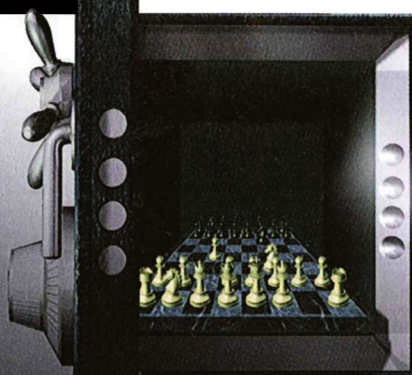




Opening for Black according
to
Karpov



Alexander
Khalifman





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Opening for Black According to Karpov

Caro-Kann Defence
Nimzo-Indian Defence
Queen's Indian Defence
Catalan Opening
English Opening
Trompowski Attack
Reti Opening
King's Indian Attack

Alexander Khalifman
14th World Chess Champion

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Preface

Dear Chessfriends,

It's no secret that chess players prefer to read opening books and seldom have time for books on endgames. There are many openings and opening books, but problems still remain. So, what opening to choose and how to master it in the easiest and most convenient way? As a matter of fact, to know several openings is insufficient, whereas it would be more rewarding to materialize a whole system of playable openings before hand to enable the player to defend himself from any unpleasant surprises in the beginning of the game with minimal efforts.

To build (this word seems to reflect the idea of the present book in the best way) the opening repertoire for Black is a complex task. Usually it is a tedious and time-consuming process. We will achieve this purpose in an easier way through a close examination of Black openings played by Anatoly Karpov, the 12th World Champion. Of course, we will regard not all the openings he ever played but only those which agree with the idea of an integral opening system.

For two decades after the mid-seventies Anatoly Karpov was one of the world's strongest players. And, of course, his elaborated opening preparations were one of the key elements that allowed him to achieve such outstanding results.

Karpov came to his present Black repertoire not at once. At first he played the Ruy Lopez and the Sicilian Defence after 1.e4, the Queen's gambit after 1.d4 and the symmetrical 1...c5 in the English Opening. Then he began to play so called solid openings: the Caro-Kann, Nimzo-Indian, Queen's Indian Defences and the Catalan Opening. Having studied them thoroughly, he achieved excellent results.

We will follow his path, so you won't have to study extra openings (of course, it's helpful to know, for example, the King's Indian

and the Gruenfeld after 1.d4, but how can one remember everything and constantly be well informed about all novelties?) or take trouble choosing the best move from many opportunities. I carried out this work for you with all possible care, taking into account the latest opening innovations.

So I recommend you to build your Black opening repertoire as follows:

In case of 1.e4 you play 1...c6 (the Caro-Kann Defence, Part 1 of this book).

The move – order after 1.d4 is more difficult to remember, yet I am sure of your success, so you play 1...♟f6. Now White very often continues with 2.c4, and 2...e6 is your answer.

Then in case of 3.♟c3 you play 3...♞b4 (Nimzo-Indian, Part 2), if 3.♟f3, then 3...b6 (Queen's Indian, Part 3), if 3.g3, then 3...d5 (Catalan Opening, Part 4).

If White begins with 1.c4 (the English Opening, Part 5), which sometimes confuses an inexperienced player, then your answer will be 1...e5. As for the crafty move – order 1.♟f3 ♟f6 2.c4, we have prepared 2...b6. Now in case of 3.d4 there is 3...e6, proceeding to the Queen's Indian Defence you have already learned from Part 3. If White does without d2-d4, then you refer to Chapter 22, dedicated to the corresponding opening lines. There is another example of our elaborated opening repertoire. Let's assume that White plays 1.d4 ♟f6 and then 2.g3. What should you do? Nothing in particular, you just play 2...d5, and if White answers with 3.c4, then we will obtain the Catalan Opening with 3...e6 (see Part 4), but if White wants to manage without c2-c4 and develops his pieces with ♟g2, ♟f3, then you have c6 and ♟g4, see p.181.

With this book in your library you will never be short of moves, favourable to Black. Be assured that no crafty rearrangements by White will catch you unawares.

A. Khalifman, 14th World Chess Champion

Part 1. Caro-Kann Defence

Chapter 1 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♘d7

This opening appeared in the tournament practice at the close of the 19th century. The first analysis was published in 1890s by the German master H. Caro and the Austrian player M. Kann, and this was how the defence got its name. The idea of Black's first move is quite simple: he wants to attack the centre with d7–d5 but not to lose an opportunity to develop his light-squared bishop to f5 or g4 which cannot be achieved, for instance, in the French Defence. Black's further strategy usually depends on White's plan, but in any case Black's flexible pawn structure and solid position allow him to solve his opening problems successfully, not fearing a straight attack which is so usual in the Sicilian Defence, and to take the initiative by an occasion. Many outstanding players were attracted by the merits of this defence, the Caro-Kann was included into opening repertoires of the World Champions J. R. Capablanca, M. Botvinnik, T. Petrosian, A. Karpov, G. Kasparov and

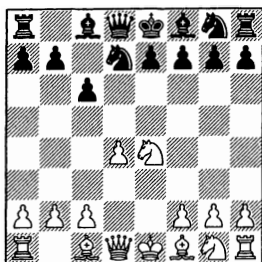
A. Khalifman.

White's main plan is to keep tension in the centre: **1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4**, whereupon Black has to make a choice among several ways of development, for instance 4...♙f5 as Capablanca and Botvinnik preferred, or a more flexible and very popular now classical variation with **4...♘d7** which is applied often by Karpov. Namely this system will be regarded thoroughly in Part 1, though White has alternative continuations on the second and third moves, too...

Classical System

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♘d7

Now we have the main position of the system. Black is going to play 5...♗gf6 at his next move, thus avoiding creation of double pawns. Depending on his opponent's further plan, Black can develop his light-squared bishop to f5 or g4 or make a fianchetto. Black's formation is very solid, and he need not fear a smashing attack in the opening.



Still, one should always remember a well known trap when playing Black – even experienced masters are caught sometimes: if White plays 5. ♖e2 now, then an automatic 5... ♖gf6?? becomes a terrible mistake because of 6. ♘d6 with a mate. The correct response here is a preliminary 5...e6, so that the queen on e2 will hinder a normal development of White's pieces. Let's regard more natural continuations a) 5. ♘f3, b) 5. ♙c4 and c) 5. ♘g5.

a) 5. ♘f3 ♘g6

White has to choose, whether he retreats with the knight or makes an exchange on f5.

The move 6. ♙d3 does not create any problem for Black, and after 6... ♘xe4 7. ♙xe4 ♘f6 8. ♙d3 ♙g4 9. c3 e6 he continues his development easily, getting a full equalisation: 10. 0-0 ♙e7 11. h3 ♙h5 12. ♙f4 0-0 World – Karpov, Internet 1996.

The play is more interesting in case of:

a1) 6. ♘g3

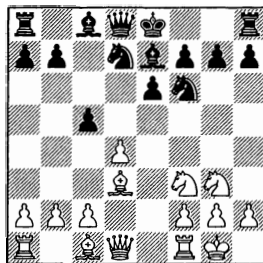
Now Black has to complete the development of his kingside with

6...e6 7. ♙d3 ♙e7 8. 0-0

And then he can undermine White's centre with

8...c5

This manoeuvre is quite typical for the system in question.



In this position White has two more or less equal continuations:

a1a) 9. b3 0-0 10. ♙b2 b6

Black's prospects are rather simple: he puts his bishop on b7 and then looks for better positions for his major pieces.

11. ♖e2

Also the line 11. c4 ♙b7 12. ♖e2 ♙e8 13. dxc5 ♘xc5 14. ♙c2 ♖c7= makes no fundamental changes in Black's plans as he still has an equal play, Tiviakov – Karpov, San Giorgio (m/3) 1995.

11... ♙b7 12. ♖ad1 ♖c7 13. c4 ♖fe8 14. ♖fe1 ♖ad8

In this game Karpov arranged his rooks well and then began a concrete play:

15. ♙b1 cxd4 16. ♘xd4 ♙b4

with Black's initiative, Tiviakov – Karpov, San Giorgio (m/1) 1995.

Events develop in a similar way if White rejects the idea of the flank development of his bishop:

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 de 4.♗e4 ♘bd7

**a1b) 9.♖e2 0-0 10.♞d1 ♖c7
11.c4 ♞e8 12.dxc5 ♘xc5**

You can see that the arrangement of Black's pieces is practically the same, and the pawn chain is as strong as it should be in the Caro-Kann.

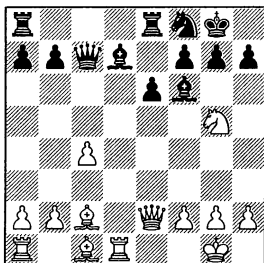
13.♙c2 ♘cd7

Karpov transfers the knight to reinforce his kingside

14.♘g5

One more example: 14.♙a4 ♞d8 15.♙c2 b6 16.b3 ♙b7 17.♙b2 ♘f8 18.♗e4 ♘xe4 19.♙xe4 ♘g6= with an approximately equal position, Ivanchuk – Karpov, Monaco 1997

14...♘f8 15.♘3e4 ♙d7 16.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 Adams – Karpov, Dortmund 1994.



In both examples White attempts to cause threats on the kingside, but Black's position is solid and he is ready to begin a counterattack at any moment. For instance, there is no 17.♘xh7? ♘xh7 18.♙xh7+ ♖xh7 19.♖d3+ ♖g8 20.♖xd7 because of 20...♞ad8 21.♖a4 ♖xc4!, and after 22.♖xc4 ♞xd1+ 23.♖f1 ♞xf1+ 24.♖xf1 ♞c8 Black has a better endgame.

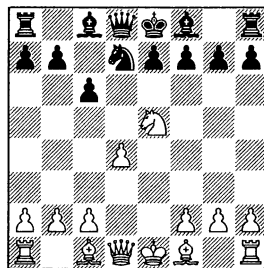
In case of a knight exchange the play is more calm, often with further exchanges, transposing the game into an approximately equal endgame. The light-squared bishop occupies usually g4 or f5.

a2) 6.♘xf6+ ♘xf6

White has many different opportunities here but none of them are really profitable to him:

a2a) 7.♗e5 ♘d7!?

An interesting move. Black wants to exchange the active knight of his opponent regardless of the loss of time.



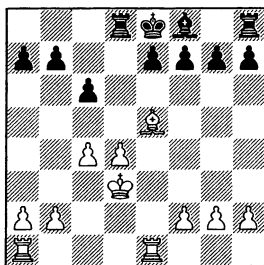
8.♘d3

It should be mentioned that in case of 8.♘f3 Black can play 8...♘f6, offering a repetition of moves. This can be useful as we are playing a solid opening, and our main task is to balance out the chances.

The line 8.♙e3 ♘xe5 9.dxe5 ♙f5 leads to a total simplification. White cannot avoid an exchange of the queens: 10.♖xd8 ♞xd8 11.♙a7 ♙xc2 12.♙b6 ♞a8 13.♙c4 e6. In this game Black accomplished then the bishop manoeuvre

vre ♖e4–d5 and got an even play, A. Sokolov – Karpov, Linares 1987.

Another way to try to hold the outpost on e5 also leads to simplifications: 8. ♖f4 ♜xe5 9. ♖xe5 ♜d5. With his active queen in the centre Black forces his opponent to go for new exchanges: 10. c4 ♜a5+ 11. ♜d2 ♜xd2+ 12. ♜xd2 ♖f5 13. ♖d3 ♖xd3 14. ♜xd3 ♜d8 15. ♜he1.



It may look as if White has the initiative, but don't hurry: 15... ♖f6 16. ♖g3 ♜f7! and now Black is threatening with 17...e5. An immediate 16...e5? 17. ♜c3 ♜xd4 is bad because of 18. ♖xe5! That is why White is obliged to play 17. ♜c3 and after 17...e6 the position is equal, Sutovskij – Karpov, Tilburg 1996.

8...g6 9.c3 ♖g7

So it turns out that Black wants to play e5.

10. ♖e2

White does not hinder his opponent from fulfilling his plan. In case of 10. ♖f4 there is 10... ♜a5 with the same threat again. Now if 11. b4, then Black's queen has

an excellent retreat square, and after 11... ♜d5 White suffers difficulties.

10...e5 11.dxe5 ♜xe5 12. ♜e5 ♜xd1 13. ♖xd1 ♖xe5 14. 0-0 0-0 15. ♜e1 ♖f6 16. ♖b3 ♜g7=

Black performed his plan successfully – there is a rough symmetry and full equality on the board, Leko – Karpov, Belgrade 1996.

White can continue his free development with

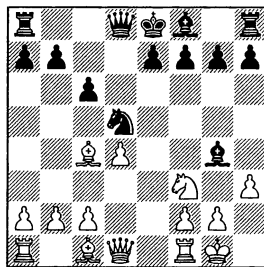
a2b) 7. ♖c4 ♜d5

But no 7... ♖g4? because of 8. ♖xf7+! ♜xf7 9. ♜e5+, winning the game.

8.0-0

But here Black also has good opportunities for the development of his pieces:

8...♖g4 9.h3



9...♖xf3!?

One of Karpov's favourite positional techniques is to exchange one bishop and to arrange pawns on squares of the corresponding colour.

10. ♜xf3 e6 11.c3 ♖d6=

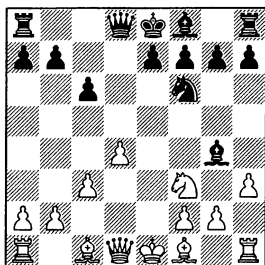
White has the advantage of

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 de 4.♙e4 ♘bd7

two bishops and some space advantage, but all Black's pieces occupy good places, and when the position opens up, new exchanges will thus bring it to an absolute balance, Kir.Georgiev – Karpov, Biel 1992.

Events develop in a similar way after the solid

a2c) 7.c3 ♙g4 8.h3



8...♙xf3

The same technique again!

9.♙xf3 ♙d5 10.♙e2 e6 11. 0-0 ♙d6

Well, White has two bishops and a space advantage again, but he won't gain benefit neither with the queens nor without them after an exchange, so strong Black's defence is:

1) 12.♙d3 ♙c7 13.♙f3 ♙d7 14.♙d1 0-0 15.c4

White got an ideal position for his forces, and now he is going to open up the centre with d4–d5.

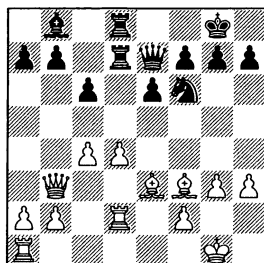
15...♙ad8

Black's plan is clear: he doubles his rooks on the d–file to wait then for decisive actions of his opponent.

16.♙b3 ♙e7 17.g3

Of course not 17.♙xb7?? ♙h2.

17...♙b8 18.♙e3 ♙d7 19.♙d2 ♙fd8



So the planned advance d4–d5 can bring only mass exchanges and a drawing position. White found no other way for the development of his initiative, and the game was drawn in several moves Kasparov – Karpov, Seville (m/14) 1987.

In case of an exchange of the queens Black can follow the same simple plan:

2) 12.♙d1 ♙xf3 13.♙xf3 ♙d5

The knight should be transferred to e7 in order not to be bound with Bg5.

14.c4 ♙e7 15.♙d2 0-0 16. ♙c3 ♙fd8=

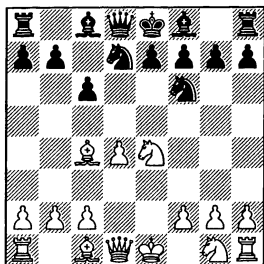
Black is ready to double his rooks on the d–file again, and it turns out that, despite the above mentioned merits of White's position, the position on the board is practically equal, Illescas Cordoba – Karpov, Las Palmas 1994.

b) 5.♙c4

A more aggressive continuation. White wants to attack the square f7 in order to stimulate

the advance e7–e6, restricting the mobility of the c8–bishop.

5...♘gf6



6. g5

An exchange with 6.♟xf6+ ♞xf6 can reduce the play to the just considered positions, for instance in case of 7.♞f3. The play develops differently after 7.c3 ♞c7!? (7...♙f5? is bad because of 8.♞b3.) Now in case of 8.♞b3 Black has 8...e5 9.dxe5 ♞g4 with a counterplay, and in case of 8.♞f3 ♙g4 9.♞g3 ♞xg3 10.hxg3 the position is approximately equal. In the game Ivanchuk – Karpov, Dortmund 1995, the opponents played 10...♙f5 11.♞e2 e6 12.f3 ♞d5 13.g4 ♙g6 14.♞f4 ♞xf4 15.♙xf4 and to a draw in several moves.

6...e6 7.♔e2

Threatening with a typical
8. Nxf7 .

7...♘b6

White has two equivalent retreats: b1) 8.♙b3 and b2) 8.♙d3.

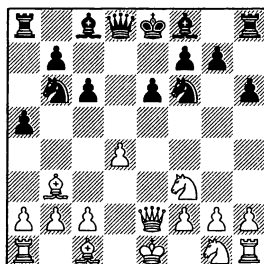
b1) 8. b3

Here the bishop is more active, but instead Black can develop his initiative on the queenside.

8...h6!

The most useful and well-timed move as now White's knights will impede each other. By the way, 8...♗xd4? is losing because of 9.♕1f3 to be followed by 10.♕e5.

9. 5f3 a5!



It's profitable for Black to weaken the queenside pawns a little before the standard breakthrough in the centre. Now White has three opportunities: b1a) 10.a3, b1b) 10.c3 and b1c) 10.a4.

b1a) 10.a3 a4 11.♙a2 c5

Black should not linger with the creation of a counterplay as White's pieces can become too active.

12.f4

White continues with his development. In case of 12.dxc5 ♖xc5 13.♗d2 0-0 14.0-0-0 ♜e7 Black takes the lead over his opponent in the development of his initiative.

12...♞bd5

Now Black can transfer the misplaced knight to a convenient position with a spare tempo.

13. ♖e5 ♔a5+.

The most helpful check which

forces White to decide whether he will exchange the queens or go for complications:

14.♘d2

In case of 14.♙d2 there is 14...♘g4, beginning the counterplay.

14...b5

Just in proper time to prevent a castling on the queenside.

15.♘gf3 b4 16.♙c4

White managed to strain the position, but Black still has a sufficient counterplay:

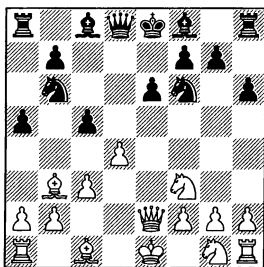
16...♙a6 17.0-0 bxa3 18.♙xa3 cxd4 with an unclear position, Ivanchuk – Karpov, Tilburg 1993.

b1b) 10.c3

In this situation Black also should not delay the advance

10...c5

Now White has to bother with the prophylactics



11.a3

In case of a “normal” continuation like 11.♙e3 an advance of the a–pawn is possible: 11...a4 12.♙c2 a3, developing the initiative on the queenside.

11...♙c7 12.♘e5

The square f3 should be clear

red for a natural development of the g1–knight.

12...cxd4 13.cxd4 a4 14.♙c2 ♙d7 15.♘xd7 ♘bx7 16.♙d1

In case of 16.♘f3 there is an unpleasant 16...♙c8.

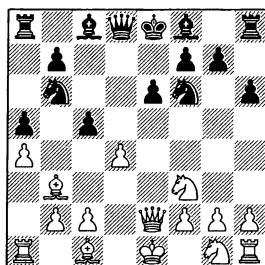
16...♙d6 17.♘e2 ♘d5=

White has two bishops and Black has a better pawn structure and an excellent knight on d5, so the chances are even, Kasparov – Karpov, Linares 1994.

b1c) 10.a4

White prevents a further advance of the a–pawn, but Black’s plan does not change:

10...c5



11.dxc5

If White does not hurry with an exchange on c5 and plays 11.♙f4, Black also can continue his development with 11...♙d6 12.♘e5 (As a matter of fact, nothing changes after 12.♙g3 0-0 13.♘e5 ♙e7 14.♘gf3 ♘bd5 15.0-0 as now Black can exchange White’s dangerous bishop with 15...♘h5, thus obtaining a good play Anand – Karpov, Linares 1994) 12...0-0 13.♘gf3 ♙c7 14.♙g3 ♘bd5 15.dxc5 (In case of

15.c4 White gets a hole on b4.) Well, now after 15...♟xc5 16.0-0 b6 Black has an active position, threatening to put the bishop on a6 in some lines, Anand – Karpov, Monaco 1994.

Now after the exchange Karpov continues with

11...♞bd7

Also a mere 11...♞xc5 is good.

12.♞e5

White has to waste time again to mobilise his g1-knight.

12...♞xe5 13.♟xe5 ♞d7

Winning back the pawn and getting a good play.

14.♟e2

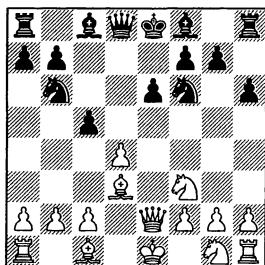
After 14.♟d4 ♞xc5 15.♟xd8+ ♟xd8 Black's position is none the worse.

14...♞xc5 15.♞f3 b6 16.0-0 0-0 17.c3 ♟c7= with even chances, Beliavsky – Karpov, Tilburg 1993.

b2) 8.♞d3

This retreat with the bishop does not allow Black to show an initiative on the queenside at once, but, on the other hand, from d3 the bishop exerts no dangerous influence on the central squares.

8...h6 9.♞5f3 c5



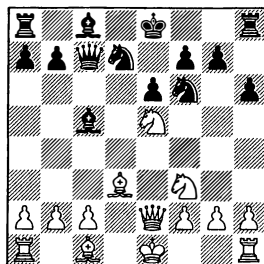
10.dxc5.

White can avoid this exchange which also leads to an interesting struggle, but these variations are less popular. So, in the game Svidler – Karpov, Tilburg 1996 the opponents played 10.♞e3 ♟c7 11.♞e5 ♞d6 12.♞gf3 ♞bd5 13.♞b5+ ♟e7. A typical manoeuvre for this system: Black abandons his castling right, but his king is quite safe owing to its solid pawn shelter and the harmonious arrangement of pieces. After 14.0-0 a6 15.♞d3 b5 Black gets a sufficient counterplay.

10...♞xc5 11.♞e5

A sharp play occurs after 11.♞d2 ♟c7 12.0-0-0 (there is no immediate 12.Ne5? because of the following little trick: 12...♞xf2! 13.♟xf2 ♟xe5!) 12...0-0 13.♞e5 ♞d7 14.♞gf3 ♟fc8 15.g4 ♞e7 16.g5 hxg5 with mutual chances A. Ivanov – Karpov, Moscow 1992.

11...♞bd7 12.♞gf3 ♟c7



13.♞f4

A keen continuation where White abandons castling. If White avoids complications, he cannot count on an opening ad-

vantage: 13.0-0 0-0 14.♞e1 (Or 14.♙d2 ♙d6 15.♘d7 ♙d7 16.♞ae1 ♞fd8 with a sold position by Black, A. Sokolov – Karpov, Linares (m/7) 1987) 14...♙d6. Natural moves of the opponents require no particular annotations: 15.♘c4 ♙e7 16.♘ce5 ♘c5. You can see that White has just agreed to repeat moves, but Black wants to gain more. 17.♙c4 a6 18.a3 b5 19.♙a2 ♙b7 with an initiative owing to the prevalence of the b7–bishop and the control over e4, Izeta – Karpov, Dos Hermanas 1993.

13...♙b4+

This is rather unpleasant.

14.♘d2

In case of a retreat of the king the play is less tense, with approximately equal chances: 14.♙f1 ♙d6 15.♙g3 (15.♞d1 is bad because of 15...♘h5, whereupon there is no 16.♘xf7 ♘xf4 17.♘xd6 ♙xd6 18.♙g6 ♙e7 19.♞xd6 ♘xe2 with a material advantage, and after 16.g3 ♘xf4 17.gxf4 0-0 Black has a positional advantage Morovic Fernandez – Karpov, Las Palmas 1994). The game Timman – Karpov, Optiebeurs 1988 developed as follows: 15...0-0 16.♞d1 ♘xe5 17.♘xe5 ♞d8 18.♘c4 ♙xg3 19.hxg3 ♙d7 with good chances for Black.

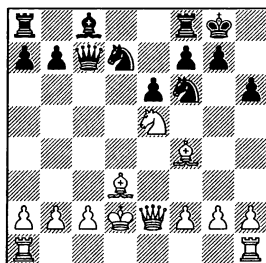
14...♙xd2+

White has to take with the king.

15.♙xd2 0-0

The estimation of this position is unclear, even though it was

tested by Karpov in five games.



16.♞hd1

This continuation occurred three times in 1993 in the FIDE match Karpov – Timman for the title of the World Champion.

Less precise is 16.♙c1 ♞d8 17.♞d1 ♘c5 18.♙c4 ♞xd1 19.♙xd1, as the passive rook on a1 allows Black to get some better chances after 19...a6 20.♘d3 ♙c6 21.♘xc5 ♙xc5 Topalov – Karpov, Varna (m/4) 1995.

16...♘c5

During the match Karpov has come to a conclusion that this move is the most accurate, while 16...♙b6 gives an advantage to White.

17.♙e1

17.♙c1 ♞d8 leads the game to the position just mentioned. In case of 17.♙c4 the sharp 17...b5 is possible, Sanden - Wessman, Sweden 1994. In the game rivals agreed to a draw, though Black's position was already more preferable, for example: 18.♙xb5 ♙b7 19.f3 ♘h5 20.♙g3 ♘xg3 21.hxg3 ♘e4+! with an advantage.

17...♘xd3+ 18.♞xd3 ♘d5 19.♙g3 b5

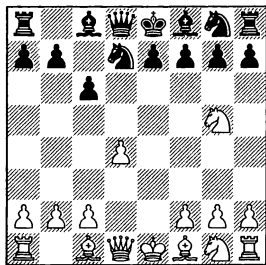
20.c3

A sharp 20.a4 ♖a6 21.♟d2 (or 21.♞d2 ♟a5 22.c3 b4 23.c4 ♞ac8 with a better play) 21...b4 22.♞g6 ♟c6 23.♞xf8 ♖xd3 24.♟xd3 ♞xf8 25.f3 ♞c8 gives an advantage to Black, Topalov - Karpov, Varna (m/2) 1995.

20...♟b7 21.♞ad1, and the rivals agreed to a draw, Timman - Karpov, Netherlands (m/7) 1993. Events can approximately develop by this way: 21...♖d7 22.♞d4 ♞ad8 23.♖h4 f6 24.♞xd7 ♟xd7 25.a4 a6 26.axb5 axb5 27.♞f1 ♟c6 with an equal position.

c) 5.♞g5

This move has become fashionable in the past few years.



White does not hurry to define a stand for his light-squared bishop and, at the same time, prepares some traps like 5...h6? 6.♞e6!

5...♞g5 6.♖d3 e6

Black has to develop his f8-bishop to perform then the advance h6, so that White will have to solve the problem where to put his knights again.

7.♞1f3

If White reserves f3 for another knight with 7.♞e2, then Black is OK. His plan implies the development of the kingside first with 7...♖d6 8.0-0 h6, then he prepares a fianchetto of the c8-bishop with 9.♞f3 ♟c7 10.c4 b6 11.b3 ♖b7 12.♖b2, and after the planned 12...c5 he has a strong position with rich opportunities for an active play, as the white knight on e2 cannot enter the play at once. After 13.♞g3 0-0 Black is, at least, none the worse, Christiansen - Karpov, Roquebrune 1992.

7...♖d6

7...h6 is still dangerous because of 8.♞xe6! with a strong attack, Deep Blue - Kasparov, New York, 1997.

8.♟e2

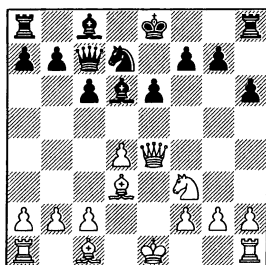
More active than 8.0-0 to be met with 8...h6 9.♞e4, so that after the exchange 9...♞xe4 10.♖xe4 Black can transfer his knight to a convenient position at a proper moment, sparing a tempo and maintaining his solid pawn structure: 10...0-0 11.c3. Now it's time for the standard breakthrough in the centre with 11...c5, and after 12.♖c2 ♟c7 13.♞e1 ♞d8 14.h3 ♞f6 Black solves his opening problems successfully: 15.♟e2 cxd4 with an equality. 16.♞xd4 ♖h2+. A useful move as the white king is worse on h1. 17.♞h1 ♖f4 18.♞b5. White's temporary activity is not dangerous, Black's position is

very solid. 18...♙b8 19.a4 ♗d7 20.♗xf4 ♙xf4 21.♘d4 ♗c6!, and, as 22.♘xc6 is bad now because of 22...♚d2 Black threatens to take the initiative, Kamsky – Karpov, Tilburg 1991.

8...h6!

Now this move is just necessary. So, 8...♙c7? was bad because of 9.♘xf7! with a crushing defeat.

9.♗e4 ♘xe4 10.♙xe4 ♙c7



The crucial position of the variation.

11.♙g4

If White postpones this move and plays something like 11.♗d2, then Black has time to develop his queenside, and after 11...b6 12.0-0-0 (or 12.♙g4 g5! 13.♙h3 ♚g8 14.g4 – 14.♙xh6? winning a piece after 14...♗f8 – 14...♗b7 15.0-0-0 0-0-0 16.♚he1 ♗f4 Castro – Karpov, Leon 1993) 12...♗b7 13.♙g4 he can go for a sharp line: 13...g5! 14.♙h3 0-0-0 15.♚he1 c5 16.dxc5 ♘xc5, thus obtaining a fine position Shirov – Karpov, Hoogeveen, 1998.

11...♗f8

At this moment 11...g5 is already dangerous, because Black

has no time to develop his light-squared bishop, and after 12.♙h3 ♚g8 13.♘d2! White gains an advantage. In this case Black has certain problems after he loses the right to castle, still, as the practice shows, his strong and flexible pawn structure and the absence of weak points allow him to solve his opening problems. Besides, after mass exchanges which Black should trigger off later, the closeness of his king to the centre will be a positive factor.

12.0-0

Other continuations also deserve attention:

12.♘d2 e5 13.♘c4 ♘c5 14.♙g3 ♘xd3+ 15.cxd3!? (Black has no problems in case of 15.♙xd3. After 15...♗e6 16.dxe5 ♗xe5 17.♘xe5 ♙xe5+ his position is even a little better Ljubojevic – Karpov, Monaco 1998) 15...f6 16.♗d2. The pressure upon e5 is rather unpleasant, but with the precise play Karpov manages to extinguish his opponent's initiative: 16...♗e6 17.♘xd6 ♙xd6 18.♗c3 ♚d8!=, whereupon the game is drawn in several moves Anand – Karpov, Dos Hermanas 1999.

12.♗e3!? Another attempt to develop an initiative. 12...b6 13.♘d2 ♘f6 14.♙e2 ♘d5. Karpov prepares to exchange. 15.♘c4 ♗a6 16.♘xd6 (if 16.0-0-0, then 16...♘f4) 16...♗xd3 17.♙xd3 ♙xd6 18.0-0 ♚d8 19.♚ad1 b5. Black carried out several exchanges, and with his last move

Chapter 1

he secured a convenient stand in the centre for his knight J. Polgar – Karpov, Budapest 1998.

12...c5 13.♖h4

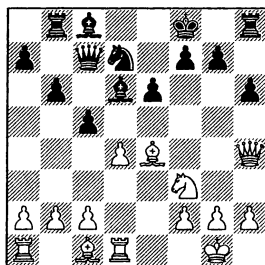
The struggle develops in a similar way in case of 13.c3 b6 14.♞e1 ♠b7. Black takes the control over the big diagonal, and after 15.h4 c4! he does not let White open up the centre and develops his initiative on the queenside. The game continued with 16.♠c2 b5 17.♠d2 a5 18.h5 ♠d5 with a complex play Anand – Karpov, Monaco 1998. Owing to the pressure on the diagonal h1 – a8 (there is a way to reinforce this pressure with ♖b7 and ♜f6) Black copes with his opening tasks without castling.

13...b6 14.♠e4

White stands up against the above shown plan.

14...♞b8 15.♞d1

Black had an equal play also in case of 15.b3 ♜f6 16.dxc5 bxc5 17.♠b2 ♜xe4 18.♖xe4 ♠b7 in the game Timman – Karpov, Bali 2000.



15...c4!

Karpov does not want to open up the centre.

16.♜e5 ♜f6 17.♠f3 ♠b7=

Once more Black managed to take control over the central squares and got his own play, Sadvakasov – Karpov, Groningen 1999.

Summary

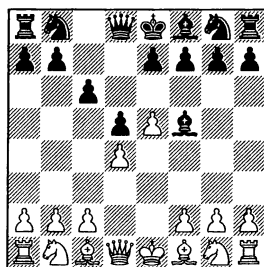
In some variations of the Classical System White manages to maintain the tension. Sometimes he even can deprive Black of the castling. Black's pluses are his flexible and solid pawn structure; harmonious arrangement of pieces and control over strategically important central squares d5 and e4. He must accomplish the advance c7-c5 in time to create a counterplay on the queenside and then he can try to simplify the position because the endgame is usually favourable for him in this system. Generally, Black can obtain a satisfactory play in all variations.

Chapter 2 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♖f5

Closed System

The name of this system which is especially popular at present is a little formal, it reflects only the fact that the centre is closed at the very beginning of the game. Still, the further development of the play often leads to an open struggle, more than that, White opens up the centre as early as in the opening with the advance e2–e4. The “French-like” pawn structure is, on the whole, favourable for Black as it does not involve problems with the light-squared bishop which stands passively in the real French Defence. On the other hand, Black loses a tempo when performing the strategically necessary advance c6–c5, and if White manages to take the initiative, he can develop a strong attack. In general, the system leads to a complex and often keen struggle, where White should strive for an active play, whereas Black looks for simplifications and for an end-game which is usually beneficial to him.

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♖f5

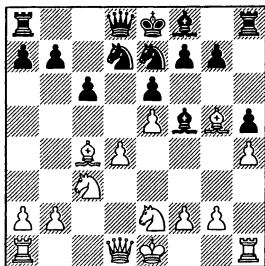


White's most popular moves in this position are a) 4.♘c3 and b) 4.♗f3, as the rest continuations create no problems for Black:

4.♘e2. This is too sluggish. 4...e6 5.♗f4. (After 5.♗g3 ♖g6 6.h4 h5 7.♗e2 Black plays 7...c5!, and the line 8.♗xh5 ♗xh5 9.♗xh5 is no good for White because of 9...g6 10.♗g5 ♗e7, Black winning back the pawn and getting a better play.) 5...c5 6.g4. A venturesome move, but Black is already OK. 6...♗e4 7.f3 ♖h4+ 8.♗e2 ♗g6. (8...♘c6 deserves attention as after 9.fxex4 ♖xg4 10.♗e1 ♖h4+ 11.♗e2 ♗xd4 Black begins a very strong attack) 9.c3 ♗c6 10.♗e3 ♖d8 11.♗f2 ♗ge7,

and Black gains a slight advantage Kobese – Karpov, Cap d'Agde 1998.

4.h4 h5 5.c4. White plays actively on the whole board, but he creates weak points in his own camp. 5...e6 6.♘c3 ♘e7 7.♗ge2 (7.♗g5 dxc4 8.♙xc4 ♘d7 – after the exchange on c4 Black got a semi-opened d-file and an outpost on d5 for the knight. 9.♗ge2



9...f6! Redoubling the control over d5. 10.exf6 gxf6 11.♙e3 ♘b6, and now Black has a good play in case of 12.♙d3 ♙d7 13.♗f4 0-0-0 14.♙e2 ♘ed5 15.♗fxd5 ♘xd5 Nunn – Karpov, Monaco 1995, as 16.♙xh5 is bad because of 16...♘b4, and in case of 12.♙b3 ♘bd5 13.♗g3 ♗g4 14.♙d3 ♗f5 15.♗xd5 cxd5 ♗ Black also has sufficient counter-chances Magem Badals – Karpov, Spain 1996, for instance, he is quite safe in case of 16.♙a4+ ♙f7) 7...dxc4 8.♗g3. Karpov refuses to cover the pawn with 8...b5, though in case of 9.♗g5 ♙a5 it's not at all clear whether White is sufficiently compensated. Still, in the

game Black also gets a good position: 8...♗g6 9.♗g5 (threatening with 10.♗ge4) 9...♙b6 10.♙d2 ♙b4 11.a3 ♙b3 12.♙c1 ♘d5= Adams – Karpov, Tilburg 1996.

4.♙d3 ♙xd3 5.♙xd3. According to the pawn structure, the exchange of the bishops is more favourable for Black, but, on the other hand, it promotes White's development. As result, the position stays approximately equal. 5...e6 6.♗f3. (There is also 6.♗e2 ♙a5+ 7.♗bc3, as in case of 7.♙d2 Black has 7...♙a6 – 7...♗e7 8.0-0 ♘d7 9.a4 c5 10.♙d2 ♙d8 11.♗g5 (threatening with 12.♘b5) 11...a6 12.f4 g6 13.♗g3 ♙c7 with a complex play Van Der Werf – Khalifman, Wijk aan Zee 1995) 6...c5 7.c3 ♘c6 8.a3 c4. There is a typical French position on the board, but without light-squared bishops. Probably Black's chances are slightly better. 9.♙c2 ♗ge7 10.♗g5 h6 11. ♙h4 g5 12. ♗g3 ♗f5 with Black's initiative De Gremont – Karpov, San Giorgio 1995.

The line 4.c3 e6 5.♙e3 ♙b6 6.♙b3 ♘d7 leads to a quiet play. We have a French position here with a developed light-squared bishop. Black's pieces stand in convenient positions. Sooner or later Black will play c7–c5, fully equalising the chances. In the game the opponents played 7. ♘d2 a5 8.♙xb6 ♘xb6 9.a4 ♗e7 10.f4 ♗g6 11.♗gf3 ♗f5 12.♙f2 h5

13.g3 ♟e7= with an equal position
Gelfand – Karpov, Monaco 2000.

a) 4.♟c3 e6 5.g4 ♟g6 6.♟ge2

White prepares an attack on the kingside with 7.♟f4, 8.h4, or in a reversed order.

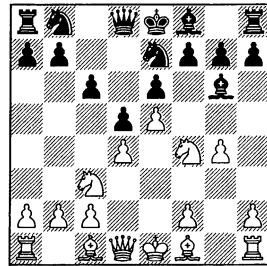
6...♟e7 7.♟f4

As a matter of fact, this move wins a piece. Other opportunities cannot disturb Black, for instance:

1) 7.♟e3. This continuation which should prevent the undermining c5 is too languid and poses no problems for Black. 7...h5 8.♟f4. (Black gains an advantage after 8.g5?!, taking the initiative with 8...♟f5 9.h4 ♖b6) 8...hxg4 9.♟xg6 ♟xg6 10.♖xg4 ♟h4. Now 11.♟g5? loses owing to ♖g5! and 11.♟d3 g6 12.0-0-0 ♟e7 leads to a position with mutual chances Nunn – Karpov, Monaco 1994.

2) 7.h4 h5! Black suggests his opponent to make his choice at once. 8.g5 This move is better when the bishop is on c1. (8.♟f4. This order of moves gives good opportunities to Black. After 8...hxg4 9.♟xg6 ♟xg6 it turns out that the h-pawn is weak. 10.h5 c5! 11.♖xg4 (also 11.♟e3 ♟c6 12.♖xg4 cxd4 13.♟xd4 ♟ge7 14.♟d3 ♟xd4 15.♖xd4 ♟c6 does not change the character of the position Sherzer – Yermolinsky, Philadelphia 1998) 11...cxd4 12.♖d4 ♟c6 13.♟b5 ♟ge7 14.♟g5 a6 15.♟xc6 ♟xc6! with a better endgame Casella – Bareev, New

York 1998). 8...c5. Leading to a very keen play. (Also the move 8...♟f5 deserves attention, because the line 9.♟f4 c5 10.♟g6 fxg6 gives an excellent position to Black.) 9.dxc5 ♟d7 10.b4. White creates an outpost on c5, threatening with 11.♟b5. After 10...♟xe5 11.♟d4 a5 there was a sharp position with mutual chances in the game Shirov – Karpov, Monaco 1999.



7...c5!

This way only! If Black does not resist his opponent's plan, then in case of 7...♟d7 8.h4 h6 9.♟xg6 ♟xg6 10.h5 he finds himself in a strained position, while the line 8...c5 9.h5 cxd4 loses him the game because of 10.♟b5.

8.h4

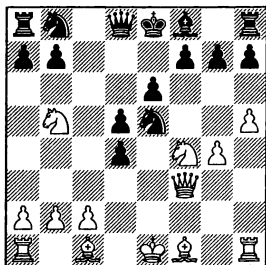
In case of 8.dxc5 ♟ec6 9.h4 ♟xe5 Black gets an even play without any sacrifice, for instance 10.♟g2 h5 11.♖e2 ♟bc6 12.♟xg6 ♟xg6 13.♟xd5 ♟xc5 14.♟g5 ♟ge7 15.♖b5 f6 16.♖xc5 ♟d5 17.0-0-0 ♖e7 18.♖b5 0-0-0 with mutual chances Shirov – Karpov, Monaco 2000.

8...cxd4 9.♟b5

9.♖xd4 is bad and after 9...

♖bc6 10. ♔a4 a6 the white queen is in danger.

9... ♖ec6 10. h5 ♕e4 11. f3 ♕xf3 12. ♔xf3 ♖xe5



For the sacrificed bishop Black gets three pawns in the centre and convenient development ways.

He has a good play after any retreat of the white queen: 13. ♔g3 ♖bc6 14. ♖d3 ♖xd3 15. ♕xd3 e5 Kotronias – Karpov, Hellas 1997 or 13. ♔e2 ♖bc6 14. ♕g2 ♕c5 15. c3 dxc3 16. bxc3 0-0 Lju-bojevic – Karpov, Monaco 1994.

b) 4. ♖f3 e6 5. ♕e2

The most solid and flexible branch of the Closed System. White develops his kingside pieces and does not hurry to make a choice between opening up the centre with c4 and retaining the French-like structure. The continuation 5.a3 is, as a matter of fact, a loss of tempo, and it presents no complex problems to Black. After 5... ♖e7 6. ♖bd2 ♖d7 7. ♖h4 Black accomplishes the programmed 7...c5 and gets a good position. 8.c3 (Risky is 8.c4 cxd4 9.cxd5 ♖xd5

10. ♖xf5 exf5 11. ♖f3 ♔a5+) 8... a6 9. ♖xf5 ♖xf5 10. ♖f3 ♖c8= Despite the two bishops White has no advantage, Short – Karpov, Dos Hermanas 1997.

5... ♖e7

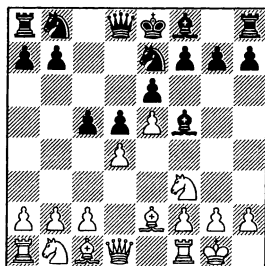
Karpov's favourite continuation.

6.0-0

White completes the development of the kingside and is ready to carry out the planned advance to c4. If he abandons this plan, then he loses any chance to gain an opening advantage.

6. ♖bd2 ♖d7 7. c3 h6. Now after 8.0-0 ♖g6 9. ♕e1 ♖f4 10. ♖f1 (10. ♕f1 was better) 10... ♖xe2+ 11. ♔xe2 ♕e7 12. ♖g3 ♕g6 with a slight advantage for Black Benjamin – Seirawan, USA 1999, and in case of 8. ♖f1 ♕h7 9. ♖g3 c5 10. dxc5 (if 10.0-0, then Black equalises just with 10... ♖c6) 10... ♖c5 11. ♖d4 ♖c6 12. f4 ♔b6 Black threatens to take the initiative. In the game Svidler – Dautov, Bad Homburg 1998 the opponents agreed to a draw in a move.

6...c5



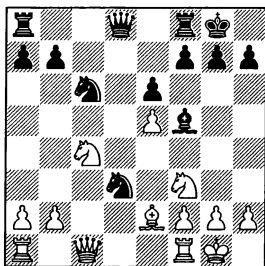
7.c4

Apart from the fundamental

7.c4 White has a number of other interesting opportunities:

7.♘c3 ♘ec6 8.♙g5 ♖a5 9.a3. (The line with 9.dxc5 ♙xc5 10.a3 is also interesting, with the best response 10... ♙e7 11.♙xe7 ♘xe7. Now after 11.♘b5 0-0 the position becomes equal.) In the game Smirin – Karpov, France 1996 White ventured on a pawn sacrifice, but he failed to get a sufficient compensation after 9... ♘xd4 10.♘xd4 cxd4 11.♘b5 (better than 11.♙xd4 ♘c6) 11...h6 12.♙d2 ♖b6.

The immediate capture 7.dxc5 Karpov used to meet with 7... ♘ec6!?, getting an equal position after 8.♙e3 ♘d7 9.c4 with 9... dxc4 10.♘a3 (10.♙xc4 ♙xc5 is none the better) 10...♙xc5 (10...c3 deserves attention) 11.♙xc5 ♘xc5 12.♘xc4 0-0 13.♖c1. (In the line 13.♘d6 ♖b6 14.♘xf5 exf5 Black gets certain initiative owing to the weakness of the c5-pawn) 13...♘d3



Now after 14.♙xd3 ♖xd3 15.♙d1 ♖c2 16.♙d7 ♖xc1 17.♙xc1 Black plays 17...♙e4!, thus equalising the play Wang Zili – Karpov, Beijing 1998, and if White goes

for complications with 14.♙e3 ♖d5 15.♘d6, then 15...♘dx5! 16.♙fd1 (16.♘xb7 ♙fb8) 16.♘xf3+ 17.♙xf3 ♙e5 with the same result Ivanchuk – Karpov, Monaco 1998.

