundance of practical and theoretical material available that we believe it deserves a separate volume.

The French Defence has long acquired a quite peculiar reputation. Most of the top-class players do not even recognize it as an 100% correct opening. Well, it has certain strategical liabilities indeed: Black’s position is cramped, his light squared bishop is usually very weak and he has plenty of problems with the safety of his king. It is rather dangerous for Black to castle sometimes, while keeping the king in the centre impedes the development of his own pieces. Still, people played the French Defence; they are playing it and will play it! It is a quite difficult task to mention all the strong players who have been using it regularly and who have contributed greatly to its theoretical development. At first, that list would be quite long and secondly we might omit someone anyway...In fact it may be easier to make a list of the great players of the past and the present who have never played the French Defence...This should tell you a lot...

Whenever there are drawbacks to something, there are advantages to it as well. White’s space edge can be neutralized by timely undermining of his centre. Black’s light squared bishop can be exchanged at some moment, meanwhile there arises a question – whether it is really so bad after all...? In fact, that same piece might become sometimes extremely unpleasant for White in case the position gets opened. Black is often perfectly capable to solve the problem of the safety of his king by a profound theoretical knowledge.

If I have to summarize, I will have to mention that the French Defence is a quite interesting and unique opening in which both opponents must solve difficult problems right after the very beginning of the game and most of these problems are characteristic only for that particular opening. Of course, it is absolutely necessary to know thoroughly the opening theory, but the all-round understanding of the arising pawn-structures and the complex strategy of that opening should combine with an extensive practical experience.

I will completely agree that the systems 3.e5 and 3.♟d2 have their advantages as well, but I am taking the responsibility to recommend to you to study and to play the most principled move for White and that is – 3.♟c3. Well, I understand that the devotees to that active knight-move must know a lot of theoretical variations, but I can assure you – this move creates most of all problems for Black and it provides White with greatest chances to obtain an opening advantage.

We have analyzed some seldom played lines on move three for Black in the first part of our book. Objectively speaking, he cannot rely on obtaining a good position by playing like that and he can only count on the effect of surprise.

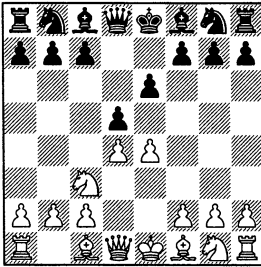
In the second part of our book we deal with the Rubinstein Variation (3...dxe4), which is quite different from the majority of the other variations of the French Defence from the point of view of strategical contents. Black surrenders the centre immediately and he practically gives up the idea to fight for complete equality in the opening stage. Instead, he is trying to complete his development, to organize the freeing pawn-break c7-c5 and to prove gradually that White's slight advantage is insufficient to win the game. That rather pragmatic approach is quite popular in contemporary chess and it yields more than acceptable practical results to Black. White needs to play very precisely in order to force Black to solve serious problems in the opening. I believe that the new analyses and clarifications of the existing traditional evaluations of the positions that we are dealing with in our book will help White players resolve that task successfully.

The third and basic part of this book is devoted to the variations arising after the move 3...♟f6 – the so-called Classical System. White is faced with an immediate difficult choice, since each one of the two main lines (4.e5 & 4.♙g5) has certain advantages and some drawbacks as well. The contemporary opening theory cannot give a convincing answer to the question – which of these two lines is more dangerous for Black. I am not going to assert a definite response to that dilemma with 100 % degree of certainty, but at the moment our book is coming out of print – the move with the king's pawn, recommended by V.Steinitz, seems to offer the best prospects for White. Meanwhile, during the year 2005, Anand preferred to play that move almost entirely in his games. There arise quite complex positions indeed, but still in the majority of cases, White's space advantage and his dominance over the key d4-outpost provide him with excellent middle game prospects.

A.Khalifman
14th World Chess Champion

Part 1

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3
rare 3rd moves for Black
3...♘c6

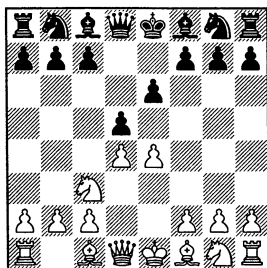


Black has three main defensive lines in this position – 3...dxe4 (Part 2), 3...♘f6 (Part 3) and 3...♗b4 (book 7).

3...♘c6 is played seldom (Chapter 2). This move develops a piece indeed, but it contradicts

the classical strategical concepts for ♘lack in the French Defence. Its main drawback is that he has great problems to organize the thematic pawn-break c7-c5 in order to undermine White's centre. Now, the most logical plan for Black seems to be the preparation of f7-f6, after White closes the centre. There arises a very interesting and complicated struggle, in which White usually maintains better chances.

We analyze the rest of Black's seldom played tries on move three in our Chapter 1.



We will analyze in this chapter all possibilities for Black except 3...♘f6, 3...♗b4 and 3...dxe4, that is: **a) 3...f5**, **b) 3...♗e7**, **c) 3...h6**, **d) 3...c5**, **e) 3...a6**, **f) 3...♗e7** and **g) 3...b6**.

The move 3...♘c6 will be dealt with in the next chapter.

About 3...c6 – see volume 3, Chapter 5.

It seems quite anti-positional for Black to try some hybrid between the Pirc Defence and the French Defence with the move 3...g6?! White can play simply: 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.e5 and he exerts a powerful positional pressure on the kingside, for example:

5...♘c6 6.♗e2 f6 7.exf6 ♘xf6 8.♗g5 0–0 9.♖d2 ♗e8 10.♘e5 ♗d7 11.h4± Jacob – Voigt, Burg Star-gard 1995; 5...♗e7 6.♗d3 b6 7.♗f4 ♘d7 8.♖d2 c5 9.♘b5± Daemmig

– Goelzhaeuser, Baunatal 1997; 5...a6, Acs – Varga, Balatonlelle 2002, 6.♗f4 ♘d7 7.h4 c5 8.h5 ♖b6 (8...cxd4 9.♖xd4 ♗e7 10.0–0±) 9.♘a4 ♖a5+ 10.c3 c4 (10...cxd4 11.b4 ♖d8 12.cxd4±) 11.b4 ♖c7 12.♘b2±. Black's dark squares on the kingside are so vulnerable, that White preserves excellent attacking chances in all variations.

a) 3...f5?!

Black creates with this move plenty of weak squares along the e-file (the vulnerability of the e5-square is absolutely essential) and he gets no compensation in return.

4.exf5 exf5 5.♖e2+!

This is a very strong move and it either causes disharmony in Black's position, or it enables White to trade favourably the dark squared bishops.

5...♗e7

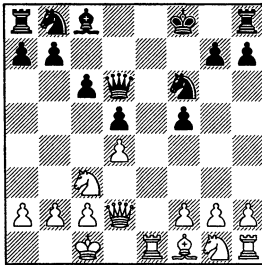
White obtains easily a clear advantage after: 5...♗f7 6.♘f3 ♘f6 7.♗g5 ♗b4 8.♘e5+ ♗g8, Pereda – Valledor Martinez, Norena 2001 and here the simplest line for him is: 9.♖f3 c6 10.a3 ♗d6 11.0–0–0 and he has an easy game along the

open e-file, as well as on the vulnerable dark squares, for example: 11...♘bd7 12.♞e1 ♔e8 13.♙f4 ♘e4 14.♘d3±.

6.♙g5 c6

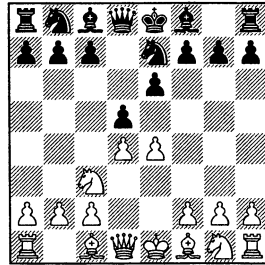
It is even worse for Black to play: 6...♗f7 7.♙xe7 ♘xe7 8.♘f3 ♞e8 9.0-0-0 ♘g6 10.♚d2 c6 11. h4± Al Rufeï – Houli, Casablanca 2002 and White's initiative in the centre and on the kingside is overwhelming.

7.0-0-0 ♗f8 8.♙xe7+ ♚xe7 9.♚d2 ♘f6 10.♞e1 ♚d6



This position was reached in the game Smailbegovic – Kozomara, Sombor 1957. **11.♘h3!** White intends to occupy the dark squares with his last move and he preserves the possibility to follow with f2-f3, depriving his opponent of any counterplay. No matter how Black proceeds later, he is going to have numerous problems connected with his lag in development and the weak squares along the e-file: 11...b6 12.f3 ♙a6 13.♙xa6 ♘xa6 14.♚d3±; 11...b5 12.f3 b4 13.♘a4±; 11...♘bd7 12.f3 ♘b6 13. ♙d3±; 11...♘e4 12.♚e3 ♘d7 13.f3 ♘ef6 14.♙d3±.

b) 3...♘e7?!



This move is not very useful in the fight for the centre and it hampers the development of Black's pieces. White easily obtains a considerable positional advantage.

4.♘f3

This is the most natural and obviously best move. Black has tried plenty of other possibilities in this position:

4...dxe4

The other lines for Black are:

About 4...g6 5.♙d3 ♘bc6, see – 3...♘c6; 4...♘bc6 5.♙d3 – see 3...♘c6; 4...c6 5.♙d3 – see volume 3, Chapter 5;

4...b6 5.♙g5 ♙b7 (Black's defence is not any easier after the exchange of the light squared bishops with: 5...♙a6 6.♙xa6 ♘xa6 7.exd5 exd5 8.♚e2 ♘b8 9.0-0 c6 10.♞fe1 ♚d6 11.♙h4± Fuchs – Hollnbuchner, Wattens 1996, because of his lag in development.) 6.♙b5+ ♘d7? (This is a blunder, but even after the best for Black: 6...c6 7.♙d3 h6 8.♙h4± he has no good squares for the deployment of his pieces.) 7.exd5 exd5 8.♘e5+ – and

Black loses at least two pawns, Tchoubar – Pepa, Kiev 2002;

4...c5 – this pawn-sacrifice is quite dubious: 5.dxc5 ♖bc6 (5... ♗ec6? 6.exd5+– Martinez Perez – Lago, Spain 2002) 6.♙e3 ♖a5, Zelei – Jancso, Miskolc 1994 and now after: 7.a3 dxe4 8.b4± Black is in a serious trouble;

4...♗d7 5.♙d3 c6 6.e5 ♗g6 7.h4 f5, Capablanca – Allies, Pinar del Rio (simul) 1941, now, White's most straightforward line seems to be: 8.h5 ♗e7 9.h6± weakening the dark squares on Black's kingside;

4...♗ec6 – this move contributes to the development of Black's kingside indirectly, but it hampers the development of the queenside. 5.♙d3 ♗b4 6.♙e2 c6 (Black's attempt to win a pawn ends up in a loss of a piece after: 6...dxe4 7.♗xe4 ♖d5 8.♗g3 ♗xa2? 9.c4 ♖a5+ 10.♙d2 ♙b4 11.♖b3+–) 7.0–0 ♙e7 8.a3 ♗4a6 9.♙d3± Bru-men – Vojko, Bled 1998;

4...♗g6 – this placement of the knight is of course far from being ideal and it enables White to occupy additional space on the kingside with a swift march of his h-pawn. 5.♙d3 – Black has great problems, after that natural move, no matter what he follows with:

5...dxe4 6.♗xe4 f5 7.♗g3 ♙e7, Busslapp – Beilfuss, Recklinghausen 1999, 8.h4 ♖d6 (8...0–0 9.h5 ♗h4 10.♗hx4 ♙hx4 11.c3±) 9.c3 0–0 10.♗e2±;

5...♙b4, R.Lukac – Pucik, Slovakia 1994, 6.h4 dxe4 (The weakness of the dark squares – complex on the kingside is quite evident after: 6...c5 7.h5 ♗e7 8.h6±) 7.♙xe4 0–0 8.h5 ♗e7 9.h6 g6 10.0–0±; 5...♙e7 6.h4 dxe4 (6... ♗hx4 7.♗hx4 ♙hx4 8.♖g4 ♙e7 9.♖xg7 ♙f6 10.♖g3 ♙xd4 11.♗b5±) 7.♗xe4 ♙d6 8.g3 ♗e7 9.♖e2 ♗bc6 10.♗xd6± Kotz – Senekowitsch, Austria 1991;

5...a6, Wilk – Tobiasz, Wisla 1999, 6.h4!±;

5...c5 6.exd5 exd5 (Black loses a pawn too after: 6...cxd4 7.dxe6! ♙xe6 8.♗xd4±) 7.dxc5 ♙e6 (It is even worse for him to play: 7...♗e7 8.0–0 ♙g4 9.♙e1 ♗bc6 10.♗b5+– Baccarin Viaro – Meruvia Sal, St Lorenzo 1995; 7...♙xc5 8.♗xd5 0–0 9.c4±) 8.♙e3 ♗d7 9.♙b5 a6 10.♙a4 ♙c8 11.0–0 ♙xc5 12.♙xd7+ ♖xd7 13.♙xc5 ♙xc5 14.♖d4± Bellotti – Babics, Bratto 1993.

5.♗xe4 ♗f5

About 5...♗bc6 6.♙d3 – see 3...♗c6.

5...♙d7, Swart – Perluka, Nijmegen 1992, 6.♙d3 ♙c6 7.0–0±.

5...♗g8?! – this strange move transposes to the Rubinstein Variation (1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4), except that Black loses two tempi, Milto – Zakharenko, Tomsk 2002, 6.♙d3±.

5...♗g6 – Black simply provokes the advance of his opponent's h-pawn with that move and White's initiative in the centre and on the kingside becomes

really powerful after that – 6.h4 h5 7.♙d3 ♘e7 8.♘eg5± Brockmann – Kurapkat, Germany 1995.

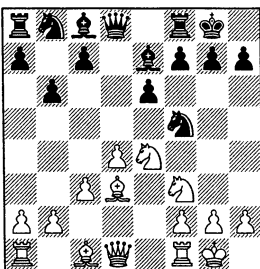
6.♙d3 ♘e7

6...♘c6 7.c3 ♘e7 (It is not any better for Black to play here: 7...♘d6 8.♘g3 b6 9.0–0 ♘b7, Kornick – Goergen, Germany 1991, 10.♘e5±) 8.0–0 h6 9.♖c2 ♘d6 10.♙f4 0–0 11.♞ad1± Mills – Delmar, England 1898. Black’s position is quite cramped and he has no counterplay whatsoever (the pawn-breaks e6–e5 and c6–c5 are almost impossible to accomplish), so White’s positional advantage is stable and long-lasting.

7.0–0 0–0

Black has fallen, numerous times in practice, into the trap: 7...♘xd4?? 8.♘xd4 ♖xd4 9.♙b5+– Guerra – Garcia Perez, Nava 2001.

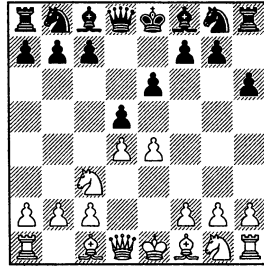
8.c3 b6



This position was reached in the game Visintin – Ianniello, Italy 1995. Black’s knight on f5 is miserably placed and it hampers his counterplay. **9.♖e2 ♙b7 10.♙f4±**. White dominates in the

centre and that provides him with a long-lasting pressure.

c) 3...h6



Black weakens his kingside with that move and he delays his natural development. His position in the centre is solid though, and White cannot immediately acquire an advantage sufficient enough for a win.

4.♙d3 ♘c6

About 4...♗xe4 5.♘xe4 – see 3...♗xe4, Chapter 3.

Black has tried in practice some other moves too:

4...c5?! – this pawn-sacrifice is quite dubious. 5.exd5 exd5 6.dxc5 ♘c6 7.♙b5 d4, Lutton – Arnott, West Bromwich 2003 and now after the logical line: 8.♖e2+ ♘e6 9.♘e4± there arises a position, which we have already analyzed in the line 3...c5, except that Black has played an extra move h7–h6. It is however unclear whether that is helpful for him;

4...♙b4 5.e5 ♘e7, May – Severin, Germany 1996, (after 5...c5 6.a3 ♙xc3+ 7.bxc3 c4 8.♖g4±

Chapter 1

there arises a pawn-structure, which is favourable for White and it is typical for the Winawer variation – 1.e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♖c3 ♗b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♗xc3 6.bxc3) 6. ♖g4 c5 (It is worse for Black to play: 6...g6 7. ♗d2± because his queenside is considerably weakened.) 7.dxc5 ♖bc6 (after 7... ♗xc3+ 8. bxc3 ♖a5 9. ♖e2± White has the bishop pair advantage in an open position) 8. ♗d2± and Black has problems to complete his development, because of the questionable h6-move;

4... ♖f6 5.e5 ♖f7, Ozerkman – Oksuz, Turkey 2002 and now White should follow with the powerful maneuver: 6. ♖ce2! c5 7.c3 ♖c6 8. ♖f3±. The move h6 is hardly useful for Black in that scheme, because his only counterplay is connected with the preparation of the pawn-break f7-f6 and that would only emphasize the weakness of the light squares on his kingside. The exchange of the dark squared bishops led simply to White's positional advantage becoming even greater after: 8...cxd4 9.cxd4 ♗b4+ 10. ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 11. ♖xd2± Heinrich – Hoppe, Spree 1997.

5. ♖f3 ♖b4 6. ♗b5+!

This powerful move deprives Black's knight of its best square for a retreat.

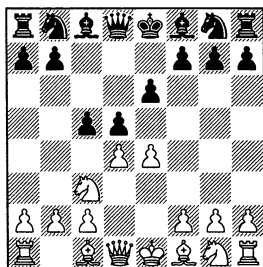
6...c6

White has no problems to maintain his advantage after: 6... ♗d7?! 7. ♗xd7+ ♖xd7 8. ♖e5 ♖d6

(8... ♖d8 9.a3 ♖c6 10.exd5±) 9.a3 ♖c6 10. ♖b5 ♖e7 11. ♗f4±.

7. ♗e2 ♖f6 8.e5 ♖e4 9.a3 ♖a5 10. 0–0 ♖xc3 11.bxc3 ♖a6 12. ♗d2 c5 13.c4± Spoelman – Galje, Hooegeveen 2004.

d) 3...c5



Black sacrifices a pawn without a good reason. No doubt, he gets some compensation, although insufficient, but White's chances remain clearly better in all lines.

4.exd5 exd5

It is even simpler for White to counter: 4...cxd4?! with 5. ♖xd4 – Black remains a pawn down and he is behind in development:

5... ♖f6? – this move leads to an endgame and White's task to materialize his advantage becomes even easier: 6. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 7. ♗b5+ ♗d7 8.dxe6 fxe6 9. ♖f3+– Banderet – Loubani, Paris 1994;

5...h6? – that is an unnecessary loss of time: 6. ♖f3 ♖f6 7. ♗b5+ ♗d7 8.dxe6 fxe6 9. ♗d3± Zeh – Moeller, Bad Woerishofen 1991;

5...exd5?! – this move either forces an endgame, or it acti-

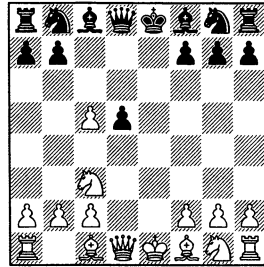
vates White's pieces considerably. 6.♟xd5 ♟xd5 (6...♞d7 7.♟c4 ♟e7+ 8.♞g2 ♞b6 9.♟b5+ ♟d7 10.♟xb7+- Voropai – Scherbenko, Kiev 2002) 7.♞xd5 ♟d6 8.♟f4 ♟xf4 9.♞xf4± and White remains with a solid extra pawn, Krewett – Koepping, Germany 1997;

5...♞f6 6.♟b5+! – that move provokes the appearance of a weakness on the e6-square for Black: 6...♞bd7 (Black loses after: 6...♞c6? 7.dxc6 ♟xd4 8.cxb7+ ♟d7 9.bxa8♟+ ♞e7 10.♟e3 ♟b4 11.a3 ♟xb2 12.♟c5# Chow – Valyaeu, Melbourne 1992, but it looks much more stubborn for him to defend with: 6...♟d7 7.dxe6 fxe6, Golschman – Mary, Paris 1988, although after: 8.♞f3± Black has no compensation for the pawn at all.) 7.dxe6 fxe6 (7...♟c5?? 8.exd7+- Castelo – Biagini, M Curitiba 1984) 8.♞f3± and White remains with a solid extra pawn and a superior development;

5...♞c6 6.♟b5 a6 7.♟a4! exd5 (Black's attempt to seize the initiative with the help of an exchange-sacrifice fails after: 7...axb5 8.♟xa8 ♞b4 9.♟g5! f6 10.0-0-0 ffg5 11.dxe6 ♟c7 12.♞f3+- because White's lead in development is overwhelming in a position with approximate material equality.) 8.♟xc6+ bxc6 9.♟xc6+ ♟d7 10.♟xd5 ♞f6 (It is not so good for Black to try: 10...♟e7+? 11.♟e4 ♞f6 12.♟xe7+ ♟xe7 13.♟e3+- White has two extra pawns in a calm endgame, Porta – Cordeiro,

Spain 2002.) 11.♟d4 ♟e7 12.♞f3 ♟c8 13.0-0± Black's couple of bishops is not sufficient to compensate his two pawn-deficit, Dekker – Rich, USA 1992.

5.dxc6



5...♞f6

Black's task is much more difficult after his other possibilities:

5...d4 6.♟b5+ ♞c6 (It is worse for Black to play: 6...♟d7? 7.♟xd4 a6 8.♟xd7+ ♟xd7 9.♟xd7+ ♞xd7 10.b4+- and White should be able to materialize easily his two extra pawns in this endgame. After: 7...♟xb5, Garcia Alvarez – Boliyar Baron, Spain 1997, White could have gone into a winning endgame with the following line: 8.♟xd8+ ♞xd8 9.♞xb5 ♟xc5 10.♟g5+ ♞e7 11.0-0-0+-) 7.♟e2+ ♟e6 (Black is not out of the woods after the rest of his possibilities either: 7...♟e7 8.♞e4 ♟a5+ 9.♟d2 ♟c7, Fernandez Palacio – Estrada Tamargo, Santa Clara 2000, in case of 10.♞f3 ♟g4 11.♞d6+ ♞f8 12.♟f4 ♟a5+ 13.♟d2+- White has an extra pawn and a powerful initiative too; 7...♟e7 8.♞e4 ♟e6, De

Chapter 1

Hoop – Stiepel, Hengelo 1997 and here White's most direct road to victory is the move: 9.♙c4+-) 8.♗e4 ♙e7, Ljubic – Huber, Werfen 1993 (in answer to 8...a6, Hess – Habel, Siegburg 1997, White's simplest line is: 9.♙c4!? ♗d7 – the other moves are even worse for Black: 9...♙xc4?? 10.♗f6#; 9...♗f6 10.♗g5±; 9...♙e7 10.♙xe6 fxe6 11.♗h3 e5 12.♙g5± – 10.♗g5 d3! 11.♗xd3±; following: 8...♗f6 9.♙g5 ♗a5+ 10.♙d2 ♗d8 11.♗g5± Black lags in development, Rausis – Tarira, Lisbon 1999; 8...♗d5 – this move restores the material balance, but after: 9.♗f3 ♙xc5 10.♗xc5 ♗xc5 11.♗g5± White preserves a long-lasting pressure, thanks to his powerful bishops, Herbold – Lohmueller, Ludwigshafen 1996) and here White's most energetic line to increase his advantage is: 9.♗h3! ♙xh3 (9...♗d7 10.♗f4±; 9...a6 10.♙xc6+ bxc6 11.♗f4±) 10.gxh3 ♗d7 (10...a6 11.♙d3! ♗e5 12.♗d6+-; 11...♗d5 12.♙c4 ♗e5 13.f4+-; 11...♗f8 12.0-0±) 11.♗d6+ ♗f8 12.♙f4± and White has a great lead in development and the two bishop advantage. His attacking chances against the black king, stranded in the centre, are just excellent;

5...♙xc5 6.♗xd5 ♗e7+ (It is bad for Black to follow with: 6...♗xd5?! 7.♗xd5 ♙d6 8.♙f4±; 7...♙b6 8.♗xb6 axb6 9.♗f3+- and White remains with an extra pawn in the endgame and a couple of powerful bishops, Guerrero – Mal-

donado, Peru 1999; it is hardly better for Black to try: 6...♗b6 7.♗e4 ♙e7 8.♗b5± and White should press his extra pawn-advantage home in the endgame; 7...♙e6?? 8.♗xc5+- Falkowski – Simmons, Lansing 1993) 7.♗e4 ♙e6 (Black would hardly equalize after: 7...♗f6 8.♗xe7+ ♙xe7 9.♙f4 ♗c6 10.♗f3± Drewitz – Scheer, Bad Duerkheim 1997; as well as after: 7...♙f5, Incadi – Frohlich, Czech Republic 1996, 8.♗xe7+ ♗xe7 9.♙d3 ♙xd3 10.cxd3 ♗bc6 11.♙e3± and White remains with a solid extra pawn in both cases) 8.♙b5+ ♙d7 (The simplifications are quite favourable for White in case of: 8...♗c6 9.♙xc6+ bxc6, Socha – Kubicka, Straszecin 1999, 10.♙e3! ♗c8 11.♙xc5 ♗xc5 12.♗f3± as well as after 8...♗d7, Tosoni – Michelena, Italy 1996, 9.♙e3! ♙xe3 10.♗xe3±) 9.♙xd7+ ♗xd7, Auvinen – Laukkanen, Kuopio 1990 and now the simplest way of playing for White is to complete his development first with: 10.♗f3 0-0-0 11.0-0± and he preserves a solid extra pawn;

5...♙e6 6.♙e3 ♗f6 (The move 6...♗a5? – just loses two tempi. 7.a3! ♗f6 8.b4 ♗d8 9.♗f3 ♙e7 10.♙b5+ ♗c6 11.♗d4± Johansson – Mladenovic, Jonkoping 1988; 6...♗c6 7.♗f3 a6 8.♗d4 ♗xd4 9.♗xd4 ♗c8, Miralles Bruges – Cardo Llagostera, Barcelona 1995 and now the simplest line for White is: 10.♗a4+ ♗d7 11.♗xd7+ ♗xd7 12.b4± or ♙d7 11.♗b4 ♗f6

12.♗d1± and Black has no compensation for the missing pawn) 7.♘f3 ♗e7 (about 7...♘c6 8.♘b5 ♗e7 9.♘d4 – see 7...♗e7) 8.♗b5+ ♘c6 9.♘d4 ♗c8, Wallberg – Reimer, Frankfurt 2002 (9...♗c7, Henke – Walz, Email 1989 and now, after 10.b4 0–0 11.a3 a5 12.♗b1 axb4 13.axb4 ♗a3 14.♘ce2± Black's compensation for the sacrificed pawn is questionable; it is hardly better for him to try: 9...♗d7 10.0–0 0–0 11.♗e1 ♗e8 12.♘b3 a6 13.♗e2 ♗e6 14.♘d4± Bechmann – Poestges, Email 2002). White's simplest solution of the problems is: 10.b4 0–0 11.a3± and Black has a slight lead in development indeed, but it is not sufficient to compensate the sacrificed pawn.

6.♗b5+ ♘c6 7.♗e3 ♗e7

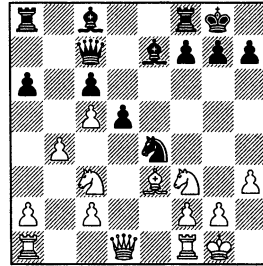
The move 7...♗d7?! – in connection with the weakness of the d5-pawn is just a loss of a tempo. 8.♘ge2 a6 9.♗a4± Haffner – Papet, corr. 1991.

In answer to 7...a6, Stoltz – Basjuni, Marianske Lazne 1951, the simplest line for White is: 8.♗xc6+ bxc6 9.♘f3 ♗e7 10.0–0 0–0 11.♗d4± and Black has no compensation for the pawn, despite his bishop-pair.

8.h3 0–0 9.♘f3 a6

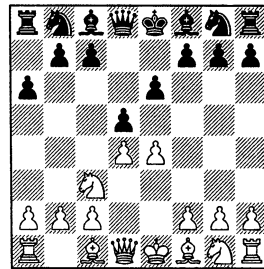
After 9...♗e6 10.0–0 ♗c7 11.♗xc6 bxc6 12.b4 ♗ad8 13.♘d4 ♘d7 14.f4± White enjoys a space advantage in addition to the extra pawn, Contin – Farina, Nereto 1998.

10.♗xc6 bxc6 11.0–0 ♗c7 12.b4 ♘e4



13.♗d4± Friedrich – Farina, Bratto 2001. Black has now some compensation for the sacrificed pawn, thanks to his couple of bishops, but still White's prospects are clearly better.

e) 3...a6



Basically, this is a useful move, but its main drawback is that Black delays his development. The position presently remains closed though and White cannot exploit that drawback so easily.

4.♘f3 ♘f6

The other possibilities for Black are very seldom played:

4...b6?! Moser – Mulch, Giesen 1994, 5.♗d3 ♗b4 6.0–0±;

Chapter 1

4...c5?! 5.exd5 exd5, Papadopulos – Farre, Buenos Aires 1997, 6.dxc5 ♗xc5 7.♞xd5±;

4...♟c6 5.a3! – the inclusion of the moves a3 and a6 is in favour of White, because he has ensured the safety of the bishop on d3, while Black's symmetrical move is hardly so purposeful. 5...♟f6 6.♗d3 dxe4 7.♟xe4 ♟xd4?? (This is a terrible blunder. It is better for Black to play: 7...♗e7 8.0–0 0–0 9.c3± but White still remains with a slight, but stable advantage. He has extra space and an easy and free development; moreover Black can hardly organize the freeing pawn-breaks e6–e5 or c7–c5) 8.♟xd4 ♞xd4 9.♗b5+ axb5 10.♞xd4+– Grillo – Mussap, Italy 2005;

4...h6?! 5.♗d3 ♟c6 6.a3 ♗d7 (It is better for Black to follow with: 6...dxe4 7.♟xe4± but his position remains passive, although solid enough.) 7.exd5 exd5 8.♟xd5± Braby – Svedenklint, Jonkoping 1987;

4...b5?! 5.♗d3 ♗b7, Beckel – Kanzler, Germany 1993, 6.exd5 b4 (it is worse for Black to try here: 6...exd5 7.0–0 ♗d6 8.♞e1+ ♟e7 9.♟g5 h6 10.♞h5± because White preserves excellent attacking prospects, for example: 10...0–0 11.♟h7 ♞e8 12.♗xh6+–) 7.dxe6! bxc3 8.exf7+ ♟xf7 9.♟e5+ ♟e7 (9...♟e8 10.♞h5+–; 9...♟e6 10.♗f5+!! ♟e7 11.♟c6!+–) 10.bxc3± and White has three pawns for the piece. In addition,

he can brag about a huge lead in development and excellent attacking chances against Black's king, stranded in the centre;

4...♗b4 5.e5 c5 (it is worse for Black to defend with: 5...f5 6.a3 ♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♟e7 8.♗d3 c5 9.a4 ♞a5 10.♞d2 c4 11.♗e2 ♟d7 12.0–0 ♟f8 13.♗a3 ♞d8 14.h4 ♟ge6 15.h5± because White's initiative is very powerful and Black has no counterplay whatsoever, Martin – Choudhury, Dundee 1993) 6.a3 ♗a5 (The other possibilities for Black are hardly any better: 6...cxd4, Turschner – Dettmar, Hamburg 1998 and now after: 7.axb4 dxc3 8.♞d4 cxb2 9.♗xb2± White's compensation for the pawn is more than sufficient – he has a great lead in development, space advantage and a couple of strong bishops; 6...♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 c4 8.♗e2 h6, Mueller – Wohlgemuth, Germany 1995, 9.a4± this move enables White to deploy his bishop to its most active possible placement – the a3-square) 7.dxc5 ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♞a5, Silar – Novotny, Karvina 1985 (Black fails to obtain any compensation for the pawn in case of: 8...♟c6 9.♗e3 ♟ge7 10.♗d3 ♟g6 11.♗d4± Moen – Paust, Gausdal 1986) and here White's most energetic line seems to be: 9.♞d2!? ♞xc5 (it is worse for Black to play: 9...♟d7 10.c4 ♞xd2+ 11.♗xd2 ♟e7 12.cxd5±) 10.c4 dxc4 (or 10...♟c6 11.♞g5 g6 12.♞f4±) 11.♞g5 g6 12.♗e2± and Black's extra pawn is not a suffi-

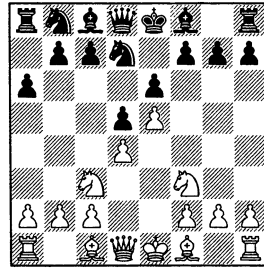
cient compensation for the weaknesses on the dark squares and his lag in development;

4...♙e7 5.♙d3 ♘f6 (It is not so good for Black to try here: 5...c6?! 6.0-0 dxe4 7.♘xe4± Stillger – Zimmermann, Finkenstein 1995; after 5...c5 6.exd5 cxd4 7.♘xd4 exd5 8.0-0± White has a huge lead in development, Schuetz – Dreiseitel, Forchheim 2003) 6.0-0 b6 (Black should better follow with: 6...dxe4 7.♘xe4± and he transposes to the passive, but reliable pawn-structure of the Rubinstein variation, Makropoulou – Lematschko, Athens 1990; Black only loses a tempo with: 6...c6?! Comp “Rebel Century” – Van Wely, Maastricht 2002, 7.e5 ♘fd7 8.♘e2 c5 9.c3 ♘c6 10.a3±) 7.♙e1 ♙b7 8.exd5! exd5, Muhren – Dimitrijevic, Hengelo 2004 (It is possibly better for Black to follow with: 8...♘xd5 9.♘e4±). Now, the transfer of White’s knight to the f5-square provides him with excellent attacking prospects after: 9.♘h4! 0-0 (Black should avoid the line: 9...♙c8 10.♙g5 0-0? 11.♙e7!+-) 10.♘f5±.

5.e5 ♘fd7

In case of 5...♘e4 6.♘xe4 dxe4 7.♘g5, Black can hardly defend his e4-pawn, for example: 7...♙d5 8.c4 ♙c6 (8...♙b4+ 9.♙d2+-) 9.♙c2 ♙b4 10.♙d2 ♙xd2+ 11.♙xd2! ♙b6 12.c5 ♙b4+ 13.♙c3± or 7...c5 8.dxc5 ♙d5 9.♙h5 g6 10.♙e2 ♙xe5 11.♘xe4 ♙xc5 (following: 11...♘c6

12.♙g5± Black will have problems to regain his pawn) 12.♘xc5 ♙xc5 13.♙h6± and the dark squares on Black’s kingside are quite vulnerable; moreover he has problems to develop his pieces.



6.♘e2

This is the standard transfer of White’s knight to the kingside.

6...c5 7.c3 ♘c6

It is inferior for Black to follow with: 7...b5 8.♘f4 g6 9.♙d3± because White’s centre is very powerful and he has a great lead in development. His initiative on the kingside is dangerous for his opponent and Black’s attempt to counterattack on the queenside led him to a desperate situation after: 9...c4 10.♙c2 a5 11.h4 ♘c6 12.h5 g5 13.♘xe6! fxe6 14.♘xg5 ♙e7 15.h6+- Mendoza – L.Lopez, Barranquilla 1999.

8.a3

This move is useful, since it prevents Black’s counterplay on the queenside. Additionally, White can start a queenside offensive himself at an opportune moment with the help of the move b2-b4.

8...♙e7

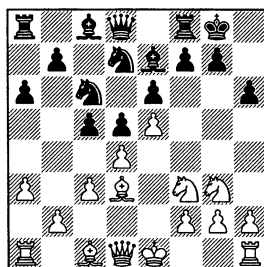
In answer to 8...c4, Ibarra – Culbeaux, Merida 2002, it is logical for White to proceed with his kingside initiative by playing: 9.h4, for example: 9...♙e7 (9...h6 10.♘f4) 10.♙g5 h6 11.♙xe7 ♖xe7 12.♘f4±.

After 8...b5, Bustelo – Riverol, Montevideo 2000, the simplest line for White is to complete his development with: 9.♘g3 ♙e7 10.♙d3 0–0? (White still has dangerous threats after: 10...♙b7 11.♘h5 0–0 12.♖d2!±; about 10...cxd4 11.cxd4 – see 8...cxd4) 11.h4! h6 (Black loses after his other possibilities too: 11...f6 12.♘g5! fxg5 13.♙xh7+! ♗xh7 14.hxg5+ ♗g8 15.♙h8+! ♗xh8 16.♖h5+ ♗g8 17.g6+– or 11...♙b7 12.♙xh7+–) 12.♙xh6! gxh6 13.♖d2! f6 14.♖xh6 ♜f7 15.♘g5+–.

8...cxd4 9.cxd4 b5, Cervera Procas – Baldellou, San Jose 1998, here naturally, the right place for White's knight is on the kingside: 10.♘g3 ♙e7 11.♙d3 ♙b7 (Black should avoid: 11...0–0?! 12.♖c2 ♖b6 13.♙xh7+ ♗h8 14.♙e3 g6 15.♙xg6 fxg6 16.♖xg6→ because White has three pawns for the piece and an extremely dangerous attack.) 12.♘h5 0–0 13. ♖d2 ♖a5 (13...♖c7? 14.♘g7 ♘xd4 15. ♖h6 ♘xf3+ 16.♗d1!+–) 14.b4! ♘xb4 (after 14...♙xb4 15.axb4 ♖xa1 16.♖g5+– Black's queen-sacrifice can only postpone for a while the inevitable defeat.) 15.0–0 ♘c6 (15...♖a4? 16.axb4

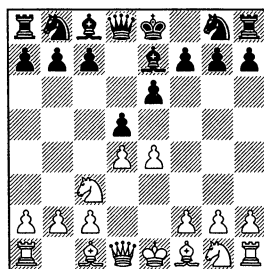
♖xa1 17.♘xg7+–) 16.♖e3± and White has dangerous threats on the kingside as a compensation for the sacrificed pawn. Black's defence is quite problematic, for example: 16...♜fc8 17.♘g7! ♙f8 18.♘h5± the material is equal indeed, but Black's king-position is seriously compromised.

9.♘g3 0–0 10.♙d3 h6



This position was reached in the game Leiva Corredera – Corretja Torrens, Spain 2000. Following: **11.0–0±** Black has problems to organize any active counterplay.

f) 3...♙e7



4.♘f3 ♘f6

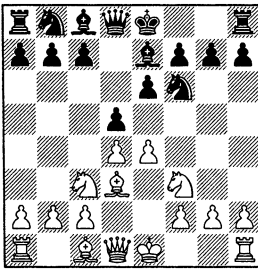
About 4...dxe4 5.♘xe4 – see 3...dxe4, Chapter 6; 4...♘c6 5.e5

– see 3...♘c6; 4...c6 5.♗d3 – see volume 3, Chapter 5.

In case of 4...f5, White should better occupy additional space with 5.e5!? for example: 5...c5 6.♗e3 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘c6 8.♗b5 ♗d7 9.0–0± and White has a huge lead in development and extra space.

4...b6 5.♗b5+ c6 6.♗d3 ♘f6 (Black should better play here: 6...♗a6 7.♗xa6 ♘xa6 8.♘e5 ♖c8 9.♗h5 g6 10.♗e2 ♘b8 11.0–0±) 7.♗e2 ♗b7 8.0–0 0–0 9.♗g5 ♘bd7 10.♗ad1 b5 11.e5 ♘e8 12.♗e3 ♘c7 13.♘e2± but his defence remains questionable, because his position is cramped and his light squared bishop is very bad, Riemersma – Hoeksema, Enschede 1990.

5.♗d3



5...c5

Concerning 5...a6 6.0–0 – see 3...a6; 5...dxe4 6.♘xe4 – see 3...dxe4, Chapter 6.

5...h6 6.e5 ♘fd7 7.♘e2! c5 8.c3 ♘c6 9.0–0 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♘b6 11.a3 ♗d7, N.Gouliev – Maier, Warsaw 2005 and here White could have maintained a great advantage with the help of a move,

which restricts Black's possibilities on the queenside considerably i.e.: 12.b3! ♖c8 13.♗e3±.

5...0–0 6.e5 ♘fd7 (or 6...♘g4?! 7.h3 ♘h6 8.♗xh6 gxh6 9.♗d2±) 7.h4! f6 (It is too bad for Black to play: 7...c5 8.♗xh7+ ♘xh7 9.♘g5+– but he should better try instead: 7...h6 8.♘e2 c5 9.c3 ♘c6 10.a3± although even then White's initiative on the kingside might easily turn into an overwhelming attack) 8.♘g5! fxg5 9.♗xh7+ ♘xh7 10.hxg5+ ♘g8 11.♗h8+ ♘xh8 12.♗h5+ ♘g8 13.g6 1–0 N.Pedersen – J.Pedersen, Aarhus 1995.

5...b6 6.♗e2 ♗b7 (it is too dangerous for Black to play: 6...0–0 7.e5 ♘e8 8.h4! h6 9.♘g5 ♘c6 10.♘h7!? ♘xd4 11.♗g4 f5 12.♗g6 ♖f7 13.♗xh6±; 11...♘f5 12.♘xf8 ♘xf8 13.h5± and Black's compensation for the exchange-sacrifice is evidently insufficient, Leyva – Juarez Flores, Guatemala 2000. It is even worse for Black to play: 9...hxg5? 10.♗h7! ♘h8 11.♗h5+–; 10...♘xh7 11.♗h5 ♘g8 12.hxg5+–, because White checkmates in a flash.) 7.0–0 0–0 8.♗f4 ♘bd7, Gazik – Ambroz, Czechoslovakia 1990 (White preserves his edge too after: 8...c6 9.♖fe1 a5 10.exd5!? cxd5 11.♘b5 ♘a6 – it is possibly best for Black to follow with: 11...♘bd7 12.c3± – 12.c3 ♘e4 13.♘e5 ♗e8 14.f3 ♘f6 15.a4± Ambroz – Kuntzig, Wuerzburg 1991) 9.e5 ♘e8 (9...♘h5 10.♗e3 f5 11.exf6 ♘hxf6 12.♘g5±) 10.♘d1 c5 11.c3± and White's centre is solid and his

prospects on the kingside are excellent.

5...♖c6 6.e5 ♘d7 7.a3! White plans to transfer his knight on c3 to the kingside. His last move was necessary in order to ensure his bishop on d3 from being exchanged. 7...♗a5 (The move 7...♘cb8?! only loses tempi for Black. 8.♘e2 c5 9.c3 ♘c6 10.0-0± White's prospects in the centre and on the kingside are superior, while Black's counterplay is nowhere to be seen. Occhioni – Wyss, Italy 1997; 7...a6?! – this move does not prevent the accomplishment of White's plan at all, Rogers – Hamilton, Noosa 1993 and now after: 8.♘e2± Black cannot play 8...♘xd4? because of 9.♘fxd4 c5 10.♘xe6! fxe6 11.♘f4 ♘xe5 12.♖h5+ ♘f7 13.♗xh7 e5 14.♘g6 ♗g4 15.♖xg4 ♖xh7 16.♖f5+-; It is also too dangerous for Black to play: 7...0-0, because of 8.h4!, for example: 8...f6 9.♘g5! fxg5 10.♗xh7+ ♘xh7 11.hxg5+ ♘g8 12.♖h8+ ♘xh8 13.♖h5+ ♘g8 14.g6+-; 8...h6 9.♘e2±; 8...f5 9.♘e2 ♖e8 10.c3 ♘d8 11.♘f4± Hamilton – Ozols, Melbourne 1972 and White's attacking chances against the enemy king are excellent.) 8.♘e2 c5 9.c3 ♘c4 10.0-0 a5 11.a4 ♘cb6 12.♘f4 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♘b8 14.♘h5 g6 15.♘f6+ ♗xf6 16.exf6±. White's huge lead in development ensured the two bishop advantage for him and provoked a considerable weakening of Black's kingside. It is not amazing that Black

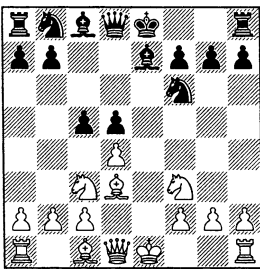
lost the game rather quickly after: 16...♖xf6 17.♖b3 ♘6d7 18.♗b5 ♘c6 19.♗g5 ♖g7 20.♖ac1 f6 21.♗xc6 bxc6 22.♖xc6 0-0 23.♗f4 ♖e8 24.h4 ♘b8 25.♗xb8 ♗a6 26.♖xa6 1-0 Kindermann – Paehtz, Bad Woerishofen 1994.

6.exd5 exd5

6...♘xd5 7.♘xd5 exd5 (7...♖xd5 8.c4 ♖h5 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.♗e3 ♗f6 11.♗e2± Psakhis; 8...♖d8 9.dxc5 ♘a6 10.♖e2 ♘xc5 11.♗c2 a5 12.♗f4 0-0 13.0-0 f6 14.♖ad1± and White is clearly better thanks to his superior pawn-structure and the dominance along the d-file, Pokojowczyk – Trapl, Prague 1978.) 8.dxc5 0-0 (it is not so good for Black to play 8...♖a5+ 9.c3 ♖xc5 10.0-0 ♘c6 11.♘d4 ♘xd4 12.♗e3 ♖d6 13.♗xd4± because the activity of White's pieces is considerable, so Black cannot exploit the advantages of his isolated pawn. He is left to worry only about the drawbacks of his position, Reeh – Kargoll, Brilon 1986, but it is obviously best for him to try: 8...♗xc5 9.0-0 0-0 10.c3± although even then Black's defence is difficult enough.) 9.♗e3 ♘c6, Odler – Moravcik, Slovakia 1995 and here White could have preserved a solid extra pawn after the calm line: 10.c3 ♗g4 11.♗e2±.

White maintains a slight, but stable edge, because of his better pawn-structure, following: 6...cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘xd5 8.♘xd5 ♖xd5 9.0-0 ♘d7 10.♘b5 ♖c6 11.♖e2 a6 12.♘d4 ♖c7 13.c4± Kaminski

– Krivoshey, Katowice 1995. It is however, even stronger for him to continue with: 7.♙b5+! ♘d7 8. ♘xd7+ ♗xd7 (in answer to 8... ♖bxd7, L.Christiansen – Seirawan, USA 1997, White wins a pawn after 9.♗xd4, for example: 9...exd5 10.♘xd5 ♗a5+ 11.♘c3 0–0 12.0–0±; 11...♙c5 12.♗f4 ♗a6 13.♙e3± and Black's compensation for the pawn is non-existent or 9...♙c5 10.♗d3 exd5 11.0–0 0–0 12.♘xd5±; 11...♖b6 12.♗b5+ ♘fd7 13.♗e1±) 9.dxe6 ♗xe6+ 10. ♘e2 ♙b4+ 11.♙d2 ♙c5 12.0–0 ♗d7, Lukin – Romanishin, USSR 1978 and despite the fact that Black has played logically enough until now – his position is very difficult. White can simply grab the central pawn with: 13.♘exd4! ♘xd4?! (Black has no compensation for the pawn even after the best line for him i.e.: 13...0–0 14. ♖b3±) 14.♗e1+ ♖f8 15.♘xd4 and White leads in development in addition to his extra pawn. It is evidently quite bad for Black to try: 15...♗xd4 16.♙b4+–.



7.dxc5 0–0

7...♗a5?! 8.0–0 ♗xc5 9.♖b5

♘d7 10.♙e3 ♗c8 11.♘xa7± and Black remained a pawn down and he was lagging in development in the game, Gutierrez – Agudelo, Medellin 1977.

In answer to 7...♖bd7, Kripp – Stimpel, Frankfurt 2000, it deserves attention for White to follow with: 8.♙b5!? ♙xc5 (8...a6 9.♘xd7+ ♘xd7 10.♘xd5 ♙xc5 11. ♗e2+ ♖f8 12.♙e3±; 11...♙e6 12. ♘f4± and he remains with a solid extra pawn) 9.0–0 a6 (9...0–0 10.♘xd5±) 10.♗e1+ ♙e7 11.♙a4 0–0 (11...b5 12.♘xd5±) 12.♘xd5± Black's compensation for the pawn is obviously insufficient.

7...♙xc5 8.♙g5 ♙e6, Hatfield – Kovacs, Canada 1996 and now White could have preserved a slight, but long-lasting edge with: 9.0–0 0–0 10.♗d2 ♘c6 11.♗fe1± Black's pieces are somewhat passive and his isolated d5-pawn is a liability.

8.0–0 ♖bd7

It looks dubious for Black to play: 8...♘c6?! Gmeiner – Macheltt, Germany 1994. White can remain with an extra pawn after: 9.♙e3 ♙g4 (9...♘g4 10.♘xd5 ♘xe3 11.♘xe3 ♙xc5 12.c3±) 10.♙e2 ♙xf3 (Black's attempt at playing too actively, in order to have some compensation, leads to a very bad position.) 11.♙xf3 d4 12.♙xc6 dxe3 (12...dxc3 13.♙xb7 cxb2 14.♗b1 ♗b8 15.♗xd8 ♗fxd8 16.c6+–) 13. ♙xb7 exf2+ 14.♖h1±.

9.♙g5 ♘xc5 10.♗e1 ♙e6

White's task is much easier

Chapter 1

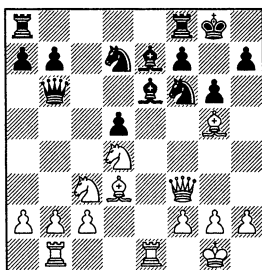
after the rest of the sensible moves:

10...♞xd3 11.♟xd3 ♞e6 12.♞ad1 ♞c8 13.♞d4 ♟d7 14.♞e3± White exerts a powerful pressure along the d-file, but still Black was not forced to lose outright in one move: – 14...♞e4? 15.♞xe6+ – Schmitt – Meyer, Wiesbaden 1994;

10...♞g4 11.h3 ♞e6 12.♞d4 h6, Brenjo – Piskov, Belgrade 1995 and now the move 13.♞e3± ensures the blockade of Black's isolated pawn and prevents the eventual activity of his pieces;

10...♞e6 11.♞h4 ♞d7, Elsen – Kargoll, Germany 1992, here after 12.♞e5± Black should worry about his isolated pawn as well as how to neutralize White's initiative.

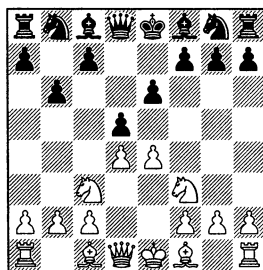
11.♞d4 ♟b6 12.♞b1 g6 13.♟f3 ♞cd7



14.♞b5 ♞d8, Sax – Ambroz, Baile Herculane 1982 (it is even worse for Black to defend with: 14...♟xd4 15.♞xd7 ♞xd7 16.♞xe7 ♞fe8 17.♞bd1 ♟b6 18.♞xd5± and he has problems with the safety of his king), 15.♞xe6 ♞xe6 16.♟e2±. White has the two bishop ad-

vantage and he exerts pressure against Black's hanging pawns in the centre. The safety of the black king is quite questionable too.

g) 3...b6 4.♞f3



We will analyze now the moves:

g1) 4...♞f6 and g2) 4...♞b4.

About 4...♞e7 5.♞g5 – see 3...♞e7; 4...dxe4 5.♞xe4 – see 3...dxe4, Chapter 3; 4...c6 – see volume 3, Chapter 5.

It is much easier to play with White in case Black tries some other moves, for example:

4...c5?! Pecinova – Zichova, Czech Republic 1997 and here White could have won a pawn after the simple line: 5.exd5 exd5 6.♞b5+ ♞d7 7.♟e2 ♞e7 8.♞xd5±;

4...♞b7 5.♞b5+! c6 6.♞d3 ♞f6 (It is possibly better for Black to try: 6...♞b4 7.0–0 ♞xc3 8.bxc3 dxe4 9.♞xe4 ♞f6 10.♞d3± Zelic – Gazic, Dresden 2003, but White's couple of powerful bishops provides him with a stable advantage.) 7.e5 ♞fd7 8.♞g5!± White's threats on the kingside are extremely dangerous. 8...♞e7 9.♟g4

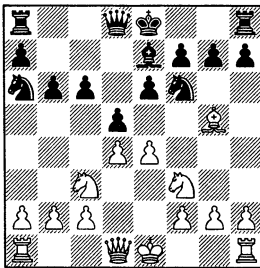
♘f8 10.♘h7 ♙xh7 11.♙xh7 ♘h7
 12.♚xg7 ♘f8 13.h4! ♙xh4 14.♙xh4
 ♚xh4 15.♙g5 ♚h1+ 16.♘d2 ♚xg2
 17.♚f6+- Alekhine – Rozanov,
 Moscow 1908.

g1) 4...♘f6 5.♙b5+ c6

It is worse for Black to play:
 5...♙d7 6.♙d3 ♙b4 7.exd5 ♘xd5
 (White maintains a strong pressure too after: 7...exd5 8.0-0 0-0
 9.♙g5±) 8.♙d2 ♘xc3 9.bxc3 ♙d6
 10.♘e5± and he has the bishop-pair and his pieces are very active. White's edge will be long-lasting.

6.♙d3 ♙a6 7.♙xa6 ♘xa6 8.♙g5 ♙e7

Black should better avoid:
 8...h6 9.♙xf6 ♚xf6 10.♚e2 ♘c7
 11.♘e5± because he can hardly maintain the material equality.



9.♚e2 ♘c7

After 9...♘b8 10.e5 ♘fd7 11.h4 despite the fact that Black has managed to facilitate his defence by exchanging the light squared bishops, White's kingside initiative remains very powerful.

10.♘e5 ♘xe4

It is worse for Black to try: 10...♚d6 11.♙f4±.

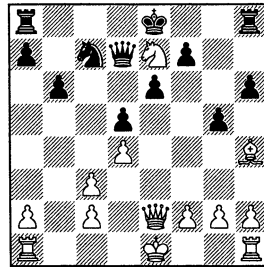
11.♘xc6 ♘xc3

It is hardly any better for Black to play: 11...♚d6 12.♘xe7 ♘xg5 13.♘f5 ♚f8 14.♘g3 h6 15.f4 ♘h7 16.f5±.

12.bxc3 ♚d7 13.♘xe7 h6

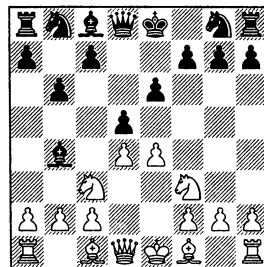
13...f6 14.♙xf6 gxf6 15.♘f5±.

14.♙h4 g5



15.♘g6! fxf6 16.♙g3± The superiority of White's bishop over Black's knight is quite evident. There are numerous mutual weaknesses on the board, but that is in favour of White, because of his extra space. In addition, Black's king is rather unsafe.

g2) 4...♙b4

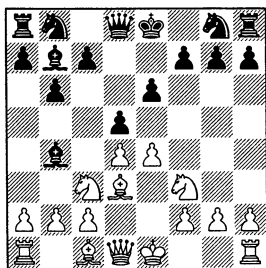


5.♙d3 ♙b7

5...♙a6 – Black loses too much time in order to trade

the light squared bishops and that is important, because the centre is not closed and the game can be easily opened. 6.0-0 ♖xc3 7.bxc3 dxe4, Norcross – Stefan-ski, Lansing 1987 and now the simplest line for White is: 8.♗xe4 c6 (8...♗xf1 9.♗xa8 ♖b5 10.♗e5 ♗d7 11.a4±) 9.♞e1 ♗f6 10.♗g5± White maintains a great advantage, because of his lead in development and his excellent bishop-pair.

Following 5...♗f6 6.♗g5 h6 7.♗xf6 ♜xf6 8.0-0 ♖xc3 9.bxc3 0-0 10.c4± White's mobile pawn-centre provides him with a slight, but stable edge, Klip – Bohm, Netherlands 1987.



6.exd5

This is the most energetic line for White, but it is also very good for him to play 6.e5, entering the Winawer variation. His queen has failed to come to the g4-square indeed, but Black's defence is still difficult. The idea b6 and ♖b7 is hardly the best reaction against White's calm play in this line. Black has also tried in this position:

6...♗c6 7.0-0 ♜d7 8.♗e2! f6 9.c3 ♗f8 10.b4 ♗ge7 11.♗f4 0-0-0 12.b5 ♗a5 13.exf6 gxf6 14.♞e1± W.Browne – J.Rodriguez, Siegen 1970;

6...h6 7.0-0 ♖xc3 8.bxc3 ♗d7 9.a4 a5, Fernandez Vazquez – Tenreiro, Ferrol 2002, 10.♗d2±;

6...♗h6 7.0-0 ♗c6 8.♗e2 ♗f5 9.c3± Van der Weide – Littlewood, Islington 1972;

6..f6 7.exf6 ♜xf6 8.0-0 h6, Reys – Thoroe, Neumuenster 1999 and now it is very good for White to follow with: 9.♗e5! ♗e7 10.♗b5 ♗d8 11.c3±;

6...c5 7.0-0 cxd4 (in answer to 7...♗c6, Gather – Hagedorn, Vlissingen 2001, White's simplest line should be: 8.♗b5! c4 9.a3 ♗e7 10.♗e2± and Black's usual counterplay on the queenside has been stopped dead in its tracks, while after: 7...♗a6 8.♗xa6 ♗xa6 9.♗b5 cxd4 10.♗fxd4 ♗c5 11.♜g4± he is faced with a rather unpleasant choice – to weaken the dark squares on the kingside even more, or to lose his castling rights, Siegel – Funk, Germany 1987) 8.♗b5 ♗c6 9.♗bxd4 ♗ge7 10.c3 ♗c5 11.♞e1 ♗g6 12.♗g5 ♗e7 13.♗xe7 ♜xe7 14.♜a4 ♞c8 15.♗b5 0-0, Purps – Mittag, Germany 1994 and here White can win a pawn by playing: 16.♗xa7 ♗xa7 17.♜xa7 ♗f4 (17...♜c7 18.♜a4±) 18.♗a6 ♞b8 19.♞ad1± It looks like Black has no compensation at all.

6...♜xd5

About 6...♙xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♘xd5 8.0-0± – see 6...♙xd5.

Black plays very seldom in practice 6...exd5?! and that is easily understandable – the bishop is passive on the b7-square and it needs to be redeployed to another diagonal, so Black must lose additional time. The game might follow with: 7.0-0 ♖e7 (7...♙xc3?! 8.bxc3 ♖e7 9.♞e1 0-0? 10.♙xh7+ ♗xh7 11.♗g5+ ♗g6 12.♞g4+-; Black failed to save the game after: 10...♗h8 11.♗g5 g6 12.♞f3 ♖f5 13.♙xg6 fxg6 14.♞h3+ 1-0 Fatyga – Hermann, corr. 1990; 9...♞d6 10.♞e2 ♖bc6 11.a4±; 7... ♖f6 8.♞e1+ ♙e7 – it is even worse for Black to play: 8...♖e4?! 9. ♖xe4! ♙xe1 10.♞xe1 ♞e7 11.♙g5 ♞e6 12.♗g3+- because White's two light pieces are clearly superior to Black's rook – 9.♖h4! 0-0 10.♖f5±; 9...♙c8 10.♙g5 0-0? 11. ♞xe7! ♞xe7 12.♖xd5+-; 10...♙e6 11.♖f5±) 8.♖b5! ♙a6 9.a3 ♙d6 10. ♞e1 ♙xb5 (in answer to 10...0-0? White can play 11.♖xd6 ♙xd3 12. ♖xf7± but it is even better for him to follow with the more resolute line: 11.♙xh7! ♗xh7 12.♗g5+ ♗g6 13.h4! ♞h8 14.♞g4+-; Black fails in his attempt at simplifying the position with: 10...c6 11.♖xd6+ ♞xd6 12.♙xa6 ♖xa6 13.♞e2 ♖c7 14.♙f4 ♞d7 15.♞xe7+-; 13...♖b8 14.♙f4! ♞d8 15.♞e5! White's tremendous lead in development guarantees him a swift victory.) 11.♙xb5+ c6 12.♙d3±.

6...♙xd5 7.0-0 ♙xc3 (Black

should refrain from: 7...♖f6 8. ♖xd5 ♞xd5, Anhaeuser – Birnbaum, Augsburg 1998, because after 9.c4± White occupies the centre. In addition, he leads in development and his bishop-pair is very active, so White maintains a long-lasting initiative, while his opponent's counterplay is nowhere to be seen. Black has problems too after: 7...♙b7 8.♖e4 ♖e7 9.c3 ♙d6 10.♖xd6± Dudas – Kiss, Hungary 1999.) 8.bxc3 ♖e7 (8... ♖d7, Stopa – Luba, Wisla 1999, 9.c4 ♙b7 10.♞e1±; Black would not fare any better after: 8...♖f6 9.♙a3 ♖bd7 10.c4 ♙b7 11.♞e1 c5 12.d5 ♖xd5? 13.cxd5 ♙xd5 14. ♙b5+-; 12...0-0 13.dxe6 fxe6 14. ♖g5± Geilmann – Zelt, Ruhrgebiet 1999) 9.♙a3 ♖d7 (9...h6 10. ♞e1 ♖d7 11.c4 ♙b7 12.d5± Nemeč – Plšek, Brno 1968) 10.c4 ♙b7 11. d5 e5 (following 11...exd5 12.cxd5 ♙xd5 13.♞e1 c5 14.♞e2± White's compensation for the pawn is more than sufficient, thanks to his couple of active bishops and the vulnerable placement of the black king) 12.♞e1 f6 13.♖d4± Szamos – Horvath, Hungary 1999. Black's defensive task is extremely difficult, because of his lag in development and the gaping weakness on the e6-square;

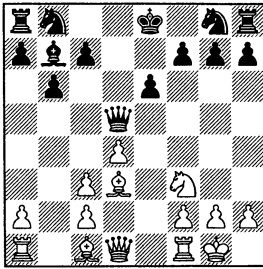
7.0-0 ♙xc3

7...♞h5 8.♙b5+ ♙c6 (Black should better play here: 8...c6 9.♙e2 ♙a6 10.♖e4 ♙xe2 11.♞xe2 ♖d7 12.♗g3 ♞a5 13.c4±) 9.♙e2 ♞g6, Zozulia – Kamel, Cairo 2003,

Chapter 1

but now after 10.♖b5± Black is faced with a difficult choice – to leave his king stranded in the centre, or to present White with the two bishop advantage.

8.bxc3



8...♗f6

8...♗a5 – the only idea of that move would be for Black to try to gobble some pawns, but his lag in development might become catastrophic after that. 9.♖b1 c6 (after 9...♗xc3 10.d5 ♗f6 11.dxe6 fxe6 12.♗b2 ♗a5 13.♗e2± White's superior development and his two powerful bishops more than compensate the sacrificed pawn; it is hardly better for Black to play: 9...♗xa2 10.♗f4 ♗f6 11.c4 0–0 12.♗xc7±) 10.♗e5 ♗f6 11.♗c4 ♗d5 12.♗a3 c5 13.♗e3 ♗g5 14.dxc5± Olsson – Wallin, Elitserien 2005.

In answer to 8...♗d7, Vuilleumier – Sulava, Cannes 1999, it is logical for White to occupy the centre – 9.c4 with the following eventual developments:

9...♗d6 10.♖b1 c5 11.d5! – this is a standard pawn-sacrifice with the idea to open files in the centre. 11...exd5 12.cxd5 ♗xd5 13.c4 ♗d6

(13...♗h5 14.♖e1+ ♗e7 15.♗e2+–; 14...♗f8 15.♗e4 ♗xe4 16.♗d6+–) 14.♖e1+ ♗f8 (14...♗e7 15.♗g5 ♗f6 16.♗e5±) 15.♖b2! ♗gf6 (after 15...♖d8 17.♗f5!± Black has problems to avoid the deadly pin along the d-file, no matter whether he exchanges queens or not.) 16.♖d2 ♗f4 17.♗e2 ♗c7 (17...♗g4 18.h3 ♗e6 19.♗f1 ♗c6 20.♗b2±) 18.♖d6 ♗c6 19.♗f4 ♗e4 (19...♗b7 20.♗e5! ♗xe5 21.♗xe5 ♗e8 22.♖xc6! ♗xc6 23.♗f3 ♗c8 24.♗d5! ♖b8 25.♗e4! ♗f6 26.♗f4+–) 20.♗h4 ♖e8 (20...g5 21.♗f3±) 21.♗f3±;

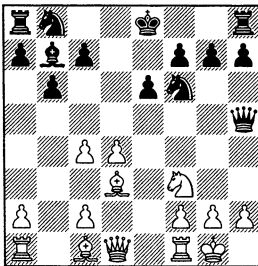
9...♗h5 10.♗e2 ♗g6 (10...♗f5 11.d5! ♗gf6 (it is dangerous for Black to play: 11...exd5 12.♗d3 ♗f6 13.♖e1+ ♗f8 14.cxd5 ♗xd5 15.♗g5± It becomes now too difficult for Black to maintain the material equality, while White's lead in development and his bishop-pair provide him with a powerful initiative.) 12.♗d3 ♗h5 13.dxe6 fxe6 14.♗g5 ♗xd1 15.♖xd1 ♗e7 16.♖e1 e5 17.c5±) 11.♗g5! ♗gf6 (It is possibly best for Black to follow here with: 11...♗f6 12.♗h5! g6 13.♗f3± but White has excellent attacking chances irrelevant of where the black king might try to find a safe shelter.) 12.♖e1 ♗f5 13.♗d3 ♗g4 14.♗xg4 ♗xg4 15.d5±.

9.c4 ♗h5

Or 9...♗d7 10.♗a3 ♗c6 11.c3 0–0–0 12.♖b1 h6 13.♗e2± Ravagnati – Crimi, Italy 1992;

9...♗d6, Winkel – Cherner, corr. 1999, 10.♖b1! c5 (10...♗g4? 11.c5 ♗xf3 12.cxd6 ♗xd1 13.

dxc7+-; 10...♙e4?! 11.♙xe4 ♘xe4 12.♙d3 ♘f6 13.♙a3 ♙f4 14.♙e1±) 11.dxc5 ♙xc5 12.♙b5 ♙c7 13.♙a3 ♘bd7 (13...♘g4?! 14.♙h5 g6? 15.♙xg6! fxc6 16.♙d4! ♙g8 17.♙xg4 ♙f7 18.♙e5+-; 15...♙xf3 16.♙xf3 fxc6 17.♙xg4 gxc5 18.♙xe6+-; 14...♘f6 15.♙g5 ♙g8 16.♙e1 ♙f4 17.♙f5 ♙xf3 18.♙a1!±) 14.♙g5 g6 15.♙e1 0-0-0 (it is premature for Black to play: 15...♙f4, due to 16.♙g3 0-0-0 17.♘g5! ♘h5 18.♙e7! ♘g3 19.hxc3±) 16.♙b2 ♙f4 17.♙g3 h5 18.c5! h4 19.♙h3 bxc5 20.♙e2= and White maintains good attacking chances, because the position of the black king has been compromised.



This position was reached in the game J.Garcia – Faro, Spain 1993 and it ended surprisingly quickly: 10.d5 ♘a6? 11.♙e1 0-0 12.♙e5 1-0. Still, after 10...0-0 11.♙e1 ♘bd7 (It is too bad for Black to play: 11...exd5, because of 12.♙e5 ♙g4 13.cxd5± ♙a4 14.♘d4 ♘d5 15.♙xd5 ♙xd5 16.♙h5 f5 17.♘xf5+) 12.dxe6 ♙xf3! White has a bishop-pair and an extra pawn, but he has no advantage at all due to his horrible

pawn-structure. It is therefore stronger for him to play:

10.♙e2 ♙f5

Black's other possibilities are worse for him:

10...c5?! 11.♘g5! ♙g6 12.♙d3 ♙h5 13.♙xh5 ♘xh5 14.d5! h6 15.♘xe6 fxe6 16.♙g6 ♘d7 17.♙xh5±;

10...♙a5 11.♙f4 c5 12.d5! exd5 (Black should better play here: 12...0-0 13.dxe6 fxe6 14.♙d6± but his queen remains isolated from the actions and White has the bishop pair advantage and a powerful pressure against the weak e6-pawn.) 13.cxd5 ♙xd5 (or 13...♘d5 14.♙d6! ♘c3 15.♙d2 ♘d7 16.♙e3+ ♘e4 17.♘g5 ♙d2 18.♙xd2 ♘xd2 19.♙fe1+-) 14.c4 ♙e6 15.♘e5 ♘bd7 16.♘c6 ♙c3 17.♙d6+- Black's king remains stranded in the centre and his pieces are disordinated.

11.♙a3! ♘bd7

11...c5?! – this move is quite dubious and it enables White to start an offensive against Black's king stranded in the centre: 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.♙b1 ♙e4 14.♙d6 ♘bd7 15.♘d4! ♙g5 16.♙f3 ♙c8 (16...♙xf3 17.♘xf3±) 17.♙fe1 ♙xf3 18.♘xf3 ♙g4 19.♙b7+-.

12.d5 0-0-0

12...exd5?! – that decision by Black is too risky: 13.♙d3 ♙g4 (it is very bad for Black to play: 13...♘e4 14.cxd5 ♘df6 15.♘d2! ♙xd5 16.♘xe4+-) 14.h3 ♙h5 15.♙e1+ ♘d8 16.cxd5 ♙xd5 (it is hardly any better for him to try: 16...♙xd5

Chapter 1

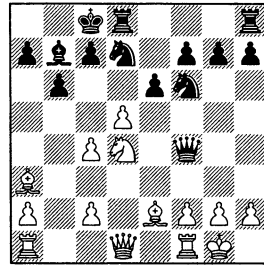
17. ♖a6! c5 (or 17... ♖e8 18. ♖xe8+ ♗xe8 19. ♗e1+ ♕e6 20. ♖d4±) 18. ♖e5! ♖e8 19. ♗xh5 ♖xh5 20. ♖ad1 ♖hf6 (20... ♖f4 21. ♖c1+-) 21. ♖b2 ♗c7 22. c4 ♖e6 (22... ♖c6 23. ♖xf7±) 23. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 24. ♖c1! f6 25. ♖f4+ ♗d8 (25... ♖e5 26. ♖xe5+-) 26. ♖b7±) 17. c4 ♗a5 18. ♖b2± having in mind Black's king stranded in the centre, White's piece-activity more than compensates the sacrificed pawn.

13. ♖d4 ♗f4

13... ♗g6 14. ♖d3 ♗g5 15. f4 ♗h4 16. dxe6 fxe6 17. ♖xe6 ♖g4 18. h3 ♖e3 19. ♗e1±.

(diagram)

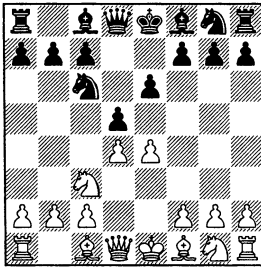
14. g3 ♗h6 (14... ♗e4 15. ♖f3 ♗g6 16. ♖e7 ♖de8 17. d6↑) **15. ♖e1 ♖e4** (15... exd5 16. ♖f5 ♗h3 17. ♖e7+ ♗b8 18. cxd5 ♖he8 19. ♖f3±)



16. ♖f3 ♖d2 (It is too bad for Black to defend with: 16... exd5 17. cxd5± since the following line does not work: 17... ♖xf2?! 18. ♗xf2 ♗xh2+ 19. ♖g2 ♖xd5 20. ♖f3+-; 19... ♖f6 20. c4 h5 21. ♗f3+-) **17. ♖g4 ♖f6 18. ♖c1 ♗g6 19. ♖h3 ♖de4** (19... ♖xc4? 20. dxe6 ♗b8 21. e7±) **20. ♖f4↑**. Black's king is not safe at all on the queenside. White maintains excellent attacking prospects.

Conclusion

The possibilities for Black, which we have analyzed in this chapter, are very seldom played. Basically, they aim at surprising the opponent and taking him away from his home-preparation. White maintains a clear advantage in all variations with quite natural moves. Black should better try to stay away from trouble by transposing into other popular schemes, for example into the Rubinstein variation.



This move develops a piece indeed, but it contradicts the classical strategic concepts for Black in the French Defence. Its main drawback is that he has great problems to organize the thematic pawn-break c7-c5 in order to undermine White's centre. Now, the most logical plan for Black seems to be the preparation of f7-f6, after White closes the centre. There arises a very interesting and complicated struggle, in which White usually maintains better chances.

4.♘f3

We will analyze here: **a) 4...♗b4** and **b) 4...♘f6**.

Black has tried sometimes other moves too:

About 4...a6 5.♗d3 – see 3...a6; 4...h6 5.♗d3 – see 3...h6; 4...dxe4 5.♘xe4 – see Chapter 3.

4...♘ge7 5.♗d3 b6 (After 5...

dxe4 6.♘xe4 ♘f5 7.c3 ♗e7 8.0-0 h6 9.♗c2 ♘d6 10.♗f4 0-0 11.♗ad1± Black remains in a very passive, but solid position, Mills – Delmar, England 1898; It is too dubious for Black to play: 5...g6 6.0-0 ♗g7 7.♗g5 0-0 8.e5± and the weakness of the dark squares on the kingside presents White with superior attacking prospects, Keres – Maurer, Tallinn 1933.) 6.0-0 ♘b4 7.♗b5+ c6 8.♗e2 ♗a6 9.a3 dxe4 10.♘xe4 ♗xe2 11.♗xe2 ♘bd5 12.c4± White has a space advantage and a huge lead in development, Horowitz – Pilnick, New York 1942;

4...♗e7 5.e5 b6 (5...a6, Duarte – J.Oliva, Merida 1997, 6.♘e2±) 6.♗b5 ♗b7 7.a3 h6 8.0-0 g5 9.♘e1± Kamberi – Kreger, Gaylord 1994.

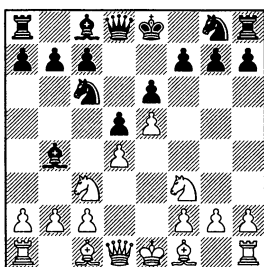
a) 4...♗b4 5.e5

(diagram)

5...♘ge7

About 5...♗d7 6.♗d3 b6 7.0-0 – see 5...b6; 5...♗f8 6.a3 – see 4...♘f6 5.e5 ♘g8 6.a3.

It is less logical for Black to play: 5...b6, because he usually connects such a move with the



idea to trade the light squared bishop with ♗a6 . Now, that idea would not work, because of the unfavourable placement of the knight on c6. 6... ♗d3 h6 (White's initiative on the queenside is running smoothly after: 6... ♗b7 7. 0-0 ♞d7 8. ♗e2 0-0-0 9.a4 f5 10.c3 ♗f8 11.b4± Martinez – Beltran, Cartagena 1995, Black can hardly create any counterplay. After 6... ♞d7 7.0-0 ♗xc3 8.bxc3 ♗b7 , Clemanace – Laird, Wellington 1978, White's pressure on the kingside is overwhelming – 9. ♗g5 h6 10. ♞h5 ♗d8 11. ♗h3 c5 12. ♞g4± .) 7.0-0 ♗b7 (It is not so purposeful for Black to play here: 7... ♗xc3 8.bxc3 ♗b8 9.c4! dxc4 10. ♗e4 c6 11.c3 ♗e7 12. ♗d2 ♗a6 13. ♗c2 , because White's compensation for the pawn is more than sufficient – he has a pawn-centre, a couple of bishops and a powerful knight and it is not surprising at all that Black failed to survive for long: 13... ♗d7 14. ♗e4 0-0 15. ♞g4 ♗h8 16. ♗g5 1-0 Reefat – Islam, Dhaka 2003.) 8. ♗e2 ♞d7 (It is even worse for Black to play 8... ♗f8 , Riedner – Koellendorfer, Austria 1991, and after 9.c3± White is

capable of seizing the initiative on both sides of the board.) 9.c3 ♗f8 10. ♗d2 0-0-0 11.b4 f6 12.f4± Te-manlis – Menkes, Tel Aviv 1990.

5...h6 6. ♗d3 ♗ge7 (White's initiative develops effortlessly after: 6... ♗xc3+?! 7.bxc3 ♗ge7 7. 0-0 0-0 9. ♞e2 ♗a5 10. ♗a3 c6 11. ♗d2 f6 12.f4± Connor – Whitehead, corr 1996; It is quite dubious for Black to follow with: 6... ♗a5?! 7. ♗d2 ♗b6 8. ♗e2 a6 9.c3 ♗d7 10. ♗g3± because he has nothing to counter with White's onslaught on the kingside, Chinasamy – Minani, Istanbul 2000; It is not advisable for Black to continue with: 6... ♗d7 7.0-0 ♗ge7 8. ♗e2 ♗f5 9.c3 ♗e7 10. ♗f4± because the development of White's initiative on the kingside and in the centre is facilitated by the unfavourable placement of Black's pieces, Spierings – Kroes, corr. 1991; it is too bad for Black to follow with: 6...f6? 7. ♗g6+ ♗f8 8.0-0 f5 9. ♗e2 ♗e7 10. ♗f4 ♗g5 , Em.Lasker – Gerwig, USA 1906, because after the simple line: 11. ♗xg5 hxg5 12. ♗h3± White preserves excellent chances to exploit Black's kingside weaknesses.) 7.0-0 0-0 8. ♗e2 ♗d7 9.c3± Vehre – Connolly, corr. 1986. White has a powerful centre and superior attacking prospects, while Black has no counterplay whatsoever.

5...f5 6. ♗d2 ♗d7 (The other possibilities for Black are hardly an improvement: 6...a6?! 7.a3

♗a5 8.♗d3 h6, Nava – Washburn, Email 2000 and here: 9.♘e2± prepares the trade of the dark squared bishop and that is quite favourable for White; otherwise his opponent's bishop would be forced to retreat to a passive position. Black is deprived of any counterplay in both cases; 6... ♗xc3 7.♗xc3 ♗d7, Antoni – Erdel, Bonnevoie 2000, 8.♗d2 ♘ge7 9.♗d3± and White has the two bishop advantage and excellent prospects to seize the initiative on both sides of the board; 6... ♘ge7 7.♘e2 ♗xd2+ 8.♗xd2 0-0 9.♘f4 ♗e8 10.♗e2 ♗d7 11.♘g5! ♘d8 12.h4 c5 13.dxc5 ♗c8 14.♗h5! g6 15.♗e2± and having provoked the weakening of Black's king-position – White's attack became victorious quite soon in the game G.Martin – Secula, corr. 1982; 6... ♗d7 7.♘e2 ♗e7 8.♘f4±; 7... ♗xd2+ 8.♗xd2 ♘h6 9.♘f4 ♗e7 10.c4± White maintains a powerful pressure in the centre and excellent attacking chances on the queen-side, A.Martin – Erez, Spain 1994) 7.♗d3 ♗e7 8.a3 ♗xc3 9.♗xc3 ♘h6 10.♗d2 ♘f7 11.b4± Laube – Sadeghi, Germany 1993. Black has no counterplay at all, while White can act effectively on both sides of the board.

Black has seldom tried in practice: 5...f6 6.a3 ♗xc3+ (6...♗a5 7.b4 ♗b6 8.♘a4. Black gives up his dark squared bishop and he does not even have the superficial compensation of doubled pawns

for White. 8...♘ce7 9.♗d3 ♗d7, Latini – Fusthy, Cattolica 1993, 10.♘xb6 axb6 11.0-0±; 8...fxe5 9.♘xb6 axb6 10.dxe5 ♘ge7, Contessotto – Zunino, Chivilcoy 2001, 11.b5 ♘a5 12.♗d3 0-0 13.0-0 c5 – and even after the best for Black: 13...♗e8 14.♗b1± he has no counterplay whatsoever – 14.♗xh7+! ♘xh7 15.♘g5+ ♘g8 16.♗h5 ♗f5 17.♗h7+ ♘f8 18.f4! ♘c4 19.g4 ♗f7 20.f5+–; White checkmates too after: 15...♘g6 16.h4! ♗h8 17.♗g4 ♗g8 18.h5+ ♘h6 19.♘xe6+ ♘h7 20.♘g5+ ♘h6 21.e6+–) 7.bxc3 ♘ge7 (White maintains a great advantage by simple means after: 7...fxe5 8.dxe5 ♘ge7 9.♗d3 h6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♗e2 ♘f5 12.♗d1 ♗d7 13.c4 ♗e8 14.♗b2± Karjakin – Chepukaitis, Dubai 2002. It is hardly better for Black to try: 7...♗d7 8.♗b1 fxe5 9.dxe5 ♗b8, Marx – Marek, France 1998, 10.♗d3 ♘ge7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♗e2 ♗e8 13.c4±) 8.♗d3 0-0, Ostergaard – Paust, Stockholm 1987. Presently, White's simplest solution would be: 9.exf6 ♗xf6 (It is much worse for Black to play: 9...gxf6 10.♗h6 ♗e8 11.♘e5! ♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♘g6 13.♗xg6 hxg6 14.♗g4 ♘f7 15.♗f4± because he has nothing against White's attack on the dark squares.) 10.0-0±. The arising position belongs to the Winawer variation (1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e5), except that the placement of the black knight on the c6-square precludes Black's counterplay with c7-c5.

6. ♖d3 ♜f5

Black has tried in practice some other possibilities too:

The move 6...0-0? Niethammer – Dobratz, Doernfeld 1999, is a grave blunder and White wins with the standard checkmating combination: 7. ♖xh7+ ♜xh7 8. ♜g5+ ♜g6 (8...♜g8 9. ♖h5 ♞e8 10. ♖h7+ ♜f8 11. ♖h8+ ♜g8 12. ♜h7+ ♜e7 13. ♖g5+-) 9. h4 ♖e8 10. ♖g4 ♜f5 11. h5+ ♜h6 12. ♜ge4+! ♜h7 13. h6+-;

6...♖d7 7.0-0 0-0? Schugal – Burgsmuller, Germany 1996, once again the typical bishop-sacrifice works, although White cannot bring in the rook and the h-pawn into the attack: 8. ♖xh7+ ♜xh7 9. ♜g5+ ♜g6 (9...♜g8 10. ♖h5 ♞e8 11. ♖h7+ ♜f8 12. ♖h8+ ♜g8 13. ♜h7+ ♜e7 14. ♖g5+-) 10. ♜e2!+-;

6...♜g6 7.0-0 (in answer to 7...h6, Skinke – Benamani, Oropesa del Mar 2001, it is logical for White to try the standard maneuver of the knight to the kingside: 8. ♜e2! 0-0 9. c3 ♖e7 10. ♖c2± or 8...♜h4 9. ♜e1! ♖d7 10. c3 ♖e7 11. ♜f4± – Black's pieces are dis-coordinated and White enjoys a great space advantage, so he can seize the initiative on both sides of the board.) 7...♖e7 8. a3 b6 9. ♜e2! a5 10. c3 ♖a6 11. ♖c2 ♜a7 12. ♞e1 c5 13. ♖e3 ♞c8 14. g3 ♜c6 15. h4± White's onslaught on the kingside is much more dangerous than Black's counterplay, Gautier – Mathieu, France 2003;

6...♜a5 7.0-0 ♖xc3 8. bxc3 c5 9. dxc5 ♖c7 10. ♖e3 ♜g6 11. ♖d4 0-0 12. ♞e1± – White has an extra pawn, a huge space advantage and a couple of powerful bishops. He has excellent chances to organize a victorious kingside attack. Black tried to facilitate his defence by exchanging the light squared bishops, but that led him into a lost position quite soon: 12...a6 13. ♞b1 ♖d7 14. ♜g5 ♖b5 15. ♖h5 h6 16. ♜xe6 fxe6 17. ♖xg6+- Pilaj – Kovaljov, Tallinn 1997;

6...h6 7.0-0 0-0 8. ♜e2! ♜f5 9. c3 ♖e7 10. ♖b1± – White's centre is very solid and his attacking prospects are superior: 10...♖g5 11. ♜xg5 hxg5 12. ♖d3 g6 13. h3 b6 14. f4 ♜b8 15. b4 gxf4 16. ♖xf4+- E. Ivanov – Kirichenko, Russia 2002;

6...♖d7 7.0-0 b6 8. ♜e2! ♜g6 9. c3 ♖e7, Knorr Jarillo – Alberdi Guibert, Subijana 1998 and now after the best line for White: 10. ♜g3 0-0 (Black would change matters neither with: 10...♖b7 11. ♜g5 a5 12. ♞e1 ♖a6 13. ♖c2± nor with: 10...a5 11. ♞e1 ♖a6 12. ♖c2 0-0 13. ♜g5± and White's initiative on the kingside is overwhelming in both cases.) 11. h4± and Black is faced with an extremely difficult defence.

7.0-0 ♖e7!?

7...b6 8. ♜e2 h5?! (White preserves a powerful pressure in the centre after that move, but Black can hardly defend against White's

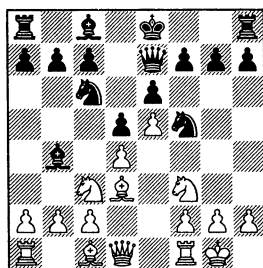
building kingside initiative after the other possibilities either.) 9.c4! ♗e7 10.♗xf5 exf5 11.cxd5 ♗xd5 12.♗f4 ♗d7 13.d5± White's winning chances are superior, because of his lead in development and a powerful centre; moreover the shelter of the black king is quite unreliable, Chesnauskas – Borisenko, USSR 1968.

7...0–0 8.♗e2! b6 9.c3 ♗e7, Haessler – Porth, Germany 1993 and now after 10.♗c2 h6 11.♗f4 a5 12.♗e1 ♗d7 13.♗e2± White has a space advantage and good attacking prospects on the kingside.

7...♗e7 8.a3! – this is a useful move and it enables White to avoid the trade of the light squared bishops after the planned ♗e2-move. 8...a5 9.♗e2 b6 10.c3 h5 11.♗c2 ♗a6 12.♗e1 g5 (This attempt by Black to seize the initiative on the kingside is bound to fail, because of the discoordination of his pieces.) 13.♗g3 ♗xg3 14.fxg3! g4 15.♗d2 ♗d7 16.♗f1 ♗g8 17.♗f4 ♗c8 18.b4± White has occupied plenty of space and he can exert a lot of pressure on both sides of the board, Stanev – Prie, Val Maubuee 1990.

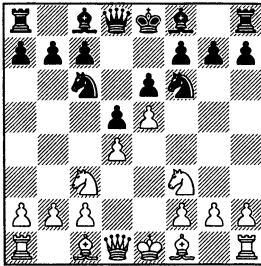
7...♗cxd4 (or 7...♗fxd4) – Black does not win his opponent's central pawn with that move, instead he only enables White to develop an overwhelming kingside initiative effortlessly: 8.♗xd4 ♗xd4 9.♗g4 c5 (9...♗c6 10.♗xg7 ♗f8 11.♗g5 ♗d7 12.♗ad1± Pieri – Cordara, Forli 1993) 10.

♗xg7 ♗d7, Babrikowski – Porth, Germany 1993 and here White maintains a great advantage with: 11.a3 ♗xc3 (Black is even worse after: 11...♗a5 12.b4 cxb4 13.axb4 ♗xb4 14.♗xd5 exd5 15.♗g4+– because White regains his piece and his attack is easily victorious.) 12.bxc3 ♗c6 13.♗xf7± and White has a solid extra pawn and a couple of powerful bishops, so his winning prospects are superior.



8.♗e2! – this is the simplest solution for White. (It is worse for him to play the seemingly attractive line: 8.♗xf5?! ♗xc3 9.♗xe6 ♗xe6 10.bxc3 ♗a5± because Black has a really dangerous counterplay along the light squares, for example: 11.♗d2 h5 12.f4 ♗g4 13.♗e1 ♗f5 14.♗e2 0–0–0 ½ Houhou – Rey, Val Thorens 1995) **8...♗h4 9.♗d2 ♗xd2 10.♗xd2 ♗b4 11.♗xb4 ♗xb4 12.♗c1!±** and White enjoys a space edge and excellent possibilities on both sides of the board. Black's defence is even more difficult, because of his “bad” light squared bishop.

b) 4...♟f6 5.e5



We will now deal in details with the lines: **b1) 5...♟d7** and **b2) 5...♟e4**.

Black has seldom tried in practice some other possible retreats of the knight:

5...♟g4?! Mendes – Cunha dos Santos, Portugal 1994, 6.h3 ♟h6 7.♟xh6 gxh6 8.♟d2 ♟g8 9.g3 ♟d7 10.0–0–0±;

5...♟g8 6.a3 a5 (6...b6 7.♟d3 ♟b7 8.0–0 ♟d7 9.♟e2 0–0–0 10.b4 f6 11.♟d2 ♟b8 12.b5 ♟ce7 13.a4± and White's queenside attack is very powerful, Arizmendi – Bauer, Saint Vincent 2003; 9...♟ge7 10.b4 h6, Hamatgaleev – Gumerov, Ufa 1999, now, Black's king will hardly find a safe haven after: 11.♟g3±) 7.♟b5 ♟d7 8.0–0 ♟a7 9.♟d3 h6 (9...c5 10.dxc5 ♟xc5 11.♟e2 ♟e7 12.♟e3± Nunn) 10.♟e3 b6 (10...c5 11.a4 ♟e7 12.♟b5!± Nunn) 11.b3 ♟c6 12.a4 ♟b7 13.♟e2 ♟c6 14.♟f4 ♟b4 15.♟e2 ♟a6 16.c4! White's lead in development is overwhelming and he has a powerful initiative in the centre and on the queenside. 16...♟e7 17.♟d2 ♟ec6 18.♟c1 dxc4 19.bxc4!

♟xd4 20.♟xd4 ♟xd4 21.♟xe6! fxe6 (21...♟d7 22.♟xf8±) 22.♟h5+ ♟d7, Nunn – Sahovic, Geneve 1987 and now White's simplest solution is to go into an endgame with: 23.♟xb4 ♟xd1 24.♟fxd1+ ♟c8 25.♟xf8 ♟xf8 26.♟g4 ♟e8 27.c5!±. The material has been reduced considerably, but Black's defence against White's numerous threats is extremely difficult, for example: 27...b5 28.♟f3 ♟b8 29.♟c6 ♟e7 30.♟d4+–.

b1) 5...♟d7 6.♟e2!

This maneuver of the knight to a more active placement is quite typical for that position; moreover White can fortify his centre now with the move c3.

6...f6

The other possibilities for Black are rather passive:

6...♟e7 7.c3 0–0 8.♟f4 a6 (8...g5 9.♟h5 f6 10.h4! – Black would have obtained a quite decent compensation for the pawn after the seemingly attractive line for White: 10.exf6 ♟xf6 11.♟xg5 e5 12.♟c2 e4 13.♟f4 ♟d6 – 10...fxe5 11.♟xg5 ♟f6 12.♟xf6+ ♟xf6 13.♟g4 ♟e7 14.♟d3± and White's two bishop advantage provides him with clearly better chances, since Black must worry about the safety of his king, Hanison – Marques Noronha, Email 2001; It looks too slow for Black to try: 8...♟b6, because after: 9.♟d3 f6 10.♟c2 f5 11.g4± White organizes quickly an extremely dangerous

attack against the enemy king, Zernovic – Roth, Slovakia 2000) 9.♗d3± White had a huge advantage with his powerful centre and superior attacking prospects; nevertheless Black did not need to lose the game outright with: 9...f6?? 10.♗xe6+– Meijer – Korhonen, Email 1998;

In answer to 6...b6, Garcia Ramon – Ansola Marquinez, Aragon 2003, it seems logical for White to follow with: 7.♗f4 ♗e7 8.c3↑ and his kingside initiative is dangerous, while Black has no counterplay at all;

6...♗b6 7.♗f4 ♗d7 8.c3 a5, Lux – J.Anderson, London 1987, 9.♗d3 ♗e7 10.♖c2 h6 (or 10...g6 11.h4± and White exerts a powerful pressure on the kingside) 11.♗h5 0–0 12.♖d2→ White's kingside threats are extremely dangerous, for example: 12...♗b4 (12...f5 13.♗xg7! ♗xg7 14.♖xh6+ ♗f7 15.♖h5+ ♗g8 16.♖g6+ ♗h8 17.g4+–) 13.♗b1 ♗c4 14.♖f4±;

6...♗e7 7.c3 b6 8.♗f4 ♗g6, Zuse – Weidemann, Germany 1988 and now White would have a slight, but stable advantage after the simple line: 9.♗xg6 hxg6 10.♗g5 ♗e7 (10...f6 11.♖c2 ♗f7 12.♗e3±) 11.♗xe7 ♖xe7 12.♗d3 ♗b7 13.♖e2±. Black's position is cramped and he would hardly be able to create any effective counterplay.

7.exf6 ♗xf6 8.♗g3 ♗d6 9.♗b5

White's main task here is to prevent the freeing pawn-break e6-e5.

9...0–0

Black can hardly equalize after the rest of the moves either:

9...♖e7 10.0–0 h5?! (This move only creates additional weaknesses on Black's kingside and it precludes the organization of any counterplay. He should have played instead: 10...♗d7 11.♖e1±) 11.♖e1 g6 12.♗g5± Boschetti – Vogel, Mendrisio 1986;

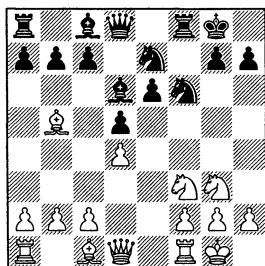
9...♗d7 10.0–0 0–0 11.♖e1 a6 (11...♗xg3?! – this is a dubious move and it not only “presents” White with the two bishop advantage, but it also surrenders the all-important e5-outpost. 12.hxg3 a6 13.♗d3 ♖e8 14.c3 ♖h5 15.♗f4± Murey – Trinh, Paris 1991. Black would not fare any better after: 13...♗b4 14.♗g5! ♗xd3 15.♖xd3 ♖e8 16.♗xf6 ♖xf6 17.g4± or 16...gxf6 17.g4± and the superiority of White's bishop against Black's knight is quite clear-cut.) 12.♗f1± (It is worse for White to play here: 12.♗xc6?! ♗xc6 13.♗g5 ♖e8 14.♗xe6 ♖d7 or 13.♖xe6 ♗e4 and Black's compensation for the pawn is more than sufficient with a bishop-pair and a huge piece-activity) White's plans are based on fortifying the centre with c3, followed by a deployment of the bishop to the b1-h7 diagonal.

10.0–0 ♗e7

10...a6 11.♗a4 ♗b8 12.c3 c5 13.♖e1 ♗c6 14.♗c2 ♖c7 15.♗g5

cx d4 16.cxd4 ♖f4 17.♗xf4 ♜xf4
18.♞c1± Tseshkovsky – P.Meister,
Hungary 1990.

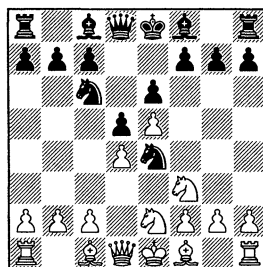
10...♞e8 11.♞e1 ♘g4?! – Black
loses important tempi after that,
Hennings – Porth, Germany
1998, 12.h3 ♘f6 (12...♗xg3 13.fxg3
♘f6 14.♗f4±) 13.♘f5! Black must
now either concede the two bish-
op advantage to his opponent and
that guarantees White a clear
edge, or he should enter the fol-
lowing line: 13...♗b4 14.c3 ♗a5
15.♞a4 ♗b6 16.♗xc6 bxc6 17.♞a3±
and both black bishops are with-
out any good prospects whatso-
ever.



This position was reached in
the game Cicak – Brueckner, Ger-
many 1988. It seems now quite
logical for White to try: **11.♞e1**
and the game might follow with:
11...c5 (11...a6 12.♗d3 c5 13.dxc5
♗xc5 14.♗e3 ♗d6 15.c4±; 14...♗xe3
15.♞xe3 ♘c6 16.c4± and White can
easily attack Black's vulnerable
central pawns.) **12.dxc5 ♗xc5**
13.♗e3 ♗xe3 14.♞xe3±. Black
needs to worry about the weak-
ness of the dark squares – com-
plex in the centre; moreover his

bishop is without any bright fu-
ture. He can hardly organize any
effective counterplay, for exam-
ple: 14...♘g4 15.♞e2 ♞b6 16.c4
a6 17.♗a4 dxc4 18.♞c1 ♞f4 19.b3!
cxb3 20.♗xb3± – White's piece-
activity more than compensates
the sacrificed pawn.

b2) 5...♘e4 6.♘e2



We will now analyze thor-
oughly: **b2a) 6...♗d7** and **b2b)**
6...f6.

Black has tried some other
lines too:

6...f5?! – this move spells dan-
ger for Black, because White can
capture the centralized enemy
knight with: 7.h4! ♗e7 8.g3 0–0
9.♘fg1±;

6...b6 7.♘g3 ♗b7 8.c3 ♘xg3
9.hxg3 ♗e7 10.♗d3 h6 11.♞e2
♘a5 12.g4 g5 13.♞h5 ♘d7 14.♗e3
♞f8 15.0–0–0 ♞d8 16.♞dh1 ♞g7,
Antoniou – Sasaki, Krevan 1996,
17.♞1h3 ♘c8 18.♞f1 c5 19.♞h1±;

6...♘a5 7.♘g3 c5, Fogarasi –
Gara, Hungary 1992, 8.c3 ♘xg3
9.hxg3 cxd4 10.♞xd4 ♘c6 11.♞f4
♞b6 12.♗d3±;

6...♘e7 7.♘g3 ♘f5 8.♗d3 c5

9.♗e4 dxe4 10.♗xe4 ♗xd4 11.♗e3± Hector – Prie, Chartres 1990;

6...h5 – only compromises Black's kingside. 7.c3 h4 8.♗d2! ♗xd2 9.♗xd2 ♗e7 10.♗f4 ♗f5 11.♗d3 g6 12.♖e2 c6 13.0–0–0 ♖a5 14.♗b1 ♗d7 15.g4± Gelfand – Kengis, Tilburg 1992. White can boast about his powerful centre, his lead in development and he can easily seize the initiative on both sides of the board;

6...♗e7 7.♗g3 ♗b8 (about 7...f6 8.exf6 – see 6...f6; 7...f5 8.exf6 – see 7...f6) 8.♗d3 f5 9.exf6 ♗xf6, Serjakov – Airapetian, Tula 2003 and here White's huge lead in development enables him to begin a kingside onslaught by playing: 10.♗g5!? 0–0 11.♗h5 g6 (it is too dangerous for Black to try: 11...h6 12.♗xf6+ ♖xf6 13.♗h7 ♖f5 14.g4±) 12.♗xf6+ ♖xf6 (12...♗xf6? 13.♗xh7!+–) 13.♗xh7?! ♗xh7 14.♖h5+ ♗g7 15.♖h6+ ♗f7 16.♖h7+ ♗e8 17.♗g5 ♖f8 18.♗h6 ♖f6 (18...♗d7 19.♗xf8 ♖xf8 20.♗xg6±) 19.♗g7 ♖f4 20.♖xg6+ ♗d7 (20...♖f7 21.♗e2±) 21.g3 ♖f3 22.♗e2± White's material advantage is only minimal, but Black can hardly counter the advance of White's passed pawns on the kingside.

b2a) 6...♗d7

This is a prophylactic move against White's threat ♗b5, but thus Black postpones for a while undermining White's pawn-centre with f7-f6.

7.c3

That move fortifies White's centre and it ensures the wonderful d3-outpost for his bishop. In answer to 7.♗e3, with the idea to transpose to variation **b2b)** after 7...f6 8.♗g3, Black can emphasize the fact that the move has been too premature by playing: 7...♗e7 8.♗g3 f5! 9.exf6 (In case of 9.c3 0–0= Black is threatening a fork and White is forced to lose tempi. The game might follow with: 10.♖c1 ♗a5! 11.♗d3 ♖e8 12.b4 – White is now threatening ♗b5 – 12...♗c4 13.♗xc4 dxc4 14.♗xe4 fxe4 15.♗d2 ♖g6 16.0–0 ♗c6! and Black's chances are at least equal.) 9...♗xf6 10.♗d3 (after 10.♖e2 0–0 11.0–0–0 ♖e8 12.♗d2 ♗d6 13.♖e1 ♖g6∞ the chances are about equal) 10...0–0 11.♗e5 (in case of 11.c3 ♗d6, it becomes evident that White's bishop on the e3-square is misplaced – it closes the e-file and it becomes very easy for Black to prepare the freeing move e6-e5) 11...♗b4! 12.♗e2 c5! 13.dxc5 (13.c3 cxd4=) d4! 14.♗xd4 ♗a4∞ and Black's compensation for the two missing pawns is just excellent.

7...f6

7...f5?! 8.h4! ♗e7 (8...♖e7? Robledo – Minzer, Santiago 1996, White was winning easily here with: 9.♗fg1!+– followed by the unavoidable 10.f3) 9.g3 0–0 10.♗fg1±.

Black cannot equalize with: 7...♗e7 8.♗g3 0–0 9.♗d3 f5 10.exf6

♠xf6 11.0–0 ♔d6 12.♚e2±. The basic drawback of Black's position is the lack of available space and it is almost impossible for him to prepare the thematic pawn-break e6–e5.

8. ♖g3!? fxe5

It is worse for Black to play: 8...♗xg3 9.hxg3 fxe5 10.dxe5 ♚e7 11.♔d3± because he can hardly defend against White's threats on the kingside.

9. dxe5!

This move is much stronger than: 9.♗xe4 dxe4 10.♗xe5 ♗xe5 11.dxe5 ♔c6 13.♔c4 ♚xe5 14.♔e3, Zelcic – V.Kovacevic, Split 2000, because after 14...0–0–0, White must fight for a draw with an accurate play.

9...♔c5

Black has plenty of possibilities here, but White maintains his advantage in all lines:

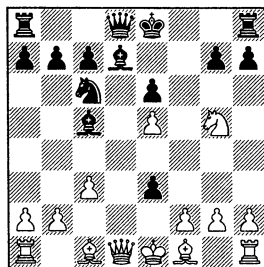
9...♗c5 10.b4 (It is also good for White to follow with the calm move: 10.♚c2 a5 11.♔e3 ♔e7 12.h4± and Black has problems to complete his development, since it is too dangerous for him to follow with: 12...0–0, because of 13.♗g5 g6 14.♗xh7! ♗xh7 15.h5→ and White's attack is extremely dangerous.) 10...♗e4 11.b5 ♗xg3 (The other possibilities for Black are hardly any better, for example: 11...♗e7 12.♗xe4 dxe4 13.♗g5±; 11...♗a5 12.♗xe4 dxe4 13.♗g5± and Black's attempt to free himself with: 13...c6 14.♗xe4 cxb5? leads to an immediate disaster

after 15.♗f6!+–) 12.hxg3 ♗e7 (or 12...♗a5 13.♔d3±) 13.♗g5± Black's "developed" pieces are not only out of action, but they hamper the rest of his pieces, so he is almost beyond salvation. He loses, for example after: 13...h6 (or 13...g6 14.♚f3 ♗f5 15.g4+–) 14.♚f3+–;

9...♔e7 10.♔d3 ♗c5 (and once again it is too dangerous for Black to open the h-file – 10...♗xg3 11.hxg3±) 11.♔b1! a5 12.h4 0–0 (The other possibility for Black does not contribute to his development indeed; nevertheless it is obviously safer: 12...a4 13.♔e3±) 13.♗g5! h6 (or 13...♔xg5 14.♔xg5 ♚e8 15.♚c2±) 14.♚c2± Black can hardly parry White's threats against the black king without material losses.

10. ♗xe4 dxe4 11. ♗g5 e3

Black's defence is very difficult too after: 11...♗xe5 12.♗xe4 ♔b6 (12...♔e7 13.♚h5+ ♗f7 14.♔e3±) 13.♔g5 ♚c8 14.♚h5+ ♗g6 (14...♗f7 15.♔d3±) 15.♔d3±; as well as after 11...♔b6 12. ♚h5+ g6 13.♚e2 ♗xe5 14.♗xe4 0–0 15.♔g5±.

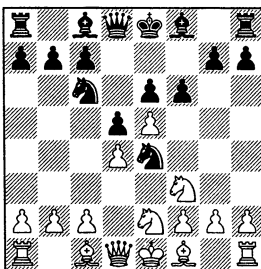


12.f4!

Black's e3-pawn seems to be

threatening, while in fact, it is simply a weakness and he will have problems defending it. 12...0-0 (or 12...♘e7 13.♙d3 ♘f5 14.♚e2!±; 12...♙b6 13.♚h5+! g6 14.♚h3 ♘xe5 15.♙xe3±) 13.♚d3 ♙f5 14.♘e4 ♙b6 (Black's attempt to attack White's "centralized" king fails after: 14...♙xe5!? 15.fxe5 ♘xe5 16.♚c2 ♚h4+ 17.g3 ♘f3+ 18.♙d1 ♚h5 19.♘xc5 ♘xh2+ 20.♚e2+-; Black can also try the piece-sacrifice - 12...♘xe5!? 13.♘e4! ♙b6 14.fxe5 ♚h4+ 15.♘g3 0-0-0, but White should be able to consolidate his position with a precise play and he will remain with an extra knight for two pawns. 16.♚h5 ♚f4 17.♙f3 ♚xe5 18.♚e4±) 15.♙xe3± White has won a pawn and he should manage to neutralize Black's temporary activity with an accurate play.

b2b) 6...f6



This is the most straightforward line for Black – his counterplay, connected with the idea c7-c5 is presently impossible, so he should try to undermine White's centre from the other side.

7.♘g3

White should not trade on f6 himself, because Black would counter that by the move 7...♚xf6 with a good game.

7...fxe5

About 7...♘xg3 8.hxg3 fxe5 9.♙b5 – see 7...fxe5 8.♙b5.

7...f5?! 8.c3 ♙e7 9.h4! b6 (9...♘xg3 10.fxg3 h5 11.♙g5 b6 12.♙e2 a5 13.♙xe7 ♚xe7 14.♘g5 g6 15.0-0± Black is faced with an extremely unpleasant defence, because of the weak dark squares on the kingside and the passivity of his pieces, R.Mainka – Meister, Germany 1991) 10.♘e2! (10.♘h5 0-0 11.♘f4↑ Psakhis) 10...♚d7 11.♘fg1! (Black has no satisfactory defence now against 12.f3.) 11...♚d8 12.g3 0-0 13.f3 ♘xg3 14.♘xg3 ♙xh4 15.♙f4 g5 16.♙xh4!+- R.Mainka – Thesing, Dortmund 1991.

7...♙d7 8.♙d3 f5 9.c3 ♙e7 10.♘h5 0-0 11.h4↑ ♚e8 12.♘f4 ♘a5 13.♘g5 ♘xg5 14.hxg5 g6 15.♚f3± White preserves excellent attacking chances against Black's compromised kingside, Zezulkin – Dewenter, Bad Zwischenahn 2002.

7...♙e7 8.exf6 ♙xf6 (8...♘xf6 9.♙d3 ♙d6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♙e1 ♘b4 12.♙f1 c5 13.c3 ♘c6 14.a3 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♚c7 16.b4 a6 17.♙b2 ♙d7 18.♘e5± White maintains a long-lasting positional pressure, because of his dominance over the e5-square, Degraeve – Brouthin, Bethune 2000.) 9.♙d3 0-0

(9... ♖xd4? 10. ♖xd4 ♙xd4 11. ♗b5+ c6 12. ♖xd4 cxb5 13. ♖xe4 dxe4 14. ♖xg7+- Psakhis; 9... ♖d6?! 10. c3 ♙d7 11. ♖e2 g6 12. 0-0 ♖e7 13. ♗e1 0-0-0 14. a4 ♗de8 15. b4± White has a powerful queenside initiative, while his opponent has no counterplay whatsoever, S.Kayumov – Gardeh, Abu Dhabi 2002) 10. ♖xe4 dxe4 11. ♙xe4 ♖xd4 12. 0-0 c6 (12... ♖f5 13. c3 ♖d6 14. ♙c2 ♖f7, Franzoni – Zorman, Biel 1994, Black lags in development and his king is somewhat vulnerable, so White should not trade queens – 15. ♖e2±; in answer to 12...e5, Ivanovic – S.Nikolic, Budva 1986, White's simplest line would be: 13. c3 ♖xf3 14. ♖xf3 c6 15. ♙e3, transposing to the line 12...c6; in case of 12...♖xf3, Pulkkinen – Kekki, Helsinki 1993, the most energetic move for White seems to be 13. ♖xf3! and it becomes too risky for Black to go after material gains, because after: 13... ♙xb2 – it is better for Black to try: 13... ♙d4 14. ♖d3 h6 15. c3± – 14. ♖h3! and White checkmates after 14... ♙xa1 15. ♖xh7+ ♖f7 16. ♖h5+- or 14... ♙xc1 15. ♖xh7+ ♖f7 16. ♖h5→ White's attack is overwhelming and the material is equal) 13. c3 ♖xf3+ 14. ♖xf3 e5 15. ♙e3 ♖e7 (in answer to 15... ♙e6, Sammalvuori – Kekki, Helsinki 1993, White's best line would be: 16. ♙c5 ♗f7 17. ♗fd1 ♖c7 18. ♖d3 g6 19. ♖e3± White has occupied the d-file and he has weakened both Black's flanks) 16. b4 ♖f7 17. a4 a6

18. ♙c5± Black's defence is extremely difficult here, because of his weak e5-pawn and the great activity of White's pieces, Mokry – Reefschaeger, Malmo 1986.

8. dxe5 ♙d7

This is a prophylactic move against White's possibility 9. ♙b5.

Naturally, it is wrong for Black to exchange two light pieces for a rook and pawns in the line: 8... ♙b4+?! 9. c3 ♖xc3 10. bxc3 ♙xc3+ 11. ♙d2 ♙xa1 12. ♖xa1 0-0 13. ♙d3± because White's chances to organize a dangerous attack are just excellent, since there are still queens present on the board.

In answer to 8... ♙e7, Cabrilo – Z.Nikolic, Cetinje 1993, it seems attractive for White to follow with: 9. ♙b5!? ♙d7 (in case of 9... ♖c5 10. ♙xc6+ bxc6 11. ♖d4 ♙d7 12. ♖h5+ g6 13. ♖g4± Black's pawn-centre is quite static and it only hampers the movements of his own pieces. The dark squares on Black's kingside are vulnerable and his two bishop advantage does not compensate the positional defects in his camp at all.) 10. ♙e3 0-0 (Once again it is not good for Black to play: 10... ♙b4+ 11. c3 ♖xc3 12. bxc3 ♙xc3+ 13. ♙d2 ♙xa1 14. ♖xa1 0-0 15. ♙d3±. It is quite risky for him to open the h-file: 10... ♖xg3 11. hxg3, because that comes right into White's hands. After: 11... 0-0 12. ♖d3 g6 13. ♙xc6 ♙xc6 14. 0-0-0± White remains with excellent attacking chances; it is even worse for

Black to follow with: 11...♘xe5? 12.♘xe5 ♗xb5 13.♞h5+-.) 11.♗xc6 ♗xc6 (in case of 11...bxc6 12.♘xe4 dxe4 13.♘d2 ♞b8 14.♘b3!± Black's pawns are a sorry sight...) 12.♘d4 ♞d7 (12...♘c5 13.♘xc6 bxc6 14.♞g4±) 13.♞g4 ♘c5 14.♘h5 ♖f7 15.♘f4± and White has a clear-cut plan to seize the initiative on the kingside by advancing his h-pawn, while Black's counterplay is quite difficult to organize, because of the vulnerability of the e6-square.

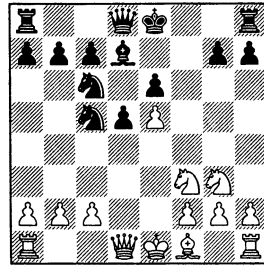
9.♗e3 ♗c5

Now, after: 9...♗b4+ 10.c3 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♗xc3+ 12.♗d2 ♗xa1 13.♞xa1 0-0 14.♗d3± White's light pieces are much stronger than Black's rook and pawns.

10.♗xc5 ♘xc5

(diagram)

This position was reached in the game V.Gashimov – Heberla, Artek 2000. Black's knights are totally misplaced on the c-file and



his counterplay is non-existent. White can patiently prepare his kingside onslaught. **11.♞d2 0-0** **12.♞e3 ♞e7** **13.0-0-0 ♗e8** (this is a logical transfer of the bishop to a more active position) **14.h4 ♗g6** **15.h5 ♗e4** **16.♘d4 ♘xd4** **17.♞xd4 a5** (It is even worse for Black to play here: 17...♗f5 18.♘xf5 ♞xf5 19.g4 ♖f7 20.f4 ♞af8 21.♗g2 c6 22.g5± and White begins a dangerous kingside attack.) **18.f3 ♗f5** **19.♘e2 h6** **20.g4 ♗h7** **21.♞g1 ♘d7** **22.f4±**. White's prospects on the kingside are clearly more promising than Black's counterplay.

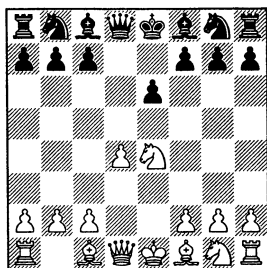
Conclusion

Black's third move, which we have analyzed in this chapter, possesses an evident drawback – it hampers his standard counterplay, connected with the pawn-break c7-c5. Despite all that, White must play very precisely in order to prevent Black's possible activity, connected with the pawn-move f7-f6. White has a wonderful maneuver at his disposal, which is quite purposeful in all variations: ♘c3-e2, followed by its deployment to g3 or f4 and there it facilitates the development of White's kingside initiative. The other idea behind the move ♘c3-e2 is that White can support his centre with c2-c3 and that is quite useful for him in numerous lines. Black is often forced into a long-lasting defence, without any good prospects. His attempts to seize the initiative usually lead only to great additional difficulties.

Part 2

Rubinstein Variation

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4



The diagrammed position is extremely popular in the contemporary tournament practice. Black reduces the tension in the centre by exchanging pawns in order to complete the mobilization of his pieces without being intimidated by the possible pawn-advance e4-e5 by White. The absence of long pawn-chains is in fact a bit untypical for the French Defence. Actually, the arising positions in the Rubinstein variation resemble a lot these in the Caro-Kann Defence. You will be easily convinced of that if you have a look at the third part of our book three. It is the pawn-structure in the centre, as a rule, that is decisive in the choice of plans for both sides and the character of the play as well.

Black does not have any obvious weaknesses in the Rubinstein variation and White must play very precisely and energetically in order to fight for the opening advantage; otherwise Black will easily equalize after the completion of the mobilization of his forces. Tournament practice has indicated that Black's greatest problem in this line is the development of his light squared bishop. He can try to solve it in numerous ways.

In Chapter 3, we have analyzed variations that are presently out of fashion. Black either ignores the problem with his light squared bishop altogether (4...♗c6 and 4...♖d5), or he tries to solve it by quite radical means as: 4...e5 and 4...b6. White's task, in the majority of these lines, is to only choose the simplest and the most reliable method of obtaining the opening advantage.

In Chapter 4 we deal with the move 4...♗f6. Presently, it is not so popular either, despite the fact that plenty of masters used to play like that as early as during the 19th century. Things are far from

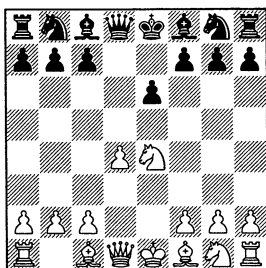
simple, though...The move 4... ♖f6 is connected with a quite reasonable idea – to remove White's knight on e4 away from the centre immediately. Black's task to plan his further actions will become much easier after that. This idea has included new developments lately in the process of evolution of the Rubinstein variation.

Out attention has been focused on the move 4... ♗d7 in Chapter 5. Black aims at obtaining a solid, but somewhat passive position, by playing like that. The emphasis here is often on the subsequent middle game battle in this line. White often ends up with having the two bishop advantage after the opening. His later actions are usually motivated by the necessity to exploit it with maximal efficiency.

In Chapter 6 we analyze the move 4... ♗e7. Its purpose is to prepare the development of the knight to the f6-square. In this case Black is not trying to remove White's knight from e4 in such

radical fashion as in Chapter 4. He plans later to start fighting against White's centre with the help of the pawn-advance c7-c5. White's best chance of obtaining an edge in the opening in this line is to try to castle long in most of the variations.

Chapters 7 and 8 are devoted to the most popular move for Black nowadays – 4... ♗d7. In fact, here we are having an improved version of the variation that we have analyzed in Chapter 6. Black's aim is to simplify the position as quickly as possible, before White has even completed his development. It is quite enough for White to play a bit slow at some moment and he may lose his opening advantage altogether. Presently, the lines, which we analyze in these two chapters, are developing daily. During the process of preparation of this book for printing, there appeared plenty of fragments of games played in the present year 2006 and they have been included in our book too.



We will analyse now the moves: **a) 4...e5**, **b) 4...♗c6**, **c) 4...b6** and **d) 4...♗d5**.

The other possibilities for Black, with the exception of: **4...♗f6**, **4...♗e7**, **4...♗d7** and **4...♗d7** are not of any special interest to us. They are either already long out of use, or they transpose to positions that are typical for some other variations.

The line: **4...c6 5.♗f3** belongs much rather to the Caro-Kann Defence – see page 94, volume 3.

It is obviously bad for Black to play the immediate move **4...c5?!**. It is worth mentioning that the plan with **c7-c5** is absolutely thematic for the Rubinstein variation of the French Defence, but in this particular case Black is essentially unprepared for it yet. There

might follow: **5.dxc5 (In case of: 5.♗xc5 ♗xc5 6.dxc5, the only way for Black to maintain the material equality is to enter the variation: 6...♖a5+ 7.c3 ♗xc5 8.♗e3, but it becomes perfectly clear that as a result of the line: 8...♗e7 9.♗g4! f6 10.♗d3 f5 11.♗h5+ g6 12.♗e2 ♗f6 13.♗f3 0-0 14.♗h6 ♗e8 15.♗e5± Dorawa – Jaszczuk, Bad Woerishofen 1992, he ends up in a very bad position, while following: 8...♗c7, Mancini – van Maele, Bethune 1998, it is again very good for White to continue with the move 9.♗g4!±) 5...♗xd1+ 6.♗xd1 f5 (or 6...♗d7 7.♗b5 ♗gf6 8.♗xf6+ gxf6, Matilainen – Olkinuora, Gausdal 1996, 9.♗e3±; Black cannot solve all his problems with: 6...♗f6 7.♗xf6+ gxf6 8.♗e3 ♗g7 9.♗f3 ♗c6 10.♗d3 f5 11.♗c1± Notarangelo – Doerdelmann, corr. 2001.) 7.♗d6+ ♗xd6 8.cxd6 ♗f6 (Black's position is just terrible after: 8...e5 9.♗f3 ♗c6 10.♗b5 e4 11.♗e5 ♗d7 12.♗xd7 ♗xd7 13.♗f4+– Stross – Vorobyov, Internet 2004.) 9.♗f4 ♗e4 10.♗e1 ♗c6 11.♗b5 ♗d7 12.f3 ♗f6 13.♗xc6 ♗xc6 14.♗e2± Lorenzini**

– D.Gonzalez, Buenos Aires 1997 and his compensation for the pawn is insufficient.

The move 4...f5?! compromises chronically the e5-square. White can exploit that with the energetic reaction 5.♗g5! (It is also possible for him to play: 5.♗c3 ♗f6 6.♗f3, because it is extremely dangerous for Black to follow with: 6...c5 7.♗b5+ ♗d7, Kraus – Crell, Bochum 1991, because of 8.♖e2!±, threatening 9.♖xe6, while after: 6...♗c6 7.♗c4, there arises a position that we are analyzing in the variation **b**) 5...♗c6 (Black's great difficulties are best illustrated with the line: 5...♗f6 6.♗c4! ♗d5 7.♖e2 ♖e7 8.♗1h3 ♖b4+ 9.♗d2 ♖xb2 10.0–0 ♖xd4 11.c3 ♖g4 12.f3 ♖h4 13.♗xd5+– De Smet – van de Werf, corr. 1984. The pawn-break in the centre 5...c5 is too risky for Black, due to 6.♗c4!± and he must worry about the defence of his e6-pawn. After 5...♗e7, Black fails to repel immediately White's knight to the other half of the board, because of the maneuver: 6.♗1h3!? ♗c6, Steinitz – Bird, London (m/7) 1866 and here after the quite obvious move – 7.c3± White could have maintained a great advantage.) 6.c3 ♗f6 (or 6...♗e7 7.♗1h3!? ♗xg5 8.♗xg5 ♖f6 9.♗f4 ♗ge7 10.♗c4 ♗d7 11.♖h5+ ♗g6 12.♗xc7+– Comp “Tao” – Comp “Yace”, Leiden 2001) 7.♗c4 ♗d5 8.♗1h3 ♗e7 9.♖e2 ♖d6 10.0–0 0–0 11.♖e1± Lonis – Breidenbach, 1985.

The check – 4...♗b4+?! is not logical at all. After 5.c3 ♗e7 (It is too bad for Black to play here: 5...♗a5?! 6.♗f3 ♗e7 7.♗d3 0–0 8.♗g3 ♗bc6 9.♗xh7+ ♗xh7 10.♗g5+ ♗g8 11.♖h5 ♖e8 12.♖xf7+ ♗h8 13.♖h5+ ♗g8 14.♖h7+ ♗f8 15.♖h8+ ♗g8 16.♗h7+ ♗f7 17.♗g5+– and Black had to resign in the game B.Wall – Hatfield, Guam 1974. Following: 5...f5 6.cxb4 fxe4 7.♖h5+ g6 8.♖e5±, the chronic weakness of the dark squares in Black's camp became a telling factor, TheQuark – Goldrake, Internet 1999.) 6.♗f3. We have now the position of the variation 4...♗e7 (see Chapter 5), except that White has played additionally the useful move c2-c3. As a result of 6...♗f6 (In case of 6...♖d5 7.♗d3 ♗f6 8.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 9.0–0 0–0, Junaidi – Popp, Eclipse 1999, it is very strong for White to continue with: 10.♗f4!, so that after 10...c6, he can occupy the e5-square with the move 11.♗e5±, while Black's central pawn-break 10...c5? is impossible, because of: 11.dxc5 ♖xc5 12.♗d6!+–) 7.♗xf6+ (White can also continue with 7.♗d3, analogously to the variation 4...♗e7, which we are analyzing in our chapter 5, but here, thanks to the fact that his d4-pawn has been reliably protected with c2-c3, he has even better prospects...) 7...♗xf6 8.♗d3 0–0 9.♖e2 ♗e7 10.♗f4 ♗d6 11.♗g3 ♗c6 12.0–0–0 ♗d7 13.♗e5 ♖c8 14.f4± and in the game Karpov – Comp “Fidelity”, Turin

1982, White managed to organize an effective kingside attack.

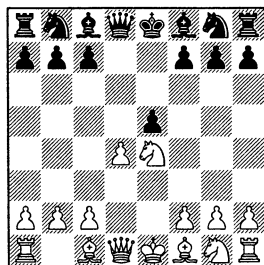
We have to mention – 4...♖e7 among the rarely played moves. After: 5.♗d3 ♖bc6 (It is really amusing to see the result of the move 5...g6?? 6.♖f6# W.Ivanov – Martynov, Moscow 1973; while in case of: 5...♖g6 6.c3 ♗e7 7.♖f3 0–0, Comp “Crafty” – Cardona, Boston 1997, it was attractive for White to follow with 8.h4!?) 6.♖f3↑ (The indifferent move 6.c3, in the game Riewe – Erlach, Germany 1995, enabled Black to solve all his opening problems with the help of 6...e5=) Black’s knight stands in the way of his own dark squared bishop and that creates problems for the habitual development of his kingside.

The move 4...h6, has no separate importance. Following: 5.♗d3 ♖f6 6.♖f3 ♖c6 (The line 7...♗e7 8.♖e2 has been analyzed in chapter 6, while the variation: 7...♖bd7 8.♖e2 has been dealt with in chapter 7.) 7.c3 ♗e7 (Or 7...♗d6 8.♖xd6+ cxd6 9.0–0± Mitschnigg – Waldhart, Wattens 1996 and White maintains a stable edge due to his bishop pair.), or 7...♗d7 and the game transposes to variation **b** (see 4...♖c6).

a) 4...e5

(diagram)

Black’s light-squared bishop is the main liability of his position. So he sacrifices a pawn with the idea to solve that problem once



and for all. The bishop has excellent prospects now along the c8–h3 diagonal.

5.♖f3!

White’s lead in development is more important than a mere pawn. After 5.dxe5 ♖xd1+ 6.♖xd1 ♖c6 7.♗b5 (It is not any better for White to play 7.♗f4, as in the game Olivera – Campomanes, Havana 1966, because after 7...♖ge7!? 8.♖f3 ♖g6 9.♗g3 ♗g4=, Black restores the material balance. In case White insists stubbornly on remaining with an extra pawn with the move 7.f4, then after 7...♗g4+ 8.♖e1 0–0–0 9.♗d2 f6≙, Black had a powerful initiative for the pawn as the game Krstic – Pecnik, Zagreb 2001 showed.) 7...♗d7 8.♖f3 (after 8.e6 ♗xe6 9.♗xc6+ bxc6=, Black’s bishop pair more than compensated the minute defect of his pawn-structure as it was played in the game Kieninger – Lachmann, Germany 1941.) 8...♖xe5 9.♗xd7+ ♖xd7 10.♖e2 0–0–0=, the position was equal in the game Djeno – Detelic, Pula 2002.

5...♗g4

Black’s light squared bishop

enters the actions now.

After 5...exd4 6.♘xd4↑, White's lead in development should be a telling factor in the ensuing battle.

His attempt to occupy some additional space with 5...f5?, may be refuted energetically by White with the help of the line: 6.♘xe5!? fxe4 (6...♙d5 7.♘c3) 7.♙h5+ g6 8.♘xg6 hxg6 9.♙xg6+ ♔d7 (or 9...♔e7 10.♙g5+-; 9...♔c6 10.♙b5+ ♔d6 11.♙f4+ ♔e7 12.♙e5+-) 10.♙f5+ ♔e8 11.♙e5+- and Black should better resign.

In case of 5...♘c6, Black must consider the possibility: 6.♙b5! ♘d7 (After 6...♙d5 7.♙e2 ♙f5 8.♘eg5+-, White has the terrible threat 9.♙c4; while in case of 6...♙g4, Stader – Merten, corr. 1997, White should have chosen the variation: 7.0-0 exd4 8.♙e1♞ and he would have enjoyed a great lead in development.) 7.♙e2 f5 8.♘eg5 e4, Andrieux – Martenot, corr. 1992. Here, White could have continued with: 9.d5!? ♘b4 10.0-0± with a clear advantage.

6.♙c4 f6

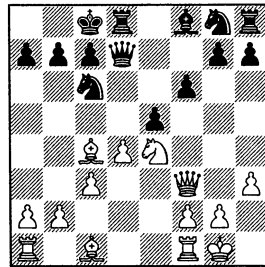
The move 6...exd4?? is bad because of 7.♙xf7+-.

7.0-0 ♘c6 8.c3 ♙d7 9.h3

It is not so precise for White to play 9.dxe5, because after 9...♙xd1 10.♙xd1 ♙xf3 11.gxf3 ♘xe5 12.♙b5+ c6 13.♙e2 ♙e7∞, as it was played in the game Menacher – Wippich, Germany 1992, White could not exploit his lead in development so effectively, because

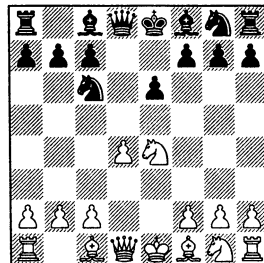
of the absence of queens on the board.

