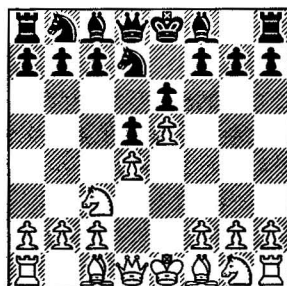


# Chapter Thirteen

## Classical Variation: 4 e5



1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 c3 f6

This is the Classical Variation of the French Defence. It is similar in pawn structure to the Advance Variation as well as those lines of the Tarrasch variations that include the moves ...f6 and e5.

4 e5

In the next chapter we consider 4 g5. 4 d3 is seldom played due to 4...c5 and:

(a) 5 exd5 cxd4 (5...exd5=) 6 b5+ d7 7 xd7+ (7 xd4 xb5 8 xb5 xd5 9 e2 c6 10 a4 c5!; 10...a6 11 b4 b6 12 xc6 xa4 13 xd8 xd8= – Steinitz) 7...xd7 (7...bxd7!? 8 dxe6 dxc3 9 exd7+ xd7) 8 dxe6 xe6+ (8...fxe6!? 9 ce2 c6 10 f3 c5) 9 ce2 c6 10 f3 b4+ 11 d2 0-0-0= Lasker-Marshall, New York (2) 1907;

(b) 5 f3 cxd4 (5...c6=) 6 xd4 e5 (6...b4!; 6...c6 7 b5 d7 8 exd5 exd5 9 0-0 e7 10 e3 0-0= Lasker-Bogoljubow, Zurich 1934) 7 f3 d4 8 e2 g4, just a shade better for Black after 9 0-0 (9 cxe5?? a5+) 9...c6.

4...fd7

Now White has:

13.1 5 f3

13.2 5 ce2

13.3 5 f4

The only other interesting move is 5 g4!? c5 (5...b6!?) and the centre is breaking up so White must try to get b5-d6 in, or perhaps dxc5 at the right moment: 6 f3 (6 b5 cxd4 7 f4 a5+ 8 d2 b6) 6...cxd4 7 b5 (7 xd4 c6 8 f4 a6! intending ...c7) 7...c6 8 d6+ xd6 9 xg7 xe5 10 xe5 xf6 11 xf6 xf6 12 cxc6?! (12 f4! and 12...e7 13 g3 e4= or 12...d7 13 b5 cxe5 14 xe5 g8 15 g3 a6 16 xd7+ xd7 17 xd4 e7=) 12...bxc6 13 f4 c5! 14 e5 e7 15 b4 cxb4 16 xd4 g8 17 c5+ d7 18 xb4 a5 19 a3 a6.

13.1 5 f3

Aiming for piece play instead of pawn expansion; it is played frequently but considered fairly harmless.

5...c5 6 ce2

Now we have reached the position from 5 ce2 c5 6 f3. 6 dxc5 transposes to 1 e4 e6 2 f3 d5 3 c3 f6 4

## Play the French

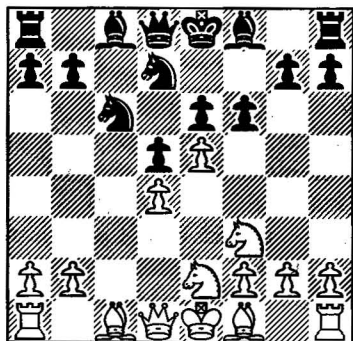
e5 ♖fd7 5 d4 c5 6 dxc5, which is in the Odds and Ends chapter via 2 ♖f3 d5 3 ♖c3.

6...♖c6

6...cxd4 7 ♖exd4 ♖c6 is also reasonable, e.g., 8 ♖xc6 bxc6 9 ♖d3 ♖c5 10 ♖e2 ♖e7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♖e3 ♖b8= Jimenez Chacon-Hamdouchi, Dos Hermanas 1998.

7 c3 cxd4

7...♖e7 is a flexible option: 8 a3! (8 ♖g3?! ♖b6 9 ♖e2 cxd4 10 cxd4 ♖b4+ 11 ♖f1 f6?; 8 ♖f4 cxd4 9 cxd4 ♖b6 10 ♖e2? Yudkovsky-Coello, Cannes 1997, and Black should play 10...g5! 11 ♖h5 g4 12 ♖g5 ♖b4+ 13 ♖f1 ♖xd4?) 8...a5 9 ♖f4 ♖b6 10 h4 a4=. 8 cxd4 f6



9 ♖f4

9 exf6 ♖xf6 10 ♖c3 ♖d6 is comfortable for Black (compare a 3 ♖d2 ♖f6 Tarrasch; here White is committed too early to ♖c3):

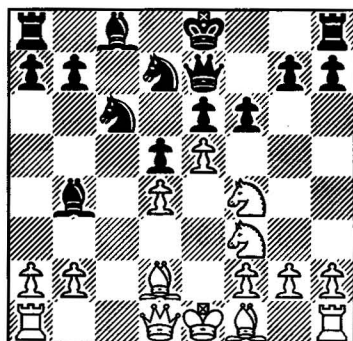
(a) 11 ♖b5 0-0 12 0-0 ♖c7 (or 12...♖b6!) 13 h3 ♖d7 14 ♖e1 ♖ae8 15 ♖e3 a6 16 ♖f1 Lau-Gleizerov, Dresden 1994, and here 16...e5! was strong;

(b) 11 ♖e2 0-0 12 0-0 h6 (12...♖b6!) 13 h3!? ♖d7 14 ♖e3 Hort-Knaak, Bundesliga 1996; now 14...♖e8! 15 ♖e1 ♖g6 was promising;

(c) 11 ♖d3 0-0 12 ♖g5 ♖e8!?

(12...♖b6!) 13 ♖d2? ♖h5? (13...e5!?) 14 ♖e2? (14 ♖c2; 14 0-0 ♖f4) 14...e5 15 ♖xe5 (15 dxe5? ♖b4 16 ♖c3 ♖xf3! 17 gxf3 d4 18 f4 dxc3 19 bxc3 ♖xe5! 20 fxe5 ♖xe5+ +- McDonald) 15...♖xd4 16 ♖xd4 ♖xe5+ 17 ♖e3 ♖f4+ Nijboer-Glek, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

9...♖b4+ 10 ♖d2 ♖e7



11 ♖xb4

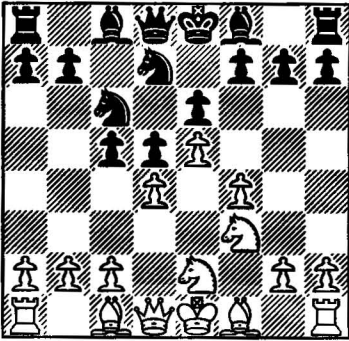
11 exf6?! ♖xf6? 12 ♖d3 0-0 13 0-0 ♖e4 14 ♖e3 ♖d6 15 g3 ♖f6 16 ♖xe4 dxe4 17 ♖d2 ♖xf4 18 gxf4 ♖d7! 19 ♖xe4 ♖g6+ 20 ♖g3 ♖e7! 21 ♖c1 ♖c6 with light square domination, Tate-Shulman, Sioux Falls 2001.

After 11 ♖xb4, Shirov-Ivanchuk, Tilburg 1993 continued 11...♖xb4+ 12 ♖d2 ♖e7! 13 exf6+ gxf6 14 ♖xb4+ ♖xb4 15 ♖d2 ♖b6 16 a3 ♖c6 17 ♖b5 ♖d7!? (17...♖a5! 18 ♖ae1 ♖ac4+ 19 ♖c1 ♖f7= with the idea ...a6) 18 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 19 ♖he1 ♖d7 20 b3 ♖d6 21 ♖e3 and White had a small advantage. As a whole, however, 5 ♖f3 is rather easy to play against.

13.2 5 ♖ce2

This is considered the optimal order to get to the main f4 lines, but that is not so clear. Before we get to how Black can throw a wrench (spanner!) in the works, let's take a close look at 5 f4. That is the move

used in the next section (13.3), but I'm going to discuss it here first for early deviations in the context of  $\mathcal{D}ce2$  systems. The move order issues examined here and in the next few notes are of great importance and will repay study: 5 f4 c5 6  $\mathcal{D}f3$  (6 dxc5 and other non-transpositional moves not leading to  $\mathcal{D}ce2$  systems are given in 13.3) 6... $\mathcal{D}c6$  7  $\mathcal{D}e2$



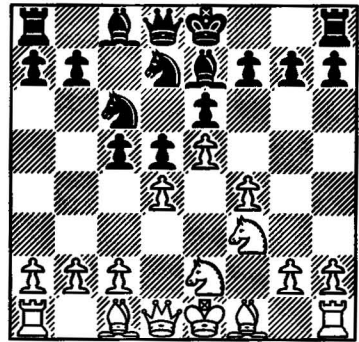
This can also arise after 5  $\mathcal{D}ce2$  c5 6 f4  $\mathcal{D}c6$  7  $\mathcal{D}f3$ , as well as from 3  $\mathcal{D}d2$   $\mathcal{D}f6$  4 e5  $\mathcal{D}fd7$  5 f4 c5 6  $\mathcal{D}df3$   $\mathcal{D}c6$  7  $\mathcal{D}e2$ . Although it is appearing regularly, books tend to either treat lightly or even ignore this position. Black has several ways to respond. 7... $\mathbb{W}b6$  returns the game to normal channels after 8 c3. And 7...b5!? has been played quite a bit recently, although it seems more logical once White has played g3. A problem for Black, not necessarily insoluble, is 8 a3  $\mathbb{N}b8$  9 c3 a5 (9...b4 10 dxc5! bxc3 11 b4 a5 12  $\mathcal{D}ed4$ ) 10 dxc5  $\mathcal{D}xc5$  11  $\mathcal{E}e3$ !? with the idea 11... $\mathcal{D}e4$ ? 12  $\mathcal{D}g3\pm$ .