The play after 7.c3 is rather dull, and after 7...cxd4 8.cxd4 ♘bc6 9.♘c3 ♙g4 Black has no serious problems, so, the line 10.♘h4 ♙xe2 11.♘xe2 ♘g6 12.♘f3 ♙b4 13.♙g5 ♙e7 14.♙xe7 ♖xe7 15.♙c1 0-0 16.♙c3 ♙ac8= with a full balance was seen in the game Xie Jun – Karpov, Guangzhou 2000.

7...♘bc6 8.dxc5

In case of 8.♘c3 dxc4 9.dxc5 Black has an excellent response 9...♘d5!, and after 10.♘d4 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♙xc5 12.♘xc6 bxc6 the position is even. Now if White plays 12.♘xf5 exf5 13.♙xc4 (13.♙xd8 ♙xd8 14.♙xc4 ♘xe5 15.♙e1 f6), then Black has a tactical resource of 13...♙xf2+! 14.♙h1 (no 14.♙xf2 ♖h4) 14...♙xd1 15.♙xd1 ♘xe5 16.♙b5 ♘c6 17.♙a3, and White has an initiative at the high price of two pawns Shirov – Karpov, Vienna 1996.

8...d4 9.♖a4

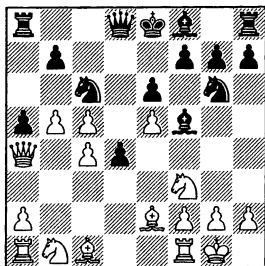
The move 9.♙d3!? deserves attention: White returns the pawn but still keeps some space advantage. 9...♙xd3 10.♖xd3 ♘g6 11.♖e4 ♙xc5 12.♘bd2 0-0 13.♘b3 ♙b6 14.♙g5 ♖b8 15.♙fe1 Bologan – Razuvaev, Reggio Emilia 1996/97. White fulfilled his plan and now maintains some initiative, but Black's position has no weak points, and the pos-

sible threat to the d4–pawn can be outweighed with the pressure upon the e5–pawn.

9...♟g6 10.b4

Maybe it is better for White to be satisfied with 10.♞d1 ♙xc5 11.b4 ♙xb4 12.♟xd4 ♖a5 13.♖xa5 ♙xa5 14.♟xc6 bxc6 15.♙b2 and after ♙f3 the position is equal.

10...a5 11.b5



11...♟b4

It's interesting to test 11...♟xe5 12.♟xe5 ♟xe5 13.♙f4 d3 (13...♟g6 is worse owing to 14.b6 ♖d7 15.c6 bxc6 – 15...♖xc6? 16.♖xc6+ bxc6 17.b7+ – 16.♙f3

with an initiative to Black) 14.♙xe5 dxe2 15.♞e1 ♙xc5 16.♞xe2 0–0 and Black has a nice position.

12.b6+

The move 12.a3? loses immediately because of 12...♙c2. After 12.c6? ♙c2 13.♖a3 ♟d3 White loses his queen.

12...♟c6 13.♙a3 ♟f4

White keeps his extra pawn, but instead Black develops an initiative.

In practice there was also 13...♙e7 14.♞d1 0–0 15.♟c3 (15.♟bd2 is worse because of 15...d3! 16.♙f1 ♟gxe5 17.♟xe5 ♟xe5 with advantage to Black) 15...♟f4! 16.g3 (16.♙f1 ♙g4!) 16...♖e8 17.gxf4 dxc3 18.♞ac1 c2 with unclear game Bologan - Haba, BL 1992/93.

14.♞e1 ♟xe2+ 15.♞xe2 ♖d7 16.♞d2 d3 17.♟c3 a draw was concluded in the position which is hard to estimate Hamdouchi – Karpov, Cap d'Agde 1998.

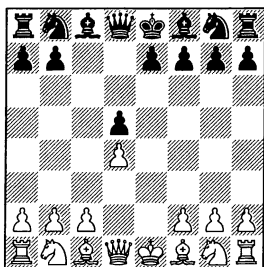
Summary

Black is involved into a keen struggle in many variations of the Closed System. His strong pawn chain and opportunities for quick and convenient development are Black's chief advantage here, as well as in many other formations of the Caro-Kann Defence. An early development of the light-squared bishop followed by an obligatory advance c7–c5 is especially important in this system. Simplifications are usually beneficial for Black, and in the endgame chances are at least equal.

Chapter 3 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4

Panov Attack

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5



In this position White has two different continuations: 4.♘d3 or 4.c4

4.c4

This continuation which was brought into practice in the thirties by the Soviet chess master V. Panov became fashionable very quickly and is still very popular. In the Panov Attack White usually opens up the centre at once, not fearing to create an isolated pawn on d4, and gets positions with a rich play for pieces. Black wants to exchange his opponent's active pieces and transpose the game into an endgame where the weakness of White's pawns may

tell. Interestingly enough, positions of the Panov Attack can be achieved in other openings as well: in the Queen's Gambit, in the Nimzo-Indian Defence, etc.

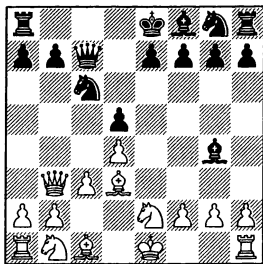
Another possible continuation is 4.♘d3 ♘c6 5.c3 ♖c7. White rejected any attacking activity in the centre and, having reinforced the square d4, develops his pieces, not creating problems for Black right now. A typical feature of this variation is White's tendency to develop the bishops first, and only then the knights; the control over e5 is also very important. Black's last move should prevent 6.♘f4 and cover an important square, at the same time. 6.♗e2 (White still wants find a profitable position for his bishop. Black has no problems after 6.♘g5. Black just answers with 6...♗f6, not fearing an exchange on f6, because after gxf6 his position in the centre gets stronger. Further events may develop as follows: 7.♗d2 ♘g4 8.♗gf3 e6 9.♗h4 ♘d6 10.♘g3 ♗h5. Black transfers the bishop to g6, and after 11.♘xd6 ♖xd6= the position is equal Illescas Cordoba –

Anand, Linares 1994) 6...♗g4 Still preventing ♕f4. White has two opportunities:

7.f3 Such a straightforward accomplishment of the plan is somewhat weakening for the kingside, and after 7...♗d7 8.♕f4 e5!? 9.dxe5 ♖xe5 10.0-0 ♗d6 we have a position with mutual chances.

There was also: 11.♖h1 ♖e7 12.♖a3 a6 13.♖c2 0-0 14.♖cd4 (or 14.♖ed4 ♜ac8= Semeniyuk – Drev, St.Petersburg 1999) 14...♞ad8 15.♙c2 ♖h8 16.♞ad1 with a complex play, Fernandez Romero – Becerra, Malaga 1999 and 11.♖d4 ♖e7 12.♖a3 a6 13.♖ac2 0-0 14.♙d2 ♞ad8 15.♕xe5 ♕xe5 16.f4 ♕f6=, also with a roughly equal position, Maiwald – Ashley, Bermuda 1997.

7.♙b3



Looks more dangerous, creating two threats: 8.♙xd5 and 8.♕f4. White gained the advantage of a bishop pair here, but after 7...♕xe2 8.♕xe2 ♞d8 9.♗g5 g6 10.♖d2 ♗h6 Black exchanged one of them and got an equal play in the game J. Polgar – Karpov, Roquebrune 1992.

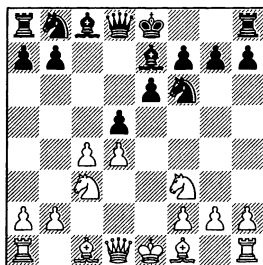
Let us revert to the position after 4.c4.

4...♖f6 5.♖c3 e6 6.♖f3

In case of 6.♗g5 ♕e7 7.♖f3 0-0 8.♗d3 Black encounters no difficulties and, continuing with 8...dxc4 9.♕xc4 a6 10.0-0 b5 11.♗d3 ♗b7, he obtains a good play Z. Polgar – Inkiov, Stara Zagora 1990.

6...♕e7

The main continuation of the system. Another move, 6...♗b4, which often occurs in Karpov's games, produces positions of the Nimzo-Indian Defence to be considered in Part 2.



Now White has two main continuations: to close the centre with a) 7.c5 or to capture on d5 b) 7.c4xd5.

Sometimes 7.♗d3 can be seen, but after 7...dxc4 8.♕xc4 White loses a tempo and cannot hope to gain an advantage: 8...0-0 9.0-0 ♖c6. Black has a plain and clear play, implying development of his initiative on the queenside. He plays a6 and b5 and gets an equal position. 10.♗b3 (or 10.a3 a6 11.♗a2 b5 12.♙d3 b4 13.♖e4 ♗b7=

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.ed cd 4.c4 ♘f6 5.♗c3 e6 6.♗f3 ♕e7

with an approximately equal position, Ljubojevic – Kuczynski, Moscow 1994) 10...a6 11.♖e1 ♗a5 12.♕c2 b5 13.a4 b4 14.♗e4 ♕b7 also leaves chances for both sides, Korchnoi – Savon, Moscow 1971.

In case of 7.♕f4 Black accomplishes a similar plan. After 7...dxc4 8.♕xc4 0-0 9.0-0 ♗c6 10.♖c1 a6 11.a3 b5 12.♕a2 ♕b7 he threatens to play 13...♗a5 and take control over the most important square d5, thus forcing his opponent to open up the centre which involves exchanges and allows to release the tension: 13.d5 exd5 14.♗xd5 ♗xd5 15.♕xd5 ♖c8= with an equalisation, Ljubojevic – Smyslov, Petropolis 1973.

The move 7.a3 0-0 gives positions of the a)–line in case of 8.c5, and after 8.cxd5 ♗xd5 9.♕d3 ♗c6 10.0-0 ♕f6 it brings the play to positions of the b)–line.

a) 7.c5

White creates a pawn advantage on the queenside, and the pawn on c5 restricts the mobility of Black's pieces.

7...0-0 8.♕d3 b6

Beginning the struggle against the pawn wedge.

9.b4 ♕b7 10.♕f4 a5 11.♗b5

An attempt to use the outpost on d6 gives an interesting play. In case of a straight 11.a3 Black obtains a counterplay with 11...axb4 12.axb4 ♗c6, e. g. 13.♖a4 ♖xa4 14.♗xa4 ♗a8.

11...♗a6 12.♗d6 ♕xd6 13.♕xd6 ♗xb4!

Having sacrificed by an exchange, Black gets an excellent play on the queenside and in the centre.

14.♕xf8

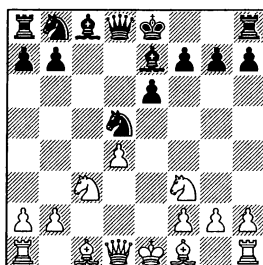
Also 14.♕b5 ♗e4!? 15.♕xf8 ♗xf8 is interesting, as Black is compensated owing to the threats of 16...♗c3 or 16...bxc5.

14...♗xf8 15.♕b1

15.cxb6 is bad because of 15...♗xd3+ 16.♗xd3 ♗b4+ 17.♗d2 ♗b5 with Black's strong attack.

15...bxc5 16.0-0 ♕a6 17.♖e1 ♖c8≠ with mutual chances, Blatny – Lobron, Debrecen 1992.

b) 7.cxd5 ♗xd5



8.♕d3

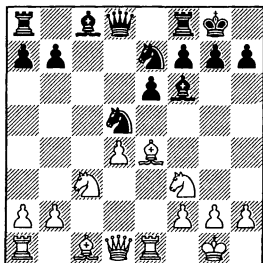
A more active continuation 8.♕c4 0-0 9.0-0 ♗c6 10.♖e1 allows Black to spare a tempo when organising the counterplay: 10...a6 11.♕b3 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 b5 13.♗d3 ♖a7 14.♕c2. The bishop gets to the diagonal b1–h7 anyway, but with a loss of time. After 14...g6 15.♕h6 ♖e8 16.♗e3 ♖d7 17.h4 ♕f6 there was a complex position in the game A. Sokolov – Karpov, Linares 1987.

8...♗c6 9.0-0 0-0 10.♖e1

Also the continuation 10.a3 can be seen. In some cases it can be helpful to cover the point b4, but still this method is too sluggish... 10...♙f6 11.♙e4 (or 11.♙c2 b6 12.♞e1 ♗b7 13.♞e4 ♞c8 with a complex play, Rozentalis – Danielsen, Koge 1997) 11...♞ce7. It's important for Black to have an opportunity to capture a piece in case of an exchange on d5. 12.♟d3 g6 13.♙h6 ♙g7. Despite certain weakening of the black squares this exchange is not very frightful and is often played by grandmasters. 14.♙xg7 ♟xg7 15.♞fe1 b6. Now Black is ready to take the initiative after 16...♙b7, so White begins exchanges, but after 16.♙xd5 ♞xd5 17.♞xd5 ♟xd5 Black's position is quite solid, and he obtains a nice endgame after rook exchanges on the c-file, Huebner–Portisch, Frankfurt 1998.

10...♙f6 11.♙e4 ♞ce7

Black reinforces the square d5, and by an opportunity he can transfer the knight to g6.



This is the crucial position of the system.

12.♟d3

Other continuations were seen as well:

12.♞e5. White gives way to his queen, at the same time threatening with ♞g4. 12...♞g6 13.♟f3 (in case of 13.♟h5 “Karpov” exchanges should be performed 13...♞xc3 14.bxc3 ♙xe5 15.dxe5 to play then 15...♟a5 with counterthreats) 13...♞xc3 14.bxc3 (after 14.♟xc3 ♟d6 15.♞xg6 hxg6 16.♙e3 White’s development is better, but Black has no weak points, Novikov – Franco, Saint Vincent 1998) 14...♙xe5 15.dxe5 ♟a5. The exchanges released the tension, so White decides to sacrifice a pawn: 16.♞b1 (in case of 16.♙b2 there is 16...♙d7!?, and after multiple exchanges 17.♙xg6 hxg6 18.♟xb7 ♞ab8 19.♟xd7 ♞xb2 20.♟c6 ♞xa2 21.♞xa2 ♟xa2 the position is almost equal) 16...♞xe5 17. ♟e2 White has certain compensation for the sacrificed material, J. Polgar – Karpov, Tilburg 1996.

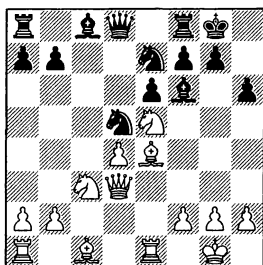
12.h4. Black should not be afraid of this diversionary activity. After 12...♞f5 13.♟d3 Black begins exchanges: 13...♞xc3 14.bxc3 h6 15.h5 ♞d6. It’s helpful to prepare further exchanges while White attempts to create threats on the kingside. After 16.♞e5 ♞e4 17.♟e4 ♙xe5 18.dxe5 (if 18.♟xe5, then 18...♟d5 equalises the game – another standard manoeuvre) 18...f5!? Black got a good play in the game Anand – Karpov, Lausanne 1998.

White’s attempt to put pressure on the queenside with

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.ed cd 4.c4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e6 6.♘f3 ♕e7

12.♖b3 deserves no particular attention: 12...b6 13.♙f4 ♙b7. Black's position here is so solid that the other side is obliged to suggest exchanges which are always beneficial to Black in the Caro-Kann, so after 14.♙e5 ♙c6 15.♙ac1 ♘xc3 16.♙xc6 ♘xc6 17.♙xc3 ♙xe5 18.dxe5 ♘d4 19.♘xd4 the game was drawn J. Polgar – Karpov, Vienna 1996.

12...h6 13.♘e5



13...♘xc3

Karpov applies a similar relief method almost for every White's position, for instance after 13.♖e2 (instead of 13.♘e5) ♙d7 14.♙b1 White is going to create a battery queen&bishop on the diagonal b1–h7, so Black begins to exchange with 14...♘xc3 15.bxc3

♙c6. The bishop gets to the required diagonal. 16.♘e5 The knight occupies an attacking position. 17.♖d3 with a smashing defeat which is threatening, but Black prevents it with the same old exchange 16...♙xe5 17.♖xe5, followed by the standard manoeuvre 17...♖d5. So, Black has dreadful forces on the diagonal h1 – a8, and in case of a queen exchange he has good prospects for a play against White's pawns on c3 and d4, Adams – Karpov, Roquebrune 1992.

14.♖xc3

White prefers to keep the pawn on b2 in order to have his pawn structure undamaged in case of an exchange on c5. Well, Black begins a counterplay in the centre and on the queenside:

14...♘f5 15.♙e3 a5 16.♙ac1 a4

17.♙ed1, Topalov – Karpov, Linares 1995. And in this position the black rook should enter the game: **17...♙a5=**. From this square it covers d5 and by an opportunity it can attack the b2–pawn from d5. Both sides have the same chances.

Summary

The Panov Attack produces positions with an isolated white pawn. His main plan is to prepare an attack on the kingside building the battery queen&bishop on the diagonal b1–h7 with the use of an outpost on e5. Black opposes this plan with a series of exchanges on c3 and e5 and then the weak points of White's pawn structure will be important. A firm and constant control over the d5-square is especially significant here.

Chapter 4 Uncommon systems

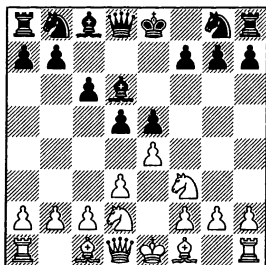
1.e4 c6

Sometimes due to different reasons White deviates from the natural and, without doubt, the strongest continuation 2.d4 and plays: a) 2.d3, b) 2.♘c3, c) 2.c4 or d) 2.b3.

a) 2.d3 d5 3.♘d2

In that way White wants to create King's Indian-like structures, where the basis of his plan will be a space capture on the kingside by means of the advance e4–e5. However, Black prevents this opportunity at once and conquers the centre.

4...e5 4.♘gf3 ♙d6



The well known grandmaster L. Ljubojevic is an adherent of this variation. He used this system against A. Karpov for many

years.

a1) 5.♖e2 ♘f6 6.d4

6.exd5 cxd5 7.♘xe5 is dangerous, as after 7...0-0 Black creates serious threats on the e–file, for instance with 8.d4 ♘c6 9.♘xc6 (if 9.♘df3, then 9...♘xd4! 10.♘xd4 ♙xe5) 9...bxc6 with a fine compensation for the pawn.

A sluggish 6.g3 0-0 7.♙g2 ♚e8 8.0-0 allows Black to take the initiative on the queenside with 8...a5!, and after 9.a3 a4 Black has certain advantage owing to the passive position of White's pieces Ljubojevic – Karpov, Linares 1992.

6...dxe4 7.♘xe5 ♙f5 8.h3!?

With the threat of 9.g4.

8...h5 9.♙g1, and now 9...h4! gives a complex position with mutual chances, Ljubojevic – Karpov, Roquebrune 1992.

a2) 5.g3

A fianchetto is more suitable with the queen on d1.

5...♘f6 6.♙g2 0-0 7.0-0 ♚e8 8.♚e1

Better than 8.b3, weakening the queenside. In the game

Ljubojevic – Karpov, Monaco, 1993, Black played 8...♗g4 9.h3 ♗h5 10.♗b2 ♜bd7 11.♞e1 a5 and got an initiative.

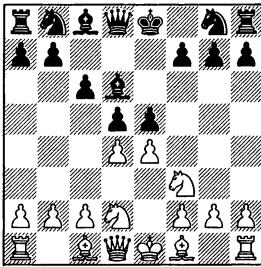
8...♜bd7 9.c3

White has no active moves, no objects for an attack, and after

9...dxe4 10.dxe4 ♞c7 11.♞c2=.

The position is equal, almost symmetrical, Ljubojevic – Karpov, Buenos Aires 1980.

a3) 5.d4



This move looks illogical, White just loses a tempo: 2.d2–d3, then 5.d3–d4

5...exd4 6.exd5 cxd5 7.♜xd4 ♜c6 8.♗b5 ♜ge7

This position is similar to the Tarrasch Variation of the French Defence.

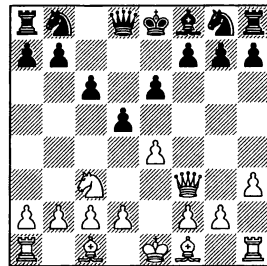
9.♜2f3 0-0 10.0-0 ♗g4 11.♗e2 ♞e8=.

Black's pieces are more active, but White has no weak points and the position should be estimated as approximately equal, Buchal – Sturua, Groningen 1998.

b) 2.♜c3 d5 3.♜f3 ♗g4 4.h3
This system was popular in

the middle of the century. White gains the advantage of two bishops. Still, this does not help him very much as the position is not open. Practice showed that Black can equalise without particular efforts, though White's position is usually firm in this variation. Anyway, now this line is used seldom.

4...♗xf3 5.♞xf3 e6



Different moves were played in this situation:

b1) 6.d4 ♜f6 7.♗d3

If 7.e5, then after 7...♜fd7, followed by c7–c5, Black gains a position with an ideal French-like structure and suffers no difficulties with his light-squared bishop.

7...dxe4 8.♜xe4 ♜xe4 9.♞xe4 ♜d7 10.c3 ♜f6 11.♞e2 ♗d6

Despite Black failed to close the game totally, his position is still solid enough.

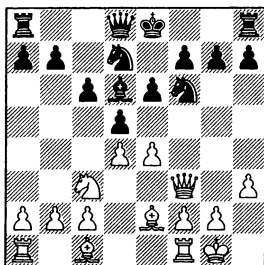
12.0-0 ♗c7 13.♞e1 0-0= with an approximate balance, Short – Karpov, Monaco 1993.

b2) 6.♗e2 ♜f6 7.d3 ♗d6

Black arranges his forces in a convenient order and waits for

the right moment to simplify the position.

8.0-0 ♖bd7 9.d4



Now a series of exchanges on e4 follows, typical for this variation: **9...dxe4 10.♖xe4 ♖xe4 11.♗xe4 ♖f6 12.♗f3 0-0=**, and Black's position is safe again, Leko – Karpov, Leon 1993.

b3) 6.♗g3

An attempt to block up the development of Black's kingside.

6...♖f6 7.d3 ♖bd7 8.♗e2

In case of 8.e5 Black has 8...♖g8 to be followed by ♖e7, c5, etc.

8...♗b4!?, and Black has a sufficient counterplay owing to the threat of 9...d4, Torre – Adianto, Indonesia 1999.

b4) 6.d3 ♖d7 7.♗e2 g6

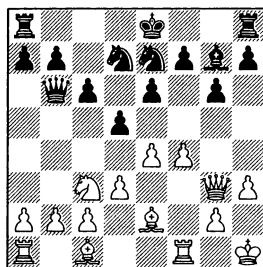
Black has an ideal pawn structure for an endgame with the dark-squared bishop: almost all his pawns occupy light squares.

8.0-0 ♗g7 9.♗g3

White prepares the advance f2–f4.

9...♗b6 10.♖h1 ♖e7 11.f4

Hoping to open up the play.



11...f5! 12.e5

For 12.exd5 Black has 12...exd5 and then 0-0-0.

12...d4 13.♖b1 ♖d5=.

The position got closed, chances of the sides are approximately equal, Anand – Karpov, Brussels 1991.

b5) 6.g3 ♖f6 7.♗g2 ♖bd7 8.d3

If White does not play d2–d3, then Karpov always releases the centre, for example, after 8.♗e2 dxe4 9.♖xe4 ♖xe4 10.♗xe4 Black continued his development with 10...g6 11.c3 (in case of 11.d4 there is 11...♖f6) 11...♗h6! and then equalised the play easily: 12.h4 ♖c5 13.d4 ♗xc1 14.♗xc1 ♖xe4 15.♗xe4 ♗d5= Ljubojevic – Karpov, Monaco 1995.

8...♗b4

Threatening with 9...d4 and forcing White into castling.

9.0-0-0 10.♖e2

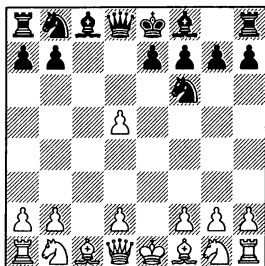
Black threatened to take on c3 and play then dxe4, separating White's queenside pawns.

10...♗d6 11.♖f4 a5 with mutual chances, Ljubojevic – Karpov, Linares 1995.

c) 2.c4

This continuation became popular in the eighties. Usually the play gets reduced to structures, resembling the Gruenfeld Defence, which are favourable for Black.

2...d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.cxd5
 ♖f6



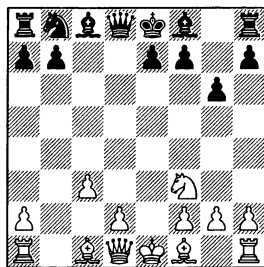
5.♖c3

Attempts to keep the pawn allow Black to create a good counterplay:

5.♖a4+ ♖bd7 6.♖c3 g6 7.d4 ♖g7 8.♖b3 0-0 9.♖g5 ♖b6 10.♖f6 ♖xf6 11.♖f3 and here after 11...e6 12.dxe6 ♖xe6 Black has a development advantage for the pawn, two mighty bishops and open files for the rooks, so he has a sufficient compensation, Larsen – Karpov, Montreal 1979.

5.♖b5+ ♖d7 6.♖c4 b5! Black uses the merits of his position energetically. 7.♖b3 a5 8.a3. (8.♖c3 ♖a6 9.d4 is better, but here after 9...a4 10.♖c2 ♖b4 Black also has an initiative.) 8...♖a6 9.d4 ♖c7 10.♖f3 ♖g4 11.♖g3 ♖cxd5, and Black is just better, Short – Karpov, Brussels 1987.

5...♖xd5 6.♖f3 ♖xc3 7.bxc3
 g6



8.d4

8.h4?! The aggression is evidently untimely because White is underdeveloped. 8...♖g7 9.h5 ♖c6 10.♖b1 ♖c7 11.♖a3 ♖f5+. Black gets a considerable advantage with plain moves, A. Sokolov – Karpov, Linares 1987.

8.♖c4 ♖g7 9.♖g5. This time White's activity is more grounded. 9...0-0 10.♖f3. Forcing the opponent to play 10...e6. But after 11.d4 ♖c6 12.0-0 ♖a5! 13.♖d3 ♖d7 14.♖b1 ♖c8= Black solved his opening problems successfully in the game Morozovich – Karpov, Moscow 1992.

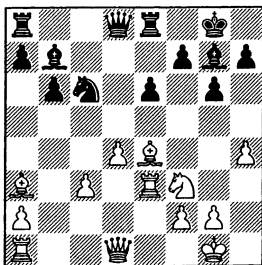
8...♖g7 9.♖d3 0-0 10.0-0
 ♖c6 11.♖e1

White begins an attack against the e7-pawn.

11...b6 12.♖a3

Also 12.♖g5 ♖e8 13.♖a4 is interesting, though after 13...♖b7 14.♖ad1 a6 15.♖e4 b5 Black is OK, Beshukov – Dreev, Novgorod 1999.

12...♖b7 13.♖e4 ♖e8 14.♖e3
 e6 15.h4



15...a5

Black plays "by Karpov"!

16.xb7 bxb7 17.g5 d5!

Creating a blockade on the light squares.

18.e2 a5! 19.f3 c4!

Black gains an advantage
Morozevich – Vyzmanavin, St.
Petersburg 1993.

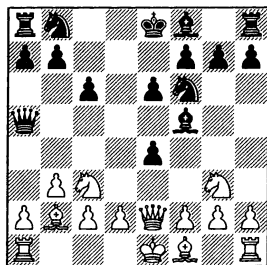
d) 2.b3 d5

Now White should decide whether he will raise the tension in the centre with 3.ed or 3.e5, thus losing the opening initiative, or he will sacrifice the e4–pawn, hoping to gain a development advantage, but after

3.b2 dxe4 4.e2 ef5 5.g3
e6 6.c3 f6

it turns out that this way to develop the initiative is too slow.

7.e2 a5



8.fxf5

If 8.cxe4 dxe4 9.e4, then 9...a6 with the threat of 10...b4, and Black stands better, for instance in the line 10.a3 d8 with new threats.

8...xf5

White still has not returned the pawn, and got no development advantage, so Black's position is slightly better, Stefansson – Karpov, Reykjavik 1994.

Summary

Since 2.d4 is undoubtedly the strongest continuation in the Caro-Kann Defence, any deviation from it means a certain concession to Black in the fundamental struggle for the opening advantage, and White as a rule has some psychological reasons for doing this. Black should look for simplifications again using the merits of his pawn structure.

Black does not have any opening difficulties.

Part 2. Nimzo-Indian Defence

Chapter 5 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.♚c2 0-0

This is one of the most popular openings which has always been in great demand. The famous chess theorist, grandmaster A. Nimzowitsch put this defence into his chess practice in the mid twenties, and ever since it has been an indispensable part of opening repertoires of leading players, including many World Champions. The Nimzo-Indian Defence attracts many adherents, who may have various styles, thanks to the diversity of strategic methods (blockade, “good” and “bad” bishops, play against a single pawn, etc.) but its chief virtues are firmness and flexibility of Black’s pawn structure and opportunities for a quick and harmonious development. At the same time a typical feature for many systems of this defence is the pawn weakness on c3 or c4 in White’s camp that allows Black to create an active counterplay in certain cases. As a whole, White’s main plan is to prepare an attack on the kingside using his pawn centre, whereas Black tries to keep control over the important squares

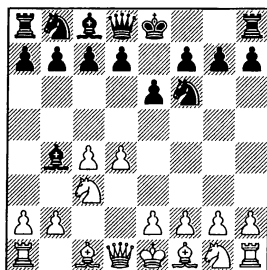
e4 and d5 and arranges a counterattack in the centre, having undermined White’s pawns with c7–c5, e7–e5 or d7–d5.

We shall begin our study of the Nimzo-Indian Defence with the system with 4. ♚c2 which is most popular at present.

Modern System

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4

With this move Black begins to struggle for the square e4. He is ready to part with his dark-squared bishop, thus creating double pawns in White’s camp.



4.♚c2

White, in his turn, wants to avoid weakening of his pawn structure after an exchange on

c3. Besides he takes control over the strategically important square e4. This is why this system is so popular. However, an early development of the queen impedes the development of minor pieces, and its position on the c-file is often unstable when Black follows a plan, connected with the undermining of the centre with c7–c5 and a subsequent transfer of the rook to c8.

Black has several good continuations. A. Karpov prefers the most adaptable:

4...0-0

White has four continuations after this move, namely a) 5.e4, b) 5.♘f3, c) 5.♙g5 and d) 5.a3.

a) 5.e4

This move looks illogical as after

5...d6 6.a3

6.♘f3 c5 7.dxc5 ♙xc5 weakens the dark squares, and 6.e5 ♘fd7 7.a3 ♙xc3+ 8.♚xc3 c5 leads to the destruction of the pawn centre after 9.exd6 cxd4 10.♚xd4 ♘c6 11.♚c3 ♘c5 12.♙e2 e5, Black takes the initiative.

6...♙xc3+

White is still forced to double the pawns.

7.bxc3 e5

This strategic technique is typical of such positions. After the exchange of one bishop the pawns should be arranged so as to increase the mobility of the other bishop. At the same time, a blockade of White's centre begins.

8.♙d3

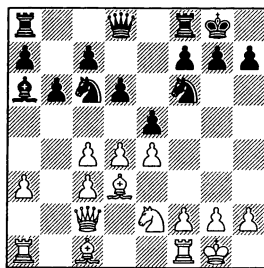
In case of 8.♘f3? Black answers with 8...exd4 9.cxd4 ♘xe4.

8...♘c6 9.♘e2

9.d5 leads to a total blockade of the centre, and after 9...♘a5 10.♘e2 b6 11.0-0 ♙a6 White suffers difficulties with the defence of his c4-pawn. So, in case of 12.♚a2 Black plays 12...c6 to create subsequent pressure upon the c-file.

9...b6 10.0-0 ♙a6

A standard method for an attack of the weak c4-pawn which we shall encounter more than once in this chapter.



11.f4

White shows activity on the kingside, but after 11...♘d7 12.♙e3 ♘a5 it turns out that Black has left him behind, and in case of 13.c5 (Short – Karpov, Dortmund 1997) 13...♙xd3 14.♚xd3 exd4 15.cxd4 dxc5 16.dxc5 ♘xc5 White loses his pawn for a compensation which leaves him no chance to claim anything but a draw.

b) 5.♘f3

This continuation is more

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.♙c2 0-0

solid.

5...c5

A characteristic undermining of White's centre.

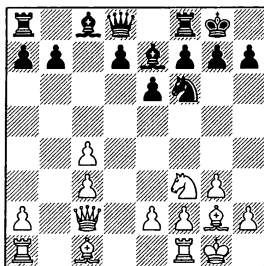
6.dxc5

Now if 6.a3 ♙xc3+ 7.♙xc3, then after the natural 7...cxd4 8.♙xd4 ♘c6 9.♙h4 d5 10.cxd5 ♙xd5 Black can equalise the play easily, for example with 11.♙g5 ♘d7 12.e4 ♙b3 13.♚b1 ♙c2 14.♘d2 ♘c5= Yakovich – Karpov, Moscow 1992.

6...♘a6

Black's knight wants to get to e4. White has three different ways of development here but Black has already solved his problems.

b1) 7.g3 ♘xc5 8.♙g2 ♘ce4 9.0-0 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♙e7



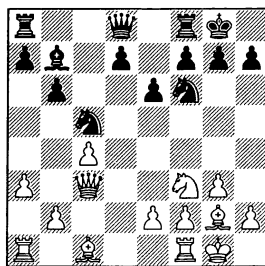
Black managed to spoil the pawn structure of his adversary and still keeps both bishops. In the game Hertneck – Karpov, Baden-Baden 1992, the opponents continued as follows: 11.e4 d6 12.e5 dxe5 13.♘xe5 ♙c7 14.♙e2 ♙d6 15.♙f4 ♘e8 16.♚ab1 f6 17.♘d3 ♙xc4 with some advantage.

b2) 7.a3 ♙xc3+ 8.♙xc3 ♘xc5

9.g3

After 9.b4 ♘ce4 10.♙d3 d5 11.cxd5 exd5 12.♙b2 ♙f5 Black takes the initiative, in case of 9.♙f4 d5 he also has a good play.

9...b6 10.♙g2 ♙b7 11.0-0



11...♚c8

After taking control over e4 Black begins an active play on the semi-open file.

12.♙f4 d5 13.♘e5 ♘fe4

Black has an advantage Adianto – Karpov, Cap d'Agde 1998.

b3) 7.e3 ♘xc5 8.♙d2

A calm way of development. White sluggishly gets rid of the bind.

8...b6

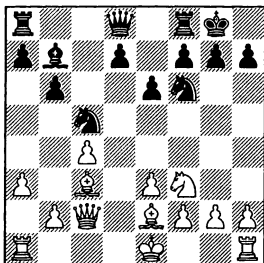
Black reacts with the same tried remedy: he performs a fianchetto of the light-squared bishop, takes control over the square e4 and turns to the c-file.

9.a3

In case of 9.♙e2 the game develops similarly with 9...♙b7 10.0-0 ♙e7 11.a3 ♙xc3 12.♙xc3 ♚ac8 13.♚ac1 ♚fd8 14.b4 ♘ce4 15.♙d4 d6 16.♙d3 e5 17.♙b2 ♙e6 with a complex, approximately equal play Ivkov – Kar-

pov, Bugojno 1978.

9...♙xc3 10.♙xc3 ♖b7 11.
♙e2



11...d6

The arrangement of Black's central pawns is typical of this variation: he can use opportunely the advance e6–e5 to restrict the activity of White's bishop on the big diagonal, not fearing to weaken d5 as this square is well protected.

12.b3

A prophylactic move which prepares a retreat for the bishop and defends the pawn on c4. If White attempts a straight attack in the centre with 12.♖d1, then Black has 12...♘ce4 and after 13.♙d4 ♖c7 he threatens with 14...d5 or 14...e5.

12...e5 13.0-0

In case of 13.♖d1 there is 13...♖c7 14.0-0 ♘ce4 15.♙b2 ♖fe8 with a renewed threat of the advance d6–d5.

13...♖c8 14.♖fc1 ♖e7

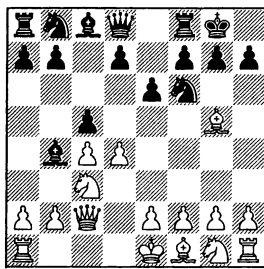
So Black completed his development successfully and after 15.b4 ♘ce4 16.♙e1 ♖c7 he can begin to play against the c4-pawn. The game Hertneck –

Karpov, Germany 1994 continued with 17.♖b2 ♖e6 18.a4 ♙a6 with a complex play.

c) 5.♙g5

An altogether natural continuation with only one defect as it causes some delay in the development of the kingside. Black accomplishes a break-through in the centre immediately:

5...c5



6.dxc5

Other possible continuations also present no particular problems for Black: 6.♘f3 h6. In such a situation it's recommended to define a stand for the white bishop. 7.♙xf6 (7.♙h4 is no good because of 7...g5 8.♙g3 g4) 7...♖xf6 8.a3 ♙xc3+ 9.♖xc3 b6 10.e3 ♙b7 11.♙e2 cxd4 with an equal position.

6.d5 d6 7.♘f3 h6 8.♙h4 g5 9.♙g3 ♙xc3+ 10.bxc3 e5 Certain weakening of the castling position is not dangerous as White is underdeveloped. After 11.♘d2 ♘h5 12.f3 ♘xg3 13.hxg3 ♖g7 14.g4 f5 15.gxf5 ♙xf5 16.e4 ♙g6 17.♖b1 b6 there was a position with mutual chances in the game

Lautier – Andersson, Biel 1991.

6.e3 cxd4 7.exd4 ♘c6 8.♘f3 d5 9.a3 ♙xc3+ 10.♙xc3 ♖e8. An approximately equal position. If White wants to get more with 11.c5, then after 11...h6 he has to make a hard choice. 12.♙xf6 (White encounters difficulties in the line 12.♙f4 ♘e4 13.♙d3 e5! 14.♘e5 – or 14.dxe5 ♙a5 – 14...f6 15.♘xc6 ♘xc5+ 16.♙d2 ♘xd3 17.♘xd8 ♘xf4 with a conclusive advantage) 12...♙xf6 13.♙b5 e5 14.dxe5 d4. White should play very cautiously in this keen position. 15.0-0-0 (15.0-0 ♙g6 16.♘xd4 ♘xd4 17.♙xd4 ♙h3 18.g3 ♖ed8 with mutual chances is better) 15...♖xe5, and Black creates dangerous threats, Seirawan – Sunye Neto, Dubai 1986.

6...h6 7.♙h4 ♘a6 8.e3

Or 8.a3 ♙xc3+ 9.♙xc3 ♘xc5 10.♙xf6 ♙xf6 11.♙xf6 gxf6 12.b4 ♘a4 13.e3 b6 14.♘f3 ♙a6= with an equality Kozhul – Kasparov, Belgrade 1989.

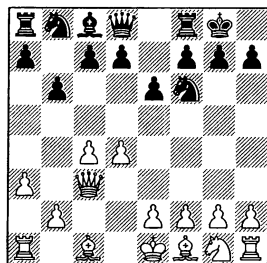
8...♘xc5 9.♘ge2 ♘ce4 10.a3 ♙a5 11.♖c1 ♙xc3+ 12.♘xc3 b6=

So, the calm development of events produces an equal position, Spassky – Greenfeld, Thessaloniki 1988.

d) 5.a3

The most popular continuation. White dissolves the binding at once and keeps both opportunities to put his dark-squared bishop to g5 or b2.

5...♙xc3+ 6.♙xc3 b6



Now we have the first crucial position of the system on the diagram. White has two basic opportunities: d1) 7.♘f3 or d2) 7.♙g5.

d1) 7.♘f3

Then White wants to develop his dark-squared bishop on the “b2”.

7...♙b7

This position is similar with positions considered above (ref. to the line b) 5.♘f3), with the difference that here White’s development is more natural. White has to make his choice again: d1a) 8.e3, d1b) 8.g3 or d1c) 8.b3.

d1a) 8.e3 d6 9.b3 ♘bd7

The square e4 is under control, so Black may proceed to the c-file.

10.♙b2 ♙e7 11.♙e2 c5 12.0-0 ♖ac8 13.♖ad1

After 13.dxc5 ♘xc5 14. ♖ad1 Black has 14...e5 or 14...d5 with a good play in both cases.

13...d5!

Now the opposition of the queen and the rook on the c-file becomes really unpleasant for White.

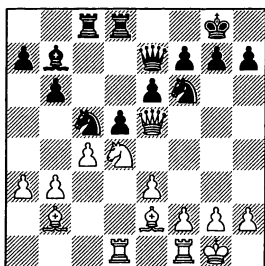
14.dxc5 ♘xc5 15.♙e5

Out of the harm’s way. In case of 15.♘e5 dxc4 16.♙xc4 ♘ce4

17.♖d3 ♜fd8 18.♙d4 there is a keen struggle which may turn profitable for Black. So far the moves were practically forced but now Black has an interesting opportunity of 18...b5!?, and after 19.♙xb5 ♖c3 White has to part with his queen: 20.♖xc3, because if he moves the rook away, then an unpleasant 20...♙e4 follows, so Black captures 20...♜xc3, though the position after 21.♙xc3 is unclear.

15...♜fd8 16.♘d4

Or 16.cxd5 ♙xd5 17.b4 ♘5d7 with a balanced position.



16...♖f8!

Black covers the square g7 and prevents a very unpleasant 17.♘f5 at the same time.

In the game Timman – Karpov, Jakarta (m/21) 1993 the opponents continued with **17.f3 dxc4 18.♙xc4 ♙d5** and agreed to a draw after **19.♙xd5**. It should be noted, however, that the position was not absolutely equal as after **19...♘xd5** Black had some nice chances connected with the threat of **20...f6**.

d1b) 8.g3

The double fianchetto does not change Black's plans very much, moreover, in this case he gains additional interests:

8...d6 9.♙g2 ♘bd7

Everything develops in a standard manner for the present.

10.0-0 a5!?

Also a "banal" 10...c5 is good here with the position, described above. Now Black threatens to play 11...a4 to secure the square b3 and then begin an attack of the c4-pawn.

11.b3 ♖e7 12.♙b2 ♜fe8 13.♜fe1 ♙e4

Black proceeds to another plan which was also regarded above.

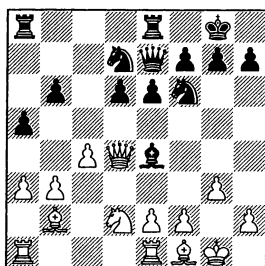
14.♙f1

A sly move. White wants to engage his knight in the active play and keep both bishops at the same time.

14...c5

Continuing his own plan.

15.♘d2 cxd4 16.♖xd4



16...e5

Another familiar trick: the bishop on b2 faces a solid wall of Black's pawns.

17.♖c3

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♞c3 ♙b4 4.♚c2 0-0

Black actually can retreat with his active bishop now, but Karpov's intention is different: he plays **17...♞ac8!?** **18.♞xe4 ♞xe4** **19.♚e3 ♞ef6** with good chances owing to the threat of the advance a5-a4 which secures a solid stand on c5 for the knights, but Black must avoid opening the game as White's bishops still keep all their potential might, Korchnoi – Karpov, Biel 1992.

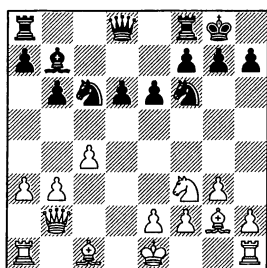
d1c) 8.b3

This continuation also has no fundamental distinctions from those which were examined above, more than that, Black can even attempt to seize the initiative.

8...d6 9.g3 c5 10.♙g2

In case of 10...♞e4 11.♚c2 ♞xc5 12.♙g2 ♙e4.

10...cxd4 11.♚xd4 ♞c6 12.♚b2



12...♞e5

The whole line is forced, so White parts with his advantage of two bishops and his kingside gets weakened.

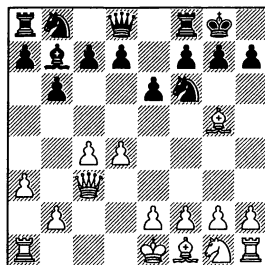
13.0-0 ♞xf3+ 14.♙xf3 ♙xf3

15.exf3 (Mikhalevski – Gershon, Tel Aviv 2000). Now **15...d5** with good prospects is the most simple decision here though White's bishop still allows him to hope for an equalisation.

d2) 7.♙g5

The main line of the system. This binding presents definite problems for Black but quite solvable.

7...♙b7



White has three basic opportunities here: d2a) 8.♞f3, d2b) 8.e3 and d2c) 8.f3.

d2a) 8.♞f3

It's hard for White to gain an advantage in this continuation.

8...d6 9.♞d2

A very interesting idea but it gives a fine counterplay to Black because White's development is retarded. In case of 9.g3 h6 Black equalises easily both after an exchange with 10.♙xf6 ♚xf6 11.♙g2 c5 and in the line 10.♙e3 c5 11.♙g2 cxd4 12.♙xd4 ♞bd7, with the same chief plan in both cases, connected with the use of the c-file.