9...♙xf3 10.♙xf3 0-0-0



11.♙e2 (White might make use of his two bishop advantage in some other fashion too. For example with: 11.♙e3 exd4 12.cxd4 ♘b4 13.♘c5 ♙xc5 14.dxc5 ♘d5 15.♙fd1 ♘ge7, and here in the game Plenkovic – Pecnik, Rabac 2003, with the move 16.b4± White could have obtained a clear advantage.) 11...♙d6, Zufic – Pecnik, Pula 2001 (The move 11...exd4 was not good for Black, because of 12.♘xf6±). After: 12.♙d1!↑, White could have maintained a powerful initiative in the centre and on the queenside, because of the weak light squares in Black's camp.

b) 4...♘c6



Black is trying to organize the pawn-break e6-e5 similarly to line a.

5. ♖f3

In case Black fails to solve the problem with the development of his light-squared bishop in the next few moves – he will face great difficulties in the opening. That is because his own knight on c6 hampers Black to attack White’s centre with the move c7-c5. The most popular moves played by Black in that position are: **b1) 5... ♖f6** and **b2) 5... ♗e7**.

About 5...e5 6. ♗b5! – see 4... e5; about 5... ♗d5 6. ♗d3 – see 4... ♗d5; about 5...a6 6.c3 ♗e7 7. ♗d3 – see line **b2**.

We have to note that Black fails to develop his bishop along the a8-h1 diagonal with the move 5...b6?, because of: 6. ♗b5! ♗b7 (after 6... ♗d5 7. ♗e2 ♖f6 8.c4+–, in the game Rausis – Herboth, Baden-Baden 1993, Black lost a piece) 7. ♖e5 ♗d5 (Black also loses after: 7... ♖ge7, because of 8.0–0 a6 9. ♗f3, and in the game Buchner – Viegas, Dresden 2000, Black refrained from playing 9... f6, because of 10. ♗xf6!+–) 8. ♗e2 (It is weaker for White to play 8. ♗f3, because after 8...0–0–0 9. ♗xc6 ♗xc6, as it was played in the game Caruana – Stenzel, Nassau 2000, it became clear that the line: 10. ♖xf7 ♗xe4+ 11. ♗xe4 ♗xe4 12.c3 ♗d7 13. ♖xh8 g6∞, would not provide White with any ad-

vantage, because his knight on h8 was trapped.) 8...0–0–0 (8... ♖ge7 9.c4 ♗xd4 10. ♖g5 a6 11. ♗a4±) 9. ♗c4! (The simplifications after: 9. ♗xc6 ♗xc6 10. ♖xc6 ♗xc6 11.c3 ♖f6=, in the game Golyak – Stenzel, New York 1998, led to a quite acceptable position for Black.) 9... ♗a5+ (9... ♖xd4 10. ♗xd5 ♗xd5 11. ♗d3 ♗xe5 12.f3 ♗d5 13.0–0+–) 10. ♗d2 ♖xd4 (10... ♗a4 11. ♗b3 ♖xd4 12. ♗xa4 ♖xe2 13. ♖xe2+–) 11. ♗xa5 ♖xe2 12. ♖xe2 bxa5 13. ♖xf7 ♗xe4 14. ♗xe6+–, and Black loses plenty of material.

It is quite dubious for Black to play now 5...f5?! just like on his move 4. After 6. ♖c3 (White can also play here 6. ♖g5↑, because 6... h6?! 7. ♖h3 g5, does not work for Black due to 8. ♗b5!±) 6... ♖f6 (The line 6... ♗b4, Bartmann – Kemmlae, Germany 2001, in case of: 7. ♗c4!? ♖f6 8.0–0, may lead to a simple transposition of moves.) 7. ♗c4 and White exerts a powerful pressure against Black’s e6-pawn. Later, there might follow: 7... ♗b4 (After 7...h6 8.0–0 ♖a5, Truong – Nhat, Vung Tau 2004, White can continue with 9. ♗b5+!?, because in case of the exchange of the bishops on d7, he will occupy the e5-square, while after: 9...c6 10. ♗d3± Black’s knight on a5 will be in a very perilous situation. In case Black tries something active on the queenside like: 7...a6 8.0–0 b5 9. ♗b3 ♗b4, Dunning – van Gimst, corr. 2002, White can counter that with the central

breakthrough – 10.d5!→) 8.0–0 ♘xc3 (White's position is so good that you can be convinced of that in the following fragment of the game Kuporosov – M.Eliseev, Bor 2000, in which after: 8...0–0 9.a3 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♗e4 11.♖d3 ♗h8 12.♞e1 ♞e8 13.♙f4 ♙d7 14.♗e5 ♗xe5 15.♙xe5 c5 16.♞ab1± White's position was absolutely superior, despite his loss of time for the move a2–a3.) 9.bxc3 0–0 10.♗g5 (The typical positional mistake – 10.♗e5?! was made by the founder of the positional school of chess in the game Steinitz – Bird, London (m/5) 1866, and after the quite obvious line: 10...♗xe5 11.dxe5 ♖xd1 12.♞xd1 ♗d5±, Black could have got rid quite cheaply of his chronic weakness on the e5-square.) 10...♗d5 11.♞e1 ♗a5 12.♙xd5!? (This is White's simplest line, although as a result of: 12.♞xe6 ♗xc4 13.♞h5 ♗f6 14.♞xf6 ♞xf6 15.♞xh7+ ♗f8 16.♞h8+ ♗e7 17.♞xg7+ ♗d6 18.♙f4+, as well as in case of: 18...♗c6 19.d5!→, and also after: 18...♗d5 19.♞e1→, Black's king will become the likely victim of the extremely active white pieces.) 12...exd5 13.♞h5 h6 14.♗f3± and White is perfectly prepared for a victorious kingside attack, L.Vega – Pravia, Gijon 1999.

It is not logical for Black to follow with 5...♙d6, because that would present White with the two bishop advantage practically in all lines, for example after:

6.c3 (6.♙d3 ♗b4±) 6...♙d7 7.♙d3 ♗ge7 8.♞c2 (It seems also good for White here to play: 8.♗fg5 ♗g6 9.♗xd6+ cxd6 10.0–0↑ and his initiative is very dangerous, because Black cannot answer with 10...h6, due to: 11.♗xe6 ♙xe6 12.♙xg6 fxe6 13.d5±) 8...h6 9.♙d2 ♗d5 10.h3 ♞e7 11.a3 f5 12.♗xd6+ cxd6, Cvitanic – Mihalic, Slovenia 1993 and after 13.c4± White's positional advantage would have been overwhelming.

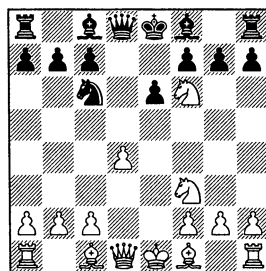
In case of 5...♙d7, White can continue with 6.c3!? (After 6.♙d3, White must consider the line: 6...♗b4!? 7.0–0 ♗xd3 8.♞xd3 ♗f6 9.♗e5 ♙e7 10.c4 ♗xe4 11.♞xe4 c6 12.♙f4 0–0 13.a3 ♙e8 14.♞fel f6 15.♗f3 ♙f7± Kerekes – Russo, corr. 2002.) 6...♗ge7 (Following: 6...♗f6, Beumer – Spoelstra, Hengelo 2002, it seems good for White to play: 7.♗xf6+ gxf6 8.♙f4↑; The position arising after: 6...h6 7.♙d3 ♗f6 8.♞e2, has been analyzed after the following order of moves: 4...♗c6 5.♗f3 h6 6.c3 ♙e7 7.♙d3 ♗f6 8.0–0 – see b2) 7.♙d3 ♗g6 8.0–0↑ and Black is obviously unprepared for the pawn-advance e6–e5.

If Black loses a tempo for the move 5...h6, it is possible for White to follow with: 6.c3 ♙e7 (After 6...♗f6, he is not obliged to play: 7.♗xf6+ ♞xf6 and to transpose to the variations from chapter 4, but White can try instead: 7.♙d3!? ♙d7 8.♞e2 ♗xe4 9.♙xe4 ♙d6 10.♗e5 0–0 11.♙f4↑ and he

has the initiative.) 7.♔d3 ♖f6 8.0-0 (It is also very strong for White to play here the immediate move 8.♖e2, because it is too bad for Black to follow with 8...0-0?, because of: 9.♗xf6+ ♕xf6 10.♗e4 ♜e8 11.♗h7+ ♖f8 12.b3+- Curdo - Klavins, Boston 1958, as well as: 8...♕d7?! 9.♕f4 ♗d5 10.♕d2 f5 11.♗g3 ♖f7 12.0-0-0 g5 11.♕c4→ Thomann - Gaudet, Quebec 2000 and the vulnerability of the e5-outpost has catastrophic consequences for Black. Even after the best defence for him - 8...♗xe4 9.♕xe4 ♖d6, Maia - De Toledo, Sao Paulo 2004, 9.0-0 0-0 10.♗e5± he might end up without any counterplay whatsoever.) 8...♕d7 (if 8...0-0, then after 9.♖e2±, Black still must decide what to do with his light-squared bishop. He failed to solve the problem with the help of the move: 9...b6?? 10.♗xf6+ ♕xf6 11.♗e4 ♜e8 12.♖xc6+-, as it was played in the game Gentili - Rylander, Haninge 1997 or 9...♗d5 10.a3 b6?? 11.c4 ♗f6 12.♗xf6+ ♕xf6 13.♖e4 g6 14.♖xc6+- Munoz Sanchez - Barahona, Guayaquil 2003.) 9.♖e2 ♗xe4 (Black's attempt to wait with: 9...♖c8 10.♜e1 ♗xe4 11.♕xe4 ♗d8 12.♗e5 ♕f6 13.♕f4 ♕xe5 14.♕xe5 0-0, led after: 15.♕xg7! ♖xg7 16.♖g4+ ♖f6 17.♖h4+ ♖g7 18.♜e3→, in the game Villarroel - Li Chen, Havana 1970, to an overwhelming attack by White against Black's king; Black can try to attack White's king with the help

of the line: 8...♕e7 9.0-0 ♗d5 10.a3 and then 10...g5?! 11.c4 ♗f6 12.d5 ♗a5 13.♗d4+-, but in connection with the threat 14.♕d2, in the game Grzesik - Faulbaum, Germany 1982, all that operation backfired. Meanwhile, even if Black had tried the more reliable line: 10...0-0 11.c4 ♗b6 12.b4± White would have maintained a tremendous space advantage and excellent possibilities for active play in the centre as well as on both sides of the board.) 10.♕xe4 ♕f6 (After: 10...0-0 11.♕c2 ♕d6 12.♗e5↑ Berger - Schwarz, Nuremberg 1883, White's queen is threatening to join in the attack against Black's king along the b1-h7 diagonal.) 11.♕f4± and White's advantage is quite evident, Pira - Halpern, Paris 1988.

b1) 5...♗f6 6.♗xf6+



Black now must decide whether to comply with an eventual defect of his pawn-structure on the kingside, or to capture with his queen on f6, which will lead to White attacking it with his light pieces.

6...gxf6

After 6...♗xf6 7.♙g5!? (it is also possible for White to play here 7.♙d3, which after 7...h6 8.0-0 – transposes to positions from Chapter 4) 7...♗f5 (in case of 7...♗g6 8.♙d3 ♗h5 9.c3 ♙d6 10.h3 f6, in the game Chiquet – Calin, France 1999, after 11.♙e3 ♙d7 12.♙d2 ♗xd1+ 13.♗xd1 0-0-0 14.0-0±, White remains slightly better in the endgame) 8.c3 (after 8.♙d3, Black has 8...♗a5+! and here it would not work for White to play 9.c3?! because of 9...♙xd4∞, Specht – Billing, Willingen 2003, while after 9.♙d2 White must consider 9...♗b6 10.0-0 ♗xb2∞) 8...f6 (In case of: 8...♙e7 9.♙d3 ♗d5 10.♙xe7 ♙xe7 11.0-0 b6 12.♗e1 c6 13.♗c2 ♗h5 14.♙e5 f6 15.♙f3 0-0 16.♗e4 ♗f7 17.♗ae1± Black's light squared bishop remains extremely passive, Szamos – Smida, Salgotarjan 1998; after: 8...e5 9.dxe5 ♙d7 10.♙d3 ♗e6 11.0-0 ♙e7 12.♙f4 0-0-0 13.h3± Black solved somehow the problem with the development of his light squared bishop, but he failed to restore the material balance, Romanova – Keletiova, Rimavska Sobota 1996. It is quite acceptable for Black to play: 8...♙d6 9.♙d3 ♗g4 10.0-0 ♗h5 11.♙e3 0-0 12.♗e1 ♗e8 13.♗d2 ♙d7 14.♙f4± Ramus – Binder, corr. 2002, but still he is too far from complete equality.) 9.♙e3 ♙d6 10.♙d3 ♗h5 11.♙d2 ♗xd1+ 12.♗xd1 0-0 13.0-0±, White was slightly better in

the endgame in Stephan – Elborg, Dortmund 1997.

7.♙b5

The other possibility for White is – 7.g3. It looks like Black's most principled answer in that case is the move – 7...e5!? (7...♗d5 8.♙g2 ♙d7 9.0-0 ♗h5 10.c4↑ and White seizes the initiative thanks to his superior development, Maahs – Porth, Germany 1996; 7...♙g7 8.♙g2 ♙e7 9.0-0 c6 10.♗e1 0-0 11.c4 ♙g6 12.h4 ♗a5 13.♙d2 ♗h5 14.♙c3 ♗e8 15.♙d2 ♗xd1 16.♗axd1±, Black failed to solve his problems in the opening, because of his passive light-squared bishop in the game S.Salov – L.Nilsson, Copenhagen 1997.) 8.♙g2 ♙xd4 (8...♙g4 9.h3 ♙h5 10.g4 ♙g6 11.c3 ♗d7 12.♙e3± Kasparov – Gazet, Deurne (simul) 2000) 9.♙xd4 ♗xd4 10.♗xd4 exd4∞.

7...♙d7

7...♙g8, Contreras – Aparicio, Embalse 1982, 8.♙f4 ♗d5 9.♗e2 – see 7...♗d5.

Black plays sometimes in practice here the move 7...♗d6, with the idea to evacuate his king to the queenside. However, after 8.0-0 ♙d7 9.♗e1 0-0-0 10.c3 ♙e7 11.♙e2 ♙c6 12.♙e3 b6 13.a4↑, Schaefer – Auener, Bingen 1991, White's initiative on the queenside developed faster than Black's counterplay on the other side of the board.

His more active possibility 7...♗d5 has its drawbacks too. Black's queen can be attacked in the mid-

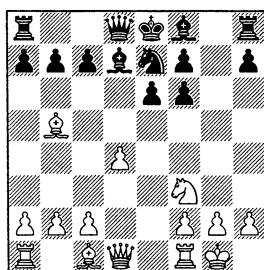
dle of the board by White's pieces and pawns. For example: 8.♖e2 ♖g8 (In case of: 8...♗d7 9.c4 ♗b4+ 10.♘f1 ♗h5 11.d5 ♘e5 12.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 13.dxe6+ fxe6 14.♘xe5+ ♗xe5 15.♗xe5 fxe5 16.♗e3 b6 17.♘e2± White has the advantage, because of the vulnerability of Black's pawns along the e-file, Tiemann – Ruppenthal, corr. 1987.) 9.♗f4! ♖xg2 (Black has no compensation for the pawn in case of: 9...♗f5 10.♗xc7 ♗d7 11.a3 ♖c8 12.♗g3 ♗h6 13.0-0+- Winter – Raszier, corr. 1986.) 10.♗g3 e5 11.h3 ♗f5 12.dxe5! (White can win the exchange with the help of the move 12.♘f1, but after: 12...♖xg3 13.fxg3 0-0-0 14.c4 ♗e6 15.♗xc6 ♗xh3+ 16.♘g1 bxc6∞, Black would have an excellent compensation for it.) 12... 0-0-0 13.♖d1 ♗xd1+ 14.♗xd1 ♖xd1+ 15.♘xd1 ♗e4 16.♘d2 ♗d5 17.c4± and Black cannot avoid material losses.

It seems attractive for Black to try the line: 7...a6 8.♗xc6+ bxc6, as a result of which his pawn-structure on both sides of the board would be hopelessly compromised. This is however partially compensated by his two bishop advantage. There might follow: 9.♗e2 (If 9.c4, then 9...c5 10.d5 ♗d7∞ and after 11...♗b7 and 12...0-0-0, White will hardly manage to preserve his wonderful outpost on d5.) 9...♖b8 (In case of: 9...c5 10.♗e3! cxd4 11.♘xd4 ♗b7 12.0-0-0±, White completes

the mobilization of his forces much ahead of his opponent.) 10.0-0 c5 11.♖d1 ♗d5 12.dxc5 (Following: 12.c4?! ♗h5 13.d5 e5±, Black obtains excellent counterplay along the light squares.) 12...♗xc5 13.♗e3 ♗b5 (After: 13...♗h5?! 14.♗f4! ♖xb2 15.♗e4 ♗e7 16.♗c6+ ♘f8 17.♗xc7 ♗b718.♘e5!±, threatening 19.♖d8, Black's situation is absolutely critical.) 14.c4 ♗h5 (14...♗xb2? 15.♗d3 ♗d6 16.♖db1+-) 15.♗a7! ♖b7 (In case of: 15...♖a8? 16.♗e4! ♖xa7, Rachels – Penkalski, USA 1991, White's simplest solution is the variation: 17.♗d4 ♗d6 18.♗xa7+-) 16.♗d4 ♗e7 17.♗e4 0-0 18.♗c6 e5 19.♗c3±.

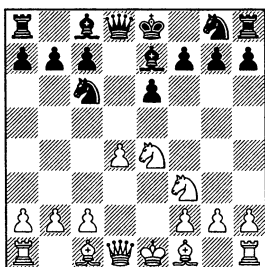
8.0-0 ♘e7

After 8...♗d6 9.♖e1 ♖g8, White can try 10.c4!? with the idea to follow with 11.d5†.



9.♗e2 a6 10.♗d3 ♗c6 11.c4±
 Ascic – Ilic, Pula 1992. Black managed somehow to develop his light-squared bishop indeed, but he lost plenty of time for that and he fell behind in development considerably.

b2) 5...♙e7



6.c3

White solidifies his d4-pawn.

6...♗f6

About 6...♙d7 7.♙d3 ♗f6 8.0-0 – see 6...♗f6 7.♙d3 ♙d7 8.0-0.

It is very difficult to find a situation in the ♘ubinstein variation in which the anti-positional move 6...f5?! might be purposeful for Black. Still, it has been played surprisingly often in games of human players as well as of computer programs. Small wonder that after: 7.♗g3 ♗f6 8.♙d3 ♗d6 9.0-0 0-0 (The plan including Black's castling long is even worse – 9...♙d7?! 10.♙e1 0-0-0, because of: 11.♗g5!+- Comp “Nimzo 2000b” – Comp “SnailChess”, Boissel 2000.) 10.♙e1± Black's position is very difficult.

It is not good for Black to play 6...b6?! because of 7.♙b5! and he is forced to play 7...♙d7 (after the planned 7...♙b7?, White can follow with: 8.♗e5 ♗d5 9.♗e2 ♗f6 10.f3 0-0 11.♙xc6 ♙xc6 12.c4 ♗a5+ 13.♙d2 ♙b4 14.♗xc6+- Ols-son – Matthijs, Panormo 2001), so that would lead after: 8.0-0

♗f6 9.♗e2 ♗b8 10.♙d3± Kasik – Hacaperka, Klatovy 1999, to a very difficult position for Black.

The move 6...a6 is just a loss of time. 7.♙d3 ♗f6 8.0-0 (or 8.♗e2 ♗xe4 9.♙xe4 ♙d7 10.♙f4 0-0 11.h4± Enterfeldt – J. Eriksson, Vasteras 1986) 8...h6 9.♙e1 0-0 10. ♗xf6+ ♙xf6 11.♙c2 ♗e7 12.♗e5 ♙xe5 13.♙xe5 ♗g6 14.♙e3± Dryja – Katus, Krynica 2001.

Or 6...♗d5 7.♙d3 f5 (about 7... ♗f6 8.♗e2 – see the line 6...♗f6 7.♙d3 ♗d5 8.♗e2) 8.♗g3 ♗f6 9. ♗e2 ♗d6 10.♗e5 0-0 11.0-0± Koivisto – Jarvela, Finland 2003.

7.♙d3 0-0

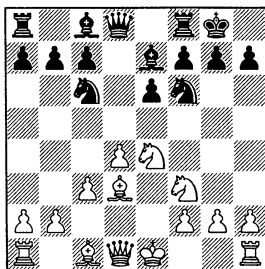
About 7...h6 8.0-0 – see 5... h6.

In case of 7...♗xe4 8.♙xe4 ♙d7, White can choose between the calm: 9.0-0 0-0 (After: 9... ♙f6 10.♗c2 h6 11.♙f4 0-0 12.♙ad1 ♗c8 13.♗d2→ Stranegger – Rabl, Austria 1993, White has the terrible threat – 14.♙xh6.) 10.♙e1 ♙f6 11.♙f4± Tatai – Camara, Netanya 1973, with a solid positional advantage for White and the more aggressive line: 9.♗c2 g6 10.h4→ as it was played later in the game Schaefer – Stertkuhl, Germany 1992.

Having in mind that after the move 7...♙d7, Black postpones the exchange on e4 for some time, in case of the line: 8.0-0 0-0 9.♗e2 ♗xe4, White can already play 10.♗xe4↑ and he maintains a quite dangerous initiative, Bjerke – Pallag, Rimavska Sobota 1996.

The plan including the move 7...b6, leads to a difficult position for Black just like on move six, for example: 8.♙b5!? ♕d7 9.♚e2 ♖b8 10.♙d3± Reim – Kugelmeier, Pang 1983.

Black cannot solve his opening problems with: 7...♚d5, because after 8.♚e2 0–0 (8...♙d7 9.0–0 0–0 10.b4 ♖xe4 11.♙xe4 ♚h5 12.a4↑ Kalmar – Szobi, Debrecen 1956 – White’s initiative on the queenside is running smoothly; 8...♖xe4 9.♙xe4 ♚d6 10.0–0 f5 11.♙xc6+ bxc6 12.♖e5 0–0 13.♚f3 ♙b7 14.♙f4 ♚d5 15.♚g3± Showalter – Halpern, New York 1894 – White had a clear advantage thanks to the defects of Black’s pawn structure.) 9.♙f4 ♖xe4 10.♙xe4 ♚a5 11.0–0 ♙d6 12.♖e5 ♙xe5 13.♙xe5± Mortensen – Crawley, Copenhagen 1987, and Black still has problems with the development of his light-squared bishop.



8.0–0

In case White tries a plan with castling long after: 8.♚c2 h6 9.♙d2 ♙d6 10.0–0–0, he should consider the line: 10...e5!? 11.♖xd6

cxd6 12.dxe5 ♖xe5 13.♖xe5 dxe5± Krueger – Wrede, Germany 1997 – and Black’s position was slightly worse, but still quite acceptable.

8...♖xe4

After 8...b6, it is possible for White to follow with 9.♚e2 ♙b7 10.♖fg5!? (it is weaker for White to play 10.♖xf6+ ♙xf6 11.♚e4 g6 12.♙h6 ♚e8 13.♚f4, as it was played in the game Mirabile – Stenzel, Nassau 1999, because in that case Black obtains counter-chances with the move 13...e5!∞) 10...♖xe4 11.♚xe4 g6 12.♚h4± Jahr – Knol, Bad Wildbad 1993, White had a powerful pressure on the kingside.

Black has problems to defend his kingside after: 8...♙d7 9.♚e2 ♖xe4 10.♚xe4↑ Bjerke – Pallag, Rimavska Sobota 1996.

Black can try to bring his queen to the kingside with the idea to neutralize White’s pressure there with: 8...♚d5 9.♚e1 ♚h5, but after 10.♖g3 ♚d5 11.♙f4 ♚d8 12.♚e2 b6 13.♚ad1 ♙b7 in the game Daurer – Bichlmeier, Bayern 1998, White could have obtained a great advantage with 14.♖e5!±.

I would like to remind you that after: 8...h6 9.♚e2± (see 5...h6) Black’s position is difficult, since he cannot easily complete the development of his queenside. Additionally, the weakening of Black’s position with the move h7-h6 enables White to begin an attack against Black’s king with the help

of the exchange on f6, followed by ♖e2-e4.

9. ♙xe4 ♙f6

About 9...♙d7 – see 7...♙d7.

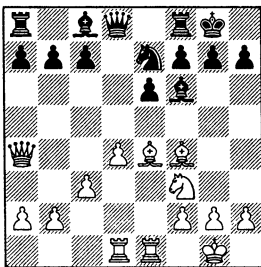
After 9...f5 10.♙xc6 bxc6 11.♘e5 ♙b7 12.♖b3 ♖c8 13.♞e1 ♙d6 14.♙f4± Nguyen Van Huy – Aryanezhad, Rasht 1998, Black’s pawn structure is a sorry sight.

In case of 9...♖d7 10.♙f4 ♙f6 11.♖c2 g6 12.♞ad1 ♘e7 13.♙e5 ♙xe5 14.dxe5 ♖b5 15.♞d2± Røjahn – Selfors, Norway 1998, Black’s position is again difficult. His problems are due to the main drawback of the Rubinstein Variation – the problem with the development of the light-squared bishop.

10. ♙f4

It is quite possible for White to follow with: 10.♖c2 h6 11.♞e1 ♘e7 12.h3 c6, and here in the game Craane – Chidi, Novi Sad 1990, White’s considerable advantage would have been emphasized quite convincingly with the move 13.♙f4±.

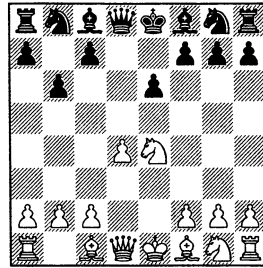
10 ... ♘e7 11. ♞e1 ♙b8 12. ♖a4 ♙a8 13. ♞ad1±



This position was reached in

the game Barglowski – Muklewicz, Rowy 1998. Black is faced with serious problems with the development of his queenside.

c) 4...b6



We have already mentioned that the development of the light-squared bishop is Black’s main problem in the Rubinstein Variation. He now intends to deploy it on the long a8-h1 diagonal and to solve that problem once and for all.

5. ♘f3

This is the most natural move. It is less attractive for White to try to prevent the development of the enemy bishop on the long diagonal with the help of the move: 5.♖f3, because after: 5...♖d5 (5...♙b7 6.♘d6±; 5...c6 6.c3±, and later the weakening of the d6-square might become a telling factor.) 6. c4 ♙b4 7.♙d2 ♙xd2+ 8.♘xd2 ♖xf3 9.♘gxf3 ♘f6 10.♙e2 ♘bd7 11.♘e5 ♙b7 12.♙f3 ♙xf3 13.♘dxf3 ♘xe5 14.♘xe5 ♞d8= Zingailo – Bronnikova, Ordzhonikidze 2004, Black manages to solve all his problems in the opening successfully.

5...♟b7

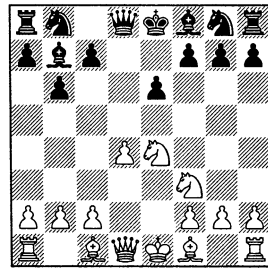
It is extremely risky for Black to try here 5...♟e7?!, because of 6.♞e5! and he fails to play 6...♟b7?, due to 7.♟f3+.

The straightforward move 5...♟a6?! solves the problem with Black's "bad" bishop, but as a result of the variation: 6.♟xa6 ♞xa6 7.0-0 ♟e7 8.c4 ♞b8 9.d5 ♞f6 10.♞xf6+ ♟xf6 11.♟e2± he lags considerably in development, Servat – Alurralde, Rosario 1992.

Black's position is very difficult in case of: 5...♞d7?! 6.♟b5! (That is much stronger for White than to transpose to variations from chapter 7 with 6.♟d3 ♟b7.) 6...♞gf6, Jackova – Bogatko, Czech Republic 1995 (Black loses immediately after 6...♞d7?? due to 7.♞e5 ♟xe4 8.♟xd7+ ♞e7 9.♟c6 f6 10.♟xe4 fxe5 11.♟g5+ ♞f6 12.dxe5+- Misiuda – Graul, Sandomierz 1976; 6...a6? 7.♟c6 ♟a7 8.♞e5 ♟d6 9.♟g5 ♞e7 10.♟h5 ♟xe5 11.dxe5 ♟b7 12.♟xb7 ♟xb7 13.0-0 0-0 14.♟f6 ♟e8 15.♟xg7! ♞xg7 16.♟xd7+- Freiman – Dus Chotimirsky, Kiev 1938; 6...♟e7? 7.♞e5 ♞f8 8.♞c6 ♟e8 9.♟f4 a6 10.♞xe7 axb5 11.♞xg8 ♟b7 12.♟e2 ♞xg8 13.♟xc7 ♟xe4 14.♟xe4 ♟c8 15.♟e5+- and Black has lost not only a pawn, but his castling rights too, Mithrakanth – Theerapappisit, Moscow 1994.) and here it seems quite reasonable for White to follow with the simple move 7.♟c6!? (making use of the fact that Black has "forgotten" to

place his bishop along the a8-h1 diagonal...) 7...♟b8 8.♞xf6+ gxf6 (or 8...♟xf6 9.♟g5 ♟g6 10.0-0 ♟d6 11.c4± with the idea to follow with 12.♟a4) 9.0-0 ♟b7 10.♟xb7 ♟xb7 11.d5± and the weakness of the light squares in Black's camp is quite evident.

5...♞f6 6.♞xf6+ ♟xf6 (about 6...gxf6 7.♟b5, see variation a, Chapter 4) 7.♟g5!? (It is also good for White to play here 7.♟d3, because in case of 7...♟b7?, Black loses his queen: 8.♟g5 ♟xf3 9.♟d2! ♟xd4 10.♟b5+-, while after: 7...h6 8.♟e4 c6 9.♞e5 ♟d6 10.♟h5!? g6 11.♟g4 ♟xe5 12.dxe5 ♟xe5 13.0-0→ White's attack for the sacrificed pawn is very powerful.) 7...♟f5 (After: 7...♟g6 8.♟d3 f5 9.♟d2 ♟b7 10.♞e5 ♟h5 11.♟e2+- Black's queen got trapped in the game Nagy – Sipka, Fuzesabony 1995.) 8.♟d3 ♟a5+ 9.♟d2 ♟d5 10.0-0 ♟b7 11.♟e1 ♟d8 12.c3± – and White had a great lead in development, Comp "DarkUFO" – Comp "Genius", Internet 1999.



6.♟b5+!

This is an important move. White provokes the move c7-c6

for Black. That reduces the scope of action of the bishop on b7 and also weakens the d6-square, which can be exploited later by White.

6...c6

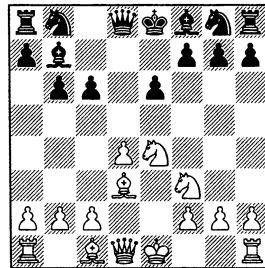
This is the only move.

Black loses immediately after 6...♗d7??, because of 7.♗e5.

Black's position is very difficult after 6...♗c6?!. In case of 7.♗d3!? (the exchange of the bishops 7.♗xc6+ ♗xc6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.c4 ♗f6 10.♗g3 0-0 11.b3 ♗d6 12.♗b2 ♖e8= Diez del Corral – Blau, Biel 1960, enabled Black to equalize gradually the game) 7...♗d7 (After 7...♗f6, White can compromise considerably the pawn-structure of the opponent with: 8.♗xf6+ gxf6 9.0-0 ♗d5 10.c4 ♗h5 11.d5 ♗b7 12.♗f4± T.Horvath – Lovass, Budapest 1982.) 8.♗e2! (The indifferent move 8.0-0, after 8...♗e7 9.♗e2 ♗gf6 10.♗e5 ♗xe5 11.dxe5 ♗xe4 12.♗xe4 ♗xe4 13.♗xe4 0-0 14.♗g4 ♗d5 15.♗f4 ♖fd8= Ipsarides – Aristotelous, Lemesos 1999, led to simplifications and complete equality.) 8...♗e7 (In case of 8...♗gf6 9.♗ge5! h6, White can follow with: 10.♗xe6! fxe6 12.♗g6+ ♗e7 13.0-0=, and he remains with excellent compensation for the sacrificed piece, while after 9...♗e7, it is good for him to play simply 10.0-0, because now in the line 10...h6 11.♗e4 ♗xe4 12.♗xe4 ♗xe4 13.♗xe4±, White can exploit the drawbacks of the move b7-b6, since Black cannot cover

anymore the a8-h1 diagonal with his c-pawn.) White now can avoid exchanges with the move 9.♗eg5! If you try to look carefully at the arising position you would easily notice that Black has great problems to complete his development. For example after the seemingly attractive move for him: 9...♗gf6, White has the tactical strike – 10.♗xf7! ♗xf3?! (It is relatively better for Black to play: 10...♗xf7, but even then after 11.♗g5+ ♗e8 12.♗xe6 ♗c8 13.♗xg7+ ♗d8 14.♗e6+ ♗e8 15.♗f4→, White has an overwhelming attack.) 11.♗xe6 ♗f8 (if 11...♗c8, then 12.♗xh8 ♗d5 13.♗h3+-) 12.♗xd8 ♗xe6 13.♗xe6 ♗xg2 14.♖g1+-, and in the game Kotronias – Peric, Linares 2002, Black resigned, because he obviously realized the futility of his further resistance.

7.♗d3



7...♗d7

After 7...♗e7 8.♗e2 ♗f6 (After 8...♗d7 9.♗f4, it becomes clear that due to the threat of a check on the d6-square, Black's natural development becomes impossible. His attempt to develop his pieces

in a non-standard fashion with: 9...♟d6 10.♟eg5 ♟d5 11.♟d2 ♟gf6, enabled White with the help of: 12.♟xf7! ♟xf7 13.♟g5+ ♟e8 14.♟xe6 ♟d6 15.♟xg7+ ♟d8, Rozhkov – Sazanova, Nizhnij Novgorod 1998, to start a powerful attack against the enemy king. He had to continue his onslaught with: 16.c4 ♟b4 17.♟f5→.) 9.♟f4 ♟xe4 (In case of 9...0–0, Korneev – Campayo Hernandez, Spain 2004, it seems attractive for White to follow with: 10.♟xf6+!? ♟xf6 11.0–0–0→ and his kingside attack is very dangerous. Black cannot defend with: 11...c5?! 12.dxc5 ♟c8, because of: 13.h4 h6 14.g4 ♟c6 15.♟h3 ♟a4 16.♟e5 ♟xa2 17.♟xf6 gxf6 18.c3 bxc5 19.g5+–) 10.♟xe4 ♟d7, Shchepetkova – Sazanova, Vladimir 2002, it deserved attention for White to follow with: 11.♟e5!? ♟xe5 12.dxe5↑, and he would have some initiative, because of the more active placement of his pieces.

In case of 7...♟f6 8.♟xf6+ gxf6 (8...♟xf6?? 9.♟g5+–) 9.♟f4!?, the game transposes to Chapter 4.

8.♟e2

This is a useful move that helps White to preserve the option to castle long.

8...h6

In case of 8...♟gf6, White should better emphasize the weakness of the d6-square with the move 9.♟f4!±. It is weaker for him to play: 9.♟g5, because that will eventually lead to simpli-

fication of the position which would be in favour of Black in the long run. For example after: 9...♟e7 10.h4 ♟xe4 11.♟xe4 ♟f6 12.♟xf6 gxf6 13.0–0–0 ♟d6 14.♟b1 0–0–0= Kupreichik – Yudasin, Sverdlovsk 1984, the position was approximately equal.

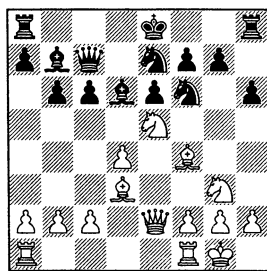
9.♟f4 ♟df6

After 9...♟gf6 10.♟d6+ ♟xd6 11.♟xd6 ♟f8 12.♟a3± Zendrowski – Majstorovic, London 1994, White was clearly better, because of the weak dark squares in Black's camp.

10.♟g3

White has much better development and so he should avoid exchanges. After 10.♟xf6+ ♟xf6 (One Black knight replaces another...) 11.0–0–0 ♟d6 12.♟g3 ♟c7 13.♟e5 0–0–0 14.♟b1 ♟b8 15.c3 ♟hf8± Ferguson – Cubas, Guaruva 1995, White is better, but it would not be easy at all for him to press his advantage home.

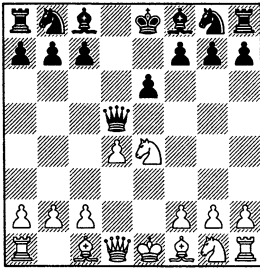
10...♟d6 11.♟e5 ♟e7 12.0–0 ♟c7



This position was reached in the game Tseshkovsky – Vaidya, Calcutta 1986. White can continue

with: 13.♗h5!?± and he can create strong pressure against Black's kingside, since the knight on f6 is a very important defender.

d) 4...♞d5



Black infringes with that move an important principled rule in the opening and centralizes his queen before the development of the rest of the pieces.

5.♙d3!?

White is not in a hurry to remove his knight away from the centre. In case of 5.♖c3 ♙b4 6.♗f3 ♗f6 (6...♙d7 7.♙d3 ♙b5 8.0-0 ♙xc3 9.bxc3 ♗d7 10.♞b1± Razuvaev – G.Kuzmin, Baku 1972) 7.♙d3, Black can try to organize a blockade on the light squares with the help of: 7...b6 8.0-0 ♙xc3 9.bxc3 ♙a6!?. There might follow: 10.♙a3 (after 10.♙f4 ♙xd3 11.♞xd3 ♗bd7 12.c4 ♞b7 13.♞a3 c5 14.d5 0-0 15.dxe6 fxe6∞ Nataf – Coupet, France 1997, the position is double edged) 10...♞a5 11.♙b4 (In case White does not prevent the evacuation of the enemy king away from the centre, Black would not have anything to worry about:

11.♙b2 ♙xd3 12.♞xd3 ♗bd7 13.c4 0-0= Grabics – Hoang Thanh Trang, Hungary 1996.) 11...♞a4 12.♞c1 (If 12.♞e1, then after the simplifications: 12...♙xd3 13.cxd3 ♞xd1 14.♞axd1 ♗d5=, Black solves all his problems in the opening.) 12...♙xd3 13.cxd3 ♗bd7∞, and with his next move Black will cover the a3-f8 diagonal with the move c7-c5.

5...♗f6

After 5...b6?! 6.♗f3 ♙b7 7.0-0 ♗d7 8.c4 ♞h5 9.♙f4± Delgado – Chemin, Internet 2004, it is not clear how Black can defend comfortably his c7-pawn.

Black cannot undermine White's centre with the move 5...c5?, because of: 6.dxc5 ♗c6 (Black would not fare any better in case of: 6...♙xc5, since he loses a pawn after: 7.♙b5+ ♙d7 8.♞xd5 exd5 9.♗xc5 ♙xb5 10.♗xb7+-) 7.c4 ♞e5 8.♗f3 ♞c7 9.0-0 ♗f6 10.♗fg5 ♗xe4 11.♗xe4+- Antonsen – Goddard, Norway 1994.

Black's attempt to prepare the development of his knight to the f6-square with the move 5...♗d7?! combines very badly with the placement of his queen on d5 and he lags considerably in his development as a result. After: 6.♗f3 ♗gf6 7.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 8.0-0 ♙d6 (Black's queen is vulnerable in the centre and his pieces are not well developed, so it is very dangerous for him to play 8...c5, because of: 9.c4 ♞h5 10.d5! ♙e7 11.♞e1± and it becomes clear that 11...0-0?,

followed by 12.♞e5!+- Negru – Melo, corr. 2002, leads to the loss of Black’s queen.) 9.a3 ♟d7 10.c4 ♞h5 11.♟e2 ♞g6 12.c5 ♟e7 13.♞e5 ♞e4 14.♟f3+- and once again Black’s queen had nowhere to run to, Engstner – Idlinge, Vaxjo 1992.

We can say more or less the same about the move 5...♟e7?!, following: 6.♞f3 ♞f6 7.c4 ♞d8 8.0-0 ♞c6 9.♟c2 ♟d7 10.♞e5 ♞xe5 11.dxe5 ♞xe4 12.♟xe4 c6 13.♞g4 ♟f8 14.♞d1 ♞a5 15.♟f4± and White obtained a tremendous positional advantage in the game Comp “AnMon 5.06” – Comp “Gromit 2.20”, 2000.

The move 5...♟d7?! is connected with the idea to trade the light squared bishops. That is a quite reasonable idea from the point of view of strategy, but unfortunately it would not work for Black if White plays correctly. The point is that after 6.♞f3 (Now, Black can give up his idea altogether with: 6...♞c6 7.c4 ♞a5+ 8.♟d2, but after: 8...♟b4 9.♞c3 ♞h5 10.0-0 ♞ge7 11.♞e1 0-0-0 12.a3 ♟xc3 13.bxc3→ Steel – Schackis, South Africa 1985, or 8...♞b6 9.♟c3 ♟b4 10.0-0 ♟xc3 11.bxc3 0-0-0 12.♞b1 ♞a5 13.♞b3→ Sipos – Radnai, Paks 1997, he comes under a very dangerous attack.) 6...♟b5, White has the powerful counter measure 7.c4!. Tournament practice has witnessed the following lines: 7...♟xc4 8.♞c3 ♟b4 (or 8...♞c6 9.♞e5 ♞xg2 10.♟e4 ♞h3 11.♟xb7+-) 9.

♞a4+ ♞c6 10.0-0 ♟xc3 11.♟xc4 ♞a5 12.♞b3 ♟b4 13.a3 b5 14.♟d3 ♞b8 15.♟e4 ♞ge7 16.♟xc6+ ♞xc6 17.d5 exd5 18.♞xd5 ♞e7 19.♞d4 ♟d6 20.♞xg7+- and Black has succeeded in avoiding the loss of a piece indeed, but his situation should not be envied at all, Johnsrud – Bascetta, corr. 2002.

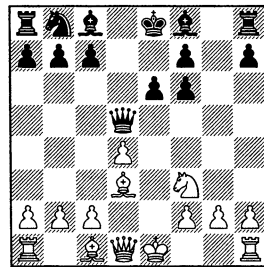
If Black tries to win additional material with: 5...f5?! 6.♞g3 ♞xg2 (In case Black does not capture the g2-pawn, the whole idea behind the move f7-f5 becomes senseless: 6...♟d7 7.♞f3 ♞f6 8.c3 c5 9.♞e2 ♟e7 10.♟c4 ♞d6 11.dxc5 ♞xc5, Coppel – S.Garcia, corr. 2002 and here White’s simplest line is: 12.♟xe6+-; after 6...♞f6 7.♞f3 ♞c6 8.0-0 ♟e7 9.♟f4 ♞d8 10.c3 0-0 11.♞e1 ♞d5 12.♟d2 ♟d6 13.♞g5 ♞f6 14.♞h5 ♞g6 15.♞h3 ♟d7 16.♞5f4 ♞xf4 17.♞xf4 ♞f6 18.♟c4± Black has no compensation for the weakened e5-outpost in his camp, Micheel – Bruhs, corr. 1987; In case of 6...c5, White can continue with 7.♞f3 and after: 7...♞c6 8.c4! ♞d8 9.d5 exd5 10.cxd5 ♞xd5 11.0-0∞ he has an excellent compensation for the pawn, while following: 7...cxd4 8.0-0 ♞c6 9.♞e2, as a result of: 9...♞ge7 10.♟c4 ♞d6 11.♞g5 f4 12.♞3e4 ♞e5 13.♞f3 ♞c7 14.♞eg5± Lisakowski – Lucke, corr. 2001, or 9...g6 10.♟f4 ♟g7 11.♟c4 ♞d7 12.♞fe1± Dietze – Diener, corr. 1973, Black remains in a very difficult position.) 7.♞f3 ♞h3 (7...♟e7? 8.♟f1+-) 8.♞e2 ♟e7 9.♟f4∞

Fadeev – Korovashkin, Alushta 1998, he ends up in a big trouble.

After 5...♗c6 6.♗f3 (White should not forget about Black's eventual counterplay connected with the move e6-e5, for example after: 6.c3 e5 7.♖e2 ♗e6 8.♗f3 exd4 9.0-0 0-0-0∞, in the game N.Mitkov – Sulava, Kladovo 1991, Black had excellent counterchances.) 6...♗b4 (About 6...♗d7?! 7.c4 – see 5...♗d7; 6...♗f6 7.♗xf6 – see 5...♗f6; it is too dangerous for Black to open the game with the move 6...e5?, because he lags considerably in development, for example: 7.dxe5 ♗xe5 8.♗xe5 ♖xe5 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♗e1 ♗e6 11.♗g5 ♖d5 12.♗xe6 fxe6 13.♖g4+- Manescu – Piotrovskis, Tallinn 1997; after 6...♗e7 7.0-0 h6 8.c4 ♖h5, Pregarac – Surbek, Portoroz 1996, White can cause a lot of trouble for the black queen with the move 9.♗g3±) 7.0-0 ♗xd3 8.♖xd3, Black would have remained with the two bishop advantage. Meanwhile he falls behind in his development and that becomes the factor determining the correct evaluation of the position. For example after: 8...♗f6 (It is too risky for Black to play: 8...♗d7?!, because of 9.c4 ♖h5 10.♗e5±, and White is threatening to capture Black's queen with the help of: 11.g4 ♖h4 12.♗g5+-; in case of: 8...♗e7 9.♗e1 ♗f6 10.c4 ♖f5 11.♗xf6+ ♖xf6, Rakaczki – Pali, Gyongyos 2000, it deserves attention for White to continue with 12.♗d2!?) with

the idea to follow with 13.♗c3±) 9.♗xf6+ (The other possible line for White – 9.♗g3 ♗e7 10.c4 ♖d6∞ Arngrimsson – Mortensen, Copenhagen 2002, enabled Black to solve his opening problems.) 9...gxf6 10.c4 ♖h5, Moindrot – Guillard, corr. 1956, 11.♗f4 c6 12.♗d2±, and despite the fact that more than ten moves have been played – Black's only developed piece happens to be his queen.

6.♗xf6+ gxf6 7.♗f3



7...♖g8

Black is trying to exploit the g-file in order to obtain some counterplay.

He has tried in practice some other moves too:

For example: 7...♗d6? (White's plans include the transfer of the bishop to the b8-h2 diagonal, but Black should prevent that idea.) 8.c4 ♖h5 9.c5 ♗e7 10.♗f4, still enables White to deploy his bishop to the strategically important diagonal anyway. The complications after: 10...♖g8 11.♗xc7 ♖xg2 12.♗g3 ♖d5 13.♖b3 ♖h5 14.♗h4+- ended up in White trapping Black's rook in the game

Esplana – Munoz Sanchez, Lima 2001;

After the tentative move 7... b6?!, White can also proceed with 8.♙f4!? (His other alternative here is 8.c4!? and if 8... ♗b4+, then after the trade of the dark squared bishops: 9.♙d2 ♖a5 10.♙e4 c6 11.a3 ♙xd2+ 12.♗xd2±, Black's position is very difficult, Guerrero – Fiorito, Buenos Aires 1991, while in case of: 8... ♖h5 9.♙f4 ♗b7 10.♙xc7 ♖g8, Broberg – Muller, corr. 1978, 11.♙g3 ♗b4+ 12.♗f1± Black's compensation for the pawn is evidently insufficient.) 8...♙d6 (or 8...c5 9.c4 ♖d7 10.♙e4 ♗b7 11.♙xb7 ♖xb7 12.d5±) 9.c4! ♖a5+ (9... ♖h5 10.♙e4+-) 10.♙d2 ♖h5 11.♙e4± and White's advantage is undisputed.

White maintains a dangerous initiative after: 7... ♖h5 8.♙f4 ♙d6 9.♖d2!? (It is too slow for him to play: 9.♙g3 ♙d7 10.0-0 ♙c6∞ Arguelles – G.Moreno, Asturias 1998.) 9... ♖g8 10.♖g1 ♙d7 11.0-0-0 ♙c6 12.c4↑.

It looks like the least of evils for Black here is to try to complete the development of his queenside as quickly as possible – 7... ♗c6 8.♙f4 ♙d7 (After 8...♙d6 9.♙xd6 cxd6 10.0-0 ♙d7 11.c4 ♖h5 12.d5 ♗e5 13.♙e2 ♖g8 14.♗xe5 ♖xe5 15.♙f3± Castaldo – Crea, Turin 1998, Black's pawn-structure is much inferior and on top of that his king is endangered in the centre.) 9.c4!? (The exchange of pawns after: 9.♙xc7 ♗xd4 10.

♗xd4 ♖xd4 11.c3 ♖c5 12.♙g3 ♙c6∞ is favourable for Black, Zuzek – Kuusela, corr. 1974; In case of: 9.c3 0-0-0 10.♖e2 ♙g7 11.♙c4 ♖h5 12.0-0-0, Dimuro – Lo Presti, Buenos Aires 2004, it seems attractive for Black to defend with 12... ♗e7∞ and the position is approximately equal.) 9... ♖a5+, but even then after: 10.♙d2 ♗b4 11.a3 ♙xd2+ 12.♖xd2 ♖xd2+ 13.♗xd2±, White has a much better endgame, thanks to his superior pawn-structure.

The other line for Black: 7... ♙d7 8.♙f4!? (White's alternative here is the move: 8.c4!? ♖d6 9.0-0 ♗c6 10.♙e3 ♗e7, Mortensen – Crouch, Copenhagen 1995 and here it deserves attention for him to play: 11.♖b3!? 0-0-0 12.♙e4±.) 8... ♖g8 (about 8... ♗c6 9.c4!? – see 7... ♗c6) 9.♙xc7 ♗c6, Calzetta Ruiz – Mellado Trivino, Castellar 1996 (or 9... ♖xg2 10.c4 ♖h5 11.♙g3 ♙c6 12.d5 ♗b4+ 13.♗d2 ♖xd1+ 14.♖xd1 exd5 15.♗f1±), as a result of: 10.c3 ♖xg2 11.♙g3 e5 12.♗d2 ♙g4 13.♖xg4 ♖xg3 14.hxg3 ♖xh1+ 15.♙f1± we reach a position in which Black's king is bound to remain in the centre of the board for a long time to come.

8.0-0!?

White has castled in practice here much more often than he has played any other moves. Still, we have to pay some attention to the possibility 8.♙f4!?, which is an integral part of his plan as you may have noticed from our previous

notes. There might follow: 8...♙d6 (8...♞xg2?! 9.♙g3±; after 8...♙c6, Fiensch – von Juechen, corr. 1978 White must consider: 9.c4!? ♞a5+ 10.♙f1 ♙d7 11.a3 0–0–0 12.b4 ♞h5 13.b5 ♙e7 14.♞a4 ♙b8 15.♙xc7+! ♙xc7 16.♞a5+ ♙c8 17.♞xa7 and his attack is very powerful in case of: 17...♙c6 18.d5! exd5 19.♞b1→, as well as after: 17...♙c6 18.bxc6 ♙xc6 19.d5! exd5 20.♙d4→) 9.c4 ♞a5+ (Following: 9...♞h5 10.♙xd6 cxd6 11.0–0 ♙c6 12.d5!↑ I.Gurevich – Lee, Las Vegas 1992, White seizes the initiative in the centre of the board thanks to his lead in development.) 10.♙d2 ♞h5 (or 10...♙b4?! 11.a3 ♙xd2+ 12.♞xd2 ♞xd2+ 13.♙xd2 ♞xg2 14.♞hg1 ♞xg1 15.♞xg1 ♙d7 16.♙xh7± Mahia – Roldan, Buenos Aires 1991) 11. ♞e2 ♞xg2 12.0–0–0♞ and White has an excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

8...♙c6

The move 8...♙d6 only facilitates and speeds up White's initiative. After 9.c4 ♞h5 10.c5 ♙e7 11.♙f4 ♞g4 12.♙g3 f5 13.♙e5 ♞xd1 14.♞fxd1 ♙d7, Buljovic – R.Maric, Sombor 1966, White could have played 15.♙e2!±, stabilizing his obvious advantage.

Black has also tried in practice the immediate 8...♞h5. In that case White can follow with: 9.♙f4 ♙d6 10.♙xd6 cxd6 11.♞e1 ♙d7 (After 11...♙c6, Giertz – Kraatz, corr. 1974, White can play; 12.c4!? ♞g4 13.♙f1 and he is already threaten-

ing 14.d5↑) 12.♙d2 ♞xd1 13.♞axd1 ♙c6 14.f3 ♞g7 15.♙e4 ♙xe4 16.♙xe4 ♙d7, Bellin – Stull, Metz 1991, and here it is very strong for White to march forward with the f-pawn – 17.f4!? 0–0–0 18.f5±.

9.♞e1

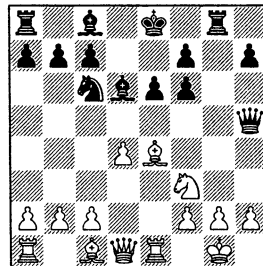
The attack against the black queen with the move 9.c4 is not so effective, because of: 9...♞h5 10.♙f4 ♞g4 11.♙g3 ♙d6 12.♙e2 ♞g7∞ De Blasio – Laudati, Vitinia 1996, and Black obtains counter-chances with the threat to play f5-f4.

9...♞h5

About 9...♙d6 10.♙e4 ♞h5 11.g3 – see 9...♞h5.

It is obviously worse for Black to play now: 9...♙d7?! 10.♙e4 ♞h5, because of White's pawn-break in the centre – 11.d5! ♙e7, Y.Nikitin – Muratov, Kazanjian 1966 and here he could have followed with the decisive operation: 12.dxe6 fxe6 13.♙xb7 ♙d8 14.♞d4+–.

10.♙e4 ♙d6



11.g3!?

White should be careful not to underestimate Black's counter-chances. For example after:

Chapter 3

11.c4 ♖d7 12.d5 ♜e7!? 13.dxe6 fxe6 14.g3 (14.♙xb7, Jakovenko – Hoang Thanh Trang, Budapest 1996, White won a pawn, but as a result of 14...♞b8 15.♙e4 f5 16.♙c2 ♙c6→, Black had a overwhelming attack.) 14...0–0–0 15.♞b3, Tolnai – Trang, Budapest 1996, (It is even worse for White to try: 15.♞d4?!, due to: 15...f5! 16.♞xa7 ♙c6 17.♙xc6 ♜xc6 18.♞e3 e5 19.♞e2 e4 20.♜d4 ♞xe2 21.♜xe2 ♜e5 22.♞d1, Szucs – Z.Szabo, corr. 1996 and here after 22... ♜xc4+ Black maintains a clear advantage in the arising endgame.) 15...♙c6 16.♙xc6 ♜xc6 17.♞xe6 ♞f5 18.♞e2 ♙b4☞ and Black has a full compensation for the sacrificed pawn in connection with the threat – 19...♞d3.

11...f5 12.♙xc6+ bxc6

Black's pawn-structure has been compromised considerably.

13.c4

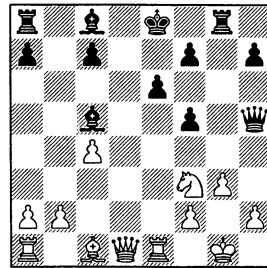
This is with the idea to follow with 14.c5.

13...c5

It is calmer for Black to play 13...♙b7, but then after 14.c5 ♙e7 15.♙f4±, White is clearly better. Black's bishops are doomed to remain passive, while his pawn-

weaknesses will soon become a telling factor.

14.dxc5 ♙xc5



This position was reached in the game Keres – Katalymov, Moscow 1965. White had to play: **15.♞d5!?** ♞b8 **16.♙f4!** (It is not so clear if White follows with: 16.♞c6+ ♙d7 17.♞xc5 ♞xf3☞, because Black obtains good counterplay along the a8-h1 diagonal.) **16...♞xb2** (after 16... ♙b7 17.♞xe6+ fxe6 18.♞xe6+ ♜f8 19.♙h6+ ♞g7 20.♜g5 ♙xf2 21.♜f1 ♞g6 22.♞xg6 hxg6 23.♜xf2±, the complications lead by force to an endgame with an extra pawn for White) **17.♜d4 ♙xd4 18.♞xd4 ♞b7 19.♞ad1 ♞h4 20.c5☞**, and he would have an excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn, because of the active play along the dark squares.

Conclusion

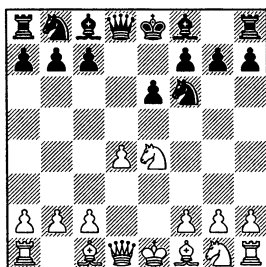
Black's main problem in the Rubinstein variation is the development of his light squared bishop. Generally speaking, the outcome of the opening battle depends mostly on the fact – how successfully and at what price he manages to solve that problem. In our chapter three we are dealing with lines that are long past their popularity. Black is

usually trying to solve the problem with the development of his light squared bishop in a rather unusual fashion for the French Defence and that is by trying to accomplish the pawn-move e6-e5. This idea is evidently quite risky from the point of view of strategy. Whenever he fails to realize his idea – the prospects of his light squared bishop remain quite grim indeed. Variation b is a good example of that...Meanwhile, even in case Black really manages to achieve his aim, like in variation a, he continues to have problems. This is hardly surprising, because he lags in development. After he opens up the centre, White usually seizes the central files and he starts attacking Black's king. You can see the consequences of Black's lag in development in line d, in which he is forced to introduce into actions his queen quite early, contrary to all familiar principles of playing in the opening stage.

Variation c can be defined as quite different from the rest of the lines that we are analyzing in our chapter three. It is something like an introduction to one of the main lines, which we will be dealing with in chapter five. Pay attention to the strategical maneuver for White – 6.♗b5!, with the help of which he reduces the possibilities of the enemy bishop to occupy the long a8-h1 diagonal.

Chapter 4

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4
♘f6



Black is trying to exploit the exposed placement of the white knight on e4 and intends to equalize by simplifications. The main drawbacks of that move are immediately obvious – after the exchange on f6 Black will have to either introduce his queen too early into the actions, or he will have to compromise his pawn-structure on the kingside.

5.♘xf6+

Black now must make up his mind what to capture with on f6, the pawn – **a) 5...gxf6**, or with the queen – **b) 5...♖xf6**.

a) 5...gxf6

Black's pawn structure on the kingside is compromised after that capture. This practically pre-

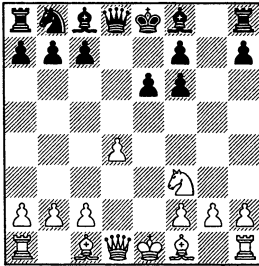
cludes the possibility for Black to castle short in that position.

6.♘f3

This is a principled move.

White plays in practice the move 6.♗e3 quite often, but it is hardly reasonable for him to deploy his darksquared bishop there at such an early stage of the opening. After: 6...♘c6!? (In case of the schematic move for Black – 6...b6?!, White can take advantage of the fact that the f3-square is free with the help of the line: 7.♖f3! c6 8.0-0-0 ♗b7 9.♘h3 ♘d7 10.♘f4 ♖e7 11.♗d3 0-0-0 12.♗e4 ♖d6 13.g4 ♖c7 14.♘h5 ♗e7 15.♗f4 e5 16.♗g3± obtaining a considerable edge, Timoshenko – Lukov, Paris 2000.) 7.♘f3 (In case of: 7.c3 ♘e7 8.♘f3 ♗d7 9.♗d3 ♗c6 10.♖e2 ♖d7 11.0-0-0 0-0-0 12.♖b1 ♘d5 13.♗c1 ♗d6= Sahakian – Klimenko, Erevan 1999, or: 7.♗e2 ♗d7 8.♗f3 ♖e7 9.♖d2 0-0-0 10.0-0-0 ♖b4 11.♖xb4 ♘xb4= Borge – Rasmussen, Denmark 1997, Black's position is passive, but it is quite solid.) 7...♗g8 8.g3 e5 9.♗g2 ♗g4 10.♖d3 ♖e7∞ and

Black managed to organize some effective central counterplay in the game Westerinen – Herrera Perez, Havana 1985.



6...b6

We have already mentioned in our Chapter 3, that the outcome of the opening battle in the Rubinstein variation depends largely on whether Black manages to solve the problem of development of his light-squared bishop.

The move 6...c5, prior to the development of his forces, usually leaves the initiative to White. Black has created some tension in the centre, but it is not easy for him to maintain it at all. For example after: 7. ♖e3! ♜b6 (7...♜c6? 7...♜d6? leads to the loss of an important pawn: 8.dxc5 ♜c7 9.♜d2 e5 10.♖c4 ♖g4 11.0-0-0 ♞d8 12.♜c3+- Abuin – Garcia Goday, Padron 2001; in case of 7...♜d7 8.♜d2 ♜c7 9.0-0-0 a6 10.♖e2 b6, it is very well for White to follow with 11.d5!± Thorsteinnsson – Gunnarsson, Reykjavik 1976; in case Black reduces immediately the tension in the centre with: 7...cxd4 8.♜xd4, then after: 8...

♖d7 9.♜f3 ♜c6 10.0-0-0± he can hardly complete his development, Stangl – Spiel, Germany 1998, while following: 8...♜a5+ 9.c3 a6, it is possible for White to continue with: 10.g3!? ♜d5 11.♞g1 ♜d7 12.♖g2 ♜c4 13.♜b3 ♜e5 14.h3 ♜d3+ 15.♜d2 ♜e5 16. ♞ad1 ♞b8 17.♜c1 ♖d7, Lastin – Sakaev, Elista 1997, 18.♞ge1!? ♖e7 19.♜xc4 ♜xc4 20.♖h6±) 8.dxc5 ♖xc5 9. ♖xc5 ♜xc5 10.♜d2! (after 10. ♜d4 ♜xd4 11.♜xd4 a6 12.0-0-0 ♖d7 13.♖d3 ♜c6 14.♖e4 0-0-0 15.♞he1 ♖e8± Ahn – Keogh, Baturmi 1999, White has a better endgame, but still it is not easy at all to break Black's defence.) 10...♜c6 11.0-0-0 e5 12.♜h6 ♜e7 13.♖d3↑ and in the game Zoldan – Belloni, Cortina d'Ampezzo 2004, White had better continue the fight, instead of agreeing to a draw.

The semi-open g-file is often used by Black to organize his eventual counterplay. White usually tries to neutralize it in two typical fashions. He can develop his bishop to the f4-square in order to cover the file and his kingside too with the move ♖f4-g3, or in case he does not have that possibility, he develops his kingside according to the scheme: g2-g3 and ♖f1-g2. Now, we will see some typical examples. Here is one of them: 6...♞g8 7.♖f4!? ♖d6 8.♖g3 ♜d7 9.♖d3 ♜f8 10.♜e2 ♜g6 11.0-0-0 ♜e7 12.♜d2 f5 13.♜f3 ♜g5 14.h4 ♜g4 15.♜xg4 fxg4 16.♜e4± Stald – O. Larsen, corr. 2001.

Black obviously does not have anything special in mind by playing 6...♗e7. White can exploit that by following with 7.♙f4! (His alternative plan with the move 7.g3, would have been completely justified in case of: 7...b6 8.♙g2 ♖b7 9.0-0 ♗d7 10.c4↑ Svidler – Fietz, Darmstadt (simultan) 2000, but in order to understand the fine points of that position we have to analyze additionally the variation: 7...c5!? 8.♙g2 ♗c6 9.♙e3 ♖b6∞) 7...c5 8.dxc5 ♖a5+ (In case of: 8...♗xd1+ 9.♗xd1 ♙xc5 10.♗d2↑, White has the initiative, thanks to his threat to deploy the knight to the wonderful d6-square.) 9.♗d2 ♖xc5 10.0-0-0 e5 11.♙e3 ♖c7 12.♙b5+ ♗c6 13.♖c3 ♙e6 14.♙c4 ♙xc4 15.♖xc4 ♗d8 16.♗xd8+ ♖xd8 17.♗d1 ♖c7, Bertorello – Camano, Buenos Aires 1994 and here after: 18.♖g4!? ♗b4 19.c3± White is clearly better.

In case of 6...♗d7, White can again continue with 7.♙f4!?. Now, if Black tries to repel White's bishop from the f4-square with the help of the line: 7...♗b6 (or 7...c5 8.dxc5 ♙xc5 9.♙c4 ♗g8 10.♙g3 a6 11.0-0 b5 12.♙d3 f5 13.a4± Utasi – Galego, Groningen 1982; 7...♙d6 8.♙g3 ♖e7 9.♙e2 b5 10.0-0 ♙a6 11.♗e1 ♙xg3 12.hxg3 ♖d6 13.♗h4± Harasta – Bulla, Slovakia 1997; 7...a6 8.♙c4 b5 9.♙b3 ♙b7 10.0-0 ♙d6 11.♙xd6 cxd6 12.♗e1 ♗g8 13.d5 e5, Husajina – Okrosa, Croatia 2005, 14.♗d4!±; 7...b6 8.♙d3 ♙b7 9.♖e2 ♙d6 10.♙g3 ♖e7

11.0-0-0 0-0-0 12.♗he1 ♙xg3 13.hxg3 ♖d6 14.♙e4± Hase – Rossetto, Santa Fe 1973) 8.a3 ♗d5 9.♙d2 (White obviously refrained from the move 9.♙g3, because of 9...♙h6, followed by 10...♗f4±.) 9...♙d7 and here White can seize the initiative in the centre of the board with the help of the variation: 10.c4 ♗e7 11.♙c3 ♙g7 12.d5 ♗g6 13.dxe6 ♙xe6 14.♖a4+ ♙d7 15.♖b4↑ and his prospects are evidently preferable, due to his superior pawn-structure, Corte – Piro, Buenos Aires 1946.

Black can prevent the appearance of White's bishop along the b8-h2 diagonal with the help of the move 6...♙d6. In that case, White should better choose another scheme of development: 7.g3!? b6 (Whenever Black's bishop is on the c5-square, instead of on e7, he must consider, in answer to the move 7...c5, the possibility for White to play – 8.dxc5!? ♙xc5 9.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 10.♙g2↑) 8.♙g2 ♙b7 9.0-0 ♗d7 10.c4 c6 11.♗e1 ♖c7 12.d5↑ and White seized the initiative definitely after having accomplished the pawn-break in the centre in the game Lodos – Crespo Gavilan, Villagarcia 1996.

We must also mention that after: 6...♗c6 7.♙b5, the game transposes to Chapter 3, variation **b1**.

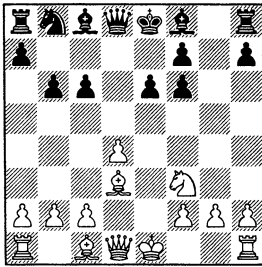
7.♙b5+

We are already familiar with this motive from Chapter 3, variation **c**.

7...c6

After 7...♗d7 8.♗d3 ♗c6 (Black's bishop, placed on the d7-square after: 8...♗c6 9.0-0 ♗g7 10.♞e1 0-0 11.c3 ♞e8 12.♞b3± resembles something like a big pawn, Zippy – Ariel, Internet 1993) 9.0-0!? There arises the position that we are analyzing in our Chapter 3, variation c (see 4...b6 5.♗f3 ♗b7 6.♗b5+ ♗c6 7.♗d3)

8.♗d3



8...♗b7

In case Black prevents White's bishop from occupying the b8-h2 diagonal with the move 8...♞c7, then White can play 9.♞e2 ♗b7 10.♗d2 ♗d7 (The move 10...♗d6, Henni – Malikgulyew, Zagan 1997, in principle does not change anything in White's plans at all: 11.c4 ♗d7 12.b4↑) 11.c4 0-0-0 (11...♗e7 12.♗c3 0-0-0 13.b4↑ Friedrich – Olexa, Ahaus 1952) 12.b4 ♖b8 13.♗c3 ♞g8 14.0-0 f5 15.c5 ♗g7 16.♞fc1↑, and in the game A. Rodriguez – Suarez, Buenos Aires 1997, White's initiative on the queenside developed much faster than opponent's actions on the other side of the board.

The other possibility for Black to prevent White's bishop from dominating on the b8-h2 diagonal is the move 8...♗d6. After 9.♞e2 ♗b7 (9...♗d7, Kokkinos – Donchev, Albena 1977, 10.♗d2 ♗b7 11.c4!? – see 9...♗b7) White can play just like in the line that we have seen in our notes to the previous move – 10.♗d2 ♗d7 (10...♞e7 11.0-0 ♗d7 12.a4 0-0-0 13.a5→ Tuschinske – Koehler, Germany 1999) 11.c4 ♞c7 12.b4 c5 13.bxc5 bxc5 14.d5↑, and he would have a powerful initiative.

In case of 8...♗a6, White should probably fight for the advantage with the help of the move 9.a3!? (After the standard 9.♗f4, White must consider the maneuver: 9...♗b4 10.♗e2 ♗d5∞, while following: 9.c3 ♗b7 10.♞e2 ♗c7 11.♗f4 ♗d5 12.♗g3 ♗d6 13.0-0 ♗f4 14.♗xf4 ♗xf4 15.♗a6 ♗xa6 16.♞xa6 0-0 17.♞d3 ♖h8 18.g3 ♞g8= White did not achieve anything out of the opening at all, Kholmov – Kopaev, Minsk 1952.) 9...♗b7 10.♞e2 ♗c7 11.c4↑ and Black's knight has no good prospects on the c7-square.

9.♗f4!?

It is also quite possible for White to follow with 9.♞e2!?, since in case of 9...♗d6 10.♗d2, or 9...♞c7 10.♗d2, the game transposes to lines that we have analysed in our previous notes.

9...♗d6

White's bishop is very powerful on the b8-h2 diagonal; there-

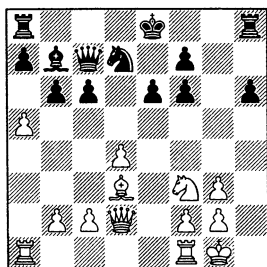
fore Black's desire to exchange it seems to be quite natural. In case he refrains from that with for example: 9...♘d7?!, then as a result of: 10.0-0 a6 11.c4 c5 12.d5 e5 13.♙e1 ♖g7 14.♘h4 ♘f8 15.♘f5+- he might end up quickly in a hopeless position, Verboom – Halteren, Utrecht 1993.

In case of 9...♘a6, it is possible for White to follow with: 10.a3 ♘c7 11.c4 ♖d7 12.♙c2 h5 and here his most principled line is: 13.0-0!?↑ (White castled long: 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.♙b1 h4 15.d5!? ♘d6! 16.dxe6 fxe6 17.♙e4 ♗e7± in the game Plachetka – Meyer, Odense 1993, but he did not achieve anything special).

10.♙g3 ♙c7 11.0-0

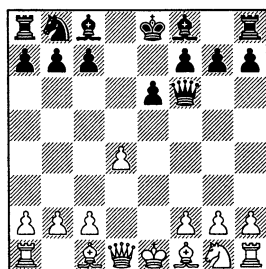
It is not so convincing for White to play: 11.♙e2 ♘d7 12.♙a6 0-0-0 13.♙xb7+ ♘xb7 14.0-0-0 ♘f8 15.♙b1± Bertok – Troeger, Oberhausen 1961. By the way, he is better in that case too. It is much easier for Black to defend in a position with both sides having castled long.

11...♘d7 12.a4 ♙xg3 13.hxg3 ♘f8 14.♙d2 h6 15.a5 ♘d7



16.♙f1↑ van der Wiel – Troeger, Porz 1982. It is more than obvious that White's initiative is much ahead in its development. Black will have great defensive problems on both sides of the board.

b) 5...♙xf6



Thus Black avoids compromising his pawn-structure, but the exposed placement of his queen will present White with plenty of additional tempi to seize the initiative.

6.♘f3

White's plans include the moves 7.♙d3 and 8.♙g5 trapping Black's queen.

6...h6

Black should better protect the g5-square immediately.

About 6...c6 7.♙g5 – see 4...e6, page 94, book 3.

It is too risky for Black to play 6...c5?!, because of 7.♙g5! (It looks like 7.dxc5 is very strong for White, but that is not true. Black can counter that with: 7...h6! 8.♙b5+ ♘d7 9.♙xd7+ ♘xd7= Apil-luelo – Jario Garcia, Spain 1991.)

7... ♖g6 (or 7... ♖f5 8. ♙d3 ♜d5 9. c4 ♜d6 10. dxc5 ♖xc5 11. 0-0±) 8. ♙d3 ♖h5 9. 0-0 f6 and here White can complete his development altogether with the move 10. ♙e3±, while the only developed black piece is the queen...

In case of 6... ♙d7, possibly the best move for White is 7. ♙d3!? (It is not so clear if White plays 7. ♙g5, because of 7... ♖g6 8. ♙d3 and here in the game Tarrasch – Em. Lasker, Germany (m/6) 1908, Black did not have to create chronic weaknesses with the move f7-f5, but he had to complete his development calmly with: 8... ♖h5!? 9. h3 f6 10. ♙f4 ♙d6 11. ♙xd6 cxd6 12. c3± and his position would have been a bit worse, but still quite acceptable.) and suddenly he is threatening to trap his opponent's queen with the move ♙c1-g5. In case Black defends against that threat with the move h7-h6, the game transposes to the main line. If Black ignores that threat, with the hope after: 7... ♙c6?? 8. ♙g5, to counter it with the intermediate move 8... ♙xf3, then White's trap springs after: 9. ♜d2! ♖xd4 10. ♙b5+- and Black's queen gets lost.

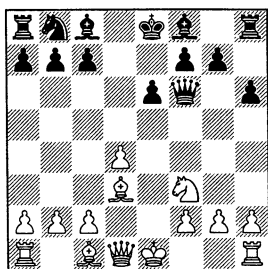
In case Black decides to go back with the queen to its initial position – 6... ♜d8, then it becomes even easier for White to exploit his lead in development. He can follow with: 7. ♙d3 ♙e7 (7... ♙d6 8. ♖e2 c6 9. 0-0 ♜d7 10. c4 0-0 11. ♙g5 ♙e7 12. ♖e4 g6

13. ♖h4 ♙e8 14. ♖fe1 ♙xg5 15. ♜xg5 ♜f8 16. ♙e3→ Wege – Dumancic, Aschach 1999; 7... ♜c6 8. 0-0 ♙e7 9. c3 ♙d7 10. ♖e2 0-0 11. ♖e4 f5 12. ♖e2 ♖e8 13. ♙e1 ♙d6 14. ♙c4 ♖f6 15. ♙g5 ♖g6 16. ♜d2 h6 17. ♙f4± Divtasvuodna – Hossa, Internet 1998; 7... c5 8. dxc5 ♙xc5 9. ♖e2 ♜d7 10. 0-0 0-0 11. ♙g5 ♖b6 12. c3 a5 13. ♙ad1± Ucha – Schuster, Buenos Aires 1992, and Black can hardly complete the development of his queenside; in case of 7... ♜d7 8. ♖e2 ♙e7 9. 0-0, the game again transposes to the lines after 7... ♙e7) 8. ♖e2 ♜d7 (It is too dangerous for Black to open the game, because of his lag in development – 8... c5 9. dxc5 ♖a5+ 10. ♙d2 ♖xc5 11. ♙c3 ♙f6 12. ♙xf6 gxf6 13. 0-0-0 ♙d7 14. ♜d2 ♙c6 15. ♙e4 ♖g5 16. h4 ♖a5 17. ♙h3↑ Delchev – Suppa, Porto San Giorgio 2003; It is obviously bad for Black to follow with 8... ♙d7, because after: 9. ♜e5!? ♙c6 10. c3± Black's knight on b8 will be forced to defend the light squared bishop; moreover that White can obtain the two bishop advantage at any moment that he pleases.) 9. 0-0 0-0 (In case Black delays castling his position remains difficult – 9... ♙f6 10. ♙f4 ♜f8 11. ♙ad1 ♜g6 12. ♙g3 0-0 13. ♜e5 ♙e8 14. c3 ♖e7 15. ♖h5 ♙xe5 16. ♙xe5 f6 17. ♙g3 ♖f7 18. ♖fe1± L. Schmid – Troeger, Bad Pyrmont 1949.) 10. ♙d1 c6 (The essence of the scheme of deployment of White's pieces with the queen on the e2-

square is that Black cannot develop his light-squared bishop on the a8-h1 diagonal with the move 10...b6??, because of 11.♖e4+-; Black can prevent White's queen from coming to the e4-square with the move 10...♟f6, but it becomes completely unclear how he can complete his development after: 11.♟e5 h6 12.c4!±, followed by 13.♟f4.) 11.♟f4 ♖e8 (You can see an amazing trap happening in the following game – 11...♟f6?! 12.♟e5 ♖e7 13.♟c4 ♟d8?! 14.♟d6! ♖e8 15.♟c7+- Bertazzoni – Ghidini, Pellestrina 1979.) 11.♟f4 ♖e8 12.♟e5 ♟f6 13.c3 ♟d7 14.♟c2 g6 15.♖f3±, and in the game Solomunovic – J.Meyer, Boeblingen 1999, Black failed to solve the problem of the development of his “bad” light-squared bishop altogether.

After 6...♟c6 7.♟d3 (with the idea to follow with 8.♟g5) 7...h6 8.0-0, or 6...♟d6 7.♟d3 h6 8.0-0 ♟c6, the lines transpose to 6...h6.

7.♟d3



As a rule, in this position Black chooses either **b1)** 7...♟d6, **b2)** 7...c5, or **b3)** 7...♟c6.

The other moves, in principle, have no separate importance as a rule. The game often transposes to some other well-familiar lines after them.

Black's attempt to find something new in the labyrinth of well-known variations may end up very badly for him. See a typical example: 7...♟d7 8.0-0 c5 (About 8...♟d6 9.♖e2, or 8...♟c6 9.♟e5 ♟d6 10.♖e2 – see variation **b1**; 8...♟c6 9.c3 – see variation **b3a**) 9.♟e3 cxd4 10.♟xd4 ♖d8 11.♟c3 ♟c6 12.♟e5± Menz – Pannier, corr. 1990, in which Black was too far back in development for the sake of solving the problem with his light squared bishop.

He cannot equalize by playing: 7...♟d7 8.0-0 b6 (About 8...♟d6 9.♖e2 – see variation **b1**; 8...c5 9.♟e3 – see variation **b2**; the passive line: 8...♖d8 9.♖e1 ♟e7 10.c3 ♟f6 11.♟c2 c6 12.♟e5 ♖c7 13.♟f4 ♟d6 14.c4± did not help Black at all in the solution of his main problem – the development of his light squared bishop, Safranska – Quartararo, Montecatini Terme 1998.) 9.♟e4!? (9.♟b5!?) 9...♖b8 10.♟c6 ♟d6, Marie – Arqueros, corr. 1989 and here White could have afforded to follow with the much more aggressive line: 11.♟e5!? ♟xe5 12.dxe5 ♖xe5 13.♖g4 0-0 14.♟xh6 ♖xb2 15.♖ad1∞.

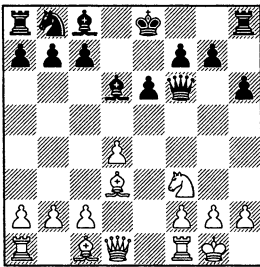
b1) 7...♟d6

Without the move ♟b8-c6,

which we will analyze in variation **b3**, it is senseless for Black to play 7...♗d6. We deal with this move mostly because it is played rather often in practice (in fact that is Black's most popular move in this position...).

8.0-0

This is White's most natural move. Now, Black must demonstrate how he plans to complete his development.



8...0-0

Black can also try here 8...♖c6, which after 9.c3 will transpose to variation **b3**.

All other possibilities for Black are considerably weaker:

The move 8...♗f4?! is evidently anti-positional. Black exchanges his good and well-developed bishop for White's "bad" and undeveloped bishop. See the following fragment of a game as a convincing proof of that: 9.♖e2 ♗xc1 10.♞axc1 0-0 11.♗e5 g6 12.f4 ♗d7 13.c3 ♗b6 14.♞f3 ♗d5 15.♞cf1→ Hardicsay – Nemeth, Budapest 1987;

The main drawback of the move 8...♗d7 is that after 9.♖e2,

Black's king will not be safe on the kingside. He can try to ensure something like a safe haven for it with the help of: 9...♖e7 (Or 9...0-0 10.♖e4!→; 9...b6 10.♗b5!? ♗b7 11.♗e5 ♗xe5 12.dxe5 ♖h4 13.f4 0-0-0 14.♗e3↑ and White's queenside initiative is very dangerous. It is still too risky for Black to play 9...c5, Fuente – Caurin, corr. 1989, because after: 10.dxc5!? ♗xc5 11.♗b5+ ♗d7 12.♞d1 ♖e7 13.♗xd7+ ♗xd7 14.♗e3± he has great problems to castle. The lines: 9...g5 10.♞e1 ♗f4 11.♖e4 ♗xc1 12.♞axc1 c6, Trivizas – Vorgias, Athens 2000, 13.c4±, as well as: 9...c6 10.♞e1 ♗f4 11.♗e5 ♗xc1 12.♞axc1± ♗eto – Faria, Sao Paulo 1996, do not need any special comments.) freeing the f6-square for the knight, but naturally that mode of development is too slow and it cannot solve Black's problems. There might follow: 10.♞e1 ♗f6 (Or 10...0-0 11.♗d2 ♗f6 12.♗e5 c5 13.dxc5 ♗xc5, van Elst – Ruiz, France 2004, 14.♖f3±; 10...c6 11.♗d2 0-0, Treybal – Dobrotka, Slovakia 2002, 12.c4±.) 11.♗e5!? (White exploits immediately to his advantage the placement of Black's knight on d7.) 11...♗d7 (If 11...a6, then 12.♖f3 c5 13.♗e3 ♖c7 14.h3 ♗d7 15.♖g3± Florescu – Petre, Eforie Nord 2001 and Black has problems with the defence of his g7-pawn.) 12.♖f3 c6 13.♗d2 0-0-0 14.a3 ♗b8 15.b4→, Black's king has been evacuated to the

queenside, but it is hardly safer there, Martel – Intelangelo, Las Palmas 1991.

After 8...b6, of course it is not advantageous for White to place his bishop on b5 in two moves. Instead, he can force Black to close the long diagonal with his c-pawn in another fashion: 9.♙e4 c6 10.♞e1 0–0 (or 10...♙b7 11.d5!↑ Nguyen – Imas, Willingen 2004) 11.♟e5 ♙xe5 (In case of: 11...♙b7, White wins by force with a direct attack against Black's king: 12.♟g4! ♞e7 13.♟xh6+ gxh6 14.♞g4+ ♔h8 15.♙xh6 f5 16.♙xf8 ♞xf8 17.♞h5+ ♔g7 18.♞g5+ ♔f7 19.♙xf5! exf5 20.♞xf5+ ♔g7 21.♞g5+ ♔f7 22.♞e3+– Sarkar – Sherman, Philadelphia 1995.) 12.dxe5 ♞d8 (or 12...♞e7, Meyer – Guidone, Italia 1991, 13.♙e3±) 13.♞f3± and Black's position is extremely difficult, Nicolau – Bruinenberg, Mijdrecht 1979. Black has not solved the problem with the development of his light squared bishop yet, while he has already lost the fight for the dark squares.

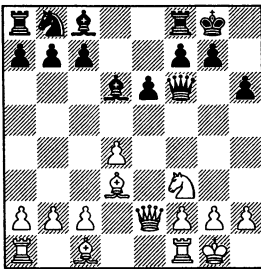
He has tried to develop his light squared bishop along the a8-h1 diagonal in another way too – 8...♙d7 9.♞e2!?. (White preserves the advantage thanks to his bishop pair in case of: 9.♞e1 ♙c6 10.♟e5 ♙xe5 11.dxe5 ♞h4±.) 9...♙c6 (About 9...♟c6 10.c3 – see variation **b3a.**), but then Black must worry about the move 10.♟e5!. Following that, he has

tried in practice: 10...♙xe5 (Or 10...♟d7 11.♟xc6 bxc6 12.♞e4 ♞d8, Niebling – Eidam, Bad Wildbad 1997, 13.♙e3±; in case of: 10...0–0, the seemingly attractive line for White: 11.♟xc6 ♟xc6 12.♞e4 g6 13.♙xh6, suddenly backfires due to: 13...♞h8! 14.♞e3 ♟xd4±, but after the best possibility for White: 11.f4! ♞d8 12.♞h5 ♙e8 13.♙e3 ♟c6 14.c3 ♞e7, Hussert – Schmidt-Seifert, corr. 1979, he can pose quite serious problems to his opponent with the help of 15.♞ae1±, followed by 16.♙c1 and the pawn-break f4-f5.) 11.dxe5 ♞h4 (Or 11...♞d8 12.♞g4 g5, Rogoff – Milkovich, Binghamton 1974, 13.♞d1±; if 11...♞e7, Mihvev – Bozic, Ljubljana 1994, then White must take care, so that the c5-square becomes inaccessible to Black's knight: 12.♙d2!?. ♟d7 13.b4 b6 14.♞g4±) 12.f4 ♟d7 (or 12...a6 13.f5! exf5 14.e6→ Estrada Nieto – Frank, Zalakaros 2001) 13.b4 a6 14.♙b2 ♟b6 15.c4 0–0 16.♞ad1 ♞fd8 17.f5! exf5 18.e6→ Racz – Frank, Budapest 2005.

9.♞e2!?

Now, Black should consider the possibility of White's queen appearing on the e4-square after which he will have great problems with the defence of the b1-h7 diagonal. That is even more dangerous for him if you have in mind that, since his pawn is already on the h6-square, he cannot cover the b1-h7 diagonal with the move g7-g6.

The prophylactic move 9.c3 is evidently not the best here, but it does not spoil anything in fact. After: 9...♟c6 (or 9...b6 10.♟e4 c6 11.♟e1 ♟b7 12.♟e5 ♟xe5 13.dxe5± Jasny – Deva, USA 2004; 9...♟d7, Dahl – Aune, Norway 1992, 10.♟e2!? ♟c6 11.♟e5↑; following: 9...♟d7, Gomez Lopez – B.Rodriguez, Spain 1999, it is good for White to play 10.♟e2!?, because Black cannot answer with 10...e5?, due to 11.♟e4→, while the more reliable move: 10...♟e7 11.♟e1↑, forces Black to postpone the solution of the problem with his light squared bishop for sometime in the future...) here White can choose between 10.♟e2 and 10.♟d2, see variation – **b3b**.



9...♟c6

That is the best defence for Black under the circumstances. He can try to cover the b1-h7 diagonal with the move f7-f5, as Black did that after: 9...♟e7?! 10.♟e4 f5, but then his e5-square would remain chronically weak: 11.♟e2 ♟d7 12.♟c4 ♟f6 13.♟e1 ♟f8 14.♟e5± M.Rytshagov – Reuter, Mittelrhein 1994.

The other move with the knight – 9...♟d7?!, enables White to demonstrate the power of his attacking position. After 10.♟e4, Black must free immediately the f8-square for his king: 10...♟d8 (or 10...♟e8 11.♟h7+ ♟f8 12.♟e1 ♟e7 13.c4→ Vella – Dawson, Dubai 1986; 10...♟g6 11.♟xg6 fxg6 12.♟xg6 e5 13.♟e3 exd4 14.♟xd4+– Probst – Moerger, Voelklingen 2001; 10...♟f5 11.♟h4! ♟f6 12.♟g5!+– van Hengel – Weijers, Hengelo 1998) 11.♟h7+ ♟f8 12.♟e1 b6 13.♟e4 ♟b8 14.♟d2± and the material remains equal indeed, but the evaluation of the position is doubtlessly in favour of White, V.Martinez – P.Garcia, Gran Canaria 1989.

10.♟e4

White shows here his main trump. In case he simply protects his d4-pawn with the move 10.c3, after 10...e5!?, the game transposes to variation **b3b**.

10...♟f5

This is the only way for Black to cover the b1-h7 diagonal.

Or 10...g6? 11.♟xh6+–; 10...♟d8?! Burn – Delmar, New York 1889, 11.♟h7+ ♟f8 12.c3±; 10...♟e8?! 11.♟h7+ ♟f8, Roeberg – Feicht, Griesheim 2003, 12.c3±.

11.♟h4

The immediate trade of queens after: 11.♟xf5 exf5 12.c3±, has not been tested in the tournament practice yet.

11...♟e7

Black can avoid being crushed

only with the help of tactics. Following: 11...♚a5? 12.♙xh6! gxh6 13.♚xh6 ♖e8 14.♙h7+-, the game would be just over, Gajdos – Biro, Budapest 1916.

12.♚g3

The exchange of queens in case of: 12.♚xe7 ♘xe7 13.♙xf5 ♘xf5= Long – Fowler, Dortmund 1980 leads to a position in which Black has no problems whatsoever and the presence of opposite coloured bishops on the board only emphasizes the drawish tendencies. If White wishes to trade queen outright, he should better do it in another fashion – 12.♙xf5 ♙xh4 13.♙e4 ♙f6 14.c3±. Here, Black still has some problems, because his light squared bishop is very passive and the pawn-break e6-e5 is still too difficult to accomplish..

12...♙d6

Black's bishop is chasing White's queen like a bee is after honey...There is no respite. After: 12...♚f6?! 13.♙f4 ♙d6 14.♙e5 ♙xe5 15.dxe5 ♚e7 16.♖fe1 ♘b4 17.♙e4 ♙d7 18.c3± White remained with a clear advantage, Tischbierek – Kucera, Decin 1979.

13.♙xf5

White is now forced to exchange queens, because he has no good squares to retreat his queen to. The alternative is – 13.♚xd6 cxd6 14.♙xf5 exf5 15.d5!? (15.♙f4 d5 16.h4 ♖e8= Csolto – Petko, Martin 2003; 15.b3, Sestakov – Ferenczi, Nyiregyhaza 1996, 15...

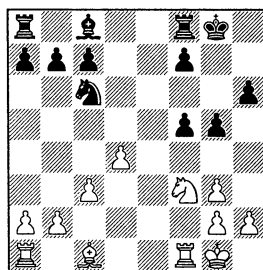
d5!? 16.♖e1 ♙e6=; if 15.c4, then White must consider the consequences of the line: 15...d5 16.cxd5 ♘b4 17.d6 ♖d8=.) 15...♘b4 (After: 15...♙e5 16.♘xe5 dxe5 17.b3, White's c and d-pawns, supported by his dark squared bishop, will become extremely dangerous.) 16.c4 ♘d3 17.♖d1 ♘xc1 18.♖axc1± and White is threatening to create a passed pawn after the advance c4-c5.

13...♙xg3 14.fxg3

It also seems good for White to follow with the simple line: 14.hxg3 exf5 15.c4±. In this case, he has good chances to create a passed pawn on the queenside thanks to his superior pawn-structure.

14...exf5 15.c3 g5

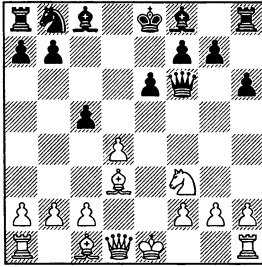
Otherwise White's bishop would have been deployed to the f4-square.



16.♖e1± Ronneland – C. Andersson, Hallsberg 1991. White maintains some advantage, despite the opposite coloured bishops. This is due mainly to his possibility to create a passed pawn on the queenside at some opportune

moment. On the contrary, Black's pawn-structure on the kingside precludes him from doing the same...

b2) 7...c5



8.♙e3

White would not mind opening of the game, because of his much superior development.

8...♘c6

It is worse for Black to play: 8...♘d7 9.0-0 ♙d6 (In case of: 9...♙e7 10.c3 0-0, Janos – Nepras, Slovakia 1995, White can increase his positional pressure, by playing: 11.♙c2!? ♖d8 12.♗d3 ♘f8 13.♗e4↑), because of 10.♙b5! a6 (after 10...cxd4 11.♙xd4 ♗g6 12.♗d2, Diesen – Ross, Chicago 1973, White had a powerful attack against Black's king stranded in the centre, because Black could not defend with: 12...0-0, because of 13.♙xd7! ♙xd7 14.♙e5 ♙c6 15.♘h4 ♗g5 16.♗xg5 hxg5 17.♙xd6 ♖fd8 18.♙e7+-) 11.♙xd7+ ♙xd7 12.dxc5 ♙c7 13.♙d4± Fodre – Csizmadia, Gyula 1997, and Black remained a pawn down.

9.0-0

White achieves less with 9. dxc5, because of 9...♗xb2 10. 0-0 ♗f6 11.♘d4 ♙d7 12.♘b5 ♖c8 13.♙e4 ♗e5∞ Janosevic – Puc, Belgrade 1948.

9...cxd4

After 9...♙e7 10.c3 cxd4 11. ♘xd4 ♘xd4 12.♙xd4 e5 13.♙b5+ ♖f8 14.♙e3± Novik – Nalbandian, Rostov 1993, Black lost his right to castle.

10.♘xd4 ♙d7

The move 10...♙e7, after: 11.♘xc6 bxc6, leads to some weakening of Black's pawn-structure on the queenside. 12.c3!? (White achieves much less after: 12.♙e4 e5 13.♗f3 ♗xf3 14.♙xf3 ♙d7 15.♖ad1± Manik – Dobrotka, Slovakia 1998, but even then he preserves some edge.) and now in case of: 12...0-0 (or 12...e5 13.♗a4 ♙d7 14. f4↑) there might follow: 13.♗a4 e5 14.♗e4 g6 15.♙xh6 (or 15.f4 ♙f5 16.fxe5 ♙xe4 17.exf6 ♙xd3 18.fxe7 ♖fe8 19.♖fd1 ♙f5 20.♙c5± Wieck – Cimafranca, Long Island 1995) 15...♙f5 16.♗e3 ♙xd3 (or 16...♖fb8 17.♙xf5 ♗xf5 18.b3 g5 19.f4 gxf4 20.♙xf4+-) 17.♙xf8 ♙xf1 18.♙xe7 ♗xe7 19.♖xf1± White ends up with a solid extra pawn.

11.♘b5

The other possibility for White is – 11.♙e4 a6 12.♘xc6 ♙xc6 13. ♙xc6+ bxc6, S.Kuper – Losch, Germany 1993, and here after 14.c3±, White could have obtained some edge, because of his better pawn-structure.

11...♖c8

In case of 11...♖e5, Emunds – Hirsch, Muenster 1995, it is very good for White to follow with: 12.♗d2!±, with the powerful threat 13.♙f4.

If Black prevents the penetration of his opponent's knight to the c7-square with the move: 11...♗d8?!, then White can try: 12.♙f4 ♖c8 (In case of: 12...e5 13.♞e1 ♙e7 14.♙xe5 ♜xe5 15.♞xe5 0–0, Black cannot survive with just a loss of a pawn due to: 16.♞d5! ♗c8 17.♞xd7 ♗xd7 18.♙h7+– Rutkowski – Hauck, Bad Wildbad 2002.) 13.♜d6+!? ♙xd6 14.♙xd6 ♜e7 15.♗g4 ♙c6 and Black's king will remain stranded in the centre of the board, Marzahn – Oezdemir, Giessen 1996. White's punishment for Black in that case that might be quite painful: 16.♙e5! ♗d5 17.♞fe1+–.

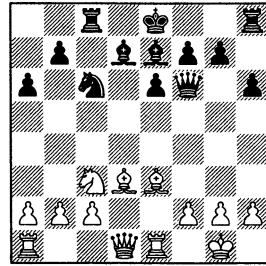
12.♞e1

This is stronger than 12.♜xa7, because the complications after: 12...♜xa7 13.♙xa7 ♗xb2 14.♙e4 ♗b4 15.♞e1 ♗a4 16.♙d4 ♙c6∞ Kudrin – Belorusov, Philadelphia 2003, led to a quite unclear position.

12...a6

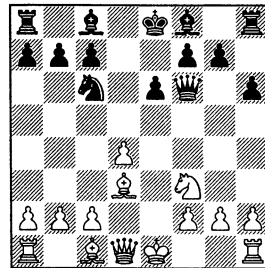
After 12...♗xb2 13.c3 ♜e5 14.♞e2 ♗xa1 15.♗xa1 ♜xd3 16.♜xa7+–, Black loses his queen, while in case of: 12...♙e7 13.♜xa7 ♜xa7 14.♙xa7 ♗xb2 15.♞b1 ♗xa2 16.♙d4 ♙c6 17.♗g4 ♙f8 18.♞b3→, he is subjected to a crushing attack.

13.♜c3 ♙e7



14.a3!? (It is less convincing for White to follow with 14.♙e4, because of 14...♙b4 15.♗d2 ♙xc3 16.bxc3 e5∞) **14...0–0 15.♙e4** (Black has completed his development, but he still has problems with his light-squared bishop.) **15...♙e8** (It is too bad for Black to play 15...♞cd8, because after 16.♙b6± he loses the exchange.) **16.♗h5±**. White maintains some advantage, because his pieces are placed more harmoniously.

b3) 7...♜c6



This is the most logical move. There is no threat against the d4-pawn yet; nevertheless White will have to play the prophylactic move c2-c3, in order to redeploy his queen (like in variation **b1**) to the e2-square.

8.0-0

White does not waste any time to defend the d4-pawn, because it is not under attack presently.

Now, Black must solve the problem where to evacuate his king. If he intends to castle long, then it seems attractive for him to follow with: **b3a) 8...♙d7**, while if he plans to castle short, he should better play: **b3b) 8...♙d6**.

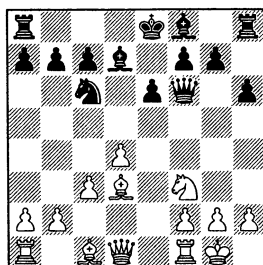
There is another possibility for him in principle – 8...g5?! 9. ♖e1 (This move ensures the e5-square for White's knight in case of the pawn-advance g5-g4.) 11...♙g7 (After 10...♙d7, Black must already consider the pawn-break 11.d5!→) 10.c3 g4, postponing the problem with castling for some time to come. Well, while Black was making up his mind about his castling in the game Da Silva – Martins Figueiredo, corr. 2000, after the moves: 11.♟e5 ♟xe5 12.dxe5 ♖h4 13.g3 ♖h3 14.♙e2 ♙d7 (or 14...h5 15.♙f1+-) 15.♙xg4+- the game was just over...

b3a) 8...♙d7?!

This move is played not only with the intention to castle long, but it is also threatening 9...♟xd4. I am going to mention here that in general – the entire plan with a long castling for Black is quite dubious.

9.c3

White's d4-pawn is reliably defended now.

**9...♙d6**

Strangely enough, but Black has been developing his bishop here in most of the games in which he was later castling long. We have to admit – there is some sound logic in that. The additional control over the e5-square is necessary for him, while the decision about where to place the king can be delayed and made on the next move.

In case of the immediate 9...0-0-0, White can continue with 10.♖e2!? (10.♖e1↑ Rose – Okike, England 1998 is also acceptable for White) 10...g5 (about 10...♙d6 11.b4 – see 9...♙d6) and after 11.b4 g4 12.♟d2 ♖g7 13.♟e4 ♟b8 14.♙f4 ♙e7 15.♟c5→, White's attack was very powerful in the game P.Martinez – Villalta, Taragona 1993.

The aggressive line 9...g5 10. ♖e2 g4 (10...0-0-0 11.b4 – see 9.0-0-0) 11.♟e5 ♟xe5 12.dxe5 ♖g7 13.♙f4 ♙e7, Neron de Surgy – Sauvetre, Paris 1994, after 14.a4!? 0-0-0 15.a5±, leads to plenty of serious problems for Black.

10.♖e2 0-0-0

Black's castling short is hardly

any better. After: 10...0–0, it is good for White to play: 11.♖e1! (In case of the standard move 11.♖e4, Black can counter it with: 11...♟f5 12.♟xf5 exf5±, which leads to an endgame in which White's edge is only minimal.) with the idea to deploy his knight to the e5-outpost and thus to deprive Black of any counterplay connected with the advance e6-e5. Black has tried in that position: 11...♗e7 (Or 11...♖e7 12.♗e5 ♗xe5 13.dxe5 ♙c5 14.♖e4 g6 15.♙xh6+- Riff – Lacroix, Condom 2003; it is very important that the time, which Black has lost for the move ♙c8-d7, does not allow him to free his position with the help of the move 11...e5, because of: 12.dxe5 ♗xe5 13.♗e5 ♙xe5 14.♖e4! ♟fe8 15.♖h7+ ♗f8 16.♙e3→; in case of: 11...♟fe8 12.♗e5, following: 12...♙xe5 13.dxe5 ♖e7 14.♖e4→ Thiellement – S.Delgado, Tel Aviv 1964, as well as after: 12...♟ad8, Preuss – H.Schmidt, Roskilde 1998, 13.♗xd7 ♟xd7 14.♖e4→, Black comes under a very dangerous attack.) 12.♗e5 ♙xe5 (or 12...♟fd8 13.♖e4 ♗c6 14.♖h7+ ♗f8 15.♗xd7+ ♟xd7 16.♖h8+ ♗e7 17.♖xa8+- Guller – Notegger, Vorrarlberg 1996) 13.dxe5 ♖h4, Havasi – R.Krogius, Warsaw 1935 and here White had the possibility to demonstrate the power of his bishop pair: 14.g3 ♖a4 (or 14...♖h3 15.♖e4 ♗g6 16.♖xb7+-) 15.♙c2 ♖b5 (15...♖a5 16.♖d3+-) 16.c4 ♖a5 17.♙d2 ♖b6 18.♙e3 (It

is also possible for White to play 18.♖d3 ♗g6±, but still he cannot capture the enemy bishop – 19.♖xd7?, because of 19...♟fd8=) 18...♖c6 19.b4±.

It is again too risky for Black to play 10...g5, because after 11.♖e1 0–0–0 12.♗e5 ♙xe5 13.dxe5 ♖g7 14.a4 h5 15.b4 g4 16.♙f4 ♗e7 17.c4 h4 18.b5 ♟dg8 19.a5→ Gotz – Raschka, Valtice 1992, White is obvious ahead of Black in the development of his attack on the kingside.

The juxtaposition of White's queen and Black's king prevents Black from playing: 10...e5?, because of: 11.dxe5 ♗xe5 12.♗xe5 ♖xe5 (12...♙xe5 13.f4+-) 13.♖xe5 ♙xe5 14.♖e1 f6 15.f4+-.

11.b4!

The main idea for Black in the variation **b3** is for him to free his light squared bishop with the help of the pawn-advance e6-e5. This is exactly what White must fight against in the first place. He intends to attack Black's knight on c6, which is ready to support that advance. It is essential to know that White fails to prevent e6-e5 with the move 11.♖e1!?, because after 11...e5! 12.dxe5 (12.d5 ♗e7∞) ♗xe5 13.♗xe5 ♙xe5= Weeks – A.Hansen, Hamburg 1999, Black equalizes completely (14.♖xe5? ♟de8♯).

11...g5

Black has tried in practice plenty of moves in that position, but White's attack is much faster

after every one of them. For example:

11... ♗e7 12. b5!? ♗d5 13. c4 ♗f4 14. ♖xf4 ♖xf4, Ortel – Nagy Dani, Hungary 2001, 15. g3 ♖d6 16. c5 ♖e7 17. ♖e4→;

11... e5 (that is the most principled move) 12. b5 e4 13. ♖xe4 ♗a5 14. ♖d2 ♖he8 15. ♖fe1 ♖f4, Gazivoda – Novkovic, Belgrade 2005, 16. ♖xf4 ♖xf4 17. ♗e5+-;

11... ♖de8 (Black is trying to prepare the pawn-advance e6-e5) 12. b5 ♗a5 13. ♗e5 ♖e7 14. c4 b6 15. ♖d2 ♗b7 16. ♗c6 ♖xc6 17. bxc6 ♗d8 18. c5+- Strapko – Lueck, corr. 1985;

11... ♖he8 (This is once again an attempt to support e6-e5, but in another fashion.) 12. b5 ♗e7 13. c4 ♗f5 14. ♖b2 ♗h4 15. ♗xh4 ♖xh4 16. g3 ♖h3 17. c5 ♖f8 18. c6 bxc6 19. ♖f3→ Henao – Sherman, New York 1993;

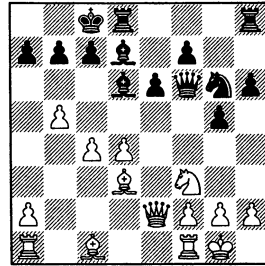
11... ♖dg8 (This move is too slow.) 12. b5 ♗e7 13. c4 g5 14. ♗e5 ♖xe5 15. dxe5 ♖g7 16. a4→ Solak – Pappas, Panormo 1998;

11... ♖f4 (in the hope of forcing some simplifications...) 12. b5 ♗e7 13. a4 g5 14. a5 ♗d5 15. c4 ♖xc1, von Auer – Kolompar, Frankfurt 2002, the battle could have been decided in White's favour by 16. a6! b6 17. ♖fxc1+-.

12. b5 ♗e7 13. c4 ♗g6

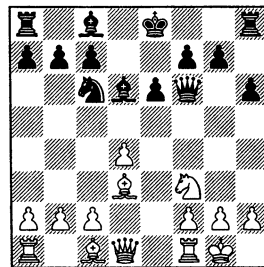
Black's position is very bad after: 13... ♖f4 14. ♖b2 g4 15. ♗e5 ♖xe5 16. dxe5 ♖g5 17. ♖e4 ♗b8 18. c5→ Zarnicki – Jerez, Villa Martelli 1997, as well as after:

13... g4 14. ♗e5 ♖xe5 15. dxe5 ♖g7 16. a4 ♗g6 17. ♖e1→ Lampe – Beth, Schleswig Holstein 1991.



14. c5 (14. ♖xg6!? ♖xg6 15. c5 g4 16. ♗e5 ♖xe5 17. dxe5 ♖e8 18. a4 h5 19. ♖e3 ♖d3 20. ♖e1→ Smolovic – Mihic, Belgrade 2003) 14... g4 (after 14... ♖xc5 15. dxc5 ♖xa1 16. ♖xg6 fxc6 17. c6 bxc6 18. bxc6 ♖xc6 19. ♖xe6+ ♗b7 20. ♖b3+ ♗c8 21. ♖b2 ♖d5 22. ♖xa1 ♖xb3 23. ♖xh8+-, Black loses a piece by force.) 15. cxd6 gxf3 16. ♖c2 c6 17. ♖e4 fxc2 18. ♖d1→, and in the game Fiacan – Valent, Slovakia 1997, Black failed to defend his king successfully.

b3b) 8... ♖d6



That is the best for Black. He completes at first the devel-

opment of his kingside. Now, White's queen cannot go to e2, because of Black's attack against his d4-pawn.

9.c3!?

Black plans to organize the pawn-break in the centre e6-e5. White sometimes tries to prevent it with the move 9.♞e1. Black can follow that with: 9...0-0 (if Black plays 9...♙d7 with the idea to castle long, then after the pawn-break 10.d5! ♘e7 11.dxe6 ♙xe6 12.♙b5+ ♘c6 13.♞d4 ♞g6 14.♙xc6+ bxc6 15.♙f4±, White preserves some advantage) 10.♙e4 ♞d8 (10...♙d7 11.♘e5!±) 11.♙e3 (It is worse for White to play 11.c3, because of 11...e5! 12.♙xc6 bxc6 13.dxe5 ♙xe5 14.♞a4 ♙d6 15.♙e3 c5= Roose – V.Munoz, Haifa 1976.) 11...♙d7 (The move 11...e5?!, would not work for Black due to 12.♙xc6 bxc6 13.♘e5 c5, ♘otro-nias – Canda, Dubai 1986, and White can preserve his extra pawn with the move 14.♞f3±.) 12.c4 ♙e8 13.♞b3 a5∞ L.Szabo – van den Tol, Zaandam 1946 – both sides have certain achievements. Black has managed to complete his development, while White has prevented successfully the e6-e5 pawn-break.

9...0-0

About 9...♙d7?! 10.♞e2 – see 8...♙d7.

The exchange of the dark squared bishops here – 9...♙f4?! is anti-positional. It is hardly surprising that after: 10.♞e2 ♙xc1

11.♙xc1 0-0 12.b4 ♙d7 13.b5 ♘e7 14.♘e5 ♞ad8 15.f4± Black had a very difficult position in the game I.Schneider – Eggebrecht, Barsinghausen 1999.

It is much more in the spirit of the variation for Black here to try: 9...e5?!, but in this particular case that move would not work, because Black has not castled yet. Following: 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11.♘e5 ♙xe5 12.f4 ♙d6 13.♞e1+ ♘d8 14.♞f3→ White organized a dangerous attack against Black's king stranded in the centre in the game Perlo – Boyd, corr. 1982.

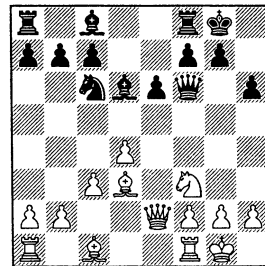
The other attempt for Black to solve the problem with the development of his light squared bishop with: 9...b6?!, after: 10.♙e4 ♙d7, L.Paulsen – Pflaum, Duesseldorf 1862, 11.♘e5! ♙xe5 12.dxe5± presented White with the two bishop advantage and excellent prospects too. The tactical justification of that variation is that Black cannot capture the pawn – 12...♞xe5?, because he loses a piece after: 13.♞f3 ♞c5 14.♙e3 ♞c4 15.b3 ♞xc3 16.♞ac1+–.

10.♞e2!?

This is a very important moment. After White's queen has occupied the e2-square, there arises some series of tactical complications in which it is far from easy to prove any advantage for him. Therefore, lately White has tried some alternative ways of playing. His hopes for an opening edge are often connected with

the move 10. ♖d2!?. This knight is headed for the e4-square and that combined with the appearance of White's queen on h5 may create plenty of problems for Black's king. Here, we must first analyze the consequences of the move 11... ♗h4 for Black. (It is obviously bad for him to play 10...b6?!, because of: 11. ♖e4 ♗h4 12.g3 ♗e7 13. ♗h5 f5 14. ♖xd6 ♗xd6 15. ♖f4 e5 16. ♖c4+ ♜h7 17.dxe5 ♖xe5 18. ♗fe1 ♗c5 19. ♗xe5 ♗xc4 20. ♗e7 ♗f6 21. ♗ae1± Hermanowicz – Szymanowska, Bartkova 2002; while in case of 10...e5, it is good for White to follow with: 11. ♖e4!? ♗d8 12. ♗h5 exd4 13. ♖xh6! g6 14. ♗g5 ♗xg5, Muehlhan – Filzmeier, Znojmo 2004, 15. ♖xg5 ♖e5 16. ♖c2 dxc3 17.bxc3±) 11.g3 ♗d8 12. ♖e4 (12.f4 e5!∞) 12...e5 13. ♗h5 (The correctness of the sacrifice – 13.f4?! exd4 14.f5, Voigt – Faulbaum, Germany 1997, in case of 14...♖e5!±, becomes too difficult for White to prove; after 13.d5 ♖e7 14.c4 f5∞ the position is with mutual chances for both sides. White cannot achieve much with: 13.dxe5 ♖xe5=; 13. ♖xd6 ♗xd6 14.dxe5 ♖xe5 15. ♖e4 ♗xd1 16. ♗xd1 ♖g4= and he fails to maintain his two bishop advantage.) 13... ♗d7 (Black loses after: 13...exd4?, because of: 14. ♖xh6! g6 15. ♗f3 ♖e5 16. ♗f6+-; it is also too bad for him to try: 13...♖e7?, due to: 14. ♖xh6! gxh6 15. ♗xh6 f5 16. ♖c4+-) 14.h4!? (It is insufficient for White to continue

with 14. ♖xh6?!, because of: 14... ♗h3! 15. ♗xh3 ♖xh3±; but it deserves attention for him to try instead: 14.d5 ♖e7 15.c4 f5 16. ♖xd6 ♗xd6∞) 14...♖e7! (In case Black opens the position, White's couple of bishops might become a powerful trump in the subsequent battle: 14... ♗g4 15. ♗xg4 ♖xg4 16. ♖xd6 cxd6 17.dxe5 dxe5 18. ♖e4±; or: 14...exd4 15. ♖xh6 ♗g4 16. ♗xg4 ♖xg4 17. ♖xd6 cxd6 18. ♖f4 ♖e5 19. ♖e4 dxc3 20.bxc3±) 15. ♖xh6 ♗g4 16. ♗xg4 ♖xg4 17. ♖e3 (or 17. ♖g5 exd4 18. ♖xe7 ♖xe7 19.cxd4 ♗ad8∞) 17...exd4 18.cxd4 ♗fd8 19. ♗fc1 ♗ac8∞ and Black regains his sacrificed pawn.



10...e5!?

That is a principled move and it is connected with a pawn-sacrifice for Black. Otherwise he might be squeezed in a tight positional bind. For example after: 10... ♖d7?! 11. ♗e1, we reach a position from a variation, which is rather unfavourable for Black i.e. **b3a** see – 8... ♖d7 9.c3 ♖d6 10. ♗e2 0–0 11. ♗e1.

After White's other possibilities, the game resembles a lot the

lines, which we have already dealt with in variation **b3a**. For example after: 10...♞e7?! 11.♞e1 ♞e8 12.♟e5 ♟xe5 13.dxe5 ♟c5, in the game Platz – Hegebarth, Magdeburg 1938, White could have played the move 14.♞e4→, beginning an extremely dangerous attack against Black's king.

It is hardly any better for Black to follow with 10...♞e8?! Shagalovich – Zilber, Minsk 1957, due to 11.♞e1!? and it becomes clear that the pawn-break 11...e5, would not work, because of: 12.♞e4 g6 13.♟xh6 ♟f5 14.♞e3 exd4 15.♞xe8+ ♞xe8 16.♞xe8+ ♔h7 17.♟g5±.

White's prospects are again better thanks to his extra space after: 10...♟e7 11.♟e5 ♞h4 (11...c5? loses for Black, because of: 12.♟g4 ♞h4 13.g3 ♞h3 14.f4, and he is helpless against 15.♟f2+–) 12.g3 ♞h3 13.a4 ♟d5 14.a5 a6 15.♟d2↑ Hrvacic – Sunara, Split 1999.

11.♞e4

This is the beginning of tactical complications. After 11.dxe5 ♟xe5 12.♟xe5 ♞xe5 13.♞xe5 ♟xe5= Nunez – Huergo, Havana 1992, White has no advantage whatsoever.

11...g6

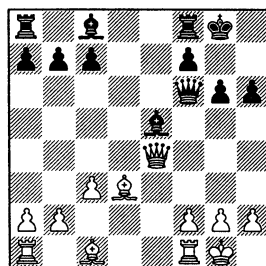
It is too dangerous for Black to let White's queen in his camp. After: 11...♞e8?! 12.♞h7+ ♔f8 13.♞e1→ I.Gurevich – Chow, New York 1994, Black came under a strong attack.

11...♞g6?! 12.♞xg6 fxg6 13.dxe5 ♟xe5 14.♟xe5 ♟xe5 15.f4 ♟d6 16.♟xg6± L.Paulsen – Saalbach, Leipzig 1863.

12.dxe5

White should not accept the pawn-sacrifice. After 12.♟b5 ♟f5 13.♞e3 exd4 14.cxd4 h5 15.♟xc6 bxc6∞ Rogers – Canda, Dubai 1986, Black's bishop pair compensates the defects of his pawn-structure on the queenside.

12...♟xe5 13.♟xe5 ♟xe5



14.♟xh6

In case of 14.♟c4, as it was played in the game Shevelevich – Karpatchev, Simferopol 1989, Black could have equalized with: 14...h5!? 15.♞e1 ♟d6 16.h3 c6=. After 14.♞e1 ♞e8 15.♟f4 ♟f5 16.♞e3 ♟xf4 17.♞xf4 ♞g5 18.♞xg5 hxg5 19.♟xf5 gxf5= Chandler – Gutierrez, Haifa 1976, there arose an equal rook and pawn endgame. White's attempt to obtain the advantage with the help of: 14.f4 ♟d6 15.♞f3 ♟c5+ (It is also a quite reliable line for Black to play: 15...♟d7 16.♟d2 ♟c6 17.♟e4 ♟c5+ 18.♔h1 ♟xe4 19.♞xe4 ♞ad8= Martelli – Gutierrez Mangel, Hai-

fa 1976.) 16.♞h1, as it was played in the game W.Mueller – Golf, Hockenheim 1994, could have been seriously tested by Black with the help of: 16...♙f5! 17.♙xf5 ♞xf5 18.♞xb7 ♞d3 19.♞f3 ♞xf3 20.♙xf3 ♙fe8 21.♙f1 ♙e2=.

14...♙f5 15.♞c4

Naturally, it is too bad for White to play: 15.♞e3?, because of 15...♙fe8= Bach – Bocksberger, Germany 2000 – and White's queen is deprived of comfortable squares to retreat to.

15...b5

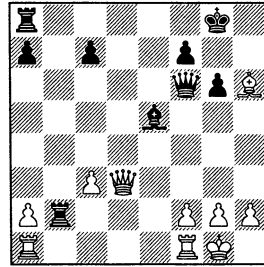
The exchange operation: 15...♙xh2+ 16.♟xh2 ♞d6+ 17.♞f4 ♞xf4+ 18.♙xf4 ♙xd3 19.♙fd1 ♙b5 20.♙xc7± Filev – Todorov, Sofia 2004, led to a position with an extra pawn for White.

Black has no compensation for the pawn at all following: 15...♙e6 16.♞c5! (but not 18.♞a4 ♙fd8 19.♙ad1 g5= Golyak – Karpachev, corr. 1988) 16...♙xh2+ 17.♟xh2 ♞h4+ 18.♟g1 ♞xh6 19.♞xc7±.

16.♞xb5 ♙fb8 17.♞c4 ♙xd3 18.♞xd3 ♙xb2

The move 18...g5, Rozentalis – A.Odeev, Minsk 1986, could have been refuted by: 19.♞e2! (now, in case it might become neces-

sary – White can save his bishop with the move 20.h4) 19...♙xh2+ 20.♟xh2 ♞xh6+ 21.♟g1±, and White has all the chances to press the advantage of his extra pawn home.



19.♙c1! It is quite useful for White to repel the enemy rook away from its active position. (In case of 19.♙e3 ♙xc3=, Black has no problems whatsoever, Calandri – G.Davies, corr. 1995) **19...♙b7** (If 19...♙d8, then White can trade his queen for two black rooks – 20.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 21.♙xb2±, while after 19...♙b6 20.♙e3 ♙d8 21.♞c2 ♙c6 22.♙ad1 ♙xc3 23.♙xd8+ ♞xd8 24.♞a4±, Black will certainly lose his a7-pawn.) **19...♙b7 20.♙e3 ♙d8 21.♞c4 ♙xc3 22.♙ad1±.** White maintains some advantage, because of his superior pawn structure.

Conclusion

White's knight on the e4-outpost exerts a powerful pressure over the central squares. Therefore, it is not surprising at all that Black tries to repel it from there in numerous ways. Our chapter 4 is devoted to one and only move for Black – 4...♟f6. This move is considered to be the oldest in the Rubinstein system and quite deservedly so. It

has been played for more than 150 years and it has been analyzed extensively by the theory of the openings. White can exchange that knight on f6 and Black is faced with a choice: he can either open the g-file in order to create some counterplay on the kingside, or he can introduce his queen into action preserving his pawn-chain elastic. Accordingly, the White players should be ready to fight in two entirely different types of positions.

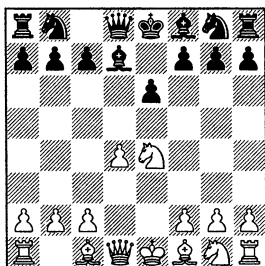
In the first case (variation a) it is worth paying attention to the typical maneuver ♖c1-f4, with the help of which White is trying to neutralize the pressure along the semi-open g-file. His other possibility to parry Black's kingside threats is to play the move g2-g3, followed by a fianchetto of his light squared bishop. In general, in variation a, there usually arise positions with opposite sides castling in which White combines his play in the centre with an onslaught on the queenside.

In the second variation the game is much calmer as a rule. Both sides are busy mobilizing his forces first, avoiding early direct clashes. Sometimes Black tries to open the game early, as in (variation b2), or he opts for fighting in positions with opposite side castling as in (variation b3a). This strategy is hardly advisable for him, though... Then, just like in the variations that we deal with in our chapter three, Black relies mainly on the preparation of the pawn-advance in the centre – e6-e5. He needs to ensure the safety of his queen in that case with the help of the additional move h7-h6. This prophylactic influences tremendously the subsequent developments in the game. Black has great problems later with the defence of the b1-h7 diagonal, in case he castles short.

The most problematic line, from the point of view of White, is variation b3b. Black sacrifices a pawn in it, but he manages to simplify the position considerably. We advise you in that case to pay a close attention to our notes to White's moves nine and ten. We indicate there how you can maintain the tension in the centre, avoiding mass exchanges of pieces in the process.

Chapter 5

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4
♙d7



Black is preparing the development of his light-squared bishop to the a8-h1 diagonal, avoiding the weakening move for the queenside b7-b6.

5. ♗f3 ♙c6

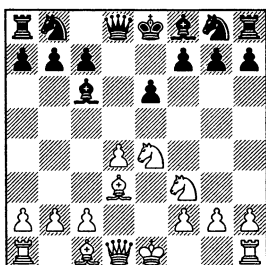
About 5...♗c6 6.c3 – see variation **b**, Chapter 3.

Black must play consistently and not restrict himself to half-measures. After: 5...♙e7 6.♙d3 ♗f6, it is very strong for White to follow with: 7.♗e5! and Black has great problems to solve. For example: 7...♙c6 (The exchange of a couple of knights – 7...♗xe4 8.♙xe4 ♗c6, Beuchat – Sparacino, Switzerland 1994, after: 9.♗f3!? 0-0 10.♙e3 ♗xe5 11.dxe5 c6 12.0-0-0↑ would not solve for Black the problem with the

development of his light squared bishop; in case of: 7...♗c6 8.♗g5!? 0-0 9.c3 ♙e8 10.♗e2 ♗d5 11.f4 ♗d8 12.0-0 g6 13.♙c4 ♗a5 14.♙d2↑ Black's light squared bishop remains once again a sorry sight, Biro – Friedrich, Bechhofen 1998) 8.♗g5!? (White has a space advantage, so he should avoid exchanges, although after: 8.♗xc6 ♗xc6 9.c3 e5 10.♗xf6+ ♙xf6 11.♗e2 0-0 12.dxe5 ♗xe5 13.♙e4 ♗e8 14.0-0 c6 15.♙e3±, he is again better, thanks to his powerful bishop pair, Handel – Samuelsson, corr. 1988.) 8...0-0 9.♙e3 h6 10.h4 ♗d5 11.♗e2 ♗bd7 12.♙c4 ♗xg2 13.0-0-0→ and White has excellent prospects for a victorious kingside attack, Minasian – Carlier, Groningen 1990.

Following: 5...♗f6, Mungai – Tamborini, corr. 1987, White can continue with: 6.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 (about 6...gxf6 7.♙f4!? – see variation **a**, Chapter 4) 7.♙d3 h6 (White was threatening 8.♙g5.) 8.♗e5↑ and White is much ahead in development.

6. ♙d3



Now, we have to analyze the moves: **a) 6...♗xe4** and **b) 6...♘d7**, preparing ♘g8-f6.

About 6...♗e7 7.0-0 ♘f6 (7...♘d7 8.♖e2 – see 6...♘d7) 8.♘g3 0-0 (8...♘d7 9.♖e2 – see 6...♘d7) 9.♖e2!? ♘bd7 10.♘e5 – see 6...♘d7.

The move 6...♘f6 is obviously weaker, because of 7.♘xf6+ gxf6 (7...♗xf6?? 8.♗g5! ♗xf3 9.♖d2! ♗xd4?! 10.♗b5+- Kotkov – G. Akopian, Krasnodar 1966; 9...♗xg2 10.♗xf6 ♗xh1 11.♗h4 ♗c6 12.c4+- Suetin – N.Zilberman, Kirovabad 1973) 8.0-0 ♗e7 (In case of: 8...♘d7 9.c4 ♗xf3 10.♗xf3 c6 11.♗f4!? ♖a5 12.a3 e5 13.♗fe1 0-0-0 14.dxe5 fxe5 15.b4 ♖c7 16.♗g5 f6 17.♗xf6 ♘xf6 18.♗xf6+- Furhoff – Mortensen, Copenhagen 1998, White's game is quite easy...) 8.0-0 ♗e7 (after 8...♗xf3 9.♗xf3 c6 10.♗d2 ♗e7 11.♗ad1 ♘d7 12.♗fe1 ♖c7 13.♗h5 ♘f8, White has the pawn-break 14.d5!→ Nisipeanu – Torres, Naujac 2000; a similar pawn-break in the centre brought White a decisive advantage after: 8...♖d5?! 9.c4! ♗h5 10.d5! exd5 11.♗e1+ ♘d8 12.♘g5! ♗xd1 13.♘xf7+ ♘c8

14.♗xd1 ♗g8 15.cxd5+-, in the game V.Akopian – Karatorossian, Linares 2001, as well as after: 8...♗d6 9.c4 h5 10.d5! exd5 11.♗e1+ ♘f8 12.♘d4 dxc4 13.♗xc4 ♖d7 14.♗e3 ♗e4 15.f3 ♗g6 16.♗b3 c6 17.♗ad1 ♖c7 18.♘e6+! fxe6 19.♗xd6 ♗xd6 20.♗xb7+- Vettel – Huisl, Germany 1988) 9.♗f4 (This maneuver is well-familiar to us.) 9...♘d7 10.♗e1 ♘f8 11.c4 ♘g6 12.♗g3 0-0, Mann – Faisst, Germany 1988, and here it was very strong for White to follow with 13.d5!±.

a) 6...♗xe4

In order for you to understand better what is going on, we have to tell you – that exchange is quite typical for many variations for Black in this chapter. What is the point? White obtains the two bishop advantage indeed, but Black's position remains super-solid. White develops his pieces effortlessly in the arising positions, but if he wishes to maintain a stable advantage he must try to avoid further exchanges of his light pieces.

7.♗xe4 c6

The move 7...♘c6?! enables White to change the pawn-structure quite favourably for him with: 8.0-0 ♘f6 9.♗xc6+ bxc6 10.b3. Black can attempt to correct its defects with: 10...c5 11.♗b2 cxd4, Suarez Garcia – Valle Rodriguez, Gijon 2000, but he loses plenty of time while doing this. Here, the

capture – 12.♗xd4!?! emphasizes White's lead in development.

In comparison to c7-c6, the move 7...♞c8, Salvatore – Custo, San Fernando 1999, does not bring any advantages to Black. On the contrary, his queen on c8 is placed very passively and White can easily develop according to the scheme from the main line: 8.0-0 ♗f6 9.♕d3± and later c4, b3 and ♖b2.

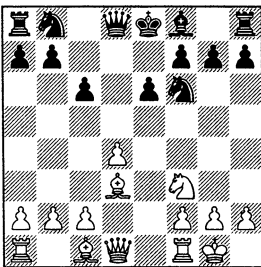
8.0-0

It is obviously worse for White to play here 8.c4?!, because of 8...♖b4!= and he must either comply with the exchange of the bishops, or he will lose his castling rights.

