



FIDE Trainers' Commission

Advanced Chess School Volume 11

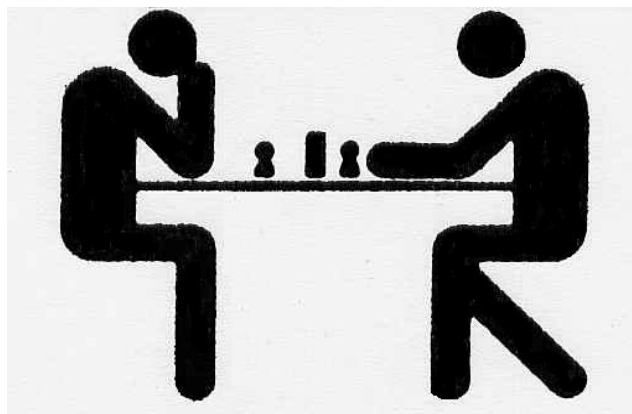
The Centre & Typical Pawn Structures

Georg Mohr

First Edition in Pdf - 2017

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Advanced Chess School - Volume 11 - The Centre & Typical Pawn Structures - Georg Mohr

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Foreword

FIDE Presidential Board

Chess has existed as a sport played at a competitive level for centuries. The common code governing the Laws of Chess is relatively recent, and the foundation of *Fédération Internationale des Échecs* (FIDE), in Paris in 1924, is even more modern. FIDE currently has 186 member federations spread across all continents. Titles for players were introduced by FIDE in 1950, and titles for Arbiters and Organizers followed. From 2005 we are moving to a new phase, with titles for Trainers.

Chess is on the increase in schools across the world. It is part of the mainstream curriculum in many countries. It is a goal of FIDE to make chess an educational tool, and generate worldwide popularity for the game. Examples of the many educational advantages of chess are: shows the need to make people realise the importance of advance planning; develops analytic and accurate thinking; shows the necessity for a combative spirit; teaches fair play and emphasises the need for preparation and hard work for success. However, with the increasing population of chess players, comes the need for trainers to assist with their development.

This is a new concept of the ever-active FIDE Trainers' Commission. This series is dedicated to advanced subjects, consisting of 80-page books. We do hope that we will be able to deliver 3-4 such books annually, increasing the level and the education of our trainers worldwide. This series will provide excellent manuals for trainers and fulfils a considerable need in modern chess literature, concentrating on the technical side of the game, but also covering various other topics and providing information. The best trainers will contribute to this series, which will be an essential tool in the preparation of trainers at all levels for the future. It will ensure that the next generation of players will be at a great advantage over those that have gone before.

Symbols

+	check	=	equal position
++	double check	oo	unclear position
#	checkmate	oo/=	with compensation
!!	brilliant move	=+	Black is slightly better
!	good move	-/+	Black has a large advantage
!?	interesting move	-+	Black is winning
?!	dubious move	1-0	the game ends in a win for White
?	bad move	½-½	the game ends in a draw
??	blunder	0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
+ -	White is winning	(D)	see next diagram
+/-	White has a large advantage	○	White to play
+=	White is slightly better	●	Black to play

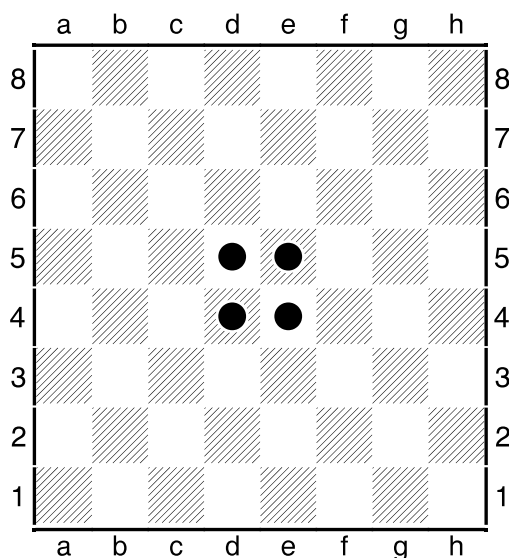
The Centre & Typical Pawn Structures

Introduction

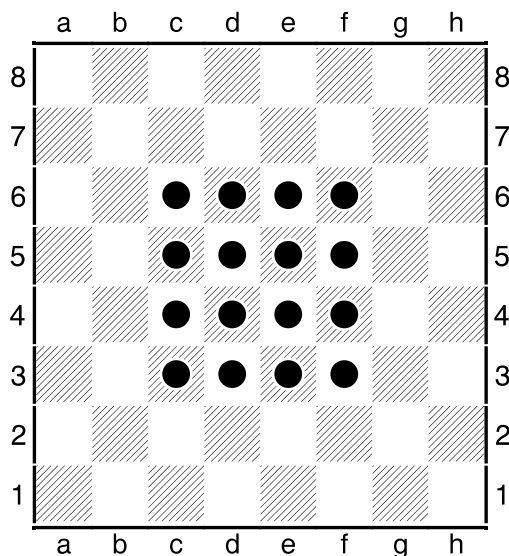
One of the first concepts that a person comes across when learning how to play chess is the centre, more accurately its role and its meaning.

The name itself tells us that it has to do with something in the middle and in our case that represents the middle, the centre of the board.

In the next diagram we see the so-called Small Centre:



Then, in the following diagram, we have the concept of the Big Centre:



Most of the rules can be used for both centres, but we need to be careful! If a

certain rule can be used in most cases, it certainly does not mean that we can definitely use it in our own position.

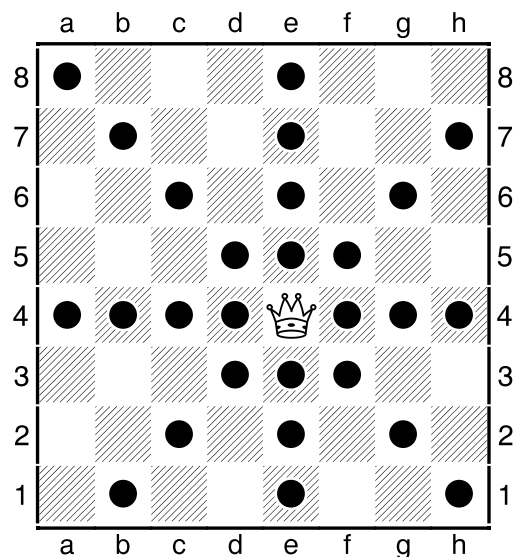
Beginners usually do not know why the centre is so important. It is not like we can win the game there. The kings are not in the centre and logically there are no mates.



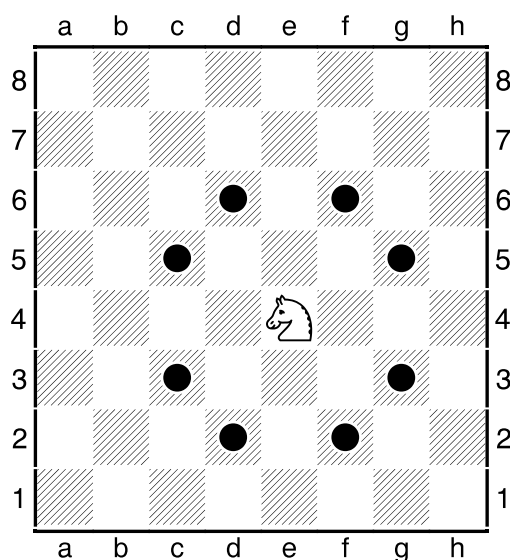
A material advantage can be achieved in any part of the board. And it is true that the centre is not directly connected with the end result of the game. Its importance is tactical and strategic.

Control over the centre leaves a player with a positional advantage, and this book will show you how to use that kind of advantage properly.

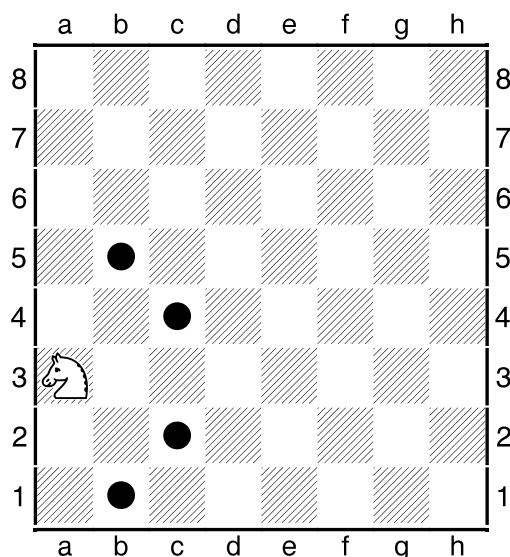
The meaning of the centre will be easier to understand if we get to know the power of the pieces in different parts of the board. For example, the queen in the centre controls 27 different squares.



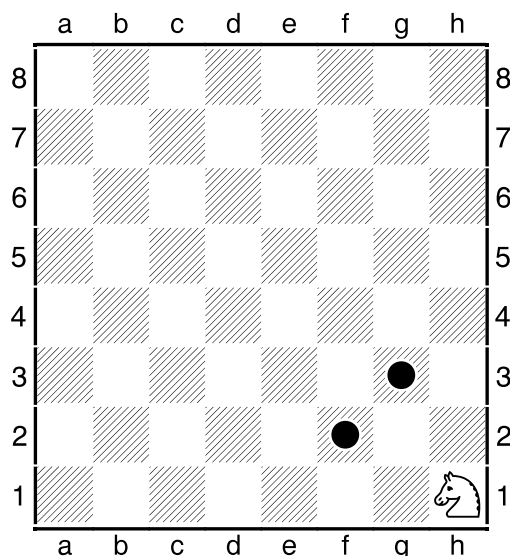
On the contrary, on the edge of the board or in the corner (the a3 square) the queen controls only 21 squares. An even more illustrative example is the knight, which controls eight squares in the centre:



On the edge (a3) four squares and only two in the corner (h1).

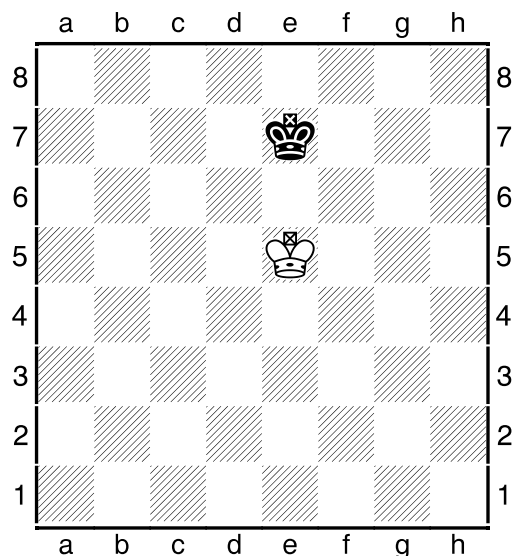


Diagrams to compare the knight's mobility.



The centre represents the part of the board from where the pieces can reach other, more distant parts. We can see that especially with the knight, and even more with the king, which usually comes to a dominant position in the centre in the endgame.

This kind of dominant position can be decisive due to the space advantage (because the opposing kings cannot touch each other and the other king is automatically located outside of the centre).



Having control over the centre leaves a player with a space advantage even earlier - in the middlegame.

The pieces in the centre are putting pressure on the opponent's pieces, which are forced to move backwards or defend themselves from positions which are usually distant from the centre.

The fight for the centre begins already in the opening. There are many ways of doing it: the usual way is that both players put their pawns in the centre and then try to control it with them.

Around 100 years ago that was the only known way and the only way that was accepted (1.e4 e5 or 1.d4 d5). The first World Champion William Steinitz taught us that control over the centre means a big, or even decisive, advantage - and his lessons were popularised by German Dr. Siegbert Tarrasch, the 'teacher of the nation'.

W.Steinitz later on discovered another possibility, some kind of a pawn/piece centre, where pawns and pieces help each

other to reach their goal. Only after the breakthrough of the small group of free-minded chess players, nowadays we call them hyper modernists (Aron Nimzowitsch, Richard Reti and others) was the wider knowledge about the centre produced.

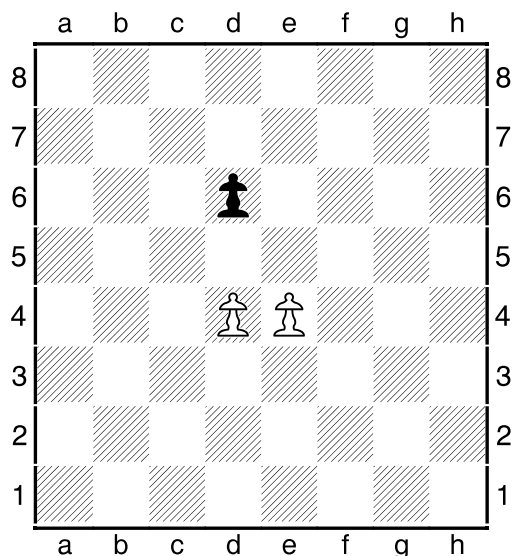
Hypermodernists said - and also theoretically and practically proved - that there exist other possibilities of fighting for the centre. The best-known is the concept of 'control from a distance', where we control the central squares with the pieces; for example the e4-square in closed openings: after 1.d4 both moves so 1...d5 and 1...Nf6 have the same effect; they both take control over the e4-square.

An even more drastic possibility is to deliberately give up the centre in order to later on drain or attack it.

Both openings, the 'Gruenfeld Indian Defence' and 'Alekhine's Defence' are the most illustrative examples of these new principles. White can use a similar tactic in for example 'Reti Opening'.

There are many classifications of the centre. The most classic one is the classification about the centre types: we know many kinds of centres that vary in different pawn settings.

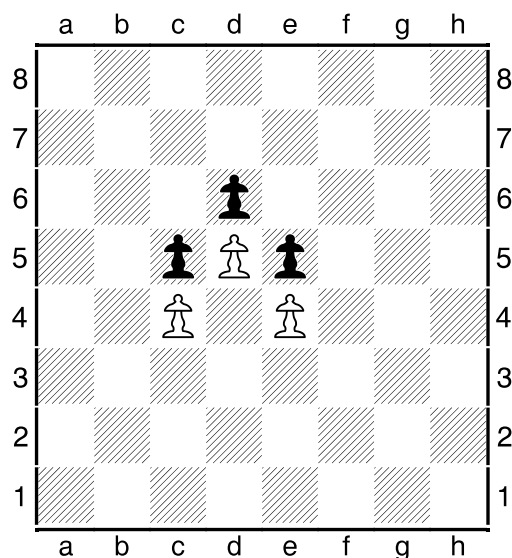
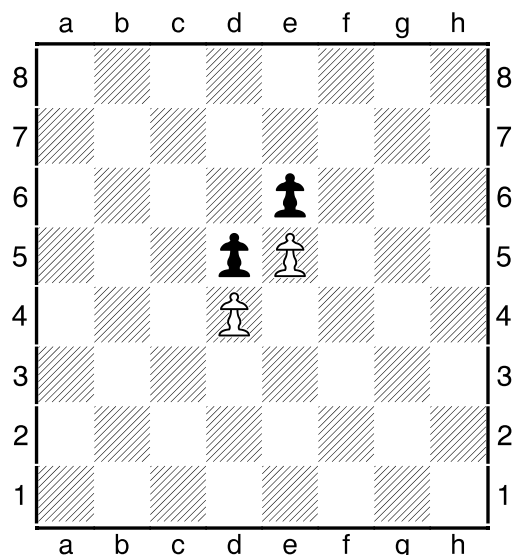
The mobile (moving) centre, where one of the players has a pawn more in the centre (usually one or two) and the opposing pawn cannot stop them from moving forward. The classical example represents the e4- and d4-pawns against the d6-pawn.



When and how to move forward, what cannot happen, what Black needs to be careful about?

The opposite represents the fixed (blocked) centre, where pawns cannot move forward and they can only disappear from the board (or they can take outside of the centre).

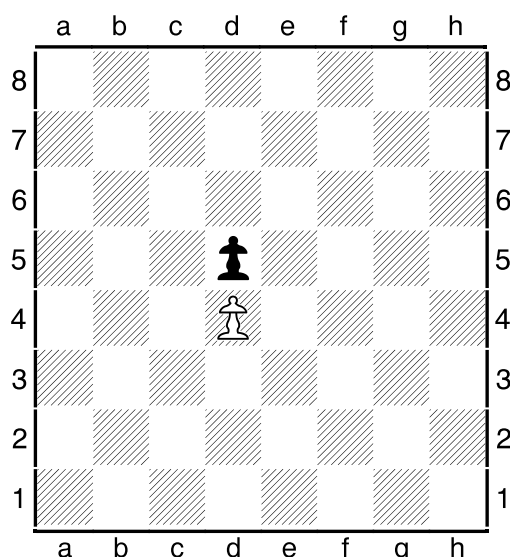
These kinds of positions are shown in the next two diagrams:



When we talk about the blocked centre, play is logically moved to the flanks and both players will attempt to gain control over the centre with a flank strategy.

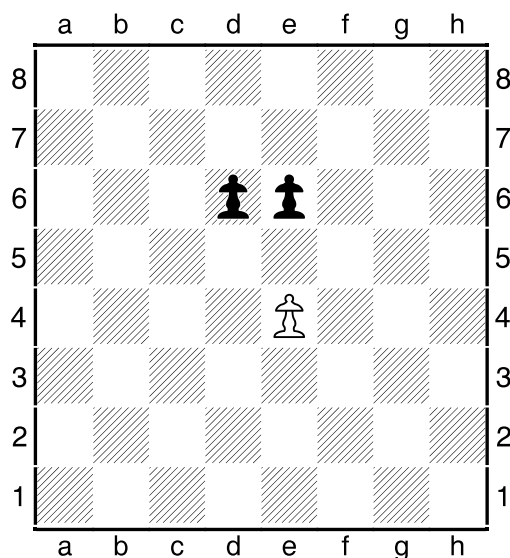


We know many other types of centres; for example the Symmetrical Centre, where two pawns are standing in front of each other:



And the battle takes place on the other, open, central files. The Static Centre means that the placement of the pawns has a specific shape, where every move with a pawn is extremely delicate and can even mean a material loss.

The Dynamic Centre (see next diagram) means that there is no contact between the pawns, but they are watching each other and need to pay attention to any kind of movement among them.



And there is also the Open Centre, where there are no pawns in the centre and their role is played instead (with the placement in the centre) or indirectly (with the control from the distance) by the pieces.

Every type of centre that was mentioned is marked by pawns. Their general placement, and most of the entire placement in the

centre, is called the pawn structure. There are many types of pawn structures and we would probably need many books, if we wanted to study them all.

For most structures there are typical clear strategic plans, and pawn structures in the centre are important mostly because they represent the result of the play in certain openings.

The player as a rule with his choice of the opening also chooses a pawn structure, and that is why knowledge of them and understanding of the resulting play are so important.

Some of these rules have been known for decades (the position with an isolated pawn; the position with hanging pawns: the Carlsbad pawn structure), and some of them were discovered in modern chess - which does not make them any less important (the Scheveningen structure; the Maroczy pawn structure; the structure with the backward d-pawn, structures with doubled pawns).

In this book we will not look at them specifically, but the basic information about them will be found in the chapters about the different kinds of centres.

The positions will be studied based on whole games, because only in this way will you be able to understand the importance of the centre, the pawn structures and their direct link with the openings, middlegames and endgames.

The chosen games will be, in most cases, classical: the games of the old masters are as a rule clearer and easier to understand the basic principles from. In modern chess, and in particular games that are being played today, there are too many factors which influence them.

I hope that this basic knowledge about the centre and the most representative pawn structures will encourage you to study chess more deeply.

The book is appropriate for chess beginners and much of the advice can also be used by more qualified chess players. I recommend to you to go through the book alone - it is easy to understand, and the best way to learn how to play chess is to study the game by ourselves.

About the Playing Strategy in the Centre

Ignoring the Centre

It was said in the introduction, that control over the centre is one of the most important strategic elements in chess. Usually both players face the problems concerning the centre responsibly and with different tactics.

They put their pawns in the centre and control with them the squares in the centre, or one of the players gives up control of the centre and leaves it to the opponent, and then tries to weaken the opponent's pawn structure, or even destroy it.

Every square in the centre is important, because if you control even only one square it could leave you with the advantage. The placement of a certain piece in the centre, knowing that it cannot be driven away by any of the opponent's pawns, is beneficial for the development of the game.

But it doesn't bring you an automatic advantage, as we will see later on. In any case, control over the centre has great importance. It is not important if we control it with the pawns or with the pieces, but what is important is to control it.

The next example will demonstrate the dangers that are present if we give up the centre.

□ **Botvinnik Mikhail**

■ **Capablanca Jose Raul**

E49 Rotterdam 1938

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 d5 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 c5 7.cxd5 exd5

Nowadays we are familiar with the fact that White has an advantage in this kind of positions due to the good chances of advancing his pawns in the centre. In 1938 players did not know that - and so the 'Nimzo-Indian Defence, and also knowledge about the centre, started to develop.

8.Bd3 0-0 9.Ne2 b6 10.0-0 Ba6

It looks like Black has a great position: he has a good pawn structure, no special weaknesses and his development is easy and simple. After the exchange of the light-squared bishops he will reach the most important strategic goal: the exchange of the best placed piece.

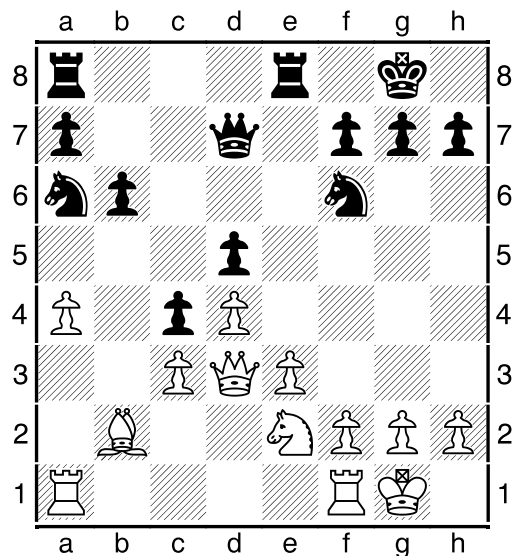
11.Bxa6 Nxa6 12.Bb2

At first sight this is a very strange move, but it is fighting for the centre! What is White's plan? Definitely the e4 move in the centre (after f3). The move will be difficult to perform without appropriate defence of the d4-square, where the Black's pressure will be oriented. So both plans are clear and simple: first of all White needs to strengthen the d4-square and after that prepare the e4 move. In the meantime Black will exert pressure on the d4-square and will place his pieces on their optimal squares.

12...Qd7 13.a4 Rfe8?!

Black can also put pressure on the d4-square indirectly, which is why the exchange of the pawns is necessary. After 13...cxd4 14.cxd4 Rfc8 and 15...Rc4 the e4 move would not be so easy to perform. The bishop on b2 would only have a defensive role.

14.Qd3 c4? (D)



This is a very serious positional mistake and it represents a moment that needs to be examined closely. It is known that White wants to play the e4 move, and that Black is making his work harder with the pressure that he is putting on the d4-square. After this move - which White did not force him to play - he voluntarily lets go of the pressure and thereby leaves White with no obstacles. Black could choose from different plans, for example ...Nb8-c6-a5-b3 or 14...Qb7. The

great Cuban was of course aware of the fact that he was giving up on the centre with the move played, but he hoped that swift action on the queenside would bring him success.

15.Qc2 Nb8 16.Rae1

White follows his strategic plan - moving his pieces to squares which control the e4-square.

16...Nc6 17.Ng3 Na5

After 17...Ne4 would follow 18. Nh1! (with the idea of f3 and Nf2, or backwards with Ng3) and White would peacefully continue with his plan. For example: 18...f5 19.f3 Nd6 20.Ba3 g6 21.Ng3 and there is no defence against the e4 move (G.Kasparov).

18.f3 Nb3 19.e4 Qxa4 20.e5 Nd7

Both players have realised their strategic plans. We can easily see that White has the positional advantage: he is threatening Nf5-d6 or an advance of his f-pawn. Black will have to pass several tests, before he will manage to realise his pawn up advantage, which he won on the queenside.

21.Qf2

We need to be careful when it comes to the realisation of our plans. Black threatened that he would, with the tactical ...Nc5 move, save his knight, which got stranded on the queenside.

21...g6 22.f4 f5!

After this blockading move White has no choice. He needs to take and with that open the e-file, where the exchange of the rooks will occur.

23.exf6 Nxf6 24.f5 Rxe1 25.Rxe1 Re8 26.Re6!

26.fxg6 hxg6 27.Rxe8 Nxe8.

26...Rxe6

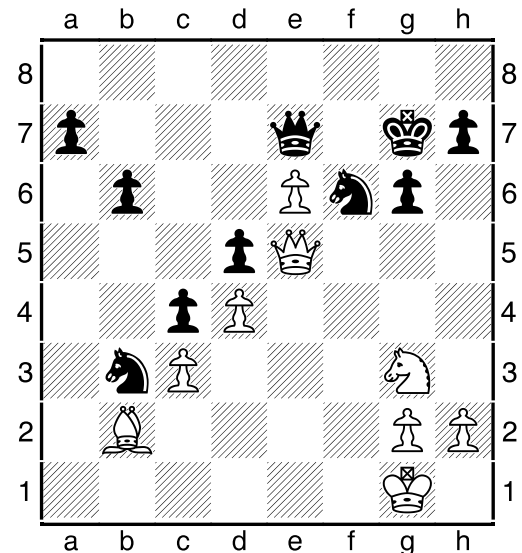
After 26...Kg7 (26...Kf7) 27.Rxf6! Kxf6 28.fxg6 White will lead out a strong attack.

27.fxe6 Kg7 28.Qf4 Qe8

The threat was 29.Nf5+ gxf5 30.Qg5+.

29.Qe5 Qe7 (D)

In front of us is one of the best-known positions in chess history, revealing the highlight of White's entire strategy.



30.Ba3!!

The glorious sacrifice based on deflection.

30...Qxa3 31.Nh5+ gxh5 32.Qg5+ Kf8

33.Qxf6+ Kg8 34.e7

Care is still needed, White could have fallen for the trick: 34.Qf7 Kh8 35.e7? Qc1 36.Kf2 Qd2 37.Kg3 Qg5 38.Kf3 Nd4! 39.cd4 Qg4 with a draw with because of the perpetual checks.

34...Qc1+ 35.Kf2 Qc2+ 36.Kg3 Qd3+

37.Kh4 Qe4+ 38.Kxh5 Qe2+ 39.Kh4 Qe4+

40.g4 Qe1+ 41.Kh5

1-0

Weak Squares in the Centre

Weakening of the squares in the centre can have fatal consequences, and this is why we need to be careful when it comes to moving our central pawns: every movement leaves behind, and all around, weak squares, which an experienced player can often quickly exploit.

Let's take a look at two practical examples from the former World Champion Alexander Alekhine. In both games the players were incautious when it came to advancing their f-pawn - the movement of the pawn leaving behind weak squares all over the e-file.

In the first example we meet the 'Exchange Variation' of the 'French Defence', which promises a symmetrical centre with equal play.

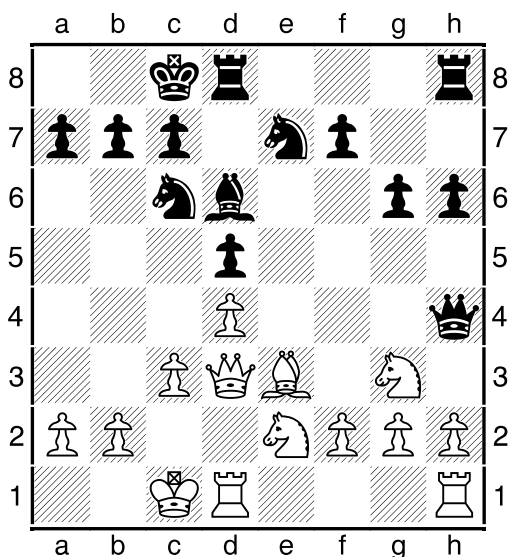
Development is simple for both players and they have no weaknesses.

□ **Winter William**

■ **Alekhine Alexander**

C01 Nottingham 1936

1.d4 e6 2.e4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.Bd3 Nc6 5.Ne2 Bd6 6.c3 Qh4 7.Nd2 Bg4 8.Qc2 0-0-0 9.Nf1 g6 10.Be3 Nge7 11.0-0-0 Bf5 12.Nfg3 Bxd3 13.Qxd3 h6 (D)



The position is more-or-less equal, although Black may have a slight initiative due to the more active placement of his pieces and a 'better bishop' - when we try to decide which bishop is better and which one is

worse, we help ourselves by looking at the pawn structures, especially with fixed pawns. In the centre there are two fixed pawns, the d4-pawn and the d5-pawn - White's bishop is restricted by his pawn and Black's bishop is attacking the opponent's pawn. White wanted to destroy the coordination of Black's pieces and so he decided to play...

14.f4?

This move is bad, because it weakens many squares along the e-file (e3, e4). The next World Champion-to-be will exploit that with the placement of his knight to the eternal 'base' (which represents the square from which the knight cannot be attacked by any of the opponent's pawns) and with the occupation of the e-file.

14...Qg4 15.h3 Qd7 16.Rhf1 h5 17.Ng1 h4 18.N3e2 Nf5

The first part of the plan has been fulfilled, the knight has moved to a wonderful square. Next follows a systematic conquest of the e-file.

19.Nf3 f6 20.Nh2 Rde8! 21.Bd2 Re6! 22.Ng4 Rhe8! 23.Rde1 R8e7! 24.Kd1 Qe8! 25.Qf3 Na5

Black's position is so good, that he is able to help himself with some tactics.

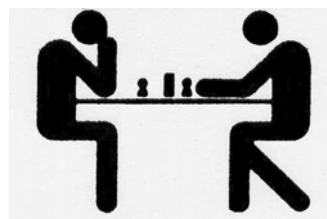
26.b3

26.Qxd5 Rxe2 27.Rxe2 Rxe2 28.Qxa5 Ng3 29.Rf3 Qe4! with a decisive attack.

26...Nc4! 27.Bc1

Bad would be 27.bxc4, because of 27...Qa4+ 28.Kc1 Ba3+ 29.Kb1 Rb6+ 30.Ka1 Qc2. Here you can see how easy is to put centralised pieces into play.

27...Nce3+ 28.Bxe3 Nxe3+ 29.Nxe3 Rxe3 30.Qf2 Qb5 31.Nc1 Rxc3 32.Rxe7 Bxe7 33.Qe1 Kd7 34.f5 Re3 35.Qf2 g5 36.Re1 Re4 37.Rxe4 dxe4 38.Kd2 Bd6 39.Kc2 Bf4 0-1

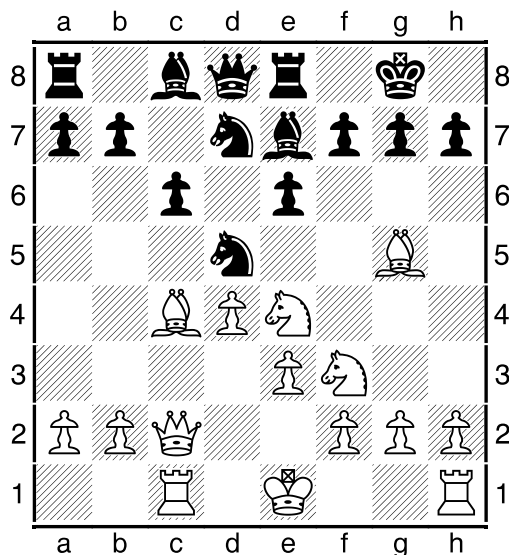


□ Alekhine Alexander

■ Yates Frederick Dewhurst

D64 London 1922

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 Be7 5.Bg5
0-0 6.e3 Nbd7 7.Rc1 c6 8.Qc2 Re8 9.Bd3
dxc4 10.Bxc4 Nd5 11.Ne4 (D)



In this entirely normal position, with a still undefined centre, Black wanted a little bit too much:

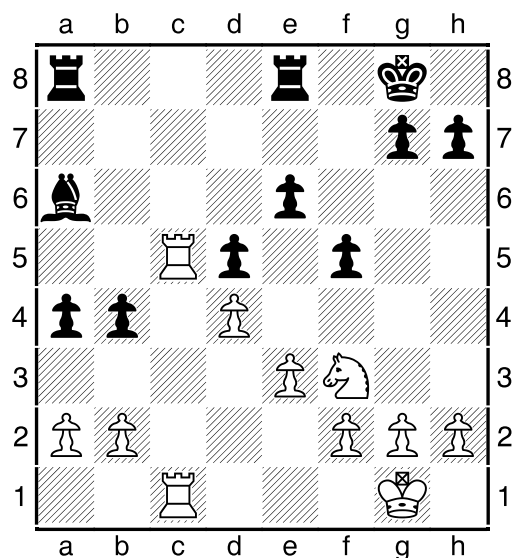
11...f5?

This move of the pawn weakens numerous squares along the e-file and the f-file.

12.Bxe7 Qxe7 13.Ned2 b5?

Leading to additional weaknesses. Black wanted to develop the bishop on c8 at any cost, but it would be wiser to play 13...N5b6 14.Bd3 g6, with a gradual preparation of the liberating ...e5 move.

14.Bxd5 cxd5 15.0-0 a5 16.Nb3 a4 17.Nc5 Nxc5 18.Qxc5 Qxc5 19.Rxc5 b4 20.Rfc1 Ba6 (D)



21.Ne5

The centralised knight on the eternal base puts pressure on Black's rooks.

21...Reb8

It is not possible to play 21...Rec8 22.Rxc8 Rxc8 23.Rxc8 Bxc8 24.Nc6.

22.f3!

And now White's king will become involved in the play.

22...b3 23.a3 h6 24.Kf2 Kh7 25.h4 Rf8 26.Kg3 Rfb8

White is the master of the open file, which means that he has the positional advantage. Next follows the penetration of the rooks to the seventh rank.

27.Rc7 Bb5 28.R1c5 Ba6 29.R5c6 Re8 30.Kf4 Kg8 31.h5 Bf1 32.g3 Ba6 33.Rf7 Kh7 34.Rcc7 Rg8 35.Nd7 Kh8 36.Nf6 Rgf8 37.Rxg7 Rxf6 38.Ke5

1-0

The Weak Square as a Trump!

As with every 'rule', so this one also has 'exceptions'. One of them was demonstrated by Emanuel Lasker, who shocked - in one of the most famous games of all time - Jose Raul Capablanca with a seemingly irrational move. A premature move or a deep strategy?

□ **Lasker Emanuel**

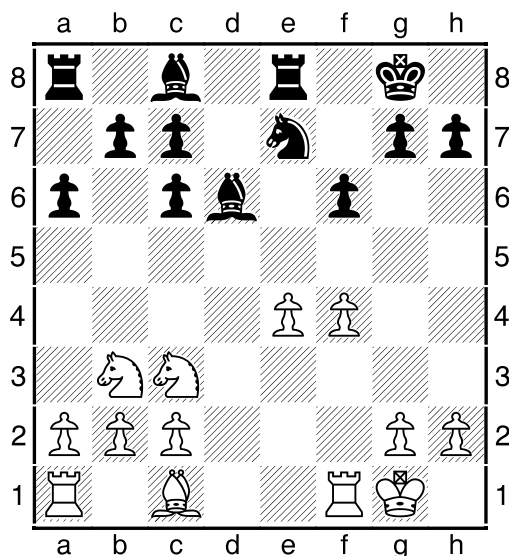
■ **Capablanca Jose Raul**

C68 St Petersburg 1914

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Bxc6

The 'Spanish (Ruy Lopez) Exchange Variation' is a very special opening, which led Lasker to some nice victories. Later on it was largely forgotten until some decades later it was brought back to life by Robert Fischer, who used it to beat all his unprepared opponents. Nowadays the variation is chosen by many players, even those with high ratings. The exchange on c6 defines the pawn structure. After 4...dxc6 and a later d4 exd4, White's superiority will be shown on the kingside, where he has four pawns against three pawns. On the other hand, on the queenside Black has the same advantage, but has troubles due to his doubled pawns. Black, though, has other compensation.

4...dxc6 5.d4 exd4 6.Qxd4 Qxd4 7.Nxd4 Bd6 8.Nc3 Ne7 9.0-0 0-0 10.f4 Re8 11.Nb3 f6 (D)



In the diagram we can see the famous

position in which Dr. E.Lasker shocked his opponent with the following move:

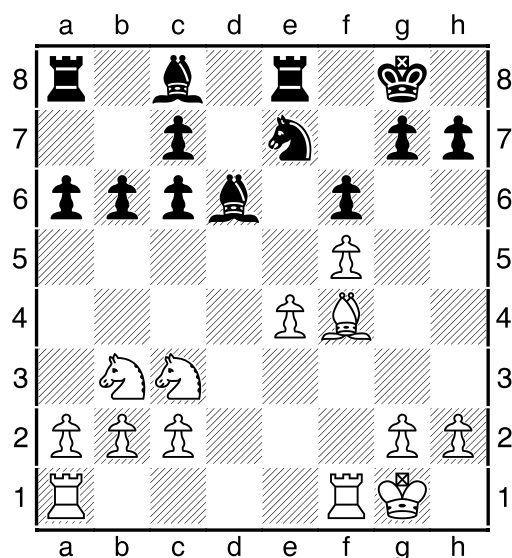
12.f5!

Against all then-respected principles! The movement of the f-pawn gives up its only advantage - the potential passed pawn on the kingside. 'The careless progression' also leaves Black with the important central e5-square. But E.Lasker had foreseen a bit more. With this move he achieved three things: he opened the way for his dark-squared bishop; he simultaneously restricted Black's knight that wanted to settle down on g6 (and after a future f5 then ...Ne5); and he also started to built a fort on e6 for the knight, with which he hoped to paralyse all of Black's play.

12...b6

Perhaps passive defence would have been better - 12...Bd7 13.Bf4 Rad8. Black instead chose a plan connected to a counterattack on the e4-pawn, but it is very slow and weakens the critical e6-square.

13.Bf4 (D)



13...Bb7?

After this unfortunate decision, Black finds himself in serious trouble. In principle he is trying to get rid of the doubled pawns, but this time, after the exchange of the pawns, the d6-pawn will turn into an eternal weakness. It would be better to play 13....Bxf4! 14.Rxf4 c5! with an

approximately equal position, but this better move was shown by J.R.Capablanca only after the game!

14.Bxd6 cxd6 15.Nd4 Rad8 16.Ne6 Rd7 17.Rad1 Nc8 18.Rf2 b5 19.Rfd2

White is strengthening the pressure on the d6-pawn.

19...Rde7 20.b4

Preventing the ...c5 move: Black is strategically destroyed.

20...Kf7 21.a3 Ba8?!

The last chance was hidden in the exchange sacrifice - 21...Rxe6 22.fxe6 Rxe6.

22.Kf2 Ra7 23.g4

White is controlling the centre and is moving the play onto the kingside.

23...h6 24.Rd3 a5 25.h4 axb4 26.axb4 Rae7 27.Kf3 Rg8 28.Kf4 g6 29.Rg3 g5+

This last Black move was criticised by commentators (G.Kasparov) but it is a little too late for wise advice: 29...gxf5 30.exf5 d5 31.g5! hxg5 32.hxg5 fxg5 33.Nxg5+ Kf8 34.f6 Ra7 35.Ke5! etc.

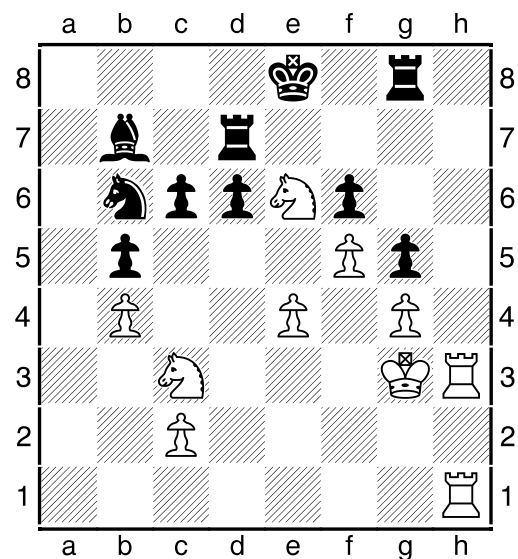
30.Kf3 Nb6 31.hxg5 hxg5 32.Rh3!

E. Lasker was not tempted by the material goods and he rather prevents his opponent's counterplay. After 32.Rxd6 Rh8 and ...Nc4.

32...Rd7 33.Kg3

The preparation of the end.

33...Ke8 34.Rdh1 Bb7 (D)



35.e5!

A full 23 moves after 12.f5, White's e-pawn manages to progress! With the e5 move White clears a square for his other, less-active, knight.

35...Qxe5 36.Ne4 Nd5 37.N6c5 Bc8

38.Nxd7 Bxd7 39.Rh7 Rf8 40.Ra1 Kd8

41.Ra8+ Bc8 42.Nc5

1-0

Complete Control Over the Centre

Let's have a look at yet another classical example on the theme of complete control of the centre. In the game, White voluntarily gave up the centre - without even thinking of trying to attack it.

Black firstly gains control over the centre and later on also over the both wings. White has no choice but to wait and play without any plan due to his very passive position.

□ **Lisitsin Georgy**

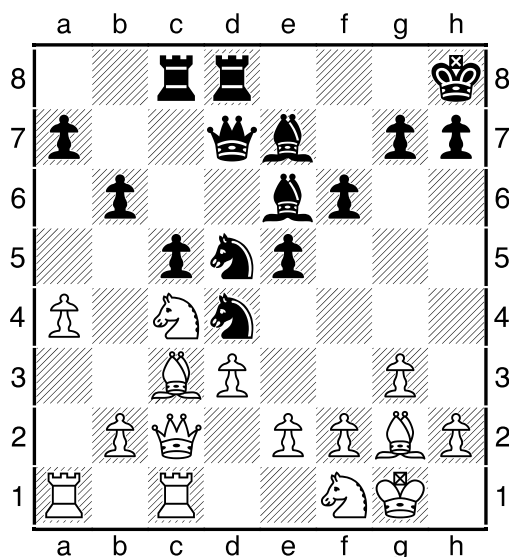
■ **Botvinnik Mikhail**

A30 Leningrad 1932

1.Nf3 c5 2.c4 Nf6 3.g3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5
5.Bg2 Nc6 6.0-0 e5 7.d3 Be7 8.Nbd2 0-0
9.Nc4 f6 10.Be3 Be6 11.a4

With this move White consolidates his knight, but he has also weakened himself on the queenside.

11...Qd7 12.Qd2 b6 13.Rfc1 Rac8 14.Qd1
Kh8 15.Bd2 Rfd8 16.Qb3 Nc7 17.Bc3 Rb8
18.Qc2 Nd5 19.Nfd2 Rbc8 20.Nf1 Nd4! (D)



We have seen that White is moving the pieces without any real purpose - his manoeuvres with the queen prove that he has no appropriate strategic plan. In the meantime Black's plan is clear and concrete: with the planned move of his knight to d4 he wants to force the opponent to take his knight to d4 and afterwards Black could begin to exert pressure on the e-file.

21.Qd1 Bg4 22.Bxd4

It is difficult for White to play the e3 move, because this would decisively weaken his d3-pawn. The concentration of Black's pieces in the centre is so strong that it does not allow White to start any counterplay.

22...exd4 23.Qd2 Bf8

Opening access to the e-file.

24.Re1 Re8 25.h4 Bh3 26.Bf3 Re7 27.Nh2
Rce8 28.Kh1 Be6 29.b3 Nb4 30.Bg2 Bd5
31.Nf3 Rf7

Black wants to bring his f8-bishop into play.
32.Kh2 Bd6 33.Bh3 Qd8 34.Rab1 Rfe7
35.Ng1 Bc7 36.Na3 Bb7 37.Bg2 Bxg2
38.Kxg2 Nd5 39.Nc2 Qd6

A known manoeuvre: after gaining control of the centre, the play is moved to the wing. After 40...Ne3 there is no defence.

40.Na3 Ne3+ 41.Kh1 Ng4 42.Qf4

If 42.Rf1 then 42...Qd5+, or if 42.Kg2 Nxf2!.

42...Qxf4 43.gxf4 Nxf2+ 44.Kg2 Nxd3
0-1



Exchanges in the Centre

A very important element, one that we will come across constantly, represents the exchanges in the centre. When to exchange, what to exchange and how to exchange?

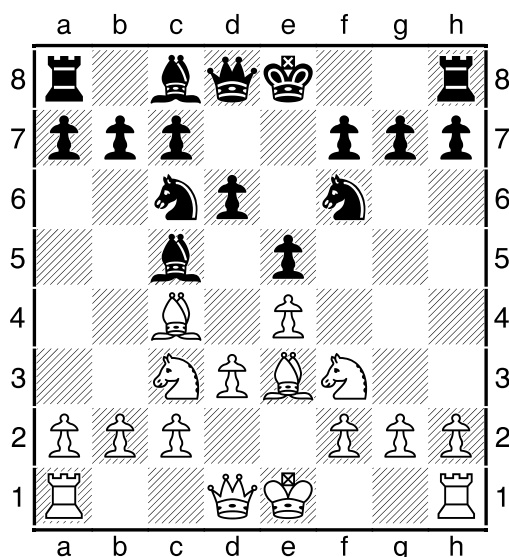
Exchanges in the centre usually transform the type of centre or even change the entire pawn structure.

Therefore it is very important to know different kinds of positions, and to pick the most appropriate one for us from among them.

Example 1

C50

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.d3 d6 6.Be3 (D)

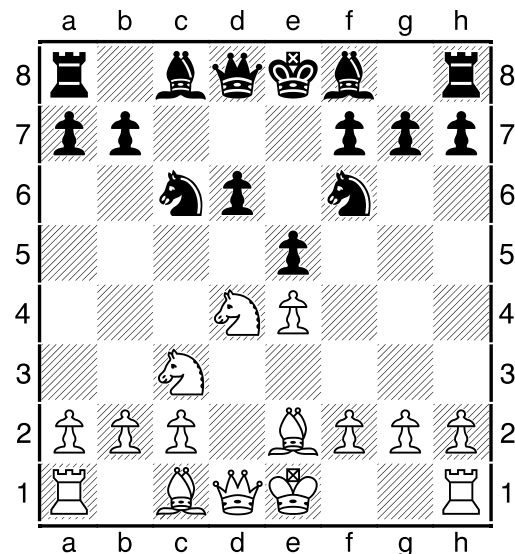


The exchange **6...Bxe3** is not recommended. Black manages to create double pawns for White, but with that he made his position in the centre stronger: White gained control over the d4-square and the e4-square is not in danger, so help from the f-pawn does not make a difference. Besides this, White has also gained the open f-file, which he will use later on for his plans.

Example 2

B58

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 d6 6.Be2 e5 (D)



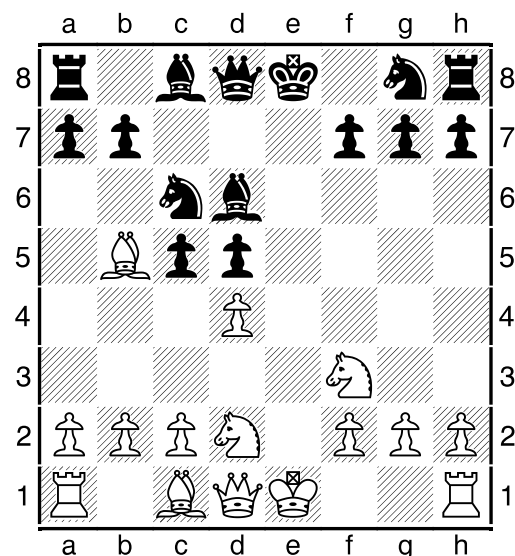
The exchange **7.Nxc6** is not recommended. The pawns are as a rule stronger the closer they are to the centre, and White only helps Black with this exchange. The b-pawn (after **7...bxc6**) moves a file closer to the centre, and with it the d6-pawn gained a helper with which to advance at some point.

Exchanges are good for a player if they free a square for certain pieces.

Example 3

C09

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 c5 4.exd5 exd5 5.Ngf3 Nc6 6.Bb5 Bd6 (D)



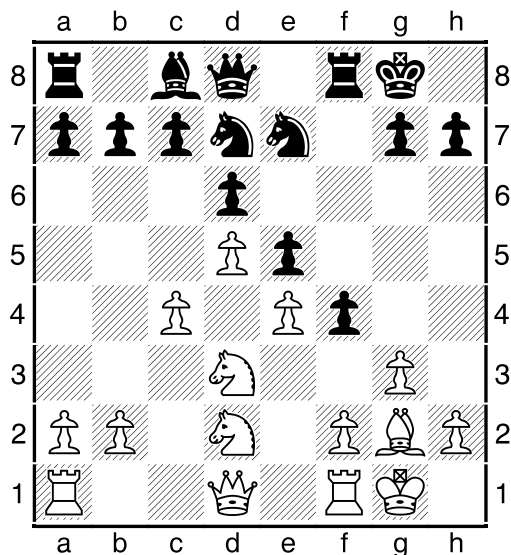
The exchange **7.dxc5** is good for White, which frees the d4-square for his knight.

□ **Alatortsev Vladimir**

■ **Levenfish Grigory**

E11 Tbilisi 1937

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 Bb4+ 4.Bd2 Bxd2+
5.Nxd2 Nc6 6.Ng3 d6 7.Bg2 e5 8.d5 Ne7
9.0-0 0-0 10.e4 Nd7 11.Ne1 f5 12.Nd3 f4
(D)



13.gxf4?

A serious mistake. Who knows what White was counting on? Black, of course, took with the pawn and so freed the e5-square - on which he will later put his knight or some other piece.

13...exf4 14.Nf3 Ng6 15.Rc1 Qe7 16.Re1 Nde5 17.Nfxe5 Nxe5 18.f3 b6 19.Nxe5 Qxe5 20.Qd2 Bd7 21.Qc3 Rfe8 22.Qxe5 Rxe5 23.a3 a5 24.b3 Kf7 25.Kf2 Kf6 26.Ke2 Rh5 27.Rh1 Ke5 28.Kd3 h6 29.h3 Rg5 30.Rh2 Rg3 31.h4 Rg8 32.Ke2 g5 33.hxg5 hxg5 34.Kf2 g4 35.Rh5+ Kd4 36.Rd1+ Kc3 37.Rh7 gxf3 38.Bf1 Kc2 39.Rd3 Bh3 40.Rxf3 Rxf3+ 41.Kxf3 Bxf1 42.Rxc7 Rf8 43.Rc6 Kd3 44.Rxd6 Be2+ 45.Kf2 f3 46.Rh6 Rg8 47.Rh2 Kxe4 48.Rh4+ Kd3 49.Rh2 Rg6
0-1

At the end of the 19th century the foundations for the positional chess school were set by William Steinitz.