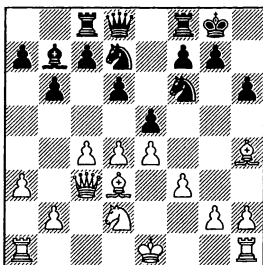
9...♞bd7 10.f3

10.e4 is no good as after h6 11.♙xf6 ♘xf6 12.♙d3 c5 Black takes the initiative.

10...h6 11.♙h4 ♖c8

Defending the c7-pawn and preparing the following tactical operation:

12.e4 e5 13.♙d3



13...♘xe4!?

A mere 13...exd4 14.♙xd4 ♘e5 is also good enough.

14.♙xd8 ♘xc3 15.♙h4 e4 16.♙c2 exf3 17.bxc3 ♖ce8+ 18.♙d1 fxe2

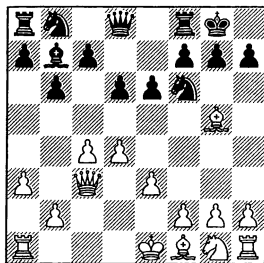
In this complex position Black has a sufficient compensation for the sacrificed piece, Ivanchuk – Karpov, Moscow 1993.

d2b) 8.e3

A more adaptable continuation. White still keeps two basic ways of development. Black does not need to change his response:

8...d6

The plan stays the same too: ♘bd7, then a play on the c-file with an undermining advance c7–c5, and then ♖c8 with a troublesome for White opposition of the rook and the queen.



9.f3

9.♘f3. This variation does not introduce anything particularly new in comparison with the line which develops after 9.f3, though one should remember that tactical nuances constitute a base of every plan. 9...♘bd7 10.♘d2 c5 11.f3. White cannot do without this move, so he is forced to waste time... 11...♖c8 12.dxc5. (If 12.♙e2, then Black has 12...♖e8, and in case of a natural 13.0–0 he just plays 13...♘d5!, whereas after 13.dxc5 ♖xc5 14.♙xf6 ♘xf6 15.b4 ♖c7= he equalises owing to the unavoidable 16...d5 as it was in the game Onischuk – Tiviakov, Wijk aan Zee 2000) 12...♖xc5 13.♙h4 d5 14.b4 ♖c8. Now Black is threatening with 15...dxc4 to be followed by 16...b5. So White prefers 15.♙b2 ♖e8 16.♙e2 ♙c7 17.0–0, and after 17...♙e5 18.♙xe5 ♘xe5= the position was balanced out in the game Wang Lei – Karpov, Beijing 1998, though 17...♙a6!/? deserves attention too.

9...♘bd7 10.♘h3

Leads to a complex play. In case of 10.♙d3 Black develops his forces according to the usual scheme: 10...c5 11.♘e2 ♖c8 12.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.♚c2 0-0

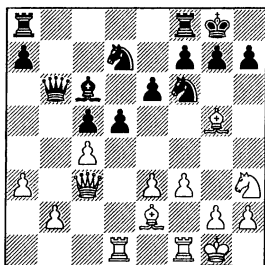
♙b3 (no other way, because an immediate castling 12.0-0 is no good because of 12...cxd4 13.exd4 b5) 12...cxd4 13.exd4 ♚c7 14.♙a4 ♘b7 15.♘c3 with a complex struggle). Now the blow 15...♘c5! wins a pawn although after 16.dxc5 ♚xc5 17.♙h1 ♚xg5 18.♙a4= White has a certain compensation, Grigore – Pinter, Budapest 2000.

10...c5 11.dxc5

If 11.♙d3, then, of course 11...cxd4 12.exd4 ♘c8.

11...bxc5 12.♙e2 ♙b6 13.0-0 d5 14.♙ad1 ♙c6

Black arranged his pieces well and develops his initiative on the queenside.



15.♘f2

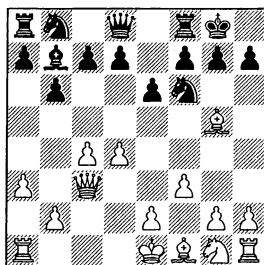
In case of 15.cxd5 Black has 15...exd5, and the weakness of the hanging pawns is compensated with pressure on files b and e.

In the game Kasparov – Karpov, Las Palmas 1996 the opponents continued with **15...h6**

16.♙h4 ♙a4 17.♙d2 ♙b3 with a complex play. White's retarded b2-pawn restricts his opportunities on the kingside.

d2c) 8.f3

The most energetic continuation. White wants to create a powerful pawn centre immediately despite his lag in development.



8...h6

This helpful move should make White determine a position for his bishop before Black begins to play on the queenside.

9.♙h4

An exchange on f6 is unfavourable for White. After 9.♙xf6 ♙xf6 10.e4 c5 Black is first to begin an active play in the centre. Now 11.dxc5 is bad because of an exchange on c3, as well as 11.d5, whereas the best move 11.♘e2 does not contribute to a harmonious development and leaves different opportunities for Black, for example 11...♙g5 with an initiative.

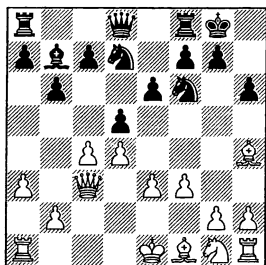
Another retreat of the bishop 9.♙f4 allows Black to begin a counterattack with 9...d5 10.c5

♖h5 to be followed by 11.♖h3 bxc5 12.♗xc5 ♖xf4 13.♗xf4 ♖d7 and a subsequent advance c7–c5.

9...d5 10.e3

An immediate exchange in the centre with 10.cxd5 exd5 is, perhaps, untimely. 11.e3 (It's risky to take the sacrificed pawn as after 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.♗xc7 ♗a6 13.♗e5 ♗c6 Black begins a strong attack on the queenside) 11...♞e8 12.♗f2. (In case of 12.♖h3 Black continues with 12...♗e7 13.♗f2 c5, and if 14.♗b5, then ♗c6! An exchange is unfavourable for White, and after the bishop retreats, Black plays 15...♗d7!, creating unpleasant threats) 12...c5 13.♗b5. (No 13.dxc5? because of 13...d4 with a crushing attack) 13...cxd4 14.♗xd4 ♗c6 15.♗d3. (An exchange on c6 is profitable for Black as he can introduce the knight with a spare tempo, for example 15.♗xc6 ♖xc6 16.♗a4 ♖e5 with an initiative) 15...♖bd7 16.♖e2 ♖c5 17.♗c2 ♗b5. So Black prevented his opponent from castling and took the initiative, Seirawan – Karpov, Rotterdam 1989.

10...♖bd7



11.cxd5

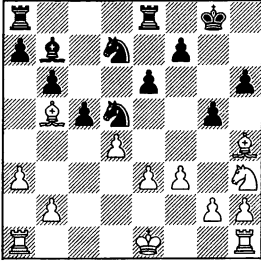
Now that the black knight cannot get to c6, this exchange allows White to struggle for an initiative.

Black has no problems after 11.♗d3 c5. Positions which can appear in this line are similar to those considered below, with the difference that White loses a tempo.

An alluring 11.c5 also wastes time, and after a forced 11...c6 12.♗d3 Black proceeds to a queenside counterattack with 12...a5, threatening to fix the b2–pawn, and in case of a natural 13.b4 he delivers a blow with the knight 13...♖e4! and gains a considerable advantage. 14.♗xe4 (After 14.♗xd8 ♖xc3 White simply loses a pawn) 14...♗xh4+ 15.g3 ♗f6 16.♗c2 axb4 17.axb4 ♞xa1+ 18.♗xa1 ♞a8 19.♗c3 bxc5 20.bxc5 e5!+. The game is opened up at White's obvious disadvantage, I. Sokolov – Polugaevsky, Biel 1989.

The continuation 11.♖h3 is more interesting. Black's response is standard: 11...c5. Black is ready to begin an active play on the c–file. White's no less standard move 12.cxd5 Black encounters with 12...♖xd5! and after the forced line 13.♗xd8 ♖xc3 14.♗e7 (14.♗xb6 axb6 15.bxc3 ♞a5 16.dxc5 ♖xc5 is worse for White because after an inevitable ♞fa8 Black returns the pawn and takes the initiative with an intrusion on the a–file)

14...♞fe8 15.♙h4 ♘d5 White creates an unpleasant binding with 16.♙b5 (by the way, do you remember what shortcomings the move 11.♙d3 has?) 16...g5.



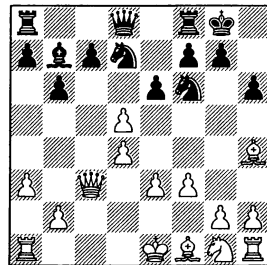
In this position White has two opportunities:

1) alluring 17.♙xd7 ♞ed8 18.♙f2 (in case of 18.♙a4 Black has a promising piece sacrifice 18...♟xe3! and after 19.♙f2 ♟f5 20.♙g3 ♞xd4 his compensation is more than sufficient) 18...♞xd7 19.dxc5 bxc5 gives a complex position with a good play for Black, for example after 20.0-0-0 (20.♞c1 which occurred in the game Khenkin – Ulibin, Minsk 1990, is worse because of 20...♙a6!, the unhappy stand of White's king prevents his own pieces from entering the play. After 21.e4 ♟b6 22.♙xc5 ♟a4 Black returns the pawn easily and gains an advantage. The move 20.e4 also promises nothing good to White because of the counterstrike 20...g4! as Black returns the pawn and gets an approximately equal position in case of 21.fxg4 ♟f6 or has an excellent play after 21.exd5 gxf3 22.dxe6 ♞e8). After

White's castling Black plays 20...f5, creating a complex position with mutual chances. So in case of 21.e4 fxe4 22.fxe4 ♟b6 the weakness of the e4-pawn is self-evident and besides White's knight stands not very well.

2) 17.♙f2. A more adaptable continuation which still fails to present any serious problems to Black. The struggle is very much like in the previous variation. 17...♞ed8 18.e4 (The continuation 18.♙xd7 ♞xd7 19.dxc5 bxc5 reduces the position exactly to the just considered 17.♙xd7) 18...♟f6 19.d5 (In case of 19.0-0-0 g4 20.♟f4 cxd4 Black has better chances) 19...♟xc5 20.♙xc5 (Or 20.0-0 ♟d3, forcing White to exchange one of his bishops) 20...bxc5 21.♞c1 a6 22.♙e2 ♞ac8= Lerner – Janjgava, New York 1990. Black has a weak pawn on c5 but his pieces are positioned more actively, so both sides have approximately equal chances.

Let us revert to the main line after **11.cxd5**



11...♟xd5!

This trick, which we have already seen, Black allows to get

rid of the unpleasant bind and to stimulate simplifications.

12. ♖xd8 ♜xc3 13. ♖h4

This continuation occurs most frequently though other moves are also possible:

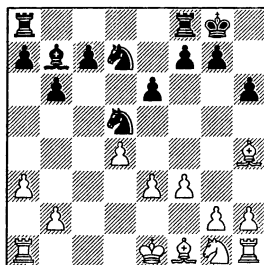
13. ♖xc7 White hopes to make use of the inconvenient position of the black knight with the help of the forced line 13... ♜d5 14. ♖d6 ♜xe3 15. ♖f2 (or 15. ♖xf8 ♜c2+ 16. ♖f2 ♜xa1 17. ♖b4 ♜c8 with an excellent play) 15... ♜c2 16. ♖d1 ♖fc8 17. ♖b5 ♜f6 18. ♜e2 but in the game Salov – Karpov, Skellefteo 1989 Black played 18... a6, and after 19. ♖a4 (in case of 19. ♖d3 Black continues with 19... ♜d5, preparing a retreat for the c2-knight, for example 20. g4 ♜ce3 21. ♖c1 ♖d8 22. ♖e5 f6 23. ♖g3 f5 24. gxf5 ♜xf5 with a good play, Hjartarson – Sax, Rotterdam 1989) Black answered with 19... b5 20. ♖b3 ♖d5 with slightly better chances.

13. bxc3 Too sluggishly. Black gains a brilliant play here with natural moves: 13... ♖fxd8 14. ♖d3 c5 15. ♜e2 ♖ac8 16. ♖f2 ♖f8 17. ♖hc1 ♖e7 No comments required, Black's position is none the worse at least, Miladinovic – Bojkovic, Subotica 1999.

13. ♖e7 This move which occurred in the game Scherbakov – Karpov, Moscow 1993, does not change the general course of play. After 13... ♖fe8 14. ♖h4 ♜d5 White is forced to play 15. ♖f2 (15. e4?! ♜e3 with some advantage for Black), and then 15... f5

leads to positions of the main variation.

13... ♜d5



The other crucial position. White managed to exchange queens and avoid an early opening up. Now he is going to complete his development and begin an advance of his central pawns, so as to use the strength of his two bishops then. Black still has certain development advantage and his knight is very strong on d5. His main plan implies an advance f7–f5 to secure a safe stand for the centralised knight, followed by e6–e5, ♖ae8 and then, depending on circumstances, an exchange on d4 with a subsequent use of the e-file or a further advance of the e-pawn.

14. ♖f2

White gained nothing from 14. e4 because of 14... ♜e3, and in case of 14. ♖f2 Black fulfilled the outlined plan with an opportune assault on the h4-bishop. The game Dragomaretsky – Moizhess, Moscow 1992 developed as follows: 14... f5! 15. ♖b5 c6 16. ♖c4 e5 17. ♜e2 exd4 18. ♜xd4 ♜e5 The whole line was forced but now

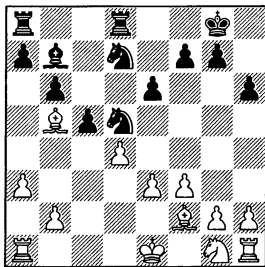
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♙c3 ♜b4 4.♚c2 0-0

White has to exchange on d5 with an equalisation because in case of 19.♙e2 Black answers with 19...g5 20.♙g3 f4 21.exf4 gxf4 22.♙h4 ♗g6, and White's position is worse.

14...c5 15.♙b5

White gains nothing from 15.e4 ♗e7 16.♗e2 (Or 16.♙b5 ♗c6 17.♗e2 ♖fc8 18.0-0 cxd4 19.♗xd4 ♗c5 20.♗xc6 with a draw, M. Gurevich – Polugaevsky, New York 1989) 16...♖ac8 17.♗c3 cxd4 18.♙xd4 ♖fd8 19.♙e2 ♗g6 20.♜f2 ♗f4 21.♖ac1 ♗c5. Black's knights occupy active stands, and further simplifications are unavoidable. After 22.♙xc5 ♖xc5 23.♖cd1 ♖xd1 24.♖xd1 ♗xe2 25.♜xe2 ♖c7= an equal position appeared in the game Dive – Xu Jun, Istambul 2000.

15...♖fd8



16.e4

The most vigorous continuation.

The line 16.♗e2 cxd4 17.♗xd4 ♗c5, which was mentioned above, does not create a lot of problems for Black. A lucky position of the knights should be noted here too. The game Topalov – Kramnik,

Monaco 1998 continued with 18.0-0 ♗c7 19.♙c4 e5 20.♗f5 ♙a6 21.♙xa6 ♗7xa6= with an equality.

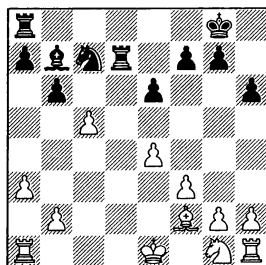
16...♗c7!

A strong retort. Black takes a dangerous initiative with a pawn sacrifice.

17.♙xd7

If the white bishop retreats, then Black has 17...♙a6.

17...♖xd7 18.dxc5



18...f5!

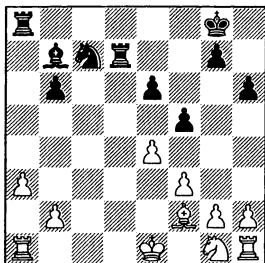
A necessary element of the plan: Black should open up the position in order to make use of his development advantage.

19.cxb6

There is an interesting opportunity of 19.e5 which allows to keep the position closed. For example, after 19...♖d5 20.cxb6 (20.♗e2 bxc5 21.♖c1 ♗a6 is worse as after the forced 22.♙g3 Black plays 22...♖ad8 and intrudes on the second rank) 20...♖xe5+ 21.♗e2 axb6 22.♙d4 ♖b5 23.0-0 White manages to complete his development without letting the black rook pass into his rear, though after 23...e5 24.a4 ♖b4 25.♙xe5 ♗e6 Black returns the

pawn and has a satisfactory position.

19...axb6



20.♖e2

Now 20.e5 is already no good because of 20...♞a5 and then after the forced 21.♙g3 comes

21...g5 and White's position is getting slightly worse. Black's initiative is dangerous also in case of 20.exf5 exf5 21.♙e3 ♜d5.

If White refuses to take the sacrifice he cannot count on an opening advantage, but even after 20.♙xb6 fxe4 21. fxe4 (in the line 21.b4 ♜d5 22.♙c5 ♜f4 Black is sufficiently compensated too) 21...♙xe4 22.♜f3 ♜d5 Black's counterplay is quite real.

In the game the opponents continued with **20...fxe4 21.fxe4 ♙xe4=** Black has a promising play, Kramnik – Kasparov, London (m/8) 2000.

Summary

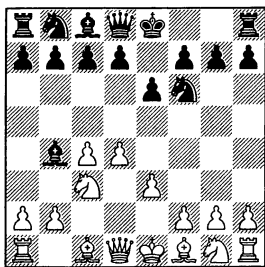
From the very beginning White manages to gain an advantage of the bishop pair without damaging his pawn structure. However, White wastes time on that and, as a result, he has a lag in development. Black's task is to organize a counterplay in the centre and on the queenside with the use of his development advantage. He applies the advance c7-c5 to gain a play on the c-file. Owing to the fianchetto of the light-squared bishop Black keeps control over the important squares d5 and e4. In the main line Black should try to open up the play before White concludes his development.

Chapter 6

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e3 c5

Rubinstein System

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4
4.e3



The initial position of the Rubinstein System is presented on the diagram. White fortifies the centre and prepares a harmonious mobilisation of his minor pieces. Now ♘ge2 becomes possible, then White drives back the black bishop and avoids to double his pawns at the same time. Black's best plan is an immediate attack in the centre. Usually the variation gives positions with the white isolated d4-pawn.

4...c5

White has to choose how he will develop his pieces. We shall regard two basic opportunities: a)

5.♘ge2 and b) 5.♙d3. Other possible continuations are: 5.a3, leading to the Saemisch System to be considered in Chapter 7, and 5.♘f3, reducing the play to the Blockade System (see Chapter 8).

a) 5.♘ge2

This move deserves attention even though it is not very popular nowadays.

5...d5

Black has to display a activity in the centre immediately, not waiting for an unpleasant 6.a3 as after 6...♙xc3+ 7.♘xc3 White gains a clear advantage.

6.a3

A natural continuation. White gains no profit from a preliminary exchange with 6.cxd5 after 6...♘xd5 7.a3 (or 7.e4 ♘f6 8.♙g5 - in case of 8.e5 ♘fd7 9.a3 cxd4 White loses a pawn - 8...h6 9.♙xf6 ♗xf6 10.a3 cxd4 11.axb4 dxc3 12.bxc3 0-0 with an equality) 7...♘xc3 8.♘xc3 ♙a5 9.dxc5 ♙xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♗xd1 11.♙xd1 ♙d7, and Black gains an equal play, for example 12.a4 (if 12.♖b1 ♙a4 13.♙d2 ♘c6, then no 14.

♖xb7? because of 14...0-0-0+, winning the rook) 12...♙c6 13. ♙b5 a6 14.♙xc6+ ♜xc6 15.♙c2 0-0-0 with a good play.

Now 6.a3 is followed by a forced line:

6...♙xc3 7.♜xc3 cxd4 8.exd4

Further simplifications and an equalisation are inevitable in case of 8.♙xd4 ♜c6 9.♙h4 dxc4 10.♙xc4 ♜e5= Fine – Reshevsky, New York 1954.

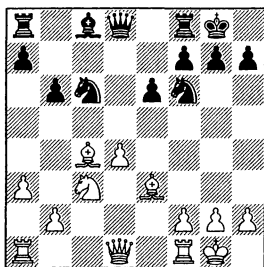
8...dxc4

So Black eased tension in the centre and created an isolated pawn. Still, White's pieces are active and he has the advantage of the bishop pair.

9.♙xc4 ♜c6 10.♙e3

An untimely 10.d5 exd5 11. ♜xd5 releases the play and brings it to an equal position after 11...♙e6 12.♜xf6+ ♙xf6= Sliwa – Tolush, Warsaw 1961.

10...0-0 11.0-0 b6



The crucial position of the variation.

12.♙d3

This is the best plan, White is going to create a battery queen & bishop on the diagonal b1–h7 and at the same time he covers

well the pawn on d4. Other plans were tested in this position too:

12.d5 Again, this advance is untimely here. After 12...♜a5 13.♙a2 exd5 14.♜xd5 ♙b7= White got rid of the single pawn but the position became equal Panno – Najdorf, Palma de Mallorca 1969.

12.♞e1 ♙b7 13.♙a2 ♜e7 Please, note this technique which is typical of this variation. The transfer of the knight to e7 allows Black to manoeuvre easily. Depending on the situation, this knight can go to the blocking square d5 or turn to a defensive play, covering the diagonal b1–h7 from g6 or f5. As a whole, the struggle in this line is similar to the main variation which begins with 12.♙d3.

12.♞c1 ♙b7 13.♙a2 ♜e7 In general, White's position is reduced to the main line again (12.♙d3) but the best place for the queen's rook in this variation is on d1.

12.♙f3 A more interesting idea. White's queen comes closer to the opponent's king. 12...♙b7 13.♙d3 (now 13.♞ad1 isn't advisable because of 13...♜a5) 13... ♙d7 14.♙h3 (Black is threatening to exchange one of the most dangerous pieces in this variation, for example 14.♞ad1 ♜b4 15.♙e2 ♜xd3 16.♙xd3 ♙c6, and Black stands better) 14...♜e7 15.♞ad1 (an alluring 15.♙g5 is no problem for Black as after 15... ♜g6 16.♙xf6 gxf6 White suffers

difficulties defending of his central pawn and has no straight attack: 17.♘e2 ♖ac8 18.f4 f5 with an equal play for Black) 15...♘g6 16.f4 ♘d5 A successful co-operation of the black knights should be marked here, they take control over the strategically important spot d5 in turn and at the same time solve the defence problems of the kingside. 17.f5 exf5 18.♙xf5. The march of the white pawn did not gain a great advantage for White, and after 18...♙c7 19.♘d5 ♙xd5= there was an equal position with Black's very strong centralised bishop in the game Sadler – Karpov, Monaco 1998.

12...♙b7 13.♖ad1 h6

A necessary move. The threat of 14.♙g5 should be prevented. Now White has to choose a profitable stand for his dark-squared bishop because his other pieces already occupy optimal places. He has two opportunities, but the character of the position remains unchanged in both case and Black's forces are arranged in a standard manner.

14.f3

White prepares a transfer of the bishop to h4 via f2.

When placed at a more active stand with 14.♙f4, the bishop can be attacked by Black's pieces. 14...♘e7. A familiar manoeuvre. 15.♖fe1 ♘fd5 16.♙g3 ♘g6 17.f3 (in case of 17.♘xd5 Black just takes with the bishop 17...♙xd5) 17...♖c8 18.♘xd5 ♙xd5 19.♙a6

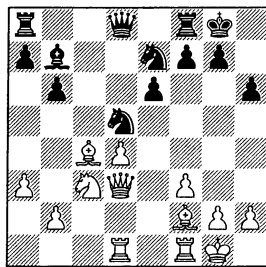
♖a8 20.♖c1 White took control over the c-file, and Black develops his activity on the kingside: 20...h5. Black has a solid position and certain counterplay owing to the opportunities of ♙g5, h4, ♘f4 so the chances are balanced out. In the game Korchnoi – Hansen, Biel 1992, the opponents agreed to a draw in several moves.

14...♘e7

Black's answer is standard.

15.♙f2 ♘fd5

White has the advantage of two bishops and his pieces are active. Yet, Black's position is very sound. He just has to control the d5-square safely, so that in case of d4-d5 he can start mass exchanges to simplify and equalise the position.



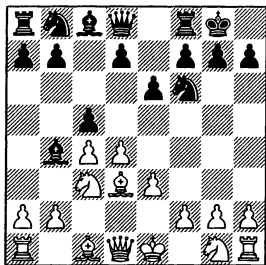
The game Korchnoi – Karpov, Bagio (m/5) 1978, developed as follows:

16.♙a2 ♘f4 17.♙d2 ♘fg6=

Black holds on to a waiting tactic, his knights co-operate perfectly, his bishop aims at the square d5, so it's hard for White to find weak points in his opponent's formation. The position should be estimated as an ap-

proximately equal.

b) 5.♔d3 0-0



The most popular continuations are b1) 6.♘ge2 and b2) 6.♘f3.

In case of 6.d5 Black simply transposes the position to the Benoni Defence with 6...exd5 7.cxd5 d6 and has a good play: 8.♘ge2 (or 8.♘f3 ♔g4 9.0-0 ♘bd7) 8...♘bd7 9.0-0 ♘e5 10.♙c2 ♜e8 In this position Black controls strategically important squares on the e-file and maintains equal chances.

After 6.a3 the play can be reduced to some Saemisch-like positions in a redaction which is profitable for Black. After 6...♙xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♘c6 8.♘e2 (in case of 8.dxc5 Black gains an advantage with 8...♙a5, the line 8.d5 ♘e5 also presents no problems for him, and 8.♘f3 allows to proceed with a spare tempo to a well known blocking plan, considered at length in the next chapter: 8...d6 9.0-0 e5 with mutual chances) 8...b6 9.e4 ♘e8 An important defensive manoeuvre which permits to restrict White's initiative on the kingside with f7-

f5 in proper time. 10.0-0 ♙a6 Launching an attack of the c4-pawn. 11.f4 (If the white queen rushes to protect the pawn with 11.♙a4, then there is a complex position with mutual chances after 11...♘a5 12.dxc5 - no 12.♙e3 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♘d6 14.♜fc1 because of 14...♙xc4! 15.♙xc4 ♘axc4 16.♜xc4 b5 with an advantage - 12...bxc5 13.♙e3 d6) 11...f5 12.♘g3 g6 13.♙e3 cxd4 14.cxd4 d5! Black extinguished White's activity on the kingside and now seizes the initiative. After 15.cxd5 ♙xd3 16.♙xd3 fxe4 17.♙xe4 ♙xd5 his position is preferable, Yusupov - Karpov, Linares 1993.

b1) 6.♘ge2

Preparing a2-a3. Now Black has to advance the pawn immediately:

6...d5

White has two basic continuations: b1a) 7.cxd5 and b1b) 7.0-0.

The line 7.a3 ♙xc3+ 8.♘xc3 cxd4 9.exd4 dxc4 10.♙xc4 ♘c6 11.♙e3 b6 12.0-0 ♙b7 leads to the above regarded position with a spare tempo for Black, and after 13.♙d3 h6= or 13.♙d3 h6 14.♜ad1 ♘e7 15.♙a2 ♘ed5= Black proceeds to familiar manoeuvres, equalising the play.

b1a) 7.cxd5 cxd4

The simplest for Black.

8.exd4

White gains nothing from 8.♘xd4 ♘xd5.

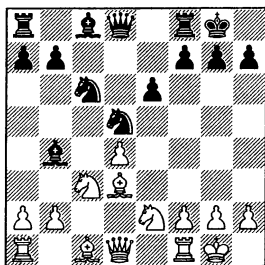
8...♘xd5 9.0-0

Or 9.a3 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♙d6

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e3 c5

11.♙e4 ♘c6 12.♗d3 h6= with an approximate equality, I. Sokolov – Van der Wiel, Wijk aan Zee 1989.

9...♘c6



10.♙c2

This position occurred in practice more than once. White has many opportunities:

10.♘xd5 exd5 11.♘f4 ♙d6 12.♞e1 ♘e7 13.♗f3 White attempts to win the pawn d5, but his own pawn on d4 is uncovered, and Black makes use of this circumstance. After 13...♘g6! 14.♘xg6 (or 14.♘xd5 ♗h4) 14...hxg6 15.♙f4 ♙xf4 16.♗xf4 ♞e8 17.♞xe8+ ♗xe8= the position is equal, Bareev – Eingorn, Moscow 1986.

10.♙e3 is no problem for Black. The line 10...♘xe3 11.fxe3 e5 is obviously advantageous to him, for example after 12.♗b3 exd4 13.exd4 ♙g4.

In case of 10.♙e4 Black exchanges with 10...♘xc3, and after 11.bxc3 ♙d6 12.♗d3 h6 13.♞d1 ♗c7 14.♘g3 he completes his development with 14...♘a5 15.♗f3 ♙d7 and then transfers the bishop to c6 with an equalisation.

Other opportunities imply creation of a queen&bishop battery on the diagonal b1–h7. 10.♗c2 h6 11.♘xd5 (In case of 11.♞d1 Black performs the familiar manoeuvre, reinforcing the strategically important square d5. 11...♘ce7 12.♘f4 – If White plays 12.♘g3, then Black responds with 12...♙d7 to be followed by ♞c8 and a play on the c-file. – 12...♙d6 13.♘fxd5 ♘xd5 14.♗e2 ♞e8= with an equal play, Speelman – Polugaevsky, Moscow 1985) 11...exd5 12.♙e3 ♞e8 13.♗b3 White attempts to impede the development of his opponent's queenside, but after 13...♙d6 14.♘g3 ♙e6! it turns out that the pawn cannot be taken (15.♗xb7? ♘b4 16.♙b1 a6!, catching the white queen). After 15.♙c2 ♘b4= there was a complex position with mutual chances in the game Kelecevic – Ribli, Lugano 1985.

10...♙d6

Now that the white queen is at the head of the battery Black proceeds to a plan which should bring his queen to h4.

11.♗d3

The line 11.♘xd5 exd5 12.♙f4 creates no difficulties for Black. White wants to exchange profitably on f4, but after 12...♙e7 13.♙e3 ♙g4! 14.f3 ♙h5 Black can transfer his bishop to f7: 15.♙b3 f6! 16.♘f4 ♙f7 17.♙f2 ♙d6= with equal chances, Rivas – Chernin, New York 1989.

11...♗h4 12.g3 ♗h5 13.♘xd5

If White rejects the exchange, then Black plays ♖ce7 and transfers the bishop to the diagonal h1–a8.

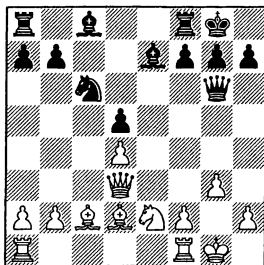
13...exd5 14. ♖f4

In case of 14. ♖f4 ♖xf4 15. ♖xf4 Black gains better chances in the forced line 15... ♖b4 16. ♖d1 ♖g4! 17. f3 ♖xc2 18. fxg4 ♖g6 19. ♖c1 ♖ac8.

14... ♖e7

As in the previous example, Black should not exchange in this situation.

15. ♖d2 ♖g6



Now it's obvious that White's achievements are poor. Both 16. ♖b3 ♖d6 17. ♖f4 ♖d8 and 16. ♖g6 hxg6 17. ♖b3 ♖d8 18. ♖c3 ♖f6 lead to equal positions.

In the game Lautier – M. Gurevich, Marseille 1988 the balance was maintained after 16. ♖g2 ♖xd3 17. ♖xd3 ♖f6 18. ♖c3 ♖d8 19. ♖ac1 ♖d7=.

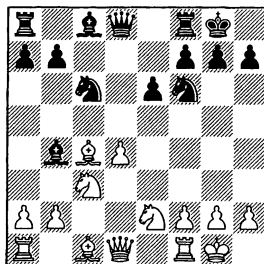
b1b) 7.0–0

One more natural continuation.

7...cxd4 8. exd4 dxc4 9. ♖xc4 ♖c6

It leads to a position of the

variation **b2)** 5. ♖d3 0–0 6. ♖f3 where the king's knight occupies a more active stand on f3.



White has to make his choice.

10. ♖d3 This queen transfer is not problematic for Black. He responds with the standard 10...b6 11. ♖d1 ♖b7 12. ♖h3 Now the old manoeuvre 12... ♖e7 gives an excellent play to Black with a harmonious arrangement of pieces, a good pawn structure and a firm control over the square d5.

10.h3 looks a bit passive. Black proceeds with his development as usual. 10...b6, and after 11. ♖e3 ♖b7 12. a3 ♖xc3 13. ♖xc3 h6 14. ♖d3 he accomplishes the same allocation of pieces: 14... ♖e7 15. ♖ad1 ♖ed5 16. ♖a2 ♖c8=. Black's pieces are active, the square d5 under control, so both sides have equal chances Vaganian – Tukmakov, Reggio Emilia 1987/88.

10. ♖g5

This move is more active, but Black still can equalise the play easily.

10... ♖e7 11. a3

In case of 11. ♖d3 Black plays 11... ♖a5 to exchange the active

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 ♗b4 4.e3 c5

bishop. Now if 12.♗b5, then 12...♗d7.

Another example: 11.♖c1 b6 12.♗d2 ♗b7. Both sides develop peacefully and don't trouble each other. After 13.♖fd1 ♗d5 14.♗xe7 ♗xe7 Black's position is slightly better.

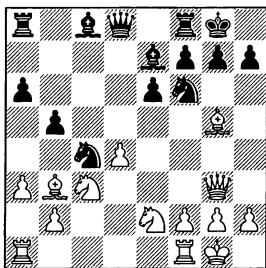
11...a6 12.♗d3

Or 12.♖c1 b5 13.♗a2 ♗b7 14.♗d3 ♗e5! This tactical trick is typical of this variation. The black knight is transferred to an advantageous position with a spare tempo. After 15.♗c2 ♗c4 16.♖fd1 ♖c8 Black's chances are none the worse at least, Bronstein – Kosten, London 1989.

12...b5 13.♗b3 ♗e5

The same manoeuvre.

14.♗g3 ♗c4



White has no advantage, for example **15.a4** (In case of 15.♗h6 Black also gets a promising position after 15...♗e8 16.a4 ♗d6 17.♗f3 ♖b8) **15...♗d7 16.axb5 axb5 17. ♖xa8 ♗xa8 18.♗c2 ♗b8 19.♗f4** (Or 19.♗h4 h6 20.♗xf6 ♗xf6 21.♗e4 g6 with Black's advantage.) **19...♗d6** leads to simplifications in an approximately equal position. So we

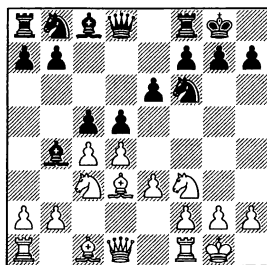
can conclude that the position of White's knight on e2 is too passive to do any real damage to Black.

Now let us revert to the principal line:

b2) 6.♗f3

From this square the knight exerts a strong influence on the centre, and Black's tasks are more difficult than in the previous lines.

6...d5 7.0-0

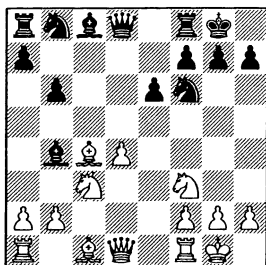


This position which can appear with different transpositions in moves order is rather popular in modern tournament practice. Black has a wide choice of plans here. We shall regard in detail a plan which implies a release in the centre and which Karpov applies regularly and successfully.

By the way, on the previous move White gained no advantage with the exchange 7.cxd5. After 7...♗xd5 the play developed almost by force with 8.♗c2 h6 9. 0-0 cxd4 10.exd4 ♗c6 11.a3 ♗d6 12.♗e2 ♗ce7, and then Black gained an equal play with 13.♗e5

♠f5 with a solid and active position Bologan – Epishin, Germany 1999.

7...dxc4 8.♙xc4 cxd4 9.exd4 b6



The diagram presents the key position of the system. It should be noted that this position can be achieved from the Panov Attack in the Caro–Kann Defence (after 6...♙b4). White has certain space advantage, an important outpost on e5, and his prospects are connected with the development of his initiative on the kingside. Black took a firm control over d5 and has chances to organise a counterplay on the c-file. Besides, his position is very solid.

10.♙g5

White tested various continuations in this position as well.

10.♙f4 looks unconvincing. After 10...♙b7 11.♖e2 ♙xc3 12.bxc3 ♘d5 Black has a sufficient counterplay.

10.a3 loses a tempo. Black is forced to perform the required arrangement. 10...♙xc3 11.bxc3 ♙b7 12.♙g5 ♘bd7 13.♖c1 White takes measures against threats on the c-file, but after 13...♖c7

14.♙a2 ♖d6 he experiences difficulties with his a-pawn.

10.♖e1 This move usually leads to positions of the Main Variation with reversed order of moves. Let us regard two examples from Karpov's games in which he deviated from the line: 10...♙b7 11.♙d3 ♘c6 12.a3 ♙e7. An admissible way of development. After 13.♙g5 (or 13.♙c2 ♖c8 14.♖d3 g6 15.♙h6 ♖e8 16.♖ad1 ♙f8 17.♙g5 ♙e7 18.♙h6 ♙f8 with a draw in the game F. Olafsson – Karpov, Amsterdam 1976) 13...♘d5 14.♙e3 (Black gains a promising position after 14.♙xe7 ♘cxe7 15.♖c1 ♖c8) 14... ♘xc3 15.bxc3 ♖c8 16.c4 ♘a5 17.♘e5 ♙f6 18.♖c1 ♙xe5 19.dxe5 ♖h4 Black had sufficient counterchances in the game J. Polgar – Karpov, Monaco 1994.

10.♖e2 ♙b7 11.♖d1 ♘bd7 As a matter of fact, this line has no self-dependent value because most fundamental continuations were regarded in the main variation. Still, deviations from the principal line are possible here, as well as in the next line, for instance 12.♙d2. A cautious but not dangerous move (an immediate break-through in the centre leads, as usual, to simplifications and equalisation: 12.d5 exd5 13.♘xd5 ♖e8 14.♙e3 ♙xd5 15. ♙xd5 ♘xd5 16.♖xd5 ♖e7) 12... ♖c8. Naturally, Black begins to play on the c-file. Now it is White who should aim at simplifications to equalise the position: 13.♙a6

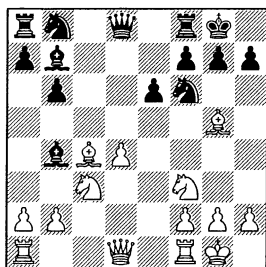
(An active 13. ♘e5 gains an advantage to Black after 13...♙xc3 both in case of 14.♙xc3 ♘d5 15.♙d2 ♘7f6 and 14.bxc3 ♘xe5 15.dxe5 ♘e4) 13...♙xa6 14.♙xa6 ♙xc3. This policy exchange, introduced by Karpov, should create a counterplay on the c-file for Black. After 15.bxc3 ♙c7 16.♙ac1 ♙c8= the position is equal, Taimanov – Karpov, Moscow 1973.

At last, there is one more sensible continuation: 10.♙b3. In the game Larsen – Petrosian, Las Palmas 1975, Black got a good play with 10...♙xc3. Please, pay attention to this important exchange once more. Now after 11.bxc3 ♙b7 12.♘e5 ♙c7 13.♙a3 ♙e8 Black has a very convenient position.

Let's revert to the main line.

After the exchange in the centre White's dark-squared bishop is free and can be moved to a more active position. The usual binding in this system is rather unpleasant for Black, but his position is solid, and Karpov found a precise plan for an equalisation.

10...♙b7



11.♙e2

Other continuations were tested as well.

11.♙e1 ♙xc3 Black arranges his pieces according to the plan. 12.bxc3 ♘bd7 13.♙d3 ♙c7 Now White has two principal opportunities. 14.c4 ♙fe8 15.♙h4 The bishop should be transferred to g3 in order to drive out the black queen from its convenient stand (no use of 15.♘e5 ♘xe5 16.♙xe5 ♘d7 as Black puts his knight on f8 and keeps a strong position). 15...♘h5! In this way Black hinders his opponent's plan, besides, he can opportunely transfer the knight to f4, creating threats on the kingside. The chances can be estimated as approximately equal here. Now if White continues with 14.♙c1, then it becomes possible to transfer the queen for an attack of the a-pawn: 14...♙d6 15.♙h4 (or 15.♘e5 ♘xe5 16.dxe5 ♙d5 17.f3 ♘d7 with an approximate equality) 15...♙fc8 16.♙g3 ♙a3 with a complex play, Gelfand – Karpov, Linares 1994.

11.♘e5 In this line the policy manoeuvre 11...♙xc3 12.bxc3 ♙c7 also gives a good play to Black, and if White intensifies with 13.♙xf6 gxf6 14.♙g4+ ♙h8 15.♙h4, then Black loses the piece but still has a draw 15...fxe5 16.♙f6+ ♙g8 17.♙g5+-. So White has a perpetual check and no more Timman – Karpov, Malta 1980.

11.♙d3 Again, Black has a promising position after 11...♘bd7 12.♙ad1 ♙xc3 13.bxc3 ♙c7.

Having performed the standard exchange, Black begins to play on the c-file. 14.♖b3 ♖e4 15.♗e3 ♖d5=. The light-squared bishop is very active, Black has an equal play, Gheorghiu – Ostojic, Cleveland 1975.

11.♞c1 Now there is a slightly different situation. In case of an exchange on c3 Black's play on the c-file is not very efficient. However, he has another way because White's last move does not contribute to the development of his initiative on the kingside. 11...♜c6 12.a3 (after 12.d5?! ♜a5 13.♜e4 ♖e7! too many White's pieces are attacked) 12...♖e7. It turns out that Black's position is strong enough even without the exchange on c3. This position occurred twice in Karpov's practice.

In the first game White played 13.♞e1 ♜d5. We see one more method of defence which leads to simplifications and allows to equalise the play, for example 14.♖d2 (also 14.♖xd5 ♖xg5 15.♜g5 ♗g5 16.♖e4 ♞fd8 maintains a balance, and in case of 14.♖xe7 there is 14...♜cxe7) 14...♜xc3 15.♖xc3 ♖f6 16.d5 exd5 with a draw in the game Gligoric – Karpov, Tilburg 1977.

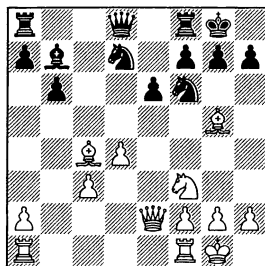
White's second response was 13.♗d3. Black applied a similar defence in the game Ivanchuk – Karpov, Linares 1991: 13...♜d5, and after exchanges 14.♖xd5 ♖xg5 15.♜xg5 ♗xg5 the position was approximately equal.

11...♖xc3

Black proceeds with his development plan. In addition to the above mentioned merits of this exchange Black increases his influence on the most important squares e4 and d5.

12.bxc3 ♜bd7

Black arranges his forces as usual. The next element in his plan is ♗c7.



13.♖d3

The most natural continuation. White's bishop moves away from the c-file to give a way for the pawn. 13.♖b5 and 13.♖h4 were also seen in practice.

In case of 13.♖b5 Black plays 13...♗c7, and if 14.♞fc1, then 14...h6. A useful move. Now the bishop is driven away from the queenside where Black is going to organise a counterplay. 15.♖h4. The bishop wants to get to g3 but Black applies the above regarded manoeuvre 15...♜h5 and gains an equal play.

13.♖h4 Now there is no 13...♗c7 because of 14.♖g3, but still Black has another opportunity to create a counterplay on the c-file: 13...♞c8, and after 14.♞ac1 ♖xf3!

Black destroys the opponent's pawn chain and gets counter-chances 15.gxf3 ♖e8 16. ♙b5 ♖e7 17.c4 ♘f8 G. Kuzmin – Polugaevsky, USSR 1970.

13.♘e5 This move leads to a keen play. 13...♖c7 14.♘xd7 ♘xd7 15.♖a1 ♖fe8 16.♖fe1 h6 17.♙h4 a6. Both sides have arranged their forces in the best ways. White has the advantage of two bishops, Black has a better pawn structure and can put pressure on the big diagonal. 18.♙b3 b5 19.a4 ♖c6 20.♖g4 (In case of 20.f3 Black begins a blockade on light squares with 20...♘b6. A break-through in the centre 20.d5 exd5 21.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 22.♖xe8+ ♘f8 gives Black a slightly better play, for example 23.♖d8 ♖c7 24.♙xd5 g5) 20...g5 This way leads to the position where White has to draw with a perpetual check: 21.♙xg5 hxg5 22.♖xg5+ ♙f8 23.♖h6+ ♙g8 in the game Nimzo 7.32 – Junior 6.0, Computer Tournament 2000.

13...♖c7 14.c4

In case of 14.♖fc1 ♖fe8 15.♙h4 Black equalises without trouble with the standard 15...♘h5, for example 16.♙g3 ♘xg3 17.hxg3 ♖ac8 18.♙b5 ♖ed8 with a slightly better play for Black, Rozentalis – Karpov, BL 1994.

14...♘g4!

Black threatens with 15...♙xf3 with a mate.