8...♗f6

Black should not postpone that move. In case of: 8...♗d7 9.c4, 8...♕d6 9.c4, 8...♕e7 9.c4, or 8...♞c7 9.c4, White in answer to 9...♗f6, besides the usual reaction 10.♕d3, has the additional possibility: 10.♕c2! (see variation **b1** – 6...♗d7 7.0-0 ♕xe4 8.♕xe4 c6 9.c4 ♗gf6 10.♕c2).

9.♕d3



Now, we will deal with Black's two basic schemes of develop-

ment: **a1**) 9...♕e7 and **a2**) 9...♕d6. In principle, there is no big difference between variations **a1** and **a2**, but there are some nuances. In both cases White adheres to one and the same scheme of development and that is: c4, b3 and ♖b2. Additionally, in case of 9...♞c7 10.c4, after 10...♕e7 11.b3 ♗bd7 12.♖b2 0-0 13.♞e2, or 10...♗bd7 11.♞e2 ♕d6 12.b3 0-0 13.♖b2, the game will transpose to variations **a1**, or **a2** anyway.

It is not so principled for Black to play 9...♗bd7, because here after: 10.c4 ♕e7 (It is too risky for Black to try 10...c5?, due to: 11.d5! exd5 12.♞e1+ ♕e7 13.cxd5 ♗b6, T.Schmidt – Schubert, corr. 1986 and now, White could have deprived Black of castling rights with: 14.♖b5+!? ♗f8 15.♕g5 ♗bxd5 16.♞b3±. The move 10...g6?! presents White with an extra tempo after: 11.b3 ♕g7 12.♖a3 and Black's bishop is forced to go back: 12...♖f8 13.♖b2 ♕e7 14.♞e2 0-0 15.♞ad1! Batsanin – Jakupovic, Mureck 1998. In case Black decides to castle long: 10...♞c7 11.b3 0-0-0 12.♞e2 ♕d6, Ebert – Funk, Darmstadt 1992, it is possible for White to follow with 13.♖b2, in order to prevent e6-e5 and then he can start his usual queenside offensive with a2-a3 and b3-b4.) White, besides his standard plan with b2-b3 (see variation **a1**), has the additional possibility – 11.♖f4! (Black's early development of the knight

to the d7-square precludes the move ♖e7-d6.) 11...0-0 12.♗c2 ♜a5 13.♞d3 ♞h5 14.♞fe1 ♞ad8 15. h3± Arakhamia – L.Hansen, Biel 1991.

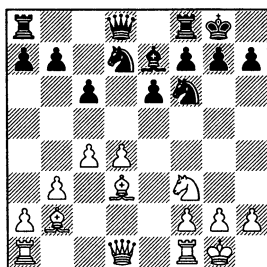
a1) 9...♗e7 10.c4

White must first of all complete the development of his queenside.

10...0-0

About 10...♞c7 11.b3 0-0 12. ♗b2 ♖bd7 13.♞e2 – see 10...0-0.

11.b3 ♖bd7 12.♗b2



12...♞c7

Undermining White's centre with the move 12...c5, does not facilitate Black's defence at all. In principle White would not mind opening of the game, because he has the two bishop advantage. He may even ignore Black's last move: 13.♞e2 ♞e8 (After 13... cxd4 14.♖xd4 ♞e8 15.♞ad1 ♞b6, Magdorf – Stierner, Ratzeburg 1997, White can play 16.♗b1± and he solves the problem once and for all with the possible advance of Black's e-pawn.) 14.♗c2 ♞c7 15.a3 b6 16.♞fe1 ♞ad8 17.♞ad1 ♗f8 18.h3 g6 19.♗c1 a6 20.dxc5 bxc5

21.♗g5± Spraggett – Hamilton, Toronto 2004.

The preparation of the pawn-advance c6-c5, with 12...♞c8, after 13.♞e2 c5 (In case of: 13...♞e8 14.♞ad1 a6, White can develop his initiative in the standard fashion – 15.♖e5 ♖f8 16.f4 ♞c7 17.f5↑ Berling – Rasmussen, Copenhagen 1999.) 14.♞ad1 cxd4 15.♗xd4± M.Eriksson – P.Ekelund, Helsingborg 1991 and the evaluation of the position remains more or less the same.

Should Black play indifferently, then after the completion of the centralization of his pieces White, as a rule, deploys his knight to the e5-outpost and then he supports it with his f-pawn – 12...h6 13.♞e2 ♞e8 14.♞ad1 ♞c7 15.♖e5↑ Mai – Wisnewski, Bad Bevensen 1994.

Black has at his disposal another possible plan connected with the advance of his a-pawn: 12...♞e8 13.♞e2 a5, with the idea to follow with 14...a4. White should immediately prevent that enlargement of the battle front on the queenside with the move 14.a3!?. After 14...♞b6 15.♗c2 ♞ad8, Black's temporary activity on the queenside has been terminated and White can continue with his usual active operations in the natural fashion: 16.♞ad1 ♞a6 17.♞fe1 ♖f8 18.♖e5± Renman – Engstrom, Karlskrona 1983.

In answer to the immediate move 12...a5, in the game Kula-

ots – Raud, Tallinn 2005, White could have played 13.a3!?, just like in the previous example.

The maneuver 12...♟a5, involves the idea to trade the dark squared bishops with the help of the move ♗e7-a3. White must prevent that idea immediately with 13.a3!?. There might follow: 13...♟b6 (The move 13...b5?! was convincingly refuted with: 14.♟e5 ♟fc8 15.♟xd7 ♟xd7 16.d5! and here after: 16...bxc4? 17.dxe6 cxd3 18.exd7 ♗d8 19.♟xd3+- in the game Watson – Teske, Porz 1993, Black's position was in ruins outright. It would have been more resilient for him to have defended with: 16...cxd5 17.cxd5 exd5 18.♟h5 ♟f8 19.♟xd5 ♗d8 20.♟e4 ♟d2 21.♗d4!±) 14.♟c2 ♗ac8 15.b4 (Now, the placement of Black's queen on the a5-square only enhances White's queenside initiative.) 15...♟fd8 16.♗c3 ♟f8 17.♟e5± Berni – Wismayer, Genova 2001.

13.♟e2

Whenever Black's bishop is on e7 – the exact placement of White's queen is practically immaterial. It is also possible for him to continue with: 13.♟c2 h6 14.♗ad1 (White can also deploy his rooks on the central files in another move-order: 14.♟fe1 a5 15.a3 a4 16.b4 ♟f4 17.h3 ♟fd8 18.♗ad1± van Gool – Bronsdijk, corr. 1991.) 14...♟fd8 (Opening of the game is harmless for White. After: 14...c5 15.dxc5 ♟xc5, he can maintain

his two bishop advantage with the move 16.♗e2±.) 15.♟fe1± Zwick – Schenderowitsch, Bad Ems 1996.

13...♟fe8

After 13...♟fd8, Volokitin – Burmakin, Alushta 2001, White should have played 14.♗ad1± too.

14.♗ad1

It is also possible for White to play immediately 14.♟e5, but after: 14...c5 15.♗ad1 ♗d6 16.♟xd7 ♟xd7 17.g3 cxd4 18.♗xd4, Stewart – Czeratzki, Polch 1993, Black could have countered that with 18...♗e5 19.♗e3 ♟f6± occupying the a1-h8 diagonal with his bishop and that would have provided him with some counterplay.

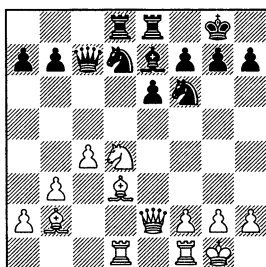
14...♗ad8 15.♟e5

White takes his chances by playing like that. In general, that is hardly necessary. Instead, he could have continued in a patient positional style. See a typical example: 15.♗b1 ♗f8 (Or 15...c5, Holmsten – Raaste, Helsinki 1996, 16.dxc5 ♗xc5 17.a3±; 15...a6, Wahlbom – L.♟arlsson, Motala 1976, 16.h3!?,±, having in mind the transfer of the queen to the e3-square.) 16.h3 g6 17.♟e3 a6 18.♟fe1 ♗g7 19.♟c1 ♟b8 20.♗c3 ♟c7 21.♟a3 ♗f8 22.♟a5 ♟xa5 23.♗xa5 ♟c8 24.♟e5± I.Rogers – Hug, Biel 1993. The queens have been exchanged, but that is in favour of White. Now, he can advance his kingside pawns without being afraid of any effective counterplay by Black.

15...c5 16.♟f3!?

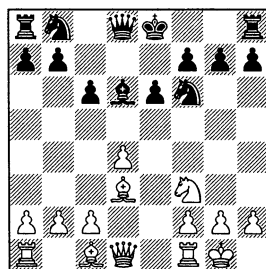
White should possibly try to avoid the trade of the knights. Meanwhile, after: 16.♘xd7 ♘xd7 17.dxc5 (In case of: 17.♙b1 ♕f6= Baumstark – Kellner, Tbilisi 1976, the exchange of the dark squared bishops is almost unavoidable and as a result – complete equality will be reached...) 17...♘xc5 18.♙b1±, he preserves some minimal edge anyway.

16...cxd4 17.♘xd4±



White is still slightly better, due to his couple of bishops.

a2) 9...♙d6



10.c4 ♘bd7

It is the same after: 10...0–0 11. b3 ♘bd7 12.♙b2 – see 10...♘bd7.

11.b3 0–0

Following: 11...♙b8 12.♙b2

0–0 13.♙c2 ♖d8 14.♙e2, opening of the game after: 14...c5 15.♙ad1 cxd4 16.♙xd4 ♙e7 17.♙fd1±, provided White with better chances, because of his two bishop advantage, Riou – Toulzac, Chambéry 1994.

Black's plan, connected with the advance of his a-pawn – 11...a5, can be presently ignored by White 12.♙b2!?. After 12...0–0 (The idea behind White's last move is that after 12...a4, he has the powerful argument 13.d5!↑ and the opening of the position turns out to be in his favour, because of the vulnerability of Black's g7-pawn. Black has also tried in practice: 12...♙c7 13.d5! e5 14.♙e1 0–0, Tischbierek – Morin, New York 1994 and here the line: 15.dxc6!? bxc6 16.♙c2↑ would have maintained a very powerful initiative for White.) he should not allow the further advance of Black's a-pawn, so White must play now the standard move 13.a3. Black has tested in that position: 13...♙c7 14.♙e2 ♖fe8 15. ♖fel ♙f8 16.♙ad1 g6 17.♙b1 ♙g7 18.♘e5 ♘xe5 19.dxe5 ♘d7 20.h4 ♙ad8 21.♙c2 ♙f8 22.h5↑ with some kingside initiative for White in the game Jansa – Voloshin, Ceske Budejovice 1993.

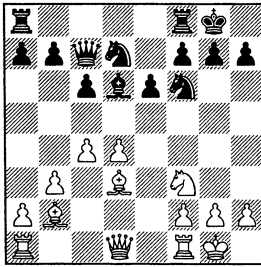
12.♙b2 ♙c7

About 12...a5 13.a3 – see 11... a5.

Or 12...c5 13.♙e2 cxd4 14.♘xd4 ♙b8 15.g3 ♖e8 16.♙ad1 ♙f8 17.♙b1 a6 18.♘f3± E.Berg – Westerinen, Geteborg 1999.

In case of 12...♖a5, White should better prevent the move ♗d6-a3 with 13.a3!?. After: 13...♗h5 14.h3 ♗ad8 15.♗e1 c5, Bailey – McTavish, Toronto 2004, he could have preserved all the advantages of his position with the move 16.♖e2±.

White can act in an analogous fashion in case of: 12...♗e8 13.♖e2 ♖a5, Aller – R.Guillen, Padron 2002, 13.a3!?!±.



13. ♖c2!?

Here, this is the only moment in which you can see the difference between the position of the black bishop on e7 (see variation **a1**) and on the d6-square... In case White plays now analogously to variation **a1** 13.♖e2, then Black can equalize with the help of the line: 13...♗fe8! 14.♘e5 (Or 14.♗ad1 e5! 15.c5 e4 16.cxd6 ♖xd6=; after: 14.♗fe1 ♗b4 15.♗ed1 ♗d6, White should again consider the possibility for Black – e6-e5, while the move 16.♘e5 would not be so helpful, because of: 16...c5!? 17.♘xd7 ♘xd7 18.h3 cxd4 19.♗xd4 ♗e5 20.♗xe5 ♘xe5= Vogelhuber – Baron, Bochum 1990.)

14...c5!? 15.f4 (or 15.♘f3? cxd4±; 15.♘xd7 ♘xd7 16.g3 cxd4 17.♗xd4 ♗e5 18.♗xe5 ♘xe5= Anka – Stiemer, Balatonbereny 1994) 15...cxd4 16.♗xd4 ♗c5 17.♗xc5 ♖xc5+ 18.♘h1 ♗ad8= Czebe – Medic, Balatonbereny 1993.

13...♗fe8

13...e5? Markgraf – Overbeck, Dortmund 1999, 14.c5!+-.

If Black decides to inflict a strike on the other side – 13...c5, then White can, if he so wishes, open the position himself and continue with: 14.dxc5 ♗xc5 (It would not work for Black to play here: 14...♘xc5?, because of: 15.♗xf6 ♘xd3 16.♗xg7+- and he loses a pawn, while after: 14...♖xc5 15.♗fe1 h6 16.a3 a5 17.♗c3 b6, Groeger – Fuchs, corr. 1991, it is quite logical for White to proceed with his queenside offensive with the move 18.b4↑) 15.♗ad1 ♗ac8 16.♖c3 ♗fd8 17.♗b1± Bensch – Cremerius, corr. 1995. White has the bishop pair and he should not mind opening the game.

The inclusion of the prophylactic move 13...h6, after: 14.♗fe1 c5 15.h3 (or 15.♗ad1 cxd4 16.♗xd4 e5 17.♗c3! Sandstroem – Somod, corr. 1997) 15...♗ac8 16.♗ad1±, followed by 17.♖e2 (In fact White must be very careful, prior to his complete centralization of his forces, with the move 16.♘e5?!, because he might thus lose his two bishop advantage: 16...cxd4 17.♘xd7 ♘xd7 18.♗xd4 ♗e5 19.♗xe5 ♘xe5= Green – Heusslein,

corr. 1986) does not change anything essential in the evaluation of the position.

14. ♖fe1 c5

In principle, the decision about the opening of the game is crucial in this situation. In case Black continues maneuvering in his own camp, without trying any active operations, White can also improve patiently his own position. See a couple of examples:

14... ♖f8 15. ♖ad1 g6 16. ♖f1 ♖g7 17. g3 ♖ad8 18. ♖g2 ♖h5 (or 18... a6 19. ♖c3 ♖c8 20. ♖b2 ♖ed8 21. ♖d2 ♖h6 22. ♖de2± Vitolins – O.Larsen, corr. 1991) 19. ♖e2 ♖c8 20. h4 ♖cd8 21. ♖de1 ♖hf6 22. ♖c1 h5 23. ♖h3 ♖f8 24. ♖a1 ♖g4 25. ♖c3 ♖h6 26. ♖b2± Spassky – O’Kelly, San Juan 1969.

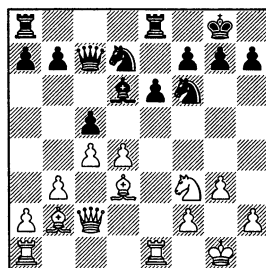
Black would not change anything much with the line: 14... ♖ad8 15. ♖ad1 ♖f8 16. a3 ♖g6 17. g3 a5 18. ♖g2± Helm – Medic, Saint Vincent 2002.

15. g3

This prophylactic is quite necessary. White should not be so eager to open the game here. After: 15. dxc5 ♖xc5!? (or 15... ♖xc5?! 16. a3 a5 17. ♖c3 ♖h5 18. b4↑ Johann – Ceratzki, Germany 2002) 16. ♖xf6 (16. ♖e2 e5! 17. h3 e4 18. ♖d4 e3±) 16... ♖xd3 17. ♖xd3 gxf6 18. ♖d4 ♖e7∞ the position is with mutual chances.

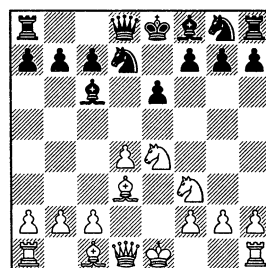
White can try another prophylactic move here – 15. h3. Following: 15... cxd4 16. ♖xd4 a6 17. ♖f3 h6 18. ♖ad1 ♖ad8 19. ♖f1± he pre-

serves the two bishop advantage, Fauth – Gebhardt, corr. 1991.



15... h6 16. a3 a5 17. ♖f1 b6 18. ♖g2 ♖ac8 19. ♖ad1± and once again White is clearly better, due to his powerful bishop pair, Valeriani – Fuchs, corr. 1991.

b) 6... ♖d7



7. 0–0

White does not achieve much with the aggressive line: 7. ♖e2 ♖gf6 8. ♖eg5, in the spirit of line c, which we have analysed in Chapter 3. Black now has the possibility to play 8... ♖e7! (8... h6?! 9. ♖xe6! fxe6 10. ♖g6+ ♖e7 11. 0–0±) 9. 0–0 h6 10. ♖e4 ♖xe4 11. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 12. ♖xe4 c6=, and equalize, Sutovsky – Rustemov, Esbjerg 2001.

After White castles, Black as a rule fights against White's knight on e4 in two different ways – **b1)** 7...♗xe4, or **b2)** 7...♘gf6.

I would like to mention once again that the exchange of Black's bishop for the knight on e4 is quite typical for the variation – 4...♗d7. Strangely enough, the more Black postpones that decision, the more White's possibilities become greater.

In case of 7...♗e7 8. ♖e2, the moment for the exchange 8...♗xe4?! (in case of 8...♘gf6 9. ♘g3 we reach the same position as after 7...♘gf6 – see line **b2)** is not appropriate for Black. After 9. ♖xe4 c6 10. ♖g4 ♗f6 11. ♗f4 ♘e7, Gomboc – Steiner, Ljubljana 1997, White can concentrate his forces on the kingside and that provides him with an overwhelming advantage – 12.c3 0–0 13. ♘g5 ♘g6 14. ♖h5±.

The prophylactic – 7...h6 would not change anything in particular in White's plans. After: 8. ♖e2 ♘gf6 9. ♘g3 (Or 9. ♘xf6+ ♖xf6 10. ♘e5 ♗xe5 11.dxe5 ♖e7∞, followed by 12...0–0–0. Here, White enjoys a space advantage, so he should necessarily avoid exchanges: 9.c4 ♗xe4 10. ♗xe4 ♘xe4 11. ♖xe4 c6 12. ♗f4 ♘f6 13. ♖c2 ♗d6 14. ♗e5 0–0= Poteas – Lila, Athens 1999.) 9...♗e7 10.c4 ♗xf3 11. ♖xf3 c6, Kosc – M. Horvath, Graz 1993, White can patiently develop according to the scheme that we have analyzed in

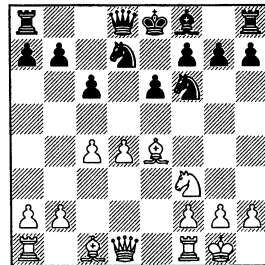
our variation **b2** – 12.b3 0–0 13. ♗b2±.

In case of 7...♘df6, it deserves attention for White to play: 8. ♘g3!?!± (The exchange of two couples of light pieces is quite favourable for Black – 8. ♖e1 ♘xe4 9. ♗xe4 ♗xe4 10. ♖xe4 ♘f6 11. ♗g5 ♗e7 12. ♖e1 c5 13.dxc5 ♗xc5 14. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8= Schweizer – Just, Templin 2004.) preserving on the board as many light pieces as possible.

b1) 7...♗xe4

If Black intended to exchange on e4, he had better do that earlier (see variation **a**).

8. ♗xe4 c6 9.c4 ♘gf6



10. ♗c2!?

As you have already seen, the late exchange on e4 presents White with an additional possibility – to retreat to the c2-square with his bishop. In case of 10. ♗d3, the game transposes to variation **a**. Generally speaking, the bishop is better placed on c2 than on d3. This opinion is doubtlessly confirmed by the tournament practice. Still, things are far from sim-

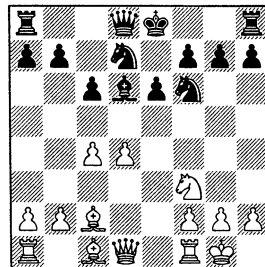
ple, because Black has some additional possibilities too.

10...♔d6

That is Black's most logical scheme of development. He thus prevents the appearance of White's bishop on the f4-square. In case of: 10...♔e7, White can follow with: 11.♔f4!? 0-0 12.♖d3 ♜e8 (After: 12...♗a5 13.♔e5 ♜fd8 14.a3 ♔xe5 15.♔xe5 h6 16.b4 ♗b6 17.a4!, Black's queen is cut off from the rest of his forces and here he loses after: 17...♔xb4, because of: 18.a5! ♗a6 19.♔xf6 gxf6 20. ♜fb1 c5 21.♗h7+ ♔f8 22.dxc5 ♔xc5 23.♔g6! fvg6 24.♜xb7+-, while in case of: 17...a5, Moser – Fanouraki, Verdun 1995, White can continue his queenside offensive with: 18.c5 ♗a7 19.b5±.) 13.♜ad1 ♔f8 (In principle, White should avoid the exchange of the knights, but ...there are some exceptions to the rules, indeed... – 13...g6 14.♜fe1 ♔f8 15.♔e5 ♔h5 16.♔d2 ♔xe5, Gallagher – Orr, London 1988 after: 17.dxe5!? ♗xd3 18.♔xd3 ♔e7 19.g4! ♔g7 20.♔e4± Black's knight ends up miserably placed.) 14.a3!? ♔g6 15.♔g3 ♔d6 16.♔e5 ♗c7 17.♗e2 ♜ad8 18.h4↑ and White had a powerful kingside initiative in the game Gipslis – Djuric, Tallinn 1981.

Black can prevent the appearance of White's bishop on the f4-square with the help of the move 10...♗c7. After that, there might arise positions with opposite sides castling. 11.♜e1 ♔e7 (Following:

11...♔b4 12.♜e2 ♔d6 the attractive move for White 13.d5?! in the game Neelakantan – Girinath, Calcutta 1999, enabled Black with the help of the line: 13...0-0-0! 14.dxc6 ♔e5 15.cxb7+ ♔b8 16.♜d2 ♔xf3+ 17.♗xf3 ♔xh2+ 18.♔h1 ♔e5∞ to force great complications all over the board. Instead, it would have been stronger for White to have played the calmer line: 13.♗d3!? 0-0-0 13.♔d2↑) 12.♗d3 0-0-0 (It is extremely dangerous for Black to evacuate his king to the kingside with 12...0-0?!, because of: 13.♔e5!? ♜ad8 14.♔f4 ♗c8 15.♗h3! c5 16.♔xd7 ♗xd7, D.Pedersen – Lauridsen, Aarhus 1993 and here White could have obtained a decisive advantage with: 17.d5 exd5 18.♔f5 ♗e8 19. ♔e5+-) 13.♔d2↑ Now, White is evidently better prepared to develop his queenside initiative by advancing his b-pawn.



11.♜e1!?

In case White continues analogously to variation a: 11.b3 0-0 12.♔b2 ♗c7 13.♗e2, then Black can exploit the placement of

White's bishop on the c2-square in an amazing fashion – 13...b5!? (Or 13...♗fe8, Lutz – Kelecevic, Biel 1995, 14.♗e5!? ♗f8 15.f4 c5 16.dxc5 ♕xc5+ 17.♖h1± L.Psakhis; 13...c5 14.dxc5 ♕xc5 15.a3 a5 16.♗ad1 ♗fd8 17.♗d4 ♗f8 18.♗b5 ♗e7 19.g3± Gallagher – Kelecevic, Switzerland 1993.) and Black obtains some counterplay on the queenside. After: 14.c5 (In case White ignores Black's queenside actions altogether with: 14.♖d3 bxc4 15.bxc4 c5 16.♗fe1 cxd4 17.♗xd4 ♗fc8±, then as a result his pawn-structure becomes too far from being ideal...) 14...♕e7 15.♗g5 ♗ae8 16.f4 h6 17.♗f3 ♗d5 18.g3 ♕f6 19.♕d3 g6 20.a3 ♕g7 21. ♗ae1 f5± and White still has some pressure indeed, but the position has become closed and that is definitely not the dream of the side, which boasts about having the bishop pair, Rosito – Tempone, Mar del Plata 1992.

11... 0–0 12.♖d3

White's intentions to attack Black's kingside are right on the agenda. That is what he had in mind (to build the attacking battery ♕c2+♖d3) when he had retreated his bishop to the c2-square on his move ten.

12...♗c7

Black can fortify his kingside even more with the help of the line: 12...♗e8 13.♕g5 ♗f8, but after: 14.♗ad1 ♕e7 15.♕f4 ♗a5 16.a3 ♗ad8, Madsen – Korning, corr. 1985, 17.b4!? ♗h5 18.♗e5

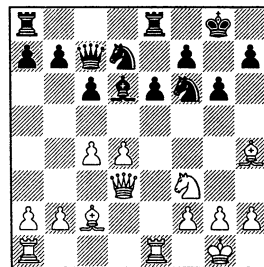
♗g4 19.♕g3↑ his queen would be endangered.

13.♕g5 ♗fe8

In case of: 13...♕f4 14.♕h4 ♗fe8 15.♗ad1 ♗ac8 16.♖c3 a6 17.♗e5± Black's bishop turns out to be isolated from the rest of his forces. In the game Psakhis – Skembris, Belgrade 1988, there followed: 17...♗xe5? 18.dxe5 ♗d7 19.♖d4+– and Black could have already resigned right on the spot..

After 13...g6, Skjoldager – Rasmussen, Copenhagen 1995, it is possible for White to follow with 14.♖c3!?!↑, creating the unpleasant threat of the pawn-break – d4-d5.

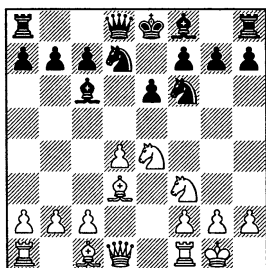
14.♕h4 g6



15.♖c3!↑ – and here once again White is threatening to break in the centre with d4-d5, I.Miladinovic – Radulovic, Obrenovac 2005. Black tried to defend against that with 15...b5, but after 16.♕xf6 b4 (In case of: 16...♗xf6 17.d5 ♗g4 18.h3 b4 19.♖d4 ♗h2 20.♗g5± Black's knight might end up trapped in White's camp...) 17.♖d2 ♗xf6 18.c5 ♕f8 19.♖xb4 ♗ab8

20. ♖a3± he remained a pawn down.

b2) 7... ♖g6



8. ♖g3

The exchanges of the light pieces are clearly favourable for Black. The retreat of White's knight to the g3-square leads as a rule to calmer positions, in which he is trying to exploit his space advantage.

The game becomes much more dynamic after the other knight-move – 8. ♖eg5 ♗d6 (or 8...h6 9. ♖xe6 fxe6 10. ♗g6+ ♖e7 11.c4→; 8...♗e7 9. ♖xf7 ♖xf7 10. ♖g5+ ♖g8 11. ♖xe6≙) 9. ♗e1 h6 (9...0-0?! 10. ♖e5±) 10. ♖h3 (10. ♗xe6+? ♖f8! ♖) ♗xf3 (9...0-0?! 10. ♖e5±) 11. ♗xf3 c6 12. ♖f4 ♗a5 (12...0-0 13. ♖h5†) 13.c3 0-0-0∞.

8... ♗e7

After 8...h5?!, the best way for White to emphasize the drawbacks of Black's last move is the line: 9. ♗g5! ♖b6 10. ♗e1 h4 11. ♖xh4 ♗d5 12. ♗e5 ♗d7, Radulski – Ovezov, Bled 2002, 13.c3±.

Black has no time to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop. After

8...g6 9.c4 ♗g7, White can follow with the powerful: 10.d5! exd5 11. ♗e1+ ♖f8 12. ♖d4 ♖c5 13. ♖xc6 bxc6 14. ♗e2≙ Makropoulou – Puska, Calvia 2004, and White had an excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

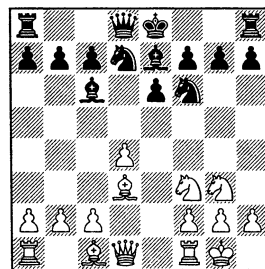
In case Black takes care about the future of his other bishop i.e. 8...b6, Makropoulou – Bashkite, Dresden 2004, then White's plan 9. ♗e2!?, which we have seen in variation **b2a**, is even more effective, for example: 9...♗e7 10. ♖e5 ♖xe5 (After: 10...♗b7 11. ♗b5 0-0 12. ♖c6± Black will be forced to part with one of his valuable bishops.) 11.dxe5 ♗d5 12.f4↑.

In case of 8...♗d6, it is very strong for White to play 9. ♗e1!, after which his knight-escapades to the e5, or f5-squares are even more powerful. For example: 9...0-0 (9...♗xg3 10.hxg3 ♗xf3 11. ♗xf3 c6 12.c4 0-0 13. ♗d2 ♗e8 14.g4± Makropoulou – Giadzi, Komotini 1993; 9...♗xf3 10. ♗xf3 c6 11. ♖f5 ♗f8 12. ♗g3 ♗a5 13. ♗e2! 0-0-0 14. ♖d6+ ♗xd6 15. ♗xd6 ♖f8 16. ♗g3± Hase – Bianchi, Olavarria 2003; 9...♖g4 10. ♖f5! ♖f8 11. ♖xd6 cxd6 12. ♖g5 ♖gf6 13. ♗f4± Vaculik – Petras, Czech Republic 1998; in answer to 9... ♗e7 10.c4 0-0, the other knight-manoeuvre becomes very effective: 11. ♖e5! ♖xe5 12.dxe5 ♖d7 13. ♗h5 f5 14.exf6 ♖xf6 15. ♗e2± Knezevic – Jacimovic, Cetinje 1992; while if Black plays 9...b6, then White can employ both his

knights with: 10. ♖e5 ♗b7 11. ♖f5 0–0 12. ♖xd6 cxd6, Hebden – Arkell, Hastings 1995, 13. ♖c4 ♖c7 14. ♗f4 ♖c6 15. ♗f1±, maintaining a clear advantage.) 10. ♖e5 ♖b8 (after 10... ♖d5, Moberg – Dedorson, Sweden 1993, 11. ♖xc6 bxc6 12. ♖e4±, or 10... ♖e8, Paal – Csema, Infotozsde 2001, 11. ♖xc6 bxc6 12. ♖e4±, Black's queenside is seriously weakened, while in case of 10... ♗xe5 11. dxe5 ♖d5 12. ♖h5 f5 13. exf6 ♖5xf6 14. ♖g5 h6 15. ♖e3± Trabert – Skembris, Lido Estensi 2002, White has a clear edge, because of his bishop pair and the weakness of Black's e6-pawn.) 11. ♗g5 ♗e7 12. c4 h6 13. ♗f4 ♖fd7, Kleinschmidt – Seidel, Giessen 1992, White here could have played: 14. d5! exd5 15. ♖xc6 bxc6 (15... ♖xc6 16. cxd5 ♖b4 17. ♗xc7! ♖xc7 18. ♖xe7+-) 16. cxd5 cxd5 17. ♖f5! (it is also possible for White to follow with: 17. ♗xc7 ♖xc7 18. ♖xe7±) 17... ♗g5 18. ♖f3 c6 19. ♗d6 ♖e8 20. ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 21. ♖g3→, and obtain an overwhelming kingside attack.

The exchange 8... ♗xf3 9. ♖xf3, presents in fact White with an extra tempo in comparison to the main line. It can be used in a different fashion. For example like that: 9...c6 (Black's counterplay in the centre – 9...c5?! would not work, because of: 10. ♖xb7 cxd4, Ecsedi – Karkus, Hungary 2003 and here after: 11. ♖e4 ♗e7 12. ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 13. ♗b5± Black is deprived of his castling rights.)

10. ♖e1 ♗e7 (10...g6? 11. ♗g5! h6 12. ♖xe6+! fxe6 13. ♗xg6+ ♖e7 14. ♖f5+ exf5 15. ♖e1+- Castellanos – Camarena Gimenez, Cullera 2004.) 11. ♗d2 0–0 12. c4 ♖e8 13. ♗c3 ♗f8 (13... ♖f8 14. h4 ♖c7 15. ♖e3 ♖ad8 16. ♖ae1 ♖d7 17. ♖e2± Al Modiahki – Aung Aung, Yangoon 1999; 13... ♖c7 14. ♖e3 ♖ad8 15. ♖ae1± Vozovic – Rozic, Balatonlelle 2002.) 14. h4 (in the game Nunn – Lobron, Novi Sad 1990, White preferred to concentrate his forces on the queenside: 14. b4 g6 15. a4 ♗g7 16. ♖e2 ♖c7 17. ♖ae1 ♖ad8 18. h3±) 14...g6 15. h5 ♗g7 16. ♖e2 ♖f8 17. ♖ae1±, and White kept on some pressure against Black's kingside in the game Brunner – Rubinetti, Buenos Aires 1992.



9. ♖e2

If you have in mind that Black can always exchange his bishop for his opponent's knight on f3, then here White players try quite often to save a tempo for a queen-move and they play instead 9. ♖e1. The point is however, that his threat to establish a knight on the e5-outpost is not so effective

anymore: 9...0-0 10.♖e5 ♖xe5 11.dxe5 ♗d5=.

Therefore, it is trickier to play with the same idea the move 9.c4, but things are not so simple here either...After: 9...0-0 10.b3 (Black has no problems in case of: 10.♖e5 ♖xe5 11.dxe5 ♖d7 12.♗h5 g6 13.♗e2 ♖xe5! 14.♗xe5 ♗xd3 15.♙h6 f6 16.♗xe6+ ♜f7 17.♜fd1 ♗c2 18.♞d2 ♗a4 19.b3 ♗a5 20.♞ad1 ♙d6!= Kovalev – Chernin, Debrecen 1992.) 10...♙xf3!?) (Black's position following: 10...b6 11.♙b2 ♙b7 12.♗e2 c5 13.♞ad1 is quite suspicious and he loses almost by force after: 13...♞e8? 14.dxc5 bxc5 15.♖e5 g6 16.♙e4! ♗c7 17.♖xd7 ♖xd7 18.♞xd7 ♗xd7 19.♞d1 ♗c7 20.♙xb7 ♗xb7 21.♗e5 f6 22.♗xe6+ ♔f8 23.♙c1 g5 24.♙xg5 fxg5, Fontaine – Buljovic, Subotica 2001, 25.♖f5!+-, while the variation: 13...♗c7?! 14.d5! exd5 15.♗xe7 ♞ae8 16.♙e5! ♗xe5 17.♗xf8+ ♔xf8 18.♖xe5 ♖xe5 19.♜fe1 ♙a6 20.♙f1± leads to the loss of the exchange for Black, Scarani – Jimenez Artega, corr. 2001. His relatively best defence is: 13...cxd4 14.♖xd4 ♙c5 15.♖e4 ♗c7, Twitchell – Doye, corr. 1995, 16.♖xc5 ♖xc5 17.♙b1↑, but White maintains his initiative thanks to his bishop pair.) After 11.♗xf3, Black can try to complicate matters with: 11...c5! (or 11...c6 12.♙b2↑) 12.♗xb7 (In case of: 12.♙b2 cxd4 13.♙xd4, White's bishops turn out to be quite unstable: 13...♖c5 14.♞ad1

♖xd3 15.♞xd3 ♗c7 16.♖h5 ♖xh5 17.♗xh5 ♗f4= Czebe – Lehmann, Budapest 1993.) 12...cxd4 13.♙b2 ♖c5 14.♗f3∞ Loskutov – Rustemov, St Petersburg 1997 and the game becomes very sharp.

Now, Black has two main possibilities: **b2a) 9...0-0** and **b2b) 9...♙xf3**.

9...a6?! 10.♞e1 ♗c8 11.♖e5 ♖xe5 12.dxe5 ♖d7 13.c3 b5, Gaponenko – Gervais, Duisburg 1992, 14.♗g4!? g6 15.♙h6±.

Black's demise can be even more spectacular after: 9...b6?! 10.♞d1 (It is also possible for White to follow with: 10.♖e5 ♙b7 11.♙b5 0-0, Flaherty – Champion, corr. 2001, 12.♖c6±) 10...0-0 11.♖e5 ♙b7 12.c4 ♞e8 13.♙g5 h6 14.♙f4 ♗c8 15.♖h5 ♜f8, Csapo – Berta, Hungary 1994, 16.♖g4! Δ♖xh5 17.♖xh6+ gxh6 18.♗xh5→ and White's attack is decisive.

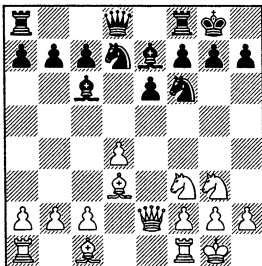
The move 9...♖d5?, with the idea to play next ♖b4 is an obvious mistake. White refutes that idea with the move 10.a3, after which it becomes evident that Black has lost valuable time in vain. 10...h6 11.c4 ♖5f6 12.b4 b6 13.♖e5 ♖xe5 14.dxe5 ♖d7 15.♙c2 ♙b7 16.♞d1 0-0, Maur – Abromeit, corr. 2000, 17.♗d3+-.

It is hardly any better for Black to try 9...♖b6?!. White only needs to protect his d4-pawn with the move 10.c3, in order to follow that with coming with his knight to the powerful e5-outpost and later his initiative develops just

effortlessly: 10...h6 11. ♖e5 ♗d5 12. ♖xc6 bxc6 (or 12...♗xc6?? 13. ♗b5+- E.Fernandez – Musso, Uruguay 1987) 13. ♗d1±.

Black's attempt to attack on the kingside with the move 9...h5?! is evidently not well prepared. After: 10. ♗e1 h4 11. ♖e4!? (Irrelevant of Black's adventurous play, White must react accurately: 11. ♖f1 h3 12.g3 ♖b6 13. ♖1d2 ♗d5 14.c4 ♗h5 15. ♖e5 ♗xe2 16. ♗xe2 ♗g2= Totic – Suljovic, Golubac 2003.) 11...♖xe4 12. ♗xe4 ♗xe4 13. ♗xe4 c6, Black has achieved what he was hoping for – he has exchanged two couples of light pieces. Here however, he has problems with the defence of his h-pawn. As a result of: 14.c4 ♖f6 15. ♗c2 h3 16.g3 ♗h5 17. ♗g5 ♗d7 18. ♗ad1 ♗d8 (18...0-0 19.d5→) 19. ♖e5 ♗c8 20.f4± he failed to solve them in the game Barle – Ilievski, Zagreb 1977.

b2a) 9...0-0



10. ♖e5!

White's knight is headed towards the centre. Now, after its exchange, White's d4-pawn will

go to the e5-square and it will cramp Black's kingside considerably.

10...♖xe5

After 10...♖b8? 11.c3 b6 12. ♖xc6 ♖xc6, Pons Morro – Font, Mallorca 2000, White can continue his offensive with: 13. ♖h5! ♖xh5 14. ♗xh5 g6 15. ♗f3 ♖a5 16.b4+-.

11.dxe5 ♗d5

In case of 11...♖d7 12. ♗d1 (It is useless for White to waste time on prophylactics with 12. ♖h1, because Black can sacrifice a pawn with: 12...♗e8!? 13.c3 ♗d8 14.f4 f5! 15.exf6 ♖xf6 16. ♗xe6+ ♖h8 17. ♗c4 b5 18. ♗b3 ♗c5= and he seizes the initiative, Karjakin – Anastasian, Warsaw 2005.) 12...♗c8 13.c4 a5 14. ♗c2 a4 15. ♗f4 ♗d8 16.h4 (White can establish a solid positional bind on the kingside in another fashion: 16. ♖e4 ♗a5 17. ♗d2 ♗a8 18. ♖g5 g6 19.h4 b6 20.h5↑ Kovacs – Merlini, corr. 1998.) 16...♖f8 17.h5 ♗xd1+ 18. ♗xd1 ♗e8 19.h6 g6 20. ♖e4±, Black's pieces had no available space whatsoever in the game Bashkov – Bus, Polanica Zdroj 1995.

12.f4

The passive move: 12.f3, after 12...♖d7 13.f4 ♖c5 14. ♗c4 ♗d4+ 15. ♖h1 ♖e4 16. ♖xe4 ♗xe4=, enabled Black to simplify the position, J.Fernandes – Cardoso, Brazil 1999.

12...♖g4

In case of 12...♖d7, White

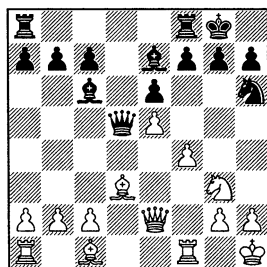
can follow with: 13.♞d1! (In case White is only a bit slow with: 13... ♘c5 14.♙c4 ♚d4+ 15.♙h1 ♘e4 16.♘xe4 ♚xe4= Marciniaak – Lebraud, Condom 2003 he may lose his advantage altogether. Instead, he can try: 13.c3! ♘c5 14.♙c4! ♚d7 15.f5↑ Kobalia – Rustemov, Ekaterinburg 2002) 13... ♚a5 (after 13... ♚c5+, White has 14.♙e3±, and the combination: 14... ♚xe3+?! 15.♚xe3 ♙c5, does not work for Black, because of: 16.♙xh7+! ♙xh7 17.♞d4+–, while after 13... ♚d4+ 14.♙h1 ♚b6 15.c3 a5 16.f5↑, White has the initiative according to the analysis of GM M.Adams.) 14.c3, and White is clearly better. There might follow: 14... ♙a4 (14... ♚b6+ 15.♙h1 a5 16.f5↑, Adams) 15.♞e1! (It is worse for White to play 15.b3, because of 15... ♙xb3 16.♙xh7+ ♙xh7 17.♞xd7 ♙d5!∞) 15... ♞fd8 16.♙h1 ♘f8 (after 16... ♚b6 17.b3 ♙c6 18.b4±, White can gain a lot of space on the queenside too.) 17.♙e3 c5 18.♙e4 ♚c7 (18... ♙c6 19.♙xc6 bxc6 20.f5± Adams) 19.f5 ♙h4 (19... ♙c6 20.♙xc6 bxc6 21.♚g4± Adams – Korchnoi, Eng-hien les Bains 2003; In case Black accepts the pawn-sacrifice with: 19... ♚xe5, then after 20.♚g4! ♚c7 21.♙h6 g6 22.fxg6 hxg6 23.♙xf8 ♙xf8 24.♙xg6 fxg6 25.♚xa4±, he is in big trouble – Adams) 20.♚g4 ♙xg3 21.f6! (This intermediate move with the f-pawn is essential, because after 21.hxg3?! exf5 22.♙xf5 ♙d7♞, White might become even worse.) 21... ♘g6 (21...

g6 22.♚xg3+–) 22.♙xg6 fxg6 (22... hxg6 23.hxg3 ♙c6 24.♙g5 ♞d3 25.♚h4+–) 23.hxg3 ♙d7 (23... ♙c6 24.♚xe6+ ♚f7 25.♚xf7+ ♙xf7 26.♞f1±) 24.♙g5±, and here according to GM Adams's analysis, White has a powerful initiative on the dark squares.

13.♙h1!

White does not wish to waste time for the move h2-h3, while after 13.♘e4 ♚d4+ 14.♙h1 ♞ad8∞, the position is with mutual chances.

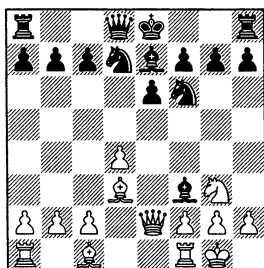
13...♘h6



14.♙e3! (It is weaker for White to play 14.♞d1 ♚a5 15.f5, because of 15... ♘xf5 16.♙xf5 exf5 17.♘xf5 ♞fe8 18.♙d2 ♚a4 19.c4 ♙d7∞, Adams, while after: 14.♙d2 ♞ad8 15.♙c3 a6 16.♞ad1, Berndt – Bonacic, Germany 1990, Black can play: 16... ♙b5!? 17.♙xh7+ ♙xh7 18.♞xd5 ♙xe2 19.♞xd8 ♞xd8 20.♘xe2 ♘f5∞, and obtain excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn; 14.c4!? ♚d7 15.♞d1↑ Psakhis) 14... ♙h4 (It is worse for Black to play 14... g6, because after 15.♘e4 ♘f5 16.♙c5 ♙g7 17.♙xe7 ♘xe7 18.♘f6±, Adams, White oc-

cupies the dark squares around Black's king.) 15.♙e4±. White's chances are clearly better, because of his actively placed pieces and his space advantage.

b2b) 9...♙xf3



Black annihilates White's knight on f3 in due time, having in mind the problems it is capable of creating for him.

10.♞xf3 c6

The move 10...♞c8?, with the idea to prepare c7-c5, is a mistake for Black. After: 11.♞e1 c5 12.d5 ♟xd5 13.♟f5 ♙f8, Al.Karpov – Peric, Kecskemet 1992, White could have settled the issue immediately with the move 14.♞xe6!+-.

11.b3!?

It now becomes essential for White to utilize effectively his bishop pair. This is decisive for the outcome of the opening battle.

White plans now to develop his queenside according to the scheme – b3, ♙b2 and c4. It is not worth for him to transpose moves in that scheme. After: 11.c4 0-0

12.b3, he might face the counterstrike 12...c5!∞ and we reach a position that we have already mentioned in our notes to White's move nine (see 9.c4).

11...0-0

Black often tries to exploit the placement of White's knight on g3 in order to organize some kingside attack. This plan cannot equalize for him, however: 11...h5 12.♞d1 h4 13.♟e2 ♞a5 (or 13...h3 14.g3±) 14.c4 ♞h5 15.♞xh5 ♟xh5 16.♙e3± and White maintains his edge thanks to his couple of powerful bishops, Tseshkovsky – G.Akopian, Erevan 1977.

Black has also tried the same idea in another version – 11...♞c7 12.c4 h5, De Souza – Vasconcellos, Sao Bernardo 1968. Now, if you have in mind that Black can evacuate his king to the queenside, it seems logical for White to follow with 13.♙d2!?. (He can now attack with his b-pawn in case Black castles long...) and if 13...h4 14.♟e2 e5, then 15.♙f5↑ and White maintains the initiative.

In case of 11...♞a5, as in variation a, White can play the prophylactic move 12.a3! (or 12.♙b2 ♙a3! 13.♙xa3 ♞xa3 14.♞fe1 0-0 15.♟e4 ♞fd8= Prieur – Tolonen, Finland 2002) 12...0-0 (It is too risky for Black to try 12...♞c3?!, because of 13.♙e3± and his queen is seriously endangered. The careless move – 13...♟d5? 14.b4! a5 15.♟e4+- led to the loss of the black queen in

the game Nisipeanu – Agistriotis, Athens 2004) 13.♔b2±.

12.♔b2

The transposition of moves – 12.c4, Ostrowski – D.Mueller, Leverkusen 2001, enables Black to counterstrike – 12...c5! 13.♚xb7 cxd4↗.

12...♞e8

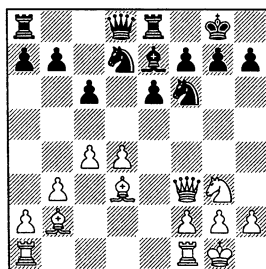
If Black plays 12...a5, with the idea to occupy some additional space on the queenside by advancing his a-pawn, White should better respond again with the prophylactic move 13.a3!?. Later, after he completes the centralization of his forces, he can exert some pressure against Black's defence on the kingside. See a typical example; 13...♚c7 14.c4 ♜fd8 15.♞fe1 ♘f8 16.h4 ♞d7 (Or 16...♘g6 17.h5 ♘h4 18.♚e3 h6 19.♞ad1± and Black fails to create any counterplay, because in case of 19...♔d6, White has the powerful argument 20.d5↑) 17.♞ac1 ♞ad8 18.♔b1 ♚b6 19.♞e2 ♘e8 20.h5 h6 21.♘e4 ♘f6 22.d5↑ Yandemirov – Lyrberg, Minsk 1994.

Black often tries here 12...♚c7, but that should not change White's plans at all. Following: 13.c4 (It is worth mentioning here that White should not postpone for long the advance of his c-pawn, because of Black's possible counterplay on the queenside: 13.♞fe1 ♞fe8 14.♞ad1 b5!? 15.♘e4 b4 16.♔c1 ♘d5 17.♘g5 ♔xg5 18.♔xg5 ♘f8 19.♔d2 ♘g6↗ Stjashkina – Polovnikova, St Pe-

tersburg 2000.) 13...♞fe8 (After: 13...♞ad8 14.♞fe1 ♞fe8 15.♞ad1 ♘f8 16.h4 ♘g6 17.h5 ♘h4 18.♚e3 h6, Smagacz – Kawecki, Polanica Zdroj 1999, White had everything well-prepared for the breakthrough in the centre – 19.d5! cxd5 20.♔xf6 ♔xf6 21.cxd5 ♚a5 22.♔c4↑) 14.♞fe1 ♔d6 15.♞ad1± and he had a powerful initiative thanks to his mighty bishop pair (After 15.♔c2 b5!? 16.c5 ♔f8∞ Lar-duet – Ramas, Cuba 1993, White presented Black with the control over the important d5-outpost).

13.c4

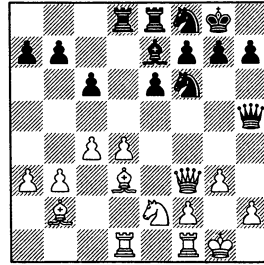
White should always have in mind here an important tactical nuance. After: 13.♞ad1 ♚a5 14.a3 (in order to prevent the appearance of Black's bishop on the a3-square...) 14...♞ad8 15.♞fe1, Richter – Bosse, Bad Zwosten 2001, Black suddenly has the resource – 15...♔xa3! and if 16.♞a1, then 16...♚xe1+ 17.♞xe1 ♔xb2∞ and Black obtains an excellent compensation for the queen.



13...♘f8

Black's plan connected with the trade of the dark squared bish-

ops – 13...a5, can be neutralized by White with the standard reaction: 14.a3! c7 15.fe1 f8 16.f1 ad8 17.ad1 b6 18.e3 g6 19.g3 d7 20.e4± Evans – Segal, Sao Paulo 1978 and he is already threatening the pawn-break 21.d5!



After: 13...a5 14.a3!? b6 15.ad1 ad8 16.c2 f8, D.Losev – Novichkov, Moscow 1998, White can begin breaking Black’s defensive fortress on the kingside with the help of the move 17.h4!?!↑.

14.ad1 c7

The adventurous expedition of Black’s queen after: 14...a5 15.a3!? g6 16.b4 g5 17.fe1± can cause problems only for the queen itself...

15.e2

It is also possible for White here to follow with 15.h4 and if 15...g6, then 16.h5 f4 17.c2↑ (Finkel) and he is already threatening – 18.c1.

15...ad8 16.g3 a5 17.a3 h5

(diagram)

18.xh5!?! Now, White must comply with the exchange

of queens. (After: 18.g2 g6 19.fe1, Nguyen Anh Dung – Aung Aung, Bangkok 2004 and 19...e5! 20.dxe5 xe5 21.xe5 21...xe5 22.b4 a5± (Finkel) Black deprives his opponent of his two bishop advantage and he has a serious counterplay. White cannot keep his bishop pair, with the move 21.f4?, because he would even lose the game after: 21...f3+ 22.h1 xe1-+) 18...xh5 19.g4 f6 20.h3 g6 21.f4±. Now, despite the exchange of queens, White maintains some advantage due to his couple of bishops. We have already mentioned in our notes to variation a, that the trade of queens is often in favour of White too, since he can advance his kingside pawns much more safely then.

Conclusion

We have analyzed in this chapter a variation in which Black solves the problem with the development of his light squared bishop in the most radical fashion. It comes immediately to the long a8-h1 diagonal. Black’s plan is rather simple and it is well-founded strategically; nevertheless it has a certain liability. The bishop on the c6-square precludes Black from accomplishing the thematic pawn-counterstrike in the centre – c7-c5. In case there remain plenty of light pieces

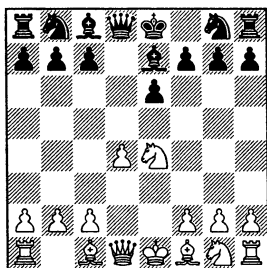
on the board, Black might end up squeezed in his own camp, because White has an abundant space advantage. This can be well-illustrated for example in variation b2a. It is exactly in order to utilize his extra space that White often retreats his knight on e4 away from the centre. Black typically exchanges his light squared bishop for a white knight in this variation to reduce the effect of White's extra space. Accordingly, White tries to exploit maximally his two bishop advantage in that case. His task includes:

- 1) to avoid the exchange of his bishops;*
- 2) to place them if possible on adjacent diagonals;*
- 3) to avoid the trade of his knight too, unless that leads to some particular advantage...*

As a rule, White's main attacking field is Black's kingside. His main strategic idea in this variation is to combine the pressure against Black's king shelter with the effective preparation of the central pawn-break d4-d5.

Chapter 6

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4
♙e7



Black prepares the move ♘f6. Meanwhile, Black is practically forced to postpone the pawn-break c7-c5 for several moves; otherwise ♙f8-e7xc5 will turn out to be just a loss of time. If c7-c5 is a part of Black's immediate plans, he should better prepare the development of his knight on f6 with 4...♘d7 (Chapter 8).

5.♘f3

This is the most natural move for White and he is going to play it at some moment anyway.

5...♘f6

Black's urgent task is to complete the mobilization of his king-side and he is going to deal with his main problem only later – the development of the light squared bishop.

About 5...b6?! 6.♗e5! – see 4...b6 (variation **c**, Chapter 3); as for 5...♙d7 6.♙d3 – see 4...♙d7 (Chapter 5); 5...♘c6 6.c3 – see 4...♘c6 (variation **b2**, Chapter 3).

After 5...♘d7 6.♙d3 b6 (6...f5? 7.♘eg5 ♙xg5 8.♙xg5 ♘gf6 9.0-0 0-0 10.♙e1 ♘b6 11.c4 c6 12.♙e2 ♙d7 13.h3 ♙e8 14.♘e5+ – Biancalana – Pasquelli, Italy 1990; about 6...♘gf6 7.♙e2 see line **b**) it is very good for White to follow with 7.♙b5! (It is not sufficient for White to play 7.♘e5, because of 7...♘xe5 8.dxe5 ♙d5 9.♙f4 ♙b7 10.0-0 g5!±, while after 7.♙e2 ♙b7 8.♙f4 ♘gf6 9.0-0-0 0-0 10.♘b1, Black can play 10...♘xe4 11.♙xe4 ♙xe4 12.♙xe4 ♘f6 13.♙c6 ♘d5 14.♙g3, Alonso – Artal, Aragon 1998, and here it is very strong for Black to play 14...b5!±, since White does not have 15.♙xb5?±, because of 15...♘c3+! 16.bxc3 ♙b8+)) and probably Black is already beyond salvation. For example, after 7...♘gf6 (in case of 7...♙b7, White has 8.♘e5 ♙xe4 9.♙xd7+ ♘f8 10.♙h5 g6 11.♙h6+ ♘xh6 12.♙xh6+ ♘g8 13.♙f4 ♙f5 14.g4 g5 15.♙f3 ♙g6

Chapter 6

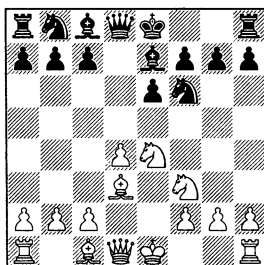
16.0-0-0! ♖d6, Van Beek – Sinke, Vlissingen 2000, and here White can continue the attack against Black's king with: 17.♙c6!? ♖b8 18.h4→) with the help of 8.♘e5! ♘xe4 9.♚f3 f5 (Black is not out of the woods after: 9...0-0 10.♚xe4 ♖b8 11.♘c6 ♖b7 12.c3±.) 10.♘c6 (It is not so clear if White follows with: 10.♚h5+?! g6 11.♘xg6 ♘ef6, Ries – Camilleri, Bad Woerishofen 2001, because then even after the strongest move 12.♚h3, Black plays 12...hxg6 13.♚xh8+ ♜f7∞, and his position remains quite defensible.) 10...♖b4+ (otherwise Black loses his queen) 11.♘xb4±, and White obtains an overwhelming advantage thanks to his bishop pair.

The move 5...h6 has been played in numerous games and it is not only a loss of valuable time, but it also compromises Black's kingside. The game might continue: 6.♖d3 ♘f6 (It is more or less the same after: 6...♘d7 7.♚e2 ♘g6 8.♖d2.) 7.♚e2 ♘bd7 (In case of: 7...0-0, Reimer – Thiele, corr. 1990, White can exploit the drawbacks of the move h7-h6, with the help of the standard maneuver 8.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 9.♚e4→; in case of 7...b6, Gruskovnjak – Bizjak, Kranj 2005, it seems logical for White to follow with: 8.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 9.♖e4 c6 10.♖f4 ♖b7 11.0-0-0→ preparing his kingside attack; if 7...a6, Kreideweiss – Thiele, corr. 1990, then White can proceed with his standard plan –

8.♖d2↑, followed by castling long.) 8.♖d2 (Now, White intends to castle long in order to exploit with maximal efficiency the weakening of Black's kingside caused by the move h7-h6.) 8...c6 (In case Black castles short – 8...0-0, Drtina – Dobrotka, Slovakia 2001, then after 9.0-0-0→ White's kingside attack will be extremely powerful. You can see a typical example in the following fragment of a game: 8...♘xe4 9.♖xe4 ♘f6 10.♖d3 c6 11.0-0-0 0-0 12.g4 a5 13.♖hg1→ Schwarz – Dobrotka, Slovakia 2003. It is however hardly advisable for Black to leave his king in the centre either: 8...c5 9.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 10.d5! ♘f8 11.dxe6 ♘xe6 12.0-0-0→, as it happened in the game Z.Szabo – Kincs, Kaposvar 2000.) 9.0-0-0 ♚c7 10.g4 ♘xe4 11.♖xe4 b6 12.h4 ♖b7 13.g5 0-0-0 14.g6↑ and despite the fact that Black managed to evacuate his king to the queenside, White's initiative was very dangerous, Hermelin – Lampen, Tampere 1994.

6.♖d3

The preliminary exchange – 6.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 7.♖d3 is imprecise, because of: 7...c5!? 8.dxc5 ♘d7=.



In this position – Black as a rule chooses either **a) 6...♖xe4** or **b) 6...♗bd7**.

Black's other possibilities are either weaker, or they transpose to some lines that we have already analyzed.

About 6...h6 7. ♖e2 – see 5...h6; 6...♗c6 7.c3 – see variation **b2**, Chapter 3; 6...♙d7 7. ♗e5!? – see Chapter 5.

In case of 6...b6, White's immediate task is to play: 7. ♗xf6+ ♙xf6 8. ♙e4 c6 and to close the long light squares diagonal, which Black intended to deploy his bishop on. The rest is a matter of choice. White's most energetic plan seems to include castling long, because his bishops are placed just perfectly, pointed at Black's kingside – 9. ♙f4!? (After the calmer line: 9.0–0 ♙b7 10. ♖e2 ♗d7 11. ♙f4 0–0 12. ♖ad1 ♙e7 13.c4 ♗f6 14. ♙c2 ♖c8 15. ♖fe1 ♖e8 16. ♙e5 ♗d7 17. ♖e4 ♗f8 18. ♖g4↑ Kasparov – Pereiro, Cordoba (simultan) 1992, White still preserves good chances to develop a dangerous kingside initiative.) 9...♙b7 10. ♗e5 0–0 (The move 10...♙xe5 – is something like a positional capitulation for Black. It is good for White to capture with the bishop and also to try: 11.dxe5 ♖xd1+ 12. ♖xd1 ♗d7 13. ♖d6 ♖c8 14. ♙f3± Wiegel – W.Keller, Roethenbach 1996.) 11. ♖d3 g6 (or 11...h6, Homoki – Ferenczi, Hungary 1998, 12.0–0–0→) 12.h4 ♙xe5 13. ♙xe5 f5 14. ♙f3 ♗d7 15. ♙f4 ♖f6

16.0–0–0→ Preissmann – von Allmen, Switzerland 1997.

Black's attempt to undermine White's centre with the move 6...c5 is obviously premature, because as a result of: 7. ♗xc5 ♙xc5 8.dxc5 ♖a5+ 9.c3 ♖xc5 10.0–0 0–0, Przytycki – Bukowski, Augustow 1997 (or 10...♗bd7 11. ♙f4 0–0 12. ♙d6!+– Calzetta Ruiz – Ruiz Escobar, Pamplona 2001) 11. ♙f4!? ♗d5 (Black cannot play here 11...b6?, due to 12. ♙d6!+–) 12. ♙g3↑ White is not only considerably ahead in development, but he has the two bishop advantage as well.

In case of 6...0–0 7. ♖e2!? c5 (The careless move 7...a6, Lakos – Ignacz, Budapest 2005, provides White with a free-running attack against the black king after: 8. ♗xf6!? ♙xf6 9. ♖e4 g6 10. ♙h6 ♖e8 11.0–0–0 ♖d5 12. ♖f4 ♗d7 13. ♗b1→; about 7...♗bd7 8. ♙g5 – see line **b**, 7...♗c6 8.c3 – see Chapter 3, line **b**) 8.dxc5 ♙xc5, Manthey – Herfurth, Leipzig 1995, White could have continued with: 9. ♗xc5 ♖a5+ 10. ♙d2 ♖xc5 11.0–0±, obtaining the two bishop advantage.

a) 6...♖xe4 7. ♙xe4

Thus White's bishop occupies the a8-h1 diagonal and the development of Black's light-squared bishop becomes a harder task to accomplish.

Now, we will analyze thoroughly the moves: **a1) 7...c5** and **a2) 7...♗d7**.

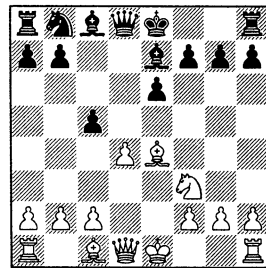
The “active” move 7...f5?! cannot be recommended at all. After: 8.♔d3 c5 (or 8...♗c6 9.c3 ♔d7 10.0-0 0-0 11.♞e1±; 8...0-0 9.0-0 ♗c6 10.c3 a6 11.♞e1 ♔f6 12.♞c2± Bretscher – Linnbrunner, Seefeld 1996) 9.0-0 0-0 (or 9...♗c6 10.dxc5 ♔xc5, Kudrin – Brown, Internet 2001, 11.♔c4± or 11.♞e1±) 10.♔c4 ♗c6 11.dxc5 ♞xd1 12.♞xd1 ♔xc5 13.♗g5 ♞e8 14.♞e1± Black’s backward e6-pawn is hopelessly weak, Stroehler – Kueppers, corr. 2001.

The other extreme measure for Black is the move 7...c6?! He should not play so passively. If now White opts for castling long: 8.♞e2!? ♗d7 9.♔d2 ♗f6 10.♔d3 ♔d7 11.0-0-0 0-0 12.♗e5 b5 13.g4→ then it becomes very difficult for Black to parry White’s king-side attack, Kuzmenko – Ostler, Internet 2004.

Therefore, Black usually refrains from castling short – 7...0-0. After 8.♞e2!? (The other alternative for White – 8.h4!? threatening 9.♔xh7+ is also rather unpleasant for Black, for example: 8...♗d7 9.♔g5 f6 10.♞e2!?→ and here, in case Black accepts the piece-sacrifice – 10...fxg5?, White finishes off his attack in a spectacular fashion with: 11.♔xh7+! ♗xh7 12.hxg5+ ♗g6 13.♞xe6+ ♗f6 14.♗e5+ ♗xg5 15.f4+! ♗xf4 16.♞f1+ ♗g5 17.♞f5+ ♗h6 18.0-0-0!! g6 19.♞h1 ♗g7 20.♞g5 ♞e8 21.♞xe7!+-) 8...♗d7 (After: 8...c5 9.dxc5 ♔xc5 10.♔d2,

Black loses outright after: 10...♗c6?! 11.0-0-0 ♞b6, because of: 12.♔xh7! ♗xh7 13.♞e4! f5 14.♞h4+ ♗g6 15.♞g5+ ♗f7 16.♞h5+ g6 17.♞h7+ ♗e8 18.♞xg6+ ♞f7 19.♗g5 ♗e5 20.♞h5+-, while even following the more resilient defence: 10...♗d7 11.0-0-0 ♗f6 12. ♔g5 ♞b6 13.♔xf6 gxf6 14.♗e5! f5 15.♞h5→, White’s attack is still extremely dangerous.) White can first of all play 9.c3 and transpose to the main line and secondly he can try the additional possibility – 9.h4!?, for example: 9...♗f6 (or 9...c5 10.♔g5 cxd4 11.0-0-0 f5 12.♔d5! ♔xg5+ 13.hxg5 exd5 14.♞e6+ ♞f7 15.g6!, van der Hoek – Gaslevich, corr. 1985, 15...hxg6 16.♞h8+ ♗xh8 17.♞xf7+-) 10.♔d3 c5 11. dxc5 ♔xc5 12.♔g5 h6 13.0-0-0 ♞e7 14.♗b1 ♞d8, Chatterjee – Altanoch, corr. 1998 and here the best for White would have been the move 15.♗e5!→.

a1) 7...c5



8.0-0

White usually plays the move 8.dxc5 in similar positions, forcing

Black to make another move with an already developed piece, but here, in this particular case, the endgame after: 8...♖xd1+ 9.♗xd1 ♗xc5= is completely equal.

8...♖d7

It is not clear what advantages Black can obtain from playing c7-c5 so early.

In case of 8...♖c6, Mussgnug – Thenhausen, Enger Spenge 1998, it is possible yet 9.dxc5!? ♖xd1 10.♗xd1 ♗xc5. After 11.♗f4±, White's position is preferable in comparison to capturing on c5 on the previous move.

8...cxd4 9.♖xd4 0-0 10.c3 ♖d7 (after 10...f5?! 11.♗f3 e5? loses at once: 12.♖b3+ ♗h8 13.♗xb7 exd4 14.♗xa8+- Kuhn – Markus, Baiersbronn 1998, and after 11...♖b6, Zvara – Netusil, Czech Republic 1998, White can best emphasize the drawbacks of Black's idea with: 12.♖e2!? ♗f6 13.♗d1±) 11.♖f3 ♖c7 12.♗f4 ♖b6, Sandler – Fell, Sydney 1992, and here the move 13.a4!±, shows that Black will have to pay a dear price for the delay of the development of his pieces on the queenside. This is hardly surprising. The exchange in the centre – c5xd4, presents White with the additional f3-square for the development of his pieces. After he gains control over the long a8-h1 diagonal, he can paralyze Black's queenside for a long time to come.

9.c3!

It is not so good for White to

play here 9.♖e2, because after 9...cxd4 10.♖xd4 ♖c5= Black manages to exchange his opponent's light squared bishop.

9...cxd4

After the other moves for Black: 9...♖c7 10.♖e2, 9...♖f6 10.♗c2 0-0 11.♖e2, or 9...0-0 10.♖e2, the game transposes to variation **a2** (GM L.Psakhis analyzes also the additional possibility: 10.♗c2 ♖f6 11.♖d3 b6 12.♗g5±).

10.♖xd4 ♖f6

Or 10...a6, Wittmann – Robatsch, Austria 1996, 11.♖e2±, with the idea to follow with 12.♗f4.

In case of 10...0-0, Black must consider the move 11.♖f3! (see 8...cxd4), which complicates the development of his queenside.

The move 10...♖c5, as a result of: 11.♗c2 e5 12.♖f5 ♗xf5 13.♗xf5 ♖xd1 14.♗xd1 0-0 (or 14...g6?! 15.♗c2 f5 16.♗e3 b6 17.♗d5± Hresc – Samovojska, Pula 1993) 15.♗e3±, led to a position in which White had the two bishop advantage in the game Stibal – Urisek, corr. 2001.

11.♗c2

Here, the retreat 11.♗f3 is clearly worse, because of a quite concrete reason: 11...e5! 12.♖b5 0-0 13.♖xd8 ♗xd8 14.♗g5 ♗d7 15.♗xf6 ♗xf6 16.♖d6 ♗c6 17.♗xc6 ♗xd6= Dietzsch – Marian, Wittlich 1980.

11...0-0

The careless move 11...b6?!, Saavedra – M.Valles, Candas

1999, as a result of: 12. ♖a4+ ♔d7 13. ♘c6 could have lost the castling rights for Black.

Black loses a pawn with the move 11... ♗c7?!, because of: 12. ♘b5 ♗c6 13. ♖f4 0-0 14. ♘c7 e5 15. ♖xe5 ♖g4 16. ♗d2± A.Zozulia – Kononenko, Alushta 1999.

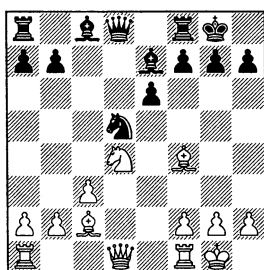
It is more acceptable for him to try 11... ♗b6, but even then after: 12. ♗e2 ♔d7 13. ♗e1 0-0 14. ♖e3 ♗c7 15. ♗ad1 h6 16. ♗f3↑ White maintains his initiative, DeVault – Dean, corr. 1998.

12. ♖f4

By playing 12. ♗e2 White can transpose to variation a2.

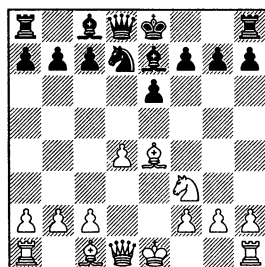
12... ♘d5

The line: 12... ♗d5 13. ♗e2 ♔d7 14. ♗fe1 ♖c6 15. ♘xc6 ♗xc6 16. ♖e5±, presented White with the bishop pair in the game Acin – Cardoso, Spain 2002.



13. ♗d3 (White has created now the dangerous attacking battery ♖c2 and ♗d3.) **13...g6** **14. ♖h6 ♗e8** **15. ♗ad1±** and White had some edge, thanks to his greater piece-activity in the game Garbett – Sarapu, Wellington 1978.

a2) 7... ♘d7



8. ♗e2!?

It will soon become clear – why that move is so necessary.

8...c5

The idea to play early ♗e2 for White is connected with a tactical fine point. In answer to 8... ♘f6?, White can play: 9. ♖xb7 ♖xb7 10. ♗b5 and 11. ♗xb7±.

After 8...0-0, White has 9.c3 (preparing the c2-square for the retreat of the bishop) 9... ♘f6 (About 9...c5 10.0-0 – see 8...c5) 10. ♖c2 b6 11. ♖f4 ♖b7 12.0-0-0!? ♗c8 13. ♘b1 ♗d5 14. ♘e5 ♗xg2 15. ♗hg1 ♗h3 16. ♖g5±, and in the game Golubovic – Saric, Pula 1999, White had an excellent compensation for the one pawn deficit. Black has also tried in practice: 8...a6, but White can counter that with 9.c3 c5 (9... ♘f6 10. ♖c2 b6 11. ♘e5! Hess – Mustafaev, Chalkidiki 2003, and if 11... ♖b7?, then White has 12. ♖a4+ b5 13. ♖xb5+-) 10.0-0 cxd4 11. ♘xd4 ♗c7 12. ♗e1 0-0 13. ♖c2 ♖f6 14. ♗e4 g6 15. ♖h6 ♗e8 16. ♗ad1± Godena – Nicevski, Cattolica 1994, and White's

pieces are much more actively placed.

9.c3!?

This modest pawn-move not only fortifies White's position in the centre, but it also ensures the c2-square for the retreat of his bishop in case Black follows with ♗f6.

White's chances to obtain the advantage are much less after: 9.0-0. Black then plays: 9...cxd4! 10.♙d1 (in case of 10.♖xd4 Black can play 10...♗c5 exchanging his knight for White's light-squared bishop and that after: 11.♙d1 ♖xe4 12.♙xe4 0-0 13.♙f4 ♙b6 14.♗b3 f6 15.♙c4 ♙b4 16.♙c7 e5= Zoister – Haba, Linz 2000, led to an equal position.) 10...♗c5 11.♙xd4 ♙b6, White should better comply with equality after: 12.c3 (It is weaker for White to play: 12.♙e3?! ♙xb2 13.♙ad1, Anand – Robatsch, Manila 1992 – and after 13...♖xe4! 14.♙xe4 0-0, it is White who should fight for equality.) 12...♖xe4 13.♙xe4 0-0 14.♙g5 f6=.

9...♗f6

Now, when the d4-square is reliably defended, White should not be afraid of: 9...0-0 10.0-0 cxd4 (10...♗f6 11.♙c2 – see 9...♗f6; 10...♙f6 11.♙d1±; 10...♙b6 11.♙d1 ♙d8 12.♙c2 ♗f8 13.♙e3± Ebeling – Kujala, Finland 1989; 10...♙c7 11.♙d1 ♙d8, Emma – Schweber, Villa Gesell 1969, 12.♙g5!? ♙xg5 13.♖xg5 h6 14.♗f3±) 11.♖xd4 ♗f6 (in case of 11...a6, Makropoulou – Makka, Athens

2003, it is good for White to play 12.♙f4±, because he should not fear: 12...e5?!, due to 13.♗f5 exf4 14.♖xe7±) and White's d4-knight is reliably defended. 12.♙f3!? a6, Godena – Depyl, France 2001 (12...♙c7 13.♗b5!? ♙b8 14.g3±, with the idea to follow with 15.♙f4.) 13.♙f4±.

You can see in all these variations that if Black exchanges on d4 immediately, without first repelling White's bishop from the a8-h1 diagonal with the move ♗f6, then he suddenly must solve additional problems with the development of his queenside.

About 9...♙c7 10.0-0 0-0 11.♙c2 ♗f6 12.dxc5 – see 9...♗f6 10.♙c2 0-0 11.0-0 ♙c7 12.dxc5.

10.♙c2 0-0

After: 10...cxd4 11.♖xd4 0-0 12.0-0 – see 10...0-0, or 10...♙c7 11.0-0 0-0 (Black's unnecessary delay of castling – 11...cxd4 12.cxd4 ♙d7?!, as a result of: 13.♙g5 ♙b6 14.♙b3 0-0 15.♙ad1 ♙ad8 16.♗f5!± Aksentijevic – Babic, Belgrade 2004, caused him a serious trouble.) 12.dxc5 – see 10...0-0 11.0-0 ♙c7 12.cxd5, so all that leads only to a transposition of moves.

11.0-0 cxd4

Otherwise White exchanges pawns in the centre himself. For example, after 11...b6 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.♗e5 ♙b7 14.♙d1 ♙c7, A. Gavrillov – Totsky, Pardubice 1999, White maintains his advantage with 15.♙f4!±.

White can continue analogously to the already mentioned examples in case Black tries some other moves: 11...h6, Sarakauskienė – Hisleur, La Fere 2003, 12.dxc5 ♗xc5 13.♗f4↑, or 11...♗b6, Schnur – Schulz, Internet 2001 12.dxc5 ♗xc5 (about 12...♗xc5 see – 11...♗c7) 13.♗g5↑.

Black plays 11...♗c7 sometimes, in order to occupy the b8-h2 diagonal, so that he can impede the development of White's dark squared bishop. Meanwhile, White can continue in that case according to well-familiar schemes: 12.dxc5 ♗xc5 (In case of 12...♗xc5 13.♗g5 ♗e7 14.♞ad1± Maka – Malewski, Krynica 2001, Black still has the problem of the development of his light-squared bishop to worry about.) 13.♗g5 (This is more precise than 13.♗f4, because after: 13...b6 14.♞ad1 ♗b7∞, Black manages to solve the problem of the development of his queenside.) 13...♞d8 (Now the move 13...b6?, does not work, because of 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 15.♗e4±) 14.♞ad1 ♗d7 15.c4± Biro – E.Szabo, Zalakaros 1998. White is slightly better, due to his lead in development.

12.♗xd4 ♗c7

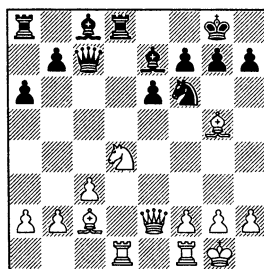
Otherwise Black must worry about the appearance of White's bishop on the f4-square. For example after: 12...♗d7 13.♗f4 ♞e8 (or 13...♗d5, von Herman – Gaerth, Berlin 2004, 14.♗e5!↑; 13...a6, Andreasen – Hoi, Denmark

1996, 14.♞ad1↑; 13...♗b6 14.♗e5 ♗d5 15.♞ad1 ♞ad8 16.♞fe1 ♗d6 17.♗xd6 ♗xd6 18.♗e4! f5 19.♗f3± Comp "Little Goliath" – Comp "Insomniac", Germany 1999; 13...♗c6 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.♗e5 ♗b6 16.♞ad1± Fedorowicz – Lein, USA 1986) 14.♞ad1 ♗b6 15.♗e5 ♞ad8 16.♞d3 ♗d5 17.♞h3→ White managed to deploy his pieces perfectly for the oncoming kingside offensive in the game Ziegler – Remmel, Stockholm 1991.

It is already quite understandable from this fragment that after: 12...a6 13.♗f4 ♗d5, Z.Pokorny – Netusil, Czech Republic 2003, White had to follow with the move 14.♗e5↑ and in case of 12...h6, De la Riva – Isanta, Spain 1999, there were no reasons for him to shun the idea – 13.♗f4↑.

Black's offer to exchange queens with: 12...♗a5 13.♗f4 ♗h5, R.Perez – G.Lopez, Mondragon 2004, should have been accepted by White. As a result of: 14.♗xh5 ♗xh5 15.♗e5±, he would have obtained a slightly better endgame.

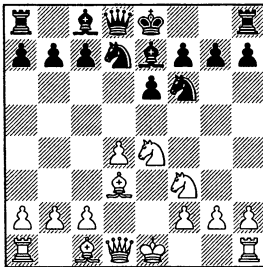
13.♗g5 ♞d8 14.♞ad1 a6



15.♞fe1 ♗d7, Saltaev – Del Rio

Angelis, Cappelle la Grande 1998. Here, White preferred to increase the pressure against his opponent's kingside with his standard moves: 16. ♖f3 ♖c5 17. ♙f4±. His other possibility was: **16. ♘f5!?** exf5 17. ♖xe7 ♙e8 18. ♖b4†.

b) 6... ♘bd7



7. ♖e2!?

If in the diagrammed position castling for both sides had been included – 7.0–0 0–0, then after 8. ♖e2, Black would have solved much easier the problem with the development of his light squared bishop with the move 8...b6. White's most principled line here: 9. ♘e5 ♙b7 10. ♘g5, leads to a complicated position, which is abundant with tactical possibilities. See how the game might develop in case of: 10...h6 (The passive move 10... ♖e8, after 11. ♙e1 ♙d6, Eyer – Reuter, Baden 1992, enabled White to seize the initiative easily with: 12. ♙b5! a6 13. ♙xd7 ♘xd7 14. ♖d3±, since Black did not have: 14... ♘f6??, because of 15. ♘g4+-; while the pawn-break in the centre 10...

c5, after 11. ♘exf7!? ♙xf7 12. ♖xe6 ♙d5, Waltratus – Libura, Lublin 1999, enabled White with the help of a temporary queen-sacrifice: 13. ♖xd5! ♘xd5 14. ♙xh7+ ♘f8 15. ♘e6+ ♘e8 16. ♘xd8 ♙xd8 17. ♙g6±, to enter a clearly better endgame.) 11. ♘exf7 (In case of White retreating: 11. ♘gf3 c5 12. ♙b5, Domarkaite – Kalevic, Nova Gorica 1999, Black solves all his problems with: 12... ♖c7 13. ♙f4 ♙fd8 14. ♙g3 ♘xe5 15. ♘xe5 ♙d6=.) 11... ♙xf7 12. ♘xe6 ♖c8 13. ♙g6 ♘f8 14. ♙xf7+ ♘xf7 15. ♘xg7 ♖d7! (15... ♙a6 16. c4 ♖g4 17. ♖xg4 ♘xg4 18. ♘f5 ♙xc4 19. ♙d1 h5 20. ♘xe7 ♘xe7 21. ♙g5+ ♘d7, Colle – Tartakower, Bad Niendorf 1927, 22. h3!? ♘e6 23. b3 ♙e2 24. ♙e1±) 16. ♘h5, Ciuksyte – Stjashkina, Warsaw 2001 – Black could follow with: 16... ♖xd4!??∞, and reach a position in which he had at least equal chances.

Black should now consider:

b1) 7...c5 and **b2) 7... 0–0**.

About 7...h6 8. ♙d2 – see 5... h6, about 7... ♘xe4 8. ♙xe4 – see line a.

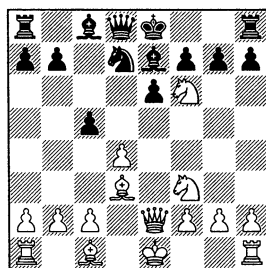
Neither side has castled yet, so that influences considerably the evaluation of Black's plan including the move 7...b6?!. Here that idea for Black is not attractive at all, because of 8. ♘e5!. He is practically forced to continue with 8... ♘xe5 (It is absolutely essential that the absence of castling for both side makes the move 8... ♙b7? a blunder, be-

cause of 9.♟xf7! ♔xf7 10.♞g5+ ♗e8 11.♞xe6 ♖c8 12.♞xg7+ ♔f7 13.♗e6+- Lakos – Macek, Pula 2000) 9.dxe5 ♞d7 (after 9...♞xe4 10.♙xe4 ♖b8 11.♙f4 c5 12.♞d1 ♖c7 13.♗b5+ ♔f8 14.0-0± Corredor – Arburu, Spain 1990, Black lost his right to castle.) 10.♙f4! and that leads to positions in which White has all the prerequisites for a crushing kingside attack, thanks to his excellent e5-pawn. The fact that he can castle long makes his attacking prospects even more powerful: 10...♙b7 (10...0-0 11.0-0-0 c5 12.h4 ♖c7 13.♞g5 h6 14.♗e4+- Keres – Kocher, Madrid 1943.) 11.0-0-0 h6 12.h4 a6 13.♗h5 b5 14.♞g5 ♙xg5 15.hxg5± Dostal – Libura, Nachod 1998.

The move 7...a6?! is an obvious loss of time. White can increase the pressure in that case with the help of 8.♞eg5!? (Following: 8.0-0, the line 8...0-0 9.♞eg5 leads to a transposition of moves, but in case of the simplifications arising after: 8...♞xe4 9.♙xe4 ♞f6 10.♙d3 b6 11.♙g5 ♙b7 12.♞ad1 0-0 13.c4 ♞h5 14.♙c1↑, Ivkov – Jancev, Vrnjacka Banja 1962, White manages to preserve some initiative.) 8...0-0 (or 8...c5? 9.♞xf7 ♔xf7 10.♞g5+ ♗e8 11.♞xe6 ♖b6 12.♞xg7+ ♔d8 13.♞e6+ ♗e8 14.♙f4+- Zelic – Jagstaidt, Geneve 1995; in case of: 8...h6 9.♞xe6 fxe6 10.♙g6+ ♔f8 11.♞e5 ♖g8 12.♞f7 ♗e8 13.0-0→, White organizes a strong attack for the sacrificed piece.) 9.0-0!?

(White has tested in practice until now only: 9.♙d2 c5 10.c3 cxd4 11.cxd4 ♖b6 12.0-0-0 ♙b4∞, but Black had counter chances in the game Molnar – Lorincz, Miskolc 1996.). Now, the principled line: 9...h6 (but not 9...b6? 10.♞xh7 ♞xh7 11.♙xh7+ ♔xh7 12.♗e4+ ♔g8 13.♗xa8+-; in case of: 9...c5 10.♞e1± White's threat 11.♞xe6 is quite unpleasant for Black.) 10.♞xe6 fxe6 11.♗xe6+ ♖f7 (or 11...♔h8 12.♞h4+-) 12.♙g6 ♖f8 13.♙f4 c6 14.♞fe1↑, leads to a position in which White maintains a powerful initiative with material equality present on the board.

b1) 7...c5 8.♞xf6+



Black now has two reasonable possibilities: **b1a) 8...♙xf6** and **b1b) 8...♞xf6**.

b1a) 8...♙xf6

Black leaves his knight on the d7-square in order to support his c5-pawn.

9.d5!?

The juxtaposition of the white queen and the black king along the e-file is becoming a decisive factor now.

9...b6

After 9...e7 10.dxe6 e6 11.e6+ fxe6 12.0-0 de5 (12...0-0 13.dg5± Namyslo – Faisst, Germany 1995, the weakness of Black's e6-pawn was considerable.) 13.dxe5 e5 14.ee1 e3 15.eb5+ f7 16.ee3 a6 17.ee2±, Black's pawn-structure is clearly inferior and he has not completed yet the development of his queenside, C.Martinez – Lorente, Malaga 2004.

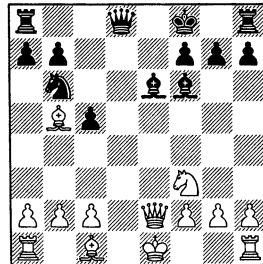
It is a bit tricky for Black to sacrifice a pawn with: 9...0-0 10.dxe6 b6 (10...fxe6 11.0-0 b6 12.ee4 g6 13.eh6 ee8 14.ead1± Lopez Garcia – Campos Hernandez, Aragon 2003) 11.exf7+ e7, Chaplin – Ferrigno, Cannes 2000, and here White could have played: 12.0-0! e7 13.ee3 ebx2 14.ead1 ee8 15.c3 ea3 16.e2±, returning his extra pawn, and obtaining a wonderful position thanks to the pressure against Black's king-side.

In case Black tries to close the position with the move 9...e5, White can follow with: 10.h4!? e7(10...h6 11.e2 e7 12.0-0-0 b6 13.dxe5 e5 14.ee1 ebx2+ 15.fxb2 e2 16.ee2+ d8 17.c4± Kundin – Deutsch, Tel Aviv 2002) 11.e5 h6 12.e6 dxf6 dxf6 13.d6 e6 14.0-0-0 e7 15.dxe5 0-0 16.g4→ T.Horvath – Cigan, Austria 1995, White had a powerful attack against Black's king.

10. eb5+ f8 11.dxe6 e6

Black managed to preserve a symmetrical pawn-structure indeed, but at the cost of losing his right to castle.

Following: 11...a6 12.e3 e6 13.0-0 c4 14.e4 e7 15.e3 d5 16.e4 e5, Conde – F.Martinez, corr. 1999, White's most convincing line is: 17.e4! (threatening 18.e5) 17...e8 (or 17...e4 18.ea1 e2 19. e5+-) 18.e5 e4 (or 18...e4 19.e6 e5 20.e7+ e7 21.d4+-) 19.e4 e4 20.e6 e3 21.gxf3 gxf6 22.c3± and White remained with an extra pawn in a king and rook end-game.

**12.0-0**

The position seems to be rather simple; nevertheless White must play very precisely, otherwise he can easily dissipate all his advantage. For example after: 12.e3 e7 13.0-0 e8 14.e4 e8∞ Boudy – Sieiro, Cuba 1993, the position was with mutual chances, while after 12.a4 a6 13.e3 c4! 14.e4 e7= Kudrin – Nogueiras, North Bay 1998, the game was equal.

12...h6

The tournament practice has proved that Black needs to control the g5-square excessively. It is obviously worse for him to play: 12...c4, because of 13.♙e3 ♖c7 (13...♙xb2 14.♟ad1 ♗c8 15.♘g5 ♙g4 16.f3 ♙f5 17.a4!♞, and White has an excellent compensation for the pawn; after 13...a6 14. ♙c5+ ♖g8 15.♙xb6 ♗xb6 16.♙xc4 ♙xc4 17.♗xc4± Black refrained from capturing on b2, because he was too far behind in development, Bock – Lagergren, corr. 2000) 14.♟ad1 ♘d5 (14...♙xb2 15.♘g5!↑) 15.♘d4 ♙xd4 16.♙xd4± Areshchenko – Ushenina, Sudak 2002.

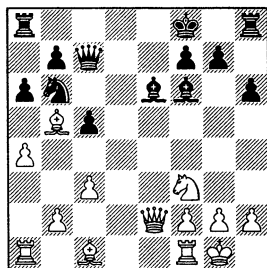
In case of 12...♗c7, Herrera – R.Perez, Santa Clara 1996, White can remind Black that he has lost the reliable control over the g5-square with the move 13.♘g5!?!↑. If 12...♗e7, then he can follow with: 13.c3 ♟d8 14.♟e1 h6 15.♙f4 ♘d5 16.♙g3 g6 17.♙d3± Castaldi – Ricci, Sorrento 1950 – and White's prospects were clearly better, because his pieces were much more actively deployed.

13.c3

It is weaker for White to play: 13.♙f4 ♙xb2 14.♟ad1 ♗c8∞ Pritchett – Clarke, ♙righton 1977, or 13.♟d1 ♗c7 14.a4 g5 15.a5 ♘d5∞ Huzman – Seirawan, Amsterdam 1995. After 13.♙d3 c4 14.♙e4 ♗c7 15.c3 ♟e8 16.♗c2 g6 17.♙e3 ♖g7= Becerra Rivero – R.Perez, Santa Clara 1998, Black managed to

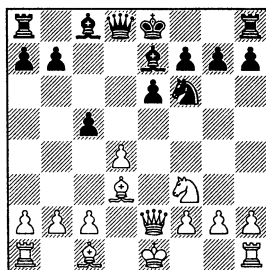
complete his development successfully and the position was equal.

13...♗c7 14.a4 a6



15.a5! (White intends to secure the c4-outpost for his pieces with the march of the a-pawn.) 15... ♘d5 16.♙c4 g6 17.♘d2 ♖g7 18.♘e4± Kolev – Tejero Royo, Barcelona 2000. White's pieces are more active and so he has some edge.

b1b) 8...♘xf6



9.dxc5

White's light squared bishop is a very important battle unit in his initiative. That is why he did not like to exchange on c5, while Black's knight was on the d7-square.

Now, Black has two possibilities to restore the material balance: **b1b1) 9...♙xc5** and **b1b2) 9...♖a5+**.

It is obviously insufficient for Black to equalize with the line: 9...0-0 10. ♙d2 ♘d5 (or 10... ♙xc5 11.0-0-0 ♖b6 12. ♘g5 ♙xf2 13. ♗df1 ♙d4 14. c3 h6 15. ♘e4 1-0 Krempel – Muck, corr. 1990) 11. c4 ♘f6, Shanava – Zarqua, Tbilisi 2001 and here it seems logical for White to follow with 12.0-0 (threatening 12. b4) ♙xc5 13. b4 ♙e7 14. ♗ad1↑ and he maintains the initiative.

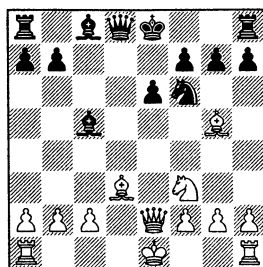
b1b1) 9...♙xc5

That is Black's most natural move, but its drawback is more than obvious to the naked eye. He makes a second move with an already developed piece. In fact, the main liability of the entire variation with 4...♙e7 can be best seen in this particular line.

10. ♙g5!?

White preserves the option to castle long by playing like that. That decision is a logical consequence of the essence of this position. Black is slightly behind in development and the importance of every move increases considerably in a position with opposite sides castling.

The other possibility for him is the move 10.0-0, which transposes to lines that will be analysed in Chapter 8.



10...♖a5+

White will have a powerful initiative on the kingside after he castles long if Black does not play that move. The following game is a typical example of that, Palac – Runic, Bled 2002, in which the issue was settled rather quickly: 10...♖c7 11.0-0-0 a6 12. ♗he1 b5 13. ♘e5 0-0 14. ♙xf6 gxf6 15. ♙xh7+ ♘xh7 16. ♖h5+ ♔g7 17. ♖g4+- and Black resigned.

After 10...♖b6, White can again play 11.0-0-0 (the other possibility for White is 11.0-0!?, and after 11...♖xb2 12. ♗ab1 ♖a3 13. ♗b3 ♖a5 14. ♖e5±, he will have an excellent compensation for the pawn.) and if 11...♙xf2?!, then 12. ♖e5!±.

It is too slow for him to follow with: 10...a6. After: 11.0-0-0 ♖a5 12. ♘b1 ♙e7 13. ♘e5 0-0 14. f4± ♙erzinsh – Sedlakova, Hlohovec 1994, White had a strong attack against the enemy king.

The passive move 10...♙e7, after 11.0-0-0 ♖a5, Delchev – Collet, Creon 2001 (11...♖b6 12. h4 ♙d7 13. ♘e5 ♙c6 14. ♗he1 h6 15. ♘xf7+- Gereben – Warkentin, Weinheim 1968; 11...♘d7 12. h4

h6, Velcheva – Trtanj, Tucepi 1996, 13.♙e7 ♖e7 14.g4→) could have been punished convincingly after: 12.♙b5+!? The point is that the natural move for Black: 12...♙d7?! (12...♙f8 13.♙b1±) can be countered by White with the combination: 13.♙xd7! ♜xd7 14.♙xd7+ ♙xd7 15.♜e5+ ♙e8 16.♙xe7 ♙xe7 (16...♖xa2 17.♙a3 ♖a1+ 18.♙d2 ♙d8+ 19.♙e3+-, and Black has no satisfactory defence against the threats: 20.♙xa1 and 20.♖b5+.) 17.♖h5! (White's queen is ready for action like in an ambush...) 17...♖xa2 (17...♙hf8 18.♜c6+-; 17...♖c7 18.♖xf7+ ♙d8 19.♙d1+ ♙c8 20.♖xe6+ ♙b8 21.♜d7+ ♙c8 22.♜f8+ ♙b8 23.♖e8+-) 18.♖xf7+ ♙d6 19.♙d1+ ♙xe5 20.♖xg7+ ♙f5 21.g4+-, and Black's king will hardly survive against White's attack.

In case of 10...♙d7, White can again castle long: 11.0-0-0 (The other possibility for White is: 11.♜e5 ♖c7 12.0-0 a6 13.♙ad1 ♙d8 14.♙fe1 ♙e7 15.♙f4± Romero Holmes – Marino Bravo, Spain 1993.) 11...♖b6 12.♜e5 ♙c6 13.♙he1! ♙xf2 (13...♙d4 14.c3 ♖c5 15.♙xf6 gxf6 16.♜xf7 ♙xf7 17.♖xe6+ ♙g7 18.♖g4+- Hjelm – Hogberg, Linköping 1996) 14.♙xf6 gxf6 (14...♙e1 15.♖h5 ♖c7 16.♙xg7 ♙g8 17.♖xh7 0-0-0 18.♜xc6 ♖xc6 19.♙xe1 ♙xg7 20.♖xg7 ♙xd3 21.♖xf7+-) 15.♜xf7! ♙e3+ (Black cannot accept the sacrifice of the knight: 15...♙xf7, because of 16.♖xe6+ ♙g7 17.♖e7+ ♙h6

18.♖xf6+ ♙h5 19.♙e2+-) 16.♖xe3 ♖xe3+ 17.♙xe3 ♙xf7 18.♙c4 ♙ae8 19.♙d6±, and White was clearly better in the endgame.

If Black tries to avoid the pin along the d8-h4 diagonal in a tactical fashion with: 10...0-0 11.0-0-0 ♖c7 (11...♖b6 12.♙xf6 gxf6 13.♜e5 f5 14.g4 ♙xf2 15.♜c4 ♖c5 16.gxf5 exf5 17.c3→ Zapata – J.Gonzalez, Valencia 1990, or 13.♜d2!? ♙xf2 14.♙hf1 ♙d4 15.c3 ♙e3 16.♙xf6 ♖c5 17.♙b1 ♙d8 18.♜e4+- Gazen – Doerdelmann, corr. 2002), then after: 12.♙xf6 ♖f4+ (12...gxf6 13.♖e4f5 14.♖h4↑) 13.♜d2 gxf6 14.♙xh7+ ♙g7 15.♙d3 ♙h8 16.♙b1 ♖xf2 17.♖g4+ ♙f8, Wang Yu – N.Kiseleva, Moscow 2001, White could have played 18.♜f3±, obtaining an overwhelming advantage.

In case of 10...h6, White should better preserve the tension with: 11.♙h4!?±. After 11.♙xf6 ♖xf6 12.♙b5+, Weng – Ludwig, Halle 1993, 12...♙f8 13.0-0-0 g6∞, Black's position is quite acceptable thanks to his bishop pair, while in case of: 11.♙b5+ ♙d7, Bentancor – Chapado, Buenos Aires 2001, 12.♙xf6 ♖a5+ 13.♙c3 ♖xb5 14.♖xb5 ♙xb5 15.♙xg7 ♙g8 16.♙d4 ♙c8 17.♙g1 ♙c6 18.♙xc5 ♙xf3 19.♙d2 ♙e4 20.♙xa7 ♙xc2+ 21.♙e3 ♙xg2=, the game could have been decided in a opposite coloured bishops endgame.

11.c3 ♙e7 12.0-0

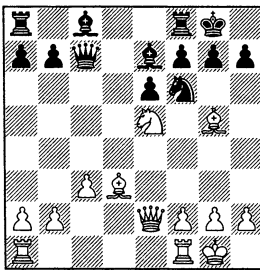
White can deprive Black

from castling with: 12. ♙b5+ ♙d7 13. ♙xd7+ ♗xd7 14. ♙xe7 ♗xe7, but after 15. ♗e4 ♖ab8 16. 0-0 ♗f6 17. ♗f4 ♖hd8= Kulicov – Ushenina, Sudak 2002, he can hardly prove any real achievements because of that...

12... 0-0 13. ♗e5

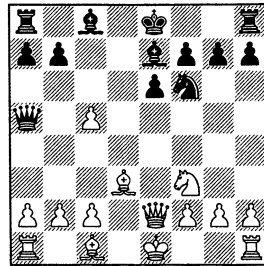
Besides the knight-move, White has also tried in practice 13. ♖fd1. After 13... ♗c5 (It is worth noticing that Black cannot play 13... ♙d7?, because of: 14. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 15. ♙xh7+-) 14. ♙c2 a5 15. ♖d4↑ and White manages to bring his rook into the attack against Black's kingside, Radulov – Alexopoulos, Thessaloniki 1979.

13... ♗c7



14. ♖ad1 ♗d5 (after 14...g6 15. ♖fe1 ♗g7 16. ♗e3± Velcheva – Peric, Cannes 1997, the weaknesses around Black's king are quite considerable) **15. ♙xe7 ♗xe7**, Zahariev – Makka, Ano Liosia 2001. White can continue here with: **16. ♗e4!?** ♗f6 **17. ♗h4 h6** **18. ♖fe1±**, and he can maintain some advantage due to his more actively placed pieces.

b1b2) 9... ♗a5+



10. c3!?

White plans to castle short here.

His other possibility is: 10. ♙d2 ♗xc5 11. 0-0-0 and he evacuates his king to the queenside, but the fight becomes double edged. Here is how it might develop later – 11... ♙d7!?. (If 11... 0-0, then Black will have difficulties to develop his bishop. Here are two examples from the legacy of GM Paul Keres – 12... ♖d8 13. g4 ♗d7 14. f4 ♗f8 15. g5 ♙d7 16. ♖hg1 ♙e8 17. ♖g3 ♖ac8 18. ♗b1 ♙b5 19. c4 ♙e8 20. ♙c3↑ Keres – Turn, Tallinn 1942, as well as: 12...b6 13. g4 ♙b7 14. g5! It becomes clear now that Black cannot play 14... ♙xh1!?, because of: 15. gxf6 ♙xf6 16. ♗d7 ♗c6 17. ♗xf6+ gxf6 18. ♗g4+ ♗h8 19. ♗h4 f5 20. ♗f6+ ♗g8 21. ♖g1+-, while in case of: 14... ♗d5, Keres – Petrovs, Riga 1939, White has the possibility to continue with: 15. ♗e4!?. g6 16. ♗d7 ♗c8 17. ♗xf8 ♗b4 18. ♗e2 ♗xd3+ 19. ♗xd3 ♙xh1 20. ♗xh7 ♙d5 21. ♙c3± and he obtains a material advantage.) 12. ♗e5 ♙a4! (Black's cas-

ting short is again a loss of time: 12...0-0 13.g4!? ♖c6 14.g5 ♗e8 15.♞hg1 ♗d6 16.♞g4 g6 17.♖b4 ♞b6 18.♗xd6 ♗xd6 19.♗c4 ♞c7 20.♗xd6 ♞xd6 21.♗xg6→ Thipsay – Dimitriadis, Thessaloniki 1984.) 13.g4 ♞c8 and Black manages to find some weaknesses in White's king shelter. The not so well-known game R.Fischer – Zhukov, New York (simultan) 1965 continued with: 14.b3 ♖c6 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.g5 (In case of: 16.♗b1 ♗d5 18.c4 ♞d4! White cannot capture the knight 19.cxd5?, due to: 19...♗f6+, while after: 19.♞e4 ♗c3+ 20.♗xc3 ♞xc3= Black is not worse at all.) 16...♗d5 17.♞e5 (The line: 17.c4?! ♞d4! 18.♗c2 ♗a3↑, allows Black to seize the initiative.) 17...0-0 (It is also possible for Black to defend with: 17...♗b4 18.♞xc5 ♗xd3+ 19.cxd3 ♗xc5=) 18.♗b1 a5 19.h4 ♗b4= and the game soon ended in a draw.

10...♞xc5 11.♗e3

It is logical for White to exploit the exposed position of the black queen, even before he castles, in order to improve the placement of his dark squared bishop. He plays sometimes 11.♗g5 and Black's most precise reaction against that is 11...♗d7!? (White would not mind the line: 11...0-0 12.0-0-0, since the game transposes to variation **b2**, in which his chances are preferable.). Now, after 12.♗e5 (In case of 12.0-0-0, Osnos – Barcza, Leningrad 1967 Black can evacuate his king to

the queenside: 12...♗a4!? 13.♞d2 0-0-0 14.♗e5 ♞hf8=) 12...♗a4!? (It deserves attention for Black to play here: 12...♗g4!?, because following: 13.♗xd7?! ♞xg5 14.♖b5 a6 15.♗b6+ axb5 16.♗xa8 0-0 17.♗c7 ♖c5 18.0-0 ♞d8= he obtains an excellent counterplay on the kingside for the sacrificed exchange, while after: 13.♗xf7!? ♗xf7 14.♗xe7 ♞xf2+ 15.♞xf2+ ♗xf2 16.♗xf2 ♗xe7± White's advantage is just minimal.) 13.0-0 ♞d8 14.♞fe1 0-0 15.♞f3 ♞d5 16.♗e3 ♞c7 17.♗d4 ♖c5 18.♗xc5 ♞xc5= and Black has managed to avoid the opposite sides castling and he can equalize easily by simplifying the position, Gabudeanu – Dainauskas, corr. 1997.

11...♞a5

Black has tried some other retreats of his queen. After: 11...♞h5 12.♗d4 ♗d7 13.♗e5 ♞xe2+ 14.♗xe2 ♗d5 15.♗xd7 ♗xd7 16.♗f3 ♗f6 17.0-0-0 ♗xd4 18.♞xd4 ♗c7 19.♗xd5 exd5 20.♞xd5+- Maka – Szymanski, Wisla 2000 he managed to solve the problem with the development of his light squared bishop, but only at the cost of a pawn.

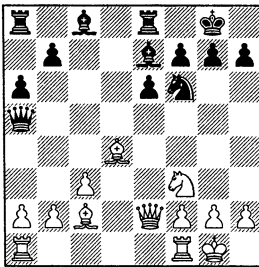
In case of: 11...♞c7 12.♗d4 ♗d7 13.♞e5 ♞xe5+ 14.♗xe5 0-0 15.0-0-0 ♖c6 16.♗xc6 bxc6 17.♗xf6 ♗xf6 18.♗e4 ♞ab8 19.♞d7 ♞b6 20.♗c2± the endgame with opposite coloured bishops proved to be quite difficult for Black in the game Proehl – M.Mueller, Germany 1995.

12. ♙d4 a6

The typical maneuver of the light squared bishop – 12...♙d7 13. ♘e5 ♙c6 14. 0–0 0–0 15. ♘xc6 bxc6± cannot solve all problems for Black, Bezemer – Krudde, Netherlands 2001. White has a couple of bishops and a superior pawn-structure, so he is clearly better.

13. 0–0 0–0 14. ♙c2 ♙e8

If 14...♞d8, with the idea to redeploy the bishop to the e8-square via d7, White can continue with: 15. ♘e5 ♙d7 16. ♚e3! and the threat ♙d4-b6, would not allow Black to complete successfully his idea – 16...♘d5 17. ♚h3 h6 18. ♚d3 ♘f6 19. ♘g4±.



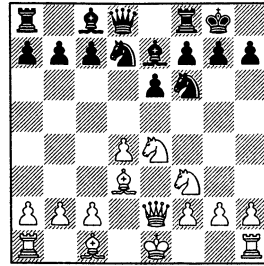
15. ♞fe1± and Black still has problems with the development of his queenside, Root – Au, USA 1989.

b2) 7... 0–0

(diagram)

Black is not in a hurry to start active operations in the centre and he delays them for a more appropriate moment.

8. ♙g5



White develops his pieces in that fashion, so that he can create maximal difficulties for Black to solve his main problem – the development of the light-squared bishop. It is therefore worse for White to play: 8.c3, because of 8...b6 9. ♘xf6+ (9. ♙g5 ♙b7 10. h4 c5 11. 0–0–0 ♚c7± De Wind – Hummel, Leiden 2000.) 9...♘xf6 10. ♘e5 ♙b7 11. ♙g5, Civin – Simukov, Pribram 1995, and Black could have obtained an excellent position by playing 11...c5!?∞.

8...c5

Black loses plenty of material after 8...b6??, because of 9. ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 10. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 11. ♚e4+–.

Black can introduce some corrections in his plan including the development of his bishop along the a8-h1 diagonal and that is: 8...♞b8 9. h4 b6 10. 0–0–0 ♙b7, Tirdard – Victor, Maromme 1994. On the other hand, while Black was wasting time to develop his worst placed piece, White succeeded in organizing a dangerous kingside attack: 11. ♞h3 h6 12. ♘e5→.

It is too passive for Black to play 8...♞e8. After 9. h4!? (It is less attractive for White to fol-

low with 9.0-0-0, because of: 9... ♖xe4 10. ♗xe7 ♜c3!? 11. ♗xh7+ ♜h8 12. bxc3 ♞xe7☞ Matkovic – R.Pavlovic, Pula 1992, but he can try instead: 9. ♜xf6+!? ♗xf6 10. h4 c5 11.0-0-0 cxd4 12. ♜xd4 ♗xg5+ 13. hxc5 ♞xg5+ 14. ♜b1 ♜f3 15. ♜f3 ♞c5 16. ♜e5 h6 17. g4→ Anisimov – Shuvatkin, St Petersburg 2005.) 9...h6 (In case of: 9... ♜xe4 10. ♞xe4 ♜f8 11. ♗xe7 ♞xe7 12.0-0-0 c5 13. h5 cxd4 14. h6 g6 15. ♜xd4 e5 16. ♞de1± Black's position remains difficult, due to his vulnerable dark squares on the kingside, Kruhme – Vogt, corr 1963.) 10. ♗xf6 ♜xf6 11.0-0-0 ♜d5, Bjornsson – Gunnarsson, Reykjavik 2002, it is now possible for White to continue with: 12. ♜e5!? ♜f4 13. ♞f3 ♜xd3+ 14. ♞xd3 ♞f8 15. ♞f4± and we have a rare example of the superiority of White's couple of knights over the two black bishops.

Black fails to simplify the position with the move 8... ♜d5. After: 9.0-0-0 f6 (The pawn-break in the centre – 9...e5 10. ♗c4 c6 11. dxe5 ♜xe5 12. ♗xd5 cxd5 13. ♗xe7 ♞xe7 14. ♜c3 ♜c6 15. ♞xe7 ♜xe7 16. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 17. ♞xd5 ♗e6 18. ♞d2+- led Black to the loss of an important pawn in the game Gligoric – P.Garcia, Havana 1952; while in case of: 9... ♗xg5+ 10. ♜exg5 ♜7f6 11. ♜e5 a5 12. h4 ♜f4 13. ♞f3 ♜xd3+ 14. ♞xd3 b6 15. ♜g4 g6 16. ♜e5± Black had his "bad" light squared bishop to worry about as well as his king-

side weaknesses, D.Pirrot – Ameling, St Ingbert 1988) 10. ♗d2 ♞f7 (or 10...f5? 11. ♜eg5+- Justin – Golja, Ljubljana 1998) 11. g4→ and White had targets to attack on Black's kingside.

After the immediate exchange of the knights – 8... ♜xe4 9. ♞xe4, Black will have to play the move 9...g6, which weakens his kingside. White's subsequent onslaught is quite standard: 10. h4 c5 (Or 10...e5 11. dxe5 ♜c5 12. ♞e3 ♜xd3 13. ♞xd3 ♗xg5 14. hxc5 ♞xd3 15. cxd3+- Kulikov – Ruchkin, Tula 2003; 10... ♜f6 11. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12. h5 ♞d5 13. ♞f4 ♗g7 14. hxc6 hxc6, Illescas Cordoba – Falcon, Benasque 1983, 15. ♜e5!? c5 16. ♞h4 ♞e8 17. ♜xg6 fxg6 18. ♗xg6+-) 11. 0-0-0 ♜f6 12. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 13. dxc5 ♞c7 (In case of: 13... ♞a5 14. h5 ♞xa2 15. c3→ Black cannot create any threats against White's king with only his queen...) 14. h5 ♗d7 15. hxc6 hxc6, Roldan – Cigarria, Asturias 1986 and here the move 16. ♞g4→ provided White with a powerful attack.

Black's deliberate weakening of his kingside – 8...g6 enabled White with: 9. h4 ♜xe4 10. ♗xe4 ♜f6 11.0-0-0 ♗d7 12. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 13. h5 ♗c6 14. hxc6 hxc6 15. ♞h3 ♗xe4 16. ♞xe4 ♞d5 17. ♞f4 ♞f5 18. ♞h2→, to begin a dangerous penetration along the h-file in the game Dgebuadze – Pauwels, Gent 1999.

The move 8...h6 does not improve Black's defence on the

kingside either. After 9.♟xf6+ (It is also possible for White to follow with: 9.♙d2 c5 10.♟xf6+ ♟xf6 11.dxc5 ♙xc5 12.0-0-0 ♟b6 13.♟e5↑ and his attack with the g-pawn becomes quite effective when Black's pawn is on the h6-square, T.Tolnai – Przewoznik, Naleczow 1987.) 9...♟xf6 (or 9...♙xf6 10.♟e4 ♙e8 11.♟h7+ ♟f8, Nazarevskiy – Logozinsky, Mariupol 2003, 12.♟h8+ ♟e7 13.♙xf6+ ♟xf6 14.♟h7→) 10.♙xf6 ♙xf6 11.♟e4 g6 12.h4 ♙g7 (The exchange of pawns: 12...♟d5 13.♟f4 ♟g7 14.♟xc7 ♙xd4 15.♟xd4 ♟xd4 16.0-0-0 ♟xf2 17.h5→ enables White to organize a dangerous attack.) 13.h5 f5 14.♟e3 g5 15.♙c4 ♟d6, Hausner – Spacek, Prague 1991, here White should have continued with 16.0-0-0↑ maintaining a powerful initiative.

9.dxc5

In case White plays 9.0-0-0 – he should seriously consider 9...cxd4∞.

9...♟xc5

Black's attempt to simplify the position with the move 9...♟d5 has not become popular yet. In that case White's most principled answer is 10.h4!? (After 10.c6 bxc6 11.♙xe7 ♟xe7∞ the activity of Black's pieces compensates his slightly inferior pawn-structure. White has played often in practice the calmer line: 10.0-0 ♟xc5 11.♙xe7 ♟xe7 12.♟xc5 ♟xc5 13.♟e4 ♟f6 14.♟h4 h6 15.♙fe1 b6 16.♙e5 ♟c7 17.♙e3, A.Timofeev –

V.Zaitsev, Russia 2000 and here: 17...♙b7!? 18.♟e5 ♙ad8 19.♙ae1 ♟d7 20.♟xd7 ♟xd7 21.♙g3 ♟h8= would have led to an approximately equal position.). There might follow: 10...f6 (In case Black regains his pawn: 10...♟a5+ 11.c3 ♟xc5 12.♟xc5 ♟xc5, then after: 13.♟e4 f5 14.♙xe7 ♟xe7 15.♟d4 ♟a5 16.♙c4± he is left with a backward e5-pawn.) 11.0-0-0 fxc5 (Black's counterplay against White's king – 11...♟a5, can be refuted spectacularly with the line: 12.♟c3! ♟xc3 13.♟xe6+ ♟h8 14.♟xe7 ♟xd1 15.♙h6! ♙g8 16.♟g5+→) 12.♟exg5 ♟f4 13.♟e4 g6 14.♙c4→ and White has a powerful attack for the sacrificed pawn.

10.♟xc5 ♟a5+

About 10...♙xc5 11.0-0-0 – see variation **b1b1** (10...0-0).

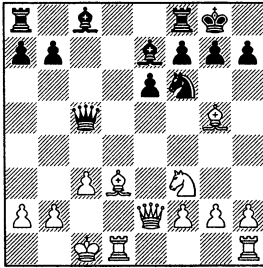
11.c3 ♟xc5

It is quite obvious that Black should not even think about 11...♙xc5??, because of 12.b4+→.

12.0-0-0!?

It is much easier for White to profit from his lead in development in a position with opposite sides castling. In the variations **b1b2** we witnessed a similar position, but there Black had not castled yet. This circumstance enabled Black to complete his queenside development without losing a tempo for castling. Here he does not have that same possibility. White can also continue in a calmer fashion, by castling short, but after: 12.0-0 ♙d8 13.♙ad1

♙d7 14.♘e5 ♙e8 15.♖h1 ♚d5 16.f4 ♚ad8 → Klimov – Yandemirov, St Petersburg 2002, Black can force exchanges and he can gradually obtain a satisfactory position.



12...h6

Black's wish to clarify the intentions of White's dark-squared bishop is understandable. It is worth mentioning that Black has tried numerous possibilities in the diagrammed position. Meanwhile, after many of them he ended up in a hopeless situation after only a few moves. See a typical example: 12...b5? 13.♙xf6 ♙xf6 14.♞e4 g6 15.♞xa8+- R.Fischer – G.Kral, USA (simultan) 1964, or 12...a6?! 13.♖b1 b5? 14.♙xf6 ♙xf6 15.♞e4 g6 16.♞xa8+- Rizouk – Mounir, Ramadan 2000.

If you have in mind that Black fails to develop his bishop along the a8-h1 diagonal, then it is logical for him to try the usual move 12...♙d7. It turns out – that is bad too, because of the standard combination: 13.♙xf6 ♙xf6 14.♙xh7+! ♖xh7 15.♙xd7 b5 (Black has also tried here 15...b6, Harjunpaeae – Jaederholm, corr. 1992, but af-

ter 16.♞e3+ it becomes clear that the move with Black's b-pawn one or two squares forward does not change anything important in that position.) 16.♞e3 ♞c6 17.♙hd1± and White remained with a solid extra pawn in the game Kotronias – Grivas, Athens 1988.

In case of 12...♙d8, White can continue with the same combination: 13.♙xf6 ♙xf6 (Black can preserve the material balance with the move 13...gxf6, but after 14.g4! he is faced with a difficult choice – he must either comply with having numerous pawn-weaknesses: 14...♖h8, Koltzsch – Bolduan, corr. 1997, 15.♞e4!? f5 16.gxf5 exf5 17.♞f4 ♙e6 18.♖b1 ♞d6 19.♘e5 f6 20.♘g6+ ♖g7 21.♞xd6 ♙xd6 22.♘h4±, or he must isolate his rook completely: 14...♖g7 15.♞e4 ♙h8 16.♘d4 ♙d7 17.f4↑) 14.♙xh7+! ♖xh7 (14...♖f8 15.♙xd8+ ♙xd8 16.♞d2 ♙f6 17.♙d1 e5 18.♘g5± Kotrotsos – Poteas, Athens 2000; 14...♖h8 15.♙xd8+ ♙xd8 16.♙c2 ♙f6 17.♙d1 ♖g8 18.♞d2± Amrein – Neber, Hungary 1998) 15.♙xd8 ♙xd8 16.♞d3+ ♞f5 (16...g6, 17.♞xd8 ♞xf2, Sonnenberger – Bayer, Austria 1999, 18.♞f8!+-) 17.♞xd8 b5 (17...b6 18.♞c7 ♙a6 19.♙e1 ♖g8 20.♞e5 ♞xe5 21.♘xe5+- Fichtl – Fuchs, Berlin 1962; 17...f6 18.♙d1 e5 19.♙d2 ♞g4 20.♞e8 ♞f4 21.♞h5+ ♖g8 22.♞e8+ ♖h7 23.h3+- Scekkic – Savicevic, Kragujevac 2000, and Black is totally pinned.) 18.♞e7 ♞f4+ 19.♘d2±, and in the

game J. Polgar – Rayo Gutierrez, San Sebastian 1991, and White has great chances to press his advantage of an extra pawn home.

Black has tested in practice many different ideas in order to exchange the dark squared bishops, but he had never been really successful in doing this. See a typical example: 12... ♖d7 13. h4 ♗d8 14. ♗c2 g6 15. ♗xe7 ♗xe7 16. h5 ♗f6 17. hxc6 hxc6 18. ♗d4 e5 19. ♗dh4 ♗e8 20. ♗e3+- and White's attack along the h-file was absolutely unstoppable, Bartel – Jakymov, Budva 2003.

In case of 12... ♖g4, White can follow with 13. ♗xe7 (This idea could have been tried in another fashion too: 13. h4 f6 14. ♗e4 f5 15. ♗xe7 ♗xe7 16. ♗e2±.) 13... ♗xe7 14. ♗e4 f5 15. ♗e2 ♗d7 16. h3 ♖h6 17. ♗he1 ♗ae8 18. ♖e5± and Black ended up with a backward e6-pawn, which was a great liability in his position, Ma. Tseitlin – Kataev, Israel 1996.

The consequences of the trade of bishops after: 12... ♖d5 13. ♗xe7 ♖xe7 (or 13... ♗xe7? 14. ♗xh7+ ♖xh7 15. ♗xd5+- den Kelder – De Ruijsscher, Schagen 2003) 14. h4 h6, Ragione – Liguori, Formia 1995 and 15. g4!?! → can hardly satisfy Black.

The computer programs liked the move 12... ♗a5, but it would not solve all the problems for Black. White can easily parry the attack against his a2-pawn and it becomes clear that Black has

no real counterplay: 13. ♗b1 (Human players liked to act more modestly: 13. ♖b1 ♗d8 14. ♖e5 ♗d5 15. f4 ♗c7, Zpevak – Vavrak, Zvolen 2000, but even then after 16. h4↑ White maintained his initiative.) 13... h6 14. ♗xf6 (The less forced line: 14. ♗h4 ♗d8 15. ♖e5 ♗a4 16. ♗xd8+ ♗xd8 17. ♗d1 ♗c7 18. ♗d4± Comp “Kallisto 66” – Comp “Fritz 3”, 1995 did not solve all problems for Black either.) 14... ♗xf6 15. ♗e4 g6 16. h4 ♗g7 17. h5 f5 18. ♗c4 g5 19. ♖d4 ♗a6 20. ♗xa6 bxa6 21. ♗he1 ♖f7 22. ♖c6 ♖f6 23. ♗c2 ♗h8 (or 23... ♗f7 24. ♗b3 ♗c7 25. ♖d8 e5 26. ♗d5 ♗b8 27. ♖c6 ♗b6 28. ♖xe5+- Comp “Rebel 8” – Comp “Fritz 3”, 1996) 24. f3 ♗e8 25. ♗a4± Comp “Rebel 8” – Comp “Fritz 3”, 1996.

It seems more straightforward for Black to try the move 12... a5 with the idea to break White's defence on the queenside. There might follow: 13. h4 a4 (the move 13... g6, no doubt weakens Black's king and after: 14. ♖e5 a4 15. a3 ♖d5, Kersten – Lubos, Dresden 2003, White can continue his kingside offensive with: 16. ♗xe7 ♖xe7 17. h5→) 14. a3!?! (White should not let his opponent's a-pawn advance too far, because in case of 14. c4?! a3!↑ Black seizes the initiative.) 14... ♗a5 (in case of 14... ♗d8?, White's typical combination works again: 15. ♗xf6! ♗xf6 16. ♗xh7+ ♖xh7 17. ♗xd8 ♗xd8 18. ♗d3+ ♗f5 19. ♗xd8 f6 20. ♗e8+- Bednarski – Knudsen,

Esbjerg 1980; 14...♖d5?!, Burch – I. Rubinstein, Ectool 1999, 15.♙xe7 ♘xe7 16.♚e4 f5 17.♚d4±; while after: 14...♚c7, Spangenberg – Vavra, Mamaia 1991, White should better think about the prophylactic move 15.♗b1!?±) 15.♗he1 ♚c7 16.♙c2 ♖d8 17.♗xd8+ ♙xd8 18.♗e5 ♙e7 19.f4±, and White preserved some advantage, because of his actively placed pieces in the game Sermek – Slekyš, Olomouc 1996.

13.h4!?

It is advantageous for White to keep the tension. After 13.♙e3?! ♚a5 14.♙d4, his intention to exploit the move h7-h6 as a target to organize an effective pawn-on-slaughter on the kingside was refuted quite effectively with: 14...♚xa2 15.♙b1 ♚a5 16.♗e5 ♙d7 17.g4 ♙b5±, Winants – Straat, Haarlem 1997 – and Black remained with an extra pawn and a solid position.

13...♙d7

Black is trying to complete the development of his queenside. He cannot capture White's bishop. After: 13...hxc5? 14.hxc5 ♘g4 (or 14...♗d5 15.♙h7+ ♗h8 16.♚e4+-) 15.♙h7+ ♗h8 16.♚e4 ♘h6 17.gxh6 g6 18.♙xg6 fxg6 19.♗e5 ♖g8 20.h7 ♖g7 21.f4 ♚c7 22.♚xg6!+- Black is helpless against White's oncoming queen-sacrifice 23.♚xg7+!, Bareisz – Hudak, corr. 1994.

In case of: 13...♘g4 14.♙xe7 ♚xe7 15.♗e5 ♘xe5 16.♚xe5 ♙d7 17.♚e4 f5 18.♚xb7± N. Pedersen

– Nilsson, Denmark 1996, Black remains a pawn down.

The other possible retreat of the knight 13...♗d5, after 14.♙xe7!? (The following line is acceptable for Black: 14.♚e4 f5 15.♙xe7 ♚xf2!, Kotronias – Pandavos, Athens 1989, but even then after: 16.♚e1!? ♚xe1 17.♗hxe1 ♘xe7 18.♙c4 ♘c6 19.♙e6+ ♙e6 20.♗e6± the endgame is advantageous for White too.) 14...♚xe7 (If 14...♗xe7, then after 15.g4→, the exposed placement of Black's pawn on the h6-square becomes a wonderful target for White's pawn-on-slaughter on the kingside.) 15.♙h7+! ♗xh7 16.♗xd5 ♗g8 (It is essential that Black cannot play 16...♙d7?!, because of 17.♚d3+-) 17.♗hd1± leads to a position in which Black's "French" bishop is still very bad and his queenside is undeveloped.

Black can ensure in advance the f8-square for the retreat of his king with the move 13...♖d8. Still, his defence remains difficult in that case too: 14.♗e5 ♖d5 15.f4 ♚c7, Wason – Mankinen, corr. 1993 (or 15...a5 16.g4 ♙d6 17.♙xf6 gxf6 18.g5 ♙xe5 19.fxe5 ♖xe5 20.♚h5 ♚f8 21.♗hg1 ♗h8 22.♙c2+- Huuskonen – Jaederholm, corr. 1991) 16.♙xf6 ♙xf6 17.♚e4 ♙xe5 (After: 17...g6 18.h5 ♙xe5 19.fxe5 ♚xe5 20.hxc6 ♚xe4 21.gxf7+ ♗xf7 22.♙xe4 ♖xd1+ 23.♖xd1± Black's queenside is undeveloped and his h6-pawn is very weak too.) 18.fxe5 ♚xe5 19.♚h7+

♗f8 20.♕e4 ♖xd1+ 21.♖xd1 ♗f4+ 22.♖b1→. Black's queen is his only battle unit in action against White's numerous active pieces.

14.g4!

This move suits the spirit of the position perfectly.

In case of: 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 15.♗e4 ♖fd8 16.♗h7+ ♗f8 17.♕e4, White's queen penetrates Black's camp, but after: 17...♗a4!∞, it is not clear how White can proceed with his initiative.

After 14.♗e5 ♗c6 15.♗xc6, the opponents agreed to a draw in the game Panchapagesan – Hassabis, London 1993. We can continue the line: 15...bxc6 16.♕e3 ♗a5 17.♖b1 ♗d5∞, and it becomes obvious that Black has absolutely no problems thanks to the powerful placement of the knight on d5.

14...♖fc8

Black cannot capture White's bishop once again. After 14...hgx5? 15.hxg5 ♗d5 16.♗h7+ ♗h8, White has the problem-like move: 17.♗e1!+–, and Black has no satisfactory defence against the threat: 18.♗g6+ ♗g8 19.♖h8+ ♗xh8 20.♗h1+ ♗g8 21.♗h7#.

It is also dangerous for Black to accept the pawn sacrifice with: 14...♗xg4?!, because of: 15.♗xe7 ♗xe7 16.♖hg1 h5 17.♗e5→, while in case of 14...♗c6, White can follow with: 15.♕e3 ♗a5 16.g5 ♗d5 17.♗d2 ♗xa2 18.♗b1 ♗a1 19.♗e5∞, and he has an excellent compensation.

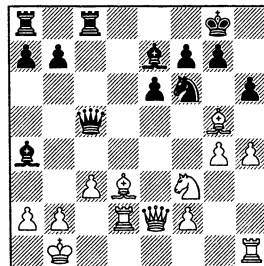
15.♖b1

This prophylactic king-move is quite necessary in that situation. White's attempt to proceed with the pawn-onslaught with: 15.♗xf6 ♗xf6 16.g5 (16.♗h7+ ♗xh7 17.♖xd7 ♗g8∞) can be countered by Black with: 16...♗xc3! 17.bxc3 ♗xc3+ 18.♖b1 ♗c6! (It is too bad for Black to play 18...♖c6?, because after 19.♗d4+– White manages to bring his knight to the defence of his king.) 19.♗e5 (19.gxh6 ♗xf3 20.♗xf3 ♖c6→) 19...♗xh1 20.gxh6 ♗b4+ 21.♗b2 ♗xb2+ 22.♖xb2 gxh6 23.♖xh1∞, and there arises an endgame in which Black's chances are at least equal.

15...♗a4

White's bishop is again un-touchable. After 15...hgx5? 16.hxg5 ♗d5 17.♗h7+ ♗f8 18.♕e4 ♗g8 19.♗xd5 exd5 20.♗d3 g6 21.♗e5+–, White's queen joins in the attack against Black's king along the third rank with a decisive effect.