His conclusions were revolutionary and their value was even higher, because he was constantly proving them to be correct in his games.

The early understanding about the centre

and statements about the advantage of the player that has his pawn in the centre tortured W.Steinitz.

Later on he understood that not all exchanges in the centre are bad; on the contrary he thought that, even though we might lose some tension, the exchanges could even prove useful - when we get rid of our pawn in the centre we open the way for the rook that will now attack the opponent's pawn on the now semi-open file for example. If this kind of attack is supported by other pieces, it already means a specific system of play.

W.Steinitz also tried out his ideas in practice. In some variations of the 'Spanish Game' he started (with the black pieces) to voluntarily take on d4, passing the space advantage to his opponent but starting to attack the e4-pawn in return.

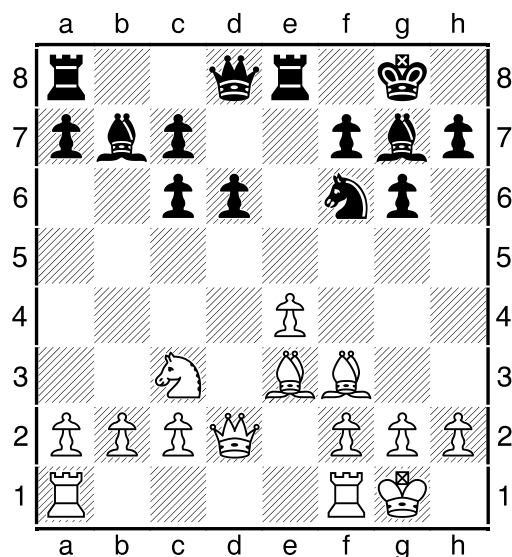
Later on this kind of play was used by many great masters, and the tactic is used in many openings even today.

□ **Spassky Boris**

■ **Larsen Bent**

C46 Malmö 1968

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 g6 4.d4 exd4
5.Nxd4 Bg7 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Be2 0-0 8.0-0 Re8
9.Nxc6 bxc6 10.Bf3 Bb7 11.Qd2 d6 (D)



You can see before you an example of the previously described way of playing. Black took on d4 and made peace with White's knight in the centre - and also with the apparently passive position in this part of the

board. Black's d6-pawn is currently managing to stop White's e4-pawn and Black's pawns are so compactly connected that there is no visible way in which White can attack them before the endgame. This is why White would like to see the e5 move happen, to clear the position in the centre, but there is no possible way to force Black to allow it. Meanwhile Black will strengthen his pressure on the e4-pawn, along the e-file on which he will place his heavy pieces, and also with the help of his minor pieces.

12.Bh6?

It would have been better if White had played 12.Bg5 to try to disable Black's attack on the e4-pawn.

12...Bxh6 13.Qxh6 Re5 14.Rae1 c5 15.Re3 Qe7 16.Rfe1 Re8

After only a few moves, the position has drastically changed: all Black's pieces are actively attacking the e4-pawn and on the contrary White's pieces are playing a defensive role. There is no way for Black to bring yet another piece into action, which is why he needs to get rid of one of the opponent's defensive pieces. The most vulnerable is the bishop on f3, and it can be disturbed by the ...g5-g4 move.

17.h4 Qe6 18.Qf4 Kg7 19.b3 h6 20.Qg3 Qd7 21.Qf4 R8e7 22.Nd5?

White lost his nerve and the result will show up in the endgame - with the bishop on f3 restricted by his own pawns, against Black's powerful knight on e5 that controls everything.

22...Bxd5 23.exd5 g5 24.hxg5 hxg5 25.Qg3 Qf5 26.c4 Rxe3 27.fxe3 Re5 28.Bd1 Qd3 29.Bf3 Qc3 30.Kh2 a5 31.Kh1 Kf8 32.Rf1 Qxe3 33.Qh3 Kg7 34.g3 Qd4 35.g4 a4 36.Bd1 Re3 37.Qg2 Rd3 38.Be2 Rd2 39.bxa4 Qe5 0-1

Black players quickly realised that the tactic is a sly one and they looked for numerous other variations where they could give up the centre.

In the next example Black took with his d5-pawn on e4, leaving White with his d4-pawn. Black later started to restrict it with the ...c6 and ...e6 moves and then started applying pressure.

□ Klovans Janis

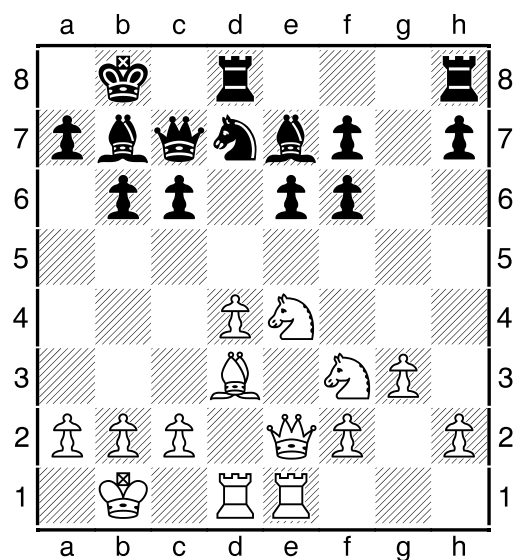
■ Chistiakov Alexander

C13 Kharkov 1967

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 dxe4 5.Nxe4 Be7 6.Bxf6 gxf6 7.Nf3 b6 8.Bd3 Bb7 9.Qe2 Nd7 10.0-0-0 c6

Black has set his 'blockade': he is not worried about White's slight advantage due to the almost complete blockage in the centre, where White will not be able to produce a real threat for some time.

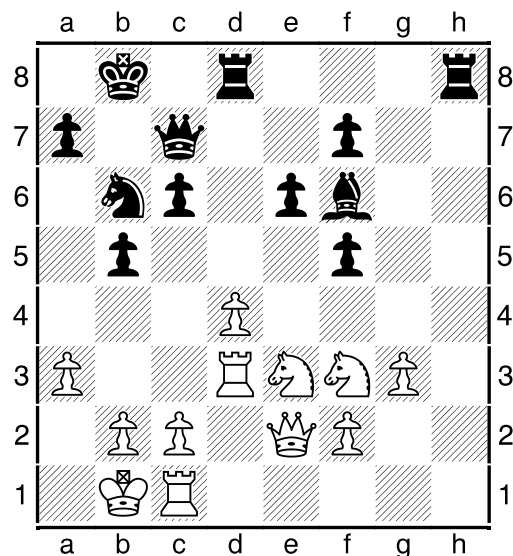
11.Rhe1 Qc7 12.Kb1 0-0-0 13.g3 Kb8 (D)



14.Ba6?

We have seen a similar bad exchange, only on the other wing in the previous game.

14...Bxa6 15.Qxa6 Rhg8 16.Qe2 f5 17.Ned2 h5 18.Nc4 h4 19.Rd3 hxg3 20.hxg3 Rh8 21.a3 Bf6 22.Red1 b5 23.Ne3 Nb6 24.Rc1 (D)



Black has reached an almost ideal position.

He is putting pressure on the d4-pawn and White cannot begin any central action himself. The d4-pawn is fixed on the black square and creates around itself a complex of bad light-squares that will become the targets for Black's development. Of course Black will have to show something more if he wants to win; active plans connected with the advancement of pawns on both wings.

24...f4 25.Ng4 Bg7 26.Nge5 fxg3 27.Qe4 Rd6 28.fxg3 f6 29.Ng6 Re8 30.Rh1 Nd5 31.g4 Qf7 32.Rh7 Rd7 33.Rd1 Ka8 34.Re1 Rb7 35.Rhh1 b4 36.axb4 Rxb4 37.Kc1 Qb7 38.b3 Qa6 39.Kb2 Qc4 40.Re3 Nxe3

And Black is an exchange up, and with this advantage he won the game.

41.Qxe3 Rb7 42.Rh5 e5 43.Ngh4 Reb8 44.Nf5 Bf8 45.Nd2 Qa4 46.Rh3 Rb6 47.Qxe5 Ra6 48.Kc3 Qxg4 49.Qd3 Qb4+ 50.Kb2 Qa3+ 51.Kc3 Qa1+ 0-1

In the years that followed the Second World War, a similar idea (only an improved one) was launched in the world of the masters by the young Soviet Grandmasters, starting with David Bronstein and Efim Geller. We are of course talking about the 'King's Indian Defence' and about the variations that include capturing on d4. Later, many new variations evolved on this theme.

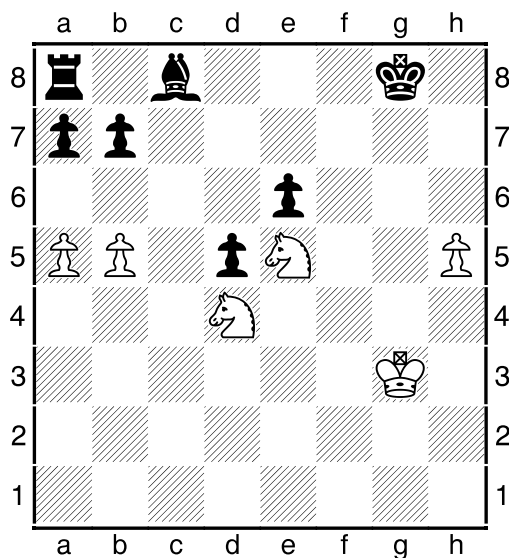
The Blockade of the Centre with Pieces

A very efficient, but also very hard to realise, method of play, is the blockade of the centre with the pieces.

What we have in mind are those positions where we move our pawns away from the centre and replace them with pieces, pieces which are able to put more pressure on the opponent from their squares in the centre.

When we talk about that we cannot ignore Aron Nimzowitsch, the father of teaching about the blockade and its consequences.

Let's have a look at a blocked position with which A.Nimzowitsch enchanted millions of other chess players from different nations:



Even though White has less material (there are only a few pieces left on the board and White has no special threats) he is the one who is trying to win!

The position is, of course, not real and is a figment of A.Nimzowitsch's imagination. But his ideas were also shown in practice.

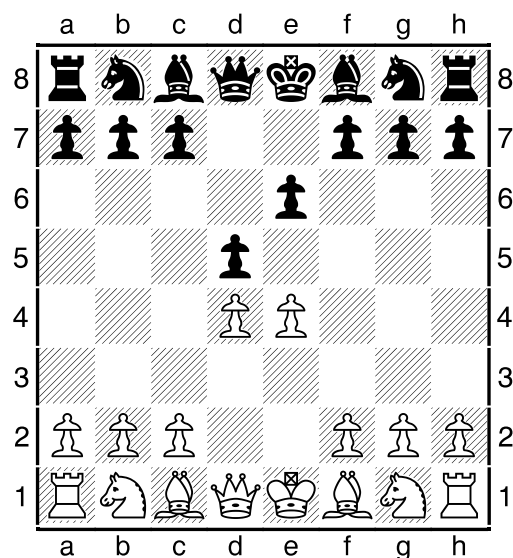


□ Nimzowitsch Aron

■ Salwe Georg

C02 Carlsbad 1911

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 (D)



3.e5

The 'Advance Variation' of the 'French Defence' was one of A.Nimzowitsch's favourites. The continuation is quite simple: Black will try to destroy White's centre. A.Nimzowitsch managed to prove that White - contrary to what was believed at that time - is able to play against this strategy also with the pieces and not only with his pawns.

3...c5 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nf3 Qb6 6.Bd3

Nowadays they more often play 6.Be2, or 6.a3 which prepares the next blockade on the queenside. It is interesting that Black can also, after 6.a3, decide on blocking the position with 6...c4!? - and afterwards follows a complicated strategic battle.

6...Bd7

Preparing the capture on d4, which was not possible immediately due to 6...cxd4 7.cxd4 Nxd4? 8.Nxd4 Qxd4 9.Bb5+.

7.Qxc5!? Bxc5 8.0-0 f6

Black follows his strategy and hopes that he will somehow manage to open the centre. If he is able to play the ...e5 move, his bishop will come into play and all his worries would be forgotten. White will face him in the centre with his pieces.

9.b4!

A good strategy and one which leaves White with complete control over the dark-squares (c5, d4, e5).

9...Be7 10.Bf4

An additional defence of the decisive e5-square.

10...fxe5 11.Nxe5 Nxe5 12.Bxe5

A.Nimzowitsch: 'The new blockage piece (the bishop) does not do its job any worse than the knight'.

12...Nf6

12...Bf6? - an attempt to exchange the unpleasant bishops - is not possible: 13.Qh5 g6 14.Bxg6 hxg6 15.Qxg6+ Ke7 16.Bxf6+ Nxf6 17.Qg7+ +-.

13.Nd2

A.Nimzowitsch: 'Trying to help the blockage piece!' Play concentrated on winning the h7-pawn with 13.Qc2? 0-0! 14.Bxf6 Rxf6 15.Bxh7+ Kh8 16.Bxg6 e5! - + would be completely wrong, because it would simply liberate Black.

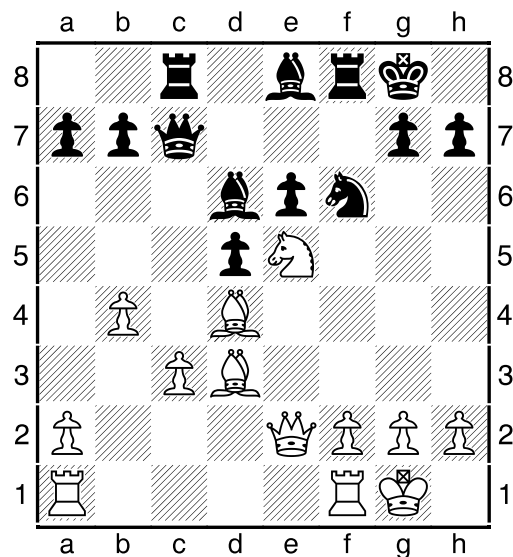
13...0-0 14.Nf3 Bd6 15.Qe2 Rac8 16.Bd4 Qc7 17.Ne5

A.Nimzowitsch: 'Now White is controlling both central squares.'

17...Be8 (D)

Black opened both files for his rooks (c and f), but it does him no good. White has control of the centre, but it is still not enough to win the game. Attention: when we have the advantage in the centre we need to

move play to the wing to finish the task.



18.Rae1 Bxe5 19.Bxe5 Qc6 20.Bd4 Bd7 21.Qc2!

The queen is being activated in order to attack Black's king.

21...Rf7 22.Re3!

The remaining inactive pieces head into battle.

22...b6 23.Rg3 Kh8 24.Bxh7! e5

24.. .Nxb7 25.Qg6! +-.

25.Bg6 Re7 26.Re1 Qd6 27.Be3 d4 28.Bg5 Rxc3 29.Rxc3 dxc3 30.Qxc3 Kg8 31.a3 Kf8 32.Bh4 Be8 33.Bf5 Qd4 34.Qxd4 exd4 35.Rxe7 Kxe7 36.Bd3 Kd6 37.Bxf6 gxf6 38.Kf1 Bc6 39.h4

1-0

The Types of Centres

In the following chapters we will get to know some basic types of centres and recommended methods of play for both sides. All this will be shown with the help of games from the greatest chess masters: the goal is for you to see that they too spend a lot of time thinking about this most important part of the board.

The Mobile Centre

It is very easy to describe the mobile centre: we talk about the mobile centre when one of the players has some pawns in the centre (at least two) and the other player has only one or even none. For example: e4/d4: e6 or e4/d4: d6 or d4/e5/f5: c6/f7 or e3: d5/e5/f5.

We talk about mobility, because one of the attacker's pawns is able to move freely due to not having any pawns in front of him. These kinds of positions are usually very tense, and the value of every move is very high.

Every tempo can be decisive for the end result of the game. There is no room here for slow manoeuvres, for standing still, but only for a concrete action supported by accurate calculations.

It is clear that the player with the mobile centre has the positional advantage. The pawns (the two pawns) put pressure on the opponent and take away his space. The attacker will try to advance with his three pawns as far as he can and so push his opponent into an even more defensive role - and also fix his pieces. After the advance of the mobile pawns there are two realistic effects:

1. The attacker will create a passed pawn: e5/d5: c7/f7 by 1.e6 or 1.d6)
2. The attacker will increase his pressure on the opponent's pieces and will later move the play to the wing.

The defender's play is also seemingly quite simple. His first wish will be to attack the opponent's centre in order to blockade or even destroy it. To achieve the blockade he needs to undermine the centre, but he needs to be careful.

And yet another very important rule: when there is an active, mobile centre, the defender needs to forget about any kind of wing activity!

Ignoring the Centre

To start with, let's see how dangerous the mobile centre can be - and how catastrophic the consequences can be - if you play incautiously by ignoring the centre. In the 'Giuoco Pianissimo' (Italian Game) an incautious beginner could end up like this:

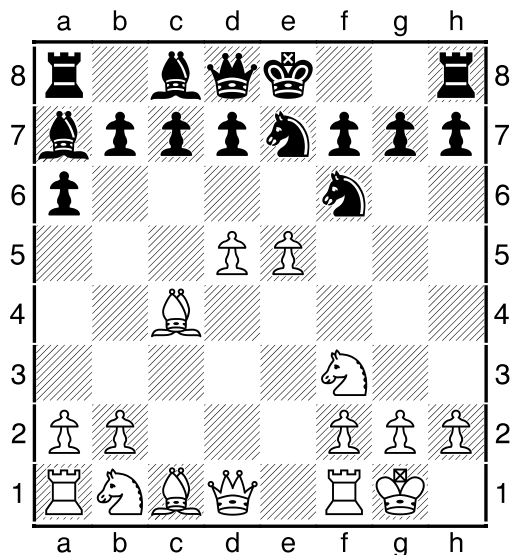
Example 4

C54

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 Nf6 5.0-0 a6?

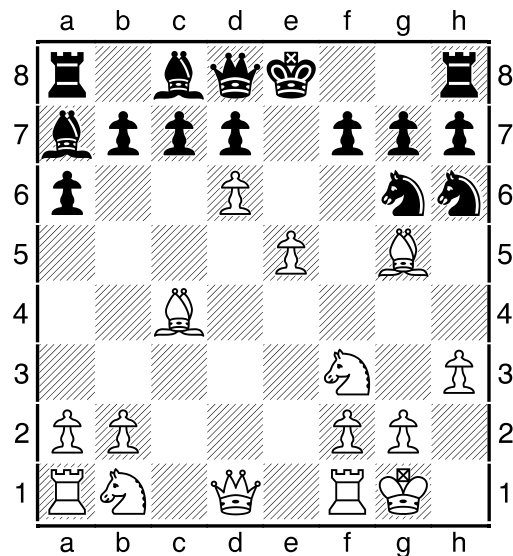
As previously mentioned, an incautious move. Black needed to bravely take on e4.

6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 Ba7 8.d5 Ne7 9.e5! (D)



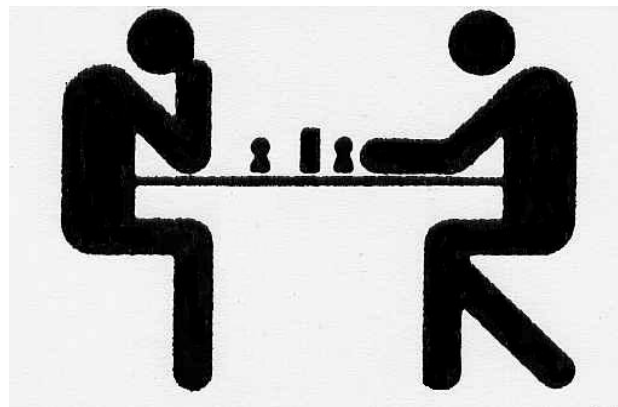
White's pawns are frightening and they will help to open the e-file. They already cause the black king great worry. Such play by Black is not recommended at all and this is a good example of how not to play!

9...Ng4 10.h3 Nh6 11.d6 Ng6 (D)



12.Bg5 f6 13.exf6 gxf6 14.Re1+ Kf8
15.Bxh6 #
1-0

An instructive game - I hope that it is clear now why a mobile centre must not be ignored!



The Domination of the Mobile Centre

We got to know the classical mobile pawn centre in the game between M.Botvinnik and J.R.Capablanca. White's pawns were advanced gradually, pushing Black's pieces away from the centre and into a purely defensive role.

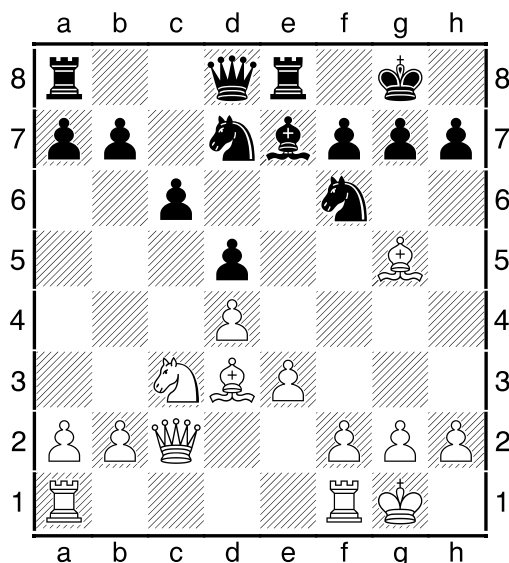
When White gained enough space, a mating attack followed. In that game the Cuban managed to defend thoughtfully, but generally the games end with more-or-less the same result.

□ Polgar Susan

■ Boensch Uwe

D36 Dortmund 1990

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5
5.Bg5 c6 6.e3 Be7 7.Qc2 Bg4 8.Nge2 Bxe2
9.Bxe2 Nbd7 10.0-0 0-0 11.Bd3 Re8 (D)



The 'Exchange Variation' in the 'Queen's Gambit', as a rule, offers White a potential mobile centre. White's e-pawn is not facing any other pawns and that is why preparation of the e4 thrust is one of the basic plans in this position.

12.f3

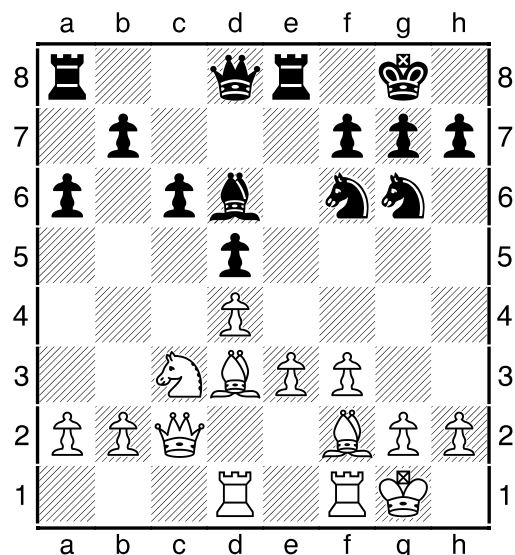
As planned, though White will not be rushing with the e4 move. Before that, safety must be taken care of, and above all the d4-pawn needs to be strengthened as it will turn into a weakness after e4 and the reply dxe4. Due to this, White will first move her bishop to f2 and then play the 'mysterious' Rad1

move.

12...Nf8

Black decides to wait. The only possible solution to prevent White's plan was the ...c5 move, but Black obviously did not like the position after d4xc5.

13.Bh4 a6 14.Rad1 Ng6 15.Bf2 Bd6 (D)



Now everything is prepared and there is no more reason to wait.

16.e4 dxe4

Black evidently has no choice but to take. Otherwise there would follow 17.e5 and Black's pieces would be pushed into a defensive role.

17.fxe4

You can see here a classical position with a mobile centre.

17...Ng4 18.e5

A very important moment. Every single step that is made by one of the mobile pawns in the centre can be decisive and will mark the following course of play. With the 18.e5 move, which was, of course, foreseen by White, S.Polgar decides to attack the king - and for that she was willing to sacrifice the dark-squared bishop (which did not have a decent place to move to anyway). The e5 move is also important for another reason: the advance of one of the two pawns creates a hole into which the opponent can place one of his pieces. After 18.e5 this hole is located on the d5-square (after the possible

d5-move, the hole would be placed on e5). These holes are the reason why the movements of the pawns can be complicated and one must think about them very carefully.

18...Bc7

Worse is 18...Nxf2? because of 19.Qxf2.

19.Bc4 Re7 20.Kh1

The withdrawal of the king from the dangerous diagonal is also a preparation for withdrawal of the bishop with Bg1. Therefore it is time for Black to take.

20...Nxf2+ 21.Qxf2 Qd7 22.Ne4

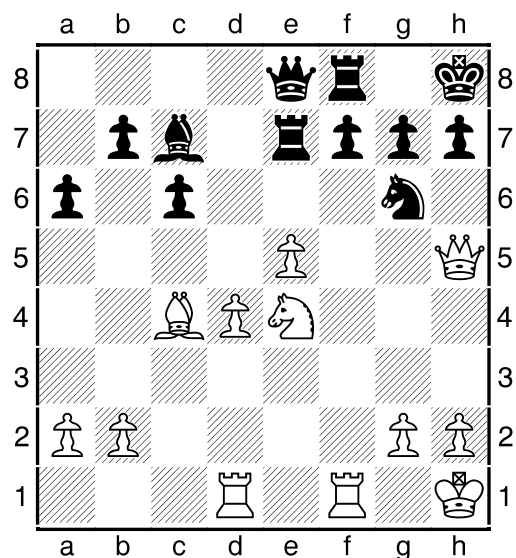
The attack is joined by the knight.

22...Rf8 23.Qf3

It is hard to lose a game with only one weakness. White is attacking the f7-square and Black is suitably defending it. But White's space advantage, because of the e5-pawn, makes it possible for White to create another weakness on the kingside. It will be difficult for Black to defend two weaknesses in such a pressed position! So, where should White attack? On the h7-square, of course!

23...Qe8 24.Qh5 Kh8 (D)

Really necessary - the threat was 25.Nf6+ gxf6 26.exf6 Re3 27.Qh6.



25.Rd3!

White's final piece joins the attack.

25...h6 26.Rdf3 Nxe5

Black is completely helpless and is trying to somehow complicate matters, but the former Women's World Champion will be careful till the end.

27.Qxe5 Rxe5 28.Rxf7 Rxf7 29.Qxf7

Black is pinned all over the place: 29.Qf7 Qf7 30.Rf7 Re4 31.Rf8 Kh7 32.Bd3 +-.
1-0

The Feeling for Time

For appropriate play in positions with a mobile centre, a good feeling for time is needed - and also for the preservation of the initiative.

One of the best masters of this kind of play was Alexander Alekhine. Let us see how he, with appropriate usage of tempos and consistent pressure, took down the American, Frank Marshall.

□ **Alekhine Alexander**

■ **Marshall Frank James**

D06 Baden-Baden 1925

1.d4 d5 2.c4 Nf6?

This move is bad, because White can build a strong pawn centre with no obstacles.

3.cxd5 Nxd5 4.e4 Nf6 5.Bd3 e5!?

The right choice of strategy - Black starts to undermine White's centre. The sacrifice of the pawn is only temporary, because White cannot hold on to it..

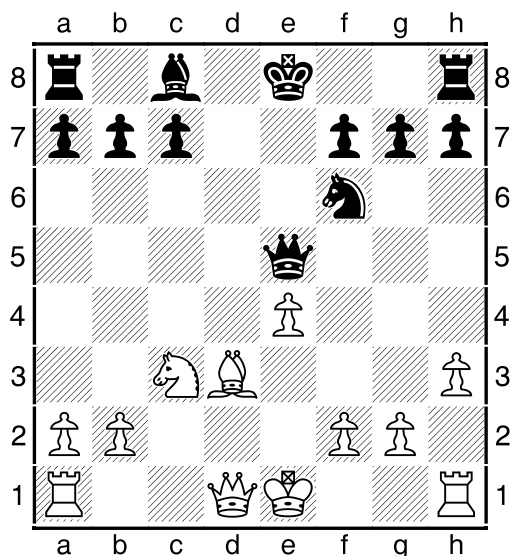
6.dxe5 Ng4 7.Nf3

Worse is 7.f4 Bc5 8.Nh3 Qh4+, then ...0-0 and Black would have great compensation with his play against White's king.

7...Nc6 8.Bg5!

White is not interested in defending the pawn he gained (8.Bf4 Nb4!?), but rather follows his goal of gaining a mobile centre.

8...Be7 9.Bxe7 Qxe7 10.Nc3 Nxe5 11.Nxe5 Qxe5 12.h3 Nf6 (D)



13.Qd2!

A.Alekhine demonstrates his feeling for dynamics. After the incautious 13.0-0 Black would strike 13...g5!. Now 13...g5 is worse, because White would castle queenside.

13...Bd7 14.Qe3!

And again in great style - this move prevents long castle.

14...Bc6 15.0-0-0 0-0

With opposite-side castling Black is clearly in danger, but he needs to castle sooner or later.

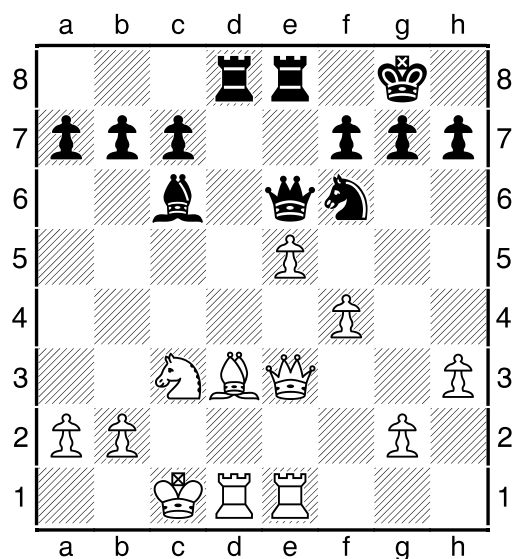
16.f4!

The mobile centre starts to invade Black's territory.

16...Qe6

Or 16...Qa5 17.e5 Nd5 18.Nxd5 Bxd5 19.Bxh7+ and 20.Qd3.

17.e5! Rfe8 18.Rhe1 Rad8 (D)



19.f5! Qe7

First the opponent needs to be forced back, and then follow the attack! The rest of the game is all about the technique of calculating different variations.

20.Qg5 Nd5 21.f6 Qf8 22.Bc4 Nxc3 23.Rxd8 Rxd8 24.fxg7 Nxa2+

If 24...Qe8, then 25.Bxf7+ Kxf7 26.Rf1+ Ke6 27.Rf6+ Kd5 28.Rf8 +-.

25.Kb1 Qe8 26.e6 Be4+ 27.Ka1 f5

27...fxe6 28.Bxe6+ Qxe6 29.Qxd8+ Kxg7 30.Qd4+ and 31.Rxe4.

28.e7+ Rd5 29.Qf6 Qf7 30.e8Q+ 1-0

Passed Pawns in the Centre

The defender faces even more trouble when there are no obstacles in front of the mobile pawns in the centre.

Let's see a classical example of ignoring the mobile pawns in the centre and an example of the complete helplessness when the centre is taken over by the opponent's pawns.

It is very important to have the possibility of undermining them; the possibility to pressure them. When a player has no such ability or possibility of doing so, their position will soon turn into a disastrous one.

□ **Gligoric Svetozar**

■ **Szabo Laszlo**

E42 Helsinki 1952

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 c5 5.Nge2 d5 6.a3 cxd4 7.exd4 Be7 8.c5

This move reveals White's plans: he wants to play actively on the queenside. The old rule says: 'against an action on the wing you need to strike in the centre!'

8...0-0 9.b4 b6 10.g3 bxc5 11.dxc5

Everything is clear: White thinks that he will get a decisive initiative with quick advancement of the pawns on the queenside; on the contrary Black is not afraid of this progression and in the meantime wants to conquer the centre.

11...a5 12.Rb1 axb4 13.axb4 Nc6 14.Bg2 Rb8 15.Ba3

White chose his plan, but now starts to complicate matters. It is true that the advance brings him no great joy: 15.b5 Bxc5! 16.bxc6 Rxb1 17.Nxb1 Qb6 (or 17...Ng4, with great compensation for the sacrificed piece).

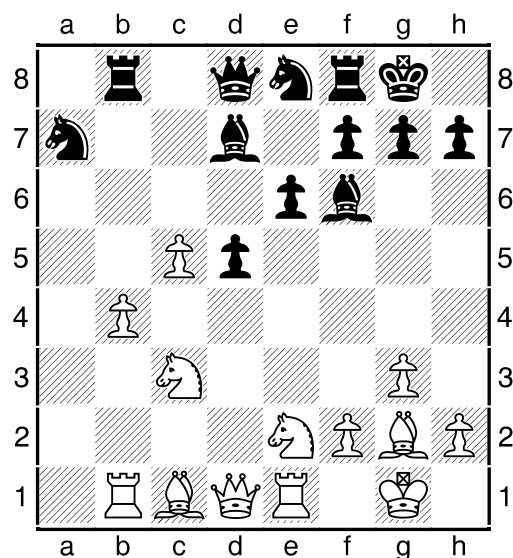
15...Bd7 16.0-0 Na7

Black's play is simple. First he will block any kind of advance by White's pawns and then the rest will take care of itself.

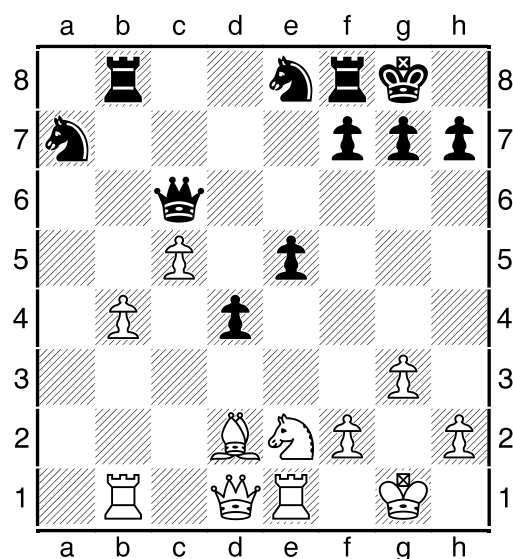
17.Re1 Ne8 18.Bc1 Bf6 (D)

A very interesting position! It is obvious that White voluntarily gave up the central pawns, and he now wants Black to progress with his as far as possible - White's plan would then be to undermine them or place a piece

amidst them. In order to do that he has chosen a very provocative plan, one which is literally inviting Black to advance. The fearless Hungarian took up the challenge.



19.Bf4!? e5 20.Bd2 d4 21.Nd5 Bc6 22.Nxf6+ Qxf6 23.Bxc6 Qxc6 (D)



Next follows the undermining, for which Black is well-prepared.

24.f4 f6!

After the swap on e5 Black's pawns would truly not have the support from the sides, but that kind of support is simply not needed here. White's play is paralysed.

25.Qb3+ Kh8 26.Rf1 Nc7 27.Qc4 Nab5!

An excellent move, which blocks all White's pawns and also defends the d4-pawn. The

...e4 push is in the air.

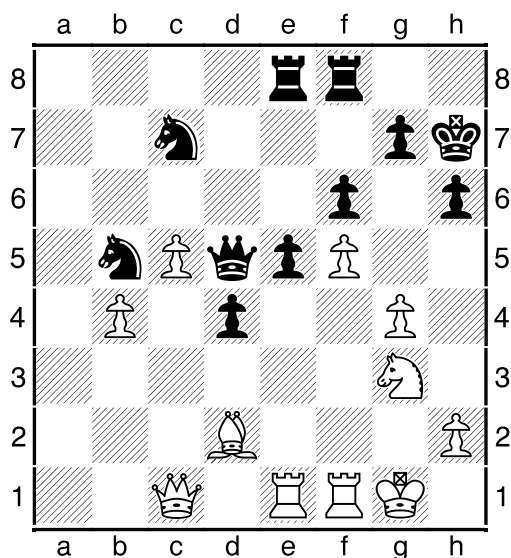
28.Rbe1 h6 29.g4

What else? White has no power on the queenside and he has been defeated in the centre. All he is left with is to try to attack on the kingside. It is wonderful to watch how L.Szabo systematically improves his position, without rushing.

29...Rbe8 30.f5 Qd5

Black offers a transition into the endgame, where White's chances would actually be higher. Despite this, White desired more than just a difficult endgame and so avoids the queen swap.

31.Qc1 Kh7 32.Ng3 (D)



A splendid position! The time has come to start the advance of the pawns. Black of course does not want the Ne4 move to happen, so his manoeuvres are very instructive: a careful advance of the pawns and prevention of a blockade. White is left with only a desperate attack. We know that attacks on the wing can be successful only if you have control over the centre...

32...e4! 33.Bf4 e3 34.Qd1 Qc4 35.h4 Nd5 36.g5 d3!

Moving forward rank-by-rank!

37.Qg4 Rg8 38.Nh5 Re4 39.g6+ Kh8 40.Qg3

And White gave up before Black could even respond.

0-1

We have seen how strong connected pawns in the centre can be when there are no

obstacles in front of them, but we don't see this kind of position too often in tournament practice.

More common are positions where one of the pawns faces an obstacle. In this situation, the attacker (the player with the mobile centre) usually tries to remove the obstacle. Let's see an example!

□ **Bachtiar Arovah**

■ **Bilek Istvan**

A40 Skopje 1972

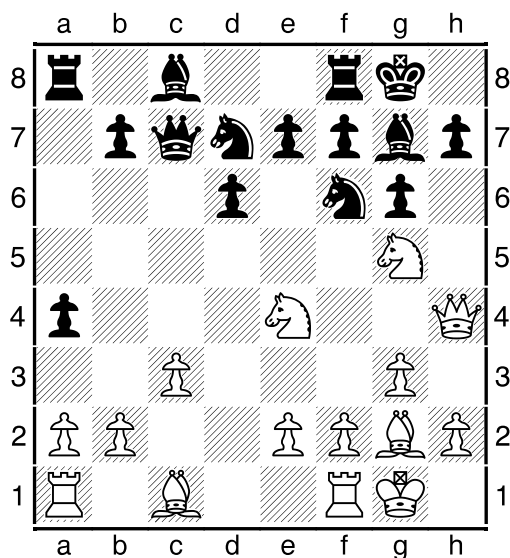
1.d4 g6 2.g3 Bg7 3.Bg2 c5 4.c3 Qb6 5.dxc5

Let's pause here for a second. We have already figured out that pawns have a higher value the closer they are to the centre. So why is it necessary to exchange a central pawn for one on the file next to it?

5...Qxc5 6.Nf3 Nf6 7.0-0 0-0 8.Nbd2 d6 9.Qa4 Nbd7 10.Qh4 Qc7 11.Ng5

The aggressive actions of White seem a little contrived and has no foundation in control over the centre, nor in better development or an appropriate placement of the pieces.

11...a5 12.Nde4 a4! (D)



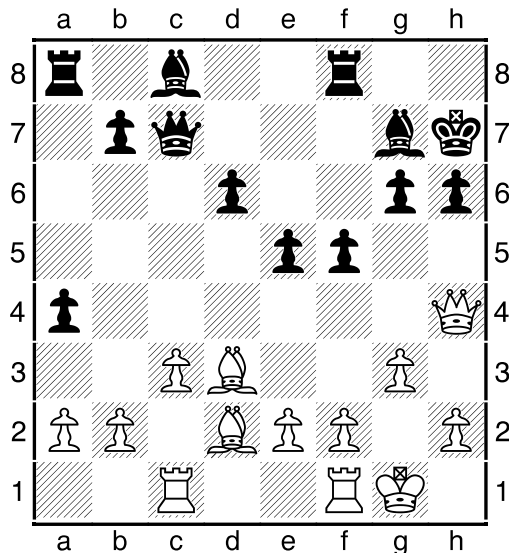
Black wants to force the a3 move, because he is following a basic positional principle: when the opponent only has a bishop left on the board, then the one who places his pawns on squares of the opposite colour to the bishop, has the advantage. Since there are dark-squared bishops on the board, the pawns need to be placed on the light squares!

13.Bd2 h6 14.Nxf6+ Nxf6 15.Ne4 Nxe4

16.Bxe4 Kh7 17.Bd3

If White had understood where the traps in the position were, then he would definitely return his bishop to the g2-square, from where it would be easier to fight against Black's pawns in the centre. White did move his bishop to a seemingly active square, but from there Black's king cannot be attacked.

17...e5 18.Rac1 f5 (D)



19.e4

Black's pawns need to be stopped, but White can only succeed in this temporarily as Black will prepare the ...d5 move.

19...Qf7 20.exf5

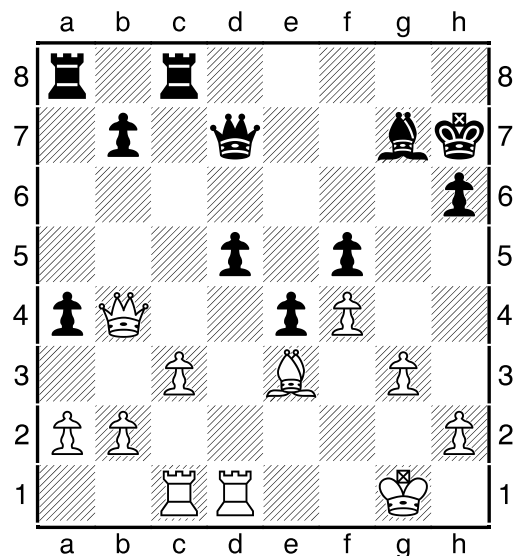
The threat was 20...f4 followed by ...g5.

20...gxf5 21.Qb4 d5

Black has gained full control over the centre and with it is 'stealing' White's space. The attempt at a blockade will not work and even less so the unprincipled swap of the light-squared bishops.

22.f4 e4 23.Bb5 Bd7 24.Be3 Rfc8 25.Bxd7 Qxd7 26.Rfd1 (D)

It looks like White has succeeded. Black's pawns in the centre are blocked and White is threatening Bd4, with the appropriate blockade. He also threatens to undermine the centre with the c4 move. However, Black has evaluated the position deeply:



26...b5!

Preventing the undermining and also indirectly preventing the blockade, due to the threat 27. ...Rc4 forcing 28.Qa3.

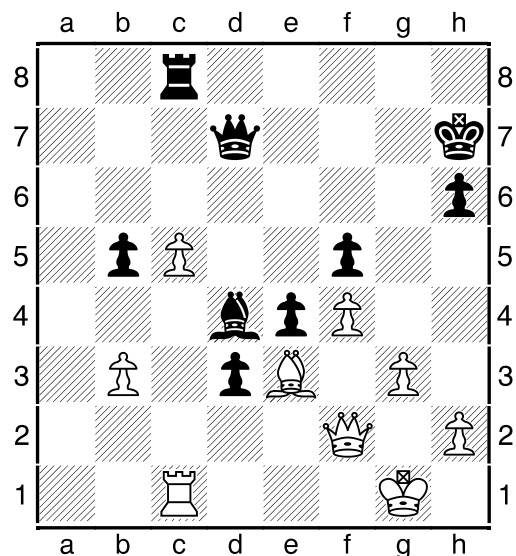
27.b3 axb3 28.axb3 Ra2

The next positional element on the list is - the seventh (second) rank!

29.c4

With this move White frees the way for Black's d-pawn, but in any event it is too late for sage advice. Let's have a look at a few variations: 29.Rd2 Rxd2 30.Bxd2 Bf8 31.Qa6 Bc5 or 29.Re1 Bf8 30.Qd4 Bc5 31.Qxc5 (31.Qe5 Be3) 31...Rxc5 32.Bxc5 b4.

29...d4 30.c5 d3 31.Rd2 Rxd2 32.Qxd2 Bd4 33.Qf2 (D)



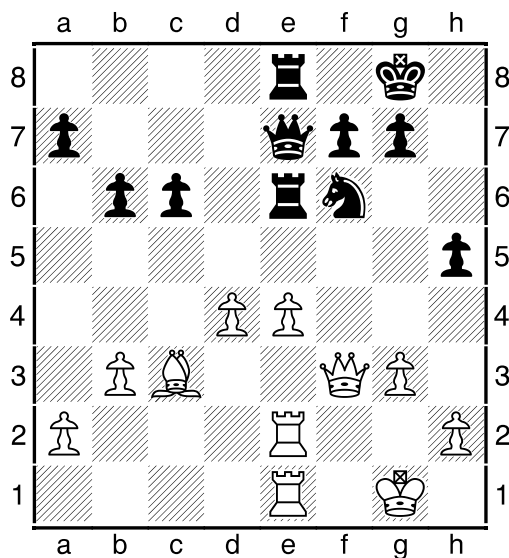
33...Rxc5! 34.Rxc5 Bxc5

Black's central pawns are unstoppable.
0-1

Defensive Play

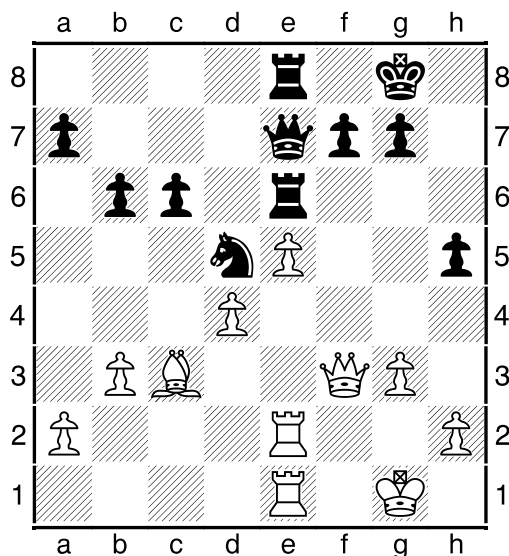
Of course, the defender is not immediately lost when he plays against the mobile centre. It is, however, very important for him to know a lot of possibilities as to how he can defend against this kind of centre. Here we will get to know the basic ones:

1. Pressuring the mobile centre with the pieces.



Black is attacking the e4-pawn, which now has no choice but to advance. Now an empty space is left on d5 for Black's knight and after that it will become:

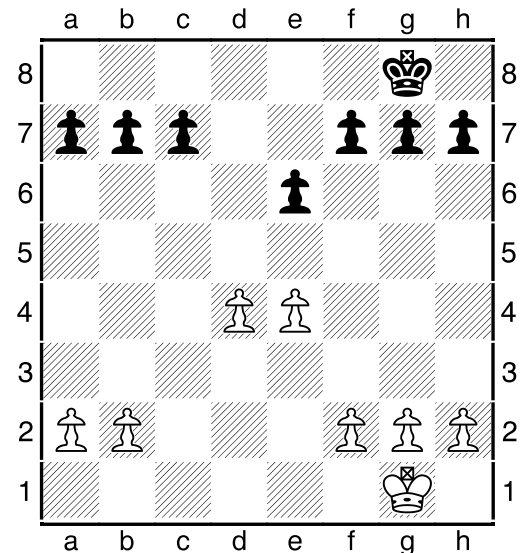
2. A blocked mobile centre.



White is completely helpless in this position. The 'wrong' bishop is left on the

board and White's pawns are standing on the squares of the wrong colour. Black's only has to open the position at the right moment and wait for a favourable outcome.

3. Destroying the centre.



A typical placement of the pawns, where Black undermines White's centre with the move **1...c5!** - there are still other pieces on the board that can help to make the ...c5 move happen.

White is facing a problem: if he waits for the capture on d4, or if he takes on c5, then the mobile centre can easily turn into an (almost) symmetrical centre. The best possibility for him is to advance, and to try to create a passed pawn (1...c5 2.d5 exd5 3.exd5) and after that the positions need to be, once again, evaluated very accurately.

The second possibility of trying to undermine the centre 1...f5 is less recommendable, because White can take, or advance 2.e5, and most of all he can defend the centre with the 2.f3 move.

4. The destruction of the mobile centre.

This represents the most efficient way of fighting against the mobile centre.

And now let us see how previously described possibilities were used in actual games. Pay attention to how cold-blooded the defenders can be, and how self-confident the attackers.

Pressure and the Blockade

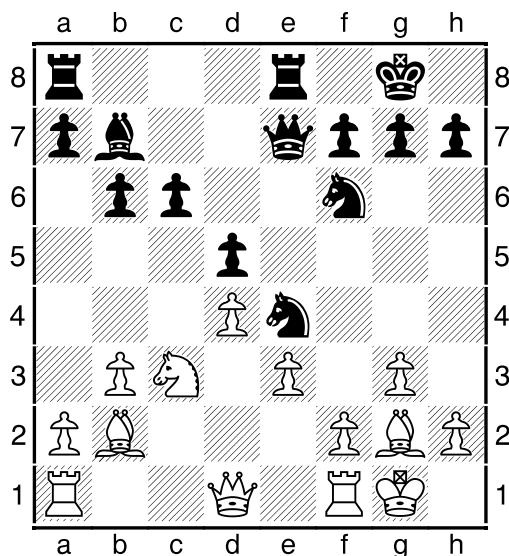
□ Konstantinopolsky Alexander

■ Kotov Alexander

A14 Baku 1945

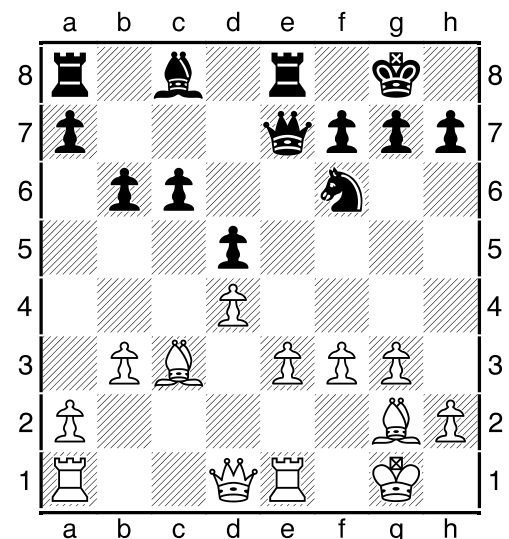
This time we will not be paying any attention to the introductory moves:

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.b3 d5 4.Bb2 Be7 5.g3 0-0 6.Bg2 b6 7.0-0 Nbd7 8.cxd5 exd5 9.Nd4 Bb7 10.Nf5 Re8 11.Nxe7+ Qxe7 12.Nc3 c6 13.d4 Ne4 14.e3 Ndf6 (D)



The decisive battle is going on around the e4-square. White wants to prepare the e4 move, but there are still a few moves missing in the centre before he can hope to realise that. On the contrary, Black is preventing the move and is over-protecting the square with his pieces.

15.Re1 Bc8 16.f3 Nxc3 17.Bxc3 (D)



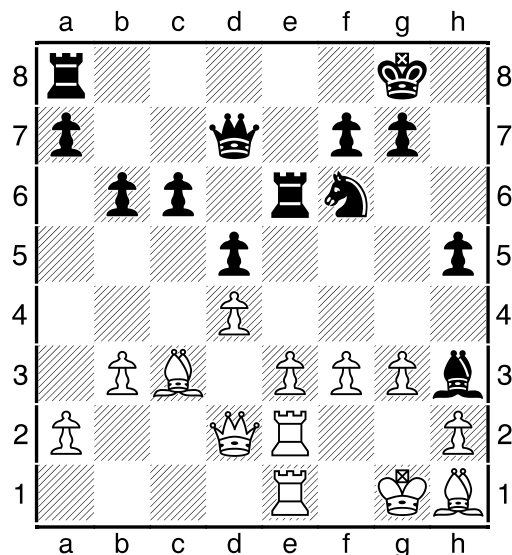
17...Bf5!