15.♙e4

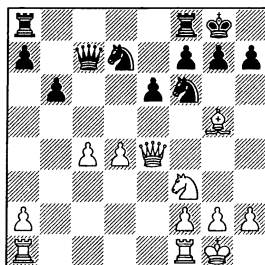
This move is forced, and now White loses his advantage of two

bishops.

The line 15.g3 ♖fe8 16.♙f4 allows Black to spoil White's position with a showy 16...e5! All the following variations are estimated in Black's favour: 17.♘xe5 ♘gxe5 18.dxe5 (18.♙xe5 ♘xe5 19.dxe5 ♖c6) 18...♖c6 19.f3 ♘xe5 20.♙xe5 ♖c5+ 21.♙g2 ♖xe5 or 17.♘g5 ♘gf6 18.dxe5 ♘xe5 to be followed by 19.♖c2 h6 20.♙xe5 ♖xe5 with numerous threats, for example 21.♘h3 ♖h5 22.♘f4 ♖f3. Another method of defence, namely 19.♖ae1 resulted in a considerable positional advantage to Black after the forced 19...♖c6 20.f3 ♘xd3 21.♖xd3 h6 22.♘h3 ♙a6 23.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 24.♖c1 ♖c8+ in the game J. Polgar – Karpov, Monaco 1995.

15...♙xe4 16.♖xe4 ♘gf6

The position is balanced out after the bishop exchange. White has some space advantage and is more active, and Black compensates this with his better pawn structure and very solid position.



17.♖e2

17.♖d3 was tested as well. An even position was achieved after 17...h6 18.♙xf6 (avoiding the ex-

Chapter 6

change with 18.♙e3 ♜ac8 19. ♜ac1 e5 20.dxe5 ♘xe5 21.♘xe5 ♙xe5 22.♙d4 ♙e4, Black gains some advantage owing to the weakness of White's c4-pawn) 18...♘xf6 19.a4 ♜ac8 20.♞fc1 ♞fd8= in the game Petrosian – Karpov, Milano 1975.

17...♞ac8 18.♞ac1 ♞fe8 19. ♞fe1 h6

As usual, it's helpful to determine the bishop's position.

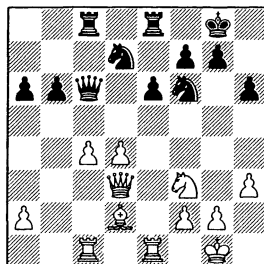
20.♙d2

In case of 20.♙h4 a Karpov-like answer is 20...♘h5 By the way, Karpov played White in that game, and it was his opponent who acted in this Karpov-like manner.

20...♙c6 21.♙d3

Or 21.♙f4 ♙a4. Now Black performs a typical pawn undermining.

21...a6 22.h3



22...b5! =

So Black crushes his opponent's pawn centre and gains an outpost on d5, equalising the position, Karpov – Van Wely, Wijk aan Zee 1998.

Summary

The main variation of the system produces a typical position with the isolated d4-pawn. White plays on the kingside and in the centre. Black's position is solid, and his pawn structure is more stable. His pieces are arranged harmoniously, and his light-squared bishop is especially powerful, controlling the squares d5 and e4. The main plan is connected with an exchange on c3 and a play on the c-file or a blockade of the c- and d-pawns on light squares.

Chapter 7

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.a3
♙xc3 5.bxc3 c5**

Saemisch System

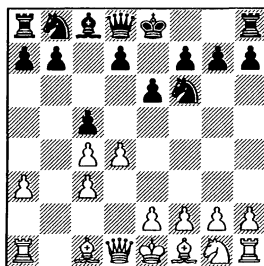
The Saemisch System, elaborated in the twenties, was always considered to be the most fundamental retort in the Nimzo-Indian Defence. White immediately gains advantage of the bishop pair and reinforces his pawn centre at the same time, so later he can organize an active play on the kingside as well as in the centre. On the other hand, the weakness of the double pawns on the c-file is a shortcoming of this opening formation as they become an object of Black's counterplay, and the move a3 is a loss of tempo so White has a lag in piece development. Nowadays the Saemisch System is not very popular, because during many years of tournament practice Black found reliable methods of defence allowing him to develop a counterplay against weak pawns.

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4
4.a3**

This move defines the Saemisch System. Also a variation beginning with 4.f3 can also produce positions of this system in

forced lines. So the situation after 4...d5 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 c5 is the same as the one considered in the variation a) and it can be achieved with 4.a3 ♙xc3+ 5.bxc3 c5 6.f3 d5.

4...♙xc3+ 5.bxc3 c5



There are many methods of how to struggle against the Saemisch System, but this one is probably the most popular. Black blocks the double pawns immediately, clears the way to a5 for his queen and the chief thing: with this move Black begins to build his basic formation which successfully unites a reliable defence with a counterattack. White's main continuations are: a) 6.f3 with an intention to capture the centre by means of an immediate pawn advance and b)

6.e3, aiming at a rapid piece development. Other opportunities are obviously insufficient to struggle for an opening advantage, for example:

6.♖c2 ♘c6 7.♘f3, and Black can reduce the play to the Blockade System with d6 and e5, only with the difference that the position of White's queen is defined too early here.

6.♘f3 also leads to the Blockade System.

6.e4?! A venturesome continuation. Black gains an advantage with simple moves. 6...♖a5 (it makes no sense to go for unclear complications after 6...♘xe4 7.♖g4) 7.e5 ♘e4 8.♙d2 ♘c6. White's centre is sagged. The game continued with 9.♘e2 b6 10.f4 cxd4 11.♘xd4 (11.cxd4 ♘xd2 12.♖xd2 ♖xd2+ 13.♙xd2 ♙a6 loses a pawn) 11...♙b7+ with an obvious positional advantage to Black, Zaitsev – Krogus, USSR 1962.

a) 6.f3 d5

Karpov chooses this move from many other possible moves. Surely Black will wreck his opponent's plans in this way but the play will be opened up and White will get rid of his weakness on c4.

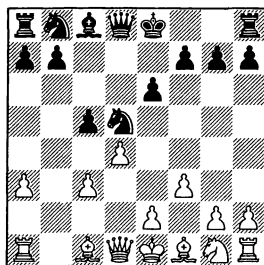
7.cxd5

7.e3 is too sluggish. After 7...♘c6 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.♙d2 0–0 it's risky for White to advance his central pawns because of his lag in development: 10.♙d3 (if 10.e4 ♘f6 11.♙e3, then after 11...♖a5 12.♖d2 ♙d8 Black has a danger-

ous initiative) 10...cxd4 11.cxd4 e5! White's centre is under attack and thus has problems. 12.e4 (in case of 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 Black has an excellent play) 12...♘f4 13.♙xf4 exf4 14.d5 ♖h4+ 15.♙f1 ♘e5 with Black's advantage.

7...♘xd5

The key position of the Variation.



White has three possible moves: a1) 8.♖d3, a2) 8.♖d2, a3) 8.dxc5.

a1) 8.♖d3

White defended the pawn and now he is ready to proceed to the policy advance e2 – e4, however his queen stands badly because hinders a harmonious development of the kingside and can be attacked by the opponent's pieces.

8...b6!? 9.e4

Black is OK in the line 9.dxc5 bxc5 10.e4 ♙a6 11.♖d2 ♙xf1 12.♙f1 ♘b6 13.♖d8 ♘d8, unlike his opponent. 14.♘e2 ♘d7 15.a4 ♙b8 16.♘g3 ♘c4. The knight has got a perfect stand, so Black has a slight advantage, Shirov – Arnason, Reykjavik 1992.

9...♙a6 10.♖d2

After 10.c4 ♖f6 11.d5 exd5 12.exd5 0-0 White encounters evident difficulties; also in case of 11.dxc5 ♖xd3 12.♙xd3 ♖bd7 13.cxb6 ♖xb6 Black's position is good; and if the queen retreats, then White is deprived of his castling right, so Black can begin an attack.

10...♙xf1 11.♖xf1 ♖e7 12. ♖e2

After 12.dxc5 ♖xd2 13.♙xd2 bxc5 14.♖b1 0-0 15.♖b7 ♖ec6 16.♖e2 ♖d8 Black's compensation for the pawn is more than sufficient

12...♖bc6 13.dxc5

Probably 13.♖f2 with an approximately equal position is better.

13...♖c7 14.♖f4

Or 14.♖d6 ♖xd6 15.cxd6 ♖c8 16.♖d4 ♖xd4 17.cxd4 ♖xd6= Karpov.

14...e5 15.♖g4 0-0 16.♖f2

Or 16.♙h6 ♖g6 17.♙e3 ♖a5 with the same motives as in the game.

16...♖a5 17.cxb6 ♖xb6+ 18.♙e3 ♖c6

Black has the initiative owing to the threat of ♖c4, Shirov – Karpov, Biel 1992.

a2) 8.♖d2

This move is more springy but also no trouble for Black.

8...0-0 9.e4 ♖b6 10.a4

Otherwise Black's knight would have taken this place.

10...♙d7 11.♙b5

Or 11.a5 ♖a4 with a threat to the a5-pawn.

11...a6 12.♙xd7 ♖8xd7 13. ♖e2 ♖c4? with a good counterplay by Black, Botvinnik – Smyslov, Moscow 1966.

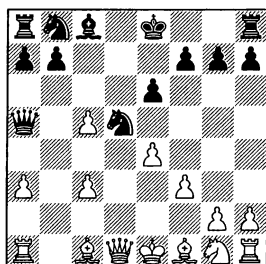
a3) 8.dxc5

The main line, and the keenest one. White worsens his pawn structure, hoping to make use of his bishops after the play is opened up. Besides, he still keeps an extra pawn. Black replies with a natural:

8...♖a5

White's pawns suffer an attack while his pieces are underdeveloped. All that promise a good counterplay to Black.

9.e4



9...♖f6!

A relatively fresh idea. This knight goes to d7, and the other keeps an opportunity to develop either to a6 or c6.

10.♙e3

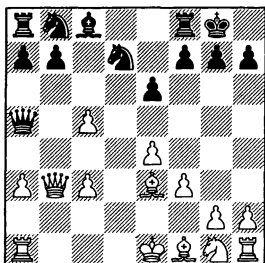
In the forced variation 10.♖b1 0-0 11.♖b5 ♖xc3+ 12.♖f2 ♖e5 13.♙b2 ♖c7 14.♖d6 ♖e8 15.♖xc7 ♖xc7 16.♖b3 ♖c6= Black got a good solid position, Milov – Magerramov, Berlin 1993.

10...0-0 11.♖b3

Or 11.♖e2 ♖fd7! 12.♖d6 ♖a6

13.c6 ♖dc5 14.cxb7 ♙xb7 with dangerous threats.

11...♖fd7?!



Black is threatening to win back a pawn with 12...♙c7 or 12...♖a6.

a3a) 12.a4 ♙c7!

An immediate 12...♖xc5?! gains a clear advantage to White after 13.♙b4.

13.♙a3

White's pawn is defended but he has wasted too much time.

13...b6!? 14.a5

In case of 14.cxb6 axb6 15.♖e2 ♙a6 Black has a fertile play.

14...bxc5 15.♖h3 ♙a6 16.♙xa6 ♖xa6

Now White can complete his development successfully, the position after 17.♙a4 ♖e5 18.0-0 ♙c6 19.♙f4 ♙xa4 20.♙xa4 ♖c6 is equal, Milov – Razuvaev, Biel 1994.

a3b) 12.♙d1 ♙c7 13.♙c4

13.♖e2?! is worse owing to 13...♖xc5 14. ♙c4 b6 15.♙d4 ♙a6 16.♖g3 ♙xf1 17.♙xf1 ♖c6 with Black's advantage Gutman – Hjartarson, Germany 1990.

13...♖a6 14.c6

White is forced to part with

his extra pawn but he manages to break his opponent's pawn chain at this. However he gains no advantage. In the game Dreev – Goldin, New York 1991, after 14...bxc6 15.f4 ♖b6 16.♙d4 c5 a draw was fixed soon.

a3c) 12.♙b4

One more attempt to retain the extra pawn and without worsening the position.

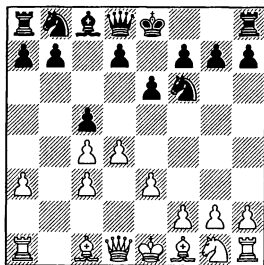
12...♙c7 13.♙d1 ♖c6 14.♙a4 ♖ce5 15.♙d4 ♖c6

It turns out that the queen has no convenient stand to defend the pawn. As White cannot allow a capture ♖xc5 that would make his position simply worse, he must agree to a repetition of moves:

16.♙a4 ♖ce5 17.♙d4 ♖c6 Draw. Timman – Karpov, Tilburg 1991.

Let's return to the main line.

b) 6.e3



White does not hurry to occupy the centre with pawns until he completes his development.

6...♖c6 7.♙d3

7.♖e2 is perhaps an inaccuracy. After 7...b6 8.♖g3 ♙a6 9.♙d3 ♖a5 White encounters

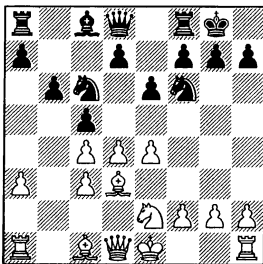
problems with the defence of his c4-pawn without getting anything instead, Nisman – Karpov, USSR 1968.

7...0-0 8.♖e2

Strange as it may seem, but White's choices are restricted. Of course, in case of 8.dxc5 Black plays 8...♙a5; if 8.d5, then he has a good play after 8...♘e5; the line 8.e4 ♘e8 reduces the play to the main variation, and in case of 8.♘f3 Black proceeds to the blockade system with 8...d6 9.0-0 (or 9.e4 e5 10.d5 ♘e7) 9...e5 and thus he has an extra tempo in the Saemisch System.

8...b6 9.e4

Threatening to create an unpleasant bind after 10.♗g5. White has to play vigorously. He has no time for manoeuvres in case of 9.♘g3 ♗a6 10.0-0 (there was still a way back to the main line: 10.e4 ♘e8) 10...♘a5, his problems with the c4-pawn stay unsolved and White is tardy for counterplay.



9...♘e8!

This move is a key element in Black's formation. His plan for the queenside play has already

been demonstrated in the examples of White's inaccurate play: to fix the c4-pawn with c7–c5, to attack this pawn with b6, ♗a5, ♗a6 and then to add in a rook or the queen from the c-file. However, it is necessary to remember that White may have his own plans on the kingside and can organise a dangerous attack on the black king regardless of the loss of his pawn. Black's last move has three purposes at once as it prevents a dangerous bind after 10.♗g5 and prepares a blocking advance f7–f5 in case of White's attempt to attack his position with an advance of his own f-pawn, at last this manoeuvre can be very proper because the knight can support pressure upon the c4-pawn from d6.

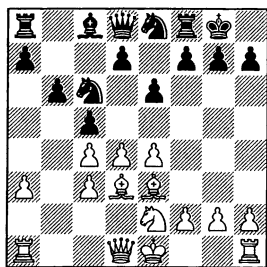
White has two continuations which deserve attention in this position, b1) 10.♗e3 and b2) 10.0-0, although other were seen too.

A risky 10.h4?! attracted no followers. After 10...♗a6 11.e5 d6 12.♙a4? (a loss of tempo, 12.♗g5 ♙c7 13.♙c2 was a bit better) 12...♘a5 13.♙c2 (13...d5 was threatening) 13...h6 14.♗h7+ ♖h8 15.♗e4 ♜c8+ Black gained a clear advantage, Littlewood – Spassky, Hastings 1965/66.

The advance 10.d5 is also in Black's favour, as it loses a tempo and allows to block up White's central pawns. Black can attack the weak c4-pawn immediately with 10...♘d6 11.♙e2 ♗a6.

The last tested move, 10.e5, also is not very profitable to White after 10...♙a6 11.♖a4 This non-standard plan is quite unpleasant for Black (11.h4 d6! 12.♙g5 ♗c7 With a timely attack of the e5-pawn Black creates hard problems for his opponent. 13.♗c2 h6 14.exd6 ♘xd6 15.♙f4 ♘a5 is no good, as well as 13.f4 ♘a5 14.♙g3 ♙xc4, depriving White both of his pawn and attack, Holland – Chernin, London 1989) 11...♘a5 12.dxc5 ♖c8! To switch to a counterattack is the best decision here as White is underdeveloped. 13.♙e3 (Also in case of 13.cxb6 axb6 14.♗b4 f5! 15.♙e3 Black uses a temporary sacrifice 15...♘c6! to capture the important e5-pawn and gain an equal play.) 13...bxc5 14.♖d1 f5 A strong move. Black is threatening with a further advance of the f-pawn. After the forced 15.exf6 ♘xf6 16.0–0 Black transfers his bishop to the big diagonal and gains a certain advantage 16...♙b7 17.f3 ♙c6 Moskalenko – Gipslis, Alushta 1994.

b1) 10.♙e3



10...♙a6!

Black must counterattack before his adversary completes his development.

11.♙g3

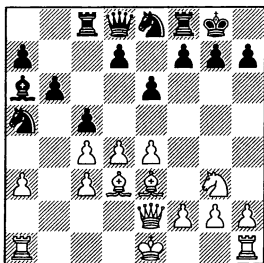
This continuation is the sharpest and most dangerous, though practice showed as early as in the fifties, that with a precise play Black's chances are higher even here.

Now a capture of the pawn with 11.dxc5 allows Black to take the initiative after 11...♘e5, for example, in case of 12.cxb6 axb6 13.♖b1 ♙xc4 14.♙c2 b5 Black takes control over all important squares, and after 12.♙d4 ♘xd3+ 13.♗xd3 bxc5 14. ♙xc5 d6 15.♖d1 ♖c8 16.♗d4 (the forced line after 16.♙xd6 ♙xc4 17.♗g3 ♙xe2 18.♗xe2 ♘xd6 19. ♖xd6 ♗a5 also wins an advantage to Black) 16...♗c7 Black returns the pawn and has a better position after 17.♙xd6 ♘xd6 18.♗xd6 ♗xc4. In response to the White's best 19.♖d2 there is 19...♗a4 with initiative.

The line 11.e5 d6 12.f4 is more keen, and still in case of 12...♘a5 13.0–0 ♙xc4 14.f5 ♙xd3 15.♗xd3 dxe5 16.fxe6 cxd4 there is no sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn, Cherepkov – Gipslis, USSR 1960.

A quiet 11.0–0 allows Black to gain a slightly better position after 11...♘a5 12.dxc5 ♘xc4 13. ♙xc4 ♙xc4 14.♖e1 bxc5 15.♙xc5 d6 Damjanovic – Lengyel, Leipzig 1960.

11...♘a5 12.♗e2 ♖c8

**13.♖c1**

13.d5 ♖h4! This precise move hinders White's initiative on the kingside. 14.0-0 ♖d6 Now Black turns to one of the standard arrangements: 15.f4 f5 or 15.♖ad1 f5 where White loses a pawn after 16.dxe6 dxe6 17.exf5 exf5 18.♖f3 ♖b7 Geller – Smyslov, Amsterdam 1956.

13...♖d6!

Is possible.

14.e5 cxd4! 15.♖xd4

In case of 15.cxd4 ♖dxc4 16.♖h5 g6 17.♖h6 ♖xe3 Black's attack is more efficient: 18.♖xc8 (or 18.♖h5 ♖xc1+ 19.♖d2 ♖f5 20.♖xf5 ♖b3+, and Black is there first, for example 21.♖e3 ♖c3+ 22.♖f4 ♖h4+) 18...♖xg2+ 19.♖d2 ♖xc8 20.♖h5 ♖b3+, again with Black's advantage and a victory after 21.♖d1 ♖e3+ 22.♖xe3 ♖xd3 23.♖f6+ ♖g7 24.♖xd3 ♖c1.

15...♖f5 16.♖g4

Or 16.♖xf5 exf5 17.♖xf5 ♖g5 18.♖e3 ♖xc4, forbidding the castling.

16...♖xd4 17.♖h5 ♖f5 18.♖xf5 g6 19.♖f6+ ♖g7 20.♖b1

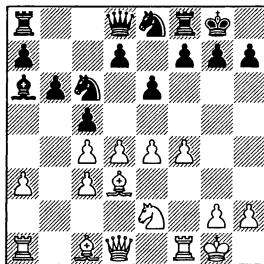
In case of 20.♖h4 there is a mere 20...h6.

20...♖xc4 21.f4 d6

Black gains a material advantage and his opponent does not have any compensation Polugaevsky – Furman, Sochi 1958.

b2) 10.0-0 ♖a6 11.f4

In the insufficiently explored line with 11.♖a4 ♖a5 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.♖e3 d6 14.♖ab1 there is a complex position with mutual chances, and after 11.♖a4 ♖a5 12.♖e3 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♖d6 14.♖fc1 Black gains a material advantage owing to a combination: 14...♖xc4! 15.♖xc4 ♖axc4 16.♖xc4 b5.

**11...f5!**

A typical manoeuvre which allows to contain the development of the opponent's initiative.

12.♖g3

Of course in case of 12.d5 Black has 12...♖a5. After 12.exf5 exf5 13.dxc5 bxc5 14.♖e3 (there is also an interesting forced line 14.♖g3 g6 15.♖e3 d6 16.♖xf5!? gxf5 17.♖d5+ ♖f7 18.♖xc6 ♖xc4 with an unclear position) 14...d6 15.♖b1 ♖c7= and the position is equal, Spassky – Bykov, USSR 1963.

12...g6 13.♖e3

In case of 13.dxc5 Black ap-

plies the familiar method of a counterattack: 13...♖a5, and after 14.♙e3 ♘xc4 15.♙xc4 ♙xc4 16.♞e1 fxe4 17.♘xe4 ♙d5= the position is approximately equal, Agrest – Mochalov, USSR 1991.

13...♙d6

Black reached a standard position, the play is equalised.

14.exf5

An equality is maintained also after 14.dxc5 ♘xc4 15.♙xc4 ♙xc4 16.♞e1 b5 17.exf5 gxf5.

14...♘xc4 15.♙xc4

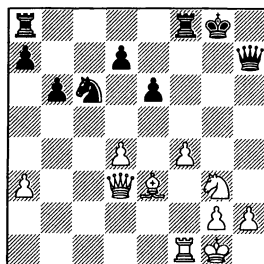
This position occurred twice on the highest level and both times Black got a sufficient counterplay. By the way, according to I. Zaitsev Black stands better in case of 15.fxg6 ♘xe3 16.♙h5, for example after 16...♙e7 17.♙xa6 ♘xf1 18.♞xf1 hxg6 19.♙xg6+ ♙g7. Now we'll give a long forced line.

15...♙xc4 16.fxg6 ♙xf1 17.♙h5 ♙e7 18.♞xf1 hxg6 19.♙xg6+ ♙g7 20.♙d3

If the game proceeds to a keen

endgame with 20.♙xg7+ ♙xg7 21.dxc5 ♙a5 22.cxb6 axb6 23.♙xb6 ♘c4, then the chances are equal Hiarcs 7.32 – Fritz 6, Computer Tournament 2000.

20...cxd4 21.cxd4 ♙h7



The last crucial position. 22.♙b5 (I. Zaitsev brought out an interesting variation: 22.f5!? ♘e7 23.♞f3 ♘xf5 24.♘xf5 ♞xf5 25.♞g3+ ♙f8, and both sides had to agree on a repetition of moves: 26.♞h3 ♙g8 27.♞g3 ♙h7 28.♞h3). The game Yusupov – Karpov, London (m/3) 1989 continued with 22...a6 23.♙b3 ♘e7 24.♞f3 ♞ac8 25.♙xb6 ♞c6 26.♙a5 ♘d5, with a slight advantage to Black.

Summary

In the Saemisch System Black can not only defend his position, but also struggle for the initiative: the advance c7-c5 blocks up White's double pawns immediately, then the c4-pawn can be attacked with b6, ♘a5, ♙a6, and after it Black's rook or queen is engaged in the attack along the c-file. However, Black should remember that White also has chances on the kingside and can arrange a dangerous attack on the king, even sacrificing the pawn. That is why 9...♘e8! is necessary, allowing to make the blocking advance f7-f5 if White attempts to begin storming on Black's position with an advance of his f-pawn.

Chapter 8

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.♘f3 c5
5.e3 ♘c6 6.♙d3 ♙xc3 7.bxc3 d6

Blockade System

In this chapter we shall regard those variations where Black attempts to reduce the play to blockade formations of the Saemisch System where White's knight is on f3 instead of e2.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4
4.♘f3 c5 5.e3

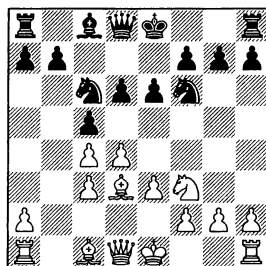
Also a rare move 5.d5 deserves to be considered as it is the only original continuation in this position. All others transpose the play to various positions from other systems: Saemisch, Lenin-grad, etc. 5...♘e4 6.♙d2 (in case of 6.♙c2 there is a strong 6...♙f6) 6...♙xc3 7.bxc3 (or 7.♙xc3 ♘xc3 8.bxc3 ♙f6 with an equality) 7...d6 8.♙c2 ♘xd2 9.♘xd2 e5 Black gains an equal play with simple moves, for example after 10.e3 ♘d7 11.♙d3 ♘f6 12.0-0 0-0= Antoshin – Barcza, Hungary 1964.

5...♘c6 6.♙d3 ♙xc3+

Namely this exchange is an introduction to the Blockade System. Here the white knight occupies a worse position in comparison with main variations of the

Saemisch System, so Black can afford to waste a tempo.

7.bxc3 d6



The initial position of the system. Here White has a wide choice of continuations but the point is that there are only two basic plans for the development of an initiative, one of them is connected with a vivid piece play a) 8.0-0 and b) 8.♘d2, and the other c) 8.e4 should close the centre. Other moves are insufficient to struggle for an opening advantage. So the sacrifice 8.d5 exd5 9.cxd5 ♘xd5 is evidently incorrect, and after 10.♙b2 ♘f6 11.0-0 0-0 to be followed by ♙g4 and ♘e5 Black gains both material and positional advantage. 8.♙c2 e5 is too sluggish, and the typical manoeuvre 9.dxc5 dxc5 10.

♘g5 causes no problems for Black after 10...h6 11.♗e4 ♘xe4 12.♙xe4 ♙e6 with a full equalisation. Now let's revert to the basic continuations.

a) 8.0-0 e5

Black forms a blockade of the central pawns and clears a way for the bishop. White has the advantage of two bishops and more space. However, his pawns on the c-file are weak and, besides, his e-pawn always restricts the mobility of one of his bishops. White's main plan is to open up the centre with f2-f4 or to exchange knights on e4 with a subsequent transfer of the bishop to d5 (Botvinnik's plan). Both aims can be achieved after:

9.♘g5

9.d5 ♘e7 10.e4 leads to the line **c)**, and 9.♖c2 ♖e7 10.♘d2 brings us to the line **b)**. Now Black has to play precisely in order to impede his opponent's plans.

9...0-0 10.f4

In case of 10.dxc5 dxc5 11.♗e4 b6 12.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 13.♙e4 ♙f5 the white bishop still gets to d5, but after 14.♙d5 ♖ad8 White has no time for e3-e4, and for 15.♗f3 Black has 15...e4 16.♙xe4 ♙xe4 17.♗xe4 ♖fe8 18.♖c2 ♗a5 with an evident compensation.

10...exd4

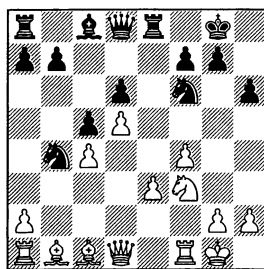
Black should not allow the f-file to be opened up.

11.cxd4 ♖e8

The strategically important square e4 is under Black's firm

control.

12.d5 ♘b4 13.♙b1 h6 14.♗f3



Black has an opportunity to struggle for initiative after

14...b5!

This method, as well as the advance f7-f5, is typical for the Blockade System.

15.a3 ♗a6 16.cxb5 ♘c7

In the game Villeneuve – Boudre, Val Maubuee 1988, Black returned the pawn and had an excellent position owing to the strong pressure on the e-file.

b) 8.♘d2

An adaptable move which lets White choose the main plan a bit later. So he can transfer the knight to b3 or apply Botvinnik's plan (♘d2-e4xf6 followed by ♙d3-e4-d5), there is also a variation with ♘d2-f1-g3(e3).

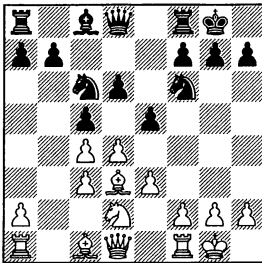
8...e5

Now passive answers like 9.♙b2, 9.♖c2, 9.♖b1 does not create any problems for Black and simply waste White's time. In any case Black can continue, for example, with 9...0-0 10.0-0 ♖e8 with a convenient play. 9.♘b3 is more interesting but after it the control over e4 is lost and Black

4. ♖f3 c5 5. e3 ♜c6 6. ♙d3 ♙xc3 7. bxc3 d6

makes use of this fact immediately. After 9... ♖e7 10. 0-0 e4 11. ♙e2 (if 11. ♙c2 then 11... ♙g4) 11... 0-0 there is a complex position with mutual chances where the e4-pawn secures Black's space advantage on the kingside, and in case of 11. f3 exf3 12. gxf3 (or 12. ♙xf3 ♙d7 with pressure on the e-file) the position of the white king gets weakened.

9.0-0 0-0



10.d5

This plan is the most unpleasant for Black but still is not an advantage to White. Other moves were seen here too.

10. ♜e4, threatening to apply Botvinnik's plan (the line 10. dxc5 dxc5 11. ♜e4 was considered above), forces Black to open up the centre: 10... exd4 11. cxd4 ♙f5 12. ♜xc5 dxc5 13. ♙xf5 cxd4. White's bishops broke free, but the weakness of the e4-pawn and good supporting squares of Black's knights equalise the chances, for example 14. ♞b1 (the endgame after 14. exd4 ♖xd4 15. ♖xd4 ♜xd4 16. ♙d3 ♞ad8 is favourable for Black) 14... b6 15. ♖f3 ♖d6 16. ♞b3 ♞fe8 17. ♖h3

h6 18. ♞d3 (Knaak – Garcia Gonzales, Cuba 1984) and now after 18... ♞ad8 19. exd4 ♜xd4 Black gets a good play, and an attempt to attack his position with 20. ♙xh6 faces 20... ♖e5 21. ♙xg7 ♜e2+ 22. ♖h1 ♖xg7 with Black's advantage.

In case of 10. ♞e1 with the idea to transfer the knight via f1 Black also can open up the centre without fear: 10... cxd4 11. cxd4 exd4 12. exd4, and after 12... ♙g4 13. f3 ♙h5 Black's chances are none the worse owing to the weakness on c4, for example 14. ♜e4 ♜e4 15. ♙e4 ♞c8 with Black's initiative Beliavsky – Adorjan, Thessaloniki 1988.

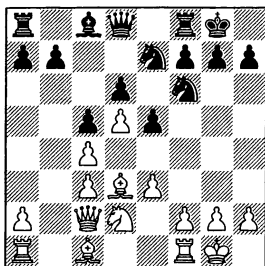
If White tries to perform a variation of Botvinnik's plan with 10. ♖c2 ♖e7 11. dxc5 dxc5 12. ♜e4, then Black finds an interesting opportunity 12... g6 13. ♜xf6 ♖f6, and now in case of 14. f4 (or 14. ♙e4 ♙f5!) he plays 14... exf4 15. exf4 ♙f5!=, restricting the dark-squared bishop, Taimanov – Hübner, Palma de Mallorca 1970.

10... ♜e7 11. ♖c2

The most solid continuation. White continues his development and still can either lock the centre or open it up with f2-f4.

In case of an immediate 11. e4 Black has time to prepare a programmed breakthrough: 11... h6 12. ♞e1 ♜h7 13. ♜f1 f5, and after 14. exf5 ♙xf5 15. ♜g3 ♙xd3 16. ♖xd3 ♖d7= the play is equal Balashov – Vaganian, USSR 1989.

The same plan should be performed in case of 11.f3 ♘g6 12.g3 ♘e8 13.e4 f5!, equalising the play: 14.exf5 ♙xf5 15.♗e4 ♖d7 16.♖c2 White creates an outpost on e4, and Black destroys it successfully: 16...♗f6!, and after 17.♗xc5 ♙xd3 18.♗xd3 ♜ac8 19.♗b2 Black proceeds to a standard break-through on the other side with 19...b5, and Black's compensation is more than enough, Lukacs – Stohl, Austria 1994.



11...g6!

An important move. Black is ready both to a break-through in case of 12.e4 ♗h5 13.♗f3 ♙g7 14.♙d2 h6 15.♙e2 f5! 16.exf5 ♙xf5= Gligoric – Seirawan, Baden 1980, and to a blockade after 12.a4 (or 12.f4 ♗g4 13.♗f3 exf4 14.exf4 ♗f5 15.♞e1 h5! with a good play Donner – Stean, Marbella 1982) 12...♗h5 13.f4 exf4 14.exf4 ♗f6 15.♗f3 ♗f5 16.♞e1 ♙d7 17.h3 h5 with equal chances, Spassky – Timman, Hilversum (m/4) 1983.

c) 8.e4 e5 9.d5

9.0–0 is bad here because of 9...cxd4 10.cxd4 ♙g4, forcing

White to go for a repetition of moves after 11.d5 ♗d4 12.♖a4+ ♙d7 13.♖d1 as there is no 13.♖b4 ♗xf3+ 14.gxf3 ♙h3 15.♞e1 0–0 with Black's advantage, Farago – Csom, Budapest 1969.

This is why a prophylactic 9.h3 deserves attention. Black's best answer in this case is a waiting move 9...h6, and after 10.♙e3 b6 White has to lock up the centre sooner or later that will allow his opponent to begin flank operations. Several examples are given below:

11.0–0 ♖c7 12.d5 ♗e7 13.♗h4 g5!? Such technique occurs frequently in these positions and should prevent a possible f2–f4. After 14.♖f3 ♗fg8 15.♗f5 ♗xf5 16.exf5 ♗f6 Black has a good play, Portisch – Timman, Mar del Plata 1982.

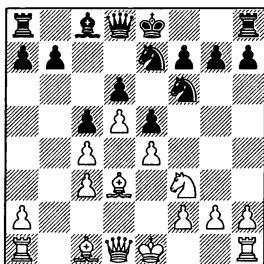
11.♖e2 White keeps an opportunity to castle on either side. 11...♖c7 Black waits for one more move, and then continues in the same manner: 12.d5 ♗e7 13.♗h4 g5!? 14.♖f3 ♗fg8 15.♗f5 ♗xf5 16.exf5 ♗f6 with mutual chances, Ibragimov – Serper, USSR 1991.

11.d5 ♗e7 12.♗d2 g5 This time the situation is slightly different, but Karpov applies the same method, not fearing complications. 13.h4 gxh4 14.♞xh4 ♗g6 15.♞h1 (It would be risky to capture the pawn. In case of 15.♞xh6 ♞xh6 16.♙xh6 ♗g4 Black develops a dangerous initiative). However Black suffered no difficulties

4.♟f3 c5 5.e3 ♘c6 6.♙d3 ♙xc3 7.bxc3 d6

in the game as well. 15...♙g4 16.♟f1 ♟f4 17.g3 ♘g2 18.♙e2 ♘4e3 19.♘e3 ♘e3 20.♙e3 ♙g5 with an unclear position, Yusupov – Karpov, Dortmund 1994.

9...♘e7



10.h3

The same prophylaxis, though Black's position is quite reliable in other lines too.

Another waiting move 10.♙b1 (intended against 10...♙g4) evokes a similar response: 10...h6, and Black is ready to begin a counterplay on the kingside, for example 11.h4 (or 11.♘g1 ♙c7 12.g3 ♙d7 13.f4 exf4 14.gxf4 0-0-0 15.♘f3 ♙g4 16.0-0 ♘d7 17.♙b3 b6 18.♙c2 f6 19.♙h1, and after 19...g5! Black seizes the square e5 and gets sufficient chances, Gligoric – Huebner, Bugojno 1982) 11...0-0 12.♘h2 ♘h7 13.g4 ♘g6 14.g5 (14.h5 is profitable to because of ♘f4, followed by ♙f6 and ♘g5) 14...♘xh4 15.gxh6 g6 16.♙g1 ♙h8 17.♙g3 (17.f4 is bad because of 17...f5! 18.fxe5 fxe4 19.♙xe4 ♘g2+! with a very strong attack) 17...b6 18.♙b2 f5, and Black seizes the initiative, Gligoric – Adorjan,

Sarajevo 1983.

10.♘d2 leads to a calm manoeuvring play. After 10...♘g6 11.h4 h5 12.g3 ♙a5 13.♙c2 ♙d7 14.a4 ♘e7 15.♟f1 0-0-0=the position is approximately equal Hracek – Aseev, Brno 1991.

The early castling creates certain serious problems for Black. 10.0-0 ♘g6 11.♘e1 0-0 12.g3 ♙h3 13.♘g2 ♘e8 14.♙e1 f5! While White was preparing an advance on the f-file, Black managed to do it before. 15.exf5 ♙xf5 16.f4 ♙d3 17.♙d3 ♙d7, and Black gains a slight advantage Gligoric – Timman, Yugoslavia 1979.

There is a keen struggle after the fundamental 10.♘h4 but Black can profit if he plays very precisely. 10...h6 11.f4 (in case of 11.f3, 11.g3 or 11.0-0 Black can continue with 11...g5 similarly to the above considered variations) 11...♘g6! is Fischer's move which keeps the blockade. 12.♘xg6 fxg6 13.0-0 (after 13.fxe5 dxe5 14.♙e3 b6 15.0-0 0-0 there is a balance on the board. Despite pawn weaknesses there is no obvious plan for White's break-through. After Black transfers his knight via ♘f6-e8-d6 his chances may prove to be better, Spassky – Fischer, Reykjavik (m/5) 1972) 13...0-0. In this position White tried to struggle for an initiative in different ways.

An attempt to develop an activity on the kingside with 14.f5 Black meets with the standard response 14...b5!, and if 15.cxb5?!

(15.g4 is slightly better though after 15...♖a5 16.♗d2 bxc4 Black's chances are preferable), then 15...c4! 16.♗c2 (or 16.♗xc4 ♖b6+ 17.♖h1 ♜xe4) 16...gxf5 17.exf5 ♖b6+ 18.♖h1 ♖xb5 with an advantage, Unzicker – Timman, Wijk aan Zee 1981. In case of a more discreet 14.♖e1 (or 14.♖b1 b6 15.♖b2 ♖e7 16.h3 ♗d7 with an equality, Spassky – Hort, Tilburg 1979), then after 14...♗d7 15.♖g3 ♖e8 16.f5 g5 17.♖h3 ♖h5 18.♖e3 a6 the play is equal and White should be cautious, for example in case of 19.♗d2 (19.a4 is better) there is 19...b5! with an initiative.

10...h6 11.♗e3

White continues his manoeuvres without force which is typical of the modern Blockade System.

11...♖a5

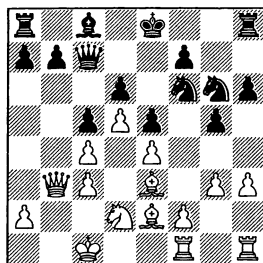
Diverting the queen.

12.♖b3 ♖c7 13.♜d2 ♜h5

14.g3

In case of 14.♗e2 Black can play 14...♜f4!?

14...g5 15.0-0-0 ♜g6 16.♗e2 ♜f6 17.♞df1



Having completed his development, White prepares to open up the play. Karpov reacts with an original manoeuvre which is also a standard technique for the Blockade System now.

17...♖e7!

Black frees the way for the king and aims at the e4–pawn if White performs a break–through with f2–f4.

18.♖b1 ♗d8 19.♜f3

There is nothing good in 19.f4 exf4 20.gxf4 ♜xf4 21.♗xf4 gxf4 22.♞xf4 because of 22...♖e5.

19...♗c7

Black's king has a convenient stand. Black's chances in this position with a complex play are none the worse Kamsky – Karpov, Linares 1991.

Summary

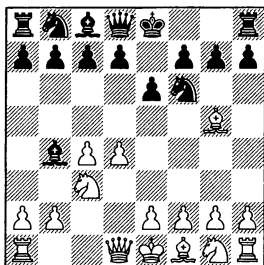
Black has a firm position in all lines, but usually it's hard for him to create a counterplay. He should be very accurate and calm, especially with the castling which, as a rule should not be performed too early. In the struggle for the initiative Black uses typical advances f7–f5 and b7–b5. Also a king transfer via ♗e8 - d8 - c7, followed by a counterplay on the kingside, is profitable for Black in many cases.

Chapter 9

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.♙g5
h6

Leningrad System

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4
4.♙g5



This move defines the Leningrad System. White binds up the knight to continue the struggle for the central squares e4 and d5. However, bishop early withdrawal from the queenside creates additional opportunities for a counterplay for Black.

4...h6

An important move. Now the exchanges 5.♙xf6 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♗xf6 are in Black's favour as the position to appear after 7.♘f3 d6 8.e4 ♘c6 9.♙e2 e5 resembles the Blockade System but here White has neither the advantage of two bishops nor an activity which would compensate for his pawns'

weaknesses. Simple and natural moves allow Black to get better chances 10.0-0 0-0 11.♖b1 b6 12.d5 ♘a5 13.♘d2 ♗g6 14.♕h1 f5 15.♙f3 ♘b7! 16.♗e2 ♘c5 with an advantage, Gonzales – Veingold, Andorra 1994.

5.♙h4 c5

Now that the bishop cannot revert to the defence of the queenside Black can develop an activity there.

6.d5

This is the only opportunity to struggle for an opening advantage. Other ways create no danger for Black: in the line 6.dxc5 ♙xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♗a5 8.♙xf6 gxf6 9.♗d4 e5 10.♗e3 ♘a6 11.♘f3 ♗xc5 he gains an advantage.

After 6.♖c1 cxd4 7.♗xd4 ♘c6 8.♙xf6 ♘xd4 9.♙xd8 ♗xd8 10.e3 ♘c6 11.a3 ♙d6 12.♘f3 b6 there is an almost forced equal end-game; in case of 6.e3 cxd4 7.exd4 ♗a5 Black can take the initiative, for instance 8.♗c2 ♘e4 9.♘e2 ♘d6!? with the threat of ♘f5.

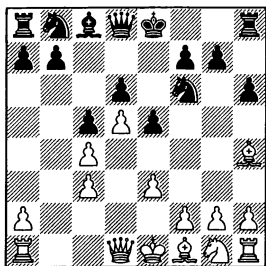
6...♙xc3+

A familiar mode. Black proceeds to the blockade.

7.bxc3 d6 8.e3

Another continuation that is connected with an opening up of the centre is 8.dxe6 ♖xe6 allowing Black to attack the weak pawns at once: 9.e3 ♜bd7 10.♗d3 (or 10.♙xd6 ♙a5 11.♙d3 ♖f5 with an advantage) 10...♞e5, and White encounters serious problems. So in case of 11.♙e2 there is an unpleasant 11...♙a5.

8...e5



Black has arranged his forces for the blockade. White's dark-squared bishop stands here more actively than in the Blockade System, but, on the other hand, it cannot assist in the defence of the queenside, and in many cases Black can profit from the possible advance g7–g5. Also the control over the square e4 is of great importance.

9.♙c2

This is just one of the ways to control it. Other continuations were seen too. 9.♞f3 White is going to transfer the knight to d2 to cover e4. His further plans imply that he completes his development and then opens up with f2–f4. However Black also has some opportunities for an

active play. 9...♙e7 10.♞d2 g5 is typical of the Leningrad System. 11.♗g3 ♖f5 12.♗e2 (In case of 12.h4 Black has to surrender the h-file for a while, but after 12...♞g8 13.hxg5 hxg5 his position is solid and the king can find a safe shelter, for example 14.♙b3 ♙c7 15.f3 ♜bd7 to be followed by 0–0–0. Later Black's rook can return to the h-file) 12...♞bd7 13.0–0 (in case of 13.h4 Black has an immediate 13...0–0–0; and if 13.f3, then he applies another typical trick 13...e4!) 13...h5!? Black takes the initiative. 14.f4 (or 14.f3 h4 15.♗f2 e4! with an advantage to Black) 14...exf4 15.exf4 h4 16.♞e1 (In case of 16.♗f2 gxf4 17.♙a4 ♙f8 18.♞ae1 ♞e5 Black stands better, Planinc – Hort, Hasings 1975) 16...hxg3 17.♗f3 gxh2+ 18.♙h1 ♞e5 The piece should be returned, but after 19.fxe5 dxe5 20.♙e2 ♞d7 White has no sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawns.

9.f4 This move introduces a forced line with an approximately equal endgame. 9...exf4 10.exf4 ♙e7+ 11.♙e2 (Black has an advantage after 11.♗e2 g5! 12.fxg5 ♞e4) 11...♙xe2+ 12.♞xe2 ♞e4 13.♞g3 ♞xg3 14.♗xg3 ♖f5 15.♞d2 ♞d7= Cherepkov – Taimanov, USSR 1955.

9.♗d3 Allowing Black to perform the policy advance with a spare tempo. 9...e4 10.♗c2 (no 10.♗xe4? because of 10...g5) 10...g5 11.♗g3 ♙e7 12.h4 ♞g8 A

familiar motive. Black cedes the h-file but suffers no difficulties because of that. 13. hxc5 hxc5 14. ♖e2 ♖bd7 15. ♖b1 (the same after 15. ♖a4 ♖d8 16. ♖b1 ♖c7 with a complex play) 15... ♖d8. Karpov's favourite trick which we already know from the chapter about the Blockade System. 16. a4 a5 17. ♖a2 ♖c7. Black's king found a very convenient stand. Black's chances are slightly better in the coming struggle, Williams – Karpov, Nice 1974.

