

JOHAN HELLSTEN



MASTERING
CHESS
STRATEGY

EVERYMAN CHESS

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www.everymanchess.com

First published in 2010 by Gloucester Publishers plc (formerly Everyman Publishers plc),
Northburgh House, 10 Northburgh Street, London EC1V0AT

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First published 2010 by Gloucester Publishers plc

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 978 185744 648 7

Distributed in North America by The Globe Pequot Press, P.O Box 480,
246 Goose Lane, Guilford, CT 06437-0480.

All other sales enquiries should be directed to Everyman Chess, Northburgh House,
10 Northburgh Street, London EC1V 0AT
tel: 020 7253 7887 fax: 020 7490 3708
email: info@everymanchess.com
website: www.everymanchess.com

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EVERYMAN CHESS SERIES

Chief advisor: Byron Jacobs

Commissioning editor: John Emms

Assistant editor: Richard Palliser

Typesetting and editing by First Rank Publishing, Brighton.

Cover design by Horatio Monteverde.

Printed and bound in the US by Versa Press.

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Preface

This book has its origin in my classes as a chess trainer in Chile and Ecuador. The objective of the book is purely practical: to help the reader to improve his skills within chess strategy. It does not pretend to fulfil any scientific, historic or artistic functions.

Thanks to my students and ex-students in Chile and Ecuador, whose feedback during classes certainly enriched this material. Also thanks to Alexandra and Nico for your patience while I was writing the book.

Johan Hellsten,
Riobamba,
September 2010

Introduction

Here I would like to comment briefly on some general aspects of this book.

Contents

This book touches a wide range of subjects related to middlegame strategy. Each subject comes with some explanatory examples, and in the second half of the book you will find related exercises. I am a strong supporter of the intensive use of exercises in the learning process. In my opinion, the closer you can get to a game situation when you are training (or teaching) chess, the faster progress can be expected.

In his excellent work *Logika Sovremennyyh Shahmat* (Modern Chess Logic), Belarusian writer and grandmaster Viacheslav Dydyshko mentions that one major problem faced by chess students is that the theoretical knowledge acquired from literature remains “alien” to us for a long time. In the heat of the battle we will probably rely on what our intuition tells us and, unfortunately, that doesn’t always coincide with our knowledge.

Advancing his thoughts a little further, it is one thing to read through and understand a couple of Rubinstein’s rook endgames, and quite another one to be able to play them like him! Naturally, any new chess knowledge has to be integrated in our mind with such depth that we are able to swiftly apply it in practice, even if a long time has passed since the learning moment. School kids often memorize a lot of facts before an exam, and forget most of it within a few weeks. (I, for one, would not like to repeat today my French or Maths exams from 1990.) In contrast, chess players need to store the information for a long time, and retrieve it without much delay. In this context I believe that exercises, alongside normal games and their posterior analysis, are one of the best tools. Compare the case of learning languages: few persons are able to speak a new language confidently after just reading through a few text and grammar books. What most of us need is practice, practice...

Style and level

I have tried to explain in the most didactical way possible what is actually happening on the board, without an excessive use of analysis, in order not to tire the reader. To experienced players some parts of the book will appear rather basic; and to others, more challenging. Club players will probably see a lot of things for the first time.

Material

There have been many different sources involved in the writing of this book, the most significant ones being *Chess Informant*, *ChessBase Megabase* and *Chess Today*. I have used a lot of my own games and fragments, simply because these are the games that I know best.

Technology

I used *Chess Assistant 8.1* for the elaboration of this book, with *Rybka 2.4* as the main analysis engine, and *Megabase 2008* as a main reference database.

How to read this book?

It makes sense to start with the first, short chapter since it touches upon several concepts that will be present during the rest of the book. In contrast, the rest of the chapters are rather independent, although I often make references to earlier examples. Each chapter is divided into several sections, which can be treated in the following, simple way:

1. Go through the explanatory examples;
2. Solve the related exercises;
3. Compare your solutions with the ones in the book.

Advice for trainers

It is easy to use this book as training material. Choose the section(s) that you need, go through the explanatory examples with your students, and then let them work with the related exercises. In practical terms, I suggest you always have the exercise positions arranged on chessboards. The time needed oscillates roughly between 5 and 20 minutes, depending on the exercise (they are presented in ascending order of difficulty) and the level of the student. The solutions can be presented in written form, or played out against the trainer, which creates a closer feeling for them. Please note that the solutions given in the book are not absolute truths – the important thing is to grasp the general strategical idea in each exercise.

One additional piece of advice: many of the explanatory examples, as well as some of the longer exercises, can easily be used as “quiz” games, where the students should find the best move at determined (for example, five) moments during the game, with the trainer awarding the corresponding points and giving hints if necessary.

Chapter One

Basic Concepts of Strategy

Introduction

The middlegame is perhaps the most demanding phase of the game, where the player is constantly faced with tactical and strategical challenges. Without doubt, tactical capacity is fundamental in order to conduct the direct battle on the board, creating and evading threats, etc. However, we also need some basic notion about what things are beneficial for us in the long run. In his great work *Strategia*, famous chess trainer Mark Dvoretsky outlined a range of concepts and related definitions, which, with some slight modifications, conform the theoretical basis of this chapter.

A review of the concepts

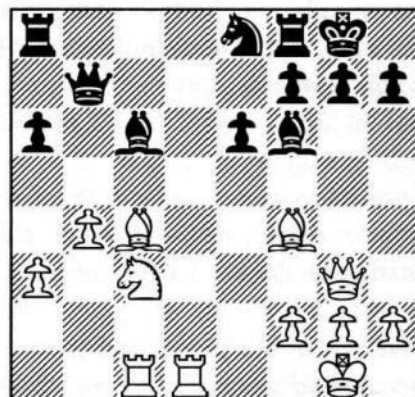
Basically, any action undertaken in the game can be abstracted to *tactical* and *strategical* operations. The tactical ones are easy to grasp: direct threats, pins, forks, deflection, etc. As for the strategical ones, we can distinguish between:

- a) improving our pieces;
- b) pawn play;

- c) exchanges;
- d) prophylaxis (with restriction and provocation).

The remainder of this book is structured around these subjects; for now let's just see a few related examples in practice.

Example 1 V.Chuchelov-Kir.Georgiev Mainz (rapid) 2002



Improving our pieces

At first sight, White seems to be clearly better. All his pieces are active, the opponent has a weakness on a6, and the queenside pawn majority is an asset in any endgame. On top of this, the black forces are obstructed by the badly placed knight on e8.

21...g6!

Simple, yet very strong. Georgiev plans ...♞g7-f5 in order to improve his knight.

22 ♠f1

A good square for the bishop, where it protects g2 and keeps watching the a6-pawn. In the event of 22 ♠g5, fighting for the dark squares, Black could adjust his plans slightly by 22...♠g7 preparing ...♞f6, and the knight reaches a decent square anyway. Another, more enterprising option is 22...♠h8!? keeping intact the plan of ...♞g7-f5.

22...♞g7 23 ♣e3?!

A strange tempo loss. The immediate 23 ♣h3 seemed more natural, although after 23...♞f5 Black hardly has any problems anymore.

23...♞f5 24 ♣h3 ♣fd8

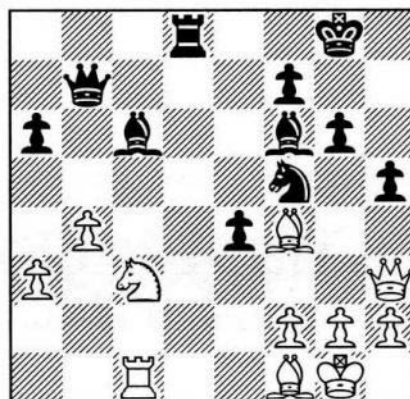
In just four moves, the situation on the board has changed noticeably. Thanks to his strong central control Black already holds the upper hand.

25 ♣d3

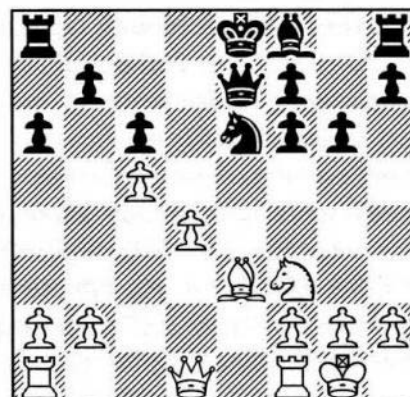
The simple 25 ♣xd8+ ♣xd8 26 ♣d1 might have been preferable. Now Black gains space, with tempo.

25...e5! 26 ♠d2 e4 27 ♣xd8+ ♣xd8 28 ♠f4 h5

A sensible move in order to back up the well-placed knight, which also has an enticing destiny on d4. Black went on to win the game. This is a simple example of how to improve one of our pieces and the possible virtues of such an operation, especially if it is our worst piece that is being improved!



Example 2
Cu.Hansen-J.Hellsten
Malmö 1996



Pawn play

Black just needs a few moves like ...♣d8, ...♠g7 and ...0-0 to achieve safety. However, it is White to move and he manages to alter the pawn structure to his benefit.

15 d5!

This advance has several virtues: it gets rid of the backward d4-pawn, destroys Black's protected square at d5, and, most importantly, creates a mobile pawn majority on the queenside.

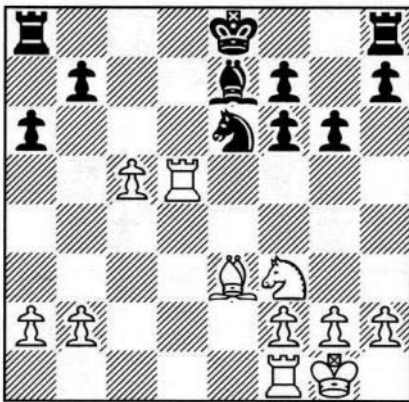
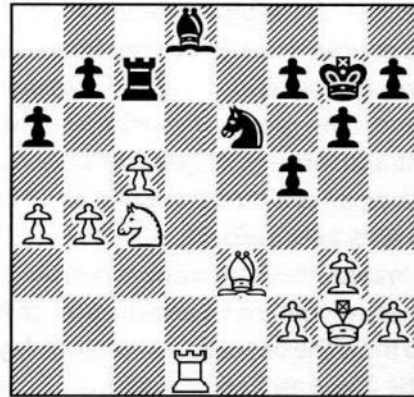
15...cxd5

After 15...♖d8? 16 d6 the protected passed pawn is decisive in the long run. Even worse is 15...♗xc5? 16 ♙xc5 ♜xc5 17 ♖e1+ with the idea of 17...♙e7 18 d6.

16 ♜xd5 ♜d7

Exchanges won't remedy Black's structural problems, but after 16...♖d8 17 ♜c4, followed by b2-b4 and a2-a4, White has a huge advantage.

17 ♖ad1 ♜xd5 18 ♖xd5 ♙e7



19b4!

White's plan is simple: convert the majority into a passed pawn. Black is unable to do the same thing on the kingside, due to the doubled f-pawns.

19...♖c8 20 ♖fd1 ♖c7 21 ♗d2!

The knight is heading for the comfortable c4-square.

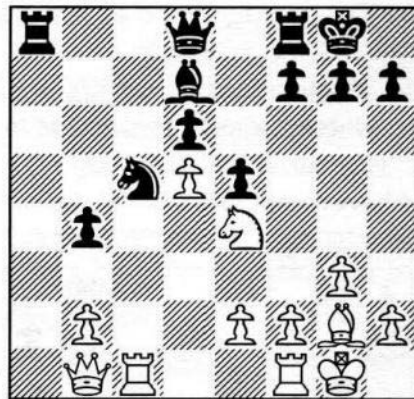
21...f5 22 ♗c4 0-0

By playing 22...f4?! 23 ♙d4 Black would just help the opponent in improving his pieces.

23 g3 ♜g7 24 ♜g2 ♖d8 25 ♖xd8 ♙xd8 26 a4! (D)

Little by little White continues with his plan, whereas Black lacks counterplay. Hansen later won the game by bringing up his king. Evidently, the key to his success was 15 d5!, improving the pawn structure.

Example 3
A.Khalifman-M.Adams
Groningen 1990



Exchanges

The last move was 22 ♗d2-e4 with the idea of swapping the strong enemy knight on c5. **22...♙f5!**

The most tempting reply, and the best one as well! Black prepares to exchange his bishop for the white knight, so that his own, powerful knight will remain on the board.

23 ♖c4 b3 24 ♜c1

By unpinning the knight White managed to avoid any tactical surprises; how-

ever, the opponent's reply will leave him with a clear strategic inferiority.

24...♙xe4! 25 ♖xe4 f5 26 ♙g2 ♜a5

By now the virtues of the ...♙f5xe4 plan are easy to grasp. The firmly installed knight outshines the passive bishop, and the b2-pawn is a burden in the long run.

27 h4 ♜b5 28 ♜c3 ♘a4!

A typical method in superior positions: Black forces the exchange of queens in order to limit the opponent's counterplay.

29 ♜b4 ♜xb4 30 ♖xb4 ♜fb8!

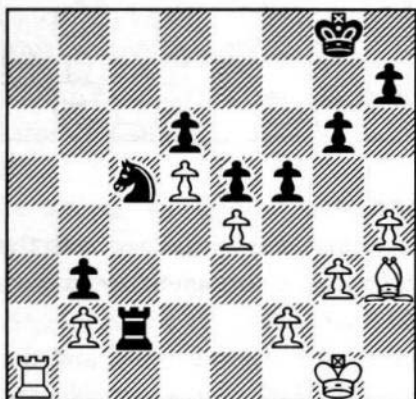
Of course not 30...♘xb2? 31 ♖xb3, and Black loses his target. Generally speaking, the attacker shouldn't exchange pawns unless there is a good reason for it.

31 ♖xb8+ ♖xb8

The previous exchanges have emphasized White's problem with the b2-pawn.

32 ♖b1 ♜c8 33 ♙h3 g6 34 e4 ♜c2 35 ♖a1 ♘c5!

The knight returns to its preferred square, where it eyes the e4-pawn. In contrast, 35...♘xb2?! 36 ♖a8+ ♙g7 37 ♖b8 would have complicated Black's task.



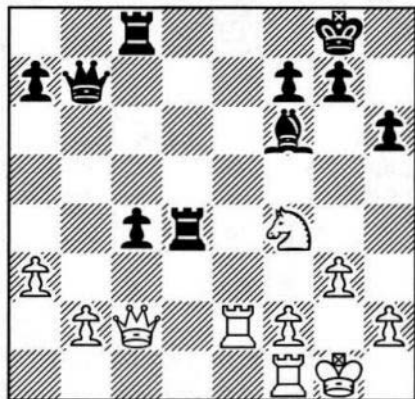
36 exf5 ♖xb2 37 fxg6

Or 37 ♖a8+ ♙g7 38 ♖a7+ ♙f6 39 fxg6 ♙xg6 and the passed pawn decides – Adams.

37...hxg6 38 ♙e6+ ♙f8 39 ♖a8+ ♙e7

White lost on time in a desperate position; for example, 40 ♖a7+ ♙d8 41 ♙f7 ♜c2 42 ♙xg6 e4! wins. In conclusion, the exchange operation initiated by 22...♙f5 helped Black to reach a superior position of the “good knight vs. bad bishop” type, while the subsequent exchanges of major pieces proved useful in order to increase the advantage.

Example 4
E.Lobron-R.Dautov
Nussloch 1996



Prophylaxis, restriction and provocation

White has just played 27 ♖d2-e2, with the probable intention of ♖fe1 creating a mating threat.

27...g6!

A typical prophylactic measure. With ...♙g7 next, Black safeguards the king from any surprises along the back rank. Moreover, he takes the f5 and h5 squares from the white queen and knight.

28 ♖fe1 ♙g7

All of a sudden White has fallen short of active plans, whereas Black is waiting for the right moment to attack the b2-pawn.

29 ♖g2 h5!

By setting up the positional threat of ...h5-h4, Black aims at provoking a weakness in the enemy camp.

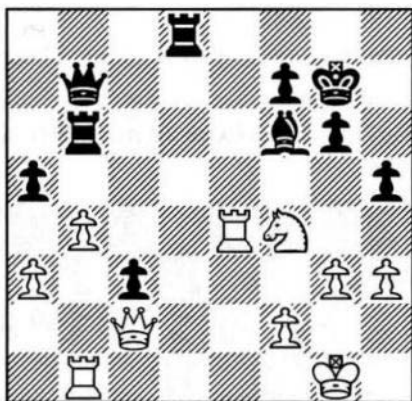
30...h3

On the intended 30 ♖e3 there could follow 30...h4! with attacking prospects. However, 30 h4 seemed like a safer way of defending the kingside, although in this case White would have to be on his guard against a potential ...♙xh4 sacrifice.

30...♖d6

The lesser evil was 31 ♖e3, though after 31...c3 32 bxc3 ♖xc3 33 ♖a2 ♖d7! (thanks to the provocation of h2-h3, Black gains a vital tempo) 34 ♖h2 ♖a4 Black enjoys a clear advantage – Dautov.

31...♖b6 32 ♖b1 c3! 33 b4 a5 34 ♖e4 ♖d8!



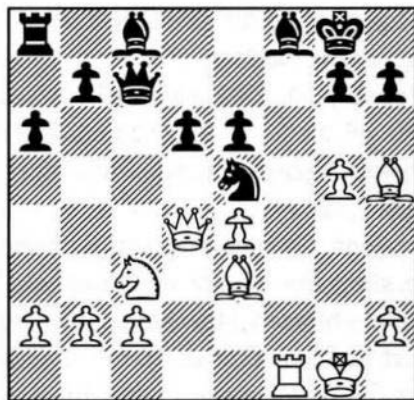
White managed to save the b-pawn, but now the second rank proves to be too vulnerable.

35 ♖be1 axb4 36 axb4 ♖xb4 37 ♖xb4 ♖xb4 38 ♖e4 ♖b2 39 ♖e2 ♖d2!

White resigned. Evidently, the plan with ...g7-g6 and ...♙g7 not only neutralized the back rank threats, but also prevented enemy ideas such as ♖h5 and ♖f5. Another strong move was 29...h5 in order to provoke a weakening of White's kingside. These methods are indeed typical in practice.

Now back to our revision of strategical concepts. Before leaving the strategical and tactical operations, the former of which we will return to soon, I would like to emphasize the *link between tactics and strategy*. Without using tactical weapons and preventing the opponent's tactical threats, we won't be able to conduct the strategical battle. Often a strategically superior position has to be realized in a concrete manner; i.e. at some moment we have to resort to tactics in order to impose our advantage. On other occasions, a tempting strategical plan can fail due to a simple tactical detail. Finally, by utilizing tactical resources in the position, we can reach minor strategical goals, such as the improvement of a specific piece. Let's see an example that touches on several of these aspects.

Example 5
N.Short-L.L.jubojevic
Novi Sad Olympiad 1990



In this theoretical position Black aims at completing the queenside development by ...♙d7-c6, after which he would have a solid game thanks to the strong knight on e5. Now let us see how Short fights against this plan with all possible tactical means.

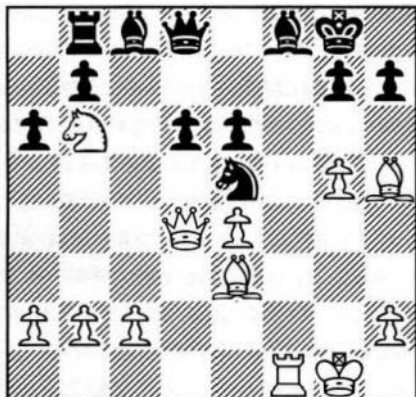
Mastering Chess Strategy

18 ♖d5!

Supported by the line 18...exd5? 19 ♜xd5+ ♔h8 20 ♜xf8 mate, White improves his knight, which was not doing anything substantial on c3.

18...♜d8 19 ♖b6 ♜b8

Again Black is just one move away from 20...♗d7, so White hurries to create threats.



20 ♗f4! ♖d7

After 20...♗d7 21 ♖xd7! (21 ♗xe5 dxe5 22 ♜xd7 ♜xb6+ 23 ♔h1 ♔h8! is less clear) 21...♖xd7 22 ♗g4 Black is suffering on the light squares; e.g. 22...♜e8 23 ♜c4 or 22...e5 23 ♜d5+ ♔h8 24 ♗e3.

Probably 20...♖c6 was preferable, when 21 ♜f2 g6 22 ♗e2!? ♗g7 23 c3, intending ♗c4, keeps a pleasant edge for White.

21 ♖c4!

Strategically speaking, this is the desired move, since any exchange would help Black to liberate himself. However, before making it Short had to establish that neither 21...e5 nor 21...d5 would work against him.

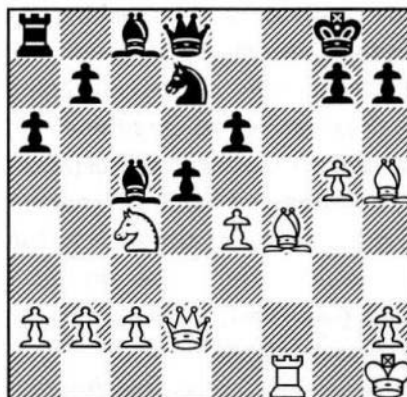
21...d5

Or 21...e5?! 22 ♜d5+ ♔h8 23 ♗e3 with a huge edge.

22 ♔h1!

Parrying the threat of 22...♗c5. It also transpires that 22...dxc4 loses the exchange after 23 ♗xb8.

22...♗c5 23 ♜d2 ♜a8



24 ♗f7+!

A new tactical twist that helps improve the bishop before grabbing the pawn.

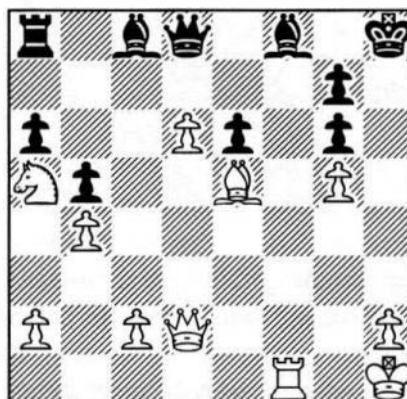
24...♔h8 25 exd5 b5 26 ♖a5!

Preventing 26...♗b7.

26...♖f8 27 ♗e5!

With the strong threat of 28 ♗xg7+ ♔xg7 29 ♜c3+.

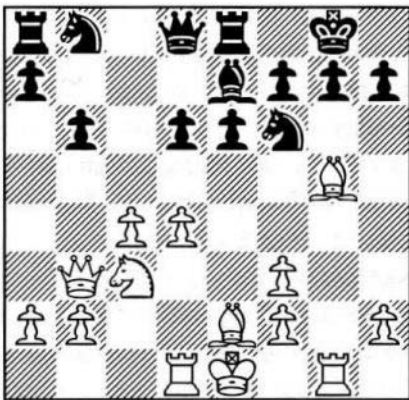
27...♖g6 28 ♗xg6 hxg6 29 b4 ♗f8 30 d6



White has an enormous advantage and soon won the game. Please note that the bishop on c8 hasn't moved yet! It is less probable that White would have reached his main objective – prevention of Black's queenside development – without such a heavy use of tactical arms.

Now we should move on with more concepts of strategy. Alongside the strategical operations we have *positional elements* such as material, weak squares, space, passed pawns, files, diagonals, etc. One important task during the game is to evaluate which of these elements hold most significance. Let's see an example.

Example 6
I. Sokolov-J. Emms
Hastings 1998/99



In the above position both sides have their respective triumphs. White possesses the two bishops and more space, whereas Black has the superior pawn structure.

13 f4!

Preparing f4-f5 in order to clear the position for the bishop pair. In such double-edged positions, the player with weaknesses should act rapidly, before the opponent manages to consolidate. Let's see what can happen in the opposite case: 13 ♖f1?! ♟bd7 14 ♙e3?! ♜f8! 15 f4 ♝g6 (thanks to the previous manoeuvre, the black king now feels safer, whereas the knight has interesting destinies on h4-f5) 16 d5 ♜c8 17 ♝g3 ♟h4 18 ♜g1 ♜f5 with excellent play,

O. Jakobsen-Cu. Hansen, Torshavn 1997. Next Black could consider ...♙f8 followed by ...g7-g6 and ...♙g7 improving the bishop, whereas White's doubled pawns are troublesome in the long run.

13... ♟bd7 14 ♜c2 d5?

A tempting counter-strike directed at the king on e1. However, it soon transpires that it is the black king who will suffer from the opening of lines. Considerable safer was 14...♜f8! 15 f5 ♜h8 16 fxe6 fxe6 with just a slight advantage for White – Ftacnik.

15 f5! exf5 16 ♜xf5 dxc4 17 ♙xc4

Now it becomes evident that the a2-g8 diagonal is a much more relevant factor than the e-file, since the white king could hide on f1 at any moment, whereas Black has no light-squared bishop that can challenge the enemy on c4.

17...g6

Definitely not 17...♙a3+? 18 ♜f1 ♙xb2 19 ♟d5; but 17...♜f8!? again made sense, e.g. 18 ♜f1 ♜c8! 19 ♜d3 ♟e6 and Black defends much better than in the game.

18 ♜f3 ♜c7 19 ♙b3 ♜xh2?!

More natural was 19...♙f8+ 20 ♜f1 ♙g7, although at this point both 21 ♟b5 and 21 ♟d5 spell trouble for Black.

20 ♙h1 ♜c7 21 ♜f1!

Securing the king and preparing 22 ♙e1. From now on, White's attack plays itself.

21... ♜d8 22 ♙e1 ♙f8

Parrying the threat of 23 ♟d5! ♟xd5 24 ♜xd5 with a deadly attack on f7.

23 ♙a4!

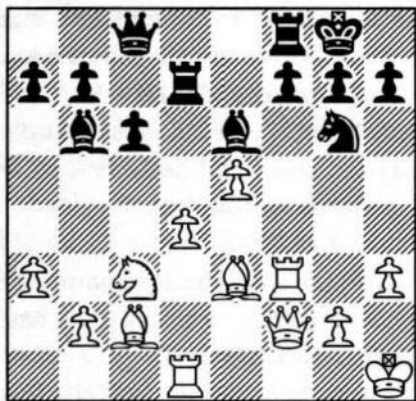
Setting up the threat of 24 ♙xd7.

23...b5 24 ♙xb5 ♙b8 25 ♙xd7 ♜xd7 26 ♙xe7! ♜xe7 27 ♙xf6 ♜e6 28 d5 ♜a6+ 29 ♜g2 ♙b6 30 ♟e4

In this desperate position, Black resigned. In conclusion, White's control of the a2-g8 diagonal and his active bishop pair were decisive factors in this game.

What about *planning* in chess? Well, this is quite a tricky matter since the opponent might put up obstacles to our plans at any moment. Only in very superior positions, with the opponent deprived of any activity, does a detailed plan make sense. In the majority of cases, we should rather concentrate on finding the appropriate strategical and tactical operations, and adjust these according to the opponent's play. Of course, this doesn't exclude keeping general directions at mind, such as "attack on the kingside", "advance the queenside pawn majority", or "exchange pieces". Let's see an example.

Example 7
I. Sokolov-U. Andersson
 Reggio Emilia 1988/89



White has interesting attacking prospects thanks to his control of the semi-open f-file and the strong bishop on c2. With his next move Sokolov takes a first step in this direction.

23 ♖g3!

Preparing 24 h4 in order to expel the knight from g6. Obviously, the immediate 23 h4? would have failed to 23...♗g4.

23...♗d8!

Wisely enough, Black prevents the enemy plan. A light-hearted reply like 23...♞fd8? permits 24 h4!, when 24...♝xh4? 25 ♞xg7+! ♝xg7 26 ♞f6+ followed by 27 ♗h6(+) is terminal for Black. On the other hand, an active defence with 23...f6? would have failed to 24 ♞xg6! hxg6 (or 24...fxe5 25 ♞h4 transposing) 25 ♗xg6 fxe5 26 ♞h4 with a decisive attack.

In effect, White's attack was stopped by the accurate 23...♗d8, so what should he do now?

24 ♗g5!

The beginning of a new plan: swap the dark-squared bishops and transfer the knight to the outpost on d6.

24...♗xg5

Possibly a better choice was 24...f6 25 exf6 ♗xf6 in order to put an end to the enemy plan, although after 26 ♞e3 ♞df7 27 ♝e4 White keeps the initiative.

25 ♞xg5 ♞d8

Before doubling rooks on the d-file, Andersson brings the queen closer to the kingside.

26 ♞e3 ♞e7 27 ♝e4 b6

The immediate 27...♞fd8 gives White the additional option of 28 ♝c5!? with an even stronger plan: swap on e6 and attack with the bishop along the a2-g8 diagonal. After 28...♞c7 29 ♝xe6 ♞xe6 30 ♗b3 ♞e7 31 ♞f1, followed by 32 ♞g5, Black is in trouble.

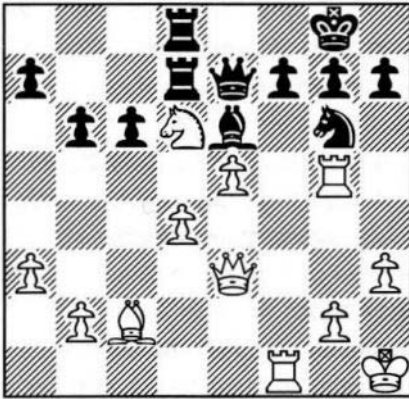
28 ♞f1

By keeping the knight on e4 for one more move, Sokolov maintains the option of ♝f6+.

28...♞fd8

If 28...♗d5, with the idea of 29 ♝xd6? ♞xd6, then White could again deviate from his original plan with 29 ♝g3! heading for f5.

29 ♝d6



Mission accomplished. On d6 the knight not just controls a variety of key squares (such as f7 and f5), it also interferes with the opponent's main idea, an attack on the d4-pawn. If these circumstances are maintained, then White could start over again with the attack.

29...♖xd6!

This sacrifice is probably Black's best shot. On 29...f6? 30 ♖h5 fxe5 31 dxe5 intending ♗xh7 and/or ♜e4, with a strong attack. Not much better is 29...c5?! due to 30 dxc5 bxc5 31 ♜g3! resuming the idea of h4-h5. At this point both 31...h6 and 31...f6 permit a strong sacrifice on g6, while 31...♜f8 32 h4 ♜xe5 33 ♜e4! is equally decisive.

30 exd6 ♖xd6 31 ♖g3

Thanks to his slight material edge and active pieces, White holds a stable edge. The next plan might be b2-b4, ♙e4 and ♖c1 in order to attack the weak c6-pawn. In this whole example we can notice the flexibility with which White executed his plans.

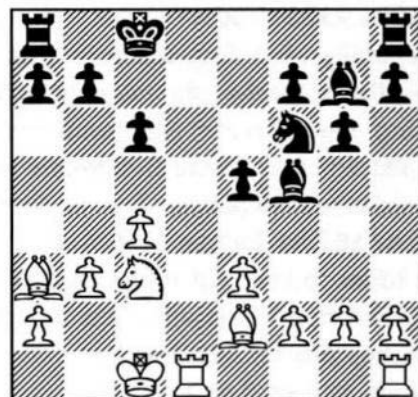
Another important concept within chess strategy is the so-called *typical positions*. Here I am referring to those with a similar pawn structure and piece configuration, although the involved set-ups (the location of some of the pawns and pieces) may differ from case

to case. For example, in the above fragment Short-Ljubojevic we came across a typical Sicilian position. The study of games that lead to typical positions is essential in order to learn openings properly, since it helps us to master the related plans in the middlegame, and acquire a "feeling" for the opening.

Technique is a term used frequently when referring to the realization of an advantage without allowing the opponent any chances of counterplay. Furthermore, good technique is often related to the attention on small details in the position.

By now we have arrived at two important concepts: *initiative* and *dynamics*. By initiative I refer to some kind of major influence on the battle, without necessarily being an advantage in itself. The side that possesses the initiative has a greater liberty when it comes to the choice of actions, whereas his opponent is mainly reduced to defensive tasks. Later on, the initiative can be converted into an advantage, or it can disappear. Let's see an example.

Example 8
Y.Seirawan-G.Sosonko
Bad Kissingen 1981



White is slightly better due to the badly placed black king that obstructs the rook on a8. He should now create some activity before Black manages to coordinate his forces.

13 h3!

Seirawan prepares g4-g5 in order to gain space and access to the e4-square for his knight. Stereotypical play with 13 B d2?! promises less after 13... f8 14 e xf8 B xf8 15 Bhd1 c7 16 d6 e6, followed by ... Ad8, and Black has no major problems.

13...h5

Now after 13... e8 14 e xf8 B xf8 15 g4 e6 16 g5 d7 17 e g4! White obtains some advantage – Cvetkovic. White also gains the upper hand in the event of 13... h6 14 g4 e6 15 d6! e8 16 e7 followed by e4. With 13...h5 Black instead aims at preventing the g2-g4 advance, and would indeed succeed after the slow 14 Bhg1?! h4. However, White has a much stronger move, which allows him to seize the initiative.

14g4! hxg4 15 hxg4

This pawn sacrifice is mainly based on the fact that the clearance of the h-file favours White, due to the disconnected black rooks.

15...e8

After 15... d8 16 Bxh8+ e8 17 B1 e6 18 B7! the black kingside comes under strong pressure.

16 Bxh8+ e8 17 e7!

Generally speaking, the side that possesses the initiative should play actively, creating new threats whenever possible. Here Black is faced with the double threat of 18 Bd8+ and 18 e6.

17...d7 18 B1 e7 19 e6!

In order to keep up the pressure White needs to bring his knight into the game. The bishop pair matters less.

19...e6 20 e4 e8 21 B7!

Seizing the seventh rank and creating

new threats. The materialistic 21 d6+?! c7 22 dxf7 promises less due to 22... e6 23 B7 Bg8!, followed by ... Bg7, and the initiative starts to evaporate.

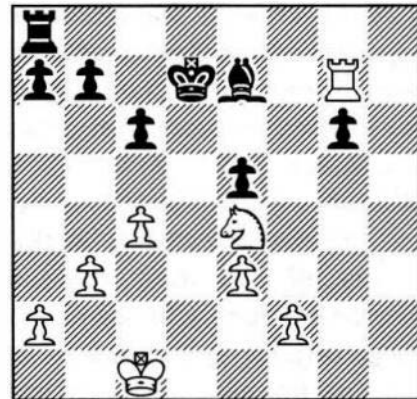
21...e8

Or 21... e6 22 c5! e5 23 e4! b6 24 exf5 bxc5 25 fxg6 fxg6 26 e3 with a considerable advantage despite the minus pawn.

22 e4+ c7

Obviously 22...f5?? failed to 23 d6+ with mate.

23 e6! e7 24 e6xf7 e7 25 Bxf7 c7 26 Bg7



Finally White has managed to convert his initiative into something more tangible: a superior endgame. The knight outshines the bishop, the rook is well placed on g7, and Black has weak pawns on the g6- and e5-squares.

26...e6 27 d1!

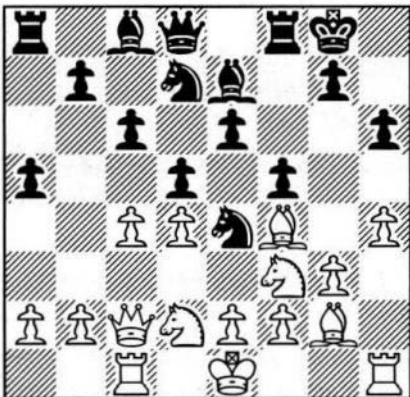
After 27 Bxg6+?! f5 28 Bg7 cxe4 (not 28... a3+? 29 d2 cxe4 30 B7! intending mate) 29 Bxe7 Bf8! Black gets some counterplay for the pawn. Seirawan prefers a more technical path, simply bringing up the king.

27..Bf8 28 e2 Bf7 29 Bg8

Heading for b8 in order to provoke new weaknesses. White later won.

Dynamics is another frequently used term in chess literature, and one that can be interpreted in different ways. I regard it as a force that changes the long-term characteristics of a position. This force is closely related to pawn play and exchanges, since these are the only irreversible actions in the game – after any pawn move or exchange, the position never becomes the same (compare the 50 moves rule). In concrete terms, pawn moves (some more than others) let new elements appear, such as open files, passed pawns and weak squares. In other words, dynamic play is the one that creates something “new” in the position. Let’s see an example.

Example 9
K.Sasikiran-A.Iljushin
 FIDE World Cup,
 Khanty Mansiysk 2005



In this structure known as the Stone-wall, Black deliberately leaves a weak square on e5, but in return gains control of the light squares, in particular e4.

12 h5!

A useful pawn advance that prevents ...g7-g5 and creates a weak square on g6,

which can soon be occupied by a knight. Moreover, the fact that the g6 and e5 squares are at a knight jump’s distance is rather practical for White.

12...♟f6

Black should probably avoid 12...♞df6?! due to 13 ♖e5 followed by ♜g6; however, the restrictive 12...♜e8! intending 13 ♜h4? ♜xh5 was worth consideration.

13 e3

Due to Black’s previous move White must protect the d4-pawn before moving the knight towards g6.

13...a4 14 ♜h4 ♜b6

Black’s play is logical as well. By attacking the c4-pawn he asks the opponent to define his centre, for example by 15 ♜xe4 fxe4 16 c5, when 16...♞d7 followed by 17...♞e8 gets him closer to the desired ...e6-e5 advance. On the other hand, 15 b3 would clear the a-file for the black rook. However, there is a third, stronger option.

15 ♟xe4!

Sasikiran swaps the rather passive bishop for the active enemy knight. Regarding his own knight on d2, its mission will be revealed two moves later.

15...fxe4 16 ♜g6 ♞e8 17 f3!

White adjusts the pawn structure so that the other knight gets into play. Moreover, he clears the b1-h7 diagonal for the queen. This key move had to be executed at this very moment – after, for example, 17 c5?! ♞d7 18 f3 e5! Black takes over.

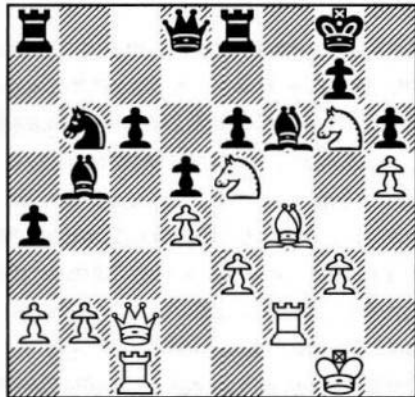
17...exf3 18 c5 ♞d7?!

In a closed position such as this one, 18...f2+? 19 ♜xf2 hardly makes any sense. But 18...♞c4!? was a more active choice; e.g. 19 ♜xf3 (avoiding 19 ♞xc4 dxc4 20 ♜xc4 b6! with counterplay) 19...b6 20 b3 axb3 21 axb3 ♜a5 and Black has far more play than in the game.

19 ♜xf3 b6 20 cxb6 ♜xb6 21 0-0!

White avoids 21 ♖xc6?! ♗d7 followed by ...♗c4 with counterplay.

21...♗a6 22 ♖f2 ♗b5 23 ♗fe5



White has achieved his main objective: a grip on e5.

23...♗c4 24 ♗g4!

By means of the threat 25 ♗xh6, Sasikiran forces the black bishop to g5 where it can be exchanged.

24...♗g5 25 ♗6e5 ♗xe5 26 ♗xe5 ♖f6 27 ♗h2! ♖ac8 28 ♗xg5 ♖xg5 29 ♖g6!

With every exchange, the knight's superiority over the bishop is more evident.

29...♖xg6

After 29...♖xe3? 30 ♖f7 Black is mated. We now appreciate the merits of the prophylactic 27 ♗h2!

30 ♗xg6!

A dynamic recapture that creates an entry square on f7 and also enables a future g4-g5, clearing the h-file.

30...♖e7 31 ♖cc2 ♖f8

At this point Sasikiran played 32 g4 followed by ♗g3 and won without any major problems. However, the consequent 32 ♖f7! seems even stronger; e.g. 32...♖exf7 33 gxf7+ ♖xf7 (or 33...♗h7? 34 ♖f2 with the threat of 35 ♗d7) 34 ♗xf7 ♗xf7 35 ♖c3! followed by b2-b3, creating a decisive passed pawn on the a-file.

A last aspect of strategy is the *rhythm of the position*. Imagine that one player possesses a far advanced passed pawn, or a strong attack. In such positions the play tends to become sharp and tactically complex, where one single slip might lead to defeat. We saw an example in Sokolov-Emms above. Conversely, in more balanced positions, such as in the previous example, the spirit of the battle is a bit different. The game becomes slower, with both players carefully choosing between different strategical operations, evaluating what are the most important elements in the position, etc. In conclusion, our way of playing has to be in accordance with the rhythm of the position – we shouldn't lose our patience in the slow ones, nor neglect the dangers and complexities of the quicker ones.

Finally, I would like to show you one of my own games, in which many of the preceding concepts are reflected.

Example 10
J.Hellsten-M.Olesen
Malmö 1997
Benoni Defence (A43)

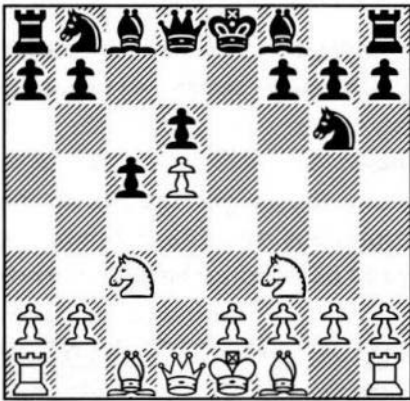
1 d4 e6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 exd5 4 cxd5 d6 5 ♗c3 ♗e7

With 5...♗f6, followed by 6...g6 and 7...♗g7, Black would have entered the main pathways of the Benoni Defence.

6 ♗f3 ♗g6

The set-up with ...♗g6 has its pros and cons, compared to the mainstream Benoni. Black increases his control of the important e5-square, thus complicating one of White's key ideas in this opening, the e4-e5 advance. On the other hand, the dark-

squared bishop is deployed less actively on e7.



7 g3

7 e4 is perfectly possible, but the fianchetto has its logic too. The g3-pawn takes the h4 and f4 squares from the enemy knight, whereas the e4-square remains accessible for a white knight, an idea that might come handy if Black later moves the bishop to f6.

7...♗e7 8 ♖g2 0-0 9 0-0 ♝a6

Black initiates a standard plan in this structure: ...b7-b5, advancing the queenside pawn majority.

10 a3

White resorts to another typical plan in the Benoni: 11 ♜b1 and 12 b4, gaining space and preventing ...b5-b4. Another, perhaps more promising option is 10 ♘d2, followed by a2-a4 and ♘c4, in order to improve the king's knight.

10...♗d7 11 ♜b1 c4

Thus Black prepares ...♘c5 and also neutralizes the b2-b4 advance, since 12 b4?! is now met by 12...cxb3 ensuring the c5-square for the knight. On the minus side, the c-pawn becomes a little loose, and White gains access to the d4-square.

Let's check Black's other options. On 11...b5?! there follows 12 b4 intending

12...c4 13 ♘d4 and White gains the upper hand. The paradoxical 11...♗f5! makes more sense: after 12 e4 ♗d7 Black has managed to provoke e2-e4, which means that White can no longer use the e4-square for his pieces, whereas the e4-pawn might soon turn into a target for the enemy forces, after moves like ...♗e8 and ...♗f6.

There is also 11...♞c8, getting on with development and complicating the b2-b4 advance. Z.Gyimesi-L.Seres, Balatonbereny 1997, continued 12 ♗d2 ♗e8! (avoiding 12...♗f6 13 ♘e4) 13 b4 cxb4 14 axb4 ♗f6 with a comfortable game for Black. Perhaps White could try the odd 13 h4!? instead, intending ♘g5 as well as h4-h5.

12 ♗e3

Heading for the promising d4-square and preparing to meet 12...♘c5?! with 13 ♗xc5 dxc5 14 d6.

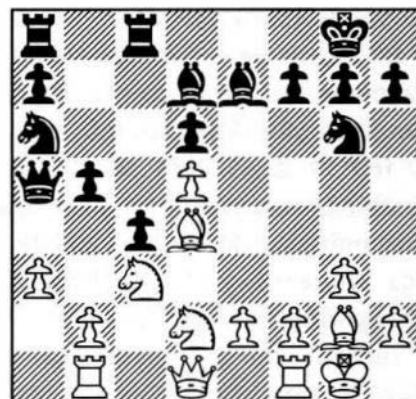
12...♞a5

Black develops the queen and strengthens the c5-square.

13 ♗d4 ♞fc8

Black continues with preparatory actions, aware that 13...♘c5?! is still premature due to 14 ♘d2 intending 14...b5 15 ♗xc5 dxc5 16 d6.

14 ♘d2 b5



Finally Black is ready to go 15...♘c5. He

would then retreat the queen to d8 in preparation for a queenside advance with ...a7-a5 and ...b5-b4. How should White react to this plan?

15 f4!

A powerful thrust that creates new opportunities on the kingside. White now threatens f5-f6 in order to soften up the f6-square, while e4-e5, seizing the centre, might also come into consideration.

15 e4?! is less flexible due to 15...♘c5 16 f4 ♘d3 with counterplay, but 15 b4!? also made sense, with a fight for the queenside. After 15...cxb3 (not 15...♚xa3? 16 ♖a1 ♚xb4 17 ♖xa6 etc) 16 ♘xb3 ♚d8! followed by ...♙f6, there are chances for both sides.

15...f6

Preventing the f5-f6 plan once and for all, at the cost of weakening the light squares and restricting the bishop on e7. However, the alternatives all lead to trouble for Black:

a) 15...f5?! invites 16 e4! intending ♙h3, with excellent attacking prospects.

b) 15...♚d8, covering the f6-square, is well met by 16 f5 ♗e5 (or 16...♗f8 17 f6! ♙xf6 18 ♖xf6! gxf6 19 ♗de4 with a strong attack) 17 ♙xe5 dx5 18 ♗de4 with a clear edge. The e4-square is ideal for the knight, from where it limits Black's counterplay and supports a future d5-d6 or f5-f6.

c) 15...♘c5 is the move that Black would like to make, but this runs into the strong continuation 16 f5 ♗e5 (16...♗f8 again fails to 17 f6!) 17 ♙xe5 dx5 18 d6! ♙g5 (or 18...♙xd6? 19 ♙xa8 ♖xa8 20 ♘xc4! bxc4 21 ♚xd6 winning) 19 ♙xa8 ♖xa8 20 ♗f3 ♙e3+ 21 ♙g2. White isn't just an exchange up, he also has a dangerous passed pawn, along with several strong threats such as 22 ♗xe5, 22 ♗d5 and 22 ♚d5.

After 15...f6 White has to forget about a direct kingside attack and, instead, focus on

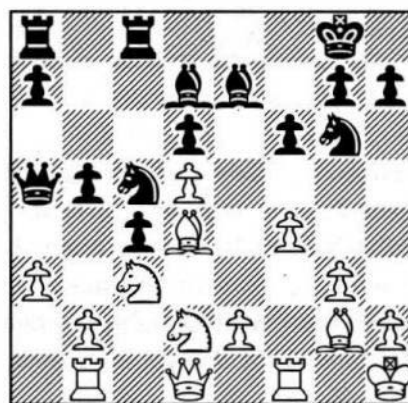
the new weaknesses in Black's camp. As a consequence, the game slows down and becomes strategically more complex.

16 ♙h1

A prophylactic measure in conjunction to my next move, which will expose the g1-a7 diagonal.

16...♘c5

Finally the knight reaches its destiny. The ambitious 16...♙d8, intending ...♙b6, fails to 17 b4! forcing the queen to retreat.



17 ♙xc5!

It might appear illogical to swap the "good" bishop, but this exchange has several virtues. White gets rid of the opponent's most active piece, the knight on c5. Moreover, after ...f7-f6 has been played, the d4-square is in fact more useful to a knight, where it can access the weaknesses on c6, e6 and f5. Finally, if we imagine a later exchange of the light-squared bishops, as well as of a pair of knights, then White would reach a "good knight vs. bad bishop" scenario. We already came across this topic in the Sasikiran-Iljushin fragment (p. 23).

17...♖xc5 18 ♗f3 ♚b6 19 ♗d4

White now enjoys a pleasant edge thanks to his light square control. In retrospect, please note that he would probably not have reached such a favourable situation without

playing 15 f4, whose tactical potential (cf. the 15...♘c5 subline) convinced Black to weaken his structure by 15...f6. Again, tactics at the service of strategy.

19...♞e8?!

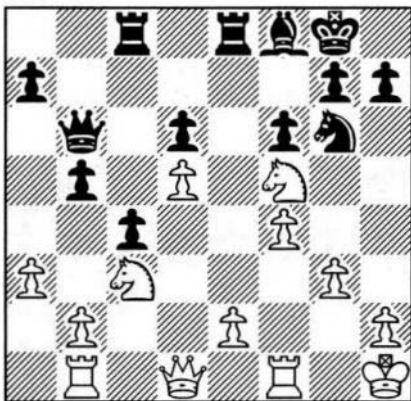
19...a5 was preferable, speeding up the queenside play, although after 20 ♖e4 b4 21 ♜a4 ♙xa4 22 ♚xa4 White keeps the better chances.

20 ♖e4!

Intending 21 ♗f5 in order to swap the opponents "good" bishop.

20...♞cc8 21 ♗f5 ♗xf5 22 ♘xf5 ♗f8?

Again Black should have resorted to 22...a5 with the idea of ...b5-b4. As a general piece of advice, in inferior positions one should hurry to create even the most minimal counterplay.



23 ♘d4!

The knight returns to its ideal square and restricts Black's only active plan: ...a7-a5 followed by ...b5-b4.

23...a6 24 e4 ♞b8 25 ♚d2 ♚b7 26 ♞be1

White has strengthened his centre, in particular the d5-pawn, which means that the knight on c3 can now look for new horizons.

26...♚d7?!

Black underestimates, or misses, White's next move.

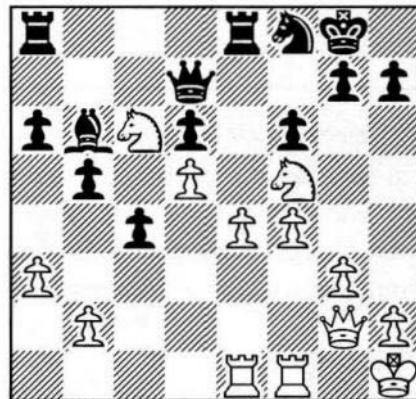
27 ♘a2!

Improving the knight in the swiftest way. Now that 27...a5 is unavailable (for this reason, 26...♚b6 was preferable), Black can't stop the ♘b4-c6 manoeuvre.

27...♗e7 28 ♘b4 ♞a8 29 ♘bc6 ♗d8 30 ♚g2 ♗b6?

Black should have exchanged one of the powerful knights by 30...♗e7, even though after 31 ♜xe7+ ♚xe7 32 ♚h3 White keeps a clear advantage. In the game the bishop soon proves to be useless on b6 anyway.

31 ♘f5 ♗f8



32 g4!

White can finally convert his positional advantage into a direct kingside attack.

32...♗e6?

Desperation, but it was already too late for a satisfactory defence; e.g. 32...h6 33 g5 breaking through, or 32...g6 33 ♘h6+ followed by 34 g5 and possibly 35 e5 with a crushing attack.

33 g5 fxg5 34 dxe6 ♚xc6 35 ♚xg5 g6

Both 35...♚b7 and 35...♞a7 are met by 36 e7 renewing the threats.

36 ♚f6! gxf5 37 ♞g1+ ♗xg1 38 ♞xg1 mate

In the following chapters we will continue the revision of these strategical concepts.

Chapter Two

Improving the Pieces

In this chapter we will study in more detail how to improve our pieces. On several occasions we will observe the cooperation between two or more pieces, for example rook and queen or the bishop pair.

The bishop

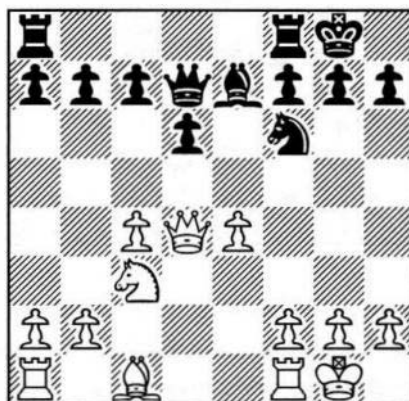
In all phases of the game, we should constantly search for ideal diagonals for our bishops. Since the bishop is able to move rapidly from one flank to another, its range can be drastically improved in a few moves.

We will start with some examples where one player seizes one of the long diagonals. The fact that these cross the whole board turns out to be more important than one might perhaps initially think.

Example 11
A.Bujakevich-L.Kritz
Moscow 1996

Already in the opening we are faced with the choice of diagonals for our bish-

ops. In the diagram position White is about to develop his remaining bishop. Ideas like 12 ♗g5 , or perhaps 12 f3 followed by ♗e3 , come to mind. However, there is another, more powerful diagonal.



12 b3!

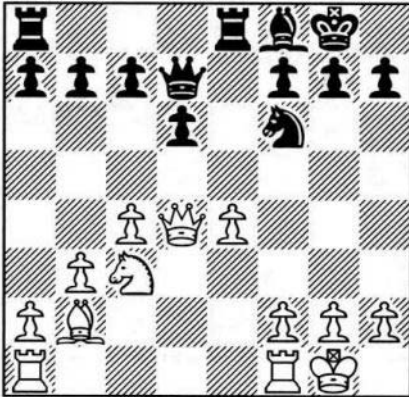
Intending ♗b2 in order to seize the long diagonal, which is of great importance when there are no central pawns on it.

12...♞fe8

If Black tries to challenge the enemy bishop by 12... ♜g4 preparing ... ♗f6 , then White has 13 ♜d5! c6 14 ♗b2 with strong

pressure. A more careful way of launching the previous plan is 12...c6!? 13 ♖b2 ♘e8. Here White could try 14 ♖ad1 ♜e6 (not 14...♙f6? 15 e5!) 15 ♜fe1 ♙f6 16 ♜d2 with a slight edge, although Black probably has less trouble than in the game.

13 ♙b2 ♙f8



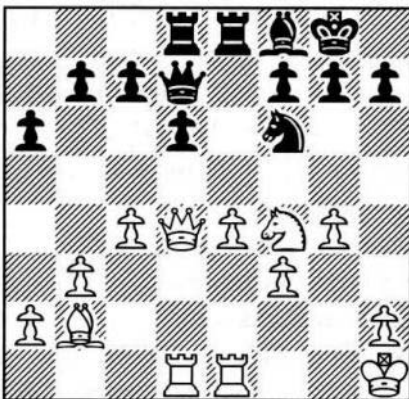
14 ♖ad1

White slowly reinforces his position, aware that the opponent can't undertake any active measures, e.g. 14...g6? 15 ♘d5!.

14...♜c6 15 ♜fe1 a6 16 f3 ♖ad8

After 16...b5?! 17 ♘d5! ♘xd5 18 cxd5 followed by ♜c1, Black ends up with a bad structure.

17 ♜h1 ♜d7 18 ♘e2 ♜e6 19 ♘f4 ♜ee8 20 g4!



Finally White is ready for concrete ac-

tion. The immediate threat is 21 g5 trapping the knight.

20...h6 21 ♖g1

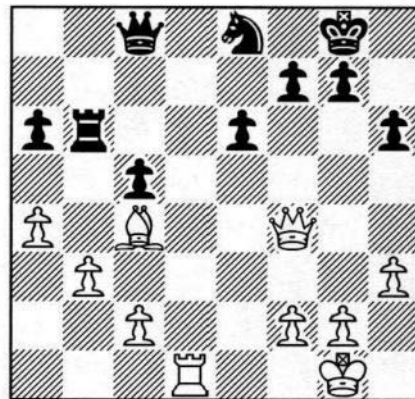
Preparing g4-g5, with a strong attack. Evidently, the bishop is well placed for this purpose on b2. Not surprisingly, there are entire opening systems based on the deployment of a bishop on the long diagonal, such as the Catalan and the Grünfeld.

Example 12

Z.Efimenko-V.Neverov

Ukrainian Championship, Rivne

2005



In open positions with pawns on both flanks the bishop tends to outshine the knight. Here White also commands the open d-file, and the black queenside pawns are weak. How to progress?

30 ♙e2!

The bishop is regrouped to the long diagonal, where it will control more squares.

30...♜c6

Heading for c7 in order to protect the seventh rank. In the event of 30...♘f6, intending 31 ♙f3 ♜b4, White has 31 a5! ♜b4 32 ♜d6 with strong pressure on the a6-pawn.

31 ♖e5

No hurry. Efimenko lets his bishop glance at the a6-pawn for one more move, while improving the queen.

31... ♟f6 32 ♜f3 ♞c7 33 ♜d6!

Activating the rook and creating the threat of 34 ♞xa6.

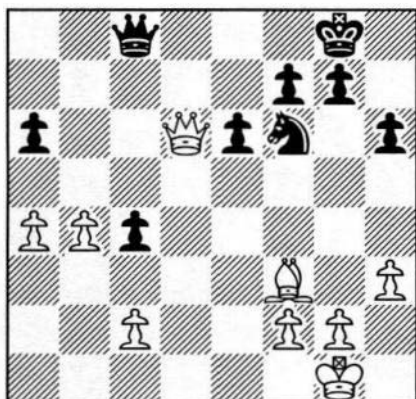
33... ♟d7 34 ♜c3 c4

Now there arises a strong passed pawn; however, Black lacked a good defence against 35 ♜c4 or 35 ♜a5.

35 b4 ♟f6 36 ♜d4 ♞d7 37 ♞xd7 ♟xd7

After the alternative 37... ♜xd7? 38 ♜xd7 ♟xd7 39 ♟e2 ♟b6 40 a5 ♟d5 41 c3! White soon wins – Ribli.

38 ♜d6 ♟f6



39 b5!

Passed pawns should advance, as the old saying goes. Instead, the game continued 39 ♜c6!? ♜d8 40 ♜a8! ♜xa8 41 ♟xa8 with a very superior endgame that Efimenko went on to win without any problems. But the advance with the b-pawn wins practically on the spot.

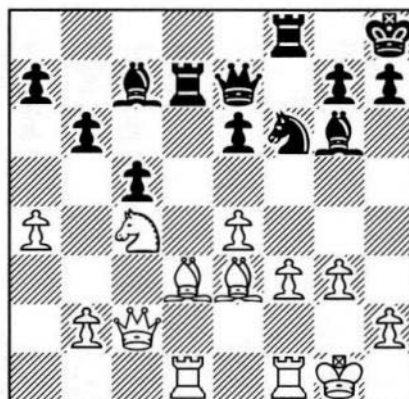
39... axb5 40 axb5 ♜d7

One of several insufficient ways of fighting against the passed pawn.

41 ♜b8+ ♟h7 42 b6

There will inevitably follow 43 b7, with an easy win.

Example 13
S.Gligoric-W.Unzicker
European Team Championship,
Bath 1973



White enjoys some positional advantage due to his superior pawn structure – there are weak points on e5 and e6. Moreover, his own pawns on e4 and f3 restrict the enemy pieces. How should he move on?

27 b3!

Gligoric prepares the transfer of his dark-squared bishop to the long diagonal, where it will become quite strong in the absence of a black f-pawn.

27... ♞fd8 28 ♟c1 ♜f8

After 28...e5?! 29 ♟b2 the pawn becomes exposed on e5. A more aggressive option is 28... ♟h5!? intending 29 ♟b2?! ♜g5! with counterplay. White could try 29 ♟e2 instead, in order to swap rooks before continuing his plan.

29 ♟b2 h6 30 ♟g2 ♟g8 31 ♟e5!

Seizing the bishop pair.

31... ♟xe5 32 ♟xe5 ♟e7

Preparing 33... ♟c6 followed by ...e6-e5 and ... ♟c6-d4, but the opponent is alert.

33 ♟b5! ♟d5!?

After 33... ♞xd1 34 ♞xd1 White keeps a

clear advantage due to his active pieces, so Black tries to complicate the game.

34 ♖c1!

Gligoric has noticed that is worth the exchange to launch a strong attack. Much less was promised by 34 ♖de1?! ♗b4 and a black rook enters on d2.

34...♗e3+ 35 ♖xe3 ♖xd1 36 ♖xd1 ♖xd1 37 ♖xh6+ ♔h7 38 ♔c4

The other bishop joins in and Black is helpless.

38...♖f7 39 ♔xe6 ♖g6 40 ♖f4! ♖d8

Or 40...♖xe6 41 ♖f8+ ♖g8 42 ♔xg7 mate.

41 ♔f7!

Black resigned in view of 41...♖c6 42 ♖g5 or 41...♖d2+ 42 ♖h3.

Now let's continue with some other diagonals, such as h3-c8, h2-b8 and their equivalents on the other flank.

Example 14
L.Stein-S.Schweber
Mar del Plata 1966



White is a pawn down but the following bishop manoeuvre, typical in this French structure, will yield him a strong initiative.

19 ♔c1!

Heading for the a3-f8 diagonal, where there is no black counterpart.

19...g6

Preparing 20...♗h7 in order to swap the strong knight on g5.

20 ♔a3 ♗h7 21 ♗f3!

A logical retreat, by which White retains the knight for future attacking purposes and leaves its counterpart badly placed on h7.

21...♖d8

On 21...0-0 there could follow 22 ♖d2 ♖g7 23 ♗e1 intending ♗g2-f4, in preparation for a kingside attack. In the game, Black prefers quite a different destiny for his king.

22 ♖d2 ♖d7!? 23 ♖fb1 ♗f5 24 ♔c5 ♖c6

In order to construct some kind of fortress on the queenside.

25 ♖c1!



It is the queen's turn to exploit the a3-f8 diagonal.

25...♖g8?

Perhaps Black was expecting the natural 26 ♖a3, but White has a much stronger option that will produce a decisive attack. The immediate 25...♖a5 was called for.

26 ♖xa4! bxa4 27 ♖a3 ♖a5 28 ♔xf5 ♖gb8

On 28...gxf5 there follows 29 ♔e7!

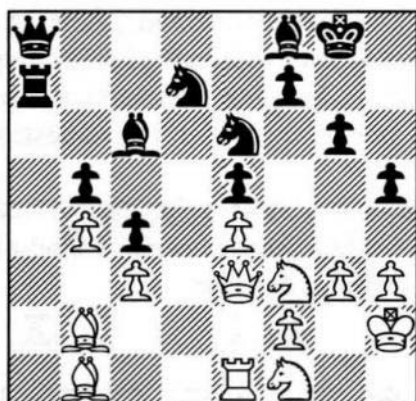
threatening mate, and after 29...♖g8 30 ♗xd8 ♜xd8 31 ♜b4 Black is finished.

29 ♜xb8 ♜xb8 30 ♖h3

White later realized his material advantage.

Example 15

E.Raaste-V.Yemelin
St. Petersburg 1996



Black is better thanks to his space advantage and more actively placed pieces. He now launches a strong bishop manoeuvre that will step up the pressure.

36...♗e7!

Intending ...♗d8-b6 in order to seize the g1-a7 diagonal. Also interesting was 36...♖h7!? intending ...♗h6, but the text is more aggressive.

37 ♖d2

It is not easy for White to improve his pieces; e.g. 37 ♜e2 ♗d8 38 ♖e3? ♗xe4.

37...♗d8 38 ♖g1 ♗b6 39 ♜e2 ♖g7

In such a superior position, Black has time for a few useful moves.

40 ♖h4 ♜d8 41 ♖g2 ♖g5!

Before White plays h3-h4. Now 42 h4? is impossible due to 42...♖h3+ snatching the f2-pawn.

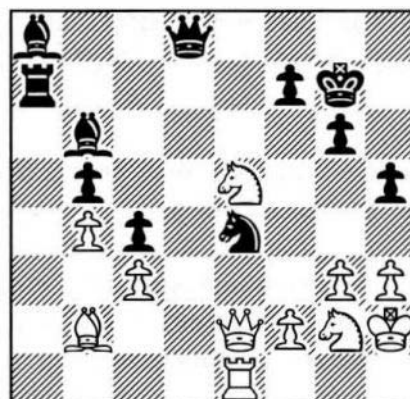
42 ♖h2 ♖f6

Increasing the pressure on the e4-pawn and creating the threat of 43...♜xd2! 44 ♜xd2 ♖f3+.

43 ♖f3

By counterattacking the e5-pawn White is able to keep the material balance. However, the fact that the h1-a8 diagonal is cleared will soon play against him.

43...♖fxe4 44 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 45 ♖xe5 ♗a8



Black maintains the strong bishop, thus creating several strong threats, such as 46...♗xf2, 46...♜e7 and 46...♜a2.

46f3 ♜e7!

This intermediate move destroys the white defence.

47 ♖xg6 fxg6 48 ♖xe4 ♜xe4 49 ♜c2 ♜xe1 50 ♖xe1 h4!

A final power move, that leaves the white king without shelter.

51 ♗c1 ♜d5 52 ♖g2 hxg3+

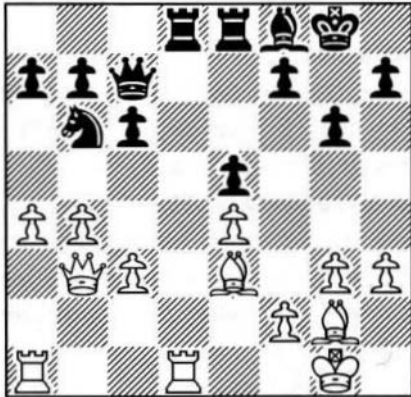
In view of 53 ♖xg3 ♜f3+ 54 ♖h2 ♗f2, White resigned.

Example 16

E.Gufeld-A.Kolarov
Odessa 1968

Here the choice of diagonals takes place

in a slower position. White is slightly better thanks to the two bishops; however, only one of them is active at this moment.

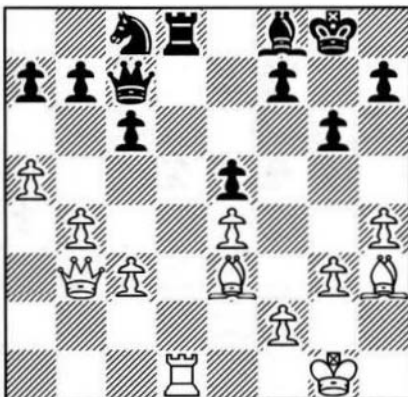


20h4!

A typical idea in structures with a kingside fianchetto. White plans g3 in order to seize the h3-c8 diagonal, thus exploiting the absence of a light-squared bishop in the black camp. If Black tries to prevent this manoeuvre by $\dots\text{d7}$ or $\dots\text{c8}$ at any moment, then simply h2 renews the idea.

20... xd1+ 21 xd1 d8 22 a5 c8 23 h3

The bishops are cooperating very well, at this moment creating an indirect threat towards a7.



23...a6

Black parries the threat but also fixes his

pawns on light squares, where they can be attacked by the enemy bishop later on. $23\dots\text{d6}!$? $24. \text{xa7} \text{xe4}$ seems more active, although after $25. \text{b6} \text{xd1+}$ $26. \text{xd1}$ White keeps an edge.

24 xd8

White temporarily hands over the d-file in order to advance the queenside pawns, since the immediate $24. \text{c4}?$ failed to $24\dots\text{xd1+}$ $25. \text{xd1} \text{xb4}$.

24... xd8 25 c4! e7

Now on $25\dots\text{d6}$ White has the strong $26. \text{d3}!$ (threatening to win the knight) $26\dots\text{c7}$ $27. \text{c5} \text{b5}$ $28. \text{d7}!$ and the game is soon decided by a bishop move to c8.

26 f1!

A common prophylactic measure in endgames with major pieces. White would like to improve his queen, but first he must cover the entry square on d1, a task that he now assigns to the king.

26... g7 27 e2 h6 28 c3 d6 29 f4!

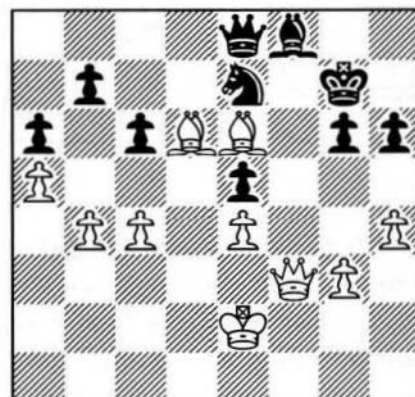
By this strong advance White opens up a second front on the kingside.

29...f6 30 c5 c7 31 fxe5 fxe5

On $31\dots\text{xe5}$ there follows $32. \text{xe5} \text{fxe5}$ $33. \text{xe7!}$ xe7 $34. \text{c5}$ with $35. \text{c8}$ to follow. $32. \text{f3!}$

Intending $32. \text{e6}$ with deadly threats.

32... d8 33 e6 e8 34 d6!



The virtues of the f2-f4 advance are easily appreciated: the e5-pawn and the e6-square have turned into weaknesses.

34...♖h7 35 ♜f6 ♘g8 36 ♙xg8+ ♕xg8 37 ♙xe5

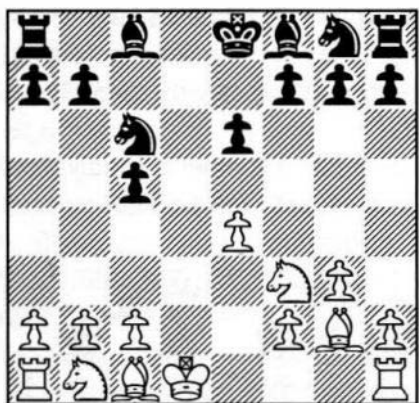
Finally White's positional advantage is converted into a material one.

37...h5 38 c5 ♙h6 39 ♜h8+ ♖f7 40 ♜xh6 ♜xe5 41 ♜f4+!

The ensuing pawn endgame is easily won.

Example 17
H.Ree-L.Portisch
Wijk aan Zee 1968

There has just been a queen exchange on d1 and one might get the impression that the game is entering peaceful waters. However, Portisch now initiates active measures in which his light-squared bishop will play a crucial role.



7...b6!

Considering that White is eager to play c2-c3 to secure his king on c2, Black hurries to put the bishop on the f1-a6 diagonal, where it will touch the key square on d3.

8 c3?!

After seeing the game, you will probably

share my anxious feelings about this natural move! One try to do without it: 8 h3 ♙a6 9 ♙e3 0-0-0+ 10 ♘bd2 ♘f6 11 ♖c1 intending b2-b3 and ♖b2, with much safer play than in the game.

8...♙a6 9 ♙f1

White tries to swap the dangerous enemy bishop. 9 ♖c2 0-0-0 10 ♙f1 ♙b7! reaches similar play.

9...0-0-0+ 10 ♘bd2 ♙b7!

Very strong. After having displaced its colleague, the bishop shifts to the long diagonal, where it will put pressure on the e4-pawn.

11 ♖c2 ♘f6 12 ♙d3

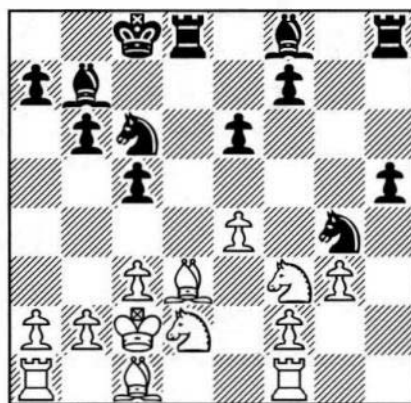
An awkward square for the bishop; however, both 12 h3? ♘xe4! 13 ♘xe4 ♘b4+, regaining the piece with interest, and 12 ♙g2?! ♘g4! 13 ♜f1 ♙a6! 14 c4 ♘b4+, heading for d3, were highly unpleasant for White.

12...h6 13 ♜e1 g5!

Black continues with active play. He now intends ...g5-g4 followed by ...♘e5, an idea familiar to us from the Seirawan-Sosonko game (p. 21).

14 h3 g4 15 hxg4 ♘g4 16 ♜f1 h5!

Portisch hurries to open up the h-file before White's queenside pieces get into play.



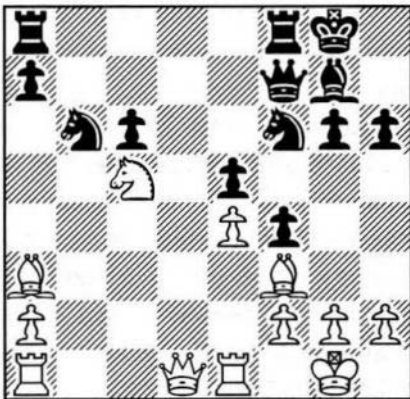
17 a4 ♘ce5 18 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 19 ♙e2 h4 20 g4

Or 20 ♖h1 hxg3! 21 ♖xh8 g2 22 ♖g8
 ♖g6 23 ♖f3 ♗xe4+ and wins – Portisch.

20...h3 21 f3 h2 22 ♖h1 ♖h3

Intending ...♗h6, with devastating pressure on White's camp. Black soon won.

Example 18
V.Kramnik-B.Gelfand
 Belgrade 1997



White is a pawn down but his active pieces and the weak enemy pawns on c6 and e5 provide compensation. Can you spot Kramnik's strong bishop manoeuvre?

23 ♗c1!

Preparing ♗d1-b3 in order to seize the a2-g8 diagonal. This would transform the passive bishop on f3 into a terrific piece now that Black has no light-squared counterpart. 23...♗b1?! is less accurate due to 23...♗c4 attacking the other bishop.

23...♗c4

Gelfand searches for relief in a queen exchange. 23...♖c4? no longer worked due to 24 ♗d1 followed by 25 ♗b3; while 23...a5 24 ♗d1 a4, taking the b3-square from the bishop, can be met by 25 ♖b1 ♖fb8 26 .♗e2!? ♗h7 (the threat was 27 ♖xb6) 27 ♗c2 followed by 28 ♖ed1 with strong pressure.

Again please remember, that we are not always able to fulfil our plans!

24 ♗d1 ♗xc1 25 ♖xc1 ♖fc8 26 ♗b3+ ♗h7
 27 ♖e6

White has managed to activate his pieces considerably.

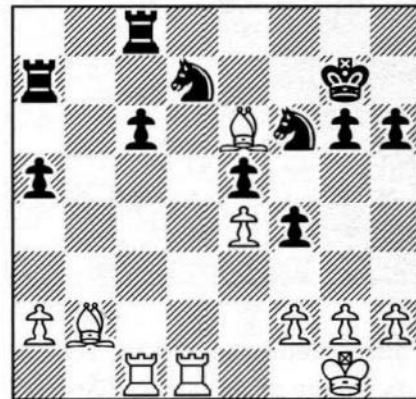
27...a5!

A good defensive move. The queen's rook will be useful along the seventh rank, whereas the a-pawn gets ready to kick away the bishop on b3.

28 ♖xg7

28 ♖c3!? a4 29 ♗c2 seems more ambitious, keeping the powerful knight.

28...♗xg7 29 ♗e6 ♖bd7 30 ♖ed1 ♖a7 31 ♗b2



White maintains strong pressure for the pawn, although Gelfand eventually drew.

Now let's see a complete game where White's light-squared bishop did the main part of the work.

Example 19
J.Hellsten-A.Brkljaca
 Belgrade 2002
 Nimzo-Indian Defence (E46)

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♗b4 4 e3 0-0 5 ♖ge2

d5 6 a3 ♖e7 7 ♘f4

This is a modest, yet fully playable version of the Rubinstein Variation in the Nimzo-Indian, in which White gives priority to a swift development. The experts prefer 7 cxd5 exd5 8 g3 with strategically complex play.

7...c6 8 ♖d3 dxc4 9 ♖xc4 ♘bd7 100-0 e5

Black exploits the fact that, with a knight on f4 instead of f3, White has less control of the e5-square.

11 ♜fe2 ♘b6 12 ♖a2!



A nice hideout for the bishop, where it stays in charge of the a2-g8 diagonal without exposing itself to the enemy pieces.

12...exd4 13 ♘xd4 c5 14 ♘f3 ♖f5

Parrying the e3-e4 advance. In contrast, after 14...♖g4 15 e4! White's kingside pawn majority slowly starts rolling, and the other bishop wakes up as well. Now in the event of 15...♝xd1 16 ♜xd1 ♖xf3?! 17 gxf3 the mobile doubled pawns are more of an asset than a burden, whereas the black knights are a long way from reaching the outpost on d4.

15 ♘e5

Touching the f7-pawn while preparing the advance of the kingside pawns.

15...♝c7

On 15...♘bd7 I had planned 16 ♝f3! on

the hunt for the bishop pair.

16 f4 ♜ad8 17 ♝f3 ♝c8?!

Preparing 18...♖e6 in order to swap White's "good" bishop; however, a simpler way to this goal was 17...♘fd7! 18 ♘xd7 (not 18 ♘c4?! ♖d3!) 18...♝xd7 19 e4 ♖e6 with approximate equality, e.g. 20 ♖b1 ♖c4 21 ♜d1 ♝c6 fighting for the open d-file.

18 a4!

Black was perhaps expecting 18 e4?! ♖e6 19. ♖xe6 ♝xe6 with an easy game. Now, on the other hand, the white queen keeps tying its counterpart to the b7-pawn and there appears the threat of 19 a5.

18...a5?

A strategical mistake that creates a weak square on b5 and makes the queenside pawn majority less mobile. Black should have preferred the pragmatic 18...♖e6! 19 ♖xe6 (or 19 ♖b1?! ♘c4 with counterplay) 19...fxe6 with just a minimal disadvantage due to the weakness on e6.

19 e4 ♖e6 20 ♖b1!

The bishop switches to the b1-h7 diagonal, where it will enhance a future kingside attack.

20...♘fd7

Black tries to get rid of the active enemy knight. If 20...♘c4?! with the same intention, then 21 ♘d3! creates the double threat of 22 f5 and 22 e5.

21 ♘g4!

In the same spirit of keeping the pieces for future attacking purposes. Moreover, Black's minor pieces now start to feel a little cramped.

21...f6

Black weakens his kingside in order to cope with the impending white pawn advances.

22 ♘d5!

Exploiting the fact that a capture on d5 would clear the b1-h7 diagonal for the

bishop, White brings the other knight into the attack.

22...♖d6 23 ♖d2?!

Here I missed 23 ♜h3!, with the double threat of 24 ♘h6+ and 24 e5, when both 23...f5?! 24 ♘e3 and 23...♖xg4 24 ♜xg4 ♘xd5 25 exd5 (preparing ♖f5 or ♜a3-h3) leave Black under a lot of pressure.

23...c4! 24 ♘h1

The pawn was poisoned due to check, but now the threat is real.

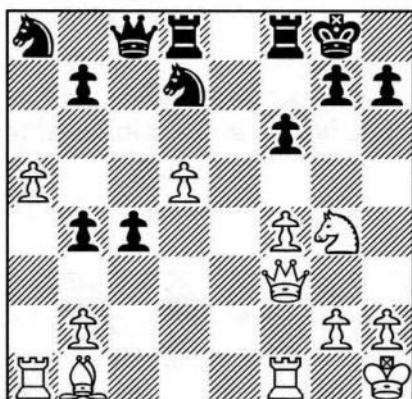
24...♙xd5?

Black should have postponed this exchange as long as possible. 24...♜c5 was much better; for example, 25 ♖e3 ♜c6 26 ♜xb6 ♘xb6 27 f5 ♖f7 28 e5 ♙d5! 29 ♜f2 ♖c7 with a complex game.

25 exd5 ♙b4?!

Again 25...♜c5 was called for, although after 26 ♖f5! followed by 27 ♙e6(+) White is clearly better thanks to the powerful bishop.

26 ♙xb4 axb4 27 a5 ♘a8



28 ♖f5!

Now the bishop aims for the protected square on e6 and also puts some pressure along the h3-c8 diagonal.

28...♜c5?

A tactical oversight in time trouble. Even though 28...g6 29 ♙e6+ ♘h8 30 f5 is de-

pressing for Black, this was his last chance.

29 ♜h3!

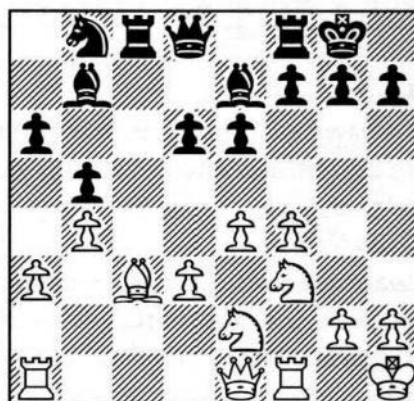
The double threat towards h7 and d7 decides the game.

29...g6 30 ♙xd7 ♜xd7 31 ♘xf6+! ♜xf6 32 ♜xd7 ♘c7 33 ♜ad1 c3 34 bxc3 bxc3 35 d6 ♘e6 36 ♜e8+

In view of 37 d7 on the next move, Black resigned.

Sofar we have mainly been dealing with open diagonals. In the following examples, we will examine a few different methods of clearing a key diagonal for our bishops.

Example 20
M.Vokac-D.Navara
Czech Championship,
Karlovy Vary 2005



In a typical Sicilian battle a piece exchange on d3 deprived White of the bishop pair but also strengthened his centre. Next he would like to attack on the kingside by ♜g3, f4-f5 etc.

17...d5!

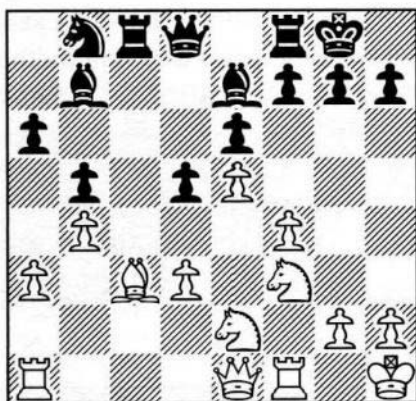
A standard advance that softens up the long diagonal for the bishop. Black could also consider 17...f5!? in the same spirit; for example, 18 ♜g3 fxe4 19 ♜d4!? ♖f6! 20

Mastering Chess Strategy

dxe4 ♖c7 21 ♗b2 ♜c4 intending ...♘c6 with counterplay.

18 e5?!

A safer choice was 18 ♘g3 dxe4 19 dxe4 ♜d3 20 ♜c1 intending ♜f2-d2. After 18 e5 White plans to put a knight on d4 in order to block the bishop on b7, and then resume the kingside attack with f4-f5. However, when playing 17...d5 Navara had already defined his next, powerful move.



18...d4!

This pawn sacrifice turns the bishop on b7 into a giant, and also creates a protected square on d5.

19 ♘exd4 ♘c6

It was time for the passive knight to enter the game. Less appropriate is 19...♜d5? 20 f5! with an attack.

20 ♗b2

Now after 20 f5 ♘xd4 21 ♘xd4 ♗h4! 22 ♜d2 ♗g5, followed by ♜d5, it is Black who ends up attacking.

20...♘xd4 21 ♘xd4 ♜d5 22 ♜e2 f5!

Eliminating the f4-f5 idea once and for all. Now 23 exf6 is strongly met by 23...♗xf6, pinning the knight.

23 ♜ac1 ♜xc1 24 ♜xc1 ♗d8!

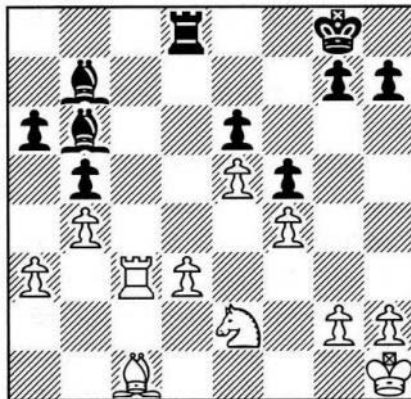
Black improves the other bishop as well.

25 ♜c5 ♜a2 26 ♗c1

Before 25...♜a2 Black had to anticipate

the line 26 ♜c2!? ♗b6 27 ♘e2! ♗xc5 28 ♘c3 ♜xb2 29 ♜xb2 ♗e3! 30 ♘e2 ♜c8 with a clear initiative.

26...♜xe2 27 ♘xe2 ♗b6 28 ♜c3 ♜d8

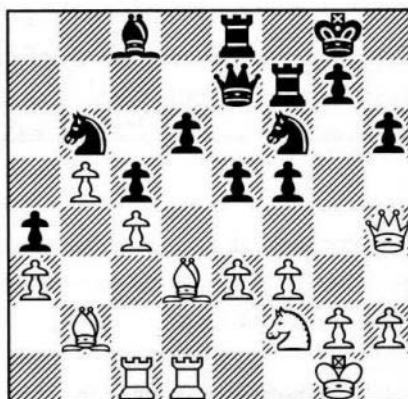


Despite the minus pawn Black has the better chances in this endgame, thanks to his bishops. The game saw 29 h3 h6 30 ♜h2 ♜f7 31 ♜g3 ♜d7 32 d4?! ♗d5 33 ♗e3 a5! (opening a second front) 34 bxa5 ♗xa5 35 ♜c1 ♗c4 followed by ...♗b6, pressuring d4. Navara went on to win after a long battle.

Example 21

S.Krivoshey-G.Timoshenko

Kiev 2001



In this strategically complex position White enjoys some advantage, thanks to the bishop pair and his sounder pawn structure, but Black's game is compact.

28f4!

Softening up the a1-h8 diagonal for the bishop, where there is no black counterpart.

28...e4?!

Preferable was 28...♗f8 keeping the tension, though Black is under pressure after 29 fxe5 dxe5 30 ♖g3!, eyeing the e5-pawn as well as the g6-square.

29 ♖e2 ♖e6 30 g4!

Another strong advance that aims at clearing the g-file towards the target on g7. White also puts some indirect pressure on e4, which explains Black's next move.

30...d5

Or 30...fxg4?! 31 ♖xf6! gxf6 32 ♖xg4 with a clear advantage thanks to Black's numerous weaknesses – Krivoshey.

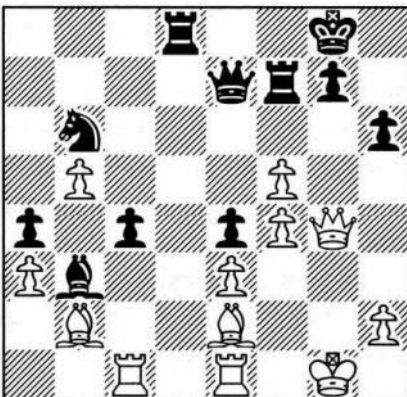
31 cxd5 ♖xd5

This drops a pawn, but after 31...♖bxd5 32 ♗g3 fxg4 (parrying the threat of 33 g5) 33 ♖xg4 White's kingside pressure is unbearable.

32 gxf5 ♖b3 33 ♖e1 c4 34 ♖g4!

Again unblocking the long diagonal for the bishop.

34...♖xg4 35 ♗xg4 ♖d8



36 ♗h1!

White avoids the removal of his bishop after 36 f6?! ♖xf6! 37 ♖xf6 ♗xf6 and instead prepares 37 ♖g1 with increased pressure.

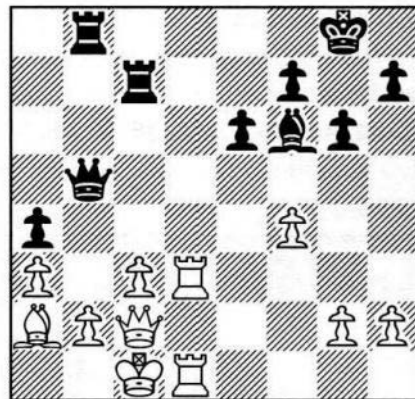
36...♗c5 37 f6

37 ♖g1! was even simpler, but the text doesn't ruin anything.

37...♖d5 38 ♖d4 ♗xb5 39 fxg7

With a clear extra pawn and a strong attack, White won without major difficulties.

Example 22
A.Istratescu-V.Buturin
Bucharest 1992



White is a pawn up, but how can he progress?

24 g4!

Istratescu prepares 25 f5 in order to soften up the a2-g8 diagonal for his bishop. This plan goes very well with the position of the white king, who won't get exposed by the pawn advances, nor obstruct a future kingside attack.

24...♖bc8 25 f5! exf5 26 gxf5 ♗g7

After 26...♗xf5 27 ♗xa4 the three passed pawns will become extremely powerful in any endgame. As for the middle-

game, White may consider an attack down the f-file.

27 fxg6 hxg6 28 ♖f3 ♜c5 29 ♖g1

The straightforward 29 ♜f2!? seemed even stronger.

29... ♜b6?!

Black should have tried 29... ♜e8! with the threat of 30... ♜e2. At this point, the tempting 30 ♙xf7? backfires due to 30... ♖g5!, exploiting the motif of a back rank mate.

30 ♖gf1! ♙g5+ 31 ♜b1 f5

Black has avoided a direct attack on f7, but now faces problems on the g-file.

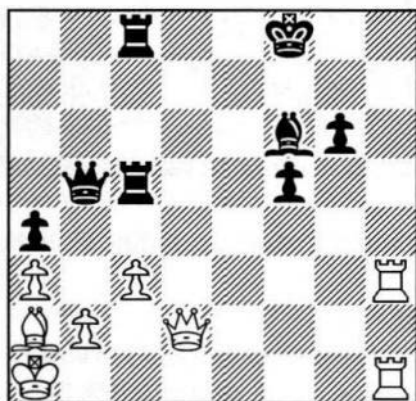
32 h4! ♙f6

Or 32... ♙xh4? 33 ♜xa4 with the double threat of 34 ♜xh4 and 34 ♜d7+.

33 ♜a1 ♜b5 34 ♖g1!

By the threat of 35 h5 White provokes Black's next move, which will clear the h-file for the attack.

34... ♙xh4 35 ♜h3 ♙f6 36 ♖gh1 ♜f8 37 ♜d2!



Suddenly the black king has nowhere to hide.

37... ♜c6 38 ♜h7 ♙g7 39 ♜h8+! ♙xh8

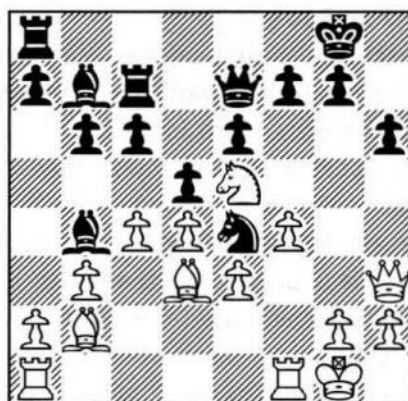
After 39... ♜e7 40 ♜e1+ White wins quickly.

40 ♜xh8+ ♜e7 41 ♜h7+!

There follows 42 ♜d4(+) with decisive

threats, so Black resigned. In fact the bishop on a2 didn't move during this whole fragment, but it still performed an important role by controlling crucial squares such as f7, e6 and g8.

Example 23
V.Kramnik-L.Van Wely
Dortmund 2008



White has already taken the first steps to a kingside attack, but it is unlikely to succeed unless more pieces participate. Kramnik finds a way to activate the bishop on b2.

17 ♙xe4 dxe4 18 c5!

This clever move exploits the vulnerable position of the bishop on b4 in order to clear the long diagonal.

18...bxc5

Safer was 18...f6, pushing away the powerful knight, even though after 19 ♘c4 ♙a6 20 ♖fc1 followed by a2-a3 White gets some advantage – Kramnik.

19 a3 ♙a5 20 dxc5 ♜xc5

Slower moves, such as 20... ♜cc8, permit 21 f5 with a promising attack. The lack of defenders on Black's kingside is strongly felt, just as in the game.

21 b4 ♖b5 22 ♖g3!

The clearance of the long diagonal has turned g7 into White's main target.

22...♗b6?!

This doesn't contribute a lot to the defence. Preferable was 22...f5, clearing the seventh rank, although after 23 ♖ad1! c5 (the threat was 24 ♘d7) 24 ♖g6 ♗d5 25 ♖xd5! exd5 26 ♖e6+ White still obtains a dangerous attack.

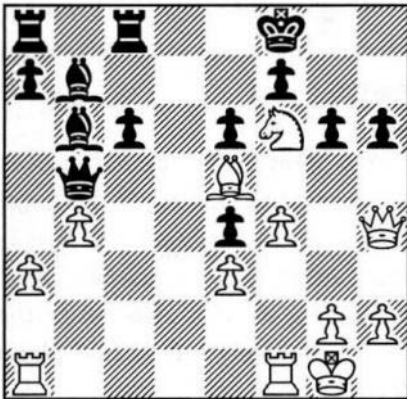
23♘d7! g6

Both 23...♗xe3+ 24 ♖h1 and 23...f6 24 ♘xf6+ ♖f8 25 ♗xe4 were equally bad for Black.

24♘f6+

Kramnik also suggests 24 ♘xb6 ♖xb6 25 f5! exf5 26 ♖xf5 and the black king is doomed on the dark squares.

24...♖f8 25 ♗e5 ♖cc8 26 ♖h4!



The white forces coordinate nicely.

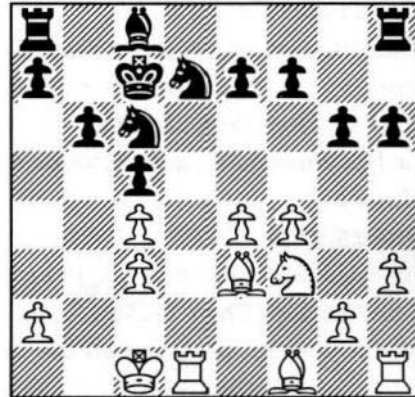
26...h5 27 ♘h7+ ♖e8 28 ♗d6 ♖c7 29 ♖fd1!

One more piece enters the attack, and Black resigned in view of the decisive 30 ♘f6+ on the next move.

Example 24
I.Sokolov-T.Nedev
Calvia Olympiad 2004

In order to exploit the strength of the

bishop pair White needs to open up the position. Sokolov hurries to clear the best diagonal for his dark-squared bishop.

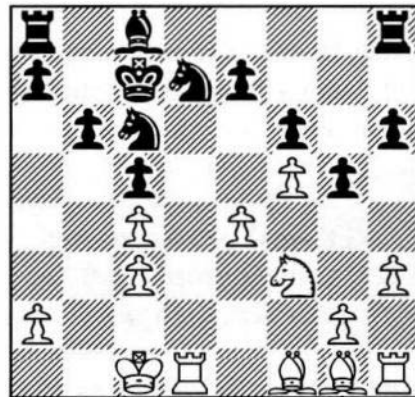


16f5! g5

Preventing 17 ♗f4+, but not the idea to occupy the h2-b8 diagonal as such. Sokolov suggests 16...e5! as a better option, although after 17 fxe6 fxe6 18 ♗f4+ e5 19 ♗h2 followed by ♗d3 White seems a little better anyway. One future idea is ♘d2-f1-e3-d5, redirecting the knight to the centre.

17 ♗g1! f6

Creating a protected square at e5.



18 ♗h2+ e5

A temporary pawn sacrifice in order to liberate the pieces. On 18...♗de5 there is the strong 19 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 20 ♖d5!, threat-

ening to capture on e5 in both ways.

19 fxe6+ ♖de5 20 e7!

The most annoying way of returning the pawn.

20... ♜e8 21 ♙e2 ♜xe7 22 ♜hf1

White now puts his focus on the weak f6-pawn.

22... ♙d7 23 ♖xe5 fxe5 24 ♜f6!

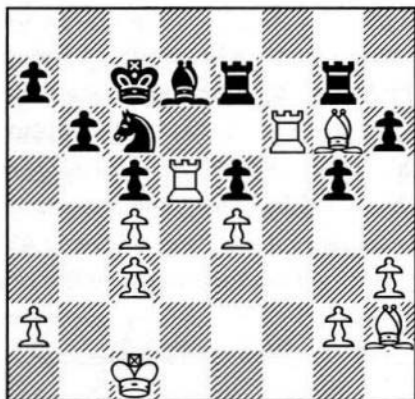
The f-pawn is gone, but the same square remains weak.

24... ♜h8 25 ♙h5!

Fixing the h6-pawn as a future target.

25... ♜hh7 26 ♙g6 ♜hg7 27 ♙d5

With long-term pressure on the e5 and h6 pawns, White is better in this endgame.



Finally, let's see a complete game on the topic of clearing diagonals for our bishops.

Example 25
G.Kamsky-G.Kasparov
 Manila Olympiad 1992
King's Indian Defence (E88)

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♖c3 ♙g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 ♙e3 e5

A classical response to the Sämisch Variation.

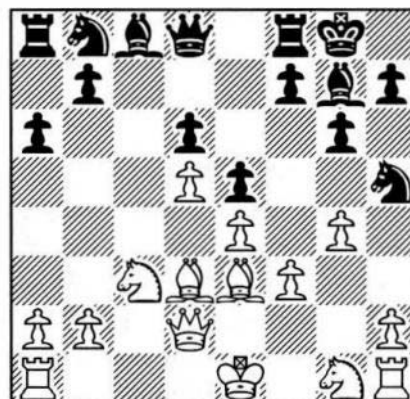
7 d5 c6

Considering that White often castles

long in this variation, it makes sense to take action on the queenside.

8 ♜d2 cxd5 9 cxd5 a6 10 ♙d3 ♖h5 11 g4?

A bad mistake that will cause White trouble for the rest of game. 11 ♖ge2 was correct, covering the f4-square.



11... ♖f4!

A typical sacrifice in the King's Indian. Sometimes in this opening, it is even a rook that settles on f4!

12 ♙c2

At this point White shouldn't even consider accepting the gift with 12 ♙xf4? exf4 13 ♜xf4, since the bishop on g7 turns into a monster. After 13...b5, followed by ...♜b6 and ...♖d7-e5, we can also notice that the e3-bishop is sorely missed in the white camp.

12...b5

Black resumes the queenside offensive that was initiated five moves ago.

13 ♜f2 ♖d7 14 ♖ge2 b4 15 ♖a4 a5!

Not 15...♖xe2? 16 ♜xe2 and Black's position loses a lot of its potential. Instead, Kasparov lets the knight stay on f4, convinced that it will be worth a pawn to clear the long diagonal for the bishop. In fact, by 15...a5 followed by 16...♙a6, he is trying to *provoke* the capture on f4.

16 ♖xf4

16 O-O-O ♖a6 17 ♜xf4 exf4 18 ♜xf4 ♞e5 reaches similar play in the game.

16...exf4 17 ♜xf4 ♞e5

In return for the pawn, Black enjoys control of the long diagonal and the powerful e5-knight.

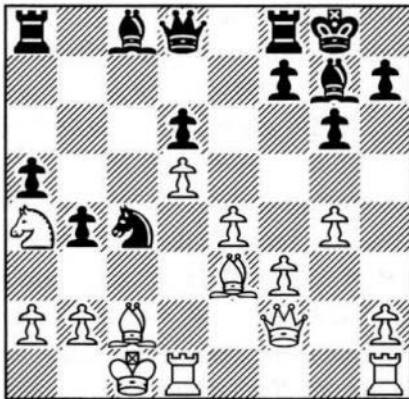
18 O-O-O

18 ♞b6? fails tactically to 18...♜xf3+, while after 18 O-O ♖a6 19 ♞fd1 ♜c8 Black is better – Kasparov. It is evident that the g2-g4 move doesn't fit very well with short castling.

18...♜c4!

Black prepares ...♞d7 with an attack on b2, and simultaneously prevents 19 ♞b6.

19 ♞e3



19...♜xe3!

A very important exchange. Any other move would have allowed 20 ♞d4!, taking up the battle for the long diagonal.

20 ♝xe3 ♞b8

Since the immediate 20...♞d7 permits 21 ♞b6, Black activates the rook first.

21 ♞b3 ♞d7 22 ♜b1 ♝e8 23 ♞b6 ♞b5!

The tempting 23...a4?! lets White defend a little better after 24 ♜xd7 ♝'xd7 25 ♞c4. But now ...a5-a4 has turned into a threat.

24 ♞d2 a4 25 ♞d1 ♞b7!

With the subtle idea of 26..b3 27 axb3 axb3 28 ♞xb3 ♝b8, trapping the knight.

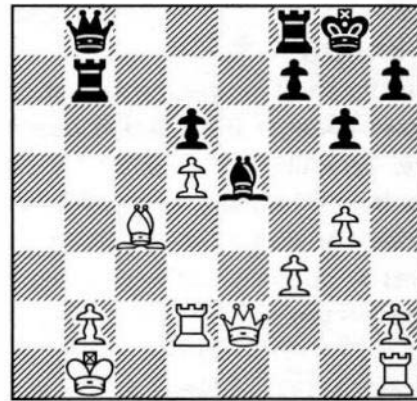
Kamsky finds the only response.

26 e5! b3

The simplifications arising after 26...♞xe5 27 f4 were not to Kasparov's taste.

27 axb3 axb3 28 ♞xb3 ♝b8 29 ♞c4 ♞xc4 30 ♞xc4 ♞xe5 31 ♝e2

Not 31 b3? ♜c8 32 ♜c2 ♞xc4+! 33 bxc4 ♞b2+ and Black wins – Kasparov.



Thanks to the inventive 26 e5 White managed temporarily to block the black bishop, thus avoiding a mortal capture on b2. Even so, his king is in a lot of trouble. The principle that the presence of opposite-coloured bishops favours the attacker applies well to this position.

31...♝a7!

Black prepares an invasion down the a-file.

32 ♞c1

Kamsky deliberately exposes himself to a pin with ♞f4 at any moment, aware that the loss of the exchange would be the least of his problems.

32..♞a8 33 b3 ♞f4 34 ♜c2 ♞e7!

The rook shifts to a better file. Now the white king turns out to be stuck in the middle.

35 ♝d3 ♝c5 36 ♞b1 ♞e3!

Before checking on a2, Black lures the

enemy queen to a more exposed square.

37 ♖d4 ♖a2+ 38 ♜d1

Or **38 ♖b2 ♖xb2+ 39 ♜xb2 ♙e5 40 ♜a2 ♖c3+** and the check on g1 decides.

38...♖xf3

White can't avoid material losses.

39 ♜xf4 ♖xf4 40 ♖xa2 ♜g1+ 41 ♜c2 ♜xh2+

White resigned.

For the related exercises, see page 301.

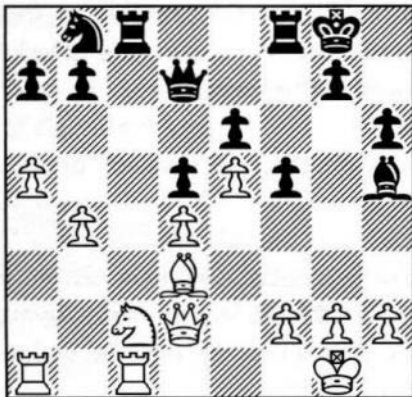
The knight

Due to its short range the knight usually becomes stronger the closer it gets to the centre. Typically it is looking for squares where it won't be chased away by the opponent's pawns, so-called protected squares or outposts. Let's see some examples on this topic.

Example 26

Y.Pelletier-M.Sebag

French Team Championship 2007



White has just played 22 b4, gaining some space on the queenside. Should Black prevent the further advance 23 b5 or ignore it?

22...a6?

Preferable was **22...♖c7 23 b5 ♖fc8** – Pelletier. With the a-pawn still on a7 Black keeps the option of ...b7-b6 if necessary. In contrast, **22...a6** leaves the b6 and c5 squares seriously weakened, something that Pelletier immediately exploits.

23 ♙f1!

Vacating the d3-square for the knight.

23...♖c7

Or **23...♜c6 24 ♜e1 ♜e7 25 ♖c5!** followed by **♖ac1** with a clear plus. Later on the knight might replace the rook on c5.

24 ♜e1!

A key move. The knight is heading for the protected square at c5, where it will attack the weak pawns on b7 and e6, while restricting Black on the open file.

24...♖fc8 25 ♜d3 ♜c6?!

White is also much better after **25...♖xc1 26 ♖xc1 ♖xc1 27 ♜xc1 ♙e8 28 ♜c5**, intending **♜a7** and **♜c5**. But the text loses material.

26 ♜c5 ♜e7 27 ♜xb7!

A tactical twist that decides the game. Now after **27...♖xb7 28 ♙xa6** White recovers the material and, more importantly, obtains two terrific passed pawns.

27...♜xd4 28 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 29 ♜c5 ♖xc5 30 ♜xd4

Of course not **30 bxc5? ♜b3**. In the game White is able to generate a decisive passed pawn.

30...♖c6 31 b5! axb5 32 a6 ♖c8 33 ♜b6! ♜f8 34 a7

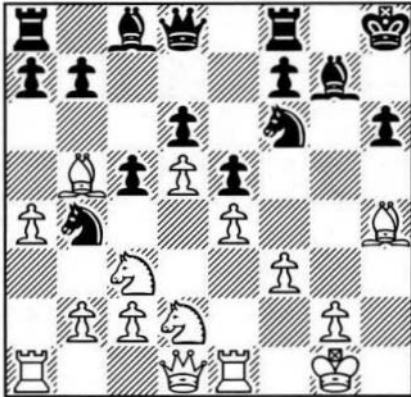
In this desperate position, Black resigned.

Example 27

G.Kasparov-A.Beliavsky
Candidates match (game 9),
Moscow 1983

White is better thanks to his sounder

pawn structure and more active pieces. Kasparov now initiates a transfer of his knights to the kingside, where the absence of a black g6-pawn has left the light squares a little loose.



19 ♖e2!

Heading for the protected square at f5.

19... ♖g8 20 c3 ♖a6 21 ♖g3 ♜f8?!

Bothered by the threatened 22 ♖h5 Beliavsky unpins the knight. However, 21... ♜f8! preparing ... ♜e7, was a better reply – Kasparov. There can follow 22 ♖c4 (22 ♖h5?! ♜e7 makes less sense) 22... ♜e7 23 ♜d2 ♖h7 24 ♖e3! preparing 25 ♖ef5. At this point, both 24... ♖xd5 25 ♖ef5! and 24... ♖xe4 25 ♜xe7 ♖xd2 26 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 27 ♜ad1 ♖b3 28 ♜d3+ ♖g7 29 ♖c4, with the double threat of 30 ♜c2 and 30 ♖e4, are troublesome for Black.

22 ♖df1!

The other knight joins his colleague in the battle for the f5-square. Less logical is 22 ♖f5?! ♜xf5 23 exf5, when the pieces can no longer make use of this square.

22... ♖h7 23 ♖e3 ♜f6

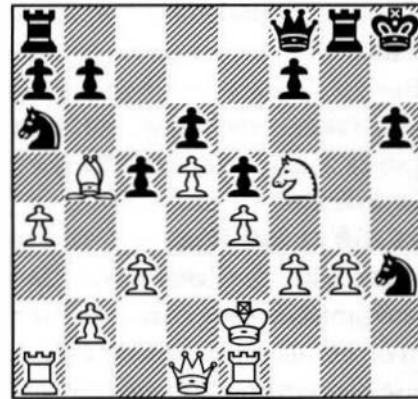
Black manages to swap his bad bishop, but the problem with the f5-square remains.

24 ♜xf6+ ♖xf6 25 ♖gf5 ♖h5 26 ♖f2!

A clever move that improves the king

and clears the path for the rook.

26... ♜xf5 27 ♖xf5 ♖f4 28 g3 ♖h3+ 29 ♖e2



With ♖h1 coming up, White has a huge advantage and won just a few moves later.

Example 28
M. Matulovic-S. Marjanovic
 Yugoslav Championship, Bjelovar
 1979

In this typical French structure, in exchange for his weaknesses on e5 and e6, Black has some pressure on the d4-pawn and along the f-file. His next moves might be ... ♜af8 and ... g5-g4. Matulovic found an excellent knight manoeuvre.



20 ♖a4!

This knight was not doing anything substantial on c3. Now it is heading for c5-d3-e5, and also eyes the b6-square.

20... ♖af8

After 20... ♖xd4 White had prepared 21 ♖b6! ♖xf3+ 22 ♖xf3 ♖g5 23 ♖h3! and wins, since 23... ♖d8 24 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 25 ♖c8+ ends with mate.

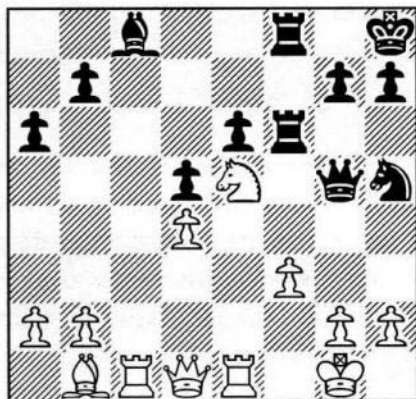
21 ♖c5 ♖c8 22 ♖d3 ♖h6

Or 22... ♖b8 23 ♖de5 ♖xe5 24 ♖xe5 with a clear advantage thanks to the strong knight on e5. Black has no time for 24... ♖xf2 because his own knight hangs on h5.

23 ♖de5 ♖xe5 24 ♖xe5!

Based on the tactical line 24... ♖xf2? 25 ♖xc8!, White is able to recapture in the best way.

24... ♖g5 25 f3!



Simple but strong. Now Black's kingside attack is practically over, whereas the control of the c-file and the prominent knight on e5 are long-term factors in White's favour.

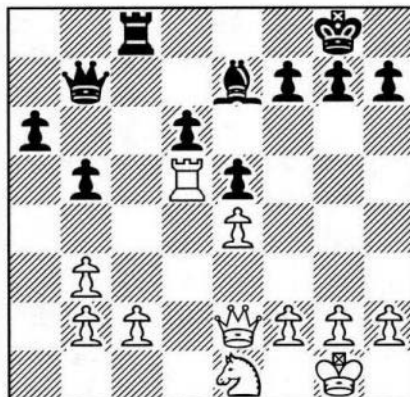
25... g6

Or 25... ♖f4 26 g3 intending ♖c7 and ♖c2 – Matulovic.

26 ♖c7 ♖h4 27 ♖d2 ♖f4 28 ♖ec1 ♖xd4 29 ♖h6!

In a hopeless position Black lost on time.

Example 29
J. Polgar-V. Anand
Wijk aan Zee 1998



The present structure can arise in several Sicilian variations. Usually Black needs active piece play in order to compensate for the weaknesses on d5 and d6, whereas in the above position, he has been left with the "bad" bishop. Thus White's plan suggests itself: install the knight on the protected square d5, exploiting the fact that Black has no minor pieces that can swap it off.

21 c3!

Preparing ♖c2-e3-d5.

21... b4

If 21... ♖c6 22 ♖c2 ♖g5, intending to swap the knight when it arrives to e3, then simply 23 ♖b4! followed by ♖d1 and ♖d5. The ability to use different routes to the same square is indeed a key virtue of the knight. On the other hand, after 21... ♖c5 22 ♖d1! a5 23 ♖c2 the knight will choose the e3-d5 route instead, after a preparatory 24 ♖d3. Contrary to the previous subline, ... ♖e7-g5 is unavailable here due to the d6-pawn hanging.

22 c4 g6 23 g3

Another option was 23 Qc2! ? Rc5 24 Qe3 , speeding up the knight manoeuvre.

23... Rc5 24 Rd1!

White should keep d5 clear for the knight.

24... a5 25 Qc2 Qg7

25... Qg5 ? failed to 26 Rxd6 , while after 25... Wc6 26 Wd3! the problem with the d6-pawn remains.

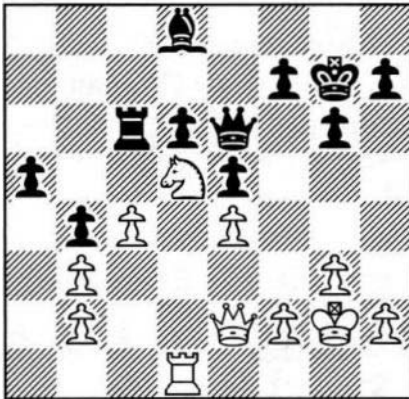
26 Wd3

Of course the immediate 26 Qe3 ? failed to 26... Wxe4 , but after the preparatory text move there is nothing that can stop Qe3-d5 .

26... Rc6 27 Qe3 Wc8 28 Qg2

A useful move that rules out ... Wh3 at any moment.

28... We6 29 We2 Qd8 30 Qd5



White has fulfilled his plan. On d5 the knight is controlling a lot of important squares, and it can't be expelled nor exchanged.

30... Rc5

Or 30... Qb6 31 Rd3 followed by Rf3 with attacking prospects – Polgar.

31 We3

White now slowly prepares a kingside attack, exploiting Black's lack of counter-play.

31... Qe7 32 Rd3 Qd8 33 Wd2 Rc6 34 Wd1

Qg8 35 h4! Qg7?!

Preferable was 35... h5 , complicating the enemy attack, although after 36 f3 Qg7 37 We2 followed by Rd1-h1 and g3-g4 , White's game is promising anyway – Polgar.

36 h5!

After this White can clear the h-file whenever she likes.

36... Qg5 37 Wf3 Rc8 38 Rd1 Rc6 39 We2 Rc8 40 Rh1 Qg8 41 f3! Rb8 42 Wf2

On f2 the queen not only controls the entire g1-a7 diagonal, but also gets closer to the h-file via g1-h2.

42... Rb7 43 hxg6 fxg6

Or 43... hxg6 44 Wg1 followed by Wh2 with a strong attack.

44 c5!

A logical advance after the ... fxg6 recapture, which left the black king more exposed towards the centre.

44... dxc5 45 Wxc5 Qd8 46 Rc1

With the plan of Rc4 and We3-c1 to seize the c-file and enable Rc8 . White has a clear plus and went on to win the game.

Example 30
G.Kasparov-J.Piket
Tilburg 1997



In exchange for the pawn White has a lead in development. Kasparov now seizes the initiative by means of a strong knight manoeuvre.

16 ♖fd2! 0-0 **17** ♖e4

Getting ready to install a knight on d6.

17... ♗e7 **18** ♗g3!

After 18 ♗xe7?! ♜xe7 White can't go 19 ♖ed6? due to 19... ♖xe5! 20 ♖xb7 ♖xc4 21 ♗xc4 ♜xb7 etc. In the game, the bishop on g3 keeps an eye on the vital e5 and d6 squares.

18... ♜d8 **19** ♖cd6!

By using this knight White clears the c-file and also keeps the ♖e4-c5 resource.

19... ♖a5 **20** ♗c2!

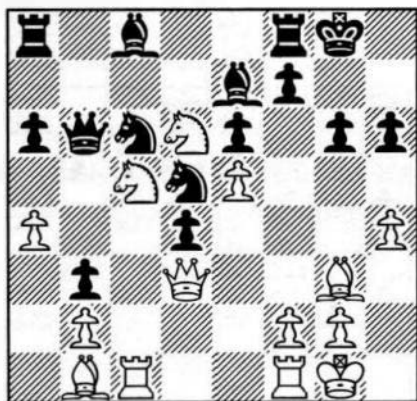
Preparing ♜d3 with a kingside attack. We saw a similar pattern in the previous game: once White has completed the knight manoeuvre, he is ready for action on other parts of the board.

20... b3 **21** ♗b1 ♜b6 **22** ♜d3 g6 **23** ♖c5!

With the double threat of ♖d7 and ♖xe6.

23... ♗c8 **24** h4! ♖c6?!

White is also much better after 24...h5 25 ♜xd4 ♖c6 26 ♜e4, but now he wins on the spot.



25 a5!

An ingenious intermediate move to de-

flect the black pieces from the kingside defence. In contrast, the immediate 25 h5? permitted 25... ♖xe5! 26 ♗xe5 ♗xd6 with unnecessary complications.

25... ♜xa5

Now on 25... ♖xa5 the time is right for 26 h5 with an irresistible attack.

26 ♖xf7! ♜xf7 **27** ♜xg6+ ♖f8

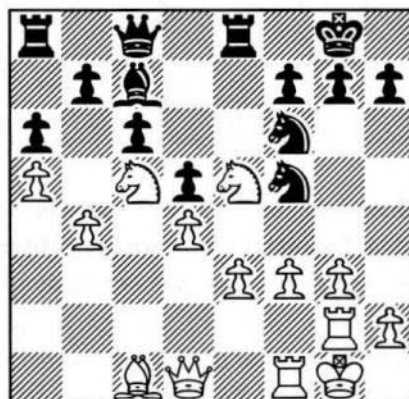
Or 27... ♜g7 28 ♜e8+ ♗f8 29 ♜xc6 winning.

28 ♖xe6+ ♗xe6 **29** ♜xc6 ♗d7 **30** ♜xh6+

Black resigned in view of 30... ♖e8 31 e6 ♗xc6 32 exf7+ ♖d7 33 ♗f5+.

Quite often the idea of exploiting protected squares appears as a consequence of incautious pawn moves by the opponent. We already saw this in Pelletier-Sebag (22...a6?), and here is another example.

Example 31
S. Guliev-J. Timman
European Team Championship,
Pula 1997

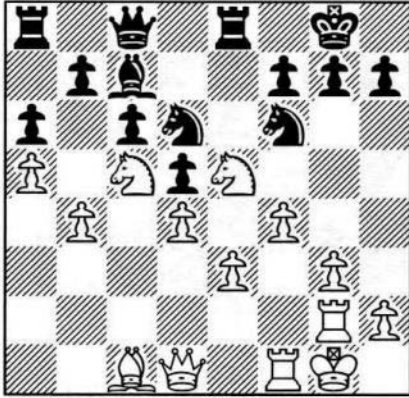


24 f4?

Strengthening the knight on e5 but leaving the pawn structure in bad shape. The simple 24 ♖cd3 was much a sounder option.

24...♖d6!

Timman immediately directs his attention to the newly created protected square at e4.



25 g4 ♗fe4 26 ♖cd3 f6

Black has been more cautious with his f-pawn than his opponent, and now manages to expel the enemy knight from the centre.

27 ♖f3 ♗c4

A nice square for the knight, but it doesn't really match its opposing number on e4. The more centrally placed, the more powerful are the knights!

28 ♖e1 ♗h8 29 ♖h4

White prepares a kingside attack, but this is unlikely to succeed with the centre under Black's command. Moreover, the c1-bishop is out of play.

29...♖d7 30 g5 fxg5 31 fxg5 ♗g8

Timman also suggests the simpler 31...g6!?

32 g6 h6 33 ♗fe5!? .♗xe5 34 dxе5 ♖e7!

Avoiding 34...♖xe5? 35 ♗b2! ♖xd3 36 ♗f7 and White takes over.

35 ♖h5 ♗f8!

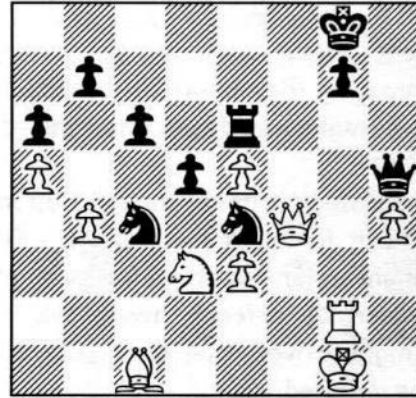
Again 35...♖xe5? was wrong due to 36 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 37 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 38 ♗f7! with compensation - Timman. Instead, Black aims to exchange White's active pieces to

reduce his counterplay.

36 ♗f7 ♗xf7 37 gxf7+ ♖xf7 38 ♖xh6 ♗e8!

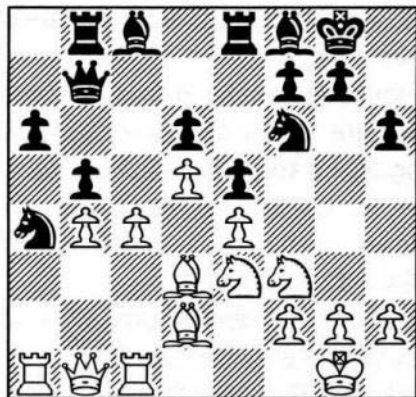
The last piece enters the game.

39 h4 ♗e6 40 ♖f4 ♖h5



Black enjoys a clear advantage thanks to his active pieces. In conclusion, we should remember that any pawn move leads to some kind of weakening; 24 f4? in this example handed over the e4-square to Black and restricted the white bishop.

Example 32
G.Cabrilo-R.Ziatdinov
Belgrade 1991



In this typical Spanish structure it is not

easy for White to exploit his space advantage. The desired c4-c5 advance is unlikely to succeed in the near future; e.g. 24 ♖a2 ♙d7 25 ♖ac2 ♜ec8 and Black holds. Instead, Cabrilo launches a slow, but powerful knight manoeuvre.

24 ♙e1!

Preparing ♜d2-b3-a5-c6, by which the passive knight would turn into a giant.

24... ♙d7

The closed nature of the position makes it difficult for Black to interfere with the opponent's plan. So he prefers to reinforce his queenside defence, aware that when the knight arrives at b3, the threat of c4-c5 will be renewed.

25 ♜d2 ♜ec8 26 ♜b3 ♙e7 27 ♖a2!

The queen's rook should also enter the game. The knight's jump to a5 can wait.

27... ♜a7

Another option is 27... ♜c7 28 ♜a5 ♜a7 preparing ... ♜bc8. At this moment, let's compare the knights on a5 and a4. Both are situated on protected squares; however, the difference is that the white knight may soon jump to a more powerful one, i.e. 29 cxb5 axb5 30 ♖xc7 ♜xc7 31 ♖c2 ♜b6 32 ♜c6! with a clear advantage.

28 ♖ac2 ♜e8

Enabling ... ♙e7-g5. There was no time for 28... ♙d8?, heading for b6, due to 29 c5.

29 cxb5

After activating his pieces, White resorts to concrete action. The quiet 29 g3!?, preparing 30 h4 to prevent ... ♙g5, was interesting as well, since 29... ♙g5?! at once would fail to 30 c5.

29... ♖xc2 30 ♜xc2 axb5

Or 30... ♖c8 31 ♜xc8! ♙xc8 32 ♖xc8 ♜d7 33 ♖b8 with a decisive advantage.

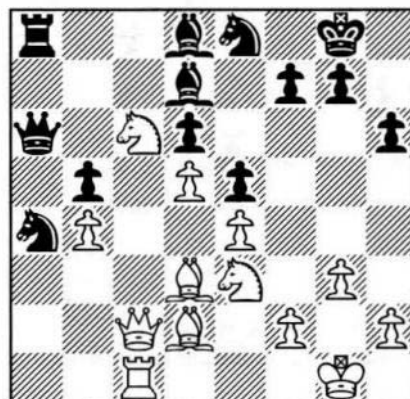
31 ♜a5 ♙g5 32 ♙d2 ♖a8

Prophylaxis against ♜a5-c6.

33 g3 ♙d8?

Black should not have abandoned the kingside defence with his bishop. After 33... h5! 34 ♜c6 ♜b7 35 h4 ♙h6 he would have much better chances of resistance.

34 ♜c6 ♜a6



White has completed the manoeuvre initiated ten moves ago, and the knight is terrific on c6. But how to make further progress?

35 ♙e1!

The initial move of this example is repeated, and again it is very strong. Cabrilo wants to put his queen on e2, from where it can take part in a kingside attack and also puts pressure on the b5-pawn.

35... ♙b6 36 ♜e2 ♜c7?!

Black should have played 36... ♙xe3!, eliminating the ♜e3-f5 resource. After 37 fxe3 (not 37 ♜xe3?! ♜b2 and the knight reaches c4) 37... ♜b6 38 ♙xb5?! ♙g4! 39 ♜d3 ♜b2 Black obtains counterplay. So the immediate 36 ♜f5! was probably more precise.

37 ♜f5 ♙xf5 38 ♜e7+!

Thus White manages to keep a knight on the excellent f5-square.

38... ♜f8 39 ♜xf5 ♙d8 40 ♖c6! f6 41 ♜g2!

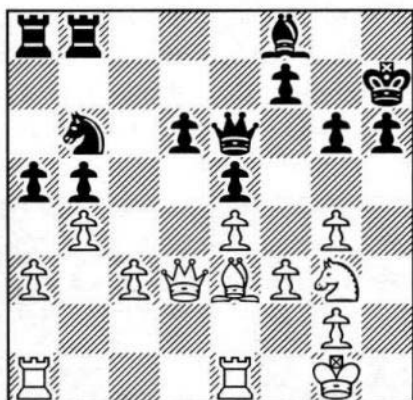
Some prophylaxis in view of the line 41 ♜xd6? ♖xd6! 42 ♖xd6 ♙xf2+. Now the rest is easy.

41... ♖a7 42 ♗g4 ♘e8 43 ♙xb5 ♜b8 44 ♝c2!
 ♙d4 45 ♙xe8 ♞xe8 46 ♞a2

Black resigned.

Sometimes, the usage of a protected square is preceded by the exchange of the enemy forces that defend it. Here is a simple example.

Example 33
Z.Hracek-Z.Almasi
 Odorheiu Secuiesc 1995



Black is just about to improve his pawn structure by 29...d5, while ...♖b6-c4 is another interesting resource, for example if White snatches a pawn with 29 ♗xb5?!. Hracek opts for a more strategical solution.

29 ♙xb6!

A strong exchange that secures the d5-square for the knight, and creates a "good knight vs. bad bishop" scenario.

29... ♞xb6 30 ♘f1!

The knight hurries to d5 before Black manages to resume the ...d6-d5 idea.

30... ♙e7 31 ♘e3 ♙h4 32 ♘d5! ♞b7

After 32... ♙xe1? 33 ♘xb6 ♞b8 34 bxa5 White wins a decisive pawn.

33 ♞eb1

The strong knight leaves White better on the whole board, and he now opens a new front on the queenside.

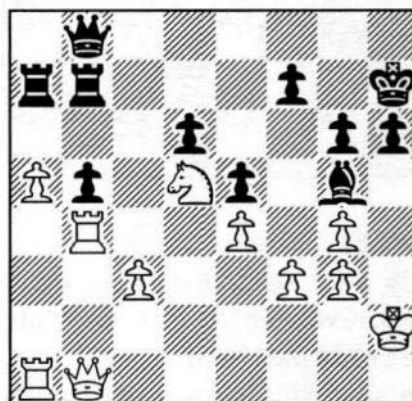
33... ♗c8 34 ♖h2!

Against the plan of ...♙g3 and ...♗d8-h4.

34... ♗d8 35 g3 ♙g5 36 a4! axb4

Or 36...bxa4 37 b5!, creating a terrific passed pawn.

37 ♞xb4 ♗b8 38 ♗b1 ♞aa7 39 a5!



39... ♞a6

Black had to stop 40 a6, but now he succumbs on the b-file.

40c4!

Creating a strong passed pawn.

40... ♙d8 41 ♞xb5 ♞xb5 42 cxb5 ♞xa5 43 ♞xa5 ♙xa5 44 b6

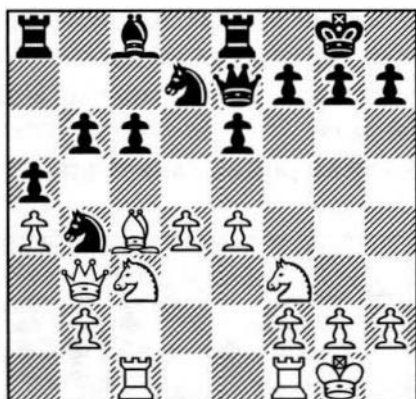
The further advance of this pawn is soon helped by the queen, so Black resigned.

In the previous examples the protected squares were available from the very beginning. Now let's see a few different ways in which they can be created.

Example 34
A.Vyzmanavin-F.Braga
 Benidorm 1993

White is slightly better thanks to his

space advantage. Vyzmanavin now opts for a concrete plan: the installation of a knight on d6.

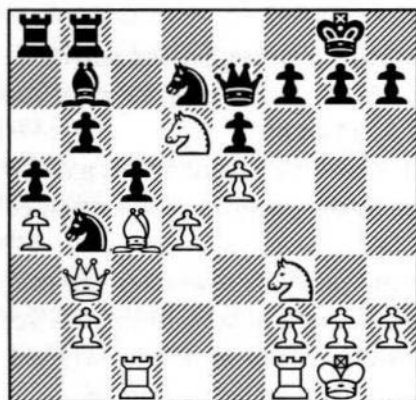


16 e5! ♖b7

Also after 16...♙a6 17 ♗e4 the knight reaches d6 with an initiative for White.

17 ♗e4 c5 18 ♗d6 ♜eb8

On 18...♙xf3 Vyzmanavin had planned 19 ♜xf3 ♜ed8 20 ♜g3 cxd4 21 f4!. Then White could consider ♜cd1xd4 or even f4-f5! with attacking prospects.



19 ♙b5

A clever move that enables ♜c1-c7 as a response to ...c5xd4 at any moment.

19...♙d5 20 ♜e3 ♙c6!

Despite b4 being a protected square, the knight wasn't doing anything substantial

there. Now it helps Black in the fight for the central dark squares.

21 ♙xc6 ♙xc6 22 ♗d2

White avoids the swap on f3 and prepares f2-f4 in order to reinforce his centre.

22...cxd4 23 ♜xd4 ♗c5 24 ♜c3!

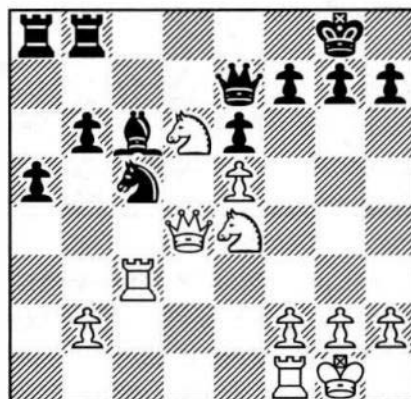
With the strong knight on d6 paralysing the black camp, an attack on the king has every reason to succeed.

24...♙xa4 25 ♗2e4!

White is better after 25 ♜xc5 bxc5 26 ♜xa4 ♜xb2 27 ♗2c4, but the text is more energetic.

25...♙c6?

Underestimating the enemy attack. Correct was 25...♗xe4 26 ♜xe4 ♙e8, reducing the material, though after 27 ♜fc1 f5 28 ♜e3, intending ♜c7, White has a great game anyway.



26 ♗f6+! ♙h8

After 26...gxf6 27 ♜g3+ ♙h8 28 exf6 ♜c7 29 ♜g7 the attack is irresistible; e.g. 29...♜g8 30 ♜xh7+! ♙xh7 31 ♜h4+ ♙g6 32 f4! with decisive threats.

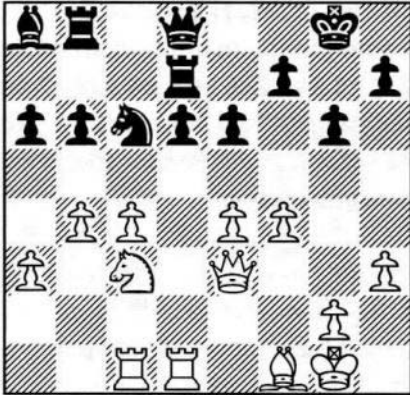
27 ♜h3 gxf6

Or 27...h6 28 ♜f4 ♜f8 29 ♗xf7+! and wins – Vyzmanavin.

28 ♜h4

In view of the imminent mate, Black resigned.

Example 35
I.Cheparinov-J.Hellsten
 Belgrade 2002



Here is a less dramatic case of creating protected squares. White aims to exploit his space advantage by moves like Qa4 , Bd2 and Bcd1 , with pressure on the b6 and d6 pawns. How can Black generate some activity?

26...e5!

A typical idea in such positions. Black deliberately weakens the d5-square, in order to transform d4 into a protected square for his knight.

27 fxe5

After 27 Qd5 Qd4 Black could soon swap the strong enemy knight by $\dots \text{Qxd5}$, whereas White is unable to do the same thing. Please note that with dark-squared bishops on the board, this would not be the case, thus the $\dots \text{e6-e5}$ idea becomes less appealing. By the text move Cheparinov avoids the $\dots \text{Qc6-d4}$ idea but lets the black knight settle on another protected square.

27...Qxe5

Not $27 \dots \text{dxe5}$? 28 Bxd7 Wxd7 29 Qd5 Wd8 30 c5 with a clear initiative on the queenside. The bishop could soon exploit

the a2-g8 diagonal.

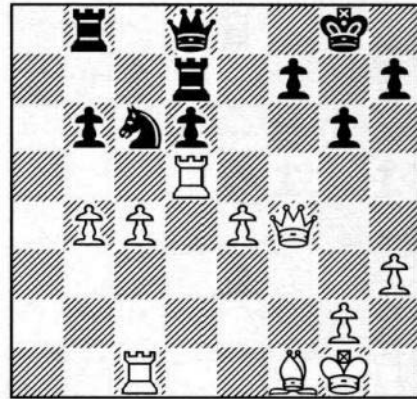
28 Qd5 a5

By swapping the a-pawns, Black avoids ending up with a weak pawn on a6 after White's c4-c5.

29 Wf4

The threat of 30 Qf6+ forces the exchange on d5.

29...Qxd5 30 Bxd5 axb4 31 axb4 Qc6!



Black prevents 32 c5 with an indirect attack on e5, and also eyes the b4-pawn.

32 Bcd1

After 32 b5? Qe5 White loses his dynamic potential on the queenside, while 32 Wd2! is well met by $32 \dots \text{Wc7}$ 33 c5 bxc5 34 bxc5 Bbd8 , when 35 Bd1 fails to $35 \dots \text{Qe7!}$ 36 cxd6 Wa7+ . In the game Cheparinov instead trades the b4-pawn for the one on d6. **32...Qxb4 33 Bxd6 Wc7 34 Wf6 Bxd6 35 Bxd6**

On 35 Wxd6 I had planned $35 \dots \text{Wc5+!}$ when both 36 Qh1 Be8 and 36 Wxc5 bxc5 , followed by $37 \dots \text{Bc8}$ and maybe $\dots \text{Qc6-d4}$, seem to favour Black.

35...Qa6!

Heading for the protected square at c5.

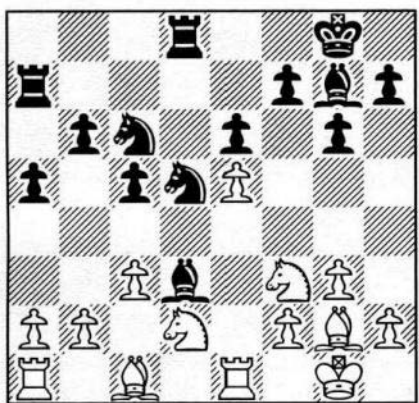
36 Bc6 Wd7 37 Bxb6!

White simplifies in order to avoid long-term inferiority due to his weak pawns.

37...Wa7 38 c5 Qxc5 39 Bxb8+ Wxb8 40

♖c4 ♜e8 41 e5! ♞d7 42 ♜c6 ♜xe5 43
 ♜xf7+! ♜xf7 44 ♜xd7+ ♜e7
 Draw agreed.

Example 36
R.J.Fischer-J.Durao
 Havana Olympiad 1966



In this typical position from the King's Indian Attack, Fischer hurries to create a protected square for his knights.

17 a4!

Fixing the pawn on b6 so that a knight can settle on c4 later on, without worrying about ...b6-b5. Moreover, b5 and b6 might turn into long-term weaknesses.

17...♜ad7?

This stereotypical move does nothing to stop White's plan. Much better was 17...g5! trying to trade the g-pawn for the central e-pawn, for example 18 h3 h5 19 ♞xg5 ♞xe5 with rather unclear play.

18 ♜f1!

This bishop exchange makes it easier for White to exploit the weak c4- and b5-squares.

18...♜xf1 19 ♜xf1 ♞de7 20 ♞c4

Thanks to the clever 17 a4, the black pieces are now unable to get rid of the knight from c4.

20...♞c8 21 ♜g5 ♞6e7?

A strategical error that leads to a "good knight vs. bad bishop" scenario. Correct was 21...♜f8 preparing ...h7-h6, and only then ...♞ce7. Durao perhaps feared 22 ♜ed1, but after 22...♜d5! he is still defending.

22 ♞fd2 h6 23 ♜xe7! ♜xe7 24 ♜a3!

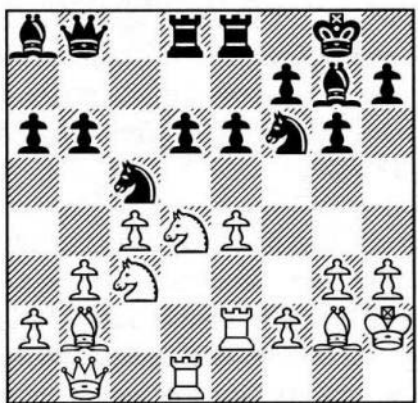
Heading for b3 in order to attack b6.

24...♜c7 25 ♜b3 ♜c6 26 ♞e4 ♜f8 27 ♜e2

Preparing g2-g4 and f2-f4 in order to open a second front. Fischer soon exploited his huge advantage.

Now let's have a look at a few examples regarding "semi-protected" squares, where the knight feels quite safe despite a potential attack from an enemy pawn.

Example 37
G.Garcia Gonzales-A.Karpov
 Linares 1981



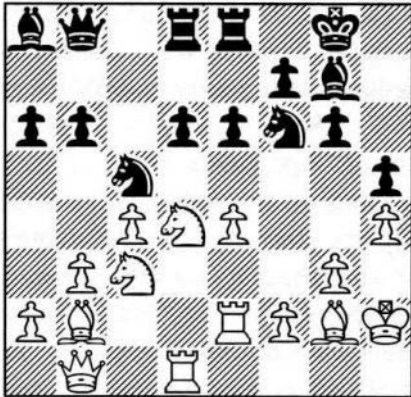
In a typical Hedgehog position White just played 23 ♜h2?!, accidentally exposing his king along the h2-b8 diagonal. Karpov reacts very opportunely.

23...h5!

With the intention of 24...h4, softening up the dark squares around White's king.

24h4

The threat was 24...h4 25 g4 d5+, and if White prevents this by 24 f4 h4 25 g4, then after 25...e5! 26 fxe5 ♖xe5 Black is better anyway thanks to his dark square dominance. By 24 h4 White avoids such a scenario, but the lost control over g4 will soon make itself felt.



24...♖c8 25 ♗g1 ♕g4! 26 f3 ♖e5

From now on, Karpov is ready to answer f3-f4 with ...♕g4! at any moment, exploiting the fact that White can't play h2-h3 anymore. As a consequence, the knight is practically untouchable on e5, and Black obtains a great game.

27 ♗dd2 ♜a7 28 ♗h1 ♗ed8 29 f4?

White loses his patience. As we already noticed, this move would be fine with the h-pawn still on h2, but in the present case it just helps Black to establish a strong knight on g4. Preferable was a non-committal move like 29 ♜d1.

29...♕g4 30 ♖d1?!

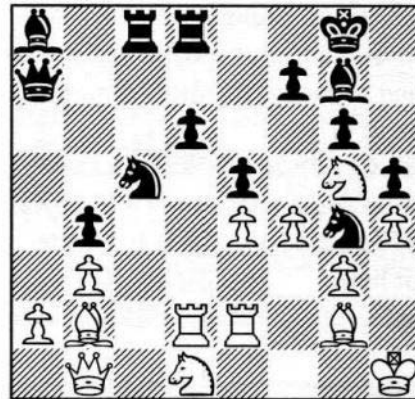
An awkward square for the knight. White should have preferred something like 30 ♖f3, although after 30...♜b8!, preparing ...b6-b5, Black is much better anyway – Kharitonov.

30...e5!

Black deflects the other knight from d4

to enable the ...b6-b5 thrust.

31 ♖f3 b5 32 cxb5 axb5 33 ♗g5 b4



With the simple idea of ...♗b7-a6. White had a very difficult game and soon lost.

Here is related case on the other flank: **1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 dxe4 4 ♖xe4 ♗f5 5 ♖c5** (a rather rare, but not harmless line against the Classical Caro-Kann) **5...b6 6 ♖b3 ♖f6 7 ♖f3 e6 8 g3** (after the provocation of ...b7-b6, the kingside fianchetto makes sense) **8...a5!?** (intending ...a4-a3 to soften up White's queenside) **9 a4 ♗e7 10 ♗g2 ♗d5 11 0-0 0-0**. Now on c2-c4 at any moment, there follows ...♖d5-b4 and the knight becomes excellent. The game Zo.Jovanovic-F.Doettling, European Junior Championship 1999, continued **12 c3 ♖d7 13 ♜e2 ♗a7 14 ♖bd2 ♗c7** and Black had no problems.

Example 38
E.Rozentalis-I.Georgiadis
 Athens 2006
Sicilian Defence (B23)

1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 a6

An interesting sideline against the Closed Sicilian.

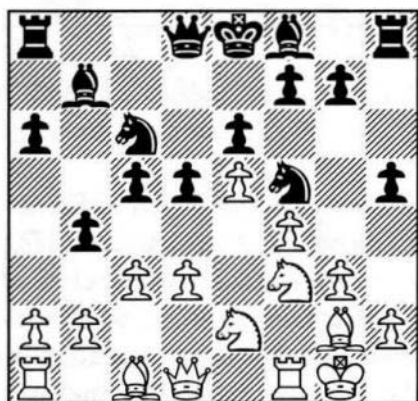
3 g3 b5 4 ♖g2 ♖b7 5 d3 e6 6 f4 b4!? 7 ♗ce2 d5 8 e5

Black's previous two pawn moves had the merit of provoking e4-e5. Since his knight on g8 hasn't moved yet, it may now proceed directly to the "semi-protected" square at f5.

8...♗e7 9 c3 ♗bc6 10 ♗f3 ♗f5 11 0-0

White could chase the knight away with 11 g4, but then 11...♗h4! is a little annoying for him.

11...h5!



A useful move that reinforces the f5-square for the knight. Now if h2-h3 and g3-g4 at any moment, then after swapping on g4 followed by ...♗h4 or even ...♗h6, Black obtains counterplay against White's weakened kingside. Thus quite often White prefers to let the knight stay on f5, at least for a while.

12 d4?!

More cautious was 12 h3 preventing the course of the game. There can follow 12...♖e7 13 ♜e1 a5 14 ♜f2 ♖a6 15 ♞d1 ♜b6 with a tense struggle. If now 16 g4, then 16...hxg4 17 hxg4 ♗h4! with counterplay.

12...h4!

At first glance this is rather illogical since the knight is now expelled from f5.

However, Georgiadis has seen a little further into the position.

13 g4 h3! 14 ♖h1 ♗h6!

Thanks to the clever 13...h3, White now can't protect the g4-pawn by 15 h3.

15 g5?!

After this Black regains control over f5 with an excellent game. White should have tried the active 15 f5!? instead, although after 15...exf5 16 gxf5 ♗xf5 17 ♗g5 ♜d7 Black defends quite well, whereas White has a long-term problem with his unsafe king.

15...♗f5 16 ♗g3 ♗ce7!

Keeping up the fight for the f5-square. In contrast, after 16...♗xg3? 17 hxg3 White would again have g3-g4 at his disposal.

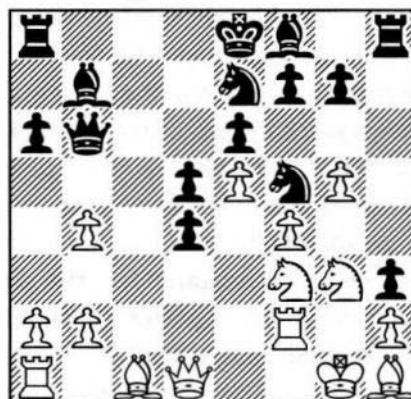
17 cxb4 cxd4!

There was nothing wrong with 17...cxb4, but the text is more ambitious. In retrospect, White should probably have released the tension by 17 dxc5.

18 ♞f2

Not 18 ♗xd4? ♜b6 19 ♗ge2 ♗c6 and Black wins a piece. In these positions we may observe that the knight on f5 is useful in preventing ♖c1-e3.

18...♜b6



Black has a huge advantage, in great deal thanks to his fantastic knight on f5.

From now on the position plays itself.

19 a3 ♖c8 20 ♗e2 ♗c6 21 ♜d3 a5 22 b5 ♙c5! 23 b3

Or 23 bxc6 ♙a6 followed by 24...d3 with strong pressure.

23...♗a7 24 a4 ♗c6!

Again exploiting the 25 bxc6 ♙a6 idea, Georgiadis gets his knight to the excellent b4-square.

25 ♙d2 ♗b4 26 ♙xb4 ♙xb4 27 ♖d1 ♖e7 28 ♖ff1

Black also has strong pressure after 28 ♗exd4 ♗xd4 29 ♗xd4 ♖c3 30 ♜e2 ♖h4!

28...♖c3! 29 ♗xc3 dxc3+ 30 ♖f2 ♙c5 31 ♖df1 ♖c8

White is completely tied up and the rest is pure desperation.

32 ♗e1 ♗e3 33 f5 ♗xf1 34 f6+ ♖d7

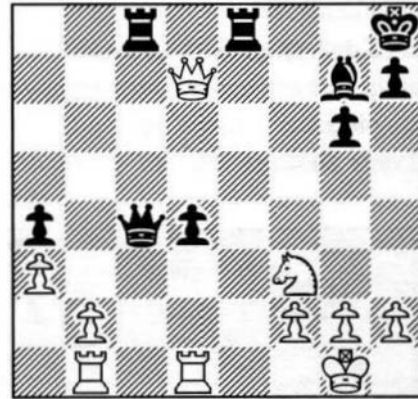
White resigns.

Going back to the first diagram, the combination of ...♗e7(h6)-f5 and ...h7-h5 are seen in a few other openings as well, such as the French and Caro-Kann. It also appears on the other flank, in terms of ...♗d7(a6)-c5 and ...a7-a5, in openings like the King's Indian and Bogó-Indian, among others.

Finally, let's see the knight performing one of its favourite tasks: blocking enemy pawns. The blockade concept will be investigated more thoroughly later on in the book, so here I will restrict myself to two simple examples.

Example 39
V.Mikhalevski-J.Ehlvest
Lake George 2005

In exchange for the pawn Black enjoys active pieces and a strong passed pawn on d4.



33 ♗e1!

Simple but strong. The knight is redirected to d3 where it will block the passed pawn. In contrast, 33 ♗xd4?? ♖ed8 loses on the spot, while 33 ♗g5?! h6! 34 ♗f7+ ♖h7 35 ♗d6 ♜d5 is also unconvincing for White.

33...♖cd8

On 33...♖e2? there follows 34 ♖dc1!, winning thanks to a back rank mate, but not 34 ♖bc1?? ♖xe1+! 35 ♖xe1 ♜xc1 and it is Black who wins.

34 ♜g4 ♖e2



35 ♖bc1

The immediate 35 ♗d3! was possible as well.

35...♜a6?

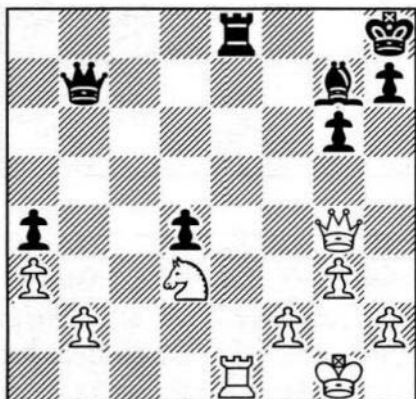
Preferable was 35...♖de8! 36 g3 ♜b3 37

♖d3 ♜g8 with just a slight white advantage – Mikhailovski.

36 ♖d3 ♜de8 37 ♗g3 ♜b7 38 ♜e1!

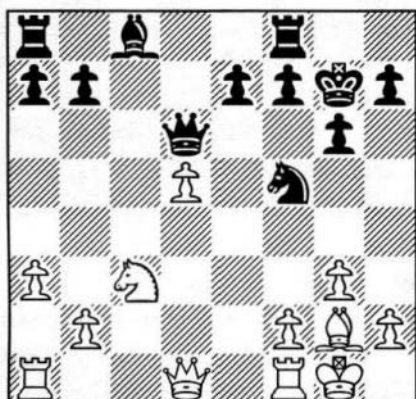
Being a pawn up White is happy to exchange pieces.

38...♜xe1+ 39 ♜xe1



Thanks to the extra pawn and the passive bishop on g7, White is clearly better. Please note here that 39...♜xe1+ 40 ♖xe1 ♜xb2? fails to 41 ♜c8+, a line Mikhailovski surely observed when playing 38 ♜e1.

Example 40
M.Stolz-J.Hellsten
German League 2000



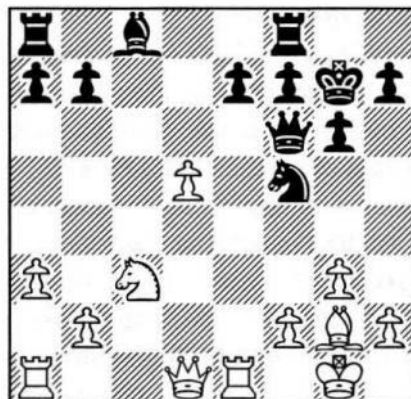
Black has a slightly cramped position and his development is yet to be completed. My first intention was the simple 17...♗d7 followed by ...♜ac8, but after 18 ♖e4 ♜b6 19 b4!, preparing ♖c5, White obtains some initiative. Then I saw a better solution...

17...♜f6!

The queen vacates the d6-square for the knight and takes control of the long diagonal. Such an arrangement also gives the bishop access to f5 and g4.

18 ♜e1

18 ♖e4? fails to 18...♜xb2, so before activating his knight White improves his major pieces.



18...♖d6 19 ♜e2 ♜e8 20 ♖b5

A logical move in order to swap the strong enemy knight, but 20 ♖e4 was a simpler way of achieving this; e.g. 20...♗xe4 21 ♗xe4 ♗d7 22 ♜ac1 ♜ac8, when Black has just a minimal advantage thanks to his active queen.

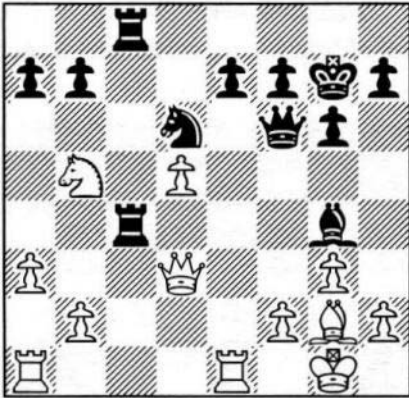
20...♗g4!

Tactics at service of strategy. Now after 21 ♜xg4?! ♖xb5 22 ♜b4 ♖d6 followed by ...♜ac8, the knight on its strong blocking post clearly outshines the bishop.

21 ♜d3 ♜ac8 22 ♖d4?

At this moment Stolz perhaps thought that he was provoking a repetition of

moves, but this is not so. 22 ♖xa7? ♕f5 followed by ...♞c2 leads to a strong black initiative, so preferable was 22 ♖xd6! exd6 23 ♜d2, eliminating the black knight. There can follow 23...♗f3 24 ♗xf3 ♜xf3 25 ♜d4+ ♜f6 with just a slight black edge.
22...♞c4 23 ♖b5 ♞ec8!



Simple and strong. Black seizes the c-file and enables a future invasion on c2, whereas the a7-pawn is irrelevant.

24 ♖xa7?

The last chance was 24 ♖c3, admitting that the whole knight journey was flawed. In the game Black obtains too much activity.

24...♗d4! 25 ♜e3 ♞c2 26 h3

This loses on the spot, but the alternatives weren't much better; e.g. 26 ♞ac1 ♞xb2 27 h3 ♗xh3! 28 ♗xh3 ♞e4 and Black is winning after 29 ♜c5 b6 or 29 ♜c3 ♜xc3 30 ♞xc3 ♞xe1+.

26...♖c4

Unable to keep the f2-pawn protected, White resigned.

For the related exercises, see page 304.

The rook

The natural working areas for our rooks are open and semi-open files. The possession of

an open file often leads to control over the whole board, which is why both sides will fight for them by all possible means. One typical method in this sense is doubling rooks on the open file, sometimes even accompanied by the queen. Let's see a few examples.

Example 41 J.Hellsten-L.Rojas Santiago 2006



White has a slight but enduring advantage thanks to the weakness on d5. He now proceeds with the seizure of the open file.

20 ♞ac1! ♜e7?!

Black develops the queen with tempo, but now his rook remains misplaced on e5, a fact that will play against him in the battle for the c-file. In this sense, 20...♞c8 was better, although White keeps the advantage with the simple 21 ♞c2!, preparing to double rooks by ♞fc1.

21 e3 h5

If 21...a5, trying to swap pawns and create activity on the queenside, then 22 b5! followed by ♞c6, with strong pressure. With 21...h5 Rojas instead secures a flight square for his king and enables ...h5-h4 at some moment.



22 ♖c6!

White aims to double the rooks on the c-file, and this is the best way to do it. From its entry square on c6 the rook interferes with the opponent's play and can be supported by b4-b5 if needed.

22... ♜d8 23 ♜fc1 g6

Black avoids any back rank mates, but also weakens the f6-square, something that I exploit with my next move.

24 ♜d4! ♜e4

If 24... ♜d7 covering c7, then 25 ♙h3! is unpleasant.

25 ♖c8

Another good option was 25 ♖c7 ♜f6 26 f3! ♜d6 27 f4 ♜f5 28 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 29 ♙xd5, transposing to a superior endgame.

25... ♜xc8?

This lets White install a decisive mating threat towards h8. 25... ♜e8 was better, although after 26 ♜1c7! ♜e6 27 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 28 ♜xa7 White ends up with an extra pawn. This is a rather typical scenario: the side that gains control of an open file, later manages to seize the seventh rank.

26 ♜xc8+ ♙h7 27 f4! ♜d7 28 ♜f8 ♜e7 29 ♜b8!

Some geometry in order to pick up the black rook without losing my own one.

29... ♜c7 30 ♜xe5 ♜c1+ 31 ♙f1 ♜xe3+ 32

♜g2

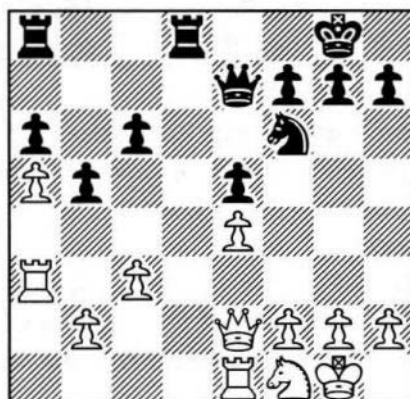
Unfortunately for Black the white king has an escape route via h3-h4.

32... ♜f2+ 33 ♜h3 ♜xf1+ 34 ♜h4 g5+ 35 fxg5 f6 36 g6+!

In view of the imminent mate, Black resigned.

In structures with just one open file, control of that file becomes very important.

**Example 42
J.Rohl Montes-A.Zapata
Ubeda 1997**



25... ♜d7!

Black hurries to double the rooks before White manages to play ♜a1-d1. Another, equally strong way to do it was 25... ♜a7 followed by 26... ♜ad7.

26 ♜aa1 ♜ad8 27 h3

In the event of 27 ♜ad1 Black should avoid the natural 27... ♜xd1?! 28 ♜xd1 ♜xd1 29 ♜xd1 ♜xe4 due to 30 ♜f3! recovering the pawn. Much stronger is the prophylactic 27...g6! just like in the game. Here both 28 ♜xd7 ♜xd7! and 28 ♜d2 ♜xd2 29 ♜xd2 c5, preparing ...c5-c4 and ...♜d3, leave Black on top.

27...g6!

Black creates a flight square for his king and gets ready to meet 28 ♖ad1? with 28...♙xd1 29 ♜xd1 ♜xd1 30 ♜xd1 ♞xe4 31 ♜f3 f5!, keeping the extra pawn.

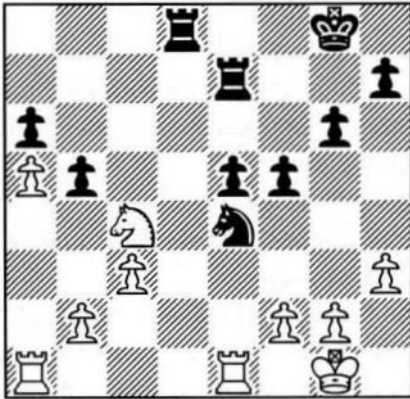
28 ♜e3 c5

Zapata slowly reinforces his position, aware that the opponent is short of active plans. Now 29 ♜b6 is prevented.

29 ♜g5 c4 30 ♞e3?

This leads to a difficult endgame. Preferable was 30 ♞h2, heading for f3.

30...♞xe4 31 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 32 ♞xc4 f5!



The powerful knight on e4 should stay on the board. Now it becomes evident that White can't stop ...♜d8-d2 seizing the second rank.

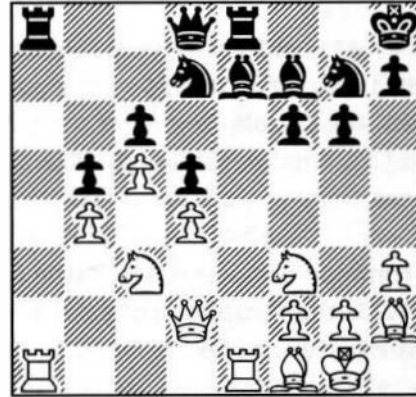
33 ♞xe5 ♜xe5 34 f3 ♜d2 35 fxe4 fxe4 36 ♜e3 ♜xb2

With a sound extra pawn and active pieces, Black went on to win the game.

Example 43
M.Yudovich-K.Klaman
 USSR Championship, Leningrad
 1947

(see following diagram)

White is better thanks to his space advantage and the weak pawn on c6. Moreover, his bishop on h2 is very strong.



22 ♖a2!

A clever way of fighting for the a-file. Now Black can't reply 22...♙xa2 23 ♜xa2 ♜a8? because of the bishop hanging on e7.

22...♜c8 23 ♜ea1 ♜b7 24 ♜b2!

Preparing 25 ♖a3 in order to triple the major pieces on the a-file. The immediate 24 ♖a3?! was less accurate due to 24...♙xa3 25 ♖xa3 ♖a8.

24...♞e6 25 ♖a3 ♞c7

On 25...♙xa3 there follows 26 ♜xa3! with the strong threat of 27 ♜a7. By playing 25...♞c7 Klaman enables ...♜e8-a8, e.g. 26 ♜a2?! ♙xa3 27 ♜xa3 ♖a8. However, on c7 the knight also gets exposed to the white bishop, something that Yudovich exploits with his next move.

26 ♖a5! ♖xa5

In view of the threat 27 ♜xc7 winning a piece, Black has to concede the a-file.

27 ♖xa5 ♞a6

Obviously 27...♖a8? failed to 28 ♜xc7. In conclusion, by tactical means White managed to seize the open file.

28 ♜a3 ♞ab8 29 ♖a7! ♜c8 30 ♞xb5!

A tempting way of converting the advantage, although the more methodical 30

Rc7 Wd8 31 Wa7 was also strong – Romanovsky.

30... cxb5 31 Rxb5

White's pressure is overwhelming and the rest is easy.

31... Qg7 32 Rxb8 Qxb8 33 Rxe8 Wxe8 34 b5 Rf8 35 We3 Wc8 36 Wf4

With the double threats of 37 Ra8 and 37 Qe5 . In this desperate position, Black resigned.

A common weapon in the battle for the open file is the occupation of entry squares. Here are two examples.

Example 44
V. Anand-M. Adams
FIDE World Championship,
New Delhi 2000



White has some advantage mainly thanks to the misplaced knight on a7. Before recovering the pawn on f4, Anand takes a grip on the queenside.

27 Rb6!

A power move that attacks Black's weak pawns and prepares the doubling of rooks on the open b-file. In contrast, the immediate 27 Wxf4?! was less effective due to

27... Wd8! and Black covers the b6-square with improved defensive chances.

27... Rbd8

After 27... Rxb6? 28 axb6 Qc8 29 b7 the passed pawn gets too strong.

28 Wxf4 We7 29 Rab1!

The greedy 29 Rxa6 permits 29... f5 with some counterplay, so Anand prefers to carry on with his plan. Now there is the threat of 30 Rb7 winning a piece.

29... Qc8 30 Rb7

Just like in the previous example, the control of the open file leads to the seizure of the seventh rank.

30... We6 31 Wg5 h6

Or 31... Wxh3 32 Qf4 Wh6 33 Wxh6 gxh6 34 Rc6 followed by Rd5 with an enormous advantage. Black can hardly move, and the a6-pawn is easy prey.

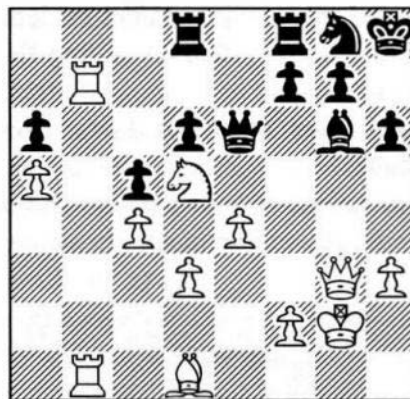
32 Wg3 Wf6 33 Qf4

Heading for the protected square on d5.

33... Qe7 34 Qg2!

The tempting 34 Rxe7?! Wxe7 35 Wxg6 permits 35... Rb8! – Anand. By 34 Qg2 White avoids any future queen check on a1.

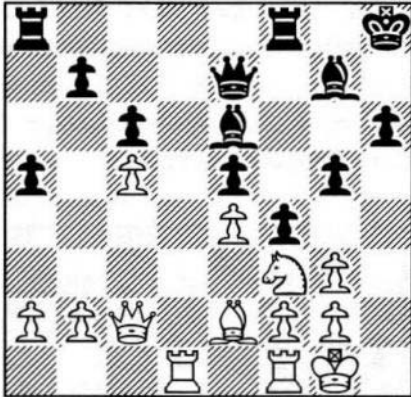
34... Qg8 35 Qd5 We6 36 Rd1!



Installing the threat of 37 Rg4 . Now both 36... f5? and 36... h5? fail to 37 Qf4 , while 36... Qf6 permits 37 Re7 Wc8 38 Qxf6 gxf6 39 Wf4 Qg7 40 Rb6 . Black resigned.

Example 45
V.Smyslov-B.Ivkov
 Rovinj/Zagreb 1970

In this position from the King's Indian, Black is just one move away from 21...♖ad8, reaching a balanced game. Thus Smyslov hurries to take command of the d-file, using an entry square.



21 ♖d6! ♖ad8

If 21...g4?! at any moment, then 22 ♘h4 glances at f5 and g6. White also keeps the pressure after 21...♜f7 22 b3, with ideas like ♙c4 and ♜c3.

22 ♜fd1 ♖xd6

Now White obtains a strong passed pawn; however, the pressure along the d-file was quite annoying for Black.

23 cxd6 ♜f6 24 ♜c5!

The queen gets ready to support the advance of the passed pawn, and also keeps an eye on the f2-pawn.

24...a4 25 ♜b6 ♜f7

Parrying the threat of d6-d7.

26 gxf4!

A key capture that opens new horizons for the knight. Now if 26...gxf4 then 27 ♘h4! followed by ♘f5, while in the game the knight finds another route to get there.

26...exf4 27 ♘d4 ♙d7 28 ♘f5! ♙e5

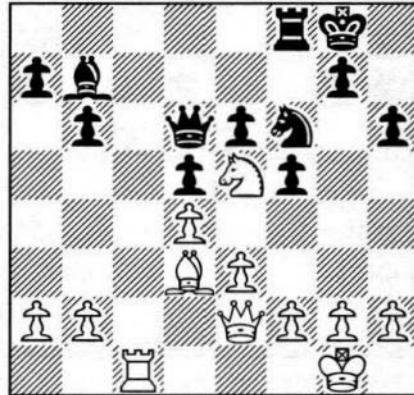
After 28...♙xf5 29 exf5 the pawn is un-touchable due to 30 d7.

29 ♘xh6 ♜h7 30 ♘g4 ♙xg4 31 ♙xg4 f3 32 gxf3

At this point Black apparently resigned, although by 32...♜h2+ 33 ♙f1 ♙xd6 he could have kept on fighting for a while. In contrast, 32 g3! preparing 33 d7 would have left him completely helpless, now that 32...♙xg3? fails to 33 ♜d4+.

Another idea in the fight for an open file is to exchange, deflect or obstruct the enemy pieces that are defending it. Let's see a few examples.

Example 46
L.Polugaevsky-C.Partos
 Biel Interzonal 1985



Black is just one move away from playing ...♞f8-c8! with resistance on the c-file.

20 ♙a6!

A strong decision. Polugaevsky has nothing against swapping the opponent's "bad" bishop, if this can help him in the fight for the open file. In contrast, the natural 20 ♜c2 proves less effective after 20...♘d7!

(but not 20...♖c8? 21 ♜xc8+! followed by checks on h8 and f7), e.g. 21 ♘g6 ♖c8 or 21 ♘xd7 ♜xd7 22 ♜c7 ♜xc7 23 ♖xc7 ♖f7 and Black defends.

20...♜b8

If 20...♙a8, then 21 ♜c2! followed by ♜c7, just like in the game.

21 ♙xb7 ♜xb7 22 ♜c2!

White prevents 22...♖c8, thus securing the open file. He is now ready for ♜c2-c7, invading the enemy camp.

22...♖e8

Or 22...♘d7 23 ♘g6! followed by 24 ♜c7 with a clear advantage.

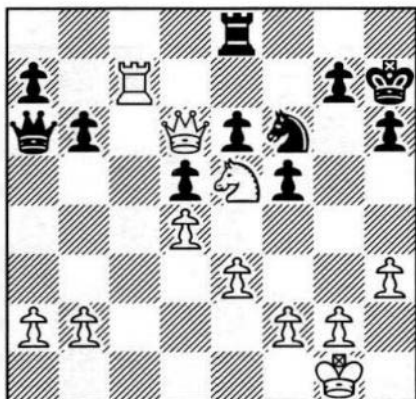
23 ♜c7 ♖e7 24 ♜d6! ♖h7

Parrying the threat of 25 ♘g6.

25 h3 ♖e8?!

25...♘e8 26 ♜d8 ♘f6 offered more resistance; e.g. 27 ♖c8 ♖e8 28 ♖c7 ♜xd8 29 ♖xb7 ♖c8 with modest counterplay.

26 ♖c7 ♜a6



27 ♘d7!

White gives up his strong knight in order to enhance the attack on the black king.

27...♘xd7

On 27...♘e4 Polugaevsky had planned 28 ♜e5! with the decisive threat of 29 ♘f8+. 28 ♜xd7 ♖g8 29 ♜xe6 ♜xa2 30 ♜xf5+ ♖h8

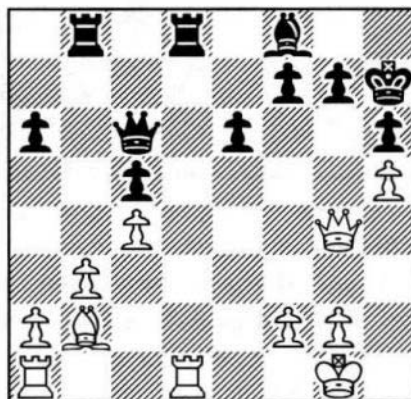
A pawn up with active pieces, White is winning. He now initiates a final attack.

31 g4! ♜xb2 32 g5 ♜b4 33 ♜g6 ♜f8 34 ♖f7!

Before capturing on h6 White rules out 34...♜f6. With mate imminent, Black resigned.

Example 47
L.Pachman-O.Jakobsen
Barcelona 1975

White is better thanks to his active pieces, but the tension along the open d-file makes it difficult for him to progress on the kingside. For example, if 26 ♖e1 intending ♖e3-g3, then 26...♖d3! with counterplay. Pachman finds a more subtle plan.



26 ♙c3!

Intending 27 ♙a5 in order to weaken Black's defence of the d-file.

26...♖bc8

Black could stop the bishop move to a5 by 26...♜c7, but then after 27 ♖e1 the rook transfer to g3 is inevitable, seeing as 27...♖d3? fails to 28 ♜e4+.

27 ♙a5 ♖xd1+ 28 ♖xd1 ♙e7

Preparing ...♙f6-d4 to obstruct the white rook.

29 ♜f3!

An ingenious fork in the fight for the open file. Pachman has seen that after

29... ♖xf3 30 gxf3, followed by ♜d7, his active rook is a much more relevant factor than his pawn structure. On the other hand, if Black defends the f7-pawn by 29... ♖e8, then after 30 ♖b7! the double threat of 31 ♜d7 and 31 ♖xa6 is highly unpleasant.

29... ♖g8

Jakobsen opts for a third solution: bring the king into the game.

30 ♖xc6 ♜xc6 31 ♜d7 ♖f8 32 ♜b7 ♖e8 33 ♜c3!

Provoking a weakness on the kingside.

33...f6

After 33... ♜f6 34 ♜xf6 gxf6 35 ♜b8+ followed by 36 ♜h8, White obtains a dangerous passed pawn.

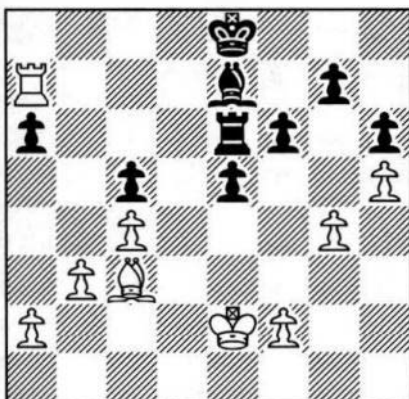
34 ♜a7!

Curiously, the rook on its own is restricting the movements of the whole black army.

34... ♜d6 35 ♖f1 e5?

Now the light squares are seriously weakened. Preferable was 35... ♜c6 with a waiting game, or 35... ♜d3 36 ♖e2 ♜d6 (the bishop was poisoned) in the same spirit.

36 ♖e2 ♜e6 37 g4!



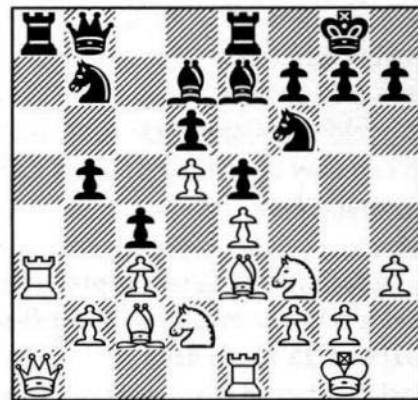
Fixing the enemy pawns on dark squares, just before Black manages to play 37...f5. As a result White's king may soon

enter the enemy camp.

37... ♜b6 38 ♖d3 ♖f7 39 ♖e4 ♖e6 40 f3 ♜c6 41 ♜b7 ♜f8 42 ♜a5 ♜e7 43 ♜b6!

Black resigned. There could have followed 43... ♜xb6 (here or later, 43... ♖d6 allows 44 ♖f5) 44 ♜xb6 ♜d6 45 a3! ♜f8 46 ♜a5 ♜d6 47 b4 and the passed pawn soon decides.

Example 48
Y. Grünfeld-Y. Kraidman
Gausdal 1982



In this typical position from the Spanish, White applies a well-known idea from the encounter A.Karpov-W.Unzicker, Nice Olympiad 1974.

22 ♜a7!

Grünfeld temporarily inserts his bishop on the a-file, in order to gain time for the tripling of the major pieces. A more relaxed line such as 22 ♖a2 ♜c8 23 ♜a1 (again, 23 ♜a7! is strong) permits 23... ♜xa3 24 ♖xa3 ♜c5 25 ♖a7 ♖xa7 26 ♜xa7 ♜d8! followed by ... ♜b6 and Black defends.

22... ♖c7 23 ♖a2 ♜ec8

Due to the restrictive effect of the bishop on a7, unlike his opponent Black can't bring more major pieces to the a-file.

With 23...♖ec8 he aims instead at improving his king's knight by ...♗e8 and ...♞d7-c5.

24 ♖a1 ♗e8 25 b4!

Fighting against the enemy plan.

25...cxb3 26 ♗xb3 ♞h5

On the search for counterplay. The tension along the a-file makes the desired 26...♞c5?? lose a piece to 27 ♗xc5.

27 ♗d3! ♗d7 28 c4!

Initiating action against Black's cramped queenside. As for the bishop on a7, White is still awaiting the right moment for its withdrawal; besides it is being useful in taking the b8-square from the black rooks.

28...bxc4

Here or later 28...♞f4 29 ♗f1 doesn't make a big difference.

29 ♞xc4 ♗d8 30 ♗b4

Grünfeld stops any tricks with 30...♞a5, which can now be met by 31 ♗e3! ♖ab8 32 ♞b6 winning material.

30...g6

30...♞f4!? 31 ♗f1 f5 seems preferable, as the text lets White invade via the b-file.

31 ♖b1! ♞c5 32 ♗xc5! dxc5

Black is forced to weaken his pawn structure, since the intermediate 32...♖xa3? fails to 33 ♞fxe5! dxe5 34 ♗xa3, winning a pawn.

33 ♗b7!



Seizing the seventh rank.

33...♖xa3 34 ♞xa3 f6

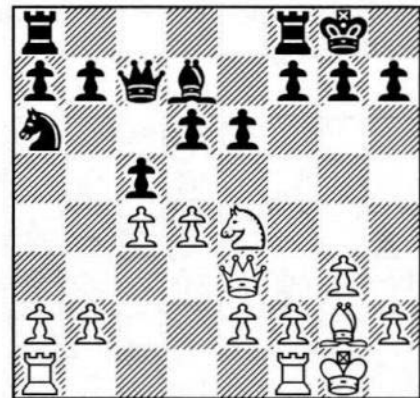
The e5-pawn needed protection, but now the a2-g8 diagonal falls into White's hands.

35 ♗c4! ♗f8 36 d6! ♞f4 37 ♗xd7 ♗xd7 38 ♖b7

Thanks to his strong passed pawn and active rook, White is clearly better and went on to win the game.

Now let's move over to positions where there are not yet any open files on the board. The following example is about control of *potentially* open files, a subject that was observed already by Aaron Nimzowitsch in his legendary work *My System*.

Example 49
A.Lugovoi-V.Orlov
St. Petersburg 1996

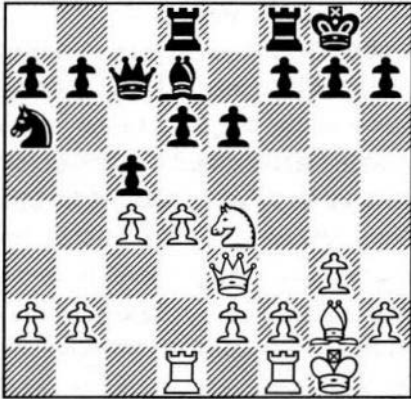


White has a slight but stable advantage thanks to the weakness on d6. He now starts working on the d-file, aware that he can clear it by d4xc5 whenever desired.

14 ♖ad1 ♖ad8

From Black's perspective, ...c5xd4? at any

moment would expose the d6-pawn after Bxd4 . Therefore it is White who decides when to clear the d-file.



15 Bd2!

In the same spirit of the previous move. Obviously 15 d5?! e5 would go against the logic of the position.

15...b6

Following 15...c6 16 Bfd1 Black would probably have to defend the c5-pawn by 16...b6 anyway, thus transposing to the game. 16...xe4?! 17 Wxe4 b6, on the other hand, loses a pawn after 18 Wb7! Wxb7 19 Qxb7 Qc7 20 dxc5.

16 Bfd1 Qc6 17 dxc5

Having activated his rooks White proceeds with the clearance of the d-file. Black can't avoid this, since both 17...bxc5? and 17...Qxc5? drop the d6-pawn, while 17...Qxe4? fails to the intermediate 18 exd6 winning a pawn.

17...dxc5 18 Qd6!

Thanks to the prior doubling of rooks Lugovoi is able to install the knight on d6, where it dominates the whole board.

18...Qxg2

If 18...Bd7, preparing 19...Bfd8, then 19 Qxc6 Wxc6 20 Qf5! Bxd2 21 Qe7+ Qh8 22 Wxd2 Wc7 23 Wd7, followed by Qc6, with a clear endgame advantage.

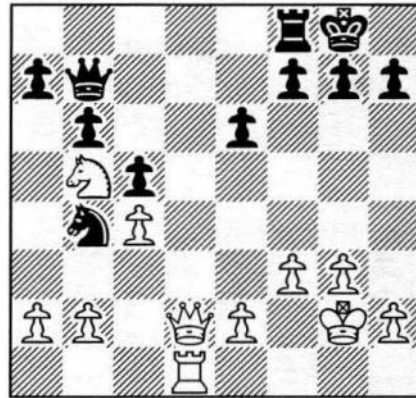
19 Qxg2 Qb4 20 Qb5

This fork helps White seize the open file.

20...Wb7+ 21 f3

21 Wf3!? looks even stronger; e.g. 21...Wxf3+ 22 Qxf3 Bxd2 23 Bxd2 Qxa2 24 Qxa7 followed by 25 Bd7.

21...Bxd2 22 Wxd2!



Just like in several of the previous examples, the stronger side recaptures with the queen, so as to be able to invade on the seventh rank later on.

22...a6?!

Now the b6-pawn becomes a serious weakness. Black should have continued 22...Qxa2 23 Ba1 a6! 24 Qd6 Wb8! 25 Bxa2 Bd8 26 Bxa6 g6!, restoring the material balance on the next move with just a slight disadvantage. Obviously such lines are easier to work out *after* than *during* the game.

23 Qc3 Qc6 24 Wd7!

A familiar pattern: after securing the open file, the stronger side seizes the seventh rank.

24...Wxd7 25 Bxd7 Bb8

Or 25...Bd8 26 Bxd8+ Qxd8 27 Qa4 and White wins a pawn. In the game we will soon reach the same situation.

26 Bd6! Qb4 27 a3 Qc2 28 Qf2 Qf8 29 Qa4!

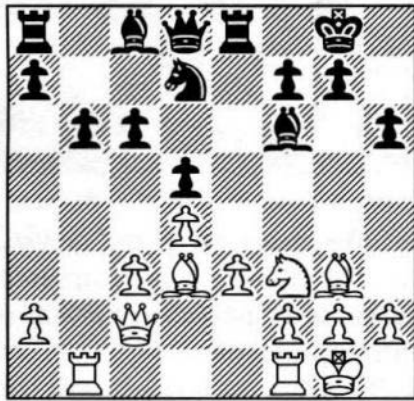
Having neutralized the enemy knight

threats, White is ready to pick up the pawn.
29...b5 30 cxb5 axb5 31 ♖xc5

Lugovoi later converted his extra pawn into a win.

The next three examples feature the clearance of a file as a strategical method.

Example 50
C.Garcia Palermo-J.Bibiloni
 Buenos Aires 1998



In an Orthodox Queen's Gambit Black swapped knights with ...♗e4xc3 somewhat too early, and White is now able to clear the c-file for his major pieces.

15 c4! ♗b7

White is also noticeably better after 15...dxc4 16 ♗xc4 ♗b7 17 e4, thanks to his strong pawn centre that may soon move forward.

16 cxd5 cxd5 17 ♖fc1!

The last piece enters the game, joining the battle for the c-file.

17...♞f8

In the event of 17...♞c8 White could consider 18 ♗c7! ♗e7 19 ♗a4 with pressure on Black's queenside. In the game, Black instead aims at covering the c7-square with

the knight from e6.

18 ♗b5 ♞e7 19 ♗c7!

Diverting the queen from the d-file, so that ...♗e6 at any moment can be met by ♗d6, trapping the rook.

19...♗c8 20 ♞b3!

White utilizes his "blocking bishop" to triple the major pieces, an idea we already came across in Grünfeld-Kraidman (p. 65).

20...♗e6 21 ♞c3 ♞c8 22 ♗d3 g6 23 h3

Also interesting was 23 ♗e5!? preparing f4-f5, when Black might soon have to hand over the bishop pair by ...♗xe5. In the game Garcia Palermo prefers to improve his position slowly, conscious that he is much better in the long run, thanks to his control of the only open file.

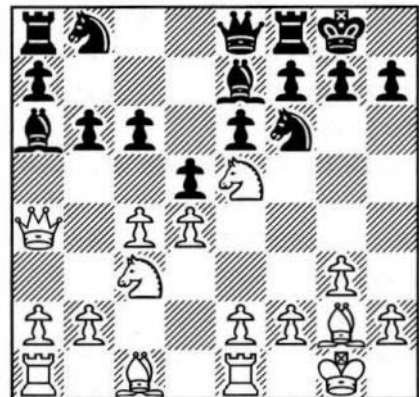
23...♗g7 24 ♗a4 ♞a8 25 ♗g3

Finally the bishop is withdrawn to enable 26 ♞c7.

25...a6 26 ♞c7! b5 27 ♗b4 ♞ae8 28 a4

Thanks to his active pieces, White keeps a clear plus.

Example 51
G.Stahlberg-M.Taimanov
 Candidates Tournament, Zürich
 1953



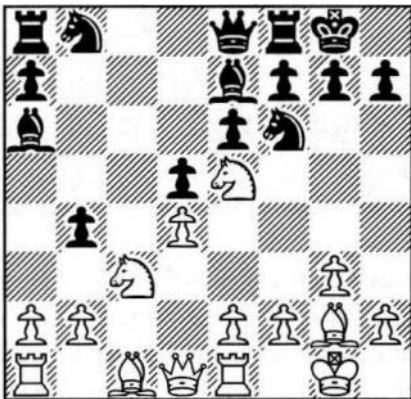
At first sight White seems to have the more active position, with the desired e2-e4 advance just about to take place.

10...b5!

A strong move with various virtues: it gains space, prepares to dislocate the enemy knight by ...b5-b4, and produces a structure with an open c-file where the bishop on g2 tends to lose strength.

11 cxb5 cxb5 12 ♖d1 b4

Unblocking the bishop and preventing the advance e2-e4.



13 ♖b1?!

This passive retreat just complicates White's development. The natural 13 ♗a4! led to an approximate equality after 13...♗c6 14 ♖xc6 ♗xc6 15 ♔g5 followed by ♗c1.

13...♖c6 14 ♖xc6 ♗xc6 15 ♖d2 ♗b6!

This is a clever attack on the d4-pawn, just when White was about to play the advance 16 e4.

16e3?

A serious positional error that buries the bishop on c1 and delays the battle for the open file. By 16 ♖b3 ♗ac8 17 ♔g5 followed by ♗c1, and hopefully ♖c5 one day, White could still fight for equality.

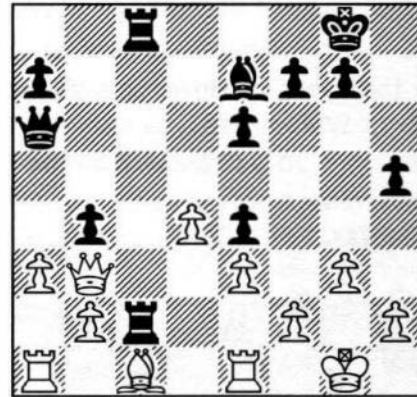
16...♗ac8 17 ♔f1 ♗c6!

Simple and strong. We can already imagine the invasion at c2.

18 ♔xa6 ♗xa6 19 ♖f3 ♗fc8 20 ♗b3 ♖e4 21 ♖d2 ♗c2!

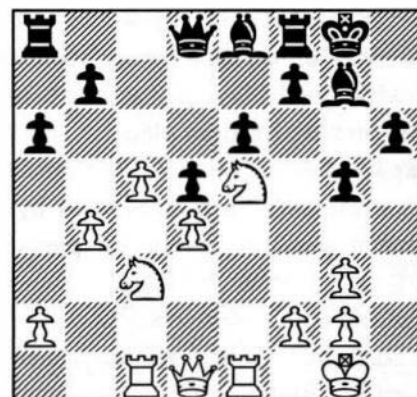
Black could have won material by 21...♗xc1 22 ♗axc1 ♖xd2, but Taimanov prefers to seize the second rank with his rook, where it keeps the enemy pieces on a1 and c1 out of play.

22 ♖xe4 dxe4 23 a3 h5!



Opening a second front with ideas like ...h4-h3 and ...♗b5-f5-f3 attacking the white king. Black later won.

Example 52
T.V.Petrosian-D.Bronstein
USSR Spartakiad, Moscow 1967



White appears to be better thanks to his

space advantage and the active knight on e5. However, a closer look reveals that Black has a dangerous plan at his disposal: ...f7-f6 and ...e6-e5 to seize the centre and open up the position for the bishop pair. Thus White needs to proceed energetically.

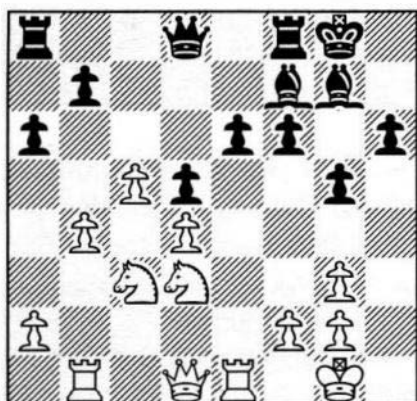
19 ♖b1!

Petrosian prepares b4-b5 in order to clear the b-file, thus creating a target for his pieces on b7.

19...f6

In the event of slower moves such as 19...♞c7, White could adjust his plans slightly with 20 a4 followed by b4-b5, in order to create a passed pawn.

20 ♘d3 ♗f7



21 b5!

In contrast to the previous note, after 21 a4?! ♗e8 22 b5 e5! Black now achieves his plan, with good play. So Petrosian hurries to carry on with his own plan.

21...♞c7

After 21...a5?! 22 b6, followed by ♘b5, the knight gets interesting prospects at d6 and c7.

22 bxa6 bxa6

If 22...♗xa6?!, then 23 ♘b5, heading for the excellent d6-square.

23 ♖b6!

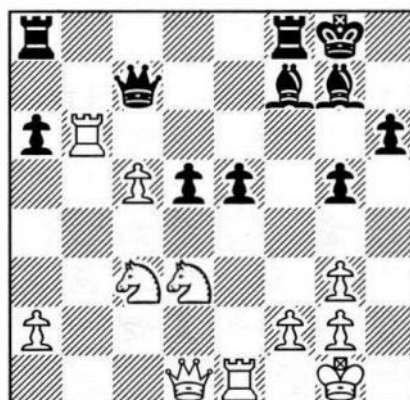
A nice and logical move. From b6 the

rook not only helps White in the battle for the b-file, it will also control the whole sixth rank in case Black goes ...e6-e5.

23...e5

Or 23...♗fb8 24 ♞b3 followed by 25 ♖b1 and White takes command of the open file.

24 dxe5 fxe5



Thus Black fulfilled his plan. However, White's superior piece activity makes him well prepared for a tactical battle, and this is where Petrosian takes the game with his next move.

25 ♘xe5! ♞xc5

After 25...♗xe5 26 ♘d5 White recovers the material straight away.

26 ♖c6 ♞a7

Now after 27 ♘xf7?! ♗xf7 not only the d5-pawn will be hanging, but also the one on f2. Thus Petrosian prefers a direct attack on Black's king, exploiting the range of the rook on b6.

27 ♘g4! ♖h8 28 ♘h6 ♗e8

With double threats against c6 and f2; however...

29 ♖xe8! ♞xf2+

Or 29...♗fxe8 30 ♞h5 with similar play as in the game.