We can - since we know the plans of both players - understand the moves that were played. Black is really taking care of the e4-square; he is controlling it in five different ways! So, how can White get what he wants? White will not just give up: he will double his rooks and wait for his opportunity. Black cannot just stand still forever. The rule says: When you gain control over the centre, move the play to the wing!

18.Qd2 h5! 19.Re2 Qd7 20.Rae1 Bh3!?

Maybe it would be better for Black to first double the rooks on the e-file? But that kind of mission is complicated: if he chooses Re6 and Rae8 he covers up his h3-c8 diagonal and after that he will not be able to play ...Bh3. The rook on e7 can also be controlled by the dark-squared bishop (Bb4). Due to these factors, Black decides to play ...Bh3 move first (and with that he inevitably loses some control over the e4-square) and only later will he double his rooks.

21.Bh1 Re6 (D)



22.e4!?

White is in a hurry - this is his only chance to play the e4 move. Both players probably accurately studied the forced outcome of this thrust.

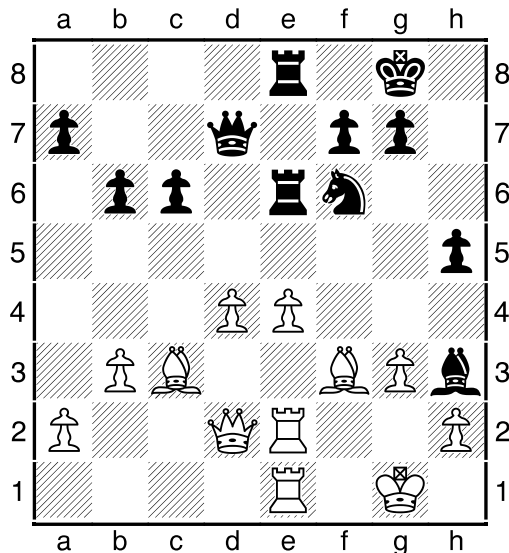
22...dxe4 23.fxe4 Rae8

Black's strategy is the right one, because he

will start to put pressure on the mobile centre with his pieces. His wish is for White to advance one of his pawns, and if possible Black wants him to do that with the e5 move because after this the d5- and f5-squares would be weak.

24.Bf3 (D)

This move is logical because the threat was 24...Bg4 25.Re3 Qe7 26.Qc2 Nd5.



24...Bg4!

A move that 'plays itself'. Black is getting rid of the defender of the critical square, because with the exchange he will force the e5 move and with that the transition to a superior endgame with a knight against the dark-squared bishop.

25.Qf4 Bxf3 26.Qxf3 Qe7 27.e5

This position is already familiar to us. Black has realised his goal and now follows the technical part of the game.

27...Nd5 28.Bd2 Qa3

White's centre is blocked and Black moves play to the wing. However the commentators suggested the 28...h4 move first, followed by the penetration with the queen.

29.Rf2 f6 30.Qxh5 Qxa2 31.Ref1 Qxb3 32.Qg6 R8e7

Because of his impatient play, Black made it possible for White to complicate the position. Bad was 32...fxe5, because of 33.Rf8+ Rxf8 34.Qxe6+ Kh7 35.Rxf8 Qd1+ 36.Rf1, which is why Black needs to be careful.

33.Bg5 Rf7 34.exf6 Qc4 35.Bh6 Rxf6 36.Rxf6 Nxf6 37.Bxg7 Qxd4+ 38.Rf2 Rxf7 39.Qxf6 Qxf6 40.Rxf6

Black has managed to curtail White's activity, made some exchanges and has transposed to an unusual rook endgame a pawn up.

40...Rc7 41.Rd6 a5 42.Rd8+ Kf7 43.Ra8 Ke6 44.Kf2 c5 45.Ke3 Kd5 46.Rb8 Rc6 47.h4 c4 48.Kd2 Kc5 49.h5 Kb4 50.Rg8 b5 51.Rg6 Rc5 52.g4 Kb3 53.Re6 c3+ 54.Kc1 Rc4 55.Re3 b4 56.Re1 Rxf4 57.Rh1 Rg2 58.Kb1 Rb2+ 0-1

The Destruction of the Mobile Centre

It is even better if the defender manages to destroy the mobile centre. In order to do so he will use moves from the flank - or even sacrifices, as in the following delightful miniature:

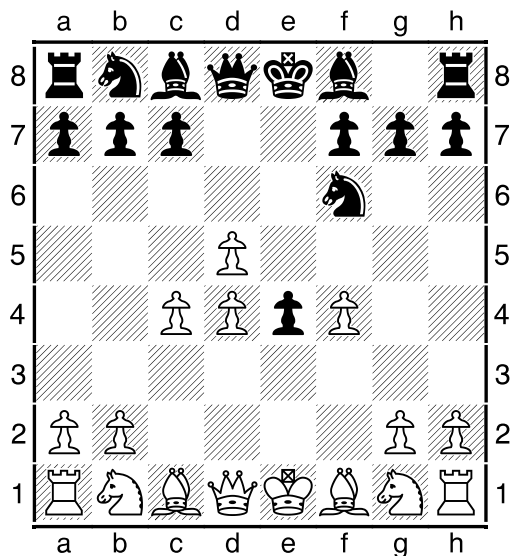
□ Shevcov Vitaly

■ Golovko Yury

C32 Soviet Union 1968

1.e4 e5 2.f4

The 'King's Gambit' is an opening in which the battle for the centre takes place from the very start of the game. White, already with his second move - the gambit move, tries to destroy Black's centre. Black faces the decision whether or not to accept the gambit (and use one of the known defensive techniques in order to play against the mobile centre) or make his own sacrifice and to try to create some tension in the centre... 2...d5 3.exd5 e4 4.d4 Nf6 5.c4 (D)



White is trying to keep his powerful, mobile mass of pawns in the centre, but he is forgetting about development and the safety of his king.

5...b5!

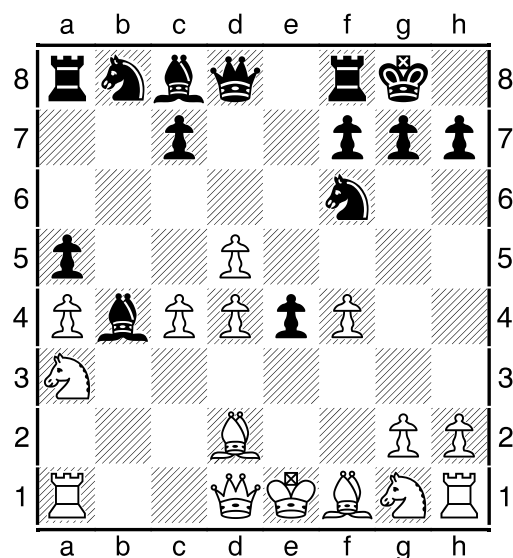
Black is back in action - the systematic breaking of White's centre is starting. The e4-pawn is representing a huge obstacle for

White's development. And now it is clear that White should have started to break Black's centre in the fourth move with the 4.d3 move.

6.b3 Bb4+ 7.Bd2 a5!

Continuing to put pressure on White's centre, which is hard to believe. However: after the incautious 8.a3 would follow 8...Bd2 9.Nd2 a4! and White's pawn-chain breaks.

8.a4 bxc4 9.bxc4 0-0 10.Na3 (D)



White has no really good moves to play, while on the contrary Black continues with his plan.

10...c6!

A new undermining.

11.Nc2 e3!

Black's advantage is already so huge that he is already able to force matters. Not working now is 12.Ne3 Re8 and White has no choice left:

12.Bxb4 axb4 13.Be2

The pawns are untouchable because White can be attacked on the a5-e1 diagonal or on the e-file. Next follows an efficient end to the game.

13...Re8 14.Kf1 b3 15.Ne1 Ne4 16.Nd3 Nd2+ 17.Ke1 Qa5 18.g4 Ba6 19.Rc1 cxd5 0-1

The Undermining of the Mobile Centre

In chess the one that we will most likely and often come across features White's mobile centre with the d4 - e4 pawns. The pawns are just screaming for moves from the sides such as ...c5 or ...f5.

The placement of the pieces is important, besides the placement of the pawns - especially the ones that help to defend the centre.

If White's pawn already stands on the c4-square then the most likely move is the ...c5 move that will without fail bring with it the play on the dark squares. White can take on c5, wait for Black to take on d4 or he can advance the pawn with d5, but in all cases he leaves behind holes (d4, e3, c5) which will be the objects of Black's counterplay.

On the other side of the board it is the same: if White has his pawns on d4, e4 and f4, he needs to be afraid of the ...f5 move, just like in the following classical game.

Ernst Gruenfeld was one of the brightest personalities of hypermodernism in chess and a very popular opening was even named after him - the 'Gruenfeld Defence'.

This is one of the first games in that opening, which hides inside a deep, but risky idea: Black will leave the pawn centre to White and later on he will attempt to undermine it.

□ Rubinstein Akiba

■ Gruenfeld Ernst

D78 Maehrisch Ostrau 1923

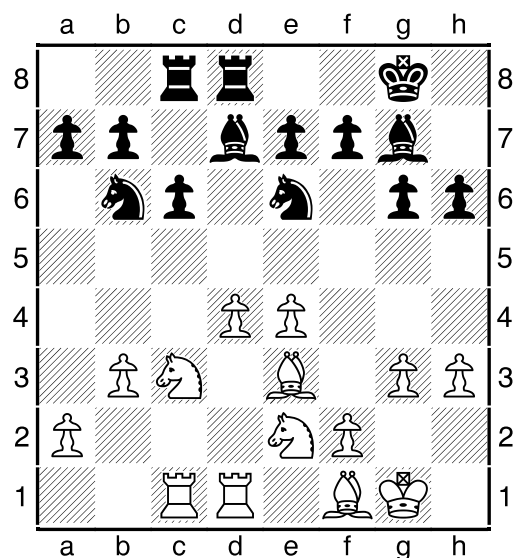
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 c6 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.Bg2 d5 6.0-0 0-0 7.Qb3 dxc4 8.Qxc4 Qb6 9.Nc3 Be6 10.Qd3 Na6 11.e4 Rad8 12.h3 Nb4

White has built a powerful pawn centre, but Black is not disturbed by it at all. With experienced manoeuvres he will ensure that he has no weaknesses. The swap of queens is good for him due to the space advantage White holds, and with it the continued threats for an organised attack against his king.

13.Qe2 Qa6! 14.Qxa6 Nxa6 15.Be3 h6 16.Rac1 Rc8 17.Rfd1 Rfd8 18.Ne5 Nd7 19.Nd3 Nb6 20.Nf4 Bd7

Black retreats peacefully, because White's pieces do not have any good squares to move to anyway.

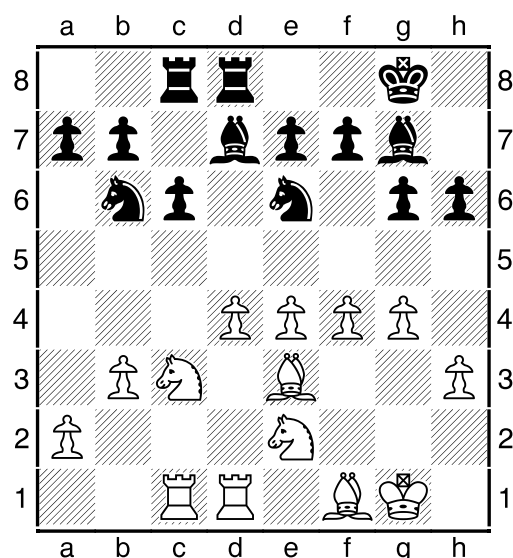
21.Bf1 Nc7 22.b3 Ne6 23.Nfe2 (D)



23...Ng5!

A provocative move! A.Rubinstein was a chess player with a strictly classical style of the play and so was surely confused by Black's strategy. A free hand to build the centre and also with tempo...

24.f4 Ne6 25.g4 (D)



A famous position and one which forced the defenders of classical principles to stop and think for a moment. White is dominating in the centre where he has placed a lot of pawns, but Black has waited for his

opportunity - and after the next move White's centre will begin to collapse.

25...f5! 26.Bg2

After 26. gxf5 gxf5 27.exf5 Nc7 Black would eventually regain the pawn and transpose into an endgame.

26...Nc7!

Aimed against the d5-square, which will become the most important square when the e4-pawn leaves the scene of battle.

27.Bf3 fxe4 28.Bxe4 Nbd5

With this kind of prevalence over the d5-square, Black has nothing to be afraid of. After a few more moves the opponents agreed a draw, but had they played on Black would be trying to win!

29.Kf2 Be8 30.Nxd5 Nxd5 31.Ng1 Rd6 32.Nf3 Rcd8 33.Rd2 Bf7 34.Bxd5 Bxd5 35.Ne5 Be4

$\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

The c6-e6 Pawns against the d4-e4 Pawns

A typical defensive tactic for Black, which can often be found in modern chess, is the placement of the pawns on e6 and c6 (after the exchange of the d-pawn for White's e-pawn or c-pawn).

This kind of position can be arising from different openings, but it is very complicated and it is hard to say that White has an advantage due to his centre.

Let's have a look at a position in which White has a pair of pawns on d4 and e4 and where Black has two defenders on c6 and e6.

White does not have much to choose from strategy-wise: one plan is connected with the d5 move, which will clear the centre (look back at the 'open centre') and the player emerging with an advantage will be the one with the more active pieces.

The second plan is connected to the e5 move. This is a strategically risky move, because White voluntarily gives up control over the d5-square. So what is the e5 move good for?

Especially because White starts the attack against Black's king with that move: the freed e4-square will serve as a jumping-off point for White's pieces to transfer to the kingside. At the same time, White's e5-pawn also removes an important defender from the f6 square (usually the knight). But if Black has also played - besides the move ...e6 - the ...g6 move then there will be a hole left on f6, which would probably be filled by one of White's pieces.

But Black does not need to wait passively. In his reserves are two plans to undermine White's centre with the ...c5 push and with the ...e5 move. In both cases he needs to be aware of the consequences of White advancing d5, with which White gains a passed pawn.

If White does not choose to advance, there usually occur some exchanges in the centre and there can be formed some symmetrical positions, or positions with majorities on both sides.

To begin with, let's see an example on the

theme of advancing with the e5 move. You will see how efficiently White exploited the e4-square for the transportation of the pieces and how, with the help of his experience, managed to finish the attack after he had moved his pieces in front of Black's king.

□ **Forgacs Leo**

■ **Cohn Erich**

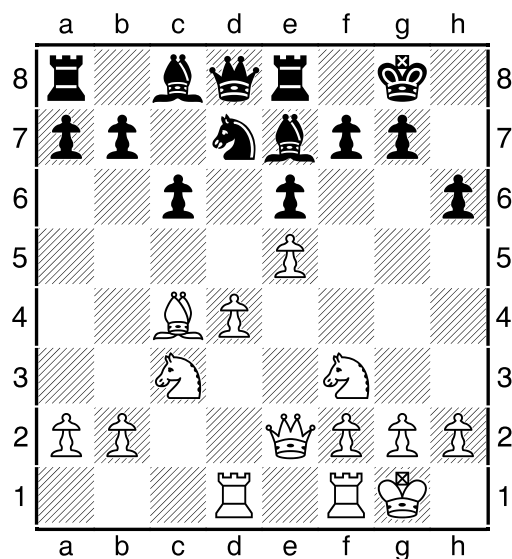
D53 St Petersburg 1909

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 e6 3.c4 Nf6 4.Nc3 dxc4 5.Bg5 Be7 6.e4 h6 7.Bxf6 Bxf6 8.Bxc4 Nd7 9.0-0 0-0 10.e5

White advances to e5 with the pawn, even though Black has not yet played the ...c6 move. This fact is not very important, because White is threatening also the advance d5 - and he is not afraid of ...c5 (with which Black would seemingly save a move).

10...Be7 11.Qe2 Re8 12.Rad1 c6 (D)

Black has no choice - the threat was 13.d5!.

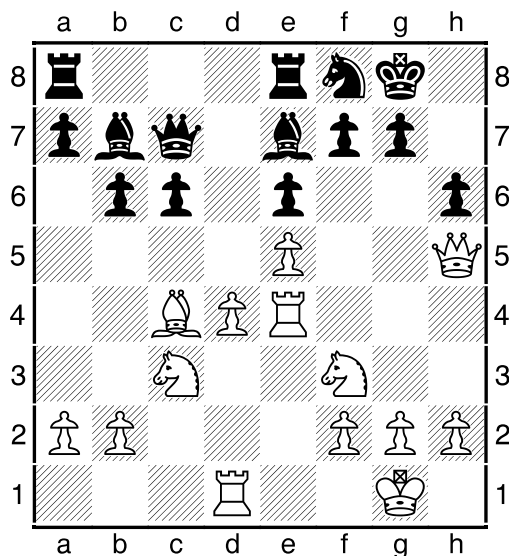


13.Qe4

The first of White's pieces exploits the 'jumping-off point' (look at the introduction) to reach the kingside.

13...Qc7 14.Rfe1 Nf8 15.Qg4 b6 16.Qh5 Bb7 17.Re4 (D)

The e4-square is being exploited by yet another of White's heavy pieces. It is important that Black is not able to play 17...c5 because of 18.d5.



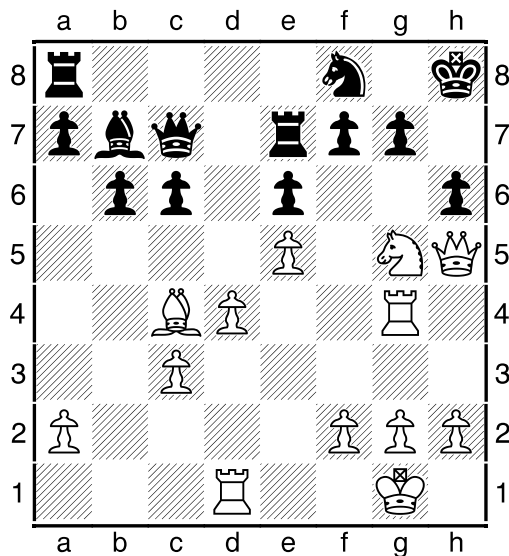
17...Bb4

With the wish of destroying the knight on c3, the next piece looking to exploit the e4 square.

18.Rg4 Bxc3 19.bxc3

After 19.Qh6 there would follow 19...Ng6, and anyway, White is not in a hurry.

19...Kh8 20.Ng5 Re7 (D)



21.Ne4

A third piece lands on the e4-square!

21...Rd8 22.Rd3 c5 23.Nf6

With the threat of 24.Qh6 gh6 25.Rg8 mate!

23...Ng6 24.Rh3

The position in the end of the game is horrific for Black. All of White's pieces have joined the attack and there is no defence to be found against 25.Qg5 followed by 26.Rh6.

1-0

□ Gheorghiu Florin

■ Smyslov Vassily

D15 Buenos Aires 1978

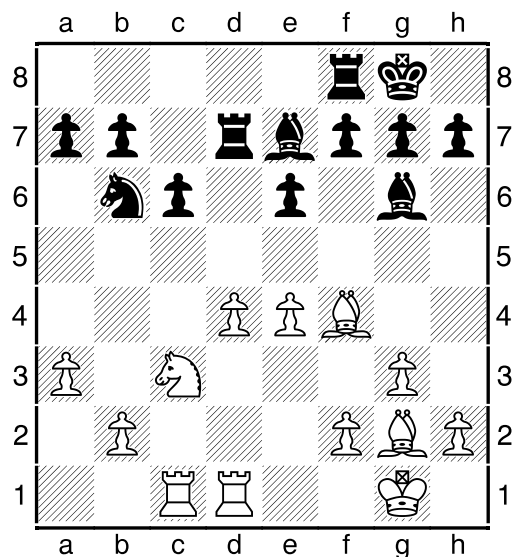
1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 c6 3.d4 Nf6 4.Qb3 Qb6 5.Nc3 dxc4 6.Qxc4 Bf5

The 'Slav Defence' is a typical opening which brings us to 'our' pawn setting. The difference between the previous game and the present game lies in the fact that this time Black has already developed his light-squared bishop before setting up his defensive wall of pawns.

7.g3 e6 8.Bg2 Qb4 9.Ne5 Nbd7 10.Qxb4 Bxb4 11.Nxd7 Nxd7 12.0-0 0-0 13.Bf4 Rad8 14.Rac1 Nb6 15.Rfd1 Rd7 16.e4

The e4 move wins space in the centre, but it is also strategically risky. We can see that Black will attack the d4-pawn, which is why White decided to follow a plan that included many exchanges.

16...Bg6 17.a3 Be7 (D)



18.d5

There was no sensible alternative for White because he is not supposed to let the ...Rfd8 move happen, a move that would prevent any strikes in the centre from happening. What will follow next? If Black exchanges twice, White will place his piece on the d5-square and start to put pressure on Black with it. For example 18...cxd5 19.exd5 exd5 20.Nxd5 Nxd5 21.Rxd5 Rxd5 (21...Rfd8 22.Rxd7) 22.Bxd5 b6 23.Rc7 and White's pieces dominate the board. This is why Black needs to be careful.

18...cxd5 19.exd5 Rfd8!

A move that allows the e6-square to become a weakness, but it will become meaningless after the many exchanges, because there will be no pieces left for White to attack the weakness with.

20.dxe6 fxe6 21.Rxd7 Rxd7 22.Rd1 Rxd1+ 23.Nxd1 Nd5

½-½

An example of excellent defence was demonstrated by Alexander Alekhine in the famous match for the World Championship title against Jose Raul Capablanca, in Buenos Aires in 1927.

□ **Capablanca Jose Raul**

■ **Alekhine Alexander**

D52 Buenos Aires 1927

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Nbd7 5.e3 c6 6.Nf3 Qa5

The 'Queen's Gambit', especially the 'Cambridge Springs' variation, marked this famous match, where all the games started with this very same opening except from one! The 'Queen's Gambit' is the opening that most often leads to our structure.

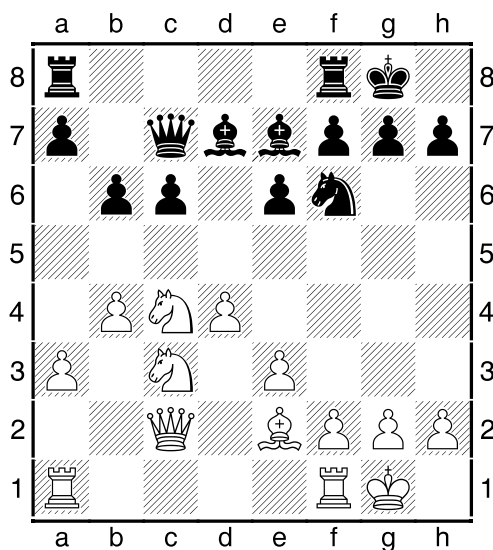
7.Nd2 Bb4 8.Qc2 dxc4 9.Bxf6 Nxf6 10.Nxc4 Qc7 11.a3 Be7 12.Be2 0-0

The first chance to play 12...c5.

13.0-0 Bd7

And a second opportunity for Black to clear the position with the 13...c5! move.

14.b4 b6 (D)



15.Bf3! Rac8!

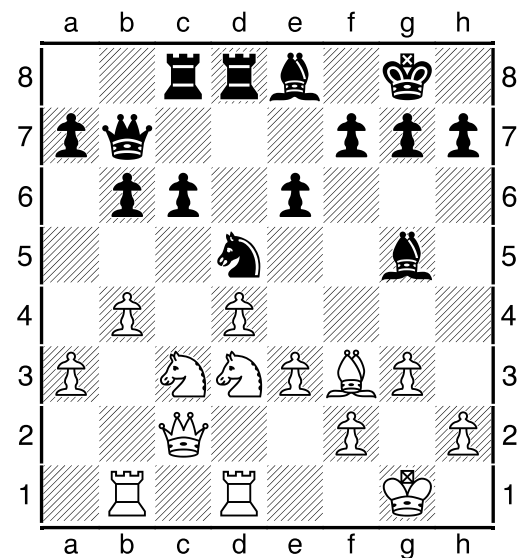
Black is being careful, strengthening the defence of the c6-pawn and of the c-file generally.

16.Rfd1 Rfd8 17.Rac1 Be8

The opening phase is over and both players have placed their pieces where they wanted. White has more space and Black has two bishops and not many weaknesses. If he manages to strike in the centre and with that open the position for his bishops, his future will be bright.

18.g3 Nd5 19.Nb2 Qb8 20.Nd3 Bg5 21.Rb1 Qb7 (D)

Risky was 21...Nxe3?! 22.fxe3 Bxe3+ 23.Kh1 Bxd4 and White is better (K.Mueller) and after 21...Bxe3? comes 22.Bxd5! +-.



22.e4

Already a success - J.R.Capablanca wants more than a draw! It was not easy for Black to realise the freeing ...c5 or ...e5 breaks and he needed to wait for a long time for White to help him with the e4 move. Now Black's plan is simple - an attack on the d4-pawn!

22...Nxc3 23.Qxc3 Qe7?!

It seems as though Black did not understand the position quite yet, as the 23...Qe7 move is simply bad. It would be more logical to play instead 23...Rc7.

24.h4!

White's only chance is hidden on the kingside.

24...Bh6 25.Ne5 g6 26.Ng4?!

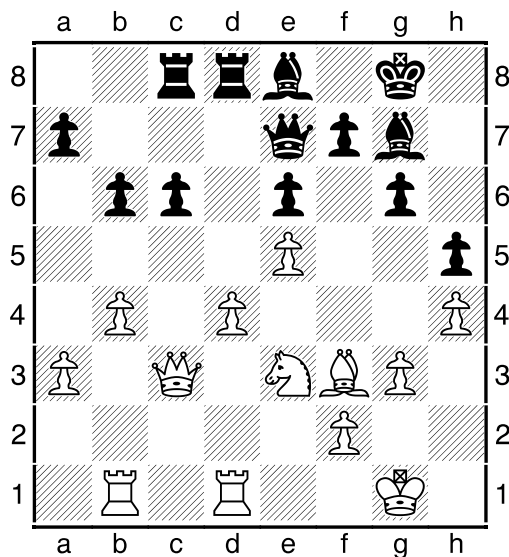
The square is not optimal for the knight, therefore it would be better placed after 26.Nc4! Bg7 27.e5! and 28.Nd6.

26...Bg7 27.e5

White has no wise alternatives left. The

threat was 27...c5.

27...h5 28.Ne3 (D)



28...c5!

Even so! With this strike from the side Black manages to break White's centre. From now on the object of desire will become the e5-square, which cannot be adequately defended by White.

29.bxc5 bxc5 30.d5?!

After this move Black is already better. Most likely the game would end in a draw after 30.Rb7 Rd7 31.Rxd7 Bxd7 32.d5 exd5 33.Nxd5 Qe6 34.Nf4 Bxe5 =.

30...exd5 31.Nxd5 Qe6

Of course not 31...Qxe5? 32.Qxe5 Bxe5 33.Ne7+.

32.Nf6+?

Better would be 32.Rb7 Bxe5 33.Qa5, with good chances of finding the solution.

32...Bxf6 33.exf6 Rxd1+ 34.Rxd1 Bc6 35.Re1 Qf5 36.Re3 c4!

And Black has reached his ideal position, which was later turned into a whole point...

37.a4 a5 38.Bg2 Bxg2 39.Kxg2 Qd5+ 40.Kh2 Qf5 41.Rf3 Qc5 42.Rf4 Kh7 43.Rd4 Qc6 44.Qxa5 c3 45.Qa7 Kg8 46.Qe7 Qb6 47.Qd7 Qc5 48.Re4 Qxf2+ 49.Kh3 Qf1+ 50.Kh2 Qf2+ 51.Kh3 Rf8 52.Qc6 Qf1+ 53.Kh2 Qf2+ 54.Kh3 Qf1+ 55.Kh2 Kh7 56.Qc4 Qf2+ 57.Kh3 Qg1 58.Re2 Qf1+ 59.Kh2 Qxf6 60.a5 Rd8 61.a6 Qf1 62.Qe4 Rd2 63.Rxd2 cxd2 64.a7 d1Q 65.a8Q Qg1+ 66.Kh3 Qdf1+ 0-1

The d4-e4 Pawns against the e6 Pawn

For our knowledge about the centre and about pawn structures there, even more important is the position with a pawn pair d4/e4 against the e6 pawn.

This position represents a huge problem for many chess masters! White has a pawn extra in the centre and Black has a more on the queenside (which is good for the endgame). White's plans are similar to those in the previous example (where Black had a pawn on c6).

Everything revolves around the d5 move, or around the e5 move. In the first case White will place his bets on the passed d-pawn that will disturb the coordination between Black's pieces.

After the exchange on d5 White in some cases takes with a piece, when he thinks that the active pieces would bring him more benefits than a passed pawn. In the second case White is placing his bets on an attack against the king.

A version of the second possibility is also very important, where White sacrifices d4-d5 and afterwards he does not recapture, but on rather advances with e5 with a sharp attack (the d-pawn is sacrificed to block the dark-squared bishop's way and also destroys the coordination between the defence pieces).

Let's get to know some classic games on the previously described themes, which will help you to understand how difficult this pawn structure is.

□ Keres Paul

■ Geller Efim

D41 Curacao 1962

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 c5 5.cxd5 Nxd5

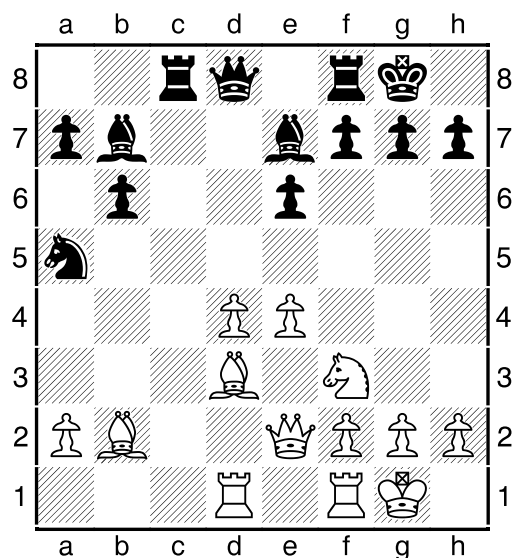
This time the pawn structure comes from an improved 'Tarrasch Defence' variation, where Black takes on d5 with the knight instead of with the pawn as in the original 'Tarrasch Defence'.

6.e3 Nc6 7.Bc4 Nxc3

The exchange is perhaps premature. Black could have chosen 7...cxd4 8.exd4 Be7, leading to positions with an isolated pawn

and other types of play that will be shown in the following chapters.

8.bxc3 Be7 9.0-0 0-0 10.e4 b6 11.Bb2 Bb7 12.Qe2 Na5 13.Bd3 Rc8 14.Rad1 cxd4 15.cxd4 (D)

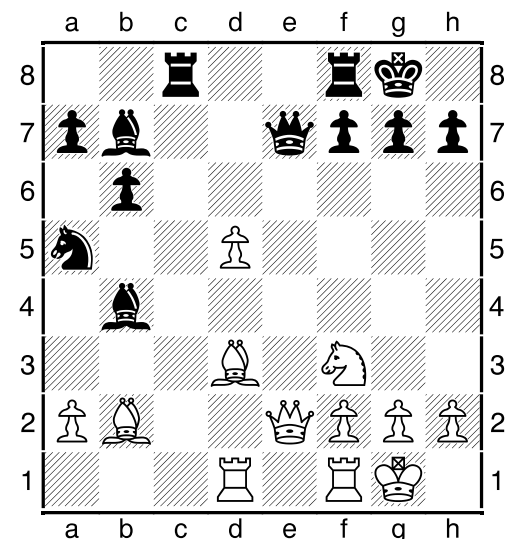


A classic position on our theme. White's bishops are placed behind the pawns, but there is great attacking potential in them. It is clear that in this kind of position the centre needs to be opened. The advance with e5 makes less sense here because it would close off the dark-squared bishop. This is why White is left with the advance of the d5 move.

15...Bb4?

Because of what we have just described, it would be better to play here 15...Bf6.

16.d5! exd5 17.exd5 Qe7 (D)



It is hard to give Black wise advice now. Bad is 17...Bxd5? 18.Qe5 f6 19.Qh5 g6 20.Bxg6 hxg6 21.Qxg6+ Kh8 22.Qh5+ Kg7 23.Rxd5 or 17...Bc3 18.Bf5! Rc4 19.Ne5. Best would be 17...Re8 18.Ne5 (with the threat of 19.Bxh7+) 18...Qh4 19.Bb5 Red8 20.Bd7 and White again has an advantage.

18.Ne5

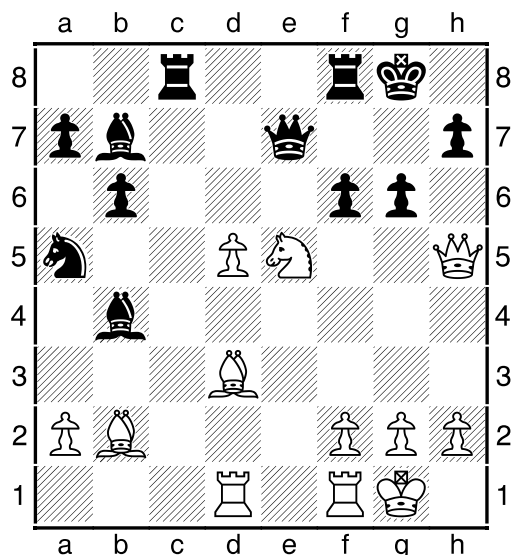
'After this move, there is no defence' - G.Kasparov.

18...f6

Also hopeless would be 18...Bd6 19.Qh5 g6 20.Ng4!! (P.Keres) or 18...Rfd8 19.Qe4 g6 20.Qd4! Rxd5 21.Nxg6! fxg6 22.Qh8+ Kf7 23.Qxh7+ Ke8 24.Bb5+! Rxb5 25.Qg8+ Qf8 26.Qxg6+ Qf7 27.Rfe1+! Bxe1 28.Rxe1+ Kf8 29.Qh6+! (G.Kasparov).

19.Qh5 g6 (D)

19...fxe5? 20.Bxh7+ Kh8 21.Bg6+.



20.Nxg6! hxg6 21.Bxg6 Qg7

This move leads to a quick loss, but Black is already lost. For example 21...Ba6 22.d6! or 21...Rc7 22.Bf5!.

22.Rd3 Bd6

22...Ba6 23.Rg3 Bxf1 24.Bh7+ Kh8 25.Bf5+ +-.

23.f4 Qh8 24.Qg4 Bc5+ 25.Kh1 Rc7 26.Bh7+ Kf7 27.Qe6+ Kg7 28.Rg3+ 1-0

The theme of the next game is the d5 advance, along with e5 and also another type of attack.

□ **Keres Paul**

■ **Fine Reuben**

D41 Ostend 1937

1.Nf3 d5 2.d4 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.Nc3 c5 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.e4 Nxc3 7.bxc3 cxd4 8.cxd4 Bb4+

Among the theoreticians, this exchange variation was for a long time considered to be one of the basic variations that ends with a draw and it was used by all 'great drawing players' in chess history. The move played points to the difference between the previous game line - after the exchange of the dark-squared bishops White's attacking potential will be minimised.

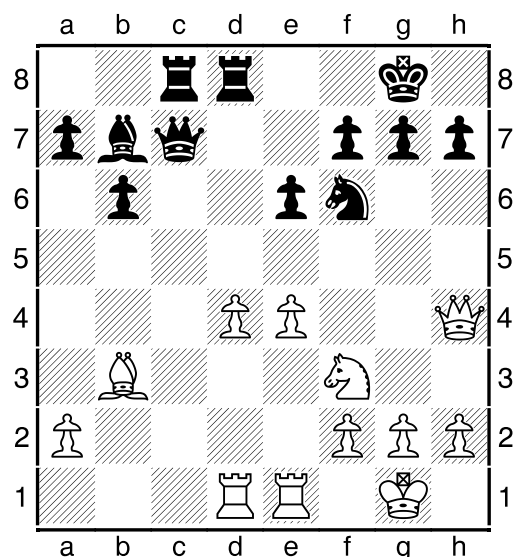
9.Bd2 Bxd2+

For some time the players of the black pieces tried 9...Qa5, until the great Akiba Rubinstein discovered the reply 10.Rb1!.

10.Qxd2 0-0 11.Bc4 Nd7

The second possibility is 11...Nc6, which we will take a look at in the next game.

12.0-0 b6 13.Rad1 Bb7 14.Rfe1 Rc8 15.Bb3 Nf6 16.Qf4 Qc7 17.Qh4 Rfd8 (D)



A very important moment! White is standing at the crossroads: if he wants to achieve anything, he will need to move one of the central pawns. The d5 penetration and the big exchanges which follow do him no good, which is why he started to fancy the 18.e5 move. The move is logical, because White opens a potential diagonal for his bishop and at the same time he gets rid of the knight on f6, from where it is able to defend the king. He also creates a known 'trampoline' on the e4-square for his pieces, above all for his knight that will, with the help of the Ng5-e4 manoeuvre, join the attack. For example: 18.e5 Nd7 19.Ng5 Nf8

20.Ne4 or 18.e5 Nd5 19.Ng5 h6 20.Ne4 Nc3 21.Nf6+!. But P.Keres decided on another kind of penetration, a motif which was unknown until this point.

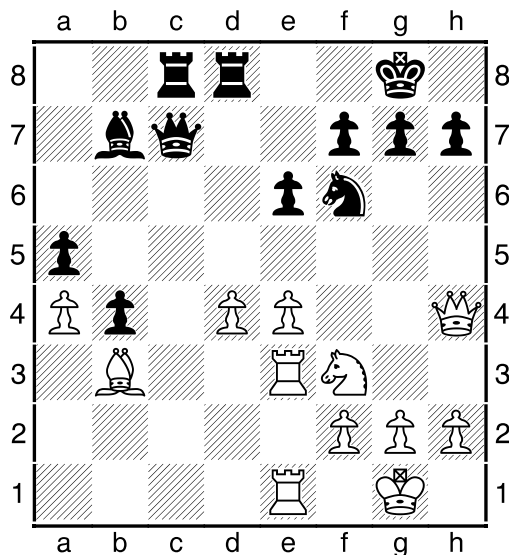
18.Re3 b5! 19.Rde1 a5!

Black has managed to achieve nice counterplay - White's bishop is in danger.

20.a4

The only move.

20...b4? (D)



This move frees White's hands and above all gives White some extra time - a tempo - to open the action. Correct was 20...bxa4 21.Bxa4 h6 and White's attack is stopped.

21.d5! exd5 22.e5!

R.Fine was surely not expecting this.

22...Nd7 23.Ng5 Nf8

More resistant would be 23...h6, where White's attack would continue as follows: 24.e6! hxe5 25.exf7+ Kxf7 26.Re7+.

24.Nxh7 Nxh7 25.Rh3 Qc1 26.Qxh7+ Kf8 27.Rhe3 d4 28.Qh8+ Ke7 29.Qxg7 Rf8 30.Qf6+ Ke8 31.e6

1-0

When the attacker, after the central pawn thrust, takes with a piece, there are present some different kinds of danger which the defender has to face.

□ **Spassky Boris**

■ **Petrosian Tigran**

D41 Moscow 1969

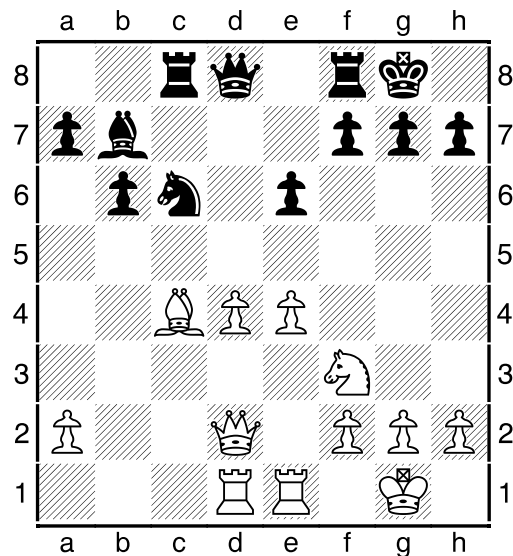
1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.d4 c5 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.e4 Nxc3 7.bxc3 cxd4 8.cxd4 Bb4+ 9.Bd2 Bxd2+ 10.Qxd2 0-0 11.Bc4 Nc6

12.0-0 b6 13.Rad1

This move, and the placement of the rooks on d1 and e1, were prepared by B.Spassky especially for this match. A.Alekhine preferred to play 13.Rfd1, but what B.Spassky had in mind was the penetration in the centre which we have already discussed.

13...Bb7 14.Rfe1 Rc8 (D)

Later on, players tried 14...Na5 15. Bd3 Qd6 with more success.



15.d5 exd5 16.Bxd5

Playing on the domination by the pieces in the centre. With the bishop on c4 it is hard for White to count on an attack and due to that it would be worse to play 16.exd5 Na5 17.Bf1 Qd6 18.Ng5 Qh6!.

16...Na5 17.Qf4 Qc7

The swap of queens is usually in favor of the player who is defending.

18.Qf5 Bxd5 19.exd5

Without the light-squared bishops the passed pawn is a decisive factor. It is supported by both White's rooks and by the queen, and Black will not be able to set up the basic defensive plan in the battle against the passed pawn - the blockade.

19...Qc2

Too slow is 19...Nc4 20.Ng5 g6 21.Qh3 h5 22.Ne4 +/- or 19...Qd6 20.Ng5 Qg6 21.Qxg6 hxe6 22.d6! Nb7 23.d7 Rcd8 24.Re7 Nc5 25.Rd5! +/-.

20.Qf4! Qxa2 21.d6!

White proves how powerful a passed pawn can be with great play.

**21...Rcd8 22.d7 Qc4 23.Qf5 h6 24.Rc1
Qa6 25.Rc7 b5 26.Nd4 Qb6 27.Rc8! Nb7
27...b4 28.Re8 Qxd4 29.Rxf8+ Rxf8
30.Rxf8+ Kf8 31.Qc5+!! +- ; 27...g6**

**28.Rxd8 Qxd8 29.Qxb5 +- ; 27...Qxd4
28.Rxd8 Rxd8 29.Re8+ +-.
28.Nc6 Nd6 29.Nxd8!! Nxf5 30.Nc6
1-0**

The Tactical Game - The e5 (...e4) Move

There are a lot of cases when the opponent's mobile centre is seemingly blocked by the defender. The critical square which would allow the advance or penetration, and which is the object of the strategic battle, is well- defended - and now the defender is looking for a counterattack.

And at that time, in spite of everything, the critical square breaks: the sacrifice of the pawn turns everything upside down. The action takes place right there, or on the other wing, and the battle begins - which the defender is usually not well-prepared for.

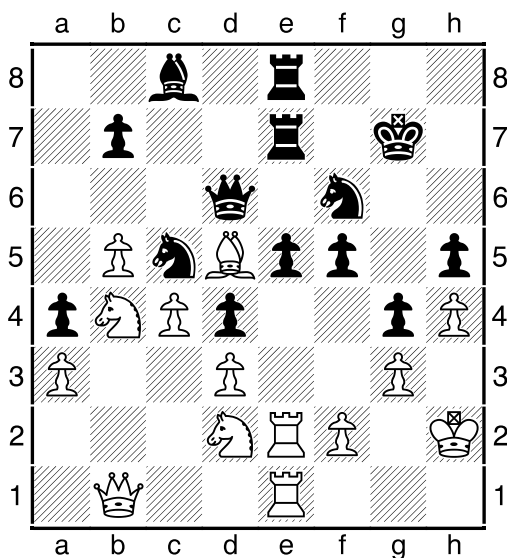
An example on this theme was demonstrated in the following game by the legendary Akiba Rubinstein.

□ Verlinsky Boris

■ Rubinstein Akiba

A09 Moscow 1925

1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 d4 3.b4 c5 4.Bb2 g6 5.e3 Bg7 6.d3 Nh6 7.Nbd2 0-0 8.exd4 cxd4 9.g3 e5 10.Bg2 a5 11.b5 a4 12.Ba3 Re8 13.0-0 f5 14.Ne1 Nd7 15.Rc1 Nf7 16.Nc2 Bf8 17.Bxf8 Kxf8 18.Nb4 Nc5 19.Re1 Qd6 20.Rb1 Bd7 21.Bd5 Rad8 22.a3 Bc8 23.Rb2 Re7 24.Nf3 Nh6 25.Rbe2 Rde8 26.Qd2 Kg7 27.Qb2 Ng4 28.Qb1 Nf6 29.Kg2 h6 30.Qd1 g5 31.h3 Nh7 32.Kh2 h5 33.h4 g4 34.Nd2 Nf6 35.Qb1 (D)



35...e4!

Black attacks the most defended square on

the board! It is all possible due to the fact that White cannot take the pawn: after 36.dxe4 fxe4 37.Nxe4 Nfxe4 38.Bxe4 White would be at least an exchange down after 38...Bf5!. Now Black has the initiative:

36.Qa1 e3 37.Nf1 Nb3 38.Qb2 f4 39.gxf4 Qxf4+

And although he has outplayed his opponent, there is no obviously visible way to force an immediate win. Most likely that also made the great A.Rubinstein mad, who began to complicate things more and more until his sensational defeat!

40.Kg2 Kg6 41.fxe3 dxe3 42.d4 Nxd4 43.Nd3 Nxd5 44.Nxf4+ Nxf4+ 45.Kh1 Ndxe2 46.Rxe2 Nxe2 47.Qxe2 Bf5 48.Ng3 Rd8 49.Qf1 Be4+ 50.Kg1 Rf7 51.Qc1 Rfd7 52.Qxe3 Rd1+ 53.Nf1 Bf3 54.Kf2 R8d3 55.Qe6+ Kg7 56.Ne3 R1d2+ 57.Kg3 Kf8 58.Kf4 Rd4+ 59.Kg5 Rd6 60.Qe5 Kf7 61.Nf5 Rg6+ 62.Kf4 Re2 63.Qc7+ Kf8 64.Nd6 Ree6 65.Qf7 #

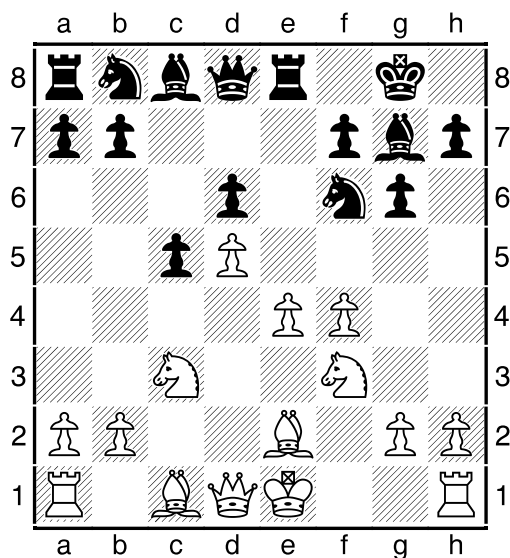
1-0

□ Mikenas Vladas

■ Vladimirov Boris

A69 Moscow 1963

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 g6 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 Bg7 6.f4 0-0 7.Be2 e6 8.Nf3 exd5 9.cxd5 Re8 (D)



White is prepared to play the e5 move, which is connected with a pawn sacrifice.

Will quick development, an open file and a diagonal be enough to compensate for the material loss? White will receive yet another trump - the passed d5-pawn, which has an open pathway ahead of it.

10.e5!? dxe5 11.fxe5 Ng4 12.Bg5 Qb6 13.0-0 Nxe5 14.Nxe5 Bxe5

A theoretical position, illustrating our theme. White has undoubted compensation and, from now on, time or every lost/won tempo will become very important.

15.Bc4 Bf5

Black has some defensive plans. It is possible to take yet another pawn, on b2 and the in-between move 15...Qb4 is also possible. All this can be found in the opening manuals.

16.Bb5!

A tricky move - White challenges Black's bishop to return back. Black's rook is in trouble because it cannot move to the f8-square (16...Rf8 17.Be7 and d6), and also not possible is 16...Nd7? 17.Rxf5 and 18.Bd7. All that is left is the withdrawal to c8 or the return of the bishop, where after 16...Bd7 17.Qf3! White gains some new attacking tempos.

16...c4+ 17.Kh1 Rc8 18.Qf3

White is constantly making his opponent 'angry' by not letting him finish his development. The threats on the f-file are very serious and due to that Black decided to cover up the line.

18...f6 19.Rae1 Qd4 20.Bf4!

Transition to the endgame, where White will give back the pawn and be left with a passed

pawn and a clear advantage.

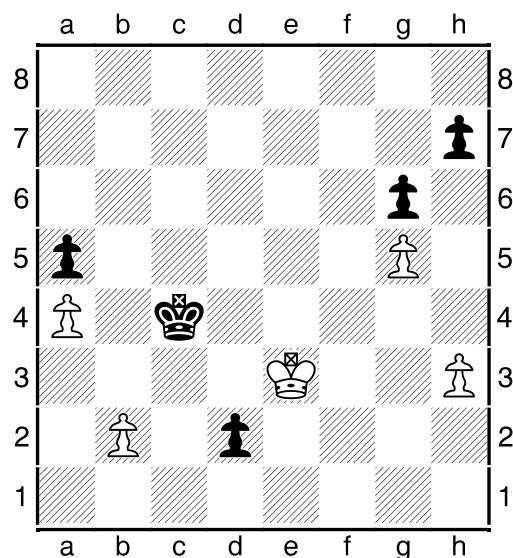
20...Qxf4 21.Qxf4 Bxf4 22.Rxf4 Na6 23.g4 Bd3 24.Bxa6 bxa6 25.Rxf6 Rab8 26.Re7 Re8

The only move. White is already winning, but he still needs to solve some technical problems.

27.Rxe8+ Rxe8 28.Rxa6 Rb8 29.d6 Rb7 30.Rc6 Rd7 31.Kg1 Kf7 32.Na4! Ke6 33.Nc5+!

A very accurate calculation of the transposition to a winning pawn endgame.

33...Kd5 34.Nxd7 Kxc6 35.Ne5+ Kxd6 36.Nxd3 cxd3 37.Kf2 Kd5 38.Ke3 Kc4 39.g5 a6 40.h3 a5 41.a4 d2 (D)



42.Kxd2

A very nice end position, where White is winning: 42...Kb3 43.Kd3 Kxb2 (43...Kxa4 44.Kc4) 44.Kxc4.

1-0

The Conclusion

To achieve a mobile, full centre is considered to be advantageous. The player that manages to achieve it has a space advantage, because the opponent's pieces are held back and need to wait.