16.♗d2↑



That is the critical position. White plans to exchange on f6 and to follow with a pawn-offensive on the kingside. Black can

hardly prevent that with the help of the move: 16...hxg5?, because of: 17.hxg5 ♖d5 (17...♗xg4 18.♖e4 ♜f5 19.♝xa4 ♝xf3 20.♙h7+ ♔f8 and 21.♙e4!+-) 18.♖e4±, and Black's bishop on a4 comes under attack on top of the quite vulnerable black king.

Conclusion

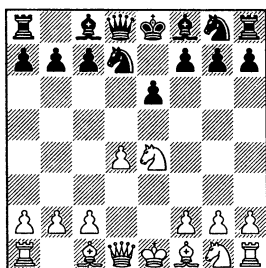
We have analyzed in our Chapter 6 the variation with the move 4...♙e7. Its idea is to exchange White's powerful knight on the e4-square. That should facilitate for Black his thematic pawn-break c7-c5. Contrary to the variation, which we had analyzed in chapter four, here Black is not afraid of the immediate exchange of the knights on f6. He postpones the solution of the problem with his light squared bishop for a later stage.

One of the important drawbacks of that plan is the fact that after the exchange of the knights, White manages to deploy his bishop on e4 in the very middle of the board. This forces Black to support the move c7-c5 with his dark squared bishop, since the knight from b8 must go to the f6-square in order to repel White's bishop. These developments are quite typical for a group of variations under our index a. It is very important for White to preserve that bishop from being exchanged. If the bishop remains on the a8-h1 diagonal, Black has great problems to develop his queenside. In case White retreats that bishop along the b1-h7 diagonal, then he should think about the preparation of a kingside attack.

Black tried to modernize all his ideas later. At first he plans to complete his development according to the scheme – ♙e7, ♖f6, ♖bd7, 0-0, b6, ♙b7 and he starts the preparation of the pawn-break c7-c5 only after that (see our notes to the move 7.♖e2 in variation b). White tries to impede that scheme of development with the move 7.♖e2!?. This practically forces Black to play c7-c5 either immediately, or on the next move. There arises a very complicated struggle in which every tempo becomes important. White often exchanges on c5 in his fight to win a tempo (variations b1b and b2), forcing Black to play another move with an already developed piece. In order to sharpen the game to the maximum, White often castles long (variation b2). The importance of each tempo increases considerably in positions with opposite sides castling and that is quite favourable for White, because of his lead in development.

Chapter 7

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4
♗d7



5.♗f3

White sometimes tries to save a tempo for that move with the knight in order to castle long as quickly as possible. After 5.♗d3, Black can play: 5...♗g6 6.♞e2 c5 (6...♗e7 7.♗f3 transposes to Chapter 6) 7.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 8.dxc5 ♗xc5 9.♗d2 0-0 10.0-0-0 ♞d5 11.♗b1, and here Black can follow with 11...e5! (it is worse for him to play 11...♞xg2, because after 12.♗f3 ♞xf2 13.♞e5, White has good compensation for the sacrificed pawn) making use of the absence of White's knight on the f3-square. Now, the complications after 12.♗g5 (in case of 12.♗c3?!, Black can already capture the pawn: 12...♞xg2, because after 13.♗f3 ♗g4 14.♞xe5 ♗xf2 15.♗g5 ♗xd1 16.♗xh7+ ♗h8+ White has

no compensation for the sacrificed material.) 12...e4 13.♗xf6 exd3 14.♞xd3 ♞c6 15.♗c3 ♞e8 16.♞f3 ♞xf3 17.♞xf3 g6 18.♗h3 ♗f5, led to an endgame in which Black had excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn in the game, Lupulescu – Jeremic, Kavala 2004.

5...♗g6

Black is trying with this move to eliminate White's powerful knight on e4 and then to push c7-c5, facilitating his defence considerably.

The immediate move 5...c5?! might end up in a catastrophe for Black. After: 6.dxc5! ♗xc5 (He can give up one of his bishops outright with: 6...♗xc5 7.♗xc5 ♞a5+ 8.c3 ♞xc5 9.♗e3 and thus he can somehow slow down White's attack, but his position in case of: 9...♞e7 10.♞a4!? ♗g6 11.♗d3 0-0 12.♞h4± Trautmann – Hoppe, corr. 1972, as well as after: 9...♞c7 10.♗d4 a6 11.♞g4 ♞e5 12.♗f3 ♞f6 13.♗g5 h5 14.♞h4 ♞f5 15.0-0-0± Croenne – Perrien, La Fere 2003, remains very difficult, indeed.) 7.♞xd8+ ♗xd8 8.♗g5+!? f6 9.0-0-0+ ♗e8 10.♗b5+ ♗f7

and White has a great lead in development. It is even more energetic for him to follow with: 11.♞d8! ♙e7 (11...fxg5 12.♟e5+ ♜e7 13.♞e8#; 11...♟xe4 12.♟e5+ ♜e7 13.♞e8+ ♜d6 14.♟f7+ ♜c5 15.♞xf8 ♟xg5 16.♟xh8 ♜xb5 17.♞xg8 g6 18.♞e1 e5 19.f4+-) 12.♟e5+ fxe5 13.♟d6+ ♜g6 (13...♟xd6 14.♙e8+ 1-0 Pevny – Barta, Slovakia 2001.) 14.♙xe7 ♟xe7 15.♞xh8+- and White had a decisive material advantage in the game, Pleci – Endzelins, Buenos Aires 1939.

The move with the other knight – 5...♟df6 6.♙d3 (It is not necessary for White to avoid the exchange of the knights with: 6.♟g3 ♟e7 7.♙d3 ♟g6 8.0-0 ♙d6∞ Kotan – Briestensky, Bratislava 1986.) after: 6...♟xe4 7.♙xe4 ♟f6 8.♙g5, transposes to variation **b**.

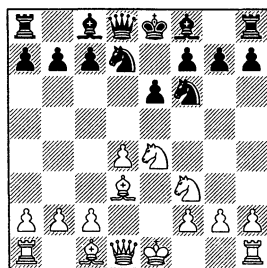
After: 5...♙e7 6.♙d3 b6 7.♙b5, or 6...♟gf6 7.♞e2, there arise positions from Chapter 6, while 5...b6 6.♙b5 has been analyzed in Chapter 3 variation **c** – see 4...b6 5.♟f3 ♟d7 6.♙b5.

It is a serious loss of time for Black if he plays: 5...h6. As a result of: 6.♙d3 ♟gf6 (About 7...♙e7 8.♞e2 ♟gf6 9.♙d2 – see 4...♙e7 5.♟f3 h6, Chapter 6.) 7.♞e2 c5 (As for 7...♙e7 8.♙d2, see Chapter 6; after 7...♟xe4 8.♙xe4, Black loses a pawn with 8...♟f6, due to 9.♙xb7!± Panajotov – Va.Ivanov, Pamporovo 2001; while in case of 7...♟d5, Bertolucci – Glorioso, corr. 1984, White's simplest line is

8.0-0, with the idea to follow with c2-c4 and the line: 8...♟b4 9.♙c4 ♟b6 10.♙b3± provides White with a huge lead in development.) 8.0-0 a6 9.♙f4 ♟xe4 10.♙xe4 ♟f6 11.♞ad1 ♟xe4 12.♞xe4 cxd4 13.♟xd4 ♞b6 14.♟f5± and the only developed black piece is the queen, Handke – Elbilia, France 2003.

6.♙d3

White here has another possibility, which is being tested quite often nowadays – that is the line: 6.♟xf6+ ♟xf6 7.c3!? (White prepares the move with his queen to the a4-square – usually after ♟e5; while after the more natural move 7.♙d3, Black can follow with: 7...c5 8.dxc5 ♙xc5 9.♞e2 0-0 10.0-0 b6 11.♙g5 ♙b7 12.♞ad1 ♞c7 13.♟e5 ♞fd8=, and so he can easily complete his development and equalize.) 7...c5 8.♟e5 a6 (preventing 9.♙b5+) 9.♙e3 (White plays here sometimes 9.♙g5 with the idea after 9...h6 10.♙e3, to establish his knight on the reliable outpost on e5.) 9...♞c7 10.♞a4+ ♟d7 11.0-0-0∞.



After the development of

White's bishop to d3 – Black as a rule chooses one of the following three possibilities: **a) 6...b6**, **b) 6...♗xe4** and **6...c5** (Chapter 8).

About 6...h6 7.♖e2 – see 5...h6; in case of 6...♗e7 7.♖e2, we reach a position that we have already analysed in Chapter 6.

After 6...a6 7.♖e2 c5 (In case of: 7...♗xe4 8.♗xe4 ♗f6 9.♗g5 ♗e7 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6, Gorelikov – V.Nikolaev, St Petersburg 2005, the best for White is to evacuate his king to the queenside 11.0–0–0†) 8.♗g5 (White can provide his bishop with a bright future along the b1–h7 diagonal with the line: 8.c3 cxd4 9.♗xd4†) 8...♗e7, Balinov – Staller, Schwarzach 2001 and here White has the strong move – 9.dxc5!†

a) 6...b6

Now, in comparison to variation c, which had been analyzed in Chapter 3 the plan with the development of the bishop along the a8–h1 diagonal seems to be much more attractive for Black.

7.♖e2!?

White must play extremely precisely if he wishes to obtain maximal dividends out of his lead in development. Therefore, he should opt for a position with opposite sides castling. After some calmer developments, in a position with mutual short castling, White can hardly hope for an opening advantage. You can see a good illustration of that in our

Chapter 6 – see 4...♗e7 5. ♗f3 ♗f6 6.♗d3 ♗bd7 7.0–0 0–0 8.♖e2 b6.

The main difference with variation c, which had been analyzed in Chapter 3 is that White's bishop has already been developed on the d3-square and the idea to give a check on b5 would not work here: 7.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 8.♗e5 ♗b7 9.♗b5+, due to: 9...c6! 10.♗xc6+ (After 10.♗xc6 ♖d5 11.c4 ♖xg2 12.♗e5+ White can continue with a discovered check and thus he would deprive Black of his castling rights: 12...♗d8 13.♖f1 ♗b4+♞ Gudmundsson – Solmundarson, Reykjavik 1982, but he does not end up with any advantage out of that.) 10...♗xc6 11.♗xc6 ♖d5! =. Now, Black can restore the material balance with the help of a simple double attack.

7...♗b7

We already know from Chapter 6 that in answer to 7...♗e7, White has the powerful reply 8.♗e5!

8.♗xf6+ ♗xf6

It is too bad for Black to play 8...♖xf6?, because after 9.♗g5 ♗xf3 10.♖e3!+–, he loses his queen.

9.♗g5!?

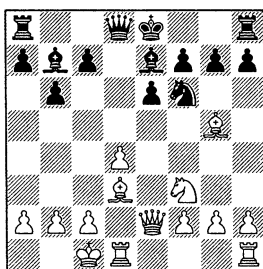
White achieves much less after: 9.♗d2, due to 9...♗e7 10.c4 (10.0–0–0 0–0 11.c3 c5 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.c4 ♖d6 14.♗e5 ♖a6 15.a3 ♖ad8∞ Belikov – Khudyakov, Alushta 2001.) 10...c5!? 11.dxc5 ♗xc5 12.h3 ♖d6 13.♗c2 ♗b4 (Black's defence is much easier

after the trade of a couple of bishops.) 14.0-0-0 ♖xd2+ 15.♞xd2 ♜f4 16.♙a4+ ♔e7∞, and Black had a good game, despite the loss of his castling rights in the game Zufic – Mufic, Pula 2000.

9...♙e7

In case of 9...h6, Black should worry about the line: 10.♙xf6 gxf6 (10...♜xf6?! 11.♙b5 c6 12.♘e5 ♞c8 13.d5!±) 11.0-0-0 ♜d6 (Black's situation becomes much worse in case of: 11...♜d5?! 12.♙c4, because 12...♜e4 13.♙b5+ ♔d8 14.♜d2± leads to the loss of his castling rights, while the variation: 12...♜a5 13.d5 e5 14.♘e5+- loses for Black immediately, Fridjonsson – Solmundarson, Reykjavik 1982.) 12.♙a6 (It is advisable for White to deprive Black of his bishop pair.) 12...0-0-0 13.♞he1 c6 14.♔b1 ♙g7 15.♙xb7+ ♔xb7 16.c4± Short – Korchnoi, Tilburg 1991, and White had some advantage thanks to his superior pawn-structure.

10.0-0-0



Now, it is principled for Black to follow with **a1) 10...h6**, as well as with **a2) 10...0-0**.

Black has also tried in practice some other various alternatives. The common idea behind all of them is in fact the same – he wishes to simplify maximally the position by exchanges.

Here, despite the fact that following: 10...♘g4 11.♙xe7 ♜xe7 12.♙e4 c6 (or 12...♙d5 13.♙xd5!? exd5 14.♜b5+ ♜d7 15.♞he1+ ♔d8 16.♜f1±) 13.♘e5 ♘xe5 14.dxe5 0-0 15.♞d6 ♞ad8 16.♞hd1± Black achieves what he was after, the outcome of the opening cannot be satisfactory for him. White is dominant on the d-file and that provides him with a great advantage.

Black can try to simplify the game a bit with the move 10...♘d5. In this case it is possible for White to continue with 11.h4!?! h6 (Opening of the h-file, followed by castling short after: 11...♙xg5+? 12.hxg5 ♘f4 13.♜e5 ♘xd3+ 14.♞xd3 0-0 15.g6! ♜d5 16.♞xh7 ♜xe5 17.♘xe5 ♙xg2 18.♞h2+- equals for Black a mere suicide, Zhao – Zvedeniouk, Canberra 2004. It is not much better for him to play: 11...♜d6? 12.♘e5 ♘b4 13.♙c4 ♙d5?! 14.♙xe7 ♜xe7 15.a3 ♙xc4 16.♜xc4 ♘d5 17.♜c6+- Kotz – Walzl, Leiner 1996; 11...♘b4 12.♙e4 ♙xe4 13.♜xe4 ♜d5 14.♜xd5 ♘xd5 15.c4 ♘f6 16.♞he1 c6 17.d5 cxd5 18.cxd5 ♞c8+ 19.♔b1 ♞d8 20.dxe6 ♞xd1+ 21.♞xd1 fxe6 22.♞e1±, as in the game Marzolo – Gouret, France 1998) 12.♙d2 ♜d6 (In case of:

12...♔d6 13. ♖e5 ♗f6 14. ♔b5+ c6
 15. ♖xc6 0-0 16. ♖e5 ♗fc8 17. ♖b1
 a6 18. ♔d3 ♖f4, Nataf – Sube,
 France 1992, after: 19. ♔xf4 ♗xf4
 20. g3 ♗f6 21. ♗he1± Black's com-
 pensation for the pawn is insuf-
 ficient.) 13. ♖e5 (after the inclu-
 sion of the moves h7-h6 and h2-
 h4, Black will be hardly willing
 to castle short...) 13...♗f8 14. ♖c4
 ♗d7 15. ♖e5 ♗d6 16. ♔e4 0-0-0
 17. c4 f5 (17...♖f6 18. ♔xb7+ ♖xb7
 19. ♗f3+ c6 20. ♔f4+-) 18. ♔f3
 ♖f6 19. ♔xb7+ ♖xb7 20. ♔f4±, and
 Black had great difficulties, be-
 cause of the gaping hole on the e5-
 square in the game Roselli Mailhe
 – Freire, Embalse 1981.

The same idea can be tested
 in another fashion with the move
 10...♖d7. White can counter that
 with 11.h4!? (according to the
 analysis of GM E.Sutovsky after
 11. ♔xe7 11...♗xe7 12. ♗he1 0-0
 13.d5 ♖c5 14. ♔c4±, White is still
 slightly better) 11...♔xf3 12. ♗xf3
 ♔xg5+ 13.hxg5 ♗xg5+ 14. ♖b1 ♔d8
 (14...♖e7 15. ♔e4 ♔ad8 16. ♗a3+
 c5 17. ♗xa7 ♗f4 18.f3±) and here
 after 15. ♗h5!? (15. ♔xh7 ♗f6!? 16.
 ♗c6 g6∞; in case of 15.d5, Su-
 tovsky – Akopian, Moscow (m/1)
 2002, Black could have accepted
 the pawn-sacrifice: 15...♗xd5!
 16. ♔e4 ♗e5 17. ♔c6 ♖e7 18. ♗he1
 ♗c5 19. ♗xd7+ ♗xd7 20. ♔xd7
 ♖xd7 21. ♗xf7+ ♖c8 22. ♗xg7 ♔d8
 23. ♗xh7 ♗xf2 24. ♗e4 ♖b8=,
 Sutovsky) 15...♗f6 16. ♗e3∞ and
 White has good compensation for
 the sacrificed pawn.

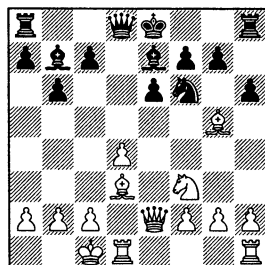
Black has another try at his
 disposal connected with the idea
 to simplify the position with the
 line: 10...♔xf3 11. ♗xf3 ♗d5. In that
 case White can preserve his initia-
 tive with: 12. ♗xd5 (after 12. ♔b5+
 ♖f8, White cannot keep his two
 bishop advantage, while the ex-
 changes: 13. ♔xf6 ♔xf6 14. ♗xd5
 exd5 15. ♔c6 ♔d8 16. ♗he1 g6 17.b4
 ♖g7 18.b5 ♔d6 19.c3 ♗hd8=, are
 not dangerous for Black, because
 of the presence of opposite col-
 oured bishops on the board, ♔usch
 – Diesterweg, Deidesheim 2000.)
 12...♖xd5 13. ♔b5+ ♖f8 14. ♔d2
 ♔d8 (14...♔f6 15.c4 ♖e7 16. ♔b4
 a6 17. ♔c6 ♔d8 18.d5± Costantini
 – Castaldo, Aymavilles 2000; 14...
 h5 15. ♗he1 ♔d8 16.c3 g6 17.a3 ♔d6
 18.c4± A.Peter – G.Acs, Hungary
 1993; 14...h6 15.c4 ♖f6 16. ♗he1
 ♔d8 17. ♔c3 h5 18. ♗e2 h4 19. ♔c6
 ♗h6 20. ♗de1± Zaragatski – Rohl-
 mann, Ruhrgebiet 1999.) 15. ♗hf1
 h6 16.h3 g6 17.c4↑ Gentes – Lu-
 kic, Manitoba 1996.

White preserves good attack-
 ing chances after: 10...♗d5 11. ♖b1
 0-0 (Black's attempt to evacu-
 ate his king to the queenside is
 not so safe at all: 11...0-0-0
 12. ♖e5 ♗df8 13.f3 ♖b8 14. ♔b5
 ♖a8 15.c4 ♗d6, in view of: 16.c5!
 bxc5 17.dxc5 ♗xc5, Limbos – Fer-
 ry, Bruges 1961 and White wins
 the exchange after: 18. ♔xf6 ♔xf6
 19. ♖d7 ♗f5+ 20. ♔d3±; if 11...h6,
 Schwamberger – Jaeger, Ger-
 many 1986, then 12. ♔f4± and
 it is not good for Black to play

12...0-0-0?, because of: 13.♘e5 ♜hf8 14.♙c4 ♚xg2 15.♘xf7+-) 12.h4. For example, in case of: 12...♜fe8 (12...c5? 13.♙xf6! ♙xf6 14.♘g5 h6 15.♙h7+ ♘h8 16.♙e4 ♚d7 17.dxc5 ♚c7 18.♙xb7 ♚xb7 19.♚d3 g6 20.♚d7+-; 12...♚a5? 13.♘e5 ♞ad8 14.♘g4 ♘h8 15.♘xf6 ♙xf6 16.♙xf6 gxf6 17.♚e3 f5 18.♚h6 f6 19.♞he1+- A.Martin – Moyano Morales, Barcelona 1984; 12...h6?! 13.♘e5 ♜fd8 14.f3 ♞ab8 15.♙f4 ♘h5 16.♙h2± Jagodzinska – Kaczorowska, Bydgoszcz 1990; 12...♜fd8 13.c4 ♚d6 14.♞he1 h6 15.♙c1 ♙f8 16.♘e5 ♘d7 17.g4 → D. Bronstein – Kan, Moscow 1947) White can play 13.♘e5 ♞ad8 14.♞he1 a6 15.♙c4↑, and in the game Kondratiev – B.Beliavsky, Leningrad 1966, White managed to preserve his initiative.

In case of: 10...♚d6 11.♘e5 0-0 12.♘b1 ♞ad8, it deserves attention for White to follow with: 13.♙f4! (after 13.c4 h6 14.♙f4 ♚xd4! 15.♙h7+ ♘xh7 16.♞xd4 ♞xd4 17.♙e3 ♞e4 18.♘f3 ♞d8≡, Black had good compensation for the sacrificed queen in the game Topalov – Vaganian, Novgorod 1995.) 13...♘d5 (after 13...♚d5 14.c4 ♚xd4 15.♙xh7+ ♘xh7 16.♞xd4 ♞xd4 17.♙e3±, according to GM Dolmatov, Black has no sufficient compensation for the queen) 14.♘xf7 ♚xf4 15.♘xd8 ♞xd8 16.♚xe6+ ♘f8 17.♞he1±, and White preserved some advantage having a rook and two pawns for two light pieces.

a1) 10...h6



11.♙d2!?

It looks like Black's last move can be easily refuted with: 11.♙xf6 ♙xf6 (11...gxf6 12.d5±) 12.d5 (12.♙e4 ♙xe4 13.♚xe4 0-0 14.d5 exd5 15.♞xd5 ♚c8=) 12...♙xd5 13.♙b5+, but it is not so simple at all. After: 13...♘f8 (13...♘e7? 14.c4 ♙xf3 15.♚xf3 ♚c8 16.♙c6 ♙g5+ 17.♘b1 ♞b8 18.h4 ♙xh4 19.♞xh4+- Geisler – Link, Bayern 1999) 14.c4 (14.♙c6? ♙xb2+ 15.♘xb2 ♚f6↑) 14...a6 15.♙c6 (in case of 15.♙a4, Black gets rid of the pin with the help of: 15...♚d6! 16.cxd5 ♚f4+ 17.♘b1 ♚xa4 18.dxe6 ♞e8∞, while after: 15.cxd5 axb5 16.dxe6, Black equalizes with: 16...♚e8=) 15...♙xc6 16.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 17.♞e1 ♘g8≡, and Black has good compensation for the queen.

11...0-0

The inclusion of the move h7-h6 does not seem right for Black in case he castles short. White obtains a target now (Black's h6-pawn) on the kingside, but it is not easy to recommend to Black anything better anyway...

After 11...♚d5 12.c4 ♚h5, it is

very effective for White to follow with the pawn-break 13.d5!, for example: 13...exd5 14.♞he1 ♘g8 15.♗c3 ♘f8 16.♗b1 ♗f6 17.♗xf6 gxf6 18.h3± Kotronias – Kourkounakis, Gausdal 1990, and White's attack against the black king stranded in the centre is very dangerous.

Following: 11...a6 12.c4 b5 13.c5!? (White should not count pawns when he opens files on the queenside...: 13.cxb5 axb5 14.♗xb5+ c6 15.♗c4 ♖c8 16.♘e5 c5= Tzermadianos – Managadze, Athens 2004.) 13...♗d5 14.♗b1 0–0–0 15.♘e5 ♞f8 16.f3 ♗b8 (Black cannot capture the pawn 16...♗xd4, because of 17.c6! ♗a8 18.♗c2 ♖c5 19.♘xf7+–) 17.♗c2± and after the deployment of White's bishop to the b3-square Black's position will look rather miserable.

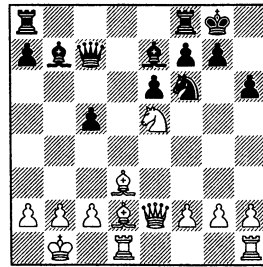
12.♗b1

White cannot avoid playing that prophylactic move. After 12.♞hg1, he should consider the line: 12...c5!? 13.c3 ♖c8 14.♗b1 cxd4 15.♘xd4 ♗c5 16.g4 ♗xd4 17.cxd4 ♖xd4 18.♗xh6 ♗a4 19.b3 ♖b4 20.♗d2 ♗d4= Hector – Greтарsson, Gausdal 1998.

12...c5 13.dxc5 bxc5 14.♘e5 ♖c7

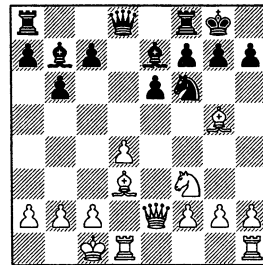
(diagram)

This position was reached in the game Borzakian – Borisov, Paris 2002. After: **15.♞hg1↑**, White could have emphasized the drawbacks of Black's move h7-



h6 by a forward-march of his g-pawn.

a2) 10...0–0



11.♗b1!

Black only needs now to push c7-c5 in order to be perfectly happy. This is exactly what White must prevent at all costs.

The typical move for positions with opposite castling – 11.h4, enables Black to open files on the queenside with 11...c5! and after 12.dxc5 (The prophylactic: 12.♗b1 ♖c7 13.♞h3 ♞fd8 14.dxc5 ♖xc5= seems to be already too late, Milner-Barry – Wade, Nottingham 1946.) 12...♖c7 13.♗xf6 (Or 13.cxb6 axb6 14.♗b1 ♞fc8=; after 13.♘e5 ♖xc5, White does not achieve anything special with: 14.♘d7 ♘d7 15.♗xh7+ ♗xh7 16.

♖xd7 ♜c6! 17.♚d3+ ♔g8 18. ♙xe7
 ♜xg2=, while in case of: 14. ♙xf6
 ♙xf6 15. ♔d7, White's king turns
 out to be vulnerable after: 15...
 ♙b2+! 16. ♔xb2 ♜b4+ 17. ♔c1
 ♜a3+ 18. ♔d2 ♜a5+ 19. c3 ♜fd8
 20. ♔e5 ♜ac8≙ 13... ♙xf6 14. ♔g5
 (The sacrifice – 14. ♙xh7+? ♔xh7
 15. ♔g5+ ♔g8 16. ♜h5, is incor-
 rect, due to: 16... ♜f4+! 17. ♔b1
 ♜f5–+) 14... g6 (or 14... h6? 15.
 ♔h7±) 15. ♔e4 (Once again the
 sacrifice does not work for White:
 15. ♔xh7? ♔xh7 16. h5, because of
 16... ♜e5!.) 15... ♙g7 16. h5 bxc5
 17. hxg6 hxg6 18. c3 ♜ab8 19. ♜e3
 ♙xe4 20. ♙xe4 ♜a5!∞ and Black's
 chances are at least equal, Class
 – Besser, Germany 1976.

11... ♔d5

About 11... ♜d5 12. h4 – see
 10... ♜d5.

Black's most principled answer
 here – 11... c5?!, as a result of:
 12. dxc5 ♜c7 13. ♔e5! (White
 should not open additional files
 on the queenside with: 13. cxb6
 axb6≙ A. Hoffmann – Secula, Bre-
 men 1997.) leads to a difficult po-
 sition for Black. Only the move
 13... bxc5 enables him to preserve
 the material balance (Black loses
 the exchange in case of: 13...
 ♜fd8? 14. c6! ♙xc6 15. ♔xc6 ♜xc6
 16. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 17. ♙e4+– Galego
 – C. Santos, Maceira 1997; after:
 13... ♜xc5 14. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 15. ♔d7
 ♜b4 16. c3!? ♙xc3 17. ♔xf8 ♜xf8
 18. a3 ♜b3 19. ♜c2 ♜xc2+ 20. ♙xc2
 ♙f6 21. f3± you can see quite
 clearly the effect of the prophy-

lactic move of White's king to the
 b1-square.) 14. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 15. ♔d7
 ♜fd8 (or 15... ♙d4?! 16. ♔xf8 ♜xf8
 17. c3 ♙f6 18. ♙e4+– De Firmian –
 Jacobi, USA 1989.) 16. ♔xf6+ gxf6
 17. ♜g4+ ♔f8 18. ♜h4 ♔e7, Lagra-
 eve – Ferry, Val d'Isere 2002.
 After 19. f3!± White's advantage
 is overwhelming, due to the vul-
 nerable placement of Black's
 king and his compromised pawn-
 structure.

The move 11... ♜c8 is aimed at
 the preparation of the pawn-ad-
 vance c7-c5, but after 12. ♔e5↑,
 Black has nothing to brag about.
 His attempt to fulfill that idea at
 any rate with: 12... c5?? 13. dxc5
 bxc5 14. ♙xf6 gxf6 15. ♙xh7+– led
 him to an immediate surrender in
 the game Sziraki – Schwing, Bal-
 tonbereny 1994.

White obtains the two bishop
 advantage after: 11... ♙xf3 12. ♜xf3
 ♜d5, Skold – M. Johansson, Stock-
 holm 1966 and he should better
 try to utilize it in the middle game
 with – 13. ♜g3↑.

Black intends to simplify the
 position with the move 11... ♔d7,
 but it turns out after: 12. ♙e3!?
 ♙f6 13. h4 ♜e8 14. ♔g5 ♔f8 15. ♜h5
 g6 16. ♜g4 h5 17. ♜g3 ♜d6 18. f4↑,
 that he fails to solve any of his
 problems, Cohn – Lowcki, Bre-
 slau 1912.

The move 11... a5 is interest-
 ing for Black. In this case we can
 recommend to White to follow
 with: 12. ♔e5! (The simplifica-
 tions after: 12. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 13. ♙e4

♗xe4 14. ♖xe4 ♖d5= Turicnik – Garibaldi, corr. 2002 are advantageous for Black, while the attempt to attack by sacrificing material for White with: 12.h4 a4 13. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 14. ♗g5 g6 15. ♗xh7 ♗xh7 16. h5 ♗g7 17.hxg6 ♖xd4 18.c3 ♖e5∞ is not very impressive..., Mortenson – Drewes, corr. 1997) 12...a4 (with the idea to push that pawn to a3...) 13.a3±. Black has failed to solve his main problems – to prepare c7-c5 and to simplify the position, so he is too far from complete equality.

12.h4 ♖d6

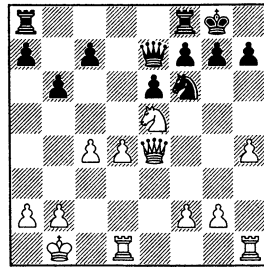
In case Black wishes to repel White's bishop from the g5-square, he should have done that before castling. Now, he is just inviting a direct kingside attack with: 12...h6?! 13.c4!/? (White's initiative is quite powerful even after his calmer lines like: 13. ♗d2 ♗b4 14. ♗xb4 ♗xb4 15.g4 ♖f6 16. ♖h3↑ Tejero Garces – Maroto Borrás, Spain 1994.) 13...♗f6 14. ♗c1 c5 15.g4 cxd4 16.g5 ♗h5 17. ♖hg1→ Vlcek – Kovacoc, Slovakia 1999.

If Black persists in his attempt to exchange pieces with the move 12...♗b4, this is going to lead to a weakening of his kingside after: 13. ♗xe7 ♖xe7 14. ♗g5! ♗xd3 15. ♖xd3 g6 16.f4 h5 17. ♖hg1↑ I.Johannsson – Besser, Halle 1967.

13. ♗e5 ♗b4 14. ♗xe7 ♖xe7 15. ♗e4 ♗xe4 16. ♖xe4 ♗d5

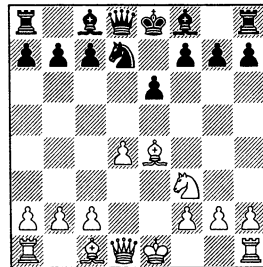
It would not work for Black to play here 16...c5?!, because of 17.dxc5 bxc5 18. ♗d7±.

17.c4 ♗f6



18. ♖c6! (After 18. ♖f3, Black manages to accomplish his thematic pawn-break – 18...c5! 19. ♖he1 cxd4 20. ♖xd4 ♖c5= Spassky – Schoenhof, Burbach 1996.) **18...♖d6 19. ♖he1±.** The position has been simplified considerably, but Black is still far from equality, because he cannot easily organize the pawn-advance c7-c5 at all.

b) 6...♗xe4 7. ♗xe4



7...♗f6

After 7...♗e7 8. ♖e2 we have a transposition to Chapter 6, while after 7...c5 8.0–0, the game transposes to Chapter 8.

The risky move 7...f5?! can only be described as a positional

capitulation. After: 8.♔d3 ♘f6 9.♙e3 ♙d6 10.♚e2 c6 11.0-0-0 ♘d5 12.c3 ♘xe3 13.♚xe3 0-0 14.♙c4± the vulnerability of Black's e6-pawn and the e5-square guarantees White an overwhelming advantage, Charousek – J.Pap, corr. 1901.

After 7...♙d6, White's most logical reaction is: 8.♚e2!? 0-0 (or 8...♘f6? 9.♙xb7!±) 9.♙g5 ♙e7 (or 9...♘f6 10.0-0-0↑) 10.h4↑.

8.♙g5!

White is trying to complete his development as quickly as possible. We will now analyse the following possibilities for Black: **b1) 8...h6**, **b2) 8...♙e7** and **b3) 8...♚d6**.

Black's move 8...c5 usually leads again to transpositions, because after 9.0-0, we are back to Chapter 8.

b1) 8...h6 9.♙xf6

White's strategy should rely mostly on his lead in development and that is why he presents Black with a bishop pair.

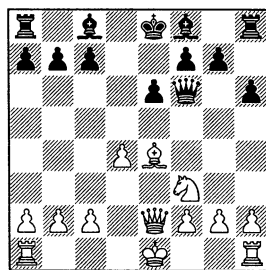
9...♚xf6

After 9...gxf6 10.♚e2 c5 (10...♚d6 11.0-0-0 ♙g7 12.♙b1 0-0 13.h4 f5 14.♙d3 c5 15.c3 cxd4 16.♘xd4 a6 17.g4!→ Landre – Tetenkina, Avoine 2003; In answer to 10...c6, G.Guseinov – D.Petrosian, Lahijan 2005, it deserved attention for White to play 11.0-0↑, in order to start quickly an offensive in the centre with c2-c4 and d4-d5.) 11.0-0-0 cxd4

12.♘xd4 ♚b6 13.♙d3±, White's lead in development was just awesome in the game Nunez Munoz – Hernandez Yanez, Madrid 2001.

10.♚e2

White is now threatening the typical combination with the temporary sacrifice of the bishop on b7. He plays sometimes the move 10.♚d3 with the same purpose. After 10...a6, in the game Antal – Wolter, Budapest 2001, White decided not to castle long and played instead 11.♚b3, and as a result of 11...c6 12.♚b6 ♚d8 13.♚xd8+ ♘xd8 14.♘e5 ♙e7 15.h4 ♙d7 16.♙h3 ♙e8 17.♙b3 ♙a7 18.a4±, he dissipated most of his advantage.



10...c6

In case of 10...♙d6, the following typical combination becomes very effective: 11.♙xb7! ♙xb7 12.♚b5+ ♙e7 13.♚xb7 ♙ab8 14.♚xa7 ♚g6 15.0-0 ♚xc2, Savon – Mochalov, Orel 1998. If White had followed that with the right move – 16.♘e5!±, his advantage would have become really overwhelming.

Black can prevent White's combination with the move 10...a6. On the other hand, after that move his lag in development becomes even more telling and after: 11.0-0-0 d6 12. b1 0-0 13.h4 Bb8 (13... e7 14.g4 → Short – Zhu Chen, Gibraltar 2006) 14.g4 d7 15.g5 →, White has a powerful attack against the black king, E.Alexeev – Korobov, Oropesa del Mar 2001.

11. d3 Bb8

After 11...d7 12.0-0 d6 13.f4 e7 14. h5, Black is obliged to play 14... f8 and he forfeits the possibility to castle short in that game altogether, and as a result of: 15.c3 0-0-0 16.b4 →, White has the possibility of a powerful pawn-onslaught on the queen-side, Lindemann – Cawi, Germany 1982.

Black can get rid of the powerful white knight on e5 with the help of the line: 11...d6 12. dxc6 d7 13. d3 e5 e5 14. dxb7 Bb8 15.dxe5 d8 16. e4 Bxb2 17.0-0 b5 18. e3 0-0 19. Bf1 Bxb1+ 20. Bxb1 ±, but only at the cost of a pawn, Buettner – Rochel, corr. 2001.

12. f4!

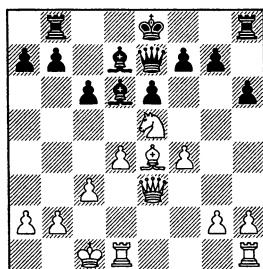
White's knight now is very solidly placed in the centre.

12... b4+

Black should not accept the pawn-sacrifice with the move 12... xf4?. After 13.g3 g5 14. 0-0 f5 15. dxf5! exf5 16. d3 g6+ b7 17. d3 h8+ b7 18. e3 a8

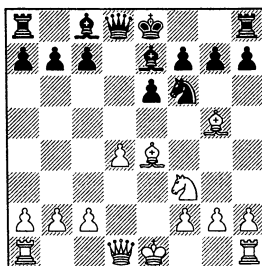
19. e8+ →, he loses by force. It is also not so good for him to play: 12...g6, because after: 13. e3 g7 14.0-0-0 0-0 15.h4 →, White has an overwhelming kingside attack and Black has nothing to counter it with.

13.c3 d6 14. e3 e7 15. 0-0-0 d7



16.g4 (Black is already almost beyond salvation.) 16... d8 (in case of 16...0-0? 17.g5 hxg5 18.fxg5 →, Black will hardly survive for long) 17.c4 b7, Sutovsky – Shachar, Tel Aviv 2002. Here White had to follow with: 18.c5!? e5 19.dxe5 Bbd8 20. d6 g5 21.h4 gxh4 22. h3 ± (A.Finkel) and White would have an overwhelming advantage.

b2) 8... e7



9. ♖xf6!

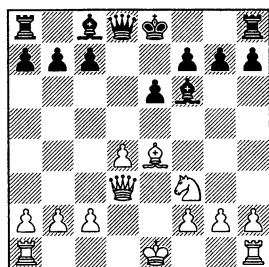
White does not lose any time to retreat with his dark-squared bishop and continues to play in the spirit of the line **b1**. His strategy is aimed at exploiting his lead in development.

9... ♖xf6

The move 9...gxf6 is not played anymore, because of 10. ♖e2. After 10...c6 (10...f5? 11. ♖xb7!+-; 10...0-0 11.g4 f5 12.gxf5 exf5 13. ♖g1+ ♖h8 14. ♖xf5 ♖xf5 15. ♖e5+ ♖f6 16. ♖xf5 ♖e8+ 17. ♖e5 ♖e7 18.0-0-0 ♖xe5 19. ♖ge1+- Comp "Super C" – Comp "Chesscard", 1990) 11.0-0 ♖b6 (in case of 11... ♖c7 12.c4 b6 13. ♖ac1 ♖b7, White has the pawn-break 14.d5!↑, at his disposal) White can begin an offensive on the queenside: 12.c4 ♖d7 13.c5 ♖c7 14. ♖fd1 h5 15. ♖d2 ♖d8 (15...0-0-0 16. ♖c4↑, Anand) 16. ♖c4 ♖c8 17. ♖e3!?. (GM S.Dolmatov recommends another possibility for White – 17. ♖ac1!?. Its idea becomes obvious in the line: 17...b5?! 18.cxb6 axb6 19. ♖f3 ♖b7 20. ♖e3 ♖c8 21.d5→) 17...b5 (after 17...♖f8, White can continue his queenside attack with the move 18.b4±) 18.cxb6 axb6 19. ♖ac1 ♖b7 (19...c5 20.d5→) 20. ♖f3 ♖c8 (20...f5? 21. ♖e5! 1-0 Anand – Vaganian, Riga 1995) 21.b4±, and White had a clear advantage.

10. ♖d3

Black now has the threat 11. ♖xb7! to worry about.



10... ♖d6

It is obvious that it is too bad for Black to play 10...c5?!, because of 11. ♖b5+ ♖d7 12. ♖xc5 ♖e7 13. ♖c3 0-0 14.0-0 ♖b5 15. ♖fe1 ♖b6 16. ♖d2 ♖ad8 17.c3±, and that was already proved as early as in the ancient game Chigorin – Schiffers, St Petersburg (m/8) 1897.

In case of 10...h6?!, White has the typical combination: 11. ♖xb7! ♖xb7 (if 11...♖b8, Goessling – Ries, Willingen 1999, then White already has an extra pawn, so he should not avoid further simplifications and play: 12. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 13.b3 c5 14.0-0 cxd4 15. ♖xd4±) 12. ♖b5+ ♖d7 13. ♖xb7 0-0 14. 0-0 ♖ab8 15. ♖xa7 ♖xb2 16.c3 ♖c6 17. ♖a3 ♖b6 18. ♖fb1± Tirard – Solakian, France 1996 – and White remains with an extra pawn.

That same combination works too after: 10...g6?! 11. ♖xb7! ♖xb7 (11...♖b8 12. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 13.b3 c5 Pfefferle – Gehring, Badenweiler 1995, 14.0-0 cxd4 15. ♖xd4±) 12. ♖b5+ ♖d7 (After 12...♖f8 13. ♖xb7 ♖g7, D.English – Levy, corr. 1998, White must castle short

14.0–0± and not long.) 13.♖xb7 0–0 14.0–0 ♖ab8 15.♖xa7 ♖xb2 (after 15...♖c6 16.♖a3 ♖xc2 17.♖fb1 ♖a8 18.♖c3 ♖xc3 19.bxc3 ♖a3, Dahm – Branding, Neumuenster 1999, White could have preserved his extra pawn with the move 20.♖b3±) 16.c3 ♖c6 17.♖a3 ♖b6 18.♖fb1± Balinov – Ebner, Graz 1999, and White is once again a pawn up.

In case of White castling long, it would be extremely risky for Black to evacuate his king to the opposite side of the board: 10... ♖b8 11.0–0–0 g6 12.h4 ♗d7 13.h5 ♗c6 14.c4 ♖d6 15.♖he1 ♗xe4 16.♖xe4 ♖a6 17.♗b1 0–0 (or 17... ♖xc4? 18.♖f4 ♗e7 19.♗e5+–) 18.hxg6 hxg6 19.♗e5→ Papp – Szamoskozi, Hungary 2003.

Black can preserve the material equality with the move 10... c6. In that case it is possible for White to follow with: 11.0–0–0 ♗d7 (11...♖c7 12.♗b1 b6 13.♖he1 ♗b7 14.♗xh7 0–0–0 15.♗e4± Valderrama – Cardona, Cali 1999; 11...♖a5 12.♗b1 ♗d7 13.♗e5 ♗xe5 14.dxe5 0–0–0 15.♖g3 g6 16.♗d3 ♗c7 17.f4 ♗c8 18.♖hd1±, and White is totally dominant on the d-file, Suarez Real – Gomez Romano, Asturias 1998; After 11... g6 12.♖c3 0–0 13.g3 ♗g7 14.h4 h5 15.♗e5 ♖f6 16.f4→ Grantz – Duesel, corr. 2000, or 11...h6 12.♗b1 ♖e7, Barnsley – Clarke, corr. 1991, 13.♗e5 0–0 14.f4→ White manages to occupy the e5-square with his knight.) 12.♗e5 g6 13.f4

♖e7 14.♖e3 0–0–0 15.♗d3 ♗e8 16.c4 ♖c7 17.♖hd1↑, and White maintained a powerful pressure over Black's position in the game Galkin – Galavics, Oberwart 1999.

11.0–0–0

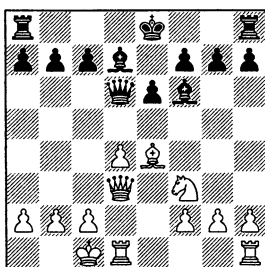
White castles long while Black is presently deprived of that possibility, moreover his king will hardly be safe on the kingside too.

After 11.0–0 g6 12.♖ad1 0–0 13.c3 ♗d7 14.♖e2 ♗c6 15.♗d2 ♗g7=, it is much easier for Black to equalize, Eberlein – Krokkel, Metz 1991.

11...♗d7

Black sacrifices a pawn trying to reduce his lag in development. After 11...c6 12.♗e5 ♗xe5 13.dxe5 ♖xd3 14.♖xd3 ♗d7 15.♖hd1 ♖d8 16.♖g3 g6 17.c4 ♗c8 18.♖xd8+ ♗xd8, Ginzburg – Galindo, Buenos Aires 1991, White could have emphasized his edge in the endgame with the help of: 19.♖a3 a6 20.c5±. All seven black pawns remain on light squares and his light-squared bishop is forced to defend the position on its initial square.

It looks slightly better for Black to follow with: 11...h6, but here again after: 12.♗e5 0–0 13.f4 c5, Chuprikov – Zankovich, Simferopol 1989, White can follow with: 14.♖e2 cxd4 15.c3 ♖b8 16.♖xd4 ♖c7 17.♖hd1 b5 18.♗b1↑, and he is ahead of Black in the development of his initiative.



12.♟e5!?

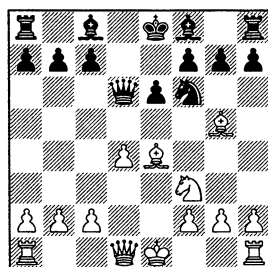
If White accepts the pawn-sacrifice – 12.♟xb7 ♖b8 13.♟e4 c5 14.♟b1, then the fight becomes much sharper. The open files on the queenside and his two bishop advantage provide Black with a dangerous counterplay. He only needs to bring his rook on h8 into action in order to have a perfect position. Therefore, it seems the best for him to play 14...g6! (Black plans to castle short in case of: 14...♟e7 15.c3 ♟b5, Rublevsky – Lobron, Frankfurt 2000, but after 16.♟e3!?± White's chances are clearly better.) 15.♟a3 0–0 16.♟e5 ♟xe5 17.dxe5 ♟xe5 18.♟xd7 ♟xe4∞ and Black has no problems whatsoever.

12...♟xe5 13.dxe5 ♟xd3 14.♟xd3 0–0–0 15.♟hd1↑ The position has been simplified considerably, but still it will be a problem for Black to neutralize White's pressure along the d-file.

b3) 8...♟d6

(diagram)

This move is considered to be the most reliable for Black in that position.



9...♟xf6

White proceeds in the same fashion as in lines **b1** and **b2**.

9...gxf6 10.c3!?

White prevents with this move the possibility of the black queen coming to the b4-square and also he ensures the c2-square for the retreat of his bishop.

It is less precise for White to play 10.0–0, because of 10...f5 (10...♟d7 11.c4 0–0–0 12.♟b3 ♟b4 13.♟c2± Psakhis) 11.♟d3 ♟g7 12.♟e2 0–0 13.♟ad1 c5 14.c3 b6 15.♟a6 ♟xa6 16.♟xa6 ♟fd8=, and Black's position turned out to be quite solid in the game, Anand – Speelman, Linares 1991.

White can prevent the move of the black f-pawn with the move 10.♟e2, but after 10...♟d7 11.0–0–0 0–0–0 12.♟b1 ♟b8 13.c4, in the game Kochetkova – Bystryakova, St Petersburg 2003, Black's king managed to evacuate to the queenside. He could have solved the defensive problems against an eventual pawn-offensive by White in the centre with the move: 13...c5∞.

10...f5

Black can try to evacuate his

king to the queenside with the help of the move 10...♗d7?!, but that can hardly be successful, because of the powerful resource for White: 11.♗d2!. After 11...c6 (11...♗c6 12.♖f3 ♗e7 13.♗c4 ♖d7 14.♗xc6 ♖xc6 15.♖xc6+ bxc6 16.b4 ♗g8 17.g3± Kharlov – Zakharevich, Novgorod 1999 – Black was left with numerous pawn-weaknesses on the queenside.) 12.♖e2 0–0–0 13.♗c4 ♖c7 14.b4 f5 15.♗d3 f6 16.0–0 h5 17.a4↑, White had a powerful initiative on the queenside in the game Kosteniuk – Danielian, Dresden 2004.

In case Black does not repel immediately White's bishop from the e4-square, then he will be in a bit of trouble. After: 10...♗g7 11.♖e2 c6 12.♗d2 ♗d7, White can impede the evacuation of Black's king away from the centre with the help of the line: 13.♗c4!?. (It is weaker for him to play: 13.0–0–0 0–0–0 14.♗b1 ♗b8 15.♖h5, because of: 15...♗e8 16.♗c4 ♖c7 17.g3 f5 18.♗c2 f6= Kobalia – Zhang Zhong, Khanty Mansyisk (m/2) 2005.) 13...♖c7 14.♖h5±.

Following 10...♖b6, White should better play 11.♖e2!?. (After 11.0–0, Gibney – Offenborn, corr. 2001, Black must consider the move 11...♖xb2∞) 11...♗g7 12.a4!?. a5 13.0–0–0 0–0–0 14.♗d2!↑, emphasizing the fact that Black's queen is misplaced. He cannot capture the pawn 14...♖xb2?, because after: 15.♖d3 f5 (if 15...♖b6 16.♗xh7+ ♗h8 17.♖h3+– then Black's king

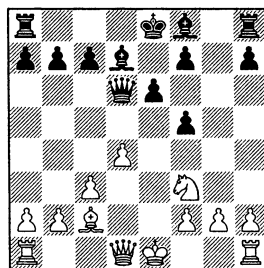
is on the verge of being checkmated) 16.♗xf5 exf5 17.♗fb1+– he loses his queen.

11.♗c2

11.♗d3 ♗d7 12.♗e5 ♗g7 13.♗xd7 ♖xd7 14.0–0 0–0–0=, Black has no problems whatsoever in that position with opposite-coloured bishops, Maciejja – Luch, Dzwirzyno 2004.

11...♗d7

It is worse for Black to play 11...♗g7?! 12.♖e2 0–0 (12...♗d7 13.♗xf5 0–0–0 14.♗c2± Rublevsky – Sulava, Bled 2002.) 13.♗g1 ♖f4 14.h3 ♗d7 15.♗e5 ♗ad8 16.g4 ♗h8 17.♗d3 ♖h2 18.0–0–0→ and White has a strong attack, Hauser – Meyer, corr. 2001.



12.♖e2!?

White is threatening 13.♗xf5.

After: 12.♗e5 ♗g7 13.f4 ♗xe5 14.fxe5 ♖d5 15.♖f3 ♗c6 16.♖xd5 ♗xd5= White can hardly improve his position, Maciejja – Anastasian, Stepanakert 2004. It will be too difficult for him to break Black's defence without queens present on the board.

12...0–0–0 13.♗e5

In case White plays a bit

slowly – 13.0–0–0 ♖g7 14.♗e5, then Black manages to get rid of White's powerful knight: 14... ♗xe5 15.dxe5 ♜c5=.

13...♗e8 14.♗b3

White's problem is that 14. 0–0–0? would not work, because of: 14...♜d5 15.♗b1 ♜xg2⚡.

14...f6

Black repels White's knight from the e5-square with this move, but he weakens his e6-pawn. In case of: 14...♗h6 15.0–0 ♖g8 16.f4±, that same knight would be extremely powerful. After: 14...♗g7 15.f4 ♗xe5 16.fxe5±, Black will have plenty of problems to solve in the middle game.

15.♗c4

It is not worth for White to play 15.♗d3?!, because of 15...e5!⚡.

15...♜c6 16.0–0

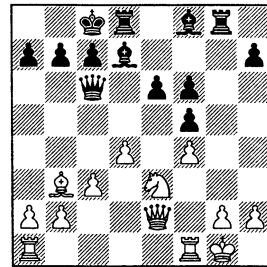
As a result of the exchange of pawns – 16.♗a5 ♜xg2 17.♗xe6+

♗b8∞, Black's bishops can become much more active.

16...♖g8 17.f4 ♗d7

If 17...♗h5, then White can inflict a series of tactical strikes with: 18.♗a5! ♗xe2 19.♗xc6 ♖d6 20.♖f2±.

18.♗e3±



Black must watch constantly about the possibility of the pawn-break d4–d5, meanwhile his bishops are passive and he must defend against the threat – 19.♗xf5 in the diagrammed position.

Conclusion

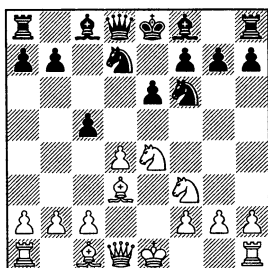
Black plays the move 4...♗d7, in order to prepare 5...♗gf6, so that he can fight against White's knight on e4. He plans to continue with c7–c5 at some moment too. The basic difference here, in comparison to the variations that we have analyzed in Chapter 6, is that Black would like to save a tempo for the move ♗f8–e7. The whole variation is quite complex, so we have divided it into two separate chapters. In chapter seven we deal only with variations in which Black postpones the move c7–c5 for a later period in the middle game. Having this in mind, the most interesting lines include his plan to develop his light squared bishop along the a8–h1 diagonal (variation a) and also the plan, where Black's efforts are focused on coping with White's knight on e4 at a very early stage (variation b).

You can consider variation a as an improved modification for Black of variation c, which has been dealt with in Chapter 3. The development of Black's light squared bishop along the a8-h1 diagonal forces a delay of his kingside mobilization. Therefore, it is logical for White to exploit his lead in development immediately, so he must opt for opposite sides castling.

In variation b, immediately after the exchange of knights on the e4-square, Black plays the move 7...♘f6 with the idea to repel White's bishop from that central square. Accordingly, we have an improved version for Black of variation a, which has been analyzed in Chapter 6. White must resort to tactics in order to fight with this idea successfully. The game Anand – Vaganian, Riga 1995 proved to be quite essential for the development of the entire system. Presently, the focus of the theoretical discussions is on the move 8...♙d6.

Chapter 8

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4
 ♘d7 5.♘f3 ♘gf6 6.♗d3 c5



7.0–0

The basic difference between this variation and the line with 4...♗e7, which we have analyzed in Chapter 6, can be seen in case of: 7.c3 ♘xe4 8.♗xe4 ♘f6 9.♗c2 cxd4 10.♘xd4 ♗c5! and Black's bishop comes to the c5-square in one move. Now, if White does not wish to comply with the weakening of his pawn structure, he will have to enter variations with numerous exchanges of pieces: 11.♗a4+ (The transfer to a position with an isolated pawn does not promise any advantage for White: 11.0–0 ♗xd4 12.cxd4 ♗d7 13.♗f4 ♗c6 14.♗e5 0–0∞ Martin del Campo – Hadjiyiannis, Manila 1992.) 11...♗d7 12.♗g5 (Or 12.0–0 ♗xa4 13.♖xa4+ ♖d7 14.♖xd7+ ♗xd7 15.♖d1 ♗e7 16.♗e3 ♖ac8

17.♘c2 ♖hd8 18.♖xd8 ♗xd8 19.♖d1+ ♗e7= Apicella – Vaissier, Clichy 2004.) 12...♗xa4 13.♖xa4+ ♖d7 14.♖xd7+ ♘xd7 15.0–0 h6 16.♗h4 ♗e7 17.♗xe7 ♗xe7 18.♖he1 ♖hd8 19.♘f5+ ♗f8 20.♘d6 ♖ab8= Kramnik – Bareev, Monaco 2004.

Black is now forced to clarify the situation in the centre. As a rule, he usually chooses: **a) 7...♗e7**, **b) 7...cxd4**, or **c) 7...♘xe4**.

We however need to mention another possibility for Black, before proceeding with the analysis of these moves i.e.: 7...♖c7 8.♖e2 ♘xe4 (8...a6, Shytaj – Belotti, Laveno 2003, 9.♖e1!↑ Δ10.♘eg5) 9.♖xe4! (White wishes to deploy his queen to the h4-square in order to create problems for Black to castle.) 9...♘f6 10.♖h4 cxd4 11.♘xd4 a6 12.♖e1 ♗e7 13.♗g5 h6 14.c4 ♖g8 15.♗d2 ♗d7 16.♗f4 ♖b6 17.♗e5± Saulin – Pushkov, Elista 1995.

Black can solve the problem with the development of his light squared bishop: 7...b6 8.♗f4 ♗b7, Rzepka – Casser, corr. 1999, only

if he parts with his dark squared bishop – 9.♗d6+ ♙xd6 10.♙xd6±. This is clearly unsatisfactory for him, because he can hardly succeed in castling.

a) 7...♙e7 8.♗xc5

Black has lost time for the move with the bishop and therefore the exchange in the centre seems to be the most logical possibility.

8...♗xc5

After 8...♙xc5 9.dxc5 ♗xc5 10.♙c4 0-0 11.♖e2 ♗c7 12.♗e5±, White remained with a two bishop advantage in the game, Strikovic – Gerber, Cannes 1996.

9.dxc5 ♙xc5

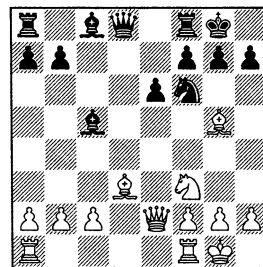
In case Black wishes to restore the material balance with the move 9...♖a5, then White can play: 10.c6!?! bxc6, Korchnoi – D.Gurevich, Bern 1996, and after 11.♖e2 0-0 12.♗e5±, White could have obtained some advantage, because of his better pawn-structure.

10.♖e2 0-0

Following 10...♖c7 11.♙g5, if Black delays his short castle, his position becomes immediately difficult. For example: 11...♙e7?! (About 11...0-0 12.♖ad1 – see 10...0-0; after: 11...a6?! 12.♖ad1 ♙d6 13.♖fe1 ♗d5, Zaltz – Shachar, Ramat Aviv 2004, it is good for White to continue with: 14.♖e4!?! ♗b4 15.♙f4! ♙xf4 16.♖xb4 ♙d6 17.♖d4 and ♙lack loses either a

pawn: 17...0-0 18.♖xd6 ♖xd6 19.♙xh7+ ♗xh7 20.♖xd6+–, or his castling rights: 17...♗f8 18.♙e4±.) 12.♙b5+!?! (The transfer to the main line after: 12.♖ad1 0-0 13.♗e5 – see 10...0-0, evidently does not satisfy White anymore.) 12...♙d7 13.♗e5 ♙xb5 14.♖xb5+ ♗f8 (Black loses a piece in case of: 14...♗d7 15.♖ad1 ♖d8 16.♖xd7 ♖xd7 17.♖d1+– Mahdi –Todor, Vienna 1998.) 15.c3±.

11.♙g5



11...♙e7

Or 11...♙d6? 12.♖ad1 h6 13.♙h4 g5 14.♙g3 ♙xg3 15.♙h7+ ♗xh7 16.♖xd8 ♙xf2+ 17.♖xf2 ♖xd8 18.♗e5 f6 19.♖h5+– Comp “Fritz 4.1” – Comp “Hiarc 6”, 1998. Black’s other possibility also looks like a blunder – 11...b6?, Aseev – Kholmov, St Petersburg 1995 and White could have punished that outright with: 12.♙xf6 gxf6 13.♖e4 f5 14.♖xa8 ♖c7 15.♙e4! fxe4 16.♖xe4+–.

After the move 11...♖e7?! White’s pin becomes even more dangerous. Following: 12.♖ad1 ♖d8, Hamid – Barbiso, Elis-ta 1998, it is very effective for

him to continue with 13.♔d2±, threatening 14.♕e4.

In case of: 11...♚b6 12.c3 ♔d5 13.♟ad1 ♚c7, Newerovski – Feoktistov, St Petersburg 1999, White can compromise Black's defensive fortifications on the kingside by playing: 14.♚e4 g6 (The line: 14...f5 15.♚h4↑ leads to the formation of a backward e6-pawn in Black's camp.) 15.♟fe1 ♔d7 16.♕e5↑ and White maintains his kingside pressure.

Black can ensure a leeway for his king with tempo, before removing his queen from the d8-square: 11...h6 12.♙h4 ♙e7 13.♟ad1 ♚b6?! (It is better for him to play 13...♚c7 14.♕e5 – see 11...♙e7; 13...♔h8?! 14.♕e5 ♚c7 15.♟fe1 g6, Frois – Areal, Portugal 2000, 16.♙xg6 fxg6 17.♕xg6+ ♔g7 18.♕xf8 ♔xf8 19.♙g3±; after 13...♚a5?! 14.a3, it is too risky for Black to send his queen to the kingside: 14...♚h5 15.h3 ♟d8 16.b4 ♔f8, Schiffers – Burn, Vienna 1898, because of 17.c4!+- and White is threatening 18.g4 and if 14...♟d8 15.♕e5 ♚c7, then he can follow with: 16.♟fe1 ♔d7 17.♙g3 ♙d6 18.♙g6! fxg6 19.♕xd7 ♙xg3 20.♕xf6+ gxf6 21.♚xe6+ ♔g7 22.hxg3+-) 14.c3 ♔d7 (Or 14...♚a5 15.♙c4 b6 16.♕d4 ♙b7 17.♕xe6+- Pikulska – Kidzinski, Krynica 1998.), but Black cannot equalize by playing like that: 15.♕e5! ♙e8 16.♟fe1 ♟d8 17.♙b1 ♙b5 18.c4 ♟xd1 19.♟xd1 ♙a4 20.b3 ♙c6 21.♕g6!+- Singliar – Trippe, corr. 1991. After

Black plays h7-h6, White's knight, deployed on e5, can be sacrificed at any moment with a disastrous effect for Black.

In case of: 11...♚c7 12.♟ad1 b6 (After 12...♕d5, Seifert – Pilczewski, Krakow 1990, White should exploit the absence of Black's knight from the kingside by playing: 13.♚e4!, forcing Black to compromise his king shelter: 13...f5 14.♚h4 ♕b4 15.♙b5±, or 13...g6 14.c4 ♕b4 15.♙b1↑) 13.♕e5 ♙e7 (The other possibilities for Black lose outright: 13...♙b7? 14.♙xf6 gxf6 15.♕d7+-; 13...♟b8? 14.♙xf6 gxf6 15.♙xh7 ♔xh7 16.♚h5+ ♔g7 17.♚g4+ ♔h8 18.♟d3+-; 13...♕d5? 14.c4 ♕b4 15.♙e4+- A. Rubinstein – Sterk, Bad Pistyan 1912.) 14.♟fe1!? (After: 14.♙xf6 ♙xf6 15.♚e4 g6 16.♚xa8, Black saves the day with the line: 16...♙b7 17.♚xa7 ♟a8 18.♚xa8+ ♙xa8 19.f4 ♙xe5 20.fxe5 ♚xe5∞) and the game transposes to variations, which we are going to analyze later (see 11...♙e7).

12.♟ad1 ♚c7

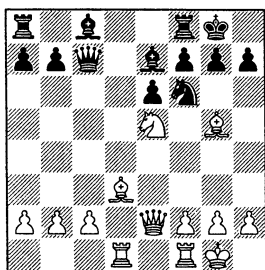
Black often tries to facilitate his defence by simplifications, however the move 12...♕d5?, which is aimed at that purpose is bad because of: 13.♙xe7 ♚xe7 14.♙xh7+ ♔xh7 15.♟xd5 g6 (15...♚f6, Shah – Smajlovic, Elista 1998 16.♟d4+-) 16.♟d4+- Macekova – Gunova, Trencin 1995.

In case Black's queen retreats to another square, for example: 12...♚a5, it is possible for White

to follow with: 13.a3 ♖b6 (About 13...h6 14. ♗h4 – see 11...h6; Black cannot easily complete the development of his queenside after: 13...g6?! 14.c4 b6, Roblet – Azorin, Avoine 1991, because of: 15. ♗e4! ♖b8 16. ♗f4+–; or 13...♗d8 14. ♗e5 ♖c7 15. ♖fe1 a5, Comp “Rebel 8” – Comp “Junior 3.3”, 1997 and here it is good for White to continue with 16. ♖e3!†, with the idea 17. ♖h3 to follow.) 14.c3 h6 15. ♗h4 ♗d7 16. ♗e5 ♗c6 17. ♖fe1† S.Salov – Gregory, Bled 2002 and White is already threatening 18. ♗g6, or 18. ♗g4. White preserved some advantage, because of his more actively placed pieces.

If 12...♖b6, D.Tan – Russev, Paris 1995, then White can play 13.c3±, analogously to the line 11...♖b6.

13. ♗e5



13...♗d8

Black has problems here to complete the development of his queenside. The move 13...♖b8? loses for him by force, because of: 14. ♗f4! ♗d5 15. ♗xh7+! ♗xh7 16. ♗xd5 exd5 17. ♖h5+ ♗g8 18. ♗g6 fxe6 19. ♖xd5+ ♗h7 20.

♗xc7+– Dunne – Koopmans, Rochester 1980.

It is again not so good for Black to play 13...♗d5?!, just like on the previous move, because of: 14. ♗xe7 ♖xe7 15. ♖e4 ♗f6 (15...g6, Weiss – Leitner, Australia 1994, 16. ♖fe1± Δ17. ♗xg6) 16. ♖h4 g6 17. ♖fe1 ♗d5 18. ♖h6 ♖f6 19. ♗c4 ♗e7 20. ♗g4 ♖g7 21. ♖g5± Lim Yee Weng – Ali, Erevan 1996 – and Black can hardly defend successfully the dark squares around his king.

In case of 13...b6?! 14. ♖fe1 ♗d5 15. ♗xe7 ♖xe7 16. ♗e4, Robovic – Siegel, Bad Ragaz 1993, it becomes clear that Black must comply with a considerable weakening of his pawn-structure, because otherwise he loses after: 16...♗b7 17. ♗xd5± ♗xd5?, because of 18.c4+–.

We must also mention here Black’s possible plan with the advance of his a-pawn – 13...a5 14. ♖fe1 a4, which was tested in the game Dieguez – Padros, Spain 1999. In case White tries to stop Black’s pawn with the move 15.a3, then after 15...♖a5 16. ♗b5±, Black will be faced with serious problems to solve.

After 13...h6 14. ♗h4, White wins following: 14...b6?(about 14...♗d8 15.c3 – see 13...♗d8), due to 15. ♗xf6 gxf6 16. ♖g4+ ♗h8 17. ♖h4 ♗g7 18. ♖g3+ ♗h8 19. ♗g6+ fxe6 20. ♖xc7+– Neelakantan – Fenil, Mumbai 2004.

14.c3 h6

Chapter 8

The move 14...♔d7? D.Roiz – M.Marino, Spain 1990, loses immediately for Black, because of: 15.♙xh7+! ♖xh7 16.♙xf6 ♙xf6 17.♚h5+ ♖g8 18.♚xf7+ ♖h7 19.♙d3+–.

14...g6 only leads to a considerable weakening of Black's position on the kingside and it was hardly a surprise that after: 15.♟fe1 ♘d5 16.♙xe7 ♚xe7 17.♟f3 ♖g7 18.♙e4 f6 19.♘g6 hxg6 20.♙xd5+–, in the game Illa – Palau, Carrasco 1921, White had a decisive advantage. In case of 14...a5, White can counter that with the immediate 15.a4. After 15...♖f8 16.♟fe1 ♙d7, Tiviakov – Krudde, Netherlands 2000, White has the simplifying combination: 17.♙xh7 ♙xa4 18.♙xd8+ ♙xd8 19.♙f4 ♚c8 20.♟f3±, and thus he can reach a very favourable position.

15.♙h4 b6

After 15...♙d7, White can play 16.f4!? ♙e8 (After: 16...♙a4 17.b3 ♙e8 18.c4 ♙d6 19.♖h1 ♙ad8 20.♙g3 ♚c5, Heilemann – Pappier, corr. 1994, White can continue with his attack with the help of the line: 21.f5 exf5 22.♟xf5→) 17.♙de1 ♙f8 18.f5→, and start an offensive on the kingside, Skaperdas – Tzouvelekis, Athens 2000.

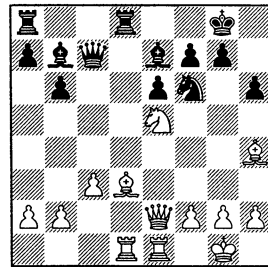
16.♟fe1

White's knight on e5 needs defending in excess. After 16.♙g3 ♙d6 17.♙c2, Black had an interesting tactical strike at his disposal – 17...♙a6! 18.♚xa6 ♙xe5 19.♙xe5

♚xe5 20.♚xa7 ♘d5 21.♚b7 ♙db8 22.♚c6 ♙xa2=, and so he managed to equalize in the game Och-sner – Vester, Denmark 2001.

16...♙b7

Black cannot simplify the position with the move 16...♙d5?, because of: 17.♙xe7 ♘xe7 18.♙e4 ♙b7 19.♚h7+ ♖f8 20.♚h8+ ♘g8 21.♙h7+–.



17.♘xf7!

Black has completed the mobilization of his forces. The position could have been evaluated as equal unless White had some tactical strike at his disposal.

17...♚c6

Attack is the best defence. It is obvious that 17...♖xf7 is bad for Black, because of 18.♚xe6+ ♖f8 19.♙xf6 ♙xf6 20.♙c4+–, and Black must give up a lot of material in order to avoid being checkmated on the g8-square.

18.♙e4 ♚xe4

After 18...♘xe4? 19.♘xd8 ♙xd8 20.♙xd8+ ♙xd8 21.♙xd8 ♘g5 22.♚g4+–, White remains with an extra exchange and a pawn too.

19.♚xe4

The intermediate exchange

19. ♖xd8+? ♔xd8, is not to be recommended, because after: 20. ♖xe4 ♔xe4 21. ♘xd8 ♖xd8+, White cannot regain his piece, because of the weakness on the first rank.

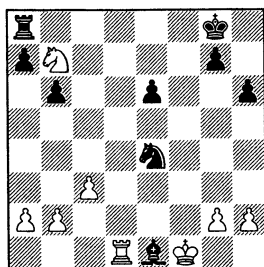
19... ♘xe4

All other moves for Black are worse:

19... ♔xe4? 20. ♘xd8 g5, Kashdan – Tholfsen, Syracuse 1934, 21. ♔xg5! hxg5 22. ♘xe6+–;

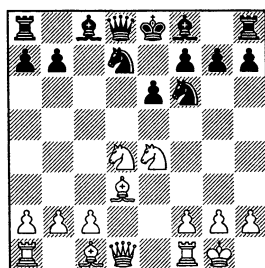
In case of 19... ♖xd1?!, White has the intermediate move 20. ♘xh6+! (giving up the knight for as much material as possible), and after 20... ♔f8 21. ♖xe6 ♖xe1+ 22. ♖xe1 gxh6, the material ratio is quite non-standard 23. ♔xf6!? (GM A.Karpov analyses another possibility, connected with the line: 23. ♖e3!? ♖d8 24. ♖xh6+ ♔f7 25. h3 ♖d1+ 26. ♔h2 ♖f1 27. ♖d2±) 23... ♔xf6 24. ♖e6 ♔g7 (24... ♔g5 25. h4!+–) 25. ♖d6+! (Black loses material no matter where his king retreats to...) 25... ♔e8 (25... ♔g8 26. ♖d7 ♖b8 27. f3!+– Karpov) 26. ♖c7 ♖d8 27. f3! (White needs a retreat-square for his king and he must play like that right now, because after: 27. h4 ♖d7 28. ♖b8+ ♔f7 29. ♖xa7 ♔e5!±, Black's rook and two bishops restore coordination.) 27... ♖d1+ 28. ♔f2 ♖d2+ 29. ♔e3, and here after 29... ♖d7 30. ♖b8+ ♔f7 (30... ♔e7 31. ♖xa7±) 31. ♖xa7± Karpov – Speelman, Reykjavik 1991.

20. ♘xd8 ♔xh4 21. ♘xb7 ♔xf2+ 22. ♔f1 ♔xe1



23. ♔xe1± Randa – Thrash, corr. 1996. An endgame has been reached after some forced play. White has the better pawn-structure and therefore he maintains some advantage.

b) 7... cxd4 8. ♘xd4



The f3-square has been freed and after the exchange of a couple of knights, White's light-squared bishop will be able to remain on the long diagonal because of that.

8... ♘xe4

Opening of the position after Black has lost time for the move 8... a6?!, might end up in a disaster for him: 9. ♖e1 ♔e7 10. ♔e3 ♘d5 11. ♖g4 g6, Hebelka – Pusec, Slovakia 1998 and here after 12. ♔h6± Black will be hardly able to castle for a long time to come.

In case of 8...♘c5, Black should worry about the possibility: 9. ♖xf6+ gxf6 (9...♗xf6 10. ♖b5 ♖e5 11. ♗e1 ♗b8 12. g3+-) 10. ♖b5+ ♖d7 11. ♗e2!? a6 12. ♖xd7+ ♗xd7 13. ♖e3 ♗d5 14. c4 ♗e4, Lematschko – Gerber, Switzerland 1997, here White could have played 15. b4!? ♖a4 (15...♖d3 16. f3±) 16. f3±, with an overwhelming advantage.

After 8...♖e7 9. ♗e1 0-0 10. c3 ♖xe4 11. ♖xe4 ♖f6 12. ♖c2 (White creates a powerful battery – ♖c2 and ♗d3) 12...♖d7 (in case of 12...♗c7 13. ♖g5 h6 14. ♖h4 ♖d8 15. ♗d3→, Black failed to prevent the penetration of the white queen in his camp in the game Antoshkova – Dushenok, St Petersburg 2003; After: 12...♗d5 13. ♖f4 ♗h5 14. ♗d2 ♗a5 15. ♗d3 ♖d8 16. ♖e5 g6, Korbut – Dushenok, St Petersburg 2004, White can continue with 17. ♗g3!?, threatening ♖f4-c7, 17...♖h5 18. ♗g4 ♖f6 19. ♗h3↑ and he can maintain his initiative.) 13. ♗d3 g6 14. ♖h6 ♖e8 15. ♗f3 ♗b6 16. ♖b3 ♖ad8 17. ♗e2 ♖c6 18. ♖xc6 ♗xc6 19. ♗xc6 bxc6 20. h3±, and in the game Yemelin – Erendzhenov, Elista 1995, White had a clear advantage in the endgame, because of his bishop pair and superior pawn-structure.

9. ♖xe4 ♖f6

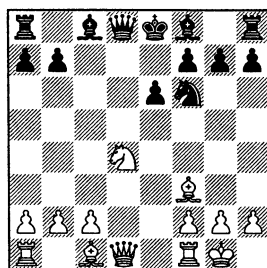
In case of 9...♖c5 10. ♖f3 ♖e7, Brickman – Waters, England 1998, White can create a two bishop-battery with the move 11. ♖f4!?±.

After: 9...♖c5 10. ♗d3 ♗h4,

Bergh – Lheureux, corr. 2000, the simplest line for White to preserve his initiative is: 11. ♖f3 ♗h5 12. ♖g5↑.

10. ♖f3

White deploys his bishop on the a8-h1 diagonal and thus prevents noticeably the natural development of Black's queenside.



10...♖c5

After 10...a6 11. ♖f4!? (White places his bishops on adjacent diagonals and organizes powerful pressure against Black's queenside.) 11...♗b6 12. ♗d3 ♖d7 13. ♖ad1 ♖c5 14. ♖e5 ♖d8 15. ♖b3 ♖e7 16. ♗d4 ♗b5, Aseev – Huzman, Beersheba 1998, White could have achieved an overwhelming advantage with the help of the line: 17. ♗e3 0-0 18. ♖d4±.

In answer to 10...♖e7, it again seems very good for White to continue with: 11. ♖f4!? (Or 11. ♖b5 0-0 12. ♖f4 ♖d7 13. c4 ♖c6= and Black solved rather easily the problem with the development of his light squared bishop in the game, Shirov – Anand, Moscow (m/2) 2001.) 11...♖d5 12. ♖g3 0-0 (or 12...♗b6? 13. c4 ♖f6 14. ♖b5

0-0 15.♗c7 ♖b8, Prihoda – Hanzl, Neratov 1993, 16.♗d5+–) 13.c3↑ with an initiative for White.

11.♙e3 ♙b6

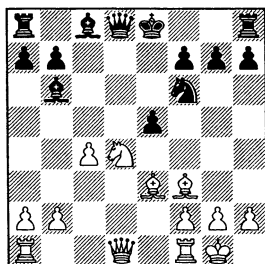
Black's bishop on the c5-square was rather unstable and he could not play, for example 11...0-0?!, due to the tactical strike: 12.♗xe6±.

12.c4!?

Black's knight is thus deprived of the d5-square.

12...e5

After 12...0-0 13.♗b5 ♙xe3 14.fxe3 ♗b6 15.♗d4 ♗xd4 16.exd4±, White reaches a clearly better endgame.

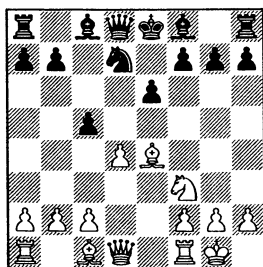


13.♗b5 ♙xe3 14.fxe3 ♗xd1 15.♖fxd1 ♗e7 16.♗d6 ♖b8 17.c5 ♖d8, Shirov – Bareev, Monaco 2002. After: **18.♗ac1!?**±, Black still has a lot of problems to solve with the development of his queenside.

c) 7...♗xe4 8.♙xe4
(diagram)

8...♗f6

About 8...cxd4 9.♗xd4 – see variation **b**; 8...♙e7 9.c3 – see variation **a1**, Chapter 6: 4...♙e7 5.♗f3



♗f6 6.♙d3 ♗xe4 7.♗xe4 c5 8.0-0 ♗d7 9.c3.

After: 8...♗b6 9.c3 ♗f6 10.♙d3 (Here, it is even more precise for White to play: 10.♙c2 ♙d7 11.♗e2 cxd4 12.♗xd4 ♙e7 13.♖e1↑, transposing to a position from Chapter 6, variation **a1**, see 11...♗b6.) 10...♙d7 11.♗e2 cxd4 12.♗xd4 ♙e7 and in the game Wolf – A.Fritz, Duesseldorf 1908, White could have increased his pressure with quite natural moves: 13.♙g5 0-0 14.♖ad1↑.

It is much more difficult for White to prove his advantage in case of 8...♗c7. Obviously, his most principled move is 9.♙g5! (After: 9.c3 ♗f6 10.♙d3 ♙d7, Black wishes to exchange on d4 and then to develop his bishop to d6 with tempo. White tried to prevent that plan with the line: 11.♗e5 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♙d6 13.♙f4 0-0∞ Koscielski – Cordes, Recklinghausen 2000, but he had to comply with having an isolated pawn.) 9...♙d6 (or 9...h6 10.♙h4 ♙d6 11.d5 e5 12.♗d2 g5 13.♙g3 ♗b6 14.♗h5± Tsvetkov – Barlow, corr. 1999) 10.c4 h6 11.♙h4 f5 12.dxc5! (In case of: 12.♙c2

g5 13. ♖e1, Kovchan – Zakharevich, St Petersburg 2002, after: 13...0–0! 14. ♖xe6 ♘f6∞ White cannot easily prove that he has compensation for the sacrificed piece.) 12...♗xc5 (Following: 12...♙xc5 13. ♙g3 f4 14. ♙g6+ ♖e7 15. ♙h4+– Black’s king is bound to remain in the centre for long. In case of 12...♞xc5, with the help of: 13.b4! ♞xb4 14. ♖b1 ♞c5 15. ♙xb7± White can open additional files for attack.) 13. ♙c2 g5 14. ♙g3 f4 15. ♗d4→ (This is an analysis by Zaharevich). White’s bishop on g3 will soon perish, but then Black will have great problems to defend his king stranded in the centre for long.

9. ♙g5 cxd4

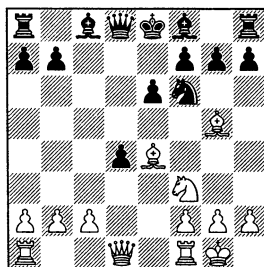
It is dangerous for Black to waste time for the move 9...h6, because of: 10. ♙xf6 ♞xf6 (10...gxf6 11. ♞e2 cxd4 12. ♖fd1 ♞b6 13. ♗xd4 ♙e7, Gullaksen – Tetenkina, Stockholm 2004, 14.a4!↑) 11. ♞d3! (threatening 12. ♞b5+) 11...a6, and here in the game Devedzic – Fucak, Zadar 2001, White could have followed with: 12. ♞c4!? cxd4 (12...♙e7 13.dxc5 ♞xb2 14. ♖ab1±) 13. ♙c6+ ♗d8 14. ♖ad1 ♗c7 15. ♙e4+ ♗b8 16. ♖xd4±, with a clear advantage for him.

In case of 9...♙e7, Black should again consider the possibility: 10. ♙xf6. Now, it is too bad for Black to play 10...♙xf6? (after 10...gxf6 11.c3±, White is better thanks to his superior pawn-structure, but no doubt that would have

been Black’s best decision under the circumstances.) because of: 11.dxc5 ♞c7 (11...♙xb2 12. ♖b1 ♞xd1 13. ♖fxd1 f5 14. ♖xb2 fxe4 15. ♗e5 0–0 16. ♖b4+–) 12. ♞d6 ♞xd6 13.cxd6 ♙xb2 14. ♖ab1 ♙a3 15. ♖fd1+–, and in the game Pap – Frank, Budapest 2002, the fight was practically over...

After 9...♞c7, White’s optimal decision will be 10. ♙d3!? (The exchange 10. ♙xf6 gxf6, following: 11. ♖e1 ♙d7 12.c3 0–0–0∞ in the game R.Mueller – Galavics, Austria 2004, provided Black with a good counterplay, while in case of: 11.c3, Matulessy – Van Blokland, Groningen 2001, Black should have played 11...♙d7, with the idea to proceed with castling long.) 10...♙d7 11. ♞e2 cxd4 12. ♗xd4± and White maintains some pressure.

In answer to the more active move for Black – 9...♞b6, it is again possible for White to follow with: 10. ♙d3 cxd4 11. ♗xd4±.



10. ♞e2!?

This is the most dangerous line for Black. White plans to restore the material balance and

recapture the d4-pawn with the rook. He will thus gain additional tempi for the development of his initiative.

The other possibility – 10. ♗xd4, has also been tested numerous times in practice. Nowadays, it looks like Black can achieve complete equality after 10...♔e7 (10...h6?! 11. ♗xf6 ♖xf6 12. ♗d3! a6 13. ♖ad1 ♔e7 14. ♗c6! e5 15. ♗xe7 ♖xe7 16. f4 → Svidler – Bareev, Wijk aan Zee 2004; 10...♔c5 11. ♗b3 ♔d6 12. ♗xf6 gxf6 13. ♖h5 f5, Morozevich – Zakharevich, Novgorod 1997, White could have preserved some advantage with the calm move: 14. ♗f3±.) 11. ♗f3 (following 11. ♔d3, Black can equalize with a series of exchanges: 11...0-0 12. c3 ♗d5 13. ♗f3 ♖d8 14. ♔c2 ♖xd1 15. ♖axd1 ♔d7 16. ♗e5 ♔e8 17. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 18. ♖d1 ♖d5 19. ♖xd5 ♗xd5 20. ♗xe7 ♗xe7= Pandavos – Ellison, Balatonbereny 1992.) 11...0-0 12. ♖e1 (after 12. ♗d3 White should consider the possibility: 12...♖a5!=, while after 12. c4, Black can play: 12...♖c7!? 13. ♖c1 a6 14. ♖e1 e5 15. ♗c2 ♖xc4 16. ♖xe5 ♔e6= Morozevich – Pelletier, Biel 2004) 12...♖b6! 13. ♗b3 (White does not achieve much after: 13. ♗f5 exf5 14. ♖xe7, because of 14...♗e4 15. ♗xe4 fxe4= Cheparinov – R.Perez, Sevilla 2004.) 13...♖d8 14. ♖e2 a5 (14...♔d7 15. ♔d2 ♔b4 16. c3 ♔d6 17. c4 a5, J.Polgar – van Wely, Hoogeveen 2001, White could have played here: 18. c5!?

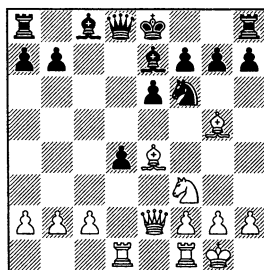
♔xc5 19. ♗xc5 ♖xc5 20. ♖ac1 ♖f5 21. ♗xb7 ♖ab8 22. ♖c7 ♔c8 23. ♗xc8 ♖dxc8 24. ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 25. ♖a6±, creating a dangerous passed pawn on the queenside.) 15. ♔e3 ♖c7 16. c4 ♔d7 17. ♔d4 a4 18. ♔e5 ♔d6 19. ♗xd6 ♖xd6 20. ♖ad1 ♖b6 21. ♗d4 ♔e8= Shomoev – Bareev, Internet 2004.

10...♔e7

After 10...♖b6 11. ♗xf6 gxf6 12. ♖fd1!? ♔g7 (In case of 12...♔c5, White should follow with 13. ♖ab1!?, with the idea to play b2-b4, while after 13...a5, he has the resource 14. c3!±.) 13. ♗xd4 0-0 14. c3 ♔d7 15. a4 a6 16. a5 ♖c7 17. ♖h5 h6 18. ♖d3↑, and White seized the initiative in the game Shirov – Gelfand, Monaco 2002.

11. ♖ad1

White has also tried the move 11. ♖fd1 with the same idea. Now after 11...♗xe4 12. ♖xd4 (12. ♗xe7 ♖xe7 13. ♖xe4 0-0 14. ♖xd4 f6 15. ♖ad1 e5 16. ♖d6 ♔e6 17. b3 ♖ad8, the position was equal in the game Mancini – Kool, Belgium 2003) 12...♖xd4 13. ♗xd4 ♗xg5 14. h4±, there arises a position similar to the one that we will analyse later in the text of our main line.



11...♟xe4

This is the principled decision. Black annihilates one of (the most dangerous...) White's bishops.

The quite timid move: 11...♟d7, after 12.♞xd4 ♟xe4 13.♞xe4! ♞c7 (Black cannot win a piece with the move 13...♟xg5, because of 14.♞fd1±) 14.♟xe7!? (It is weaker for White to play 14.♟e5, because of 14...♟c6 15.♞h4 ♟xg5 16.♞xg5 f6 17.♞h5+ g6 18.♟xg6 ♞f7 19.♞g4 0-0-0 20.♟f4, and here in the game O.Maiorov – Doroshkievich, Cherkessk 1997, Black could have followed with 20...♞xh5 21.♟xh5 f5 22.♞g7 ♞d2 23.♞c1 ♞h8=, obtaining excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn, thanks to the great activity of his pieces.) 14...♟c6 15.♞g4! ♟xe7 (15...♞xe7 16.♞xg7+-; 15...♟xf3 16.♞xg7 ♟xe7 17.♞g5+ ♟f8 18.♞f6 ♞g8 19.♞xf3+-) 16.♞fd1±, and Black has lost his castling rights.

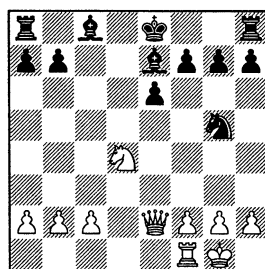
In case of 11...♞b6, Black should consider: 12.♟xd4!? ♟d7 (after 12...♞xb2 13.♟b5, Black can choose the smart move 13...♟f8!?, preparing a retreat for his queen on e5, but the line: 14.♞b1 ♞xa2 15.♞a1 ♞b2 16.♟xb7! ♟xb7 17.♞fb1 ♞xa1 18.♞xa1±, clarifies the situation once and for all...) 13.♟xf6 gxf6 (13...♟xf6 14.♟f5±) 14.♞fe1 0-0-0 (14...♟c5 15.♟b3 ♟b4 16.c3 ♟e7 17.♞h5± A.Kovacevic – Kotic, Jahorina 2000) 15.c3±, and thanks to his better pawn-structure White's chances were slight superior.

12.♞xd4! ♞xd4

12...♟d7 13.♞xe4!±; 12...♟d6 13.♟xe7 ♞xe7 14.♞fd1± Psakhis.

Black has no time to retreat with his queen anymore. In case of: 12...♞c7? 13.♟xe7 ♞xe7 (13...♟c3 14.♞d3 ♟xe7 15.♞c4+-) White wins with 14.♞b5+!, and after 14...♟d7 15.♞xb7 ♞c8 16.♞xe4 ♟xc2 17.♟d4+-, Black loses material.

13.♟xd4 ♟xg5



14.h4!?

Black remains with a rook and two light pieces for the queen, so in fact he has material advantage. He will hardly be able to sustain it however. White can exploit rather quickly the unfavourable placement of Black's knight on g5 and regain material.

White has also tried in practice the move 14.f4. After 14...0-0 (in case of 14...e5 15.♞xe5 ♟e6 16.♟xe6 fxe6 17.♞xg7 ♞f8 18.♞xh7±, Black can save his knight, but at the cost of the complete crash of his kingside. The self-sacrifice of the knight with: 14...♟h3+, leads after: 15.gxh3 0-0 16.♞e4 ♟f6 17.♞d1 ♞d8 18.♞d3 ♞b8 19.♟f3±,

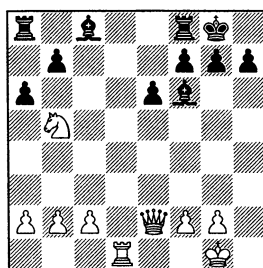
to a position in which Black is too far from equality, Morozevich – Zakharevich, Krasnodar 1997.) 15.fxg5 ♙xg5 16.♘f3 ♙d8 (16...♙e7 17.♙d1 f6 18.♙c4 ♙d8 19.♘h1± Simmelink – Hage, corr. 2000) 17.♙e4 f6 (in case of 17...♙b8, White resorts to tactics: 18.♘g5! ♙xg5 19.♙e5 ♙d7 20.♙xg5 ♙bc8 21.♙d1±, and deprives Black of his two bishop advantage.) 18.c4 ♙b8 19.b4 a5 20.a3 axb4 21.axb4±, and White preserved winning chances in the game Rublevsky – Zakharevich, Maikop 1998.

14...0-0

Black's attempt to save his knight with the move 14...e5 is much more justified now, than after the move f2-f4. Meanwhile, the tournament practice has proved that Black is too far from the prospect of realizing his material advantage: 15.♙xe5 ♘e6 16.♘f5 f6 17.♙b5+ ♘f7 18.♘xe7 ♘xe7 19.f4 ♙d8 (19...g6 20.f5 gxf5 21.♙xf5 ♙f8 22.♙xh7+ ♙f7 23. ♙e4± Shirov – van Wely, Monaco 2001 – Black has failed altogether to coordinate his pieces.) 20.c3! (in case of 20.f5, the black knight can retreat to the centre – 20...♘d4, and after: 21.♙e1+ ♘f7 22.♙c4+ ♘f8 23.♙b4+ ♘g8 24.♙c4+ ♘f8=, White can hardly improve his position.) 20...b6 (This move prepares the c5-square for the

retreat of the knight.) 21.♙e1 (21. ♙h5 h6∞) 21...♘f7 22.♙c6! (after 22.♙h5+ g6 23.♙xh7+ ♘g7, White's queen gets suddenly trapped, while the forced line: 24.♙e7+ ♘xe7 25.♙xg7+ ♘e6 26. ♙xg6 ♙b7∞, does not clarify the position at all.) 22...♙d7 23.♙d5 g6 24.g4!±, and it turns out that Black will not manage to save his knight after all.

15.hxg5 ♙xg5 16.♙d1 ♙f6 17.♘b5 a6



18.♘d6 (the idea of that manoeuvre is to deprive Black of his two bishop-advantage) **18... ♙xb2 19.♙b1 ♙f6 20.♘xc8 ♙axc8 21.♙xb7±** Zontakh – Romanchuk, Alushta 2002. There is something like material equality present on the board indeed – Black has a rook, a piece and a pawn for the queen. It is however more than obvious that White's heavy pieces are so active that Black will have to fight long and hard for a draw...

Conclusion

In this chapter we complete our analysis of the variation 4... ♖d7. You should pay a close attention to our notes to White's move seven, in order to understand how Black intends to profit from the tempo he has saved for an additional move with his bishop, in comparison to the variation 4... ♗e7 (Chapter 6). Having pushed c7-c5, now he plans to begin exchanging pieces on a large scale in order to equalize completely. After 7. 0-0, he can develop his pieces according to the scheme in Chapter 6 (variation a,) or what is even more logical, he can start exchanging pieces in the centre outright (variations b and c).

In variation a, the game is not very different from the analogous variations, which we have analyzed in Chapter 6. At first, White exchanges on c5, in order to force Black to make another move with an already developed piece and later he tries to exploit his lead in development. His basic plan is to create some pressure on the kingside, combining his attack against Black's king with efforts to impede the development of Black's queenside as well.

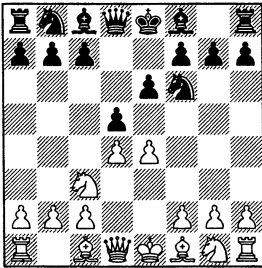
In variation b, Black exchanges pawns on the d4-square, but thus he enables White to maintain his bishop on the long a8-h1 diagonal. As a result of that Black has immediate difficulties with the completion of the development of his queenside. Here, the problem with the future of his light squared bishop becomes really crucial. You must also keep in mind that White has a pawn-majority on the queenside and that combined with his dominance on the open d-file might prove to be quite an important factor in the correct evaluation of the position.

In variation c we have analyzed the most ambitious approach to the problems in the opening for both sides. White shuns the move 10. ♖xd4 in favour of 10. ♖e2, so he enters the field of tactics. As a result of fierce complications, there arises a position with a non-standard material ratio. The correct final evaluation of the position after 14.h4 will doubtlessly be made in the future, based on more practical testing. Presently we can say definitely only that Black must fight hard for the draw in this variation and his counter chances are really quite restricted.

Part 3

Steinitz Variation

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5



Following the move 3...♘f6, there arises one of the oldest systems in the French Defence and it is usually called “The Classical System”. The third part of our book will be devoted entirely to that subject.

This variation has always been fashionable and it has enjoyed the reputation of a solid and reliable defensive system for Black. During the second half of the last century it was not as popular as the system with 3...♘b4; but presently it seems that the tide of fashion in this opening has turned around and the adherents to the French Defence prefer the classical system much more often. That is especially true if you have in mind the top-level tournaments.

This system usually leads to complicated strategical battles with plenty of tactical nuances.

The fight is with mutual chances, but White’s prospects are slightly superior, as it should be. Still, he must play very precisely in order to obtain something real out of the opening; otherwise Black may not only equalize, but he might even seize the initiative. Such character of the fight naturally attracts many strong and ambitious chess-players. Accordingly, the classical system has been a part of the opening repertoire for Black of many great players of the past and the present. It is sufficient to mention here the names of Lasker, Tarrash, Rubinstein, Capablanca, Alekhine, Petrosian, Kortchnoi, Yusupov, Barrev, Dreev, Ivanchuk, Morozevic etc.

Concerning Vishi Anand, he has only seldom played the French Defence with 3...♘f6, but he has faced numerous times that system with White (and quite successfully at that...!), so we are going as usual to follow the vast experience of the Indian grandmaster.

By developing his king’s knight to f6 on his move three, Black provokes his opponent to push forward his king’s pawn with tempo

– 4.e5 and that enables White to obtain a space advantage. Why is Black not afraid of that? The position in the centre becomes closed and after that he can undermine White's centre with the typical moves – c7-c5, f7-f6 and even g7-g5 (in case White places his pawn on the f4-square). Similar developments are quite typical for the ideas behind that opening and they attract the devotees to the French Defence.

We would like to mention that White has practically an only real alternative in his fight for the opening advantage and that is the move – 4.♔g5. This line is quite popular too and it has its advantages and disadvantages, but its analysis is outside the scope of our book. Here, we will concentrate only on White's principled line – 4.e5. This particular move was preferred by the first official World Champion Wilhelm Steinitz and this was the reason that the entire variation was named after him in the opening theory.

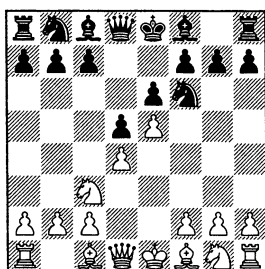
We will analyze some rarely played attempts by Black on move four in Chapter 9 and later we will deal with his main defence 4...♗fd7. His knight is not so well placed on that square and it hampers the development of the rest of his pieces indeed, but still it supports the key pawn-breaks, which are an integral part of Black's plan. Steinitz used to choose the move 5.♗ce2 in that

position, with the idea to prepare c2-c3, but contemporary tournament practice has shown that Black obtains quite an acceptable game in that line.

White creates much more problems for Black with the move 5.f4, and later, after the series of logical moves 5...c5 6.♗f3 ♗c6 (The other seldom played lines are dealt with in chapter 10.) 7.♔e3. White continues with a sound strategical line of fortifying his pawn centre and it was recommended some fifty years ago by Isaak Boleslavsky.

After 7.♔e3, there arises an important critical position. The later developments depend on Black's choice. At first we will analyze some rarely played possibilities for Black on move seven (Chapter 11) and then we will pay attention to the more popular lines 7...♞b6 (Chapter 12) and 7...a6 (Chapter 13).

Following all that, we will analyze the immediate exchange of the central pawns – 7...cxd4. This is Black's most popular defence and we will deal quite thoroughly with it. In Chapters 14-16, we will see all Black's possibilities after 8.♗xd4, besides the main line 8...♔c5. The adherents to the classical system of the French Defence base their hopes mostly on that variation in their fight for equality. We are going to study it in the last part of our book (Chapters 17-20).



We will analyze now some seldom played moves for Black: **a) 4...♗g8** and **b) 4...♗e4**. His main defensive line 4...♗f7 will be dealt with in the next chapters.

a) 4...♗g8 5.♗f3

Now, Black as a rule strives to exchange his traditionally bad “French” light squared bishop with b7-b6 and ♗a6. White cannot avoid that favourably. This is however not something he should worry about, because Black’s time-consuming maneuvers (♗g8-f6-g8) provide him with a lead in development and naturally with a space advantage too.

5...b6

Black’s other possibilities are less logical:

The move 5...♞d7 – has been encountered several times in games between amateurs. We can recommend to White a simple set-up of forces – 6.♗d3, later the knight can go to the e2-square and depending on Black’s actions – b3, c4 or c3, followed by a king-side offensive;

5...♗b4 6.♗d2. The exchange of the dark squared bishops is advantageous for White, since his pawns in the centre are fixed on dark squares. Black ended up in a lost position in the following two games: 6...c5 7.♗b5 ♗d2 8.♞d2 f6 9.♗d6 ♗e7 10.dc+- Le Thomas – Balazs, Paris 2003 and 6...♗e7 7.♗d3 0-0, Bruno – Guala, Chivilcoy 1978. Here White had at his disposal the standard tactical strike – 8.♗xh7+ ♗xh7 9.♗g5+ ♗g8 (9...♗g6 10.h4) 10.♞h5 ♗e8 11.♞h7+ ♗f8 12.♞h8+ ♗g8 13.♗h7+ ♗e7 14.♗g5+- The results of the exchange of bishops are quite obvious;

5...c5 – Black undermines White’s centre with that move without any delay. This is hardly consistent with the time he has

lost with the strange maneuvers of his king's knight. 6.♙e3 cxd4 (The move 6...♟b6, Rozman – Rozic, Rogaska Slatina 2002, does not seem attractive, because it leads to the trade of the dark squared bishops and that is not promising for Black at all since after: 7.dxc5 ♙xc5 8.♙xc5 ♟xc5 9.♗b5± the dark squares in his camp are rather vulnerable.) 7.♗xd4. White has already three light pieces developed, a comfortable blocking d4-square for his knight and an indisputable space advantage. Black's forces are on their initial squares. Playing in that fashion can hardly be the right way to achieve equality. 7...♗c6 8.f4 ♗ge7 9.♗cb5 ♗g6 10.♟d2 a6 11.♗c3 ♙e7, Apicella – Mercier, Angers 1990. We can recommend to White Now a standard plan. The king must be sheltered on the queenside where it will be safe enough, because White's pawns there have not been touched yet, while he must concentrate on a future pawn-offensive on the kingside. 12.0–0–0 13.♖b1±;

5...♙e7 – this idea is rather dubious. It seems too slow; moreover that square might be needed for the development of the knight. 6.h4 c5 7.♙e3 cxd4 8.♟xd4 ♗c6 9.♟g4 ♙f8 (This is a sad necessity for Black.) 10.♙d3. White's lead in development is so great that small wonder he checkmated his opponent quickly: 10...♙d7 11.a3 a6 12.0–0 f5 13.exf6 ♗xf6 14.♙g6+

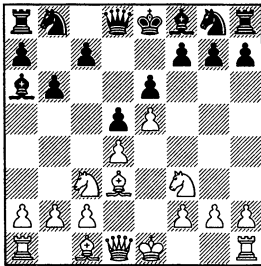
1–0 Estrada Degrandi – Pena, Santa Clara 1968;

5...♗c6 – this move reduces Black's prospects for an active play on the queenside, since he does not have Now the standard pawn-break c7-c5 at his disposal. 6.a3 a5 (White's position is superior after: 6...f5, Galiani – Salinardi, Chivilcoy 1997, 7.♙d3 ♙d7 8.♗e2 ♗ge7 9.♗f4 ♗a5 10.h4±. Now, he should not worry about Black's possibility to undermine his centre with f7-f6, because he has a space advantage and his hands are free for actions on both sides of the board. Or 6...b6 7.♙d3 ♙b7 8.0–0 ♟d7 9.♗e2 ♗ge7 10.b4 h6, Hamatgaleev – Gumerov, Ufa 1999, 11.♙d2 ♗f5 12.b5 ♗d8 13.♙b4± and once again, depending on the actions of the opponent, White's can choose which side of the board to operate on. He has the initiative in his hands indisputably.) 7.♙b5 ♙d7 8.0–0 ♗a7 9.♙d3 h6 10.♙e3 b6 11.b3 ♙c6 12.a4 ♙b7 13.♗e2 ♗c6 14.♗f4 ♗b4 15.♙e2 ♙a6, Nunn – Sahovic, Geneve 1987, 16.c4. White avoids exchanges, maintaining his advantage in a more complex position. Note the difference in the placement of pieces of both sides. 16...♗e7 17.♙d2 ♗ec6 18.♟c1 dxc4 19.bxc4 ♗d4 – this line seems to be resolute, but it is not well founded. White's forces are perfectly mobilized and he inflicts a series of heavy blows: 20.♗xd4 ♟xd4 21.♗xe6 fxe6 22.♙h5+ ♗d7

23. ♖f3 ♖xe5 24. ♜fe1 ♖f5 25. ♖xa8 ♖xh5 26. ♗xb4 ♗d6 27. ♖h8+.

6. ♗d3 ♗a6

Black has also tried in practice 6...a5, but it is quite unclear what the reason is behind this new weakening. 7.0-0 ♗a6 8. ♗e2 ♗e7 9.b3 ♗xd3 10. ♖xd3 ♖d7 11.c4 ♗a6 12. ♗c3 c6, Szieberth – Meyer, Balatonbereny 1993, 13.a3±.



7. ♗e2

This is a typical maneuver in similar positions. You can see something like that in the closed system of the Caro-Kann Defence (for example after: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4. ♗c3 h5 5. ♗d3 ♗xd3 6. ♖xd3 e6 7. ♗f3 ♗d7 8.0-0 ♗e7 9. ♗e2 ♗h6 10.c3 ♗f5 11. ♗g3± A.Fedorov – Izoria, Crete 2003 and in case Black captures on g3, White will play f2xg3 developing some initiative along the f-file.). White's knight on c3 is not placed so well in general. In perspective, it might become a target for the advancing black pawns on the queenside and it blocks White's own c2-pawn etc. After it is transferred to the g3-square, it often attacks Black's knight on f5 and

it contributes to White's domination on the kingside.

7... ♗xd3

Black plays sometimes 7... ♖d7 immediately. We can recommend to White to preserve his pawn-chain on the queenside elastic, so that later he has a greater choice of plans for actions available. 8.0-0 c5 (or 8... ♗e7 9.c3 ♗xd3 10. ♖xd3 ♗bc6, Khedkar – Gentes, Winnipeg 2000, 11.b3±) 9.c3 ♗e7, Seeck – M.Carl, Bad Segeberg 1995, 10.b3 ♗xd3 11. ♖xd3 ♗bc6 12. ♖d1±. White's rook is placed in ambush. Black's knight will soon have to abandon the e7-square and then White will have the very unpleasant idea for Black – d4xc5 followed by c3-c4.

8. ♖xd3 ♖d7

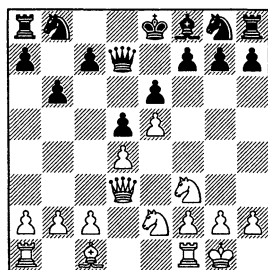
It seems too slow for Black to play 8... ♗e7 9.0-0 h5 10.c4 ♗c6 11.cxd5 ♖xd5 12.a3. His temporary domination over the important d5-outpost does not guarantee him a bright future at all. In fact he has no time to transfer there either of his knights. 12... ♖d8 13. ♗f4 ♖d7 14.d5 – here comes the pawn-break! 14... ♗h6 (or 14... exd5 15.e6+-) 15. ♖d1 g5 16. ♗xe6 fxe6 17. ♖g6+ ♗f8 18. ♗xg5 ♗xg5 19. ♗xg5 ♗f7 20. ♗xd8± Benschop – Harmsen, Hilversum 1986.

In the game Vargic – Zaia, Medulin 1997 Black went even further and he repeated the bishop-maneuver with his queen. 8... ♗e7 9. ♗e2 ♖c8 – this is an interesting idea, since the closed

centre enables Black to maneuver unhurriedly. He is going to ensure the safety of his king by trading queens, but he cannot equalize in the endgame either. White will have only a slight edge indeed, but it is much easier for him to play positions like that, because he risks practically nothing. He can only win and the maximum Black can rely on is a draw. 10.♘f4 ♗a6 11.b4. Generally speaking, as a rule White should avoid moves like that. There are only dark squared bishops left on the board, but he obtains a very comfortable position in this particular case. 11...♗xd3 12.♙xd3 ♖ec6 13.♙d2. Black cannot exploit the weakness of the c4-square effectively. White's bishop controls the a5-e1 diagonal and that in principle precludes the possibility of Black's maneuver – ♖c6-a5-c4, meanwhile the b6-square is occupied by a pawn. 13...♙d7 (Naturally, it is not good for Black to follow with 13...b5 due to 14.a4 h6 15.♗fc1 ♗c8 16.c4. Now you can see White's main idea in action. He organizes some pressure along the c-file against Black's backward c7-pawn. 16...dxc4 17.♗xc4 ♙e7 18.b5 ♙d5. The adversaries agreed to a draw here, but the position was far from being equal. For example White can continue with 19.a5, with the idea to open the a-file and to penetrate with his rook to the a7-square. He can also attack his opponent's knight

on the commanding d5-square with the help of ♙d3-f4. Black must definitely solve some more problems in this position.

9.0–0



9...♙c6

Black has tested in practice some other moves too:

9...♙e7 10.♙f4 ♖bc6 11.♙h5. This is a typical resource for White. His knight on h5 is not threatening anything special presently, but it “may have an effect on his nerves...”. Black's bishop is forced to defend the g7-pawn and he would not like to protect it with his rook, since he would lose then his castling rights. 11...♙b4 12.♗e2 c5 13.c3 ♙bc6 14.♗d1 c4 15.b3 ♙a5 16.♗b1 ♙ec6 17.♙d2 b5 18.♗g4± van den Doel – Vogel, Vlaardingen 2005.

This position arose (except that with a loss of a tempo) in the following game: 9...c5 10.c3 c4 11.♗c2 ♙c6, Al Hamido – E. Grant, Buenos Aires 1978. White could have maintained a slight advantage after: 12.♙g3 b5 13.b3 ♗b8 14.♙e3 ♙a3 15.♙h5 g6 16.♙h6±. You may have already noticed that

in both games Black's occupation of space on the queenside proved to be a quite dubious achievement. He reduces the tension in the centre, which is usually in favour of White, and he only weakens the potential shelter of his king.

10. ♖d2

The move 10.c3 would have diminished White's possibilities. Now, his bishop, which is supposed to be "bad" (his central pawn-chain has been fixed on dark squares) can be quite useful along the a5-e1 diagonal.

10... ♗ge7

Black cannot equalize with the somewhat artificial move 10... ♖b4, since White's plan is very simple: 11. ♖xb4 ♖xb4 12.c4 c6 13. ♖ac1 ♗h6, Blazek – Molnar, Slovakia 1998, 14.c5 b5 15.a3 ♖a5 16.b4±.

11. ♖ac1 0-0-0

Is there any other alternative for Black's king? His castling short needs a thorough preparation. Meanwhile, White's standard pawn-offensive on the kingside with the f and g-pawns (if necessary) might be quite dangerous in the future. Black now intends to concentrate his main defensive forces on the queenside.

12.a4 ♖b7 13.a5

It is evident that White is much ahead of his opponent in the development of his initiative and that is extremely important in positions with opposite castling. White's bishop is capable of sup-

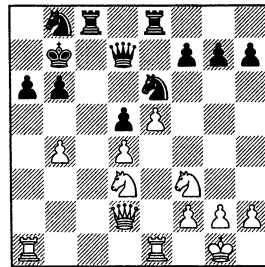
porting the advance of his a-pawn as long as the move c2-c3 has not been played, while the prospects of Black's knight on c6 are considerably reduced.

13... a6 14.axb6 cxb6 15. ♖a1 ♖b8 16.b3 ♗ec6 17.c4 ♖b4

Black's natural desire to simplify the position by exchanging pieces and thus to reduce the tension on the queenside is quite understandable.

He cannot facilitate his defence by playing: 17...f6 18.cxd5 exd5 19. ♖fe1 fxe5 20. ♗xe5 ♗xe5 21.dxe5±.

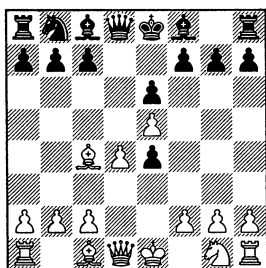
18.cxd5 exd5 19. ♗f4 ♖c8 20. ♖fe1 ♖xd2 21. ♖xd2 ♖he8 22. ♗d3 ♗d8 23.b4 ♗e6



24. ♖eb1. White has played simply and naturally and he has obtained a pleasant attacking position, in which Black has no counterplay. Black's monarch is presently seriously endangered. He must constantly worry about the potential threat of White playing ♗c5. **24... ♖c7 25.b5 a5 26. ♗b2 ♖ec8 27. ♗a4 ♖c2 28. ♗b6.** Now comes the tactical strike. Black has managed to avoid

being checkmated indeed, but that would not change the evaluation of the position at all. **28...** ♖d8 (or 28...♗d2 29.♘d7 ♗dc2 30.♘xb8 ♖xb8 31.g3±) **29.♘c8 ♗d2 30.♘d6 ♖b6 31.♘d2±** Abramovic – Z.Nikolic, Vrnjachka Banja 1988.

b) 4...♗e4 5.♘xe4 dxe4 6. ♗c4



Black now has several logical possibilities: **b1) 6...c5**, **b2) 6... ♘d7** and **b3) 6...a6**.

The other moves are only seldom tested:

6...c6 7.f3 ♗e7 8.fxe4 ♘a6 9. ♘f3 c5 10.d5+– Walker – Townsend, Detroit 1994;

6...♘c6 7.c3 a6 8.♗b3 ♘a5 9.♗c2 c5 10.♗xe4 cxd4 11.♖xd4 ♖xd4 12.cxd4 ♗d7 13.♗d2 ♗c6 14.f3 ♘c4 15.♗xc6+ bxc6 16.♗c1 ♘xb2 17.♗xc6± and White has a solid extra pawn and Black's compensation for it is obviously insufficient, van der Wiel – Kuijf, Netherlands 1992;

6...b6 7.d5 ♗b7 (It seems too bad for Black to continue with: 7... ♗a6 8.♗xa6 ♘xa6 9.♖e2 ♘b4

10.dxe6 fxe6 11.♖xe4± Edik – Stephen21, Internet 2001.) 8.dxe6 ♖xd1+ 9.♘xd1 f5 10.exf6 gxf6, Paniagua – Kolb, Pellestrina 1979, 11.♗f4± Black is a pawn down and his pawn-structure is clearly inferior;

The move 6...♗d7 led to an interesting fight, but that was once again in favour of White: 7.♗e3 c5 8.d5 ♖b6 9.c3 exd5 10.♖xd5 ♗e6 11.♖xe4 ♖xb2 12.♗c1 ♘c6 13.♗xe6 fe 14.♖c4 0–0–0 15.♖xe6± Huebner – Zach, Bad Wiessee 1997.

b1) 6...c5 7.d5

We will analyze now: **b1a) 7... exd5**, **b1b) 7...♖b6**, **b1c) 7... ♘d7** and **b1d) 7...a6**.

The move 7...g6 is too slow. 8.f4 f6?! (This pawn-pushing is a little bit too much, meanwhile 8...♗g7 9.c3 a6 10.d6± is also terrible for Black.) 9.exf6 ♖xf6 10.♘e2 exd5 (It is again preferable for Black to play 10...♗g7 with the idea to force c2-c3.) 11.♖xd5 ♘c6 12.♗d2! Now, White deploys his bishop on the c3-square and that is much more dangerous for Black. 12...♗g7 13.♗c3± Howell – Crouch, Isle of Man 1994.

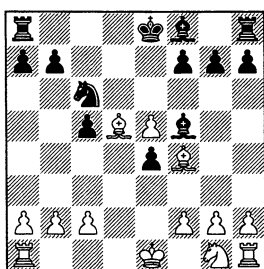
b1a) 7...exd5 8.♖xd5 ♖xd5 9.♗xd5 ♘c6

The development of the knight to c6 is to be preferred by Black, since his bishop can join in the defence of the e4-pawn.

It is weaker for Black to try 9...♘d7 10.♗f4 f5, Zauner – Kret-

schel, Bayern 1995, 11.f3, White is not forced to capture en passant, although he is better even then. 11... ♗e7 12.h4 ef 13. ♗f3 ♗b6 14.c4± and Black's pawns, having been pushed to c5 and f5 cannot control the central d5 and e5-squares; moreover they restrict his own bishops. White's advantage is considerable.

10. ♗f4 ♗f5



This was played in the game Lichman – Gujvan, Alushta 2001.

11. ♗xc6 – White destroys the pawn-structure of his opponent with his last move and that will be a telling factor in the endgame. Black has some compensation, because of his pair of bishops, but it is insufficient for equality. 11... bxc6 12. ♗e2 ♗d8 13. ♗g3 ♗g6 14. ♗e2±.

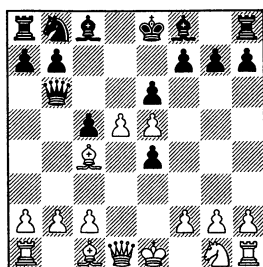
b1b) 7... ♗b6

(diagram)

Black develops his queen with tempo threatening to check on the b4-square, capturing White's bishop.

8.c3 ♗d7

After 8...exd5 9. ♗xd5 ♗f5 10.



♗e2 ♗d7 11. ♗xe4 ♗xe4 12. ♗xe4 ♗e7 13. ♗f3± Black remains simply a pawn down, Torrado – Piay, Spain 2003.

Black can try to create some disharmony in White's set-up, but his defence does not become any easier because of that: 8...e3 9.fxe3 exd5 10. ♗xd5 ♗e7 11. ♗f3 0–0 12. 0–0 ♗d8 13.c4 ♗c6 14.b3± (Finkel). White has an extra pawn and he dominates in the centre. His rook is very active on the f-file exerting pressure against Black's f7-pawn.

9.f4!

This move is as simple and it is strong. Black is faced with an unpleasant dilemma He must either comply with the potentially dangerous pawn-tandem f4-e5, which has encircled the half-dead black e4-pawn, or he must exchange that pawn and get rid of it once and for all. This would however only help White's piece-development and as we already know he will have a powerful pressure along the f-file. Still, it looks like the second decision is the lesser evil: 9...exf3!? 10. ♗xf3 exd5 11. ♗xd5 ♗e6 12. ♗f4. Now it

is a matter of choice for the White player, whether to have black's pawn on the e6-square, or not. (He has a slight advantage in that case too: 12. ♖xe6+ fxe6 13. 0-0 ♘b6 14. ♗d3±) 12... ♗xd5 13. ♗xd5 ♘b6 14. ♗e4. White's prospects are doubtlessly superior. After he deploys his rooks to d1 and f1, all his pieces will be maximally active. I do not believe – there will be too many players eager to defend that position with Black.

9...exd5 10. ♖xd5

White's strongest piece has occupied a super-active outpost in the centre and it controls the whole board from there.

10...♗g6 11. ♗e2

White plans to gobble Black's e4-pawn quite prosaically after a couple of moves. Black needs to react immediately.

11...♗e7

It is insufficient for him to play: 11... ♘b6 12. ♗b5+ ♗d7 13. ♗xd7+ ♘xd7 14. ♘g3±, because his b7 and e4-pawns are hanging simultaneously.

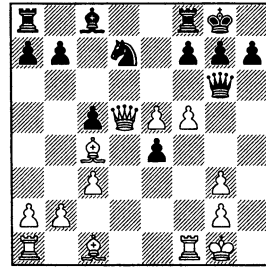
Or 11... ♗xg2 12. ♗xf7+ ♘d8 13. ♗g1 ♗xh2 14. ♗e3+- (Finkel), Black gets checkmated, or he loses plenty of material quite soon.

12. ♘g3 ♗h4

It is more resilient for Black to defend with: 12... f5 13. e6 ♘b6 14. ♗b5+ ♘f8 15. ♗xf5+ ♗xf5 16. ♘xf5 ♗xe6 17. ♘g3± (Finkel) and that would force White to switch to realizing his positional advantage in a complicated endgame.

He is busy attacking Black's e4-pawn right now.

13. 0-0 ♗xg3 14. hxg3 0-0 15. f5



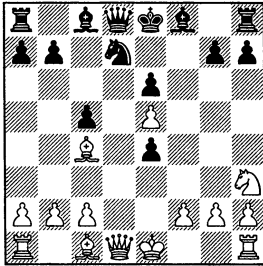
15... ♗xg3? (Black would only prolong his suffering by exchanging queens after: 15... ♗c6 16. e6 ♗xd5 17. ♗xd5 ♘f6 18. exf7+ ♘h8 19. ♗e6 b6±. Meanwhile, it is highly unlikely that he will manage to save that endgame, since White has a couple of powerful bishops and an extra pawn and that guarantees him a great advantage. **16. ♗f4 ♗g4 17. e6!+-** There is no acceptable defence in sight anymore. **17... fxe6** (or 17... ♘b6 18. exf7+ ♘h8 19. ♗xc5 ♗xf5 20. ♗d6 ♘xc4 21. ♗xf8+-) **18. fxe6 ♘b6 19. e7+!!** The end is just exquisite. **19... ♘xd5 20. exf8 ♗+ ♘xf8 21. ♗d6+ ♘e8 22. ♗b5+ ♗d7 23. ♗f8#** Onischuk – Hertneck, Biel 1997.

b1c) 7... ♘d7

That is a cold-blooded answer. Black is not trying to exchange queens; instead he opts for a complicated fight.

8. dxe6 fxe6 9. ♘h3

This move is the most venomous for Black. White's queen is ready to go to the h5-square eyeing the enemy king.



9... ♘xe5

Black has some other possibilities too:

It is just terrible for him to try: 9... ♖b6? 10. ♙xd8+ ♗xd8 11. ♙e2 ♙e7 12. ♘g5! ♙xg5 13. ♙xg5+ ♗e8 14. ♙e3 ♘d7 15. 0-0-0± Kr. Georgiev – B. Maksimovic, Khania 1992. White's advantage is doubtless and it is quite stable. He has the bishop pair; moreover Black's pawns on the e-file are so vulnerable that his defence will be extremely problematic;

After 9... ♙b6 10. 0-0 ♘xe5 11. ♙h5+ ♗f7 12. ♘g5 g6 13. ♙g4 ♗xg5 14. ♙xg5 ♙g7, Alvarez – Dalmagro, Argentine 1995, 15. ♙xe4 0-0 16. ♙ab1±, Black's position has a slight, but long-term defect – the isolated e6-pawn;

9... ♙c7 10. ♙f4 ♙c6 11. ♙e2 ♙e7 12. ♙g4! (Note White's interesting maneuver ♙d1-e2-g4.) 12... ♖b6 13. ♙xg7 ♙f8 14. ♙e2 ♘d7 15. ♙h5+ ♗d8 16. ♙g5 1-0 Muller – L'Henoret, corr. 1997;

9... ♙e7 10. ♗f4 ♘xe5 11. ♙h5+ ♗f7 12. ♘xe6 ♙xe6 13. ♙xe6 0-0 14. 0-0 ♙d6, van Lankveld – Westerweele, Vlissingen 2000, 15. ♙d5±. White enjoys the two bishop advantage and it is quite unclear how Black can defend his b7 and e4-pawns simultaneously.

10. ♙h5+ ♗f7

Black's king went for a walk, which could not have brought him anything else but trouble, in the game Glaser – Bruederle, Germany 1996: 10... ♘g6 11. ♘g5 ♙f6 12. ♙b5+ ♘d7 13. ♙xd7+ ♗xd7 14. ♙e3 ♙e7 15. 0-0-0+ ♗c6 16. ♙e2 h6 17. ♘xe4±.

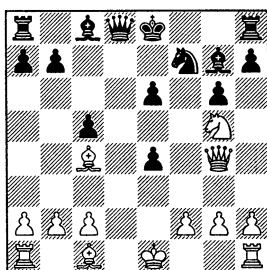
11. ♘g5 g6 12. ♙g4 ♙g7

Black's kingside was totally destroyed after: 12... ♘d6 13. ♙xe6 ♙e7 (It was a disaster for Black to play: 13... h5 14. ♙f4 ♙e7 15. ♙e5 ♙g7 16. ♙f7+ ♗f8 17. ♙xe7+ ♗xe7 18. ♙xg6 ♗f6 19. ♘xe4+ ♘xe4 20. ♙xe4±, because he remained two pawns down, Currie – Berk, Email 2001.) 14. ♘xh7± Carothers – Kowalski, corr. 2002.

Black was quickly crushed following: 12... ♘e5 13. ♙b5 ♗e7 14. ♙h4 ♙a5+ 15. ♙d2 ♙xb5 16. ♙c3 (He had an extra piece indeed, but he had no satisfactory against White's threats at all.) 16... ♙g7 17. ♘xe4+ ♗f8 18. 0-0-0 ♗f7 19. ♙xg7+ ♗xg7 20. ♙f6+ ♗g8 21. ♘g5 1-0 Kindermann – Dobosz, Bern 1995.

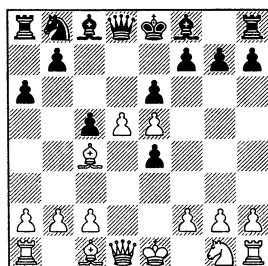
Black would not survive for long either in case of 12... h5. White has again a quite unpleasant

ant check at his disposal – 13.♙b5+ ♖e7 (This is a sad necessity, because the other possibility is just suicidal for Black: 13...♙d7 14.♚e6 ♚e7 15.♙xd7.) 14.♚f4 ♜d6 15.♚e5 ♙h6 16.♜xe4 ♜xe4 17.♙xh6± and Black's position resembles ruins, Dvoiry's – Florath, Berlin 1996.



13.♙xe6! ♜e5 14.♚xe4 ♚e7 15.♙xc8 ♚xc8 16.0–0. What Black has achieved is – he has avoided the immediate surrender; nevertheless White has a solid extra pawn and his opponent has no compensation whatsoever. 16...0–0 17.♙f4 ♜c6 18.♚c4+ ♜h8 19.♚ae1 ♚f6 20.♜e6 ♚f7 21.♙d2 ♚f5 22.♜xg7 ♜xg7 23.♙c3± Kveinys – Crouch, Katowice 1992.

b1d) 7...a6



Black's idea is quite clear – he wishes to repel White's bishop with tempo, occupying additional space on the queenside. It is logical for White to prevent that. Still, the inclusion of the moves –7...a6 8.a4 reduces his possibilities in some lines.

8.a4 ♜d7

Following: 8...exd5 9.♙xd5 ♜d7 10.f4 f5 11.a5 ♙e7 12.♙e3 ♜f8 13.♜e2 ♚c7 14.c4, White is completely dominant in the centre and it is not so easy for Black to comply with that. 14...♙d7 15.♜c3 0–0–0 16.0–0 g5 17.♚c1 gxf4 18.♙xf4 ♜e6 19.♙xe4 ♜d4 20.e6 1-0 Mista – Szulc, Krynica 1998.

9.dxe6 fxe6 10.♜h3

This idea is already quite familiar to us.

10...♜xe5 11.♚h5+ ♜f7 12. ♜g5 g6 13.♜xf7

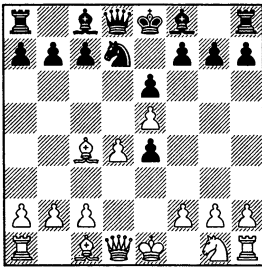
In the game Kveinys – Crouch, White used the manoeuvre ♚h5-g4 quite successfully in a similar position. There is now a fine point, though... Presently, Black's pawn is placed on a6 and in case of 13.♚g4 ♜e5, White does not have the worrisome check on the b5-square.

13...♚a5+!

Black reduces the material with this ingenious resource. 14.♙d2 gxf5 15.♙xa5 ♜xf7 16.0–0± van der Wiel – Visser, Netherlands 1993. The defects of Black's position are quite obvious even to the naked eye. His pawn-structure is totally in ruins.

3. ♖c3 ♗f6 4. e5 ♜e4 5. ♜xe4 dxe4 6. ♙c4

b2) 6... ♜d7



Black attacks at first White's e5-pawn and he undermines his centre only then. White does not have the possibility of playing d4-d5 anymore. The game is much calmer now.

7. ♜e2 c5

Black was severely punished for the compromising pushing of his h-pawn in the following game: 7...b6 8. 0-0 ♙b7 9. ♗f4 h5 10. c3 h4 11. ♗g4 ♜e7 12. ♙xe6 0-0-0 13. ♙c4+- Feher – G. Portisch, Zalaegerszeg 1993.

It seems reliable for Black, but still insufficient for equality, to play: 7... ♗b6 8. ♙b3 c5 9. c3 ♙d7 (Or 9... cxd4 10. cxd4 ♙b4+ – this simplifies the position as usual, but Black's dark squares become extremely vulnerable. 11. ♙d2 ♙xd2+ 12. ♜xd2 ♙d7 13. ♗c3 ♙c6 14. 0-0 a5 15. ♜ad1 a4 16. ♙c2 ♗c4 17. ♜e2 ♗xb2 18. ♜d2 a3 19. ♙xe4 ♙xe4 20. ♗xe4 0-0 21. ♗d6 ♜a5 22. d5 ♜c5 23. dxe6 fxe6, Solic – Sargac, Zadar 2004, 24. ♗xb7±) 10. 0-0 ♙c6 (10... h5 – This operation seems to be rather dubious. 11. ♗g3 ♙c6 12. ♜e1 ♜h4 13. ♙c2

xd4 14. cxd4 ♙b4, Markus – Zwikker, corr. 1992, 15. ♙d2 ♙xd2 16. ♜xd2±. Black has no more resources to protect his e4-pawn.) 11. ♗g3 ♜h4 12. ♜e2 (White attacks the enemy e4-pawn with quite natural moves.) 12... 0-0-0 13. ♜d1 ♗d7?? (13... cxd4 14. cxd4 ♙e7 15. ♙c2±) 14. d5 1-0 Kashliuk – Porper, corr. 1988.