But it's not so easy for White. Two other nontranspositional moves are playable, with one that I find particularly attractive:

(a) 7...cxd4; McDonald thinks that this is dubious, yet it has a long his-

tory. Perhaps White is a little better, but Black has many possibilities, for example, 8  $\mathcal{D}exd4$   $\mathcal{E}c5$  (or 8... $\mathcal{D}xd4$  9  $\mathcal{D}xd4$   $\mathbb{W}b6$  10 c3  $\mathcal{E}c5$  11  $\mathcal{E}e2$  0-0) 9 c3  $\mathbb{W}b6$  10 b4!? (10  $\mathcal{E}e2$  0-0!? 11  $\mathcal{E}d3$ ! g6 12  $\mathcal{E}c2$   $\mathcal{D}xd4$  13 cxd4  $\mathcal{E}b4+$  14  $\mathcal{C}f2$  f6 $\pm$ ) 10... $\mathcal{D}xd4$  11  $\mathcal{D}xd4$   $\mathcal{E}xd4$  12  $\mathbb{W}xd4$   $\mathbb{W}xd4$  13 cxd4  $\mathcal{D}b6$  14  $\mathcal{E}d3$  (14 a4  $\mathcal{E}d7$  15 a5  $\mathcal{D}c4$ =) 14... $\mathcal{E}d7$  15  $\mathcal{E}d2$   $\mathbb{N}c8$  (15...a6 16 0-0  $\mathcal{E}b5$ !?) 16  $\mathcal{C}e2$  a6 17  $\mathbb{N}hc1$  0-0 18 g4  $\mathcal{D}a4$  with the idea ... $\mathcal{E}b5$ , was Niedermaier-B.Schneider, Bundesliga 1986. Neither side played perfectly, of course, but at least we see some ideas;

(b) 7... $\mathcal{E}e7$ !? is an interesting waiting move, not committing to ... $\mathbb{W}b6$ , ...cxd4, or ...b5. I quite like it.

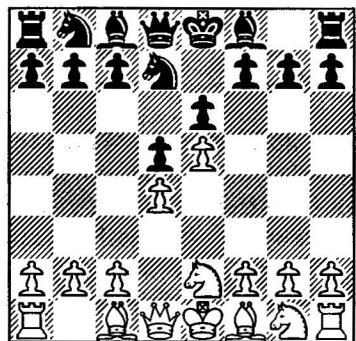


White has to show his cards:

(b1) 8  $\mathcal{E}e3$   $\mathbb{W}b6$  forces White to lose a crucial tempo defending his b-pawn, which isn't so easy – compare main lines;

(b2) 8 g3  $\mathbb{W}b6$  gives White the option of entering a main line by means of 9 c3 (also from the 3  $\mathcal{D}d2$   $\mathcal{D}f6$  Tarrasch Variation), but with g3 already in, which isn't always his plan in the 5  $\mathcal{D}ce2$  lines. An independent and logical plan for Black would be 8...0-0 9  $\mathcal{E}g2$  b6!? intending 10 0-0  $\mathcal{E}a6$ . In fact, even the immediate 8...b6 is worth thinking about;

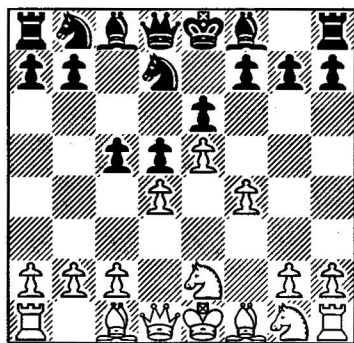
(b3) 8 c3 is the key move. It allows Black to transpose into a main line by 8...♖b6 or he can go his own way by 8...0-0, e.g., 9 a3 (9 g3 allows another known position after 9...♖b6, but Black can also play a standard anti-f4 plan by 9...f5 and queenside expansion; or choose an aggressive strategy by 9...a5!? 10 ♔g2 b5!? having in mind ...♙a6 and ...b4) 9...a5 10 g3 cxd4 (alternatives are 10...b6!? and 10...a4!? 11 ♙h3) 11 cxd4 (11 ♖exd4 ♖c5= intends moves like ...♙d7 and ...a4) 11...f6!? (11...f5 12 ♔g2?! a4 13 0-0 ♖b6 wins key queenside squares) 12 ♙h3 fxe5 13 dxe5 (13 ♙xe6+ ♙h8 is messy, but the first point is 14 dxe5?! ♖dxe5!) 13...♖b6!? (13...♖c5! with the idea ...a4) 14 ♖c3? (for better or worse, correct was the risky 14 ♙xe6+ ♙h8 15 ♙xd5) 14...♖dxe5!? (14...♖c5 ties White down completely, since 15 ♖d4 ♖xd4 16 ♖xd4 ♖a6 threatens ...♖b3 and ...♖d3+) 15 fxe5 ♖xe5 16 ♔g2 ♙d7 17 ♖f1 ♖c4 with a strong attack for the piece. Bologan-M.Gurevich, Cap d'Agde 2002 went 18 ♖b1 ♙f6 19 ♖d3 ♖ac8 20 ♖g5 ♙xg5 21 ♙xg5 ♖xf1+ 22 ♙xf1 ♖f8 23 ♖e2 ♖f5! 24 ♙f4 g5 25 ♖xd5 exd5 26 ♙b8 ♖f8 0-1.



5...c5 6 c3

6 ♖f3 transposes into 5 ♖f3 c5 6

♖e2 above. 6 f4! may well be the best move order, because of the issues raised in the note to 6...♖c6 below.



Now 6...♖c6 7 ♖f3 is the last note, but 7 c3! will transpose to our main line without having to deal with the 7...f6 variation below. And 6...cxd4 7 ♖xd4 ♖c6 8 ♖gf3 also transposes to the last note, but not to Black's best line. Nevertheless, I think that Black has other good opportunities to deviate at this point. Here are some ideas:

(a) 6...♖b6 7 ♖f3 (7 c3 ♙e7 8 ♖f3 0-0 transposes) 7...♙e7 is a sort of waiting game: 8 c3 0-0 with the idea 9 dxc5 ♖xc5 10 ♖ed4 ♖c6 11 ♙e2 ♖e4=;

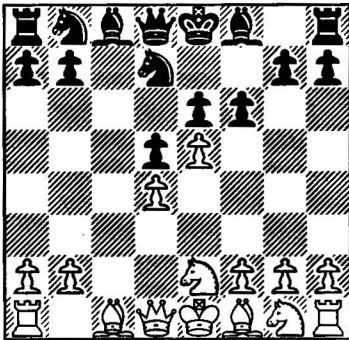
(b) 6...♙e7 is a similar idea, when White might try 7 ♖f3 0-0 8 c3 (8 ♙e3 ♖b6), leading to 8...f6!? (or 8...♖b6) 9 ♙e3 fxe5 10 fxe5 ♖b6 11 ♖d2 ♖c6 with mixed prospects, e.g., 12 0-0-0 (12 ♖f4? cxd4 13 ♖xd4 ♖xf4! 14 ♙xf4 ♖xd4 15 ♖xd4 ♖xb2 16 ♖d1 ♖xa2?) 12...♖a5 13 ♙b1 cxd4 14 cxd4 ♖b6! 15 ♖xa5 ♖xa5 16 b3 ♙d7= intending ...♖c6 and ...a5-a4;

(c) 6...♖a5+!? 7 c3 (7 ♙d2 ♖b6 8 ♙c3 ♖c6 9 ♖f3 cxd4!? 10 ♖exd4 ♙b4 is promising) 7...b5!? (risky but perhaps okay; 7...♖c6 is of course an option) 8 ♖f3 (8 dxc5 b4 9 a3 ♙xc5 10

♠d2 ♖b6=) 8...b4 9 ♠d2 ♘c6 10 cxb4 cxb4 with the idea 11 a3!? ♠e7! 12 axb4 ♘xb4 etc. The interesting thing is that if any of these moves is satisfactory for Black, White has no order that gets him to the main lines by force without legitimate options for Black.

6...♘c6

Assuming that Black has achieved this exact position after all the move order jockeying implicit in the last two notes, he actually has a significant move that seems to equalise at this point: 6...cxd4 7 cxd4 f6!:

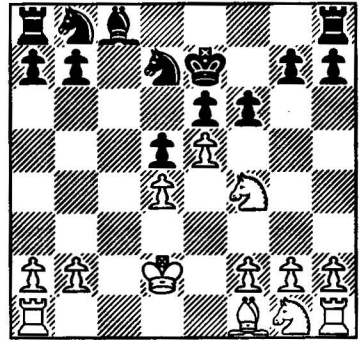


(a) Black's development is fast after 8 exf6 ♘xf6 9 ♘f3 ♠d6 (9...♘c6 10 ♘c3 transposes to 13.1, the note to 9 ♘f4, which was fine for Black) 10 g3 ♘c6 11 ♠g2 0-0 12 0-0 ♖b6 13 ♜b1 ♠d7 14 ♠f4 ♘e4 with good activity in Bologan-Glek, Bundesliga 1992;

(b) 8 f4 fxe5 9 dxe5 (9 fxe5 ♠b4+ 10 ♠f2 0-0+ 11 ♘f3 ♘c6 with initiative and ideas of sacrificing on e5) 9...♘c6 10 ♘f3 ♠b4+ 11 ♘c3 (11 ♠d2 ♘c5) 11...♘c5 12 ♠e3 Shirov-Ivanchuk, Tilburg 1993, and a straightforward path was 12...♘e4 13 ♖c2 (13 ♜c1 ♖a5 14 ♠d2 0-0) 13...♖a5 14 ♜c1 ♖xa2;

(c) 8 ♘f4 ♠b4+ 9 ♠d2 ♖b6 10 ♠xb4 (10 exf6 ♘xf6 11 ♖a4+ ♘c6?;

10 ♜c1 0-0 11 ♠xb4 ♖xb4+ 12 ♖d2 ♖e7 unclear – Atalik; 10 ♖h5+ g6 11 ♘xg6 ♠xd2+ 12 ♠xd2 ♖xb2+ 13 ♠e3 ♖xa1 14 ♘xh8+ ♠d8 and Black is at least okay) 10...♖xb4+ 11 ♖d2 ♖xd2+ 12 ♠xd2 ♠e7



13 exf6+ (the most commonly played move; 13 ♘f3 fxe5 14 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 15 dxe5 ♘c6 16 ♘d3 ♠d7 [or 16...b6 17 ♜c1 ♠b7=] 17 f4 ♠e8 18 ♜c1 ♜f8 19 g3 is 't' according to theory, but then 19...♠g6!, e.g., 20 ♘c5 ♜fc8!? 21 ♘xb7 [21 ♠b5 ♘b4!] 21...♘b4! and White loses the c-file) 13...gxf6 14 ♜e1 (14 ♘f3?! ♠d6; 14 ♘ge2 ♘c6 15 ♘d3 e5) 14...♘b6 and now two important moves:

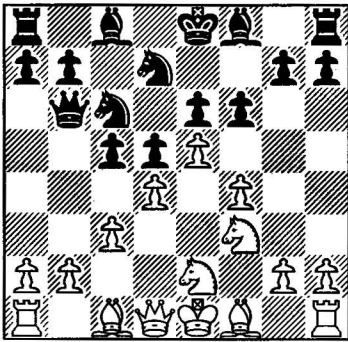
(c1) 15 ♠d3?! allows Black to force things in the centre by 15...♘c6 16 ♘f3 ♠d6! 17 ♘h5 ♜f8! (17...e5 18 ♘xf6 e4 19 ♘g5 ♠c7 is unclear) 18 ♠xh7 (18 ♜e2 e5 19 ♘xf6 e4 20 ♘xe4+ dxe4 21 ♠xe4 ♠g4?) 18...e5 (18...♜h8!? is messy) 19 dxe5+ (19 ♘g3 e4 20 ♘h4 ♘xd4 21 f3 ♜h8! 22 ♘hf5+ ♠xf5 23 ♘xf5+ ♠e5 and Black's king was a monster in Bezgodov-Sakaev, Russia Ch 1999) 19...fxe5 20 ♠c1 (20 ♜hf1 ♠g4?; 20 ♘g3 ♠g4?) 20...♠g4 21 ♘g3 ♠xf3 22 gxf3 ♘d4+ Arakhamia Grant-Gleizerov, Port Erin 2001;

(c2) 15 ♘f3 ♠d6 (15...♘c6 16 ♠b5

♠d7 17 ♙xc6 bxc6 18 ♖e2 favoured White in Anand-Bareev, Shenyang 2000) and here White must find something better than transposing into the previous note by 16 ♖h5 (16 ♙b5 a6 17 ♙d3 ♜c6 is no improvement) 16...♞f8 17 ♙d3 ♜c6. 7 f4 ♖b6

For 7...♙e7, compare 6 f4 ♙e7, although delaying ...♜c6 there allowed a queen on b6 to cover e6 for the ...f6 break.

8 ♜f3 f6



Finally the main line position of the 5 ♜ce2 variation has been reached. Black wants to blast open the centre, sacrificially if necessary, whereas White knows that if he can hold on to his space advantage without compromising his pawns or creating weaknesses, he must stand better. A particularly fascinating thing about this position, which has been around for years, is that White has begun to neglect his development entirely in order to expand on the flanks. Thus one will see a3 and b4 as well as h4-h5 in order to clamp down on both wings. In the end I believe that Black, with superior development, has sufficient resources to achieve dynamic equality. In any case, the play will seldom become

drawish! At this point there is a vitally important fork in the road:

13.21 9 g3

13.22 9 a3

(a) 9 ♖b3 is normally answered by 9...cxd4 10 ♖xb6 ♜xb6=; a fun alternative is 9...♖c7 (what's the queen doing on b3?): 10 g3 cxd4 (10...fxe5 11 fxe5 cxd4 12 cxd4 ♙b4+ 13 ♙d2 ♙xd2+ 14 ♜xd2 0-0) 11 cxd4 ♙b4+ 12 ♜f2 0-0 13 ♜g2 ♙a5 (13...fxe5!? 14 fxe5 ♙e7 15 ♙e3 ♜b6♞ 16 ♜f4 ♜a5 17 ♖d1 ♜ac4) 14 ♙e3 ♙b6 15 ♞c1 ♖b8 16 exf6 ♜xf6 17 ♜e5 ♙d7 18 ♜xd7 ♜xd7= B.Lalic-Dizdar, Porec 1998;

(b) 9 ♜g3? is better after the move a3: 9...cxd4 10 cxd4 ♙b4+ 11 ♜e2 (this is the only move) 11...g5! 12 exf6 g4 13 f7+ ♜e7 14 ♜d2 ♜xd4+ 15 ♜e1 ♖c7;

(c) 9 exf6 ♜xf6 10 g3 ♙d6 11 ♙g2 0-0 12 0-0 cxd4 13 cxd4 e5!? (13...♙d7 14 b3 ♜e4♞) 14 fxe5 ♜xe5 15 ♜xe5 ♙xe5 16 ♜h1 ♙c7 17 ♜c3= Aseev-Pesiakov, St Petersburg 1999;

(d) 9 h4 is playable but probably a move too early: 9...cxd4 (9...♙e7 10 h5? fxe5 11 fxe5 cxd4 12 cxd4 0-0♞) 10 cxd4 fxe5 11 fxe5 ♙b4+ 12 ♜c3 0-0 13 a3 ♙e7 14 ♙e2? ♞xf3! 15 gx3 ♖xd4♞ Mahdi-Weinzettl, Mureck 2001.

13.21 9 g3 cxd4

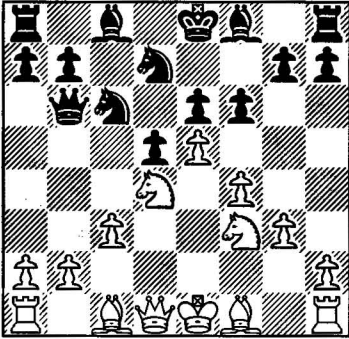
and the play splits a last time:

13.211 10 ♜exd4

13.212 10 cxd4

13.211 10 ♜exd4

This has become the key line of late, following some White improvements.



10...fxe5

The only solution that I see working here apart from my main line is the immediate 10...♟xd4 11 cxd4 ♞b4+ (without ...fxe5) 12 ♟d2 (12 ♟f2 0-0 13 ♟e3 fxe5 14 fxe5 ♟e7 15 b3 ♟f7 16 h4 K.Schmidt-Merker, corr 1987; and the same idea of 16...♟f8 17 ♟d3 ♟d7 and ...♟e8 or ...♞b5 works fine) 12...fxe5 13 fxe5 0-0. This sidesteps the ♟f2-g2 idea and equalises effortlessly after 14 ♟xb4 ♟xb4+ 15 ♟d2 ♟xd2+ 16 ♟xd2 ♟b8! 17 ♟e2 ♟c6 18 ♟f3 ♟d7, e.g., 19 0-0 ♟e8 20 ♟ad1 h6 21 h3 ♟g6.

11 fxe5

11 ♟xe6 is normally queried although none of the given solutions is clear: 11...♟f6 (11...♟e7?! 12 ♟xf8 ♟xf8 13 ♟e2!; 11...e4 12 ♟fd4! ♟f6 13 a4! and 13...♟d7 ends in equality, but more interesting is 13...♟xd4 14 ♟xd4 ♟c5 15 ♟b5+ ♟d7 16 ♟xd7+ ♟xd7=) 12 fxe5 (12 ♟xf8 ♟g4 13 ♟e2 ♟xf3 14 ♟xf3 ♟xf8=) 12...♟xe6! 13 exf6 0-0-0 with good compensation, e.g., 14 ♟e2 ♟e8! 15 ♟e3 ♟c5 16 ♟xc5 ♟xc5 and White has problems: 17 fxg7 ♟hg8? 18 0-0-0 ♟g4 19 ♟d3 Strobel-Piasecki, Baden 1993; now 19...♟f2!?

11...♟c5!

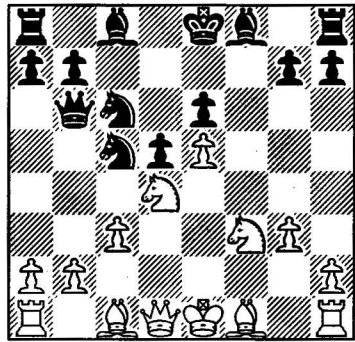
A move played by Luther that

gives Black his full share of the play. With other moves Black won't equalise:

(a) 11...♟dx5? 12 ♟xe5 ♟xe5 13 ♟h5+;

(b) 11...♟xd4 12 cxd4 ♟b4+ 13 ♟f2 0-0 14 ♟g2 ♟e7 15 ♟d3 ♟f7 16 h4 ♟f8 17 ♟g5 ♟xg5 18 hxg5 g6 19 ♟h4± or better, as occurred in two games;

(c) 11...♟c5? 12 ♟xe6 ♟dx5 13 ♟xc5! ♟xc5 14 ♟xe5 ♟xe5 15 ♟h5+ ♟g6 16 ♟e2+!± with ♟e3 and ♟e2 – Pedersen.



12 ♟h3

I don't know of other games, so here's some analysis:

(a) 12 ♟xc6 bxc6 13 ♟c2 (13 ♟d4 g6! 14 ♟b1 [14 ♟e2 ♟g7] 14...♟g7 15 ♟f4 0-0 16 ♟e2 ♟e4 17 0-0 c5 18 ♟f3 ♟b7?) 13...♟e7! 14 ♟e3 0-0 15 ♟e2 ♟a6 16 b4 ♟d3+ 17 ♟d2 c5!;

(b) 12 ♟b5 ♟e7 13 0-0 0-0 14 ♟g5 h6 15 ♟xe7 ♟xe7 16 a4 a6 17 a5 ♟c7=.

12...♟e7!

12...♟a6!? 13 ♟f1 ♟b6= draws.

13 0-0 0-0 14 ♟e2

14 ♟h1 ♟xd4 15 ♟xd4 ♟c7?.

14...♟xd4 15 ♟xd4

Or 15 cxd4 ♟e4?. After 15 ♟xd4, Atlas-Luther, Moerbisch 2001 went 15...♟xf1+ 16 ♟xf1 ♟d7 17 ♟g2 ♟h8

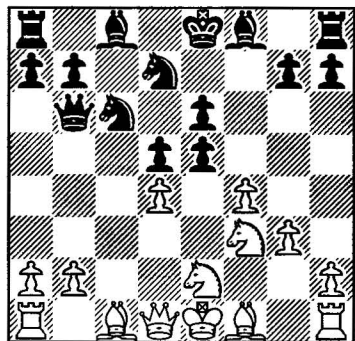
(17...♙f8!? 18 ♖e3 a5=) 18 ♖e3 ♖c7  
19 ♖g1 ♙f8 20 ♚e1 with equality.

### 13.212 10 cxd4

This move is so associated with miniature disasters for White that some people are surprised to find that it's theoretically playable, if only equal. I won't spend too much time showing brilliancies by Black.