We can evaluate the position only after some time has passed, because every move and every won tempo is important. Undoubtedly, there is no room here for sleepy play and slow manoeuvres! The attacker will try to advance the pawns and squeeze his opponent even more. With the manoeuvre in the centre he will gain a passed pawn or he will move the play to the wing, from where he will start to attack the opponent's weaknesses. The defender has no choice: he must try to block the opponent's centre first and then try to break it with strikes from the sides and, hopefully, finally destroy it.

It is important to know that as a rule there is no room for the defender's actions on the wing in this kind of position (we attack on the wing when there is a fixed centre).

The Symmetrical Centre

We can talk about symmetrical (we can also come across the word static) centre when the pawns on the central squares have trouble moving.

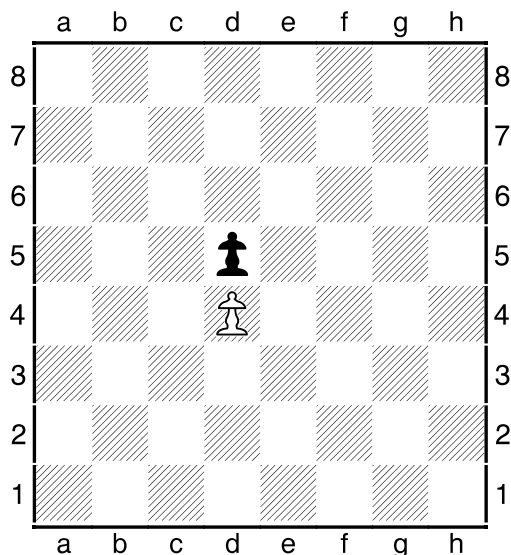
Or there is a pawn in front of them and in that case it is possible that they cannot move at all, or that any kind of movement would lead to material (or positional) losses.

This is the reason why pawns in this kind of centre are usually 'resting' and the play takes place beside them or even further on the wings.

There is a difference between a symmetrical centre and a blocked centre: in a blocked centre, the word tells us that the centre is completely occupied by pawns and as a result the play with the pieces (and with other pawns) is moved to the wings.

On the contrary, there are only a few pawns in the centre (often there are only two) when we talk about a symmetrical centre.

A classical example of a symmetrical centre is shown in the next diagram:



It is similar when the pawns are standing on e4 and e5, but in that case it does not often happen that the f-pawns are not still on the board, which can make the undermining possible (f4 or ...f5).

We will get to know the position in the diagram in detail. First we need to ask ourselves what the players want in this kind of position?

The initiative is very important - if one of the players manages to conquer a central square and later put a piece there (we call that kind of square a base, or outpost, because Black has no pawns with which to get rid of the piece), it will always make the defender angry.

It is similar with the open-lines that are placed besides the central pawns: the advantage will go to the player who first gains full control over the line, and later with the help of it prepare manoeuvres in the centre, so making room for action on the wing.



The symmetrical centre can arise out of many modern and nowadays very popular openings: the 'Nimzo-Indian Defence', the 'Russian (Petroff's) Defence', the 'Queen's Gambit' and also out of some variations of the 'French Defence'.

The Initiative on the Queenside

Transposition to the Endgame

To begin with let's take a look at two games of the fourth World Champion Alexander Alekhine. In the first game, the then World Champion was defeated by a young Russian, Mikhail Botvinnik, who a decade later took his place as World Champion.

'I thought that I made the position equal, but the fact is that I was already lost at that time! A very dangerous position, a very unpleasant structure,' moaned A.Alekhine after the game.

□ **Botvinnik Mikhail**

■ **Alekhine Alexander**

D41 Rotterdam 1938

1.Nf3 d5 2.d4 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.Nc3 c5 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.e3 Nc6 7.Bc4 cxd4 8.exd4 Be7 9.0-0 0-0 10.Re1

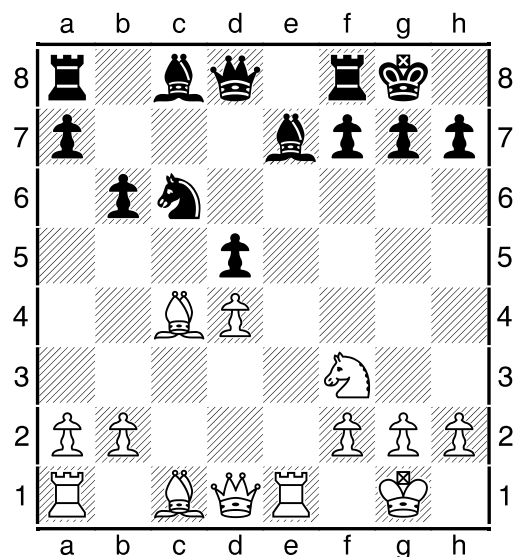
M.Botvinnik loved positions with the isolated queen's pawn (IQP), which you will get to know in the second part of the book. He was one of the first researchers of this very sensitive area and he knew also the transpositions to other kinds of positions. One of them will be demonstrated in this game.

10...b6?!

Nowadays we know that this decision was not such a good one. Black first needs to take on c3 (10...Nxc3 11.bxc3) and only then develop his bishop on the long diagonal: 11...b6 12.Bd3 Bb7. Of course White will not just stand still, but he will immediately take the initiative on the kingside, where Black hasn't enough defensive pieces: 13.h4! Bxh4 (14.Ng5 was threatened) 14.Nxh4 Qxh4 15.Re3, with a very strong initiative in exchange for the sacrificed pawn (G.Kasparov).

11.Nxd5! exd5 (D)

White has transformed the centre into a symmetrical centre, which brings him a pretty large advantage owing to his better development and initiative (he has the move). Furthermore, Black is restricted only to defence...



It is instructive to watch how accurately M.Botvinnik is able to preserve the initiative and how finely he exchanged the pieces, leaving only those on the board which will bring him the final success.

12.Bb5

Black is sentenced to a passive defence. Now the weaknesses on the c- and e-files become obvious. Due to this, every exchange could prove fatal. A.Alekhine did not evaluate the position well enough and started to prepare the exchange of the light-squared bishops (following the principle: to exchange a bad bishop for a better one).

12...Bd7?

The problem that Black will face after the exchange will be the holes in his territory, especially a hole on c6. Better would be 12...Bb7 13.Qa4 Rc8 14.Bf4 a6! and Black could hope to gradually equalise.

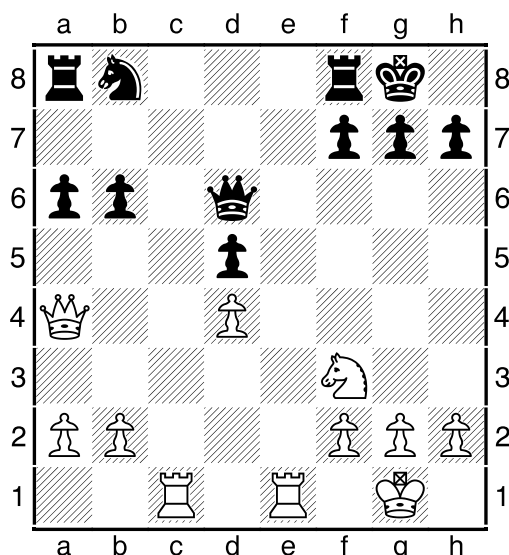
13.Qa4 Nb8

A passive move, but it is hard to offer wise advice to Black. For example 13...Rc8 14.Bf4 and Black has no good move. The threat is Rac1, with a decisive advantage.

14.Bf4 Bxb5 15.Qxb5 a6 16.Qa4 Bd6

A classical defensive technique in a pressed position: after every exchange the defender has more space and more possible solutions.

17.Bxd6 Qxd6 18.Rac1 (D)



A very interesting position! The pawns are placed almost symmetrically and it is hard to say that one of them is weak. On top of this, there are only a few pawns left, and there are not many pieces either (there are already three pairs missing from the board). There are two open files in the centre and they are both under White's control: even though there are no direct effects of the control to be seen as yet, Black has difficulties due to not having a good plan. He desperately wants to swap the last piece, but the knight on b8 is sentenced to a passive role and it also needs to control the squares for the penetration of White's rook.

18...Ra7 19.Qc2

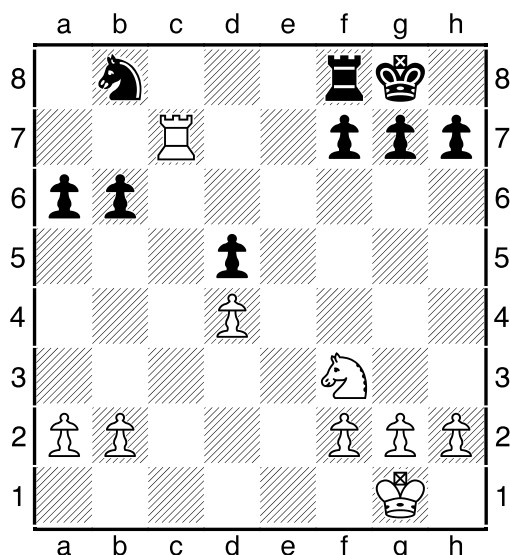
White has no troubles playing moves. He has evaluated that it will be easier for him to penetrate along the c-file rather than via the e-file, which could later be defended by Black's king...

19...Re7

The moment which proves that exchanges are good for White: 19...Nd7 20.Qc6 Qxc6 21.Rxc6 with a winning endgame. After 19...f6, with which he defends the critical e5-square (which is where White wants to place his knight) and after 20.Qf5 White starts to exploit a next critical light-square in Black's territory - e6.

20.Rxe7 Qxe7 21.Qc7! Qxc7 22.Rxc7 (D)

White cold-bloodedly agreed to yet further exchanges, penetrating with a rook to the seventh rank, from where he is able to paralyse Black.



22...f6!

Black wants to swap rooks (with ...Rf7) and isn't scared by the move 23.Rb7, because after 23...Rc8! he would get nice counterplay. White now saw that he would need to leave the seventh rank.

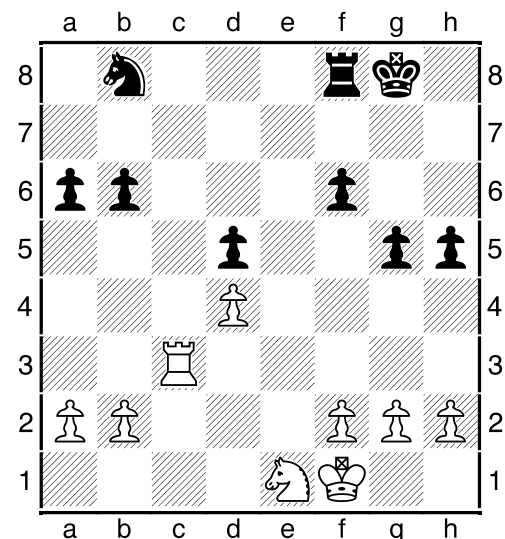
23.Kf1 Rf7 24.Rc8+ Rf8 25.Rc3!

An outstandingly instructive game! With the help of the in-between check he managed to return Black's rook back to the eighth rank and now White temporarily withdraws. And everything is supported by accurate calculations, as we will soon get to see.

25...g5

A.Alekhine defends himself wisely - with the advance of the pawns on the kingside the seventh rank loses some of its power and also the domination over Black's rook is weakened.

26.Ne1 h5 (D)



Black continues with his defensive strategy.

27.h4!!

A surprise on the wing, right where Black surely did not expect it! White wants to weaken Black's pawns on the kingside.

27...Nd7

The capture 27...gxh4 28.Nf3 would be much worse; 27...Kf7 is most likely the best choice, even though White would keep a clear advantage after 28.hxg5 fxg5 29.Nf3 Kf6 30.Ne5. Look at the placement of the knights!

28.Rc7

Complete control!

28...Rf7 29.Nf3 g4 30.Ne1

The knight is headed for the f4-square, which was taken over by skilful moves of the pawns and provocations with the knight.

30...f5 31.Nd3 f4

Black was faced with a sad choice: whether to leave the knight on f4 or place there his pawn, which will be under constant attack?

32.f3

M.Botvinnik was not thinking about winning a pawn after 32.Nb4, instead focusing on fixing Black's additional weakness. He knew very well that the material would wait for him. Next follows a slow, almost sadistic, realisation of the advantage.

32...gxf3 33.gxf3 a5 34.a4 Kf8 35.Rc6 Ke7 36.Kf2 Rf5 37.b3 Kd8 38.Ke2 Nb8

A desperate attempt at activity.

39.Rg6!

White was certainly not thinking about 39.Rxb6? Kc7, where Black would - after 40...Nc6 - be left with a chance of counterplay.

39...Kc7 40.Ne5 Na6 41.Rg7+

After 41.Rg5 White would have won a little quicker, but that does not change the result.

41...Kc8 42.Nc6 Rf6 43.Ne7+ Kb8 44.Nxd5 Rd6 45.Rg5 Nb4 46.Nxb4 axb4 47.Rxh5 Rc6 48.Rb5 Kc7 49.Rxb4 Rh6 50.Rb5 Rxh4 51.Kd3

'I was completely helpless!' - A.Alekhine.

1-0

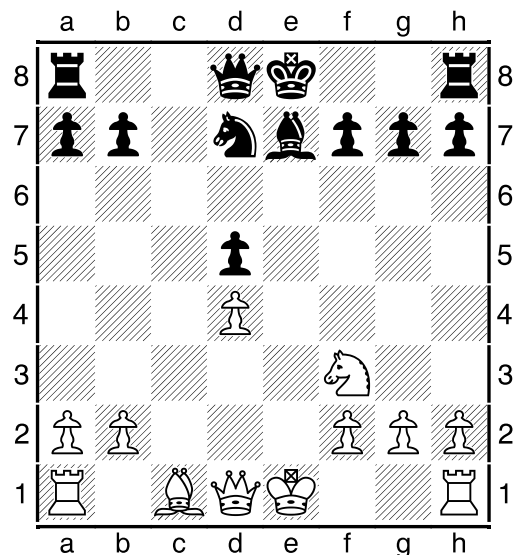
The World Champion memorised the lesson deeply, and only a year later he got the chance to demonstrate what his 'compatriot' taught him...

□ **Alekhine Alexander**

■ **Eliskases Erich**

D41 Buenos Aires 1939

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e6 6.Nf3 Be7 7.cxd5 Nxd5 8.Bb5+! Bd7 9.Bxd7+! Nxd7 10.Nxd5 exd5 (D)



The position in the diagram is very similar to that from the previous game...

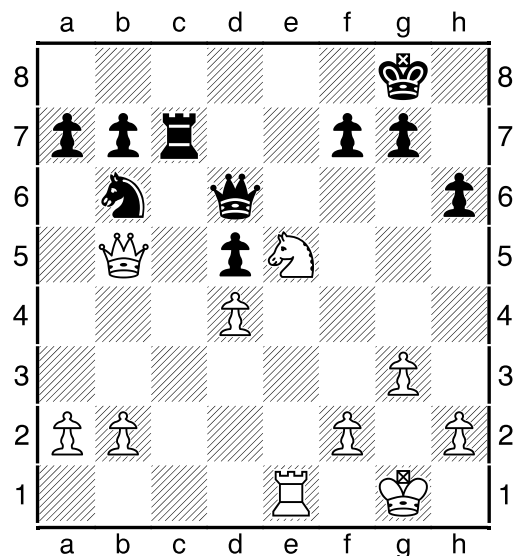
11.Qb3 Nb6 12.0-0 0-0 13.Bf4 Bd6

Black is following the same logic as his opponent used a year ago: every exchange makes it easier to defend.

14.Bxd6 Qxd6 15.Rfe1 Rac8 16.Rac1

The story is repeating itself: Black has no direct weaknesses, but he is completely pressed and without a real plan.

16...h6 17.Ne5 Rc7 18.g3 Rfc8 19.Rxc7 Rxc7 20.Qb5 (D)



Black has exchanged a pair of rooks and

taken control of the c-file. He has managed to achieve a lot more than A.Alekhine did a year ago! How to evaluate the position? White undoubtedly has the initiative and that is why Black can only save himself by making the right exchanges. It would be best to neutralise White's pressure on the e-file: 20...Re7 21.Qa5 f6 22.Ng6 Rxe1 23.Qxe1. After the exchange of the knights as in the game, White will keep all the luxuries of the position.

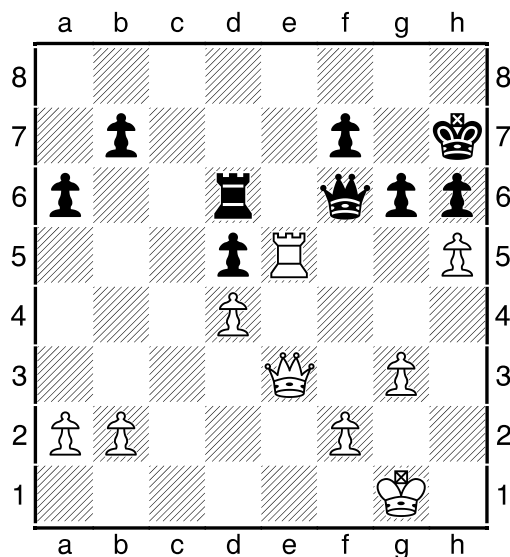
20...Nd7 21.Nxd7 Rxd7 22.Re8+ Kh7 23.h4! a6

Black cannot block with 23...h5 due to 24.Ra8! a6 25.Qe2, with a double threat (Qh5 or Qe8).

24.Qe2 Rd8 25.Re7 Rd7 26.Re5 g6

Black is having a really hard time: the threats were h5, a check on the diagonal and penetration to the eighth rank.

27.h5 Qf6 28.Qe3 Rd6 (D)



29.Qb3!

The d5-pawn is lost. In return Black will win the pawn on b2, this he will do him no better than a pure endgame, and that is still far away.

29...Rb6 30.hxg6+ Qxg6 31.Qxd5 Rxb2 32.Rf5 Rb5?

Better would be 32...Kg8.

33.Rxf7+ Kg8 34.Rf6+ Rxd5 35.Rxg6+ Kh7 36.Rb6 Rxd4 37.Rxb7+ Kg8 38.Rb6 Ra4 39.Rxh6 Rxa2 40.Kg2 a5 41.Ra6 a4 42.Ra7 a3 43.g4 Kf8 44.g5 Kg8 45.Kg3 Ra1 46.Kg4 Rg1+ 47.Kf5 Rg2 48.f4 a2 49.Kf6 1-0

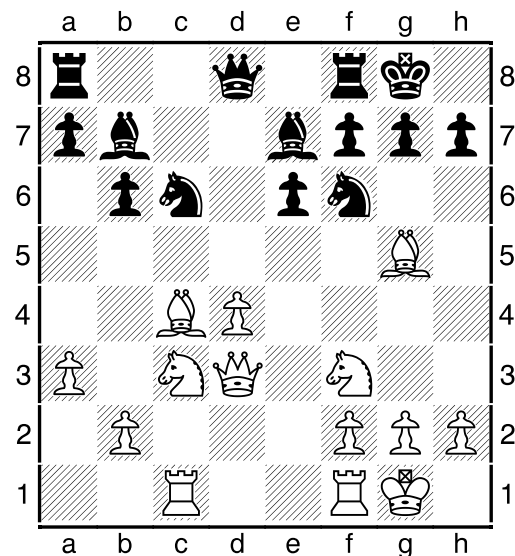
Let's see a more modern game, which will help us to believe that the basic rules about the centre, which were true in the past, are also true today!

□ **Ivanchuk Vassily**

■ **Karpov Anatoly**

E54 Linares 1991

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 0-0 5.Bd3 d5 6.Nf3 c5 7.0-0 cxd4 8.exd4 dxc4 9.Bxc4 b6 10.Bg5 Bb7 11.Rc1 Nc6 12.a3 Be7 13.Qd3 (D)



13...Nd5?!

Black offers transposition into the positions that are good for White and which we have already got to know. 13...Rc8 14.Ba2! Rc7!? 15.Bb1 g6 16.Bh6 Re8 17.Rfe1 Rd7 or 13...h6 (V.Anand) 14.Bh4 Rc8.

14.Bxd5! exd5

14...Bxg5 15.Nxg5 Qxg5 16.Be4 f5 17.Bxc6 Bxc6 18.f3 Rfd8 19.Ne2.

15.Bxe7 Nxe7 16.Rfe1 Rc8 17.h4!

This motif was already seen in the game A.Alekhine-E.Eliskases. White wants to stake out space on the kingside and fix the pawns in front of Black's king. He also wants to take the g6-square away from the knight. Another possibility is 17.Re3 Qd6 18.Rce1, with pressure on the e-file.

17...h6 18.h5 Rc7 19.Nb5?!

An unnecessary exchange. We already know that exchanges are good for the defender and the move played makes it possible for Black to get rid of his light-squared bishop, his worst piece. White could keep a stable

advantage with 19.Re3 Qc8 20.Rce1 Qf5 21.Qd2.

19...Rxc1 20.Rxc1 Ba6 21.a4 Bxb5 22.Qxb5 Nf5 23.g3 Ne7 24.Ne5

Despite his mistake on the 19th move, White has kept a clear advantage. His pieces are more active, he controls the open file and Black has a lot of weak squares. It is hard for Black to get rid of the knight on e5 without weakening his position even more.

24...Qd6 25.Qa6 Nf5 26.Qd3 Ne7 27.Qf3 a5 28.Kg2

V.Anand later showed the simple move 28.b3! +/-, with which White would keep his big advantage.

28...f6?!

Black could have found counterplay with the move 28...g5! because it is not wise for White to open the f-file. The threat would then be ...f6/f5 and White's king would be in danger.

29.Nd3

Worse would be 29.Ng6 (V.Anand) 29...Nxg6 30.hxg6 f5!.

29...Rc8 30.Re1

White does not want to exchange rooks. After 30.Rxc8+ Nxc8 31.Nf4 Ne7 his advantage would be purely symbolic.

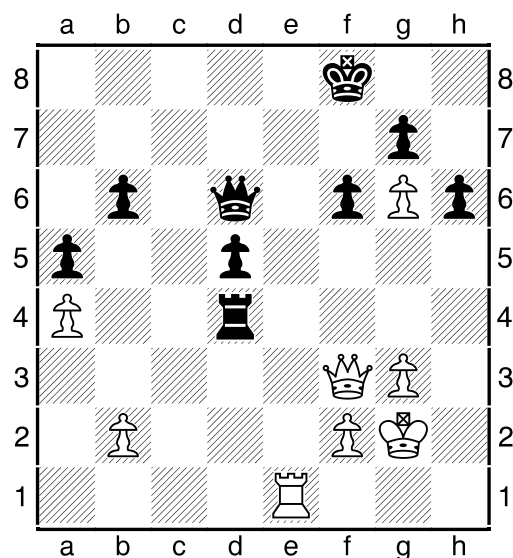
30...Rc4 31.Nf4

Yet another inaccurate move. The commentators proved in their long analyses that it would have been better to play 31.Qg4!? and 31...f5!? 32.Qh4 Nc6, followed by a nice variation: 33.Re8+ Kf7

34.Rc8 Nxd4 35.Rd8 Qe6 36.Rd7+ Kg8 37.Qd8 Kh7 38.Re7! Rc8 39.Rxe6 Rxd8 40.Rxb6 +/-.

31...Rxd4 32.Ng6 Nxg6 33.hxg6 Kf8! (D)

The queen ending is lost after 33...Re4?! 34.Rxe4 dxe4 35.Qxe4 Kf8 36.Qa8+ Ke7 37.Qb7+ (V.Anand).



34.Qf5! Rc4 35.g4 Qf4?

And here Black lost on time. White has good compensation, but the road to victory would still be long and complicated. For example: 36.Qxd5 Qxg4+ (36...Qc7? 37.Qg8! +/-) 37.Kf1 Qh3+ 38.Ke2 Qg4+ 39.Kd3 +/- or 35...Qb4 36.Re3 Rg4+ 37.Kf3 or 35...d4 36.Re6 Qd8 37.Qb5 +/- . Note that best was 35...Rc6! (V.Anand) 36.g5 d4!? oo.

1-0

The Outpost on e5 (e4)

It is clear that when there is a symmetrical pawn structure, the two central squares that are being controlled by the opponent's pawn are very important. In the positions that we are looking at White's outposts are the e5 and c5-squares and Black's outposts are the e4- and c4-squares.

Due to White's first move advantage, it is logical that he will be the first to occupy the outpost. And it is not hard to choose which square either: in the opening it is easier for the knight to reach the e5-square than the c5-square.

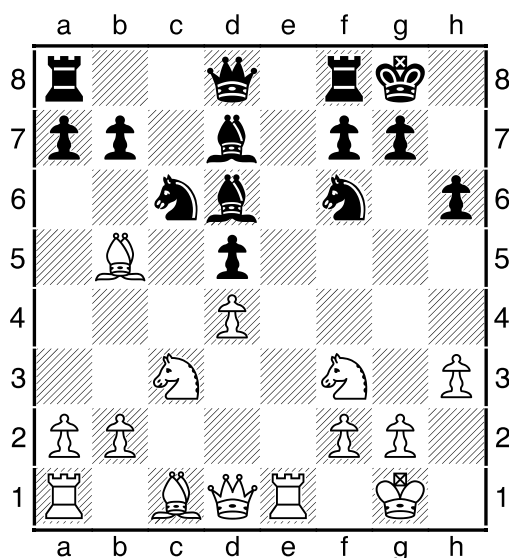
Let's see an example on this theme, one which was a success for A.Karpov, the victim from the previous game. Obviously he also learned from his defeats!

□ Karpov Anatoly

■ Morovic Fernandez Ivan

D32 Las Palmas 1994

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 d5 4.e3 c5 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.cxd5 exd5 7.Bb5 Bd6 8.0-0 0-0 9.h3 cxd4 10.exd4 h6 11.Re1 Bd7 (D)



We can see before us the position which allows jumping into e5. We already know the structure, and the difference between the other games is undoubtedly the number of pieces still on the board. When there is a full board it is hard for White to exploit his positional advantage and he needs to use a new strategic plan.

12.Ne5!

This move does not represent a decisive threat, but it is very unpleasant nonetheless. What should Black do? He will not be able to tolerate the knight forever and so needs to devote some time to this problem. The possible capture would be (at least for now) very bad, because White would take with the pawn and so gaining a majority on the kingside - and he would also isolate and weaken Black's d5-pawn.

12...Rc8 13.a3 a6

Also possible is 13...Re8, when White will quietly strengthen his outpost with 14.Bf4.

14.Ba4

This bishop wants to be placed on the b1-h7 diagonal, but there is still no concrete mission for him there. That is why it is, in the meantime, putting pressure on the defender's of Black's centre, and forcing Black to make some unpleasant decisions.

14...b5

Almost forced, but we can see with the naked eye that the move leaves holes behind, which will not be easy to fill up.

15.Bb3 Be6 16.Bc2

The motif is simple: to move the queen to d3 and to get rid of the knight on f6.

16...Qb6 17.Be3 Rfd8

For the first time Black is threatening to take on e5: if he were to move then 18...Be5 19.de5 d4! would appear.

18.Ng4!

Black has no choice but to take the knight with the bishop. He must not give up the knight on f6, because he desperately needs it for defence.

18...Bxg4 19.hxg4 Bb8 20.Bf5 Rc7 21.a4!

Play over the whole board is a distinctive feature of the great masters. White is threatening to take on b5, with which he would weaken Black's b-pawn.

21...b4 22.a5!

A nice pawn sacrifice and the beginning of the final attack!

22...Nxa5 23.Na4 Qd6

Or 23...Qb5 24.Nc5, with the idea of 25.Bd3 or 25.Qa4.

24.g3!

White moves the play marvelously from wing to wing - just like in football, where similar transfers are practically undefendable. He is now threatening 25.Bf4.

24...Ra7 25.g5 hxg5 26.Bxg5 Nc6

Quickly back into defence, but sadly it is too late for Black.

27.Rc1

White is threatening indirectly this time with 28.Bf4. An interesting variation is 27...Ne7

28.Bf4 and the queen is trapped in the middle of the board!

27...Na5 28.Rc5 Nc4 29.b3 Na3

Once more: 29...Nb6? 30.Bf4 +-.

30.Kg2

The final operation: the rook goes to h1.

30...Re7 31.Rh1 Rde8 32.Rh8+ Kxh8

33.Qh1+ Kg8 34.Bxf6 Qxg3+ 35.fxg3

Re2+ 36.Kh3 gxf6 37.Kg4

1-0

Counterplay

Counterplay is connected with a few elements. The first and the most important one is the withdrawal of the pieces away from the centre, or the neutralisation of the possible pressure on the open lines.

It is clear that the defender can turn into an attacker if he manages to switch roles (if he chases away the attacker's pieces from the centre and himself occupies the outpost, or if he takes away the control over the open file from the opponent).

But usually this kind of heroism does not work out for him and he needs to face the attacker's pressure.

In this case it is better to dig oneself in and to be careful that the position does not get any weaker, while at the same time searching for possible weaknesses in the opponent's territory.



It is very important to evaluate the position regularly - the positional elements can change quickly and it is very important that one exploits every moment for possible action.

When we are defending, these kind of moments are not common and we cannot afford to miss any of them!

□ **Timman Jan**

■ **Yermolinsky Alex**

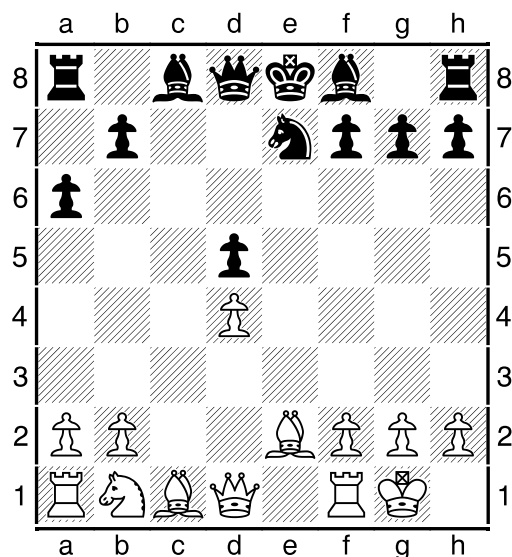
B30 Elista 1998

1.e4 c5!

The exclamation mark is placed here because, as we will see, an absolutely symmetrical pawn structure can also arise from the sharpest opening in chess.

2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 e6 4.0-0 Nge7 5.c3 a6

6.Be2 d5 7.exd5 exd5 8.d4 cxd4 9.Nxd4 Nxd4 10.cxd4?! (D)



Even though it would lose a few tempos, White needs to take with the queen.

10...g6! 11.Nc3 Bg7

Black develops his pieces ideally. They eye up the d4-pawn and control the potential outpost on e5. White already has a few minor problems to worry about: first of all, an important question is how he will defend the d4-square?

12.Bg5 0-0 13.Re1 h6 14.Bh4?

Correct was 14.Bxe7 Qxe7 15.Nxd5 Qh4 16.Nb6 Rb8 17.Nxc8 Rfxc8 18.Bg4 Rd8 19.Re4 Qf6, with more-or-less equal play.

14...g5!

The start of forced play.

15.Bg3 Nc6 16.Bf3 Be6 17.Be5 Nxe5 18.dxe5 d4 19.Na4 Qa5!

It is interesting that White is already in serious trouble, even though he has not played any really bad moves yet.

20.Bxb7 Rad8 21.Rc1 d3 22.Re4 Bd7 23.Bc6

Better would be 23.Nc5, although Black would keep his advantage: 23...Bf5 24. Ra4 Qb6 25.b3 d2 26.Rcc4 Rfe8!

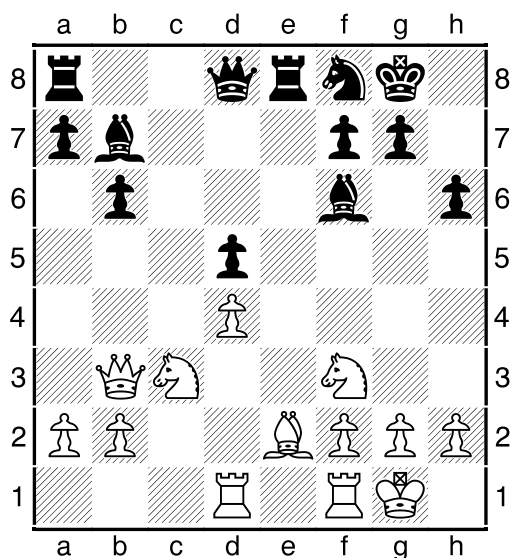
23...Bxc6 24.Rxc6 Qd5 25.Rcc4 Bxe5 26.Nc3 Qd6 27.h4 d2 28.hxg5 hxg5 29.Re3 Bf4 30.Ne4? Qe6 31.Rec3 f5 32.g3 fxe4 33.gxf4 Rxf4 34.Rg3 Qxc4 0-1

□ Damljanovic Branko

■ Jussupow Artur

D58 Belgrade 1989

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.c4 d5 4.Nc3 Be7 5.Bg5
0-0 6.e3 h6 7.Bh4 b6 8.Qb3 Bb7 9.Bxf6
Bxf6 10.Rd1 c6 11.e4 Nd7 12.cxd5 exd5
13.exd5 Re8+ 14.Be2 cxd5 15.0-0 Nf8 (D)



White has formed our structure and forced Black to develop his bishop on the passive b7-square. But Black has his trumps: first of all the pair of bishops, which makes it easier for him to defend the outpost square on e5, and at the same time offers the preliminary conditions for an attack on the d4-pawn. White would, if he succeeds in jumping into the e5-square, be better - but the jump is simply not possible at this moment.

16.Rfe1 Ne6

The ideal square for the knight, from where he attacks the d4-pawn and also defends the sensitive c7-square.

17.Bb5?!

This move is connected with a loss of time and withdrawal to the f1-square would be

better.

17...Re7 18.Re3 Qd6!

The queen would like to go to f4 and strengthen the pressure on the d4-pawn.

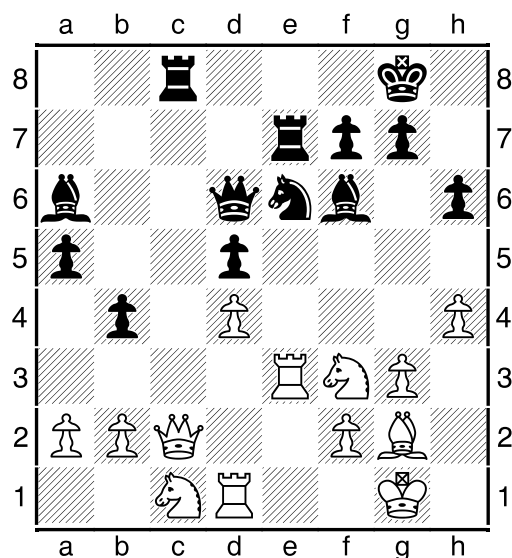
19.g3 a6 20.Bf1 b5

Preparing the advance of the pawns to b4 and a5 with the conquest of space on the queenside. Black needs to open the position a bit more, because his bishops demand it.

21.Bg2 Rc8 22.Ne2 b4 23.Qd3 a5

Play will be joined by the dark-squared bishop via the a6-square.

24.Qf5 Rce8 25.h4 Bc8 26.Qc2 Ba6 27.Nc1 Rc8 (D)



28.Qa4

This move leads directly to defeat! After 28.Qf5 White could still resist.

28...Nxd4!

First we had exemplary strategic play, and for the end - a tactical stroke!

**29.Nxd4 Bxd4 30.Rxd4 Rxe3 31.fxe3 Qxg3
32.Nb3 Qxe3+ 33.Kh2 Rc2 34.Qd7 Qe5+
35.Kh1 Rxb2 36.Qxd5 Rb1+
0-1**

The Open Centre

We can talk about the open centre when there are no pawns of either side placed in it. Manoeuvres with the pieces are characteristic for this kind of position, both players placing them in the centre.

The manoeuvres are connected with the occupation of the open lines in the centre and also of the important squares.

The possible weaknesses in the opponent's camp, especially the ones near the centre, have increased significance.

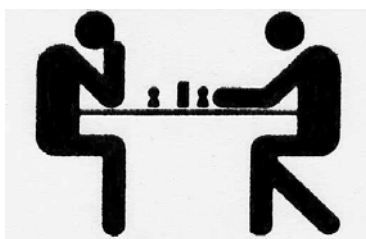
The placement of the pieces in the centre is also important because it adds power to the pieces, especially to the minor pieces. When a bishop is placed in the centre, it controls 13 squares (from the corner only seven), a knight can jump to eight different squares from a central position, which is a lot more than when it is placed in the corner on the edge of the board.

And there is something else which is important to know: if we place a bishop, for example on the e5-square, it will control the whole board on the two long diagonals.

A knight, which has difficulties moving from one side of the board to the other because its manoeuvres are slow, becomes alive in the centre and can quickly reach even the most remote squares on the board.

When there is an open centre it is hard to give exact advice. It is clear that the player, who occupies the centre with his pieces, will try to create weaknesses in the opponent's camp.

If he manages to do that, he will quickly move the play there. It is also clear that the defender will try to prevent that and will try to defend his position with the pieces - but with hardly any movement of his pawns (any pawn moves simply leaves behind holes!).



□ **Reti Richard**

■ **Capablanca Jose Raul**

A15 New York 1924

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.b4

R.Retis was one of the pioneers of chess hypermodernism. The famous Czech successfully defended his wing openings in practice - controlling the centre from a distance. J.R.Capablanca was his opposite - a marvelous classicist with a refined feeling for clear positions. We can imagine that the unusual opening placements chosen by hyper-modernists were confusing to him.

3...Bg7 4.Bb2 0-0 5.g3 b6!?

J.R.Capablanca also decides on a hypermodernistic 'double fianchetto'.

6.Bg2 Bb7 7.0-0 d6 8.d3 Nbd7 9.Nbd2 e5

Black has played the opening simply and the chances are balanced.

10.Qc2 Re8 11.Rfd1 a5

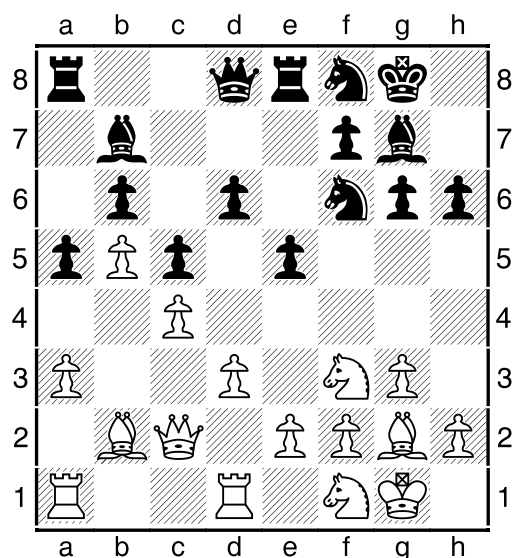
Action in the centre would be premature:

11...e4 12.dxe4 Nxe4 13.Bxg7 Kxg7 14.Nd4.

12.a3 h6?!

A move that is hard to understand and the very beginning of Black's later troubles. Until this game, the Cuban hadn't lost a single game for a few years and later on he apologised that he was sick when the game started. 'I have never beaten a healthy opponent!' was the famous comment Dr. Emanuel Lasker poked fun at Capa with.

13.Nf1 c5 14.b5 Nf8 (D)



Activity in the centre with 14... d5 would again be quite bad: 15.cxd5 Nxd5 16.N3d2! Qe7 17.Nc4 Rad8 18.Nfd2! (marvellous knight manoeuvres) and White has the advantage.

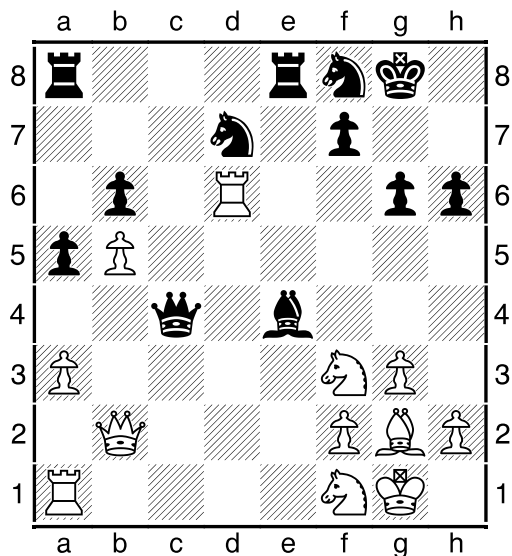
15.e3!?

A very important moment: White is forced to decide on his plans in the centre. One possibility was 15.e4 and Ne3-d5, but the Czech rightly evaluated that the opening of the centre would bring him more.

15...Qc7 16.d4 Be4 17.Qc3 exd4 18.exd4 N6d7?

A. Alekhine later wrote that better would be 19...Rad8 20.dxc5 dxc5 21.Bxg7 Kxg7 22.Qb2+ Kg8 23.Ne3, when White would be just a little better. It is clear that White will manage to open the centre completely, but the question is: who will be able to occupy it with his pieces first and more successfully? The following manoeuvres answer this question.

19.Qd2! cxd4 20.Bxd4 Qxc4 21.Bxg7 Kxg7 22.Qb2+ Kg8 23.Rxd6 (D)



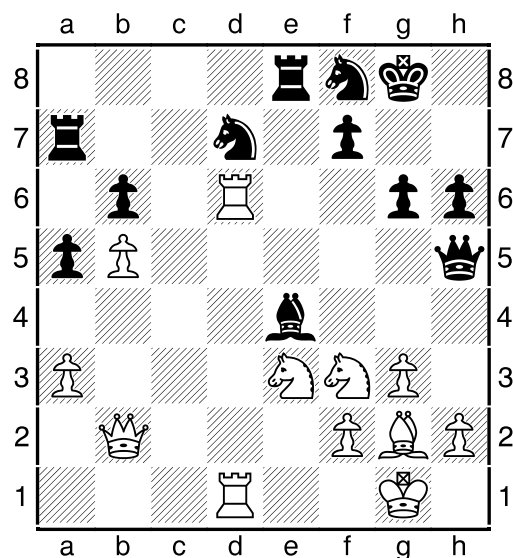
Along the way the opponents have removed both c-pawns and now the centre is completely open. There is now a threat of 24.N3d2, which was available immediately because of the reply 23... Qc2.

23...Qc5 24.Rad1

With his active pieces in the centre White controls the d-file, and he also has the initiative because of the attack on d7.

24...Ra7 25.Ne3 Qh5 (D)

The unpleasant 26.Ng4 +- was threatened.



26.Nd4!

Best! Look at the domination of White's pieces in the centre, from where they control the entire board. Black's pieces are fully pinned: The knight on d7 is defending the d6-pawn and the rook on a7 and the knight on f8 are defending the knight on d7. The queen is alone on the kingside and the rook on e8 controls nothing. R.Retzi had no greed for the queen and he gave up on the attractive 26. R1d5 Bxd5 27.g4, where Black would, after 27...Bxf3 28.gxh5 win the queen for his rook, knight and pawn, but he would have difficulties with the realisation of the advantage, unlike in the game continuation.

26...Bxg2 27.Kxg2 Qe5?

Black tries to patch himself up, even though better was 27...Ne5. Of course not 27...Rxe3? 28.fxe3 Qxd1 29.Ne6.

28.Nc4 Qc5

'The unfortunate queen cannot find any safe shelter' - A.Alekhine.

29.Nc6 Rc7 30.Ne3

White's predominance in the centre is horrifying. We have already said that the knight can move very quickly from the centre to the wing. White's knights are successfully combining attacks on the queenside, where they have paralysed Black, and quick jumps on the kingside, where there are holes around Black's king. The threat is Ng4 again, but the game was abruptly ended when J.R.Capablanca overlooked:

30...Ne5 31.R1d5

1-0

Provoking a Weakness

The provocation of a weakness, against which the attackers' strategy will be oriented, represents the basic accession in this position. Let's have a look at how Mikhail Botvinnik handled this kind of position.

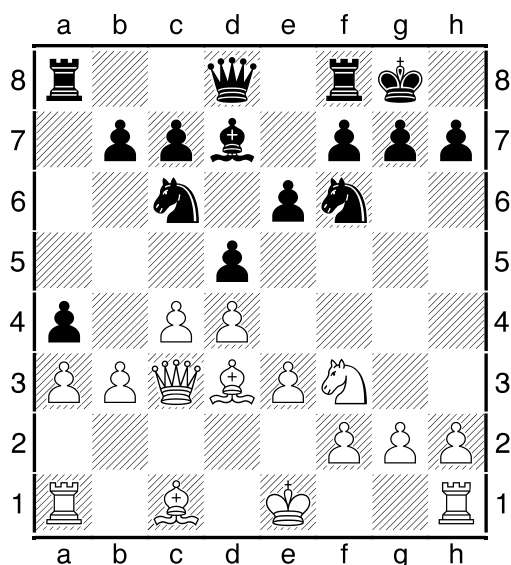
□ Kotov Alexander
■ Botvinnik Mikhail

E33 Leningrad 1939

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 Nc6 5.Nf3 d5 6.e3 0-0 7.a3 Bxc3+ 8.Qxc3 Bd7

Black - in exchange for the pair of bishops - develops at lightening-like speed. The player who has the advantage in development needs to open up the game, and this is usually connected with the opening of the centre. Which is why White needs to be careful...

9.b3 a5 10.Bd3 a4 (D)



11.Nd2?

This move goes against all basic principles of play in the opening. The knight leaves the centre and is moved again without White first finishing development.

11...Re8 12.0-0

It is clear that Black's plan is to open the centre with the strike ...e5. That is why it was unwise to consider 12.f4, which takes even more space from the dark-squared bishop and also creates new holes on the light-squares. Black would continue with

12...Na5! and after big exchanges on c4 the bishop on d7 would start to play.

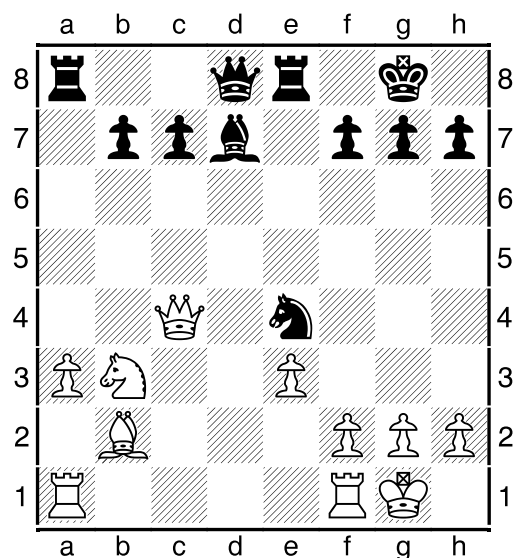
12...e5 13.dxe5

Yet another inaccurate move: when we are falling behind with development we do not open the game. Better would be 13.Bb2, without fearing 13...e4.

13...Nxe5 14.Bb2 axb3 15.Nxb3 Ne4!

The beginning of the occupation of the centre with the pieces - the preparation before the complete opening of the centre.

16.Qc2 Nxc4 17.Bxc4 dxc4 18.Qxc4 (D)



18...Qg5!

An excellent move, which forces White to weaken himself. There are two threats: 19...Bh3 and 19...Bb5, seriously limiting White's choices:

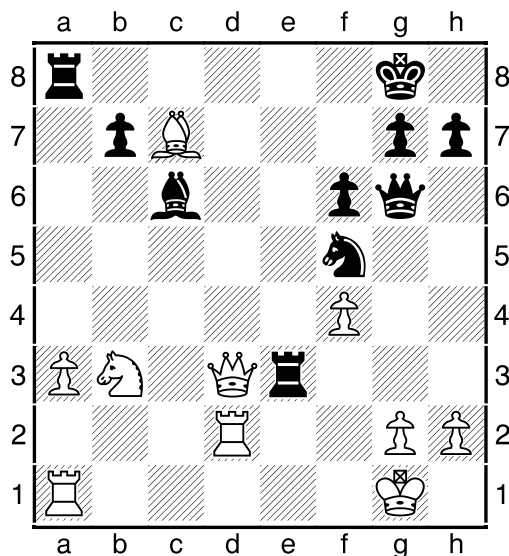
19.f4 Qg6

Threatening ...Bxb3 followed by ...Nd2 winning the exchange. The capture of the pawn with 20.Qc7 would be incredibly dangerous: 20...Bh3 21.Qc2 Rac8 22.Qe2 Nd6! with many different threats.

20.Rfd1 Nd6! 21.Qd3 Bf5 22.Qc3 Be4 23.Rd2 Bc6 24.Qd3 Nf5

Black has strengthened himself in the centre with some nice manoeuvres and is combining this central dominance with threats on the light-squares. Many things are threatened: directly 25...Re3 or more indirectly 25...Be4 26.Qc3 Nh4.

25.Be5 f6 26.Bxc7 Rxe3 (D)



The centre is fully open and Black's dominance is even more marked.

27.Qc4+ Kh8 28.Bb6 Ree8 29.Qf1 h5

30.Nd4 Nxd4 31.Bxd4 Re4

The opposite-coloured bishops increase Black's advantage. The old rule teaches us that opposite-coloured bishops do not stop or prevent an attack, but on the contrary make the defender's task even harder, because he cannot play against the bishop.

32.Re1 Rxe1 33.Qxe1 Rxa3 34.Kh1 Ra8 35.Re2 Kh7 36.h3 Re8 37.Qf2 Qxg2+ 38.Qxg2 Rxe2

White played the opening inaccurately and M.Botvinnik obtained a serious advantage in development. White also continued inaccurately and ignored Black wishes for the opening of the centre. With the excellent move 18...Qg5 Black provoked weaknesses around White's king and later on exploited them instructively.

0-1

The Attack on the King

When the opponent has not yet castled, it best to open the play up as soon as possible. If our pieces are near the opponent's king it will not bode well for him.

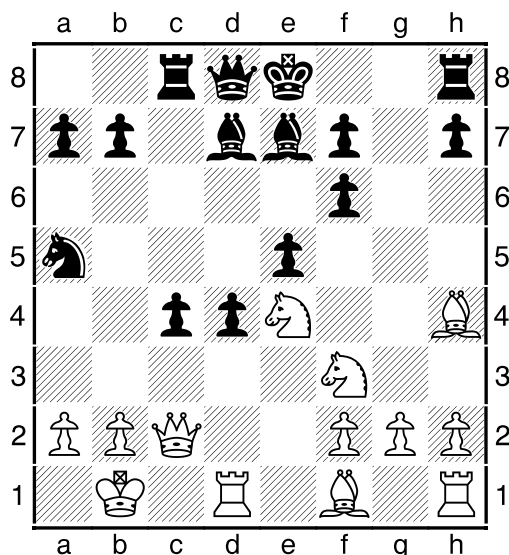
Then the play becomes full of tactics, sacrifices often occur and the games usually end up on the shortlist of 'most beautiful game'.