8. c3 b6

About 8... ♜c7 9. ♙b3 b6 10. 0-0 ♙b7 11. ♗g3 – see 8...b6.

It is also possible for Black to follow with 8... cxd4, reducing the tension in the centre. Meanwhile, White's game is natural and simple. 9. cxd4 ♙b4+ (Or 9... a6 10. 0-0 b5 11. ♙b3 ♙b7 12. ♗f4 ♗b6 13. ♜g4 g6 14. ♙e3 ♗d5 15. ♗xd5 ♙xd5 16. ♙g5 ♙e7 17. ♙xe7 ♜xe7 18. ♙xd5 exd5 19. ♜ac1± and the only open file remained dominated by White in the game, Garcia Martinez – Damaso, Havana 1990.) 10. ♙d2 ♜a5 11. ♗c3 ♗b6 12. ♙b3 ♙xc3 13. bxc3 ♙d7 14. c4 ♜a6 15. ♜c1 0-0 16. 0-0 ♜ac8 17. ♜g4+- Olenin – Moskalenko, Yalta 1995. White has the bishop pair, while Black must worry about his vulnerable e4-pawn and the safety of his king. White's advantage is doubtless.

9. 0-0 ♙b7 10. ♙b3

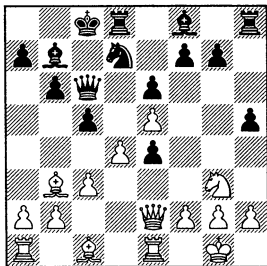
This prophylactic move is quite sensible, because the bishop will have to be removed from the c-file sooner or later, since it can be attacked there by Black's queen or rook.

10... ♖c7 11. ♘g3 0-0-0

It is quite understandable that Black wishes to connect his rooks. It is bad for him to try instead: 11... ♝d8?! 12. ♙g5 ♙e7 13. ♙xe7 ♘xe7 14. ♗h5 ♝df8 15. ♗g5+- D'Costa - Boyle, Cork 2005.

11...c4 - as usual, it is questionable for Black to reduce the tension in the centre. 12. ♙c2 f5 13. exf6 ♘xf6 14. ♙g5 ♙d6 15. ♙xf6 gxf6 16. ♗h5+ ♘e7 17. ♘xe4 ♝ag8 18. g3 ♗c6, Kaiumov - Svec, Karvina 1992. Here, White followed with: 19. ♗h4 ♝f8 20. f3± and he consolidated his position with a great advantage.

12. ♗e2 ♗c6 13. ♝e1 h5

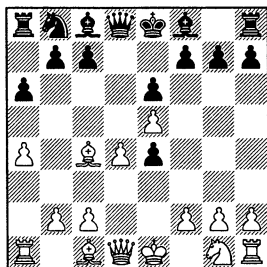


14. ♗xe4 h4. Black is trying to create some counterplay on the kingside, but it is quite harmless with queens absent from the board. **15. ♗xc6+ ♙xc6 16. ♘e4 cxd4 17. ♘g5 ♘xe5 18. ♝xe5 d3 19. ♙d2 f6 20. ♝xe6 ♙d7 21. ♘f7±** Rogers - Alvarado Ascanio, Las Palmas 1994.

b3) 6...a6 7.a4

We have already mentioned that White should not allow the

move b7-b5. It is more reasonable for him to lose a tempo in order to prevent it.



7...b6

About 7...c5 8.d5 - see 6...c5 7.d5 a6 8.a4.

After 7...♘d7 8.♘e2 c5 9.c3 b6 10.0-0 ♗c7 11.♙b3 ♙b7 12.♘g3 0-0-0 13.♗h5 c4 14.♙c2 f5 15.♙g5+- White wins the exchange, Morovic - Teo Kok, Dubai 1986.

In case of: 7...♘c6 8.♘e2 b6 9.c3 ♙b7 10.0-0 h5 11.♘f4 ♘e7 12.♗e2 g6 13.♙b3 c5 14.dxc5 bxc5 15.♙c2 ♗c7 16.♙xe4± Black has lost his e4-pawn, just like in numerous other lines, Agdestein - Langrock, Kiel 2000.

8. ♘e2 ♙b7

After Black's bishop has been developed to the b7-square, his e4-pawn has been protected and White should look for other targets.

Or 8...c5 9.d5 ♗h4 10.♘f4 ♝a7 11.dxe6 f5, Theocharides - Chersich, Halle 1995, 12.exf6+-.

9. ♘f4

This move is more precise than 9.0-0, since Now White can

counter 9...c5, with the powerful argument – 10.d5.

9... ♗c6

In case of 9...c5 10.d5 exd5 11. ♗xd5 ♗e7, Feher – Fish, Budapest 1992, it seems very strong for White to follow with: 12. ♗f4 0–0 13.e6+–.

After 9...g6 10. ♗e3 ♗c6 11.0–0 ♗e7 12... ♗d7 13. ♗fd1 ♗g7 14.c3 0–0 15. ♗b3 ♗ad8 16. ♗c2 ♗c8 17. a5 b5 18.b4 ♗d5 19. ♗d2 f5 20. exf6±, Black has certain problems with his doubled e-pawns, T.Luther – Kerkmeester, Groningen 1990.

10.c3 ♗e7

10... ♗d7 11.0–0 ♗e7 12. ♗e2 ♗g6 13. ♗h5. Of course, White should not exchange on g6, opening the h-file for his opponent. The knight attacks the g7-pawn from the h5-square and it prevents Black from castling. White's battery of queen + bishop exerts pressure against Black's a6-pawn, therefore Black's castling long is problematic as well.

Following 13...c5 14. ♗d1 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♗e7 16. ♗a3 ♗h4 17. ♗b3 ♗c7 18. ♗g5 ♗f5 19.d5± White's advantage is overwhelming, Gal-dunts – Vogler, Wiesbaden 1999. Naturally, it is bad for Black to try 19... ♗e5 20. ♗f4 as well.

10...g6 11.0–0 h5 (In case of 11... ♗g7, as it was played in the game Ki.Georgiev – Sulava, France 1998, it seems quite reasonable for White to occupy additional space with the straightfor-

ward line: 12.b4 0–0 13. ♗e3 ♗e7 14.a5 b5 15. ♗b3±) 12. ♗e2 ♗e7 13. ♗d1 ♗d7 14.b4.

White has started the slow, but relentless advance of his pawn-avalanche on the queenside. Black is once again faced with the crucial dilemma – where to castle? His kingside has been compromised, while White's pressure on the f1-a6 diagonal makes that enterprise quite dubious. 14... ♗h6 15. ♗b3 ♗xf4 16. ♗xf4 h4 17.h3. It would be a mistake for White to allow the chronic weakening of the light squares on his kingside after his opponent's move h4-h3. Black has in fact an extra piece in the fight for the light squares, since White's bishop on f4 might become useless in that case. 17... ♗f5 18. ♗g5 ♗h5 19. ♗f6 ♗e7 20.c4+– White's bishop on f6 is very powerful, since it controls a complex of squares – d8, e7, h8 and g5 and it paralyzes Black's forces, ♗oidman – Vogler, Germany 1997.

11.0–0

This is White's most natural answer.

11...c5

After: 11... ♗d5 12. ♗e2 ♗xf4 13. ♗xf4 ♗e7 14. ♗g4 ♗f8, Rusak – Oorebeek, Email 2000, the simple move 15. ♗h5± creates very serious problems for Black, because he cannot coordinate easily his pieces.

12. ♗e3 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♗f5 14.d5!

That is clearly White's most

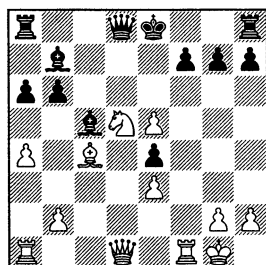
logical decision. He has a huge lead in development, therefore it is advantageous for him to open files in the centre.

14...exd5

It is hardly any better for Black to defend here with: 14...♘xe3 15.fxe3 ♙c5 16.dxe6 ♙xe3+ 17.♔h1 ♚xd1 18.exf7+ ♕e7 19.♗axd1±; or 15...♗c8 16.♙b3 ♙c5 17.dxe6 ♙xe3+ 18.♔h1 ♚xd1 19.exf7+ ♕e7 20.♗axd1±.

15.♘xd5 ♘xe3 16.fxe3 ♙c5
(diagram)

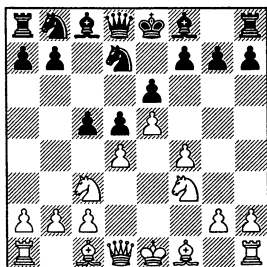
17.e6 0-0 (Black cannot capture that “bold pedestrian soldier”, because of: 17...fxe6? 18.♚h5+ g6 19.♚e5+-). He cannot save the game even after the more resilient defence: 18...♔d7



19.♚e5!, since White’s attack is obviously decisive, for example: 19...exd5 20.♙xd5 ♙xd5 21.♚xd5+ ♕c7 22.♗f7+ ♙e7 23.♚e5+-, or: 19...♗f8 20.♗xf8 ♙xf8 21.♘c7!+-) **18.exf7+ ♔h8 19.♚h5 b5 20. ♙a2 ♗b8 21.♔h1±** Black has no counterplay whatsoever and White’s position is nearly winning, Chandler – Humphrey, Brisbane 2006.

Chapter 10

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7
5.f4 c5 6.♘f3



Black's main defence 6...♘c6 will be analyzed in the following chapters, while now we will deal with the other seldom played moves: **a) 6...b6**, **b) 6...♗b6**, **c) 6...cxd4** and **d) 6...a6**.

Black has tried in practice some other possibilities – all of them quite rare:

6...♙e7 7.♙e3 cxd4 (About 7...b6 – see 6...b6; 7...0–0 8.♙e2 a6 9.0–0 c4. White's kingside offensive is running unopposed after the closing of the centre. 10.♗e1 ♞e8 11.f5± Forchmann – Hammerich, Willingen 2003.) 8.♘xd4 b6 (about 8...♘c6 – see 6...♘c6) 9.♗g4, Black must be careful now – 9...g6 10.♙d3±. It is a disaster for him to play – 9...0–0? 10.♘xe6 fxe6 11.♗xe6+ ♖h8 12.♗xd5± Lee – Zelinski, Email 1996;

In case Black advances his f-pawn one or two squares forward, for example: 6...f6, Gulko – Schinzel, Polanica Zdroj 1977, White must capture on f6 creating certain inconveniences for Black concerning the protection of his dark squares. 7.exf6 ♗xf6, Skripchenko – L.Zaitseva, Ukraine 1996 (7...gxf6 8.f5±; 7...♘xf6 ♙e3±) 8.♘b5 ♘a6 9.♙e3±;

Black's attempts to close the centre from both sides of the board fail. He has neither time nor resources to develop his pieces comfortably. 6...c4 7.♙e2 ♘c6 8.0–0 ♙e7 9.♙e3 f5 10.b3 cxb3 11.axb3 a6 12.♗c1 ♘f8 13.♘d1 ♘g6 14.c4± Moraes – Gazola, Brazil 1996.

a) 6...b6

Black tries to solve the eternal problem of his bad "French" bishop in this line, instead of the standard pawn-offensive on the queenside.

7.♙e3 ♙e7

He can also play immediately – 7...♙a6 8.♙a6 ♘xa6 9.0–0 g6, Beltran Rueda – Fernandez Diaz, Spain 1994 and here it would

have been reasonable for White to free the way for his c-pawn with the idea to open the centre with c2-c4, while Black's pieces are not yet developed: 10. ♖b5 ♘c7 11. a4 ♘xb5 12. axb5 ♖c7 13. b3 c4 14. bxc4 ♗xc4 15. ♗d3±.

7...g6 8. ♗d2 h5, Maciejewski – Jozefczak, Poznan 1987, Black is trying in vain to prevent White's potential activity on the kingside. This is luxury he cannot afford, because his lag in development is so considerable. He fails to neutralize White's initiative, which is running all over the board. 9. ♖b5 a6 10. ♖d6+ ♙xd6 11. exd6 c4 12. ♙f2 ♖f8 13. ♗b4 ♘c6 14. ♗a3 ♖a7 15. ♙h4 ♖b5 16. ♙xd8 ♖xa3 17. ♙f6±.

Black played much more prudently in the next game: 8...♙a6 9. ♖b5 ♙xb5 10. ♙xb5 c4 11. c3 a6 12. ♙a4 b5 13. ♙c2 ♘c6 14. 0-0± Ki.Georgiev – Duckers, Cappelle la Grande 2004. He solved the problem with his bad bishop indeed, but he is still far from equality. White has the bishop pair and a clear-cut plan for a kingside offensive.

8. ♗d2 ♙a6

About 8...♘c6 – see 6...♘c6 7. ♙e3 b6 8. ♗d2 ♙e7.

The idea behind the move 8...a5 is dubious and its drawbacks are evident too. Black weakens his light squares (the b6-square as well) and it is not easy in fact to understand the merits of the move 8...a5. 9. ♙b5 ♙a6 10. 0-0 g6

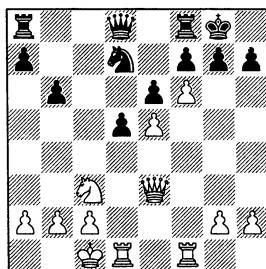
11. ♗e2 ♖c7 12. ♙xa6 ♖xa6 13. ♖b5 ♖c6 14. c4± Escandell – Puebla, Villa Ballester, 1995. White's knight is placed on b5 quite comfortably and his rooks will occupy the c1 and d1-squares.

After 8...g6, Sznapiak – Hvenkilde, Copenhagen 1990, White must play actively. 9. 0-0-0 ♙a6 10. ♙xa6 ♖xa6 11. ♖b1 0-0 12. h4, because his attack becomes stronger after the move g7-g6. I would like to draw your attention once again that White's pawnshelter has not been compromised. 12...h5 13. ♙d1 b5 14. g4→ and Black will hardly manage to survive.

9. 0-0-0 ♙xf1 10. ♗hxfl ♖c6 11. f5

White is playing simply and strongly. That is the way to maintain your position superior!

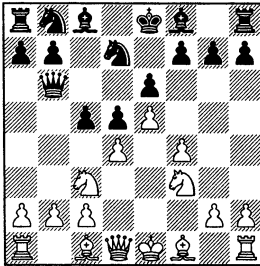
11...cxd4 12. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 13. ♙xd4 ♙g5 14. ♙e3 ♙xe3 15. ♗xe3 0-0 16. f6±



Neumann – Hoethe, Kassel 2000. White is already attacking the enemy king. His rooks are ready to join into action along the third or the fourth ranks. Black's

future counterplay is nowhere to be seen.

b) 6...♖b6



Black is trying to save time for the move a7-a6 (see variation **d**) in order to attack White's b2-pawn and to hamper his comfortable development.

7.♗e3

White now can afford to ignore that superficial threat. After a thorough check – that pawn, as in numerous other cases too, turns out to be poisoned.

7...♖xb2

About 7...cxd4 8.♖xd4 – see 6...cxd4 7.♖xd4 ♖b6 8.♗e3.

As for 7...a6 8.a3 – see 6...a6; about 7...♖c6 8.♖a4 – see 6...♖c6 7.♗e3 ♖b6 8.♖a4.

After 7...c4, Beninsky – Agulnick, Email 2002, White can continue with the simple line: 8.♖b1 ♖c6 9.♗e2 ♗e7 10.0-0±. Black usually achieves nothing positive by closing the centre, moreover that now his queen is placed in front of his b-pawn.

7...♗e7 8.♖a4 ♖a5+ 9.c3 c4 10.b4 cxb3 (In case Black's queen

retreats, the blocking of the pawn-structure on the queenside frees White's hands for actions on the kingside where he has the majority of forces and extra space.) 11.axb3 ♖c7 12.♗d3 f5 13.0-0 b6 14.c4 ♗b7 15.♖c3± Mirnik – C.Fischer, Germany 1988.

8.♖b5 cxd4

Black may sacrifice his rook, but the result is equally disastrous for him.

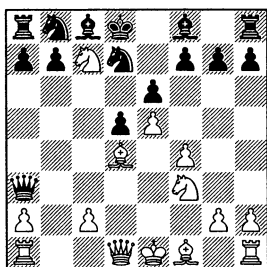
8...♖a6, Lawson – Hervieux, New York 1999, 9.a3 – White is weaving a net around Black's queen and he is not counting upon 9...♖b6 10.dxc5 ♖c4 11.♗xc4 dxc4 12.♖b1 ♖a2 13.♖c1 c3 14.♖b3 ♗xc5 15.♗xc5 ♖xc5 16.♖d1. This is an exquisite final move. White is threatening ♖c7+ followed by a checkmate on the next move and his queen avoids simultaneously the possible attack after ♖c5xb3. 16...0-0 17.♖xc3+ – Black's queen has been trapped and the fight is over.

9.♖c7+ ♖d8 10.♗xd4 ♖a3

Black does not facilitate his defence at all after: 10...♗b4+ 11.♖f2 ♗c5 (11...♗c3 12.♖b1 ♗xd4+ 13.♖xd4 ♖xa2 14.♖xa8+ – Jobe – Gurkan, Elo 2000) 12.♖xa8+ – Solin – Tuominen, Stockholm 1994 and White remains with an extra rook in both cases.

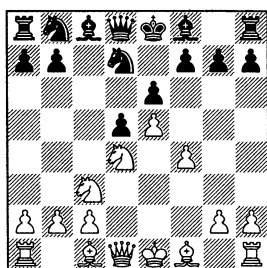
(diagram)

11.♖xa8 ♖c6 12.c3 ♖xd4 13.cxd4 ♖c3+ 14.♖f2 ♖c5 15.dxc5 ♗xc5+ 16.♖g3+ – Kaeiser – Krause, Altenkirchen 1999.



Black has obtained some counter-play indeed, but he has paid a too dear price for that. He has practically no active fighting units left to conduct an effective attack.

c) 6...cxd4 7.dxd4



7...e3

About 7...d6 8.e3 – see 6...d6.

As for 7...a6 – see 6...a6 7.e3 cxd4.

7...e7 8.e3± Bondarovsky – Ruiz Diaz, Castelar 2002.

7...b6 8.e3 bxb2? Black decides to risk and he grabbed White's b2-pawn. (He had better play 8...d6 – see 6...d6 7.e3 cd 8.dxd4 b6.) 9.d6 b5 b4 10.d7+ d8 11.d2 (It seemed like Black had overlooked that move.) 11...xc7 12.d6+ b5

13.b5+– Kruppa – Bareev, Naberezhnye Chelny 1988.

7...b4 8.e3 d6 (8...xc3 9.bxc3 d6 10.d3± White has the bishop pair, a space advantage and a superior development and that looks like an excellent compensation for his doubled c-pawns.) 9.e2 d6 10.0-0 g6 11.h1 d7, Ruiz – Romero, San Jose 1995, 12.cb5±. Black will be forced to exchange his bishop for White's knight, which will otherwise penetrate to the d6-square sometime in the future and that will make the dark squares in his camp chronically weak.

8.e3 0-0

After 8...d6, we reach the main theoretical positions – see 6...d6 7.e3 cxd4 8.d4 e5.

The straightforward move 8...xd4 seems to be quite grim for Black. 9.xd4 d6, Hidegh – Kristof, Hungary 1996, 10.d6 dxd4 11.d6+ e7 12.xd4.

The following possibility looks like a simple loss of time: 8...b4 9.d2 d6 10.a3 a5 11.d3 xc3 12.dxa5 xd2+ 13.xd2 dxa5 14.xa5± C.Bauer – Ramming, Ingelheim 1998.

8...b6 9.d2 d6 (It is insufficient for Black to play now: 9...xb2 10.b1 a3 11.d6 b5 xe3 12.xe3 a5 13.d6±) 10.0-0-0± Harrow – Mosher, USA 1994.

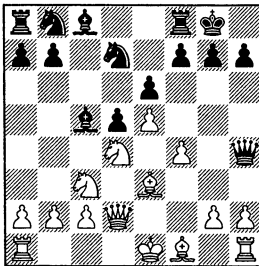
8...a6 9.g4 0-0 10.0-0 b5 11.d3 b6 12.h1 f5, Zelic – Saric, Zadar 2000. White had to

4...♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♞f3 a6 7.♙e3

capture en passant 13.e7 here with somewhat better chances. His pieces are completely mobilized and he has no weaknesses, which of course absolutely does not apply to his opponent's position.

9.♞d2 ♞h4+

Black had better transpose to the main line theory with 9...♞c6 – see 6...♞c6.

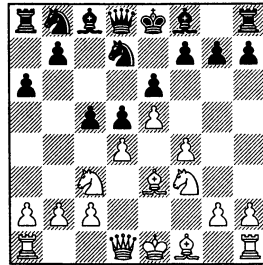


10.g3 ♞e7 11.0–0–0 ♞b6
 12.♞db5 f6 13.♙xc5 ♞xc5 14.
 exf6 ♙xf6 15.♞d4± Azuma – Ki-
 tada, Japan 2002. After the trade
 of the dark squared bishops,
 White's advantage is guaranteed
 by his dominance on the dark
 squares.

d) 6...a6

This move has been played with two objects in mind. The first is that now the b5-square has become inaccessible to White's light pieces. We already know that White's knight may use that square as a base for its deployment to d6 or d4. The second idea is that Black may support in that fashion his standard pawn-offensive on the queenside.

7.♙e3



We will analyze now the following possibilities **d1) 7...b5, d2) 7...♞b6.**

About 7...♙e7 8.♞d2 ♞c6 – see 6...♞c6; 7...♞c6 8.♞d2 – see 6...♞c6 7.♙e3 a6 8.♞d2.

Black plays only very seldom: 7...f5. White opens the centre and that turns out to be in his favour, because of his lead in development: 8.exf6 gxf6 9.♞d2 cxd4, Imperor – Noiro, Paris 1994, 10. ♞xd4 ♞b6 11.♙f2 ♞e7 12.♙e2±.

It is too slow for Black and White has no problems after the move 7...b6, Ghannoum – Desjardins, Quebec 1992, 8.♙e2 ♞c6 9. 0–0 ♙e7 10.♞d2±.

7...cxd4 8.♞xd4 g6 (About 8... ♞c6 – see 6...♞c6; 8...♙b4 9.♞g4 0–0 10.♙d3 ♙xc3+ 11.bxc3 f5, Lupor – Steinhoefel, Germany 1997. White had here at his disposal a simple, but elegant tactical strike: 12.♞xg7+ ♙xg7 13.♞xe6+ ♙h8 14.♞xd8 ♙xd8 15.♙xf5±. His pawn-avalanche on the kingside supported by his two bishops is much more powerful than Black's knight.) 9.♞d2 ♞c6 10.0–0–0. (It

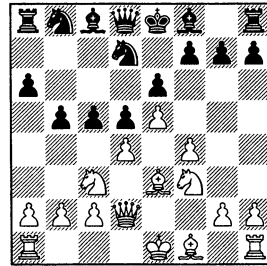
is quite reasonable now for White to castle long. The g7-g6 weakening on Black's kingside has created a juicy target for a rapid pawns-attack by White with the help of h2-h4-h5, or g2-g4, f4-f5. Black's counter offensive on the queenside would not be so effective, because of his considerable lag in development.) 10...♖b6 11.♟f2± Morel – Alurralde, Rosario 1992.

As usual, a move like 7...c4 makes White's task much simpler. In answer to that, White can proceed with a patient development and later with his standard kingside onslaught. 8.g3 ♗b4 9.♗g2 ♘c6 10.0-0 0-0 11.a3 ♗e7 12.f5± Schumacher – von Rosenberg, Eemail 2002.

d1) 7...b5 8.♟d2!

This is White's best move. The queen frees the d1-square for the knight, which will be forced to retreat after Black's pawn advance anyway. Meanwhile, this is not something White should worry about. The knight will be transferred to the kingside and it will participate actively in his attack there. You should not forget the golden rule of chess that "pawns cannot go back...". Pay attention to the fact that White has not touched any pawns on the queenside. Therefore we can note once again that Black has no target for a counterplay, moreover he might have problems at some moment

with the defence of his far-advanced pawn mass there.



8...♗e7

It seems more consistent for Black to continue with his pawn-offensive: 8...b4 9.♗e2 a5, but White can neutralize it and obtain a superior position even without any extraordinary measures: 10.dxc5 ♘xc5, Berg – Volkov, Internet 2004, 11.♗g3±. Black has occupied plenty of space on the queenside indeed, but he has no real targets there. Meanwhile White is much ahead in development and in the future, depending on Black's reactions, he has active prospects on the kingside (with f4-f5), as well as on the queenside (after a2-a3).

White's chances are clearly better as well in case of: 8...cxd4 9.♗xd4 ♗b4 10.a3 ♗a5 11.♗e2 0-0 12.0-0± Crafty 16.13 – Fritz 3.10, Notts 1999.

8...♗b7 9.♗d3 b4. Black continues with his offensive and he does not permit his pawns to be fixed on light squares. 10.♗d1 ♗c6 (It is also interesting for Black to follow with: 10...c4!? 11.♗e2 ♖b6

(∞ Psakhis), but we can still assume that White will maintain his advantage after he concentrates his forces on the kingside. 12.0-0 ♗c6 13.♙f2 ♙e7 14.♗e3 ♖b8 15. f5±. This dynamic variation needs some practical testing.) 11.0-0 cxd4 12.♗xd4. The control over the d4-square is extremely important. White's knight, deployed there, controls a whole complex of squares; in addition it exerts pressure against Black's e6-pawn and that precludes the advance of his f7-pawn. 12...♙e7 (It would not work for Black to continue with: 12...♙c5 13.♗xc6 ♙xc6 14. ♙xc5 ♗xc5 15.♖xb4, because he remains a pawn down. White can counter 12...♗c5 with 13.♗f2±) 13.♖f3! Now, White can afford a move like that, because the centre is closed and his pieces are extremely active. His rook is deployed for a direct attack. It is not certain that he will manage to checkmate, but still the pressure is very unpleasant for Black. He will be forced to weaken his dark squares. 13...0-0 14.♖h3 g6 15. ♗f2± Kamsky – Ivanchuk, Tilburg 1992.

8...♖c7 9.♙d3 (White provokes in a standard fashion Black to play c5-c4.) 9...♗b6 10.0-0 g6 11.dxc5 (White uncovers the dark squares with the idea to occupy the blocking d4-square.) 12...♙xc5 12.♙xc5 ♖xc5+ 13.♗h1 ♗c6 14. ♗e2 ♙d7 15.c3 ♗c4 16.♙xc4 bxc4 17.♗ed4 ♗xd4 18.♗xd4± V.Gure-

vich – Suomalainen, Jyvaskyla 1993. White's knight on d4 is much more powerful than Black's "bad" bishop on d7.

9.♙d3

Black is now tempted to push c5-c4 with tempo, but that is going to reduce the tension in the centre permanently. White will have his hands free for actions on the kingside and he will attack Black's e6-pawn with f4-f5. Black's prospects on the queenside are far from clear.

9...g6

After 9...0-0, Quattrocchi – Rebaudo, Italy 1997, White can occupy the important d4-square in the habitual way after 10. dxc5±.

10.0-0 ♙b7 11.♗d1

White's knight is headed for the g4-square and its place will be taken by a pawn in order to make White's pawn-chain more elastic.

11...cxd4

Otherwise after c2-c3, White may capture on d4 with the pawn just in case.

12.♗xd4 ♗c5 13.b4!

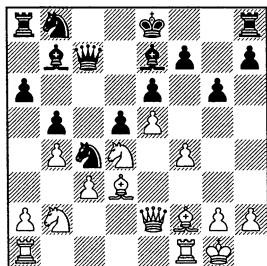
This is a multi-purpose move. White occupies additional space and he attacks Black's only active piece. Still, the main idea is to block his opponent's b5-pawn, after which the pawn-break a2-a4 will become very effective, since Black will be deprived of the possibility b5-b4.

13...♗a4

After 13...♖e4, White retreats 14.♙e1, having in mind the idea a2-a4 and ♘d1-f2, so that Black's knight on e4 will be in permanent danger. White does not intend to put up with it there for long.

He maintains a slight, but stable advantage in case of: 13...♘xd3 14.cxd4 0-0 (or 14...♘c6 15.♞b1±) 15.♘f2 ♘d7 16.♞ac1 ♞e8 17.♘b3. Note that White has practically an extra piece in the fight for the dark squares, because Black's bishop on c8 is completely idle. 17...♞c8 18.♞xc8 ♙xc8 19.♘a5 ♙f8 20.♞c1 ♘b8 21.♞c3 ♞h4 22.g3 ♞h5 23.♙c5. The fine point in positions like that is the placement of White's d4-pawn. Whenever it is on the d3-square, it controls the c4 and e4-squares and it does not stand in the way of White's only bishop left on the board. 23...♙d7 24.♙xf8 ♞xf8 25.♘b3±. As it quite often happens in the French Defence – Black's main problem is his light squared bishop.

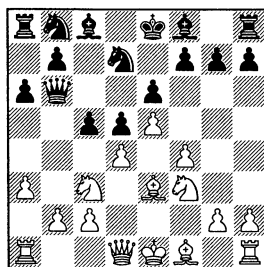
14.c3 ♘b6! 15.♙f2 ♞c7 16. ♘b2 ♘c4 17.♞e2



Here, Black's most resilient defence seems to be 17...♖a3!

which is a continuation of the endless maneuvering of that knight: ♘g8-f6-d7-c5-a4-b6-c4-a3 (and all that during the first 17 moves of the game!). The knight on a3 prevents mechanically the quite unpleasant pawn-advance for Black – a2-a4. Thus, at least he might save some time to develop his pieces. 17...♘c6? 18. a4± Anand – Bareev, Linares 1993.

d2) 7...♞b6 8.a3



This is a standard reaction for White in similar positions. Now, in case Black tries to capture White's b2-pawn, he will have his queen trapped after ♘c3-a4.

We will analyze thoroughly: d2a) 8...cxd4, d2b) 8...♘c6.

Black has some other alternatives too.

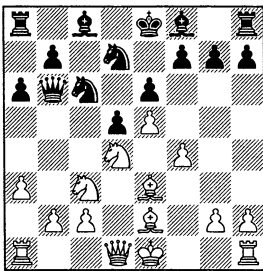
The move 8...♞a7 – seems to be somewhat artificial. 9.g3 ♘c6 10.♙g2 cxd4 11.♘xd4 ♙c5 12.♘ce2 (White must hold on to the control of the d4-square, because it is absolutely essential for his set-up.) 12...0-0 13.0-0 f6, G.Timoshenko – Pert, Budapest 2003. Here,

White had to play 14.♟f2, with the transparent threat to capture the e6-pawn. 14...♟d8 15.exf6 ♟xf6 16.b4± and Black's backward e6-pawn and his pieces on the eighth rank hardly contribute to the attractiveness of his position;

8...c4 – this reduction of the tension in the centre cannot be recommended to Black. 9.b3 cxb3 10.cxb3 ♟c7 11.♟d2 b5 12.♟d3 g6 13.0–0 ♟b7 14.♟fc1± S.Krylov – Berlinsky, Mondariz 2003. White's pieces are perfectly placed and he can operate effectively on both sides of the board;

8...♟c7, Zigangirova – Mokhova, St.Petersburg 2003. Now, White can proceed in a straightforward manner: 9.dxc5 ♟xc5 10.♟xc5 ♟xc5 11.♟d2 0–0 12.b4 ♟e4 13.♟xe4 dxe4 14.♟g5 f6 15.exf6 ♟xf6 16.g3±.

d2a) 8...cxd4 9.♟xd4 ♟c6 10.♟e2



10...♟c5

The indifferent move 10...♟a7 led to an amusing miniature: 11.♟xe6 ♟xe3 12.♟xd5 ♟a7 13.♟dc7+ ♟e7 14.♟d6# 1–0 Maciuc-

lewicz – Ringel, Email 1999. It is obvious that Black cannot afford the luxury to lose tempi just like that.

White obtained the two bishop advantage practically for free in the following game: 10...♟xd4 11.♟xd4 ♟c5 12.♟a4 ♟c6 (about 12...♟a5 13.c3 ♟xd4 14.♟xd4 – see 10...♟c5) 13.♟xc5 ♟xc5 14.0–0 0–0 15.♟f3 ♟e4 16.c3 ♟d7 17.♟d3 f5. White's patient, but unstoppable amassing of forces on the kingside (♟xe4, ♟g3, ♟g4) is an impressive sight and here his bishop on d4 becomes extremely powerful. 18.exf6 ♟xf6 19.♟c2 ♟e4. Black hopes to deprive his opponent of at least one of his dangerous bishops, so that he can build something like the Maginot Line on the light squares. White, however, has at his disposal here an attractive exchange-sacrifice: 20.♟e1 ♟e8 21.♟xe4 dxe4 22.♟xe4± Levacic – Lucchetti, France 1998. His compensation is more than sufficient.

11.♟a4 ♟a5 + 12.c3 ♟xd4

Black can and should preserve the dark squared bishops on the board. 12...♟xd4 13.♟xd4 ♟e7, this move is purposeful from the point of view of the protection of the dark squares, but it is still insufficient for equality. 14.b4 ♟c7 15.0–0 ♟b8 16.♟c1 0–0, Blanco – Prasca, Judenara 1999, 17.c4±.

13.♟xd4 ♟xd4

In case of 13...b5, White can follow with 14.b4, since it would

not work for Black to play 14... ♖xa4, because of the cold-blooded retreat 15. ♖b1 and his queen will be unavoidably trapped after ♕e2-d1. If Black retreats humbly – 14... ♖c7, then after 15. ♖c5± White dominates on the dark squares.

14. ♖xd4 0–0

About 14... ♖c7 15.b4 0–0 16. 0–0 – see 14...0–0.

14...b6 15. ♕d1 ♖b5 16.b4. We are already familiar with this strategy. White occupies space and he controls the dark squares. In this particular case he restricts the mobility of Black's knight too. Remember the famous rule – “If one of your pieces is badly placed – your whole game is bad.” Now, Black has not one, but two terribly deployed pieces – his knight and his “traditionally bad” bishop. 16...a5 17. ♖b2± Topalov – Korchnoi, Dos Hermanas 1999.

15. 0–0 ♖c7

White's game is very pleasant and simple after: 15...b5 16. ♖c5 ♖xc5 17. ♖xc5. The difference in the placement of the bishops is more than evident. 17...♖b8 18.a4 ♖b6 19. ♖xb6 ♖xb6 20.axb5 axb5 21.b4 and White fixes his opponent's pawns on light squares. 21... ♕d7 22. ♖a7± Campora – Carabeo Garcia, Seville 2003.

16. b4 b6

16...b5 – The following game reached that position after some transposition of moves. 17. ♖b2 ♕b7 (or 17...f6, Gerigk – Junge,

Germany 1990 18. ef ♖xf6 19. ♕f3±) 18. ♕g4! Now, Black's most sensible counterplay seems to be undermining White's centre with f7-f6, so that is what White's last move is aimed at preventing. 18... ♖ac8 19. ♖f3 f5 (19...a5!? 20. ♖e1 axb4 21.axb4 ♖fe8 22. ♖g3± Finkel) 20. exf6 ♖xf6 21. ♖e1 ♖f8 22. ♖e5 ♖d6 23. ♖fe3 ♖c7 24.h4. These motives are well-familiar too. White dominates on the dark squares and he restricts the mobility of the black bishop on b7. 24...h6 25.h5± J.Nunn – S.Pedersen, Oxford 1998.

17. ♖b2 ♕b7 18. c4 f6

Black could have concentrated his attention entirely on the queenside, but that would not have equalized for him at all: 18... ♖fc8 19. ♖ac1 a5, Miladinovic – Kacheishvili, Leon 2001, 20. ♖d2±.

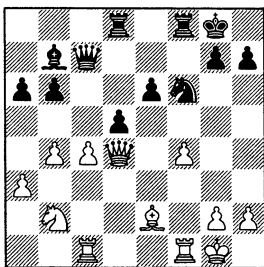
19. exf6 ♖xf6 20. ♖ac1 ♖ad8

Black would not solve all his problems with 20...dxc4. His bishop on b7 has been activated indeed, but the chronic weakness of the e6-square remains permanent. 21. ♖xc4 ♖d5, Demyak – Marcinkiewicz, Email 2002, 22. ♖e5± White's knight on e5 is extremely powerful and stable, while its black counterpart can be exchanged by White with the bishop if necessary.

(diagram)

21. c5± E.Berg – Radjabov, Aviles 2000. White is once again dominating on the dark squares,

4...♖fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♖f3 a6 7.♔e3

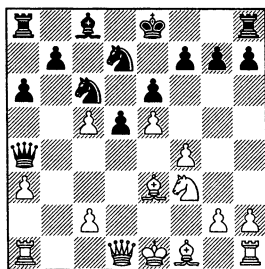


while Black's bishop on b7 is practically useless. White's edge is quite stable.

d2b) 8...♖c6 9.dxc5

This is the beginning of the fight for the dark squares on the queenside.

9...♔xc5 10.♖a4 ♖a5+ 11. b4 ♖xa4 12.bxc5



Now, White controls the dark squares complex quite reliably. His bishop on e3 plays a key-role in that, since it has no opponent.

Here, Black has several possibilities. We will analyze in details: **d2b1) 12...f6, d2b2) 12... 0-0.**

He has tried some other moves too:

12...♖a5+ 13.♖d2 ♖xd2+ 14. ♔xd2 f6 15.exf6 ♖xf6 16.♔d3

0-0, Caramazana – Alvarino Cazon, Asturias 1996. Now, White should better not avoid the trade of the dark squared bishops, but he should rather bring his rook to an active position: 17.♖ab1 ♖g4 18.♖hf1 ♖xe3 19.♔xe3±. White's king has been activated and that is wonderful, since it is already an endgame. His pieces are perfectly placed;

12...d4 – This is an ingenious decision. Black opens the long a8-h1 diagonal and the d-file as well. Still, the exchange of his central pawn for White's doubled pawn is dubious from the positional point of view. 13.♖xd4 ♖xc5 14.♔e2, Voitsekhovskiy – Pliasunov, St.Petersburg 2003. 14...♖e4 15.♖xc6 ♖xc6 16.♖d4=;

12...♖b8, Bobras – Baklan, Cappelle la Grande 2002. Here, White could have proceeded in the standard fashion with: 13.c4 ♖a5+ 14.♖d2 ♖xd2+ 15.♔xd2 and that would have provided him with the two bishop advantage and a superior position;

In case of 12...♖a5, M.Botvinnik – Haimovich, Tel-Aviv 1998, 13.c4 ♖xd1 14.♖xd1 ♖c4 15.♔xc4 dxc4 16.♖c1 ♖b8 17.♖d2, White preserves a slight edge. His knight on d6 will be rather annoying for Black in perspective.

d2b1) 12...f6 13.exf6 ♖xf6

Or 13...gxf6 14.c4 ♖a5+ 15.♖d2 dxc4 16.♔xc4 ♖xc5 17.0-0 ♖xd2 18.♖xd2, Black has won a pawn

indeed, but I do not believe that any chess player might prefer his position. White has the two bishop advantage in a position with an open centre and a lead in development, so his compensation is just excellent. 18...b6 19.♞ab1 ♞b8 20.♙xc5 bxc5 21.♞xb8 ♜xb8 22.♞e4 ♖e7 23.♞xc5. Black's position is a sorry sight – the only outcome he can dream about is a draw after a long and hard fight. 23...♞c6 24.♞xa6 ♙xa6 25.♙xa6± A.Timofeev – Sakalauskas, Gothenburg 2005.

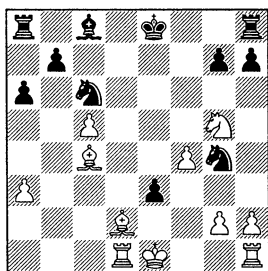
14.♙d3 ♞g4

Or 14...0–0 15.0–0 ♙d7, Kuemin – Gleizerov, Stockholm 2005, 16.♞e1±.

15.♙d2 e5

Wong Zi Jing – Soln, Bled 2002 and here White could have maintained his advantage by exchanging queens.

16.c4 ♞d1 17.♞d1 dc 18.♙c4 e4 19.♞g5 e3



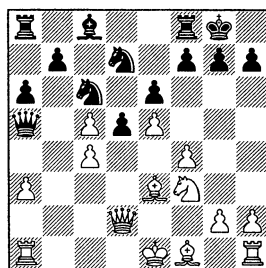
20.♙c3±

White's couple of bishops is an enormously powerful force in that open position.

d2b2) 12...0–0 13.c4

It is now favourable for White to trade queens. As it is very well known – the bishop pair is exceptionally effective in endgames; moreover White's king is presently in the centre. It might be endangered in an eventual middle game, for example after the undermining move f7-f6. In the endgame the placement of the monarch in the centre of the board is usually quite purposeful.

13...♞a5+ 14.♞d2



14...♞d8

Black is trying to gain some tempi.

It is also interesting for him to try to advance his d-pawn with the idea later to annihilate at an opportune moment White's unfortunate army units – the pawns on c4 and c5: 14...d4 15.♞xd4 ♞xd2+ 16.♖xd2 ♞a5, Jedryczka – Bohnenblust, Patras 1999. White could have returned the gift here, creating weaknesses for his opponent in his stead: 17.c6 bxc6 18.♞b1 c5 19.♞b3 ♞b8 20.♖c3 ♞xb3 21.♞xb3 ♙b7 22.♞g1 ♙c6 23.

4...♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♟f3 a6 7.♙e3

♙d3 ♙a4 24.♟xb8 ♟xb8 25.♟b1 ♟xb1 26.♙xb1± (Kruppa). It is not easy for White to win this position, but once again he risks nothing and the maximum that Black can rely on is a draw and that should not make him optimistic at all.

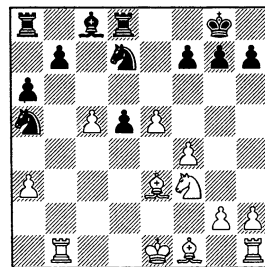
Black has tried numerous times in practice the immediate exchange of queens 14...♞xd2+ and White must capture with his king 15.♔xd2!. There are plenty of pieces on the board indeed, but Black cannot create presently any real threats. White has a lot of space for maneuvering and his pieces are accordingly much more mobile than their counterparts. 15...d4 (or 15...♞d8 16.♔c3 ♟e7 17.♙f2 ♟b8 18.♙h4 ♟bc6 19.♟d4± Mitkov – I.Schneider, USA 2005) ♟a5 17.♔c2 ♟xc5 18.♟c6!? White exchanges one of Black's knights and displaces the other one at the same time. 18...♟xc6 19.♙xc5 ♞d8 20.♙b6 ♟f8 21.♙c5 ♞d8 22.♙e2 ♙d7 (Naturally, Black can deprive his opponent of the two bishop advantage, but his position would have only become worse because of that. 22...♟d4 23.♙d4 ♞d4 24.♟hd1 ♞d1 25. ♞d1 ♔f8 26. ♞d8 ♔e7 27. ♟g8+-) 23.♙b6 ♟e8 24.♞ad1 ♟b8 25.♔b3 ♙c6 26.♙f3 ♙xf3 27.gxf3 h5 28.♞d6 ♟c6 29. ♞d7 ♟e7 30.♟hd1 ♟g6 31.♞1d4 ♟eb8 32.c5± Klimov – Kruppa, St Petersburg 2000.

15.♞xa5

This move seems to be more precise than the intermediate exchange 15.cd, since then Black would have had the additional possibility to play 15...♞xd2.

15...♟xa5 16.cxd5 exd5 17. ♟b1

White restricts the eventual activity of Black's knight on a5 and he also "freezes" the b7-pawn. It is worth noticing that his bishop on e3 participates quite purposefully in all that. The prospects of Black's only bishop are considerably reduced as a result.



17...♟e8

Black has tried in practice some maneuvers with the knight too:

17...♟f8, Libiszewski – Kosten, Sautron 2004 and here White could have maintained a great advantage with the help of: 18.♟d4 ♟e6 19.♟xe6 ♙xe6 20. ♙d2±;

Or 17...♟b8!? Grischuk – M. Gurevich, France 2003. White should counter that in an identical fashion – 18.♟d4, since a

move like that can never be bad. 18...♖bc6 (It is hardly possible for Black to put up with such a knight for long.) 19.♔d2 ♖xd4 20.♙xd4 ♙f5 21.♗b6 ♖c6 22.♕c3±. This is a picturesque position. White's king goes forward despite any superficial danger. That should not be surprising, since all his pieces occupy commanding positions. He is totally dominant on the dark squares.

18.♙d1

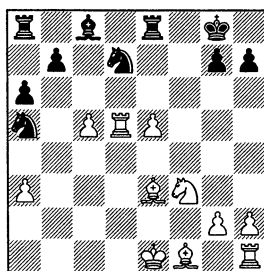
There is some logic in White's strange rook-maneuvers ♖a1-b1-d1, because now Black's d5-pawn is defenseless.

18...f6

Black has nothing else to do, since his queenside is stalemated.

19.♙xd5 fxе5 20.fxe5

White has a solid extra pawn and a couple of bishops. The only thing he needs to do presently is to consolidate his forces.



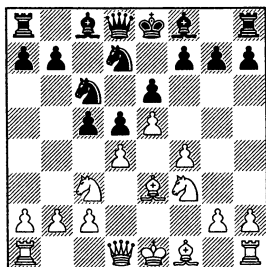
20...♖f8 21.♙d3 ♙e6 22. ♖d6 ♖ac8 23.♕f2 ♙c4 24.♙f5 ♖c7 25.♕g3 ♙e6 26.♙d3± Van-devoort – Degraeve, Cappelle la Grande 2004.

Conclusion

The main ideas for White in these positions are: full control of the all-important d4-outpost, after the exchange of the d-pawn, dominance on the complex of dark squares and restriction of the mobility of the “French” light squared bishop of his opponent. It is usually advantageous for White to transfer into an endgame. In case Black reduces the tension in the centre (which seldom happens, though...) with the move c5-c4, White's hands are free for actions on the kingside and there he has a clear superiority in forces and space. Black's possible counterplay on the queenside then is neither easy nor dangerous. He tries to undermine White's centre in some lines with the move f7-f6. As a rule, in similar structures, when the centre has been opened and the queens are absent from the board – the power of the bishop pair is quite impressive and White usually has it in these variations.

Chapter 11

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7
5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♙e3



This order of moves in the classical system of the French Defence was introduced into the tournament practice by Isaak Boleslavsky. White develops his pieces fortifying maximally in the process the strategically important d4-square. In case of an exchange in the centre, one of White's light pieces will occupy that important blocking square. We are soon going to see that the play in this variation can develop in numerous different ways. It is possible to witness patient maneuvering battle in the middle game with a space advantage for White, as well as a swift transfer into an endgame, in which Black will have to solve the problem of his light squared bishop. Sometimes right in the opening stage there are sudden complications

leading to misbalance in the material ratio.

After 7.♙e3, Black has plenty of different possibilities at his disposal. The most popular – 7...♖b6, 7...a6 and 7...cxd4 – will be analyzed later, while in this chapter we are going to deal with some seldom played moves. The most logical among them are: **a) 7...b6?!**, **b) 7...f6?!**, **c) 7...♗a5**, **d) 7...♞b8** and finally **e) 7...♙e7** (The following lines have no separate importance: 7...f5 8.exf6 – see 7...f6 and about 7...♘xd4 8.♘xd4 cxd4 9.♙xd4 – see 7...cxd4).

At first I will mention in short some other rather exotic possibilities for Black:

The risky attempt for him – 7...g5?! cannot be recommended, because after 8.♘xg5 cxd4, White has immediately two very favourable lines: the simple 9.♗h5 ♗e7 10.♘b5± and the more spectacular: 9.♘xe6 fxe6 10.♗h5+ ♘e7 11.♙f2!± which was tested in the game Brustman – Repkova, Moscow 1994 – and in both cases Black was faced with extremely difficult problems to solve.

It is premature for Black to close the centre with the move 7...c4?! because it presents White with a free hand for actions on the kingside. Meanwhile, he can even play without any preparation: 8.f5 ♖e7 (or 8...exf5 9.♟xd5 ♜a5+ 10.♟c3±; 8...♙b4 9.fxe6 fxe6 10.♙e2 0-0 11.0-0±; 8...♟b6 9.fxe6 ♙xe6 10.♙e2 ♙e7 11.0-0 h6 12.♜e1±) 9.g3!± and White can follow that with a deployment of his bishop to the h3-square and subsequent pressure against the e6-pawn.

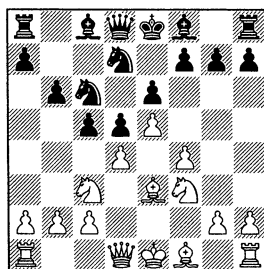
Black has tried sometimes in practice the awkward move – 7...♟e7?!. The position is of a closed type indeed, but Black can hardly afford to maneuver like that with his knights without being duly punished. After: 8.♜d2 c4 (or 8...♟f5 9.♙f2 h5 10.♙d3±; 8...a6 9.♙e2 ♟f5 10.♙f2 h5 11.0-0 ♙e7 12.dxc5 ♟xc5 13.♟d4± Carstens – Haenisch, Germany 1984) 9.g3!? ♟f5 10.♙f2 h5 11.♙g2 ♙e7 12.♟e2 ♟b8 13.h3 ♟c6 14.c3 ♙d7 15.♜c2 g6 16.♟d2 ♟f8 17.g4 ♟g7 18.♟g3± White had a powerful initiative in the game Geenen – Ballester, Brussels 1993.

In case of the passive move 7...g6, White can obtain a slight, but long-lasting positional advantage with: 8.♜d2 a6 (It is too dubious for Black to play 8...a5?! 9.♙b5± while after 8...c4, White can play immediately: 9.g4!? h5 10.gxh5 ♙xh5 11.♟e2± and his attacking prospects are excellent – he can

redeploy his knight to the g3-square and then he can advance his h-pawn.) 9.dxc5 ♙xc5 (or 9...♟xc5 10.♙e2±) 10.♙xc5 ♟xc5 11.0-0-0± – and a standard situation has been reached in which the drawbacks of the move g6 are evident.

There is a strange and not well investigated move for Black – 7...h6, which is purposeful enough, since it helps the preparation of the undermining pawn-break g7-g5 and in the game Milman – Kiriakov, Minneapolis 2005, there followed: 8.♜d2 g5 (It is less consistent for Black to play here: 8...a6 9.dxc5 ♟xc5 10.0-0-0 b5 11.♙d3 ♙d7 12.♜f2± Hirt – Lipecki, Bad Ragaz 1992.) 9.dxc5 gxf4 10.♙xf4 ♟xc5 11.0-0-0 ♙d7 12.♟b1± and White maintained an edge.

a) 7...b6?!



This move is very seldom played and its main drawback is its passivity. Still, after some accurate play Black can obtain a solid position, but practically without any active counterplay.

8. ♙e2 ♙e7

Black has also tried in practice here: 8... ♙b7 9. 0–0 ♖c8, Lommers – Astengo, Arco 2002 (About 9... ♙e7 10. ♖e1 – see 8... ♙e7.) and now White should exploit his lead in development by beginning immediate resolute actions with 10.f5! and Black's defence becomes rather problematic, for example it is too dangerous for him to defend with: 10... cxd4 11. ♗xd4 ♙c5 12. fxe6 fxe6 13. ♙h5+ g6 14. ♙g4±; it is hardly any better: 10... exf5 11. ♙g5 ♙e7 12. ♙xe7 ♗xe7 13. ♗b5 0–0 14. ♗xa7 ♙a8 15. ♗b5±; 11... f6 12. exf6 ♗xf6 13. ♙xf6 gxf6 (or 13... ♖xf6 14. ♗xd5 ♖d8 15. ♙c4±) 14. ♙d3±.

Probably Black's most resilient defence here is 10... ♙e7, with the following eventual developments: 11. ♖e1! exf5 (White's possibility to penetrate with his knight to the d6-square guarantees his advantage in the following variation: 11... cxd4 12. ♗xd4 ♙c5 13. fxe6 ♗xd4 14. exd7+ ♖xd7 15. ♙d3 ♗e6 16. ♙xc5 bxc5 17. ♗b5 0–0 18. ♗d6±) 12. ♖g3 g6 13. ♗b5 0–0 14. ♙d3± and White has an excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn, for example after: 14... cxd4 15. ♙h6 ♙e8 16. ♙xf5± and he has the very unpleasant threat for Black 17.e6→; Black's defence is difficult too in case of: 11... 0–0 12. ♖g3 ♗h8 (12... ♗xd4 13. ♗xd4 ♙h4 14. ♖h3 cxd4 15. ♙xd4±) 13. fxe6 fxe6 14. ♖h3 ♗xd4 15. ♗xd4 cxd4 16. ♙d3±. Black's position is

rather cramped and his bishop on b7 is passive, so his defensive task is without any good prospects, because in case of 16... h6, White has the promising sacrifice – 17. ♙xh6!? ♙h4 18. ♙xg7+ ♗xg7 19. ♖xe6 ♖e7 20. ♖g6+ ♗h8 21. ♙f5→ and his attack is very powerful in a position with material equality.

9. 0–0 0–0

White obtains a great advantage after Black's premature attempt to complicate matters in the centre with the move – 9... f6, because after the sharp counter measure 10.f5! Black can hardly parry White's threats without material losses:

10... cxd4?! 11. ♙b5 dxc3 (11... dxe3 12. ♙xc6 ♖b8 13. fxe6+–) 12. ♙xc6 cxb2 13. ♖b1 0–0 14. ♙xa8 ♙a6 15. fxe6 ♖xa8 16. exd7 ♙xf1 17. ♖xf1+–;

10... ♗db8?! 11. exf6 ♙xf6 12. dxc5± and White remains with a solid extra pawn;

10... fxe5?! – now White's attack becomes extremely dangerous: 11. fxe6! exd4 12. exd7+ ♙xd7 13. ♗xd4 cxd4 14. ♗b5!→ dxe3 15. ♖xd5 ♖c8 (Black cannot save the game after: 15... ♙f6 16. ♙h5+ g6 17. ♙ad1 ♗e5 18. ♗d6+ ♗e7 19. ♖xe5+!; 18... ♗f8 19. ♖xe5 ♗g7 20. ♖xe3+–) 16. ♙ad1. Black lags considerably in development and his king is stranded in the centre, so he has no chances to save the day, despite his extra piece: 16... ♖f8 (or 16... a6 17. ♙g4 ♗b8 18. ♖f7+ ♗d8 19. ♗d4 ♗c7 20. ♖xe7+–) 17.

♙c4 ♘d8 18.♙xf8+ ♙xf8 19.♚e5+ ♘e6 20.♙e6 ♙e6 21.♘c7+ ♘e7 22.♙d6 ♘f7 23.♙d8+-;

10...exf5 – That is evidently Black’s most tenacious defence. 11.♘xd5 cxd4 (or 11...fxe5 12.♙b5 ♙b7 13.dxe5±) 12.♘xd4 ♘xd4 13.♚xd4 ♘xe5 (13...fxe5 14.♚c4 ♘c5 15.♘xe7 ♚xe7 16.♚d5±) 14.♚a4+ ♙d7 15.♚b3 – Once again White’s compensation for the pawn is more than sufficient, because of Black’s inferior development and his “centralized” king.

It is quite possible for Black to follow with: 9...♙b7 10.♚e1 (It is worse for him to try: 10...♘f8 11.♚f2 cxd4 12.♘xd4 ♘g6, Aksionova – Gutsko, Kiev 2000, Black is behind in development, so White should open files and activate his pieces: 13.f5! exf5 14.♙b5! ♘gxe5 15.♘xf5 0–0 16.♙ad1± White regains his sacrificed pawn and the activity of his forces guarantees his edge. It is too bad for Black to play: 16...d4 17.♚g3 ♘g6 18.♙xc6 ♙xc6 19.♙xd4 f6 20.h4+- but it is possible for him to defend with the natural line: 10...0–0 11.♚g3 cxd4 12.♘xd4 ♘xd4 13.♙xd4 ♙c5 14.♙ad1± and Black’s position is passive, but still solid enough.) 10...cxd4 11.♘xd4 ♘xd4 12.♙xd4 ♙c5, Bolt – Ruston, St Helier 2002 and here White maintains a powerful positional pressure after: 13.♙xc5 bxc5 (or 13...♘xc5 14.♙b5±) 14.♘b5 0–0 15.♘d6 ♚b6 16.b3 f6 17.♚g3±.

10.♚d2 ♘db8?!

This is played with the idea to trade the “bad” light squared bishop, but Black loses too much time in order to accomplish that. It is better for him to try: 10...f6! with the following eventual developments: 11.dxc5 fxe5 (or 11...bxc5? 12.♘xd5 fxe5 13.♘xe7+ ♚xe7 14.♘e5±; 11...♘xc5 12.♙b5 ♙b7 13.exf6 ♙xf6 14.♙xc6 ♙xc6 15.♙d4 ♘e4 16.♚e3±; 11...♙xc5 12.♙xc5 ♘xc5 13.♙b5 ♙b7 14.♙xc6 ♙xc6 15.♘d4±) 12.♘xd5 ♙xc5 13.fxe5 ♙b7 14.♙xc5 ♘xc5 15.♘f4 ♚xd2 16.♘d2± and Black is doomed to a long and laborious defence in that endgame, due to his weakness on e6.

11.♙ad1 ♘h8 12.♘h1 ♙a6

Black is so much behind in development that he should avoid opening files. After: 12...f6?! 13.exf6 ♙xf6 14.♙f2↑ White’s initiative is very powerful and his opponent’s attempt to parry it with the help of the move 14...♚f8 can be countered by a dangerous pawn-sacrifice – 15.♙h4 ♙xf4 16.♙xe7 ♘xe7 17.♘g5! ♙f6 18.♘xh7!±.

13.f5 ♙xe2 14.♘xe2 exf5 15.c3!?

It deserves attention here for White to try the more aggressive line: 15.c4!? cxd4 16.♘exd4 ♘xd4 (In case of: 16...dxc4 17.♚c2 ♘xd4 18.♙xd4 ♚c8 19.♙xc4 ♚e6 20.♘d4 ♚xe5 21.♘xf5 ♙f6 22.♙d4 ♚e6 23.♚c3→ White’s attack is overwhelming.) 17.♘xd4 dxc4 18.♚e2!↑ and White’s initiative is so

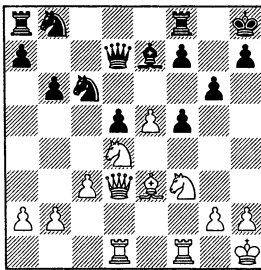
4... ♖fd7 5.f4 c5 6. ♖f3 ♖c6 7. ♔e3

powerful that Black's defence becomes quite problematic, for example: 18... ♖d5 19. ♖xf5 ♖e6 (or 19... ♖xe5? 20. ♖f3+-) 20. ♖g4 g6 21. ♖f3 ♖c6 22. ♖xe7 ♖xe7 23. ♖d6 ♖f5 24. ♔f4±.

15...cxd4?!

White preserves a good compensation for the pawn even after the more accurate defence for Black – 15...c4 16. ♖c2 ♖d7 17. ♖g5. He must be extremely careful, because for example in answer to 17...g6, White can continue with the aggressive line: 18.g4!? h6 19.gxf5 hxg5 (it is hardly any better for Black to play: 19...♔xg5 20.♔xg5 hxg5 21.fxg6! ♖e7 22.gxf7 ♖bc6 23.♖f6±) 20.f6 ♔d8 21. ♔xg5→.

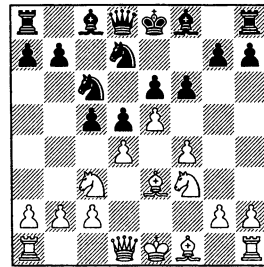
16. ♖exd4! ♖d7 17. ♖d3 g6



18.c4! That is White's most energetic line and now his initiative turns quickly into a decisive crushing attack. **18...♖d8** (18...dxc4 19. ♖xc4 ♖a5 20. ♖e2 ♖bc6 21.e6 ♖e8 22. ♔h6 ♖g8 23. ♖b5±) **19. ♖b5! d4** (19...dxc4 20. ♖e2 ♖b7 21. ♖xc4 ♖xd1 22. ♖xd1 ♖g7 23.e6±) **20. ♖fxd4 a6** (20...♖xe5 21. ♖e2 ♖bc6 22. ♖xf5 ♖b7 23.

♖fd6±; 21... ♖b7 22. ♔f4 ♖ec6 23. ♖c7 ♔f6 24. ♖db5±) **21. ♖c3 ♖b7** (21...♖xe5 22. ♖e2 ♖c7 23. ♔f4 ♖bd7 24. ♖d5 ♖d6 25. ♖f3 f6 26. ♖xf6±) **22. ♖d5 b5** (22...♖xe5 23. ♖c3 f6 24. ♔g5 fxg5 25. ♖xf5→; 24...♖d6 25. ♔f4→) **23. ♖xf5! bxc4** **24. ♖e4 gxf5** **25. ♖xf5 ♔f8** (25... f6 26.exf6 ♔f8 27.f7+-) **26. ♖df1** 1–0 Ovetchkin – Morozevich, Moscow 1998.

b) 7...f6?!

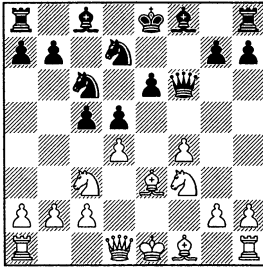


Black is evidently far behind in development, therefore this typical for the French Defence undermining White's centre move – f7-f6 seems to be rather premature in this variation. There are not so many games played in that line, but they confirm that evaluation quite convincingly.

8. exf6 ♖xf6

Black's problems are not any easier to solve after his other possible captures: if 8...gxf6?! then 9.f5± and Black's centre is destroyed, while in case of: 8...♖xf6 9.dxc5, Black loses a pawn, since after 9... ♖a5 (or 9... ♔e7 10. ♖d2±; 9... ♖g4 10. ♔d4±) White has the

powerful resource 10.♖d2!± Helfer – Maedler, St.Ingbert 1987 and Black cannot follow with 10...♙xc5? because White wins a piece after 11.♗b3+–.



9.♗b5!?

That is the most straightforward and at the same time very effective way for White to emphasize the awkward placement of Black's pieces. It turns out that he can hardly defend simultaneously the c7-square and the e6 and c7-pawns.

9...♞d8

Black is forced to go back with his queen, because after: 9...cxd4 10.♗fxd4 ♙b4+ (The complications in case of: 10...♙xc5 11.♗c7+ ♜f7 12.♗dxe6! ♙xe3 13.♗g5+ ♜f8 14.♗xd5 ♞xb2 15.♗xe3 ♞b4+ 16.♞d2± end up quickly in favour of White.) 11.c3 ♙a5 12.♞g4± as it was played in the game Arnason – Asmundsson, Iceland 1985, the situation becomes even worse for him.

It is not easy to recommend the eccentric move for Black – 9...♜d8, at least because of: 10.f5!? ♞xf5 11.♙d3 ♞h5 (or 11...♞g4 12.

♗g5 ♞xg2 13.♞f1±; 11...♞f7 12.0–0± Koifman – Freidin, Moscow 1962) 12.♗g5 ♞xd1+ 13.♞xd1± and White's threats are very powerful.

10.♗g5!

It is not so effective for White to continue with 10.f5, Friedel – Duncan, Chicago 2004, because Black can counter that with 10...c4! without being afraid of 11.fxe6 ♗f6 12.♙f4, because after 12...♞a5∞ he obtains a good counterplay.

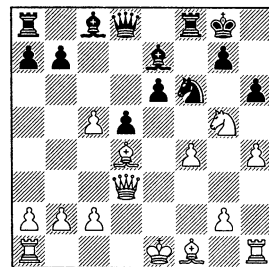
10...♗f6 11.dxc5

Black has failed to defend all his weaknesses and he has remained with a pawn down without any compensation whatsoever.

11...♙e7

He can hardly change anything with the line: 11...h6 12.♗f3 ♙e7 (or 12...♗g4 13.♙g1±) 13.♗e5 0–0 14.♗g6 ♞f7 15.♙e2±. Black has tried in practice too: 11...a6 12.♗d4 ♗xd4 13.♙xd4 h6 14.♗f3± Maltez – Cardoso, Coimbra 2003.

12.♗d4 ♗xd4 13.♙xd4 0–0 14.♞d3!? h6 15.h4!±

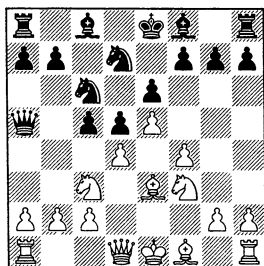


White makes a good use now of the compromised shelter of the

4... ♖fd7 5.f4 c5 6. ♖f3 ♖c6 7. ♗e3

black king and he maintains the powerful position of his knight on the g5-square, preventing his opponent from occupying the central e4-outpost. Now, it is too bad for Black to play: 15...hxg5? 16.hxg5 ♖e4 17. ♖h3, threatening 18.g6. Black cannot save the game by evacuating his king to the other side of the board: 17... ♖a5+ (17... ♖f7 18. ♖h5+ g6 19. ♖h7 ♖e8 20. ♖xg6+ ♖d7 21. ♗b5+ ♖c7 22. ♗e5+-; 17...e5 18. ♖h7+ ♖f7 19. ♖h5+ ♖e6 20. ♖g6+-) 18.c3 e5 (18... ♖f7 19. ♗xg7!+-) 19. ♖h7+ ♖f7 20. ♗xe5 ♗g8 (It is equally hopeless for him here to follow with: 20... ♖xc5 21. ♖xg7+ ♖e8 22.0-0-0+-) 21.b4 ♖a3 (21... ♖a4 22. ♗h6+-) 22. ♗e2+- and Black's position is just pathetic. His attempt to activate his forces with the help of the move – 15... ♖e4 does not solve his problems either, due to: 16. ♖xe4 dxe4 17. ♖xe4 ♗xh4+ 18. ♖d1 ♗f6 19.c3± followed by the deployment of the bishop to the d3-square and White's advantage is overwhelming.

c) 7... ♖a5



This move is not popular at all. The black queen is seemingly active on the a5-square, but White can easily emphasize the drawbacks of Black's last move with the simple reaction:

8.a3!

White is threatening to capture on c5, followed by b2-b4. For example in the game Kuehn – Pfeffer, Hamburg 1993, Black was simply left with a pawn down after the careless reaction: 8...a6? 9.dxc5 ♖c7 10.b4±.

8...c4

About 8...cxd4 9. ♖xd4 – see 7...cxd4.

The strange move 8... ♖d8?! was tested in the game Vasiukov – Frog, Leningrad 1991. There followed: 9. ♖d2 a6 10.dxc5 ♖xc5 11.b4 ♖d7 12. ♗d3±.

It is hardly sensible for Black to lose a tempo by playing: 8... ♖b6. That idea might only be justified in case of: 9. ♖a4 ♖a5+ 10.c3 (It is interesting for White to test here 10. ♗d2!? – Black cannot capture the knight, because of 11.b3, while White can counter 10... ♖c7 with 11.c4±) 10...c4∞. It is probably more precise for White to play: 9. ♗e2 cxd4 (Thanks to White's a3-pawn, Black cannot capture – 9... ♖xb2? due to 10. ♖a4+-.) 10. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 (or 10... ♗c5 11. ♖cb5±) 11. ♗xd4 ♗c5 12. ♖b5± and White has a clear positional edge.

9.g3!?

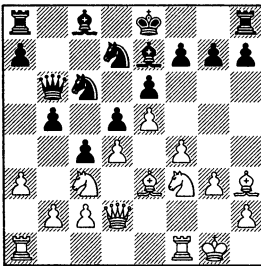
The situation in the centre has been clarified, so White can

choose the optimal square for the development of his light squared bishop in order to support his pawn-onslaught on the kingside.

9...b5 10.♖h3 ♖b6

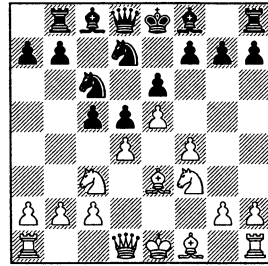
In case of: 10...b4 11.axb4 ♖xb4 12.♞a2± we can only conclude that Black has created deliberately potential weaknesses on the queenside. After 10...♖b6, it is not good for White to play 11.f5? because of 11...♟dx5! therefore he should first complete his development and fortify his bishop on the e3-square.

11.0–0 ♖e7 12.♞d2±



Now, the pawn-advance f4-f5 becomes extremely unpleasant for Black and he cannot maintain his kingside position closed anymore. The game Atakisi – Vidovic, Mureck 1998, continued with: 12...f5 13.g4 (It is also good for White to follow with: 13.exf6 ♟xf6 14.♟g5±) 13...g6 14.gxf5 gxf5 15.♟h1 ♟f8 16.♞g1 ♟g6 17.♟g5 ♖xg5 18.♞xg5± and White's positional advantage was overwhelming.

d) 7...♞b8



Black starts the preparation of the move b7 – b5, with the idea that the rook-move to the b-file might be more purposeful than the pawn-move – a6. He will have to lose an additional tempo for ♖a5, indeed. This line has never been too popular; nevertheless it has been tested in practice by such eminent grandmasters as Ivanchuk, Volkov and Zvjaginzev.

8.♖e2!?

White usually plays here 8.♞d2, but it seems to me that now it is more important for White to complete the development of his kingside and after he castles short, he may have some additional possibilities at his disposal.

8...♖a5

It is possible, but still not so logical for Black to follow with the simplifying: 8...cxd4 9.♟xd4 ♖c5 10.♞d2± Borriss – Hertneck, Kreuzberg 2006 – White preserves a slight advantage and the purposefulness of Black's move seven is rather questionable.

9.0–0 b5

Black accomplishes his plan quite consistently, but now White has a very original idea that he can

only exploit in the 7... ♖b8 – variation.

10.a4!

White had tried before in this position: 10.f5 cxd4 11.fxe6 fxe6 12. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 13. ♕xd4 b4∞ Joentausta – Manninen, Jyvaskyla 2000 or 10. ♖d2 b4 11. ♖d1 cxd4 12. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 13. ♕xd4 ♕c5= Short – Haro, Sao Paulo 2004 and Black's game was quite acceptable in both cases.

Following 10.a4, Black is faced with a dilemma – he is of course reluctant to compromise his pawn-structure on the queenside, but otherwise he has to let White's knight occupy the important b5-square, which has become possible only because of the absence of Black's a6-pawn.

10...b4

In case of 10...bxa4, White's simplest answer is 11. ♖xa4 and his positional advantage is undisputed, for example: 11...c4 12. f5± or 11...cxd4 12. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 13. ♕xd4±.

11. ♖b5

Now, in order for Black to attack White's knight, he needs not only the move a7-a6, but he must also remove his queen away from the a-file. Meanwhile, White is already quite well-prepared to attack Black's king stranded in the centre.

11...c4

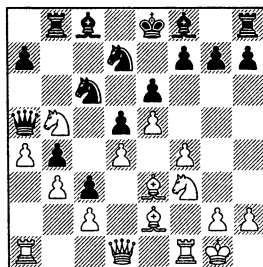
It seems like there is nothing more reliable to be recommended to Black. After: 11... ♖b6 12.f5, he

can defend successfully neither with: 12...exf5 (about 12...a6 – see 11...a6) 13.a5! ♖xa5 14.dxc5 ♕xc5 15. ♖d6+ ♖e7 16. ♖xd5 ♕xe3+ 17. ♖h1 ♖c5 (17... ♖b7 18. ♖xf7+ ♖d8 19. ♖xg7+-) 18. ♖xf5 ♖d8 19. ♖xa5 ♖xd5 20. ♖xd5 ♕b6 21. ♖g5+- nor with 12...cxd4 13.fxe6 fxe6 14.a5! ♖xa5 15. ♕xd4 ♕c5 (15... ♖c5 16. ♖g5 ♖c6 17. ♖f7 ♖xd4 18. ♖xd4+-) 16. ♕xc5 ♖xc5 (16... ♖xc5+ 17. ♖fd4+-) 17. ♖d6 ♖e7 18. ♖d4+-.

It is obviously in favour of White if Black plays: 11...a6 12. f5 ♖b6 (or 12...c4 13.fxe6 fxe6 14. ♖g5 axb5 15. ♕h5+ g6 16.axb5 ♖xb5 17. ♖f3+-) 13.fxe6 fxe6 14. ♖g5 axb5 15. ♕h5+ g6 16. ♖f3± and Black will have to lose material in order to parry White's checkmating threats – (17. ♖f7+ and 18. ♖xe6#).

12.b3! c3

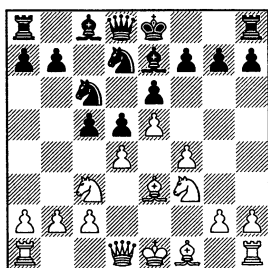
After 12... ♖b6, White plays 13.f5! and the fireworks in the centre after: 13...exf5 14.bxc4 ♖xc4 (it is only slightly more resilient for Black to defend with: 14... ♕e7 15. ♖d2! ?+-) 15. ♕xc4 dxc4 16.d5+- are going to bring Black's demise unavoidably.



13. ♖e1!?±

White calmly prepares his kingside onslaught and it will soon become decisive. His knight on b5 is completely safe from attacks, because it has the check on the d6-square at its disposal at any moment and in case of its exchange – White’s other knight will gain access to the e5-square.

e) 7... ♗e7



Black plays that move much more often than all the other moves that we have already analyzed. By choosing it, he plans to develop his kingside as quickly as possible and he usually castles short. The main drawback of that line is that in case Black wishes to deploy his bishop to the c5-square at some moment, as it is often quite appropriate in that system, he will need to lose a tempo.

8. dxc5!?

It is more popular for White to play here 8. ♖d2, but still the immediate exchange helps him clarify his opponent’s intentions quicker. Black must make up his mind now – what piece to capture

on c5 with. Accordingly, White can choose his optimal deployment of forces.

8... ♗xc5

Naturally, Black would not like to lose a tempo, but after 8... ♗xc5, it is not so easy for White to obtain any considerable edge. Therefore, he should play simply 9. ♖d2 and later the game might develop in one of the following ways: 9... ♖b6 10. ♗xc5 ♗xc5 11.0–0–0 ♗d7 12. ♗b1±; 9... ♖a5 10. ♗xc5 ♗xc5 11. ♗b5!? ♖xd2+ 12. ♗xd2±; 9...0–0 10.0–0–0 ♖b6 (or 10... ♖a5 11. ♗b1 ♖b8 12. ♖f2± Novosak – Valek, Czech Republic 1997) 11. ♗xc5 (This is much simpler for White than the line: 11. ♗g1 ♗xg1 12. ♖xg1 ♗c5∞ as it was played in the game Ivanchuk – Korchnoi, Monaco 1992.) 11... ♗xc5 12. ♗d3 ♗b4 13. ♗b1±. All these variations are more or less similar: after the exchange of the dark squared bishops White has improved his control over the important d4-square and Black has his usual problems with his light squared “French” bishop. Meanwhile, the simplifications do not guarantee that his defence might become easier in positions of that type. This may sound to you more like a common sense evaluation, but later we are going to deal with these positions over and over again, so we will study them thoroughly, particularly in the variation 7...cxd4.

The flexible move 8...0–0!?

has been tried in practice by GM Morozevich and it deserves a serious attention indeed. There might follow: 9.♣d2 ♞xc5 (about 9...♙xc5 – see 8...♙xc5) 10.a3 b6 11.♙b5 (This move prevents the trade of the light squared bishops on the a6-square, which is of course favourable for Black.) 11...♙b7 12.0–0 ♞c8 13.♙ad1 ♣c7 (Now already, the move 13...♙a6 – is something that Black cannot afford, because after: 14.♙xa6 ♞xa6, White follows with the immediate 15.f5!± and his threats become very dangerous.) 14.♣e1 ♣fd8 15.♙xc6!? ♙xc6 16.♞d4 g6 17.♙f2 ♙f8 18.♙h4± Kramnik – Morozevich, Monaco 2003, with a powerful initiative for White.

9.♙e2 0–0

It is not advisable for Black to play 9...♣b6?! because of 10.♙b1!± (Knaak) and White is threatening 11.b4.

In the game Cheparinov – Borges, Mondariz 2003, Black started with the move 9...a6, but that did not change the character of the fight too much and after: 10.0–0 0–0 11.a3 ♣c7 (or 11...b5 12.♣e1 ♙b7 13.♣g3±) 12.♣e1 b5 13.♣g3 ♞e4 14.♞xe4 dxe4 15.♞d2 ♙b7 16.♞b3± White obtained a clear advantage.

In case of: 9...♣a5 10.0–0 ♞a4 11.♞xa4 ♣xa4 12.c4 ♣xd1 13.♣fxd1± (Morozevich) White maintained his edge in the arising endgame.

10.0–0 ♙d7

The move 10...a6 had been analyzed before – see 9...a6.

The undermining move 10...f6, leads to the formation of a vulnerable weakness on the e6-square: 11.exf6 ♣xf6 12.♣d2 b6 13.♞d4 ♙b7 14.♞xc6 ♙xc6 15.♙d4 ♣f8 16.♙g4± Groszpeter – Meszaros, Vienna 1996.

It is quite possible that Black should choose instead: 10...b6 11.♣e1 ♙a6 12.♙xa6 ♞xa6 13.♣d1 ♞c5 14.f5± but White still remains slightly better.

11.a3!

This is a useful move, it restricts Black's possibilities and it supports the possible pawn-advance – b2-b4.

11...♙e8

Black must play very carefully here and he must free promptly the d7-square for his knight, since it is too bad for him to follow with: 11...f6? 12.exf6 ♣xf6 13.b4 ♞e4 14.♞xe4 dxe4 15.♞g5+– while the careless move 11...♣c8?! will also be countered by White with 12.b4 and Black has great problems after: 12...♞a6 13.b5 (or 13.♞b5±) 13...♞cb8 14.♞xd5± (Morozevich), as well as after: 12...♞e4 13.♞xe4 dxe4 14.♞d2± (Ivanchuk).

12.♣e1

This move frees the square for the rook and it envisages the re-deployment of White's queen to the kingside.

12...♣c8

Black's attempt at complicating the game with: 12...d4!? 13.♣d1

♖b6 14.♘xd4 ♖xb2 15.♙b1! ♖xa3 16.♘db5 ♖a5 17.♗f2 a6 18.♙a1± provides White with more than sufficient compensation for the pawn. It is more reliable for Black to continue with: 12...f6, after which White must choose between: 13.exf6 ♙xf6 14.♙d1± and GM Psakhis's recommendation – 13.b4 ♘d7 14.♘d4± after which White remains with a slight but stable advantage.

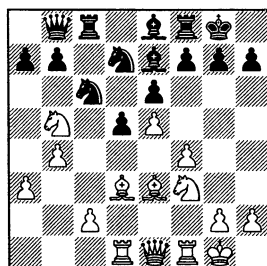
13.♙d1 ♖c7

After 13...f6, White has the beautiful counter argument 14.♙c4! and Black is left with plenty of problems to worry about: 14...♖a5 15.♘xd5 exd5 16.♙xd5+ ♙f7 17.♖xa5 ♘xa5 18.♙xf7+ ♖xf7 19.b4±; 14...♖c7 15.♙xd5!±; 14...♖b6 15.♘xd5 exd5 16.♙xd5+ ♖h8 17.b4± (Knaak).

14.b4 ♘d7

In case of 14...♘e4? White plays: 15.♘xe4 dxe4 16.♘d2± and Black loses his pawn.

15.♘b5 ♖b8 16.♙d3±



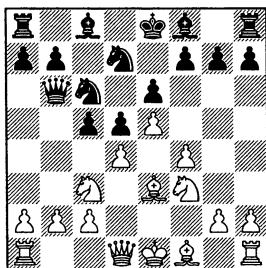
This position arose in the game Ivanchuk – Morozevich, Amsterdam 1996. Black chose the risky line: 16...f6?! 17.♖h4 f5 (or 17...h6 18.♖h3 g5 19.g4±) 18.♖h3 (It is also interesting for White to try the original tactical solution: 18.♙xa7!? ♖a8 19.♗f2 ♘xa7 20.♖xa7 ♖xa7+ 21.♘xa7 ♙a8 22.♘b5±.) 18...♘b6 19.♙xb6 axb6 20.g4!± and White's attack was absolutely decisive, while Black had no counterplay whatsoever. Instead of 16...f6?!, he had better prefer: 16...a6 17.♘bd4 ♘xd4 18.♘d4 ♖c7 19.♗g3± but even then White's positional pressure is overwhelming.

Conclusion

We have analyzed some very seldom played lines in the Steinitz system (with the exception maybe of the move – 7...♙e7), in which Black fails to equalize. Still, it is worth noticing that even in these side lines White cannot automatically obtain a great advantage – this is a quite specific feature of the entire system. In general, Black's position is solid enough and in case he abstains from unnecessary adventures – there arises some calm positional maneuvering play. The real fight belongs to the middle game and White even relies sometimes to an advantageous endgame. Black's main problems throughout are his cramped position and his "bad" light squared bishop.

Chapter 12

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7
5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♙e3 ♚b6



There were times in which this natural and logical move for Black that increased the pressure against White's centre (attacking the b2-pawn in the process) was the most popular. Nowadays, the tide has changed. The main reason is that formerly by choosing this variation Black was demonstrating his readiness to sacrifice a piece for three pawns in order to enter quite irrational positions. They were not so well-analyzed and that suited the Black players perfectly, because they were presented with additional chances in the purely practical play. Subsequently, the sharp lines after 7... ♚b6 were analyzed extensively and contemporary theory evaluates the complications after that in favour of White, but we will discuss all this a bit later.

8.♘a4

This is the necessary reaction by White and it was recommended by Boleslavsky. In general, a knight is usually misplaced at the edge of the board and this position is no exception to the rule. Still, this move is practically forced in this position; otherwise White cannot hold his set-up in the centre; moreover we should not forget that Black also loses some tempi for his queen-moves.

8... ♚a5+

It is senseless for Black to follow with: 8... ♚c7? 9.♘xc5± or 8... ♚b4+? 9.c3 ♚a5 10.♘xc5± – and he loses some tempi and a pawn as well.

9.c3

Black's next move becomes extremely important in this moment. It will determine the situation in the centre, because if he plays a) 9...b6 or b) 9...c4, then the centre will remain closed, while after c) 9...cxd4, the type of position will be entirely different.

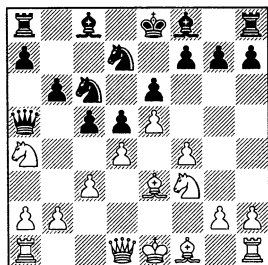
I will mention that it is a mistake for Black to play: 9...b5? 10.♘xc5 ♙xc5 (he cannot change

anything with: 10...♖xc5 11.dxc5 b4 12.a3! bxc3 13.b4+-) 11.dxc5 b4 12.a3! bxc3 13.b4+- Wolf – Scherer, Germany 1995, as well as: 9...♗e7? 10.♖xc5 ♖xc5 11.dxc5± while: 9...♖xd4 10.♖xd4 cxd4 11.b4 ♖c7 (11...♖d8 12.♗xd4 – see 9...cxd4) 12.♗xd4, leads to a transposition of moves – see 9...cxd4.

a) 9...b6

This is a relatively new and not well-investigated move and it became fashionable mostly because of the crisis of the sharp variation – 9...cxd4. Black intends to either exchange his bad “French” bishop, or to close the position with the move c5-c4 at some moment under more favourable circumstances. For example, after 10.a3 c4= Black’s prospects are not worse at all, because the advance of White’s b-pawn is connected with compromising his queenside.

The essential drawback of the move 9...b6 is that Black’s queen becomes a bit isolated and White should make an immediate good use out of that.



10.♗d2!

Now, Black’s queen is seriously endangered (White is threatening 11.c4), therefore his next move is forced.

10...c4 11.b4

Black has at his disposal two alternatives here – the radical decision **a1) 11...♖xb4** and the more restrained **a2) 11...♖a6**.

It is hardly worth trying for him to play 11...♖b5?! because, after 12.♖b2± Stavru – Vezzosi, Forli 1992, his queen is again under threats.

a1) 11...♖xb4

Black’s material equivalent for the sacrificed piece is obviously insufficient, but he relies on the power of his passed pawns on the queenside. This variation is not so popular anymore and it leads to an advantage for White, but he needs to play very precisely.

12.cxb4 ♗xb4 13.♖c2!

Black will push b6-b5 sooner or later and the white knight will need the c3-square. Meanwhile, White already has in mind that after Black’s b-pawn comes forward to the b4-square, White’s queen will go to a4 with the idea to invite a transfer into an endgame.

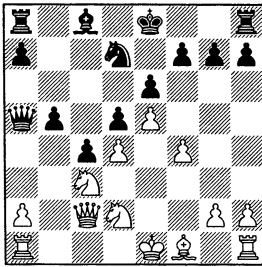
13...♗xd2+ 14.♖xd2 b5

About 14...0-0 15.♖b1 b5 16.♖c3 – see 14...b5.

Black tried to redeploy his knight to a more active position with the move 14...♖b8, in the game Sarenac – Strbac, Belgrade

2006. Later, there might follow: 15. ♘c3 b5 (In case of 15... ♘c6?!, White could have returned the extra piece organizing a powerful attack: 16. ♙xc4! dxc4 17. ♘xc4 ♖b4 18. ♘d6+ ♗f8 19. 0-0!±) 16. ♖b1 a6 (After: 16... b4 17. ♗a4+ ♗xa4 18. ♘xa4±, the vulnerability of the c5-outpost would be a telling factor in the future.) 17. ♙e2 ♘c6 18. ♘f3± – Black's compensation for the sacrificed piece is evidently insufficient.

15. ♘c3



15... b4

It is illogical for Black to try: 15... ♙a6?! 16. a3 ♖b6 17. ♘f3 ♘b8 18. ♙e2 ♘c6 19. ♖d1± Herrera – Borges Mateos, Cuba 1994.

In the game Ribeiro – Hmadi, Algarve 1995, Black played at first 15... 0-0 and White's most precise reaction against that was the move 16. ♖b1! and in case of: 16... b4 17. ♗a4 ♖b6 (17... ♗xa4 18. ♘xa4±) 18. ♖xb4 ♗xd4 19. ♘e2 ♗e3 20. ♖c3± Black's central pawns would have been blocked quite reliably. Instead of 16... b4, Black can continue with: 16... ♖b8 17. ♙e2 b4 18. ♗a4 ♖b6 19. ♘f3± but that

is again in favour of White.

The move 15... ♖b8!? is connected with an insidious trap. After the standard: 16. ♖b1 b4 17. ♗a4? Black has the beautiful tactical resource: 17... bxc3! 18. ♗xa5 ♖xb1+ 19. ♘xb1 c2-+ and his pawn promotes. The situation is also rather unclear after: 16. ♙e2 b4 17. ♗a4 ♖b6 18. ♖b1 ♗xd4! 19. ♘b5 ♖xb5! 20. ♖xb5 ♗xf4∞. The best line for White is: 16. ♘f3! b4 17. ♗a4 ♖b6 (The endgames after: 17... ♗xa4 18. ♘xa4± or 17... ♗a6 18. ♗xa6 ♙a6 19. ♘d1± are favourable for White.) 18. ♖b1 0-0 19. ♙e2± – the same position could have arisen after the move 15... 0-0.

16. ♗a4!

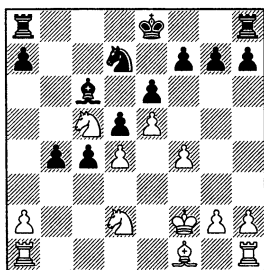
We have already been convinced – this resource helps White to parry quite effectively Black's activity on the queenside.

16... ♗xa4

Black has also tested here the alternative 16... ♖b6. After 17. ♘b5 0-0 18. ♘f3 f6, in the game Stripunsky – Hmadi, Pardubice 1995, White played 19. ♘d6?! but he had evidently underestimated the line: 19... fxe5! 20. ♘xc8 ♖axc8 21. ♗xd7 ♖c7! 22. ♗a4 e4± and Black had a powerful initiative. Instead of that, White had better continue with: 19. ♖b1! fxe5 20. fxe5 a5 21. ♘d6± maintaining the advantage. Black can also try to improve his play. It deserves attention for him to try: 18... ♙b7!? (instead of 18... f6) 19. ♘d6

♙c6, Karabalis – Wornath, Ges-
sen 1996, 20.♙c2 a5 21.♞b1 a4
22.a3! b3 23.♙c3± and White has
only a slight edge.

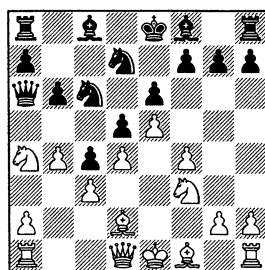
17.♘xa4 ♙b7 18.♙f2 ♙c6
19.♘c5±



This endgame arose in the en-
counter Grafll – Karabalis, Bad
Wildungen 1998. Black's passed
pawns are not a real threat at all.
Note that the move 19...♙e7? is
bad for Black due to 20.♘a6!+-.
After an eventual exchange on the
c5-square, White obtains control
over the blocking square d4. In
case Black advances straightfor-
wardly his pawns, the following
eventual developments may arise:
19...a5 20.♙e2 a4 21.♞hb1 ♘xc5
(or 21...b3 22.axb3 ♘xc5 23.dxc5
cxb3 24.♘f3 ♙d7 25.♘d4 ♞hb8
26.♞b2 ♞b4 27.♙e3±) 22.dxc5 ♞b8
23.♘f3 ♙e7 (or 23...b3?! 24.axb3
axb3 25.♘d4 ♙d7 26.♞a7+ ♞b7
27.♞a6 ♞c8 28.♙g4! g6 29.f5! gxf5
30.♙h5 ♙b5 31.♞b6±) 24.♘d4±.
Naturally, it would not be so easy
for White to materialize his extra
piece, but he preserves serious
chances to get a full point in the
scoreboard.

a2) 11...♙a6

This move leads to very origi-
nal positions. The centre has been
closed and the fight focuses on the
sides and Black would like very
much to seize the initiative. That
can happen for example after:
12.g3 b5 13.♘c5 ♙a3± followed
by a7-a5, as it was played in the
game Alekseev – Drozdovskij,
Kochin 2004.



12.a3!?

That is a precise prophylactic
move. Tempi are not so important
in a position of this type, while
White should be very careful to
prevent his opponent's plans. It
may have become clear to you,
from our previous notes that
Black intends to place his queen
on the a3-square, so White should
better neutralize that idea.

12...♙e7

The straightforward advance
of Black's pawns on the queen-
side can create some problems
for him and that was confirmed
in the game van Den Doel – Ved-
der, Amsterdam 1995: 12...b5 13.
♘c5 ♙b6 14.♙e2 a5 15.0-0 ♘xc5
16.bxc5 ♙b7 17.♞b1± – here Black

will hardly manage to push b5-b4, while his b5-pawn needs some protection already.

Generally speaking, the play is not forced in this variation; therefore the moves for both sides are not so critical at any moment. Black can try for example to come back with his queen to a more natural position with: 12... ♖b7 13.g3 ♗c7 (13...b5 14. ♘c5 ♘xc5 15.bxc5±; 13... ♙e7 – see 12... ♙e7). Later in the game Deepan – Barua, Visakhapatnam 2004, there followed: 14. ♙h3 (White's bishop supports the thematic advance f4-f5 from that square.) 14... ♘e7 15.0-0 g6 16. ♖c2 ♙g7 17. ♘b2 a5 18.b5±. The queenside has been blocked. White redeploys his knight to the c3-square and intends to advance his pawns with the support of the rest of his pieces. Naturally, Black is not forced to lose a position like that, but he should be psychologically prepared for a long and laborious defence.

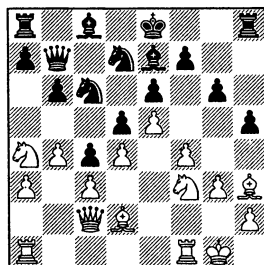
13.g3

White's bishop is headed once again for the attractive h3-square.

13... ♖b7 14. ♙h3 g6 15.0-0 h5 16. ♖c2±

(diagram)

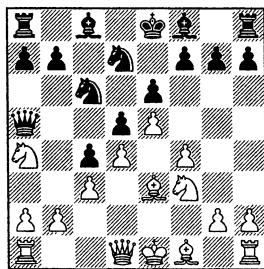
Black has placed his pawns on g6 and h5 and thus he has prevented the immediate pawn-on-slaught on the kingside, but still he is too far from equality. In fact, White preserves active possibili-



ties on both sides of the board. After 16...b5, in the game Frolyanov – Shaposhnikov, St.Petersburg 2004, White could have continued with: 17. ♘c5 ♘xc5 18.bxc5± and Black's b5-pawn would have remained a potential target. Only tournament practice can show whether White's slight positional advantage can be materialized in this position.

b) 9...c4

Black clarifies immediately the situation in the centre and he plans to hold that cramped, but solid position. This quite reliable line is a part of the opening repertoire of such eminent grandmasters like Kortchnoi, Vaganian and Bareev.



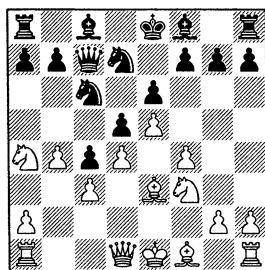
10.b4 ♗c7

Black should not trade his central pawn for White's rook pawn. After 10...cxb3?! 11.axb3, White is clearly better in case of: 11...b5 12.♟c5 ♖b6 (if 12...♗xc3+? then 13.♙d2 ♗b2 14.♟d3+- and Black's queen is trapped) 13.b4 a5 14.♙d3 a4 (14...g6, Ulfarsson – Jonasson, Reykjavik 2000, 15.♗e2!? ♗b8 16.bxa5 ♟xa5 17.♗b1±; 14...♟xc5 15.bxc5 ♗b7 16.0-0 ♙e7 17.♗e2 b4 18.axb4 axb4 19.♗xa8 ♗xa8 20.♗b2± Tavakoli – Tomlinson, corr. 2000) 15.♗e2 ♗b8 16.♟g5± as well as after: 11...a6 12.♙d3 ♙e7 13.0-0 b5 14.♟c5! ♗b6 (it is again bad for Black to play here: 14...♗xc3 15.♗c1 ♗a5 16.♟xe6!±) 15.b4± as well as following: 11...♗c7 (it is more or less the same after: 11...♙e7 12.♙d3 0-0 13.0-0 ♗c7) 12.♙d3 ♙e7 (12...a6 13.0-0 b5 14.♟b2 ♙b7 15.f5± Bosco – Linskens, Buenos Aires 1984) 13.0-0 0-0 (13...♗b8, Demidukov – Fingorov, Odessa 2000, 14.f5±) 14.f5±.

After 10.b4, Black does not sacrifice a piece in practice as often as in some other lines. Still, in case of: 10...♟xb4 11.cxb4 ♙xb4+ 12.♟f2 b5, White should better repel Black's bishop to a less active position with 13.a3!? ♙e7 and follow that with: 14.♟c5 ♟xc5 (In case of 14...♗b6, as it was played in the game Krockenberger – Welker, Germany 1995, White's simplest answer is 15.♙e2!± and the exchange on c5 will lead to a transposition of moves.) 15.dxc5 ♗c7, Rachimi – Bludau, Giessen

1996, 16.♙e2! (White should not even try to hold on to his extra pawn: 16.♗d4 ♙d7 17.♙e2 ♗c8 18.c6 ♙xc6 19.♗xa7 ♗xa7 20.♙xa7 ♗a8∞.) 16...♙xc5 17.♙xc5 ♗xc5+ 18.♗d4±. Black has three pawns for the piece indeed, but they have been reliably blocked and White is ready for decisive actions on the kingside, irrelevant of whether there will be queens present on the board or not.

Black has also tried some other retreats of his queen: 10...♗b5 11.♙e2 a5 (or 11...a6?! 12.0-0 ♟a7 13.♟b2 ♙e7 14.♗c2 g6 15.♟f2 ♗b6 16.♙h4± Kupka – Tuzil, Plzen 1995) 12.a3± Konguvel – Benitah, Moscow 2004; 10...♗d8 (Black's queen is hardly better placed here than on the c7-square) 11.g3!? ♙e7 12.♙h3±; 10...♗a6 11.a3!? b6 (or 11...b5 12.♟c5± Haensel – K.Fischer, Thuringen 2002) 12.g3±. White remains slightly better in all these variations, but the fight will be quite complex.



11.g3!?

White's more popular move here is 11.♙e2. It has been played

by Anand as well. Still, as our more attentive readers might have noticed – we are trying to develop the bishop to the h3-square, in positions with a closed centre, so that it can support effectively the pawn-break f4-f5.

11... ♙e7

There are plenty of possibilities for a transposition of moves, which do not change anything substantial and they usually lead to the main line: 11...b5 12. ♘c5 a5 (or 12... ♘xc5 13.dxc5 a5 14.a3 ♙b7 15. ♙h3±) 13.a3 axb4 (in case of: 13... ♗a7, then 14. ♖b1 axb4 15.axb4 ♗a3 16. ♗c2 ♗a2 17. ♖b2 ♗a1+ 18. ♜f2± and Black's temporary activity has been neutralized; 13... ♙e7 14. ♙h3 – see 11... ♙e7) 14.axb4 ♖xa1 15. ♗xa1 ♙e7 16. ♙h3 – see 11... ♙e7; 11...g6 12. ♙h3 ♙e7 – see 11... ♙e7; 11...b6 12. ♙h3 ♙e7 – see 11... ♙e7.

12. ♙h3 b5

About 12...0-0 13.0-0 b5 14. ♘c5 a5 15.a3 – see 12...b5.

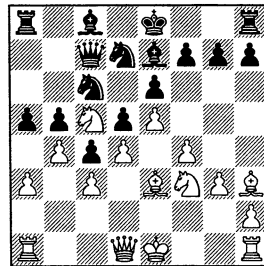
Black cannot equalize in case he castles long: 12... ♘f8 13.0-0 ♙d7 14. ♗c2 h6 15.f5 0-0-0 16. ♘c5± Belkhodja – Mialane, Plancoet 2002.

He can also try here the more tentative move 12...b6, which does not weaken the important c5-square. After: 13.0-0 a5 (or 13... ♘f8 14. ♗c2 ♙d7 15. ♘b2 h6 16.a4± Voekler – Zysk, Germany 1994 – and Black will still have many problems to worry about in case he castles long.) 14.b5 ♘d8 15.f5 exf5 16. ♙xf5± as it was played in

the game M.Rychagov – Ruzele, Moscow 1994, White maintains his initiative.

In the game Mocanu – Poluektov, Kharkiv 2004, Black followed with: 12...g6 13.0-0 b6 14. ♗c2 a5 15.a3 0-0, but White had the quite promising possibility 16. ♘g5!?±. This knight is perfectly placed here. It cannot be attacked with the move 16...h6? because of 17. ♘xe6!+- and Black's position is in ruins, while in case of: 16... ♙xg5?! 17.hxg5± his weaknesses will be emphasized after White's other knight comes to the kingside via the route – a4-b2-d1-f2-g4.

13. ♘c5 a5 14.a3



14...axb4

Black can change nothing in case he tries: 14...0-0 15.0-0 axb4 (it is also possible for Black to play 15... ♘xc5 16.dxc5 and here: 16... ♙b7 17. ♘d4 axb4 18.axb4 ♘xd4 19. ♙xd4± Eyo – Cardona, Formigal 2002 or 16...f5 17.exf6 ♙xf6, Buzzoni – Torielli, corr. 1988, 18. ♘d4±) 16.axb4 ♖xa1 17. ♗xa1 ♘xc5 18.dxc5 – see 14...axb4.

15.axb4 ♖xa1 16. ♗xa1 ♘xc5 17.dxc5

White obtains a protected passed pawn after he captures on c5 with that pawn, as well as the wonderful central d4-square. The move 17.bxc5? is not good for him in this particular case, because of 17...b4 and Black has a comfortable game.

17...0-0 18.0-0

This is more precise for White than: 18.♘d4 ♘xd4 19.♙xd4 ♙b7 20.0-0 ♚a8∞ as it was played in the game Svidler – Bareev, Elista 1997.

18...f5

Black risks coming under a dangerous attack in case he does not play that move, for example after: 18...♙b7 19.♚d1 (White is only slightly better in case of: 19.♜f2 ♜a8 20.♜a2± but it might not be sufficient to win the game.) 19...♜a8 20.f5! exf5 21.♙xf5 g6 (Black loses after: 21...♘xe5? 22.♘xe5 ♚xe5 23.♙d4 ♚c7 24.♙xh7!+-) 22.e6! gxf5 (or 22...f6 23.♙h3± Brencher – Souto, Email 2001) 23.exf7+. There might follow: 23...♔g7 24.♚xd5 ♙f6 (24...♚c8 25.♘g5 ♙xg5 26.♙xg5±) 25.♚xf5 ♚e7 26.♙g5± and White's threats are quite dangerous, or: 23...♔xf7 24.♚xd5+ ♔e8 (24...♔g7 25.♘d4!+-) 25.♚g8+ ♙f8 26.♜e1 ♜a1! (this is Black's only defence) 27.♜xa1 ♘e7 28.♚xh7 ♙xf3 29.♜a6!?± and White's rook and pawns are superior to Black's two light pieces if you have in mind the unsafe placement of the black king.

In case of 18...f6, then besides 19.exf6 – see 18...f5, White has the additional possibility: 19.♘d4!? fxe5 20.♘xe6 ♚b7 21.♚d1± (Svidler) and he is slightly better.

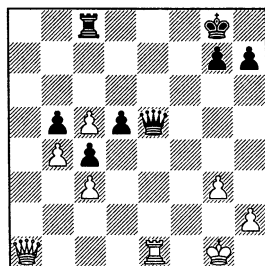
19.exf6 ♙xf6 20.♘d4 ♘xd4 21.♙xd4 e5

The line: 21...♙xd4+ 22.cxd4± is also in favour of White.

22.♙xc8 ♜xc8

It is not good for Black to play here 22...exd4, because of the intermediate check – 23.♙e6+ ♔h8 24.cxd4±.

23.fxe5 ♙xe5 24.♙xe5 ♚xe5 25.♜e1±



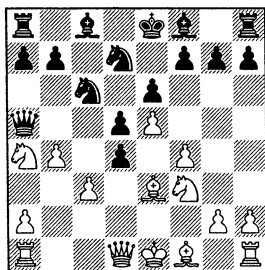
This variation was recommended by GM Peter Svidler. White maintains winning chances in this heavy pieces endgame. His passed pawn paralyzes Black's forces. After: 25...♚f6, White should better play calmly 26.♚b2!± with the idea to place the queen on d2 and not 26.♚d1, which leads to a drawish king and rook endgame in the variation: 26...♚xc3 27.♚xd5+ ♔h8 28.♚e5 ♚xe5 29.♜xe5 ♔g8 30.♜e7 ♜f8! 31.♔g2 ♜f7=.

c) 9...cxd4

That is Black's basic defence in this line. He begins to fight against White's centre immediately and he postpones the key-choice for later.

10.b4!

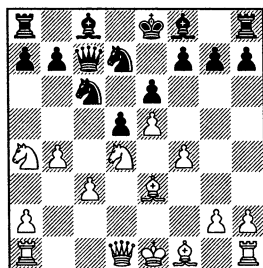
That is an important intermediate move and White's strategy in this line is based on it. He repels Black's queen with it, he occupies additional space on the queenside and he solves the problem with the safety of the knight on a4. This last circumstance can be best illustrated with the following variation: 10.♘xd4 ♘xd4 11.♙xd4? (White should have played 11.b4 here as well, although it would be connected with pawn-sacrifices) 11...b5♯ and White has serious problems to worry about.



Now, Black must make an important choice. He has some calm retreats of his queen: **c1) 10...♖c7** and **c2) 10...♗d8**, but he can also sharpen the game considerably with the piece-sacrifice **c3) 10...♘xb4**.

c1) 10...♖c7

Black complies with the defence of a passive and rather cramped position in the hope of exploiting the defects of White's pawn-structure, or to manage to play the undermining move f7-f6 at some moment, or even g7-g5.

11.♘xd4**11...♘xd4**

We must analyze some other possibilities for Black as well:

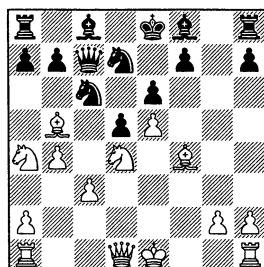
In case of: 11...♙e7 12.♙d3, the game transposes to the main line after: 12...0-0 13.0-0 ♘xd4 14.♙xd4 – see 11...♘xd4, but Black has also tried 12...g6 13.0-0 b6, Fong – Ardaman, Saint John 1988, 14.♖e2± and White is clearly better;

Black has tested often in practice the move 11...a6 with the idea to prepare b7-b5 and to establish control over the c4-square. After White's imprecise move 12.♙d3?! Black can seize the initiative with: 12...b5 13.♘b2 ♘cxe5! 14. fxe5 ♖xc3+ 15.♖d2 ♙xb4♯ Kassis – Bleik, Moscow 1994, therefore it is much stronger for White to play 12.♖d2! and later he can exploit the drawbacks of Black's

active queenside actions. The tournament practice shows that White is clearly better; 12...♙e7 13.♙d3 b5 14.♗b2 ♗b6 15.a4! ♖c4 16.♗xc4 bxc4 (16...dxc4 17.♙e4 ♙b7 18.♙xc6+ ♙xc6 19.axb5±) 17. ♙c2± Olenin – Tairova, Tula 2003 or 12...b5 13.♗b2 ♗b6 (13...♗xd4 14.♙xd4 ♙b7 15.♙e2 ♙e7 16.0–0 0–0 17.♙e3± Meissner – Neumann, Templin 1997; 13...♙b7 14. a4±) 14.a4! ♖c4 (14...bxa4 15. ♗xa4 ♖c4 16.♙xc4 dxc4 17.♗xc6 ♙xc6 18.♗b6 ♖b8 19.♗xc8 ♖xc8 20.0–0 ♙e7 21.♙a2± Fontaine – Gendre, Meribel 1998 and Black remains with too many weaknesses to worry about.) 15.♗xc4 bxc4 16.♗xc6 ♙xc6 17.♙d4 ♙e7 18.♙e2 0–0, Malisauskas – Sarakauskas, Vilnius 2004, 19.0–0±. White controls the centre quite reliably and he has superior prospects on both sides of the board. I would like to focus your attention on the typical resource for this type of positions – the undermining move a2-a4, as a result of which Black is forced to compromise his position on the queenside.

He can try the bold pawn-break 11...g5!? which is maybe better than its reputation. In the few games, in which Black has tried that risky move – he lost rather quickly, but that was due to his bad play afterwards. Well, White is better anyway. After 12.♙b5! (Black's king is stranded in the centre and White concentrates forces against it.) 12...gxf4

(The passive and indifferent move 12...♗b6? does not prevent White's attack at all: 13.♗xb6 axb6 14.0–0 gxf4 15.♙xf4 ♙d7 16.♗f5! ♙d8 17.♗d6+ ♙xd6 18. exd6 ♙f6 19.♙d2 ♖g8 20.♖ae1 ♖a3 21.♙h6 ♙xc3 22.♙xc6 bxc6 23.♙f2 f6 24.♖e3 1-0 Nunn – Wockenfuss, Germany 1984.) 13.♙xf4



and Black has several possibilities here. In the game Saric – Bazant, Croatia 2005, there followed: 13...♗xd4 14.♙xd4 a6 (It is more resilient for Black to defend here with: 14...♙g7 15.0–0 0–0 16.♖ae1±) 15.♙xd7 ♙xd7 16.♗b6± and Black's position was very difficult. After 13...♙g7, White has the powerful tactical strike: 14.♗xe6! fxe6 15.♙h5+ ♖f8 (it is too bad for Black to play here: 15...♖d8 16.♙g5+ ♗e7 17.♙xe7+ ♖xe7 18.♙g5+ ♖f7 19.0–0+ ♖g8 20.♙e7+-) 16.0–0 ♖g8 17.♙xc6 bxc6 (or 17...♙xc6 18.♙h6 ♗xe5 19.♙g5+-) 18.♙h6 ♗f8 19.♖xf8+! ♙xf8 20.♙xf8 ♙f7 21.♙h4± and despite the fact that White is an exchange down, his advantage is overwhelming. Black cannot solve his problems with: 13...a5 14.♙h5

♜xd4 15. cxd4 ♙xb4+ 16. ♚d1± because White is again much better.

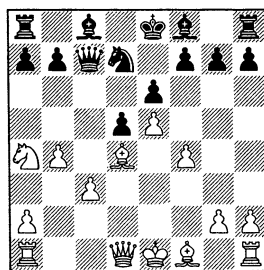
It is interesting to see – what will happen in case Black grabs immediately White's central pawn? In the game Schulz – Schubert, corr. 2000, there followed 13... ♜xe5? and White could have organized a decisive attack after: 14. ♜xe6! fxe6 15. ♗h5+ ♚d8 16. 0–0 ♙d6 17. ♖ae1 h6 (or 17... a6 18. ♗g5+ ♙e7 19. ♗g7 ♖e8 20. ♙xd7+–) 18. ♙g5+ ♙e7 19. ♙xe7+ ♚xe7 20. ♗h4+ ♚d6 (20... ♚e8 21. ♗f6+–) 21. c4 ♗d8 22. ♗d4 ♖f8 23. ♖xf8 ♗xf8 24. ♖xe5+–.

Black's best chance to offer some tough resistance can be based on the line: 13... ♜dx5! 14. 0–0 ♙d6 (In case of 14... ♙g7, White has the resource: 15. ♙xc6+ bxc6 16. ♗h5 0–0 17. ♜c5±) 15. ♗h5. Now, after: 15... 0–0?! 16. ♙h6 ♖e8 17. ♙d3! Black's defence becomes extremely difficult, for example: 17... a6 18. ♙f4! ♜g6 19. ♙xd6 ♗xd6 20. ♖xf7+–; 17... ♜g6 18. ♜b5 ♗b8 19. ♜xd6 ♗xd6 20. ♖xf7 ♚xf7 21. ♙g5!+–; 17... ♜xd4 18. cxd4 ♜g6 19. ♖ac1 ♗e7 (or 19... ♗d7 20. ♜c5 ♙xc5 21. ♖xc5±) 20. ♙g5 ♗f8 (or 20... ♗d7? 21. ♙b5! ♗xb5 22. ♖xf7+–) 21. ♙b5±. Black does not lose by force only in that last variation; nevertheless the correct evaluation of the position leaves us without any doubts that White's advantage is overwhelming. Instead of 15... 0–0?! it is better for Black to play 15... ♜g6 and there might follow: 16. ♙xd6 ♗xd6

17. ♖f6!? ♗e5 18. ♗f3 0–0 19. ♙xc6 bxc6 20. ♜c5± Hertel – Lorentzen, corr. 1998. This position has not been analyzed thoroughly yet. I believe that White's compensation for the sacrificed pawn is more than sufficient. His pieces are quite active and Black's king has not found a safe shelter yet.

12. ♙xd4

In this pawn-structure White can combine two reasonable ideas. He can prepare a pieces and pawns onslaught on the kingside and he can also try to push c3-c4. This queenside operation can often be very unpleasant for Black and in particular it emphasizes the misplacement of his queen. In general, White's advantage is indisputable.



12... ♙e7

About 12... f5 13. ♙d3 ♙e7 – see 12... ♙e7.

Black has many other possibilities in this position and here are some very seldom played:

After the trade on the d4-square – the strike 12... g5?! is not so effective anymore, because of: 13. f5! ♜xe5 (or 13... exf5 14. e6 ♜e5

15.♙b5 ♖e7 16.exf7±) 14.fxe6 ♙xe6 15.♙b5± – and Black has great difficulties. The other undermining possibility backfires too – 12...f6?! 13.♙d3± and if 13...fxe5 14.fxe5 ♖xe5? then 15.♚h5+ ♖f7 16.0–0+– and White has a winning position. It seems very anti-positional for Black to follow with: 12...♖b6?! 13.♖xb6 axb6 14.♙d3±. Black's situation would not be improved with the inclusion of the moves: 12...a5 13.a3 g6 14.♙b5 ♙e7 15.♙b6± Andreikin – Gorovyykh, Peniscola 2002.) 14.♙d3 ♚c6?! (about 14...0–0 15.0–0 – see 12...♙e7) 15.0–0 b5 16.♖b2 ♙d8 17.♚e2± Haslinger – Thompson, Aberdeen 1994. It is in favour of White if Black plays: 12...g6 13.♙d3 ♙g7 (Black's bishop is totally misplaced here.) 14.♚e2 0–0 15.0–0± Blackstone – Ervin, Hollywood 1970;

In case of 12...b6, it is interesting for White to try 13.♙b5!? (creating additional problems for Black) 13...♙b7 (or 13...♙e7 14.0–0 0–0, Folk – Sakar, Ostrava 2000, 15.♚c1 ♙b7 16.c4 dxc4 17.♚xc4 ♚d8 18.♙b2±) 14.0–0 ♙c6 15.♙d3 g6 16.♖b2 ♙e7 17.♚e2 0–0, Kharitonov – Rajabov, Artek 1999, 18.g4± and White's attack is very powerful;

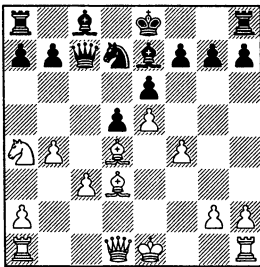
Black's standard and well-familiar queenside play, beginning with 12...a6 13.♙d3 b5, is insufficient for him here. After 14.♖b2, Black has tired different possibilities: 14...♖b6 15.0–0 ♖c4 (or 15...

♙d7 16.♚e2 ♖c4 17.f5± Duchhardt – Remesow, Germany 1994) 16.♖xc4 bxc4 (It is even more dangerous for Black to capture with the other pawn: 16...dxc4 17.♙e4 ♙b7 18.♚f3 ♙xe4 19.♚xe4 ♚d8 20.a4!+– Lahno – Uhvarin, Alushta 2000 – the outcome of this game will be decided due to White's dominance over the rook file.) 17.♙c2±; 14...♙b7 15.0–0 g6 (15...♙e7 16.♚e2±) 16.♚e2 ♖b6 17.a4! ♖c4 18.axb5 axb5 19.♚xa8+ ♙xa8 20.♖xc4 bxc4 21.♚a1± Tauber – Lukac, Slovakia 2000; 14...h5 15.0–0 g6 16.a4!± Gimeno – Gaspar, Zaragoza 2001; 14...♖b8 15.0–0 ♖c6 16.♙f2 ♙d7 17.a4! bxa4 18.♖xa4 d4 19.♙e4± Frolyanov – Rakhmanov, Cherepovets 2001; 14...♙e7 15.0–0 0–0 (or 15...♖b6 16.♙c2 ♖c4 17.♖d3± Muslija – Koso, Omis 2003; 15...♖b8 16.a4±), Dizdarevic – Hardegen, Penrith 2003, 16.♚e2±. All these lines that you have just seen are more or less similar. White exploits his opponent's weaknesses on the queenside and that is usually done with the help of the move a2–a4;

The logical continuation of the exchange on d4 would be the transfer of Black's knight to the c6-square via d7. Still, it is not good enough to equalize either. After 12...♖b8 13.♙d3 ♖c6 14.♙f2 b6 (The move 14...g5 is obviously too risky after: 15.b5 ♖a5 16.b6 axb6 17.♙b5+ ♖c6 18.♙xb6 and Black is faced with the unpleasant

choice between 18... ♗b8, Kuiper – Guerrini, corr. 1995, 19.0–0 gxf4 20. ♗g4!± and 18... ♗e7 19. 0–0 ♗d7, Prado – Portilho, corr. 1992, 20. ♘c5! ♘xe5 21. ♘xd7 ♘xd7 22. ♗d4 ♗g8 23. f5±.) 15.0–0. Now, White can concentrate on the preparation of the move c3-c4. For example: 15... ♗e7 16. a3 0–0 17. ♗c1± followed by 18. c4 or 15... ♗d7 16. a3 g6, Van Der Sterren – Murrey, Hilversum 1984, 17. ♘b2 ♗h6 18. ♗f3 a5 19. b5 ♘e7 20. c4± and White has a powerful pressure along the central files.

13. ♗d3



13... 0–0

Black can try to postpone his castling short, but it leads only to a transposition of moves in most of the lines.

It is too bad for him to play: 13... g5? 14. ♗h5 gxf4 15.0–0 ♘f8 16. ♗xf4 ♘g6 17. ♗xf7! ♘xf7 18. ♗xg6+ ♘g7 19. ♗d3 ♗d7 20. ♗e3!+– and White's threats are impossible to parry. Black has also tried in practice here: 13... g6 14.0–0 b6 (14...0–0 – see 13...0–0) 15. ♗c1± Rowson – Floor, Wijk aan Zee 2000, with c3-c4 to follow quite

soon; 13...b6 14.0–0 a5, Kalegin – Shuvatkin, St Petersburg 2005 (about 14...0–0 – see 13...0–0; 14... ♗b7 15. ♗c1±), 15. f5±; 13...a6 14.0–0 0–0 – see 13...0–0; 13...f5 14.0–0 h5?! (14...0–0 – see 13...0–0) 15. ♗c1 ♗d8 16. c4± Seret – Erozbek, Nice 1974; 13... ♘b8 14. 0–0 b6 15. a3 ♗a6 16. b5 ♗b7 17. f5±. White maintains a powerful initiative in all the variations.

14.0–0

It seems that White has all conditions necessary for the typical combination with the bishop-sacrifice on h7 and the subsequent inclusion of the heavy pieces into the attack. I am not going to analyze all these variations, because they are usually good enough only for a draw. Meanwhile, White's position is so good that I think he does not need to take any chances at all.

14... ♘b8

See how quickly White's king-side attack may develop in these short illustrative games:

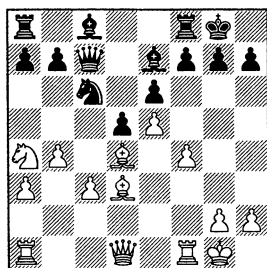
14...f5 15. g4 g6 16. gxf5 gxf5 17. ♘h1 ♗d8 18. ♗g1+ ♘h8 19. ♗h5 ♗g8 20. ♗f7 ♗h4 21. ♗xf5 exf5 22. e6+ ♘f6 23. e7 1–0 Pokorna – Mnich, Slovakia 1994;

14...g6 15. ♗c1 ♘b6 16. ♘xb6 axb6 17. ♗d2 ♗d7 18. f5 exf5 19. ♗h6 ♗e6 20. ♗f3 f6 21. ♗e1 ♗ae8 22. ♗b5 ♗d7 23. ♗h3 1–0 Konev – Pikulev, Simferopol 1989;

Black cannot solve his problems with: 14...f6 15. ♗h5 f5 (He loses immediately after: 15...g6?

16. ♖xg6 hxg6 17. ♗xg6+ ♔h8 18. ♜f3+- Neumann – Mersmann, Lingen 1995.) 16.g4 g6 17. ♗h6± Flis – Maszota, Rowy 2000 or 14...a6 15. ♗h5 g6 16. ♗h6 ♖e8 17.h4!? ♙f8 18. ♗g5 ♗d8 19. ♗g3 b5 20. ♖b2 ♖b6 21.h5± Gabrielsen – Hole, Langesund 1999. The fight can also develop like this: 14...a5 15.a3 b6, Aguado Garcia – Lopez Martinez, Barcelona 1996, 16. ♗e2!?± or 14...b6 15. ♗h5 g6 16. ♗h6±.

15.a3!? ♖c6



16. ♙e3±

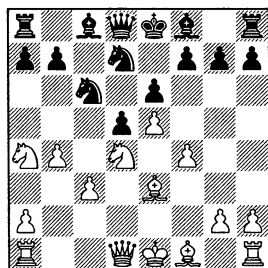
White maintains his positional advantage. Later, there might follow, for example: 16...b6 17. ♗c2 h6 18.c4 d4 19. ♙f2± Melia – Dedijer, Heraklio 2004 or 16...♙d7 17. ♜f3 g6 18. ♖c5± Suetin – Liberzon, Leningrad 1960.

c2) 10... ♗d8

The placement of Black's queen on the d8-square may help Black in his kingside defence in some lines. It also removes the queen away from the eventual juxtaposition along the c-file, but on the whole – the fight develops

in a similar fashion to the previous variation.

11. ♖xd4



11... ♙e7

We should not forget, while we are analyzing the different possibilities for Black, that he should try to justify somehow his move 10, but he did not always succeed in doing that, for example:

11...a5 12.a3 axb4 13.axb4 ♙e7 14. ♙d3 0-0 15.0-0±; 11...♖xd4 12. ♙xd4 ♖b8 (12...f6 13. ♙d3±; 12...b6 13. ♙b5±; 12...a6 13. ♙d3 – see 11...a6; 12...♙e7 13. ♙d3 – see 11...♙e7) 13. ♙d3 ♖c6 14. ♙f2± – we have studied that position quite thoroughly when Black's queen was on the c7-square;

11...a6 12. ♙d3 ♗h4+ (This is an original idea, but it is hardly so purposeful for Black. It is in favour of White if Black follows with: 12...♖xd4 13. ♙xd4 b5 14. ♖b2 ♖b6 15.a4 ♖c4 16. ♖xc4 bxc4 17. ♙c2 g6 18.0-0± Petr – Hagara, Slovakia 2000.) 13.g3 ♗h3 14. ♙f1 ♗h6, Macekova – Duris, Slovakia 1997, 15. ♔f2!? (White defends his bishop and now his f4-pawn becomes mobile.) 15...♖xd4?! (This

line is too risky, but 15...♗e7 16. h4 f5 17.c4± is without any good prospects for Black.) 16.f5! g5 (After 16...♗xe3+ 17.♘xe3 ♘xf5+ 18. ♘f2 b5 19.♘b2 ♘xe5 20.a4+– Black has no compensation for his sacrificed queen.) 17.♗xd4± and White's positional advantage is obvious, because it would not work for Black to defend with: 17...exf5? 18.e6 ♘f6 19.♘b6 ♖b8 20.♗xf6 ♗xf6 21.♗a4+ ♘d8 22. ♘xd5 ♗xe6 23.♖d1 ♗d7 24.♗a5+ b6 25.♗xa6+– and his position is hopeless.

12.♗d3 ♘xd4

About 12...g6 13.0–0 ♘xd4 14.♗xd4 0–0 – see 12...♘xd4.

It is in favour of White if Black plays: 12...♘b6?! 13.♘xb6 axb6 14.0–0±.

In the game Lukin – Bagirov, Telavi 1982, Black tried: 12...0–0 13.0–0 g6 (about 13...♘xd4 14. ♗xd4 – see 12...♘xd4) 14.♗e2 ♘db8 15.b5 ♘xd4 16.♗xd4 ♗a5 17.♘c5 ♘d7 18.♘b3 ♗c7 19.g4± and White began a dangerous kingside onslaught.

13.♗xd4 0–0

Black can hardly change anything with: 13...f5 14.0–0 0–0 15.g4 g6 16.gxf5 gxf5 17.♘h1 ♘h8 18.♖g1± – because White's attack becomes even stronger after the opening of the g-file.

White's advantage was overwhelming after: 13...g6 14.0–0 b6 (or 14...a6 15.♘b2 b6 16.a3 ♗b7 17.♗e2 0–0 18.g4± Gaspero

– Catena, Italy 1998) 15.g4 ♗b7 16.f5 gxf5 17.gxf5 ♖g8+ 18.♘h1± Geenen – Benesch, Zalakaros 1988.

14.0–0

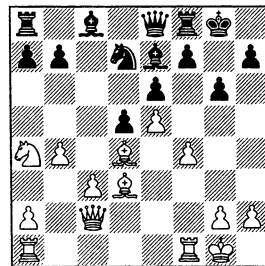
We have analyzed an almost similar position in the variation **c1**. I would like to mention that the placement of the black queen on the d8-square reduces the pressure against White's e5-pawn, so the preparation of the pawn-break f4-f5 for White becomes easier.

14...♗e8

The queen comes closer to the defence of the king.

In case of 14...a6, White can play the immediate: 15.f5 exf5 (or 15...f6 16.fxe6 ♘xe5, Brameld – Parisse, Germany 1994, 17.♘b6±) 16.♗xf5± Rodehueser – Dawid, Muelheim 1995 and his edge is undisputed. After: 14...g6 15.♗e2 a6 16.♘b2 b5, White has the thematic pawn-break 17.a4!± Grechihin – Tikhomirov, Yaroslavl 1995 and Black has to worry about his usual problems.

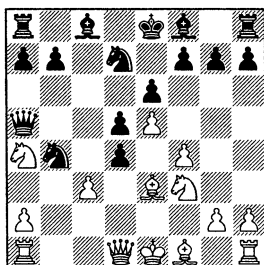
15.♗c2 g6



16. ♖ae1±

White has mobilized his forces perfectly. He only needs to improve the placement of his knight on a4. Black's forces are passive and his defence will be very difficult. There might follow: 16...a5 17.b5±; 16...b6 17.♟b2 ♞b7 18.♞d1 a5 19.a3± or 16...f5 17.exf6 ♞xf6 18.♞c5± – this last variation was tested in the recently played game – Simonsen – Nielsen, Oyrarbakka 2005.

c3) 10...♞xb4



That is a principled decision. Black is not willing to comply with the passive defensive play, which is typical for the lines that we have just analyzed, so he changes the standard material ratio. It may seem that Black's pawns are not a real threat at all, but in fact he relies much more on his active and lively piece-play and on the possible pawn-break g7-g5 than on his passed pawns. There is also the possibility for Black to form a powerful pawn-mass in the centre (particularly after g7-g5) and White should by no means under-

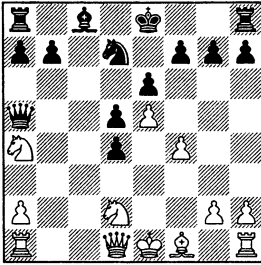
estimate it, especially in the end-game.

These are Black's basic ideas in this variation, but the latest tournament practice has confirmed that in case White plays precisely – Black's plans are not going to be realized.

11.cxb4 ♞xb4+ 12.♞d2 ♞xd2+

The immediate exchange on d2 does not leave White any choice, due to the defenselessness of the knight on a4. He is forced to capture with his knight and that causes a certain disharmony in White's pieces set-up. After Black's other possibilities, White manages to redeploy his forces and Black's prospects are considerably inferior: 12...g5?! 13.♞b2 gxf4 14.♞d3 ♞c3 15.♞xd4+-; 12...b6?! 13.♞b2 ♞a6 or 13...♞c5 14.♞xb4 ♞xb4+ 15.♞d2 ♞a3 16.♞xd4 ♞e4 17.♞b5+- Christ – Ruckes, Wiesbaden 1994) 14.♞xb4 ♞xb4+ 15.♞d2 ♞a3 16.♞xd4+-; 12...b5?! 13.♞b2 ♞c3 (13...♞b6 14.♞xb4 ♞xb4+ 15.♞d2 ♞xd2+ 16.♞xd2+- Tingander – Tenno, Tampere 1988) 14.♞xd4+-; 12...f6?! 13.♞b2 0-0 14.♞xb4 ♞xb4+ 15.♞d2 ♞xd2+ 16.♞xd2 ♞c5 17.♞d3 ♞e4+ 18.♞e1+- Saether – Heyken, Gausdal 1992; 12...0-0?! 13.♞b2 ♞c5 (about 13...f6 – see 12...f6) 14.♞d3+-.