#### 10...♖b4+

I think that this move order is more flexible and therefore preferable to the exchange of f- for e-pawn first. But often they transpose and there are some nuances: 10...fxe5



(a) 11 dxe5? ♖b4+ 12 ♖d2 ♚e3! is winning: 13 ♖g2 (13 ♚b3! ♚e4!) 13...0-0 14 ♔f1? (14 a3 ♖c5!; 14 ♚b3! ♚xb3 15 axb3 ♖c5♣) 14...♖xd2 15 ♚xd2 ♚xd2 16 ♖xd2 ♖dxe5-+;

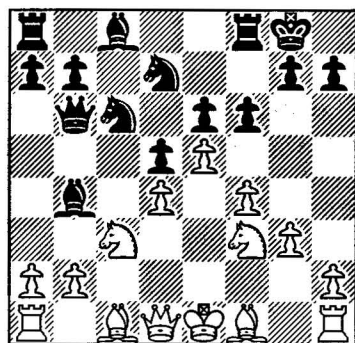
(b) 11 fxe5 ♖b4+ 12 ♖c3 0-0 13 ♖f4 (this is the good defensive move that White doesn't have if Black omits the exchange on e5; compare the main line; not 13 a3? ♙xf3!♣) 13...♖e7 (threatening b2 and also ...g5 in many cases) 14 ♚d2? (14 ♖h3? ♚xb2 15 ♖xe6+ ♔h8 16 ♙c1 ♙xf4! 17 gxf4 ♖xd4-+ – Sisniga; 14 ♖a4 is equal after 14...♚a5+ 15 ♖c3 ♚b6 16 ♖a4 ♚a5+= etc.; for 14 a3!, compare the main line; White has some advan-

tage) 14...g5! 15 ♖xg5 ♖xg5 16 ♖xg5 ♖xd4 17 ♖g2 ♖xe5-+ Dolmatov-Bareev, Elista 1997.

#### 11 ♖c3

11 ♖d2 has lost countless games after 11...fxe5 12 fxe5 0-0 13 ♖g2 ♖dxe5! 14 dxe5 ♖xe5, e.g., 15 ♖ed4 (15 ♖f4 ♚e3+ 16 ♔f1 ♖xd2-+) 15...♖d3+ (15...♖c4 also wins) 16 ♔e2 ♖xb2 17 ♚b3 ♚a6+ 18 ♔f2 ♖xd2 19 ♚xb2 ♚d3-+ was Hamann-Uhlmann, Halle 1963.

#### 11...0-0



Now there's no ♖f4 defence, so White's task is much harder.

#### 12 a3!

(a) 12 exf6 ♖xf6 13 ♖g2 (13 a3= – Bondarevski; 13...♖e7♣) 13...♖e4 14 ♚d3 e5! 15 0-0 (15 fxe5 ♖g4♣) 15...♖xc3 16 bxc3 e4-+ Grischuk-Mraz, corr 1986;

(b) 12 ♖h3? is often played, but is only good after 12 a3 ♖e7. Here it has lost numerous contests in the manner of 12...fxe5 13 ♖xe6+ ♔h8 14 fxe5 ♖dxe5! 15 ♖xd5 ♖xf3+ 16 ♖xf3 ♖xd4-+ Chevalier-Lempereur, Paris 1994.

#### 12...♖e7

Possible is 12...♖xc3+ 13 bxc3 fxe5 14 fxe5 ♚c7 intending ...♖b6 with light square pressure.

#### 13 ♖h3!

Without ♠f4, the threat of 13...fxe5 14 fxe5? ♠xf3 is difficult to meet:

(a) 13 ♠d3?! fxe5 14 dxe5 (14 fxe5 ♡xd4 15 ♡xd4 ♡xe5 with more than enough compensation, even after the mild 16 ♠f1! ♠d7! 17 ♠b1 ♠c5?) 14...♡c5 15 ♠c2 ♠d8?

(b) 13 ♡a4 ♣c7 14 ♠d3 fxe5 (14...a6!?) 15 fxe5? ♠xf3! 16 ♣xf3 ♡xd4 17 ♣d1 (or 17 ♣e3 ♡xe5!) 17...♡xe5 18 0-0 ♡xd3 19 ♣xd3 e5?

(c) 13 exf6 ♡xf6 14 ♠d3 a6 15 ♠c2 ♠d7 16 0-0 ♠e8! with the idea of ...♠h5.

### 13...fxe5

13...♠h8!? isn't bad, e.g., 14 ♡a4 (14 ♠xe6? ♡dxe5!; 14 0-0) 14...♣a6! 15 ♠f1 b5 16 ♡c3 fxe5 17 ♠xb5 ♣b6 18 ♠xc6 (18 fxe5 ♠xf3! 19 ♠xc6 ♡xe5! 20 ♠xa8 ♡d3+ 21 ♠e2 ♣xd4+ + Knaak) 18...♣xc6 19 fxe5 ♠a6!, was Sznapiak-Knaak, Bratislava 1983; Black has a small edge after 20 ♠f4 ♠ab8.

### 14 ♠xe6+

14 fxe5? ♠xf3 15 ♣xf3 ♡xd4-+.

### 14...♠h8 15 ♡xd5

15 dxe5 ♡dxe5.

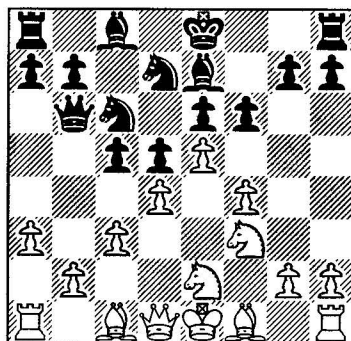
### 15...♣d8 16 ♠xd7

16 ♡xe7 ♣xe7 17 d5 e4 18 ♡g5 ♡c5! 19 ♠xc8 (19 0-0! ♠xe6 20 dxe6 ♡xe6 21 ♡xe4 ♡xf4= – Yudasin and Ivanov; or 19...♡xe6) 19...♡d3+ 20 ♠f1 ♠axc8 21 dxc6 ♣xg5 22 cxb7 ♠b8 23 ♠g2 ♣f6 24 ♣e2 ♠xb7 unclear, Lukin-Se.Ivanov, USSR 1984.

### 16...♠xd7 17 dxe5 ♠g4

With activity and the light squares, Black is probably a little better despite the two pawn deficit. Smagin-Dimitrov, Prilep 1992 continued 18 0-0 ♠c5+ 19 ♠e3 ♠xe3+ 20 ♡xe3 ♣b6 21 ♣d2 ♠xf3 22 ♠xf3 ♡d4 23 ♠ff1 (23 ♠af1 ♡xf3+ 24 ♠xf3 unclear – Smagin) 23...♡b3 24 ♣f2 ♡xa1 25 ♠xa1 ♠ae8 26 ♠c1 g5!.

### 13.22 9 a3 ♠e7



### 10 h4

The modern move. Alternatives:

(a) 10 b4 cxd4 and:

(a1) 11 ♡exd4?! fxe5! 12 fxe5?! (12 ♡xe6! ♡f6 planning 13 ♡xg7+ ♠f8 14 b5 ♡e4!? 15 ♣c2 ♡d8 16 ♡h5 ♣h6+ – Pedersen) 12...♡dxe5 13 ♡xe5 ♡xe5 14 ♣h5+ ♡g6 15 ♠d3 0-0 16 ♠xg6 hxg6 17 ♣xg6 ♠f6 18 ♠e3 e5 0-1 F.Meyer-Pedersen, Germany 1999;

(a2) 11 cxd4 0-0 12 ♠b1 a5 (12...♡a5!? 13 ♡c3 ♡c4 is unclear; 12...♠f7!? 13 ♣d3 ♡f8= with the idea ...♠d7, ...♠c8) 13 b5 a4 was Shirov-Gurevich, Munich 1993; 14 exf6 ♡xf6 15 ♡c3 ♡d8 16 ♠d3 ♡f7 unclear (Shirov);

(b) 10 ♡g3 is easily met by 10...0-0 11 ♠d3 fxe5 12 fxe5 (12 dxe5 c4 13 ♠c2 ♡c5?) 12...cxd4 13 cxd4 g6! and 14...♡xd4 or 14...♠xf3 next, since ♠xh7+/♣h5 ideas are eliminated.

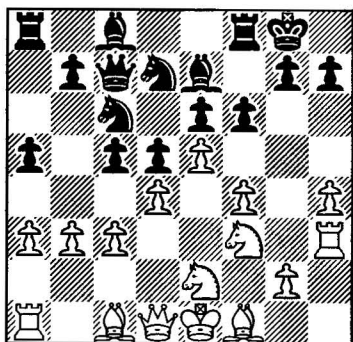
### 10...0-0 11 ♠h3!

The star move for this variation. 11 b4 cxd4 12 cxd4 a5 (12...♠f7=) 13 b5!? (13 bxa5 ♣xa5+ 14 ♠d2 ♣b6?) 13...♣xb5!? (13...♡d8=) 14 ♡c3 ♣b6 15 ♠b1 ♣d8 16 ♠d3 gave White some attack in Bauer-Bareev, Enghien les Bains 2003; 16...h6 17 ♡b5 ♠a6!? (17...f5) 18 ♠c2 f5 19 g4 ♡b6 20 gxf5 exf5.

11...a5

A legitimate alternative is 11...cxd4 12 cxd4 ♖a5 13 b4 ♘c4 14 ♘c3 (14 ♘g3 a5 15 ♙d3 f5) 14...a5 15 b5 ♚f7! with the standard plan ...♚f7, ...♘f8, ...♙d7; I used to play this way in the Tarrasch 3...♘f6 variation with 5 f4.

12 b3 ♚c7



13 ♘e2!

An ingenious retreat: White undevelops his pieces just to hold the centre and play prophylactically. A pretty game followed 13 ♚c2?! b6! 14 ♙d2 ♙a6 15 a4?! ♚ac8 16 f5? fxe5 17 fxe6 e4! 18 exd7 ♚xd7 (winning) 19 ♘e5 ♘xe5 20 dxe5 ♚xh3! 21 gxh3 ♙xh4+ 22 ♘d1 ♚xf1+ 23 ♙e1 ♚xe1+ 0-1 Jamrich-H.Schneider Zinner, Budapest 2001.