□ Chebotarev Oleg

■ Freidlin

D39 Leningrad 1948

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Bg5 Bb4+ 5.Nc3 dxc4 6.e4 c5 7.e5 cxd4 8.Qa4+ Nc6 9.0-0-0 Bd7 10.Ne4 Be7 11.exf6 gxf6 12.Bh4 Rc8 13.Kb1 Na5 14.Qc2 e5 (D)



Black sacrificed a piece and in return received three pawns and a terrific predominance in the centre. White's decision to return the piece is not hard to make in view of this, especially when we consider the fact that Black's king has not found safety yet.

15.Nxd4! exd4 16.Rxd4 Qb6

16...0-0? 17.Bxf6! Bxf6 18.Rxd7!

17.Rd6!

An excellent move, which highlights all of White's advantages - and the other way around also, all of Black's shortcomings. The rook is untouchable: 17...Bd6 18.Nf6 and the queen is lost.

17...Rc6 18.Bxf6 Rg8 19.Bd4!

White first prevented Black from castling and now he frees up the squares for the attack with tempo (the bishop clears the square for the knight, which desperately wants to be placed on f6).

19...Qb5 20.Rxc6 Nxc6 21.Bc5!

Removing the defence - White is attacking in great style. An empty centre leaves a clear path for fantasy and chess geometry.

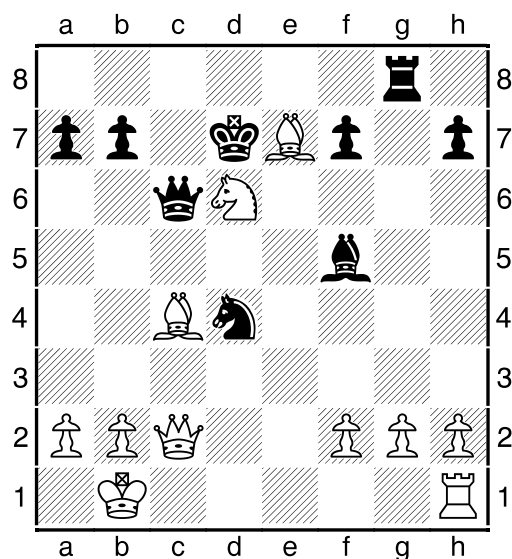
21...Bf5 22.Bxe7 Nd4

Black was depending on this counterstroke, but White had calculated deeply and accurately:

23.Bxc4!

Of course not 23.Bxf6 Qc6! rather than 23...Nxc2 24.Nxf6!+ Ke7 25.Nxg8+ and 26.Bxb5.

23...Qc6 24.Nd6+ Kd7 (D)



25.Nxf5!

A magnificent queen sacrifice, which makes this game a real beauty.

25...Nxc2 26.Rd1+ Kc8

26...Kc7 27.Bb3.

27.Bxf7 Rg4

Or 27...Rxc2 28.Bd5 Qd7 29.Bxb7! or 27...Rh8 28.Rc1.

28.Nd6+ Kc7 29.Ne8+ Kb6 30.Rd6 1-0

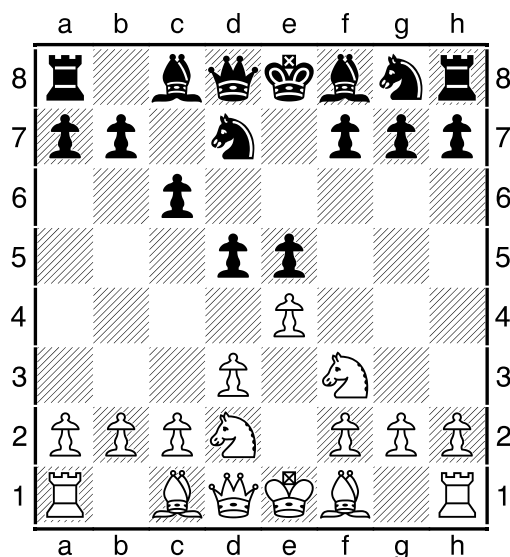
The most beautiful illustration of the attack on the short-castled king is the famous game between M.Tal and V.Smyslov in Yugoslavia in 1959.

□ Tal Mihail

■ Smyslov Vassily

B10 Bled/Zagreb/Belgrade 1959

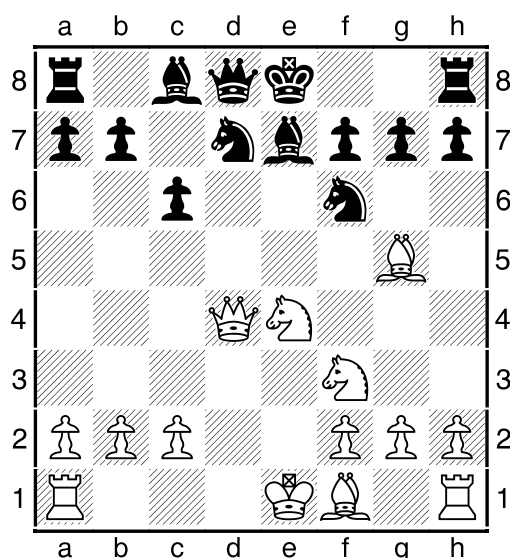
1.e4 c6 2.d3 d5 3.Nd2 e5 4.Ngf3 Nd7 (D)



5.d4

An immediate invitation to an open fight and to clear the centre! The pawns in the centre cannot withstand the mutual tension and it is only a matter of time before the centre will unleash itself.

5...Qxe4 6.Nxe4 exd4 7.Qxd4 Ngf6 8.Bg5 Be7 (D)



White could exploit his initiative most with a transition to the endgame, after 9.Nd6+ Bxd6 10.Qxd6 Qe7+ 11.Qxe7+, where he would dominate with his pair of bishops. But young M.Tal thought differently: as a rule he avoided the exchange of the queens and adored attacks, even though he

intentionally played some bad moves! We do not recommend you to play like this, unless you have the abilities of M.Tal!

9.0-0-0?! 0-0 10.Nd6

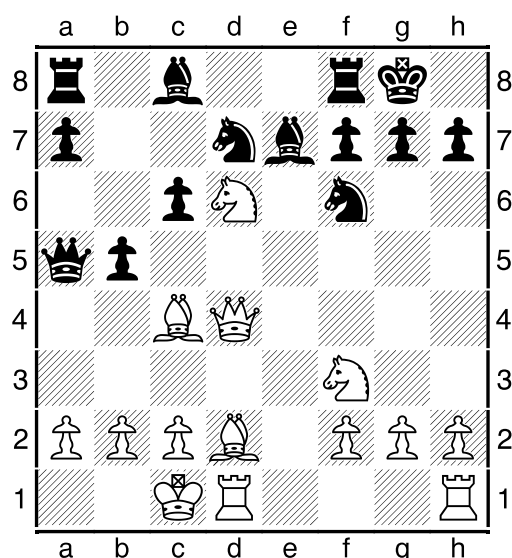
The difference is obvious: Black does not have to take anymore, because it is no longer check. A very good move for Black now would have been 10...Nb6 and for example 11.Nxc8 Rxc8 12.Qh4 Nfd5!. Did V.Smyslov wanted more?

10...Qa5 11.Bc4

White intentionally exposes himself to the attack of Black's pawns and will in the meantime play with his pieces in the centre. M.Tal oriented himself in such circumstances very well:

11...b5 12.Bd2! (D)

An excellent move! The bishop goes to the long diagonal, from where it will be a threat against Black's king, while freeing the g5-square for the queen, from where she will threaten mate amongst other things.



12...Qa6

The other possibility was 12...Qc7, whereupon N.Tal would definitely strike on f7: 13.Bxf7+ Rxf7 14.Nxf7 Kxf7 15.Ng5+ Kg8 16.Rhe1. Though we have been taught since we are little that the two pieces are worth more than a rook and a pawn, and that we usually do not strike like this on the f7-square, M.Tal loved to prove the contrary. And he usually managed to prove it

13.Nf5! Bd8!

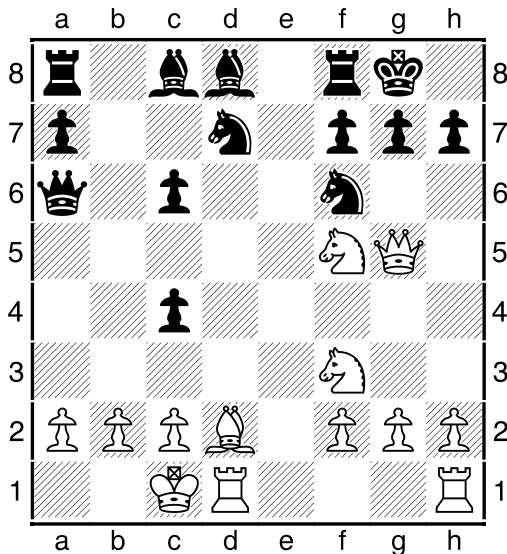
Both players are playing the best moves: White is already attacking wildly, while

Black is accurately defending himself. After 13...Bc5? M.Tal would let loose his imagination with 14.Qf4 bxc4 15.Bc3 and Black would have no defence against the many threats.

14.Qh4!

A classic intuitive sacrifice, the consequences of which were not possible to calculate fully during the game. The queen heads to g5.

14...bxc4 15.Qg5 (D)



A famous position! Black has many possibilities for defense and the almighty computer, for example, has proven that the game would end in a draw, were the players to play the most accurate moves. But is this not also true after the first move 1.e4?

15...Nh5

One of the best possibilities.

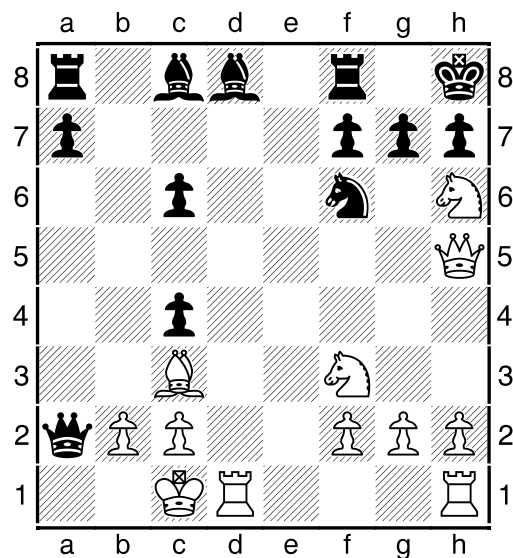
16.Nh6+ Kh8 17.Qxh5 Qxa2!

Even though the commentators of half a century ago thought that this move was a decisive mistake, computers nowadays tell

us that this is not so. After 17...Bf6 18.Nxf7+ White would have a strong attack, even though M.Tal intended to respond with the bad 18.Bc3? Bxc3 19.Ng5 Bxb2+! 20.Kxb2 Qb5+ 21.Kc1 gxf6 22.Qxf6 Qf5 and the critical h7-square is defended!

18.Bc3 Nf6? (D)

This really is a decisive mistake - after 18...Bf6 or 18...Bc7 Black would probably be able to defend himself. The first and only mistake by V.Smyslov in the game and - the immediate end!



19.Qxf7!

Lightning from a blue sky, such as only the great magician from Riga could do!

19...Qa1+

Or a smothered mate after 19...Rxf7 20.Rxd8+ Ng8 21.Nxf7 # or 19...Re8 20.Qg8+! and 21.Nf7 #!

20.Kd2 Rxf7 21.Nxf7+ Kg8 22.Rxa1 Kxf7 23.Ne5+ Ke6 24.Nxc6 Ne4+ 25.Ke3 Bb6+ 26.Bd4

1-0

The Defence with the Open Centre

The placing of the pieces into an open centre does not necessarily give an advantage, and certainly not a decisive one.

It is very important to defend those pieces properly and to be prepared for the exchanges on which the opponent will weigh heavily. What can a defender do? He cannot simply withstand the pressure from the centralised pieces and needs to do everything in his power to remove them.

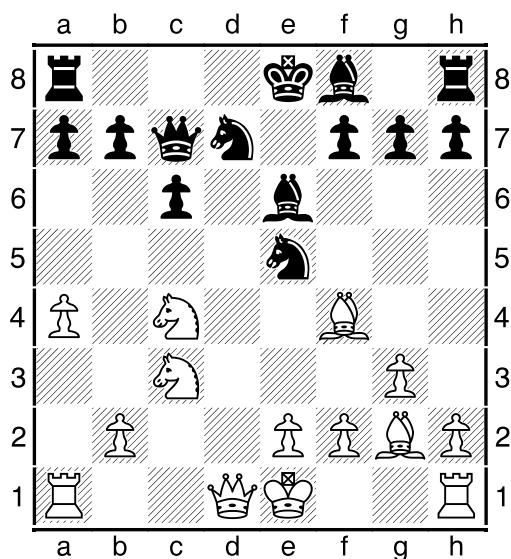
The basis of the defensive play is therefore quite simple: manoeuvring with the goal of getting rid of the enemy centralised pieces.

□ Alekhine Alexander

■ Euwe Max

D17 Netherlands 1935

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 dxc4 5.a4 Bf5 6.Ne5 Nbd7 7.Nxc4 Qc7 8.g3 e5 9.dxe5 Nxe5 10.Bf4 Nfd7 11.Bg2 Be6 (D)



A very modern variation in those days and especially during the two matches between the fourth and the fifth World Champions. Black has many moves to choose from now: 11...f6 or 11...Rd8 and nowadays the most popular and wild 11...g5.

12.Nxe5 Nxe5 13.0-0 Be7

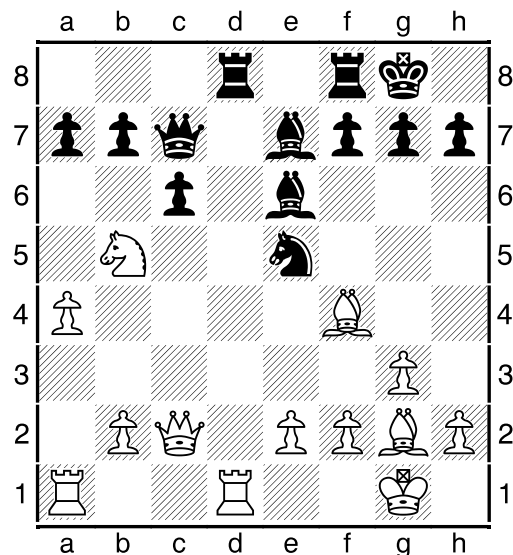
Theory recommends instead 13...f6.

14.Qc2!

White is already threatening 15.Nb5-d4 or 15.Nd5, a consequence of Black's careless play: two pieces are undefended - the queen

on c7 and indirectly also the centralised knight on e5.

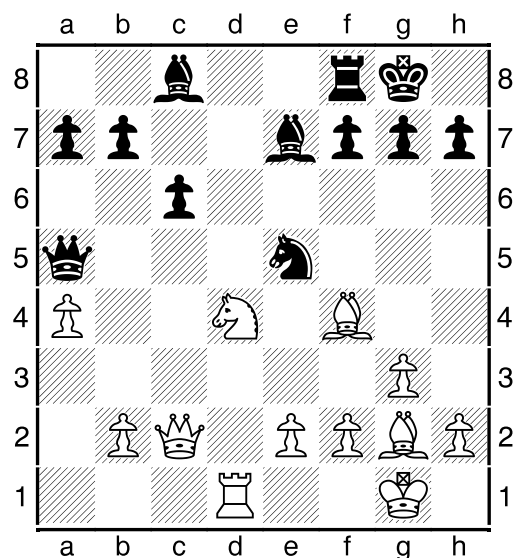
14...Rd8 15.Rfd1 0-0 16.Nb5 (D)



16...Rxd1+?

To figure out that this is a mistake it is not necessary to be a strong chess player. We do not give up the open files without a fight, unless we are forced to by the opponent. With this exchange, Black was preparing the move ...Qa5, which was not possible immediately: 16...Qa5 17.Rd8 Rd8 18.Be5 cb5 19.Bb7 Rd2 20.Qc6 +/-, but the idea is completely wrong. It would have been correct to play 16...Qb8, with a continued strengthening of the knight in the centre.

17.Rxd1 Qa5 18.Nd4 Bc8 (D)



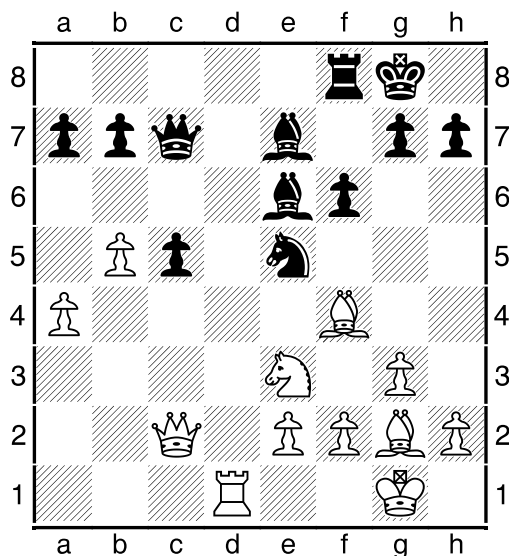
19.b4!

A marvellous wing stroke, which represents the successful culmination of White's play in the centre. Black is angry about the unstable placement of the knight on e5 and he cannot take the pawn: 19...Bxb4 20.Nb3 Qc7 21.Qe4 Bc3 22.Rc1 Bb2 23.Rc2 f5 24.Qb4 +- and a piece is lost.

19...Qc7 20.b5 c5 21.Nf5

The unfortunate knight on e5 is still calling for help, but by the time Black strengthened its defence on the next move with ...f6, it was already too late.

21...f6 22.Ne3 Be6 (D)



White will play the final part of the game flawlessly. The biggest hole in Black's camp is placed on the d5-square and that is why it is necessary to remove its only defender first:

23.Bd5! Bxd5 24.Rxd5 Qa5

24...Rd8 25.Bxe5 fxe5 26.Qf5 +- - A.Alekhine.

25.Nf5 Qe1+ 26.Kg2 Bd8 27.Bxe5 fxe5

28.Rd7 Bf6 29.Nh6+ Kh8 30.Qxc5

1-0



An instructive game, which demonstrated clearly the introductory words. Black's pieces in the centre were unstable, not defended well-enough and White built his entire strategy on this fact.

The Planned Opening of Play

With the example of the planned opening of the centre we already met in the game M.Tal-V.Smyslov (5.d4!) it was thought for a very long time that the quick opening of the centre represented a draw offer.

But this opinion is wrong: the player that masters this strategic element can confront the opponent with many problems. Usually a player decides to open the centre when he notices that a free central square will be good for one of his pieces.

Especially painful for the opponent is if we place the queen there and the opponent is unable to get rid of it. The World Champion Tigran Petrosian loved to show the following game on this theme to his students.

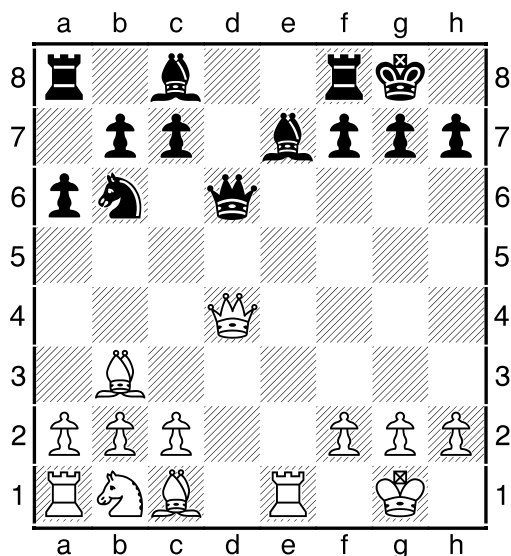
□ Suetin Alexey
 ■ Petrosian Tigran
 C84 Moscow 1950

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.d4 exd4 7.Re1 0-0 8.e5 Nd5

The theory of this variation was at that time only starting to develop - nowadays we know that the correct move is 8...Ne8. The knight on d5 offers White too many tempos for development.

9.Nxd4 Nxd4 10.Qxd4 Nb6 11.Bb3 d5 12.exd6 Qxd6 (D)

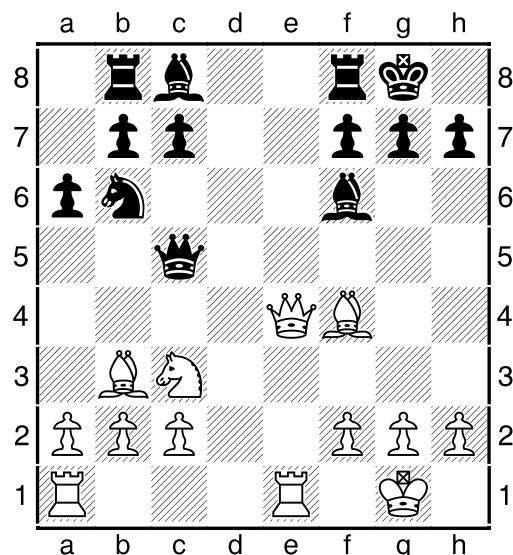
A bit better is 12...Bd6, though White is still better after 13.Bf4 Qh4 14.g3 Qg4 15.h3!.



13.Qe4!

This is the kind of centralisation that we are talking about. The queen on e4 controls practically the entire board and Black has no suitable piece with which to get rid of it.

13...Bf6 14.Nc3 Rb8 15.Bf4 Qc5 (D)



The next instructive moment! With his experienced manoeuvring, White forces Black to develop his pieces onto bad-squares - and now he decides to exchange his pride and joy, the queen on e4! Why? Purely because Black's strongholds were being defended only by his queen, and after the exchange of the strongest pieces, Black's weaknesses will be seen only too clearly.

16.Qe3! Qc6

One convincing variation is 16...Qxe3 17.Rxe3 Bd8 18.Rd1 Bd7 19.h3 and there is no defence against Red3.

17.Qg3 Be6

Black sacrifices a pawn and it is the beginning of the end. After 17...Bd8 18.Be5 g6 19.Rad1 Bd7 20.Qf4 White would have a very strong attack.

18.Bxc7 Rbc8 19.Be5 Bxb3 20.axb3 Nd7 21.Bxf6 Nxf6 22.Rad1

And White easily realised his big advantage.
22...Rfe8 23.h3 h6 24.Re3 Rxe3 25.Qxe3 Qc7 26.Qg3 Qxg3 27.fxg3 Kf8 28.Kf2 Ke7 29.Ke3 Ke6 30.Rd4 Ne8 31.Kd3 Nd6 32.Ne2 g5 33.g4 f5 34.gxf5+ Nxf5 35.Re4+ Kf6 36.Nd4 Nxd4 37.Rxd4 Rc7 38.Rd6+

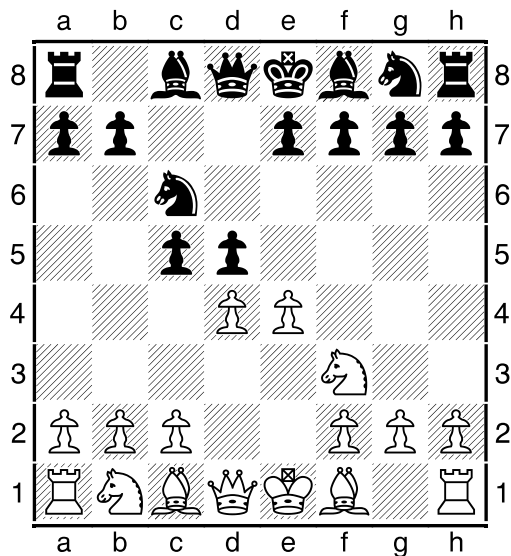
Kf5 39.Rxh6 Kf4 40.c4 Rd7+ 41.Kc3 Rg7
42.g4 Re7 43.c5 Kg3 44.b4 Re3+ 45.Kc4
Re4+ 46.Kb3 Re3+ 47.Ka4 Re2 48.Rh5
Rxb2 49.Rxg5 Kxh3 50.Rg7 Kh4 51.Rxb7
Kxg4 52.Rf7 Ra2+ 53.Kb3 Ra1 54.Kc4
Re1+ 55.Kd5 Rd1+ 56.Kc6 Rb1 57.Kb6
Rxb4+ 58.Kxa6 Kg5 59.c6 Kg6 60.Rf1
1-0

□ Boleslavsky Isaak

■ Gurgeniidze Bukhuti

B32 Rostov on Don 1960

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 d5? (D)



A senseless experiment that will be soundly punished by White. Black will lag behind in development and the opening of the centre is in favor for the player who has the advantage in development!

4.exd5 Qxd5 5.Nc3 Qe6+ 6.Be3 cxd4

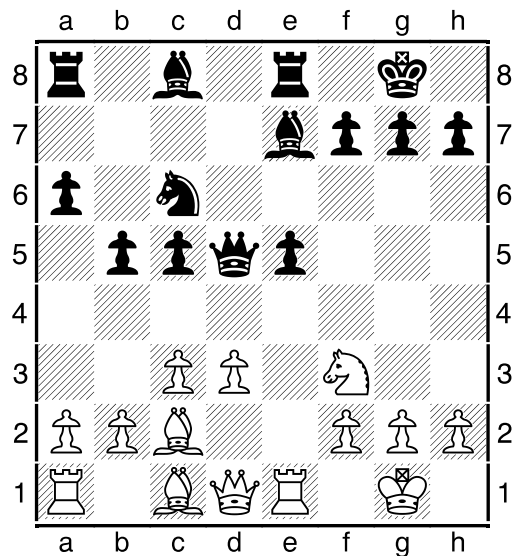
7.Nxd4 Qd7 8.Ndb5! Rb8 9.Qe2! f6
10.Rd1 Qg4 11.f3 Qh5 12.Bxa7 Nxa7
13.Nd6+
1-0

□ Alekhine Alexander

■ Eliskases Erich

C90 Podebrady 1936

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 Na5 9.Bc2 c5 10.d3 Nc6 11.Nbd2 0-0 12.Nf1 Re8 13.Ne3 d5 14.exd5 Nxd5 15.Nxd5 Qxd5 (D)

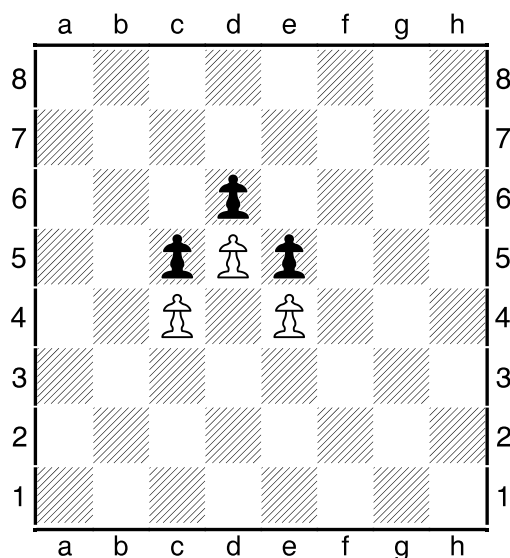
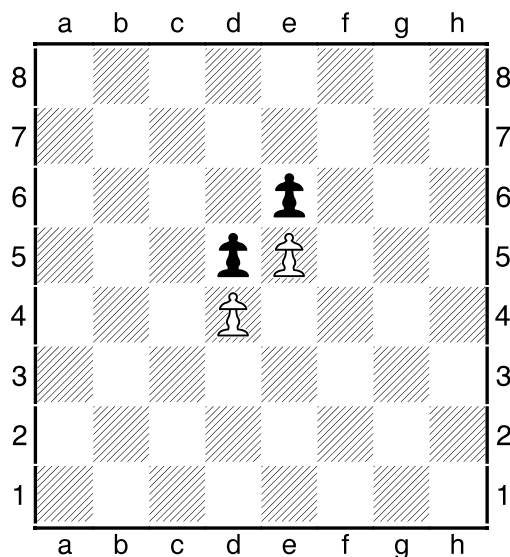


16.d4 exd4 17.Be4 Qd7 18.cxd4 Bf6
19.Bg5 Rxe4 20.Rxe4 Bxd4 21.Nxd4 Nxd4
22.Qh5 Bb7 23.Rh4 Qf5 24.Be3 Rd8
25.Rxd4
1-0

The Closed (Blocked) Centre

We can talk about a closed or blocked centre when the central pawns of both players are blocked or when they are facing each other directly and are standing on squares of opposite colours.

Let us once more take a look at two characteristic pawn placements:



A fixed centre makes our job easier when we are choosing our plans. When we use them in practice, we aid ourselves with known playing and strategic methods.

A simple logic, which can also be turned into a rule: where there is a closed centre, the play must be moved to the wing.

Usually one of the players attacks on the kingside and the other on the queenside. The

position of the kings is very important: the attack directly on the king is usually more dangerous than the attack on the other wing.

The price that we have to pay for a mistake is even higher here and we can afford a sacrifice in order for the attack to be successful. When there is a blocked centre, a pawn wedge can occur. In the first diagram,

White has a pawn wedge (pawns that are placed diagonally and are linked) from the b2-square to the e5-square. If Black decides to exchange on d4 then the wedge becomes shorter (formed now by the d4 and e5 pawns).

Black's wedge is spreading out from the f7-square to the d5-square. If, instead of exchanging on d4, he advanced with ...c4, then the wedge would become longer (from the f7-square to the c4-square). Sometimes Black makes it longer with the placement of the b-pawn on the b3-square. In the second case, White has a distinctive pawn wedge from g2 to d5 and Black from c7 to f4.

Aron Nimzowitsch spent lots of time studying this 'wedge theory' and he made a very important discovery: when we attack the opponent's wedge with the pawns, we should always attack the last defended pawn!

In White's wedge from g2 to d5 the last defended pawn is the pawn on f3 (defended by the g2-pawn). So Black's plan is simple: the advance of the g-pawn to the g4-square, which provokes White's reaction.

He can let Black take on f3, which will leave the f3-pawn without pawn defence (if White recaptures g2xf3) or White's g-pawn would become weak and isolated (if White takes on g4).

Something similar happens when White is playing against Black's wedge c7-d6. The pawn on d6 needs to be attacked and White can achieve that with the c5 move.

A similar rule can on principle be used in all attacks against pawn wedges. When we attack the wedge with the pieces then we of course attack the last pawn in the wedge, but it is very hard to get to it without the help of

our pawns.

This is why we often aid ourselves with the opening of the neighbouring files and so try to come around the wedge, especially when we try to attack with the rooks.

The defence is also connected with this logic and actions that are trying to restrict the opponent's defensive techniques. When we know what the most suitable defensive plan is, we will place the pieces so that they will make the attacker's goal very hard to accomplish. When we cannot prevent the plan from happening, we try to predict the consequences and then we set up the next defence.

When we use action on the wings, we must keep the centre blocked. Every change in the central statics can be fatal. White's queen has managed to enter into the opponent's territory in our diagram, but she will not be able to handle things by herself.

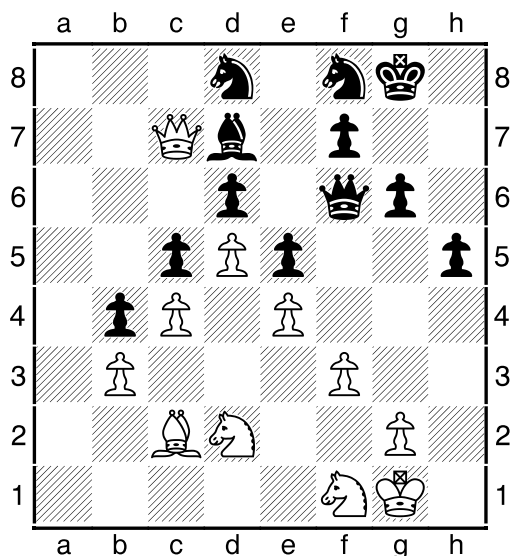
Black is a pawn up, he has successfully blocked the queenside and seemingly also the centre.

If Black's pawn were to be placed on f4 then Black would surely win the game, because he would only need to correct the coordination of his pieces and then advance with the pawns on the wing where he has the material advantage. But as it is, White saw a chance to break Black's centre:

□ Shishov Mikhail Vasilievich

■ Byvshev

Riga 1954



1.f4!

Suddenly Black is in real trouble. White is threatening to take on e5 and the clumsy placement of the knight on d8 paralyzes Black's queen. All that is left is to take with the pawn:

1...exf4 2.e5! dxe5 3.Ne4

The knight is now awake and the battle is immediately decided. Black's central pawns, which were only seconds ago blocking the centre, will fall.

3...Qh4 4.Qxe5 Nh7 5.Nxc5 f3 6.Qg3 Qd4+ 7.Qf2 Qxf2+ 8.Kxf2

And White won quickly.

1-0

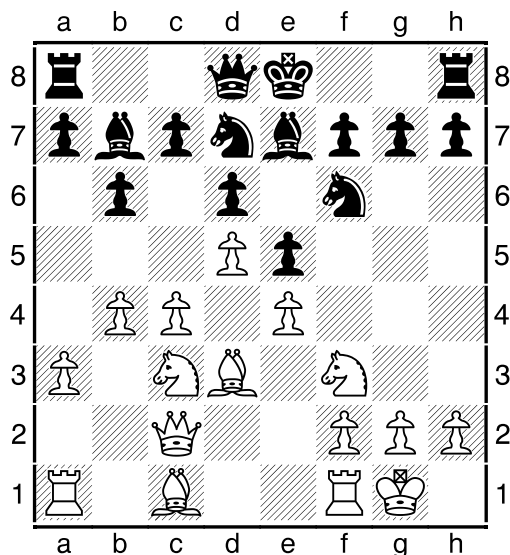
Similarly fatal can be an attack on the wrong side - the side where the player doesn't stand better. It is very important to study similar positions: without understanding where the best place to attack is, it is pointless to learn about the correct methods for attacking!

□ Opocensky Karel

■ Nimzowitsch Aron

E32 Marienbad 1925

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 b6 5.e4 Bb7 6.Bd3 Nc6 7.Nf3 Be7 8.a3 d6 9.0-0 e5 10.d5 Nb8 11.b4 Nbd7 (D)



The diagram shows a classic position with a closed centre. The plan for White is not too hard: Black is blocking the centre with a pawn wedge from c7 to e5 and we already know that we need to attack this kind of wedge with the pawns and, more precisely,

we need to attack the penultimate pawn. In our case that is the pawn on d6, which can be attacked by the c5 move! Black will in the meantime prepare the ...f5 undermining move. White's plan is clear: due to the c5-square being strongly defended, White will first need to prepare the move with his pieces. For example h3 (the defence against ...Ng4), Be3, Na4 etc. The Czech Grandmaster obviously did not understand the position and instead decided to attack on the other wing - the wing where he has no advantage!

12.Bb2? 0-0 13.Ne2

Evaluating the following moves would be pointless, because White is following his chosen plan. The place for the pieces was aiming at the queenside.

13...Ne8 14.Qd2 g6 15.g4 Ng7 16.Ng3 c6!

Black first strengthened the kingside and now he is already active in the centre: the rule teaches us that the correct response to an action on the wing is to attack in the centre. Of course, if that is possible.

17.Qh6 Rc8 18.Rac1 a6

Black is waiting with the opening of the centre, because he sees that White is weakening himself by preparing action on

the kingside.

19.Rfd1 Rc7 20.h4? cxd5 21.cxd5

After 21.exd5 Black would strike at the centre even further - 21...b5!

21...Rxc1 22.Rxc1 Nf6 23.Nh2 Kh8 24.Qe3 Nd7 25.Nf3 Nf6 26.Nh2 Ng8 27.g5 f6

Black is already in counterattack mode and the game will be decided on the kingside, where White had placed all his hopes.

28.Nf3 fxg5 29.hxg5 Bc8 30.Rc6 Bd7 31.Bxa6

Of course not 31.Rxb6? Rxf3.

31...Bxc6 32.Qxc6 Qc7 33.b5 h6!

With this pawn sacrifice Black makes some room for his king.

34.gxh6 Ne6 35.a4 Bd8 36.Ba3 Qf7 37.Nxe5 dxe5 38.Bxf8 Qxf8 39.a5 Nxe6 40.axb6 Ng4 41.b7 Nxe3 42.b8Q Qf3 43.fxe3 Qxg3+ 44.Kh1 Qxe3 45.Bc8 Bc7 46.Qb7 Nf4 47.Bh3 Qxh3+ 48.Kg1 Qg2 # 0-1

White played the opening well, but then he completely missed the correct plan. His action on the kingside only weakened him and Black exploited that instructively, firstly with action in the centre and after that with the final attack on the kingside.

The Pawn(s) Attack on the Blocked Centre

We already said that we should attack the opponent's pawn wedge with our own pawns and will either try to break it down or loosen it, or we try to weaken the last link of the chain - and in order to do that we must aid plan with by an attack on the penultimate pawn.

In the next legendary game we will see how the opponents' did not know all of the 'rules' yet and therefore did not make completely accurate choices.

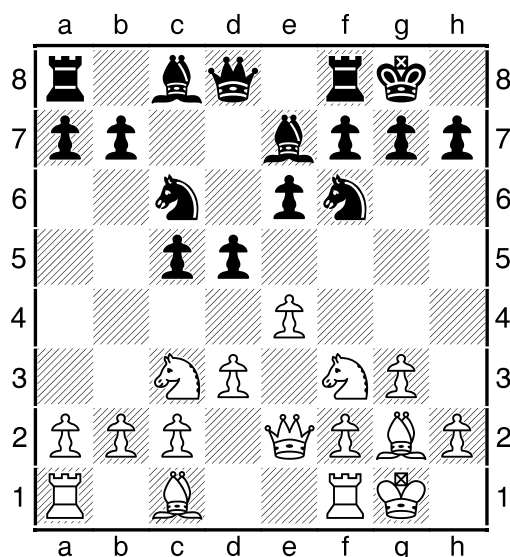
□ Chigorin Mikhail

■ Tarrasch Siegbert

C00 St Petersburg 1893

1.e4 e6 2.Qe2 c5 3.g3 Nc6 4.Nf3 Be7 5.Bg2

d5 6.d3 Nf6 7.0-0 0-0 8.Nc3 (D)



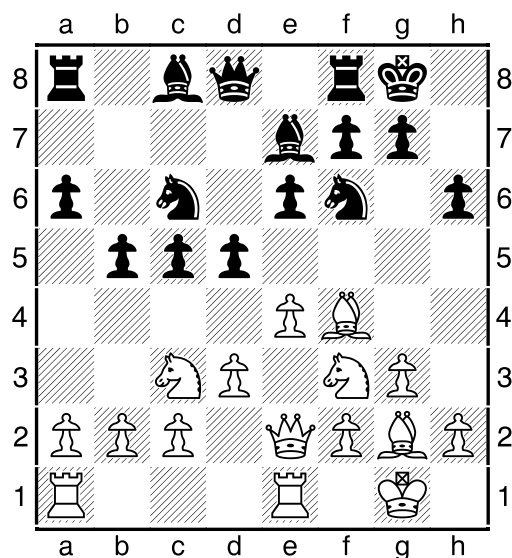
Many times we will come across such positions, where White develops his knight to the d2-square, then blocks the centre (e4-e5) and later on develops according to the system Re1, Nf1, h4, Bf4, N1h2, Ng4 etc, and tries to attack Black's king. Meanwhile Black will search for his opportunity on the queenside, where no pieces are placed and so Black's pawns can progress without interference. With the move played, the father of the Russian chess school tries to provoke Black into playing ...d4.

8...a6 9.Bg5 h6

In positions in which we know that our opponent will attack us, we should prefer

not to move the pawns in front of our king. Any pawn movement in front of the castled position can bring a weakness, which offers the attacker extra chances.

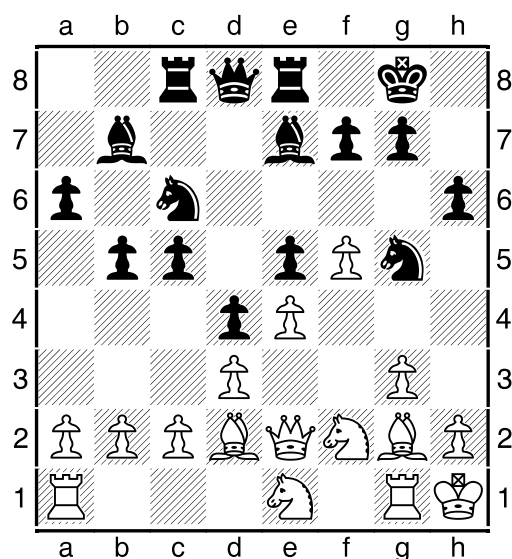
10.Bf4 b5 11.Rfe1 (D)



11...d4?

White wanted this to happen: the stable centre leaves him with a free hand to attack on the kingside. Correct is to maintain the tension with the help of the move 11...Bb7.

12.Nd1 Nd7 13.Kh1 Re8 14.Rg1 e5 15.Bd2 Nf8 16.Ne1 Ne6 17.f4 Bb7 18.f5 Ng5 19.Nf2 Rc8 (D)



20.Qh5?

The beginning of the wrong plan. We already know that when there is a blocked

centre, we attack with the pawns first and only afterwards with the pieces. So the correct plan would be h4, followed by Nf3 and g4-g5.

20...Nh7 21.Nf3 c4!

Black 'gets' it: with this attack on the penultimate link of the wedge he will gain the best counterplay.

22.Bf1 cxd3 23.cxd3 Ng5!

Now it is time for the blockade on the kingside. He already dominates on the queenside. White's queen on h5 is causing problems only to himself because it is blocking its own pieces.

24.Bxg5 Bxg5 25.Ng4 Kf8!

A preventive move, exploiting the position of White's queen on h5. White was threatening 26.h4 Bf6 27.Nxf6+ Qxf6 28.g4 and 29. g5. After the move played the threat is gone: 26.h4 Bf6 27.Nxf6+ Qxf6 28.g4 Ke7! 29.g5 hxg5 30.hxg5 Qd6 and Black will control the h-file with decisive threats.

26.Be2 Bf6!

Black starts to set up the defensive placement ...Bf6, ...Qd6, ...Ne7-g8.

27.h4 Qd6 28.Nfh2 Ne7!

Black is defending slyly: now White can't go 29.Nxf6 Qxf6 30.Ng4 because of 30...Qf5!.

29.Raf1 Ng8 30.Bd1 Rc7!

Black passes over to the counterattack.

31.Bb3 Rec8 32.Nf2 Bd8 33.Qe2

The threat was 33...Nf6 and White had no choice but to admit that his choice of plan was wrong.

33...a5 34.Nf3 a4 35.Bd1 Bc6!

This move hides the plan ...Be8-f7-b3, with the swap of the light-squared bishops. White's bishop prevents Black's rooks from entering and that is why Black want to exchange it, even though his bishop is 'officially better'. White can defend against Black's plans with the help of the attack on the kingside, but this has fallen behind for the last 15 moves!

36.g4 f6 37.Nh3 Be8 38.Qh2 Bf7 39.a3 Bb3

40.Nf2 Bxd1 41.Nxd1 Rc2

Black has achieved all his little strategic goals and he will now take over the decisive initiative on the queenside.

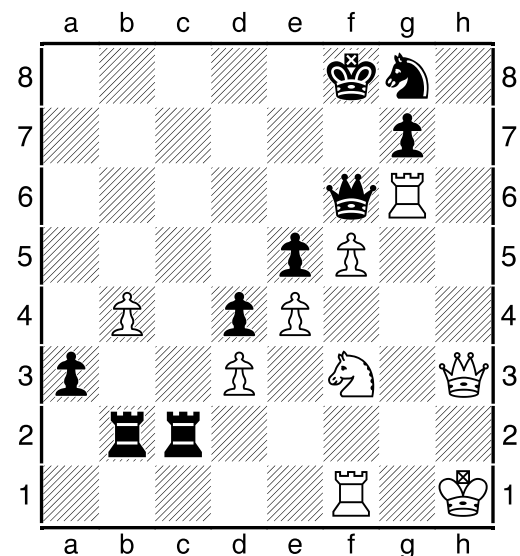
42.Qg3 b4 43.axb4 Qa6 44.Nf2 Rxb2 45.g5 hxg5 46.hxg5 Rcc2 47.Ng4 Qd6

There is no obvious way for White to strengthen his attack, and meanwhile Black has some serious threats on the second rank and with the passed a-pawn

48.gxf6 Bxf6 49.Qh3 a3 50.Nxf6

Or 50.Qh8 (with a threat 51.Nh6) 50...g5! -+.

50...Qxf6 51.Rg6 (D)



51...a2!

An elegant ending to the game, with a queen sacrifice.

52.Rxf6+ gxf6 53.Rd1 Rb1 54.Qf1 Rcb2 55.Nd2 Rxd1 56.Qxd1 Rxd2 57.Qc1 Rxd3 58.Kg2 Rc3 59.Qa1 Rc2+ 60.Kf3 d3 61.Qd1 Rb2 62.Qa4 d2

0-1

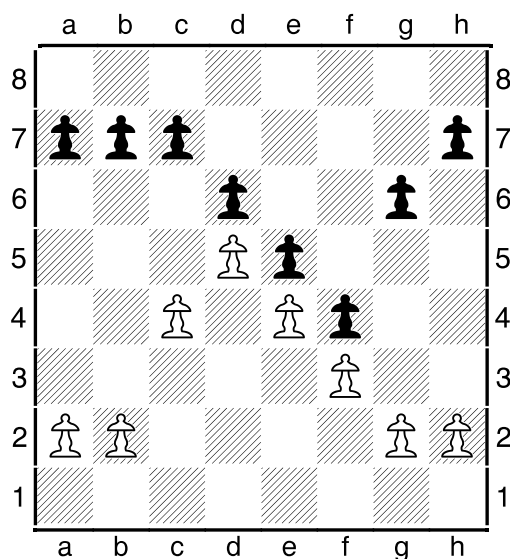
We have seen here how dangerous an incautious closing of the centre is. White could have gained an almost decisive advantage at move 20, but instead of the pawn advance h4, he decided instead on an attack with his pieces, one which was doomed from the very beginning.

Questions About the 'King's Indian Defence'

The attack with the pawns cannot be decisive by itself. The pawns do all that they can with their action: they loosen the seemingly bulletproof pawn wedges, weaken the squares in their hinterland or around them - and with it make room for their own pieces - so that these pieces can deliver the final decisive blows.

The positions from the classic 'King's Indian Defence' are the most typical for questions about the closed centre, and especially for the chapter about clearing the way for the pieces.

Let us see in a little more detail the placement of the pawns in the Mar del Plata variation:



We can see that the position in the centre is defined by the two pawn wedges: White's, with the pawns from g2 to d5 and Black's, with the pawns from c7 to f4.

It is clear that it is very hard to get into the opponent's camp with the pieces without any help from the pawns. Where should White attack in perspective? We already know that the correct plan is connected with the c5 move.

After c5 Black will be face with a question: he can swap on c5 and allow the c-file to semi-open from where White will attack the c7-pawn.

He can also not react and allow White to make the choice. White usually takes on d6 and Black again needs to choose. Taking with a piece leads to the previously described variations, with the backward c7-pawn, while taking with the pawn leaves the d6-pawn without defence (the defender on c7 is gone) - and at the same time White has opened the c-file where he will be able to prepare a penetration to the weak c7-square.

And Black? All his hopes are linked with the advance ...g5-g4. If he can achieve that, White will face similar question to Black's after the c5 move.

White's job is a little harder due to his king being hidden behind the wedge - so of course he cannot allow the play to open too much.

Does Black have the advantage? No, not even near. The placement of the wedges in the centre also offers White a space advantage and with it also the possibility for him to finish his action more easily.

Black must be patient: if he survives the first wave of attack and in the meantime prepares his own activity; only then does he have a chance to take over the initiative.



□ **Lilienthal Andor**

■ **Kan Ilia Abramovich**

E94 Moscow 1935

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nc3 Nbd7 4.e4 e5 5.Nf3 g6 6.Be2 Bg7 7.0-0 0-0 8.d5

The 8.d5 move defines the following play, because now two pawn wedges are forming.

The plans of play are clear from the beginning: White will try to prepare the c5 move, Black first the ...f5 move and after the possible f3 move, usually the ...f5-f4 move and a further ...g5-g4 with an attack on the f3-pawn.

8...Nc5 9.Qc2 a5 10.Be3?!

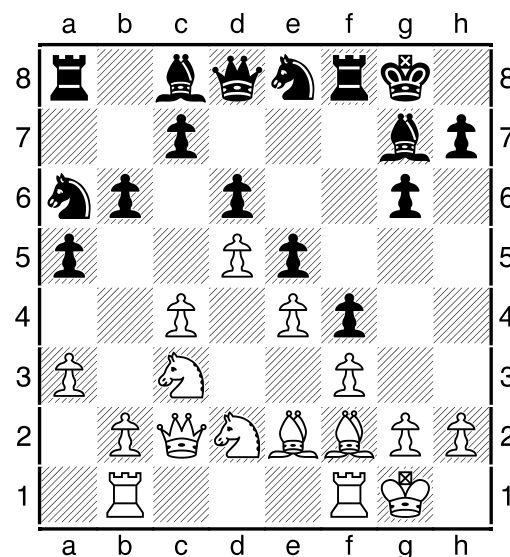
This game is already old - and the players were facing this delicate area for the first time. Nowadays White would not allow Black the ...Ng4 move and its prevention is linked with certain digressions. The prevention by the move h3 is not good, because the h3-pawn would become an ideal target for Black in his following actions (the advance of the g-pawn). This is why White players usually first move the knight from the f3-square, and there are two realistic possibilities. Whether to move to the e1-square (from where it wants to get to the d3-square and support the c5 stroke) or more optimistically to the d2-square from where it wants to go to the c4-square (after c5 has been played). More optimistic because in the second variation White believes that he will be able to play the c5 move without the help of the knight. This question of the knight's withdrawal is one of the most important ones in the 'King's Indian Defence' and it depends on many other factors. It is similar on the other side of the board, where Black needs to move his knight from f6 in order to play the ...f5 move. Or he moves it to the e8-square and defends the potentially weak c7-square? Or to the d7-square, where he is really blocking the way of his light-squared bishop, but is also making it hard for White to play the c5 advance? Or aggressively to the h5-square from where it wants to get to the f4-square? There are no direct answers - everything depends on the concrete factors at the given moment. That is why it is so important to study this kind of position - and also useful for everyone who will someday find themselves in similar structures. Attention: this structure can also arise from other openings, not only the 'King's Indian Defence'!

10...b6 11.Nd2 Ne8 12.a3 f5 13.f3 f4 14.Bf2 Na6

With this move Black is making it difficult

for White to play the b4 move, for which everything was prepared. He of course cannot prevent it.

15.Rab1 (D)



15...Qg5?

We already know that we have to attack the pawn wedge with our pawns - so that means here with the g5- and h5-pawns. It is very hard to break through similar defenses only with the pieces.

16.Rfc1 h5 17.Kh1?!

If White was not scared after the previous move then this withdrawal is even harder to understand - why not immediately 17.b4!.