13.♞xd2



Now, Black has two basic possibilities; one is to try to undermine White's central pawns with the move **c3a) 13...g5** and the other is to enhance the development of the queenside, which should be started with the move **c3b) 13...b6**.

The pawn-break f7-f6 is good neither immediately: 13...f6?! 14. ♙d3 fxe5?! 15. ♜h5+- nor following: 13...0-0 14. ♙d3 f6?! (about 14...b5 15. ♘b2 – see 13...b5) 15. exf6 ♜xf6 16.0-0+- Stabilewski – Rick, Germany 1996.

Black has tried often in practice, but not too successfully, the line 13...b5 14. ♘b2. Black's pawn on b5 restricts his light squared bishop, while the redeployment of his knight to the c4-square does not help the development of his counterplay at all. The game might follow with: 14...f6?! 15. ♙d3+- Fernandez Garcia – Granados, Las Palmas 1985; 14...♖c3 15. ♘d3 ♘b6 (or 15...0-0 16. ♙e2 ♘b6 17. ♜c1 ♚a5 18.0-0 ♘c4 19. ♘b3 ♖b6 20. ♜f2± Beutel – Waibel, corr. 1985) 16. ♔f2 0-0 (but not 16...♘c4?! 17. ♘b3+-) 17. ♘b3 ♖c7 18. ♙e2 ♘c4 19. ♜c1±; 14...0-0 15.

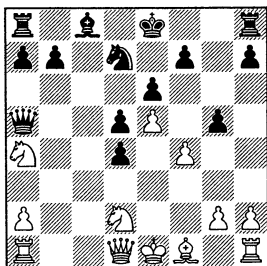
♙d3 ♖c3 (about 15...♘c5 – see 14...♘c5) 16. ♖c2 ♙a6, Podonic – Asrjan, Szombathely 1993 (16...♘c5 17. ♜c1±) 17. ♙xh7+ ♔h8 18. ♘d1! (this is an important move for White) 18...♚a5 (but not 18...♖xa1? because of 19. ♘b3+-) 19. ♙d3 ♜fc8 20. ♖b2±; 14...♘b6 15.a4 bxa4 16. ♘xa4 ♙d7 17. ♘xb6 ♖xb6 18. ♙d3± Hedman – Danerud, Sweden 1998; 14...♘c5 15. ♙d3 ♖c3! (White has considerably less problems after: 15...♘e4 16. ♙xe4 dxe4 17.0-0 ♖b4 18. ♘xe4 ♖xb2 19.a3!+- Maric – Batyrbekova, Sofia 1994 and White traps the enemy queen, or 15...0-0 16.0-0 ♖b6 17. ♜f3± Korchnoi – Gurgenzidze, Moscow 1967.) 16. ♖b1! (Capturing the b5-pawn opens the third rank for the active actions of Black's queen) 16...♙d7 (It would not work for Black to play 16...♖xb2? due to 17. ♙xb5+-) 17. ♔e2± – and White manages easily to coordinate his pieces.

c3a) 13...g5

Contemporary theory considers this move as no less effective means of fighting against White's centre than the standard-pawn breaks c7-c5 and f7-f6. It can be seen in numerous lines of the French Defence, as well as quite often in the Steinitz variation too.

In the game Anand – Dreev, Madras 1991, there followed: 14. ♘b2 gxf4 15. ♘d3 b6 16. ♔f2 ♙a6 17. ♘f3 ♜c8!∞ and Black had

a good counterplay, but White could have played much better.



14. ♖b1!

That is a very important move. White wishes to deploy his bishop to the b5-square and Black will be faced with a difficult dilemma.

14...gxf4

This move does not prevent White's intentions. Black has also tried here the tentative move 14...a6, although he should be reluctant to play a move like that, being a piece down. Meanwhile, he weakens the b6-square with that move and his light squared bishop has already no access to the a6-square. In the game: Kuczynski – Dolmatov, Polanica Zdroj 1993, there followed: 15. ♘b2 ♘c5 (This is in fact an admission by Black that he does not intend to attack White's central pawn anymore, but it is equally ineffective for him to play: 15... ♗xa2 16. ♘d3 ♗a3 17. fxg5± H. Schneider – Raikaa, corr. 1997, as well as even the more consistent line: 15...gxf4 16. ♘d3 b5 17. ♙e2 ♙b7 18. 0–0±.) 16. ♙d3 ♙d7 (16... ♗c3 17. ♗e2±; 16... ♗xa2

17. 0–0 ♙d7 – see 16... ♙d7) 17. 0–0 ♗xa2 (or 17... ♘d3 18. ♘d3 ♙b5 19. ♘b3 ♗a3 20. f5± Gluzman – Reeves, Melbourne 1998) 18. fxg5 ♗a3 (In case Black castles short he simply gets checkmated: 18... 0–0? 19. ♙xh7+! ♙xh7 20. ♗h5+ ♙g8 21. ♖f4+–; after 18... ♖c8, White wins with: 19. ♗h5 ♖f8 20. g6! hxg6 21. ♙xg6+–) and here White can win with some spectacular combinations – 19. ♖xf7! ♙xf7 (or 19... ♘d3 20. ♗f3!+–; 19... 0–0–0 20. ♘f3+–) 20. ♗f3+ ♙e8 (or 20... ♙g7 21. ♗f6+ ♙g8 22. ♖f1+–) 21. ♙g6+ hxg6 22. ♗xa3+– and White wins the enemy queen.

15. ♙b5! ♖b8

The pin along the a4–e8 diagonal is extremely unpleasant for Black and he cannot get rid of it without losses.

In case of 15... ♙e7?! White's most precise line is: 16. ♗g4! ♘xe5 17. ♗xf4 ♙d7 (If 17... f6, then 18. 0–0 ♖f8 19. ♗xd4 b6 20. ♖b4! and Black's queen is trapped, he cannot save it with: 20... ♘c4 21. ♗c3 ♙d7 22. ♙xd7 ♘xd2 23. ♗c7+– Mai – Piceu, Rimavska Sobota 1996.) 18. 0–0! ♙xb5 (in the game Nomen – Ritsema, Netherlands 1987, after: 18... b6 19. ♗xe5 ♗xd2 20. ♖xf7+! Black resigned, because of the forced checkmate: 20... ♙xf7 21. ♖f1+ ♙e7 22. ♗g7+ ♙d6 23. ♗xd7+ ♙e5 24. ♗g7+ ♙d6 25. ♗g3+ e5 26. ♖f6+ etc.) 19. ♘e4! (After 19. ♗xe5 ♗xd2 20. ♖xb5 ♗e3 21. ♗xe3 dxe3 22. ♖xb7+

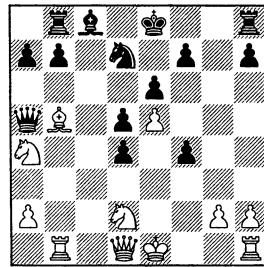
♘d6± Black has slightly more chances for a successful defence.) 19...dxe4 (or 19...♗xa4 20.♖f6+ ♘d7 21.♗xe5+-) 20.♗xe5 ♗xa4 (He cannot save the game with: 20...a6 21.♖f6+ ♘d6 22.♗xd4+ ♘e7 23.♖f6+ ♘d6 24.♖f4+-) 21.♙b5+- and Black is helpless against White's direct threats, despite his material advantage.

Black has tried here also: 15... ♘f8?! 16.0-0 ♘xe5 17.♙xf4 a6 (It would not help him to try the line: 17...♙g8 18.♖h5 ♗c7 19.♖xh7 a6 20.♙e8! ♙g7 21.♖h6+- because White's attack is crushing.) 18. ♖h5 ♘g6 (or 18...axb5 19.♗xe5 ♙g8 20.♘b3 ♗xa4 21.♖f6+-; 18... ♗xd2 19.♖h6+ ♘e7 20.♙xf7+ ♘xf7 21.♗xd2 axb5 22.♘b6+-) 19. ♖h6+ ♘e7 (About 19...♘g8 20. ♙xf7 ♘xf7 - see 19...♘e7.). This position arose in the game Ziatdinov - Barsov, Tashkent 1993 and here White's fastest winning line would have been: 20.♙xf7!+ ♘xf7 21.♙f1+ ♘g8 (or 21...♘e7 22.♗g5+ ♘d6 23.♘c4!+-) 22.♙e8 ♗c7 23. ♙xg6 ♗g7 24.♙f7+ ♗xf7 25.♙xf7 ♘xf7 26.♘b6+-.

Black does not have too many chances after 15...♗c7?! 16.♘f3 (This is the simplest for White, although it is not bad for him to follow with: 16.0-0!? ♗xe5 17.♘f3± and White's initiative is so powerful that it compensates the sacrificed material with interest) 16...♗a5+ (or 16...a6 17. ♙xd7+ ♙xd7 18.♘b6+-) 17.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 18.♘xd2 ♙g8 19.♙hg1 ♘e7

20.♙b4+- - and Black cannot survive in that endgame.

The relatively best defensive line for Black is: 15...a6 16.♙xd7+ ♙xd7 17.♘b6 ♙d8 18.♘d7 ♙xd7 19.0-0 ♗xa2 20.♙xf4± Noshkovicz - Jorgensen, corr. 1996, but even then, after these developments, White begins to annihilate Black's weak pawns and he should have no problems materializing his advantage.



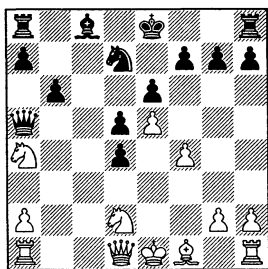
16. ♘c5±

The game Short - Timman, Amsterdam 1994 reached that position. White's advantage is evident and he proved quite convincingly that his piece is clearly superior to Black's pawns. There followed: **16... ♗c3** (In case of 16... ♗a3, White can follow with: 17. ♘a6!? ♗e3 18. ♗e2 bxa6 19. ♙xd7+ ♘xd7 20. ♙xb8 ♙g8 21. ♙b3+- and Black's compensation for the rook is obviously insufficient.) **17. ♘d3 a6 18. ♙c1 ♗a3 19. ♖b3!** (This move repels Black's queen from its active placement.) **19... ♗a5** (or 19... ♗xb3 20. ♙xd7+ ♙xd7 21. axb3!+- N.Short) **20. ♙xd7+ ♙xd7 21. ♘xf4 ♙g8** (In case of

21...♔e7, White has 22.0–0! while after: 22...♖xd2 23.♘xd5+ exd5 24.♗xd5 ♔d8 25.♗d6+- White's threats are absolutely decisive.) **22.♗d3!** ♖g5 **23.0–0+-** and White won promptly.

c3b) 13...b6

That is Black's most popular line. He plans to trade the light squared bishops and to organize some counterplay along the c-file, bringing in the process his knight to the c5-square. Black should not forget about the possibility g7-g5 either. White in his turn should try to complete the development of his queenside as quickly as possible.



14.♗d3

This is White's most natural and strongest move. Black has more chances to obtain a good counterplay after White's other possibilities.

14...♗a6

We have to analyze here the immediate: 14...♘c5 15.♘xc5 bxc5. Black has improved his pawn-structure considerably, but suddenly after 16.0–0, it becomes

clear that he cannot do anything. In case of 16...c4? White regains his piece with: 17.♗xc4! dxc4 18.♘xc4 ♗d5 19.♘d6+ ♔e7 20.♗h5+- and he creates threats that Black can never parry, Hopewell – Ker, New Zealand 1986. The position is very difficult for Black too after: 16...g6 17.♗c1 ♗b6, Liberzon – Czerniak, Israel 1975, 18.♗a4+ ♗d7 19.♗a3 ♗c8 20.♗a6± Krnic. Finally, after 16...♗d7, White should play 17.f5! and in case of 17...c4 (or 17...0–0 18.f6±; 17...exf5 18.♘b3 ♗b6 19.♗f3 ♗e6 20.♗ab1±) he plays again: 18.♗xc4! dxc4 19.♘xc4 ♗d5 (19...♗c5 20.♘d6 ♔e7 21.♗f3!+-) 20.♘d6+ ♔e7 21.♗d3!± and Black's defence is extremely difficult.

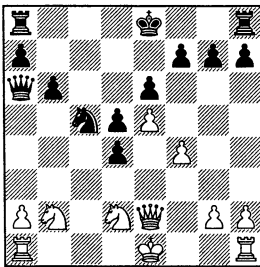
15.♘b2 ♘c5

In case of: 15...♗xd3 16.♘xd3 ♘c5 (After 16...♗c3, it is very strong for White to play 17.♔e2± Le Bled – Meslin, corr. 1997, followed by 18.♘b3.), White should better avoid the exchange with the move 17.♘f2. Now, after: 17...♘e4?! (or 17...♗c3?! 18.0–0 0–0 19.♘b3 1–0 Barr – Wetterling, corr. 1999) 18.♘fxe4 dxe4 19.0–0 ♗d5 20.♗e1 e3 21.♘f3 ♗d8 22.♗a4+- Buchal – Schoebel, Hesen 1988, the vulnerability of Black's pawns becomes quite obvious. It is more resilient for him to defend with: 17...♘a4 18.0–0 ♘c3 19.♗g4 0–0 20.♘f3± Timman – Korchnoi, Brussels 1987, but the transfer of Black's knight to the c3-square has taken so

much time that White is perfectly prepared for a successful kingside attack. The game ended in a spectacular fashion: 20... ♗ac8 21. ♖h4 ♗a4 22. ♘g4 ♘e2+ 23. ♙h1 ♗c2 24. ♗ae1 d3 25. ♗d1! h6 26. ♘xh6! gxh6 27. ♖xh6 f6 28. exf6 ♗c7 29. ♘e5 ♗h7 30. ♗g6+ and Black resigned.

16. ♗xa6 ♗xa6 17. ♗e2!

White has an extra piece, so the eventual simplifications would be advantageous for him. Black's chance is to exploit the open c-file, prior to White's consolidation of forces.



17... ♗a3

It is hopeless for Black to defend with: 17... ♗c8? 18. ♗xa6 ♘xa6 19. ♙d1 ♘b4 20. ♘f3 ♗c2 21. ♘d3+- Brenke – Holmberg, corr. 1999. It seems more interesting for him to try: 17... d3!? 18. ♗e3 ♗a3 (or 18... 0-0 19. 0-0 ♗a3 – see 18... ♗a3), which would enable him to castle, but after: 19. ♗d4 0-0 20. 0-0 ♗ac8, as it was played in the game: Psakhis – Dizdar, Yugoslavia 1987, White could have consolidated his advantage with: 21. ♘b3! ♘xb3 (it is insufficient for Black to play: 21... a5

22. ♘d3 ♘xd3 23. ♗xd3 a4 24. ♘c1 ♗c3 25. ♗d4 b5 26. ♘e2 ♗c4 27. ♗f3! ♗b4 28. ♗d3±) 22. axb3 ♗xb3 23. ♘d3 ♗c4 (or 23... a5 24. f5 exf5 25. ♗xf5 ♗c3 26. ♗xc3 ♗xc3 27. ♘f4± and White has excellent winning chances) 24. ♗e3 ♗c3 25. ♗fd1 a5 26. f5!±. White's initiative on the kingside will soon become a decisive factor...

18. ♗b5+ ♘e7 19. 0-0 ♗e3+ 20. ♗f2 ♗hc8

It is hardly any better for Black to play: 20... ♗ac8 21. ♘f1±.

21. ♘f1

White forces Black's queen to abandon its active position and so he improves the coordination of his pieces.

21... ♗c3

Or 21... ♗a3 22. ♗f3 ♗a5 (22... ♗a6?! 23. ♗b4+-) – see 21... ♗c3.

22. ♗f3 d3

It is useless for Black to try: 22... ♗c2 23. ♗b4+- Tay – Hoffmann, corr. 1999.

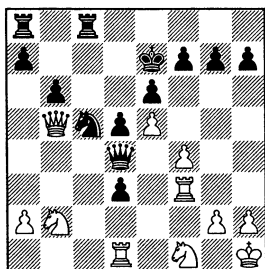
It seems a bit wiser for him to defend with 22... ♗a5!? in order to open the file for the second rook at the price of doubling his pawns. White however, is not obliged to exchange. Instead he can follow with: 23. ♗e2!? ♘e4 24. f5 ♗c3 25. ♘g3± and his advantage is considerable.

23. ♗d1 ♗d4+

In case Black becomes too greedy as in the variation: 23... ♗a3?! Micheli – Caruso, Mendrisio 1988, 24. f5! ♗xa2 25. ♗b4! ♗b3 26. ♗h4 ♙f8 27. ♗d2, his defence

becomes quite problematic, because he has no pieces left around his king. Now, in case of 27...♔g8, White wins – 28.♙h3 h6 29.f6+–.

24.♔h1±



White will soon capture his opponent's d3-pawn and the only thing Black can rely on will be some temporary activity along the c-file. After: 24...♗e4 25.♗xd3 ♙c2 (if 25...a6?! then 26.♙b1 and it is useless for Black to try: 26...♗c3 27.♙b2+– Muller – Cerf, corr. 1995) 26.♗e3 ♗d2 (or 27...♗c3? 28.♗xc2 1-0 Di Paolo – Pietrocola, corr. 1988) 27.f5± and White had no real problems to press his material advantage home in the game Nunn – Zysk, Germany 1987.

Conclusion

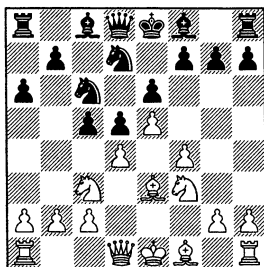
The variation 7...♙b6 leads to very interesting and complex positions. White's claims to the opening advantage should be based on a good preparation and the capability to apply successfully variable opening strategy. He must be ready to play quite different types of positions; meanwhile it is usually Black who makes the decision. He can choose the pawn-structure for the middle game (closed centre after 9...c4 or 9...b6 10.♗d2 c4 or an open fight after 9...cxd4).

Additionally, Black can sacrifice a piece in numerous variations on the b4-square and that leads to very complicated and non-standard situations. White must play extremely precisely in these lines and he should be very careful while making every important decision.

We have analyzed all possible branches of the 7...♙b6 variation and we can conclude that in case both sides play correctly, White's chances are clearly better. In fact, Black risks most of all in case he sacrifices a piece for three pawns after: 9...cxd4 10.b4 ♗xb4 and that is one of the reasons that presently the French Defence fans choose much more often the lines 7...a6 or 7...cxd4 – but we are going to discuss all that in our next chapters.

Chapter 13

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♝f6 4.e5 ♞fd7
5.f4 c5 6.♞f3 ♞c6 7.♙e3 a6



This variation became popular during the 80ies of the last century and it continued to be fashionable until now. Black prepares the advance of of his b7-pawn with the idea to occupy additional space on the queenside. Meanwhile, the situation in the centre remains unclear, so there may arise plenty of different positions. The main drawback of this line for Black is that his piece-development has been slowed down, but it is not so easy for White to exploit that circumstance. White must avoid routine decisions if he wishes to obtain a serious advantage out of the opening and he should adhere to a well-planned flexible strategy.

8.♙d2

That is a useful multi-purpose move. I must emphasize that it is

very difficult to predict the eventual-set-up of White's pieces right now. We should say that White has prepared his castling long, but that does not mean that his king will necessarily go to the queenside. It all depends on Black's reactions.

8...b5

This is Black's most principled decision, but we should also mention some other possibilities, since they are so many, despite the fact that Black plays them so rarely:

8...c4?! – Black determines prematurely the situation in the centre. After that, White can play immediately: 9.f5 ♞b6 (9...h6 10.fxe6 fxe6 11.g3 ♙e7 12.♙h3± Pcola – Fabik, Bratislava 1991.) 10.fxe6 ♙xe6 11.♙e2 ♙b4 12.0–0 h6 13.a3± and he maintains a great advantage, Fermin – Marcelino, Asturias 1997;

8...f6?! (this attempt does not equalize for Black, just like on the previous move, although it is more purposeful when Black controls the b5-square) 9.exf6 ♙xf6 (it is too dubious for Black to play: 9...gxf6?! 10.0–0–0 ♙c7 11.f5± Sieber – Graebe, Germany

1999, while White will counter 9... dxf6 with the simple move 10. $\text{dxc5}\pm$) 10.0-0-0 cxd4 (In case of 10... d6 11. dxc5 dxc5 , White has the surprising resource 12. $\text{dxc4}!$ and Black can avoid the disastrous opening of files in the centre for him neither with: 12... d7 13. $\text{dxd5}!$ exd5 14. dxd5 dxd5 15. $\text{dxd5}+-$ nor with: 12...0-0 13. $\text{dxd5}!$ exd5 14. $\text{dxd5}+$ d6 15. $\text{dxd6}\pm$; He cannot solve his problems with: 10... b5 11. dxc5 dxc5 12. dxc5 dxc5 13. $\text{e3}\pm$ Euler – Stock, Rhein Main 2004.) 11. dxd4 b4 , Haugen – Endresen, Fister 1992, 12. $\text{b1}\pm$. White's chances are clearly better and after the careless move 12...0-0?! Black can be punished with: 13. dxc6 bxc6 14. $\text{dxd5}\pm$;

We will not deal too thoroughly with the move 8... $\text{b8}?$! (if Black intends to play like that in the first place, he had better do that on his move seven) 9. $\text{d2}\pm$ – and when Black's pawn in on the a6-square – the move b8 is hardly purposeful;

It is not logical for Black to play 8... $\text{b6}?$! either – White obtains the advantage easily, although it is only slight after: 9. d2 b7 (About 9... c7 10.0-0 d7 11. d1 b7 – see 9... b7 ; 9... g6 10.0-0 \pm) 10.0-0 c7 (10... d7 11. $\text{d1}\pm$) 11. d1 d7 12. $\text{c3}\pm$ Dyce – Chicovani, Baile Herculane 1994;

Black has also tried in practice: 8... b6 9.0-0-0 a5 (Black has tested the move: 9... $\text{c4}?$! here

too, but it is refuted by White tactically with the help of the line: 10. $\text{dxc4}!$ dxc4 11. d5 c7 12. dxc6 cxc6 13. $\text{f5}\pm$ Wojtkiewicz – Drasko, Polanica Zdroj 1988; after 9... $\text{cxd4}?$! 10. dxd4 dxd4 11. dxd4 , it becomes clear that in case of 11... d5 , White has 12. $\text{d4}\pm$ Rujevic – Pecori, Australia 2004, therefore Black must lose some tempi, for example: 11... a5 12. b1 b5 13. $\text{f5}\pm$ Loukachouk – Shpagin, Tula 2003; 9... g6 10. $\text{g4}!$? h5 11. gxh5 hxh5 12. d2 a5 13. $\text{h4}\pm$ Kozlowski – Bugalski, Polanica Zdroj 2004; It is somewhat better for Black to play: 9... a7 10. dxc5 dxc5 11. dxc5 cxc5 12. d3 b5 13. b1 d6 14. $\text{d2}\pm$ Bratovic – Kucukgode, Balatonlelle 2003 or 9... c7 10. $\text{dxc5}\pm$ which leads to some typical positions, rather favourable for White.) 10. dxc5 dxc5 11. b1 b5 12. $\text{d3}\pm$ Mainka – Bohn, Germany 1993 and White preserves a clear positional advantage;

Black's active move 8... a5 , should warn White that he must castle short. After 9. d2 , Black cannot equalize, no matter what line he tries: 9... b5 10.0-0 b4 11. d1 d7 (Or 11... f5 12. exf6 dxf6 13. d2 cxd4 14. dxd4 dxd4 15. $\text{dxd4}\pm$ Salmensuu – Kytoniemi, Vammala 1999; 11... c4 , Brouwers – Keizer, Hengelo 1999, 12. d2 d7 13. $\text{d3}\pm$ – White has deployed his forces quite comfortably and he has a clear edge.) 12. d2 0-0 13. dxc5 dxc5 14. $\text{d4}\pm$; 9... cxd4 10. dxd4 b4 (After 10... dxd4 11.

♙xd4 ♙c5, White should better castle long: 12.0-0-0 ♙xd4 13. ♗xd4 ♗c5 14. ♗d2 b5 15. ♘b1± Timmermans – Jonkheer, Vlissingen 2001, with a slight advantage for White.) 11. ♘b3 ♗c7 12.a3 ♙e7 13. ♙d3 f6 (13...0-0 14. ♗f2!?) 14. exf6 ♘xf6 (or 14...♙xf6 15. ♗f2±) 15.h3 0-0 16.0-0 ♙d7 17. ♙ae1 ♙ae8 18. ♗f2± Hickl – Tauber, Bad Woerishofen 1991 – and White's game is quite comfortable in that blocked position;

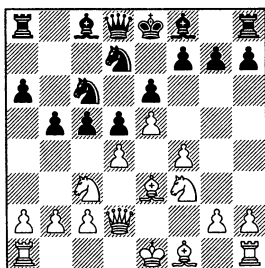
8...♗c7 (Black plans to save a tempo in case of: 9.dxc5 ♙xc5, but White should not be in a hurry to exchange there.) 9. ♙e2!? ♙e7 (about 9...cxd4 10. ♘xd4 – see 7... cxd4; 9...b5 10.0-0 ♙e7 11. ♘d1 cxd4 12. ♘xd4 ♘c5 13. ♘f2 0-0 14. c3 ♙d7 15. ♙ae1± Roj – Hadzala, Czech Republic 1998) 10.0-0 0-0 (10...b5 – see 9...b5; 10... cxd4 11. ♘xd4 ♘xd4 12. ♙xd4± Schmitt – Freck, Germany 1994) 11. ♘d1!±. That quite typical retreat for the whole variation is not only connected with the transfer of the knight to the kingside, but it also fees the c3-square for the move c2-c3, which helps the fortification of the pawn-centrep. In case Black exchanges on d4 – there arises a typical blocking position, in which White maintains somewhat better chances;

8...♙e7 9.dxc5 (Now, Black would lose a tempo if he captures with the bishop.) 9...♘xc5 (or 9... ♗a5 10. ♙d3 ♘xc5 11.0-0 ♙d7 12. a3 ♘xd3 13.cxd3± Tomescu –

Mozes, Romania 1992; 9...♙xc5 10. ♙xc5 ♘xc5 11.0-0-0±) 10. ♙e2 (It is amazing, but White has often played in practice here 10. ♗f2?! but after 10...♗a5! he was probably regretting his decision already.) 10...b5 11.a3! (White is trying to restrict the possibilities of his opponent and that is quite typical in this variation. We will encounter similar ideas in the main lines as well.) 11...♙b7 (In the game T.Fischer – Seifert, Chemnitz 1998, there followed: 11...♗c7 12.0-0 ♘d7 13. ♘h1 ♘b6 14.f5 ♘c4 15. ♙xc4 bxc4 16. ♙ae1 ♙d7 17. ♗f2± and White's initiative was very powerful.) 12. ♘d4 ♘xd4 (It is insufficient for Black to equalize if he plays: 12...♙e4 13. ♘xe4 dxe4 14.0-0 0-0±.) 13. ♙xd4 ♗c7 14.0-0 0-0 15. ♗e3 ♙ac8?! (Black had better prefer here: 15...♘e4 16. ♘xe4 dxe4 17. c3± because his rook might be more useful on the rook file in the subsequent fight.) 16.b4! ♘e4 (or 16...♘d7 17.f5±) 17. ♘xe4 dxe4 18. c3± C.Hansen – Knudsen, Silkeborg 1983. White's plan is very simple; after the unavoidable a3-a4, he wishes to break Black's defence on the queenside and to penetrate along the a-file, combining that with exerting some pressure against Black's vulnerable pawns;

Finally, Black has some moves that do not have a separate importance, because they lead to a transposition of moves: about 8...

g6 – see 7...g6; about 8...f5 9.exf6
 – see 8...f6; as for 8...cxd4 9.♘xd4
 – see 7...cxd4.



9.a3!?

White applies a prophylactic approach to this position. Nowadays, almost all top-players in the world prefer this move, which prevents the accomplishment of Black's main idea. White impedes the advance of Black's b-pawn (or much rather – he makes it strategically unfavourable), after which Black would have pushed forward his rook-pawn and he would have placed his bishop on the a6-square – improving his position considerably.

We will now deal with the following possibilities for Black: **a) 9...cxd4**, **b) 9...♙a5**, **c) 9...♙b7**, **d) 9...g5!?** and **e) 9...♙b6**.

His other lines are quite seldom played, but still some of them require some attention:

It is too dubious for him to play: 9...b4?! 10.axb4 cxb4 11.♘e2± – because it is quite incomprehensible why Black has exchanged a central pawn for White's rook-pawn and he has eliminated the

pressure against the d4-square in the process;

It seems premature for Black to play: 9...c4?! 10.g4± because now White's hands are free for actions on the kingside;

In case of: 9...f6?! 10.exf6 ♙xf6 11.g3 c4 12.♙h3 g6 13.0–0 ♙g7 14.♘e5± Voekler – Schuette, Germany 2002, White is dominant in the centre and he has a clear advantage;

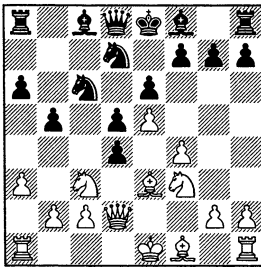
After 9...g6, in the game Timoshenko – Volkov, Korinthos 2004, White chose 10.♙f2!? c4 11.g4 ♘b6 12.h4 h5 (it is equally insufficient for Black to play here: 12...♘a4 13.♘xa4 bxa4 14.♙d2!? h5 15.gxh5 ♙xh5 16.♙e2±) 13.gxh5 ♙xh5 14.♙e2 ♙e7 15.♘g5 ♙h8 16. h5 ♘a4 and here White could have obtained a clear advantage after: 17.♘xa4 bxa4 18.0–0–0± – because his kingside initiative develops much faster than Black's counterplay;

There is some logic for Black to try the developing move 9...♙e7, but it is only seldom played in practice and it has not been analyzed thoroughly. Its idea is simple – Black makes a useful move without determining the situation in the centre. White's correct reaction is the move – 10.♘e2!?. Thus, he defends additionally the important strategical outpost – the d4-square. Later, for example after the exchange of pawns, his knight may occupy that square, having some blocking function,

or White will be able to play the move c2-c3, fortifying his centre. After 10...0-0, Liubavin – Kvasosa, Russia 2005 and 11.♟g3± White's prospects are preferable;

White can play in an analogous fashion after the rarely played move for Black – 9...♚c7. White should seriously consider the move 10.♞e2!?!± which has not been tested in practice yet.

a) 9...cxd4



This is an attempt by Black to solve the problems by simplifying the position. We will see soon that it is now more difficult for White to achieve a great advantage, but he maintains a stable initiative even in case of the exchange of queens.

10.♞xd4 ♘xd4 11.♙xd4 ♞b8

Black's alternative here is the move 11...♙c5. After: 12.♙xc5 ♘xc5 13.♚d4 ♚b6 (It will be in favour of White, should Black play: 13...♚c7, Schmidt – Starke, Germany 1993, 14.0-0-0 ♟b7 15.♙d3±) 14.0-0-0 ♞d7 (otherwise Black must worry about 15.f5)

15.♞e2 ♚b8 16.♚xb6 ♚xb6 17.♞d4 f6 18.exf6 gxf6 19.♙e2± and White ended up in a somewhat better endgame in the game Efimenko – Aleskerov, Dubai 2005. His idea is to improve the placement of his pieces after (♙f3, ♚he1) and to create the threat f4-f5. Black cannot solve his problems with the line: 19...e5!?! 20.♞f5 d4 21.♚he1±.

12.♙d3 ♘c6 13.♙f2 ♙d7

Black cannot change much, in comparison to the main line, with the variation: 13...♙e7 14.0-0 0-0, Mueller – Fraczek, Krakow 2005, 15.♞e2± because White maintains his advantage.

The character of the fight changes considerably after Black's active move 13...b4!?. In the line: 14.0-0 d4 15.♙e4 ♚d7 16.♙xc6 ♚xc6 17.♙xd4 ♟b7± White wins a pawn, but Black's bishop pair provides him with an excellent compensation. White obtains a slight, but stable advantage with the move 14.♞a4!?. In the game Gumula – Fraczek, Lubniewice 2005, Black chose 14...♚b8, but White should have countered that with: 15.axb4 ♘xb4 16.♙e2± with an obvious edge.

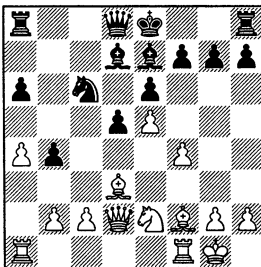
It is more principled for Black to play here: 14...bxa3 15.bxa3 ♚b8 16.0-0, but despite the compromising of his pawn-structure, White preserves his initiative throughout. In case of 16...♙e7, he has the resource 17.♚c3! while after: 17...♚a5?! 18.♚xc6+ ♙d7 19.♚ab1! ♚xb1 (If 19...♚c8 20.♚xa6,

then Black saves the day neither with: 20...♟xa4 21.♟xc8!+- nor with: 20...♟xa6 21.♙xa6 ♖a8 22.♘c5+-; It is equally hopeless for Black to play here: 19...♙xc6 20.♖xb8+ ♘d7 21.♘b6 ♘c7 22.♖xh8+-) 20.♟a8 ♟d8 (It is even worse for Black to try: 20...♙d8 21.♖xb1 ♟xa4 22.♖b8+-) 21.♟xd8+ ♙xd8 22.♖xb1 ♙xa4 23.♙xa6± and White remains with an extra pawn. Black has more chances after the move 16...♟a5, but even then in the endgame after: 17.♟xa5 ♘xa5 18.♖fb1 ♖xb1+ 19.♖xb1 ♙xa3 20.♙xa6! 0-0 21.♙d3± he has problems to save the game, because of the bad coordination of his pieces.

14.0-0 ♙e7 15.♘e2!

In case Black plays passively, White will place his pawns on c3 and b4, then he will play a3-a4 and thus he will create chronic weaknesses for Black on his queenside.

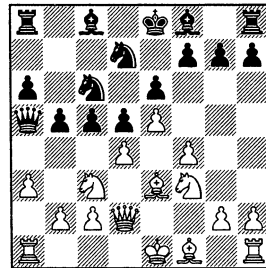
15...b4 16.a4±



White's prospects are slightly better. After 16...0-0, he can play 17.♘d4 ♘xd4 18.♙xd4±. In the game Kramnik – Bischoff, Brissa-

go 2004, Black continued with 16...♘a5 and White started immediate active actions on the kingside with: 17.f5!? exf5 18.♘d4 g6 19.e6! fx6 20.♟e2 ♘c6 (Black fails to fortify his position after 20...♟c8 21.♖ae1 ♘f7, because of: 22.♙xf5! gxf5 23.♘xf5+-) 21. ♘xe6 ♙xe6 22.♟xe6± and he obtained a clear advantage. Still, after 17...exf5, Black had better continue with 17...♘c4! and there might follow: 18.♟f4 ♘xb2 19.♟g4 ♙f8 20.♘d4±. Naturally, White would have some initiative for the sacrificed pawn, but he could have also tried the more modest move 17.b3± preventing Black's knight from coming to the c4-square, avoiding complications and delaying the pawn-break f4-f5 for sometime later in the future.

b) 9...♟a5



This active queen-move is with the idea to help Black occupy additional space on the queenside with the pawn-advance b5-b4. That line became popular lately, mostly because of the game Anand – Ivanchuk, Monaco 2005.

10.dxc5!?

That is White's logical reaction against Black's plan. The Indian grandmaster played in the above-mentioned game: 10. ♕e2 b4 11. ♗d1 c4 12. a4 c3∞ and he managed to win the game in a sharp fight. I think that White can try to claim the advantage after the move 10.dxc5 in a much simpler situation from the point of view of strategy.

Recently, there was another quite interesting move found for White – the prophylactic measure 10. ♖a2!?. His rook is protected now and in case of b5-b4, White can capture with his pawn. It is still too early for a definite evaluation of that line, moreover it has not been tested sufficiently in practice yet, but Black has failed until now to solve the problems in the opening after that: 10... ♖b6 (The straightforward attempt for Black – 10... b4? 11. axb4 ♖xb4, would not work, because of 12. ♗b5!±) 11. ♗e2 b4 (This move is consequent with Black's plan; nevertheless it leads to compromising of his queenside pawn-structure.) 12. axb4 ♗xb4 13. ♖a1 ♗c6 14. b3 ♕b7 (or 14... g6 15. ♗c3 cxd4 16. ♗xd4 ♗xd4 17. ♕xd4 ♖c6 18. ♕e2 ♕c5 19. 0-0 0-0 20. ♗a4 ♕xd4+ 21. ♖xd4 ♕b7 22. ♕f3 ♖ac8 23. c4± Timofeev – Wang Hao, Moscow 2006) 15. ♗c3 ♖c7 16. ♗a4 cxd4 17. ♗xd4 ♕b4 (It is also interesting for Black to try here: 17... g5!?, but after 18. g3± White's

prospects are better.) 18. c3 ♗xd4 19. ♕xd4 ♕e7 20. ♕d3 0-0 21. 0-0± Svidler – Komarov, Paris 2006 – Black has failed to obtain an acceptable game.

10... ♕xc5

Now, the move 10... b4 is not justified, because that pawn gets pinned and lost after: 11. ♗a2 ♗xc5 (Black's position is very difficult after: 11... bxa3 12. ♖xa5 ♗xa5 13. b4± while in case of 11... ♖b8, White's simplest line is: 12. ♗d4, having in mind that it would not work for Black to play: 12... bxa3? 13. ♗xc6 axb2 14. ♖xa5 bxa1 ♖+ 15. ♗f2 ♕e7 16. ♗xb8+– and White remains with an extra piece, since Black cannot capture that knight, because of the discovered check for White winning the queen.) 12. ♗d4 ♗e4 13. ♗xc6 ♖a4 14. ♖c1 ♖xc6 15. ♗xb4± Tseshkovsky – Kobylkin, Krasnodar 2003.

11. ♕xc5 ♗xc5 12. ♗d4 ♖b6

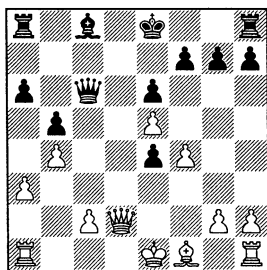
The endgame, which arises after: 12... ♗xd4 13. ♖xd4 ♗a4 14. b4 ♖b6 15. ♖xb6 ♗xb6 16. a4, is very difficult for Black. He cannot solve his problems with the line: 16... bxa4 17. ♗xa4 ♗xa4 18. ♖xa4 ♕b7 19. ♕d3 ♗e7 20. ♗d2± (Nogueiras), because of the vulnerability of his a6-pawn. I am going to illustrate the possible eventual developments with the following line: 20... d4 21. ♖ha1 ♕xg2 22. ♖xa6 ♖xa6 23. ♖xa6 ♖a8?! 24. ♖xa8 ♕xa8 25. ♕xh7! g6 26. ♗d3 ♗f8 27. ♗xd4 ♗g7 28. b5 ♗xh7 29. c4+– and White's pawns are unstoppable.

In case of 16...d4, White's knight occupies the powerful d6-outpost and after 17.♘e4, Black is faced with the difficult choice between: 17...bxa4 18.0-0-0± and 17...♘xa4 18.♘d6+ ♔e7 19.♞d1±. We will make the conclusion that White has excellent winning chances in similar endgames.

13.♘xc6 ♖xc6 14.b4 ♘e4

Black complies with the compromising of his pawn-structure, but even after 14...♘d7 15.♘e2 f6 16.♘d4 ♖b6 17.exf6 ♘xf6 18.♙e2 (the line 18.♙d3 0-0 19.c3 enables Black to sharpen the game with the help of: 19...e5! 20.fxe5 ♘g4∞) 18...0-0 19.♞e3± White preserves his positional edge.

15.♘xe4 dxe4



16.♞c1!

White plans to make a good use of his extra pawn on the queenside. If we have in mind that Black's king is bound to remain in the centre for some time to come, then the move c2-c4 with be rather unpleasant for Black, indeed.

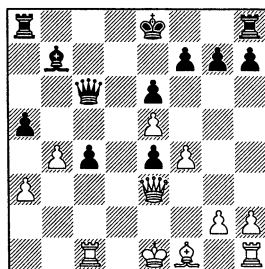
16...♙b7 17.c4 bxc4 18.♞e3!

This move covers the g1-a7

diagonal and it blocks Black's e4-pawn. It is not so good for White to capture immediately: 18.♞xc4 ♖b6 19.♙e2 ♞d8 20.♞c3 0-0= Dominguez – Nogueiras, Havana 2005 or 18.♙xc4 ♖b6= and Black equalizes easily.

18...a5

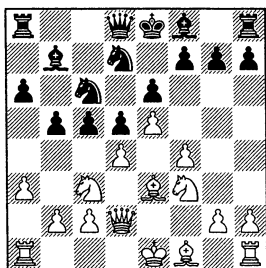
This natural move for Black becomes quite doubtful after the subsequent pawn-sacrifice by White, so it is worth for Black to consider here a line, which promises him only a slightly worse position in the variations: 18...♞d8 19.♙xc4 0-0 20.0-0 ♞d7. (It is too risky for Black to try: 20...♞a4?! 21.f5! exf5 22.e6 fxe6 23.♙xe6+ ♔h8 24.♞c7±) 21.♞c2 ♞a4 22.♞fc1 ♞d1 23.♞xd1 ♞xc2 24.♞c1± or 18...0-0 19.♙xc4 ♞d7 (Or 19...♞fd8?! 20.f5!±; about 19...♞ad8 – see 18...♞d8) 20.0-0 ♞fd8 21.♙e2± – and White keeps his pressure in both cases.



19.b5! This resource helps White maintain his initiative; otherwise it might disappear after a while. **19...♞xb5** (In case of: 19...♞d7 20.♙xc4 ♙d5 21.b6 ♞c8, but here not: 22.♙xd5 ♞xc1+ 23.♞xc1

♚xd5! 24. ♚c8 ♜e7 25. ♚xh8 e3!= which leads only to a draw, but: 22. ♙a6! ♜xc1+ 23. ♚xc1 0–0 24. 0–0± and White's powerful passed pawn provides him with a clear advantage.) 20. ♙xc4 ♚d7 (or 20... ♚c6 21.0–0 0–0 22.f5→ and White has a strong attack) 21. ♚c5! ♙c6 (That is Black's only acceptable defence against 22. ♙b5.) 22.0–0 ♚a7 (It is too problematic for Black if he plays: 22... ♙a4 23. ♜fe1±) 23. ♚xa7 ♜xa7 24. ♙xe6 ♜e6 25. ♜xc6 ♜e7 26. ♜e1± (We have used here GM Nogueiras's comments) White regains his pawn and he preserves good winning chances in this four rooks endgame.

c) 9... ♙b7



That is a quite popular line for Black. He adheres to a flexible strategy, without clarifying the situation in the centre for the time being and he simply completes the development of his queenside.

10. ♜e2!?

This move is played not only with the idea to protect additionally the important d4-square, but

White also plans to redeploy this knight to the kingside along the route e2-g3-h5. The move 10. ♜e2 has been played much less in practice than 10. ♙d3, but it is not weaker at all and it poses serious problems to Black.

10... ♜c8

The hasty move 10...c4, enables White to play 11.g4 and to begin immediate attacking actions, for example: 11...h5 12.gxh5 ♜xh5 13. ♜g3 ♜h8 14.f5 exf5 15. ♜xf5 g6 16. ♜g3 ♚c7 17. ♜g5± Neelotpal – Hariharan, Calicut 2003.

It is not enough for Black to equalize with: 10...b4 11.cxb4 ♜xb4 12. ♜g3 ♚b6, Mareco – Cubas, Buenos Aires 2004, 13. ♙e2 ♜c6 14.0–0 cxd4 15. ♜xd4 ♜xd4 16. ♙xd4 ♙c5 17.c3±.

11. ♜g3 ♙e7

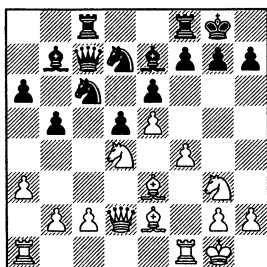
In case of 11... ♚b6, White can choose between 12. ♙e2± and 12.c3 ♜a5 13. ♚c2±.

12. ♙e2 0–0

In the game S.Solovjov – Vunder, St.Petersburg 2005, there followed: 12...g6?! 13.0–0 0–0 14. c3!± and White had better chances. Now, after 14... ♜a5, he can play 15. ♚c2, after which it is too risky for Black to follow with: 15...b4?! 16.axb4 cxb4 17.f5! gxf5 18. ♜xf5 exf5 19. ♚xf5 ♜c6 20. ♜xa5! ♚xa5 21. ♙d3 ♜g6 22. ♚xd7+– because White ends up in a winning position.

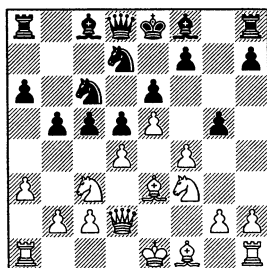
13.0–0 cxd4 14. ♜xd4 ♚c7

Black is only slightly worse after: 14... ♜xd4 15. ♙xd4 ♙c5 16.c3±



15.c3 ♖c5 16.♗ab1 ♜fd8 17. ♞e1± (S.Solovjov). White enjoys a long-lasting initiative. He controls the situation in the centre of the board and he plans to increase the pressure on the kingside. His forthcoming attacking resources are: the advance f4-f5 and the maneuver of the knight to the h5-square.

d) 9...g5!?



That is a quite new idea introduced by GM Morozevich. Black undermines White's centre from the other side of the board and he is prepared to sacrifice a pawn while doing that. For example after: 10.♜xg5?! cxd4 11.♙xd4 ♜xd4 12.♞xd4 ♞c5 13.♞d2 ♞b6± Black was dominant over the dark squares and he seized the

initiative in the game A.Ivanov – Lintchevski, St.Petersburg 2005. White must play very precisely in this line in order to obtain the advantage, because the arising positions are quite non-standard and there are plenty of tactical nuances in them.

10.fxg5

This is White's most principled decision. Among his other possibilities I would mention: 10.dxc5 gxf4 11.♙xf4 ♙xc5. In the game Frolyanov – Volkov, Sochi 2005, White chose 12.a4 and after 12...♞a5= he failed to obtain any advantage out of the opening. It deserves attention for White to play 12.♙d3!? in order to be able to counter 12...♞c7, with 13.0-0-0! – and here White's position is absolutely superior after: 13...♜dxe5? 14.♜xe5 ♜xe5 15.♜xd5!+- as well as after: 13...b4?! 14.♜xd5! exd5 15.e6±. These lines demonstrate the possibilities of both sides in this position, but Black does not need to play so bad and his defence can easily be improved. Instead of 12...♞c7, it is much more accurate for him to play 12...♞a5!∞ and the game remains quite complicated.

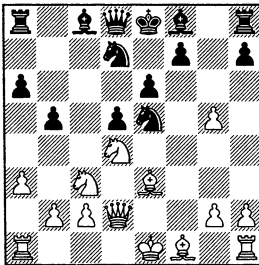
10...cxd4 11.♜xd4!?

White ignores the material for a while. He sacrifices his central pawn in order to open the dark squared diagonals. This is quite advantageous for him, because he can organize an attack against the unsafe black king. In

the first game, in which this move was played – Anand – Morozevich, Monaco 2005, White chose the solid line: 11. ♕xd4 ♕g7 12. 0–0–0 0–0∞ however the extra pawn did not matter so much in that position and the arising fight was characterized by mutual attacks on opposite sides of the board.

11... ♗xc5

The other possible capture seems to be illogical, because White is trying to activate his dark square bishop. After 11... ♗dx5, White can follow with: 12. ♕e2 ♕g7 13.0–0!? 0–0 14. ♗xc6 ♗xc6 15. ♕c5± and his position is clearly superior.

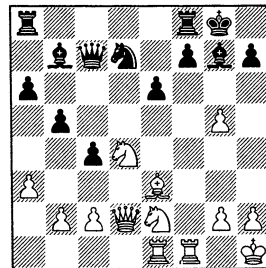


12. ♗f3!?

That is a new idea. White redeploys his pieces – now the d4-square becomes available to the bishop, which can later be exchanged for its counterpart and that is going to weaken additionally the dark squares in Black’s camp. Let us see how the game might develop after some other moves, which have been tested in practice.

After: 12. ♕e2 ♕b7 13. ♕h5 ♖e7 14.0–0 ♕g7 15. ♗ce2 0–0 16.b3±, White had the advantage in the game Zhang Zhong – Roiz, Istanbul 2005, but it was stronger for Black to have defended with: 12... ♕g7! 13.0–0 0–0∞ and the position would have been rather unclear.

It is more interesting for White to try 12. ♗d3!? as it was played in the game Motylev – Volkov, Moscow 2005. White completes the development of his kingside, he castles short and he leaves the e2-square free for the subsequent maneuver of the knight – via the e2 and g3-squares to h5. After the logical moves: 12... ♕b7 13.0–0 ♖c7 14. ♗h1 ♕g7 15. ♖ae1 0–0, White played 16. ♗ce2! allowing: 16... ♗c4 17. ♕xc4 dxc4.



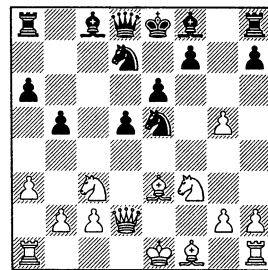
It looks like Black’s bishop pair guarantees him a comfortable game, but we should not underestimate his weaknesses on the kingside. In fact, Black’s king is only defended by the bishop and after its exchange White’s attack might soon become crushing. This is what White’s plan is based on. The

outcome of this game was decided later due to a terrible blunder by Black: 18. ♖g3 c3 19. bxc3 ♖ac8 20. ♘h5 ♗xc3? 21. ♗xc3 ♖xc3 22. ♘xg7 ♖xe3 (It becomes clear now that in case of 22... ♘xg7, White has: 23. ♘xe6! fxe6 24. ♗d4+- and he wins.) 23. ♖xe3 ♘xg7 24. ♖c3+- and White pressed his material advantage home. It was better for Black to defend with 20... ♗e5, but White can maintain his initiative even then with 21. ♘e2! (fortifying his c3-pawn and freeing the square for the bishop) 21... ♗c6 (or 21... ♗xh2? 22. ♗xd7!+-; 21... ♖fd8 22. ♗d4 ♗xh2?! 23. g6! hxg6 24. ♗h6 ♗e5 25. ♘ef4+-; 21... ♖cd8 22. ♗f4±) 22. ♖f2 ♗d5 23. ♗d4±. White has defended the g2-square and he has prepared the favourable exchange of the dark squared bishops.

Naturally, Black was not forced to play 18...c3. We must analyze the possibility: 18... ♗e5 19. ♘h5. Here are the possible developments: 19... ♗xh2 20. ♘f3 ♗xf3 21. ♖xf3 ♗e5 22. ♗d4± or 19... ♖ad8 20. ♗f4 ♗xf4 21. ♖xf4 e5 (If 21... ♗d6, then 22. ♗c3! e5 23. ♘f5 ♗e6 24. ♗h3+- while in case of 21... ♗c5, White has the powerful resource 22. ♖g4! threatening 23. ♘f6+ and 23. ♗c3 – Black can solve his problems neither with: 22... ♘h8 23. g6! fxg6 24. ♘f4± nor with: 22... e5 23. ♘f5±) 22. ♖h4! (After 22. ♗c3, White achieves only a draw in the line: 22... exd4 23. ♗xd4 f6 24. ♖e7 ♖f7 25. ♖g4

♘f8 26. gxf6 ♖xf6=) 22... ♗d6 (White's knight is untouchable: 22... exd4?? 23. ♘f6+ and White checkmates.) 23. ♘g7! This knight will be deployed to the f5-square and White controls the e8-square in the process. Black's king-shelter has been compromised by the absence of the g-pawn and he should worry about a possible dangerous attack. For example, he loses again if he captures White's knight: 23... exd4? 24. ♘f5 ♗b6 25. ♘e7+ ♘h8 (25... ♘g7 26. g6!) 26. ♖h6 ♗c5 27. ♗f4+-; while after 23... ♘b6, White wins spectacularly: 24. ♘g5 ♗c7 25. ♖xh7!! ♘xh7 26. g6 fxg6 27. ♗h6 ♘g8 28. ♗xg6+ ♘h8 29. ♖e3 ♗h7 30. ♖h3+-.

All these lines cannot exhaust all the possibilities, nevertheless they illustrate quite convincingly how promising White's plan, beginning with the move 12. ♗d3!? is.



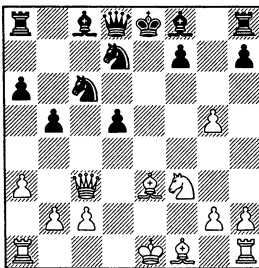
12... ♗g7

The dangers, that Black's king, stranded in the centre, can be subjected to, can be seen in the following lines: 12... ♘g4? 13. ♗d4 e5 14. ♘xd5! exd4 15. ♗xd4+- or

12...h6? (hoping for 13.gxh6?! ♟xf3+ 14.gxf3 ♚h4+) 13.0-0-0 hxg5 14.♟xd5! ♟xf3 15.gxf3 exd5 16.♚xd5 ♚b8 17.♙h3! ♚xh3 18.♚he1 ♙e7 19.♙c5+- and White's threats are decisive.

Black lags in development, so it is too premature for him to play: 12...b4? 13.axb4 ♙xb4 14.♟xe5 ♟xe5 15.♙d4 ♙d6 16.♙b5+ ♙d7 (It is not any better for Black to follow with: 16...♟f8 17.♟e4! ♚g8 18.♟f6+-) 17.♙xd7+ ♟xd7 (This is forced, since after 17...♚xd7, White wins with: 18.♚e2 ♚c7 19.♟b5!+-) 18.0-0+- and Black's position is pathetic.

Following 12...♟c6, White has at his disposal a promising positional sacrifice: 13.♟xd5! exd5 14.♚c3.



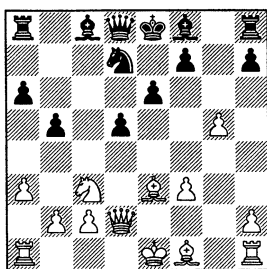
He exploits the defenselessness of his opponent's pieces and he destroys the pawn-shelter of his king. Naturally, common sense is not enough in this extremely sharp position, so we have to analyze some concrete variations. It would not work for Black to play: 14...♟ce5? 15.♟xe5 ♙g7, because of 16.♚c6±. If 14...♚a5,

then 15.b4 and Black has no satisfactory continuation, for example: 15...♟xb4 16.♟f2! ♚g8 17.axb4 ♚xb4 18.♚c6 ♚b8 19.♚e1+-; 15...♚xb4 16.axb4 ♙xb4 17.♙d2 ♙xc3 18.♙xc3 0-0 19.♙xb5±; 15...♙xb4 16.axb4 ♚xb4 17.♙d2 ♚e4+ (about 17...♚xc3 18.♙xc3 - see 15...♚xb4) 18.♟f2 d4 19.♚a3 b4 20.♙xb4 ♚e3+ (or 20...♚xc2+ 21.♙d2±) 21.♟g3 ♚xa3 (or 21...♟f6 22.♚xe3+ dxe3 23.♙b5! ♟e4+ 24.♟f4+-) 22.♙xa3±; 15...♚xa3 16.♚xa3 ♙xb4 17.♚xb4 ♟xb4 18.♟d4 ♙b7 19.♙d2 ♟c6 20.♚e3+ ♟d8 (20...♟f8 21.♟xc6 ♙xc6 22.♙b4+ ♟g8 23.♙c3+- or 22...♟g7 23.♙c3+f6 24.exf6+ ♟xf6 25.♚e7+ ♟g6 26.♙d3+-) 21.♟xc6+ ♙xc6 22.♙a5+ ♟c8 23.♙d3±.

We have to see now Black's most principled line: 14...♚e7 15.0-0-0. White's attack, for the sacrificed piece, is extremely powerful. Here are some of the possible developments: 15...♟ce5 16.♙f4 ♙g7 17.♟xe5 ♟xe5 (or 17...♙xe5 18.♙xe5 ♟xe5 19.♚e1 d4 20.♚g3+-; 17...0-0 18.♟c6 ♚e6 19.♟d4+-) 18.♙xe5 ♚xg5+ 19.♟b1±; 15...♚g8 16.♚xc6 ♚xe3+ 17.♟b1 ♚a7 18.♚xd5→; 15...b4!? 16.♚xc6 ♚xe3+ 17.♟b1 ♚a7 18.♚xd5 ♙e7 19.♚e1 bxa3 (19...♙b7? 20.♚d6+-) 20.♙c4 ♚f8 21.♚d6 ♟b8 (or 21...♟c5? 22.♚xe7+! ♚xe7 23.♚c6+-; 21...♟b6? 22.♚xe7+! ♚xe7 23.♚xb6+-) 22.♚xa3 ♙e6 23.♚a2→. As you might have noticed - Black's defence was extremely difficult in all these lines.

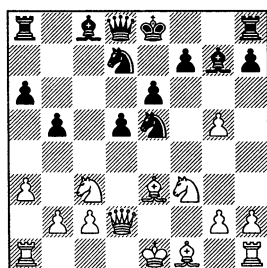
It is not logical for Black to play: 12...♖b7 13.♗xe5 ♗xe5 14. 0-0-0± since his basic counter-play along the b-file, connected with ♖b8 and b4, will be quite difficult to accomplish.

The main drawback of the exchange 12...♗xf3+ 13.gxf3, is that White improves his pawn-structure and then he fixes his opponent's pawns on the light squares.



Later, there might follow: 13...♗g7 (13...♖b7 14.0-0-0±) 14.f4 ♗b7 (After 14...h6, White has 15.♗d4!±.) 15.0-0-0. There may arise some interesting complications after 15...d4!? (It is more prudent for Black to play here: 15...0-0 16.♗d4 ♗xd4 17.♞xd4 ♞b6 18.♞g1 ♞xd4 19.♞xd4± but even then White maintains a slight edge in that endgame.), but they all end up in favour of White: 16.♗xd4 e5 17.♗xe5 ♗xe5 18.♞e2 ♞e7 19.♗g2 ♗c6 (or 19...♗f3 20.♞xe7+ ♗xe7 21.♞hf1+-) 20.♞he1! (This is a very important nuance – after 20.♞xe7+ ♗xe7 21.♞he1+ ♗f8 22.♞d7, Black has the intermediate move 22...♗xc3! – and

White's rook on e1 is hanging, so he has to play: 23.bxc3 ♖b8 24. ♗d5 ♗d8 25.♗xb7 ♗xb7 26.♞ee7 ♗d8∞ – and it becomes obvious that White does not have sufficient resources, because Black has already managed to trade White's knight.) 20...♞xe2 21.♞xe2 ♗f8 22. ♞d7 ♖b8 (or 22...♗xc3 23.♞xb7+-) 23.♗d5 ♗d8 24.♗xb7 ♗xb7 (It is already too late for Black to play: 24...♗xc3 25.♗xa6 ♗g7 26.f5+-) 25.♞ee7 ♗d8 (or 25...♗d6 26.♗e4 ♗xe4 27.♞xf7+ ♗e8 28.♞de7+ ♗d8 29.♞xg7+-) 26.♗e4+- followed by 27.♗d6 and White's advantage is decisive.



13.♗xe5!

That move is more precise than the immediate 13.0-0-0, which Black can counter with 13...♗c6!∞.

13...♗xe5 14.0-0-0 0-0

After Black has castled short, White can quickly bring his knight into the actions, but Black's other moves do not promise him any easy defence either, for example: 14...♗c4 15.♗xc4 bxc4 16.♞hf1±; 14...♞e7 15.♞e1 b4 (15...0-0 16. ♗f4±) 16.axb4 ♞xb4 17.♗xd5!

♗xd2+ 18. ♘xd2 exd5 19. ♙d4±;
14... ♗c7 15. ♙f4 ♗c5 (15...0-0 16.
♙e1±) 16. ♘e4! ♗e7 17. ♘g3±.

15. ♘e4!

White exploits this tactical motive, so his knight is headed for the g3, or the f6-square, depending on his opponent's choice.

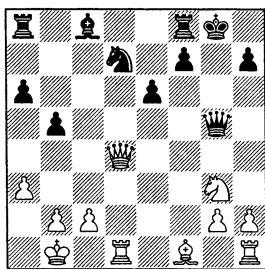
15... ♘d7

Black prevents the trade of the dark squared bishops, because it is the only defender of his king. His other possibilities enable White to organize a crushing attack: 15... ♘c4 16. ♙xc4 bxc4 17. ♙hf1±; 15... ♙b7 16. ♘f6+ ♙xf6 17. gxf6 ♗xf6 18. ♙d4 ♗g7 19. g4 ♙fc8 20. ♙e2±; 15... ♙d7 16. ♘f6+ ♙xf6 17. gxf6 ♗xf6 18. ♙d4 ♗g7 19. g4 ♙fc8 20. ♙e2 b4 21. axb4 ♙a4 22. ♙c3±. White's advantage in all these lines is undisputable.

16. ♘g3! d4

In case Black plays the calm move 18... ♙b7, White can follow with: 19. ♘h5 ♙h8 20. ♗f2 ♙c8 21. ♗h4± and he preserves very dangerous threats.

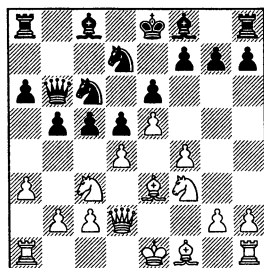
17. ♙xd4 ♙xd4 18. ♗xd4 ♗xg5+ 19. ♘b1±



White has a slight advantage

– his king is much safer and he has the smaller number of pawn-islands. After 19... ♙b7!? (Black is hoping for the complications after: 20. ♗xd7 ♙ad8 21. ♗xb7 ♙xd1+ 22. ♘a2 ♗c1∞) White can choose between 20. ♙d3± and 20. ♙xb5 axb5 21. ♗xd7±.

e) 9... ♗b6



That is Black's most popular and natural move. He increases the pressure against the central d4-outpost and that is quite in the spirit of the French Defence. This move however, has a certain drawback – Black's queen is headed deliberately into juxtaposition with White's dark squared bishop.

Let us see how White can exploit that circumstance:

10. ♘e2!

In this quite typical situation, White's standard looking move should make Black worry about the following eventual developments: after the exchange on c5, White's knight will occupy the d4-square and then he will have the positional threat b2-b4.

Black has numerous possibilities here and we will analyze them, but at first we must have a look at some very seldom played lines:

It is hardly the best decision for Black to play here: 10...b4?! 11.axb4 cxb4 12.g4 b3 13.c3 h5 (13...♗b7 14.f5 ♖b6 15.♘g3 ♘c4 16.♙xc4 dxc4 17.0-0± Luther – Braun, Altenkirchen 2005 and White has excellent attacking prospects). After: 14.gxh5 ♜xh5 15.♘g3 ♞h8, White played the hasty move 16.f5 and it enabled Black in the game Konguvel – Barua, New Delhi 2006, to obtain a good counterplay with 16...♖b4!∞. Instead, it was much better for White to have played the more accurate move – 16.♙f2!± and he would have maintained his advantage, thanks to his pawn-dominance in the centre and the possibilities for active actions on the kingside;

It is too slow for Black to try: 10...h6 (with the idea to prepare g7-g5 at some moment) – since White should not be in a hurry and he can play the useful move – 11.c3!?!±;

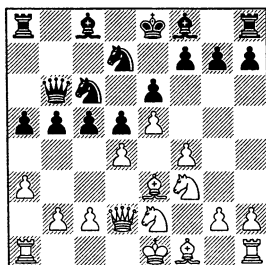
Black has played only very seldom the move 10...g6, which might prove to be a serious weakening in the future – after: 11.dxc5 ♙xc5 12.♘ed4 ♖c7 (12...♘xd4, Moser – Padurariu, Chisinau 2005, 13.♘xd4±), as it was played in the game Pikula – Jeremic, Topola 2004, White could have obtained

a positional advantage with the line: 13.♘xc6 ♖xc6 (In case of: 13...♙xe3 14.♗xe3 ♖xc6, White can play: 15.♘d4 ♖c7 16.♙d3± without being afraid of: 16...♘b6 17.b3 ♖c3+?! 18.♙f2±) 14.♙xc5 ♘xc5 15.♙d3±;

It is also possible for Black to play 10...♙e7, but after: 11.dxc5 ♙xc5 he loses a tempo (that is the drawback of the move 10...♙e7, in comparison to 10...♙b7 and we will deal with that later). There might follow: 12.♘ed4 ♘xd4 13.♘xd4 ♖c7 14.♙d3 g5!?! (Black's attempt to destroy White's centre leads only to the opening of the g-file.) 15.g3 ♙b7 16.0-0-0 0-0-0 17.♙b1 ♘b6, Karjakin – Kiriakov, Internet 2004, 18.♗a5! (White prevents the move 18...♘c4?, because of the line: 19.♖xc7+ ♙xc7 20.♘xe6!±) 18...gxf4 (or 18...♞dg8 19.b4±; 18...♘d7 19.♖xc7+ ♙xc7 20.fxg5±) 19.gxf4 ♞dg8 20. ♞hg1± and White has a clear advantage.

The lines for Black, which deserve a thorough analysis, are: **e1) 10...a5**, **e2) 10...♙b7** and **e3) 10...c4**.

e1) 10...a5



That is a very purposeful move for Black. He frees the a6-square for his bishop and he plans to prepare the advance b5-b4 at some opportune moment. Meanwhile, it is not so effective for White to play now: 11.dxc5 ♙xc5 12.♘ed4, because the move b2-b4 would not work for him and Black manages to play 12...0-0, followed by f7-f6 and he obtains a quite sufficient counterplay.

11.c3 ♙a6

It is still premature for Black to play: 11...b4?! 12.axb4 cxb4 13.f5 and White is clearly better after: 13...exf5 14.♘f4 bxc3 15.bxc3 ♘e7 16.c4± as well as after: 13...♙a6 14.♘f4± Skorchenko – Manelis, Voronezh 2005.

In case of: 11...a4 12.dxc5 ♙xc5 13.♘ed4 ♘a5 14.♚f2 ♘c4 15.♙d3, Black's b5-pawn becomes chronically weak. His active attempt: 15...f6 16.0-0 0-0 17.♚e2! fxe5 18.fxe5 (White is threatening 19.♙xh7+.) 18...h6 (It is too bad for Black to play: 18...♘dx5? 19.♘xe5 ♘xe5 20.♙xf8+ ♙xf8 21.♙f1+- because White's queen joins in the attack decisively.) 19.♙f2± (Efimenko) leads to a very difficult position for Black.

12.f5!

White must play aggressively right now, because after the calm line: 12.dxc5 ♙xc5 13.♘ed4, Black can answer with 13...b4= and he equalizes easily.

12...b4

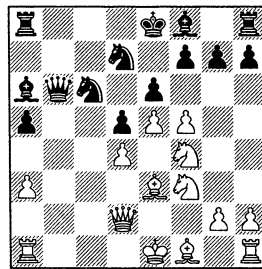
The line 12...exf5 13.♘f4 de-

stroys Black's pawn-chain and it causes new weaknesses. After: 13...cxd4 14.cxd4 ♘e7 15.♙d3 b4 (or 15...h6 16.h4±) 16.axb4 ♙xd3 17.♘xd3 a4 18.0-0± White has a clear advantage. It is insufficient for Black to try to defend his d5-pawn indirectly with: 13...♚b7 14.♙d3! (Black would be quite happy after the lines: 14.♘xd5 ♘xd4! 15.cxd4 ♚xd5∞ or 14.e6 ♘f6∞) 14...cxd4 15.cxd4 g6 16.0-0 ♘b6 17.♚e2 b4 18.♙b5± (Efimenko) – because his king will remain stranded in the centre and that would be a permanent cause for worries for Black.

13.♘f4!

In the game Efimenko – Kobylykin, Kharkiv 2004, there followed: 13.fxe6 fxe6 14.♘f4 bxc3 15.bxc3 cxd4 16.cxd4± which was again in favour of White, but Black's defence would have been even harder without the exchange of pawns.

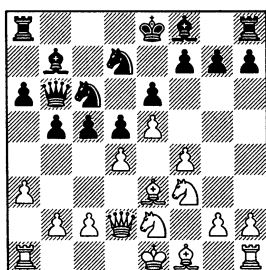
13...bxc3 14.bxc3 cxd4 15.cxd4±



Black's weak e6-pawn is the main factor, which provides White with a great advantage.

Black's defence will be rather difficult after: 15...♘d8 16.♙d3 ♙xd3 17.♖xd3 ♗a6 18.♕e2± (Efimenko) or 15...♙xf1 16.♞xf1 ♘d8 17.♕f2±.

e2) 10...♙b7



Black completes the development of his queenside and he avoids playing with his dark squared bishop, so that he can eventually capture on c5 without wasting a tempo.

11.dxc5 ♙xc5 12.♘ed4 ♘xd4

It is not easy to recommend to Black the line: 12...b4 13.axb4 ♙xb4 14.c3 ♙c5 15.b4 ♘xd4 16.♘xd4 ♙xd4 17.♙xd4 ♗c7 18.♙d3 0-0 19.0-0± because White's advantage was quite stable in the game Frolyanov – Vunder, St Petersburg 2004.

13.♘xd4 ♗c7

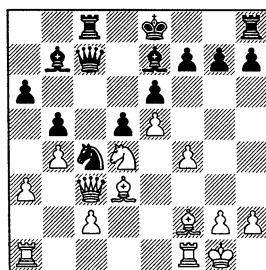
Black is preparing for White's possible pawn-advance b2-b4. It is not good for him to try instead: 13...0-0 14.b4 ♙xd4 15.♙xd4 ♗c7 16.♙d3± – White has a space advantage as well as the bishop pair.

14.b4

The weakening of the c4-square is almost immaterial in this position. It is much more important for White to exploit the strategy of restriction of the mobility of his opponent's pieces. Black's light squared bishop will hardly be able to enter the actions under the circumstances.

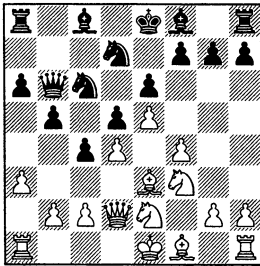
It might be also good for White to try here the calm line: 14.♙d3 ♙xd4 15.♙xd4 ♘c5 16.0-0 ♘e4 17.♗e3± but he should consider the possibility for Black to counter strike with: 14...g5! and he obtains excellent counterplay.

14...♙e7 15.♙d3 ♘b6 16.0-0 ♘c4 17.♗c3 ♗c8 18.♙f2±



White maintains a slight, but stable positional advantage. In the game Voitsekhovskiy – Eraschenkov, Voronezh 2003, Black tried to change the character of the fight with 18...g5?! but that only made matters worse after: 19.f5 ♘xe5 20.♗xc7 ♗xc7 21.♙g3 ♘xd3 22.♙xc7 ♙f6 23.♙b6±.

e3) 10...c4



Black closes the centre out-right. This move was played by Black in the famous game Kasparov – Radjabov, Linares 2003, in which he even managed to win the game at the end. White’s loss however, had nothing to do with the result of the opening battle. On the contrary, just because of this game, the line with 9.a3 became fashionable and it soon turned out to be one of the most popular lines in the Steinitz variation of the French Defence.

11.g4!

White shows immediately his great interest towards the king-side as his main field for actions. We already know that the move g2-g4 can be positionally justifiable only when the centre has been closed.

11...h5

This is an attempt by Black to make the accomplishment of White’s plan harder.

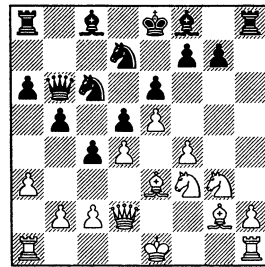
Black has tried also: 11...b4 12.axb4 ♙xb4 13.c3 ♙e7 14.f5± Mareco – Pereyra Arcija, Buenos

Aires 2004 – but White’s initiative develops unopposed.

12.gxh5 ♜xh5 13.♘g3 ♜h8 14.♙g2!?

This is a flexible decision.

In the abovementioned game after: 14.f5 exf5 15.♘xf5, Black had the tactical resource 15...♘f6!∞ Kasparov – Radjabov, Linares 2003, which enabled him to obtain serious counter-chances.



14...g6

In case of 14...b4, it is even stronger for White to follow with: 15.f5 exf5 16.♘xf5 ♘f6 (or 16...bxa3 17.bxa3 ♘f6 18.♘xg7+ ♙xg7 19.exf6 ♙xf6 20.0–0±) 17.♘xg7+ ♙xg7 18.exf6 ♙xf6 19.0–0 ♙e6 20.axb4 ♚xb4 21.c3 ♚b7 22.♙g5± – and White’s king is much safer than its counterpart in all these variations. Meanwhile, Black has plenty of pawn-weaknesses to worry about.

White’s advantage is considerable after: 14...♙b7 15.f5 exf5 16.♘xf5 g6 17.♘g3± – because Black has problems to defend his f7-square.

15.h4

White's most urgent task is to improve the placement of his pieces and to prepare h4-h5. Black can hardly do anything to stop that.

15...♘b7

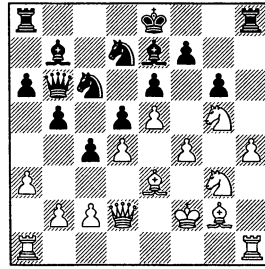
In case Black opts for 15...b4 anyway, then White can counter that with: 16.♔f2! ♙e7 (it is useless for Black to play: 16...c3 17. bxc3 bxa3 18.c4±; 16...bxa3 17.bxa3 ♖a5?! 18.♗xa5 ♜xa5 19.h5±) 17. h5 gxh5 18.♜xh5 ♞g8 (otherwise White follows with 19.♜g7+) 19. f5! exf5 20.♞f4 ♖b5 21.a4 ♗a5 22.b3±. White has deprived his opponent of any counterplay and he is ready to exploit Black's vulnerable weaknesses on the kingside.

16.♔f2!

This is the optimal square for

White's king. It is quite safe here and it does not stand in the way of the rest of his pieces.

16...♙e7 17.♜g5±



White's position is superior. He will prepare h4-h5 sooner or later and his opponent's f7-pawn will become even more vulnerable after that. Black's counterplay is evidently too slow, so he must concentrate entirely on purely defensive tasks.

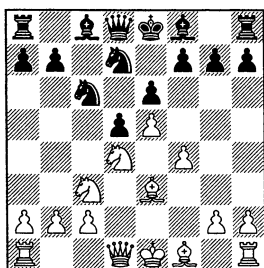
Conclusion

The variation with 7...a6 seems to be quite reliable for Black, because if he plays correctly – White can hardly obtain any serious advantage. Still, White's chances are somewhat better, mostly because of his space advantage and accordingly greater activity of pieces. White must increase patiently his positional pluses and he must exploit actively the prophylactic approach. His strategy should be aimed at the restriction of Black's possibilities and it usually begins with the move 9.a3! and continues in the middle game fight.

Black's decision on move nine is extremely important for the subsequent character of the game. The sharpest lines and also sometimes wild complications arise after the principled move 9...g5! which has become very fashionable recently. This line is quite interesting mostly because Black would not like to comply with a passive defence, but he is trying to seize the initiative outright. I believe however, that we have found quite promising methods for White to maintain his advantage in that case too.

Chapter 14

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5
 ♘fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♙e3 cxd4
 8.♘xd4



Black is presently on a cross-roads. He has plenty of different possibilities and the character of the ensuing battle will be determined right now. I would like to mention immediately that there are numerous ways of transposing from one line to another in this system and this is going to make our task of systematizing the material harder. This is something our readers should comply with.

Now, let us go back to the essence of the problems. Black's main line and probably the most logical is the move 8...♙c5, which creates some pressure against White's central set-up. Then, Black can play here the key-move for that system – 8...a6, which he can hardly ever continue without

and also the possibility – 8...♗b6, which practically forces White to sacrifice his b2-pawn. It leads to a particularly sharp fight. All these variations will be dealt with in our subsequent chapters, while in this chapter I will analyze thoroughly some other possibilities for Black and these are: **a) 8...♙e7**, **b) 8...♙b4** and **c) 8...♘xd4**.

Now, in short about some other quite rare lines:

I will mention right now, that the overly optimistic move 8...g5, which was played in the game Kouwenhoven – Lomineishvili, Tapolca 1996, loses immediately, because of: 9.♘xe6 fxe6 10.♗h5+ ♘e7 11.f5 ♙g7 12.f6+ ♘xf6 13.♙c5 ♘d7 14.♗f7+;

The following line has practically no separate importance: 8...♗c7 9.♗d2 ♘xd4 (after 9...a6, the game transposes to variation 8...a6, which we will analyze later) 10.♙xd4 f6? Kriz – O.Wowk, Trenčin 1995, (in case of 10...a6, there is another transposition to the abovementioned line – 8...a6) 11.exf6 ♘xf6 12.♘b5 ♗e7 13.♙e5 ♘e4 14.♗e2 ♗b8 15.0–0–0+–;

8...g6 9.♖d2 ♘c5, Metz – Maier, Baden 1992. Here White can follow simply with 10.♗e2, transposing to the set-up, which is analyzed in the variation with 8...♘c5. Black's move g7-g6, in this case can hardly change anything important in the essence of the position;

8...♗a5 9.a3. This is the simplest reaction for White. Now, after the eventual exchange operation connected with the c5-square, Black must consider the possibility b2-b4 (White's queen has not been moved yet and the rook on a1 is protected!). 9...♘xd4 (about 9...a6 10.♖d2 – see 8...a6; 9...♗e7, Enders – Mikulic, Wattens 1998, 10.♗d3 and now: 10...♗b6 11.♘cb5±; 10...♘c5 11.0–0 ♘xd3 12.cxd3 0–0 13.b4 ♖c7 14.♗c1±; 10...0–0 11.♘b3 ♖d8 12.0–0 f5 13.♘e2. White is planning the advance of his c-pawn. 13...♘b6 14.♘ed4 ♗d7 15.♖e2±) 10.♗xd4 a6 11.♗d3 b5, Korchnoi – F. Blatny, Luhacovice 1969, 12.0–0±;

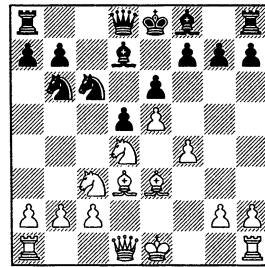
8...♘c5. This seemingly beautiful deployment of pieces has a serious drawback. The point is that after some natural developing moves – this black knight, in case it comes under attack, will have practically no good squares to retreat to. White will make a good use out of that, for sure. 9.♖d2 ♗d7 (It is almost the same if Black follows with: 9...a6 10.♗e2 ♗e7 11.0–0 0–0 12.a3, in case of: 9...♗e7 10.♗e2 0–0 11.0–0 f5?!

12.exf6 ♖xf6 13.♖ae1 ♗d7 14.♘xc6 ♗xc6 15.♗d4 ♖f8 16.♗g4, Black's position becomes extremely difficult, Sergeeva – Frick, Istanbul 2000.) 10.♗e2 ♗e7 11.0–0 0–0, Hasanov – Waleed, Dubai 2003, 12.a3. This move emphasizes the unstable placement of Black's knight on c5. 12...♗c8 (12...a6 13.b4 ♘xd4 14.♗xd4 ♘a4 15.♘d1 b5 16.♘e3 ♘b6 17.f5 exf5 18.♘xf5 ♗xf5 19.♖xf5± – and White has excellent attacking prospects on the kingside. It is very difficult for Black to diminish White's attacking potential by exchanging pieces and his defence will be extremely problematic.) 13.b4 ♘xd4 (The complications after: 13...♘a4 14.♘xe6 fxe6 15.♘xa4, are again in favour of White, for example: 15...♘e5 16.♘c5 b6 17.♘xe6 ♗xe6 18.fxe5 ♖c7 19.♗a6 ♖b8 20.♗d4 b5 21.♖xf8 ♗xf8 22.a4 bxa4 23.c3+–) 14.♗xd4 ♘a4 15.♘d1! (In case of: 15.♘xa4 ♗xa4 16.♗d3 f5, White's resources might not be sufficient to materialize his advantage. Generally speaking, and that concerns mostly positions in which White has some edge – he must study very carefully the situation before he decides to trade his last remaining knight. The reason is that after that he will only have linear pieces left on the board, so he must evaluate very precisely whether these pieces will enable him to prevail over his opponent's defence.) 15...♖c7 16.♗d3 f6 (Black's attempt to exchange

the light squared bishops with the help of the move 16...a6, at an opportune moment, cannot facilitate his defence either. 17. ♖e2. White maneuvers his pieces gradually to the kingside, while Black's forces are stuck on the queenside and he has no real counterplay. White's bishop on d4 is a very important piece in that script, because it not only controls some very essential squares but it also solidifies White's centre, moreover Black cannot exchange it easily at all. Naturally, Black's knight might enter the actions at some moment from the c3-square, after White's knight abandons the d1-square, but that might turn out to be too late then. The following variations illustrate Black's eventual problems, should that happen: 17...f5 18.g4 fxg4 19. ♖xg4 ♜f7 20. ♘e3 ♜fc8 21.f5 exf5 22. ♘xf5+-, or 18...g6 19.gxf5 gxf5 20. ♗h1 ♗h8 21. ♙g1 ♙g8 22. ♘e3 ♘c3 23. ♖h5 and Black should better resign.) 17. ♖e2 fxe5 18. ♙xe5 ♖b6+ (White will counter 18...♙d6 with 19. ♖h5.) 19. ♗h1 ♙e8 20. ♘e3 ♙f6 21.c4 ♘c3 22. ♙xc3 ♙xc3 23. ♜ac1 ♙d4 24.c5 ♖c7 25. ♘c2 ♙b2 26. ♖b1 ♙c3 27. ♖xe6+ ♙f7 28. ♖h3 g6 29. ♘e3±;

8...♘b6. This route of the black knight is a bit clearer – it is headed for the c4-square. This plan however, seems to be too time-consuming, because Black lags in development considerably. Meanwhile, Black's next moves are more or less predictable (that

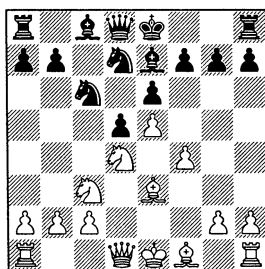
is if we ignore the fact that he does not have a clear plan...) and so White can already think about how he can emphasize the drawbacks of Black's scheme. We will see how he can do that in the following game. 9. ♙d3. That is the first important fine point. White is absolutely not obliged to develop his queen to the d2-square. Black cannot create now any problems for White in the centre with moves like ♙f8-c5, or ♖d8-b6, so he can play that natural and strong developing move. 9...♙d7



10. ♖e2! (The second important moment is not to let the opponent off the hook. It seems attractive for White to continue with: 10.0-0 and in case of: 10...♜c8 he has the spectacular strike – 11. ♘xe6! ♙xe6 12.f5 ♙d7 13.e6+-, ♙ut after: 10...♙c5 11. ♘cb5 0-0, the real fight will be just beginning... Now, Black's choice is considerably reduced.) 10...♜c8 11. ♘db5!. Suddenly it becomes clear that Black's main problems are connected with the vulnerability of the g1-a7 diagonal. 11...♘a5

(The other possibility for Black to try to activate his pieces is not effective at all – 11...♖b4 12.♗xa7 ♗xd3+ 13.cxd3 ♖a8 14.♗ab5 ♗xb5 15.♗xb5 ♗b4+ 16.♔f2±. In case of 11...a6, then White follows with 12.♟f2 ♗a8 13.♗d4±. It becomes clear now that White has accomplished an almost ideal deployment of pieces, while Black's position looks just pathetic.) 12. ♗xa7 ♖a8 13.♗ab5 (The position is not so clear if White continues with: 13.♗d4 ♖xa7 14.♟f2 ♗ac4 15.♗xc4 ♗xc4 16.♗xa7 b6.) 13...♗ac4 (13...♗bc4 14.♖b1) 14. ♗c1 ♗b4 15.0–0 ♗a4 16.♗xc4 dxc4 17.♟xc4 ♗c5+ 18.♔h1 ♗xc3 19.♗xc3 ♟b6 20.♗e4 ♗e7 (After 20...♗b5, White obtains for the exchange a whole avalanche of pawns on the kingside – 21.♟xc5 ♟xc5 22.♗xc5 ♗xf1 23.♗xb7+-) 21.♟e2+- T.Petrosian – Donner, Venezia 1967.

a) 8...♗e7



9.♟f3

I have already mentioned that if Black does not organize some immediate pressure against

White's centre (and in particular against the d4-square...) White's hands are free for action and he can choose different set-ups in the mobilization of his forces. Presently, his scheme of development resembles the Sicilian Defence. Now, Black can postpone the selection of his plan for a move and he can either evacuate his king – **a1) 9...0–0**, or he can start immediate operations in the centre with – **a2) 9...♗xd4**.

a1) 9...0–0 10.♗d3 ♗c5

The other possible plans for Black are:

10...♗xd4 11.♗xd4 f5 (Or 11... ♗c5 12.♗e2 ♗xd4 13.♗xd4 ♟b6 14.0–0–0 ♗c5 15.♟h5 ♗xd3+. Black would not like to compromise the pawn-shelter of his king, because that would create a wonderful target for White's eventual attack. 16.♖xd3 ♗d7 17.♖hd1 and White's rooks are perfectly ready to be redeployed to the kingside; 11...♗c5 12.0–0. Now, it is quite probable that there will be a transposition to the variations that we have analyzed in the lines with 10...♗c5.) 12.0–0–0 ♗c5 13.♗xc5 ♗xc5 14.g4 fxg4 15.♟xg4 ♗e3+ 16.♔b1 ♗xf4 17.♟h5 ♗h6 (It is too bad for Black to play here 17...g6 18.♗xg6. The move 17...h6 can hardly create any problems for White – 18.♗e2 ♟g5 19.♗xf4 ♖xf4 20.♟e8+ ♟f8 21.♗h7+ ♔xh7 22.♟xf8 ♟xe5 23.♖df1 b6 24.♖hg1 ♗b7 25.♟e7 ♗a6 26.♖e1+-) 18.

♙hg1 ♖h8 19.♙xh7! (In case of the seemingly attractive line: 19.♙xg7 ♖xg7 20.♙g1+ ♖h8 21.♙xh6 ♙f7 22.♘b5 ♙e7 23.♘d6 ♙g7!, Black defends successfully.) 19... ♖xh7 20.♙xg7+ ♖xg7 21.♙g1+ ♙g5 22.♙xg5+ ♙xg5 23.♙xg5+ ♖h7 24.♙h4+. White's queen is headed for h3, from where it will control the f1-square and attack simultaneously Black's e6-pawn. 24...♖g6 25.♙g3+ ♖h6 26.♙h3+ ♖g7 27.♘b5 ♙d7 28.♘c7 ♙ad8 29.♙g4+ ♖h7 30.a3±. Black now loses his e6-pawn and he will need a miracle to save that game;

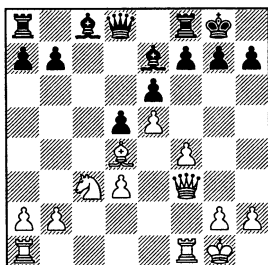
10...♙c5 11.♘c2 ♙b6 12. 0-0-0 ♘b4 13.♙h3 ♘xd3+ (Here, the two conflicting sides may exchange mutual weakening of the pawn-shelters of their kings after – 13...h6 14.a3 ♘xd3+ 15.♙xd3 ♙a6 16.g4, with the following eventual developments: 16...♙e7 17.g5 hxg5 18.♘f3 gxf4 19.♘xf4 and Black's king will be extremely vulnerable under the circumstances; 16...f6 17.g5 fxe6+ ♙xe6 19.♘xe6 ♘xe5 20.♘xc5 ♘xd3+ 21.♘xd3 ♙g4 22.♘d4+-; 16...b5 17.g5 hxg5 18.♙g1 b4 19. ♙xg5 bxa3 20.bxa3 ♙xa3+ 21. ♖d1 g6 22.♙d2 ♙e7 23.♙h5+-) 14.♙xd3 ♙a6 (Black should seriously consider here the retreat of some of his pieces in order to ensure the safety of his king – 14... ♙d8 15.♙f2 ♙e8 16.♙g3 ♙f8. Now, Black must defend very accurately as you can see in the following variation: 17.♘f3 ♘c5?! 18.♘g5

h6 19.♙h5 ♙d7 20.♙d1 and it suddenly becomes clear that Black is beyond salvation. After the move 19...hxg5, Black gets checkmated outright – 20.♙h3 f6 21.fxe6 fxe6 22.♙xc5 ♙xc5 23.♙h7+ ♖f7 24.♙f1+ ♖e7 25.♙xg7#) 15.♖b1 ♙e7 (This move enables Black's knight to occupy the e4-square; in case of the tentative move 15... b6, White's attack develops unopposed – 16.♙d2 ♙b7 17.♙h5 ♙fe8 18.♙h3 ♘f8 19.f5 exf5 20.♘xf5 d4 21.♘xg7 ♖xg7 22.♙g5+ ♘g6 23.♙h6+ ♖g8 24.♙g5+-, or 21... ♙d5 22.♘c1 ♖xg7 23.♙g5+ ♘g6 24.♙h6+ ♖g8 25.♙g5+-) 16.♙f2 ♘c5 17.♙a3 ♙c4 18.♙h4 ♙xh4 19.♙xh4 ♘e4. Black's centralized knight is powerful indeed, but that is his only achievement that he can boast about. Meanwhile, that is quite insufficient to parry the powerful onslaught of White's forces, which clearly outnumber those of his opponent. For example: 20.♙h3 h6 21.g4 f6 22.exf6 ♙xf6 23.g5 ♙g6 24.gxh6 gxh6 25.♙d8+ ♖h7 26.♙xh6+!! ♙xh6 27.♙e7+ ♖h8 28.♙g1 and White checkmates unavoidably.

11.0-0

I can recommend here for the players who dislike to part with their bishops without necessity – the move 11.♙e2!?, with similar ideas as in the variation 8...♘c5. I believe that the loss of a tempo here is almost immaterial.

11...♘xd3 12.cxd3 ♘xd4 13.♙xd4



There arose a typical position and we are going to evaluate it in a standard fashion. Black's set-up is solid, but rather cramped and his counterplay is practically non-existent. White's best chance is for him to gradually improve his build-up on the kingside with the idea to force Black to play f7-f5 at some moment. That will lead after e5xf6 to the appearance of some real weaknesses in Black's camp like the e6-pawn and the e5-square. White's bishop on d4 will become even more powerful then and in case Black manages to exchange it – its place will be occupied by the white knight and it will be deployed there no less effectively.

13...b6 14.♖ac1

It also deserves attention for White to try here the immediate move – 14.♗g3.

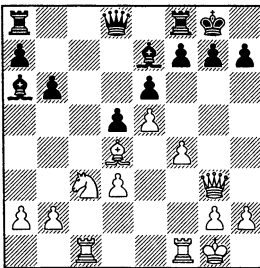
14...♗a6

Black can also try here the less ambitious move 14...♗d7, and in that case he no doubt makes the preparation of the pawn-break f4-f5 harder for White. On the other hand – there are some drawbacks of such set-up. White does not

need to worry about the defence of his d3-pawn anymore. In fact he must only avoid unnecessary complications and he should continue with the concentration of his forces on the kingside. The following variation illustrates the eventual possible developments: 15.♗e3. White takes into account that he may play f4-f5 earlier, but he risks losing his advantage outright, so he takes care about some prophylactic measures in order to restrict the eventual counterplay of his opponent. His queen is perfectly placed on the e3-square, in case Black tries to free himself with the help of the moves f7-f6, or f7-f5, as well as if there are some exchanging operations concerning the c5-square. 15...♖c8 16.♗f3 ♗c5 17.♞e2. This move seems to be at first sight a little bit too academic. (You can see however, White's tremendous attacking potential in the following variation (Unfortunately for White – it is not absolutely forced...): 17.♖cf1 and here after Black's straightforward reaction: 17...♗xd4 18.♗xd4 ♗c7 19.♗e3 ♗c5 20.d4 ♗c4 21.♖g3 b5 22.♗ff3 b4, the potential energy of White's f-pawn is transformed at first into kinetic energy... 23.f5 f6 24.fxe6 bxc3 25.b3 ♗c7 26.exf6 ♗xg3 27.f7+ ♞h8 28.hxg3 c2 29.exd7 c1♗+ 30.♗xc1 ♖xc1+ 31.♞h2 h6 ...and then into an excellent full point into the tournament scoreboard – 32.♖e3+-. Black cannot

save the day with: 22...g6 23.f5 exf5 24.b3, because he will soon be checkmated. Still, White must be carefully on the alert about the possibility after f7-f5, or f7-f6 – to be able after the exchange on f6 to redeploy his knight to the key-outpost – the d4-square. In the last variation after: 19...f6 20.exf6 ♟xf6 21.♖e2 ♗c2, he will be faced with quite unnecessary problems...) 17...♕xd4+ 18.♖xd4 ♟xc1 19.♗xc1 ♗c8 20.♗e3 ♗a6 21.a3 ♟c8 22.g4±. Black has no targets to attack on the queenside – White has reliably defended beforehand all possible squares for penetration, therefore Black must worry about the safety of his king instead.

15. ♗g3



15...♗d7

Black's other possibilities are:

15...♟c8. His rook occupies for a while the so-called crossing point of communications, as a result of which – his light squared bishop is deprived of the possibility to come back quickly to the c8-h3 diagonal and White makes a good use of that imme-

diately – 16.f5 exf5 (Or 16...♕h4?! 17.♗g4 ♗g5 18.♗h3 exf5 19.g3 ♕xd3 20.♟f4 – and as a result of the complications Black has lost his bishop, while his three pawns are hardly a sufficient compensation for it in this type of position.) 17.♟xf5 ♕h4 18.♗g4 ♕xd3 (The line 18...g6 19.e6! ♕xd3, leads only to a transposition of moves.) 19.e6 g6 20.exf7+ ♟xf7 21. ♟xf7 ♖xf7 22.♗f4+ ♕f5 23.♗h6 ♕f6 24.♗xh7+ ♖f8 25.♕e3 (After: 25. ♗h6+ ♖f7 26.♟d1 ♕xd4+ 27.♟xd4 ♗e7 28.♗h7+ ♖f8 29. ♗xe7+ ♖e7 30.♟xd5, White remains with an extra pawn, but it is quite difficult for him to materialize it into a full point. Therefore, he wishes to preserve the queens in order to exploit the vulnerable placement of Black's king.) 25...♕g5 26.♕xg5 ♗xg5 27.♟e1 ♗d2 28.♗h4 ♖g8 29.h3 ♟f8 30.♟e7 g5 31.♗g3±;

15...♕h4 – This is an attempt by Black to deflect White's queen from its active position. 16.♗h3 ♕e7 17.♟f3 ♕c5 (It is too bad for Black to play: 17...♟c8 18.♟g3 ♕c5 19.♕xc5 ♟xc5 20.♗h6 g6 21.♟h3+-, while after 17...f5, the defenselessness of his e6-pawn becomes a telling factor – 18.exf6 ♕xf6 19.♗xe6+ ♖h8 20.♕xf6±.) 18.♕xc5 bxc5 19.♟g3 ♖h8 20.♗g4 ♟g8 21.♖a4±. The commentators of the distant past (like 100 years ago...) used to say – Black has a difficult game... and you can see that in the following eventual variation: 21...c4 22.♟h3 h6 23.d4 ♗a5

24.♖c5 ♖xa2 25.f5 exf5 26.♟f4
♜gd8 27.♞a3 ♟xb2 28.♞xa6+–;

15...f5 16.exf6 ♜xf6 17.♞e2±.
White has achieved everything he wanted. Black has failed to preserve the closed type of the position and after the exchange of the dark squared bishops and the transfer of White's knight to the d4-square, White will gradually increase the pressure along the e-file. The superiority of his knight over Black's bishop in this pawn-structure is of a stable and long-term character.

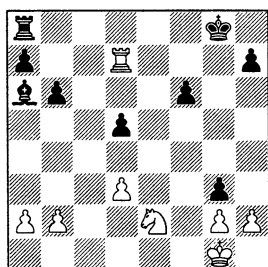
16.f5 f6 17.♞e2

In case of: 17.fxe6 ♟xe6 18.exf6 ♜xf6 19.♞xf6 ♞xf6 20.♞e1 ♟d6 21.♞xd5 ♟xg3 22.♞xf6+ gxf6 23.hxg3 ♜xd3 24.♞e7, White maintains a slight advantage, but it is hardly worth for him to test in practice whether the drawish tendencies of the endgames with opposite coloured bishops are really strong enough...

17...exf5 18.exf6 ♜xf6 19.♜xf6 ♞xf6 20.♞c7

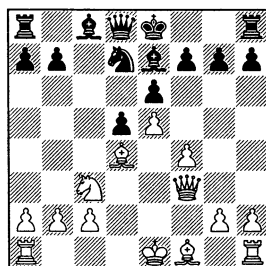
Finally, White's rook on c1 has taken the rostrum...

20...f4 21.♞xd7 fxg3 22.♞xf6 gxf6



23.♞f4! It is amazing, but now everything works for White and he maintains his advantage in the endgame. This is maybe because he was doing everything correctly until now...? **23...gxf6 24.♞xf6 ♜c8 25.♞d8+ ♞f7 26.♞xd5 ♜b7 27.♞d7+ ♞e6 28.♞xb7 ♞xd5 29.♞xh7±.** White's rook is very active now and he has an extra pawn, so he is well-prepared to begin the most pleasant phase of the game – the realization of his advantage into a full point.

a2) 9...♞xd4 10.♜xd4



10...♞b8

This is a quite purposeful move for Black. The key d4-square has been ignored for a while and Black wishes to exploit that. It is weaker for him to play: 10...f5 11.0–0–0 12.g4!± ♞c5 13.gxf5 ♞xf5 14.♜e3! ♟f8 15.♞g1 ♟f7 (or 15...♞xe5 16.♜d4 ♞g5 17.♜xc5!+–) 16.♜h3 b5 17.f5! b4 18.♞b5 ♜d7 (18...exf5 19.♞c7 ♞b8 20.♞xd5± Gipslis) 19.♞d4 ♟c8 20.♜h6 ♜f6 (20...♞h8 21.♜xg7+ ♞xg7 22.♞xg7 ♞xg7 23.f6+– Gipslis) 21.f6 g6

22.♙xf8 ♜xf8 23.♞h5+-. The rest of the game is quite understandable without any comments. 23...♞c8 24.♞g2 ♞c7 25.♜b1 a6 26.♞dg1 ♙c8 27.♜e2 ♜e4 28.♞xg6+ hxg6 29.♞xg6+ ♞g7 30.fxg7 ♞xg7 31.♞h6 1-0 Gofshstein - Kengis, USSR 1978.

If, for example: 10...a6 11.0-0-0 ♞c7, then White's queen reaches the desired square much faster than following the traditional route via d2 - 12.♞g3±.

11.0-0-0

It seems very attractive for White to play here: 11.♙d3 ♜c6 12.♙f2 ♜b4 13.0-0-0 and he maintains good chances to develop a powerful initiative. Unfortunately for him the position is not so clear after: 12...0-0 13.a3 g6! (In case of 13...f6 14.♞h5, Black loses after: 14...g6 15.♙xg6 hxg6 16.♞xg6+ ♜h8 17.0-0-0 Δ♞d3-h3+-, while White can counter 14..f5 with the powerful argument: 15.g4! g6 15.♞h6 fxg4? 16.♙xg6 hxg6 17.♞xg6+ ♜h8 18.♞g1+-) 14.♞g3 (or 14.0-0 f6 15.exf6 ♙xf6 16.♙c5 ♞f7 17.♞ad1 b6 18.♙e3 ♞f8∞) 14..f5 and the game becomes extremely complicated. White must consider the possibility g6-g5 for Black on the kingside, eventually after the preparation - ♜g8-h8 and ♞f8-g8, while on the queenside Black can try a7-a6 and b7-b5, particularly if White castles long.

11...♜c6 12.f5

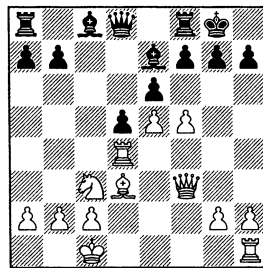
The game becomes very tactical now. The exchange on d4 is

not so favourable for White from the point of view of strategy, but he wishes to seize the initiative irrelevant of the price.

12...♜xd4

The juxtaposition of the rook and the queen is very unpleasant for Black in case of: 12...exf5 13.♜xd5 0-0 14.♙c3±.

13.♞xd4 0-0 14.♙d3



14...♙c5

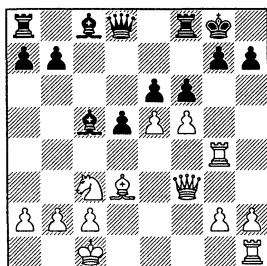
White's attack is very powerful after: 14...♙g5+ 15.♜b1 ♞b6 16.♞g4 f6 (It is equally hopeless for Black to play here: 16...♞e3 17.f6 g6 18.h4 ♞xf3 19.gxf3 ♙e3 20.h5 g5 21.h6! ♙d7 22.♞e1 ♙d2 23.♞eg1±) 17.♞xg5 fxg5 18.f6 ♞c7 19.♞f1! gxf6 20.exf6 ♜h8 (or 20...a6 21.♞h5 ♞f7 22.♞xg5 ♜h8 23.♞e5+-) 21.♞e3 ♞f7 (Black's situation is critical after his other possibilities as well - 21...♙d7 22.f7+-, or 21...♞f7 22.♜xd5 ♞xh2 23.♜e7 ♞h6 24.♞e4 ♙d7 25.♞xb7 ♞d8 26.♞c7+-) 22.♜b5 ♙d7 23.♜d6 ♞g8 24.♞e5 ♞ad8 25.f7+ ♞g7 26.♞f6 and Black is completely paralyzed.

Instead, his more tenacious defence is: 14...♞b6 15.♞f4 exf5

(or 15...f6 16.fxe6 ♖xe6 17.♗xd5 ♗xd5 18.♝xd5 fxe5 19.♞e4 ♞h6+ 20.♔b1±) 16.♗xd5 ♗g5 17.♗xb6 ♗xf4+ 18.♝xf4 axb6 19.a3 ♞a5 20.♞e1 ♞e8 21.♗xf5 ♗xf5 22.♝xf5 f6 23.♞e4 fxe5 24.c4±. Black's pawns are weak and his king cannot enter the actions anytime soon. His attempt to organize some counterplay backfires after – 24...♞a4 25.♔d2 b5 26.♝fxe5 ♝xe5 27.♝xe5 bxc4 28.♞b5 and White wins.

15.♞g4 f6

In case of: 15...exf5 16.♗xf5 d4 17.♗e4 ♗e7, the arising endgame is very difficult for Black – 18.♗xc8 ♝xc8 19.♗f6+ ♔h8 20.♞h4 ♗xf6 21.exf6 ♞xf6 22.♞xf6 gxf6 23.♝xd4±.



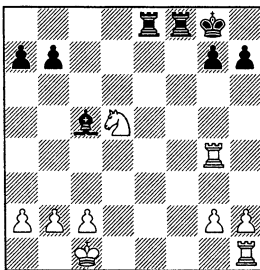
16.fxe6

Our readers might get a bit bored while playing through the following variations, but White has at his disposal another possibility here. It adheres strictly to the logical thread, begun with the move 12.f5 – White should not lose the initiative even for a second. We know – this is extremely important ever since we started studying that position. Here, eve-

rything comes at the end to a king and rook endgame with a slight advantage for White, but I believe that you might find that not less exciting... 16.♞g3!? ♝f7 (or 16...♞c7 17.fxe6 ♗xe6 18.exf6 ♞xg3 19.♗xh7+!! ♔xh7? 20.hxg3+ ♔g8 21.♝xg7#; 19...♔f7 20.♝xg3±) 17.♝f1 ♗e7 (White is threatening: 18.fxe6 ♗xe6 19.exf6. If, for example 17...♞e7, then White has the following beautiful variation at his disposal: 18.fxe6 ♗xe6 19.♞h4 fxe5 20.♗xh7+ ♔f8 21.♝xf7+ ♔xf7 22.♞h5! ♞f6 23.♗xd5! ♞f1+ 24.♔d2 ♞d8 25.♞g6+ ♔f8 26.♞xe6+–) 18.♝f3! exf5 (or 18...fxe5 19.fxe6 ♗xe6 20.♗xh7+ ♔h8 21.♝xf7 ♗xf7 22.♗g6 ♗xg6 23.♝xg6±; 18...d4 19.♗b5 exf5 20.♗xf5± ♗xf5 21.♝xf5 ♞d5 22.♝xg7+ ♝xg7 23.♞xg7+ ♔xg7 24.exf6+ ♗xf6 25.♝xd5+–) 19.♗xf5 ♗xf5 (19...♞b6 20.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 21.♞h4+ ♔g8 22.♞h3+–) 20.♝xf5 ♞d7 (20...♞b6 21.♗xd5 ♞g1+ 22.♔d2 g6 23.exf6 ♗f8 24.♞h5 ♔h8 25.♝xg6 ♞d4+ 26.♞d3 ♞xb2 27.♞c3 ♞b1 28.♗e7 ♞d8+ 29.♔e3! ♞c1+ 30.♔e4! White is totally dominant now! 30...h6 31.♔f5! ♞e8 32.♔e6+–) 21.♞f3 ♞af8 22.♗xd5 fxe5 23.♗xe7+ ♞xe7 24.♞d5 ♞d7 25.♞xd7 ♝xd7 26.♝xf8+ ♔xf8 27.♞e4 ♞e7 (27...♞d5 28.♞c4 ♔e7 29.♞c7+ ♞d7 30.♝xd7+ ♔xd7 31.♔d2 ♔e6 32.♔d3 ♔f5 33.c4 ♔f4 34.b4 h5 35.c5 e4+ 36.♔d4 h4 37.h3 a6 38.a4+–. It seems better for Black to sacrifice a pawn here and thus he can create

more technical problems for White – 29...♟f6 30.♙b7 e4 31.♙b3 ♟e5 32.g3 ♟d7 33.♙e3 ♟f7 34.♟d2 ♟d4 35.♟e2 ♟c7 36.c3+ ♟d5 37.g4±) 28.♙h4! (This move forces Black to weaken his g6-square.) 28...h6 (It is worse for Black to play here 28...g6 29.♟d2 and he cannot follow with the move 29...♟f7. Or 28...♟g8 29.♟d2 and Black still has the problem with his h7-pawn to worry about.) 29.♟d2 ♟f7 (or 29...♟e8 30.♙g4! ♟d7?! 31.♙g6±) 30.♙c4 ♟e6 31.♙c8 ♟d7 32.♙b8. White has forced his opponent to defend his pawns along the seventh rank with his pieces, so he gradually centralizes his king. 32...♟c7 33.♙g8 ♟d6 34.♟e3 ♟d5 35.♟d8+ ♟e6 36.c4 ♟f7 37.♙a8 a6 38.♙b8 ♟c7 39.b3 ♟f7 40.g3 ♟d6 41.♟e4±.

16...♙xe6 17.♙f5 ♙xf5 18.♟xf5 fxe5 19.♟xe5 ♟d7 20.♟xd5+ ♟xd5 21.♟xd5 ♙ae8

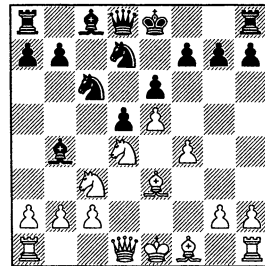


22.♙c4!

White's rook controls the c2-square as well as the fourth rank from that square and that is extremely important as you are going to be convinced later. On top

of that – the rook is placed there quite reliably and so White can hope to gradually neutralize the activity of Black's pieces. **22...♙d6** (The move 22...b6 provides some safety for the bishop on c5 only temporarily – 23.g4 ♟f2 24.h4 ♙e2 25.h5 ♟f7 26.♟d1 ♟e6 27.b4±) **23.g4 ♙e2 24.h4 ♟ff2 25.h5 ♟f7 26.♟d1 ♟e6 27.a4 ♙g2 28.♟b1 ♙e5 29.a5±**. White has practically consolidated his position completely and he has good chances to press the advantage of an extra pawn home.

b) 8...♙b4



9.a3

It is the best for White here to force Black to clarify his intentions immediately. His dark squared bishop is a tremendously important piece in this variation and its exchange on c3 should be favourable for White. Black then will have considerably fewer chances to organize any effective counterplay and his defence on the king-side might become problematic in some variations. The weakening of the d6-square seems to be just

academic at that moment, but it may become a telling factor in the future. On the other hand – the deformation of White’s pawn-structure can be corrected by him later with a move like c3-c4.

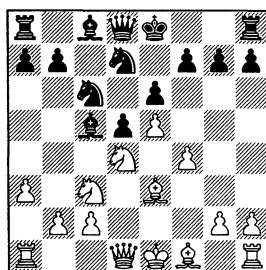
I believe that in this position we have to analyze thoroughly the moves **b1) 9...♗c5!? and b2) 9...♗xc3+**. The other possibilities for Black are not so critical:

About 9...♗e7, Lipka – Biro, Slovakia 1998, 10.♞f3 – see variation 8...♗e7 9.♞f3. The presence of White’s pawn on a3 should rather be in his favour.

9...♗a5. This is hardly the best diagonal for Black’s bishop. There are too many of his pieces on the queenside at the moment, while his kingside is considerably weakened. 10.♞d2 a6 11.♗d3 ♖xd4 (or 11...♗b6 12.♗ce2; 11...♗c5 12.b4 ♖xd3+ 13.cxd3 ♖xd4 14.♗xd4 ♗c7 15.0–0±) 12.♗xd4 ♖b8 (12...♗b6 13.♞e3±) 13.♞f2! ♖c6 14.♗c5 ♗c7 (Or 14...d4 15.b4 dxc3 16.bxa5 ♞xa5 17.0–0±; 14...b6 15.♗d6 d4 16.b4± Nunn.) 15.♗e2 (It looks like White does not need to force Black to fortify his kingside at the moment, as it happened in the game Nunn – Timman, Reykjavik 1988 – 15.♞g3 g6 16.0–0 b6 17.♗f2 f5 18.♗e2 0–0 19.♗d4. Black could have continued here with: 19...♖xd4 20.♗xd4 ♗d7± and White would have to try his best in order to prevail over Black’s defence; moreover it would have been highly unlikely that he would

have been successful at the end.) 15...b6 16.♗e3 0–0 17.♗d4 ♖xd4 18.♗xd4 a5 19.♞e2 and White’s advantage is overwhelming.

b1) 9...♗c5



This is a seldom played move, but it seems to me quite undeservedly so.

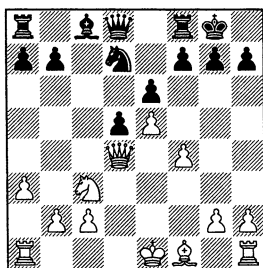
10.♞d2 0–0 11.♞f2!?

In case White plays analogously to the main line, for example: 11.0–0–0 a6, it looks like he has an extra tempo, because of the move a2-a3. Still, after Black’s standard plan with ♗xd4, followed by b7-b5, ♞a8-b8 and b5-b4, the conflict on the queenside arises much earlier than for example when White’s pawn had been on the a2-square. This circumstance makes us wonder whether this extra tempo is useful for White, particularly in case he castles long. So, there comes another question – are these maneuvers with the queen so purposeful at such an early stage of the game and can White play somehow simpler? After some analysis it turns out that every White’s move changes

something in the position and these details are not necessarily in his favour. For example after 11. ♗e2, Black suddenly has the resource: 11... ♘dxе5 12. ♘xc6 ♗xe3 13. ♘xd8 ♗xd2+ 14. ♘xd2 ♘c4+ 15. ♗xc4 dxc4 16. ♘xf7 ♗xf7 17. ♘e3 ♗d7 18. g3 ♗c6 19. ♗he1 ♗af8 20. ♘d4 g5, while the seemingly solid move 11.g3 closes the important communication artery like the third rank – see the notes to Black's next move.

11... ♗b6

The total exchanging operation on the d4-square does not provide Black with an easy defence at all – 11... ♘xd4 12. ♗xd4 ♘xd4 13. ♗xd4



and here Black can follow with several different lines – the immediate f7-f6, the preparatory transfer of the knight to the c6-square, followed by f7-f6, and also the move 13... ♗b6.

Let us investigate the first possibility – Black's attempt to form a mobile pawn mass in the centre with: 13... f6 14. exf6 ♗xf6 15. ♗xf6 gxf6. This is very bad for him, because he is very much backward

in development and his pieces fail to support his pawns effectively – 16.0–0–0 ♘b6 17.f5±. It is more reliable for Black to continue with: 15... ♘xf6 16. ♗d3 ♗d7 17.0–0 ♗ac8 18. ♗ae1±. Later, White can deploy his knight to the d4-square and he can be quite optimistic about the future.

His task is more complex after 13... ♘b8, but even then he has a relatively easy way to obtain an edge. 14. ♗d3 ♘c6, Raaste – Tuomala, Finland 1985, 15. ♗e3! f6 16.0–0 d4 17. ♗h3. Now you can see how important the third rank is. The secret to the effective waging of a war is – communications... 17... h6 18. ♘e2 fxe5 19. ♗g3! exf4 (The move 19... ♗f6 seems to be more tenacious, but in fact it is without any bright prospects for Black, because he ends up in a very difficult endgame at the end of that forced line: 20.fxe5 ♗xf1+ 21. ♗xf1 ♗g5 22. ♗xg5 hxg5 23. ♗e4 d3 24.cxd3 ♘xe5 25. ♗c1 ♗b8 26. d4 ♘f7 27. ♗c7 ♘d6 28. ♗g6 a5 29. ♘g3 b5 30. ♘e4 ♘xe4 31. ♗xe4 a4 32. ♗a7+–) 20. ♘xf4 ♗f6 (After: 20... ♗g5 21. ♘g6 ♗d8 22. ♗f3 ♗e3+ 23. ♗xe3 dxe3 24. ♗ae1, White regains his pawn and he maintains a great positional advantage.) 21. ♘g6 ♗e8 (or 21... ♘f7 22. ♗h4+–; 21... ♗d7 22. ♘e5! ♗xf1+ 23. ♗xf1 ♗e8 24. ♗f7+–) 22. ♗xf6 gxf6 23. ♘e5+ ♘f8 24. ♗h4 ♘xe5 25. ♗xf6+ ♘f7 26. ♗f1+–.

13... ♗b6 14. ♗xb6 ♘xb6 (We are going to deal with a similar

Chapter 14

type of positions a bit later, when we analyze the variation – 8... ♙c5 9. ♖d2 0–0 10. 0–0–0 ♘xd4 11. ♙xd4 ♙xd4 12. ♗xd4 ♖b6 13. ♗xb6 ♘b6. In fact, there is not a great difference between the move a2-a3 and White's castling long, because he usually brings his king to the centre at the end anyway.) 15. ♘b5 ♙d7 16. ♘d4 ♖ac8, Schlesinger – Meyer, Doernigheim 1994. Now, I believe that White's best is to try to restrict the mobility of his opponent's pieces with: 17. b3! f6 18. g3! This move avoids the complications that become possible after Black's rook penetrates to the f4-square. 18...fxe5 19. fxe5±.

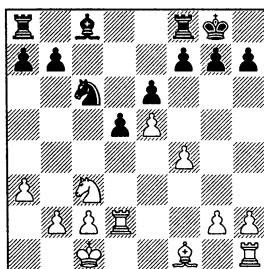
12. 0–0–0 ♘xd4 13. ♙xd4 ♙xd4

13...f6 14. exf6 ♖xf6 15. g3±.

14. ♗xd4 ♗xd4 15. ♖xd4 ♘b8

15...f6 16. exf6 ♘xf6 17. g3±; 15... ♘c5 16. b4 ♘d7 17. ♘b5 a6 18. ♘d6 f6 19. exf6 ♘xf6 20. c4±.

16. ♖d2 ♘c6



17. h4!

That is a standard maneuver for this variation and we are going to deal extensively with

similar positions in our Chapter 18, devoted to the variation: 8... ♙c5 9. ♖d2 ♘xd4 10. ♙xd4 ♙xd4 11. ♗xd4 ♖b6. This move is usually played with the idea to occupy additional space with the help of h4-h5, moreover White has the possibility to transfer his rook on h1 to the centre, or even to the queenside via the third rank. In this particular case, there is another idea too – White prevents irrevocably Black's possibility to undermine White's centre with the help of the move g7-g5 and as we are going to see later – that is a very important moment. It is also interesting for White to try 17. ♘b5. In case of the straightforward reaction by Black: 17...f6 18. f5! White seizes the initiative. There is a possibility for the following variation to happen: 18. f5 exf5 19. ♘c7 ♖b8 20. exf6 ♖xf6 21. ♘d5 ♖e6 22. ♙c4 ♗f8 23. ♘b4 ♖e8 24. ♙b5 ♖e6 25. ♙xc6 bxc6 26. ♖d8+ ♗e7 27. ♖h8 c5 28. ♘d5+ ♗f7 29. ♖d1 h6 30. g4 ♖e2 31. h4 a5 32. g5 hxg5 33. hxg5 ♖e4 34. ♘c3 and White's second rook can penetrate to Black's eighth rank with a decisive effect. Still, after 17...a6 18. ♘d6 b5! White's task becomes much more difficult. He must be on the alert about the possibilities f7-f6, as well as ♘c6-a5-c4 and he should try in spite of all to adhere to some real and effective plan.

17... ♙d7

It is also possible for Black to play the immediate: 17...f6

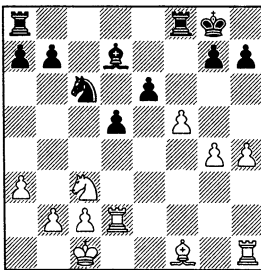
18. exf6 gxf6 19. g4±. Or 18... fxf6 19. g3 g6 20. g1 d7 21. f5! exf5 22. dxd5 d8 23. d4 f6 24. c4+ f8 25. gd1 e5 26. de6+ and Black loses the exchange.

18.g4

This move is played with the idea to reduce the effectiveness (after g4-g5) of Black's undermining move f7-f6. Meanwhile, White does not close the kingside altogether and he preserves the possibility to open a "second front" sometimes in the future.

18...f6 19. exf6 fxf6 20. f5! ff8

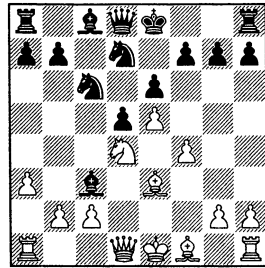
Or 20... e8 21. g2 exf5 22. dxd5 f7 23. d7 c8 24. db5 da5 25. dd4±. White's knight is performing magic in this variation. After its seemingly purposeless wandering over the board – Black's defensive fortress is practically in ruins.



21.g2 d4 22.de4 exf5 23. dc5 cc8 24.f1 g6 (In case of 24... f4, White will follow with the simple move 25. df2.) **25.gxf5 xf5 26. dxb7 g4 27. fxf8+ xf8 28.b4** and Black has serious problems to worry about

– White's queenside pawns are quickly advancing to promotion.

b2) 9...xc3+



This is a very important decision for Black, but it is consistent with his previous play; why otherwise did he play the move 8... b4?! in the first place?

10.bxc3 dxd4

Black has tried in practice some other moves too:

10...0-0 11. d3 h4+ 12. g3 e7 (It is too risky for him to play here: 12... h3 13. d3 f6 14. dh4) 13. h5 g6, von Saleski – Siebert, Email 2000, 14. e2 f6 15. exf6 xf6 16.0-0 Ae1, d3, d4±;

10... e7 11. d3 d5 12.0-0 dxd3 13.cxd3 0-0 14. f3 (It was possibly simpler for White to have maneuvered his queen to the kingside immediately with – 14. h5.) 14...f6 15. exf6 fxf6 16. dxc6 bxc6 17. d4 f7 18. e5 f8 19. h3 b7 20. h5± Liberzon – Golz, Zinnowitz 1967. The presence of opposite coloured bishops on the board does not facilitate Black's defence at all. His bishop is much more passive than its counterpart

and his lack of space is quite considerable;

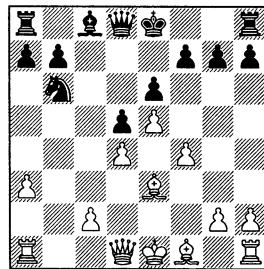
10...a6 11.c4 ♖b6 (Or 11...0-0 12.cxd5 ♖a5+ 13.♙f2 exd5 14. ♖b3 ♗d8 15.♙d3± De Waard – Blijstra, corr. 1996; 11...♗xd4 12.♗xd4 dxc4 13.♙xc4 b5 14.♙b3 ♙b7 15.0-0 ♗c7 16.♙ad1 ♙c6 17.f5 ♗xe5 18.fxe6 fxe6 19.♙fe1 – There will be hardly anybody having doubts about the power of the bishop pair in similar positions.) 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.cxd5 ♗xd5 (Or 13...exd5 14.♙d3±; 13...cxd5 14.♙b1 ♗c4 15.♙xc4 dxc4 16.♗xd8+ ♗xd8 17.♙b4±. The point is not so much that Black is losing a pawn – he has to complete his development at first, since in fact he has not even come out of the opening yet. Secondly, it remains quite unclear how he can develop his bishop on c8, so that it would not come under attack by White's pieces.) 14.♙d2 ♗b6 (or 14...c5 15.c4 ♗e7 16.♙e3 ♗c7 17.♗d6±) 15.♙b1 ♗c5 16.♙b3±. Black has in fact only two pieces participating in the fight and after c2-c4, his knight on d5 will be repelled from its wonderful outpost and Black's position will be just terrible;

10...♗a5 11.♗d2 0-0 (The move 11...♗c5 – enables White to correct his pawn-structure and he has a very easy game after that. 12.♗b3 ♗xb3 13.cxb3 ♗c7 14.b4 b6 15.♙d3 ♗e7 16.0-0 ♙b7 17.♙d4 g6 18.a4 ♙c6 19.♗h1 ♗d7 20.b5 ♙b7 21.a5 ♗f5 22.axb6 ♗xd4 23.cxd4 axb6 24.♙xa8+ ♙xa8 25.g4 ♗e7

26.f5± Drummond – Truscott, Sydney 1992.) 12.♙d3 (This move is more active than 12.♙e2, as it was played in the game Bendel – Schwabe, Griesheim 1999.) 12... ♗c5 13.0-0 ♗xd4 14.♙xd4 ♙d7 15.♗e3 ♙ac8 16.g4!? (Blacks defence is quite difficult against the standard attack f4-f5-f6.) 16...f5 17.exf6 gxf6 18.g5+–.

11.cxd4 ♖b6

Now, at first sight it looks like everything works perfectly for White – his position seems to be extremely attractive. Things are far from simple however, and it is too early for him to create weaknesses deliberately. For example in the game van der Sterren – Donner, Leeuwarden 1978, after 12.♙d2 a5 13.a4 ♙d7 14.c3 ♙c6, Black gradually seized the initiative.



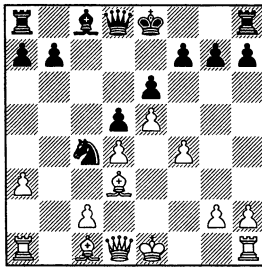
12.♙d3

White has a very amusing possibility at his disposal: 12.♗h5!? ♗c4 13.♙f2 ♗xe3 14.♙xe3 ♗a5 (14...0-0 15.♙d3 h6 16.g4±, or 15... g6 16.♗h6 f6 17.h4 fxe5 18.fxe5+–) 15.♙d3 ♙d7 16.♙hb1 ♗c3 17.♙a2! b6 18.♗h4 ♙a4 19.♗e1 ♗xe1+

(19... ♗c7 20. ♗b4±) 20. ♗xe1±. Unfortunately, in case Black refrains from an attempt to punish White immediately, the position remains complicated enough and White can hardly obtain any advantage: 13... ♗c7 14. ♗a2 ♗d7 15. ♗d3 ♗c8 16. ♗b1 ♗xe3 17. ♗xe3 b6=.

12... ♗c4 13. ♗c1

White prevents the maneuver ♗c4-b2, which leads to the exchange of his super-important bishop.



13... ♗h4+

Now, Black has plenty of possibilities to choose from:

13... ♗b6 14. c3 ♗b2. Black chases his opponent's dark squared bishop, but White would not mind it being exchanged so much after all. 15. ♗xb2 ♗xb2 16. 0-0 ♗d7 (In case of: 16... 0-0 17. ♗xh7+! ♗xh7 18. ♗d3+ ♗g8 19. ♗fb1, White traps Black's queen.) 17. ♗e1 ♗c8 18. ♗b1 ♗xc3 19. ♗xc3 ♗xc3 20. ♗xb7 ♗f8 21. f5 exf5 22. ♗xf5±. It is now very difficult for Black to bring his rook on f8 into the action without losses;

13... 0-0. Black is playing with fire and White's powerful attack

develops quite easily with only natural moves. 14. ♗h5 ♗a5+ 15. ♗e2 h6 (Or 15... g6 16. ♗h6 ♗c3 17. ♗b1 ♗xd4 18. h4 f5 19. h5 g5 20. ♗xg5+ ♗f7 21. g4!+-) 16. g4 ♗c3 17. ♗b1 ♗d7 (17... ♗xd4 18. g5 g6 19. ♗xh6+-) 18. ♗b3! (White should be careful not to fall into the trap – 18. g5 ♗c2!) 18... ♗xd4 19. g5 ♗a4 (or 19... ♗xe5 20. fxe5 ♗xe5+ 21. ♗d1 d4 22. ♗e1 ♗c5 23. ♗h4+-) 20. gxh6 g6 21. ♗xg6 f5 22. ♗g5 ♗h8 23. ♗h5 ♗e4+ 24. ♗e3 ♗xc2+ 25. ♗e1+-;

13... f5. In case Black manages to castle, it will be difficult for White to create an effective attack and the game will become calm and even boring. 14. ♗h5+! g6 15. ♗e2. Now, White has a target (that is Black's g6-pawn) and he can advance his h-pawn, so Black's castling short is far from being safe. 15... ♗a5+ 16. ♗d2 ♗xd2 17. ♗xd2 ♗xd2+ 18. ♗xd2. White's chances are on the kingside, but if it becomes necessary he can try to advance his a-pawn – a3-a4-a5 and he can create some problems for his opponent on the queenside as well. 18... ♗d7 19. ♗ab1 (White prevents the maneuver a7-a6, followed by ♗d7-b5.) 19... b6 20. g4 fxg4 21. ♗hg1 h5 22. h3 gxh3 23. ♗xg6±;

13... ♗d7. This move is too calm to cause White any real problems. He is going to continue with his active actions on the kingside as it should be in such type of a pawn-structure. Black has no

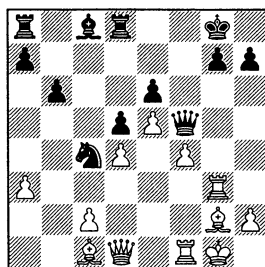
counterplay on the queenside, so he should concentrate mainly on fortifying his defensive fortress on the kingside. 14.0-0 ♖c7 15.♞b1 0-0-0 16.♟f3 f5 (or 16...♔b8 17.f5 exf5 18.♙xf5 ♙e6 19.♙d3±) 17.exf6 gxf6 18.f5±;

13...♟a5+ 14.♙d2 ♟b6!? 15.♙xc4. Naturally, White should be reluctant to enter a position with opposite coloured bishops present on the board, but he has nothing better. He maintains his initiative, though... 15...dxc4 16.♙b4 ♙d7 17.0-0 ♙c6 18.f5 exf5 19.♙c5 ♟d8 20.♞xf5 ♟d5 21.♟f1 Δ21...b6? 22.e6+-.