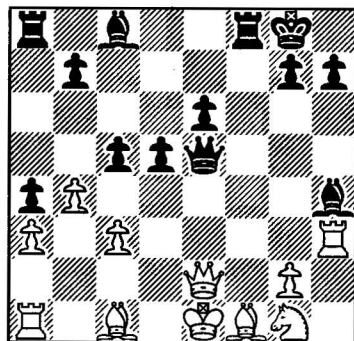
13...a4

Anand recommends 13...b6, which he thinks is fine based upon the mistaken combinative try 14 ♙d3 (14 ♙e3 ♙a6 15 ♙xa6 ♚xa6= – Anand) 14...♙a6 15 ♙xh7+? ♘xh7 16 ♘g5+ ffg5 17 hxg5+ ♘g8 18 ♚h5 (18 g6 ♚f5++) 18...♙xg5! 19 ffg5 ♚f1+ 20 ♘d2 ♚af8 21 ♚h7+ ♘f7++.

14 b4 fxe5 15 fxe5 ♘dxe5!? 16 dxe5 ♘xe5 17 ♘xe5 ♚xe5+ 18 ♚e2 ♙xh4+!

Generally condemned. Black could also play 18...♚c7 followed by ...e5

(hitting h3) and/or ...♙f6. This isn't easy to assess because Black has the centre and White's king is exposed. Of course it's only two pawns and if White can develop he's winning. Oddly enough, HiArcs already likes Black. There might follow something like 19 ♙g5!? (19 ♘f3 cxb4 or 19...e5; 19 ♚h5 cxb4 20 axb4 g6 21 ♚h6 e5 22 ♚g3 ♚xf1+! 23 ♘xf1 ♚c4+ 24 ♘e2 ♙g4+) 19...♙xg5 20 hxg5 e5 21 ♚f3 (21 ♚e3 e4 22 ♚d1 cxb4 23 cxb4 ♙e6 24 ♘h3 ♚ad8 and ...♚e5 with a strong attack) 21...♙f5 22 ♚f2!? cxb4 23 cxb4 e4 24 ♚g3 ♚ac8!. This shows that the assumption that White was better throughout this game should at least be questioned.



19 ♘d1

Not 19 ♚xh4? ♚g3+.

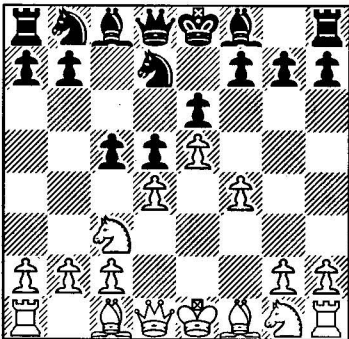
19...♚f6?

After this Black is doomed. There have been various statements (with little analysis) about the ending after 19...♚xe2+! 20 ♙xe2 ♙f2 (actually 20...♙f6 has some good points, e.g., 21 bxc5 ♚a5 22 ♙e3 ♙xc3 23 ♚b1 d4 or 23...e5; maybe this is better?). Positions so deep into the opening seldom determine its validity, and Black has had better options on the last few moves, so I won't take too serious a look here. But to me chances seem

about balanced. Since 21 ♖f3? e5 looks bad, White's has 21 ♖h1 (Kavalek) 21...e5 (or 21...cxb4) 22 bxc5 ♖a5!; or Anand's 21 ♙e3 e5 22 ♙xf2 ♖xf2 23 ♖g3 and 'White has a comfortable edge in the ending'. This strikes me as unclear, one plausible continuation being 23...b6 24 ♙e1 (24 ♖h3 ♖f6 25 ♖g5 ♖f5 26 ♙b5 ♖a7!) 24...♖f6 (24...♖f4!?) 25 ♖e3 ♖e6 and White may be slightly better but this would have to be proven.

After 19...♙f6, Anand-Shirov, Tehran 2000 continued 20 ♖f3! (Kavalek analyses the alternative 20 ♖f3 ♙e7 21 ♙e3 d4 to White's advantage, but 21...b6! is better) 20...♙xc3 (there isn't anything better) 21 ♙b2 ♙b3+ 22 ♙c1 e5 23 ♖xh4 (23 ♖d2! ♙xh3 24 ♖xb3±) 23...♙f5 24 ♙d1 e4 25 ♙xb3 axb3 26 ♖d2 e3 27 ♖f3 (27 ♖xb3±) 27...♖ae8 28 ♙d1 c4 29 ♙e2 and White's two extra pieces decide.

13.3 5 f4 c5



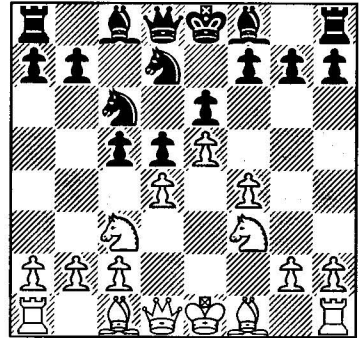
6 ♖f3

Here we look at lines not involving ♖ce2.

6 dxc5 ♖c6 7 a3 is an old line: 7...♙xc5 8 ♙g4 0-0 9 ♖f3 ♖d4 10 ♙d3 f5 11 ♙h3 ♖xf3+ 12 ♙xf3 ♙b6 13 ♖e2 ♖c5 ♯ Tarrasch-Spielmann, Nuremberg 1906) 7 ♙g4 0-0 8 ♙d3 f5 9

♙h3 ♙xg1! (this is an original idea; 9...♖c6=) 10 ♖xg1 ♖c5 11 ♙d2 ♖c6!? 12 ♖b5?! ♙b6 13 0-0-0 ♙d7 14 ♖d6 ♖a4! 15 ♙b5 ♖d4 16 ♙e3 ♖e2+! 17 ♙xe2 ♙xb2+ 18 ♙d2 ♙b4+ 19 ♙c1 ♖c3 ♯ Fischer-Benko, Curacao 1962.

6...♖c6



6...cxd4 7 ♖xd4 ♙b4!? is definitely worthy of consideration; I don't know of any examples.

7 ♙e3

For 7 ♖e2, see 13.2 5 ♖ce2. Others are barely touched upon (if at all) in the books:

(a) 7 ♙d3?! cxd4 8 ♖e2 ♙b6 9 0-0 f6! 10 exf6 ♖xf6 11 ♙h1 ♙c5 12 a3 a5 13 b3 0-0 14 ♙b2 g6? (14...♖g4! 15 ♙e1 e5! 16 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 17 fxe5 ♖xf1+ 18 ♙xf1 ♖xe5 ♯) 15 ♙e1 ♙d7?! (15...♖h5 ♯) 16 ♙h4 unclear, Abdel Aziem-Peng Zhaoqin, Cairo 2002;

(b) 7 a3? meets the fate of any slow move: 7...cxd4 8 ♖xd4 ♖dx5! with the idea 9 fxe5 ♙h4+;

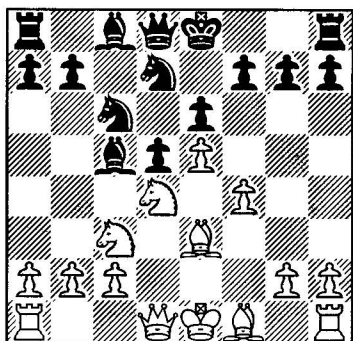
(c) 7 ♙b5 a6!? (7...cxd4 8 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 9 ♙xd4 a6 10 ♙xd7+ ♙xd7 11 0-0 ♖c8 12 ♙e3 ♙c5=) 8 ♙xc6 bxc6 9 0-0 (9 ♖e2 cxd4 10 ♖fxd4 c5 11 ♖f3 ♙e7 12 0-0 ♖b6!?) 13 c3 0-0 14 ♙c2 a5! ♯ Varga-Lehmann, Hungary 1999) 9...cxd4 10 ♖xd4 c5 11 ♖f3 ♙e7 ♯ Megibow-Cotton, Concord 1995; the bishop pair counts for something;

(d) 7 dxc5 ♟xc5 8 ♟d3 a6!? (8...f6! 9 exf6 ♞xf6 10 ♞e2 0-0 11 ♞e5 ♞c7) 9 ♞e2 ♞c7 10 ♟d2 b5 11 a3 ♞b8= Bole-slavsky-Pachman, Saltjjobaden1948.

7...cxd4

This exchange is in line with my philosophy for a second system: to give the reader a solid and extremely well-established variation that will always be playable.

8 ♞xd4 ♟c5



9 ♞d2

Preparing 0-0-0. Nothing else is considered sharp enough:

(a) 9 g3 ♞b6 10 ♞a4 ♞a5+ 11 c3 ♟xd4 12 ♟xd4 ♞xd4 13 ♞xd4 b6= 14 ♞b4!? ♞xb4 15 cxb4 f6 16 ♟b5? fxe5 17 fxe5 0-0 ♞ Antal-Hoang Thanh Trang, Budapest 2002;

(b) 9 ♟e2 ♞b6!? (usually arrived at by 8...♞b6 9 ♟e2 ♟c5) 10 ♞a4 ♞a5+ 11 c3 ♞xd4 12 ♟xd4 ♟xd4 13 ♞xd4 0-0 14 0-0 b6 15 ♟d1 ♟a6!? 16 b4 ♞b5 17 ♞f3 ♞c4= Vera-Borges Mateos, Havana 1987;

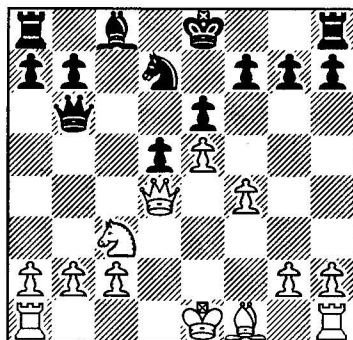
(c) 9 ♞a4? ♟xd4 10 ♟xd4 ♞dx5! 11 ♟e2 (11 ♟xe5 ♞xe5 12 fxe5 ♞h4+ 13 g3 ♞xa4) 11...♞g6 12 0-0 ♞xd4 13 ♞xd4 0-0 ♞ Redmon-Marechal, Glenalmond 1996;

(d) 9 ♟b5 0-0 10 ♞xc6 bxc6 11 ♟xc5 ♞xc5 12 ♟xc6 (or 12 ♞d4 ♞b6 13 b4 cxb5 14 bxc5 ♞a5= Suetin)

12...♞b8 13 ♞d4 ♞a5= Laplaza-Rogemont, corr 1992.