17...Qh6

Black understands that he can only get counterplay with the advance of the g-pawn.

18.b4 axb4 19.axb4 g5 20.Na4 Bd7 21.c5

White gets his strike in first and will soon seriously weaken Black's position on the queenside. Can Black in the meantime prepare something more serious on the other side of the board?

21...Nxc5 22.Nxc5 bxc5 23.bxc5 g4

We need to ask ourselves what each player is threatening? White has more plans: he definitely wants to get rid of Black's light-squared bishop, which defends some critical points, especially the one on c6. Black will also have a hard time attacking without the light-squared bishop - even now we cannot see any concrete threats. After 23...g4 he is threatening to open the g-file and to weaken the f3-pawn, but: he cannot really attack the f3-pawn - and the opening of the g-file

might just be more useful for White...

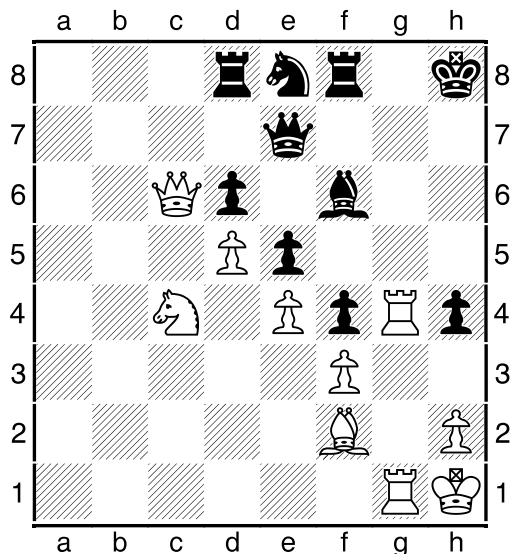
24.cxd6 cxd6 25.Nc4 gxf3 26.gxf3 Bh3 27.Bf1 Bxf1

Black could not avoid the exchange because there would, after the withdrawal of the bishop to d7 or c8, follow 28.Nb6.

28.Rxf1 h4 29.Rg1

Black has played heedlessly and White is now better on both wings, which is rare. Next follows the final part of the game and White will spice it up with a nice sacrifice.

29...Qh5 30.Nd2 Kh8 31.Rg4 Bf6 32.Rbg1 Rd8 33.Qc6 Qh7 34.Nc4 Qe7 (D)



35.Bxh4! Rf7

After 35...Bxh4 36.Ne5!

36.Rg8+ Kh7 37.Bxf6 Rxf6 38.Qa4 Rh6 39.Qa2 Rc8 40.Qg2

1-0



□ Illescas Cordoba Miguel

■ Short Nigel

C66 Dos Hermanas 1997

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.0-0 Be7 5.Re1 d6 6.c3 0-0 7.d4 Bd7 8.d5

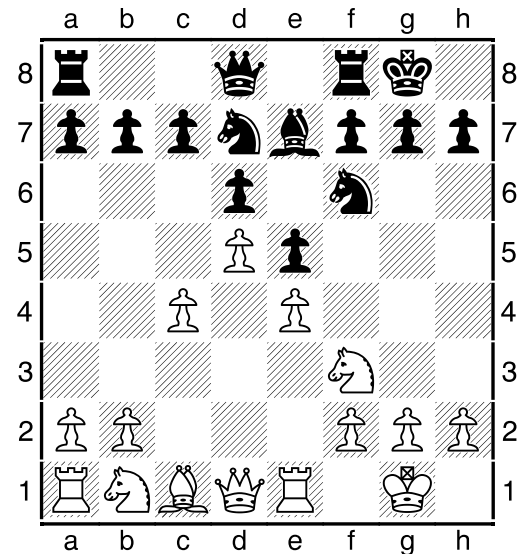
The introduction into our discussion positions with a blocked centre.

8...Nb8 9.Bxd7

The other possibility is 9.Bd3, keeping the

light-squared bishops on the board, but White clearly followed the basic rules about the evaluation of the bishops.

9...Nbx d7 10.c4 (D)



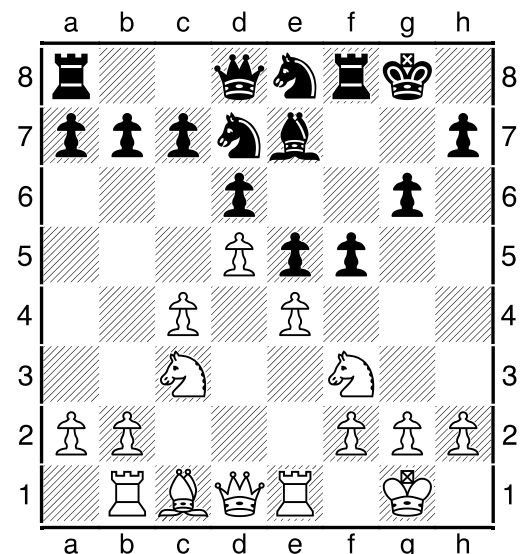
10...Ne8!?

Black makes it clear from the start: he wants to strike on the kingside. There is no need for moves like ...Nc5 or ...a5 in this position (with the ...a5-move Black strengthens the c5-square for his knight) because there is no bishop on c8 which needs to be unblocked.

11.Nc3 g6 12.Rb1!?

A strange, slow plan - what will the rook do on the b-file? For the preparation of the b4 move better would be 12.Bh6 (or 12.b4 a5 13.Bh6 Ng7 14.a3) 12...Ng7 13.Qd2 followed by b4.

12...f5 (D)



A position that needs to be studied carefully!

It can be very dangerous to underestimate Black's actions, therefore White should take on f5. For example 13.exf5 gxf5 (13...Rxf5 14.Ne4) 14.Bh6 Rf6! 15.Bg5 Rg6 16.Bxe7 Qe7 17.g3, with an unclear position, but approximately equal play with the chances for both sides. Worse is 13.Bh6 Rf7 14.b4?! f4! with play against the bishop on h6.

13.b4?! f4!

Black now has many nice possibilities to attack on the kingside.

14.a4 Rf7

Black could gain a tempo with the plan ...Kh8, ...Rg8, ...g5-g4 and ...Rg6. White's threats will not be serious for a long time and so there is no need to place the rook on the seventh rank.

15.Ba3 g5 16.Nd2

16.h3 would weaken White's position even more: 16...h5 17.Nh2 Nef6 18.f3 Rg7, with the movement of the queen to h6 and the placement of the other rook on g8.

16...Nef6 17.f3 Rg7 18.Kh1 g4 19.Qe2

Also after 19.fxf4 Nxg4 20.Re2 Qe8 Black's attack would be strong.

19...Kh8 20.Rec1

The pawn sacrifice after 20.c5?! would only be an exaggeration: 20...dxc5 21.bxc5 (21.Nc4 cxb4 22.Bxb4 Bxb4 23.Rxb4 b6) 21...Bxc5 22.Bxc5 Nxc5 23.Nb3 Qe7.

20...Rg6!

A very useful move - Black wants to place his heavy pieces on the g-file and his bishop on h6.

21.c5

White loses his nerve, although he was already falling behind with his activity and there was nothing else left to do for him except for this suicidal action. The slow attack 21.Nb3 Qf8! 22.Nb5 (22.c5 Qh6) 22...Qh6 23.Nxc7 Rag8 24.Rc2 gxf3 25.Qxf3 (25.gxf3 Nh5 -+) 25...Rg3 26.Qf1 Ng4 27.Qg1 Ne3 -+ was sentenced to failure and the only serious alternative was 21.Nd1!? (L.Ftacnik) 21...Qg8 22.c5.

21...dxc5! 22.bxc5 Bxc5 23.Bxc5 Nxc5 24.Nb5 b6

Black has taken the pawn and there is no visible alternative for White.

25.a5

After 25.Nb3 there would follow simply 25...gxf3 26.gxf3 Nfd7!

25...Qe7 26.Nb3 gxf3 27.gxf3 Nxb3 28.Rxb3

28.Rxc7 Nd4 -+.

28...Rag8 29.Qf2

29.Nxc7? Qxc7 30.Rxc7 Rg1 # ; 29.Rbb1 Qg7 30.Nxc7 Rg2 31.Ne6 Qg6 32.Nf8 Rxe2 33.Nxg6+ Rg6 -+.

29...Qg7 30.Rbb1

30.Nxc7 Rg2 -+ ; 30.Rb2!? Nd7 31.Nxc7 Nc5 32.Ne6 Nxe6 33.dxe6 bxa5.

30...Rg2 31.Qh4

31.Qf1 Rxh2+ 32.Kxh2 Qg3+.

31...Qg6 32.Nc3

32.Nxc7 Nxe4 33.Ne6 Rxh2+! 34.Qh2 Nf2+ 35.Qxf2 Qh5+ 36.Qh2 Qf3+.

32...b5 33.Re1 b4 34.Ne2 Nxe4 35.fxe4 Rg1+

0-1

The Attack with Rough Force

With 'immovable' centres and long pawn wedges we need to consider the possible sacrifices.

The attacker usually sacrifices a piece for one or two pawns in the wedge, and with this he frees his central pawns. Their advance without obstacles can often be the decisive factor. Many games have been played both in the past and present times that included such sacrifices - and their prevention.

Let's see how Tigran Petrosian, the ninth World Champion, handled the opponent's wedge.

□ Petrosian Tigran

■ Barcza Gedeon

C00 Saltsjobaden 1952

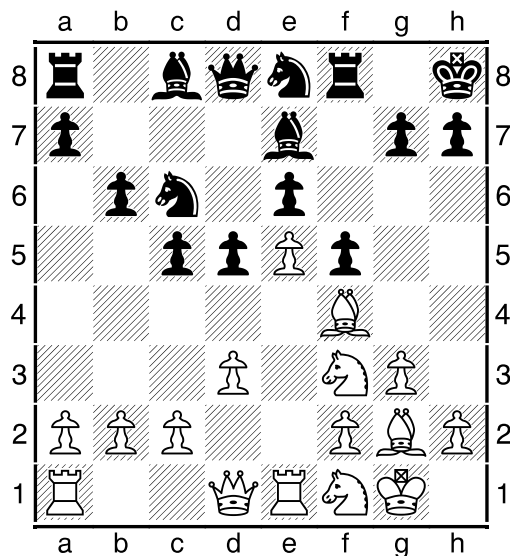
1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d3 e6 4.Nbd2

The 'King's Indian Attack' set-up which we have already discussed.

4...d5 5.g3 Nf6 6.Bg2 Be7 7.0-0 0-0 8.Re1 b6 9.e5 Ne8

A fairly logical move is 9... Nd7, because the knight performs many tasks there: besides attacking the centre, it also defends with the possible withdrawal to f8.

10.Nf1 Kh8 11.Bf4 f5 (D)



12.h4!

It is very important to learn how White will systematically build his wedge. First up, he prevents the possible counterplay with ...g5

and then he prepares the c3-move followed by the d4 move.

12...Nc7 13.N1d2 Bb7

The move 13...d4? would give White the opportunity to enter with his knight: 14.Nc4 Nd5 15.Bg5! and not working now is 15...b5? 16.Nd6 Ne5, because of 17.Nxe5 Qxd6 18.Bxd5 and 19.Bxe7 +- (T.Petrosian).

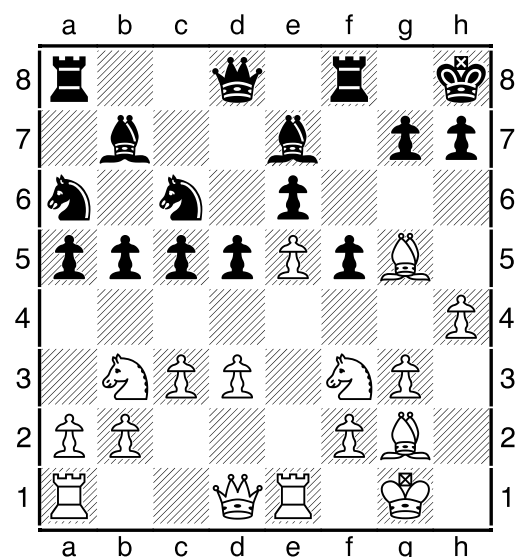
14.c3 b5?

It was the last chance to play ...d4.

15.Nb3! a5 16.Bg5

The c5-pawn is under threat.

16...Na6 (D)



17.d4! c4

White is better, because he will exchange the dark-squared bishops and his light-square bishop is more active than the opponent's (the strength of the bishops can easily be evaluated correctly with the fixed pawns in the centre: the one that is attacking the opponent's pawns is better, and the one that is forced to defend its own pawns is weaker).

18.Nc1 Nc7

It would be better to play 18...b4!? Immediately, in a search for counterplay on the wing where Black has the advantage.

19.Ne2 Kg8 20.Nf4 Qe8?

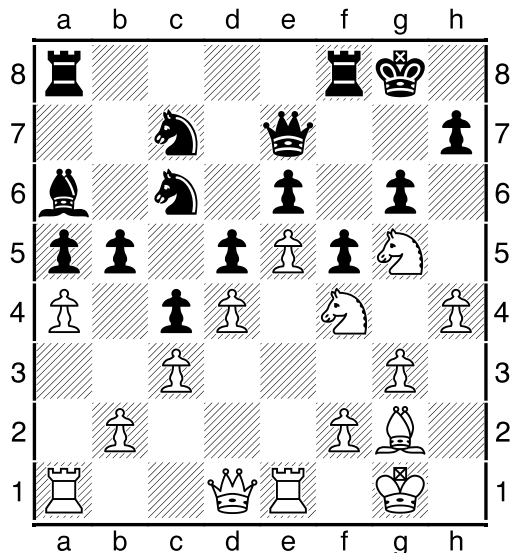
This move has no meaning. If Black had managed to foresee some of the following moves, he would definitely have moved the

rook from the long diagonal (20...Rb8) and thus prevented the tactical strokes from White.

21.Bxe7 Qxe7 22.Ng5 g6

The unpleasant 23.Qh5 was threatened.

23.a4! Ba6? (D)



After this move Black is immediately lost. White has started to undermine Black's

pawn wedge and is already ready to make some sacrifices in the centre (with the move 23.a4 he loosened the c4-pawn's defence). The only possibility was 23...b4, where White can choose from two different, attractive continuations: 24.Nfxe6 Nxe6 25.Bxd5 Ncd8 26.Bc4 Kg7 (26...Kh8) 27.Nxe6 Nxe6 28. d5 Nd8 29.Qd4 and White's central pawns become alive, giving him a large, almost decisive, advantage and 24.b3 (a positional, but no-less-effective move) 24...bxc3 (better is 24...cxb3 - T.Petrosian) 25.bxc4 dxc4 (25...Nb4 26.cxd5 Bxd5 27.Bxd5 Nbx d5 28.Ngxe6! +/-) 26.d5 c2 27.Qxc2 Nb4 28.d6 Nxc2 29.dxe7 Rfb8 30.Bxb7 Rxb7 31.Red1! +/-.

After the move played, the game is decided:

24.Nfxe6! Nxe6 25.Bxd5 Rad8

If 25...Ncd8 then 26.Bxa8 - therefore as mentioned earlier better was 20...Rb8!.

26.Bxe6+ Kg7 27.axb5 Bxb5 28.d5 f4 29.Qg4 h6 30.Nh3

1-0

The Static Centre

We can talk about the static centre when the pawns are placed in some typical structure and are usually also in direct contact.

But the pawns are more-or-less sentenced to wait, standing still, because any and every movement is extremely delicate and can lead to decisive changes. The positions that can be placed into static centres are countless and we would need huge books if we wanted to show them all or study them.

That is why we will concentrate on two typical structures - and we will get to know them fleetingly and only with the basic plans. Both structures are so extensive that we could write entire books based on each one alone.

First we will get to know the positions with an isolated central pawn, which are placed in the group of static centres. They belong there - until something happens with the isolated pawn: if he moves forward (d5 or ...d4), the centre is as a rule transformed into an open centre.

When the exchanges occur on the next file (c or e), there are hanging pawns and we will learn about them in the chapter about the dynamic centre. The positions with the isolated pawn can also be placed among the dynamic centres - the isolated pawn contains a lot of potential energy, and it wants to advance and release it.

The fate of the whole game depends on whether the pawn succeeds in advancing or not. Because of all that it would be correct to place the positions with the isolated pawn among the new group, let's list it under-static centres.

The second structure that we will get to know in this chapter is the Carlsbad pawn structure. This structure is spread worldwide and it can arise out of many openings (the 'Queen's Gambit' is the most common one) and it is defined by different playing plans.

Positions with the Isolated Pawn

When we talk about the structure with the isolated pawn we have in mind those positions where White has the isolated d4-pawn or Black has the isolated d5-pawn. We talk about the isolated pawn when a player has a pawn that has no support from the pawns on the adjacent files: with the isolated d-pawn the condition is that the player has no pawns on the e or c files.

This characteristic also immediately defines the biggest weakness of the isolated pawn: we cannot defend it with another pawn, and for this reason it is chronically weak and also a target of the opponent's attacks.

Even worse than its own weakness are the weaknesses around the pawn, and especially in front of it: the d5-square in front of the isolated d4-pawn is terribly weak because the opponent can make manoeuvres with his pieces there and it can become an outpost for his pieces. Isolated pawns are especially weak in endgames, where they can be easily attacked by the opponent's pieces, without the chance of any counterplay.

Of course the position with the isolated pawn has its advantages. Some chess players appreciate this kind of position so much that they even choose those openings which bring about positions with the isolated pawn.

The advantages of positions with the isolated pawn are especially shown in 'space'. This space advantage makes possible the quick regrouping of the pieces over the board and, if needed, a quick change of plans.

The attacker is most dangerous when he is attacking the king - and the d4-pawn creates an outpost for his pieces on the e5-square, and in its hinterland the third rank is free for the penetration of the heavy pieces.

Of course there are also at least two dangerous strategic plans: play on the c-file or the d5 strike in the centre, which brings many exchanges, after which the attacker is as rule left with more active pieces.

I have already mentioned that positions with the isolated pawn can appear out of different openings. The most characteristic are different variations of the 'Queen's Gambit', the 'Nimzo-Indian Defence' and these positions can also be formed out of the open or semi-open plays, for example out of the 'Russian Defence', the 'Caro-Kann Defence' or even out of the 'Sicilian Defence' (the 'Alapin Variation').

The Play Against the Isolated Pawn

In the first match for the official World Championship title in 1886, the competitors were the big romantic Johannes Zukertort and the father of positional play William Steinitz. The starting-points were clear: the first spoke in favor of the attack and the other for the defence. In positions with isolated queen pawns their evaluations were diametrically opposed.

J.Zukertort thought that the weakened energy of the isolated pawn leaves White with the advantage, but W.Steinitz fought against that and thought instead that Black holds the advantage, should he manage to defend himself properly.

W.Steinitz was the better player and he won the match and become the first World Champion. His executions were so convincing that they convinced every doubter of that time.

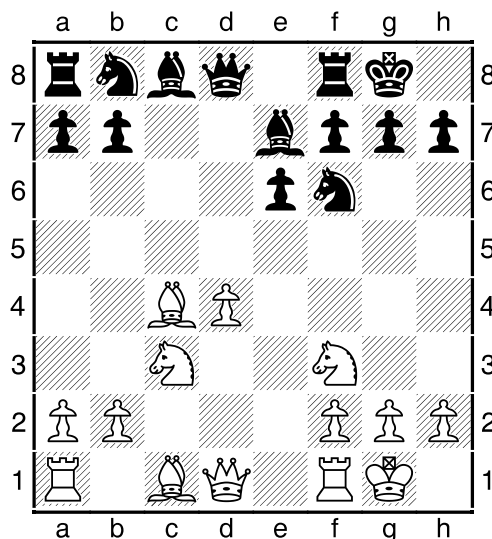
Such positions with the isolated queen pawn (IQP) were forgotten until Mikhail Botvinnik brought them back to life half a century later. Nowadays we know that there is no such thing as a united rule or evaluation: some prefer isolated pawns and others prefer to play against them.

□ **Zukertort Johannes Hermann**

■ **Steinitz William**

D26 United States of America 1886

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 dxc4 5.e3 c5 6.Bxc4 cxd4 7.exd4 Be7 8.0-0 0-0 (D)



W.Steinitz was the first player who systematically thought about the classical position with the isolated queen pawn. The father of positional play understood that the isolated pawn in the centre defines a very special pawn structure, and that it is wise to play according to well-studied patterns when face with these kinds of structures.

9.Qe2 Nbd7 10.Bb3

J.Zukertort trusted the white pieces, which seemingly bring him the more active play, connected with a possible attack on the king. And that was all that the chess romantics wanted at that time! White could choose here 10.d5 = with the liquidation of the centre and equal play.

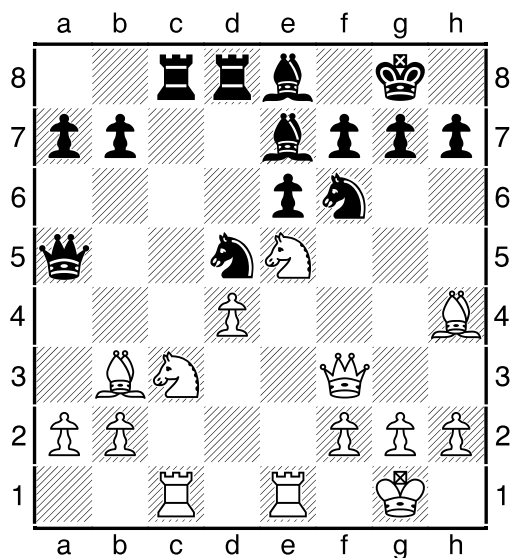
10...Nb6 11.Bf4

Today we know that better plans include the development of the bishop to g5.

11...Nbd5 12.Bg3 Qa5 13.Rac1 Bd7 14.Ne5 Rfd8! 15.Qf3 Be8!

W.Steinitz had studied the position carefully - and also understood it. The technique that we use to place the pieces to the most suitable squares is very important in play revolving around certain pawn structures. We also need to know how many pieces we need for the attack and how many for the defence - the bishop on e8 does both jobs.

16.Rfe1 Rac8 17.Bh4 (D)



17...Nxc3!

Nowadays many people know the ideas for

the battle against the isolated pawn, but in 1886 it was quite different. Black first sets up a bullet-proof defence on the kingside and now he passes over to the counterattack of the centre. To begin with he changes the pawn structure: he turns White's isolated pawn into a pair of hanging pawns. The d4-pawn is now defended, but White has a new weakness on the c3-square.

18.bxc3 Qc7

Again, nowadays, many people would play 18...b5 to fix White's pawns, but W.Steinitz knew that the pawns would become weaker if the advance c4 were to be played. Black will not be against exchanges - this also the consequence of his preparations at home: when there are less pieces on the board it is harder to defend weaknesses!

19.Qd3 Nd5

Yet another typical manoeuvre, which is now linked to the exchange of pieces.

20.Bxe7 Qxe7 21.Bxd5?

J.Zukertort is doing what W.Steinitz wants him to do: he only helps Black with this exchange.

21...Rxd5 22.c4

J.Zukertort, as stated, was in favour of active play and therefore plays these optimistic moves, but the advance of the c-pawn will

only loosen the centre even more.

22...Rdd8 23.Re3?

There is no attack here - Black's king is well defended. It would be better to pass over to the defence now, with the solid 23.Red1, and the slow preparation of the possible d4-d5 thrust.

23...Qd6 24.Rd1 f6 25.Rh3!? h6!

Black does not want to complicate matters with 25...fxe5 26.Qxh7+ Kf8 27.Rf3, leading to unclear play.

26.Ng4

If 26.Ng6 Bxg6 27.Qxg6 Rxc4 28.Rxh6 Qxd4! 29.Qh7+ Kf8 30.Qh8+ Kf7 31.Qxd8 Qxd8! -+.

26...Qf4!

The start of the counterattack, which was performed flawlessly by Black. The end of the game is not important for our theme, but let's still take a look at how the great master handled the situation!

27.Ne3 Ba4! 28.Rf3 Qd6 29.Rd2 Bc6 30.Rg3

30.Rxf6? gxf6 31.Qg6+ Kf8 32.Qxf6+ Ke8 -+ ; 30.d5!? Qe5! 31.Rg3 exd5 32.Qg6 Rc7.

30...f5 31.Rg6 Be4 32.Qb3 Kh7 33.c5 Rxc5 34.Rxe6 Rc1+ 35.Nd1 Qf4 36.Qb2 Rb1 37.Qc3 Rc8 38.Rxe4 Qxe4

0-1

The Attack on the Kingside

The preliminary conditions for the attack on the kingside are fulfilled: White has an open e-file and on it a strong outpost - the e5-square.

Black is pressed and has difficulties with some of his pieces, which cannot join the defence.

White can attack in two ways: with the pieces, where he will intensively attack one of Black's pawns in front of the king and he is helped by some basic motifs - the transposition of the heavy pieces via the third rank and/or with the battery on the b1-h7 diagonal.

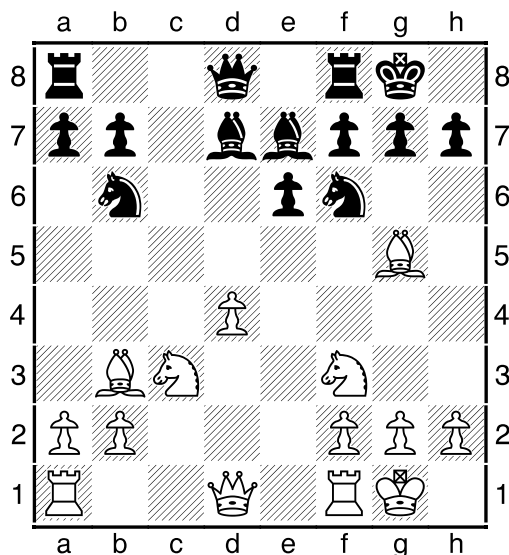
The second method of attack is the one where the attacker additionally helps himself with the pawns (usually with the f-pawn).

□ Botvinnik Mikhail

■ Vidmar Milan Sr

D40 Nottingham 1936

1.c4 e6 2.Nf3 d5 3.d4 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.Nc3 0-0 6.e3 Nbd7 7.Bd3 c5 8.0-0 cxd4 9.exd4 dxc4 10.Bxc4 Nb6 11.Bb3 Bd7 (D)



12.Qd3!

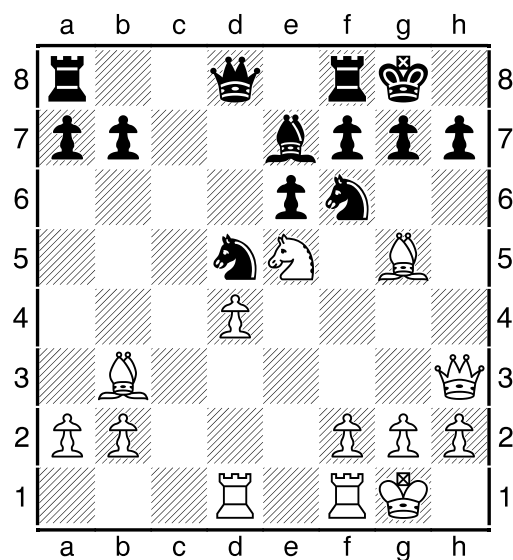
White doesn't reveal his full plans with this move yet, instead simply preparing the battery Bc2-Qd3. All the preliminary conditions for the attack with the f-pawn are fulfilled: Black's knight is on b6 from where he is defending one of the critical squares, the d5-square, but allows White to freely

access the e5- and d4-squares.

12...Nbd5 13.Ne5 Bc6 14.Rad1! Nb4 15.Qh3!

In positions with the isolated pawn, White's a1 rook usually goes to d1, from where it defends the weak pawn and at the same time supports the pawn's possible advance in the centre.

15...Bd5 16.Nxd5 Nbx d5? (D)



A serious positional mistake - the right move was 16...Nfd5, when White would have, after 17.Bc1 Rc8, only a small advantage. But after the capture in the game, White's hands are free to advance the f-pawn, which will decide the game in lightning-like fashion!

17.f4! Rc8

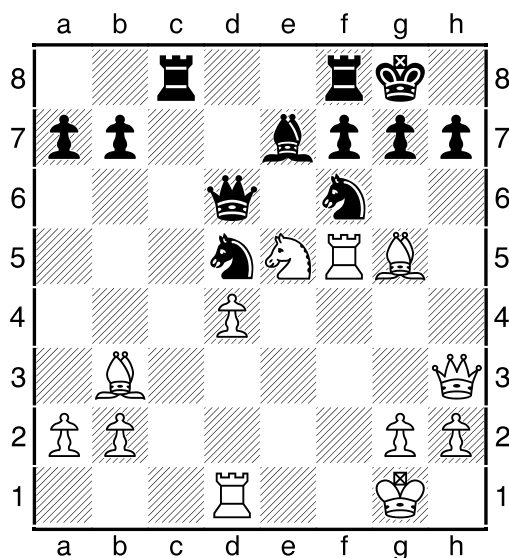
There is no wise defence to offer against f5: 17...g6 18.Bh6 Re8 19.Ba4 +/- or 17...Ne4 18.Nxf7! Kxf7 (18...Rxf7 19.Qxe6) 19.Rde1!, with a decisive attack.

18.f5 exf5

Black could resist a little longer after 18...Qd6 19.fxe6 fxe6 20.Nc4 Qc6 21.Rfe1, though his position would be forlorn, if not lost, sooner rather than later.

19.Rxf5 Qd6 (D)

The position is already lost for Black, as the main alternative proves: 19...Rc7 20.Rfd1 Nb6 21.Qh4 Nbd5 22.Nxf7 Rxf7 23.Bxd5 Nxd5 24.Rxf7 Bxg5 25.Qxg5, with a mating attack.



20.Nxf7! Rxf7 21.Bxf6 Bxf6
21...Nxf6 22.Rxf6 Bxf6 23.Qxc8 +.
22.Rxd5 Qc6 23.Rd6 Qe8 24.Rd7
1-0

In positions with the isolated queen pawn (IQP) - when White decides for active play on the kingside, the plans connected with piece-play prevail over pawn play.

The characteristic motifs are, for example, the battery Qd3-Bc2, which generally forces Black to play ...g6.

White gradually places his rooks on d1 and e1: with one he is defending his weak d-pawn (and supports its possible advance) and with the other he performs active operations on the semi-open file. The knight usually goes to e5, the bishop to g5...

□ Kamsky Gata

■ Short Nigel

E48 Linares 1994

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 c5 5.Bd3
Nc6 6.Nge2 cxd4 7.exd4 d5 8.cxd5 Nxd5
9.0-0 Bd6 10.Ne4

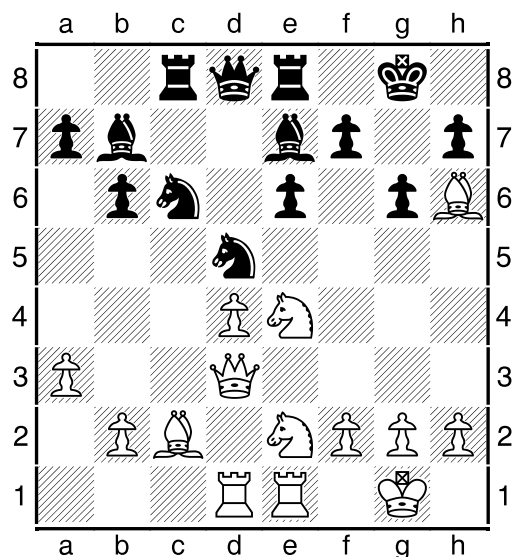
An unusual move - White usually keeping up the pressure on the d5-square in IQP positions - but the knight is pointed at the kingside, where he will try to help with the attack on the king.

10...Be7 11.a3! 0-0 12.Bc2! Re8 13.Qd3!

Remember these last three moves of White, because they are very characteristic: a2-a3 is a prophylactic move, because it defends the Qd3-Bc2 battery from the ...Nb4-move. The battery provokes the weakening move ...g6

and White now has a clear plan of play - and especially a free square for his dark-squared bishop to join the attack.

13...g6 14.Bh6 b6 15.Rad1 Bb7 16.Rfe1
Rc8 (D)



17.Bb3

The bishop has done everything he could on the b1-h7 diagonal and now moves back to his fundamental work-place. The pressure on the d5-square is always useful and White can also keep it with the help of his knight: 17.N2c3 Na5 18.Qg3 Nc4 19.Ba4 Bc6 20.Bb3 Nxc3 21.bxc3 Bxe4 22.Rxe4 Nd6, although in the game Shirov,A-Psakhis,L Klaipeda 1988, he did not achieve any advantage.

17...a6

A loss of tempo. The correct plan was to move the rook to the d-file: 17...Rc7!? 18.N2g3 Rd7, with approximately equal play.

18.N2g3 Nb8?!

Yet another move which is just too slow. Interesting was 18...Bh4!, with the idea of ...Nce7-f5!

19.Qf3

White's queen bravely exposes herself on the long diagonal, but G.Kamsky has spotted the hole on the f6-square and now directs his powers against it.

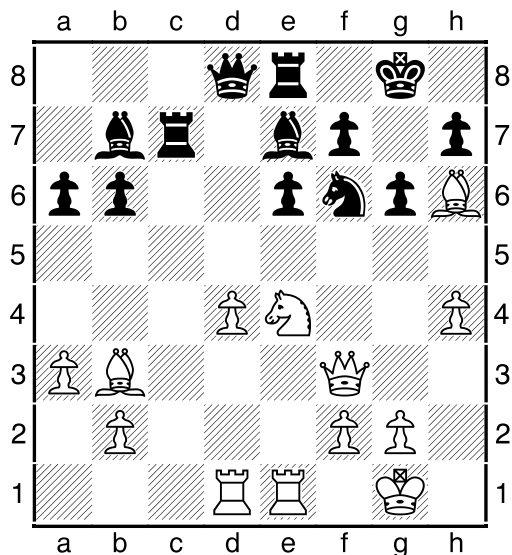
19...Rc7 20.Nh5! Nd7

Black would lose quickly after 20...gxh5? 21.Qg3 Bxg5 22.Bxg5 +-, and also bad is 20...f5 21.Nc3 and White has a big advantage.

21.h4! N7f6

White is beautifully combining many different attacking motifs and Black already has no defence: 21...Bxh4 22.Nd6 Re7 23.Nxb7 Rxb7 24.g3 gxh5 25.gxh4 +- or 21...b5 22.Ng5 N5f6 23.Nxe6! fxe6 24.Bxe6+ Kh8 25.Bg7 #.

22.Nhxf6+ Nxf6 (D)



23.d5!

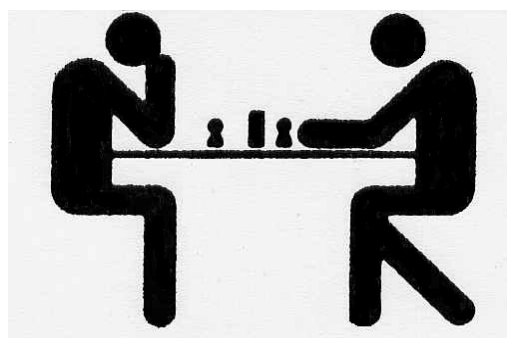
The final penetration, which completely breaks Black's defence.

23...Nxe4

The capture on d5 would not save Black: 23...exd5 24.Nxf6+ Bxf6 25.Qxf6! +- or 23...Nxd5 24.Bxd5 Bxd5 25.Rxd5! Qxd5 (25...exd5 26.Nxf6+ Bxf6 27.Rxe8+ Qxe8 28.Qxf6 Qxe1+ 29.Kh2 +-) 26.Nxf6+ Bxf6 27.Qxf6 +-, nor would the move 23...e5 because of 24.d6 +-.

24.Qxe6 f5 25.Rxd8 Rxd8 26.Rd1

1-0



The d5 Strike

'The dynamic power of the isolated queen pawn is hidden in its energy, while it is progressing,' said Aron Nimzowitsch, and it's true: the d5 stroke in the centre is one of the strongest weapons in the arsenal of the player with the isolated pawn.

The move is usually very attractive, because White hits at the most-defended square on the board. The d5 stroke contains many goals within its aim, the first one being the change of the pawn structure, which will definitely occur.

After big piece exchanges (if they occur) White's pieces will take up more active squares (the d5-square, which will be a prime spot for White's piece, is situated in the opponent's half of the board).



White usually takes a space advantage with his thrust, but this kind of stroke can be especially effective in the positions where Black has not yet castled.

But the effect can also be strong when there is a castled position involved, particularly when it is connected with the motifs on the b1-h7 and h4-d8 diagonals and the d-file, where White's rook and Black's queen usually have an 'x-ray connection'.

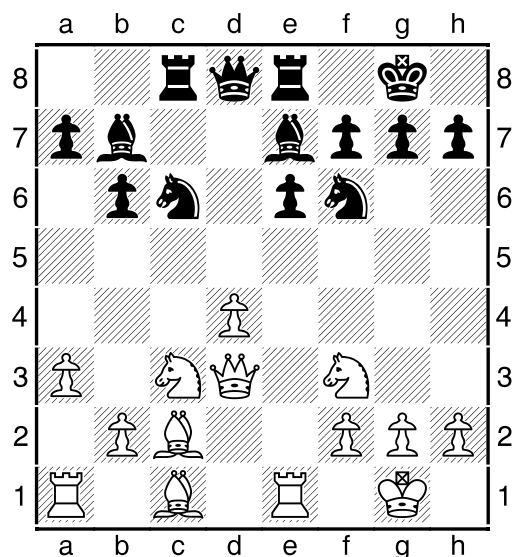
□ Petrosian Tigran

■ Balashov Yuri

E57 Soviet Union 1974

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 e6 3.d4 Bb4 4.e3 c5 5.Bd3 d5 6.Nf3 0-0 7.0-0 dxc4 8.Bxc4 Nc6 9.Bd3 cxd4 10.exd4 Be7 11.Re1 b6 12.a3 Bb7 13.Bc2 Rc8 14.Qd3 Re8? (D)

A position that was famous in the mid-seventies and this move was also chosen in some games by the World Champion Anatoly Karpov! More cautious would be to close the dangerous diagonal with the ...g6 move.



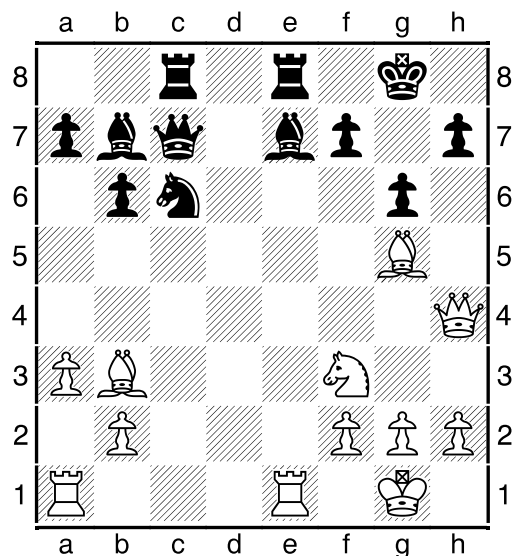
15.d5! exd5 16.Bg5!

This is the standard attacking mechanism, one which you should remember. It threatens 17.Bxf6, and Black has no defence, e.g. 16...g6 fails due to 17.Rxe7! Qxe7 18.Nxd5.

16...Ne4 17.Nxe4 dxe4 18.Qxe4 g6 19.Qh4 Qc7

The 20.Bb3 move is hanging in the air. White would continue with this after 19...Rc7 and L.Portisch also played this way against A.Karpov (Milano 1975), who choose 19...h5. In both cases White's advantage is huge.

20.Bb3! (D)



Black is already without defence. The threat

is 21.Bxf7+. After 20...Bf8 21.Bf4 followed by 22.Ng5, and after 20...Bd6 21.Bf6, also with a quick decision.

20...h5 21.Qe4 Kg7 22.Bxf7 Kxf7 23.Bh6!
The culminating point of White's attack.

23...Qd6

Strangely, another game here ended with 23...Bd6 24.Ng5+ Kf6 25.Nxh7+ 1-0, S. Garcia,S-Pomar,A Salamanca 1975.

24.Qc4+ Kf6 25.Rad1 Nd4 26.Qxd4+ Qxd4 27.Rxd4 Rc5 28.h4
1-0

In most cases the d5 stroke is not connected with motifs of attack on the king, but rather appears as a more positional move.

White is not afraid of the 'big' exchange in the centre, because it usually leaves him with some predominance in the endgame - or in the middlegame if there are enough pieces left on the board.

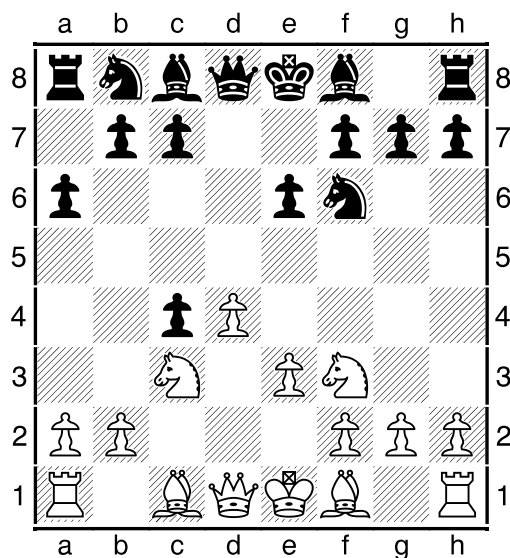
One of the pioneers, who studied the d5 push, was the universal Akiba Rubinstein. Now let's see how Akiba performed this in practice!

□ **Rubinstein Akiba**

■ **Tartakower Saviely**

D27 Marienbad 1925

1.c4 e6 2.Nf3 d5 3.d4 Nf6 4.Nc3 dxc4 5.e3 a6 (D)



6.a4

The move has both good and bad sides: White doesn't allow the ...b5 move but at the same time he gives up the b4-square, which

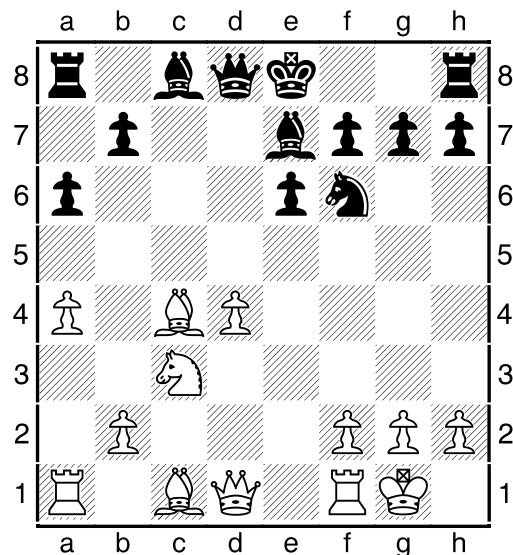
will be a nice spot for a black knight.

6...c5 7.Bxc4 Nc6 8.0-0 cxd4 9.Nxd4

It seems more logical to take with the pawn, with a transposition to known positions. **9...Nxd4?!**

After 9...Bd7 the position would be almost equal.

10.exd4 Be7 (D)



11.d5

The classical stroke. White provokes the exchanges in the centre due to him being better in the resulting endgame.

11...exd5 12.Nxd5 Nxd5 13.Bxd5 0-0 14.Qf3

After this move, the capture with the knight on the ninth move makes sense - White's queen is marvellously placed on f3 and performs many things at the same time: attacking on b7; looking at f7; and it has also in the meantime freed the d1-square for the rook.

14...Bd6 15.Re1

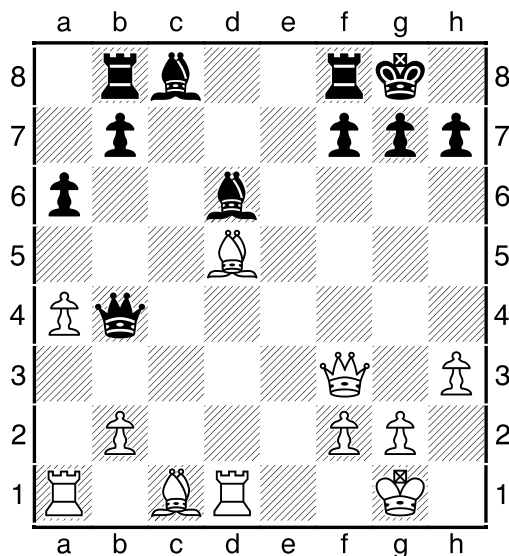
Black directly defends his pawn: 15.Bb7? Bxh2+! 16.Kxh2 Qc7+. We need to remember this kind of defensive motif.

15...Qh4 16.h3 Qb4 17.Rd1

On the attractive-looking 17.Re8 move, Black defends himself with 17...Re6! utilising the counter-threat of mate on e1.

17...Rb8 (D)

Black has managed to defend the b7-square, but White is still strongly-placed and is making new threats with every move played. Now A.Rubinstein surprised everyone with his simplicity...



18.b3! Be6!

Black defends thoughtfully and is willing to sacrifice a pawn for attractive counterplay.

19.Bxe6 fxe6 20.Qe2 Bc5!

Counterplay at any cost!

21.Qxe6+ Kh8 22.Ba3!

A marvellous move, which needed to be seen by A.Rubinstein earlier - and that is connected with deep calculation. The analyses show that White keeps his advantage in every variation!

22...Qa5 23.Rd5!

The point of the previous move. White returns the pawn and offers a transition to the endgame, in which he will definitely be better. His work would be made more difficult with a transition into an endgame with the heavy pieces, even though he would be a pawn up: 23.Bxc5 Qxc5 would be problematic because of Black's active play.

23...Bxf2+ 24.Kh1 Qc3 25.Rc1 Qf6

25...Qe3? 26.Re5 +.

26.Qxf6 Rxf6 27.Rd7

Even though there is not much material on the board, White's advantage is huge. Many things are threatened: Rb7, Bb2 or Rcc7.

27...Be3 28.Rxb7 Rb6 29.Rxb6 Bxb6 30.Rc6!

White has won a pawn and there was never any doubt in A.Rubinstein's technique. The rest of the game requires no real comment - White played a model ending:

30...h5 31.Bd6 Rb7 32.b4 a5 33.b5 Kh7 34.g4 hxg4 35.hxg4 Kg8 36.Kg2 Kf7 37.Kf3 Bd8 38.Ke4 Ke8 39.Kd5 g5 40.Ke6 Bb6 41.Rc8+ Bd8 42.Bc5 Rb8 43.Rc6 Rb7 44.b6 Rb8 45.Rc7 Bxc7 46.bxc7 Rc8 47.Bb6 Ra8 48.Ba7

1-0

The Attack on the Queenside

In modern chess the level of defence has risen. Even more, defenders often even prevent any thoughts of an attack on the king with accurate positional play.

Therefore the attackers are turning to other plans and the situation is the same with positions involving the isolated queen pawn. One of them - the preparation and the execution of the d5 strike - was shown in the previous chapter.

Now let's see what White can do when the d5-square is well defended (and thus preventing this strike). We already know that the player with the isolated pawn needs to maintain the initiative.

The actively-placed pieces make that possible, now only the objects of the attack need to be found.

When Black successfully prevents the attack on the king and also the d5 stroke in the centre, he usually needs to pay for that with weaknesses on the queenside.

The battle will - in most cases - revolve around the c-file and the bad pawns in Black's camp. If White manages to occupy the file and also create an outpost (usually on the c5 or c6 squares) or even penetrate to the seventh rank, then his advantage will be unquestionable.

White's work would be made easier if Black were to move a pawn on the queenside, if (due to him being incautious or due to his development he has no defenders left to defend the weak squares).

In the structure a6-b7 the dark-squares are weak and it is even worse when we have the structure a7-b6, if White manages to exchange the light-squared bishops. As happened in the next game...

□ **Karpov Anatoly**

■ **Geller Efim**

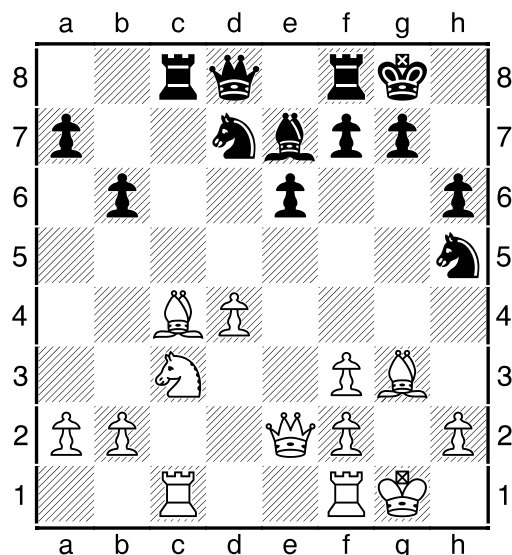
D58 Moscow 1981

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Be7 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.Bg5 h6 6.Bh4 0-0 7.e3 b6 8.Rc1 Bb7 9.Bd3 Nbd7 10.0-0 c5 11.Qe2 Rc8 12.Bg3 cxd4 13.exd4 dxc4 14.Bxc4 Bxf3?!

Better is 14...Nh5!? 15.Rfd1 (or 15.Ba6

Nxg3 16.hxg3 Bxa6 17.Qxa6 Rc7, Najdorf,M-Hort,V Lugano 1968) 15...Nxg3 16.hxg3 Nf6 17.Ne5 Bb4! 18.Ba6 Qe7, Gurevich,M-Beliavsky,A Reggio Emilia, 1989, in both cases with approximately equal play.

15.gxf3 Nh5 (D)



Black gave up the important bishop in exchange for nothing, as he will have to repair White's structure by taking on g3 or he will lose the rook. And without the light-squared bishop his queenside is desperately weak: in the structure a7-b6 the light-squared bishop is obligatory!

16.Ba6!

White immediately exploits all his advantages.

16...Nxg3

Only this, as after 16...Ra8 or 16...Rc6 there is 17.Bb7.

17.hxg3 Rc7

After 17...Rc6 18.Rfd1 Nf6 19.Kg2! White is clearly better and he had also prepared a trick: 19...Qb8? 20.Nd5! +/- . The withdrawal of the rook with 17...Ra8 allows the penetration of the centre: 18.Rfd1 Nf6 19.d5! exd5 20.Bb7 and White's position is simply too strong.

18.Rfd1!

There is nothing on offer after 18.Nb5 Rc1 19.Rc1 Nb8! 20.Na7 Qd4.

18...Nf6

Black is of course angry about the bishop on a6, but he cannot get rid of him with 18...Nb8, because the knight needs to control the d5-square. After 19.Bc4, and a subsequent d5 White would stand a lot better.

19.Nb5!

The knight moved to the other wing, so now it is time to attack Black's pawns on the queenside.

19...Rxc1 20.Rxc1 Nd5

If 20...Qb8 21.Rc7 Nd5 22.Rxa7 +/- or 20...Qd5 21.a3, also with a big advantage.