14.g3 ♟h3 15.♙f1 ♟f5 16.♙g2 0-0 17.0-0 ♙d8

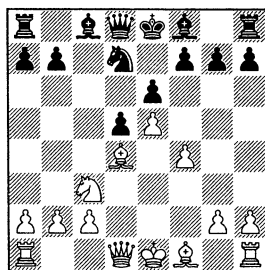
17...♟g6 18.f5 (White prevents the possibility of Black closing the position with f7-f5.) 18...gxf5 19.♙xd5 ♙e6 20.♙xb7 ♞ad8 21.♙f3 ♘xe5 (21...♙d5 22.c3! ♟e6 23.♙xd5 ♞xd5 24.♟d3 ♘xe5 25.♟xf5±) 22.♙h5 ♟f6 23.dxe5 ♟xe5. Black has some compensation for the sacrificed piece indeed, and White should (according to Nimzowitsch) coordinate his pieces after the successful operation. It remains a bit unclear however, whether the whole operation is a success or not and only the result of the game might provide the correct answer to that. 24.♙d2 f4 25.gxf4 ♟c5+ 26.♟f2 ♞xd2 27.♟xd2 ♟xh5 28.♟g2±.

18.♞b1 b6 19.♞b3 ♟g6 20.g4 f5 21.gxf5 ♟xf5 22.♞g3±



Black's defence will be far from easy from now on. He has failed to fortify his kingside and his pieces are a bit misplaced, particularly his knight on c4. White will prepare the pawn-break f4-f5, bringing his dark squared bishop into the attack as well.

c) 8...♘xd4 9.♙xd4



9...♘b8

This is the logical follow-up of the exchange on move eight – Black starts fighting for the key d4-square. In case he continues in some other fashion, the reduction of the tension in the centre would not be purposeful for him, since that is in White's favour as a rule.

The other possibilities for Black are:

About 9...♙a5 10.a3 – see variation: 8...♙a5 9.a3 ♘xd4; as for 9...♙e7 10.♟f3 – see variation 8...♙e7;

The line 9...a6 10.♙d2 – transposes to variations that we have analyzed in our Chapter 15, line e; while 9...♙c5 10.♙d2 – transposes to lines from Chapter 17;

9...♘c5, Gouret – Moutaux, Paris 1999, 10.♙d2 a6 11.a3 ♙e7 12.♙e2 0–0 13.0–0±;

9...f5 (or 9...f6) 10.exf6 ♘xf6 11.♙b5+!? (It is also possible for White to follow with the modest line: 11.♙d3 ♙d6 12.0–0 0–0 13.♙f3 ♙e8 14.♙ae1 ♙h5 15.♙xh5 ♘xh5 16.g3± Henriques – Fernandes, Lisbon 1999.) 11...♙f7, Middelhoff – Kretschel, Bayern 1994 (11...♙d7 12.♙e2±) 12.0–0±;

9...♙h4+ 10.g3 ♙d8 11.♙e2 f6 12.0–0 b6 13.exf6 ♘xf6 14.♙b5+ ♙d7 15.♙e2± Zhou – Still, Winnipeg 2004;

9...♘b6 10.♙d3 ♙d7 11.0–0 ♙c8 12.♙g4 h5 13.♙g3 h4 14.♙g4 h3 15.g3 ♘c4, Garcia Ramon – Rivero, Gran Canaria 1989, 16.♘e2±;

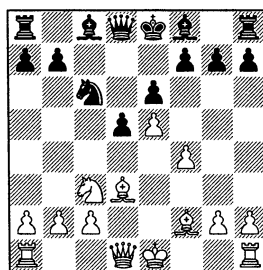
9...♙b4 10.a3 ♙xc3+ (About 10...♙a5 11.♙d2 a6 12.♙d3 – see 8...♙b4; White can also continue with: 11.♙e2 a6 12.♙d3 0–0 13.0–0 ♙c7 14.♙ad1 b6 15.♙h3 ♙b7 16.♙d3 h6 17.♙f3 f5? 18.exf6 ♘xf6 19.♙xe6+ ♙h8 20.♙f5+– Haugen – Latumbo, corr. 1998.) 11.♙xc3 0–0 (11...b6 12.♙g4 g6 13.0–0–0 ♘c5, Kulish – Trotsenko, Serpukhov 2002, 14.♙e1± – White's

bishop is redeployed to the h4–d8 diagonal now.) 12.♙b4 ♙e8, Guder – Kohls, Bad Neustadt 1990, 13.♙h5 ♙b6 14.0–0–0 a5 15.♙c3 ♘c5 16.♙d4 ♙c7 17.♙xc5 ♙xc5 18.♙d3 ♙e3+ (18...g6 19.♙h6 b6 20.h4 ♙a6 21.h5+–, or 18...h6 19.g4 b5 20.g5+–) 19.♙b1 ♙xf4 20.♙hf1 g6 21.♙xf4 gxh5 22.♙df1±.

10.♙d3 ♘c6

10...♙d7. This is hardly Black's best decision – he abandons the right path. It is not surprising that he fails to even complete his development. 11.0–0 ♙a5 12.a3 ♙c5 13.♙f2 ♙c6 14.f5 exf5 15.♙xf5 g6 16.♙h3 ♙xf2+ 17.♙xf2 ♙c5 18.♙d2 0–0 19.b4 ♙e7 20.b5+– Karasek – Dyer, corr. 1995.

11.♙f2



11...♙e7

That is Black's most natural move, but he has tried in practice some other possibilities too:

About 11...h5 12.0–0 g6, van der Vorm – Pedersen, Denmark 1999 – see 11...g6;

11...g6 12.0–0 h5, Steil – Tomaszewski, Dortmund 1987, 13.♘b5 a6 14.♘d4±. There arise some

similar positions in our main line – see 11...♙e7;

11...b6 12.0–0 a6, Cranbourne – Taiana, corr. 1990. This line seems to be rather provocative for White, but he does not need to try to refute it outright. It will be quite sufficient for him to adhere to the basic set-up with a knight on the proud d4-square. 13.a3 (White has an even simpler line here: 13.♘e2 ♕c5 14.c3 ♙xf2+ 15.♞xf2 0–0 16.♘d4±) 13...♕c5 14.♞h5 ♞c7 15.♘e2 ♙b7 16.c3±;

11...♘b4 12.♙e2 ♙d7 13.0–0 g6 14.a3 ♘c6 15.♙d3 h5 16.♘b5 a6 17.♘d4 (This is the most standard plan, but he can also try: 17.♘d6+ ♙xd6 18.exd6 ♞b8, Nunn – Schulz, Germany 1985. Here, White could have obtained an excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn with – 19.♙h4 ♞xd6 20.♙f6 ♞g8 21.♞e2± (Nunn). I am going to add though, that Black's defensive resources are not exhausted at all, for example: 21...♘e7, followed by ♙d7-c6.) 17...♘xd4 (or 17...♕c5 18.♘f3±) 18.♙xd4 ♙e7 19.♞e2±. It seems weaker for Black to try: 15...b6 16.♘b5 a6 17.♘d6+ (This decision seems to be more justified in this situation, since Black's queenside pawns are weakened, but of course White can continue with the already familiar set-up with 17.♘d4±.) 17...♙xd6 18.exd6 ♞b8 19.♞e2 ♞xd6 20.♙xa6 0–0 21.♙d3± Fedorowicz – Lein, Las Vegas 1992;

11...g5, Diesen – Bednarski,

Polanica Zdroj 1978. This is a very risky move for Black. Well, sometimes he can create problems for White with this undermining operation, but it looks like this does not apply to that particular case. White completes the development of his forces in record-breaking pace and then it becomes clear that Black's king is in a serious trouble. 12.♞h5 gxf4 13.0–0–0 ♞g8 14.♙h4 ♞b6 15.♞he1 (White is threatening 16.♘d5.) 15...♕c5. That is probably Black's only defence – he wishes to close the e-file with a check. 16.♘b1 ♙e3 17.♘b5 ♕c5 18.♘d6+ ♙xd6 19.exd6+–;

11...♙b4 12.0–0 ♙xc3 13.bxc3 ♞c7 14.♞g4! (After 14.♙h4 ♘e7! 15.♞f3 ♘g6, Remise – Mary, corr. 1992, Black managed to parry White's direct threats.) 14...0–0 15.♙h4 ♘e7 16.♞f3 ♘f5 17.♞h3±. It seems to be extremely doubtful that Black would neutralize White's attack;

11...♞a5. I believe this idea is rather dubious for Black. The trade of the dark squared bishops must be favourable for White in this case. 12.0–0 ♕c5 (Black has also tried in practice here: 12...a6 13.♘h1 ♞b4 14.♞c1 g6 15.a3 ♞a5 16.b4 ♞c7 17.♘a4 b5 18.♘c5 h5 19.c3 ♙h6 20.♙e3 ♞b8 21.a4 0–0 22.axb5 axb5 23.♞d2± Boleslavsky – Troeger, Hamburg 1960; 12...♙d7 13.a3 a6 14.b4 ♞d8 15.♘e2 g6 16.c4 dxc4 17.♙xc4 ♙h6 18.♞d3 g5 19.♞h3 ♙g7 20.♞g3 ♞g8 21.♞ad1 gxf4 22.♘xf4 ♞c7, Lein

– Taylor, New York 1976, 23. ♗xd7 ♗xd7 24. ♖d3+ ♗c8 25. ♗xe6+–, or 24... ♗e8 25. ♖xh7 ♗e7 26. ♗xe6 ♖xc4 27. ♗xg7+ ♗d7 28. ♗d1+ ♗c7 29. ♖h6+–) 13. ♗b5 ♕xf2+ (Black loses several tempi with the line: 13... ♕e7 14. c3 ♖d8 15. ♖h5 a6 16. ♗d4 ♗xd4 17. ♕xd4 g6, Palkovi – Goric, Rijeka 2001, 18. ♖e2 0–0 19. ♗f3 ♕d7 20. ♗h3±) 14. ♗xf2 0–0 15. ♗d6 (White has so many possibilities at his disposal that you can even overlook some, but still I will mention here: 15. ♖h5 g6 16. ♖h6 ♖b6 17. ♗e1 ♗d4 18. ♗d6 ♖xb2 19. c4 ♖c3 20. ♗d1 Δ21. cxd5 exd5 22. f5+–; 16... ♗b4, Taylor – Barth, New York 1983, 17. ♗d4 ♖c5 18. ♗f3+–) 15... h6 (15... ♗b4? 16. ♕xh7+ ♗xh7 17. ♖h5+ ♗g8 18. ♗f3+–; 15... ♖c5 16. a3 f6 17. ♖h5 f5, Taeger – Marschner, Germany 1985. White’s positional advantage is so great that he does not need to overdo things anymore. It is quite sufficient for him to follow with the simple move 18. c4 and Black will need a miracle to save the day.) 16. ♖h5 ♖b6 17. g4 ♗b4 (Black must still try to create some problems for White, for example with 17... ♖xb2, although he is absolutely incapable to change the evaluation of the position in any case. 18. ♗d1 and now: 18... ♖xa2 19. g5 ♗e7 20. gxf6 g6 21. ♖g5+–; 18... ♗e7 19. c4 ♖c3 20. g5 dxc4 21. gxf6 cxd3 22. hxf7 ♗xg7 23. ♗e4+–; 18... ♗b4 19. g5 ♗xd3 20. cxd3 g6 21. ♖xh6 ♖d4 22. ♗g2 ♕d7 23. ♗f3 ♖b2+ 24. ♗g1

♖e2 25. ♗df1+–) 18. g5 ♗xd3 19. cxd3 g6 20. ♖xh6+– van der Wiel – Miralles, Budel 1987.

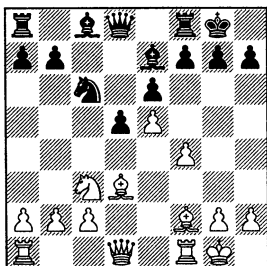
12. 0–0

It deserves serious attention for White to continue here with the aggressive maneuver: 12. ♖h5 ♖a5 13. 0–0 g6 14. ♖h6 ♕f8 15. ♖h3± Nunn – Sutton, England 1984. Evidently, Black’s best defensive chance must be: 12... ♕d7 (It is less precise for him to follow with: 12... g6 13. ♖h6 ♕f8 14. ♖h3 ♕d7 15. 0–0–0 ♖a5 16. ♗b1 0–0–0 17. ♕h4 ♕e7 18. ♗b5± Arnason – Rakic, Bela Crkva 1983.) 13. 0–0 (or 13. 0–0–0 ♗c8! 14. ♗b1 ♗b4 15. f5 ♖a5 16. fxe6 ♕xe6 17. ♕b5+ ♗c6±) 13... g6 14. ♖h6 ♕f8 15. ♖h3 ♕e7 16. ♗ae1 0–0 17. a3 f5 and as a result of all that, there arose a position, which is similar to the one that we will analyze later (see our notes to White’s move 13 in the main line), except that it is even more advantageous for White – his queen is placed on the h3-square much better than on h6.

12... 0–0

Black should not clarify his pawn-structure so early with a move like 12... f5, because then White can follow with the rather unpleasant plan for Black, connected with the move c2-c4. 13. a3 0–0 14. ♗e2 ♖c7, Palac – Goric, Neum 2004 (or 14... a6 15. c4 dxc4 16. ♕xc4 ♖xd1 17. ♗fxd1 g5 18. g3 gxf4 19. gxf4 ♗f7 20. ♗ac1 ♗e8 21. ♗c3 ♗g8+ 22. ♗f1 ♗g4 23. ♕a2 h5 24. h3 ♗g6 25. ♕b6 ♕d7 26. ♗g3+–

Galinsky – Kosikov, Kiev 2003)
 15.♞c1 ♖a5 16.♘d4 ♗d7 17.g4 ♘c4
 18.gxf5 ♘xb2 19.♞g4±.



13.♘b5

This move is in the spirit of the ideas of Steinitz and Nimzowitsch. I like it much more than White's other possibilities. The importance of the good and bad squares in chess is just tremendous and that is often used as a compass in the choice of the correct plan. White has lost one of his knights as a battle unit in the fight for the d4-outpost; accordingly he should bring there his other knight. Despite the fact that Black can eventually exchange that knight as well, the analysis of the arising positions shows that his defence will not be facilitated at all.

In case White is already bored with following the classics, he can try something more adventurous without being restricted by dogmatic thinking. Still, in that case he must worry about Black's possibility f7-f6, after which he frees his game considerably, or even f7-f5, which on the contrary might

lead to even more unclear positions. Meanwhile, the d4-outpost will probably never lose its tremendous strategic importance.

See some examples on this theme:

13.♞h5 g6 14.♞h6 f5 (It is too bad for Black to play here 14...f6, because of 15.♗xg6 hxg6 16.♞xg6+ ♖h8 17.♞ad1 ♖b4 18.♗d4+-) 15. ♖b5, Kristiansen – Borngaesser, Graz 1972 (In case of: 15.a3 ♞f7 16.♘e2 White must consider the possibility: 16...g5!? 17.♘d4 ♘xd4 18.♗xd4 gxf4 19.♞xf4 ♞g7.), 15... a6 16.♘d4 and White has not achieved anything substantial. Whenever Black's pawn is on f5, it is rather difficult for White to create threats against Black's king; moreover the purposefulness of the placement of his queen on the h6-square becomes quite questionable. The pawn-sacrifice – 16.♘d6 leads to an unclear situation as well – 16...♗xd6 17.exd6 ♞xd6 18.♞fe1 ♗d7∞;

The move 13.a3 can be justified in case of 13...f5 – see 12...f5, but Black is absolutely not obliged to commit harakiri – 13...♗d7 14.♞h5 g6 15.♞h6 f5 16.g4, Reeh – Borngaesser, Dortmund 1987 (It is more prudent for White to follow with 16.♘e2, but Black obtains some counterplay even then – 16...♞c8 17.♞ac1 ♖a5 – and his knight is headed for the c4-outpost and he can proceed with some provocative actions on the kingside too with ♞f8-f7-g7, fol-

lowed by g6-g5.) 16...fxg4 Δ17. ♙e2? ♟xe5! 18.♙d4 ♟f5 19.♙xe5 ♟f8-+.

13...♙d7

Black cannot boast about a great choice of moves here:

13...♟b4 14.♟xa7, loses a pawn for Black and his compensation is nowhere in sight.

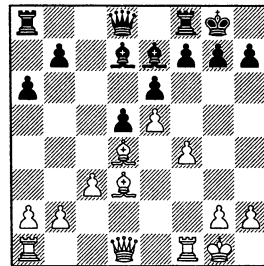
13...a6 14.♟d4 ♟b4, leads to similar positions as the main line, for example: 15.♙e2 ♙d7 16.c3 ♟c6 17.♙d3 ♟xd4 18.♙xd4 ♙b5 19.♙xb5 axb5 20.a3±;

13...f5 14.c4 dxc4 (Now, Black's e6-pawn becomes very weak, but even after 14...♟b4, White maintains a clear advantage – 15.♙e2 ♙d7 16.♟d4 ♙c5 17.a3 ♟c6 18.cxd5 ♟xd4 19.♙xd4 ♟b6 20.♟f2±) 15.♙xc4 ♟a5 16.♙e2 b6 17.♟c1 ♙a6 (It is more resilient for Black to defend with 17...♙b7. Now, White can make his task much more difficult if he plays too greedily – 18.♟c7 ♟c8 19.♟xd8 ♟fxd8 20.♟xe6 ♟d2. Therefore his best line is 18.a3, preventing the activation of Black's pieces for the time being. There might follow: 18...♟fc8 19.♟xd8 ♟fxd8 20.b4 ♟c6 21.♙f3 ♟d7 22.♟fd1 ♟cd8 23.♟xd7 ♟xd7 24.♙e3 ♟d8 25.♙xb7 ♟xb7 26.♟c8 g5 27.♟a8 a5 28.♟d6 ♟d7 29.♟c8 ♙f8 30.♟xb6 ♟d1+ 31.♟f2 gxf4 32.♟e2 ♟a1 33. ♙c5+–) 18.♟a4 ♙b5 19.♙xb5 a6 20.♙d7 ♟f7 21.♟fd1 b5 22.♟c2 ♟b8 23.♟d2 ♟d8 24.♟e1 1–0 Rubinchik – Tomasevic, corr. 1984.

14.c3 a6

14...f5!? 15.exf6 ♙xf6 16.♙c5 ♙e7 (16...♟e7 17.♟e2±) 17.♙e3 g6 (17...a6 18.♟h5!) 18.♟c2 a6 19.♟d4±. White's pieces are free for actions in this position and Black has so many weaknesses in his camp that White's advantage is quite stable.

15.♟d4 ♟xd4 16.♙xd4!



16...♟c8

It deserves serious attention for Black to defend in some other fashion too:

16...g6 17.♟e2 ♟c7 18.♟e3! (We are well-familiar with these ideas already...) 18...♙b5 19.♙xb5 axb5 20.g4! ♟h8 21.f5 gxf5 22. gxf5 ♟g8+ 23.♟g1±;

16...♙b5 17.♙xb5 axb5 18.a3 g6 19.♟d3 ♟d7 20.♟ae1! ♟c8 21.♟e3! This is a multi-functional move for White. He presently prevents 21...♙c5, because it may lead to further simplifications. Additionally, White creates some indirect pressure against the e6-square and that might be important in case Black decides for the sake of the defence of his kingside to push f7-f6, or f7-f5. 21...♟c6

22.g4! f6. Otherwise, White's initiative might become quite dangerous. 23.exf6 ♖xf6 24.♙xf6 ♜xf6 25.g5±.

17.♖h5 g6

In case of 17...h6, White must play very inventively: 18.♙c2 ♙c5 19.♞ad1 ♙b5 20.♞f2! ♙xd4 21.♞xd4 f5 22.g4! ♙e8 23.♖h3! ♙g6 24.♞g2 (Now, the idea behind the move 20.♞f2 surfaces.) 24...♙h8 (Or 24...♙h7 25.♖g3 ♖d7 26.♞xd5!! This is a jolt from the blue! 26...exd5 27.gxf5 ♙xf5 28.e6! ♖c7 29.♙xf5+ ♞xf5 30.♖g6+ ♙h8 31.♖xf5 d4 32.♞e2 ♖b6 33.cxd4 ♖xd4+ 34.♙g2+-) 25.g5 ♙h7 26.gxh6 gxh6 27.♞d3 ♞g8 28.♞dg3 ♖c5+ 29.♙h1 ♖e7 (After 29...d4, there arise some beautiful geometric motives – 30.♞xg6!! ♞xg6 31.♞xg6 ♙xg6 32.♖g2+ ♙f7 33.♖xb7+ and White wins a whole rook.) 30.♙d1 ♞ad8 (or 30...d4 31.cxd4 ♞ad8 32.♙h5 ♙xh5 33.♖xh5 ♞xg3 34.♞xg3±; it would not work for Black to play 30...♙f7 31.♖xh6+!, because White checkmates.) 31.♞g1 d4 32.cxd4 ♞xd4 33.♖g2+-.

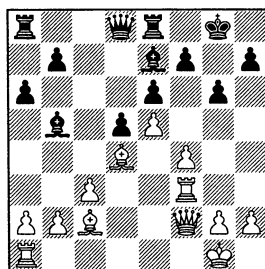
18.♖h6 ♞e8

Now, it is too late for Black

to play 18...♙b5, because of: 19.f5! exf5 20.♞f3 ♙xd3 21.e6 f6 22.♞h3+- (Tatai).

19.♞f3 ♙f8 20.♖h4 ♙e7

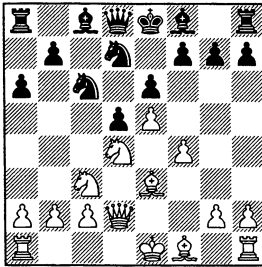
21.♖f2 ♙b5 22.♙c2 ♖d8



23.f5!+- exf5 (Black cannot ignore this brave pedestrian soldier – 23...♙d7 24.f6 ♙f8 25.♙xg6 hxg6 26.♖h4 Tatai, with an unavoidable checkmate.) **24.♞xf5! ♞f8** (Black loses immediately after: 24...gxf5 25.♖xf5 ♙g5 26.♖xh7+ ♙f8 27.♙c5+- Tatai.) **25.♖f4! f6** (Black is already beyond salvation, in case of 25...♙d7, White wins with: 26.e6 fxe6 27.♖e5+- Tatai.) **26.exf6 gxf5 27.♖g5+ ♙f7 28.♖g7+ ♙e8 29.♞e1 ♞f7 30.♖g8+ ♞f8 31.♖xh7** 1-0 Tatai – Unzicker, Roma 1982. This was a wonderfully played game by White.

Chapter 15

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7
5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♙e3 cxd4 8.♘xd4
a6 9.♚d2



Black has plenty of moves in this position and his most logical are – a) 9...♚a5, b) 9...♚c7, c) 9...♙e7, d) 9...♙b4 and e) 9...♘xd4.

The other possibilities for him are played only very seldom:

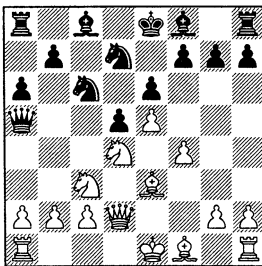
9...♘b6 10.♙d3 (In case of 10.0–0–0, White should consider the possibility 10...♘a5.) 10...g6?! This is a dubious move. (It seems slightly better for Black to try 10...♙d7, but White has a clear advantage after that too: 11.♚f2 ♘xd4 12.♙xc4 ♘c4 13.♘d1± or 11...♘c4 12.♙xc4 ♘xd4 13.♙d3 ♘c6 14.a3±) 11.0–0 ♙d7 12.♚f2 ♘c4 13.♙xc4 dxc4 14.♘e4 ♙e7 15.♙ad1 ♘b4 16.♘f3 ♘d5 17.♙c5 ♘f8 18.♘f6 ♙c6 19.♘g5 ♘g7 20.♙xe7 ♚xe7 21.♘ge4± Anderson – Casillas, Islington 1998. Black has a chronic weakness of his dark squares

complex and in particular of the f6 and d6-squares. His king is potentially vulnerable and so his position seems to be very difficult;

9...g6?! That is a loss of time to say the least after which White's initiative becomes threatening. It is hardly necessary for Black to defend against f4-f5 at such an early stage of the game. 10.0–0–0 ♙b4 (It is just terrible for Black to follow with: 10...♘b6 11.♚f2 ♘d7 12.g4 ♘xd4 13.♙xd4 ♚c7 14.♘xd5, Morel – Alurralde, Rosario 1992, because his position becomes undefendable. White's tactical strike on d5 is a routine matter in similar situations... For example after: 10...♘xd4 11.♙xd4, Black lost in more or less the same fashion in the games Magyar – Rithnovszky, Hungary 1995 – 11...♘b8 12.♚f2 ♙d7 13.♘xd5 exd5 14.e6+– and Libiszewski – Luchetti, Lyon 1995, where after 11...b5, White followed with the already familiar tactical fireworks – 12.♘xd5 exd5 13.e6 and here after 13...♘f6 14.♚c3, as well as in case of: 13...f6 14.exd7+ ♙xd7 15.♙e1+ Black is in a big trouble.) 11.a3 ♙a5, Van den Berg – Tredup, Halle 2004. Here,

White's simplest reaction would have been 12.h4, beginning immediately active kingside operations. 12...♖e7 (If 12...h5, then 13.♗e2, planning 14.g4 hxg4 15.♗xg4, followed by h4-h5.) 13.♖b1 (Now, Black must consider in some lines the possibility for White – ♖c3xd5, because the capture ♗xd2 will be without a check...) 13...♖xd4 14.♗xd4 b5 15. h5±. White can counter 15...b4 with the simple move 16.♖a2.

a) 9...♖a5



Black's queen can come under attack in this position indeed, but still this move cannot be considered as a loss of a tempo at all. At first, it is rather unclear whether White's knight will be better placed on the b3-square than on d4. He has the similar dilemma in the Sicilian Defence... Secondly, the move a2-a3 might turn out to be not so useful in some variations, for example in case White plans to evacuate his king on the queenside. Still, I will venture the opinion that White should not have too much of a problem

to find the right plan under the circumstances if he takes into account the details and the nuances of the arising positions...

10.a3

It also deserves attention for him to play: 10.♖b3 ♖c7 11.♗d3 and the situation resembles the one, which we have analyzed in Chapter 20, devoted to the variation: 8...♗c5 9.♖d2 0-0 10. 0-0-0 a6. The only difference is that Black has played ♖c7, instead of having castled short, but most probably that would only lead to a transposition of moves at the end.

10...♗b4

The move 10...♖xd4 will be dealt with later, when we analyze the variation: 9...♖xd4 10.♗xd4 ♖a5 11.a3.

11.♗d3 ♖c5

It is hardly advantageous for Black to determine immediately the placement of his king with 11...0-0. He has tried in practice the following lines as well:

11...♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♖c7 13.0-0 b5 14.♖f2 ♗b7 (This move loses a pawn, but it is not easy to give here a good advice to Black, because it is obviously rather dangerous for him to castle – 14...0-0 15.♖h4 h6 16.♖f3 ♖d8 17.♖h5 ♖xd4 18.cxd4 f5 19.g4 and Black's kingside gets destroyed. Or 15... g6 16.f5 exf5 17.♖xf5 and White's attack is checkmating, for example: 17...♖ce5 18.♖e7+ ♖h8 19. ♗xg6! ♖xg6 20.♖xg6+ fxg6 21.

♙d4+ ♘g8 22.♚e7+- . Black cannot save the game by playing at first: 16...♟xd4 17.♙xd4 exf5 18.♚xf5! ♙b7 19.♚h5 ♖d8 20.♚h3+-) 15.♙xb5 0-0 (Black had better accept that sacrifice, from the practical point of view, but that would have hardly changed the outcome of the game – 15...axb5 16.♟xb5 ♖b8 17.♟d6+ ♘f8 18.♚ab1 ♟a5 19.f5 ♟xe5 20.fxe6 f6 21.♙c5 ♘g8 22.e7+-) 16.♙d3 ♟a5 17.♟f3 g6 18.♚h4 ♚fe8 19.♚h6 ♖xc3 20.♙d4 ♖c7 21.f5, 1-0 Sion Castro – Velez Agorritz, Pamplona 2000;

11...♙e7 12.0-0 ♖c7. The whole operation by Black was a bit dubious and the final result seemed to me like a loss of valuable time. 13.♚f2 b5 14.♚g3 g6 15.♘h1 ♟xd4 16.♙xd4 ♙c5. After some wandering over the board – Black's bishop has finally come to the right square... 17.♟e2 ♙b7 18.c3. That is the standard aggressive set-up for White in the middle of the board in this variation. He has the space advantage and his pieces are perfectly placed for active actions on both sides of the board. That is why Black should better postpone his castling for a while. 18...♟b6 19.b3! (Black was hoping for the miracle-chance to redeploy his pieces with 19...♟c4, with the idea ♟b2 or ♟d2-e4 to follow. White is on the alert, though...) 19...♟d7 20.♚fc1 ♙e7 21.c4 dxc4 22.bxc4 b4. Here, White could have obtained a great advantage with the move 23.axb4 (In the

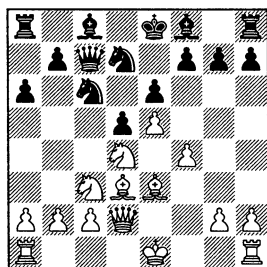
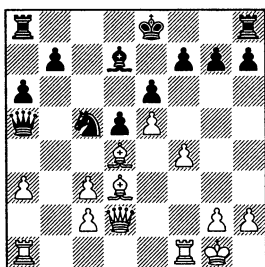
game Widiger – Geisert, Hassloch 1999, he followed with: 23.c5 bxa3 24.♚xa3 0-0 and Black could have defended successfully.) 23... ♙xb4 24.c5 0-0 25.c6 ♙xc6 26. ♙e4 ♟b8 27.♚f3 ♚c8 28.♚c2 (or 28.♙c5 ♙xe4 28.♚xe4 and White wins the exchange) 28...a5 29.♚ac1 ♚a6 30.♙g1 and Black has great problems defending against 31. ♟d4.

12.0-0 ♙xc3 13.bxc3 ♟xd4 14.♙xd4 ♙d7

Black fails to evacuate his king to a safe place after: 14...0-0 15.♚e3 ♟xd3 16.cxd3 ♙d7 17.g4+. Pay attention to that position. Black is too far from equality, despite the opposite coloured bishops present on the board. His bishop is rather passive, while its counterpart is like a monster. On one hand it stabilizes White's position in the centre and on the queenside and it practically prevents Black from organizing any sensible counterplay. On the other hand White's bishop makes the build-up of a defensive fortress for ♙lack on the kingside with the move 17...f5 extremely difficult, because after: 18.exf6 gxf6 19.g5 his position becomes hopeless. Meanwhile, White is threatening to advance his f-pawn and that spells trouble for Black.

(diagram)

15.♚e3 ♚c8, Muravyev – Sliwa, corr. 1995, 16.f5! This move poses great problems to Black. 16...exf5 17.e6 fxe6 (The other



possible captures are hardly any better – 17...♙xe6 18.♙xf5 ♖e4 19. ♙xg7 ♖g8 20.♙d4± or 17...♗xe6 18.♙xg7 ♖g8 19.♙d4±) **18.♞xf5**. White has numerous threats and Black's pieces are so dis-coordinated that he cannot parry these threats at all. He should try to solve at least the crucial task and that is to ensure the safety of his king. **18...♗d8 19.♞g5+ ♗c7 20.♞g3+!** ♗c6 (Black fails to evacuate his king away from the immediate perils with: 20...♗b6 21.♞f7 ♖hd8 22.♞g7! ♞a4 23.♞g5 ♞c6 24.c4! dxc4 25.♙e4! ♞xe4 26.♙xc5+ ♗c6 27.♙f2 ♞d5 28.♞e3 and again the black monarch is in a mortal danger.) **21.♞f7 ♖hf8 22.♞xg7±**. White's attack continues and the material is already equal.

b) 9...♞c7 10.♙d3

(diagram)

10...♗c5

Black's other possibilities are:

About 10...♙c5 11.♗ce2 ♗xd4 12.♙xd4 – see variation 9...♗xd4 10.♙xd4 ♞c7;

After 10...♗a5 11.0–0 ♗c4 12. ♙xc4 ♞xc4, Black manages to

trade his knight for White's good bishop. This could have been defined as a real achievement under somewhat different circumstances. Here, the loss if several tempi would not remain unpunished, since White's attack against the enemy king is much more effective than any abstract common sense positional philosophizing. 13.f5 ♗xe5 14.♞ae1 ♙b4 15.fx6. Black had better prefer here: 15...0–0!? (In case of: 15...f6 16. ♗f5 0–0, as it was played in the game Tkachiev – Akhundov, Calicut 1993, White could have settled the issue immediately with – 17. ♗xg7 ♗xg7 18.♙h6+ ♗h8 19.♙xf8 ♙xf8 20.♞xf6 ♙g7 21.e7 ♙d7 22. ♗xd5 ♞c5+ 23.♞f2 ♞xf2+ 24.♞xf2 ♖e8 25.♞fe2 ♙c6 26.♞xe5 ♙xe5 27.♞xe5 ♙xd5 28.♞xd5+–.) Here, after the almost forced line: 16.♙f4 ♗g6 17.exf7+ ♞xf7 18.♖e8+ ♞f8 19.♞xf8+ ♗xf8 20.♞f2 ♙g4 21.♙e5 ♙h5, it seems that Black will manage to defend against White's direct threats. That is not exactly true however, since he can continue with: 22.♗a4! ♖e8 (Black loses after: 22...♗d7 23.b3 ♞c8 24.♙xg7 ♗xg7 25.♗e6+ ♗g8 26.

♖d4+ – he would not fare much better after the desperate attempt: 22... ♖xa2 23. b3, with the same unambiguous threat – 24. ♗xg7.) 23. ♗xg7 ♗g6 (or 23... ♗xg7? 24. ♖f6+ ♗g8 25. dxf5+–) 24. b3 ♖c8 (In case of 24... ♖c7, White follows with: 25. ♗xf8 ♖xf8 26. ♖xf8+! ♗xf8 27. ♖xf8+ and the final fork on the e6-square crowns the end of that wonderful spectacle...) 25. ♗h6±. White should not need too much of an effort to overcome some technical difficulties on the road to victory.

11.0–0 g6 12. ♖a1

According to A. Nimzowitsch's terminology – this is a mysterious rook-move. There is no better future available to Black's knight on c5 than to be exchanged for his opponent's bishop on d3, therefore White is already preparing some future actions along the c-file.

12... ♗d7 13. ♖f2 dxd4 14. ♗xd4 ♖c8 15. ♖e3 h5 16. b4 dxd3 17. cxd3 ♗c6

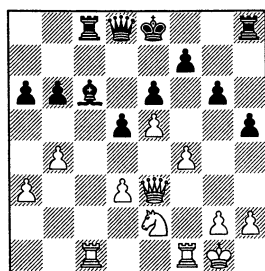
This is a more tenacious defence for Black than the line: 17... ♖b8 18. dxd5 ♗g7 19. ♗a7 1–0 Mohr – Karnar, Slovenia 1993.

18. a3 ♖d7

Black prevents the penetration of White's knight to the b6-square. In case he ignores that threat, there might be the following eventual developments: 18... h4 19. dxa4 h3 20. g3 ♖d8 21. dxb6 ♖c7 22. ♖d2 ♗h6 23. ♖c2±. Later, White proceeds with doubling his

rooks along the c-file, followed by a3-a4 and b4-b5.

19. ♗c5 ♗xc5 20. ♖xc5 ♖d8 21. dxe2 b6 22. ♖e3±.



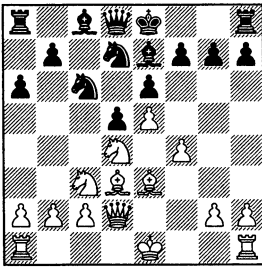
After White's knight occupies the d4-outpost, it will be much more powerful than Black's bishop (White should better do that immediately on his next move; otherwise Black might have the chance to liven up his pieces with a move like d5-d4) and that would provide him with a stable positional edge. Black must watch about White's possible penetration along the c-file and he must also protect his somewhat weakened kingside and the vulnerable b6-pawn. Still, his main problem remains to be the fact that the eventual endgame with "a knight against a bishop" might turn out to be practically hopeless for him at the end.

c) 9... ♗e7 10. ♗d3

(diagram)

10... dxc5

Black's other possibilities are: about 10... ♖c7 11.0–0 dxc5 12. ♖f2 – see 10... dxc5;



10...♙c5 11.♜c2 ♖b6 12.c3 a5 (This is obviously better for Black than his total positional surrender over the whole board after – 12...♙xd4?! 13.♜xd4 ♖c7 14.0–0 ♜xd4 15.cxd4 b5 16.f5± Rial – A.Castro, Spain 2001.) 13.♖c2!? (The game Santo Roman – Marteau, Montpellier 2000, continued with: 13.0–0 f6 14.♖c2 fxe5 15.fxe5 ♜cxe5 16.♙xh7 ♜f6∞) 13...h6 (13...g5 14.g3±. Black has already compromised his position considerably and here it seems very good for White to castle long and to follow that with an attack against Black’s king stranded in the centre.) 14.a4 (This move seems to be rather unpleasant for Black. He cannot occupy any additional space on the queenside with the help of for example: a5-a4 and ♜c6-a5. On the other hand, White prevents maximally the eventual complications, which are possible in case of: 14.0–0 g5 15.g3 h5.) 14...0–0 15.0–0 f6 16.exf6 ♜xf6 17.♞h1 ♙d7 18.♞ae1±. White’s plans include – the move ♙e3-g1, with the idea to unpin the knight on d4. Later, there might follow:

18...♜g4 19.♙g1 e5 20.fxe5 ♜gxe5 21.♜f4±.

Black has also tried in practice: 10...♜xd4 11.♙xd4 and then:

about 11...b5 – see variation 9...♜xd4 10.♙xd4 b5 11.♙d3 ♙e7; 11...0–0 12.♖e3 (as for 12.0–0 ♙c5 – see variation 9...♙b4) 12...f6 13.♖h3 (Another excellent practical choice for White here is the line: 13.exf6 ♜xf6 14.0–0 – and his advantage is considerable.) 13...f5 14.g4 ♙h4+ Chanelle – Laurens, Rochefort 1998, 15.♞e2 fxc4 16.♖xc4 ♞f7 (or 16...♖e7 17.♞hg1 g6 18.♞af1 Δ♞f3-h3±) 17.♞hg1 b6 18.♖h5 ♜f8 19.♙g4 ♙e7 20.♞ag1±. Black seems almost helpless against White’s direct kingside attack.

11...♜c5 12.0–0 (It seems attractive for White to try the immediate: – 12.0–0–0 ♜xd3+ 13.♖xd3 0–0 14.♞b1, Tung – Aldako Elkano, San Sebastian 2003, but after: 14...b5 15.g4 b4 16.♜e2 a5 17.f5 a4! the situation becomes quite unclear.) 12...0–0 13.♖e3 (I do not like so much White’s possibility: 13.♙e2!? ♙d7 14.♖e3 ♜a4 15.♜xa4 ♙xa4 16.♙d3 ♙b5 17.♙xb5 axb5, although he maintains an advantage in that case too.) 13...♜xd3 14.cxd3. White has a slight, but stable edge here. We have analyzed similar positions in Chapter 14, while we were studying the variation: 8...♙e7 9.♖f3 0–0 10.♙d3 ♜c5 11.0–0 ♜xd3 12.cxd3. In fact, now the situation is even more favourable for White, be-

cause he controls the important g1-a7 diagonal completely. His urgent task is to prepare the advance of his f-pawn at an opportune moment and thus to force Black to push f7-f5. After the eventual capture e5xf6, Black will have additional weaknesses along the e-file to worry about. You can see Black's eventual problems in that case in the following possible variations: 14...b5 15.a3 ♕b7 16.b4 ♖c8 17. ♖ac1 ♖c6 18. ♗g3 f6 19. exf6 ♕xf6 20. ♖e2 ♖xc1 21. ♖xc1 ♕xd4 22. ♖xd4 ♗f6 23. ♗e3 ♗xf4 24. ♗xf4 ♖xf4 25. ♖e6 ♖f7 26. d4 ♖e7 27. ♖d8 ♖d7 28. ♖xb7 ♖xb7 29. ♖c6±.

11...♖b8. This maneuver is not so effective now with a black pawn on the a6-square, because the weakening of the b6-square becomes important.. 12. ♗f2 ♖c6 (or 12...0-0 13. ♕b6 ♗e8, Krupkova – Ingolfsdottir, Varna 2002, 14.0-0 ♖d7 15. ♕d4 b5 16. ♖ae1± and the concentration of White's pieces on the kingside looks already threatening.) 13. ♕b6 ♗d7 14.0-0 g6 15.a3 0-0 16. ♖ad1 ♕d8 17. ♕c5 ♕e7, Dudek – Smal, corr. 1992. Here, it seems quite logical for White to squeeze Black's pieces to their initial positions: 18. ♖a4! ♕xc5 19. ♗xc5 ♗c7 20. ♖b6 ♖b8 21. c4±.

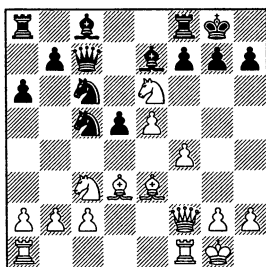
11.0-0 ♗c7 12. ♗f2 0-0

It does not seem reasonable for Black to postpone his castling. In the game Beliavsky – Ikica, Portoroz 1996, his position be-

came quickly hopeless after: 12...♕d7 13. ♖ac1 ♖c8 14.a3 b5? 15. ♖dxb5+-. Naturally, he did not need to blunder a pawn on move 14, but White could have played much better on his previous move i.e.: 13. ♖xe6!! ♖xe6 14. ♖d5 ♗a5 15. ♖xe7 ♖xe7 16.f5 ♖d8 17. ♕b6 ♗d5 (Here, it is extremely dangerous for Black to capture White's e5-pawn. The play might continue with the following spectacular variation: 17... ♗xe5 18. ♖fe1 ♗f6 19. ♕d4 ♗g5 20. h4 ♗g4 21. ♖e4 ♗h5 22.g4 ♗h6 23. ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 24. ♕c5+ ♖e8 25. ♖e1+ ♖e6 26.g5 ♗h5 27. ♕e2 and White wins the enemy queen. It is only slightly more resilient for Black to defend with: 20... ♗h5 21. ♕xg7 ♖g8 22. ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 23. ♕c5+ ♖e8 24. ♖e1+ ♖e6 25. ♕f6 ♖xg2+ 26. ♖h1! ♖g1+ 27. ♗xg1 ♗f3+ 28. ♗g2+-) 18. ♖ad1 ♗xa2 19.e6 fxe6 20. ♕xd8 ♖xd8 (Black loses too after: 20...♖xd8 21.f6 ♖f5 22. ♕xf5 exf5 23. ♗h4, followed by 24. ♖fe1.) 21. ♗b6+ ♖e8 22.c4! and Black's pieces are so discoordinated that he cannot defend his king successfully.

13. ♖xe6!

This move creates a complete havoc in Black's set-up. After 13. ♖f5, as it was played in the game Lenoir – Bustamante Casas, Matinhos 1999, Black could have continued with: 13...b6 14. ♖xe7 ♗xe7, followed by ♕b7, ♖fd8, ♖ac8 and he would have obtained a quite acceptable game.

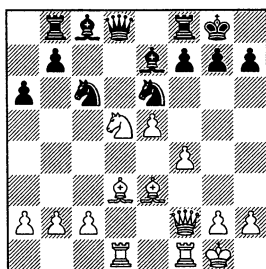


13...♖xe6 14.♜xd5 ♖d8

After the other possible retreats of the queen, Black will have to return his extra piece; otherwise he will have great problems, for example: 14...♜b8 15. ♜xe7+ ♜xe7 16.f5 ♜d8 17.f6 ♜g6 18.fxg7 ♝e8 19.♙xg6 hxg6 20.♜h4+- or 14...♜a5 15.♜xe7+ ♜xe7 16.f5 ♜d8 17.f6 gxf6 18.♜xf6 ♜g6 19.♙xg6 hxg6 20.♙h6 ♜c5+ 21.♞f2 ♜e6 22.♞d1 ♜c7 23.♙xf8 ♜xf8 24.♞d8+-.

15.♞ad1! ♙b8

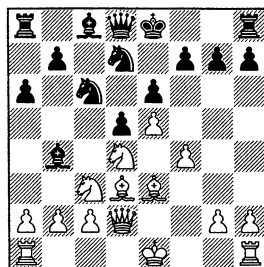
It is too bad for Black to play: 15...♜xd5 16.♙xh7+ ♜xh7 17.♞xd5+- or 15...f5 16.exf6 ♙xf6 17.♜b6+-.



16.♙e4 ♜e8 17.f5 ♜g5 18. ♜xe7+ ♜xe7 19.♙xc6 bxc6 20. ♙c5 ♜xe5 (In case of 20...♜e8, White follows with 21.♜d4 and

Black has nothing to move. He sets up a trap with his last move – after 21.♙d6, Black plays 21... ♜e4!) **21.♙xf8! ♜xf8 22.♞fe1 ♜e4 23.♞d8+ ♜e7 24.♜h4+ ♜f6 25.♜xf6+** and White wins.

d) 9...♙b4 10.♙d3



10...0-0

About 10...♜a5 11.a3 – see variation 9...♜a5; as for 10...♙c5 – see variation 9...♙e7 10.♙d3 ♙c5.

10...♜c5 11.0-0 ♜xd3 (The line 11...♙d7, which happened in the game Gabrielsen – E.David, Oslo 2002, following 12.♞f2 ♜xd3 13.cxd3 ♜xd4 14.♙xd4, leads after a transposition of moves to the same position as the move in the text.) 12.cxd3 ♙d7 13.♞f2 ♜xd4 14.♙xd4 0-0. (We have analyzed similar position extensively in our Chapter 14, while we were dealing with the line: 8...♙e7 9.♞f3 0-0 10.♙d3 ♜c5. In this situation, Black has weakened the g1-a7 diagonal considerably and that provides White with additional possibilities.) 15.♙b6!? (It is also interesting for White to continue here with: 15.♙c5 ♙xc5 16.♞xc5,

as it was played in the game Smejkal – Ljungqvist, Czechoslovakia 1967, but I am worried by Black's possibility – 16...f6. Naturally, the exchange of the dark squared bishops is advantageous for White; nevertheless, as it often happens, here his pieces have lost their coordination for a while. Now, after the immediate capturing on f6, White fails to bring his knight to the d4-square. It becomes obvious that White's best decision here is: 17. ♗d4 fxe5 18. fxe5 ♗e7 and his position remains slightly better.) 15... ♗e8 16. ♗d4 ♗e7 (16... ♙e7?! 17.f5 exf5 18. ♖xd5+– or 16... ♙xc3 17.bxc3 ♗c8 18. ♙c5 ♗e8 19. ♗e3, followed by ♙c5-d4, g2-g4 and f4-f5±) 17.f5 ♗fc8 18.f6 ♗c5 19. ♙xc5 ♙xc5 20. ♖e2 ♙b5 21. ♗ad1 and the arising endgame is extremely unpleasant for Black.

11.0–0 ♗e7

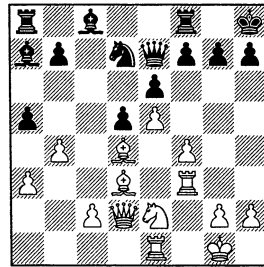
11... ♖xd4 12. ♙xd4 ♙c5 13. ♖e2 ♗b6 14.c3 ♙xd4+ 15. ♖xd4 (I would have preferred here the move 15.cxd4± and after that White can organize a kingside attack, or he can try some purely positional methods of realization of his advantage, exploiting the c-file and the c5-square. Naturally, the choice between these two equally strong moves depends mostly on style, as well as on preference and even on the mood of the player...) 15... ♖c5 16. ♙c2. No doubt, this bishop should be preserved by White. 16... ♙d7 17. ♗ae1

a5 18. ♗f2. White intends to free his queen from the defence of his b2-pawn. 18...f5 19.exf6 ♗xf6 20. ♗e5 ♗af8 21. ♗e3± Short – Timman, Amsterdam 1989.

12. ♗ae1 ♖h8 13.a3 ♙c5 14. ♖ce2

The arising middle game seems to me to be more promising for White than the standard endgame that was tested in the game Gikas – Hart, Dortmund 1993, as it followed with: 14. ♗f2 ♖xd4 15. ♙xd4 ♙xd4 16. ♗xd4 ♗c5 17. ♖e2 ♗xd4+ 18. ♖xd4 ♖c5 19. ♗f3 ♙d7 20. ♗h3 and White preserved a slight advantage.

14... ♙a7 15.b4 ♖xd4 16. ♙xd4 a5 17. ♗f3±

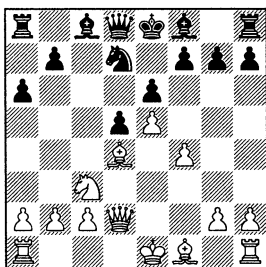


White is perfectly ready for a decisive onslaught against the enemy king.

e) 9... ♖xd4 10. ♙xd4 (diagram)

10...b5

The line 10... ♙c5 11.0–0–0 transposes to variations from Chapter 17, devoted to – 8... ♙c5 9. ♗d2 a6 10.0–0–0 ♖xd4; about 10...g6 11.0–0–0 – see variation



9...g6; as for 10...♙b4 11.♙d3 0–0 12.0–0 – see variation 9...♙b4; 10...♙e7 11.♙d3 – see variation 9...♙e7 10.♙d3 ♖xd4 11.♙xd4.

10...♗c5 (We have already discussed the drawbacks of that set-up in Chapter 14, while we were analyzing the variation 8...♗c5.) 11.a3 ♙e7 12.♙e2 0–0 13.0–0±.

10...f6. This move does not bring anything good for Black, except additional weaknesses. 11.exf6 ♖xf6 12.♙d3 ♙d6 13.0–0 0–0 14.♙ae1 ♗c7, Fiser – Kastner, Litomyšl 2003, 15.♗a4±.

10...♗b8. That is not a good idea for Black, because White's bishop, after its being attacked, can retreat to the b6-square with tempo, so that White's attack is not slowed down. 11.♗f2 ♙d7 (or 11...♗c6 12.♙b6 ♗e7 13.0–0 0 f6, De la Riva Aguado – Belenguer, Zaragoza 1994, 14.exf6!?) This move is more precise than the immediate capture on d5 as it happened in the first game in which that line was played. 14...♗xf6 15.♙xd5 exd5. Otherwise Black must remain a pawn down without any compensation whatsoever.

16.♗xd5 ♗f7 17.♗c7+ ♗d7 18.♙e2! and here it is too bad for Black to play: 18...♗xa2 19.♗e3! ♗a1+ 20.♗d2 ♙b4+ 21.♗d3 ♗a2+ 22.b3 ♗d8 23.♙g4+ ♗c6 24.♙f3+ ♙d7 25.♗d4+ – as well as: 18...♙d6 19.♙d1! h5 20.c4! ♙b8 21.c5 ♙h6 22.♗e3 ♙f6 23.cxd6 ♙xd6 24.♙xh5 ♙xd1+ 25.♙xd1 and his position is totally hopeless.) 12.♙d3 b5, Relange – Mela, Paris 1998, 13.a4 b4 14.♙b6 ♗c8 15.♗e2 ♙e7 16.0–0±.

10...♗c7 11.♙d3 ♙c5 12.♗e2 ♙xd4 (12...b6 13.c3±) 13.♗xd4 ♗c5 14.b4! (or 14.0–0 ♗b6 15.c3, Jedryczka – Kalina, Augustow 1996, 15...♗xd3 16.♗xd3 ♗xb2 17.a4 ♗b6∞) 14...♗xd3+ 15.cxd3 ♗b6 16.♗c3 (In case of: 16...0–0 17.♗c5 ♗d8 18.0–0 b6 19.♗c3 ♙d7 20.♙ac1 ♙c8 21.♗d2 ♗e7 22.a3, White preserves a slight advantage, mostly because of the superiority of his knight on d4 over his opponent's bishop. Black should play extremely accurately not to enter a very difficult endgame.) 16...♙d7 17.♗c5 (or 17...♗xc5 18.bxc5 ♙c8 19.♙c1 ♗e7 20.♗d2 ♙c7 21.♙c2 ♙hc8 22.♙hc1 f6 23.♙b1 ♙xc5 24.♙xc5 ♙xc5 25.♙xb7 ♗e8 26.♗b3 ♙c6 27.♙a7±) 17...♗d8 18.0–0 ♙c8 19.♗a7 0–0 (or 19...♗c7 20.♗b3±; 19...0–0 20.♙ac1 f6 21.♙xc8 ♗xc8 22.♗c5 ♗b8 23.♗f3±) 19...♙c7 20.♙ac1 0–0 21.♗b3 ♙b5 22.♗e3 ♙xc1 23.♙xc1 ♗e7 24.a3±;

10...♗a5 11.a3! (In the game Zelcic – Yeullaz, Saint Vincent 2000, White had some edge after:

11.♙d3 ♙c5 12.♙xc5 ♞xc5 13. 0-0-0, but it seemed much more logical for him to follow with: 12...♟xc5 13.a3 ♞b6.) 11...♙c5 12. ♙xc5 ♞xc5 13.♙d3 0-0 14.♞e2!? White's idea is quite obvious – he plans to deploy his knight to the d4-square, to fortify it with c2-c3 and then to castle short. In case he manages to accomplish that, his advantage will be doubtless. 14...♞b6 (Black attacks his opponent's b2-pawn and that creates some problems for White. His task becomes much easier after Black's other possibilities: 14... ♞a7 15.♞d4 ♞c5 16.♞e3 ♙d7 17. 0-0±; 14...♞c7 15.♞d4 ♞c5 16.♞e3 ♙d7 17.0-0±; 14...f6 15.♞d4 and now, White maintains his edge in case of: 15...♞e7 16.♞b4 ♞xb4+ 17.axb4 fxe5 18.♞xe6 ♟f7 19.♞c7 ♟b8 20.♞xd5 exf4 21.0-0 g5 22. ♟fe1± as well as after: 15...♞b6 16.♞b4 fxe5 17.♞xb6 ♞xb6 18.fxe5 ♞a4 19.b3 ♞c5 20.♟f1 ♙d7 21. ♞e2±.) 15.♞b4 ♞a7 16.♞e7 b5 (Presently, Black's knight cannot abandon the d7-square – 16... ♞c5? 17.♙xh7+.) 17.♞h4 (Black's queen is rather misplaced on the e7-square and it would be advisable for White to keep it there for a while. It is not so simple however, for example after: 17.♟f1 h6 18.g4, Black has the counterstrike – 18... ♞xe5!) 17...h6 18.g4 ♞c5 19.♟g1! f6 20.exf6 ♟xf6 21.g5 ♞xd3+ 22. cxd3 hxg5 (Black can complicate the game considerably with the move 22...♟g6, but White can still

maintain his advantage after: 23.♞h5 ♞h7 24.♟g3 ♞c7 25.♟c1 ♞e7 26.♞d2 b4 27.♟cg1± or 23... ♞f7 24.♞d2 hxg5 25.♟xg5 ♟xg5 26.♞xg5 ♙b7 27.♞d4 ♟f8 28.♟g1 ♞f6 29.♞xf6 ♟xf6 30.♞e3 ♟h6 31.h4±) 23.♟xg5 ♟f5 (23...♙b7 24.♞d2±) 24.♟xf5 exf5 25.♞d8+ ♞h7 26.♟c1 ♙e6 27.♟c7 ♟xd8 28. ♟xa7 ♙c8 29.♞d4 ♟d7. Black has great problems even without that exchange – White's rook is much more active and Black's bishop on c8 is not reliably placed, so it needs permanent protection. 30. ♟xd7 ♙xd7 31.b4 ♞h6 32.♞f2 ♞h5 33.♞g3 ♙c8 34.♞f3 ♞h6 35.h3±. White's king is quite ready to go along the route – ♞g3-f2-e3-d4 etc.

11.♙d3 ♙c5

Black's other possibilities are:

11...♞c7 12.0-0 ♙c5 13.♞e2±;
11...♞b6 12.♞f2 ♟b8, Bodrogi – Ignacz, Budapest 2004, 13.0-0 ♞c7 14.♞e2 ♞c4 15.♟ad1±;

11...♙e7 12.0-0 g6, Slaby – Bronowicki, Polanczyk 2000, 13. ♞e3 ♞c7 14.a3 ♙b7 15.♞d1 ♟c8 16.♞f2 h5 17.b4 ♙d8 18.a4 bxa4 19.♟xa4 ♞b6 20.♟a2 ♞c4 21.♞h3±;

11...♞c5 12.0-0 b4 (or 12...g6 13.♞e3 ♞c7, Lundberg – Greben, Pardubice 1993, 14.♙xb5+ axb5 15.♞xb5 ♞b6 16.♞d6+ ♙xd6 17. exd6±) 13.♞e2 ♞xd3 14.cxd3 ♙e7 15.♟fc1 0-0 16.♞e3 ♟b8 17.♙c5 ♙b7 18.♙xe7 ♞xe7 19.♞d4 ♟bc8 20.f5 exf5 21.♞xf5 ♟xc1+ 22.♟xc1 ♞e6 23.♞g5 g6, Danailov – Perez Aleman, Las Palmas 1993, 24.

Chapter 15

♖h6+ ♕h8 25.♟f6+ ♜xf6 26. exf6+-.

12.♗e2 ♖b7 13.c3 ♝c8

It seems extremely risky for Black to play here: 13...♜h4+ 14. g3 ♟h3 15.f5 ♟g2 16.0-0-0±.

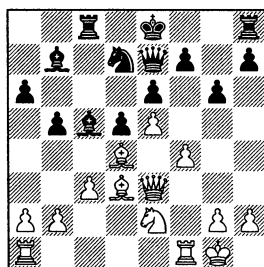
14.♟e3 ♟e7 15.0-0 g6!?

Black prevents the pawn-break f4-f5.

15...0-0, Cribbett – Foord, New Zealand 1980, 16.f5 exf5 17.♗xf5 ♝xc7 18.♗xd7 ♗xd4 19. ♗xd4 ♝xd7 20.♟g3± or 17...♟xe5 18.♟h3 ♗f6 19.♗xc8 ♗xc8 20. ♟h4± and Black's compensation for the exchange is evidently insufficient.

(diagram)

Now, White has several equally purposeful plans at his disposal. For example, it seems quite reasonable for him to follow with: **16.a4 b4 17.a5**. This move deprives Black's pieces of the b6-square and it fixes the weakness on a6 in the process. In case the



b-file gets opened, Black's bishop, which defends the a6-pawn, will become a target for an attack on the open file and that would create additional problems for him. **17...0-0 18.♖h1**. Now, White can patiently improve his position, while Black has nothing sensible to do. The point is that the exchange on d4 is quite favourable for White, if you have in mind the pawn-structure and Black cannot even dream about creating any counterplay without that exchange. **18...♝c7 19.♗g1 ♝fc8 20.♟h3 ♗xd4 21.cxd4 b3 22. ♗f3±**.

Conclusions about Chapters 14-15

The system 8...a6 for Black and the lines that we have analyzed in our previous chapter have plenty of things in common. Contrary to the variation 8...♗c5, now Black refrains from an immediate pressure against White's centre and thus he enables his opponent to vary in the choice of his plans. White can castle short or long, but his main strategical idea remains the same. He must create and fortify a powerful central set-up with either a knight or a bishop on the all-important d4-outpost Following that and exploiting the power of that construction, he organizes a kingside attack having in mind as a rule the pawn-break f4-f5.

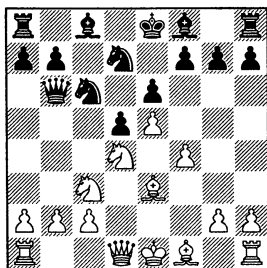
Black has problems to free himself from the positional pressure, because White often slows down his active actions and pays attention, as Nimzowitsch might have said, to some prophylactic measures...He usually prevents Black's undermining move f7-f6, which is his main idea for counterplay.

It is also very important that White maintains his advantage after an eventual transfer into an endgame too. That is because he usually has extra space and his bishop is much stronger than its counterpart. That remains to be White's reserve road to victory in case he fails in his direct attack.

In general, we can assume that the variations that we have analyzed are rather favourable for White, but they are so numerous and variable that he must study them carefully. Each line is more or less unique and therefore it requires a special approach.

Chapter 16

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7
5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♙e3 cxd4 8.♘xd4
♙b6



This is the second most popular line for Black (after 8...♙c5) and it is particularly interesting among his numerous other possibilities. Black practically forces his opponent to sacrifice a pawn with the hope that his relatively solid and stable pawn-structure would enable him to gradually neutralize White's initiative.

9.♙d2

I believe – that is White's most principled answer in case he wishes to achieve a real advantage in the opening stage.

9...♙xb2

Black's other possibilities are not so logical, since the main idea of the whole 8...♙b6 variation for him is to exert pressure against the b2-pawn. We will not even consider seriously the moves 9...♙b4 and 9...a6 (which have been

played in practice, though...), because of the routine counterstrike for White – 10.♘xe6 and Black should better resign. The possible retreats of Black's queen are just an obvious loss of time and White obtains a great advantage effortlessly, for example after: 9...♙d8, Werner – Lui, Vlissingen 2001, 10.0–0–0, White continued the game practically with two extra tempi.

It is not any better for Black to try here: 9...♙a5 10.♘b3 ♙c7, Volis – Athanasiadis, Ambelokipi 2002, 11.♘b5 ♙b8 12.♙d3 a6 13.♘5d4± or 9...♙c7 10.♙d3 a6 11.0–0 ♘xd4 12.♙xd4 ♙c5 13.♘e2 0–0 14.c3 f5 15.exf6 gxf6 16.♙e3 (White would have played the same move in case Black had captured on e6 with any other piece as well.) ♙d6 17.♖h1 ♗f7 18.♙ae1± Osterman – Handel, corr. 1993.

Following 9...♙c5, Black manages to force some simplifications, but after the forced line: 10.♘a4 ♙b4 11.♘xc5 ♙xd2 12.♖xd2 ♘xc5 13.♘b5 ♘e4+ 14.♖e1 0–0 15.♙d3, his position is without any good prospects. White has the two bishop advantage and the d6–

square in Black's camp is so vulnerable that White's knight can penetrate to that outpost in numerous lines. In addition, Black's knight on e4 is rather unstable and that enables White to attack his opponent's pawn-structure with the help of the move c2-c4, thus reducing its elasticity, for example after: 15..f5, Wurschner – Lamy, Email 2002, 16.exf6 gxf6 17.c4 ♖f7 18.♖d1 ♖g7 19.♖g1 f5 20.♖e2 ♖b4 21.♖d4± or 15...a6 16.♖c7 ♖b8 17.c4 ♖b4 18.♖b1±. White is clearly better in all these lines.

After 9... ♖xd4, Black can postpone his decision-making for just one move – 10. ♖xd4, but after that he is faced once again with a difficult choice:

10... ♗a5 11. ♖b5 ♗xd2+ (11... ♗d8 12. ♗c3+-) 12. ♖xd2 ♖d8 13. ♖xa7+- Pflug – Huber, Rieden 1996;

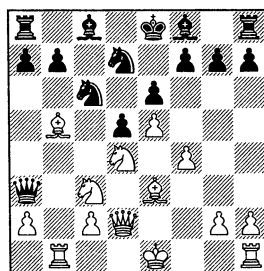
10... ♗c6 11. ♖b5 ♗c7 12.0-0 a6 13. ♖d3 ♖c5 14. ♖e2 and we have reached by transposition the game Osterman – Handel, corr. 1993 – see 9... ♗c7, which we have already analyzed;

10... ♗d8 11.0-0-0 ♖b4 (or 11...g6 12. ♖xd5 exd5 13.e6±; 11...a6 12.f5±) 12.h4 ♖c5 13. ♗e3 b6 14.h5 (Black's counterplay is obviously too slow.) 14...0-0 15.g4 ♖d7, Abreu – Cardenas, Guines 1998. Here, White should not have wasted time on prophylactic (16. ♖b1), but instead he could have started immediate actions aimed

at finishing his opponent off with a direct attack – 16.f5 ♖xc3 (or 16...♖c8 17.f6 ♖xc3 18. ♗g5+-) 17. ♖xc3 ♖e4 18.f6 ♖c8 19. ♖b4 and Black would have been beyond salvation;

10... ♖c5 11. ♖a4 ♗c6 (After 11... ♖b4 12.c3 ♗a5, Kalbou – Konstantin, Internet 2004, 13.cxb4 ♗xa4 14.b3 ♗a3 15. ♖b2, Black simply loses his queen.) 12. ♖xc5 ♖xc5 13. ♗a5 ♖d7 14. ♖b5 ♗xc2 15.0-0 0-0 16. ♖ac1 ♗e4 17. ♗c3 ♖b6 (hoping for 18. ♖d3 ♖a4) 18.b3 ♖d7 (in case of 18... ♗g6, Black's defence is quite problematic too – 19. ♖c5 ♖d8 20. ♖e7 d4 21. ♗h3 ♖d5 22. ♖d3 ♗h6 23. ♖xh6 gxh6 24. ♖f3+-) 19. ♖d3 ♖ac8 20. ♖xe4 ♖xc3 21. ♖xh7+ and White remains with an extra exchange, de Firmian – Cornelison, San Mateo 1992.

10. ♖b1 ♗a3 11. ♖b5



Black can solve the problem with his knight on c6 in several different ways. We will deal in details with the most solid: **a) 11... ♖db8** and **b) 11... ♖xd4**.

Here is in short something about his other possibilities:

It seems extremely dubious for him to continue with: 11...♭a5 12.f5 ♗d8 (or 12...exf5 13.♭xf5 ♗b4 14.♭xg7+ ♗f8 15.♗d4+-) 13.♗g5+ ♗e7 14.fxe6 ♭xe5, Seret – Mercier, Clermont Ferrand 1985, 15.♭xd5 f6 16.♭f5 ♭ac4 17.♗d4+-;

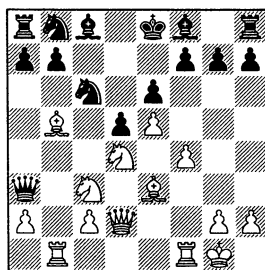
The move 11...♗b4 – has not attracted too many followers either. 12.♖b3 ♗a5 13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.♭xc6 ♗xc3, von Saleski – C. Wagner, Email 2000, 15.♭xa5 ♗xd2+ 16.♭xd2 ♗a6 (In case of 16...f6, it is not so good for White to follow with 17.♭c6, due to 17...fxe5 18.fxe5 ♭b6 and Black forces an additional simplification of the position. White has some other counter measures though, for example: 17.exf6 ♭xf6 18.c4 ♭e4+ 19.♗c2 ♗a6 20.cxd5 exd5 21.♖d1 ♖d8 22.♗xa7 0-0 23.♭b2±.) 17.♖hb1 f6 (or 17...0-0 18.♭c6 f6 19.♖a3 ♗c4 20.♖b7+-) 18.♭c6. White's position is doubtlessly much more attractive. Black's knight on d7 is out of action, his a7-pawn is vulnerable and his opponent dominates on the b-file. White should however play very actively and enterprisingly, because he must consider the possible drawish motives connected with the presence of opposite coloured bishops on the board. 18...fxe5 19.fxe5 ♗c4 (or 19...0-0 20.a4 ♭b6 21.♗xb6 axb6 22.♖f3±) 20.♖b7 ♗xa2 21.♖a1 ♗c4 22.♖xa7 ♖xa7 23.♖xa7 ♖f8. The material has been reduced indeed, but White's advantage is

considerable. Black's pieces are deployed in disharmony and his e6-pawn is weak. 24.♗c5 (White wishes to preserve his e5-pawn, but it is also possible for him to follow with: 24.♭d4 ♭e5 25.♭xe6, winning Black's g7-pawn.) 24...♖f4 (In case of: 24...♖f5 25.♗d6 ♖f2+ 26.♗c3 ♖xg2 27.♖a8+ ♗f7 28.♭d8+ ♗g6 29.♖a7, White's e5-pawn may become extremely dangerous.) 25.♗d6 ♖e4 26.♗c3 ♖e3+ 27.♭b4 ♖e4 28.♖a8+ ♗f7 29.♖d8 and Black loses his knight on d7.

a) 11...♭db8

The renowned connoisseur of the French Defence – GM Sergey Volkov prefers this particular move.

12.0-0



Here, Black has tried in practice the following lines: **a1) 12... ♗a5**, **a2) 12...♗b4** and **a3) 12... a6**.

The move 12...♗d7, was played in a correspondence game, but it did not challenge White in any way and it was in fact a loss of a tempo. After: 13.f5 a6 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.fxe6 fxe6 (It is hardly an

improvement for Black to try: 15... ♙xe6 16. ♗f2 ♗e7 17. ♗a4+-) 16. ♚b3 ♗a5 17. ♚xf8+ ♚xf8 18. ♗xe6 d4 19. ♗xf8 dxe3 20. ♚xb8+ White pressed easily his advantage home.

a1) 12... ♗a5 13. ♗b3 ♗d8

Black tried this plan in the game I.Herrera – Vallejo Pons, Havana 1999. He brings back his queen into the defence with the idea to gradually neutralize White's lead in development.

14. ♗a4!?

This is probably not White's only plan, but still it is very attractive. He is ready to acknowledge that he will fail to end up the game with a checkmate anytime soon and he plans to continue with positional strategy. On one hand he prevents Black's move 14...a6, on the other hand he prepares opening the centre with the help of the move c2-c4 and that will enable him to penetrate with his knight to the d6-square and to exert a powerful pressure along the open files. Meanwhile, White's space advantage will increase additionally, so Black's pieces will become extremely cramped.

14... ♙e7

Or 14... ♗d7 15. c4 a6 16. ♙xc6 bxc6 17. ♗a5±.

15. c4 dxc4

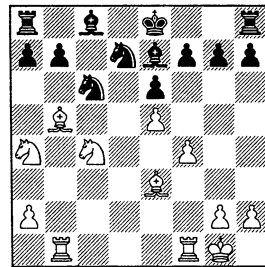
After 15...0-0 16. cxd5 exd5 17. ♗c3 ♙b4 18. a3 ♙xc3 19. ♗xc3 ♙f5 20. ♚bd1, White's compensation for the pawn is more than suffi-

cient. Black must worry about his d5-pawn. He should also try not to let White's pawn-avalanche on the kingside come forward unopposed and he must find a way to develop his knight on b8 somehow – so he has too many problems indeed.

16. ♗xd8+ ♙xd8 17. ♗d2 ♗d7

In case of: 17...a6 18. ♙xc6+ ♗xc6 19. ♗xc4 b5 20. ♗d6+ ♗f8 21. ♚fc1 ♙d7 22. ♗c5 – there will come a moment in which White will regain everything with interest, for example: 22... ♗b8 23. ♗cb7 ♗c6 24. ♚d1 ♙e8 25. ♚bc1 ♗e7 26. ♗xf7±.

18. ♗xc4 ♙e7

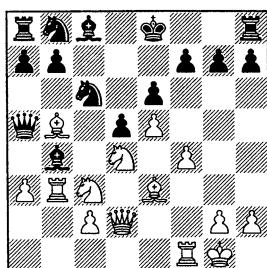


19. ♚fd1 f6 20. exf6 gxf6 21. ♙xc6 (White has an alternative here, for players who may like to obtain more dynamic positions and that is – 21. ♗d6+ ♙xd6 22. ♚xd6 ♗e7 23. ♚bd1 and his compensation for the pawn is more than sufficient.) **21... bxc6 22. ♗d6+ ♙xd6 23. ♚xd6 ♗b8** (In case of 23...e5 24. ♚xc6 0-0 25. ♗c3 exf4 26. ♙xf4 ♗e5 27. ♚d6, White's initiative is very powerful

in the endgame too. Black's problems can be best illustrated in the following possible line: 27...♖c4 28.♗d4 ♙e6 29.♗e1 ♜f7 30.♙h6 ♗fc8 31.♗g4+ ♙g6 32.♗d5+-) **24. ♖bd1 0-0 25.♗c5 ♜f7 26.♗d8 ♗xd8** (26...♗a6 27.♗xc8±) **27. ♗xd8±**. Black's defence will be rather difficult, despite the reduced material left on the board.

a2) 12...♙b4 13.♗b3 ♖a5 14.

a3



Black is now forced to make an important decision.

14...♙c5

His other possibilities do not solve his problems at all:

14...♙xc3 15.♗xc3 0-0 16.♖b1! This move helps White prepare a decisive break on...the kingside! 16...♗xd4 (Black has no other way to complete his development in sight.) 17.♙xd4 ♖c6 18.♙xc6 bxc6 19.f5! exf5 20.e6! ♖d8 21.♙xg7! ♜xg7 22.♗g3+ ♜f6 23.♖h6+ ♜e7 24.♗e3 ♗h8 (Black loses after 24...fxe6, due to: 25.♖b7+ ♜d6 26.♖f4+) 25.♖g5+ ♜d6 26.e7 ♖e8 27.♖f6+ ♜d7 28.c4 and Black is completely helpless;

14...♙e7 (now, Black should worry about White's possibility f4-f5-f6 and that reduces his prospects considerably) 15.f5 a6 (he is trying to force some simplifications) 16.♙xc6 ♗xc6 17.♖f2 ♗xe5 (In case of: 17...♗xd4 18.♙xd4 ♖c7 19.♗a4! ♖b8 20.♗b6 exf5 21.♗xd5 ♖d8 22.♗xe7 ♖xe7 23.♙c5, Black fails to provide his king with a safe shelter. There might follow, for example: 23...♖e6 24.♖d1 b5 25.♖bd3 ♙b7 26.♖d2 and the fight is practically over.) 18. ♗xe6! fxe6 (or 18...♗g4 19.♙b6 ♖xc3 20.♗xc3 ♗xf2 21.♗c7+ ♜d7 22.♗xf2 ♖b8 23.♗xd5 and Black even fails to complete his development) 19.♙b6 ♙c5 (after 19... ♗d7 20.♙xa5 ♙c5 21.fxe6 ♙xf2+ 22.♗xf2 ♗f6 23.♖b6 - Black will be forced to play during the rest of the game without his queenside pieces) 20.♙xc5 ♗g4 21.♖d4 ♖c7 22.♖f4 e5 23.♗xd5 ♖c6 24.♗e4 ♜f7 25.♗e7 exd4 26.♗xc6 bxc6 27.♗xg4 ♙xf5 28.♖f4 ♜e6 29. ♙xd4 ♙xc2 30.♗e3+ and Black's defence is so difficult that White will manage to gobble at least a couple of more pawns.

15.♖f2 ♙b6

After 15...♙xd4, Black presents his opponent with the two bishop advantage and his defence will lack any good prospects. 16. ♙xd4 0-0 17.♙c5 ♖d8 18.♙d6 ♖b6 19.♖xb6 axb6 20.♗a4 ♗d7 21.♖d1. White could have easily restored the material balance, but he prefers to increase the

positional pressure, since Black has practically no useful moves left. 21... ♖a5 22. ♜b4 ♖c4 (or 22... ♖c6 23. ♜bb1 f6 24. exf6 gxf6 25. f5 ♖f7 26. fxe6+ ♖xe6 27. ♙c7 ♜g8 28. ♖c3+) 23. ♙xc4 dxc4 24. ♙c7 ♜e8 25. ♖c3 – White's threat to penetrate with his knight to the d6-square is extremely unpleasant for Black.

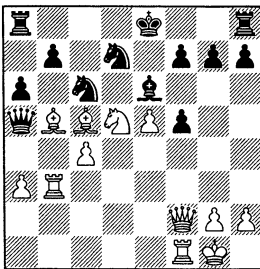
16. f5 exf5

In case of 16... 0–0 17. f6 g6 18. ♙xc6 ♖xc6 19. ♜xb6, White's queen will soon checkmate Black's king and there is no available defence in sight.

17. ♖xd5 ♙xd4 18. ♙xd4 ♙e6 19. c4 ♖d7

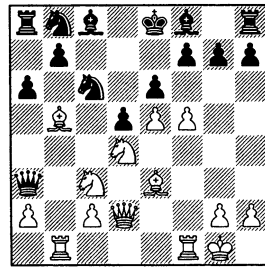
Black cannot castle, his pieces are disordinated and they are incapable of defending the king against White's direct attack.

20. ♙c5 a6



21. ♙b4! ♗d8 22. ♙d6 axb5 23. ♖c7+ ♗xc7 24. ♙xc7 ♙xc4 25. ♜c3 and Black's compensation for the queen was obviously insufficient in the game Bologan – Volkov, Rethymnon 2003.

a3) 12... a6 13. f5!



13... axb5

Black is practically forced to accept that sacrifice, because following: 13... ♙b4 14. ♜b3 ♗a5, Betkowski – Kawecki, Poland 1999, 15. ♗f2 ♙xc3 (After 15... axb5 16. fxe6 0–0 17. exf7+ ♖h8 18. ♖xd5 ♙e7 19. ♖xe7 ♖e7 20. e6 – Black's position is defenseless.) 16. fxe6 0–0 – the game ends up in a spectacular checkmate – 17. ♗xf7 ♜xf7 18. exf7+ ♖f8 19. ♖e6+ ♙xe6 20. ♙c5+ ♖e7 21. ♙xe7+ ♖xe7 22. f8♖#.

14. fxe6 ♙xe6

White's task is even simpler after: 14... fxe6 15. ♖dxb5 ♗a5 16. ♗f2 ♖d7 (In case of 16... ♙e7, White wins with: 17. ♖xd5! exd5 18. ♙b6 ♜f8 19. ♖c7+ ♖d7 20. e6+ ♖d6 21. ♗g3+.) 17. ♖d6+ ♖d8 (or 17... ♙xd6 18. ♗f7 ♖d8 19. exd6+–) 18. ♖f7+ ♖c7 19. ♖b5+ ♖b8 20. ♖xh8+–.

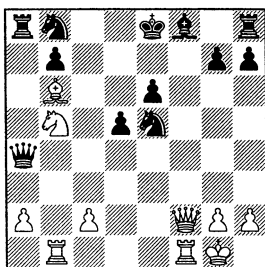
15. ♖xe6 fxe6 16. ♖xb5 ♗a5 17. ♗f2 ♖xe5

Or 17... ♖d7 18. ♗f7+ ♖d8 19. ♙g5+ ♙e7 20. ♗xg7 ♜e8 21. ♖d6+–.

18. ♙b6 ♗a4

It is also dangerous for Black to follow with: 18... ♗xa2 19. ♙d4

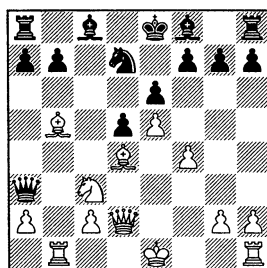
(threatening 20.♖a1) 19...♙c4 20. ♘xe5 ♘c5 21.♙d4! (White thus avoids the unnecessary technical problems that he has to cope with after: 21.♙d6+ ♗e7 22.♙xc4 ♘xf2+ 23.♙xf2 dxc4 24.♙xg7 ♖e8 25.♙e5 ♙d7 26.♙xb7, although he maintains his advantage even then.) 21...♙f8 22.♙e3 ♙d7 23. ♙c7+ ♗e7 24.♙xe6 ♙xf1+ 25.♙xf1 ♗d6 26.♙f4+ ♗xe6 27.♖e1+ ♙e5 28.♙xe5+ ♗d7 29.♙xg7+ ♗c6 30. ♖e6+ ♙d6 31.♙xd6+ ♗xd6 32.♙e5+ ♗c5 33.♙c7+ ♗b4 34.♙xb7+ ♙b5 35.♙xa8 ♙c5+ 36.♗h1+-.



19.c4! (This move is much more precise than 19.♘c5, which was tested in the games Nordholz – Boehm, Germany 1987 and Poluliakhov – O.Ivanov, USSR 1989, because Black has at his disposal the attractive tactical strike – 19...♙f3+! with quite good chances of equalizing. It is stronger for White to play here 19.♙c7+, but even then after: 19... ♗d7 20.♙xa8 ♙xa8 21.c4 ♙d6 22. cxd5 ♖e8 Black preserves some chances to save the game.) **19... ♙a6** (Accepting the sacrifice does not promise anything good for

Black either – 19...dxc4 20.♙c7+ ♗d7 21.♙d4+ ♙d6 22.♙fd1 ♙d3 23.♙xa8 ♙xa8 24.♙xg7+- or 19...♙xc4 20.♙c7 ♗d7 21.♙xa8 ♙bc6 22.♙e3 ♙a6 23.♙b6+ ♗c7 24.♙g3+-) **20.♙e2 ♙xc4 21. ♙xe5 ♙c6 22.♙d4 ♙d6 23. ♙xf8+ ♙xf8 24.♙xe6 ♙f6 25. ♙xd5+-** White is threatening 26.♖e1 and Black has nothing to counter it with.

b) 11...♙xd4 12.♙xd4



12...♙b4

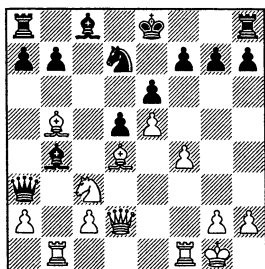
The other possibilities for Black are:

12...♙a5, Fontaine – Vidovic, Menorca 1996, 13.0–0 ♙c7 14. ♙a4. Now, White is planning c2-c4, but he also has the attractive route for his rook – ♖b1-b3 and later according to the circumstances: 14...a6 15.♙b6 ♖b8 16.♙a4 ♘c5 17.♙xc5 ♙xc5+ 18.♙f2 ♙c7 19.♙b4 a5 20.♙b5 and Black can hardly survive for longer than the opening stage of the game;

12...♙e7, Le Hoang – Cao Son, Vung Tau 2004, 13.0–0 0–0 14.♙xd5 exd5 15.♖b3 ♙xa2 16. ♖a1+-;

12...a6 13.♙xd7+ ♙xd7 14.♞b3 ♗e7 (14...♚a5 15.♙b6+-) 15.♞xb7 ♗d8 16.0-0 ♚c8 (Black's position seems to be reliable enough, but he has a small problem. The moment his bishop on f8 abandons its place, White's f-pawn goes forward and Black can hardly defend his kingside. For example: 16...♙e7 17.f5 ♚c8 18.♞fb1 ♙c6 19.♞xe7+ ♜xe7 20.♗g5+ ♜d7 21.fxe6+ and after a few moves Black resigned, Zaksaitė – Shatilov, Birstonas 2002.) 17.♞b3 ♚c4 (or 17...♙c5 18.f5 exf5?! 19.♜xd5 0-0 20.♜f6+ ♜h8 21.♞h3 ♙xd4+ 22.♜h1 1-0 Golubev – V.Zakharov, Moscow 1995) 18.♜d1 ♙b5 19.♜e3 ♚c7 20.♞fb1±. Black's defence is extremely difficult, because his king is stranded in the centre. He should worry about f4-f5 on the one side of the board and about White's possibility a2-a4 on the other side of the board.

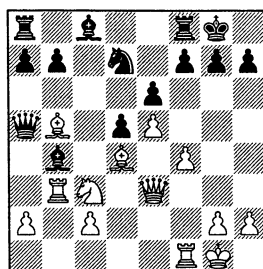
13. 0-0



Later, the developments depend largely on Black's choice between – **b1)** 13... 0-0 and **b2)** 13...a6.

It seems quite dubious for him to follow with: 13...♚a5 14.♗e3 0-0 (in case of 14...a6, White follows with: 15.♙xd7 ♙xd7 16.♙b6) 15.f5 ♙xc3 16.♙xc3 ♚c7 17.f6 1-0 Russo – Myatt, Email 2002.

b1) 13... 0-0 14.♞b3 ♚a5 15.♗e3



15...♜b6

Black has tried here some other moves too:

15...b6 (15...a6? 16.♙xd7 ♙xd7 17.♙b6+-) 16.f5 exf5 17.e6 fxe6 18.♗xe6+ ♜f7 19.♗xd5 ♞b8 20.♙c4± Penttinen – Piacentini, Li-massol 2000;

15...f5 16.♞fb1 ♙e7 (Or 16...♙xc3 17.♙xc3 ♚d8 18.♞a3! a6 19.♙a5 ♚h4 20.g3 ♚h5 21.♙b4 ♜f7 22.c4!? dxc4 23.♙xc4≡ Monin – Vl.Loginov, corr. 1986. White has managed to play c2-c4 and he has avoided the appearance of the enemy knight on the d5-square. Black has problems now developing his queenside, particularly if you have in mind that White can redeploy his light squared bishop to the h1-a8 diagonal, thus increasing his control over the

board even more. It deserved attention for Black to try 18...♘b6, with the idea to trade that knight for White's light squared bishop. Nevertheless, even then after: 19.♙a5!? d4 20.♖b3 ♗c7 21.♞a4 ♗c5 22.♙xb6 ♖xb6 23.♙f1! ♗xb3 24.cxb3! ♜d8 25.♜d1 d3 26.♞xd3 ♞xd3 27.♙xd3 ♙d7 28.♜d4 ♙c6 29.♙c4 ♝f7 30.♜d6 ♞e8 31.♝f2, White maintains a long-lasting advantage in the endgame.) 17.♙xd7 ♙xd7 18.♞xb7 ♞fd8 19.g4! (Naturally, White can capture Black's a7-pawn at the end, but he will have great problems then to materialize it into a full point.) 19...fxg4 20.f5 ♙f8 21.f6. White's advantage is overwhelming – Black is almost in a zugzwang: his bishop on f8 defends the g7-square, the other bishop on d7 covers the seventh rank, the rook on d8 defends that particular bishop and the other rook controls the a7-square and so it prevents White's rooks from penetrating on the seventh rank. It looks like Black's queen is free, but no – it defends the c7-square – after 21...♖a6, White will follow with: 22.♞c7 Δ23.♞bb7. Meanwhile, White's plan is crystal clear: ♗f4, followed by ♗xg4 and a subsequent attack against the enemy king.

16. ♗g3

White wishes to reduce Black's choice of possibilities and to force his bishop to retreat to e7 – 16.a3!? ♙e7 17.♗g3. Still after: 17...g6! (in case of 17...♙c4, White idea

triumphs – 18.f5 ♜d8 19.f6 ♙f8 20.fxg7 ♙xg7 21.♞f4+–) 18.♙e4 dxe4 19.♙c3 ♖xa3! 20.♞xa3 ♙xa3, the final outcome of the battle is completely unclear.

16...♙c4 17.f5 ♜d8

The move 17...exf5?!, was played in the game Pavasovic – Zueger, Portoroz 1998 and it led to a swift disaster for Black after: 18.e6! f6 19.♞xb4 ♗xb4 20.e7 ♗xe7 21.♙xd5 ♖e2 22.♙xf6+– (A.Finkel).

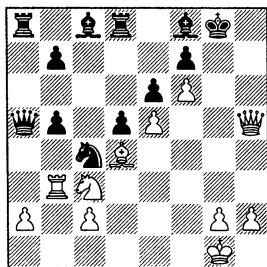
18. ♞f4! ♙f8

White was threatening to play 19.♞g4. It would have been terrible for Black to defend with: 18...exf5? 19.e6 g6 20.exf7+ ♝xf7 21.♖h4+– (A.Finkel).

19.f6 g6 20. ♞h4 a6

Black would not have saved the game with: 20...♙d2 21.♖h3 h5 22.♞xh5! gxh5 23.♖xh5 ♙c4 (23...♙xb3 24.♙d3+–). White at first checks several times in a row in order to take control over the e1-square – 24.♗g5+ ♝h7 25.♖h4 ♙h6 26.♙xc4 dxc4 27.♙e3+–.

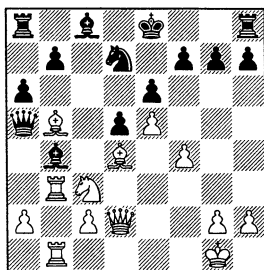
21. ♖h3 h5 22. ♞xh5 gxh5 23. ♖xh5 axb5



24. ♝f2!! ♖a3 (Here, in con-

nection with White's threat 25. ♙e4, Black is forced to sacrifice his queen in order to avoid the worst. He has gained plenty of material before, so he can afford that. Still, the queen was his only piece capable of creating problems for White, so with its disappearance from the board his chances for a successful defence diminished considerably.) **25. ♜xb5! ♜xb3 26. axb3 ♜a3**, Rechlis – Zueger, Ohrid 2001, **27. ♙e3! ♜xb5 28. ♙h6+-**. This move would have been played by White practically against every other move too. Black is totally defenseless against the checkmating threat.

b2) 13...a6 14. ♝b3 ♖a5 15. ♝fb1!



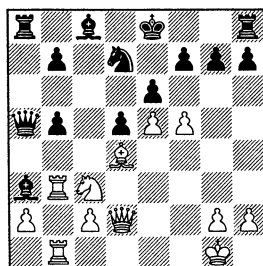
Black now has a choice between numerous other moves. We will deal here with: **b2a) 15... ♙a3**, **b2b) 15... ♜xb5** and **b2c) 15... ♙e7**.

It is not so resilient for him to defend with: 15... ♙xc3, Daels – Debailleul, Bethune 2002, 16. ♝xc3 ♖xa2 (or 16... 0-0 17. f5 axb5 18. f6

♖xa2 19. ♙d1 and White checkmates) 17. ♝b2 ♖a1+ 18. ♙f1 0-0 (18... ♖a4 19. ♝bb3 ♜f8 20. ♖a3 ♗d7 21. ♙b6 ♖e7 22. ♙c7 ♖b4 23. ♝ab3 ♖e7 24. ♙d6 ♗d8 25. ♝c7 ♜d7 26. f5+-) 19. ♝g3 ♜c5 (or 19... ♖a4 20. f5 and Black can hardly defend his king) 20. ♙xc5 ♜xb2 21. f5 ♖xe5 22. ♙d4 ♖xg3 23. hxg3 exf5 24. ♖e3±.

b2a) 15... ♙a3 16. f5! axb5

Black loses immediately after: 16... exf5 17. ♝xa3 ♖xa3 18. ♝b3 ♖a5 (or 18... axb5 19. ♝xa3 ♝xa3 20. ♜xb5 ♝xa2 21. ♜d6+) 19. ♙xd7+ ♙xd7 20. ♙b6+-.



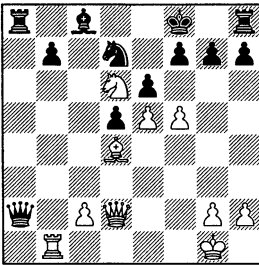
17. ♝xa3! ♖xa3 18. ♜xb5 ♖xa2

In case of 18... ♖a5, White wins with GM G.Timoshenko's recommendation – 19. ♖g5 ♖a6 (or 19... ♜f8 20. fxe6 fxe6 21. ♜d6 ♜g8 22. ♖e7+-) 20. ♜d6+ ♝xd6 21. exd6 ♗d8 22. ♖xg7 ♝f8 23. ♝e1 ♜b8 24. d7+.

19. ♜d6+ ♜f8

Black has also tried in practice the move 19... ♜d8, A.Timoshenko – Kasapchuk, corr. 1996 and here White should better continue with

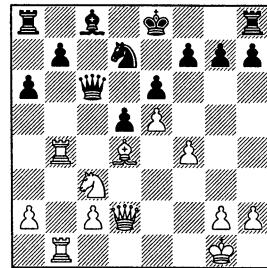
20.♔d1! (recommended by GM G.Timoshenko). Later, the game may develop in the following fashion: 20...♟f8 21.♞a1 ♜xa1 22.♙xa1 b6 23.♙d4. Black's material compensation for the queen seems sufficient indeed, but he fails to coordinate his pieces and that spells disaster for him at the end. 23...g6 (Black's position is really bad after: 23...♞a2 24.♜g4 g6 25. fxe6 fxe6 26.♞xe6+- or 23...exf5 24.♞f3 ♞a5 25.c4+-) 24.f6 ♖c7 25.♞b1 ♞a4 26.c4 ♙a6 27.♞b3 ♞a5 (27...♟xc4 28.♙xc4 ♙xc4 29. ♞b4+-) 28.♞b4 ♙c5 29.♙b5+ ♙xb5 30.♙xc5+-.



20.♟f1! (This is obviously even simpler than the line that White chose in the game we are following i.e. 20.♞a1 ♜xa1+ 21. ♙xa1 ♞xa1+ 22.♙f2 ♞a8 23.♜g5! f6 24.♞h5 g6 25.♞h6+ ♖g8 26. ♙e8 ♙f7 27.♜g7+ ♙xe8 28.♞xh8+ ♙f8 29.exf6 1-0 G.Timoshenko – Itkis, Herculane 1996.) **20...♞a5** Black's defence is extremely difficult after his other possibilities too: 20...♙xe5 21.f6! gxf6 22.♙xe5 h6 (22...♙e7 23.♜g5!+-) 23.♞f4+-; 20...f6 21.exf6 ♙xf6

22.fxe6 h6 (22...♙xe6 23.♜g5 ♙e7 24.♙f5+ ♙xf5 25.♞xg7+ ♙d6 26.♞xf6+ ♙e6 27.♙e5+ ♙d7 28. ♜g7+ ♙c6 29.♜c7+ ♙b5 30.♞xb7+ ♙c5 31.♙xh8 ♞xh8 32.♜e7+ ♙b5 33.♞xe6 ♞a7+ 34.♙h1 ♞d8 35. ♞f6+-) 23.♙xf6 gxf6 24.♜c3 d4 25.e7+; 20...♖g8 21.fxe6 fxe6 22.♜g5 h6 23.♜g6 ♞a4 24.c4 with the irrevocable threat ♙d6-e8. **21.♜g5 ♙c5 22.f6 ♞g8 23.fxg7+ ♞xg7 24.♞h6 ♜c7 25.♞xf7+ ♜xf7 26.♙xf7 ♙xf7 27.♞h5+ ♞g6 28.♞xh7+ ♞g7 29.♞h5+ ♞g6 30.♙xc5 ♙d7 31.♙e7+-.** Black is utterly helpless against 32.♙f6, followed by ♞h7+.

b2b) 15...♞xb5 16.♞xb4! ♜c6



17.f5!

This move opens the way for the deployment of White's queen to the kingside.

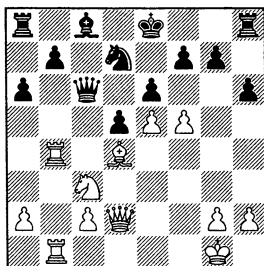
17...h6

Black's other moves are clearly weaker:

17...exf5, Hall – Huber, Timra 1995, 18.♜g5 ♜g6 (In case of: 18...0-0 19.e6 f6 20.♞xf5 a5 21.♙d5 ♞e8 22.♞b6! ♜c4 23.♞d6!

♗xd4+ 24. ♚h1, Black has no defence against White's numerous threats.) 19. ♗xg6 hxg6 20. ♜xd5 ♜d8 (20... a5 21. ♖c4+-) 21. ♖d1 a5 22. ♖b6+ ♜xb6 23. ♜xb6+ ♚e7 24. ♖c4 and White's rook penetrates to the c7-square with a decisive effect;

17... b5 18. ♗g5 g6, Erenska – Lissowska, Konin 1990 (it is not any better for Black to try here 18... ♖g8 19. f6 – with the threat 20. ♗xg7 – 19... g6 20. ♗h6±) 19. fxe6 fxe6 20. ♗h6 ♗c7 21. ♗g7 ♖f8 22. ♜xd5 exd5 23. e6 ♗d6 24. exd7+ ♙xd7 25. ♖e1+ ♜d8 26. ♖b3 and it would take a miracle to save the black king from being checkmated.



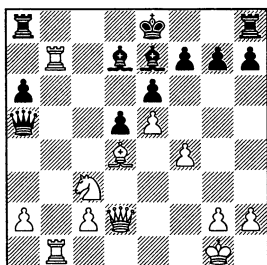
18. ♗f4

This move seems to be the most consequential for White, but evidently 18. f6, as it was played in the game Ki. Georgiev – Dolmatov, Moscow 1990, is good enough to maintain White's advantage as well. **18... exf5 19. ♗g3 ♖g8** (or 19... ♗g6 20. ♗xg6 fxc6 21. ♜xd5+-) **20. ♗f3 b6** (It is worse for Black to play here: 20... b5 21. a4 ♗e6 22. ♜xd5+- Asanov

– Gasik, Bratislava 1993.) **21. ♗xf5 ♖b7 22. ♗xh7 0–0–0 23. ♗f5 g6 24. ♗f2±.** Black's king will hardly be safe on the queenside either. White not only can capture on b6, but he has some other ways of improving his position too, without even allowing the long h1-a8 diagonal to be opened, for example: ♖b1-b3, ♜c3-a4, ♖b3-c3 etc.

b2c) 15... ♙e7 16. ♙xd7 ♙xd7 17. ♖xb7

It seems very attractive for White to prevent the move 17... ♙c5 with 17. ♗e3!? (In case of 17... ♖c8 18. ♖b7, White achieves what he wants...), but Black should counter that with: 17... ♗d8! 18. f5! (after 18. ♖xb7 0–0 19. ♖b6 ♗c8 20. ♖c7 ♗e8 21. ♙c5 ♙xc5 22. ♗xc5 ♖c8 23. ♖bb7 ♖xc7 24. ♖xc7 ♖b5 25. ♜xb5 ♗xb5 26. ♗xb5 axb5 27. ♖b7 ♖a8 28. ♖xb5 g5 or 19. f5 exf5 20. ♖b6 ♗c8 21. ♖c7 ♗e8 22. ♜xd5 ♙d8, Eilmes – Blauert, Internet 2005, 23. ♙c5 ♙xc7 24. ♜xc7 ♖b8, White's initiative ebbs gradually away.) 18... ♙c6! 19. fxe6 fxe6 20. ♗h3 0–0! Black ignores material gains for the moment. (In the line: 20... ♗d7 21. ♗h5+ g6 22. ♗h6 0–0–0 23. a4, White's initiative is very powerful, particularly because of his threat – ♜c3-b5.) 21. ♗xe6+ ♚h8 22. ♗g4 (or 22. ♖b7 ♙b7 23. ♖b7 ♙g5 and Black's position is quite acceptable) 22... ♙g5 23. ♜e2 ♗e7 24. e6 ♖ae8∞.



17...♙c5

This move has been tested in practice only once and it looks like a serious mistake. Still, it is far from clear how White should refute it if at all...

The alternative for Black here is the line – 17...♞c8 18.♞e3 ♞c4 (In case of: 18...♙c5 19.♜e2! White’s attack is overwhelming, for example: 19...♙xd4 20.♜xd4 ♞xa2 21.f5 0–0 22.f6 gxf6 23.♞d1 ♙a4 24.exf6 ♜h8 25.♞h6 ♞g8 26.♞xf7 ♙xc2 27.♜xe6 – threatening 28.♞g7+! – 27...♞xg2+ 28.♜xg2 ♙e4+ 29.♜g3 ♞c3+ 30.♜f4 ♞f2+ 31.♜e5 ♞f5+ 32.♜d6 ♞c6+ 33.♜xc6 ♞xe6+ 34.♜c7 ♞xf7+ 35.♜d6 ♞g8 36.♜e7+–. Or 20...♞c5 21.f5! exf5 22.e6 and Black is faced with an unpleasant choice: after 22...♙xe6, White plays 23.♞xf7, while in case of 22...fxe6, White wins with 23.♞xd7+– Enders – Proehl, Binz 1994.) 19.f5 exf5 (The move 19...♙c8, Hellstroffer – Baillon, Paris 2001, loses immediately after: 20.♞xe7+ ♜xe7 21.♞g5+ ♜e8 22.♙b6. Black would not change much with the line: 19...♙d8 20.♞b8 ♞c8 21.♞xc8 ♙xc8 22.♙c5, since he fails to

evacuate his king to a safe haven. 22...♙g5 23.♞d4 ♞c7 24.fxe6 fxe6 25.♙d6 ♞c6 26.♞a7 ♞d7 27.♞c5± Reppmann – F.Schmidt, corr. 1996.) 20.♞xd7! ♜xd7 21.♞b7+ ♜e8 (Following 21...♜e6 22.♞b6+ ♜d7 23.e6+ the issue is settled even faster.) 22.e6 ♞d8! (This defence is much more resilient than: 22...♞a3 23.♞b8+ ♙d8 24.♞g5+– Soffer – Blauert, Budapest 1998.) 23.♙xg7 (this move is more precise than GM L.Psakhis’ recommendation – 23.exf7 ♜xf7 24.♜xd5 ♞e8 25.♞e5 ♞xd4 26.♞xd4±) 23...♞g8 24.♞d7 ♞xg7 (Black would not save the game by playing: 24...♙c5 25.♞xd8+ ♜xd8 26.♞xc5 ♞xc5 27.exf7 ♞e8 28.♜f2 or 24...♞b8 25.♞xe7+ ♜xe7 26.♜xd5) 25.♞xd8+ ♙xd8 26.♞a7 ♞c7 (or 26...♙e7 27.♞b8+ ♙d8 28.e7 ♜xe7 29.♜xd5+ ♜d7 30.♞b7+ and White’s advantage is huge, because Black’s pieces are totally disordinated) 27.♞xa6 fxe6 28.♞xe6+ ♞ce7 29.♞c6+ ♜f8 30.♜xd5 and the game should end up in a victory for White.

18.♞b8+ ♜e7 19.♞1b5

Following: 19.♞xh8 ♙xd4+ 20.♞xd4 ♞xh8 21.f5 ♞c8 22.♞h4+ ♜e8 23.♞xh7 ♞xc3 24.♞h8+ the game Stepanov – Sakalauskas, Platelia 1999 ended in a draw.

19...♙xd4+ 20.♞xd4 ♞a3 21.♞xh8 axb5 22.♞xa8 ♞xa8

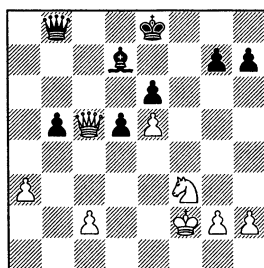
This position was reached in the game Eilmes – Blauert, Internet 2005.

23.♞c5+ ♜d8 24.a3

It becomes clear now that the endgame after: 24... ♖c6 25. ♖xc6 ♙xc6 is obviously extremely difficult for Black. He can solve the problem with his kingside pawns in a different fashion; nevertheless his defensive task is a real burden. 26. ♜f2 ♜c7 27. ♜e3 ♜b6 28. ♜d4 ♙b7 29. ♞e2 ♙a6 30. ♞c1 ♙c8 31. ♞b3 h6 32. ♜c3 ♙b7 33. g3 ♙c6 34. ♜b4 h5 (Black may also try to continue without touching his pawns, but that would hardly change anything: 34... ♙e8 35. ♞d4 ♙d7 36. g4 g6 37. h4 ♙e8 38. f5 gxf5 39. gxf5 ♙d7 40. f6 ♙e8 41. h5 ♙d7 42. c3 ♙e8 43. ♞f3 ♜c6 44. ♞h2+-) 35. ♞d4 ♙d7 36. c3 ♙e8 (in case of 36...g6, White penetrates with his knight in the enemy camp – 37. ♞f3 ♙e8 38. ♞g5 ♜c6 39. ♞h7 ♜b6 40. ♞f6 ♙c6 41. h3 ♙b7 42. ♞e8+-) 37. f5 ♙d7 38. fxe6 fxe6 39. h3 and Black ends up in a zugzwang.

Black should better defend passively here, maneuvering with the queen, trying to prepare the move f7-f6 at some moment, in order to create a target for attack – White's potentially weak e5-pawn.

24... ♖b7 25. ♜f2 ♜e8 26. ♞e2 f6 27. ♞d4 fxe5 28. fxe5 ♖b8 29. ♞f3±



White is slightly better here mostly because of two reasons. Queen and knight are usually stronger than queen and bishop and that position is no exception to the rule. The second reason is that White's queen is all-powerful on the c5-square and Black can hardly remove it from there, since the endgame with a knight for White against a bishop for Black might be simply lost for the second player. Meanwhile, Black's queen is miserably placed and it is far from clear how he can improve its position. White should only advance his kingside pawns in order to create additional weaknesses in Black's camp.

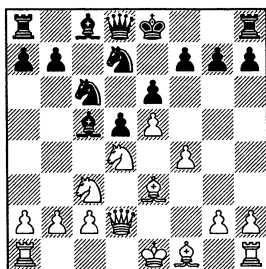
Conclusion

The variation 8... ♖b6 seems to me to be too risky for Black, since he lags considerably in development after he captures White's b2-pawn. The arising positions are rather similar to the Najdorf variation of the Sicilian defence (1.e4 c5 2. ♞f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♞xd4 ♞f6 5. ♞c3 a6 6. ♙g5 e6 7. f4 ♖b6 8. ♗d2 ♖xb2), but here the situation is even more favourable for White, because of the following reasons: the pawn-

structure in the centre is quite stable and White's knight on d4 is very powerful. The pawn on e5 divides the board into two parts and Black has great problems to maneuver his pieces to and from the two sides of the board, particularly because his position is cramped. White can often afford playing quite aggressively, preparing the pawn-break f4-f5 and his opponent's lag in development provokes just that. Black is either incapable, or he simply fails to protect his king. White should play precisely and energetically throughout and it is quite worth it, because Black might not even survive for longer than the opening stage in some variations.

Chapter 17

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7
5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♙e3 cxd4 8.♘xd4
♙c5 9.♚d2



In this position we will analyze the following possible developments: **1)** The exchange of one of the light pieces on the d4-square, meanwhile Black delays his castling – in this chapter; **2)** The double exchange on d4 (9...♙xd4 10.♘xd4 ♘xd4, or 9...♘xd4 10.♙xd4 ♙xd4) – Chapter 18; **3)** Black castles short, followed by a single capture ♙c5xd4, or ♘c6xd4 – Chapter 19; **4)** Black does not clarify the situation at all and he makes the standard developing moves for that system – 9...0–0 10.0–0–0 a6 – Chapter 20.

Now, something in short about Black's other possibilities:

About 9...♚b6 10.♘a4 – see Chapter 16;

9...♚a5, Valderrama Proy – Carrasco Esteller, Badalona 1999,

10.♘b3 ♙xe3 11.♚xe3 ♚b6 12.♚xb6 ♘xb6 13.♘b5 0–0 14.0–0–0 (It is also possible for White to play here 14.♙d3±) 14...a6 15.♘5d4 f6 16.exf6 gxf6 17.♙e1. Black fails to set his pawn-mass into motion in this position. 17...♘xd4 18.♘xd4 ♘f7 19.g4 ♙g8 20. ♙g1 h6 21.h4 ♙d7 22.♙d3 ♘c4 23.h5±;

9...♚e7 10.0–0–0 f6, Sturm – Idessis, Germany 1997, this move looks quite dubious here, because Black is obviously unprepared for the opening of the game. (About the best move for him – 10...0–0 see chapter 20. It is equally bad for him to try: 10...f5? – because the pawn-structure here is so brittle that White has the tactical strike – 11.♘xf5 ♚f8? This is sheer desperation... 12.♘d4+– Guempges – Rozenfeld, Ruhrgebiet 1998, but even after, for example: 11...exf5 12.♘xd5 ♙xe3 13.♚xe3 ♚d8 14.♚g3 0–0 15.e6 ♘b6 16.e7 ♘xe7 17.♘f6+ and Black is lost; The move 10...♘b6, N.Pavlovic – Saric, Herceg Novi 2001, after: 11.♘b3 ♙xe3 12.♚xe3 0–0 13.g3 ♙d7 14.♘b1 transposes to the variations that we are analyzing in

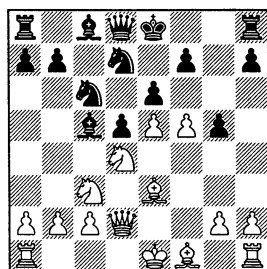
our chapter 19, variation a.) 10... ♖e7) 11. ♘f5! exf5 12. ♘d5 ♖d8 (In case of: 12... ♗xe3? the game is quickly over – 13. ♖xe3 ♖d8 14. exf6+ ♘f8 15. ♖a3+ ♘f7 16. ♗c4 ♘a5 17. ♖he1 ♘xc4 18. ♖e7+ and White checkmates unavoidably.) 13. e6 ♘b6 14. ♗xc5 ♖xd5 15. ♖xd5 ♘d5 16. ♖xd5 ♗xe6 17. ♖d6 ♘f7 18. ♗e2+;

About 9... ♗xd4 10. ♗xd4 a6, or 10...0-0 – see variation a in this chapter, as well as variation b in Chapter 19; as for 10... ♘xd4 11. ♖xd4 – see Chapter 18;

9... ♘xd4 10. ♗xd4 b6 (About 10...a6 11.0-0-0 see 9...a6; 10... ♗xd4 11. ♖xd4 – see Chapter 18; 10...0-0 11.0-0-0 – see chapter 19; 10... ♖b6 11. ♘a4 – see 8... ♖b6, chapter 16; 10... ♗b4, Barnsley – Copley, corr. 1988, this loss of a tempo is incomprehensible in this situation. 11.a3 ♗a5 12. ♗d3 0-0 13.0-0 ♗b6 14. ♘e2+) 11.0-0-0 ♗b7 12.h4 ♖e7 (or 12...0-0 13.h5 ♖c8 14.h6 g6, Jorge Bort – Herrera Lopez, Mislata 2001, 15. ♘b1 a6 16. ♖e3 ♖c7 17. ♗d3 ♗xd4 18. ♖xd4 ♖c5 19. ♘e2+) 13.h5 0-0-0 (13...0-0 14. ♘b1 – see variation 9...0-0, 10... ♖e7) 14.h6 f5 15.hxg7 ♖xg7 16. ♘b5 ♘b8 17.b4 ♗e7 18. ♖c3 ♖c8 19. ♖a3 a5 20. ♘d6 axb4 21. ♖xb4 ♖g4 22. ♖d2 ♖c7 23. ♖h6 ♘c5 24. ♗xc5 bxc5 25. ♖xe6 ♖g8 26. ♖xe7 ♖xe7 27. ♖c3 ♖c7 28. ♖a3 ♖g4 29.g3 ♖g8 30. ♘xb7 ♖xb7 31. ♖xd5 ♖h5 32. ♖xc5 ♖h1 33. ♖d6+ ♖c7 34. ♖b5+ ♘a8 35. ♘b2 ♖b7 36. ♖b3 ♖xg3 37. ♗b5

♖xb3+ 38.axb3 ♖xb5 39. ♖a6+ 1-0 Roques – Becker, Email 1999. That was an excellent game, just like many other correspondence games...

9...g5 10.f5! – White is much better prepared for opening of the game and he easily obtains a superior position.



For example:

10... ♘xd4 11. ♗xd4 ♗xd4 12. ♖xd4 ♖b6 13. ♖d2 ♖xb2 (This move seems to be quite logical. It is too bad for Black to play: 13... d4 14. ♘b5 ♘xe5 15. ♖xg5+-, or 13... ♘xe5 14.0-0-0 ♗d7 15. ♖xg5 h6 16. ♖g3 ♖d6 17.fxe6 fxe6 18. ♘b5 ♖b8 19. ♖e1 a6 20. ♖xe5 axb5 21. ♖g7 ♖f8 22. ♖xe6+ ♗xe6 23. ♗xb5+ ♘d8 24. ♖xf8+ ♘c7 25. ♖c5+ ♘d8 26. ♖f1 1-0 Szieberth – K.Petrosian, Budapest 1995.) 14. ♖b1 ♖a3 15. ♖b3 ♖e7 (It is worse for Black to try: 15... ♖a5 16.fxe6 fxe6 17. ♖xg5 d4 18. ♗b5 dxc3 19. ♖f1 and White checkmates quickly; 15... ♖c5 16. ♘b5! d4 17. ♘xd4 ♘xe5 18. ♗b5+ ♘c6 19. ♖c3 ♖e5+ 20. ♖e3 ♖c5 21.0-0 0-0 22. ♗xc6 e5 23. ♘b3 ♖xc6 24. ♖xe5 ♖f6 25. ♖d5+) 16. ♗b5 a6

17.♙xd7+ ♙xd7 18.♞xb7 ♞c8 19.f6. White now begins playing in a purely positional style. 19...♞d8 20.♟e2 ♞c4 (or 20...♞b8 21.♞xb8 ♞xb8 22.0-0 ♙b5 23.♞e3 ♙xe2 24.♞xe2±) 21.0-0 ♞c8 22.♞fb1 ♞xc2 23.♞e3 ♞c5 24.♞xc5 ♞xc5 25.♞b6 ♟d8. Now, it is not clear how Black can ever bring his rook on h8 into action. 26.♞xa6±;

10...♙xd4 11.♙xd4 ♟dxe5, Vasquez – Gomez, Ciego de Avila 1997, 12.♙xe5. White still does not need to exchange the f-pawns. He has the resource – f5-f6 at some moment and it is quite unpleasant for Black. 12...♟xe5 13.♙b5+ ♟c6 (or 13...♙d7 14.fxe6! fxe6 15.♞e2 ♞c7 16.0-0-0 0-0-0 17.♙xd7+ ♞xd7 18.♟b5 ♞b8 19.♞e3±; 13...♟f8 14.h4!? a6 15.♙e2 ♞g8 16.0-0-0±) 14.fxe6 fxe6 (or 14...♙xe6 15.0-0-0 d4 16. ♟e4±) 15.0-0 ♞f8 16.♟a4! (This is a multi-purpose move for White. He also prevents the possible checks along the g1-a7 diagonal.) 16...♙d7 17.c4! a6 (or 17...♟e5 18.♞b4↑) 18.♙xc6 ♙xc6 (18...bxc6 19.♞d4±). Later, the lines are practically forced: 19.♞e2 ♟e7 (or 19...♞e7 20.♟b6!+-; 19...♙xa4 20.♞xe6+ ♞e7 21.♞xf8 ♟xf8 22.♞f1+ ♟e8 23.♞g8+ ♟d7 24.♞xa8+-) 20.♞e3! ♙xa4 21.♞xf8 ♞xf8 22.♞f1 ♞e8 23.♞a3 ♟d7 24.♞xa4+ ♟c7 25.♞a5+ b6 26.♞c3 ♞c8 (26...♞d8 27.cxd5+ ♟b7 28.♞c1 ♞c8 29.♞xc8+ ♞xc8 30.♞xc8 ♟xc8 31.dxe6 ♟d8 32.♟f2 ♟e7 33.♟f3 h5 34.g4+-, or 33...♟xe6 34.♟g4

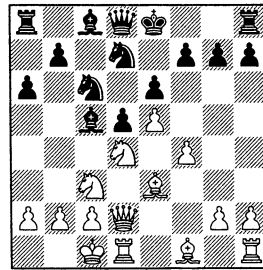
♟f6 35.♟h5+-) 27.cxd5+ ♟b7 28.♞f3 exd5 29.♞xd5+ ♞c6 30.♞xg5±;

10...♟dxe5, Adnoy – Wikstrom, Gausdal 2001, 11.♙xg5 f6 (It is just terrible for Black to play: 11...♟xd4 12.♙xd8 ♟df3+ 13.gxf3 ♟xf3+ 14.♟e2 ♟xd2 15.♙f6 ♟xf1 16.♙xh8 ♟e3 17.♟a4+-) 12.♙e3 ♙xd4 13.♙xd4 ♟c4 14.♙xc4 dxc4 15.0-0-0 e5 (15...♟xd4 16.♞xd4 ♞xd4 17.♞xd4 e5 18.♞xc4 ♙xf5 19.♞f1 ♙e6 20.♞c7 0-0 21.♟e4±) 16.♙e3 ♞xd2+ 17.♞xd2 ♙xf5 18.♞f1 ♙g6 19.♞xf6 ♞d8 20.♟d5±.

9...a6

That is a rather flexible line for Black. He does not clarify his intentions yet and he makes a useful move.

10.0-0-0



We will analyze now: **a) 10...♙xd4**, **b) 10...♟xd4** and **c) 10...♞c7**.

About 10...0-0 11.♟b3 – see chapter 20; 10...♞a5 11.♟b1 ♟xd4 12.♙xd4 – see Chapter **b**.

10...♙b4 11.a3 ♙e7, Lim – Jacubowski, Email 1998, 12.♞f2 0-0 13.♙d3±.

10...♘a5, Perpinya Rofes – Mendivil, Spain 1991, 11.f5!? 0–0 12.♙g5 ♙e7 13.♙xe7 ♖xe7 14.f6 gxf6 15.♘f5! exf5 16.♘xd5 ♖xe5 (but not 16...♖c5 17.♘xf6+–) 17.♙e1 ♖b8 18.♖h6 ♘h8 19.♙d3+–.

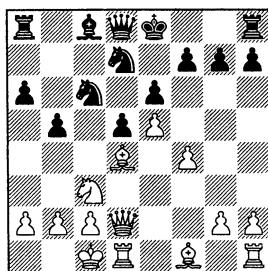
a) 10...♙xd4 11.♙xd4 b5

About 11...♘xd4 12.♖xd4 – see chapter 18; 11...♖a5 12.♙f2 0–0 13.♘b1 b5 14.♙d3 – see 11...b5.

It is also possible for Black to follow with:

11...f6, Leisebein – Vorwerk, corr. 1987. As a rule, this move, played so early, does not guarantee Black an easy life at all. White leads in development and his pawn-structure is more flexible, so that provides him with a long-term initiative. 12.exf6 ♘xf6 13.g3 0–0 14.♙g2±;

About 11...0–0 12.♙f2 – see variation **b**, Chapter 19.



12.♙f2 ♖a5

About 12...0–0 13.♘e2 – see variation **b**, Chapter 19.

12...♘b6, Billon – Krasucki, La Fere 2005, 13.♘e4 0–0 (or 13...dxe4 14.♖xd8+ ♘xd8 15.♙xb6 ♙b7 16.g3±) 14.♙c5 dxe4 15.♖xd8

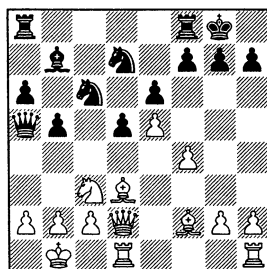
♙xd8 16.♙xd8+ ♘xd8 17.♙xb6±.

13.♘b1 0–0

13...b4 14.♘e2 ♖c7 15.♘d4 ♘xd4 16.♙xd4 a5 17.f5 ♘c5? 18.♖g5+– Radovanovic – Karanikolas, Ikaria 1993.

14.♙d3 ♙b7

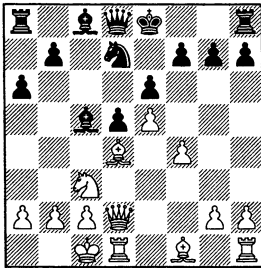
14...b4 15.♘e2 ♘c5 16.♙xc5 (White can also try here: 16.♘d4!? ♘xd4 17.♙xd4 ♘xd3 18.♖xd3 ♙d7, King – McHugh, Dublin 1993 and later analogously to the game Svidler – Iljushin, Ekaterinburg 2002, variation **b**, Chapter 19: 19.g4 ♖fc8 20.♙hg1 ♙c4 21.b3 ♙c7 22.f5 ♙b5 23.♖d2! ♙ac8 24.♙c1, or 22...♙ac8 23.♙g2 ♙b5 24.♖e3±) 16...♖xc5, Berndt – Herndl, Rethymnon 2003, 17.♖e1!? a5 (Or 17...♖e7 18.♖g3 a5 19.♖h3 h6 20.g4 ♙a6 21.g5 ♙xd3 22.♙xd3 hxg5 23.♙g1 and White has a strong attack.) 18.♖h4 h6 19.g4 ♙a6 20.g5 ♙xd3 21.♙xd3 ♙fc8 22.♙c1 ♘e7 23.gxh6 ♘f5 24.♖g5±.



15.h4 ♖fc8, I.Herrera – Larinos Crespo, Malaga 2000, **16.♙h3 ♘b4 17.a3 ♘xd3 18.♙xd3±**. White's rook is perfectly placed on the third rank and from there it

can defend the queenside as well as it can be quickly redeployed to attack the black king, which is presently deprived of any piece protection.

b) 10...♘xd4 11.♙xd4



11...b5

That is obviously not so good for Black. He had better try, for example: 11...0-0 – see variation **c**, Chapter 19, or 11...♙xd4 – see variation **b**, Chapter 18.

His other possibilities are:

11...♚c7 12.♚e3 0-0 13.♙d3 – see variation **c**, Chapter 19;

11...♙b4 12.a3 ♙a5 13.♙d3 b5 14.f5± Mischke – Schwingler, St Ingbert 1988;

11...♚a5 12.♘b1 b5, Vehi Bach – Scotti, Chiasso 1991, 13. f5 b4 14.♘e2 exf5 (Or 14...♙xd4 15.♘xd4 ♘xe5 16.fxe6 0-0 17. ♔e1 ♘g6 18.exf7+ ♔xf7 19.♔e8+ ♔f8? 20.♘b3 ♚c7 21.♚xd5+ ♙e6 22.♚xa8 1-0 Schork – Hauck, Bad Wildbad 2002. It is much more resilient for Black to defend with: 19...♘f8 20.♙d3±) 15.♚g5±.

12.♘e4! ♙e7

Otherwise Black's position is

just terrible: 12...dxe4 13.♙xc5; 12...♙xd4 13.♘d6+ ♘e7 14.♚xd4± Johnston – Phillips, Birmingham 2001; 12...♚c7? 13.♘xc5 ♘xc5, Scheske – Gulde, Wittlich 1997, 14.♚c3 and White wins a piece.

13.♘g5 ♘c5

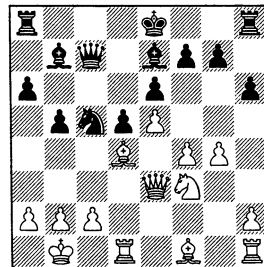
13...h6 14.♘f3 ♘b8 (about 14...♘c5 15.♚e3 ♚c7 16.♘b1 ♙b7 17.g4 – see 13...♘c5) 15.♙e3 ♘c6 16.♘d4 ♙b7 17.♘b1 ♚c7, Gonzalez – Parra, Cuba 2000, 18.♙d3 0-0 19.g4±.

It is hardly advisable for Black to try here: 13...♙xg5 14.fxg5 – because he has no counterplay at all and he has nothing to counter White's kingside actions with.

14.♚e3 ♚c7 15.♘b1 h6 16. ♘f3 ♙b7

Black's main problem is – what to do about the safety of his king?! In case he castles short, he will have to face the pawn-onslaught – g2-g4, ♔h1-g1, g4-g5 etc.

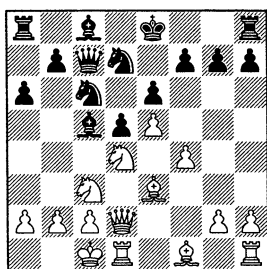
17.g4



17...h5 (Black could have considered here the possibility 17... 0-0-0. White has now a rather simple plan – 18.♙d3 Δ19.f5±, but Black's heavy pieces would have

been connected then, while now his defence is very difficult, because his heavy pieces are without communication.) **18.gxh5** $\text{\textcircled{h}}\text{h5}$ **19.** $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{g5}$ $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{c8}$ **20.** $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{e2}$ $\text{\textcircled{h}}\text{h6}$ **21.c3** $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{e4}$ **22.h4**. Black's rook on h6 is isolated and it is quite unclear what he can do about that. **22...♖c6** **23.h5** $\text{\textcircled{h}}\text{h8}$ **24.** $\text{\textcircled{h}}\text{hg1}\pm$ Yagupov – V.Kozlov, Tula 2004.

c) 10...♖c7



White has already played his more or less standard developing moves and here he should make up his mind about his immediate plans for the future, particularly if we go a little bit further and we compare this situation with the one after 10...0-0 (We will deal with this variation in our last chapter.). Since Black will castle short at some moment anyway, that move is an integral part of his program, we have to acknowledge that the move – 10...♖c7, in fact reduces his further possibilities. Well, White must also have in mind some specific nuances of that position. His king is already on the queenside

and that means that he should be very careful about the possible actions of his opponent on that part of the board, for example about the maneuver $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{c5-b4xc3}$, which would lead to a compromising of his pawn-shelter there.

11.♖f2

This move is more constructive, in comparison for example with 11. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{b1}$. White wishes to deploy his bishop to the d3-square, meanwhile his queen is eyeing Black's kingside, moreover that its route to the h4-square is completely open. It also deserves attention for him to play 11. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{b3}$, transposing to variations which we analyze in chapter 20. The only difference is presently that Black has not castled yet, but since he will soon do that anyway, it is quite possible that there will be just a transposition of moves at the end. As for the variations that are of separate importance, there might follow, for example: 11... $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{b4}$ 12. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{b1}$ (That is a prophylactic measure by White – now the capturing on d2 will be without a check and therefore if Black's knight on c6 abandons its home base, then he must consider the possibility – $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{c3xd5}$. But even in case of: 12. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{d3}$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{e7}$, White has the interesting maneuver – 13. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{d4}$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{c6}$ 14. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{f2}!?$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{e7}$ 15. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{e1}\pm$) 12...f6 13. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{d4}$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{c5}$ 14. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xc6}$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{e4}$ (14...bc 15. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xd5}+-$; 14...♖xc6 15.♖d4±) 15. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xb4}$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xd2}+$ 16. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{xd2}$ fxe5 17. fxe5 0-0 18. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{d3}$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{d7}$ 19. $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{e3}\pm$.

11... ♘xd4

Following 11...b5, it is worth for White to clarify immediately the pawn-structure of the position with: 12. ♘xc6 ♗xc6 13. ♙d3 ♙b7 14. ♘e2 b4 15. ♘b1 ♙c8 16. ♗he1 ♗c7 17. ♘d4±.

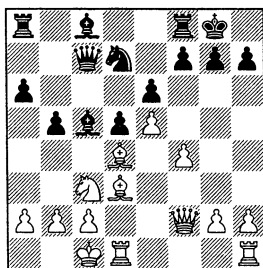
12. ♙xd4 0-0

Or 12...b5 13. ♙d3 ♙xd4 (The move – 13...0-0 transposes to the main line.) 14. ♗xd4 g6 15. ♘xd5 exd5 16. e6 0-0 17. exd7 ♙xd7 18. f5± Pont Mulet – Cubas Pons, Ibiza 2003.

13. ♙d3 b5

About 13...♙xd4 14. ♗xd4 – see variation c, Chapter 19.

Or 13...f6 14. exf6 ♙xf6 15. g3 b6 16. ♗he1 ♙b7 17. ♗e3 ♙e8, Zulfugarli – Roghani, Dubai 2003, 18. ♙f1±.



14. ♗h4!

White thus exploits the possibility to provoke weaknesses of the pawn-shelter of his opponent's king.