9...0-0

It's an indication of Black's flexibility in this line that he has still another option here in 9...♟xd4 10 ♟xd4 ♞xd4 11 ♞xd4 ♞b6



This plan has been around for years and is still popular right now among the chess elite; in particular, Korchnoi and Bareev have championed it. The basic idea is that in the ending, a kingside advance by White tends to be harmless, so that despite White's better bishop Black will have time to develop rapidly on the queenside using the open c-file to level the chances. The interesting endgame it produces tends to lead to a draw with accurate play by Black; but that can be a problem for both sides. After all, White will also have limited prospects against a strong player or one who knows the ideas well. Thus 9...♟xd4 trades safety for complexity.

From the diagram, searching for genuine winning chances, White has been offering a pawn by 12 ♞d2!? ♞xb2 (12...♞c5 13 0-0-0 ♟d7 is also playable) 13 ♞b1 ♞a3 14 ♞b5 ♞xa2 15 ♞d6+ ♟e7 but for the moment Bareev has demonstrated in two top-level games that Black's two pawns

are as important as White's attack.

After 9...0-0, White can choose between two strategies:

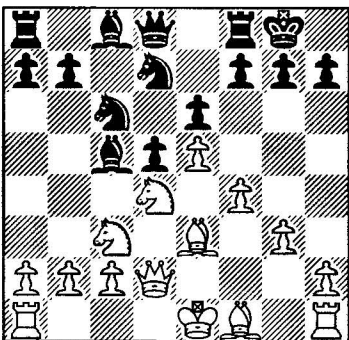
**13.31 10 g3**

**13.32 10 0-0-0**

The alternative 10 ♖e2 gives Black the choice of playing for a simplified game by 10...♗dx5!? 11 ♗xc6 (11 fxe5 ♗xd4 with the idea 12 ♖xd4 ♗h4+) 11...♖xe3 12 ♗xd8 ♖xd2+ 13 ♗xd2 ♗c4+! 14 ♖xc4 dxc4 15 ♗xf7 ♖xf7 16 ♗e3 b6 17 ♖hd1 ♖a6!=, intending ...e5 and on fxe5, ...♖e8. Or he can play for more with the 'normal' 10...a6 11 0-0 ♗xd4 12 ♖xd4 ♗b6 13 ♖xc5 ♗xc5+ 14 ♗h1 b5 15 ♖d3 ♗b6 16 b3 ♖b7= Rayner-C.Daly, Debrecen 1992, when 17 ♗e2?! was answered by 17...♗c4!?

**13.31 10 g3**

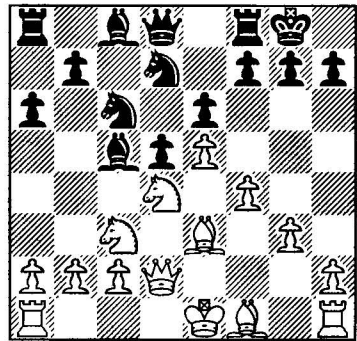
This is a semi-waiting move in the sense that White wants to see what Black is doing before committing his king's bishop or king. White's bishop may go to g2 or h3, a drawback being the loss of control over c4.



**10...a6**

The direct plan with 10...♖xd4 11 ♖xd4 ♗xd4 12 ♗xd4 ♗b8! intending ...♗c6 is also satisfactory. Black can

play along the c-file after ...♖d7 and ...♖c8 and may also think about ...f6, for example, 13 0-0-0 ♗c6 14 ♗f2 ♖d7 15 ♗b1 ♗a5 16 ♖d3 ♖fc8 17 ♗e1 (17 a3!? b5!?) 17...♗b4 18 a3 ♗xd3 19 ♖xd3 ♖c4 20 ♗d2 ♖ac8 21 ♗e2 ♗xd2 22 ♖xd2 ♖e4 23 ♗c3 Anand-Shirov, Leon 2001; and although Black shouldn't have serious problems with other moves, it seems to me that 23...♖e3! 24 ♖hd1 (24 ♗e2 f6) 24...♖c4 is a good set-up. Black may play for ...f6 after, say, ...♗f8 and/or ...♖c6.



**11 ♗ce2**

White logically reinforces d4. Nevertheless, it takes pressure off of d5 and e4. Options are:

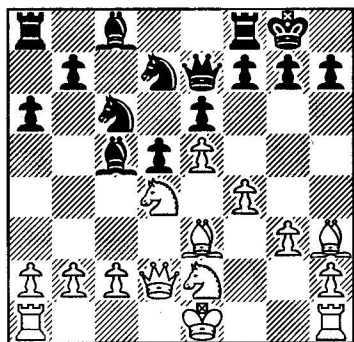
(a) 11 ♖g2 ♗xd4 (11...♗a5!? 12 b3 b5=) 12 ♖xd4 b5 13 ♗e2 ♗c7 14 ♖xc5 ♗xc5 15 ♗d4 ♖b7 16 0-0 ♗e4= Kuczynski-Gunnarsson, Ohrid 2001; when Black gets this move in he's normally okay;

(b) 11 ♖h3 ♗xd4 12 ♖xd4 ♗c7 (both 12...b5 13 0-0 ♗b6 14 ♗e2 b4 and Leitao's more active suggestion 13...a5!? 14 ♗xb5 ♖a6 15 a4 ♖xb5 16 axb5 ♗b6 are unclear) 13 0-0-0 (13 ♖xc5 ♗xc5 14 0-0 b5 15 ♗d4 b4! 16 ♗xb4 ♖b8 17 ♗a3 ♗b6 18 ♗h1 d4!=) 13...b5 14 ♖he1 Paetz-Lomineishvili, Leon 2001; and 14...b4! 15 ♗a4!? ♖xd4 16 ♗xd4 a5 17 f5 ♖e8 18 fxe6

fxe6 would be equal.

11...♖b6

In this particular instance, I think 11...♖e7 makes sense, since after 12 ♖h3 Black's defence of e6 gives him leeway to contest the light squares:



12...f5!?, a unique idea that I like. It challenges White to capture en passant and lose central control for the sake of free play; otherwise, any plan with g4 grants Black f-file play: 13 0-0 (13 exf6 ♗xf6 threatens ...♗e4, and Black gets easy play after 14 ♖g2 e5 15 ♗xc6 bxc6 16 ♖xc5 ♗xc5 17 fxe5 ♗g4; 13 0-0-0 ♗xd4 14 ♗xd4 ♗b6 15 b3?! ♖d7 with the speedier attack) 13...♗xd4 14 ♗xd4 and a sample line is 14...♖a7 (with the idea ...♗c5) 15 ♖ac1! ♗c5 16 c4 ♗e4 17 ♗e2 ♖d7 18 ♖fd1 ♖xd4 19 ♖xd4 dxc4 20 ♗xc4 ♖ac8 21 ♗b3 ♖c6 22 ♖b6 ♖d5=.

12 c3

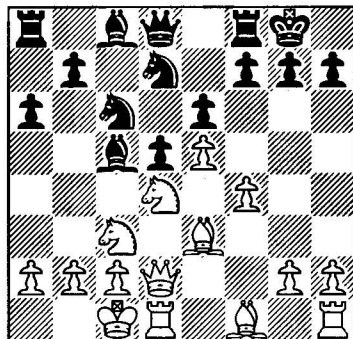
12 0-0-0 f6!

12...a5

Here too 12...f6 looks quite reasonable, since 13 exf6 ♗xf6 14 ♖g2 ♖d7 discourages 15 0-0 due to 15...♗g4.

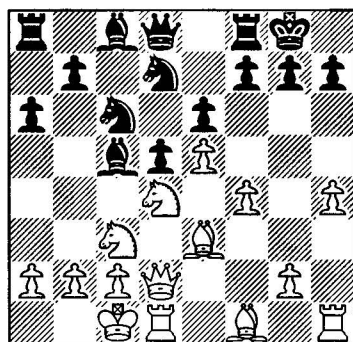
After 12...a5, Ermolaev-Sumets, Lviv 2002 continued 13 ♖h3 a4 14 ♗f2 ♗d8 15 ♖g2 ♖b6 16 b4 ♖c7!? 17 ♗b5 ♖b8 18 ♗ed4 ♗b6 19 ♗d3 ♗c4 20 ♖f2 ♖d7=.

13.32 10 0-0-0 a6



Preparing ...b5 with an advance on the queenside. My first instinct in this type of position was that White, with more central space and good pieces, probably stands slightly better. But White's goals on the kingside are hard to achieve and Black has White's king as a target for his queenside expansion. Moreover, in some cases a well-timed simplification will equalise on the spot. Statistically, in fact, Black has done remarkably well from this position in terms of both raw results and performance rating.

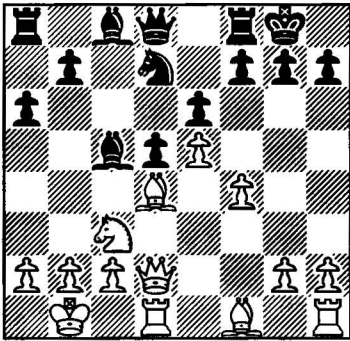
11 h4



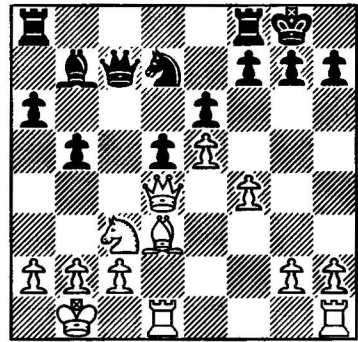
A critical point. With this move White demonstrates his intention to attack on the kingside, perhaps via

$\text{N}h3$ , a move that incidentally defends along the third rank. White can choose also to play positionally, which usually entails strengthening the d4 point and/or neutralising Black's ideas on the queenside, as shown by:

(a) 11  $\text{Q}b1$  (this will often transpose to 11 h4 lines, but sometimes White switches plans) 11... $\text{Q}xd4$  12  $\text{Q}xd4$