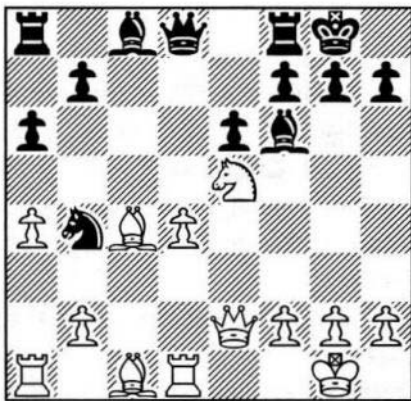
30 ♖h2 ♗xe8 31 ♞h5! ♞e1 32 ♘f5+ ♖g8

33 ♘g7 ♗f1 34 ♞xe8+

Black resigns.

In the second half of the previous example, we witnessed the strength of a rook controlling a whole rank. Let's see a few more examples related to this subject.

Example 53
E.Agrest-S.Brynell
 European Team Championship,
 Gothenburg 2005



In a typical isolated queen's pawn structure White launches a strong rook manoeuvre.

15 ♖a3!

Heading for g3 or h3 to enhance an attack on the black king.

15... ♛e7

This seems a little slow, but it is not easy to find a satisfactory defence. For example, after 15...b6 16 ♖h3 ♗b7 17 d5! (not 17 ♛h5?! ♗e4! and Black defends) 17... ♗xd5 18 ♛h5 h6 19 ♗xh6! White obtains a decisive attack – Brynell; and 15... ♗d7, preparing ... ♗c6, can be met in the very same way, starting with 16 ♖h3.

16 ♖g4

White aims to swap the defender on f6, a logical idea after 15... ♛e7 since Black will have to move his queen again. Neverthe-

less, the simple 16 ♖h3!? might have been even stronger.

16... ♗d7 17 ♖xf6+ ♛xf6 18 ♖g3!

Now this is the preferred file for the rook, in order to support the ♗c1-g5 idea.

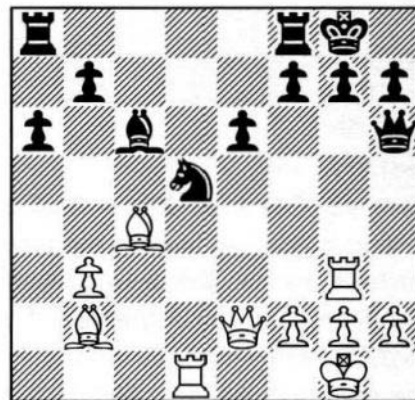
18... ♗xa4?

This leads to immediate defeat. 18...h6? was also bad due to 19 ♛d2! with a double threat at h6 and b4; but 18... ♖fc8! 19 ♗g5 ♛f5 20 ♗h6 g6 could have prolonged Black's resistance – Brynell.

19 b3 ♗c6 20 d5!

With the deadly idea of 21 ♗b2.

20... ♖xd5 21 ♗b2 ♛h6



22 ♗xg7

Even stronger was 22 ♛e5! f6 23 ♛xe6+, winning a piece.

22... ♛xg7 23 ♖xg7+ ♗xg7 24 ♛e5+ f6

Or 24... ♗g8 25 ♖d4! with a decisive attack.

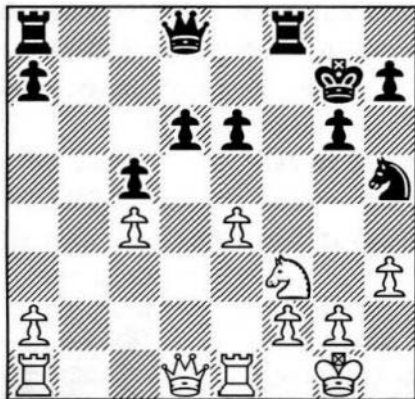
25 ♛xe6

White soon realized his material plus.

Example 54
A.Khalifman-P.Leko
 Ubeda 1997

While the previous example showed the seizure of a rank as an attacking method,

here we will see it in a more general context. Black aims to exploit the semi-open f-file by moves like ... $\text{d}f4$ and ... $\text{w}f6$, with quite some activity on the kingside. In respect to this plan, Khalifman launches a powerful rook manoeuvre.



18 Rb1! $\text{E}f7$

After 18... $\text{d}f4?! 19 \text{Rb7+ } \text{c}g8 20 \text{h4}$ Black lacks a good answer to the threat 21 $g3$. Instead, by 18... $\text{E}f7$ Leko prevents 19 Rb7+ and prepares the doubling of rooks.

19 Rb3!

The rook is directed to d3 where it will put pressure on the d6-pawn and, at the same time, assist in the kingside defence.

19... $\text{d}f4 20 \text{h4 h6}$

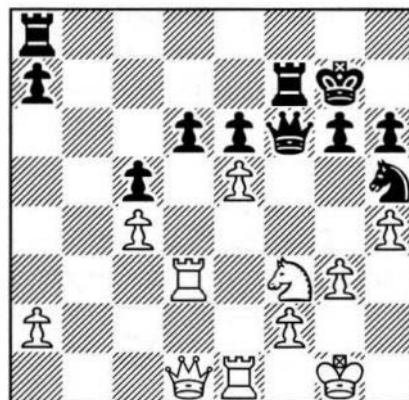
If 20... $e5$, intending ... $\text{d}e6-d4$, then 21 $\text{d}g5! \text{E}e7 22 \text{g3 } \text{d}e6 23 \text{dxe6+ } \text{E}xe6 24 \text{w}d5!$ with a clear edge – Khalifman.

21 $\text{g3 } \text{d}h5 22 \text{Rd3 } \text{w}f6$

At this point 23 $\text{E}e3$ looks interesting in order to reinforce f3, thus renewing the attack on the d6-pawn. But perhaps Black might get some counterplay with 23... Rb8!? 24 $\text{Rxd6 } \text{Rb2}$. Khalifman prefers a more technical solution.

23 $e5!$

White no longer wins a pawn but clears the files for both rooks and fixes the e6 and c5 pawns as future targets.



23... $\text{dxe5} 24 \text{Rxe5 } \text{Rb8}$

Leko sacrifices a pawn for the sake of counterplay. Passive defence with 24... Rc6 , intending 25... Rc6 , is well met by 25 $\text{w}e2 \text{Rc6} 26 \text{R}xh5! \text{g}xh5 27 \text{d}e5$ with a decisive advantage – Khalifman.

25 $\text{w}e2!$

Preventing 25... Rb2 and increasing the pressure on e6.

25... $\text{c}h7 26 \text{Rxe6 } \text{w}f5 27 \text{E}e7!$

A pawn up, White is happy to exchange pieces.

27... $\text{Rb1+} 28 \text{c}h2$

Avoiding 28 $\text{c}g2? \text{d}f4+! 29 \text{g}xf4 \text{w}g4+ 30 \text{c}h2 \text{w}xf4+$ with a perpetual.

28... $\text{d}g7 29 \text{Rxf7 } \text{w}xf7 30 \text{Rd5 } \text{w}b7 31 \text{c}g2!$

Another technical choice. 31 Rxc5?! permits 31... Rb2 with unnecessary counterplay.

31... $\text{w}b2$

Now that the f2-pawn is safe White can meet 31... Rb2 with 32 $\text{w}d3!$, threatening 33 Rd7 as well as 33 $h5$.

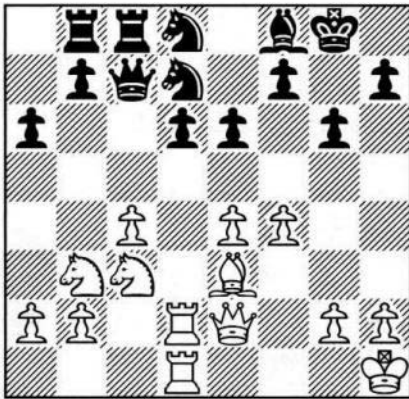
32 $\text{w}xb2 \text{Rxb2} 33 \text{Rd2}$

Securing the extra pawn. Khalifman won the ending without major problems.

Of all the ranks the seventh (or second in White's camp) keeps special importance due

to its proximity to the enemy pawns and king. In the previous examples we often came across the seizure of the seventh rank, usually as a consequence of controlling a file. Here is a final example on this topic.

Example 55
M.Petursson-P.Lyrberg
 Reykjavik 1996



22 c5!

A strong pawn sacrifice to seize the seventh rank. In contrast, 22 e5?! ♖xc4 is less clear.

22...♖xc5 23 ♖xc5 dxc5 24 ♔d7 ♖b6 25 f5!

With the opponent completely paralysed, White directs his attention to the black king.

25...exf5

In this way Black brings his queen to the defence. If instead 25...♔g7, then White could try 26 ♖f2! with the strong threat of 27 fxe6 fxe6 28 ♔e7!, heading for e8.

26 exf5 ♖f6 27 ♔f4 ♔a8 28 ♖d5

White has no problems with giving up another pawn, conscious of his great attacking potential.

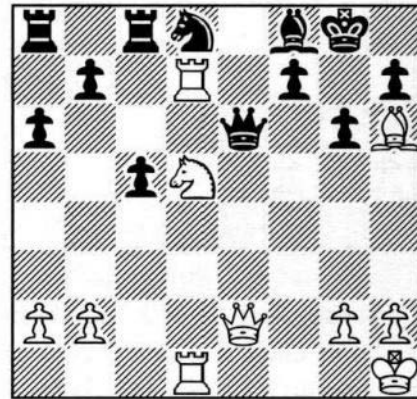
28...♖xf5 29 ♔h6!

The tempting 29 ♔e5? permits 29...♖c6!

30 ♖f6+ ♔g7 with a draw – Petursson. Instead, in the game White creates the strong threat of 30 ♔f1.

29...♖e6?

Black should have returned some material; e.g. 29...♖c6 30 ♔f1 ♔e8 31 ♖d1 ♖e6 32 ♔f6+ ♔h8 33 ♖xe8 ♔xe8 34 ♔xf8 ♔xf8 35 ♔xb7 with a clear, yet not decisive advantage – Petursson.



30 ♖xe6!

Although it is not that easy to foresee at this very moment, White now forces a winning endgame.

30...♖xe6 31 ♖f6+ ♔h8 32 ♔xf7 ♔g7 33 ♔xg7+ ♖xg7 34 ♔dd7! ♔f8 35 ♔xb7 ♔xf7 36 ♔xf7

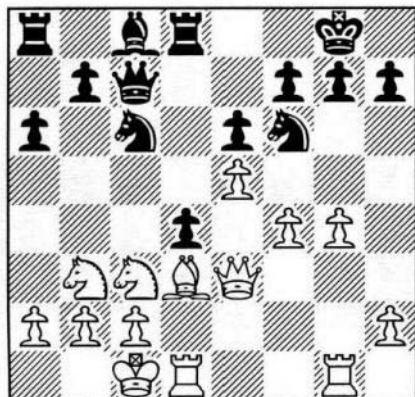
Despite material equality, Black resigned – and not too early! The point is that he can never free his pieces due to the mating threats, whereas White will just bring his king to the queenside and eliminate the pawns on c5 and a6 with an easy win.

For the related exercises to this section, see page 307.

The queen

As any chess player knows, the queen is a terrific attacking piece. This virtue is well illustrated in the following example.

Example 56
B. Spassky-G. Capelan
Solingen 1974

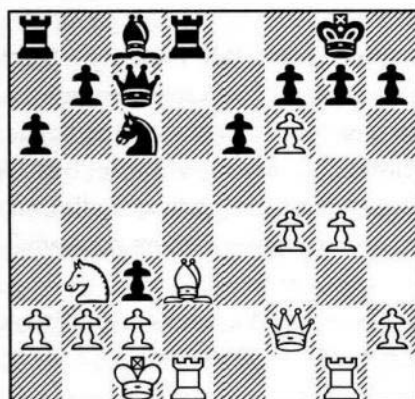


In a tense position with attacks on opposite flanks Black has just played 15...d4, perhaps hoping for 16 ♖xd4?! ♗xd4 17 exf6 ♜xf4! 18 ♜xf4 ♗xf4 with roughly equal chances in the endgame.

16 ♜f2!

Spassky is not interested in simplification and directs his queen to the kingside.

16...dxc3 17 exf6



17...♖b4?

Now White's attack becomes too strong. 17...cxb2+ 18 ♜xb2! (the natural 18 ♜b1?!)

permits 18...♖b4 with a favourable version of the game, now that 19 ♜xh7+ followed by ♜h4-g5 fails to mate on c2) 18...gxf6 19 ♜h4 ♜xf4 20 ♜xh7+ ♜f8 21 g5!? also leaves the black king under a cloud. Thus Black should probably prefer 17...gxf6, although after 18 bxc3 followed by ♗g3-h3 or even 19 f5!?, White keeps good attacking prospects.

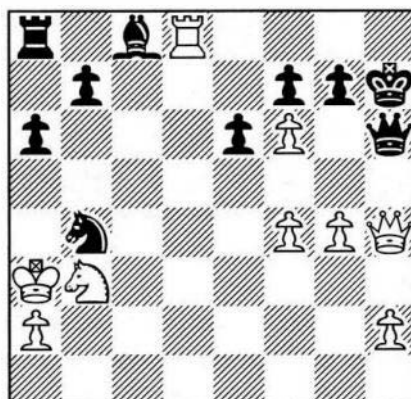
18 ♜xh7+! ♜xh7 19 ♜h4+ ♜g8 20 ♜g5!

Having assured himself that he won't get mated, White continues his attack.

20...♗xd1+ 21 ♗xd1 cxb2+ 22 ♜xb2 ♜xc2+ 23 ♜a3 ♜g6

Or 23...♜xa2+ 24 ♜xb4 a5+ 25 ♜c3 and the checks are over.

24 ♗d8+ ♜h7 25 ♜h4+ ♜h6



26 fxg7! ♜xg7

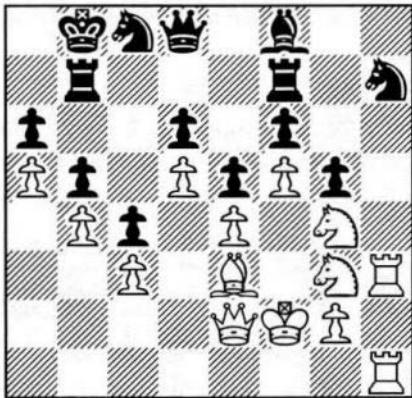
After 26...♜xh4 27 g8♜+ ♜h6 28 ♜h8+ Black is mated, while on 26...♖c2+ White avoids 27 ♜a4?? ♗d7+!, preferring 27 ♜b2!. 27 ♗g8+! ♜xg8 28 ♜xh6 ♖c6 29 ♖c5! ♗e7 30 ♖e4 ♖d5 31 g5!

Preparing 32 ♖f6+ when the queen is finally able to give mate. Black resigned.

Another common task for the queen is to control files and diagonals, alone or accompanied by other pieces. We already came across this subject in Grünfeld-Kraidman and Garcia Palermo-Bibiloni.

Let's see a few more examples.

Example 57
T.Luther-Y.Gonzalez Vidal
 Havana 2004



White is clearly better thanks to his space advantage, but how can he make progress?

45 ♖h2!

Preparing ♜e1-h1 to increase h-file pressure.

45... ♜be7 46 ♜e1 ♜c7 47 ♜h1 ♜a8 48 ♜f1!

Preparing an exchange sacrifice on h7.

48... ♜g7

In the event of passive defence with 48... ♜b8, Gonzalez indicates 49 ♔d2 ♜a8 50 ♔f3 ♜b8 51 ♜xh7! ♜xh7 52 ♔xf6 ♜xh2 53 ♜xh2 followed by 54 ♜xg5 with a winning advantage. In the game, White manages to enter the enemy camp with one of his rooks.

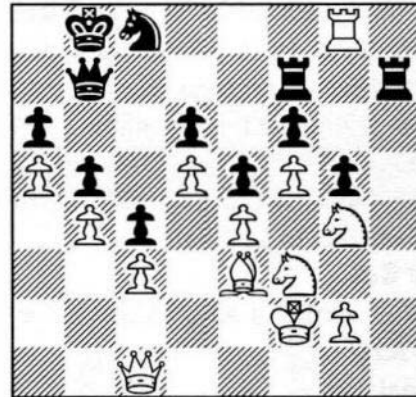
49 ♜h6! ♜gf7 50 ♜g6 ♜b7 51 ♜g8 ♜e8 52 ♜h8 ♜ee7 53 ♔d2 ♜b8 54 ♔f3 ♜a8 55 ♜c1!

Withdrawing the queen, so that it won't get exposed after White's next move.

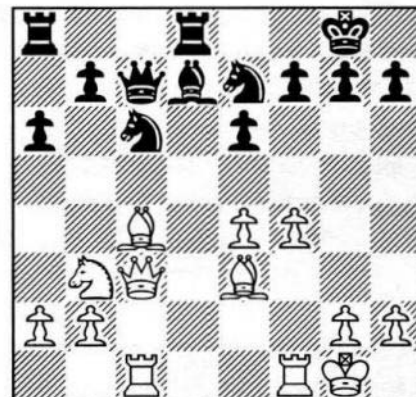
55... ♜b8 56 ♜2xh7! ♜xh7 57 ♜xf8 ♜ef7 58 ♜g8

Intending 59 ♜g6 with a winning ad-

vantage.



Example 58
V.Smyslov-B.Spassky
 Leningrad-Moscow match 1959



White has a considerable advantage thanks to his bishop pair and more active pieces. By a subtle queen manoeuvre Smyslov manages to step up the pressure.

16 ♜e1!

The queen is heading for f2, where it will reinforce the g1-a7 diagonal as well as the f-file after a future f4-f5.

16...b6?

The pawn advances just one step in or-

der not to weaken c5; however, Black's main priority was to drive the bishop on c4 from the attack. After 16...b5 17 ♖e2 ♖e8 18 ♜f2 ♜ab8 19 f5 White has a clear, but not decisive advantage; e.g. 19...e5 20 f6 gxf6 21 ♜xf6 ♜d6 and the game continues. 17 ♜f2 ♜db8

This looks odd, but Black couldn't play 17...♜ab8 due to 18 ♖xa6.

18 f5! ♜c8

Or 18...exf5? 19 ♖f4, when 19...♞e5 fails to 20 ♖xf7+.

19 ♞d4!

The knight joins the attack. The straightforward 19 f6!? looks strong as well; e.g. 19...♞g6 20 fxg7 ♞ge5 21 ♖xb6 with a decisive advantage.

19...♞xd4

After 19...exf5 20 exf5 Black can't avoid 21 f6.

20 ♖xd4 ♞c6 21 fxe6 ♖xe6 22 ♖xe6

Spassky resigned, in view of 22...♜'xe6 23 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 24 ♜xf7+ with mate.

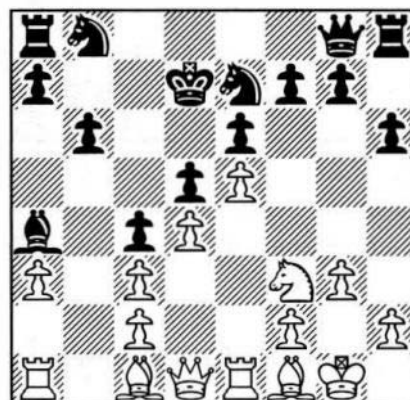
Winawer Black undertakes a strong manoeuvre, and a rather surprising one the first time you see it.

12...♞d7!

The king passes to the queenside, where it will feel quite safe thanks to the restrictive force of the bishop on a4. Conversely, after 12...0-0?! 13 g3, followed by ♞h4 and ♜h5 or f4-f5, White obtains attacking prospects.

13 g3 ♜g8!

The queen is heading for h7, where it will take command of the b1-h7 diagonal and increase the pressure on the c2-pawn.



14 ♖g2?!

With this pawn structure White is unable to develop this bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal, but even so g2 is hardly the best square. Preferable was 14 h4!? preparing ♖h3, e.g. 14...♜h7 15 ♜a2 ♞a6 16 ♖h3 ♞c7 17 ♞h2! ♞b5 18 ♜e3 ♞f5 19 ♜f3 with far more activity than in the game.

14...♜h7 15 ♜e2 ♞a6!

Stronger than the natural 15...♞bc6, since the knight now finds an excellent outpost on b5.

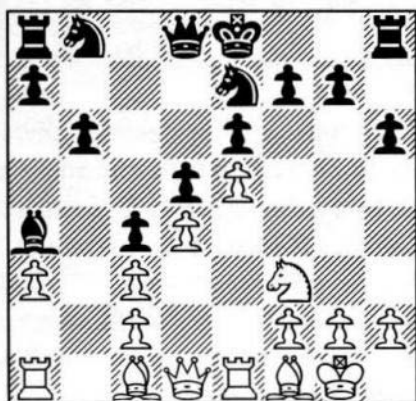
16 ♜d2 ♞c7 17 ♖b2 ♜ag8

Slowly preparing a kingside attack.

18 h4 ♜f5 19 ♖c1

The prophylactic 19 ♞h2!? seems better

Example 59
A.Khruschiov-L.Psakhis
Pardubice 2002



In a typical position from the French

here; e.g. 19...g5 20 ♖h1 ♗g6 21 ♕g1 with more resistance than in the game.

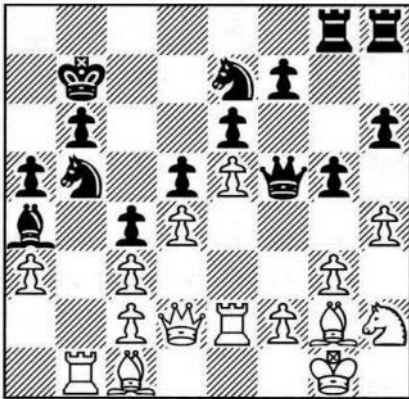
19...♗c8!

Before rolling out the attack Psakhis improves his position on the other flank.

20 ♖a2 ♖b5 21 ♖b2 a5

Of course not 21...♗xa3? 22 ♖b4 or 22 ♖a2 and White wins a piece.

22 ♖b1 ♗b7 23 ♗h2 g5!



24 hxg5?

This just accelerates Black's attack. Also ineffective was 24 h5? g4, but 24 g4 ♖h7 25 h5 would have helped White resist. There might follow 25...♖e8 26 ♖f3 ♖hf8 27 ♖b2 ♖c6 28 ♖be1 ♗a6! (securing the king) followed by 29...f5 with an initiative.

24...hxg5 25 ♖f1 g4 26 ♖e3 ♖h5 27 ♖e1

If 27 ♗xc4? then 27...♖h2+ 28 ♖f1 ♖h1+! 29 ♖xh1 ♖xh1+ 30 ♕g2 ♖gh8 with mate.

27...♗a6!

Black safeguards the king and avoids any tricks with 28 ♗xc4.

28 ♖b2 ♖f5 29 ♖bc1 ♖h7!

Preparing 30...♖gh8 with a strong attack.

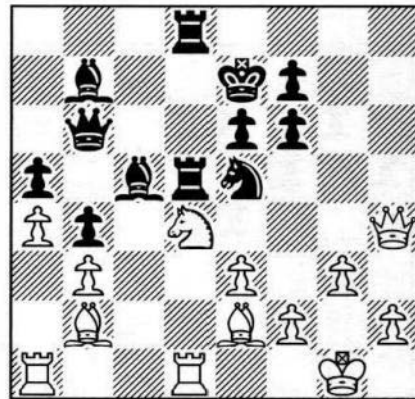
In the previous example we saw the queen alone taking command of a whole diagonal. This idea becomes even stronger

if she is accompanied by a bishop – the so-called battery, which is a basic weapon in attacking positions.

Example 60

A.Dreev-E.Sveshnikov

Russian Team Championship 1992



22...♖xd4!

Black sacrifices the exchange in order to mount a dangerous attack along the h1-a8 diagonal. 22...♖xd4?! 23 ♖xd4 ♖c6 is less effective due to 24 ♖dc1! repelling the attack, but not 24 ♖ac1? ♖xd4! and Black wins.

23 ♖xd4

Black also enjoys a strong attack after 23 exd4 ♖c6 24 f3 ♖xf3+ 25 ♖xf3 ♖xf3.

23...♖xd4 24 exd4 ♖c6! 25 d5

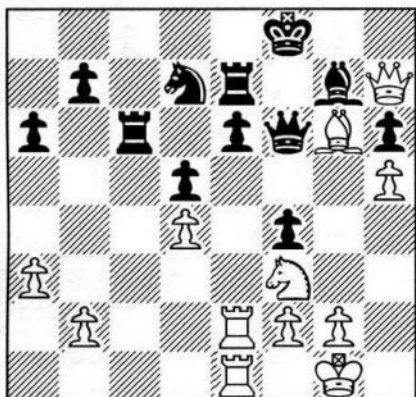
Only by desperate means is White able to prolong resistance.

25...♖xd5 26 f3 ♖xd1+ 27 ♖xd1 ♖xf3+ 28 ♖xf3 ♖xf3 29 ♖d2

And here White lost on time. The game could have concluded 29...♖h1+ 30 ♖f2 ♖g2+ 31 ♖e1 (or 31 ♖e3 ♖f3+ 32 ♖d4 ♖c3 mate) 31...♖g1+ 32 ♖e2 ♖a6+! 33 ♖f3 ♖h1+ 34 ♖g4 ♖e4+ 35 ♖h3 ♖f1+ and Black wins – Sveshnikov.

Finally, an example that shows the great mobility of the queen, which lets her change working area with remarkable speed.

Example 61
V.Smyslov-V.Simagin
 Moscow 1967



White is clearly better thanks to his active pieces and Black's deficient pawn structure, in particular the e6-pawn. Having noticed that his queen isn't really doing anything on the kingside, Smyslov opts for her transfer to the opposite flank, in order to open up a second front.

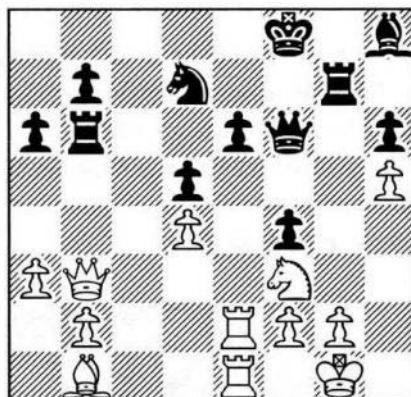
32 ♔b1! ♚h8 33 ♛d3 ♜g7

Trying for a counterattack, but now the e6-pawn becomes exposed. However, a more solid defence such as 33...♞e8 34 ♔a2 ♞cc8 also led to problems after 35 ♛b3!, with the double threat of 36 ♛xb7 and 36 ♛b4+ followed by 37 ♛d6.

34 ♛b3! ♞b6

Unfortunately for Black any defence of the b7-pawn implies some concession. If 34...♘b6? then 35 ♘e5, while both 34...b5?! 35 a4! and 34...b6 35 ♞c2! ♞xc2 36 ♛xc2, followed by ♛c8(+) and ♛c6, leave his

queenside too exposed.



35 ♛c3!

Smyslov exploits the fact that the c-file has become temporarily available and now threatens 36 ♛c8+. Black can't prevent this by 35...♞c6? due to 36 ♛b4+ winning a pawn.

35...♞g8?

A bad oversight. Black had to try 35...♙g8 36 ♛c8+ ♘f8, when the tempting 37 ♘e5?? fails to 37...f3!, but 37 ♙g6! ♞c6 38 ♛b8 followed by 39 ♘e5 leaves White remains clearly on top.

36 ♛c8+

Incapable of saving both the rook and the knight, Black resigned.

For the related exercises, see page 311.

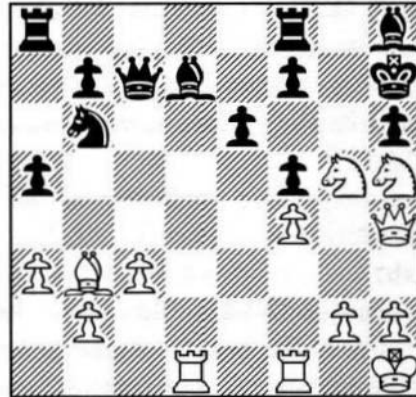
The king

As beginners we are taught to castle quickly in order to secure the king and bring the rook into the game. Indeed, it would be illogical not to exploit such a powerful move, that lets us improve two pieces at the same time. Thus in many openings, castling is made almost automatically, in particular to the short side. Here we will see some examples where it is less clear if, when, and to which side to castle.

Example 62
N.Short-B.Gulko
 Candidates match (game 3),
 New York 1994



24...♗e5 25 ♖h5+ ♜h7 26 f4 ♗h8 27 ♖g5+!



Black resigned in view of 27...hxg5 28 ♖f6+ ♜g6 29 ♜xg5 mate, while 27...♜g6 28 ♗d3! followed by 29 ♗g3 soon leads to the same thing. Finally on 27...♜g8 Short indicates 28 ♖f6+ ♗xf6 (or 28...♜g7 29 ♖gh7! intending ♜g3 mate) 29 ♜xh6 ♗xg5 30 ♜xg5+ ♜h7 31 ♗d3 and wins.

Black is just one move away from completing his development, but which one?

18...0-0?

A bad decision since White's reply will leave the black king in a lot of trouble. Much better was 18...♗c6 19 f4 0-0-0! – Short. White is not yet capable of creating any direct queenside threats, besides which the existence of the open d-file makes a king's attack less likely to succeed; e.g. 20 ♖f3 ♗xf3! 21 ♗xf3 ♗c5! with counterplay. Even the immediate 18...0-0-0! seems fine.

19 ♗xf6! gxf6 20 ♜g4+

Now White's attack plays itself.

20...♜h7

Or 20...♜h8 21 ♜h4! ♜g7 22 ♖e4 ♗e7 23 ♖f4 heading for h5 with a strong attack – Short.

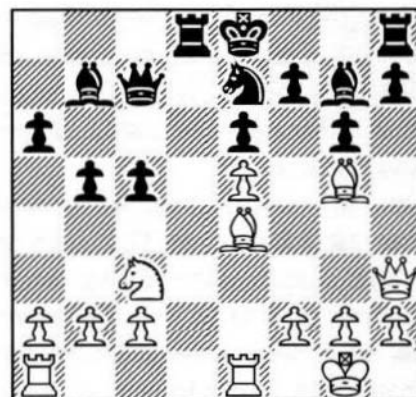
21 ♖e4!f5

If 21...♗e7, then 22 ♖xf6+ ♗xf6 23 ♗c2+ ♜h8 24 ♜e4 and wins.

22 ♖f6+ ♜h8 23 ♜h4 ♜g7 24 ♗ad1!

The last piece enters the game, with ideas like ♜d4(+) and ♗d3-g3.

Example 63
J.Rosito-J.Hellsten
 Mendoza 2005



In contrast to the previous example, here the option of long castling is discarded. So why not go 15...0-0 right away,

securing the king and bringing the last piece into play? Well, it transpires that after 16 ♖xb7 ♖xb7 17 ♘e4! White obtains a dangerous attack, with ideas such as 18 ♖f6, 18 ♘f6+ and 18 ♘d6. Thus I decided to postpone castling until a safer moment.

15...♞d4!

A strong move, fighting for the key square e4.

16 ♖xb7

Now after 16 ♖f6 0-0! Black doesn't have to fear the enemy attack, since the white knight isn't participating. In the game Rosito prepares its transfer via e4.

16...♞xb7 17 f3 h6!



Asking the question of the bishop before castling. 17...0-0?! is still dangerous due to 18 ♘e4 ♘d5 (or 18...♖xe5 19 ♘xc5 with multiple threats) 19 c3!, intending 19...♞d3? 20 ♘f2.

18 ♖e3

After 18 ♖f6 0-0 19 ♘e4 ♘d5 20 c3 (here, and on the next move, 20 ♘xc5? fails to 20...♞b6) 20...♞d3 21 ♖h1 ♞b6 intending ...c5-c4, Black also manages to neutralize the enemy attack with level play.

18...♞c4 19 ♘e4 ♖xe5

Just in time, before White lands a knight on d6. Now White wins the exchange, but Black obtains ample compensation.

20 c3 ♘d5 21 b3?

A tactical oversight in a complex position. After 21 ♞ad1! ♞c6 22 b3 ♞xc3! 23 ♘xc3 ♖xc3 24 ♖d2 ♖d4+ 25 ♖h1 h5 followed by ...0-0 Black has no problems, but the text leaves White simply worse.

21...♞xc3 22 ♘xc3 ♖xc3

Black recovers the exchange at once, thus keeping the extra pawn.

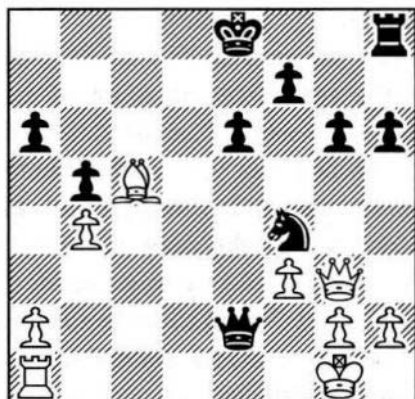
23 ♖xc5 ♖xa1 24 ♞xa1 ♞c7!

Heading for e5. Despite certain difficulties in mobilizing the rook, Black is clearly better thanks to the extra pawn and superior activity.

25 b4

The strongest reply, since both 25 ♞c1? and 25 ♖d4?! run into 25...♘f4 with double threats.

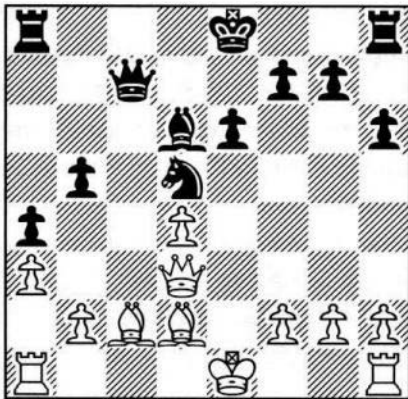
25...♞e5 26 ♞d1 ♞e2 27 ♞a1 ♞e5 28 ♞d1 ♞e2 29 ♞a1 ♘f4 30 ♞g3



Here the game continued with 30...♞e5?! 31 ♞e1 ♞g5 32 ♖d4! 0-0 33 ♞xg5 hxg5 34 ♖f6 and White recovered the pawn. Instead, by 30...g5 31 ♖h1 ♘d7! preparing ...♖c6-b7 and ...♞d8, Black could have secured his king without dropping the pawn, while his active queen restricts the enemy counterplay. In conclusion, when resolving the "king problem" be as flexible as possible!

Now let's examine two cases where Black deliberately dismisses both castling options, and finds a better destiny for the king.

Example 64
G.Kasparov-A.Karpov
Linares 1994



At first sight the position appears somewhat troublesome for Black. He can't play 22...0-0?? due to 23 ♖h7 mate, and 22...0-0-0? 23 ♜c1 is also bad for him. Karpov finds a third solution.

22...♚e7!

An excellent move. On e7 the king is relatively safe and the king's rook can enter the game.

23 ♜c1 ♜c4!

The queen's exchange clearly favours Black, since it finishes off any white attacking prospects and leaves the king on e7 well placed for the endgame.

24 ♚e2?!

Following the opponent's example, but now Black manages further favourable simplifications. Karpov suggests 24 g3! and only then 25 ♚e2, thus preventing any black bishop or knight move to f4.

24...♘f4+!

Instead, the game continued 24...♜hb8?! 25 g3! ♜xd3+ 26 ♙xd3 b4 27 ♜a1! bxa3 28 bxa3 ♜b3 29 ♙c2 ♜xa3 30 ♜xa3 ♙xa3 31 ♜a1 ♙.b2 32 ♜xa4 ♜xa4 33 ♙xa4 ♙xd4 34 f4 and with play on a single flank, Kasparov easily held his own despite the minus pawn.

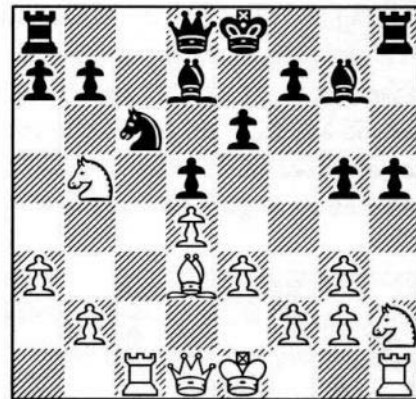
25 ♙xf4 ♙xf4 26 ♜xc4

If 26 ♜cd1, then 26...♜hd8! with serious pressure on the d4-pawn.

26...bxc4 27 ♜b1 ♜hd8 28 ♜hd1 ♙g5!

Intending ...f7-f5 and ...♙f6 with pressure on the weaknesses on d4 and b2. Black has much the better game and the contrast to the initial position is striking.

Example 65
T.V.Petrosian-M.Botvinnik
Training match, Moscow 1952



Here we will see the same idea in a more aggressive context. Black has already started a kingside advance but, before continuing it, he has to respond to the threat of 17 ♘d6+. Botvinnik finds the most appealing solution.

16...♚f8!

A safe square for the king, while the rook remains active on h8.

17 ♘f1

Trying to improve the passive knight. 17 Qd6? Wb8 was useless, while 17 O-O?! permits 17...g4! followed by ...f7-f5 and ...h5-h4 with an attack.

17...g4 18 Qd2 e5!

Clearing the position for the bishop pair.

19 Wb3?!

Now the d4-pawn turns into a problem. Preferable was 19 dxe5 Nxe5 20 Qe2 with a passive, yet solid position.

19...exd4 20 Qxd4 Qxd4 21 exd4 We7+

Of course not 21... Kxd4? 22 Wb4+ .

22 Qd1?!

Petrosian hopes to escape with the king to b1, but there is no time for this. 22 Qf1 was better.

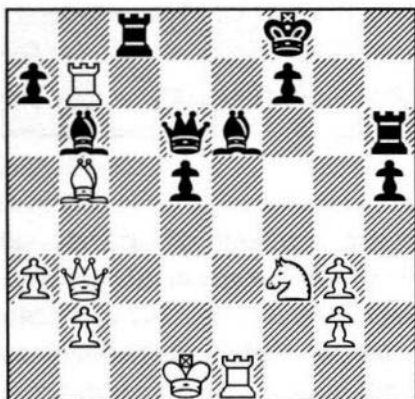
22... Kxd4 23 Kc7

Neither 23 Wxb7? Qa4+ nor 23 Wxd5? Qxb2 , followed by 24... Qa4 , worked for White – Botvinnik.

23... Kb6 24 Ke1 Qd6 25 Kxb7 Kh6!

Heading for f6, where the rook will defend f7 and attack f2 at the same time. Much worse was 25... Qxf2? 26 Kf1 followed by Ne4 , or 25... Qc8? 26 Ne4! with dangerous counterplay.

26 Qb5 Qe6 27 f4 gxf3 28 Qxf3 Kc8



The last piece enters the game with a clear advantage. The difference between the two kings is striking.

29 Qe5 Wc5!

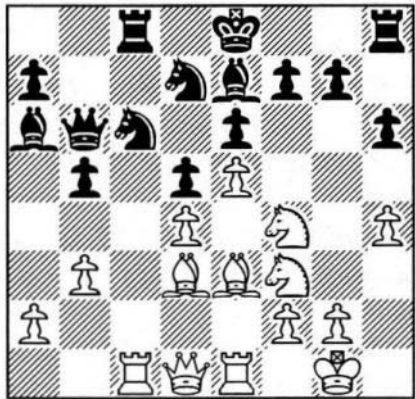
29... Qd4 was a much simpler continuation, whereas White should have preferred 30 Wb4 on the next move.

30 Kxf7+? Qg8! 31 Kf3 Wc1+ 32 Qe2 Kc2+ 33 Qf1 Wd2!

White resigned in view of the continuation 34 Qe2 Wd4 .

In the previous example we saw Petrosian trying to secure his king by Qd1-c2-b1 , and in my game with Rosito I missed a similar option with ... Qd7-c6-b7 . Such king marches are indeed quite frequent in practice, particularly in closed positions such as the following one.

Example 66
V.Anand-J.Timman
Tilburg 1991



Black still needs to resolve the problem of his king. But if 20... O-O?! then 21 Qh5 followed by Qh2 and Wg4 , or even Qxh6 and Wd2 , yields White a promising attack. As for the other flank, long castling is no longer available. Timman comes up with a creative solution.

20... Qd8!

Intending ... Qc7-b8 in order to secure

the king on the queenside, where it will feel much safer than on g8.

21 ♖e2

White intends a2-a4 striking at Black's queenside, but this is easily parried.

21... ♗a3 22 ♙c2 ♜b4! 23 ♙xc8+ ♝xc8

The king gets one step closer to its destiny.

24 ♙c1

If 24. ♙b1 ♜c6 25 ♙c1 ♙e7 Black is fine.

24... ♜xd3

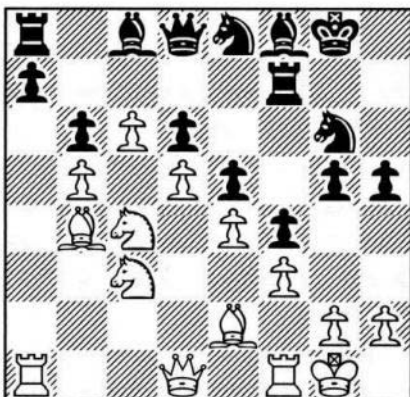
Timman's suggestion. Instead, the game continued 24... ♙xc1?! 25 ♙xc1+ ♝b8 26 ♜h5! with an edge for White, now that 26...g6 runs into 27 ♜f6.

25 ♖xd3 ♗e7!

Keeping the valuable dark-squared bishop and preparing ...♝b8 followed by ...♙c8, when the king would be completely safe. Now after 26 ♜h5 g6 the knight can no longer enter at f6, so Black has a comfortable game.

A king march can also be effected by a castled king, as in the next example.

Example 67
Y.Zherebukh-A.R.S.Salem
Moscow 2009



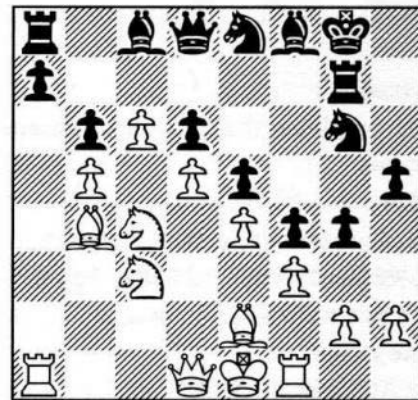
In a typical King's Indian battle Black is close to achieving ...g5-g4 with a strong attack on the enemy king. Thus White resorts to a common defensive idea in closed positions: transfer the king to the opposite flank.

21 ♜f2! g4 22 ♝e1

Obviously 22 fxc4? ♖h4+ should be avoided.

22... ♙g7

Black couldn't play 22... ♖h4+?! 23 ♝d2 ♖xh2 due to 24 ♜xb6! ♙b8 25 ♜xc8 ♙xc8 26 fxc4 and it is the black king who is starting to feel uncomfortable.



23 ♝d2

The king is already quite safe, and White's positional triumphs on the queenside make his position preferable in the long run.

23... ♗h4 24 ♙g1 ♙g6 25 ♝c2 ♜f6 26 ♜a4!

By means of the threat 27 ♜xb6 White transfers his knight to the more active d3-square, where it will enable a positional sacrifice on e5.

26... ♙b8 27 ♜ab2 ♖c7 28 ♗d3 ♜e8 29 ♖c1 ♖g7 30 ♙c3 ♜f6 31 ♝b3!

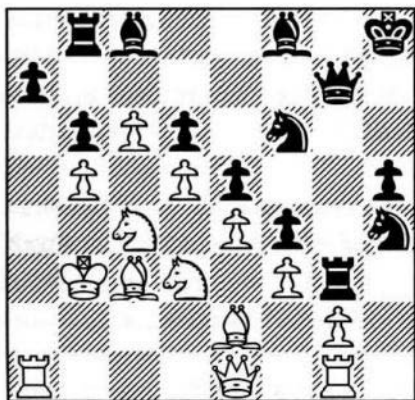
Removing the king from the second rank, just in case.

31... ♝h8 32 ♖e1

At this point, the line 32 ♜cxe5! dxe5 33

♞xe5 was already decisive – Baburin. Indeed, on the next move, the f4-pawn falls as well.

32...g3 33 hxg3 ♖xg3



34 ♞dx5!

A strong blow that turns Black's position into ruins.

34...dx5

34...♞xg2 was relatively better, although after 35 ♖xg2 ♖xg2 36 ♞d3 ♜g5 37 ♖xa7 Black has a hard time anyway.

35 ♙xe5 ♞g6

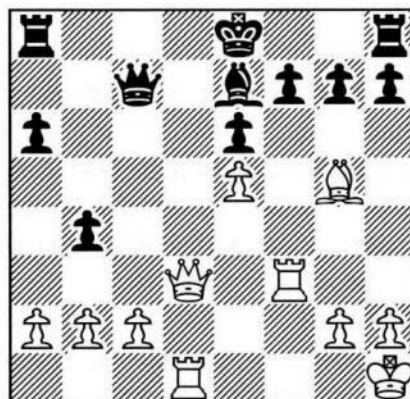
Or 35...♖a8 36 ♜c3 ♙e7 37 ♞xb6 and wins. Also in the game White has a crushing advantage.

36 ♙xb8 ♞xe4 37 ♖xa7 ♞c5+ 38 ♜a2 ♜d4 39 ♜a1! ♙g7 40 ♜xd4 ♙xd4 41 ♖d1

Black resigned.

Beginners are advised to constantly protect their king, and activate it only when the endgame is reached. This is quite a valid recommendation, and in the later section on prophylaxis we will take a closer look at different techniques of protecting the king. However, there are in fact middle-game situations when the best or only defence consists in active movements with the monarch. Here is one example of such a "brave king".

Example 68
E.Berg-R.Åkesson
Swedish Championship,
Gothenburg 2005



As often occurs in the Open Sicilian White is ahead in development, but Black has a better pawn structure in the long run. Thus White should act quickly before the opponent manages to consolidate.

19 ♖xf7!?

A tempting sacrifice, considering that the black king is now forced to leave the back ranks. Nevertheless, 19 ♜e4! ♖c8 20 ♙xe7 ♜xe7 21 c3! was objectively better, opening a second front on the queenside – Berg. Here 21...bxc3?! fails to 22 ♜a4+! ♜f8 23 ♜xa6 with a strong initiative. Black's situation is even worse after 19...0-0? 20 ♖h3! h6 21 ♙xh6 with a winning attack.

19...♜xf7 20 ♜f3+ ♜g6!

The king should advance! Backward movements failed to 21 ♜xa8+, while 20...♙f6? 21 ♙xf6! yields White a crushing attack; e.g. 21...gxf6 22 ♜xf6+ ♜g8 23 ♖d3, heading for g3.

21 ♜e4+ ♜xg5!

In the same spirit of the previous move. In contrast, after 21...♜f7 22 ♖f1+ ♙f6 23

♔xf6! White again obtains a decisive attack; e.g. 23...gxf6 24 ♖xf6+ ♕e7 25 ♜xb4+ ♕d8 26 ♜f8+ or 25...♕e8 26 ♜xe6+.

22 ♜d3 ♜af8!

Creating the counter-threat of 23...♜f1 mate, as well as the defensive resource ...♜f4. The cautious 22...g6?, preparing ...♕h6-g7, would have failed to 23 ♜e3+! ♕h5 24 g4+! ♕h4 (or 24...♕xg4 25 ♜d4+ ♕h5 26 ♜h3+ with a quick mate) 25 ♜h6+ ♕xg4 26 ♜d4+ ♕f3 27 ♜f4+ ♕e2 28 ♜d2+ ♕e1 29 ♜f2 mate – Berg.

23 ♜g3+ ♕h6 24 ♜h3+ ♕g5 25 ♜g3+

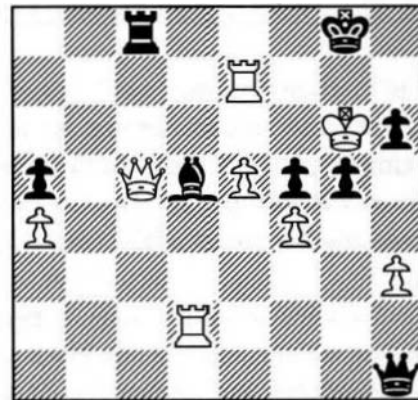
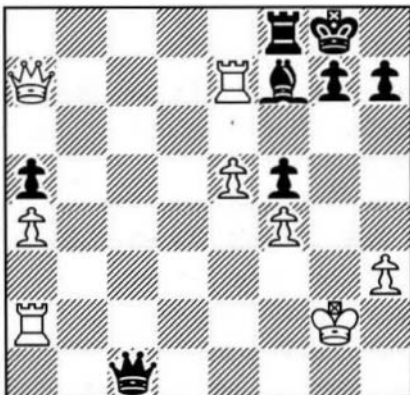
The winning try 25 ♜h4+? ♕f5 26 ♜f3+ fails to 26...♕g6! 27 ♜g4+ ♔g5 28 ♜xe6+ ♕h5! 29 ♜h3+ ♔h4 30 g4+ ♕g5 and the checks are over.

25...♕h6 26 ♜h3+ ♕g5 27 ♜g3+

Draw.

The “brave king” idea can also be used for parrying counterattacks when attacking. We already saw this in the final part of Hellsten-Rojas, and here is another example.

Example 69
M.Ulibin-J.Hellsten
Dresden 1994



White has won the exchange, but his king is rather unprotected and Black enjoys an active queen. At this point 33...♔xa2?? obviously fails to 34 ♜xg7+ with mate, but by 33...♜xf4! Black would keep the balance; e.g. 34 e6 ♜e4+ 32 ♕h2 ♜e5+ 36 ♕h1 ♔h5 37 ♜g2 g6!, when his king is probably the safer one. However, in time trouble I couldn't resist a direct attack on the white king.

33...♔d5+? 34 ♕g3!

Of course. Black is denied taking the f4-pawn.

34...♜e1+ 35 ♜f2 ♜g1+ 36 ♕h4

It transpires that the white king is completely safe here.

36...h6 37 ♜d2!

The most technical choice, looking for a queen exchange.

37...♜e1+

Also after 37...g5+ 38 ♕h5 ♔f3+ 39 ♕g6 or 38...♔f7+ 39 ♜xf7! White wins.

38 ♜f2 g5+ 39 ♕h5 ♜h1 40 ♕g6! ♜c8 41 ♜c5!

Suddenly White's king is instrumental in setting up a mate.

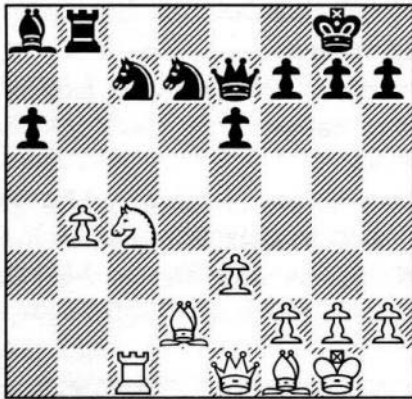
41...♜c6+ 42 e6 1-0

For the related exercises, see page 312.

The bishop pair

The bishop pair is usually a great strategic asset at any stage. We already saw some proof of this in a number of previous examples, such as Gufeld-Kolarov, Kramnik-Gelfand and Vokac-Navara. Here is one more example that shows the strength of the bishop pair.

Example 70
A.Miles-J.Sunye Neto
 Linares, Nuevo León 1994



This kind of position, with pawns on both flanks and an open centre, is much to the liking of the bishop pair. Miles now begins slow manoeuvring play with the aim of increasing the power of the two bishops.

25e4!

A move with various virtues: it restricts the bishop on a8, deprives the black pieces of the d5-square, and grants the g1-a7 diagonal to White's own bishop.

25...b5

Thus Black complicates the attack on his a6-pawn. However, in the further course of the game it is not easy for him to find an active plan.

26 f3 Bc8 27 e3 h6 28 Wd2

seizing the d-file and preparing a future d6 to fight against the blocker on b5.

28...c7 29 Bd1 Bc7 30 Wb2

By threatening 31 e4 White aims to provoke ...e6-e5, though the immediate 30 d6!? looked just as strong.

30...e5 31 Wd2!

Resuming the d6 idea.

31...We6 32 d6 d4

Or 32...dxd6 33 Wxd6 Wxd6 34 Bxd6 and the a6-pawn is doomed.

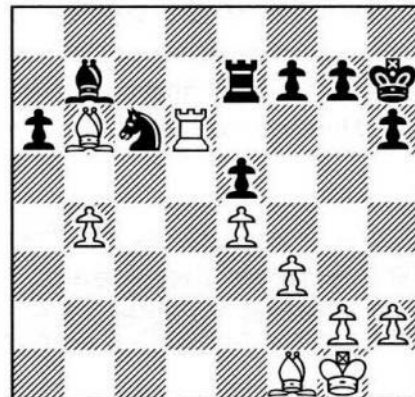
33 exd4 Wxd6 34 e3! Wxd2 35 Bxd2

The exchanges have left Black's a6-pawn more vulnerable.

35...ab7 36 Bd6 db8 37 a7!

A clever intermediate move. 37 ab6 at once permits 37...Bc6, swapping White's active rook.

37...dc6 38 ab6 Be7



39 a4!

Thanks to ...e6-e5, both bishops are now noticeably active and start to cooperate.

39...f6

Black is also suffering after 39...dxb4 40 exd8! Be8 41 exf7 Bf8 42 g6+. The e5-pawn is a long-term problem.

40 ae6!

Much stronger than 40 ed5?! dxb4 41 exd8 dxd5! 42 exe7 dxe7 43 Bd7 exa4! with chances for a draw – Miles.

40...♖xb4 41 ♗c5! a5 42 ♗f5+ g6 43 ♜xf6

White has not only recovered the pawn, but also managed to damage Black's pawn structure.

43...♜g7 44 ♗e6 ♜d3 45 ♗d6!

Not 45 ♗f8?! ♜c7 with unnecessary counterplay. In the game the black rook finds itself severely restricted by the bishop pair, and the e5-pawn is practically doomed.

45...♜f4 46 ♗c4 g5?

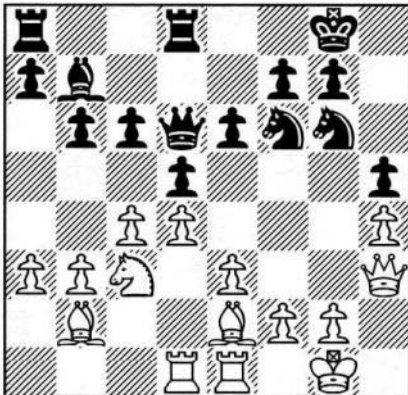
A bad mistake, but 46...♜d7 47 ♗xe5 was equally hopeless.

47 ♗f8! 1-0

In view of 47...♜c7 48 ♜xh6 mate.

Since the bishops are particularly favoured by positions with an open centre, one key idea is to clear diagonals for them. Let's see one example.

Example 71
J.Hellsten-I.Zaja
Menton 2003

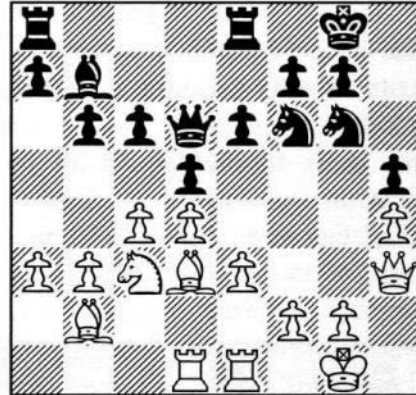


White has emerged from the opening with a slight plus thanks to his bishop pair. He now prepares e3-e4 to clear the position for his bishops, in particular the a1-h8 di-

agonal where Black has no opposing bishop.

18 ♗d3 ♜e8

The active 18...e5?! permits 19 ♗xg6 fxg6 20 ♜xd5! cxd5 21 dxe5 and White regains the piece with a sound extra pawn.



19 e4!

Now that Black's previous move left his queen undefended, White carries on with his plan without bothering about ...♜g6-f4. Less promising seems 19 ♗xg6 fxg6 20 e4 ♜g4!? 21 f3 ♜h6 after which Black manages to maintain a closed position.

19...e5

Indeed, after 19...♜f4?! 20 ♜g3 followed by 21 ♗b1, Black achieves nothing, and 19...dxe4?! 20 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 21 ♗xe4 is equally uninspiring for him. By 19...e5 Zaja creates some activity but also helps me in activating the bishop on b2.

20 ♜g3!

Keeping the tension makes sense here, since Black has difficulties in finding a useful move. Weaker was 20 dxe5?! ♜xe5, when the queen eyes both e1 and b2.

20...dxc4

On the natural! 20...♜ad8 I had planned 21 exd5 exd4 22 ♜xd6, transposing to a favourable endgame; e.g. 22...♜xe1+ 23 ♜xe1 ♜xd6 24 ♜e4 ♜xe4 25 ♜xe4 cxd5 26

♖xd4 preparing ♗e2-f3.

21. ♖xc4 b5 22 ♗f1

Not 22 ♜xg6?! bxc4 with complications.

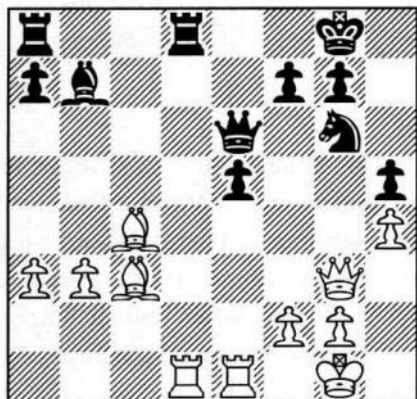
22... ♜e6 23 d5!

White swaps a few pawns in order to clear diagonals for his bishops. My original plan was 23 dxe5 intending 23... ♖xe5?! 24 ♖d5!, but after 23... ♖g4! the position seemed less clear to me.

23... cxd5 24 exd5 ♖xd5 25 ♗xb5 ♖xc3 26 ♗xc3 ♖ed8?

This leads to problems with the e5-pawn. After the correct 26... ♗c6 27 ♗c4 ♜f6 Black had more chances of survival.

27. ♗c4!



Directing both bishops at Black's king. Now any queen move like 27... ♜f6 just drops a pawn after 28 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 29 ♗xe5, so Black is forced to enter complications.

27... ♗d5 28 ♜g5

Even stronger was 28 ♗a5! ♖d7 29 ♖xd5! ♖xd5 30 ♜f3, establishing a dangerous pin. Now both 30... ♖f4 31 ♗d2! and 30... ♖e7 31 ♗b4! win on the spot; so 30... e4 31 ♖xe4 ♖d1+ 32 ♖h2 ♜d6+ 33 g3 is practically forced, when Black faces a difficult defensive task.

28... ♖d7 29 ♖xd5?

This wins a pawn, but 29 ♖xe5! ♖xe5 30

♗xe5 offered much more; e.g. 30... f6 31 ♖xd5! ♖xd5 32 ♗xf6 recovering the material with interest, or 30... g6 31 ♗b5! (I saw only 31 ♖xd5? ♖xd5 32 ♗xd5 ♜xd5 33 ♜f6 ♖f8 and Black defends) 31... ♗c6 32 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 (or 32... ♜xd7 33 ♜f6) 33 ♗xd7 ♜xd7 34 ♜f6 ♖f8 35 ♜h8+ followed by 36 ♜xa8. In these lines the cooperation between the two bishops in the attack is striking.

29... ♖xd5 30 ♜xh5 ♖c8 31 ♜f3 e4?

Returning the favour. 31... ♖xh4? 32 ♜e4 was equally bad, but 31... ♖xc4! 32 bxc4 ♖c5 33 h5 ♖f8 let the game continue.

32 ♖xe4 ♖d1+ 33 ♖h2

With all his pieces directed at the black king, White obviously avoids exchanges.

33... ♜d6+ 34 g3 ♖h8?

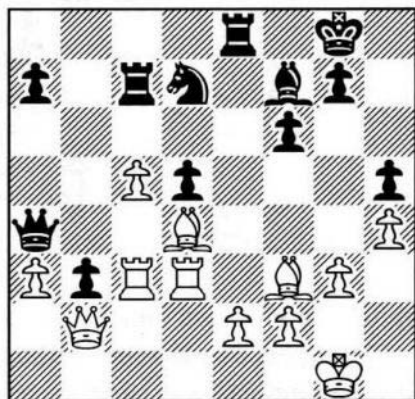
A tactical slip in a hopeless position.

35 ♜g4!

Black resigned.

It has been said that a virtue of the bishop pair is that one of the bishops can be exchanged for another advantage. Let's look at an example on this topic.

Example 72
E. Bareev-S. Lputian
Kharkov 1985



White is better thanks to the bishop pair and the weak d5-pawn. Bareev finds a simple way of increasing his advantage.

26 ♖xb3! ♜xc5 27 ♙xc5 ♝xc5 28 ♜b7!

The bishop pair is gone, but White has achieved a few other advantages in exchange: control of the seventh rank and a superior bishop.

28... ♜a5?!

Now White manages to trade queens, which will leave the a7-pawn more exposed. After 28... ♜ec8 29 ♜b4 ♜a6! 30 ♜b3 ♜a5 Black had more chances of survival than in the game.

29 ♜b4! ♜ec8 30 ♜xa5 ♝xa5 31 ♜e3!

With the strong threat of 32 ♜e7.

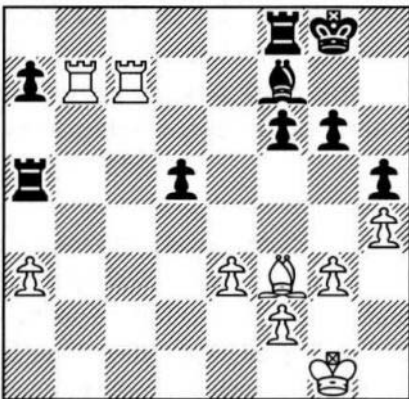
31... ♜e8 32 ♜c3!

Bareev insists upon doubling rooks on the seventh rank. After 32 ♜xe8+ ♙xe8 33 ♜b8 ♜f7 34 ♙xh5+ g6 35 ♙xg6+ ♜xg6 36 ♜xe8 ♝xa3 White should win the rook ending, but the game continuation is more appealing.

32... g6

In view of the threat 33 ♜cc7 ♜f8 34 ♙xh5!, Black defends the h5-pawn in advance.

33 ♜cc7 ♜f8 34 e3!



White isn't interested in the a7-pawn, since he is close to achieving a decisive

zugzwang. The a3-pawn is untouchable due to 35 ♙xd5!.

34... a6 35 ♜d7 f5

Or 35... ♜c5 36 ♜a7 a5 37 a4! with similar consequences.

36 ♜bc7 ♜b5 37 ♜g2 ♜a5 38 a4!

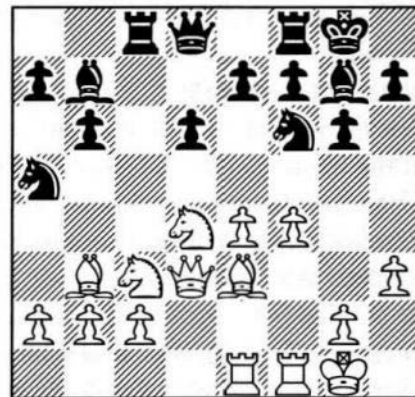
Zugzwang. Black has only a few desperate moves left.

38... d4 39 exd4 f4 40 gxf4 ♜f5 41 ♜g3 1-0

In view of 41... a5 42 ♙e4 ♜f6 43 ♙d5, transposing to an easily won pawn endgame.

Sometimes we can even consider giving up material in order to obtain the bishop pair. A typical transaction in this sense is a rook for a minor piece and a pawn, i.e. a positional exchange sacrifice. Here is one example.

Example 73
E. Mortensen-S. Kudrin
Copenhagen 1983



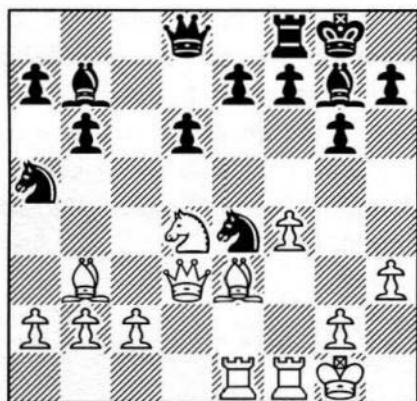
White is planning a kingside attack with moves like ♙f2-h4 followed by e4-e5 or f4-f5, but Black's next move changes the picture completely.

13... ♜xc3!

Mastering Chess Strategy

The ... Bxc3 idea is a common guest in the Open Sicilian, one that can support various goals. It may enhance an attack on a white king on c1, improve Black's central control and, when the reply b2xc3 is forced, damage White's queenside pawn structure. On this occasion, it will leave Black with a strong bishop pair, control of the h1-a8 diagonal, and a potential passed pawn on the e-file.

14 Wxc3 Dxe4 **15** Wd3



15... Dxb3 !

Exchanging White's most active minor piece, thus securing the advantage of the bishop pair.

16 axb3 **e5** **17** De2 Wa8 !

A clever way of reinforcing Black's control of the h1-a8 diagonal. Typically after an exchange sacrifice of this kind, the opponent faces problems on the squares of the same colour as his absent bishop.

18 **b4**

Preventing De4-c5 . Here and later, f5 can be met by d5 ! c3 Bd8 , intending ... d5-d4 .

18... Df6 **19** Bf2 De4 **20** Bff1 Be8 **21** Ch2 Df6 **22** Bg1

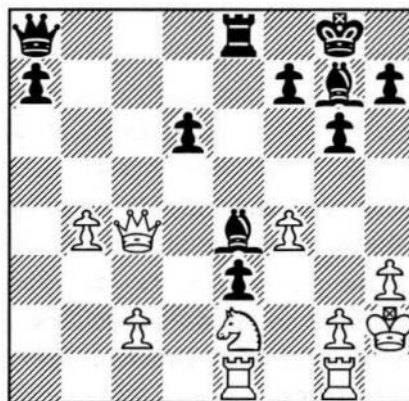
On f2 Black had prepared d5 , and if d2 ? then ... e4 followed by ... e3 . This pawn also becomes very strong

in the game.

22... Dd5 **23** Ad2 **e4** **24** Wb3 **e3** **25** Ac3 Dxc3 **26** bxc3 **b5**!

Intending ... d5-c4 .

27 **c4** bxc4 **28** Wxc4 Ae4



White managed to stop Black's plan, but the bishop has now found another stronghold.

29 Wb3 **d5** **30** **c3**

With hindsight, eliminating the dangerous passed pawn by Wxe3 Axg2 Wf2 seems like a better choice.

30... Ad3 **31** Dd4 Wb8 **32** **g3** Ac4 **33** Wd1 Ae4 **34** Wf3 Axd4 !

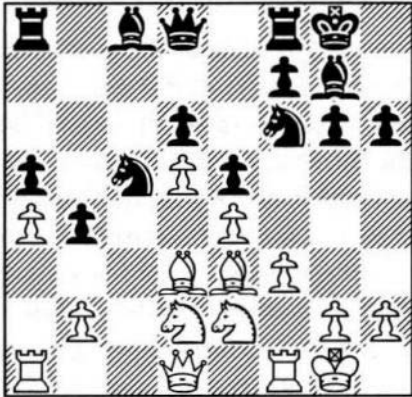
In exchange for the bishop pair, Black is able to grab a few pawns.

35 cxd4 Wxb4 **36** Ab1 Wd2+ **37** Ch1 Wxd4 **38** **f5** Ae8 **39** Ab7 We4 !

Simplest. Black soon converted his material and positional advantages into victory.

In some closed and semi-open structures the strength of the bishop pair is not noticeably felt. This often happens when defects in the pawn formation have left the enemy knights with protected squares, as in Sasikiran-Iljushin (p. 23) and Hellsten-Olesen (p. 24). Let's see yet another example on this topic.

Example 74
J.Hellsten-J.Berrocal Farina
 Santa Cruz 2005



In a typical King's Indian battle Black has just played the apparently natural 15...d7-c5?!. This gives White the chance of transposing to a structure where his knights will outshine the black bishops.

16. ♖xc5!

Damaging Black's pawn structure and creating a blockading square on c4 for the knights. Even so, in such positions White usually protects this bishop from exchanges, and I probably wouldn't have played this without prior knowledge of the old game T.V.Petrosian-S.Schweber, Stockholm Interzonal 1962, where White proceeded in a similar way.

16...dxc5 17. ♗b5!

Before installing the knight on c4 it makes sense to activate the bishop and prevent Black's tempting plan of ...d8-d6.

17...h5!

Preparing ...h6 to improve the dark-squared bishop.

18. ♖c4 ♖e8 19. ♗xe8!

Yet another strong bishop vs. knight exchange, this one also "copied" from Petro-

sian's game. It is important for White to stop 20...d6 challenging his own knight on c4.

19...♗xe8 20. ♖c1

The other knight heads for d3 or b3 in order to attack Black's weak pawns.

20...♗h6 21. ♗e1

Directed against the plan of ...a6 followed by ...xc4 and ...e3-d4.

21...♗a6 22. ♖c2 ♖h4?!

Preparing ...f4 with kingside threats, but White easily prevents this idea. More sensible was 22...xc4 23. ♖xc4 ♖d2! 24. ♗e2 ♖g5! followed by ...e3-d4, when at least Black has no "bad" pieces anymore. In the game this bishop remains a problem.

23. ♖d3 ♗ec8



24. ♗ad1

Keeping things simple. After 24. ♖ce5? c4 or 24. ♖dx5?! ♖f4 25. g3 ♖g5! 26. ♖d3 ♖xg3 the game gets unnecessarily complicated, as it does after 24. ♖b6?! c4! 25. ♖f2 ♖e7 followed by ...♖c5. However, Rybka found an even better option: 24. g3! ♖f6 (or 24...♖h3 25. ♖b6 and 25...c4? no longer works due to 26. ♖f2!) 25. ♖dx5 ♖xc4 26. ♖xc4 ♖xf3 27. ♖e2! with a tremendous positional plus for White.

24...♗ab8 25. b3 ♗xc4

Black gives up the bishop pair, aware by

now that the threats towards e5 and a5 were for real; e.g. 25...f6 26 ♖xa5 ♙xd3 27 ♜xd3 ♙f4 28 g3 ♙xg3 29 ♜e2! ♙f4 30 ♖c6 ♜b7 31 d6 and White wins.

26 ♜xc4 ♜b6 27 ♜e2!

Some prophylaxis to protect the king from a potential ...♙h6-f4.

27...♜f6 28 ♖b2!

The knight is redirected to the blockading square on c4, where it will support a future d5-d6.

28...h4?!

This lets the d-pawn roll. 28...♙f8 29 ♜d3 ♙d6 30 ♖c4 ♜a6 was more tenacious, although 31 ♜c2 followed by 32 ♜dc1 still yields White a pleasant edge.

29 ♜d3 ♙f4 30 ♖c4 ♜a6 31 d6! ♖g7 32 ♜d5!

The most technical choice which improves the queen and creates the threat of 33 d7 ♜d8 34 ♜xc5. In the game I messed things up by 32 d7?! ♜d8 33 ♖d6 ♜aa8 34 ♜b5? (a simple win was achieved by 34 ♖b7! c4 35 ♜xc4 ♜b6+ 36 ♖c5 followed by 37 ♜b5) 34...♜e6 35 ♜d5, when 35...♜xd7! 36 ♖f5+gxf5 37 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 38 ♜xd7 c4! 39 bxc4 ♜c8 would have yielded Black reasonable drawing chances.

32...♜a7

Now 33 d7? ♜d8 leaves the d-pawn exposed, as in the game. However, White has a much simpler option at his disposal.

33 ♖b6! ♜d8 34 ♜xc5

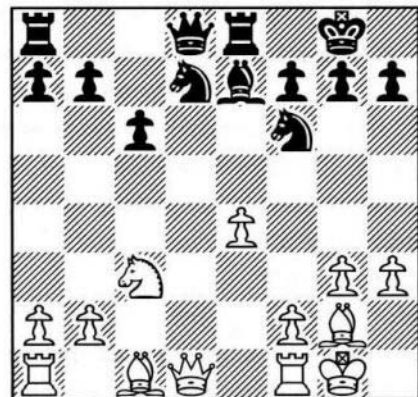
On top of his strategical advantages White enjoys an extra pawn.

In fact there are many openings where one side deliberately gives up the bishop pair for different reasons. In the Spanish Exchange Variation and the Sicilian Rosolimo, the ♙xc6 capture is a main feature, while ♙xf6 is often seen in the Ragozin Variation of the Queen's Gambit, as well as

the French Rubinstein Variation, to name a few. Black, for his part, has entire defences based on the ...♙xc3 capture, such as the Nimzo-Indian and the French Winawer. And in many lines of the Benoni and the Slav, he is happy to give up his light-squared bishop by ...♙xf3.

In positions where the owner of the bishop pair doesn't suffer from any weak squares or pawns, a main idea for his opponent is to "mess up" the game, creating threats with every move, that could eventually lead to a transformation of the position, protected squares for his knights, etc. John Watson investigated this subject quite thoroughly in his fascinating work *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy*, and it is a central theme in Chigorin's Defence, as well as in a few other openings. Here is one example.

Example 75
L.Schandorff-J.Hellsten
German League 1999



White has emerged from Réti's Opening with the bishop pair, without having made any obvious concessions. Thus Black needs to act energetically in order to avoid long-term inferiority.

13...♖b4!

Indirectly attacking the e4-pawn.

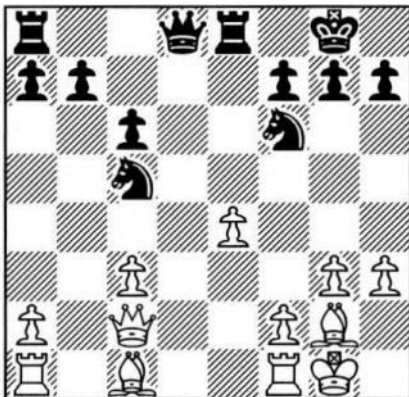
14♜c2

After 14 ♖e1?! ♗c5 15 ♜c2 ♜d3! Black obtains excellent counterplay.

14...♗xc3

The later game A.Kochyev-D.Kovaljov, St. Petersburg 1999, continued instead 14...♗c5 15 ♖d1 ♜e7 16 f3 ♗a5 17 ♗e2 ♗b6 18 ♜h2 h5! with counterplay, now that 19 h4 runs into 19...♗cxe4!? 20 fxe4 ♗g4+ 21 ♜h1 ♗f2+ 22 ♜h2 ♗g4+ with a perpetual. However, 18 ♜h1 might be a better try. In the game Black captures on c3 immediately in order to secure a protected square for his knight on c5.

15 bxc3 ♗c5



16♖d1

If 16 ♗g5!?, intending 17 ♖ad1, then 16...♜d3! 17 ♜xd3 ♗xd3 18 ♖fd1 ♗c5 seems quite playable, since 19 ♗xf6 gxf6 at any moment doesn't really do any harm to Black.

16...♜a5 17 ♖d4! ♖ad8 18 ♗d2

White has managed to defend the e4-pawn in a clever way and now prepares 19 ♖e1, stabilizing his position. Then he could consider e4-e5 or f2-f4, advancing his pawn majority.

18...♗e6!

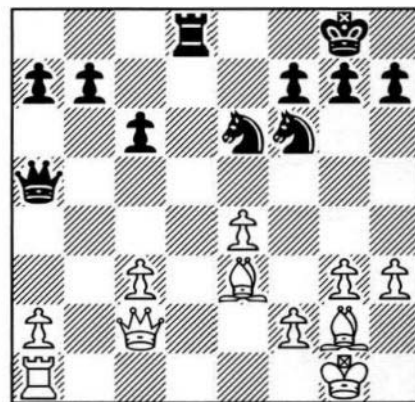
Fighting against the strong rook on d4. Pawn grabbing with 18...♗cxe4? failed to a back rank mate.

19 ♖xd8

On 19 ♖b4 ! had planned 19...♜h5!? 20 ♖e1 (or 20 ♖xb7♗c5 with activity) 20...♗c5 21 ♖d4 ♜g6!, hitting the e4-pawn from a different angle.

19...♖xd8 20 ♗e3

Preparing f2-f4. The immediate 20 f4? fails to 20...♜c5+ 21 ♜h2 ♜f2 etc.



20...h5!

Black finds new ways of "messing up" the game. Now his plan is 21...h4 22 g4 ♜e5 followed by ...♗f4, exploiting the newly created protected square. If White prevents this by 21 h4, then 21...♗g4 with new threats.

21 f4 h4 22 g4 ♗c5!

Installing the threat of 23...♖d3. White can't avoid this by 24 ♜h2 ♖d3 25 ♗xc5? due to 25...♖xc3 followed by ...♖xc5.

23 ♗d4

Both 23 g5?! ♗h5 24 ♜f2 ♗d3! 25 ♜xh4 ♜xc3 26 ♖f1 g6 and 23 e5?! ♗d5 24 ♗d2 ♗e6! 25 ♖f1 ♜c5+ 26 ♜h1 ♗e3 leave White under some pressure. With the game continuation he avoids such counterplay, but also leaves the f4-pawn undefended, something that Black immediately exploits.

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23... ♖e6! 24 ♗e3

Or 24 ♗xf6?! gxf6 and White's dark square weaknesses are a much more relevant factor than the doubled f-pawns.

24... ♖c5

Other moves give White time to consolidate by 25 ♗f1. Hence a repetition of moves

is logical.

25 ♗d4 ♖e6 26 ♗e3 ♖c5

Draw.

For the related exercises to this section, see page 315.

Chapter Three

Exchanges

The exchange of pieces is an important idea at any stage of the game, one that can have a huge impact on the strategical balance. The following examples have been categorized according to the principal objective being supported by the exchange. However, it should be noted that sometimes one single exchange can support several objectives.

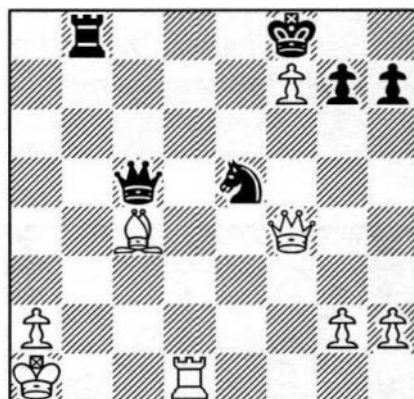
Realizing a material advantage

One of the first strategical principles taught to new chess players is that when you have more material, exchange pieces! Thus we are able to reduce the opponent's counterplay and simplify to an endgame, where the material advantage can be more easily realized. Let's see a few examples.

Example 76
Z.Efimenko-R.Vaganian
German League 2005

In this late middlegame position White is two pawns up but his king is rather ex-

posed on a1. Efimenko finds a technical solution.



34 ♛d4!

Forcing a queen exchange that will finish off Black's counterplay and produce a superior endgame. When carrying out such exchanges, we should be ready to return some of the extra material if needed, like the f7-pawn in this case. In contrast, the greedy 34 ♙b3? failed to 34... ♛c3+ 35 ♚b1 ♜xb3+! 36 axb3 ♛xb3+ with a perpetual.

34... ♛xd4+

After 34... ♛e7 35 ♙b3 Black's counter-

play is gone, while 34...♖xc4? fails to 35 ♜d6+ ♜xf7 36 ♜xb8 ♜c3+ 37 ♜b2 etc.

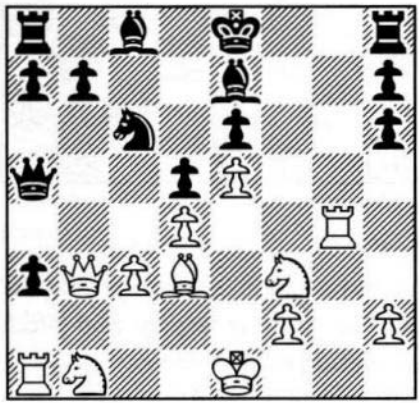
35 ♜xd4 ♜xc4 36 ♜xc4 ♜xf7 37 a4!

Passed pawns should move forward! In the game, afflicted by heavy time trouble, Efimenko preferred 37 ♜e4?!, when Black could have put up some resistance by 37...♜d8! 38 ♜e2 ♜a8!, hindering the advance of the a-pawn – Meyer/Efimenko.

37...♜e6 38 ♜a2

White wins by bringing up his king; e.g. 38...♜b7 39 ♜a3 ♜d5 40 ♜c2 ♜a7 41 ♜b4 ♜b7+ 42 ♜c3 (42 ♜a5 is also possible) 42...♜c7+ 43 ♜d3 ♜a7 (after 43...♜xc2 44 ♜xc2 ♜c4 45 a5 the white king is first to reach the kingside) 44 ♜a2 ♜a5 45 ♜a1! with a position reminiscent of the famous game A.Alekhine-J.R.Capablanca, World Championship (game 34), Buenos Aires 1927.

Example 77
R.Djurhuus-J.Hellsten
Asker 1997



White is two pawns down but is close to recovering one of them and enjoys a fair amount of activity for the other one. His next moves might be ♜xa3, ♜a2 and ♜b5 with some initiative.

13...♜b6!

Looking for a queen exchange to reduce White's initiative and lead the game into an endgame with an extra pawn.

14 ♜c2

After 14 ♜d1? ♜b2 15 ♜bd2 ♜xc3 the white queenside collapses, while 14 ♜b5 can be met by 14...♜d7 15 ♜xa3 a6! 16 ♜a4 ♜c8 and White is in trouble.

14...♜b2!

In the same spirit of the previous move. Now the queen exchange is inevitable.

15 ♜xb2 axb2 16 ♜a2 ♜d7 17 ♜xb2 0-0-0 18 ♜bd2 ♜dg8!

As often happens, a material advantage is transformed into a positional one, or vice versa. In this case, Black returns the second pawn in order to swap the opponent's most active piece.

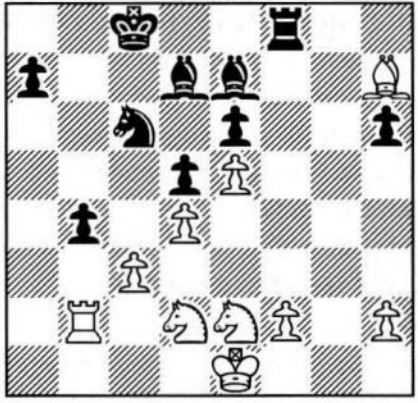
19 ♜xg8+ ♜xg8 20 ♜xh7 ♜f8 21 ♜g1

It is not easy to find any prospects for White's minor pieces.

21...b5! 22 ♜e2

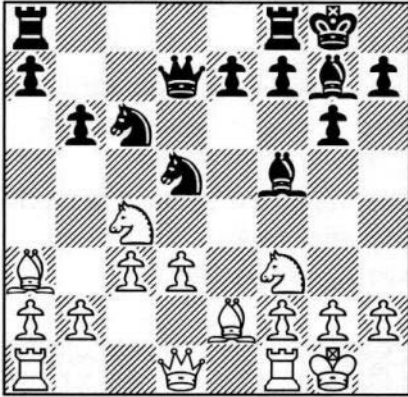
Or 22 ♜xb5 ♜xd4 23 ♜b1 ♜c6 and the e5-pawn is in trouble.

22...b4



Hitting the base of the pawn chain. Thanks to the bishop pair, the passed a-pawn and White's weaknesses, Black is clearly better.

Example 78
E.Sveshnikov-D.King
 Bern 1992



Black has sacrificed a pawn in return for a slight initiative. He is now planning either ...b5-b4, intimidating the bishop on a3 and softening up White's queenside, or 15...d4 with kingside activity and pressure on d3. Sveshnikov resorts to a simple idea, always worthy of consideration in positions with a material advantage: swap off pieces.

15 dxe3!

Thus White ensures at least one piece exchange, and avoids the ...b5-b4 advance being effected with tempo.

15...d4

After 15...dxe3?! 16 fxe3, followed by e3-e4, White seizes the centre, while 15...e6 16 dxd5 .e6xd5 17 d4 ffd8 18 d2! also favours him, now that 18...e5? runs into 19 c4 .e6 20 d5.

16 dxf5 ♖xf5 17 g3!

Looking for more exchanges. Not 17 ♖e1 ♜fd8 18 d4 e5 19 .e6 ♜c8!, when 20 .e6xc6 ♜xc6 21 dxe5?? fails to 21...♜xg2 mate.

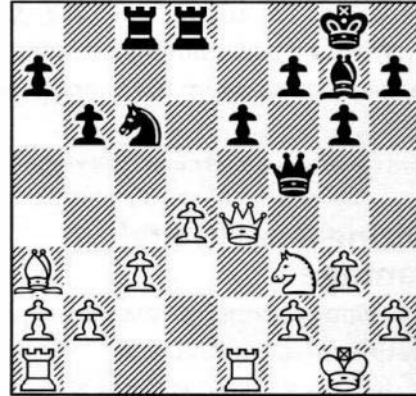
17...dxe2+

Otherwise the knight will just become misplaced.

18 ♜xe2 ♜fd8 19 d4 ♜ac8

Or 19...e5 20 dxe5 dxe5 21 dxe5 .e6xe5 22 ♜fe1 with a sound extra pawn.

20 ♜fe1 e6 21 ♜e4!



Sveshnikov continues with his simplification policy.

21...♜xe4?!

Being a pawn down, queen exchanges should be rejected unless there is a good reason. Black could count on more practical chances after 21...♜a5, when White still has a slight problem with the bishop on a3.

22 ♜xe4 ♜d7

Black covers the e7-square, aware that after 22...d4 23 .e6! ♜d7 24 .e6g5 d4c4 25 ♜e2 White may soon start to advance his queenside pawn majority, with moves such as ♜d1, .e6c1, b2-b3, .e6b2 and c3-c4.

23 b3!?

Avoiding the ...d4a5-c4 plan and enabling .e6a3-b2. In contrast, the game continued 23 ♜ae1 d4a5 24 d2 ♜d5 (24...e5! is also interesting) and White's queenside was somewhat paralysed, although Sveshnikov won in the end.

23...e5

A temporary pawn sacrifice to create some counterplay. Besides, the exchange of pawns tends to favour the defending side.

24 dxe5

Another good option is 24 ♖xe5 ♜xe5 25 dxe5 ♜xc3 26 ♙d6 ♜c2 27 ♜d4!, parrying the threat of 27...♜xd6 while preparing a2-a4 and b4-b5.

24...♜d3 25 ♜g2 ♜xc3 26 ♜ae1

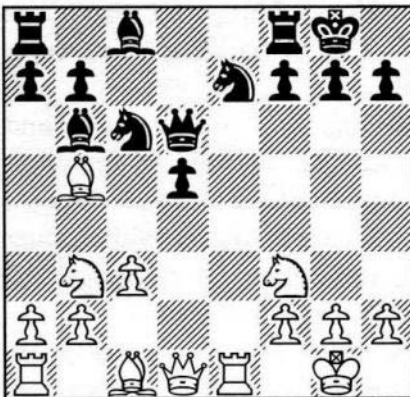
Preparing to answer 26...♜c2 by 27 ♜1e2. With ♙a3-d6 coming up, White enjoys a sound extra pawn in the endgame.

For the related exercises, see page 316.

Realizing a positional advantage

The previous examples showed how the realization of a material advantage was facilitated by exchanges. This also applies to positional advantages, such as the bishop pair (compare Miles-Sunye Neto, p. 86), weak points in the enemy pawn structure, a mobile pawn majority, etc. Let's see a few examples.

Example 79
A.Kharlov-A.Villavicencio
Martinez
 Linares 1997



The structure with an isolated queen's pawn is typical for this topic. White is

happy to swap pieces since the weak d5-pawn will make any endgame favourable for him. Black, on the other hand, should avoid exchanges and try to exploit the dynamic advantages of the isolated pawn, such as more space and the strong squares on e4 and c4.

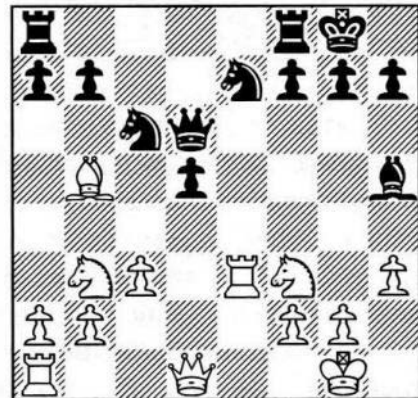
12 ♙e3!

A key move, in order to trade bishops before Black manages to play 12...♞f5.

12...♙xe3

Black has no choice since 12...♙c7? loses material after 13 ♙c5!.

13 ♜xe3 ♙g4 14 h3 ♙h5



15 ♙e2!

Preparing more exchanges.

15...♜ad8 16 ♙fd4! ♞xd4?

16...♙g6 was correct, keeping more pieces on the board, when 17 ♞d2 followed by ♜d1 or ♜e1 leads to a slight white advantage.

17 ♞xd4 ♙xe2 18 ♞xe2 ♞c6 19 ♜d1!

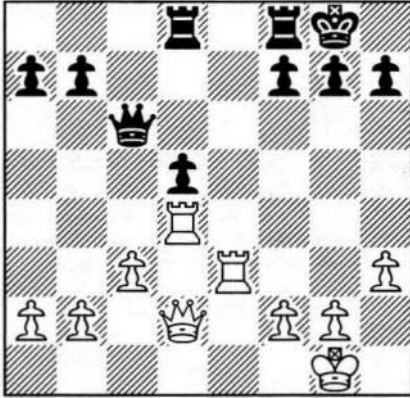
The last piece is brought into play with focus on the d5-pawn. In contrast, the further exchange by 19 ♞xc6?! permits 19...bxc6!, when the d5-pawn is no longer a problem and might even turn into a passed pawn after ...c6-c5 and ...d5-d4.

19...♞xd4?!

Maintaining the tension with 19...♞d7

seems better. If now 20 ♖ed3, then 20...♗fe8 preparing ...♘e5-c4 with some activity.

20 ♖xd4 ♜c6 21 ♜d2!



Evidently, the absence of minor pieces on the board has made it easier for White to increase the pressure on the d5-pawn.

21...♗d6 22 ♖ed3 ♗fd8 23 c4!

A typical tactical resource in the fight against isolated pawns.

23...h6 24 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 25 ♖xd5

A pawn up, White is happy to exchange as many pieces as he can.

25...♖xd5?!

25...♖e8 26 ♗d8 h5 was preferable when, contrary to the game, White still has to work for a while to create a passed pawn.

26 cxd5!

The apparently logical 26 ♜xd5? ♜xd5 27 cxd5 fails to 27...♗f8 and Black's king soon eliminates the extra pawn.

26...♜d6 27 ♜d4!

Centralization is a key idea in queen endings, in order to exploit the range of this piece fully.

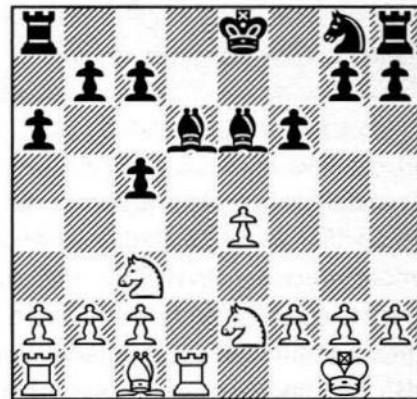
27...a6 28 ♗f1 ♗f8 29 ♗e2 ♜e7+ 30 ♜e3 ♜b4?

In a difficult endgame Black overlooks the opponent's idea.

31 ♜a3! ♜xa3 32 bxa3

Now the queen exchange is correct since the d5-pawn can be defended. The pawn ending concluded 32...♗e7 33 ♜d3 ♜d6 34 ♜c4 b6 35 a4 h5 36 h4 g6 37 g3 f6 38 f4 ♜d7 39 a5! bxa5 40 ♜c5 a4 41 a3 and Black resigned.

Example 80
S.Brynell-K.Moberg
Gothenburg 1996



This structure, typical of the Spanish Exchange variation, is another case where virtually any piece trade clearly favours one of the players. Black possesses the bishop pair but also suffers from a defective pawn structure, in the sense that his queenside pawn majority cannot be easily converted into a passed pawn. Thus White's next move suggests itself.

11 ♗f4!

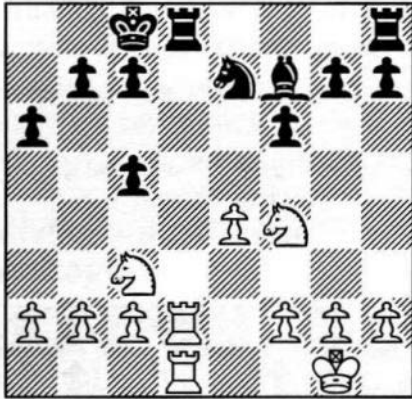
Depriving Black of the bishop pair, and taking the game one step further towards an endgame, where the pawn structure speaks in White's favour. For this reason, contemporary games in this variation usually see Black postponing or omitting ...♗f8-d6.

11...0-0-0 12 ♗d2 ♘e7

Mastering Chess Strategy

Or 12...♙xf4 13 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 14 ♜xf4 followed by ♜d1+ with similar consequences.

13 ♜ad1 ♙xf4 14 ♜xf4 ♙f7



15 f3

A natural move that prepares ♗f2-e3, but 15 ♖xd8+! ♜xd8 16 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 17 f3 was more precise – Brynell. By exchanging both pairs of rooks, White reduces the opponent's counterplay and avoids any drawish rook endgames.

15...♖xd8 16 ♖xd8 ♜d8?

16...♜e8!, keeping the rook on the board, was preferable for reasons explained in the previous note.

17 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 18 ♗f2

Now White has a small but enduring advantage thanks to his mobile pawn majority on the kingside.

18...♗d7 19 ♗e3 ♗d6 20 ♜d3

Clearing the way for the f-pawn.

20...♙g6?!

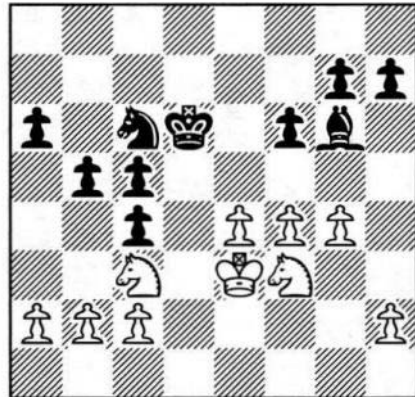
A passive diagonal for the bishop. 20...b5 was more natural, trying to make progress on the queenside. Now the tempting 21 e5+ fxe5 22 ♜e4+ doesn't really achieve much after 22...♗d5! 23 ♜dxc5 a5. Thus 21 a3!?, safeguarding the a-pawn, might be a better try and if 21...♜c6, then White plays 22 ♜e2, preventing the knight jump to d4 –

Brynell (who kindly supplied me with some comments on this game).

21 g4!

Gaining some space before advancing the f- and e-pawns.

21...c4 22 ♜e1 c5 23 f4 b5 24 ♜f3 ♜c6



25 e5+!

Using some minor tactics Brynell finally manages to break through on the kingside.

25...fxe5 26 f5 ♙e8 27 ♜e4+ ♗e7

If Black hangs on to the pawn by 27...♗d5, then 28 f6! g6 29 ♜fg5 ♜d8 30 ♜xh7 gives White a huge edge thanks to the strong passed pawn.

28 c3!

Less technical was 28 ♜xc5?! ♜b4 with counterplay.

28...a5

Black has run out of active plans and from now on White just has to advance his kingside majority to achieve the passed pawn. The c5-pawn can wait.

29 h4 h5 30 g5! g6?

Leaving the opponent with a protected passed pawn can't be right, but there was no satisfactory defence to 31 f6+ anyway.

31 f6+ ♗e6 32 a4!

Before taking on c5, White softens up the c4-pawn.

32...b4 33 ♜xc5+ ♗d5 34 ♜b7!

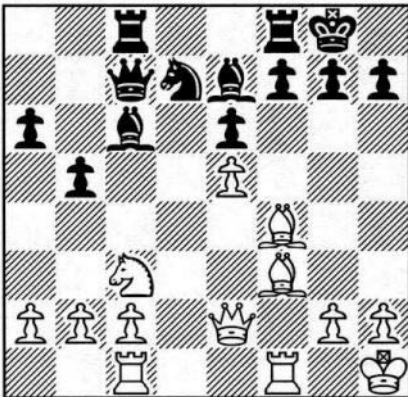
Tying the black knight to the defence of the a-pawn.

34...♙f7 35 ♖d2 bxc3 36 bxc3 ♜d8?

Black resigned without waiting for 37 ♜xd8. In any case, even without this time-trouble blunder, he was lost in view of the inevitable ♜e4(xc4)-d6.

Of course there are also pawn structures where the simplifications tend to favour Black. One case is the Open Sicilian, where White, in the event of an unsuccessful attack, often ends up in an inferior endgame. Here is one simple example.

Example 81
S.Bouaziz-V.Jansa
Sarajevo 1979



By means of an earlier e4-e5 advance White gained some space and took steps to a future kingside attack. However, from a long-term perspective the e5-pawn is weak, while the queenside pawn structure also favours Black, whose pawn on b5 restricts the white majority. In this context, Jansa's subsequent play is easy to understand.

17...♙xf3

Also interesting is 17...b4!?, asking the question of the knight; e.g. 18 ♜e4?! ♜xe5

or 18 ♙xc6 ♜xc6 19 ♜e4 ♜c4! in the same spirit as the game continuation.

18 ♙xf3

After 18 ♜xf3?! ♜xe5 19 ♜g3 f6 Black will have a clear advantage in the endgame due to the backward c-pawn.

18...♜c4!

A key move, in order to transpose to a favourable endgame. Less clear is 18...b4?! 19 ♜e4 ♜xe5 20 ♙g3 with ideas like ♜h5 and ♜g5.

19 ♜xc4

Or 19 ♜f2!? b4 20 b3 ♜c5!, insisting on the queen swap; e.g. 21 ♜e4 ♜xf2 22 ♙xf2 ♜b6 followed by ♜d5, with a comfortable edge.

19...♙xc4 20 ♙d1 ♜b6 21 ♙e3 ♙c5!

The bishop exchange will further emphasize White's problems with the e5-pawn.

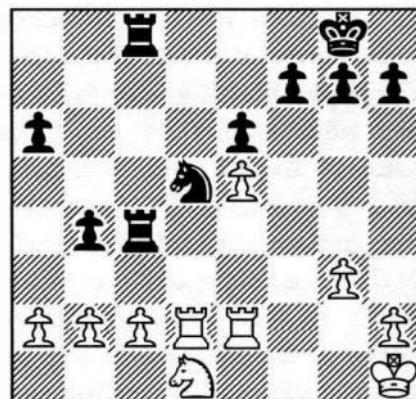
22 ♙d2?!

22 a3 was a lesser evil, avoiding the course of the game, when Black could consider a timely ...a6-a5 followed by ...b5-b4.

22...b4 23 ♜d1 ♙xe3 24 ♙xe3

After 24 ♜xe3? ♙e4 the e5-pawn falls.

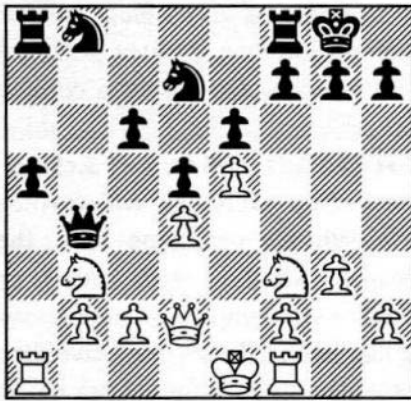
24...♜d5 25 ♙ee2 ♙fc8 26 g3



White is doomed to passivity and Jansa proceeds with the creation of a new weakness.

26...♖c5! 27 ♔g2 h5 28 ♕f3 ♖a5
 Winning a pawn.
 29 ♖e3 ♗xe3 30 ♖xe3 ♖xa2 31 ♖b3 a5
 Black soon realized his extra pawn.

Example 82
Y.Seirawan-Alexa.Ivanov
 US Championship, Salt Lake City
 1999



Black is about to take a major decision:
 to exchange the queens or not?

15...♚xd2+?

Now White obtains a superior endgame thanks to Black's weak queenside pawn structure. Correct was 15...♚c4!, sacrificing a pawn for counterplay with focus on the exposed white king. There can follow 16 ♖xa5 (or 16 ♖xa5 ♖a6!, heading for b4) 16...♚b5 17 b4 ♖a6 (17...f6!? is another interesting option) 18 c3 c5! 19 dxc5 (after 19 bxc5?! ♗c7 the knight on a5 is in trouble) 19...♖axc5 20 ♖d4 ♖d3+ 21 ♗d1 (or 21 ♗e2 ♖c1+ 22 ♗e1 ♖d3+ with a perpetual) 21...♚a6 22 b5 ♚b6 with excellent compensation.

16 ♗xd2 a4 17 ♖e1!

Heading for the protected square at c5.

17...f6?!

17...♖a6! was correct, preventing the ♖d3-c5 manoeuvre. After 18 ♖c5 ♖xc5 19 dxc5 ♖d7 20 ♖d3, preparing ♖a3 and ♖fa1, White has a slight edge due to the weak a4-pawn, but nothing more.

18 ♖d3 fxe5 19 dxe5

With a clear grip on the queenside.

19...♗f7 20 f4 ♗e7 21 h4!

Preventing the ...g7-g5 counter-strike. Here, or later, 21...h6 is well met by 22 h5, freezing the pawn structure.

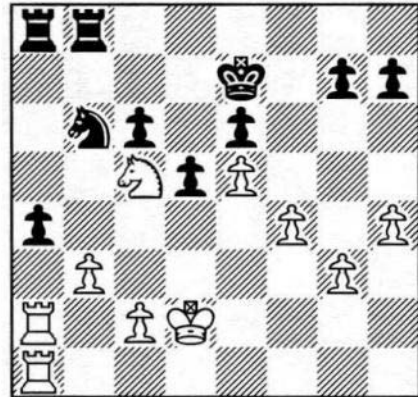
21...♖c8 22 ♖bc5

Just in time, before Black goes ...c6-c5. Now the a4-pawn has turned into a serious problem.

22...♖b6 23 ♖a2 ♖8d7

Or 23...♖c7 24 ♖fa1 ♖ca7 25 b3! a3 26 c3 intending ♖b4-c2.

24 ♖fa1 ♖xc5 25 ♖xc5 ♖cb8 26 b3!



The cleanest way of conquering the a4-pawn. 26 ♖xa4?! ♖xa4 27 ♖xa4 ♖xa4 28 ♖xa4 ♖xb2 is less clear.

26...axb3?

Any other move allows 27 ♖xa4 with a decisive endgame plus, but now Black gets much bigger problems after 27 ♖a7+! ♖xa7 28 ♖xa7+ ♗e8 29 cxb3. In fact, Ivanov resigned without waiting for 27 ♖a7+.

For the related exercises to this section, see page 317.

Eliminating key pieces

In the previous examples we saw how virtually any exchange favoured the player with a positional advantage. More common, however, is the situation where one side is looking to trade off a specific enemy piece. The motivation can either be long-term (e.g. to leave the opponent with the "bad" bishop) or short-term (e.g. get rid of his most active piece). Here we will have a look at the first case.

Example 83
J.Piket-J.Timman
 Dutch Championship,
 Amsterdam 1996



In some structures the pawn formation has such an impact on the range of the bishops that we can easily talk about "good" and "bad" bishops. In the position above, White uses a small tactical trick in order to exchange his "bad" bishop for the opponents "good" one, which will reduce Black's control over the light squares.

12 ♗h3! ♗xh3

After 12...♗f7?! the bishop on h3 is hardly a bad piece anymore, and it even helps White in winning a pawn by 13 ♖g4!

g6 14 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 15 ♗xd7+ ♗xd7 16 fxe5 ♗xc4 17 exf6! – Piket.

13 ♖h5+ g6 14 ♖xh3

Thanks to the bishop swap, the white queen now controls the whole h3-c8 diagonal, with particular focus on the weak e6-square.

14...♗b6 15 fxe5! fxe5

After 15...♗xc4? 16 exf6 White wins a pawn, while 15...♗xe5?! 16 ♗xe5 ♖xe5? runs into 17 ♗f4 ♖h5 18 ♖e6 with a strong initiative. In conclusion, the timely 15 fxe5 forced Black to open the f-file.

16 ♖e6 ♗xc4 17 ♖xc4

An interesting alternative was 17 ♖f7+! ♗d7 18 ♖xc4, in order to temporarily displace Black's king. Now if 18...♖d6 19 ♗f3 ♖e6, challenging the active white queen, then 20 ♖d5+! keeps up the pressure.

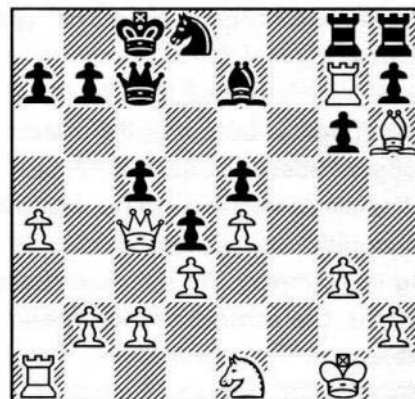
17...0-0-0 18 ♗h6

Activating the bishop and preventing 18...♗h(d)f8.

18...♗dg8!

By creating the threat of 19...g5 and 20...♗g6, Black prevents the tempting manoeuvre ♗f3-g5. He also vacates d8 to the knight, from where it will cover the sensitive e6 and f7 squares.

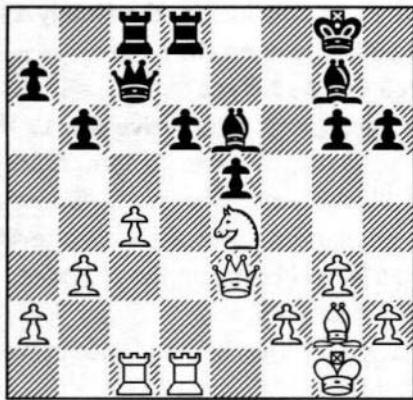
19 ♗f7 ♗d8 20 ♗g7



White is slightly better thanks to his su-

perior bishop and light square control. The game continued 20...♖xg7 21.♙xg7 ♖e8 22 ♜f3 ♙d6 23 ♙h6 ♜f7 24 ♞d2 ♜xc4 25 ♞xc4 ♜d7 26 ♜f1 ♞e6 27 h4!, intending h4-h5, and Piket eventually won.

Example 84
V.Smyslov-A.Denker
 USSR-USA match, Moscow 1946



The principle of “good” and “bad” bishops isn’t limited to closed structures. In the position above, we can observe that Black’s light-squared bishop enjoys a great range and is useful in controlling the weak square on d5. In contrast, its colleague on g7 is restricted by its own pawns. Thus White’s next move in this position isn’t hard to predict.

24 ♞c3!

Intending 25 ♙d5 in order to exchange the opponent’s good bishop. Please note that the straightforward 24 ♖d3?, intending to double rooks, runs into 24...d5! with strong counterplay. On the other hand, 24 ♖c3!? with the same intention seems fully playable.

24...♜e7!

The prophylactic 24...♜h7 can be met by 25 ♙e4!, followed by h4-h5 and ♜d3, with

pressure on the g6-pawn – Yusupov/Smyslov. Even so, this must be better than the text, where Black is reduced to a typical “good knight vs. bad bishop” scenario.

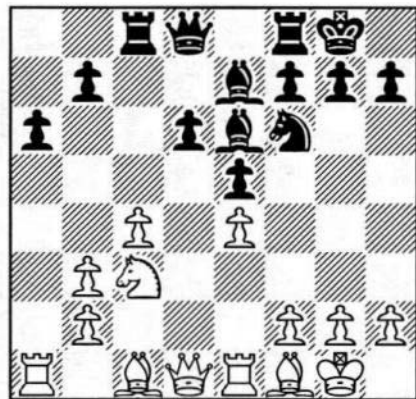
25 ♙d5! ♜h7 26 ♙xe6 ♜xe6 27 ♖d3

In the absence of Black’s light-squared bishop White has an easier job attacking the weak pawn on d6. Besides, his knight can no longer be exchanged.

27...♖c7 28 ♖cd1 ♖f7 29 ♞e4 ♙f8 30 ♖d5!

Preparing ♖1d3 and ♜d2 with strong pressure on d6. Smyslov later converted his clear advantage into victory.

Example 85
E.Geller-E.Sveshnikov
 Moscow 1995



Now let’s see the exchange of bishops in a more defensive context. Just like in the previous example, Black is suffering slightly from a weak backward pawn on d6 and a passive dark-squared bishop. Sveshnikov finds an excellent solution.

14...♞e8!

Preparing ...♙g5 in order to get rid of the “bad” bishop. 14...♞d7?!, with the same idea, is less appropriate since the d6-pawn will be hanging, but 14...h6! intending ...♞h7 and ...♙g5 was interesting as well.

15 ♖d5

The restrictive 15 ♗h5 can be met by 15...g6 16 ♗h6 f5! with counterplay.

15...♗g5 16 ♗xg5

On 16 ♗e3 Black could try 16...♗xe3 17 ♗xe3 ♗xd5! 18 ♗xd5 ♗b6 intending ...♖c7-e6-d4, when it is White who will suffer from a “bad” bishop.

16...♗xg5 17 b4

By this advance White clears the third rank for his rooks and prepares to meet 17...♗xd5 18 ♗xd5 ♗c6 (intending ...♖c7-e6) with 19 b5!. Thus in the game Black directs his attention to the kingside.

17...f5!? 18 exf5 ♗xf5 19 ♖a3 ♗d8 20 ♗g3

Preferable was 20 ♗c3 ♗f7 21 g3! ♖f6 22 ♗g2 with a slight edge – Belov/Baburin.

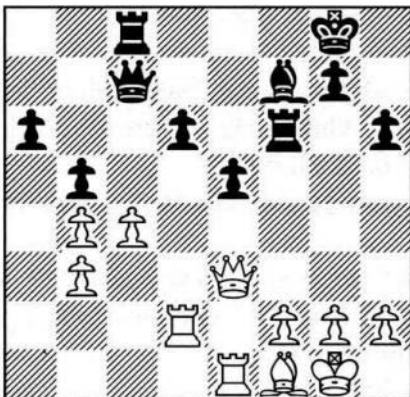
20...♗f7 21 b3 ♖f6

Challenging the strong enemy knight.

22 ♖xf6+ ♗xf6 23 ♗d2 ♗c7 24 ♗d3 ♗f7 25 ♗e3

25 ♗d1 seemed more logical, but Geller may not have liked 25...♗h5!? 26 f3 ♗b6+ 27 ♗h1 e4 with complications.

25...h6 26 ♗d2 b5!

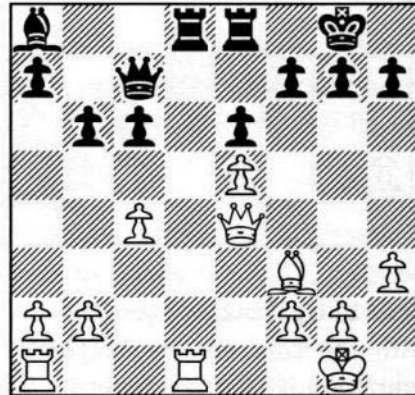


By this dynamic blow Black finally gets rid of his backward pawn on d6.

27 cxb5 axb5 28 ♗xb5 ♗b8 29 ♗d3 ♗xb4

With full equality. The game was soon drawn.

Example 86
A.Karpov-J.Lautier
Biel 1992



Here is a more complex example on the subject of leaving the opponent with “bad” pieces. Optically White appears to be much better thanks to his space advantage and the passive bishop on a8. However, a closer look reveals that if Black just manages to play ...c6-c5, then his bishop wakes up and his pawn structure gets in order.

19 ♗xd8!

By exchanging the four rooks Karpov aims to leave the black bishop undefended, so that the ...c6-c5 advance won't work tactically. It is of less importance that Black gains temporary command of the open file.

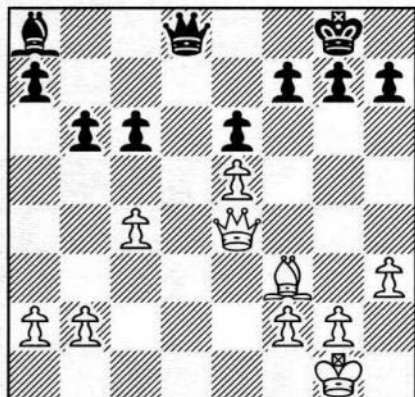
19...♗xd8 20 ♗d1! ♗xd1+

On 20...♗c8 White could switch his focus to the d-file by 21 ♗d6! c5 22 ♗d3 ♗xf3 23 ♗d7! ♗b8 24 ♗xf3, when the control of the open file and the 7th rank ensures a long-term advantage.

21 ♗xd1 ♗d8 22 ♗f3!

Again preventing ...c6-c5. Lautier now wins a pawn, but when making his 19th move Karpov must have already estimated that his positional grip more than compen-

sates for a slight material disadvantage.



22...♙d2 23 b3 ♚xa2 24 b4!

With the concrete idea of b4-b5. The straightforward 24 ♙d4?! promises less due to 24...♙a3, e.g. 25 ♙d7 ♙a1+! 26 ♙d1 h6 or 25 ♙d8+ ♙f8 26 ♙c7 c5.

24...♙a1+ 25 ♙h2 ♙a6

Heading for the eighth rank. The more active 25...♙a3 permits 26 c5! ♙c3 (or 26...bxc5 27 b5! ♙a5 28 bxc6 ♙c7 29 ♙d3! with 30 ♙d7 next) 27 cxb6 axb6 28 b5, followed by 29 bxc6, creating a dangerous passed pawn.

26 ♙d4

After 26 b5?! ♙c8 27 bxc6 h6, followed by 28...a5, Black obtains counterplay – Karpov.

26...♙c8 27 c5!

This advance leaves the “bad” bishop even more restricted, and transforms the c6-pawn into an eternal weakness.

27...bxc5 28 ♙xc5 a6 29 ♙e7 g6 30 h4!

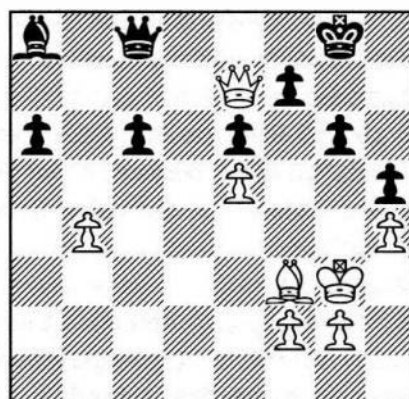
A typical idea to soften up the enemy kingside or create tactical motifs by h5-h6.

30...h5?

A natural, but bad move that lets the white king enter on the dark squares.

30...♙b8 31 ♙h3 h6! was necessary, in order to answer 32 h5 with 32...g5.

31 ♙g3!



31...♙b7

Black searches for relief in a queen exchange. In any case, 31...♙b8 32 ♙f4, with the plan ♙e4, f2-f3 and g2-g4, would force him to do so sooner or later in order to save his king. On the other hand, after 31...c5 32 bxc5 ♙xf3 33 gxf3 the c-pawn is likely to decide the game; e.g. 33...a5 34 ♙d6 followed by c5-c6 and ♙d7, or 33...♙c6 34 ♙d8+! ♙g7 35 ♙b6 with 36 c6 next.

32 ♙xb7!

An excellent decision. Despite the pawn minus, Karpov has nothing against exchanges, as long as the black bishop stays on the board. From now on the passive state of this piece leaves Black helpless against White’s plan of creating a passed pawn on the h-file.

32...♙xb7 33 ♙f4 ♙f8 34 ♙g5 ♙e7 35 ♙e4! ♙a8

Or 35...♙c8 36 ♙xc6 ♙d7 37 ♙xd7! ♙xd7 38 ♙f6! ♙e8 39 f3, followed by 40 g4 with an easy win.

36 f3 ♙b7

White also wins after 36...c5 37 ♙xa8 cxb4 38 ♙c6 b3 39 ♙a4 b2 40 ♙c2 – Karpov.

37 g4 ♙a8

37...hxc4 38 fxc4 followed by 39 h5 is equally hopeless. Whenever Black moves his king to f8, the white one enters on f6.

38 gxh5 gxh5 39 f4 ♖b7 40 ♕f3 ♕a8 41 ♜xh5

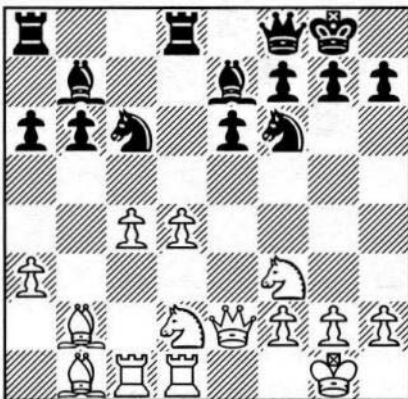
Clearing the path for the passed pawn. Black resigned.

For the related exercises to this section, see page 319.

Facilitating an attack

Now let's move on to exchanges realized on a more short-term basis. When attacking, the exchange of the opponent's defending pieces can have a great impact on the battle. Here are some examples.

Example 87
J.Hellsten-L.Johannessen
Asker 1997



In a typical structure with hanging pawns White is eager to start an attack, exploiting his strong bishops on b2 and b1.

17 ♖e4!

Intending to swap off the main defender of Black's kingside, the knight on f6. After that the advance d4-d5 would leave the king on g8 rather unprotected.

17...♗a5

Black meets the threat of 18 d5 in ad-

vance. It is hard to find any good alternatives; e.g. 17...♗e4 18 ♜xe4 g6 19 d5! exd5 20 cxd5 ♗a5 21 ♜d4 f6 22 ♜xb6 wins a piece, or 17...♗e8 18 d5! exd5 19 cxd5 ♗a5 20 ♖eg5 g6 21 ♕a2! (preparing d5-d6) 21...♗d6 22 ♜c7 with a devastating attack.

18d5!

Anyway. This forces the knight exchange under favourable conditions, whereas 18 ♗xf6+? ♕xf6 would obviously have eased Black's task.

18...exd5

18...♗e4 19 ♜xe4 g6 20 ♜e5 was again hopeless for Black, while 18...♗d7 permits 19 dxe6 fxe6 20 ♖eg5 with decisive threats.

19 ♗xf6+ gxf6

Or 19...♕xf6 20 ♜d3!, winning the bishop on f6. In the game the doubled pawns leave Black's kingside undefendable. 20 ♖h4 d4 21 ♖f5 ♕c5 22 ♜g4+ ♖h8 23 ♜h4

With a decisive double threat at f6 and h7. Black resigned.

Example 88
A.Morozevich-A.Beliavsky
European Team Championship,
Heraklion 2007



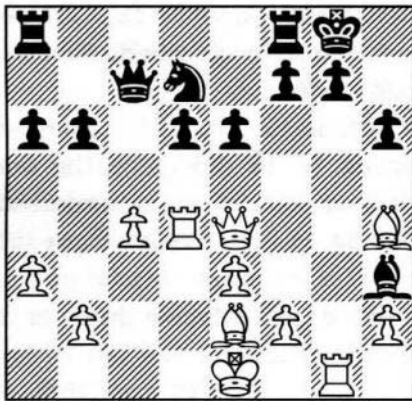
In the previous example you might have noticed that the black knight on c6 was unable to help the defence. Here it is much better placed on d7 but, even so, the same method of exchanging its colleague on f6 proved effective.

17 ♖e4! ♜xe4

17...♙f5? was impossible due to 18 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 19 ♙xf6 followed by 20 ♖xg7+.

18 ♗xe4

Now the pressure along the g-file is worrying for Black.



18...♙f5

One of several insufficient continuations. Both 18...♖ae8 19 ♗f4 ♙f5 20 ♗xd6! and 18...e5 19 ♙d3! f5 20 ♗d5+ ♖h8 21 ♗xd6 let White recover the pawn with a favourable endgame thanks to the two bishops. Perhaps 18...♞e5 was a better choice, although after 19 ♙f6 ♞g6 20 ♗f3! e5 (both 20...gxf6 21 ♖h4! and 20...♙f5 21 e4 are equally unpleasant for Black) 21 ♖h4 ♙d7 22 ♗h5, preparing ♙xg7 as well as ♙d3, White enjoys a strong attack.

19 ♗g2 ♙g6

After 19...g5? 20 ♙xg5! hxg5 21 ♗xg5+ ♙g6 22 ♗h6, intending ♖h4, the black king is doomed.

20 ♙e7 d5

Believsky hands over the exchange,

aware that 20...♖fe8 21 ♙xd6 ♗d8 22 ♙d3! would have been even more unpleasant for him.

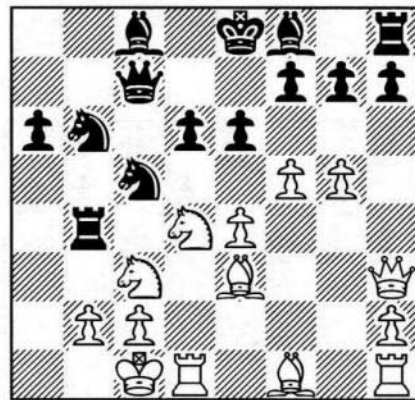
21 ♙xf8 ♜xf8 22 h4 ♗e5 23 ♗g3!

An idea already familiar to us: exchange pieces in order to realize a material advantage.

23...♗f6 24 h5 ♙f5 25 ♗c7 b5 26 ♗c6! ♖d8 27 cxd5

A clear exchange up, Morozevich won the game without major problems.

Example 89
V.Meijers-L.Bruzon Bautista
Linares 2001



Here is a similar case with reversed colours and flanks. In a tense Sicilian battle, Bruzon accelerates his attack with a knight exchange.

16...♞ba4!

Eliminating the main defender of White's queenside, as well as of the e4-pawn.

17 ♞xa4

Here and on the next move 17 fxe6?! fxe6 just gives White an additional problem with a potential ...e6-e5.

17...♖xa4

Threatening 18...♖a1+ 19 ♔d2 ♕xe4+.

18 ♖b1 exf5!

The tempting 18...♗a5!? permits 19 ♖b3 ♙xb3 20 cxb3 ♖a1+ 21 ♔c2 and White is still alive. Now, on the other hand, both recaptures on f5 are bad for him: 19 exf5? fails to 21...♕xf5+ at the end of this very variation, while 19 ♕xf5?! ♗a5 leaves him without the defensive resource ♖d4-b3. Thus he has to try a third option.

19 b3 fxe4! 20 ♗h4 ♖b4 21 ♖c4 ♗b7 22 g6

Desperation, but a slower defence such as 22 ♔a1 failed to 22...d5 23 ♖e2 ♖d6 24 ♖hf1 ♗e5 with a decisive advantage – Bruzon.

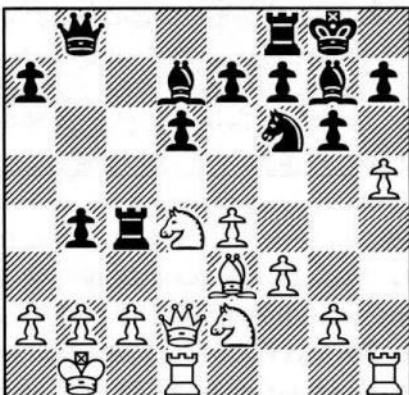
22...♖xc4! 23 ♗xh7 ♖xh7 24 gxh7 ♖c3 25 ♖he1

Equally hopeless is 25 h8♗ ♖xe3 with ideas like ...♖a4-c3(+).

25...♖xb3!

After 26 cxb3 ♖xb3+ 27 ♔c1 ♖c3+ 28 ♖c2 ♖xc2+ 29 ♔xc2 ♗c6+ the queen soon gets to h5, so White resigned.

Example 90
P.Dely-G.Szilagy
Hungarian Championship,
Budapest 1966



Another typical target for the “aggressive” exchange is the fianchettoed bishop, as in this simple example from the Sicilian Dragon.

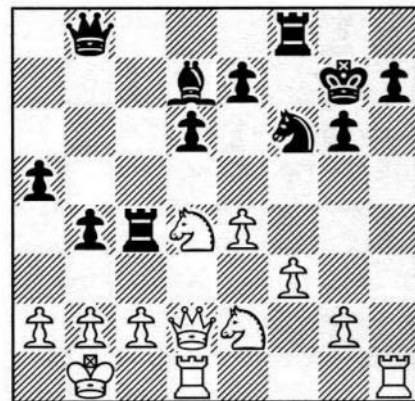
17 ♖h6!

Swapping the key defender on g7. 17 hxg6?! fxg6 18 ♖h6 was less precise due to 18...♖f7! and, in contrast to the game, the h7-pawn gets some extra protection.

17...a5

Obviously Black shouldn't even think about 17...♖xh5? 18 ♖xh5 gxh5 19 ♗g5, while the radical 17...♖h8!? 18 ♖xf8 ♗xf8 19 g4 leaves White with a strong attack anyway.

18 hxg6 fxg6 19 ♖xg7 ♔xg7



20 ♗h6+ ♔f7

Or 20...♔g8 21 ♖f4! ♖xd4 22 ♖xd4 e5 23 ♖d5! and wins – Maric. After the text White should look for a way of dislodging the defender on f6. If the knight was still on c3, then 21 ♖d5! would have solved this task; in the game Dely finds a different solution.

21 g4! ♖g8 22 g5 ♖h5 23 ♖xh5!

Simplest, clearing more space for the attack.

23...gxh5 24 ♗xh7+ ♔f8

After 24...♖g7 25 ♗xh5+ ♔f8 26 ♖f4! the attack is also irresistible.

25 g6 ♗e8 26 ♖g1 e5 27 ♗h6+ ♖g7

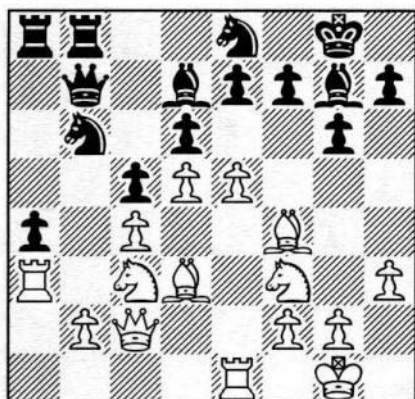
Or 27...♔e7 28 ♖g5+ ♕f8 29 ♖f6+ with mate.

28 ♖h8+

Black resigned in view of 28...♖g8 29 ♖f6+.

The exchange of the fianchettoed bishop is equally common in positions with castling on the same flank. Here is one example.

Example 91
J.Hellsten-M.Llorens Sepulveda
Santiago 2005



Faced with the unpleasant threat of 22 e6 followed by h4-h5, Black decides to dissolve the tension in the centre.

21...dxe5

Now, at first glance, 22 ♖xe5 seems natural, in order to activate the knight and maintain an indirect threat towards the rook on b8. However, 22...♖d6 blocks this diagonal, when Black has an inferior but playable position. In the game I recapture the other way instead, to force the exchange of the defender on g7.

22 ♗xe5! ♗xe5 23 ♖xe5 ♖d6 24 ♖e4!

White starts sending his pieces to the

kingside, where his attacking prospects have increased after the departure of the fianchettoed bishop. Less consistent was 24 ♖xg6? hxg6 25 ♗xg6 ♖bxc4 26 ♖xe7 ♕f8 or 24 ♗xg6? hxg6 25 ♖xg6 ♗f5!, while 24 h4?! ♗f5 lets Black swap the attacking bishop on d3.

24...♖c7

The desired 24...♖xe4 failed to 25 ♗xe4 and 26 d6 on the next move. Thus Black is forced to spend one move covering the c5-pawn.

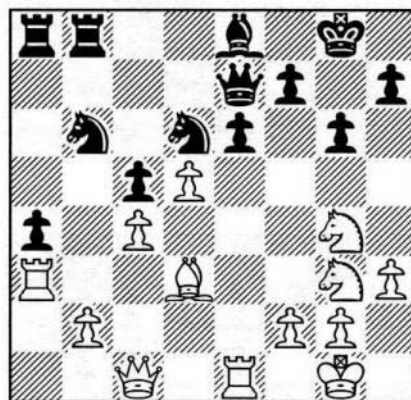
25 ♖g3 ♗e8?

The last chance was 25...♖d8! intending ...♖f8-g7 – Stohl. In the game Black's kingside gets short of defenders.

26 ♖c1! e6

This produces new weaknesses, but after 26...f6 27 ♖h6! followed by ♖h5, or 26...♗d7 27 ♖h6 ♖d8 28 ♖xg6! hxg6 29 ♗xg6 fxg6 30 ♖xg6+ ♕h8 31 ♖h6+ ♕g8 32 ♖h5, followed by ♖g3+, White's attack is also irresistible.

27 ♖g4 ♖e7



28 ♖c3

My first intention was 28 ♖h6 followed by ♖h5, but after 28...♗d7 29 ♖h5 ♖e8 30 ♖gf6+ ♖xf6 31 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 Black may keep on fighting for a while.

28...♖h4

Parrying the threat of 29 ♖h6+, but now White breaks through on the e-file.

29 dxe6 fxe6 30 ♖xe6 ♖d8 31 ♜e5 ♖bc8?

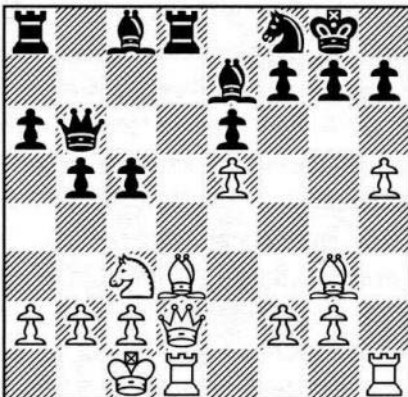
This loses on the spot, but after 31... ♖dxc4 32 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 33 ♖xe8+!? ♖xe8 34 ♜d5+ ♗g7 35 ♜xc4 White also has an easy win.

32 ♖h5! gxh5 33 ♖h6+

Black resigned in view of 33... ♗f8 34 ♜h8 mate.

Example 92

V.Kupreichik-M.Taimanov
USSR Championship, Moscow
1976



Here is a final example regarding the exchange of a defending piece. In order to make progress on the kingside, White needs to eliminate the defender of the dark squares, the bishop on e7.

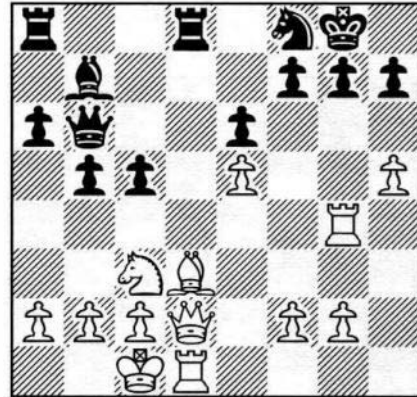
16 ♗h4! ♗xh4

Avoiding the exchange by 16... f6? leads to a disaster after 17 h6, while 16... ♜c7? 17 ♗xe7 ♜xe7 permits the tactical shot 18 ♗xh7+. This is also why 17... c4 is impossible on the next move.

17 ♖xh4 ♗b7 18 ♖g4

In just a few moves White has managed

to activate his rook and now intends 19 ♜g5 or 19 ♜h6, stepping up the attack.



18...g6

Indispensable, but now the absence of the dark-squared bishop is strongly felt.

19 ♜g5 ♖d7?!

A natural move that prepares 20... ♜d8 as a response to 20 h6; however, White soon finds new horizons for his attack. It seems that Black should have preferred the cold-blooded 19... c4 20 h6 f5! instead; e.g. 21 exf6 cxd3 22 f7+! ♗xf7 23 ♖f4+ ♗g8! 24 ♜e7 ♖d7 25 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 26 ♜xd7 ♖f7 27 ♜xd3 ♜xf2 with unclear play. Of course such variations are difficult to work out during the game.

20 ♖h1!

Now that the mating motif with h5-h6 and ♜f6-g7 has been temporarily neutralized, Kupreichik directs his attention to the h-file.

20... ♜d8

It was already too late for 20... c4 in view of 21 ♖e4!; e.g. 21... cxd3 22 ♖f6+ ♗h8 23 ♖xd7 ♜c7 24 c3 ♜xd7 25 ♜f6+ followed by 26 h6, or 21... ♗xe4 22 ♗xe4 ♖ad8 23 ♜f6 ♜d4 24 ♗d3! ♜xg4 25 h6 winning – Suetin.

21 ♜h6 ♖xd3

The only way to avoid a decisive sacrifice on g6.

22 cxd3 ♖xd3 23 ♜f4!

Creating the threat of 24 hxg6 fxg6 25 ♜xf8+.

23... ♗d7 24 ♗g5



Preparing 25 ♘e4. White is clearly better and soon won the game.

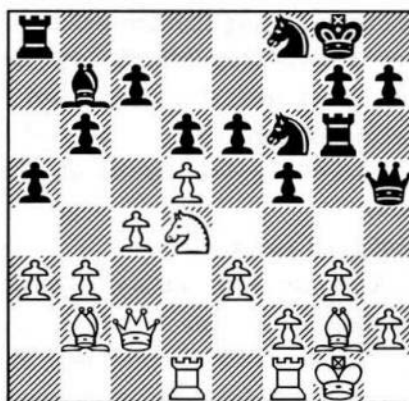
For the related exercises to this section, see page 321.

Facilitating the defence

In the previous section we saw how certain exchanges had the effect of facilitating an attack. Now let's turn our attention to the opposite case: the exchange of the opponent's attacking pieces in order to ease our defensive task. One typical idea in this sense is the exchange of queens which, if successful, tends to ruin most attacks.

Example 93
J.Granda Zuniga-F.Santacruz
 Pan-American Team
 Championship 1987

It is not difficult to guess Black's plan in this position: a kingside attack. Granda finds a simple, effective solution.



19 ♗e2!

Without queens the black attack would lose all its venom. Moreover, White's long-term advantages, such as his bishop pair and superior structure, would become more notable. Less convincing is 19 dxe6?! ♜h6 20 h4 ♙xg2 21 ♜xg2 ♙e4 22 ♗e2 ♗xe2 23 ♘e2 ♘xe6 with an inferior version of the game. White no longer possesses the bishop pair, and Black has an active knight on e4.

19... ♗xe2

A clear concession, but the alternatives were even worse: 19... ♗h6? fails to 20 dxe6 ♙xg2 21 ♜xg2 and the f5-pawn is doomed, while 19... ♘g4?! 20 h3 ♜h6 21 e4! ♙e8 22 ♙c1 g5 23 dxe6, followed by 24 ♘xf5, leaves the black position in ruins.

20 ♘xe2 e5

Parrying the threat of 21 ♘d4 with an attack on the f5-pawn.

21 ♘c3 ♘8d7 22 f4!

Softening up the long diagonal for the bishop, as well as the f-file.

22... ♘g4

Black defends against the threat of 23 fxe5 and prepares the regrouping of the badly placed rook on g6.

23 ♜fe1!

Not 23 ♜de1?! ♘c5 with threats at b3 and d3. Now 23... ♘c5?! runs into 24 h3 ♘h6

25 fxe5 dxe5 26 ♖b5! with pressure on c7 and e5.

23...♙f6 24 h3 ♖h6 25 ♖b5 ♗c8 26 ♖a7

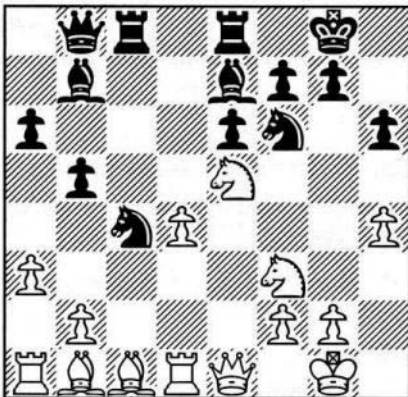
26 b4 at once was also interesting, to keep the rook tied to the defence of c7.

26...♗e8 27 b4

Stepping up the pressure on the queenside. White enjoys a slight but enduring advantage, whereas Black never even got close to his desired attack.

Another common target for the "defensive" exchange is the king's bishop, which tends to play an important role in many kingside attacks. Let's see two examples.

Example 94
V.Simagin-T.V.Petrosian
 USSR Championship, Moscow
 1951



As often is the case in such structures, the side with the isolated pawn aims at a kingside attack. Petrosian finds a great defensive measure.

23...♗a8!

Preparing ...♗b7-e4 to swap the attacking bishop on b1.

24 ♗e2 ♗e4! 25 ♗e1

If White sidesteps by 25 ♗a2, then after 25...♖d6 the black bishop becomes excellent along the b1-h7 diagonal, both for defensive and aggressive purposes.

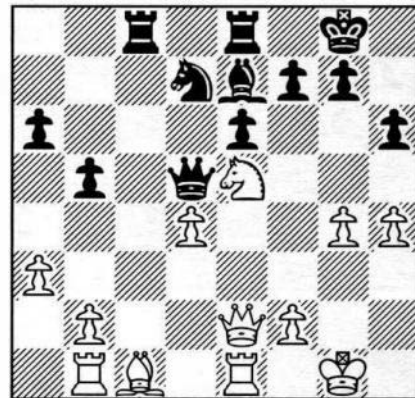
25...♗xb1 26 ♗xb1 ♗d5

In the absence of his light-squared bishop, White's attacking prospects have worsened considerably, something that he now fails to accept.

27 g4?

Better was 27 ♗f4 followed by ♗bc1, battling for the c-file. In the game White faces more problems on the light squares.

27...♖xe5 28 ♖xe5 ♖d7!



A move with various virtues: it secures the knight from the g4-g5 advance, attacks the h4-pawn, and prepares another "defensive" exchange on e5.

29 ♗f3?

This leads to a lost endgame. Equally bad was 29 ♖xd7? ♗xd7, dropping one of the pawns on d4 and h4, while 29 ♖f3 ♗c4, followed by ...♗ec8, leaves Black with a pleasant, though not winning advantage.

29...♖xe5 30 ♗xd5 exd5 31 dxe5 ♗xh4 32 ♗e2 f6! 33 e6

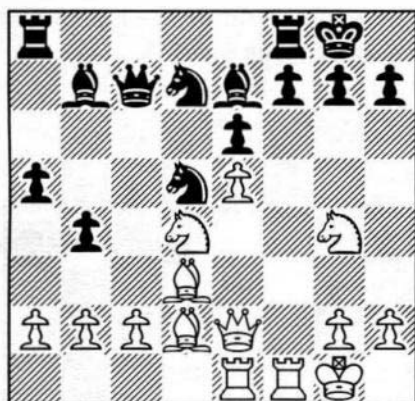
After 33 ♗f4 ♗c4 or 33 f4 fxe5 34 fxe5 ♗c4 White loses another pawn.

33...♗c6 34 ♗e3 ♗exe6

Black later won.

Example 95
E.Mortensen-J.Adamski
Copenhagen 1998

Here is a more complex example on the same topic. Structurally speaking, Black has a sound position. However, his king is under a cloud for the moment, with all the enemy pieces directed against him.



18...♖b6!

An excellent defensive measure. Adamski prepares 19...♗a6 to exchange the powerful bishop on d3, thus reducing the potential of the white attack.

The more indifferent 18...♘c5?! runs into 19 ♘f6+! ♘xf6 (or 19...gxf6 20 ♗xh7+! ♖xh7 21 ♗h5+ followed by 22 ♗f3) 20 exf6 ♗xf6 21 ♗xh7+! ♖xh7 22 ♗xf6! with a strong attack; e.g. 22...gxf6 23 ♗h5+ ♖g8 24 ♗g4+! ♖h8 25 ♗e3 with mate, or 22...♘e4 23 ♗f4 ♘d2 24 ♗h5+! ♖g8 25 ♗h4 f5 26 ♘xe6 with the mortal threat of 27 ♗h7+.

19c3

The only way of continuing the attack, since the tempting 19 ♗e4 permits 19...♗xd4+! 20 ♗xd4 ♗c5 with a welcome queen exchange.

19...bxc3 20 bxc3 ♗a6!

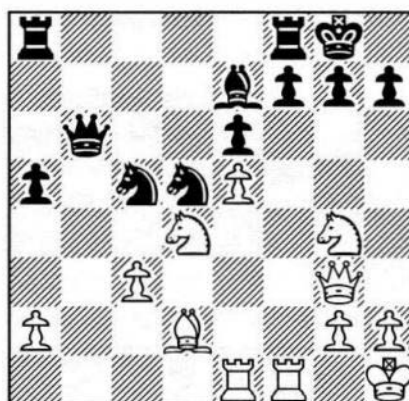
Now that 21 c4? doesn't work White is forced to accept the bishop exchange.

21 ♖h1

After 21 ♗xa6 ♗xa6 22 c4 ♗c5! Black obtains counterplay, while 21 ♗f3!? instead, preparing 22 ♗h3, can be met by 21...♗xd3 22 ♗xd3 ♘c5; e.g. 23 ♗c2 f5! 24 exf6 ♗xf6 25 ♗h3 g6 26 ♗h6 ♗f7 27 ♗e2 ♗h8 28 ♗d2 ♗g7 with rather unclear play.

21...♗xd3 22 ♗xd3 ♘c5 23 ♗g3

The immediate 23 ♘h6+? fails to 23...gxxh6 24 ♗g3+ ♖h8 25 ♗xh6 ♗g8 etc. But now 24 ♘h6+ has turned into a threat.



23...f5!

Adamski accepts a weak pawn on e6 in order to neutralize the enemy attack.

24 exf6 ♗xf6

Not 24...♘xf6? 25 ♘f5! exf5 26 ♘h6+ ♖h8 27 ♗xe7 etc.

25 ♘xf6+

The seemingly clever 25 ♘xe6?! ♘xe6 26 c4 fails to 26...♗a6! with the diabolic idea 27 cxd5 ♗h4! and Black wins; but 25 ♗c1 was probably a better option, with an improved version of the game.

25...♘xf6 26 ♗h6 ♗b7

Black defends g7 and seizes the long diagonal at the same time. Moreover, White already has to be careful with a knight jump to e4.

27 ♖c1

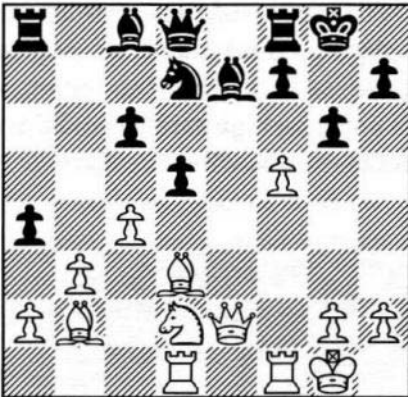
Not a very appealing move, but on 27 ♘xe6? Black had prepared 27...♘e6 28 ♗xe6 ♘e4! winning the bishop.

27...♘fe4 28 ♖e3 ♖d5

Thanks to his central control, Black is considerably better.

Example 96
B.Spassky-T.V.Petrosian
 World Championship (game 1),
 Moscow 1969

The queen's bishop can also be the object of the "defensive" exchange, as in the present example.



16...♗f6!

A strong move neutralizing the enemy bishop. Others, such as 16...axb3?, allow White to carry out his main threat: 17 fxg6 hxg6 18 ♗xg6! fxg6 19 ♖e6+ ♘h7 20 ♗f7+! with mate to come.

17 ♗xf6

Now after 17 fxg6?! ♗xb2 18 gxf7+ ♗xf7 White's attack proves unconvincing; e.g. 19 ♗xf7 ♘xf7 20 ♖h5+ ♘f8 21 ♗f1+ ♘f6 22 ♖xh7 ♖e7 23 ♖h8+ ♘f7 and Black defends. 17...♘xf6 18 ♖f2 axb3 19 axb3 ♗a2

With the opponent being short of direct threats, Petrosian launches a counterattack.

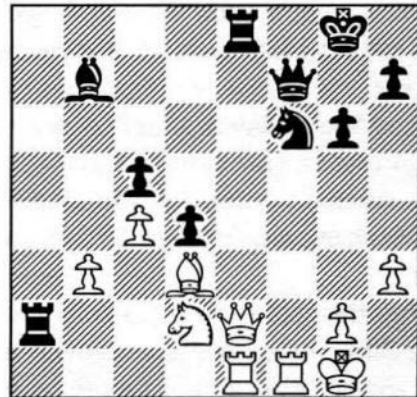
20 fxg6?

The opening of the f-file will merely help Black in creating counterplay. Preferable was 20 ♗b1 ♗a5 21 ♖h4 with a slight edge – Geller.

20...fxg6 21 h3 ♖e7 22 ♖d4?!

A strange mistake that lets Black improve his bishop. Better was 22 cxd5 ♘xd5 23 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 24 ♗xf8+ ♘xf8 25 ♘c4 with an equal endgame.

22...c5 23 ♖f4 ♗b7! 24 ♗de1 ♖g7 25 ♖e3 d4! 26 ♖e6+ ♖f7 27 ♖e2 ♗e8

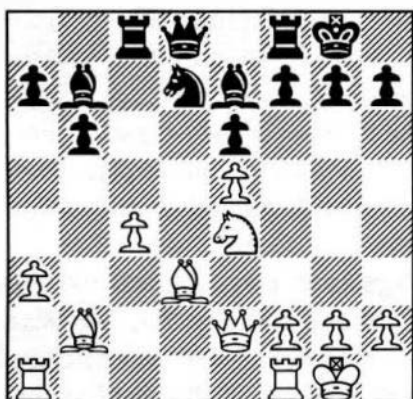


Black has an active game and went on to win.

In the following example Black managed to neutralize the enemy attack by a timely exchange of an attacking knight.

Example 97
K.De Francesco-A.Gipslis
 Passau 1997

White has just played ♘d2-e4, with a focus on Black's kingside as well as the d6-square.



16...♙xe4!

Eliminating the strong enemy knight. In contrast, the indifferent 16...♘c5? allows the nice combination 17 ♖f6+! ♗xf6 18 ♜g4+! ♜h8 19 exf6 ♙xf6 20 ♜h4! winning.

17 ♙xe4

Or 17 ♜xe4 g6 with similar play.

17...g6

Restricting White's light-squared bishop and ruling out a sacrifice on h7.

18 f4

After the departure of his knight it is far more difficult for White to launch an attack, and he has to accept a more positional battle. If 18 ♜ad1, then 18...♜c7 19 ♙d3 ♜fd8 with a balanced game.

18...♘c5 19 ♙c2 ♜d7 20 ♜ad1 ♜c6 21 ♜f3 ♘a4!

Now White's compromised queenside structure makes itself felt.

22 ♙a1 ♜fd8!

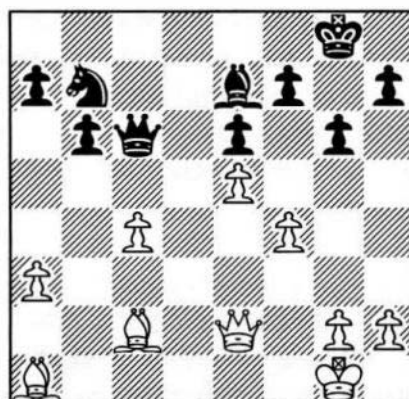
Avoiding 22...♜xc4 23 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 24 ♙b3 ♜e4 25 ♙c2 with a perpetual.

23 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 24 ♜d3

By swapping rooks White aims to reduce the pressure on the c4-pawn.

24...♜xd3 25 ♜xd3 ♘c5 26 ♜e2 ♘b7!

Heading for a5 in order to resume the attack on c4. Despite White's bishop pair, Black has a more pleasant endgame.

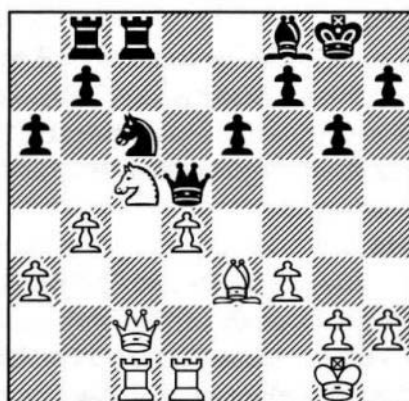


For the related exercises, see page 323.

Reducing enemy activity

Another objective of piece exchanges is the reduction of the opponent's overall activity. During the course of a game, the activity of each piece goes up and down. Logically, it makes sense to swap off an enemy piece that is enjoying high activity, and this is the subject of the following examples.

Example 98
J.Hellsten-P.Lafuente
 Pinamar 2004



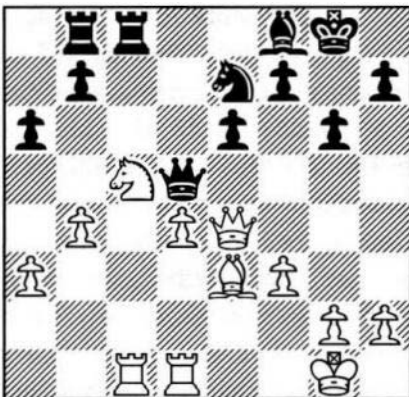
White has obtained some queenside initiative in this isolani structure, but it is not obvious how he can make progress. A closer look reveals that Black's position is sustained by his queen, which blocks (and attacks) the isolated pawn, while covering crucial squares like d7 and c6. In this context, my next move is easy to understand.

24 ♖e4!

Challenging the black queen, whose absence would open up tactical ideas such as ♖d7-b6(f6), as well as ♗f4 fighting for b7. 24 ♗f4?! ♖a8 25 ♖xb7 at once is less effective due to 25...♖xd4 recovering the pawn.

24...♖e7?

In time trouble my opponent overlooks the threat of 25 ♗f4. Equally bad was 24...♗d8? 25 ♗f4 ♖a8 26 ♖xb7 or 24...♗g7? 25 ♗xd5 exd5 26 ♖d7! ♖a8 27 ♖b6, while 24...♗xe4?! 25 fxe4 yields White an excellent pawn structure, with d4-d5 coming up. Finally, after 24...♗xc5 25 ♗xd5 (25 dxc5!? is interesting as well) 25...exd5 26 dxc5 ♖d8 27 ♗f4 followed by 28 ♗d6 White is also better, but this was Black's least evil.



25 ♗f4 ♖a8 26 ♖xb7

Now White is just a clear pawn up.

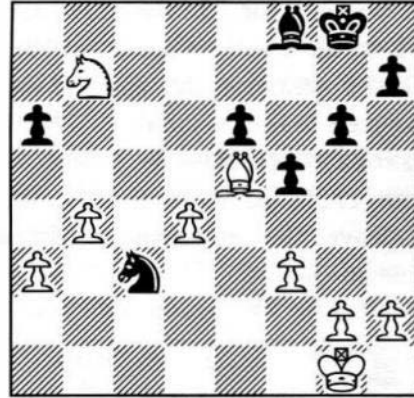
26...f5 27 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 28 ♗xc8!

Having an extra pawn I am, of course, happy to exchange pieces.

28...♗xc8 29 ♗c1! ♗c3

Or 29...♗xc1+ 30 ♗xc1 ♗g7 31 ♗b2, hanging on to the pawn.

30 ♗xc3 ♖xc3 31 ♗e5



White returns material in order to create a far advanced passed pawn.

31...♖b1 32 ♖c5 ♗xc5 33 dxc5 ♖xa3 34 c6 ♖b5 35 ♗f2 ♗f8 36 c7 ♖a7 37 ♗e3

Heading for c5. With a strong passed pawn and superior minor piece, White is winning.

Example 99

A.Moiseenko-D.Yevseev
Cappelle la Grande 2006



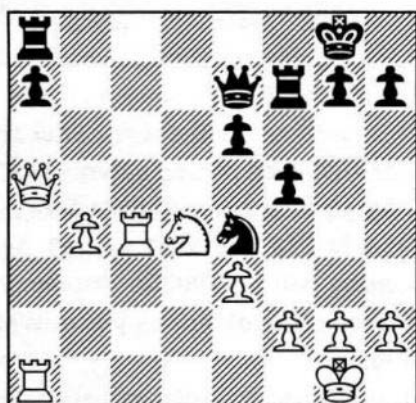
Black has just played ...f7-f5?, unnecessarily weakening the light squares. Moiseenko immediately punishes his opponent.

26 ♖c4!

An excellent idea. In the absence of the bishop on d5 it will be easier for White to attack the weakness on e6, and he also gains access to the c6-square.

26...♗xc4 27 ♜xc4 ♞f7

Both 27...f4 28 ♛e5! and 27...♞fc8 28 ♛a2! leave the e6-pawn in danger - Moiseenko.



28 ♜a1 ♞e8 29 ♞c7 ♛f8 30 ♛e5!?

Another good option was 30 ♛xa7 ♞xc7 31 ♞xc7 winning a pawn, since 31...♞a8 fails to 32 ♞xg7+ ♖h8 33 ♞xh7+ ♖g8 34 ♞g7+ ♖h8 35 ♞f7!, and wherever the black queen goes, 36 ♞h7+ decides.

30...♞fe7

If 30...♛d6, the simplest reply is to exchange: 31 ♛xd6 ♖xd6 32 ♞1c6! with a superior endgame.

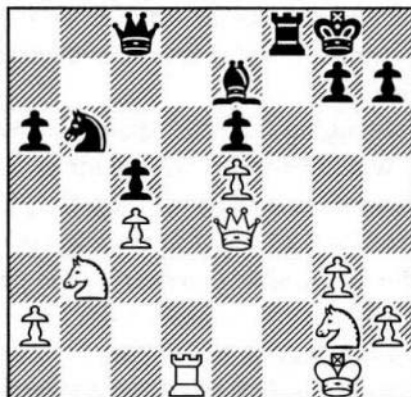
31 ♞xe7 ♞xe7 32 ♞c6 ♖g5 33 h4!

In view of the line 33 ♖xe6?? ♖xe6 34 ♞xe6 ♛c8!, it makes sense to give the king a little space.

33...♖f7 34 ♛c5 ♖d8 35 ♞c8! ♞e8 36 ♛xa7

With an extra pawn and more active pieces, White soon won the game.

Example 100
A.Miles-R.Byrne
Reykjavik 1980



Here is an example from a later stage of the game. White is slightly better thanks to his space advantage and more active pieces. How should Black proceed?

29...♛a8?

An instructive error. At first sight it seems logical to swap the active white queen, but as we will soon see in the game, it is in fact the white rook that poses the most danger to Black. Thus 29...♞d8! was a better choice, disputing the open file, and after 30 ♞xd8+ ♛xd8 the black queen proves just as active as its counterpart.

Generally in similar positions, the side with less space is happy to keep his queen on the board, since it can easily attack weak spots in the "open land" of the enemy camp, like d3, d1 and a4 in this case. Moreover, a queen exchange makes it easier for the opponent to exploit his space advantage with the king, as in the continuation of this game.

30 ♛xa8 ♞xa8 31 ♖a5! ♖f8

Black has no time for 31...♞d8? due to 32 ♞b1! with 33 ♖c6 next - Shereshevsky.

32 ♖f4 ♜e8 33 ♔f2!

The king is heading for e4 to protect the e5-pawn, thus liberating the other pieces.

33...g5

Being short of better options Black opts for active defence. 33...♔f7?! followed by ...♔e7 would just expose the king to a check on c6.

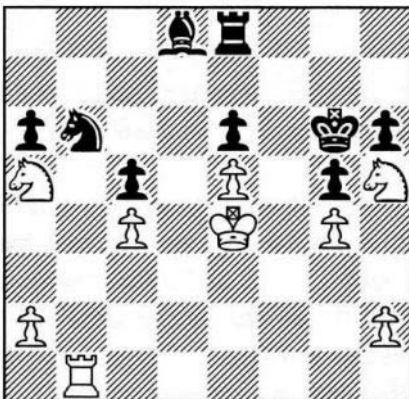
34 ♖h5

Curiously, both knights are excellently located at the edge of the board.

34...♙e7 35 ♔e3 ♔f7 36 ♜f1+ ♔g6 37 g4!

A move with several virtues: it secures the knight on h5, fixes Black's g-pawn on the colour of his bishop, and creates mating motifs.

37...h6 38 ♜b1 ♙d8 39 ♔e4



Obviously such a king manoeuvre wouldn't have been possible in the presence of queens.

39...♙c7 40 ♜f1 ♙d8 41 ♜f3!

Creating some kind of zugzwang.

41...♙e7

If 41...♜h8, then 42 ♖c6! intending 42...♖xc4 43 ♜d3 ♙a5 44 ♜d7 - Shereshevsky.

42 ♜b3 ♙d8 43 ♖c6 ♙c7 44 ♜f3!

The rook quickly switches files, a typical method when working on several fronts.

44...♖d7 45 a4!

Very methodical. White is not in a hurry, and aims at advancing the pawn to a5, where it will deprive the black pieces of the b6-square.

45...♜f8

This loses a pawn but it was hard to suggest anything better; e.g. 45...a5 46 ♜b3 ♖b6 47 ♜b5 and the rook enters with decisive effect.

46 ♖e7+ ♔h7 47 ♜xf8 ♖xf8 48 ♖f6+! ♔g7

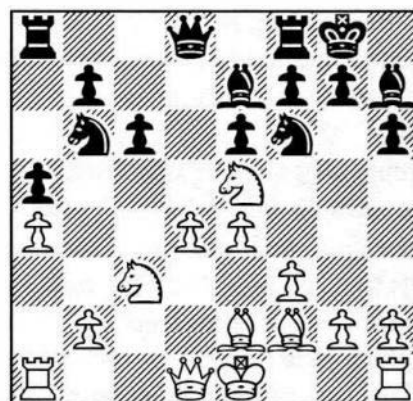
49 ♖e8+ ♔f7 50 ♖xc7 ♔xe7 51 ♖xa6 ♖d7 52 ♖c7

Avoiding 52 a5?? ♔d8 and the knight is trapped. Miles realized his extra pawn easily.

Example 101

B.Avruch-S.Grigoriants
Russian Team Championship 2008

A well-known strategical principle is that the side with more space should avoid exchanges. We already saw an example of this in Hellsten-Brkljaca (p. 35), and here is another case from a popular theoretical line in the Slav Defence.



14...♖fd7

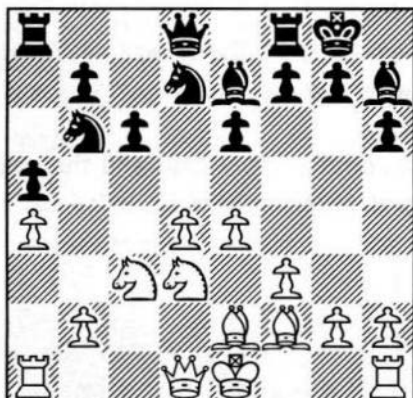
A sensible move, in order to swap the active knight on e5, something that would

Mastering Chess Strategy

also free some space at the back for Black's own pieces.

15 ♖d3!

Having more space White declines the knight exchange. This has the effect of leaving Black's minor pieces rather cramped, in particular the knight on b6.



15...♗d6

By vacating the e7-square Black solves the deployment of his queen. The more straightforward 15...♖c8, preparing ...c6-c5, could be met by 16 ♗b3 c5 17 dxc5 ♖xc5 18 ♖xc5 ♗xc5 19 ♗xc5 ♖xc5 20 ♖d1 ♗c7 21 ♖b5 ♗c6 22 0-0 with an edge for White.

16 ♖c1 ♗e7 17 ♗b3!

Before castling Avrukh puts some pressure on b6 in order to prevent the liberating ...c6-c5 and ...e6-e5 advances.

17...♗c7

Prophylaxis against a potential d4-d5.

18 0-0 ♖ac8 19 ♖h1

White is in no hurry for the moment and resorts to a few useful moves while waiting for the opponent's next step.

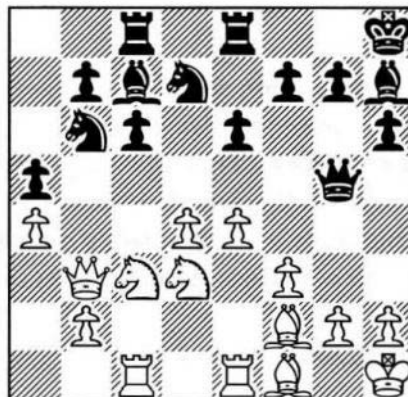
19...♖h8 20 ♖fe1 ♗g5?!

The active 20...f5 is well met by 21 e5! f4 22 ♖ed1, preparing ♗e1 and ♖e4, attacking the a5-pawn – Avrukh. Even so, Black should probably prefer this, since in the game his bishop on h7 remains out of play

for too long.

21 ♗f1 ♖fe8?

By undefending f7 Black allows a blow on the dark squares. 21...f5 was still preferable, although after 22 ♖c5! ♖xc5 23 dxc5 ♖d7 24 ♖cd1 White keeps the advantage.



22 ♖e5!

An unexpected return. Now it is difficult for Black to cover all his weak squares.

22...♖xe5

A lesser evil was 22...♗e7 23 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 24 d5! ♗d6 25 ♗g3 e5 26 dxc6 bxc6 27 ♖ed1 ♗e7 28 ♗f2 ♖b8 29 ♗c2 with a clear edge for White due to the weak pawns on a5 and c6 – Avrukh.

23 dxe5 ♖d7

23...♗xe5? 24 f4! ♗xf4 25 ♗g3 wins a piece.

24 ♗xb7 ♖xe5 25 ♗g3!

Now the tension along the h2-b8 diagonal is unpleasant for Black.

25...♗e7 26 ♖b5! ♗b8

After 26...cxb5 27 ♗xe5 the double pin is decisive.

27 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 28 ♖ed1!

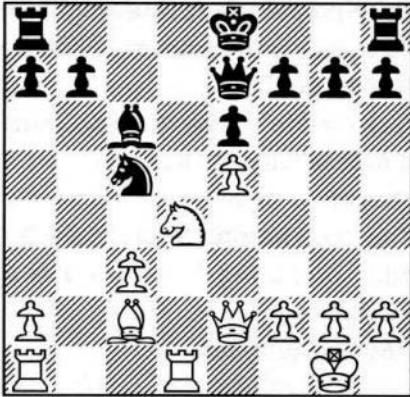
Occupying the open file and preparing ♖d6 in order to seize the dark squares.

28...♖f8 29 ♖d6 f6 30 ♗xe5 fxe5 31 ♖xc6

With a sound extra pawn White won without any problems.

Example 102
M. Neubauer-O. Korneev
 European Championship,
 Warsaw 2005

Now let's see the "active" exchange in a more defensive context. White has just played 18 Nf3-d4 activating his knight. What should Black do about his bishop?



18...Bc8!

Korneev declares that he has nothing against swapping his bishop for the active knight, and prepares to meet 19 Nxc6 by 19... Bxc6 , keeping the pawn structure intact. The alternatives were all inferior: 18... $\text{Nd5}?!$ allows 19 Nf5! exf5 20 Bxd5 with double threats at f5 and b5, while both 18... $\text{O-O}?!$ 19 Nxc6 bxc6 20 Bd6 and 18... $\text{Nd7 19 Nb5 O-O 20 Nd6}$ yield White a definite initiative.

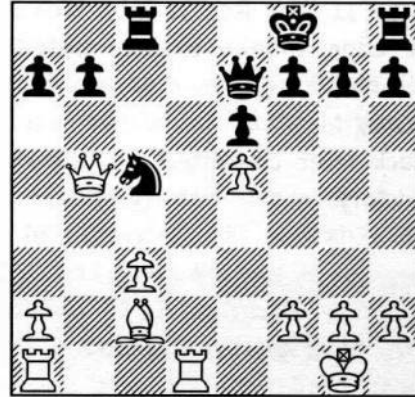
19 Nb5

After 19 Nxc6 Bxc6 Black has no problems whatsoever. He can later restrict the white bishop by ... g7-g6 , just like in De Francesco-Gipslis (p. 115).

19...Ndxb5! 20 Wxb5+ Gf8

Avoiding 20... $\text{Bc6}?!$ 21 $\text{Bd6! a6 22 Bxc6 axb5 23 Bc8+ Gd7 24 Bxh8}$ with complications. In the game Black is left without the

option of castling; however, White doesn't have the right pieces on the board in order to exploit this.



21 Bd4 g6 22 Bxd1 Gg7

By now it is unclear how White can improve his position, whereas Black enjoys a long-term target on c3.

23 h4 Bc7! 24 We2 h5

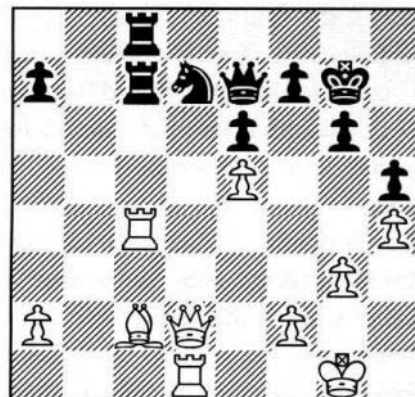
Ruling out any attacking attempt with h4-h5.

25 g3 Bhc8 26 Wd2 b5

Also interesting was 26...b6 preparing ... Nb7-a5 with increased pressure on c3. Now White is able to get rid of that pawn.

27 c4 bxc4 28 Bxc4 Nd7!

Asking White to solve some minor tactical problems.



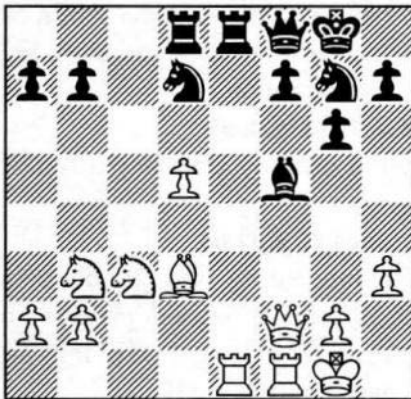
29 ♖xc7 ♜xc7 30 ♙b3?

This just loses a pawn. 30 ♜a5 was preferable, intending 30... ♖xc2 31 ♜xa7 with simplifications. Instead, Black could try 30... ♗b6 31 ♙b3 ♖c5 32 ♜b4 ♜c7 with a slight edge thanks to his more active knight.

30... ♗xe5

Black later converted his extra pawn into victory.

Example 103
J. Hellsten-J. Veloz
Ambato 2009



Black has just played ... ♗e6-f5, offering the exchange of bishops. My first intention was 22 ♙xf5 ♗xf5 23 ♜xa7, winning a pawn; however, after 23... ♜b4! Black gets some counterplay on the dark squares. Then I saw a much stronger idea, based on the exchange of a minor piece.

22 ♖xe8

The immediate 22 ♙b5?! permits 22... ♖xe1! 23 ♖xe1 ♗b6 with much more resistance than in the game.

22... ♖xe8

Obviously 22... ♗xe8? fails to 23 ♙xf5, while 22... ♜xe8 can be met in the same way

as in the game.

23 ♙b5!

A key move. Among Black's minor pieces it is the knight on d7 that holds most importance for the moment, since it controls the weak f6-square and blocks the passed d-pawn. Thus White wants to exchange it.

23... a6

Practically forced, in view of the additional threat 24 g4.

24 ♙xd7 ♙xd7 25 ♗c5!

White prepares a future knight jump to e4 and supports the advance of the d-pawn.

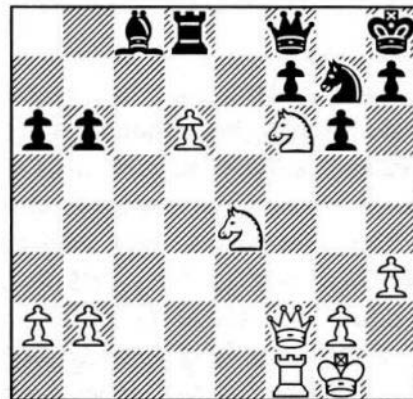
25... ♙c8 26 d6! ♖d8

Black couldn't play 26... ♜xd6 due to 27 ♗5e4 followed by 28 ♗f6+.

27 ♗3e4b6

After the alternative 27... f5 28 ♜h4! (or 28 ♜d4), preparing ♗f6+, Black is also in deep trouble.

28 ♗f6+ ♜h8 29 ♗ce4



White has reached his goal. The strong knight on f6 not only supports a future d6-d7, it also enhances a future kingside attack.

29... ♗f5 30 ♜xb6

30 ♖d1! was even stronger, when 30... ♗xd6 31 ♜h4 h5 32 ♗xh5! gxh5 33 ♜f6+ followed by 34 ♖d5 leads to a decisive attack.

30...♖xd6 31 ♜d1♗b7

Black has managed to eliminate the passed d-pawn, but his king remains under a cloud.

32 ♜xd8 ♗xd8

Or 32...♗xd8 33 ♜e3! with the double threat of 34 ♜h6 and 34 ♜c3.

33 ♜d4♗e6 34 ♜c3 ♗g7 35 ♗g5 .♙e6

Black has to give up a pawn to stop 36 ♗xf7+.

36 ♗gxh7♜d6 37 ♗g5

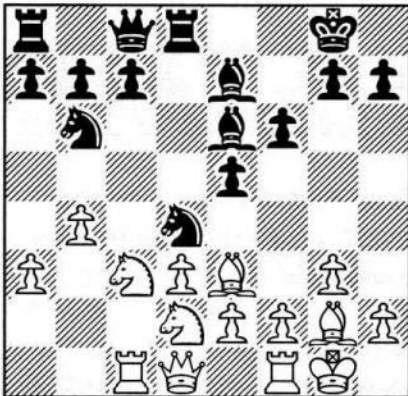
Here I missed 37 ♗e8! ♜b6+ 38 ♖h1 with an immediate win, but the text doesn't ruin anything.

37...♜b6+ 38 ♖h1 ♜d6?

This loses at once, though Black's position was hopeless anyway.

39 ♜c8+! ♙xc8 40 ♗xf7 mate

Example 104
L.Psakhis-M.Drasko
Sochi 1988



In this typical position from the English White would like to increase the pressure on the queenside; however, a normal continuation such as 14 ♗ce4 is well met by 14...a5! 15 ♗c5 ♙d5 with roughly equal play. Psakhis finds a much stronger solution.

14 ♙xd4!

Giving up the bishop pair to eliminate the active knight on d4, after which the white pieces will get access to squares like b3 and b5.

14...♜xd4

Following 14...exd4 15 ♗b5 c6 16 ♗f3! Black is unable to defend the d4-pawn.

15 ♗b3 ♜d8

Repeating White's idea with 15...♙xb3? ends in a disaster after 16 ♜xb3+ ♖h8 17 ♗b5 ♜d7 18 ♙h3 – Psakhis.

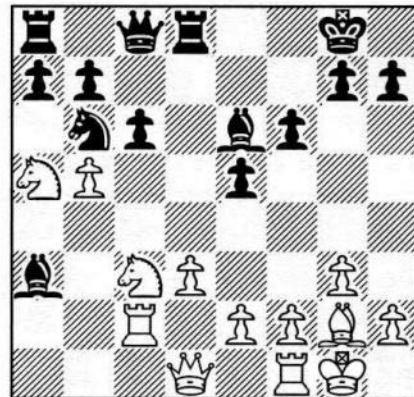
16 ♗a5! c6

The only reply, since both 16...♜b8? 17 ♗b5 and 16...♗d5? 17 ♗xd5 .♙xd5 18 ♙xd5+ ♜xd5 19 ♜b3 lead to material losses.

17 b5!

Psakhis hurries to soften up the light squares before Black manages to consolidate. The loss of the a3-pawn is less relevant.

17...♙xa3 18 ♜c2



18...♙h3

Drasko returns the pawn in order to eliminate the strong fianchettoed bishop. Both 18...cxb5? 19 ♗xb5 and 18...♙b4? 19 bxc6 ♙xa5 20 cxb7 again lead to material losses, as does 18...♗d5 19 bxc6 bxc6 20 ♗xd5 ♙xd5 21 ♗xc6! – Psakhis. Perhaps

the prophylactic 18...♙f8!? was Black's best choice; e.g. 19 bxc6 bxc6 20 ♖xc6 ♜e8 21 ♗a5 ♜b8 and the discovered attacks can be met by 22...♜a6.

19 ♙xh3 ♜xh3 20 ♖xb7 ♜dc8 21 ♗b1!

By means of a double attack on a3 and c6, White wins a pawn.

21...♙b4 22 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 23 bxc6 ♜e6 24 ♜c2 ♜c8 25 ♜c1

Hanging on to the extra pawn with a clear advantage.

For the related exercises to this section, see page 325.

Series of exchanges

An interesting strategical idea is a series of exchanges that produces a favourable piece configuration on the board, for example good knight vs. bad bishop. In fact we already came across this topic in Sasikiran-Iljushin and Hellsten-Olesen. Here are a few more examples.

Example 105
J.Hodgson-J.Sherwin
Frome 2001



In a typical position from the Stonewall Dutch White initiates a series of exchanges

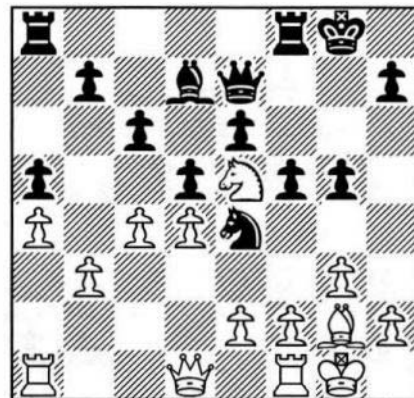
that, if successful, will leave him with a good knight against the opponent's bad bishop.

14 ♖fe5! ♖xe5

If 14...♖df6, declining the exchange, then 15 f3 ♖d6 16 ♜d2 ♜g7 17 ♜ae1, slowly preparing e2-e4 with a pleasant advantage.

15 ♖xe5 ♙d7?!

Black does nothing to stop the opponent's plan. Better was 15...♖d6! followed by ...♖f7 in order to challenge the powerful knight on e5, although after 16 ♜d2 ♖f7 17 ♖d3! White keeps some advantage, with f2-f3 and e2-e4 as a future idea. In contrast, 17 ♖xf7?! ♜xf7 would leave him with a rather passive bishop on g2.



16 ♙xe4! dxe4

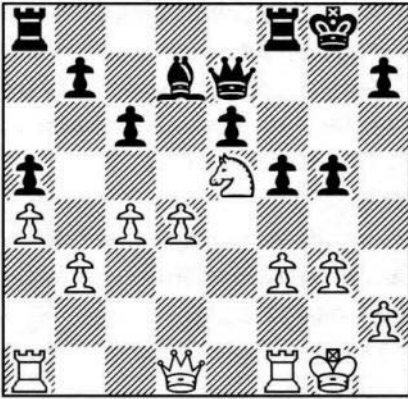
On 16...fxe4 White could react in the same ways in the game.

17 f3!

Clearing the centre in order to exploit Black's weaknesses in a more effective way, just like Sasikiran did in the aforementioned game.

17...exf3 18 exf3

By now the merits of the plan initiated on move 14 are evident: the knight is a giant on e5, whereas Black has ended up with a typical "bad" bishop.



18...♖ad8 19 c5 ♕c8?!

19...♕e8 seems more natural, giving the bishop some slight hope of seeing daylight.

20 ♖d2

Well aware of his long-term advantage, Hodgson is not in a hurry and slowly reinforces his position.

20...♗d5 21 ♗ad1 ♗fd8 22 ♖c3

22 ♖xa5?! ♗xd4 with complications makes no sense for White, either here or later.

22...♖f6 23 ♗fe1 h5 24 ♖h1 g4

This leads to new weaknesses, but it was difficult to find any active plan for Black.

25 ♖e3 ♖h7 26 ♖f4!

Creating the threat of 27 fxg4 hxg4 28 ♗xg4.

26...♗g8 27 fxg4 hxg4 28 ♖c4!

Now that the rook left d8 White manages to regroup the knight without losing the d4-pawn.

28...♗gd8?

A tactical mistake in a difficult position.

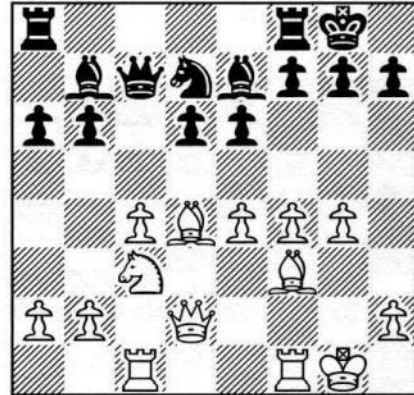
29 ♖b6! ♖e7

It transpires that 29...♗xd4 fails to 30 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 31 ♖c7+. Thus White wins the exchange.

30 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 31 ♗e5

Hodgson soon realized his material advantage.

Example 106
E.Poliviou-J.Hellsten
Patras 2002



In a typical Sicilian battle White has just played the impulsive g2-g4, which gives me the opportunity to carry out a favourable series of exchanges.

15...e5!

Deliberately loosening the d5-square in order to get a grip on the dark squares.

16 ♖d5 ♖d8!

By maintaining the tension Black enables the later exchange of his "bad" bishop on e7. 16...♗xd5?! 17 cxd5 ♖d8 is less convincing due to 18 ♗e3 exf4 19 ♗xf4 ♖e5 20 g5!, restricting that piece.

17 fx e5?

This lets me fulfil my plan. 17 ♗e3 was correct, when 17...exf4 18 ♗xf4 ♖e5, preparing ...h7-h6 and ...♗e7-g5, yields Black a pleasant game but nothing more.

17...♗g5! 18 ♗e3

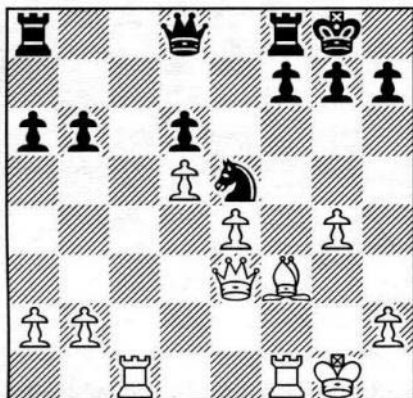
After 18 ♖e3?! dxe5 19 ♗c3 ♖c5 White has a problem with the e4-pawn.

18...♗xe3+ 19 ♖xe3 ♗xd5!

Swapping off the last piece capable of challenging the black knight.

20 cxd5 ♖xe5

Black has reached his goal. The knight is excellently placed on e5, and it can't be exchanged. In contrast, White's bishop is restricted by his own pawns. Moreover, the g2-g4 advance has left weak squares on f4 and h4. In conclusion, White is facing a difficult defensive task.



21 ♖c3 b5

Now my plan is to swap both pairs of rooks in order to avoid counterplay and obtain the strong duo of queen and knight in the endgame. But first, considering the colour of the enemy bishop, it makes sense to put the pawns on dark squares.

22 ♗e2 b4 23 ♖c2 ♖c8 24 ♖fc1 ♖xc2 25 ♖xc2 a5 26 h3 h6 27 b3?

Another strategical mistake: White deliberately places his pawns on the same colour squares as his bishop. He also weakens the c3-square, from where the knight will be able to attack his a-pawn. 27 a3 was much better, avoiding these problems and enabling pawn exchanges, which tend to help the defender.

27... ♗b8 28 ♗a6 ♖e8 29 ♖g2 ♗d7!

The threat of 29... ♗c5 forces the bishop to retreat, after which the second pair of rooks can be exchanged.

30 ♗d3 ♖c8 31 ♗c1 ♖xc2+ 32 ♗xc2 ♗e5 33 ♗e2 g5!

Gaining more dark square control and fixing the enemy pawns on light squares.

34 ♗c1 ♗g6 35 ♗f1

If White abandons the c-file by 35 ♗e3, then 35... ♗c7 36 ♗c4 a4! intending ...a4-a3 to fix a future target on a2.

35... ♗b6

The position is unpleasant for White, who has to parry numerous enemy threats.

36 ♗d2 ♗h4+ 37 ♖g3

Or 37 ♖h1 ♗f3 38 ♗g2 ♗e3 winning the e4-pawn.

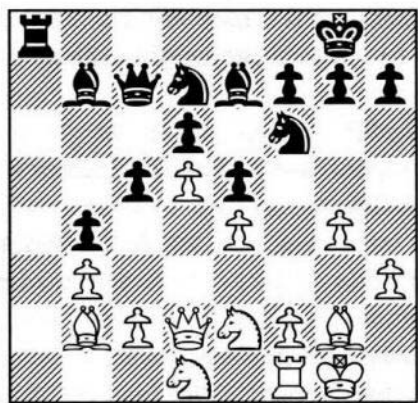
37... ♗g1+ 38 ♗g2 ♗a1 39 ♗f3?

White's first tactical error in this game proves decisive. However, after 39 ♖h2 ♖g7! 40 ♗f2 ♗e5+ his position was also hopeless. A possible plan for Black is to place the knight on f4, the queen on c3 and finally activate the king via f6 and e5. Any minor piece endgame is lost for White due to the bad bishop; e.g. 41 ♗g3? ♖f6 and the black king enters with decisive effect.

39... ♗e5+

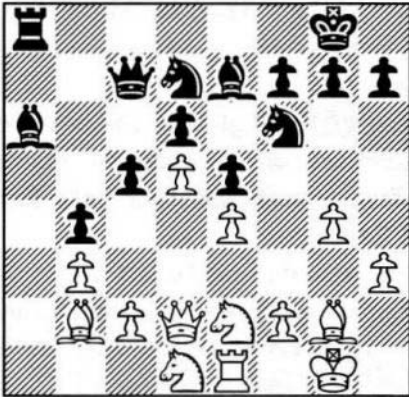
In view of 40 ♖f2 ♗h2+, White resigned.

Example 107
L. Shamkovich-Joe Benjamin
 Las Vegas 1995



In this closed position Benjamin initiates a favourable series of exchanges, with a focus on the passive enemy bishop on g2 as well as the weak f4-square.

17...♗a6! 18 ♖e1



18...♗xe2!

It might seem strange to swap the “good” bishop but it is probably the other bishop that is worth more in this particular structure, thanks to the excellent c1-h6 diagonal. Moreover, Black avoids the plan of 19 ♖g3 and 20 ♗f1 with White trying to get rid of his worst piece.

19 ♜xe2 ♖f8

Heading for the protected square at f4.

20 ♖e3 ♖g6 21 ♖c4?!

As we will soon see, the merits of this knight manoeuvre are merely temporary. 21 ♖f5 was preferable, when 21...♖d7 22 ♗a1 ♗xa1+ 23 ♗xa1 leaves Black with somewhat less freedom than in the game, due to the pressure on d6.

21...♖d7!

A move with two functions: the bishop reaches its ideal square on g5, while the knight is directed to b6 in order to swap its colleague on c4. The tempting 21...♖f4 can wait until a more optimal moment. In fact, delaying obvious moves (such as 21...♖f4 in this case) is a useful idea in practical play,

not only for reasons of tactics or strategy, but even psychology – here it is unpleasant for White to have to consider ...♖g6-f4 on virtually every move.

22 ♗f1

If 22 ♗c1, then 22...h6!, insisting on the idea of ...♗e7-g5.

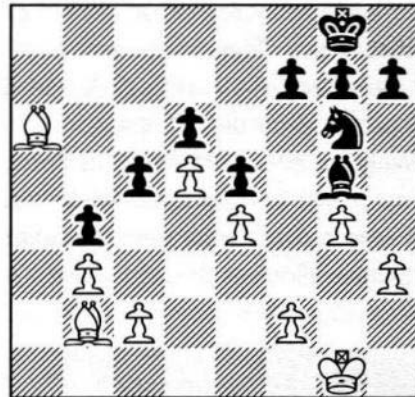
22...♖b6 23 ♖xb6 ♜xb6

White’s proud knight is gone and now he has to take action against the threat of 24...♗a2.

24 ♗a1 ♗xa1 25 ♗xa1 ♗g5 26 ♗b2 ♜a5

The threat of 27...♜a2 forces White to swap queens.

27 ♜a6 ♜xa6 28 ♗xa6



28...♗d2!

Before seizing f4 with the knight, Black activates his bishop. The inefficiency of White’s bishop pair is striking.

29 ♗g2 ♖f4+

Another idea is 29...h5!? in order to separate the white g- and h-pawns, or fix a weakness on h3 by an opportune ...h5-h4. There can follow 30 ♗f3 ♖f4 31 ♗f1 (or 31 h4 hxg4+ 32 ♗xg4 g6 and the h-pawn has turned into a weakness) 31...♗h7 intending 32...♗g6 and 33...h4, when White is forced into a very passive position.

30 ♗g3 g6

Thanks to his active pieces Black is con-

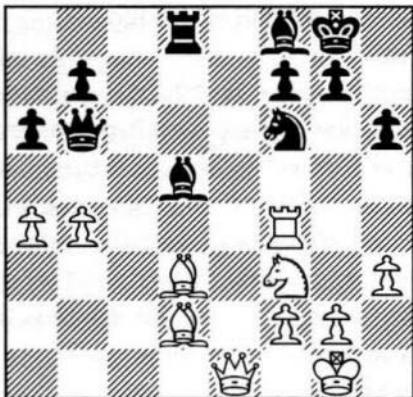
siderably better in this endgame, in fact only he can win. The game continued 31 h4 ♖f8 32 ♖f3 ♖e7 33 ♙c4 ♖f6 34 g5+ ♖g7 35 ♖g4 f6! 36 ♙b5 ♖f7 37 ♙c4 ♖g7 38 ♙.b5 ♟g2 39 gxf6+ ♖xf6 40 h5 ♟f4 41 hxg6 h5+! 42 ♖h4 ♖xg6 and the passed h-pawn later proved decisive.

For the related exercises to this section, see page 327.

Dynamic exchanges

So far we have seen a lot of exchanges supporting different objectives, without bothering too much on which particular square they took place. In contrast, this final section is devoted to exchanges that alter the pawn structure. Such “dynamic” exchanges can have the effect of clearing files and diagonals (see, for example, 17 ♙xe4 in Kramnik-Van Wely, p. 40; or 23 ♟xc5 in Petursson-Lyrberg, p. 73) and creating weaknesses in the enemy camp. In the next few examples we will have a look at the latter case.

Example 108
E. Bareev-M. Kobalia
Kazan 2005



Black is a little better thanks to his more harmoniously placed pieces. How can he convert this advantage into something more tangible? Kobalia finds a strong idea. **24...♟h5!**

Deflecting the rook from f4, in order to weaken White’s pawn structure by a later ...♙xf3.

25 ♙e3

After 25 ♙f5?! g6 the rook is in trouble, so Bareev prepares its escape to d4 instead.

25...♞c7 26 ♙d4 ♙xf3! 27 gxf3 ♙xd4 28 ♙xd4 ♟f4

The exchange on f3 left White with a number of weak pawns, while Black obtained a powerful protected square for his knight.

29 ♙f1 ♞c6

Tempting, but the flexible 29...♟e6!? seems even stronger; for example, 30 ♙e3 ♞c2! 31 a5 ♞b3 winning the b4-pawn, or 30 ♙e5 ♙xb4! 31 ♞xb4 ♞xe5 32 ♞xb7 a5 with a slight advantage – Kobalia. The trade of dark-squared bishops is indeed beneficial for Black, since it makes his knight untouchable on f4.

30 b5!