21.Nxa7!

Everything looks a little odd, but A.Karpov calculated well and he evaluated the consequences even better. Black cannot exploit the fact that White's pieces appear a

bit lost.

21...Nb4 22.a3! Qa8!?

22...Nxa6 23.Nc6! Qd7 24.Qxa6 +/-.

23.Rc7!

White is playing like a machine and sees everything: 23.Nc8? Bg5! -+.

23...Nd5 24.Rb7!

Black is defending himself thoughtfully: 24.Rd7 Rd8! 25.Rxd8 Bxd8 26.Qb5 Bf6, but White has the answer to everything. The game is decided.

24...Bf6 25.Nc6 Rc8 26.Ne5 Bxe5 27.Qxe5 Rc1+ 28.Kg2 Qd8 29.Bd3 Ra1

29...g6 30.Qd2 Ra1 31.Qxh6 +- ; 29...Rc7 30.Rxc7 Qxc7 +/-.

30.Qe4 g6 31.Rxf7! Kxf7 32.Qxg6+ Kf8 33.Qxh6+

1-0

The Battle Against the c Pawn

This special chapter is designed to cover positions with the isolated pawn, and the opponent is fighting with the c-pawn (instead of the e-pawn).

These types of positions usually arise from the 'Queen's Gambit' and in modern chess also out of some variations of the 'Russian (Petroff's) Defence'.

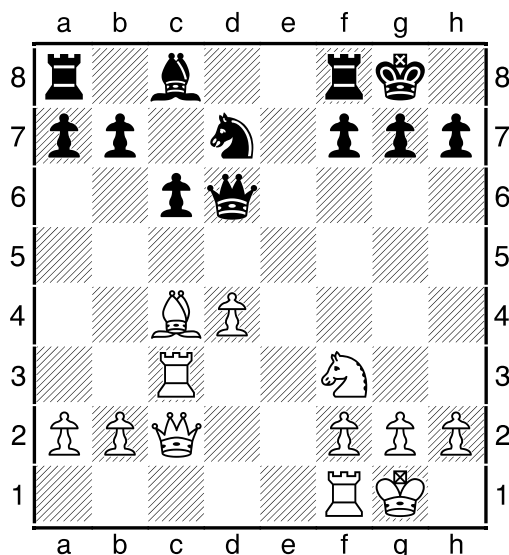
Let's see some characteristic examples!

□ **Farago Ivan**

■ **Velikov Petar**

D68 Albena 1983

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 e6 5.Bg5 Be7 6.e3 Nbd7 7.Rc1 0-0 8.Bd3 dxc4 9.Bxc4 Nd5 10.Bxe7 Qxe7 11.0-0 Nxc3 12.Rxc3 e5 13.Qc2 exd4 14.exd4 Qd6 (D)



We need to take a minute to stop and take stock of this position. White has the advantage in development having already mobilised his pieces. The rook on c3 can easily move to the kingside, the queen and the bishop are already looking in that direction and the knight only needs a move to jump to e5 or g5. Black, on the other hand, has not finished his development and his biggest problem is that he will not be able to cover the a2-g8 diagonal with his knight, where White's light-squared bishop dominates. Black doesn't have enough pieces with which to defend his king, and therefore White goes straight into action.

15.Ng5!

The best square for the knight, from where he attacks h7 and f7.

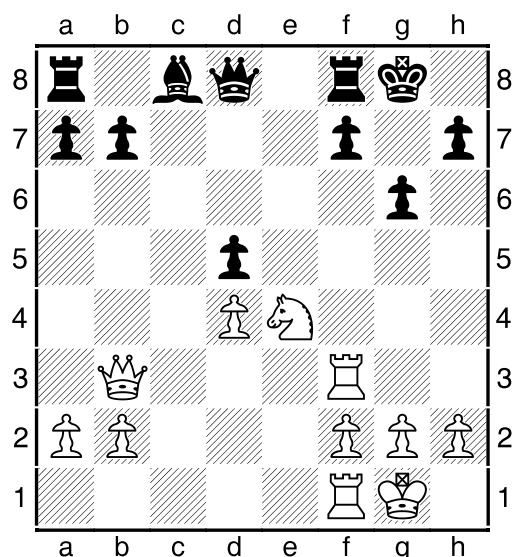
15...Nf6

An instructive mistake is seen after 15...g6: 16. Nxf7! Rxf7 17.Rf3 Nf6 18.Qb3 Qe7 19.Bxf7+ Qxf7 20.Rxf6. Also the defence with 15...Qg6 would be bad due to the transition to the endgame with: 16.Qxg6 hxg6 17.Re1 and the game will be decided by the penetration of White's rook to the e7-square.

16.Rf3 g6 17.Qb3 Nd5

After 17...Qe7 follows the already-seen 18. Nxf7! Rxf7 19.Bxf7+ Qxf7+ 20.Rxf6.

18.Ne4 Qd8 19.Bxd5 cxd5 (D)



Next follows an effective and instructive mating attack, a demonstration of the strong knight against the bad bishop, and at the same time the demonstration of the power of developed pieces against ones that are not.

20.Nf6+ Kg7 21.Qe3 h5 22.Qe5 Kh6

23.Nxh5 Bg4 24.Qg7+ Kg5

24...Kxh5 25.Qh7+ Kg5 26.h4 #.

25.Rg3

1-0

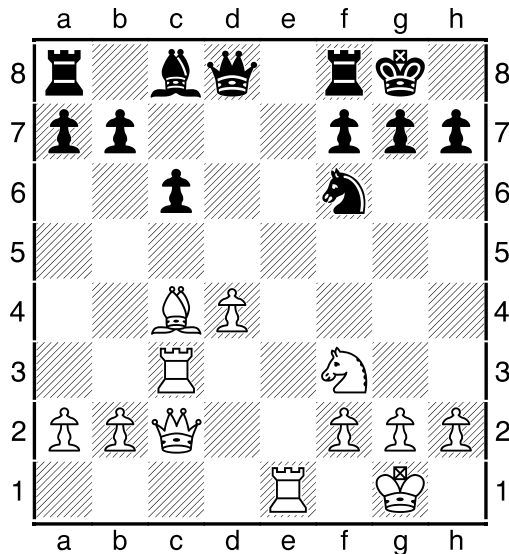
The next game we are going to see is very similar to the previous game - the differences will be small, but important!

□ **Lputian Smbat**

■ **Balashov Yuri**

D68 Yerevan 1986

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 Be7 5.Bg5
0-0 6.e3 Nbd7 7.Rc1 c6 8.Bd3 dxc4 9.Bxc4
Nd5 10.Bxe7 Qxe7 11.0-0 Nxc3 12.Rxc3 e5
13.Qc2 exd4 14.exd4 Nf6 15.Re1 Qd8 (D)



The position in the diagram is almost identical to our previous example, after Black's fourteenth move. The pawn structure is the same, only White's rook is placed on e1, Black's queen on d8 and - the most important factor - Black's knight is already placed on f6, from where it is able to cover the dangerous diagonal with the Nd5 move. For this reason White cannot count on a direct attack; he needs to prepare it first. What is Black's biggest problem? His undeveloped bishop, of course! Because Black already wants to play ...Bg4, White's response is clear:

16.h3!

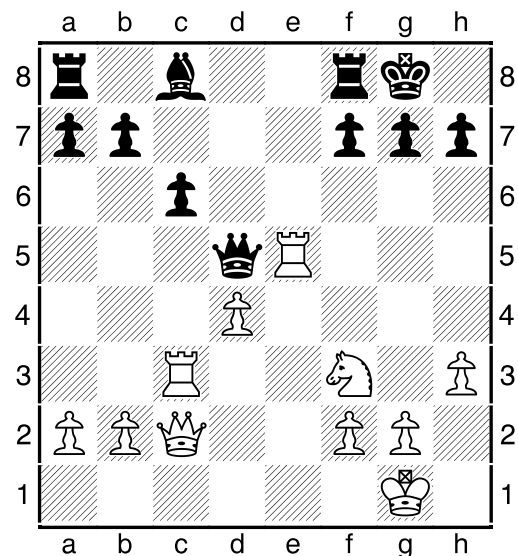
The mastery of the positional play is hidden in preventing the opponent's plans.

16...Nd5 17.Bxd5!

The next instructive moment. Black needed to jump into d5 due to the threat 17.Rce3 and the penetration of the rook to the seventh rank. After the swap on d5, Black again has no choice: after 17...cxd5 18.Rc7 White has complete control.

17...Qxd5 18.Re5! (D)

After the exchange of the knight, Black's king is left with no defenders. It is time for action on the kingside, where all White's pieces will be situated in a couple of moves. Notice that White is dominating and has the initiative...



18...Qd6

Of course not 18...Qxa2? 19.Ra3 and the queen is captured.

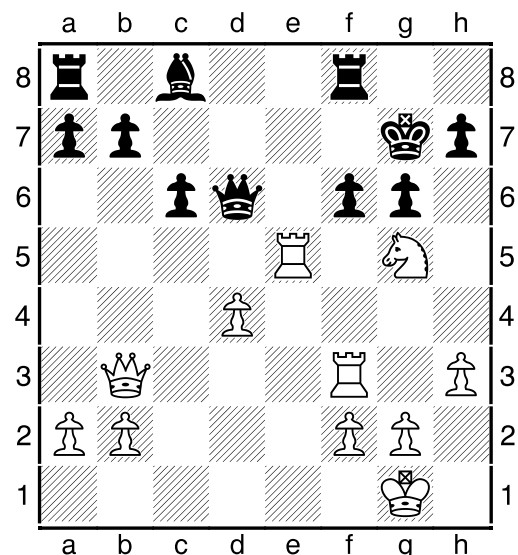
19.Ng5 g6

19...Qg6 20.Qb3.

20.Rf3 f6

Black is already lost, but the move played is linked to a wonderful finish. Dangerous was 20...Qxd4 21.Re4 Qd5 22.Nxf7 Rxf7 23.Re8+ Kg7 24.Qc3+ Kh6 25.Qe3+ Kg7 26.Rxf7+ Qxf7 27.Re7. After 20...Bf5 a direct approach is decisive: 21.Rxf5! gxf5 22.Rg3+ Kh8 23.Qxf5 Qg6 24.Qf4 f5 25.Nxh7.

21.Qb3+ Kg7 (D)



22.Re8! a5

After 22...Rxe8, White has a forced mate: 23.Qf7+ Kh6 24.Qxh7+ Kxg5 25.h4+ Kg4 26.Qxg6+ Kh4 27.g3 #.

23.Rxc8

1-0

In both cases the same amount of pieces was left on the board and the exchanges were forced by White in his favor.

Similar structures can also appear when all the pieces are still on the board, but there is no less danger in such positions, except that these are more positional, because it is harder to attack the king.

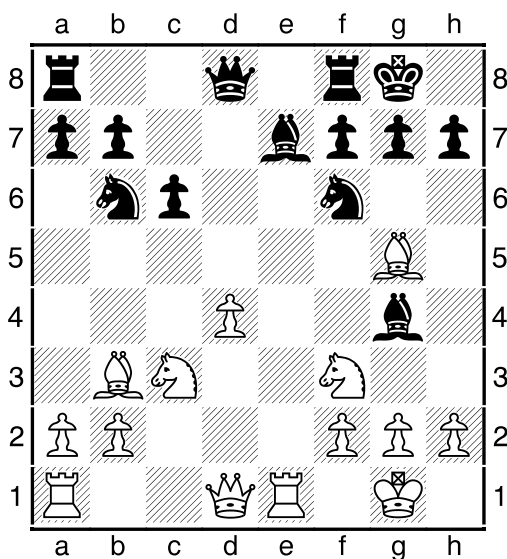


□ Vaganian Rafael

■ Huebner Robert

C42 Tilburg 1983

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.Nc3 e5 4.e3 exd4
5.exd4 Nf6 6.Bxc4 Be7 7.Nf3 0-0 8.0-0
Nbd7 9.Re1 Nb6 10.Bb3 c6 11.Bg5 Bg4
(D)

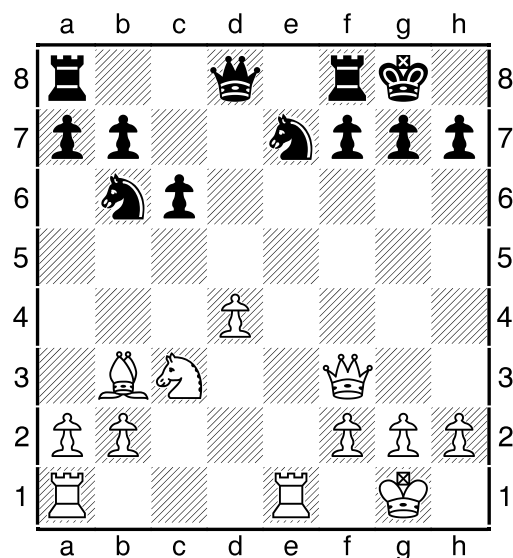


White is more active due to his control over the e-file. With the next move he will get rid of the pin and will be threatening to jump into e5, therefore Black needs to take. After 12.Ne5 the bishop would not have a place to move to.

12.Qd3 Bxf3 13.Qxf3 Nfd5 14.Bxe7

White cannot exploit the pin even more, because not working is 14.Re7 Ne7 15.Re1 Nbc8 16.Qe2 Re8 17.Bf7 Kf7 18.Qe6 Kf8 19.Re3 Nd6 20. Rf3 Nef5! and Black is saved thanks to White's weaknesses on the first rank.

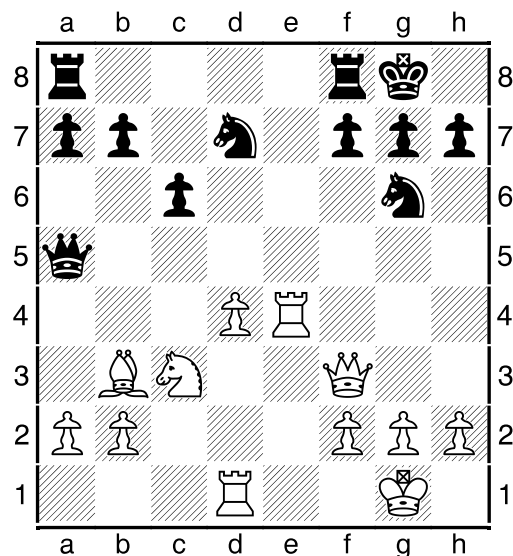
14...Nxe7 (D)



15.Re5!

And once again this instructive manoeuvre with the rook on the fifth rank. The rook on e5 fulfils many functions: it threatens to move to the kingside; prepares the doubling on the e-file; and also controls the d5-square. Therefore Black's knight needs to chase it away, in exchange for taking up a more modest position on the g6-square.

15...Ng6 16.Re4 Nd7 17.Rd1 Qa5 (D)



18.Re3!

Freeing up the e4-square for the knight.

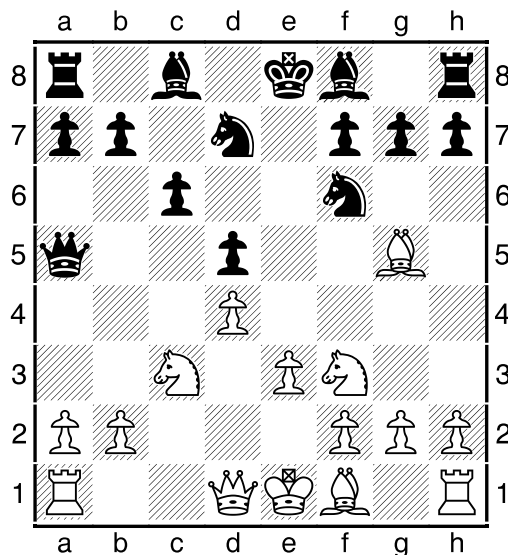
18...Rad8 19.Ne4 Qc7 20.h4! h6

White exploited just the right moment, because 20...Nh4 fails to 21.Qh5 Ng6 22.Rh3 h6 23.Qxg6.

21.Qg4 Kh8 22.h5 Nf4 23.Rg3 g5 24.hxg6 fxe6 25.Re1 Rde8 26.Rge3 Nb6 27.Nc5 Qc8 28.Qxf4 1-0

The Carlsbad Structure

This characteristic pawn placement got its name after the international tournament in Carlsbad in 1923. At that time a very popular variation was the ‘Cambridge-Springs’ in the ‘Queen’s Gambit’: **1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 c6 5.e3 Nbd7 6.Nf3 Qa5**, against which White players did not know how to achieve the advantage. For this reason, many players decided for the quick exchange in the centre: **6.cxd5 exd5 (D)**



With a transposition to our pawn structure.

Nowadays the Carlsbad structure normally arises from the ‘Queen’s Gambit’ and White usually chooses it a move earlier with the exchange on d5. Similar kinds of positions with this structure were seen even earlier, but White players did not plan this kind of play with these positions - they were more or less coincidental.

White decides on the Carlsbad structure with the exchange on d5 and he also has the advantage of choosing one of the typical game plans first. We will get to know two of them: the minority attack with the pawns on the queenside: b4-b5-xc6, with which White wants to change the pawn structure and weaken the pawns on Black’s queenside. The second characteristic plan is linked with the preparation of the e4-move in the centre, which will also bring important differences in the pawn structure.

Black needs to wait and decide on his counterplay based on the White’s plan. It is logical that he will respond to White’s action on the queenside with activity on the other side of the board - and that means he will prepare an attack on White’s king.

He can help himself by using his pawns or he can attack with the pieces only. He can make White’s plans with the minority attack harder using some positional defensive methods, for example with the strengthened defence of the b5-square (which White is supposed to use with his pawn) or with the strengthening of the possible outpost on c4.

If White is preparing the play in the centre (the e4-plan) then Black also needs to be well-prepared. He can do that with action on the wing and it would be even better if he could, only temporarily, leave the control of the centre to White, and later attack it very quickly.

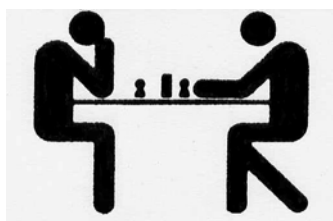
The Minority Attack

We have already said that under this strategic banner we are talking about a simple plan. White will advance his b-pawn and he will try to loosen Black's strong pawn wedge on the queenside.

If we imagine, in a basic Carlsbad structure, a pawn on b5, then Black has a hard time deciding what to do. If he leaves the decision to White, he will take on c6 and thereby weaken the c6-pawn (if Black recaptures bc6) or he will weaken the d5 pawn, if Black takes back with a piece.

It is a similar story if Black takes on b5 or if he plays the ...c5 move - in both cases the d5 pawn is left weak. But the worst thing that he can do is to wait.

If Black only waits, then White will make the c6-pawn weak and later make suitable exchanges and transfer into the endgame, where he will try to exploit his advantage.



□ Petrosian Tigran

■ Krogus Nikolai

D91 Tbilisi 1959

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.Nc3 d5 5.Bg5 Ne4 6.cxd5

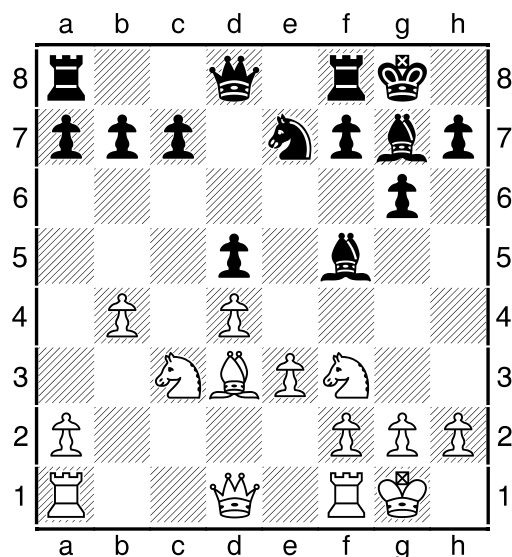
Transposing to the Carlsbad structure, for which White is ready to give up his dark-squared bishop.

6...Nxc5 7.Nxc5 e6 8.Nf3 exd5 9.e3 0-0 10.Bd3 Nc6

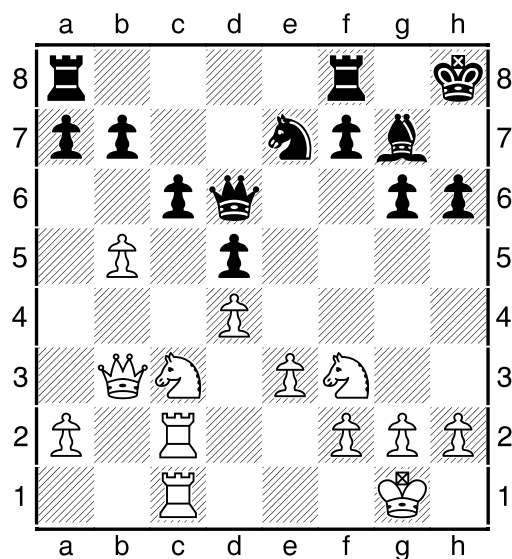
The immediate transition into the Carlsbad structure would occur after 10...c6.

11.0-0 Ne7 12.b4 Bf5 (D)

The swapping of light-squared-bishops is Black's first thought in these structures, but in our position better would be 12...Bg4, because Black will gain counterplay more easily with the pin. But, as it is, he has left White's hands free - and T.Petrosian will use that for an immediate attack on the queenside.



13.Bxf5 Nxf5 14.b5 Qd6 15.Qb3 Ne7 16.Rfc1 Kh8 17.Rc2 h6 18.Rac1 c6 (D)



Black is hesitating with his actions and has not yet made any threats on the kingside. In the meantime, White has gradually improved his position and placed his pieces ideally. Black is in trouble: after ...c6xb5 he would be left with the weak d-pawn and White's rooks would control the c-file. And if he does not take, White will - sooner or later.

19.Na4!

T.Petrosian plays very accurately: after 19.bxc6 bxc6 20.Na4 Rab8 there would be no squares for the queen to move to. For this reason White waits to take on c6, because it

will certainly wait for him.

19...Rab8 20.g3!

Yet another marvelous, prophylactic move. With 20.g3 White prevents possible counterplay for Black with ...f5-f4.

20...Kh7 21.Nc5 Rfd8

After this move the pawn is forceably lost.

22.bxc6 bxc6 23.Qa4

Besides the weakness on c6, Black also has a weakness on a7. A very important moment! If Black were to fight against White's b4-b5 advance with the ...a6 move (this move is actually not preventing the b5 thrust, because White would simply prepare it with the a4 move), he would only have one weakness (on the c6-square).

23...Qf6 24.Kg2 Ra8 25.Nb7 Re8 26.Na5

The c6-pawn is sentenced to death and that is the end of the story.

26...g5 27.h3 Qf5 28.Nxc6 Qe4 29.Rc5 f5

30.Qc2 Nxc6 31.Rxc6 f4 32.exf4 gxf4 33.g4

Bxd4 34.Qd2 Bg7 35.Re1 Qa4 36.Qxd5

Rxe1 37.Nxe1 Rf8 38.Nf3 Kh8 39.Rc7 a6

40.Qb7 Rg8 41.Nh4

1-0

We can learn a lot of things from this instructive game. Above all it, is glorious to see how carefully and uncompromisingly T.Petrosian built his game.

The advance of the b-pawn at the right moment, while being careful all the time to not allow the ...c5 break.

A very important conclusion is that White's dark-squared bishop does not have an important role within the minority attack strategy - White needs to attack the c6-square with his light-squared bishop, with the knights and with the heavy pieces.

Black, in the meantime, has not taken care of the counterplay: when White is able or allowed to play the b4-b5 move, Black must be ready to respond in the centre or on the kingside. Simple but rather important advices...

□ Smyslov Vassily

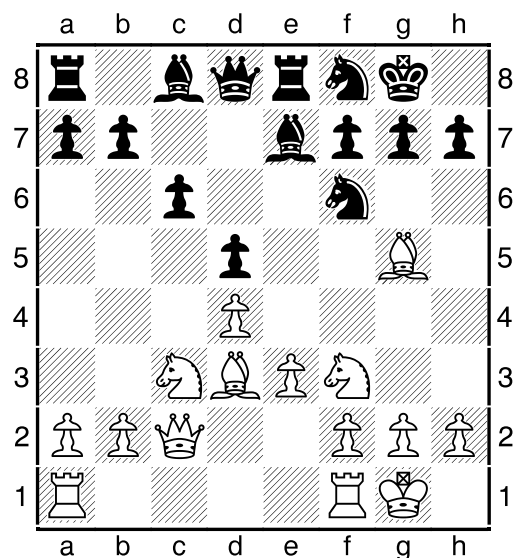
■ Keres Paul

D36 Den Haag/Moscow 1948

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 c6 5.e3

Nbd7 6.cxd5 exd5 7.Bd3 Be7 8.Nf3 0-0

9.Qc2 Re8 10.0-0 Nf8 (D)



A classic and classical position and one of the basic ones in the position with the Carlsbad structure. Black wants to unburden himself with the ...Ne4 move, but which did work immediately: 10...Ne4? 11.Bxe4 Bxg5 (11...dxe4 12.Nxe4) 12.Bxh7+. Therefore Black needs to defend the h7-square first and only then carry out his relieving manoeuvre - one that White cannot prevent.

11.Rab1

The beginning of the minority attack - White's intentions are not hidden.

11...Ng6

Black restricts the bishop on g5 by taking his squares away. We already know that White wants to swap it and therefore he is not upset by Black's plans.

12.b4 Bd6

Better is 12...a6! with which Black gets rid of the potentially weak pawn on the a-file for good.

13.b5 Bd7?!

For some unknown reason Black did not proceed with his plan to play against the dark-squared-bishop - 13...h6. True, White would find some new motifs in the centre: 14.Bxf6 Qxf6 15.e4 (worse is 15.bxc6 bxc6 16.e4?! Nf4!), where the game after 15...Nf4! 16.e5 Qe6 is not yet decided due to Black's threats on the kingside, for example 17.exd6 Qg4 18.Ne1 Rxe1.

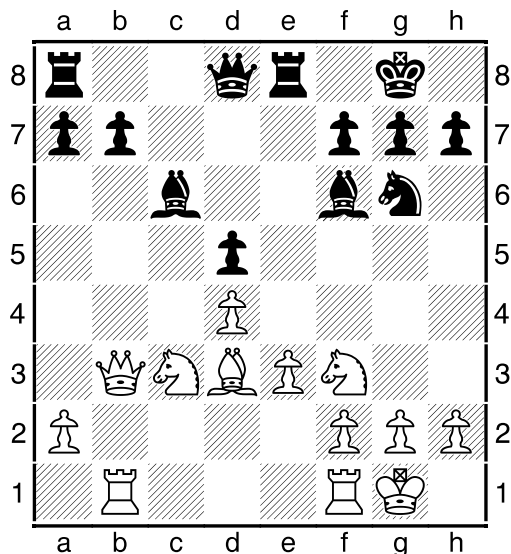
14.bxc6 Bxc6?

A mistake. Better was 14...bxc6 as White would have fewer attacking motifs available.

15.Qb3

White is clearly better: he is threatening the d5-pawn and also preparing a marvellous positional operation...

15...Be7 16.Bxf6 Bxf6 (D)



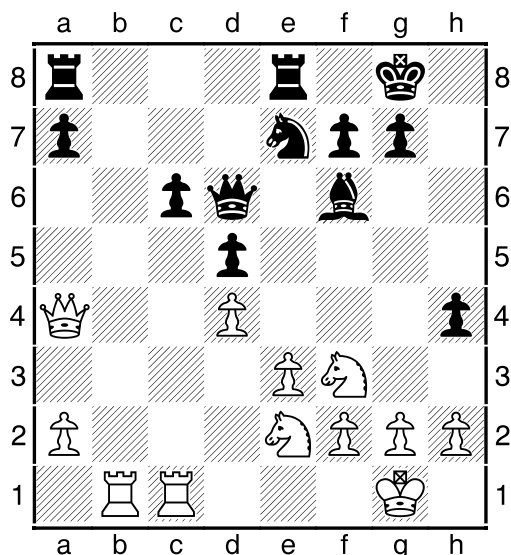
17.Bb5!

A very logical removal of Black's defensive piece. Black's light-squared bishop is a bad piece for the endgame, but it is taking care of Black's holes in the middlegame.

17...Qd6 18.Rfc1 h5

Black is searching for counterplay. Also possible and - perhaps even better - is ...Nh4 or even 18...Ne7, with the idea of ...g5.

19.Ne2 h4 20.Bxc6 bxc6 21.Qa4 Ne7 (D)



White has reached his ideal position with the queenside attack. Black's pieces are forced to stay in one place because they need to defend the pawns, or the entry squares in their hinterland. There is no counterplay to

be seen and White's best move now is 22.Qa6!, with which he paralyses the queenside even more. V.Smyslov, who was most-likely sure that the game was already won, continued even more ambitiously.

22.Rb7 a5 23.h3

After 23.Rcb1 Reb8 big exchanges occur on the b-file - and as a rule, exchanges in compressed positions are good for the defender.

23...Reb8 24.Rcb1 Rxb7 25.Rxb7 c5!

P.Keres is playing excellently and saves his biggest weaknesses.

26.Rb5!

V.Smyslov directs his attack towards the Black pawns on the queenside.

26...cxd4 27.Nexd4 Rc8

After 27...Qc7 28.Nb3 Qc6 29.Nc5 White is better. If 29...Qc7, then 30.Qg4, and if 29...Bc3 30.Nh4 d4 31.Nf5! Nxf5 32.Rb8 White wins the queen.

28.Nb3 Bc3

One of Black's pawns will fall and P.Keres preferred to give up the pawns on the kingside. White's strategy has turned out to be too strong.

29.Qxh4 Rc4 30.g4! a4

30...Ra4 31.Ng5, with a strong attack.

31.Nbd4 Bxd4 32.Nxd4 Qe5

Or 32...Nc6 33.Nxc6 (33.Rb6? Nxd4!) 33...Rxc6 34.Ra5.

33.Nf3 Qd6 34.Ra5 Rc8 35.Rxa4 Ng6 36.Qh5 Qf6 37.Qf5 Qc6 38.Ra7 Rf8 39.Rd7 d4 40.Rxd4 Ra8 41.a4

1-0

We have already stated that Black cannot just sit and wait. For a while it was thought that the only suitable counterplay was the attack with the pawns on White's king. Let's see a game on this theme.

□ **Bogoljubow Efim**

■ **Rubinstein Akiba**

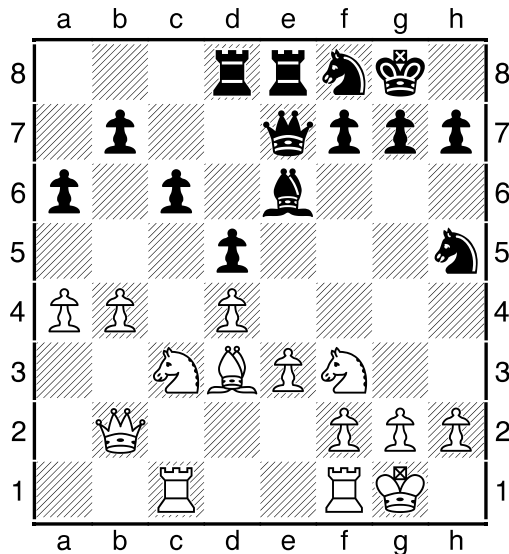
D65 San Remo 1930

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.Bg5 Nbd7 5.e3 Be7 6.Nc3 0-0 7.Rc1 Re8 8.a3 a6 9.cxd5

White decides to transfer into the Carlsbad structure, which is somewhat dubious here. The trouble lies in the fact that he has already played Rc1 - and with the minority attack the rook must be placed on b1,

whereas with the execution of the plan e4 it needs to be on the e1-square. The moves a4 and ...a6 are in Black's favour: Black's move is part of his defensive system while White's move mean a loss of tempo...

9...exd5 10.Bd3 c6 11.0-0 Nf8 12.Qc2 Nh5
Tournament practice later showed that there are two better moves here, both of which we already know: 12...Ne4 and 12...Ng6.
13.Bxe7 Qxe7 14.b4 Be6 15.Qb2 Rad8 16.a4 (D)



16...g5

A Rubinstein shows his cards and there will be an almighty battle on both wings.

17.b5 axb5 18.axb5 g4 19.Nd2 Bc8 20.Rfe1 f5

Threatening the highly unpleasant e4.

21.Na2!

The beginning of the siege of the weak c6-pawn. It seems as though White has managed to get there first; Black is not threatening anything, and White is already attacking.

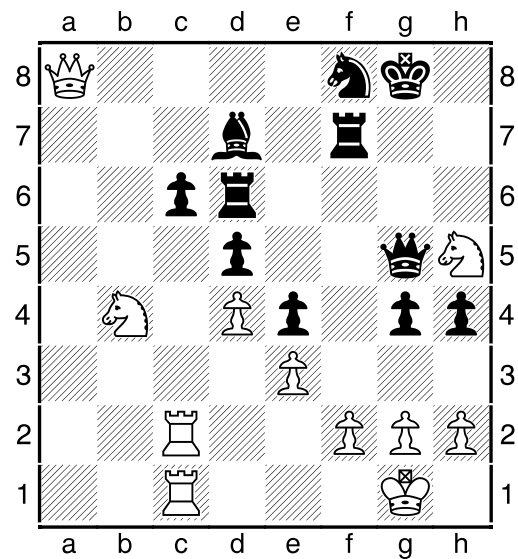
21...Rd6 22.bxc6 bxc6 23.Qb6 Bd7 24.Nb4 Nf6

The c6-pawn is not directly threatened: 25.Nxc6? Qe6 26.Bb5 Rc8 -+.

25.Rc2 Ne4 26.Bxe4

A typical capture for this kind of position: Black's bishop is helpless in comparison to the knights. Of course the capture opens the f-file, where Black will be searching for counterplay, and he will combine the defence of his only weakness with opportunities for counterplay.

26...fxe4 27.Rec1 Qf6 28.Qb7 Re7 29.Qa8 Rf7 30.Nf1 h5 31.Ng3 h4 32.Nh5 Qg5 (D)



33.Qb8!

An excellent zwischenzug, and one which decides the game. Unnecessary complications would arise after 33.Nf4? Rxf4! etc.

33...Rh6 34.Nf4 g3 35.Nxc6 gxf2+ 36.Kxf2 Bxc6 37.Rxc6 Rxc6 38.Rxc6

White succeeded on his primary target and he patiently won the endgame on the 77th move!

38...h3 39.gxh3 Qh5 40.Ke1 Qf3 41.Rg6+ Kh7 42.Rg3 Qh1+ 43.Kd2 Qa1 44.Qc8 Qa2+ 45.Ke1 Qa1+ 46.Ke2 Qb2+ 47.Kf1 Ng6 48.Qg4 Rxf4+ 49.exf4 Qc1+ 50.Kf2 Qd2+ 51.Kg1 Qc1+ 52.Kf2 Qd2+ 53.Qe2 Qxd4+ 54.Qe3 Qb2+ 55.Kf1 Qa1+ 56.Ke2 Qb2+ 57.Kd1 Qb1+ 58.Qc1 Qxc1+ 59.Kxc1 Nxf4 60.Rg4 Ne6 61.Kd2 Kh6 62.Ke3 Kh5 63.Rg8 Kh4 64.Rg6 Nc7 65.Rc6 Ne8 66.Rc8 Nd6 67.Rd8 Nc4+ 68.Kf4 Kxh3 69.Rxd5 e3 70.Kf3 Kxh2 71.Rc5 Nd2+ 72.Kxe3 Nf1+ 73.Kf2 Ng3 74.Re5 Nh1+ 75.Kf3 Ng3 76.Rg5 Nf1 77.Kf2

1-0

After this game a new crisis appeared: many people believed that this meant the end of the Carlsbad structure.

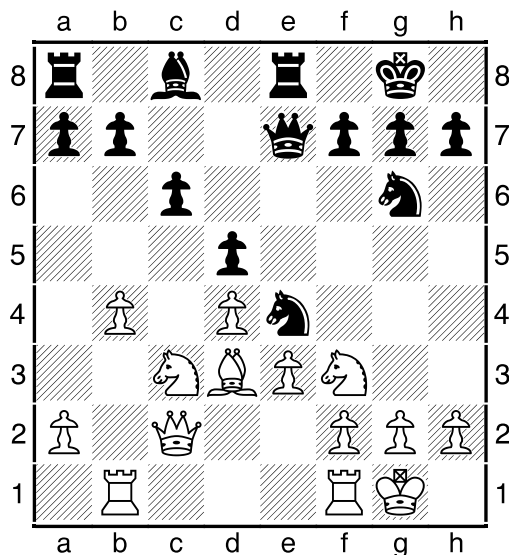
Only in the Russian chess school did players understand that Black needs to search for counterplay by means of an attack on the king with the pieces.

□ Furman Semen

■ Klovans Janis

D36 Moscow 1964

1.c4 Nf6 2.d4 e6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5
5.Bg5 Be7 6.e3 0-0 7.Bd3 Nbd7 8.Nf3 c6
9.Qc2 Re8 10.0-0 Nf8 11.Rab1 Ng6 12.b4
Ne4 13.Bxe7 Qxe7 (D)



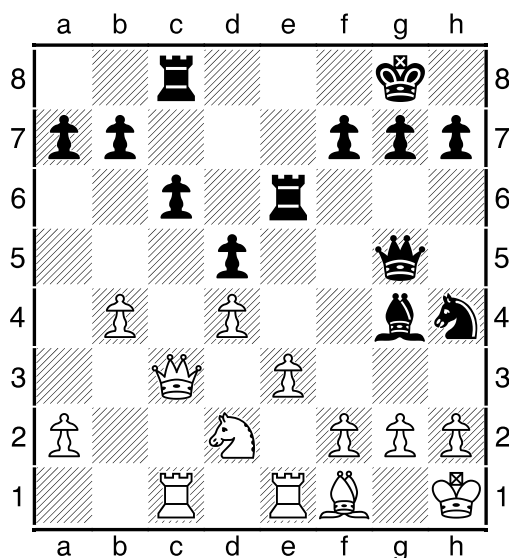
14.Rfe1

This move is not part of a suitable plan. The correct and principled approach would be 14.Be4! As practice showed, Black has a hard time attacking in this structure.

14...Nxc3 15.Qxc3 Bg4 16.Nd2 Rac8

Black decides on a prophylactic move, temporarily halting White's b5 thrust. Now it is clear: the pieces will move to more aggressive positions and White should think about a defensive plan and piece placements.

17.Rbc1 Nh4 18.Bf1 Qg5 19.Kh1 Re6 (D)



20.e4

White seeks a solution in the centre.

20...dxe4 21.Nxe4?

After this move White will have a hard time defending. With 21.Re4 instead, big exchanges would occur on the e-file - and also a possible draw.

21...Qf4 22.Nc5 Nf3!

From now on everything is forced.

23.g3 Rh6 24.h3 Rxb3+ 25.Bxb3 Qh6
0-1

It is clear that White made some mistakes and so made it possible for Black to end the game efficiently. Later on the theoreticians made some improvements in White's defence, practically everything being based on the capture of the knight with the Be4 move.

The Russian chess school kept on working. Later on they discovered that Black can also use positional motifs and not only tactical ones.

The plans, with a quick exchange of the light-squared bishops and a later placement of the pawns in the triangle b5-c6-d5 - and including the jump into the e4-square, became modern.

This plan completely turned the stream of play, due to White being stopped on the queenside forever.

Garry Kasparov confused things even more, when he brought back to life an old, forgotten plan of defence which he improved at the end of the 20th Century.

□ Portisch Lajos

■ Kasparov Garry

D36 Skelleftea 1989

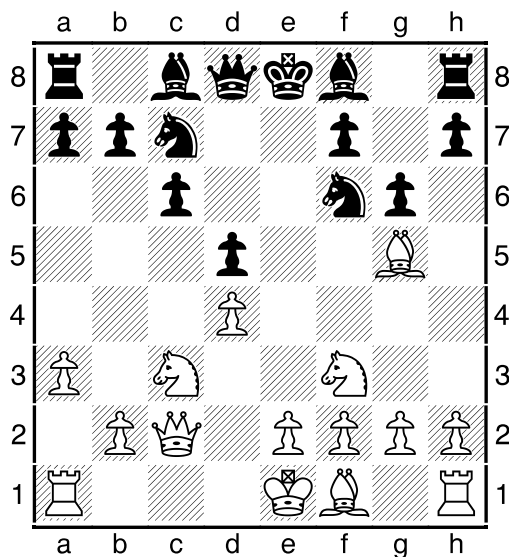
1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.cxd5 exd5
5.Nc3 c6 6.Qc2 Na6

Kasparov is not interested (yet) in the exchange of the light-squared bishops, due to being afraid of the draw. Therefore he first takes care of the knight - and this manoeuvre hides an interesting plan. The move prevents the setting of the Bd3-Qc2 battery due to the ...Nb4 move in reply.

7.a3 Nc7

An elastic square for the knight, from where it controls the b5-square and from where it can also quickly move to the kingside.

8.Bg5 g6 (D)



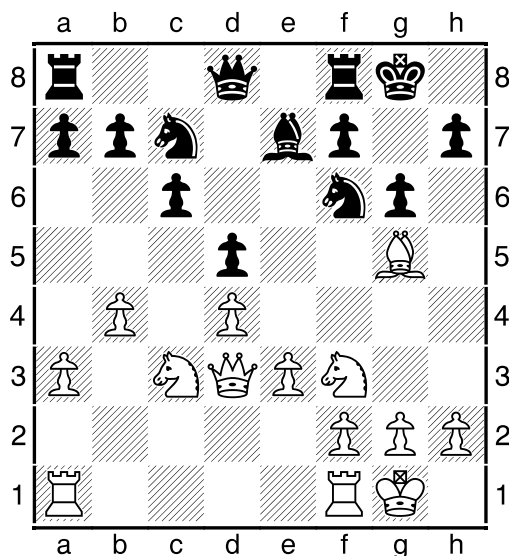
9.e3

9.e4 is a risky move, because Black has good control over the d5-square. If White persists with the attack, he will be left in a bad endgame. For example: 9.e4 dxe4 10.Nxe4 Bg7 11.0-0 0-0 12.h4 Bf5 13.Bxf6 Bxf6 14.h5 Re8 15.Bd3 Bg7! and White has no serious threats.

9...Bf5 10.Bd3

Theory recommends 10.Qb3 Rb8, with approximately equal play. The swap of the light-squared bishop is good for Black.

10...Bxd3 11.Qxd3 Be7 12.0-0 0-0 13.b4 (D)



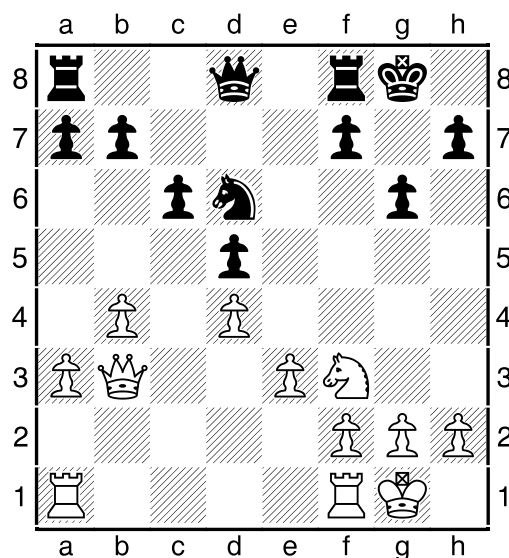
13...Ne4!

The classic relieving manoeuvre. Black offers those transitions in which the outcomes are good for him.

14.Bf4

The exchange on the e7-square is more logical, because White cannot escape from the trade of dark-squared bishops in any event.

14...Nxc3 15.Qxc3 Bd6! 16.Bxd6 Nb5! 17.Qb3 Nxd6 (D)



Black wanted this exact position! He has exchanged all the pieces that he wanted and the d6-knight is left dominating the board. White is left without an active plan: he can forget about the b5 move, and also the e4 strike in the centre. He can do nothing but wait. Black will in the meantime improve the position of his pieces and start to advance his pawns on the kingside.

18.a4 a6 19.Ne5 Re8 20.Rfe1 Qg5 21.h3 Kg7 22.Qc2 Re6 23.Rac1 Rae8 24.Qb1 Qh5 25.Qb3 f6 26.Nd3 g5

G.Kasparov's technique is fantastic. White's knight can jump to c5, but the rook on e7 is able to deal with its threats. L.Portisch wants to somehow swap the knight, but there is no visible way of achieving such a wish.

27.Qd1 Qg6 28.Qc2 R6e7 29.Red1 h5 30.Qb1 h4 31.Qc2 g4

G.Kasparov opens an attack on the king. White is faced with a sad choice: whether to face the attack or to transpose to an endgame that is bad for him. He chose the second possibility.

32.Nf4 Qxc2 33.Rxc2 g3!

The point of Black's 31st move: the game will be decided by the weak e3-pawn.

34.Rd3 Kh6 35.Kf1 Kg5 36.Ne2 Nc4!

37.Rcc3 Nb2!

The first achievement of Black's strategy is the fall of the a4-pawn.

38.Rd2 Nxa4 39.Rb3 Nb6 40.Ng1 Nc4 41.Nf3+ Kh5 42.Rdd3 a5! 43.bxa5 Ra8!

Black's technique is excellent. Now let us observe how he finished the job systematically.

44.Rd1 Rxa5 45.Re1 b5 46.Re2 Ra1+ 47.Re1 Rea7 48.fgx3 Rxe1+ 49.Kxe1 Ra1+ 50.Ke2 hxg3 51.Ne1 Ra2+ 52.Kd1 Rd2+ 53.Kc1 Re2 54.Kd1 Rxe3 55.Rxe3 Nxe3+ 56.Ke2 Nf5 57.Nc2 Nh4 58.Nb4 Nxc2 59.Kf3 Nh4+ 60.Kxg3 Nf5+ 61.Kf4 Nxd4 62.Ke3 Nf5+

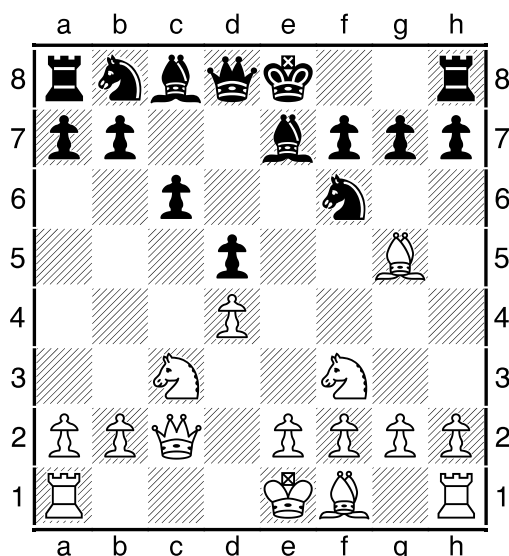
0-1

□ Polugaevsky Lev

■ Spassky Boris

D36 Leningrad 1963

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.d4 Be7 5.cxd5 exd5 6.Bg5 c6 7.Qc2 (D)



7...g6!

An instructive manoeuvre, with which Black solves the problem of his light-squared bishop. In the positions where White manages to set up the Qc2-Bd3 battery and so prevents Black from playing ...Bf5, Black can help himself with a long but effective plan: ...Nd7-f8-e6-g7! when there is once again no defence against ...Bf5!

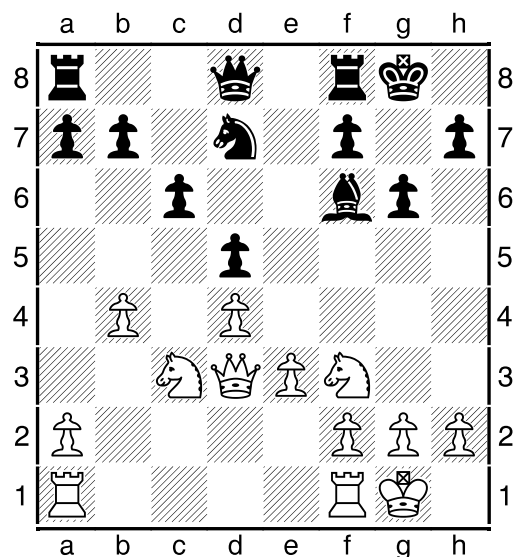
8.e3 Bf5 9.Bd3 Bxd3 10.Qxd3 0-0 11.Bxf6 Bxf6 12.b4

White doesn't feel sorry about the bishop exchange and plays on the time factor - the

b4 move was performed without losing time with preparatory moves.

12...Nd7 13.0-0? (D)

This move is no longer consistent. When you say a, then you also need to say b...



13...b5!

An exclamation mark for courage! Black has already succeeded with many things in this game: he swapped the 'bad' light-squared bishop and he has also blocked White's b-pawn, which can now forget about advancing. If Black manages to put his knight on c4, then he will be able to think about taking over the initiative.

14.a4! a6 15.a5!

L.Polugaevsky also knew what we have previously described and therefore decided on this manoeuvre which does not let Black's knight to come to b6 then c4.

15...Re8 16.Ne2 Be7 17.Qb3 Bd6 18.Nc1 g5
Black has only one weakness - the c6-pawn - which cannot be easily attacked by White. Black therefore has a free hand on the kingside and, besides this, the bishop on d6 is eyeing up the b4-square, where the backward pawn is.

19.Nd3 g4 20.Nd2 Re6 21.Rfc1 Qg5

Black will not mate easily, but it is also hard to see how White can improve his position? They will both use all their forces and the most logical result was seen after a few more moves...

22.Ra2 Rae8 23.Rac2 Qh6 24.Nf1 Bb8 25.Nc5 Nxc5 26.Rxc5 Rg6 27.Qc2 Ree6 28.g3 Kg7 29.Qf5 ½-½

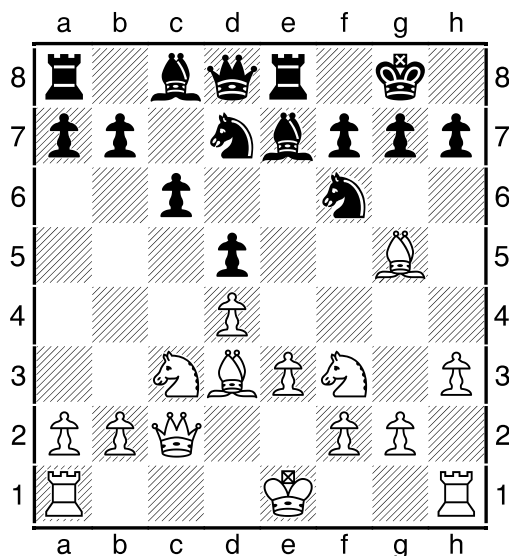
Garry Kasparov had yet another ace up his sleeve, but he never used it in a game. Magnus Carlsen, G.Kasparov's one-time student, ensured that the variation would not be forgotten.