12...b5 (after 12... $\text{W}c7$ , it's important to note that 13 h4 b5 transposes to one of the main lines below with 11 h4  $\text{Q}xd4$  12  $\text{Q}xd4$   $\text{W}c7$  13  $\text{Q}b1$  b5; instead White can play 13  $\text{W}f2$  b5 14  $\text{Q}d3$  b4 15  $\text{Q}e2$  a5 16  $\text{W}h4$  g6 17  $\text{N}hf1$   $\text{Q}a6$  Zahariev-I.Ivanisevic, Chania 2000; then Black is way ahead of the lines with 11  $\text{W}f2$  and can follow up by ... $\text{N}fc8$  and even ... $\text{Q}f8$  if needed – ChessPublishing) 13  $\text{W}e3$  (13 h4 transposes to 11 h4  $\text{Q}xd4$  12  $\text{Q}xd4$  b5 13  $\text{Q}b1$ ) 13... $\text{W}c7$  (13... $\text{W}e7$  could be considered – Pedersen) 14  $\text{Q}d3$   $\text{Q}xd4$  (14...b4 15  $\text{W}h3$ !) 15  $\text{W}xd4$   $\text{Q}b7$ ! (This is a fashionable treatment of such lines; Black wants to develop quickly and tie White's pieces to e4 by placing a knight on c5 before pushing his queenside pawns. Still, after 15... $\text{W}c5$  16  $\text{Q}e2$  b4 17  $\text{N}he1$   $\text{N}e8$  18  $\text{W}xc5$ !?  $\text{Q}xc5$  19  $\text{Q}d4$  Libiszewski-Buhmann, Pula 2003, 19... $\text{Q}d7$ ! doesn't look bad)



16  $\text{N}he1$   $\text{Q}c5$  17  $\text{Q}e2$   $\text{N}ac8$ !? (17... $\text{N}fc8$  looks better, because a later ...b4 and ...a5 will be more effective) 18  $\text{W}e3$   $\text{Q}e4$  19  $\text{Q}d4$  (19  $\text{Q}xe4$  dxe4 empowers the bishop, e.g., 20  $\text{N}d2$  f6! 21 exf6  $\text{N}xf6$  22  $\text{N}ed1$   $\text{Q}d5$ =) 19... $\text{W}e7$ !? (19...b4!?) 20  $\text{Q}f3$ !? (I prefer White a bit here, because Black isn't well set up for ...b4 and ...a5) 20... $\text{W}b4$  21  $\text{Q}a1$   $\text{W}e7$  22  $\text{Q}g5$  d4!? 23  $\text{W}h3$   $\text{Q}xg5$  24 fxf5 g6 25  $\text{W}g4$ ± J.Polgar-Luther, Ohrid 2001. White intends h4-h5, although things are still complex and Black went on to win;

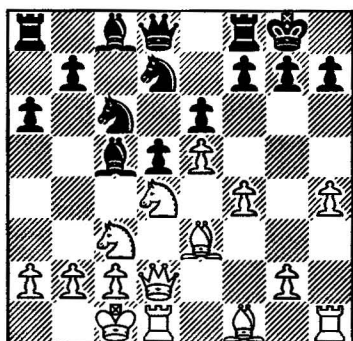
(b) 11  $\text{W}f2$  was recently played by Kramnik. The idea is to launch a kingside attack by  $\text{Q}d3$  and  $\text{W}h4$ . Here are two responses:

(b1) 11... $\text{Q}b4$ !? meets the threat 12  $\text{Q}xc6$  and tries to force White's knight to a worse square. It may well equalise, e.g., 12  $\text{Q}ce2$  (uninspiring is 12  $\text{Q}xc6$  bxc6 13  $\text{Q}e2$   $\text{N}b8$ =; and a mistake is 12  $\text{Q}a4$ ?  $\text{W}a5$ ) 12... $\text{Q}a5$  (heading for c4; 12... $\text{W}a5$ !?) 13 c3  $\text{Q}e7$  14  $\text{Q}g3$  b5 15  $\text{Q}d3$   $\text{Q}b7$  16  $\text{W}c2$  h6 17  $\text{Q}b1$   $\text{Q}c4$  18  $\text{Q}f2$   $\text{Q}c5$ =. These moves are hardly forced, but the general idea is that White has a difficult time attacking;

(b2) 11... $\text{Q}xd4$  12  $\text{Q}xd4$  should probably be played in a non-standard

manner, because otherwise White remains somewhat better: 12...♖c7 (for example, 12...♗e7 would keep an eye on h4 and should be considered; then the move ...f6 is also appropriate in some lines) 13 ♔d3 ♔xd4!? (13...b5?! 14 ♖h4 h6 15 ♘e2 f6?! 16 ♗g4!± was the game Kramnik-Radjabov, Linares 2003; 13...f6!? might be playable, with the idea 14 exf6 ♜xf6! 15 f5!? b5) 14 ♗xd4 ♘c5 (14...b5) 15 f5! ♘xd3+ 16 ♜xd3 with a nice advantage; this is the sort of position White wants;

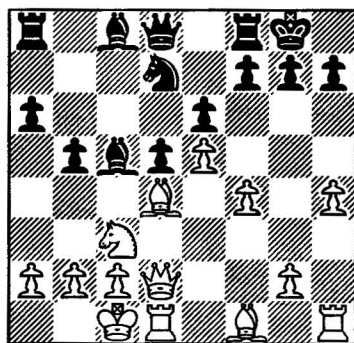
(c) Nijboer has specialised in the relatively unexplored 11 ♘b3. A couple of his recent games went 11...b6 12 ♘e2 a5!? (12...♗e7 13 ♘ed4 ♘xd4 14 ♘xd4 f6 15 exf6 ♘xf6 16 ♔d3 ♔b7 17 ♘f3 Nijboer-Arizmendi Martinez, Bled 2002; and Nijboer recommends 17...♘h5 with complications, apparently dynamically equal ones) 13 ♘ed4 ♘xd4 14 ♘xd4 ♔a6 15 ♔b1 ♗c7 16 ♔d3 (16 ♔xa6 ♜xa6 17 g4!?) 16...a4 17 ♗e2 ♔xd3 18 cxd3 Nijboer-Stellwagen, Wijk aan Zee 2003; and simply 18...a3 was equal.



11...♘xd4

11...♗c7 has led to very similar games, and is better played later (see below). One early example went 12 ♜h3 (12 h5!± or even 12 g4 ♘d4 13

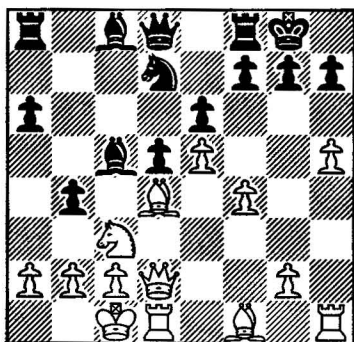
♔xd4 b5 14 g5!±) 12...♘xd4 13 ♔xd4 b5= 14 ♗e3!? ♔b7 15 ♔d3 f6! 16 exf6 ♜xf6 Mokry-Bareev, Trnava 1989. 12 ♔xd4 b5



13 ♜h3!?

This has been very popular, but recently White has been looking at other courses as well:

(a) 13 h5 looks scary, but gives Black a critical tempo for his own attack, e.g., 13...b4 (13...♗c7 is often arrived at by a move order with an earlier ...♗c7; when White commits to h6 it usually doesn't achieve much, e.g., 14 h6 g6 15 ♔b1 and 15...♔b7 16 ♔xc5 ♘xc5= or 15...♔b7 16 ♔xc5 ♘xc5=)



This leads to a typical and major decision. Does White want to block the queenside and simplify, or to con-

centrate upon the centre at the cost of allowing Black's queenside pawns to advance? We have:

(a1) 14 ♖e2 15 ♖e3 ♖c7 16 ♖b1 (16 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 17 ♖d4 ♖a6 18 f5 – McDonald; 18...♖e4! with the idea 19 fxe6 ♖xe5 or 19 ♖f4 exf5=) 16...♖a6 17 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 18 ♖g3?! ♖fc8 19 ♖c1 a4! 20 ♖xa6 ♖xa6 and both ...a3 and ...b3 are serious worries for White, Topalov-Morozevich, Sarajevo 1999;

(a2) 14 ♖a4 ♖xd4 15 ♖xd4 a5 (15...f6!? 16 h6 g6 and Black's king seems secure while White's centre is becoming loose) 16 ♖b5 (to stop ...♖a6; this same manoeuvre is tried in the main line) 16...♖b8 17 ♖d3 and a recent game Olenin-Zvjaginsev, Togliatti 2003 went 17...♖b7 18 ♖b1 ♖c6 19 ♖c5 ♖b5 20 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 21 g4!? ♖fc8 22 f5 ♖xd3 23 cxd3? b3! 24 a3 ♖c2♯;

(b) 13 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 14 ♖d4 ♖c7 15 a3 (15 f5 ♖b7 16 f6?! – committing too quickly – 16...gxf6 17 exf6 ♖h8♯ A.Ivanov-Glek, USSR 1987) 15...♖d7 16 f5 ♖fc8! 17 f6?! (the same problem) 17...gxf6 (17...♖e4!) 18 exf6 Apicella-M.Gurevich, Clichy 2001; 18...♖e4!;

(c) 13 ♖b1!? is a subtle move order that has recently come into prominence. 13...♖c7

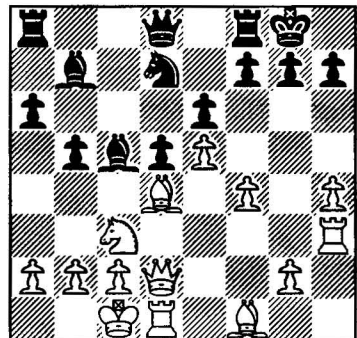
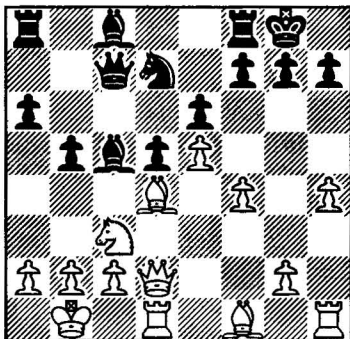
reached by other orders, e.g., 11 ♖b1 ♖xd4 12 ♖xd4 ♖c7 13 h4 b5. Now both of White's moves are critical:

(c1) 14 ♖h3 (Anand gives this '?!') 14...b4!? (as usual, 14...♖b7 is an option, especially in view of 15 h5 b4 16 ♖a4 ♖xd4 17 ♖xd4 ♖a5 18 b3 ♖c6!♯) 15 ♖a4 ♖xd4 16 ♖xd4 ♖b8!? (or 16...a5 17 c3 ♖a6!) 17 ♖e3 a5 18 f5?! (18 h5 ♖b7 19 f5 ♖bc8 20 ♖d3 ♖a6! with initiative) Anand-Buhmann, Stuttgart 2002; and Anand gives 18...exf5! 19 ♖xd5 ♖b7! 20 ♖xd7 ♖bd8 21 e6 ♖xd7 22 exd7 ♖c6 23 ♖c5 ♖d8 24 ♖c4 ♖f8 25 ♖de1 ♖e4 26 ♖xe4 fxe4 27 ♖b5 f5♯;

(c2) 14 h5! b4 15 ♖a4 ♖xd4 16 ♖xd4 a5 (16...f6!) 17 h6 (17 ♖b5 ♖b8 18 h6 g6 19 c4 bxc3 20 ♖xc3 f6!-) 17...g6 18 ♖c1! ♖c6 19 b3 ♖a6 20 ♖xa6 ♖xa6 21 c3 bxc3 22 ♖xc3± Khamatgaleev-Kosic, Patras 2002.