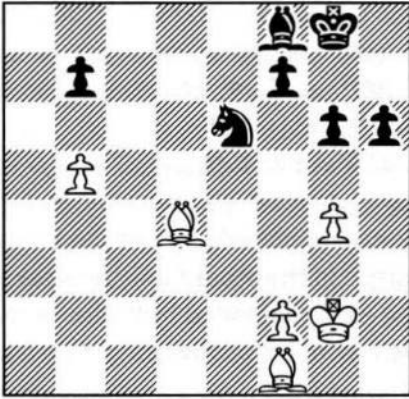
Pawn exchanges tend to make life easier for the defender.

30...axb5 31 axb5 ♞g6+

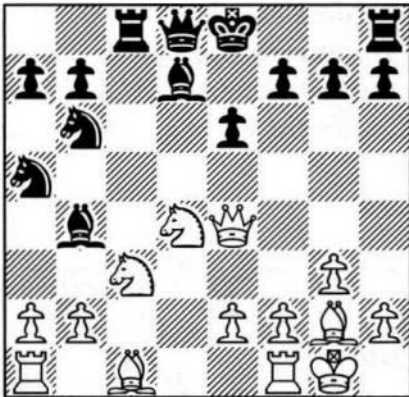
After the exchange 31...♞xf3?! 32 ♞e3 ♞xe3 33 ♙xe3 ♙d6 (or 33...♟e6?! 34 ♙g2) 34 ♙xf4! ♙xf4 35 b6 the opposite-coloured bishop ending is an easy draw. In the game Black wins the pawn under better circumstances.

32 ♖h1 ♞h5! 33 ♞e4 ♟xh3 34 ♖g2 ♟g5 35 ♞f5 g6 36 ♞g4! ♞xg4+ 37 fxg4 ♟e6

Despite the minus pawn, White keeps reasonable drawing chances in this endgame thanks to the bishop pair. Nevertheless, Black won in the end.



Example 109
P.H.Nielsen-A.Naiditsch
 Dortmund 2005



White has just advanced the queen from c2 to e4, unpinning the knight on c3 and preparing to meet the reply 14...0-0? with the trick 15 Qxe6! Qxe6 16 Wxb4 , while 14... $\text{Qe7?!$ 15 Rd1 0-0 16 Qf4 leaves Black with a rather cramped position. Fortunately for Black, there is an excellent third option.

14... Qxc3! 15 bxc3 0-0

By giving up the bishop pair Black managed to quickly secure his king and, in a more long-term perspective, left the oppo-

nent with weaknesses on c3, c4 and a4.

16 $\text{Rd1?!$

This looks like an oversight, but Black is also better after 16 Qa3 Re8 17 Qb4 Qac4 - Naiditsch.

16... Qc6!

By exploiting the pin along the d-file, Black swaps off the opponent's "good" bishop, something that will further enhance his light square control.

17 Wg4 Qxg2 18 Qxg2 f5!

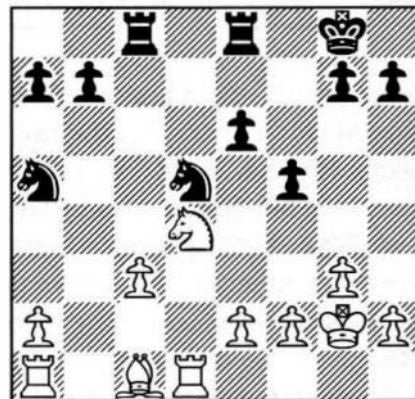
Preparing a centralizing queen check to counteract White's kingside threats. The immediate 18... Wd5+? failed to 19 e4.

19 Wh5 Wd5+ 20 Wf3

If 20 f3 , then 20... Qac4 restricting the enemy bishop is a good reply. On the other hand, the careless 20...e5? runs into the response 21 Qxf5! Wxd1 22 Qe7+ with a perpetual check, and the same thing applies to 19...e5? on the previous move.

20... Rfe8 21 Wxd5 Qxd5

The queen exchange finished off most of White's activity, and now his queenside weaknesses have become more tangible.



22 Qb5

After 22 Qb2 Qc4 23 Rab1 Rd8! 24 Qa1 b6 the bishop makes a sad impression.

22... Qc4 23 Rd4

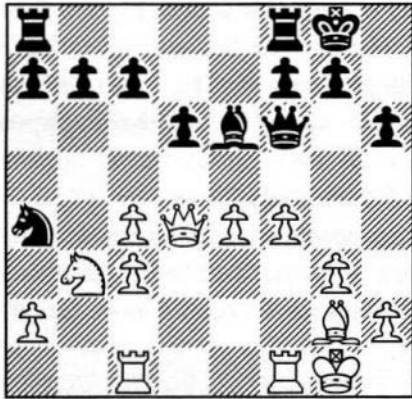
Or 23 Qxa7? Rc5! trapping the knight.

23...a6 24 ♖a3 ♜xa3 25 ♙xa3 ♜xc3 26 ♙d6 ♜c2

With a sound extra pawn, Black went on to win the game.

Sometimes the structural damage caused by the "dynamic" exchanges can be counter-weighted by other factors, as we will see next:

Example 110
G. Shahade-V. Akopian
New York Open 1998



In this double-edged position White has just played ♜d2-d4, offering the exchange of queens. Now 18...♜xd4?! 19 cxd4 would evidently help him improve his pawn structure, while 18...♜e7?! permits 19 e5! dxex5 20 ♜xe5 with an initiative. Akopian prefers a more active option.

18...c5!

Black accepts a shattered pawn structure on the kingside in order to keep up the pressure on the other flank.

19 ♜xf6

After 19 ♜xd6 ♜ad8 20 e5!? ♜xd6! 21 exf6 ♙xc4 Black emerges with a similar advantage as in the game.

19...gxf6 20 ♜fd1 ♖b2!

A clever way of picking up the c4-pawn. Less good is 20...♙xc4?! 21 ♜xd6 or 20...♜fd8?! 21 ♖a5! b6 22 ♜c6 intending 22...♜d7? 23 e5! - Ribli.

21 ♜xd6 ♖xc4 22 ♜d3 b6

Black has managed to stabilize the position with a slight edge thanks to his queen-side grip. On the other flank his weaknesses are not easily exploited by White, who has a problem with his passive knight on b3.

23 e5

Trying to create some activity. 23 ♜cd1? failed to 23...♖b2, while 23 f5 ♖e5! and 23 ♖d2 ♜fd8! both also favoured Black.

23...♜ad8!

Seizing the open file. The pawn that is now lost on f6 can be collected later.

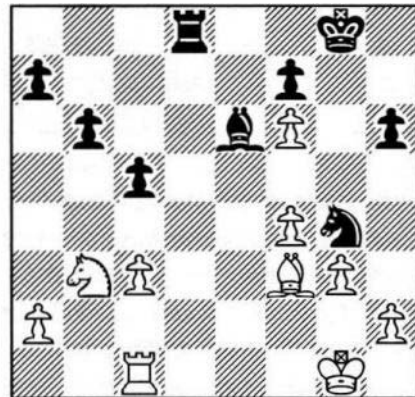
24 ♜xd8

After 24 ♜cd1? ♜xd3 25 ♜xd3 fxe5 White is just a pawn down.

24...♜xd8 25 exf6 ♖e3 26 ♙f3

Parrying the threat of 26...♜d1+ 27 ♜xd1 ♖xd1, when the white queenside soon collapses.

26...♖g4!



27 ♙xg4?

As we will see soon, the bishop's departure will leave White seriously weakened on the light squares. 27 ♜d1! was correct,

swapping the active enemy rook; e.g. 27...♖xd1+ 28 ♗xd1 ♜xf6 29 ♖f3 with just a slight disadvantage due to the isolated queenside pawns. At this point, the tempting 29...♗d5? fails to 30 f5!.

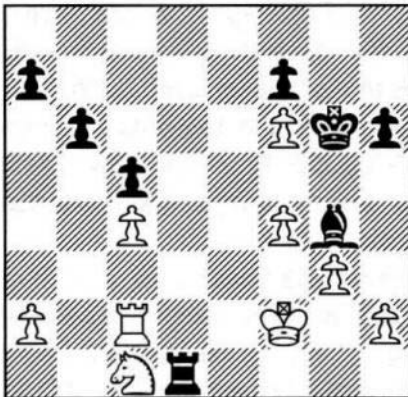
27...♗xg4 28 ♖c2 ♖d3!

Tying the white rook to the c3-pawn. The immediate 28...♗h7?! was less precise due to 29 ♖d2!, neutralizing Black's strong rook.

29 c4?!

Fixing the pawn on a light square can't be right, but after 29 ♗d2? ♗d1 or 29 ♗f2 ♗h7 30 ♗c1 ♖d1 White also remains in difficulties.

29...♗h7 30 ♗c1 ♖d1+ 31 ♗f2 ♗g6



Black is finally ready to restore the material balance. In this kind of minor piece ending, with pawns on both flanks and rooks on the board, the bishop clearly outshines the knight.

32 ♗e2 ♗f5!

Akopian directs his attention to the c4-pawn. Less technical is 32...♗xf6?! 33 ♗c3 with some slight counterplay.

33 ♖b2

If the rook leaves the second rank, then 33...♖d2 decides.

33...♗d3 34 ♗c3 ♖f1+ 35 ♗g2 ♗xc4

Black wins a pawn and, more impor-

tantly, generates powerful connected passed pawns.

36 ♗d5 ♖c1 37 ♗e7+ ♗xf6 38 ♗c8 ♖a1!

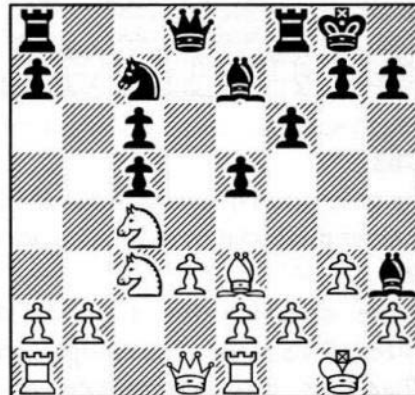
Forcing favourable simplifications.

39 ♗xa7 ♖xa2 40 ♖xa2 ♗xa2 41 ♗f2 ♗e6 42 f5+ ♗e5!

Avoiding 42...♗xf5? 43 ♗c8 b5 44 ♗d6+ ♗e5 45 ♗xb5 with some remote drawing chances. After the text White is unable to stop the passed pawns, so he resigned.

Just as a "dynamic" exchange can damage a sound pawn structure, it can also repair a defective one. In the following example Black used this idea on several occasions.

Example 111
L.Van Wely-V.Salov
Wijk aan Zee 1997



An English Opening with an early ♗xc6 produced this clash between different advantages. White possesses a compact pawn structure, but the absence of the fianchettoed bishop has left him vulnerable on the light squares and, indirectly, to a kingside attack. Black, on the other hand, enjoys the bishop pair in return for his numerous queenside weaknesses. An interesting bat-

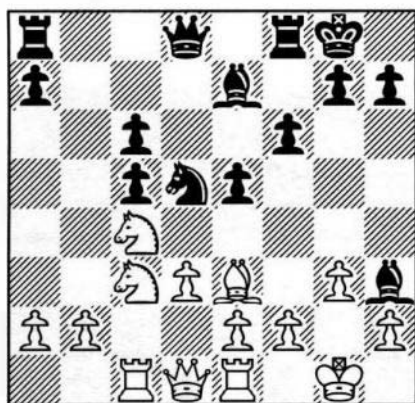
tle is to be expected.

13...♖d5!

Salov exploits the dynamic potential of his doubled pawns in order to centralize the knight. This is similar to Shahade's ♜d2-d4 in the previous example. Also interesting is 13...♖e6!? intending ...♜c7 and ...f5-f4 (Yudasin), when White could consider 14 ♜a4 in order to counter 14...♜c7 with the annoying 15 ♜a5!.

14♞c1

Obviously 14 ♖xd5? cxd5 does Black a big favour by repairing his pawn structure.



14...♞b8

The possession of a semi-open file is another asset produced by doubled pawns.

15 ♜d2

Before attacking the c5-pawn White mobilizes all his pieces. The straightforward 15 ♖a4?! is less appropriate due to 15...♖xe3 16 ♖xe3 f5!, followed by ...f5-f4, with a strong attack.

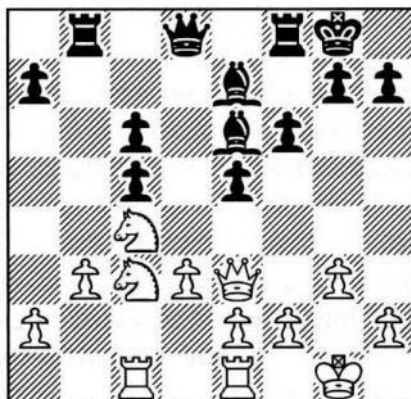
15...♗e6!

A clever prophylactic move that prepares to meet 16 ♖a4 by 16...♖b6!, offering a new "dynamic" exchange. Then 17 ♖xc5? would fail to 17...♗xc4, winning a piece. This tactical line explains White's next move in the game.

16 b3! ♖xe3

Swapping the bishop before White goes ♖c3-a4.

17 ♜xe3



17...♜d4!

In the same spirit as the 13th move. Generally in such a structure White is happy to swap queens, but not on d4 where the recapture ...c5xd4 would straighten out Black's pawns. Thus Van Wely ignores the active enemy queen and continues his queenside attack.

18 ♖a4 ♗d5 19 ♞e1

If 19 ♖d2, hitting c5, then 19...♞b5 preparing ...f5-f4; for example, 20 ♖e4 f5! 21 ♖exc5 ♜xe3 22 fxe3 ♗g5! 23 ♜f2 f4 with strong counterplay.

19...♞fd8 20 ♞c3

Preparing ♞dc1 with increased pressure on the c5-pawn. With the white knight still on c4 Black can't play ...f6-f5, so how can he create some activity?

20...h5!

A key move. With most enemy pieces concentrated to the queenside, Salov opens a new front on the other flank.

21 ♞dc1

After 21 h4?! ♜g4! 22 ♜h2 ♗e6 the white king is in danger.

21...h4 22 ♖d2 ♞b5 23 ♖f3!

Accurate defence. After 23 ♖xc5?! ♗xc5

24 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 25 ♖xc5 ♔a1+ 26 ♜f1 ♔xa2, preparing ...♖b8, White's king would feel uncomfortable.

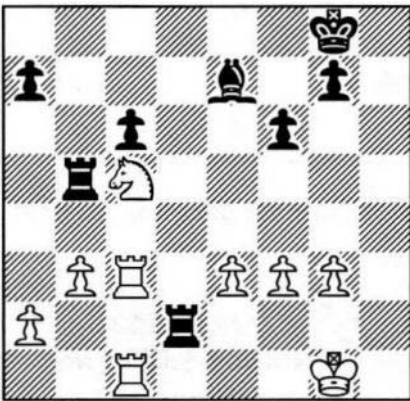
23...♔xe3 24 fxe3

Now Black is forced to create some activity before White goes e3-e4.

24...hxg3 25 hxg3 e4! 26 dxe4

If 26 ♜d2 exd3 27 exd3, then 27...f5! 28 ♜xc5 ♙f6, preparing ...♙f7 and ...♖h8 with counterplay – Ribli.

26...♙xe4 27 ♜xc5 ♙xf3 28 exf3 ♖d2!



Black is a pawn down, but his active pieces provide ample compensation.

29 a4 ♖b8 30 ♜d3

30 ♖1c2 just invites to mass exchanges and a draw, while 30 ♖b1!?, safeguarding the b3-pawn, is well met by 30...♖bd8 31 ♜e4 ♖e2, when both 32 ♖xc6 f5! followed by 33...♖dd2 and 32 g4 ♙b4! 33 ♖c4 a5 lead to black counterplay.

30...♙a3!

Heading for b2 in order to soften up White's defence.

31 ♖b1 ♖d8 32 ♜f2 c5 33 ♙f1?

This lets Black stretch his initiative to a maximum. White should have simplified by 33 ♜e4! ♖e2 34 ♜xc5 ♙xc5 35 ♖xc5 ♖dd2 36 e4 and the game ends with a perpetual – Ribli.

33...♖a2 34 ♜d3 ♙b4! 35 ♜xb4cxb4 36 ♖c4 ♖dd2

Despite the pawn minus, Black is not interested in a draw but aims at eliminating White's kingside. The game continued 37 ♖xb4 ♖f2+ 38 ♙g1 ♖xf3 39 g4 ♖xe3 40 ♖f1 a5! and White soon lost another pawn, and eventually the game.

For the related exercises, see page 328.

Chapter Four

Pawn Play

The play with pawns fulfils a whole range of functions in chess. In the previous chapters we came across some of them, such as the opening of files (Garcia Palermo-Bibiloni), clearance of diagonals (Sokolov-Nedev), and creation of protected squares (Vyzmanavin-Braga). Moreover, in examples like Guliev-Timman we observed that a single pawn move can cause serious weaknesses in one's own camp. In this chapter we will examine further facets of pawn play.

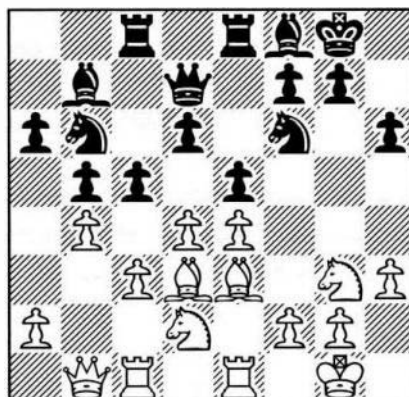
Gaining space

A fundamental function of pawn play is to gain space. We have already seen some examples of this in the previous chapters; e.g. Seirawan-Sosonko (the g4-g5 advance) and Stahlberg-Taimanov (the ...b5-b4 advance). By moving our pawns forward we are able to control more squares, and the space vacated by them often proves useful to the other pieces. In the following games we will see White gaining space on the three main areas of the board: the kingside, the queen-side and the centre. These examples will also tell us something about how to exploit

a space advantage once it is achieved.

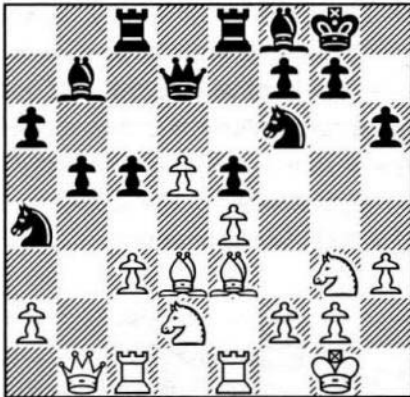
Example 112 A.Karpov-S.Gligoric San Antonio 1972

In a typical Spanish battle Black has just played ...c7-c5, challenging the white centre. Karpov now initiates some alterations to the pawn structure that will help him to gain space.



25 bxc5 dxc5 26 d5! ♘a4

Improving the knight and preparing 27...c4, followed by 28...♗c5, with a favourable bishop exchange. However, after seeing the game, one gets the feeling that Black should rather have taken some measures on the other flank. One try in this sense would be 26...g6 preparing ...♗g7, although after 27 c4! b4 28 ♖b3, with ideas like ♖a5 and a2-a3, White keeps the initiative.



27 c4!

Preventing Black's plan and strengthening the centre.

27...b4 28 ♖f1!

Now that the tension has dissolved in the centre, White can start concrete action on the kingside. The protected square on c3 is less relevant.

28...♖c7

Unfortunately, there is no longer time for 28...g6?! 29 f4 exf4 30 ♗xf4 ♗g7 due to 31 e5! with a huge edge.

29f4♖d7

Again strategy and tactics don't match for Black: the desirable 29...exf4?! 30 ♗xf4 ♗d6 fails to 31 ♗xd6 ♖xd6 32 ♖f5 with a strong initiative; e.g. 32...♖e5? 33 ♖f3 or 32...♖d8 33 ♖a1! ♖c3 34 ♖xc3 bxc3 35 ♖xc3, threatening 36 ♖xh6+ as well as 36 e5.

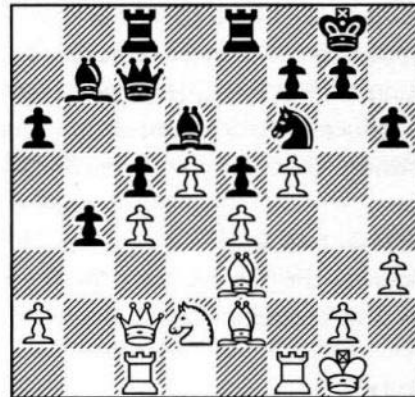
30 ♖c2 ♖c3 31 f5!

A key move. Karpov avoids the plan of ...e5xf4 followed by ...♗e5, and gains considerable space on the kingside.

31...♖f6 32 ♖e2

Swapping the opponent's most active piece and clearing the way for the g-pawn.

32...♖xe2+ 33 ♗xe2 ♗d6



34 g4!

Of course. With the centre completely closed, nothing speaks against a massive pawn advance on the kingside.

34...♖f8!

A clever defence. The king escapes from potential dangers on the kingside, just like in Zhrebukh-Salem (p. 83).

35 h4 ♖e7 36 g5 hxg5 37 hxg5 ♖d7 38 ♗g4!

A typical theme when gaining space: the squares vacated by the advancing pawn are of immediate interest to its fellow pieces. In fact we already saw this happen in Hellsten-Berrocal with 32 ♖d5 (p. 91). From now on Black will have to be on his guard against an opportune f5-f6, and this explains his next move.

38...♗g8 39 ♖f2

Preparing ♗h1 in order to dispute the open file.

39...♗h8

Mastering Chess Strategy

Now that the white king obstructs the rook along the f-file, Black doesn't have to fear 40 f6+.

40 ♖h1 ♜c8 41 ♜d1

White takes his time, aware that the opponent has no counterplay at all. Another strong option was 41 a3! a5 42 ♜a4 ♖b6 43 ♜b5, opening a second front on the queenside – Karpov.

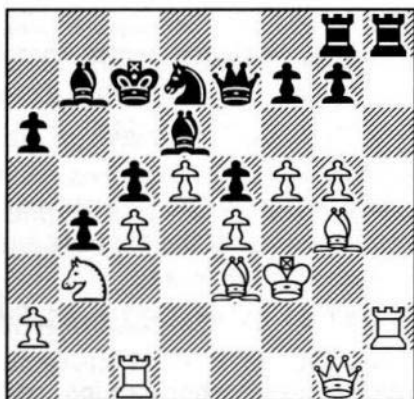
41... ♗d8 42 ♜g1 ♖b6 43 ♖h2 ♜e7

Preparing to meet 44 ♜h1 by 44... ♜f8, resisting on the h-file. However, this move also reduces Black's queenside control, something that Karpov immediately exploits.

44 ♖b3! ♗c7 45 ♗f3!

Clearing the second rank for the major pieces and producing an attack on the c5-pawn.

45... ♖d7



46 a3!

A typical method in positions with a space advantage – open a second front. Now Black is too cramped to be able to defend both flanks at the same time.

46... ♖xa3 47 ♜a2 ♖h4 48 ♜xa3 ♜gh8 49 ♖b1 ♜b8

49... ♖h1 50 ♜xh1 ♜xh1 51 ♜xh1 is equally hopeless.

50 ♜e1!

The queen joins the attack with tempo.

50... ♜xg4

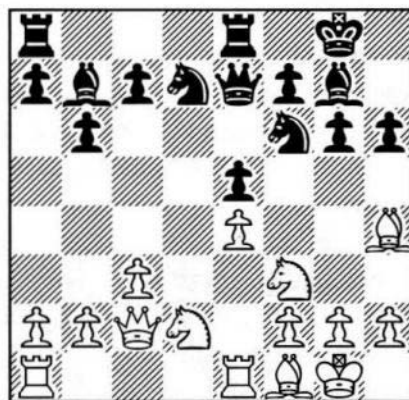
Desperation, but 50... ♖hh8 permitted 51 ♜a5+ ♗c8 52 f6! gxf6 53 ♖xc5 and Black's defence finally cracks.

51 ♗xg4 ♜c8 52 ♜a5+ 1-0

In view of the line 52... ♜b6 53 ♖xc5! ♜xc5 54 ♜xb6 ♜xb6 55 ♜xb6+ ♖xb6 56 c5.

In the previous example Karpov firmly advanced his kingside pawns, exploiting the fact that the blocked centre had left the opponent without counterplay. However, in many other pawn structures such a pawn advance would have jeopardized the king's safety. In comparison, a pawn advance on the queenside is a much less risky affair, and it appears with great frequency in practice. Here is one example.

Example 113 G.Kasparov-S.Martinovic Baku 1980



14 b4!

Gaining some space and taking the c5-square from the black knight.

14... a6

The active 14... a5!? would have complicated White's plan; e.g. 15 a3 ♜a7 16 ♜d3

♖e8 17 ♜b2 with just a slight edge – Kasparov.

15 ♜c4 ♖ac8?!

Aware that the immediate 15...c5? runs into 16 ♖ad1 cxb4 17 ♜d6, Black prepares it. However, 15...♜e6! was a better way of doing that; for example, 16 a4 a5! with counterplay, or 16 ♜fd2 c5 17 ♜e3 cxb4 18 cxb4 ♖ac8 19 ♜b1 b5 20 a4 and again White has just a slight advantage – Kasparov.

16 a4!

From now on White is ready to meet ...c7-c5 by b4-b5, thus securing the knight on c4 as well as the weak pawn on b6.

16...♜e6 17 ♜fd2 ♜h5

Deprived of any prospects on the queenside, Martinovic directs his attention to the other flank.

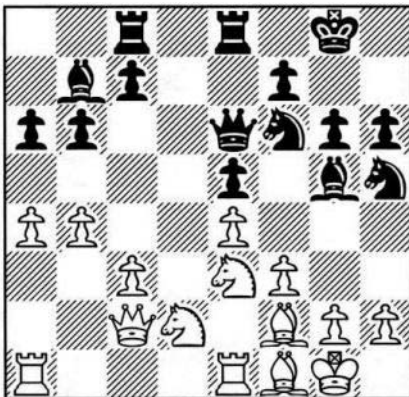
18 f3 ♜f6 19 ♜f2!

Keeping the “good” bishop.

19...♜g5 20 ♜e3

Vacating the c4-square, but not for the bishop!

20...♜df6



21c4!

Quite a difficult move to see, and very strong. The presence of this pawn at c4 creates the possibility of ♜e3-d5 and also enables a further queenside expansion. In

contrast, after 21 ♜c4?! ♜e7 it is not clear what White has achieved.

21...c6?!

Preventing 22 ♜d5 at the cost of severely weakening the dark squares on the queenside, something that Kasparov immediately exploits. Instead, something like 21...♖cd8 22 ♜d5 ♖d7 was preferable, when 23 a5 preserves White’s advantage.

22 ♜b3! ♜d7 23 c5!

Softening up Black’s queenside and creating a protected square on d6.

23...b5

Equally bad is 23...bxc5 24 bxc5! with the knight entering on a5.

24 ♖ed1 ♜e7 25 ♜c4!

By using some minor tactics White seizes the d6-square. Also strong was 25 ♜f5! in the same spirit – Kasparov.

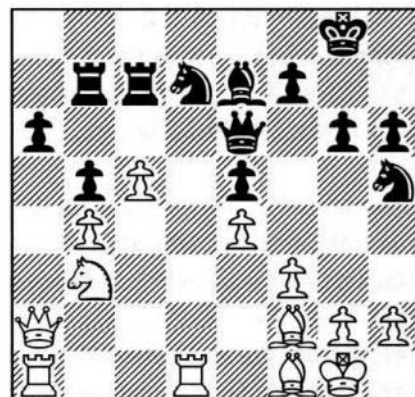
25...♖c7

After 25...bxc4? 26 ♜xc4 the piece is recovered with interest.

26 ♜d6 ♖b8 27 axb5 cxb5

Now White is left with a strong passed pawn, but 27...axb5 28 ♖a7 followed by 29 ♜a5 was fatal.

28 ♜xb7 ♖xb7 29 ♜a2!

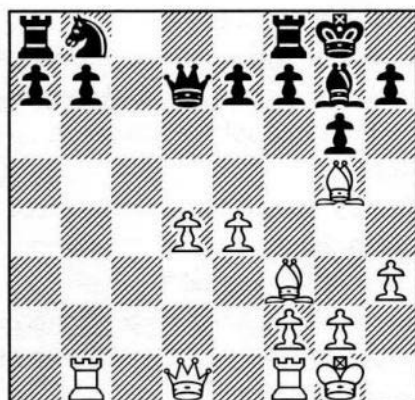


By attacking the a6-pawn Kasparov forces a queen exchange, which will help him realizing the c-pawn.

29...♖b8 30 ♖a5 ♜xa2 31 ♜xa2 ♜a7 32 c6 ♜a8

Curiously, the rook has been forced all the way back home, and so has the knight. The game concluded 33 ♜c2! ♙xb4 34 ♜d8+ ♜g7 35 ♙b6 ♙xa5 36 ♙xa5 ♜xc6 37 ♜xb8 ♜xb8 38 ♜xc6 ♙b4 39 ♙c7 and Black resigned.

Example 114
L.Johannessen-H.Nakamura
Bermuda 2002



In a typical position from the Grünfeld, White is a pawn down but enjoys a strong centre and a powerful bishop pair. From now on, he will do anything possible to make his central pawns advance.

16 d5!

Gaining space and preventing 16...♖c6. Less convincing is 16 e5?! ♖c6 17 ♜a4 ♜ad8 and Black has no problems whatsoever.

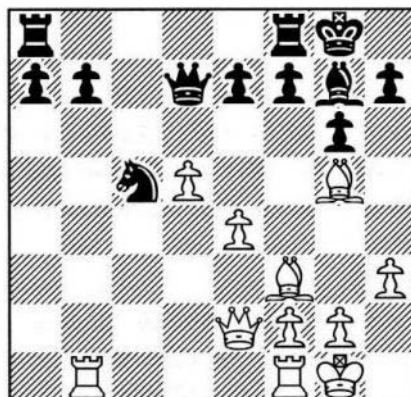
16...♖a6

Here, or on the next move, a blockade with 16...♙e5 made little sense due to 17 ♙g4!, preparing f2-f4 – Krasenkow, who instead suggests 16...a5, running with the a-pawn as far as possible.

17 ♜e2

Supporting e4-e5 and vacating d1 for the rooks.

17...♖c5



18 e5!

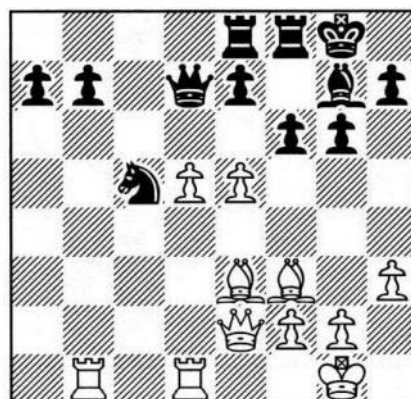
A pawn centre on the fifth rank tends to be a devastating force in most positions, and this is no exception.

18...♜ae8

Preparing ...f7-f6 to create at least some counterplay.

19 ♜fd1 f6 20 ♙e3!

There was no reason to help Black by 20 exf6?! exf6.



20...♜c8

Or 20...b6 21 ♙xc5 bxc5 22 ♜c4! fxe5 23 d6+ ♜h8 24 ♜b7, followed by 25 dxe7, with a decisive advantage.

21 d6!

Another key move which clears the h1-a8 and a2-g8 diagonals for tactical purposes, while getting White one step closer to a passed pawn.

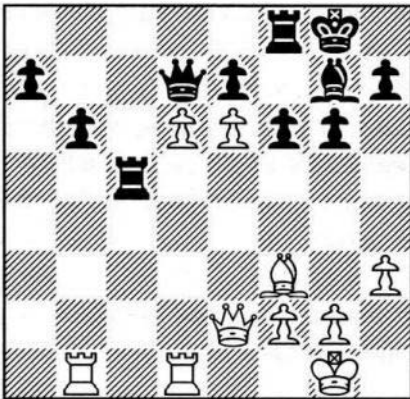
21...b6

Neither 21...exd6 22 ♖a2+! ♕h8 23 ♖xa7, with the double threat of 24 ♗xc5 and 24 exd6, nor 21...fxe5 22 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 23 ♖a2+! ♕h8 24 ♖xa7 ♗c4 25 ♗xb7 offered Black any chance of resistance – Krasenkow.

22 ♗xc5!

White finally says goodbye to his bishop pair, in order to secure the further advance of his central pawns.

22...♗xc5 23 e6



In less than ten moves White's pawn centre has made remarkable progress, and he is now ready to convert it into a decisive passed pawn.

23...♖c8

After 23...♖d8 24 dxe7 ♖xe7 25 ♗d7 ♖e8 26 ♗xa7 ♗e5 27 ♖c4, with ideas like ♖c7 and ♗d5, the situation is desperate for Black.

24 dxe7

Not 24 d7?! ♖c7 with some remote hope of salvation.

24...♗e8 25 ♗d8!

The final touch. One of the passed

pawns sacrifices itself in order to secure the advance of its colleague.

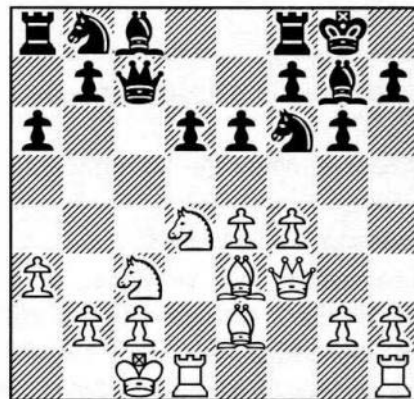
25...♗d8 26 exd8♖+ ♖xd8 27 e7 ♖e8 28 ♖e6+ ♕h8 29 ♗d1! ♗c8 30 ♖xc8! ♖xc8 31 ♗d8+

Black resigned.

A common situation for a pawn expansion is when the opponent's king is being attacked. Let's see one example.

Example 115
M.Adams-O.Renet
Cannes (team rapid) 1992

In the opening Black was forced to define the destiny of his king much earlier than desired, and White can proceed with a full-scale attack.



12 f5!

The kingside pawns start rolling. 12 g4 was somewhat less precise due to 12...e5!, hitting the g4-pawn. Here both 13 g5 exd4 14 gxf6 dxc3 15 fxg7 cxb2+ 16 ♕b1 and 13 ♖f5!? gxf5 14 gxf5 yield White promising play, but in the game he will have even better prospects.

12...♖c6 13 g4! ♗e8

Reinforcing the e6-pawn and vacating

Mastering Chess Strategy

the f8-square for the bishop. 13...♖e5?! 14 ♖g2 ♘c4 is too optimistic in view of 15 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 16 g5 ♘h5 17 f6 ♗h8 18 ♘de2, followed by ♘g3, when Black's kingside is soon unlocked with decisive effect. But 13...exf5!? 14 exf5 ♘d4 15 ♘d4 ♗d7 followed by 16...♗c6 might have been a lesser evil, with a difficult though not yet lost game.



14 g5 ♘d7

Or 14...♘h5 15 f6 ♗f8 16 ♖g2, followed by ♗xh5, and White breaks through.

15 f6 ♗f8 16 h4!

Of course. White intends simply to open the h-file and give mate.

16...♘de5 17 ♖h3 b5 18 h5

Even swifter was 18 ♘xc6!, deflecting one of the black defenders before carrying on with the attack. Now both 18...♖xc6 19 h5 and 18...♘xc6 19 h5 b4 20 ♗df1!, preparing 21 hxg6 hxg6 22 f7+, lead to an immediate win.

18...b4 19 axb4 ♘xb4 20 ♗df1!

Installing the threat of 21 hxg6 hxg6 22 f7+. Black has just one reply.

20...h6 21 ♘f3!

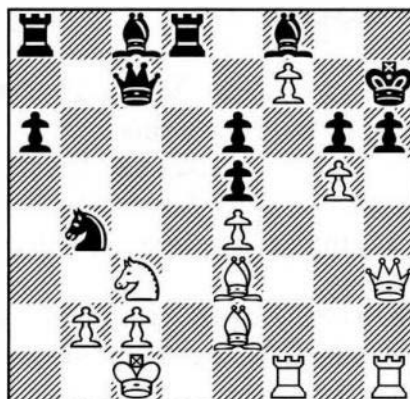
In order to swap the defender on e5.

21...♗d8

This counterattack won't turn out well, but after 21...♘bc6 22 hxg6 fxg6 23 gxh6 White's win is just a question of time.

22 ♘xe5 dxe5 23 hxg6 fxg6 24 f7+ ♖h7

Or 24...♖h8 25 ♗f6! ♖a5 26 ♖b1 ♘xc2 27 ♗xg6 ♘a3+ 28 ♖c1 and wins – Adams.



25 ♗h5!

Forcing the black king to leave his cave.

25...♖a5

After 25...gxh5 26 g6+ ♖h8 27 ♖xh5 ♖a5 28 ♖b1 ♘xc2 29 ♗xh6 Black is mated.

26 ♗xg6+ ♖h8 27 ♖b1 ♘xc2 28 ♖f3!

28 ♖xc2 was also possible, but the text forces mate.

28...♘a3+ 29 ♖c1

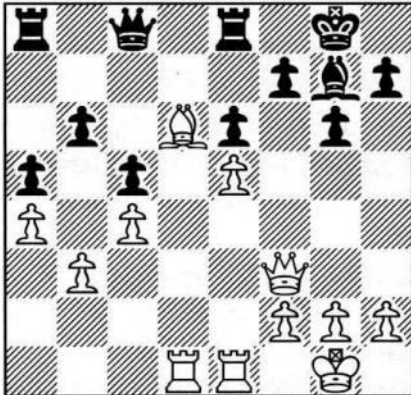
In view of 29...♘c4 30 ♖f6+ ♗g7 31 ♗xh6 mate, Black resigned.

An important idea when possessing a space advantage is the opening of a second front. This is similar to the famous end-game principle of "two weaknesses", just that there are more pieces on the board. Typically the new front is opened by a pawn, like Karpov's 46 a3! against Gligoric (p. 134). Here is one more example.

Example 116
V.Kuporosov-A.Panchenko
Budapest 1991

White is much better, thanks to his

space advantage, control of the only open file and the strong bishop on d6. However, a mechanical doubling of rooks by Rd3 and Red1 might not yield much after $\dots\text{Ra7-d7}$ followed by $\dots\text{Red8}$. Kuporosov finds a stronger option.



25 h4!

Opening up a second front on the king-side, where Black can't defend himself easily due to the lack of space.

25...Ra7

The desirable $25\dots\text{h5}?!$ runs into $26\ \text{g4! hxg4}\ 27\ \text{Wxg4}$ followed by $28\ \text{h5}$, when it is hard to believe that the attack can be stopped.

26 h5 Rd7 27 Rd3 Wa8 28 Wf4!

Keeping the queens for a future attack and enabling the next, strong move.

28...Wd8 29 h6!

At first sight it seems illogical to close the h-file, thus ruling out a direct attack. However, Kuporosov has estimated that from now on Black will have a problem with his bishop, whereas the h6-pawn will be useful in any tactical context.

29...Le8

The desirable $29\dots\text{Le8}$ fails to $30\ \text{Red1 Lexd6}\ 31\ \text{Rxd6 Rxd6}\ 32\ \text{Rxd6}$, when Black can't keep both b6 and f6 under control.

30 We4 Wa8 31 We3

Slowly resuming work on the second front.

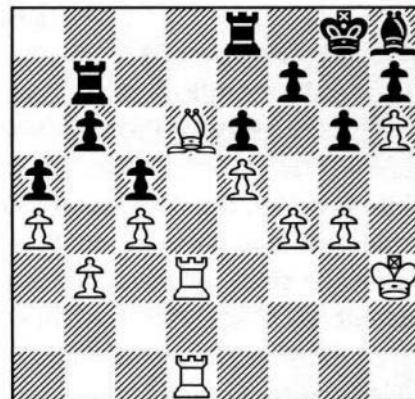
31...Wd8?!

Here or later, Black should have tried to free himself by $\dots\text{f7-f6}$. On this occasion, after $31\dots\text{f6}\ 32\ \text{exf6! Lexf6}\ 33\ \text{Le5}$ White obtains a comfortable edge, but Black has more hopes of survival than in the game.

32 g3 Wa8 33 Red1 Wc6 34 f4 Wa8 35 Rd2 Wc6 36 Rd1 Wa8 37 Qf2 Ra7 38 g4! Rd7 39 Qg3 Ra7 40 Qh3 Wc8 41 We4 Wb7?!

As we will see next, the queen exchange no longer favours Black. But White should also be winning after $41\dots\text{Rd7}\ 42\ \text{Qg2}$, preparing $43\ \text{f5}$.

42 Wxb7! Rxb7



43 f5!

Threatening f5-f6 followed by Le7 , when the entrance of the white rooks is inevitable.

43...f6

After $43\dots\text{exf5}\ 44\ \text{gxf5}$, both $44\dots\text{gxf5?}\ 45\ \text{Rg3+}$ and $44\dots\text{Le5?}\ 45\ \text{Le5 Rxe5}\ 46\ \text{Rd8+}$ lose for Black, while $44\dots\text{f6}\ 45\ \text{e6}$ is equally grim for him.

44 g5!

A nice blow. No matter how Black captures, a white pawn reaches f6 on the next move.

44...fxe5 45 f6 e4 46 R3d2

White finally managed to unlock the position and the rest is just agony for Black due to his sad bishop.

46...e3 47 ♖e2 ♗d7 48 ♖xe3 e5 49 ♗d5 ♖ed8 50 ♙c7! ♗xd5 51 cxd5 ♗xd5 52 ♖xe5

In this hopeless position, Black resigned.

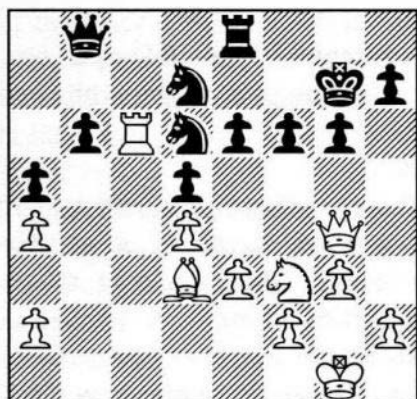
For the related exercises, see page 329.

Creating weaknesses

Another important idea within pawn play is to create weaknesses. Here I am referring to pawn advances that soften up squares or pawns in the enemy camp. Let's start by examining a few examples where the focus lies on potentially weak squares.

Example 117 V.Ivanchuk-P.Leko Istanbul Olympiad 2000

White is better, thanks to control of the open file and the pressure on the black pawns on the sixth. However, an immediate assault with **30 ♖f4?** backfires after **30...e5! 31 dxe5 fxe5**. Ivanchuk finds a more controlled way to proceed.



30 h4!

Opening a new front on the kingside.

30...♗f8

Leko overprotects his weaknesses at g6 and e6, and prepares **31...♖c8** in order to swap the active white rook.

31 ♖f4

By attacking the knight on d6 White prevents **...♖e8-c8**. In contrast, after **31 h5?! ♖c8! 32 ♖xc8 ♜xc8 33 ♖f4 ♗f7!** Black defends comfortably.

31...♗d8

In the event of **31...♗f7?!**, both **32 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 33 ♖c7!** and the immediate **32 ♖c7!** get White in command of the seventh rank.

32 g4!

With the simple idea of g4-g5 in order to soften up the key square on e5.

32...♗e8

Searching for some relief in a queen exchange. It is hard to suggest anything better, e.g. **32...h6?! 33 g5**.

33 ♖xb8 ♖xb8

Now the black knights cover the key squares on c7, e6 and f6, while b6 is defended by the rook. If Leko had the time, he would free himself by **...♗f7-e7, ...♗d6, ...♗d7** and finally **...♖c8**. But this whole idea remains an illusion after White's next move.

34 g5!

Generating a weak square on e5, to the great pleasure of the white knight.

34...h6 35 ♖g2!

There was nothing wrong with the immediate **35 gxh6+ ♗xf6 36 ♗e5**, but Ivanchuk has observed that his opponent can't undertake anything anyway, thus he first activates his king.

35...hxg5 36 hxg5 ♗f7 37 gxf6 ♗xf6 38 ♗e5 ♖b7

This drops a pawn; but after **38...g5 39 ♖g3**, intending **♖g4, ♗f3** and **♗xg5**, the win is just a question of time.

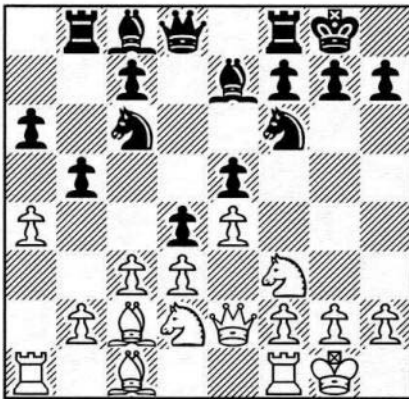
39 ♖c8! ♗e7

Even worse is 39...♞e7? 40 ♖b5, losing one of the knights.

40 ♖xg6 ♜d6 41 ♞c6

On top of his positional superiority, White now has an extra pawn. Ivanchuk won without difficulty.

Example 118
B.Spasky-M.Taimanov
 USSR Championship, Moscow
 1956



In a Spanish battle Spassky has just played a2-a4, which is a typical move in this opening. However, on this occasion it lets Black carry out a favourable alteration of the pawn structure.

11...dxc3! 12 bxc3 b4!

A strong pawn advance with the aim of softening up the d4-square for the black pieces.

13 ♜c4

Now each side has "his" weakness, but as the further course of the game will show us, the central ones are usually worth more. In the event of 13 ♖b2 Black could consider 13...♞e8!?, overprotecting e5; e.g. 14 ♜c4 ♖g4! 15 h3 ♖xf3 16 ♜xf3 bxc3 17 ♖xc3 ♖c5!, followed by ♖d4 with a pleasant ad-

vantage.

13...♖g4!

Enabling a timely ...♖xf3 to eliminate a defender of the d4-square. Less convincing is 13...bxc3?! 14 ♜cxe5 with complications.

14 ♖b2 ♖c5 15 ♞ad1

After 15 cxb4 ♖xf3 16 ♜xf3 ♜xb4 17 ♞ac1 ♖d4! the d4-square also remains in Black's command.

15...bxc3 16 ♖xc3 ♜d4

Another good option was 16...♖d4; for example, 17 ♖d2 ♜h5! preparing 18...♜f4. Here 18 h3? fails to 18...♜g3.

17 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 18 h3 ♖xf3 19 ♜xf3 ♜d7!

Time to improve the knight, which is in fact the most suitable occupant of the d4-square.

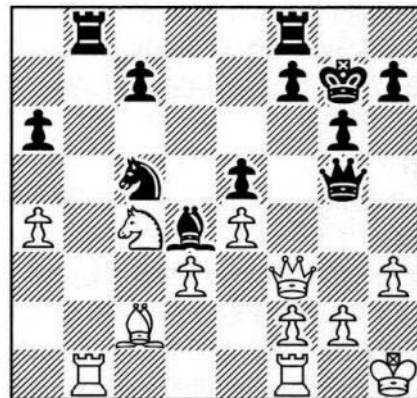
20 ♞b1 ♜g5!

Activating the queen and connecting the rooks.

21 ♜h1 g6 22 ♜e3 ♜c5 23 ♜c4

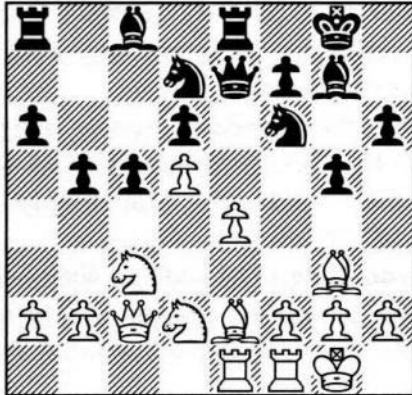
White can't really undertake much, e.g. 23 ♜d5?! c6.

23...♜g7!



Taimanov keeps slowly improving his position. The game continued 24 ♜e2 ♜e6 25 g3 ♖c5! 26 ♞xb8 ♞xb8 27 ♜h2 ♜f6 28 ♜g2 h5 29 h4 ♜d4 30 ♜d1 ♜e6 with a clear advantage for Black, who went on to win the game.

Example 119
M.Najdorf-R.J.Fischer
 Santa Monica 1966



Here is a more complex example. In a typical Benoni, the ...g6-g5 advance helped Black to gain some space and enhance his dark square control, but also left a weakness on f5. However, the straightforward 16 d1, heading for e3-f5, is well met by 16...d5 17 d3 e3 d7 and Black has everything under control; e.g. 18 f4 gxf4 19 Bxf4 g6 20 f5 exf5 21 Bxf5 c4! with counterplay. Thus White needs to widen his horizons.

16a4!

Softening up c4 for the white knights.

16...b4

After 16...bxa4? 17 d4! d5 18 ex5! dxe5 19 dxa4 White manages to ruin the black pawn structure while keeping the strong knight on c4, with a clear advantage on the whole board.

17 d1d5

The brave 17...dxe4?! is well met by 18 d3 f5 19 dxe4 (not 19 f3? d4+) 19...fxe4 20 ex4 d5 21 d3, perhaps followed by 22 f4, with a strong initiative.

18 d3 d6?!

Intending 19...d4 followed by ...d7-e5 with complete dark square control, but White will not let this happen. Preferable was 18...h5 19 h4 gxh4 20 exh4 g6, as in the game Joe.Benjamin-J.Watson, Lone Pine 1979, when 21 ag5! looks a little better for White.

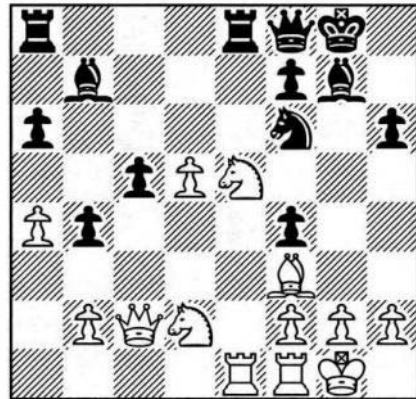
19 dxc4 d4 20 exf4!

Initiating powerful action in the centre.

20...gxf4 21 e5! dxe5 22 ef3

Thanks to threat of 23 d6, White recovers the pawn at once.

22...f8 23 dxe5 ab7



Black's pawn structure is now in ruins, but his bishop pair yields some kind of compensation.

24 ddc4!

Najdorf concludes the plan initiated by 16 a4, without worrying about the d5-pawn.

24...ad8

Indeed, after 24...dxd5? 25 d7! or 24...exd5? 25 exd5 dxd5 26 d7! White wins material.

25 dc6!

The tempting 25 d6?! permits 25...exf3 26 dxf3 ex1 27 Bxe1 d8!, eliminating the passed pawn. In the game White waits with its advance until a better opportunity arises.

25...♖xe1 26 ♜xe1 ♜e8 27 ♜d1!

Another precise move, which leaves Black's major pieces badly placed and supports the passed pawn.

27...♜c8 28 h3!?

Aware that the opponent can't undertake much, Najdorf opts for a useful move.

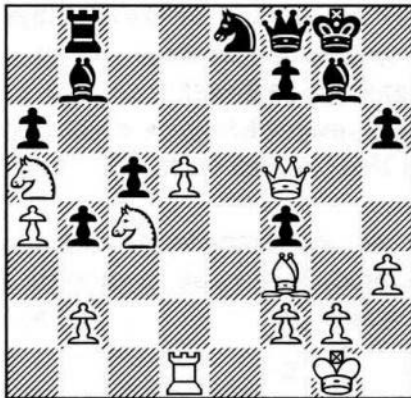
28...♗e8

After 28...♗xd5? 29 ♖6a5 White wins.

29 ♖6a5 ♜b8

Or 29...♗a8 30 ♗b6 ♜d8 31 ♗xa8 ♜xa8 32 d6! ♜d8 33 d7 ♗f6 34 ♗c6 and the passed pawn decides.

30 ♗f5!



Unexpectedly, when White finally exploits the f5-square, it is with the queen.

30...♗d6?

This loses at once, but after 30...♗a8 31 ♗c6 ♜b7 32 d6 Black is also helpless.

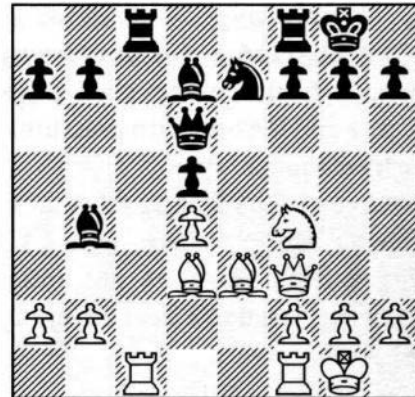
31 ♗xd6 1-0

31...♗xd6 32 ♗xb7 ♜xb7 33 ♗c8+ follows.

Example 120
J.Hellsten-J.Plachetka
 Greek Team Championship 2004

In this position with a fixed pawn centre, White is slightly better thanks to the more active placement of his minor pieces.

How can he make further progress, considering the fact that the d5-pawn is well defended for the moment?



15 h4!

A typical advance to gain some space and enable future pressure on Black's king-side. Since the reply 15...h5 isn't possible, the pawn can soon move on to h5.

15...a6?!

Any bishop or knight move to f5 drops the d5-pawn, and so does 15...♗g6? after 16 a3! ♗a5 17 ♗xd5. With 15...a6 Plachetka, instead, prepares a bishop exchange with a timely ...♗b5, but this doesn't have a high priority at this moment. The immediate 15...♜xc1 16 ♜xc1 ♜c8 was better, in order to simplify the game.

16 h5 ♜xc1

Now if 16...♗b5, then 17 ♗xb5 axb5 18 ♗d3 ♗a5 19 ♜c5! with an initiative. Also after 16...h6!? 17 ♗b1, preparing ♗d3, White is slightly better thanks to his control of the b1-h7 diagonal, which can't be blocked by ...g7-g6 anymore.

17 ♜xc1 ♜c8 18 ♜xc8+ ♗xc8 19 ♗c2!

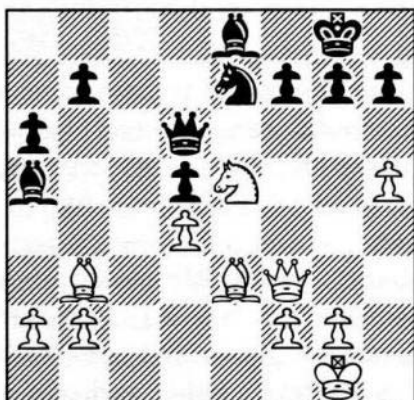
A small but useful move. The bishop can now go to b3 to put pressure on d5, while a subsequent ♗d3 will help both the knight and the other bishop in finding new destinies.

19...♔d7?

Black prepares 20...♔c6 in order to safeguard the d5-pawn, but the following sequence of white moves will leave him suffering on the kingside. Preferable was 19...h6 20 ♔b3 ♔e6 with a passive but safe position. A future white plan might be ♖xe6, ♔c2 and ♗e2-d3 with pressure along the b1-h7 diagonal.

20 ♔b3 ♔c6 21 ♖d3 ♔a5 22 ♖e5! ♔e8

After 22...♗e6 23 ♖xc6, both 23...bxc6 24 ♗e2 and 23...♗xc6 24 h6!, intending 24...g6 25 ♔g5, lead to a clear advantage for White.



23 h6!

A key move that softens up a whole complex of dark squares. Now it is evident why Black should have preferred ...h7-h6 earlier.

23...g6 24 ♖g4!

By means of the threat 25 ♖f6+, White forces ...f7-f5 in order to secure the e5-square. Another good option was 24 ♔g5, increasing the pressure on the d5-pawn; e.g. 24...♖f5 25 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 26 ♔xd5 ♖xd4 27 ♔xb7 with a sound extra pawn in the endgame.

24...f5 25 ♖e5 ♔c6 26 ♖d3!

A temporary retreat that clears the way for the bishop towards e5, where it will

haunt the black king.

26...♖f8 27 ♔f4 ♗f6 28 ♗e3

The immediate 28 ♔e5 permits 28...♗g5, so White first covers the g5-square.

28...♔d8 29 ♔e5 ♗f7 30 ♖f4

Also possible was 30 ♔g7+ ♖g8 31 ♖e5 ♗e6 32 ♖g4! ♗xe3 33 ♖f6+ ♖f7 34 fxe3, winning the h7-pawn, but the text is even more uncomfortable for Black due to his unsafe king.

30...♖c8?

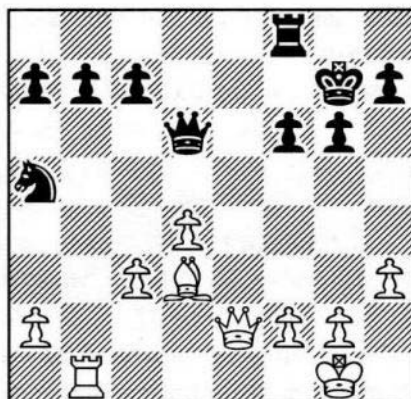
A tactical oversight. The last chance was 30...♖e8!, preparing a king march to the other flank, when 31 ♔d6 ♖d7 32 ♖d3! ♖c8 33 ♔f4, with ideas like ♗e5 and ♖c5-e6, keeps a huge advantage.

31 ♔g7+ ♖g8 32 ♖xd5!

Black resigned in view of 32...♔xd5 33 ♔xd5 ♗xd5 34 ♗e8 mate.

In the next example the very same advance produces a weak pawn in the opponent's camp.

Example 121
P.Svidler-A.Motylev
 European Club Cup, Ohrid 2009



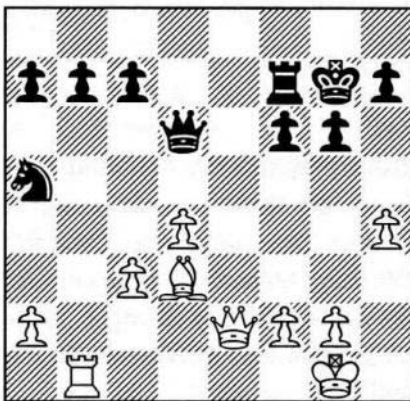
A brief look at the position reveals two minor problems for Black: his knight is temporarily out of play on a5, and the light squares on the kingside have been slightly weakened by an earlier ...f7-f6. In the following play, Svidler exploits these factors to a maximum.

26 h4!

Preparing h4-h5 to soften up the g6-pawn.

26...f7

Motylev prepares 27...e7 in order to activate his rook. The more restrictive 26...h5 permits 27 g4!? intensifying the attack; e.g. 27...h8? 28 e4 and the g6-pawn can't be covered properly, or 27...hxg4 28 b5! c6 (after 28...b6? 29 xg4 f5 30 xf5 White wins a pawn) 29 xg4 e5 30 dx5 xd3 31 xb7 xc3 32 e6 with some initiative for White.



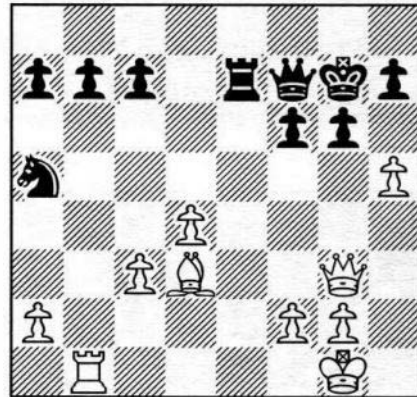
27 h5! e7

Black shouldn't even think about 27...g5?, clearing the b1-h7 diagonal; e.g. 28 h6+!? xh6 29 f3 with the threat of 30 f3+, and if 29...g7?, then 30 f5. But 27...f5!?, blocking that same diagonal, is quite reasonable, when 28 d2 preparing 29 g5 keeps some initiative.

28 g4 e6 29 g3 f7?!

A logical follow-up to the previous

move, but this gives White the opportunity to bring his rook into the attack. Preferable was 29...d6!?, insisting on the queen exchange, when 30f4 is well met by 30...e6! 31 hxg6 e3+ – Golubev. Thus 30 h4, keeping up the pressure, is probably a better choice.



30 b5!

The beginning of quite an unusual and very strong manoeuvre. The rook is swung to the h-file where it will enhance the white attack. Meanwhile, the check on e1 is harmless.

30...b6 31 hxg6 hxg6 32 h5! e8?!

After 32...b7 33 h3! f5 34 h4 White also has strong pressure, but the text practically loses a pawn.

33 h3!

Preparing 34 h4 with mating threats along the h-file.

33...f5

Obviously 33...h8 failed to 34 xh8 xh8 35 xg6.

34 xxf5!

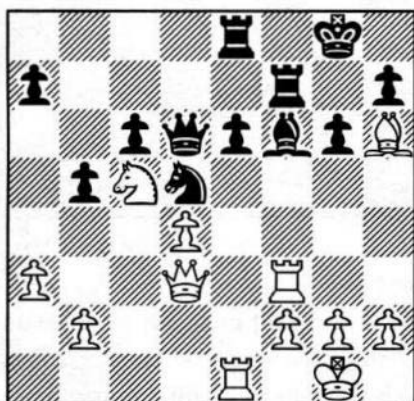
A decisive blow. Now after 34...xf5 35 xc7+ Black loses his queen, e.g. 35...f6 36 f3 or 35...f7 36 h7+!

34...c6 35 d3 e6 36 h4 g8 37 c4! e1+ 38 h2 xc4 39 h8+ f7 40 h7+

Black resigned.

Often a pawn advance is directed at a pawn minority in the opponent's camp, where it can cause both weak squares and pawns. Here are two examples that feature such "majority" attacks, the first one on the kingside and the second on the queenside.

Example 122
Pr.Nikolic-L.Van Wely
 Groningen 1993



White is clearly better thanks to the opponent's numerous weaknesses. In order to increase the pressure, Nikolic resorts to a typical pawn advance.

29 g3!

Preparing h4-h5 to soften up the black kingside pawns.

29...a5

Van Wely intends ...a5-a4 securing his queenside, but the immediate 29...g7, taking care of the other flank, seemed more relevant.

30 h4! g7

30...a4?! runs into 31 h5 gxh5 32 e5! with a strong attack, now that 32...xe5? 33 fxf7 fxf7 34 fxh7+ leads to mate.

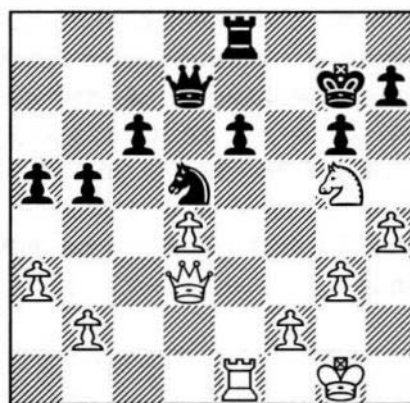
31 fxf7 fxf7 32 e4!

A tempting knight manoeuvre, but the

simple 32 e5! looks just as strong. No matter how Black reacts, he ends up with severe weaknesses; e.g. 33...g5 34 e5! h6 35 g6+, or 33...f6 34 hxg6 hxg6 35 e5!, heading for g5. Also after 33...gxh5 34 f3 f6 35 e5! h6 36 f4!, with the threat of 37 g5+, White's attack is decisive.

32...Wd7 33 g5+ g8 34 fxg7 fxg7

Or 34...fxg7 35 e6 with a technical win.



35 e5!

Nikolic prepares the doubling of the major pieces on the e-file, with the rook in front. Thus this piece also gets closer to Black's king. Anyway, the straightforward 35 h5! was again very strong.

35...h6 36 e4 e7 37 e2 a4 38 c5 c7 39 e4!

Unfortunately for Black, the c6-pawn can only be saved by removing the queen from the kingside defence.

39...Wd6 40 h5!

Finally! Now Black is completely helpless.

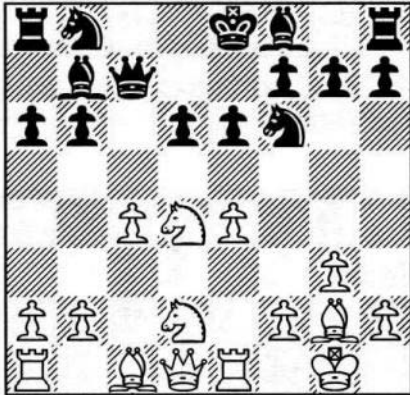
40...gxh5

Obviously 40...g5 fails to 41 g6+.

41 fxh5 f8 42 g4+ h7 43 e4!

In view of 43...e7 44 g5+, Black resigned.

Example 123
V.Salov-A.Karpov
 Wijk aan Zee 1998



In a typical Hedgehog position Black is somewhat behind in development. Thus Salov hurries to attack him in his most vulnerable area, the queenside.

11 a4!

Preparing a4-a5 to soften up the a5-square and the a6-pawn. This plan goes well with the deployment of the knight on d2, who can join the attack via b3-a5.

11...d6

After 11...d6?! 12 a5, preparing d2b3-a5, Black is already under pressure; e.g. 12...e7 13 d2b3 d8 14 axb6 dxb6 15 a5 a8 16 ac6!, as in the game U.Bönsch-V.Chuchelov, Berlin 1996, which continued 16...xc6 17 dxc6 xc6 18 e5 xc4 19 exf6 xf6 20 e3 with a strong initiative.

12 dxc6 xc6

Also after 12...xc6 13 a5! b5 14 cxb5 xb5 15 a3!, preparing b3, Black's queenside becomes exposed.

13 a5! b8

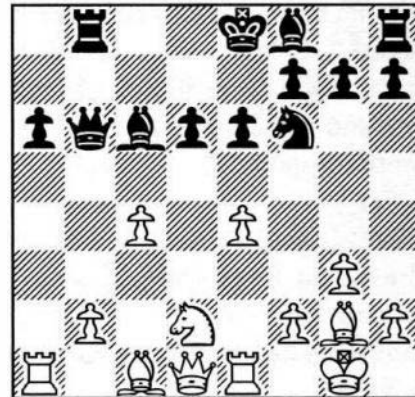
One of several unsatisfactory replies. 13...b5?! 14 cxb5 xb5? 15 e5! was termi-

nal, while after 13...e7 14 d3 b8 15 axb6 xb6 16 d4! White keeps the initiative; e.g. 16...a8 17 a4+! or 16...d7 17 e3!. Thus 13...bxa5! 14 d3 b8 15 dxa5 a8 was Black's safest choice, when 16 d2!? e7 (not 16...xb2? 17 c3 followed by e4-e5) 17 b4 0-0, followed by ...fc8, leaves him just slightly worse due to the weak a6-pawn.

14 axb6

Inferior was 14 d3?! bxa5 15 dxa5 a8, transposing to the previous note.

14...xb6



15 e3!

A key move that prepares 16 b3, after which the weakness on a6 will be strongly felt.

15...d7

The knight joins the queenside defence. After 15...e7? 16 b3 c7 17 xb8+ xb8 18 e5! White wins a piece.

16 b3 a7 17 ba3

Perhaps 17 xb8+dxb8 18 b4! was even stronger: e.g. 18...b6 19 b5! axb5 20 cxb5 xb5? 21 b1 winning, or 18...e7 19 b5 b7 20 d3 0-0 21 e3 a8 22 c5 with a clear advantage – Salov.

17...b7

If 17...c5 then 18 d3! is unpleasant, e.g. 18...d3 19 xb3 xb3 20 xb3 e7

21 ♖a2! ♜b7 22 ♖a4+, harassing the black king.

18 b4!

The pawn joins the attack on a6, which forces Black's reply.

18...♗b6 19 ♖a4!

Defending b4 and complicating Black's castling.

19...♙e7 20 ♙b2 ♙f6?

The weakening 20...e5 was Black's last chance. After 21 ♖f1 0-0 22 ♘e3 White is strategically much better, but in the game he wins material.

21 e5!

A strong blow that liberates the c-pawn.

21...♙xe5

Or 21...♙xg2 22 exf6 ♙c6 23 fxg7! ♜g8 24 ♖c2 and wins, while 21...dxe5 22 c5 is similar to the game.

22 c5 ♖c7

Both 22...dxc5? 23 ♙xe5 and 22...♗b5 23 ♖xb5 axb5 24 ♙xe5 ♘e5 25 ♙xb7 ♜xb7 26 ♜a8+ are terminal.

23 ♙xe5 dxe5 24 ♙xb7 ♜xb7 25 c6 ♘b6 26 ♖xa6 ♖xc6

By a series of "only moves" Karpov has managed to stay alive, but White's next leaves him helpless.

27 ♘c4!

With the double threat of 28 ♘a5 and 28 ♖xb7 ♖xb7 29 ♘d6+. Obviously 27...♖xc4 fails to 28 ♖xb7.

27...♜b8 28 ♘xb6 0-0

In view of 28...♜xb6 29 ♖a8+ or 28...♖xb6 29 ♖xb6 ♜xb6 30 ♜a8+, Black has to accept losing a piece.

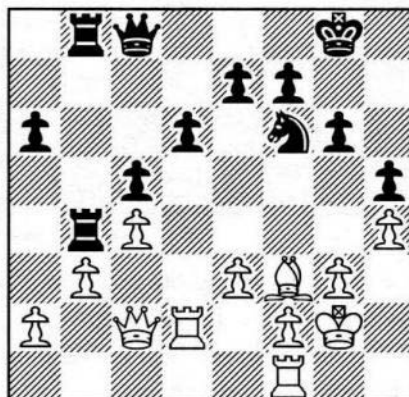
29 ♘c4 ♖e4 30 ♜e3 ♖d5 31 ♘e5 ♜fc8 32 ♖d3

Black resigned.

Another typical target for the pawn advance is an enemy pawn majority. Such "minority" attacks can take place in many

different structures, and in fact we already came across two of them in Psakhis-Drasko (p. 123) and Bouaziz-Jansa (p. 101). Here are a few more examples.

Example 124
R.Cifuentes Parada-G.Milos
Santiago 1989



At first sight the position seems rather level, but Black has a simple idea at his disposal, one that will soon yield him the upper hand.

26...a5!

Initiating a minority attack.

27 ♙d1a4

White is faced with a typical dilemma: if he swaps on a4 then the c4-pawn becomes vulnerable, whereas if he doesn't, then Black's ...a4xb3 will fix a weakness on b3.

28 ♖d3

Cifuentes opts for the latter, aware that after 28 bxa4?! ♖a6 29 ♙e2 ♜xa4 he would have two weaknesses to look after.

28...axb3 29 axb3

From now on Black has a slight but enduring advantage thanks to the weak b3-pawn. Moreover, he is first to exploit the open a-file.

29...♖b7+ 30 f3

Or 30 ♖f3 ♖a7 heading for a3 – Milos.

30...♖a8! 31 ♖c2 ♖a2 32 ♖c3 ♖a8

Preparing ...♖a3-b2 in order to swap the defender on c3.

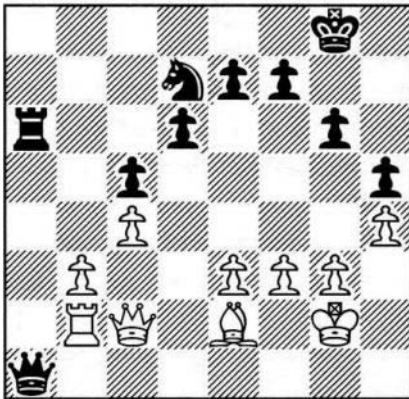
33 ♖d1 ♖a1 34 ♖e2 ♖a3 35 ♖b2

If 35 ♖d1, then 35...♔g4!, with the double threat of 36...♖xc4 and 36...♗e5.

35...♖b6!

By this the rook gains access to the a-file.

36 ♖d1 ♖a1 37 ♖e2 ♖xf1 38 ♖xf1 ♖a1 39 ♖e2 ♖a6 40 ♖c2 ♔d7!



Milov prepares ...♗e5-c6-b4, exploiting the weak b4-square. 40...♖e1?! 41 ♖b1 is less constructive.

41 ♖b1?

Handing over the second rank. 41 f4 was correct, preventing Black's plan, who could consider 41...♗f6 42 ♖f3 e5!?, preparing ...e5-e4.

41...♖a2! 42 ♖xa1

Obviously 42 ♖d1?? failed to 42...♖xe2+ 43 ♖f1 ♖a2.

42...♖xc2 43 ♖f2 ♔e5 44 ♖a4?

After 44 ♖e1 ♖b2 or 44 ♖b1 ♔d3+ 45 ♖f1 ♔b4 White also faces an uphill struggle, but now he unexpectedly loses his bishop.

44...♔d3+! 45 ♖f1 ♔c1 46 ♖d1 ♖h2!

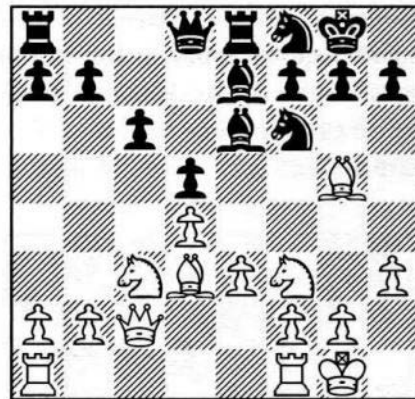
With the deadly threat of 47...♖h1+; or if 47 ♖g1, then 47...♖d2 trapping the bishop.

47 ♖e1 ♔d3+

In view of 48 ♖f1 ♖f2+! 49 ♖g1 ♖d2 50 ♖a1 ♔b2, White resigned.

Example 125

A.Beliavsky-A.Yusupov
USSR Championship, Moscow
1983



Here is the Carlsbad structure, usually produced by the Exchange Variation of the Queen's Gambit, and where the "classical" minority attack takes place. This subject has been extensively covered in chess literature, so I will limit myself to the present example.

12 a3

Beliavsky prepares b4-b5 to soften up the black queenside pawns. Also possible is 12 ♖ab1 with the same intention; e.g. 12...a5 13 a3, preparing b2-b4. Even the radical 12 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 13 b4 has been seen in practice.

12...♔d6d7

This structure implies a certain space disadvantage for Black, so generally he is happy to swap pieces.

13 ♖xe7

For the same reason, 13 ♖f4 is more popular in today's practice.

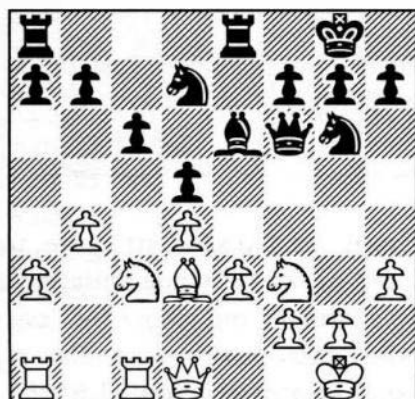
13...♗xe7 14 b4 ♘g6

Yusupov searches for activity on "his" flank. In the event of 14...♗f6, with the threat of 15...♖xh3, White could play 15 ♘h2 intending 15...♘g6?! 16 f4! – Beliavsky, with 17 f5 to follow.

15 ♖fc1

Before taking concrete action White mobilizes his last piece. In contrast, the straightforward 15 b5?! permits 15...c5! with counterplay. In a future structure with an isolated queen's pawn, the premature b4-b5 advance yields Black a protected square on c5.

15...♗f6 16 ♗d1



White parries the threat of 16...♖xh3 and clears the c-file for the rook at the same time.

16...♖f5?!

Although exchanges generally favour Black in this structure, he should have waited with this one, since now White achieves b4-b5 straight away. Preferable was 16...♖ac8, intending 17 b5?! c5! – Beliavsky. White could instead try 17 ♖a2?! followed by ♖ac2 before pushing b4-b5. Also 16...a6 would be better than the text,

since after a later a3-a4 followed by b4-b5, by capturing ...a6xb5 Black gets rid of a potentially weak pawn on the a-file. Finally, the typical resource 16...b5?!, intending ...♗b6-c4, is less appropriate here due to 17 a4! a6 18 a5, preventing Black's idea and preparing ♖a2-c2 with pressure on c6.

17 b5!

Hurrying with the minority attack, exploiting the fact that without a bishop on e6, the reply 17...c5? would leave the d5-pawn undefended.

17...♖xd3 18 ♗xd3 ♘b6

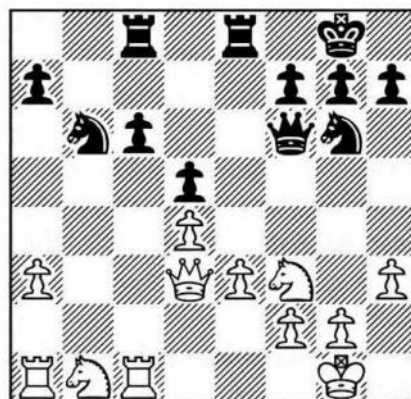
Yusupov reinforces his queenside defence and eyes the c4-square.

19 bxc6 bxc6 20 ♘b1!

Regrouping the knight to d2, where it will control c4 and at the same time assist in the kingside defence.

20...♖ac8?!

20...♖ec8 seems more prudent, using both rooks in the defence; e.g. 21 ♖a2 ♗d6 22 ♖ac2 a5! 23 ♘bd2 a4, gaining some space on the queenside, with just a slight disadvantage.



21 ♖a2!

White enables ♖ac2 with increased pressure on the c6-pawn, and also removes the rook from the vulnerable a1-h8 diagonal. In contrast, the natural 21 ♘bd2?!

would have run into 21...c5!, when Black frees himself by tactical means.

21...d4

After 21...d4 22 dbd2 the knight can't stay on c4 anyway, so Yusupov instead activates the other knight.

22 d4

Avoiding 22 d4e5? c5! and Black again solves all his problems.

22...d4h4 23 d2 e6 24 ac2 e7

Meeting the threat of d4f3-e5 in advance. 24...g6?! 25 d4f3 d4h3?? is too optimistic due to 26 d4xg6!.

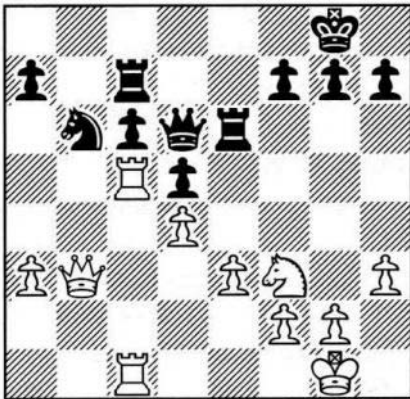
25 e5

If 25 d4f3?! then 25...d4c4 is a little annoying, so Beliavsky prefers to activate his major pieces.

25...e7 26 d4b3 d4d6?!

26...g6 was more sensible, avoiding any back rank problems and thus preventing White's idea on the next move.

27 d4f3!



Exploiting the tactic 27...d4c4? 28 d4b8+, White finally manages to improve his knight.

27...d4d7?

This leads to material losses. 27...f6 was correct, covering the e5-square and avoiding the back rank mates, when 28 a4! d4d7 29 e5c3 followed by d4e1-d3 yields White a clear, but far from decisive advantage.

28 d4e5! d4xc5

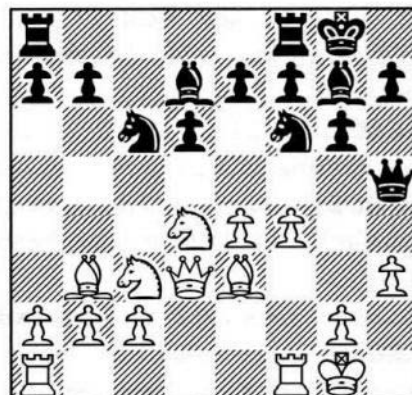
Both 28...d4b6 29 d4xc6, followed by 30 d4b4, and 28...d4xe5 29 d4b8+ d4f8 30 d4xc7 d4d3 31 e5xc6 d4xc1 32 e5xc1 are equally disastrous.

29 d4b8+ d4f8 30 d4xc7 f6 31 d4xc6 d4d3 32 e5b1 e5e8 33 d4xa7

In this desperate position, Black lost on time.

Other openings where the minority attack plays a crucial role are the English with 1...e5 (see Psakhis-Drasko) and the Open Sicilian. In the latter, Black often tries to push forward his queenside pawns, in particular the b-pawn. In the short term, this helps him to gain some space and dislodge the knight from c3, thus reducing White's central control. In the long run, such a minority attack can leave the white pawn majority restricted and transformed into weaknesses. Let's see one example from the Accelerated Dragon.

Example 126
N.Short-G.Kamsky
Candidates match (game 2),
Linares 1994



Mastering Chess Strategy

As usual in this kind of structure, White's chances lie in the centre and on the kingside, whereas Black aims at counterplay on the queenside. A special feature in the above position is the unusual location of the black queen – on h5 she complicates a white attack but might also get exposed tactically.

12...b5!

Kamsky hurries with the minority attack. Less effective is 12...a5?! 13 a4! or 12...a6?! 13 ♖ae1 b5 14 ♜xc6 ♙xc6 15 ♙d4, preparing e4-e5, with a white initiative.

13 ♖ae1

The last piece enters the game. Both 13 ♜xb5?! and 13 ♜cxb5?! yield Black strong counterplay after 13...♟b4! 14 ♛c4 a5 preparing ...♙ac8, but 13 ♟de2!? b4 14 ♟g3 ♛a5 15 ♟d5 might be more critical, when 15...♟xd5?! 16 exd5 leaves the knight short of a good destiny.

13...a5!

The queenside expansion continues, now with the threat of 14...a4. Also possible is 13...b4 14 ♜xc6 ♙xc6 15 ♟d5 ♟xd5 16 exd5 ♙d7. In the game Kamsky gets a better version of this position by first clearing the a-file.

14 a3

After 14 a4?! ♟b4 15 ♛d2 bxa4 White can't recapture on a4 due to the pressure on e4, while 16 ♙c4 ♛c5! 17 ♙e2 ♛c7 leaves him without evident compensation for the pawn.

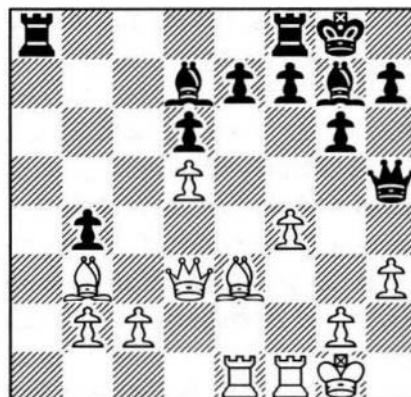
14...b4 15 ♜xc6

This intermediate capture rules out the option of 15 axb4 ♟b4!? 16 ♛d2 a4, although Black could also consider the simple 15...axb4.

15...♙xc6 16 axb4 axb4 17 ♙d5 ♟xd5 18 exd5 ♙d7

After the smoke has cleared, the first fruit of Black's minority attack can be ob-

served: a weak pawn on b2. Moreover, his own pawn on b4 has a restrictive effect upon White's queenside.



19 ♙f2

The strategically desirable 19 ♙d4 is met by 19...♙b5! 20 ♛xb5 ♙xd4+ 21 ♟h1 ♛h4, when Black's superior bishop yields him a slight but enduring advantage – Ubi-lava. If White tries to avoid this scenario by 20 ♙c4?!, then after 20...♙xc4 21 ♛xc4 ♙fc8 22 ♛xb4 ♙ab8 23 ♛a4 ♛xd5! 24 ♙xg7 ♟xg7 25 ♙xe7 ♙xb2 Black obtains an even bigger advantage.

19...♙fe8!

Kamsky is not interested in trading his sound e7-pawn for the weakness on b2.

20 ♙b1

Not a pleasant move to make, but after 20 c3?! bxc3 21 bxc3 ♙a3 White merely emerges with new weaknesses.

20...♛f5!

Black directs his attention to the c2-pawn. Now 21 ♛xf5?! ♙xf5 followed by ...♙ec8 is rather unpleasant for White, so Short declines the queen exchange.

21 ♛d2 ♙a4!

Challenging the defender on b3.

22 g4 ♛d7 23 ♙c4

Both 23 ♙xa4 ♙xa4 24 ♙fe1 h5!?, opening a new front, and 23 ♛xb4 ♙xb3 24

♖xb3 ♜eb8, followed by ...♗xb2, are equally favourable for Black.

23...♞ec8 24 ♖d3

24 ♖xb4? lost a piece to 24...♞ab8, but 24 b3!? intending 24...♗b5 25 ♖xb4 ♗xc4 26 bxc4 ♖c7 27 c5! dxc5 28 ♖c4 was perhaps a better choice.

24...♞a5!

Insisting on the bishop exchange. Now 25...♗b5 is inevitable.

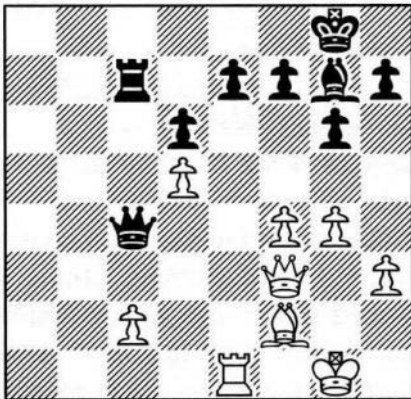
25 ♜fe1 ♗b5 26 b3

After 26 ♗xb5 ♖xb5 27 ♖xb5 ♞xb5 28 ♞xe7 ♞xd5 Black keeps a clear edge – Ubi-lava.

26...♗xc4 27 bxc4 ♞a3 28 ♞b3 ♖c7!

Of course Black doesn't repair White's pawn structure by 28...♞xb3? 29 cxb3, but keeps attacking his weak pawns.

29 ♞xa3 bxa3 30 ♖xa3 ♖xc4 31 ♖f3 ♞c7



Despite the simplifications Black keeps a clear edge thanks to the weak pawns on c2 and d5.

32 ♖e4

Or 32 ♞e2 ♗d4!, exposing White's king and preparing ...♞c5.

32...♖xe4?!

The prophylactic 32...♗f8! led to the win of a pawn.

33 ♞xe4 f5!

Gaining some light square control and

fixing the f4-pawn.

34 ♞e2 ♖f7 35 ♖g2 ♞c4 36 ♗e3?!

White returns the favour. 36 ♖f3 ♗d4 37 ♗h4! ♞c3+ 38 ♖g2 ♗f6 39 ♗f2! kept reasonable chances for a draw, and so does ♗c1 on the next two moves. In contrast, after the bishop exchange he is unable cover all his weaknesses.

36...♗d4! 37 gxf5 gxf5 38 ♖f2? ♗xe3+ 39 ♖xe3 ♞c3+ 40 ♖d4

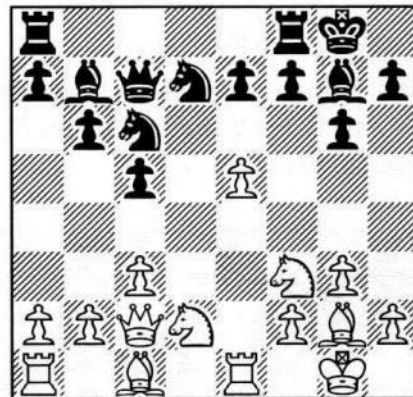
40 ♖f2 ♞xh3 is just as hopeless.

40...♖f3! 41 ♞e3 ♞xf4+ 42 ♖d3 h5

Black soon realized his extra pawn.

Sometimes pawn advances can be used to cause doubled pawns in the enemy camp. Here is one example.

Example 127
V.Bogdanovski-D.Cummings
European Team Championship,
Pula 1997



Black has just played ...♖d8-c7, attacking the e5-pawn, but White has no intention of defending it.

13 e6! fxe6 14 ♗e4!

The previous pawn moves created a series of weaknesses on the e-file, and White immediately exploits one of them. Less

clear was 14 $\text{d}g5$ $\text{d}d8$, while 14 $\text{R}xe6?$ permits 14... $\text{d}ce5!$ 15 $\text{d}xe5$ $\text{d}xe5$ 16 $\text{d}xb7$ $\text{W}xb7$ with a black initiative – Horn. As we will see, Bogdanovski is in no hurry to recover the pawn.

14... $\text{d}de5$ 15 $\text{d}xe5$ $\text{W}xe5$

Or 15... $\text{d}xe5?!$ 16 $\text{d}f4$ with an annoying pin.

16 $\text{W}e2$

Preparing $\text{d}e4$ - $g5$, an idea that Black immediately prevents.

16... $h6$ 17 $\text{d}h3!$

Eyeing the weakness on e6. 17 $\text{d}f4?!$ $\text{W}f5$ is less clear.

17... $\text{d}d8$

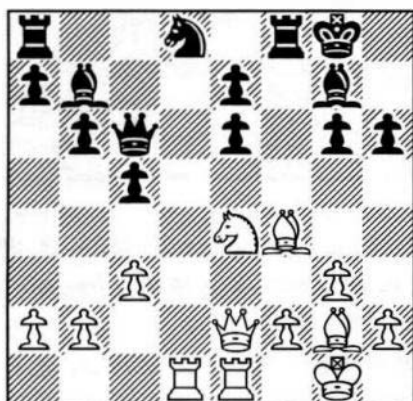
17... $\text{W}d5!?$ was a more active try, when 18 $\text{d}g5!$ $\text{d}d4!$ 19 $\text{d}xe6+$ $\text{d}xe6$ 20 $\text{W}xe6+$ $\text{W}xe6$ 21 $\text{d}xe6$ $\text{R}f7$ 22 $\text{d}f4$ might yield White a minimal edge in the endgame.

18 $\text{d}f4$ $\text{W}d5$

After 18... $\text{W}xe4?!$ 19 $\text{W}xe4$ $\text{d}xe4$ 20 $\text{R}xe4$ White has a superior endgame thanks to the bishop pair, while 18... $\text{R}xf4!?$ 19 $gxf4$ $\text{W}xf4$ 20 $\text{R}ad1$ also seems a bit better for him.

19 $\text{R}ad1$ $\text{W}c6$ 20 $\text{d}g2!$

After provoking the displacement of the enemy knight, the bishop returns to its preferred diagonal.



White now has a stable advantage

thanks to his more active pieces, whereas the weak pawns on e6 and e7 are still waiting to be exploited.

20...e5

There was the threat of 21 $\text{d}f6+$.

21 $\text{d}c1$ $\text{d}h8$ 22 $\text{W}g4$ $\text{d}f7$

Parrying the threat of 23 $\text{W}h4$, but now the queen finds another interesting destiny.

23 $\text{W}d7!$ $\text{R}ae8$

Or 23... $\text{W}xd7$ 24 $\text{R}xd7$ $\text{d}d6$ 25 $\text{d}xd6$ $\text{d}xg2$ 26 $\text{d}xg2$ exd6 27 $\text{R}xd6$ with a clear advantage – Horn.

24 b4!

After seizing the seventh rank, White opens a new front.

24... $cxb4$ 25 $cxb4$ $a6?$

This leads to a decisive weakening of the dark squares. Correct was 25... $\text{R}d8$ 26 $\text{W}xe7$ $\text{R}xd1$ 27 $\text{R}xd1$ $\text{W}c2$ 28 $\text{R}e1$ $\text{d}d8$ with just a slight disadvantage – Horn.

26 $\text{d}e3!$ b5 27 $\text{d}c5$

The e7-pawn is doomed, and indirectly the whole black position.

27... $\text{R}d8$ 28 $\text{W}xe7$ $\text{R}xd1$ 29 $\text{R}xd1$ $\text{d}a8$ 30 $\text{R}d7!$ $g5$

At this point Bogdanovski for some reason regretted his previous strong move, and after 31 $\text{R}d1?$ $\text{W}g6$ 32 $\text{R}e1$ $\text{R}d8$ he had to start all over again in order to score the full point. However, 31 $\text{R}a7!$, preparing a combination with 32 $\text{R}xa8$, won virtually on the spot; e.g. 31... $\text{W}g6$ 32 $\text{W}xf8+$ $\text{d}xf8$ 33 $\text{R}xa8$ or 31... $\text{W}d5$ 32 $\text{R}xa8!$, when both 32... $\text{R}xa8$ 33 $\text{d}c3$ and 32... $\text{W}xa8$ 33 $\text{d}d6$ are fatal for Black.

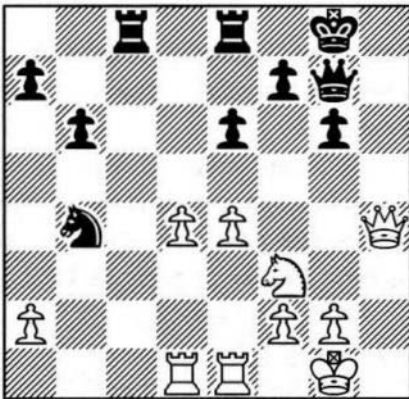
For the related exercises to this section, see page 331.

Passed pawns

Among all positional elements the passed pawn is of exceptional importance, and the nature of the battle often changes drasti-

cally once it appears on the board. We already came across this subject in several of the previous examples, such as Efimenko-Neuerov, Pelletier-Sebag, Brynell-Moberg and Johannessen-Nakamura, to name a few. Let's see some more examples.

Example 128
S.Gligoric-P.Popovic
 Novi Sad 1979



In this position from the Grünfeld, White enjoys a pleasant advantage. His pawn centre is intact, Black has not managed to create any of the counterplay characteristic of this opening, and he also suffers from the departure of his fianchettoed bishop. Without bothering about the a2-pawn, Gligoric proceeds with the inherent plan of the position.

26d5!

Creating a passed pawn. Usually passed pawns become stronger with each step they take, so this is a good moment for its creation, considering that Black can't stop a subsequent d5-d6.

26...exd5?

The following rook exchange will just leave the back rank more vulnerable to tac-

tical threats. 26...♖xa2?! 27 d6 followed by 28 d7 was even more risky for Black, but by 26...♗c2! 27 ♜f1 exd5 28 exd5 ♜ed8 29 d6 f6 he would at least have managed to stop the d-pawn from reaching the seventh rank.

27 exd5 ♜xe1+ 28 ♗xe1

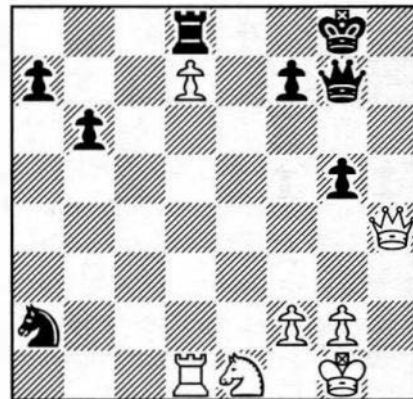
Now there appears the double threat of ♜xb4 and d6-d7.

28...♗xa2

After 28...♗a6 29 d6 ♜f8 30 d7 ♜d8 31 ♗f3 ♗c5 32 ♗e5 the strength of the passed pawn is evident. Black can't do anything against the plan of ♜g4 followed by ♗c6.

29 d6! g5 30 d7!

The further this pawn gets, the stronger. 30...♜d8



31 ♜c4?!

By 31 ♜e4! White would have obtained a decisive attack; e.g. 31...♗c3 32 ♜e7! ♜f8 33 ♜xg5+ ♗h7 34 ♜d3, or 31...♜f8 32 ♜g4 ♜e7 33 ♗f3 f6 34 ♗xg5! fxg5 35 ♜d5. In general terms, the side with a passed pawn is often happy to start an attack on the opponent's king, since the latter has fewer defensive resources available.

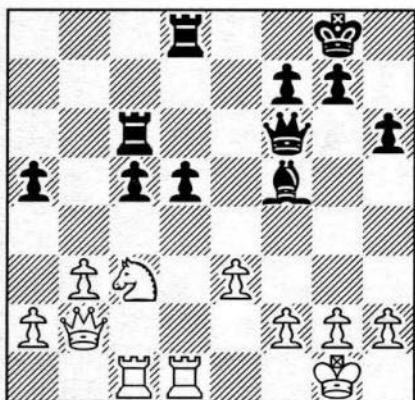
31...♗c3 32 ♜c1 ♜d4!

The lesser evil, in order to avoid an attack. After 32...♜xd7?! 33 ♜c8+ ♗h7 34 ♜xc3 White soon wins.

33 ♖xc3 ♜xc4 34 ♖xc4 ♖xd7 35 ♜f1

This endgame is won thanks to the fact that Black's passed pawns haven't yet managed to advance. Gligoric proceeded in technical fashion: 35...f6 36 ♜e2 ♜f7 37 ♖c6! (cutting off the king) 37...♜g6 38 ♜c2 g4 39 ♜e3 ♖d4 40 g3! (fixing the enemy pawns as future targets) 40...♜g5 41 ♖c7 ♖a4 42 ♖g7+ ♜h5 43 ♜d5 and Black resigned in view of 43...f5 44 ♜f4+ ♜h6 45 ♖g6+ ♜h7 46 ♖f6 ♖a5 47 ♜e3, followed by ♜h5 and ♜f4.

Example 129
J.Hellsten-L.Rojas
Santiago 2006



Another structure that frequently produces a passed pawn is the one with hanging pawns. In the above position, if White was to move then 24 ♜a4! would be an excellent option, keeping the hanging pawns at bay. But it is Black's turn, and he immediately proceeds with the creation of a passed pawn.

24...d4! 25 ♜a4

The opening of the c-file after 25 exd4?! cxd4 disfavors White, since any future rook exchanges will weaken his defence of the back rank.

25...♖d5!

The most active defence of the d5-pawn. Now after 26 exd4 cxd4 White can't take on c6 and d4 due to the back rank mate.

26 ♜e2?

A bad move, since it lets the passed pawn advance even further. After 26 f3! ♖d7 27 e4 ♖g5 White remains under pressure, but at least he doesn't have to worry about the d-pawn for a while.

26...d3! 27 ♜f3 ♜e6 28 ♜c3 ♖d8

With the double threat of 29...♖g4 and 29...d2.

29 ♖d2 c4!

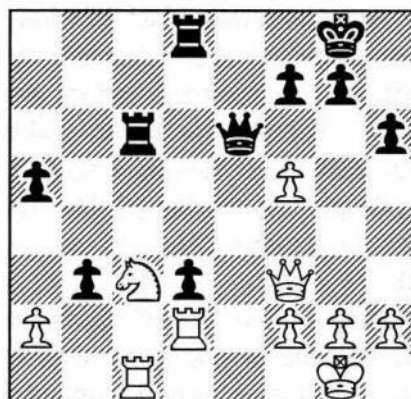
A key move, in order to clear some space in the area of the passed pawn.

30 e4 cxb3!

Both 30...♖g4 and 30...♖g6 were playable as well, but the text is more effective. As we will see next, far advanced passed pawns tend to have a great tactical potential.

31 exf5

After 31 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 32 exf5 ♖dc8 Black is winning, since 33 ♖xd3 fails to 33...b2 followed by 34...♖xc3 and ...♖c1 in the end.



31...♖xc3!

A well-calculated queen sacrifice that produces a second strong passed pawn.

32 fxe6 ♖xc1+ 33 ♖d1 b2 34 e7

The only way of parrying the threat 34...b1♙.

34...♞e8!

Rojas swaps the d3-pawn for the one on e7, aware that his remaining passed pawn will decide the game. I had only anticipated 34...♞b8?, when 35 ♜xd3 b1♙ 36 ♜xb1 ♞cxb1 37 e8♙+! ♞xe8 38 ♞xb1 lets White fight for a draw in the rook endgame; e.g. 38...♞e2 39 h4! ♞xa2 40 ♞b8+ ♜h7 41 ♞a8 followed by 42 ♞a7.

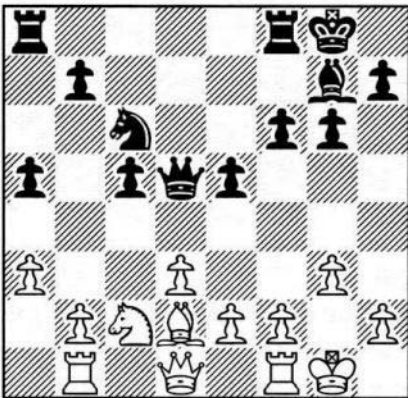
35 ♜xd3 ♞xe7

With the double threat of 36...♞e1+ and 36...♞b7.

36 ♜d8+ ♜h7 37 ♜d3+ g6 38 ♜f1♞b7!

In view of 39 ♜d2 ♞xd1+ 40 ♜xd1 b1♙, White resigned.

Example 130
R.Åström-Je.Hall
Swedish Championship,
Linköping 1996



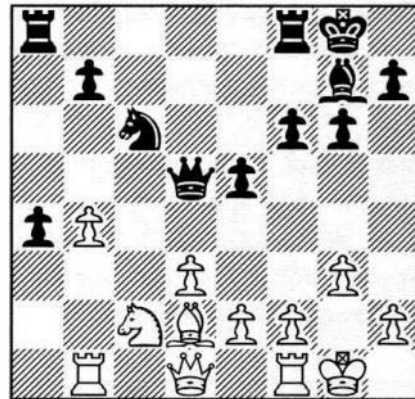
Now let's see the strength of the passed pawn in a long-term perspective. In this position, the early departure of White's fianchettoed bishop has left him with a rather passive game, and he now tries to change matters by a minority attack.

17 b4?

A typical idea in such structures, but on this particular occasion it runs into a strong antidote. 17 ♖e3 ♜e6 18 ♞c1 b6 19 ♖c4 was preferable, slowly improving the pieces.

17...cxb4 18 axb4 a4!

Of course! This passed pawn will turn into a headache for White.



19 b5 ♖d4 20 ♖e3

A more recent encounter continued 20 ♖xd4?! exd4 21 ♞b4 a3 22 ♜a1 f5 23 ♞c1 ♞fe8 24 ♞c7 ♜h8! (ruling out a ♞xg7+ sacrifice) 25 ♞bc4 a2 with a huge advantage, S.Pelipenko-V.Bardjuzha, Kharkov 2004. In our game, White at least manages to install the knight on the protected square c4.

20...♜e6 21 ♖c4 f5!

Preparing ...e5-e4 in order to clear the long diagonal for the bishop, after which the passed pawn will become even more dangerous. Also interesting was 21...e4!? in the same spirit, whereas 21...a3, according to the principle that passed pawns should always advance, permits 22 ♞a1 a2 (or 22...♖xb5 23 ♜b4!) 23 e3! ♖xb5 24 ♜b3, when it is not clear whether Black can hold on to that pawn.

22 ♜e3

White prepares to swap the active black

knight, aware that 22 e3?! ♖b3 23 ♗b4 ♜fd8 followed by ...e5-e4 leads to trouble for him.

22...e4! 23 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 24 ♜b4!

Active defence. The slower 24 ♜c2?! runs into 24...exd3 25 ♜xd3 (or 25 exd3 f4!, opening a second front) 25...♜fd8 26 ♜c2 a3 with the double threat of 27...a2 and 27...♜ac8.

24...a3 25 dxe4?

A lesser evil was 25 ♖xa3 ♗c5 26 ♖c2 ♗xb4 27 ♖xb4 ♜fd8 with a clear, yet not decisive advantage for Black.

25...♗c5?

Black misses 25...♗c3!, when 26 ♜a4 a2 wins on the spot, and 26 exf5 gxf5 27 ♜b3 ♗xb4 28 ♜xb4 a2 29 ♜a1 f4!, opening a new front, is equally hopeless for White.

26 ♜a4 ♜xa4 27 ♜xa4 ♜xe4



The previous exchanges have not eased White's task in any way. Apart from taking constant care of the passed pawn, he also has to look out for a potential black attack on the kingside. On top of all that, the bishop is very strong in this kind of open position with pawns on both flanks.

28 ♜b3 ♜e6 29 e3

Preventing ...f5-f4. If 29 ♜a4, then 29...f4! 30 ♖xa3 fxg3 31 hxg3 ♗xf2+! 32 ♜xf2 ♜e3 and Black wins – Hall.

29...♗e7! 30 ♜a1

Thanks to Black's previous move, he could now meet 30 ♜a4? by 30...♜c8! 31 ♖xa3 ♜a2, winning the knight.

30...♜a8

Or 30...♜c8 31 ♜c1, followed by 32 ♜c2, with similar play as in the game.

31 ♜a2 ♜c8 32 ♜c2 ♜d8 33 ♜c3 ♜a8 34 ♜c2 h5!

After repeating moves Hall proceeds with a thematic advance that helps him to open a new front on the kingside.

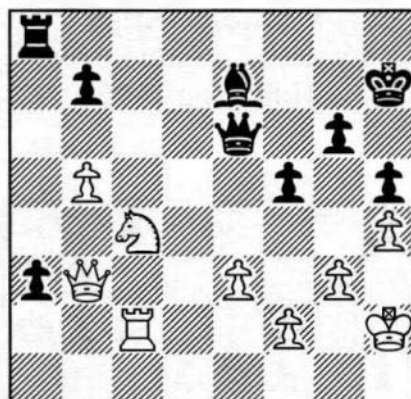
35 h4

Åström correctly prevents ...h5-h4, but as we will see soon, this doesn't make the white kingside impenetrable.

35...♖h7 36 ♖h2 ♜c8 37 ♜c1

White is reduced to waiting tactics.

37...♜a8 38 ♜c2



38...g5!

Black finally breaks through on the kingside. Now White will have a hard time defending both flanks.

39 hxg5 ♗xg5 40 ♜a2 h4! 41 f4

After 41 ♜d2 ♜c8 42 ♜c2 hxg3+ 43 fxg3 ♜d5, followed by ...♖g7 and ...♜h8, White is helpless.

41...hxg3+ 42 ♖xg3 ♗h4+! 43 ♖h2

Or 43 ♖xh4? ♜g8 with a quick mate.

43...♜h6 44 ♖g1 ♜g8+ 45 ♖f1

If 45 ♖g2, then 45...♙xg2+ 46 ♔xg2 ♗g6+ 47 ♕f1 ♗g3 48 ♕e2 a2!, exhausting White's defence.

45...♙f6!

Starting the final attack. 45...♗g6 is also strong.

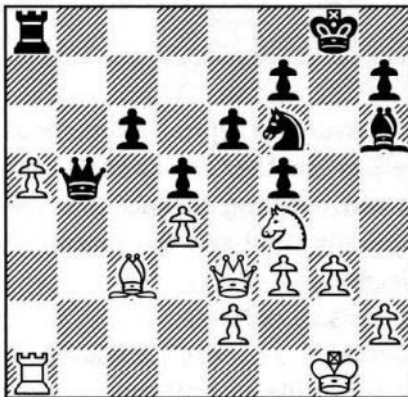
46 ♖e5 ♗h1+ 47 ♕e2 ♗g2+ 48 ♔d3 ♗e4+ 49 ♕e2 ♙xe5 50 ♙xe5 ♖g2+ 51 ♕e1

Or 51 ♔d1 ♗f3+ 52 ♕e1 ♖xa2, when both 53 ♗xa2 ♗h1+ 54 ♕f2 ♗h2+ and 53 ♗f7+ ♕h6 54 ♗f6+ ♕h5, followed by ...♔g4-h3-g2, lead to a black win.

51...♗h4+ 52 ♔d1 ♗h1 mate

Virtually any measure is allowed in the fight for a passed pawn's advance. In Hellsten-Rojas we saw a queen sacrifice supporting this idea, while the following example features a concession of a more positional nature.

Example 131
J.Dorfman-D.Paunovic
Minsk 1986



White enjoys a strong passed pawn on a5, but for the moment its advance is being confidently prevented by the black rook and queen.

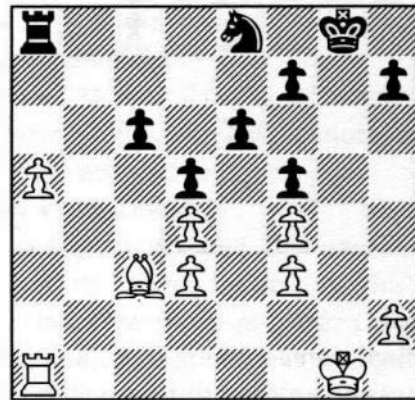
27 ♗d3!

In order to facilitate the further advance of the passed pawn, Dorfman is ready to let all his remaining pawns be transformed into chronic weaknesses.

27...♙xf4

Any queen move lets White advance the a-pawn, while 27...♗xd3? 28 ♖xd3 would just help his knight in approaching the queenside.

28 ♙xf4 ♗xd3 29 exd3 ♖e8



30 ♕f2

Of course not 30 a6? ♖c7 31 a7 ♖b5 and the pawn is lost.

30...f6 31 ♙b4!

Heading for b6 to liberate the rook from the defence of the pawn.

31...♖c7 32 ♖c1 ♖a6

After 32...♖a6? 33 ♙d6 ♖c8 34 ♖b1 White breaks through on the queenside. Thus Black's rook is obliged to take up a passive role on a6, so that the knight can block the b-file by ...♖b5 if necessary.

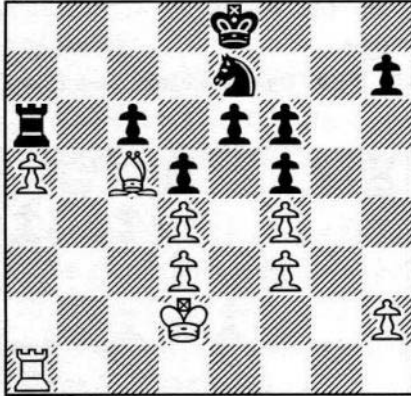
33 ♕e3 ♖b5 34 ♖a1 ♕f7 35 ♙c5 ♕e8 36 ♙b6

White is speculating with two different ideas: enter with the king via d2-c3-b4-c5, or penetrate with the rook on the open g- or b-file.

36...♖d6 37 ♕d2 ♖c8

Black would have liked to keep blocking the b-file by 37...♖b5, but after 38 ♖g1 ♗f7 39 ♜c1! ♜a7 40 ♜c3 the plan of ♗b4-c5 proves inevitable; e.g. 40...♜c8 41 ♗b4! ♜xb6 42 ♜xc6 and White wins. 37...♜d7? 38 ♖g1 is also bad.

38 ♜c5 ♜e7



39 ♖b1!

Using some minor tactics Dorfman manages to enter with the rook. Less convincing was 39 ♜c3?! ♜g6 with a counter-attack on the f4-pawn.

39...♜g6

After 39...♜xa5? 40 ♖b8+, followed by 41 ♖b7(+), White wins material.

40 ♖b8+ ♗f7 41 ♖b7+ ♗e8 42 ♜b6

Again securing the passed pawn. Now that the battle is no longer limited to a single flank, Black is practically lost due to his passive rook.

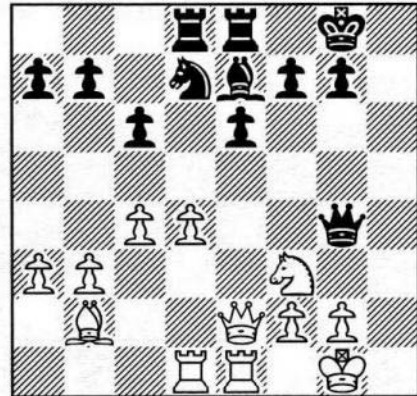
42...♜xf4 43 ♜xh7 e5

At this point the game continued 44 ♜h6?! e4 45 ♜xf6 ♜xd3 and White's task was somewhat complicated, although Dorfman won in the end. However, the thematic 44 h4!, advancing the second passed pawn, was considerably simpler; for example, 44...e4 45 h5! exf3 46 ♜e3 followed by h5-h6, or 44...♜e6 45 h5 ♜xd4 46 h6! ♜f8 47 ♖b7, when both 47...♜g8 48 h7+

♜h8 49 ♜d8! c5 50 ♜f7 and 47...♜xf3+ 48 ♜e3 ♜g5 49 h7 ♜xh7 50 ♜xh7 lead to a quick win.

Naturally, a passed pawn doesn't mean victory in every position, and it tends to lose some of its strength if the opponent manages to block it. Usually the best blocker is the knight, a topic we came across briefly in Mikhailovski-Ehlvest (p. 57). Here is another example.

Example 132
B.Spassky-A.Karpov
Candidates match (game 6),
Leningrad 1974



In a structure typical of openings such as the Slav and the Caro-Kann, Spassky proceeds with a strong advance that will clear the long diagonal and the central files for his pieces.

22 d5! cxd5 23 cxd5

Now after 23...exd5?! 24 ♜xd5 the pin along the e-file is problematic for Black, whose bishop can't move due to 25 ♜xe8+. If he, instead, avoids this scenario by 23...e5, then after 24 d6 White obtains a dangerous passed pawn.

23...e5!

Anyway! Karpov has estimated that, with the passed pawn being safely blocked by the knight on d7, he faces no immediate danger.

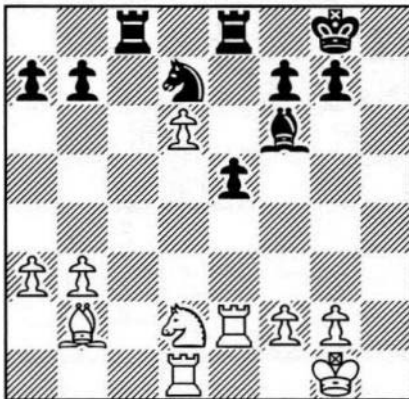
24d6

After 24 Qxe5?! Wxe2 25 Rxe2 Qd6 it is White who suffers from a pin, e.g. 26 Rde1 Qxe5 27 Qxe5 Qxa3 and the d5-pawn can't be saved.

24...Qf6 25 Qd2

Spassky regroups the knight to c4/e4 and prevents the ...e5-e4 strike. If 25 Wb5 , avoiding the queen exchange, then 25...e4! keeps the balance; e.g. 26 Qd4 e3! 27 fxe3 Rxe3 with counterplay, or 26 Qh2 Wg5! 27 Qd5 Wg6 28 Qxf6 Qxf6 29 Rdd1 Rd7 followed by ... Red8 – Karpov.

25...Wxe2 26 Rxe2 Rc8!



Karpov distributes the small space at his disposal in a clever way. The rook doesn't just seize the open file, it also vacates the d8-b6 route for the bishop, which in turn enables the consolidating plan of ...f7-f6 and ...Qf7-e6.

27 Qe4?!

This pseudo-active move does nothing to stop the plan just mentioned; the same goes for 27 Qc4 b5 followed by ... Qd8 and ...f7-f6.

Instead, the flexible 27 Qf1! was critical

– Larsen. Now 27... Qd8 can be met by 28 f4! opening a new front, e.g. 28...f6 29 fxe5 fxe5 30 Qc4 with pressure; while after 27... Rc2 28 Qc4 Rxe2 29 Qxe2 Qd8 30 a4 followed by Qc1-e3 , or 27... Rc6 28 Qc4 b5 29 Qa5 Rcc8 30 Rd5 a6 31 b4 intending Qb3-c5 , White keeps some advantage.

27...Qd8 28 g4 f6 29 Qg2 Qf7 30 Rc1?!

Usually exchanges favour the side with the passed pawn, but in this particular case they will just make it easier for Black to attack the d6-pawn with his king. More active was 30 Rf1! ?, followed by f2-f4, in order to open a new front.

30...Qb6 31 Rec2 Rxc2 32 Rxc2 Qe6

Now the passed pawn is more of a burden than an asset to White.

33 a4 a5 34 Qa3 Qb8!

Having neutralized the passed pawn, Black starts looking for activity. This apparently innocent move prepares the plan of ... Qd4 and ...b7-b5, whereas the immediate 34... Qd4?! was less precise due to 35 Rc7 .

35 Rc4 Qd4 36 f4

If 36 Qc3 , covering the b5-square, then 36... Qb6 37 Rc7 Qxc3 38 Rxc3 Qd5! followed by ...b7-b5. In the game Spassky instead tries to achieve f4-f5.

36...g6 37 Qg3 exf4!

Aware that 37...b5?! runs into 38 f5+ gxf5 39 gxf5+ Qd5 40 Rc7 , Karpov adjusts his plans and stops f4-f5 once and for all.

38 Rxd4 fxg3 39 Qxg3 Rc8

Thanks to his more active pieces Black enjoys a pleasant advantage. Now there appears the threat of 40... Rc3+ .

40 Rd3

40 Rc4? failed to 40... Rxc4 41 bxc4 Qb6 , while 40 Re4+ Qe5 41 g5 doesn't work due to 41... Rc3+ 42 Qg2 Rxb3 , when both 43 gxf6 Qxf6 and 43 d7 Rd3! let Black keep the extra pawn.

40...g5!

Ruling out any attempts with 41 ♖e3+ followed by g4-g5.

41 ♖b2 b6 42 ♖d4?!

White should have tried the simplifying 42 ♖c3 ♖xc3+ 43 ♖xc3 ♕xd6 44 b4, when 44...b5! 45 bxa5 bxa4 keeps good winning chances.

42...♖c6 43 ♖c3 ♖c5

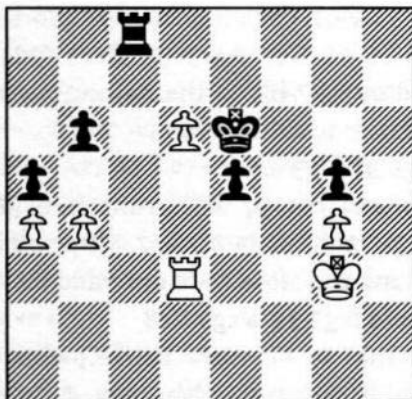
Karpov dismisses 43...♖xd6 44 ♖xd6+ ♕xd6, transposing to the previous note, and keeps searching for a bigger advantage. Meanwhile, White can just wait.

44 ♕g2 ♖c8 45 ♕g3 ♖e5!

Now after 46 ♖e3 ♕xd6 Black wins the d-pawn without having to swap his active rook, so White prefers a rook endgame.

46 ♖xe5 fxe5 47 b4?

This active defence backfires after Black's reply. Correct was 47 ♕f3 ♖d8 48 ♕e3 ♖xd6 49 ♖c3, heading for c8, with some chances for a draw. On the other hand, 48 b4? axb4 49 ♖b3 fails to 48...♖f8+! followed by 49...♖f4.



47...e4! 48 ♖d4

Or 48 ♖e3 ♖c4 with an easy win.

48...♕e5

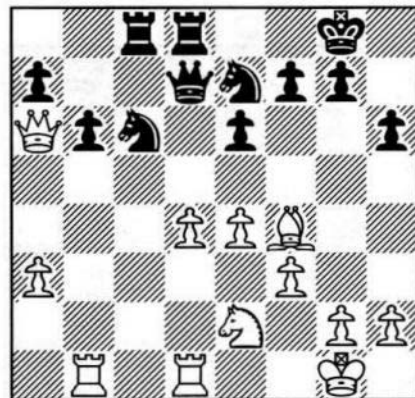
Now Black obtains a second passed pawn on the b-file, and 49 d7 ♖d8 doesn't change much.

49 ♖d1 axb4

The game ended 50 ♖b1 ♖c3+ 51 ♕f2 ♖d3! 52 d7 ♖xd7 53 ♖xb4 ♖d6 54 ♕e3 ♖d3+ 55 ♕e2 ♖a3 0-1, in view of the black king's entry at f4.

In the previous example Spassky was right in creating the passed pawn, but later failed to exploit it. On other occasions, the creation of a passed pawn simply isn't the best choice in the position. Here is one example.

Example 133
Z. Ilincic-Kir.Georgiev
Cacak 1995



White enjoys a strong pawn centre, but the opponent's pieces are well organized. How to proceed?

20 ♖b5?!

Preparing d4-d5 in order to create a passed pawn, but as we will soon see, this won't have the desired effect. Preferable was 20 ♖bc1 ♖a5 21 ♕d3 with an equal game – Georgiev.

20...♖a5 21 d5?

It was not too late for 21 ♖b4 ♖c6 22 ♕d3, saving the d4-d5 idea for the future.

21...exd5 22 exd5 ♖b7!

A key move, that creates the threat of 23...dxc5, and also keeps an eye on the important d6-square. 22...d5 23 d6!? is less clear, when 23...dxb7? fails to 24 Bxf5! and 23...dxc4 permits 24 d3! dfxd6 25 dxd6 dxd6 26 Bbd5 with strong pressure.

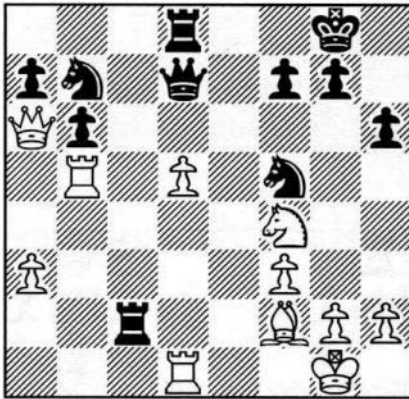
23 d3

Now 23 d6? fails to 23...dxc5, while 23 Bb4 dxd5 24 Bbd4 Wc6 leaves White without sufficient compensation for the pawn.

23...Bc2! 24 d4

The natural 24 d4? failed to 24...dxc5.

24...d5 25 d4



The dark sides of the plan initiated five moves ago have already become evident. Black's knight gained access to the f5-square, and his rook commands the c-file as well as the second rank. Meanwhile, White's major pieces are badly coordinated. As for the passed pawn itself, it is not likely to advance in the near future and rather represents a weakness.

25...d6

A natural move to activate the knight and block the d-pawn, but 25...Wc7!, with the double threat of 26...Wxf4 and 26...Bxf2 27 dxf2 Wc2+, was even stronger; e.g. 26 Bb4 Bxf2! 27 dxf2 Wc5+ 28 de2 Be8+ 29 Be4 Bxe4+ 30 fxe4 We3+ wins – Georgiev.

26 Bb4 Be8 27 g4?!

27 Wd3, covering the e3-square, was safer, when 27...Wc7 preparing ...Bc3 keeps the initiative.

27...de3 28 Wd3 Bxf2 29 dxf2 dxd1+ 30 Wxd1 Wc7!

After the departure of his bishop, White is suffering on the dark squares.

31 Bb3?

This exposes the king to a strong attack. White had to try something like 31 d3 32 Wd4 de3+ 33 dh3 Wc1 34 Wd3 with marginal chances of defence.

31...de4+! 32 fxe4 Wxf4+ 33 Wf3 Wxh2+ 34 de3 Wg1+ 35 d4?

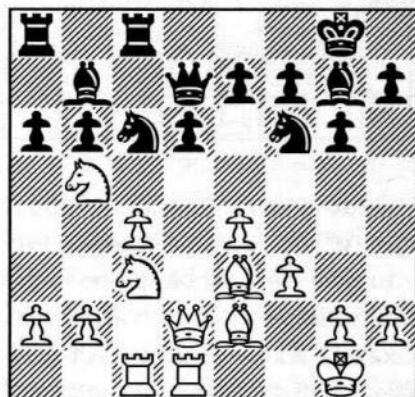
After 35 d3 Bc8 the white king has a hard time, but now he is mated.

35...g5+ 36 d5 Wd4!

White resigned.

Needless to say, two connected passed pawns represent a tremendous force, one that often justifies material concessions. Let's see two examples.

Example 134
E. Van den Doel-G. Guseinov
 European Team Championship,
 Gothenburg 2005



In this Maróczy structure Black has just played ...a7-a6?, probably expecting a further positional battle after 15 $\text{d}4$ or 15 $\text{a}3$. White's reply must have come as a cold shower.

15 $\text{d}4$!

Van den Doel alters the material balance in order to create a few powerful passed pawns. The next moves are practically forced.

15... $\text{axb}5$ 16 $\text{dxb}6$ $\text{Wd}8$ 17 $\text{cxb}5$ $\text{e}5$ 18 $\text{Bxc}8$!

Stronger than 18 $\text{dxc}8$?! $\text{Bxc}8$, when the black rook prevents the march of the a-pawn.

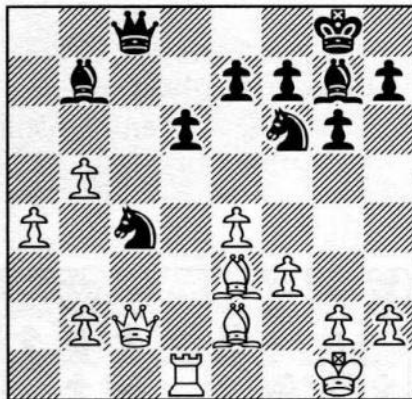
18... $\text{Bxc}8$ 19 $\text{dxc}8$ $\text{Wxc}8$ 20 $\text{a}4$!

Of course. Now the connected passed pawns turn into a headache for Black.

20... $\text{d}c4$

If 20... $\text{d}5$, then 21 $\text{a}5$ $\text{dxe}4$ 22 $\text{Wd}8$! $\text{Bf}8$ 23 $\text{Wxc}8$ $\text{Bxc}8$ 24 $\text{Bd}8$ with $\text{a}6$ - $\text{a}7$ coming up next.

21 $\text{Wc}2$!



A great move. Confident about the strength of his passed pawns, White is ready to give up a whole piece in order to exchange queens and reach an endgame.

21... $\text{dxe}3$ 22 $\text{Wxc}8$ $\text{Bxc}8$ 23 $\text{Bc}1$ $\text{e}6$

After 23... $\text{Bd}7$ 24 $\text{b}6$! $\text{Bxa}4$ 25 $\text{b}7$ $\text{d}d7$ 26 $\text{Bc}8$ $\text{Bf}8$ 27 $\text{b}3$! $\text{Bxb}3$ 28 $\text{Bb}5$ White

wins – Finkel. As for 23... $\text{Bb}7$, the most technical way to victory is 24 $\text{Bc}7$ $\text{d}h5$ 25 $\text{g}3$! $\text{Bxb}2$ 26 $\text{Bxb}7$ $\text{Bd}4$ 27 $\text{Bh}1$ followed by $\text{a}5$ - $\text{a}6$.

24 $\text{b}6$!

Forward!

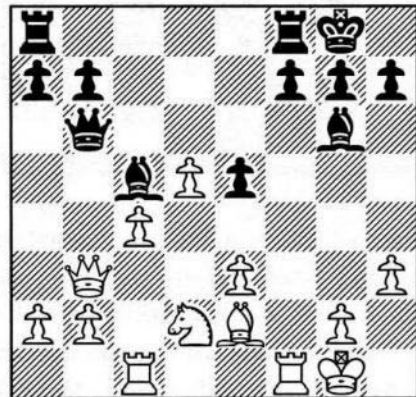
24... $\text{Bh}6$ 25 $\text{b}7$ $\text{Bg}7$

A surrealistic attempt for counterplay, but 25... $\text{d}d7$ just loses after 26 $\text{Bb}5$ $\text{d}b8$ 27 $\text{Bc}8$! – Finkel.

26 $\text{b}8$ $\text{Wd}xg2$ 27 $\text{Bc}3$ $\text{d}f4$ 28 $\text{Bc}4$

White soon realized his loads of extra material.

Example 135
J. Hellsten-E. Mohamed
Malmö 1992



Here is a less violent case on the same topic. In exchange for the pawn Black enjoys a strong bishop pair, with pressure on the e3-pawn. How should White defend it? After 19 $\text{Wxb}6$? $\text{axb}6$ he loses one of the pawns on a2 and e3, while 19 $\text{Bf}3$?! $\text{e}4$ 20 $\text{B}g3$ $\text{f}5$ yields Black a strong initiative. After some thinking I found a third, and much better option.

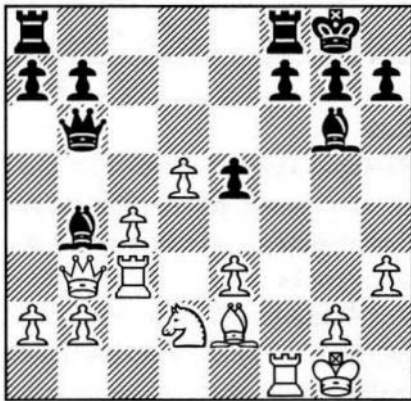
19 $\text{Bc}3$!

Preparing an exchange sacrifice that

will neutralize Black's activity and leave White with two connected passed pawns.

19...♙b4

A tempting reply, but with hindsight 19...f5 might have been a better choice. White could react by 20 ♖h1 f4 21 exf4exf4 22 ♙d3, when 22...♙d4 23 ♙xg6! ♙xc3 24 ♙xh7+ ♖xh7 25 ♗xc3 followed by ♒f3 promises him some advantage.



20 a3 ♙xc3 21 ♗xc3

Black has won the exchange, but the departure of his dark-squared bishop has made the pawns on c4 and d5 more dangerous. To start with, there is the threat of 22 c5.

21...♗d6

21...♙ac8 22 ♙c1 ♗d6 23 ♙f3 transposes.

22 ♙f3!

Renewing the threat of c4-c5. 22 b4?! is less appropriate due to 22...b5! destroying the white pawn chain.

22...♙ac8 23 ♙c1

Not 23 e4?! b5! and Black again manages to undermine the passed pawns.

23...♙fe8

Mohamed finally accepts the c4-c5 advance, aware that 23...b6?! 24 b4 makes little sense; e.g. 24...♙c7 25 c5 bxc5 26 bxc5 ♙fc8? 27 cxd6 ♙xc3 28 ♙xc3 ♙xc3 29 d7 and

White wins. During the game I thought that 23...e4 was the best option, but after the simple 24 ♒xe4 ♙xe4 25 ♙xe4 ♙fe8 26 ♙f3 Black remains in difficulties.

24 c5 ♗d7 25 ♒e4

By means of the threat of 26 ♒d6 White practically forces the exchange of the active black bishop. In contrast, 25 d6?! proves premature after 25...♙e6! with ...♙xd6 coming up.

25...♙xe4 26 ♙xe4 f5 27 ♙c2!

The impulsive 27 c6?! permits 27...bxc6 28 dxc6 ♗e6 with rather unclear play.

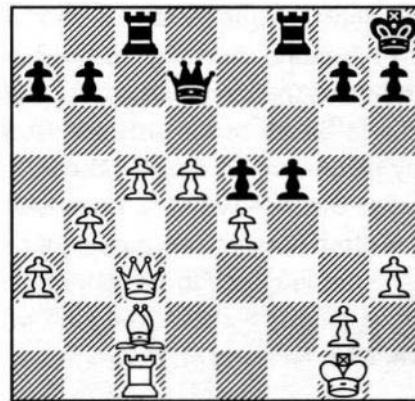
27...♖h8 28 e4

But now there was nothing wrong with 28 d6. I think that I choose the text in order to rule out any attempt with ...e5-e4 followed by ...f5-f4.

28...♙f8

Here and later, 28...f4 is well met by 29 ♙d1!.

29 b4



The rest is surprisingly easy. In the absence of open files, Black is unable to create any real counterplay with his rooks.

29...♙f6 30 ♙e1 ♙e8 31 ♗d3 fxe4

This clears the f-file but also produces a weakness on e5.

32 ♗xe4 g6 33 d6! ♙f4 34 ♗e3 a5 35 ♗c3! axb4 36 axb4 ♙d4

Now Black loses a pawn, but after 36...♖g7 37 b5 ♜f6 38 ♜d1 preparing c5-c6, White is also winning.

37 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 38 ♜xd4 ♜g7 39 ♙e4

The game concluded 39...♜e7 40 ♜xg7+ ♜xg7 41 ♙xb7! ♜xb7 42 c6 ♜xb4 43 c7 ♜b1+ 44 ♙h2 ♜c1 45 d7 and Black resigned.

For the related exercises to this section, see page 334.

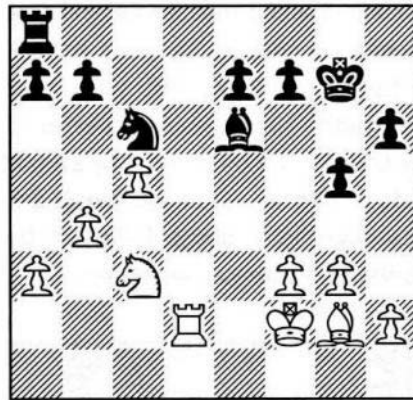
Pawn majorities

Many openings produce some kind of asymmetry regarding the pawn structure. One of the players obtains a pawn majority on the queenside, and his opponent one on the kingside, a situation already familiar to us from Hellsten-Brkljaca and Brynell-Moberg, among others. Such majorities can be converted into a passed pawn, and they can also support an attack on the enemy king.

Let's start with queenside majorities. In the usual positions where both sides have castled short, a queenside pawn majority has two fundamental virtues: its advance won't expose the king, and a future passed pawn will be at some distance from the enemy king in the endgame. The latter implies that the side with the queenside majority is often happy to exchange pieces and take the game closer to the endgame. The following example shows the kind of position that he is aiming at.

Example 136
V.Smyslov-L.Szabo
Hastings 1954/55

Thanks to his advanced pawn majority on the queenside, White has a big advantage. Of course its impact would be less strong with the black king on c7.



28...♜d8

As long as the white rook remains on d2, Black's king won't be able to assist in the queenside defence, so it makes sense to exchange rooks.

29 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 30 f4!

The bishop joins the battle for the queenside.

30...gxf4 31 gxf4 ♙b3

Freeing the e6-square for the knight and possibly the king. Here or later, it probably made sense to include 31...a6 32 a4 in order to reduce the number of pawns, but that might not change too much.

32 ♙e3

The immediate 32 b5 was also possible, but activating the king is rarely wrong in the endgame.

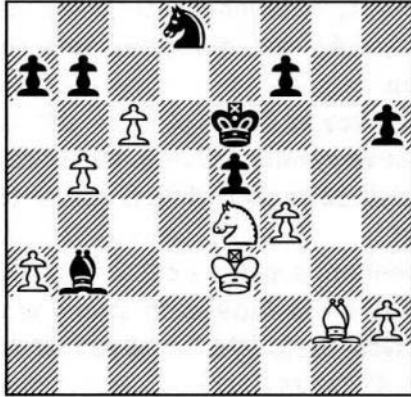
32...♙f6?

This lets White realize his pawn majority by tactical means. A lesser evil was 32...♙f8 33 b5 ♙e8, trying a different route for the king, although after 34 c6 bxc6 35 bxc6 ♜e6 36 f5 ♜c7 37 ♙d4 Black's task remains very difficult.

33 b5! e5

Desperation, but the intended 33...♙e6 failed to 34 c6, when both 34...bxc6 35 bxc6 ♙d6 36 ♜b5+! and 34...♙d6 35 b6! axb6 36 ♜b5+ win for White – Smyslov.

34 Qe4+ Ke6 35 c6!



The double threat of 36 c7 and 36 Qc5+ is more than Black can take.

35... exf4+ 36 Kxf4 bxc6 37 Qc5+ Kd6 38 Qxb3 cxb5 39 h4

White soon realized his extra piece.

Now let's see a complete game where White, at an early stage, heads for a battle with a queenside pawn majority.

Example 137
S.Erenburg-A.Murariu
 Las Palmas 2003
Sicilian Defence (B22)

1 e4 c5 2 c3

The Sicilian Alapin is one of the openings that often produces a pawn majority on the queenside.

2... d5 3 exd5 Wxd5 4 d4 Qf6 5 Qf3 e6 6 Ke3

A modern continuation, which puts some immediate pressure on the c5-pawn. Other frequent options are 6 Ke3 and 6 Ke2 .

6... Qbd7

More common is 6... cxd4 ; for example, 7 cxd4 Ke4+ 8 Qc3 0-0 9 Ke3 b6 10 0-0 Kxc3

11 bxc3 Ke6 with a complex battle.

7 c4

White desists from a structure with an isolated queen's pawn and takes the first step to a future pawn majority.

7... Wd6 8 Qc3 a6

Avoiding a knight jump to b5. The alternative is 8... cxd4 9 Qxd4 a6 , avoiding the kind of play that now arises in the game.

9 dxc5!

White obliges the opponent to put a piece on c5, in order to achieve b2-b4 with tempo later on.

9... Wxd1+

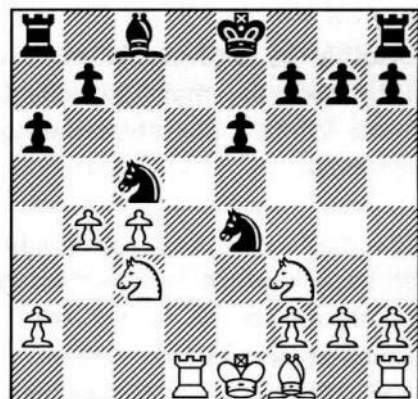
After 9... Qxc5?! 10 Wxd6 Kxd6 11 b4! Qce4 12 Qxe4 Qxe4 13 c5! , followed by Ke3 , White's pawn majority is already a main factor in the battle.

10 Kxd1 Kxc5 11 Kxc5 Qxc5 12 b4!

White takes the opportunity to advance his pawn majority. In contrast, 12 Ke2?! Ke7 13 0-0 b6 14 Kd4 Ke7 15 Bfd1 Bhd8 led to a rather equal game in V.Parfenov-A.Eliseev, Moscow 2001.

12... Qfe4?!

This entangles Black's development. Correct was 12... Qce4! 13 Qxe4 Qxe4 14 Kd4! Qf6 15 Ke2 Ke7 with just a slight disadvantage.



13 Qb1!

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An excellent move, related to the concept of “the superfluous piece” investigated by Mark Dvoretsky. Now both black knights are soon forced to less active squares.

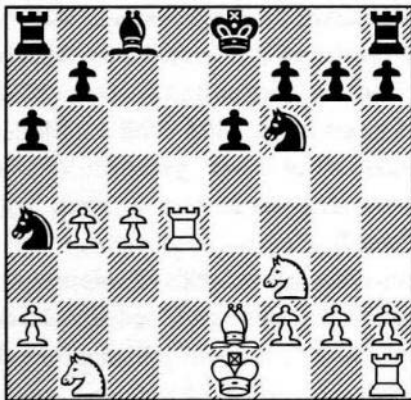
13...♖a4?!

Tempting at first sight, but the knight isn't well placed there in the long run. Preferable was 13...♗d7 14 ♔d3 ♗ef6 followed by ...b7-b6, ...♙b7 and ...♗e7. If White tries to avoid this by 15 c5?!, then after 15...a5! 16 a3 axb4 17 axb4 ♗d5 the b4-pawn gets into trouble.

14 ♗d4!

The best way of dislodging the knight, since 14 ♔d3 runs into 14...♗ec3! intending ...a7-a5 with counterplay.

14...♗f6 15 ♙e2



15...♗e7

Obviously 15...0-0? would move away the king from the main battlefield, the queenside. White applies the same logic on his next move.

16 ♗d2! a5

Pawn exchanges usually favour the defender, besides which he now manages to activate the rook on a8.

17 a3 axb4 18 axb4 ♗d8

Or 18...b6 19 ♗e5 ♙b7 20 f3 preparing ♗c2-b3 in order to intimidate the knight on a4.

19 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 20 ♗c2 ♗b6

Black finally admits the problem with the misplaced knight on a4. Unfortunately, on b6 it obstructs the development of his bishop.

21 ♗c3 ♗e7 22 ♗d1 ♗g4

Not very constructive, but after 22...♔d7 23 ♗e5 ♙e8 24 ♙f3 White is also better.

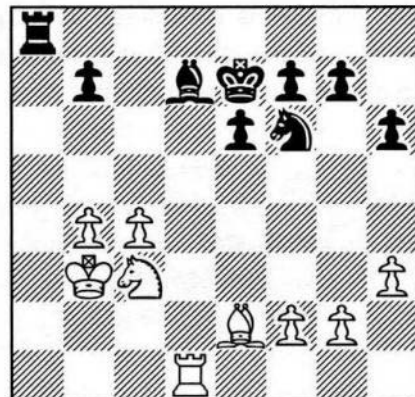
23 h3!

Erenburg avoids 23 c5? ♗d5! 24 ♗xd5+ exd5 25 ♗xd5 ♗a2+ with strong counterplay. Now the knight has to retreat in view of 23...♗xf2? 24 ♗f1.

23...♗f6 24 ♗b3 h6 25 ♗e5!

Activating the knight and enabling ♙f3. The latter explains why the bishop went to e2 and not d3 on the 15th move.

25...♗bd7 26 ♗xd7 ♙xd7



27 b5!

A key move, that doesn't just advance the pawn majority, but also restricts the enemy bishop. The fact that White fixes his pawns on squares of the “wrong” colour and also cedes the c5-square isn't a big deal, since Black lacks space for exploiting this. In contrast, both 27 c5?! ♙c6 28 f3 ♗d5 29 b5 ♗xc3 30 ♗xc3 ♙d5 and 27 ♙f3 ♙c6! 28 ♙xc6 bxc6 lead to a smaller advantage than in the game.

27...b6?

Rather natural, but now this pawn turns into a weakness. Correct was 27...♠d8 28 ♙f3 ♙c8, when 29 ♖xd8 ♗xd8 30 c5 produces a clear, but not decisive advantage – Erenburg.

28 ♙

After 28...♖a7? 29 ♖a4 the problem with ...b7-b6 is well displayed. Thus Black has to surrender the a-file.

29 ♖a1!

This move comes with two strong ideas: seize the seventh rank by ♖a7, or attack the b6-pawn by ♖a6 and ♖a4.

29...♙c8

Preparing ...♖d7-c5.

30 ♖a7+ ♖d7 31 ♙c6!

Now White is ready to swap the defending knight at any moment.

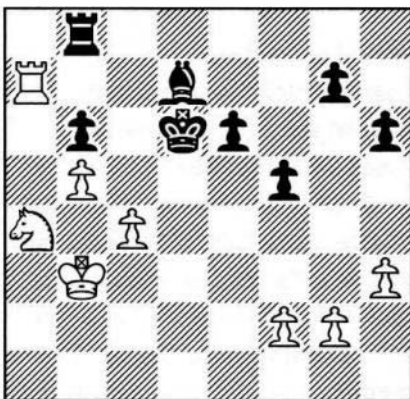
31...f5

Since the immediate 31...♗d6 fails to 32 ♖e4+, Black prepares it.

32 ♖a4 ♗d6 33 ♙xd7!

Just at the right moment, before the knight escapes to e5.

33...♙xd7



34 ♗b4!

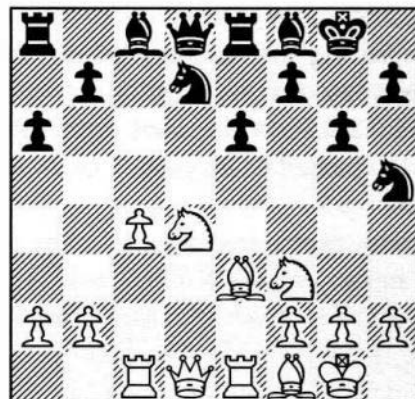
Active king. Now the threat of 35 ♖xb6! ♖xb6 36 c5+ forces the black king to move away from the b6-pawn, and the rest is easy.

34...♗e7 35 ♖a6 e5 36 ♖xb6 ♖d8 37 ♖b7 ♗f6 38 ♖c5 ♙e8 39 ♖

In view of b6-b7, Black resigned.

Example 138
V.Spasov-A.Dreev
Moscow Olympiad 1994

Here is an example where the queenside pawn majority is realized in a slightly different way.

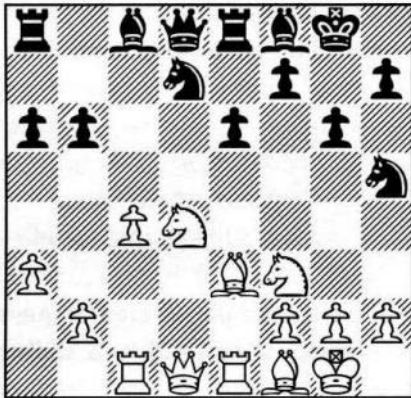


16 a3!

Preparing the plan of b2-b4, ♖b3 and c4-c5 in order to advance the queenside majority.

16...b6

Dreev hurries to conclude his development. Obviously 16...a5?! permits 17 ♖b5, when the knight turns into a headache for Black. As for 16...e5 17 ♖b3 f5?! advancing his own majority, after 18 c5! followed by ♙c4+, the king becomes exposed. The attempt to improve this line by 17...b6 permits 18 c5!, when White gets in first on "his" flank; e.g. 18...bxc5 19 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 20 ♗xd8 ♖xd8 21 ♙xc5 f6 22 ♙xf8 ♗xf8 23 ♖c7! with a pleasant endgame advantage thanks to the active pieces and the weak a6-pawn.



17 b4 ♖b7 18 ♜b3 ♜hf6

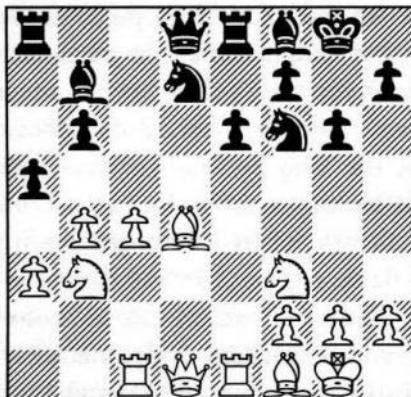
Improving the knight. After 18...♞c8 19 c5 bxc5 20 ♜xc5! (fighting for the e5-square) 20...♜xc5 21 bxc5 preparing 22 ♜e5, the passed pawn yields a clear plus.

19 ♗d4

Spasov prepares ♜f3-e5 to soften up the dark squares in the enemy camp. The immediate 19 c5!? was also interesting.

19...a5!?

Initiating a counterattack. 19...♞c8 20 ♜e5 ♜xe5 21 ♗xe5 ♜d7 22 ♗d6 leads to a slight edge for White. Dolmatov suggests 19...♗h6!? intending 20 ♞c2 e5! and the pawn is untouchable; instead, 20 ♞b1!? followed by c4-c5 seems preferable, just like in the game.



20c5!

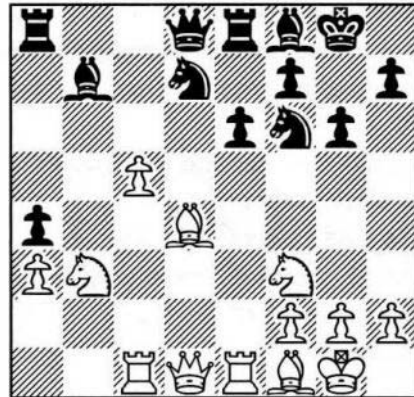
A key move that converts the pawn majority into a passed pawn.

20...bxc5

In the event of 20...axb4!? White can choose between the simple 21 axb4 and the riskier 21 c6!? ♗xc6 22 ♞xc6 bxa3 23 ♜a1, in both cases with a slight advantage – Spasov.

21 bxc5 a4!

The immediate 21...♗c6?! runs into 22 ♜e5 ♜xe5 23 ♗xe5 ♜d5 24 ♜d4 with strong pressure. For this reason Dreev first deflects the knight from d4.



22 ♗bd2 ♗c6 23 ♗e5!

Simplification will make this passed pawn stronger.

23...♜xe5 24 ♗xe5 ♜d7

24...♞a5? loses material to 25 ♜c4!, while after 24...♜d5?! 25 ♜e4 the weak squares on d6 and f6 are clearly felt.

25 ♗d6!

In the same spirit as the 23rd move.

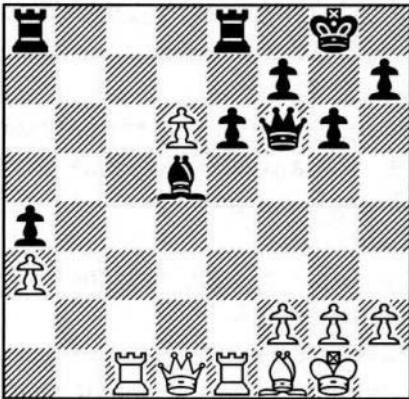
25...♗xd6?

Black underestimates the ensuing passed pawn on d6. 25...♗g7! was clearly preferable, avoiding the exchanges and keeping the pawn at c4. After 26 ♞b1 or 26 ♜c4 White keeps a slight edge, but nothing more.

26 cxd6 ♗d5 27 ♖e4!

Creating the threat of 28 ♙b5. The immediate 27 ♙b5?! permitted 27...♗g5! 28 g3 ♗ed8 with counterplay – Spasov.
27...♖f6

Giving up the blockade of the passed pawn, but Black was short of alternatives; e.g. 27...♗b6 28 ♗c7!? intending 28...♗ad8? 29 ♗xd7! ♗xd7 30 ♖f6+.
28 ♖xf6+ ♗xf6



29 d7?!

A natural advance, but 29 ♙c4!, challenging the blocker on d5 first, was more technical; for example, 29...♗ed8 30 ♙xd5 exd5 31 ♗xd5 ♗a6! 32 d7 ♗d6 33 ♗e8+ ♖g7 34 ♗xd6! ♗xd6 35 ♗xd8 ♗e7! 36 ♗dc8 ♗xd7 37 ♗8c4!, followed by h2-h4, with good chances for victory.

29...♗ed8 30 ♗c7 ♗b2?!

While 30...♗e7? failed to 31 ♗xd5, correct was 30...♗f4! heading for d6; e.g. 31 ♗c1 ♗d6 32 ♙b5 ♙xg2! snatching a pawn, with unclear play.

31 ♗c1 ♗b6?!

31...♗xc1 32 ♗exc1 ♖f8 33 ♙b5 ♖e7 was a lesser evil, with a difficult, though far from lost endgame. In the game the presence of queens inhibits the king transfer to e7.

32 ♗f4 ♗a7 33 ♗xa7 ♗xa7 34 ♙b5 ♗a5

Or 34...♗xd7 35 ♙xd7 ♗xd7 36 ♗c1 and the rook enters sooner or later with decisive effect.

35 ♗b1 ♗b6

If 35...♙b3 then 36 ♗f6! followed by a timely ♗c1.

36 ♗b4 ♙c6?

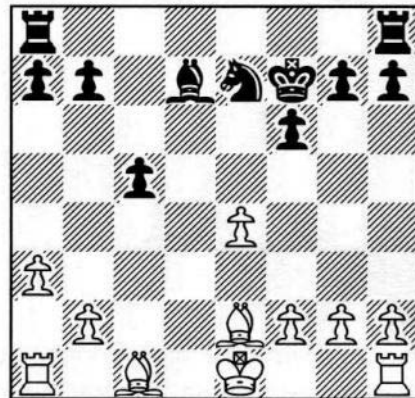
A tactical slip in a desperate position.

37 ♙xa4 ♗c5 38 ♗b8!

Black resigned.

How to fight against a queenside pawn majority? One idea is to create activity on the other flank, for example by advancing one's own majority, a topic that we will investigate after the next game. Another option is a minority attack in order to soften up the enemy majority, as in the following example.

Example 139
V.Ivanchuk-S.Karjakin
Wijk aan Zee 2006



White is slightly better thanks to his bishop pair. Ivanchuk's following play is a model example of how to neutralize a pawn majority.

17 ♙e3 ♗hc8

After 17...b6?! 18 b4! cxb4 19 axb4 ♗hc8

20 b5! one pawn stops two with a clear advantage – Ivanchuk.

18 f3

A useful move that reinforces the e4-pawn and enables ♖f2. In contrast, 18 b4?! is less suitable here due to 18...c4! creating a passed pawn. Advancing the kingside majority by 18 f4?! is equally flawed due to 18...♙c6 19 ♙f3 f5! with counterplay.

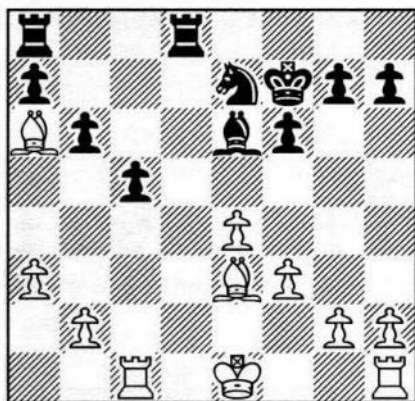
18...♙

If 18...b5, then 19 0-0-0! ♖c7 20 ♖d6 is very strong – Ivanchuk. There can follow 20...c4 21 ♖hd1 ♙c6 22 g4!?, preparing h2-h4 and g4-g5 with a new front.

19 ♖c1

After 19...c4 20 ♖f2 b5 21 ♖hd1 White gets the upper hand; e.g., 21...a5?! 22 f4! f5 23 ♙f3, when 23...♖ab8 fails to 24 exf5 ♙xf5 25 ♙a7.

20 ♙a6! ♖d8



21 b4!

After expelling the rook from the c-file, White launches a minority attack in order to eliminate the potential passed pawn and clear lines towards the black queenside.

21...cxb4 22 axb4 ♙

Keeping the powerful bishop pair.

23...♙e6 24 ♖f2

Also tempting is 24 b5!?, fixing the black pawns, but Ivanchuk is not in a hurry.

24...♖

Exploiting the semi-open file that was created by b2-b4.

25...♙c6?!

Surprisingly, this leads to a loss of a pawn almost by force. 25...♖d7 was a lesser evil, when 26 ♖hc1! ♖dc7 27 ♖xc7! ♖xc7 28 ♙f4 ♖c2 29 ♖e3 yields White a clear advantage – Ivanchuk.

26 ♙

Again this pinprick in order to stir up the black defence. Now 26...♖c7? fails to 27 ♖hc1 ♖dd7 28 ♙b5 etc.

26...♖b8 27 ♙b5!

The trade of the b4-pawn for the one on a7 will have a weakening effect on the remaining pawn on b6.

27...♙xb4

If 27...♖bc8 or 27...♖dc8, then 28 ♖hc1 with similar play.

28 ♖xa7+ ♖g8 29 ♖e7!

Preparing ♖a1-a7, a threat that soon forces Karjakin to give up the b6-pawn.

29...♙f7 30 ♖a1 ♖a8 31 ♖d7!

Improving the rook before taking the pawn. Less technical was 31 ♖xa8?! ♖xa8 32 ♙xb6 ♖b8! 33 ♖d7 ♖xb6 34 ♖d8+ ♙e8 35 ♙xe8 ♖f8 with more chances of survival than in the game.

31...♖dc8

Or 31...♙e6 32 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 33 ♖d6! ♖f7 34 ♖xb6 with a similar game.

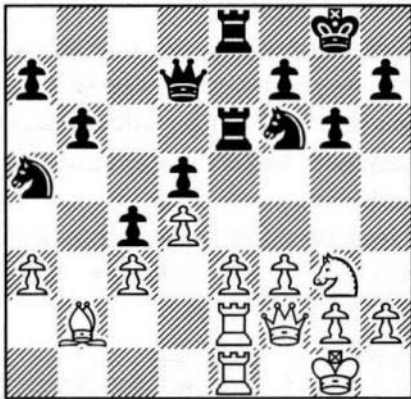
32 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 33 ♙xb6

Now in the event of 33...♖b8 White has the reply 34 ♖d6. Ivanchuk later realized his extra pawn.

Now let's move over to pawn majorities on the kingside. The advance of a kingside majority can have several positive effects, such as an attack on the opponent's king (given that he has castled short), the creation of a passed pawn, or simply increased

central control. The following example shows the kingside pawn majority in an attacking context.

Example 140
S.Gligoric-P.Benko
 Budapest 1948



In a Nimzo-Indian battle Black has delayed his natural plan of ...b6-b5, ...a7-a5, ...b5-b4 etc, while White has made all the preparatory moves needed for an expansion on the other flank.

21 e4!

The pawn majority starts moving. Now 21...dxe4 22 fxe4 would just give Benko additional worries along the f-file, so he prefers to keep the position closed.

21...♖b7 22 e5 ♜d7 23 f4!

With the strong threat of 24 f5. Black has only one reply.

23...f5 24 ♜f1!

Clearing the way for the g-pawn. As we will see, Black won't be able to maintain the kingside blockade. Had this been the case, then 24 exf6 followed by f4-f5 would have been worth considering.

24...b5

Initiating counterplay on the queenside,

but it is too late. Also after 24...♗c6 25 ♗e3 ♗e7 26 a4!, followed by ♙a3 and ♜f3, White exerts strong pressure.

25 ♗e3 ♜b6 26 g4! fxe4

The alternative try 26...♜f8 seems more tenacious, although after the reply 27 ♜f3 ♗h8 28 ♜g2 Black's task remains very difficult.

27 ♜xg4 ♜f8 28 ♗f6+ ♗h8

Here or later, an exchange sacrifice on f6 has the drawback of letting the white rooks enter along the e-file.

29 ♜g2!

Tying Black's pieces to the defence of the d5-pawn. After 29 f5 gxf5 30 ♜xf5 ♜f7 he would have more chances of survival – Gligoric.

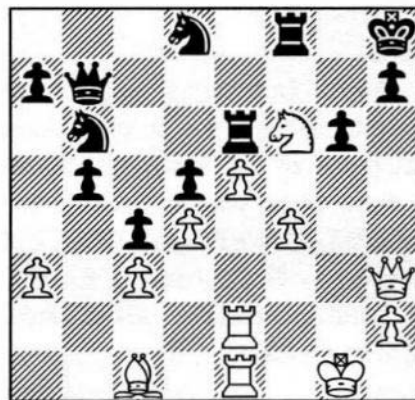
29...♗c6

Benko prepares ...♗e7-f5, exploiting the fact that 30 ♗xd5? fails to 30...♗xd4.

30 ♜h3! ♗d8

Black can't complete his plan, since 30...♜f7 runs into 31 ♗xh7! – Gligoric.

31 ♙c1!

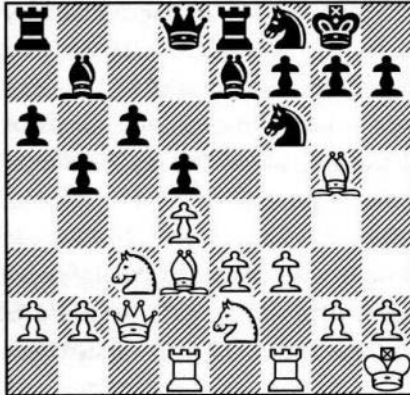


The last piece joins the attack with decisive effect.

31...♗c8 32 ♗h1 ♜a6 33 f5! gxf5 34 ♙h6

Black lost on time, but after the continuation 34...♜f7 35 ♜g1 ♗e7 36 ♜g2 the game is over anyway.

Example 141
J.Hellsten-G.Soppe
 Pinamar 2004



Another opening line that frequently produces a kingside pawn majority is the Exchange Variation of the Queen's Gambit. In the position above, White already initiated the plan of f2-f3 and e3-e4 in order to advance his majority. Black, on the other hand, intends a counter-strike with ...c6-c5, prepared by ...Bc8.

14...dxe4!

A simple, but strong solution. White gives up the bishop pair in order to enable the advance of his kingside pawns. The immediate 14 e4 was less convincing due to 14...dxe4 15 fxe4 ♞g4!, when both 16 ♙e7 ♜xe7 17 ♜c1 c5! and 16 ♙c1 c5! yield Black counterplay on the dark squares.

14...dxe4 15 e4 Bc8

After 15...dxe4 16. fxe4 ♙xd4 17 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 18 ♙xb5, followed by ♙a4-b3, White is a bit better thanks to his healthier pawn structure – Soppe. But the prophylactic 15...g6!? was interesting. Then White should avoid 16 e5?! ♙g7 17 f4 f5! with a successful blockade of the majority. 16 f4!, preparing f4-f5, seems preferable; for ex-

ample, 16...dxe4 17 ♜xe4 ♙g7 18 f5! with an initiative.

16e5!

Getting on with the plan.

16...♙e7 17 f4 c5 18 dxc5 ♙xc5

After 18...♙xc5 19 a3 followed by ♜d4, White is slightly better.

19 ♙f5

Another good option was 19 ♙e4!? with a direct attack on the d5-pawn.

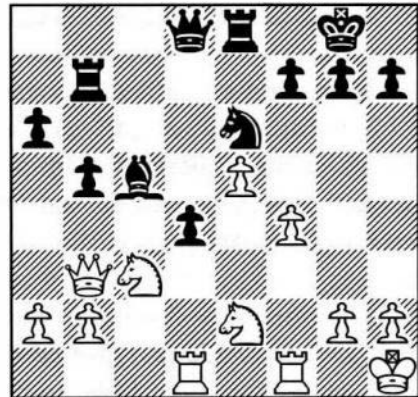
19...♞c7 20 ♜b3 d4?!

Black saves the pawn but also surrenders the e4-square. Preferable was 20...♜a8 21 ♜d4 ♜a7 22 ♜ce2 b4, followed by ...♜b6 and ...a5, with just a slight disadvantage.

21 ♙e4!

A key move, neutralizing the bishop on b7 and clearing the way for the f-pawn.

21...♜e6 22 ♙xb7 ♞xb7



23 f5!

Resuming the advance of the pawn majority. Also interesting was 23 ♜e4 ♙e7 24 f5 ♜c5 25 ♜xc5 ♙xc5 26 e6! fxe6 27 ♜f4!, followed by ♜xe6, with an improved version of the game.

23...♜g5 24 e6!

White avoids the trick 24 h4? ♜e4! 25 ♜xe4 ♜xh4+ and creates an advanced passed pawn that will make the black king feel uneasy.

24...fxe6 25 f4

The knight exploits the active f4-square that was just vacated by the f-pawn.

25...g8

In the event of 25...b8 unpinning the d4-pawn, White has 26 e6 e6 27 e4! e5 28 g5! h8 29 e6 with a strong initiative thanks to the powerful knight.

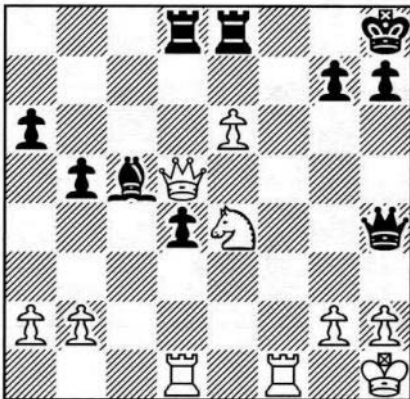
26 e6 e6 27 fxe6 h4

Thus Black prevents a knight move to e4, though only for a moment. In the event of 27...be7 28 e4 b6 29 g5 White enjoys excellent attacking prospects.

28 h5! b8 29 e4

A natural move in order to activate the knight. The straightforward 29 xc5 dxc3 30 bxc3 e7 31 d6! was also strong.

29...bd8



30 e5!

White again exploits the squares that have been vacated by his pawn advances, thus securing a central position for his queen. Now that 30...a7? 31 d6 would be disastrous for Black, he has to give up the d4-pawn.

30...e7 31 xd4 xd4 32 xd4 h6 33 e5!

The queen returns to its preferred square.

33...f8?

A bad idea, since the absence of rooks

will leave the back rank vulnerable. The last chance was 33...g4 34 h3 g6, touching the e6-pawn, although after 35 c1! followed by c6, White is winning in the long run.

34 xf8+ xf8 35 g3 e7

Or 35...g4 36 e7 d1+ 37 g2, when both 37...e2+ 38 f2! and 37...xe7 38 xe7 e2+ 39 h3 h5+ 40 h4 lead to a win. In the game the knight is decisively regrouped to d5.

36 e3! b4

After 36...d6 37 xd6! xd6 38 d5 followed by g2-f3-e4, Black is helpless.

37 d5 c5?

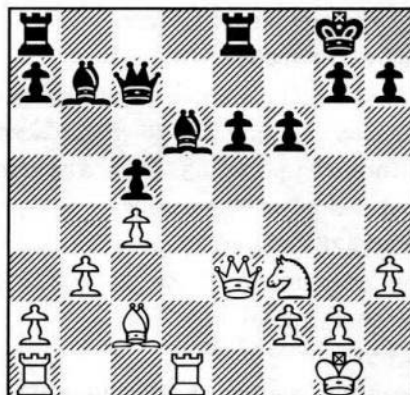
A last slip in time trouble, but 37...c4 38 g2 c6 39 h3 was equally desperate for Black.

38 e7! xe7 39 e7 f2 40 h8+

Black resigned.

The next example shows the advance of a kingside pawn majority as a way of gaining space and central control.

Example 142
P.San Segundo-V.Kramnik
Madrid 1993



Mastering Chess Strategy

Black is better, thanks to his bishop pair and more mobile pawn majority. However, a stereotypical move like 22...♖ad8?! permits 23 ♗e4! neutralizing the bishop pair. Kramnik finds a much better option.

22...f5!

A power move that restricts the white bishop and enables a future kingside expansion by ...g7-g6 and ...e6-e5.

23 ♗e1

White prepares ♖e5 and vacates d1 for the other rook.

23...♗f4!

Forcing the white queen to a less active square before taking further action. Less convincing was 23...g6?! 24 ♖e5! or 23...♖c6 24 ♖ad1 g6 25 ♖g5!, when 25...e5? fails to 26 ♗xf5.

24 ♖e2 ♖c6

Restricting the knight on f3. The immediate 24...g6 was also strong; e.g. 25 ♖e5 ♖ad8 26 ♖ad1 ♖xd1 27 ♗xd1 ♗e4! renewing the idea of ...e6-e5.

25 ♖ad1?!

This natural move doesn't do anything to stop Black's plan. A lesser evil was 25 ♖f1 g6 26 ♖e5 ♖c7 27 ♖e2, transposing to the previous note.

25...g6!

Simple and strong. Now White can't stop ...e6-e5, so he tries to relieve the defence by a queen exchange.

26 ♖d3 e5 27 ♖d5+?

This produces a weak pawn on d5. Preferable was 27 ♖d7 e4 28 ♖xc6 ♗xc6 29 ♖d2, intending ♖f1-e3, with a worse but not lost endgame – Kramnik.

27...♖xd5 28 cxd5 e4 29 g3

The only move, since 29 ♖h2? ♖ad8 drops the d5-pawn.

29...♗h6!

Kramnik avoids both 29...exf3?! 30 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 31 gxf4 with counterplay, and

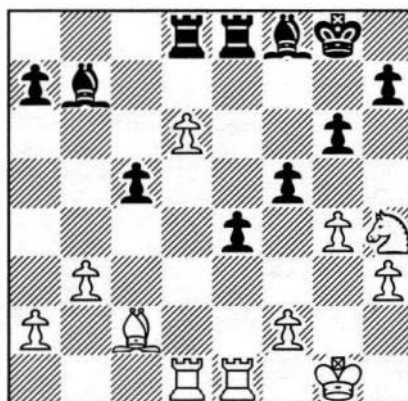
29...♗d6?! 30 ♖d2, when the knight reaches the strong c4-square since 30...♗xd5?? loses a piece after 31 ♖f1. In contrast, after the text 30 ♖d2? ♗xd5 doesn't work for White, so the knight is forced to a less active square.

30 ♗h4 ♖ad8 31 d6

The pawn sacrifice 31 b4!? cxb4 32 d6 is well met by 32...♖f8 preparing ...♗e6, e.g. 33 ♗b3 e3 34 fxe3 ♖xe3 with a sound extra pawn.

31...♗f8 32 g4

32 d7 ♗e7 33 g4! was a lesser evil; for example, 33...♖exd7 34 gxf5 ♗e7 35 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 36 ♖g2 gxf5 37 ♖e3 with more counterplay than in the game.



32...♗c8!

Black is not in a hurry to take the d6-pawn, and first secures his pawn structure.

33 gxf5 gxf5 34 ♖d5

White can't play 34 f3? ♗xd6 35 fxe4 due to 35...♗g3!.

34...♖xd6 35 ♖ed1

Or 35 ♖xc5? ♗h6! 36 ♖xf5 ♖g6+ wins. 35...♖xd5 36 ♖xd5 ♗e6 37 ♖d1 ♖f7 38 ♖f1?!

Too passive. 38 ♖g2! was preferable, heading for f4; e.g. 38...♗h6 39 ♖d6 ♖f6 40 ♖c6 ♖c8 41 ♖a6 and Black still has to overcome some practical obstacles.

38...♟f6! 39 ♘g2 ♚e5

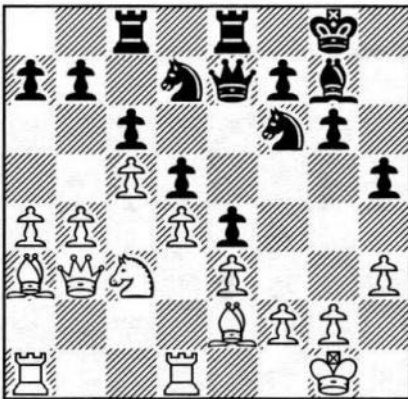
Now the black king is doing a great job supporting the pawn majority. Kramnik later realized his extra pawn.

For the related exercises to this section, see page 337.

Pawn chains

A common feature in some closed and semi-closed openings, such as the French and the King's Indian, is the arrangement of both sides' pawns in chains. Let's see some examples on this topic.

Example 143
R.Vaganian-A.Planinec
Moscow 1975



When attacking a pawn chain it often makes sense to undermine its rear points, as in this simple example.

17 b5!

Vaganian starts a queenside attack with a focus on the c6-pawn, which sustains the rest of the black pawn chain.

17...♞e6

In contrast, Black is not even close to achieving a similar attack by ...f5-f4 at the

opponent's base on e3.

18 a5!

Preparing a5-a6 in order to split the black pawns. Less good is 18 bxc6?! bxc6 19 ♙a6 ♜b8.

18...g5

Planinec ignores the enemy plan and prepares action on "his" flank. Instead, 18...cxb5? fails to 19 ♘xb5 with double threats at a7 and d6, while after 18...a6?! 19 bxa6 bxa6 20 ♙xa6 ♜a8 21 ♙b7! ♜xa5 22 ♙b4 Black faces a difficult task due to the weak c6-pawn.

19 a6! bxa6 20 bxc6 ♜xc6 21 ♜ab1

White's powerful 19th didn't just transform the c5-pawn into a passed pawn, it also left the d5-pawn without protection.

21...g4 22 hxg4

Avoiding 22 h4 g3! 23 fxg3 ♙h6 with some counterplay towards the base of the white pawn chain at e3.

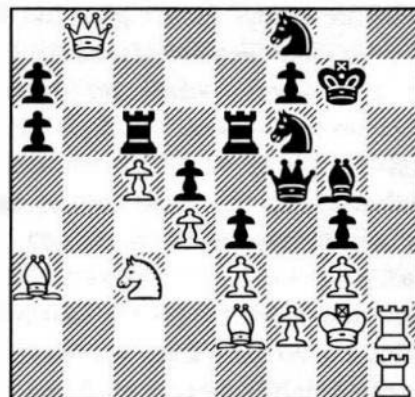
22...hxg4 23 g3! ♜f5 24 ♟g2

Now White can go ♜h1 whenever needed. In contrast, Black can't use his knight on f6 in the attack due to the problem with the d5-pawn.

24...♟f8 25 ♜b7 ♜ee6 26 ♜b8! ♙h6

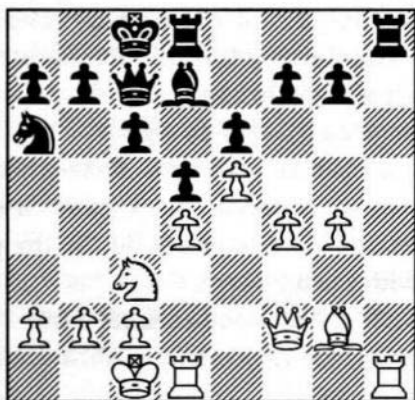
Or 26...♟d7 27 ♜f4 with a welcome queen exchange.

27 ♜h1 ♙g5 28 ♜h2 ♟g7 29 ♜bh1



Black's kingside attack has been completely neutralized, whereas his queenside structure remains in ruins. Vaganian subsequently realized his advantage without any hurry: 29...♖e8 30 ♜xa7 ♘8d7 31 ♜b7 ♜e6 32 ♜b3 ♖b8 33 ♜a2 ♘f8 34 ♖b1! ♖e8 35 ♖b7 ♘g6 36 ♜b3 ♘e7 37 ♖b8! ♖ec8 38 ♖xc8 ♜xc8 39 ♖h1 ♜d7 40 ♜b8 ♘g6 41 ♜a8 ♜e6 42 ♖b1 ♘e7 43 ♖b6! ♘d7 44 ♖xc6 ♘xc6 45 ♜xa6 and the extra pawn later took its toll.

Example 144
J. Timman-G. Kamsky
Tilburg 1990



In this typical position from the Caro-Kann White enjoys more space but Black has no tangible weaknesses. Kamsky now starts a long-term attack on the white pawn chain on d4-e5-f4.

18...c5!

Undermining the base on d4 before White consolidates by ♘e2 and c2-c3.

19♖b1

Here and later, 19 ♘e2 is well met by 19...♗b5, e.g. 20 dxc5 ♗xe2! 21 ♜xe2 ♘xc5 when the knight seems a bit more active than the bishop. On the other hand, 19 dxc5

♘xc5 just helps Black in improving his knight.

19...♖b8 20 a3 ♜b6!

Increasing the pressure on d4. Now the positional threat of 21... cxd4 22. ♜xd4 ♜xd4 23. ♖xd4 ♖xh1 24. ♗xh1 ♖h8 forces White to release the tension.

21 dxc5 ♘xc5 22 ♜d4 ♗c6!

Preparing ...♘d7 in order to keep fighting for the dark squares in the centre.

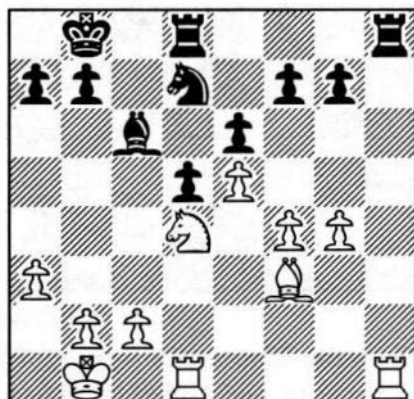
23 ♗f3

If 23 f5, attacking the black base on e6, then 23... ♘d7 24 ♜f4 ♖xh1 25 ♖xh1 d4! 26 ♘e4 ♜c7 with annoying pressure on the e5-pawn.

23...♘d7 24 ♘e2

This natural move keeps both the d4-square and the h-file under control. Even so, we will soon see why White should have preferred 24 ♜xb6 ♘xb6 25 g5! ♘c4 26 ♖xh8 ♖xh8 27 ♖h1 with just a slight disadvantage.

24...♜xd4 25 ♘xd4



25...g5!

A powerful blow that destroys the remainder of the white pawn chain and converts the e6-pawn into a passed pawn.

26 fxg5 ♘xe5 27 ♖he1

Aware of the long-term inferiority of his position, Timman looks for counterplay.

27...♖g6 28 c4 ♜hg8

Preparing an attack on the weak g5-pawn.

29 ♜e3!

Enabling a future check on b3.

29...♗e7 30 ♗xc6+ bxc6 31 cxd5 cxd5 32 ♜c1 ♗d7?!

With 32...♜c8! 33 ♜b3+ ♔a8 Black could have finished off the enemy attack.

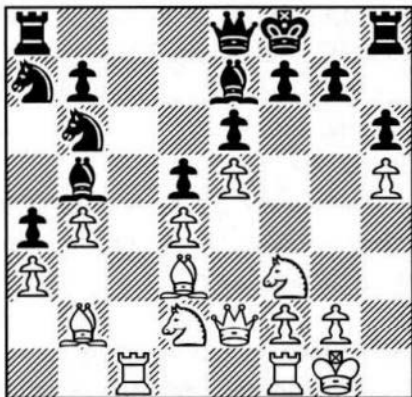
33 ♜e2 ♜xg5 34 ♔a6?

Correct was 34 ♜b3+! ♗b7 35 ♜bc3 ♜g8 36 ♔a6 ♜b6 37 ♜c7! with sufficient counterplay for a draw - Kamsky.

34...♗d6!

Now Black is ready to meet 35 ♜b3+ by 35...♜b6, thus neutralizing White's attack. The game continued 35 ♜e2 ♜c6 36 ♜f1 ♜g7 37 ♜ef3 f5 38 gxf5 ♗xf5 39 ♔d3 ♗d6 40 ♜e3 ♜e7 41 ♜fe1 ♗e8! 42 ♜e5 ♗c7 43 ♔f5 ♔c8 44 ♔g4 ♔d7 45 ♜g5 ♔d6 and Black later realized his extra pawn.

Example 145
J.Nunn-K.Bischoff
Hamburg 1984

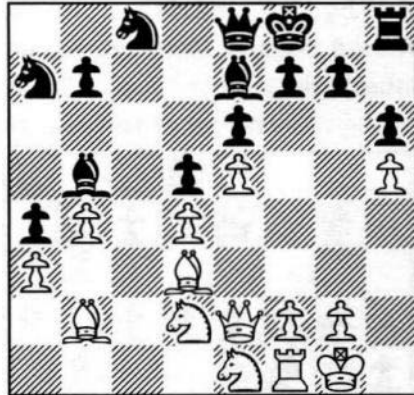


In a French battle Black has just played ...♗d7-b5 in order to swap his "bad" bishop. Nunn finds an excellent reply.

18 ♗e1!

This retreat doesn't just enable a recapture with the knight on d3, it also prepares f4-f5 with an attack on the black pawn chain.

18...♜c8 19 ♜xc8 ♗bxc8



20 f4

The strength of the f4-f5 plan is further emphasized by the location of the black king on f8. In the following, Bischoff tries to solve this problem by a king march to the other flank.

20...♗d7! 21 g4

21 f5!? exf5 22 g4 was a more straightforward option, when 22...fxg4? fails to 23 e6.

21...♔e8 22 f5 ♗b6?!

Preferable was 22...♔d8, carrying on with the plan; e.g. 23 fxe6 fxe6 24 ♜f7 ♜g8 or 23 ♗g2 ♔c7 24 ♗f4 ♜f8 with just a slight disadvantage - Nunn.

23 ♗g2 ♔xd3?

This lets the white queen switch to the more promising b1-h7 diagonal, with access to the potential weakness on g6. 23...♜f8 was correct, safeguarding f7 before resuming the king march.

24 ♗xd3 ♔g5

If 24...♗b5, then 25 ♗b1! with the threat of 26 fxe6 fxe6 27 ♗g6+. With the text

Mastering Chess Strategy

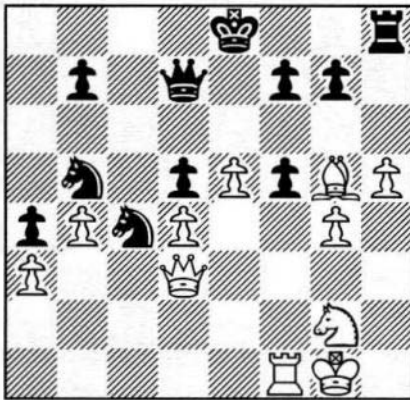
Black gets ready to swap a potential knight on f4.

25 ♖f3 ♗c4 26 ♖xg5 hxg5

Since 26...♗xb2 fails to 27 fxe6!, White manages to keep the bishop on the board, which will now help him in winning a pawn.

27 ♙c1 ♗b5 28 ♙xg5 exf5

After 28...♗bxa3 29 f6 the h-pawn decides the game.



29 ♖f4!

Initiating a final attack on the black king.

29...fxg4 30 e6 fxe6 31 ♖e1!

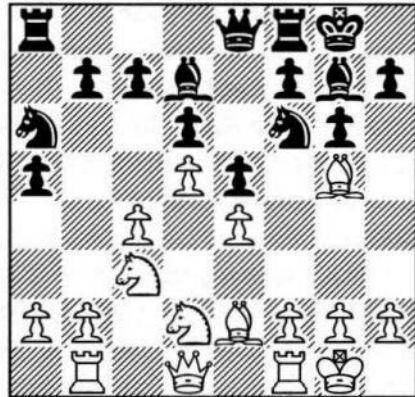
The natural 31 ♖g6+?! permits 31...♗f7 32 ♗xf7+ ♗xf7 33 ♖g6+ ♗e8 34 ♖xh8 ♖xd4 with complications, but 31 ♖g6 ♖g8 32 ♖e7 was also strong – Nunn.

31...♖c7 32 ♖xe6! ♖xe6 33 ♗f5

In view of the conclusion 33...♗f7 34 ♖xe6+ ♗f8 35 ♖e8+ ♗xe8 36 ♗c8 mate, Black resigned.

The attack at the base of the opponent's pawn chain isn't necessarily associated to the creation of a weak pawn. Often the goal is less specific: to open a new front, create activity, etc, just like Nunn's f4-f5 in the previous example. The following example is a similar case.

Example 146 V.Zvjaginsev-J.Polgar FIDE World Championship, Las Vegas 1999



In this position from the Petrosian Variation of the King's Indian, White is slowly preparing a queenside advance by b2-b3, a2-a3 and b3-b4, while Black aims at creating activity on the other flank.

11...h6

Clearing a retreat square for the knight as a preparation for ...f7-f5.

12 ♙e3

After 12 ♙h4 ♖h7 Black can consider the additional plan of ...h7-h5 and ...♙h6, improving the fianchettoed bishop before taking further action.

12...♖h7 13 b3

The immediate 13 a3 is interesting as well, since 13...a4 permits 14 ♖b5! with an attack on the a4-pawn.

13...f5

A key move in the King's Indian. Black gains space and prepares future actions on the kingside.

14 f3

If 14 exf5, then 14...gxf5, taking the e4-square from the white pieces with ...♖f6

and ...♖g6 as a possible follow-up.

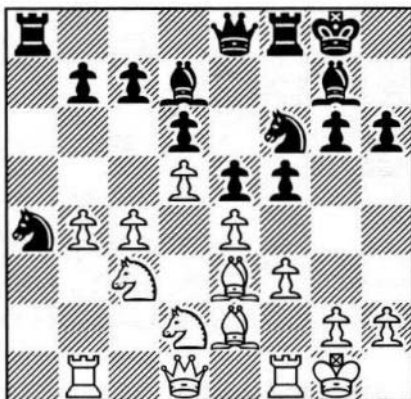
14...♟f6

When attacking pawn chains there often appears a choice whether to capture at the opponent's base or advance the attacking pawn one step further. In this particular case, the first option with 14...fxe4?! makes little sense after 15 ♟dxe4, when the e4-square turns into a strong base for the white pieces. On the other hand, 14...f4 15 ♟f2 g5, preparing an attack on the "new" base on f3, deserves attention, and this is indeed a typical plan in the King's Indian. There can follow 16 a3 ♟f6 17 b4 axb4 18 axb4 when both 18...b6 19 ♟b5!, intending ♞a1 with an indirect attack on c7, and 18...h5 19 c5 g4 20 cxd6 cxd6 21 ♟c4, with double threats at d6 and b6, seem to favour White. In conclusion, neither 14...fxe4 nor 14...f4 is fully satisfactory at this moment, so Polgar's flexible 14...♟f6 is more reasonable, saving either of these options for a more suitable occasion.

15 a3♟c5

Improving the knight before it is restricted by b3-b4.

16 b4 axb4 17 axb4 ♟a4



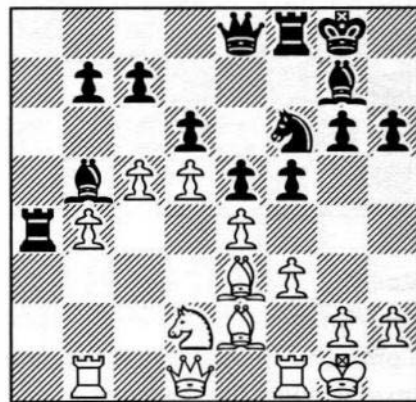
White is now considerably closer to the desired c4-c5 advance, at the cost of some black counterplay along the a-file.

18 ♟xa4

After 18 ♜c2 ♟xc3 19 ♜xc3, both 19...f4 20 ♟f2 g5 and 19...♟h5!? 20 ♜fe1 ♟f4 21 ♟f1 g5 lead to black counterplay – Huzman.

18...♞xa4 19 c5 ♟b5!

Black avoids the trick 20 c6 and again exploits the space vacated by the opponent's pawn moves in order to improve his pieces. Actually Bischoff applied a similar idea by ...♟e7-g5 in the previous game.



20 ♞e1?!

This lets Black take the initiative by his next strong move. 20 ♟c4! was preferable, when both 20...♞a3 21 ♜e2 and 20...♟xc4 21 ♟xc4 fxe4 22 cxd6! favour White. Thus Black should in turn prefer 20...fxe4 21 fxe4 ♟xc4 22 ♟xc4 ♟xe4, when 23 ♜d3 ♟f6 24 cxd6 cxd6 25 ♟xd6 ♜d7 26 ♟e4 leads to a slight advantage – Huzman. Interestingly, in this variation both pawn chains were reduced to one single isolated pawn.

20...♞a3! 21 ♟xb5 ♜xb5 22 ♜e2

Renewing the idea of 23 ♟c4, which forces Black to swap queens.

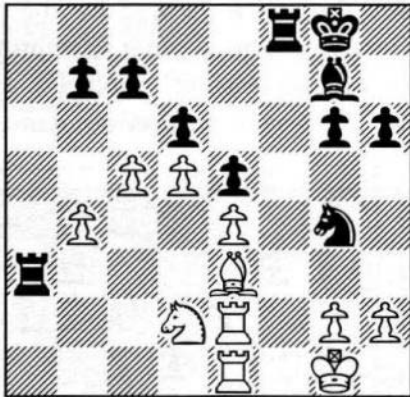
22...♜xe2 23 ♞xe2 fxe4!

Finally Polgar goes for the first option outlined in the comment to the 14th move, in order to intensify her kingside initiative. This is a good moment for the capture on

e4, since White can't reply 24 ♖xe4? due to 24...♗xd5.

24 fxe4 ♗g4 25 ♖be1

Black also keeps the initiative after 25 ♗b3 ♗xe3 26 ♖xe3 ♖a2! or 25 ♖f2 ♖a2 26 ♖g3 h5!, preparing ...♖h6 – Huzman.



25...♖a4!

A precise move that emphasizes White's main problems in this part of the game: his queenside pawns have become vulnerable, and the original plan of attacking the base on d6 is no longer realistic. We saw a few similar cases of a space advantage turning into a liability in Stolz-Hellsten and Miles-Byrne (the 29...♖d8 subline).

26 cxd6 cxd6 27 ♖b6

27 ♗c4 ♖xb4 28 ♗xd6? fails tactically to 28...♗xe3 29 ♖xe3 ♖d8, while after 27 b5 ♖c8 Black enjoys a strong initiative.

27...♖c8!

Polgar avoids 27...♖xb4? 28 ♖c7 ♖f6? 29 h3 and prefers to bring her second rook into the queenside attack.

28 ♖a5 h5

It transpires that the "bad" bishop has an excellent future on h6.

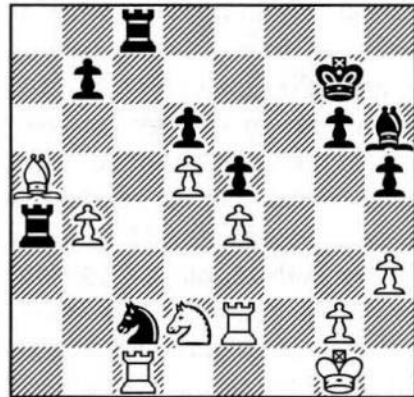
29 ♖f1

This doesn't seem very constructive, but after 29 ♗f3 ♖h6 30 h3 ♗f6 White's position is also unpleasant.

29...♖h6 30 h3 ♗e3 31 ♖fe1?!

Relatively better was 31 ♖f6 ♖a1+ 32 ♗h2 ♖c2 33 ♖xg6+ ♗h7 34 ♖xh6+! ♗xh6 35 ♖xe3 ♖xd2 with a difficult, though not yet lost endgame.