14...h6

The move 14...g6 compromises Black's pawn-structure even more and White easily organizes a crushing attack: 15. ♘e2 b4 16. ♗h6

a5 17. h4 ♙xd4 18. ♘xd4 ♙d8 19. h5 ♘f8 20. ♗g5 ♙a6 21. ♙xa6 ♙xa6 22. ♗f6 ♘d7 23. ♗e7 1-0 Kritz – O'Kinneide, Biel 2003, or 16... ♙xd4 17. ♘xd4 ♘c5 18. h4 ♙d7 19. h5 ♙e8 20. g4± Miljanic – Kalezic, Budva 2003.

15. ♘e2 f6

Or 15...♙b7 16. ♗hg1! f6 17. ♗g4± Kramnik.

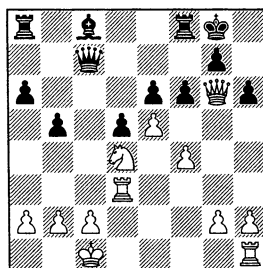
16. ♗g4 ♙xd4

In case of 16...f5 17. ♗f3, Black is almost helpless against White's standard plan connected with the advance of his g-pawn.

17. ♘xd4

White's alternative to the move in the game is the line – 17. ♗xe6+! ♘h8. Black's next moves are practically forced: 18. ♗f5 ♙e3+ 19. ♘b1 g6 20. ♗xg6 ♘xe5 21. fxe5 fxe5 22. ♘c3↑ (Kramnik). Now, after: 22...♙b7 23. ♗he1, as well as in case of: 22...d4 23. ♘d5, White is in a total control of the developments on the board.

17... ♘c5 18. ♗g6 ♘xd3+ 19. ♙xd3



19... ♗c4?

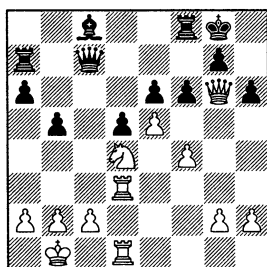
It is also not good for Black to continue with: 19...fxe5 20. ♘xe6

♙xe6 21. ♖xe6 ♗f7 22. ♖xe5 ♗xf4+
23. ♗xf4 ♙xf4 24. ♗xd5 ♙f2 25. ♗d2
♙af8 26. ♗e1± (Finkel).

It looks like Black's best chance to save the game is the line: 19... ♗f7 20. ♗xf7+ ♙xf7 21. exf6 ♙xf6 22. g3 g5 23. fxg5 hxg5 24. ♘f3 ♗g6 25. ♘e5 ♙h6 26. ♙f3 ♙b7 27. ♙f7 ♙b8 28. ♙hf1!? ♙xh2 29. ♘d7 ♗c8 30. ♙f8+ ♙xf8 31. ♙xf8+ ♘g7 32. ♙b8 ♙c6 33. ♘e5 and Black loses his bishop. Possibly it is slightly more resilient for him to defend with: 24... ♙b7 25. ♗e1 ♗e8 26. ♗de3±.

20. ♗hd1 ♙a7 21. ♘b1 ♗c7
(diagram)

22. f5 ♗b6 (This move loses by force, but Black has great problems after his other possibilities too: 22...exf5 23. e6 ♗xh2 24. ♙h3 ♗f4 25. ♘xf5+; 22...♗xe5 23. ♘c6 ♗c7 24. ♘xa7 ♗xa7±. According



to Vladimir Kramnik, Black preserves some practical chances to save the game after: 22...fxe5 23. ♘xe6 ♙xe6 24. ♗xe6+ ♗f7±) **23. ♙h3 fxe5 24. ♙xh6 ♙f6** (In case of 24...exd4, White realizes his main threat – 25. ♗h7+ ♘f7 26. f6+– Kramnik.) **25. ♗e8+ ♙f8 26. ♙h8+ ♘xh8 27. ♗xf8+ ♘h7 28. ♘f3 ♗c7 29. fxe6 e4 30. ♘g5+ ♘h6 31. h4 ♘h5 32. ♗f5 g6 33. g4+ ♘xh4 34. ♙h1+ ♘g3 35. ♙g1+ ♘h4 36. ♗f6** 1-0 Kramnik – Radjabov, Linares 2003.

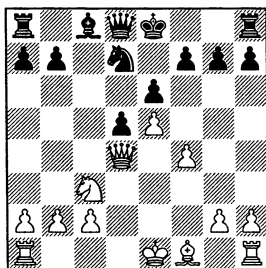
Conclusion

We have analyzed in this chapter some of Black's not so popular moves. These are basically variations, in which he delays his castling and he tries to play actively at an early stage of the game. It becomes clear however, that it is too difficult for Black to contradict the objective chess laws, while White's strategy in this variation has a sound positional basis, therefore he can always find a way to punish Black for breaking the rules.

Now, the variation c) 10...♗c7, is something special. Here, White is faced with a problem, because Black thus delays the clarification of his intentions and he does not exchange in the centre (see also Chapter 20). In the process of studying this variation we are going to enrich our strategic arsenal with the already standard maneuver – ♗f2-h4, with the idea to provoke weaknesses on Black's kingside.

Chapter 18

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7
 5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♙e3 cxd4 8.♘xd4
 ♙c5 9.♚d2 ♘xd4 10.♙xd4 ♙xd4
 11.♚xd4



Black's basic plan and the most solid too is **c)** 11...♚b6, but we will also analyze some other rarely played moves like **a)** 11...f6 and **b)** 11...a6.

There are other very seldom played moves for Black too:

11...b6 12.0-0-0 ♙b7, Perkins – Carp, Dos Hermanas 2003, 13.h4±;

11...♘b8 12.♙d3 ♘c6 13.♚f2 f6 (or 13...0-0 14.0-0-0 f6 15.♚h4 h6 16.exf6 ♚xf6 17.♚xf6 ♚xf6 18.g3±) 14.♚h4 fxe5 15.♚h5+ g6 16.♙xg6+ ♘d7 17.♙d3 exf4, Malinovsky – Fingerov, Olomouc 2005, 18.♚f7+ ♚e7 19.♚xf4±.

a) 11...f6 12.exf6 ♚xf6

In case of 12...♘xf6, White's simplest decision is – 13.♙d3 0-0 14.0-0 ♙d7 15.♚he1±.

13.0-0-0 0-0

About 13...a6 14.g3 – see variation **b**.

14.g3

White does not need to avoid the exchange of queens, because he maintains a stable advantage in the endgame.

14...♚xd4

About 14...a6 15.♙g2 – see variation **b**.

Or 14...♘b6, Held – Grafe, Germany 1998, 15.♚xf6 gxf6 16.f5±.

After: 14...♘b8 15.♚xf6 ♚xf6 (In case of 15...gxf6? 16.f5, Black's pawn-chain remains in ruins, Moghaddam – Hassan, Oropesa del Mar 1998.) 16.♘b5 ♘c6 17.c4 dxc4 18.♙xc4 ♘f8 19.♚he1 ♚b8 20.♘d6! (In the game Rimani – Ropert, Balatonbereny 1986, White won a pawn after: 20.♘c7 ♘f7 21.♘xe6 ♙xe6 22.♚xe6 ♚xe6 23.f5, but he had to solve certain technical problems after the move 23...♚d8.) 20...♘e7 21.a3±. Black can hardly complete his development without losing material, or compromising his position considerably.

15.♙xd4 ♘f6

In the games between computer programs the move 15...♘c5

is rather popular. One of these games, at the World Championship between programs in the year 2001, continued in the following fashion: 16.♔g2 ♕d7 17.b4 ♖a4 18.♖xd5 exd5 19.♔xd5+ ♗h8 20.♔xb7 ♖ad8 21.♗hd1 ♖c3 22.♗1d2 ♗f7 23.♔c6 ♖xa2+ 24.♗b2 ♗b8 25.♔d5 ♖xb4 26.♔xf7 ♖c6+ 27.♗c3 ♖xd4 28.♗xd4+-.

Human players prefer more reliable squares for their pieces: 15...♖b6, Nedeljko - Karakas, Vrnjacka Banja 1966. This move cannot change the evaluation of the position in any radical way – the knight on b6 is hardly better placed than on f6. 16.♔d3 (16.♔h3?! e5) 16...♔d7 17.♗e1 ♖ac8 18.h4±.

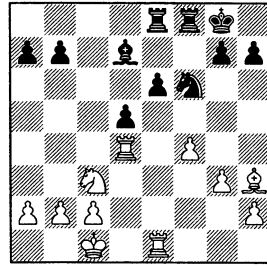
16.♔h3 ♔d7

16...♗e8, Rellstab – Troeger, Bad Nauheim 1948, 17.♖b5!? ♗e7 (After: 17...e5 18.dxe5 ♗xe5 19.♖c7 ♗b8 20.♔g2±, or 19...♔xh3 20.♖xa8 ♗e7 21.c4± – Black will have great problems to trap White's knight on a8.) 18.♗e1±. The situation on the board is quite close to the critical point at which the positional edge is about to be transformed into a material advantage. White must watch about Black's tactical possibility – e6-e5, though...

17.♗e1 ♗ae8

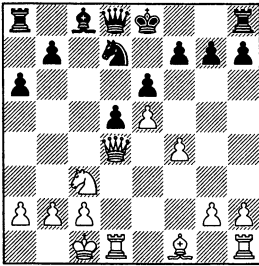
(diagram)

18.♗e5! This is the most radical possible prophylactic against e6-e5. **18...h6** **19.a4**. White occupies additional space on the



queenside. **19...♗f7**. (Black usually responds with 19...a5 against pawn-advances like White's last move. This follows Capablanca's principles that if you have a light squared bishop you should better place your pawns on the dark squares. There are however, some peculiar nuances in each position and here Black should have in mind White's possibility – 20.b4! ♗c8 21.♗b2±) **20.a5** ♗e7 **21.♗b4 ♔c6** **22.♖e2** (White begins regrouping his forces.) **22...♖d7** **23.♗e3 ♖c5** **24.♖d4** (In case of 24...g5, White can follow with: 25.♖f3 ♗g7 26.♖e5, but possibly that is how Black should have played anyway. The idea of redeploying the bishop to the c8-square does not seem attractive at all.) **24...♔d7** **25.♖f3 ♔c8** **26.♖e5+ ♗f6** **27.♔g4 g6** **28.h4** ♖e4 **29.♔e2 g5** **30.♔d3 gxf4** **31.gxf4 ♖c5** **32.♖g4+ ♗g7**, Huebner – Ellrich, Delmenhorst 1975. Here, White could have played: 33.♔g6 ♗g7 34.h5 and he would have squeezed Black's position so much that his defence would have been extremely problematic.

b) 11...a6 12. 0-0-0



12... ♗b6

Now, Black has plenty of possibilities to choose from:

12... ♗a5, Rau – Schaefer, Germany 1998, 13. ♙d3±;

12...g6, Ocytko – Mittermayr, Werfen 1990, 13.h4 h5 14. ♖h3 ♗b6 15. ♗xb6 ♖xb6 16.a4 a5 17. ♖b5 0-0 18.b3±;

12... ♗c7 13.h4 (It is also possible for White to play here 13. ♗e3, or 13. ♙d3 ♗c5 14. ♖e2±) 13... ♗c5 14. ♗d2 b5 15.h5 ♖a7 16. ♖h3 ♖c7 17. ♖g3 g6 18. ♖h3 ♙b7 19.hxg6 fxg6 20. ♖e2 ♗e7 21. ♖d4 0-0 22. ♙d3 ♖c5 23. ♖dh1 ♗e8 24. ♖b1 ♖e4 25. ♗e3 b4 26. ♖h4 ♖ff7 27.g4± Ghinda – Ulker, Romania 1978;

12...0-0, Jessel – Couturier, St Quentin 2002, 13. ♙d3 f6 (or 13... b5 14. ♖e4±) 14.exf6 ♗xf6 15. ♗xf6 ♖xf6 16.g3 ♙d7 17. ♖he1 ♖ac8 18. ♖d2 h6 19. ♖e2 g5 20.fxg5! (20. ♖d4±) 20...hxg5 21. ♖d4 ♖f7 22. ♖de2 ♖fe8 23. ♖f3 g4 24. ♖g5+ ♖g7 25. ♖xe6+ ♙xe6 26. ♖xe6 ♖xe6 27. ♖xe6 ♖f7 28. ♖b6+;

12...b5 13. ♙d3 ♗b6 (Or 13... ♗a5 14. ♖b1 b4 15. ♖e2 ♗c5 16. ♗xc5 ♖xc5 17. ♖d4 ♙d7 18. ♖c1 h5

19. ♖d2 ♖e7 20. ♖hf1 f6 21. ♖de1 ♖f7 22.f5 ♖ae8 23.fxe6+ ♙xe6 24. ♖f4 ♖xd3 25.cxd3 ♖h6 26. ♖c1 ♙d7 27. ♖c7 ♖e7 28.e6 1-0 Happel – Schuetz, Unna 2003.) 14. ♖e2 ♙b7 15. ♗xb6 ♖xb6 16. ♖d4 g6 17.g4± Abreu – Pineiro, Pontevedra 2003;

12...f6 13.exf6 ♗xf6 14.g3 ♗xd4 (or 14...0-0 15. ♙g2 ♗xd4 16. ♖xd4 ♖b8 17. ♖e1± Southam – D.Trifunovic, Toronto 1995) 15. ♖xd4 ♖f7 16.f5!? exf5 17. ♖xd5. Black has managed somehow, with a little help from his opponent, to improve his pawn-structure, but he is still too far from equality, because White's pieces are tremendously active. 17...b5 (Even after 17... ♖e5, Black fails to neutralize his opponent's activity and it is soon going to bring White something decisive – 18. ♖b6 ♖b8 19. ♙g2 ♙e6 20. ♖e1 and here: 20... ♖c6 21. ♖d6 ♖he8 22. ♙xc6 bxc6 23. ♖xc6±; 20... ♖g6 21. ♖d6 ♖he8 22. ♖d5 ♙xd5 23. ♙xd5+ ♖f8 24. ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 25. ♖b6±; 20... ♖g4 21.h3 ♖f6 22. ♖c4 ♙xc4 23. ♖xc4 ♖hd8 24. ♖c7+ ♖d7 25. ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 26. ♙d5+ ♖f8 27. ♖f1 g6 28.g4 ♖f6 29. ♙g2±) 18. ♙h3 g6 (After 18... ♖f6, Black loses a pawn – 19. ♖b6 ♙b7 20. ♖hd1 ♖ae8 21. ♙xf5.) 19. ♖e1 ♖b8 20.g4 ♖b6 (or 20...fxg4? 21. ♖e7+ ♖g8 22. ♙xg4+-) 21. ♖e7+ ♖f8 22. ♖a7 ♖xd5 23. ♖xd5 ♙e6 24. ♖d6 fxg4 25. ♙g2 ♙f5 26. ♙c6 1-0 Pritchett – Cooke, Brighton 1972. This game shows clearly that the quick exchanges do not guarantee

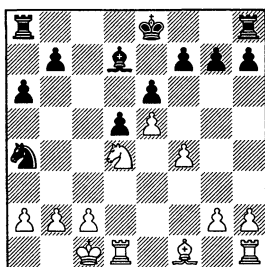
any safety for Black in this system even if he manages to improve his pawn-structure at some moment. White has numerous resources to maintain his positional edge.

13. ♖xb6 ♜xb6 14. ♝e2 ♘d7

Or 14... ♝c4 15. ♝d4 b5, Tischbierek – Perruchoud, Biel 2004, 15. ♘d3 ♘b7 16. ♞he1±.

15. ♝d4 ♜a4!?

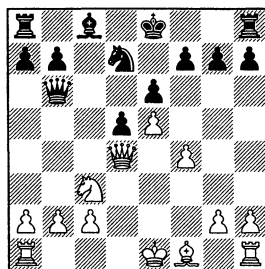
In case of 15... h5 16. b3± Steiner – Stoppel, Austria 2001; or 15... 0-0 – we will deal with similar positions later – see 12... 0-0 13. ♖xb6 – variation c.



16. g4!? (This position is practically identical to the one in variation c – see our notes to White’s move 12. The difference is that Black has played a7-a6 early and White has managed to exert some pressure against Black’s kingside.) **16... h5 17. gxh5 ♞xh5 18. h4 ♝e7 19. ♘e2 ♞h7 20. h5 ♝c5 21. ♞hg1 ♞c8 22. ♞g2 ♝f8 23. ♞dg1.** White’s bishop is now much more active, for example: **23... ♝e4 24. ♘d3 ♞xh5 25. ♞xg7 ♝e7** (It would not work for Black to play: 25... ♝c5 26. ♞xf7+ ♝xf7 27. ♘g6+ ♝e7 28. ♘h5 ♝d3+ 29.

♝d2 ♝xf4 30. ♞g7 ♝d8 31. ♘f7+–) **26. ♝f3** and White maintains a slight advantage (Here, in case of 26... ♝c5, he can play 27. ♘g6+–).

c) 11... ♖b6



12. ♝b5

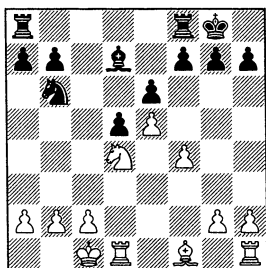
Now, the line: 12. ♖xb6 ♜xb6 13. ♝b5 ♝e7 14. ♘d3 ♘d7 15. ♝d4 is very popular for White. I would like to show you here a game, which is quite typical for that scheme of development, so that you can have an idea what White is supposed to do. 15... ♜a4 16. 0-0-0 ♝c5 17. ♞hf1 ♞ac8 18. ♝d2 a6 19. ♞f3 h5 20. ♞df1 g6. Now, White should comply with plenty of exchanges if he tries to break on the kingside. 21. g3 ♜a4 22. b3 ♝c5 23. h3 ♞c7 24. a4 a5! That is another fine point. Black does not allow the move a4-a5, since it leads to a positional bind for White. 25. ♞f2 ♞cc8 26. ♝e3 ♞b8 27. g4 hxg4 28. hxg4 ♞bg8 29. f5 gxf5 30. gxf5 ♞h5 31. ♞f4 ♞g3 32. ♝d2 exf5 33. ♝xf5+ ♘xf5 34. ♘xf5 ♞xf5 35. ♞xf5 ♝e4+ 36. ♝c1 ♝xf2 37. ♞xf2 ♝e6 and the game soon ended in a draw, Zel-

cic – Dreev, Las Vegas 1999. The statistics of the results in this variation is favourable for White and he has doubtlessly some advantage in that position indeed, but it is quite hard to prove all that using scientific approach only... If Black follows strictly the defensive scheme that you have seen in that game, then it is not easy for White to demonstrate an effective plan to increase his advantage. Therefore, I suggest to you another idea, which has also been tested successfully in practice and its main advantage is that it has been analyzed and played considerably less...

12... ♗xd4

The move 12... ♜e7, was tried by Black in the game Seelinger – Bulla, Topolcianky 1994, but it seemed like a bad decision for him: 13. ♗b4+ ♜c5 14. a3 ♙d7 15. ♜d4±.

12...0-0 13. ♗xb6 ♜xb6 14. 0-0-0 ♙d7 15. ♜d4.



This endgame resembles the one that we had analyzed in our notes to White's move twelve, except that the difference is that both

sides have already castled. It turns out – this is not so advantageous for Black, because if he places his pawns on g6 and h5, then his king will be endangered in case White opens files on the kingside. There might arise the following variations:

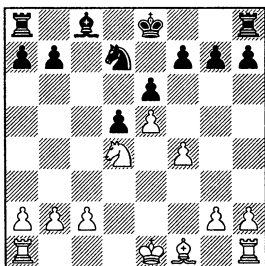
15... ♖ac8 16. b3 f6 17. g3±;

15... a5 16. ♙d3 ♖fc8 17. g4 a4 (This move seems to be too emotional and it is not in the spirit of the position.) 18. a3 ♜c4 19. ♙xc4 ♖xc4 20. c3 b5 21. ♙d3 b4 22. axb4 a3 23. b3 ♖c7 24. ♜d2 1-0 Kuehn – Staak, Hamburg 1994;

15... f6 16. ♙d3 fxe5 17. fxe5 ♖f2. Black activates his pieces, but White has no real weaknesses in his camp and gradually he either repels, or he exchanges his opponent's most dangerous pieces: 18. ♖hg1 ♜a4 19. ♙e2 ♖c8, Cubas Pons – Oliver Andres, Ibiza 2003, 20. ♙df1 ♖cf8 21. ♙f3 ♖xf1+ 22. ♖xf1±;

15... a6 16. h4 ♖ae8 17. ♖h3 ♙c8 18. ♖e3 f6 19. g3 f5 20. b3 ♖f7 21. ♖c3 ♜a8 22. a4 ♖c7 23. ♖xc7 ♜xc7 24. ♙d3 ♙d7 25. ♖c3 ♖c8 26. a5. This game is an excellent example of how easy it is to win a chess game if your opponent plays only passively throughout... 26... ♜f7 (Or 26... ♜e8 27. ♖xc8 ♙xc8 28. ♜b2 ♜f7 29. ♜c3 ♜e7 30. ♜b4 ♜d7 31. ♜c5 ♜c7 32. c4 dxc4 33. ♙xc4+-) 27. ♜b2 ♜e7 28. ♙e2 g6 29. h5 ♙e8 30. h6 ♙d7 31. ♜f3+- Apicella – Moracchini, St Quentin 2001.

13. ♖xd4



13... ♗e7

Black will have to play that move at some moment anyway. His other possibilities are:

13... ♖b6. This is hardly the best decision for him, since White can easily restrict the mobility of that knight with the simple move 14. b3±;

13... a6. It looks like this standard move is too optimistic in that situation. 14. h4. I would like to emphasize – this maneuver is one of the main strategical weapons for White in this system. In principle, it is played with the idea to occupy space on the kingside and White has the additional possibility to redeploy his rook to the queenside via the third rank. 14... h5 (or 14... ♖b8 15. h5 ♗d7 16. h6 g6, Gallagher – Blalock, Lisbon 2000, 17. c3 ♖c6 18. ♖f3 ♗e7 19. ♗d3 ♗af8 20. ♗d2±) 15. ♗h3 ♖b8 16. ♗g3 g6, Gallagher – Ryan, Hove 1997, 17. ♗b3 ♖c6 18. ♗d1 ♖xd4 19. ♗xd4 b5 20. a4±;

13... ♖c5 14. h4!?. (The move 14. ♗d3, will probably transpose to the game Zelcic – Dreev,

Las Vegas 1999, see the notes to White's move twelve.) 14... h5 (It is evidently better for Black to follow here with: 14... f6 15. h5 0–0 16. ♗h4 ♗d7 17. ♗e2±. White's plan is to bring his king to the e3-square and then to neutralize Black's possible activity along the f-file, for example with g2-g3, ♗h4-f4 and later to continue with breaking gradually Black's defence.) 15. ♗h3 ♗d7 16. ♗c3 ♗c8 (In case of: 16... b6 17. b4 ♖e4 18. ♗c7, White's rook can create plenty of problems for Black, meanwhile it is quite safe, despite the fact that it is seemingly endangered, for example: 18... ♗d8 19. ♗b7 ♗c8 20. ♗a6±, or 18... ♗h6 19. ♖f3 ♗g6 20. ♖g5 ♗d8 21. ♗b7 f5 22. a4±. Black can also try here the line: 16... ♖e4 17. ♗c7 ♗b8, with the idea to repel White's annoying rook away from the seventh rank. Still, White can maintain his initiative in that case too: 18. ♗b5 ♗xb5 19. ♖xb5 a6 20. ♖d6+ ♖xd6 21. exd6 ♗h6 22. a4!?. It is essential for White now to build the construction – ♗a3 and a pawn on the g3-square. White is also preparing to create a passed pawn on the queenside in the process. Now, after: 22... ♗g6, he has the resource: 23. ♗a3! ♗xg2 24. d7+ ♗d8 25. ♗ac3 and his rook penetrates unavoidably to the c8-square, while in case of 22... ♗d8, White follows again with: 23. ♗a3! ♗xd6 24. ♗xb7 ♗c6 25. ♗d2 ♗g6 26. g3±. White has an active rook and he can create a passed pawn

on the b-file, so these are the factors that guarantee his advantage.) 17.b4 ♜a4 18. ♖xc8+ ♙xc8 19. ♖c1! ♙d7 (Black fails in his attempts to organize some counterplay with: 19... ♜c3 20. ♗d2 ♜e4+ 21. ♗e3 ♜c3 22. ♗d3 ♜xa2 23. ♖b1+–, or 22... ♜e4 23.c4+–) 20.c4 dxc4 21. ♖xc4 ♗d8 22.g3 ♜b6 23. ♖c5 ♜d5 24.a3 b6 25. ♖c1 f6 26. ♙d3±.

14.h4 h5

Black has here some other possibilities as well:

14... ♜b8 15.h5. That is a very important moment. As a rule, in case White manages to advance his h-pawn that far, his chances to obtain some real advantage increase considerably. 15... ♜c6 16. ♜f3 h6 17. ♗d2 ♙d7 18. ♙d3 f6 (If Black adheres to only passive resistance, White can always find a way to improve his position – 18... ♖hc8 19. ♖ae1 ♖c7 20.c3 a6 21. ♖h4 ♖ac8 22.a3 ♗f8 23.g4 ♜e7 24.g5 ♙b5 25. ♙b1 ♖c4 26.gxh6 gxh6 27. ♖g1 ♜c6 28. ♖hg4± Fedorov – Glek, Sochi 2005.) 19. ♖ae1 (White can also try another plan here: 19. ♖h4!? fxe5 20.fxe5 ♖hf8 21. ♖g4 ♖f7 22. ♖e1 ♖c8 23. ♜h4 ♗d8 24. ♜g6 a6 25. ♜f4±. There was a quite interesting game played on that theme, while our book was in the process of preparation for print...: 19. ♖h3 fxe5 20.fxe5 ♖hf8 21. ♖g3 ♗f7 22. ♖h1 ♗g8 23. ♖h4 ♖ae8 24.a3 ♖e7 25. ♗e3 ♙e8 26. ♖gh3 ♖c7 27. ♖h1 ♙d7 28. ♖f4± Bologan

– M.Gurevich, Gibraltar 2006. I would like to mention that Black can counter the attractive move for White – 22. ♙h7, with: 22...g5! 23.hxg6+ ♗g7 and White's bishop gets isolated from the actions.) 19... ♖hf8 20.g3 fxe5 21. ♜xe5 ♜xe5 22. ♖xe5 ♖ac8 23. ♗e3 a6 24. ♗d4 ♗d6 25. ♖he1± Hellers – Andersson, Malmo 1994. White plans to advance at an opportune moment either f4-f5, or c2-c4;

14... ♜c5 15.h5 f6 (This line is a little bit more dynamic than the tentative: 15...h6 16. ♗d2 ♙d7 17.g4 f6 18. ♗e3 fxe5 19.fxe5 ♖hf8, Janous – Ramik, corr. 2003, 20. ♙d3 ♖ac8 21. ♖ag1 ♜xd3 22.cxd3 ♙e8 23.g5±.) 16. ♖h4 ♙d7 17. ♗d2 ♖af8 18. ♙e2 fxe5 19.fxe5 ♖f7 20. ♗e3 ♖hf8 21.g3! a6 22. ♖f4 ♙e8 23. ♖h1 ♜e4 (or 23... ♜d7 24. ♜f3±) 24. ♖g1 ♜c5 25. ♙d3 ♜xd3 26.cxd3 ♗d7 27. ♖xf7+ ♙xf7 28.g4 ♙e8 29. ♜f3±;

14...f6 15. ♜f3 (White cannot obtain any advantage after: 15.exf6+ gxf6 16.g4, due to: 16... ♜c5! 17.g5 e5! 18.gxf6+ ♗xf6 19.fxe5+ ♗xe5, or 17.0–0–0 e5 18.fxe5 fxe5 19. ♖e1 ♜e4 20. ♙c4 ♖d8 21. ♜b5 ♙xg4 22. ♙xd5 ♖xd5 23. ♜c7 ♖c5 24. ♜xa8 ♜f2.) 15...fxe5 (In case of: 15...h5 16. ♙d3 fxe5 17. ♜xe5 ♜xe5 18.fxe5 ♙d7 19. ♗d2, White is clearly better and in particular the king and bishop endgame might turn out to be quite difficult for Black.) 16.fxe5 b6 (or 16... ♜c5 17.h5 ♙d7 18. ♖h4±; 16...h6 17.h5±) 17. ♙d3 ♙b7 18.0–0! (White must

also consider here the possibility – d5-d4.) 18...♖af8 19.♗ae1 a6 (or 19...♗f4 20.g3 ♗f7 21.♘d4 ♗xf1+ 22.♙xf1±; 19...a5 20.g3 g6 21.♙b5±) 20.g3 ♘c5 21.♘d4 ♗xf1+ 22.♗xf1 ♘d7 23.♗e1 h6 24.h5±.

15.♗h3 a6

Now, in case of 15...f6, White can continue with 16.♗e3±. It is not good for Black to follow with: 15...♘b6, after which he is left without any counterplay whatsoever: 16.a4! ♙d7 (The standard move for Black in similar situations – 16...a5 is not effective here at all: 17.♗g3 g6 18.♗b3 ♘d7 19.♗c3 f6 20.♗c7±.) 17.a5 ♘a4 18.b3 ♘c5 19.b4 ♘e4 20.♙d3 ♗ac8 21.♗a3 f5 22.♙xe4 dxe4 23.♗hg3 ♔f7 24.♗gc3 ♔e7 25.♔d2 a6 26.♗xc8 ♗xc8 27.♗g3 ♔f7 28.♗c3 ♗xc3 29.♔xc3 ♔e7 30.♘b3 ♔d8 31.♘c5 ♔c7 32.♔d4 ♔c6 33.c4 ♙c8 34.♘a4 ♙d7 35.♘c3 b6 36.axb6 ♔xb6 37.♘e2 ♙e8 38.♔c3 ♔c7 39.♘d4 ♙d7 40.c5 ♙c8 41.♔c4 ♙d7 42.c6 ♙c8 43.♔c5 g6 44.♘c2 1–0 Gallagher – Marechal, Cappelle la Grande 2002.

16.♗c3 ♗a7

Black protects his b7-pawn and he plans to redeploy his forces according to the scheme: ♘d7-b8, ♙c8-d7 and ♘b8-c6, but White finds a possibility to impede that plan:

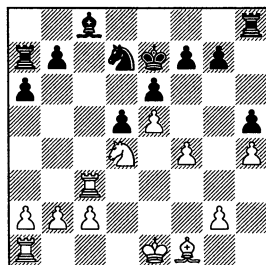
(diagram)

17.b4!

This is a wonderful idea!

17...f6

Black cannot play here: 17...



♘b6?! 18.♗c7+ ♙d7? 19.♘c6+–, while in case of 17...♘b8, White’s pieces become suddenly tremendously active: 18.b5! axb5 19.♘xb5 ♗a4 20.♗c7+ ♙d7 21.♘d6! ♗xf4 (After 21...f6, White preserves an extremely dangerous initiative with – 22.♗b1 fxe5 23.fxe5 ♗xa2 24.♙b5 ♗f8 25.♙xd7 ♘xd7 26.♗xb7 ♗d8 27.♘b5 ♗b2 28.♔d2 ♗b4 29.c3 ♗hx4? 30.♘d4+–) 22.♗b1 ♘c6 (Following 22...♗hx4, White wins the exchange with: 23.♗xb7 f6 24.♘c8+ ♔d8 25.♘b6 ♗b4 26.♗c5 ♗xb6 27.♗xb6 ♔e7 28.exf6+ gxf6 29.♗c7+–) 23.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 24.♗xb7+ ♔d8 25.♘xf7+ ♗xf7 26.♗xf7 g6 27.a4±. White’s passed pawn is super-dangerous for Black.

18.♗c7! fxe5 19.fxe5 ♗a8 20.c4! ♗e8 21.cxd5 exd5 22.♗ac1 ♔d8

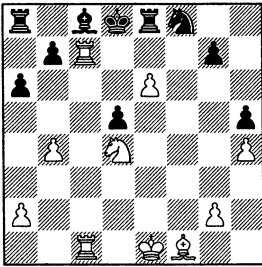
Black would not change anything much by playing: 22...♔f8 23.e6 ♘f6 24.♗f7+ ♔g8 25.♗cc7±, or 23...♘e5 24.e7+ ♔f7 25.♔d2 ♙g4 26.♗e1 ♘d7 27.♙e2 ♗xe7 28.♗xb7 ♗e4 29.♘c6±.

23.e6 ♘f8

Or 23...♘f6 24.♔f2 ♙xe6 25.♗xb7 ♙d7 26.♗cc7 ♗e4 27.♘c6+

8. ♖xd4 ♙c5 9. ♗d2 ♜xd4 10. ♙xd4 ♙xd4 11. ♗xd4

♙xc6 28. ♗xc6 ♗xh4 29. ♗xg7 ♜e8
30. ♗g5±.



24. ♖d2!? (After the seemingly natural line: 24. ♗xg7 ♜xe6 25. ♜xe6+ ♙xe6 26. ♖d2 a5 27. b5 ♗e7 28. ♗g5 ♖d7, in the game Gof-

shtein – Chernin, Brno 1993, Black managed somehow to improve his situation – his king abandoned the eighth rank. If now, for example: 29. ♗xh5, then Black obtains some counterplay with 29... ♗f8 and his rook penetrates to the f2-square.) **24... ♜xe6 25. ♜xe6+ ♙xe6 26. ♗xb7!** Now, Black has practically no chances to organize any counterplay at all. **26... a5 27. b5 ♗e7 28. ♗b6 ♙g4 29. ♙d3±.** White is clearly better in this position, mostly because of the vulnerability of Black's pawns and in particular the a5-pawn.

Conclusion

The endgame, which we analyze in this chapter, is a quite frequent guest in the contemporary tournament practice. Its popularity is due to the fact that it is easy to learn and Black's position is quite solid. Meanwhile, his possibilities to organize some counterplay are not so great and that enables White to improve patiently his position without being in a hurry. In general, we have to summarize the important moments and we hope that might be quite useful for you.

1) As a rule, it is always favourable for White to occupy additional space on both flanks, by advancing – a2-a4-a5, or h2-h4-h5.

2) Black's knight on b6 is a bit misplaced and if he ignores that fact for a while, White should better restrict its mobility with the move b2-b3.

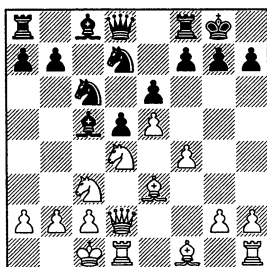
3) The third rank is usually a key route for the redeployment of White's rook.

4) In case Black plays f7-f6 – he can hardly have the patience to defend without that move anyway – White must try to neutralize accurately Black's active attempts and later he can create additional weaknesses in Black's camp.

5) White preserves excellent winning chances even in case the game is simplified considerably. The entire structure of the position guarantees that his advantage is stable and it cannot vaporize into thin air outright.

Chapter 19

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7
5.f4 c5 6.♗f3 ♗c6 7.♙e3 cxd4 8.♗xd4
♙c5 9.♚d2 0-0 10.0-0-0



Black's most natural and even thematic move in this position is a7-a6, played either immediately (about 10...a6 – see Chapter 20), or a bit later, for example after an exchange on d4 – **b) 10...♙xd4 11.♙xd4 a6** and **c) 10...♗xd4 11.♙xd4 a6** (In fact, Black can even play a7-a6 much earlier – on his move seven, eight or nine. We are going to analyze in this chapter too the rarely played; nevertheless quite solid system of development – **a) 10...♚e7**.)

The other possible lines for Black are:

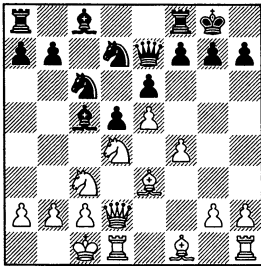
10...♗b8, E.Paetz – Elschner, Germany 1997, 11.♗b3±. Here, just like in the variation: 10...a6 11.♗b3, the move ♗b8 is hardly more useful for Black than a7-

a6. White can also continue with 11.♗b1, since the inclusion of this couple of moves (♗b8 and ♗b1) should definitely be in favour of White;

10...♚a5 11.♗b3 ♙xe3 12.♚xe3 ♚b4 (Or 12...♚d8 13.♚h3 a5 14.♙d3 g6 15.a3 a4 16.♗d2 ♗dx5 17.fxe5 ♗xe5 18.♗he1 ♗xd3 19.♚xd3+ – Lindmark – R.Andersson, Sweden 1998.) 13.♗b5 ♚e7 14.♗b1 f6 15.exf6 ♗xf6 16.♙d3 ♙d7 17.♗he1 a6 18.♗5d4± Hindle – Pritchett, Havana 1966;

10...♙b4 11.a3 ♙c5 (This loss of two tempi should worsen Black's chances considerably. He has also tried in practice the move 11...♙a5, Lappage – Connolly, Bunratty 2001, 12.♙d3, but here it becomes rather unclear what Black intends to do next. Or: 11...♗xd4 12.♙xd4 ♙e7, Lanz Calavia – Michel, corr. 2002, 13.♚e3, with the already familiar plan – ♙d3 and ♚h3±) 12.h4 ♚e7 13.♗h3 a6 14.h5 ♗b6 15.♚f2 ♚c7 16.♗b3 ♙xe3+ 17.♚xe3 ♗c4 18.♙xc4 dxc4 19.♗c5 b5 20.♗3e4+ – Dragojlovic – Levasseur, Tapolca 1989.

a) 10... ♗e7



This is a quite solid defensive line for Black. It will be now far from easy for White to break his opponent's defence with a direct kingside attack, so he must be patient and prepare himself for a tough positional battle.

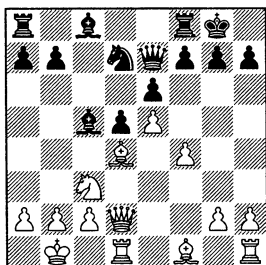
11. ♜b1 ♜xd4

The variation: 11...a6 12. ♜b3 b6 13. h4 ♙b7 14. h5 ♜fd8 15. ♜e2 ♜ac8 16. ♜h3, transposes to the game Nijboer – Glek, Apeldoorn 2001, which we will analyze later in our Chapter 20.

11... ♜b6 12. ♜b3 ♙xe3 13. ♗xe3 ♙d7 14. g3 (It is possible for White to follow here with 14. ♙d3±, but the move in the text is quite sensible too. It is a very important aspect of White's strategy in the Steinitz system of the French Defence to watch carefully about Black's possibility – f7-f6 and for example, in case of the immediate move: 14. g4 f6, or 14. ♜b5 f6 15. exf6 ♗xf6 16. g3 e5, Black obtains a very comfortable game. If in the latter variation White plays instead the move 15. ♜d6, then af-

ter: 15...fxe5 16. fxe5 ♙e8, White may be somewhat better, but he would not be quite happy to continue the game with such a weak pawn on the e5-square, from the point of view of psychology...) 14... ♜fc8 (Or 14...f6 15. exf6 ♗xf6 16. ♙b5 ♙e8 17. ♜he1 ♙h5 18. ♜d2 ♙g4 19. ♜a4 ♜xa4 20. ♙xa4 ♜f7 21. ♜c5 ♜b8 22. ♙b5 ♙f5 23. ♙xc6 bxc6 24. ♗e5 ♜b5 25. ♗xf6 ♜xf6 26. ♜d7 ♜h6 27. ♜e5±; 24... ♗xe5 25. ♜xe5 ♜e7 26. a4± Hameister – Lutzenberger, Email 2001.) 15. g4 ♜b4 (After Black's rook had abandoned the f8-square, it is not so good for him to follow with: 15...f6 16. gxf6 ♗xf6 17. g5 ♗f7 18. ♙d3±.) 16. ♜d4 ♜c5 (Or 16... ♗c5 17. ♙d3! ♗a5? 18. ♜b3+–; 17... ♙a4? 18. f5! ♗a5 19. f6 ♜xc3 20. ♗g5! ♙xc2+ 21. ♙xc2 ♗xa2+ 22. ♜c1 ♗a1+ 23. ♜d2 ♜c4+ 24. ♜e2 ♜e3+ 25. ♜f2+–; 17... ♜a4 18. ♜xa4 ♙xa4 19. ♜c1 ♜xd3 20. cxd3 ♗b6 21. f5± Kasparov.) 17. a3 ♜c6? (After: 17... ♜a6 18. ♜a2!? ♜c4 19. ♗h3± Kasparov; I would like to add that it is also possible for White to try: 18. ♗h3 ♜c4 19. ♙d3 g6 20. ♜ce2 b5 21. ♗h6±, or: 18. ♗h3 g6 19. ♜g1 ♜ac8 20. ♜g3 ♜a4 21. ♜xa4 ♙xa4 22. ♙d3±) 18. ♜b3!? (The game Kasparov – Shirov, Astana 2001, followed with: 18. ♜cb5 and the position remained quite complicated.) 18...d4 19. ♜xd4 ♜xd4 20. ♜xd4 ♜ac8 21. ♜d6! ♜xc3 22. bxc3 ♜d5 23. ♗d4 ♜xc3+ 24. ♜a1 ♙b5 25. ♙g2± (Kasparov).

12.♙xd4



12...b6

Black has tested some other moves too:

12...♙b6, Strawson – Picchiotino, Email 1997, 13.♚e3±. If now, for example: 13...♘c5, then 14.f5 and Black can already resign...

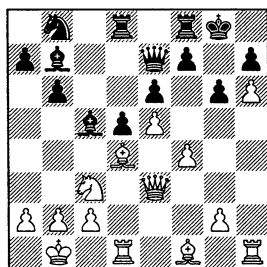
12...♘b6 (Now, Black plans in complete accordance with the inner nature of chess to continue with a natural and quick scheme of mobilization of his forces with: ♙d7, ♜ac8, ♙xd4, ♜c7, ♜fc8. People played like that as early as during the times of Paul Morphy. If Black develops a new piece with his every move – he should not be having problems at all.) 13.♙xc5. White must exploit the possibility to deploy his knight on the d4-outpost in the most natural fashion, while he can. He thus disrupts his opponents plans in the process: 13...♚xc5 14.♘b5 ♙d7 15.♘d4 (White can also try entering the endgame after: 15.♚d4 ♚xd4 16.♘xd4 f6 17.g3! This move deprives Black's rook of the f4-square. 17...fxe5 18.fxe5 ♗a4. Otherwise White will play the move b2-b3, restricting

the mobility of that knight. 19.♙h3 ♘c5 20.♜hf1±) 15...♘a4 16.♘b3 ♚b6 17.♚d4 ♜ac8 18.♚xb6 ♘xb6 19.g3 ♜c7 20.♘d4 ♘c8 21.♙d3± Khalifman – Korchnoi, Drammen 2005.

13.h4 ♙b7 14.h5 ♜ad8 15.♚e3 ♘b8 16.h6

Naturally, that move does not lead to a checkmate, but White thus creates gradually weaknesses in Black's camp, as people say "In for a penny, in for a pound...".

16...g6



17.♘b5!

Presently, White cannot attack his opponent's king, but Black has a gaping weakness in his camp – the d6-square. After the total weight of his weaknesses passes over the critical mass, quantity should transform into quality...

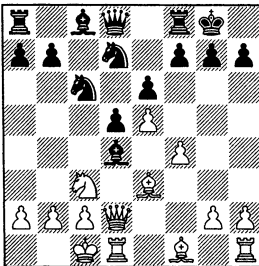
17...♙a6?!

It is better for Black to defend here with: 17...♘c6 18.c3 (In case of the immediate move: 18.♙xc5 bxc5 19.♘d6 d4! 20.♚b3 ♙a8, the game becomes rather unclear.) 18...a6 19.♙xc5 bxc5 20.♘d6 f6 (The exchange-sacrifice is of course possible here for Black,

but it is evidently insufficient – 20... ♙xd6 21. exd6 ♚xd6 22. g4 e5 23. fxe5 ♜xe5 24. ♙g2 ♜xg4 25. ♚d2±. If 20... d4, then after: 21. cxd4 ♜xd4 22. ♚c3 ♙d7 23. ♙g1 ♙fd8 24. ♙d3, it is again unclear how Black can avoid capturing ♙d7xd6 at the end.) 21. ♙e1 c4 22. ♜xb7. Otherwise Black's bishop will retreat to the a8-square and White must try to find another plan altogether. 22... ♚xb7 23. exf6 ♙xf6 24. g3 ♚a7 25. ♙h3 ♚xe3 26. ♙xe3 ♜f7 27. ♙he1 ♙d6 28. b3±.

18. ♙xc5 bxc5 19. ♜d6 ♙xf1 20. ♙hx f1 ♜d7 21. c4 d4 22. ♚a3 ♙a8 23. ♜e4 ♙fe8 24. ♙d3 f5 25. exf6 ♜xf6 26. ♜xf6+ ♚xf6 27. ♚xc5 e5 28. ♙dd1 ♙ad8 29. fxe5 ♚h4 30. ♚xa7 ♙e7 31. ♚b6 ♙xe5 32. ♙f4 1-0 Svidler – Bareev, Elista 1997. This was a very instructive game, which illustrated the axiom that chess was most of all – weak squares...

b) 10... ♙xd4



I believe that it is still too early for Black to clarify his intentions at that point. Well, he must be ready otherwise to counter White's sys-

tem with the move ♜d4-b3, which we are dealing with in our Chapter 20.

11. ♙xd4 a6

Or 11... f6 12. exf6 ♜xf6, Jonasson – Sigurjonsson, Reykjavik 1996, 13. ♜b1. This is a very useful prophylactic move for White as you are going to see in the nearest future. 13... ♚a5 (or 13... ♙d7 14. ♙c5 ♙e8 15. ♙d3 ♚a5 16. ♜b5±) 14. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 15. g3 ♙d7 16. ♜e4! ♙h6 17. ♚xa5 ♜xa5 18. ♜f2±.

11... ♜xd4 12. ♚xd4 f6 (Or 12... b6, Salminen – Merkl, corr. 1997, 13. h4±; 12... ♜b6 13. h4 f5 14. ♜b5 ♚d7 15. h5 ♙d8 16. h6 g6 17. ♜d6 ♚c7 18. ♙h3 ♙d7 19. ♙e2 ♜c8 20. g4 ♜xd6? 21. exd6 1-0 Montes Espino – Navoz Alvarez, corr. 1987; about 12... ♚b6 13. ♚xb6 ♜xb6 14. ♜b5 – see Chapter 18; as for 12... a6 13. ♙d3 – see Chapter 18.) 13. ♜xd5 (Following: 13. exf6 ♚xf6 14. g3, White can transpose to variation a, Chapter 18.) 13... fxe5 14. fxe5 ♚g5+ 15. ♚e3 ♚xe3+ 16. ♜xe3 ♜xe5 17. ♙b5 a6 18. ♙a4 b5 19. ♙b3 a5 20. ♙d6 ♙e8 21. a4 ♙a6 22. ♙xe6+ ♙xe6 23. ♙d8+ ♜f7 24. axb5 ♙a8 25. ♜d5 ♙b7 26. ♙f1+ ♜g6 27. ♙xa8 ♙xa8 28. ♜c7 ♙b6 29. ♜xa8 ♙xb5 30. ♜c7± Socko – Pantsulaia, Rethymnon 2003.

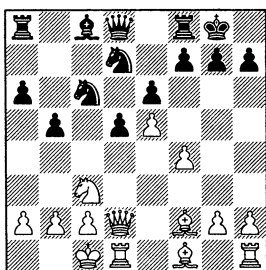
12. ♙f2

White not only shuns simplifications in this fashion, but he reduces his opponent's possibilities as well. It is Black who chooses to capture or not on d4 in this position, so White should better avoid

that now, moreover that his plan is crystal clear at the moment.

12...b5

About 12...♖a5 13.♘b1 b5 14. ♘d3 – see variation a, Chapter 17.



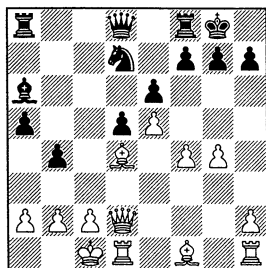
13.♘e2

It is good for White to try too: 13. ♘d3 b4 14. ♘a4 ♖a5 (Or 14...f6 15.exf6 ♗xf6 16.g3 a5 17. ♘b5 ♘b7 18.♗he1 ♗ac8 19.♘b1±; 14...a5 15.♗e2 ♗e7 16.h4 f6 17.exf6 ♗xf6 18.♘b1 e5 19.♗hf1 e4 20. ♘b5 ♘e7 21.c4 bxc3 22.♘xc3 ♘b6 23.g4 ♖b8 24. ♘d4, followed by f4-f5± Nijboer – Vedder, Amsterdam 1995.) 15.b3 ♘b7 16.♗e3 ♗ac8 (or 16...♘e7 17.♘c5 ♘c6 18.♗h3 ♘f5 19.♘xd7 ♘xd7 20.♘b1 ♗fc8 21.g4 ♘h6 22.f5 ♘b5 23.♗c1!±) 17.♗h3 h6 (or 17...g6 18.♗h6 ♘e7 19. ♘h4 f6 20.exf6 ♘xf6 21. ♗he1±) 18.g4 ♘e7 19.g5 g6 (or 19...h5 20.g6 ♘c6 21.♗hg1 ♘xa4 22.♗xh5+-) 20.gxh6 ♘h7 21.♗h4 ♗ce8 22.♘b6! ♘xb6 23.♗f6 ♘hx6 24. ♘xb6 ♗xb6 25.h4+-.

13...b4 14.♘d4 ♘xd4 15. ♘xd4 a5 16.g4 ♘a6

The line: 16...♗c7 17.♘b1 will most probably lead only to a transposition of moves. Still,

I would like to mention here the following extremely instructive game, which will help you understand better this typical position and will enlarge for sure your arsenal in dealing with it.) 17. ♘b5!? ♘a6?! (Black is ignorant of White's plan. It was obviously better for him to have defended with: 17... ♘c5 18.♗e3 ♘a6 19. ♘xc5 ♗fc8.) 18. ♘xd7! ♗xd7 19.♗hg1 ♗fc8 20.f5 ♗b5 21. ♗g2! b3 22.axb3 ♗xb3 23. f6 ♗b4 24. ♗xb4 axb4 25.b3! This endgame is extremely difficult for Black and the presence of opposite coloured bishops is hardly any consolation for him, because the difference in their strength at the moment is too hard for Black to bear...: 25...gxf6 26.exf6 ♗c6 27.g5 ♘f8 28.h4 ♘e8 29.h5 ♗ac8 30. ♘e5 ♘d7 31.♘b1 ♗g8 32.g6 hxg6 33.hxg6 ♗xg6 34. ♗xg6 fxg6 35.♗h1 ♗c8 36.♗h7+ ♘c6 37.♗e7 d4 38.f7 d3 39.cxd3 ♘xd3+ 40.♘b2 ♘d5 41.♗c7 1-0 Svidler – Iljushin, Ekaterinburg 2002.



17.♘g2

White is planning to attack on the kingside, so it might seem to you that he should not have

avoided the trade of the bishops, moreover that he loses a tempo while doing that. Still, he might not manage to finish the game off with a checkmate, while the additional control over the e4-square and the two bishop advantage comprise solid strategical achievements in the long run...

17... ♖c7 18. ♘b1

White has more than sufficient defensive resources, so he does not need to enter a race with mutual attacks on the opposite sides of the board. He demonstrates with his last move that he wishes to ensure the safety of his own king at first and later he can take a good care of the enemy king...

18... ♖fc8 19. ♖c1 ♖ab8 20. f5 a4

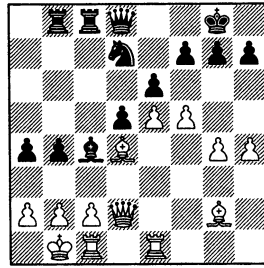
It is not so good for Black to try here: 20... ♘xe5, because of: 21. fxe6 fxe6 22. ♖e3 ♘f7 23. ♖xe6±.

21. ♖he1

White is preparing the subsequent advance of his f-pawn, because Black would counter the immediate move 21. f6, with 21... ♘xe5.

21... ♙c4 22. h4 ♚d8

Black will need to play that move anyway. In case of: 22... b3 23. cxb3 axb3 24. a3 ♘c5 25. f6 gxf6? (Or 25... ♚d8 26. ♖c3 ♘a4 27. ♖h3 ♖a8 28. ♖c1± and White is quite well-prepared for his king-side pawn-onslaught.) 26. exf6 ♘h8 27. ♙e5+- (A.Finkel).



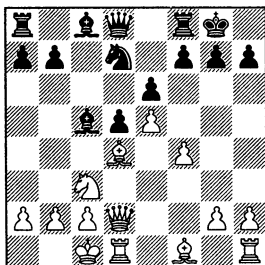
23. f6 gxh6?

It is more resilient for Black to defend here with: 23... b3 24. cxb3 axb3 25. a3 ♖c6 (or 25... ♘c5 – see 22... b3). White's prospects seem to be superior here, but the position is still quite complex as you can see in the following exemplary line: 26. h5 ♖bc8 27. ♖c3 ♘c5 28. g5 ♚a5 29. ♙xc5 ♖xc5 30. g6 hxg6 (or 30... fxg6 31. hxg6 hxg6 32. ♖h1!+-) 31. fxg7 gxh5 32. ♖g1! (White is careful not to succumb to Black's last trap – 32. ♖h6? ♙d3+! 33. ♘a1 ♙h7+-) 32... ♙d3+ 33. ♖xd3 and White wins.

24. exf6 ♘h8 25. g5 ♙xa2+

(This is a desperation sacrifice by Black, but his defence against the threat g5-g6 – either immediately, or after the preliminary move h4-h5 – is nowhere to be seen.) **26. ♘xa2 b3+ 27. cxb3 axb3+ 28. ♘b1 ♖a8 29. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 30. ♚d3 ♖a4** (or 30... ♖c7 31. ♖xb3 ♖f4 32. ♚d3+-) **31. ♙f2 ♖b8 32. ♙xd5 exd5 33. ♖xd5 ♖c8 34. ♖xb3 ♘c5 35. ♙xc5 ♖f5+ 36. ♖c2** 1-0 Anand – M.Gurevich, Bastia 2002.

c) 10...♖xd4 11.♙xd4



11...a6

Black's other possibilities transpose to variations that we have already analyzed: 11...♖e7 12.♗b1 – see variation **a**; 11...♙xd4 12.♗xd4 – see variation **b**; 11...f6 12.exf6 ♙xd4 13.♗xd4 ♗xf6 – see Chapter 18, variation **a**; 11...♗c7, Budzyn – Helstroffer, Bad Zwesten 2006, 12.♖e3 a6 13.♙d3, transposes to the main line; 11...b6 – see Chapter 17, variation: 9...♖xd4 10.♙xd4 b6 11.0–0–0 0–0.

12.♖e3!

This is an excellent square for White's queen. It controls from here the whole central sector of the board and it can be redeployed easily to the kingside if that needs be...It seems to me to be weaker for White to follow with 12.♗f2, due to: 12...b6! 13.♙d3 f6! 14.♗h4 (or 14.exf6 ♗xf6 15.♗e2? e5-+) 14...g6 and Black's position is quite acceptable.

12...♗c7

After: 12...♖e7 13.♙d3 ♙xd4 14.♗xd4, Black has the following possibilities at his disposal:

About 14...♗c5 – see line **c**;

Or 14...b5 15.♗e4! f6 16.exf6 ♖xf6 17.♗g5 h6 18.♗f3 ♙d7 19.♗he1 ♗d6 20.♗e5 b4 21.g4 ♙b5 22.♙g6 ♗h7, Grischuk – Lorenz, Mainz 2005, 23.g5 hxg5 24.fxg5 ♖xg5 25.♗h4 ♗d8 26.♙g1+-;

14...♖c5 15.♗b1 b5?! (This is a serious mistake; after 15...♖xd3, the fight still goes on...- 16.♗xd3 f5 17.exf6 ♗xf6 18.g3±.) 16.f5 exf5 (Here, Black's best bet had been: 16...♖xd3 17.♗xd3 ♗a7 18.♗h4 f6 19.fxe6 ♙xe6 20.exf6 ♗xf6 21.♖xd5 ♙d5 22.♗xd5 ♗f7 23.♗dd1±) 17.♖xd5 ♗a7 18.♗h4 ♗h8 19.♗hf1 ♖xd3 20.♗xd3 ♙e6 (or 20...h6 21.♖f6 ♗c5 22.♗f4 ♗c4 23.♗d4 ♗e2 24.♗d3±) 21.♖f6 h6 22.♗h3 f4 23.g4 fxg3 24.♗e4 1–0 Baramidze – Buhmann, Lippstadt 2004 (comments by A.Finkel).

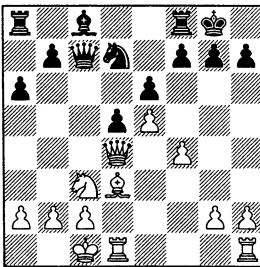
13.♙d3 ♙xd4

In case of 13...b5, White plays 14.♗h3! and he forces Black to compromise his king shelter with – 14...g6 and then he simply retreats – 15.♖e3. Later, the game might follow with: 15...b4 16.♗e2 a5 17.h4 ♙a6 18.♗b1! ♗fc8 19.h5 ♖f8 (About 19...a4 – see 18...a4; 19...♙xd3 20.cxd3 ♗b6 21.g4 ♙xd4 22.♖xd4 b3 23.a3 ♗c2 24.f5 ♗ac8, Berndt – O'Kinneide, Chalkidiki 2002, 25.hxg6 fxg6 26.fxg6 ♖c5 27.♗xh7+-) 20.hxg6 fxg6 21.g4 a4 22.♗c1! ♙c4 23.f5 b3 24.fxg6 hxg6, Kruppa – Fish, Alushta 1994 (Black cannot save the game with: 24...bxa2+ 25.♗a1 hxg6 26.♙xc5 ♗xc5 27.♗h6 a3 28.b3!+-, Knaak.) 25.♙xc5! ♗xc5 26.♗h6 a3

27. ♚h8+ ♜f7 28. ♙xg6+ ♜e7 29. cxb3+-. Black cannot avoid decisive material losses.

He cannot survive after the other variations either: 18... ♙xd3 19. cxd3 ♚b6 20. h5 ♙xd4 (or 20... b3!? 21. a3 ♚ac8 22. g4 ♚fe8 23. hxg6 fxg6 24. ♙xc5 ♚xc5 25. ♜d4±) 21. ♜xd4 ♜c5 22. ♚c1 ♚ac8 23. ♜b3 ♜a4 24. ♚xb6 ♜xb6 25. ♜xa5+- Ismailova – Iskenderova, Baku 2001, or 18... a4 19. h5 ♙xd4 (19... ♚fc8 20. hxg6 fxg6, Zelic – Brady, St Vincent 2004, 21. ♚xh7! ♜xh7 22. ♚h1+ ♜g8 23. ♚h3 ♜f8 24. ♚h8+ ♜f7 25. ♙xc5 ♚xc5 26. ♙xg6! ♜e7 27. ♚g7+ ♜d8 28. ♚h8+-, or 22... ♜g7 23. f5! ♙xd3 24. ♚h6+ ♜f7 25. ♚xg6+ ♜e7 26. ♚h7 ♜d8 27. ♚g5+ ♜e8 28. ♚g8+ ♜f8 29. ♚c7+-; 23... ♚h8 24. f6+ ♜xf6 25. exf6+ ♜f7 26. ♚xh8 ♚xh8 27. ♙xc5+-) 20. ♜xd4 ♜c5 21. ♙xa6 ♚xa6 22. ♜b5 ♚e7 23. ♜d6 ♚c6 24. g4 b3 25. cxb3 axb3 26. a3 ♜b7 27. ♜xb7 ♚xb7 28. f5 d4 29. ♚h6+- Luther – Abella Vazquez, Ferrol 2002.

14. ♚xd4



14... ♚c5

Black has also tested here: 14...

b5 15. ♚he1 (It deserves attention for White to follow with: 15. ♜e4 f6! 16. ♜d6 ♚b8 17. ♚hf1 ♚c5 18. ♚xc5 ♜xc5, as a result of which there arises a type of an endgame that we are already familiar with, the difference being only with the placement of White's knight on the d6-square. On the one hand, it controls from there plenty of important squares in Black's camp and it is quite annoying for him. On the other hand, it is a bit isolated from the rest of White's pieces by the pawn-chains and it can be eventually exchanged; moreover that the important key blocking d4-square has been vacated... In general, White's position is somewhat better, but he can easily lose his advantage altogether: 19. ♜d2 ♜b7 20. ♜xb7 ♙xb7. Black is already planning to advance his d-pawn, activating his light squared bishop. 21. ♚de1 f5, followed by d5-d4; or 19. ♙e2 ♜b7 20. ♜xc8 ♚bxc8 21. a4 bxa4 22. exf6 ♚xf6 23. ♙xa6 ♚b8; 19. ♚de1 b4 20. ♙e2 ♙d7 and Black gradually equalizes.) and here Black must clarify his intentions about what he plans to do next:

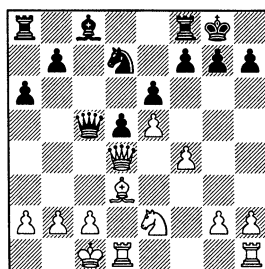
15... ♚b6 16. ♚xb6 ♜xb6 17. ♜e2 b4 18. ♜d4 a5 19. b3. White has a stable advantage in this endgame. His king is placed much closer to the centre and his opponent's queenside pawns are too advanced, so in case the game is opened, Black might have serious problems protect-

ing them. 19...♙a6 20.♖b2 ♜fc8 21.f5 ♙xd3 22.cxd3 exf5 23.♗xf5 ♜c3 24.d4 ♜e8 (Black's attempt to obtain some counterplay with the move 24...a4 is too slow, because of: 25.♜c1 a3+ 26.♖b1 ♜d3 27.♜c6 ♗d7 28.♖c2+-, or: 26...g6 27.♗e7+ ♖f8 28.♗c6 ♜d3 29.♖c2 ♜c3+ 30.♖d2+-) 25.♜c1 ♜xc1 26.♜xc1 ♗d7 27.♜c7 1-0 Pedzich – Aaberg, Copenhagen 1991;

15...♗c5 16.f5 exf5 17.♗xd5 ♗xd3+ 18.♜xd3 ♞a5? (This is a decisive mistake; instead Black had better defend with: 19...♞c4 20.♞xc4 bxc4 21.♜d4 ♙e6 22.♗c7 and White wins a pawn indeed, but still that would have been Black's best defensive possibility, since after the move in the game he can only dream about having an endgame like that...) 19.b4! ♞xa2 20.♗f6+ gxf6 (Black loses too after: 20...♖h8 21.♜h3 gxf6 22.♞h4 ♞a1+ 23.♖d2 ♜d8+ 24.♖e2 ♞xe5+ 25.♖f1+-) 21.♜g3+ ♖h8 22.♞h4 ♞a1+ 23.♖d2 ♜d8+ 24.♖e2 ♞xe5+ 25.♖f1 ♜d1 26.♜xd1 ♙e6 27.♞h6 ♙c4+ 28.♖g1 1-0 Aagaard – Brynell, Stockholm 2004;

15...♞c5 16.♗e2 b4 (Black has tried in practice here the line: 16...♞xd4 17.♗xd4 ♗c5 18.♜e3 b4 19.♗c6 ♗xd3+ 20.cxd3 d4 21.♜e2 a5 22.♖d2 ♙b7 23.♗xd4 ♜ad8 24.♖e3± Kruppa – Vainerman, USSR 1989; in case of: 16...♙b7, Ekstroem – Quinto, Mendrisio 1989, White can follow with the simple line: 17.♞xc5 ♗xc5

18.♗d4±.) 17.♞xc5 ♗xc5 18.♖d2 a5 19.♗d4 ♙a6 20.♞a1 ♜fc8 21.a3 (It is insufficient for Black to try: 21...♙xd3 22.axb4 ♙e4 23.bxc5 ♜xc5 24.g3 a4 25.b4±.) 21...♙c4 22.axb4 axb4 23.b3 (It was also possible for White to continue with: 23.♙xc4!? dxc4 24.♗c6 c3+ 25.bxc3 bxc3+ 26.♖e3 ♖f8 27.♜xa8 ♜xa8 28.♖d4 ♗a4 29.♜b1±) 23...♙xd3 24.cxd3 ♜xa1 25.♜xa1± Szelag – Depyl, Cappelle la Grande 2001.



15.♗e2 b5

It is too risky for Black to play: 15...f6?! 16.exf6 gxf6 17.♜h1 e5 (or 17...b6 18.c3 ♙b7 19.♙c2±) 18.fxe5 fxe5 19.♙xh7+. This sacrifice is decisive: 19...♖h7 20.♞h4+ ♖g6 21.♞g4+ ♖f7 (or 21...♖h7 22.♜d3 ♜f6 23.♜h3+ ♜h6 24.♜f1+-) 22.♗f4 ♞d6 (or 22...exf4 23.♞h5+ ♖g7 24.♜xd5 ♞xd5 25.♞xd5 ♗f6 26.♞g5+ ♖f7 27.♞xf4+-) 23.♞h5+ ♖g8 24.♞g5+ ♖f7 (24...♖h7 25.♜e3 ♗b6 26.♜xe5+-) 25.♗xd5 ♞g6 26.♞xg6+ ♖xg6 27.♗e7+ ♖g5 28.♗xc8 ♜axc8 29.♜xd7 ♜f2 30.♜d2+-.

There arises an endgame, which is quite typical for this varia-

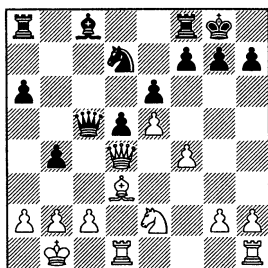
tion after: 15... ♗xd4 16. ♗xd4 ♗b8 17.h4! White occupies additional space on the kingside. 17... ♙d7 18.h5 ♗c6 19. ♗f3 h6 (It deserves attention for Black to try here: 19...f6!? 20.h6! If now – 20...g6, then 21.exf6 ♗xf6 22.g3±. Black's more tenacious defence seems to be 20...fxe5, but even then it looks like White maintains his advantage after: 21. ♗xe5!? ♗xe5 22.fxe5 g6 23. ♗hf1 ♙b5 24. ♗d2 ♙xd3 25.cxd3 ♗ac8 26. ♗c1. After White exchanges a couple of rooks, Black will have problems to control both open files. 26... ♗xc1 27. ♗xc1 ♗f2+ 28. ♗e3 ♗xb2 29. ♗c8+ ♗f7 30. ♗c7+ ♗g8 31. ♗g7+ ♗h8 32.g4 ♗h2 33.g5+-. In case of: 25... ♗xf1 26. ♗f1 ♗c8, then 27. ♗f6 ♗c6 28.b4 and Black will probably end up in a zugzwang...) 20.c3 ♗ac8 21.g3 ♗c7 (It would not work for Black to try: 21...d4 22. ♙e4+-) 22. ♗d2 ♙e8 23. ♗de1 ♗e7 24. ♗h2 f6 25.exf6 gxf6 26. ♗h4 e5?! (Black's better defence here would be: 26... ♙xh5 27. ♗f5 exf5 28. ♗xh5 ♗xe1 29. ♗xe1 ♗g7 30. ♗xf5 ♗d8±.) 27. ♙c2 ♗d7?! (White's advantage is practically decisive after that move. Black could have some chances of survival after: 27...d4 28. ♗f5 dxc3+ 29.bxc3 ♗d7+ 30. ♗c1 ♗h7±, or: 27...exf4 28.gxf4 ♗xe1 29. ♗xe1 ♙xh5 30. ♗f5 ♙g6 31. ♗xh6+ ♗g7 32. ♗g2 ♗e7 33. ♗f5+ ♗f7 34. ♗d6+ ♗e6 35. ♗xb7 ♙xc2 36. ♗xc2 ♗f5±.) 28. ♗g6! ♙xg6 29.hxg6 d4 or 29... ♗g7 30. ♗xh6! ♗xh6 31. ♗h1+) 30. ♗xh6 dxc3+ 31. ♗c1! cxb2+ 32.

♗b1 ♗fd8 (or 32... ♗d4 33. ♗eh1 ♗xc2 34.f5! ♗d1+ 35. ♗xd1 ♗e3 36. ♗d7 ♗xf5 37. ♗hh7+-) 33. ♗eh1 f5 34. ♙b3+ ♗g7 35. ♗h7+ ♗f8 36. ♗xd7 1-0 Grischuk – Iljushin, Krasnoyarsk 2003 (We have used the comments of A.Finkel in our notes).

15...b6 16. ♗b1 (I am going to quote here another excellent game, in which White managed to organize a perfect execution of a strategical positional bind. 16. ♗he1 ♗e8 17.h4 ♙b7 18.h5 ♗ad8 19.g4 f6 20.g5 fxe5 21.fxe5 ♙c6 22.g6 h6 23. ♗f4 ♗b8 (or 23... ♗f8 24. ♗g4 ♗e3+ 25. ♗b1 ♗xe5 26. ♗d4+-) 24. ♗d4 ♙d7 25. ♗f1 ♗c6 26. ♗b3 ♗e7 27. ♗f7+ ♗h8 28. ♗xe7 ♗xe7 29. ♗de1 ♙c8 30.c3 ♗g8 31. ♗d4 ♗b8 32. ♗e2 ♗f8 33. ♗ef2 ♗xf2 34. ♗xf2 ♙b7 35. ♙e2 ♗d7 36. ♗f3 ♗xe5 37. ♗e3 ♗d7 38. ♗f5 ♗f8 39. ♗xe7 ♗xe7 40. ♙g4 1-0 Korneev – Kraai, Zalakaros 2003.) 16... ♙b7 17.c3 ♙c6 18. ♙c2! White must preserve that bishop from its being exchanged. 18... ♙b5 19. ♗d2 ♙xe2 20. ♗xe2 ♗fd8 21.f5! White widens the front of his kingside attack. 21... exf5 (Or 21...b5 22. ♗h5 ♗f8 23.f6 ♗g6 24. ♗d4!+-; 22...exf5 23. ♗xf5 g6 24. ♗f4±) 22. ♙xf5 ♗f8 23.e6 fxe6 24. ♙xe6+ ♗h8 (Black cannot solve his problems if he enters a heavy pieces endgame. The difference between the relative power of the remaining forces is too great for him to cope with...: 24... ♗xe6 25. ♗xe6+ ♗h8 26. ♗he1±)

25.♙f7 d4! 26.♚f2! dxc3 27.♚xc5 bxc3 28.bxc3 ♖db8+ 29.♙c2 ♖a7 30.♙c4 ♘d7 31.♖b1 ♖xb1 32.♖xb1 g6, Hossain – Vakhidov, Dhaka 2003, 33.♖d1 ♙g7 34.♖d6 a5 35.♖c6±. Black's pawns on a5 and c5 are quite vulnerable and his pieces are so passive that his defence will be very problematic.

16.♙b1 b4



17.♖c1!

White plans to open and occupy the c-file.

17...♚xd4

This endgame is extremely difficult for Black. The only issue here is whether he will manage to survive or not...His only alternative is the unclear pawn-sacrifice: 17...a5 18.c3 b3 (18...♙a6 19.♙xa6 ♖xa6 20.♚xc5 ♘xc5 21.cxb4±, or 19...♚xd4 20.♘xd4 ♖xa6 21.cxb4 axb4 22.♖c7±) 19.axb3 ♚e7 (Finkel) 20.♙c2 ♙a6 21.♖ce1 ♘c5 (or 21...♙xe2 22.♖xe2 ♘c5 23.f5 exf5 24.♚xd5 ♖ad8 25.♚f3 g6 26.g4±) 22.♘c1 ♖fb8 23.♖e3±.

18.♘xd4 ♘c5

Black prevents temporarily the move c2-c3. In case of 18...a5, White can easily obtain a great

advantage with the line: 19.c3 bxc3 20.♖xc3 ♙a6 21.♙xa6 ♖xa6 22.♖c7±.

19.♖hd1

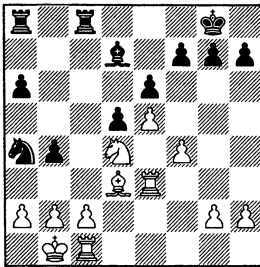
White has much less problems to worry about after: 19...f6 20.c3 fe5 21.fe5 bxc3 22.♖xc3 ♘xd3 23.♖dxd3 ♙d7 24.♖f3 ♖xf3 25.gxf3. He now has the additional resource – f3-f4-f5, creating a passed pawn along the e-file. 25...♖a7 (It is not any better for Black to try: 25...♖c8 26.♖xc8+ ♙xc8 27.♙c2 ♙f7 28.b4 ♙g6 29.♙d3 ♙g5 30.♙e3±) 26.♙c2. White can patiently improve his position in the next few moves. 26...♙f7 27.f4 ♖b7 28.b3 h6 29.♙d2 ♙e7 (It would not work for Black to play: 29...g5? 30.fxg5 hxg5 31.♖g3 ♙g6 32.h4+– Finkel.) 30.a3 ♙f7 31.h4 g6 32.♖c5 ♙e7 33.b4 ♙f7 34.♙e3 ♙e8 35.♙f3 ♙f7 (Black cannot hamper his opponent's plans with the move 35...h5, because that would deprive him of his last chance to create some counterplay on the kingside.) 36.♙g4 ♙e7 37.h5 ♙f7 38.hxg6+ ♙xg6 39.f5+ exf5+ 40.♙f4. Now, Black is totally helpless. 40...♙e8 41.♖c8 ♙d7 42.♖a8 ♙b5 43.♖f8 ♖f7 44.♖d8 ♖d7 45.♖b8 ♙d3 46.♖b6+ ♙h7 47.e6. It is over now! White's passed pawn is marching on. 47...♖g7 48.♘xf5 ♖g5 49.♘h6! ♖g1 50.e7 ♖e1 51.♘f5 ♖f1+ 52.♙e3 ♙xf5 53.♙e2 1–0 Grischuk – Iljushin, Istanbul 2003.

19...♘a4

White is presently failing to

push c2-c3, but he has plenty of other possibilities too.

20. ♖e1! ♖d7 21. ♖e3 ♖fc8



22. f5! exf5 (In case of 22... ♗c5, White's pawn goes forward – 23. f6±.) 23. ♖xf5 ♖xf5 24. ♗xf5 ♖e8 25. ♖d1 ♗b6 26. b3! g6 27. ♗d4 ♖ac8 28. e6! f5 (After: 28... fxe6 29. ♖de1, White preserves good chances to penetrate his opponent's camp with one of his rooks, for example: 29...

e5 30. ♖xe5 ♗xf7 31. ♖e6±) 29. c3 bxc3 30. ♖c1 ♗g7 31. ♖exc3 ♗f6 (Following: 31... ♖xc3 32. ♖xc3 ♖c8 33. ♖e3! ♗f8 34. e7+ ♗e8 35. ♖e6 ♗d7 36. ♖xa6 ♗xe7 37. ♖e6+ ♗f7 38. ♖d6 ♗f6 39. a4, Black's position does not inspire any optimism whatsoever.) 32. ♖c6 ♖b8 (Black is trying to preserve as many pieces on the board as possible, but White's advantage is so great that he only needs to show a bit of accuracy in order to be victorious.) 33. ♗c2 a5 34. ♗d3 a4 35. ♖c7 axb3 36. axb3 h6 37. h4 ♖bc8 38. ♖f7+ ♗e5 39. ♖e1+ ♗f4 40. h5 ♗g5 41. hxg6 ♗xg6 42. ♗xf5 ♖cd8 43. ♗e7+ ♗g5 44. ♖e5+ ♗g4 45. ♖g7+ 1-0 Khalifman – M.Gurevich, Germany 2002

Conclusion

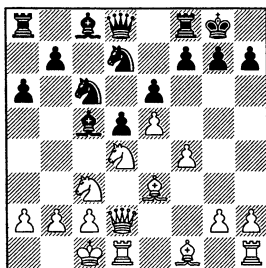
The system 10... ♔e7 is quite reliable for Black and the character of the fight in it is rather different from the rest of the systems in this variation. Black develops his pieces quickly and he places them in the centre. Maybe the drawback of that system is its relative passivity, but White must play very patiently – he cannot achieve much with seemingly active knight-maneuvers; nevertheless that is one of the few lines of the French Defence in which the vulnerability of the d6-square is really important and that might be the key-square for White to deal with Black's defensive concept successfully.

Concerning the move 10... ♖xd4 – such an early exchange can hardly create real problems for White, since Black clarifies his intentions too early. As a result of that, White can easily realize his standard and quite effective plan – he takes the d4-square under control and he advances his f-pawn.

As for the variation with the early 10... ♖xd4 – we have to say that exchange is also in favour of White. He gains access to the important e3-square and from there his queen can be quickly redeployed to the kingside. We know that White can also accomplish that in another fashion, for example with the maneuver ♖d2-f2-h4, but that is not so principled. It is essential for White to provoke a weakening of Black's kingside pawn-shelter with h7-h6, or g7-g6. After that he can exploit these weaknesses and that resource is quite typical for the entire system, so our readers should include it in their arsenal.

The connection between the middle game and the endgame can be easily noticed in the development of this system. White in principle should not avoid an endgame, since he usually manages to maintain some advantage almost always. The most important thing for him is to avoid a radical change in the pawn-structure, since the difference in the power of the light squared bishops guarantees him a stable edge. We are going to deal with similar endgames in our Chapter 18.

Chapter 20 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7
 5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♙e3 cxd4 8.♘xd4
 ♙c5 9.♚d2 0-0 10.0-0-0 a6



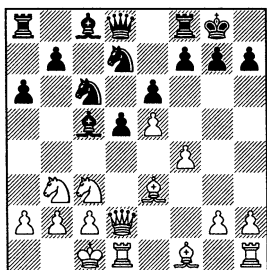
According to the database of games – this is a relatively “new” line – the first game played is back in the year 1984 – Glek – Korzubov, Vilnius 1984. Meanwhile, that is presently the most popular variation for Black in the Steinitz system and that is hardly surprising. Contrary to the endgame, which we have analyzed in Chapter 18, here Black has a chance to enter a complex fight in the middle game and that by itself is a very attractive psychological factor. Well, psychology is still something quite abstract and from the point of view of objectivity I must mention – that is doubtlessly Black’s most flexible line – he makes a useful move and he does not define anything yet, concerning the subsequent deployment of his forces.

Now, it is high time we discussed White’s problems too. His main continuations after 10... a6 are 11.h4, 11.♖b1 and 11.♚f2. Each one of these has its plusses and minuses, but I am not going to deal right now with all White’s problems in details. Generally speaking, Black has a universal plan, which provides him with quite an acceptable game – 11... ♙xd4 12.♙xd4 b5 and later according to circumstances. For example, in case of: 11.♚f2 ♙xd4 12.♙xd4 b5 13.♙e3 b4 14.♘e2 a5 15.♘d4 ♘xd4 16.♙xd4 ♙a6, Black manages to exchange the light squared bishops – see Shirov – Radjabov, Leon 2004, or Karjakin – Stellwagen, Wijk aan Zee 2005. If 14.♘a4, then White must consider: 14...♚a5 15.b3 ♙b7 16.b3 d4, as it was played in the game Hertneck – Knaak, Erfurt 2005. There might follow the practically forced line: 17.♙xd4 ♘xd4 18.♚xd4 ♜fd8 19.♙e4 ♙xe4 20.♚xe4 ♘c5 21.♚c6 (after 21.♘xc5 ♚xa2 22.♘d3 ♜ac8 23.♘d2 ♜xc2+ 24.♘e1 h6, Black has a good compensation for the piece) 21...♘a4 22.♜xd8 (or 22.♚xa4 ♚b6 23.♘b1 a5) 22...♜xd8

23.bxa4 g5 24.g3 ♖g7, with the idea to follow with 25...♗d5. I am not saying that Black has no problems at all, but all these variations are being analyzed to an almost complete exhaustion and the strategic contents of the position in some of the lines is not as important as concrete tactics.

11.♘b3

White is playing directly to prevent Black's plans. Black wishes to play 11...♗xd4 – therefore White must not allow that! According to my database, this move has been played for the first time in the game Gurieli – Zaitseva, Tbilisi 1987, but the greatest contribution to the development of that line should be acknowledged to the Dutch grandmaster Friso Nijboer, who had some quite impressive and memorable victories in this variation.



Now, Black has four more or less logical continuations – a) 11...♗xe3, b) 11...b6, c) 11...♗e7 and d) 11...♗b4.

a) 11...♗xe3

This is the simplest line for

Black – he exchanges pieces and that reminds us of his way of playing in the previous chapters.

12.♗xe3 b5

He has also tried in practice here:

12...♗c7?! That move does not prevent in any way the development of White's kingside initiative. 13.♗h3! b5 14.♗d3 g6 15.♗h6 ♗d8?! 16.h4 ♘f8 17.h5 b4 18.♘e2+- M.Popovic – Baljutsev, Plovdiv 1990;

12...b6 13.h4 (It is also good for White to play here 13.♗d3.) 13...f6 14.exf6!/? (It seems to me – that is a simple way for White to obtain a great advantage, meanwhile I would like to mention here a correspondence game in which that line was played for the first time. White obtained only a slight edge in it, but he managed to win the game, despite the considerable simplifications. 14.♘d4 ♘xd4 15.♗xd4 fxe5 16.fxe5 ♗b7 17.g3 ♗c7 18.♗e1 ♗c5 19.♘e2 ♗f5 20.♗xc5 bxc5 21.♘f4 ♗xe5 22.♗xe5 ♘xe5 23.♗h3 d4 24. ♗e1 ♘f3 25.♗xe6 g5 26.hxg5 ♘xg5 27. ♗e7 ♘xh3 28.♘xh3 ♗d5 29.a4 ♗d8 30.♘g5 h5 31.♘e6 ♗c8 32. ♘c7 ♗c6 33.♘xa6 ♗xa4 34.♗e5± Potrata – Strbad, corr. 1992.) 14... ♘xf6 (or 14...♗xf6 15.g3±) 15.h5 b5 16.h6 g6 17.♗e2 b4 18.♘a4 e5 19.fxe5 ♗e8 20.♗c5 ♘e5 21.♘b6±.

13.♗d3 b4

Black has other possibilities too, but White's plan remains the same anyway. He intends to cre-

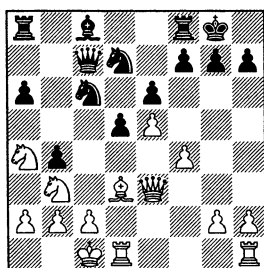
ate weaknesses in the pawn-shelter of the enemy king and later to exploit them successfully:

About 13... ♗c7 – see 12... ♗c7; 13... ♗b6 14. ♗h3±;

Or 13... ♗e7 14. ♗h3 g6 15. ♖hf1 ♖d8 16. ♖de1 ♖b6 17. g4 ♖c4 18. ♗h6 ♗f8 19. ♗h4 ♗e7 20. ♗xe7 ♖xe7, Gurieli – Zaitseva, Tbilisi 1987, 21. h4±.

14. ♖a4 ♗c7

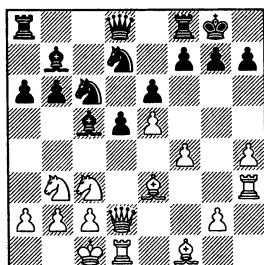
Or 14... a5 15. ♗h3 h6 16. g4 ♙a6 17. g5 ♙xd3 18. ♖xd3 ♖cxe5 19. fxe5 ♗xg5+ 20. ♖b1 ♗xe5 21. ♖g1 ♖h7 22. ♖bc5 ♖a7 23. ♖dg3± Spitz – Siviero, Email 2002.



15. g4 ♙b7 16. ♗h3 g6 17. ♗h6 ♖d8 18. ♖he1 ♖e8 19. ♖e3 ♖c8 20. ♖h3+– Zidu – Grulich, corr. 2002. It is so very obvious now that Black's pieces are in complete disarray and he cannot create any counterplay. He cannot defend his king effectively either.

b) 11... ♖b6 12. h4 ♙b7 13. ♖h3

Here, it is possibly more precise for White to play 13. h5!?. In fact, the only difference might arise in case the centre gets opened with the move f7-f6.



We will analyze the following possibilities:

About 13... ♖c8 14. ♖h3 ♗e7 15. ♖b1 – see 13. ♖h3;

13... h6. Now, White has a clear-cut plan for a kingside attack and Black has problems to counter it with anything efficient. 14. ♖g1 ♙xe3 15. ♗xe3 ♖c5 16. g4 ♖xb3+ 17. axb3 ♗c7 (or 17... d4 18. ♗e4 ♗c7 19. ♙d3 g6 20. hxg6 dxc3 21. g7+–) 18. ♙d3 f6 19. exf6 ♖xf6 20. g5 d4 (or 20... ♗xf4+ 21. ♗xf4 ♖xf4 22. gxh6 ♖f7 23. ♖a4+–) 21. ♗e4 ♗xf4+ 22. ♗xf4 ♖xf4 23. gxh6 ♖f7 24. ♖e4+–;

13... ♙xe3. It is in this variation that you can see the important difference – in comparison to 13. ♖h3 – in the character of the subsequent fight. 14. ♗xe3 f6 15. h6 g6 (or 15... fxe5 16. hxg7 ♖xf4 17. ♗h3+–) 16. exf6 ♗xf6 17. g3. White's exchange-sacrifice here is practically forced; nevertheless he obtains a more than sufficient compensation for it. 17... d4 18. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 19. ♖xd4 ♙xh1 20. ♖xd7 b5 (or 20... ♖fd8 21. ♖g7+ ♖h8 22. ♗xb6±) 21. ♙h3 ♖h8 (21... ♖fe8 22. ♗c5 ♖ac8 23. ♖g7+ ♖h8 24. ♗a7+–, or 23... ♗xg7 24. ♙xe6+! and White wins)

22.♠d6 ♖fe8 23.♙xe6 ♠ad8 24. ♠xa6 b4 25.♘b5! You should not forget that White's bishop on e6 is pinned here, but he has as a reserve the maneuver – ♘b5-c7. 25...♙f3 (or 25...♙b7 26.♠b6 ♙c8 27.♘c7 ♙xe6 28.♠xe6 ♠xe6 29. ♘xe6 ♠e8 30.♙c5 ♘g8 31.♘g5 ♙e7 32.♙c4+ ♘f8 33.b3+-) 26. c4! ♠d1+ (Or 26...g5 27.♙e5. White opts for an immediate endgame! 27...♙xe5 28.fxe5 ♠d1+ 29. ♘c2 ♠e1 30.♙f7+-) 27.♘c2 ♙f5+ 28.♙xf5 ♠xe3 29.♠b6+-.

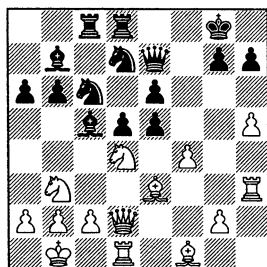
13...♠c8

White's move thirteen was only the beginning of a maneuver. Now, the harmony of his pieces has been disrupted for a moment and he should be quite careful to control the situation, preventing Black's eventual counterplay. The thorough analysis shows that everything is OK in case of: 13... ♙xe3 14.♙xe3 f6, because White consolidates his position gradually and he maintains his advantage: 15.exf6 ♙xf6 16.g3 ♠ac8 (16...♘e7 17.♠e1±) 17.♠h2 ♘e7 (or 17...♠fe8 18.♙h3 ♘c5 19.♘xc5 bxc5 20.♙xc5 ♙g6 21.♘xd5 exd5 22.♙xc8 ♙xc8 23.♙xd5+ ♘h8 24. h5 ♙f6 25.h6 gxh6 26.♙d6+-) 18.♙h3 ♘f5 19.♙xf5 exf5 20.♘xd5 ♙xd5 21.♠xd5 ♠fe8 22.♙d4 (It is also possible for White to play here 22.♙d2.) 22...♠e1+ 23.♘d2 ♠e4 24.♙xf6 ♘xf6 25.♠d3 ♘g4 26.♠g2 ♠ce8 27.♘d4. Now, White has nothing to worry about anymore. 27...♘e3 28.♠g1 ♘c4 29.♘c1±.

14.h5 ♙e7

Following 14...h6, White organizes quickly a crushing king-side attack after: 15.g4 ♙b4 16. ♙d3 ♙xc3 17.bxc3 ♙e7 18.g5 hxg5 19.♠g1 gf 20.♙xf4 ♘cxe5 21.♙h6±.

15.♘b1 ♠fd8 16.♘e2 f6 17. ♘ed4 fxe5



18.♘xc6

This order of moves is more precise than 18.fxe5, as it was played in the abovementioned game, because then Black has the additional possibility to follow with: 18...♘cxe5 19.♙g5 ♘f6 20. h6 ♘e4 21.♙xe7 ♘xd2+ 22.♠xd2 ♙xe7 23.♘xe6 ♠d6 24.♘g7 ♠f6 25.♠d1 ♙f8 and he has solved all his problems.

18...♙xc6

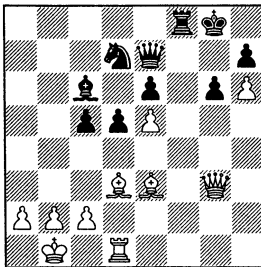
Black should have possibly preferred here: 18...♠xc6 19.fxe5 ♠f8, but even then White preserves a slight advantage: 20.♙d4 ♠cc8 21.♠e1 h6 (or 21...♠f5 22.♙d3 ♠g5 23.h6±) 22.♠g3 ♙h4 23.♠g6±.

19.fxe5 ♠f8 20.h6 g6 21.♙g5 ♙e8 22.♙xa6 ♠a8 23.♙d3 ♠f2

It is stronger for Black to defend here with: 23...♘xe5 24.♘xc5 bxc5, but White still

maintains his initiative after:
 25. ♗c3 ♗b8 (or 25...d4 26. ♗xc5 ♖xd3 27. ♗xd4 ♗f7 28. ♗hxd3±)
 26. ♙xg6! d4 27. ♗xc5 ♖xg6 (or
 27...hxg6 28. ♙e7+–) 28. ♗xc6
 ♗e5 29. ♙c1+–.

24. ♗e1 ♗xg2 25. ♙e3 ♗e7
 26. ♗g3 ♗xg3 27. ♗xg3! ♗f8 28.
 ♖xc5 bxc5



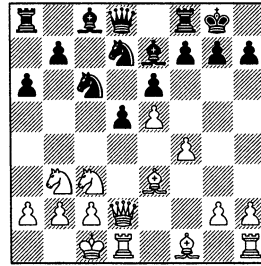
29. ♙xg6! hxg6 30. ♗xg6+
 ♖h8 31. ♗g1. Now, suddenly
 Black has great problems to de-
 fend against the check on the g7-
 square. 31... ♖xe5 (Or 31... ♗a8
 32. ♙g5 ♗f8 33. h7+–) 32. ♗g7+
 ♗xg7 33. hxg7+ ♖g8 34. gxf8 ♗+
 ♖xf8 35. ♙xc5+ ♖f7 36. ♙d4
 ♖d7 37. ♗g7+ 1-0 Nijboer – Glek,
 Apeldoorn 2001. This was an ex-
 cellent game and the endgame
 with the non-standard bishop-
 sacrifice was really impressive.

c) 11... ♙e7

(diagram)

12. h4 b5 13. ♖b1

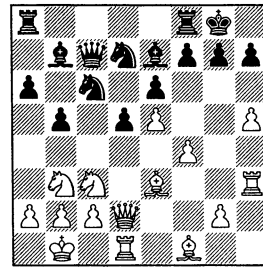
White transposes moves in
 order to prevent Black's maneu-
 ver ♖c6-a5. In the game we were
 following – White had played:
 13. ♗h3 ♙b7 14. ♖b1.



13... ♙b7

White would have countered
 13... ♖a5, with: 14. ♖xa5 ♗xa5
 15. ♖xd5+–.

14. ♗h3 ♗c7 15. h5



15... b4

It would have been a reason-
 able alternative for Black to try 15...
 ♖b6, but it looks like White would
 have maintained his initiative in
 that case too: 16. h6 (This move is
 played with the idea to exchange
 the bishop on e7 and to follow with
 a purely positional play. It also
 deserves attention for White to
 continue with the following plan
 of development of his initiative:
 16. ♙xb6 ♗xb6 17. g4 ♗ac8 18. g5
 ♙b4 19. a3 ♙e7 20. g6 h6 21. gxf7+
 ♗xf7 22. ♗g3 ♙h4 23. ♗g4 ♙f2 24.
 ♙h3 ♙e3 25. ♗d3 ♗e8 26. ♖e2 b4
 27. a4±, or 25... ♖e7 26. ♖e2 ♗c4

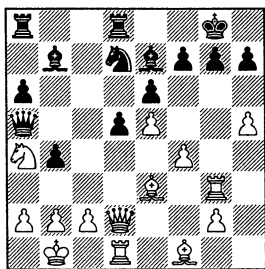
27.♖bd4 ♕xd4 28.♖xd4±. It is sometimes quite useful to find a reserve line in some not so well analyzed positions. It increases your confidence that the general evaluation of the position is correct... 16...g6 17.♖f2 ♖c4 18.♕c5 b4 19.♖a4 ♜fd8 (Black's standard freeing move – 19...f6?! is too slow here, because of: 20.♕xc4! dxc4 21.♕d6 ♕xd6 22.exd6 ♖f7 23.♖bc5 ♜ab8 24.d7 ♖d8 25.f5! exf5 26.♖f4 ♜a8 27.♖xb7 ♖xb7 28.♖c7 ♖d8 29.♖b6+–, or 23...c3 24.d7 ♜ab8 25.♞e3 ♖d8 26.f5 exf5 27.♖f4+–) 20.♕xe7 ♖xe7 (In case of 20...♖xe7, Black suddenly loses his a6-pawn: 21.♖h4 ♖f5 22.♖f6 ♖e7 23.♖xe7 ♖xe7 24.♖ac5 ♕c6 25.♖xa6 ♜xa6 26.♕xc4+– and his attempt at preserving the material balance leads to even more terrible consequences for him – 24...♞db8 25.♖d7 ♞c8 26.♖f6+ ♖h8 27.♕xc4 dxc4 28.♞d7 ♕xg2?! 29.♞xe7 ♕xh3 30.♞xf7, with an unavoidable checkmate.) 21.♖c5 ♖c7 22.♞h1! (White is creating the threat 23.♕xc4.) 22...♖4a5 23.♖xa5 ♖xa5 24.♖xa5 ♖xa5 25.♖c5 ♞dc8 26.♖d7 ♖c4 27.♞d4 ♖h8 28.♕xc4 ♞xc4 29.♞hd1±. Black's king is totally isolated in this endgame and he will hardly manage to save the day.

16.♖a4 ♖a5 17.♞g3 ♜fd8

That move is not attractive at all. According to the rules of positional play, that rook should go to c8. Possibly, Black's idea is in case of: 18...♖c4 19.♕xc4 dxc4, to

ensure an additional protection of the knight on d7, but it does not even come to that. So – 17...♜fc8 18.♖d4! (Now, White cannot adhere to the same plan as in the game, because his a2-pawn is hanging.) 18...♕c6 (It would not work for Black to play: 18...♖c4 19.♕xc4 dxc4? 20.♖xe6!+–; if 18...♖c6 19.♕d3 ♖xd4 20.♕xd4 ♕c6, then 21.f5! ♕xa4 22.fxe6 fxe6 23.♖h6 ♕xc2+ 24.♖a1 and White wins.) 19.♖xc6 ♖xc6 20.b3 f5 21.exf6 ♖xf6 (or 21...♕xf6 22.f5 ♖c7 23.fxe6 ♖e5 24.♕d4 ♖e6 25.♖b6! ♖xb6 26.♖h6 ♖f7 27.♞xg7+ ♕xg7 28.♖xg7+ ♖e8 29.♕xb6 ♖c6 30.♕d3+–) 22.h6 g6 23.♕d3 ♖c4 24.bxc4 ♖xa4 25.♕xg6 hxg6 26.♞xg6 ♖f7 27.♞g7+ ♖f8 28.♕d4 ♞xc4 (28...♖e4? 29.h7+–) 29.♖e2! (Δ30.♕xf6 ♕xf6 31.♞g8+!) 29...♞ac8 30.♞d2 ♞8c6 31.♖d3 ♞xc2 (Black has no other defence against 32.♖g6 in sight.) 32.♞xc2 ♞xc2 33.♖xc2 b3 34.♖f2 bxa2+ 35.♖a1 ♖d1+ 36.♖xa2 ♖a4+ 37.♖b1 ♖b3+ 38.♕b2 ♖d1+ 39.♕c1 ♖g4 40.♖g3 ♖xh6 41.f5+–.

18.♖xa5 ♖xa5



19.♕d4!!

This is a brilliant piece-sacrifice. We will try to describe to you the advantages of that move one by one: 1) White's queen now has a free route to be redeployed to the kingside; 2) The bishop is eyeing Black's g7-pawn in advance – if the game is suddenly opened that will be of tremendous importance; 3) White fortifies his e5-pawn and blocks the centre permanently. Now, Black has only a quite narrow line of communications between his two flanks and it is presently overburdened with pieces (♞d8, ♖d7, ♙e7), so it all depends on whether he will have enough resources to protect his king, since he will hardly manage to bring any reserves into the defence in the near future.

19... ♗xa4

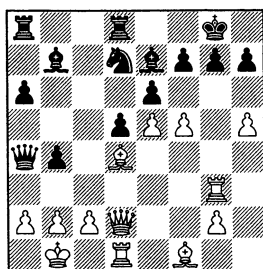
Naturally, Black must capture the piece; otherwise White's attack is practically running unopposed in a position with material equality:

19... h6 20. f5 ♙g5 21. ♖xg5 hxg5 22. ♗xg5+–;

19... ♙f8 20. f5! exf5 21. e6! fxe6 22. ♙xg7 ♖f7 23. ♙xf8 ♖xf8 24. ♗h6 ♖e7 (Black cannot save the game after his other possibilities either: 24... ♖e8 25. ♗xe6+ ♖d8 26. b3+–; 24... ♗xa4 25. ♖e1 ♖e7 26. ♖xe6+ ♖d8 27. b3 ♗a5 28. ♖g7 ♖a7 29. ♗g5+ ♖c8 30. ♖xd7+–) 25. ♖g7+ ♖d6 (or 25... ♖d8 26. b3 ♖e8 27. ♖e1+–; 25... ♖f7 26. ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 27. ♗xh7+ ♖e8 28. ♖e1 e5 29. b3 e4 30. ♗xf5+–) 26. ♗f4+ ♖c6

27. c4 bxc3 28. ♖xc3+–. Black's king seems to be “centralized” a little bit too much...

20. f5



20... ♖f8

The other possible defences are insufficient too:

20... ♖ac8 21. f6 ♙f8 22. ♙d3 g6 23. b3 ♗c6 24. hxg6 fxc6 25. ♖xg6+! hxg6 26. ♗g5+–;

20... ♙f8 21. f6 g6 (It is useless for Black to try: 21... ♖dc8 22. ♙d3!). Now in case of 22... g6, White wins with the already familiar line: 23. hxg6 hxg6 24. ♖xg6+ fxc6 25. ♗g5+–, while his task is only a bit more difficult after: 22... b3 23. axb3 ♗xd4 24. ♙xh7+ ♖xh7 25. ♗xd4 gxf6 26. h6! ♖xe5 27. ♖e1 ♙c6 28. ♖xe5 fxe5 29. ♗h4!+–) 22. hxg6 fxc6 23. ♖xg6+ hxg6 24. ♗g5 ♖xe5 25. ♙xe5 ♗e8 26. ♙d3+–;

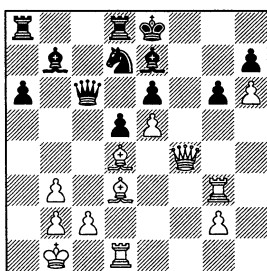
20... exf5 21. ♗h6 ♙f8 22. e6! f6 23. e7+–.

21. h6 g6 22. fxc6 fxc6 23. ♙d3 b3

Black has no chances to survive after his other tries either: 23... ♖b8 24. ♙xg6 hxg6 25. h7 ♖g7 26. ♖h1 ♖h8 27. ♖xg6 ♖d7 28. ♗h6+–; 23... ♖dc8 24. ♙xg6 hxg6

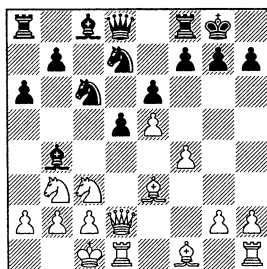
25. $\text{E}xg6$ $\text{Q}xe5$ 26. $\text{Q}xe5$ b3 27. axb3
 $\text{W}h4$ 28. $\text{E}f1+$ $\text{Q}e8$ 29. $\text{E}g7$ a5 30. h7
 $\text{Q}d7$ 31. $\text{Q}f6+-$.

24. $\text{W}f4+$ $\text{Q}e8$ 25. axb3 $\text{W}c6$



26. $\text{E}xg6!$ $\text{Q}f8$ 27. $\text{E}g7$ $\text{Q}d7$
 28. $\text{E}f1$ $\text{E}e8$ 29. $\text{W}g5$ $\text{Q}d8$ 30.
 $\text{E}xe7+-$ $\text{E}xe7$ 31. $\text{E}xf8+$ $\text{Q}d7$
 32. $\text{E}xa8$ $\text{Q}xa8$ 33. $\text{W}g8$ $\text{W}c8$ 34.
 $\text{Q}xh7$ $\text{W}e8$ 35. $\text{W}xe8+$ $\text{E}xe8$ 36.
 $\text{Q}d3$ $\text{Q}c6$ 37. g4 $\text{E}g8$ 38. h7 $\text{E}h8$
 39. g5 $\text{Q}e7$ 40. g6 $\text{Q}f8$ 41. $\text{Q}c5+$
 $\text{Q}g7$ 42. $\text{Q}e7$ 1-0 Nijboer – Stell-
 wagen, Leeuwarden 2002. This
 was a wonderful creative achieve-
 ment of the Dutch grandmaster.

d) 11... $\text{Q}b4$



That is the most popular and
 evidently the best move for Black.
 He wishes to provoke some weak-
 ening on White's queenside; oth-

erwise he will have to put up with
 that annoying pin for long.

12. $\text{Q}d3$

In case of 12. a3?! $\text{Q}e7$, Black's
 plan is quite simple – he advances
 his b-pawn.

12... b5

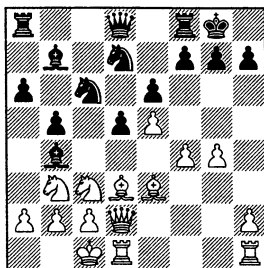
Black has tried in practice
 too: 12...f6 13. exf6 $\text{W}xf6$, Li Shi-
 long – Kantaria, Dos Hermanas
 2004, 14. $\text{E}hf1!$ $\text{Q}xc3$ (He changes
 practically nothing with: 14... $\text{Q}h8$
 15. a3 $\text{Q}xc3$ 16. $\text{W}xc3$ $\text{W}xc3$ 17. bxc3
 b5 18. $\text{Q}d4\pm$, if 14...b5, then it
 is possible for White to follow
 with: 15. $\text{Q}d4$ $\text{Q}b7$ 16. $\text{Q}xc6$ $\text{Q}xc6$
 17. $\text{Q}d4\pm$) 15. $\text{W}xc3$ $\text{W}xc3$ 16. bxc3
 b5 17. $\text{Q}d4$ $\text{Q}d8$ 18. $\text{E}de1$ $\text{Q}b7$ 19.
 $\text{Q}g1$ $\text{Q}c5$ 20. $\text{Q}b3$ $\text{Q}e4$ 21. $\text{Q}c5\pm$.
 After the exchange of the knights,
 White will prepare g2-g4 and f4-
 f5 and his bishops will become
 real monsters.

13. g4

Black has tried in this position
 the following moves: d1) 13... $\text{Q}b7$
 and d2) 13... $\text{Q}b6$, but I would
 like to mention the possibility:
 13... $\text{Q}a5$ 14. $\text{Q}xa5$ (It is seemingly
 quite attractive for White to play:
 14. a3 $\text{Q}c4$ 15. $\text{Q}xh7+!$ $\text{Q}h8$ 16.
 $\text{W}g2$ $\text{Q}xc3$ 17. $\text{W}h3$ $\text{Q}xb2+$ 18. $\text{Q}b1$
 $\text{E}e8$ 19. $\text{Q}d3+$ $\text{Q}g8$ 20. $\text{W}h7+$ $\text{Q}f8$
 21. $\text{Q}xc4$ bxc4 22. $\text{Q}xb2$ cxb3 23.
 cxb3 $\text{Q}b7$ 24. $\text{Q}f2$ f6 25. g5! fxe5 26.
 fxe5 $\text{W}c7$ 27. $\text{Q}d4$ and his attack is
 overwhelming, but he must also
 consider: 15... $\text{Q}xh7$ 16. $\text{W}d3+$ $\text{Q}g8$
 17. axb4 a5 18. bxa5 $\text{Q}a6$ and Black
 has some counterplay.) 14... $\text{W}xa5$
 15. $\text{Q}d4$ $\text{Q}c5$ (or 15... $\text{Q}c5$ 16. $\text{Q}xc5$

♖xc5 17. ♖b1 b4 18. ♖e2 ♙d7 19. ♖d4±) 16. ♖b1 ♖xd3 17. ♗xd3 ♙d7 18. f5 ♙xc3 19. ♙xc3 b4 20. ♙d4 ♙b5 21. ♗e3±.

d1) 13... ♙b7



14. ♖hg1 ♗c8

14... ♗c7 15. ♖g3 ♗fc8 16. ♖h3 g6 17. ♗f2 ♙e7 (Black's other possibility is – 17... ♙xc3 18. bxc3. The difference in the strength of the pieces enables White to simply ignore the slight weakening of his queenside. 18... ♗d8 19. ♖c5! ♖xc5 20. ♙xc5 ♖a5 21. g5 ♗c6 22. ♙b4. Now, in case of: 22... h5 23. gxh6 ♖h7, White has the resource: 24. f5! exf5 25. ♙xf5 and he wins after: 25... gxf5 26. ♗xf5+ ♖h8 27. ♖g1!+-, as well as after: 25... ♗g5+ 26. ♖b1 ♗xf5 27. ♖f3 ♗g4 28. ♖d4+-). It is more resilient for Black to defend with: 22... ♖c4, but White has a quite effective plan even then: 23. ♙xc4 ♗xc4 24. ♖h6! a5 25. ♗h4 ♗xf4 26. ♗xf4 axb4 27. ♖d3+-) 18. ♖b1 ♖b4 19. ♗c1 ♖xd3 20. cxd3 ♗d8 21. ♖f1 ♗e8 22. ♙d4 f5 (Naturally, Black had his reasons for such a radical decision; nevertheless his position

becomes strategically hopeless after that. On the other hand, after for example: 22... b4 23. ♖e2 a5 24. f5 a4 25. ♖d2 ♗c6 26. f6 ♙f8 27. ♗h4 h6 28. ♙e3, White will soon checkmate.) 23. gxf5 exf5 24. ♖a5± Netzer – Vallin, Evry 2004.

15. ♖g3 ♖a5

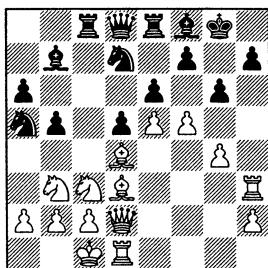
Black can also try here:

15... ♙xc3 16. bxc3 ♖e7 17. ♖h3 ♖g6 18. ♙d4 ♗e7 19. ♖b1. White's plan is to prepare and push f4-f5. This task is not so difficult to accomplish, for example after: 19... ♗fe8, he can follow with the immediate: 20. f5 exf5 21. e6! fxe6 22. gxf5 exf5 23. ♙xf5±;

15... ♗e8 16. ♖h3 g6 17. ♗f2 ♙f8 (It would have been better for Black to have defended with: 17... ♙xc3 18. bxc3 ♖a5 19. ♖c5 ♖xc5 20. ♙xc5 ♖c4 21. ♙xc4 bxc4 22. ♗e3 ♗d7 23. ♙d6±) 18. g5! White now seizes the initiative and he never lets it slip away from his hands to the end of the game. 18... ♖b4 19. ♖b1 ♖xd3 20. cxd3 ♙c6 21. ♖e2 b4 22. ♖bd4 ♙a4 23. b3 ♙b5 24. ♖xb5 axb5 25. ♖d4 ♗a5 26. ♗h4 h5 27. gxh6 ♗c3 28. f5!! (This is a spectacular breakthrough, which leads to a forced win, but it was quite good enough for him to have played too: 28. h7+ ♖h8 29. ♗f2 ♗a8 30. ♗b2 ♖c5 31. ♙f2± Nijboer – Glek, France 2003.) 28... exf5 29. e6 ♗a8 (or 29... fxe6 30. ♗g3 ♖h7 31. ♖g1+-) 30. ♖d2 ♖xd3 (or 30... ♗ac8 31. ♖g2 ♖xd3 32. ♙d2! ♗a8 33. ♙c1!+-) 31. exd7 ♖xd2 32. a4 bxa3 33. h7+ ♖h8 34. ♙xd2

♞xd2 35. ♜f6+ ♔g7 36. d8♞+ and the game end up in a checkmate.

16. ♖h3 g6 17. ♙d4 ♜e8 18. f5 ♙f8



19. ♖xa5

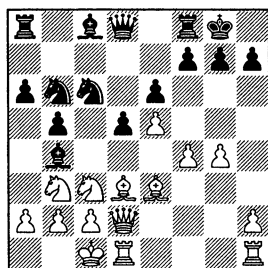
I hope that the fans of aesthetics and beauty are going to appreciate the variation: 19.f6! b4 20. ♞g5! (Soloviov) and the threat 21. ♙xg6 is impossible to parry. Black might try such a line, for example: 20...bxc3 21. ♙xg6 fxc6 22. f7+ ♝xf7 23. ♜xh7 ♙g7 24. ♞h6, but White still wins. Black cannot save the day by eliminating White's dangerous bishop either: 19...♖xb3 20. axb3 ♖c5 21. ♞g5 ♖xd3+ 22. ♝dxd3, with the idea to follow with 23. ♜xh7+.

19... ♞xa5 20. ♞f4 ♖c5?!

Now, White wins quite easily, but his task would not be so difficult after Black's other defences: 20...♜e7 21.f6 ♜e8 22. ♙xg6 hxg6 23.g5+-; 20...b4 21.fxc6 fxc6 22. ♙xg6 ♜e7 (22...hxg6 23. ♝f1 ♜e7 24. ♞g5+-) 23. ♙xh7+! ♜xh7 24. ♜xh7 ♝xh7 25. ♞f7+ ♝h8 26. ♞h5+! ♝g8 27. ♞g6+ ♔g7 28. ♞xe6+ ♝h7 29. ♝d3 ♙h6+ 30.g5 ♙xg5+ 31. ♖b1+-.

21. ♙xc5 ♜xc5 22. ♜xh7 1-0 Nijboer – Sielecki, Breda 2001.

d2) 13... ♖b6



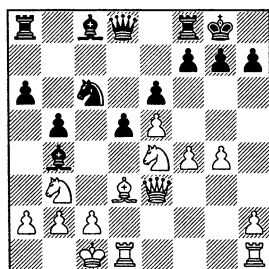
This is a more active line for Black – he is trying to deploy his knight to a4, or to the c4-square.

14. ♞f2 ♖c4

It is definitely weaker for Black to play: 14...♖a4 15. ♖e2 ♙e7 16. ♖ed4 ♖b4 17. ♖b1 ♖xd3 18. cxd3+.

15. ♖e4 ♙e7

White maintains a powerful initiative in case of: 15...♖xe3 16. ♞xe3



and here the following variations might arise:

16...dxe4 17. ♞xe4±; 16...♙e7 17.g5! ♝h8 (17...♖b4 18. ♖f6+ gxf6

19. ♙xh7+ and White checkmates)
17... ♖h8 18. ♗h3 ♖b4 19. ♖f6 h6
20. ♖g4+-;

16... ♗c7 17. ♖f6+! This is the most principled line for White, but you feel some pity for that sacrificial lamb as usual... 17... gxf6 18. exf6 ♗d8 (The tentative move 18... ♙d6, leads to a checkmate after: 19. ♗h3 ♙xf4+ 20. ♖b1 h6 21. g5 ♙xg5 22. ♗hg1+-) 19. ♙xh7+ ♖f8 20. g5! ♙d6 (or 20... d4 21. ♗f2) 21. ♗hf1. I believe – White's position is close to winning. His queen is practically ready to come even closer to the enemy king, meanwhile Black must worry about White's possible pawn-offensive too.

16. ♙c5!?

I think – that is the right way for White to fight for a real advantage. In the game, we are following, it all ended peacefully after: 16. g5 dxe4 17. ♙xc4 ♗c7 18. ♙b6 ♗b8 19. ♙e2 ♖b4 20. c3 ♖d5 21. ♙d4 ♗c7 22. ♗hg1 ♙b7 23. ♗h4 a5 24. ♖d2 ♖b4 25. ♖b1 ♙d5 26. ♗g3, draw, Nijboer – Stellwagen, Leuwarden 2002.

16... ♙xc5

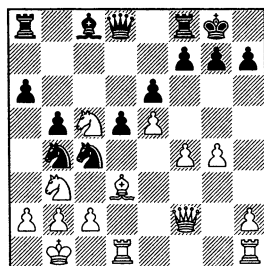
Black's other possibilities are clearly worse:

16... ♙b7 17. ♙xe7 ♗xe7 18. ♖g5 h6 19. ♖h7 ♗fc8 20. g5 ♖b4 21. gxf6 ♖xa2+ 22. ♖b1 ♖c3+ 23. bxc3 ♗a3 24. ♖f6+ gxf6 25. ♗hg1+! ♖f8 (or 25... ♖h8 26. ♙xc4 bxc4 27. ♗h4 ♗e7 28. exf6 ♗a3 29. h7+-) 26. ♙xc4 bxc4 27. h7 ♖e7 28. ♗b6+-;

16... ♙d7 17. ♙xe7 ♗xe7 18. ♖g5 h6 19. ♖h7. All this is well-familiar by now... 19... ♗fc8 20. g5 ♖b4 21. gxf6 ♖xa2+ (or 21... ♖xd3+ 22. ♗xd3 ♖xh7 23. hxf6 ♖g8 24. ♗g1, followed by ♗d3-h3+-) 22. ♖b1 ♖c3+ 23. bxc3 ♗a3 24. ♙xc4 bxc4 (24... ♖xh7 25. hxf6+-) 25. ♖f6+ gxf6 26. h7+ ♖h8 27. ♗h4 ♗e7 28. ♗hg1+-;

16... dxe4 17. ♙xe4 ♗c7 18. ♙xe7 ♗xe7 19. ♙xc6 ♙b7 20. ♙xb7 ♗xb7 21. ♖c5 ♗b6 22. ♗he1±.

17. ♖exc5 ♖b4 18. ♖b1

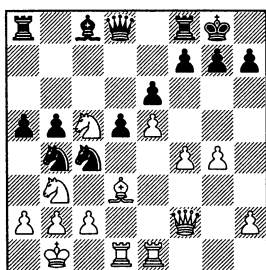


White has completed his prophylactic measures on the queenside and now his plan is to fortify his e5-pawn and then to advance his f-pawn. The fight has entered a very complex phase indeed. Black's knights are not threatening anything much, but White needs to play accurately – he must control the situation on the queenside. His optimal strategy is the following – White must create threats in the centre and on the kingside and he must force Black to do something active on the queenside, while White's pieces are better mobilized. He must

parry that activity by exchanges or by blocking the position and later he should try to materialize his advantages.

18...♞e7

Black's alternative here is the move – 18...a5 (In case of 18...f6, White still maintains his edge – 19.♞h4 ♖xd3 20.cxd3 ♜e3 21.♞dg1 fxe5 22.♞xd8 ♞xd8 23. fxe5 d4 24.♞g3 ♞d5 25.♞c1±) 19.♞he1.



Now, Black has several continuations:

19...a4 20.♖d4 a3 21.b3 ♜b2 22.♞d2 ♞b6 23.♜f3 ♞a7 (or 23...♜2xd3 24.cxd3±) 24.c3 ♜2xd3 25.♜xd3 ♞xf2 26.♜xf2 ♜c6 27.♜d4 ♜xd4 28.♞xd4 ♞c7 29.♜c2 ♜b7 30.♞e3 ♞fc8 31.g5! ♜f8 32.h4±;

19...♞b6 20.f5 a4 21.♜c1 a3 (That is Black's last chance. His other possibilities lose instantly: 21...♜a6 22.f6! ♜xc5 23.♞xh7+; 22...g5 23.♞g3+-; 22...g6 23.♞f4 ♜h8 24.♜xa6 ♞xa6 25.♞h6 ♞g8 25.♞xc4 bxc4 26.♞e3+-) 22.b3 ♜a6 (Black fails to evacuate his king to the queenside: 22...g6 23.f6 ♞d8 24.♞xc4 bxc4 25.♞e3 ♜f8 26.♜d7+ and White wins the

enemy queen.) 23.f6 g6 24.♞f4! ♜c7 25.♞h6 ♜e8 26.♞xc4 bxc4 27.♞e3+-;

19...♞c7 20.♜c1! f6 (The idea behind White's move twenty can be best seen in the following variation: 20...a4 21.a3 ♜xd3 22.♜1xd3±; in case of: 20...♞b8 21.a3 ♜xd3 22.♜1xd3 b4 23.a4± White is ready to push his f-pawn forward.) 21.exf6 ♞xf6 22.f5 ♞b6 (White can break Black's defence by rather surprising maneuvers with his knight in case of: 22...♞c6 23.♜5b3 e5 24.♜c5. Now, Black cannot continue with: 24...e4 25.♜xe4+-). His last chance is to try: 24...♞a7 25.♞xc4 bxc4 26.♜e4! ♞ff7 27.♜g5 ♞fe7 28.♞xe5! c3 29.b3 a4 30.♞de1 axb3 31.♞xa7! bxa2+ 32.♜xa2 ♜xa2 33.♞b8+-). Now if 22...exf5, then 23.♞e8+ ♜f7 24.g5 and White's attack is very powerful.) 23.♞g1! White's queen is protected here and the knight on c5 is free for action... 23...exf5 24.♞e8+ ♜f7 25.♞h8! ♞c6 26.♞e1! ♞b7 27.♞xa8 ♞xa8 28.♜d7 ♞e3 29.♞xc4 ♞xe1 30.♞xe1 and White wins the exchange thanks to the possibility – ♜e5+.

19.♞he1 a5 20.f5 f6 21.exf6 ♞xf6

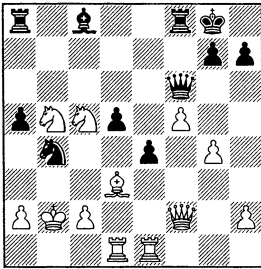
Now, the most important thing for White is not to blunder a checkmate on the b2-square.

22.♜d4 e5

After: 22...exf5 23.♞xf5 g6 (or 23...♞xf5 24.♞xf5 ♞xf5 25.gxf5 ♞f6 26.♜ce6±) 24.♞e6+ ♞xe6 25.♞xf6 ♞xf6 26.♞xe6 ♞xe6 27.♜cxe6 ♜e3

28. ♖g1±. White's knights on d4 and e6 are dominating the board and Black has no sensible plan whatsoever.

23. ♖xb5 ♖xb2 24. ♙xb2 e4



25. ♖d4 (It is possible that the

line: 25.c3 ♖xd3+ 26. ♖xd3 exd3 27. ♖xd3 ♖b8 28.a4 ♙a6 29. ♖xd5± might be even better for White, but it is quite understandable that he wishes to obtain a purely technical position with an advantage like that.) 25... ♖xd3+ 26. ♖xd3 ♖b8 27. ♖xf6 ♖xb5+ 28. ♙c1 gxf6 29.a4 ♖b8 30. ♖c5 ♖d8 31. ♖xe4 ♙f7 32. ♖c3±. In general, that evaluation might even underestimate a bit White's prospects, since Black can hardly save that position. It is amazing, but his bishop on c8 never managed to enter the actions at all.

Conclusion

The variation – 8... ♙c5 9. ♖d2 0-0 10. 0-0-0 a6 11. ♖b3 – is evidently one of the most complex in the Steinitz system. It is quite sufficient to emphasize that all 16 pieces remain on the board for a long period of the game. Nevertheless, White's plan is almost universal: in its constructive aspect – he must fortify his centre and in particular his e5-pawn. Later, he should try to develop his kingside initiative and concerning prophylactics – he must watch about Black's undermining move – f7-f6 and additionally White should try to contain Black's initiative on the queenside. In general, if the game becomes a race – White is usually faster, because the potential of his pieces is considerably greater. There are plenty of possible variations indeed, but after a careful analysis it is easy to notice that White uses standard maneuvers in almost all of them. Some of these resources were already studied by us in our previous chapters in a little bit modified kind. White's active maneuvering of his rook along the third rank is maybe what you should pay a special attention to. This is necessary, because White's pawn on e5 needs additional protection and the straightforward pawn-break f4-f5 does not always work perfectly for him. In conclusion, White has excellent prospects, but that does not mean – that evaluation is absolutely final. The entire variation is developing daily and there is still plenty of blank spots left- therefore our readers should work, study, search and create new methods and ideas in order to be really successful and we wish you all well.

Index of Variations

Part 1. 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟c3 9

Chapter 1 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟c3

a) 3...f5	10
b) 3...♟e7	11
c) 3...h3	13
d) 3...c5	14
e) 3...a6	17
f) 3...♟e7	20
g) 3...b6	24

Chapter 2 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟c3 ♟c6 4.♟f3

various	31
a) 4...♟b4	31
b) 4...♟f6 5.e5 various	36
b1) 5.e5 ♟d7	36
b2) 5.e5 ♟e4	38

Part 2. 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟c3 dxe4 4.♟xe4 44

Chapter 3 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟c3 dxe4 4.♟xe4

various	46
a) 4...e5	48
b) 4...♟c6 5.♟f3 various	50
b1) 5.♟f3 ♟f6	52
b2) 5.♟f3 ♟e7	55
c) 4...b6	57
d) 4...♟d5	61

Chapter 4 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟c3 dxe4 4.♟xe4 ♟f6 5.♟xf6

a) 5...gxf6	68
b) 5...♟xf6 6.♟f3 various	72
5...♟xf6 6.♟f3 h6 7.♟d3 various	74
b1) 7.♟d3 ♟d6	74
b2) 7.♟d3 c5	79
b3) 7.♟d3 ♟c6	80

Chapter 5 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♖c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♕d7 5.♗f3

various	89
5...♗c6 6.♗d3 ♗f6	90
a) 5...♗c6 6.♗d3 ♗xe4 7.♗xe4 various	90
7.♗xe4 c6 8.0-0 ♗f6 9.♗d3 various	91
a1) 9.♗d3 ♗e7	92
a2) 9.♗d3 ♗d6	94
b) 5...♗c6 6.♗d3 ♗d7 7.♞e2	96
7.0-0 various	97
b1) 7.0-0 ♗xe4	97
b2) 7.0-0 ♗gf6	100

Chapter 6 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♖c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♗e7 5.♗f3

various	109
5...♗f6 6.♗d3 various	111
a) 5...♗f6 6.♗d3 ♗xe4 7.♗xe4 various	112
a1) 7.♗xe4 c5	112
a2) 7.♗xe4 ♗d7	114
b) 5...♗f6 6.♗d3 ♗bd7 7.0-0	117
7.♞e2 various	117
b1) 7.♞e2 c5	118
b2) 7.♞e2 0-0	125

Chapter 7 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♖c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♗d7 5.♗f3

various	133
5...♗gf6 6.♗xf6	134
a) 5...♗gf6 6.♗d3 b6	135
b) 5...♗gf6 6.♗d3 ♗xe4 7.♗xe4	141
b1) 7.♗xe4 ♗f6 8.♗g5 h6	142
b2) 7.♗xe4 ♗f6 8.♗g5 ♗e7	143
b3) 7.♗xe4 ♗f6 8.♗g5 ♞d6	146

Chapter 8 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♖c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♗d7 5.♗f3 ♗gf6 6.♗d3 c5 7.0-0

various	150
a) 7...♗e7	151
b) 7...cxd4	155
c) 7...♗xe4	157

Part 3. 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟c3 ♘f6 4.e5 163

Chapter 9 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟c3 ♘f6 4.e5

a)	4...♟g8	165
b)	4...♟e4 5.♟xe4 dxe4 6.♟c4 various	170
	b1) 6.♟c4 c5	170
	b2) 6.♟c4 ♟d7	175

Chapter 10 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♟f3

	various	179
a)	6...b6	179
b)	6...♞b6	181
c)	6...cxd4	182
d)	6...a6 7.♟e3 various.	183
	d1) 7.♟e3 b5.	184
	d2) 7.♟e3 ♞b6.	186

Chapter 11 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♟f3 ♟c6 7.♟e3

	various	193
a)	7...b6	194
b)	7...f6	197
c)	7...♞a5	199
d)	7...♞b8	200
e)	7...♟e7	202

Chapter 12 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♟f3 ♟c6 7.♟e3 ♞b6 8.♟a4 ♞a5 9.c3

	various	205
a)	9...b6	206
b)	9...c4	209
c)	9...cxd4 10.b4	213
	c1) 10.b4 ♞c7.	213
	c2) 10.b4 ♞d8.	218
	c3) 10.b4 ♟xb4 11.cb ♟xb4 12.♟d2 various	220
	c3a) 12.♟d2 ♟xd2 13.♟xd2 g5.	221
	c3b) 12.♟d2 ♟xd2 13.♟xd2 b6.	224

**Chapter 13 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♟f6 4.e5 ♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♟f3
♟c6 7.♙e3 a6 8.♚d2**

various	227
8...b5 9.a3 various.	230
a) 9.a3 cxd4.	231
b) 9.a3 ♚a5.	232
c) 9.a3 ♙b7.	235
d) 9.a3 g5.	236
e) 9.a3 ♚b6 10.♟e2 various.	241
e1) 10.♟e2 a5.	242
e2) 10.♟e2 ♙b7.	244
e3) 10.♟e2 c4.	245

**Chapter 14 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♟f6 4.e5 ♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♟f3
♟c6 7.♙e3 cxd4 8.♟xd4**

various	247
a) 8...♙e7 9.♚f3.	250
a1) 9.♚f3 0-0	250
a2) 9.♚f3 ♟xd4.	254
b) 8...♙b4 9.a3 various.	258
b1) 9.a3 ♙c5.	258
b2) 9.a3 ♙xc3.	261
c) 8...♟xd4.	264

**Chapter 15 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♟f6 4.e5 ♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♟f3
♟c6 7.♙e3 cxd4 8.♟xd4 a6 9.♚d2**

various	271
a) 9...♚a5	272
b) 9...♚c7	274
c) 9...♙e7	275
d) 9...♙b4	278
e) 9...♟xd4	279

**Chapter 16 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♟f6 4.e5 ♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♟f3
♟c6 7.♙e3 cxd4 8.♟xd4 ♚b6 9.♚d2**

various	284
9...♚xb2 10.♚b1 ♚a3 11.♙b5 various.	285
a) 11.♙b5 ♟db8.	286
b) 11.♙b5 ♟xd4.	290

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