### 13...b4

One last time 13...♖c7 14 ♖b1 transposes, this time to note 'c' 13 ♖b1 above. An important alternative, currently popular, is 13...♖b7. Although move order is certainly important, this may be one of those variations where a knowledge of basic ideas (like the difference between ...b4 and ...♖b7 lines) is more helpful than memorising exact orders.



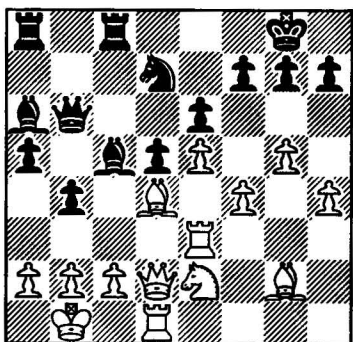
An important position is often

Here are some examples of play after 13...♙b7:

(a) 14 f5?! is premature: 14...exf5 15 ♖xd5 ♙xd5 16 ♙xc5 ♖xc5 17 ♗xd5 ♗b6 18 ♗d6 ♗a7! 19 ♜f3 ♖e6 20 ♗a3 f4 21 ♞d6?! ♗g1 22 ♗d3 ♞ac8 and everything is going Black's way, Van der Weide-Stellwagen, Leeuwarden 2001;

(b) 14 ♞g3!? b4 15 ♖a4 ♙xd4 16 ♗xd4 ♗a5 17 b3 ♙c6 18 ♖b2 (18 f5!? – Pedersen) 18...♖c5 19 ♙d3 ♞fd8♣ was Dutreeuw-M.Gurevich, Brussels 1995;

(c) 14 g4 (a popular move) 14...b4 15 ♖e2 a5 16 g5 ♗b6 17 ♖b1 ♙a6 18 ♞e3 (18 h5, and instead of 18...♞ac8?! 19 g6! Coco-Daconto, corr 1997, Black should play 18...♞fc8!, as follows...) 18...♞fc8! 19 ♙g2 (19 h5 a4 20 g6 hxg6 21 hxg6 fxg6 22 ♞g3 ♖f8)



19...♙xe2! 20 ♞xe2 a4 21 f5 b3 22 cxb3 axb3 23 a3 ♙xd4 24 ♗xd4 ♞c5!? 25 h5 ♞ac8 26 ♗d3 ♞c2♣ Borriss-Korchnoi, Panormo 2001;

(d) 14 ♖b1?! has been played a lot, but Black's attack is better than usual, e.g., 14...b4 15 ♖e2 a5 16 ♗e3 ♗c7 17 ♞g3!? ♙a6♣ 18 ♙xc5? ♖xc5 19 f5 f6?! (19...♖e4!-+) 20 fxe6? (20 exf6 ♞xf6 21 ♖f4 d4!) 20...fxe5 21 ♞f3 d4-+ Aagaard-Stellwagen, Wijk aan Zee 2001.

#### 14 ♖a4

14 ♖e2 is rather slow in the face of 14...a5 15 ♗e3 (15 h5 ♙a6 16 h6 g6 17 g4 ♗b6 18 ♖b1 a4 19 ♞e3?! ♙c4 20 c3?! ♙xa2+! 21 ♖xa2 b3+ 22 ♖b1 a3 with a huge attack, Adriano-C.Jones, corr 2003) 15...♗c7. Then 16 ♙xc5?! ♖xc5 17 ♖d4 a4 18 ♖b1 a3! 19 b3 ♙a6 20 ♙xa6 ♞xa6 favoured Black, J.Polgar-Shirov, Prague 1999.

#### 14...♙xd4 15 ♗xd4 a5

Black will simplify and White's attack is not yet underway. There are two exciting alternatives, one fully satisfactory:

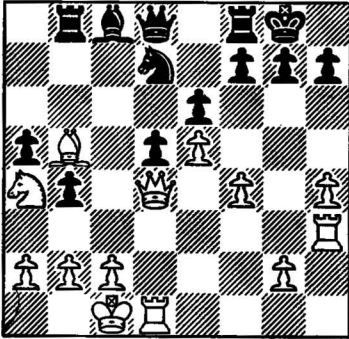
(a) 15...f6 16 ♗xb4 fxe5 17 ♗d6! ♗f6 18 f5!; this is Kasparov's ingenious move. A playable line is that given by Ron Langeveld in ChessPub (with some additions from me): 18...♞e8! 19 ♞b3 (19 fxe6 ♗f4+ 20 ♖b1 ♗xa4 21 exd7 ♙xd7 22 ♞a3! ♗g4 23 ♗xd5+ ♙e6♣; 19 ♗c6 ♞b8 20 fxe6?! ♗f4+ 21 ♖b1 ♖f6 22 ♞f3 ♗g4♣; 19 ♖c3?! ♖h8! 20 fxe6 ♗h6+ 21 ♖b1 ♖f6 22 g4!? ♖xg4 23 ♖xd5 ♙xe6♣) 19...♗xh4 20 fxe6 ♗xa4 21 ♞b4 (21 ♗xd5 ♖c5!!) 21...♗xb4!? 22 ♗xb4 ♖f6 with a small edge for White;

♣ (b) 15...♗a5! seems fine for Black, the main line being 16 b3 ♙b7!? (or 16...f6! 17 exf6 ♖xf6=) 17 c3! (17 ♞g3 ♙c6 18 ♖b2 ♖c5!) 17...♞fc8 18 ♖b2 bxc3+ 19 ♞xc3 ♞xc3 20 ♗xc3 Nijboer-Luther, Leuwarden 1992; and after 20...♗d8 21 ♞c1?! (21 g3! ♞c8 with a tiny edge for White) 21...♞c8 22 ♗b4, Langeveld suggests 22...♞xc1! 23 ♖xc1 ♙c6! 24 ♙xa6 ♗xh4♣.

#### 16 ♙b5!?

This is considered best, to prevent 16...♙a6. 16 c4!? ♙b7! is easier than 16...bxc3 17 ♞xc3?! ♗xh4 18 g3 ♗d8 19 ♖b1 with some play for the pawn, Nijboer-Korchnoi, Arnhem 1999.

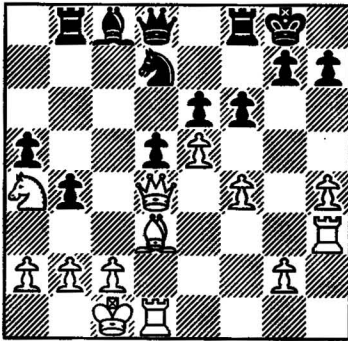
#### 16...♞b8



17  $\text{♙d3!}$

White's loss of tempo is supposed to be worth prevention of ... $\text{♙a6}$ . The alternatives lack punch, e.g., 17  $\text{♙e2 ♙b7 18 ♚b1 ♙c6 19 ♚c5 ♙b5}$  (19... $\text{♚xc5 20 ♚xc5 ♛c8 21 ♚d4 f6=}$ ) 20  $\text{♙d3 ♚xc5 21 ♚xc5 ♚d7=}$  De la Riva Aguado-Glek, Saint Vincent 1999.

17... $\text{f6!}$



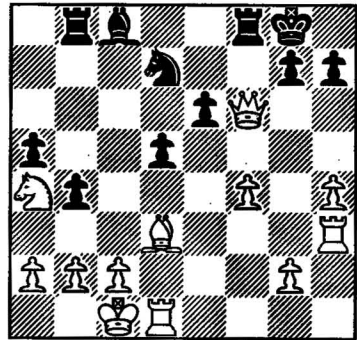
A rare but effective solution in this well-known position, recommended by Pedersen. It also seems that

17... $\text{♚c7}$  equalises in both theory and practice, e.g., 18  $\text{♛e1 ♚c6 19 b3 ♙a6 20 ♙xa6 ♚xa6 21 h5}$  (21  $\text{♛g3!?$  ♚h8 – Pedersen) 21... $\text{♛fc8 22 f5 ♚c6 23 ♛e2 ♚c5=}$  Sedlak-Antic, Subotica 2000.

18  $\text{exf6}$

18  $\text{b3?! fxe5 19 fxe5 ♚c7 20 ♛e1 ♚c6 21 h5 ♙a6}$  Garofalo-Latronico, email 2000.

18... $\text{♚xf6 19 ♚xf6}$



19... $\text{♚xf6}$

A recent test of 17... $\text{f6}$  by Shirov went 19... $\text{♛xf6 20 ♛e3 ♛xf4 21 ♛xe6 ♚f6 22 ♛d6 ♙g4 23 ♛e1 ♙h5 24 ♚b6 ♙f7 25 ♚d7 ♚xd7 26 ♛xd7 ♛xh4 27 ♛ee7?!}$  (27  $\text{♛a7=}$ ) 27... $\text{♛f8 28 ♙f5 ♛h6 29 ♙g4 ♛f6}$  Langheinrich-Shirov, Cologne 2003.

After 19... $\text{♚xf6}$ , Pedersen's analysis goes 20  $\text{♛f3 ♚e4 21 ♙xe4 dxe4=}$ . White has nothing after 22  $\text{♛e3}$  (although not 22  $\text{♛ff1? ♙a6}$  or 22  $\text{♛f2 e5!}$ ) 22... $\text{♛xf4 23 g3 ♛f8 24 ♛xe4 ♛b5!}$ . Black's idea is to cover c5 and e5 while preparing ... $\text{♛d5}$  or ... $\text{e5}$ , freeing his bishop.