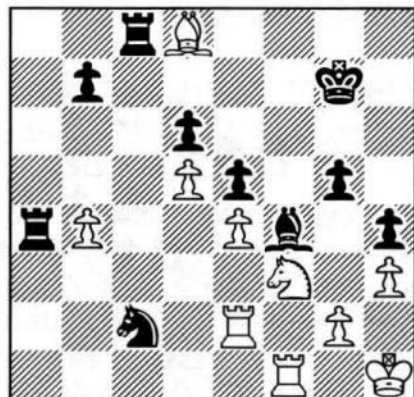
31...♗c2 32 ♖c1 ♗g7



Enabling a future ...♗d4, if necessary. Anyway, with White completely tied up, the position plays itself.

33 ♗h1 h4! 34 ♖f1 ♖f4 35 ♗f3 g5 36 ♖d8?!

The more sober 36 ♖b1 can be answered in the same way.



36...♗d4! 37 ♗xd4 exd4

This passed pawn is decisive.

38 ♖b6 ♖xb4 39 ♖a5 d3! 40 ♖xb4 dxe2

41 ♖e1 ♖c4 0-1

In view of 42...♖xe4 and 43...♖g3.

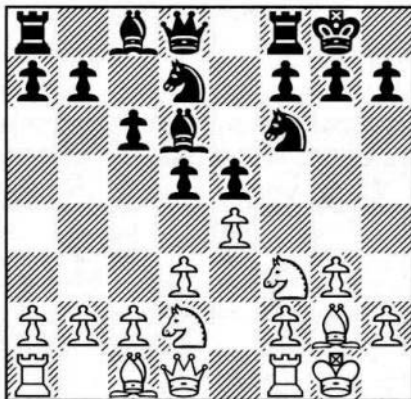
The attack on the opponent's pawn chain can also be directed at its front, an idea that we have already come across in Sasikiran-Iljushin (f2-f3) and Kamsky-Kasparov (...c7-c6). Here is one more example on this topic.

Example 147
A.Kunte-L.Ravi
 Indian Championship,
 Mumbai 2000
Caro-Kann Defence (B10)

1 e4 c6 2 d3

White avoids 2 d4 with a mainstream Caro-Kann, and instead sets up a King's Indian Attack.

2...d5 3 d2 e5 4 g3 f3 d7 5 g3 g6 6 g2 d6 7 0-0-0



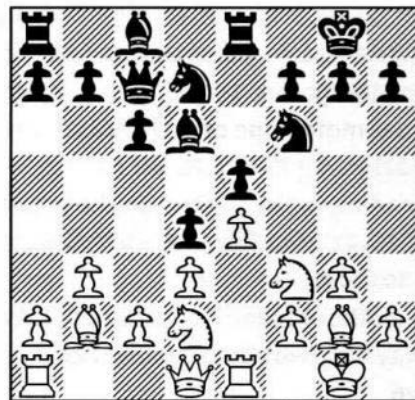
8 b3

8 ♖e1 ♖e8 9 c3 is a more frequent continuation. In the game White hurries to deploy his bishop on the long diagonal in order to put pressure on the e5-pawn. If Black later tries to restrict this bishop by ...d5-d4 and ...c6-c5, then he will have lost a few tempi compared to a normal King's Indian with reversed colours.

8...♖e8 9 ♖b2 ♗c7

The immediate 9...d4 is well met by 10 d4h4!, preparing f2-f4, in the same spirit of Polgar's ...f7-f5 in the previous example. There can follow 10...♗c7 11 d4c4 ♖f8 12 f4 c5 13 a4! (reinforcing the knight on c4) 13...exf4 14 gxf4 ♖b6 15 h3 (preventing d4g4-e3) 15...dxc4 16 bxc4 g6 17 ♖c1 ♖g7 18 ♗f3 ♗e7 19 ♗f2 d7 20 ♖d2 d7 21 ♖ae1 ♖d7 22 f5! with an initiative in K.Rathnakaran-Pr.Roy, New Delhi 2009.

10 ♖e1 d4



Black finally resorts to this advance, which gains some space and restricts the bishop on b2. In contrast, 10...dxe4 11 dxe4, followed by d4c4 or d4f1-e3-f5, should yield White a slight advantage, while the flexible 10...d7f8 permits 11 exd5 cxd5 12 c4! with some initiative, e.g. 12...d4 13 c5! followed by 14 ♖c1 and d4c4.

11 c3!

With the rook on e1 and the black queen on c7 the plan with f2-f4 becomes less feasible, so White prefers to attack the black pawn chain at its front.

11...dxc3

After 11...c5 12 ♖c1 Black probably has to capture on c3 anyway, with a transposition to the game.

12 ♖xc3 c5

As a result of the c2-c3 advance Black

gained a protected square on d4, but with the knight on d7 it is not easy for him to exploit it. On the other hand, the clearance of the c-file and the a1-h8 diagonal will soon prove useful to White.

13 ♖c1 ♜d8

An understandable retreat in order to avoid d3-d4 or b3-b4, but 13...b5, taking the c4-square from the knight, was probably a better choice.

14 ♖c4 ♙c7 15 a4 a5?!

This merely helps secure the white knight on c4, where it will tie its colleague on d7 to the defence of the e5-pawn for the rest of the game. 15...b6 was a lesser evil, with a remote hope of ...a7-a6 and ...b6-b5.

16 ♜d2!

Heading for b2 to step up the pressure.

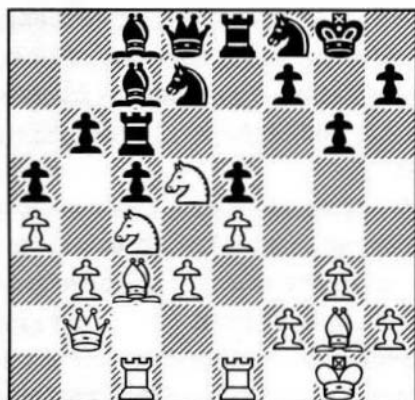
16...♞a6 17 ♜b2 ♜e7 18 ♖e3 ♖c6 19 ♖f5 ♜d8 20 ♖d2!

The other knight "inherits" c4 and clears the way for a future f2-f4 advance.

20...g6

The further course of the game suggests that Black does better without this natural move, perhaps by 20...♖f8 21 ♖c4 ♖g6.

21 ♖e3 ♖f8 22 ♖dc4 ♖d6 23 ♖d5 b6



24 f4!

Softening up the a1-h8 diagonal towards the black king.

24...f6

If 24...exf4 25 gxf4 ♖e6, trying to relieve the tension by ...♖d4, then 26 ♙f6! and White wins material.

25 ♞f1 ♙b8 26 ♞f2 ♙b7 27 ♞cf1 exf4

A positional surrender, but the pressure on Black's position was unbearable. White could even increase it by ♙h3, if needed.

28 gxf4 f5 29 ♙h8!

A decisive blow that helps secure the f6-square.

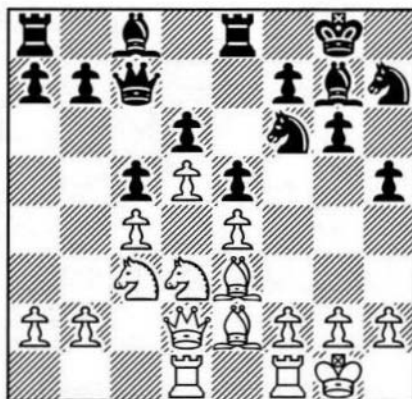
29...♖e6 30 exf5 gxf5 31 ♙f6! ♜c8 32 ♙f3

More pieces join the attack.

32...♖d4 33 ♞g2+ ♗f8 34 ♙xd4 cxd4 35 ♜xd4

In this desperate position, Black resigned.

Example 148
J.Hellsten-I.Nikoloitsos
Athens 2002



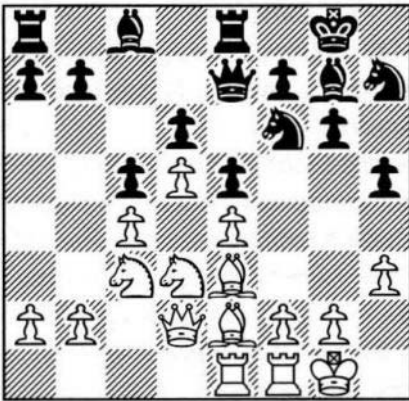
The following position shows a different kind of pawn chain, with double fronts (c5 and e5) on Black's side, and double bases (c4 and e4) on White's side, so to speak. In such a structure, both players are typically aiming at a pawn breakthrough on the b-file or the f-file.

15 h3!

Before taking concrete action it makes sense to rule out ... f6-g4 or ... c8-g4 , since any piece exchange would make Black's position a little less cramped.

15... we7 16 ide1

White slowly prepares the key advance f2-f4 , which would be premature at this point due to the pressure on e4.



16... $\text{d7?!$

This leaves the knight on f6 without its preferred retreat square. 16... a6 was preferable, when White can consider both the restrictive 17 a4 and the more ambitious 17 a3? , preparing b2-b4 .

17 d1! ab8

Black is just one move from achieving ... b7-b5 , but White gets in first on "his" flank.

18 f4! b6

Settling for an inferior pawn structure. After 18... exf4? 19 xf4 Black can't stop a crushing 20 e5 on the next move. In contrast, had he refrained from 16... d7? two moves ago, then 19... d7! would be possible at this moment, heading for the blocking square on e5.

19 fxe5 dxe5 20 if2!

The bishop is regrouped to h4 to interfere with Black's play. After 20 ie2?! if8!

21 ief2 de8 , followed by ... d6 , the latter has no major problems.

20... ic8 21 ih4

Another good option was 21 ig3 d7 22 db5! a6 23 da7 ib7 24 ia4! followed by dc6 .

21... a6

At this point Black isn't really preparing ... b6-b5 anymore, but simply aims to avoid dc3-b5 whenever the queen moves out of the pin on the h4-d8 diagonal.

22 a4

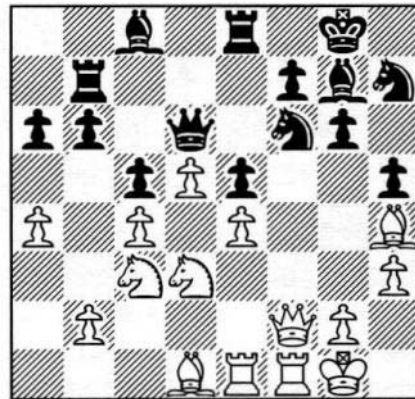
Neither is White trying to stop ... b6-b5 , but rather intends a4-a5 to soften up the c5-pawn.

22... wd6 23 wf2!

Eyeing both the c5 and f7 pawns.

23... ib7

The optimistic 23... g5 24 ig3 h4 25 ih2 df8 , preparing ... dg6-f4 , fails to 26 a5! b5 27 b4! , when both 27... cxb4 28 c5 and 27... bxc4 28 bxc5 are fatal for Black.



24 a5!

Softening up the remainder of Black's pawn chain.

24... bxa5 25 ia4 if8 26 ic6

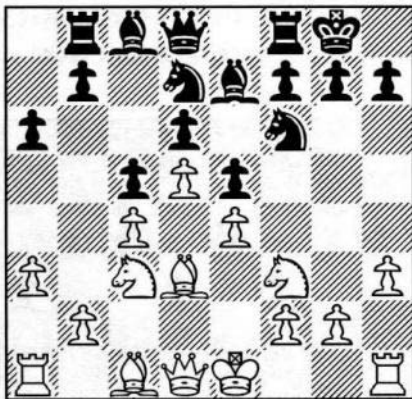
Before taking the c5-pawn White improves his pieces. The immediate 26 dxc5?! permits 26... ic7 27 ic6 g5! 28 ig3 h4 29 ih2 g4! with unnecessary counterplay.

26...♖b3 27 ♖e2 ♘d7 28 ♙xd7 ♙xd7 29 ♘xc5

Now the connected passed pawns are decisive. The game continued 29...♖b4 30 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 31 c5 f5 32 c6 ♗d6 33 ♗a7! (with the double threat of ♙e7 and ♙f2-c5) 33...♖f7 34 ♗xa6 g5 35 ♙f2 fxe4 36 ♗xa5 ♗b8 37 ♘xe4 and White soon won.

Example 149
M.Gurevich-J.Piket
Wijk aan Zee 2002

Here is a more complex example featuring a similar pawn structure. In the coming middlegame battle it is far from clear who is going to advance on which flank, and when!



10 a4?!

Thus White prevents ...b7-b5 but also harms the future plan of b2-b4, since after the subsequent ...c5xb4 he won't have the response a3xb4 at his disposal, thus Black gains a stronghold on c5.

More flexible was 10 0-0, when the aggressive 10...b5?! backfires after 11 cxb5 axb5 12 ♘xb5 ♘xe4 13 ♘a7! – Piket. More balanced continuations are 10...♗h5 11 ♖e1 ♘f4 12 ♙f1, followed by g2-g3, or

10...♗e8 11 b4 b6 12 ♖b1, in both cases with a slight white advantage.

10...♗h5

Black takes some initial actions on the kingside, with focus on the f4-square.

11 ♗e2

After 11 g4?! ♘f4 12 ♙xf4 exf4 13 ♗d2 ♙f6 14 ♗xf4 ♗e5 Black gets excellent compensation for the pawn.

11...g6 12 g4

Gaining some space and complicating the ...f7-f5 breakthrough. On the other hand, White's own f2-f4 advance becomes less feasible.

12...♗g7 13 ♙h6 ♘f6

In a cramped position like this one, the search for harmony between one's pieces is essential. Here the knight is heading for g8 or e8-c7, whereas the d7-square is better exploited by the bishop.

14 ♗g3 ♗h8 15 ♗c2

After the alternative 15 ♗e2 ♙d7 followed by 16...♗e8, the ...b7-b5 advance is also inevitable.

15...♙d7

In the absence of a knight on c3, White is unable to stop the liberating ...b7-b5 advance.

16 a5 b5!

A first sign that Black is doing well.

17 axb6 ♗xb6 18 ♗a2 a5!

Grabbing some more space before White manages to play ♙d2-a5.

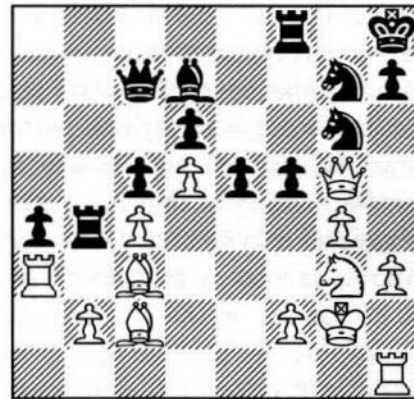
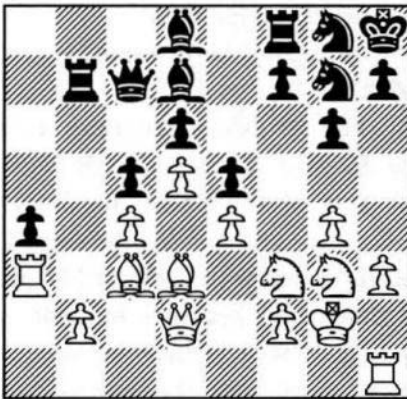
19 ♙d2 a4 20 ♙c3 ♗g8!

Now that several white pieces are busy on the queenside, Black slowly prepares ...f7-f5.

21 ♖a3

Ruling out ♗b3, but Black might not have been interested in a queen exchange anyway, considering the uncertain destiny of White's king.

21...♖b7 22 ♗f1 ♙d8 23 ♗g2 ♗c7 24 ♗d2



24...f5!

After several preparatory moves Black finally unleashes this key breakthrough, one that will generate great activity on the kingside.

25 exf5 gxf5 26 ♖c2

Gurevich wisely desists from 26 gxf5?! ♜xf5 27 ♙xf5 ♙xf5 28 ♖xa4 ♜g7, followed by ...♙b7, with strong counterplay – Stohl. Here we can see the virtue of 21...♙b7 and 22...♙d8 as a preparation for the doubling of rooks on the f-file.

26...♙e7

Heading for the protected square at f4. Premature was 26...e4? 27 ♙g5 and Black's position collapses.

27 ♜h6

After 27 ♙xa4 ♙g6 28 ♙xd7 ♜xd7 29 g5 e4! 30 ♙g1 ♙h4+ 31 ♜f1 ♙g8 the game becomes very complex, where Black's safer king might be a telling factor in the long run.

27...♙g6 28 ♙g5!

Forcing the departure of Black's powerful dark-squared bishop. The tempting 28 ♙h5 ♙xh5 29 gxh5 backfires after 29...♙f6! – Piket.

28...♙xg5 29 ♜xg5 ♙b4!

An ingenious sacrifice to create activity on all parts of the board.

30 gxf5?

A tactical oversight in time trouble. 30 ♙xb4?! cxb4 31 ♖aa1 ♜xc4 was equally unfavourable, but 30 b3! axb3 31 ♙xb3 kept the balance.

30...♙xf5!

Possible thanks to the tactic ...♙g6-h4+.

31 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 32 h4

White gives up a pawn in order to prevent a knight check on h4. Both 32 ♙xf5 ♖xf5 33 ♜g4 ♖f4 and 32 ♙xb4 cxb4 33 ♖g3 ♙gh4+ lead to much greater difficulties.

32...♖xc4!

Piket has calculated that the knight on f5 can be recovered quickly.

33 h5?

The last chance was 33 ♙xf5 ♜f7 34 ♙xe5+! ♙xe5 35 ♖g3 ♖xd5+ 36 f3 with an inferior, but defensible position.

33...♙f4+ 34 ♜h2 h6 35 ♜g4 ♖g8!

Now White has to give up his queen.

36 ♙xf5 ♖xg4 37 ♙xg4 ♜e7! 38 ♙e1

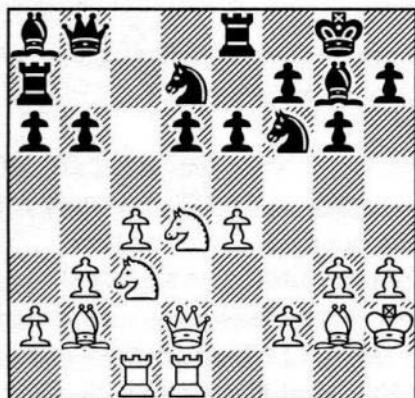
At this point Black played 38...♖c1?! and eventually converted his advantage into a win. However, by 38...♜h4+! 39 ♙h3 ♖c1!, preparing 40...♖xe1, he could have won on the spot; e.g. 40 ♖g3 ♖xe1 41 ♖xe1 ♙xh3 42 ♖xh3 ♜xf2+ – Piket.

For the related exercises, see page 338.

Dynamics

In the first chapter I defined dynamic play as the one that creates new elements in the position, such as open files, weak squares, passed pawns, etc. Usually it is performed by pawn moves and occasionally by exchanges. According to that definition, this whole chapter is in fact filled with dynamic operations, as well as the section on "dynamic exchanges" in the previous chapter, and many other parts of the book. Thus it is rather difficult to separate dynamics from other strategical concepts, since it is constantly present in the battle. Anyway, in the following section we will have a look at some dynamic operations of a more radical nature, with a great impact on the strategical balance of the position.

Example 150
J.Garcia Padron-M.Suba
Las Palmas 1979



The Hedgehog structure is a good starting point when discussing the role of dynamics. Despite an evident space disadvantage, Black's position has a lot of dynamic potential, based mainly on the pawn advances ...d6-d5 and ...b6-b5. Once he

achieves any of these advances, the position tends to change drastically, with a notable increase of activity among his forces.

21 ♖de2?

This knight retreat generates an attack on the d6-pawn; however, it also lets Black launch one of the pawn advances mentioned above. Perhaps White should have looked for a better destiny for his queen, a piece that often becomes exposed in the Hedgehog. 21 ♖e2?! runs into the other key advance 21...d5! with the rook x-raying the queen along the e-file, but 21 ♖e1, followed by ♗cd1 and ♜c1-a1, or even ♖e2 and ♜e1, was a more cautious option.

21...b5!

Romanian GM Mihai Suba is one of the pioneers in the Hedgehog, and he probably didn't think for a long time about this move.

22 cxb5

After 22 ♜xd6 bxc4 White ends up with a weak pawn on b3.

22...axb5 23 f3

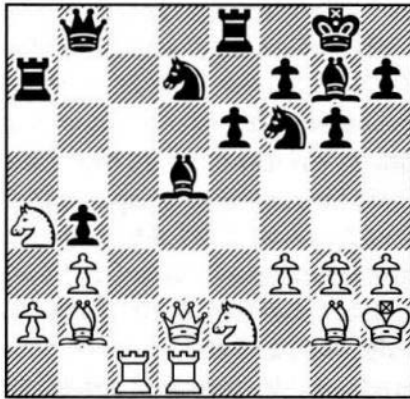
Securing the e4-pawn. This time 23 ♜xd6 is well met by 23...b4 24 ♖a4 ♖xe4, when Black obtains a superior pawn structure and considerable activity for his pieces. Even so, after 25 ♜xb8 ♗xb8 White at least manages to swap the queens, thus reducing some of Black's initiative.

23...b4! 24 ♖a4 d5

This and the previous pawn advance are often executed in sequence, in order to divert the white knight from the centre before striking there.

25 exd5 ♗xd5

In less than five moves, the position has changed noticeably. White no longer enjoys a space advantage, and most of his pawns can be considered as weaknesses. Meanwhile, Black's pieces remain harmoniously placed.

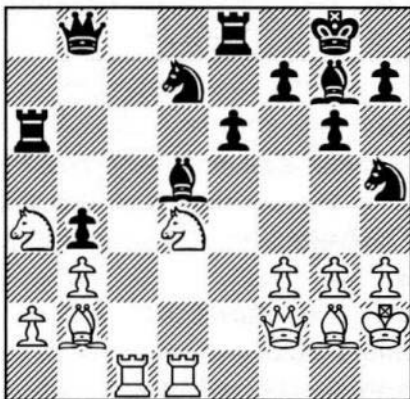


26 $\text{d}4 \text{a}6$

Avoiding 27 $\text{c}6$ with an unfavourable exchange. Of course 26... $\text{b}7$ was also possible; however, Suba prefers to keep his queen on the h2-b8 diagonal where it eyes the weak g3-pawn.

27 $\text{f}2 \text{h}5$

By the threat of 28... $\text{d}g3$ 29 $\text{w}xg3 \text{e}5$ Black provokes new weaknesses in the enemy camp. Even so, the straightforward 27... $\text{e}5!$ followed by 28... $\text{e}4$ led to a bigger advantage – Suba.



28 $\text{f}4 \text{d}f6?$

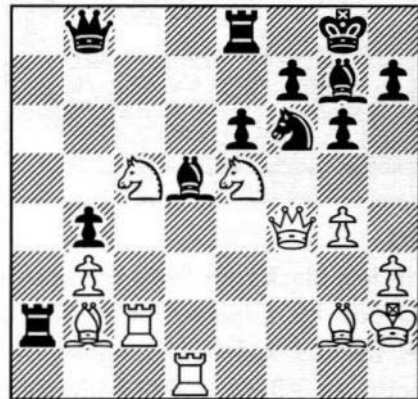
Now the knights become rather piled up on the kingside, and the white knight on a4 gains access to c5. By 28... $\text{d}hf6!?$, preparing ...h5-h4, Black maintained a pleasant edge.

29 $\text{c}6 \text{w}b7$ 30 $\text{d}e5 \text{a}a8$ 31 $\text{c}5! \text{w}b8$ 32 $\text{g}4?$

Allowing a powerful combination. Correct was 32 $\text{e}d4$, covering a2, when 32... $\text{e}xg2$ 33 $\text{w}xg2 \text{d}d5$ leads to a roughly equal game.

32... $\text{d}xf4!$ 33 $\text{w}xf4 \text{a}a2$ 34 $\text{c}c2$

After 34 $\text{d}cd7 \text{d}xd7$ 35 $\text{w}xf7+ \text{c}h8$ White can't give mate by 36 $\text{d}xg6+$ since his knight is pinned – Suba.



34... $\text{a}xb2!$

The key move in Black's combination, which exploits White's vulnerability along the h2-b8 and a1-h8 diagonals.

35 $\text{a}xb2 \text{d}xg4+$ 36 $\text{w}xg4 \text{w}xe5+$ 37 $\text{c}h1 \text{w}xb2$

Black ended up with several extra pawns, and the rest is easy.

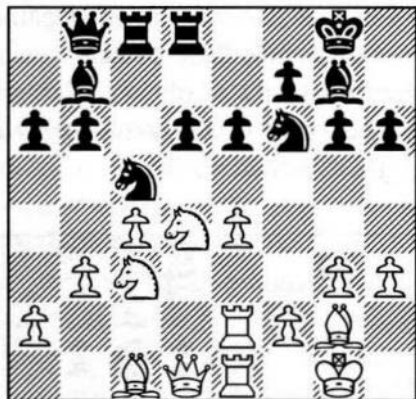
38 $\text{e}xd5 \text{e}xd5$ 39 $\text{w}d7 \text{e}e2$ 40 $\text{w}d8+ \text{e}f8$ 41 $\text{w}b8 \text{w}c2$

White resigned.

Example 151
R.Hübner-G.Kasparov
 Tilburg 1981

Here is another example from the same Hedgehog structure, where the location of the black knight on c5 adds some extra power to a potential ...b6-b5 or ...d6-d5 ad-

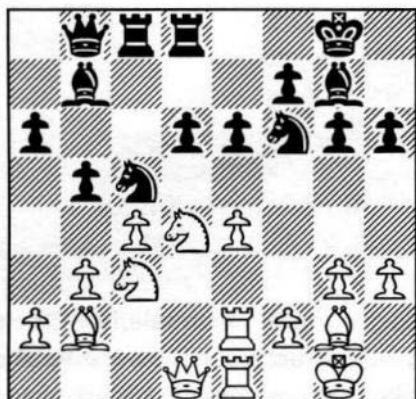
vance. If White chases the knight away by 23 b4?!, then after 23...♖cd7 he gets a problem with the c4-pawn.



23 ♖b2

This lets Black transform the position to his favour by a series of strong pawn moves. Instead, Kasparov suggests the prophylactic 23 ♖d2?!, when both the solid 23...♗a8 and the more aggressive 23...e5!? 24 ♖c2 b5! come into consideration. In the latter case there can follow 25 ♖d5 bxc4!? 26 ♖e7+ ♗h7 27 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 with pressure on e4 and b3, or 25 cxb5 axb5 26 ♖b4 (not 26 ♖xb5?! ♖fxe4) 26...♗a8 27 ♖cd5 ♖xd5 28 ♖xd5 ♗.xd5 29 exd5 f5!, preparing ...e5-e4, with some dark square dominance.

23...b5!



24 cxb5

The intermediate 24 b4? fails to 24...bxc4! 25 bxc5 dxc5 with a pin along the d-file.

24...d5! 25 exd5

Both 25 e5? ♖fe4 and 25 bxa6? ♗xa6 26 ♖d2 dxe4 favour Black – Kasparov.

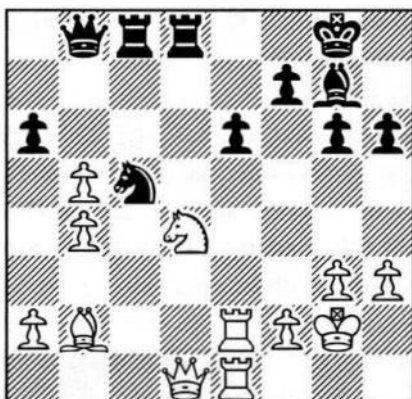
25...♖xd5

The previous pawn advances have led to a complete activation of Black's forces.

26 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 27 b4!

Faced with the threat of ...e6-e5, Hübner defends resourcefully. After the passive 27 ♖d2?! axb5 Black has much the better game.

27...♗xg2 28 ♖xg2



28...e5!

Kasparov exploits every possible resource in the position. Now this pawn is soon converted into a powerful passed pawn.

29 bxc5 exd4 30 ♖d2?!

White should have held on to his c-pawn by 30 ♗d3! axb5 31 ♖c2 with just a slight disadvantage – Kasparov. In contrast, 30 bxa6? backfires after 30...d3!.

30...♖xc5 31 bxa6 ♗a8+ 32 ♗f3 ♗xa6

Black has emerged from the complications with a pleasant advantage.

33 ♖ed1 ♖f5 34 ♗e4 ♗a4!

Now 35 ♖xd4? Is met by 35...♗fd5.

35 a3 ♖e8?! 36 ♗b7 ♗d8!

After discovering that 36...♗e2?! 37 ♗xe2 ♗xd1 permits 38 ♗c8+ ♖h7 39 ♗c2! with a probable draw, Kasparov starts all over again.

37 ♗d3 h5!

Opening a new kingside front, an idea that was already possible two moves ago.

38 ♗d2 ♗e8!

Preparing 39...♗b8 to divert White's queen from the long diagonal.

39 ♖f1?

This lets Black unleash a strong combination. 39 ♖h2 was correct, vacating the g2-square for the queen, when 39...h4!? 40 ♗g2 ♗fd5 followed by ...♖e5 keeps up the pressure; whereas 39 ♖xd4? again failed to 39...♗fd5.

39...♗b8 40 ♗c7 ♗xb2! 41 ♗xb2 ♗e4

White's king is in great trouble.

42 ♗c4 ♗h1+ 43 ♖e2 ♗g1! 44 ♗b8+

The immediate 44 f4 loses a rook to 44...♗g2+.

44...♖h7 45 f4 h4!

A final destruction of the white king's shelter.

46 ♗b5

Or 46 ♗bb3 ♗f6! 47 ♖d2 ♗g2+! 48 ♖d1 ♗h1+ 49 ♖d2 ♗c6 and wins – Kasparov.

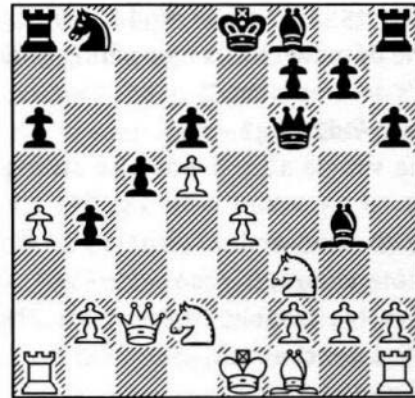
46...♗xb5 47 ♗xb5 hxg3 48 ♗g5 ♗f2+ 49 ♖d1 ♗f1+

White resigned, since both 50 ♖d2 g2 51 ♗g3 ♖h6! and 50 ♖c2 ♗e2+ 51 ♗d2 d3+ 52 ♖c1 ♗e1+ lead to defeat.

Example 152
A.Chernin-A.Miles
Tunis Interzonal 1985

Here is an example from an earlier stage of the game. Black is just a few moves away

from achieving ...♗d7, ...♖e7 and ...0-0 with a normal battle. Thus Chernin hurries to transform the position by means of a strong pawn sacrifice.



12 e5!

Clearing the e4-square for the knight and, in a longer perspective, converting the d5-pawn into a passed pawn.

12...dxe5

Declining the sacrifice by 12...♗e7 permits 13 e6! ♖xf3 14 ♗xf3 fxe6 15 ♗g6+ ♗f7 16 ♗xe6+ ♗xe6+ 17 dxe6 ♖c6 18 ♖c4 with a clear advantage in the endgame – Chernin.

13 ♖e4 ♗f4

The only way of hanging on to the e5-pawn, since both 13...♗f5? 14 h3!, intending 15 ♖d6+, and 13...♗e7?! 14 d6 ♗e6 15 ♖c4 are terrible for Black.

14 ♖fd2

White reinforces e4, enables a future ♖c4, and sets up the threat of 15 g3 ♗f5 16 h3.

14...♖f5?!

This leads to a difficult game after White's strong reply. A safer alternative was 14...h5, vacating the h6-square for the queen, when 15 ♗c4 ♗h6 16 ♗xe5 restores the material balance with some advantage for White.

15 ♖d3!

The simplest choice. Once these bishops are exchanged Black will suffer on the light squares.

15...♗xe4

After 15...♕d7 16 g3 ♖g4 17 d6! ♖g6 18 0-0 the d6-pawn has a hampering effect on Black's development.

16 ♖xe4 ♕d7 17 g3

The simple 17 0-0 was also strong; e.g. 17...f5 18 g3, when both 18...♖f3 19 ♖d2 ♖xd5 20 ♖xf5 and 18...♖g4 19 f3 ♖h5 20 g4!, intending 20...fxg4? 21 ♖f6+, leave Black in big trouble. In the game Chernin prefers a direct attack.

17...♖g4 18 h3 ♖h5



19 d6!

A key advance, which prevents ...♗e7 and clears the a2-g8 and h1-a8 diagonals for the white pieces.

19...♖g6

19..f5 runs into 20 ♖xc5! ♗c8 21 ♖xf5!, while the preparative 19...♗c8 fails to 20 ♖xa6 - Makarychev.

20 ♗d1

Instead of complicating things by 20 ♖xc5?! ♖xd6, Chernin simply reinforces his position.

20...b3 21 ♖e2!

Avoiding 21 ♖xb3 f5 with a glimpse of

counterplay for Black.

21...f5 22 g4!

Another power move that softens up the b1-h7 diagonal. Now 22...fxe4? obviously loses the exchange after 23 ♖xe4.

22...c4 23 ♖b1 fxg4

This permits a decisive invasion on the queenside, but after 23...♗c8 24 ♖g3 Black's position also collapses.

24 ♖xc4 ♖f7 25 ♖c6 ♗d8 26 hxg4 g6 27 ♖c5!

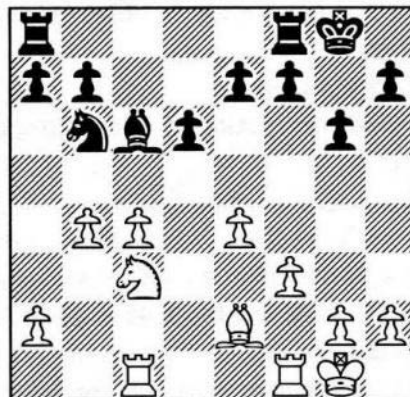
Preparing ♖e4-d5, among other things.

27...♗g8 28 ♖e4 ♖g7 29 ♖xa6 ♖f4 30 ♖c7+ ♖f7 31 ♖c4+! ♖f6 32 ♖d5+

Black resigned.

Example 153

**Y.Razuvaev-K.Honfi
Cienfuegos 1976**



Dynamic play is also possible with less material on the board. In the above position, can you find anything better than the natural 16 ♗fd1 - ?

16e5!

A surprising advance that aims at creating a passed pawn on the c-file.

16...dxe5?!

With hindsight it easy to suggest the

pragmatic 16...♖fd8, when 17 exd6 exd6 18 ♖fd1 yields White a slight but enduring advantage.

17 b5 ♗e8 18 c5

Thanks to the previous alteration of the pawn structure, this pawn has a free route towards c7.

18...♗d7 19 ♗d5!

Before pushing the pawn further it makes sense to activate the knight. 19 c6?! bxc6 20 bxc6 ♖b6 followed by ...♗c8 is less clear.

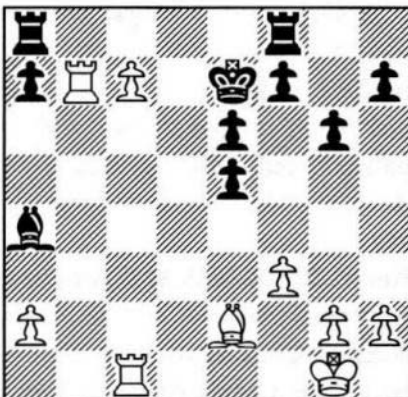
19...e6 20 ♗e7+ ♔g7 21 c6! bxc6 22 bxc6 ♖b6 23 c7

As we saw in some earlier examples, such as Gligoric-Popovic (p. 157), a passed pawn on the seventh rank is a powerful thing, and here it is well supported by the rest of White's pieces.

23...♗d7 24 ♖fd1 ♗a4

The desirable 24...♗f6? failed to 25 ♖xd7! ♖xd7 26 c8♖.

25 ♗d6! ♗f6! 26 ♖xb6 ♔xe7 27 ♖b7



After precise play from both sides, White keeps a clear advantage thanks to his strong passed pawn.

27...♗f6?

Now the passed pawn is realized almost automatically. 27...♗d7? failed to 28 c8♖! ♖axc8 29 ♗d1 ♖fd8 30 ♗b5, so an exchange

sacrifice with 27...♗d6 28 ♗a6 ♗c6! 29 ♖b2 ♖ac8 seems like Black's last chance for survival. Perhaps White should go for more by 28 ♖b2!? followed by ♗d2+ instead.

28 ♖cb1! ♗c6 29 ♖b8 ♖c8 30 ♖c1! ♖axb8

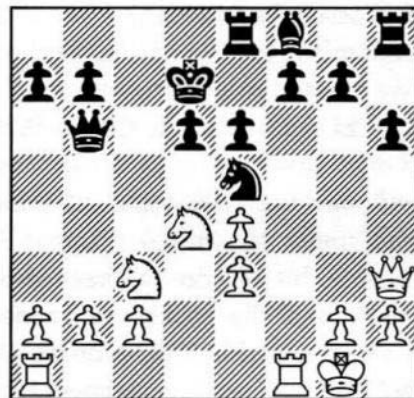
Or 30...♗d7 31 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 32 ♗a6 ♗c8 33 ♖b1! and wins – Gulko.

31 cxb8♖ ♖xb8 32 ♖xc6

White soon realized his material advantage.

So far in this section the dynamic operations have mainly taken place in the centre, and this is indeed where the strongest impact on the strategical balance can be expected. Even so, positional transformations can also occur as a result of dynamic play on the flanks, as in the following examples.

Example 154
M.Ulibin-Je.Hall
Stockholm 1998



In exchange for his bad pawn structure, White enjoys some initiative thanks to the semi-open f-file and the unsafe location of the black king. Now if we let Black play alone for a few moves, then after ...♗c8-b8, ...♗e7-f6 and ...♗c8 his superior pawn struc-

ture would yield him a clear and enduring advantage. Thus White needs to act quickly.

15 a4!

A strong advance that creates new opportunities on the queenside. 15 $\text{d5?!$ d8 is less constructive, while after 15 $\text{f3?!$ xe3+ 16 h1 c8! Black soon solves his problems by returning the pawn; e.g. 17 xe5 hx3 18 gxh3 dxe5 19 xf7 d8 or 17 ae1 c5 18 xe5 xe5 19 xf7 b8 , followed by ...e7 , in both cases with a roughly equal game.

15...c8

After 15...a6?! 16 a5, with ideas like a4-b6(+) and b4-b5, things just get worse for Black – Hall.

16 a5 d8 17 a6!

By this and the next pawn advance Ulibin aims to create a protected square for his knights on c6, which would have a strong effect on the position.

17...b6 18 b4!

A more “static” approach with 18 $\text{cb5?!$ d7 19 a3 promises less after 19... b8 20 c3 c8 .

18...d7 19 b5 e7 20 a2!

Heading for c6. We saw a similar manoeuvre in Hellsten-Olesen.

20...e6 21 b4 b8 22 dxc6+ a8 23 ad1

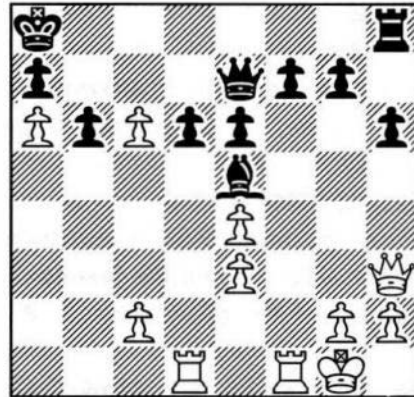
Black has basically achieved the plan outlined under the initial diagram – his king is safe, his bishop has been brought into play, and the rooks are connected. However, the terrific knight on c6 leaves him without any real perspectives, so Hall decides upon an exchange sacrifice.

23...c8 24 xe5 xe5 25 c6 xc6 26 bxc6 e7

Of course not 26... xc6? 27 xf7 and Black’s fortress is destroyed.

At this point, if Black just manages to play 26... c8 and 27... xc6 then he would

have no major problems – Hall. However...



27 c4!

Preparing a pawn sacrifice on c5 to open up the position for the rooks, after which the black king will face great danger. Another idea in the same dynamic spirit is 27 $\text{d4!?$ xd4 (or 27... c8 28 c4) 28 exd4 c8 29 d5 with a clear advantage – *Rybka*.

27...c8 28 c5! bxc5

Both 28... dxc5 29 d7 , followed by xfxf7 , and 28... xc6 29 cxd6 e7 30 e5! xe5 31 xf3 c7 32 d8+! are fatal for Black – Hall.

29 b1 xc6 30 b7 c7

Black has managed to restore the material balance, but now his king is too exposed.

31 xc7

After 31 $\text{fb1?!$ d8 32 f3 c4 Black has more hopes of survival.

31...xc7 32 h5! c8

The f7-pawn can’t be saved; e.g. 32...f6 33 e8+ or 32... e6 33 e5! dxe5 34 f3+ b8 35 b1+ and wins.

33 xf7

White has managed to break through Black’s fortress and now proceeds with a direct attack.

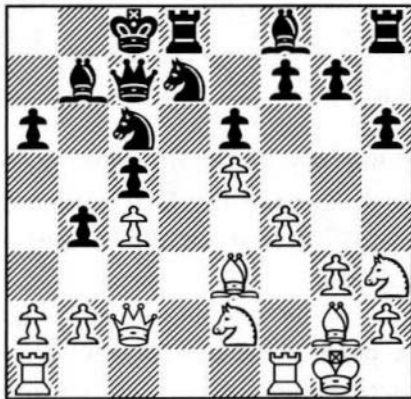
33...e6 34 b1 c4 35 b7 c3 36 xa7+ b8 37 b7+ a8 38 c7 b8 39 b7!

Not 39 ♖d7? ♜b1+ 40 ♜f2 ♙h4+ 41 g3 ♙xg3+! with a perpetual after 42 ♜xg3 ♜g1+ 43 ♜h3 ♜f1+ or 42 hxg3 ♜c2+ 43 ♜f3 ♜d1+, but 39 a7 in the same spirit wins since the check on f1 is no longer available. Anyway, Ulibin's solution is much more technical.

39... ♜c8 40 ♜c7! ♜xc7 41 ♜xc7 ♜b8 42 ♜c6 ♙e5 43 ♜f2 ♜a7 44 h3

Preparing a decisive king march to the opposite flank. Black resigned.

Example 155
F.Hellers-J.Hellsten
 Swedish Team Championship
 1999



Black has a solid but somewhat cramped position. Now after a stereotypical continuation such as 16... ♙e7?! 17 ♜ad1 ♜b6 18 ♜f2, followed by ♜e4, White soon gets the upper hand with pressure on c5 and d6. In the game I find a possibility that drastically changes the logic of the position.

16...g5!

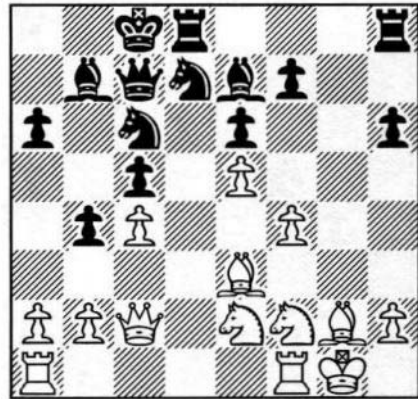
A strong advance that will either clear the g-file towards the enemy king or destroy his pawn chain.

17 ♜f2

White accepts the former, since after 17 ♜xg5?! ♜cxe5 the simple plan of ♙xg2 and ♜b7+ is unpleasant for him.

17...gxf4 18 gxf4 ♙e7

The more straightforward 18... ♜g8 19 ♜g3 h5 permits 20 ♜h7! with some interference in Black's attack. In the game, I prefer to put the other rook on g8, so that the one on h8 supports the ...h5-h4 advance.



19 ♜e4 ♜dg8 20 ♜f2

Some necessary prophylaxis, since after 20 ♜ad1 f5! both 21 ♜d6+ ♙xd6 22 exd6 ♜xg2+!? 23 ♜xg2 ♜ce5+, followed by ... ♜c6, and 21 exf6 ♜xf6 22 ♜g3 h5 with ...h5-h4 next are dangerous for White.

20...f5!

Just at the right moment, before White is able to resume the plan of 21 ♜ad1 and 22 ♜d6+.

21 ♜d6+

After 21 exf6 ♜xf6 22 ♜xf6 ♙xf6 White ends up placed passively. Whenever his knight moves to g3, the black one enters on d4. In the game Hellers prefers to sacrifice a pawn for activity.

21... ♙xd6 22 exd6 ♜xd6 23 ♜d1 ♜c7 24 ♜g3

This doesn't help White too much, but after 24 ♜h1 ♜xg2! 25 ♜xg2 ♜e7 26 ♜g3 h5! he is also under considerable pressure.

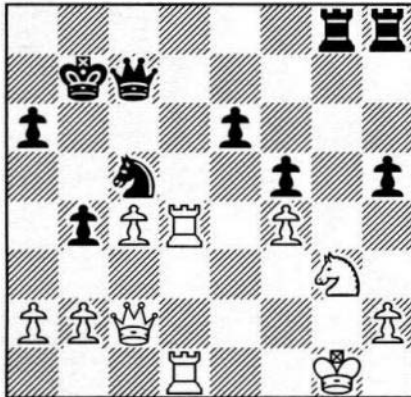
24...h5! 25 ♖fd2 ♘d4

A “dynamic exchange” that yields Black a strong square for his knight on c5. However, the simple 25...♖g7! was virtually winning – Hellers.

26 ♙xd4 cxd4 27 ♙xb7+ ♖xb7

After 27...♗xb7 28 c5! White gets some unnecessary counterplay.

28 ♖xd4 ♘c5



Despite the material balance White is clearly worse due to his unsafe king.

29 ♖f2 h4 30 ♘e2 ♗c6 31 ♖g1 ♖xg1 32 ♘g1 ♗h1

A tempting move in time trouble, but 32...♖g8 33 ♘f3 h3 was probably simpler; e.g. 34 ♖e3 ♖g2 35 ♖d2 ♖xd2 36 ♗xd2 ♗e4+ 37 ♖f2 ♗xc4 with a sound extra pawn.

33 ♘f3 ♖g8 34 ♖e3 ♖g2 35 ♖d2?!

Preferable was 35 ♗d1! ♗xd1 36 ♖xd1 ♖xb2 37 ♖d2! with an attack on the h4-pawn. Black should probably try 36...♘e4 instead, preferring activity to material.

35...h3! 36 ♗d1 ♗xd1 37 ♖xd1 ♖xb2?!

37...♘e4 was stronger, as in the previous note, in order to keep the active rook on the board.

38 ♖d2 ♖xd2 39 ♖xd2 ♘e4+ 40 ♖d3 ♖c6 41 ♘g5 ♘f2+ 42 ♖d4?

The last chance was 42 ♖e3 ♘g4+ 43

♖d4 ♘xh2 44 ♘xh3 with some hopes of a draw. In the game Black opens a decisive second front on the queenside.

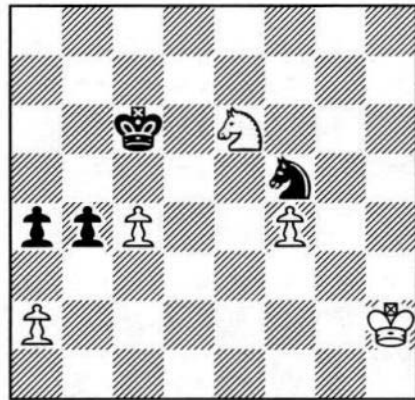
42...a5! 43 ♘xe6 a4

With the strong threat of 44...b3 45 axb3 a3 46 ♖c3 ♘d1+.

44 ♖e5 ♘g4+ 45 ♖xf5 ♘xh2 46 ♖e4 ♘g4

Now White is unable to defend both flanks and his task becomes hopeless.

47 ♖f3 h2 48 ♖g2 ♘e3+ 49 ♖xh2 ♘f5!



Taking the d4-square from the white knight. In view of the forthcoming 50...b3 with a quick promotion, White resigned.

One of the openings with major dynamic potential is the English. Let's see a complete game.

Example 156

A.Onischuk-Z.Hracek

German League 2001

English Opening (A36)

1 c4 c5 2 ♘c3 g6 3 g3 ♖g7 4 ♖g2 ♘c6 5 a3

Before defining his kingside set-up White prepares the typical b2-b4 advance.

5...d6 6 ♖b1 a5 7 e3 ♗f5?!

On this square the bishop just gets in the way of a future ...f7-f5 advance, besides

which it soon becomes exposed to the white pieces. A simple knight move to f6 or h6 followed by ...0-0 was preferable, or else 7...e5 intending ...♖ge7 and ...0-0.

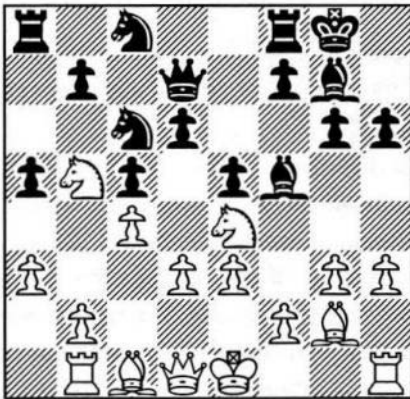
8 d3 e5 9 ♖ge2 ♗ge7 10 ♖b5!? 0-0 11 ♖ec3

The set-up with ♖b5 and ♖ec3 is rather logical after Black's 7th move, since the natural reaction with ...d6-d5 would require a new bishop move by ...♗f5-e6. In the game Hracek instead opts for kingside play.

11...♗d7 12 ♖e4! ♖c8

A sad necessity, since after 12...♗xe4?! 13 dxe4! Black ends up with weaknesses along the d-file.

13 h3 h6



By 13...h6 Black prepares 14...♗e6 followed by ...f7-f5, without having to worry about ♖e4-g5. However, after White's strong reply he will have to forget about this plan.

14 g4! ♗e6 15 g5! h5

Keeping the h-file closed. 15...f5 16 gxf6 ♗xf6 gives White a protected square for his knight on e4, and he could consider 17 h4 next with some kingside activity. Also after 15...hxg5 16 ♖xg5 ♗f5 17 h4!? the black king is starting to feel uncomfortable on g8, while the knight enjoys two "semi-protected" squares at e4 and g5, a similar case to Garcia Gonzales-Karpov (p. 54).

16 b3

Resuming the development. At this point Onischuk probably had the strong 19th move already in mind.

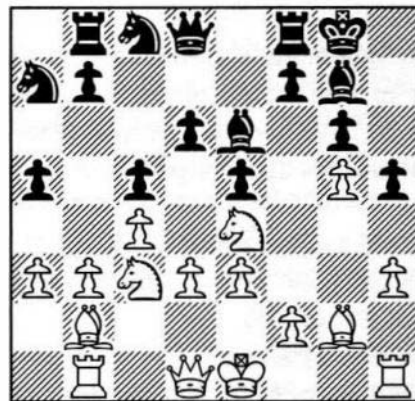
16...♗d8 17 ♗b2 ♖a7

Black has considerable difficulties in dislodging the active enemy knights and freeing his position. If 17...d5, then 18 ♖xc5 ♗xg5 19 ♖f1! ♗d8 (covering the d5-pawn and the c7-square) 20 ♖xe6 fxe6 21 ♖e2 with a clear advantage - Onischuk. White could consider h3-h4 next, followed by ♗h3 and ♗g1 with pressure on the weak pawns on e6 and g6.

18 ♖bc3!

Leaving the black knight misplaced on a7.

18...♗b8



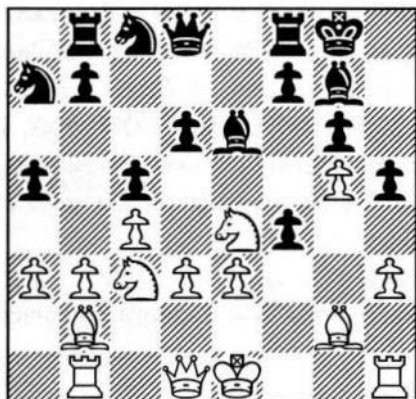
A key moment in the game. Black is preparing ...b7-b5 with queenside counterplay, and 19 a4?! ♖c6, followed by ...♖b4, would finally let him improve his knights and facilitate the desired ...d6-d5 advance. But White's next move shows that his dynamic potential on the other flank is not yet exhausted.

19 f4!

Clearing the a1-h8 diagonal for the bishop, thus taking up the battle for the f6-square.

19...exf4

As a result of the central tension, after 19...b5 20 fxe5 dxe5 21 h4!? Black ends up with a weak pawn on c5. On the other hand, 20...♙xe5 21 ♖d5 soon lets White land a knight on f6.



20 ♖f6+!

An ingenious intermediate move that leads to the seizure of the long diagonal, since 20...♙h8 would just give Black additional worries about a potential ♖xh5 sacrifice.

20...♙xf6 21 gxf6 ♗xf6

Or 21...fxe3 22 0-0 with the primitive plan of ♗e2xe3-h6.

22 0-0 ♗d8 23 ♗f3?!

Heading for f4-h6, but considerably simpler was 23 exf4! ♖c6 24 f5! ♙xf5 25 ♙xf5 gxf5 26 ♗xh5 with a strong attack – Onischuk.

23...♗h4!

Hracek naturally avoids 23...fxe3? 24 ♖e4! f5 25 ♗xe3 with fatal consequences and instead invites to a queen exchange on f4.

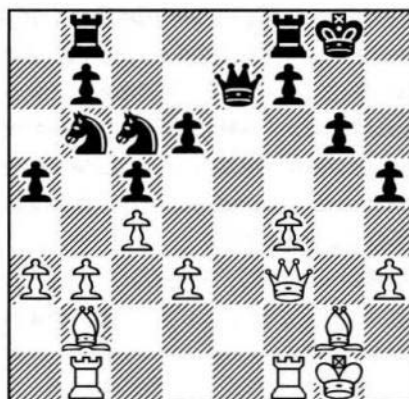
24 ♖d5!

Keeping up the attack. The provocative 24 ♖e4!? f5 25 ♖c3, followed by ♖d5, was interesting as well.

24...♙xd5 25 ♗xd5 ♗e7

Of course not 25...fxe3? 26 ♙f6 ♗g3 27 ♙f3.

26 exf4 ♖b6 27 ♗f3 ♖c6



28 f5!

Clearing new lines towards the black king. 28 ♙be1 ♗h4 29 f5 ♖d4 is less clear.

28...♖d4?

An impulsive reply that lets White break through on the kingside. Black should have disputed the open file by 28...♙be8, when after 29 ♙be1 ♗xe1 30 ♙xe1 ♙xe1+ 31 ♙h2 both 31...♙b1 32 ♗e2! and 31...♖e5 32 ♙xe5 ♙xe5 33 ♗xb7 ♖c8 34 f6 keep some advantage – Onischuk.

29 ♙xd4 cxd4 30 ♙be1 ♗f6 31 fxd6!

Considering the bad enemy pawn structure White no longer has any reason to avoid the endgames, e.g. 31...♗xf3 32 ♙xf3 fxd6 33 ♙e6! recovering the pawn with interest.

31...♗xg6 32 ♗f4 ♖d7 33 ♙h2!

Preparing a deadly ♙g1. The d4-pawn can wait.

33...♖c5

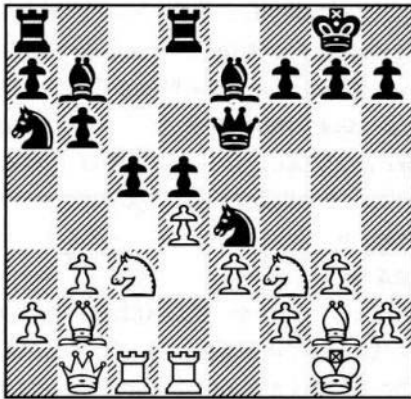
After 33...♖e5 34 ♙e4 ♗g7 35 ♙g1 ♖g6 36 ♗xd6 White is also winning.

34 ♙e4 ♖e6 35 ♗xd6

Black resigned. If 35...♗h6 then one simple reply is 36 ♙g1+ ♙h8 37 ♗e5+ ♖g7 38 ♗xd4 with a crushing advantage.

Another structure rich in dynamics is the one with hanging pawns. Here is a short example.

Example 157
J.Aagaard-R.Åkesson
Gothenburg 1998



17...f5?!

Black reinforces his knight on e4 but also weakens the e5-square and the whole a1-h8 diagonal. Preferable was 17...Bac8 or 17...Rf6 with a normal game.

18 Qe5 Rf6 19 Qe2!

Clearing the way for the bishop and preparing Qe2-f4.

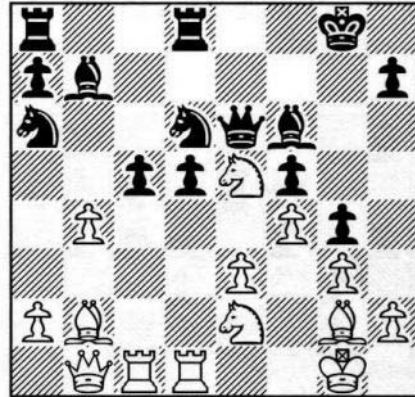
19...g5

19...cxd4 20 exd4 Rg5 was safer, when 21 Qf4! Rxf4 22 gxf4, followed by f2-f3, yields White some advantage thanks to his strong knight.

20 f3 Qd6 21 f4! g4?

This avoids the arrival of the knight at f4, but soon leads to far more serious problems. Instead, 21...h6 runs into 22 g4! Qe4 (or 22...fxg4? 23 Wg6+) 23 Qg3 Qxg3 24 hxg3 when Black is incapable of covering all his weak points, but 21...Qe4 22 fxg5 Rg5 23 Qf4 We7 was probably a lesser evil.

22 dxc5 bxc5 23 b4!



A nice blow that wins the key square on d4 for the white pieces and, indirectly, command of the whole position.

23...d4

A last attempt to complicate the game. 23...cxb4 24 Qd4 We8 25 Qxf5 leads to a collapse of Black's kingside, while after 23...Qxb4 24 Bxc5 the threat of 25 Qd4 is decisive, e.g. 24...Qe4 25 Qd4 We6 26 Bb5! Rc8 27 a3 Qa6 28 Qxf5! Rxf5 29 Bbxd5 with substantial material gains.

24 bxc5 Rg2 25 Qxd4! We8

Or 25...Wd5 26 Qxf5, winning more material.

26 Qxg2 Rxe5 27 fxe5 Qe4 28 Wd3!

With the double threat of 29 Wxa6 and 29 Wc4+. Less technical was 28 Qxf5?! Qd2.

28...Qc7

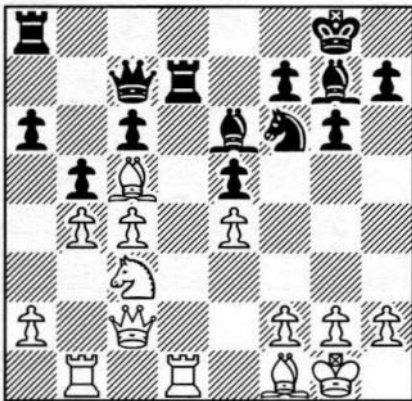
Or 28...Qaxc5 29 Wc4+ Qh8 30 e6 and the long diagonal finally charges its price.

29 Wc4+ Qf8 30 Bf1 Qd5 31 Qxf5 Qd2 32 Wxg4 1-0

Example 158
J.Hellsten-R.Bator
Malmö 1997

In a King's Indian battle Black has just

played ...♖d8-d7 in order to double rooks on the d-file. To aspire for any advantage White somehow needs to alter the balance of the position.



18 a4!

A strong advance that creates new opportunities on the queenside. At the time of this game, I had recently seen the encounter M.Krasenkow-J.Hickl, Jakarta 1996, in which a similar idea was effected.

18...bxc4

After 18...bxa4?! 19 ♖xa4 the knight obtains interesting destinies at b6 and c5, while 18...♗xc4 19 ♗xc4 bxc4 20 ♖e2 also lets White progress on the queenside; e.g. 20...a5?! 21 bxa5 ♖xa5 22 ♖xc4 and the outside passed pawn is a long-term asset.

19a5!

Fixing the weaknesses on b6 and a6, and also freeing the a4-square for the knight. In contrast, the attempt to recover the pawn at once by 19 ♖a2? runs into 19...♖d4!, intending 20...♗d7 as well as 20 ♗xd4 exd4 21 ♖xd4 ♗g4! with a decisive double attack.

19...♖d4!?

A dynamic reply. 19...♖ad8? obviously failed to 20 ♗b6, while after 19...♖xd1 20 ♖xd1 ♗d7 21 ♗d6 ♖b7 22 ♖a4 the c4-pawn is soon collected with a slight advan-

tage, e.g. 22...♖b5 23 ♗b2! followed by ♗xc4. The simple 21 ♖a4! is interesting as well.

20 ♗b6

Preparing ♖a4-c5. Again the captures on d4 were inadequate due to the tactical resource ...♗g4, while 20 ♖a4? at once fails to 20...♖xe4.

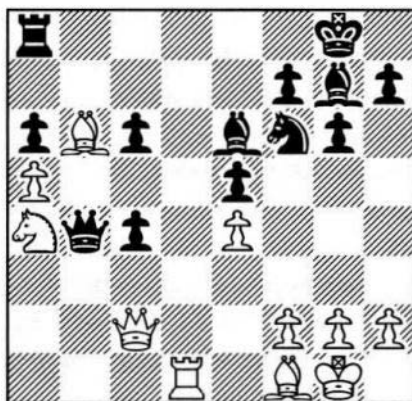
20...♖d6

The alternative was 20...♖b8, keeping the queen away from the vulnerable d-file. White could react by 21 ♖a4 ♖xe4 22 ♗c5! ♗d5 23 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 24 ♖xc4 ♗xb1 25 ♖xb1 with a clear initiative for the pawn; e.g. 25...♖b7 26 ♖c1 ♗d5 27 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 28 ♖xc6 ♗xb4 29 ♖c7! ♗d5 30 ♖d7 with ♗c4 coming up.

21 ♖a4

White improves his knight, exploiting the fact that the e4-pawn is immune. Now the threat of 22 ♗xd4 exd4 23 ♗xc4 forces Black to swap his active rook.

21...♖xd1 22 ♖xd1 ♖xb4



Black has won a second pawn; however, his queenside structure would soon collapse if it wasn't for the bishop on e6, something that explains my next move.

23 ♗c5! c3?!

This leads to irreparable damage to the pawn structure, so 23...♗g4 was preferable,

when 24 ♖b1! ♗a3 25 ♙xc4 yields White a pleasant advantage despite the minus pawn. I should admit that, during the game, the dynamic sacrifice 23...♞d5!? worried me a little. However, White has no reason to alter the balance by 24 exd5?! cxd5, and should rather continue 24 ♖b1!, when both 24...♗c3 25 ♗a4 and 24...♗a3 25 ♞xe6 fxe6 26 ♙xc4 keep Black troubled by his weak pawns.

24 ♖b1 ♗a3 25 ♞xe6 fxe6 26 ♖b3 ♗a4 27 ♖xc3!

Simplest, in order to speed up the attack on the a6-pawn. White's own pawn on e4 is less relevant.

27...♗xc2 28 ♖xc2 ♞xe4 29 ♖xc6

The position has clarified. Despite his extra pawn Black's task is difficult due to the weakness on a6.

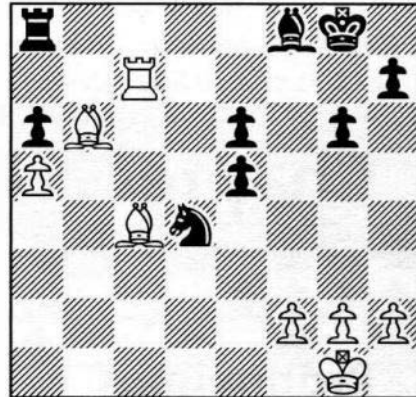
29...♞d2 30 ♙e2 ♞b3 31 ♙c4!

Just as on the previous move, White refrains from taking on e6 so as to keep the bishop pair. After 31 ♖xe6?! ♞d4 32 ♙xd4 exd4 Black has some remote hope of a draw due to the opposite-coloured bishops.

31...♞d4 32 ♖c7 ♙f8?!

32...♙f6 was relatively better, preparing 33...♙d8, when White should avoid 33 ♖a7?! ♖c8! with counterplay. Instead, 33 ♖d7! is strong, when 33...♖c8? runs into 34 ♖xd4, while other moves permit 34 f4! with

an indirect attack on the enemy knight.



33 f4!

After the black bishop's departure from the long diagonal, this blow is decisive.

33...♞b5

Or 33...♙d6 34 ♞d7 ♖c8 35 ♙xa6 ♖c1+ 36 ♙f1! with a quick win.

34 ♙xe6+ ♗h8 35 ♖c8! ♖xc8 36 ♙xc8 ♞d6 37 ♙xa6 exf4 38 ♙b7! ♙g7

Equally hopeless is 38...♞xb7 39 a6 or 38...♞c4 39 ♙d4+ ♙g7 40 ♙xg7+ ♗xg7 41 a6, when the g-pawn decides in the end.

39 a6 ♞c4 40 ♙c5

In this desperate position, Black lost on time.

For the related exercises to this section, see page 340.

Chapter Five

Prophylaxis

The previous three chapters showed numerous examples on how to improve our pieces, realize favourable exchanges, and use our pawns for all kinds of benefits. In contrast, the focus of the present chapter is on the opponent's play, more specifically the measures that we can take to prevent or confront his plans. I have used "Prophylaxis" as the name of this chapter, since it is a familiar term in chess literature when referring to the above matters. Even so, this term can have more than one interpretation, which is why I have opted for a further split in several concepts.

Before going more into details, here is a brief definition of each concept, as they are interpreted in this book:

Restriction

Prevent the opponent's plans and movements, i.e. not let him do what he wants.

Prophylaxis

Prepare for the opponent's plans, i.e. let him do what he wants but with less impact than expected.

Provocation

Force the opponent to take unwanted actions.

Restriction

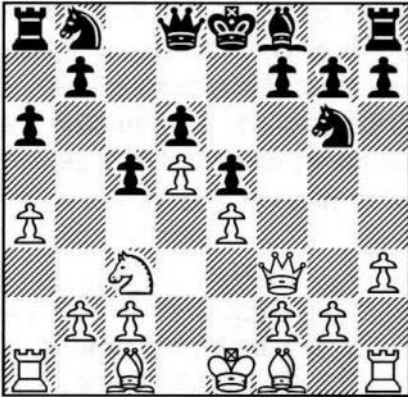
In the previous chapters we often came across the idea of restriction. For example, in Miles-Sunye Neto (p. 86) the former successfully limited the opponent's light-squared bishop, while in Karpov-Lautier (p. 105) White constantly prevented the ...c6-c5 advance. Generally speaking, the restrictive measures are directed either at the opponent's plans, or at the range of some of his pieces. Although these could sometimes be regarded as synonymous, the former case is more specific and the latter more general. Let's start with some examples closely related to the restriction of enemy plans.

Example 159

J.H.Donner-W.Balcerowski
Varna Olympiad 1962

In a kind of Old Benoni Black has just

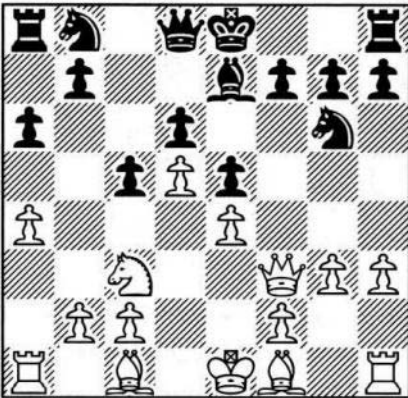
played ...♖e7-g6, vacating the e7-square for the bishop in order to develop his pieces. How would you now continue with White? The equally developing 9 ♖d3 ♗e7 10 0-0 permits 10...♗g5! and Black manages to swap his "bad" bishop for the opponent's good one with a decent game.



9 g3!

Donner is attentive to the opponent's plan and takes restrictive measures.

9...♗e7



10 h4!

Now Black's minor pieces don't have any prospects whatsoever.

10...0-0 11 ♖d2

Other good options were 11.♗h3 and 11 ♖d1.

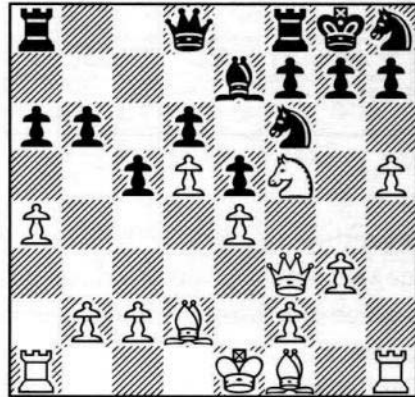
11...b6 12 ♖d1!

Heading for the nice square at f5.

12...♗d7 13 ♖e3 ♗f6

If 13...♗f6, preparing ...♖e7, then White could consider 14 ♗h3 ♖e7 15 ♗.xd7! ♖xd7 16 ♖g4, winning a pawn.

14 h5 ♖h8 15 ♗f5



15...♗a7?

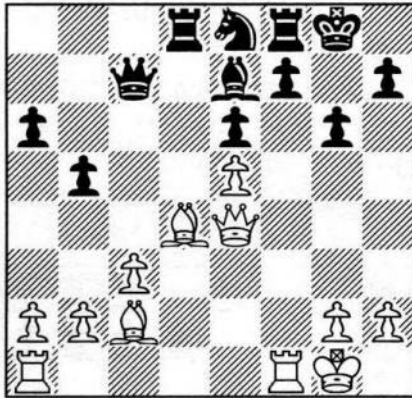
The last chance was 15...h6 with a horrible position, in particular for the knight on h8 which can't return to the game without a further weakening of the kingside.

16h6!

In view of 16...g6 17 ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 18 ♗g5, Black resigned. Admittedly Balcerowski could have defended better, yet the effect of White's 9th and 10th moves on the battle were surprisingly strong.

Example 160
N.Short-G.Kasparov
Amsterdam 1996

White has a more pleasant position. His isolated pawn on e5 restricts the movements of the enemy pieces, and the semi open f-file will be useful in an attack. Before taking concrete action, Short considers the opponent's intentions.



19 b4!

Preventing 19...♔c5 with a bishop exchange that would favour Black, on account of his space disadvantage and the potential white attack.

19...♘g7 20 g4!

Taking the f5-square from the knight.

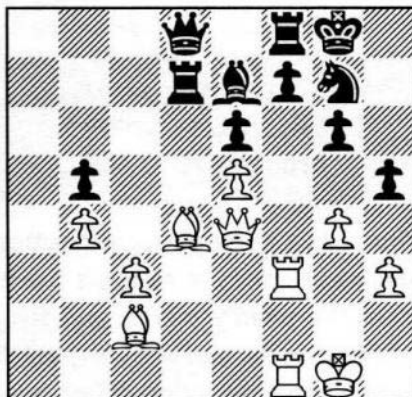
20...h5 21 h3! a5 22 a3!♞d7

White's restriction policy has finally left the opponent without active moves, and the idea of a king's attack can be resumed.

23 ♞f3 ♞d8 24 ♞b1

The immediate 24 ♞af1?! permits 24...axb4 25 axb4 ♔xb4!. After the text Black has ended up in some kind of zugzwang.

24...♔g5 25 ♞bf1 axb4 26 axb4 ♔e7?!



Kasparov reinstalls the threat of ...♔xb4, but the time spent on the ...♔g5-e7 manoeuvre could have cost him dearly. 26...h4 was a safer choice, when 27 ♞e2!? followed by ♞f2 keeps a clear advantage.

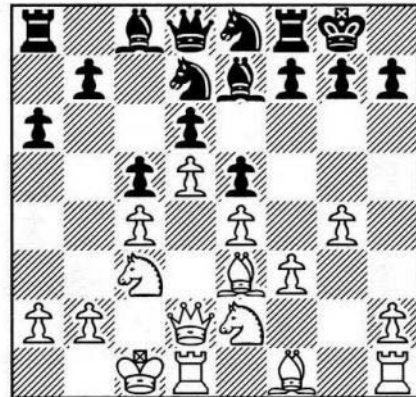
27 gxf5!

With all the pieces directed at the black king, this is the right moment to strike. Instead, the game saw 27 ♞b1? h4 28 ♞e3 ♞e8!, preparing ...♘c7-d5, and Black improved his position to some extent.

27...♘h5 28 ♞xf7! ♞xf7 29 ♞xf7 ♞xf7 30 ♞xg6+ ♘f8 31 ♞h6+ ♘g7 32 ♔g6

White mates in a few moves – Short.

Example 161
P.Konguvel-T.Markowski
Koszalin 1998



The previous example showed the usage of restriction in the attack, whereas here we will see it in a more defensive context. The location of the kings on opposite flanks suggests that both sides are eager to attack. However, the straightforward 11...b5 is well met by 12 ♘g3 g6 13 h4!, preparing h4-h5 and ♞h2, when 13...♔xh4? obviously fails to 14 ♞h2. Markowski finds a more appealing solution.

11...♗h4!

Ruling out the h2-h4 advance and, indirectly, the whole white attack.

12 ♖g3 g6 13 ♜b1 ♖g7

In the absence of enemy threats on the kingside, Black is in no hurry and slowly reinforces his position. The dynamic 13...b5!? 14 cxb5 ♖c7 was also interesting.

14 ♗d3 ♜e7 15 ♗h6?! f6!

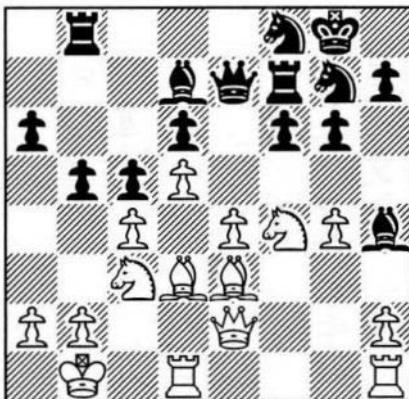
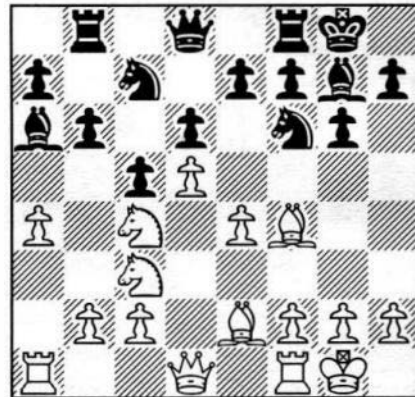
Now the positional threat of 16...♗g5 forces the white bishop to return.

16 ♗e3 ♜f7 17 ♜g2 ♖f8 18 ♖ge2 ♗d7 19 f4

This yields Black new opportunities on the e-file, but there was no other real way of making progress; e.g. 19 ♜h3 g5!? 20 ♖g3 ♖g6, heading for f4.

19...exf4 20 ♖xf4 ♜b8 21 ♜e2 b5!

anchetted bishop, or ♜e1 and ♗f1 preparing e4-e5. However, before going any further with the own plans, it makes sense to ask the usual question: what does my opponent want to do?



12 b3!

Smyslov has observed that Black is planning ...♗xc4, followed by ...a7-a6 and ...b6-b5 with queenside counterplay. By 12 b3 he prepares to meet 12...♗xc4 by 13 bxc4!, after which the ...b6-b5 advance is no longer feasible. In contrast, 12 e5?! ♖h5 yields Black counterplay.

12...♖d7

12...♖h5 is met by the simple 13 ♗d2, while after 12...♜e8 13 ♜d2 ♗xc4 14 bxc4! e6 15 ♗f3!? exd5 16 exd5 a6 17 ♜ab1 ♜d7 18 ♜d3, White keeps the ...b6-b5 advance at bay with some advantage.

13 ♜d2 f5

Now that queenside counterplay is no longer available, Schmid logically looks for activity on the other flank.

14 ♜ad1 fxe4 15 ♖xe4 ♜f5

After 15...♗b7 16 ♗g5 ♜e8 17 ♜de1! the complications apparently favour White; e.g. 17...♖xd5? 18 ♗g4 or 17...♗xd5?! 18 ♖exd6! exd6 19 ♗f3, while 17...♜f7? runs into 18 ♖cxd6! exd6 19 ♖xd6 ♜xd5 20 ♗c4. Finally, 17...♖e5 18 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 19 c4 leaves

With excellent counterplay. The game continued 22 ♜d2 f5!? 23 gxf5 gxf5 24 ♜g1 b4 25 ♖d1 fxe4 26 ♗c2 ♜e5 27 ♜g2 ♗f5 and Black hung on to his extra pawn.

Example 162
V.Smyslov-L.Schmid
Helsinki Olympiad 1952

In this Benoni structure White has a few different ideas at his disposal, such as ♜d2 and ♗h6 in order to swap the strong fi-

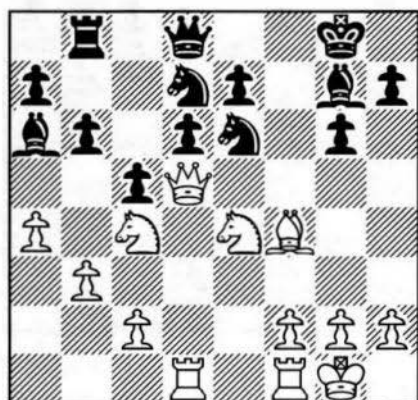
Black in a rather cramped position.

16 ♖g4!

Using some minor tactics Smyslov indirectly defends the d5-pawn.

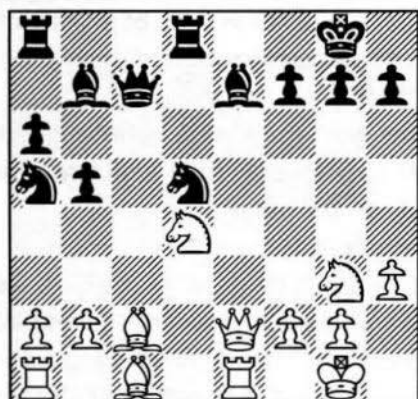
16...♗xd5 17 ♖e6+! ♜xe6 18 ♜xd5

Thanks to his superior activity and slight material advantage, White is better.



Now let's see a few examples featuring the restriction of specific enemy pieces.

Example 163
I.Boleslavsky-P.Keres
Candidates Tournament,
Zürich 1953



Positions with an open centre are often

rich in tactical possibilities for both sides. For example, here the direct 18...♖c5?! 19 ♜df5 ♜f4 backfires after 20 ♜g4!. Keres opts for a more simple solution.

18...g6!

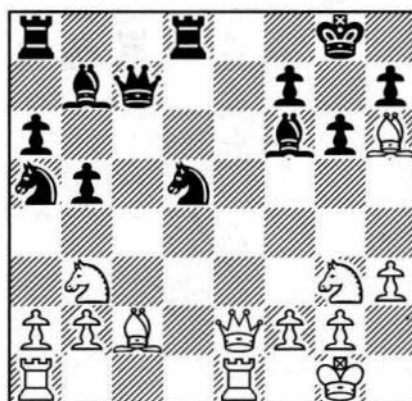
Taking the f5-square from the white knights and restricting the bishop on c2.

19 ♖h6?!

The bishop is actively developed, but the rest of White's pieces remain in bad positions. The sacrifice 19 ♜df5?! ♗xf5 20 ♜xf5 can be met by 20...♖f8, preparing ...f7-f6; e.g. 21 ♜g4+ ♖h8 22 ♜d4+ ♖f6 and Black defends. But 19...♖f6 20 ♜e4 ♖g7 keeps a slight edge.

19...♖f6 20 ♜b3

Or 20 ♜ad1 ♜f4 21 ♖xf4 ♜xf4 with a clear edge.



20...♜c4!

The immediate 20...♖xb2?! runs into 21 ♜xa5 ♜xa5 22 ♖xg6! ♖xa1 23 ♖xf7+ ♖h8 24 ♜xa1 with a strong attack.

21 ♜e4 ♖xb2

Black wins a pawn, something that urges Boleslavsky to sacrifice the exchange.

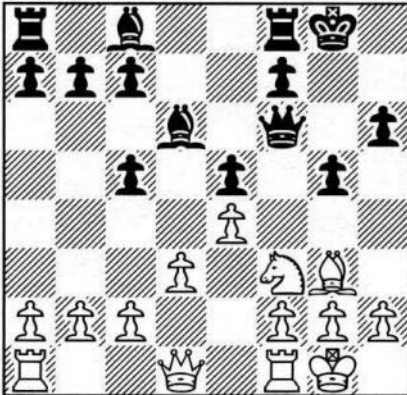
22 ♜bc5 ♖xa1 23 ♜xa1 ♖f5!

Simplest, now that 24 ♜e6 can be met by 24...♜e5!.

24 ♜xb7 ♜xb7 25 ♜c5 ♜c6

Black soon won.

Example 164
W.Winter-J.R.Capablanca
Hastings 1919



Here is a classical case regarding the restriction of a specific piece.

12...♙g4!

Capablanca prepares ...♙xf3 in order to double the white f-pawns, after which the bishop on g3 will be locked out for the rest of the game. Sadly for White, he can't stop this plan.

13 h3 ♙xf3 14 ♖xf3 ♖xf3 15 gxf3 f6 16 ♔g2?!

Probably 16 ♜fd1, followed by ♜f1-e2-d2, offered more resistance as the king does nothing on g2. Then White would have to sacrifice a pawn by f3-f4 followed by f2-f3 in order to get his bishop back into the game. Although this should be equally hopeless in the long run, at least it yields more counterplay than in the game.

16...a5!

Black starts action on the queenside, where he is practically a piece up. The fact that his pawns are temporarily placed on squares of the same colour as his bishop is of little relevance.

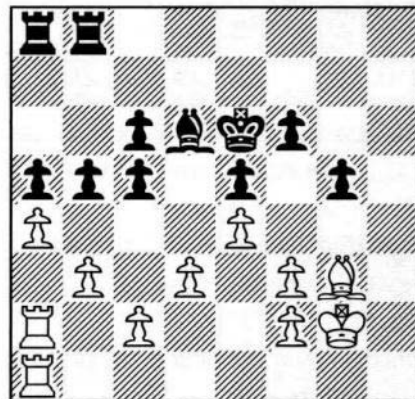
17 a4 ♜f7 18 ♜h1 ♜e6 19 h4 ♜fb8!

Perhaps only at this point Winter realized what was going on.

20 hxg5 hxg5 21 b3 c6!

No hurry. Black should be able to recapture with a pawn on b5 in order to keep controlling the light squares, such as a4. In contrast, after 21...b5?! 22 axb5 ♜xb5 23 ♜a4 ♜b4 24 ♜ha1 it will be much more difficult to progress on the queenside.

22 ♜a2 b5 23 ♜ha1



23...c4!

A decisive breakthrough that splits the white pawns and activates the black pieces.

24 axb5

Or 24 dxc4 bxc4 25 bxc4 ♜b4 followed by ...♜ab8 and ...♜xc4.

24...cxb3 25 cxb3 ♜xb5

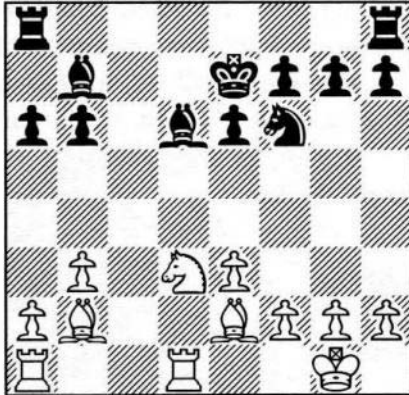
Now it becomes evident that with such a passive bishop White won't be able to resist on the queenside.

26 ♜a4 ♜xb3 27 d4 ♜b5 28 ♜c4 ♜b4 29 ♜xc6 ♜xd4 0-1

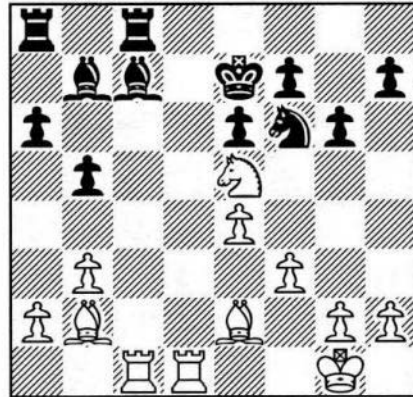
Example 165
V.Malakhov-M.Narciso Dublan
Spanish Team
Championship 2004

The reduced number of pieces and the

symmetrical pawn structure might suggest a quick draw, but as we will see next, this is not what Malakhov has in mind.



Parrying the threat of 21 ♖a3+ ♜e8 22 ♜c4, heading for d6.



17f3!

Preparing e3-e4 in order to gain space and restrict the enemy pieces.

17...♜hc8?!

This deployment of the rooks leaves the d-file in White's hands. Preferable seems 17...♜hd8!? 18 e4 ♖c7 19 ♜ac1 ♜ac8 with just a slight white advantage – Huzman.

18 e4!

This advance doesn't just create the threat of 19 e5, it also takes the important d5-square under control. Moreover, the range of the bishop on b7 is limited for the rest of the game.

18...♖c7

The active 18...♜c2?! backfires after 19 ♖f1 ♖c7 20 ♖d4 with the threat of 21 ♜b4.

19 ♜ac1

The last piece enters the game. Note that 19 e5? is not on White's agenda – the pawn chain g2-f3-e4 should remain intact in order to limit the scope of Black's pieces.

19...g6

Preparing 20...♜d7 to improve the queenside defence, but White's strong reply prevents this idea.

20 ♜e5! b5

21 a4!

Malakhov clears the f1-a6 diagonal for his bishop towards the future target on a6, and also liberates the c4-square for his knight.

21...♖xe5?

Swapping his best minor piece and indirectly surrendering the dark squares. For better or worse 21...♖b6+ 22 ♜f1 b4 23 ♜c4 ♖c7 had to be tried – Huzman.

22 ♖xe5 bxa4 23 bxa4 ♖c6

After 23...♜xc1 24 ♜xc1 ♜e8 25 a5!, preparing ♜b1-b6, Black is in big trouble.

24 ♖d6+ ♜e8 25 ♜d4!

Preparing ♜dc4 with increased pressure. Less technical is 25 a5?! ♖b5! and the bad bishop leaves the board.

25...♜d7 26 ♜dc4 ♖b7 27 ♜c7!

Usually, when a rook seizes the seventh rank it targets the opponent's pawns, but on this occasion it is the black bishop that gets exposed.

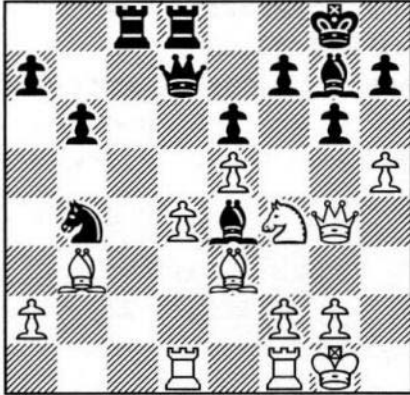
27...♜d8 28 a5!

Preparing a decisive bishop transfer to a4. Being completely tied up, Black can't stop this plan.

28...♜ab8 29 ♖d1 ♖a8 30 ♖a4

White soon won.

Example 166
Y. Balashov-B. Gulko
 USSR Championship, Moscow
 1976



Black has just played ...e4, parrying any immediate threats to his king, e.g. 19 dxe6? e5. What should White do now?

19h6!

It might seem illogical to close the flank where you are attacking, but Balashov has anticipated that, by tactical means, he can force the bishop to h8, where it will become terribly restricted. We saw a similar idea in Kuporosov-Panchenko.

19...e5

Not 19...e6? 20 d5! with multiple threats.

20 g3 e8

A sad place for the bishop, but both 20...e6 21 d5! e8 22 g5 and 20...e7 21 d5 g7 22 dxe7 exd7 23 g5 led to a strong white attack on the dark squares.

21 d5

21 d5! was an interesting alternative, when 21...e6 fails to 22 dxe6, while 21...exd5 22 dxd5 dxd5 23 exd5, followed by f2-f4, leads to a difficult game for Black

due to the imprisoned bishop on h8.

21...e6 22 d5!

Balashov wisely starts all over again, after seeing that 22 d5? e6 23 exf6 d5 would let Black get rid of his bad bishop.

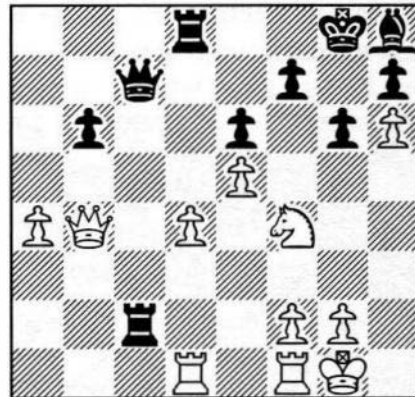
22...e7?

22...d5 was preferable, although after 23 dxd5 exd5 24 g5 e8 25 h4 e6 26 c1 White remains clearly on top – Belov.

23 d2!

This practically wins a pawn and also produces exchanges, which will make the inferiority of the bishop on h8 even more notable.

23...a5 24 e4 axb4 25 e3 c2 26 b3! c7 27 e4+ g8 28 a4



White is basically winning. The game concluded 28...c4 29 b5 e8 30 e2 d5 31 b3 e8 32 b1 d8 33 f1 c2 34 bc1! c8 35 e3 c2 c2 36 b5+ and Black resigned in view of 36...c6 37 c1 b5 38 ex8+ d7 39 axb5 ex8 40 f4 with a lost endgame.

For the related exercises to this section, see page 343.

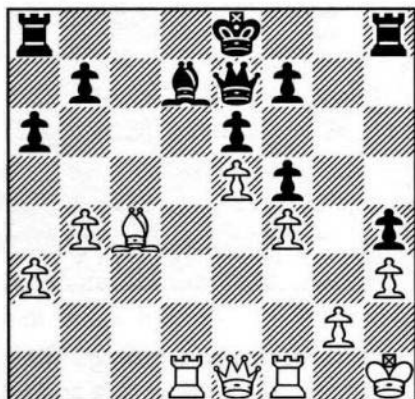
Prophylaxis

Sometimes the enemy plans simply can't be prevented, and we should rather take meas-

ures to be able to meet them in the best possible way. This idea, referred to in this book with the specific term *prophylaxis*, has appeared several times in the previous games; for example, in Van Wely-Salov, p. 131 (15...♙e6! as a preparation to the potential 16 ♖a4) and Karpov-Gligoric, p. 134 (38...♗g8 in view of the threat 39 f6+). Let's see some more examples of this idea.

Example 167
M.Tal-A.Koblencs
Riga 1954

Black has just played ...♜d8-e7, unpining the bishop on d7. Tal easily predicts the opponent's intention, ...♙d7-c6, and takes prophylactic measures.



24 ♙e2! ♙c6 25 ♙f3

The exchange of bishops will put an end to Black's attacking ambitions and emphasize the problem of his unstable king.

25...♙xf3 26 ♗xf3 ♗d8

In the event of 26...0-0 White can choose between the simple 27 ♗fd3, just like in the game, and the more aggressive 27 g3.

27 ♗fd3 ♗xd3 28 ♗xd3 ♜c7

Or 28...0-0 29 ♜d2 with the unpleasant threat of 30 ♗d7.

29 ♗c3 ♜d7 30 ♜c1!

With the double intention of 31 ♗c8+ and 31 ♗c7.

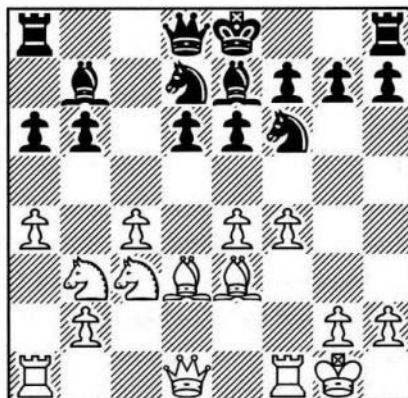
30...0-0 31 ♗c7 ♜d5

This drops a pawn, but after 31...♜d3 32 ♜e1! ♜g3 33 ♜xg3+ hxg3 34 ♗c3 or 32...♜xa3 33 ♜xh4 ♜xb4 34 ♜g5+ ♖h8 35 h4 Black also has a difficult game.

32 ♜e1! ♜d8 33 ♗xb7

Tal soon converted his extra pawn into victory.

Example 168
S.Sulskis-L.Gofshtein
Lisbon 2001



White has just played a2-a4, preparing a4-a5 to soften up the enemy queenside, an idea familiar to us from Salov-Karpov.

12...♗b8!

Vacating a retreat square on a8 for the bishop. The alternatives were all inferior: after 12...0-0?! 13 a5 bxa5 14 ♖xa5 Black loses the bishop pair, while 12...♖c5?! 13 a5 ♖cx4 14 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 15 axb6!, followed by ♖a5, yields White a dangerous initiative on the queenside. Finally, the "restrictive" 12...a5?! would leave a protected square for the white knights on b5.

13 a5 bxa5 14 ♖xa5 ♗a8

By simple prophylaxis Black has secured his bishop. Now the control of the semi-open b-file and the pressure along the h1-a8 diagonal compensate for the slight weaknesses on a5 and a6.

15 ♖b3 ♗b7

Also reasonable is 15...♖c8, not repeating.

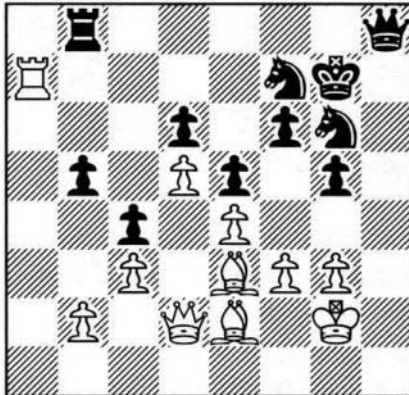
16 ♖d2 0-0 17 b4 d5!

A typical Hedgehog counter-strike.

18 cxd5 ♗xb4 19 ♖a4 exd5 20 e5 ♖e4!

Black has an active game.

Example 169
S.Dolmatov-R.Hernandez Onna
Amsterdam 1979



Here is a more complex example. A careful look at the board reveals that Black has two concrete intentions: 40...♖h7 followed by ...♗h8 with an attack on the h-file; and 40...♗a8 to seize the a-file.

40 ♖c1!

This queen move gets White ready to meet both plans. Also good are 40 ♖e1 or 40 ♖d1 in the same spirit.

40...♖h7

After 40...♗a8 41 ♖a1! it is White who

wins the battle for the a-file.

41 ♖h1!

This queen exchange finishes off Black's attack and lands him in a difficult endgame due the active white rook.

41...♖xh1+ 42 ♗xh1 ♖f8

Or 42...b4?! 43 ♗d2! bxc3 44 ♗xc3 and the c4-pawn is doomed.

43 ♖g1 ♖e7 44 ♖f2

Preparing ♗f1-h3. Both here and on the next move, the premature 44 ♗f1 permits 44...g4! – Dvoretsky.

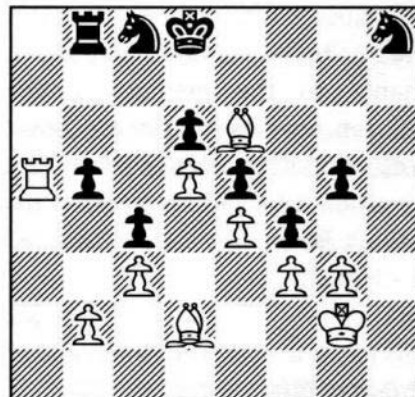
44...f5 45 ♗d2!

By withdrawing the bishop before Black goes ...f5-f4, White gains some extra flexibility.

45...f4 46 ♗f1 ♗c8 47 ♗a5!

A typical restrictive measure in end-games, stopping the plan of ...♖b6-a4.

47...♖e7 48 ♗h3 ♖d8 49 ♗e6 ♖h8 50 ♖g2

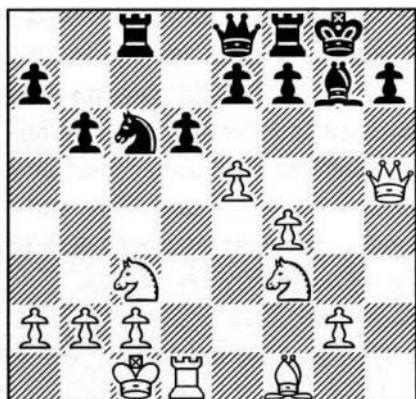


Preparing ♖h3-g4-f5. Dolmatov later converted his superior activity into victory.

Example 170
J.Polgar-I.Smirin
Istanbul Olympiad 2000

Prophylaxis is often associated with defensive play, but it can also be used in the

attack, as we will see in this example. Black has just played ...♖d8-e8. What might be his intention?



17 ♖h3!

Polgar withdraws her queen in advance, after seeing that the natural 17 ♔d3? runs into 17...f5! thwarting the white attack; e.g. 18 ♖h3 ♖g6 19 ♘h4 ♖g4 and Black has no problems.

17...h6

Thanks to the previous prophylaxis 17...f5? can now be met by 18 ♔c4+! ♗h8 19 ♔e6, while 17...dxe5 permits the nice combination 18 ♘g5! h6 19 ♖f5! hxg5 20 ♔d3 f6 21 ♖h7+ ♗f7 22 ♔g6+ ♗e6 23 f5 mate – Finkel.

18 ♔d3

This move is now well timed and creates the threat of ♖f5.

18...♗b4 19 ♔e4 e6 20 f5!

With the threat of 21 f6 ♔xf6 22 ♖xh6. Black has to pin his last hopes on a counterattack.

20...♞xc3 21 f6! ♖b5

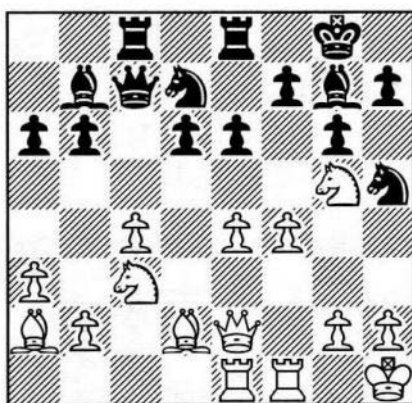
Or 21...♖a4 22 bxc3 ♘xa2+ 23 ♗b2 ♘xc3 24 ♞d4 and wins – Polgar.

22 ♖g3!

After 22...♞xc2+ 23 ♔xc2 ♘xa2+ 24 ♗d2 ♖b4+ 25 ♗e2 the king soon escapes, so Black resigned.

A common task for prophylactic measures is to reinforce (or “overprotect”) one’s own vulnerable points. This idea already appeared several times in the book; e.g. ♗f1-e2 in Gufeld-Kolarov (p. 32), 27 ♞e2 in Hellsten-Berrocal (p. 91) and 30...♘f8 in Ivanchuk-Leko (p. 142). Here are more examples.

Example 171
P. Carlsson-F. Vallejo Pons
Calvia 2005



In a Sicilian battle Black applied a clever prophylactic measure before carrying on with his own play.

21...♞e7!

Overprotecting the f7-pawn. In contrast, the immediate 21...♖b8?! permits 22 f5! exf5 23 c5 with an attack on that pawn.

22 ♞c1 ♖b8

Supporting a future ...b6-b5 and heading for a8 at some moment in order to increase the pressure on e4. Meanwhile, the bishop on a2 has been reduced to a purely defensive function.

23 ♖e3 ♘hf6 24 ♞ce1

White also applies some overprotection. The straightforward 24 ♖h3? failed to 24...h6 25 ♘f3 ♘xe4.

24...♖a8 25 ♜h3

Preparing ♠f2 to support the e4-pawn. If 25 ♠f3, then 25...♙c5 26 ♜b1 b5! with counterplay.

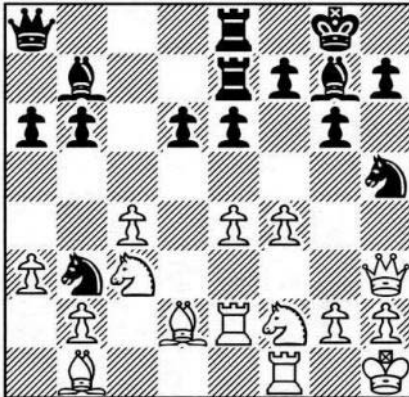
25...♗ce8 26 ♗e2

Providing the g2-pawn with some extra protection. The immediate 26 ♠f2?! runs into 26...e5! with increased pressure on e4, now that 27 f5? fails to 27...gxf5 28 exf5 ♜xg2+ etc.

26...♙c5 27 ♜b1 ♗g4 28 ♗g3 ♠f6 29 ♠f2?!

If 29 ♗e3, repeating moves, then Black consider 29...♗g4 followed by ...f7-f5, or even 29...d5!?, when both 30 cxd5?! ♠fxe4! 21 ♙xe4 exd5 and 30 e5 d4!? 31 ♗xd4 ♗d7 32 ♗g1 ♠fe4 followed by ...♗ed8 look excellent for him. Even so, this was probably a lesser evil for White.

29...♗h5 30 ♗h3 ♙b3!



Vallejo initiates an attack on the c4-pawn, exploiting the fact that most of White's pieces are away on the other flank.

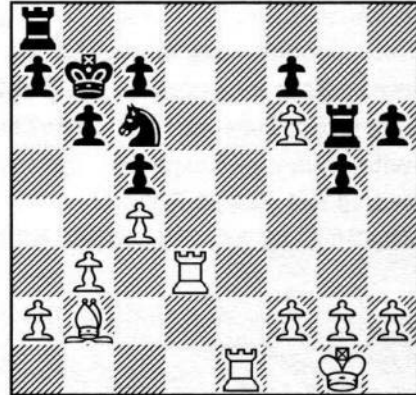
31 ♜e3 ♙a5! 32 ♜a2 ♗c8?! 33 ♗h4?

By 33 ♙a4! White could have confused things a little, so 32...♜xc3 33 bxc3 ♜xe4 was probably the correct choice on the previous move.

33...♜f6 34 ♗g4 ♙xc4 35 ♜xc4 ♗xc4!

With a sound extra pawn Black went on to win the game.

Example 172
G.Kasparov-V.Kramnik
World Championship (game 3),
London 2000

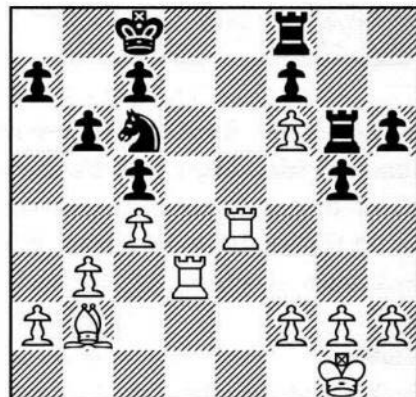


In this typical position from the Berlin Spanish, you can easily find Black's best move by asking yourself the usual question "what does my opponent want to do?".

24...♗f8!

Defending the f7-pawn in advance. Now 25 ♗d7 can be met by 25...♙c8. Much worse was 24...♙d4? 25 ♜xd4 cxd4 26 ♗xd4 ♗xf6 27 ♗d7 with a clear advantage for White - Kasparov.

25 ♗e4 ♙c8



26 f4?!

Preferable was 26 h4! ♖d4 27 ♙xd4 cxd4 28 ♜dxd4 ♜xf6 29 hxg5 hxg5 30 ♜e5 with a more active rook endgame.

26...gxf4 27 ♜xf4 ♜e8

Now that the king controls d7 the rook can be used for active means.

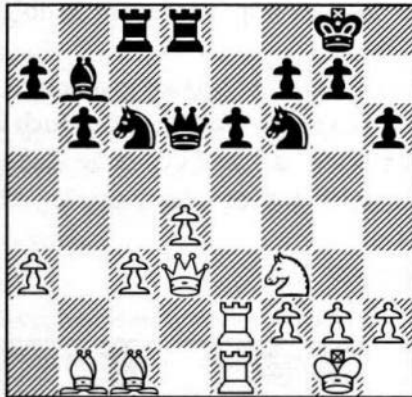
28 ♙c3?!

White should have preferred 28 ♜d2, preventing ♜e2; for example, 28...♜e6 29 g3 ♗e5 30 ♙xe5 ♜xe5 31 ♖g2 ♜e6 32 ♜df2 ♖d7 with equality – Kasparov.

28...♜e2 29 ♜f2 ♜e4 30 ♜h3 a5!

Intending ...a5-a4 with a slight initiative.

Example 173
A.Yusupov-P.Enders
 German Championship, Bremen
 1998



As we can see from the aggressive deployment of his queen and bishop along the b1-h7 diagonal, White is preparing an attack on the kingside. In response to this Black applies a clever prophylactic manoeuvre.

17...♗b8!

The knight is heading for f8 where it will reinforce the kingside defence, in particular

the h7-square. This retreat also clears the h1-a8 diagonal for the bishop.

18 ♜e3

Or 18 ♗e5?! ♜d5!, when both 19 ♜g3 ♜xc3 and 19 f3 ♙a6 fail for White.

18...♗bd7 19 ♗h4 ♗f8 20 ♜h3

With the threat of 21 ♙xh6 gxh6 22 ♜d2!, unleashing a scary attack.

20...♙e4!

A powerful counter-strike based on White's vulnerable back rank.

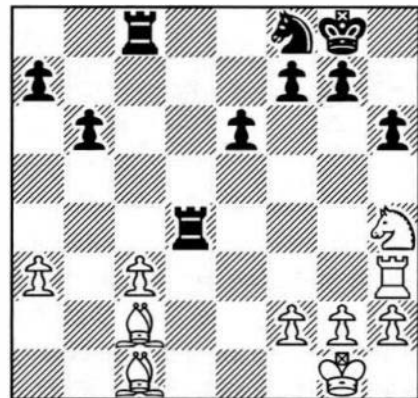
21 ♜xe4?!

A lesser evil was 21 ♜b5 a6 22 ♜b3 ♙xb1 23 ♜xb1 ♗d5 with some advantage for Black due to the weaknesses on c3 and c4. In contrast, White's attack has lost most of its potential after the departure of his light-squared bishop.

21...♗xe4 22 ♜xe4 ♜xd4! 23 ♜xd4

After 23 ♜e1 ♜d1 24 ♖f1 ♜a4! the threat of ♜d1 is very strong, e.g. 25 ♙d3 ♜xd3 26 ♜xd3 ♜xh4 with a clear advantage – Knaak.

23...♜xd4 24 ♙c2



24...♜xh4!

One more tactical twist, which practically decides the game.

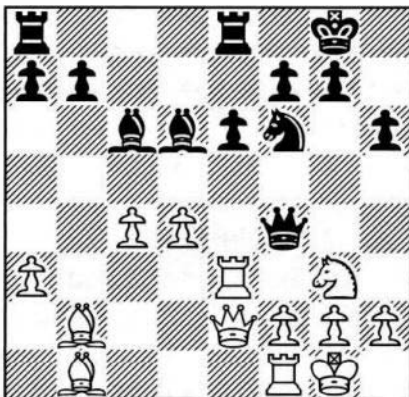
25 ♜xh4 ♜xc3 26 ♙e3 ♜xc2

Black later realized his material advantage.

A piece with a natural need for prophylaxis is the king. In fact we just saw a few cases where weak points in the king's position were covered by his fellow pieces. However, the prophylaxis can also be performed by the king himself; e.g. by ♔g1-h1 or ...♔g8-h8 as seen in Hellsten-Olesen, Guliev-Timman and Avrukh-Grigoriants. As for positions with long castling, a prophylactic ♖c1-b1 or ...♜c8-b8 is even more frequent, and we saw one example in Timman-Kamsky, where both sides in fact carried out this idea. Here are a few other methods of royal prophylaxis.

Example 174
L.B.Hansen-S.Tiviakov
Istanbul Olympiad 2000

Most of White's pieces are directed at the enemy kingside, and next he might be planning 21 ♖d3 with the worrying threat of 22 d5 exd5 23 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 24 ♖h7+ ♔h8 25 ♖h8 mate. How should Black react to this?



20...♜f8!

Removing the king from the vulnerable g8-square in advance. A more active try like 20...♖g4?! permits 21 ♖d3!, intending

21...♖xe3 22 fxe3 ♖g5 23 d5! exd5 24 ♖h7+ ♜f8 25 ♖f5 with a decisive attack.

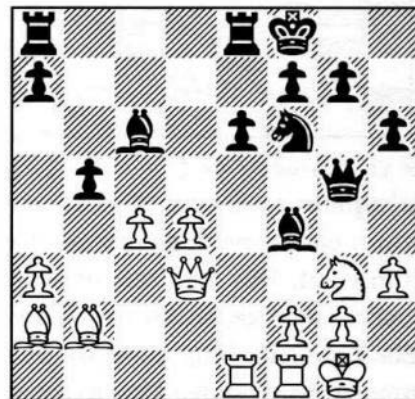
21 ♖d3 ♖h4 22 h3

Parrying the threat of 22...♖g4. Now the 22 d5 idea has lost considerable strength, since the queen no longer enters with check on h7; e.g. 22...exd5 23 ♖xf6 gxf6! 24 cxd5 ♖xe3 25 fxe3 ♖d7 with an unclear game.

22...♖f4 23 ♖e1 ♖g5

Tying the white knight to the defence of g2 and preparing the next, strong move.

24 ♖a2 b5!



A typical counter-strike against the hanging pawns, and one that we already saw in Aagaard-Åkesson (p. 201).

25 d5!?

Since 25 cxb5?! ♖xb5 or 25 c5?! ♖ad8 produces a weak pawn on d4 and a strong base for the black pieces on d5, White goes for a pawn sacrifice.

25...bxc4 26 ♖xf6 gxf6

After 26...♖xf6?! 27 ♖xc4 Black would just have an additional worry about ♖g3-h5.

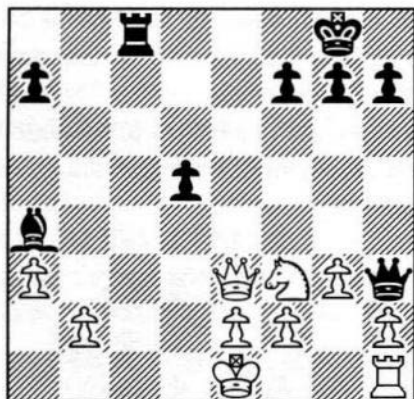
27 ♖xc4 ♖xd5 28 ♖xd5 ♖xd5

Safer than 28...♖ad8 29 ♖e4 ♖xd5 30 ♖c3 – Wells.

29 ♖xd5 exd5

Black's extra pawn yields him a slight advantage in the endgame.

Example 175
V.Akopian-J.Polgar
Merida 2000



As beginners we were told to secure our king from back rank mates by advancing a pawn in front. This idea remains frequent in practice at all levels. In the above position Black has a definite initiative thanks to the opponent's stranded king in the centre. Before taking concrete action, Polgar applies some simple prophylaxis.

21...h6!

Creating a flight square on h7, something that will prove useful in any tactical context. In contrast, the active 21...c2?! 22 b3 a2 runs into 23 e5!, covering a1 and threatening mate, with counterplay.

22 d4?!

This won't end well, but it is was not easy for White to free himself. For example, if 22 b3, intending d2 and c1, then simply 22...xb3! 23 xb3 c1+ 24 d2xh1 and Black wins the exchange, now that 25 b8+ can be parried by 25...h7.

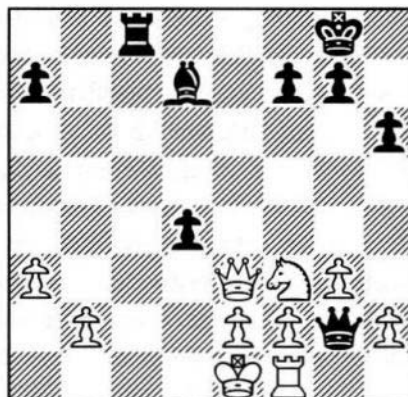
22...g2 23 f1 d7!

Perhaps Akopian overlooked this strong transfer of the bishop to h3.

24 f3

Or 24 f3 h3 25 g1 c1+! 26 xc1 xg1+ and wins – Polgar.

24...d4!



A nice blow on the theme of deflection. Now both 25 xd4 c1+ and 25 d4 h3 win.

25 f4 g5 26 d4xg5

Hardly a correct sacrifice, but after 26 d2 e8 27 d3 g4 28 g1 c8 White ends up in a terribly passive position.

26...hxg5 27 xg5+ f8 28 h6+ e8 29 f3

After 29 h8+ e7 30 h4+ f6 31 h7+ d6 the checks are over – Polgar.

29...c6!

Winning the h2-pawn. The rest is easy.

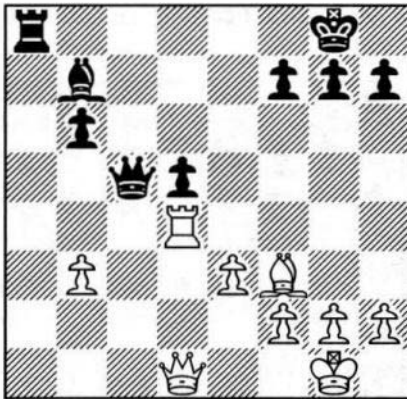
30 f4 xh2 31 b8+ e7 32 d2 c2+!

33 xc2 xe2+ 34 b3 xf1 35 b4+ e6

White resigned.

Example 176
Kir.Georgiev-R.Dautov
Istanbul Olympiad 2000

In view of the weakness on d5, White has a slight but enduring edge. However, the pawn is immune for the moment, i.e. 26 xd5?? xd5 27 xd5 xd5! 28 xd5 a1+. Moreover, Black has a dangerous plan in ...c3 followed by ...a1.



26 g3!

A simple prophylactic measure. Georgiev moves his king from the vulnerable back rank to a safer place on g2. This is indeed a very common method in practice, one that we already saw in Anand-Adams (p. 62) and Spassky-Taimanov (p. 143), the latter actually in a much less tactical context.

26...♖c3 27 ♔g2 ♖a2

A tempting move which lets Black swap the d5-pawn for the one on e3, but even so White retains an edge. The alternative was 27...♖a1, when 28 ♖d2 ♖xb3 29 ♖b4! ♖a2 30 ♖xa2 ♖xa2 31 ♖xb6 ♖a7 32 ♖b5 followed by ♗xd5 yields White some practical chances in a theoretically drawn endgame.

28 ♗xd5 ♖xe3 29 ♖f3! ♗xd5

Here and on the next move, after 29...♖xf3+ 30 ♔xf3 ♗xd5+ 31 ♖xd5 ♔f8 32 ♖d6! White again obtains practical winning chances; e.g. 32...♖a6 33 b4 followed by 34 b5 or 32...♖b2 33 ♖xb6 – Dautov.

30 ♖xd5 ♖e8

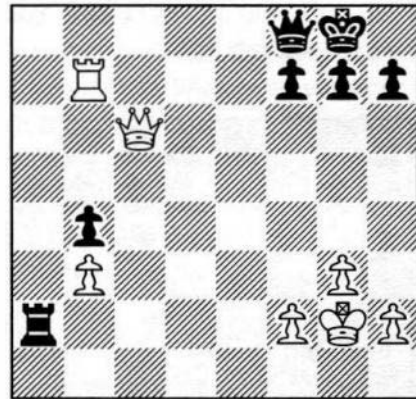
Now it is Black who has a back rank problem, e.g. 30...♖e7 31 ♖e3!.

31 ♖d6 b5 32 ♖c6 ♖f8?

Black should have taken his last chance to enter a rook endgame by 32...♖xc6+! 33 ♖xc6 ♔f8 – Dautov. Indeed, after 34 ♖b6 ♔e7 35 ♖xb5 ♖b2 Black's well-placed rook

implies some chances for a draw.

33 ♖d7! b4 34 ♖b7



The activity of White's major pieces has increased considerably.

34...g6 35 ♖e4 ♖c5 36 ♖e8+ ♖f8 37 ♖e5

Preparing ♖f4 in order to tie up the black queen to the f7-pawn.

37...♖a8??

A bad time-trouble error, but after 37...♖c2 38 ♖f4! h5 39 ♖b8! ♖c8 40 ♖xb4 White had a stable edge. Now he achieves a decisive double threat.

38 ♖c7! ♖xf2+ 39 ♔xf2 ♖a2+ 40 ♔f3 ♖xb3+

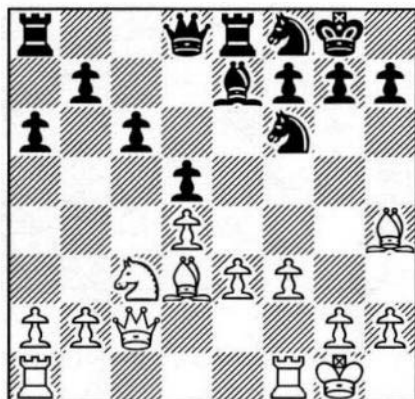
Black resigned, not waiting for 41 ♔f4.

Nimzowitsch introduced the concept of mysterious rook moves, by which a rook is placed on a potentially open file. This idea is rather standard in today's practice, and we already saw a related case in Lugovoi-Orlov (p. 66). Here is one more example.

Example 177
Zsu.Polgar-U.Bönsch
Dortmund 1990

White has employed the Exchange Variation with ♗ge2 against the Queen's

Gambit. Now she is planning e3-e4 with a strong pawn centre, an idea familiar to us from Hellsten-Soppe (p. 176). Black, on the other hand, would like to create counter-play by a timely ...c6-c5.



14 ♖ad1!

Giving some extra support to the d4-pawn and discouraging Black from ...c6-c5.

14... ♜g6

Indeed, after 14...c5?! 15 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 16 dxc5 ♜xe3 17 ♜xd5! White wins a pawn, thanks to the presence of the rook on d1.

15 ♖f2 ♖d6

On this occasion 15...c5? runs into 16 ♖xg6 hxg6 17 dxc5 ♖xc5 18 ♜xd5!, again winning a pawn – Polgar.

16 e4! dxe4 17 fxe4 ♜g4 18 e5! ♖c7

After 18...♜xf2? 19 ♜xf2 f7-pawn falls.

19 ♖c4!

Increasing the pressure on f7 and unblocking the rook on d1 in order to safeguard the d4-pawn.

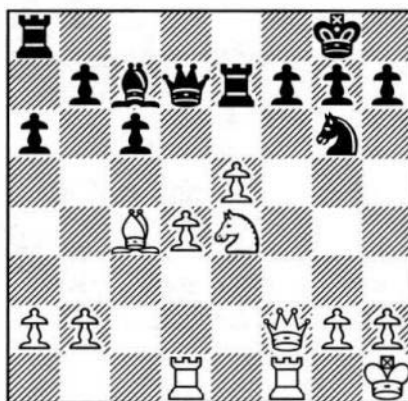
19... ♜e7 20 ♖h1

With the simple plan of ♖g1 and h2-h3.

20... ♜xf2+ 21 ♜xf2 ♜d7 22 ♜e4!

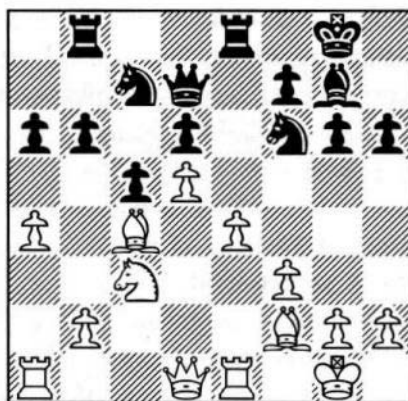
Heading for g5 or c5 with a strong attack. The game continued 22...♜f8 23 ♜f3 ♜e8 24 ♜h5 ♖h8 25 ♖d3! h6 26 ♖df3 ♜xe5 27 dxe5 ♜xe5 28 ♜xf7! ♜xf7 29 ♜xf7 and Black resigned in view of 29...♜xf7 30 ♜xf7

♜xe4 31 ♜f8+ ♖h7 32 ♖d3 or 29...♜xe4 30 ♜f8+! with similar consequences.



Another simple but useful prophylactic measure is the retreat of a piece just before it is threatened. We already came across this idea in a few earlier examples, such as Cabrilo-Ziatdinov with 32...♜a8 (p. 49) and Beliavsky-Yusupov with 24...♜e7 (p. 151). The main point of this idea is to gain more flexibility on our next move, as in the following example.

Example 178
R.Vera Gonzalez-P.Cramling
 Las Palmas 1988



In this typical Benoni structure Black has just played ...a7-a6 with the apparent intention of ...b6-b5.

19 ♖f1!

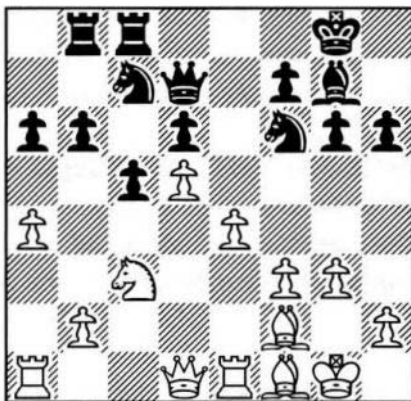
Retreating the bishop in advance. Now if Black goes ...b6-b5 anyway, then after a double capture on b5 White obtains the possibility of ♖a1-a7, a move that he obviously didn't have at his disposal in the first place.

19...♞ec8

Indeed, after 19...b5? 20 axb5 axb5 21 ♖a7! Black is in trouble; e.g. 21...b4 22 ♖b5 ♞ec8 23 e5!, intending 23...dxe5? 24 d6, or 21...c4 22 e5! ♖h7 23 f4 with a clear advantage – Vera.

20g3

White is in no hurry and makes a useful move on the other flank which enables ♖f1-h3 at some moment.



20...b5

The only chance for activity.

21 axb5 axb5 22 ♖a7! b4 23 ♖a4

Due to Black's sensible 19th move, 23 ♖b5? no longer worked: 23...♞xb5 24 ♖xb5 ♞xb5.

23...♞d8 24 e5!

A strong advance that clears the position for the bishop pair and softens up the c5-pawn.

24...♖fxd5

Or 24...dxe5 25 d6 ♖e6 26 ♖c4 with a clear edge – Vera.

25 ♖c4! dxe5 26 ♞b3

A tempting choice, though the simple 26 ♖xc5 might have been even stronger.

26...♞a8! 27 ♞xa8 ♞xa8 28 ♖d1 ♞e8!

By means of some minor tactics Cramling avoids immediate defeat.

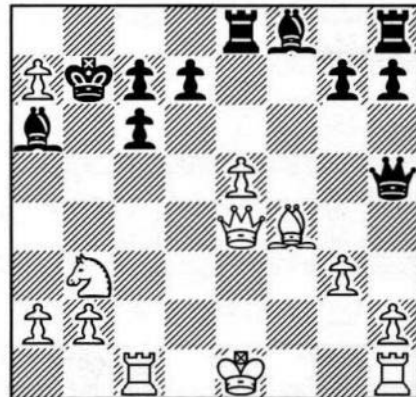
29 ♖xc5 ♖b6 30 ♖d3!

With the threat of 31 ♖xg6.

30...♞h7 31 ♞xb4

Thanks to his bishop pair and potentially strong passed pawn, White keeps a stable advantage.

Example 179
J. Timman-A. Karpov
London 1984



The same method of retreating a piece before it is threatened can be particularly powerful when applied to the king in a tactical context. Here White is trying to make his attack work by means of ♖a5+ and a sacrifice on c6.

19...♞a8!

An excellent prophylactic measure. By parrying the check on a5 in advance, Black

obtains a greater number of choices on his next move. Less clear is 19...d5 20 ♖e3 ♙b4+ 21 ♜f2, or 19...g5 20 ♜xc6!? dxc6 21 ♚a5+ with huge complications.

20 h4

Preventing 20...g5. At this point 20 ♚a5? fails outright to 20...♙b4+, winning a piece, since neither 21 ♜xb4 ♖e2 mate, nor 21 ♙d2 ♜xe5 work for White.

20...d5!

With his own king secured Black launches a strong counterattack on the stranded enemy king in the centre.

21 ♖e3

If 21 ♖c2, 21...♜xe5+! 22 ♙xe5 ♖xe5+ 23 ♜f2 ♙d6 24 ♖xc6+ ♜xa7 followed by ...♜f8+.

21...g5!

Anyway! Now the f-file is decisively cleared for the attack.

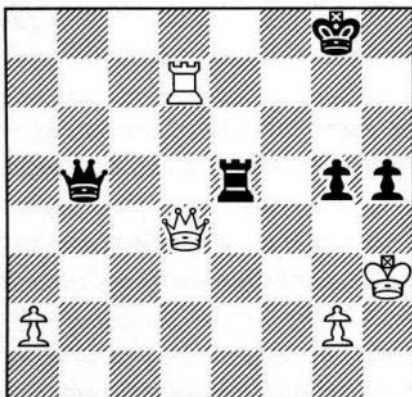
22 ♙xg5 ♙b4+ 23 ♜f2 ♜hf8+ 24 ♜g2

Or 24 ♙f4 ♜xe5 25 ♖d4 ♜xf4+! etc.

24...♜xe5! 25 ♖xe5 ♖f3+ 26 ♜h2 ♖f2+

In view of 27 ♜h3 ♙c8+ 28 g4 ♖f3+, White resigned.

Example 180
N. Grandelius-I. Sokolov
Malmö 2009



Here is a similar case from a later stage of the game. Despite the material balance White is much better due to the exposed enemy king; however, the straightforward 60 ♖d6? fails to 60...♜e3+ 61 ♜h2 ♖e5+! saving a draw, and 60 ♖a7? ♜e3+! is similar.

60 ♜h2!

Securing the king from any checks in advance. Now the black rook can't move due to the mate on g7.

60...♖c6

The most tenacious choice. In contrast, the game saw 60...♖c5?! 61 ♖d3! and Black resigned in view of 61...♜f5 62 ♖b3+! ♜h8 63 ♖b8+ ♜f8 64 ♖b2+ ♜g8 65 ♖g7 mate.

61 ♜a7

After 61 ♖xe5?! ♖xd7 62 ♖xg5+ ♜f8 63 ♖xh5 White should also be able to win, but the text is simpler.

61...♖f6

Black managed to defend against both threats at e5 and d8, but now White is able to simplify to a rook endgame with two extra pawns.

62 ♜a5! ♜e6 63 ♖xf6 ♜xf6 64 ♜xg5+ ♜f7 65 ♜xh5 ♜a6 66 ♜f5+! ♜g6 67 ♜f2

White wins rather easily by activating his king, while the rook defends the pawns – Golubev.

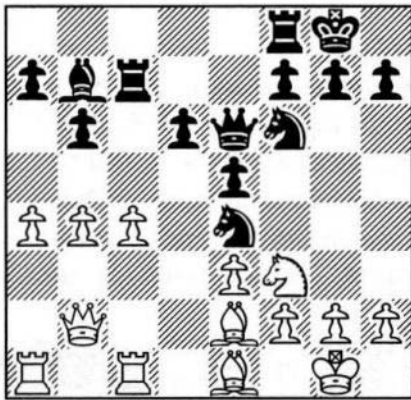
For the related exercises, see page 347.

Provocation

A common idea within modern practice is to force the opponent to make undesirable moves. In the present book, this goes under the term *provocation*. From a strategical perspective, the cases with pawn moves are the most interesting to study, due to the greater long-term impact on the position. For example, the provocative measures can cause weak squares and weak pawns in the

opponent's camp, and also restrict his pieces. In the earlier section about creating weaknesses we saw several examples where the pawns themselves performed this task, for example by majority and minority attacks. In contrast, the following examples focus on provocation realized by the pieces.

Example 181
G.Hertneck-A.Karpov
German League 1994



White has just played 18 a4 preparing a4-a5 with a majority attack. Karpov finds the perfect antidote.

18...♟a6!

By attacking the c4-pawn, Black provokes b4-b5 which will convert the c5-square into a base for his pieces.

19b5

After 19 ♛a2?! ♜fc8 the c4-pawn just gets in trouble, so Hertneck accepts the provocation.

19...♞b7 20 a5 h6

Black delays occupying the c5-square, so as not to obstruct his rooks, and resorts to some useful prophylaxis.

21♞d1 ♜fc8 22 h3

Or 22 ♟b4 ♞g4 23 ♟e1 f5 with counterplay – Karpov.

22...♞d7

The knight glances at c5 and also overprotects the e5-pawn, thus enabling a future ...d6-d5 with a fight for the c-file.

23 ♞d2 ♞ec5!

Leaving the enemy knight awkwardly placed on d2.

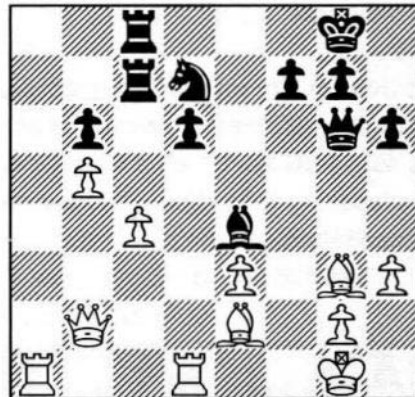
24 axb6 axb6 25 f3 e4! 26 fxe4

After 26 f4?! ♞d3 27 ♛d4 ♞7c5 Black is clearly better – Karpov. We saw a similar case with “neighbouring” protected squares in Sasikiran-Iljushin (p. 23).

26...♞xe4 27 ♞xe4 ♟xe4

Avoiding the doubtful 27..♛xe4?! 28 ♟f3 ♛xe3+ 29 ♟f2 with some counterplay for the pawn.

28 ♟g3 ♛g6

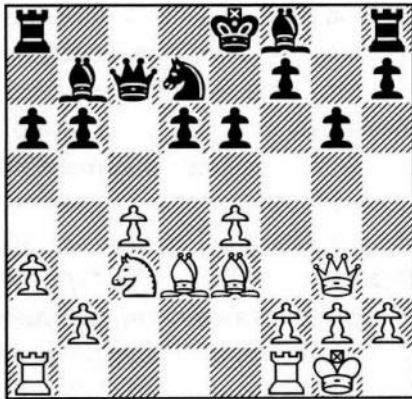


Thanks to his light square grip Black has the better chances. The game saw 29 ♛h2 d5! 30 ♜ac1 ♞f6 31 ♟f1 ♜c5 32 cxd5 ♞xd5 33 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 and Karpov went on to win.

Example 182
F.Vallejo Pons-S.Karjakin
Dos Hermanas 2003

In this Hedgehog position Black has just

played ...g7-g6 in order to conclude his development by ...♗g7 and ...0-0.



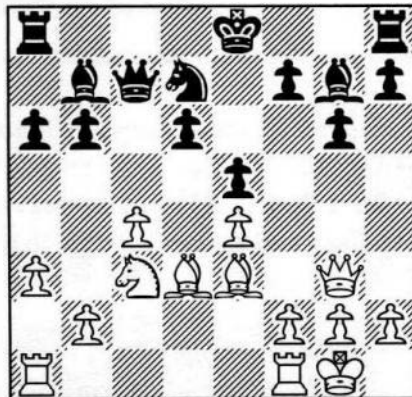
14 ♗d4!

An annoying reply. Now Black will either have to weaken his pawn structure by ...e6-e5, or suspend further development. Less convincing was 14 f4?! ♗g7 15 f5 0-0 with a balanced game.

14...e5

Opting for the former. After 14...♗g8 15 ♖ad1 ♗g7 16 ♗e2, attacking d6, or 14...♗e5 15 f4 ♖xd3 16 ♗xd3! e5 17 fxе5 dxe5 18 ♗f2, preparing ♖d5, Black has some difficulties – Ftacnik.

15 ♗e3 ♗g7



16 ♖d5

The first fruit of the provocative 14 ♗d4

can be appreciated: a protected square on d5.

16...♗d8

Or 16...♗xd5 17 cxd5, followed by ♖ac1, with strong pressure along the c-file.

17 h4!?

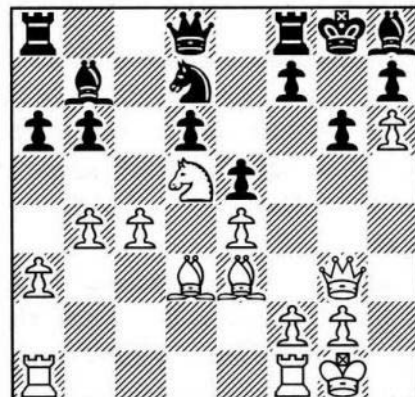
An interesting advance. Vallejo has estimated that the kingside is where his advantage can be most easily increased. Now 17...h5?! 18 ♗g5! just leads to new problems for Black, so he prefers to continue development.

17...0-0 18 h5 ♖c5 19 h6! ♗h8

19...♖xd3? failed to 20 hxg7 ♗xg7 21 ♗xb6, but the alternative 19...♗f6 was probably a lesser evil – Ribli.

20 b4! ♖d7

Due to the inclusion of h5-h6 and ...♗g7-h8, Black can't reply 20...♖xd3? 21 ♗xb6 ♖f4 due to 22 ♗xd8 ♖e2+ 23 ♗h2 ♖xg3 24 ♖e7 mate, while 20...♗xd5 21 bxc5 ♗b7 22 cxb6 is also bad for him. In conclusion, the natural 18...♖c5 seems to fail tactically.



21 ♗g5!

Again White uses this bishop for provocative means. Now the double threat at d8 and e7 forces Black to a further weakening of his pawn structure by ...f7-f6, since the pin after 21...♖f6? 22 ♗h4 would be fatal for him.

21...f6 22 ♖e3 ♜f7 23 ♖e2!

A useful move that directs the bishop to the promising h3-c8 diagonal, and also clears the d-file for the major pieces towards the weak pawn on d6.

23...♟f8 24 ♜ad1 f5

Exposing the king, but Black's position was difficult anyway.

25 exf5 gxf5 26 f4! ♖xd5

Or 26...e4 27 ♖h5 winning the exchange.

27 ♜xd5 ♜f6 28 ♜d3 ♜e4 29 ♜h3!

This indirect attack on the f5-pawn finally breaks the black defence.

29...♜c8 30 ♖h5 ♜f6 31 ♖xb6 ♜xc4 32 fxe5 dxe5 33 ♜xf5

The rest is easy.

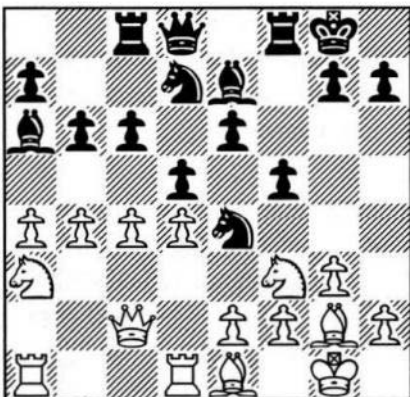
33...♜c1+ 34 ♜d1 ♜xh6 35 ♖e3! ♜g7 36 ♖f3 ♜c3 37 ♖h6

Black resigned.

The knight can also be useful in provoking unwanted moves from the opponent. Here is one example.

Example 183

L.Portisch-Z.Almasi
Hungarian Team Championship
2001



14...♜d6!

By attacking the c4-pawn Black aims at clearing the f1-a6 diagonal for his bishop. Less promising is 14...c5 15 dxc5 bxc5 16 b5 ♖b7 17 e3 with a slight white advantage – Almasi.

15 c5

15 b5? drops a pawn after 15...cxb5 16 axb5 ♜xb5, while the passive 15 ♜d2 can be met by 15...♜f6, followed by 16...♜fe4, renewing the fight for the c4-square.

15...♜e4

Just like in the previous two examples the “provocative” piece, after completing its mission, returns to its original square.

16 cxb6

Also after 16 e3 bxc5 17 bxc5 ♜c7, preparing ...e6-e5, Black has some initiative.

16...axb6 17 e3 ♖f6!

Since the immediate 17...c5?! permits 18 dxc5 bxc5 19 b5 ♖b7 20 a5, Almasi prepares it.

18 ♜b3?!

18 ♜ac1 seems preferable, leaving the a1-h8 diagonal.

18...♖e2! 19 ♜dc1 c5!

Producing a strong passed pawn that will be well assisted by the bishop on e2.

20 ♜c2 c4 21 ♜b2 b5!

Thus Black fixes a target on b4 and rules out any attempts with b4-b5 and ♜b4-c6.

22 axb5 c3 23 ♜b3 ♜e8!?

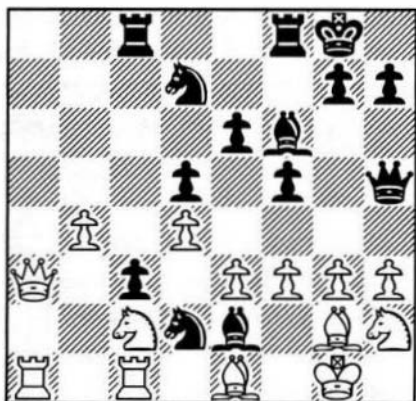
Opening a kingside front, although 23...♖c4 followed by 24...♖xb5 seemed much simpler.

24 h3 ♜h5 25 ♜h2 ♜d2 26 ♜a3?!

Correct was 26 ♜a2 ♖c4 27 ♜a6 ♜f7 with unclear play – Almasi.

26...♖xb5 27 f3 ♖e2!

More provocation. Now White has either to weaken his pawn structure or expose his king.

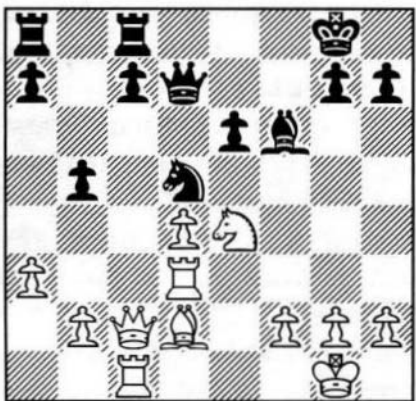


28 ♖f2 ♗d3

Thanks to his strong passed pawn Black is clearly better.

Now let's see two examples where the provocation is carried out by a rook.

Example 184
Pr. Nikolic-L. Van Wely
Groningen 1993



In the above position White has a stable advantage thanks to his superior pawn structure, but how to increase it?

23 ♖h3!

Before installing the knight on c5, Niko-

lic provokes a new weakness on the kingside. The immediate 23 ♖c5 could be met by 23...♗f7 24 ♖h3 h6! 25 ♖e1 ♜e8 with an inferior but solid position.

23...g6

Black is forced to weaken his dark squares, since after 23...h6?! 24 ♖xf6+! ♖xf6 25 ♗g6 he has a problem with the h6-pawn – Van Wely.

24 ♖c5 ♗d6 25 ♗d3 ♜f8!

Sensibly integrating both rooks in the kingside defence.

26 ♖e1

Here and on the next move, 26 ♗xb5?! permits 26...♗xd4 27 ♖e4 ♗b6! and Black liberates himself.

26...♜ae8 27 ♜f3

The rook had fulfilled its function on h3 and now exerts pressure along the f-file.

27...c6 28 ♗h6!

A strong move that leaves Black with a dilemma: if he swaps bishops then the dark squares are eternally weakened, whereas if he doesn't, then a future white attack is enhanced by the bishop on h6.

28...♜f7

After 28...♗g7 29 ♗xg7 ♜xf3 30 ♗xf3 ♗xg7 White also keeps the advantage, but the black king would have felt safer than in the game.

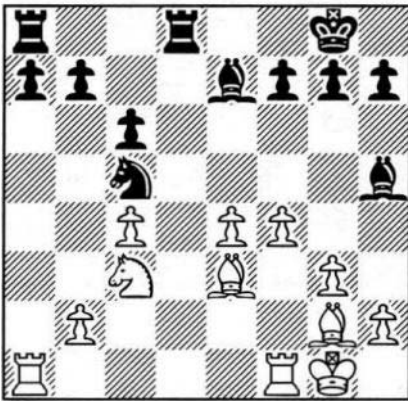
29 g3!

Preparing h4-h5 with a majority attack. The continuation of this game was featured in the earlier section on creating weaknesses (see Example 122).

Example 185
La. Karlsson-J. Hellsten
Swedish Team Championship
1995

In this Slav-like position it is far from

evident how to proceed with White. If 18 e5, clearing the h1-a8 diagonal for the bishop, then by 18...a5! Black fixes his queenside pawn structure in the best possible way, with ...f7-f6 and ...e7 as a further plan. On the other hand, 18 b4?!, gaining some space and preventing ...a7-a5, runs into 18...b3! 19 e7xa7 fxa7 20 e7xa7 d2, recovering the pawn with a clear initiative. Karlsson finds a third and excellent option.



18 e5!

Attacking the knight on c5, which can't move due to the bishop hanging on h5. Thus Black is forced to reply 18...b6, which leaves him with a weakness on c6 and discards the aforementioned structure with pawns on a5, b7 and c6.

18...b6 19 e7a2

White's next step isn't hard to predict: e4-e5 with an attack on c6.

19...d3?

A flawed attempt for counterplay. Equally bad was 19...a5? 20 e5 fxc6 due to 21 e6! fxc7 22 g4, winning a piece. Instead, Black should have tried 19...f6 20 e5 e7f7!, when both 21 e7xc6 e7xc4 and 21 b3 fdc8 yield him chances for a successful defence.

20 e1e1 f6 21 e5 e8

During the game I thought that the worst was over. White's next move came like a cold shower.

22 b5!

Not just attacking a7, but also threatening 23 d7, followed by captures on e8 and c6.

22...b3

Preparing 23...d3 to complicate the game. After 22...d6? 23 e7xb6! Black's position collapses.

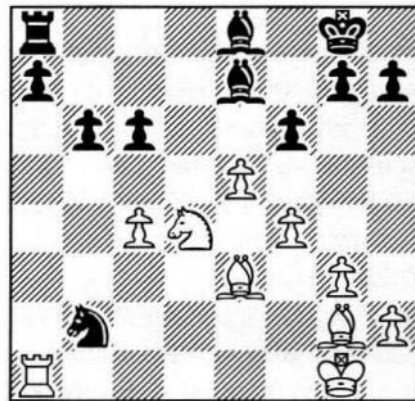
23 d4!

The most technical choice, in order to eliminate the active rook on b3. After 23 d7?! d3 24 e2 e5 the game becomes unnecessarily complicated.

23...d3 24 eea1

A good alternative was 24 d7xb3 d7xe1 25 e4!, trapping the knight.

24...e7xb2 25 f7xb2 d7xb2



26 dxc6

Finally ruining the black queenside. 26 dxc6?! dxc6 27 dxc6 f7 is less convincing, when the absence of the white bishop pair gives Black more chances of survival.

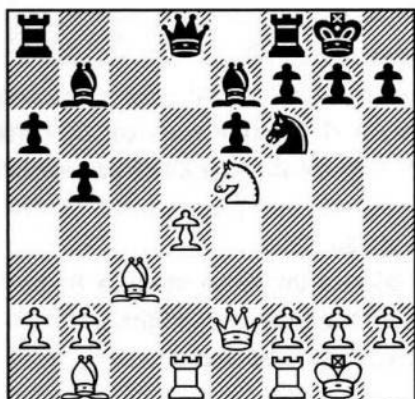
26...dxc6 27 dxc6 fxc8 28 d5+ f8 29 fxa7 fxe5

Unfortunately, 29...dxc4? failed to 30 e6!, when the black rook can't cover the knight and the back rank at the same time.

30 fxe5

With a sound extra pawn and a strong bishop pair, White is winning.

Example 186
A.Yusupov-A.Shirov
 Prague (rapid) 2002



The queen also has a great provocative potential. In the position above White hasn't really gained enough activity to compensate his isolated pawn, but that could change if he achieves ♞d3-h3(g3) with an attack.

16...♞d5!

Provoking f2-f3, a move White is hardly ever happy to play in the current structure. It doesn't just hamper a future kingside attack, it also weakens the dark squares surrounding his own king.

17f3 b4

Now that there is no longer any need for defensive measures, Shirov initiates an attack himself on the queenside.

18 ♖e1 a5 19 ♞e3

Prophylaxis against ...♖b7-a6.

19...♞ac8 20 ♖g3?!

Overly passive. 20 ♖h4 must have been better.

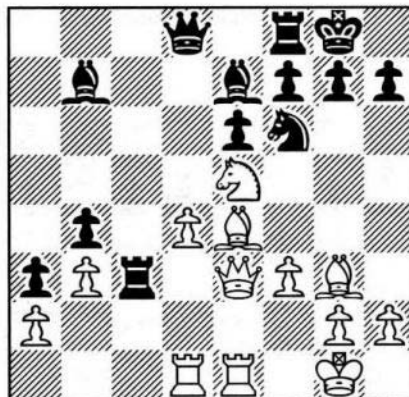
20...a4!

Preparing ..a4-a3 in order to fix a target on a2 and soften up the c3-square for his own pieces.

21 ♜fe1 a3 22 b3 ♞d8

Vacating the d5-square for the knight, from where it can reach c3.

23 ♖e4 ♞c3!



This intermediate move creates some uncomfortable disorder in the enemy camp.

24 ♞d3?!

Practically dropping a pawn. After 24 ♞e2 ♖xe4 25 fxe4 ♖d6!, followed by ...♞c7 and ...♞fc8, White is also suffering, but at least the material remains even.

24...♖xe4 25 fxe4 ♞c2! 26 ♞e2

Or 26 ♞d2 ♖.g5!, overloading the white queen.

26...♖.g5 27 ♞f2

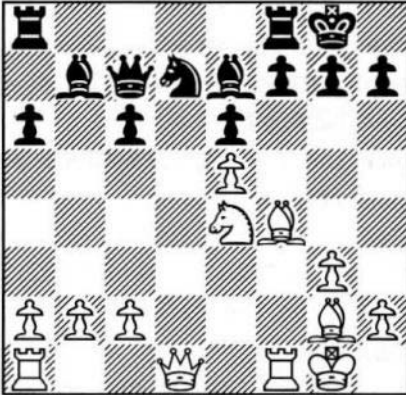
If 27 ♞f3, then 27...♞c1+ 28 ♞e1 f5! winning – Huzman.

27...♞c1+ 28 ♞e1 ♖xe4 29 ♞xc1 ♖xc1 30 ♞d1 ♖b2

With a sound extra pawn Black went on to win.

Provocative measures can also prove useful when attacking the enemy king. Here are two examples.

Example 187
M.Tal-K.Darga
 USSR-West Germany match,
 Hamburg 1960



White has the more active position, but his e5-pawn is exposed and the liberating ...c6-c5 thrust must also be considered. How to proceed? The natural 15 $\text{d}6$ doesn't yield much after 15... $\text{e}6$ 16 exd6 $\text{b}6+$ 17 h1 c5 !, when Black manages to finish off the bishop pair while safely blocking the passed pawn. On the other hand, the prophylactic 15 h1 ?! permits 15...c5, when 16 f6+ fails to 16... xf6 17 exf6 $\text{g}2+$ 18 $\text{g}2$ $\text{c}6+$ etc.

15 h5 !

At first sight a rather useless move, since Black can easily dislodge the queen by ...g7-g6. However, Tal has estimated that the ensuing weaknesses on f6 and h6 will enhance a further attack.

15...g6

After 15...c5? 16 f6+ ! White wins material; e.g. 16... xf6 17 exf6 xf6 18 xc7 hx5 19 xb7 a7 20 f3 – Tal. If Black improves this line by 15... b6+ 16 h1 c5 , then after 17 $\text{a}1$ $\text{a}8$ 18 g5 White keeps some initiative.

16 e2 !

Perhaps Darga was only expecting 16 h6 ?! , when 16... xe5 17 g5 xg5 18 xg5 f5 ! solves all his problems.

16...c5

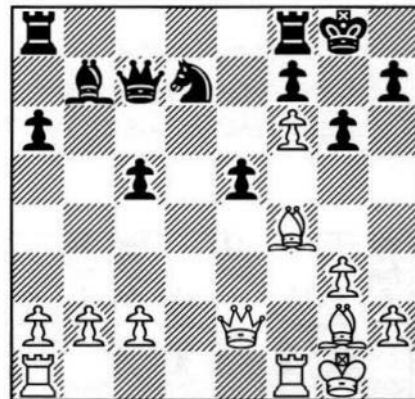
If 16... xe5 , then 17 ae1 b6+ 18 h1 d7 19 h6 fe8 20 f3 f5 21 c3 ! f8 22 xf8 xf8 23 d6 with a clear initiative – Tal. The attempt to avoid this by 17...f6? fails to 18 xf6+ , transposing to a clearly better endgame.

17 f6+ xf6

After 17... h8 ?! 18 xd7 xd7 19 $\text{a}1$ c7 20 h6 the f7-pawn falls, so Black has to accept a further weakening of the dark squares.

18 xf6 e5

Or 18... b6 ?! 19 xb7 xb7 20 d6 , preparing e3-h6 – Tal.



19 xe5 !

Thanks to his strong pawn on f6, White's dark-squared bishop is no longer essential in the attack. In contrast, the tempting 19 xb7 ?! xb7 20 xe5 ? ae8 21 e3 failed to 21... xe5 22 h6 xf6 !, repelling the attack.

19... xe5

Or 19... xe5 20 xe5 xe5 21 xb7 ab8 22 d5 xb2 23 ae1 with a clearly better endgame – Tal.

20 ♖xb7 ♜ab8

After 20...♜xb7 21 ♜xe5 ♜fe8 22 ♜c3 ♜e2 23 ♜f2 White is simply a pawn up.

21 ♖d5 ♜b6

In the event of 21...♜xb2 22 ♜ae1 ♖d7, Tal had planned 23 ♖xf7+! ♜xf7 24 ♜e8+ with a decisive 25 ♜e7 on the next move.

22 ♜ae1 ♖d7 23 ♜e7! c4

If 23...♜d6, then simply 24 ♜d1!. In this and the previous note, the strength of the f6-pawn is striking.

24 ♖h1!

The prophylactic king move, a subject familiar to us from the previous section. Now Black is fatally tied up.

24...♜xb2 25 ♜e6! ♜bb8 26 ♜d6 ♜bd8 27 ♜d1

In view of the inevitable 28 ♖f3, Black resigned.

Just like in the previous example White provokes ...g7-g6 with his queen, but for a different reason: to create a target for his h4-h5 advance.

16...g6 17 ♜g3

The queen approaches the enemy king and avoids an annoying ...c6-c5.

17...h6

After 17...♖d5 18 ♖ce4 Black can no longer play 18...h6? due to 19 ♖xe6! – Atlas.

18 ♖ge4 ♖d5 19 f4!

Since the immediate 19 h5?! permits 19...g5, Bacrot prepares it.

19...♖g7

After 19...h5?! 20 ♖e2 ♖h8 21 ♖g5, with ideas like ♖xh5, the black king is in danger.

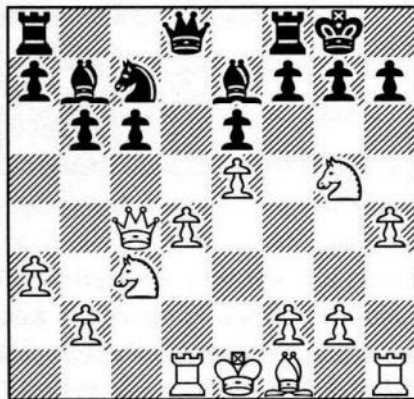
20 h5 g5

Other moves can be met by 21 ♖d3, stepping up the pressure on g6.

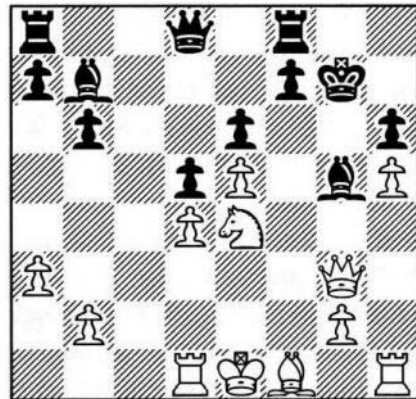
21 fxg5 ♖xg5 22 ♖xd5 cxd5

After 22...exd5?! 23 ♖d6 ♖c8 24 ♖d3, preparing 0-0, White has a promising attack, with f5 as a base for his pieces.

Example 188
E.Bacrot-A.Beliavsky
Enghien les Bains 1999



In this double-edged position White would like to progress on the kingside, but the natural 16 ♖d3?! doesn't yield much after 16...h6. Bacrot finds a stronger option.
16 ♜d3!



23 ♖xg5!

Releasing the h-pawn, which will turn into a headache for Black during the rest of the game.

23...♜xg5

Beliavsky accepts an inferior endgame, aware that after 23...hxg5 24 ♖d3, intend-

ing O-O and ♖f6, his king is unlikely to survive; e.g. 24...f5 25 exf6+ ♜xf6 26 ♖f1 ♜e7 27 h6+! ♚g8 28 ♚d2! with the dreadful threat of 29 ♜e5.

24 ♜xg5+ hxg5 25 h6+ ♚h8 26 ♖c1 ♖ac8 27 ♖xc8 ♙xc8

Or 27...♖xc8 28 ♚d2, followed by ♙d3 and ♖f1, with a huge advantage. In the game Black manages to avoid this scenario by swapping the white e-pawn.

28 ♙d3 f5 29 exf6 ♖xf6 30 ♖h5! ♖f4 31 ♖xg5 ♖xd4 32 ♚e2

Preparing h6-h7 with a strong initiative in the endgame. The game concluded 32...♖f4 33 ♚e3 ♖f6 34 h7 ♖f8 35 ♚d4! a6 36 ♚e5 ♙d7 37 ♙b1! ♙.b5 38 ♚xe6 d4 39 ♚e7 ♖b8 40 ♖d5 ♖e8+ 41 ♚f7 ♙c4 42 ♚xe8 ♙.xd5 43 g4 and Black resigned in view of 43...♙c4 44 g5 d3 45 g6 ♚g7 46 h8♜+! ♚xh8 47 ♚f8 – Atlas.

For the related exercises to this section, see page 350.

Chapter Six

Miscellaneous

This final chapter contains a mix of elements and concepts related to strategy.

Weak squares

The subject of weak squares is present in various parts of this book, especially in the section on improving the knight. Here we will continue the investigation, starting with two examples where the weak squares are exploited by other pieces.

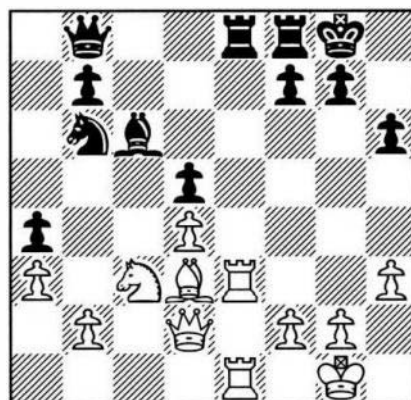
Example 189
V.Kramnik-V.Zvjaginsev
Tilburg 1998

(see following diagram)

White is slightly better thanks to his more active pieces. A careful look also reveals that Black's queenside is somewhat exposed on the dark squares, a fact that Kramnik exploits at once.

25 ♖d1!

The knight is regrouped to e3 and, more importantly, the queen gains access to the protected square on b4.



25...g6?!

Zvjaginsev avoids a future knight transfer to f5, but more to the point was 25...♖d6!, preventing 26 ♖b4. White could react by 26 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 27 ♖xe8+ ♗xe8 28 ♖e3 ♗d7 29 ♖a5 with a pleasant advantage, but not as big as in the game. In contrast, 25...♖c4?! was inadvisable on account of 25 ♗xc4 dxc4 26 d5 with a strong passed pawn.

26 ♖b4! ♖d7

Or 26...♖xe3 27 ♖xe3 ♖d8 28 ♖g4!, eyeing both h6 and e5.

27. ♖b5!

Swapping the opponent's bad bishop, but with a good reason: to win the a4-pawn.

27... ♖xe3 28 ♗xe3 ♖f6

If 28... ♖b6, holding on to the pawn, then after 29 ♖g4 ♖g7 30 ♖xc6 bxc6 31 ♖e7 or 31 ♖c5 Black is under strong pressure. 28... ♖a7? 29 ♖xd5 is even worse.

29 ♖xa4 ♖xa4 30 ♖xa4 ♖e8

Preparing ... ♖e4 with some minimal compensation for the pawn.

31 ♖d1 ♖e4 32 ♖g4!

White is obviously happy to exchange pieces.

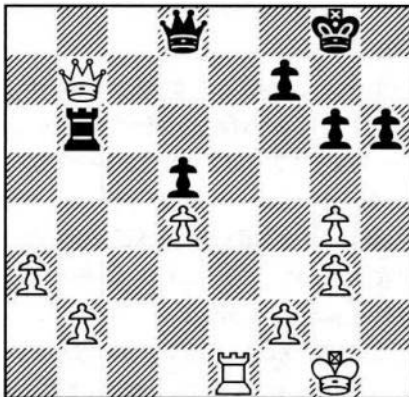
32... ♖xg4 33 hxg4 ♖f4 34 g3 ♖f6 35 ♖b3?

More technical was 35 ♖e5 ♖d6 36 ♖e2 – Kramnik.

35... ♖d8?

Black, on his part, misses the stronger 35... ♖c8!, intending 36 ♖xd5 ♖c2 with counterplay.

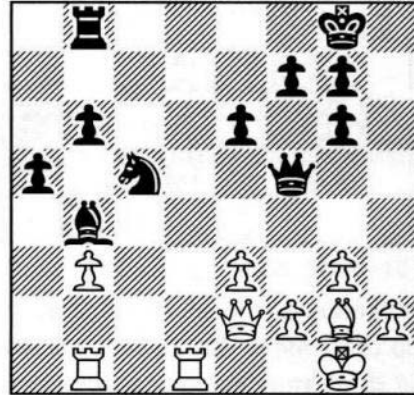
36 ♖xb7 ♖b6



37 ♖e8+!

This tactic forces a decisive exchange combination. The game concluded 37... ♖xe8 38 ♖xb6 ♖e1+ 39 ♖g2 ♖e4+ 40 ♖h2 ♖g7 41 ♖c7! and Black resigned in view of 41... ♖xd4 42 ♖c3! or 41... ♖e2 42 ♖e5+.

Example 190
J. Hellsten-R. Sagit
Swedish Championship,
Gothenburg 2006



Despite a minimal material deficit Black has a comfortable game. His minor pieces are well placed and after a move like 34... ♖e5 or even 34... g5!?, gaining some space, it will not be easy for White to progress. However, my opponent fell for a more active continuation.

34... e5?

Intending the advance ... e5-e4 followed by ... ♖d7-e5, but the big flaw of this plan is that White gains a protected square for his pieces on d5, one that I will exploit to the maximum.

35 ♖d5! e4 36 ♖c4

A great diagonal for the bishop. Perhaps Sagit only at this point realized that 36... ♖d7? drops a piece to 37 g4.

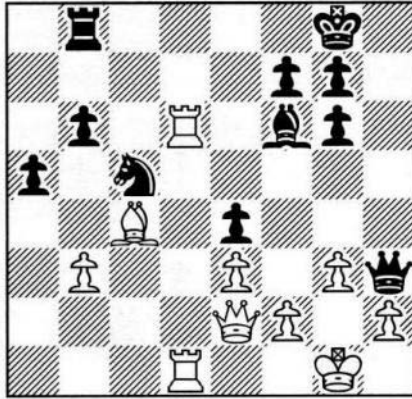
36... ♖h3 37 ♖d5!

Improving the rook and vacating d1 for its colleague.

37... ♖c3

The bishop is mobilized to the kingside defence. This time 37... ♖d7 runs into 38 ♖d1! ♖f6 39 ♖d8+ ♖xd8 40 ♖xd8+ ♖h7 41

♙xf7, when 41...♘g4? fails to 42 ♗g8+.
38 ♖bd1 ♗f6 39 ♖d6!



An annoying move for Black, whose bishop can't move due to the threat at g6. At the same time the d5-square is vacated for the other rook.

39...♖b7

In time trouble Sagit gives up a pawn in order to renew the idea of ...♘d7-e5. Passive defence was equally unsuccessful; e.g. 39...♗f5 40 ♖c6!, heading for c7, when 40...♗e5 41 ♖d5 leaves Black practically in zugzwang. It is rather striking that in just a few moves three white pieces have used the d5-square.

40 ♗d5 ♖e7 41 ♖xb6 ♘d7 42 ♖b7 ♘e5
43 ♗xe4

White is winning.

43...♘g4 44 ♖b8+ ♗h7 45 ♗xg4!

The most aesthetic choice, though 45 ♖dd8 ♗xh2+ 46 ♗f1 ♗h3+ 47 ♗g2 also worked.

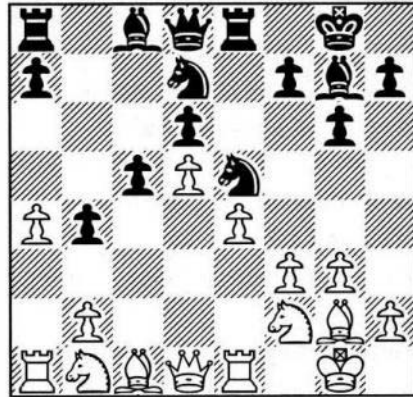
45...♗xg4 46 ♖dd8 ♖e8

Or if instead 46...♗h6 47 ♖h8+ ♗g5 48 h4+ etc.

47 ♖xe8 ♗d8 48 ♖bx8 ♗h6 49 h4 1-0

Sometimes the exploitation of a weak square can justify minor sacrifices, as in the following two examples.

Example 191
Z.Milev-T.V.Petrosian
Bucharest 1953



In a typical Benoni position White is just about to dislodge the knight on e5 by f3-f4. Petrosian finds a timely antidote.

15...c4!

Preparing ...♘c5 with focus on the d3-square. The fact that White can now win a pawn is less relevant.

16 f4!

With hindsight 16 ♗e3, preparing ♘d2 and ♖c1, was a safer choice. There can follow 16...♘c5 17 ♘d2 c3! 18 bxc3 bxc3 and Black keeps the initiative. In contrast, 17...♘cd3?! permits the exchange sacrifice 18 ♘xd3 ♘xd3 19 ♘xc4! ♘xe1 20 ♗xe1 when the worst is over for White.

16...♘d3 17 ♘xd3 cxd3 18 ♗xd3 ♘c5

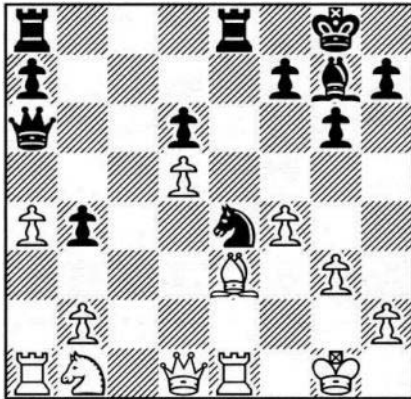
White has won a pawn, but now he is faced with the strong plan of ...♗a6 and ...♘d3.

19 ♗d1 ♗a6 20 ♖f1

Returning the pawn in order to parry the enemy plan. After 20 ♖e3 ♖c8! Black's activity is overwhelming, e.g. 21 ♘d2? ♗d4 or 21 ♗h1 ♘d3!

20...♘xe4! 21 ♗xa6 ♗b6+ 22 ♗e3 ♗xa6

White has ended up with a very difficult position, and his next move just accelerates the end.



23 ♖d4? ♙xd4+ 24 ♜xd4 ♜xg3! 25 ♜c3

Or 25 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 26 hxg3 ♜e1+ with mate to follow.

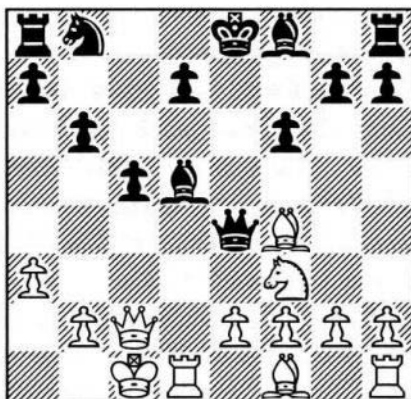
25...bxc3 26 hxg3 c2!

The rest is easy.

27 ♜f2 ♜ac8 28 ♜e3 ♜xe3 29 ♜xe3 ♜c4

White resigned.

Example 192
S.Lputian-I.Farago
Yerevan 1982



Black has just played ...♜e7-e4 in the

search for a queen exchange. However, Lputian has quite different intentions. A careful look at the black pawn structure will give a hint about his next move.

13 ♜xd5!

A strong exchange sacrifice that will leave Black chronically weak on the light squares, in particular along the a2-g8 diagonal.

13...♜xd5

Obviously 13...♜xf4+?! 14 e3 doesn't make much sense, since Black is missing his light-squared bishop anyway.

14 e3 ♜e6

After 14...♜c6 15 ♙c4 ♜h5 16 ♜d1 White enjoys strong pressure, while the destiny of Black's king remains uncertain. By the text Farago prepares to meet 15 ♙c4 by 15...d5; however, thanks to having played 14 e3 instead of 14 e4, Lputian now finds yet another great diagonal for the bishop.

15 ♙d3! ♜c6

Or 15...d5 16 ♜d1! ♜c6 17 ♙f5 ♜f7 18 ♜a4! with a strong attack. The greedy 16 ♙xh7?!, on the other hand, permits 16...♜xh7! 17 ♜xh7 ♜c6, preparing ...0-0-0 with a normal battle.

16 ♜d1

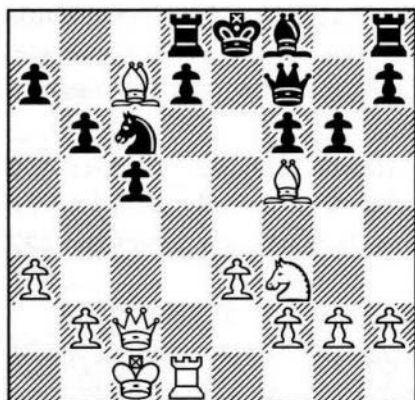
The last piece enters the game, creating the threat of 17 ♙f5. From now on the absence of the light-squared bishop is very strongly felt in Black's camp.

16...♜d8

16...0-0-0?? obviously fails to 17 ♙a6 mate, while after 16...g6 17 ♙c4 ♜e7 18 ♙d6 ♜g7 19 ♜e4+ ♙e7 20 ♙e6! White enjoys a strong attack.

17 ♙f5 ♜f7 18 ♙c7 g6

After 18...d5 19 ♙xd8 ♜xd8 20 ♙e4! Black also is in big trouble. In fact it is difficult to find an improvement for him in this whole example.



19 ♖e4+

Instead of recovering the exchange, Lputian continues the attack.

19... ♗e7 20 ♙xd7+

A key move, that breaks through the black defence. Incidentally, both 19... ♖e7 and 19... ♙e7 would have run into the same reply.

20... ♗xd7 21 ♖xc6 ♗g8 22 ♗d6 ♗g7

22... ♖xd6 23 ♙xd6 ♙xd6 was a bit more tenacious, although 24 ♖c8+! ♗d8 25 ♖e6+ ♗f8 26 ♖xf6+ ♗e8 27 ♖e6+ ♗f8 28 ♗g5 soon leads to a win for White.

23 ♗e6

Finally White regains the material, with interest.

23... ♖xe6 24 ♖xe6+ ♗ge7 25 ♖c6

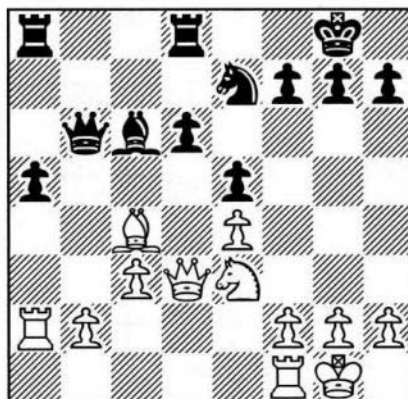
Black resigned.

What methods are available when the weak square is on our own side? If possible, of course, we are happy to get rid of it, as in the following example.

Example 193
Xie Jun-V.Filippov
Shanghai 2000

As often in the Sicilian 5veshnikov the

battle revolves around the d5-square.



22... ♗b7!

By attacking the e4-pawn Black gets ready for the liberating ...d6-d5 advance.

23 ♖d5

In the section on improving the knight we already observed that protected squares should be occupied by pieces, not by pawns, and the latter is indeed what is going to happen here. However, after 23 f3 d5! 24 exd5 ♖xd5 White would lose any trace of an advantage; e.g. 25 ♗d1? ♗a7! or 25 ♖xd5 ♙xd5 26 ♙xd5 ♗xd5 with complete equality.

23... ♙xd5

Black should hurry with these exchanges before White secures the d5-square by ♗d1.

24 ♙xd5 ♖xd5 25 exd5?!

A lesser evil was 25 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 26 exd5, swapping the active black queen. Li Qun-V.Filippov, Shenyang 1999, continued 26... ♗f8 27 f4! ♗e7 28 fxe5 dxe5 29 c4 ♗db8 30 ♗fa1 ♗b4 31 b3 ♗xb3 32 ♗xa5 ♗xa5 33 ♗xa5 and the game was soon drawn. In contrast, the f2-f4 advance is less appealing with the black queen still on the board.

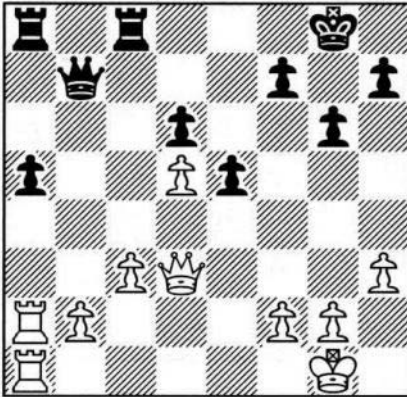
25...g6

Some prophylaxis, in order to improve the king and avoid any surprises on the

back rank. Black's next plan is to put pressure on the white pawns along the b- and c-files.

26 ♖fa1 ♗dc8 27 h3?!

27 b4? failed to 27...axb4 28 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 29 ♖xa8+ ♜xa8 30 cxb4 ♜a1+ 31 ♜f1 ♜xf1+! 32 ♜xf1 ♜f8 with a winning pawn endgame – Filippov; but 27 h4! was a better try, followed by h4-h5 with some king-side activity.



27...♖ab8!

Parrying the threat of 28 b4 with a transposition to a queen endgame where the b-pawn would be a big asset for White. Now, in contrast, 28 ♖xa5?! ♜xb2 leaves the latter with a weak pawn on c3.

28 ♜d2 ♜g7 29 f4?

Dropping a pawn. 29 ♖xa5 ♜xb2 30 ♜xb2 ♖xb2 31 ♖1a3 was preferable, when 31...♗d2 32 ♖b5 ♖c7! keeps a slight edge – Rogozenko.

29...♖c5! 30 fxe5

Obviously 30 ♖xa5?? runs into 30...♖xa5 31 ♖xa5 ♜b6+.

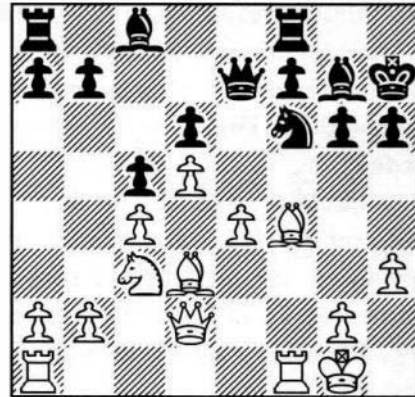
30...♖xd5 31 ♜f2 ♖xe5

Black later realized his extra pawn.

In several openings one side accepts a weakness in exchange for other assets, such as space, the possession of a semi-open file, or active piece play. This is a

common pattern in the Sicilian Sveshnikov that we just came across, and we had another case in Kunte-Ravi (p. 185). Here is one more example.

Example 194
I.Ivanisevic-D.Solak
Belgrade 2002



An earlier f2-f4 advance cleared the f-file for White and activated his dark-squared bishop, but also yielded Black a protected square on e5. An interesting battle is to be expected.

16 ♖b5!

Tying a black piece to the defence of the d6-pawn. In contrast, stereotypical play with 16 ♖ae1? permits 16...♗d7!, followed by ...♗e5, ...♗d7 and ...♖ae8, when only Black can be better.

16...♗d8

16...♗e8 takes the knight away from the desired d7-e5 route, and after 17 ♖f3 ♗d7 18 ♗c3 h5 (preparing ...♗e5) 19 ♗g5! ♗d4+ (not 19...♗f6? 20 ♖xf6 ♗xf6 21 ♖f1 etc) 20 ♜h1 f6 21 ♗h4, followed by ♖af1, White has an evident initiative. Later on he could try to bring his knight to f3.

17 ♖ae1

Mastering Chess Strategy

With the threat of 18 e5 which would win the battle for the e5-square.

17...♟h5

Black moves his knight from f6 before playing ...a7-a6, since 17...a6? fails to 18 ♞xd6! ♞xd6 19 ♠xd6 ♝xd6 20 e5 etc, while 17...♞d7? obviously leaves the d6-pawn undefended.

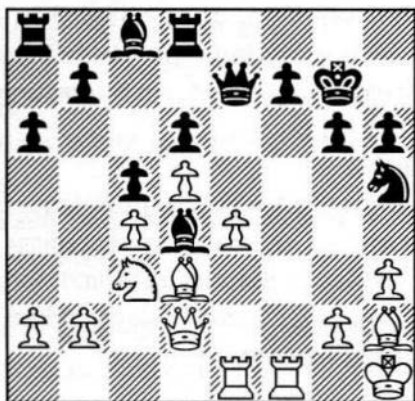
18 ♠h2 a6 19 ♞c3

Now Black would like to swap bishops on e5 and later regroup the knight to this square, but unfortunately 19...♠e5 20 ♠xe5 ♝xe5? fails tactically to 21 ♞xf7. Thus Solak decides to prepare this plan by covering the f7-pawn with the king.

19...♠d4+

With hindsight 19...♠e5 20 ♠xe5 dxe5! was a lesser evil. Black gives up the plan of occupying e5 but manages to slow down the game; e.g. 21 ♞f3 ♠d7 22 ♞ef1 f6, preparing ...♞f8 and ...♞g7-e8-d6, with an inferior but solid game.

20 ♟h1 ♟g7



21 ♞f3!

Ivanisevic starts exploiting the half-open f-file.

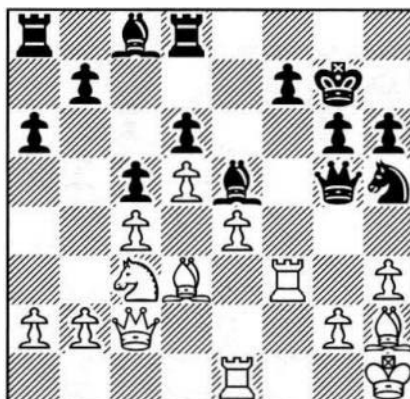
21...♝g5

Slower moves such as 21...♠d7?! run into 22 ♞ef1 ♞f8 23 g4! ♞f6 24 e5! and Black's position collapses.

22 ♝c2

After 22 ♝xg5?! hxg5 23 ♞ef1 f6 24 g4 ♞f4 25 ♠xf4 gxf4 26 ♞xf4 ♠e5 Black has a good compensation for the pawn – Ribli. As we will see later White, in fact, has nothing against a queen exchange, except on g5 which would create a safe square for the black knight on f4.

22...♠e5



23 g4!

A key move that leaves the enemy knight without a proper destiny. 23 ♞ef1!? was equally promising, when both 23...♞f8? 24 g4 and 23...♞g3+ 24 ♠xg3 ♠xg3 25 ♞xf7+ ♟g8 26 e5!, followed by ♠xg6, lead to big trouble. He would have to try 23...♠xh2 24 ♞xf7+ ♟g8 25 ♟xh2 ♝e5+ 26 ♟g1 g5 with dubious compensation for the pawn.

23...♝h4

The only move, since both 23...♞f4 and 23...♞f6 run into 24 ♞ef1.

24 ♝f2!

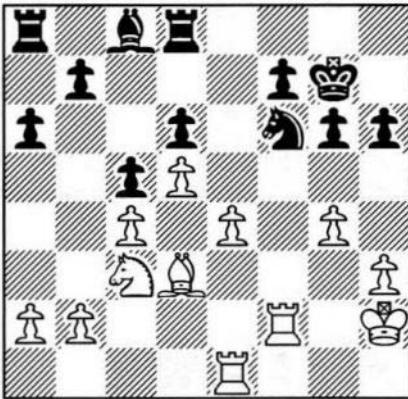
Thus White parries both threats of 24...♝xe1 and 24...♠xg4, whereas the pressure along the f-file remains intact even after the queen exchange. In contrast, 24 ♞ef1?! permits 24...♠xg4 25 ♞xf7+ ♟g8 26 hxg4 ♞g3+! 27 ♟g1 ♞xf1 28 ♞xf1 ♠d4+ 29 ♟g2 ♞f8 with considerable counterplay – Ribli.

24... ♖xf2 25 ♜xf2 ♙xh2

Both 25... ♖g3+? 26 ♜g2 and 25... ♙d4?! 26 ♜f3 ♖f6 27 ♜ef1, preparing 28 e5, lead Black into trouble, while 25... ♖f6 runs into 26 ♙xe5! dxe5 27 ♜ef1 ♜d6 28 b4!, destroying his blockade; e.g. 28... cxb4 29 c5 ♜d8 30 ♖a4 or 28... b6 29 bxc5 bxc5 30 ♖a4.

26 ♙xh2 ♖f6

Black is just one move from ... ♖d7, finally winning the battle for the e5-square. However...

**27 e5!**

An appealing pawn sacrifice, which ruins the enemy plan of a blockade on e5 and frees the e4-square for White's own knight. In contrast, after 27 ♜ef1? ♖d7 28 ♜xf7+ ♜g8, followed by 29... ♖e5, the game is far from over.

27... dxe5 28 ♜ef1! ♜d6

Or 28... ♖d7 29 ♜xf7+ ♜g8 30 ♙xg6 winning – Ribli. After the text Black just needs one tempo to consolidate by ... ♙c8-d7, but White has a neat finish prepared.

29 ♖e4! ♖xe4 30 ♜xf7+ ♜g8 31 ♜f8+ ♜g7 32 ♜1f7 mate

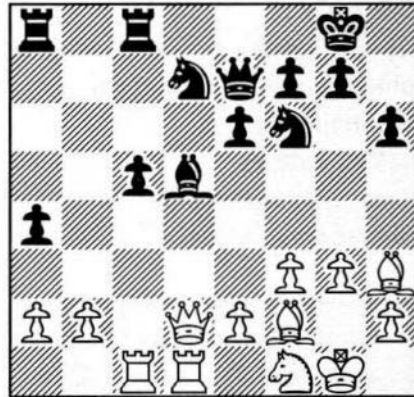
For the related exercises, see page 353.

Weak pawns

Basically, a pawn is weak when it can't be defended by a fellow pawn; but, just as in

the case of weak squares, everything depends on the opponent's possibilities of attacking it, as well as other factors in the position. For example, in both Polgar-Anand and Geller-Sveshnikov Black had a backward pawn on d6, but his fate was hardly the same. Let's see some more examples.

Example 195
Pr. Nikolic-M. Adams
 Wijk aan Zee 2000



A quick glance at the position reveals that Black has a weak pawn on c5, and another, less exposed one on a4.

23 ♜a1!

Aware of his long-term plus and the lack of black counterplay, Nikolic takes his time to cover the a2-pawn. Less appropriate was 23 a3?! ♙b3, when the bishop obtains a protected square on b3.

23... ♖e5

Adams tries to improve his pieces to the fullest extent. This move is useful to prevent e2-e4.

24 ♜c3 ♖fd7 25 ♖e3

Now 25 e4 was entirely possible, but White prefers a complete focus on the c5-pawn.

25...♖b7 26 ♖g2 ♖ab8 27 ♖d2

A useful move, which protects the b2-pawn and enables the doubling of rooks on the c- or d-file.

27...f6 28 ♖c1 ♜b6 29 ♖dc2 ♜ed7?!

Preferable was 29...c4 30 ♜a5 ♜d5 31 ♜xd5 ♖xd5 with just a slight disadvantage – Gershon. Apparently the ...c5-c4 advance has left the c-pawn a bit safer; for instance, on the previous move 31 ♜xc4?! failed to 31...♜b4.

30 ♜a3!

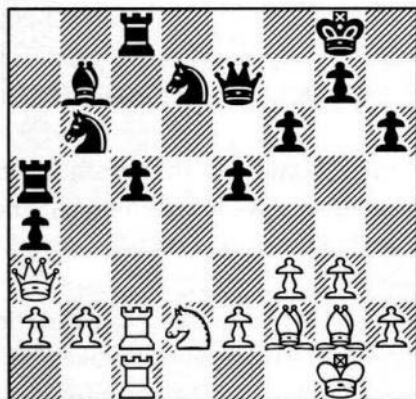
An excellent square for the queen, where she eyes both of Black's weak pawns.

30...♖a8 31 ♜f1!

Stepping up the pressure on c5 and re-grouping the knight to perform a more active role in the game.

31...♖a5 32 ♜d2 e5

Adams gets rid of a potential target on e6 and prepares ...e5-e4.



33 e4!

The straightforward 33 ♜c4!? ♜xc4 34 ♖xc4 probably won a pawn, but Nikolic is still in no hurry. The text prevents any counterplay with ...e5-e4 and prepares the seizure of the h3-c8 diagonal.

33...♜h8 34 ♖h3! ♖d8 35 ♜f1

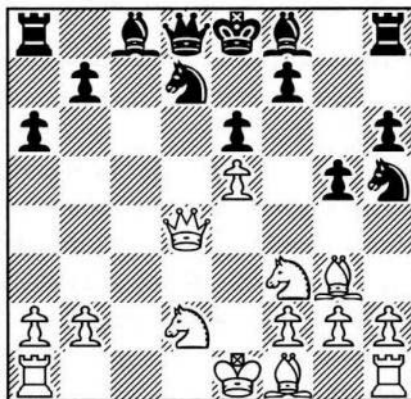
A last prophylactic measure that removes the knight from the vulnerable post

on the d-file. By now the c5-pawn is doomed; e.g. 35...♖c8 36 ♜e3 with the strong threat of 37 ♜c4, so Black surrenders it.

35...♖aa8 36 ♖xc5 ♜xc5 37 ♜xc5 ♜xc5+ 38 ♖xc5

With a sound extra pawn and more active pieces, the endgame is winning for White. There followed 38...♖a6 39 ♜e3 ♖ab8 40 ♖1c2 ♖d3 41 ♖d2 ♖d4 42 ♖e6! (restricting the black knight) 42...♖b1?! 43 ♖d1! ♖xd1+ 44 ♜xd1 a3 45 ♜c3 and Black resigned, since 45...♖d3 46 b4 followed by ♜f2-e3 is hopeless for him.

Example 196
M.Hebden-M.Illescas Cordoba
Andorra 1998



An early e4-e5 advance has yielded White some space advantage and dark square control, that he would like to exploit by moves like 0-0-0 and ♜e4-d6. On the other hand, in a long term perspective the same e5-pawn can be considered a weakness.

12...♜b6!

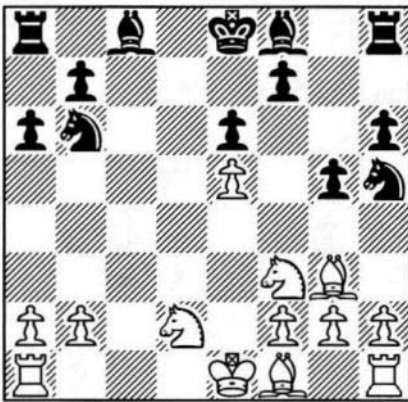
Taking the game closer to an endgame where the negative aspects of the e5-pawn

will become more tangible. In contrast, the tempting 12...♙c5?! permits 13 ♖g4 ♜xg3 14 hxg3!, preparing 0-0-0 and ♜e4, with a strong initiative.

13 ♖xb6

13 ♜c4?! fails to the annoying 13...♙b4+!, while after 13 ♖g4 ♜xg3 14 hxg3 ♖xb2 15 ♜b1 ♖c3 White hasn't just lost a pawn, but also the option of long castling.

13...♜xb6



14 ♙e2 ♙g7!

From here the bishop puts some pressure on the e5-pawn, while the king will be well placed on e7 in this queenless middle-game.

15 0-0-0 ♙d7 16 ♜he1

After 16 ♙e4 ♙c6 17 ♜d6+ ♖e7 the e5-pawn is in danger, considering the threat of 18...♜xg3 19 hxg3 g4, followed by 20...♙xe5.

16...♖e7 17 ♖b1 ♜hd8 18 ♜b3

Heading for a5. Again after 18 ♙e4 ♙c6 19 ♜d6 ♜xg3 20 hxg3 ♜d7! White has a problem with the e5-pawn; e.g. 21 ♜c4 b5! 22 ♜a5 ♙e4+ 23 ♙d3 ♙xf3 24 gxf3 ♜xe5 with a sound extra pawn for Black.

18...♙a4 19 ♜d6?

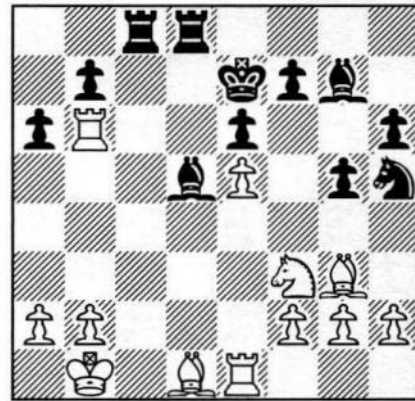
Correct was 19 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 20 ♜a5 ♜d7 21 b3 ♙b5 22 ♙xb5 axb5 and Black is just

slightly better – Illescas.

19...♙xb3 20 ♜xb6

Perhaps Hebden only now discovered that after 20 axb3 ♜d7! the e5-pawn is doomed; e.g. 21 ♜e1 ♜xg3 22 hxg3 g4! followed by 23...♙xe5. Thus he is forced to displace his rook and hand over the d-file to Black.

20...♙d5 21 ♙d1 ♜ac8



Black's pieces are much better placed than their white counterparts, and ...♜xg3 followed by ...g5-g4, exposing the e5-pawn, is in the air. Moreover, once the bishop leaves d5 White will be suffering on the d-file.

22 ♙b3 ♙c6! 23 a4?!

White should have tried 23 ♜b4 in order to stop ...g5-g4 and bring the rook back into the game.

23...♜xg3

Before advancing ...g5-g4 the bishop must be swapped to avoid ♙h4+.

24 fxg3

Hardly a desirable recapture, but after 24 hxg3 g4 25 ♙h2 h5 the double threat of 26...♙xg2 and 26...♜d2 is decisive.

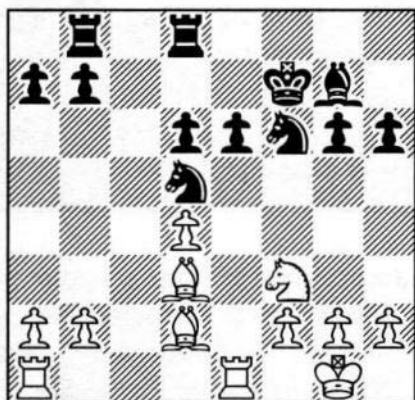
24...g4 25 ♜h4

A terrible place for the knight, but the g2-pawn needed protection.