□ **Van Wely Loek**

■ **Carlsen Magnus**

D36 Wijk aan Zee 2010

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 d5 4.d4 Nbd7
5.cxd5 exd5 6.Bg5 Be7 7.e3 c6 8.Qc2 0-0
9.Bd3 Re8 10.h3 (D)



Similar positions have been known for decades. Black players usually play automatically: 10...Nf8 (with the idea of 11...Ne4). M.Carlsen (G.Kasparov) did not hesitate:

10...Ne4!?

Unbelievable! Every school boy knows that this does not work due to...

11.Bxe4 dxe4

11...Bxg5 12.Bxh7+! - for this reason Black players first defend the h7-square.

12.Nxe4

And White is a pawn up. But:

12...Qa5+! 13.Kf1 Bf8 14.Bf4?!

The Dutchman became confused, and it would have been better to save himself from the pin on the b1-h7 diagonal, for example with the 14.Nc3 retreat.

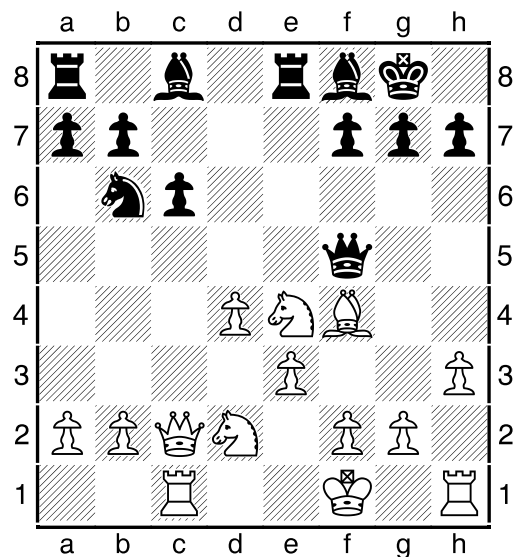
14...Qf5!

Black's threats are becoming more and more real.

15.Nfd2 Nb6 16.Rc1 (D)

More or less forced, but now it seems that

Black is active enough...



16...Nd5!

Black has more than enough compensation and will not be scared by the possible exchanges.

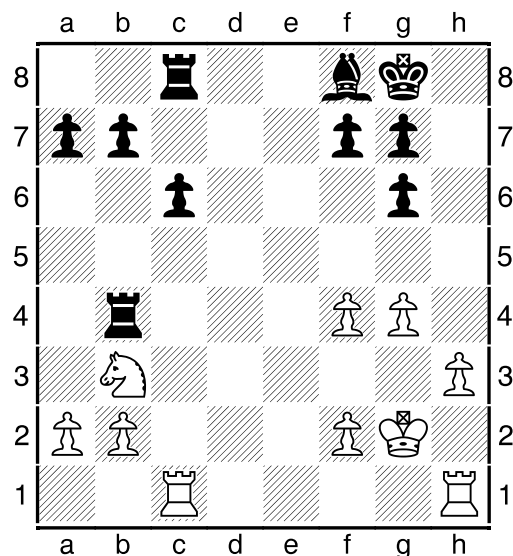
17.g4 Qg6 18.Nd6 Rd8 19.Qxg6

A hard decision and the computer suggests a similar continuation for White, but with the queens still on the board: 19.Nxc8 Nxf4 20.exf4 Rxd4! 21.f5 Qb6 22.Nf3, with unclear play. Next follows the same motif...

19...hxcg6 20.Nxc8 Nxf4 21.exf4 Rxd4 22.Nb3 Rb4 23.Kg2

After 23.Nxa7 Rxa7 the a2-pawn is lost.

23...Rxc8 (D)



24.Rhd1!

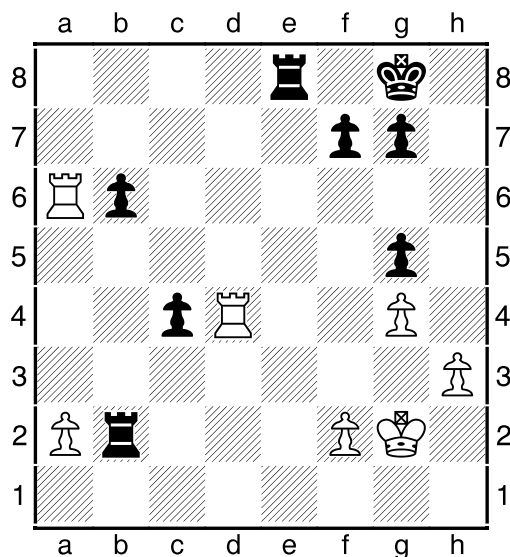
L.Van Wely is playing thoughtfully. In two moves he has managed to turn the position upside-down: instead of being a pawn up, he

transposes into a position a pawn down but with compensation.

24...Rxf4 25.Rd7 Rb4 26.Rc2 Re8 27.Rcd2 Be7 28.Rc7 Bf6 29.Rdd7 b6 30.Rxa7 g5 31.Rd2

Better was 31.Rxf7, although Black has the seventh rank well-defended.

31...c5 32.Ra6 c4 33.Nd4 Bxd4 34.Rxd4 Rxb2 (D)



35.Rd7?

This loses immediately. After 35.Rxc4! Ree2 36.Kg3 Rxf2 37.Rb6! it is true that Black is better: 37...Rg2+ 38.Kf3 Rbf2+ 39.Ke4 Rf4+ 40.Kd5 Rd2+ 41.Kc5 Rxa2, but the position looks like a draw! But now the pawn escapes:

35...c3 36.Raa7 Rf8 37.Rdc7 c2 38.Kg3 Rd8 39.Rxf7 Rd3+ 40.Kg2 c1Q 0-1



The minority attack has always been White's secret weapon in the Carlsbad structure. Even nowadays it is believed to be a strong weapon, although Black players have found some suitable possibilities for counterplay.

Penetration in the Centre

Practice has shown that White has good chances to achieve the advantage with the e4 plan.

Especially effective is the plan that was conceived by Mikhail Botvinnik: a normal development of the pieces, only the knight needs to be placed on e2 instead on f3.

And with this move he already announces that his plan will include the e4 move, but that does not make Black's job any easier to face it.

The rook goes to e1, the pawn on f3, the knight, if needed, to g3 and the e4 stroke is prepared.

Black needs to be well-prepared on - usually after the exchange on e4 he starts to put pressure in the centre, on White's new and unstable e4-d4 pawn pair.

Tigran Petrosjan was a deep thinker and discovered that Black can prevent White's placement with a small change in the order of the moves. Namely, after 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Be7! White has nothing wiser than the Nf3 move...

Later on, some positions were discovered where the e4 move can be played without such preparations. After the exchange he places a piece on e4 (a knight, a bishop or even a rook) and then makes threats with it on both sides of the board.

Already in the introduction we got to know the game M.Botvinnik-J.R. Capablanca, where Black did not take White's threats seriously and made a mistake when he took the pawn on the other side of the board.

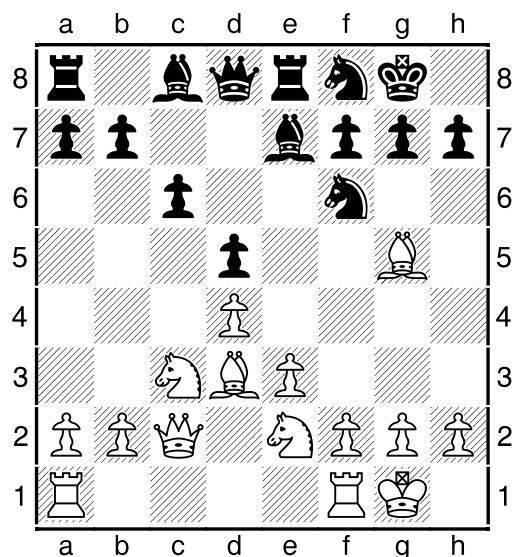
Now let's see yet another game of M.Botvinnik's, where he systematically prepared the e4 move and Black did not know how exactly to defend against the dangers that were pointed at his king...

□ Botvinnik Mikhail

■ Keres Paul

D36 Moscow 1952

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bg5 Be7 6.e3 0-0 7.Bd3 Nbd7 8.Qc2 Re8 9.Nge2 Nf8 10.0-0 c6 (D)



We can see here the classic position, where M.Botvinnik unexpectedly decided on a game of hide and seek - with his next move announcing the minority attack.

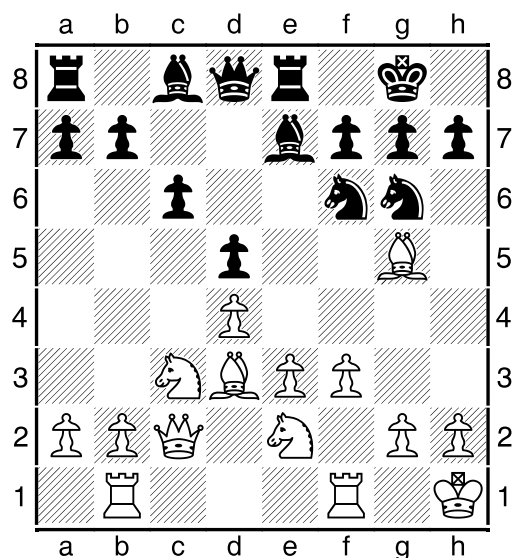
11.Rab1!? Bd6?!

Black is threatening ...Bxh2+ and ...Ng4+. White of course saw this and quickly underlined the weaknesses of Black's bishop on d6. Modern theory recommends 11...Nh5 or 11...Ne4 in both cases with equal play.

12.Kh1 Ng6 13.f3!

White is already threatening the e4 advance and Black will face a tactical threat (the fork e4-e5). Therefore P.Keres had to admit his mistake and retreat his bishop.

13...Be7



14.Rbe1!

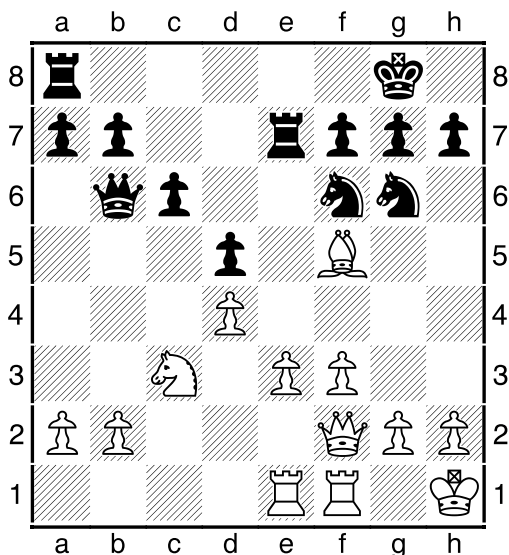
White is also prepared to give up a tempo to place his rook on its natural spot. Black commonly fights against the e4 plan with the ...c5 counterthrust, but which does not work in our position: 14...c5? 15.dxc5 Bxc5 16.Bxf6 gxf6 17.Nd4. The pawn on e3 is weak, but there is no obvious way for Black to additionally attack it. Therefore Black's kingside is fatally and irreparably damaged.

14...Nd7 15.Bxe7 Rxe7 16.Ng3 Nf6 17.Qf2!
The position plays itself. White places his pieces on suitable squares and prepares the strike in the centre. Of course the defence of the d4-square must be strengthened first. The queen on f2 is ideally placed: it defends the d4-pawn and at the same time prepares for the opening of the f-file (after e4 dxe4, fxe4), after which it will as quickly as possible start to put pressure on the f7-square.

17...Be6 18.Nf5 Bxf5?!

A tough decision and the wrong choice. Without the light-squared bishops, Black's defence will collapse. Better was 18...Rd7 with a passive but still strong defence.

19.Bxf5 Qb6 (D)



20.e4!

A systematic move, after which White takes over the initiative.

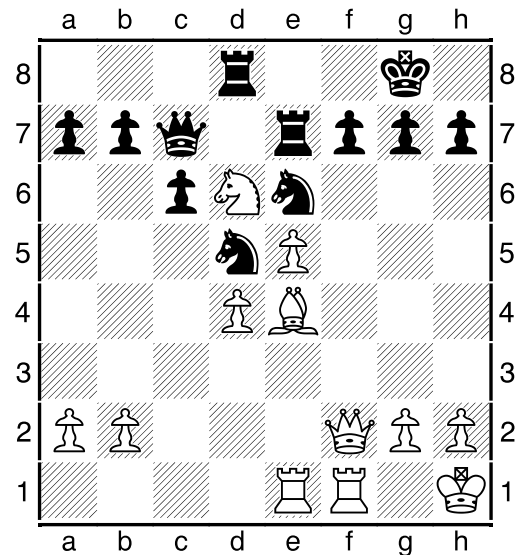
20...dxe4

Forced: if Black waits, then White will play e5; return his bishop to d3 and advance with the f-pawn to the f5- or f6-squares, with strong pressure.

21.fxe4 Rd8 22.e5 Nd5 23.Ne4 Nf8 24.Nd6

White's pressure on the f-file will be decisive - the f7-square is especially vulnerable.

24...Qc7 25.Be4 Ne6 (D)



26.Qh4!

The final precise move, with which White provokes new weaknesses in front of Black's king. M.Botvinnik finished the game with energetic and technical play.

26...g6 27.Bxd5 cxd5 28.Rc1 Qd7 29.Rc3 Rf8 30.Nf5 Rfe8 31.Nh6+!

The knight will be a big part of the final mating attack and it is definitely worth more than a rook in this position.

31...Kf8 32.Qf6 Ng7 33.Rcf3 Rc8 34.Nxf7 Re6 35.Qg5 Nf5 36.Nh6 Qg7 37.g4 1-0

Let's have a look at yet another game on this theme, and what happens if Black just waits.

□ Karpov Anatoly

■ Kasparov Garry

D31 London/Leningrad 1986

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Be7

With the chosen move-order Black has achieved something: White needs to somehow decide at this moment whether he will chose the familiar systems with the Nf3 move (and give up the dangerous placement Bd3-Qc2-Nge2) or he will have to develop his bishop to the seemingly more modest f4-square.

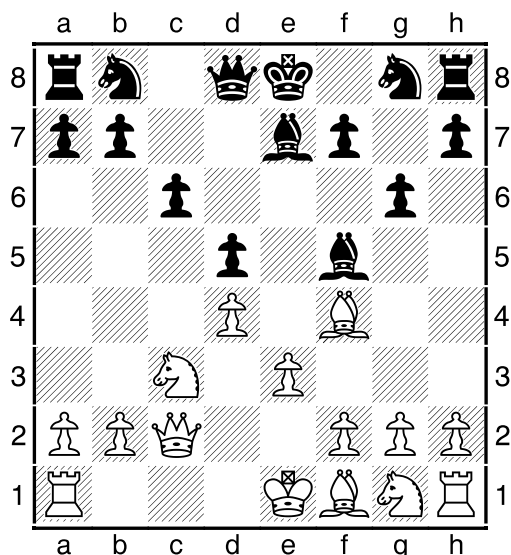
4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bf4

After the text move White gave up the standard pressure on the d5-square and the play is now completely new. It is clear that White will be playing on the kingside and Black will search for his opportunities on the queenside or in the centre.

5...c6 6.Qc2 g6

We already know this idea: Black wants to swap the light-squared bishops with the ...Bf5 move. The second possibility is the provocative 6...Bg4, where Black leaves the space advantage in the centre to White: 7.f3 Bh5 8.e4 Bg6 9.Bd3 Nf6, but puts huge pressure on White's centre with his well-developed pieces.

7.e3 Bf5 (D)



8.Qd2!

A loss of tempo, but it is not so important due to the closed nature of the position. Black's f5-bishop will be the target of White's pawns (e4 or g4), with which White will easily win back his lost tempo. An additional problem Black faces is hidden in the g6-pawn's position, which is taking away a good square for the possible retreat of the bishop.

8...Nd7

Black is pressed for space and he needs to think clearly where he will develop his pieces. White's f3 with g4 (or e4) action is unstoppable and Black needs to find suitable squares for his pieces.

9.f3 Nb6

Freeing the d7-square for the other knight.

10.e4 Be6 11.e5!

White is not paying attention to Black's wishes and makes it even more difficult for Black to finish his development. The e5 pawn is very unpleasant because it is restricting Black. How can G.Kasparov finish his development?

11...h5

One possibility, but not the best one. The old rule states that we need to move as few pawns as we possible on the side where we are weaker - and where the opponent is planning his actions. Black could instead strike in the centre - 11...f5!?. Or he could think about developing his knight to e7 (the withdrawal of the queen and bishop from e7). But absolutely not 11...Nc4? 12.Bxc4 dxc4 13.Ne4 and White penetrates via one of the weakened black squares (d6 or f6).

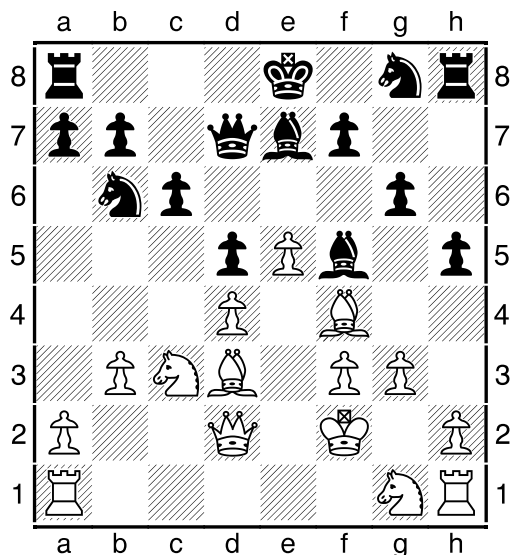
12.Bd3 Qd7 13.b3!

A.Karpov is a master of prophylactic play - and this move takes away the possibility of Black jumping into c4.

13...Bh4+? 14.g3 Be7

The sense behind this manoeuvre is not completely clear. Kasparov passes the move to White and the g3 move is not weakening at all.

15.Kf2 Bf5 (D)



16.Bf1!

An excellent move! The player with the space advantage does not exchange pieces, because the opponent would be able to defend more easily - a classic chess rule. White's pawn will progress and nothing will

stop them (f3 and g4), they will push Black's bishop back and later White's light-squared bishop will return to d3 (or somewhere else) victoriously.

16...Kf8 17.Kg2 a5 18.a3?!

A completely unnecessary jump to the other wing (because White needs to play on the kingside, where he is a lot better). The correct plan is clear and simple: h3 and g4.

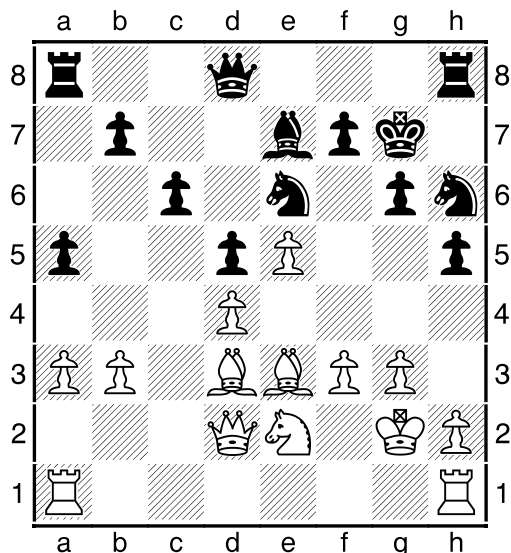
18...Qd8 19.Nh3!

Threatening the unpleasant Ng5 so Black has no choice but to take.

19...Bxh3+ 20.Kxh3 Kg7 21.Kg2 Nd7!

G.Kasparov immediately senses his opportunity: the knight goes to e6, from where it will attack the d4- and f4-squares - and at the same time it will help to prepare the ...c5 break.

22.Bd3 Nf8 23.Be3 Ne6 24.Ne2 Nh6 (D)



Even though Black is trying really hard, his prospects are still not good. There is no counterplay in sight - his only chance is hidden in the ...c5 thrust. White can in the meantime prepare the advance of his pawns, and can push Black's pieces even deeper into defence, whereupon he can hope to open the play up and target Black's monarch.

25.b4?!

White's tendency to prevent Black's ...c5 break can be easily understood, but a pawn movement on the wing where he is weaker can only be helpful to Black.

25...Qb6 26.b5?

A serious mistake. After 26.Rab1 Black would gain the a-file (after the exchange on

b4), but at least for now, he cannot really use it. For example: 26.Rab1 axb4 27.axb4 Ra3 28.Rhc1, with the preparation of the b5 move and aimed against the counter attack ... c5. But like this...

26...c5!

Black succeeds and his counterplay is well and truly present! White was the master of his fate - only a few moves ago the pawns were still on a3 and b3 and Black could only dream about similar counterplay. But this is a result of unprincipled play and play on the wing where we have no advantage.

27.Nc3 cxd4 28.Bxh6+ Rxb6 29.Nxd5 Qd8 30.Be4 h4 31.Rhf1?!

White needs to think about equalizing, and that was offered by 31.Rhc1. Now, however, Black has the initiative.

31...hxg3 32.hxg3 Rc8 33.Rh1 Rxb1?!

A waste of time, and correct was 33...Bg5 34.f4 Rc5! and Black has a strong initiative. The game ended in a draw after...

34.Rxb1 Bg5 35.f4 Rc5 36.fxc5 Rxd5 37.Bxd5 Qxd5+ 38.Kh2 Qxe5 39.Rf1 Qxb5 40.Qf2 Nxc5 41.Qxd4+ 1/2-1/2

After long years of studying, Black players came up with a suitable method of how we are supposed to face the dangers in the centre, connected to the e4- and d4-pawn pair.

□ **Kasparov Garry**

■ **Barua Dibyendu**

D36 Internet 2000

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bg5 c6 6.Qc2 Be7 7.e3 Nbd7 8.Bd3 0-0 9.Nge2 Re8 10.0-0 Nf8 11.f3 Ng6 12.Rad1 h6

Black pays no attention to White's plans in our game. G.Kasparov was M.Botvinnik's student and he of course taught him his system well. The Indian's attempt was new at the time, as until then 12...Be6 had been played with great success, for example: 13.Kh1 (better is 13.Ng3! Rc8 14.Bf5 Bxf5 15.Nxf5 h6 16.Bxf6 Bxf6 17. e4, where White's advantage is purely symbolic) 13...Rc8 14.e4 (premature!) 14...dxe4 15.fxe4 Ng4! 16.Bc1 c5! and Black has attacked White's central pawns at the right

moment. No good is 17.d5, due to 17...Bd7 and 18...Bd6, with the idea of ...Qh4. In the game Gulko,B-Sturua,Z Elista 1998 there followed 17.Bb5 Qc7 18.Nf4 cxd4 19.Bxe8 dxc3 20.Bb5 cxb2 21.Qxb2 Nxf4 22.Bxf4 Qc2 23.Qxc2 Rxc2 24.Rd2 Rxd2 25.Bxd2 Bc5, with the advantage for Black. Popular, but worse, is 12...Nh5 13.Bxe7 Qxe7 14.e4 dxe4 15.fxe4 Be6 16.e5 c5 17.d5 Bg4 18.e6! as in the game Yakovich,A-Ahlander,B Stockholm 1999.

13.Bxf6

The complications after 13.Bxh6 gxh6 14.Bxg6 fxg6 15.Qxg6+ Kh8 16.Nf4 Bf8 17.e4 are completely unnecessary and now the position is unclear.

13...Bxf6 14.Bxg6 fxg6 15.e4 g5 16.e5

White has no advantage left after 16.a4 Be6 17.a5 Be7 18.f4 gxf4 19.Nxf4 Bg5.

16...Be7 17.f4 gxf4 18.Nxf4 Rf8 19.Ng6 Rxf1+ 20.Rxf1 Be6 21.Ne2

A rare case where in an open position the pair of knights is better than a pair of bishops.

21...Qd7 22.h4 Re8 23.Ng3 Bf7?!

Better would be 23...Bd8!?, because Black will have a hard time without his dark-squared bishop - the d6-square is too weak. At the same time, the bishop would be threatening a transfer to the b6-square with an attack on the d4-pawn, the only weak point in White's camp.

24.Nxe7+ Rxe7 25.Nf5 Re6 26.Nd6

The rest of the game is like the play between a cat and a mouse - the knight on d6 will paralyse Black, and the light-squared bishop is completely helpless against it.

26...Bg6 27.Qc3 Rxd6

Black couldn't tolerate the knight's dominance any longer, but even an exchange sacrifice cannot save him. The rest is the technical part of the game:

28.exd6 Qxd6 29.Qa3 Qb8 30.Qe7 Qg3 31.Rf3

White makes his work harder - after 31.Rf8+ Kh7 32.Qd8! Be4 33.Rh8+ Kg6 34.Qe8+ Kf5 35.Qf7+ Kg4 36.Qxg7+ the path to victory would be a lot quicker.

31...Qg4 32.Qf8+ Kh7 33.Qf4 Qd7 34.Rg3 Be4 35.Qe5 Qf7 36.h5 Qd7 37.b4 a6 38.a4 Kg8 39.a5 Kh7 40.Kf2 Kg8 41.Qb8+ Kh7

42.Qf8 Bc2 43.Qf4 Be4 44.Qe5 Kg8 45.Ke3 Kh7 46.Ke2 Kg8 47.Qb8+ Kh7 48.Qf8 Bc2 49.Kd2 Be4 50.Kc1 Qc7 51.Rg4 Qd7 52.Rf4 Bxg2 53.Qf5+ Qxf5 54.Rxf5 Kg8 55.Kd2 Bh3 56.Rf4 Be6 57.Ke3 Bf7 58.Rf5 Kf8 59.Re5 Be8 60.Kf4 Bf7 61.Kg4 Be8 62.Kg3 Bf7 63.Kf4 Be8 64.Kf5 Bxh5 65.Ke6 Bg6 66.Re3 Bc2 67.Rf3+ Kg8 68.b5 cxb5 69.Kxd5 b4 70.Kc4 b3 71.Kc3 g5 72.d5 g4 73.Rf4 h5 74.d6

1-0

In the Carlsbad structure there also exist plans whereby White plays the e4 move without the support of the f3 pawn.

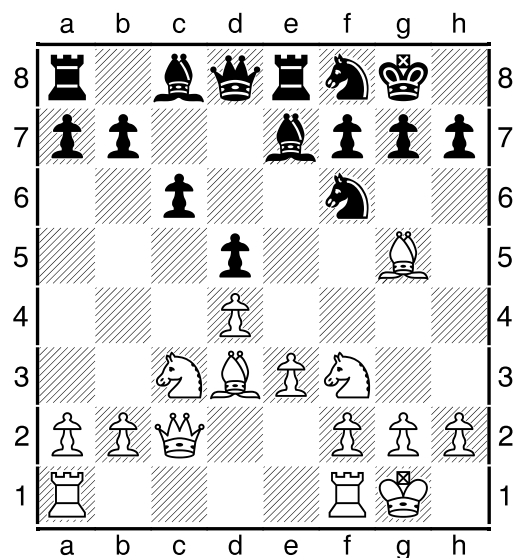
In these cases he wants to take on e4 with a piece (after e4 de4) and wants to gain and use the initiative with his pieces in the centre, or will attack the opponent's king very quickly.

□ Marshall Frank James

■ Rubinstein Akiba

D36 Moscow 1925

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Nbd7 5.e3 Be7 6.Nf3 0-0 7.cxd5 exd5 8.Bd3 Re8 9.0-0 c6 10.Qc2 Nf8 (D)



11.Rae1

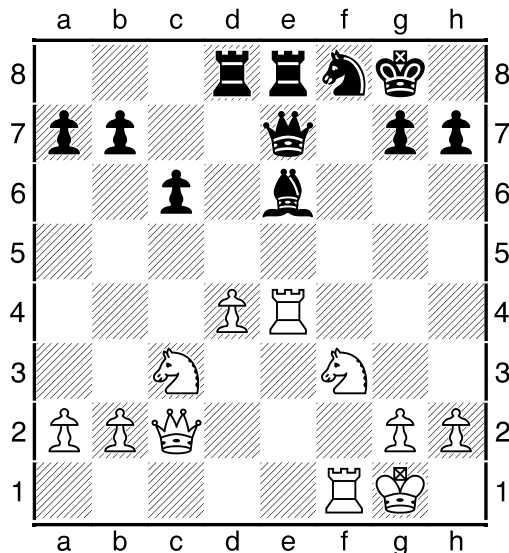
White shows his cards immediately - he wants to play the e4 move. For now Black is defending the e4-square very well and it is not clear how White can succeed.

11...Ne4 12.Bxe7 Qxe7 13.Bxe4 dxe4 14.Nd2

White's plan is now becoming clearer: to

provoke the ... f5 move (because he can't play 14...Bf5 due to 15.f3) when White will open the centre and hope for the advantage thanks to the initiative.

14...f5 15.f3! exf3 16.Nxf3 Be6 17.e4 fxe4 18.Rxe4 Rad8 (D)



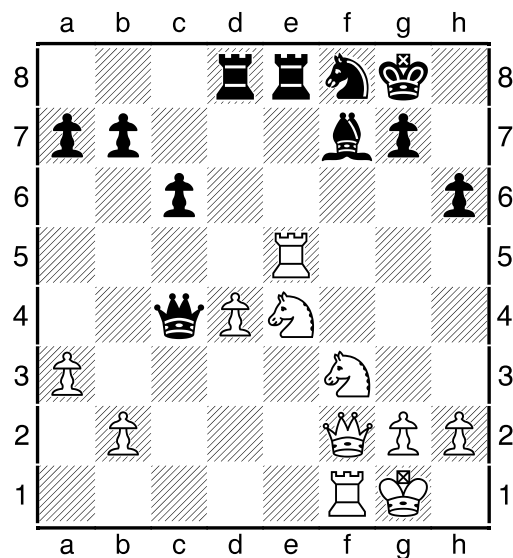
A critical position, which can be seen in many games. Let us see one example of the same scenario, only this time played half a century later: 19.Rfe1 h6 20.Re5 Qf7 21.Qe4 Rd6 22.Qe3 Nd7 23.Ra5 Nf6 24.Qf4 Red8 25.Rxa7 Qd7 26.Na4 Nd5 27.Qg3 Qc7 28.Nc5 Bc8 29.Ne5 Rf6 30.Ne4 Rf4 31.Ng6 Qb6 32.Nxf4 Qxa7 33.Nxd5? (up until this

moment White's play has been simply fantastic, and he almost achieved a decisive advantage due to the constant maintenance of the initiative, which he could have kept after 33.Nh5! Qxd4+ 34.Kh1 Kh8 35.Nef6 g5 36.Nxd5) 33...Qxd4 34.Qe3 draw, Tal,M-Vaganian,R Moscow 1975.

19.Re5 h6 20.Ne4 Qb4?

Correct was 20...Qc7 and ...d5. F.Marshall quickly finished the game in his own typical gunman style.

21.a3! Qc4 22.Qf2 Bf7 (D)



23.b3 Qxb3 24.Nfd2 Qa2 25.Nc3 1-0

The Dynamic Centre

Positions with as yet undetermined placement of the pawns in centre, are more common in chess. We can talk about these positions when the central pawns are not in direct contact.

They contain a lot of traps and they demand a lot of knowledge and because such positions can change to all our previously-described positions, it is important to know them well first - and only after do we need to start learning about the dynamic centre.

But of course these kinds of positions, with this type of centre, are hard to play: there are no clear plans and we need to be careful all the time, and we also need to evaluate and re-evaluate the possible consequences of the transitions constantly.

The active side will try to maintain their dominance in the centre and the attacker will always be threatening a transition into whichever central pawn structure is good for him. And he will achieve this the easiest, if he advances his pawns as far as possible, at least across the centre of the board (with White's pawns at least to the fifth rank and to the fourth rank with Black's pawns).

He can start to get active on the wing only after the outcome in the centre is decided or stabilised, but before that one needs to be careful about attacking with the pawns on the wing. You need to keep in mind the possibility of counterattack in the centre.

The defender needs to delay the outcome in the centre for as long as possible and he needs to support the pawn tension in the centre. This will be the easiest way for him to secure himself against quick attacks, but if it occurs, almost surely a chance for counterattack will appear.

If the defender starts to sense the attacker's wing action, then he needs to prepare the counterattack in the centre immediately: success is almost assured! The most appropriate openings for studying the dynamic centre are the 'Sicilian Defence' variations.

We will come across a lot of such positions in modern chess, and every single one of them has its traps. Therefore we will only get to know a few of them here and we will try to give you some basic advice. Active play in the centre, advance of the pawns!

Active Play in the Centre

□ Tal Mihail

■ Olafsson Fridrik

B82 Bled 1961

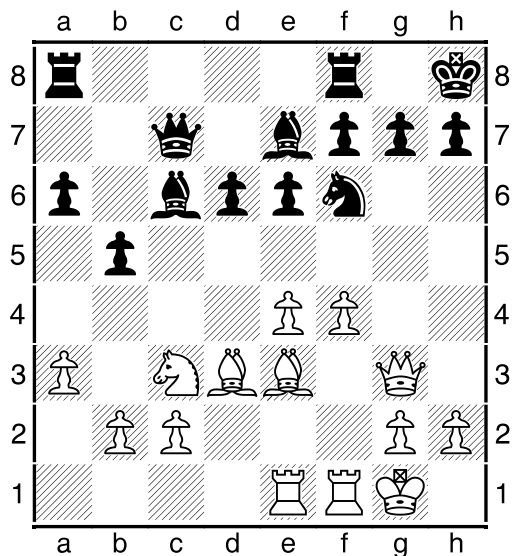
1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 e6
5.Nc3 Qc7 6.Be3 a6 7.a3?! Nf6 8.f4 d6

The acceptance of pawn sacrifice with 8...Nxd4 9.Bxd4! Qxf4 10.g3 Qc7 11.e5 would be risky. F.Olafsson rather chooses a transposition to some kind of 'Scheveningen' version of the 'Sicilian Defence', where White has saved a move and already developed his bishop to the active d3-square (usually the bishop first goes to e2).

9.Qf3 Be7 10.Bd3 0-0 11.0-0 Bd7?!

A novelty, but still a worse move than the at that time known continuation 11...Nxd4!? 12.Bxd4 e5 13.Be3 (13.fxe5 dxe5 14.Qg3 Bc5! =) 13...exf4 14.Bxf4 (14.Qxf4! - I.Boleslavsky) 14...Be6 =.

12.Rae1 b5 13.Qg3 Kh8 14.Nxc6 Bxc6 (D)



White has completed the centralisation of his pieces and decides to define the position of his pawns in the centre.

15.e5! Ng8

M.Tal suggested in his comments 15...Ne8!?, when White is better after 16.Qh3 g6 17.f5 exf5 18.Rxf5 Bd7 19.Ref1. Also the capture 15...dxe5 is inadvisable: 16.fxe5 Nh5 17.Qh3 Qxe5 18.Kh1 +/- or 18.g4!? g6 19.gxh5 gxh5 20.Kf2 +/-.

16.Qh3 Nh6 17.f5!

According to plan, but in M.Tal's style - a little impatient. After 17.Kh1 or 17.Bd4 White's advantage would be clearer.

17...Nxf5 18.Rxf5 exf5 19.Bxf5 g6 20.Bd4 Kg8?

F.Olafsson played this move without thinking. The real challenge for the attacker, the pirate from Riga, would be represented by the move 20...Qd8!. M.Tal had seen that bad would be 21.Qh6? dxe5 22.Bxe5+ Bf6 23.Re3 Rg8! and also 21.e6+? Bf6 22.Qh4 fxe6 23.Rxe6 Be5! 24.Bxe5+ dxe5 25.Qxd8 Rxd8, but he recommended 21.Be4! and continued with his analysis: 21...Bxe4 (21...Rc8 22.Rf1 Bxe4 23.e6+ Kg8 24.Qh6 f6 25.Rf4! g5 (25...Qc7 26.Rxe4 and 27.Nd5!) 26.Nxe4! or 21...d5 22.Bd3) 22.Nxe4 dxe4 23.Bxe5+ f6 24.Ng5 h5 25.Ne6 and 26.Qe3!. Even more interesting are the variations after 21.exd6+!? Bf6 22.Qh4 Kg7 (22...Bxd4+ 23.Qxd4+ Kg8 (23...f6 24.Re7!+) 24.Be4 Re8 25.Rd1 +/-) 23.Bd7!! (with the threat of Re7!) 23...Bd7 24.Nd5 Bxd4+ 25.Qxd4+ Kh6 (25...f6 26.Re7+ Kg8 27.Qh4 Rf7 28. Nf6 +/-) 26.Rxe4 f6 27.Re7+, but the variation was turned upside down by Fritz, with the 26...g5! -+ move.

21.e6 Bg5

Let's still have a look at M.Tal's final attack and the transposition into a won endgame: an elegant solution, with which many Sicilian battles end...

22.exf7+ Rxf7 23.Bxg6 Rg7 24.Qe6+ Kh8 25.Be8 h6 26.Bxc6 Qxc6 27.Ne4 Re8 28.Qg6 Ree7 29.h4 Qd5 30.Bxg7+ Rxg7 31.Qxd6 Qxd6 32.Nxd6 Bxh4 33.Re8+ Rg8 34.Nf7+ Kg7 35.Rxg8+ Kxg8 36.Nxh6+ Kh7 37.Nf5 Bg5 38.b3 1-0

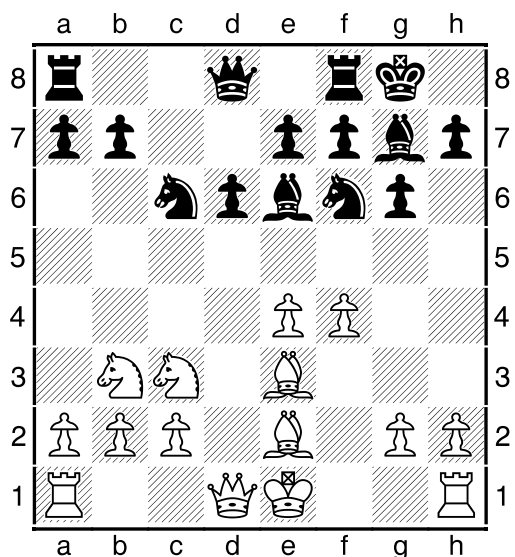
There is no room for attacks on the wing in positions with a dynamic centre. Mikhail Botvinnik understood that already in this next, classic, game.

□ Alekhine Alexander

■ Botvinnik Mikhail

B72 Nottingham 1936

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6
5.Nc3 g6 6.Be2 Bg7 7.Be3 Nc6 8.Nb3 Be6
9.f4 0-0 (D)



A famous position in chess history! Alexander Alekhine, who lost his World Champion title a year previously, wanted to prove in this tournament that he was still the best. Before the game, he was sure that he would defeat the young Russian and the next move shows that he wanted to blow him off the board:

10.g4 d5!

Mikhail Botvinnik was a chess player with a classical education, which teaches you the basic and strong rules: against a quick action on the wing, we need to strike in the centre! Every delay brings only trouble: 10...Na5 11.g5 Nd7 12.Bd4.

11.f5

Or 11.e5 d4 12.Nxd4 Nxd4 13.Bxd4 Nxe4.

11...Bc8 12.exd5

A little better would be 12.fxe6 hxe6 13.exd5 Nb4 14.Bf3.

12...Nb4 13.d6 Qxd6 14.Bc5 Qf4 15.Rf1 Qxh2 16.Bxb4 Nxe4

The second sacrifice, which brings Black a draw. But not 16...Qg3+ 17.Rf2 Ng4 18.Ne4!

17.Bxe4 Qg3+ 18.Rf2 Qg1+ 19.Rf1 Qg3+ 20.Rf2 Qg1+

½-½

Let's put aside the complicated and dynamic Sicilian structures and get to know the so called 'Hedgehog' structure.

The structure gained its name after the typical placement of Black's pawns - in a line on a6, b6, d6 and e6 these pawns look like a hedgehog's spines and they are practically untouchable.

The pawns are placed along the sixth rank and Black's pieces are crouched behind them, but that does not mean that Black is performing his operations in a restricted area (on the last three ranks) for no reason.

He is intentionally leaving the space advantage to White: though White cannot place his pieces and pawns on the fifth rank (it is controlled by Black's quills), there are still four ranks left for him on his side of the board.

White usually places his pawns in the centre, at least on e4 and c4 (White's d4 pawn and Black's c5 pawn leave the board quickly) and he has, at least theoretically, an advantage on this part of the board.

But Black is concentrated on the centre and he is waiting for the perfect moment to strike on the wing (...b5) and to attack the c4-pawn (when the c4 pawn is out of the picture, White's pressure in the centre is weakened).

But when the right moment arrives, Black attacks directly in the centre: the ...d5 move, if played at the right moment, as a rule saves all his problems and often leaves him with the advantage.

The freed pieces, which were sitting behind the quills, double their power. In these positions White usually manoeuvres and strengthens the pressure on the bad Black pawns on b6 and especially on d6.

He must be at all times prepared for the aforementioned strikes of Black, and he himself want to play the f5 move (if, with it, he can force Black to take on f5 or to play the ...e5 move).

After the advance of Black's e-pawn he gains control over the d5-square, where he will later place a piece (usually the knight) and control the board with it.

The second plan is connected with active play on the queenside, something similar to that which the Indian champion Viswanathan Anand managed to achieve in the following game.

□ Anand Viswanathan

■ Illescas Cordoba Miguel

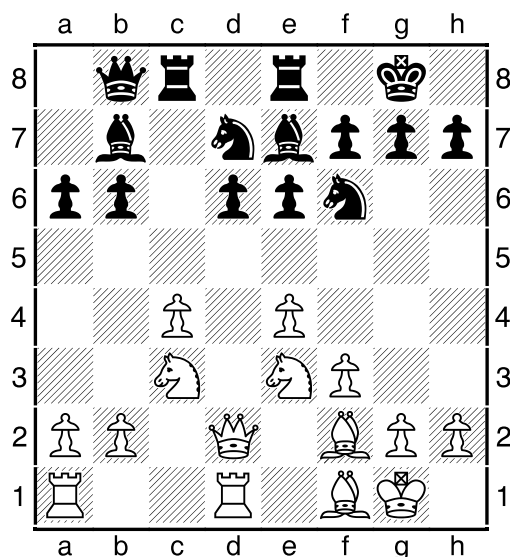
B44 Linares 1992

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nc6
5.Nb5 d6 6.c4 Nf6 7.N1c3 a6 8.Na3 b6
9.Be2 Bb7 10.0-0 Nb8

The other serious possibility is connected with the manoeuvre of the knight to the d7-square, via the e5-square: 10...Be7 11.Be3 Ne5!. The knight is better placed on e5, because he is also looking at the c4-square, where a badly defended pawn stands. Therefore White has troubles rescuing his knight from the a3-square, which he wants to place on d4 or on e3. A continuation might be: 12. f3 (12. f4 Ng6 or 12.Bf3 Nh4) 12...0-0 13.Qd2 Qc7 14.Rfd1 Rac8 15.Rac1 (15.Kh1 d5!) 15...Qb8, with approximately equal play.

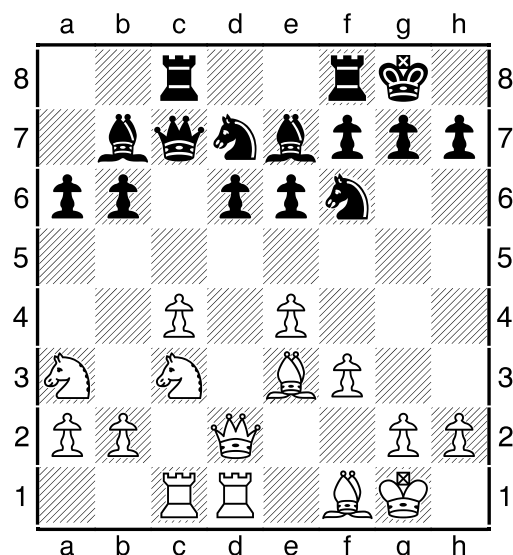
11.f3 Be7 12.Be3 Nbd7 13.Qd2

V.Akopian had shown a better move: 13.Nc2! 0-0 14.Qd2 Qc7 15.Rfd1 (later we will see why the position of the rook on d1 is so important) 15...Rac8 16.Bf2 Rfe8 17.Bf1 Qb8 18.Ne3! (D)



This is an important position and ideal for White, for many reasons: the queen and the rook on the d-file put pressure on the d6-pawn and Black does not have his standard plan. ...Bd8-c7; the knight on e3 controls the c4- and d5-squares; the rook on the a-file will support the advance of the a-pawn, right to the a5-square.

13...0-0 14.Rfd1 Qc7 15.Rac1 Rac8 16.Bf1 (D)



The second critical position occurs after 16.Kh1 Qb8 17. Bf1 Kh8 18.Nc2! (wrong is 18.Qf2 Bd8! - the queen needs to be on the d-file, where restricts the bishop) 18...Rg8 19.b3 Bc6 20.Bg1 g5 21.Re1! (defence of the e-pawn; after ...g4 would follow f4) 21...Rg6 22.Nd5! and White had a huge advantage in the game Anand,V-Polgar,S New Delhi 1990.

16...Rfe8 17.Kh1 Qb8 18.Nc2 Ne5

After the standard 18...Bd8!? 19.Bf4 Ne5 20.b3 Bc7 21.Bg5 White has the advantage.

19.b3 Ba8 20.Bg1 Re8?!

We already know the defence against the 20...Kh8 plan: 21.Re1! Rg8 22.Nd4 and White is prepared for ...g4 with f4!

21.Nd4 Bf8?

A mistake, as from now on the b6-pawn will be left defenceless. It would have been better to admit the mistake with 21...Re8.

22.Re1 Ned7?

A new mistake, and 22...g6 should have been played instead.

23.a3 Bb7

And not 23...d5 24.cxd5 Bxa3 25.Rc2 exd5 26.Bxa6 Bb7 27.Bxb7 Qxb7 28.e5 +/-.

24.b4

Black released the pressure on the c4-pawn and White exploits this fact. Next follows classic action on the queenside.

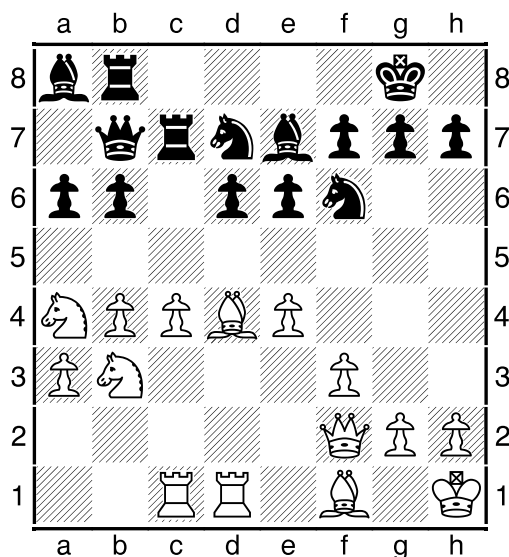
24...Rc7 25.Nb3 Ba8 26.Na4 Bc6 27.Nb2 Ba8 28.Bd4 Rdc8 29.Red1

Black is helpless and without the counterplay linked with the ...b5 or ... d5 strikes.

29...Be7

After 29...b5 White would easily keep his advantage: 30.Na5! bxc4 31.Rxc4 Rxc4 32.Bxc4 +/-.

30.Qf2 Qb7? 31.Na4 Rb8 (D)



Next follows a nice final combination:

32.Nxb6! Nxb6 33.Na5 Qa7 34.c5 dxc5 35.bxc5 Nc8 36.c6 Rb6 37.Rb1 Rxb1 38.Rxb1 1-0

Of course the 'Hedgehog' structures are not a one-way street, like we saw in the previous game.

Let's see what White can expect if he is incautious, even though he is famous...

□ Polugaevsky Lev

■ Ftacnik Lubomir

A30 Luzern 1982

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 c5

Our placements can be formed out of the 'English Opening'.

3.Nc3 e6 4.g3 b6 5.Bg2 Bb7 6.0-0 Be7 7.d4 cxd4 8.Qxd4 d6 9.Rd1

Now White has many plans to choose from. L.Polugaevsky chose the most common one.

9...a6 10.b3 Nbd7 11.e4 Qb8 12.Bb2 0-0 13.Nd2 Rd8!

Showing an excellent understanding of the position - when the bishop is on b2, the rook needs to be on d8.

14.a4 Qc7 15.Qe3 Rac8 16.Qe2 Ne5 17.h3?!

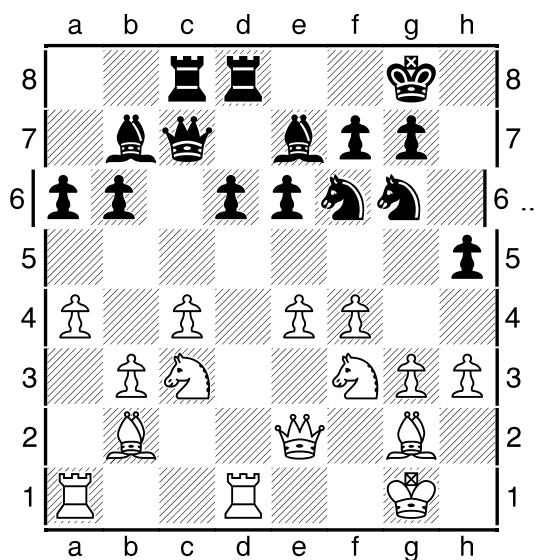
White weakens his kingside, which he had no need to do. Better was 17.Kh1, with complicated play.

17...h5!

A typical idea. Black wants to attack the g3 pawn and to weaken the pawns on the kingside.

18.f4 Ng6 19.Nf3 (D)

After 19.h4, which prevents the ...h4 stroke, White weakens his g4-square, so: 19...Ng4 20.Rf1 Qc5 21.Kh1 Qe3 and now White has many weaknesses.



19...d5!!

Shockingly!

20.cxd5?

White - logically - lost his nerve here. This kind of strike always shocks the player and L.Polugaevsky obviously wanted to simplify the position with exchanges. Better, however, would be 20.e5.

20...h4!

The highlight of Black's combination.

21.Nxh4 Nxh4 22.gxh4 Qxf4 23.Qxe6 fxe6 24.e5?!

Black's strong attack will endure also after the more resistant 24.Rxd8+ Rxd8 25.Rd1 Rxd1+ 26.Qxd1 Qe3+ 27.Kh2 Qf2, with many threats.

24...Bc5+ 25.Kh1 Nh5 26.Qxh5 Qg3 27.Nd5 Rxd5 28.Rf1 Qxg2+ 29.Kxg2 Rd2+

0-1

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Curriculum Vitae

Georg Mohr

Georg Mohr (born February 2nd, 1965) is a Slovenian Grandmaster, trainer and organiser.

In 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000 and 2002, Georg Mohr played for the Slovenian Olympic team.

For the next four Chess Olympiads, he was selector of Slovenian Olympic men's team. In 2004 he was awarded the title of FIDE Senior Trainer.

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