9. f3 A more flexible continuation. 9... ♖bd7 10. ♖d3 It seems that Black already cannot play e5–e4. 10... g5 11. ♖g3 h5 The closed centre allows Black to show activity on the flank. 12. h4 g4 13. ♖e2 (or 13. e4 ♖g8 14. ♖e2 gxf3 15. gxf3 ♖a5 with a promising position) 13... gxf3 14. gxf3 e4! In this case the policy advance was performed at the price of a pawn. In return Black creates pressure on the e-file and takes the important square e5. 15. fxe4 ♖e7 16. ♖f4 White gives the pawn in order to simplify the play. (In case of 16. ♖c2 ♖g8 17. ♖f4 ♖e5 18. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 Black has a rich compensation, for example

after 19. 0–0–0 ♖g4 20. ♖dg1 0–0–0 he develops high pressure.) 16... ♖xe4 17. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 18. ♖g3 ♖xc4 19. ♖b3 ♖b6 20. ♖xd6 ♖xd5= A series of exchanges resulted in an equal endgame, Ree – Rashkovsky, Sochi 1976.

9... ♖e7 10. ♖f3

Other responses are weaker, for example 10. f3 g5 11. ♖f2 e4 or 10. ♖d3 g5 11. ♖g3 e4 with a better play for Black in both lines. If 10. e4 ♖bd7 11. ♖d3 g5 12. ♖g3, then after 12... ♖f8 13. ♖e2 ♖g6 14. f3 h5 Black is more active.

10... g5 11. ♖g3 ♖h5 12. ♖d3 ♖d7

Involving the opponent into a complex manoeuvre struggle.

13. ♖d2 ♖df6 14. h3 ♖d7 15. ♖b1 b6 16. a4 ♖g7 17. f3 ♖fh5

Black found good positions for his knights. The plan further implies f7–f5.

18. ♖h2 ♖d8!?

Karpov performs his special manoeuvre.

19. a5 Kc7

Black's king comes to defend the queenside. Both sides have certain chances in this position, Yusupov–Karpov, Germany 1995.

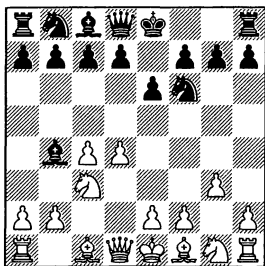
Summary

The whole struggle develops on the kingside. Positions of this system are similar to those of the Blockade System but White's light-squared bishop is on the kingside now. Black should remember about a timely e5–e4 and a manoeuvre, connected with the king transfer from e8 to c7.

Chapter 10 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.g3

Romanishin System

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4
4.g3



This original system which resembles the Catalan Opening became popular in the eighties. For twenty years Black has elaborated reliable methods for creating a sensible counterplay.

4...c5 5.♘f3

Other continuations don't allow to subdue the lag in development, for example 5.d5 ♘e4 6.♗c2 (or 6.♙d2 ♙xc3 7.♙xc3 ♘xc3 8.bxc3 ♗a5 with an initiative) 6...♗f6! 7.♘h3 (also 7.♘f3 ♘xc3 8.♙d2 ♘xd5 is bad for White) 7...♘xc3 8.♙d2 ♘xd5 9.cxd5 ♙xd2+ 10.♗xd2 e5 11.d6 ♘c6 to Black's advantage Vaganian – Karpov, USSR 1969.

Black is also better after 5.dxc5 ♘e4 6.♗d4 ♗f6! 7.♗xf6 gxf6.

5...cxd4 6.♘xd4 0-0 7.♙g2 d5

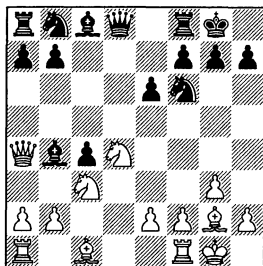
Black completes his development and begins a counterattack in the centre. White has a choice: a) 8.0-0, b) 8.♗b3 or c) 8.cxd5.

a) 8.0-0

For the sacrificed pawn White gets an initiative which can only suffice to maintain the balance.

8...dxc4 9.♗a4

In case of 9.♙g5 h6 10.♙xf6 ♗xf6 11.♘db5 (11.♘e4 is worse because of ♗e7 12.♗c2 e5) 11...♘c6 12.♗a4 ♗e5 Black gains a slightly better play, Speelman – Timman, London (m/2) 1989.



9...♘a6!

The most precise move. Now

4.g3 c5 5.♟f3 cxd4 6.♞xd4 0-0 7.♙g2 d5

White has to make efforts to equalise:

10.♞db5

Or 10.♞d1 ♙d7 11.♖c2 ♖c7 12.♞db5 ♙xb5 13.♞xb5 ♖b6 14.a4 – after 14.♖xc4? ♞ac8 White loses a piece – 14...♞g4 to Black's advantage.

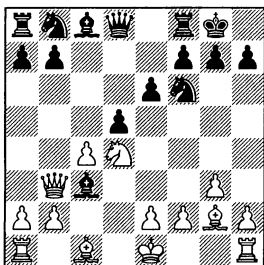
10...♞d5 11.♞d1 ♙xc3 12.♞xc3 ♞xc3 13.bxc3 ♞c5!

White probably will return the pawn but his initiative is already exhausted, Romanishin – Portisch, Reggio Emilia 1991.

b) 8.♖b3

A more promising continuation.

8...♙xc3+



White is again at the crossroads: b1) 9.♖xc3 or b2) 9.bxc3

b1) 9.♖xc3

This capture allows Black to advance his central pawns with a spare tempo.

9...e5 10.♞b3

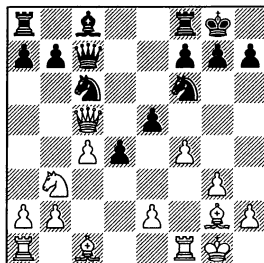
Or 10.♞c2 which is perhaps too passive. After 10...d4 11.♖d3 ♞c6 12.0-0 h6 Black has a good play, for example 13.b4 ♙e6 14.c5 ♙d5 15.e4 dxe3 16.♙xe3 ♙xg2 17.♖xd8 ♞fxd8 18.♖xg2 ♞d5

19.♙d2 ♞c7 with certain advantage, Johansen – Suba, Kuala Lumpur 1992.

10...d4 11.♖a5 ♖e7 12.0-0

Black takes the initiative in case of 12.♖c5 ♖xc5 13.♞xc5 ♞c6 14.f4 ♞e8.

12...♞c6 13.♖c5 ♖c7! 14.f4



14...♞d7!

After White has to make a hard decision.

15.♖a3

After 15.♖d5 (Piket – Beliavsky, Amsterdam 1989), Black can fix a draw by the repetition of moves 15...♞f6 16.♖c5 ♞d7 because White's queen has not a good square to retreat.

15...a5

Threatening with an unpleasant 16...♞b4. Now after the forced 16.♙d2 ♞b6 17.♖c5 a4 18.♞c1 ♙e6 19.♙d5 ♞d7 Black has some initiative.

b2) 9.bxc3

Leading to a complex play with mutual chances.

9...♞c6 10.cxd5 ♞a5 11.♖c2 ♞xd5 12.♖d3

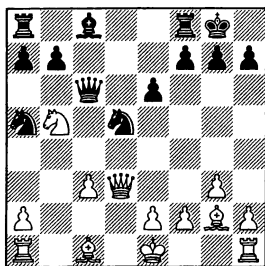
In case of 12.♞b3 ♙d7 13.0-0 ♞c8 14.♙d2 ♞c4 Black stands

better, Unizicker – Loginov, Budapest 1994.

12...♖c7 13.♟b5

Black is also better after 13. 0-0 ♟d7 14. ♟xd5 exd5 Kasparov – Suba, Dubai 1986.

13...♖c6



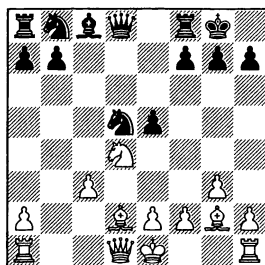
Now the line **14.0-0** (Exacerbation after 14. ♟a3 ♞d8 15.e4 ♟c4 16.exd5 exd5 17. ♞b1 a6 is not in White's favour) **14...♟d7 15.a4 a6 16.e4 axb5 17.exd5 ♖c4 18.♗xc4 ♟xc4 19.♞b1 ♞xa4=** gives an approximately equal position.

c) 8.cxd5 ♟xd5 9.♟d2

9. ♖b3 Now that the centre is released this continuation cannot sharpen the play. 9... ♟c6 10. ♟xc6 bxc6 11.0-0 ♖a5 12. ♟d2 ♟xc3 13.bxc3 ♟a6 Black equalised the position absolutely. 14. ♞fd1!? (14. ♟f3 is worse, 14... ♞ab8 15. ♖c2 ♟c4 with certain advantage for Black) 14... ♖c5 (15.c4 was threatening) 15.e4 ♟c4 16. ♖a4 ♟b6. Using the square c4 as an outpost for his minor pieces, Black maintains the balance easily. After 17. ♖b4 ♖h5 18. ♟e3 ♟e2 19. ♞d2 ♞ab8 20. ♟xb6 axb6=

there is an equal position on the board, Kasparov – Anand, Wijk aan Zee 2000.

9...♟xc3 10.bxc3 e5



White has three retreats. In any case Black develops his forces according to a single plan: ♟c6, ♟e6, ♟b6 (or ♟de7), taking control over the important squares c4 and d5 and neutralising the most dangerous piece of this variation, that is the g2-bishop. Also the weakness of the c-pawn is significant. There are several examples:

c1) 11.♟c2 ♟c6 12.c4

In case of 12. ♟b4 it's better to retreat with 12... ♟de7, holding c6. After 13.0-0 ♟e6 14. ♟g5 ♖c7 15. ♖a4 h6 16. ♟xe7 ♟xe7 Black's position is preferable, Van Wely – Dautov, Krumbach 1991. Now if White castles with 12.0-0, then Black develops as usual: 12... ♟e6, etc.

12...♟de7 13.♟e3 ♟e6 14.0-0 ♞c8 with mutual chances Lautier – M. Gurevich, Barcelona 1992.

c2) 11.♟b3 ♟c6 12.0-0

12. ♟g5 ♖xg5 13. ♖xd5 is not dangerous as there is, for exam-

4.g3 c5 5.♟f3 cxd4 6.♞xd4 0-0 7.♞g2 d5

ple, 13...♞g4 14.h3 ♞ad8 15.♣b5 ♞c8 with a firm position, and if 16.♞xc6 is bad because after 16...bxc6 17.♣xc6 ♞e6 Black takes a strong initiative.

12...♞b6 13.♞e3 ♣c7 14.♣d3

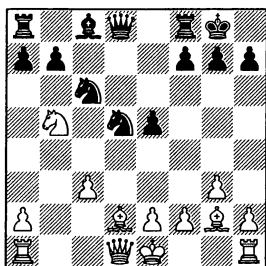
Or 14.f4 ♞d8 15.♣c1 ♞g4 with an advantage.

14...♞d8 15.♣e4 ♞e6 16.♞fd1 ♣e7 Black has a solid position Tal – Timman, Bugojno 1980. There is also an unpleasant threat of 17...♞d5.

c3) 11.♞b5

The most active move.

11...♞c6



12.0-0

The development should be completed.

White has no 12.♞c1 ♞e6 13.♞a3 as after 13...♣a5 14.♞xf8 ♣xb5 15.♞a3 (in case of 15.♞b4 a5 16.e4 ♞dxb4 17.cxb4 ♞d4 Black's threats are incontrovertible) 15...♞xc3 Black is well compensated.

Another example of an early activity: 12.c4 ♞b6 13.c5 ♞c4 14.♣c2 a6! 15.♣xc4 ♞e6 16.♣c2 (grandmaster B. Gulko brought other interesting lines: 16.♣c3 axb5 17.♞xc6 bxc6 18.♣xe5 ♞e8 with an advantage or 16.♣a4 axb5 17.♣xb5 ♞d4 18.♣b2 ♞c4 19.e3 ♞d5! 20.e4 ♞c4, and White's king was pinned down in the centre for a long time) 16...axb5 17.0-0 ♞d5! 18.♞xd5 ♣xd5 19.♞e3 ♞a3!, and Black gains certain advantage.

12...♞e6 13.♞c1 a6 14.c4 ♞b6 15.♞d6 (Topalov – Karpov, Monaco 1999) **15...♞xc4 16.♞xb7 ♣b6** is the simplest way to maintain a balance here.

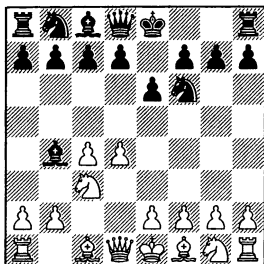
Summary

Black uses his slight development advantage to begin a struggle for the central squares. A capture on c3 with the bishop is a standard technique, which allows him to keep the development advantage for subsequent active play in the centre.

Chapter 11 1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.♚b3

System with 4.♚b3

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4



4.♚b3

This continuation was popular in the thirties but now it occurs seldom as practice showed that Black has many efficient ways of an equalisation. The most White can hope to achieve are positions of the Modern System.

Let's regard also several seldom applied reforts against the Nimzo-Indian Defence.

4.♚d3 The queen occupies a bad stand here and Black is going to make use of this circumstance at the first opportunity. 4...c5 5.d5 0-0 6.♙d2 exd5 7.cxd5 (Black stands better also after 7.♗xd5 ♙xd2+ 8.♚xd2 ♗xd5 9.cxd5 d6) 7...d6 8.g3 b6! And

here is that opportunity! 9.♙g2 ♙a6 The queen has to retreat with a loss of tempo, and White's king will pinned down in the centre for a long time. 10.♚c2 ♗bd7 11.♗h3 ♞e8 12.♗f4 ♙xc3!? White lost here after 13.bxc3 (13.♙xc3 is better, with a slight advantage to Black) 13...g5 14.♗d3 ♞xe2+! 15.♚xe2 ♗e5→ with Black's powerful attack, Mikenas – Keres, USSR 1940.

4.♙d2 A passive move which does not create any problems for Black. Black can develop as follows: 4...0-0 5.♗f3 b6 6.g3 ♙b7 7.♙g2 d6 8.0-0 ♗bd7 9.a3 ♙xc3 10.♙xc3 ♗e4 11.♚c2 f5 with an equality, Bondarevsky – Kottnauer, Moscow 1947.

4...c5 5.dxc5

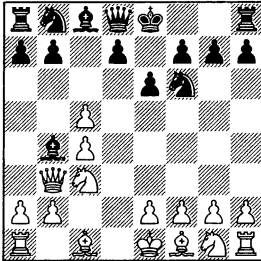
In case of 5.♗f3 there is 5...♗e4, and after 6.♗d2 ♙xc3 7.bxc3 ♗xd2 8.♙xd2 ♚c7 9.e4 d6 10.♙e2 e5, Black can proceed to the Blockade System in a favourable redaction. After 11.0-0 ♗c6 12.d5 ♗e7 the position is equal.

After 5.e3 0-0 6.♙d3 b6 7.♗e2 ♙b7 Black controls the central squares and has no problems. An exemplary line may look as fol-

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.♚b3

lows: 8.0–0 cxd4 9.exd4 ♙e7 10.♙g5 d6 11.♚fd1 ♘bd7 with approximately equal chances.

Now in case of 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.♚xc3 cxd4 7.♚xd4 ♘c6 there is a position of the Modern System with a convenient play for Black.



5...♙xc3

Among several equalising moves Karpov chooses the one he likes most.

6.♘f3

Of course not 6.♙g5? because of 6...♙xf2+ 7.♚xf2 ♘g4.

6...b6 7.♙g5 ♙b7 8.♚d1

The only way to create problems for the opponent is to play on the d–file. 8.e4 h6 is worse as White will be forced to exchange his active bishop.

8...0–0 9.e3

Again, there is no 9.e4 h6 as after 10.♙h4 Black plays 10...g5

and wins a pawn.

9...♙e7

Black builds an opportune hedgehog structure.

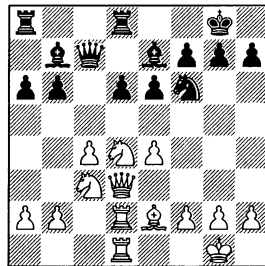
10.♙e2 ♘a6 11.0–0 ♘c5 12.♚c2 ♘ce4!

Now White has to part with his active bishop or cede the square e4.

13.♙xf6

In case of 13.♘xe4 ♙xe4 Black also has a convenient and solid position.

13...♘xf6 14.e4 d6 15.♚d2 ♚c7 16.♚fd1 a6 17.♘d4 ♚fd8 18.♚d3



18...♙f8=

Despite White's space advantage the chances can be estimated as approximately equal. Karpov's position has no weak points and he has the advantage of the bishop pair, Piket–Karpov, Monaco 1992.

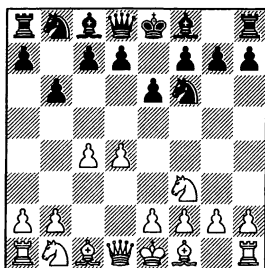
Summary

Black has no problems. White's best chance is to transpose the game into a variation of the Modern System, favourable for Black.

Part 3. Queen's Indian Defence

Chapter 12 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.g3 ♘a6

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 This continuation was used primarily only to avoid the Nimzo-Indian Defence and brought usually to the Queen's Gambit after 3...d5. Later on Black discovered other interesting systems of development, and the move **3...b6** introduces one of them and presents the initial position of the Queen's Indian.



Most systems of this opening lead to a quiet positional play, and for a long time the Queen's Indian Defence had a reputation of a drawing opening. Nowadays there are many new ideas that allow to intensify the struggle, and the popularity of the Queen's Indian Defence has increased considerably at present, all the more that here White's solid develop-

ment leaves less opportunities for Black's counterplay than in the Nimzowitsch Defence. General strategies of both sides in this opening are as follows: White lingers over the seizure of the centre and completes the development of his kingside first, threatening to break through with d4 – d5 or open up the d-file, and Black puts pressure on the important squares d5 and e4 with his pieces and organises a counterplay on the c-file. As a rule, Black's position is rather solid but his activity is low. In the initial position White has several quite different opportunities.

Main System

4.g3

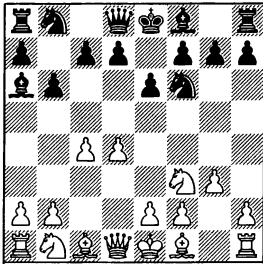
Counterbalancing Black's intention to perform a fianchetto, White moves his own bishop on the big diagonal in order to be able to control the central squares and support possible pawn advances to e4 and d5 later.

4...♘a6

There are several continuations but lately Karpov prefers

1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 e6 3.♟f3 b6 4.g3 ♟a6

this move, which allows Black to counterattack the c4–pawn immediately and struggle for the initiative.



There are several ways to defend the pawn in this position, but each of them has its defects. The basic continuations are a) 5.♟a4, b) 5.♟d2 and c) 5.b3. Other moves are less popular:

5.♟b3 In this line White's queen performs only defensive functions so that White can't hope to gain an opening advantage. 5...d5 Events develop logically. The pawn c4 is again attacked. 6.cxd5 (6.♟bd2 is too slowly. After 6...dxc4 7.♟xc4 ♟d5 Black has the initiative.) 6...♟xd5 7.♟c2 (Or 7.♟xd5 ♟xd5 8.a3 c5 9.e4 ♟f6 with Black's good play) 7...c5 8.♟c3 ♟c6. Now the pawn d4 is under attack, and after the forced 9.dxc5 ♟xc5 10.♟g2 ♟b7 11.0–0 ♟bd7 there is an approximate equality on the board. 12.♟d2 (A pursuit of the opponent's queen with 12.♟h4 ♟c7 13.♟b5?? can cost White his own after 13...♟xf2) 12...0–0 13.♟ac1 ♟fc8= with equal chances, Piket – Karpov, Monaco 1995.

5.♟c2 Is not better than the previous move. 5...c5 Black attacks the d4–pawn which gets weakened with the removal of the white queen. 6.♟g2 ♟c6 7.dxc5 (The square d4 can't be held, for example 7.♟a4 ♟c8 8.♟e3 cxd4 9.♟xd4 ♟g4! 10.♟xc6 ♟xe3 11.fxex3 ♟b7. Black has a positional advantage, and in case of 12.♟xa7 ♟xg2 13.♟xc8 ♟xa4 14.♟g1 ♟b7 15.♟xb6 ♟b4 he even gains a material advantage. Or 7.0–0 cxd4 8.♟d1 ♟c8 9.♟a4 – no 9.♟xd4 ♟xd4 10.♟xd4 ♟c5 11.♟d1 ♟xc4! – 9...♟a5 with Black's extra pawn Sveshnikov – Kupreichik, Moscow 1976) 7...♟xc5 Now in case of an active 8.a3 Black gets a serious counterplay: 8...♟c8 9.♟a4 Actually, this move is a loss a tempo, but other opportunities are even worse (For example, 9.b4 ♟e7 10.b5? is bad – 10.0–0 ♟b7 11.♟bd2 is better, though Black has the initiative again after 11...a5, putting pressure on the c–file – 10...♟xb5! 11.cxb5 ♟b4 12.♟b2 ♟c2+ 13.♟f1 – or 13.♟d1 ♟g4 – 13...♟xa1 14.♟c3 ♟c7 15.♟d2 ♟c2 16.♟xc2 ♟d5 with a victory. Also in case of 9.0–0 ♟d4 10.♟xd4 ♟xd4 Black has an advantage as it is not easy for White to defend the c4–pawn) 9...♟b7 10.0–0 0–0 11.♟c3 ♟e7 12.♟g5 ♟a5 In this line White has problems with the c4–pawn again. After 13.♟d2 ♟xg2 14.♟xg2 ♟c7 Black has a good play. Now if White continues his development with 8.0–0,

Black responds with the same 8...♖c8, accentuating the poor position of White's queen, and in case of 9.♟a4 a sudden 9...♞b8! creates a threat of capture on c4, for example 10. ♔f4? (in case of 10.♞bd2 ♔e7 White's pieces are bound to the defence of the c4-pawn, and the queen stands inconveniently. Black castles and then advances d7–d5 with an excellent play, if White defends with 10.b3, then his queen will be out of play) 10...♙xc4 11.♙xb8 b5 12.♟c2 ♔d5 with a material advantage.

a) 5.♟a4

This queen's move is more dangerous than two considered above variants. White not only covers the pawn but also attacks the a6-bishop, impeding the development of his opponent's queenside.

5...c5

As well as in the previous case, Black attacks the pawn d4 immediately, making use of the fact that the queen leaves the d-file. White can continue with the natural

6.♔g2

6.d5 is incorrect, because of, for example 6...exd5 7.exd5 ♙b7 8.e4 ♟e7.

6...♙b7

In this position White has two approximately equivalent opportunities: a1) 7.0–0 and a2) 7.dxc5.

a1) 7.0–0 cxd4 8.♞xd4 ♔xg2 9.♙xg2 ♟c8!

Though the tension in the centre is released, Black has not solved his development problems yet. With the knight's last move he prepares jump to c6 and removes the queen from the semi-open d-file, planning its transfer to the long diagonal.

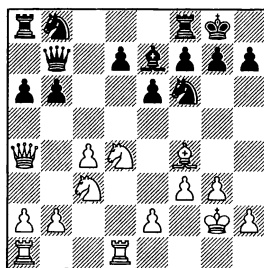
10.♔f4

In case of 10.♞d1 ♞c6 Black equalises the play easily: 11.♞xc6 ♟xc6+ 12.♟xc6 dxc6 13.♔f4 ♞d8 14.♞c3 ♙b4 15.♔c7 ♞xd1 16. ♞xd1 ♟e7= Nikolic – Karpov, Monaco 1998

10...a6

Preventing the threat of 11. ♞b5. In the game Piket – Karpov, Monaco 1993, the opponents continued with

11.♞c3 ♟b7+ 12.f3 ♔e7 13. ♞fd1 0–0

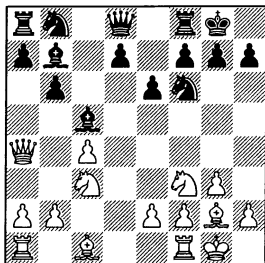


Now White puts some pressure on the d-file but Black's position is solid and he can create a counterplay on the queenside, for example with 14.♞d2 ♞c8 15. ♞ad1 ♞c6 16.♞xc6 ♟xc6 17.e4 b5!? 18.cxb5 axb5 19.♟xb5 ♟xb5 20.♞xb5 ♙b4 with an equalisation or with 14.e4 d6 15.♞de2 ♞d8 16.♞d2 ♞c6 17.♞ad1 ♞e8

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.g3 ♖a6

with a safe position.

a2) 7.dxc5 ♖xc5 8.0-0 0-0
9.♘c3



9...♖e7

Black frees the square c5 to transfer the knight via b8 – a6 – c5 – e4.

10.♖f4

If White impedes this transfer with 10.♖d1 ♘a6 11.♖e3 ♘c5 12.♖xc5 bxc5 with a subsequent attack on the d–file after 13.♘e5 ♖xg2 14.♖xg2, then Black has 14...♖b8 which allows him to launch exchanges, for example 15.♘d7 ♘xd7 16.♖xd7 ♖xb2 17.♖b1 ♖xc3 18.♖xe7 ♖d2 19.e3 ♖d3 with an equal position.

10...♘a6 11.♖fd1

Or 11.♖ac1 ♘c5 12.♖d1 d6 13.b4 ♘ce4 14.♘xe4 ♖xe4.

11...♘c5 12.♖c2 ♖c8

This move is rather useful here: Black takes away the queen from an opposition with the white rook to a more active place, and at the same time he defends the bishop on b7.

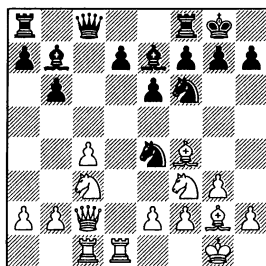
13.♖ac1

In case of 13.♖d4 d5 an equal endgame can be achieved almost

by force: 14.cxd5 ♘xd5 15.♘xd5 ♖xd5 16.♘g5 ♖xg5 17.♖xd5 exd5 18.♖xg5 ♘e6 19.♖c8 ♖axc8 20.♖xd5 ♘xg5 21.♖xg5 ♖c2.

13...♘ce4

Black's knight completed the transfer.



14.♘d4

Leads to simplifications.

Other opportunities are weaker.

An attempt to develop the initiative on the kingside with 14.h3 ♖d8 15.g4 (the line 15.♘b5 d6 16.b3 a6 gives nothing too) 15...d6 16.♖d3 ♘xc3 attracted no followers, besides White made a blunder with 17.♖xc3? (in case of 17.♖xc3 ♖c5 18.b4 ♖c6 Black was just slightly better) 17...e5 and lost a piece in the game Bareev – Karpov, Tilburg 1991.

After the exchange 14.♘xe4 ♖xe4 Black's centralised bishop occupies a very advantageous position as White can drive it out only with an exchange on g2. 15.♖d2 ♖a6. Black begins an active play first. 16.a3 (after 16.b3 the activity of the opponent's dark-squared bishop grows considerably) 16...♖ac8 17.♖g5 h6 18.♖xf6 ♖xf6 19.♖b4 d5 with

Black's initiative, Skembris – Sax, Italy 2000.

14...♖xc3 15.♗xc3 a6 16. ♖b3

The play develops in a similar way also in case of 16.♙f3 ♖a7 17.♗b3 ♙xf3 18.♗xf3 ♖b7 19. ♖xb7 ♙xb7= Huebner – Adams, Dortmund 2000.

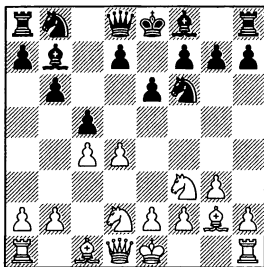
16...♙xg2 17.♗xg2 ♖b7+ 18.♗f3 ♖a7 19.♖xb7 ♙xb7

White has some initiative but there are no weak points in Black's position, Piket – Karpov, Monaco (m/1) 1999.

b) 5.♗bd2 ♙b7

Black lost a tempo but forced White's knight to occupy a less active position.

6.♙g2 c5



7.e4

Other continuations are also not dangerous for Black:

7.d5 exd5 8.♗h4 This gambit move could have been dangerous if the knight were on c3. Continuing with 8...g6 9.0–0 (Or 9.cxd5 ♙g7 10.♗c4 0–0 Black returns the extra pawn and completes his development successfully, obtaining a complex position with a

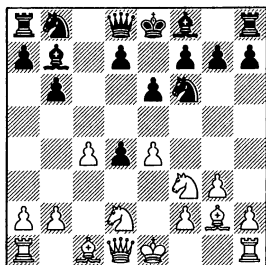
typical of the Modern Benoni System pawn structure, for example 11.♗d6 ♙a6 12.a4 ♗e8 13.♗e4 d6 14.0–0 ♗d7 with mutual chances, Van Wely – Psakhis, Leeuwarden 1993) 9...♙g7 10.cxd5 d6 11.♗c4 0–0. Again Black obtains a convenient structure of the Modern Benoni with prospects for an interesting struggle. An exemplary line is 12.♙f4 ♗e8 13.♖d2 ♙a6 14.♙ac1 ♙xc4 15.♙xc4 ♗d7 with unclear play, Piket – Salov, Brussels 1992.

7.0–0 cxd4 8.♗b3 (The position gets simplified after 8.♗xd4 ♙xg2 9.♗xg2 ♖c8. A familiar manoeuvre! After 10.e3 ♙e7 11.♖f3 ♗c6 12.♗xc6 ♖xc6 13. ♖xc6 dxc6 the opponents agreed to a draw in the game Smyslov Karpov, Amsterdam 1981) 8... ♙e7 9.♗bxd4 a6 10.b3 0–0 11. ♙b2 d6 There is the so called hedgehog structure on the board in a favourable for Black variation. White has some space advantage. However, Black's position is solid and resembles a spring, ready to release. He controls the central squares firmly and has enough space to perform manoeuvres and prepare the desired advance d6 – d5. The lines below show that Black has a full-fledged play and is ready to struggle for the initiative: 12.♙c1 ♗bd7 13.a3 (or 13.b4 ♖b8 14.a3 ♙c8 15.♖b3 ♙f8 16.♙fd1 d5!= Yusupov – Ljubojevic, Linares 1990) 13...♙c8 14.b4 ♙c7 15.♖b3 ♖a8 with pressure on the central

squares, Ma. Tseitlin – Chernin, Beer-Sheva 1992; a similar reformation was accomplished by Black in the recent game, Molvig – H. Hansen, Copenhagen 2000: 12.e3 ♖e8 13.♘e2 ♜bd7 14.♜c3 ♜c8 15.♞e1 ♛c7 16.♞c1 ♛b8 with a good play.

7...cxd4

In this position Black also does not mind passing on to the hedgehog structure.



Now White has two main continuations b1) 8.0-0 and b2) 8.e5.

b1) 8.0-0

After 8.♟xd4 ♕c5 White's knight has no good squares for the development of the initiative, for example 9.♟b5 a6 10.♟c3 ♖c7 with a convenient development or 9.♟4b3 d6 10.0-0 – the exchange 10.♟xc5 dxc5 would only emphasize the poor position of the white knight and open weak squares on the d-file – 10...e5!. Black took control over the square d4 and got a good play after 11.♖e1 ♟c6 12.♟b1 0-0 13.♟c3 ♕b4 14.♕d2 ♕a6 15.♟d5 ♕xd2 16.♟xd2 ♟d4= Riazantsev – Sax, Dubai 2000.

8...d6 9.♘xd4 ♔d7

Black obtains a satisfactory position.

10.♖e1

Black also has good chances in case of 10.a4 ♖c6 11.♗xc6 ♙xc6 12.b4 ♙e7 13.b5 ♙b7 14.a5 bxa5 15.♗xa5 ♙d8 to be followed by a bishop transfer to the diagonal a7 – g1.

10...♙e7 11.♘b1 ♖c6 12.♘c3
♜xd4 13.♔xd4 0-0 14.b3 ♜fd8
with a complex play, Ivanchuk –
Karpov, Linares 1994.

b2) 8.e5

White wants to exchange the ill-placed knight as then the position gets simpler and Black equalises the play easily.

8...♘e4

The best move.

9.0-0

9. ♖xd4 was bad because of 9... ♗c3!, and after the forced 10. ♙xb7 ♖xd1 11. ♙xa8 ♙c5 12. ♖2b3 ♖c6 13. ♙xc6 ♙xd4 14. ♖xd4 dxc6 ♣ Black has a considerable advantage.

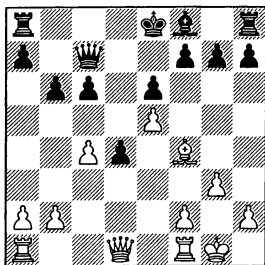
An immediate return of the pawn results in mass exchanges and absolute equality: 9. ♖xe4 ♙xe4 10. ♗xd4 ♙b4 11. ♙d2 ♙xf3 12. ♙xf3 ♜c6 13. ♙xc6 (or 13. ♗f4 ♙xd2+ 14. ♗xd2 ♙c7 15. ♙d6 ♜c8) 13... ♙xd2+ 14. ♗xd2 dxc6 15. ♗xd8+ ♜xd8+ 16. ♙c3 with a draw, Epishin – Karpov, Dos Hermanas 1994.

9...♘xd2 10.♙xd2 ♔c7 11.♙f4 ♙xf3

This technique is used regularly in the variation in ques-

tion.

12. ♖xf3 ♜c6 13. ♖xc6 dxc6



Again Black managed to provoke simplifications. After 14. ♜xd4 ♜d8 15. ♜e4 ♖e7 16. ♜ad1 0–0= the position is even Piket – Karpov, Dos Hermanas 1995.

c) 5.b3

This continuation is perhaps the most solid one. The pawn on c4 is secured well, but instead the square c3 gets weakened.

5... ♖b4+ 6. ♖d2

No 6. ♜bd2 because of 6... ♖c3 7. ♜b1 ♖b7 with a hard position for White, for example in case of 8. ♖b2 ♜e4 9. ♜g1 ♜f6 Black creates irresistible threats.

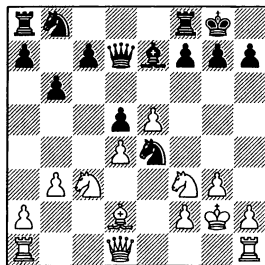
6... ♖e7

Now White's d2-bishop stands badly.

7. ♖g2

An attempt to advance immediately e2 – e4 gives nothing: 7. ♜c3 0–0 8. e4 d5! Attacking the c4-pawn, Black deprives his opponent of fianchetto. After 9. cxd5 ♖xf1 10. ♜xf1 exd5 11. e5 Black plays 11... ♜e4, and White can't exchange on e4 because of the weakness of the d4-pawn (this is

one of drawbacks of having the bishop on d2). 12. ♜g2 ♜d7.



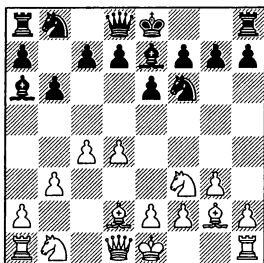
Now there is a complex position with mutual chances.

A straight 13. ♜e2 "makes" Black perform the desired manoeuvre with 13... ♜xc3 14. ♖xc3 c5 15. ♜he1 (even after the best 15. e6 ♜xe6 16. ♜xe6 fxe6 17. ♜he1 Black obtains a sufficient counterplay with 17... ♖f6 18. ♜xe6 ♜a6, preparing both ♜fe8 and the transfer ♜c7–b5) 15... ♜e6 16. ♜g1 ♜c6 17. dxc5 d4, and Black seizes the initiative, Agdestein – Karpov, Gjovik 1991.

In case of 13. ♜e1 Black also has a convenient play. After the policy exchange on c3 with 13... ♜xc3 14. ♖xc3 Black plays 14... ♜c6, preparing ♜d8 – e6 with a good play.

The line 13. ♜c1 ♜xc3 14. ♜xc3 looks more interesting as White creates pressure on the c-file. In this case Black begins a counterplay on the queenside with 14... a5 15. h4 ♖b4 16. ♜c2 ♜a6, Nikolic – Karpov, Tilburg 1988. After 17. ♖e3 h6 there is a keen struggle with mutual chances.

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♟f3 b6 4.g3 ♔a6



7...c6

Black prepares the advance d7–d5 as in case of cxd5 he wants to have cxd5. He is also ready to launch a counterattack on the queenside with b6–b5.

In this position White has several possible continuations: c1) 8.0–0, c2) 8.♟c3 and c3) 8.♔c3.

c1) 8.0–0

White gains nothing with 8.♔g5. Having transferred the bishop to a more active position, White loses his extra tempo. 8...d5 9.♟bd2 ♟bd7 10.0–0 0–0 11.♝c2 c5. Black has arranged his forces successfully and can create threats on the c–file after ♜c8. Now in case of 12.e4 dxe4 13.♟xe4 ♔b7= mass exchanges, which fully equalize the chances are inevitable, Ribli – Timman, Bugojno 1984.

8...d5

The play can be reduced to the variation c3) here, though both sides can also deviate from the main line.

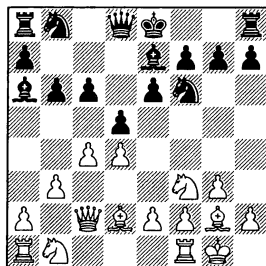
9.♝c2

White frees d1 for the rook and redoubles his control over the central squares, but this arrangement has some shortcomings

also: the queen's position on the c–file facilitates Black's counterplay, and besides White can't move the knight from b1 because of the threats to the c4–pawn. Other continuations also gain no advantage to White.

So in case of 9.♟e5 ♟fd7 10.♟xd7 ♟xd7 White should return to the main line with 11.♔c3 0–0 12.♟d2 as an active 11.♟c3 can result in a worse position after 11...♜c8, for example 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.a4?! ♟b8! , and Black gains an advantage, transferring the knight with ♟c6–b4, Pelts–Sax, Montreal 1986.

Also Black has no problems after 9.♔c3 0–0 10.♟bd2 ♟bd7 and can prepare to play on the c–file: 11.♔b2 ♜c8 12.♜c1 c5 13.♜e1 cxd4 14.♟xd4 ♔b7= with approximately even opportunities, Larsen – Karpov, Brussels 1987 or 11.♜e1 c5 12.e4 dxe4 13.♟xe4 ♟xe4 14.♜xe4 ♟f6 15.♜e3 ♔b7 with a convenient play Van Wely – Karpov, Monaco 1999.



9...♟bd7

Black completes his development and can proceed to stand–ard operations on the c–file. Now

after 10.♖d1 0–0 White has problems with the development of his queen's knight, for example 11.♗e1. This ugly move is forced as in case of 11.♗f4 ♜c8 12.♘bd2 c5 13.♙b2 cxd4 14.♙xd4 ♗c5 Black's position is evidently more promising than White's, Polovodin – Belozarov, St.Petersburg 1994. Still after 11...♜c8 12.♘bd2 c5 13.♙b2 cxd4 White can encounter difficulties.

If White continues with 10.a4, planning to develop the knight on a3, then after 10...0–0 11.♖d1 (this move seems to be unnecessary, an immediate 11.♘a3 is better) 11...♘e4 12.♗f4 ♗b4 Black has certain initiative, for example 13.♘bd2 ♘c3 14.♞e1 ♜c8 15.e4 ♘f6 16.e5 ♘fe4 Granda Zuniga – Sax, Wijk aan Zee 1989.

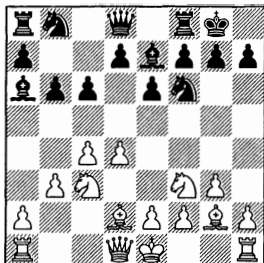
Perhaps the following line is the best for White:

10.♜c1 0–0 11.a4 ♜c8 12.♘a3 ♘e4 13.♗e1, but even here Black has a solid and active position after **13...♗f6**.

c2) 8.♘c3

The most active continuation. Its main minus is the insufficient defence of c4–pawn.

8...0–0



9.e4

The pawn sacrifice with 9.d5 exd5 10.cxd5 ♘xd5 11.♘xd5 cxd5 does not give enough. White's position looks active but the pawn can't be returned and Black feels fine, for example 12.♗c3 (or 12.0–0 ♗f6 13.♜c1 ♘c6 14.♞e1 d4 15.b4 ♞e8 16.a4 b5! 17.a5 ♜c8, and the compensation is not at all evident, Adianto – Browne, San Francisco 1991) 12...♘c6 13.0–0 ♗f6 14.♜c1 ♜c8 15.♗xf6 ♙xf6. Now the weakness on e2 tells. 16.♜c2 ♞fe8 17.♖d2 d4 18.♞e1 (Farago – Adorjan, Hungary 1984), and after 18...♞e4 with the threat of 19...♞ce8 Black maintains an advantage.

If White allows d7–d5, then Black just takes the initiative, so after 9.0–0 d5 10.♗f4 ♘bd7 11.♘d2 ♘h5 12.e4 ♘xf4 13.gxf4 ♗b4 Black has an obvious advantage, Benjamin – Farago, Philadelphia 1984.

9...d5 10.♙e2 b5!

This is a regular manoeuvre in many positions of this variation.

11.e5 ♘e8 12.cxb5 cxb5 13.♙e3

13...b4 was threatening, winning a piece.

13...b4 14.♘e2 ♘c6

Now White can maintain an active play only at the price of his castling: 15.♘f4 ♙b6 16.♘d3 ♘c7 17.♜c1 ♘b5 18.♘c5 as it was in the game Dydyshko – A. Ivanov, USSR 1985, but after 18...♘bd4!, followed by 19.♘d7 ♘xf3+ 20.

♙xf3 (or 20.♙xf3 ♙b7 21.♘xf8 ♘xe5 with a crushing defeat) 20...♙xe3+ 21.♙xe3 ♜fc8 Black has both material and positional advantages.

In case of the better move

15.0-0

Black develops his initiative on the queenside with

15...♙b6

followed by a transfer of the knight with ♘c7-b5 and a rook duplication on the c-file, for example with 16.♜fd1 ♘c7 17.♜ac1 ♘b5 18.♙e1 ♜ac8 so that there is no 19.♜c2 because of 19...♘xe5.

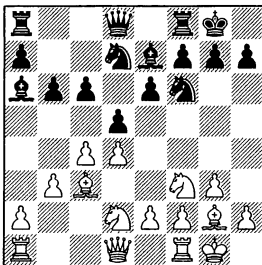
c3) 8.♙c3 d5

White can develop his initiative in two ways: c3a) 9.♘bd2 or c3b) 9.♘e5.

c3a) 9.♘bd2 ♘bd7 10.0-0

The line 10.♙c2 ♖b7 11.e4 dxe4 12.♘xe4 c5 13.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 14.dxc5 ♘xc5 15.♜d1 ♙e7 16.0-0 0-0 leads to simplifications and the play gets equalized.

10...0-0



11.♜e1

The most keen continuation. White is preparing an immediate

break-through in the centre.

White tested different moves in this position, but Black's response was usually standard: he organised a counterplay on the c-file with ♜c8 and c7-c5. There are some examples: 11.♖b2 ♖b7 12.♜c1 ♜c8 13.♜c2 c5 14.♙a1 dxc4 15.♘xc4 b5 16.♘e3 cxd4 17.♜xc8 ♙xc8 18.♙xd4 ♙a8 19.♜c1 a6= with an approximate equality, Yrjola – Shneider, Helsinki 1992.

11.♙c2. In this case Black's plan is even more efficient owing to the unlucky position of White's queen: 11...c5 12.♜fd1 ♜c8 13.♜ac1 cxd4 14.♘xd4 e5 15.♘f5 ♖a3 16.♖b2 ♙c5 with Black's initiative, Gligoric – Ljubojevic, Niksic 1983.

11.♙b1 ♜c8 12.♙b2 c5 13.♜ac1 ♜e8 14.♜fd1 ♙f8 15.e3 cxd4 16.♙xd4 ♙e7 17.♘e5 ♘xe5 18.♙xe5 dxc4 19.♘xc4 ♜ed8. After the slackening of tension in the centre the position is even.

11.a4 c5 12.a5. An attempt to attack immediately on the queenside gives Black a certain initiative after 12...b5 13.dxc5 ♘xc5 14.♜c1 bxc4 15.bxc4 ♘ce4 16.♘xe4 ♘xe4 17.cxd5 ♘xc3 18.♜xc3 ♙xa5 Karolyi – Tiviakov, Clichy 1991.

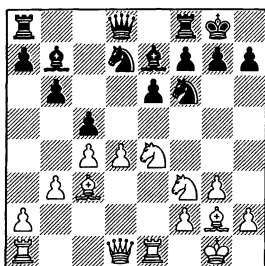
11.♜c1 ♜c8 12.♜c2 (Or 12.♖b2 ♖b7 13.♜e1 c5 14.cxd5 exd5 15.e3 ♜e8= Csom – Bunzmann, Budapest 1998) 12...♙c7 13.♜e1 c5 with an equal play for Black.