25...♜d4!

With the threat of 26...♖e4, besieging the e5-pawn. By now Black has an overwhelming advantage on the whole board, and the position plays itself. The game continued 26 ♗c2 a5 27 ♖b3 ♗cd8 28 h3 h5 29 hxg4 hxg4 30 ♖be3 ♖b4! 31 ♖3e2 ♗d5! (zugzwang) 32 ♗e4 ♗xe4 33 ♖xe4 ♗d1+! 34 ♗xd1 ♗xe4+ 35 ♗a2 ♗xe5 with a quick win.

Example 197
E.Rozentalis-K.Lie
Gausdal 2007



Here is a case with multiple weak pawns. Despite the reduced material Black is in trouble due to his set of weak pawns on the sixth rank that need constant protection from his pieces.

20 ♖e2!

Preparing ♖ae1 with pressure on the e6-pawn.

20...g5

After 20...♖e8 21 ♖ae1 Black will have to play 21...g5 anyway, considering the threat of 22 ♗h4.

21 ♖ae1 ♖e8 22 h4!

Softening up the black kingside pawns for a future attack.

22...g4

Or 22...♗f4 23 ♗xf4 gxf4 24 ♗c4!, provoking ...d6-d5, after which the knight can settle on e5.

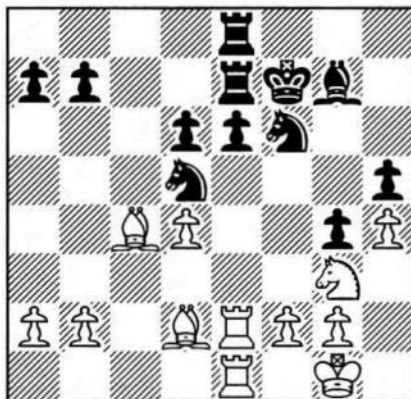
23 ♗h2 h5?!

This natural move makes White's job a lot easier. 23...♖bc8 was more flexible, when 24 ♗f1?! runs into 24...♗h5! with double threats at f4 and d4. A better try is 24 g3, covering the f4-square in advance; e.g. 24...♖c7 25 h5! ♗xh5 26 ♗xg4 or 24...h5 25 f3!, in both cases with some initiative.

24 ♗f1 ♖e7 25 ♗c4!

Limiting the movement of both enemy knights.

25...♖be8 26 ♗g3



Now most of Black's pieces are tied up to the defence of his pawns, whereas White could step up the pressure by ♗g5 if needed.

26...♗b6?

This leads to unexpected tactical difficulties. 26...♖c7 was preferable, when 27 ♗b3 keeps the initiative - Barsky.

27 ♗b5! ♗bd7

Any rook move permits 28 ♗f5! winning at least a pawn, while after 27...♗fd7 28 ♗e4! the double threat of 29 ♗xd6+ and 29 ♗g5+ is more than Black can take. The text avoids any of these problems but runs into a new one.

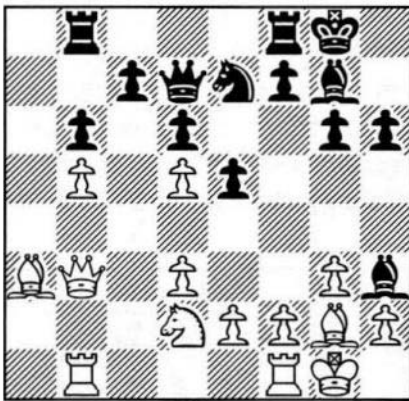
28 ♖b4!

The d6-pawn turns out to be undefendable.

28...a6 29 ♖a4 1-0

Nothing changes after 29...b5 30 ♖b3.

Example 198
Je.Hall-N.Hjelm
Stockholm 1986



In a typical position from the English Black has just played ...♗e6-h3 with focus on the enemy king. What about White's plans? A quick glance reveals that the weakest point in the black camp is the backward pawn on c7. Thus White's next move suggests itself.

18 ♖fc1! ♗xg2 19 ♖xg2 f5 20 ♖c4!

A strong move that enables a tripling of the major pieces along the c-file, and also keeps an eye on the kingside defence.

20...♙f7

The brave 20...♗xd5? runs into 21 e4 fxe4 22 dxe4 ♗f7 23 f3 ♖f6 24 ♖xc7 ♗xb3 25 ♖xb3 with an overwhelming advantage – Hall.

21 ♖bc1 ♖c8

Again 21...♗xd5? fails to 22 e4, e.g. 22...fxe4 23 dxe4 ♖f6 24 ♖xc7 with mate-

rial gains. But now the d5-pawn needs protection, which explains White's next move.

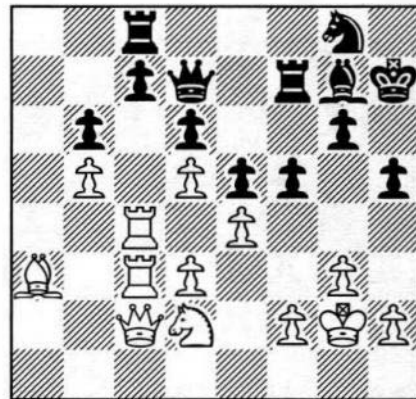
22 e4 ♖h7?!

Preferable was 22...f4, speeding up the attack. Here White could consider 23 ♗c2 ♗xb5 24 ♖xd6 cxd6 25 ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 26 ♗xc8+ ♖h7 27 ♗c2 with some advantage thanks to his superior knight – Hall.

23 ♖1c3!

Now the threat of 24 ♗c2 proves inevitable.

23...h5 24 ♗c2 ♖g8



25 ♖c6!

By means of the double threat of 26 ♖xd6 and 26 ♖xb6, White wins a pawn. In retrospect, these tactics would not have existed had Black managed to defend the c7-pawn horizontally with both rooks, but that was never practically possible.

25...♗f8 26 ♖xb6 cxb6 27 ♖xc8 ♗xb5

Black has managed to restore the material balance, but the following strong blow will leave him helpless on the dark squares.

28 ♖xf8! ♖xf8 29 ♖xd6 ♖f7

If 29...♖e8, then 30 ♗c7+ followed by ♗xe5.

30 ♖f3!

The last piece joins the attack, with mortal effect.

30...♖d7 31 ♗xe5 ♖e7 32 ♖g5+ ♖h6

Or 32...♔g8 33 d6! with a decisive attack; e.g. 33...♜xe5 34 ♜c4+ ♔g7 35 ♜f7+ ♔h6 36 ♜h7+ ♔xg5 37 f4+ and wins – Hall. 33 ♖f7+ ♔h7 34 ♜d2 ♖g8 35 ♖g5+ ♔h6 36 ♖e6+

In view of 36...♔h7 37 ♖f8 mate, Black resigned.

Example 199
Art.Minasian-A.Kharlov
 Linares 1999



A careful look at the position reveals several factors in White's favour: the backward pawn on b7, a weak square on b6, and a potential target on d6. In the following play, Minasian exploits these assets in impressive style.

20 ♖a3!

The best diagonal for the bishop, on which it eyes the d6-pawn.

20...f6

Kharlov prepares ...♜f7 in order to reinforce the queenside defence. Instead, 20...f5?! would just activate the bishop on g2, while after 20...♖e7 21 ♜b4! the black knight is forced to the unappealing c8-square.

21 ♜b6!

As we already know, the side with a positional advantage is usually favoured by exchanges, which help him in reducing the opponent's counterplay.

21...♜f7

Or 21...♜d7 22 ♜c7!, insisting on the queen swap.

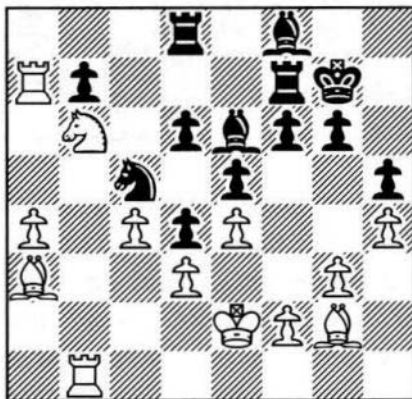
22 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 23 ♔e2 ♖f8 24 ♖b6!

Since the natural 24 ♜ab1 permits 24...♜a8!? 25 ♖b6 ♜a6 with some counterplay towards the a4-pawn, Minasian first seizes the a8-square.

24...♖b8 25 ♜ab1 ♖a6 26 ♜b5 ♖c5

As observed by Tiviakov, the ...♖b8-a6-c5 manoeuvre improved the knight but also left the a7-square without cover, a fact that White exploits within the next moves.

27 ♜hb1 ♔g7 28 ♜a5! ♜b8 29 ♜a7 ♖d8



It is already difficult to find any reasonable plan for Black, whereas White still has various ways of improving his position.

30 a5! ♖a6 31 ♖d5 ♜dd7 32 ♜b6!

By seizing the sixth rank Minasian finishes off the ...♖a6-c5 resource, and generates the tactical idea of c4-c5.

32...♜xd5

A concession, but it was not easy to suggest anything better; e.g. 32...♔g8 33 ♜a8 ♔g7 34 ♜e8! and Black has to swap on d5 anyway.

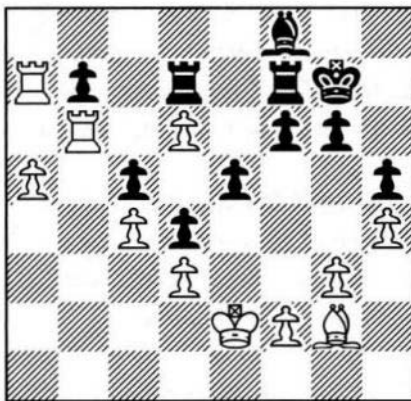
33 exd5!

A dynamic recapture that enables the future clearance of the h1-a8 diagonal for the bishop on g2.

33...♘c5

This lets White speed up his plan, but a passive defence with 33...♖h7 proves equally hopeless after 34 ♖e1 ♖g7 35 ♗f3 ♖h7 36 ♗d1, followed by 37 ♗a4, finally conquering one of the weak pawns.

34 ♗xc5 dxc5 35 d6!



Swapping the d6-pawn for the one on b7, in order to create an outside passed pawn on the a-file.

35...♗xd6

The intermediate 35...e4 was more tenacious, although after 36 ♗xe4 ♗xd6 37 ♗d5 ♖fe7+ 38 ♖d1! the threat of 39 a6 can't be parried satisfactorily; e.g. 38...♗e5 39 ♗e6! ♖c7 40 f4 or 38...♗b8 39 ♖a8 ♗e5 40 f4 ♗d6 41 a6! with similar consequences as in the game.

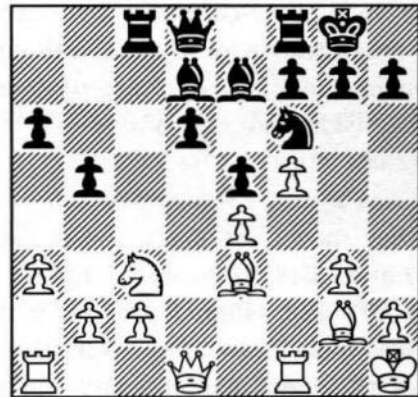
36 ♗d5 ♖fe7 37 a6! ♖e8

Thanks to 36 ♗d5, 37...bxa6 can be met by 38 ♖axa6! ♗c7 39 ♖xf6 with an easy win. **38 ♖bxb7 ♖xb7 39 ♖xb7+ 1-0**

Just as in the case of weak squares, occasionally weak pawns can be created and exploited by means of a positional sacrifice.

Here is one example.

Example 200
A.Vydeslaver-L.Psakhis
Israeli Championship, Ramat Aviv
1998

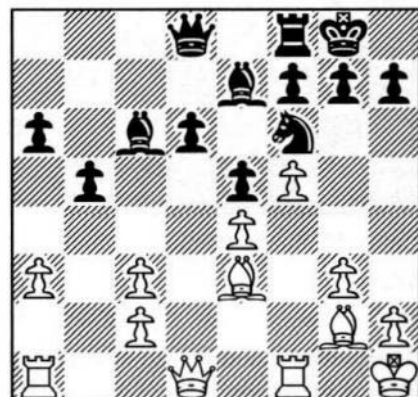


In a typical Sicilian battle White is preparing a kingside attack by g4-g5, while ♗g5 followed by ♗xf6 and ♖d5 is another possible plan.

15...♖xc3!

A thematic exchange sacrifice that damages White's queenside pawn structure and undermines the crucial e4-pawn.

16 bxc3 ♗c6



17 ♖g5

Abandoning the e-pawn for the sake of counterplay, as after 17 ♖d3 ♖a8! that pawn is doomed anyway. There can follow 18 ♖g5 ♖xe4 19 ♖e2 ♖c8! 20 ♖xf6 ♖xg2+ 21 ♖xg2 ♖xg2+ 22 ♖xg2 gxf6!? 23 ♖f3 ♖c4!, when the rook doesn't just seize the whole fourth rank, but also rules out the a3-a4 resource. Next the king could join the battle via f8-e8-d7-c6, where it will support a future advance of the central pawns. Meanwhile, White's rooks are passive and his queenside weaknesses require constant protection.

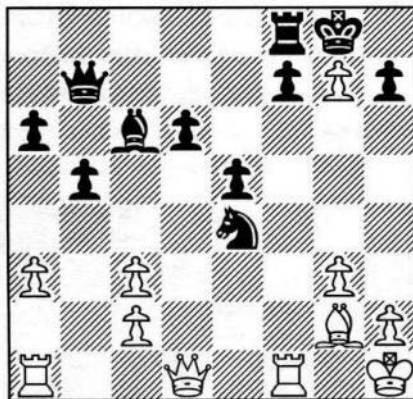
17...♖xe4 18 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 19 f6

Other moves let Black consolidate by ...♖b7 and ...♖c8; for example, 19 ♖e1 ♖b7 or 19 ♖f3 ♖c8, when the slight material deficit is more than compensated by control of the long diagonal and the weak pawns on c2 and c3.

19...♖b7

The ideal square for the queen. Obviously 19...gxf6? failed to 20 ♖g4+.

20 fxg7



20...♖c8!

Psakhis speeds up the attack on the white queenside and leaves the g7-pawn as a shield for his king.

21 ♖g4?!

After 21 ♖e2 ♖xc3 22 ♖xc6 ♖xc6+ 23 ♖f3 ♖xg7 Black has an excellent ending, but at least the white king feels safer than in the game.

21...♖d2!

The most powerful continuation, which helps to activate the rook. After 21...♖c3?! 22 ♖xc6 ♖xc6+ 23 ♖g1 White obtains counterplay, with ideas like 24 ♖xf7 followed by 25 ♖f1+.

22 ♖f2 ♖xg2+ 23 ♖xg2 ♖xc3 24 ♖g5

If 24 ♖b4 ♖xc2 25 ♖xd6?, then 25...♖xg2+! 26 ♖xg2 ♖e4+ and wins – Atlas. With the text White attacks the knight and at the same time prepares a perpetual on d8-g5, but both threats are easily parried.

24...♖e4! 25 ♖d8+ ♖xg7 26 ♖e1?

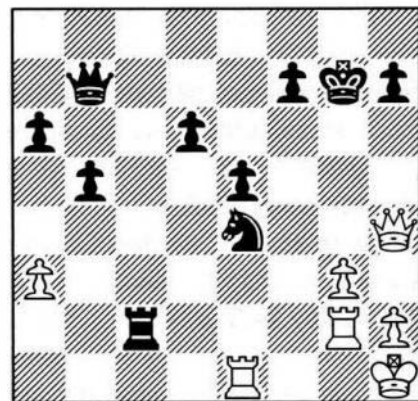
White had to unpin his rook by 26 ♖g1, when one good reply is 26...♖c8!? 27 ♖h4 ♖b6+, followed by 28...♖c4.

26...♖xc2?

Tempting, but 26...♖f2+ 27 ♖g1 ♖h3+! won on the spot; e.g. 28 ♖f1 ♖f3+ or 28 ♖h1 ♖xc2 with mate to come.

27 ♖h4

The only move, since both 27 ♖xe4? ♖c1+ and 27 ♖xc2? ♖f2+ 28 ♖g1 ♖h3+ 29 ♖f1 ♖f3+ lead to mate.

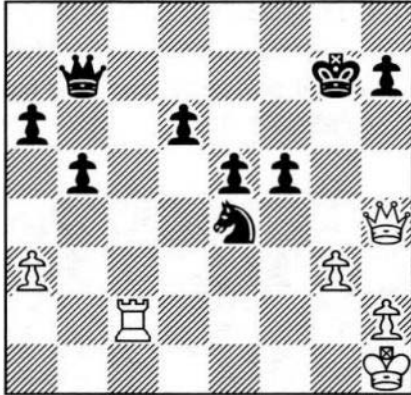


27...f5!

Simple but strong, reinforcing the centralized knight. In contrast, after 27...♠xg2? 28 ♠xe4 Black can't avoid a perpetual on g5-d8 since his rook is hanging.

28 ♠xc2 ♠d2+ 29 ♠e4 ♠xe4

With some powerful passed pawns, a tremendous knight in the centre and the safer king, Black's position plays itself.



30 ♠g1 ♗d7 31 ♗h5 h6 32 ♗d1 ♠g6 33 ♗d5 ♠f6 34 ♗c6 ♗a7+!

Centralizing the queen.

35 ♠g2 ♗d4 36 h3 a5!

Since 37 ♗xb5? fails to 37...♗e4+, Black manages to create one more passed pawn.

37 ♠h2 b4 38 axb4 axb4 39 ♗c4 ♗e4 40 ♗b3 h5!

Preparing ...h5-h4 to expose the white king further and create a trio of passed pawns.

41 ♠c7 d5 42 ♠c6 h4! 43 gxh4 f4 44 ♗d1 ♠f5 45 ♗g1 ♗e2+

Of course not 45...d4?? 46 ♗g5 mate. Also on the previous move 44...d4?? was a blunder due to 45 ♗g4+.

46 ♠h1 ♗f3+ 47 ♠h2 ♗e2+ 48 ♠h1 ♗h5 49 ♗g5+

A sad necessity, as 49 ♗f2 ♠e4 was hopeless for White.

49...♗xg5 50 hxg5 ♠xg5

Now the passed pawns are much too

strong for the rook. The game concluded 51 ♠b6 d4 52 ♠xb4 d3 53 ♠b8 e4 54 ♠g2 d2 55 ♠d8 f3+ 56 ♠g3 ♠h5+ 57 ♠f2 ♠f4 58 ♠f8+ ♠f6! and White resigned in view of 59 ♠xf6+ ♠e5.

Now let's see a complete game on the topic of working on weak pawns and squares.

Example 201
D.K.Johansen-U.Andersson
Yerevan Olympiad 1996
Sicilian Defence (B24)

1 e4 c5 2 ♠c3 e6 3 ♠ge2

A flexible move order that lets White revert to a mainstream Sicilian by d2-d4 if and when desired.

3...♠f6 4 g3 ♠c6 5 ♠g2 ♠e7 6 0-0-0 7 d4 d6!?

7...cxd4 8 ♠xd4 d6 was possible, but Andersson prefers less explored terrain.

8 ♠e1 ♠d7 9 d5 ♠e5

After 9...exd5 10 ♠xd5 ♠xd5 11 ♗xd5 ♠e6 12 ♗d1, followed by ♠f4, White is slightly better thanks to his superior pawn structure. In contrast, the game continuation leaves the knight rather passive on e2.

10 h3 ♠e8

A "mysterious" rook move. After 10...b5!? 11 f4, preparing e4-e5, a sharper battle arises.

11 a4 a6 12 f4 ♠g6 13 ♠e3?!

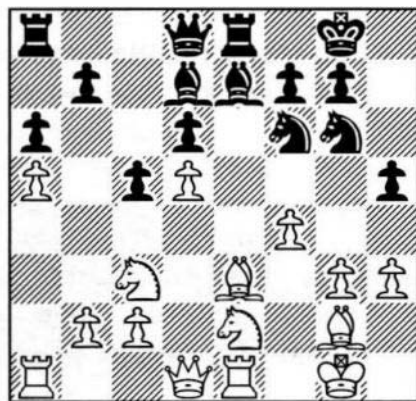
This natural developing move soon proves to have undesired effects. 13 dxe6 fxe6 14 a5 was safer.

13...exd5 14 exd5 h5!

There was nothing wrong with 14...b5!?, but the text prepares a clever positional trap that White falls into.

15 a5?

A natural move in order to prevent ...b7-b5, but 15 ♖d2 protecting the bishop in advance was mandatory. Can you see why?



15...♜c8!

A cold shower for White. Since 16 ♖h2 runs into 16...h4! intending 17 g4? ♙xg4 18 hxg4 ♜xg4+ followed by ...♜xe3, he is now forced to an ugly weakening of his kingside.

16 h4 ♙d8!

Another key move, that unblocks the rook and eyes the exposed a5-pawn, which will turn into a headache for White during the rest of the game. The obvious 16...♜g4 can wait until a more optimal moment, a subject we talked about in Shamkovich-Benjamin (p. 126).

17 ♙f2 ♙c7 18 ♜c1

In view of the threat 18...♜d8, Johansen regroupes his knight to b3.

18...♞xe1+ 19 ♙xe1 ♙h3 20 ♙h1

Without help from this bishop the light squares on the kingside would quickly be rendered indefensible.

20...♜e7!

The least active of Black's minor pieces is directed to the excellent f5-square.

21 ♜d3 ♙g4 22 ♜d2 ♜f5

A timely attack on the g3-pawn, so that White doesn't manage to cover his light

squares by 23 ♜f2.

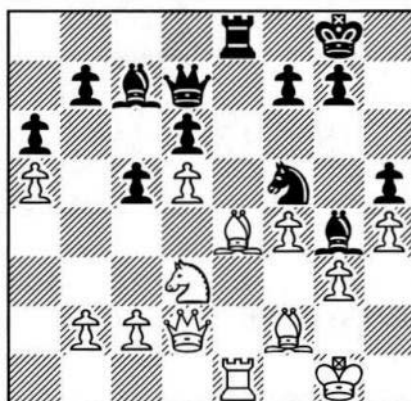
23 ♙f2 ♜d7

With the simple idea of ...♞e8, taking up the battle for the open file. White can't do the same thing with 24 ♞e1 due to the problem with the a5-pawn. For this reason, he now clears the e1-a5 diagonal for the queen.

24 ♜e4 ♜xe4

After 24...♜xd5?! 25 ♜dxc5! dxc5 26 ♜xc5 White recovers the piece with a far more pleasant position than in the game.

25 ♙xe4 ♞e8 26 ♞e1



26...♜a4!

A double attack that hurts. Now White has either to give up a pawn or swap his valuable light-squared bishop.

27 ♙xf5?!

Johansen opts for the latter, after seeing that 27 ♙g2 ♞c8 or 27...♞d8 leads to the loss of the a5-pawn. Even so, this was probably a lesser evil than the text.

27...♙xf5 28 ♞xe8+ ♜xe8 29 b4

White tries a desperate move in a very difficult position. If instead 29 b3, preparing the advance c2-c4 to reinforce the d5-pawn, then 29...♜b5 30 ♙e1 c4! 31 bxc4 ♜xc4 32 ♜c3 ♜xc3 33 ♙xc3 ♙e4 and Black finally conquers one of the weak pawns.

29...♜e4!

Seizing the light squares on the whole board. By now the absence of the fianchettoed bishop is very notable.

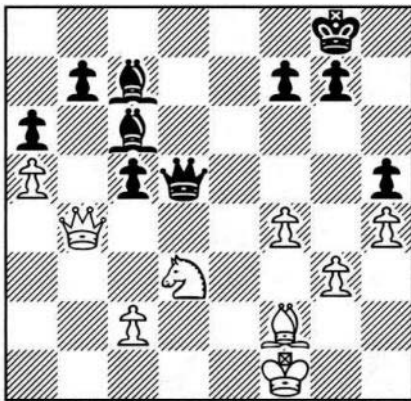
30 bxc5 ♖xd5 31 ♜b4 ♙h3!

Before launching a battery along the h1-a8 diagonal, Andersson sensibly displaces the enemy knight.

32 ♗e1 ♙d7 33 ♗d3

Or **33 ♜d4 ♜xd4 34 ♙xd4 dxc5 35 ♙xc5 ♙xa5** with an easy win.

33...♙c6 34 ♖f1 dxc5!



Provoking some kind of concession.

35 ♙xc5

Both **35 ♜xc5 ♙xa5** and **35 ♗xc5 ♜d1+**, followed by **36...♜xc2**, were equally grim for White.

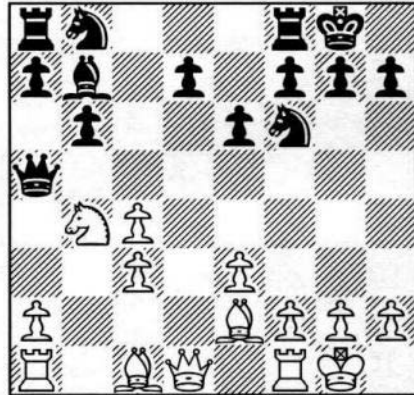
35...♜g2+ 36 ♗e1 ♜xc2 37 ♜d4 ♙b5! 0-1

For the related exercises to this section, see page 355.

Doubled pawns

In chess strategy, doubled pawns have a kind of a dual personality. Sometimes they are the perfect targets for the enemy pieces, while on other occasions they are useful for clearing files and controlling squares. In the following examples we will examine both these facets, starting with the first one.

Example 202 J.Rukavina-A.Karpov Leningrad Interzonal 1973



White has a serious problem with his doubled c-pawns which lack natural protection. In the following play Karpov directs all his attention to them.

11...♞c8!

11...♗c6?! 12 ♗xc6 ♙xc6 is less promising, since the bishop will obstruct the rooks along the c-file; besides, its most powerful destiny is a6.

12 f3 ♗c6 13 ♜b3

Now if **13 ♗xc6**, then **13...♞xc6!**, preparing **...♞ac8** and **...♙a6** with strong pressure on c4.

13...♜e5!

The queen vacates the a5-square for the knight, a threat that forces White's reply.

14 ♗xc6 ♞xc6 15 ♙d2 ♜c7!

Preparing **...♙b7-a6**. The immediate **15...♙a6?! 16 ♜a4**, while after **15...♞ac8 16 ♜a3! a5 17 ♞ab1 ♙a6 18 e4**, followed by **♙e3**, White achieves a counterattack on the b6-pawn.

16 ♜a4 a5

Renewing the **...♙a6** idea. Thanks to the precise **15...♜c7**, the queen now protects b6

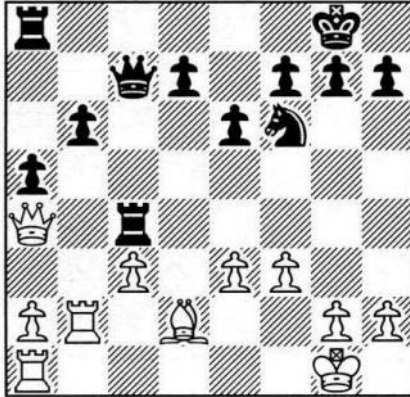
Mastering Chess Strategy

and attacks c4 at the same time.

17 ♖fb1 ♗a6 18 ♖b2

Rukavina finally gives up the c4-pawn, aware that 18 ♗b3 ♖b8 doesn't change anything.

18...♗xc4 19 ♗xc4 ♖xc4



Black is a sound pawn up, besides which his pieces are more active.

20 ♗b5 ♖c6 21 e4 d6 22 ♗g5 ♗d7!

Heading for c4. It is a well-known fact that a square occupied by a weak pawn remains a weakness even after the disappearance of that pawn.

23 ♗e7 ♗e5 24 ♗xc7 ♖xc7 25 ♖b5

Obviously 25 ♖xb6? failed to 25...♗c4.

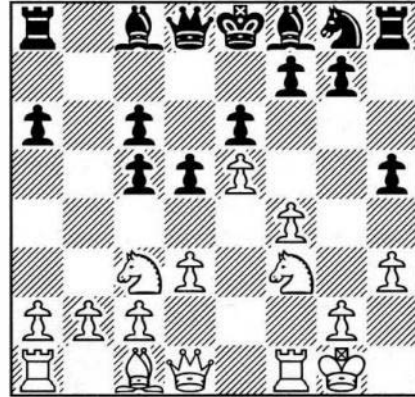
25...♗c4 26 ♗c1 ♖ac8

Black later realized his huge advantage.

Example 203
I.Hakki-M.Chokshi
Dubai 2004

In the previous example the white c-pawns weren't just doubled, they were also isolated which made them very vulnerable. Here, in contrast, Black's c-pawns aren't isolated, but the location of his d-pawn at d5 implies that they are chronically weak anyway. In the following play, White sus-

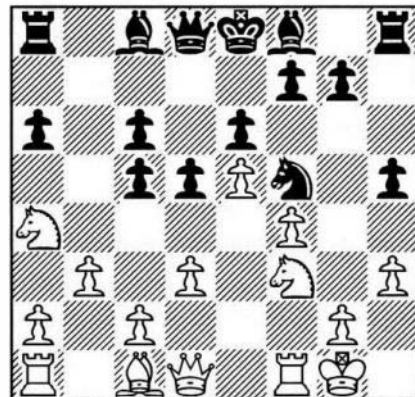
pends any attempt to exploit his lead in development (e.g. 11 f5!?) and focuses completely on the black c-pawns.



11 b3!

Preparing ♗a3 and reinforcing the a4-square for the knight.

11...♗h6 12 ♗a4 ♗f5



13 ♗d2!

Since 13 ♗a3? At once runs into 13...♗e3, White prepares it. Besides, his queen gets ready to join the attack on the c5-pawn from f2 or a5.

13...♗c7?

For better or worse Black had to try 13...c4!, giving up a pawn in order to release White's dark square bind, with a distant hope of ...c6-c5 and ...♗b7 in the future.

14 ♖a3 ♜a7 15 c4!

A key move that rules out ...c5-c4 for the rest of the game. Now there appears the threat of 16 ♜a5, conquering the c5-pawn.

15...a5 16 ♜f2 d4 17 ♘g5!

Hakki's play is very logical. After provoking ...d5-d4 he aims at installing a knight on e4, which would mean the end for the c5-pawn.

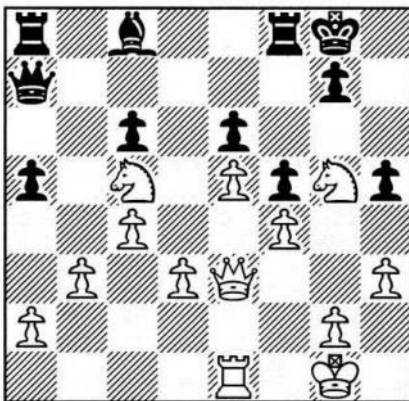
17...♞e3 18 ♜fe1 f5 19 ♜xe3!

An appealing solution which will leave White in complete command of the dark squares. 19 ♖c1!? also made sense, whereas after 19 exf6?! gxf6 20 ♞e4 f5, followed by ...♞g8, Black would obtain some minimal play along the g-file.

19...dxe3 20 ♜xe3 ♖e7 21 ♜e1

The immediate 21 ♖xc5 was more forcing, but there is no reason to hurry.

21...0-0 22 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 23 ♞xc5



A brief glance at the position reveals that White is strategically winning. His knights are monstrous, whereas the entire black army has been deprived of any prospects.

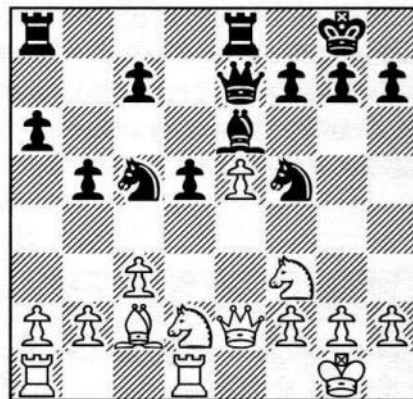
23...♞d8 24 ♜h2 ♜e7 25 a3 g6 26 d4 ♞b8 27 ♜c3

In the further course of the game, Hakki applied more or less the following plan: a prophylactic king march to a2, a rook trans-

fer to g1, and finally g2-g4 with a decisive attack on the black king.

Now let's see some cases of more healthy doubled pawns, and their usage in the positional battle.

Example 204
V.Sokolov-N.Karaklajic
Yugoslav Championship,
Sarajevo 1958



In this typical position from the Open Spanish, White's main plan is to take control of the dark squares, in particular d4 and c5. Black, on the other hand, aims at a liberating ...c7-c5 advance.

17 ♞b3

Heading for d4 and unblocking the rook on d1. The attempt to enhance this idea by 17 b4?! ♞d7 18 ♞b3 permits 18...c5! 19 bxc5 ♞xc5 and Black has no major problems; e.g. 20 ♞bd4 ♞h4!? followed by ...♞ac8, or 20 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 21 ♞xd5 ♞a4 22 ♜e3 ♞ac8 23 ♖c1 ♜a3 with clear compensation for the pawn. The drawback of b2-b4 is evident: the pawn on c3 turns into a weakness.

17...♞xb3

Other moves like 17...♞ad8 and 17...c6

are strongly met by 18 ♖bd4, seizing the centre.

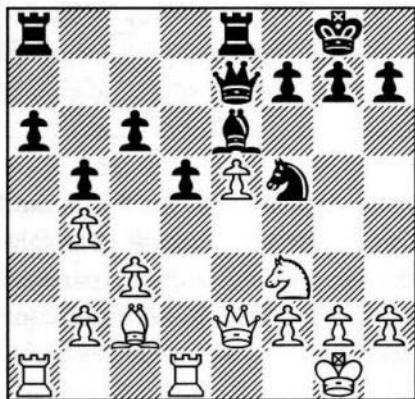
18 axb3!

The correct recapture, in order to clear the a-file for the rook and enable a future b3-b4 with a grip on the dark squares. In contrast, the stereotypical 18 ♖xb3?! permits 18...♗ad8, when the ...c7-c5 advance proves inevitable; e.g. 19 ♖d4 ♖xd4 20 cxd4 c5! 21 dxc5 ♜xc5 22 ♗ac1 ♜b6, followed by 23...d4, with complete equality.

18...c6?!

Overprotecting the d5-pawn, but this leads Black into a rather passive position. The active 18...c5! was called for; e.g. 19 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 20 ♗xd5 ♖e6 21 ♗d6 ♖xb3 22 ♗dxa6 ♗xa6 23 ♗xa6 ♖d5 with some compensation for the pawn.

19 b4!



A strong advance that fixes a whole complex of weaknesses on c5, a5, c6 and a6. Thanks to the b-pawns being doubled, if Black plays ...c6-c5 at any moment, White can capture on c5 without ending up with a weak pawn on c3, which was his problem in the 17 b4 subline above.

19...g6 20 ♗e1!

Some useful prophylaxis. Sokolov plans ♖xf5 followed by ♖d4 with a “good knight vs. bad bishop” scenario, but first he gives

the e5-pawn some extra support. 20 ♖xf5?! ♖xf5 is less convincing; e.g. 21 ♗e1 ♖g4! or 21 ♖d4 ♜xe5 22 ♜xe5 ♗xe5 23 ♖xc6 ♗e2 with counterplay.

20...♖g7

Karaklajic saves the better of his minor pieces, aware that after 20...♜c7?! 21 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 22 ♖d4 White would be clearly better. One future plan is f2-f4, g2-g4 and f4-f5, advancing the kingside majority; another is ♖b3-c5, attacking the a6-pawn.

21 ♜e3!

From e3 the queen doesn't just complicate the ...c6-c5 advance, she also eyes the h6-square. The immediate 21 ♖d4 permits 21...c5 22 bxc5 ♜xc5 and Black frees his game to some extent.

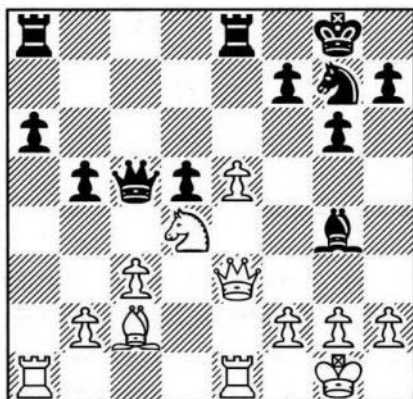
21...♖g4

Asking the question of the knight. The attempt to prepare ...c6-c5 by 21...♗ec8? fails to 22 ♜h6 with a decisive 23 ♖g5 next.

22 ♖d4 c5 23 bxc5

Avoiding 23 ♖c6?! ♜d7! 24 ♜xc5 ♗ac8 25 ♗xa6 ♗e6 and the knight is trapped.

23...♜xc5



At first sight Black isn't doing so badly; however, Sokolov has a tactical twist.

24 ♖f5! ♜xe3

The only move, in view of the impending fork on h6.

25 ♖xe3 ♗e6 26 ♜d1

The virtue of White's little combination is evident: the d5-pawn has become exposed.

26...♜d8 27 ♜d4!

Before attacking the weakness on d5, it should be blocked. In contrast, 27 ♜b3? permits 27...d4! and Black solves all his problems.

27...a5 28 ♜ad1

Now the d5-pawn is doomed, whereas White also has a good plan in f2-f4, g2-g4 and f4-f5, advancing his kingside majority. The game continued 28...♗f8 29 f4a4 30 g4 a3 31 f5 ♗c8 32 bxa3 ♜xa3 33 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 34 ♜xd5 ♗e8 35 ♜c5 and White later realized his extra pawn.

When about to double our pawns, we usually capture towards the centre, like Sokolov's a2xb3 in the previous example. However, as we will see next, this is not always the best solution.

Example 205
E.Sveshnikov-Y.Balashov
 USSR Championship, Moscow
 1976



In this French position Black has just played 9...♝c7, attacking the e5-pawn. How should White react?

10 ♗xg6?

When making this move Sveshnikov perhaps overlooked, or underestimated Black's reply. Correct was 10 ♜e2 with a balanced position that has been reached several times in practice.

10...fxg6!

Violating the principle of capturing towards the centre, but with good reason: the f-file is opened for the black pieces, the king will feel very safe on g8, and the ...g6-g5 advance will be an asset in the future. In contrast, the stereotypical 10...hxg6?! can be met by 11 ♗.g5, preventing 0-0-0 and preparing ♜bd2-b3-d4 with a certain dark square dominance.

11 ♗f4

White brings his bishop to g3 where it will reinforce the kingside and the e5-pawn, but also leaves the g1-a7 diagonal in the opponent's hands. More natural seems 11 ♗e3, challenging the enemy bishop, when Black could consider 11...♗e7! 12 ♜bd2 0-0 13 ♗d4 g5!, preparing ...g5-g4 as well as ...♗e8-g6. Just like 19 b4 in the previous example, an advance with the front doubled pawn proves to be an excellent idea. In contrast, with one of the g-pawns still on f7, then 13...g5?! would be much less tempting due to the exposure of the king.

11...0-0 12 ♗g3 ♜e7!

After White's overprotection of the e5-pawn the knight is rather idle on c6, so Balashov redirects it to f5.

13 ♜bd2 ♜f5 14 ♜b3 ♗a4!

Preventing a potential blockade on d4. In contrast, after 14...♗b6 15 ♜d2, intending ♜fd4, f2-f3 and ♗f2, White has more hopes of a successful defence.

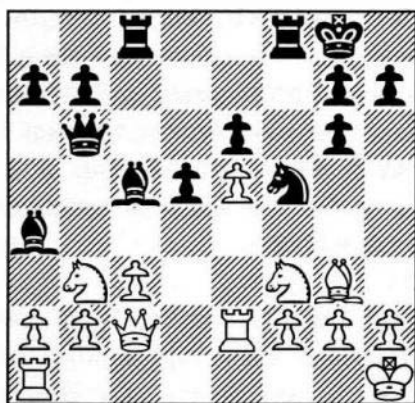
15 ♗h1?

Sveshnikov unpins his f-pawn in order to enable a future f2xg3, but now he gets a problem on the opposite flank. After 15 ♖d2! ♙xb3 16 axb3 a5, followed by ...♗b6 and perhaps ...d5-d4, Black's advantage is beyond any doubt, but White is suffering less than in the game.

15...♗b6!

This leaves the white queen awkwardly tied to the pin along the d1-a4 diagonal.

16 ♖c2 ♙ac8 17 ♙e2



17...h6!

Finally Balashov exploits the ...g6-g5 resource to step up the kingside pressure. Here and later, 17...d4!? was interesting as well.

18 h3 g5 19 ♙h2 ♙c7!

Aware that the opponent can't undertake much, Black takes his time and enables a doubling of rooks at some useful moment.

20 ♖e1?!

Sveshnikov desires to liberate himself by ♖e1-d3, but now his position turns unstable, something that Balashov immediately exploits. A waiting move like 20 ♙d2 was preferable, although White's task remains very difficult.

20...♙e7!

With the threat of 21...♖d4.

21 ♗d1 ♙c4!

Preparing ...g5-g4. As we will see next, White is already incapable of defending his kingside.

22 ♙d2 g4! 23 hxg4 ♖e3! 24 ♗e2

Or 24 fxe3 ♙f1+ 25 ♙g1 ♗xe3 26 ♖f3 ♙xd1 27 ♙axd1 ♗f4 with a decisive advantage.

24...♖xg4 25 f3 ♖xh2 26 ♖d4

If 26 ♖xh2, then 26...♙h4+ 27 ♖g3 ♗g1! and wins – Suetin.

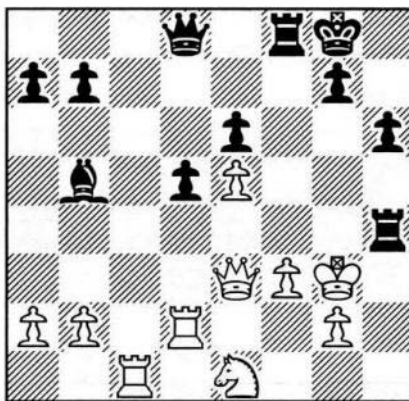
26...♙c5

Even stronger was 26...♙b5!, intending 27 ♖xb5 ♙h4, but the text doesn't ruin anything.

27 ♖xh2 ♙xd4 28 cxd4 ♙xd4 29 ♙c1?

29 ♗f2 ♙xd2 30 ♗xd2 was relatively better, although the extra pawn decides in the long run.

29...♙h4+ 30 ♖g3 ♙b5 31 ♗f2 ♗d8 32 ♗e3



32...d4!

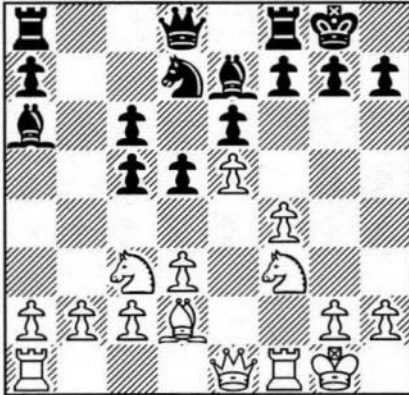
Deflecting the white queen in order to give check on g5.

33 ♙cd1 ♙hf4 34 ♗xf4 ♙xf4 35 ♖xf4 ♗g5+

In view of the imminent mate, White resigned.

Another reasonable idea when possessing doubled pawns is simply to get rid of them. Here is one example.

Example 206
W.Hug-S.Gligoric
 Skopje Olympiad 1972



White has just played 11 ♖e1, preparing a kingside attack. In his search for counter-play Gligoric decides to advance his doubled pawns in order to hit the enemy camp and clear the position for the bishop pair.

11...d4!

At first sight a surprising move since the white knight is invited to the excellent e4-square, but only in this way the black plan can be accomplished. The immediate 11...c4? is mistaken due to 12 d4 c5 13 ♗e3! – Gligoric, when Black admittedly gets rid of his doubled pawns, but also loses dark square control and buries the light-squared bishop.

12 ♘e4 c4!

Softening up the white pawn structure and enabling the future clearance of the h1-a8 diagonal for the bishop. Obviously this advance had to be effected right away, before White prevents it forever by b2-b3.

13 ♗a5

13 ♘xd4 is well met by 13...♗b6, preparing ...c6-c5; e.g. 14 ♗e3 c5 15 ♘f3 cxd3 16 ♗d1 d2!? 17 ♗xd2 ♗fd8! 18 ♗ff2 ♗xb2 with counterplay.

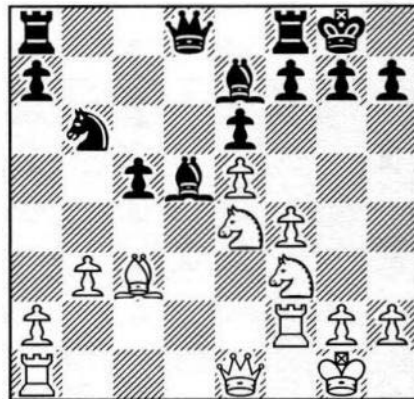
13...♗b6 14 dxc4?!

This capture just helps the black bishop reach the long diagonal. 14 ♗d1 was preferable, when 14...♗d5 15 b3 cxd3 16 cxd3 c5, preparing ...♗c6 and ...♗d5, seems slightly better for Black. At this moment 17 ♗g3? fails to 17...♗xd3! 18 ♘f6+ ♗xf6 19 exf6 ♗g6 etc.

14...♗xc4 15 ♗f2 c5 16 b3 ♗d5 17 c4

Or 17 ♗e2 ♗d7 with a clear advantage – Gligoric. Next Black can consider ...♗b7 as well as ...♗c6 followed by ...♗d5.

17...dxc3 18 ♗xc3



18...c4!

A strong advance that improves the prospects of virtually all the black pieces. White now faces an uphill struggle due to his lack of light square control, and the contrast with the initial diagram is striking.

19 ♗d2 ♗c7 20 ♗c1 ♗fd8 21 ♗d4 ♗ac8

The last piece enters the game. Being short of constructive plans, Hug now tries a sacrifice.

22 ♘f6+!? ♗xf6!

After 22...gxf6?! 23 exf6 ♗f8 24 ♘e5 the position is rather murky despite Black's extra piece. From a practical perspective, avoiding complications in a superior position makes a lot of sense.

23 exf6 ♗xf4 24 ♗e5 ♗h6 25 bxc4?

Helping the knight to a better square. Preferable was 25 fxg7 cxb3 26 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 27 axb3 ♗xb3 28 ♗d4, preparing ♖e5, with an inferior but not yet lost position.

25...♗xc4 26 ♖dc2 gxh6!

Gligoric has calculated that the ensuing white attack is harmless.

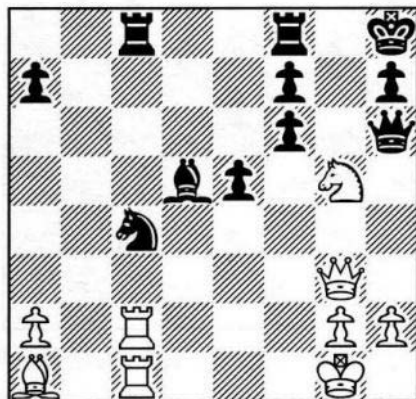
27 ♖g3+

Or 27 ♗c7!? ♖e3+! 28 ♖xe3 ♗xe3, keeping the material advantage.

27...♗h8 28 ♗g5 ♖f8 29 ♗a1

In the event of 29 ♖f4 Black of course avoids 29...fxe5?? 30 ♗xf7+, preferring the simple 29...♗g7.

29...e5



The attack has been neutralized and Black is winning.

30 ♖d3 ♖xg5 31 ♖xd5 ♗e3!

Confident about the team of queen and knight in the attack, Gligoric changes the material balance.

32 ♖xc8 ♗xd5 33 ♖xf8+ ♗g7 34 ♖fc8

If 34 ♖cc8, then 34...♖e3+ or 34...♖d2 decides.

34...♗f4 35 ♖1c2

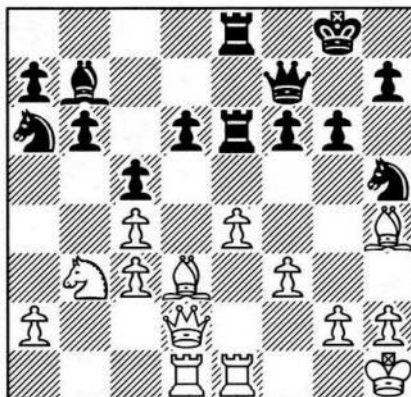
The only way of parrying both threats at g2 and e2.

35...♗h3+ 36 ♗f1 ♖f5+ 37 ♗e1 ♖e4+ 38 ♗d1 ♗f2+ 39 ♗d2 ♖d3+ 40 ♗e1 ♗e4

With the inevitable threat of 41...♖e3+

followed by a knight check on d2 or f2. White resigned.

Example 207
J.Ehlvest-G.Rechlis
Manila Interzonal 1990



Sometimes doubled pawns prove useful for controlling specific squares, in particular central ones. In the position above, White's isolated doubled pawns on the c-file aren't really exposed at this moment, and rather help him to control the centre. With his next move Ehlvest immediately exploits this fact.

22 ♗a1!

With the strong plan of ♗c2-e3-d5.

22...♗g7

Unfortunately for Black, a similar manoeuvre with 22...♗b8 followed by ...♗c6-d4 isn't possible due to the pawn on c3. Thus in the game he prepares ...f6-f5 with some kingside activity.

23 ♗c2 f5 24 ♗e3

Also possible was 24 exf5 ♗xf5 25 ♗f2 with some advantage thanks to the bishop pair, but the text is more clear-cut, in order to install the knight on d5 as soon as possible.

24...f4

After 24...fxe4 25 fxe4 ♖xe4? 26 ♘g4! White wins material; e.g. 26...♗f5 27 ♖xe4 or 26...♙h8 27 ♗f6.

25 ♗d5!

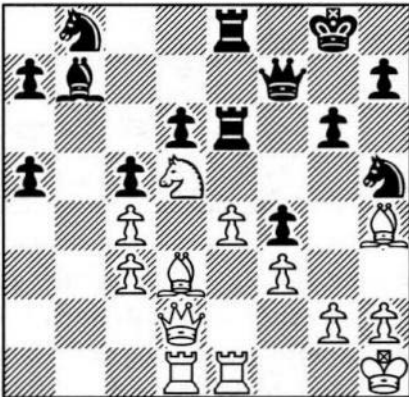
In just four moves the knight has been dramatically improved, exploiting the dynamic potential of the doubled pawns. Whenever Black captures on d5, then by c4xd5 White manages to repair his pawn structure, an idea familiar to us from Van Wely-Salov.

25...♗h5 26 a4!

Initiating a minority attack.

26...♗b8 27 a5 bxa5

The natural 27...♗d7? fails to 28 ♗c7.



28 ♖c2!

Eyeing the a4-square and preparing ♖a1. By now it is evident that White's queenside attack is much faster than Black's equivalent on the kingside, thus the latter is forced onto the defensive.

28...h6

Preparing ...g6-g5 to free the queen and knight from the defence of the f4-pawn. After 28...♗c6 29 ♖a4 ♖b8 30 ♖b1 White also keeps a strong initiative.

29 ♖a1 g5 30 ♖f2 ♗f6

Or 30...♗c6 31 ♖a4 ♗f6 32 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 33 ♖xa5, followed by ♖ea1 with pressure on

the a7-pawn.

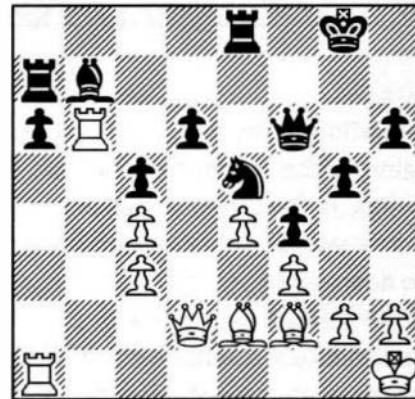
31 ♖xa5 ♗c6 32 ♖a2 ♖a8 33 ♖ea1 a6 34 ♖d3!

Providing the c4-pawn with some extra protection.

34...♗e5 35 ♖e2 ♖ee8 36 ♖b2 ♖a7?!

36...♗xd5 37 cxd5 ♖c8 was preferable, when 38 c4!?, preparing ♗a5 and ♖e1-c3, keeps a clear advantage.

37 ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 38 ♖b6!



With double threats at d6 and c5.

38...♗f7?

A tactical slip in time trouble. 38...♖e6 was necessary with an inferior, though not yet lost game.

39 ♖xc5

Now the black position collapses.

39...♗e7 40 ♖xd6 ♗d8 41 c5

Preparing 42 ♖c4. Black resigned.

**Example 208
F.Braga-U.Andersson
Sao Paulo 1979**

Here is a more complex example on the same topic. As so often in the Open Sicilian Black is under some pressure on the kingside, but in the long run the pawn structure speaks for his advantage.

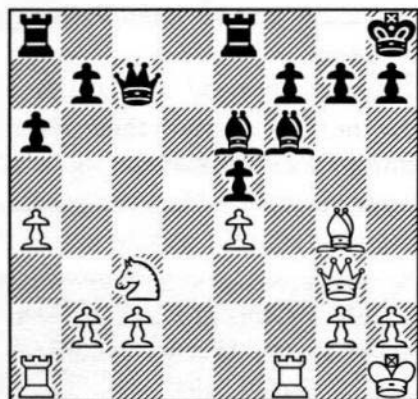


18 ♖xf6?!

In relation to my previous comment, exchanging pieces shouldn't favour White, but Braga is following a predefined plan. Preferable was 18 ♖ad1 or 18 ♜h4, keeping all the doors open.

18...♗xc4 19 ♖g4

Now White's intentions are easily appreciated: swap the last defender of the d5-square and then install the knight there. We saw a similar idea in Hracek-Almasi (p. 51).



19...♗ad8!

Andersson calmly proceeds with the most natural move in the position.

20 ♚fd1

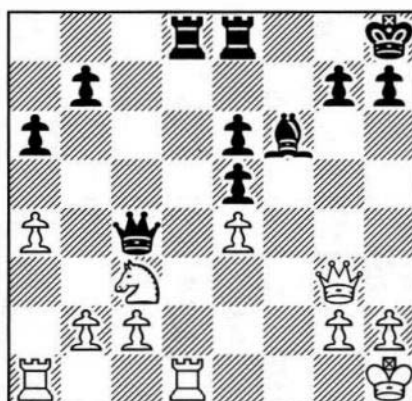
After 20 ♖xe6 fxe6! 21 ♜e3 ♗d4! 22

♗ad1 ♜b6 23 b3 ♖c8 Black exerted strong pressure in the game 5.Baumegger-D.Zoler, Graz 2002. The c2-pawn is a headache for White, and the attempt to improve this line by 22 ♖e2? fails to 22...♗b4, winning a pawn.

20...♗c4!

The queen unpins the e5-pawn to enable ...♗d4, and also eyes the interesting b4-square.

21 ♖xe6 fxe6!



By now the ...f7xe6 recapture doesn't cause us any surprise, yet its impact on the battle is enormous. Having been deprived of the d5-square, White ends up lacking a constructive plan, whereas Black has quite an easy play on the fragile enemy queenside. Due to the passive location of his knight, White can't really exploit the weak e5 and e6 pawns.

22 ♖d3

22 ♖xd8 was preferable – Andersson, although after 22...♖xd8 23 ♜e3 ♜b4 24 ♖b1 h6!?, preparing 25...♖g5 and ...♗(♖)d2, White's queenside is under obvious pressure.

22...♜b4 23 ♖b1

If 23 b3?!, then 23...♖xd3 24 ♜xd3 ♗d8! followed by 25...♖c8, winning a pawn.

23...♗d4!

Just like in the previous example the side with the doubled pawns uses them as a support for his pieces. Evidently it won't be easy for White to dislodge this rook, since the knight has to keep an eye on both e4 and a4.

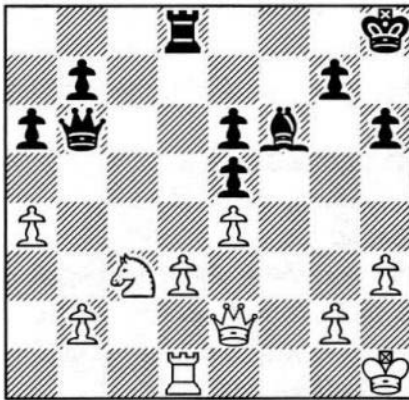
24 h3 ♖ed8 25 ♖g4

After providing his king with a flight square Braga commences the search for counterplay.

25...♗xd3 26 cxd3 ♖b6!

Of course not 26...♗xd3? 27 ♖xe6 and White wakes up, now that 27...♗xc3?? runs into 28 ♖e8+. In contrast, the text forces him to a dull defence of the backward pawn on d3.

27 ♖e2 ♖d4 28 ♗d1 h6 29 ♖g4 ♖b6 30 ♖e2



The multiple weaknesses at d3, b2 and a4 make it difficult for White to undertake any active measures. Thus Black has time to improve his position step by step.

30...♖d6 31 ♖h5 ♗h7 32 ♗f1 ♖e7 33 ♖e2

Or 33 ♗f3 ♗d6! – Andersson, with both 34...♗b6 and 34...♖d7 coming up next.

33...♗d4 34 ♗d1 ♖d8

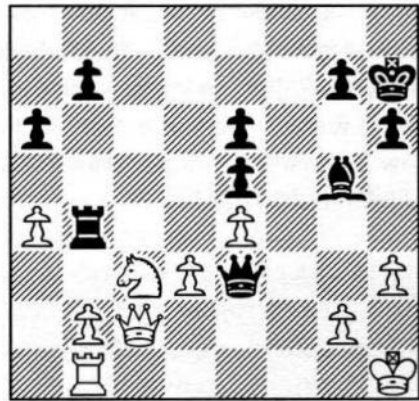
By placing the rook at the front, Black enables a future ...♗b4.

35 ♖g4 ♖b6 36 ♖e2 ♗b4 37 ♗b1

After 37 ♗d2 ♗g5 38 ♗c2 ♗f4! White is in zugzwang; e.g. 39 ♖f2 ♖xf2 40 ♗xf2

..♗c1, winning a decisive pawn.

37...♗g5 38 ♖c2 ♖e3!



Suddenly Black changes his focus to the opposite flank.

39 ♗f1 ♗f4 40 ♖e2

The threat of 40...♖g3 had to be parried, but now a pawn falls on the other flank.

40...♖d2! 41 ♖xd2 ♗xd2 42 ♗b1 ♗xa4

With an extra pawn and clearly more active pieces, Black is winning.

43 ♗g1 ♗b4 44 ♗f1 a5 45 b3 ♗g6 46 ♗f2 ♗g5

Avoiding 46...a4?! 47 ♗d1! with some confusion, but now 47...a4 is a threat.

47 ♖c3 ♗b6!

In view of the coming invasion with ...♗c6-c2, White resigned.

For the related exercises to this section, see page 356.

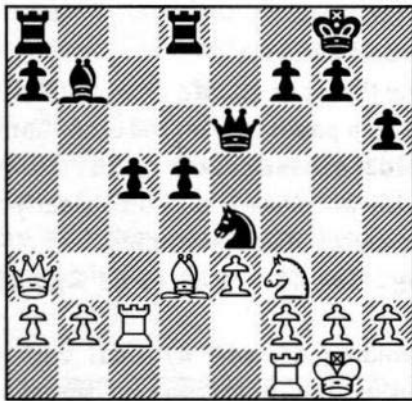
Blockade

A powerful strategical weapon is the blockade. By placing one of our pieces in front of an enemy pawn, we don't just prevent the advance of that pawn, we also limit the movements of its fellow pieces. These observations go back to Nimzowitsch, who also noticed that the blocking piece itself tends to be rather well placed, at least in

the case of a central or bishop's pawn.

So far in this book we have seen numerous blockades; e.g. in Mikhalevski-Ehlvest (p. 57), Kharlov-Villavicencio (p. 98), Spassky-Karpov (p. 162), and Ivanisevic-Solak (p. 237), just to name a few. In the following we will see some more examples on how to create a blockade and take advantage of it afterwards.

Example 209
P. Van der Sterren-L. Ljubojevic
Amsterdam 1999



One of the merits of hanging pawns is that they control a wide range of squares. For this reason the white knight is currently short of prospects. With his next move Van der Sterren addresses this issue.

20 b4!

A typical counter-strike in this structure, which weakens the hanging pawns and gains some dark square control. In fact, we already came across it in Aagaard-Åkesson (p. 201) and Hansen-Tiviakov (p. 217). In contrast, after 20 ♖xe4?! dxe4 21 ♞d2 ♜d3! Black obtains counterplay, now that 22 ♜xc5? fails to 22...♜c8.

20...c4?

Ljubojevic creates a passed pawn but also lets his opponent install a powerful blockade, one that will drastically change the strategical balance. Preferable was either 20...cxb4 21 ♜xb4 ♙a6! 22 ♞d4 ♜b6 with just a slight disadvantage – Donev, or the sharper 20...d4!? 21 exd4 cxd4 22 ♜e1 ♜g4 with complex play.

21 ♞d4! ♜g6 22 ♙xe4 ♜xe4 23 b5

The tremendous knight on d4 doesn't just prevent ...d5-d4, it also severely restricts the bishop on b7. Meanwhile, the passed pawn on c4 is unlikely to advance, whereas White may soon create one of his own on the b-file.

23...♜g6

Preparing ...a7-a6 in order to activate the rook on a8. The immediate 23...a6? failed to 24 b6.

24 ♜e7!

The queen unblocks the a-pawn with tempo.

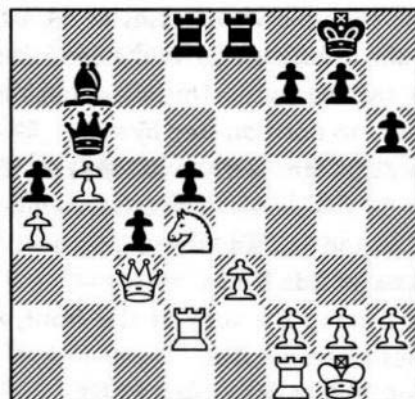
24...♜b6 25 a4 ♜e8

Parrying the threat of 26 a5.

26 ♜b4! a5

This lets White add a protected passed pawn to his other advantages, but there was no other way to prevent a4-a5.

27 ♜c3 ♜ad8 28 ♜d2!



Now that the situation on the queenside

has stabilized, White has time for a major regrouping of his pieces. The rooks will be doubled on the d-file and the knight switches to f4 or c3 in order to exert maximum pressure on the d5-pawn. Meanwhile, Black can't do very much.

28...♖d6 29 ♖e2 ♗e4 30 ♗fd1 ♗d8 31 ♖d4!

In the absence of Black's other minor pieces, the rook can take up the blocking task.

31...♗e5

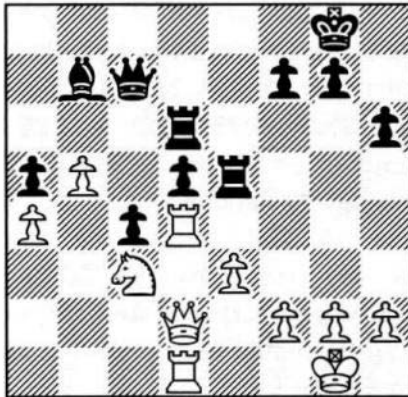
Or 31...♗xd4 32 ♗xd4, preparing ♖e2-c3 and e3-e4.

32 ♗d2 ♗c7

The immediate 32...♗g6 is well met by the prophylactic 33 g3, just like in the game.

33 ♖c3

Finally White is ready for the tactical shot 34 e4. We saw a similar idea in Kharlov-Villavicencio (p. 98).



33...♗g6?

This attacking try leads nowhere after Van der Sterren's simple reply, so 33...f5, complicating e3-e4, was a better choice. White can now win a pawn by 34 f4 ♗e8 35 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 36 ♗xd5, but after 36...c3 Black obtains some counterplay. Thus the prophylactic 34 h3!?, preparing f2-f4, might be more accurate.

34 g3 ♗c5

Ljubojevic gives up the pawn, aware that 34...♖d6 35 e4! leads to the same thing.

35 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 36 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 37 ♗xd5 ♗b4

After 37...♗xd5 38 ♗xd5 the rook ending is easily won due to the badly placed rook on g6.

38 ♗c1 ♗xa4

Or 38...c3 39 ♗d8+ ♖h7 40 ♗d3 ♗xa4 41 ♗xc3, intending h4-h5.

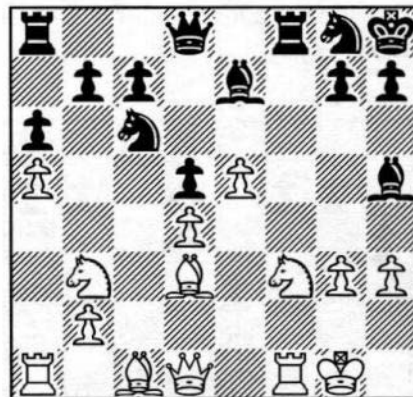
39 ♗xc4 ♗a1+ 40 ♖g2 ♗b1 41 ♗c8+ ♖h7 42 ♗xf7

With such an exposed black king, the rest is easy.

42...♗f6 43 ♗g8+ ♖g6 44 ♗c4! ♗f5 45 f4 a4 46 e4 ♗g4 47 e5 ♗e6 48 h3

Black resigned in view of 48...♗f5 49 g4.

Example 210
A.Kovchan-V.Malaniuk
Swidnica 1999



In structural terms White is better thanks to his strong passed pawn on e5 and Black's oppressed pawn majority on the queenside. Malaniuk comes up with a clever knight manoeuvre.

17...♗e8!

Preparing ...♖d8-e6 with a confident

Mastering Chess Strategy

blockade of the e5-pawn.

18 ♖d2 ♜d8 19 ♜g2

By overprotecting the knight on f3, White aims at unpinning it with ♜c2.

19...♙g6!

The immediate 19...♙e6?! permits 20 ♜c2 attacking h7, so Black responds to this threat in advance.

20 ♜c2 ♙xd3 21 ♜xd3 ♙e6

The plan has been accomplished. From e6 the knight doesn't just prevent the advance of the e-pawn, it also controls a great range of squares.

22 h4!?

Preparing 23 ♙g5 in order to swap the "bad" bishop.

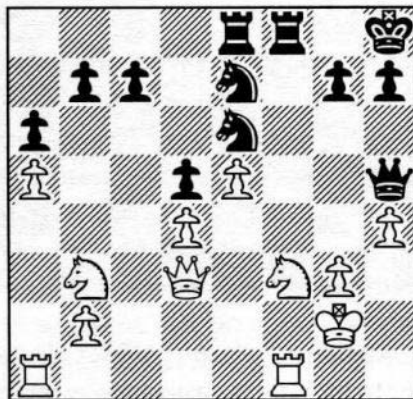
22...♜h5

Seeing that the restrictive 22...h6 23 ♜h1 ♜h5?! runs into 24 ♙g5!, Black accepts the enemy idea and keeps improving his pieces.

23 ♙g5 ♝ae8

After 23...♙xg5?! 24 ♙xg5 ♙xg5 25 hxg5 ♜xg5 26 ♙c5 White has a strong initiative for the pawn. In the game he will achieve the same idea in a less favourable version.

24 ♙xe7 ♙xe7



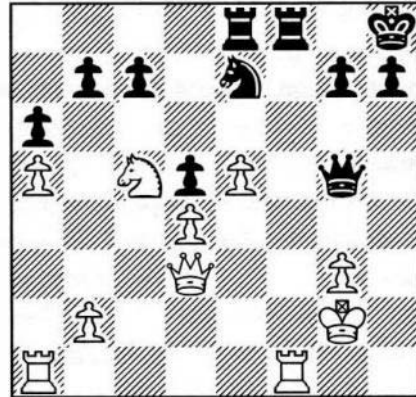
25 ♙g5!?

A typical method in the fight against the blockade: swap the blocking piece. Actually we came across it in several earlier exam-

ples, such as Krivoshey-Timoshenko with 34 ♙g4 (p. 38) and Hellsten-Veloz with 23 ♙b5 (p. 122).

25...♙xg5 26 hxg5 ♜xg5 27 ♙c5

In exchange for the pawn White enjoys an excellent knight on c5 and, again, a dangerous passed pawn on the e-file. His only problem is his king.



27...♜g4!

Parrying the fork on e6 and preparing hostile actions against the white king. Less convincing is 27...♙f5 28 ♜f4, followed by ♜af1, or 27...♙g6 28 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 29 ♜f1 – Malaniuk.

28 ♜h1 ♙g6 29 ♜af1 h6

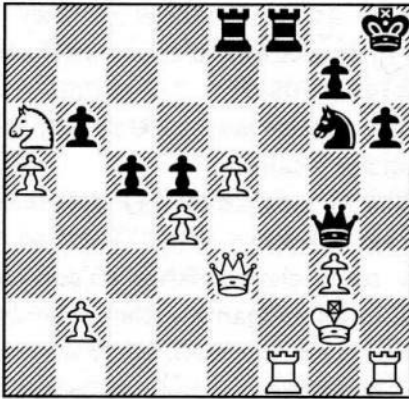
Here 29...♜f4!, hitting the d4-pawn, seems very strong; e.g. 30 ♜xh7+ ♜g8!, when Black's attack is the stronger one. Perhaps White should have preferred 28 ♜d1 two moves earlier.

30 ♜e3 b6 31 ♙xa6?

By 31 axb6 cxb6 32 ♙xa6, followed by ♙b4, White could have held the balance; e.g. 32...♜c8 33 ♙b4! ♜xf1 34 ♜xf1 ♜c4 35 ♙xd5 ♜xd4 36 ♙f4 with drawish simplifications.

31...c5!

Destroying the centre. This strong blow is the reason why White should have swapped on b6 before taking the a6-pawn.



32 ♖xf8+

Or 32 axb6 cxd4, followed by ...♟f4+ or ...♜e4+ with a devastating attack.

32...♞xf8 33 ♞f1 ♞xf1 34 ♔xf1 cxd4

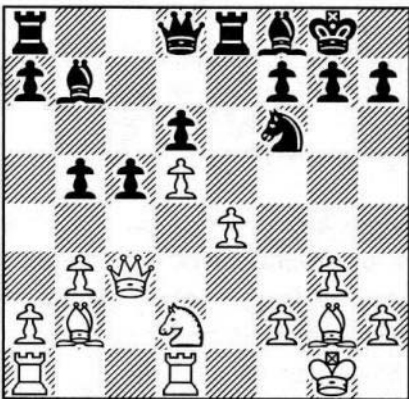
Thanks to White's exposed king, the rest is easy.

35 ♜e2 ♜f5+ 36 ♔g2 bxa5 37 e6 d3 38 e7

♟xe7! 39 ♜xe7 d2 40 ♜e8+ ♔h7 41 ♜e2 ♜c2

White resigned.

Example 211
E.Bareev-J.Polgar
 Candidates Tournament, Elista
 2007



In this Benoni-like structure, White's

long-term plan is the e4-e5 advance. However, the straightforward 17 f4?! permits 17...♜b6! 18 ♔h1 c4, preparing ...♟g4, with counterplay on the dark squares. With his next move Bareev tries first to stabilize the situation on the queenside before taking concrete action in the centre.

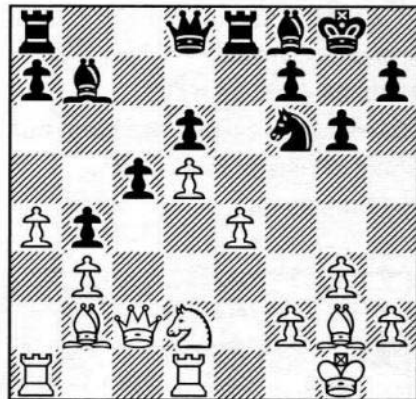
17 a4!

Softening up the c4-square for the knight, an idea familiar to us from Najdorf-Fischer (p. 144).

17...b4?!

Preferable was 17...a6, keeping the tension, although after 18 axb5 axb5 19 ♞xa8 ♜xa8 20 ♞a1 ♜b8 21 f4 White has the initiative – Krasenkow.

18 ♜c2 g6



19 a5!

A clever provocative measure. Before installing the knight on c4 White aims to deprive the black bishop of the a6-square. His idea succeeds after 19...a6?! 20 ♟c4 or if a5-a6 is allowed, so Polgar's reply is logical.

19...♞a6 20 ♟f1!

Another key move. The knight tends to be the best blocker, so Bareev protects it from exchanges by swapping the light-squared bishops. Less precise was 20 ♟c4?! ♟xc4 21 ♜xc4 ♟g7 and Black defends, with ...♞c8-c7-e7 as a future idea.

20...♙xf1 21 ♖xf1 ♙h6

This practically loses a tempo, but after 21...♙g7 22 ♖fe1 ♘d7 23 ♙xg7 ♗xg7 24 f4! preparing ♘c4 White is also better – Krasenkow. Evidently the f2-f4 advance doesn't just gain space and support a future e4-e5, it also protects the knight from exchanges, i.e. 24♘c4?! ♘e5.

22 f4 ♙g7 23 ♖fe1 ♗d7 24 ♘c4 ♙h5 25 ♖ad1

White's pieces are in perfect harmony and the desired e4-e5 advance isn't far away. As for Black, the terrific knight on c4 has left her without the customary queenside play that one expects in the Benoni.

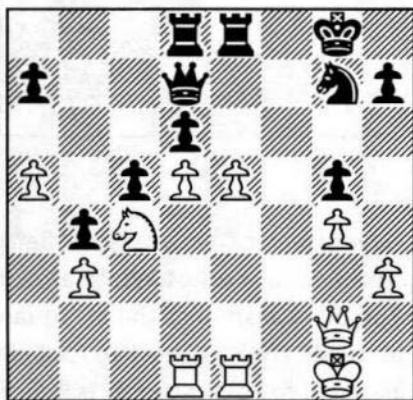
25...♙xb2 26 ♗xb2♘g2 27 ♗g2

A technical choice: before launching the e4-e5 advance White prepares g3-g4 in order to restrict the enemy knight. 27 e5 ♘f5 is less clear – Bareev.

27...♖ad8 28 g4 f6 29 h3 g5

This merely weakens the king, but Black was short of reasonable moves.

30fxg5fxg5 31 e5!



Finally! Now the d5-pawn turns into a strong passed pawn.

31...dxe5 32 d6 ♗f7 33 ♗d5!

Less technical was 33 ♘xe5?! ♗xb3, intending 34...♖xe5, but now the threat of 34 ♘xe5 is for real.

33...e4! 34 ♗xg5!

Again 34 ♘e5?! ♖xe5! 35 ♗xe5 ♗xb3 leads to unnecessary black counterplay.

34...♗f3 35 ♗d5+?!

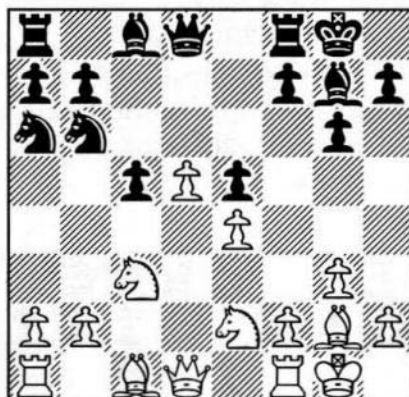
More precise was 35 ♗e3 with a clear advantage – Bareev.

35...♖e6 36 ♖e3 ♖dxd6! 37 ♖xf3 ♖xd5 38 ♖xd5 exf3 39 ♗f2

By some clever tactics Polgar has escaped to an endgame without the d-pawn on the board, but even so White keeps a clear advantage thanks to his active pieces and Black's weak queenside pawns. The game continued 39...♖e2+ 40 ♗xf3 ♖c2 41 ♖d8+! ♗f7 42 ♖d7+ ♗g6 43 ♖xa7 ♘e6 44 ♗e4 ♘d4 45 h4! and White soon converted his extra pawn.

Example 212

M.Euwe-H.Pilnik
Amsterdam 1950



Here is an older example that shows the usage of several blocking squares. White has emerged from the opening with a passed pawn on d5, and Black hurries to set up a blockade with a knight.

12...♘c4! 13 b3

A rather indifferent reply. By 13 ♘b5! White could have fought against the enemy

plan, and also provided his second knight with a good square on c3.

13...♖d6 14 ♗e3 b6 15 ♜d2 ♞e8!

A “mysterious” rook move, aimed at the potential f2-f4.

16f4

16 f3 was a more restrained approach, preparing ♞f2, ♗f1 and a4-a5 with queenside play – Ftacnik.

16...♖c7

Pilnik brings his knight closer to the heat of the battle and enables a future ...♗a6.

17 ♞f2?

An oversight that lets Black win the fight for the centre with his next, precise move. 17 ♞ae1 was correct, when 17...♗d7, preparing ...♖cb5, leads to a balanced game. Both 17...♗a6 18 f5! and 17...♗g4 18 f5! gxf5 19 h3, on the other hand, yield White some initiative.

17...exf4! 18 ♗xf4

Since 18 gxf4? fails to 18...♖xe4! 19 ♗xe4 ♞xe4 20 ♖xe4 ♗xa1, Euwe has to give up the e5-square.

18...♗a6 19 ♞e1 ♜e7 20 g4?!



This leads to new dark square weaknesses, and the square vacated on g3 won't be of much use to the knight. While 20 ♖c1? failed to 20...♗xc3! 21 ♜xc3 ♖xd5, a better way of solving the problem with this

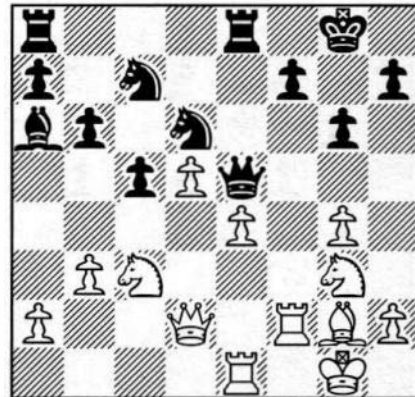
piece was 20 ♖h1!, preparing ♖g1-f3(h3).

20...♗e5!

The bishop takes up the task of blockading the other central pawn, before White is even close to achieving e4-e5.

21 ♗xe5 ♜xe5 22 ♖g3?!

It was not yet too late for 22 ♖h1!, followed by ♖g1-f3, in order to improve the knight and challenge the enemy blockade. Here Black should avoid 22...f6?! 23 ♖g1 ♖f7 due to 24 ♖f3 ♜d6 25 e5! followed by 26 ♖e4, with a strong initiative – Ftacnik. Preferable is 22...♗xe2! 23 ♞fxe2 ♞e7, followed by ...♞ae8 or ...♞f8, with some advantage.



22...♞e7 23 ♗f1 ♗c8!

Keeping the “good” bishop.

24 ♗e2 ♗d7 25 ♞ef1 ♞f8

Both here and later, 25...b5!?, advancing the queenside majority, was an interesting option. Anyway the text is also fine, with the opponent being short of active plans.

26 ♜c1 ♖ce8 27 ♖h1 f6!

Enabling a future ...♖f7-e5 to block the e4-pawn in a more confident way.

28 ♞g1 ♞g7 29 ♗f3

If 29 h4 to prevent Black's next, then after 29...b5!? 30 ♗f3 b4 31 ♖d1 ♞c8 32 ♖e3 ♗b5, preparing ...c5-c4, White is still under pressure.

29...♖g5!

Although the advance 29...b5 remained a good option for Black, the text has the merit of further reducing White's counterplay.

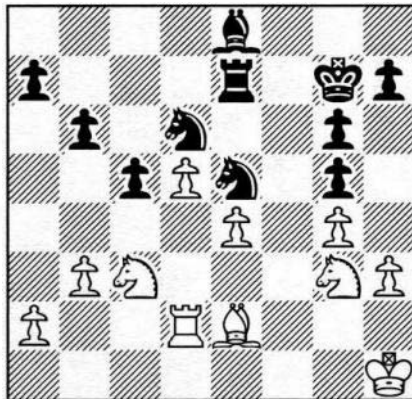
30 ♜xg5 fxg5

The doubled pawns have increased Black's dark square control, and he is now ready to resume the plan of a knight transfer to e5.

31 ♖gf1 ♗ge8 32 ♙e2 ♜xf2 33 ♜xf2 ♖g7 34 h3 ♗f6 35 ♙f3 ♙e8!

Vacating the d7-e5 route for the knight TO RELOCATE.

36 ♜e2 ♗d7 37 ♜d2 ♗e5 38 ♙e2

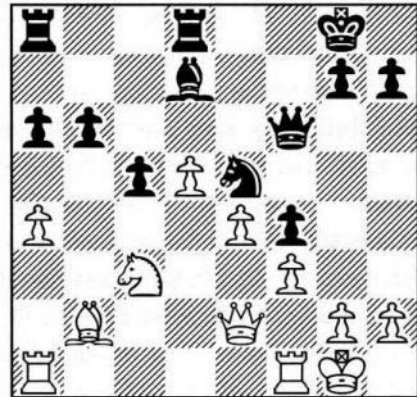


38...b5!

Finally Black sets his pawn majority in motion. In contrast, White's central pawns remain completely immobilized. There followed 39 ♜c2 ♜c7 40 ♗d1 c4 41 bxc4 bxc4 42 ♗c3 ♖f6 43 ♗b1 ♜b7 44 ♗d2 ♙a4! 45 ♜c1 ♜b2 46 ♗xc4 ♗exc4 47 ♙xc4 ♙c2! 48 ♙b3 ♜b1! 49 ♜xb1 ♙xb1 50 ♗e2 ♙xe4+ 51 ♖h2 ♖e5 52 ♗c3 ♙d3 53 ♖g3 ♗e4+ 54 ♗xe4 ♙xe4 and Pilnik managed to eliminate the d-pawn as well, with a winning endgame.

Now let's see two examples on how to fight against an enemy blockade.

Example 213
M.Botvinnik-V.Smyslov
World Championship (game 13),
Moscow 1957



Black has managed to install a powerful knight on e5 where it blocks White's central pawns. Botvinnik now prepares the exchange of this piece.

25 ♗d1!

With the strong plan of ♗f2-d3. Black's reply is more or less forced.

25...b5 26 ♗f2 c4

If 26...♗d6, preparing ...♗c4, then 27 ♜fc1 ♗c4 28 ♜xc4! bxc4 29 ♖xc4 with a huge advantage thanks to the strong bishop on b2 and the central passed pawns, which have now become totally mobile. Black is also in trouble after 26...bxa4 27 ♗d3 ♙b5 28 ♙xe5; for example, 28...♙xd3 29 ♖xd3 ♖xe5 30 ♜xa4 or 28...♖xe5 29 ♗xe5 ♙xe2 30 ♜fc1 with a clear edge for White in both cases, thanks to his superior pawn structure.

27 axb5!

Opening a second front on the queen-side, one that will indirectly weaken the blockade on e5.

27...axb5 28 ♖d2

The queen heads for the long diagonal and prevents ...b5-b4.

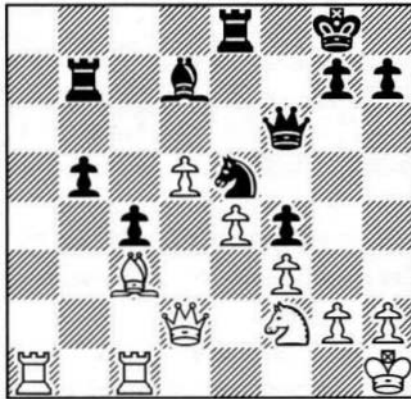
28...♖ac8

Installing the threat of 29...c3 followed by 30...♗xf3+, but it is easily parried by White's reply. In any case, after 28...♖ab8 29 ♗c3 ♜g5 30 ♕h1 with ♖a7 next, Black is under pressure.

29 ♗fc1! ♖e8 30 ♖c3

30 ♖a7 was another tempting option, but Botvinnik prefers a few prophylactic moves before taking concrete action.

30...♗c7 31 ♗h1 ♖b7



32 ♖a2!

Botvinnik has noticed that any rook exchange would seriously weaken Black's blockade, and so takes the first step in this direction.

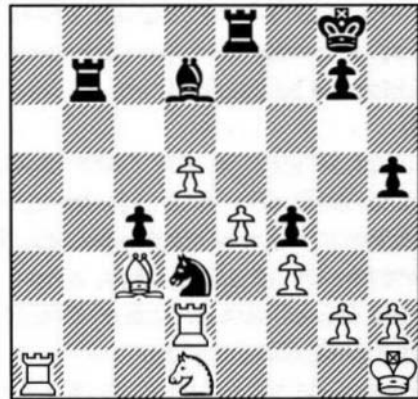
32...h5

This isn't very constructive but Black was short of active plans. In the event of 32...♜g5 33 ♖ca1 ♗g6, preparing ...♗h4, then 34 ♖a7! ♗h4 35 ♗d3! ♖xa7 36 ♖xa7 cxd3 37 ♖xd7 leads to a decisive counterattack; e.g. 37...♖e7 38 ♖xe7 ♜xe7 39 ♜xd3 ♜a3 40 ♜d2 with an easy win.

33 ♖ca1 b4 34 ♖xb4 ♜b6

Or 34...♖eb8 35 ♖c3 ♖b1+ 36 ♗d1 and Black's counterplay is over.

35 ♖c3 ♜e3 36 ♗d1! ♜xd2 37 ♖xd2 ♗d3



Black's activity is just illusory and Botvinnik soon manages to mobilize his forces, after which the passed pawns will take their toll.

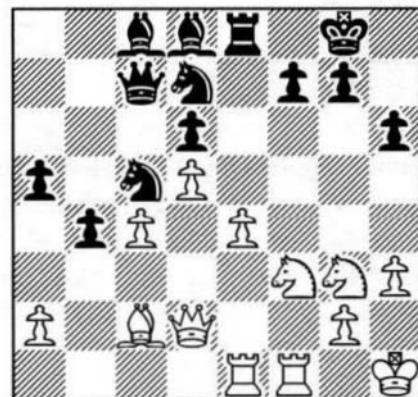
38 ♖d4 ♖eb8 39 ♗c3!

Curiously, the knight is back where it started, and now rules out the idea of 39...♖b1.

39.. ♖b3 40 h4 ♖8b7 41 ♖a8+

In view of e5-e6, Black resigned.

Example 214
M. Tal-S. Gligoric
Candidates match (game 9),
Belgrade 1968



Earlier in the game, Black sacrificed the exchange to arrange a blockade on the dark squares, and now he is just about to complete his plan by 34...♗e5.

34 e5!

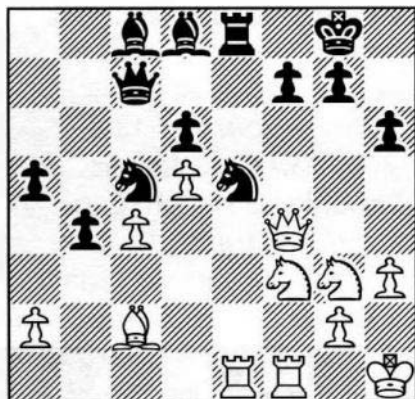
A typical idea in the fight against a blockade: a sacrifice of the pawn about to be blocked. Here it helps White clear the e-file and the b1-h7 diagonal for a future attack. We saw other merits of the same idea in Ivanisevic-Solak (p. 237).

34...♗xe5

A second exchange sacrifice with 34...♗xe5!? is interesting – Gligoric, although after 35 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 36 ♖f5, intending ♗f3-g3, White obtains attacking prospects anyway.

35 ♗f4!

Preparing the regrouping with the moves ♗h5 and ♗g3 with focus on the black king.



35...♗e7

Unpinning the knight on e5. In the event of 35...♗cd7 White should probably just stick to his original plan by 36 ♗h5, whereas the tempting 36 ♗a4?! permits 36...♗f8 37 ♗xd7 ♗g6!, followed by ...♗xd7 and Black defends.

36 ♗d4

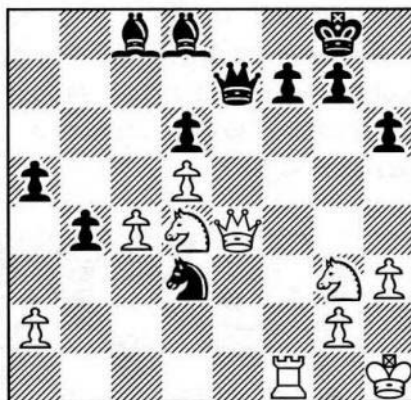
Eyeing the multiple weaknesses at b5,

c6 and f5. The consequent 36 ♗h5 followed by 37 ♗g3 was also strong.

36...♗ed3

Faced with an attack Gligoric logically resorts to exchanges. The greedy 36...♗xc4? failed to 37 ♗xf7+! – Tal.

37 ♗xd3 ♗xd3 38 ♗xe7 ♗xe7 39 ♗e4!



Tal has estimated that the exchange of queens would leave the d6-pawn short of a reliable defence.

39...♗e5 40 ♗c6! ♗xc6

Now a strong passed pawn appears on c6, but the desirable 40...♗g5 failed to 41 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 42 c5! or 41...♗xg3 42 ♗xf7! – Tal.

41 dxc6 ♗e5

The least of evils, in order to get rid of the backward d-pawn.

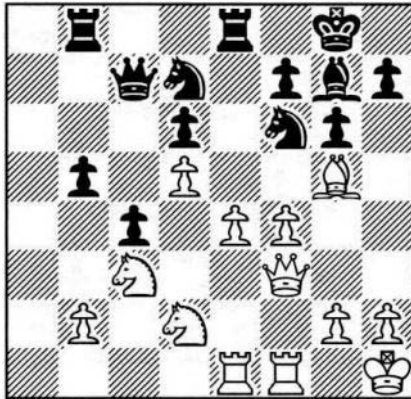
42 ♗xe5 dxe5 43 ♗d1 ♗c7 44 ♗e4!

Heading for d6-b5 to assist the passed pawn. The game continued 44...♗f8 45 ♗d6 ♗xd6 46 ♗xd6 ♗e7 47 ♗d5 a4 48 c7 b3 49 axb3 axb3 50 ♗xe5+ ♗d6 51 ♗b5 ♗xc7 52 ♗xb3 and Tal soon converted his extra material into victory.

Sometimes a blockade is achieved by means of a pawn sacrifice. Let's see one such sacrifice, that often appears in openings like the Benoni and the King's Indian.

Example 215
J. Timman-J. Nunn
 London 1975

In this typical position from the Benoni, Black is just one move away from the desired ...b5-b4, when it is not clear where the knight on c3 should go. Timman comes up with a standard antidote.



19 e5! dxe5 20 f5!

Thanks to the previous pawn sacrifice, White can now use the e4-square as a blockade for one of his knights. Obviously this would not be the case after the immediate 19 f5?, when it is Black who obtains a blocking square on e5.

20...f8

Safeguarding the vulnerable f7-pawn. 20...b4?! 21 dce4 now just helps White, but 20...e4!? was worthy of attention. In the same way as Tal did in the previous example, Black returns the pawn in order to eliminate the enemy blockade. There can follow 21 ddx4 e5! 22 d6!? d7 with a sharp battle.

21 dde4

By now the merits of the white blockade are evident. Black has been restricted on the a1-h8 diagonal and the e-file, and he

can no longer put a knight on e5. Meanwhile, the powerful knight on e4 might prove helpful both in a future kingside attack and as an assistant to the passed d-pawn.

21...b6

After 21...b4 22 dxf6+ dxf6 23 xxf6 xxf6 24 e4 White is much better despite the minus pawn – Bukic. The attempt to improve this line by 23...bxc3!? 24 xg7 xg7 can be met by 25 f6+ gh8 26 xc3 fe8 27 c1!, heading for h6, with an attack.

22 d1

Supporting a future d5-d6. A tempting alternative was 22 d6 c6 23 xxf6 dxf6 24 dxf6+ xxf6 25 d5, but the exchange sacrifice 25...xd6! 26 dxb6 cxb6 27 fxg6 fxg6 28 xe5 g7 seems to yield Black a defensible position.

22...dxe4 23 dxe4 f6

Preventing both 24 f6 and 24 e7.

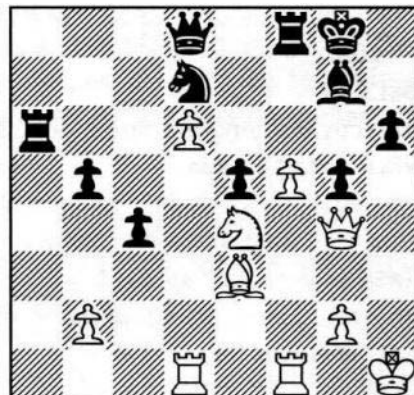
24 e3 a6 25 g4!

Provoking new weaknesses on the kingside. In contrast, 25 d6?! c6 would just help Black in activating his queen.

25...g5 26 h4! h6 27 hxg5 fxg5

Or 27...hxg5 28 f3, followed by h3 – Bukic.

28 d6 d8



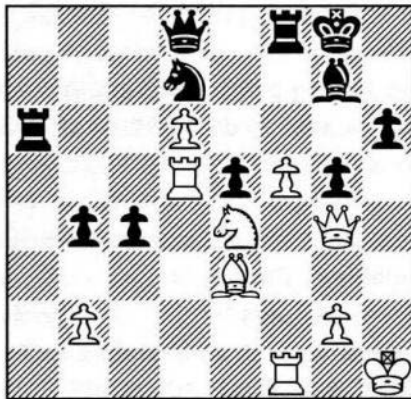
Mastering Chess Strategy

The desirable 28...♖c6 now runs into 29 f6!, when 29...♗xf6? drops a piece to 30 ♖e6+, and 29...♗xf6 30 ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 31 ♖xf6! ♖xf6 32 d7 ♖a8 33 d8♖+ ♖xd8 34 ♖xd8+ also favours White.

29 ♖d5!

Just like in Karpov-Gligoric and Hellsten-Soppe, the squares vacated by a pawn advance are immediately exploited by its fellow pieces.

29...b4



30 f6!

A strong pawn sacrifice that clears the light squares towards the black king. Also interesting was 30 ♗c5!? ♗xc5 31 ♖xc4! with multiple threats.

30...♗xf6

After 30...♗xf6? 31 ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 32 ♖xc4 ♖a8 33 ♗b6! the discovered check soon takes its toll.

31 ♖b5! ♗g7

Indirectly parrying the threat of 32 ♖b7.

32 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 33 ♖xb4

With such a dominant position White has time to pick up one of the pawns.

33...♖a1+ 34 ♗h2 ♖a5 35 ♗c5!

The white pieces are cooperating nicely. 35 ♖xc4? ♖e1 was less convincing.

35...♖f1?

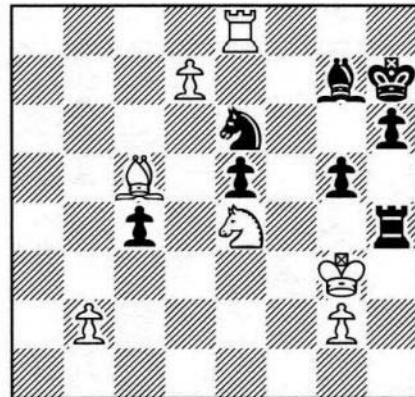
Losing track of the d-pawn. Black had to

play 35...♖a8 in order to meet 36 d7? by 36...♗xd7!. Thus White should prefer the simple capture 36 ♖xc4 with a big advantage.

36 d7! ♖f4 37 ♖d1 ♖h4+ 38 ♗g3 ♖d8

On 38...♗e6 White also decides by 39 ♖d5.

39 ♖d5+ ♗h7 40 ♖b7 ♗g6 41 ♖a7! ♗f4 42 ♖a8 ♖xa8 43 ♖xa8 ♗e6 44 ♖e8!



The enemies of the passed pawn are finished off one by one.

44...♗xc5 45 ♗xc5

Curiously, until this moment the knight hadn't moved even once since its arrival at the blocking square on e4, and that was more than 20 moves ago! Nevertheless, its impact has been strongly felt during the whole game.

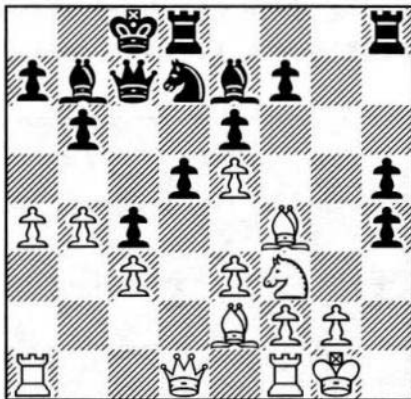
45...♗f6 46 ♖f8!

In view of 46...♗e7 47 ♖f7+, Black resigned.

So far we have mainly seen blockades being performed by pieces, in particular by knights. A different kind of blockade, less active but still rather useful, is that conducted with pawns. We already saw in Gligoric-Benko (p. 175) Black trying (in vain) to keep his kingside closed by 23...f5. Here is a more successful case.

Example 216
B.Spasky-T.V.Petrosian
 World Championship (game 7),
 Moscow 1966

The location of the kings on opposite flanks suggests that both players are aiming for an attack. Before taking concrete action on "his" flank, Petrosian applies a clever prophylactic measure on the queen-side.



18...a6!

From now on, Black will always respond to a4-a5 by ...b6-b5, and to b4-b5 by ...a6-a5, thus keeping the queenside closed.

19♖h1

Aware that his attack is no longer viable, Spasky resorts to defensive play.

19...♗dg8 20 ♗g1 ♗g4 21 ♜d2 ♗hg8 22 a5 b5!

Of course. This entire method of placing the pawns next to each other in preparation for a blockade can evidently be applied on any part of the board, and is rather frequent in practice.

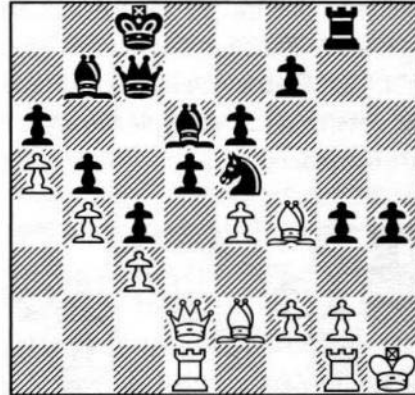
23 ♗ad1 ♖f8!

With the strong plan of 24...f6 25 exf6 e5.

24 ♖h2?

This wins the exchange but leads to the creation of a powerful block of black pawns from the e- to the h-file. Preferable was 24 ♜d4 ♖g7 25 ♖h2!? ♖h8 26 ♖h1 with a waiting game – Marin.

24...♗xe5! 25 ♖xg4 hxg4 26 e4 ♖d6



The white king is now under a cloud. There followed 27 ♜e3 ♖d7 (27...g3! was even stronger – Marin) 28 ♖xd6 ♜xd6 29 ♗d4?! e5! 30 ♗d2 f5! (vacating f6 for the knight) 31 exd5 f4 32 ♜e4 ♖f6 33 ♜f5+ ♖b8 34 f3 ♖c8! 35 ♜b1 g3 36 ♗e1 h3 with a decisive attack.

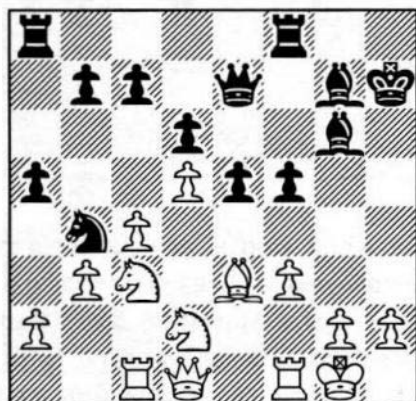
As discovered by Tigran Petrosian many years ago, sometimes the goal of establishing a blockade can justify the sacrifice of a whole exchange. Typically the rook is sacrificed for the enemy bishop of the same colour as the blocking square. In fact we recently saw Black trying to achieve this in Tal-Gligoric, and here is another example.

Example 217
J.Hellsten-P.Cramling
 Malmö 1996

In a King's Indian battle Black has great compensation for the pawn. Her bishop

pair is strong, the semi-open g- and h-files will be useful in an attack, and the pawns on e5 and f5 control the centre. Only the arrival of the knight at d3 is missing for a complete initiative; e.g. 21 a3?! ♠d3 22 ♠c2 ♣h4 23 ♣e2 e4.

So, how should White cover the d3-square? The natural 21 ♣e2 drops the exchange after 21...f4 followed by 22...♠d3; while if 21 ♠b1, then 21...e4! and the knight gets to d3 anyway, leaving its counterpart misplaced on b1.



21 ♣e2!

Anyway, I still remember a certain pleasure when making this move, one that Petrosian must have felt many times.

21...f4?

The correct choice in terms of material, but positionally deficient. Black should have tried 21...e4! 22 fxe4 fxe4 instead, when 23 ♠b5!?, heading for d4, seems to hold the balance; e.g. 23...♠d3 24 ♠cd1 followed by ♠d4, or 23...♠xa2 24 ♠ce1 ♠c3 25 ♠xc3 ♠xc3 26 ♣g4 and Black's bishop pair compensates for the slightly exposed king.

22 ♠f2 ♠d3

Or 22...♠d3 23 ♠cd1, followed by ♠de4 with a big advantage.

23 ♣d1 ♠xf1 24 ♣xf1

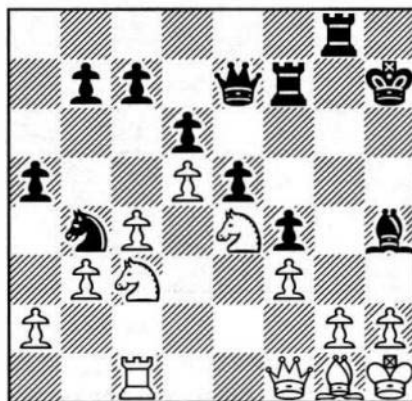
In just a few moves the position has

changed completely. Black won the exchange but ended up with a bad bishop and a lack of any dynamics whatsoever. On the other hand, White may soon establish a strong blockade on e4 with a knight, where it will dominate the whole board.

24...♠f6

Preparing 25...♠h4 in order to get rid of the bad bishop, but White easily parries this idea with his next move. A different solution for this bishop is 24...e4!?, eliminating the blockade, although after 25 ♠dxe4, preparing a2-a3 and ♠b5-d4 with focus on e6, White is much better anyway.

25 ♣h1! ♠h4 26 ♠g1 ♠f7 27 ♠de4 ♠g8



Black is logically preparing a kingside attack, but unfortunately some of her key attacking pieces are no longer present on the board, such as the light-squared bishop and the other knight. We will soon see that once the g2-pawn enjoys sufficient protection, the black attack cannot progress. In contrast, White has a rather automatic plan of action on the other flank.

28 a3 ♠a6 29 ♠c2! ♠g6 30 ♠b2

Preparing b3-b4 and c4-c5 with an attack at the base of the enemy pawn chain. We saw a similar, though less successful case in Zvjaginsev-Polgar (p. 182).

30...♣d8 31 b4 axb4 32 axb4 ♠e7

A more active task is desirable for this bishop, but after 32...♔g3?! 33 c5 ♖h4 34 c6 bxc6 35 dxc6! ♟b8 36 b5 ♜h6 37 h3, followed by 38 ♟d5 or 38 ♖c4, White is practically winning. In contrast, the simple 32...♟b8!? 33 c5 ♟d7 improving the knight was reasonable.

33 c5 ♟b8 34 ♖c4 ♟h8?

In heavy time trouble Cramling overlooks a minor tactical resource that will accelerate the white advance. 34...♜fg7 was preferable, intending 35 c6?! bxc6 36 dxc6 d5! followed by 37...♜xc6 with counterplay. Thus White should rather try 35 cxd6 cxd6 36 b5, followed by 37 b6 and ♟b5-c7-e6, or even 35 b5!? at once.

35 b5!

Now that 35...dxc5? fails to 36 d6, Black can't stop a white pawn from reaching c6.

35...♟d7

Saving the knight from eternal imprisonment. After 35...♜fg7 36 c6 Black is strategically doomed; e.g. 36...♖g8 37 ♖a2 b6 38 g4! fxg3 39 hxg3 ♜h6+ 40 ♜h2 ♜gh7 41 ♜xh6 ♜xh6+ 42 ♟g2 ♖c8 43 ♟f2, when the sad knight on b8 means that White's victory is only a matter of time.

36 c6!

Again exploiting the theme of the exposed rook on f7, i.e. 36...bxc6? 37 dxc6 and White wins.

36...♟b8?

36...♟b6 37 ♔xb6 cxb6 38 cxb7 ♖b8 was a lesser evil, when White could try 39 ♖c8+ ♜g8 40 ♖c6! ♔f8 41 ♖xb6 ♜xb7 42 ♖f2, followed by 43 b6, with an overwhelming advantage.

37 cxb7 ♜g8 38 ♜a2

With the inevitable plan of 39 ♜a8 and 40 ♔a7.

38...♔h4 39 ♜a8 ♜fg7 40 ♖f1 ♖d7 41 ♔a7

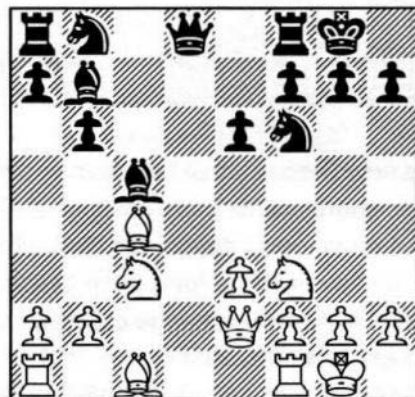
In this utterly hopeless position, Black resigned.

For the related exercises to this section, see page 358.

The initiative

In the first chapter I defined the initiative as "some kind of major influence on the battle, without necessarily being an advantage in itself". Typically we understand an "advantage" as something tangible, at least for the coming 10-15 moves; e.g. more space, a weak enemy pawn, the bishop pair, the opponent's unsafe king, etc. In contrast, the initiative easily evaporates within a few moves if not sustained. Thus the side with the initiative typically tries to create new threats all the time, and doesn't shy away from material or positional concessions in order to keep the initiative going. All this might sound a little abstract, so let's look at some examples.

Example 218 T.V.Petrosian-A.Karpov USSR Championship, Moscow 1974



In this apparently peaceful position, reminiscent of the Queen's Gambit Accepted, Petrosian hurries to take the initiative.

11 e4! ♖bd7 12 e5!

Accepting doubled pawns in order to increase the pressure. After 12 ♗g5 ♜b8! it would be more difficult to achieve the e4-e5 advance.

12...♗xf3

After 12...♗g4?! 13 ♖f4 the knight on g4 becomes misplaced.

13 gxf3 ♗h5 14 ♖d1!

By pinning the knight White prevents an annoying ...♜h4, e.g. 14 f4?! ♜h4 with counterplay.

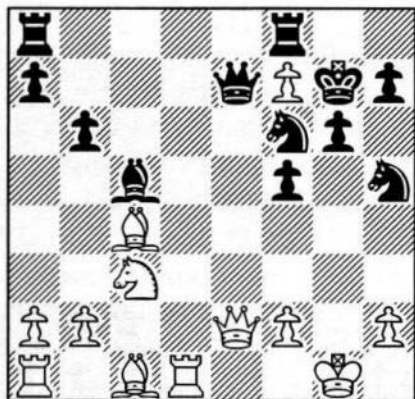
14...♜e7 15 f4 g6

Karpov is just one move away from stabilizing his position by 16...♗g7. However...

16f5! exf5 17 e6!

Unfortunately for Black, he can't recapture on e6 due to the hanging knight on d7.

17...♗df6 18 exf7+ ♖g7



By now the initiative has been converted into a more stable advantage: a strong passed pawn on f7 supported by the bishop pair. In view of these long term assets, Petrosian is happy to exchange queens.

19 ♜xe7! ♗xe7 20 ♗b5!

Heading for the weak square on e6.

20...♖ac8

A lesser evil was 20...♖fc8 21 ♗b3 ♗c5, preventing the knight transfer to e6, although after 22 ♗d4 ♗xd4 23 ♖xd4 White

is much better anyway thanks to his strong bishop pair.

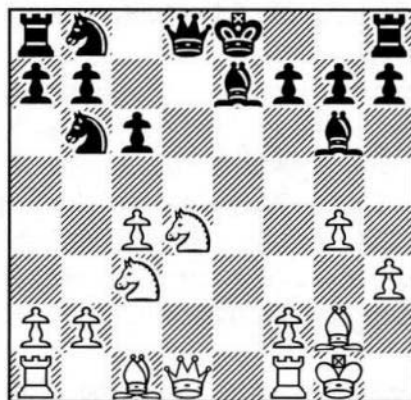
21 ♗b3 a6 22 ♗d4 ♖xf7

In view of the devastating threat of 23 ♗e6+ ♖xf7 24 ♗h6!, Karpov gives up the exchange.

23 ♗e3 ♗g4 24 ♗xf7 ♖xf7 25 ♖ac1!

In endgames with an extra exchange, it is generally a good idea to swap the opponent's remaining rook. White later won.

Example 219
P.Svidler-A.Dreev
Russian Championship, Elista
1997



Due to his privilege of making the first move, it could be argued that White has a slight initiative from the very beginning of the game. In the above position Black has a sound pawn structure and by castling on the next move he would reach a satisfactory game; e.g. 12 b3?! 0-0 13 ♗e3 ♗a6, followed by ...♗c5. Svidler finds a more energetic continuation.

12 f4! h6

The threat of 13 f5 had to be parried, and 12...f6? failed to 13 ♗e6.

13 f5 ♗h7 14 c5!

At the right moment, before the black king castles away from the vulnerable e-file.

14...♟d7

After 14...♟xc5 15 ♖e1+, both 15...♟e7 16 f6! gx6 17 ♟xh6, intending 17...♟d7? 18 ♟xc6, and 15...♟f8 16 ♟e3 ♟a6 17 ♟e4 yield White clear compensation for the pawn – Svidler.

15 g5!

Svidler doesn't give the opponent any chance to relax. Now 15...hxg5?! runs into 16 ♟e6! fxe6 17 ♜h5+ with a decisive attack, and 16...♟f8 17 ♟e6+! is equally promising.

15...0-0

After 15...♟xg5 16 ♟xg5 ♜xg5 17 ♖e1+ ♟f8 18 ♟e4, followed by ♟d6, White obtains a devastating attack, while 15...♟xc5 is well met by 16 b4! ♟ca6 17 g6! ♟g8 (or 17...fxg6 18 fxg6 ♟xg6 19 ♜g4 with multiple threats) 18 b5! with a clear advantage – Svidler. In this latter line, it is worth noticing how White uses resources on both flanks to keep his initiative going.

16g6!

A logical follow-up to the previous move, which softens up the e6-square for the knight. In contrast, after 16 gxh6?! ♟f6 17 hxg7 ♖e8 Black can hope for more counterplay than in the game.

16...fxg6 17 ♟e6 ♜c8

White also keeps strong pressure after 17...♟xc5+ 18 ♟h1 ♜e7 19 ♟xf8 ♟xf8 20 ♟e4!, creating new threats such as 21 f6 and 21 ♟xc5 ♜xc5 22 ♜b3+.

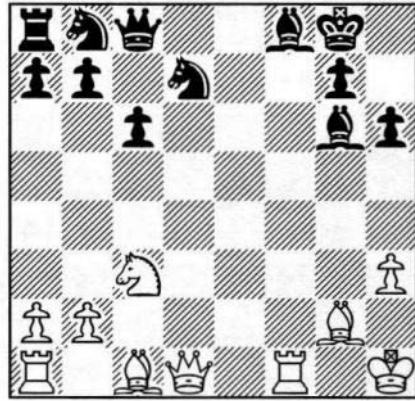
18 ♟xf8 ♟xc5+

Or 18...♟xf8 19 f6!, followed by 20 ♟e4, with an attack on the dark squares.

19 ♟h1 ♟xf8 20 fxg6 ♟xg6

By accurate defensive play Dreev has avoided immediate defeat, and now it seems as if the worst is over for him. How-

ever, Svidler finds a strong blow that keeps the initiative going.



21 ♟xh6! ♟e5

After 21...gxh6 22 ♜g4 ♟h7 23 ♖f6! Black is unable to defend his king, e.g. 23...♜e8 24 ♖xg6! ♟e5 25 ♖e6 and wins – Svidler.

22 ♟f4 ♟bd7 23 ♟e4

Finally the initiative has transformed into a more stable advantage. Black has just one pawn for the exchange, and his king remains rather unprotected.

23...♜e8 24 ♜b3+ ♜f7

Or 24...♟f7 25 ♜g3 with ♟g5 and ♜h4 coming up.

25 ♜g3

25 ♜xb7 ♖b8 26 ♜xa7 ♟xe4 27 ♟xe4 ♜h5 28 ♟g2 was even simpler – Svidler.

25...♟xe4 26 ♟xe4 ♟f6 27 ♟g2

Also possible was 27 ♟xe5 ♟xe4 28 ♜g2 ♜d5 29 ♖xf8+! with a strong attack, but the text doesn't ruin anything.

27...♟h5?

27...♟ed7 was more solid – Svidler. Now White is able to launch a final attack.

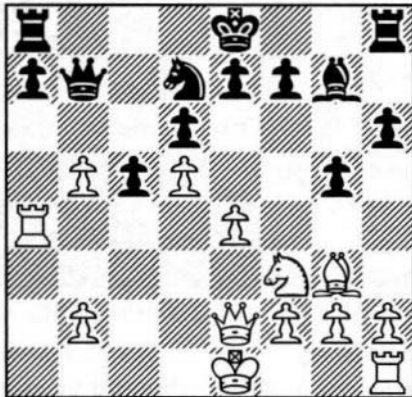
28 ♜g5 ♟d3 29 ♟e5! ♜e7 30 ♜xh5 ♜xe5

Or 30...♟xe5 31 ♖ae1 ♖e8 32 ♟e4 wins.

31 ♜f7+ ♟h8 32 ♖f5! ♟f2+ 33 ♟g1 ♟xh3+ 34 ♟f1

Black resigned.

Example 220
G.Kasparov-A.Miles
 Match (game 3), Basle 1986



In the above position, Black's strong fianchettoed bishop and the weak pawn on b5 would yield him a long-term advantage if he could just manage to consolidate; e.g. 17 0-0?! 0-0 followed by ...♖fb8. Therefore White is urged to act quickly.

17 e5!

A strong advance that softens up the e-file, the h2-b8 diagonal and the fourth rank for the white pieces. The pawn that is now lost on d5 has less priority. 17 h4 was inferior due to 17...g4! 18 ♖d2 0-0 19 0-0 ♖fb8 with an unclear game – Kasparov.

17...0-0!

Castling away from the vulnerable e-file. In contrast, after 17...♗xd5?! 18 exd6 e6 19 0-0 the strong passed pawn on d6 speaks in White's favour, while 17...dxe5 18 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 (otherwise 19 ♖c6 is strong) 19 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 20 ♗xe5 f6 21 ♗e4 leaves the black king exposed.

18h4!

White immediately searches for contact with the black king and, in a more long-term perspective, secures the participation

of the h1-rook in the battle.

18...♗xd5!

Miles again defends well. After 18...♖fb8? 19 e6! or 18...♖b6? 19 hxg5! ♖xa4 20 gxh6 White obtains a strong attack, while the endgame arising after 18...♖ab8 19 hxg5 ♗xb5 20 ♗xb5 ♖xb5 21 gxh6 ♗xe5 22 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 23 ♗xe5 dxe5 24 ♖xa7 ♖xb2 25 ♖h5! also favours him – Kasparov.

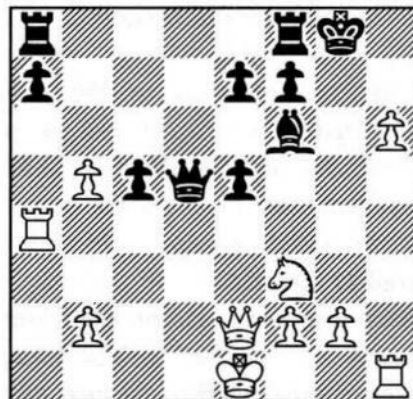
19 hxg5 ♖xe5?

19...hxg5! was correct, eliminating the dangerous pawn. At this point the tempting 20 ♖xg5? backfires after 20...♖xe5 21 ♗h4 ♖d3+! 22 ♗h4 ♗f5, so White should prefer 20 ♖g4! f6! 21 ♗c2!? ♖xe5 22 ♗xe5 dxe5 23 ♗h7+ ♖f7 24 ♗h5+ ♖e6 25 ♗g6 with attacking chances – Kasparov.

20 ♗xe5 dxe5?!

20...♗xe5 was a lesser evil, when 21 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 22 ♖e4! keeps a clear advantage – Kasparov.

21 gxh6 ♗f6



22 ♖h5!

Winning the e5-pawn, after which the black king will feel even more uncomfortable.

22...♖h8 23 ♖xe5 ♗b3

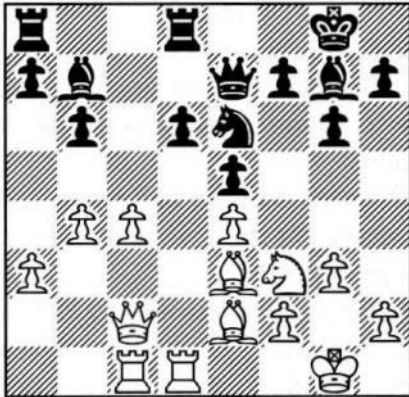
A nice line is 23...♗xg2 24 ♖g4! ♗b7 25 ♖g7! with a decisive attack – Kasparov.

24 ♖a3 ♜b4+ 25 ♔f1 ♖ad8 26 ♜c6!

Just like in Petrosian-Karpov (p. 273), once the initiative has transformed into a stable advantage White has no objections to an endgame.

26... ♜xb2 27 ♜xb2 ♙xb2 28 ♖xa7 ♖c8 29 ♖xe7 c4 30 ♔e2! c3 31 ♔d3 1-0

Example 221
J.Ehlvest-V.Topalov
Vienna 1996



In this apparently calm position many of us would probably choose 20... ♖ac8, bringing the last piece into play. However, Topalov has spotted a much more powerful idea. 20... ♖f8!

Preparing ...f7-f5 in order to clear the f-file and the h1-a8 diagonal for the black pieces. This idea is further enhanced by White's g2-g3 earlier on in the game.

21 ♜h4

Inviting the black knight into the centre, but there was no other way of preventing ...f7-f5. The attempt to create some counterplay by 21 c5 fails to 21... dxc5! 22 bxc5 ♖ac8, winning the c5-pawn – Har Zvi.

21... ♜d4! 22 ♙xd4 exd4 23 ♙d3 ♖ae8

The last piece enters the game, stepping

up the pressure on White.

24 ♔f1!?

A clever try, which could have worked against a less ambitious opponent. Both 24 f3 ♙h6!, heading for e3, and 24 ♖e1 f5! led to a clear black advantage – Hazai.

24... ♜d7!

Topalov sidesteps 24... ♙xe4?! 25 ♙xe4 ♜xe4 26 ♜xe4 ♖xe4 27 ♜f3, when his compromised pawn structure yields the opponent reasonable drawing chances.

25 ♖e1 f5!

Finally. Now the white king is under a cloud.

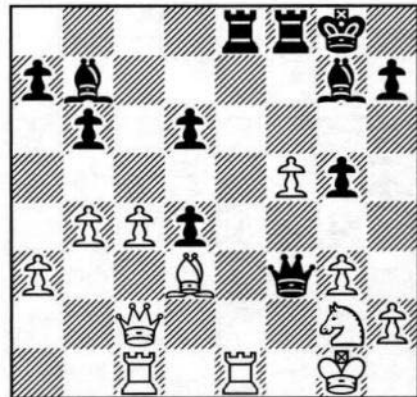
26 exf5 g5!

After 26... ♜c6 27 f3 g5 28 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 29 f6! White gets some counterplay, so Topalov first forces the knight to g2.

27 ♜g2 ♜c6 28 f3

After 28 f4 gxf4 29 gxf4 ♜f3+ 30 ♔g1 ♖e3! Black achieves a better version of the game due to the open g-file.

28... ♜xf3+ 29 ♔g1



White is just one move away from consolidating by 29 ♖f1, so Black should act quickly.

29... ♖e3!

Creating a new threat at d3. Now after 30 ♜xe3? dxe3 mate is inevitable, while 30 ♖f1? drops a piece after 30... ♜xg2+ 31

♖xg2 ♗xg2 32 ♜xg2 ♝xd3.

30 ♜xe3?!

This allows a strong passed pawn on e3. Correct was 30 ♜cd1!, defending the bishop on d3, when 30...♖c6 preparing ...♜fe8 keeps the initiative. In contrast, the tempting 30...♜fe8 31 ♜f1 ♖c6?, intending ...♜e2, fails to 32 f6! with the threat of 33 f7+.

30...♜xe3 31 ♜f1 ♖g4 32 f6?

This attempt for counterplay leads nowhere. White's last chance was 32 ♜xe3 ♗d4 33 ♖f2 ♖h5 34 ♜e1 ♜e8 35 ♜f1 – Petursson.

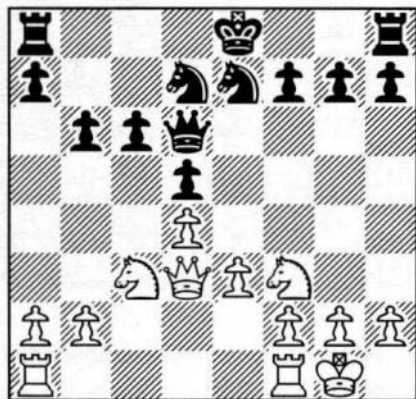
32...♜xf6 33 ♜xf6 ♗xf6 34 ♗xh7+ ♜h8 35 ♗d3 ♗d4 36 ♖e2??

A blunder, but after 36 ♜e2 ♖e6 37 ♖d1 ♖e4 38 ♖f1 ♜g7 White has a hopeless position in any case – Har Zvi.

36...♗f3!

White resigned.

Example 222
M.Carlsen-D.Jakovenko
Nanjing 2009



In a typical position from the Exchange Variation of the Queen's Gambit, Black weakened his queenside by ...b7-b6 earlier on in the game, but even so he shouldn't

have any major problems after castling on the next move; e.g. 13 ♜ac1 0-0 followed by ...♜ac8. Thus there is only one move that can pose him any immediate danger.

13 e4!

Normally this move is harmless without a preceding f2-f3, but Carlsen has observed that after 13...♜xe4?! 14 ♜xe4 his isolated d4-pawn is outweighed by Black's vulnerable king; e.g. 14...♖d5 15 ♖a3! with the double threat of 16 ♜d6+ and 16 ♜fe1, while the knight is poisoned on e4.

13...0-0

Jakovenko wisely refrains from 13...♜xe4 and prefers to continue his development.

14 e5

White takes advantage of his previous move to create a pawn majority on the kingside.

14...♖e6 15 ♜ae1 ♜fe8 16 ♜h4!

Preparing f4-f5.

16...♜g6

The active 16...c5 permits 17 ♜b5!, heading for c7 or d6.

17 ♜xg6 ♖xg6

After 17...fxg6 18 f4, preparing h2-h3, g2-g4 and f4-f5, White is better – Golubev.

18 ♖d2 ♜f8 19 f4 ♖f5

Preparing a blockade with ...♜e6 and ...h7-h5, but as we already know from the previous section the queen is not the best blocker, and Carlsen finds a strong antidote. Probably 19...f5!? followed by ...♜e6 was a better choice, when White could prepare either a g2-g4 breakthrough as in Gligoric-Benko (p. 175), or b4-b5 with a delayed minority attack.

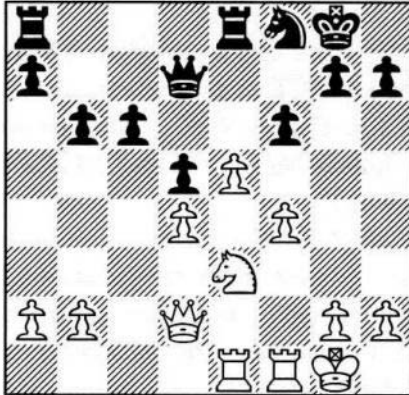
20 ♜d1!

Heading for e3 in order to challenge the enemy blockade.

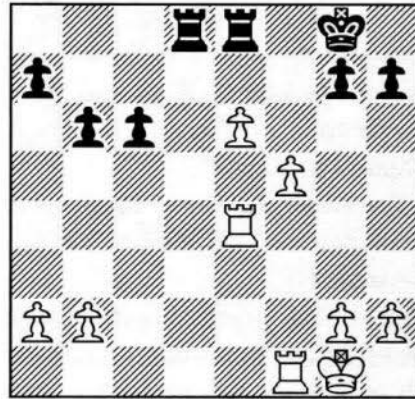
20...f6

The consequent 20...♜e6 21 ♜e3 ♖e4 can be met by 22 ♜c2 ♖f5 23 ♜f2!?, pro-

tecting the queen in advance. Now after 23...♖ac8 24 ♖e3 ♜e4 25 f5! the intended 25...♜xd4? no longer works, while 25...♗xd4? is equally flawed due to 26 ♖d1! ♜g4 27 ♜f4.
21 ♖e3 ♜d7



endgame. Carlsen soon realized his advantage by g4-g5 and eventually f5-f6.



Here is an older example that shows once more the close relation between the initiative and an inventive use of tactics.

By playing 20...f6 Jakovenko managed to prevent 22 f5 at this moment, but Carlsen finds a way to step up the pressure.

22 ♜d3!

Enabling ♖f5-d6.

22...fxe5 23 dxe5 ♖e6

Black is ready to meet 24 ♖f5 by 24...♗c5 with some counterplay, but White possesses a much stronger continuation.

24 f5! ♗c5 25 ♜d4

Now the connected pawns are ready to start an attack on Black's king by f5-f6 or e5-e6.

25...♗e4

This drops a pawn, but it was not easy to find a good defence.

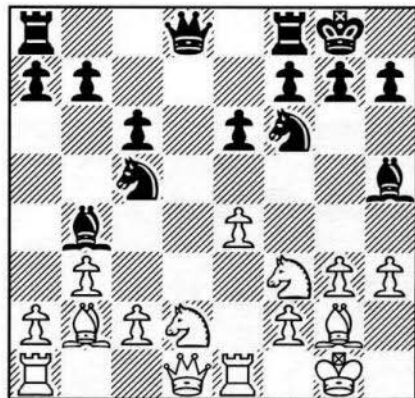
26 ♖xd5! ♜xd5

26...cxd5 obviously failed to 27 ♜xe4, while after 26...♗c5!? 27 f6! ♜ed8! 28 f7+ ♗f8 29 ♜h4! ♜xd5 30 e6! ♖xe6 31 ♜xh7 White has a strong attack – Golubev.

27 ♜xe4 ♜ad8 28 e6 ♜xe4 29 ♜xe4

With a sound extra pawn and more active pieces, White is much better in the rook

Example 223
M.Euwe-E.Bogoljubow
 Match (game 6), Amsterdam 1928



At first glance Black seems to have a more active game, with concrete threats like 13...♗xf3, winning the exchange, and 13...♗xd2, snatching the e4-pawn.

13 g4!

A compromising advance that weakens

several squares on the kingside, but Euwe has observed that a precise sequence of moves will yield him a promising initiative. Much less appealing was 13 e5?! ♖d5, heading for c3, or 13 c3? ♖d3! 14 cxb4 ♜xb2, followed by 15...♖d3 and Black even wins a pawn.

13...♗g6 14 a3! ♗xd2

A forced reply, since 14...♗a5? 15 b4 ♖a4 failed to 16 ♗xf6 ♜xf6 17 bxa5.

15 ♖xd2 ♜c7

Bogoljubow vacates d8 for the rooks and prepares ...e6-e5 followed by ...♖e6-f4, after which only Black can be better. Therefore White has to act quickly.

16 ♜f3!

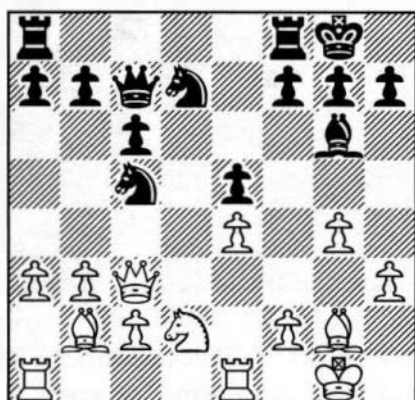
A power move that transfers the queen to a strong post on c3.

16...e5

A logical follow-up, but 16...♞ad8!? ♞ad1 e5 might have been more precise; e.g. 18 ♜c3 ♖cxe4! 19 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 20 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 21 ♗xe5 ♞xd1 22 ♞xd1 f6 with an inferior, yet holdable endgame.

17 ♜c3! ♖fd7

After 17...♖cd7?! 18 ♖c4 ♞fe8 19 ♞ad1 Black has a problem with the e5-pawn.



Bogoljubow is just one move away from the desired 18...♖e6, followed by 19...♖f4. However, Euwe has a powerful reply pre-

pared, one that will keep his initiative intact.

18 f4!

Just at the right moment, when the pawn on e5 can't move due to the mate on g7, while 18...♖e6? obviously runs into 19 f5.

18...f6 19 b4!

Taking the opportunity to displace the enemy knight. Less precise was 19 f5?! ♗f7, when 20 b4? fails to 20...♖a4. Now, on the other hand, Black can't play 19...♖a4? due to 20 ♜b3+.

19...♖a6 20 f5

Finishing off the enemy idea of a blockade on e5, and preparing g4-g5 with an attack at the base of the black pawn chain.

20...♗f7 21 ♗f1

Obviously this bishop had no more tasks along the h1-a8 diagonal.

21...♞fd8 22 ♖g2

Some sensible prophylaxis against a potential queen check.

22...♖b6 23 ♗c1!

Avoiding a fork on a4. Curiously, both bishops are now excellently placed on their original squares.

23...♖a4 24 ♜g3 ♜d6 25 g5!

White is finally ready for concrete action. The attempt to stop this blow by 24...h6 obviously made little sense after 25 h4.

25...fxg5?!

After 25...♖h8 26 ♖f3 or 26 g6 Black faces a strong attack, but the text is a positional surrender due to the weak e5-pawn.

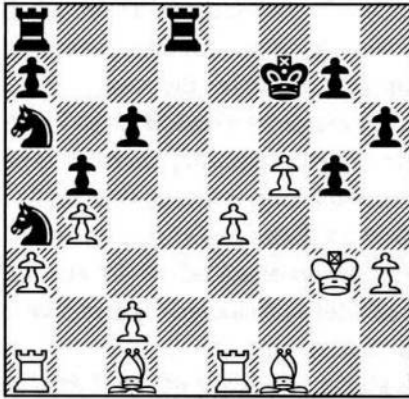
26 ♖f3! h6

Or 26...♞e8 27 ♗xg5, followed by 28 ♞ad1, and White is much better.

27 ♖xe5 b5 28 ♖xf7!

Simplifying to a clearly superior endgame.

28...♜xg3+ 29 ♖xg3 ♖xf7



30 c4!

This and the next move clear some space for the bishop pair. The tempting 30 e5 can wait.

30...d7 31 h4! gxh4+ 32 xh4d4?

Dropping a pawn, but after 32...a6 33 f4 e8 34 e5 d4 35 g3 Black's position is also hopeless.

33 f4 e8 34 e5! d2 35 cxb5 cxb5 36 xb5 b6 37 Rac1

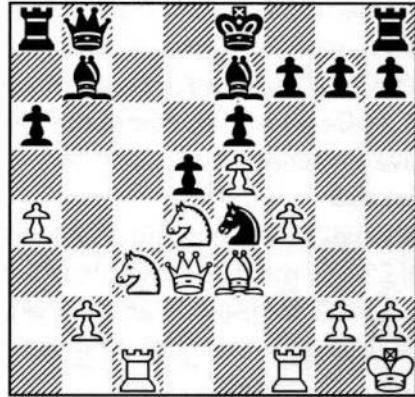
Euwe soon converted his overwhelming advantage into victory.

In Petrosian-Karpov we saw how the fight for the initiative motivated minor positional concessions, such as weak squares and doubled pawns. Another common idea in practice is a minor sacrifice to obtain or maintain the initiative. Here are a few examples on this topic.

Example 224
V. Topalov-I. Smirin
 Polanica Zdroj 1995

In a Sicilian battle Black is one move away from 19...0-0 with a decent game, thanks to the strong knight on e4 that obstructs a potential enemy attack on the

kingside. Thus White is urged to act quickly.

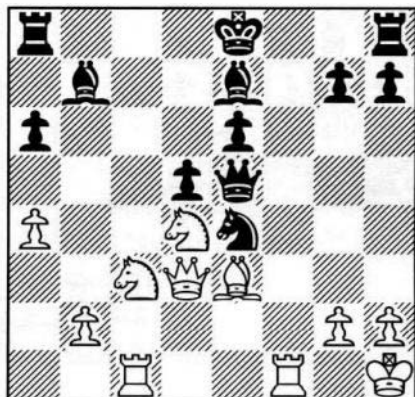


19 f5!

A strong pawn sacrifice that puts some pressure on e6 and clears the f-file towards the black king.

19...x5 20 fxe6 fxe6

In the event of 20...0-0, returning the pawn in order to secure the king, then 21 f5! d6 22 xe4 dxe4 23 b3 with double threats at b7 and f7 – Ribli. After the text Black intends 21...f6 followed by ...0-0, after which White's initiative would slowly evaporate. So how can he keep it going?



21 cb5!

Exploiting the fact that 21...axb5? fails to 22 xb5+, followed by xb7, White cre-

Mastering Chess Strategy

ates the new threat of 22 ♖c7+. Less convincing was 21 ♔f4?! ♜f6, when White lacks a useful discovered attack.

21...♖c5

After 21...♜c8?! 22 ♜xc8+ ♔xc8 23 ♖c6! ♜xb2 24 ♖c7+ ♖d7 25 ♖xd5! the attack is decisive – Ftacnik.

22 ♜e2 ♜c8

Parrying the double threat of 23 b4 and 23 ♖f3. Once more 22...axb5? was impossible due to 23 ♜xb5+ ♖d8 24 ♜xc5! ♔xc5 25 ♜f7! ♜d6 26 ♔g5+ with mate coming – Ribli.

23 ♖a7!

Again White finds a way of keeping up the pressure. Now a rook move to a8 or b8 runs into 24 ♖ac6, while 23...♔d6? fails to 24 ♖f3.

23...♜c7 24 b4!

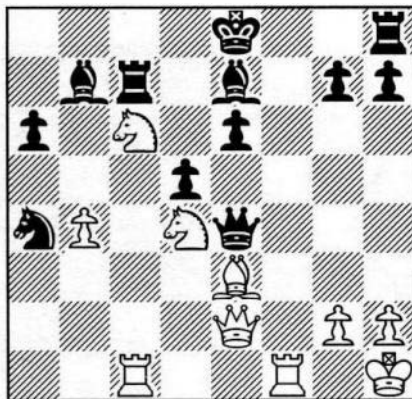
By dislodging the enemy knight Topalov revives the ♖ac6 idea.

24...♖xa4 25 ♖ac6

25 ♜xc7?! ♜xc7 26 ♖xe6 ♜e5 is less convincing – Krasenkow.

25...♜e4

The only square; 25...♜d6? runs into 26 ♔f4.



26 ♜f4!

Topalov doesn't give the opponent any chance to relax.

26...♜g6 27 ♜g4 ♜f7

If 27...♜f6, then 28 ♜f1. Now, in contrast, Smirin is ready to meet 28 ♜f1 by 28...♔f6. However, White has a much stronger option at his disposal.

28 ♜xg7! ♜xg7 29 ♖xe6 ♜b2 30 ♖xc7+

The clever temporary sacrifice on g7 has left the black king without shelter.

30...♖d7 31 ♜xb2

Also strong was 31 ♖b8+! ♜xb8 32 ♜g4+ ♖d8 33 ♖e6+, followed by decisive checks on g8 and c7.

31...♖xb2 32 ♖e5+ ♖d6 33 ♖f7+ ♖d7 34 ♖e5+!?

White wins with ease after 34 ♖xh8 ♔d6 35 ♖xa6 ♔xa6 36 ♜a1, followed by ♜a7+, but Topalov doesn't want to suspend the attack yet.

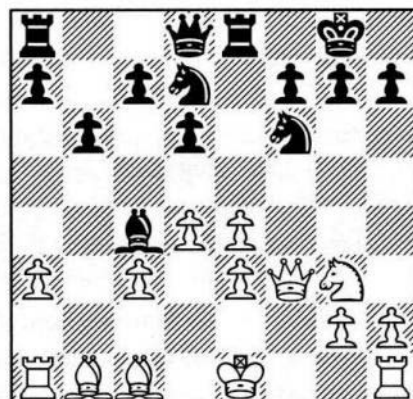
34...♖d6 35 ♔f4 ♜f8

Or 35...♜g8 36 ♖c4+ ♖d7 37 ♖xb2 d4 38 ♔g3 ♔d6 39 ♖a4!, hanging on to the extra piece – Krasenkow.

36 ♖c4+ ♖d7 37 ♖b6+!

In view of 37...♖d8 38 ♖e6+ ♖e8 39 ♖xf8, Black resigned.

Example 225 G.Kaidanov-A.Onischuk Chicago 2002



In this Nimzo-Indian structure White counts on the bishop pair, but Black has the sounder pawn formation and his bishop on c4 is rather annoying for the opponent. Kaidanov found an astonishing way of seizing the initiative.

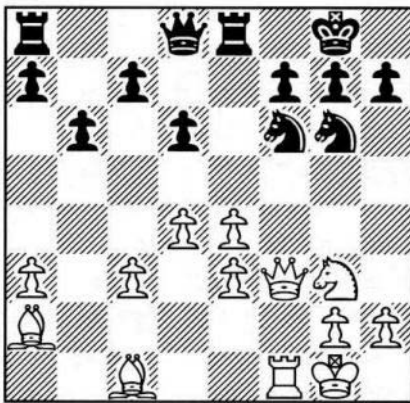
14 ♖a2!! ♗xa2

If Black doesn't take the rook then its arrival at f2 will make the black king a bit more concerned; e.g. 14...b5 15 ♖f2 a5 16 ♟f5 b4!? 17 g4!, preparing g4-g5, with a strong attack.

15 ♗xa2 ♟f8

A sensible manoeuvre in order to reinforce the kingside defence.

16 0-0 ♟g6



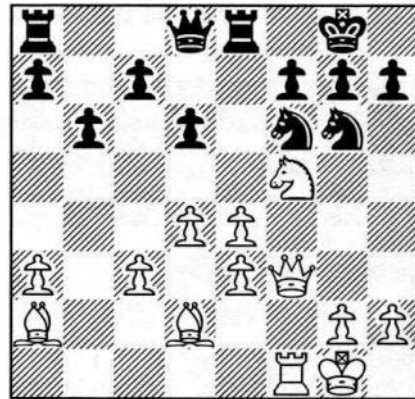
17 ♗d2

A last preparatory move before taking concrete action. It is worth noting that the bishop on a2 has become a giant after the departure of its counterpart.

17... ♞d7 18 ♟f5! ♞d8?

Black somehow regrets his previous move and yields White two extra tempi in the attack. 18...♟xe4? was equally bad due to 19 ♗xf7+! ♟h8 (both recaptures fail to 20 ♟h6+) 20 ♗xg6 hxg6 21 ♞h3+ ♟g8 22 ♟h6+. Instead, a counter sacrifice with 18...♞xe4! 19 ♟xg7 ♟f4! was called for, when there can follow 20 ♗b1 d5 21 ♗xe4

♟xe4 22 ♞xf4 ♟xg7 23 ♗e1 and the white initiative has evaporated into rough equality – Kaidanov. Evidently such lines aren't easily visualized over the board, thus in practice it is often easier to play with the initiative than against it. Now back to the position after 18...♞d8.



At first sight it is not clear how to proceed with White. The straightforward 19 g4? fails to 19...♞xe4, intending 20 g5 ♖g4+, while 19 ♗b1 ♖f8 20 g4 ♟d7 isn't convincing either. Kaidanov finds a third, ingenious option.

19 e5! dxe5 20 e4!

At the cost of just one pawn White has managed to integrate the dark-squared bishop into the attack.

20...exd4 21 ♟xg7!

Exploiting the exposed position of the knight on f6. In contrast, the natural 21 cxd4?! runs into 21...♟h4! 22 ♟xh4 ♞xd4+ 23 ♗e3 ♞xe4 24 ♞xe4 ♞xe4 with a slightly better endgame for Black – Kaidanov.

21...♟e5

The only move, since both 21...♟xg7? 22 ♗g5 and 21...♟h4? 22 ♞g3 ♟xe4 23 ♞g4 win for White. Now, on the other hand, 22 ♞g3? fails to 22...♟xe4.

22 ♞h3 dxc3

Since 22...♟xe4?! 23 ♟xe8 ♞xe8 24

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♙h6! ♜xc3 25 ♙b3 leads to a decisive attack, Black opts to deflect the bishop from the c1-h6 diagonal.

23 ♙xc3! ♜xg7 24 ♚g3+

White is finally ready to recover the material. In contrast, 24...♙xe5? lets Black escape after 24...♙xe5 25 ♚g3+ ♜g4! 26 ♚xg4+ ♜g5 27 ♜xf7+ ♜h8 etc.

24...♜g6 25 ♙xf6+ ♚xf6 26 ♜xf6 ♜xf6



27 h4!

The fight for the initiative continues even after reaching the endgame. Now Black is faced with the threat of 28 ♚g5+ ♜g7 29 h5. Less convincing was 27 ♚xc7?! ♜e5 or 27 ♚f3+?! ♜g7 28 ♚xf7+ ♜h6.

27...♜e5 28 ♚f3+ ♜g7 29 h5! f6

Black has to give up his knight, since any move with it would lead to the loss of the rook after a check on f7 or g3.

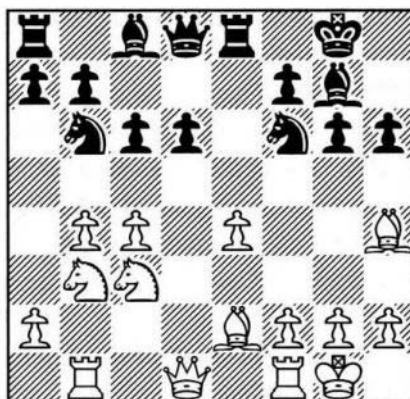
30 hxg6 hxg6 31 ♚d3

White later converted his material advantage into victory.

Example 226
G.Soppe-P.Ricardi
 Argentine Championship,
 Buenos Aires 1999

In a typical King's Indian structure

White has just played ♜d4-b3, preparing ♚c2 and ♜fd1, with pressure on the d6-pawn.



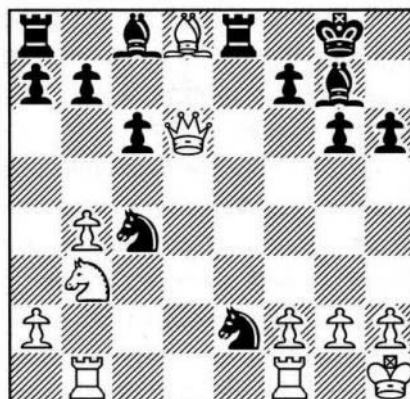
13...♜xe4!

A fascinating sacrifice. It is not evident whether Black can recover enough material for the queen, but intuition somehow suggests that he can count on a strong initiative. In contrast, after 13...g5 14 ♙g3 ♜xe4 15 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 16 ♜a5!?

14 ♙xd8 ♜xc3 15 ♚xd6 ♜xe2+

After 15...♜xb1?! 16 ♙f6! ♙xf6 17 ♚xf6 ♜xe2 18 ♜xb1, contrary to the game, White has managed to swap the powerful fianchettoed bishop.

16 ♜h1 ♜xc4



17 ♖d3

The white queen was short of safe squares; e.g. 17 ♖d1? ♗c3 or 17 ♖c7? ♗e5, while 17 ♖c5?! runs into 17...♗e6! with the strong threat of 18...♗f8.

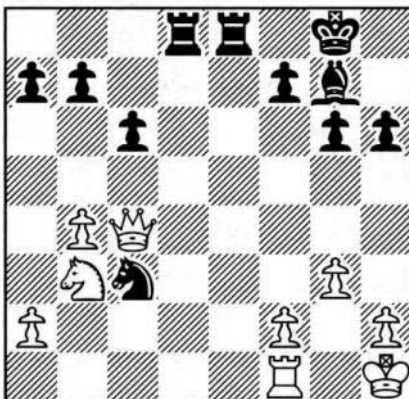
17...♗f5 18 ♖xc4 ♗xb1 19 ♖xb1 ♖axd8

Black finally managed to restore the material balance, with a clear initiative thanks to his active pieces.

20g3

Avoiding back rank mates. In the event of 20 a3 ♗c3 21 ♖c1?! ♗d1! White runs into tactical problems; e.g. 22 ♖f1 ♗c3! 23 ♖xd1 ♖xd1 24 ♖xd1 ♖e1+ 25 ♖xe1 ♗xe1 with a decisive extra pawn in the endgame – Huzman.

20...♗c3 21 ♖f1



21...♖e4!

By energetic play Ricardi keeps the initiative. In contrast, after 21...♗xa2?! 22 ♗c5 White gets some counterplay on the queen-side.

22 ♖c5 ♗b5

Installing the threat of 26...♗f8, winning the b4-pawn.

23 a4 ♖d5!

Less convincing is 23...♗f8?! 24 ♖c2 ♗d6 25 ♖d2, preparing ♗c5.

24 ♖c2 ♗c3!

By now almost all Black's pieces have

improved their positions considerably, and White is incapable of sustaining his queen-side pawns.

25 a5 a6 26 h4 h5

Ricardi is in no hurry to take the b-pawn.

27 ♗g2 ♖xb4 28 ♖e1 ♖a4?!

This yields White some unexpected counterplay. More technical was 28...♖db5! 29 ♗c1 ♖xa5 30 ♖e8+ ♗h7 31 ♖e7 ♖f5 and Black remains in complete control.

29 ♖e8+ ♗h7 30 ♗c1!

Before placing his rook on e7 Sophe prevents 30...♖a2.

30...♖xa5 31 ♖e7 ♖f5 32 ♖xb7 ♖ab5 33 ♖a7?

A tactical slip perhaps provoked by time trouble. 33 ♖d7 a5 34 ♗d3 a4 was correct, when Black has a clear, though not yet decisive advantage – Huzman.

33...♗d4! 34 ♖xa6 ♖xf2+ 35 ♖xf2 ♗xf2 36 ♗xf2 ♖f5+

Preparing ...c6-c5. Black later converted his extra material into victory.

Finally, here is a complete game that illustrates the fight for the initiative and the efforts to maintain it.

Example 227
J.Hellsten-Z.Azmaiparashvili
 Greek Team Championship 2003
Modern Defence (A41)

1 d4 d6 2 ♗f3 g6 3 c4 ♗g7 4 ♗c3 e5 5 ♗g5!?

My opponent is an expert on the position arising after 5 dxe5 dxe5 6 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8, so I preferred to take the game into more unexplored terrain.

5...f6 6 ♗d2

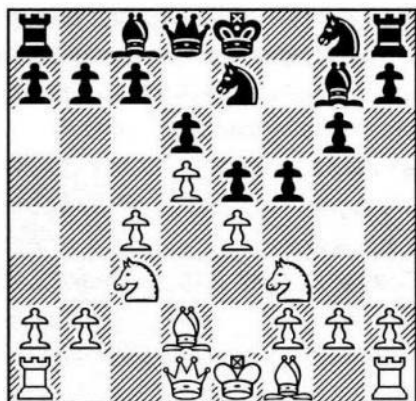
White managed to provoke ...f7-f6, but d2 is hardly an ideal place for the bishop.

6...♗c6

Others options are 6...♖e7 and 6...exd4 7 ♖xd4 f5.

7 d5 ♖ce7 8 e4 f5?!

8...♖h6 was safer, as in the game L.Ftacnik-E.Ermenkov, Budapest 1993.



With 8...f5 Black aims for an improved King's Indian after ...♖f6 and ...0-0, but White prevents this plan by his following, strong move.

9c5!

Preparing an annoying check on b5 and undermining the black pawn chain. As we will see next, the sacrificed pawn is well invested.

9...dxc5

Azmaiparashvili accepts the challenge. 9...a6!? was a safer choice, when 10 b4 ♖f6 11 ♗c4 keeps the initiative.

10 ♗b5+! ♖f8

Practically the only move, since both 10...♗d7? 11 ♖g5! c6 12 dxc6 bxc6 13 ♗c4 and 10...c6?! 11 dxc6 ♖xc6 12 ♗c4 leave the black king in serious danger.

11a4

Parrying in advance the enemy plan of ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5.

11...♖f6 12 0-0 a6

Or 12...fxe4 13 ♖g5 soon recovering the pawn.

13 ♗c4 ♗d6 14 ♖e1!

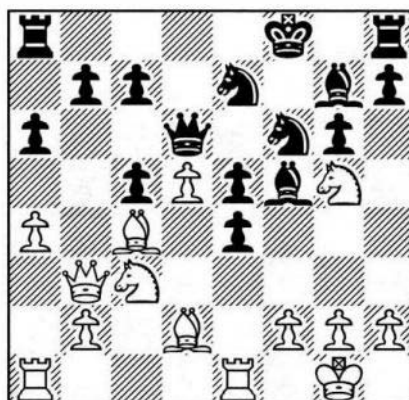
One more piece joins the battle, with pressure against the weak pawn on e5. Less logical was 14 exf5?! ♗xf5 when Black is helped with his development.

14...fxe4

My previous move was partly motivated by the line 14...f4 15 ♗xf4! exf4 16 e5, when White recovers the piece with a strong initiative: e.g. 16...♗d8 17 exf6 ♗xf6 18 ♖e4 etc.

15 ♖g5 ♗f5 16 ♗b3!

The obvious 16 ♖cxe4?! permits 16...♗xe4 17 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 18 ♖xe4 ♖f5!, followed by ...♖d4, with some counterplay.



By playing 16 ♗b3 White develops one more piece with tempo and now plans either ♖a1-d1, protecting the d5-pawn and enhancing a future ♖g5-e6(+), or g2-g4!?, fighting for the light squares on e4 and f5.

16...♗b6

After 16...b6 17 ♖ad1 h6 18 ♖e6+ ♗xe6 19 dxe6 White has a strong initiative; e.g. 19...♖c6 20 ♖xe4! ♖xe4 21 ♗f3+! ♖f6 22 ♗xh6 ♗e7 23 ♖d7 with decisive threats.

17 ♗a2

My first intention was 17 d6?!, but after 17...♖c6! 18 ♗b5 ♖d8 the game becomes murky.

17...♗d6 18 ♗b3

Before opting for one of the abovementioned

tioned plans, White regroups the queen to a3 where it will eye the c5-pawn. Both 18 ♖ad1 and 18 g4 were possible as well.

18... ♖b6 19 ♖a3! ♖d6

After 19... ♖b4? 20 ♖a2! the queen becomes exposed on b4. By playing 19... ♖d6 Black offered a draw (i.e. 20 ♖b3), but I was already too thrilled about my position, and even messed it up a little.

20 g4?!

Much stronger was 20 ♖ad1! h6 21 ♖e6+ ♖xe6 22 dxe6 ♖c6 23 ♖g5! (securing a protected square on e4 for the knight) 23... ♖d4 24 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 25 ♖xe4, followed by ♖xc5, with a clear edge thanks to the active pieces and the strong passed pawn on e6.

20... h6!

A clever intermediate move that avoids a white knight settling on e4.

21 ♖gxe4 ♖xe4 22 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 23 ♖xe4 ♖xd5

When playing 20 g4 I had forgotten that, from a3, the queen no longer protects the d5-pawn. Fortunately White's position still has a lot of potential.

24 ♖b3 ♖d8

Or 24... ♖b6 25 ♖c3, preparing ♖ae1. **25 ♖xb7 ♖f6**



A critical position has arisen. In view of

26 ♖e2 ♖d4! with some counterplay, I decided to give up the exchange in order to keep the initiative on my side.

26 ♖c3!?

With hindsight 26 ♖e2! ♖d4 27 ♖xc7 was the best option; e.g. 27... ♖d7 28 ♖b8+ ♖d8 29 ♖b3! ♖xg4+ 30 ♖h1, when White's safer king and the passive rook on h8 speak in his favour.

26... ♖b6?

In his desire to simplify, Black transposes to a bad endgame. 26... ♖xe4 27 ♖xe4 h5! was correct, when it is not clear whether White's initiative can be converted into something more tangible; e.g. 28 ♖f1 g5 29 f4!? ♖xf4 30 ♖xf4+ ♖e8! with complications.

27 ♖xb6 cxb6 28 ♖xe5 b5?!

Eliminating the potential passed pawn on a4 but, more significantly, activating the enemy rook on a1. After 28... ♖xg4 29 ♖e6 ♖xc3 30 bxc3 Black is also suffering, but this was the least of his evils. By the way, the attempt to improve this line by 29... ♖d4? fails to 30 h3!.

29 axb5 axb5 30 ♖xb5 ♖xg4

Perhaps Azmaiparashvili had prepared 30... ♖d5? and only now saw the reply 31 ♖xd5! ♖xd5 32 ♖a8+ ♖e7 33 ♖a7+.

31 ♖e4!



Activity above material. In contrast, after 31 ♖xc5?! ♗xc3 32 bxc3 ♖h7! Black is still alive.

31...h5

31...♗xc3 32 bxc3 ♘f6 33 ♖f4 ♗d6 was slightly more tenacious, although after 34 ♖a8+! ♗g7 35 ♖a7+ ♗f8 36 ♗c4 White wins.

32♖f4+ ♗g8 33 ♗c4+ ♗h7 34 ♖f7

In view of 34...♖hg8 35 ♖aa7, Black resigned.

For the related exercises, see page 361.

The link between tactics and strategy

When I was a kid and a newcomer to this game, I often heard older and more experienced players make a division of chess players into two different groups: tacticians and positional players. However, I soon noticed in my own games that the supposed tacticians would often find good squares for their pieces, seize open files and effect favourable exchanges, while the “positional” players weren’t that bad at forks and pins after all. Many years later, my experience tells me that every game contains a high amount of both tactical and strategic challenges, and these are often closely related and intertwined. Therefore both strategy and tactics have to be mastered in order to aspire to any success, no matter what our personal style. As for a classification of chess players, if such is really needed then Dvoretsky’s division into “intuitive” and “scientific” players probably makes more sense.

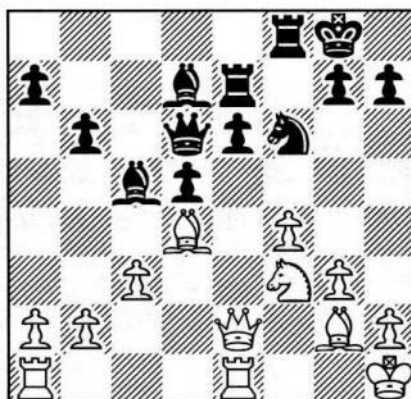
Now let’s talk a little more about the link between tactics and strategy in chess. As you have noticed, despite the strategical focus of this book, its examples are filled with tactical considerations, on almost

every move. As I mentioned in the first chapter, it is simply impossible to conduct the strategical battle without paying attention to tactical details. For example, we saw on several occasions how a superior position was converted into victory by means of an opportune use of tactical arms, as in Pelletier-Sebag (p. 44), Kasparov-Martinovic (p. 136), Short-Kasparov (p. 205), and Hall-Hjelm (p. 243), to name just a few.

In the following, we will have a look at some examples where the link between tactics and strategy is particularly explicit. To start with, here are a few cases where a lack of tactical considerations led one of the players into disaster.

Example 228 O.Renet-B.Züger Leukerbad 1992

In a typical French battle Black desires to transfer his bishop on d7 to a more active post on h5, but he chose the wrong moment.



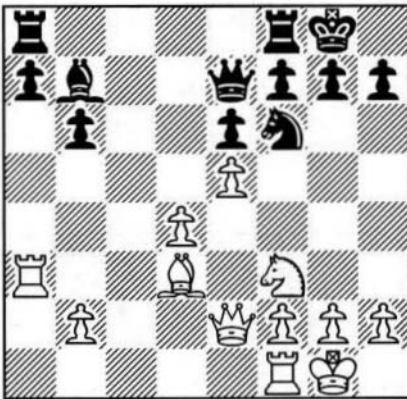
20...♗e8??

A prophylactic measure such as 20...♗c7 was called for.

21 ♖xf6!

After 21...gxf6 22 b4 the other bishop is trapped, so Black resigned. Perhaps Züger ruled out ♖xf6 in his mind due to its "anti-positional" look, and duly paid for it.

Example 229
J.Sriram-R.Laxman
 Indian Championship, Mumbai
 2009



White has just played e4-e5, with some attacking prospects.

17...♖xf3??

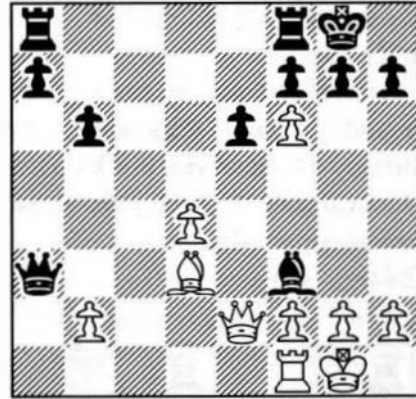
Before moving his knight Black aims at eliminating the potential attacker on f3. Just like 20...♖e8 in the previous example, his idea is strategically well founded but tactically flawed.

18 exf6!

Another intermediate move, and there are more to come. At this moment Black in fact resigned, but let's see how the game could have concluded.

18...♜xa3

Or 18...♖xe2 19 fxe7, winning a piece. The text leaves both queens en prise, but White finds a clever way of withdrawing his one with check.



19 ♖xh7 +! ♜h8

If 19...♜xh7, then 20 ♜c2+ followed by 21 bxa3.

20 fxg7+ ♜xg7 21 ♜e5+!

At last White achieves his desired queen check.

21...f6 22 ♜g3+ ♜xh7 23 bxa3

With a decisive material advantage.

Example 230
T.Wall-C.Ward
 Wrexham 1998



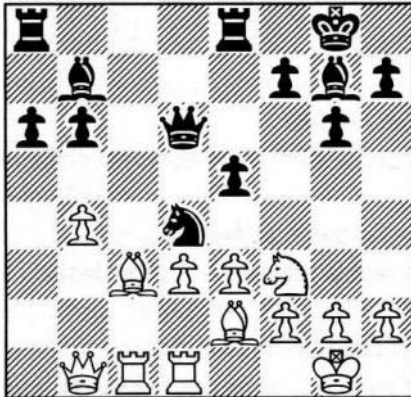
White has adopted some kind of Hedgehog with reversed colours. Now the dynamic 20 d4! was called for; e.g. 20...e4 21

♖e5! ♜xb4 22 ♙a3 a5 23 ♜c4, recovering the pawn with a slight initiative.

20 ♙c3?

A natural move that protects the b4-pawn and prepares ♜b2 with increased pressure on e5. However, Black possesses a little tactical trick that will yield him a clear strategical superiority.

20...♞d4!



21 ♙xd4

After 21 exd4 exd4 the piece is regained with serious damage to White's pawn structure.

21...exd4 22 e4 ♞ac8

Heading for the entry square at c3.

23 ♞xc8 ♞xc8 24 ♞c1 ♞c3!

After the departure of the dark-squared bishop, there is nobody in the white camp covering this square.

25 ♙d1?!

A misguided attempt for counterplay, but White's position was difficult anyway.

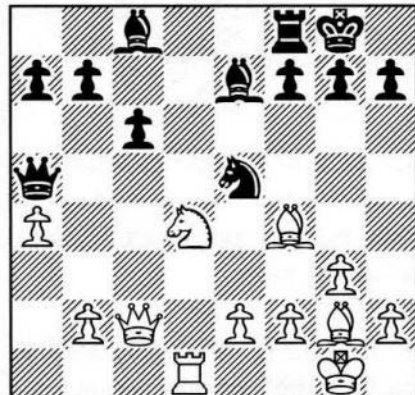
25...♞xc1 26 ♜xc1 ♜xb4 27 ♜c7 ♜b1 28 h4 ♜xd1+ 29 ♜h2 ♜xd3 30 ♜b8+ ♙f8 31 ♜xb7 ♜a3

Black soon realized his material advantage.

Tactical resources are often associated with the win of material or mate, but they

can also be used for reaching different strategical objectives, such as improving a piece, creating weaknesses in the enemy camp, etc. In fact we just witnessed this in Wall-Ward, and the book contains several other cases on the same topic, such as Yudovich-Klaman with 26 ♞a5 (p. 61), Piket-Timman with 12 ♙h3 (p. 103), Hellsten-Llorens with 24 ♜e4 (p. 110), and Sokolov-Karaklajic with 24 ♜f5 (p. 251). Here are some more examples.

Example 231
A. Alekhine-M. Euwe
World Championship (game 1),
Holland 1935



At first sight the position seems roughly level, but Alekhine finds a clever way of intertwining tactics and strategy, one that will lead the opponent into difficulties.

19 b4!

Initiating a minority attack, with focus on the c6-pawn. Unfortunately for Black, the pawn cannot be taken: 19...♜xb4?? fails to 20 ♙xe5, while after 19...♙xb4?! 20 ♜b3 ♜c7 21 ♜e4! ♙d6 22 ♜d4 he is forced into 22...g5 23 ♙xg5 with an ugly position.

19...♜c7 20 b5! c5 21 ♜f5 f6

After 21...♙f6 22 ♖e3! ♗e6 23 ♘d5 ♙xd5 24 ♜xd5 Black is also under pressure. 22 ♖e3 ♗e6 23 ♙d5!

Eliminating the main defender of the light squares.

23...♙xd5 24 ♜xd5 ♖a5

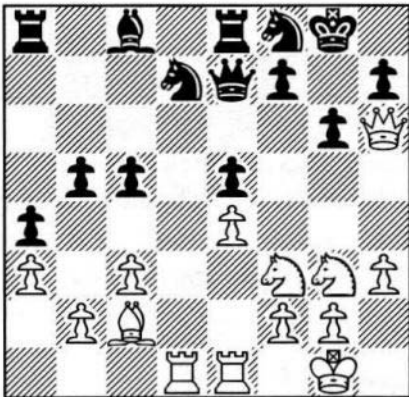
Or 24...♞d8 25 ♙xe5 ♜xe5 26 ♖f5! with a decisive advantage – Alekhine; but in the game Black runs into even bigger problems. 25 ♖f5 ♖e1+ 26 ♜g2 ♙d8 27 ♙xe5 ♜xe5 28 ♞d7!

Alekhine is not interested in picking up pawns when the final attack is near.

28...♙f6 29 ♖h6+! ♜h8 30 ♖xc5

Black resigned. There could have followed 30...♞e8 31 ♖d5! ♜xh6 32 ♖f7 with mate.

Example 232
B.Ivkov-E.Gufeld
Sarajevo 1964



White has some initiative on the king-side, but how to make further progress?

22 ♞d6!

Supported by a tactical variation White seizes the sixth rank and prepares ♞ed1 with complete control of the open file.

22...c4

On 22...♖xd6 Ivkov had prepared 23 ♖h5! ♗e6 24 ♖g5! and mate is inevitable.

Also after 22...♖e6 23 ♞ed1 he maintains the pressure, since 23...♖d4?! runs into 24 ♖g5! f6 25 ♞1xd4, intending 25...cxd4 26 ♞e6.

23 ♞ed1 ♖c5?

A logical follow-up to the previous move, but now White again takes advantage of his tactical resources on the king-side. 23...f6 first was preferable.

24 ♖xe5! ♙e6

Or 24...♖xe5 25 ♞1d5 ♖e7 26 ♞xc5!, winning a pawn, since 26...♖xd6 runs into 27 ♖h5! ♖e6 28 ♖f6+ with mate.

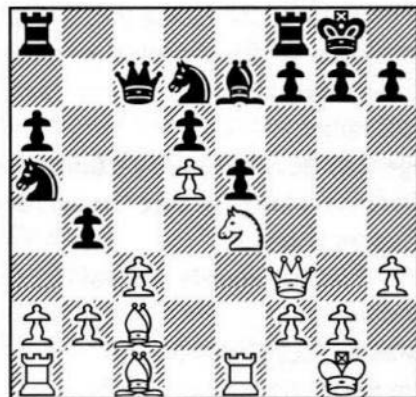
25 ♖c6 ♖c7 26 e5

White is a clear pawn up, and the rest is easy.

26...♙d7 27 ♞1d5 ♖d3 28 ♞xd7! ♖xd7 29 ♞xd7 ♖xd7 30 ♖e4 ♙e6 31 ♖f6+

In view of the imminent mate, Black resigned.

Example 233
A.Beliavsky-V.Razuvaev
Frunze 1979



In a typical position from the Spanish White is basically aiming at a kingside at-

tack, whereas Black tries to create counter-play on the opposite flank.

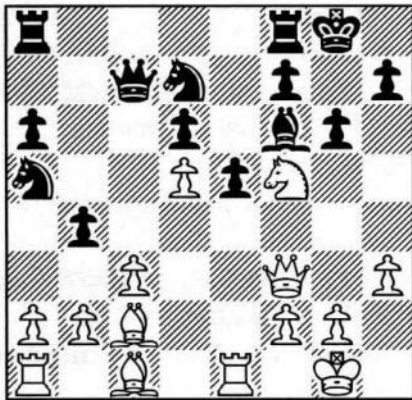
17 ♖g3

Heading for the ideal square on f5.

17...g6 18 ♖f5!

Anyway! Based on the tactical line 18...gx f5? 19 ♜xf5 ♖f6 20 ♙h6! ♜h8 21 ♙g5 with mate to come, Beliavsky manages to improve his knight.

18...♙f6



19 ♙a4!

Aware that after 19...gx f5?! 20 ♜xf5 the piece is regained, White improves his bishop and releases the pin along the c-file.

19...bxc3 20 ♖h6+ ♜g7

A vulnerable square for the king, but 20...♜h8? obviously failed to 21 ♙xd7. In contrast, had White chosen the immediate 19 ♖h6+, then 19...♜h8! would have been fully playable.

21 ♖g4 ♙e7 22 ♙h6+ ♜h8 23 ♜ac1

There is no hurry to take the exchange.

23...♖c5 24 ♜xc3!

Now tactical motifs appear along the a1-h8 diagonal.

24...♜b6 25 ♙c2 ♜fb8 26 ♙d2!

The tempting 26 ♜xe5!? allows 26...dxe5 27 ♜xe5+ ♙f6 28 ♖xf6 ♖c4! with some confusion, so Beliavsky first displaces the knight on a5.

26...♖ab7 27 ♜xe5! dxe5 28 ♜xe5+ f6

Or 28...♙f6 29 ♖xf6 ♜d6 30 ♜d4 ♖e6 31 ♜h4 with a decisive attack.

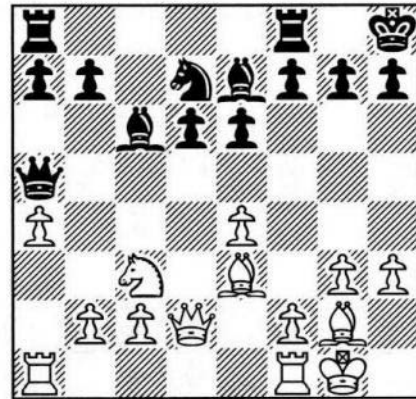
29 ♜xe7 ♜d6 30 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 31 ♖xf6

With three pawns for the exchange and far more active pieces, the rest is easy.

31...♜g7 32 ♙c3 ♜f7 33 ♖b4 ♜c8 34 bxc5 ♖xc5 35 ♖xh7

Black resigned.

Example 234
P.Popovic-J.Timman
Belgrade 1987



Here is a less dramatic case. In a Sicilian battle Black has just retreated his knight by 17...♖d7 in order to improve it via e5-c4. Popovic now alters the position in his favour by means of a well-known tactical trick.

18 ♖d5! ♜xd2

After 18...♜d8? 19 ♖xe7 ♜xe7 20 ♜fd1 the dark-squared bishop is sorely missed in Black's camp.

19 ♙xd2

Now the point of 18 ♖d5 is easily appreciated: after 19...ex d5?! 20 ex d5 White regains the piece with a clear positional plus, while 19...♙xd5 20 ex d5 e5 21 a5! also fa-

vours him – Popovic.

19...♙d8 20 ♖b4!

Depriving the opponent of the bishop pair, after which it will be easier to attack his queenside.

20...♙f6

After 20...♙a5?! 21 ♜fd1 the d6-pawn becomes exposed.

21 ♜xc6 bxc6 22 ♜ab1 ♜ab8 23 b3 d5 24 ♜fd1 ♜c5?!

24...d4 was preferable, when White could try 25 e5!? ♜xe5 26 f4, followed by ♙xc6 – Popovic.

25 ♙e3! ♙e7

The a7-pawn must stay on the board.

26 exd5 cxd5 27 c4!

Creating a passed pawn and clearing some space for the fianchettoed bishop.

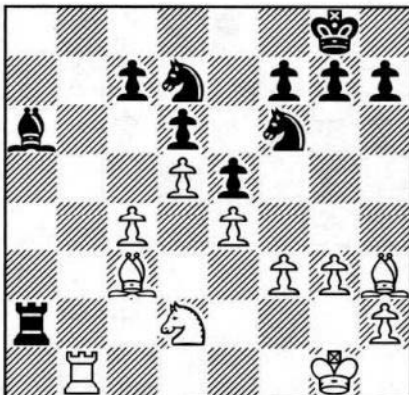
27...dxc4 28 bxc4 ♜xb1

After 28...♜xa4?! 29 ♜xb8 ♜xb8 30 ♜a1! the rook reaches the seventh rank.

29 ♜xb1

With the plan of a5-a6, ♙b7 and ♜b5. White is clearly better.

Example 235
A.Karpov-O.Romanishin
Tilburg 1993



White enjoys the bishop pair, but Black's position appears to be solid. How can the former exploit his control of the b-file?

27c5!

Based on the fact that 27...♜xc5?? fails to 28 ♜b8+, Karpov manages to undermine the enemy pawn chain and get rid of his only weak pawn.

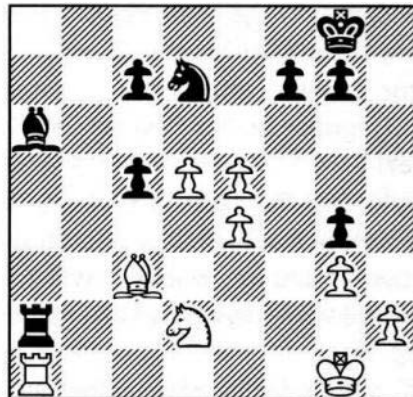
27...dxc5 28 f4!

Striking while the iron is hot.

28...h5

Romanishin creates a flight square for his king, aware that after 28...exf4? 29 e5 ♜xd5 30 ♙xd7 the piece can't be recovered by 30...♜xc3? due to the same 31 ♜b8+, while 30...♙f8 also proves unsuccessful after 31 ♙c6!, intending 31...♜xc3 32 ♜b8+ ♙e7 33 ♜e8 mate – Karpov.

29 fxe5 ♜g4 30 ♙xg4 hxg4 31 ♜a1!



Having obtained a clearly superior pawn structure, White is happy to exchange pieces.

31...♜c2?

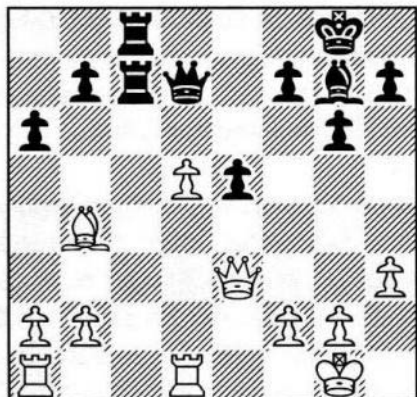
This loses by force. Black had to accept a difficult endgame after 31...♜xa1+ 32 ♙xa1. 32 ♜xa6 ♜xc3 33 ♜a8+ ♙h7 34 e6!

The rest is easy.

34...fxe6 35 dxe6 ♜f6 36 e7 ♜c1+ 37 ♙f2 ♜c2 38 ♙e1

Black resigned.

Example 236
P.Tregubov-T.Nedev
 European Club Cup, Fügen 2006



White would like to make progress with his passed pawn, but after 25 d6?! ♖c6 it is not evident how the enemy blockade can be broken, besides which the d6-pawn might become exposed after ...♙f8 at some moment. Tregubov finds a cleverer solution.

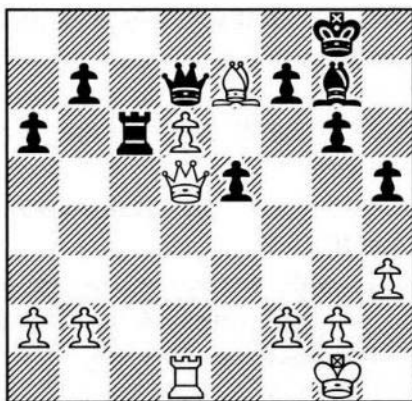
25 ♙e7!
 Exploiting the tactical trick 25...♞xe7? 26 d6, White installs his bishop on the obstructive e7-square, where it will make a strong duo with the d-pawn after d5-d6.

25...h5
 25...♙f8 drops a pawn after 26 ♙f8 ♖xf8 27 ♞xe5, while the active 25...♖c2 26 d6 ♖xb2?! runs into 27 ♖ac1! ♖bc2 28 ♖xc2 ♖xc2 29 ♖c1, intending 29...♖xc1+? 30 ♞xc1 ♙f8 31 ♞c7! winning – Golubev.

26 d6 ♖c6 27 ♖ac1 ♙h7
 Black's king has left the vulnerable back rank, but even so his position remains difficult due the strong passed pawn.

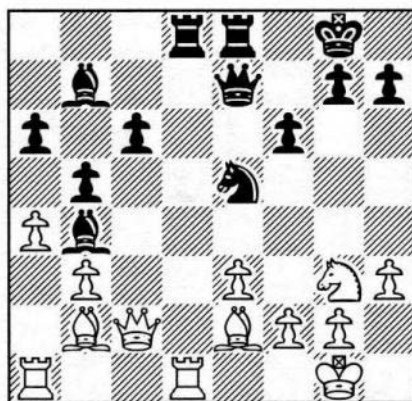
28 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 29 ♞b3 ♙g8?
 The consequent 29...f5 was called for, when 30 ♞f7 keeps the initiative – Golubev.
30 ♞d5!

Now it is difficult for Black to move, whereas White has a simple plan in ♖d3-f3.



30...♖c2 31 ♖d3 ♖c1+ 32 ♙h2 e4
 The only way to prevent 33 ♖f3.
33 ♞xe4
 Even stronger was 33 ♖g3! with the threat of 34 ♖xg6 – Golubev.
33...♖c5 34 f4
 Taking the e5-square from Black.
34...b5 35 b3 ♙h7 36 ♖d5 ♖xd5 37 ♞xd5
 White later converted his extra pawn.

Example 237
A.Karpov-A.Shirov
 Biel 1992



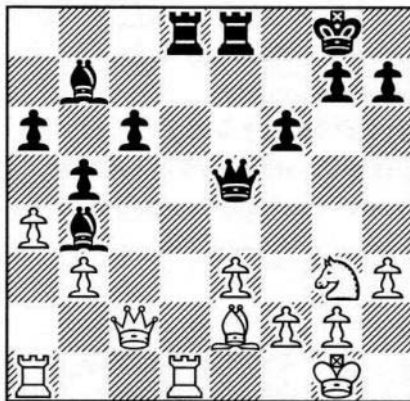
At first sight White doesn't seem to have achieved much in this position from the Semi-Slav; e.g. 21 $\text{d}f5$ $\text{c}c5!$? 22 $\text{c}xc5$ $\text{d}xc5$ 23 $\text{d}ac1$ $\text{d}f8$, intending ... $\text{d}c8$ -e6, with a solid game for Black.

21 $\text{d}xe5!$

A very concrete approach. Giving up the bishop pair hardly makes any sense in itself, but Karpov has anticipated that, in connection with a specific tactical line, it will help him to provoke chronic weaknesses on the black kingside.

21... $\text{c}xe5$

After 21... $\text{fxe5}!$? 22 $\text{d}f3$ White has a pleasant advantage thanks to the strong base on e4.



22 $\text{d}d3!$ h6

Unfortunately for Black, after 22...g6 23 $\text{d}xg6!$ hxg6 24 $\text{c}xg6+$ $\text{d}h8$ 25 $\text{c}h6+!$ $\text{d}g8$ 26 $\text{d}h5!$ the double threat of 27 $\text{c}g7$ mate and 27 $\text{d}xf6+$ cannot be parried. Thus Shirov is forced to weaken a whole complex of kingside light squares, which are immediately exploited by his opponent.

23 $\text{d}g6!$ $\text{d}f8$ 24 $\text{d}f5$ c5

After 24... $\text{d}c8$ 25 $\text{d}h4!$ the threat of 26 $\text{d}h7+$ followed by $\text{d}g6(+)$ is highly unpleasant; e.g. 25... $\text{c}g5$ 26 $\text{d}h7+$ $\text{d}f7$ 27 $\text{d}f3!$, when the white queen enters decisively on either g6 or c6. The text clears the

h1-a8 diagonal for the bishop but also lets White bring a new piece into the attack.

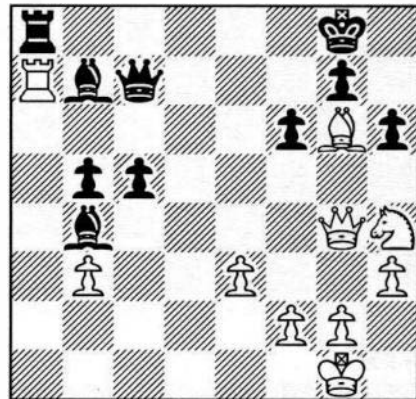
25 axb5 axb5 26 $\text{d}a7!$ $\text{c}c7$

Or 26... $\text{c}b8$ 27 $\text{d}e7+$ $\text{d}h8$ 28 $\text{d}f5!$ $\text{c}xa7$ 29 $\text{d}g6+$ $\text{d}g8$ 30 $\text{d}e6+$ with mate to come – Karpov.

27 $\text{d}h4$ $\text{d}xd1+$ 28 $\text{c}xd1$ $\text{d}a8$

If 28... $\text{d}d8$, then 29 $\text{c}g4$ $\text{c}b6$ 30 $\text{d}xb7!$ $\text{c}xb7$ 31 $\text{c}e6+$ with similar consequences.

29 $\text{c}g4!$



29... $\text{c}c6$

Taking the e6-square from the white queen, but only for an instant. Obviously 29... $\text{d}xa7?$ failed to 30 $\text{c}e6+$, followed by 31 $\text{c}e8$ mate.

30 $\text{d}xb7!$ $\text{c}xb7$ 31 $\text{c}e6+$ $\text{d}h8$ 32 $\text{d}e4$

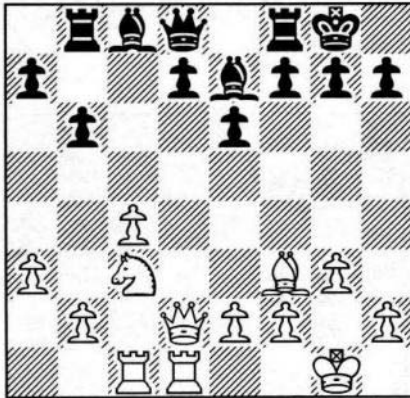
In view of 32... $\text{c}a6$ 33 $\text{d}g6+$ $\text{d}h7$ 34 $\text{d}e5+$ $\text{d}h8$ 35 $\text{d}f7+$ with Lucena's mate to come, Black resigned.

To finish with, let's see a few cases where tactical resources support strategical goals of a more defensive nature.

Example 238
A.Moiseenko-V.Bologan
 FIDE World Championship, Tripoli
 2004

In the Hedgehog-like position above

Black has a problem with completing his development. The natural 15...♙b7? drops a pawn after 16 ♖xd7, while both 15...d6 and 15...♗c7 lead to the same result after 16 ♘b5. Finally, the prophylactic 15...a6 runs into 16 ♘e4! ♗c7 17 ♘d6, preventing ...d7-d6, with a firm advantage.



15...♙g5!

Bologan has observed a minor tactical detail that will solve all his problems.

16 e3 ♙b7!

The point. With the bishop on f3 hanging in the air White has no time to capture the d7-pawn, while an exchange on b7 would leave the pawn defended by the rook.

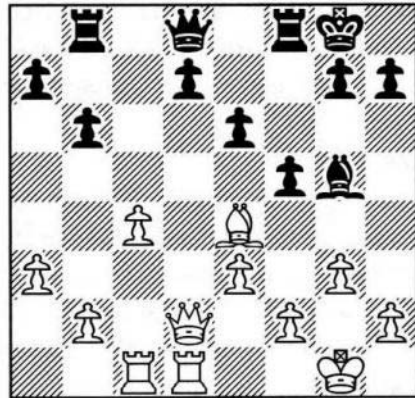
17 ♘e4

After 17 ♙xb7 ♖xb7 18 ♘e4 ♙e7, the formerly strong 19 ♘d6 proves harmless after 19...♙xd6 20 ♗xd6 ♗f6, followed by 21...♖c8 and 22...♗bc7 with counterplay. As for 19 ♖c3 ♖c7 20 ♘d3, increasing the pressure on d7, with 20...♗a8! Black once more uses tactical resources to mobilize his pieces: 21 ♙xd7? now drops the knight after 21...♖xd7 22 ♗xd7 ♘d8, while other moves are met by 21...♘d8 with a solid game.

17...♙xe4 18 ♙xe4

The threat of 19 ♗xd7 has been renewed.

18...f5!

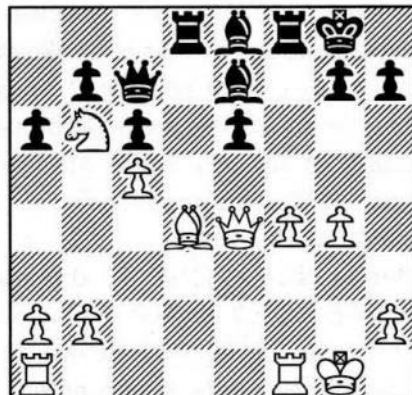


Again some minor tactics help Black in his defensive labour. By vacating the f7-square for the rook with tempo he secures the d7-pawn. There was no other way of keeping the material balance; e.g. 18...♙f6 19 ♗c2! with double threats at h7 and d7.

19 ♙f3 ♖f7 20 ♖c3 ♗c7 21 ♘d3 ♘d8

At last the d7-pawn is safe. White can't undertake much at this point, and a draw was agreed just a few moves later.

Example 239
M.Tal-A.Suetin
Sochi 1973



Black has a problem on the dark squares and his e6-pawn is weak. By exploiting some minor tactics Suetin manages to transform the position in his favour.

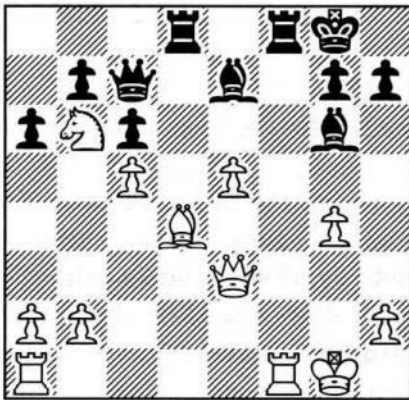
20...e5!

A surprising advance. Now neither 21 ♖xe5?? ♗xc5+, nor 21 ♜xe5?? ♝xe5 22 ♗xe5 ♗xc5+ works for White, so he is forced to obstruct himself on the a1-h8 diagonal and the e-file.

21 fxe5 ♗g6

Connecting the rooks and seizing some light squares with the bishop.

22 ♜e3



22...h6!

Preparing 23...♗g5 in order to activate the other bishop as well. Despite his extra pawn, the position is slowly becoming unpleasant for White, whose knight is no longer particularly useful on b6.

23 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 24 ♖f1 ♗d8!?

A good alternative was 24...♖xf1+ 25 ♜xf1 ♗g5 26 ♜f3 ♜d8 with excellent compensation for the pawn.

25 ♜c3 ♗g5 26 ♗e3 ♜e7

Getting closer to White's slightly exposed king.

27 ♗xg5 ♜xg5 28 ♜c4+ ♜h7 29 ♜f4 ♜e7 30 b4 ♜e6!

As we observed in some earlier exam-

ples, such as Zvjaginsev-Polgar (p. 182), sometimes a space advantage can turn out to be more of a liability than an asset.

31 ♖f2

Or 31 ♗c4 ♗d3 32 ♖c1 ♖f8! with a strong attack – Suetin.

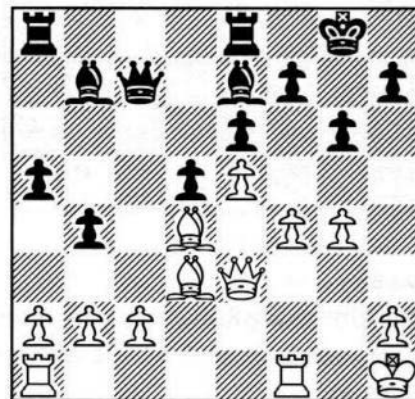
31...♗d1+ 32 ♖f1 ♖xf1+!

Here the game continued 32...♗d3? 33 h4! ♖a3 34 h5, when White obtained counterplay and eventually even won.

33 ♜xf1 ♜xa2

Black finally recovers the pawn, with some advantage thanks to his active pieces and the insecure white king.

Example 240
V.Bologan-S.Rublevsky
Dortmund 2004



In this French-like structure White has just played 22 ♗g4 with the clear intention of 23 f5, attacking the enemy king. What can Black do against this plan?

22...♗c5!

Exploiting the fact that 23 ♗xc5?? runs into 23...d4+, Rublevsky manages to swap the important enemy bishop on d4, whose departure will leave the e5-pawn more vulnerable and facilitate Black's counterplay

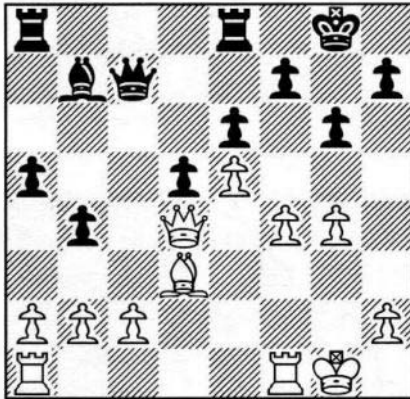
Mastering Chess Strategy

on the queenside. In contrast, after 22...♙a6?! 23 f5 ♗xd3 24 cxd3! ♖ac8 25 ♖f3 White has good attacking prospects, e.g. 25...♗c5 26 ♖h6! ♙f8 27 ♖h4 followed by 28 ♖h3 with tremendous pressure along the h-file.

23 ♖g1

Leaving the vulnerable h1-a8 diagonal. 23 f5? obviously failed to 23...♗xd4 24 ♖xd4exf5 25 gxf5 ♖xe5, while after 23 c3!? ♖ec8 24 f5 ♗a6 Black has no problems; e.g. 25 fxe6 fxe6 26 ♖f6 bxc3 27 bxc3 ♗xd4 28 cxd4 ♖c3 29 ♖d1 ♖c6!, followed by 30...♖b8, with counterplay.

23...♗xd4 24 ♖xd4



24...♗a6!

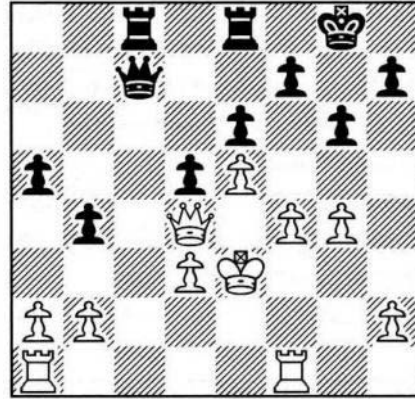
With this move Rublevsky gets rid of the "bad" bishop and, as a bonus, softens up the c2-pawn.

25 ♖f2?!

Bologan approaches with his king, perhaps counting on 25...♖a7?! 26 ♖xa7 ♖xa7 27 ♖e3. However, in the case of the queens staying on the board, the location of the king on f2 will just make the kingside more vulnerable. 25 ♖ae1 ♗xd3 26 cxd3 ♖ac8 27 f5 seems preferable, with threat of ♖f4-h6 and f5-f6; e.g. 27...♖c5 28 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 29 ♖e2 emerging into a roughly equal rook endgame.

25...♗xd3 26 cxd3 ♖ac8 27 ♖e3?

This runs into a strong counterattack. Here 27 ♖g3 was preferable, followed by 28 ♖f2 and 29 ♖af1.



27...♖e7!

Heading for the weak square on h4.

28 g5

In view of the threat 28...♖h4, Bologan weakens his pawn structure. After 28 ♖f3 h5!, both 29 h3 ♖h4 and 29 gxf5 ♖h4!, intending ...♖h3+ and ...♖c2+, leave the white king in quite some trouble.

28...♖c2!

Seizing the second rank before White manages to play 29 ♖ac1.

29 ♖f2 ♖c7 30 ♖f3 ♖c8 31 ♖af1 ♖xf2+ 32 ♖xf2

Or if 32 ♖xf2 ♖c1! with interesting prospects for the black queen in both directions.

32...♖c6! 33 ♖d2

33 ♖d4 permits 33...♖c2, while after 33 ♖g3 ♖a4! 34 b3 ♖b5, preparing ...♖c3 and ...♖c6, Black takes over.

33...d4+ 34 ♖f2 ♖d5!

By attacking the a2-pawn Black prepares to meet 35 b3 by 35...♖c3 with a clear initiative. Rublevsky went on to win.

For the related exercises, see page 363.

Exercises

The following exercises will help you to put into practice the concepts studied earlier in the book. Each block of exercises is related to a specific theoretical section, thus it makes sense to solve them once you have finished the corresponding section.

The vast majority of these exercises is conformed by middlegame positions, with a few opening and endgame positions as a complement. Logically these examples are shorter and less detailed than the explanatory examples featured earlier in the book, yet on many occasions I have continued the examples far after the supposed finish of the solution, due to their instructive content.

In most cases I am asking for a 1st move + short plan. The latter can be anything from a general idea ("clear the b1-h7 diagonal for the bishop", "swap the defender on f6" etc), a specific plan or manoeuvre ("intending Qd2-b3-a5 with pressure on c6") to a concrete sequence of moves ("in order to meet 1... Qd5 with 2 Qxd5 cxd5 3 Rc1 seizing the open file"). Sometimes you will have to evaluate one or two options, and in a number of complex positions concrete variations are required, e.g. 3-4 complete moves.

Depending on the level of each exercise (they are presented in ascending order of difficulty) you will probably need between 5 and 20 minutes to find the solution. If your solution doesn't coincide with the one in the book, don't despair - the main thing is to grasp the general idea, and if you haven't, then give yourself more time for the next position. On the other hand, you might have found an even better solution, who knows!

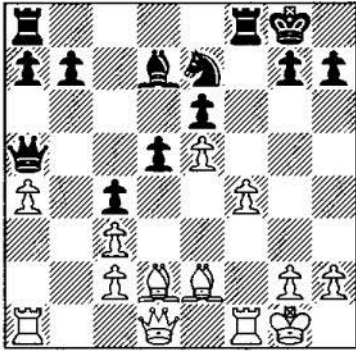
On some occasions I have included 1st move alternatives in the solution (typically originating in suggestions from my students) that for one or another reason deserve attention. Different move orders have also been dealt with in some cases. In a few exercises the related concept is applied indirectly, e.g. preventing your opponent from making a key exchange.

Mastering Chess Strategy

Finally, you might find some exercises a little easy, in particular the first ones of each section. However, in my opinion there is nothing wrong with verifying existing knowledge, just like you review a part of your opening repertoire before a tournament game. A major aim of these exercises is indeed to improve your intuition, so as to be able to apply strategic concepts more swiftly in practice.

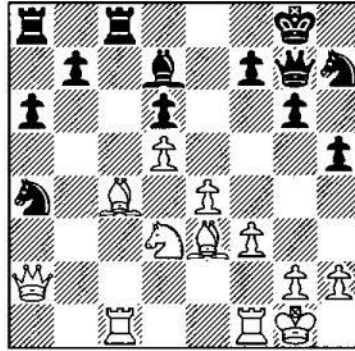
Exercises 1-20: The bishop

Position 1 (Black to play)



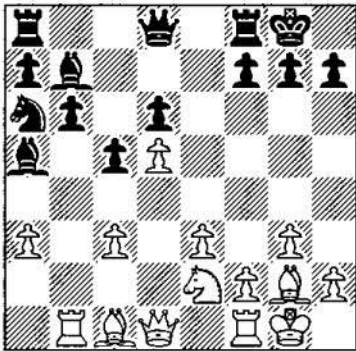
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 4 (White to play)



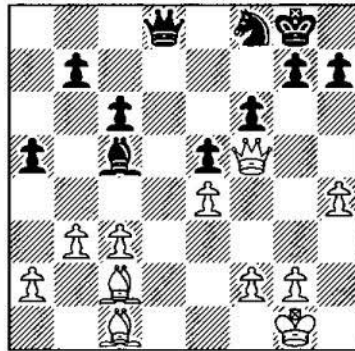
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 2 (White to play)



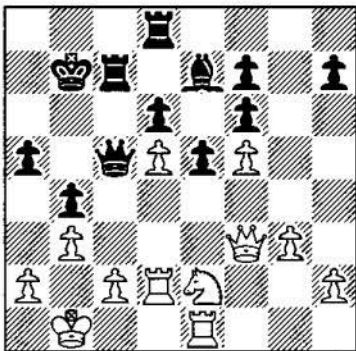
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 5 (White to play)



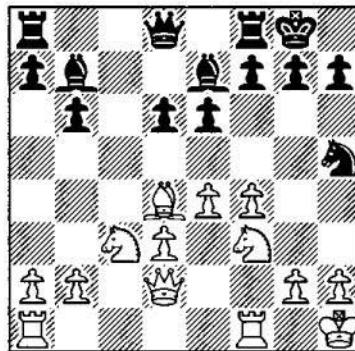
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 3 (Black to play)



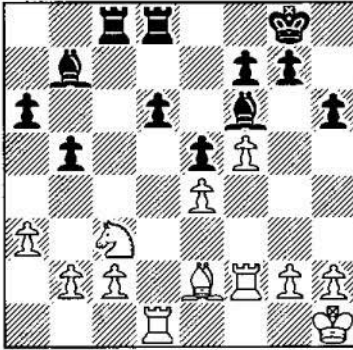
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 6 (Black to play)



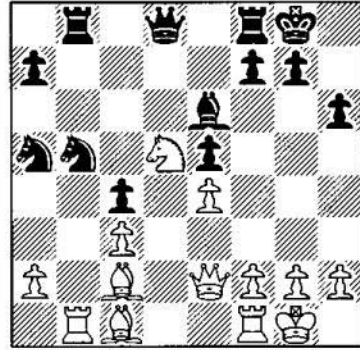
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 7 (Black to play)



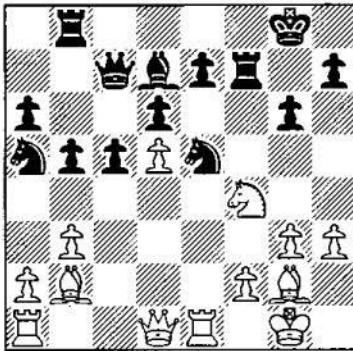
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 10 (White to play)



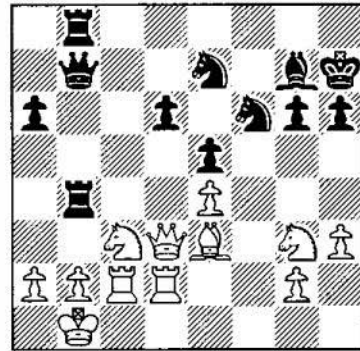
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 8 (White to play)



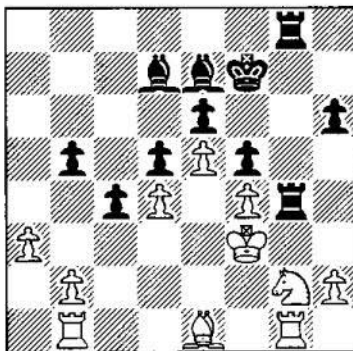
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 11 (Black to play)



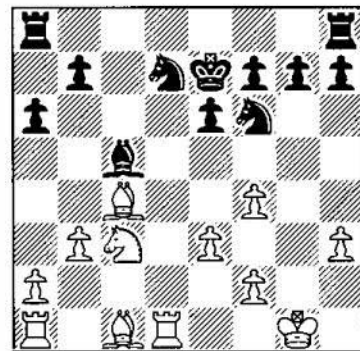
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 9 (Black to play)



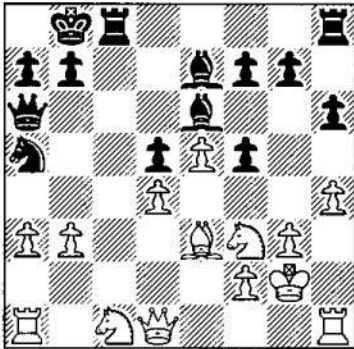
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 12 (White to play)



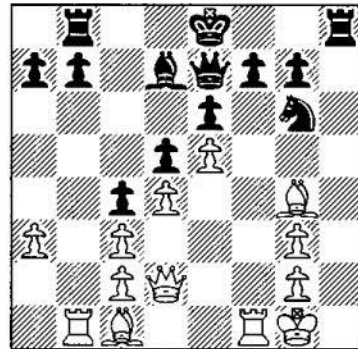
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 13 (Black to play)



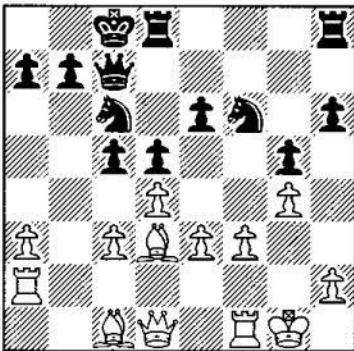
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 16 (White to play)



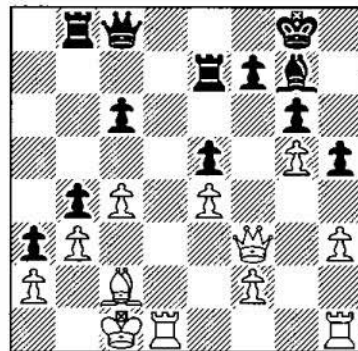
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 14 (White to play)



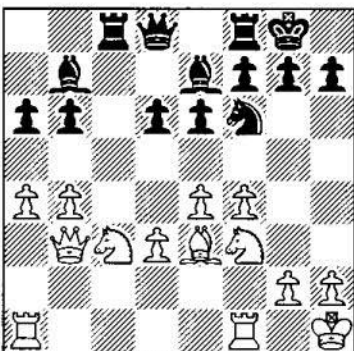
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 17 (Black to play)



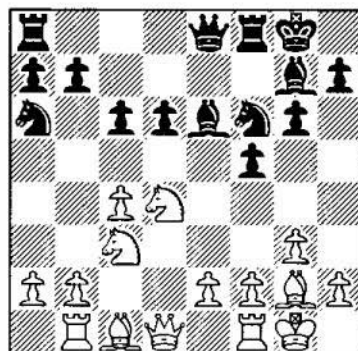
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 15 (Black to play)



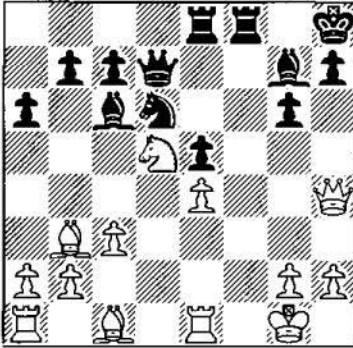
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 18 (White to play)



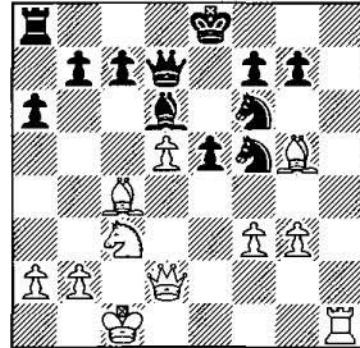
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 19 (Black to play)



Indicate your first 2 moves + short plan.

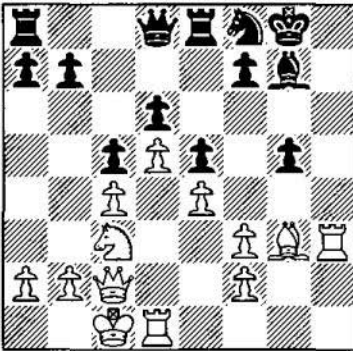
Position 20 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

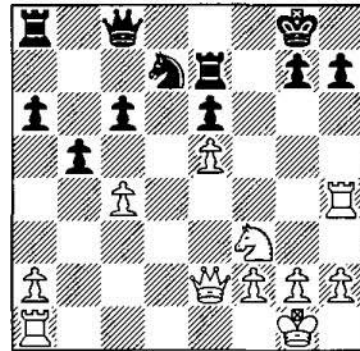
Exercises 21-40: The knight

Position 21 (White to play)



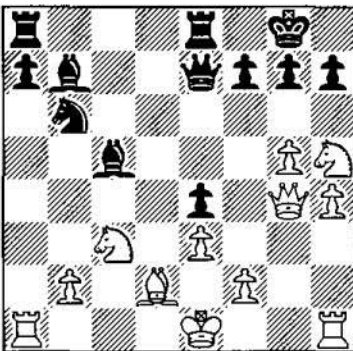
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 23 (White to play)



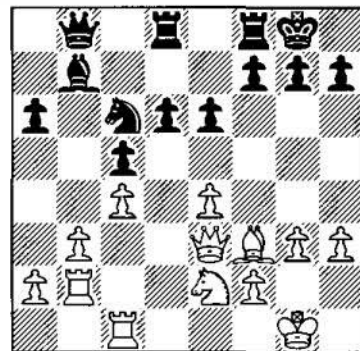
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 22 (Black to play)



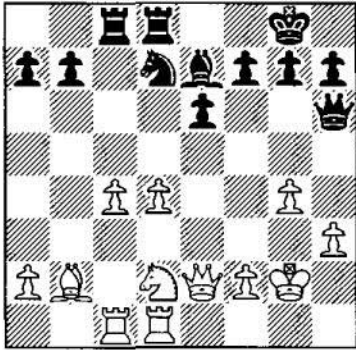
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 24 (Black to play)



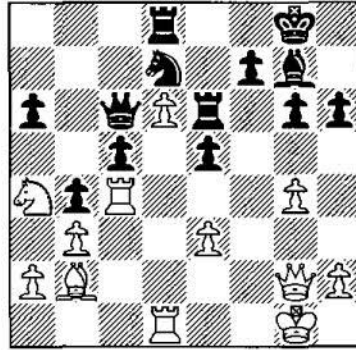
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 25 (Black to play)



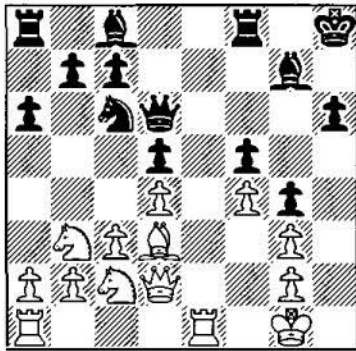
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 28 (Black to play)



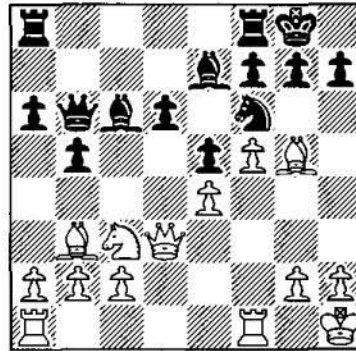
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 26 (Black to play)



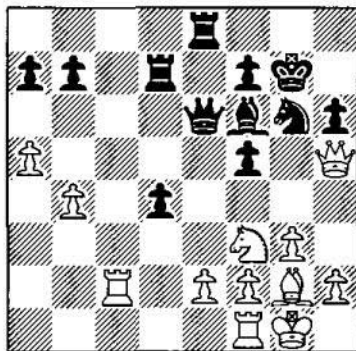
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 29 (White to play)



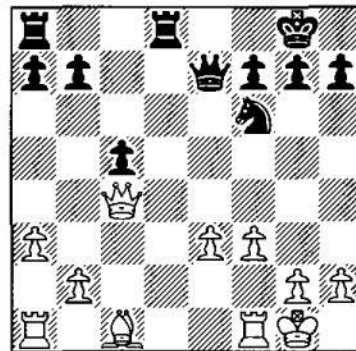
Indicate your first 2 moves + short plan.

Position 27 (White to play)



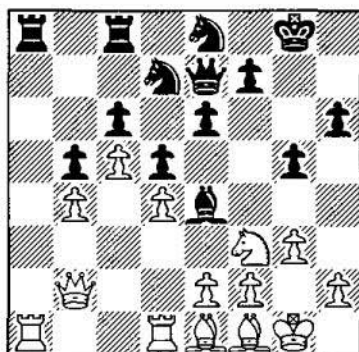
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 30 (Black to play)



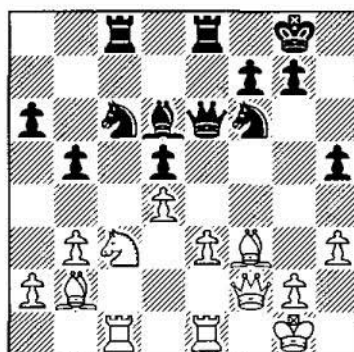
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 31 (White to play)



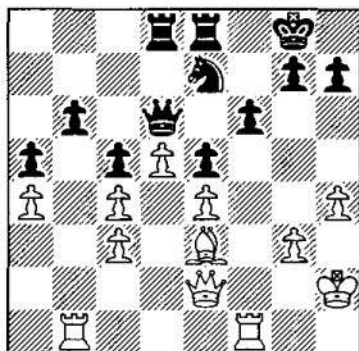
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 34 (Black to play)



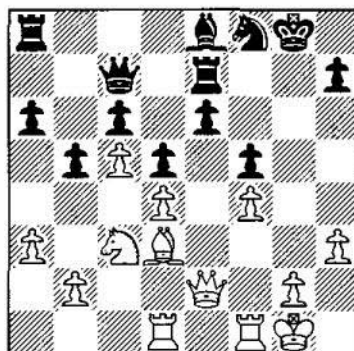
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 32 (Black to play)



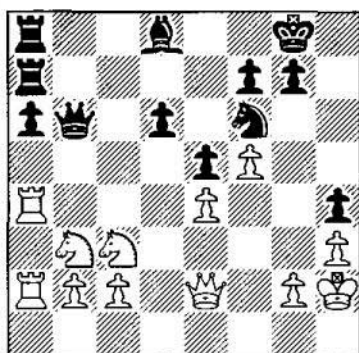
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 35 (White to play)



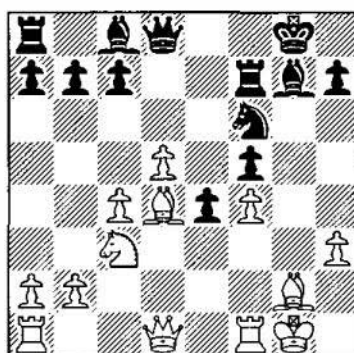
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 33 (White to play)



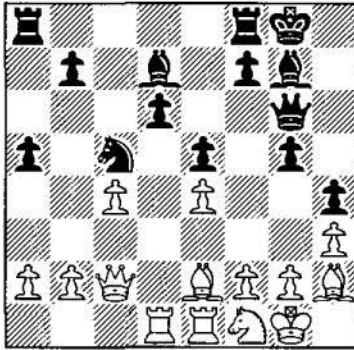
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 36 (Black to play)



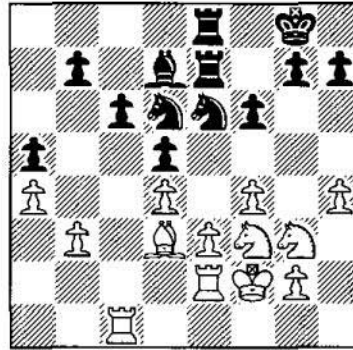
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 37 (White to play)



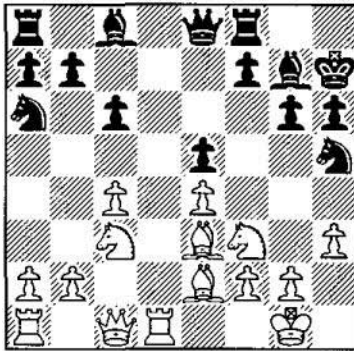
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 39 (Black to play)



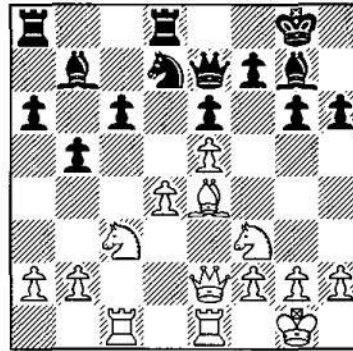
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 38 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

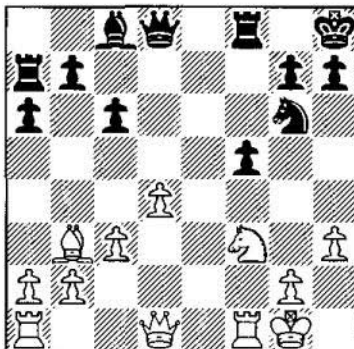
Position 40 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

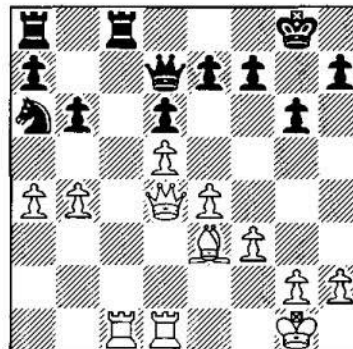
Exercises 41-60: The rook

Position 41 (White to play)



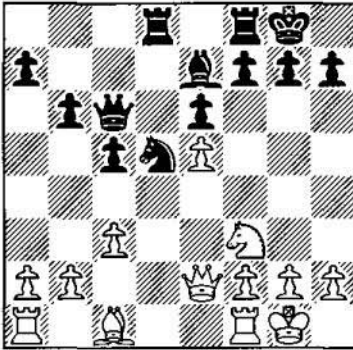
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 42 (White to play)



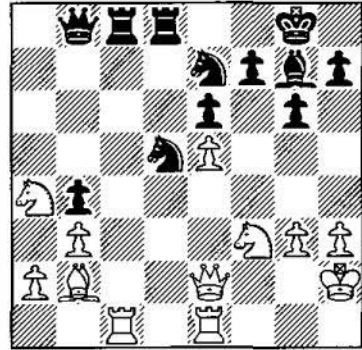
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 43 (Black to play)



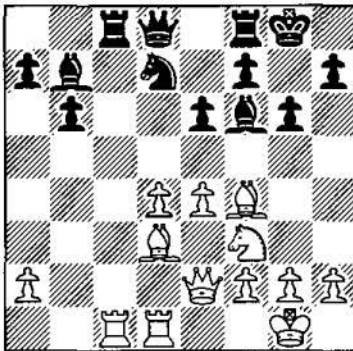
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 46 (Black to play)



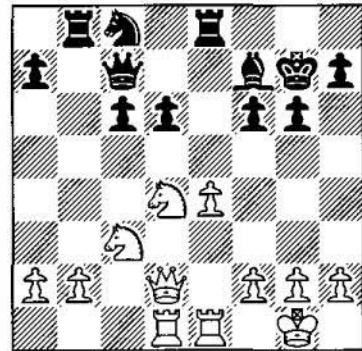
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 44 (White to play)



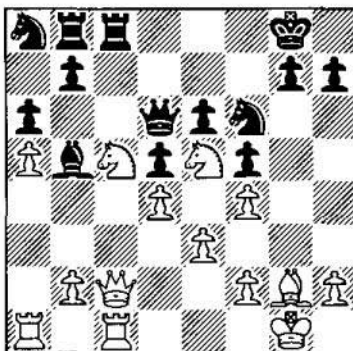
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 47 (White to play)



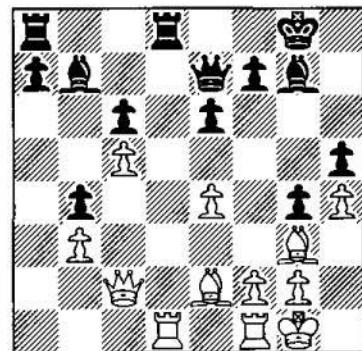
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 45 (White to play)



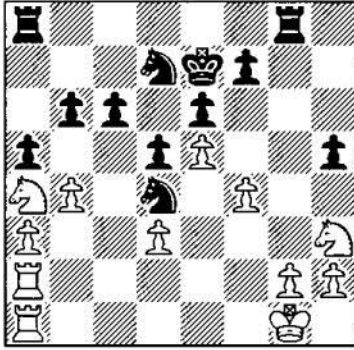
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 48 (White to play)



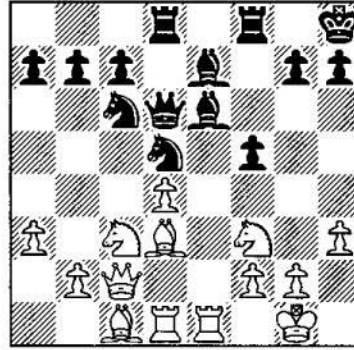
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 49 (Black to play)



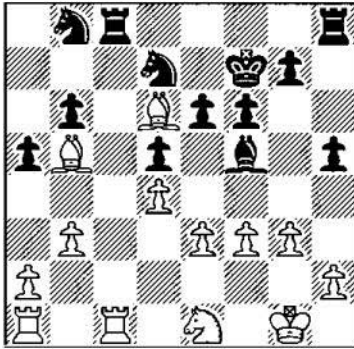
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 52 (White to play)



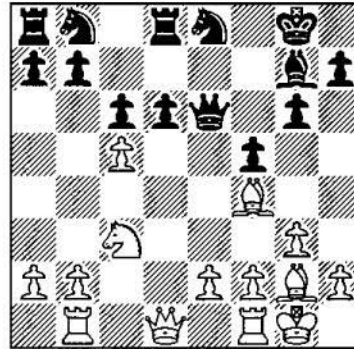
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 50 (White to play)



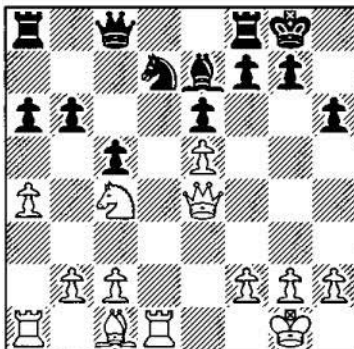
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 53 (White to play)



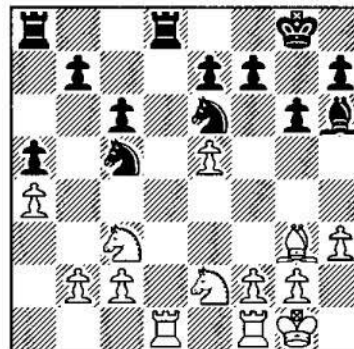
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 51 (White to play)



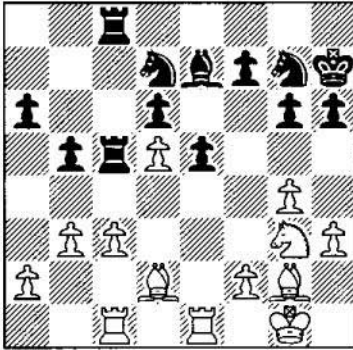
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 54 (Black to play)



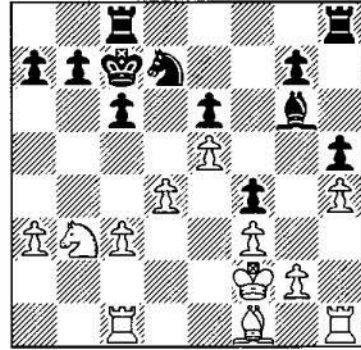
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 55 (White to play)



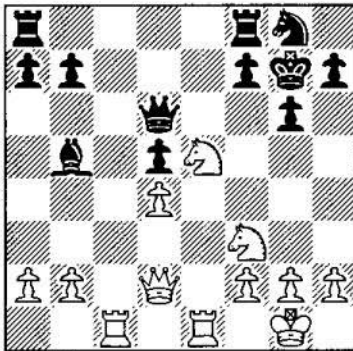
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 58 (White to play)



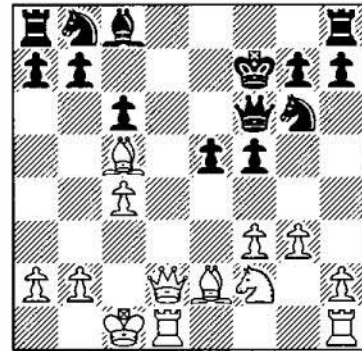
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 56 (White to play)



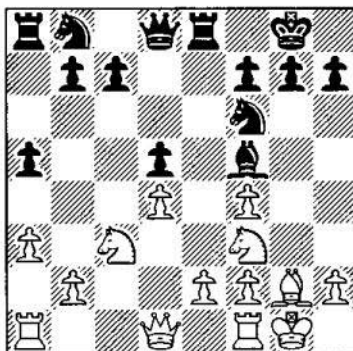
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 59 (White to play)



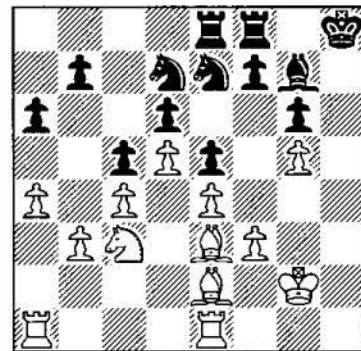
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 57 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

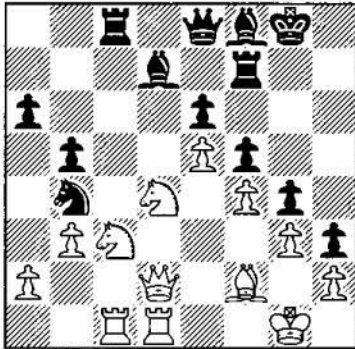
Position 60 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

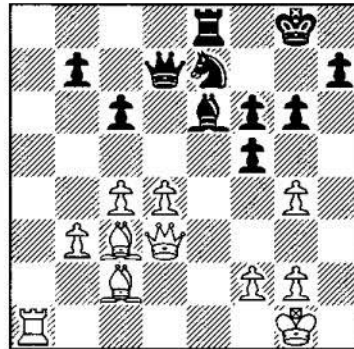
Exercises 61-69: The queen

Position 61 (Black to play)



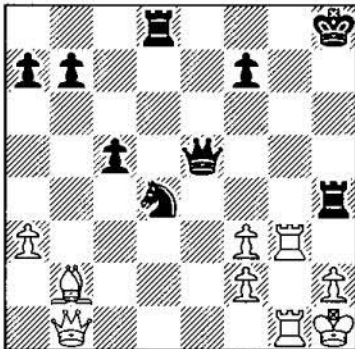
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 64 (White to play)



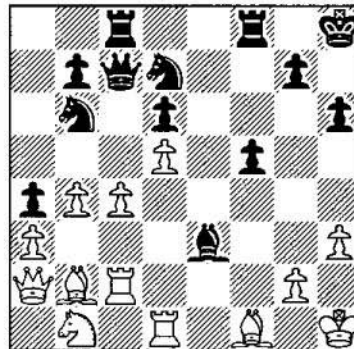
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 62 (White to play)



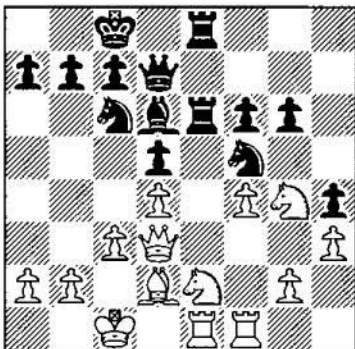
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 65 (Black to play)



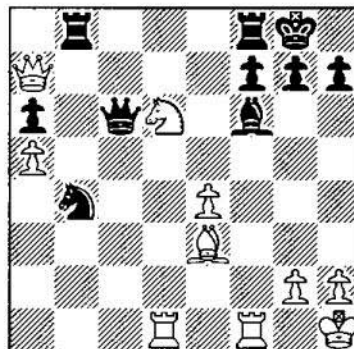
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 63 (Black to play)



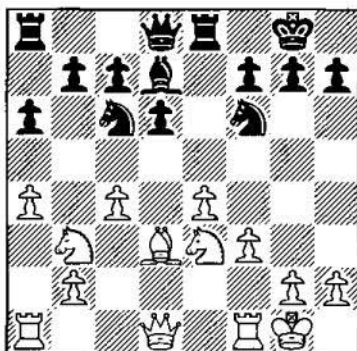
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 66 (White to play)



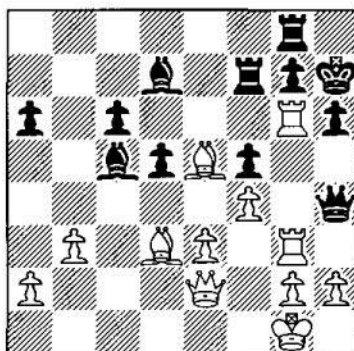
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 67 (Black to play)



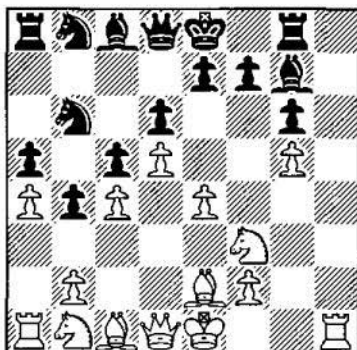
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 69 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

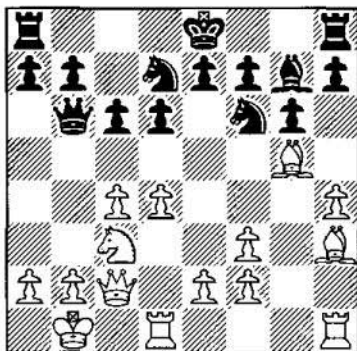
Position 68 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

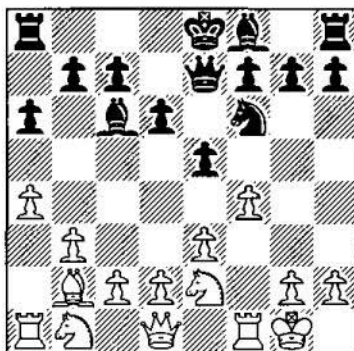
Exercises 70-81: The king

Position 70 (Black to play)



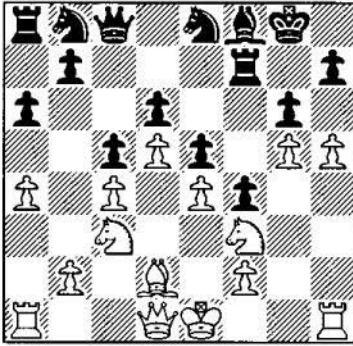
Indicate your 1st move + general solution for the king.

Position 71 (Black to play)



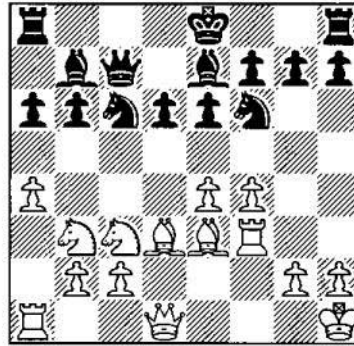
Indicate your 1st move + general solution for the king.

Position 72 (White to play)



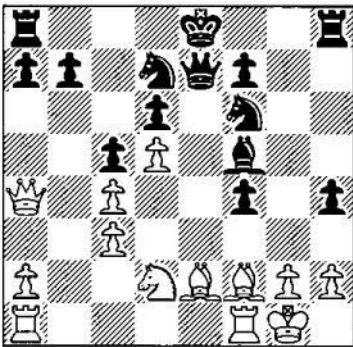
Indicate your 1st move + general solution for the king.

Position 75 (Black to play)



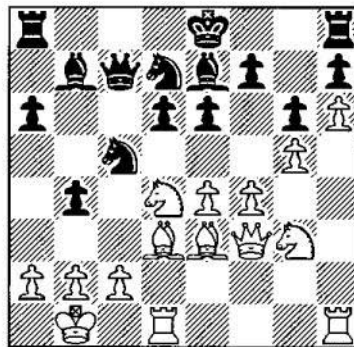
Indicate your 1st move + general solution for the king.

Position 73 (Black to play)



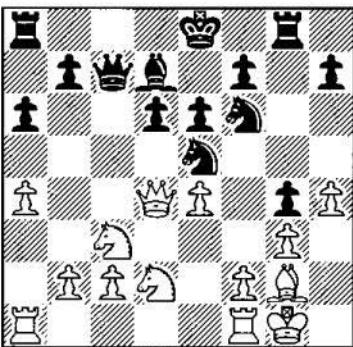
Indicate your 1st move + general solution for the king.

Position 76 (Black to play)



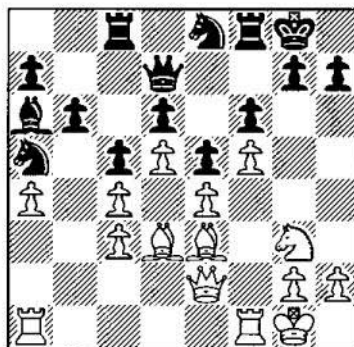
Indicate your 1st move + general solution for the king.

Position 74 (Black to play)



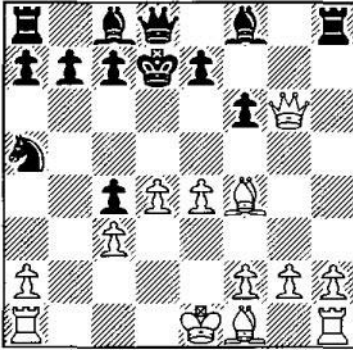
Indicate your 1st move + general solution for the king.

Position 77 (Black to play)



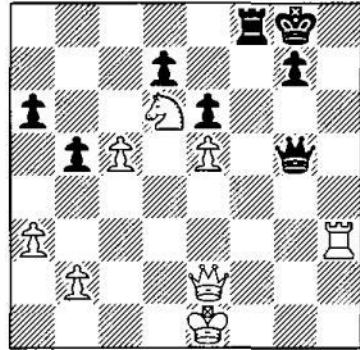
Indicate your 1st move + general solution for the king.

Position 78 (Black to play)



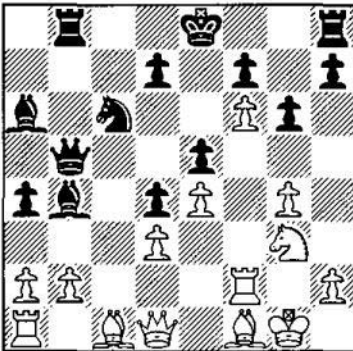
Indicate your 1st move + general solution for the king.

Position 80 (White to play)



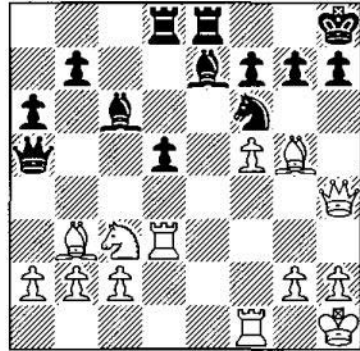
Black threatens 1... ♖g1+ 2 ♜d2 ♞f2. Which is best 1 ♞f3 or 1 ♜e3 - ? (5-6 moves analysis)

Position 79 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + general solution for the king.

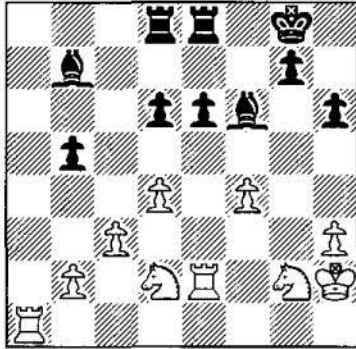
Position 81 (Black to play)



Black wants to play 1... ♜c5, preparing ...d5-d4. Should he fear 2 ♞h3 - ? (5-6 moves analysis)

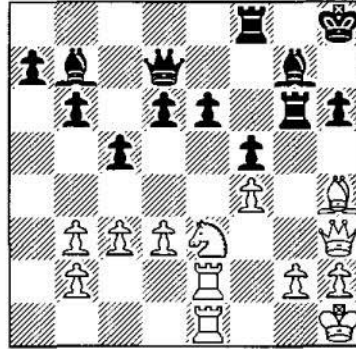
Exercises 82-90: The bishop pair

Position 82 (Black to play)



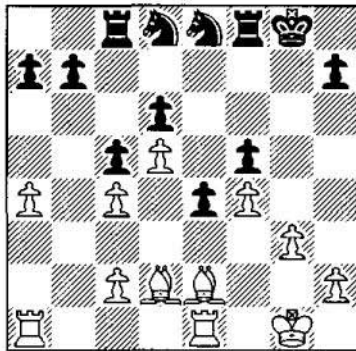
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 85 (Black to play)



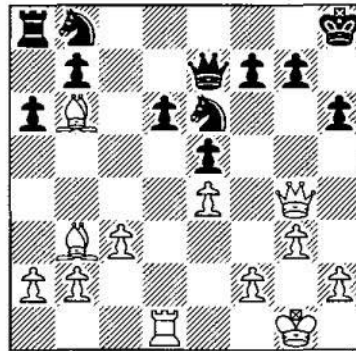
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 83 (White to play)



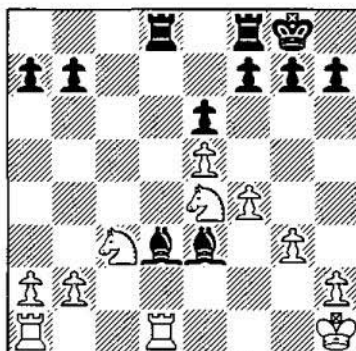
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 86 (White to play)



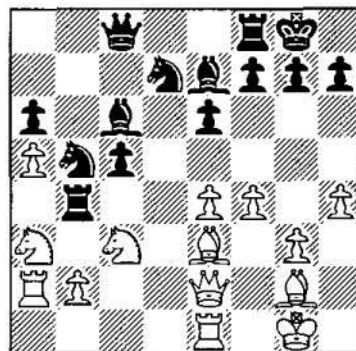
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 84 (Black to play)



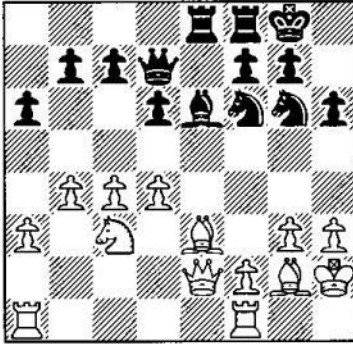
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 87 (Black to play)



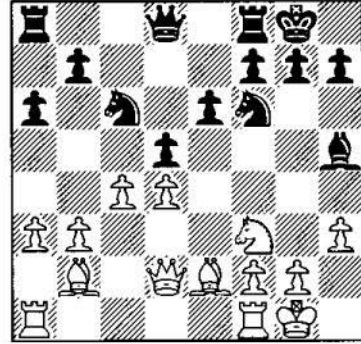
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 88 (Black to play)



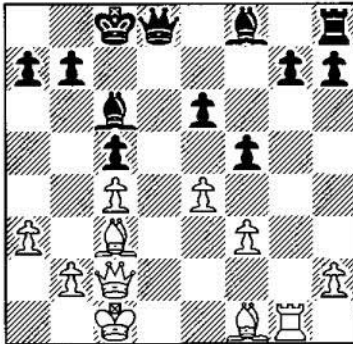
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 90 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

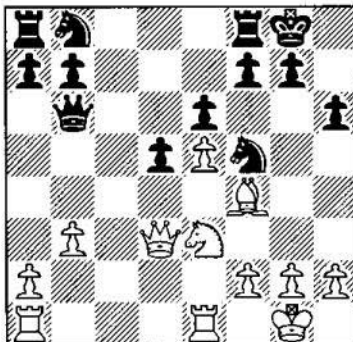
Position 89 (Black to play)



White has quite some pressure for the pawn. Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

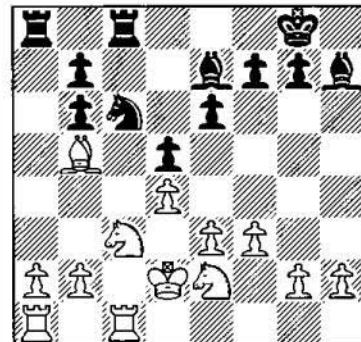
Exercises 91-96: Exchanges – material advantage

Position 91 (Black to play)



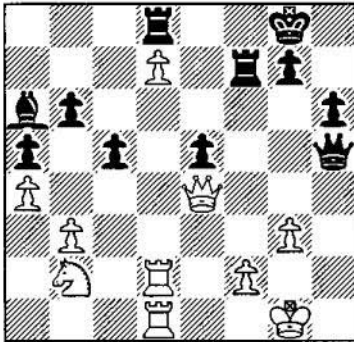
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 92 (White to play)



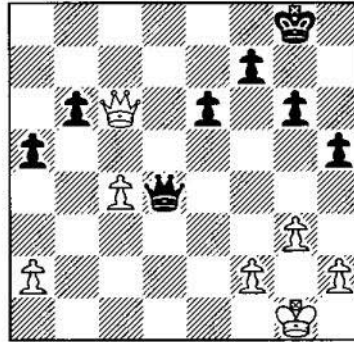
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 93 (Black to play)



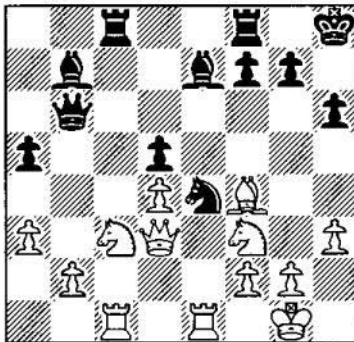
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 95 (Black to play)



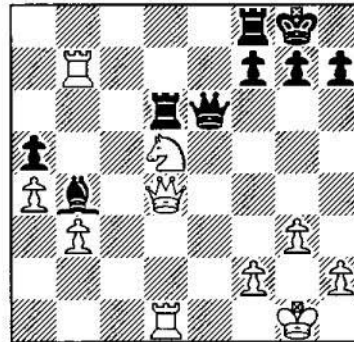
How do you continue? (4-5 moves)

Position 94 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

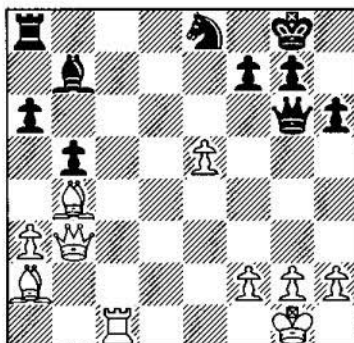
Position 96 (White to play)



How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

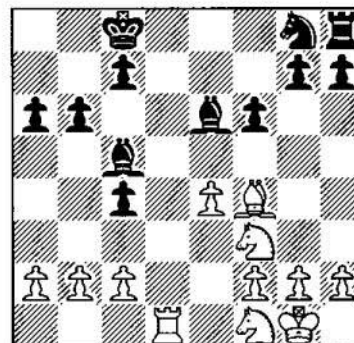
Exercises 97-104: Exchanges – positional advantage

Position 97 (White to play)



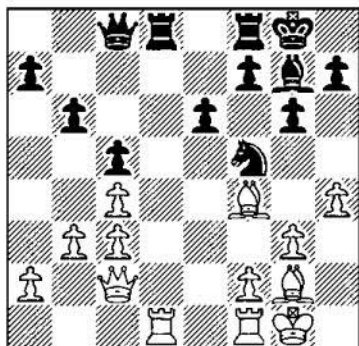
Evaluate 1 ♖g3. (general considerations)

Position 98 (White to play)



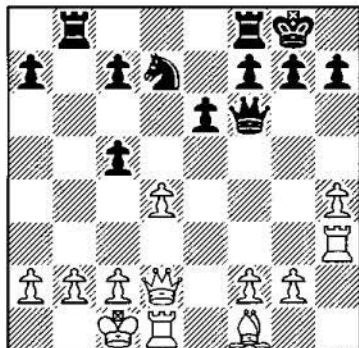
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 99 (Black to play)



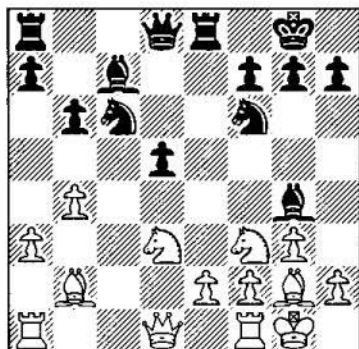
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 100 (White to play)



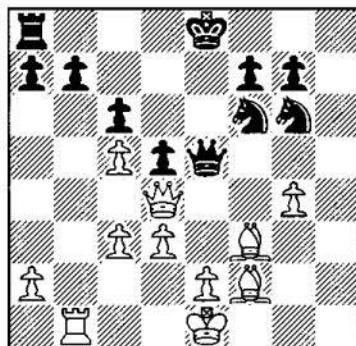
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 101 (Black to play)



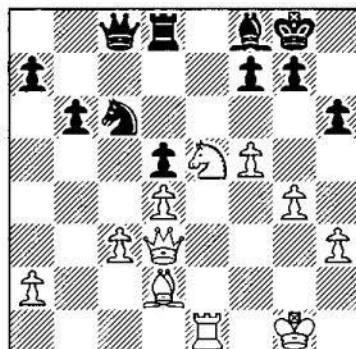
Evaluate the options 1...♙xf3 2 ♗xf3 ♕e5 and 1...♖c8 2 ♖c1 ♕b8. (general considerations)

Position 102 (Black to play)



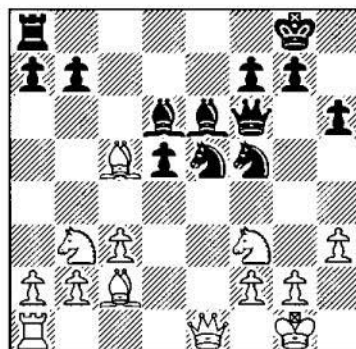
Evaluate the options 1...0-0-0 and 1...♗xd4. (general considerations)

Position 103 (Black to play)



Evaluate 1...♗xe5. (2-3 moves)

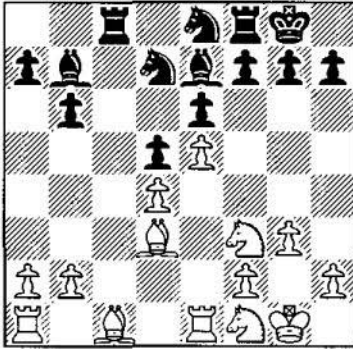
Position 104 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

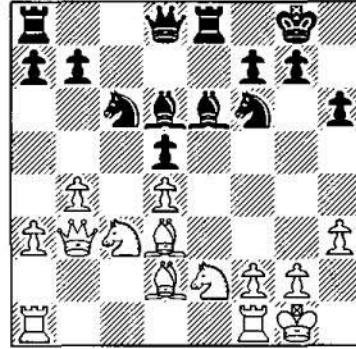
Exercises 105-114: Exchanges – key pieces

Position 105 (Black to play)



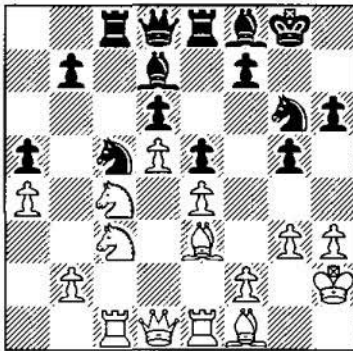
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 108 (Black to play)



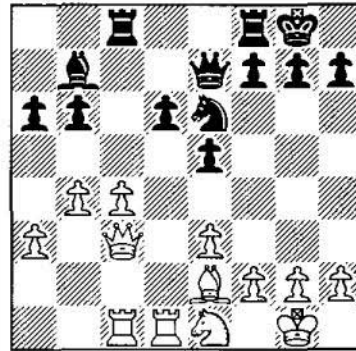
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 106 (White to play)



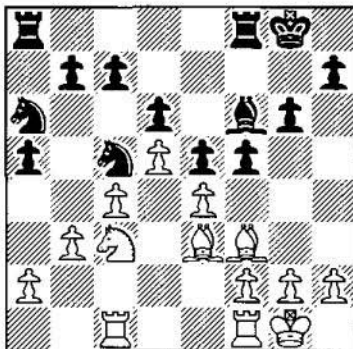
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 109 (White to play)



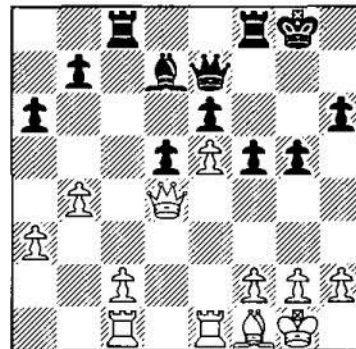
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 107 (Black to play)



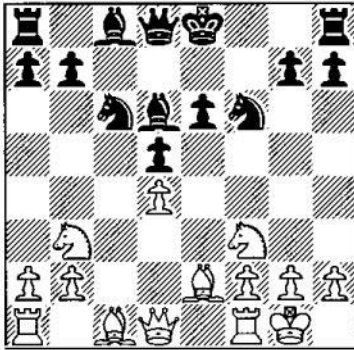
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 110 (Black to play)



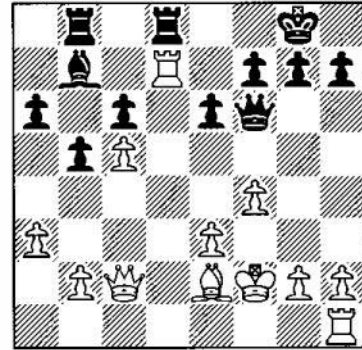
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 111 (White to play)



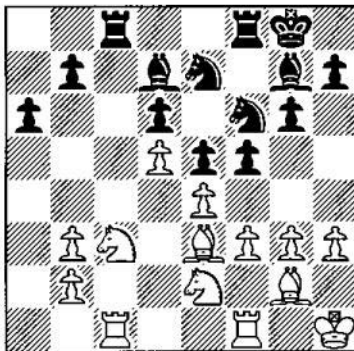
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 113 (White to play)



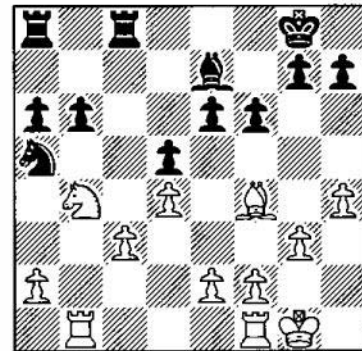
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 112 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

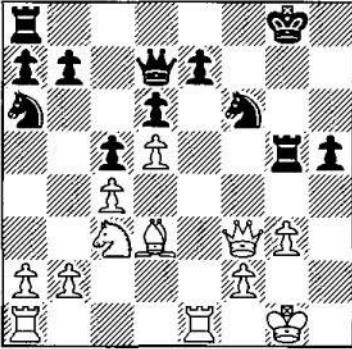
Position 114 (White to play)



Evaluate the options 1 ♘d3 and 1 ♙d2.
(general considerations)

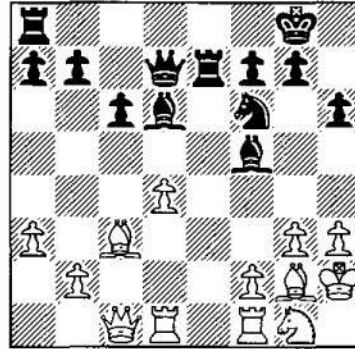
Exercises 115-126: Exchanges – attack

Position 115 (White to play)



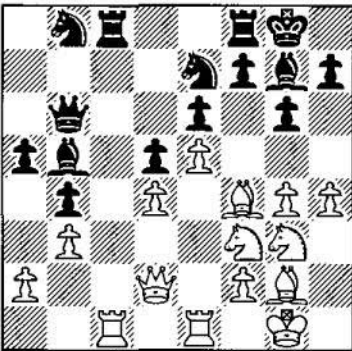
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 118 (Black to play)



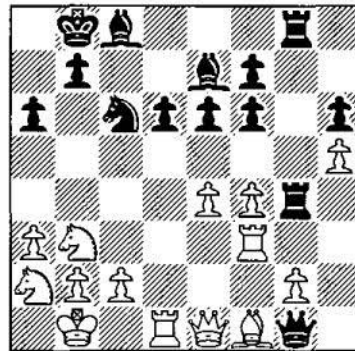
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 116 (White to play)



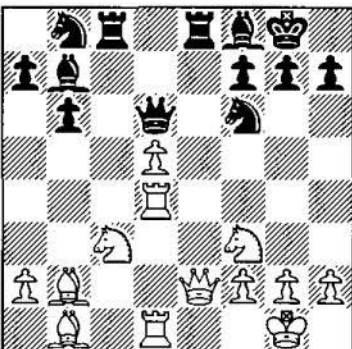
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 119 (White to play)



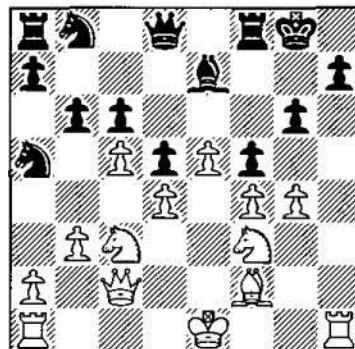
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 117 (White to play)



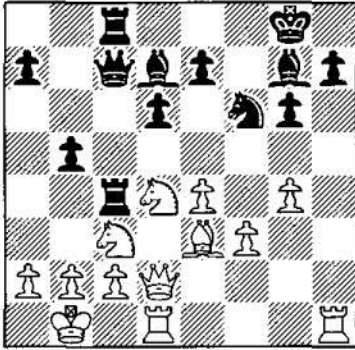
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 120 (White to play)



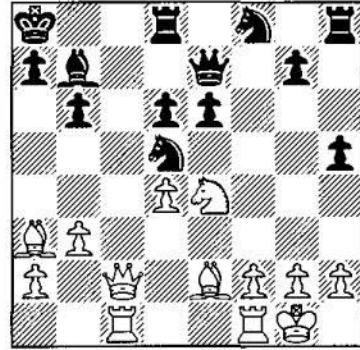
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 121 (White to play)



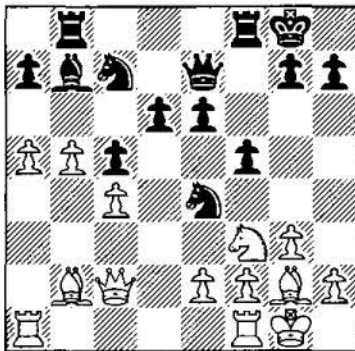
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 124 (White to play)



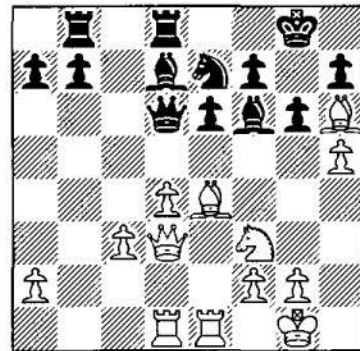
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 122 (White to play)



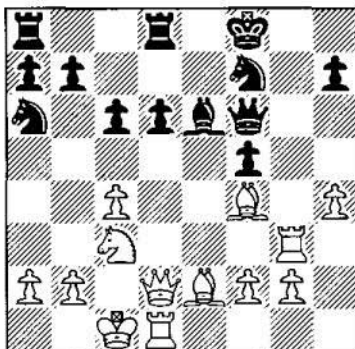
Evaluate the options 1 ♞d2 and 1 ♞ad1.
(general considerations)

Position 125 (White to play)



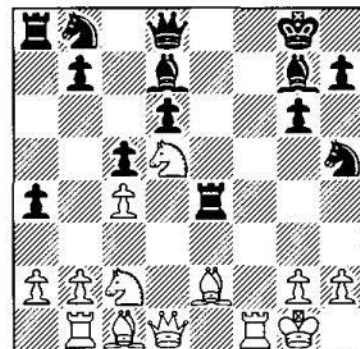
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 123 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

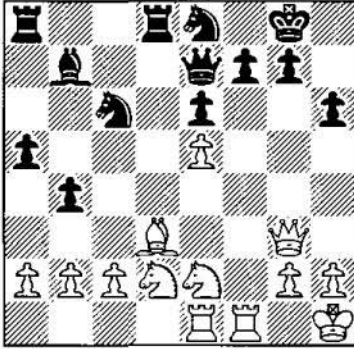
Position 126 (White to play)



How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

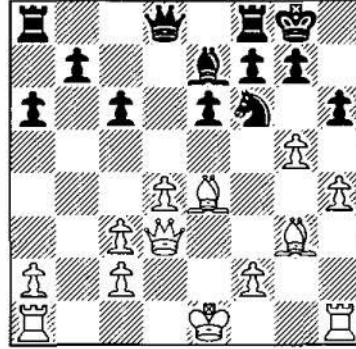
Exercises 127-136: Exchanges – defence

Position 127 (Black to play)



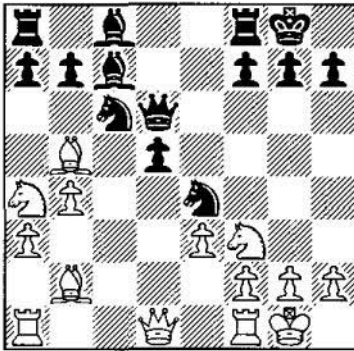
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 130 (Black to play)



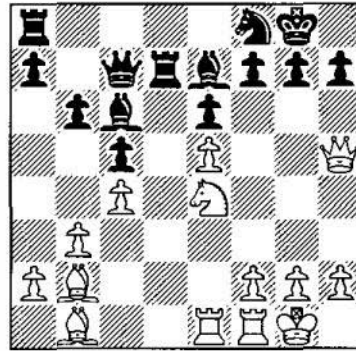
Indicate your first 2 moves + short plan.

Position 128 (White to play)



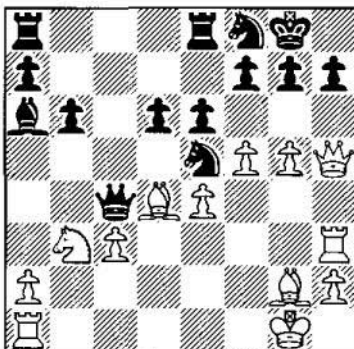
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 131 (Black to play)



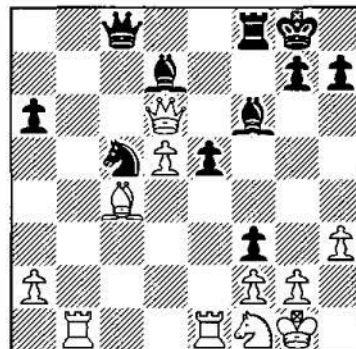
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 129 (Black to play)



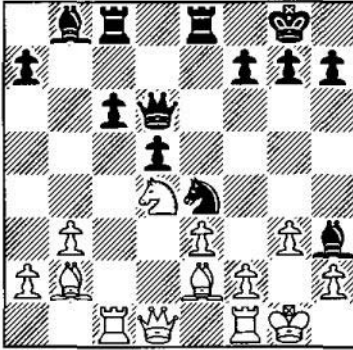
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 132 (White to play)



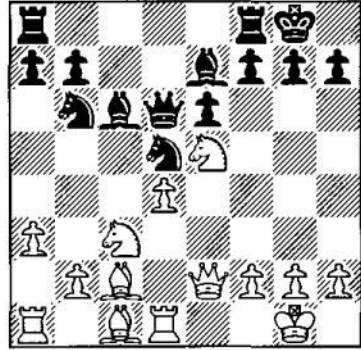
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 133 (White to play)



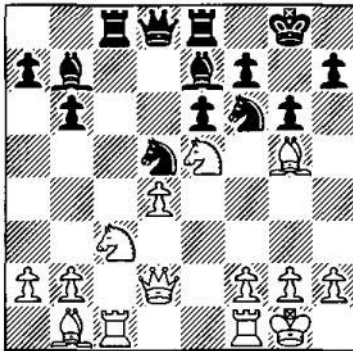
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 135 (Black to play)



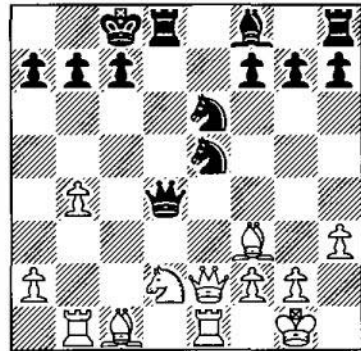
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 134 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

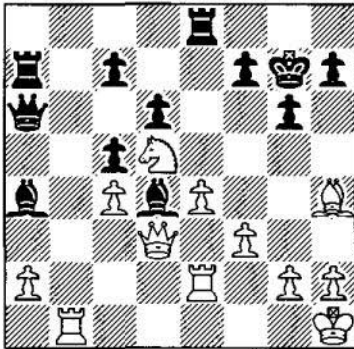
Position 136 (Black to play)



Evaluate the options 1...♖xf3+ and 1...♗d6. (3-4 moves)

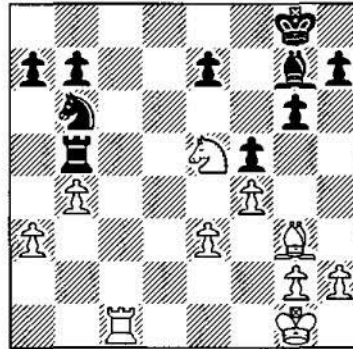
Exercises 137-148: Exchanges – activity

Position 137 (White to play)



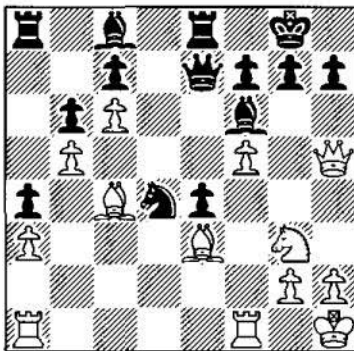
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 140 (White to play)



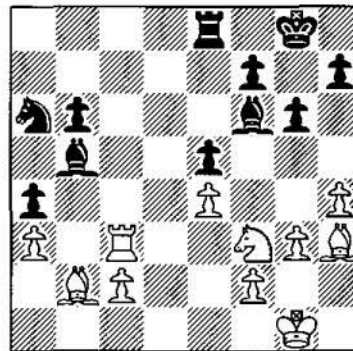
Evaluate 1 ♖c5. (general considerations)

Position 138 (White to play)



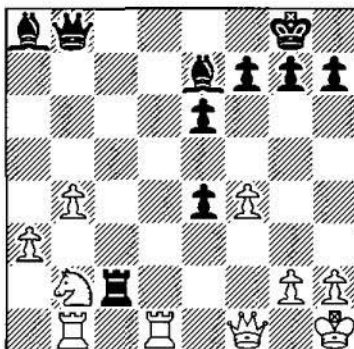
Evaluate 1 ♗xd4. (general considerations)

Position 141 (White to play)



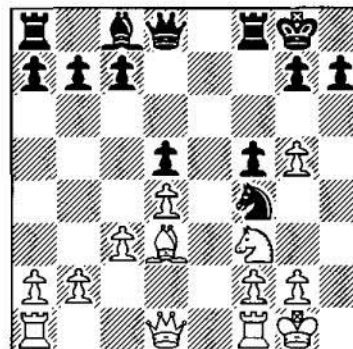
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 139 (White to play)



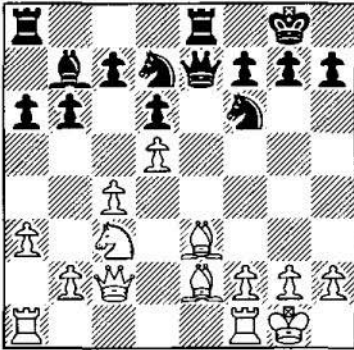
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 142 (White to play)



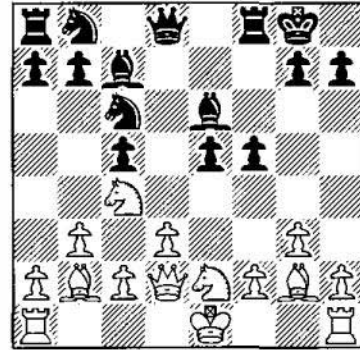
Evaluate 1 ♗c2 and 1 ♖e1. (generally)

Position 143 (Black to play)



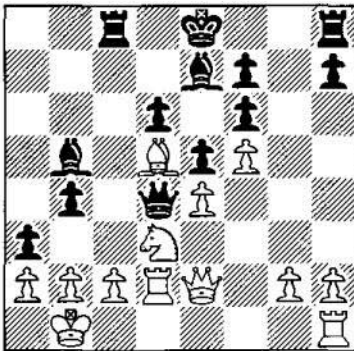
Evaluate the options 1...♖e5 and 1...♖e4.

Position 146 (Black to play)



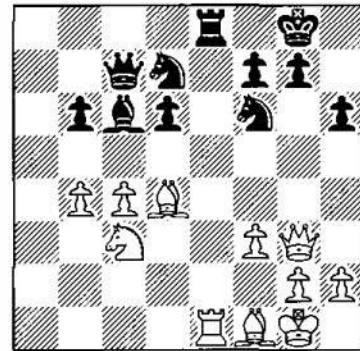
Evaluate 1...♗d5. (general considerations)

Position 144 (White to play)



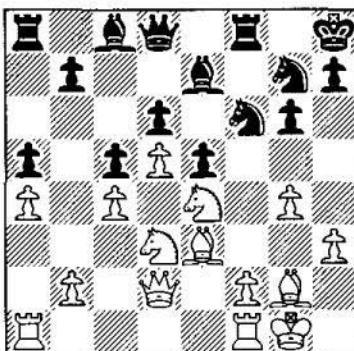
Evaluate 1 ♖f2. (general considerations)

Position 147 (White to play)



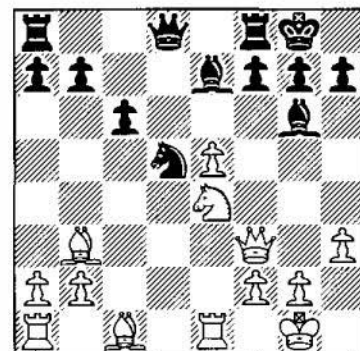
Black just played ...♖b8-e8. Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 145 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

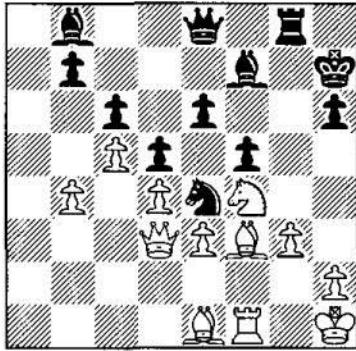
Position 148 (White to play)



Evaluate 1 ♗f4. (general considerations)

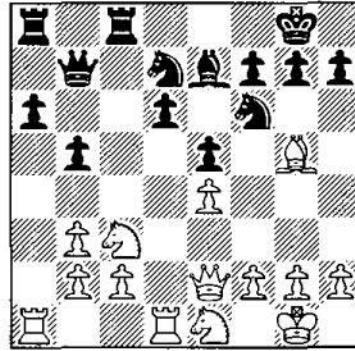
Exercises 149-154: Series of exchanges

Position 149 (Black to play)



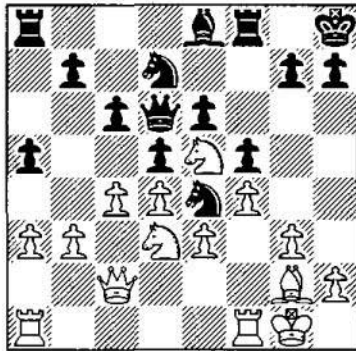
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 152 (White to play)



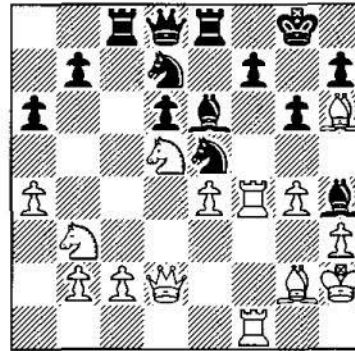
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 150 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 153 (Black to play)



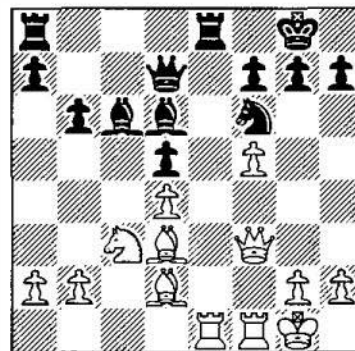
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 151 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

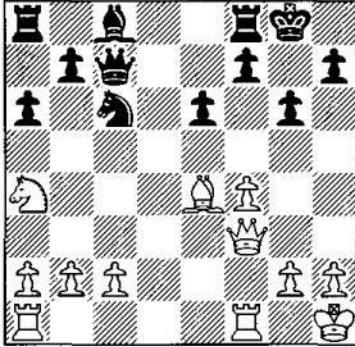
Position 154 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

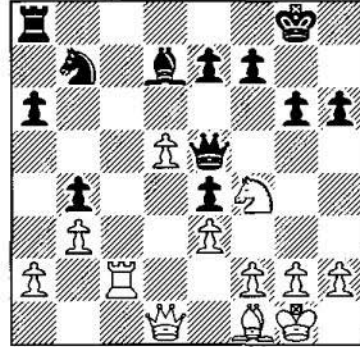
Exercises 155-162: Dynamic exchanges

Position 155 (White to play)



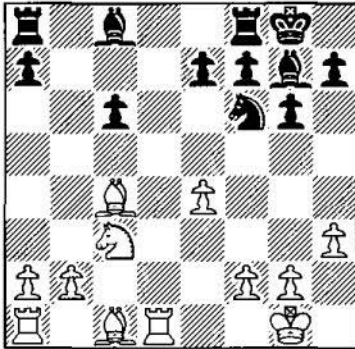
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 158 (White to play)



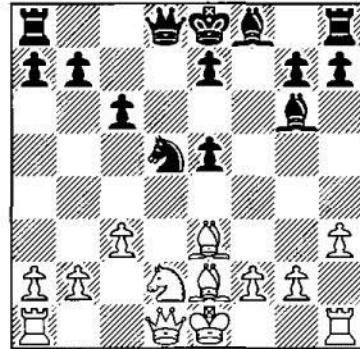
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 156 (Black to play)



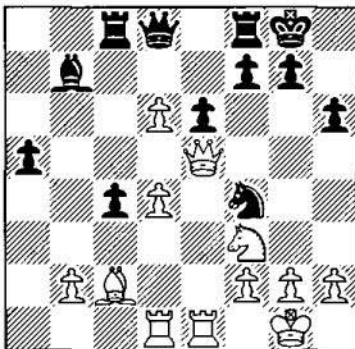
Evaluate 1...♗e6. (general considerations)

Position 159 (White to play)



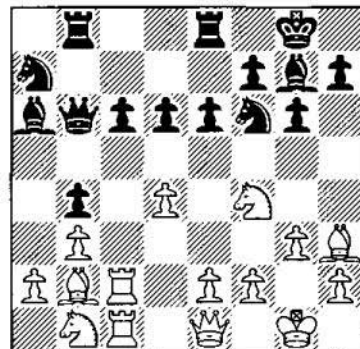
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 157 (Black to play)



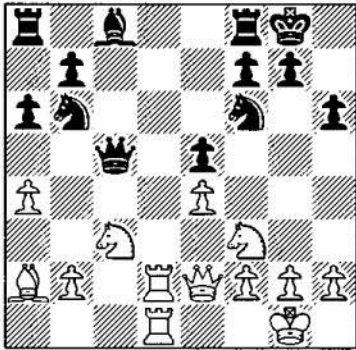
Indicate your first 2 moves + short plan.

Position 160 (Black to play)



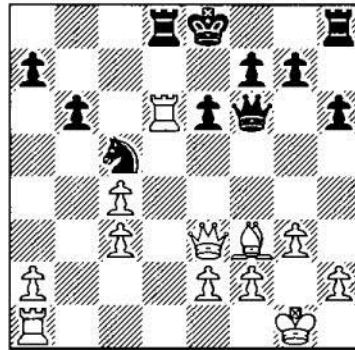
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 161 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

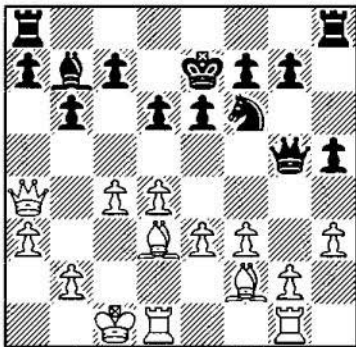
Position 162 (White to play)



Indicate your first 2 moves + short plan.

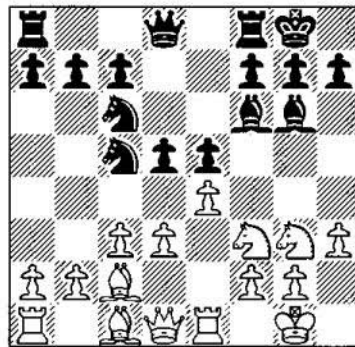
Exercises 163-174: Gaining space

Position 163 (White to play)



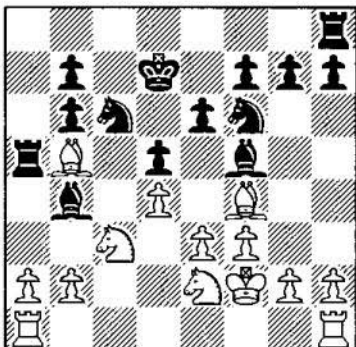
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 165 (White to play)



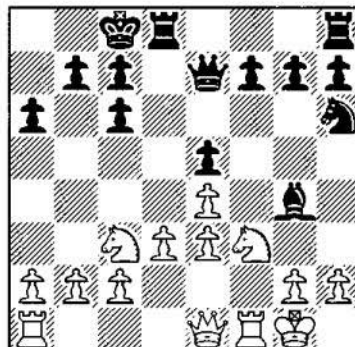
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 164 (White to play)



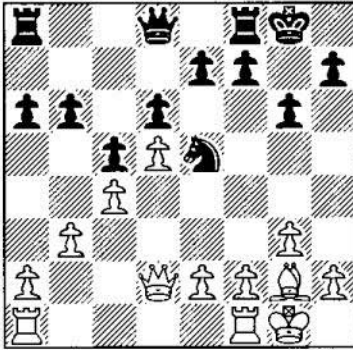
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 166 (White to play)



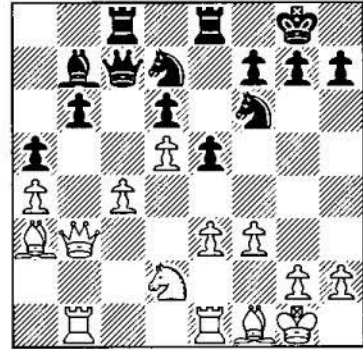
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 167 (White to play)



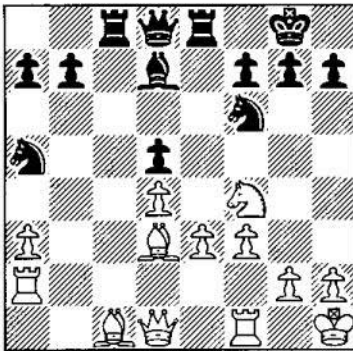
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 170 (White to play)



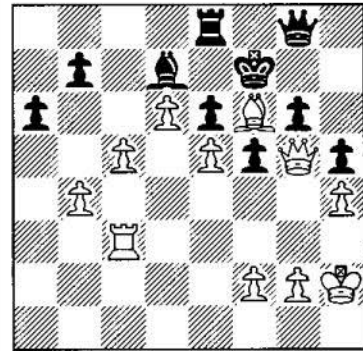
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 168 (White to play)



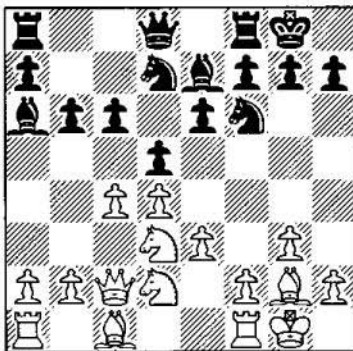
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 171 (White to play)



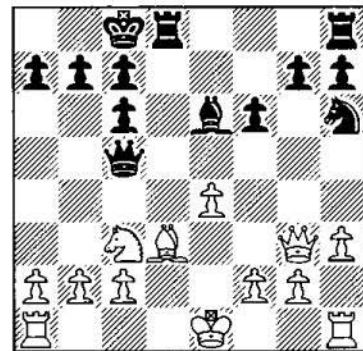
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 169 (White to play)



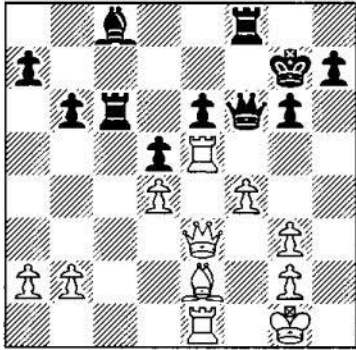
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 172 (Black to play)



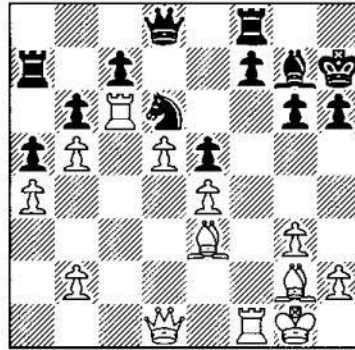
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 173 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

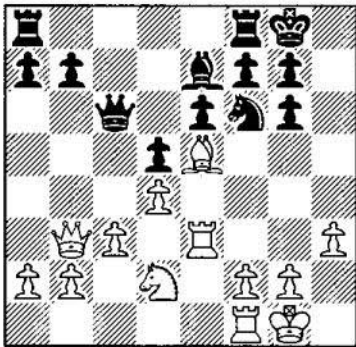
Position 174 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

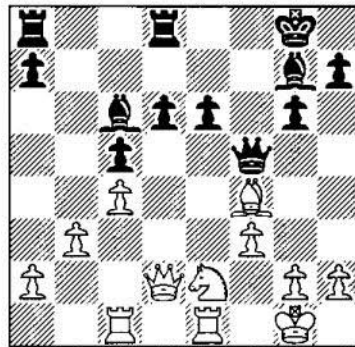
Exercises 175-192: Creating weaknesses

Position 175 (Black to play)



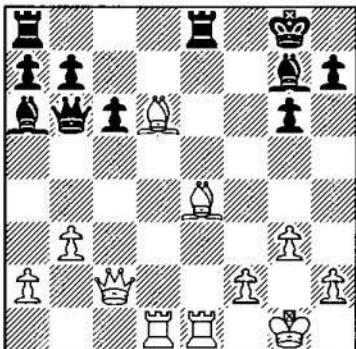
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 177 (Black to play)



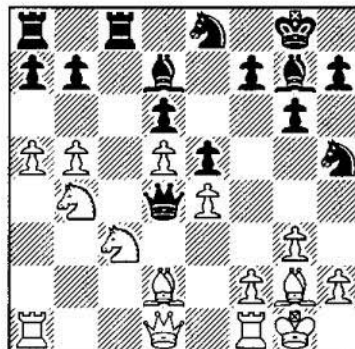
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 176 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

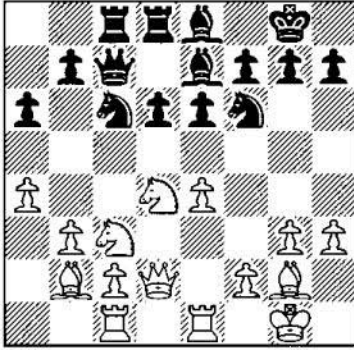
Position 178 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

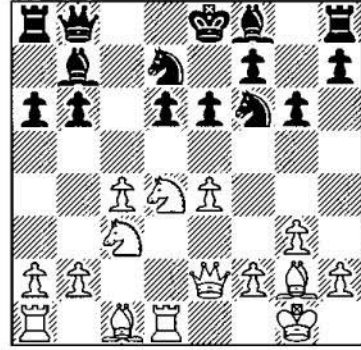
Mastering Chess Strategy

Position 179 (Black to play)



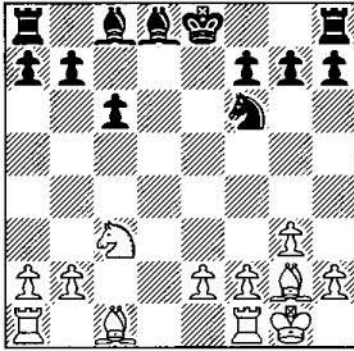
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 182 (White to play)



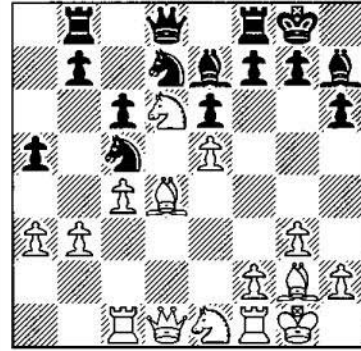
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 180 (White to play)



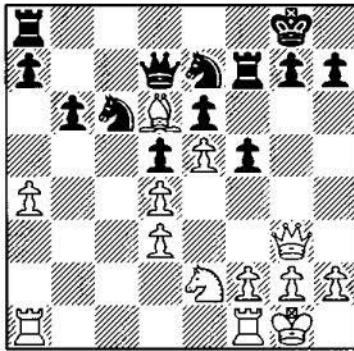
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 183 (Black to play)



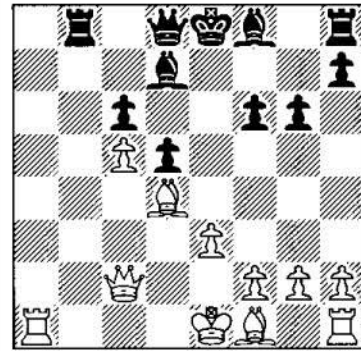
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 181 (Black to play)



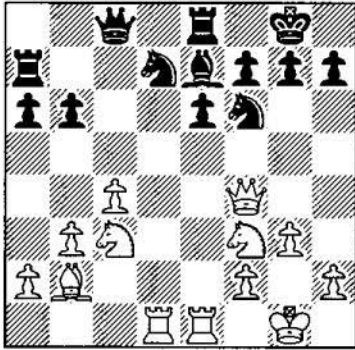
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 184 (White to play)



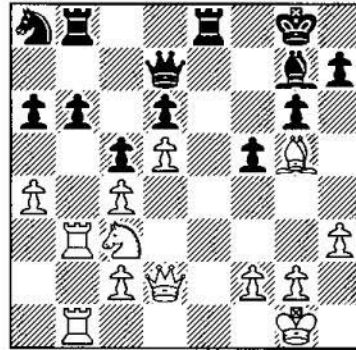
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 185 (Black to play)



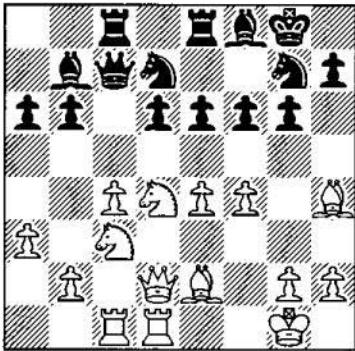
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 188 (White to play)



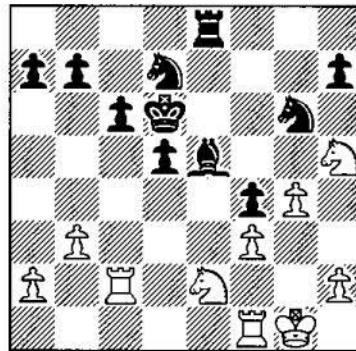
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 186 (White to play)



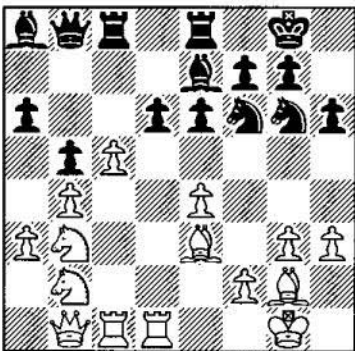
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 189 (Black to play)



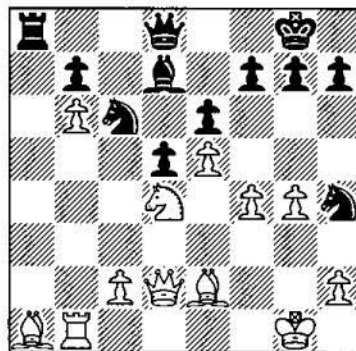
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 187 (Black to play)



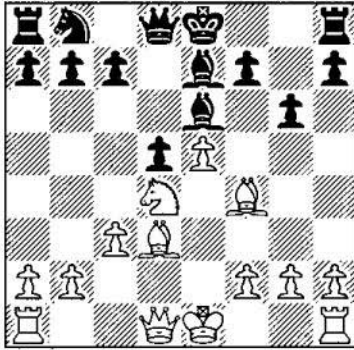
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 190 (Black to play)



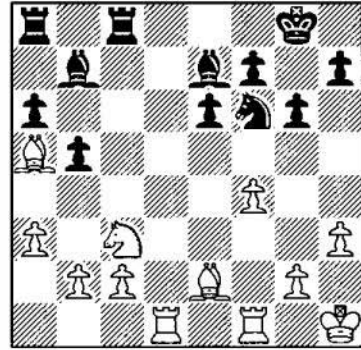
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 191 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

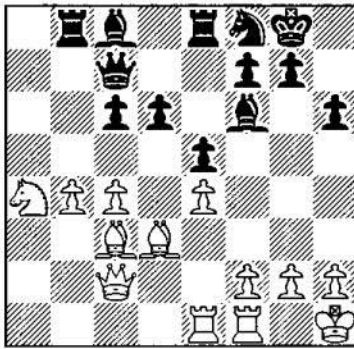
Position 192 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

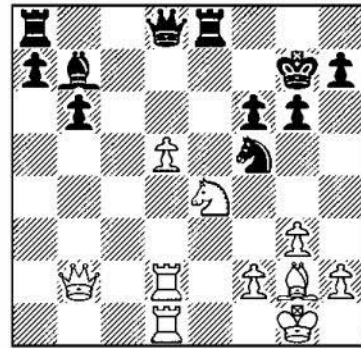
Exercises 193-208: Passed pawns

Position 193 (White to play)



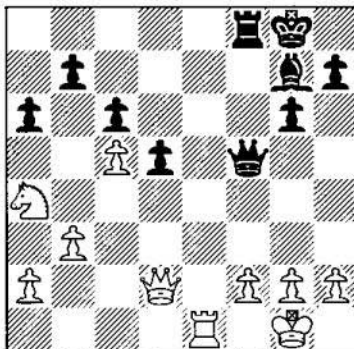
indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 195 (White to play)



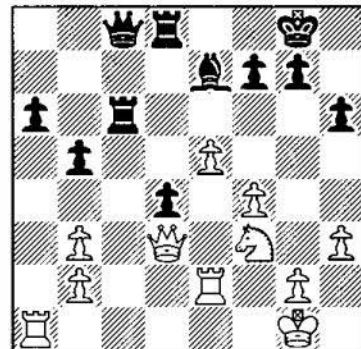
How do you continue? (4-5 moves)

Position 194 (Black to play)



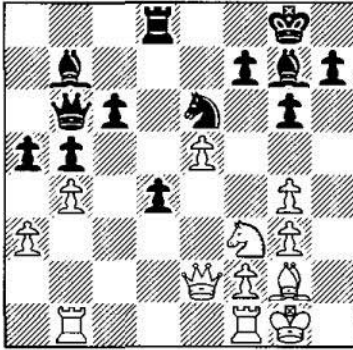
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 196 (Black to play)



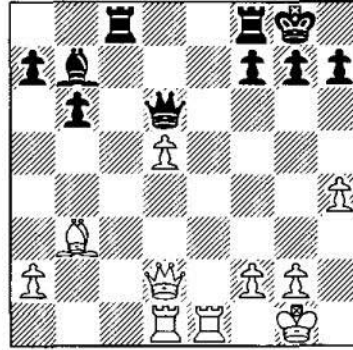
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 197 (White to play)



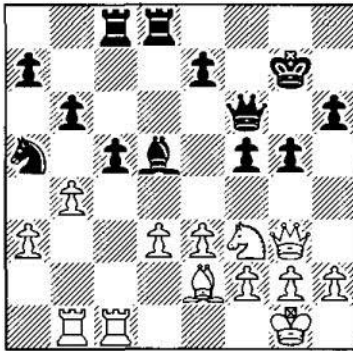
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 200 (White to play)



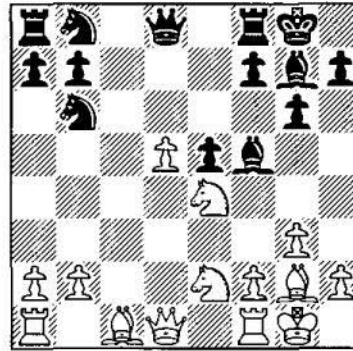
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 198 (Black to play)



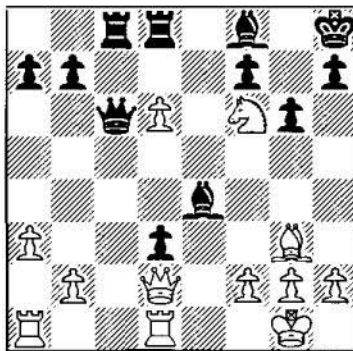
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 201 (Black to play)



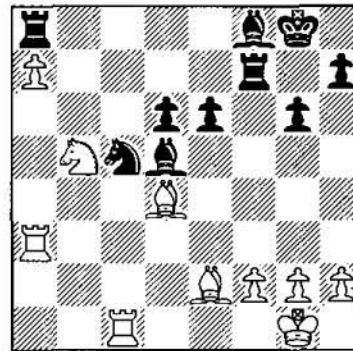
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 199 (White to play)



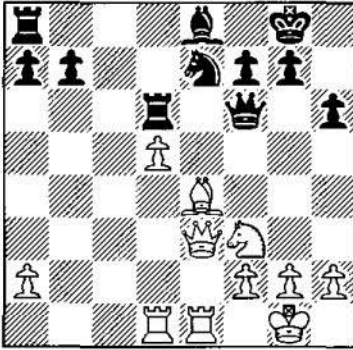
How do you continue? (5-6 moves)

Position 202 (White to play)



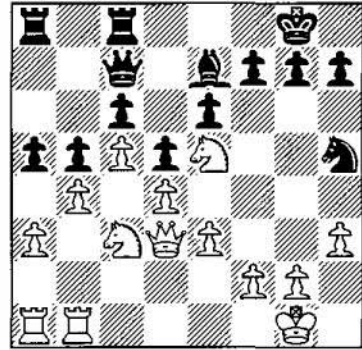
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 203 (White to play)



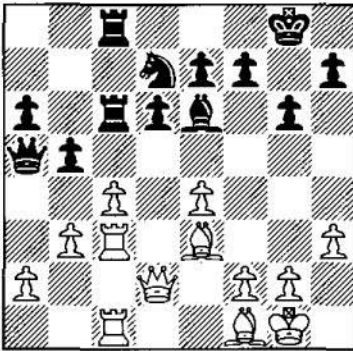
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 206 (White to play)



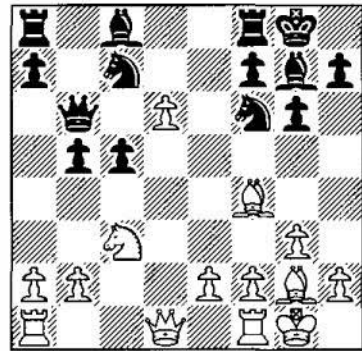
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 204 (White to play)



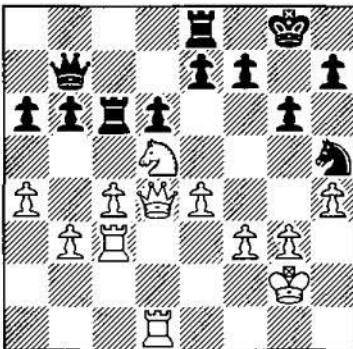
How do you continue? (4-5 moves)

Position 207 (Black to play)



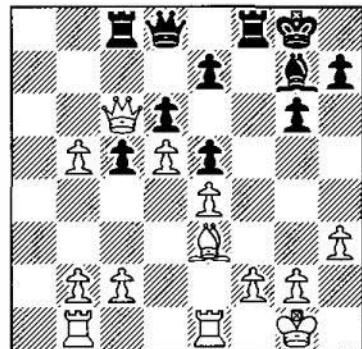
White just played 1 d6 attacking c7 and a8. Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 205 (Black to play)



Evaluate 1...b5. (general considerations)

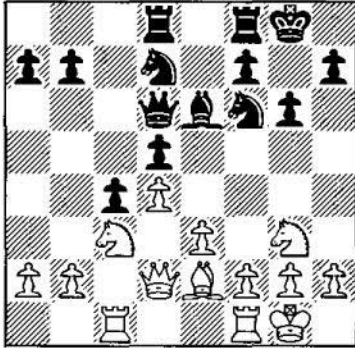
Position 208 (Whiteto play)



How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

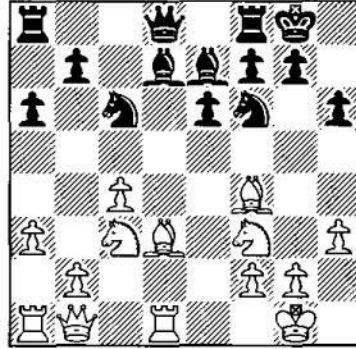
Exercises 209-218: Pawn majorities

Position 209 (White to play)



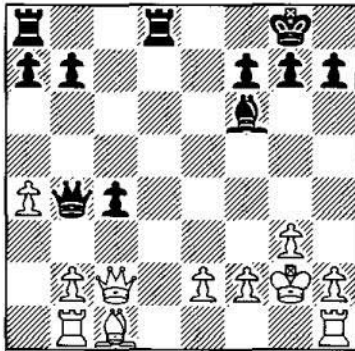
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 212 (White to play)



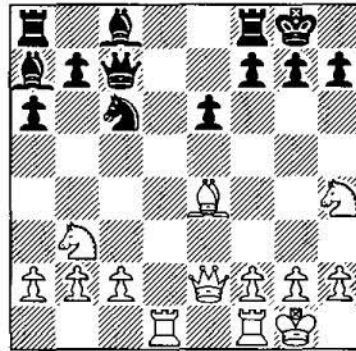
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 210 (Black to play)



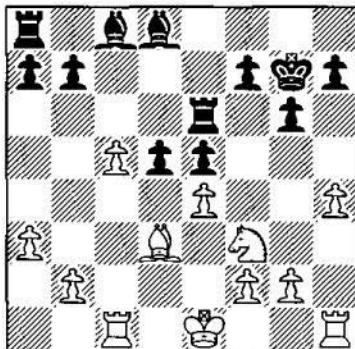
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 213 (Black to play)



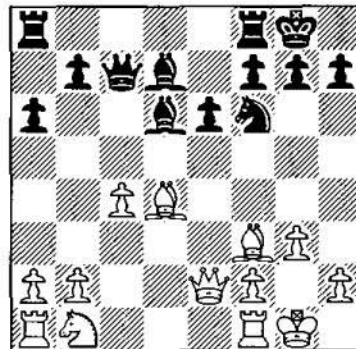
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 211 (Black to play)



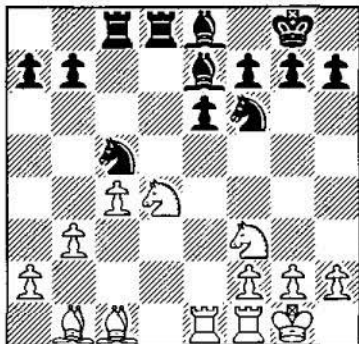
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 214 (White to play)



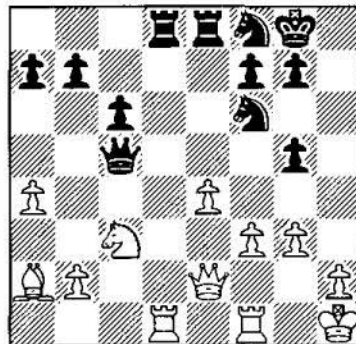
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 215 (Black to play)



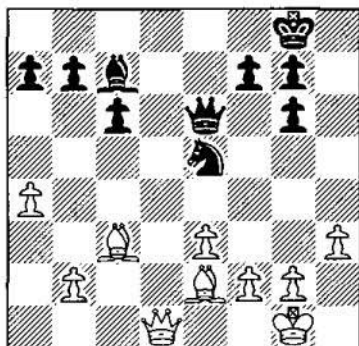
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 217 (White to play)



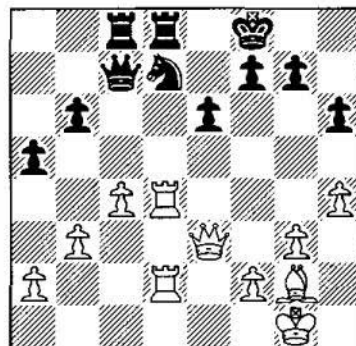
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 216 (White to play)



How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

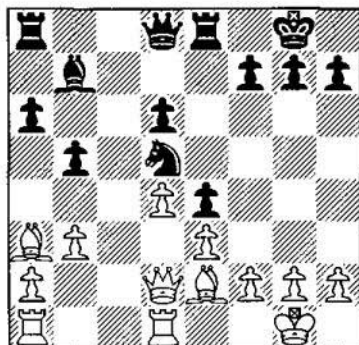
Position 218 (Black to play)



Evaluate 1...♖e7 and 1...♞f6. (3-4 moves)

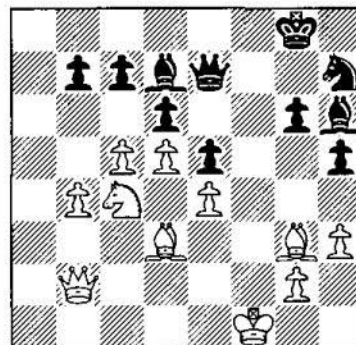
Exercises 219-228: Pawn chains

Position 219 (Black to play)



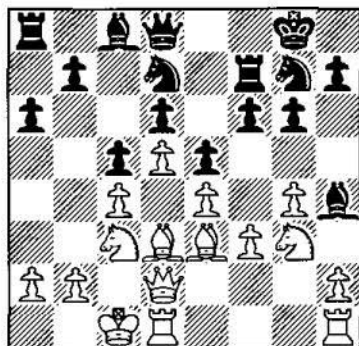
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 220 (White to play)



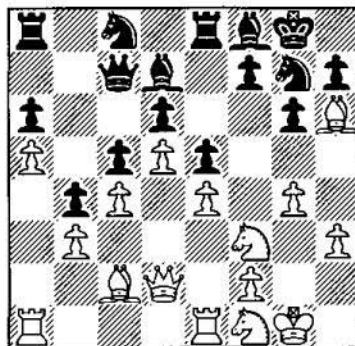
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 227 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

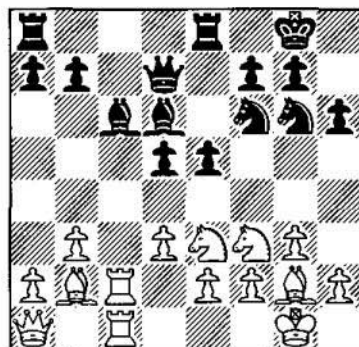
Position 228 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

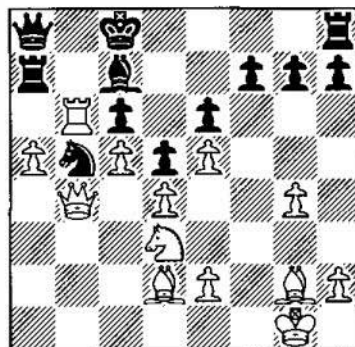
Exercises 229-246: Dynamics

Position 229 (White to play)



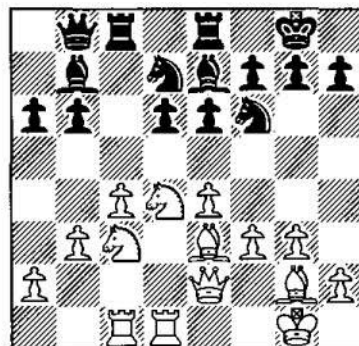
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 231 (White to play)



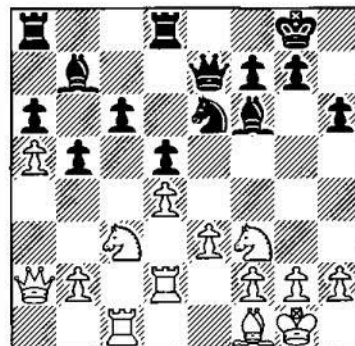
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 230 (Black to play)



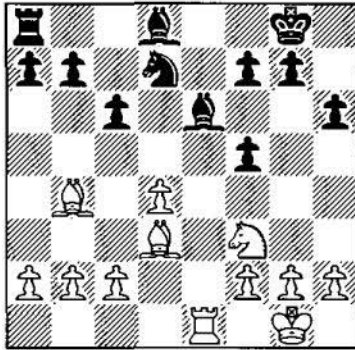
How do you continue? (5-6 moves)

Position 232 (Black to play)



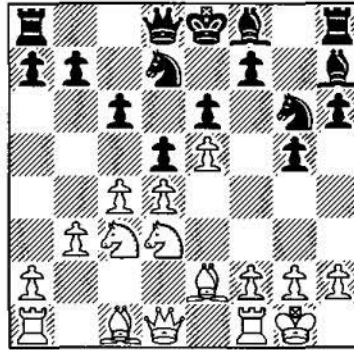
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 233 (White to play)



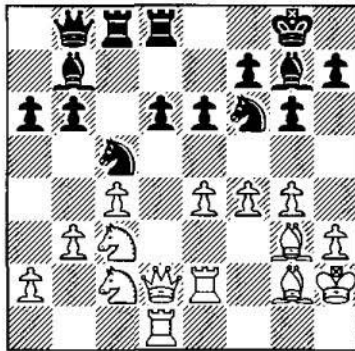
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 236 (Black to play)



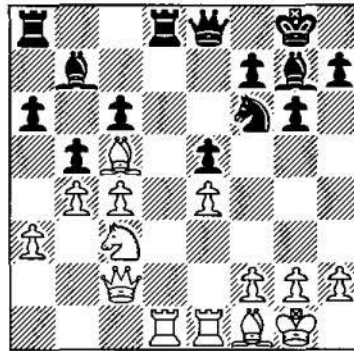
How do you continue? (2-3 moves).

Position 234 (Black to play)



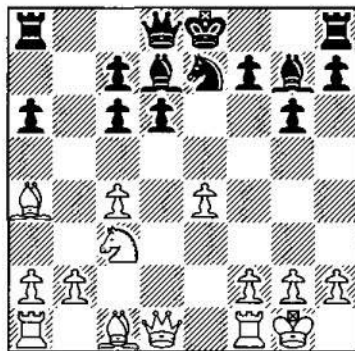
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 237 (White to play)



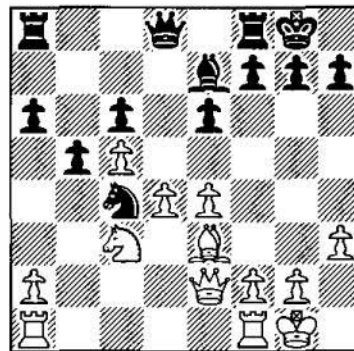
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 235 (White to play)



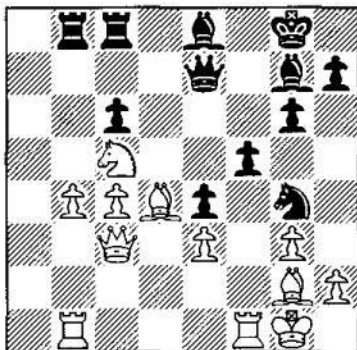
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 238 (Black to play)



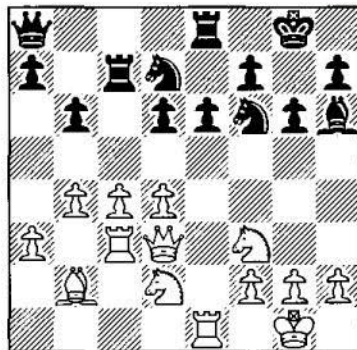
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 239 (White to play)



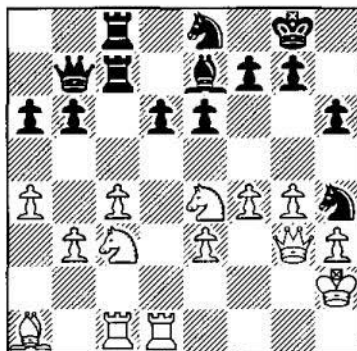
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 242 (Black to play)



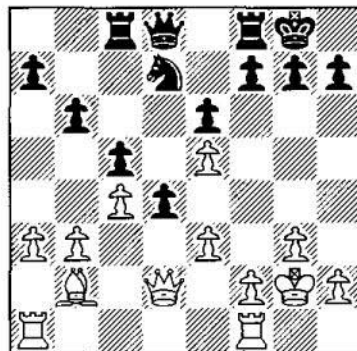
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 240 (Black to play)



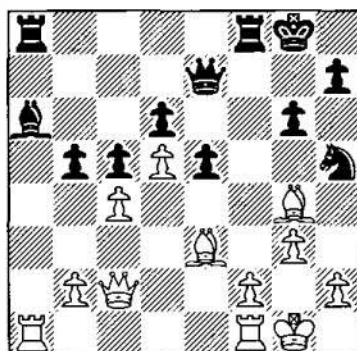
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 243 (Black to play)



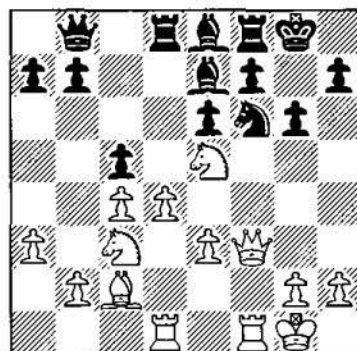
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 241 (White to play)



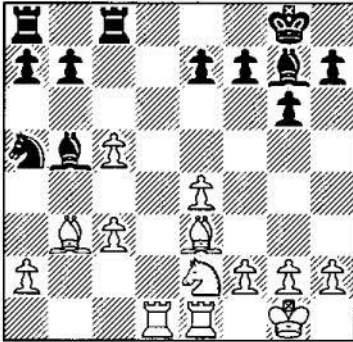
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 244 (White to play)



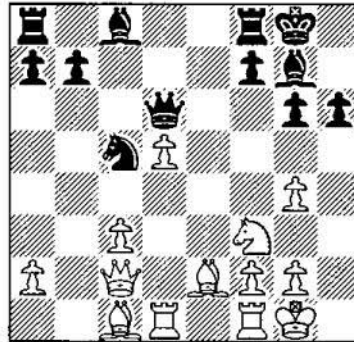
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 245 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

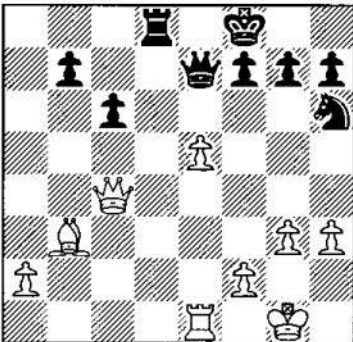
Position 246 (White to play)



Black has sac'd a pawn. How do you neutralize his initiative? (1st move + short plan)

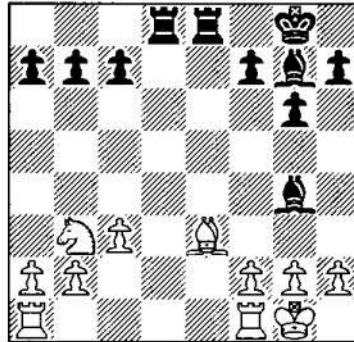
Exercises 247-266: Restriction

Position 247 (White to play)



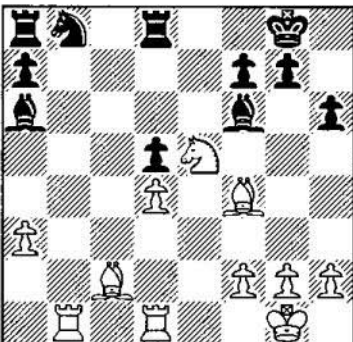
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 249 (Black to play)



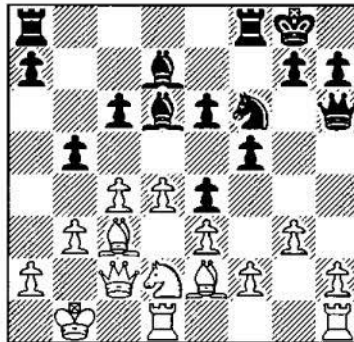
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 248 (White to play)



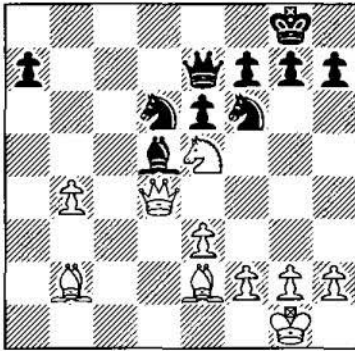
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 250 (White to play)



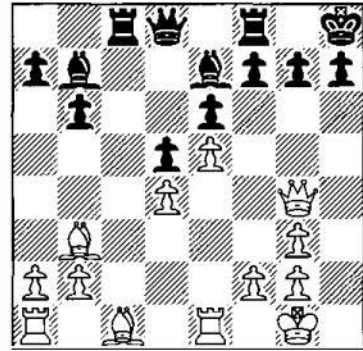
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 251 (White to play)



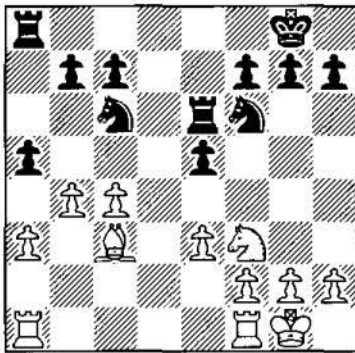
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 254 (White to play)



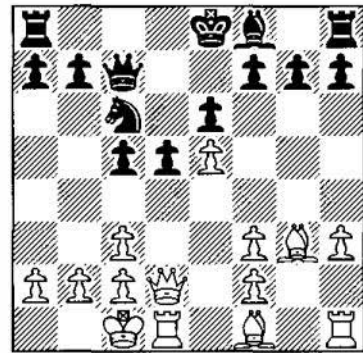
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 252 (Black to play)



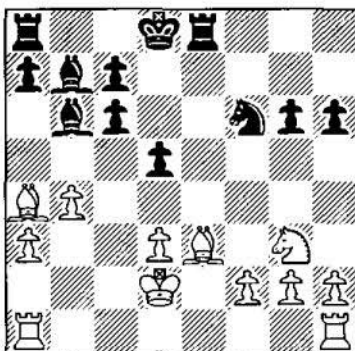
Indicate your first 2 moves + short plan.

Position 255 (Black to play)



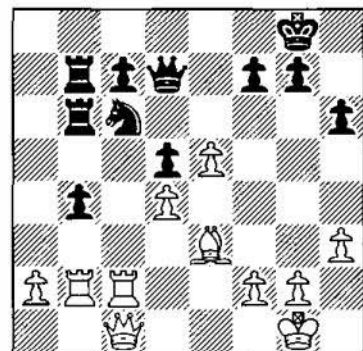
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 253 (Black to play)



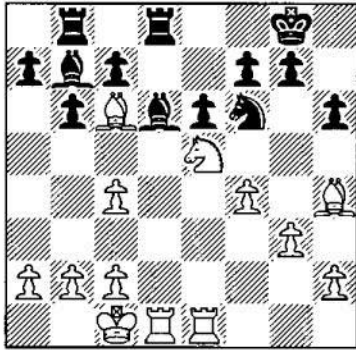
Evaluate 1...♞g4. (2-3 moves)

Position 256 (White to play)



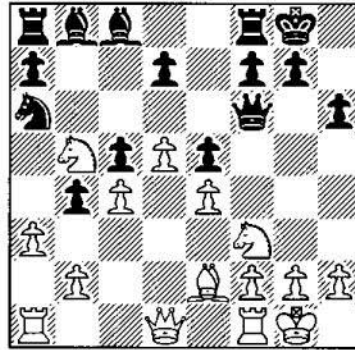
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 257 (White to play)



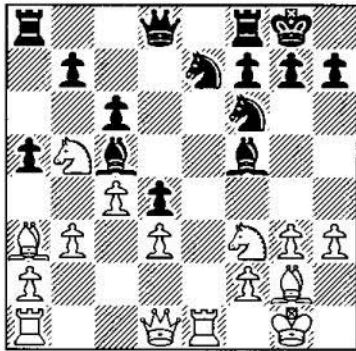
Indicate your first 2 moves + short plan.

Position 260 (White to play)



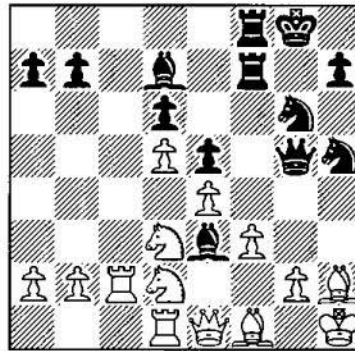
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 258 (Black to play)



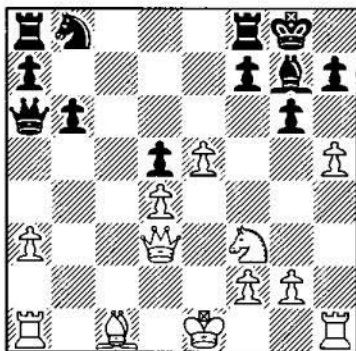
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 261 (Black to play)



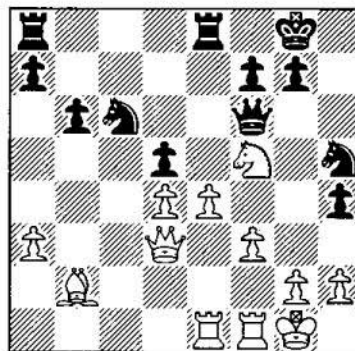
White has just played ♞c1-d1 . Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 259 (White to play)



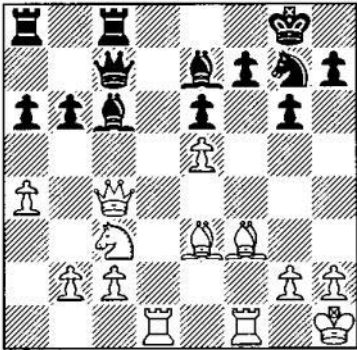
Indicate your first 2 moves + short plan.

Position 262 (White to play)



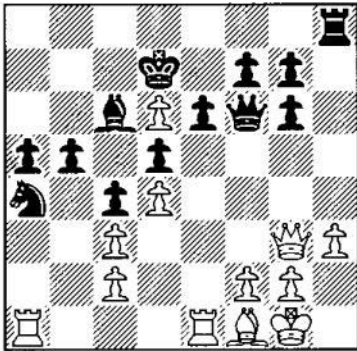
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 263 (White to play)



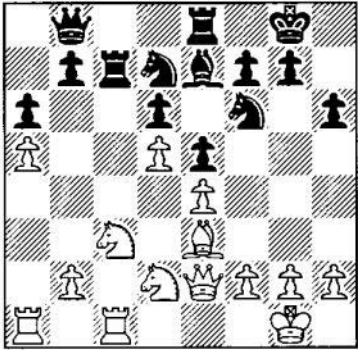
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 264 (Black to play)



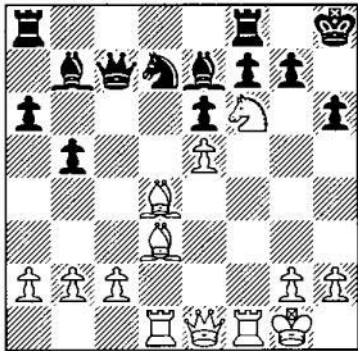
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 265 (White to play)



Black's last move was ...h7-h6. Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

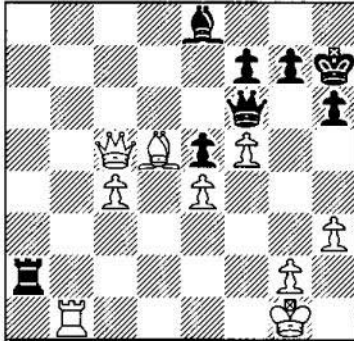
Position 266 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

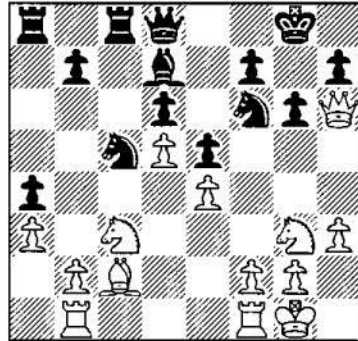
Exercises 267-286: Prophylaxis

Position 267 (White to play)



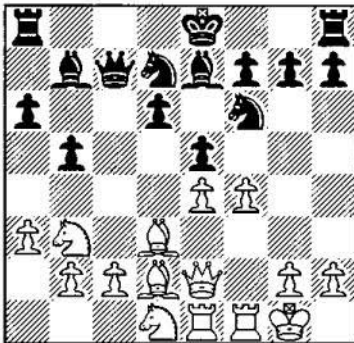
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 270 (Black to play)



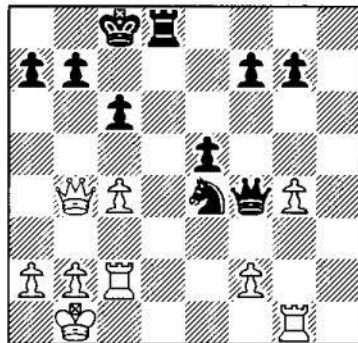
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 268 (Black to play)



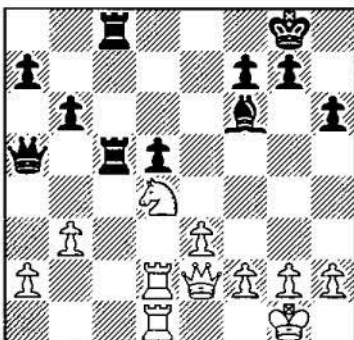
White has just played ♞c3-d1. Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 271 (White to play)



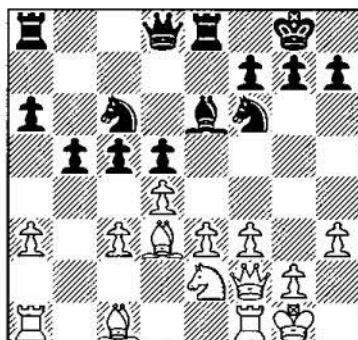
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 269 (White to play)



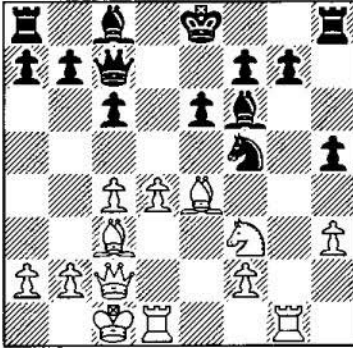
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 272 (Black to play)



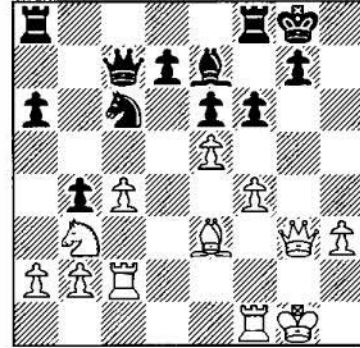
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 273 (White to play)



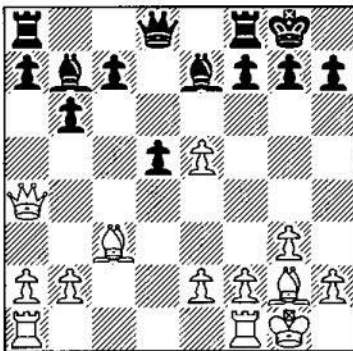
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 276 (Black to play)



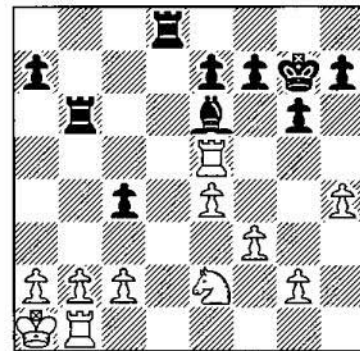
White has just played ♞c1-c2 . Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 274 (Black to play)



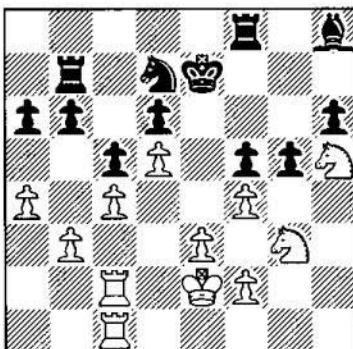
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 277 (White to play)



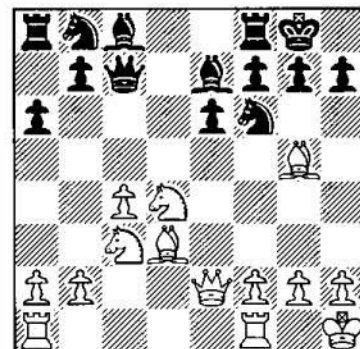
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 275 (White to play)



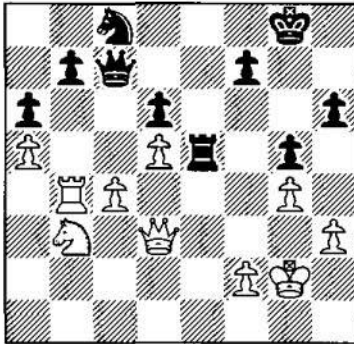
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 278 (Black to play)



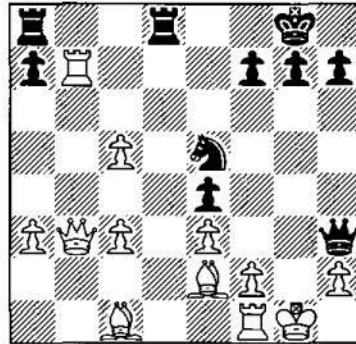
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 279 (White to play)



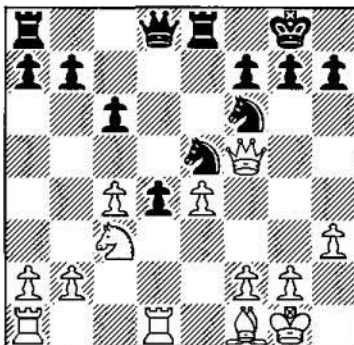
Black's last move was ...g6-g5. Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 282 (Black to play)



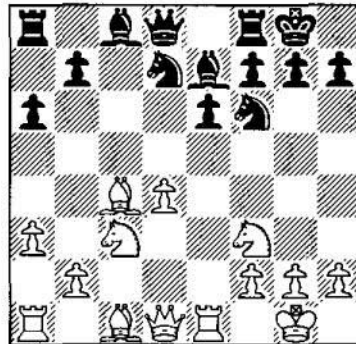
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 280 (Black to play)



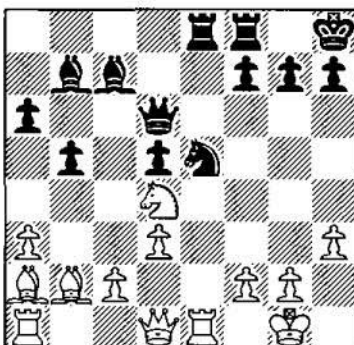
Identify White's intentions and take prophylactic measures. (2-3 moves)

Position 283 (White to play)



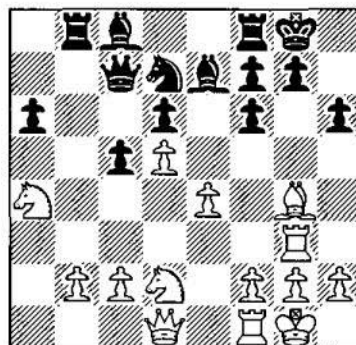
Black has just played ...a7-a6. Look for the most flexible reply. (2-3 moves)

Position 281 (White to play)



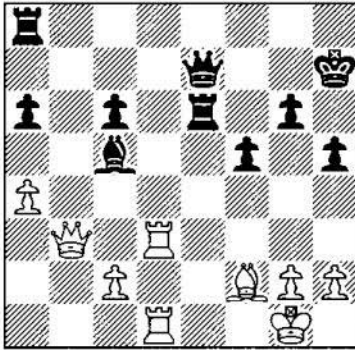
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 284 (Black to play)



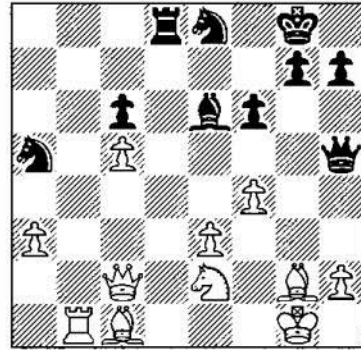
White has just played ♖a3-g3. Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 285 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

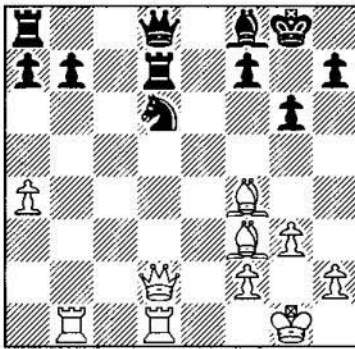
Position 286 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

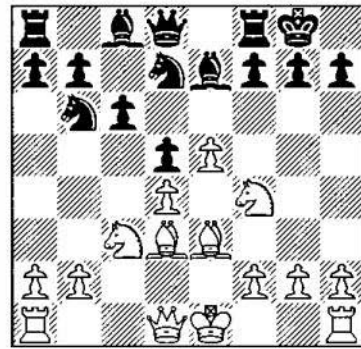
Exercises 287-306: Provocation

Position 287 (White to play)



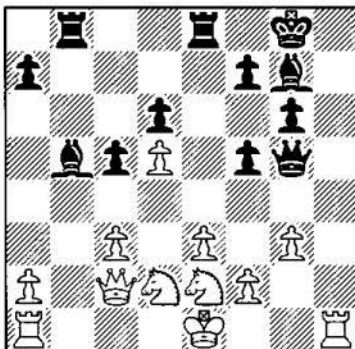
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 289 (White to play)



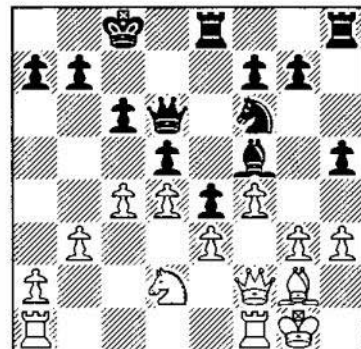
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 288 (Black to play)



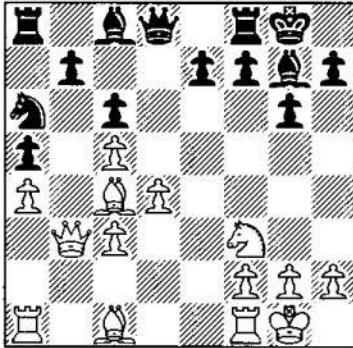
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 290 (Black to play)



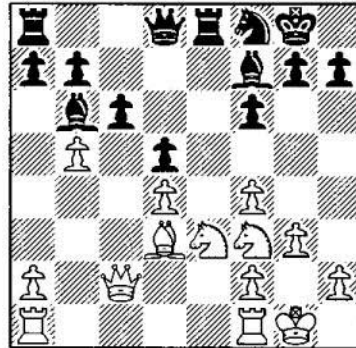
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 291 (White to play)



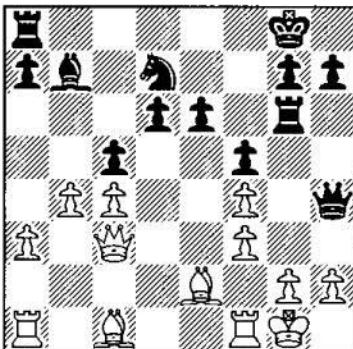
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 294 (Black to play)



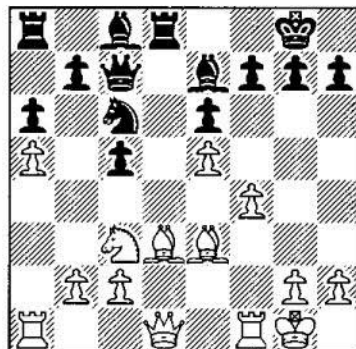
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 292 (Black to play)



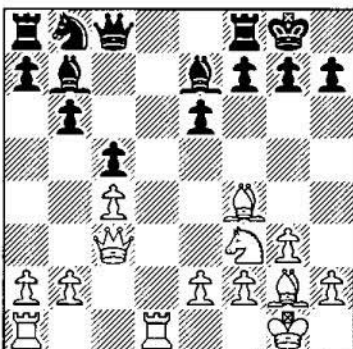
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 295 (White to play)



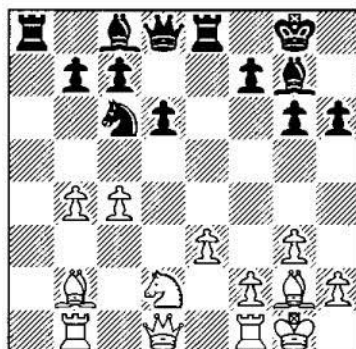
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 293 (White to play)



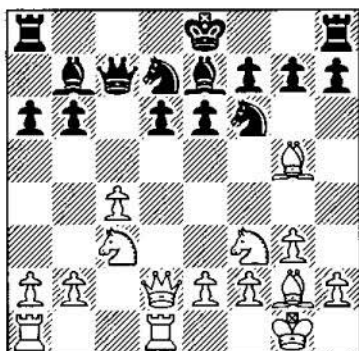
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 296 (Black to play)



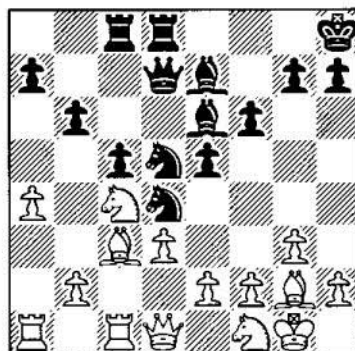
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 297 (White to play)



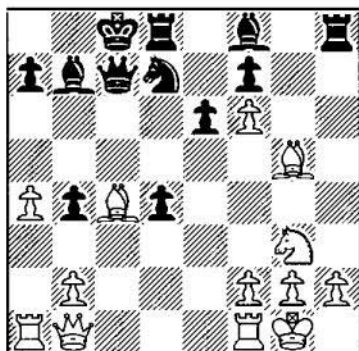
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 300 (Black to play)



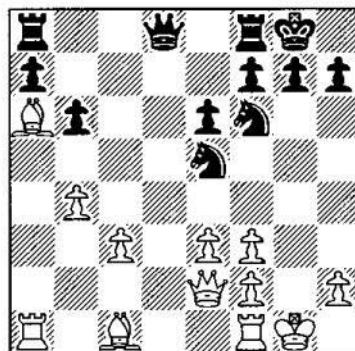
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 298 (Black to play)



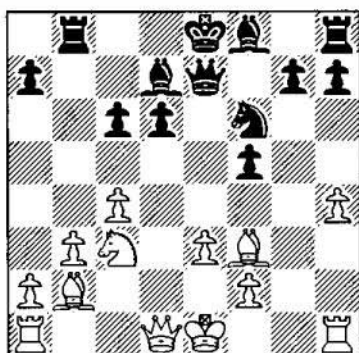
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 301 (Black to play)



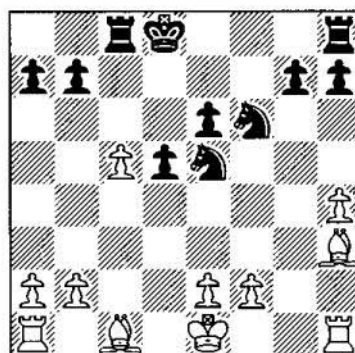
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 299 (White to play)



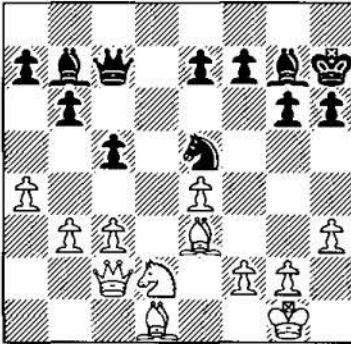
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 302 (White to play)



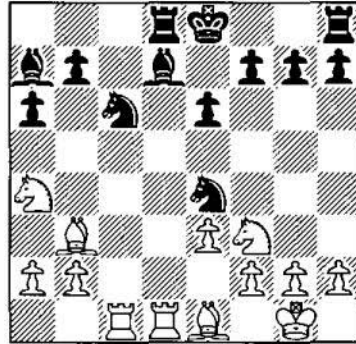
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 303 (Black to play)



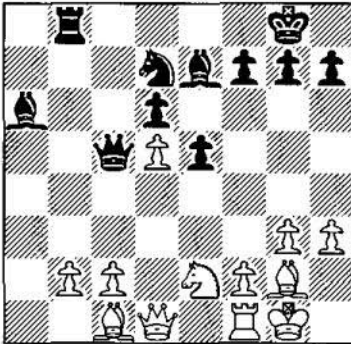
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 305 (White to play)



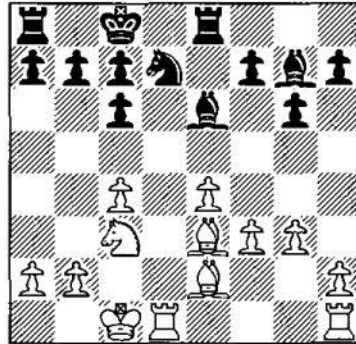
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 304 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

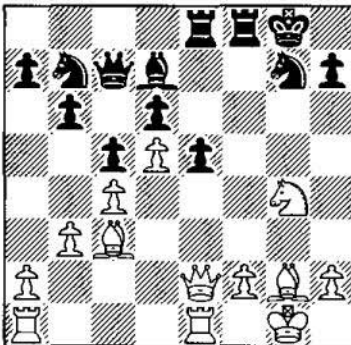
Position 306 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

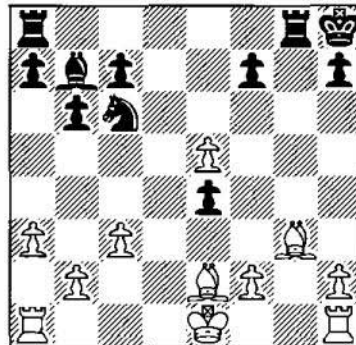
Exercises 307-314: Weak squares

Position 307 (Black to play)



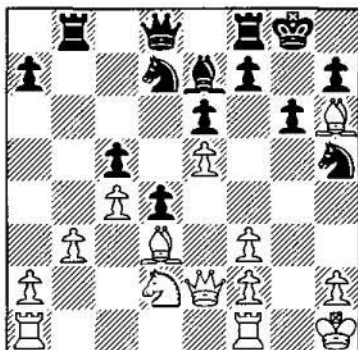
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 308 (White to play)



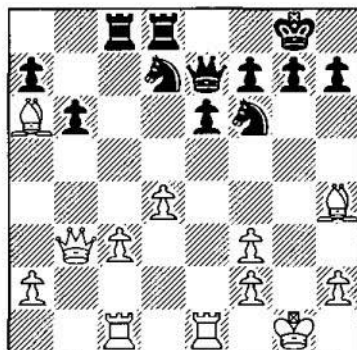
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 309 (Black to play)



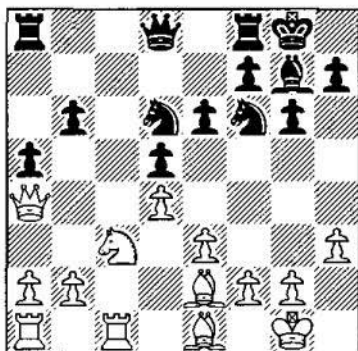
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 312 (Black to play)



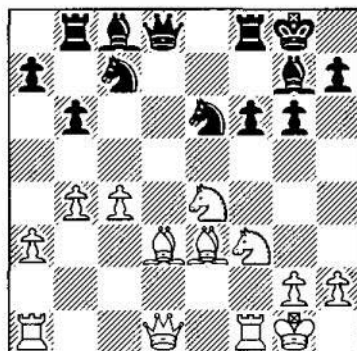
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 310 (White to play)



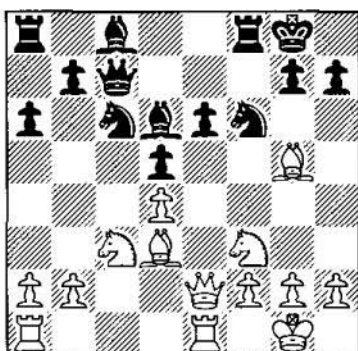
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 313 (White to play)



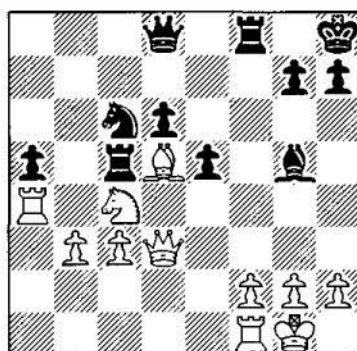
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 311 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

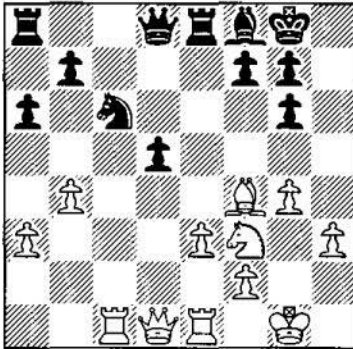
Position 314 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

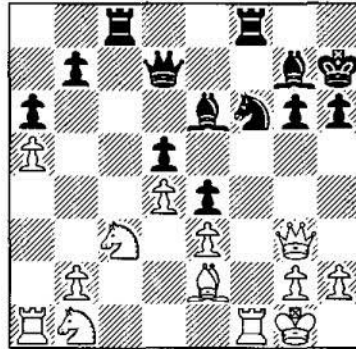
Exercises 315-324: Weak pawns

Position 315 (White to play)



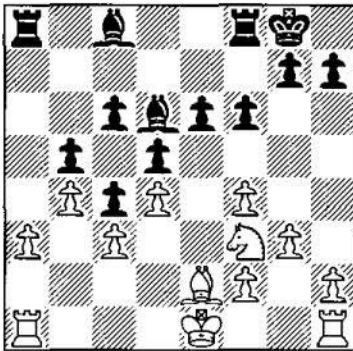
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 318 (Black to play)



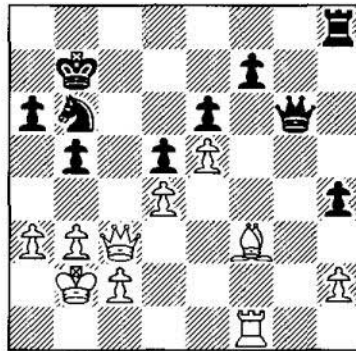
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 316 (Black to play)



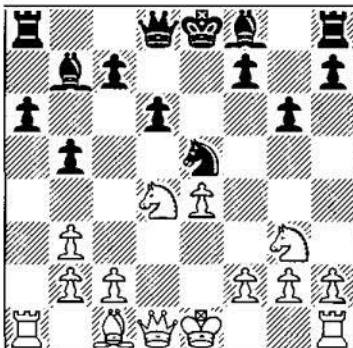
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 319 (White to play)



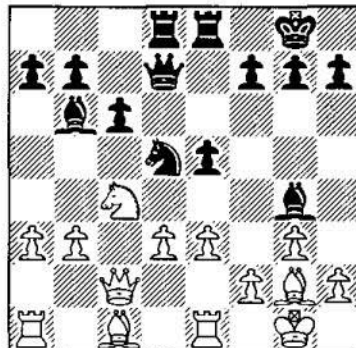
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 317 (White to play)



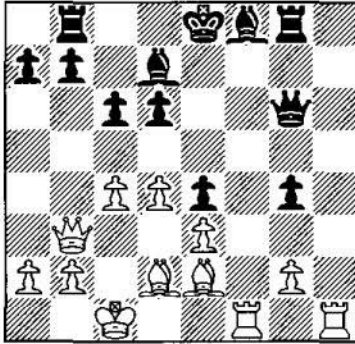
Evaluate 1 f4. (general considerations)

Position 320 (Black to play)



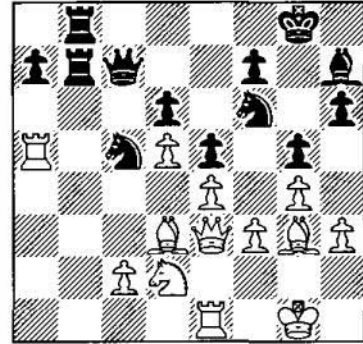
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 321 (White to play)



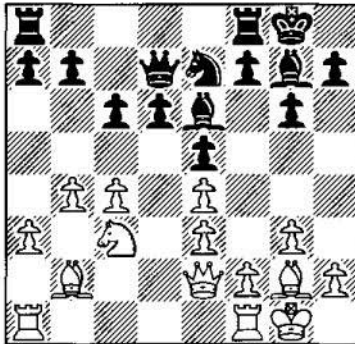
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 323 (White to play)



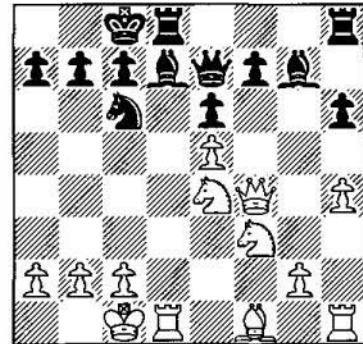
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 322 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

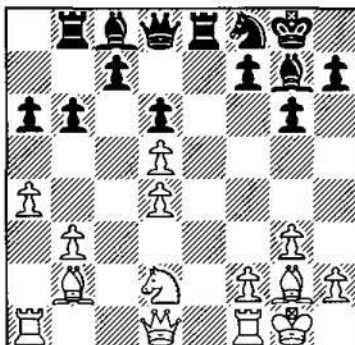
Position 324 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

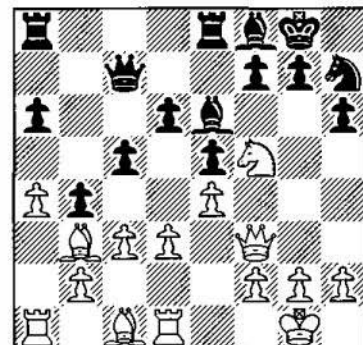
Exercises 325-334: Doubled pawns

Position 325 (Black to play)



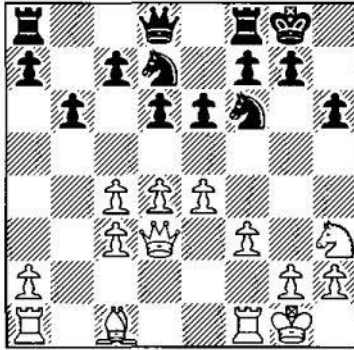
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 326 (White to play)



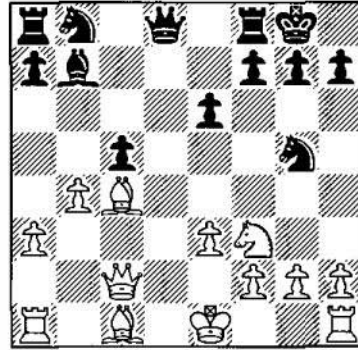
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 327 (Black to play)



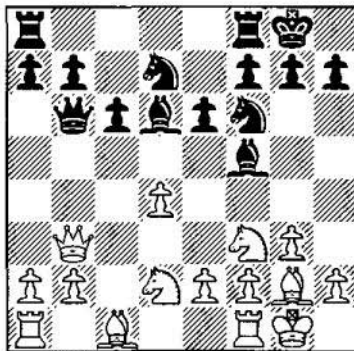
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 330 (White to play)



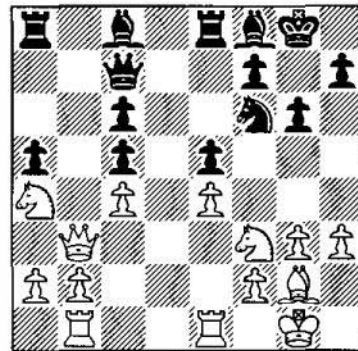
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 328 (White to play)



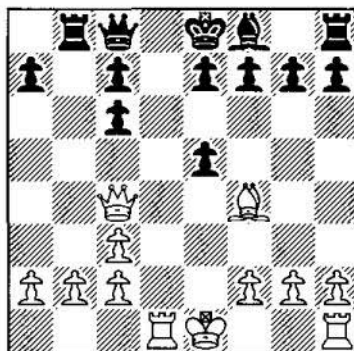
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 331 (Black to play)



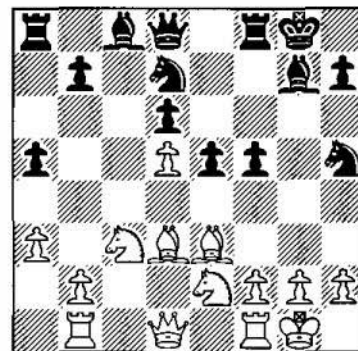
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 329 (Black to play)



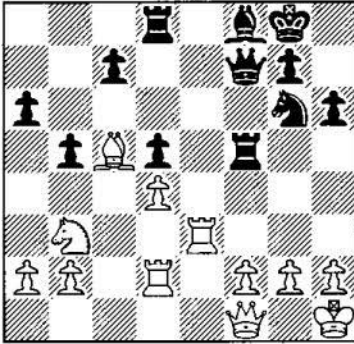
Evaluate 1...♙e6. (3-4 moves)

Position 332 (White to play)



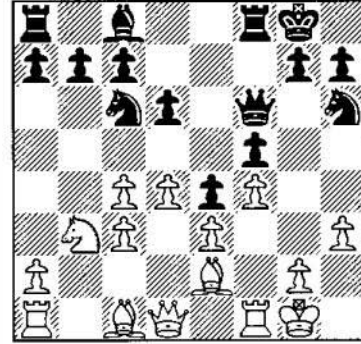
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 333 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

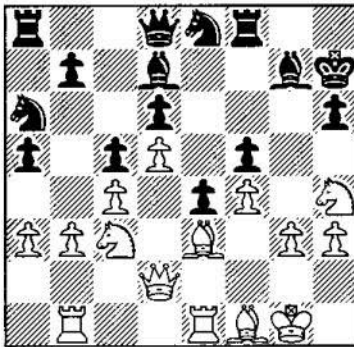
Position 334 (White to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

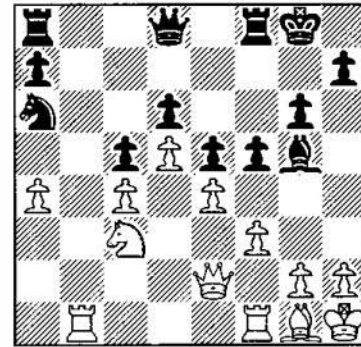
Exercises 335-350: Blockade

Position 335 (White to play)



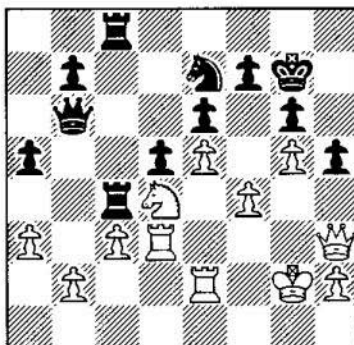
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 337 (White to play)



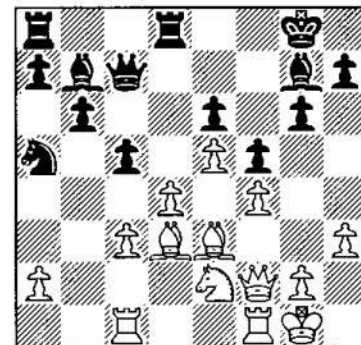
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 336 (Black to play)



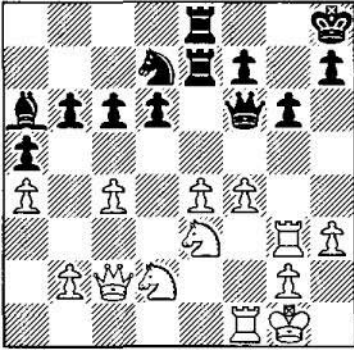
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 338 (Black to play)



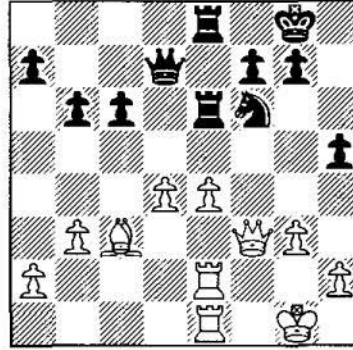
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 339 (White to play)



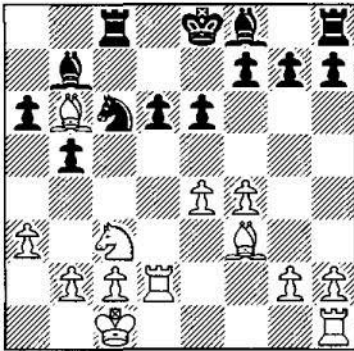
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 342 (Black to play)



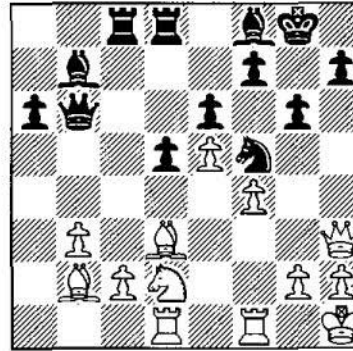
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 340 (Black to play)



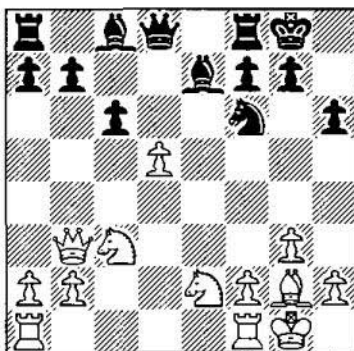
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 343 (White to play)



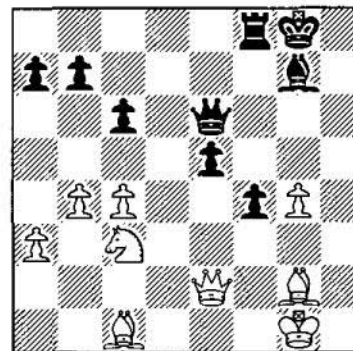
Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

Position 341 (Black to play)



Evaluate the options 1...c5 and 1...cxd5.
(general considerations)

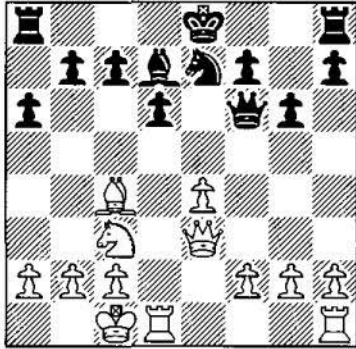
Position 344 (Black to play)



Indicate your 1st move + short plan.

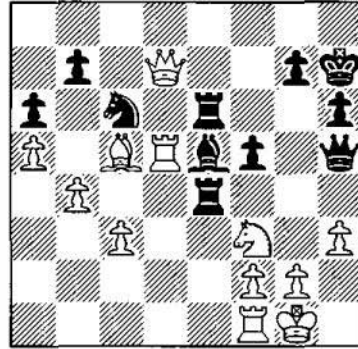
Exercises 351-366: The initiative

Position 351 (White to play)



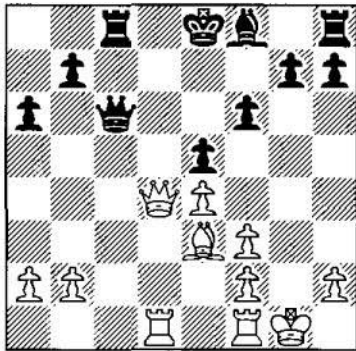
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 354 (White to play)



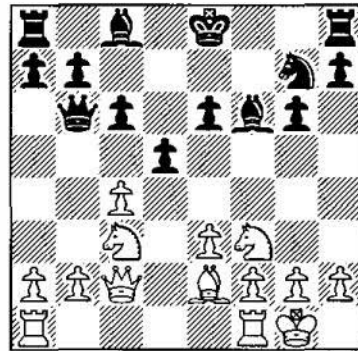
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 352 (White to play)



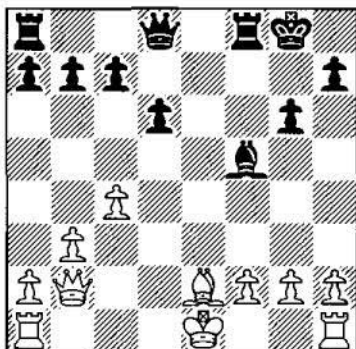
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 355 (White to play)



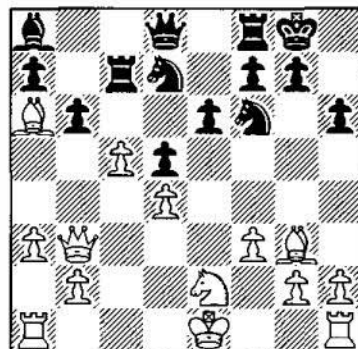
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 353 (Black to play)



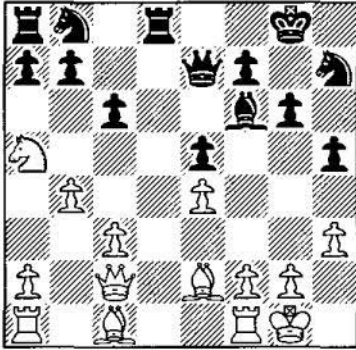
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 356 (Black to play)



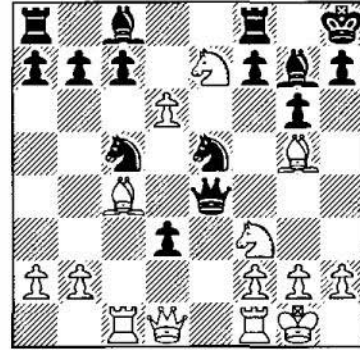
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 357 (White to play)



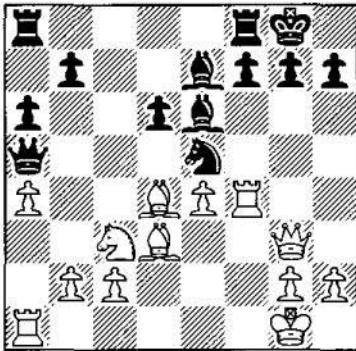
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 360 (White to play)



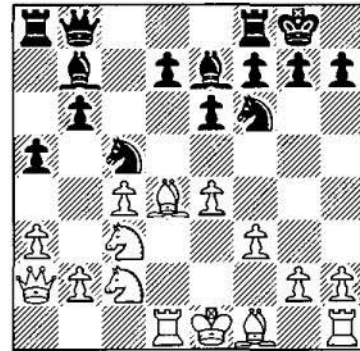
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 358 (White to play)



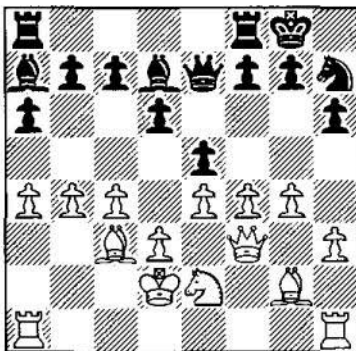
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 361 (Black to play)



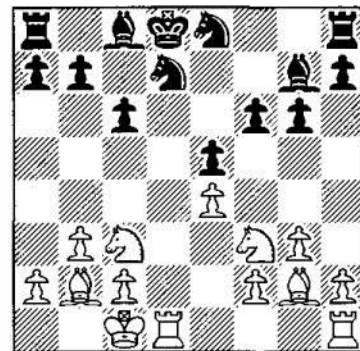
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 359 (Black to play)



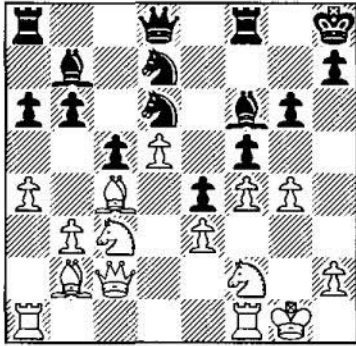
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 362 (White to play)



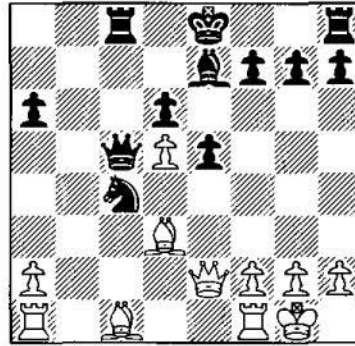
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 363 (White to play)



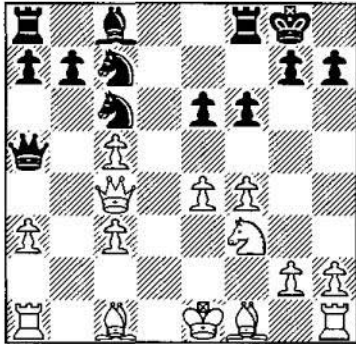
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 365 (White to play)



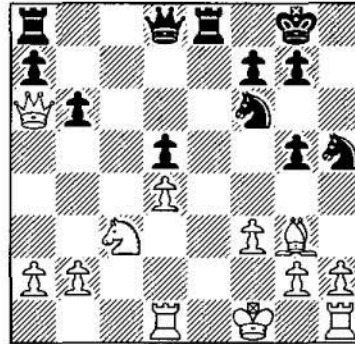
How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

Position 364 (Black to play)



How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

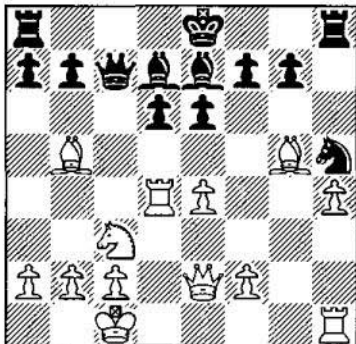
Position 366 (Black to play)



How do you continue? (3-4 moves)

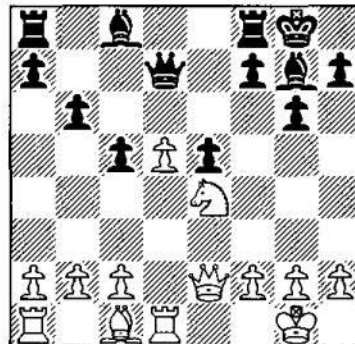
Exercises 367-382: The link between tactics and strategy

Position 367 (Black to play)



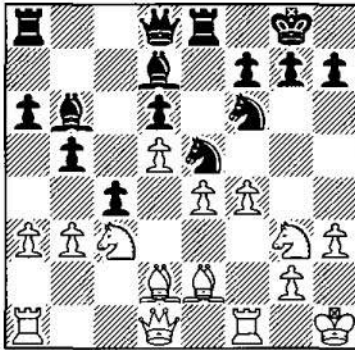
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 368 (White to play)



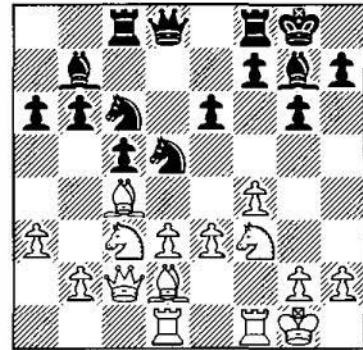
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 369 (Black to play)



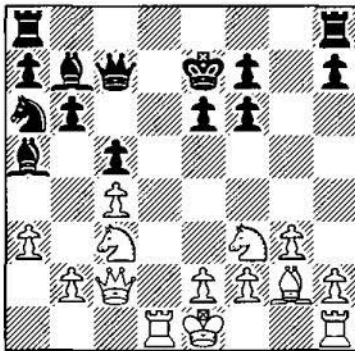
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 372 (Black to play)



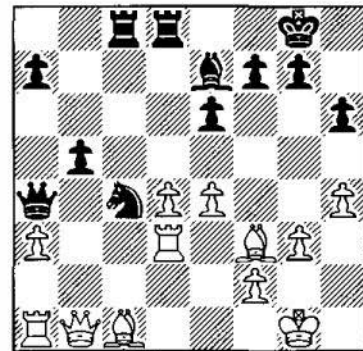
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 370 (Black to play)



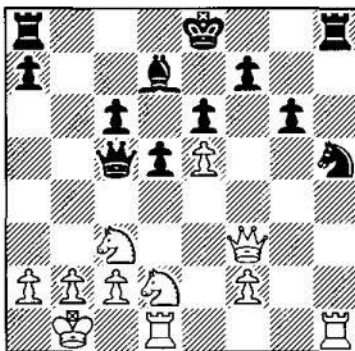
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 373 (Black to play)



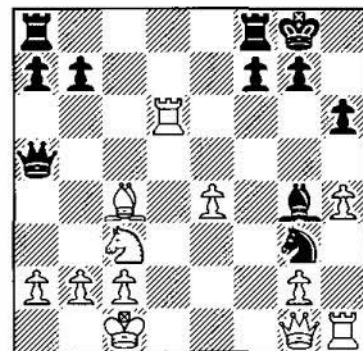
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 371 (White to play)



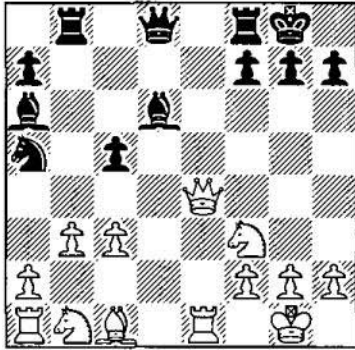
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 374 (White to play)



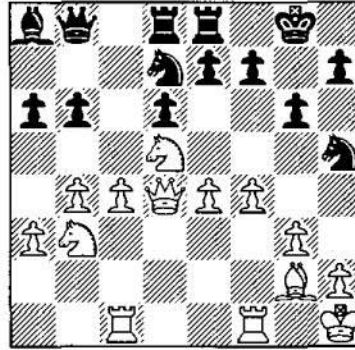
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 375 (White to play)



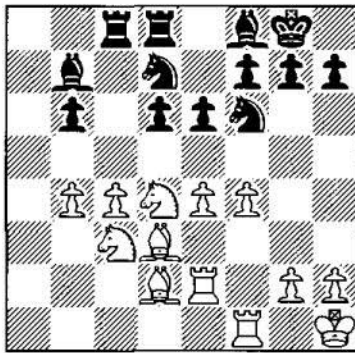
Evaluate the options 1 ♖f4 and 1 ♘g5. (2-3 moves)

Position 378 (White to play)



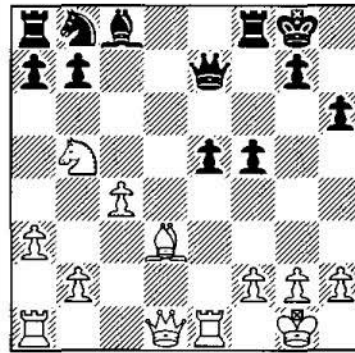
Evaluate the options 1 g4 and 1 ♖e3. (3-4 moves)

Position 376 (Black to play)



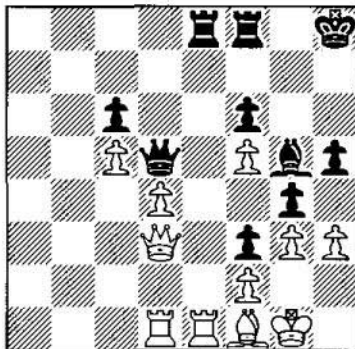
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 379 (White to play)



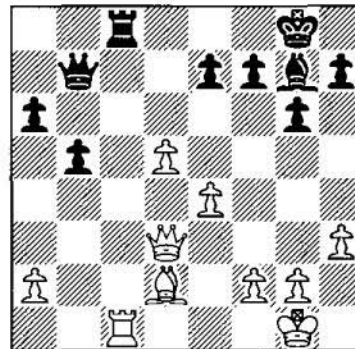
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 377 (White to play)



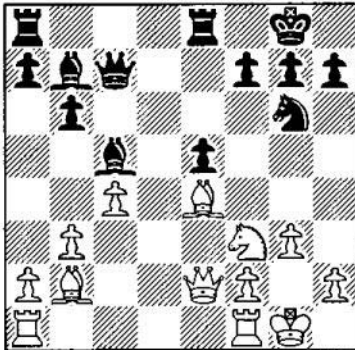
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 380 (White to play)



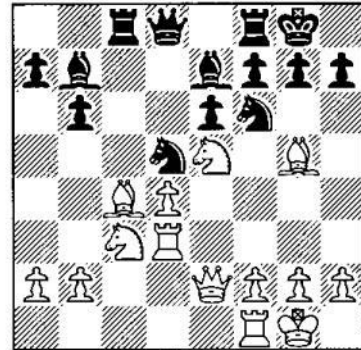
How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 381 (Black to play)



How do you continue? (2-3 moves)

Position 382 (Black to play)



White has just played the aggressive ♞d1-d3 , overlooking a tactical detail. Can you spot it? (3-4 moves).

Solutions

Position 1

St.Nikolic-B.Ivkov

Sarajevo 1967

1...♗e8!

Heading for g6 to seize the b1-h7 diagonal.

2 ♖g4 ♜b6+ 3 ♜h1 ♗g6 4 ♜b1 ♜c6 5 ♜b5 ♜c8 6 ♜a2 ♗e4

The bishop is installed on a protected square. Black has no problems.

Position 2

J.Timman-V.Ikonnikov

Dieren 2009

1 c4!

Clearing the long diagonal for the bishop, where there is no black counterpart.

1...♘c7 2 ♜c2 ♜e7 3 ♗e4!

In order to soften up Black's kingside.

3...h6 4 ♗b2 ♘e8 5 ♘c1!

Heading for b3 to harass the a5-bishop.

5...♜d7 6 ♗h7+ ♜h8 7 ♗f5 ♜c7 8 ♘b3

White has a clear advantage.

Position 3

E.Scholl-J.Timman

Dutch Championship,
Leeuwarden 1974

1...♗f8!

Black prepares 2...♗h6 to improve the passive bishop.

2 c3!

The game continued 2 ♘c1? ♗h6 3 ♘d3 ♜c3 4 ♜de2 ♗d2! and White resigned.

2...♗h6

After 2...bxc3 3 ♜c2, followed by ♜xc3, White has fewer problems.

3 ♜c2 a4!

Intending 4 bxa4 ♜a8. Black keeps the initiative.

Position 4

J.Hellsten-M.Flores Rios

Santiago 2007

1 ♜f2!

Preparing 2 ♗d4 in order to seize the long diagonal. Also interesting is 1 ♜a3!?,

Mastering Chess Strategy

attacking the d6-pawn.

1...♖c3 2 ♗b2!

The immediate 2 ♗d4?? failed to 2...♜xd4! 3 ♜xd4 ♗e2+, while 2 ♗.b3?! ♗b5 isn't convincing either.

2...♗a4?!

Preferable was 2...♗b5 3 ♗a4 ♗a3 4 ♗b6 ♗xc4 5 ♗xc4 ♜xc4! 6 ♜xc4 ♗b5, reducing the material.

3 ♗d4 ♜f8 4 ♗d3!

Planning to attack on the kingside.

4...♜c7 5 ♗b3 ♜ac8 6 ♜xc7 ♜xc7 7 e5!

White has a clear initiative.

Position 5

J.Hellsten-B.Sahl

Arlöv 1995

1 a3!

With the strong plan of b3-b4 and ♗b3(+) to seize the a2-g8 diagonal.

1...g6

This leads to new weaknesses, but after 1...♜d7 2 ♜f3!?, followed by 3 b4, Black is also under pressure.

2 ♜f3 h5 3 b4 ♗b6 4 ♗b3+ ♜g7 5 ♜e2!

6 ♜c4

Not bad, but 6 ♜d2! was even stronger.

6...♜f8

Or 6...♜e8 7 ♜e6! ♜xe6 8 ♗xe6, and 9 ♗c8.

7 ♜e6 ♗b8 8 g3 ♜h7 9 ♜g2

Enabling a future f2-f4, whereas Black is completely tied up. There followed 9...♗a6 10 ♜d7+ ♜g7 11 ♜c8 axb4 12 axb4 ♗a7 13 ♗c4 ♗b8 14 ♗e6 ♗a6 15 ♗g8+! ♜xg8 16 ♜xb7+ ♜g7 17 ♜xa6 with a quick win.

Position 6

L.Oll-B.Gelfand

Polanica Zdroj 1998

1...f5!

Softening up the h1-a8 diagonal for the bishop. Obviously 1...d5? 2 e5 is less constructive.

2 ♗e3 ♜d7 3 ♗d4 ♗f6

Also interesting is 3...♗f6!?, stepping up the pressure on e4; for example, 4 ♜c2 ♜h8 5 ♜b3?! fxe4! 6 ♗xe6 exd3 7 ♗xf8 ♜h3! 8 ♗d5 ♜g4! 9 h3 ♜f5 and Black wins – Gelfand.

4 ♗de2 ♜ae8 5 ♜ad1 g6 6 ♗d4 e5

Even stronger was 6...♗xf4! 7 ♜xf4 (or 7 ♗xf6 ♗xe2) 7...e5 8 ♗xe5 dxe5 with a clear edge.

7 ♗e3 ♗g7 8 fxe5 dxe5 9 ♗h6

At this point the simplest was 9...♜d8!, attacking the d3-pawn, with a clear advantage after 10 ♗g5 ♜c8 – Gelfand.

Position 7

T.V.Petrosian-V.Smyslov

USSR Championship, Moscow 1949

1...d5!

Sacrificing a pawn to clear the a1-h8 diagonal for the bishop.

2 ♗xd5

Preferable was 2 exd5 e4 3 ♗xe4 ♗xb2 4 ♗f3 ♗xa3 5 ♜d3 – Smyslov, although Black's bishop pair and outside passed pawn should tell in the end.

2...♗xd5 3 exd5 ♜xc2 4 b3 e4!

The passed pawn manages to advance all the way to e3.

5 g4 e3 6 ♜g2 ♜d2! 7 ♜xd2 exd2 8 ♗d1 ♜xd5

With a clear advantage.

Position 8

S.Brynell-T.Ernst

Swedish Championship,
Gothenburg 2004

1 ♗d3!

Swapping off the knight on e5 in order to clear the long diagonal towards the black king.

1...♖xd3 2 ♜xd3 b4

Preventing 3 ♜c3 and creating the threat of 3...c4, which White parries with his next move.

3 ♜ac1 ♜b6 4 ♜e3!

Heading for h6 and preparing to meet 4...c4 by 5 ♜d4!

4...♞e8 5 ♜c2 ♖b7?

The last chance was 5...e5, when 6 dxe6 ♞xe6 7 ♜c1, intending ♜d5, leaves White clearly better.

6 ♜h6 ♖d8 7 ♞ce2

Preparing ♜e4 and ♜xg6, a plan impossible to stop.

7...♜c7

If 7...♜f5, then 8 g4 ♜d3 9 ♞e3 c4 10 bxc4 ♜xc4 11 ♜e4! e5 12 dxe6 ♖xe6 13 ♜xg6! and wins.

8 ♜e4! e5

8...♜f5 9 ♜xf5 gxf5 10 ♞e6!, heading for g6.

9 dxe6 ♖xe6 10 ♜xg6! ♜c8 11 ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 12 ♞e4 ♖c7 13 ♞xe8+

In view of the imminent mate, Black resigned.

Position 9

D.Janowski-J.R.Capablanca

New York 1916

1...b4!

Sacrificing a pawn in order to enter with the bishop on a4 and c2. Another sensible idea is 1...♜f8!?, preparing ...♜e8-h5.

2 axb4

Or 2 ♜xb4 ♜a4! (avoiding 2...♜xb4 3 axb4 ♜a4 4 ♞a1) 3 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 4 ♞bc1 ♞b8 with strong pressure.

2...♜a4 3 ♞a1

On 3 ♞c1 Black might consider

3...♞xf4+!? 4 ♜xf4 ♜g5+, recovering the material with a superior position.

3...♜c2 4 ♜g3 ♜e4+ 5 ♜f2 h5! 6 ♞a7

The only way to parry the threat of 6...h4.

6...♜xg2 7 ♞xg2 h4 8 ♜xh4 ♞xg2+ 9 ♜f3 ♞xh2 10 ♜xe7 ♞h3+ 11 ♜f2 ♞b3

Black soon won.

Position 10

S.Bjarnason-J.Hellsten

Malmö 1991

1 a4!

White prepares 2 ♜a3 to activate the bishop.

1...♖c7?!

1...♜xd5 2 axb5 ♜e6 3 ♜a3 ♞e8 was preferable, although White is better anyway thanks to his strong bishop pair.

2 ♜a3 ♞xb1 3 ♞xb1 ♞e8 4 ♖e3!

Now the knight becomes awkward on c7.

4...♖a8 5 ♞b5 ♜c7 6 ♖d5 ♜xd5 7 exd5

Intending d5-d6 with a crushing advantage.

Position 11

Y.Neishtadt-A.Kotov

Leningrad 1956

1...d5!

To clear the long diagonal for the bishop.

2 exd5?!

Preferable was 2 ♜c5! dxe4 3 ♜e2 with unclear play.

2...e4 3 ♜e2 ♖exd5 4 ♖d1

On 4 ♜a1? there follows 4...♖xc3 5 ♞xc3 ♖d5 and Black wins.

4...♖d7

With ideas like ...♖e5-d3 and ...♖7b6-a4, Black enjoys excellent attacking prospects.

Position 12

A.Beliavsky-O.Romanishin
USSR Championship, Tbilisi 1978

1 ♖f1!

The bishop is transferred to the long diagonal where it will attack Black's queenside. 1 ♖e2!? followed by ♖f3 is similar, whereas 1 ♖b2 ♖ac8 2 ♖ac1 ♖hd8 is less incisive.

1...♖ac8 2 ♖g2 ♖b4

Both 2...♖xe3?! 4 fxe3 ♖xc3 4 ♖xb7 and 2...♖c7 3 ♖a4 ♖b4 4 ♖d4!, intending 4...♖d6? 5 ♖xd6!

White.

3 ♗e2 ♖c7 4 ♖f1 ♖hc8 5 ♖b2 b5?!

Removing the pawn from the bishop's sight, but now the queenside is weakened.

6 a4! bxa4 7 ♖xa4 a5 8 ♖a3!

Fighting for the a5-pawn.

8...♖xa3 9 ♖xa3 ♖c5 10 ♖d4 ♖ce4 11 ♖xa5

White later converted his extra pawn into victory.

Position 13

S.Brynell-J.Hellsten
Malmö 1998

1...f4!

Sacrificing a pawn to enter with the bishop along the b1-h7 diagonal. After 1...♖c7 2 ♖d3 ♖c3 3 ♖b4 ♖b6 4 ♖b1, followed by 5 ♖d2, White has more chances of survival.

2 ♖xf4 ♖f5! 3 e6+

Or 3 ♖e1 ♖e4, intending 4...g5, as well as ...♖e6-g4.

3...♖a8 4 exf7 ♖e4 5 ♖e1

After 5 ♖g1 ♖hf8! 6 ♖h2 ♖c6 7 ♖e5 g5 Black also enjoys a strong initiative.

5...g5 6 hxg5 hxg5 7 ♖xe4 dxe4

The immediate 7...♖h6!? was strong as well.

8 ♖xg5 ♖h6 9 ♖xe4 ♖h3+ 10 ♖f3 ♖h5+ 11 g4 ♖xf7

Thanks to the exposed enemy king Black is clearly better.

Position 14

G.Giorgadze-K.Lerner
Lvov 1990

1 ♖d2!

White prepares ♖e1-g3 in order to improve the bishop and reinforce the kingside defence.

1...♖b8

After 1...h5 2 ♖e1 h4 (or 2...hxg4 3 ♖g3! ♖g7 4 fxg4, followed by ♖af2) 3 ♖g2, intending f3-f4, White is clearly better – Giorgadze. Obviously closing the kingside is against Black's wishes.

2 ♖e1 ♖a8 3 ♖b5!?

Increasing the pressure towards the enemy queenside. Instead, the game continued 3 ♖b2 c4 4 ♖c2 h5 5 ♖a4 hxg4 6 ♖g3 ♖c8 with unclear play, though the simple 3 ♖g3!? also deserves attention.

3...♖b6 4 a4 a6 5 ♖g3!

Now that 5...axb5? 6 axb5+ ♖a7 fails to 7 ♖a4, followed by ♖fa1, White has seized the initiative.

Position 15

G.Sigurjonsson-L.Stein
Reykjavik 1972

1...d5!

With the mission of clearing the long diagonal for the bishop.

2 e5 d4!

Of course. Any other move permits 2 ♖d4 virtually burying the bishop on b7.

3 ♖xd4

Both 3 exf6 ♖xf6 and 3 ♖xd4 ♖xf3 4 exf6 ♖xf6 let Black recover the material

with a clear edge.

3...♗g4 4 ♖g1 ♕xh2!

A tactical blow, based on a mating motif on the h-file.

5 ♜fc1

If 5 ♖xh2 then 5...♞xd4, while 5 ♗xh2 permits 5...♙xb4!, threatening mate on h4.

5...♗g4 6 ♕e4 ♖xb4! 7 ♕g5

White has to prevent the mate.

7...♞d5! 8 ♕gf3 ♞xb3 9 ♕xb3 ♖d5

With a sound extra pawn, Black is winning.

Position 16

L.Stein-T.V.Petrosian

USSR Championship, Moscow 1961

1 a4!

Sacrificing a pawn to seize the a3-f8 diagonal with the bishop. Other moves, such as 1 ♖a1?, permit the restrictive 1...♙a4!

1...♙xa4

Or 1...0-0 2 ♖a1 ♞d8 3 ♖a3 ♖e8 4 ♖d6 with a clear plus.

2 ♖a1 b5 3 ♖a3 ♞d7 4 ♖f2! ♖b7 5 ♖af1 ♞d8

Black has managed to cover the f7-pawn, but White finds a way to step up the pressure.

6 ♞d1!

With ideas like ♖h5, ♞b1-b4 and ♖xe6 followed by ♞g4.

6...♖h6 7 ♖c1! ♖h7 8 ♖xe6!

In view of the decisive 8...fxe6 9 ♞g4, Black resigned.

Position 17

Y.Vilner-P.Romanovsky

USSR Championship, Moscow 1924

1...♖e6!

Preparing the strong manoeuvre ...♖f8-c5-d4.

2 ♖d3 ♖f8 3 ♖hd1

After 3 ♞e3 ♖e7 4 ♖hd1 ♞f8!, and ...♖c5-d4, Black also accomplishes his plan.

3...♖c5 4 ♞e2 ♖d4 5 ♗b1 c5

Thanks to his tremendous bishop Black is clearly better. Romanovsky later opened a new front by ...f7-f6.

Position 18

V.Salov-M.Gurevich

Reggio Emilia 1991/92

1 b4!

Preparing b4-b5 to soften up the long diagonal for the bishop on g2.

1...♖xc4?!

1...♕e4 was preferable, although after 2 ♕xe4 fxe4 3 ♕xe6 ♞xe6 4 ♞c2 ♖fe8 5 ♖e3 ♕c7 6 ♖fd1 White is better thanks to his bishop pair.

2 b5 cxb5 3 ♕dxb5

After 3 ♖xb7 b4! Black gets some counterplay.

3...♖d8 4 ♖a3

One more piece into play. 4 ♕xd6 ♞e6 5 ♖a3 ♕e8! is less clear.

4...d5 5 ♕d6!

Again White prefers activity over material.

5...♞e5 6 ♕xc4 dxc4 7 ♞c2 ♕c5

Now the game continued 8 ♖xc5? ♞xc5 9 ♖b5 ♞d6 and White lost a significant part of his advantage. Much stronger was 8 ♕a4!, e.g. 8...b6 9 ♕xc5 bxc5 10 ♞xc4+ with a huge advantage – Salov.

Position 19

M.Carlsen-A.Beliavsky

Amsterdam 2006

1...♖xd5! 2 ♖xd5

After 2 exd5 e4! the bishop on g7 wakes up and a passed pawn appears on the e-file.

2...♙f6!

Intending ...♙d8, ...c7-c6 and ...♙b6(+) in order to activate the bishop.