11...c5 12.e4

Other moves which occurred

in this position looks illogical or give no chances in the struggle for the initiative, so after 12.cxd5 exd5 13.a3 ♖e8 14.b4 ♙f8 15.e3 ♙d3 16.♗e5 ♗xe5 17.dxe5 ♗e4 Black holds a certain advantage Hebden – Wells, England 1991; after 12.♙b2 dxc4 13.♗xc4 ♙b7 14.♗fe5 ♙xg2 15.♗xg2 ♖c8= there is an equal play, Hebden – Nielsen, Gausdal 1992; and after 12.♗e5 cxd4 13.♙xd4 ♗xe5 14.♙xe5 ♖c8 Black's pieces are arranged harmoniously, Bonin – Moscow, New York 1993.

12...dxe4 13.♗xe4 ♙b7



14.♗fg5

This is the chief continuation of the variation which allows White to maintain the strain.

Besides it White has several continuations to choose from:

14.♗ed2 ♖e8 15.♖e2 ♖c7 16.♖ad1 ♖ad8 17.dxc5 ♙xc5=. White's position is solid, but Black is also none the worse, a draw, Kramnik – J. Polgar, Wijk aan Zee 2000.

14.♗xf6 ♙xf6 15.♖c1 (15.♗e5 leads to total mass exchanges and a draw: 15... ♙xg2 16.♗xg2 cxd4 17.♙xd4 ♗xe5 18.♙xe5 ♙xe5 19.

♖xe5 ♖c7 20.♖e3 draw, Kochyev – Sakaev, St.Petersburg 1992) 15...cxd4. Again White cannot hope to gain an advantage: 16.♙xd4 (Or 16.♗xd4 ♙xg2 17.♗xg2 a6 18.♖f3 ♖c8 19.♖ed1 ♖c7 20.♗e2 ♖fd8 with an approximate equality, Beliavsky – Ribli, Munich 1990) 16...♙xd4 17.♖c7 draw, Vaganian – Polugaevsky, Biel 1985.

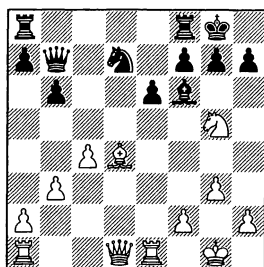
14.♗fd2. This move reduces the play to the main line after 14...cxd4 15.♙xd4 ♖c7 16.♗xf6+ ♙xf6 17.♙xb7 ♖xb7 18.♗e4 ref. to 14.♗fg5.

14.♗e5 Involving simplifications: 14...♙xe4 15.♙xe4 ♗xe4 16.♖xe4 ♗xe5 17.dxe5 ♖xd1+ 18.♖xd1 ♖fd8 with a draw in the game Ivkov – Bellin, Wijk aan Zee 2000.

14...cxd4 15.♙xd4

The line 15.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 16.♙xb7 ♖b8 with an equality is less interesting.

15...♖c7 16.♗xf6+ ♙xf6 17.♙xb7 ♖xb7



The forced exchanges simplified the position but White still keeps some initiative.

18.♗e4

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.g3 ♙a6

In case of 18.♙f3 ♙c7 19.♙xf6 ♘xf6 20.♙ad1 ♙ad8 21.♘e4 ♘xe4 22.♙xe4 a queen endgame, in which Black manages to keep the balance, is inevitable, for example: 22...♙xd1+ 23.♙xd1 ♙d8 24.♙d4 ♙xd4 25.♙xd4 f6 26.♙e4 ♙d7 27.b4 ♘f7 28.♙a8 (or 28.c5 bxc5 29.bxc5 ♙d5 30.♙c2 ♙c6 with a draw, Gyimesi – Almasi, Hungary 2000) 28...♙c7 29.h3 f5 30.a3 ♘f6= with an equality, Groszpeter – Tiviakov, Kusadasi 1990.

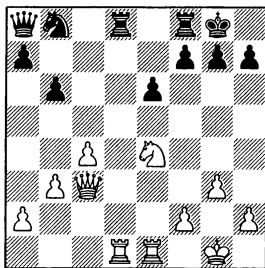
18...♙xd4 19.♙xd4 ♙ad8 20.♙ad1 ♙a8!

Step by step Black restores the balance.

21.♙c3

Also in case of 21.b4 f6 22.♙c3 ♘e5 23.f3 ♙c6 there is an approximate equality on the board, Groszpeter – Klingner, Polanica Zdroj 1985.

21...♘b8



In this position White can continue with 22.♙f3, though after 22...♘a6 23.♙xd8 (or 23.♙e3 ♘b4) 23...♙xd8 there was a more or less equal position in the game Eingorn – Lerner, USSR 1986. Another opportunity 22.♘f6+

Kasparov – Karpov, Moscow (m/18)1984 draws the game at once as after 22...♙xf6 23.♙xf6 a perpetual check is inevitable, for example 23...♘d7 24.♙xd7 ♙xd7 25.♙g5+.

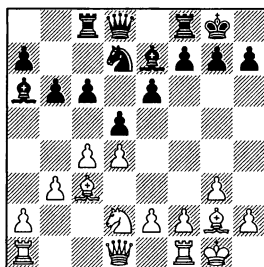
c3b) 9.♘e5 ♘fd7

The best response for White's play.

10.♘xd7 ♘xd7 11.♘d2 0-0 12.0-0

After 12.e4?! b5! 13.c5 b4! White suffers an attack: 14.♙xb4 ♙b8 15.a3 (or 15.♙c3 e5! with similar variations) 15...e5 16.exd5 exd4! 17.dxc6 (in case of 17.d6 Black starts a crushing attack with 17...♙xd6! 18.cxd6 ♙e8 19.♘e4 c5 20.♙d2 f5) 17...♘e5 18.♘c4 (18.♙e4 is bad owing to 18...f5 19.♘f3 ♙xe4 20.♘xe5 ♙d5 21.♘c4 e3 with Black's victory) 18...♘xc4 19.bxc4 ♙xc4. Despite simplifications, Black keeps a dangerous initiative Sjoberg – Chernin, European Cup 1983.

12...♙c8



Black is well prepared for the forthcoming middlegame. His pieces stand expediently, and the bishop on a6 keeps up the strain

on the diagonal a6–f1. On the other hand, White has a space advantage. To get something real, White has to launch a breakthrough in the centre:

13.e4

A preliminary 13.♖e1 after 13...c5 14.cxd5 exd5 results in a position where White has to be very accurate, so in case of 15.♖b1 cxd4 16.♙xd4 ♘c5 17.♖b2 ♘e6 18.♙f3 ♙b4 Black takes the initiative. In the game K. Hansen – Sax, Lugano 1989 the opponents continued with 19.♖ec1 ♖e7 20.♖xc8 ♖xc8 21.♙d1 ♘xd4 22.♘xd4 ♙c3 23.♖b1 ♙xd4 24.♖xd4 ♖a3 and Black gained an advantage. This plan can be performed more precisely with a preliminary 15.♙h3 ♖c7, so that after 16.♖b1 ♖e8 17.♖b2 ♙f8 18.♙f1 ♖c8 19.♙f3 the position is approximately equal, Portisch – Timman, Tilburg 1982. The policy advance 15.e4 now triggers off mass exchanges in the centre and brings the play to an absolute equality: 15...cxd4 16. ♙xd4 dxe4 17.♘xe4 ♘f6 with a draw, Vyzmanavin – Karpov, Tilburg 1993.

In case of another prepared move 13.a4 Black has several sufficient continuations. We shall regard the fundamental 13...c5. After 14.cxd5 exd5 15.♙xd5 cxd4 16.♙xd4 there is a good retreat 16...♘b8, and White is forced to lose by an exchange, though after 17.e4 ♙xf1 18.♘xf1 ♘c6 19.♘e3≡ he is compensated to

some extent, Torre – Van der Wiel, Biel 1985.

13...c5

Destroying White's centre.

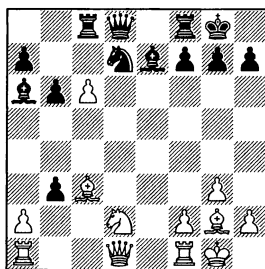
14.exd5 exd5 15.dxc5

In case of 15.♙xd5 ♘f6 16. ♙g2 (better is 16.♖e1 ♘xd5 17.cxd5 which leads to a full equality after 17...♙b7 18.dxc5 ♖xd5 19.♘e4 ♖xd1) 16...cxd4 17.♙b2 b5 Black takes the initiative.

15...dxc4 16.c6

The equality can be achieved easier from 16.♘xc4 ♖xc5 17.♖e1 (or 17.♙b4 ♙xc4 18.♙xc5 ♙xf1 19.♙xe7 ♖xe7) 17...♙xc4 18.bxc4 ♙f6 19.♖c1 ♙xc3 20.♖xc3 ♘f6 21.♙d3 ♖c7 22.♙d5=. White has a strong bishop but his pawn structure is worse than Black's. So the position is approximately equal.

16...cxb3



17.♖e1

In case of 17.♘c4 Black plays 17...b2!, and after 18.♙xb2 ♙xc4 19.♖g4 ♙f6 20.♙xf6 ♖xf6 21. ♖xc4 ♘e5 he stands slightly better, Karpov – Polugaevsky, Haninge 1990. The line 19.cxd7 ♖c7 20.♙e5 ♖c5 21.♖e1 ♙e6

22.♘d4 (Beliavsky – Lobron, Munich 1991) is stronger but still it gains no advantage to White as now Black has 22...♙xd7 23.♙xd7 ♖xd7 24.♖xg7 ♗xg7 25.♙xe7 ♞d8!= with an equality, for example 26.♞d1 ♖f5, etc.

17...b2!

The same response which breaks White's pawn chain and does not allow to open up the a-file.

18.♖xb2 ♘c5 19.♙g4

White gives up a pawn, hoping to arrange an attack. The line 19.♖a3 ♖b5 20.♘b3 ♖d6 has never been tested in practice and leads to unclear complications.

19...♖f6 20.♖xf6 ♙xf6 21.♘e4 ♙xc6 22.♙h4

After 22.♘xc5 ♙xc5 White simply loses a pawn, and an attempt to return it with 23.♙a4 ♖b5 24.♙xa7 resulted in a disaster in the game Van der Sterren – Karpov, Wijk aan Zee 1998: 24...♙c7 25.♖b7 ♙xb7 26.♙xb7 ♖c6 where White resigned because of the inevitable 27...♙d5 with a defeat.

22...♖b7 23.♞ad1

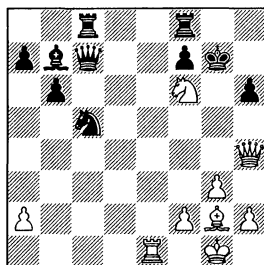
The position is very keen,

though Black's risk seems to be not very high.

23...h6

Perhaps Black gains an advantage with 23...♙ce8 as now there is no 24.♞d6 ♙xd6 25.♘xd6 ♙xe1+ 26.♖f1 ♖a6 27.♘c4 ♙e4 with a decisive material advantage.

24.♞d6 ♙c7 25.♙xh6 gxh6 26.♘f6+ ♔g7



White has no more than a perpetual check.

27.♘h5+

In case of 27.♖h3? ♙c6 28.♘h5+ ♖h8 which occurred recently in the game Soppe – Zarnicki, Dos Hermanas 2000, there was already no perpetual check.

27...♖h7 28.♘f6+ ♔g7 29.♘h5+ with a draw.

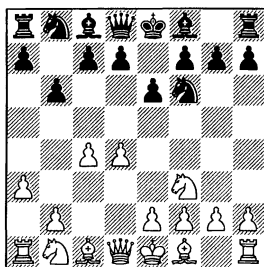
Summary

White has a space advantage. Black should prepare for a breakthrough e2–e4 in the centre and organize then a counterplay with the standard c7–c5, allowing to use the c-file. Black's chances are none the worse in the subsequent sharp play.

Chapter 13 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 cb 5.♘c3 d5

Petrosian System

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6
4.a3



This is the initial position of the Petrosian System. This prophylactic move was introduced into the chess practice by the ninth World Champion. With this move White once and for all prevents a binding of the knight which he is going to move on c3. The loss of time is insignificant here as White has already gained a space advantage. The main initial of the system appears after

4...♗b7 5.♘c3

This position can arise with a reversed order of moves: 4.♘c3 ♗b7 5.a3, though in this case Black has also 4...♗b4 which will be regarded in the next chapter.

5...d5

White has three basic continuations: a) 6.♗g5, b) 6.♖c2 and 6.cxd5. Other moves do not occur so often:

6.e3. An attempt to use the fourth move in order to organize an attack on the queenside. 6...♗e7 7.b4 (a passive 7.♗d2 provides Black with a good play after 7...0-0 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.♗d3 c5 10.dxc5 ♗xc5) 7...0-0 8.c5 a5 9.♗b2 axb4 10.axb4 ♖xa1 11.♗xa1 bxc5 12.bxc5 The wedge on c5 restricts the mobility of Black's pieces to some extent but it does not create serious problems, all the more so Black has a development advantage. After 12...♘bd7 13.♗d3 ♖a8 14.0-0 ♗a6 15.♗xa6 ♖xa6 16.♖c2 ♖b8 Black's position is at least none the worse.

6.♖a4+. This continuation is not very popular as well (combined with an early knight attack 6.♘e5, this idea becomes just doubtful: 6...♗e7 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 8.♖a4+ c6 9.♘d5 ♖xd5. Now White experiences development problems: 10.f3 0-0 11.e4 ♖d8 12.♗e3 c5 13.dxc5 – or 13.0-0-0 ♖c7 with an initiative – 13...♗xc5

14.♙xc5 bxc5. The threat of ♖g5 does not allow to develop the bishop, and in case of an active 15.♖b5 Black delivers a counter-strike of 15...♙xe4 16.fxex4 ♖h4+ 17.♙d1 ♜d8+ with a dangerous attack) 6... c6 7.cxd5 exd5 8.g3 (Another way of development is 8.♙f4 ♙e7 9.e3 0–0 10.♙e2 ♘bd7 11.0–0. Now Black achieves the bishop pair advantage with natural moves 11...♘h5 12.♙e5 f6 13.♙g3 ♘xg3 14.hxg3, redoubles his control over the central squares with 14...f5 15.♘a2 a5 16.♘c1 ♙d6 and gains some advantage, Vladimirov – Ibragimov, Dubai 2000) 8...♙d6 9.♙g2 ♘bd7 10.0–0 0–0. Both sides completed their development successfully. The chances in the complex middlegame are more or less equal. 11.♙f4 ♖e7 12.♜ad1 ♜fe8 13.e3 c5. This advance is fundamental in many variations of this system. Black gets so called hanging pawns, which are convenient for him owing to the active position of his pieces. Yet, in general the position should be estimated as approximately equal. The play can develop as follows: 14.♙xd6 (in case of 14.♜fe1 with the threat to open up the play with 15.dxc5 bxc5 16.e4, using the opposition of the rook against Black's queen, Black can simply lock up the centre with 14...c4, threatening with a queenside attack: a6, b5, etc., so after 15.♘b5 ♙b8! 16.♙xb8 ♘xb8 the square e4 is under Black's firm control

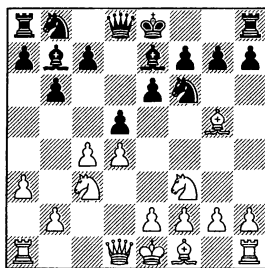
and he keeps an opportunity to advance the a– and b–pawns) 14...♙xd6 15.dxc5 bxc5, leading to a complex position with mutual chances, Gelfand – Karpov, Reggio Emilia 1992.

a) 6.♙g3

This move frequently results in an exchange of the dark-squared bishops which is usually beneficial for Black. The obvious response is

6...♙e7

White applied various continuations here but Karpov carries out the same plan almost in all variations: after castling kingside he advances c5 and tries to release the strain and exchange material. Let's regard exemplary games:



7.♖a4+

Exacerbating the struggle. Other continuations were seen too. After 7.e3 0–0 8.♙xf6 (Or 8.♜c1 h6 9.♙h4 ♘bd7 10.♙d3 c5 11.0–0 cxd4 12.exd4 dxc4 13.♙xc4 ♜c8, creating a typical position with the isolated d–pawn. Black's pieces are placed well and the strategically important square d5 is under his control. The oppo-

nents continued with 14.♔d3 ♖h5 15.♔g3 ♜xg3 16.hxg3 ♜f6 17.♖e2 ♞c7 and Black's play is a slightly better, Andersson – Karpov, London 1984) 8...♙xf6 9.cxd5 exd5 10.♔d3 c5 Black gained the advantage of two bishops. White redoubles pressure upon the opponent's central pawns. 11.0–0 g6 12.♞c1 ♜c6 There is a complex position with mutual chances on the board, Adianto – Karpov, Cap d'Agde 1998 .

The next game developed in a different way: 7.♖c2 0–0 8.e3 ♜bd7 9.cxd5 exd5 10.♔d3 c5 11.0–0 ♞e8 12.♞ad1 ♜e4. This time it is Black who has an isolated pawn. 13.♔xe7 ♖xe7 14.dxc5 ♜dxc5 15.♔e2 ♞ed8 16.♞c1 ♞ac8 . Black's pieces are very active compensating him the weakness on d5, R. Bagirov – Bakre, St. Petersburg 2000.

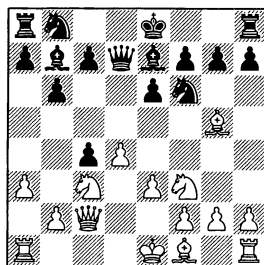
An early exchange on d5 with 7.cxd5 ♜xd5 8.♔xe7 ♜xe7 results in simplifications and does not create any difficulties for Black. 9.e3 ♜d7 10.♔e2 0–0 11.0–0 c5. In this line an undermining of the centre allows to equalise the play. 12.♞c1 (or 12.dxc5 ♜xc5 13.b4 ♜e4) 12...cxd4 13.♜xd4 a6. Black's bishop is very powerful. 14.b4 (the position is even also after an immediate 14.♔f3 ♔xf3 15.♜xf3 ♜f6) 14...♞c8 15.♖b3 ♜g6 16.♔f3 ♔xf3 17.♜xf3 ♖c7. In case of an attack Black's queen occupies b7 which is a convenient

ges. The opponents agreed to a draw in several moves, Andersson – Karpov, Marostica 1989.

7...♖d7 8.♖c2

After 8.♖xd7+ ♜bxd7 9.♜b5 Black's position looks unsafe. 9...♜d8 10.cxd5 ♜xd5 11.e4 ♔f6 12.♔f4 ♜e8 However, as it turned out his position is strong enough. Having covered c7, Black begins to press back the opponent's active pieces, and after 13.♔d3 (A breakthrough in the centre with 13.d5 results in the forced line 13...exd5 14.0–0–0 ♜d6 15.exd5 and allows Black to take control over the important central squares: 15...a6 16.♜c3 ♔f6 17.♜d4 ♞e8 18.♔e2 ♜c5 19.♖c2 ♜ce4 and Black's position is a slightly better, Gofshtein – Alterman, Israel 1996) 13...h6 14.0–0–0 c6 15.♜c3 ♔d6 16.♔e3 (Or 16.♔xd6 ♜xd6 17.e5 ♜e8 18.♜e4 ♖e7 19.♞he1 ♞c8 20.♖b1 c5 21.♔b5 ♔xe4+ 22.♞xe4 ♜b8 23.dxc5 ♞xc5 with an approximate equality, Kipper – Breier, Germany 1996) 16...♖e7 there was an unclear position with mutual chances Van Wely – Karpov, Groningen 1995.

8...dxc4 9.e3



1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♟f3 b6 4.a3 ♙b7 5.♟c3 d5

9...♙xf3!

It's dangerous to continue with the standard 9...0–0 10. ♙xc4 c5 11.dxc5 ♙xc5. Though Karpov managed to make a quick draw in the line 12.♙d3 h6 13.♙xf6 gxf6 Gelfand – Karpov, Dortmund 1997, the analysis of the game revealed that 14.♙d1! could have gained a considerable advantage to White.

10.gxf3 b5 11.♙xf6 ♙xf6

There is a very keen position on the board.

12.a4

In case of 12.♙e4 0–0 the queen is caught in all lines after a capture of the rook: 13.♙xa8 (or 13.♙xc4 bxc4 14.♙xa8 c6 15.♟e4 ♙e7) 13...♟c6 14.♙xf8 (or 14.♙b7 ♙b8 15.♙a6 ♙b6) 14...♟xf8 15. ♟xb5 e5 with a decisive advantage.

12...c6 13.axb5

The situation is unclear after 13.f4 a6.

13...cxb5 14.♙e4 0–0

In this position both sides take chances. White lacks material but has the initiative, Gelfand – Lautier, Biel 1997.

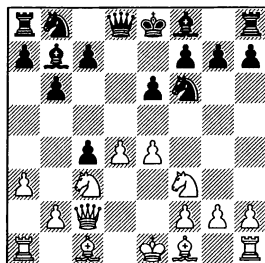
b) 6.♙c2

A new interesting continuation with a temporary pawn sacrifice.

6...dxc4 7.e4

In case of 7.♙g5 ♙xf3 8.exf3 ♙xd4 9.♙d1 White's threats look dangerous, however after 9... ♙e5+ 10.♙e4 (or 10.♟e4 ♙e7) 10...♟bd7 11.♙xf6 ♙xe4+ 12.fxe4

♟xf6 there is no compensation for the sacrificed material, for example 13.♟b5 ♙d6 14.f3 a6 15. ♟xd6+ cxd6 16.♙xd6 b5.



7...c5

The same releasing advance. There is no use in clinging to the extra pawn.

8.d5

Another fundamental continuation is 8.dxc5 ♙xc5 9.♙xc4 ♟bd7 10.♙f4 (In a game played by two computers there was 10. 0–0 ♙c7 11.♙d3 ♙c8 12.♙e2 0–0 13.♟b5 ♙b8 14.b4 ♙e7 15.♙b2 a6 with a complex play Nimzo 7.32 – Fritz 6, Computer Tournament 2000) 10...a6 11.0–0 ♙c8. As usual in these positions, Black organises a counterplay on the c-file. 12.♙e2 (no 12.♙e2 because of 12...♟xe4!) 12...b5 13.♙d3. Thus a position with mutual chances appears. After 13...♟h5 14.♙g5 ♙c7 15.a4 h6 16.♙d2 b4 17.♟a2 a5 there was an unclear position in the game Gofshtein – Schlosser, Brno 1993.

8...exd5 9.exd5

White created an outpost on d5 which restricts the mobility of the opponent's pieces to some

extent, but Black finds an efficient plan of a counterplay.

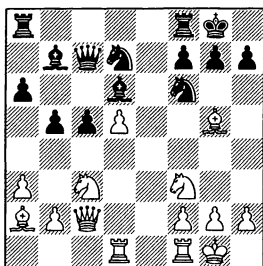
9...a6 10.♟xc4 b5

Making the bishop retreat to a less active position.

11.♟a2 ♟d6 12.♟g5 0-0 13.0-0

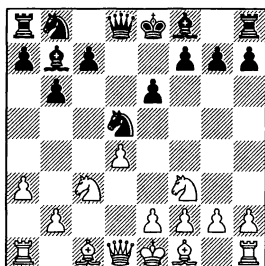
In case of 13.♞e4 there is 13...♞bd7 with the idea of 14.♞xd6 ♞e7+ with equal chances.

13...♞bd7 14.♞ad1 ♞c7



The position is approximately equal, and an untimely aggression with **15.♟b1 ♞fe8 16.♞f5 g6 17.♞h3** led White to a difficult situation after **17...b4** in the game Avrukh – Anand, Israel 2000.

c) 6.cxd5 ♞xd5



White has three main continuations: c1) 7.♟d2, c2) 7.♞c2

or c3) 7.e3. Other possible moves present no problems to Black.

The line 7.♞xd5 ♞xd5 8.g3 c5 leads to early simplifications and an equalisation after the forced 9.♟e3 cxd4 10.♞xd4 (In case of 10.♟xd4 ♞c6 11.♟c3 ♞e4 the chances are equal as well) 10... ♞xd4 11.♟xd4 ♞c6, and a draw is the most probable result.

The gambit variation 7.e4 ♞xc3 8.bxc3 ♟xe4 9.♞e5 seems to be disproved with 9...♞h4! 10.g3 (10.♞a4+ c6 11.d5 ♟d6 12.♞xf7 A desperate attempt. – In case of 12.♞xc6 Black gains a great advantage after a mere 12...0-0 – 12...♞xf7 13.dxe6+ ♞xe6 14.♟e2. The piece can't be returned, but even now there is no actual compensation after 14...♞d7+ Nogueiras – Beliavsky, Thessaloniki 1984; or 14.♟d3 is no good because of 14...♞e8! 15.♟xe4 ♞d7 with a victory) 10... ♞d8. In case of 11.♞a4+ c6 12.f3 ♟d5 13.c4 (or 13.♞d1 f6 14.♞g4 c5 15.♟b5+ ♟c6 16.♟c4 cxd4! 17.♟xe6 ♟c5+ with an overwhelming advantage Staniszewski – Stempin, Poland 1984) Black has 13...b5 14.cxb5 (no 14.♞b3 bxc4 15.♞b7 ♞d7 16.♞xd7 because of 16...c5!) 14...♟d6 15.bxc6 0-0 with a considerable positional advantage. White's best move 11.♟b5+, followed by 11...c6 12.f3 cxb5 13.fx4 ♞d7 14.♞xd7 ♞xd7 15.0-0 ♞c8 16.♞f3 e5, leads to a position where Black forces a capture on e5: 17.♞f5 (or 17.dxe5 ♟c5 18.♞h1

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♟f3 b6 4.a3 ♙b7 5.♟c3 d5

0–0) 17...♙xf5 18. ♖xf5 ♙d6 (Mikhalevsky – A. Sokolov, Biel 1992), and now in case of 19.dxe5 (otherwise White simply loses a pawn) 19...♙c5+ Black has a stable advantage owing to numerous weak points of White's pawns.

7.♙a4+. Another not prepared queenside attack. 7...♟d7 8.♟xd5 ♙xd5. Black has a solid position and some development advantage. White has three ways: the fundamental 9.♟e5 in the game Ilic – Stean, London 1983, was followed by 9...a6 10.♙f4 (in case of 10.♟c6 there is an efficient 10...♟c5! 11.dxc5 ♙d7, and it's already White who has to equalize) 10...♙d6 11.♖c1 (better was 11.e3 ♙xe5 12.dxe5 c5 13.e4 b5 14.♙c2 ♙b7 15.♖d1 with mutual chances) 11...b5 12.♙c2 ♙f6 13.♟xd7 ♙xf4 14.e3 ♙h4 15.♟c5 0–0 and Black's position was slightly better. Another active move 9.♙g5 ♙e7 10.♙xe7 ♙xe7 11.♟e5 (White also gained nothing from 11.♖c1 c6 12.e3 0–0 13.♙e2 e5 14.0–0 c5 15.dxc5 ♟xc5 with an easy equalisation, Piket – Polugaevsky, Monaco 1993) gave some initiative to Black after 11...a6 12.♟c6 ♙d6 13.♖c1 0–0 14.e3 ♖fc8 Wilder – H. Olafsson, New York 1987. In these variations Black's bishop on d5 is very active and impedes the development of White's kingside. It's better for White to turn back to the usual way of development: 9.♙c2 c5 10.e4 ♙b7 11.♙e3 a6 12.♖d1 ♙c7 to begin a complex

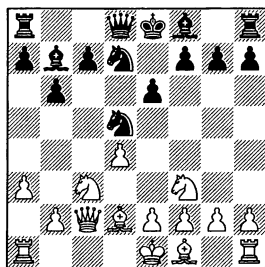
play with mutual chances after 13.d5 exd5 14.exd5 ♙d6 Mala-niuk – I. Novikov, USSR 1986.

c1) 7.♙d2

A solid continuation. In case of an exchange on c3 White is prepared to capture with the bishop and thus achieve an active position. The shortcoming of this plan is its sluggishness.

7...♟d7 8.♙c2

Now it's turn to advance e2–e4. The line 8.♟xd5 exd5 9.g3 ♙d6 10.♙g5 ♙e7 11.♙xe7 ♙xe7 12.♖c1 c5 looks illogical as now the winning of a pawn with 13.♙h3 0–0 14.dxc5 bxc5 15.♙xd7 ♙xd7 16.♖xc5 allows Black to create dangerous threats: 16...♙h3 17.♙d3 ♖ac8 18.♖xc8 ♖xc8. Black's chances are higher owing to the threat of d5–d4 Akopian – J. Polgar, Merida 2000.



8...c5

In this situation Black accomplishes the fundamental advance before castling, using the sluggishness of his opponent's plan.

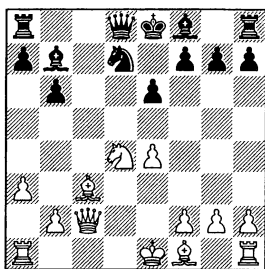
9.e4

A natural continuation. There was another plan here, connected

with a refusal to castle 9.♘xd5 exd5 10.dxc5 bxc5 11.e3 ♖e7 12.♙d3 g6 13.h4. White attacks on the kingside but Black's position is strong. A mutually keen struggle followed after 13...♗b6 14.h5 ♙f6 in the game Piket – Karpov, Monaco 1999.

9...♗xc3 10.♙xc3 cxd4 11.♘xd4

If White captures with the bishop with 11.♙xd4, then Black fulfils a similar plan: 11...♞c8 12.♙c3 a6 13.♙d3 ♖e7 with the same moves. 14.0–0 ♙f6 Black has already gained a good position, and White's attempt to switch to the tactical play with 15.e5 (after 15.♞fd1 ♙xc3 16.bxc3 0–0 Black is better) 15...♗xe5 16.♗xe5 ♙xe5 17.♙xa6 encounters a refutation of 17...♙xh2+! 18.♙xh2 ♗h4 19.♙g1 ♙xa6 20.♞fe1 0–0+ with a considerable advantage to Black Kamsky – Karpov, Monaco 1995.



11...a6!

An important move. The square b5 should be taken under control.

12.g3

The line 12.♞d1 ♗c7 13.♙e2

♙e7 14.0–0 0–0= produced an approximately equal position in the game Nogueiras – Vilela, Cienfuegos 1984.

12...♗c7 13.♙g2 ♙c5 14.♗e2

White can move the rook at once: 14.♞c1 0–0 15.0–0 ♞ac8 16.♗b3 ♙e7 with a complex play Akopian – Ehlvest, Moscow 94.

14...0–0 15.0–0 ♞ac8

As usual, Black begins to play on the c–file, this is Karpov's favourite strategic technique.

16.♞fd1 ♞fd8 17.♞ac1 ♙f8 18.♗e3 ♗c5 19.♙e1

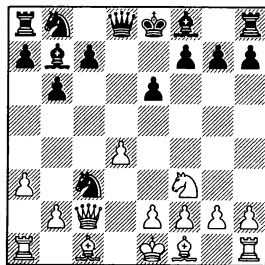
White experiences some problems because of his inaccuracy on the move 14, for example there is no 19.b4 because of 19...♗b3! 20.♗xb3 ♞xd1+ 21.♞xd1 ♗xc3, launching the battery on the c–file.

19...♗d7 20.♞d2 ♗a4 with Black's initiative Akopian – Salov, Tilburg 1994.

c2) 7.♗c2

This is one of the popular branches. White is planning the advance e2–e4.

7...♗xc3



Now White can play either

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♘b7 5.♘c3 d5

c2a) 8.♘xc3 or c2b) 8.bxc3.

Capturing with the queen, White abandons the pawn advance in the centre but he puts pressure on the c-file.

c2a) 8.♘xc3 ♘d7 9.♘g5 ♘e7 10.♘xe7 ♖xe7

Black must capture with the king, losing his right to castle. Still this achievement gains no real profit to White as Black's position has no weak points and it's hard to open up the play.

11.e3

There is also 11.g3 to be followed, for example, by 11...♘f6 12.♘g2 ♘d6 13.b4 ♖ad8. White prevented the advance c7–c5 but Black had created threats on the d-file. After 14.0–0 ♘xf3 15.♘xf3 ♘xd4 16.♘xc7+ ♖d7= the position is equal Bareev – Karpov, Belgrade 1996.

11...♖c8 12.♘e2

The line 12.♘b5 c6 13.♘e2 reduces the play to the same variation after 13...c5.

12...c5

Black sacrifices the pawn.

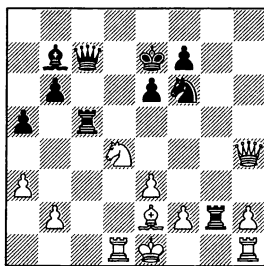
13.dxc5

If White refuses to take the sacrifice, then the play is even: 13.♖d1 ♘f6 14.0–0 (or 14.dxc5 ♘c7 15.cxb6 ♘xc3+ 16.bxc3 ♖xc3 17.bxa7 ♖xa3 18.♖c1 ♘xf3 19.♘xf3 ♖xa7 with a full equality) 14...♘d5 15.♖c1 a5 16.♖fd1 cxd4 17.♘xd4 ♘xd4. Similarly to the previous variation, the exchanges go on: 18.♘xd4 ♖xc1 19.♖xc1 ♖c8 with a drawing position Seirawan – Karpov, Brussels 1992.

13...♖xc5 14.♘xg7 ♖g8 15. ♘xh7 ♖xg2

Black appears to have a strong initiative, and his king is placed better than White's.

16.♘h4+ ♘f6 17.♖d1 ♘c7 18. ♘d4 a5



19.♘f3

White should strive for exchanges. Now after an incautious 19.♘b5? the game Portisch – Karpov, Biel 1996 came to a quick end: 19...♖xb5! 20.♘xb5 ♖g4, and White resigned.

13...♘xf3 20.♘xf3 ♖h5 21. ♘f4

21.♘a4 is bad because of 21...b5 22.♘d4 ♘g4 with dangerous threats.

21...♘xf4 22.exf4 The play can develop as follows: **22...♘e4 23.♖f1 ♖b5 24.♖d4 ♘c5 25.b4 axb4 26.axb4 ♖xb4 27.♖xb4 ♘d3+ 28.♖e2 ♘xb4** with a slight advantage to Black.

c2b) 8.bxc3

This policy capture creates more serious problems for Black.

8...♘d7 9.e4 c5 10.♘f4

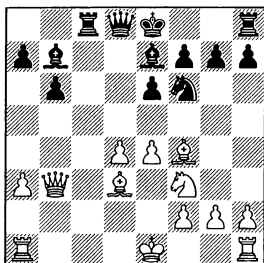
In case of 10.♘d3 ♘c7 11.♘b1 (or 11.♘b2 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♘xc2 13.♘xc2 ♘a6 with an approxi-

mate equality) 11...♔d6 Black is OK, for example 12.0-0 ♕f4 13.♖b2 0-0 14.♖d1 ♖fd8 15.♖e2 ♖ac8 16.♖ad1 ♘f8 17.♖fe1 ♖c6 with a good play for Black, Elgue-zabal – Varas, Spain 2000.

10...cxd4 11.cxd4 ♖c8 12.♖b3

There is also 12.♖b1 ♔e7 13.♔d3 0-0 14.0-0 ♖c3 15.♖c1 ♖xc1+ 16.♔xc1 ♖a8 with a complex play, Khalifman – Howell, New York 1990, as well as 12.♖a4 a6 13.♔d3 b5 14.♖b3 ♔e7 15.0-0 0-0= with an even position, Anastasian – Mikhalchishin, USSR 1987

12...♔e7 13.♔d3 ♘f6



There is the crucial position of the variation on the diagram.

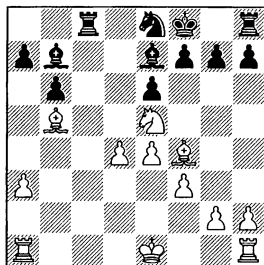
14.♖b5+

This continuation is the most unpleasant for Black. Other opportunities were tested also. A breakthrough in the centre with 14.d5 comes too early. After 14...exd5 15.♖d1 0-0 16.0-0 Black gains slightly better chances owing to a queen sacrifice with 16...dxe4! 17.♔xe4 ♘xe4 18.♖xd8 ♖fxd8 Miles – Polugaevsky, Sarajevo 1987.

If White defends the pawn with 14.♖b1, then Black gets a better play easily: 14...0-0 15.♔d2 (in case of 15.0-0 Black continues with 15...h6, threatening with an intrusion on c3) 15...♘e8 16.0-0 ♘d6 17.e5 ♘f5 18.♔xf5 exf5 19.♖xf5 ♔xf5 20.♖xf3 ♖xd4 with a certain advantage Cramling – Karpov, Spain 1996.

A pawn sacrifice with 14.♖b5 ♘f8 15.0-0 ♘xe4 results in an unclear and keen play. After 16.♖ac1 White has some compensation. In the game Khalifman – Anand, Moscow 1987, a complex struggle followed after 16...g5 17.♖xc8 ♔xc8 18.♔c1 ♔g7.

14...♖d7 15.♘e5 ♖xb5 16.♔xb5+ ♘f8 17.f3 ♘e8



In the present position White keeps some initiative. Still Black usually manages to equalize the game, playing accurately. Now he wants to drive away White's active forces with f7–f6 and ♘d6.

Also 18.♘d7+ ♔g8 19.0-0 was seen here with 19...g5! and the following exemplary lines: 20.♔e5 (or 20.♔g3 ♔g7 21.a4 ♘d6 22.♔e5+ f6 23.♔xd6 ♔xd6 24.a5 ♔f4 with an active position)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♙b7 5.♘c3 d5

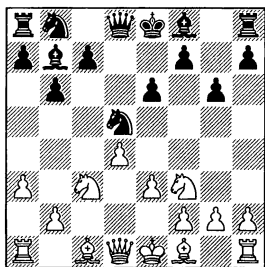
20...f6 21.♙g3 ♘f7 22.f4 ♘d6 23.♙d3 (A piece sacrifice with 23.fxg5 ♘xb5 24.gxf6 ♙d6 is incorrect and gains an advantage to Black, Browne – Miles, New York 1987) 23...♙e8 with a keen but quite admissible play for Black.

In the game Timman – Karpov, Jakarta (m/19) 1993 White played differently: 18.♙d7 ♙d8 19.♙c6, but even in this situation Black managed to press back his opponent's active pieces and started exchanges: 19...♙c8 20.♙e3 f6 21.♘d3 ♙d7 22.♙xd7 ♙xd7 23.♙e2 ♙f7 24.♙hc1 ♘d6 25.a4 ♙c8. Soon the opponents agreed to a draw.

c3) 7.e3

A solid method. White delays the advance of the e4–pawn and continues his development. Besides he wants to find out what formation his opponent is going to build.

7...g6



Black proceeds to a structure which resembles some variations of the Gruenfeld Defence. White's basic opportunities are c3a) 8.♙b5 and c3b) 8.♘xd5, other

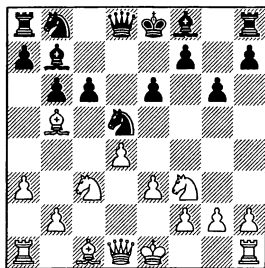
moves are less popular.

8.h4. This advance is non-typical of the system in question but still it leads to an interesting struggle. 8...♙g7 9.h5 0–0 10.hxg6 hxg6. White has opened up the h–file but his own king is not secured, and the attack is not prepared. 11.♙c2 (In case of 11.♘e4 ♘d7 12.♘eg5 ♘5f6 13.♙c4 ♙e7 14.♙c2 c5 Black threatens to begin a counterattack on the c–file, and White's attempt to create immediate threats with 15.♘h4 encounters 15...♙d5 that can be followed by 16.e4 ♙xc4 17.♙xc4 ♙ac8 and Black has a slight advantage, Miles – Cebalo, Reggio Emilia 1984/85) c5 12.♘xd5 ♙xd5 13.♙c4 ♙c6. Having made several active moves, White experiences some difficulties. 14.dxc5 ♘d7 15.♙d2 (In the line 15.cxb6 ♙fc8! 16.♙d1 ♙xc4 17.♙xd7 ♙c3+! 18.♙d2 ♙a6 White suffers a crushing attack) 15...b5 16.♙e2 ♙xc5 17.♙b3 (or 17.♙xc5 ♘xc5 18.♙b4 ♙fc8 with Black's initiative) 17...♙d5 18.♙xb5 ♙xb5 19.♙xb5 ♘e5, and Black returns the pawn and keeps the initiative, Cebalo – Timman, Zagreb 1985. It's better for White to release the centre with 11.♘xd5 exd5 and complete his development. 12.♙d2 ♘d7 13.♙d3 ♙e8. After 14.♙c3 a5 15.♙c2 ♙a6 there was a complex position with mutual chances in the game Razuvaev – A. Rodriguez, Moscow 1985.

The continuation 8.♙d3 ♙g7

after 9.♟xd5 exd5 10.b4 0–0 11.0–0 c6 produces a position of the main variation but the place of White's bishop is slightly different (on d3 in the present line). White accomplishes an active plan on the queenside: 12.a4 ♞d7 (there is no 12...a5 13.bxa5 ♞xa5 because of 14.♙d2 ♞a8 15.a5 bxa5 16.♟b3 with White's advantage). After 13.a5 b5 White opens up the centre: 14.e4 dxe4 15.♙xe4 Still, Black has a solid position and keeps control over d5. After 15...a6 16.♙g5 ♞f6 17.♙c2 ♟d6 18.♟d2 ♞d5 19.♞ab1 ♞fe8 20.♙h6 ♞e7 21.♙xg7 ♟xg7 22.♞fe1 ♞ae8 23.♞xe7 ♞xe7 24.♞e5 ♙c8 25.h3 the game was drawn Tkachiev – Anand, Shenyang 2000.

c3a) 8.♙b5+ c6



White temporarily restricted the mobility of the bishop on b7 but the releasing advance c7–c5 will follow in several moves, irrespective of where White's bishop retreats. White can retreat with the bishop to a4, c4 or d3. After 9.♟xd5 exd5 10.♙d3 ♙g7 11.b4 0–0 there is a position of the main variation but White loses a tempo, Piket – Lauber,

Germany 2000.

1) 9.♙a4

The temporary binding changes nothing.

9...♙g7 10.0–0 0–0 11.e4 ♟xc3 12.bxc3 c5

One of the typical formations of the Petrosian System was achieved after a series of natural moves. White managed to build a mighty pawn centre but Black's pieces are perfectly placed and his bishops exert strong pressure on the central squares.

13.♙g5

White ventures on a forced line. The play after 13.♞e1 is more characteristic of this variation, for example 13...♞c6 14.♙g5 ♟d6 15.e5 ♟c7. White creates an outpost on e5 but weakens his light squares. 16.h4 h6 17.♙e3 ♞e7 18.h5 ♞f5. Black's king has found a convenient stand, and in the forthcoming complex struggle Black's chances are none the worse, Pelletier – Huzman, Biel 2000.

13...f6 14.♙e3 ♙xe4 15.dxc5 bxc5 16.♙xc5 ♟xd1 17.♞fxd1 ♞c8

White's pieces are rather active but his pawn structure is severely damaged. Both sides have equal chances, Piket – Karpov, Monaco 2000.

2) 9.♙c4

White's bishop stands more active than in the previous variation, but Black's plan stays unchanged anyway:

9...♙g7 10.e4 ♟xc3 11.bxc3

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♟f3 b6 4.a3 ♙b7 5.♟c3 d5

c5 12.♙g5 ♖d6

As it can be easily seen, the play develops according to the same pattern.

13.♖d3 ♟c6 14.♞d1

Black also has a good play in case of 14.e5 ♖d7

14...0-0 15.0-0 ♟a5 with a complex play Pavlovic – H. Olafsson, Erevan 1988.

3) 9.♙d3

This retreat does not change Black's plan as well.

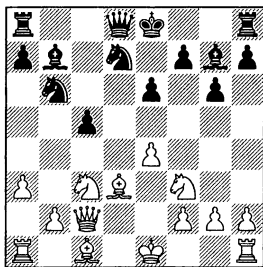
9...♙g7 10.♟e2

White deviates from the general line. A typical picture appears on the board after 10.e4 ♟xc3 11.bxc3 c5 12.♙g5 ♖d6 13.e5 ♖d7 14.0-0 0-0 to be followed by ♟c6 and the arrangement of the rooks on the d- and c-files.

10...c5

This advance again gives a convenient play to Black despite the weakening of his queenside pawn chain.

11.dxc5 bxc5 12.♖c2 ♟d7 13.e4 ♟5b6 14.♟c3



14...c4

The "weak" pawn turns into an outpost. After 15.♙e2 ♟c5

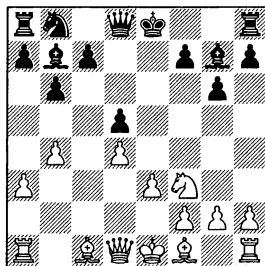
16.0-0 ♖c7 17.♙g5 0-0 18.♟d2 ♞fc8 there is a position where Black's chances are none the worse, Lobron – Karpov, Dortmund 1995.

c3b) 8.♟xd5 exd5 9.b4

There is also an interesting opportunity of 9.♙b5+ c6 10.♙d3 ♙g7, opening up the centre with 11.e4. After 11...dxe4 12.♙xe4 0-0 13.0-0 Black must be careful. In the game Black continued with 13...♟d7 14.♙g5 ♖c7 15.♞c1 ♞fe8 16.♞e1 and then equalised with the policy advance 16...c5, Kramnik – Anand, Linares 1993.