3 ♖g3

Or 3 ♙g5 ♜d8! 4 ♙xf6+ ♜xf6 5 ♖g3 c6, when the g1-a7 diagonal becomes useful for the queen.

3...c6 4 ♙b3 ♙d8! 5 ♜d3

Obviously the restrictive 5 ♙e3? failed to 5...♜xe4.

5...♙b6+ 6 ♖h1

6 ♙e3 straight away was preferable.

6...♖g4! 7 ♙e3

If 7 ♖xd6, then 7...♜f2 8 ♜g1 ♖xg2+! with mate.

7...♙xe3 8 ♖xe3 ♜f4

With the double idea of 9...♜xe4 and 9...♜ef8. Black is clearly better – Beliavsky.

Position 20

A.Beliavsky-J.Lautier

Linares 1994

1 ♙f1!

Redirecting the passive bishop to the h3-c8 diagonal where it will complicate Black's long castling. 1 ♙xf6?! gxf6 2 ♙f1 is less exact due to 2...♜d4!, intending 3 ♙h3 f5.

1...♜d4

On 1...♜xg3? there follows 2 ♜h8+ ♙f8 3 ♙h3 ♜d6 4 ♜e1! ♜gh5 5 f4, destroying the black defence, while after 1...0-0-0?! 2 ♙xf6 gxf6 3 ♙h3 ♜h8 4 ♜d1! ♜d8 5 ♙g4 the pin will soon take its toll.

2 f4!

The game saw 2 ♜h8+?! ♙f8 3 ♙h3 ♜d6 4 f4 ♜xd5 and Black eventually saved a draw.

2...♜f3

After 2...♜d8 3 ♜e3 ♜f5 4 ♜d3!, intending 5 ♜e4, White also enjoys a strong initiative.

3 ♜e2 ♜xg5 4 fxg5 ♜g8 5 ♜h8 ♖f8

Not 5...0-0-0? 6 ♙h3 and wins.

6 ♙h3! ♜e7 7 ♜e4!

Intending ♜h5-h7, as well as 8 ♖g4! followed by 9 ♜f6. White has an overwhelming initiative.

Position 21

P.Benko-M.Najdorf

Los Angeles 1963

1 ♜dh1!

Preparing ♜d1-e3-f5.

1...♜g6 2 ♜d1! ♜c8

Other moves, such as 2...b5, can be answered in the same way, while 2...♜f4 3 ♜h7 followed by ♜e3-f5 doesn't help Black either.

3 ♜e3 ♜c7

If 3...♜e7 covering f5, then 4 ♜h5 f6 5 ♜d1! followed by ♖f1-h3.

4 ♜f5 ♜f8 5 ♜d1

Another way to victory was 5 ♜h7 f6 6 ♜xg7+! ♜xg7 7 ♜h6+ ♖h8 8 ♜f7+ etc.

5...f6 6 f4!

A decisive sacrifice.

6...exf4 7 ♜h5 ♜e5 8 ♜h7+

In view of 8...♖f7 9 ♖xg7+ ♖e8 10 ♖xf8+! ♖xf8 11 ♜h8+, Black resigned.

Position 22

I.Morovic Fernandez-I.Rogers

Spanish Team Championship 1994

1...♜d7!

Intending 2...♜e5 followed by ...♜d3(+) or ...♜f3(+). 1...♜c4?! with the same idea is less precise due to 2 ♜f6+!.

2 ♖g3 ♙d6

Before continuing his plan Black makes a few prophylactic moves in order to neutralize White's ♜f6+ idea.

3 ♖g2 ♖h8 4 ♜e2

Or 4 ♜g3 ♙xg3!, followed by ...♜e5.

4...♖e5 5 ♖d4 ♗b4

Thus Black avoids a fork on f5 before completing the knight manoeuvre.

6 ♗c3 ♗xc3+ 7 bxc3 ♖d3+ 8 ♖f1 ♗c5

With better placed pieces and a strong passed pawn, Black has a clear advantage.

*Position 23***B.Spassky-J.H.Donner**

Santa Monica 1966

1 ♖g5!

By attacking the h7-pawn, the knight gets to d6 with tempo.

1...h6

On 1...♖f8 or 1...g6 there follows the same thing.

2 ♖e4 ♗c7

After 2...♖xe5? 3 ♖d6 White wins a piece.

3 ♖d6 ♗d8 4 ♗d1 ♗b6 5 ♗hd4

Thanks to his powerful knight on d6 White is clearly better. The game concluded 5...♗f8 6 ♗h1 ♗c5 7 f4 ♖b6 8 ♖e4 ♗a3 9 ♗g4! (initiating a final attack) 9...bxc4 10 ♖f6+ ♗h8 11 ♗d8 ♗c7 12 ♗g6! gxf6 13 ♗xf6+ and Black resigned in view of 13...♗g8 14 ♗xf8+ ♗xf8 15 ♗d8.

*Position 24***V.Guerra-J.Hellsten**

Mondariz 2001

1...e5!

Creating a protected square for the knight on d4.

2 ♗g2 ♗a8 3 ♖c3

Or 3 ♗d2 ♖d4 4 ♖xd4?! exd4 5 ♗d3 f5 6 ♗e1 ♗de8 with a clear edge.

3...♗d4 4 ♖d5 ♗xd5

Swapping the strong enemy knight. Unfortunately for White, he can't do the same thing.

5 cxd5 a5! 6 f4 f6 7 f5?

Burying the bishop. 7 h4 intending ♗h3 was preferable.

7...a4 8 ♗f1 axb3 9 axb3 ♗a3 10 ♗bb1 ♗a8

Intending ...♗b4 and ...♗a2 with a clear advantage thanks to the powerful knight on d4.

*Position 25***A.Raetsky-M.Gurevich**

Fourmies 1997

1...♖f8!

Heading for g6-f4(h4) in order to exploit White's kingside weaknesses.

2 ♗f3

Or 2 ♖e4 ♖g6 3 ♗e3 ♖f4+ 4 ♗h2 f5! with a strong initiative – Gurevich.

2...♖g6 3 ♗f1 f5!

Clearing the f-file for an attack and preventing ♖d2-e4. Less clear is 3...♗g5 4 ♖e4! or 3...♖f4 4 ♗c3 ♗xd4 5 ♗xb7 ♗e8 6 ♗e3 – Gurevich.

4 ♖b3

Obviously, 4 gxf5 invites 4...♗f8.

4...♗f8 5 ♗c2 ♖f4 6 ♗c1 ♗xh3+ 7 ♗xh3 ♖xh3

Black later realized his extra pawn.

*Position 26***M.Matlak-M.Marin**

Odorheiu Secuiesc 1995

1...♖e7!

With the strong plan ...♖g8-f6-e4. Less accurate is 1...♖b8?! intending ...♖d7-f6-e4 due to 2 ♖e3! followed by ♗c2, with pressure against f5.

2 ♗e2

Preparing a similar plan with ♖c5-d3-e5. If instead 2 ♖e3 interfering with the enemy manoeuvre, then Black could adjust his plans by 2...b6!? preparing ...c7-c5.

2...♘g8 3 ♘c5 ♘f6 4 ♘d3 ♘e4 5 ♖e3 h5!

Preparing a kingside attack.

6 ♘e5 ♖h6 7 ♗d3 ♗e6 8 ♜f1 c5!

Now that the white king is approaching the centre, Black amplifies his attack with a definite initiative. At this point 8 dxc5 is well met by 8...♗xe5 9 fxe5 ♖xe3 10 ♖xe3 ♘xg3+!, intending 11 ♖xg3 f4.

Position 27

V.Korchnoi-J.Piket

Match (game 3), Nijmegen 1993

1 ♘e1!

Redirecting the knight to the blockading square d3, and clearing the long diagonal for the bishop. 1 ♗h3 ♗d5 is less convincing.

1...♗de7 2 ♘d3 b6

Parrying the threat of 3 ♘c5.

3 ♗h3 ♖b3

Or 3...♖d5 4 ♖fc1 and Black runs out of sensible moves.

4 ♖fc1 ♖d5 5 ♖c7

Not 5 ♗xf5? ♗e5!, but 5 ♗g2 ♖e6 6 ♗f3 again left Black in a kind of zugzwang – Piket.

5...♗g5?

The last chance was 5...♖xc7 6 ♖xc7 ♗e7. Now White wins a pawn.

6 f4! ♖xc7 7 ♖xc7 ♗d8 8 ♖xa7

With a decisive advantage.

Position 28

J.Nogueiras Santiago-M.Sisniega

Novi Sad Olympiad 1990

1...e4!

Creating a protected square on f3 that can be exploited by the knight after the swap of bishops. 1...♖xd6? is less convincing due to 2 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 3 ♘xc5.

2 ♗xg7 ♜xg7 3 ♖d2

White has to take care of his d6-pawn.

3...♘e5!

Initiating favourable complications.

4 ♖xc5 ♖exd6 5 ♖xc6 ♖xd2 6 ♖xd2 ♖xd2 7 ♖xa6 ♘f3+

In this desperate position, White resigned. There could follow 8 ♜f1 ♘xh2+ 9 ♜e1 ♖g2, intending ...♘xg4 and the march of the h-pawn.

Position 29

R.J.Fischer-O.Gadia

Mar del Plata 1960

1 ♗xf6! ♗xf6 2 ♗d5!

Swapping the defenders of the d5-square in order to install the knight there. Less convincing is 2 ♘d5?! ♗xd5 3 ♗xd5 ♖ac8 followed by ...♗f6-g5.

2...♖ac8 3 ♗xc6 ♖xc6 4 ♖ad1 ♖fc8?!

A better way of exploiting the c-file was 4...♖c5, intending 5 ♘d5?! ♖xc2. White should prefer 5 ♖g3 ♜h8 6 ♗d2!, followed by 7 ♘d5, keeping all his positional assets.

5 ♘d5! ♖d8 6 c3

The knight dominates the whole board and Black is left without counterplay.

6...♗e7 7 ♖a1!

Preparing a2-a4 to soften up the black queenside. Also interesting was 7 f6!? ♗xf6 8 ♘xf6+ gxf6 9 ♖h3!, followed by ♗d3-g3 with a strong attack.

7...f6 8 a4 ♖b8?

This loses outright, but Black had a hard time anyway.

9 ♘xe7+!

In view of 9...♖xe7 10 ♖d5+, Black resigned.

Position 30

M.O'Conneide-A.Baburin

Dublin 1995

1...♘d7!

Heading for the weak square on d3.

2 e4

If 2 f4?!, preventing Black's plan, then after 2...d6! the knight finds an excellent destiny on e4. Also after 2 b4 ♖ac8 White is under some slight pressure.

2...d6 3 ♖c2 c4!

Fixing d3 as a protected square and facilitating the future advance of the queen-side pawn majority.

4 ♖e3 b5 5 ♖fd1 a6 6 .d4 d3 7 ♖c3 ♖ac8 8 ♖d2

Of course 8 .dxcg7? fails to 8...♖c5+.

8...f6 9 ♖ad1 ♖e6

Thanks to his strong knight Black is better.

Position 31

E.Bareev-V.Salov

Linares 1992

1 d2!

Redirecting the knight to a5 where it will eye the c6-pawn and help White to fight for the open a-file.

1...g6 2 d3 ♖d8 3 d5 ♖c7 4 ♖a3! ♖a6 5 ♖da1 ♖ca8 6 ♖c1!

In order to open a second front with h2-h4.

6...f6 7 f3 d7 8 g2 e5

If 8...f5 then 9 h4, whereas other moves permit the central thrust 9 e4.

9 dxe5 dxe5

Or 9...fxe5 10 h4 d6 11 hxg5 hxg5 12 .d3! with a clear edge – Bareev.

10 f4! d7

At this point the game went 11 .d3 ♖e8! 12 .dxf6 gxf4 with complications. 11 ♖b2!? seems stronger; for example, 11...♖e8 12 ♖xf6 ♖e6 13 ♖d4 ♖xe2 14 .d3 with heavy pressure along the a1-h8 diagonal.

Position 32

A.Denker-V.Smyslov

USSR-USA match, Moscow 1946

1...d8!

Heading for the blocking square on d6. Equally strong is 1...♖c7!?, preparing ...d8-d6.

2 h5 ♖f8 3 ♖f2 ♖f7 4 h6 g6 5 ♖bf1 ♖e7 6 ♖g4 d6

Now the knight isn't just blocking the d-pawn, it also attacks the weaknesses on c4 and e4.

7 ♖e6

Or 7 .dxc1 ♖df8! (not 7...dxc4 8 ♖e6! with counterplay), when both 8 ♖e6? dxe4 and 8 ♖e2 ♖d7 are troublesome for White.

7...dxe4 8 ♖xb6 f5!

Instead of grabbing the exchange, Black launches a counterattack.

9 ♖b2

After 9 ♖f3 ♖df8 nothing can stop ...f5-f4.

9...f4 10 ♖e6

Or 10 gxf4 ♖h4+ and the bishop is soon captured with check.

10...fxe3

Winning a piece, and soon the game.

Position 33

E.Geller-M.Najdorf

Candidates Tournament, Zürich 1953

1 d5!

Heading for c4-e3-d5 in order to exploit the key square d5. Only this route works, since on 1 d2?! Black has 1...♖c6! 2 d4 d5! with counterplay, when the e5-pawn is immune due to the pin along the h2-b8 diagonal. 1 d5? dxd5 2 exd5 would be a strategical error, since the d5-square could no longer be used by the pieces.

1...♖c8

Now that ...d6-d5 can no longer be arranged, it is difficult for Black to find an active plan.

2 ♖c4 ♜c6 3 ♜e3 a5 4 ♖c4

There is no hurry to occupy d5. Geller first reinforces his queenside.

4... ♜a6 5 b3 ♙b6 6 ♖xc8+ ♜xc8 7 ♜ed5 ♜xd5 8 ♜xd5

Thanks to his great knight, White has a clear advantage.

Position 34

Wl.Schmidt-J.Dorfman

Polanica Zdroj 1978

1... ♙b4!

Preparing the exchange of the main defender of the e4-square, the knight on c3.

2 ♜h4

Or 2 a3 ♙xc3 3 ♙xc3 ♜e4 4 ♙xe4 ♜xe4 with a clear edge.

2... ♜e7! 3 ♜g5

Thanks to his previous move, Black was ready to meet 3 ♙xh5? with 3... ♜f5 4 ♜g5 ♙xc3 5 ♙xc3 ♜e4, winning – Dorfman.

3... ♜f5

From here the knight can join the battle for the e4-square via d6 or even g3.

4 a3 ♙xc3 5 ♙xc3 g6 6 ♙b4 ♜e4 7 ♜f4 ♜fg3! 8 ♜e5 ♜d7 9 ♖xc8

In view of 9 ♜f4? g5, White has to hand over the c-file.

9... ♖xc8 10 ♙xe4 ♜xe4 11 ♖f1 ♜e6! 12 ♜xe6 fxe6

Intending ♖c2 with an overwhelming advantage.

Position 35

G.Timoscenko-J.Laengl

Seefeld 2003

1 ♜b1!

Heading for the protected square on e5.

1... ♖g7 2 ♜d2 ♙f7 3 ♖de1

White methodically improves his position, waiting with ♜f3-e5 until the f4-pawn is safe, and a pin with ♙h5 no longer exists.

3... ♜g6 4 ♜f2 ♜h8 5 ♜h2!

Preparing g2-g3 to secure the f4-pawn.

5... ♖ag8 6 g3 h6 7 ♖g1!

The immediate 7 ♜f3? permits 7... ♜xf4! 8 gxf4 ♜xf4+ 9 ♜h1 ♖g3 with counterplay.

7... ♜f8 8 ♜f3 ♜d7 9 ♜e5 ♜f6

A lesser evil was 9... ♜xe5 10 ♖xe5 with a clear, though not yet decisive advantage for White.

10 g4!

With the centre dominated by his strong knight, White launches a kingside attack.

10... fxf4 11 ♜h4! g3+ 12 ♖xg3

The rook is immune due to mate.

12... ♜h5 13 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 14 ♙e2!

White wins the h6-pawn with a decisive advantage.

36. S.Krasnov-K.Vinogradov

St. Petersburg 1962

1... ♜d7!

Heading for f8-g6-h4 with kingside pressure. Besides, on g6 the knight will be useful in eyeing the f4-pawn.

2 ♜h1

Also after 2 ♜h2 ♜f8 3 ♙h1 ♜g6 Black's game is easier; e.g. 4 c5 b6! 5 b4 bxc5 6 bxc5 ♙a6 7 ♖f2 ♙d3 etc.

2... ♜f8 3 ♖f2 ♜g6 4 ♜d2 ♙xd4

Also interesting is 4... ♜h4!? 5 ♖g1 ♙d7 followed by ... ♜h8 and ... ♖g8.

5 ♜xd4 ♜f6 6 ♜e3?

Leaving the king under a cloud. Preferable was 6 ♜xf6 ♖xf6 7 ♜d1 heading for e3.

6... ♜h8 7 ♙f1 ♙d7 8 ♙e2 ♖g7

Now Black has an automatic attack. There followed 9 ♖g1 ♖ag8 10 ♙f1 ♜h4 11 ♖xg7 ♜xg7 12 ♖c2 ♙e8! 13 ♜b5 ♙h5 14

♖d4 ♙f3+ 15 ♜h2 ♙d1! 16 ♜c3 ♖f3+ 17 ♜xf3 exf3 and Black won.

Position 37

I.Glek-Z.Kozul

European Championship,
Istanbul 2003

1 ♙g4!

Exchanging the bishops in preparation for ♖e3-f5. The immediate 1 ♖e3?! permits 1...♗xe4, while 1 f3?! f5! lets Black free himself from the f5 weakness.

1...♙xg4

Now 1..f5? drops a pawn after 2 exf5 ♙xf5 3 ♙xf5 ♜xf5 4 ♜xd6!, while 1...♜ad8 2 ♙f5!? ♙xf5 3 exf5, preparing ♖e3-d5(g4), also favours White.

2 hxg4 ♜fc8 3 ♖e3! ♙f8

Both 3...♖xe4? 4 ♖f5 and 3...♗xe4? 4 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 5 ♖d5 fail tactically for Black.

4 ♖f5 ♜c6 5 ♜d5

Preparing ♜ed1, with a pleasant advantage thanks to the opponent's light square weaknesses.

Position 38

A.Beliavsky-V.Nevednichy

Paks 2004

1 c5!

Creating a protected square on d6, which can be exploited by the knight via d2-c4-d6, or even by the rook.

1...♞c7

The desired 1..f5 permits 2 exf5 gxf5 3 ♜d6! with strong pressure: e.g. 3...f4 4 ♙d3+!, intending 4...♜h8? 5 ♙g6.

2 ♖d2! ♖f4 3 ♙f1 ♗e7 4 ♖c4 ♖fe6 5 b4

The immediate 5 ♖d6 promises less due to 5...♜d8 6 ♙c4 ♖e8!, swapping the strong knight.

5...a6?!

After 5...♖d4? 6 ♖xe5 White wins a pawn, but 5...f5 6 exf5 gxf5 7 ♖d6 e4 was a more active try.

6 ♖a4 ♖b5?

After 6...♜b8 7 ♖ab6 ♖f4 8 ♖xc8 ♜fxc8 9 ♖d6 White is also better, but at least material remains even.

7 ♖ab6 ♜b8 8 ♖d6!

Now that 8...♖xd6? loses to 9 cxd6 followed by 10 d7, Black has to give up the exchange. The game continued 8...♖bd4 9 ♖bxc8 ♜bxc8 10 ♖xc8 ♜xc8 11 ♜b1 and White won without any problems.

Position 39

C.Lutz-A.Yusupov

Tilburg 1993

1...♖d8!

Redirecting the idle knight to h6, where it will be helpful in exploiting in the complex of weak squares on g4, f5 and e4.

2 ♜ee1 ♖8f7 3 ♖h2

Preferable was 3 ♖f1, followed by ♖1h2 – Yusupov, although I fail to see any big difference after 3...♖h6 4 ♖1h2 ♙f5! just like he played in the game. One major problem for White is the lack of good squares for his knights.

3...♖h6 4 ♖gf1 ♙f5!

Challenging the main defender of the e4-square.

5 ♙e2

After 5 ♙xf5 ♖hxf5, followed by ...♖e4+, White also has a hard time.

5...♖e4+ 6 ♜g1 g5!?

After seizing the centre Black starts a flank attack.

7 g4?

A tactical oversight. White had to accept long-term inferiority after 7 fxf5 fxf5 8 hxg5 ♖xg5.

7...gxf4! 8 gxf5 ♜g7+

Now that $g\ h1$ runs into $g\ f2$ mate, Black wins material, and soon the game as well.

Position 40

R.Vaganian-V.Akopian
FIDE World Championship,
Groningen 1997

1 $d\ b1!$

Preparing $d\ d2-b3$ in order to seize the protected square on c5. This is the best way to do it, since the temporary attack on the c6-pawn limits Black's replies. In contrast, $1\ e\ b1?!$ preparing $d\ e4-c5$, fails to $1...c5!$, while $1\ d\ d2$ allows $1...a5!$ $2\ d\ x\ b5$ (or $2\ d\ b3?! a4$) $2...d\ x\ e5$ $3\ d\ x\ e5\ c\ x\ b5$ with approximate equality.

1... $\text{E}\ d\ c8$ 2 $d\ b\ d2$ a5

The desired $2...a\ b8$ $3\ d\ b3\ c5?$ fails to $4\ e\ x\ b7\ \text{E}\ x\ b7$ $5\ d\ x\ c5\ d\ x\ c5$ $6\ b4!$, winning a pawn – Akopian.

3 $d\ b3$ a4 4 $d\ c5$ $d\ x\ c5$ 5 $\text{E}\ x\ c5$

By recapturing this way White keeps the c5-square under control and facilitates the attack on the c6-pawn.

5... $e\ f8$ 6 $\text{E}\ e\ c1$ $\text{W}\ d7$ 7 $\text{E}\ 5\ c2$

Thanks to his superior pawn structure, White keeps a slight edge.

Position 41

S.Kristjansson-I.Sokolov
European Club Cup, Kemer 2007

1 $\text{W}\ d2!$

Preparing $\text{E}\ a\ e1$ to seize the open file. $1\ \text{E}\ e1?!$ is less logical since that rook is already well placed at f1.

1... $b5$ 2 $\text{E}\ a\ e1$ $\text{W}\ d6$ 3 $d\ e5\ c5$ 4 $d\ x\ g6+$ $h\ x\ g6$ 5 $\text{W}\ f2$

Perhaps the $5\ \text{E}\ e5!$ at once was stronger.

5... $c4$ 6 $e\ d1$ $g5$ 7 $\text{E}\ e5!$

Exploiting the protected square in order to double rooks.

7... $\text{E}\ e7$ 8 $\text{E}\ f\ e1$ $\text{E}\ x\ e5?!$

$8...a\ f\ e8$ was better, disputing the open file.

9 $\text{E}\ x\ e5$ $\text{W}\ h6$ 10 $\text{W}\ e3!$

With the threat of $11\ \text{E}\ e8$. Thanks to his control of the open file White is clearly better.

Position 42

G.Levenfish-G.Lisitsin
Moscow 1935

1 $\text{E}\ c6!$

By exploiting a simple tactical detail White manages to seize the c-file. $1\ b5?$ $d\ c5$ was less appropriate.

1... $\text{E}\ x\ c6$

After $1...d\ b8$ $2\ \text{E}\ x\ c8+$ $\text{W}\ x\ c8$ $3\ \text{E}\ c1$ White is also much better.

2 $d\ x\ c6$ $\text{W}\ e6$

Or $2...a\ x\ c6?$ $3\ b5$, the tactical justification of $1\ \text{E}\ c6$.

3 $\text{W}\ c3$

Thanks to his strong passed pawn White is clearly better.

Position 43

V.Menchik-J.R.Capablanca
Hastings 1930/31

1... $\text{E}\ d7!$

Preparing the doubling of rooks on the d-file.

2 $\text{E}\ d1$ $\text{E}\ f\ d8$ 3 $e\ d2$

$3\ e\ g5?$ loses outright to $3...e\ x\ g5$ $4\ d\ x\ g5\ d\ f4$, while after $3\ e\ e3\ \text{W}\ a4!$ Black keeps a clear plus.

3... $b5!$

Intending $...d\ b6-c4(a4)$ in order to improve the knight.

4 $\text{W}\ f1$ $d\ b6$ 5 $e\ f4$ $h6$ 6 $\text{E}\ x\ d7$ $\text{E}\ x\ d7$ 7 $\text{E}\ d1?$

Now the black queen manages to enter the enemy camp. The prophylactic 7 b3 was better.

7... ♖xd1+ 8 ♗xd1 ♜e4! 9 ♔g3

If 9 ♔e3 or 9 ♔d2, then 9... ♖c4, forking the b2 and e5 pawns.

9... ♗c4+ 10 ♗e2 ♗xe2+ 11 ♖xe2 ♖a4!

Winning a pawn with a decisive advantage.

Position 44

E.Geller-V.Simagin

USSR Championship, Moscow 1951

1 ♔a6!

Weakening Black's control of the open c-file.

1... ♔xa6 2 ♗xa6 ♖xc1

A sad necessity, but only thus can Black defend the a7-pawn.

3 ♖xc1 ♗a8 4 ♔d6! ♖d8 5 e5

After improving his bishop White secures it, and the pawn as well.

5... ♔g7 6 ♖c7! ♗e4 7 ♔d2

Of course not 7 ♖xd7?? ♗b1+ and Black wins material. But 7 ♔e7!? was interesting as well.

7... ♗e1+ 8 ♖f1 ♖f8 9 ♗xa7

White has gained a pawn and there is a second one coming up on f7. He soon won the game.

Position 45

M.Taimanov-G.Lisitsin

Leningrad 1949

1 ♖a3!

Preparing to triple the major pieces on the c-file.

1... ♖c7 2 ♖c3 ♗e7

The natural 2... ♖bc8? fails to 3 ♖xb7! ♖xc3 4 bxc3.

3 ♔f1!

A good exchange to facilitate an attack on the b7-pawn.

3... ♔xf1 4 ♖xf1 ♖bc8 5 ♗b3 ♖e8?

This leads to material losses, as does 5... ♖e4 6 ♖xe4 fxe4 7 ♗xb7!. Black should have tried 5... ♔g4, challenging the strong knight on e5.

6 ♖xb7! ♖xb7 7 ♗xb7! ♗xb7 8 ♖xc8 ♖f8 9 ♖b8! ♗e7

Equally painful is 9... ♗xb8 10 ♖d7+ or 9... ♗a7 10 ♖cc8 ♖ac7 11 ♖c6.

10 ♖xa8

With the inevitable threat of 11 ♖cc8. White soon won.

Position 46

M.Vukic-M.Suba

Vinkovci 1977

1... ♔h6!

Disputing the open file.

2 ♖c4 ♖e3 3 ♖cc1 ♖d5 4 ♖xc8?

This doesn't help White, but it was difficult for him to find a constructive move.

4... ♖xc8 5 ♗f2

The desired 5 ♖c1? fails to 5... ♖g4+.

5... ♖f5 6 ♖e2 ♔e3! 7 ♗e1 ♗b5

Now Black's pieces are very active.

8 ♖d2 ♗d3 9 ♖f1

If 9 ♖c4, then 9... ♖xg3! 10 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 11 ♖xe3 ♗xe3! 12 ♗xg3 ♖c2+ and wins – Suba.

9... ♖c2! 10 ♖g2

Or 10 ♖xc2 ♗xc2+ 11 ♗h1 ♗e4+! with similar consequences.

10... ♖xg2+ 11 ♖xg2 ♗e4+!

In view of 12 ♖h2 ♔g1+, White resigned.

Position 47

V.Potkin-Y.Kolotilin

Russian Team Championship 2003

1 ♖e3!

Intending ♖h3 with attacking prospects, as well as ♜d3 to increase the pressure towards d6.

1...♗e7 2 ♖h3 ♗g8

By a sensible knight manoeuvre Black managed to parry the ♖h6+ threat, as well as any sacrifice with ♗f5+. However, the knight is now passive on g8.

3 ♖g3 ♗h8 4 b3 ♜bd8 5 ♜d3!

White reverts to his main target, the d6-pawn, now that the black knight is longer defending it.

5...♜b6 6 h3 ♗g7

Perhaps 6...♗e7 was more tenacious; e.g. 7 ♜f4 ♗g7 8 ♜f3 ♗g8. In the game White simply wins a pawn.

7 ♗c2 d5 8 ♗e3!

Before taking the pawn Potkin improves his knight.

8...♗e7 9 ♗g4 ♗g8 10 exd5 cxd5 11 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 12 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 13 ♜xd5 h5 14 ♗e3

With a sound extra pawn and safer king, White is practically winning.

Position 48

B.Avrukh-G.Sargissian

German League 2007

1 ♜d6!

Exploiting the entry square at d6 in order to seize the open file.

1...♗d4

Or 1...e5 2 ♜d2 a5 3 ♜d1 with strong pressure.

2 e5 ♜xd6 3 cxd6

Not 3 exd6? ♜f6 with unclear play – Avrukh.

3...♜f8 4 ♜e4! ♗b6 5 ♗h2!?

The simple 5 ♜xb4 was also strong. In the game White prepares a kingside attack.

5...♜h6 6 f3 ♜e3

Practically the only move to resist the attack.

7 ♜xe3 ♗xe3 8 fxg4 c5 9 g5!

Intending ♗xh5 with a favourable end-game.

Position 49

G.Gamrekeil-T.V.Petrosian

Georgian Championship, Tbilisi 1944

1...♜a6!

Preparing 2...♜ga8 in order to double rooks before clearing the a-file with ...a5xb4. In contrast, after 1...axb4?! 2 axb4 ♜a6 3 ♗c3 White seizes that file with good chances for a draw.

2 ♗f2 ♜ga8 3 ♗g1 b5

Another good option was 3...axb4 4 axb4 ♗b3 (not 4...b5?! 5 ♗c3) 5 ♜b1 ♗bc5! 6 bxc5 ♗xc5, winning a pawn.

4 ♗c3

After 4 ♗c5 ♜6a7! a white pawn soon falls on the queenside. In the game Black unleashes a little combination that also gains a pawn.

4...♗b3! 5 ♜b1 axb4 6 ♗xb5

Or 6 ♜xb3 bxc3 7 ♜xc3 b4 and wins.

6...cxb5 7 ♜xb3 ♜xa3 8 ♜bxa3 bxa3 9 ♗e2 ♗c5

With an easy win.

Position 50

P.Hoeksema-E.Van den Doel

Leeuwarden 1994

1 ♗c7!

Temporarily blocking the c-file to enable the doubling of rooks.

1...e5 2 ♜c3! g5

After 2...exd4 3 exd4 ♜he8 4 ♜ac1 Black is also suffering.

3 ♜ac1 g4 4 fxg4 hxg4 5 ♗g2 ♗e4 6 ♗h4 ♜cg8 7 ♗xb8!

Simplest, in order to seize the seventh rank.

7...♖xb8 8 ♖c7+ ♗e6 9 ♖b7

Preparing ♖cc7 and hitting the b6-pawn. White has a decisive advantage.

Position 51

J.Timman-F.Vallejo Pons
European Championship,
Budva 2009

1 ♖a3!

Heading for d3 in order to fight for the d-file. Besides which, the rook can also be used in a kingside attack.

1...♗d8 2 ♖ad3

The tempting 2 ♖g3? failed to 2...♗xe5! on the theme of a back rank mate.

2...♖b8

Connecting the rooks with 2...♗c7? loses to 3 ♖xd7!, while 2...b5 3 ♗d6 ♖xd6 4 ♖xd6 is also bad for Black.

3 ♗g4f5

After 3...♗f8? 4 ♖g3 White is winning.

4 exf6 ♗xf6 5 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 6 ♗g6

With ideas like ♖xh6 and ♗e5, White keeps a clear advantage.

Position 52

B.Gelfand-M.Adams
Candidates match (game 4),
Wijk aan Zee 1994

1 ♖e2!

In order to double the rooks on the e-file, where Black has a problem with the unstable bishop on e6, as well as with the e6-square itself.

1...♖f6 2 ♖de1 ♖c8

After 2...♖g8? 3 ♗b5! ♗d7 4 ♖xf5 White wins a pawn.

3 ♖c4!

Black's previous move left this diagonal unattended.

3...♗xc3

3...♗b6? failed to 4 ♗b5 ♗d7 5 ♖e6, while after 3...♗f4 4 ♖xf4 ♗xf4 5 ♗d5 ♗d6 6 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 7 d5 White is clearly on top – Gelfand.

4 bxc3 h6 5 a4 b6 6 h4! ♗a5 7 ♖a2 c5 8 ♗g5!

An excellent strike, based on the line 8...hxg5? 9 hxg5 cxd4 10 ♗d3! with a winning attack. After 8 ♗g5! White enjoys a clear initiative and later won the game.

Position 53

E.Hedman-E.Berg
Norrköping 2004

1 e4!

Clearing the e-file for the rook, in order to enhance an attack on Black's weakened kingside.

1...♗a6

Black is urged to speed up his development. If 1...fxe4 2 ♗xe4 d5, then 3 ♗g5!, followed by ♖h3 with a strong attack.

2 exf5 ♗xf5 3 cxd6 ♗c5 4 ♖e1!

Simple and strong. Now the rook controls a lot of important squares.

4...♗xd6

This won't turn out well, but after 4...g5 5 ♗h5! ♗xd6 6 ♖h3 Black is also in trouble.

5 ♖.xd6 ♖f8 6 ♖e5! ♖xd6 7 ♗e2

White wins material.

7...♗f6 8 ♖xc5 ♖e6 9 ♗e4! ♖xe4 10 ♗xe4 ♖xc5 11 ♗c4+

Black resigned.

Position 54

J.Woda-A.Sznapik
Polish Championship, Slupsk 1989

1...♖d2!

Blocking the d-file as a preparation for the doubling of rooks.

2 f3

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Or 2 ♖b1 ♗e4! 3 ♙h2 ♗d7 with similar play. At this point 4 f3? fails to 4...♙e3+.

2...♗d7 3 ♙f2 ♗ad8 4 b3 b6 5 ♖b1 b5!

Creating an outside passed pawn.

6 axb5 cxb5 7 ♗a3 ♗b8 8 ♙e1 ♙b4! 9 ♗a1

After 9 ♙xb4 axb4 10 ♖b1 ♗a8, followed by ...♗a2, White is under pressure.

9...♙xe1 10 ♗fxe1 ♗d2

Seizing the seventh rank with a clear initiative.

Position 55

L.Vogt-J.Franzen

Stary Smokovec 1979

1 ♗a1!

Preparing a2-a4 in order to clear the a-file for the white pieces.

1...f5

Preventing ♖c3-e4. Both 1...♖b6? 2 ♙e3 and 1...♙g5? 2 ♙xg5 hxg5 3 ♗e4 lose material, while after 1...♗5c7!? 2 a4 ♖c5 3 ♗eb1 ♙g5 4 ♙e1, followed by ♙f1, White keeps the initiative on the queenside.

2 a4! ♙g5 3 ♙xg5 hxg5 4 axb5 axb5 5 ♗a6! ♗xc3 6 ♗xd6 ♗c1

After 6...♗8c7 7 ♗c6!? the strong passed pawn speaks in White's favour.

7 ♙f1 ♗xe1+ 8 ♙xe1 ♖c5 9 ♗c6! ♗xc6 10 dxc6 ♖a6 11 ♙d5!

Restricting Black's kingside pieces. Now 11...♖c7 runs into 12 ♙f7! – Vogt.

11...♗e8 12 gxf5 gxf5 13 ♖xf5

White later realized his extra pawn.

Position 56

J.R.Capablanca-A.Alekhine

St. Petersburg exhibition 1913

1 ♗a5!

By attacking the bishop White gets ready for 2 ♗c7, seizing the seventh rank. 1 ♗c5 a6 2 ♗ec1 ♗e7 is less promising, as 3

♗c7?! fails to 3...♙c6.

1...a6?!

1...♗a6 2 ♗xa6 ♙xa6 3 ♗c7 h6 was preferable. White has still managed to seize the seventh rank, but he doesn't win a pawn as in the game.

2 ♗c7! ♗xc7 3 ♗xc7 h6

In order to parry the threat of 4 ♖g5, Black has to give up a pawn.

4 ♗xb7 ♗ac8 5 b3 ♗c2 6 a4 ♙e2 7 ♖h4!

With the threat 8 ♖hxg6, while 7...♗f6 fails to 8 ♖d7+. White soon won.

Position 57

D.Sharma-V.Baklan

Balaguer 2006

1...♗a6!

Intending 2...♗e4, followed by 3...♗h6, with a kingside attack. 1...♗e6?! is less accurate due to 2 ♖g5.

2 ♗c1

Or 2 ♗e5 ♗e4! 3 ♗e4 dxe4, followed by ...♗a6-h6, just like in the game.

2...♗e4 3 ♗xe4 dxe4 4 ♗e5 ♗h6 5 ♗b3

In order to meet 5...♗h4 by 6 ♗g3.

5...♙e6 6 ♗e3 f6 7 ♖c4 ♗d5!

Heading for h5.

8 ♗c3?!

Exposing the major pieces to a fork. 8 ♖d2!?, intending ♗fd1 and ♖f1, seems preferable; e.g. 8...♗h5 9 h3 ♗g6 10 ♙h2 with chances to defend.

8...♖c6 9 ♗d1 ♗h5 10 h3 ♗e7!

With the double idea of 11...♖d5 and ♖f5-h4.

11 ♗d2 e3! 12 ♗xe3?

The last chance was 12 ♗xe3 ♙xh3 13 ♙f3, when 13...♗g6+ followed by ...♖f5-h4 keeps a strong attack.

12...♖d5 0-1

In view of 13 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 with the double threat of 14...♗xe3 and 14...♗g6+.

Position 58**V.Kramnik-G.Hertneck**

German League 1995

1 ♖g1!

Intending g2-g3 in order to clear the g-file towards the target on g7.

1...♖cf8?!

1...♗f5 2 g3 fxg3+ 3 ♖xg3 ♖cg8 was preferable, securing the g-pawn, although after 4 ♗e2!, preparing ♖cg1 as well as ♗d2-e4, White remains clearly on top – Kramnik.

2 g3 ♗f5

Black sacrifices a pawn, aware that after 2...fxg3+ 3 ♖xg3 he couldn't save it anyway; e.g. 3...♗h6 4 ♗c4! ♖e8 5 ♖cg1 ♗f8 6 ♗c5 with the inevitable threat of 7 ♗xe6+.

3 gxf4 ♖f7 4 c4 ♗b8 5 d5!

A strong breakthrough that creates a passed pawn, as well as a protected square for the knight on d4.

5...cxd5 6 cxd5 ♗b6

6...exd5 7 ♗d4 ♗b6 8 e6 ♖f6 9 ♖xg7 ♗xe6 10 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 11 ♖cc7! and White wins – Kramnik.

7 d6

White has an overwhelming advantage.

Position 59**A.Khalifman-V.Filippov**

Russian Team Championship 1995

1 ♖hf1!

With the powerful idea of 2 ♗e4 fxe4 3 fxe4, clearing the f-file towards the black king. The immediate 1 ♗e4?! is less convincing due to 1...fxe4 2 fxe4 ♗d7 followed by ...♗e6 and ...♗f6, but 1 f4!? softening up the long diagonal makes sense as well.

1...♗a6?!

1...♗d7 was safer, enabling a later ...♗d7-f6, although after 2 ♗a3 ♗e6 3 ♗c2!,

with the double idea of 4 ♖d6 and 4 ♗d3, White keeps excellent compensation.

2 ♗a3 ♗e6

Other moves can be met in the same way, e.g. 2...♗e6 3 ♗e4!, heading for g5 or d6.

3 ♗e4! fxe4

Or 3...♗d8 4 ♗g5+ ♗f6 5 ♗c3 ♗b6 6 f4, winning – Khalifman.

4 fxe4 ♗f4 5 gxf4 ♖hd8 6 ♗d6 ♗g8 7 fxe5 ♗h4

At this point the simple 8 ♗e3!, preparing ♖f2 and ♖df1, would have left Black with a hopeless position – Khalifman.

Position 60**A.Karpov-B.Spasky**

Candidates match (game 3),

Leningrad 1974

1 a5!

Preparing ♖eb1 and b3-b4 in order to clear the b-file towards the target on b7. Please note that the immediate 1 ♖ab1? would have failed to 1...a5!, closing the queenside, while 1 ♖h1+?! ♗g8 followed by ...f7-f6 isn't at all productive for White.

1...f6 2 ♖eb1 fxe4 3 b4!

Karpov is not distracted by the g5-pawn, but sticks to his plan.

3...♗f5!?

Since 3...cxb4 4 ♖xb4 is hopeless for Black, Spasky tries a counterattack.

4 ♗xg5!

More technical than 4 exf5?! e4 5 ♗d2 exf3+ 6 ♗xf3 gxf5, when the connected pawns and the strong bishop on g7 yield Black some slight compensation for the piece.

4...♗d4 5 bxc5 ♗xc5 6 ♖b6!

The d6-pawn proves to be doomed.

6...♗f6 7 ♖h1+!

A clever intermediate check to displace

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the enemy king. Now 7...♖g8 fails to 8 ♜xd6 ♙xg5 9 ♜xg6+, so Black is forced to give up the exchange.

7...♖g7 8 ♙h6+ ♖g8 9 ♙xf8 ♜xf8 10 ♜xd6

With a decisive advantage.

Position 61

V.Anand-G.Kasparov

Geneva (rapid) 1996

1...♙c7!

Preparing ...♜e8-a8 in order to seize the long diagonal.

2 a3 ♜a8 3 ♙e3 ♖d3

Thanks to the mating motif the knight doesn't need to retreat.

4 ♜c2 b4! 5 ♖a2

Or 5 ♜xd3? ♜xc3!, again exploiting the mating motif.

5...♖c5 6 ♜e2

After 6 axb4 ♖e4 7 ♜e2 ♜xc2 8 ♜xc2 ♜h7! the threat of 9...♖xg3 decides.

6...bxa3 7 b4 ♙a4! 8 bxc5 ♙xc2 9 ♖xc2 ♙xc5

Black has a clear initiative.

Position 62

I.Sokolov-G.Kasparov

Wijk aan Zee 1999

1 ♜f1!

A decisive queen transfer with two concrete ideas: 2 ♜(♜)h3 with mating motifs, and 2 ♜g2, creating deadly threats at g7 and g8.

1...♜e6

One of several insufficient replies. Both 1...♜d6 2 ♜h3! and 1...♜h5 2 ♜g2 ♜h7 3 ♜g7! followed by a check on g8 led to immediate defeat, while after 1...♜e7 2 ♜g2 ♜f8 White wins by 3 ♜h3 ♜h7 (or 3...♜h6 4 ♙c1!) 4 ♜g5! ♜xh3 5 ♙xd4+ cxd4 6 ♜f6+ ♖h7 7 ♜f5+, followed by 8 ♜xh3+.

2 ♜g2!

With the double threat of 3 ♜g8+ and 3 ♜h3! ♖(R)xh3 4 ♜g7 mate. Black resigned.

Position 63

W.Winter-A.Alekhine

Nottingham 1936

1...♜8e7!

Preparing 2...♜e8 to step up the pressure on the open file. After 1...♜e7?! 2 ♖d1 the queen has a smaller range than from e8, besides which, in the event of multiple captures on e2, it will be better off behind both rooks.

2 ♖d1 ♜e8 3 ♜f3 ♖a5!

With ideas like ...♖c4 and ...♜a4+.

4 b3

Or 4 ♜xd5?! ♜xe2 5 ♜xe2 ♜xe2 6 ♜xa5 ♖g3! 7 ♜f3 ♜e4 with a strong attack.

4...♖c4! 5 ♙c1

If 5 bxc4?, then 5...♜a4+ 6 ♖c1 ♙a3+ 7 ♖b1 ♜b6+ 8 ♖a1 ♜c2 etc.

5...♖ce3+ 6 ♙xe3 ♖xe3+ 7 ♖xe3 ♜xe3 8 ♜f2 ♜b5!

Eyeing the weak square on d3, thus forcing White to give up material.

9 ♖c1 ♜xc3 10 ♜xe7 ♙xe7 11 ♜e1 ♖d7!

Black enjoys a sound extra pawn.

Position 64

N.Short-I.Zilber

Hastings 1979/80

1 g5!

Softening up the long diagonal for a future battery. Less precise is 1 d5?! cxd5 2 ♜d4 ♖c6 3 ♜xf6 d4 and Black defends.

1...fxg5 2 d5! ♖xd5

After 2...cxd5 3 ♜d4 mate is inevitable, so Black has to give up a piece.

3 cxd5 ♜xd5 4 ♜e3!

Keeping the queens in view of Black's

exposed king.

4...f4 5 ♖b6

With 6 ♖a7 coming up, White has a nearly decisive advantage.

Position 65

Ye Jiangchuan-J.Granda Zuniga

Biel Interzonal 1993

1...♖d8!

Heading for h4 to enhance an attack on the white king. Less promising is 1...♗e5?! 2 ♗xe5 dxe5 3 c5 while 1...♗f6!? 2 ♗xf6! ♗xf6 3 ♗d3 f4 4 ♗c3 leads to a rather unclear game.

2 ♗c3?!

After 2 ♖a1 ♖g5 White is also under pressure. 2 ♗d2!, heading for f3, seems preferable, when 2...♖h4 3 ♗f3 ♖g3 4 ♗d3 ♖ce8 keeps the initiative.

2...♖h4 3 ♗b5 ♗f6! 4 ♗xf6

White can't play 4 ♗xd6? due to 4...♗g4! 5 ♗xc8 ♖g3 – Granda.

4...♗xf6 5 ♖c3 f4 6 ♖c2 ♗d7 7 ♖e4

With the double idea of 8 ♖xe3 and 8 ♗d3.

7...♖h5! 8 ♖f3 ♖g5 9 c5 ♗e5 10 ♖e2 dxc5 11 d6 b6

With a sound extra pawn and preserved attacking chances, Black is clearly better.

Position 66

A.Karpov-L.Polugaevsky

Candidates match (game 6),

Moscow 1974

1 ♗f4!

Preparing ♖f2-g3 with an attack. Also interesting is 1 ♖xf6!? gxf6 2 ♗h6 with attacking chances.

1...♖a8 2 ♖f2 ♖ad8

If 2...♖c3!?, preventing White's plan, then 3 ♗d2 intending 3...♖b3? 4 ♖b1.

3 ♖g3

After 3 e5 ♗e7 4 ♗f5 ♖e6 Black gets some relief, so Karpov keeps the option of e4-e5.

3...♖c3 4 ♖f3! ♖c2 5 ♖df1

The last piece is mobilized for the attack.

5...♗d4 6 ♗h6 ♗c6 7 ♗f5

7 ♗xf7! was also strong, e.g. 7...♖c4 8 ♗xg7 ♗xg7 9 ♖xg7+! ♗xg7 10 ♖g3 mate.

7...♖b2

Or 7...♗e5 8 ♗xg7! ♗xg3 9 ♖xg3 with mate to come.

8 ♗c1! ♖b5 9 ♗h6+ ♗h8 10 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 11 ♖xf7

With a decisive advantage.

Position 67

J.Hector - B.Sahl

Vejlle 1994

1...♖b8!

Heading for a7 in order to seize the g1-a7 diagonal, where there is no opposing white bishop.

2 ♖f2

The restrained 2 ♖d2 ♖a7 3 a5 seems better.

2...♖a7 3 ♗d5 ♗xd5 4 exd5

Or 4 cxd5 ♗e5 5 ♖d2 f5! with counterplay (Donev), now that 6 exf5?! fails to 6...♗xd3 7 ♖xd3 ♖e3!.

4...♗b4 5 ♗f1 ♖e3! 6 a5 ♖ae8 7 ♗d4?!

A lesser evil was 7 ♖d4. After the text, Black should have played 7...♖e1! 8 ♖xe1 ♖xe1 9 ♖xe1 ♖xd4 10 ♖e7 ♗a4 11 b3 ♗f8! 12 ♖e4 ♖c5 13 bxa4 g6 followed by ...♖xa5, with a clearly better endgame – Donev.

Position 68

V.Kovacevic-Y.Seirawan

Wijk aan Zee 1980

1...♗d7!

Preparing 2...♖h8 to fight for the h-file.

2 ♖bd2

After 2 ♖d2?! ♗a6! 3 ♜c2 ♖h8 Black reaches his objective anyway. But 2 ♖f1? ♖h8 3 ♖g2 might have been a better choice, enabling a recapture with the queen on h1.

2...♖h8 3 ♖g1

Or 3 ♖xh8 ♜xh8 and the queen takes command of both the h-file and the a1-h8 diagonal.

3...♗c7 4 ♖b1 ♖h3! 5 b3 ♜h8!

Now Black enjoys a pleasant initiative.

6 ♖f1 ♖8d7 7 ♗f4 ♖e5 8 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 9 ♗xe5 ♜xe5 10 f3 ♗d7 11 ♜c2 ♜d4 12 ♖g2 ♖h1

Black has clearly the more active game.

Position 69

T.Radjabov-Bu Xiangzhi

Internet 2000

1 ♖3g4!

Preparing ♜e1-g3 in order to triple the major pieces along the g-file. The simple 1 ♗xa6 was also possible, but the text is more incisive.

1...♜d8

1...fxg4? fails to 2 ♖xg7+ ♖h8 3 ♖h7 mate.

2 ♜e1! ♗e7

After 2...♗f8 3 ♜g3 the threat of 4 ♖xh6+ is inevitable.

3 ♜g3 ♜f8 4 ♗xg7! ♜xg7

The lesser of evils. 4...♖fxg7 failed to 5 ♖xh6+! ♖xh6 6 ♜h3+ with mate, while on 4...♖xg7 the same 5 ♖xh6+! is decisive; e.g. 5...♖g8 6 ♜h3 ♖f6 7 ♖h8+ ♖f7 8 ♜h5+. Finally, 4...hxg4 5 ♖xg4+ ♗f5 6 ♗xf8 wins material for White.

5 ♖xg7+ ♖fxg7 6 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 7 ♜h3 ♖g6

Or 7...♖f7 8 g4 with similar play.

8 g4 ♖f7 9 ♜h5+ ♖f8 10 ♗xf5

White's material advantage is decisive.

Position 70

N.Pushkov-V.Savon

Orel 1995

1...0-0!

The safest place. Instead, the game saw 1...0-0? and Black was crushed after 2 h5! ♖ad8 3 hxg6 hxg6 4 ♖e4! ♜a5 5 ♖dg1 d5 6 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 7 ♗xf6 exf6 8 ♖xg6! fxg6 9 ♗e6+ ♖f7 10 ♜xg6 ♜c7 11 ♗xf7+ with a quick win, now that 11...♜xf7 fails to 12 ♖h8+! 1...e6?, delaying castling, is also inappropriate due to 2 d5! and White opens the position towards the black king.

2 d5 ♖b8

Securing the king even further and enabling a future ...♖c8. Now that both kings are located on the same flank, White has more difficulties in developing an attack.

Position 71

J.Bellon Lopez-D.Merino Mejuto

Spanish Championship, Gijon 1971

1...g6!

Preparing ...♗g7 and ...0-0 in order to secure the king on the kingside. Instead, the game continued 1...0-0-0? 2 b4! ♖b8 3 c4 ♗d7 4 ♖bc3 g6 5 a5 ♗e6 6 ♜b3 ♗g7 7 b5 with a strong attack.

2 ♖a3

A quick knight manoeuvre to c4 seems like the only way of justifying White's unorthodox opening set-up.

2...♗g7 3 fxe5 dxe5 4 ♖c4 ♖e4!

Defending the e5-pawn and enabling ...♖e4-d6 as a response to ♗a3.

5 ♗a3 ♖d6 6 ♖a5 ♜d7

Preparing ...0-0 with a good game for Black.

Position 72

Y.Averbakh-O.PannoUSSR-Argentina match,
Buenos Aires 1954**1 ♖e2!**

With the centre safely blocked, this is the simplest way of securing the king and connecting the major pieces. In contrast, after 1 ♜e2?! ♟c7 2 0-0-0 b5 Black gets some slight counterplay.

1...♖g7 2 ♜h4! ♟d7 3 hxg6 hxg6 4 ♜h1

Thanks to his clever first move White can transfer the queen immediately into the attack.

4...♙e7 5 ♜h8+ ♟f7 6 ♜h6 ♟f8 7 ♜h1 ♜b8

Black had run out of sensible moves, and now there follows a decisive blow.

8 ♙xf4! ♜c7

Or 8...exf4 9 ♜h4, followed by ♜xf4+.

9 ♜h2

White soon won.

Position 73

A.Planinec-V.Hort

Hastings 1974/75

1...♟f8!

The safest place for the king. 1...0-0?! 2 ♜ae1 is less appropriate, as Black has a problem with the h4-pawn, but 1...0-0-0?! and 1...♟d8!?, heading for c7, were interesting alternatives. Of course 1...♜xe2?? was bad due to 2 ♜ae1.

2 ♜ae1 ♟e5 3 ♜d1

If 3 ♟f3, then 3...♟fd7! just like in the game.

3...♟fd7

Reinforcing the strong blocker on e5. 3...♟g7!? 4 ♟f3 h3 5 g3 ♟e4 was also interesting.

4 ♟f3 ♟xf3+ 5 ♙xf3 ♜g5

Preparing 6...♖g8 with a good game.

Position 74

S.Lejlic-J.HellstenSwedish Championship,
Ronneby 1998**1...♜c8!**

Black discards long castling in order to fully exploit the semi-open c-file. The immediate 1...♟e7!? is equally strong, whereas 1...0-0-0?! would leave the rook passive on d8 and expose the king to an attack after 2 ♜fd1, followed by moves like ♜a3 and b2-b4.

2 ♜ad1 ♟e7!

Thanks to the strong blockade on e5 White can't really exploit the location of the black king, which is even useful in defending the d6-pawn.

3 ♜b4

Or 3 f4 gxf3 4 ♟xf3 ♟eg4, followed by 5...♜c5.

3...♜c5 4 ♜xb7?!

Now White's queenside falls apart. A lesser evil was 4 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 with a nice end-game for Black.

4...♜b8 5 ♜xa6 ♜b6 6 ♜e2 ♜xb2 7 ♟db1 ♜a8 8 ♟d2 ♙xa4 9 ♜fd1 ♜b6

Thanks to his better pawn structure and superior piece activity, Black holds the upper hand.

Position 75

M.Johansson-J.Hellsten

Malmö 1999

1...♟d7!

The most flexible choice. Black doesn't yet define the destiny of his king, but prefers to improve his minor pieces by ...♙f6 and ...♟c5. In contrast, 1...0-0?! proves risky after 2 ♜h3, with ideas like 2...♟b4 3 e5! dxe5 4 ♙xh7+! ♟xh7 5 ♜h5, while 1...0-0-0?! also exposes the king after 2 a5

bxa5 (or 2...b5? 3 ♖b6) 3 ♘a4 ♘d7 4 c3, preparing ♗e2.

2 ♖g3 ♗f6 3 ♗d2 h5!?

Again 3...0-0?! is premature due to 4 ♗f1, followed by f4-f5 with an attack.

4 ♗e2 h4 5 ♗h3 ♘c5 6 ♗f3 ♗d8

6...0-0-0!? was possible, when the knight on c5 reinforces the queenside defence.

7 g4?! g6 8 g5 ♗g7 9 ♗f2 ♘e7!

Attacking the e4-pawn as well as the whole h1-a8 diagonal, which became vulnerable after White's g2-g4.

10 ♘xc5 bxc5 11 ♗g2 ♗c6 12 ♗e1 ♗b7

Black has the initiative and his king is probably the safer one.

Position 76

J.Polgar-L.Polugaevsky

Match (game 7), Aruba 1991

1...0-0!

With the kingside safely blocked the black king is in no danger on g8, whereas the queenside may now be used for an attack. In contrast, after 1...0-0-0?! 2 ♗e2, preparing ♗hf1 and f4-f5, White has a slight initiative.

2 ♗he1

Perhaps 2 ♗e2 a5 3 ♗hf1, preparing f4-f5, was still a better choice.

2...a5 3 ♗b5 ♗ac8 4 ♗c1

Polugaevsky suggests 4 ♗g4!? a4 5 ♗c1, with the idea of ♗d2, although it's not clear what White should do after 5...a3; e.g. 6 b3 ♘xe4 7 ♘xe4 ♗xe4, when 8 ♘xe6? fails to 8...♗xc2+.

4...d5!

Taking command of the light squares.

5 exd5

Or 5 e5 ♘b6 6 b3 ♘e4 7 ♘ge2 a4, continuing the attack.

5...♗xd5 6 ♗g4 ♗fd8 7 ♗e2 ♘b6

Heading for c4 with a strong initiative.

Position 77

R.Byrne-A.Kotov

USA-USSR match, New York 1954

1...♗f7!

Preparing a king march to the opposite flank to neutralize White's coming attack.

2 ♗f3

After 2 ♗h5+ ♗e7 3 ♗xh7 ♗xc4 Black obtains counterplay, but 2 ♗fb1, preparing ♘f1-d2-b3 and a4-a5, seems more logical in relation to the enemy plan.

2...♗e7 3 ♘f1 ♗d8 4 ♗h3 ♗h8!

4...h6?! is less flexible since it would complicate a future ...g7-g5 advance.

5 g4 ♗c7 6 ♘g3 ♗b8 7 ♗f2 ♘c7 8 ♗a2 ♗cg8

Black has managed to consolidate his position and the king is safe on b8. A future plan is ...g7-g5 followed by ...♘e8-g7 and ...♗c8-d7-e8 in preparation for ...h7-h5.

Position 78

E.De Haan-E.Vorobiov

Agios Kirykos 2009

1...b6!

Preparing ...♗c6-b7 in order to safeguard the king, and at the same time protecting the knight from the threat of 2 ♗f5+. The immediate 1...♗c6!? was possible too, e.g. 2 d5+ ♗b6 3 ♗b1+ ♗a6, followed by ...b7-b6.

2 ♗e2

Or 2 d5!? ♗e8 3 ♗g4+ ♗d8 and the king is out of danger.

2...♗c6! 3 d5+ ♗b7 4 ♗f3 ♗a6!

Avoiding any problems on the h1-a8 diagonal.

5 e5 fxe5 6 ♗xe5 ♗h6

Black has excellent chances of converting his extra piece.

Position 79

N.Gritsenko-N.Firman

Ukrainian Junior Championship 1999

1...♔d8!

Preparing a king march to the queenside. After 1...0-0? 2 ♖h6 ♜fc8 3 ♜c1! White obtains attacking chances, e.g. 3...♗d8 4 ♜g5 ♗e6 5 ♜h4, preparing ♗f5.

2 ♖h6

Probably 2 ♜c2 ♜c7 3 .♗d2, followed by 4 ♜ac1, offered better chances for resistance.

2...♜c7 3 ♖g7 ♜hc8!

Preparing an invasion on the queenside.

4 ♜c1 a3 5 b3

Of course 5 bxa3? fails to 5...♗c3.

5...♗c3 6 ♜b1 ♜a5 7 h4 ♗b4 8 ♜d1 ♖b2!

Black “copied” the opponent’s bishop manoeuvre, and with good reason. Now the a2-pawn is in danger.

9 ♜fxb2 axb2 10 ♜xb2 ♔b6! 11 ♖h6 ♜a3

With a decisive grip on the queenside.

Position 80

R.Åkesson-F.Bindrich

Stockholm 2007

1 ♜e3!

Preparing a “brave king” manoeuvre. Instead, the game continued 1 ♜f3? ♜xf3 2 ♜xf3 ♜xe5+ 3 ♔f1 and a draw was agreed.

1...♜g2 2 ♜d3!

Thus White covers the sensitive f1-square and threatens mate himself.

2...♜g1+ 3 ♔d2 ♜f2+ 4 ♔c3 ♜c1+ 5 ♔b4!**♜xb2+ 6 ♔a5**

The king escapes and White wins.

Position 81

M.Illescas Cordoba-U.Andersson

Ubeda 1997

1...♜c5!

Correctly estimating that White’s attack can be parried by a “brave king” manoeuvre.

2 ♜h3 ♔g8!

Not 2...h6? 3 ♖xh6 ♗g8 (otherwise 4 .♖xg7+ decides) 4 ♖g5+ ♗h6 5 f6 and White wins.

3 ♖xf6?!

If 3 ♜e1, then 3...h6! intending 4 ♖xh6? ♗e4! 5 ♖g5 ♗f2+ and wins. Since the game continuation proves unsuccessful, settling for a draw with 3 ♜g3 ♔h8 (not 3...♔f8? 4 ♖h6!) 4 ♜h3 was probably a better choice – Stohl.

3...♖xf6 4 ♜xh7+ ♔f8 5 ♜h8+

Other moves permit Black to consolidate by 5...♜e5!.

5...♔e7 6 ♜h5

After 6 ♜e1+? ♔d7 7 ♜xe8 ♜xe8 the double threat decides.

6...♜d7!

Preparing 7...♔d8. By now the king is out of danger, whereas White has problems on the back rank. Black went on to win after 7 ♜e1+ ♔d8 8 ♜xe8+ ♔xe8 9 ♜h8+ ♔e7, followed by ...d5-d4.

Position 82

P.Matovic-J.Hellsten

Belgrade 2002

1...e5!

Clearing the centre for the bishop pair. 1...b4? 2 ♗e4 is less powerful.

2 ♜ae1

2 ♗e4? fails to 2...exd4 3 ♗xf6+ gxf6 4 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 5 cxd4 ♜e2, while after 2 dxe5?! dxe5 3 f5 e4! Black is clearly better. The best option might be 2 ♜a7!?, when the simple 2...♗c6 keeps the initiative.

2...♜f8!

By 2...♖xg2 3 ♔xg2 .♖h4 Black could win a pawn, but in the game he goes for more.

3 fxe5

Both 3 dxe5 dxe5 4 f5 ♖g5! 5 ♗e4 ♙xe4 6 ♜xe4 ♗d2 and 3 ♗e4 ♙xe4! 4 ♜xe4 cxd4 5 cxd4 d5 6 ♜e2 ♙xd4 are equally troublesome for White.

3...dxe5 4 dxe5 ♙xe5+ 5 ♖g1

Or 5 ♜xe5? ♜xd2 6 ♜5e2 ♜f2! with decisive pressure.

5...♙g3 6 ♜f1 ♜fe8 7 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8

Intending 8...♜e2 with a huge plus.

Position 83

T.V.Petrosian-A.Lilienthal

USSR Championship, Moscow 1949

1 h3!

Preparing g3-g4 in order to clear some space for the bishop pair. 1 g4!? is interesting as well; e.g. 1...fxg4 2 ♙xg4 ♜c7 3 ♖f2, preparing ♜g1 with some initiative.

1...♗f6 2 g4! fxg4 3 hxg4

Located side by side the pawns deny the enemy knights any protected squares.

3...♜c7 4 ♖f2 h6 5 ♜h1 e3+

Desperate, but after 5...♜h7 6 ♜ag1, followed by ♖e3 and ♙c3, Black is also in deep trouble.

6 ♙xe3 ♗e4+ 7 ♖g2 ♗f7 8 ♙d3

White later won the game.

Position 84

A.Miles-L.Portisch

Buenos Aires Olympiad 1978

1...f6!

Clearing some space for the bishops before White manages to consolidate by ♗d6, ♖g2-f3, etc.

2 ♗d6

After 2 exf6 gxf6 Black obtains a potential passed pawn, and White loses his outpost on d6.

2...♙g6 3 ♗c4

If 3 ♗xb7? then 3...♜b8, when 4 ♗d7? fails to 4...♙e8 5 ♜c7 ♜xb7! 6 ♜xb7 ♙c6+ etc.

3...♙d4 4 ♖g2 ♙e8!

The bishop shifts to the more promising h1-a8 diagonal. Now there appears the threat of 5...♙c6+ 6 ♖f1(?) fxe5, winning a pawn, so White dissolves the tension.

5 exf6 gxf6 6 ♜ac1 ♙c6+ 7 ♖f1 ♙c5

With ideas like 8...♙f3, winning the battle for the d-file. By now the range of the bishop pair is rather worrying for White, whereas the knights are lacking protected squares. Black later won.

Position 85

S.Tiviakov-G.Kasparov

Wijk aan Zee 2001

1...b5!

Intending ...b5-b4 to weaken the a1-h8 diagonal for the bishop, in particular the d4-square.

2 ♗f1 b4 3 cxb4 cxb4 4 ♗e3 ♜g8 5 ♙g3 ♙d4!

Now the bishop is doing a great job in helping his colleague to put pressure on g2.

6 ♗c4 ♜8g7 7 ♜h5 ♖h7 8 ♗e3 ♜b5 9 ♗d2

Or 9 ♗c4 ♜d5 with a clear advantage – Kasparov. At this point Black played 9...a6 and subsequently won the game. However, by 9...♙xe3! 10 ♜xe3 ♙d5 11 ♜d1 ♜g4! he could have obtained a decisive advantage – Kasparov. Indeed, the only way for White to stop the plan of ...h5-h4 is by 12 ♜e1 and 13 h4, but then he loses the pawn on b3.

Position 86

V.Smyslov-S.Reshevsky

World Championship,
The Hague/Moscow 1948

1 ♙xe6!

Giving up the bishop pair in exchange for another advantage: a weak enemy pawn on d6. Both 1 ♖h4?! ♗g5 and 1 f4?! ♗d7 are less effective, as well as 1 ♗d5?! ♗d7 2 ♗e3 ♗f6 and Black defends.

1...fxe6 2 ♖h4! ♗d7

Or 2...♖xh4 3 gxh4 and the d6-pawn falls right away.

3 ♗d8+! ♗xd8 4 ♗xd8 ♗d7

After 4...♗c6 5 ♗c7 or 5 ♗b6 that pawn is also doomed.

5 ♗c7 ♗c5 6 ♗xd6

White wins a pawn with a decisive advantage.

Position 87

M.Lupu-L.D.Nisipeanu

Rumanian Championship,

Baile Herculane 1996

1...♗xc3 2 bxc3 ♗xe4!

A typical exchange sacrifice that yields Black the bishop pair and control of the long diagonal. Also interesting was 1...♗d4?! 2 ♗d1 ♖b7 with some pressure.

3 ♗c4

White isn't eager to accept the "gift", but he must do so eventually in order to keep the material balance.

3...♗f6 4 ♗e5 ♗a8 5 c4 ♗d6 6 ♗g4 ♗xg4 7 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 8 ♖xg4 ♗c6!

Reinforcing the control of the h1-a8 diagonal. 8...♗a8?! followed by ...♗c6 is less powerful, since the white king has a hiding square on h2.

9 ♗e2 f5 10 ♗d2 e5!

Clearing some space for the other bishop and enhancing a further kingside attack.

11 ♖f2 ♗b8!

The threat of 12...♗b3 increases the pressure on White.

12 ♗c3 exf4 13 gxf4 ♗c7 14 ♗b2 ♗xb2 15

♖xb2 ♗xf4

Intending ...♗d6-g6(+) with a decisive attack.

Position 88

C.Valiente-J.Hellsten

Santiago 2007

1...d5!

Black "messes up" the game before White manages to consolidate, with a long-term advantage thanks to the bishop pair.

1...♗f5 2 d5 ♗e5 3 ♗ad1 is less promising.

2 c5 ♗e4!

Other moves, such as 2...♗f5, permit 3 f3! followed by ♖f2, stabilizing the game.

3 ♗xe4

If 3 ♗b1, preparing 4 f3, then 3...f5! with the idea of 4 f3? ♗xg3 5 ♖xg3 f4+ etc.

3...dxe4 4 h4

Or 4 ♗xe4 ♗xh3 5 ♗xb7 ♗xf1 6 ♖xf1 f5!, followed by ...f5-f4 with an initiative.

4...♗g4 5 f3 exf3 6 ♗xf3 ♗xf3 7 ♖xf3 ♗e7!

8 ♗ae1

After 8 ♖xb7?! ♗d5 9 ♗g1 ♗a8, intending ...♗fb8, White is in trouble.

8...♗d5

Thanks to his strong knight Black is clearly better.

Position 89

M.Solmundarson-V.Smyslov

Reykjavik 1974

1...g6!

A strong exchange sacrifice that lets Black keep his pawn structure intact, and yields him a grip on the dark squares. Less promising was 1...fxe4?! 2 fxe4 ♗c7 3 ♗h3 ♖f4+ 4 ♗d2 with some initiative for White.

2 ♗xh8 ♗h6+ 3 ♖b1 ♖xh8 4 ♗d3?

Now this bishop becomes very restricted. 4 exf5 exf5 5 ♗d3 was preferable -

Smyslov, when 5... ♖f6 6 ♗f2 ♕g7 keeps the initiative.

4... ♕e3 5 ♜e1 f4! 6 ♕f1 ♗f6 7 ♕h3 ♖d7! 8 ♗d1+ ♜e7 9 ♜h1 ♗h4 10 ♕f1 g5

Slowly preparing the ...g5-g4 breakthrough.

11 ♕d3 ♕d4 12 ♗e1 ♗h5 13 ♗e2 e5

Securing the strong bishop with a clear advantage.

Position 90

V.Golod-B.Avrukh

Israeli Championship, Tel Aviv 2002

1... ♖a5!

Attacking White on the light squares before he is able to stabilize by c4-c5.

2 ♗e3

After 2 ♗c3?! dxc4 3 bxc4 ♜c8 the threat of 4... ♖xc4 and 5...b5 is unpleasant for White, while 2 ♗b4 can be met in the same way as in the game.

2...dxc4 3 bxc4 b5!

Black sacrifices a pawn in order to get a grip on the light squares and reduce the power of the bishop on b2.

4 cxb5 ♖d5 5 ♗e4 axb5 6 ♕xb5 ♖b3!

Installing the threat of 7... ♕xf3 8 ♕xf3 ♖d2, and vacating the a5-square for the queen.

7 ♜ad1 ♗a5 8 ♕d3 ♕g6 9 ♗g4 ♜fc8! 10 ♕xg6

At this point a draw was agreed. There could have followed 10...hxg6 11 ♗e4 ♗c7!, preparing 12... ♗c2, with approximate equality – Avrukh.

Position 91

D.Loza-J.Veloz

Riobamba 2009

1... ♗d4!

Forcing a queen exchange that will finish

off White's counterplay and help the realization of the extra pawn. 1... ♗a6?! is less exact due to 2 ♗d2! ♖xe3 3 ♜xe3 with attacking chances, while 1... ♖xe3?! 2 ♜xe3 ♖xc6 3 ♕xh6! lets White recover the pawn.

2 ♗xd4 ♖xd4 3 ♜ac1 ♖bc6

Thanks to his extra pawn Black has a clear advantage.

Position 92

J.Hellsten-J.Munoz

Ambato 2009

1 ♕d3!

Swapping pieces to facilitate the realization of the extra pawn.

1... ♖a5

Or 1...f5 2 ♖f4 ♜f7 3 h4!, when 3... ♕xh4? fails to 4 ♜h1.

2 ♕xh7+ ♜xh7 3 ♖d3 ♖c4 4 b3 ♖d6 5 a4 g6 6 ♖d1!

Offering more exchanges.

6... ♜g7 7 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 8 ♜c1 ♜c6 9 g3 ♜f8 10 e4 dxe4+ 11 fxe4 ♜e8 12 ♖e3

White later converted his extra pawn into a win.

Position 93

J.Timman-L.Kavalek

Montreal 1979

1... ♗f3!

In order to swap the active white queen, which will help Black neutralize the passed pawn on d7 and realize the extra pawn.

2 ♗xf3

2 ♗xe5? was impossible due to 2... ♕b7, while 2 ♗h4 ♜f6, preparing ... ♕b7, is also bad for White.

2... ♜xf3 3 ♖c4

Or 3 ♖d3 ♜xd7 4 ♖xe5 ♜xd2 5 ♜xd2 ♜xb3 and wins – Nesis.

3... ♕xc4 4 bxc4 ♜c3 5 ♜e1 ♜xc4 6 ♜xe5 ♜f7

With the double intention of 7...♖xa4 and 7...♗d4. Black is winning.

Position 94

V.Ivanchuk-J.Piket
Biel Interzonal 1993

1 ♖b5!

Swapping queens to facilitate the realization of the extra pawn.

1...♗xb5

1...♗a7? failed to 2 ♜xd5, while after 1...♖c6 2 ♗xb6 ♗xb6 3 ♜a4, preparing ♖c7, White keeps his advantage.

2 ♜xb5 a4

One pawn stops two. 2...♗a6 3 ♜c7 is less sensible, since 3...♗c4? fails to 4 ♗xc4 dxc4 5 ♗xe4.

3 ♜e5

Perhaps 3 ♜a7!? was even stronger, disputing the open file – Ivanchuk.

3...g5 4 ♗h2 ♗g7 5 ♜d7 ♗fd8 6 ♗xc8 ♗xc8

On 6...♗xc8 there follows 7 f3.

7 ♜b6 ♗f6 8 ♗c7! ♗e8 9 f3

White soon won more material, and the game.

Position 95

D.Mieles Palau-J.Hellsten
Salinas 2005

1...♗a1+!

Forcing a winning pawn ending.

2 ♖g2 ♗xa2 3 ♗xb6 ♗xc44 ♗xa5 ♗d5+!

White resigned in view of 5 ♗xd5 exd5 6 ♖f3 ♖g7 7 ♖e3 ♖f6 8 ♖d4 ♖e6.

Position 96

M.Adams-R.Kasimdzhanov
FIDE World Championship,
Tripoli 2004

1 ♗xb4!

Initiating an exchange combination that will help in realizing the extra pawn.

1...axb4 2 ♜e7+ ♗xe7 3 ♗xd6

Unfortunately for Black, he cannot even save the b4-pawn.

3...♗e2 4 ♗d4! h5 5 ♗xb4 ♗f3 6 h4 ♖c8

If 6...♗e8, then 7 ♗f4 ♗d1+ 8 ♖h2 ♗e1 9 ♗b7 – Adams.

7 ♗d2!

White is ready to give up one of the pawns in order to swap rooks; e.g. 7...♗xb3 8 ♗d8+ ♗xd8 9 ♗xd8+ ♖h7 10 a5 with an easy win.

7...♖c3 8 ♗f4 ♗c6 9 ♖h2

Alternatively, 9 ♖c4! ♖xc4 10 bxc4 in the spirit of the previous note.

9...♗xb3

Or 9...♖c1 10 ♗d8+ ♖h7 11 ♗d3+ ♖g8 12 ♗f3 and wins – Adams.

10 ♗d8+ ♖h7 11 ♗d1!

A timely double attack. White soon won.

Position 97

S.Gligoric-I.Balanel
Moscow 1956

1 ♗g3!

Inviting a queen exchange, after which the bishop pair would become even more significant.

1...♗xg3

If 1...♗e4?, then 2 e6! fxe6 3 ♗e1 with a strong attack, while 1...♗f5 2 ♗e1 ♜c7 (parrying the threat of e5-e6) 3 ♗b1 ♗d7 4 ♗d6 lets White keep the advantage.

2 hxg3 ♗d8 3 f3 g6?!

Black should have preferred 3...h5, complicating the g3-g4 advance – Nesis.

4 g4! ♖g7 5 f4!

In the absence of queens it becomes easier for White to advance his kingside majority.

5...♖c8 6 ♗d1!

Preparing a nice combination based on the seizure of the seventh rank and the e5-e6 advance. Worse is 6 ♖xc8?! ♗xc8 and the g4-pawn gets into trouble, as similarly after 7 ♗d2? ♗xd2 8 ♗xd2 ♗c8! on the next move.

6...♗c2 7 ♗d7! ♗xg2+ 8 ♖f1♗xa2 9 e6! ♗.d5 10♗xf7+ ♖g8 11 ♗f8+ ♖g7 12 ♗xe8

With the double threat of 13 ♗.f6+ and 13 e7. White soon won.

Position 98

A.Sokolovs-V.Baikov
Moscow 1992

1 ♗e3!

To eliminate Black's bishop pair and take the game closer to the ending, in consideration of the favourable pawn structure.

1...♗xe3

1...♗d6? fails to 2 ♗.xb6, while after 1...♗e7?! the knight is deprived of its destiny on e7.

2 ♖xe3♖e7 3 ♖d4 ♗f7 4 f4

White starts pushing his pawn majority. Another method of doing this was 4 f3, followed by ♖f2, g2-g4 and h2-h4, thus avoiding exposure of the e4-pawn.

4...♗e8 5 ♖f2 ♖g6 6 f5!

Parrying both threats at the pawns on e4 and f4. Now if Black installs a knight on e5, White can always swap it off.

6...♖e5 7 ♗e1♖d7 8 ♖d1 b5 9 a3 c5 10 ♖f3 ♖c7

Here or later, 10...b4 is well met by 11 c3!, putting an end to Black's queenside dynamics.

11 g4! h6 12 ♖g3

Preparing ♖f4 and e4-e5 with a clear endgame advantage.

Position 99

O.De la Riva Aguado-R.Ponomariov
Pamplona 2005

1...♗h6!

Eliminating the opponent's bishop pair and taking the game closer to an endgame, where Black is favoured by his mobile pawn majority.

2 ♗xh6

After 2 ♗e5? f6 the bishop is in trouble.

2...♖xh6 3 ♗h3 ♖g7!

Preparing to improve the knight by ...♖g8-f6(e7).

4 ♗e2 ♗c7 5 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 6 ♗d1 ♗xd1+ 7 ♗xd1 f5!

The first step in the pawn majority advance.

8 ♗d2 ♖g8 9 ♗g2 ♖f6 10 ♗f3 e5 11 ♖f1 e4 12 ♗e2 ♖f7 13 ♖e1 ♗e5

With the long-term plan of ...♖g7, ...h7-h6, ...g6-g5 and ...f5-f4, whereas White is unable to do the same thing on the queen-side.

Position 100

B.Spasky-T.V.Petrosian
World Championship (game 23),
Moscow 1966

1 ♗g5!

Swapping queens to reach an endgame where the pawn structure speaks in White's favour.

1...cxd4

After 1...♗xf2? 2 ♗f3 ♗g1 3 ♗b5! White wins material.

2 ♗xf6 ♖xf6 3 ♗xd4 ♗b7 4 ♗b3!

The exchange of rooks will help White in attacking the weak pawns on a7 and c7.

4...♗xb3 5 axb3 ♗a8 6 ♗c4♖e8

After 6...♖d5 7 g3 followed by ♗g2 White also has a huge advantage.

7 ♖a4 ♗d6 8 g3!

With the simple idea of 9 ♗g2, winning the a7-pawn.

8... ♖f8

8... ♗c8 9 ♖c4 or 8... a5 9 b4 is equally unsatisfactory.

9 ♗g2 ♖c8 10 ♖xa7

White enjoys a sound extra pawn.

Position 101**J.Hellsten-L.Rojas**

Santiago 2006

1... ♖c8!

Having an isolated pawn Black should keep the maximum number of pieces on the board. The game continued 1... ♗xf3?! 2 ♗xf3 ♗e5 3 ♗g2 ♗xd3 4 ♗xd3 ♗e5 5 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 6 ♖ac1! with a clear advantage (see example 41 in the section on improving the rook).

2 ♖c1 ♗b8

There can follow 3 b5 ♗a5 4 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 5 ♗b4 ♗b7 6 ♗d4 ♗c4 7 ♗c1 with just a slight advantage for White.

Position 102**M.Chiburdanidze-N.Alexandria**

World Women's Championship (game 7), Georgia 1981

1... 0-0-0!

Keeping the queens on for a while so as not to leave White with the two bishops in the endgame. The game continued 1... ♗xd4? 2 ♗xd4 0-0-0 3 ♗d2 ♗d7 4 ♗xg7 ♗xc5 5 ♖h1 and White had a long-term advantage.

2 ♗b4

After 2 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 White is tactically unable to maintain the bishop pair – Nesis.

2... ♖d7

Thanks to his active queen and the un-

safe location of White's king, Black has considerable counterplay.

Position 103**Y.Balashov-B.Larsen**

Buenos Aires 1980

1... ♗xe5!

Swapping pieces to reach an endgame where the weak pawns on c3 and a2 will speak in Black's favour.

2 dxe5?!

A tempting recapture, but this just helps Black's plan. Preferable was 2 ♖xe5 ♗d6 3 ♖e2, followed by ♗f3, keeping the queens on the board – Mimic/Sindik.

2... ♗xc4! 3 ♗xc4

Or 3 ♗b1 ♗c5+ 4 ♗g2 d4 with an initiative.

3... dxc4 4 ♖e2 b5 5 ♗e3?!

Now Black obtains a passed pawn. Here the active 5 e6 seems preferable.

5... ♖d3 6 ♗xa7

Or 6 ♗d4 b4! and Black achieves his goal anyway.

6... ♖xc3 7 ♗g2 ♖d3 8 ♗e3 b4

Black later converted his passed pawn into victory.

Position 104**S.Tiviakov-F.Berkes**

European Team Championship, Plovdiv 2003

1 ♗xe5!

Preparing 2 ♗xf5 and 3 ♗d4 in order to exchange as many pieces as possible, considering the opponent's isolated pawn.

1... ♗xe5 2 ♗xf5! ♗xf5

After 2... ♗xf5 3 ♗d4 ♗xd4 (or 3... ♗f6 4 ♗e7! forcing the exchange of bishops) 4 ♗xd4 White is also slightly better, thanks to his active bishop and Black's isolated pawn.

3 ♖d4! ♜e8 4 ♜e3 ♜h7 5 ♗xe5 ♜xe5 6 ♜f4!
The greedy 6 ♜xa7?! permits 6...♜g6 with ideas like ...♗xh3 and ...♜e2 – Tiviakov.
6...♜e4 7 ♜f3 ♜e5 8 ♖d4 ♗g6 9 ♜d1

Intending ♜d2 and ♜d1 in order to work on the d5-pawn, thanks to which White keeps a small but enduring advantage.

Position 105

Cu.Hansen-V.Eingorn

Dortmund 1988

1...♖c7!

Preparing ...♗a6 in order to exchange the “bad” bishop for White’s “good” one.

2 ♗d2

Or 2 ♗g5?! ♗xg5 3 ♖xg5 h6 4 ♖f3 ♗a6 with a slight black edge – Eingorn.

2...♗a6 3 ♗c2

After 3 ♗xa6 ♖xa6 4 ♜ac1 ♖ab8, preparing ...♖c6, ...♜c7 and ...♜fc8, Black has a minimal advantage thanks to his superior bishop and the vulnerable pawn on d4.

3...♖b8 4 ♜ac1 ♗b5 5 ♖e3 ♖ca6 6 a3 ♜c7 7 h4 ♜fc8

Black has no problems, and the once “bad” bishop has become excellent on b5.

Position 106

T.Markowski-V.Haralambof

Bern 1996

1 ♗e2!

Heading for g4 to swap Black’s good bishop.

1...b6

Or 1...f5 2 exf5 ♗xf5 3 ♗g4 ♗xg4 4 hxg4, intending 5 ♗xc5 ♜xc5 6 ♖e4 with a typical “good knight vs. bad bishop” scenario.

2 ♗g4 ♗xg4 3 hxg4

The bishop exchange has emphasized Black’s light square weaknesses, and his next move makes things even worse.

3...f6?!

More solid was 3...♜b8, followed by ...♜d7.
4 ♖b5!

With the inevitable plan of ♖a7-c6. Now Black can’t play 4...♖xe4? due to 5 ♜d3.

4...♖h8 5 ♖a7 ♜a8 6 ♖c6 ♜c7 7 ♗xc5 bxc5 8 ♜d2

Eyeing the a5-pawn, with a huge positional advantage.

Position 107

B.Ivkov-S.Kagan

Petropolis Interzonal 1973

1...♗g7!

Preparing 2...h6 and 3...♗g5 to eliminate White’s “good” bishop.

2 ♜fd1

Here the restrictive 2 g3!? h6 3 h4 deserved attention.

2...h6 3 ♜b1 ♗g5 4 a3

Getting on with the plan of f3-b4.

4...♗xe3 5 fxe3 fxe4 6 ♗xe4

After 6 ♖xe4?! ♖xe4 7 ♗xe4 ♖c5 the knight clearly outshines the bishop.

6...♜f7 7 b4 axb4 8 axb4 ♖d7!

Avoiding 8...♖xe4?! 9 ♖xe4, when White gets closer to achieving c4-c5. In the game Black keeps the important c5-square under control, whereas the bishop isn’t really doing anything on e4.

9 ♗d3

The aggressive 9 c5 is well met by 9...dxc5 10 d6 c6 11 b5 ♖b4 – Bartashnikov.

9...♜af8

Black has no problems.

Position 108

M.Stolberg-M.Botvinnik

USSR Championship, Moscow 1940

1...♜d7!

Preparing ♗f5 in order to swap White’s

good bishop. Besides which, there now appears the threat of ... hxh3 .

2 f4!

This weakens e4 for the rest of the game. 2 Wc2? or 2 Wb1? does nothing to stop $2 \dots \text{hxh3}$, but 2 f3 was more cautious, when $2 \dots \text{hxh3?}$ 3 gxh3 Wxh3 fails to 4 Bf2! refuting the attack. Thus Black should prefer $2 \dots \text{xf5}$ with a slight advantage.

2...xf5

Also interesting was $2 \dots \text{hxh3!?}$ with a strong attack; e.g. 3 gxh3 Wxh3 4 Qb5 Qe4! , preparing ... Be6-g6 .

3 Wc2 Re4!

Exploiting the protected square. White's next move makes things worse, but his game was difficult anyway.

4 b5?! hxh3 5 Wxd3 Qa5! 6 Qg3 Qc4 7 Qc1

7 Qxd5 Qxd5 8 Wxc4 Qe3 9 Qxe3 Qxe3 is equally unappealing.

7...Bac8 8 Ra2 Rf8 9 a4 Rb4

With strong pressure.

Position 109

A.Karpov-B.Parma

Caracas 1970

1 Wd3!

By attacking the d6-pawn White prepares 2 Qf3 in order to swap bishops, after which the weaknesses on d5 and d6 will become easier to exploit. The immediate 1 Qf3?! is less effective due to $1 \dots \text{e4!}$ 2 Qe2 d5 with counterplay.

1...Bfd8 2 Qf3! Qxf3

This helps White in activating the knight, so $2 \dots \text{g6}$ at once made sense.

3 Qxf3 g6 4 Qd2 Qc7?!

$4 \dots \text{f5}$ seems preferable, preventing Qe4 – Milic.

5 Qe4 Qe8 6 Wd5 Qg7 7 h3 Qf6 8 Qxf6 Qxf6

Or $8 \dots \text{Wxf6}$ 9 Wb7 winning a pawn.

9 We4 Qg7 10 Bd5 Wc7 11 f4!

Since the plan of tripling the major pieces would leave the c4-pawn in danger, Karpov prefers to open a new front on the kingside.

11...Re8

Or $11 \dots \text{exf4}$ 12 Wd4+ Qg8 13 exf4 , followed by f4-f5 with strong pressure.

12 fxe5 dxe5 13 c5

Thanks to his strong passed pawn and more active pieces, White is better.

Position 110

Y.Estrin-K.Pytel

Albena 1973

1...Rb5!

Getting rid of the bad bishop and reducing White's control over the light squares, in particular c4. The alternatives were less promising; e.g. $1 \dots \text{f4?!}$ 2 c4! or $1 \dots \text{Bc7?!}$ 2 c4! dxc4 3 Bxc4 , in both cases with a slight edge for White.

2 Rd3

After 2 Rxb5?! axb5 the weak pawn on c2 and the entry square on c4 are more relevant factors than the doubled b-pawns.

2...Rc4 3 h4?

This sacrifice is hardly any correct, but White was short of active plans.

3...gxh4 4 Wf4 Wg5! 5 g3 hxg3 6 fxg3 Bf7 7 Qf2 Bfc7

The extra pawn will be decisive.

Position 111

S.Erenburg-S.Porat

Ashdod 2004

1 Qg5!

Intending Qh4-g3 to swap Black's good bishop and prevent the ... Qh5-f4 manoeuvre. The bishop transfer to g3 is indeed a common idea in this French structure.

1...0-0 2 ♖h4 ♜e7

Black prepares ...e6-e5 in order to get rid of the backward pawn on e6.

3 ♖g3 ♖xg3 4 hxg3 e5 5 dxe5 ♜xe5 6 ♜xe5

6 ♖e1?! is less accurate due to 6...♜eg4!, intending ...♜f7-h5 with some initiative – Erenburg.

6...♜xe5 7 ♜d2 ♖f5 8 ♜fe1

Thanks to the isolated pawn, White is slightly better.

Position 112

J.H.Donner-B.Ivkov

Santa Monica 1966

1...h5!

Preparing ...♜h7 and ...♞h6 in order to swap the “bad” bishop for the “good” one.

2 ♜c2

The immediate 2 ♜a4 permits the annoying 2...♞b5!

2...♜h7 3 ♜fc1 ♖h6 4 ♖xh6 ♜xh6 5 ♜a4 ♜xc2! 6 ♜xc2 ♜c8

Black manages to swap the rooks before White puts a knight on b6.

7 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 8 ♜g1

Or 8 ♜ac3 a5, followed by ...b5-b4, just like in the game.

8...b5 9 ♜ac3 b4!

Fixing the b3-pawn on a light square.

10 ♜b1 ♖b5 11 ♜c1 ♜b6

Preparing ...♜d7-c5 with a clear advantage. Evidently the dark-squared bishop is missing in the white camp.

Position 113

J.Hellsten-E.Djingarova

Menton 2003

1 ♜xd8+!

Swapping the four rooks in order to emphasize Black’s “bad” bishop. Less clear was 1 ♜d2?! e5! or 1 ♜d6?! ♜xd6 2 cxd6 e5!,

while after 1 ♜hd1?! ♜xd7 2 ♜xd7 ♜h4+! is a little annoying.

1...♜xd8 2 ♜d1 ♜d5

Preparing 3...♜d8 in the fight for the d-file. Of course 2...♜xd1 3 ♜xd1 ♜xb2?? failed to 4 ♜d8 mate.

3 ♖f3! ♜xd1 4 ♜xd1 ♜e7

Or 4...♜xb2+?! 5 ♜g3 g6 6 ♜d7 ♜xa3 7 ♜xb7 ♜xc5 8 ♜xa6 with excellent winning chances.

5 b4 ♜f8?!

5...f6 was preferable, when 6 ♜d3 followed by ♖d1-b3 keeps the advantage.

6 ♜d3! h6?! 7 ♜h7 ♜h4+ 8 g3 ♜d8

Or 8...♜xh2+ 9 ♖g2 and ♜h8-b8 decides.

9 ♜h8+ ♜e7 10 ♜xg7 ♜d2+ 11 ♖e2 a5 12 ♜d4

White is winning.

Position 114

M.Najdorf-Y.Averbakh

Candidates Tournament, Zürich 1953

1 ♜d3!

Keeping the knight in order to avoid a “good knight vs. bad bishop” scenario. Instead, the game continued 1 ♖d2? ♜c4 2 ♖e1 ♖xb4! 3 cxb4?! ♜a3 4 ♜b3 ♜b5 5 e3 ♜c2 6 a4 ♜d6 7 a5 b5! 8 ♜c3 ♜c8 and Black had a huge advantage thanks to the terrible bishop on e1.

1...♜c4

After 1...♜xc3?! 2 ♜xb6 White obtains some counterplay.

2 ♜fc1

Preparing ♜f1-e1-d1 with a worse, but far from lost endgame.

Position 115

J.Hellsten-J.Piera

Madrid 2001

1 ♜e4!

Swapping the knight on f6 in order to facilitate an attack. Also interesting is 1 ♖e6!? ♗c7 2 ♖xf6! exf6 3 ♗e4 ♜g7 4 ♗xf6+ ♝h8 5 ♗xh5 with an attack.

1...♗xe4 2 ♜xe4 ♖g7 3 ♜h4

Another good option is 3 ♝g2!? followed by 4 ♖h1.

3...♗b4 4 ♖e4 ♜g4

Black manages to exchange queens, at the cost of a weak pawn on g4.

5 ♜xg4 hxg4 6 a3! ♗a6 7 ♖f5

Preparing 8 ♖e4 with a huge advantage.

Position 116

R.J.Fischer-O.Panno

Buenos Aires 1970

1 ♖h6!

Exchanging the defender on g7 as a first step to an attack on Black's king.

1...♗d7 2 ♜g5!

Installing the double threat of 3 ♜xe7 and 3 ♖xg7 ♝xg7 4 ♗h5+.

2...♖xc1 3 ♖xc1 ♖xh6 4 ♜xh6 ♖c8 5 ♖xc8+ ♗xc8 6 h5! ♜d8 7 ♗g5 ♗f8 8 ♖e4!!

A fantastic move that finishes off Black's resistance.

8...♜e7

After 8...dxe4 9 ♗3xe4 the knight enters decisively on f6.

9 ♗xh7! ♗xh7 10 hxg6 fxg6

Or 10...♗f8 11 g7 ♗g6 12 ♖xg6 fxg6 13 ♜h8+ etc.

11 ♖xg6 ♗g5 12 ♗h5!

Thanks to the previous sacrifice, the knight reaches the square it was dreaming about: f6.

12...♗f3+ 13 ♝g2 ♗h4+ 14 ♝g3 ♗xg6 15 ♗f6+! ♝f7 16 ♜h7+

In view of the mate, Black resigned.

Position 117

P.Keres-M.Taimanov

USSR Championship, Moscow 1951

1 ♗e4!

Exchanging the main defender of Black's kingside.

1...♗xe4

The desirable 1...♗bd7 loses material after 2 ♗xd6 ♖xe2 3 ♗xc8 ♖xb2 4 ♗xa7.

2 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 3 ♜xe4 ♜h6?!

After 3...g6 4 ♜d4 f6 5 h4!, preparing h4-h5, Black is also under pressure, but in the game he will suffer more.

4 ♗g5! ♖d6

Aware that 4...g6? failed to 5 ♗xf7, Black offers the h7-pawn. However, Keres just gets on with the attack.

5 h4! ♗d7 6 ♜f5 ♗f6 7 ♖xf6 gxf6

If 7...♜xf6 8 ♜xh7+ ♝f8, then 9 ♖e1! g6 10 ♗xf7! with a quick win – Keres.

8 ♗xf7! ♜c1

Or 8...♝xf7 9 ♜d7+ ♝g8 10 ♜xd6 etc.

9 ♜xh7+

Even stronger was 9 ♗xd6! ♜xd1+ 10 ♝h2 ♖c7 11 ♜e6+ with a quick mate.

9...♝f8 10 ♗xd6 ♜xd1+ 11 ♝h2 ♜xd5 12 ♗xb7 ♜e5+ 13 g3

White soon won.

Position 118

M.Kazarian-J.Hellsten

Ambato 2009

1...♖e4!

To exchange the defender on g2.

1...♗e4!? is another good move, though not as energetic as the text.

2 ♗f3

After 2 f3 ♖d5 White ends up with a weak pawn on g3.

2...♜f5 3 ♗e5 ♖xg2 4 ♝xg2 ♗d5 5 ♗f3?

After 5 ♖de1 ♖ae8 Black keeps the pres-

sure, but now he is able to proceed with a direct attack.

5...♖e6!?

A more static plus is obtained by 5...♖e2 6 ♖de1 ♗e3+ 7 ♜xe3 ♞xe3 8 ♞xe3 ♝d5.

6 ♖de1?! ♗f4+! 7 gxf4 ♞g6+ 8 ♗g5

The only move.

8...♗xf4 9 ♜b1 ♜xg5+ 10 ♖f3 ♞f6

With a decisive attack.

Position 119

S.Garcia Martinez-V.Smyslov

Sochi 1974

1 ♗b4!

In order to swap the defender on c6.

1...♗xb4 2 ♜xb4 ♘a8

After 2...♘a7 3 ♗d4!, with ideas like ♗c6+ and ♞b3, Black is in trouble.

3 ♞c3! ♞xf4 4 ♗xa6!?

A tempting sacrifice to intensify the attack, although given Black's resource on move 5, *Rybka* suggests 4 ♗d2, preparing the same sacrifice.

4...♜xd1+ 5 ♘a2 bxa6?

Black overlooks 5...♜d5! 6 ♜b6 ♞xe4, when White has to settle for a draw by 7 ♗b5, followed by ♜a5-c7-a5.

6 ♜b6 ♗b7

Preparing to meet 7 ♞c7 by 7...♞b8. However, White has a much stronger option at his disposal.

7 ♗a5! ♞b8 8 ♗c6! ♜g1

The only move.

9 ♜xg1 ♗xc6 10 ♞xc6 ♞b7 11 ♜e3 ♞g4 12 ♞c8+ ♞b8 13 ♜c3

Black resigned.

Position 120

V.Kotronias-A.Baburin

Calvia Olympiad 2004

1 ♗h4!

Swapping the main defender of Black's kingside. In contrast, after 1 ♗h4?! ♜c8! 2 0-0-0 ♗a6 Black defends – Kotronias.

1...bxc5

Or 1...fxg4 2 ♗xe7 ♜xe7 3 ♗g5 ♞xf4 4 ♗xh7, when both 4...♞f5 5 ♗f6+! ♞xf6 6 ♜h2 and 4...♗d7 5 ♜xg6+ ♜g7 6 ♜e6+ ♜f7 7 ♜h6! lead to a winning attack – Kotronias.

2 ♗xe7 ♜xe7 3 ♗g5

Now that Black's dark-squared bishop is gone, this knight cannot be exchanged.

3...cxd4 4 ♞xh7 ♜b4 5 ♘e2!

This quiet move connects the rooks with decisive effect. Black resigned in view of 5...♜xc3 6 ♜xc3 dxc3 7 ♞ah1 and the mate is inevitable.

Position 121

A.Beliavsky-E.Gufeld

Novosibirsk 1976

1 ♗d5!

Eliminating the main defender of Black's kingside. Less promising is 1 ♗h6? ♗xe4! 2 ♗xe4 ♞xd4 or 1 ♜h2?! ♞xc3! 2 bxc3 ♜xc3 with counterplay.

1...♗xd5 2 exd5 ♜b7?

Underestimating White's attack. Correct was 2...♗e5 3 ♜f2 ♞f8! 4 ♜h4 ♞f7 with chances for a defence.

3 ♜h2 ♘f7

After 3...h6 4 ♗xh6 both 4...♗xd4 5 ♞xd4! ♞xd4 6 ♗e3, followed by 7 ♜h7+, and 4...♞xd4 5 ♞de1! ♗e5 6 ♞xe5 dxe5 7 ♜xe5 lead to a white win. The text Black prepares to meet 4 ♜xh7? with 4...♞h8; however, there is a better way of capturing on h7.

4 ♜f4+! ♘g8 5 ♞xh7! ♜xd5

This loses material, but 5...♘xh7 failed to 6 ♜f7 with the inevitable 7 ♞h1+ next.

6 ♞xg7+! ♘xg7 7 ♗f5+ ♗xf5 8 ♜h6+ ♘f7 9 ♞xd5 ♗xc2+ 10 ♘a1

White soon won the game.

Position 122**N.Zhukova-A.Korotylev**

Wijk aan Zee 2005

1 ♖ad1!

Eyeing the d6-pawn and keeping all the pieces on the board. Instead, the game continued 1 ♘d2? ♘xd2 2 ♗xd2 ♙xg2 3 ♗xg2 e5! (in the absence of white defenders, Black proceeds with a kingside attack) 4 ♙c3?! (better was 4 ♗fd1 followed by ♗c3, ♗d2 and ♖ad1, mobilizing the pieces – Ftacnik) 4... ♗e6 5 ♗a2 f4! 6 f3 d5! 7 cxd5 ♘xd5 8 ♗fb1 c4 9 ♙d2 fxg3 10 hxg3 e4! (a decisive breakthrough) 11 ♙b4 ♗f7 12 b6 axb6 13 axb6 ♗e8 14 ♙a5 ♘e3+ 15 ♗f2 exf3 16 exf3 ♗e4! 17 ♗g1 ♗xf3 and White resigned.

1...e5 2 ♘h4 g6

Parrying the threat of 3 ♘xf5 ♗xf5 4 ♙xe4.

3 f3 ♘g5 4 e3

Thanks to his bishop pair White is slightly better and, in contrast to the game continuation, his king is completely safe.

Position 123**K.Urban-J.Dworakowska**European Championship,
Warsaw 2005**1 ♙h5!**

Intending 2 ♙xf7 to swap the main defender of Black's king.

1...♗d7

After 1...♙xc4 2 ♙xf7 ♗xf7 3 ♙g5 White wins on the spot – Roiz.

2 ♗e1!?

The most methodical choice. The direct 2 ♙xf7 ♗xf7 3 ♙xd6 was equally strong; e.g. 3...♙xc4 4 ♗f4! with ideas like ♙e5 and ♗g5.

2...♙xc4

If 2...♘c5, then 3 ♙xf7 ♗xf7 4 ♙g5 ♗h8 5 ♙e3! and the threat of 6 ♙d4 decides.

3 ♙xf7 ♗xf7 4 ♙e5!

Now in order to avoid 5 ♗g7+, Black has to give up material.

4...dxe5 5 ♗xd7+ ♗f8 6 ♗g5

With a strong attack and an extra exchange, White is winning.

Position 124**A.Kundin-A.Rabinovich**

Israeli Team Championship 2002

1 ♙b5!

Intending 2 ♙c6 to swap off the fianchettoed bishop.

1...♗h6?

1...♘h7 was preferable, connecting the rooks, although after 2 ♙c6 ♗c8 3 ♙xb7+ ♗xb7 4 ♗d2 White wins the d6-pawn with a decisive advantage.

2 ♙c6 a6

Or 2...♗g6 3 ♘xd6!, with the idea 3...♗xd6 4 ♙xd6 ♗xd6 5 ♙xb7+ ♗xb7 6 ♗c8 mate – Kundin.

3 ♙xb7+ ♗xb7 4 ♘xd6 ♗d7 5 ♗c4

With an extra pawn and a strong attack, White won without any problems.

Position 125**J.Hellsten-P.Vernersson**

Norrköping 1998

1 ♗d2!

Preparing ♙g5 in order to eliminate the defender on f6, and simultaneously creating the threat of 2 ♙f4, winning the exchange.

1...♗a6

If Black tries to avoid the bishop exchange by 1...♗a3 2 ♙g5 ♙g7, then 3 ♗b1! with the double threat of 4 ♗b3 and 4 ♗xb7.

2 ♖g5 ♗xg5

After 2...♗d5 3 ♖xd5 exd5 4 ♜f4! ♖xg5 5 ♗xg5 ♗f5 6 ♖e7 White enjoys a strong attack.

3 ♜xg5 ♗f5 4 hxg6 hxg6 5 g4!

Dislodging the knight to gain access to the h6-square.

5...♗g7 6 ♜h6 ♜d6 7 ♖g2!

Simpler than 7 ♗g5?! ♜f4.

7...♗a4 8 ♖h1 ♖f8 9 ♖de1

In view of the inevitable 10 ♜h8+, Black resigned.

Position 126

E.Gleizerov-V.Nevostrujev

Tomsk 1998

1 ♖xh5 gxh5 2 ♖h6!

Using some minor tactics White manages to swap off the fianchettoed bishop. Less convincing is 2 ♜xh5?! ♗e8! 3 ♜f3 ♗g6 and Black defends pretty well.

2...♗c6

Obviously 2...♗xh6? failed to 3 ♗f6+, while other bishop moves permit 3 ♖f8+. Finally, if 2...♗g4, then 3 ♜d3 intending 3...♖e5 4 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 5 ♖f7+! with a strong attack – Huzman.

3 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 4 ♜f3

Again 4 ♜xh5?! ♗e8 followed by ...♗g6 was less convincing for White, but 4 b3! activating the rook on b1 seems very strong; e.g. 4...axb3 5 ♖xb3, eyeing both b7 and g3, while the a1-h8 diagonal becomes available to the queen.

4...♖e5 5 ♜f7+ ♖h8 6 ♗ce3 ♗d4?

Missing 6...♗e6! 7 ♜xb7 ♜c8 with equality – Gleizerov.

7 ♗f6 ♖e7 8 ♜xh5 ♗e8 9 ♜h4 ♖g6 10 ♖be1 ♖f7 11 ♗ed5

With all his pieces mobilized, White enjoys a strong attack.

Position 127

V.Korchnoi-M.Taimanov

USSR Championship, Riga 1958

1...♜g5!

Forking the enemy queen and knight in order to force a queen exchange, thus preempting a potential white attack. Also interesting is 1...♗a6!?, swapping the attacker on d3.

2 ♜xg5 hxg5 3 ♗g3 ♗a6!

The exchange of bishops will make the e5-pawn more vulnerable.

4 ♖xa6 ♖xa6 5 ♗de4?!

Preferable was 5 ♗c4 ♖d5 6 ♖d1 ♖a7 7 ♖xd5! exd5 8 ♗e3! with chances for a draw.

5...♖d5! 6 ♗xg5 ♗xe5

Thanks to his sounder pawn structure Black is better in the endgame.

Position 128

J.Timman-L.Ljubojevic

Tilburg 1981

1 ♖xc6!

Preparing 2 ♗e5 to swap the attacker on c7.

1...bxc6

After 1...♜xc6?! 2 ♖c1 ♜d7 3 ♜d4, followed by 4 ♖fd1, the d5-pawn turns into a problem for Black. As for the unexpected 1...♗g5!?, White could react by 2 ♗e5 bxc6 3 ♖c1 with pressure on the c6-pawn.

2 ♗e5! ♜e7 3 ♖xc7

The intermediate 3 ♜d4!?, followed by 4 ♖xc7, might have been more precise.

3...♜xc7 4 ♜d4 ♖e8 5 ♖fc1 ♜d6

Parrying the threats of ♖b5 and 6 ♜xd5. 6 ♗c5

Thanks to the eternal weakness on c6, White keeps a slight advantage.

Position 129**E.Lobron-K.Hulak**

Yerevan Olympiad 1996

1...♖e2!

Preparing a queen exchange in order to finish off White's attack.

2 ♜h4 ♜g4! 3 ♜xg4

Or 3 ♜f2?! ♘d3, heading for f4 with strong counterplay.

3...♙g4 4 ♜g3 ♙e5

Now Black is simply better thanks to his extra pawn. Without queens on the board, White's kingside attack is unlikely to succeed.

5 h4 ♜ac8 6 h5 ♙e2 7 h6 g6

Preparing ...♙fd7 with a better game.

Position 130**T.Narmontas-V.Sergeev**

Warsaw (rapid) 2007

1...♙xe4 2 ♜xe4 ♜d5!

Forcing a queen exchange that will finish off White's attack once and for all.

3 ♜xd5 cxd5 4 gxh6 gxh6 5 ♜g1 ♝h7

Preparing ...♜c8, with a slight edge for Black thanks to his sounder pawn structure.

Position 131**M.Illescas Cordoba-O.Korneev**

Spanish Team Championship 2004

1...♙xe4!

Swapping off the dangerous knight before it enters at f6. 1...♜ad8?! is less advisable due to 2 ♙f6+!, when 2...gxf6 3 exf6 leaves Black without a defence against 4 ♜h6.

2 ♙xe4 ♜ad8 3 ♙c3 f5!?

Black is ready to alter the pawn structure in order to get some counterplay.

4 ♙c2

Or 4 exf6 ♙xf6, with ...♜d7-d2 as a plan.

4...♙g6 5 g3 ♙f8

With both white bishops being restricted, Black has no major problems in the endgame.

6 ♜d1 ♜xd1 7 ♜xd1 ♙e7 8 ♜xd8 ♜xd8

Intending ...♙c6-d4 with counterplay.

Position 132**O.Kinnmark-M.Tal**

Stockholm 1961

1 ♜c7!

Forcing a queen exchange in order to neutralize Black's attack and transpose to an endgame with extra material.

1...fxg2

Or 1...♜xc7 2 d6+ and White reaches his goal.

2 d6+ ♝h8

After 2...♙e6?! 3 ♙e3 ♙xc4 4 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 5 ♙xc4 White is winning – Kinnmark.

3 ♙g3 ♙xh3 4 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 5 ♝h2 ♙d7 6 ♜e2! e4

Black gives up a pawn to prevent ♜eb2-b8 with further simplifications.

7 ♙xe4 ♙e5+ 8 ♝g1

Not 8 ♝xg2? ♙xe4 9 ♜xe4 ♙c6 and Black recovers the exchange.

8...♙xe4 9 ♜xe4 ♙xd6 10 ♜d1 ♙f5 11 ♙e6!

Forcing favourable exchanges.

11...♙xe6 12 ♜xe6 ♙f8 13 ♜xa6

White is winning.

Position 133**J.Gustafsson-Z.Gyimesi**

Internet (blitz) 2006

1 ♙g4!

Swapping off the powerful bishop on h3. Less appealing is 1 ♜e1?! ♜f6! 2 ♙f3 ♙g5 with an initiative for Black.

1...♙xf1?

Correct was 1...♗xg4 2 ♜xg4 g6 avoiding any problem with 3 ♖f5, which can now be met by 3...♞e6.

2 ♗xc8 ♜xc8 3 ♞xf1?

The intermediate 3 ♖f5! won on the spot; e.g. 3...♞e6 4 ♜g4 g6 5 ♖e7+.

3...♞d7 4 f3 ♖d6 5 ♗a3 ♖f5 6 ♞d3 ♖xd4 7 ♞xd4

White has a more active game.

Position 134

J.Ambroz-F.Gheorghiu

Baile Herculane 1982

1...♖d7!

Securing the exchange of at least one of the attackers on e5 and g5. 1...♖xc3 2 bxc3 ♖e4 is less convincing due to 3 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 (not 3...♗xg5? 4 f4! ♗xe4 5 fxg5 with a strong attack) 4 ♗xe7 ♞xe7 5 ♜fe1 and White keeps the initiative.

2 ♗xe7

After 2 ♗h6? ♖xe5 3 dxe5 ♖xc3 Black achieves favourable exchanges.

2...♞xe7 3 ♖e4 ♗g7

Avoiding 3...♖xe5?! 4 dxe5 with interesting destinies for the white knight on d6 and f6.

4 a3 ♖5f6 5 ♖g3 ♞d6

Also possible was 5...♜ed8, avoiding White's next move.

6 ♞h6+! ♗g8 7 ♞f4 ♞e7

Black has no problems.

Position 135

H.Groetz-A.Rychagov

Agios Kirykos 2009

1...♖xc3!

Preparing a "defensive" bishop exchange on a4. In the game Rychagov preferred 1...♜ac8, when 2 ♖e4! ♞c7 3 ♖c5 would have yielded White some initiative.

2 bxc3 ♗a4! 3 ♜d3

3 ♗.xh7+!? ♗xh7 4 ♞h5+ ♗g8 5 ♜d3 f6! leads to perpetual check; e.g. 6 ♜g3 fxe5 7 ♜xg7+!? ♗xg7 8 ♗h6+ ♗h8! 9 ♗g5+! ♗g8 – Baburin.

3...♗xc2 4 ♞xc2 ♖d7!

Challenging the strong knight on e5.

5 ♜h3 g6 6 ♗f4 ♖xe5 7 ♗xe5 ♞c6

Black has no major problems; e.g. 8 ♞d2?! f6 9 ♞h6 ♜f7, easily repelling the attack.

Position 136

B.Predojevic-E.Dearing

Calvia Olympiad 2004

1...♖xf3+!

Swapping the powerful bishop, which is vital for White's attack. Instead, the game continued 1...♗d6? 2 ♗e4! ♖f4 3 ♞f1 ♖ed3 4 ♖b3! (heading for a5) 4...♞f6?! 5 ♗xf4! ♖xf4 6 ♖a5 ♞g5 (or 6...c6 7 ♗xc6! bxc6 8 ♞a6+ with mate) 7 ♗xb7+ ♗b8 8 ♞a6 and Black resigned in view of the inevitable ♖a5-c6+. Also dubious is 1...♖d3?! 2 ♖b3 ♞f6 3 ♜d1 with a strong initiative.

2 ♖xf3 ♞f6 3 ♗b2 ♞f5

White does not have sufficient compensation for the pawn – Erenburg.

Position 137

R.Teichmann-O.Bernstein

St. Petersburg 1909

1 ♗f2!

Swapping the active enemy bishop in order to seize the long diagonal with the queen.

1...♗xf2

After 1...♗e5? 2 f4 the bishop leaves the board under worse conditions; e.g. 2...♗f6 3 ♖xf6 ♗xf6 4 ♞c3+ with a strong attack.

2 ♜xf2 ♞a5 3 ♞e2! f6 4 ♞b2 ♜f8

Black is just one move from dislodging the knight by ...c7-c6; however...

5 g4! h6

White's idea was to meet 5...c6 by 6 dxf6! exf6 7 g5.

6 h4 g5 7 f4!

Insisting on the g4-g5 idea.

7...gxh4 8 dxf6! exf7 9 g5

White has a decisive attack.

Position 138

V.Milov-V.Kotronias

Gibraltar 2009

1 exd4!

Eliminating Black's most active piece, after which his underdeveloped queenside will become more notable. 1 ead1?! d2 was less convincing.

1...exd4 2 eae1 e3 3 exf4!

With the double threat of 4 exd4 and 4 ee4.

3...ed8 4 h3

The simple 4 ed1!? looks strong as well.

4...exc3

The prophylactic 4...exh8 can be met by 5 de4 g6 6 wh6! eg7 7 wxg7+! exg7 8 f6+ wxf6 9 dxf6 and White wins – Scherbakov.

5 ee4! wf6 6 ex1xe3

With the decisive threat of 7 ee8+. White won just a few moves later.

Position 139

M.Flores Rios-J.Hellsten

Santiago 2006

1 edc1!

Trying to exchange, or at least dislodge the active black rook.

1...ed2

Or 1...exc1 2 exc1 ed6 3 da4!, heading for c5 or b6, when 3...exf4? fails to 4 wxf4.

2 dc4 ed3 3 b5!

The game instead continued 3 de5? exa3 4 wc4 h5 with complications. By 3 b5 White just sends his passed pawns forward with a clear advantage.

Position 140

F.Urkedal-J.Hammer

Norwegian Championship,
Bergen 2009

1 ec5?

A bad decision since the white rook was far more active than its black counterpart. Besides, the pawn structure now becomes damaged. The tempting 1 ec7?! leads nowhere after 1...ex5 2 fe5 dd5, but 1 a4! was a much stronger option, when both 1...xa4? 2 ec8+ ef8 3 dd7 and 1...xb4 2 a5 ex5 3 axb6! exb6 4 fe5 win material for White. Thus Black should prefer 1...ed5 2 a5 dd7 3 ec7! dex5 4 fe5 eb5 5 exe7 with just a slight edge for White – Baburin.

1...exc5 2 bxc5 da4 3 dd3

Perhaps White had planned 3 c6 and only now realized that 3...ex5 leaves Black with a sound extra pawn after 4 fe5 bxc6.

3...eb2!

Forcing the exchange of White's more active minor piece.

4 dxb2 dxb2

With ideas like ...dd3 and ...exf7-e6-d5. Black soon won.

Position 141

M.Savic-R.Fontaine

Serbian Team Championship 2005

1 ef1!

Swapping the light-squared bishops in order to gain access to the c4 and c6 squares. Less convincing is 1 ec8?! ex8 2 ex8 dc5 3 dex5 dxe4 with equality.

1...exf1 2 exf1 dc5 3 ec4

Mastering Chess Strategy

As a result of the bishop exchange, the a4-pawn has become exposed.

3...♗g7 4 ♖c1!

Preparing ♗e3 to eliminate the defender on c5.

4...f5 5 exf5 gxf5 6 ♗e3 ♜c8 7 h5!

Vacating the h4-square for the knight.

7...e4?!

This loses a pawn. More prudent was 7...♗f6 8 ♞b4 ♞c6 with chances for a draw.

8 ♜h4 ♗b2 9 ♜xf5 ♞f8 10 g4 ♗xa3 11 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 12 ♞xa4

With a sound extra pawn White won.

Position 142

J.Leira-D.Cruz

Compostela 1993

1 ♞e1!

Seizing the open file and eyeing the weak e5-square. White doesn't fear the exchange on d3 since the knight is Black's most active piece.

In the game he unnecessarily safeguarded his bishop by 1 ♗c2? and after 1...♗e6 2 ♞d2 f4! Black achieved some counterplay by attacking the g5-pawn.

1...♜d3

Or 1...♗e6 2 ♞d2 f4 3 ♞e5!, followed by ♞ae1 with a strong initiative – Zlotnik. The 3 ♞e5! move is the one that White didn't have time to play in the game, due to the tempo loss caused by 1 ♗c2?.

2 ♞xd3 f4 3 ♞e5!

Preventing ...♗f5 and preparing ♞ae1 with a better game, thanks to the control of the e-file and the superior knight.

Position 143

M.Botvinnik-V.Ragozin

Moscow 1947

1...♗e4!

In view of his space disadvantage, Black searches for piece exchanges. Instead, the game continued 1...♗e5? 2 ♞ae1 ♗c8 3 ♗d4 ♗d7 4 f4 ♜g6 5 g4! (preparing g4-g5 to exploit the cramped position of the black pieces) 5...♞d8? (5...♞h8 was a lesser evil, vacating g8 for the knight – Botvinnik) 6 g5 ♜g4 7 ♞d2 with the decisive threat of h2-h3, and White soon won.

2 ♜xe4

Or 2 ♗d3 ♜xc3 3 ♗.xh7+ ♞h8 4 bxc3 ♞h4 5 ♗d3 ♗e5 with quite some activity for the pawn.

2...♞xe4

Both with or without queens, Black's task has eased considerably. After the departure of its colleague, the remaining knight has more squares to choose from, such as f6, e5 and c5.

Position 144

P.Wolff-J.Fedorowicz

US Championship, Los Angeles 1991

1 ♞f2!

An excellent decision. By swapping the active enemy queen White avoids an attack and transposes to a superior endgame.

1...♞xf2 2 ♞xf2 ♗xd3 3 cxd3

Despite the opposite-coloured bishops, White has a significant advantage since his bishop is much stronger.

3...♗d8

Or 3...0-0 4 ♞c2! ♞xc2 5 ♞xc2 ♞c8+ 6 ♞b3 axb2 7 ♞b1! and there soon emerges a dangerous passed pawn on the a-file.

4 ♞c2 ♞xc2 5 ♞xc2 axb2 6 ♞b1! ♞e7

Equally unsatisfactory is 6...♗b6 7 ♞xb2 ♗c5 8 a3! or 6...♞g8 7 g3 h5 8 ♞xb2 h4 9 ♞xb4 hxg3 10 hxg3 ♞xg3 11 ♞b7 – Wolff.

7 ♞xb2 ♗.a5 8 ♞b3!

With the strong threat of 9 ♞a4, winning the b4-pawn. White later won.

Position 145
V.Hort-L.Popov
 Varna 1969

1 ♖g3!

Avoiding pieces exchanges in order to keep the enemy position cramped. In contrast, after 1 ♗h6 ♜xe4! 2 ♗xe4 ♗d7 or 1 f4 ♜xe4 2 ♗xe4 exf4 3 ♗xf4 ♗d7, followed by ...♝b6(c7), Black completes development and connect his rooks with a decent game.

1...♜d7

If 1...♗d7, White can choose between the simple 2 f4 exf4 3 ♗xf4, followed by ♗ae1, and the more concrete 2 ♜xe5!? dxе5 3 d6.

2 ♗h6

Creating some additional pressure before going f2-f4.

2...♗h4 3 ♜e4 ♜f6 4 f4!

A strong blow that exploits the lack of coordination in Black's camp.

4...♜xe4 5 ♗xe4 exf4 6 ♜xf4 ♗g8

Parrying the threat of 7 ♗xg6, but White's greater piece activity proves decisive anyway.

7 ♗f3! ♗e8 8 ♗af1! ♗xe4 9 ♗xg7 ♗xg7 10 ♜h5+!

In view of 10...gхh5 11 ♗f7+ ♗h8 12 ♝h6 with a quick mate, Black resigned.

Position 146
A.Groszpeter-M.Suba
 Kecskemet 1979

1...♗d5!

Eliminating the more active of White's bishops.

2 ♗xd5+ ♝xd5 3 0-0-0

Quite an unnatural place for the king, but after 3 0-0 ♜d4 4 ♜xd4 cxd4, followed by ...♜c6, the absence of the fianchettoed bishop leaves him rather unprotected on g1.

3...♜d4!

Seizing the centre and vacating c6 for the other knight.

4 ♜e3 ♝d7 5 ♜c3 ♜bc6 6 ♗b1 b5 7 ♗df1 ♗a5

Black has a clear initiative.

Position 147
Y.Yakovich-M.Makarov
 Russian Championship, Elista 2001

1 ♗a1!

Turning down the rook exchange in view of his space advantage. Besides, the white rook has more prospects on a1 than its colleague on e8, such as ♗a1-a6, attacking the b6-pawn.

1...♜h5

The desirable 1...♗a8? fails to 2 ♗xa8+ ♗xa8 3 ♜b5.

2 ♝f2 ♜f4?!

Preferable was 2...♗hf6 with a waiting game.

3 ♗e3?!

3 ♗xg7! was even stronger, when both 3...♗xg7 4 ♝d4+ and 3...♗h3+ 4 gхh3 ♗xg7 5 ♝d4+ ♜f6 6 ♗a6 lead to a decisive advantage – Rabinovich.

3...♜e6 4 ♜d5! ♗xd5 5 cxd5 ♜g5 6 ♗b5!

Stepping up the pressure.

6...♗f8 7 ♗c1 ♝d8

At this point 8 h4 ♜h7 9 ♝g3! won a pawn, and most likely the game as well – Rabinovich.

Position 148
A.Karpov-J.Timman
 Amsterdam 1991

1 ♗f4!

Speeding up his development and supporting the further idea of ♜d6. Now if Black swaps on f4, his active knight disap-

pears and White's remaining bishop on b3 becomes very strong.

1...♖a5?!

Indeed, after 1...♟xf4? 2 ♜xf4 ♙xe4 (other moves run into 3 ♟d6) 3 ♜xe4 White is much better thanks to his strong bishop and the weakness on f7. A better try might be 1...♙xe4? 2 ♜xe4 ♖a5 – Aagaard, when 3 ♟d1 ♟ad8 4 ♟ed4 seems to keep the advantage.

2 ♟d6! ♙xd6

Or 2...♜b4 3 ♙xd5 cxd5 4 a3 ♜xb2 5 ♜xd5 with a clear edge – Karpov.

3 exd6 ♟fe8?

This lets the d-pawn advance, but after 3...♟ad8 4 ♟ad1 that pawn should also tell in the long run.

4 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 5 ♙xd5! cxd5 6 d7! ♟e7

After 6...♟d8 7 ♜e3! h6 8 ♜e8+ ♟h7 9 b4! ♜b6 10 ♟c1 f6 11 ♜e7 the threat of 12 ♙c7 decides.

7 ♟c1 ♟xd7 8 ♟c8+ ♟d8 9 b4! ♜b6 10 ♙c7

White is winning.

Position 149

D.Bronstein-M.Botvinnik

World Championship (game 16),
Moscow 1951

1...♙xf4!

Eliminating the strong knight on f4 and preparing 2...♙h5, to simplify into an ending with a good knight vs. a bad bishop.

2 exf4 ♙h5! 3 ♖a3

If 3 ♙g2, declining the bishop exchange, then 3...♜a8, preparing ...♜a2 and ...♟a8-a3 with strong pressure. Also after 3 ♙xe4 dxe4, followed by ...♙f3+ and ...♜h5-h3, Black obtains a strong attack – Botvinnik.

3...♙xf3+ 4 ♟xf3 ♟g7

Mission accomplished; the knight clearly outshines the bishop.

5 ♟g2 ♜d8 6 ♟f1 ♜f6 7 ♟d3 h5!

By the threat ...h5-h4, Black provokes a new weakness.

8 h4 ♟g8 9 ♟d1 ♜g7 10 ♜f3 ♟h6 11 ♟g2 ♟a8!

With 12...♟a2+ coming up, Black is clearly better.

Position 150

F.Berkes-R.Ducic

Bosnian Team Championship 2002

1 ♟xd7!

Initiating favourable exchanges in order to install an eternal knight on e5.

1...♜xd7?!

Preferable was 1...♙xd7 2 ♟e5 ♟f6!, followed by ...♙e8 and ...♟d7 to challenge the white knight, although 3 ♜c3 preparing b3-b4 keeps some advantage.

2 ♟e5 ♜e7 3 ♙xe4!

Swapping the last piece capable of challenging White's knight.

3...fxe4 4 c5

From now on White is better on the whole board, thanks to his powerful knight.

4...♙h5?! 5 g4 ♙e8 6 ♟g2 ♟g8 7 ♟ab1 ♜c7 8 ♜d2 ♙d7 9 ♟fc1 ♟a6 10 ♟c3 ♟fa8 11 h4!

After luring the black pieces to the queenside, White takes action on the opposite flank.

11...♟b8 12 h5 b5 13 cxb6 ♟axb6 14 ♜f2 ♙e8 15 h6! g6 16 f5!

With a strong attack.

Position 151

V.Makogonov-M.Botvinnik

Sverdlovsk 1943

1...♙xc3!

Initiating favourable exchanges in order to install an eternal knight on e4.

2 bxc3 ♙f5! 3 ♙xf5 ♜xf5 4 g4 ♜e6

Simplest. The tempting 4...♜e4 allows 5

♙a3! ♖d3+ 6 ♜g3 ♜xe3+ 7 ♜f3 with complications.

5. ♙a3 ♖e4+ 6 ♜f3 h5

After 6...♖xc3?! 7 ♜b3 ♖b5 8 ♙b2 0-0-0 9 f5 White gets some initiative – Botvinnik.

7 h3 f6!

With focus on the enemy monarch.

8 c4 hxg4+ 9 hxg4 ♜xh1 10 ♜xh1 0-0-0

Thanks to his safer king and superior minor piece, Black has a clear advantage.

Position 152

J. Polgar - V. Anand

Wijk aan Zee 1998

1 ♙xf6!

Initiating favourable exchanges in order to install an eternal knight on d5. 1 ♖d3?!, heading for b4-d5, is less convincing due to 1...b4! 2 ♙xf6 ♖xf6 3 ♖d5 ♖xd5 4 exd5 a5 and the d5-square can no longer be exploited by White's pieces.

1...♖xf6 2 ♖d5!

Forcing the exchange of the other knight, thus eliminating the last defender of the d5-square.

2...♙xd5 3 ♜xd5 ♜c5 4 ♜ad1!

Keeping the d5-square under control.

4...♜xd5 5 ♜xd5 ♜c8 6 c3!

Preparing ♖c2-e3-d5 with a typical "good knight vs. bad bishop" scenario. For the continuation of this game, see example 29 in the section about improving the knight.

Position 153

S. Kudrin - M. Cebalo

Titograd 1984

1...♙g5!

Swapping the active bishop on h6, as a first step to a future position with good knight vs. bad bishop.

2 ♙xg5 ♜xg5 3 ♖e3

If 3 ♖d4, then 3...♙xd5! 4 exd5 ♖c4, heading for e3.

3...♖c4 4 ♖xc4 ♙xc4 5 ♜f2 ♜e5 6 ♜h1 ♙xb3!

This exchange further emphasizes the inferiority of White's bishop.

7 cxb3 ♜e7 8 b4?!

Preferable was 8 ♜d5 ♜xd5 9 exd5 with just a slight disadvantage – Cebalo. In the game Black achieves a strong rook manoeuvre.

8...♜c4! 9 b3 ♜d4 10 ♜e1 d5! 11 ♜f1 dxe4

Having a sound extra pawn, Black won without any difficulties.

Position 154

V. Colin-D. Berczes

Brno 2006

1...♙b4!

Intending 2...♙xc3 and 3...♙b5 with favourable exchanges, after which the knight can be installed on e4, where it will clearly outshine the remaining white bishop.

2 ♜g3

Creating the threat of 3 ♙h6. Less constructive is 2 a3?! ♙xc3 3 ♙xc3 ♙b5 with the knight soon landing on e4.

2...♜h8 3 ♜xe8+

3 ♙g5! was preferable, interfering with Black's plan; for example, 3...♜xe1 4 ♜xe1 ♖e4! 5 ♙xe4 dxe4 6 d5! ♙xd5 7 f6 g6 8 ♜d1 ♙xc3 9 ♜xc3 ♜e6 10 b3 with compensation for the pawn – Berczes.

3...♜xe8 4 ♜h4?!

Again 4 ♙g5 was better, although after 4...♖e4 5 ♙xe4 dxe4 Black keeps the upper hand.

4...♙xc3 5 bxc3 ♙b5! 6 ♙xb5 ♜xb5 7 ♙g5 ♖e4

Mission accomplished, with a clear positional advantage. There followed 8 f6 g6 9

♖h6?! ♕g8 10 ♜f3 ♖b1+ 11 .♙c1 g5! 12 ♜f1 ♜xc3 and Black soon won.

Position 155

C.Pedersen-E.Mortensen

Danish Team Championship 2009

1 .♙xc6!

Creating weaknesses on c5 and c6. 1 ♜c5?! is less precise due to 1...♜d4! 2 ♖c3 ♜b5.

1...bxc6

Or 1...♖xc6 2 ♖xc6 bxc6 3 ♜c5 with a superior endgame, reminiscent of the encounter P.Benko-S.Reshevsky, US Championship, New York 1968.

2 ♖c3 ♜b8 3 ♜c5

White already has the better chances thanks to his strong knight and the sad bishop on c8.

3...f6 4 ♖ae1 ♖e7 5 a4 ♜d8 6 a5 ♜d5 7 b4!

Fixing the knight.

7...e5?! 8 fxe5 fxe5 9 ♜d3

Now the e5-pawn is doomed, and White soon won the game.

Position 156

F.Gheorghiu-T.Ghitescu

Bucharest 1966

1...♙e6?

A bad idea since Black won't obtain anything in return for the multiple weaknesses. 1...♜d7 was preferable, heading for e5 or b6, after which the bishop could settle on e6 or a6.

2 .♙xe6 fxe6 3 .♙e3 ♜fb8

Or 3...a5 4 b3 a4 5 ♜xa4 ♜xe4 6 ♜ac1 with a huge advantage.

4 b3 ♜b7 5 ♜ac1 ♜f7 6 f3 ♜d7 7 ♜a4!

After locating his pieces on ideal squares, White starts exploiting the opponent's weaknesses.

7...♜c8 8 ♜f2 ♙e5 9 ♜c2 ♜cc7?

After 9...♙d6 10 ♜b2, heading for c4, Black is also suffering, but the text loses material.

10 ♜dc1 ♜b8 11 ♜c5 ♜b5

Or 11...♜b6 12 ♜d3 ♜b5 13 ♜xe5+ ♜xe5 14 ♙f4 etc.

12 a4 ♜b4 13 ♜d3

Black resigned.

Position 157

J.Piket-L.Oll

Manila Olympiad 1992

1...♙xf3!

A timely exchange that damages White's pawn structure and secures the f4-square for the knight.

2 gxf3

Obviously 2 ♖xf4? loses the exchange after 2...♙xd1.

2...♖g5+!

Exploiting the mating threat in order to swap the active white queen as well.

3 ♖xg5 hxg5 4 ♙a4 ♜b8!

Heading for b4 to intimidate the bishop and protect the c4-pawn.

5 ♜d2 ♜b4 6 ♜a1

Or 6 ♙c6 ♜b6 7 d5 ♜xd5! with a clear edge – Oll. Here 8 ♙xd5 is met by 8...♜xd6.

6...♜d8 7 d7 ♜f8 8 ♜c2 ♜e7

The passed pawn has been neutralized, while the white rooks lack active prospects. Next Black may consider ...♜db8 and ...♜d3 to put pressure on b2.

Position 158

A.Kotov-G.Levenfish

USSR Championship, Moscow 1949

1 ♖d4!

Swapping the black queen to enable ♜c2-c7. The isolated doubled pawns are less

relevant. In contrast, after 1 ♖c1?! ♕d6 2 ♜c7 ♜c8 Black has no problems, e.g. 3 .♙xa6? ♜xc7 4 ♜xc7 ♜a1+ 5 ♙f1 ♙b5.

1...♜xd4

After 1...♜d6? 2 ♜c4! White wins a pawn.

2 exd4g5?!

This lets White seize the seventh rank. 2...♜c8? 3 ♜xc8+ ♙xc8 4 ♙xa6 was equally bad, but by 2...♕d6 3 ♜c7 ♙b5! 4 ♜xe7 ♖f8 5 ♜c7 ♜c8! Black could have neutralized the active white rook with drawing chances.

3 ♜c7 ♙b5

Or 3...♕d6 4 ♜xd7 gxf4 5 ♜xe7 ♜d8 6 ♜a7 etc.

4 ♜xb7 gxf4 5 ♜xe7 ♜c8 6 ♙xb5 axb5 7 h4!

Clearing a path for the king. With an extra pawn, more active rook and a strong passed pawn, White soon won.

Position 159

D.Bronstein-S.Tartakower

Saltsjöbaden Interzonal 1948

1 ♙h5!

Preparing 2 ♙xg6+ with further damage to Black's pawn structure.

1...♕xe3

After 1...♙xh5? 2 ♜xh5+ g6 3 ♜xe5 White recovers the pawn with a clear edge, while 1...♜d6?! runs into 2 ♕e4 ♜e6 3 ♕c5.

2 ♙xg6+! hxg6 3 fxe3 ♜d3 4 ♜f3 e6 5 ♜e4!

Transposing to an endgame where the knight will clearly outshine the bishop.

5...♜xe4

Or 5...0-0-0 6 ♜xd3 ♜xd3 7 ♖e2 with similar play.

6 ♕xe4 ♙e7 7 ♖e2 ♜d8 8 ♜ad1 0-0

If 8...♜d5?!, then 9 c4.

9 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 10 ♜f1 b6

Or 10...♜f8? 11 ♜d1! ♜d8 12 ♜xd8+ ♙xd8 13 ♕c5.

11 ♕f2!

Focusing on the c6-pawn.

11...♜d5 12 ♕d3 ♙f6 13 ♕b4

Intending 13...♜d6 14 ♜d1 to force the exchange of rooks. Despite the minus pawn only White can win this, and he later managed to do so.

Position 160

C.Lutz-V.Bologan

German Team Cup 1994

1...g5!

Forcing a "dynamic" exchange that will severely damage White's pawn structure. 1...e5?! 2 dxe5 dxe5 3 ♕d3 is less convincing, but 1...♕d5!? deserves attention.

2 ♕d3

After 2 ♕g2?? g4 the bishop is trapped.

2...♙xd3! 3 exd3 ♜a6 4 ♜d2 h6

Black is now considerably better due to the weak doubled pawns and the stronghold on d5.

5 ♙a1 ♕d5 6 ♙g2

At this point the simplest was 6...c5!? 7 ♙xd5 exd5 8 ♜d1 cxd4 followed by ...♕b5-c3 – Bologan.

Position 161

M.Botvinnik-N.Sorokin

USSR Championship, Moscow 1931

1 ♜e3!

Challenging the piece that sustains Black's position. The doubled pawns are less of a concern.

1...♜xe3

Both 1...'♜c7? 2 ♕xe5! ♜xe5 3 ♜xb6 ♕xe4 4 ♜e3! and 1...♕bd7? 2 ♜xc5 ♕xc5 3 ♕xe5 ♕cxe4 4 ♕xe4 ♕xe4 5 ♜e2!, followed by 6 ♕g6, win for White.

2 fxe3

In the absence of his queen, Black has a problem with the e5-pawn and with the a4-

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a5 threat.

2...♗g4 3 a5 ♖c8

Or 3...♖bd7 4 h3 ♗xf3 5 gxf3 ♖c5 6 b4 ♖e6 7 ♗xe6! fxe6 8 ♖a4!, followed by ♖c5 – Botvinnik.

4 ♖c1 ♗xf3?!

Probably 4...♞e8 was a lesser evil; e.g. 5 h3 ♗h5 6 ♖h4 ♖e7 7 g4 ♗g6 with more resistance than in the game.

5 gxf3 ♖e7 6 ♖d5! ♖c6

Giving up the seventh rank, but after 6...♖fxd5 7 ♗xd5! ♖xd5 8 exd5! ♞ac8 9 ♞dc2 Black is also in trouble.

7 ♖xf6+ gxf6 8 ♞d7! ♞ab8

Or 8...♖xa5 9 ♞cc7 with fatal consequences.

9 ♖f2

Preparing 10 ♞g1+ with a clear advantage.

Position 162

S.Atalik-J.Hellsten

Greek Team Championship 2003

1 ♗c6+ ♖e7 2 ♞d4!

After depriving Black of castling, White exploits the dynamic force of his doubled pawns in order to triple on the d-file. 1 ♞d4!? 0-0 2 ♞ad1 was equally strong.

2...♞d6

Not 2...♞xd4? 3 cxd4, repairing White's pawn structure, while 2...e5?! 3 ♗d5 surrenders the d5-square.

3 ♗g2!

If 3 ♗f3?! then 3...♞g5!, forcing a queen exchange. In the game 3...♞g5 would run into 4 f4.

3...♞hd8 4 ♞ad1 ♖a4?

Exposing the king. Preferable was 4...♞6d7 5 ♗c6 ♞d6 6 ♞d2 e5 7 ♞d5 ♞xd5 8 ♗xd5! (or 8 cxd5 ♞d6 with a blockade) 8...♖f8 with just a slight white edge – Atalik.

5 ♞xd6! ♞xd6 6 ♞xd6 ♖xd6 7 ♞e4! ♖xc3 8 ♞c6+ ♖e5 9 ♞d7!

Preventing 9...♞d8 with counterplay.

9...♖xe2+

After 9...g5 10 ♞d3 or 9...♞f5 10 f4+ ♖f6 11 ♞d4+ White also wins – Atalik.

10 ♖f1 ♖d4 11 ♞c7+! ♖f5 12 ♞f4+ ♖g6 13 ♗e4+ ♖f5 14 g4 1-0

Position 163

J.Hellsten-M.Johansson

Malmö 2001

1 f4!

Initiating a central advance to gain space and exploit the location of Black's king in the centre. 1 ♖b1?! h4 2 e4 ♖h5 is somewhat less powerful.

1...♞a5 2 ♞c2!

By keeping the queens on White ensures the e3-e4 advance and enhances a future attack.

2...♗c6

This doesn't help Black, but he was short of good options anyway. Obviously 2...d5? failed to 3 ♗e1.

3 e4 ♞a4 4 ♞e2! ♞ae8 5 e5 dxe5 6 fxe5 ♖d7 7 ♗h4+ f6

Or 7...♖f8 8 ♞df1 with the strong threat of 9 ♞f2.

8 exf6+gxf6 9 ♗c2 ♞a5 10 d5

With a decisive attack.

Position 164

T.Shaked-T.Bildt

Berlin 1997

1 g4!

Gaining some space on the kingside, before Black achieves the same thing by 1...h5.

1...♗g6 2 a3 ♗d6

Or 2...♗e7 3 h4! h5 4 g5 ♖e8 5 b4 ♞a8 6 e4!, exploiting the absence of a knight on

f6, with a strong initiative.

3 h4! h5

White is also better after 3...h6 4. ♖xd6 ♜xd6 5 ♜f4!, preparing g4-g5.

4 ♖xd6 ♜xd6 5 g5 ♜e8 6 ♜f4 ♜c7?

This leads to a bad structure. 6...♗f5 is sounder, when White could consider 7 ♖hd1, followed by e3-e4 and ♜e3.

7 ♜xg6 fxg6 8 ♗d3 ♜e7 9 ♜e2!

The other knight “inherits” the f4-square, where it will eye the weak pawn on g6.

9...e5 10 dxe5+ ♜xe5 11 ♜f4

White wins a pawn with a huge advantage.

Position 165

M.Chandler-E.Geller

Sochi 1982

1 b4!

Gaining space and chasing away the active black knight.

1...dxe4 2 dxe4 ♜e6 3 a4!

Preparing a4-a5. Now 3...a5 is well met by 4 b5 ♜e7 5 ♗a3, seizing the a3-f8 diagonal.

3...♖e8

Or 3...♗xd1 4 ♖xd1 ♖fd8 5 ♗e3 with a slight edge.

4 a5 a6 5 ♗a4!

Stepping up the pressure.

5...♗c8 6 ♗e3 ♜f4 7 ♗b3 h5 8 ♗c4 h4?!

This attacking attempt backfires after White’s strong reply. 8...♗e6 9 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 was preferable, when 10 ♖ad1!?, intending ♖d7, keeps the advantage.

9 ♜f5! ♗xf5 10 exf5 ♗xf5 11 ♗xf4 exf4

Or 11...♗xf4 12 ♖e4 ♗f5 13 ♗xc6 bxc6 14 ♗xc6 etc.

12 ♗xc6 bxc6 13 ♗xc6 ♖ed8 14 ♖ad1

Thanks to the weak pawns on a6 and c7 White is clearly better.

Position 166

J.R.Capablanca-D.Janowski

St. Petersburg 1914

1 ♖b1!

Preparing a pawn storm on the queen-side with b2-b4 and a2-a4. 1 a3?! is less precise, since after 1...f6 2 b4 ♜f7 White will have to spend one more tempo protecting the b-pawn before he can push a3-a4.

1...f6 2 b4 ♜f7 3 a4 ♗xf3!

Swapping a potential attacker. After 3...♗e6?! 4 b5 cxb5 5 axb5 a5 6 b6! White’s attack accelerates.

4 ♖xf3 b6?!

4...b5! seems preferable, followed by ...♜b7 and ...♖a8.

5 b5! cxb5 6 axb5 a5 7 ♜d5 ♗c5 8 c4!

Reinforcing the knight and preparing ♗c3, d3-d4 and c4-c5 with a further attack.

8...♜g5 9 ♖f2 ♜e6 10 ♗c3 ♖d7 11 ♖d1

Avoiding 11 ♖d2? ♖xd5! 12 exd5 ♗xe3+ 13 ♜h1 ♜c5 when Black is out of danger.

11...♜b7 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖c2!

Now the breakthrough c4-c5 is inevitable. The game continued 13...exd4 14 exd4 ♜f4 15 c5 ♜xd5 16 exd5 ♗xd5 17 c6+ and White won.

Position 167

U.Andersson-N.Spiridonov

Sochi 1973

1 f4!

Initiating a central advance.

1...♜d7 2 e4 b5 3 ♗c3

An excellent diagonal in the absence of a bishop on g7.

3...bxc4 4 bxc4 ♖b8 5 ♖ab1

The immediate 5 e5!? was also interesting.

5...♗c7 6 ♗h3! ♜b6

Or 6...♜f6 7 ♖be1, preparing e4-e5.

7 ♖b3 ♘a8

The more active 7...♘a4 8 ♖c2 ♗a5? fails to 9 ♖a3 ♖b4 10 .♙d7! – Andersson.

8 ♖fb1 ♖b6 9 e5!?

Another good option was 9 ♖xb6 ♘xb6 10 ♗a5! ♘xd5 11 ♗xc7 ♘xc7 12 ♖b7 with a superior endgame.

9...♖fb8 10 e6!

Softening up Black's light squares.

10...f6 11 ♙f1 ♖b4 12 a3 ♖xb3 13 ♖xb3 ♖xb3 14 ♗xb3 ♘b6?

14...♗b6! 15 ♗a4 ♗f8 was mandatory – Andersson.

15 h4!

Opening a new front on the kingside, where Black is short of defenders. There followed 15...♗f8 16 ♗h2 ♗e8 17 f5! ♗d8?! 18 fxg6 hxg6 19 ♗c2 ♘c8 20 ♗xg6 and the h-pawn soon decided.

Position 168

J.Hellsten-P.Sinkovics

Gyula 2002

1 g4!

Gaining some space and enabling a future attack.

1...h6?

This just helps White in opening lines towards the black king. After 1...g5 2 ♘h5! ♘xh5 3 gxh5, followed by e3-e4, he manages the same thing, therefore 1...♙e6 was safer, preparing to meet 2 g5 by 2...♘d7.

2 h4 ♘c4?!

Too slow. For better or worse Black had to play 2...g5 in order to stop g4-g5.

3 g5 hxg5 4 hxg5 ♘h7

Or 4...♘xe3? 5 .♙xe3 ♖xe3 6 gxf6 ♗xf6 7 ♘xd5 ♗h6+ 8 ♖h2 etc.

5 ♙xh7+! ♗xh7 ♖h2+ ♗g8 7 e4

Even stronger was 7 ♗d3! ♗xg5 (or 7...g6 8 ♘xg6) 8 ♗h7+ ♗f8 9 e4.

7...dxe4 8 fxe4 ♗e7

After 8...♖xe4 9 ♗h5 or 8...♗xg5 9 ♖g1 the attack is irresistible.

9 ♗h5 ♗xe4+ 10 ♘g2 f5 11 gxh6

Black resigned.

Position 169

F.Gheorghiu-I.Radulov

Budapest 1970

1 b4!

Preparing a2-a4 and b4-b5 to gain some space and harass the active bishop on a6. 1 e4?! is less appropriate due to 1...dxe4 2 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 3 ♙xe4 ♘f6!, hitting d4 and preparing to meet 4 ♙xc6 by 4...♖c8.

1...♖c8 2 a4 dxc4

2...c5 3 dxc5 bxc5 4 b5 ♙b7 seems more natural, when 5 .♙b2 ♗c7 6 ♖fd1 preserves a slight white advantage.

3 ♘xc4 ♙xc4

Since 3...c5? fails to 4 b5, Black first gets rid of the bishop.

4 ♗xc4 c5 5 dxc5 bxc5 6 b5!

Creating a potential passed pawn.

6...♘b6 7 ♗c2 ♘fd5 8 a5 ♘b4

8...c4 9 ♘e5 ♘b4 was more active, although after 10 ♗e2 ♘d6 11 .♙a3 White keeps the initiative.

9 ♘xb4 cxb4 10 ♙c6! ♘d5 11 ♖d1 ♗c7 12 ♙b2

Intending 13 e4 with better chances thanks to the queenside dominance.

Position 170

A.Khalifman-O.Romanishin

Ischia 1996 (analysis variation)

1 g4!

Gaining some space and bothering the knight on f6. Less promising is 1 e4?! ♖b8, preparing ...♙c8 and ...♘c5.

1...♖ed8

Vacating the e8-square for the knight.

1...e4? drops a pawn to 2 g5, while after 1...h6?! 2 h4 the h-file is soon opened to White's benefit.

2 g5 ♖e8 3 ♖e4 ♜b8 4 f4!

Clearing some more space. Also interesting is 4 h4!?, followed by h4-h5.

4...exf4

Parrying f4-f5 at the cost of unblocking the long diagonal. If 4...f5?!, then 5 gxf6 gxf6 6 ♜d1! with a strong attack.

5 exf4 ♙c8 6 ♜c3! ♖c5 7 ♖xc5 dxc5 8 ♙b2 f6

Forced, in view of the threat 9 ♜xe8+.

9 gxf6 ♖xf6 10 ♜g3 ♜f7 11 ♙d3

With excellent attacking prospects.

Position 171

A.Kushnir-N.Gaprindashvili

World Women's Championship
(game 8), Riga 1972

1b5!

Opening a new front on the queenside in order to exhaust the defence. 1 ♙e7 ♜g7 is less constructive.

1...axb5

Or 1...♙xb5 2 c6! ♙xc6 3 ♜xc6 bxc6 4 d7, winning a piece and the game.

2 c6! bxc6 3 ♙a3

Now the threat of 4 ♙a7 puts an end to Black's resistance.

3...♙a8 4 ♙xa8 ♜xa8 5 ♙d8!

Exploiting the temporary absence of the black queen, White creates a mating net. In view of 6 ♜f6+, Black resigned.

Position 172

V.Kotrotsos-A.Mastrovasilis

Greek Team Championship 2005

1...g5!

Gaining some space and reinforcing the e5-square for the knight.

2 0-0-0 ♖f7 3 ♜he1

3 h4!?, seems preferable, taking up the kingside battle.

3...h5!

Preparing ...h5-h4 with a further grip on the dark squares. Now White's bishop is slowly turning into a "bad" one.

4 ♜e3 ♜xe3+ 5 ♜xe3 ♖e5 6 ♙f1 h4! 7 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 8 b3 ♙e7

Thanks to his more active pieces and kingside control, Black has a more comfortable endgame. The game saw 9 ♙a4 b6 10 ♖b2 c5 11 c3 a5! (arranging all the pawns on the "right" colour and enabling the ...a5-a4 pinprick) 12 ♙c2 ♜g8 13 ♙d2 ♙a8 14 ♙b5 ♜d8+ 15 ♙c2 g4! 16 ♙f1 ♜g8 17 hxg4 ♖xg4 18 ♜f3? ♖h2! and White resigned.

Position 173

A.Morozevich-A.Petrushin

Krasnodar 1997

1 b4!

Intending b4-b5 to open a new front on the queenside. The straightforward 1 ♙g4 ♙d7 2 ♙xe6? fails to 2...♙xe6 3 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 4 ♜xe6 ♜xd4+ with equality.

1...♜d8?!

1...a6 seems preferable, avoiding a weakness on a7, although after 2 a4 ♙d6 3 b5 a5 4 ♙g4 ♜f7 5 ♜c1! ♙d7 6 ♙a3! ♜e7 7 ♜c7 White keeps strong pressure.

2 b5 ♙d6

Since 2...♜c2?! runs into 3 ♙g4, winning the e6-pawn, Black has to surrender the c-file.

3 ♙g4 ♜f6

Or 3...♜e8 4 f5! gxf5 5 ♙xf5, opening a new front with focus on the black king.

4 ♙a3! ♜f7

Both 4...♜c7? 5 ♜c1 and 4...♜e7? 5 ♜xd5! lose at once, while 4...♜d7 5 ♜c1 ♜f8 6 ♜e3 followed by 7 ♜ec3 is also decisive – Har Zvi.

5 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 6 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 7 ♜xe6 ♜d7 8 ♜e3! ♜xb5 9 ♜e5+ ♜h6 10 g4!

In view of the mating net, Black resigned. There can follow 10...♜d3 11 ♜h2! ♜d2 12 ♜f6!, when both 12...♜d7 13 ♜f5! and 12...♜xf6 13 g5+! lead to mate.

Position 174

P.Tregubov-A.Motylev
Russian Championship,
St. Petersburg 1998

1 h4!

Preparing h4-h5 with a new kingside front.

1...h5

After 1...f5? 2 h5! Black suffers on the b1-h7 diagonal.

2 ♖g5 ♜d7 3 ♜h2! f6

In view of the threat 4 ♖h3, Black had to weaken the light squares.

4 ♖d2 ♖h6 5 ♖xh6 ♜xh6 6 ♖h3 ♜g7

6...♜e7 at once was more precise, whereas the active 6...f5? leads to a disaster after 7 ♜d2+ ♜h7 8 exf5 gxf5 9 ♜g5 ♜f7 10 ♖xf5+! ♜xf5 11 ♜xf5 – Hazai.

7 ♜e2 ♜e7 8 ♖e6! ♜h8 9 ♜c3

Sending more pieces to the kingside, where Black can't defend himself easily due to the lack of space.

9...♜g7 10 ♜g1! ♜h6 11 g4! hxg4 12 ♜xg4 ♜f8 13 ♜g2 ♜h7 14 ♜h3 ♜a8 15 ♜g1 ♜e7 16 ♜c3!

This intermediate move leaves Black unable to defend both flanks. There followed 16...♜e8 17 ♜cg3 ♜xh4 18 ♜xg6 with the decisive threat of 19 ♜g7+.

Position 175

E.Pereishteyn-S.Atalik
Philadelphia 2000

1...b5!

Initiating a typical minority attack.

2 g4 a5 3 ♜d1?!

3 a3 b4 4 axb4 axb4 5 ♜d1 was a lesser evil, getting rid of the potentially weak a-pawn.

3...b4 4 h4 a4 5 ♜b1?

An ugly place for the knight. After 5 h5 a3! the black attack is more convincing; e.g. 6 hxg6 fxg6 7 ♜c2 axb2 8 ♜xg6 bxc3 with a decisive advantage – Atalik. However, 5 cxb4 ♖xb4 6 ♖xf6 gxf6 7 h5 offered more resistance.

5...♜e4 6 f3 ♜d6 7 ♖g3 ♜fb8

Now White is doomed on the queenside. There followed 8 ♜f2 ♜b6 9 ♜g2 ♜c4 10 ♜e1 ♖d6 11 ♖xd6 ♜xd6 12 ♜c1 ♜c8 13 cxb4 ♜xb4 14 ♜ee2 ♜b6, winning the d4-pawn, and soon the game as well.

Position 176

P.Murdzia-M.Smolovic
Hallsberg 1991

1 h4!

Initiating a majority attack to soften up Black's kingside.

1...♜ad8 2 ♖c5

Avoiding 2 h5?! ♖d4 with unnecessary counterplay.

2...♜a5 3 b4 ♜c7 4 h5! ♜xd1 5 ♜xd1

Another option was 5 ♜xd1 ♜e5 6 hxg6!, intending 6...♜xe4 7 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 8 ♜d8+ etc.

5...♜f7 6 hxg6 hxg6 7 ♖xa7

White adds an extra pawn to his other advantages.

7...♖c3?

This just accelerates the end. Black probably missed that the subsequent 8...♖xb4 fails to 9 ♜g4! with a decisive attack, just like in the game.

8 ♜e3 ♖f6 9 ♜g4!

Now if 9...♜g7, then 10 ♖xg6, winning the exchange.

9...♖d8 10 ♗xg6 ♜g7 11 ♗c5

White soon won.

Position 177

S.Djuric-L.D.Nisipeanu

FIDE World Championship,
Las Vegas 1999

1...a5!

Initiating a minority attack to soften up the white queenside.

2 ♗h6

After 2 a4?! the b3-pawn turns into an eternal weakness.

2...♗xh6!?

Thus Black gains time for his queenside attack. Also reasonable is 2...♗h8, keeping the strong bishop.

3 ♜xh6 a4! 4 ♖g3 ♜f6 5 ♖cd1

Or 5 ♖e4 ♗xe4 6 ♖xe4 axb3 7 axb3 ♖a2 with an initiative.

5...axb3 6 axb3 ♖a2 7 ♜e3 ♗g7!

Some clever prophylaxis directed at 8 ♜xe6, which now fails to 8...♖xg2+! 9 ♗xg2 ♜xf3 10 ♗h3 ♗d7 etc.

8 ♖e2 e5

Preventing 9 ♖f4 and overprotecting the d6-pawn.

9 ♖d3 ♖da8 10 ♖ed1 ♖a1

With a slight initiative thanks to the more active pieces.

Position 178

Zsu.Polgar-D.Paunovic

San Sebastian 1991

1a6!

Softening up the c6-square for the knight.

1...bxa6

1...♜xb4? failed to 2 axb7, while after 1...♖xc3 2 axb7 ♖b8 3 ♖c6! ♗xc6 4 dxc6 ♖d3 5 ♗e3 the passed pawns are decisive –

Polgar.

2 ♖c6 ♗xc6 3 bxc6

Thanks to the powerful protected passed pawn, White is practically winning.

3...♖c7 4 ♖a4 ♜b6 5 ♜a1!

Preparing 6 ♖b1.

5...♖e8 6 ♖xa6 ♜d8 7 ♖b1 f5 8 ♖xa7

White soon won.

Position 179

N.Short-M.Suba

Dortmund 1983

1...♖xd4 2 ♜xd4 b5!

Initiating a minority attack that will dislodge the knight from c3 and oppress White's queenside pawns. Also possible is 1...b5! 2 axb5 ♖xd4 3 ♜xd4 axb5.

3 axb5 axb5 4 ♖d1

Responding to 4...b4 in advance. After 4 ♖a1 ♗f8 5 ♖a7?! ♜b8 Black soon achieves ...b5-b4 anyway, while most other White fifth moves run into 5...b4!, intending 6 ♜xb4 d5 with a strong initiative.

4...d5!

Black immediately exploits the departure of the white knight in order to get a grip on the centre.

5 e5

Or 5 exd5 ♗c5!, enabling 6...♖xd5 next move.

5...♖e4! 6 ♜d3

After 6 ♗xe4?! dxe4 7 ♜xe4 ♗c6 White is suffering on the h1-a8 diagonal – Suba.

6...b4 7 ♗d4 ♜b8!

Clearing the c-file for the rook and preparing ...♗b5.

8 ♗f1 ♖d7 9 ♗g2 ♖dc7

Stepping up the pressure on the weak c2-pawn. The game continued 10 f3 ♗g5! 11 ♖e3 ♖c3 12 f4 ♗e7 13 ♜d2 ♗b5 14 ♗d3 ♜b7! and Black soon returned the knight to e4 with a pleasant advantage.

Position 180

C.Matamoros Franco-A.Cruz Condori
Espartinas 2007

1 b4!

Initiating a minority attack to weaken Black's queenside pawns. 1 e4 ♗e6 2 f4?! is less convincing in view of 2...♗b6+ 3 ♖h1 ♕g4 with counterplay.

1...a6

After 1...0-0 2 a4! ♗e7 3 b5 c5 4 ♖d1 ♖d8 5 ♗e3 White enjoys strong pressure.

2 ♗e3 ♗e6 3 a4! 0-0

Or 3...♕g4 4 ♗d4 ♗f6 5 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 6 b5 with similar play.

4 b5 ♗a5 5 bxc6! bxc6

After 5...♗xc3?! 6 cxb7 ♖ad8 7 ♖ac1, or even 6 ♖ac1!?, the passed pawn outweighs the slight material deficit.

6 ♖fc1 ♖fc8 7 ♕e4 ♕xe4?

After 7...♕d5 8 ♗d4 Black is worse due to his queenside weaknesses, but now he loses a pawn.

8 ♗xe4 ♗d5 9 ♗xd5 cxd5 10 ♖d1! ♗b4

Or 10...♖d8 11 ♖ac1, heading for c5.

11 ♖xd5

White later realized his extra pawn.

Position 181

V.Vehi Bach-L.Psakhis
Manresa 1996

1...f4!

Preparing ...f4-f3 to damage the enemy pawn structure.

2 ♖g4

White is also under strong pressure after 2 ♕xf4 ♕xd4 with the double threat of 3...♖xf4 and 3...♕ef5.

2...f3! 3 gxf3 ♕f5

Black immediately exploits the protected square on f5.

4 ♗a3?!

After 4 ♖ac1 ♕xd6 5 exd6 ♖xd6 White has a horrible structure, but at least his king is safer than in the game.

4...h5!

A strong blow on the theme of deflection, which lets Black land a knight on f3.

5 ♖xh5 ♕fxd4 6 ♕xd4 ♕xd4 7 ♗d6 ♖f5!

Before taking the pawn it makes sense to mobilize the major pieces for an attack.

8 ♖h3 ♕xf3+ 9 ♖g2 ♖f7! 10 ♖ac1

Or 10 ♖h1 ♖g6+ 11 ♖f1 ♕d2+ 12 ♖e1 ♖f3 – Atlas.

10...♖h5! 11 ♖xf3 ♖xh2+ 12 ♖xh2 ♖xf3 13 ♖c2 ♖h7! 14 ♖g1 ♖h8

White resigned.

Position 182

T.V.Petrosian-L.Psakhis
Las Palmas Interzonal 1982

1 a4!

Preparing a4-a5 with a majority attack on Black's vulnerable queenside.

1...♗g7

After 1...a5?! 2 ♕db5 ♗e7 3 ♗h6, preparing ♖d2 and ♖ad1, Black is in big trouble.

2 a5 0-0

Or 2...bxa5 3 ♕b3!, followed by ♕xa5 – Petrosian.

3 axb6 ♕xb6 4 ♕b3!

In order to exploit the new weakness on a5.

4...♖a7 5 ♗f4 e5

An undesirable advance, but 5...♖d8? failed to 6 c5.

6 ♗e3 ♗c8 7 ♕a5 ♖a8

Here White continued 8 ♖d3 ♗e6 9 b3 and later realized his positional advantage. However, 8 c5! was even stronger, e.g. 8...♕xc5 9 ♗xc5 ♖e8 10 ♗d6 ♖a7 11 ♕c6 ♖b7 12 ♕xe5 with a decisive advantage – Petrosian.

Position 183
R.Åström-J.Hellsten
 Sweden 1997

1...a4!

Softening up the b3-square for the knight.

2 ♖xc5?!

After 2 bxa4?! ♚a5 Black recovers the pawn with a slight edge thanks to his sounder pawn structure. However, 2 b4 ♜b3 3 c5! ♜xc14 ♚xc1 was a better choice, with some compensation for the exchange.

2...♜xc5 3 b4 ♜b3 4 ♜c3 c5!

Preventing c4-c5 and softening up the dark squares on the queenside.

5 bxc5?!

After 5 ♜d3 ♚c7, followed by ...♜fd8, White is also under pressure, but now his position collapses.

5...♚a5 6 ♜e3 ♜d2! 7 ♜xb7 ♜xb7 8 ♖xb7 ♜xf1 9 ♜xf1 ♖xc5 10 ♜f3?

This loses at once. 10 ♜e2 was relatively better, when 10...♖xa3 11 ♜a2 ♚b4 12 ♖a6 ♚b3! seems decisive.

10...♜d8 11 ♚c1 ♚b6!

The bishop is trapped, so White resigned.

Position 184
T.Nyback-A.Vuckovic
 German League 2005

1 ♖d3!

Creating the threat of 2 ♖xg6+ and preparing a future h4-h5 to soften up Black's kingside. The immediate 1 h4!? is also possible; e.g. 1...♖f5 2 ♖d3 ♖xd3 3 ♚xd3 and 4 h5 next.

1...♖g7 2 h4! ♜f7?!

Exposing the king. Preferable was 2...♚e7!? 3 h5 f5 4 ♚c3 o-o 5 hxg6 hxg6 6 ♜a7 with a clear, though not decisive advantage – Ftacnik.

3 h5! f5 4 ♖xg7 ♜xg7 5 ♜a7!

5 ♚c3+? ♚f6 is less convincing, but now Black has to parry that check.

5...♜f8 6 g4!

A nice blow. Also strong is 6 hxg6 hxg6 7 ♚a4!, heading for h4.

6...♜f7

The alternatives are no better, e.g. 6...fxg4 7 hxg6 h6 8 ♖f5 and wins – Ftacnik.

7 ♚c3+ ♜h6

This leads to a disaster but Black was lost, e.g. 7...♚f6 8 h6+ winning his bishop.

8 hxg6+ ♜xg6 9 gxf5+ ♜xf5 10 ♜g1+ ♜h5 11 ♖e2+

Black resigned.

Position 185
L.Portisch-U.Andersson
 Milan 1975

1...b5!

Softening up White's pawn majority and freeing the d5-square for the knight.

2 cxb5 axb5 3 b4?!

Preventing ...b5-b4, but also leaving the queenside structure in a bad shape. 3 ♜xb5 ♜xa2 was equally unpleasant, whereas 3 ♜e5 seems like the least of evils, with just a slight disadvantage after 3...♜xe5 4 ♚xe5 b4 5 ♜a4 ♜c7.

3...♚a6 4 a3 ♜b6! 5 ♜e5 ♜c8 6 ♜d3 ♖f8

After some consolidating moves Black is ready to fight for the initiative by ...♜bd5 or ...♜c4.

7 g4 ♜bd5 8 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 9 ♚d4?

This loses a piece. 9 ♚e4 was correct, when 9...♜ac7 10 ♜h3 ♜f6 preserves the advantage; e.g. 11 ♚b1 ♜c2 or 11 ♚d3 ♚d6! 12 ♚xb5?! ♜c2 with strong pressure.

9...f6 10 ♜h3

Or 10 ♜f3? ♜c4, trapping the queen.

10...fxe5 11 ♚xe5 ♜f7

Black soon won.

Position 186

F.Nijboer-I.Smirin

Wijk aan Zee 1993

1 f5!

Softening up the d5-square for the knight.

1...dxc5

After 1...exf5 2 exf5 g5 3 g3 White is clearly better due to the weaknesses on d5 and e6 – Nijboer, while 1...e5 2 e6! e6 3 fxe6 e6 4 d5, followed by g4, leads to an even bigger advantage, as does 1...gxf5 2 exf5 e5 3 e6! with similar play.

2 fxe6 hxe6 3 g4

As a result of White's second move, 3...e4 now runs into 4 e4 e4 5 h6! with a strong attack.

4 e3 e5

Now Black will never be able to recover the pawn, but after 4...e4 5 e4 e4 6 h6 or 4...f7 5 h6!, intending 6...xf6 7 g5, his king would find himself in danger. 5 d5 exd5 6 hxd5+ f7 7 g5 hxd5 8 exd5

White later realized his extra pawn.

Position 187

M.Jadoul-A.Karpov

Brussels 1986

1...h5!

Preparing ...h5-h4 to soften up the kingside.

2 a5?!

2 h4 runs into 2...g4, while 2 f4! h4! is even worse, when 3 g4 drops a pawn after 3...dxc5. But 2 cxd6 e6 3 d5 was a better choice, when 3...e5 4 e5 h4! keeps the initiative – Karpov.

2...dxc5 3 bxc5 h4!

Softening up the f4-square for the knight.

4 g4 e4 5 e4

A sad necessity, but any move with the other bishop drops a pawn.

5...xf4 6 d3 c7! 7 b4

White tries to cover both a5 and e4, but in vain.

7...e4! 8 e4 e4 9 e4 xa5 10 c6 e3

Black has a decisive advantage and won after 11 a1 c3 12 e5? e2.

Position 188

J.Lautier-R.Ponomarev

Enghien les Bains 1999

1 h4!

Softening up the g6-pawn (and the black kingside as a whole) for a later attack.

1...h5

The less committal 1...f7 permits 2 h5 gxh5 3 f4!, when Black is unable to cover all his weaknesses; e.g. 3...e8 4 a5! or 3...c7 4 d3 f8 5 e2!.

2 a5 c7 3 e2!

Heading for f4 in order to attack the weak points at g6 and e6. The immediate 2 e2?! xa4 was less clear.

3...bxa5 4 e4 b4 5 e1!

A new piece joins the attack. 5 e6?! f7 6 e4 b6 is less convincing.

5...f7

White also breaks through after 5...e1+ 6 e1 f7 7 e3 e5 8 d3!.

6 e6! e4

Or 6...b6 7 e6 e4 8 d1 e5 9 e6 a4 10 e4 cxb4 11 e5 winning – Lautier.

7 b7! xb7 8 e8+ h7 9 e7 b1+ 10 h2 e2 11 e3! b2 12 e6

Black resigned.

Position 189**R.Åkesson-J.Hellsten**

Hallsberg 1996

1...a5!

Preparing ...a5-a4 with a majority attack.

2♠d1

After 2 a3?! ♖c5 White has a problem with the b3-pawn; e.g. 3 b4 axb4 4 axb4 ♖d3 5 b5 c5!, creating a dangerous passed pawn, or 3 ♜b1 ♖h4!, when 4 ♜f2? fails to 4...♖d3+.

2...a4! 3 b4

Or 3 bxa4 ♜a8, recovering the pawn with an improved structure.

3...♖b6 4 ♜f2 ♜c7?! 5 b5?!

In time trouble both players missed 5 ♖c3!, when 5...♖c4? fails to 6 ♖xd5+! cxd5 7 ♜xd5. Therefore on the previous move Black should have preferred 4...♜e7, followed by 5...♜f7, with an unclear game.

5...♖c4 6 bxc6

Now the material balance is restored, but after 6 ♠d3 ♜b6 7 bxc6 bxc6 the chances also are about even.

6...♖e3 7 cxb7+ ♖xc2 8 ♜c1 ♜xb7 9 ♜xc2 ♠d8

Draw agreed, although Black might be slightly better.

Position 190**P.Leko-S.Lputian**

European Club Cup, Ljubljana 1995

1...h5!

Softening up the f5-square for the knight.

2 gxh5

After 2 h3?! ♜a3! 3 ♖c3 hxg4 4 hxg4 ♖g6 Black is clearly better – Lputian. In effect White has to look out for both 5...♖xf4 and 5...♜h4.

2...♖xd4 3 ♖.xd4 ♖f5 4 c3 ♜a4!

Preparing ...♜a8 in order to enter on the a-file.

5 ♖d1 ♜a6 6 ♜b2

After 6 ♖e2 ♖xd4, both 7 ♜xd4 ♜a2 and 7 cxd4 ♜xb6 8 ♜xb6 ♜xb6 yield Black a pleasant advantage.

6...♜a8 7 ♜d2 ♜a2 8 ♜b2 ♜a1 9 ♜g2 ♜a3 10 ♖g4

Challenging the strong enemy knight.

10...♖xd4 11 cxd4 ♖b5!

Exploiting the fact that 12 ♜xb5? runs into 12...♜a2.

12 ♖.e2 ♖.xe2

12...♖c4!? might be even stronger.

13 ♜xe2 ♜c3

Despite the minus pawn Black enjoys a clear initiative and went on to win.

Position 191**E.Sveshnikov-S.Palatnik**

Belgrade 1988

1 ♖xe6! fxe6 2 h4!

Initiating a majority attack to soften up the enemy kingside. Now 2...♖xh4? runs into 3 ♜g4.

2...♖c6 3 h5 g5

Black can only keep the material balance by surrendering the b1-h7 diagonal.

4 ♖g3 ♜d7 5 ♜c2 ♖f8

After 5...h6?! 6 ♖.g6+ Black's king gets stuck in the centre. If 5...0-0-0!?, then 6 h6! just like in the game, but not 6 ♖.xh7? ♖b4! 7 ♜b1 d4 with counterplay.

6 h6!

Fixing a weakness on h7.

6...♜f7 7 0-0-0 ♖e7?!

Now the black king becomes exposed. Preferable was 7...0-0-0 speeding development, when 8 ♜e2!?, heading for g4, keeps some advantage.

8 ♜a4+! c6 9 c4! a6

Or 9...dxc4 10 .xc4 d5 11 .xd5 exd5 12 e6! with a clear edge – Sveshnikov.

10 ♖a5 ♗d8 11 .xc2!

Heading for the a4-e8 diagonal. The game continued 11...d5 12 cxd5 cxd5 13 ♖a4+ ♗d7 14 ♗d3!, followed by ♗c3 with a decisive attack.

Position 192

L.Vogt-U.Andersson

Havana 1975

1...h5!

Preparing ...h5-h4 in order to fix the g3-square and indirectly weaken the f4-pawn. It is important to realize this idea before White manages to play 2 .xf3 followed by g2-g3, after which he could meet ...h5-h4 by g3-g4.

2 .xf3

It is difficult to suggest anything better.

2...xf3 3 xf3 h4! 4 ♗d2 ♗c4!

The most powerful way of doubling the rooks.

5 b3

This leads to new weaknesses, but 5 d2? d4 6 ♗d4 d3+! didn't help either.

5...♗c6 6 a4 b4 7 d2 ♗a8 8 c4

If 8 d4, then 8...♗c3 intending ...d5.

8...bxc3 9 ♗xc3 d5 10 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 11 ♗b2

The threat of 11...♗c5 12 b4 ♗c4 obliges White to vacate the e1-a5 diagonal for the bishop.

11...xf6 12 ♗a2 ♗c8!

Heading for b8 in order to attack the weakness at b3.

13 .xd2 ♗b8 14 d1 c1 b4!

After this exchange White won't be able to cover both weaknesses at b3 and f4. There followed 15 .xb4 ♗xb4 16 ♗f2 .e7! 17 ♗f3 .d6 18 d2 ♗e4 19 ♗d3 .c5 20 ♗c3 .f2 21 ♗c2 g7 22 d1 g1 ♗xf4 and Black soon won.

Position 193

A.Karpov-L.Stein

USSR Championship, Leningrad 1971

1 b5!

Creating a strong passed pawn.

1...cxb5?!

1...d7 was preferable, keeping more lines closed around the passed pawn, although after 2 b6 ♖b7 3 c5! dxc5 4 ♗b1 d6 5 .xc4! the white knight soon enters on c5 with a strong initiative.

2 cxb5 .d7 3 ♗b1 ♗ec8 4 b6!

White keeps advancing the pawn, aware that 4...xa4? fails to 5 bxc7.

4...♖b7 5 .b5 ♗a8 6 ♖b3 .e6

After 6...xb5 7 ♖xb5 ♗xa4 8 ♖xa4 ♗xc3 9 ♖a7! the blockade is broken.

7 ♖b4 .e7 8 ♗fc1 d5 9 ♖b2 d4 10 .b4!

Winning the c5-square for the knight.

10...g5

Or 10...xb4 11 ♖xb4 ♗xc1+ 12 ♗xc1 ♖xe4 13 .c6! ♗c8 14 b7 ♗xc6 15 ♗e1 and wins – Karpov.

11 ♗xc8 ♗xc8 12 ♖e2 ♗a8

Parrying the threat of 13 .a6.

13 .d6!

A key move that prepares .c7 in order to free the knight from the defence of b6. There followed 13...d6 14 ♖c2 ♗c8 15 .c7 .d8 16 d5 ♗xc7 17 dxb7! ♗xc2 18 dxd8 and the passed pawn soon proved decisive.

Position 194

E.Solozhenkin-J.Hellsten

European Club Cup,
Rethymnon 2003

1...d4!

Advancing the pawn before White manages to set up a blockade by d2-d3. Now 2 d2? doesn't work due to 2...♖xc5.

2 b4 d3! 3 ♗d1?

This time 3 ♖b2? fails to 3...♙c3!, but 3 f3 avoiding an attack on f2 was a better choice. There can follow 3...♜d5 4 ♖b6 ♜d4+ 5 ♜f1 ♙e5 with a strong black initiative. White can't improve this line by 5 ♜h1? due to 5...♙h6! 6 ♜xh6 d2 7 ♜d1 ♜e8 etc.

3...♙d4 4 ♜xd3

After 4 ♜f1 ♜e4 5 ♖c3 ♜e5! 6 ♖d1 ♜e2 7 ♜g5 ♙xf2+! 8 ♖xf2 d2 Black wins.

4...♙xf2+ 5 ♜h1 ♜xd3 6 ♜xd3 ♙xc5! 7 g3 ♙xb4

With a decisive advantage.

Position 195

L.Thiede-T.Heinemann

German League 2002

1 ♖c5!

Eliminating the black bishop in order to facilitate d5-d6.

1...bxc5

After 1...♙c8? 2 ♖e6+ ♙xe6 3 dxe6 Black loses material – Ribli.

2 ♜xb7+ ♜e7 3 ♜xa8!

A strong and necessary sacrifice. Any queen retreats permitted 3...♜d6 or 3...♖d6 with a blockade.

3...♜xa8 4 d6 ♜xg2+

Or 4...♜e8 5 dxe7 ♖xe7 6 ♜d8 ♜a4 7 ♜1d7 ♜a1+ 8 ♙f1 ♖f7 9 ♜a8!, followed by ♜axa7 – Ribli.

5 ♜xg2 ♜d7 6 ♜d5 ♖f7 7 g4! ♖g7 8 ♜xc5

White soon won.

Position 196

P.Svidler-A.Motylev

Russian Championship,

Moscow 2004

1...♜c1+! 2 ♜e1

After 2 ♜xc1 ♜xc1+ White loses the f4-pawn.

2...♜c2!

Eradicating the blockade of the passed pawn.

3 ♜xc2 ♜xc2 4 e6

On other moves 4...d3 is decisive.

4...fxe6 5 ♜xe6 ♙c5 6 ♜h2 d3!

The pawn reaches d2 with decisive effect.

7 ♜d1 d2 8 ♜g3 ♜d3 9 ♜g4

Or 9 ♜xa6 ♙e3, followed by ...♜c1.

9...♙b4 10 ♜e8+ ♜h7 11 f5 ♜c1 12 ♖e5 ♜e3!

Ruling out any mating ideas with 13 ♖g6. White resigned.

Position 197

E.Solozhenkin-O.Sepp

Finnish Team Championship 2002

1 ♖e1!

Heading for d3 to block the passed pawn. In contrast, after 1 ♜fd1 ♜d5!? Black has some pressure on e5.

1...♙a6

Preparing ...c6-c5. After 1...♜c7?! 2 ♖d3, followed by ♜fc1, Black ends up cramped.

2 ♖d3 c5 3 bxc5 ♖xc5 4 ♖xc5 ♜xc5 5 e6!

White exploits the exposed position of the bishop on a6 in order to create some activity.

5...♜e7

If 5...d3, then 6 e7 ♜e8 7 ♜xd3 ♜xe7 8 a4! with a decisive plus – Solozhenkin.

6 exf7+ ♜xf7

Or 6...♜xf7 7 ♜fd1. keeping the d-pawn at bay.

7 ♜d3!

Thus White blocks the passed pawn and creates the threat of a3-a4, whereas Black has a problem with his exposed king. The game continued 7...♜d6 8 ♜fe1 ♜d7 9 g5 ♙f8?! 10 ♜d2 a4 11 ♜e4!, followed by ♜be1, with a decisive attack.

Position 198

D.Zakarian-J.Hellsten
Agios Kirykos 2004

1...♟b3!

With the idea 2...cxb4 3 axb4 a5 in order to create a powerful passed pawn. 1...cxb4?! 2 axb4 ♟b3 is less precise due to 3 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 4 b5! when one pawn stops two.

2 ♖e1 cxb4 3 axb4 a5! 4 bxa5 bxa5 5 h4

Both 5 ♟e5?! a4 6 ♙d1 ♟c5, preparing ...a3-a2, and 5 d4 a4 6 h4 g4 7 ♟e5 a3 8 e4 a2 9 ♖xb3 ♙xb3 10 ♗xb3 ♖xd4 are equally troublesome for White.

5...♙xf3 6 ♖xb3?

After 6 ♙xf3 ♖xd3 or 6 gxf3 a4 White is also suffering, but now he loses on the spot. 6...♙xe2 7 ♖xe2 ♖c1+ 8 ♟h2 ♗a1! 9 ♗f3 ♖h1+ 10 ♟g3 ♗e5+

White resigned.

Position 199

V.Golod-A.Vydeslaver
Israeli Championship, Tel Aviv 2002

1 ♖ac1!

Initiating a series of exchanges that will facilitate the advance of the passed pawn. Of course 1 d7? ♗xf6 2 dxc8 ♗ ♖xc8 would be counter-productive.

1...♗a4 2 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 3 ♟xe4

Another possible move order is 3 d7 ♖d8 4 ♟xe4 ♗xe4 5 ♗xd3.

3...♗xe4 4 d7 ♖d8

Or 4...♖a8 5 ♗xd3 ♗xd3 6 ♖xd3 ♙e7 7 ♖e3! and wins – Golod.

5 ♗xd3

In view of 5...♗xd3 6 ♖xd3, followed by 7 ♙c7, or 5...♗c6 6 ♗c3+! ♗xc3 7 bxc3, preparing the same move, Black resigned.

Position 200

P.Cramling-E.Kovalevskaya
European Women's Championship,
Plovdiv 2008

1 ♖e4!

With the double intention of 2 ♖de1, seizing the e-file, and 2 ♗f4, fighting against the blockade on d6.

1...♖fe8?

1...♖fd8 was a lesser evil, when 2 ♖de1, heading for e7, keeps the initiative.

2 ♗f4! ♗xf4

2...♖ed8? fails to 3 ♖e8+!, while after 2...♗d7 3 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 4 d6 Black is also suffering – Cramling.

3 ♖xf4 ♖f8

Sad but necessary. After 3...♖e7 4 d6 ♖d7 5 ♙a4!, both 5...♙c6 6 ♖c4 and 5...♖dd8 6 d7 ♖b8 7 ♖e1 win for White.

4 d6 ♖cd8 5 ♖e1

5 ♖c4! ♙c8 6 ♖c7 ♙e6 7 ♖xa7 was even simpler – Cramling.

5...♙c8?

Not 5...♖xd6? 6 ♖xf7!, but 5...♙c6 was preferable, when 6 ♖d4 maintains a clear edge.

6 ♖xf7! ♖xf7 7 ♖e7 ♙d7

Or 7...♖df8 8 d7 ♙xd7 9 ♖xd7 g6 10 ♖xa7 ♟g7 11 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 12 ♙xf7 ♟xf7 13 g4 with a winning pawn endgame.

8 ♖xf7 ♟h8 9 f3

With a decisive advantage.

Position 201

O.Romanishin-V.Anand
Candidates match (game 7),
New York 1994

1...♙xe4!

Preparing ...♟c4-d6 with a firm blockade of the passed pawn. 1...♟c4?! 2 ♟2c3 is less precise, when White may later recapture

with the knight on e4.

2 ♖xe4 ♗c4 3 ♝b3 ♘d6 4 ♙g2 ♘d7 5 ♙d2

Now Black gets considerable activity. The restrictive 5 ♙e3! ♝a5 6 ♜fc1 ♜fc8 yielded White a slight edge – Anand.

5... ♗c5! 6 ♝a3 ♗ce4 7 ♙b4?! a5! 8 ♙e1

Black's point was 8 ♙xe4 axb4 9 ♝xb4 ♜a6!, followed by ...♜b6, with strong counterplay. Thus White should have played 7 ♙e1 at once.

8... ♗c4! 9 ♝d3 ♗ed6

Black's clever knight regrouping has enabled the idea of a central break with ...e5-e4.

10 ♙c3 e4! 11 ♝c2?!

A lesser evil was 11 ♙xe4 ♗xb2 12 ♙xb2 ♙xb2 13 ♜ab1 with just a slight disadvantage.

11... ♙xc3 12 ♝xc3 ♜e8 13 b3 ♗e5 14 ♗d4 ♜c8

With a strong initiative thanks to the excellent knights. In contrast, the passed pawn on d5 has completely lost its potential.

Position 202

C.Garcia Palermo-S.Giardelli

Pinamar 2001

1h4!

Opening a new front on the kingside, in order to exhaust the black defence.

1... ♜b7

After 1... ♗b3? 2 ♜xb3! ♙xb3 3 ♗c7 White wins material, while 1...e5?! 2 ♙e3, followed by 3 ♜d1, or 1...h5?! 2 ♜g3 ♗h7 3 ♙d3! ♗xd3 4 ♜xd3, followed by 5 ♗c7, is equally troublesome for Black.

2 h5 ♙e7?!

2... ♗b3 was critical, when 3 ♜xb3! ♙xb3 4 ♜c7! ♙d5! 5 ♜xb7 ♙xb7 6 ♗c7 ♜d8 (not 6...♜c8? 7 ♙a6!) 7 ♙f3! d5 8 hxg6 hxg6 9 ♙g4! keeps some winning chances. There-

fore 2 ♙e3 or 2 ♜cc3, avoiding the fork on b3 before playing h4-h5, would have been more technical.

3 hxg6 hxg6 4 ♜g3! ♗f7 5 ♜h3

Now 5... ♗b3 6 ♜xb3! ♙xb3 7 ♜c7! is indeed decisive; e.g. 7... ♙d5? 8 ♗xd6+ or 7... ♜xc7 8 ♗xc7 ♙d5 9 ♙f3! – Stohl.

5...e5

Parrying the threat of 6 ♜h7+ ♗g8 7 ♜h8+. At this point White continued 6 ♗xd6+ ♙xd6 7 ♙xc5 ♙xc5 8 ♜xc5 and later realized his extra pawn. However, by 6 ♙xc5! dxc5 7 ♜d1 ♙e6 8 ♗d6+! ♙xd6 9 ♜h7+ he could have won on the spot.

Position 203

E.Tomashevsky-A.IIjin

Russian Junior Championship 2006

1 ♗e5!

Supported by the tactic 1... ♝xe5? 2 ♙h7+, White prepares ♗c4 in order to break the blockade on d6. In contrast, 1 ♗d2? failed to 1... ♗xd5.

1... ♙b5?

Logical but tactically ill-founded. Black is also in trouble after 1...b5?! 2 ♙b1, intending 3 ♗g4. A better try is 1...♜ad8 2 ♗c4 ♜a6, when 3 ♙b1!? keeps strong pressure along the e-file. 3 d6 b5! 4 dxe7 ♜xd1 5 ♜xd1 bxc4 is less clear.

2 ♝c5!

Now 2...a6 or 2... ♙a6 fails to 3 ♗g4! ♝f4 4 g3.

2... ♜b6 3 d6! ♗g6 4 ♙xg6 fxg6 5 d7 ♜d8 6 a4!

Deflecting the bishop.

6... ♙a6

Both 6... ♙xa4 7 ♝c4+ and 6... ♙c6 7 ♗xc6 ♜xc6 8 ♜e8+ ♗h7 9 ♝d5! win – Ribli. In the game White adds an extra pawn to his other assets.

7 ♗xg6! ♗h7

Mastering Chess Strategy

Or 7... ♖xg6 8 ♜c8! ♜f6 9 ♜e8+ etc.
8 ♖e5

The game concluded 8... ♜e6 9 ♜d5 ♜e7 10 h3 b6 11 ♜e4+ ♜g8 12 ♖g4! and Black resigned.

Position 204

V.Ivanchuk-S.Tiviakov

Benidorm (rapid) 2008

1 cxb5! ♜xc3 2 bxa6!!

A rook sacrifice that produces a dangerous passed pawn. Less convincing is 2 ♖d4?! ♜xc1 3 ♜xa5 axb5! 4 ♜xb5 with unclear play – Golubev.

2... ♖f6

A key variation is 2... ♜c7 3 ♜xc3 ♜xc3 4 ♜xc3 ♜xc3 5 a7 ♜c8 6 ♖a6!, followed by ♖b7 and a8♜, when White ends up with a sound extra pawn.

3 f3! ♜3c5?!

3... ♖d7 4 a7 ♜3c5 was preferable, although after 5 b4 ♜xa7 6 bxc5 dxc5 7 ♜f2 White's advantage is practically decisive – Golubev.

4 ♜xc5! ♜xc5 5 b4!

Recovering the rook with a decisive advantage thanks to the passed pawn.

5... ♜a3 6 bxc5 dxc5 7 ♖h6! ♖d7 8 ♖b5

Black resigned.

Position 205

M.Botvinnik-A.Lilienthal

Moscow 1936

1... b5?

This helps White to create a strong passed pawn on the a-file. The prophylactic 1... ♜ec8 was better.

2 cxb5 axb5 3 ♜dc1!

Simple but strong. Now that 3... ♜ec8 fails tactically, White wins the battle for the c-file.

3... ♜xc3 4 ♜xc3 bxa4 5 ♜c7!

A strong intermediate move based on the tactical line 5... ♜xb3? 6 ♖xe7+ ♜xe7 7 ♜c8+!

5... ♜b5 6 bxa4

The straightforward 6 ♖xe7+!? ♜xe7 7 ♜xe7 axb3 8 ♜c7! was also strong, but Botvinnik prefers a more technical win.

6... ♜e2+ 7 ♜f2 ♜xf2+ 8 ♜xf2

Thanks to his outside passed pawn and active pieces, White is winning.

8... e6

Or 8... ♜a8 9 ♜c8+! ♜xc8 10 ♖xe7+ ♜f8 11 ♖xc8 etc.

9 ♖b6!