An original bishop manoeuvre can be performed after 9.♙d2 ♟d7 10.♖a4 a6 11.♞c1 ♙g7 12.♙b4. The simplest response for Black is 12...a5 13.♙d2 0-0, and if 14.♙b5, then 14...♟b8, preparing the advance c7-c6. After 15.0-0 c6 the play is equal.

9...♙g7



This is the crucial position of the system. White managed to prevent the important advance c7-c5, and now he is going to advance the a-pawn and develop his initiative on the queenside. Black's position is somewhat pas-

sive, but still quite solid as it is clear from the example of the game Tkachiev – Anand, Sheenyang 2000.

10. ♖b2

In the next game the struggle developed in a similar way:

10. ♖e2 0–0 11. 0–0 c6 12. a4 a6 13. ♖b2 ♘d7 14. ♖b3 b5 15. a5 (Kramnik – Lutz, Germany 1993) and now V. Kramnik considers 15... ♖e7 16. ♖ac1 f5 to be the best continuation, preventing an opening up of the centre.

10...c6 11. ♖e2 0–0 12. 0–0 ♘d7 13. ♖b3

This position often occurs with reversed moves: 10. ♖b3 0–0 11. ♖e2 ♘d7 12. ♖b2 c6 13. 0–0

13... ♖e8 14. ♖fc1

In case of 14. ♖c3 Black can continue with 14... ♘f6 15. ♘d2 ♖c8, transferring the bishop to a more active position. After 16. ♖fc1 (or 16. b5 c5) 16... ♖d7 17. ♖d3 a6 18. a4 ♖e7 19. a5 b5 Black's position is quite solid.

14...a5!

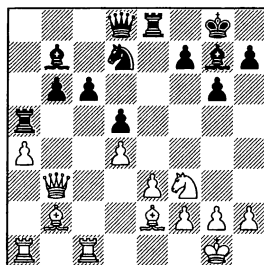
Since White refrains from the advance a3–a4, Black can organise a counterplay on the queen-side.

15. bxa5

After 15. ♖c3 axb4 16. axb4

♖e7 the character of the struggle does not change.

15... ♖xa5 16. a4



16...c5

Black managed to obtain a good play. We give the rest of the game as an illustration of the variation: 17. ♖b5 c4 18. ♖c2 ♖e6 19. ♖c3 ♖a7 20. ♖cb1 ♘b8 21. ♖a2 ♘c6 22. ♖ab2 ♘a5 23. ♘e5 ♖c7 24. ♖f1 ♖c8 25. f4. White makes a mistake in a mutually keen position. 25...f6 26. e4 fxe5 27. exd5 exd4 28. ♖xa5 bxa5. For the exchange Black obtains a pair of joined passed pawns. 29. dxe6 ♖xe6 30. ♖e4 ♖d6 31. ♖e2 ♖f7 32. f5 d3. The complications are over. The passed pawns decide the fate of the game. 33. fxg6 hxg6 34. ♖e1 d2 35. ♖d1 ♖d4 36. ♖xd4 ♖xd4+ 37. ♖h1 c3 38. ♖d3 ♖e7 39. ♖b1 ♖a2, and White resigned Shirov – Karpov, Monaco 1995.

Summary

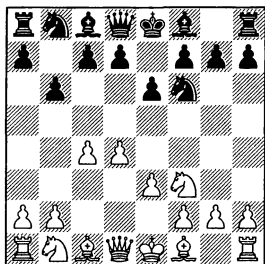
Again, as in every other variation of the Queen's Indian Defence, White has a space advantage. Black's plan for the organization of a counterplay should be chosen depending on the opponent's play. A timely c7–c5 allows Black to get sufficient counter chances.

Chapter 14 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.e3 ♙b7

Centre System

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.e3

This continuation defines the Centre System.



White fortifies his central square immediately and plans a quick development of the king-side. In this system he usually performs a fianchetto of the dark-squared bishop. The variation with a preliminary development of this bishop to f4, introduced into practice by grandmaster A. Miles, will be regarded in Chapter 15.

4... ♙b7 5.♙d3

The basic and the most natural move. The bishop occupies an active position and takes control

over e4. Among other opportunities we should mention a variation which implies an early exchange in the centre: 5.♘c3 d5 6.cxd5 exd5 7.♙b5+. After the natural 7...c6 8.♙d3 ♙e7 9.0–0 0–0 White can continue with 10.b3 (or 10.♘e5 c5 11.b3 ♘c6 12.♘xc6 ♙xc6 13.♘e2 a5 14.a4 ♘e4 with a complex struggle Malaniuk – Renet, Cap d'Adge 1994) 10...♘bd7 11.♙b2 ♙d6. Black has a solid position and sufficient counterplay, for example 12.♞e1 (if White chooses a plan with the transfer of the knight to g3, then Black prepares a counterplay in the centre with c7–c5, for example: 12.♞c1 ♞e8 13.♘e2 ♞e7 14.♘g3 g6 15.♞e2 ♙a3 16.♞fe1 ♞d6 17.♞c2 ♙xb2 18.♞xb2 c5 Gelfand – Karpov, SanghiNagar 1995 or 12.♞c2 ♞c8 13.♘e2 ♞e8 14.♘g3 c5 15.dxc5 bxc5 16.♙f5 ♞c7 17.♞ad1 ♙f8 18.♘g5 g6 Vyzmanavin – Karpov, Tilburg 1993 with a complex struggle in both cases) 12...♞e8 13.♞c2 ♞c8 14.e4. This breakthrough seems to be too early. (After 14.♞ac1 c5 15.♞e2 ♘e4

16. ♖a6 ♖xa6 17. ♗xa6 ♜df6
18. dxc5 ♞xc5 19. h3 ♖d7 20. ♖d3
♞ec8 there is an unclear position
with mutual chances Portisch –
Huebner, Manila 1990) After the
exchanges 14...d4 15. ♜xe4 ♜xe4
16. ♖xe4 Black forces 16... ♜f6
17. ♖f5 ♞c7 18. ♞xe8 ♖xe8 19. ♜e5
c5 and gains an advantage Polu-
gaevsky – Karpov, Monaco 1992.

The formation with a wedge
on d5 (5.a3 d5 6.b4) was consid-
ered in the previous chapter, and
5. ♖e2 which was also seen in this
position does not change it much,
only White's bishop becomes less
active. Black can continue with
5...d5, having the same ideas as
in the main variation.

5...♖e7 6. ♜c3

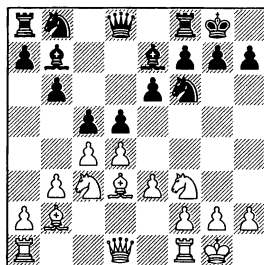
The continuation 6.0-0 d5
7.b3 most often leads to positions
of the main variation with a re-
versed order of moves, though
White can also proceed to another
formation. (Let's note that in case
of 7. ♖a4+ the simplest response
is 7...♖c6, forcing the queen to go
back on d1 as the line 8. ♖c2 dxc4
9. ♖xc4 ♖xf3 10.gxf3 0-0 is no
good for White, for example after
11. ♜c3 c5 Black is OK.) Now af-
ter 7...0-0 8. ♖b2 c5 White often
plays 9. ♜bd2. This move helps to
reinforce the d4-square because
it does not block the dark-squa-
red bishop, but the knight itself
is insufficiently active on d2.
Black responds with an ex-
change in the centre which is
usual for this system 9...cxd4
10.exd4 and then accomplishes a

simplifying manoeuvre with
10...♜e4. After 11. ♞e1 ♜d2 12.
♜xd2 ♜d7 13. ♜f3 ♞c8 14. ♞c1
♞e8 15. ♖e2 ♖d6= the position is
approximately equal Karpov –
Portisch, Malta 1980.

6...d5 7.0-0 0-0 8.b3

Sooner or later White will
have to develop the bishop. If he
first plays 8. ♖e2 with an idea to
redouble the pressure on the d-
file, then Black can answer with
the same standard 8...c5, and af-
ter 9.dxc5 bxc5 Black has a good
play, for example: 10.e4 (or
10. ♞d1 ♖b6 11.cxd5 exd5 12.b3
♜bd7 13. ♖b2 ♞fe8 14. ♞ac1 ♖c6,
and the hanging pawns are safely
covered) 10...d4 11. ♜b1 ♜bd7.
Black is already better. 12.e5 (or
12. ♖f4 ♜h5) ♖xf3 13.gxf3 ♜e8
14. ♖f4 ♞b8 15.b3 g6 16. ♜d2
♜g7 with an advantage, Oster-
man – Karpov, Yugoslavia 1975.
A preliminary exchange in the
centre with 8.cxd5 exd5 leads to
a complex struggle with mutual
chances, and after 9.b3 ♜bd7
10. ♖b2 ♜e4 11. ♞c1 ♜df6 12. ♜e2
♖d6 13. ♜e5 c5 Black's pieces are
active Kurajica – Karpov, Tilburg
1994.

8...c5 9. ♖b2



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♟f3 b6 4.e3 ♙b7 5.♙d3 ♙e7

There is the basic position of the Centre System on the diagram. Don't forget that it can appear from different lines.

9...cxd4

It has already been mentioned that this exchange is typical of the System. Black releases the tension in the centre and at the same time prevents a possible opening up of the diagonal a1–h8.

10.exd4

If White wants to keep the diagonal free for his bishop on b2 with 10.♟xd4, then Black relieves the centre totally with 10...dxc4 11.♙xc4 and begins a counterplay on the queenside: 11...a6 12.♙e2 b5 After 13.♙f3 ♖a7 14.♙xb7 ♖xb7 15.♖f3 ♜d7 16.a4 bxa4 17.♟xa4 ♖c7 18.♜fc1 ♖b7= and the position is approximately equal, Petrosian – Karpov, San Antonio 1972.

10...♟c6 11.♜c1

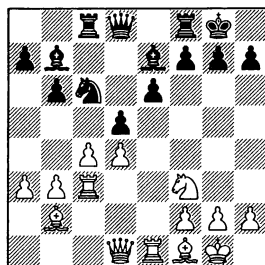
An immediate 11.♖e2 allows Black to destroy the opponent's kingside: 11...♟b4 12.♙b1 dxc4 13.bxc4 ♙xf3 14.gxf3. (There is no pawn sacrifice 14.♖xf3 ♖xd4 as in the line 15.a3 ♟a6 16.♖b7 Black launches a crushing attack with 16...♙d6 17.♖a6 ♙h2 18.♙h2 ♖h4 19.♙g1 ♟g4) Now with the manoeuvre 14...♟h5 Black neutralises attacking attempts of his opponent, for example 15.♖e4 (or 15.a3 ♟a6) 15...g6 16.a3 (or 16.♟e2 ♜c8 17.a3 ♟c6 with a good play) 16...♟f6, and there is no 17.♖b7 because of 17...♜b8

18.♖xa7 ♟c6 19.♖a4 ♟xd4.

11...♜c8 12.♜e1

If White moves the rook on the d–file with 12.♖e2 ♜e8 13.♜fd1, then Black should continue with 13...♙d6 with the threat of 14...♟b4 15.♙b1 ♙f4.

12...♟b4 13.♙f1 ♟e4 14.a3 ♟xc3 15.♜xc3 ♟c6



Another crucial position.

16.♟e5

Also 16.♖c2 is interesting (in case of an immediate 16.cxd5 ♖xd5 17.♙c4 Black simply plays 17...♖h5) 16...♙f6 17.♜d1 ♖d6 18.cxd5 ♖xd5 19.♙c4 ♖h5 20.d5. White accomplishes a breakthrough in the centre, but a precise play helps Black to repel the attack: 20...♟a5 21.dxe6 ♟xc4 22.exf7 ♖f7 23.♜xc4 ♜xc4 24.bxc4 ♙xb2 25.♖xb2 ♙xf3 26.gxf3 ♖xf3 with Black's advantage, Danner – Yu Shaoteng, Hungary 2000.

16...♟xe5 17.♜xe5 ♙f6 18.♜h5 g6 19.♜ch3 dxc4!

This line occurred in the game Keres – Smyslov, Zurich 1953. As the analysis showed it was better for White to proceed to an endgame with 20.♖g4 (in the game he played 20.♜xh7, and af-

Chapter 14

ter 20...c3! Black won very soon) ♖xd4 23.♗xd4 ♙xd4 24.♞c7 with
20...c3 21.♙xc3 ♜xc3 22.♞xc3 a position, close to a draw.

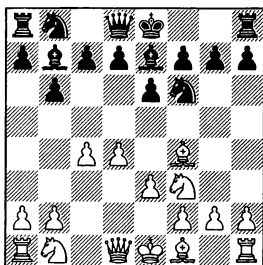
Summary

White chooses a slow way of development but still he has chances to create threats on the kingside. Black's plan is usual for the Queen's Indian Defence – to organize a counterplay in the centre.

Chapter 15 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.♙f4 ♙b7 5.e3 ♙e7

Miles Variation

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6
4.♙f4 ♙b7 5.e3 ♙e7



White places his pieces harmoniously, but he will have to spend several tempo to secure his bishop against an exchange.

6.h3

A forced loss of tempo. After 6.♘c3 ♘h5 the bishop is exchanged, and White can't count on an opening advantage, for example 7.♙g3 0–0 8.♚c2 d6 9.♙e2 g6 10.0–0 ♘d7 11.d5 e5 12.♘d2 ♘df6 13.♙b1 a6 14.f3 ♘xg3 15.hxg3 h5 16.e4 ♙c8, and the position should be estimated as approximately equal Bareev – Karpov, Paris 1992.

6...c5

This universal technique

works very well in the Miles Variation too. Black wants to open up the play immediately and make use of White's underdevelopment.

7.dxc5

In case of 7.♙d3 there is an unpleasant 7...cxd4 8.exd4 d5, threatening to win another tempo after the capture on c4.

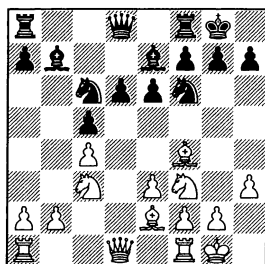
7.♘c3 cxd4 8.♘xd4 with the idea to create pressure on the d-file is another possible continuation. (Worse is 8.exd4 0–0 9.♙d3 d5 10.0–0 dxc4 11.♙xc4 ♘c6. Black gained the mentioned tempo, and White has no sufficient play to compensate for the isolation of his central pawn. After 12.♚c1 ♚c8 13.♙d3 ♘d5 Black has a certain advantage, Rivas – Huebner, Linares 1985) 8...0–0 9.♘db5 ♘e8 10.♘d6 White managed to occupy the square d6, but his lag in development begins to show. (In case of 10.♙d2 a6 11.♘d6 ♘xd6 12.♙xd6 ♙xd6 13.♙xd6 b5! Miles – Kupreichik, Reykjavik 1980 Black has a fine compensation for the pawn after 14.cxb5 ♙a5. Also an immediate capture with 10.♙xb8

♖xb8 11.♘xa7 gives Black an excellent play: 11...♘f6 12.♘ab5 d5, opening up the game, which makes the position of White's king simply dangerous) 10...♘xd6 11.♙xd6 ♘a6 12.♙e7 (This continuation is not the best one, but even after the strongest 12.♙d2 ♙d6 13.♙d6 ♙f6! White's problems stay unsolved, for example 14.♙xd7 ♘b4 15.♙a4 ♙xg2 16.♙xg2 ♘d3 17.♙e2 ♙xf2 18.♙xd3 ♙xg2 19.♘b5 ♙xb2 with a sufficient compensation) 12...♙xe7 13.♙d2 ♖fd8 14.♖d1 d5+. Black has a clear advantage with the material balance Djuric – Ornstein, Pamporovo 1981.

7...bxc5 8.♘c3 0-0 9.♙e2 ♘c6 10.0-0 d6

As practice shows, Black has an equal play in this position owing to his control over the central squares. The d6-pawn is his only weakness, but it is well protected. Black doubles his rooks on the d-file and is ready to advance

d6–d5 opportunely.



11.♙c2

Another queen move is not advantageous too: 11.♙a4 ♙b6 12.♖fd1 ♖fd8 13.♙b5 ♙c7 14.♖d2 ♖d7 15.♙a4 a6 16.♖ad1 ♖ad8 and Black has fine prospects Zs. Polgar – Polugaevsky, Reykjavik 1988.

11...♙b6 12.♖ad1

Or 12.♖fd1 ♖fd8 13.♘d2 ♖ac8 14.a3 ♙a8 15.♙f3 ♘d7 16.♙g3 ♘de5 with mutual chances.

12...♖fd8 13.♖d2 ♖d7 14.♖fd1 ♖ad8= with an even play Akopian – Polugaevsky, Moscow 1990.

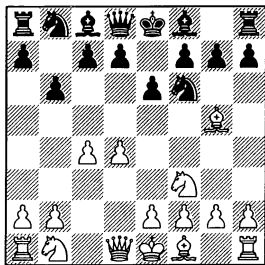
Summary

The distinction of this variation is that White develops his queenside first of all. However, the bishop's position on f4 are unstable and forces White to lose a tempo for h2-h3 in order to avoid an exchange of this active bishop after ♘h5. Black accomplishes the standard c7-c5 and gains a sufficient counterplay.

Chapter 16 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.♙g5 ♙b7

Classical System

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6
4.♙g5



This response is quite natural in the struggle for e4. At present another order of moves is more popular: 4.♘c3 ♙b7 5.♙g5, reducing the play to the main line after 5... h6. One more way to perform the desired advance at any price 4.♘bd2 ♙b7 5.♙c2 weakens another central square, and Black makes use of this fact at once: 5...c5 6.e4 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♙c5, creating problems for White. Even after a relatively better line 8.♘4b3 ♙e7 9.♙e2 ♘c6 10.a3 ♖c8 Black evidently has the initiative.

4...♙b7 5.♘c3

In the historic game Tarrasch – Bogoljubow, Sweden 1920, White chose a different way: 5.e3 h6 6.♙h4 ♙b4+ and made a blunder 7.♘bd2? which cost him a piece after 7...g5 8.♙g3 g4 as any retreat of the knight, for example 9.♘e5, Black meets with 9...♘e4 and wins.

5...h6

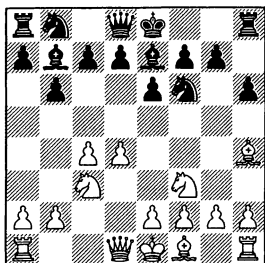
This familiar method forces White to define the bishop's position. White has to make his choice.

6.♙h4

Black was ready to agree to the line 6.♙xf6 ♗xf6 7.e4 ♙b4 8.♙d3 ♙xc3+ 9.bxc3 d6 10.0–0 e5 which would give him a convenient blockade position. He plays similarly also in case of 7.e3 ♙b4 8.♙e2 ♙xc3+ 9.bxc3 d6 10.0–0 e5 with an approximate equality. There is a prophylactic move 7.a3 too, but it loses White's time. After 7...d6 8.e4 ♘d7 Black has good prospects, and in case of an incautious 9.d5 (9.♙e2 is better with an equal position) Black takes the initiative with 9...g5! which allows him to take the long

diagonal under his bishop's control.

6...♙e7



7.e3

If White continues his struggle for the advance e2–e4 with 7.♙c2, then we already know that 7...c5 is the best response in this situation, attacking the d4–pawn immediately. Now after 8.dxc5 (in case of 8.♞d1 Black plays 8...♙xf3! and Black's pieces occupy attacking positions with extra tempi: 9.gxf3 cxd4 10.♞xd4 ♖c6 11.♞d1 ♞c8 12.♙a4 ♘e5 13.b3 0–0 with a good play Ree – Korchnoi, Wijk aan Zee 1985. In case of an immediate 8.e4 Black acts in a similar way. After the exchange of the central pawns with 8...cxd4 9.♘xd4 Black completes his development without problems and obtains a good position, for example 9...♘c6 10.♘xc6 ♙xc6 11.♞d1 ♙c7 12.♙g3 ♙b7, preparing d7–d5) 8...bxc5 9.e3 (after 9.e4 ♘c6 10.e5 ♘g4 the e5–pawn suffers an attack, and a natural 11.♙xe7 Black encounters with the shot 11...♙xe7!?, so after 12.♙e4 ♙b6 Black's threats are more dangerous than

White's) 9...0–0 10.♙e2 d6, and Black builds a formation, similar to the one regarded in the previous chapter: 11.0–0 ♖bd7 12.♞fd1 ♙b6 13.♞d2 ♞fd8. The d6–pawn is well protected, and the central squares are under Black's control too. After 14.♞ad1 ♘f8 15.♘e1 ♞d7 16.♙f3 ♞ad8 there was a position with mutual chances in the game Seirawan – Portisch, Montpellier 1985.

7...♘e4

Inviting White to start the exchanges.

8.♙xe7

After 8.♙g3 ♙b4! the struggle is more complex. The centralised knight is more important now. After 9.♙c2 ♙xc3+ 10.bxc3 d6 11.♙d3 (or 11.♘d2 ♘xd2 12.♙xd2 ♘d7 13.f3 0–0 14.♙d3 ♙e7 with an approximate equality) 11...♘xg3 12.hxg3 ♙e7 13.♙e4 ♘c6= Black has a solid position, Kamsky – Portisch, Manila 1992. Now in case of 14.♙a4 ♙d7 15.0–0 ♘a5 16.♙xd7+ ♙xd7 17.♙xb7 ♘xb7 the weakness of White's pawns is evident.

If White captures the knight with 8.♘xe4, then Black has to continue with 8...♙xe4 9.♙g3 (9.♙xe7 ♙xe7 turns the position to the main variation) 9...0–0 10.♙d3 (or 10.♘d2 ♙b7 11.♙d3 c5 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.0–0 ♘c6 with a good position) 10...♙xd3 11.♙xd3 d6 12.0–0 ♘d7 with a good play, for example 13.b4 a5 14.b5 f5 15.♙b3 a4 16.♙c2 ♙e8 17.♘e1

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.♙g5 ♙b7 5.♘c3 h6

e5= Uhlmann – Antoshin, Germany 1965.

8...♙xe7 9.♘xe4

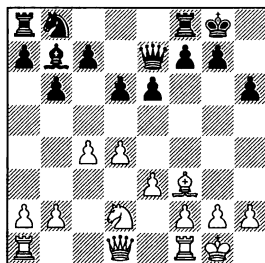
White failed to gain an advantage with 9.♖c1 0–0 10.♙e2 d6 11.0–0 ♘d7 12.♘xe4 ♙xe4 13.♘d2 ♙b7 14.♙f3, and the opponents agreed to a draw Ree – Balashov, Reykjavik 1984. An equal position appears also after 9.♙c2 ♘xc3 10.♙xc3 d6 11.♙e2 ♘d7 12.0–0 0–0 13.♘d2 e5. Black has no weak points, his pieces are placed well.

9...♙xe4 10.♘d2

The position after 10.♖c1 c5 11.♙e2 0–0 12.0–0 d6 is already familiar to us Karpov – Balashov, USSR 1980.

10...♙b7 11.♙e2 0–0 12.0–0 d6 13.♙f3

Black's bishop is very active, so White is forced to go on with exchanges.



13...c5!

The strongest continuation, combining the defence with a counterattack.

14.♙xb7

Or 14.d5 exd5 15.♙xd5 ♙xd5 16.cxd5 ♘d7 with an approximate equality.

14...♙xb7 15.♘f3 ♖d8

Black is preparing d6–d5. The opponents continued with

16.♙e2 cxd4 17.♘xd4 ♘c6 18.♖fd1 d5 19.♘xc6 ♙xc6 and agreed to a draw Tal – Karpov, Las Palmas 1977.

Summary

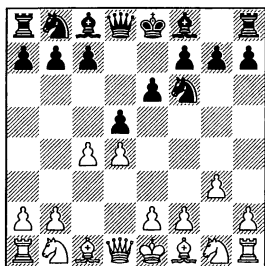
The bishop's development to g5 allows White to demonstrate a certain activity, but at the same time his queenside gets weakened. Black's plan is standard: c7–c5 at the right moment.

Part 4. Catalan Opening

Chapter 17 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5

This opening appeared in the late twenties as a method to avoid the Nimzo-Indian Defence. It also allows White to avoid active variations of the Queen's Indian, considered in this book. The Catalan Opening is rather popular at present. White starts his struggle for domination in the centre from the very beginning, his light-squared bishop is very active and exerts pressure on Black's queenside. Black should play very accurately because in many positions, which at first sight look quite safe, White still has a certain advantage.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5



This is the initial position of the Catalan Opening. Since Black can't play variations of the

Queen's Indian Defence he proceeds to the struggle in the centre and on the queenside immediately.

4.♙g2 ♙e7 5.♘f3 0-0

White has two basic continuations: a) 6.♖c2 or b) 6.0-0.

Other moves present less problems to Black:

6.♗b3 c5. This method of the centre counterplay is typical both of the Catalan Opening and of many other opening systems. After 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.cxd5 ♗xd5 9. ♗xd5 ♘xd5 10.dxc5 ♙xc5 11.♙d2 ♚d8 12.♘c3 the tension in the centre was released, and the opponents agreed to a draw in the game Sosonko – Karpov, Amsterdam 1980.

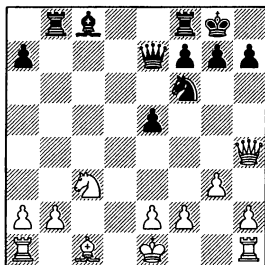
6.b3. A passive move. Black equalises easily: 6...dxc4 7.bxc4 c5 8.e3 ♘c6 9.0-0 ♗c7.

6.♘bd2. No trouble for Black, for example: 6...b6 7.0-0 ♙b7 8.b3 ♘bd7 9.♙b2 c5 10.e3 ♚c8 with an equality.

6.♘c3. This move leads to a vivid play. 6...dxc4. Now 7.0-0 reduces the game to a position that will be regarded below. 7.♘e5 is also interesting. (7.♗a4

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♙g2 ♙e7 5.♘f3 0-0

is no problem for Black: 7...a6 8.♙xc4 b5 9.♙b3 ♙b7 10.0-0 ♘bd7 with an equality; or 9.♙d3 ♙b7 10.0-0 ♘bd7) 7...♘c6. Now a forced line follows: 8.♙xc6. (Variations after 8.♘xc6 bxc6 9.♙xc6 ♖b8 10.0-0 can appear with a different moves order and will be considered below) 8...bxc6 9.♘xc6 ♙e8 10.♘xe7+ (or 10.♙a4 ♙d6) 10...♙xe7 11.♙a4 c5 12.♙c4 cxd4 13.♙xd4. White won a pawn, but Black has a clear compensation. 13...e5 14.♙h4 ♖b8.

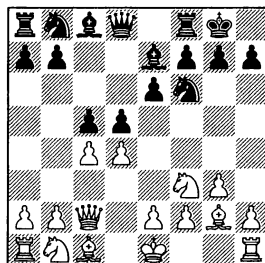


This position was seen many times. Practice shows that it's quite dangerous for White to keep the extra material. 15.♙g5 leads to an even position. (In case of 15.0-0 ♖b4 16.e4 h6 Black has a strong initiative, for example: 17.♖e1 ♖d8 18.f3 ♖d3 19.♘g2 ♙b7 20.♖e2 ♙g4! with an attack. After 21.fxg4 ♘xe4 22.♖xe4 ♖xe4 23.♘h3 ♖e1 24.♙xh6 ♖xa1 25.♙g5 f6 26.♙g6 ♖xc3 White resigned in the game Markowski – Onischuk, Polanica Zdroj 1999) 15...♖xb2 16.0-0 ♙e6 17.♙xf6 ♙xf6, and the game was drawn Seirawan – Karpov, Reykjavik 1991.

a) 6.♙c2

Leading to a complex play.

6...c5



7.0-0

Also following continuations are possible:

7.cxd5 cxd4 8.♘xd4 (in case of 8.dxe6 ♙xe6 9.0-0 ♘c6 Black's pieces are very active) 8...♘xd5, and now after 9.♙b3 (or 9.0-0 ♘b4 10.♙c4 e5 with an equality and the same in case of 10.♙c3 e5) 9...♘c6 10.♘xc6 bxc6 the play is even, and after an incautious 11.e4?! ♘b4 12.0-0 c5 13.♘a3 ♘c6 Black simply took the initiative in the game K. Grigorian – Vyzhmanavin, Pinsk 1986, having obtained an excellent stand in the centre for his knight.

7.dxc5 ♙a5+ 8.♘c3 (Or 8.♘bd2 ♙xc5. An unpleasant 9...b5 is threatening, and after 9.a3 a5 Black stands better. Also 8.♙c3 was tested, and after 8...♙xc5 9.cxd5 ♘xd5 10.♙xc5 ♙xc5 11.0-0 ♘c6 12.a3 ♙d7 13.♘bd2 ♘d4 Black had a good position in the game Korchnoi – Tal, Moscow 1968) 8...dxc4 9.0-0 (Or 9.♘d2 ♙xc5 10.♘a4 ♙a5 11.♙xc4 ♙d7 12.♘c3 ♖c8, with a convenient

play for Black after the bishop's transfer to c6, Korchnoi – Short, Luzern 1989) 9...♖xc5 10.♙e3 ♗h5 11.h3 ♜c6 12.♞fd1 ♙d7 13.♜e4 ♞fd8. Black feels OK. After 14.♖xc4 ♜xe4 15.♖xe4 ♙e8 he has a solid position, Ehlvest – Vyzhmanavin, Lvov 1985.

7...cxd4 8.♜xd4 ♜c6 9.♜xc6 bxc6

The exchanges allowed Black to reinforce his centre and now he has good play in all variations.

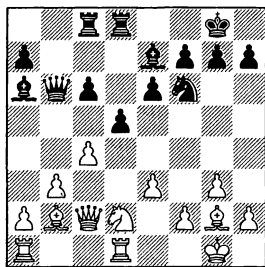
10.b3

There is also 10.♞d1 ♙a6 11.♜d2 ♖b6 with an equality.

10...♙a6 11.♙b2 ♞c8 12.e3

After 12.♜d2 ♖b6 the position is balanced out.

12...♖b6 13.♜d2 ♞fd8 14.♞fd1



14...♜d7

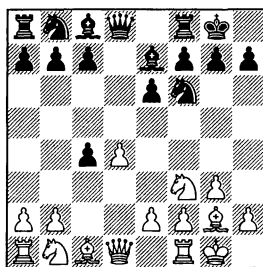
With his last move Black supported e5 and now he can resist pressure of the b2–bishop and has a promising position, Gulko – Karpov, Thessaloniki 1988.

b) 6.0-0

This continuation, connected with a pawn sacrifice (usually it is a temporary sacrifice), allows White to struggle for a lasting

initiative.

6...dxc4



White has three main continuations: b1) 7.♜a3, b2) 7.♜e5 and the most popular 7.♖c2, which will be examined in the next Chapter.

Other moves are less popular.

7.♖a4. This continuation after 7...a6 8.♖xc4 reduces the play to one of the main lines that will be regarded in the next Chapter (the line with 7.♖c2).

7.♜bd2. A poor choice: 7...b5 8.a4 c6 9.♜e5 ♜d5, and White stays without sufficient compensation.

7.a4. This continuation is interesting, but rather unpopular. 7...♜c6 8.a5 (8.♜a3 is not good because of 8...♜a5 with Black's advantage) 8...♞b8. Now there is 9.♖c2 ♜xd4 10.♜xd4 ♖xd4 11.♙e3 ♖e5 and despite extra material, position is unclear.

The activity of White's bishops and Black's problems with the queenside development should not be underestimated.

7.♜c3. Here Black also gets a good play without much trouble. 7...♜c6 8.e3 (in case of 8.e4 ♞b8

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♙g2 ♙e7 5.♘f3 0-0

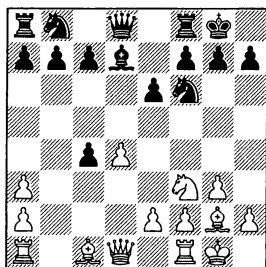
9.♙e3 a6 White runs the risk to lose the pawn for nothing) 8... ♙d6. Black is preparing e6-e5. 9.♘d2 (or 9.♙a4 e5 10.♙xc4 exd4 11.exd4 h6 with an even play) 9...e5. This advance is typical of the variation in question. 10. ♘xc4 exd4 11.exd4 ♙g4. Now Black triggers interesting complications. 12.♙b3 ♘xd4 13.♙xb7 ♙f3!? 14.♙a6 (better is 14.♙xf3 ♙b8 15.♙a7 ♘xf3+ 16.♙g2 ♙d7 with an unclear position) 14... ♙b4 15.♙e3 ♙xg2 16.♙fd1 c5, with Black's advantage Lautier – Karpov, Dos Hermanas 1995.

b1) 7.♘a3 ♙xa3 8.bxa3

White gained the advantage of two bishops at the cost of the damage of his pawn structure. This is probably enough to maintain the balance but too little for an advantage.

8...♙d7

The bishop wants to get to c6.



9.♘e5

This active continuation also promises White no more than an equality.

Other opportunities were tested as well:

9.♙c2 ♙c6 10.♙xc4 ♘bd7

leads to an equalisation, for example: 11.♙g5 h6 12.♙xf6 ♘xf6 13.♙fc1= ♙d6 Aseev – Rozentalis, USSR 1990.

In case of 9.♙g5 ♙c6 the struggle is of a similar character: 10.♙xf6 ♙xf6 11.♙c2 ♘d7 12. ♙xc4 ♙fd8 13.♙fd1 ♙e7= with an even play Murey – Geller, Moscow 1982.

9...♙c6 10.♘xc6

10.f3?! is not good due to 10...♙a4 11.♙d2 (of course no 11.♙xa4 ♙xd4+) 11...♘c6 12. ♘xc6 ♙xc6 with certain advantage by Black.

10...♘xc6 11.♙b2

Or 11.e3 ♙d6 12.♙a4 e5 13. ♙b1 ♙ab8= with a balanced position, Arbakov – Korneev, Smolensk 1991.

11...♘d5

Black transfers his knight to the queenside and safely protects his pawns.

12.♙b1

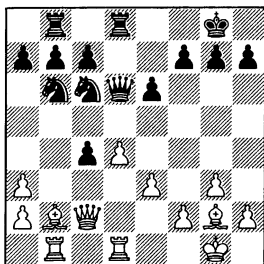
There is also 12.♙c1 ♘b6 13.e3 (an attack on the kingside with 13.g4 ♙d6 14.e3 ♙ab8 15.g5 wins an advantage rather for Black: 15...♘e7 16.♙h5 ♘ed5 17.♙c2 ♘a4 18.♙c1 b5 19.f4 f5 20.gxf6 ♘xf6 Kozul – Arlandi, Reggio Emilia 1993) 13...♙d7 14.♙c2 ♙ab8 15.♙fd1 ♘e7 16.♙f1 ♙a4= with an approximate equality, Glek – Klovans, Frunze 1988.

12...♘b6 13.e3

13.e4 is risky. So after 13... ♙d7 14.♙d2 ♙ad8 15.♙fd1 ♙fe8 16.♙a1 (or 16.♙c3 e5! 17.dxe5 ♙xd1+ 18.♙xd1 ♙xd1+ 19.♙f1

♖xe5! 20. ♖c2 ♜e1 ♠ Kasparov)
16...e5! 17.d5 ♖d6 Black had an
advantage in the game Morozov
– Tsaturjan, corr. 1989.

13... ♖d6 14. ♖c2 ♜fd8 15.
♜fd1 ♜ab8



Now White can return the
pawn and open up the files only
at the cost of an exchange of his
light-squared bishop. So he can-
not hope even for a slight advan-
tage.

b2) 7. ♖e5 ♖c6

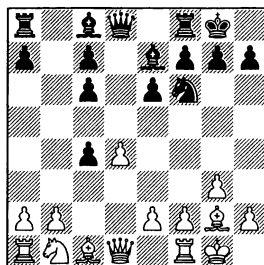
A similar variation was al-
ready considered above, but this
order of moves introduces some
certain nuances.

8. ♖xc6

In case of 8. ♖xc6 bxc6 9. ♖xc6
♖e8 10. ♖xe7+ (if 10. ♖a4, then
10... ♖b4! with an equality) 10...
♖xe7 11. ♖a4 (in the line 11. ♖a3
c5 12. ♖xc4 ♜d8 13. ♖e3 ♖b7
14. ♜c1 ♜d5 Black has an evident
compensation) 11... c5 12. ♖xc4 (or
12. ♖a3 e5 13. ♖xc5 ♖xc5 14. dxc5
♖e6 with a good play) 12... cxd4
13. ♖xd4 e5 14. ♖h4 ♜b8 there is
a position, similar to the one from
the game Seirawan – Karpov,
Reykjavik 1991, given above. It's
better for White to give back the

pawn and equalise.

8...bxc6



9. ♖a3

Once more White has a lot of
continuations to choose from:

9. ♖xc6 ♜b8 10. ♖c3 (in case of
10. ♖a3 the simplest response is
10... ♜b6 11. ♖f3 ♖xa3 12. bxa3
♖b7 13. ♖xb7 ♜xb7 with an equa-
lisation) 10... ♖b7. Black forces an
exchange of the “catalan” bishop:
11. ♖xb7 (in case of 11. ♖b5 there
is 11... c5 12. dxc5 ♖c7, and Black
gets a fair compensation; in the
line 11. ♖a4 ♖xd4 12. ♖e3 ♖xc6
13. ♖xc6 ♖d6 Black has a certain
advantage) 11... ♜xb7 12. e3 c5,
equalising the play.

9. ♖c2 ♖xd4 gives Black good
chances, for example: 10. ♖e3
♖d6 11. ♖d2 ♖d5 12. ♖xc4 ♖xe3
13. ♖xe3 ♖a6 14. ♜ac1 ♜ad8 15.
♖xc6 ♖g5= Larsen – Speelman,
London 1980.

9. ♖a4 ♖xd4. Here Black's op-
portunities are also none the
worse at least. After 10. ♜d1 (or
10. ♖d2 ♜b8 11. ♖xc6 ♖b6 12.
♖xc4 ♖xc6 13. ♖xc6 ♖a6 14. b3
♖d5=, and Black has not got any
problems Holemar – Berzinsh,
Czech Republic 1998) 10... ♖b6

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♙g2 ♙e7 5.♘f3 0-0

11.♙e3 Black can even continue with 11...♙xb2!?

9.♘c3 ♖b8 10.♘a4 ♘d5 11.♙d2 ♙a6 gives Black an easy equalisation.

9.e3 A solid move which presents some problems to Black. 9...♙a6 10.♙xc6 ♖b8 11.♘c3 ♘d5 12.♘xd5 exd5 13.♙f3 ♙b7 14.♙xb7 ♖xb7. The bishop exchange makes Black's task simpler. After 15.b3 cxb3 16.axb3 c5 17.dxc5 ♙xc5 Black can keep an equality by his accurate play, Seirawan – Ivanchuk, Tilburg 1992.

9...♙xa3 10.bxa3 ♙a6 11.♙g5

Or 11.♙xc6 ♖b8 12.♙a4 ♖b6 13.♙g2 ♘d5.

11...h6 12.♙xf6 ♙xf6 13.♙xc6

After 13.♙a4 ♙b5 14.♙a5 c3 the position is equal.

13...♖ab8 14.♙a4 ♖b6 15.♖fd1 ♖d8

Black's position is solid as usual.

16.♙f3 c6!

An attempt to win a pawn 16...♖xd4? turns out to be unfounded owing to 17.♖xd4 ♙xd4 18.♖d1! and White gets a strong

initiative, for example: 18...♙c5 (or 18...♙b5 19.♖xd4 ♙xa4 20.♖xc4 with advantage) 19.♖d8+ ♙h7 20.♙e8.

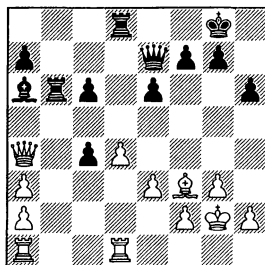
17.♙g2

After 17.♙xc6 ♖xd4 18.♖xd4 ♙xd4 19.♖d1 ♙c5 20.♖d8+ ♙h7 Black has a better position.

17...♙e7

Taking a pawn by 17...♖xd4?! is bad again. After 18.♖xd4 ♙xd4 19.♖d1 ♙f6 20.♖d7 White has a strong initiative for the pawn.

18.e3



18...♖c8!

If at once 18...♙b5, then White stands even better after 19.♙b4 ♙xb4 20.axb4 ♙a4 21.♖dc1 ♖xb4 22.a3 ♖b6 23.♖xc4.

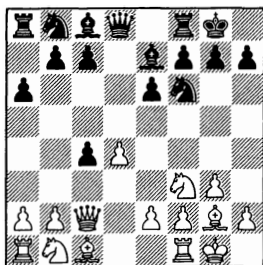
19.h4 ♙b5 20.♙b4 c5 and the initiative is on Black's side Antunes – Karpov, Tilburg 1994.

Summary

In the line 6.0-0 White sacrifices a pawn and gains a development advantage and chances to keep the initiative. Having returned the extra material, Black stabilizes the play.

Chapter 18 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♙g2 ♙e7 5.♘f3 0-0 6.0-0 dxc4 7.♚c2 a6

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5
4.♙g2 ♙e7 5.♘f3 0-0 6.0-0 dxc4
7.♚c2 a6



Black is going to cover the c4-pawn. White can prevent this by means of: a) 8.♚xc4 or b) 8.a4.

Here are several examples in which White lets his opponent protect the pawn:

8.e4?! b5 9.a4 ♙b7 10.♘c3 ♘c6! 11.axb5 axb5 12.♙xa8 ♚xa8+ with an advantage. Now if 13.♘xb5, then after 13...♘b4 14.♚xc4 ♙a6 White encounters difficulties.

8.♙g5 b5 9.♙xf6 ♙xf6 10.♘g5 ♙xg5 11.♙xa8 ♚xd4 12.♙g2 ♘d7 . Black has good prospects, Korchnoi – Vaganian, Montpellier 1985.

8.♙d1 b5 9.♘g5 c6 10.e4 h6 11.♘h3 c5 . There is no real com-

pensation for the pawn, though the strain remains Chibur-danidze – Hjartarson, Linares 1988.

8.♘bd2 b5 9.♘g5 (or 9.♘e5 ♙a7) 9...♙a7 10.b3 cxb3 11.♘xb3 h6 12.♘h3 ♙b7. The play is rather complex here, but Black still has an extra pawn and a solid position.

a) 8.♚xc4 b5

The time White spent for the return of the pawn allows Black to complete his development without problems. Now he only has to accomplish the advance c7–c5.

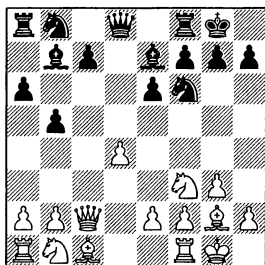
9.♚c2

Other retreats of the queen are worse: 9.♚b3 (or 9.♚d3 ♙b7 10.♙g5 ♘bd7 11.♘bd2 c5 with a convenient play) 9...♙b7. Now 10.a4?! is too early (better is 10.♙d1 ♘bd7 11.♙g5 c5 12.dxc5 ♚c7 13.♘bd2 ♙xc5= with an even play Larsen – Portisch, Havana 1966) 10...♘c6! 11.♙d1 (no good of 11.axb5 axb5 12.♙xa8 ♚xa8 13.♚xb5 because of 13...♘xd4!) 11...♘a5 12.♚d3 ♙e4 13.♚e3 ♙c2, and White is close to a defeat Karlsson - Marjanovic, Dort-

4. ♖g2 ♗e7 5. ♘f3 0-0 6. 0-0 d6 7. ♜c2 a6

mund 1982.

9... ♗b7



10. ♗g5

Now in some lines White threatens to capture the knight, provoking g7xf6.

White must complete his development, and there are alternative opportunities for the dark-squared bishop. 10. ♗f4 (neither 10. ♘bd2 ♘bd7 11. ♘b3 ♗e4 12. ♗d1 c5, nor 10. ♞d1 ♘bd7 create any special problems for Black, on the contrary, he has good play in both cases) 10... ♘c6. White played also 11. ♘c3 (11. ♘bd2 with the idea of the control over c5, allows Black to start a piece struggle, for example: 11... ♞c8 12. ♘b3 ♘b4 13. ♗d1 ♗e4 with good chances) 11... ♘b4 12. ♗c1 (or 12. ♗b1 ♘bd5 13. ♘xd5 ♗xd5 14. ♞d1 ♗c8 15. ♗e5 ♗e4 16. ♗c1 ♘d5 with an equality) 12... ♞c8 13. a3 (13. ♞d1 reduces the play to the variation with 11. ♞d1) 13... ♘bd5 14. b4, and now Black gains a good play with 14... a5! Perhaps 11. ♞d1 is more popular, in response Black accomplishes a typical knight transfer 11... ♘b4 12. ♗c1 ♞c8

13. ♘c3 ♘bd5 14. ♘xd5. Sooner or later White must go for this exchange. (Also 14. ♗e3 is possible – or 14. ♗g5 c5 with an equality – 14... ♗d6 15. ♘xd5 ♘xd5 16. ♗g5 c5 with an even position as well, Andersson – Beliavsky, Debrecen 1992) 14... ♗xd5 15. ♗e3. Preventing c7–c5, but now Black puts up a defence on light squares: 15... c6 16. ♘e1 ♗b6 17. ♘d3 ♗xg2 18. ♗xg2 ♘d5 with Black's excellent opportunities. His pieces are arranged more expediently, and the undermining on c5 is unavoidable, Dizdarevic – Huzman, Pula 1997.