A good square for the knight, where it prevents ... ♜a8 and enables a rook exchange. There followed 9... ♖f6 10 a5 ♜b8 11 ♜c8+! ♜xc8 12 ♖xc8 ♖e8 13 a6 ♖c7 14 a7 ♖a8 15 ♖xd6 ♜f8 16 e5! and the king entered with decisive effect.

Position 206

T.Nyback-M.Carlsen

Dresden Olympiad 2008

1 a4! axb4 2 axb5!

Giving up the knight in exchange for two powerful connected passed pawns. If Black had tried to avoid this by playing 1... bxa4?!, he would have ended up clearly worse after 2 b5!.

2... bxc3 3 ♖xc6 ♖f6 4 ♜xc3 ♖f8

If 4... ♖e4, intending 5... ♖h4, then 5 ♖xe7+ ♜xe7 6 ♜b2, followed by b5-b6, with a devastating initiative.

5 ♜xa8!

Swapping off one of the passed pawns' opponents.

5... ♜xa8 6 ♜a1! ♖e4 7 ♜b2 ♜e8 8 ♖e5

With the strong threat of 9 b6, which obliges Black to take radical measures.

8... ♖xc5 9 b6 ♜b7 10 ♜b5!

A well-calculated blow. Also strong was 10 dxc5 ♖xc5 11 ♜b5 ♜c8 12 ♜d7! with decisive simplifications.

10...♞a8 11 ♞xa8 ♜xa8 12 dxc5 ♜a1+ 13 ♝h2 ♜xe5+ 14 g3

Now the passed pawns win the game. Play saw 14...d4 15 b7 ♜f5 16 ♜b2 dxe3 17 fxe3 ♜xc5 18 b8 ♜ with a quick win.

Position 207

E.Gleizerov-V.Novgorodskij

Kazan 2007

1...♗e6!

Sacrificing the exchange in order to create counterplay. After 1...♞d8?! 2 dxc7! ♞xd1 3 ♞axd1 the passed pawn on c7 proves too strong; e.g. 3...♗b7 4 ♗xb7 ♜xb7 5 ♞d8+ ♗e8 6 ♞b8! ♜c6 7 ♗xb5! ♗f8 8 ♗xa7 ♜xc7 9 ♗xc7 ♞xa7 10 ♗b6 and Black resigned in S.Atalik-B.Kreiman, Los Angeles 1998. 1...♗b7?! 2 ♗xb7 ♜xb7 3 dxc7 is equally unconvincing.

2 ♗xa8 ♗xf4 3 gxf4 ♗h3

The bishop exchange will leave the white kingside without defenders.

4 ♗g2 ♗xg2 5 ♝xg2 b4! 6 ♗a4

Or 6 ♗d5 ♜xd6 7 ♗xf6+ ♜xf6 8 ♜c1 ♜e6!?, hitting e2 and preparing ...c4-c3.

6...♜c6+ 7 ♝g1 c4

A complex position has arisen, where Black's active pieces and the misplaced knight on a4 seem to compensate for the material deficit. The game continued 8 ♞c1 a5 9 ♜c2 ♗e8 10 ♞fd1 ♗xd6 11 ♞xd6 ♜xd6 12 ♜xc4 ♜d7! 13 b3 ♜g4+ 14 ♝h1 ♜h4 with counterplay for the pawn.

Position 208

A.Khalifman-E.Ermenkov

Elenite 1994

1 b4!!

Sacrificing the queen in exchange for a few connected passed pawns. Obviously 1 ♜b7 ♞b8 2 ♜a6 ♞a8 would just have led to a draw.

1...♞xc6

Or 1...cxb4 2 ♜a6 ♞a8 3 ♗a7, followed by b6-b7, while 2 b6!? ♞xc6 3 dxc6 is also strong.

2 dxc6e6

After 2...♜b6 3 c4 ♞a8 4 ♞a1! the black queen is left alone in the defence; e.g. 4...♞xa1 5 ♞xa1 e6 6 ♞a6 ♜c7 7 bxc5 dxc5 8 ♗xc5 with a quick win – Khalifman.

3 ♞ed1!

3 bxc5 d5 4 b6 d4 5 c7 ♜e7! is less clear – Khalifman.

3...♜b8

Both 3...cxd4 4 b6 and 3...d5 4 ♗xc5 d4 5 b6 are equally desperate for Black.

4 bxc5 d5 5 exd5 exd5 6 ♞xd5 ♜e8 7 c7 ♜f7 8 b6! ♜xd5 9 b7

Black resigned.

Position 209

J.Hellsten-R.Hungaski

Mendoza 2005

1 f3!

Preparing e3-e4 in order to advance the kingside majority. Less convincing is 1 e4?! dxe4 2 ♗cxe4 ♜c6 with rough equality.

1...♗b6 2 e4 ♗e8

After 2...dxe4 3 fxe4 ♗g4 4 ♞cd1 White is also better.

3 ♞fd1

3 e5 ♜d7 4 f4 ♗g7 is less promising.

3...f5 4 e5 ♜e7 5 f4 ♗c7 6 b3!

Tying the knight on b6 to the defence of the c4-pawn to prevent ...♗c8 and ...b7-b5.

6...♞d7 7 ♗f1 ♞fd8 8 ♗e3 ♝h8 9 ♜b2 g5?!

This just produces a weak pawn on f5, but Black had run out of constructive ideas.

10 ♞f1 cxb3 11 axb3 ♞g8 12 ♗d3 ♜f8 13

1 e2 f7

At this point the simple 14 fxg5 f4 (or 14...fxg5 15 f4) 15 f4 xf4 fx4 16 fxc7 would have led to a decisive advantage.

Position 210

T.Nyback-V.Ivanchuk

European Championship, Antalya 2004

1...a6!

Preparing ...b7-b5 in order to advance the queenside majority.

2 e3 b5 **3** f3

The simplifying attempt 3 axb5 axb5 4 b3? failed to 4...c3!

3...h6

With White lacking an active plan, Black has no reason to hurry.

4 h4 f8 **5** axb5 axb5 **6** e4 b3 **7** c2 a2!

Keeping up the pressure on the b2-pawn.

8 d2?

This loses at once. White had to play 8 b3, when 8...a8+! 9 g1 c3 keeps a clear advantage – Ivanchuk.

8...c3! 9 e4

Establishing a decisive pin.

10 a1 d5+ **11** e4 e6

White resigned.

Position 211

E.Grivas-Z.Ilincic

Varna 1994

1...dxe4!

Preparing the advance of the kingside pawn majority. Less convincing is 1...d4?! 2 e4, followed by d2 and e1-d3.

2 e4 f5 **3** d5 e7

Avoiding 3...e8?! 4 c6! with counterplay.

4 e2

Now 4 c6 proves harmless after 4...bxc6 5 e6 b8, while 4 O-O? fails to 4...e4 5 d4 e5! 6 a2 xh4 – Ilincic.

4...e4 5 d2 **6** e5 **6** a2 f4!

Gaining more space and preparing ...g4+.

7 f3 exf3+

Less clear is 7...e3?! 8 e4 with a blockade.

8 xf3 e3+! **9** xf4

Or 9 f2 g4 10 f3 f6 11 c2 d8, intending ...f5, with a clear advantage – Ilincic.

9...e2 10 c4 h5!

The immediate 10...fxg2?! permits 11 f3 g4 12 h5 with some counterplay.

11 e1 xg2

Black is clearly better.

Position 212

Y.Seirawan-J.Peters

US Championship, Greenville 1980

1 b4!

Advancing the pawn majority and preparing to activate the last piece by a2-d2.

1...e8 2 a2! a7?

A strange move. 2...c8 was preferable.

3 e5! c6 **4** xd7 xd7 **5** e4 f5!

Black desists from disputing the open file. 5...d6 6 e3 d8 must have been better.

6 e6! bxc6 **7** ad2

The rook reaches its ideal square and ...e6-e5 is prevented.

7...d6 8 b3 **c5 9** bxc5! e5 **10** d6!

White enjoys an overwhelming advantage; e.g. 10...e6 11 e6 d8 12 d7, followed by c5-c6, and the passed pawn decides.

Position 213**W.Wittmann-S.Dolmatov**

Frunze 1983

1...♖e7!

Intending ...f7-f5 and ...e6-e5 to advance the kingside pawn majority. The immediate 1...f5? was less precise due to 2 ♖xc6! ♜xc6 3 ♗f3, controlling e5.

2 c3?!

Preferable was 2 g3 f5 3 ♖g2 e5 with just a slight black edge – Dolmatov.

2...f5 3 ♖c2 e5

Now these two pawns control considerable space, and they can prove useful in a future kingside attack.

4♗f3♗g6 5 g3 b5!

Intending to deploy the bishop on the h1-a8 diagonal, which was weakened by g2-g3.

6 ♗g5

The beginning of an incorrect combination, but White was short of good options; e.g. 6 ♜fe1 ♖b7 7 ♗xe5? ♜ae8 and Black wins – Dolmatov.

6...h6 7 ♗d4? exd4 8 ♖.b3+ ♗h8 9 ♜h5 ♜c6 10 cxd4 ♜f6

Having a clear extra piece, Black won just a few moves later.

Position 214**S.Dolmatov-Alexa.Ivanov**

Tashkent 1980

1c5!

The first step in the advance of the queenside pawn majority. Other moves, such as 1 ♗c3 and 1 a3, permit 1...e5! with counterplay.

1...♖e7

Neither 1...♖xc5? 2 ♜c1 b6 3 b4 nor 1...♖b5?! 2 ♜e3! ♖xf1 3 cxd6 ♜c4 4 ♗d2 works out well for Black.

2 ♗c3 ♖c6

This time 2...♖xc5?! fails to 3 ♖xc5 ♜xc5 4 ♖xb7 ♜a7 5 ♖xa6 with a sound extra pawn – Dolmatov.

3 b4! ♖xf3 4 ♜xf3 ♜fd8 5 ♜fd1 ♗d5 6 ♗xd5 ♜xd5 7 ♖e3

The piece exchanges will make the potential passed pawn on c5 even stronger.

7...♜ad8 8 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 9 ♜d1 ♜xd1+

Resistance on the d-file by 9...♜d7? 10 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 fails to 11 ♜xd5 exd5 12 a4 ♗f8 13 b5 axb5 14 a5! ♜e8 15 c6 etc.

10 ♜xd1 g6

And here the simple 11 ♜c2!, preparing a2-a4, was very strong; e.g. 11...♜c6 12 a4 f6 13 ♜b3!, followed by b4-b5 with a clear advantage – Dolmatov.

Position 215**D.Sermek-G.Serper**

Tilburg 1994

1...a6!

Preparing ...b7-b5 in order to undermine White's pawn majority.

2 ♖b2 ♖f8

The immediate 2...b5?! permits 3 cxb5 axb5 4 ♗f5 ♖f8 5 ♗h6+! ♗h8 6 ♗g5 with an initiative – Serper.

3 ♜c1 ♗h5!

Heading for f4(-d3). Also interesting was 3...b5.

4 ♜cd1?!

Preventing the ...♗f4-d3 manoeuvre in advance, but now Black reverts to his first plan with great effect 4 g3 was better, with just a slight disadvantage after 4...g6 followed by ...♖g7 – Serper.

4...b5! 5 cxb5 axb5 6 ♗e2 b4!

Fixing the queenside and enabling ...♖b5.

7 ♜d4 ♜xd4

On 7...♖b5?! White had prepared 8 ♜fd1!

8 ♗exd4 ♗f4 9 ♜d1 ♜d8

Black has a more pleasant game. The battle concluded 10 g3? ♖e2+ 11 ♗g2 e5! 12 ♖xe5 ♖e6 13 ♖ef3 ♖6xd4 14 ♖xd4 ♗c5 15 ♖xe2 ♗xd1 16 ♖c1 and White resigned at the same time.

Position 216

C.Bauer-O.Korneev

Pamplona 2006

1 ♖d4!

Using some minor tactics White manages to advance his kingside pawn majority. Less convincing was 1 f4?! ♖c4 with an attack on the e3-pawn.

1...b6

Obviously 1...f6? failed to 2 ♖xa7.

2 f4! c5 3 ♗e4 ♗c6 4 ♗d3!

A clever tactical resource. After 4 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 5 ♗f3 Black can improve his defence by 5...♖b4! – Deviatkin.

4...f5

Or 4...♗xe4 5 ♗xe4 when neither 5...♖d7 6 ♗c6 ♖f6 7 ♗f2, followed by ♗f3 and e3-e4, nor 5...♖c4 6 ♗f2 ♗f8 7 ♗d5 ♖d6 8 e4 is at all appealing for Black.

5 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 6 g4! fxc4?!

This converts the e-pawn into a strong passed pawn. 6...♖e7 was a lesser evil.

7 hxc4 g5 8 ♗e4! ♖d8 9 f5

With the strong plan of ♗d5 and e4-e5. The game continued 9...♖f7 10 ♗d5 ♗f8 11 ♗xf7! ♗xf7 12 ♗f2 g6 13 ♗f3 followed by e4-e5 and White won without difficulties.

Position 217

M.Botvinnik-V.Smyslov

World Championship (game 12),
Moscow 1954

1 ♗xd8! ♗xd8 2 e5!

By handing over the open file White manages to push his kingside pawns.

2...♖d5

2...♗e8 makes little sense after 3 f4, while knight moves like 2...♖d6d7 permit 3 e6! fxe6 4 ♗xe6+, exposing the black king.

3 ♖xd5 cxd5 4 ♗d2!

Provoking Black's next move so that a later f4-f5 is effected with tempo. Less convincing is 4 f4?! gxf4 5 gxf4 d4, followed by ...d4-d3.

4...♖e6 5 f4 gxf4 6 gxf4 ♗c6?

This lets White continue his plan, eventually leading to a strong attack. Correct was 6...♗d4! 7 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 8 ♗d1 ♖e6 with just a slightly inferior endgame.

7 f5! ♖c5

Or 7...d4+ 8 ♗g1, followed by ♗g5, with similar play.

8 ♗g5! ♗d7

After 8...f6 9 ♗g2 fxe5 10 b4! ♖d3 11 f6 ♗d7 12 ♗e4! White wins – Botvinnik.

9 ♗g1 f6 10 exf6 ♖e4 11 f7+!

Deflecting the rook from the defence of the d5-pawn. The game concluded 11...♗xf7 12 ♗d8+ ♗h7 13 ♗xd5 ♖f2+ 14 ♗g2 ♗f6 15 ♖xf6 ♗xf6 16 ♗xf2 ♗xf5+ 17 ♗f3 ♗f4 18 ♗g4 and Black resigned.

Position 218

Pr.Nikolic-V.Seirawan

Wijk aan Zee 1995

1...♗e7!

Covering the rook on d8 before moving the knight from d7, where it controls the crucial square c5. Instead, the game continued 1...♖f6?! 2 ♗xd8+! ♗xd8 3 ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 4 c5!. Thus White converts his pawn majority into a passed pawn, besides which the pawn on a5 becomes weak. After 4...bxc5 5 ♖xc5+ ♗g8 6 ♗f3! ♗d2 7 a3 ♖d7 8 ♖c8+ ♗h7 9 ♗g2! ♖e5 10 ♗e4+ g6 11 h5! White was better on both flanks and later managed to win.

2 a3 ♖f6

Also possible is 2...♗c5 3 b4 axb4 4 axb4 ♗d7 with a waiting game, but not 4...♗a6?! 5 ♖a3! and the knight is misplaced on a6.

3 b4

After 3 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 4 ♗xd8 ♖xd8! White doesn't achieve c4-c5 either, just like in the main line.

3...axb4 4 axb4 ♗xd4 5 ♗xd4 ♖f8

Preparing ...♖e7 with some pressure on the b4-pawn. Black has no problems.

*Position 219***A.Lein-R.Kholmov**

USSR Team Championship 1967

1...f5!

A first step to a future ...f5-f4, undermining the white pawn chain.

2 ♗e1 ♗e6 3 ♗b2 ♖g5 4 a4 f4! 5 ♗f1

After 5 axb5? f3 Black obtains a strong attack.

5...♗f8 6 axb5 axb5 7 ♗a7 ♗c6 8 ♗a6 ♗d7!

Black isn't interested in a draw by repetition and directs his last piece at the enemy kingside.

9 exf4

Or 9 ♗a7 fxe3 10 fxe3 ♗ef6!, intending 11 ♗xd7 ♗f2 12 ♖xf2 ♗xf2 13 ♖xf2 ♖f5+ etc.

9...♗xf4 10 ♖e3 ♖d5

10...♗g6 11 g3 is less convincing.

11 ♗a7 ♗c8 12 ♗c7 ♗d3!

With a strong initiative.

*Position 220***V.Hort-R.Bogdanovic**

Sarajevo 1972

1 b5!

Preparing b5-b6 with decisive damage to Black's pawn chain.

1...h4 2 ♗f2 ♗g7

Or 2...dxc5 3 ♖xe5 with a crushing advantage.

3 b6! dxc5

3...cxb6 4 cxd6 ♖f8 5 ♖xb6 is equally hopeless.

4 bxc7 b5 5 ♗b6 c4 6 ♗xc4! bxc4 7 ♗xd7

In view of 7...♖xd7 8 ♖b8+, Black resigned.

*Position 221***N.Burnoiu-V.Iordachescu**

Bucharest 2003

1...c5!

Undermining the white pawn chain and enhancing a future queenside attack.

2 c3 c4! 3 ♗c2 a5

Black moves his focus from the d4-pawn to the one on c3. Due to his crippled pawn structure White is unable to launch a similar attack on the kingside.

4 ♗hg1

Or 4 ♗f6 ♗xf6 5 ♖xf6 ♗g8 with a clear edge - Lukacs.

4...b4 5 ♖d2 ♗c6 6 ♗f4 ♖d7!

A clever way of activating the rook on h8. Of course 6...0-0? 7 ♗xh5 had to be avoided.

7 ♗h3 b3!

A strong pawn sacrifice that is often executed on the opposite flank in the King's Indian.

8 axb3 cxb3 9 ♗xb3 a4 10 ♗a2 ♗a5! 11 ♖c2?

White had to try to distract the black pieces from the queenside; e.g. 11 ♖f4 ♗f8 12 ♗f6 ♗xf6 13 exf6!? with some remote hope of survival.

11...♗b8

Now the threat of 12...♗bc4 is decisive.

12 ♗f4?! ♗bc4

In view of the multiple threats, White resigned.

Position 222

R.Bar-A.Finkel

Israeli Championship, Tel Aviv 2002

1...f6!

Undermining White's centre, and clearing the f-file and the a1-h8 diagonal for his own pieces.

2 exf6

After 2 dxc5 bxc5 3 exf6 ♖xf6 4 ♖ad1 ♖ae8, the further advances ...d5-d4 and ...e6-e5 are already on the menu.

2...♖xf6 3 ♖ad1 ♖ac8 4 ♖d3

Or 4 ♖e5 ♜xe5 5 dxe5 ♖e7 6 g4 ♖h6, with ideas like ...d5-d4 and ...g6-g5 – Finkel.

4...cxd4 5 ♖e2 ♖e3!

Seizing the bishop pair.

6 ♖xe3 dxe3 7 ♖xe3 ♖ce8 8 c3 ♖h6!

Increasing the pressure on f4 and preparing ...e6-e5.

9 ♖fd4 ♖c5

The tempting 9...e5?! permits 10 ♖h3! with counterplay.

10 ♖h3 ♖g7 11 ♖c2 ♖c8 12 ♖g3 ♖d7 13 b3 ♖e4 14 ♖xe4 dxe4

Again preparing ...e6-e5, with an excellent game for Black.

Position 223

S.Dolmatov-T.Rakic

Frunze 1983

1 ♖3h2!

Preparing ♖g4 and f4-f5 with an attack.

1...b5

Perhaps 1...♖d7 2 ♖g40-0-0 was a safer choice.

2 ♖g4 ♖d7 3 axb5 axb5 4 ♖xa8+ ♖xa8 5 f4!

Now this advance gains strength due to the unsafe position of Black's king.

5...♖c7 6 ♖e3 b4 7 f5! exf5 8 ♖xf5 ♖e6 9 ♖f3 ♖a4?

9...0-0 was a lesser evil – Dolmatov.

10 ♖g5! ♖f8

Both 10...♖xg5 11 ♖d6+ and 10...♖xg5 11 ♖xg5, followed by e5-e6, are even more unpleasant for Black.

11 ♖xh4 ♖a2 12 ♖g5

With an extra pawn and a strong attack, White is winning.

Position 224

P.Jaracz-A.Onischuk

Koszalin 1999

1...♖e7!

Preparing ...f7-f5 with an attack on the white pawn chain.

2 ♖xc4 bxc4 3 ♖fd2 f5! 4 ♖a3 ♖f6 5 f3?!

Securing the d5-pawn, but also exposing the kingside. A lesser evil was 5 ♖axc4 fxe4 6 ♖xe4 ♖xd5, when Black is better thanks to his bishop pair and strong centre.

5...♖h5!

Now Black's kingside attack plays itself.

6 ♖f1 fxe4 7 fxe4 ♖h4! 8 ♖e2 ♖f6 9 ♖e3 ♖g6

On top of White's other problems, his e4-pawn has become vulnerable.

10 ♖c2 ♖f4 11 ♖xf4 exf4!

Creating the strong threat of ...f4-f3.

12 ♖xc4 f3 13 ♖e3

13 ♖d2 ♖ae8 is equally hopeless – Wedberg.

13...♖xd5!

In this desperate position, White resigned.

Position 225

V.Salov-M.Illescas Cordoba

Madrid 1994

1...b5!

Softening up White's pawn chain before he prevents this idea by 2 a4.

2 a4

Both 2 cxb5?! ♖xb5 and 2 c5 ♗f6 expose the d5-pawn.

2...bxc4 3 bxc4 b6

3...♗f6!?, preparing ...c7-c6, seems even simpler with a faster version of the game.

4g4

A lesser evil was 4 a5 bxa5 5 ♖xa5 ♖xa5 6 ♗xa5 c6 – Illescas.

4...c6!

Converting one of the enemy pawns into a weakness.

5 dxc6 ♖xc6 6 ♗b4?!

Preferable was 6 ♖e4 ♖xe4 7 ♖xe4 ♗f6 8 ♖e3 ♖fc8 9 ♗b4 with just a slight disadvantage after 9...♖xc4 10 ♗xd6 e4 – Illescas.

6...♗f6 7 ♗g3 ♖fc8 8 ♖b3 e4!

Before taking on c4, Black creates new weaknesses in the enemy camp.

9 f4 ♖xc4 10 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 11 ♗xd6 ♖d8!

Preparing a check on d3. Black is clearly better.

Position 226

Z.Ribli-M.Petursson

Reykjavik 1988

1 g4!

Softening up the black pawns on e4 and f5.

1...fxg4

After 1...g6?! 2 gxf5 gxf5 3 ♗h3, followed by ♖h1 and ♖g1+, the black king faces big trouble.

2 ♗xe4 ♗xe4

The aggressive 2...♗xb3? fails to 3 ♗c4! – Ribli.

3 ♖xe4 ♗f6 4 ♗xa5!

Eliminating the most active of Black's minor pieces.

4...♖xa5 5 ♗c4 ♖a6 6 ♖xg4

With a sound extra pawn, White went on to win.

Position 227

A.De Santis-Kr.Georgiev

Genoa 2006

1...♗e8!

Preparing ...♗c7 and ...b7-b5 with queenside activity.

2 ♖dg1 ♖g7 3 ♗ge2 ♗c7 4 f4

After 4 a4?! the effect of b7-b5 will be even greater; e.g. 4...b5! 5 cxb5 axb5 6 axb5 ♗b6 followed by ...♗d7 and ...♖e8.

4...exf4 5 ♗xf4 ♗e5 6 ♗e2 b5! 7 ♗g2

Obviously 7 cxb5? axb5 8 ♗xb5 ♗xb5 9 ♗xb5 ♖xa2 is very bad for White.

7...♗g5 8 h4 ♗xe3 9 ♗xe3 ♗d7 10 h5 g5!

Closing the doors for White's kingside attack. From now on a knight on f5 can always be swapped off, whereas Black has interesting attacking prospects on the opposite flank. The game continued 11 ♖g2 h6 12 ♖f1 ♖f7 13 ♗cd1 ♖e7 14 ♖a5 ♖d8 15 b3 ♖b8 16 ♗b2 ♗c8 17 ♖gf2 ♖e7 18 ♖c3 ♗d7 19 ♗d3 b4!?, followed by ...a5-a4, with a better game for Black.

Position 228

M.Adams-R.Kasimdzhanov

FIDE World Championship, Tripoli 2004

1 ♗3h2!

Preparing f2-f4 with a kingside attack.

1...♖d8 2 f4 exf4

Otherwise White could expand by 3 f5.

3 ♖xf4 ♖e7 4 ♗f3 f6 5 ♗g3 ♖d8

Also after 5...♖f7 6 ♖f1 ♖e7 7 e5! Black is in trouble; e.g. 7...dxe5 8 ♖e3 ♗e8 9 ♗e4 ♗xh6 10 ♖xh6 ♗cd6 11 ♗xc5 with a clear advantage – Adams.

6 ♖f1 ♗e8 7 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 8 e5!

A decisive breakthrough.

8...dxe5

Or 8...fxe5 9 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 10 ♗xe5+ ♗g8

11 ♖f7 and wins – Adams.

9 ♖xe5 ♗cd6 10 ♖ae1 ♜g7 11 ♗d3 ♖ac8 12 ♜f2!

The c5-pawn is doomed, e.g. 12...♗b7 13 ♗e4. White won without major problems.

Position 229

R.Réti-F.Vates

New York 1924

1 d4!

Forcing a favourable alteration of the pawn structure.

1...e4

After 1...exd4?! 2 ♗xd4 or 2 ♗xd4 White is clearly better thanks to the weak d5-pawn and control of the a1-h8 diagonal.

2 ♗e5! ♗xe5 3 dxe5 ♗h7

Or 3...♗g4 4 e6!, winning the g7-pawn.

4 f4!

More dynamics. White reinforces the e5-pawn and creates new opportunities on the kingside.

4...exf3 5 exf3 ♗g5 6 f4 ♗h3+

After 6...♗e4 7 ♖d1 f5 8 ♗xe4 fxe4 9 f5!, followed by 10 e6, Black collapses.

7 ♗h1 d4?

Desperation, but 8 ♗.d4 was coming up with a complete restriction of Black's counterplay.

8 ♗xd4 ♖ad8 9 ♖xc6!

A decisive blow.

9...bxc6 10 ♗xc6 ♗f2+ 11 ♗g2 ♜xd4 12 ♜xd4 ♖xd4 13 ♗xe8 ♗e4 14 e6! ♖d2+ 15 ♗f3

In view of 15...♗d6 16 ♗c4!, Black resigned.

Position 230

A.Vermolinsky-V.Salov

Wijk aan Zee 1997

1...d5!

Exploiting the exposed position of the queen at e2 in order to break through in the centre.

2 cxd5 exd5 3 exd5?

This leads to a complete activation of Black's forces. A lesser evil was 3 ♗f4! ♗d6 4 ♗xd6 ♜xd6 5 ♜f2 with just a slight disadvantage – Salov.

3...♗a3! 4 ♖c2 ♖xc3! 5 ♖xc3 ♗xd5 6 ♖cd3 ♗c5 7 f4

The only move, since 7 ♗c6? ♗xc6 8 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 9 ♖xd5 fails to 9...♗c1! – Salov.

7...♗xd3 8 ♖xd3 ♗c5 9 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 10 ♗f5

In a difficult position White decides upon an exchange sacrifice.

10...♗e4 11 ♗xc5 ♗xd3

Not 11...♗xf5? 12 ♖e3! and White escapes.

12 ♜xd3 bxc5 13 ♜c3 f6 14 ♜c4+ ♗h8 15 ♜f7 ♖g8

With 16...♜e8 next, Black gradually converted his extra material.

Position 231

P.H.Nielsen-E.Agrst

Malmö 2004

1 e4!

Whatever happens next, this advance is bound to create new opportunities.

1...♖d8

1...♗xb6? 2 cxb6 followed by ♗c5 is simply crushing, while after 1...dxe4? 2 ♗xe4 the pressure on c6 is decisive.

2 exd5 exd5 3 g5

Thanks to the exchange on d5, the h3-c8 diagonal has become available for White's pieces.

3...♗d7

Or 3...♖e8 4 ♖xb5! cxb5 5 ♜xb5 ♖e6 6 ♗h3, followed by ♗f4.

4 ♗xd5 cxd5

After 4...♗xd4 5 ♜xd4 cxd5 6 e6+! fxe6 7

♖xg7+ ♗c8 8 ♜f6 Black's king is decisively exposed.

5 ♜xb5+ ♗e7 6 ♖b4

Heading for c6. The game continued 6...♗f8 7 ♖c6 ♜c8 8 ♜b4 ♜g4+ 9 ♗f2 ♜h4+ 10 ♗e2 ♜g4+ 11 ♗d3 ♜aa8 12 ♖xd8 ♜xd8 13 ♜b7 and White soon won.

Position 232

M. Illescas Cordoba-N. Short

Pamplona 1999

1...c5!

A strong advance that liberates both bishops.

2 dxc5

After 2 g3 c4 Black is clearly better – Short.

2...d4! 3 ♖xd4 ♗.xd4!

The strongest recapture, enabling the future tactical resource ...♖f3+.

4 exd4 ♖xd4 5 ♗h1

Or 5 ♜cd1 ♖f3+ 6 gxf3 ♜g5+ and wins.

5...♖f3! 6 ♜xd8+

After 6 ♜dd1 ♜g5! the threat of ...♜f4 can't be parried; e.g. 7 ♖e2 ♜h4 8 gxf3 ♜xf2 9 ♗g2 ♗xf3 10 ♗xf3 ♜xf3+ 11 ♗g1 ♜xe2 and wins – Short.

6...♜xd8 7 c6 ♗xc6 8 ♖e2 ♜h4!

With decisive threats at h2 and f2.

9 gxf3 ♜xf2 10 ♖f4

If 10 ♜xc6 ♜xf1+ 11 ♖g1, then 11...♜d2 12 ♜g6 ♜f2 with imminent mate.

10...♗xf3+ 11 ♗g2 ♜d2 12 ♜g1 ♗e4!

In view of 13...♜xf4 next, White resigned.

Position 233

A. Suetin-A. Batuev

USSR 1949

1 d5!

Forcing a favourable alteration of the

pawn structure.

1...cxd5

After 1...♗xd5? 2 ♜e8+ ♗h7 3 ♗xf5+ White wins a piece.

2 ♖d4 ♗f6?!

2...♖f8 was more solid, when 3 ♖xf5 ♗f6 4 c3 yields White a small but enduring advantage.

3 ♖xe6 fxe6 4 ♜xe6 ♖e5

Since 4...g6? fails to 5 ♗b5, the f5-pawn can't be saved.

5 ♗xf5 ♖c6 6 ♗.c3 ♗.xc3 7 bxc3

Thanks to his extra pawn and strong bishop, White is clearly better.

Position 234

Y. Shulman-W. Paschall

Philadelphia 2003

1...b5!

Preparing the strong breakthrough ...d6-d5. The immediate 1...d5?! is less convincing due to 2 exd5 exd5 3 f5 ♜a8 4 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 5 cxd5.

2 cxb5 d5!

The most active follow-up, though the simple 2...axb5!? also looks sensible.

3 e5

3 f5 is well met by 3...♜a8, while both 3 bxa6?! ♗xa6 and 3 cxd5 ♖xd5 just help Black to activate his pieces.

3...♖ce4 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 5 ♗xe4

In this position a draw was agreed, but Black had every reason to keep on playing; i.e. 5...dxe4 6 ♖d4 axb5 with ...♜d5 and ...♜cd8 or even ...g6-g5!? coming up.

Position 235

I. Boleslavsky-R. Fine

USSR-USA radio match 1945

1 c5!

Fixing weak pawns on d6 and c6. Less

convincing is 1 ♖e3?! c5 2 ♖xd7+ ♜xd7, with ...♗c6-d4 coming up.

1...♗c8

After 1...dxc5? 2 ♖e3 White soon recovers the pawn with a clear positional advantage, while 1...d5? 2 exd5 cxd5 fails to 3 ♗xd5! ♗xd5 4 ♜xd5 ♖xa4 5 ♜e4+ etc.

2 ♖e3 0-0 3 ♜d2 ♜e7 4 ♖ad1 ♖e8?!

4...♖d8 first was preferable, connecting the rooks.

5 f4!

In view of Black's badly coordinated pieces, White sharpens the game.

5...f5?!

This won't end well, but it was difficult to find a good remedy to the f4-f5 threat.

6 exf5 gxf5 7 ♖fe1 dxc5 8 ♜f2 ♗d6 9 ♖xc5 ♜d8 10 ♖d4!

Swapping Black's main defender.

10...♖xd4 11 ♜xd4

With moves like ♖e3-g3 and ♖b3+ coming up, White has an overwhelming advantage.

Position 236

A. Shirov-L. Brunner

Biel 1995

1...dxc4 2 bxc4 c5!

Undermining the enemy centre.

3 dxc5

Or 3 d5 ♗gxe5 4 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 5 dxe6 ♜xd1 6 exf7+ ♗xf7 7 ♖xd1 ♖g7 with a solid game for Black.

3...♖g7 4 ♖a3 0-0!

Instead, the game continued 4...♗gxe5?! 5 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 6 ♜a4+! with ideas like ♗b5 and ♖ad1, and White enjoyed a strong initiative.

5 c6 bxc6 6 ♖xf8 ♜xf8

Black is slightly better – Shirov. The e5-pawn falls on the next move, and the bishop pair is a long-term asset.

Position 237

W. Uhlmann-L. Portisch

Skopje/Ohrid 1968

1 a4!

Creating new opportunities on the queenside.

1...bxc4 2 a5!

Speeding up the ♗a4-b6 plan. After 2 ♖xc4?! ♖f8 3 a5 ♖xc5 4 bxc5 ♜e7 5 ♗a4 ♖xd1 6 ♖xd1 ♖d8 Black defends rather well.

2...♖xd1

Or 2...♖f8 3 ♗a4 and the knight is ready to recapture on c5.

3 ♖xd1 ♗d7 4 ♗a4! ♗f8

After 4...♖d8?! 5 ♖xc4 ♗xc5 6 ♗xc5 the a6-pawn becomes exposed.

5 ♖xc4 ♗e6 6 ♗b6 ♖b8?!

This leads to unexpected tactical problems, but after 6...♖d8 7 ♖xe6 fxe6 8 ♗c4 Black is also suffering – Portisch.

7 ♖d6! ♗d4

The natural 7...♖f8 fails to 8 ♗d7!.

8 ♜a2!

With the decisive threat of 9 ♖d7, which can't be parried by 8...♖c8 due to 9 ♖xf7+! ♜xf7 10 ♖d8+. Therefore Black resigned.

Position 238

K. Rasmussen-J. Hellsten

Gistrup 1996

1...f5!

Gaining some space and preventing the plan of e4-e5 and ♗e4-d6. Also possible is 1...♜c7!? 2 e5 f5! in the same spirit.

2 exf5

2 ♖ad1 permits 2...f4 3 ♖c1 f3! 4 gxf3 ♖g5 with a strong initiative, while after 2 f3 ♜a5 3 ♖ac1 fxe4!, both 4 ♗xe4 ♗xe3 5 ♜xe3 ♜xa2 and 4 fxe4 ♖xf1+ 5 ♜xf1 ♖f8+ leave Black on top.

2...exf5!

Instead, the game saw 2...♖xf5? 3 a4! ♗d7 4 axb5 cxb5 5 ♖fb1 ♗c6 6 ♗d3 ♙d8 7 d5 with a strong white initiative.

3 ♖ad1

Both 3 d5 ♙f6 and 3 ♗f3 f4! 4 ♙xf4 ♗xd4 lead to problems for White.

3...♙f6 4 ♗f3 ♗d7

Preparing ...♖ad8, with a more active game for Black.

Position 239

J.Hellsten-Zhang Zhong

Yerevan Olympiad 1996

1 h3!

Preparing g3-g4 to soften up Black's kingside.

1...♗e5

After 1...♙xd4 2 exd4 ♗f6 3 g4! fxg4 4 ♖be1 gxh3 5 ♗xh3 Black is also under pressure.

2 g4! fxg4 3 hxg4 ♖d8

If 3...♗xg4?, then 4 ♙xg7 ♗xg7 5 ♗e6! and White wins.

4 ♖f4! g5 5 ♖f5!

Instead, the game continued 5 ♖xe4 ♙g6 6 ♖xe5 ♙xe5 7 ♙xe5 ♙xb1 8 ♙xb8 ♖xb8 9 ♙xc6 h6 and White's unsafe king made it difficult for him to progress.

5...♖xd4!

The only defence, and the move that worried me during the game.

6 exd4 ♗xg4 7 ♗g3!

Surrendering the d4-pawn in order to create a double threat at g4 and b8.

7...♙xd4+ 8 ♖h1

In this complex position White keeps some winning chances; e.g. 8...♗f2+ 9 ♖xf2 ♙xc5 10 ♖f5! ♖xb4 11 ♖xb4 ♙xb4 12 ♖e5! ♗f8 13 ♗xg5+ ♙g6 14 ♖xe4.

Position 240

J.Klinger-M.Wahls

Dortmund 1989

1...b5!

Unlocking White's queenside in order to enhance an attack on the exposed king on h2.

2 axb5 axb5 3 cxb5 d5! 4 ♗d2 ♗d6

With the simple threat of 5...♗xb5.

5 b6

After 5 ♗e2 ♖c2! or 5 ♖c2 ♗xb5 6 ♖dc1 d4! 7 exd4 ♗xd4 8 ♖a2 ♗e2 Black is winning – Wahls.

5...♗xb6 6 ♗a4?!

This lets the black queen enter on the light squares, but after 6 ♙b2 ♗b4 7 ♗cb1 ♗e4 8 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 White also had a hopeless game.

6...♗b5 7 ♗c3 ♖xc3! 8 ♙xc3 ♗e2+ 9 ♖g1 ♖xc3 10 ♗f2 ♗xe3 11 ♗xe3 ♖xe3

White resigned.

Position 241

B.Lalic-M.Turner

Metz 1998

1 b4!

A clever attack on Black's pawn chain.

1...bxc4

Or 1...cxb4 2 c5! with similar consequences.

2 bxc5 dxc5 3 ♖a5!

The simplest follow-up, in order to recover the pawn at once, after which the bishop pair becomes terrific.

3...♗f6 4 ♙e6+ ♖h8 5 ♙xc5 ♗c7 6 ♙xf8 ♗xa5 7 ♙d6 ♖e8 8 ♗e2

Of course not 8 ♙xe5? ♖xe6 – Lalic.

8...e4 9 ♗e3

With the decisive threat of 10 ♗d4.

9...♙b7 10 ♗d4 ♗d8 11 ♙e5 ♖g7 12 ♖a1

Black resigned.

Position 242

V.Korchnoi-L.Portisch
Brussels 1986

1...e5!

A strong advance that will leave Black in command of the centre.

2 dxe5 dxe5 3 ♖e2

3 ♖c2 seems more natural, when 3...e4 4 ♗d4 ♗e5! 5 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 6 ♙xe4 ♗xc4 yields Black a more pleasant game. Obviously his knight is immune due to mate.

3...e4 4 ♗d4 ♗e5!

Heading for the protected square at d3.

5 ♖h3?!

A lesser evil was 5 ♗xe4!? ♗xe4 6 ♙xe4 ♗f3+ 7 gxf3 ♙xe4 8 ♙xe4 – Portisch.

5...♗g7 6 ♗4b3?

A tactical slip in time trouble. After 6 ♗b5 ♙d7 7 ♗xe5 ♙xe5 Black remains on top, but his strong knight is gone.

6...♗d3 7 ♗xf6 ♗f4! 8 ♙e3 ♗xh3+ 9 gxh3 ♗xf6 10 ♗xe4 ♗g7

Black later realized his material advantage.

Position 243

M.Jonsson-J.Hellsten
Helsingborg 1991

1...b5!

An unexpected advance that softens up the c4 and d5 squares for the black pieces. In contrast, 1...♗xe5 2 exd4 or 1...dxe3 2 ♙xe3 just leads to sterile equality.

2 exd4

Also after 2 cxb5 ♗xe5 3 exd4 ♙d5+!, followed by ...♙fd8, or 2 ♙e2 bxc4 3 bxc4 dxe3 4 ♙xe3 ♗b6, preparing ...♙c7 and ...♙fd8, Black has a more active game.

2...bxc4 3 bxc4 ♗b6!

Not 3...♗xe5? 4 ♙e2! and Black's previous efforts were in vain.

4 ♖ac1?

Simply blundering a pawn. Correct was 4 ♙d3 cxd4 5 ♙xd4 ♗xc4 with a slightly better endgame for Black.

4...♗xc4! 5 ♙c3 ♙d5+ 6 ♗g1 ♗xb2 7 ♙xb2 cxd4

Black later realized his extra pawn.

Position 244

D.Howell-V.Epishin
Lake George 2005

1 b4!

An unexpected advance that drastically alters the balance of the position.

1...cxd4

After 1...b6 2 ♗a4! White is soon able to land a knight on c6, while 1...cxb4 2 axb4 ♗xb4? fails to 3 ♙xf6 ♗xc3 4 ♗g4 h5 5 ♗h6+ ♗h7 6 ♗xg6+ with a decisive attack.

2 exd4 ♗d7 3 ♗xd7 ♗xd7 4 ♙e3

White has emerged with a mobile pawn majority on the queenside.

4...♙de8 5 c5! f5

Weakening the a2-g8 diagonal, but it was not easy to find a constructive plan.

6 d5! exd5 7 ♗xd5 ♗d8 8 ♙d4 ♗e6

After 8...♙e5 9 ♗b3 ♗h8 10 ♗c7! ♗xc7 11 ♙xe5+ ♗xe5 12 ♙xd7 Black is also suffering, but now he loses the exchange.

9 ♗a4 ♗f7 10 ♗xe8 ♙xe8 11 ♗f6+ ♗xf6 12 ♙xf6

White later realized his material advantage.

Position 245

J.Hellsten-B.Avrukh
Kavala 2003

1 f4!

Preparing to create new opportunities with f4-f5. Despite the extra pawn White is worse here due to his inferior pawn struc-

ture, so he should act dynamically. The game instead saw 1 f3? e6 2 d4? (it was not yet too late for 2 f4!) 2...a6 3. a4 d4 4 c6 bxc6 5. c1 (avoiding a fork on b2) 5...c5 6. e2 b6! 7. b3. xe2 8. xe2 xc3 and Black later realized his extra pawn.

1...e6

Preparing ...f8xc5 just as in the game. 1...c4 2. xc4! xc4 3. d7 and 1...xe2 2. xe2 xc3 3. c2 cause White fewer worries.

2 f5! exf5 3 exf5 f8

Or 3...c4 4. xc4 dxc4 5. d4 f8 6. d4!, followed by 7. d5. After the text the knight also finds a good route.

4 d3! xc5 5. xc5. xc5 6. e4. xb3

The immediate 6...xf5? runs into 7. d6.

7 axb3. xf5

Or 7...c7 8. f6!, restricting Black's king-side.

8 d6. h5 9. dxb7

With ideas like e7 and c3-c4, White is by no means worse in the endgame.

Position 246

I.Zakharevich-L.Guliev

St. Petersburg 1997

1 d4!!

This exchange sacrifice completely changes the logic of the position. Now the threat is 2. f4. Less convincing was 1. g5?! f5 or 1. h2?!. d7, followed by ...ac8.

1...xd4 2. cxd4. a6?!

This lets the white knight occupy the newly created post on e5. 2...d7 3. xh6. e8 was preferable, when 4. d3. b6 5. e5. xd5 6. e4 keeps a clear initiative.

3. e5! d8 4. d2! f8

Or 4...xd5 5. xh6. xd4 6. d6! f6 7. xg6+ h8 8. b2! and wins – Zakharevich.

5. c4

Now d5-d6 is inevitable, since 5...d6? fails to 6. a3.

5...d7 6. d6. e6 7. a3. g7 8. e1! g5

Or 8...d7 9. d7. xd7 10. xe6. fe6 11. xe6, preparing d4-d5 and b2.

9. d3. f6

After 9...d4 10. d7! d3 11. d8+ e6 12. xe6. de1 13. d7+ xg7 14. e6! the passed pawn soon decides – Zakharevich.

10. e3. g7 11. f3. f6 12. d7!

In view of 12...xd7 13. d7. xd7 14. xe6+ xe6 15. g6+ h8 16. h3, Black resigned.

Position 247

H.Mecking-V.Seirawan

Match (game 4), Sao Paulo 1992

1. g4!

Restricting the knight on h6. In contrast, the game continued 1. e6? d5! 2. c2. g6 with counterplay for Black, whose knight has an excellent destiny on d4.

1...c5

Preparing ...d4. Other moves, such as 1...g6, can be met by 2. e6! just like in the main line.

2. e4

In view of Black's plan, White improves his queen.

2...g6 3. e3. g7

If 3...d8, then 4. e6! with similar play.

4. e6! f6

Or 4...xe6 5. c3+, preparing xe6 with a strong initiative.

5. a4!

Intending a4-a5 with a second front. White is clearly better.

Position 248

S.Furman-L.Polugaevsky

USSR Championship, Moscow 1969

1 ♖a4!

Restricting the knight on b8. Other good options were 1 ♖f5!? or 1 ♖b3!? in the same spirit.

1...♗e7 2 ♖b3

In order to double rooks at some moment. Black can hardly undertake anything.

2...g5 3 ♗g3 f6 4 ♖g6!

A key move that keeps up the pressure.

4...♗d6 5 ♗xd6 ♖xd6 6 ♖e7+ ♗f7

Or 6...♗h7 7 ♖h3! with ♗c2+ next – Belov.

7 ♖f5

Exploiting the fresh protected square. Meanwhile, Black still can't develop his knight or queen's rook.

7...♗e6 8 ♖c1! h5 9 h3 h4 10 ♖c7+ ♗f8

Or 10...♗g6 11 ♖f3! with a mating attack.

11 ♗e3!

Swapping the defender on e6.

11...♖xe3 12 ♖xe3 ♗d3 13 ♖c8+ ♗f7 14 ♖xd5 1-0

Position 249

B.Englisch-W.Steinitz

London 1883

1...b6!

Preparing ...c7-c5 in order to restrict White's minor pieces.

2 h3

After 2 ♗d4!? ♖e2 3 f3 ♗f5 4 ♖f2 ♖de8 the command of the second rank yields Black some advantage.

2...♗e6 3 ♖fd1

Now after 3 ♗.d4?! ♗xb3 4 axb3 ♗.xd4 5 cxd4 a5 the rook endgame is clearly favourable to Black, while the attempt to avoid it

by 4 ♗.xg7? fails tactically to 4...♗c4.

3...c5! 4 ♗g5?!

This just helps Black in gaining space and approaching with his king, but White was short of prospects anyway.

4...f6 5 ♗f4 ♗f7

There followed 6 f3 g5 7 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 8 ♗e3 h6 9 ♖e1 f5 10 f4 ♗f6 11 g3 a5 12 ♖c1 a4 13 a3 ♗.c4!, restricting the white knight with a huge advantage.

Position 250

V.Eingorn-H.Jonkman

Metz 2003

1 ♗a5!

Preventing an enemy attack with ...b5-b4 and ...a5-a4.

1...♖ae8 2 h3 ♗h8 3 g4!?

The most consistent choice. In contrast, the game continued 3 ♗a1 ♖g6 4 ♖b1 ♗f7 5 ♖d2 ♖e7 6 ♖c1 ♖c8 7 ♖hd1 h6 8 ♖c2 ♖fe8 9 ♖dc1 ♖f8 10 a3 e5 with unclear play.

3...♖h4

By attacking f2 Black interferes with the plan of ♖dg1 and g4-g5.

4 ♖df1 e5

A less active defence permits 5 f3 with central activity.

5 dxе5 ♗xe5 6 f4! ♗b8 7 ♖b2

Preparing ♗c3 with a promising attack.

Position 251

G.Kasparov-S.Gligoric

Lucerne Olympiad 1982

1 f3!

An excellent measure of restriction, which takes the e4-square away from several black pieces, and soon d5 as well.

1...♖c7

Or 1...♖f5 2 ♖c3 ♗b7 3 e4, keeping the advantage.

2 e4 ♖a8 3 b5!

Fixing a target on a7. We can also notice that the bishop on a8 has turned into a very passive piece.

3... ♜fe8 4 ♜a4 f5

This leads to new weaknesses, but Black was short of constructive ideas.

5 ♜b3! ♜c8 6 exf5 ♜c5+?!

Now White manages to swap the active enemy queen. Preferable was 6... ♜xf5 7 ♜c3 with a clear, though not decisive advantage – Kasparov.

7 ♜f1 ♖d5 8 ♜a3! ♜xa3 9 ♖xa3 exf5 10 ♖c5 ♜c8 11 ♜c6! ♜f7

Or 11... ♖xc6 12 ♖c4+!, followed by b5xc6, when Black is terribly passive.

12 ♜xa7 ♜xa7 13 ♖xa7

White later realized his extra pawn.

Position 252

M.Euwe-S.Reshevsky
World Championship,
The Hague/Moscow 1948

1... ♜e4! 2 ♖b2 f6!

Restricting the enemy bishop and parrying the threat of 3 b5. In contrast, 2... axb4? 3 axb4 is illogical since it opens the a-file for the white rooks.

3 b5 ♜e7

The b2-bishop is no longer impressive, while the c4-pawn has turned into a weakness, something that Black soon exploits.

4 ♜fd1 ♜d6 5 ♜f1 ♜c8! 6 ♜dc1

At this point 6... ♜c5! 7 ♜c2 ♜b6, followed by ... ♜ad8, leads to a clear black advantage – Keres.

Position 253

J.Hellsten-P.Mueller
Hallsberg 1991

1... ♜g4?

After this the bishop on b6 becomes eternally isolated. Black should have preferred 1... ♖xe3+! 2 fxe3 a5 with just a slight disadvantage.

2 d4! ♜xe3 3 fxe3

Now White is basically a piece up.

3... ♜f8 4 ♜hf1 ♜e7 5 ♖c2

Opening a new front on the kingside with a big advantage.

Position 254

A.Morozevich-A.Petrushin
Krasnodar 1997

1 ♜e2!

A simple but strong restrictive measure. Other moves, such as 1 ♖f4?!, permit 1... ♖a6! perhaps followed by ... ♖d3-g6, and Black drastically improves his worst piece.

1... f5

Worried about a potential attack on his king, Black accepts an inferior pawn structure. If 1... ♜d7, preparing ... ♖c6-b5, then White should avoid 2 ♖c2?! in view of 2... ♖a6!, and instead consider 2 g4 ♖c6 3 g5 ♖b5 4 ♜f3, intending g2-g3, ♜g2 and ♜h1 with attacking chances.

2 exf6 ♖xf6 3 ♜d3 ♜d7 4 ♖f4

A good diagonal for the bishop, where it prevents a liberating ...e6-e5 advance.

4... ♖c6 5 ♖c2 g6 6 ♜ad1 ♖b5 7 ♜d2 ♖a6 8 ♖b1 ♜c6 9 ♖e5!

Swapping Black's "good" bishop in order to exploit his dark square weaknesses more efficiently.

9... ♖xe5 10 ♜xe5 ♜g7 11 ♜de1

White is clearly better.

Position 255

F.Yates-J.R.Capablanca
Moscow 1925

1...c4!

Mastering Chess Strategy

Restricting the bishop on f1. It is worth observing that, in the absence of knights, White is unable to exploit the blockading square on d4. Less good was 1...♖xe5? 2 ♗b5+ or 1...♗e7?! 2 c4! d4 3 f4 followed by ♗g2.

2 f4 g6!

Preventing f4-f5.

3 ♖b1 h5 4 ♗h4 ♗e7 5 ♗g5?

A senseless sacrifice, but after 5 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 Black is also clearly better thanks to his superior minor piece.

5...♗xg5 6 fxg5 ♖xe5 7 ♖e3 0-0

A sound extra pawn up, Black went on to win without major problems.

Position 256

A.Karpov-A.Yusupov

USSR Championship, Moscow 1983

1 ♖c5!

Preventing Black's only active idea, ...♖a5-c4. Besides which, a doubling of rooks with ♖bc2 is enabled.

1...♖e7

Or 1...♖a7 2 ♖bc2 ♖aa6 3 ♖h2 is similar.

2 ♖h2!

Preparing a kingside advance with g2-g4, f2-f4 and f4-f5.

2...♖f5?

This simply drops a pawn. Preferable was 2...c6 with just a slight disadvantage – Yusupov.

3 ♖bc2! ♖g6 4 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 5 ♖xc7

With a sound extra pawn, White went on to win.

Position 257

I.Radulov-H.Westerinen

Helsinki 1972

1 ♗xb7! ♖xb7 2 ♖c6!

White has managed to isolate the enemy rook on b7.

2...♖a8 3 ♗xf6!

With every exchange the inferiority of that rook will make itself more strongly felt.

3...gxg6 4 f5!

Softening up the light squares.

4...e5

In the event of 4...exf5, one of several tempting replies is 5 ♖e7+! ♗xe7 6 ♖xe7, followed by ♖dd7.

5 b4!

Prophylaxis against the ...b6-b5 advance, which from now on will be met by c4-c5.

5...♗g7 6 ♖e4 h5 7 h4

Black has been deprived of any counterplay.

7...♖g8 8 ♖d2 ♖h6 9 ♖g1 ♖bb8

Desperation in a difficult position.

10 ♖xb8 ♗xb4+ 11 ♖e2 ♖xb8 12 g4

White went on to win.

Position 258

Mil.Pavlovic-V.Akopian

Gibraltar 2007

1...b6!

Restricting White's intended queenside advance, which could have become real after 1...♗xa3?! 2 ♖xa3, followed by ♖c2, a2-a3 and b3-b4.

2 ♗xc5 bxc5 3 ♖a3 ♖d6 4 ♖e5

Or 4 ♖c2 ♖g6 5 ♖d2 ♖d7, preparing ...♖de5, with pressure on d3.

4...♖d7 5 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 6 ♖b1 f5!

Speeding up the kingside play before White consolidates with ♖d2-f3. Now 7 f4 runs into 7...g5! 8 fxg5 ♖g6 9 ♖f3 with a strong initiative.

7 ♖d2 f4! 8 g4

If 8 ♖e4, then simply 8...♖e5.

8...f3!? 9 ♖xf3 ♖g6 10 ♖g5 ♖f4

Preparing ...h7-h5 with an attack. Thanks to his powerful knight, Black enjoys good compensation for the pawn.

Position 259**V.Engorn-E.Agrest**

European Club Cup, Chalkidiki 2002

1 ♖xa6 ♜xa6 2 h6!

In order to imprison Black's bishop just before he vacates the f8-square by ...♖fe8 or ...♖fc8. In contrast, the more aggressive 1 ♖e3?! ♜c6 2 ♖f4 permitted 2...♜b4! with counterplay.

2...♗h8 3 ♜h2 f6 4 f4! fxe5 5 fxe5 ♜c7

Or 5...♖ac8 6 ♜f3 ♖c2 7 ♗d2 ♜c7 8 ♖c1 with a clear edge – Ftacnik. 4...♖ac8 can be met in similar fashion.

6 ♗e3

From now White is basically a piece up and should just try to neutralize Black's temporary initiative.

6...♜b5 7 ♗d2 ♖ac8 8 a4 ♜c3 9 ♖hc1 ♜e4+ 10 ♗d3 ♗f7 11 ♜f3 ♗e6 12 ♜g5+!

Swapping the more active (to say the least) of Black's minor pieces. This also helps to improve his own bishop,

12...♜xg5 13 ♗xg5 ♗f5 14 ♗e7! ♖fe8 15 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 16 ♖f1+ ♗e6

Since 16...♗g4 fails to 17 ♖f8 ♖xf8 18 ♗xf8 ♗g3 19 ♗g7!, Black has to go passive.

17 ♗d6 a6 18 g4 g5 19 ♖f5 ♖g8 20 ♗a3!

Finally Black is in zugzwang. There followed 20...♖g6 21 ♗f8 ♖g8 22 ♗b4 a5 23 ♗d6 ♖c8 24 ♖xg5 and White soon won.

Position 260**G.Vescovi-S.Skembris**

Copenhagen 1995

1 d6!

Imprisoning three black pieces on a6, a8 and b8. Other moves, such as 1 ♖d2?!, permit 1...d6 and Black is fine.

1...♗b7

Here or later, 1...bxa3 2 bxa3! doesn't change anything.

2 ♖d3 ♖e8 3 ♖fd1

Overprotecting the crucial d6-pawn.

3...♖e6 4 ♜e1! ♖g6

White was ready to meet 4...♗c6 by 5 ♗g4.

5 ♖g3!

Very clever. It is worth a pawn to swap off Black's active pieces, so that he is left with only bad ones. Now 5...♖xe4? fails to 6 ♗f3.

5...♖xg3 6 hxg3 ♗xe4 7 ♗f3! ♗xf3 8 gxf3 e4 9 f4

Despite his minus pawn, White is winning.

9...bxa3 10 bxa3 f5 11 ♜c2 ♗f7 12 ♜e3 g6 13 g4!

Opening a new front on the kingside.

13...fxg4 14 ♜xg4

The game continued 14...h5 15 ♜e5+ ♗e8 16 ♗h2 g5 17 ♗g3 gxf4+ 18 ♗xf4 ♖f6+ 19 ♗xe4 ♖xf2 20 ♖g1 ♗xd6 21 ♜xd6+ ♗f8 22 ♖af1 and White soon won.

Position 261**M.Taimanov-M.Najdorf**

Candidates Tournament, Zürich 1953

1...b5!

Before getting on with the kingside attack, Black prevents the opponent's idea of 2 ♜c4. In contrast, after 1...♖g7? 2 ♜c4 ♗d4 3 ♜xd6, followed by ♜f5, White obtains counterplay.

2 a4 a6!

From now on the knight remains badly placed on d2.

3 axb5 axb5 4 ♖c7 ♖g7

Finally Black is able to resume his attack.

5 ♜b3 ♜h4 6 ♖c2 ♗h3! 7 ♖e2

Or 7 gxh3? ♖g1+! 8 ♗.xg1 ♖xg1+ 9 ♗h2

♜xf3 mate.

7...♜xg2 8 ♗xg2 ♗xg2+ 9 ♖xg2 ♖h4

Now White can't save his queen, since

both 10 ♖e2 and 10 ♗f1 run into 10...♗g3+. The game concluded 10 ♗xg7+ ♘xg7 11 ♖g2+ ♘h8 12 ♗e1 ♗f4 13 ♖g3 ♙f2 14 ♖g4 ♗h3 15 ♗d2 h5 16 ♖g5 and White resigned before the resumption in view of 16...♖g8 with mate to come.

Position 262

M.Botvinnik-B.Kurajica

Hastings 1966/67

1 ♙c1!

Before going e4-e5, White prevents any counterplay with ...♗h5-f4. Less convincing is 1 e5?! ♗f4! 2 ♖c2 ♗g6, when 3 ♙c1? fails to 3...♗xg2! – Botvinnik.

1...♖ed8

Parrying the threat of 2 exd5. 1...g6? failed to 2 exd5, while after 1...♖ad8? 2 exd5 ♖xe1 3 ♖xe1 the pawn can't be recovered by 3...♖xd5? due to 4 ♖e8+.

2 e5 ♗g6 3 f4!

Preparing ♖f3, to the concern of the h4-pawn.

3...♗g44 ♖f3 ♖e8

Or 4...h3 5 ♖xh3 ♗xf4 6 ♙xf4 ♗xf4 7 ♖f3 ♗g5 8 ♖g3 and wins – Botvinnik.

5 ♖ef1 ♖ad8 6 h3 ♗g6 7 ♗xh4

Having a sound extra pawn, White went on to win.

Position 263

E.Geller-A.Mikhalchishin

USSR Championship, Tbilisi 1978

1 ♗xc6!

White aims to restrict the black knight by g2-g4, and for this idea to work he must first swap a few pieces. 1 ♙xc6?! is less precise due to 1...♗f5!.

1...♗xc6 2 ♙xc6 ♖xc6 3 ♖d7!

A useful move, now that 3...♗f5? fails to 4 ♖xf5. The immediate 3 g4!? permits

3...♖d8! 4 ♖xd8+ ♙xd8 5 ♖d1 ♙c7 with an improved version of the game for Black.

3...♖e8 4 g4!

The key move, which leaves the black knight badly placed for the rest of the game.

4...h5 5 h3! hxg4 6 hxg4 b5

Black also suffers after 6...♖c4 7 ♙d4.

7 axb5 axb5 8 ♗e4

With the devastating threat of ♗f6+.

8...♖xc2 9 ♗f6+ ♙xf6 10 exf6 ♖xb2 11 fxg7

White soon won.

Position 264

A.Tolush-M.Botvinnik

USSR Championship, Moscow 1945

1...♖h4!

Preparing 2...♖f4 in order to stop the enemy plan of ♖e3-f3. Instead, 1...♗h4?! 2 ♗e5 ♗f6 3 ♗g3 just repeats moves, while the straightforward 1...b4?! runs into 2 ♖e3!, when 2...bxc3? 3 ♖f3 is fatal for Black.

2 ♖e3 ♖f4 3 ♙e2 ♗h4 4 ♙f3 b4!

After the successful restriction Black can get on with his own play.

5 ♗xh4

5 ♙g4!? seems more critical; e.g. 5...♗f6 6 cxb4 axb4 7 ♖b1! ♗c3 8 ♖xb4 ♗e4 9 ♖xe4! ♖xe4 10 ♖b1, intending 11 ♗a3 with some counterplay.

5...♖xh4 6 g3?!

A lesser evil was 6 cxb4 axb4 7 ♖b1 ♖xd4 8 ♖xb4, eliminating the dangerous b4-pawn – Botvinnik.

6...♖h8 7 cxb4 axb4

Thanks to his strong passed pawn and the weakness on d4, Black is clearly better despite being the exchange down. The game continued 8 ♖b1 ♖b8 9 h4 ♖b7 10 ♘h2 ♘xd6 11 g4 ♗c3 12 ♖a1?! ♗b5! 13 ♖d1 ♖a7 14 h5 g5! 15 ♘g2 ♖a2 16 ♙e2 and White resigned in view of 16...♖xc2.

Position 265

V.Korchnoi-Gil.Hernandez
FIDE World Championship,
Groningen 1997

1 g3!

Preparing h2-h4 in order to prevent the plan of ...h7 and ...g5 with a favourable bishop exchange.

1...h7 2 h4!

From now on Black's bishop remains a "bad" one, and the knight on h7 proves misplaced.

2...hf6 3 g2 h2c8 4 a4 c5 5 c4

Thanks to his space advantage and superior bishop, White is considerably better. The game continued 5...dcd7 6 b4 c5 7 a1 f8 8 c4 fc8 9 a3 h5 10 f3 g6 11 b4 dcd7 12 b5! xc4 13 dxc4 axb5 14 dxb5 g7 15 a7, preparing a5-a6 and c6 with strong pressure.

Position 266

Alexa.Ivanov-E.Magerramov
Riga 1980

1 b4!

Before carrying on with the attack, White prevents a defensive exchange with ...e7-c5. The straightforward 1 h7?! promises less after 1...c5! 2 e3 xe5!, heading for g4, or 2 c3 fd8 3 xf7 xe5! 4 xe5 xe5 5 xb7 xd4+ 6 cxd4 xd4 7 c2 xd1+ 8 xd1 xh7 – Ivanov.

1...fd8

Parrying the threat of 2 h7 in advance. Obviously 1...gxf6? would have run into 2 h4.

2 h5!

Eyeing vulnerable points at f7 and g7.

2...f8

Not 2...f8? 3 g3 g6 4 xg6! fxg6 5 xg6.

3 c3 xb4 4 g3! g6

If 4...g6, then 5 cxb4 xd4 6 e3 and wins – Ivanov.

5 xg6 fxg6 6 xg6 f8 7 f4!?

A good alternative was 7 f7 e4 8 xf8+! xf8 9 xe4, intending f4-g6.

7...d5 8 xe6 xe6 9 xe6 e8 10 g6

Preparing e5-e6 with a crushing advantage.

Position 267

M.Botvinnik-I.Kan
USSR Championship, Leningrad 1939

1 e3!

Prophylaxis against the threat of 1...g5.

1...a6

After 1...g5? 2 xg5 hxg5 3 b8 or 3 c1 White is just winning.

2 b8 a4 3 h2!

Further prophylaxis, against any checks along the g1-a7 diagonal and the first rank. In contrast, 3 g3?? failed to 3...a7+.

3...a3

After 3...c2 4 g3 a1 5 xe8 d1 6 g6+!! White forces mate – Botvinnik.

4 c5 a2 5 a8 xa8

5...c2 6 xa2 xa2 7 e7! f2 8 xe5 is equally desperate.

6 xa8 xa8 7 xe5 c6 8 c7 1-0**Position 268**

M.Munoz Sanchez-J.Hellsten
Salinas 2005

1...c8!

Vacating a8 for the bishop before White goes b3-a5.

2 a5 a8 3 c4?!

Preferable was 3 e3 g6!? 4 g4 xg4 5 xg4 exf4 6 xf4 e5 with balanced play.

3...c5!

Now White has a problem with the e4-pawn.

4 cxb5 ♖xd3 5 ♜xd3 ♜b6+! 6 ♖h1 ♜xb5 7 ♜xb5+ axb5 8 ♖c3 0-0

Thanks to his bishop pair and the slight weakness on e4, Black is better.

Position 269

F.Gheorghiu-A.Petrosian
Bagneux 1982

1 g3!

Preparing 2 ♖g2, in order to avoid any surprises along the back rank, and put the king on a square of opposite colour to the black bishop.

1...♖c1 2 ♖g2 ♖xd1

Or 2...♗xd4 3 ♖xc1! ♖xc1 (unfortunately for Black, no longer with check) 4 ♖xd4 with pressure on d5.

3 ♖xd1 ♖c5 4 h4!

Opening a new front on the kingside.

4...♜b4?!

The beginning of a flawed plan. More solid seems 4...b5 5 h5 ♗xd4! 6 ♖xd4 ♜'b6, followed by ...♜e6.

5 h5 ♖c7 6 ♜f3 ♖c5

It transpires that 6...♜c5? fails to 7 ♖f5 ♖d7 8 ♖xh6+!, so Black has to lose precious time on returning his rook.

7 ♜f5 ♜a3 8 ♜d7!

With the simple idea of 9 ♜e8+ taking the f7-pawn.

8...♗f8 9 ♖b5!

Heading for d6 with a decisive attack.

Position 270

G.Kasparov-V.Kramnik
Las Palmas 1996

1...♜f8!

Reinforcing the kingside in view of the coming f2-f4.

2 ♜e3

Or 2 ♜xf8+ ♗xf8 3 f4 ♖g7 4 fxe5 dxe5 5 ♖f3 ♖a6! and Black defends.

2...♗e8!

More prophylaxis. At this moment a draw was agreed, but let's see what would have happened if White carried on with his plan.

3 f4?! exf4 4 ♜xf4 ♖fd7!

Thanks to his clever second move Black manages to regroup his knight to e5 with an excellent game.

Position 271

J.Hellsten-F.Vallejo Pons
Turin Olympiad 2006

1 a3!

Creating a shelter for the king on a2.

1...♖d2+ 2 ♖a2 ♖f3 3 ♖g3 ♖d4

Or 3...e4 4 c5!?, preparing ♖c4.

4 ♖d2 ♖d7 5 ♖gd3 ♜xg4?

In time trouble both players missed 6 ♖g3 on the next move. 5...f6 was correct.

6 ♜f8+? ♖c7 7 ♜c5 ♜e6 8 ♖e3

At this point the game continued 8 f4? f6 9 fxe5 b6 10 ♜f8 fxe5 11 ♜a8 ♜xc4+ 12 b3 ♜a6 13 ♜e8 with rather unclear play. However, the simple 8 ♖e3!, with the threat of ♖xd4, would have yielded White a better endgame after 8...b6 9 ♜xe5+ ♖xe5 10 ♖xe5.

Position 272

A.Lilienthal-V.Ragozin
Moscow 1935

1...♖a7!

Considering White's probable plan of e3-e4, Black covers the f7-pawn in advance.

2 ♗d2

If 2 e4, then 2...dxe4 3 fxe4 cxd4 4 cxd4 ♗c4! 5 ♗xc4 bxc4 6 e5 ♖d5 – Watson. Now

the white central pawns are confidently blocked and the attack on f7 has been neutralized.

2... ♖b6 3 ♜fb1 ♞ae7

Directing both rooks at the potential e3-e4 advance.

4 a4 c4 5 ♙c2 ♙c8 6 ♜g3 h5!

Now 7 e4? runs into 7...h4. If White avoids this by 7 h4, then after a future e3-e4, ...d5xe4, f3xe4 a weak square appears on g4. In conclusion Black has managed to frustrate the opponent's plans, with a comfortable game.

Position 273

J.Hellsten-L.Jicman

Gyula 2002

1 ♙b1!

By avoiding a check on f4 in advance White maintains maximum flexibility in his central attack. Both 1 d5 ♙xc3 2 ♜xc3 ♜f4+ 3 ♜d2 exd5 and 1 ♙xf5 ♜f4+! 2 ♜d2 ♜xf5 3 ♜e4 0-0 4 d5 ♙xc3 5 ♜xc3 ♜f4+ 6 ♞d2 f6 seem less promising for him.

1... ♙d7?!

Now 1...♜f4?! is strongly met by 2 ♙d2! ♜d6 3 d5, but 1...♜d6 2 ♙d3 ♙d7 was a safer choice, when 3 ♜e5 intending 3...0-0-0?! 4 c5 keeps the initiative.

2 ♙xf5 exf5 3 d5! 0-0-0

Or 3...cxd5?! 4 ♙xf6 gxf6 5 ♞ge1+ ♙f8 6 ♜c3 etc.

4 d6 ♖b6 5 ♙xf6 gxf6 6 c5

Creating a powerful protected passed pawn.

6... ♖b4?

6...♖a5 was correct, when 7 ♞d4, preparing b2-b4, keeps the advantage.

7 ♞d4 ♖b5 8 ♞a4

With the double threat of 9 ♜d4 and 9 ♞xa7. White is practically winning.

Position 274

D.Fridman-V.Korchnoi

Calvia Olympiad 2004

1... ♜c8!

Removing the queen from the vulnerable d-file before White puts a rook on d1, and taking the g4-square away from his queen. Instead, 1...c5?! 2 ♞ad1 leads to unpleasant pressure on the d5-pawn, while 1...♜e8?! was less precise due to 2 ♜g4! with some initiative – Korchnoi.

2 ♜fd1 ♜e6 3 ♞d2 c5!

Gaining some space and preparing a future pawn storm on the queenside.

4 e3

Or 4 ♞ad1 ♜fd8 5 ♜b3 c4 6 ♜c2 b5 with considerable counterplay, whereas 4 ♜d1 permits 4...d4! 5 ♙xb7 dxc3 6 bxc3 ♞ab8 7 ♙d5 ♜xe5 8 c4 b5! with just a minimal disadvantage.

4... ♙c6 5 ♜d1 ♜fd8 6 ♜f1 b5! 7 ♙a5 ♞e8 8 ♞ad1 ♜xe5

Simplest. In contrast, the game saw 8...♙d8, when White should have tried 9 ♙c3 b4 10 ♞xd5! ♙e7! 11 ♙e1 ♙xd5 12 ♙xd5 ♜xe5 13 ♙xa8 ♞xa8 14 ♜b5 with the double threat of ♙xb4 and ♜b7 – Korchnoi.

9 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 10 ♙c3 ♜e6 11 ♞xd5 a6

White has just a slight edge – Korchnoi.

Position 275

Y.Seirawan-E.Van Haastert

Dutch Team Championship 2007

1 ♞a2!

A “mysterious” rook move, realizing that Black's only viable plan is ...b6-b5.

1...b5 2 axb5 axb5 3 ♞cc2!

Some more prophylaxis in order to cover the sensitive second rank. Meanwhile, Black is just playing with one rook, since the one on f8 is tied to the defence of f5.

3...bxc4 4 bxc4 ♖b3

It doesn't seem right to abandon the seventh, but there weren't many moves to choose from.

5 ♖a7 ♜f7 6 ♖a8! gxf4

Or 6...♗c3 7 ♖g8, attacking Black's king-side pawns.

7 exf4 ♗d4 8 ♜f1!

With the threat of 9 ♖e2+.

8...♖b2 9 ♖xb2 ♗xb2 10 ♖a7

White keeps the initiative. There followed 10...♗d4 11 ♖e2 ♗.h8 12 ♖hg3 ♗g7 13 ♖g1! ♜f6 14 ♖a6 ♗f8 15 ♖f3 ♜e7 16 ♖h4, winning a pawn, and later on the game.

Position 276

J.Cubas-J.Hellsten

Mendoza 2005

1...♜f7!

In view of the coming ♖c2-g2, Black protects the g7-pawn in advance and prepares a further reinforcement of the kingside by ...♗f8 and ...♖e7-f5. In contrast, the game continued 1...fxe5? 2 ♖g2 ♗f6 3 f5! exf5 4 ♖xf5, followed by ♖d2-e4, with a strong attack.

2 ♖g2 ♗f8 3 exf6

White can't play 3 ♗c5? ♗xc5+ 4 ♖xc5 due to 4...♖xe5!.

3...♖xf6 4 ♖c5

Or 4 ♖d4 ♖e7 5 b3 ♜b7!, heading for e4.

4...♖e7 5 ♖e4 ♖g6

White's attack has been neutralized, e.g. 6 ♜f3 ♜c6 7 ♖ff2 ♖xg2+ 8 ♖xg2 ♖f5, when 9 ♖f6+ leads nowhere after 9...♜f7.

Position 277

E.Hermansson-R.Edlund

Umeå 2004

1 ♖e1!

Prophylaxis against the imminent ...♖d8-d2. Less convincing is 1 ♖f4?! ♖d2 2 ♖c1 ♖c6, preparing c4-c3.

1...♖bd6

Now 1...♖d2 is met by 2 ♜b1, followed by ♜c1.

2 b4

Clearing a path for the king towards b2-c3.

2...cxb3 3 axb3 ♖d2?!

3...♖c6! was preferable, when 4 c4 ♖d2 5 ♖a5! ♖b6 6 ♖a2 ♖d3 7 ♖c1 ♖d7 8 ♖ee2 keeps the advantage – Hermansson.

4 ♖c5!

Not 4 ♜b2? ♖c8 with counterplay.

4...♗c8?!

This manoeuvre just displaces the bishop, but it was hard to find a good plan for Black anyway.

5 ♜b2 ♗a6 6 ♖f4 ♖f2 7 ♖a1! ♖c8 8 b4!

Producing a decisive passed pawn. The game continued 8...♖xc5 9 bxc5 ♗b5 10 ♖xa7 e5 11 ♖e6+! ♜h6 12 ♖xf7 and Black resigned in view of 13 ♖g5 next.

Position 278

J.I.Andersen-J.Hellsten

Gistrup 1997

1...♖d8!

Preparing ...♖bd7-f8 to reinforce the kingside defence. 1...♖bd7 is less exact due to 2 ♖ad1, preparing ♗b1 and ♖d3-h3, a plan that White doesn't manage to realize in the game.

2 ♖b3

2 ♖f3 ♖bd7 3 ♖ad1 seems more active, when Black could delay 3...♖f8 in view of 4 ♖e5, preferring 3...b6 followed by ...♗b7 in order to conclude his development.

2...♖bd7 3 ♖ac1 ♖f8 4 ♖fe1 ♗d7 5 h3

The tempting 5 ♖d5? backfires after

5...exd5 6 cxd5 ♖b8 7 ♗xe7 ♘g4!

5...♗c6

Preparing ...♘g6-f4 with an even game.

Position 279

A.Karpov-V.Smyslov

USSR Team Championship 1972

1 ♗d4!

Prophylaxis against the plan of 1...♘e7, heading for g6, which can now be met by 2 ♖b6!, forcing a queen exchange and winning one of the pawns at b7 and d6. In contrast, the straightforward 1 ♘d4?! permits 1...♘e7 2 ♖b3 ♗c5! with counterplay.

1...♗e7

Now that his plan no longer works, Black is limited to defensive actions. It also becomes evident that the ...g6-g5 advance has just produced weaknesses.

2 ♘d2 ♗e1 3 ♖b3 ♗e2 4 ♗f3! ♗e5

In view of the threat 5 ♘e4, the rook has to retreat.

5 ♗e3 f6

Or 5...♗xe3+?! 6 fxe3!, followed by 7 ♗e4 with strong pressure.

6 ♘e4 ♗g7 7 ♗g2!

Preparing ♘g3-f5. White is clearly better.

Position 280

K.Kachiani Gersinska-P.Cramling

France 2005

1...h6!

With the simple idea of 2 f4?? g6, trapping the queen. White is left without a natural plan.

2 c5 b6 3 b4 a5!

Destroying the enemy queenside.

4 ♘a4 axb4 5 ♘xb6 ♗a5!

With the double idea of 6...♗xc5 and 6...d3 followed by ...♗d4. Black went on to win.

Position 281

A.Beliavsky-Z.Almasi

Wijk aan Zee 2006

1 ♗f1!

Securing the king in advance from the threat of 1...♘d3 followed by ...♗h2+ and mate. In contrast, 1 g3 ♖h6 2 ♗g2 ♗c8 leads to a black initiative – Beliavsky.

1...♘g6 2 g3

Preventing 2...♗h2 and also limiting the black knight.

2...♗xe1+ 3 ♗xe1 ♗c8 4 ♗g2 ♗d7

Contrary to the previous subline, Black doesn't have the ...♗d6-h6 move at his disposal.

5 ♗h1 ♗e8 6 ♗g1!

A smart attack on the d5-pawn.

6...♗e5 7 h4 h6 8 ♗f3 ♗h3?!

A risky decision. 8...♗b6 was preferable – Beliavsky.

9 ♗xf7 ♘xh4 10 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 11 ♗xd5 ♗xg3

The only way of justifying the sacrifice.

12 fxg3 ♗xg3+ 13 ♗f1 ♗g4

If 13...♗f4+?, then White returns a piece by 14 ♘f3!.

14 ♗a8+ ♗h7 15 ♗e4+ ♗h8 16 ♗c3

The position remains rather unclear, but White triumphed in the end.

Position 282

M.Sadler-Y.Pelletier

German League 2003

(analysis variation)

1...♗h8!

Securing the king from a check on f7 before getting on with his own attack. The immediate 1...♘f3+?? failed to 2 ♗xf3 exf3 3 ♗xf7+ with mate, while after 1...♗f8? 2 ♗d5! ♘f3+ 3 ♗xf3 exf3 4 ♗g5 White wins.

2 ♗xf7

Or 2 f4 exf3 3 ♗xf3 ♘xf3+ 4 ♗f2 ♘d2!

Mastering Chess Strategy

and wins – Pelletier.

2...♟f3+ 3 ♜xf3 exf3 4 ♜xf3 ♝xf3

Intending ...♞ac8-c6-g6 with a strong attack.

Position 283

J.Sherwin-B.Ivkov

World Junior Championship,
Copenhagen 1953

1 ♜a2!

A prophylactic retreat that lets White react in different ways to Black's two main options, 1...b5 and 1...♞b6. Less promising is 1 ♜g5 b5 2 ♜a2 ♜b7 and Black achieves a standard set-up, or 1 ♞e5 ♞xe5 2 dxe5 ♝xd1 3 ♜xd1 ♞d7 with approximate equality.

1...♞b6

Now 1...b5? runs into 2 d5! exd5 3 ♞xd5 with a strong initiative.

2 ♞e5 ♜d7?!

After 2...♞bd5 3 ♝f3 ♝d6 4 ♜g5 White also exerts considerable pressure.

3 ♝f3! ♝c8 4 ♜g5 ♜c6 5 ♝h3 ♜d5

Or 5...♞bd5 6 ♜xd5!?, when both 6...♞xd5 7 ♞xd5 ♜xg5 8 ♞b6 and 6...♜xd5 7 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 8 ♞xd5 exd5 9 ♞d7! ♜xd4 10 ♞ac1!, followed by ♞xf8, win material for White.

6 ♜b1 g6 7 ♝h4 ♝d8 8 ♞e3!

Heading for h3 with a strong attack. The game concluded 8...♞c8 9 g4! ♞d6 10 ♞h3 ♞de8 11 ♝h6 ♜g2 12 ♝xg2 ♝xd4 13 ♜xf6 ♞xf6 14 g5 ♜c5 15 ♞e4! and Black resigned.

Position 284

E.Terpugov-T.V.Petrosian

USSR Championship, Moscow 1951

1...♝h8!

Preparing ...♞g8 and ...♜f8 to safeguard

the kingside.

2 ♜f5 ♝d8!

The immediate 2...♞g8?! permits 3 ♝h5, hitting the pawn on f7.

3 ♝g4 ♞g8 4 ♝h5 ♝e8

This defence is possible thanks to the clever 2...♝d8.

5 b3 ♜f8

Black has now covered all the potentially weak spots on the kingside and is ready to fight for the initiative. The game continued 6 ♝e2 g6 7 ♜.h3 f5! 8 f4 ♞f6 9 ♞e1 fxe4 10 ♜xc8 ♝xc8 11 ♞xe4 ♞xe4 12 ♝xe4 ♜g7 13 ♞d3 ♞b4! 14 ♝f3 c4 and Black went on to win.

Position 285

J.Hellsten-P.H.Nielsen

Copenhagen 1996

1 ♝f1!

Withdrawing the king from the vulnerable g1-a7 diagonal and covering the e1-square. Instead, 1 ♜xc5?? ♞e1+ 2 ♝f2 ♝e2+ 3 ♝g3 ♝g4+ followed by 4...♞e2+ leads to mate, while the game continued 1 ♞d7? ♞e1+! 2 ♞xe1 ♜xf2+ 3 ♝xf2 ♝xd7 with a slight black advantage.

1...♜d6

If 1...♜xf2, then 2 ♞d7 ♞e1+ 3 ♝xf2 ♞e2+ 4 ♝f3 and wins. By the text Black parries the threats of both 2 ♞d7 and 2 ♜xc5 ♝xc5 3 ♝xe6, but runs into a new tactical theme.

2 ♞xd6! ♞xd6 3 ♞xd6 ♝xd6 4 ♝b7+ ♝h6 5 ♝xa8 ♝d1+ 6 ♜e1

White is winning.

Position 286

M.Carlsen-V.Kramnik

London 2009

1...♝f8!

Removing the king from the vulnerable a2-g8 diagonal in advance. Instead, the game continued 1...♔f5? 2 e4 ♔g4 3 ♖g3 ♜f7 4 ♚f1 and White kept a sound extra pawn.

2 ♖d4

2 ♖g3 ♜d1+ 3 ♜xd1 ♚xd1+ 4 ♜f2 ♖b3 yields Black considerable counterplay, while the attempt to prepare ♖e2-d4 by 2 ♚b4? fails to 2...♔b3! – Golubev; e.g. 3 ♚xb3 ♖xb3 4 ♜xb3 ♜xe2 with an extra exchange. Obviously this line would be winning for White with the black king still on g8, as 4 ♜xb3 comes with check.

2...♚xd4! 3 exd4 ♚f5 4 ♜a2

Thanks to the clever 1...♜f8 Black is not in check at this point and can continue with active measures.

4...♜d1+! 5 ♜f2 ♚xb1 6 ♜xb1 ♖b3 7 ♚f3 ♜xc1 8 ♜xb3 ♜xf4

With an active queen Black has no problems.

Position 287

Pr.Nikolic-WI.Schmidt

Novi Sad Olympiad 1990

1 ♔g4!

Provoking ...f7-f5 in order to open the a2-g8 diagonal towards the black king.

1...f5 2 ♜d5+ ♜h8 3 ♚f3

With the threat of 4 ♚e5+, winning a piece.

3...h6 4 ♜e6 ♜e8

Or 4...♜h7 5 ♚xb7 ♚xb7 6 ♚xb7 ♚b8 7 ♚d5 ♚e7 8 ♚c6 and wins – Nikolic.

5 ♚xd6! ♚xd6

If 5...♚xd6, then 6 ♚e5+! ♜h7 7 ♚xb7+ etc.

6 ♜f6+ ♜h7 7 ♚xd6 ♚ad8 8 ♚xb7! ♜h8 9 ♜xh8+ ♜xh8 10 ♚c7! 1-0

In view of ♚e5+ on the next move.

Position 288

A.Grant-K.Arkell

Hastings 1994/95

1...♜g4!

Provoking a decisive weakness in the white pawn structure.

2 f3

2 ♖c1 runs into 2...♚xe3+! 3 fxe3 ♜xg3+ 4 ♜d1 ♜g4+! 5 ♜e1 ♜g2 and the threats cannot be parried, while after 2 ♖f4 g5 3 ♖d3 f4 Black's attack is also irresistible.

2...♜g5 3 ♖f1 ♚xe3!

Creating a decisive pin along the e-file.

4 ♖xe3 ♜xe3 5 ♜d1

Or 5 ♜d2 ♚e8 6 ♜xe3 ♚xe3 and wins.

5...♚a4! 6 ♜xa4 ♚b2 0-1

Position 289

S.Cicak-I.Yarmonov

Dresden Olympiad 2008

1 ♜c2!

Provoking a weakness on Black's king-side. In contrast, 1 ♜h5?! g6 2 ♖xg6 fxc6 3 ♚xg6 hxc6 4 ♜xc6+ ♜h8 is only a draw, since 5 ♚h6? fails to 5...♚g8 6 ♜h5 ♜e8.

1...g6

Or 1...h6 2 0-0-0, when 2...♚e8? (preparing ...♖f8) fails to 3 ♚h7+ ♜h8 4 e6!.

2 h4! ♖c4 3 0-0-0 ♖xe3 4 fxe3 ♚xh4

Black has ruled out the h4-h5 idea, but is now suffering on the h-file.

5 g3 ♚g5 6 ♚xg6! fxc6

Obviously 6...hxc6? runs into 7 ♜h2.

7 ♚xh7! ♖xe5

Since 7...♜xh7 8 ♜xg6+ ♜h8 9 ♚h1+ is terminal, Black tries a counter sacrifice.

8 dxe5 ♚f5 9 ♜h2

With a decisive attack. The game concluded 9...♜b6 10 ♚h8+ ♜f7 11 ♜h7+ ♜e8 12 ♚xf8+ ♜xf8 13 ♖xc6+ ♚xc6 14 ♚f1+! and Black resigned.

Position 290

D.Reinderman-J.Timman
Dutch Championship 1996

1...♖d7!

Provoking h3-h4 in order to create a weak square on g4.

2 h4

2 ♜h2 runs into 2...h4! intending 3 g4? ♙xg4, while after 2 cxd5 cxd5 3 ♜fc1+ ♜b8 4 h4 ♜c8 Black keeps the advantage.

2...♙g4 3 ♜e2 f6!

Preparing ...g7-g5 with an attack.

4 cxd5 cxd5 5 ♜ac1+ ♜b8 6 ♜c3 g5 7 ♜fc1 gxf4

More forcing was 7...gxh4 8 gxh4 ♜hg8, intensifying the attack – Horn. With his next move White manages to sidestep this line, but also leaves Black with a protected passed pawn on e4.

8 exf4 ♜c8 9 ♙f1 ♜xc3 10 ♜xc3 ♜c8

Thanks to his superior pawn structure and more active pieces, Black is better.

Position 291

R.Vandarbiev-V.Beznosikov
Russian Championship,
Krasnoyarsk 2003

1 ♙g5!

Provoking ...e7-e6 in order to soften up the dark squares in Black's camp and restrict his bishop on c8.

1...e6

After 1...♜e8 2 ♜e1 h6 3 ♙e4 White also has much the better game.

2 ♙e4 ♙c7 3 ♙g5!

More provocation.

3...♜d7?!

After 3...f6 4 ♙f4 ♙d5 5 ♙d6 Black admittedly ends up with a long-term weakness on e6, but at least his "good" bishop is still on the board.

4 ♙f6+ ♙xf6 5 ♙xf6

With a clear grip on the dark squares, while Black's remaining bishop is horribly passive. There followed 5...♙e8 6 ♙e5 f6 7 ♙g3 ♙g7 8 ♜fe1 ♜e8 9 ♜a2 ♜f7 10 ♜ae2 and White gradually increased his advantage.

Position 292

E.Agrest-S.K.Williams
Isle of Man 2004

1...♜h6!

Provoking a weakness in the enemy kingside to facilitate the attack.

2 h3 ♜g6 3 ♜h1 ♜g3 4 ♜g1 ♜h6 5 ♜d1

The only defence to the threat of 5...♜xh3+, since 5 ♙f1? failed to 5...♜xh3+ 6 gxh3 ♙xf3+.

5...♙f6!

More pieces to the attack. Now both 6 ♙d2 ♙g4! and 6 ♙b2 ♙h5 are fatal for White.

6 ♜e1 ♜xh3+

A decisive blow.

7 gxh3 ♜xh3+ 8 ♜g1 ♙g4! 9 ♜f2

The only move, in view of 9 fxg4 ♜g2 mate.

9...♙xf2 10 ♜xf2 e5!

Clearing the e-file. There followed 11 ♜g1 ♜h4+ 12 ♜f1 g6 13 fxe5 ♜h3+ 14 ♜f2 ♜h2+ 15 ♜g2 ♜xe5 16 ♜a2 ♜e8 17 ♜c2 ♙xf3! and White resigned in view of 18 ♙xf3 ♜e1 mate or 18 ♜xf3 ♜e4+ etc.

Position 293

A.Shneider-D.Komarov
Donetsk 1998

1 ♙e5!

Provoking ...f7-f6 to soften up the light squares in Black's camp. 1 ♙d6 ♙c6 is far less ambitious.

1...f6 2 ♖d6 ♗xd6

Or 2...♗c6 3 ♗h3!? with some pressure on e6. Now if ...f6-f5 at any moment, then the e5-square falls into White's hands.

3 ♗xd6 e5

After 3...♗d8 4 ♗d3 ♗c6 5 ♗h3! f5 6 ♗d1 ♗xd6 7 ♗xd6 ♗e8 8 ♗c7 Black is in serious trouble – Baburin/Tisdall.

4 ♗h4!

Swapping Black's main defender of the light squares.

4...♗xg2 5 ♗xg2 ♗c6 6 ♗f3 ♗d4 7 ♗d5+ ♗f7

Or 7...♗h8 8 e3 ♗c2 9 ♗d1 ♗b4 10 ♗e4, preparing ♗d7 with a strong attack.

8 ♗d1 ♗b7 9 ♗xb7 ♗xb7 10 e3 g5 11 ♗f3

Even stronger was 11 exd4 gxh4 12 dxe5 fxe5 13 ♗e6 hxg3 14 hxg3 with a huge edge in the rook endgame.

11...♗xf3 12 ♗xf3

Thanks to his control of the open file and Black's light square weaknesses, White is clearly better.

*Position 294***A.Alekhine-Em.Lasker**

New York 1924

1...♗h5!

Provoking g3-g4 in order to soften up f4 and the whole h2-b8 diagonal.

2 g4

The only way of saving the d4-pawn.

2...♗f7 3 bxc6 ♗c8 4 ♗b2

After 4 ♗ac1 ♗xc6 5 ♗b1 ♗d6 6 ♗g2 ♗ec8 Black is better thanks to the weak pawns on f4 and d4.

4...bxc6 5 f5

Parrying the unpleasant threat of 5...♗e6.

5...♗d6 6 ♗g2 ♗c7 7 ♗fe1 h5!

Preparing ...♗h7-g5 in order to swap the defender on f3.

8 h3 ♗h7 9 ♗xe8+ ♗xe8 10 ♗e1 ♗b8 11 ♗c1**♗g5!12 ♗e5**

Or 12 ♗xg5 ♗h2+ 13 ♗f1 fxg5 with a decisive attack.

12...fxe5 13 ♗xg5 e4

Black is winning.

*Position 295***O.Romanishin-J.Przewoznik**

Polanica Zdroj 1980

1 ♗h5!

Initiating an attack and provoking a weakness in the enemy pawn structure.

1...h6?!

1...g6 was more solid, when White could try 2 ♗h6 ♗f8 3 ♗h3 followed by ♗e4, eyeing the new weakness on f6.

2 ♗f3 ♗d4

If 2...♗f8 3 ♗g3 g6, then 4 ♗e4!, heading for f6.

3 ♗xd4 ♗xd4

Or 3...cxd4 4 ♗e4, preparing ♗g3 with a strong attack.

4 ♗g3 ♗f8 5 ♗g4!

One more provocative measure to soften up the black defence.

5...g5

As a result of Black's first move, 5...g6? now fails to 6 ♗xg6 fxg6 7 ♗xg6.

6 ♗f1!

The last piece joins in with decisive effect. **6...c4 7 ♗e4 ♗e8 8 ♗h5 gxf4 9 ♗xf4 ♗c5 10 ♗h1 ♗d7 11 ♗xf7**

White soon won.

*Position 296***F.Ladron de Guevara-****C.Matamoros Franco**

Campillos 2007

1...♗f5!

Provoking e3-e4 in order to restrict the bishop on g2 and gain control of the dark

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squares. 1...♖a2?! 2 ♜b3 ♜xb2 3 ♜xb2 ♙xb2 4 ♜xb2 is less promising.

2 e4 ♙d7 3 ♙xg7 ♜xg7 4 ♜h1

Or 4 ♜b3 ♜f6 5 ♜b2 ♖a4 with a clear initiative.

4...♜f6 5 f4 ♖a2

Black has the more active position. The game continued 6 b5 ♘d4 7 ♖a1 ♙g4!? 8 ♜xg4 ♜xd2 9 ♖a7 ♘c2!, followed by ...♘e3, and White was in trouble.

Position 297

Mil.Pavlovic-O.Stubberud

Gausdal 2007

1 ♙f4!

Attacking the d6-pawn to force the compromising ...e6-e5 advance.

1...e5

Both 1...♜xc4 2 ♙xd6 ♙xd6 3 ♜xd6 and 1...♘e5 2 ♘xe5 ♙xg2 3 ♘xf7! ♜xf7 4 ♜xg2 ♜xc4 5 ♖ac1 yield White a more comfortable game.

2 ♙g5 0-0 3 ♖ac1 ♜fe8

If 3...♜xc4?, then 4 ♘xe5 and ♙xb7.

4 b3

Now White has a pleasant advantage thanks to the weaknesses on d5 and d6.

4...h6 5 ♙xf6 ♘xf6 6 ♘h4!

In order to swap Black's "good" bishop.

6...♙xg2 7 ♘xg2 ♖ac8 8 ♘e3 ♜b7 9 a4

Black is never able to launch the ...b6-b5 counter-strike.

9...♙f8 10 ♘ed5 ♘d7 11 ♜e3 ♖c6 12 ♜f3 ♜c8 13 ♘e4

With an overwhelming positional advantage.

Position 298

A.Denker-M.Botvinnik

USA-USSR radio match 1945

1...♜c6!

Provoking f2-f3 in order to soften up the dark squares around the white king.

2 f3 d3!

Clearing the g1-a7 diagonal for the bishop.

3 ♜c1

Also after 3 ♘e4 ♜c7! 4 g3 ♙xe4 5 fxe4 ♜xc4 6 ♖c1 ♙c5 or 3 ♜h1 ♜c7! (more provocation) 4 f4 ♜c6 5 ♖g1 ♙c5 6 ♙xd3 ♙f2! 7 ♖c1 ♘c5 Black wins – Kasparov.

3...♙c5+ 4 ♜h1

Now the knight on g3 becomes exposed, but 4 ♙e3 lost outright to 4...d2! 5 ♜xd2 ♘e5.

4...♜d6! 5 ♜f4

5 ♙h6 failed to the simple 5...♖h7!, preparing ..♖dh8, while after 5 ♙f4 ♖xh2+! 6 ♜xh2 ♖h8+ 7 ♘h5 ♖xh5+ 8 ♜g3 ♜d4. followed by ...♜xf6, the white king is doomed.

5...♖xh2+! 6 ♜xh2 ♖h8+ 7 ♜h4 ♖xh4+ 8 ♙xh4 ♜f4 0-1

Position 299

La.Karlsson-E.Berg

Stockholm (blitz) 2005

1 ♜d4!

By hitting the a7-pawn and hampering ...g7-g6, White provokes the undesirable ...c6-c5.

1...c5

1...a5 2 0-0-0 leaves Black without reasonable moves, while after 1...g6? 2 ♘d5! cxd5 3 ♜xf6 ♖g8 4 ♙xd5 White wins a pawn for nothing.

2 ♜d2

Now a weak square has appeared on d5.

2...♜f7 3 h5 ♙e7 4 ♘d5! ♘xd5

Black is also suffering after 4...0-0 5 0-0-0, followed by ♖hg1.

5 ♙xd5 ♙e6 6 h6! ♙xd5 7 hxg7 ♖g8 8 ♜xd5

With a sound extra pawn, White soon won.

Position 300

G.Lisitsin-M.Botvinnik
Leningrad 1932

1...♗g4!

By attacking the e2-pawn Black provokes a concession from White.

2 ♖xd4

After 2 f3?! ♗e6 a weak square appears on e3, and the fianchettoed bishop becomes severely restricted.

2...exd4

The exchange on d4 has yielded Black a semi-open file and reduced White's dynamic potential.

3 ♗d2 ♖f8 4 ♖e1 ♖e8 5 h4?!

The active 5 e4 was preferable, e.g. 5...dxe3 6 ♗fxe3 ♗xe3 7 fxe3 ♖cd8 8 ♖a3 with just a slight disadvantage – Botvinnik.

5...♗h3 6 ♖f3 ♖e7!

Black starts working towards the target on e2.

7 ♗h2 ♖ce8 8 ♗h1 ♖e6 9 b3 ♗b4 10 ♖g2 ♖d5 11 ♗f3

At this point 11...♖e6!?, followed by ...♗e7, yields Black a clear advantage – Botvinnik.

Position 301

B.Larsen-G.Sax
Linares 1983

1...♗d5!

Provoking e3-e4 in order to soften up the f4-square. 1...♗d5 is less convincing due to 2 e4! ♗xc3 3 ♗e3, preparing a timely ♖b2 – Sax.

2 e4 ♗c6 3 ♖a3

3 f4?! ♗g6 and the e4-pawn is exposed.

3...♖fd8 4 ♖g5 h6! 5 ♖e3

Or 5 ♖xf6 gxf6 6 ♗h1 ♗g6 7 ♖g1 ♗h7 with a slight advantage – Sax.

5...♗g6 6 c4 ♗h5!

Black starts working on the f4 weakness.
7 c5 bxc5 8 bxc5 ♖ab8 9 ♖c4 ♗hf4 10 ♗a2 ♗c7! 11 ♗a1

On 11 ♖xa7?? Black had prepared 11...♗e5 12 ♗h1 ♗g5 13 ♖g1 ♖d1!.

11...♗e7

Heading for g5 or h4, with an initiative.

Position 302

O.Romanishin-M.Suba
Moscow 1986

1 ♖g1!

Before taking on e6 White provokes ...g7-g6 to soften up the opponent's dark squares. Less clear is 1 ♖f4 ♗g6 or 1 b4 ♗e7, followed by ...♗f7.

1...g6

If 1...♗g6, then 2 ♖g5!? preparing h4-h5 is one of several possibilities.

2 ♖f4 ♗ed7 3 ♖xe6 ♖xc5 4 ♖e3!

Enabling a future ♖d4.

4...♖c6

Or 4...♖c2 5 ♗d1, when 5...♖xb2? fails to 6 ♖xd7 followed by 7 ♖d4 – Romanishin.

5 ♖h3 ♖e8 6 ♖d1 ♖c2 7 h5!

Some surprising dynamics that helps to activate the rook on g1.

7...♖xb2

Both 7...♗xh5 8 ♖xd5 and 7...gxh5 8 ♖g7 were equally favourable for White.

8 hxg6 hxg6 9 ♖xg6 ♖xa2 10 ♗f1 ♖h8 11 ♖g2 ♗e7 12 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 13 ♖xd5

Thanks to his strong bishop White is better.

Position 303

A.Dreev-Ye Jiangchuan
Dubai (rapid) 2002

1...♖a6!

By the threat of 2...♖d3 Black provokes c3-c4, which will soften up the d4 and b4

squares for his pieces.

2 c4

Or 2 b4 ♖d3! 3 ♗b3 c4, fixing a weakness on c3 and transforming the bishop into a giant.

2...♗b7 3 ♖f3

After 3 f4 ♖c6 4 e5 ♗d7, followed by ...♖d4, Black obtains some initiative.

3...♖c6 4 ♗d2 ♖b4

Now that the plan with ...♖c6-d4 isn't feasible, Black directs his attention to the e4-pawn.

5 ♗c2 ♖xc2 6 ♗xc2 ♗c6! 7 ♖d2 f5 8 f3 e6 9 ♗d3 ♗c7

Preparing ...♗c6 and ...♗b7, with a slight but enduring advantage thanks to the bishop pair and the superior pawn structure.

Position 304

J.Mestel-Y.Balashov

European Team Championship,
Moscow 1977

1...♗c8!

By provoking c2-c3 Black leaves the enemy knight without its desired destiny. Less convincing is 1...♖f6?! 2 ♗e1 ♗c4 3 ♖c3 and White hangs on to his extra pawn.

2 c3 ♖f6 3 ♗e1 ♗c4 4 ♗g5?

Too materialistic. White should have returned the pawn by 4 b3, when 4...♗xe2 5 ♗xe2 ♗xc3 just yields Black a minimal edge.

4...♖g4! 5 hxg4 ♗xg5

Now the active bishop pair more than compensates for the pawn, whereas White keeps having a problem with his misplaced knight.

6 ♗f3 ♗b5 7 b4 g6 8 ♖c1 ♗a8 9 ♖b3 ♗a2! 10 ♗b1 ♗a3

Even stronger was 10...♗a6!, heading for a7 – Balashov.

11 ♖a5 ♗xc3

Also strong was 11...♗d2 or 11...♗d3.

12 ♖xc4 ♗xc4 13 ♗e4 ♗b3!

Black keeps a clear advantage.

Position 305

A.Gershon-B.Maryasin

Israeli Team Championship 2002

1 ♗c4!

This attack on the knight forces a minor concession from the opponent. Less promising is 1 ♗c2 ♖f6, followed by ...♗e7.

1...f5

Accepting some minor weaknesses on e6 and e5, seeing that 1...♖f6 2 ♖c5! ♗xc5 3 ♗xc5 loses the bishop pair.

2 ♗cc1 ♗e7 3 ♖c3 ♖c5

Or 3...♖f6 4 ♖e2! ♗c8 5 ♖ed4, swapping the defender on c6. Here 5...♖xd4?! runs into 6 ♗b4+! ♗e8 7 exd4, preparing 8 ♗c7.

4 ♗c2 ♗c8 5 ♖d4! ♗d6?!

White is also better after 5...♖xd4 6 exd4 ♖d7 7 d5 ♖f6 8 ♗b3 – Gershon, but now he obtains a strong attack.

6 ♖xc6+ ♗xc6 7 b4! ♖d7 8 e4! f4 9 b5! ♗d6 10 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 11 e5+!

Freeing the e4-square for the knight. The game continued 11...♗xe5 12 ♖e4! ♖f6 13 ♖g5 ♗e8 14 ♗c3+ ♗d6 15 ♗b4+ ♗d7 16 b6! and Black resigned in view of 16...♗xb6 17 ♗a4+ ♗d8 18 ♖f7 mate.

Position 306

R.Janssen-E.Bacrot

Wijk aan Zee 1997

1...♖b6!

By provoking c4-c5 Black fixes a target on c5 and improves his bishop on e6. Less convincing is 1...♗xc3 2 bxc3 ♖b6 3 c5 ♖c4 4 ♗d4.

2 c5 ♖d7

After 2...♖c4?! 3 ♔d4 Black doesn't achieve anything.

3 ♖c2 ♔f8!

A new provocative measure that forces b2-b4, after which ...a7-a5 will make the rook on a8 terrific.

4 b4 a5 5 a3 f5!

Opening a second front in the centre.

6 ♔d3 ♔g7 7 exf5 gxf5 8 ♔c1

Or 8 ♖he1?! axb4 9 axb4 ♖a3! with threats at c3 and b3.

8...♖e5 9 ♔e2 axb4 10 axb4 b6!

Softening up the remainder of the white pawn chain.

11 ♖he1 ♖b7 12 f4

After 12 ♔b2 bxc5 13 bxc5 ♖d7 the c5-pawn is doomed.

12...♖g4 13 ♔xg4 fxg4 14 ♔b2 bxc5 15 ♖e4!?

Or 15 bxc5 ♖a5! – Ribli.

15...♔f5 16 ♔xg7 ♔xe4+ 17 ♖c3 cxb4+ 18 ♖xb4 ♔d5 19 ♖xe8 ♖xe8

Despite the opposite-coloured bishops, Black went on to win.

Position 307

M.Filip-T.V.Petrosian

Yerevan 1965

1...♖d8!

Heading for the protected square at h4 and taking control of the whole h4-d8 diagonal.

2 f3

Black is also better after 2 ♖e3 ♖h4, preparing ♖h5-f4.

2...♖h5!

Eyeing the f4-square.

3 ♔d2 ♖f4 4 ♔xf4 ♖xf4 5 ♖f2 ♖h4 6 ♖e4 ♖h8 7 ♖g3 ♖d8

Preparing ...♖f7-g5, with a clear advantage thanks to his more active pieces and White's dark square weaknesses.

Position 308

A.Alekhine-M.Euwe

World Championship (game 7),
Holland 1935

1 ♔h4!

Heading for the protected square at f6. Less convincing is 1 0-0-0?! ♖xg3! 2 hxg3 ♖xe5 with compensation – Alekhine.

1...h6 2 0-0-0 ♖ae8 3 ♔f6+ ♖h7 4 f4!

By using some minor tactics White secures the e5-pawn.

4...exf3 5 ♔xf3!

After 5 ♔d3+?! ♖g6 Black can put up more resistance – Euwe.

5...♖a5 6 ♔xb7 ♖xb7 7 ♔d7!

Winning a pawn, and soon the game as well.

Position 309

R.Osterman-A.Karpov

Portoroz/Ljubljana 1975

1...♔g5!

Giving up the exchange in order to seize the weak dark squares on the enemy king-side. 1...♖e8 2 f4 is less convincing.

2 ♔xf8 ♖xf8 3 ♖g1 ♔f4 4 ♖e4 ♔xe5

The most powerful recapture, which vacates the f4-square for the knight.

5 ♖g3 ♖f4 6 ♖d2 ♔c7 7 ♔f1 ♖d6

Thanks to his grip on the dark squares, Black is much better. The game continued 8 ♖e1 f5 9 ♔e2 ♖f7 10 ♖b1 a5 11 a3 h5!, followed by ...h5-h4, and Black went on to win.

Position 310

J.Hellsten-R.Chavez

Santa Cruz 2003

1 ♖b5!

Clearing the way for the rook towards the weak square at c6.

1...♖b5?!

1...♖c8 is met simply by 2 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 3 ♜c1. Instead, 1...♜fe4! was preferable, when 2 ♜c6 ♜f5 3 ♜ac1 ♞g5! yields Black some kingside counterplay. So the simple 2 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 3 ♜c6 is probably a better choice.

2 ♞xb5 ♜e4

Obviously 2...♜c8? fails to 3 ♜xc8 ♞xc8 4 ♞xb6.

3 ♜c6! ♜b8 4 ♜ac1 ♗h6 5 ♜c7!

Seizing the seventh rank.

5...♜d6 6 ♞d7

Even stronger was 6 ♞c6! with the threat of 7 ♜d7. Black, on his part, should try 6...♜c8 on the next move.

6...♞xd7?! 7 ♜xd7 ♜f5 8 ♜cc7 ♗g5 9 g4 ♜g7 10 ♗d3

Now that 10...♜bc8 fails to 11 ♜xf7, White is practically winning.

Position 311

M.Turov-B.Predojevic

Budapest 2003

1...♜g4!

Exploiting the tactical motifs along the f-file and the h2-b8 diagonal in order to launch an attack.

2 g3

If 2 h3?, then 2...♜xd4! 3 ♜xd4 ♗h2+ 4 ♜f1 ♜xf2+ 5 ♞xf2 ♜xf2 6 ♜xf2 ♞g3+ and wins.

2...♞f7! 3 ♜g2 ♞h5

3...e5! was even stronger; e.g. 4 ♜xd5 ♞xd5! 5 ♗c4 ♗e6 6 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 or 4 dxe5 ♜xe5 5 ♜xe5 ♜xe5, preparing 5...♗g4 with a decisive attack – Predojevic.

4 h4

After 4 h3 e5! White is also in big trouble; e.g. 5 ♜h1 ♜xf2! 6 ♞xf2 ♜xd4 and the pin along the f-file decides.

4...♜xd4! 5 ♜xd4 ♜xf2+ 6 ♞xf2 ♜xf2 7 ♜xf2 e5

Not just attacking the knight, also mobilizing the remaining pieces to the kingside. There followed 8 ♜b3 ♗h3! 9 ♗e2 ♜f8+ 10 ♜g1 ♞f7 11 ♜h2 ♞e6 12 ♜ad1 ♜f2+ 13 ♜h1 d4 and the attack soon took its toll.

Position 312

P.H.Nielsen-J.Hellsten

Copenhagen 1996

1...♜c7!

Placing the rook on its most active square, without worrying about the loss of the exchange. 1...♜a8?! is less appealing.

2 ♗g3 ♜f8! 3 f4!

Preparing f4-f5. After 3 ♗xc7?! ♞xc7, preparing ...♜g6-f4(h4) as well as ...♜d5-h5, White's multiple weaknesses yield Black excellent compensation.

3...♜d5 4 ♗d3 ♞d8!

Prophylaxis against the f4-f5 advance.

5 f5

Here the game saw 5 ♜e5? ♜xd4 with a sound extra pawn for Black, while the preparatory 5 ♜cd1 can be met by 5...♜cd7.

5...exf5!

Again Black is ready to give up the exchange.

6 ♗xc7 ♞xc7 7 h3 ♞f4 8 ♜e3 ♜d6

With ideas like 9...♜e4 and ...♜g6-h4, Black has sufficient compensation for the exchange.

Position 313

E.Bareev-J.Speelman

Hastings 1991/92

1 c5!

In order to seize the d6-square with the knight, even at the cost of the exchange. Less convincing is 1 ♞c2?! f5 2 ♜c3 ♗b7 with a slight black advantage – Bareev.

1...f5 2 ♜d6 bxc5 3 bxc5 ♗xa1 4 ♞xa1

Now White's control of the long diagonal adds to his compensation.

4...♖b3?!

Both 4...♙a6 5 ♘xa6 ♖xa6 6 ♗a2 ♖ac7 7 ♖e1 and 4...♗f6 5 ♙c4!? ♗xa1 6 ♖xa1 ♙a6 7 ♙a2 yield White interesting compensation, but the text simply helps him to increase the pressure.

5 ♖d1! ♙a6 6 ♙xa6 ♖xe3

If 6...♖xa6, then 7 ♖xf5! gxf5 8 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 9 ♗e5 – Bareev.

7 ♖xf5 gxf5 8 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 9 ♙c4

Thanks to his strong passed pawn and the exposed black king, White is practically winning.

Position 314

J.Klovans-I.Nataf

Pardubice 2002

1...e4!

By tactical means Black nullifies the weak squares on d5 and e4.

2 ♗xe4?

This loses material. 2 ♙xe4? also failed to 2...d5. Instead, 2 ♗d1 was correct, when 2...♙e7 3 ♙e6 ♙f4 4 g3 ♖f6! 5 ♙h3 ♙h6 6 ♗a1 ♖c6 yields Black a slight advantage – Nataf. The desired ...d6-d5 is just one move away.

2...♖e7! 3 ♙b7

Neither 3 ♖d1? ♖xd5 4 ♖xd5 ♖e8, nor 3 ♙e6 d5 4 ♗d4 (or 4 ♗e5 ♙f4!) 4...♖c6! works for White.

3...d5 4 ♗d4 ♗c7!

Not 4...♖b5? 5 ♙a6! and the bishop escapes. Now, on the other hand, it is trapped.

5 ♖e5 ♖f5 6 ♗g4 ♙h6 7 ♖d3 ♖xc3 8 ♙a6 ♗b6! 9 ♖e1 g6!

Avoiding any tricks with 10 ♗xf5. Incapable of saving his bishop, White resigned.

Position 315

L.Ftacnik-M.Narciso Dublan

Lisbon 2001

1 ♖e2!

Preparing to triple the major pieces on the d-file towards the weakness on d5. 1 ♖c2, preparing ♖d2, is less exact since the other rook remains passive.

1...♖e7

Or 1...♖c8 2 ♖d2 ♖e7 3 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 4 ♖c2 ♗a8 5 ♙d6 with a clear advantage – Ftacnik.

2 ♖d2 ♖d7 3 ♖c3! ♖c8

The tactical blow 3...♖xb4? backfires after 4 ♖e5! d4 5 ♖b3 ♖c6 6 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 7 exd4 ♗d5 8 ♗f3 – Ftacnik.

4 ♖cd3 d4

Holding on to the pawn by 4...♖e7 made little sense due to 5 e4!, when 5...♖c4 6 ♖e5 wins the exchange.

5 ♖xd4 ♙xd4 6 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 7 ♖xd4

Thanks to his extra pawn White is clearly better.

Position 316

V.Kovacevic-Z.Ribli

Bugojno 1984

1...♖f7!

Preparing ...♖fa7 with an attack on the a3-pawn before White manages to defend it.

2 ♖d2

The depressing 2 ♖d2 ♖fa7 3 ♖b1 is well met by 3...e5!, opening the position for the bishops; e.g. 4 fxe5 fxe5 5 dxe5 ♙xe5 with a huge advantage.

2...♖fa7 3 ♖c2 ♖xa3 4 ♖xa3 ♖xa3 5 ♖b2 ♖a7 6 ♖a1 ♖xa1 7 ♖xa1 ♙d7

Preparing ...♙e8-g6. Black later converted his extra pawn.

Position 317

S.Tarrasch-M.Chigorin
Match (game 19),
St. Petersburg 1893

1 f4?

Converting the e4-pawn into a target. Preferable was 1 O-O ♗g7 2 f3 O-O 3 ♗e3 with just a slight disadvantage.

1...♖d7 2 b4

Preventing ...♖d7-c5 and enabling ♖b3-a5.

2...♗g7 3 ♖b3 0-04 0-0

After 4 ♖a5? ♗xe4! 5 ♖xe4 ♗e8 Black recovers the piece with interest.

4...♗e8 5 ♗e1 ♖f6! 6 ♖d2

By now the e4-pawn has turned into a headache for White; e.g. 6 ♗d3 ♗e7 7 ♖d2 d5! with double threats at e4 and b4, or 6 e5 dxe5 7 ♗xd8 ♗axd8 8 fxe5 ♖g4 and the pawn is doomed anyway.

6...♗d7 7 h3 ♗e7! 8 ♗e2 ♗ae8 9 ♗f1 h5!

By means of the threat 10...h4, Black finally cracks the enemy defence.

10 h4 ♗g4! 11 ♗f2 ♗xh4 12 ♖f3 ♗g4 13 e5 ♖d5 14 ♖h2 ♗d7 15 exd6 ♗xd6

Black is winning.

Position 318

V.Kovacevic-S.Gligoric
Yugoslav Team Championship 1979

1...♖g8!

Intending ...♖e7-f5 with an attack on the weakness on e3.

2 ♖d2 ♖e7 3 ♗xf8

Preparing ♖d2-f1. After 3 ♖b3? ♖f5 the queen can't protect the e3-pawn due to the discovered attacks.

3...♗xf8 4 ♗e1 ♖f5 5 ♖f1 ♗d8! 6 ♗d1 ♗g5 7 ♗a4

Vacating the d1-square for the knight. 7 ♗b3 seemed more natural, but after 7...h5! 8 ♖xe4?! dxe4 9 ♗xe6 ♖xe3!, both 10

♗xe3? ♗xf1+ and 10 ♖xe3 ♗xd4 11 ♗a3 ♗f3! let Black recover the material with interest.

7...h5!

With the double intention of ...♗h6 and ...h4-h3.

8 ♗h1 ♗h6 9 ♖d1 h4 10 ♗b3?! 10 h3

was better, when 10...♗c8 keeps the advantage.

10...h3! 11 g3

Or 11 gxf3 ♖h4 with decisive threats – Gligoric.

11...♗g4 12 ♗c1?

A blunder, but after 12 ♖d2 ♖xd4! 13 exd4 ♗xd2 Black wins anyway.

12...♗f3+

In view of the mate, White resigned.

Position 319

P.Leko-A.Morozevich
Frankfurt (rapid) 1999

1 ♗e2!

Preparing ♗d3, followed by the doubling of the major pieces on the f-file in order to attack the weaknesses on f7 and h4.

1...♗c8 2 ♗d2 ♗c7 3 ♗d3 ♗h5 4 ♗f4!

By placing the rook at the front White achieves an attack on both pawns at the same time.

4...♗g5

Or 4...h3 5 ♗f2, followed by ♗h4, and the h3-pawn is doomed.

5 ♗f2! ♗e7 6 ♗xh4 ♗f8 7 ♗e1

Preparing h2-h4 with a decisive advantage.

Position 320

F.Obers-P.Cramling
Gibraltar 2009

1...♖c7!

Discovering on the d3-pawn and preparing a future ...d6-g5 with attacking prospects.

2 dxb6?

A bad reply, since the knight was useful in attacking the e5-pawn. After 2 e1f1! f6 3 e2b2 d6 4 h4 or even 4 f4!? White could have put up more resistance.

2...axb6 3 e1f1

Or 3 e4 f5, conquering the d3-pawn.

3...d6e6! 4 e2b2?

After 4 h4 d5 the d3-pawn is lost, but even so this was a lesser evil than the game.

4...d6g5

Now Black's invasion on the dark squares is irresistible.

5 e2c1 d1f3+ 6 e1h1 e6!

In view of 7...e6h6 next, White resigned.

Position 321

M. Illescas Cordoba-J. Hodgson

Spanish Team Championship 1993

1 e1e1

Preparing e3g3 with an attack on the weak d6-pawn. Obviously Black can't stop this by 1...g3? due to 2 e1h5.

1...e1e7 2 e2g3 e6

Parrying the threat of 3 c5, but now White finds a new angle for the attack on d6.

3 e3a3! d7

Or 3...e6a8 4 e2xd6 e2xc4 5 e2xc4 e2xd6 6 e3b3 and White wins – Illescas.

4 e3xa7

With a sound extra pawn and the black king stranded in the centre, the rest is easy.

4...e2g5 5 e3b1 e2gc8

If 5...e2xe3?, then 6 e3a3.

6 c5 e1e7 7 cxd6 e2xd6 8 e2xd6 e3xd6 9 e3c5+ e3d7 10 e2f4

Preparing e2hf1 and e2c4 with a decisive attack.

Position 322

I. Morovic Fernandez-A. Karpov

Dos Hermanas 1994

1...d1c8!

Preparing ...d1b6 with an attack on the weak c4-pawn.

2 e2fd1 e2d8 3 d1a4

Or 3 e2d2 d1b6 4 c5 d1c4 5 e2d3 e3e7 with a clear advantage – Karpov.

3...e3e8 4 e2d2 a6!

Preparing ...b7-b5.

5 e2c3

After 5 c5 e2b3 6 d1b6 d1xb6 7 cxb6 a5 White ends up with a bad pawn structure.

5...b5 6 d1b2 d1b6 7 cxb5 axb5

The c-pawn is gone, but the c4-square remains weak.

8 e3d1 d5 9 a4

Or 9 exd5 d1xd5! 10 e3c2 d1xc3 11 e3xc3 e4 – Karpov.

9...d1c4! 10 d1xc4 dxc4

At first sight this passed pawn doesn't seem too powerful, but it will soon be.

11 a5 e1f8 12 a6 f6 13 f4 c5!

Fighting against the blockade on c3. The game continued 14 e2xd8 e3xd8 15 e3e1 e3b6 16 fxe5 fxe5 17 e2xe5 e3xa6 18 e2d1, and here the simple 18...cxb4! 19 e3f2 e1e7 would have been decisive – Karpov.

Position 323

J. Hellsten-J. Hjartarson

Malmö 1995

1 e2xc5!

A strong exchange sacrifice that ruins the black pawn structure. In contrast, 1 d1c4 or 1 e2ea1 is met by 1...d1fd7, followed by ...f7-f6 and ...e2g6-e8 with a solid game for Black.

1...d1xc5

After 1...e3xc5? 2 e3xc5 dxc5 3 e2xe5

White regains the material with interest.

2 h4!

Just in time, before Black plays ...f7-f6. 2 ♖c4 ♗d7 3 d6?! ♜c6 is less convincing; e.g. 4 ♗xe5? ♜xd6 or 4 ♗a5 ♜xd6 5 ♗xb7 ♜xb7.

2...gxf4 3 ♗xh4 ♗e8 4 ♜xh6 ♜b6 5 ♜e3 ♜g6

The immediate 5...f6 permits 6 ♖c4 ♜b1 7 g5! ♜xe1+ 8 ♜xe1 ♜g7 9 ♜g3 and the e5-pawn is doomed.

6 ♖c4 f6 7 ♗f2 ♜c8 8 ♜a1! ♜g7

Or 8...♗d6 9 ♗xd6 ♜xd6 10 ♜xa7 etc.

9 ♜a5! ♜d7 10 ♜xc5 ♜b8

At this point 11 ♗d2! was correct, preventing ♜b1+ and preparing 12 ♜a5 with an attack on the a7-pawn. The latter also enables a future c4-c5 with a huge advantage.

Position 324

M.Adams-A.Karpov

Las Palmas 1994

1...♗b8!

Preparing ...♗c6 and ...♗d7 in order to improve the bishop and step up the pressure on the e5-pawn. In contrast, 1...♗b4? runs into 2 ♗d6+! cxd6 3 ♜xb4 with a clear white advantage – Karpov.

2 ♗f6

Or 2 ♗d4 ♗c6 3 ♗f6 ♜c5!, preventing 4 ♗h5, with a more comfortable game.

2...♗c6 3 ♗e2 ♗d7! 4 ♗h5

After 4 ♗xd7 ♜xd7 Black has a long-term edge thanks to the weak e5-pawn, so White opts to transform the position. The sharp 4 ♗d4?! ♗xg2 5 ♜hg1, on the other hand, fails to 5...♗xe5! 6 ♗h5 ♗g6 – Karpov.

4...♗xf3 5 ♗xf3 ♗xe5 6 ♜e4 c6 7 ♜xd7 ♗xb2+!

Before being eliminated, the bishop

snatches a pawn.

8 ♜xb2 ♜xd7

Thanks to a slight material advantage and safer king, Black is better.

Position 325

D.Godes-B.Kantsler

Israeli Championship, Jerusalem 1996

1...♗d7!

Intending 2...♗f6 with pressure on the weak d5-pawn.

2 b4 ♗f6 3 ♜b3 ♗b7 4 ♜ac1

Preparing an attack on the backward pawn on c7.

4...♜d7!

Heading for f5 with increased pressure on d5.

5 ♜c2 ♜e2!

An annoying move for White since the rook isn't easily dislodged from e2, but the simple 5...♜e7!? was also strong; e.g. 6 ♜fc1 ♜f5, when 7 ♜xc7? fails to 7...♜e2! 8 ♗f3 ♗xd5 with a clear advantage.

6 b5

Securing the a-pawn. 6 ♜c4? at once failed to 6...♜xa4, while after 6 ♗f3 ♜h3! White can't stop 7...♗g4, since 7 ♗xe2? loses to 7...♗xd5.

6...axb5 7 axb5 ♜f5 8 ♜c4 ♜e7!

Black confidently defends the c7-pawn, whereas the one on d5 is practically doomed.

9 ♜a1 ♜be8 10 ♗f1 ♗xd5 11 ♗xd5 ♗xd5

Thanks to his extra pawn and more active pieces, Black is winning.

Position 326

P.Keres-A.Tamowski

Helsinki Olympiad 1952

1 ♗c4!

White keeps the d5-square under control, without worrying about the doubled c-pawns. In contrast, after 1 ♖xe6? fxe6 the doubled e-pawns take the f5 and d5 squares from his knight, while 1 ♗d5?! ♗xd5 2 exd5 bxc3 3 bxc3 c4! is rather unclear.

1...bxc3 2 bxc3 ♗xc4?!

2...♗b7 seems more active, intending ...♗ad8 and ...d6-d5.

3 dxc4

From now on the ...d6-d5 break can be discarded, and Black is also suffering from a backward pawn on d6.

3...♗e6 4 h4!

Having a firm grip on the centre, White starts an attack.

4...♗b8 5 g4 ♗b3 6 ♗d2 ♗b7 7 ♗d3!

Preparing a consolidating f2-f3, as well as ♗ab1 with a fight for the b-file.

7...♗g6?

Too optimistic. 7...♗e8 was correct, enabling ...♗b8.

8 f3 h5 9 g5 f6 10 ♗f1! fxcg5 11 hxg5 ♗e6

Thanks to his clever 10th move, White can now meet 11...♗xg5? with 12 ♗h4.

12 ♗db1! ♗xb1+ 13 ♗xb1 ♗f7 14 ♗d5

Preparing ♗b7 with a decisive advantage.

Position 327

G.Milos-U.Andersson

Szirak Interzonal 1987

1...♗c8!

Heading for a6 with an attack at the weakness on c4.

2 g4?!

More solid was 2 ♗f2, preparing ♗d1-e3.

2...♗a6 3 ♗f4

Or 3 g5 hxg5 4 ♗xg5 ♗h7 with a clear edge – Milos.

3...d5! 4 ♗f2 dxe4

Black leaves the c4-pawn for a later occasion and keeps undermining the white centre.

5 fxe4 e5! 6 ♗g3

Or 6 dxe5 ♗c5, preparing ...♗fd7 – Milos.

6...♗fe8 7 ♗fe1 ♗e6!

In Nimzowitsch style, provoking d4-d5 in order to install a knight on c5.

8 ♗ab1 ♗ae8 9 ♗e2 ♗b7 10 ♗be1 ♗c6!

After tying the white pieces to the defence of the e4-pawn, Black shifts his focus to the one on c4.

11 c5?!

After 11 d5 ♗d6, followed by ...♗c5 and ...♗a6, Black is better – Milos, but now he wins a pawn for nothing.

11...bxc5 12 d5 ♗b6 13 h4?! ♗c8! 14 ♗f3 c4!

15 ♗h1 ♗c5

Heading for d3 with a clear advantage.

Position 328

J.Hellsten-COMP Chess Genius 4

Malmö 1996

1 ♗c4!

Forcing an exchange on b3, after which the a-file will prove useful in a queenside attack. In contrast, 1 ♗xb6?! axb6 helps Black in a similar way, with ...b6-b5 next.

1...♗xb3 2 axb3 ♗c7 3 ♗f4! ♗xf4 4 gxf4

The threat 4 ♗d6 forced Black into another unfavourable doubling of the opponent's pawns. Now the f4-pawn increases White's central control.

4...a6 5 ♗fe5 ♗xe5?!

This third doubling of pawns yields White a significant space advantage and prospects of a later d4-d5 break. A lesser evil was 5...♗ab8, followed by ♗fd8 and ♗f8-e7.

6 fxe5 ♗e8

Covering the d6-square from the enemy knight.

7 f4

Here and later 7 e4, preparing d4-d5, suggests itself, but facing the machine I aimed at slower play.

7...♞d8 8 e3 h6 9 ♜f2 ♙g6 10 ♙f3 ♜h7?!

The beginning of a strange plan, but Black was short of active options.

11 ♞d2 ♞h8 12 ♜f2 ♜g8 13 ♞c1 ♜f8 14 ♘a5 ♞b8 15 e4!

Preparing d4-d5 with a clear advantage.

Position 329

J.Hellsten-S.Schneider

Malmö 1989

1...♞e6?

This leads to a terrible pawn structure. Preferable was 1...f6! 2 ♞xc6+ ♜f7 with a rather unclear game.

2 ♞xe6 fxe6 3 ♙c1!

Obviously the b2-pawn is more important than the one on e5. Now Black has a whole collection of weaknesses and his extra pawn is insignificant.

3...g6 4 0-0

More logical was 4 ♜e2 keeping the king in the centre.

4...♙g7 5 ♞fe1 ♞c8

The immediate 5...♜f7 permits 6 ♞d7, so Black covers the c7-pawn in advance.

6 ♙e3 a6 7 ♙c5 ♜f7 8 ♞d7 ♙f6 9 ♞ed1 ♞he8 10 ♜f1!

Rectifying the error on the fourth move, with focus on the e5-pawn. There followed 10...♙g5 11 f3 h5 12 ♜e2 ♙f6 13 ♜e3 ♞b8 14 ♙a3! ♞bc8?! 15 ♜e4 g5 16 b3! (preparing a decisive bishop transfer to a5) 16...♜g6 17 c4 ♜g7 18 ♙b4 a5 19 ♙c3! c5?! 20 a4 ♜g6 21 ♙xa5 ♞a8 22 ♙xc7 ♞a7 23 ♙b6 and Black resigned.

Position 330

S.Savchenko-S.Zavgorodniy

Ilyichevsk 2006

1 ♙b2!

With focus on the enemy kingside. Now any capture on f3 will clear the g-file for the attack. Less promising was 1 ♘xg5?! ♞xg5 or 1 ♘d2 ♘h3!? – Golubev.

1...♘xf3+?

This just accelerates White's plan. Black is also suffering after 1...♙xf3 2 gxf3 ♘xf3+? 3 ♜e2, e.g. 3...♘g5? 4 h4 or 3...♘h4 4 ♞c3!. Therefore 1...cxb4 2 axb4 ♘d7! is a better try, speeding up his development; e.g. 3 h4 ♘xf3+ 4 gxf3 ♞c8 5 ♞g1 e5 with unclear play.

2 gxf3 cxb4

Or 2...♘d7 3 ♞g1 e5 4 f4! with strong pressure along the a1-h8 diagonal.

3 ♞g1! f6

Returning the pawn, since 3...g6 runs into 4 ♙xe6! fxe6 5 ♞xg6+ ♜f7 6 ♞g7+ ♜e8 7 ♞xb7 and wins – Golubev.

4 ♙xe6+ ♜h8 5 ♞g3! ♞e7 6 ♞g6!

This nice blow seals Black's fate.

6...♙c8

Obviously both the queen and bishop were immune.

7 ♞h3

In view of 7...h6 8 ♞xh6+ gxh6 9 ♞xh6+ ♞h7 10 ♞xf8+, Black resigned.

Position 331

L.Portisch-R.J.Fischer

Sousse Interzonal 1967

1...♘h5!

Preparing ...♘g7-e6-d4 in order to seize the centre.

2 ♞e3

Less constructive is 2 ♞b6?! ♞e7, followed by ...♞a6, when 3 ♞xc6? fails to 3...♙d7.

2...♖a7 3 h4!

Intending ♖h2 and ♗h3 to swap the opponent's "good" bishop.

3...♗g7 4 ♖h2 f6 5 .♗h3 .♗xh3 6 ♖xh3 ♗e6

The alternative was 6...h5, ruling out h4-h5; e.g. 7 ♖bd1 ♗ad8 8 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 9 ♗d2 ♗e6, followed by ...♗d4, with some initiative for Black.

7 h5 gxh5!

Accepting the sacrifice in order to gain time.

8 ♗h1 ♗ad8 9 ♖g2 ♗g7 10 ♖f1 ♗g4! 11 ♗h4

11 ♗h4? fails to 11...♖d1+ 12 ♖g2 ♗f4+.

11...♗g6

With ideas like ...♗h6-g5 and ...♗d4, Black is better.

Position 332

Y.Piskov-H.Hermesmann

Dortmund 1992

1 ♗g3!

Forcing a favourable exchange on g3, which will clear the f-file for the rook and hamper Black's potential attack.

1...♗xg3 2 fxg3! e4 3 .♗e2 ♗e5 4 ♗b5!

Preventing 4...♗d7 and enabling ideas like ♖c1-c7 and ♗d4-e6.

4...♗e7 5 ♖c1 ♗d7 6 ♗d4

6 ♖c7 seems even stronger, e.g. 6...♗d3 7 ♗d2! with the threat of 8 ♗g5.

6...♗ac8

After 6...♗g4 7 .♗xg4 fxg4 8 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 9 ♖c7! White is much better, but in the game too he soon accomplishes the invasion at c7.

7 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 8 ♗d2 a4 9 ♖c1 ♗g6

Intending ...♗e5 and ...f5-f4 – Piskov.

10 ♗b5! ♗e5

At this point the game continued 11 ♖c7 ♗d7 12 ♗g5 (or 12 ♖xb7 f4! 13 gx4 ♗xf4 with counterplay) 12...♗e8 13 ♗c3 b5 and

Black put up some resistance. However, the intermediate 11 ♗h6! was very strong; e.g. 11...♖d8 12 ♖c7 ♗d7 13 ♖xb7 with a sound extra pawn, whereas Black hasn't achieved ...f5-f4.

Position 333

V.Ivanchuk-M.Krasenkow

Wijk aan Zee 2003

1...♗d6!

Inviting an exchange on d6, after which the doubled d-pawns would prove useful in taking the c5 and e5 squares away from the enemy pieces. Other moves, such as 1...♗f4?!, permit 2 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 3 ♗c5 with some advantage for White thanks to his excellent knight.

2 ♗xd6 cxd6! 3 ♗c1

Now that c5 is no longer available, the destiny of this knight has become less evident.

3...b4

Limiting the rook on e3.

4 f3

Or 4 ♖c2 ♗f4!? 5 ♖d3 ♗e8 with counterplay. But now 5 ♖c2 is in the air, which explains Black's next move.

4...♗c7! 5 ♖e1 a5

Securing the queenside pawns with a roughly equal game. There followed 6 ♗e2 ♖f7 7 ♖c1 ♗b7 8 ♗f2 ♗e8 9 ♗g1 and a draw was agreed.

Position 334

J.Hellsten-R.Hallerod

Ikara 2003

1 d5!

Preparing c4-c5 and c3-c4 in order to clear the long diagonal, even at the cost of a pawn. 1 c5?! d5 2 c4 promises less due to 2...♗e6!, restricting White's dark-squared

bishop, or 1. ♖b2?! ♗e7 2 d5 b6! 3 ♗d4 ♙d7 with a similar effect, while 1 ♙a3 ♗e7 2 c5 d5 3 c6!? b6! 4 c4 ♙e6 leads to rather unclearplay.

1...♗e7 2 c5! dxc5

After 2...♙xc3 3 cxd6 cxd6 4 ♙d2 ♙f6 5 ♗d4, followed by ♙b3 and ♙c3, White enjoys excellent compensation.

3 c4 b6 4 ♙d2 ♗f7 5 ♙b2 ♙h6 6 ♙f2!

Preparing g2-g4 in order to step up the pressure on the enemy kingside.

6...♗d6 7 ♙h2 ♙f7!

Black wisely tries to escape with his king, and he should have stuck to this plan on the coming moves.

8 ♙h1 a5?! 9 ♙c3 ♙f6 10 ♙c1 ♙h6 11 ♙g1 ♙d7 12 g4

White has a clear initiative.

Position 335

S.Reshevsky-H.Mecking

Sousse Interzonal 1967

1 ♙f2!

Preparing ♗d1-e3 in order to exploit the blockading square on e3 in a more powerful way.

1...♗f6?!

Preferable was 1...♙f6 2 ♗g2 ♗g7 with just a slight disadvantage – Trifunovic.

2 ♗d1 ♗g8 3 ♗e3 ♙f6 4 ♙g2 ♙ae8 5 ♙e2 ♙e7 6 g4!

A key advance that gains space and softens up the pawn on e4.

6...♙g8

Or 6...fxg4 7 ♗xg4! ♙xf4 8 ♙xe4+! ♙xe4 9 ♙xe4+ ♙g8 10 ♙g3 with a big advantage – Trifunovic.

7 ♙g3 fxg4 8 hxg4

Now the e4-pawn has become weak, besides which Black has a constant problem with the passive knight on a6.

8...♗g6 9 ♗hf5 ♙h8

Giving up the pawn, since 9...♙h7? fails to 10 g5 hxg5 11 ♙h5+ ♙g8 12 fxg5 – Trifunovic.

10 ♗xh6+ ♙h7 11 ♗hf5

White converted his extra pawn into victory.

Position 336

A.Nimzowitsch-J.R.Capablanca

New York 1927

1...♗f5!

Fighting against the blockade on d4. Also interesting is 1...♗c6!? in the same spirit.

2 ♗xf5+ gxf5 3 ♙f3

After 3 ♙xh5? ♙h8 4 ♙f3 ♙h4 White has a problem with the f4-pawn; e.g. 5 ♙f2 ♙hxf4 6 ♙xf4 ♙xf4 7 ♙xf4 ♙xb2+ and the queen clearly outshines the rooks.

3...♙g6 4 ♙ed2 ♙e4!

By this and his next move Black again directs all his attention to the d4-square.

5 ♙d4 ♙c4! 6 ♙f2 ♙b5 7 ♙g3

After 7 ♙xc4 ♙xc4 8 ♙d4 ♙b3 Black keeps the initiative.

7...♙cxd4 8 cxd4

Since 8 ♙xd4? failed to 8...♙e2, White finally had to give up his blockade.

8...♙c4 9 ♙g2 b5!

Opening a new front. The game concluded 10 ♙g1 b4 11 axb4 axb4 12 ♙g2 ♙c1! (zugzwang) 13 ♙g3 ♙h1 14 ♙d3 ♙e1 15 ♙f3 ♙d1 16 b3 ♙c1 17 ♙e3 ♙f1 and White resigned.

Position 337

T.V.Petrosian-V.Simagin

Moscow 1956

1 exf5!

Preparing a blockade on e4.

1...gxf5

Obviously 1...♖xf5 just helps White to accomplish his plan by 2 ♖e4.

2 g4!

Winning the battle for the e4-square.

2...fxg4 3 ♖e4

The immediate 3 fxg4 looks strong as well.

3...♗f4

After 3...gxf3 4 ♖xf3 ♗f4 5 ♗e3, with ideas like ♖g1+, White obtains a strong initiative.

4 ♖b7 ♖c7 5 fxg4 ♖e8 6 g5

Clearing the d1-h5 diagonal for the queen with excellent attacking prospects.

Position 338

S.Gligoric-V.Smyslov

Yugoslavia-USSR match, Kiev 1959

1...c4!

Preparing ...♖c6-e7-d5 with a blockade. Weaker is 1...♖ac8?! 2 c4!, preventing this idea.

2 ♗c2 ♖c6! 3 g4

Or 3 ♖cd1 ♖e7 4 ♗c1 ♖d5 5 ♗a3 ♖c6! with the strong threat of 6...♖e3.

3...♖e7 4 ♖h2 ♖c6 5 ♖g3 b5

Setting the pawn majority into motion.

6 a4 a6 7 ♖b1 ♖ab8 8 ♗d2 bxa4

8...♗a8 was a good alternative, keeping the option of a ...b5-b4 breakthrough.

9 ♖a1 ♗a8 10 ♗xa4 ♖c7 11 ♖a2 ♖b6 12 gxf5 exf5 13 ♗c1 ♖d5 14 ♖e2 a5 15 ♗c2 ♖b3!

An appealing exchange sacrifice that creates two connected passed pawns and further strengthens Black's light square control. The game continued 16 ♗xb3 cxb3 17 ♖a4 ♗f8 18 ♗b2 ♖e3!, preparing ...♖c4, with a clear initiative, now that 19 ♖xe3? fails to 19...♖c6.

Position 339

J.Hellsten-L.Dworakowski

Hallsberg 1993

1 e5!

Sacrificing a pawn to install a blockade on e4 with the knight, which will enhance a future attack. 1 f5?! was less promising due to 1...♖d4, preparing ...d6-d5.

1...dxe5 2 ♖e4

Another move order is 2 f5 ♖h4 3 ♖e4.

2...♖h4

Or 2...♖e6 3 f5! gxf5 4 ♖g5! with a strong attack.

3 f5! ♖c5 4 ♖g4 ♖h6 5 ♖f2!

Activating the queen and covering the knight on e3.

5...♖xe4?!

This just accelerates White's attack, but after 5...♖d3 6 ♖d2 ♖d8 7 ♖g5 Black was also under pressure.

6 ♖xe4 ♗c8 7 ♖g4 ♖f8 8 ♖f6!

Now the attack is irresistible.

8...♗xf5 9 ♖h4 ♖g7 10 ♖xh7 ♖g8 11 g4 g5 12 ♖xg5 ♗g6 13 ♖f6+ ♖f8 14 ♖h8

Black resigned.

Position 340

Y.Balashov-M.Taimanov

Moscow 1986

1...g5!

Sacrificing a pawn in order to establish a powerful dark square blockade.

2 fxg5

Or 2 g3 gxf4 3 gxf4 ♗h6 4 ♖e2 ♖g8 with counterplay.

2...♖e5

Black immediately seizes the blocking square and creates the threat of 3...♖c4. The immediate 2...h6!? was also interesting.

3 ♗d4 h6!

Exploiting tactical motifs along the

c1-h6 diagonal.

4 g6!

The only way to keep the balance – Taimanov.

4...fxg6 5 ♖g4 ♜e7 6 ♙xe5

Swapping the blockader before Black goes **6...♙g7**.

6...dxe5 7 ♜hd1 ♜c7! 8 ♜d6 ♙c8

With the plan of ...h6-h5 and ...♙h6(+). Thanks to his bishop pair and dark square control, Black is slightly better.

Position 341

D.Bunzmann-J.Hodgson

German League 1999

1...c5!

Black has assessed that the d5-pawn can be safely blocked on d6, after which the pawn itself will restrict several of the white pieces. Less promising was **1...cxd5?! 2 ♜ad1**, followed by **3 ♘xd5** or even **3 ♘f4**, after which White's activity compensates for the bishop pair.

2 ♜ad1 ♙d6 3 ♘b5 a6!

Securing future play with ...b7-b5.

4 ♘xd6 ♜xd6 5 a4 b5! 6 ♘c3

Obviously **6 axb5 axb5 7 ♜xb5?** failed to **7...♙a6**.

6...♙d7 7 ♜c2

This time the attempt to grab a pawn by **7 axb5 axb5 8 ♘xb5?** backfires after **8...♜b8!**.

7...♜fe8 8 axb5 axb5 9 ♜a1 ♜xa1 10 ♜xa1 ♜e5! 11 ♜d1 b4! 12 ♘a2 ♜e2

Attacking the weak b2-pawn with a strong initiative.

Position 342

A.Konstantinopolsky-A.Kotov

Baku 1946

1...♜e7!

Provoking the e4-e5 advance in order to install a blockade on d5.

2 e5 ♘d5 3 ♙d2 h4!

The simplest choice, creating a new weakness. In contrast, the game continued **3...♜a3 4 ♜f2 f6 5 ♜xh5 ♜xa2 6 ♜ef1 ♜xb3 7 ♜g6** with some complications.

4 ♜f2 ♜g6 5 ♜ef1 hxg3 6 hxg3 ♜e6!

Preparing ...♜e7 with a more efficient defence of the f7-pawn.

7 ♘g2 ♜e7 8 ♜h1 ♜g4!

Parrying the threat of **9 ♜h5**. Thanks to his strong knight and the weak pawns on d4 and g3, Black has a more comfortable game.

Position 343

A.Karpov-M.Taimanov

USSR Spartakiad, Moscow 1983

1 ♙xf5!

Preparing a blockade by **♘f3** and **♙d4**, even at the cost of a pawn. **1 ♘f3?!?** was less precise due to **1...d4! 2 ♙xf5 ♙xf3! 3 ♜xf3 exf5** with a slight black edge – Karpov.

1...exf5

After **1...gxf5?! 2 ♜f3** the black king is under a cloud.

2 ♘f3! ♜xc2 3 ♙d4 ♜c6

The e6-square must be kept under control, e.g. **3...♜xb3? 4 ♜h4!** with a far improved version of the game, or **3...♜c7? 4 ♘g5 h6 5 e6!** with a strong attack.

4 ♜h4!

Not just threatening a rook, but also enabling the tactical idea of **5 e6 fxe6 6 ♜f6**.

4...♜e8 5 e6! fxe6

The other captures failed to **6 ♘g5**. Now **6 ♜f6?** runs into **6...e5!**, but White has a stronger option.

6 ♘e5 ♜c7 7 ♘xg6! ♙g7 8 ♘e5

By now the powerful dark square block-

ade and the exposed black king outweigh the pawn.

8...♖e7 9 ♗g3 ♜ec8 10 ♝fe1 ♞8c7 11 ♜f3 ♚h8

At this point, simplest was 12 ♗xg7+! ♗xg7 13 ♝xe6 ♗xd4 14 ♜xd4 ♞d2 15 ♞ee1 ♞xd1 16 ♞xd1, keeping the blockade with a clear advantage – Karpov.

Position 344

J.H.Donner-M.Tal

Bled 1961

1...e4!

By advancing the e-pawn before it is blocked by ♜c3-e4, Black frees the a1-h8 diagonal and the e-file for an attack on the white king.

2 ♜xe4

2 ♜xe4? loses outright to 2...♞e8!, while after 2 ♗xe4 ♗f6! 3 ♜d1 f3, followed by 4...♗a1, Black obtains a strong initiative – Tal.

2...♠d4+ 3 ♚f1

Or 3 ♚h2 ♗h6+ 4 ♜h3 f3! 5 ♗f1 ♗h7 with strong pressure.

3...f3!

In the same spirit as two moves ago, before White arranges a blockade by ♠g2-f3.

4 ♠xf3 ♗xg4

Thanks to the double threat at f3 and g1, Black wins material.

5 ♜f6+ ♝xf6 6 ♗e8+ ♚h7 7 ♗e7+ ♗g7! 8 ♗xg7+ ♚xg7

Tal later converted his extra exchange into victory.

Position 345

Xu Jun-A.Ambarcumjan

China-CIS match, Beijing 1991

1...♠xg2!

Sacrificing the exchange to install a

blockade on d5. In contrast, 1...♞dd8? 2 d5! yields White a dangerous initiative – Ribli.

2 ♜xd7 ♗xd7 3 ♚xg2 ♜xc4 4 ♠a1

The radical 4 d5?! exd5 5 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 6 ♗e4 fails to 6...♞c5! and Black keeps the extra material.

4...♜d5 5 ♜xd5!

Immediately fighting against the enemy blockade.

5...♗xd5+ 6 ♗f3 b5! 7 ♗xd5 exd5

Now the minimal material deficit is compensated by White's passive bishop and the potential passed pawn on the b-file.

8 ♠c3 b4 9 ♠e1 a5 10 h4 h5 11 ♞b1 ♞b8! 12 ♞d3 a4!

Prophylaxis against 13 a3, which can now be met by 13...b3. The game concluded 13 ♚h3 ♠d6 14 g4 hxg4+ 15 ♚xg4 ♜a3 16 ♞b2 ♜c4 17 ♞b1 with a draw.

Position 346

D.Slavov-B.Chatalbashev

Bulgarian Team Championship 2003

1 c5!

Finishing off Black's idea of ...♜d7-c5 with a blockade. In contrast, the game saw 1 h3? ♠xf3 2 ♠xf3 ♜d7 3 ♠d1 ♜c5 with a typical "good knight vs. bad bishop" scenario.

1...bxc5

White is also better after 1...♜d7 2 cxb6 cxb6 3 ♠b5! or 2...♜xb6 3 ♞c1.

2 ♞c1 ♜d7

Or 2...♠xf3 3 ♞xf3!, keeping the ♠e2-b5 resource.

3 ♠b5!

Thus White recovers the pawn and also gets rid of his "bad" bishop.

3...♞e7 4 ♠xd7 ♠xd7 5 ♞xc5

Preparing ♜d2-c4 with some advantage thanks to the superior pawn structure.

Position 347

N.Short-Ni Hua

Beijing (rapid) 2003

1...e4!

A strong pawn sacrifice, which creates a passed pawn on the f-file and enables a blockade on e5.

2 fxe4 f4 3 ♖e2

Or 3 ♗e2 ♖e5 with a huge advantage.

3...f3! 4 ♗d2 ♖e5

More precise was 4...f2! first, e.g. 5 ♗e3 ♖e5 6 g5 ♗f3+ 7 ♗xf3 ♗xf3 with a clear advantage – Ni Hua.

5 g5 ♗g6 6 ♖g1 ♗g4 7 ♗b1 ♗f7!

Preparing 8...♗f8, followed by ...f3-f2.

8 c5 bxc5 9 bxc5 dxc5 10 h3

Or 10 ♗xc5 ♗af8 11 ♗f2 ♗d7! with ideas like ...♖g4 and ...♗f4.

10...♗af8!

With the strong threat of 11...f2.

11 ♗f2 ♗h5 12 ♗c3 ♗xh3 13 ♖xh3 ♖g4!

Decisive. There followed 14 ♗h2 ♖xh2 15 ♖xh2 f2 16 ♗d3 ♗f3! and Black soon won.

Position 348

J.H.Donner-M.Tal

Zürich 1959

1...♗b6!

In order to undermine the enemy blockade by 2...♗b4.

2 ♗ab1

White has to spend a tempo defending the b2-pawn, since 2 a5 ♗xb2 3 e5 dxe5 4 ♗ab1 ♗a3 or 4 ♗fb1 ♗d2 isn't satisfactory for him.

2...♗b4 3 ♗f1

After 3 ♗xb4?! cxb4 the black knight enters on c5 with great effect.

3...c4!

After breaking the white blockade, Black is able to move his queenside majority for-

ward.

4 ♗e2 b5 5 axb5 axb5 6 ♖h1 ♗xc3

Not 6...♖c5?! 7 e5 with unnecessary counterplay.

7 bxc3 ♗xc3 8 ♗xb5?

For better or worse, the active 8 e5 had to be tried.

8...♗d3!

Suddenly the c-pawn has turned into a major factor.

9 ♗e1 c3 10 ♗b1 ♖c5

With the double threat of 11...♗xe4 and 11...c2 12 ♗c1 ♖b3. White resigned.

Position 349

T.V.Petrosian-S.Gligoric

Varna Olympiad 1962

1 ♗e1!

Faced with the threat of ...e5-e4, White gives up the exchange in order to establish a blockade on e4. Instead, 1 ♗d1?! e4 led to a strong black initiative, while after 1 ♗e2?! ♗d3 2 ♖e4 ♖xe4 3 ♗xd3 ♖g3+! Black wins material anyway, since 4 hxg3? fxg3 5 ♗e4 ♗h5+! leads to mate.

1...♖d3

Or 1...♗e8 2 ♗e4 and White achieves his blockade.

2 ♗fe2 ♖xe1 3 ♗xe1

Black has won the exchange, but his rooks aren't very useful.

3...♗e8 4 c5 ♗ff8 5 ♖e4!

Completing the blockade initiated four moves ago. By now neither side can make progress without taking considerable risks, so a draw was agreed.

Position 350

S.Savchenko-A.Iljushin

Linares 1998

1 g3!

In order to keep the kingside blocked before getting on with the attack on the opposite flank. In contrast, the straightforward 1 bxc6 .xc6 2 .b5?! permits 2...f4!, intending ...f5 as well as ...g5-g4 with counterplay.

1...g7

Thanks to White's clever first move, he can now meet 1...g4 with 2 f4! and 1...f4 with 2 g4!.

2 bxc6 .xc6 3 .b5!

Removing the main defender of Black's queenside. With play just on "his" flank, White is strategically winning.

3...f7 4 .xc6 bxc6 5 ♖b2 f8 6 ♖b8! ♗xb8 7 ♗xb8 ♖e8 8 ♗c8

Making room for the rook. There followed:

8...d7 9 a4 f7 10 a5 ♖e7 11 ♖b8 f4 12 g4! h6 13 a6 ♖e8 14 a2! f8 15 f4 ♗g6 16 ♗xd7

With the white king escaping to h3, Black resigned.

Position 351

I.Radulov-R.Bandal

Lugano Olympiad 1968

1 e5!

Seizing the initiative before Black castles away from the centre.

1...dxe5

Or 1...♖xe5 2 ♖xe5 dxe5 3 .xf7+! f7 4 ♖xd7 with a clear edge in the endgame.

2 f4! ♖c6

Obviously 2...♖f4? fails to 3 ♖xf4 exf4 4 f6+.

3 f5 .f5 4 ♖xe5 0-0

After 4...f6? 5 ♖e3 the black king has nowhere to go.

5 ♖xe7 ♖ae8 6 .d5!

A final detail, that produces a clearly superior endgame.

6...gxe7 7 .xc6 bxc6 8 ♖he1 ♖fe8?

The last chance was 8...gxe1 9 ♖xe1 .e6!? – Milic.

9 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 10 ♖d8+ f7 11 f2 ♖e5 12 b4!

Now the a6-pawn is doomed.

12...a5 13 f4

In view of 13...gxe7 14 bxa5, Black resigned.

Position 352

L.Portisch-R.Hübner

Montreal 1979

1 ♖a7!

Initiating an attack on b7 before Black manages to castle and connect his rooks.

1...e7

After 1...c5? 2 .xc5 ♖xc5 3 ♖xb7 White wins a healthy pawn.

2 ♖c1! ♖d7 3 ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 4 ♖c1 ♖d7

The desired ...0-0 is just one move away; however...

5 ♖a8+! .d8 6 ♖c8 f7

After 6...0-0? 7 .c5! ♖e8 8 .b6 White wins material.

7 .b6!

7 ♖b8 f6 is less convincing – Gligoric.

7...xb6 8 ♖xh8 f6

Or 8...xf2+ 9 f2! with 10 ♖g8(+) next – Gligoric.

9 ♖e8+! ♖xe8 10 ♖xe8

With a winning endgame.

Position 353

V.Alatortsev-I.Boleslavsky

USSR Championship, Moscow 1950

1...g5!

Attacking White at his most vulnerable point, g2.

2 g3

After 2 0-0? .h3 Black wins material.

2...♖ae8 3 0-0 ♕h3! 4 f4

The rook couldn't move, e.g. 4 ♖fe1? ♖xf2! 5 ♗xf2 ♖e3 mate – Bondarevsky.

4...♕xf1!

A strong sacrifice that will leave the enemy king in trouble on the light squares.

4...♖c5+?! 5 ♖f2 was less convincing.

5 fxg5 ♖xe2 6 ♖c3 ♕g2!

Seizing the long diagonal in order to enhance the attack.

7 ♖d3 ♕f3 8 ♖f1

There was nothing better; e.g. 8 ♗f1 ♖xh2 9 ♖d4 c5! 10 ♖xd6 ♕c6+ 11 ♗e1 ♖h1+ 12 ♗d2 ♖xa1 13 ♖e6+ ♖f7 and Black wins.

8...♖g2+ 9 ♗h1 ♕c6!

Preparing a decisive discovered check.

10 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 11 ♖f1+ ♖f2+

White resigned.

Position 354

J.Van der Wiel-N.Short

Wijk aan Zee 1990

1 ♖xe6!

A strong sacrifice that seizes the initiative for White. In contrast, after 1 ♗xe5? ♗xe5 2 ♖xb7 ♗f3+! 3 ♗h1 ♖h4 Black wins – Van der Wiel, while 1 ♖xb7?! ♖g6 also yields him a strong attack.

1...♕h2+ 2 ♗xh2 ♖xe6 3 ♖d7! ♖e8

Or 3...f4?! 4 ♖fd1!, heading for d5.

4 ♖xb7 ♗d8

4...♖c8!? was a lesser evil, when 5 ♖b6 keeps the advantage – Van der Wiel. 5 ♖b6!? was also interesting in the game.

5 ♖a7 ♖e4 6 ♖d1!

Sidestepping the trap 6 ♖xa6? ♖b5 and bringing the last piece into the game.

6...♗e6 7 ♖dd7 ♖b8+ 8 ♕.d6 ♖b5 9 ♗d4!

Thanks to the pressure on g7 White wins material, and the rest is easy.

9...♖xd4 10 cxd4

Preparing 11 ♕e5. White soon won.

Position 355

R.Ovetchkin-N.Efanov

Nizhnij Tagil 2007

1 e4!

Putting some pressure on Black before he castles out of trouble.

1...♖a5

Preferable seems 1...0-0!? 2 cxd5 exd5 3 exd5 ♕f5 4 ♖d2 ♖ad8 with some compensation, whereas 1...d4?! runs into 2 e5! ♕e7 3 ♗e4 with a grip on the dark squares.

2 exd5 exd5 3 cxd5 ♕xc3

Or 3...cxd5? 4 ♕b5+!, harassing the black king.

4 bxc3

The intermediate 4 ♖e4+! was also strong.

4...cxd5 5 c4! ♕e6

If 5...0-0, then 6 cxd5 ♕f5 7 ♖b3 with an extra pawn.

6 ♖ab1!

Creating new threats with every move.

6...♖c7 7 ♖a4+! ♖c6

Or 7...♕d7 8 ♖a3, preventing ...0-0.

8 ♖a3 dxc4 9 ♗d4! ♖d7 10 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 11 ♕xc4 ♗f7

At the same time Black resigned. 12 ♖f3+ is one of various winning options.

Position 356

J.Lautier-A.Karpov

Linares 1995

1...bxc5!

Sacrificing the exchange in the fight for the initiative. 1...♖c6 2 ♕b5 is less forceful.

2 ♕xc7 ♖xc7 3 ♖c3

3 dxc5? failed to 3...♖a5+, while after 3 0-0? ♖b8 4 ♖c3 ♖b6 5 ♕d3 e5!? Black obtains a strong initiative.

3...e5!

Clearing the centre before White castles away from the e-file.

4 ♖d3

After 4 0-0? exd4 5 ♖xd4 ♗b6 Black wins a piece, while 4 dxe5 d4, followed by ...♖xe5, or 4 dxc5 d4, followed by ...♖xc5, also favours him.

4...exd4 5 ♖xd4 ♖e8+! 6 ♖f1

Or 6 ♖e2 d4 7 ♗c2 ♖e5, with threats like 8...c4 and 8...♖xd3+ 9 ♗xd3 ♖e3.

6...♗b6 7 ♖f5 d4 8 ♗d2 ♖e5

With ideas like ...c5-c4 and ...♖.b7-a6 Black keeps a strong initiative. The game continued 9 ♖e1 ♖e6 10 ♖b1 ♖.b7 11 ♖f2 d3! 12 ♖hf1 c4+ 13 ♖g3 ♖h5+! 14 ♖h3 ♖g6! and the exposure of White's king soon took its toll.

*Position 357***J.Hellsten-G.Dalakis**

Agios Kirykos 2004

1 f4!

Seizing the initiative without worrying about a weak square on e5. 1 ♖e3?! ♖g5 was less ambitious.

1...exf4 2 ♖xf4 b6 3 ♖c4 ♖d7 4 e5!

Just in time, before Black installs a knight on e5.

4...♖g5?!

Not 4...♖xe5? 5 ♖ae1! ♖xc4 6 ♖.xc4 with decisive threats; but 4...♖g7, keeping an eye on e5, was safer, when 5 ♖ae1 keeps the initiative.

5 ♖h2! ♖f8 6 ♗e4 c5 7 ♖d6

Creating the threat of 8 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 9 ♖.c4.

7...f5 8 exf6!?

Transposing to a superior endgame, though 8 ♗c4+ followed by 9 e6 was also strong.

8...♗xe4 9 ♖xe4 ♖e3+ 10 ♖h1 ♖hxf6

Or 10...♖dxf6 11 ♖e5!

11 ♖c4+ ♖h7?

A lesser evil was 11...♖g7 12 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 13 ♖ae1 ♖ae8 14 ♖.d6 ♖h8 with some drawing chances. Thus the correct move order for White was 11 ♖xf6+! ♖xf6 12 ♖.d6, ruling out ...♖f8-h8.

12 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6

Or 12 ...♖xf6 13 ♖fe1! ♖e8 14 ♖.b5 ♖f7 15 ♖ad1 etc.

13 ♖.d6

Faced with material losses, Black resigned.

*Position 358***J.Hellsten-R.Sergejev**

Hinnerup 1993

1 ♖d5!

Sacrificing a pawn in order to clear the light squares for the d3-bishop. 1 ♖af1?! ♗b4! is less convincing.

1...♖.xd5 2 exd5 ♖ac8

After 2...♗xd5 3 c4! ♗a5 4 ♖.e4 followed by ♖.d5, Black comes under pressure, but 2...g6!? was a more solid choice, when 3 ♖.e4 preparing h4-h5 keeps some initiative.

3 b4! ♗xd5

Or 3...♗d8 4 ♖af1 ♖g5 5 ♖f5 ♖h4 6 ♗f4, keeping up the pressure.

4 c4 ♗c6 5 ♖e4 ♗c7

After 5...♗xc4? 6 ♖.xe5 dxe5 7 ♖.xh7+ ♖xh7 8 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 9 ♗d3+ White wins.

6 ♖af1!

The last piece joins the attack, thus enhancing a future ♖.d5.

6...f6 7 ♖f5 ♖b8 8 ♖h4 g6 9 ♖.xe5! fxe5

If 9...dxe5, then 10 ♖.xg6 ♖c5+ 11 bxc5 hxg6 12 ♗xg6+ ♗g7 13 ♗f5 and wins.

10 ♖xh7! ♖f6 11 ♖h6 ♗xc4 12 ♖xg6+ ♖f8**13 ♗g5**

White soon won.

Position 359

B.Gulko-A.Karpov

Reykjavik 1991

1...b5!

Initiating an attack on the queenside, which indirectly threatens the safety of the white king.

2 axb5

Or 2 cxb5 axb5 3 a5 c5! with a clear edge – Karpov.

2...axb5 3 cxb5 ♖b6!

The immediate 3...♗xb5?! permits 4 ♖a5! c6 5 ♖ha1 with an annoying pin.

4 ♖hd1 ♗xb5 5 ♖e1 ♖fe8

Enabling a future knight manoeuvre via f8.

6 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 7 ♖a1 ♖d8!

Keeping the rook in order to enhance a future attack.

8 ♖d2

Or 8 ♖g3 g6!?, intending ...d6-d5 – Karpov.

8...c6 9 ♖c2 ♖f8! 10 ♖g3?!

White should have restricted the enemy knight by 10 f5, although Black maintains the initiative after 10...d5.

10...♖e6! 11 ♖f5 ♖c7

With the idea of ...c6-c5. There followed 12 fxe5 dxe5 13 ♗f1 c5 14 bxc5 ♖xc5 and the white king proved fatally exposed.

Position 360

N.Grandelius-V.Nithander

Swedish Championship, Växjö 2008

1 ♖e1!

Activating the last piece, without worrying about the doubled f-pawns.

1...♖xf3+

After 1...♖g4? 2 ♖xe5! ♗xe5 3 h3 ♖h5 4 ♖xc8 ♖axc8 5 g4! ♖xh3 6 ♖xe5 White is winning.

2 gxf3 ♖d4 3 dxc7

Thanks to his strong first move White now possesses a powerful passed pawn.

3...♗h3 4 ♗d5!

Vacating the c4-square for the rook.

4...♖e6 5 ♖c4! ♖xb2 6 ♗.xe6

This and the next move eliminate Black's more active pieces and weaken his defence of the crucial c8-square.

6...♗.xe6 7 ♖xe6! fxe6 8 ♖xd3!

Removing the annoying pawn on d3 and enabling a future attack with ♖h4.

8...♗f6 9 ♗xf6+ ♖xf6 10 c8 ♖ ♖axc8 11 ♖xc8 ♖d8 12 ♖c3!

The exchange of queens will facilitate realizing the material advantage. There followed 12...e5 13 ♖xa7 h5 14 f4! ♖d5 15 fxe5 ♖xe5 16 ♖c5! ♖g5+ 17 ♖f1 ♖xc3 18 ♖.xc3 and White won.

Position 361

L.L.jubojevic-S.Gligoric

Match (game 3), Belgrade 1979

1...♖h5!

Preparing ...♖f4 and ...f7-f5 with a kingside initiative.

2 ♗e2 ♖f4 3 0-0 f5! 4 e5!

Now the black pawns acquire unexpected mobility. A lesser evil was 4 exf5 ♖xf5, when Black maintains pressure – Gligoric.

4...d6! 5 exd6 ♗xd6 6 ♖h1 e5!

A strong advance that will soften up the h1-a8 diagonal for the bishop. In contrast, 6...♗xe2 7 ♖xe2 ♗.xh2? failed to 8 f4.

7 ♗g1 e4! 8 fxe4 ♖xe2

At the precise moment to secure the control of the long diagonal.

9 ♖xe2 ♗xe4 10 ♖cd4 ♖f6!

The white king is starting to feel uneasy.

11 ♖f3 ♖h6 12 h3 ♖b7 13 ♖ed4 g5!

Black has a strong attack. There followed

14 ♖e3 f4 15 ♜b5 ♗f8 16 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 17 b4 g4! 18 bxc5 gxf3 19 ♗h2 ♞g7! 20 ♞f2 fxg2 21 ♜fe1 ♞g4! and White resigned.

Position 362

E.Geller-K.Lerner

USSR Championship, Minsk 1979

1 ♜e1!

Preparing ♜d3 and f2-f4 in order to attack Black's centre and, indirectly, his king. 1 ♗h3?! ♗c7 is less powerful.

1... ♗c7 2 ♜d3 ♜d6

Or 2...b6 3 f4 ♗b7 4 ♗h3 ♜d8 5 ♗a3!, heading for e7 with strong pressure.

3 f4! ♜f7 4 ♜hf1 exf4

If 4...♜e8, then 5 f5 g5 6 ♗f3!, intending 7 ♗h5 – Geller.

5 gxf4 ♜e8 6 ♜de1 ♜f8 7 ♜d1!

The knight retreats so that the bishop on b2 enhances a future e4-e5 or f4-f5 advance.

7... ♗d7 8 ♗b1 ♜ad8 9 ♜e3 ♜d6?

9...♗c8 was a lesser evil – Geller.

10 e5! fxe5 11 fxe5 ♜f5 12 ♜c4 ♜e6 13 ♗h3!

Fighting for the d6-square.

13... ♜g8 14 ♜d6 ♜ed4 15 ♗xd4 ♜xd4 16 ♜f7

With threats like 17 ♜c5 and 17 ♗xd7 ♜xd7 18 e6, White is winning.

Position 363

J.Hellsten-S.Brynell

Swedish Championship, Gothenburg 2006

1 ♜h3!

Intending ♜g5-e6 with pressure on Black's kingside.

1... ♞e7

Both 1...fxg4?! 2 ♜g5 and 1...h6?! 2 g5 hxg5 3 fxg5 ♗g7 4 ♜e2, followed by ♜ef4,

yield White a clear initiative.

2 ♜g5 ♗xg5 3 fxg5 ♗g8

Or 3...♜e5 4 ♜e2, intending ♜f4-e6; e.g. 4...b5 5 ♜f4 bxc4 6 ♜e6 ♜df7 7 bxc4! with interesting compensation for the piece.

4 gxf5! ♞xg5+

After 4...gxf5 5 ♗h1 ♜e5 6 ♗e2 the control of the long diagonal implies a long-term plus.

5 ♗h1 ♜ae8

Not 5...♞xf5? 6 ♜xe4 ♜xf1+ 7 ♜xf1 ♗xd5 8 ♞c3 etc.

6 fxg6 hxg6 7 ♜g1 ♞h6 8 ♜g2 ♗h7 9 ♜ag1 ♜f3?

A tactical slip in time trouble. After 9...♜g8 10 ♞f2!?, both 10...♜ef8 11 ♞g3 and 10...♜e5 11 ♞f6 let White keep the initiative, but nothing more.

10 ♜xg6 ♞xg6 11 ♜xg6 ♗xg6 12 ♞g2+ ♗f5 13 ♜xe4!

In view of 13...♗xe4 14 ♞g4+ ♗xe3 15 ♗c1+ ♗f2 16 ♞g1 mate, Black resigned.

Position 364

S.Volkov-G.Tunik

Russian Championship, Krasnodar 2002

1...b6!

A pawn sacrifice to create some activity before White consolidates. 1...♜a6?! 2 ♗e3 is less promising.

2 cxb6 ♞xb6 3 ♜d4

After 3 ♗e2?! ♗a6 the white king becomes exposed.

3... ♜xd4 4 ♞xd4

If 4 cxd4, then 4...♗a6 5 ♞c5 ♞b7! with compensation – Tunik.

4... ♞c6! 5 ♞c4

Or 5 ♗d3 ♗a6! 6 ♗xa6 ♜xa6 7 0-0 ♜fd8 8 ♞e3 ♜c5, attacking e4 while threatening both ...♜b3 and ...♜d3.

5... ♗b7

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Black finally accepts the queen exchange, aware that he will soon be able to create new threats.

6 ♖xc6 ♗xc6 7 ♗d3 ♖ad8 8 ♗c2 ♖b5 9 0-0!

In view of 9 ♗b2?! ♖d6 or 9 ♗a4? ♖xc3!, intending 10 ♗xc6 ♗d1+, White returns the pawn. There followed 9...♖xc3 10 ♖e1 ♗a4! 11 ♗xa4 ♖xa4 12 ♗e3 ♗d7 13 ♖ec1 ♖b8! 14 ♖c4 ♖b3 15 ♗f2 ♖c3 with equality.

Position 365

A. Vermolinsky-J. Manion

Chicago 1995

1 ♗h6!!

A strong blow that prepares ♖ac1 with new threats and destroys Black's kingside before he castles into safety.

1...♖xd5

1...0-0? fails to 2 ♖ac1 g4 3 ♖xc4, followed by 4 ♖xc8 and 5 ♖g4+; but 1...g4 2 ♖ac1 ♖xd5 was a lesser evil, when 3 ♗xc4 ♖a8 4 ♗d5! ♖b8 5 ♖xa6 ♖xc1 6 ♖xc1 yields White a clear advantage thanks to his active bishop and the strong passed pawn on a2.

2 ♖g4!

More convincing than 2 ♗xg7?! ♖g8.

2...♖c5 3 ♖xg7 ♖xd3

White also wins material after 3...♖f8 4 ♖xh7.

4 ♖xh8+ ♖d7 5 ♖ab1 ♖c7?

5...♖b5 was the last chance – Vermolinsky, when White can keep attacking by 6 ♖xb5 axb5 7 ♖b8 ♖d5 8 ♖b1.

6 ♖b8 ♖g6 7 ♖e8+ ♖e6 8 ♖c8! ♖d7 9 ♖xc4 ♖xh6 10 ♖c8 ♖f8 11 ♖xa6 1-0

Position 366

B. Gelfand-N. Short

Candidates match (game 2),
Brussels 1991

1...b5!

Creating new threats, such as ...♖e6 and ...b5-b4, before White consolidates by ♖f2 and ♖he1. Also interesting is 1...♖xg3+!? 2 hxg3 b5!, ruling out the 2 ♗e5 option below – Aagaard.

2 ♖xb5

Now on 2 ♖f2?! Black has 2...♖e6! 3 ♖a3 ♖g4+! 4 fxg4 ♖f6+ 5 ♖g1 ♖xg3 6 hxg3 ♖ae8! with a decisive attack, while after 2 ♖xb5 ♖e6 3 ♖a3 ♖xg3 4 hxg3 ♖b8 5 ♖c3 ♖g4! White is also under pressure – Short. Finally, 2 ♗e5!? is well met by 2...b4 3 ♖b5 ♖e6 4 ♖a4 g4 with attacking chances – Aagaard.

2...♖xg3+ 3 hxg3 ♖b8 4 ♖d3 ♖xb2

Now all Black's pieces are active, and the white king remains exposed.

5 ♖d2 ♖b6 6 g4

Again 6 ♖f2? runs into 6...♖g4+, intending 7 fxg4 ♖f6+ 8 ♖g1 ♖e1+ 9 ♖h2 ♖h6 mate – Short.

6...♖b8!

Preparing to meet 7 ♖f2 by 7...♖xg4+ 8 fxg4 ♖f4+.

7 ♖d1 ♖g3 8 ♖f2 ♖b6!

Preparing ...♖be6 with a clear initiative.

Position 367

A. Shirov-V. Salov

Sicilian Tournament,
Buenos Aires 1994

1...♖g3!

Exploiting the pin on the h-file in order to achieve a favourable exchange.

2 fxg3 ♗xg5+ 3 ♖b1 ♗f6

White's attack has been neutralized.

4 ♖c4 ♗xb5 5 ♖xc7

Or 5 ♖xb5 ♖b6 6 ♖f1 ♗e5!? – Salov.

5...♗xe2 6 ♖xe2 ♖b8 7 c3 ♗d8! 8 ♖c4 ♗b6

Thanks to his more compact pawn structure Black is slightly better.

Position 368**W.Unzicker-J.H.Donner**

Gothenburg Interzonal 1955

1. ♖h6!

Exploiting the motif of a fork on f6 in order to swap Black's strong fianchettoed bishop.

1...f5 2. ♗xc7 ♜xc7 3. ♜c3 ♗b7 4. a4!

To soften up the enemy queenside.

4...a5

Or 4...a6 5. ♜c4!, with the double idea of 6 d6+ and 6 a5.

5. ♜b5 ♜c7 6. d6!

The further advanced this passed pawn, the stronger it becomes

6...♜d8

Or 6...♜c6 7. ♜xc6 ♗xc6 8. d7! ♗ad8 9. ♗d6!, intending 9...♗xd7 10. ♗ad1.

7. ♗d5!

7. d7 was another good option, but the text has the merit of eliminating black counterplay.

7...♗xd5 8. ♗xd5 e4 9. ♗ad1

The d-pawn is now a giant. The game concluded 9...♗g7 10. d7 ♗f6 11. h3 ♗e6 12. ♜c4 ♗e7 13. ♗d6! ♗a7 14. ♜c3+ ♗g8 15. ♜f6! ♗a8 16. ♜xe7 and Black resigned in view of the queen loss.

Position 369**F.Gheorghiu-B.Spassky**

Hastings 1965/66

1...♗eg4!

Supported by the tactical line 2. hxg4? ♗xe4!, followed by a mortal ...♜h4+, Black takes his knight to the ideal e3-square. Less promising was 1...♗d3 2. ♗xd3 cxd3 3. ♗e1, followed by ♜xd3, or 1...♗g6 2. bxc4 bxc4 3. ♗xc4 with unclear play.

2. ♜e1 ♗e3 3. ♗xe3 ♗xe3

The departure of White's bishop has left

him vulnerable on the dark squares.

4. bxc4 ♗c8!

Increasing the pressure on the c-file. In contrast, the game continued 4...♗d4?! 5. ♗d1! ♗xc3 6. ♜xc3 ♗xe4 7. ♗xe4 ♗xe4 8. ♗d3 with equality.

5. cxb5 ♗d4 6. ♗c1 ♜a5! 7. ♗f3 axb5

Black has a clear initiative.

Position 370**I.Sokolov-V.Ivanchuk**

Wijk aan Zee 2006

1...♗b4!

By means of a minor tactical resource, Black manages to improve his badly placed knight.

2. ♜b3

After 2. axb4?! cxb4 3. ♗b5? b3+ Black wins.

2...♗c6 3. 0-0 ♗ad8 4. ♗e4

Or 4. ♗b5 ♜b8 5. ♜e3 ♗xd1 6. ♗xd1 ♗d8 and Black is fine; e.g. 7. ♗b1 ♗d7 8. ♗c3 ♗xc3 9. ♜xc3 ♜d8 with equality – Ivanchuk.

4...h6 5. ♜e3 ♗e5!

After an unusual manoeuvre the knight has become a great piece.

6. ♗xe5 ♜xe5 7. ♗xd8 ♗xd8 8. ♗xf6

The only way of escaping from the pin.

8...♜xe3 9. fxe3 ♗a6 10. ♗g4 ♗d2

Black has the initiative.

Position 371**V.Kotronias-E.Van den Doel**

Wijk aan Zee 1995

1. ♗de4!

Supported by some minor tactics White manages to exploit the dark square weaknesses in the enemy camp.

1...♜e7

After 1...dxe4? 2. ♗xe4 ♜xe5 3. ♗f6+ White wins the piece back with interest.

2 ♖f6+ ♘d8 3 ♜ce4!

Since 3...dxe4 4 ♗xe4 leads to a mortal pin along the d-file, Black again has to accept the invasion of the enemy pieces on the dark squares.

3...♙c7 4 ♗c3 ♗d8?

The last chance was 4...a5 5 ♜c5 ♙c8 with a depressing position.

5 ♗a5+ ♘b8 6 ♗b4+ ♙c7 7 ♜c5! ♙c8 8 ♜fd7!

In view of 8...♙xd7 9 ♗b7 mate, Black resigned.

Position 372

S.Gordon-J.Donaldson

Bermuda 1995

1...b5!

Preparing a little trick that will alter the position to Black's favour.

2 ♙a2?!

The unappealing 2 ♙xd5 exd5 3 ♜e2 was a lesser evil.

2...♜d4! 3 exd4 cxd4

Recovering the piece with a clear positional plus. White couldn't avoid this scenario by 3 ♗b1? due to 3...♜xc3 4 bxc3 ♜e2+ winning a pawn.

4 ♜e5 dxc3 5 bxc3 ♗d6!

With a double threat at e5 and a3.

6 d4 ♗xa3 7 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 8 ♙a1 ♗d6

Black is winning.

Position 373

J.Johansson-R.Åström

Luleå 2004

1...♜e5!

A strong tactical blow that eliminates White's bishop pair and leaves his pawn structure in ruins.

2 dxe5 ♙xc1+ 3 ♗xc1 ♙xd3

With double threats at f3 and a3.

4 ♗c8+ ♙f8 5 ♙g2 ♗d4!

An ideal square for the queen, where it eyes e5 and f2 at the same time.

6 ♙c1?

More careful was 6 ♙a2, when 6...a5! followed by ...b4 is one of several tempting options.

6...♙d2! 7 ♙f1 g6

Preparing ...♙g7 and ...♙xa3 with a decisive advantage.

Position 374

L.Pachman-G.Barcza

Saltsjöbaden Interzonal 1952

1 ♗d4!

Exploiting the fact that 1...♜xh1? runs into 2 ♙g6! with mate, White secures a decent square for his rook. In contrast, 1 ♙h2? ♙ad8 yields Black plenty of compensation due to the awful rook on h2.

1...♗h5 2 ♙d5 ♗g6 3 ♙e1

Thanks to his extra pawn and active pieces, White is clearly better. There followed 3...♙e6 4 ♙d6 ♗g4 5 ♙xe6 fxe6 6 ♙d7 ♜h5 7 ♙xb7 ♙ad8 8 ♙d7 ♗xh4 9 ♙d1 and White soon created a decisive passed pawn on the queenside.

Position 375

S.Cicak-J.Hellsten

Swedish Championship,
Gothenburg 2006

1 ♙f4!

A pawn up, White should be happy to swap pieces, especially the active bishop on d6. In the game, he instead went for the tempting 1 ♙g5?, overlooking the strong reply 1...♙d3!. Supported by the line 2 ♗xd3?? ♙.xh2+ Black considerably improves his bishop and repels the enemy attack. There followed 2 ♗f3 h6 3 ♜h3 ♙e8! 4

♖xe8+ ♗xe8 5 ♙e3 (this time 5 ♗xd3?? failed to 5...♗e1+ 6 ♗f1 ♙xh2+) 5...♗e5 6 ♖f4 ♙e4 7 ♗h5 c4! 8 b4 ♖c6 9 a3 ♖d8 with a clear black initiative.

1...♙b7 2 ♗e3 ♙xf4 3 ♗xf4 ♗d3

The only chance for counterplay.

4 ♖bd2

Also interesting is 4 c4!?, hanging on to the pawn.

4...♗xc3 5 ♖ac1 ♗b4 6 ♗f5

With threats on both flanks, White is clearly better.

Position 376

E.Dervishi-V.Milov

Bratto 2003

1...♖e5!

By exploiting the potential pin along the d-file, Black damages the enemy pawn structure. 1...♖c5?! 2 ♙c2 was less convincing.

2 fxe5 dxe5 3 ♖f3?!

After 3 ♖cb5 exd4 Black is better, but the text practically loses a pawn.

3...♖xd3 4 ♖xe5 ♖dd8

Now White is unable to sustain all the exposed pawns on the fourth rank.

5 ♖a4?! ♖a8! 6 ♖xb6 ♖a2 7 ♖f3 ♙xe4

Black is winning.

Position 377

S.Smagin-C.Hoi

Copenhagen 1993

1 ♖e6!

Supported by a tactical variation, White improves his rook and now threatens 2 ♖d6.

1...♖xe6 2 fxe6 ♗xe6

Or 2...f5 3 ♖e1 and the passed pawn decides – Smagin.

3 h4 ♙h6 4 ♗g6!

The point. Black has no defence against the attack along the b1-h7 diagonal.

4...♙g7 5 ♙d3 ♙g8 6 ♗h7+ ♖f7 7 ♙g6+

Black resigned.

Position 378

V.Kramnik-M.Adams

Biel Interzonal 1993

1 ♗e3!

Withdrawing the queen from the exposed d4-square before taking actions on the kingside. Instead, the game continued 1 g4? ♖xf4! (less clear is 1...e5 2 fxe5 dxe5 3 ♗e3 ♖f4 4 g5!?, preparing .♙h3) 2 ♖xf4 e5 3 ♗f2 exf4 4 ♗xf4 ♖e5!. Thanks to his small combination, Black has managed a strong grip on the dark squares, and after 5 ♖c3 ♗c7 6 ♖d2 ♗e7 7 g5 ♖c8 8 ♖fc1 b5!, intending 9 cxb5? ♖d3!, he had an easier game.

1...e6

After 1...e5?! 2 f5 White takes over on the kingside.

2 ♖c3 ♖hf6

The typical 2...d5?! permits 3 cxd5 exd5 4 e5 with a white edge. After 2...♖hf6 there has arisen a position with chances for both sides.

Position 379

A.Yusupov-S.Dolmatov

Frunze 1979

1 c5!

Exploiting the fact that 1...♗xc5? fails to 2 ♖c1 followed by ♖c7, White creates a protected square on d6.

1...♖c6 2 ♙c4+ ♖h7 3 ♗d6!

Swapping the main defender of the black camp.

3...♗xd6 4 ♖xd6 a5

4...e4 was preferable, securing this

pawn, when 5 ♖ad1 followed by f2-f3 keeps pressure.

5 f3! ♗g6 6 ♖ad1 a4 7 ♙b5!

With the strong plan of ♙xc6 and ♖c4, conquering the e5-pawn. The game continued 7... ♗f6 8 ♙xc6 bxc6 9 ♖c4 ♖e8 10 ♖d6+ ♖e6 11 ♖b6! and Black resigned in view of 11... ♖b8 12 ♖d8 or 11... ♖xd6 12 cxd6 ♖b8 13 d7 ♙a6 14 ♖c8 – Moiseev.

Position 380

A.Karpov-G.Kasparov

World Championship (game 17), Lyons 1990

1 ♖c6!

Exploiting the motif of a back rank mate in order to seize the open file.

1... ♙e5

Indeed, 1... ♖xc6?! 2 dxc6 ♗xc6? runs into 3 ♗d8+ ♙f8 4 ♙h6, while 2... ♗c7 3 ♗d7 is also bad for Black.

2 ♙c3!

Forcing the enemy bishop to leave the long diagonal. 2 ♗c2 ♖xc6 3 dxc6 ♗c7 is less forceful.

2... ♙b8

Both 2... ♖xc6?! 3 dxc6 and 2... ♙xc3 3 ♗xc3 ♖xc6 4 ♗xc6!? let White keep a dangerous initiative.

3 ♗d4 f6 4 ♙a5!

Vacating c3 for the queen. Again Black can't take twice on c6 due to the check on d8.

4... ♙d6 5 ♗c3 ♖e8 6 a3

With Black having been forced into passivity, White slowly improves his position.

6... ♗g7 7 g3 ♙e5 8 ♗c5 h5 9 ♙c7!

Winning the c7-square for the rook.

9... ♙a1 10 ♙f4 ♗d7 11 ♖c7 ♗d8 12 d6 g5 13 d7 ♖f8 14 ♙d2 ♙e5 15 ♖b7!

Black resigned in view of 16 ♙a5 on the next move; e.g. 15... h4 16 ♙a5! ♗xa5 17

♗xe7+ ♗g6 18 ♗h7+! ♗xh7 19 d8♗+ winning the queen – Karpov.

Position 381

Mi.Tseitlin-E.Vasiukov

Telavi 1982

1... f5!

By means of some minor tactics Black manages to advance his pawn majority.

2 ♙d5+?!

Black's point was 2 ♙xf5? ♗c6! 3 ♗g2 ♖f8 4 ♙g4 ♖f4! 5 ♙h5 ♖af8 with decisive gains. In contrast, 2 ♙xb7! ♗xb7 3 ♖ad1 e4 4 ♖d4 would have reduced his edge to some extent.

2... ♙xd5 3 cxd5 h6!

Preventing a knight move to g5. Now White has a problem with the d5-pawn.

4 ♖ac1 ♗f7 5 ♖fd1 ♖ad8 6 a3 e4!

Before taking the pawn Black continues his promising kingside expansion.

7 ♖e1 f4! 8 ♙d4

Desperation in a difficult position.

8... ♙xa3 9 ♖c6 ♖xd5

Black soon converted his material advantage.

Position 382

C.Peptan-M.Vukic

Ljubljana 1997

1... ♖xc3 2 bxc3 ♖xc4!

By means of a tactical trick Black manages to exchange pieces, thus neutralizing the enemy attack. The attempt to avoid this by 2 ♖xc3? failed to 2... ♖e4 3 ♙xe7 ♖xc3.

3 ♖xc4?!

3 ♙xf6 was a lesser evil, when 3... ♖c7 4 ♙xe7 ♗xe7, followed by ... ♖fc8, yields Black a slight advantage thanks to his superior pawn structure.

3... ♗d5!

The point.

4 $\frac{1}{2}g^3 \frac{1}{2}a^6! 5 \frac{1}{2}xb^6$

Or 5 $\frac{1}{2}h^6 \frac{1}{2}h^5 6 \frac{1}{2}g^4 \frac{1}{2}f^5!$, soon recovering the material with interest – Har Zvi.

5... $\frac{1}{2}xe^2 6 \frac{1}{2}xd^5 \frac{1}{2}xd^5$

Black later converted his material advantage.

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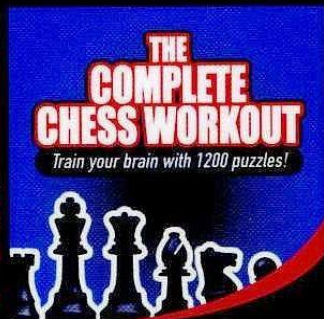
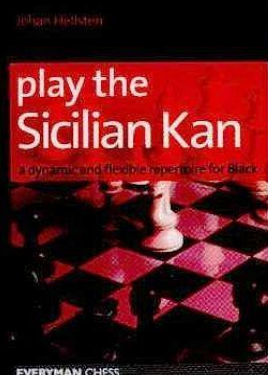
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