10. ♗d2. This is the most popular continuation. The bishop is heading to a5. 10... ♗e4 11. ♗c1 ♘bd7 12. ♗a5 ♞c8. The most precise move; the square a8 sometimes is very useful for the bishop. Besides, the planned transfer of the knight via b8–c6 doesn't break the piece co-ordination now. 13. ♘bd2 (the play is equal both after 13. a4 bxa4 14. ♘c3 ♗xf3 15. ♗xf3 ♘b6 and 13. ♘c3 ♗a8) 13... ♗a8. The key position of the variation. White can struggle for the initiative here but a correct defence keeps Black safe. Consider several exemplary lines: 14. ♘b3. In this line Black performs the desired advance c7–c5 without trouble. 14... ♗e8 15. ♘e5. (Or 15. ♗e3 c5 16. dxc5 ♘xc5 17. ♘xc5 ♗xc5 with a good play, Barlov – Morovic Fernandez, Vrsac 1985) 15... c5, and the position gets even. 14.

♖d1 ♖e8 15.b4 ♘d5 with mutual chances. 14.♗c2 ♘b8!. A transfer of the knight to c6 is the most reliable way to create a counterplay. 15.♘b3 ♙e4! 16.♗c1?! (Better is 16.♗d2 ♘c6, though in this line Black's chances are none the worse at least, Nielsen – J. Polgar, Las Vegas 1999) 16...♘c6 17.♙d2 (17.♖d1 is bad because of 17...♘xa5 18.♘xa5 c5 with Black's considerable advantage) 17...♙xf3 18.♙xf3 ♘xd4 19.♘xd4 ♗xd4 20.♙b7 ♖cd8 21.♙e3 ♗d6, and Black is slightly better.

10...♘bd7 11.♙xf6

Also 11.♘bd2 ♖c8 12.♘b3 ♙e4 13.♗c1 c5 14.dxc5 ♘xc5 15.♘xc5 ♖xc5 occurred with a good play for Black, Mednis – Inkiov, Rome 1984.

11...♘xf6 12.♘bd2 ♖c8 13.♘b3

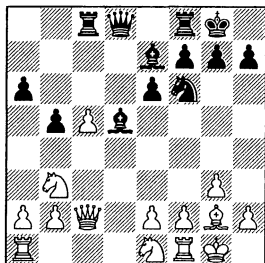
White attempts to hinder the planned advantage again.

13...c5 14.dxc5 ♙d5

The pawn is returned, and the position gets equal.

15.♘e1

In case of 15.♖fd1 which occurred in the game Kasparov – Karpov, Leningrad (m/20) 1986, 15...♗c7 is the simplest answer.



15...♙xg2!

To exchange the “catalan” bishop is more important than to return the pawn immediately.

16.♘xg2 ♘d7 17.♖fd1 ♗c7 18.c6

Or 18.♖ac1 ♘xc5 19.♘e1 ♗b7 20.♘xc5 ♖xc5= with an equality Hulak – Khalifman, Manila 1992.

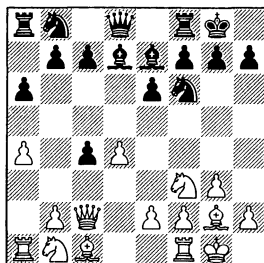
18...♘b8 19.♖ac1

In case of 19.♘d4 there is 19...♙f6.

19...♗xc6 20.♗xc6 ♖xc6=

The material balance is maintained, the position is approximately equal, Khalifman – Yusupov, Moscow 1988.

b) 8.a4 ♙d7



9.♗xc4

White has several continuations again.

9.♘c3 ♘c6 attracted no followers. After 10.e4 ♘b4 Black has a great advantage.

9.♘bd2. Another way of the knight's development is better. 9...♙c6 10.♘xc4 (Or 10.a5 b5 11.axb6 cxb6 12.♘xc4 ♙e4 13.♗d1 ♘c6 14.♙g5 ♘b4 15.♗d2 a5= with an equality, Kaidanov – Wells, London 1990) 10...♙e4.

Note this typical manoeuvre, we will encounter it more than once in this chapter. 11. ♖c3 ♖c6 12. ♖ce5 ♖d5 13. ♖b3 ♖a5 14. ♖d1 c5. The play is even. After 15. ♖d2 ♖b4 16. ♖c1 cxd4 17. ♖xb4 ♖xb4 18. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 19. ♖xd4 ♖xg2 20. ♖xg2 ♖fd8 a draw was declared in the game G. Kuzmin – Vaganian, Vilnius 1981.

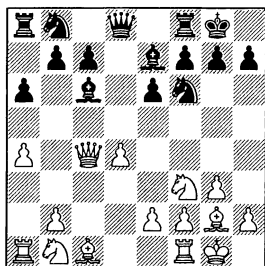
9. ♖e5. We already know this thrust and Black's response to it: 9... ♖c6 10. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 11. ♖xc6 bxc6. Surely the triple pawns is a weak point, but White has neither time nor forces to get to them. He is underdeveloped, and his kingside is weakened after the exchange of the "catalan" bishop. Black accomplishes the advance c6–c5 in all variations and gets a good position. Here are several illustrations: 12. ♖d1 ♖d5 13. ♖a3 (The move 13. ♖c3 is below any criticism. After 13... ♖h5 14. ♖g2 ♖fd8 15. h3 ♖d5 16. ♖a2 ♖b6 White just has a pawn less, Dijkmans – Dutreeuw, Gent 1999) 13... c5=; 12. ♖a3 ♖d5 13. ♖xc4 ♖h5. Threatening with 14... ♖g4 with a strong attack, and after 14. ♖e5 c5 the position is even; 12. ♖xc4 ♖d5 13. ♖d2 ♖fd8 14. e3 c5 Spiridonov – Kelecevic, Pernik 1981. If White refuses to exchange the important bishop, then it will be more difficult for him to return the pawn which promises no advantage too. Black plays c7–c5 and equalises: 11. e3 ♖a5 12. ♖d2 (In case of 12. ♖a3 c5 13. dxc5 ♖c8

14. ♖d1 ♖c7 15. c6 ♖xc6 16. ♖xc4 ♖b6 Black's position is preferable Zilberstein – Lerner, Daugavpils 1978) 12... c5 13. dxc5 ♖c8 14. b4 cxb3 15. ♖xb3 ♖xb3 16. ♖xb3 ♖d7. Now a venturesome 17. c6 (after 17. ♖a3 there was an equality in the game Sosonko – Karpov, Tilburg 1980) 17... bxc6 forces White to struggle for a draw: 18. a5 (18. ♖d2 ♖c5 is no better Kozul – Van der Sterren, 1994) 18... ♖c5 19. ♖c4 ♖d3 20. ♖xd3 ♖xd3. The game I. Ivanov – Lerner, Daugavpils 1978 continued with 21. ♖a3 ♖xa3 22. ♖xa3 ♖b4, whereas in the game Kozul – Pigusov, Biel 1993 White played 21. ♖d2 and Black could answer here 21... ♖b4!? but in both cases White had to struggle for a draw.

9. ♖d1 is a more promising continuation. 9... ♖c6 10. ♖c3 ♖xf3. This exchange is forced because White was threatening with e2–e4. 11. ♖xf3 ♖c6 12. ♖xc6 (12. e3 is worse as after 12... ♖d5 13. ♖e2 ♖a5 14. ♖b1 c6 15. e4 ♖b4 16. d5 ♖d3, it's unclear whether White has a sufficient compensation Romanishin – Geller, Vilnius 1980) 12... bxc6. This position is similar to those considered under 9. ♖e5, but now Black's queen does not get to d5. 13. ♖g5 ♖b8. Black uses the b–file to create a counterplay. 14. a5 (An even position appears after 14. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 15. ♖e4 ♖b4 16. e3 ♖d5= Illescas – Beliavsky, Madrid 1998; also after 14. e3 ♖d7 15. ♖xe7 ♖xe7

Black has a good play) 14...♖b4 15.♖a4 ♖b8 16.♖xb4 ♖xb4, Black's position being none the worse at least, Kochyev – Aseev, Leningrad 1989. There is another popular continuation: 13.a5. Now Black's rook can't get to b4 in time. Well, Black reverts to the queen: 13...♖b8!, organizing a sufficient counterplay as in following exemplary lines: 14.♖a4 ♖b3 15.♖xb3 cxb3 16.♖c4 c5 17.dxc5 ♖fd8 18.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 19.♙e3 (Or 19.♖b4 ♙xc5=) 19...♟d5 20.♟xd5 ♖xd5 21.♖b4 h6 22.♖xb3 ♙xc5 23.♙xc5 ♖xc5 with an equality, Krasenkov – Khalifman, Vilnius 1988; or 14.♖a4 c5 15.♖xc4 (a similar line occurred in the game Van der Sterren – Kalinin, Wijk aan Zee 1997: 15.dxc5 ♙xc5 16.♖xc4 ♖a7 17.e3 ♖fd8 18.♙d2 ♖ab8 with an approximate equality) 15...cxd4 16.♖xd4 c5 17.♖d1 (17.♖d3 ♖b4=) 17...♖b4 18.♖a4 ♖xc4 19.♖xc4 ♖fd8 20.♖xd8+ ♖xd8= with a balanced position, Gorelov – Khalifman, Minsk 1985.

9...♙c6



10.♙g5

The move 10.♟c3 has lost its

popularity. (10.♟bd2?! is bad due to 10...b5 11.♖c2 bxa4 with Black's advantage; 10.♖d1 ♙d5 11.♖d3 ♟c6 12.♟c3 ♟b4 13.♖b1 ♙b3 gives Black a good play, Tukmakov – Vaganian, Leningrad 1987) 10...b5! This counter-strike solves all problems at once and Black gets an even play. 11.♖d3 (11.♖a2 b4 12.♟d1 ♙d5 13.b3 c5 14.dxc5 ♟e4, and Black stands better Polugaevsky – Braga, Mar del Plata 1982) 11...b4 12.♟b1 ♙e4 13.♖d1 (After 13.♖e3 ♟bd7 14.♟bd2 ♙d5 15.♖d3 c5 16.e4 ♙b7 17.e5 ♟d5 18.♟e4 h6 19.b3 a5 Black has a certain advantage again, Spassov – Ionescu, Spain 1991) 13...c5 14.♙f4 (Or 14.♟bd2 ♙d5 15.dxc5 ♟bd7 16.c6 ♙xc6 17.♟c4 ♖c8, with Black's initiative Smyslov – Veingold, Oviedo 1992) 14...♟bd7 15.♟bd2 ♙d5 16.♖e1 ♖c8=, and White gained an approximate equality, Sveshnikov – Ivanchuk, Pinsk 1986.

The move 10.♙f4 presents some problems to Black as now the line 10...b5 11.♖c2 bxa4 12.♟c3 is in White's favour. 10...a5! In this case the advance of the a-pawn solves all Black's problems. By this way Black creates a base square on b4 and frees a6 for the knight. 11.♟c3 ♟a6. The practice of top players shows that Black has no problems here. As a rule he has a very solid position with strong supporting squares as it can be seen in the following examples:

12. ♖ac1 h6 13. ♖fe1 ♗b4 14. ♗e5 ♗xf3 15. ♗xf3 c6 16. ♖ed1 ♛e7=. Black's control over d5 gives him equal chances, Kramnik – Lautier, Dortmund 1995.

12. ♖ae1 ♗b4 13. ♗g5 h6 14. ♗xf6 ♛xf6 15. e4 ♖fd8=. There is an even position on the board again, Bareev – Short, Geneva 1996.

12. ♖fe1 ♗b4 13. ♖ac1 ♗d6 14. ♗g5 (14. e3 ♗fd5 15. ♛e2 ♗xf4 16. gxf4 f6 17. ♖h1 ♛e8 18. b3 e5 19. fxe5 fxe5 20. d5 e4 with an initiative Lautier – Beliavsky, Belgrade 1995) 14... ♗d5 15. ♗xd5 exd5 16. ♛b3 h6 17. ♗xf6 ♛xf6=. This position should be estimated as approximately equal as well, Kasparov–Gelfand, Moscow 1996.

10... ♗d5

This move became popular not long ago. Karpov usually played 10... a5 here until a reinforcement was discovered in the line 11. ♗c3 ♗a6 12. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 13. e4 ♗b4 14. ♖fd1 b6, and after 15. ♗e1! White is better, Beliavsky – Rozentalis, Batumi 1999.

11. ♛c2.

Also 11. ♛d3 occurs frequently. After the strongest response 11... c5 12. ♗c3 (In case of 12. dxc5 ♗bd7 13. ♗c3 ♗xc5 14. ♛e3 ♛a5 15. ♖fd1 ♗c6= Black equalises easily, Adianto – Short, China 2000) 12... ♗c6 White has several opportunities but none of them gains him a clear advantage because Black's position is very solid.

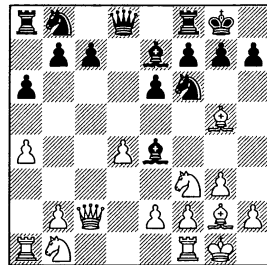
13. e4 cxd4 14. ♛xd4 h6 15. ♗f4

♗bd7 16. ♛c4 ♖c8 17. ♛e2 ♗c5=. Black has arranged his forces rather conveniently Beliavsky – Kir. Georgiev, Ulcinj 1998.

13. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 14. dxc5. The pawn should be returned. The game Nikolic – Boensch, Munich 1990, continued with 14... ♗d7 15. ♛c4 ♛e7 16. b4 a5 17. ♗d4 ♗xg2 18. ♗xg2 axb4 19. ♗e4 ♖fc8 20. a5 ♗xd4 21. ♛xd4 ♗xc5 with an equal play.

13. ♖fd1 cxd4 14. ♗xd4 (Or 14. ♛xd4 ♛xd4 15. ♗xd4 ♗xg2 16. ♗xg2 ♗bd7= with an absolutely even position, Rustemov – Bauer, Wichern 1999) 14... ♗xg2 15. ♗xg2 ♗bd7 16. ♛f3 (After 16. f4 ♖c8 White runs the risk to get a worse position Kozul – Beliavsky, Portoroz 1999) 16... ♛b8=. As well as in the previous variations, the fact that both sides have the symmetric arrangement of pawns and absence of weak points allows to estimate the position as equal, Garcia Ilundain – Wells, Escaldes 1998.

11... ♗e4



12. ♛c1

White prevents c7–c5.

Or 12. ♛d1 c5, but here Black

has a good play at once.

13. ♖c3 is bad because of 13... ♙xf3 14. ♙xf3 cxd4 15. ♗e4 (15. ♙xb7 loses immediately because of 15... ♖a7) 15... ♗c6, with Black's considerable advantage.

13. ♗bd2 ♗d5 14. dxc5 ♗bd7. It's better to take the pawn with the knight. White anyway can't keep it: 15. b4 a5, and Black is OK, Miles – Ribli, Hungary 1997.

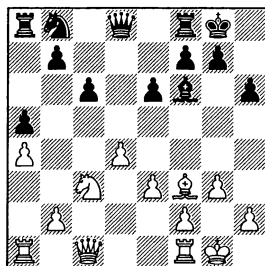
13. dxc5 h6. Black does not hurry to take the pawn again. After 14. ♙e3 ♗d5 15. ♖c1 ♖a5 16. ♗a3 ♗d7 17. ♗c4 ♖b4 18. ♗e1 ♗xe3 19. ♗xe3 ♗xc5 Black has a certain initiative, Romanishin – Beliavsky, Belgrade 2000.

12...h6 13. ♙xf6

In case of 13. ♙e3 Black has to choose between 13... ♗d5 and a

more active 13... ♗c6. In both cases he stands none the worse at least.

13... ♙xf6 14. ♗c3 ♙xf3 15. ♙xf3 c6 16. e3 a5



Black has built a solid defence, and though his position is rather passive, it's really solid. As a result, there is an approximate equality on the board, Bareev – Anand, China 2000.

Summary

The line 7. ♖c2 gives White more chances to get an advantage than moves considered in Chapter 17. But even in this case Black has a solid position.

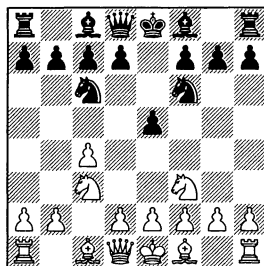
Part 5. English Opening

Chapter 19 1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♗f3 ♘c6

This opening occupies a special place in the chess theory. It combines ideas of many other openings and is very popular. White's first move does not determine this opening as there are various transitions to the Queen's Gambit, the Catalan Opening, to different variations of both Indian Defences, but in any case it claims a strategic struggle for d5. The diversity of positions which can arise here attracts many modern grandmasters. We shall consider those systems which occurred regularly in the practice of the twelfth World Champion. Chapters 19–21 deal with a formation which is actually a popular variation of the Sicilian Defence with reversed colours. Chapter 22 is about the Queen's Indian System, which can be transposed into the Queen's Indian Defence but also has numerous original variations.

Four Knights System (Variations without 4.g3)

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♗f3 ♘c6



White has a wide choice of different continuations here, though most of them lead to positions of the Sicilian Defence with reversed colours. Variations which appear after 4.g3 will be considered in the next chapter. In the present chapter we shall regard in detail following variations: a) 4.d3, b) 4.a3, c) 4.d4 and d) 4.e3. Other continuations are less popular.

4.♙a4. A strange move, probably it should prevent d5, though right now White is in perfect security. The play can develop as follows: 4...g6 5.d3 ♗g7 6.♗g5 h6 7.♗xf6 ♙xf6 8.e3 0–0 9.♗e2 ♗d8. Black concludes his development quietly and prepares a counterplay on the kingside. 10.♞c1 d6 11.b4 ♘e7 12.0–0 f5. The open-

ing gave an approximately equal position, Black's chances are evidently none the worse here, Murey – A. Sokolov, Riga 1992.

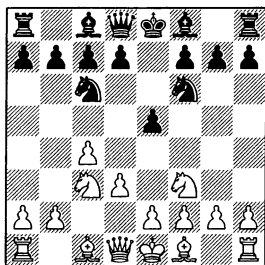
4.b3 d5 5.cxd5 ♖xd5. You can already note a Sicilian outline. 6.♙b2 ♖xc3 7.♙xc3 ♙d6 8.d3 0-0 9.e3 ♗e7. Black need not apply keen methods of struggling for the initiative. In the beginning it's enough that his position is solid and envisages a further development. After 10.♙e2 ♙d7 11.0-0 ♚ad8 the main struggle is still ahead, Korchnoi – Gipslis, USSR 1976.

4.e4 With this move White gains a firm control over d5, but at the same time Black gets the d4-square, which is no less important. Further struggle for these strategic squares develops with approximately equal chances. 4...♙b4. The most simple response which prevents a soon advance d2–d4. 5.d3 d6 6.g3. (Or 6.♙e2 a6 7.0-0 ♙c5 8.♙e3 ♖d4 9.b4 ♙a7 10.♖d5 ♖xd5 11.cxd5 0-0 12.♖xd4 exd4. The tension of the fight is released after exchanges on crucial squares. 13.♙f4 ♙b6 14.a4 a5 15.b5 ♙d7 The position is even. 16.♚c1 ♚c8. An evidently waiting move. 17.♙g3. This move looks untimely. White is preparing f2–f4, but after 17...f5 in the game Milov – Korchnoi, Dresden 1998, Black creates some concrete threats, and 18.f4 loses because of 18...fxe4 19.dxe4 d3) 6...♙c5 7.♙g2 ♖d4 8.♖xd4 ♙xd4. Now White

has two basic plans for the development of his initiative, one of them preparing d3–d4, the other f2–f4. 9.♖e2 (Less resolute is 9.0-0 ♙g4 10.♗e1 – or 10.♗b3 ♗c8 11.♙e3 ♙xe3 12.fxe3 ♖d7 13.d4 0-0= with balanced chances, Cifuentes – Schneider, Groningen 1992 – 10...c6 11.h3 ♙e6 12.♙e3 ♙xe3 13.♗xe3 ♖d7 14.♗h2 ♗b6. In this example White failed to show any activity at all so far, though the position still keeps a certain tension, Reinderman – M. Gurevich, Germany 1998) 9...♙b6 10.d4. With an immediate breakthrough in the centre. (White can also complete his development at first, for example 10.h3 c6 11.0-0 0-0 12.b3 ♖d7 13.♙b2 ♚e8, and only now 14.d4, but in this case Black is well prepared for an active play: 14...♗f6 15.♗d2 ♗g6 16.♗h2 ♖f6 with mutual chances, Reinderman – Kobalija, Wijk aan Zee 1998) 10...exd4 11.♖xd4 ♖g4 12.0-0 ♗f6 13.♖f5 ♖e5. Both sides control different important squares, the chances are even, for example: 14.♖e3 c6 15.♚b1 0-0 16.b3 a5 with a complex play, Bezman – Janovsky, Moscow 1995. There is also an interesting 9.h3, preparing a breakthrough on the kingside (in case of an immediate 9.f4 Black has 9...♖g4) 9...♙e6 10.f4 a6 11.♗f3 h6 12.♖e2 ♙c5. In the manoeuvring struggle White has some space advantage. However when the play is opened up, the weak points of his

pawn structure may tell, as well as the unsupported position of the king. Right now Black does not need to define his king's place – after an early short castling he may suffer a violent attack. The game continued with 13.♙d2 ♖e7 14.♙c3 ♙d7. Black demonstrated his coolness and kept good prospects. After 15.b4 ♙a7 he managed to make use of his advantage, Gulko – Karpov, Reykjavik 1991.

a) 4.d3



With a natural desire to develop the bishop.

4...♙b4 5.♙d2

An active thrust 5.♙g5 after 5...h6 leads to an exchange of this bishop: 6.♙xf6 (In case of 6.♙h4 it's hard to escape the exchange as well, for example: 6...d6 7.e3 g5 8.♙g3 e4 9.♘d2 ♙xc3 10.bxc3 exd3 11.♙xd3 ♘e5 12.♙c2 ♙g4 13.f3 ♙e6 14.c5 ♘h5 15.♙xe5 – this is still better than 15.cxd6 ♘g3 16.dxc7 ♖c7 17.hxg3 0–0 with Black's advantage – 15...dxe5 with an approximately equal position) 6...♙xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♖xf6 8.♘d2 0–0 9.g3 d6 10.♙g2 ♙d7 11.0–0 ♖e7. A series of natu-

ral moves produced a balanced position. Now Black is preparing vigorous actions on the kingside. The game Nogueiras – Ionov, Linares 1996, continued with 12.♖b1 b6 13.e4 ♖ae8 14.♖e1 ♘d8 15.♘f1 f5 with a complex play.

5...0–0 6.g3

Also 6.a3 ♙xc3 7.♙xc3 was seen. White got the pair of bishops but he is retarded in development. 7...♖e8. 8.e4 (8...e4 was threatening) 8...d6 9.h3 a6! Black launches a queenside attack immediately. After 10.♙e2 b5 11.cxb5 axb5 12.0–0 ♖b8 his chances were none the worse in the game Sunye Neto – Christiansen, Wijk aan Zee 1982.

6.e3 This unpretentious way of development creates no problems for Black. 6...♖e8 7.♙e2 d6 8.0–0 (In case of 8.a3 ♙xc3 9.♙xc3 ♘e7 10.0–0 c5 Black equalises the play as well. After 11.b4 – in case of 11.d4 Black has 11...exd4 12.exd4 ♘e4 – 11...b6 12.bxc5 bxc5 13.♖b1 ♙d7 14.♘d2 ♖c7 15.♖c2 ♖ab8 the position was even in the game Polugaevsky – Petrosian, Moscow 1976) 8...a5 9.b3 ♙g4 10.a3 ♙c5. In this example Black decided to keep the bishop, though an exchange was also possible. After 11.♖c2 h6 12.♖fd1 ♙h5 13.♙e1 ♙g6 he had a solid position with fine chances for the development of his initiative, Psakhis – Korchnoi, Dresden 1998.

6...♖e8 7.♙g2 ♙xc3

As well as in many other vari-

ations of this system, Black voluntarily agrees to the exchange in this line.

8.♙xc3 d5 9.cxd5

If White refuses to exchange on d5, then Black accomplishes the advance d5–d4 and gets a good play, for example: 9.b3 d4 10.♙b2 ♙f5 11.0–0 ♖d7 12.♞e1 ♞ad8 13.a3 a5= with an equality like in the game Dizdarevic – Cebalo, Mendrisio 1987 or 9.0–0 d4 10.♙d2 h6 11.b4 ♖d6 12.♖b3 ♙f5 13.b5 ♗d8 14.♙b4 ♖d7 with a complex play which occurred in the game Serper – Salov, Tilburg 1994.

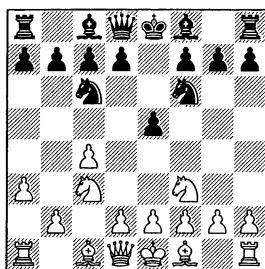
9...♗xd5 10.0–0 ♞b8 11.♞c1 ♗xc3 12.bxc3

Or 12.♞xc3 ♗d4.

12...b6 13.d4 ♙g4=

Black has no problems here, Savchenko – Romanishin, Helsinki 1992.

b) 4.a3



A prophylactic move which does not contribute to White's development. So Black does not need to hurry as well.

4...d6 5.e3

The most flexible continua-

tion. In case of 5.d4 Black can answer with an active 5...e4, and after 6.♗g5 ♙f5 there is a well known theoretical position of a sharp variation with Black's extra tempo owing to the unnecessary advance a2–a3. 7.d5 (In the line 7.f3 exf3 8.gxf3 h6 9.♗h3 ♙xh3 10.♙xh3 ♗h7 11.♞g1 ♖h4+ Black has a good play, El Ghazali – Miles, Tanta 1997) 7...♗e5 8.♖c2 g6, and the maximum which White can get here is a draw by repetition of position after 9.♗gx4 ♗xe4 10.♗xe4 ♖h4 11.♖a4+ ♙d7 12.♖c2 ♙f5.

After 5.d3 ♗d4 White can't hope to gain much. It should be mentioned here that in many variations of the English Opening this knight should be transferred to free the way for the c-pawn. 6.♗d2 ♙g4 7.b4 ♙e7 8.h3 ♙h5 9.♖a4+ c6 10.e3 ♗e6 11.♙b2 0–0. Black has completed his development first. After a retreat of the f6–knight he is ready to develop his kingside initiative with an advance of the f-pawn, Chernin – Morozovich, Podolsk 1993.

5...g6 6.d3

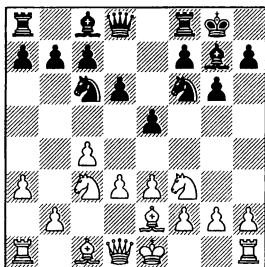
The line 6.d4 ♙g7 occurs infrequently, and in case of 7.dxe5 ♗xe5 8.♗xe5 dxe5 9.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 10.♙d2 c6 11.0–0–0 ♖c7 the play is equal.

An early advance on the queenside 6.b4 Black encounters with an active play in the centre, for example: 6...♙g7 7.♙b2 0–0 8.d3 (Or 8.b5 ♗b8 9.♙e2 e4 10.♗d4 c5 11.bxc6 ♗xc6 12.♗xc6

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♗f3 ♘c6

bxc6 13.0–0 Vaganian – Eingorn, Odessa 1989, with a good play after 13...♖b8) 8...♖e8 9.♗d2 ♗e7 10.♙e2 c6 11.0–0 d5. Black created a mobile pawn centre, and after 12.b5 he begins a counter-attack. After 12...d4 13.exd4 exd4 14.♗ce4 ♗xe4 15.♗xe4 f5 16.♗d2 cxb5 there was a keen position in the game Ree – Smyslov, Amsterdam 1994, and Black's chances were none the worse.

6...♙g7 7.♙e2 0–0



8.0–0

Both sides conclude the development before proceeding to a concrete play.

In case of 8.♖c2 d5 9.cxd5 ♗xd5 there is a position from the Sicilian Defence with reversed colours. A complex play with mutual chances begins: 10.0–0 a5 11.♖b1 ♖e8 12.♖d1 (or 12.♗xd5 ♖xd5 13.b3 ♙e6) 12...♙e6 13.♗e4 ♖e7 14.b3 (White gains nothing with 14.♗c5 ♙c8 15.b3 b6 16.♗e4 ♙b7, Black's bishop simply moves to another active position) 14...♖ad8 15.♙b2 f5 with a dynamic balance on the board, M. Gurevich – Onischuk, New York 1998.

8...♖e8 9.♖c2 ♙f5 10.♗d2 a6 11.♖b1 h5

In response to White's coming attack on the queenside Karpov shows an activity on the kingside.

12.b4 ♗h7 13.♗d5 ♙e6 14.a4 ♗b8 15.b5 axb5 16.axb5 c6 17.bxc6 bxc6=

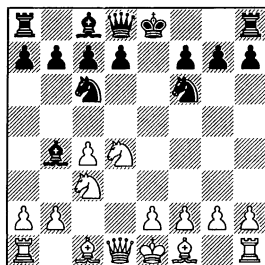
White managed to take the b-file, but Black's position is solid, and he is ready to develop his activity on the opposite flank. As a whole, the position can be estimated as roughly equal, M. Gurevich – Karpov, Hilversum 1993.

c) 4.d4 exd4 5.♗xd4

White solved the problem of the d4-square and is going to gain profit from his slight advantage in the centre. The situation requires decisive actions.

5...♙b4

It is the strongest answer which makes the opponent proceed to the solution of new problems as the threat of 6...♗e4 looks rather unpleasant.



6.♙g5

The main branch of the variation and M. Botvinnik's favourite move. White can reckon on

complications here, but the chronic shortcoming of his position (the weak pawns on the c-file) does not allow him to hope for an opening advantage.

Besides 6.♟g5 White has a wide choice of continuations:

6.e3 This move does not solve White's problems. After 6...♞e4 Black still is better developed, and White can't avoid a doubling of his pawns on the c-file.

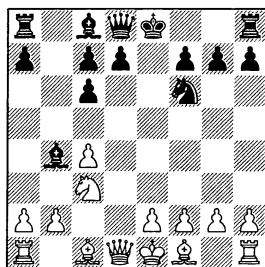
6.♟d3 Is not much better than the previous move. After 6...0-0 7.♟f4 ♞e8 (again threatening with 8...♞e4) 8.a3 ♟xc3+ 9.♟xc3 ♞e4 White encounters new difficulties.

6.♞c2 This is a better decision, though it still creates no particular problems for Black. 6...♟xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♞e4 8.♟d3 ♟e7. Both White's and Black's knights obtained good stands. The position promises an interesting struggle with approximately equal chances. 9.♞e3 (or 9.g3 d6 10.♞e3 ♞c5 11.♟c2 0-0 12.♟g2 ♟e6 with an unclear position. White's pieces are more active, but his pawn structure is severely damaged.) 9...♞c5 10.♟c2 0-0 11.♞d5 ♟d8. This situation is similar to the previous one. 12.e3 d6 13.♟e2 ♞e5. Black stands none the worse at least, Schleifer – Miladinovic, Montreal 2000.

6.g3 A solid move, but Black can get a draw now almost by force: 6...♞e4 7.♟d3 ♞xd4 8.♟xd4 ♞xc3 9.♟d2 (after 9.bxc3 ♟e7 10.♟g2 0-0 Black has an

advantage) 9...0-0 10.♟xc3 ♟xc3 11.♟xc3 ♞e8 12.♟g2 ♞b8 13.e3 b5 14.cxb5 ♞xb5 15.0-0 ♟b7 16.♟xb7 ♞xb7. It's hard to improve White's play here, and the board is nearly empty. The opponents agreed to a draw in several moves, Claesen – Ljubojevic, Antwerp 1997.

6.♞c6 bxc6



White should play accurately not to get a worse position. He is underdeveloped, and in many lines his queenside is weakened. In any case, Black's play is quite simple here. Look at several examples from recent games:

7.a3 An absolutely illogical decision. 7...♟xc3+ 8.bxc3 ♟e7. White has no compensation for the weakness of his kingside, Golovko – Lazar, Hungary 1995.

7.♟b3 ♟e7 8.♟g5 a5 9.e3? (9.a3 was necessary, though Black's position would be better anyway) 9...a4 10.♟c2 a3, and White has a hard position, Pedemonte – Ausmins, Genova 2000.

7.♟g5 h6 8.♟h4 ♟xc3+ 9.bxc3 c5 10.f3 0-0, once more it's White who has to struggle for an equalization Mulch – Wege, Germany

1.c4 e5 2.♖c3 ♗f6 3.♗f3 ♖c6

1995.

7.g3 0-0 8.♗g2 ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♜e8 10.0-0. White managed to complete the development here but anyway it's very hard to defend the weakness on c4: 10...♗e4 11.♗e3 ♗a6 12.♟a4 ♟c8 13.♜ac1 ♗d6 14.c5 ♗c4. White has a hard position, Eliseev – Holmov, St. Petersburg 1996.

7.♟d4 h6 8.♟e5+ ♟e7 9.♟xe7 ♟xe7 10.♗d2 d5 11.e3 ♗e6 12.♗xd5 ♗xd5 13.cxd5 ♗xd2 14.♟d2 cxd5=. In this example White managed to equalise, Baerner – Lawitsch, Austria 1997.

7.♗d2 A cautious and solid move. 7...0-0 8.g3 d5 9.♗g2 ♜e8 10.0-0 ♜b8 11.♜e1 h6 12.a3 ♗f8=. The position is roughly equal, Kotanjian – Kapnisis, Murek 1998

7.♟c2. Perhaps this is the most solid continuation. The game Usachyi – Smyslov, Woerishofen 1991, continued with 7...0-0 8.a3 ♗e7 9.g3 d5 10.♗g2 ♗e6= with an equal play.

Let us revert to the position after 6.♗g5.

6...h6

A well known manoeuvre which forces White to define the position of his bishop.

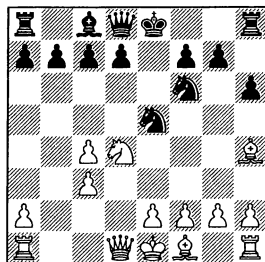
7.♗h4

Of course it's no good for White to exchange the bishop, and continuations like 7.♗xc6 bxc6 8.♗d2 0-0 9.e3 hardly allow to count on an advantage.

7...♗xc3

It's important to accomplish the exchange right now, before White plays ♜c1.

8.bxc3 ♗e5



Despite White's obvious weak points and certain underdevelopment, some of his pieces stand rather actively, and the binding is especially unpleasant. In this concrete struggle positional factors for some time retreat to the background.

9.f4

The most vigorous continuation. M. Botvinnik played just like that. Let's regard also alternative continuations.

9.♗f5 An unhappy idea which results in a loss of time. 9...0-0 10.♟d4 d6 11.e4. (This is a serious mistake, 11.♗e3 is better) 11...♜e8 12.♗e2 ♗xf5 13.exf5 c5 14.♟d1 ♗xc4 with Black's considerable advantage, Broomfield – Addison, Witley 1998.

9.f3 This formation is also a poor advantage for White. 9...0-0 10.e4 d6 11.♗f2 (White feels badly in the line 11.f4 ♗g6 12.♗xf6 ♟xf6 13.g3 c5 14.♗b5 a6 15.♗xd6 – 15.♗c7 ♟e7 is none the better – 15...♜d8, and after

the forced 16.e5 ♖xe5! 17.fxe5 ♜xe5+ Black wins) 11...♗fd7 12.♙e2 (or 12.f4 ♗g6) 12...♗b6 13.♙b3 (in case of 13.c5 dxc5 14.♗b5 ♜e7 White simply loses a pawn) 13...c5 14.♗c2 (after 14.♗b5 ♙e6 White has to retreat with his knight to a3 instead of e3 where he would like to transfer it now) 14...f5! 15.exf5 (in case of 15.0-0 fxe4 16.fxe4 ♜g5 17.♙e3 ♜g6 18.♞xf8+ ♜xf8 Black takes the initiative) 15...♙xf5 16.♞d1 (16. ♗e3 ♙d3 is none the better) 16...♙xc2 17.♜xc2 ♜g5+, and Black gains a perceptible advantage, M. Ivanov – Raïses, Reykjavik 1998.

9.e3 A more solid continuation. 9...♗g6 10.♙xf6. (There is also 10.♙g3 ♗e4 11.♜c2 ♗xg3 12.hxg3 d6 13.f4 ♜e7 14.♙f2 0-0 15.♗f5 ♙xf5 16.♜xf5 ♞fe8. White has many weak points but he also has a space advantage. In the game Schekachev – Overeem, Antwerp 1996, after 17.♞e1 ♜e4 18.g4 ♗f8 19.♙d3 ♜xf5 20.gxf5 ♗d7 21.♙f3 ♗c5 there was an approximately even position.) 10...♜xf6 11.f4. A fundamental move in this variation, even though it creates new weak points. (11.♙d3 looks more solid but it is too passive) 11...0-0 The game Ftacnik – Lautier, Bad Zwosten 1999, continued with 12.g3 c5 13.♗b5 d5 14.♙e2 dxc4 15.♙d6 ♜f5 16.♙f2 b6 with an unclear position. Perhaps there were opportunities to reinforce the play of both sides, but still

Black's position was OK.

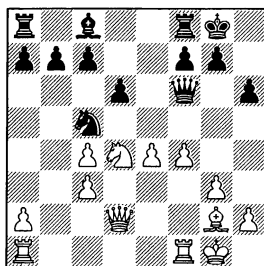
9...♗g6 10.♙xf6 ♜xf6 11.g3 ♗f8

An interesting idea, generated by Karpov. The knight goes to e6, and from this position it defends c7 and can opportunely be transferred to c5.

12.♙g2 ♗e6 13.0-0 0-0 14.e4

There is also 14.♙d2 d6 15. ♗b3 ♞b8 16.f5 ♗g5. Another possible route for the knight. 17.♙d4 ♜xd4+ 18.cxd4 ♞e8. Black's strategy in this variation is based on the e-file. 19.♞ae1 b6 20.♙c6. The wish to release the pressure on the e-file is quite natural, but after 20...♙b7! 21.♙xb7 (of course there is no 21.♙xe8? ♗h3#) 21...♞xb7= the position was approximately equal in the game Vaganian – Tukmakov, Rostov 1993.

14...d6 15.♙d2 ♗c5



There is the key position of the variation on the diagram .

16.♞ae1

Now this move looks much stronger.

16.♗b3. An inaccurate move which allows Black to seize the initiative. 16...♗a4 17.♞ac1 (or

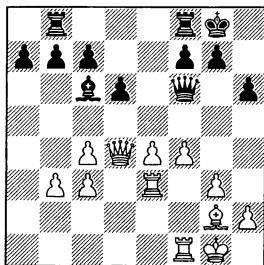
1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6

17.♙d4 ♘xc3 18.♙xf6 gxf6 19.a4 ♙d7 with a certain advantage) 17...♙e6. One more pawn is attacked. 18.♙d4. The only move, but still Black has already prepared a surprise: 18...c5!. Weak points in Black's camp are not so important in comparison with the threat to White's c-pawns. 19.♙xf6 (in the line 19.♙xd6 ♖ad8 20.e5 ♙f5 21.♙c7 ♙xc4 Black stands better as well) 19...gxf6 20.♖fd1 ♘b2 21.♖xd6 ♘xc4 22.♖d3 b6 23.e5 (or 23.f5 ♘e5 with an advantage; White can't equalise also with 23.♘d2 ♖fd8 24.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 25.♘xc4 ♙xc4 26.a4 ♖d2) 23...♖ad8! 24.♖xd8 ♖xd8 25.exf6 ♘e3. Black temporarily sacrificed the pawn, but his pieces are much more active, and White hardly can protect his pawns on c3 and f6, Shahade – Akopian, New York 1998.

16...♖b8 17.♖e3 ♙d7 18.♘b3

At first White reinforced the position of his rook and defended the c3-pawn, and now he exchanges Black's mighty knight.

18...♘xb3 19.axb3 ♙c6 20.♙d4



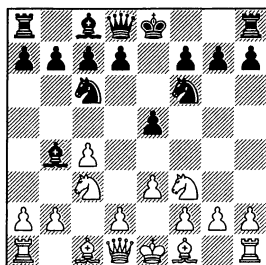
White gained as much as he

could from this position, still Black continued with 20...a6, and it turned out that an exchange on f6 was OK for Karpov. After 21.♙xf6 gxf6 the opponents agreed to a draw, Kramnik – Karpov, Las Palmas 1996.

d) 4.e3

It is the second popular move after 4.g3.

4...♙b4



Black's idea is simple: an exchange on c3, followed by e5–e4. If White does not hinder the fulfilment of this plan, he can get a worse position. White has two main continuations: d1) 5.♘d5 or d2) 5.♙c2, though other moves were seen as well.

5.d3 e4 6.dxe4 ♘xe4 7.♙c2 ♙xc3+ 8.bxc3. White has got the weak pawns we already know but he does not have any counterplay. 8...♙e7 9.♙e2 d6 10.♘d4 0–0 11.0–0 f5. Preventing e3–e4. After 12.f3 ♘c5 Black has a slight but stable advantage Hu Jun – Nikolic, Biel 1993.

5.♙e2 e4 6.♘d4 ♙xc3 7.bxc3 ♘e5 8.f4 ♘g6. Here the situation is more favourable for White: his

weak points are less perceptible, and the dark-squared bishop is rather active. 9.♔a3 d6 10.c5 dxc5 11.♔xc5 ♕d7 12.♔a3 b6 13.c4 c5 . The opening brought to a complex position with mutual chances Z. Nikolic – Renet, Vrnjaka Banja 1987.

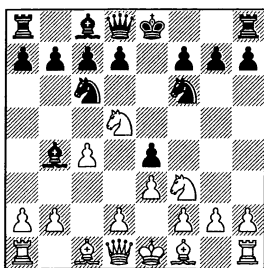
5.d4. This move occurs seldom. In this case it's worth to remember the Blockade System of the Nimzo-Indian Defence: 5... ♕xc3+ 6.bxc3 d6. Now the continuation 7.dxe5 ♖xe5 8.♖xe5 dxe5 9.♗xd8+ ♗xd8 is probably in Black's favour, whereas in other variations the game goes on with the lines of the Blockade System.

d1) 5.♖d5

A radical solution for the problem, the knight retreats from the attack.

5...e4

The best response.



White's choice is poor: d1a) 6.♖b4 or d1b) 6.♖gl.

d1a) 6.♖xb4

As practice shows, in this variation White should struggle for an equalisation.

6...♖xb4 7.♖g5

Only this retreat allows White to maintain a balance. Another knight's retreat is worse for him. 7.♖d4 c5 After this energetic move White is condemned to a hard defence, for example:

1) 8.♖c2 ♖d3+ 9.♔xd3 exd3 10.♖a3 d5. A forced line. 11.♗b3 (also after 11.cxd5 ♗xd5 White's position is slightly worse) 11... ♕e6 12.♗b5+ (Nei – Smyslov, USSR 1960), and now Black has 12...♖d7 and a strong initiative: 13.♗xb7 dxc4 14.♖b5 0-0 15.♖c7 ♖b8 16.♗xa7 ♗g5. White's position is divided into two parts, and his king is forlorn. 17.♖f1 ♕g4 18.f3 ♖f6 19.♖a6 (after 19.fxg4 ♗xg4 there is a mate) 19...♖bc8 20.b4 ♖f5. The attack is already irresistible. 21.f4 ♖d5 22.b5 ♖xf4 with a victory.

2) 8.a3. In this position White also has a hard defence. 8...cxd4 9.axb4 d3 The wedge on d3 appeared again. 10.b3 0-0 11.♔b2 d5 12.♗c1. (Following variations illustrate White's difficulties: 12.♔xf6 ♗xf6 13.cxd5 ♖d8; 12.cxd5 ♖xd5; 12.c5 ♕g4 13.f3 exf3 14.gxf3 ♖e4! 15.h4 ♗c7 16.♖g1 ♗h2 with a mating attack.) 12...dxc4 13.bxc4 ♕e6 14.♗c3 ♖c8 15.c5 b6! Files should be opened up for major pieces. 16.f3 (Also in case of 16.♖xa7 bxc5 17.bxc5 ♗d5 18.♖a5 ♖b8 Black's rooks break free. The game can continue, for example, with 19.♗c1 – there is no 19.c6? because of ♖xb2 – 19...♖b4 20.♔xf6 gxf6

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6

21.f3 ♖fb8 22.fxe4 ♗xe4 23.♖a1 ♙a2 24.♖xa2 ♖b1 25.♖a1 ♖xc1+ 26.♖xc1 ♖b2 27.c6 ♖c2 with Black's victory) 16...a5! 17.fxe4 (or 17.bxa5 ♖xc5) 17...axb4 18.♗xb4 (the endgame after 18.♗xd3 bxc5 19.♗xd8 ♖fxd8 also is not good for White) 18...bxc5 19.♗c3 ♖b8+ Vaulin – Yakovich, Russia 1997. An intrusion on the b-file can't be prevented: 20.♖a3 (there is neither 20.♙xd3 nor 20.g3 because of 20...♖b3) 20...♗b6 21.♙c1 ♘xe4 22.♗xd3 ♗b1 23.♗xb1 ♖xb1 24.♙d1 ♘f2+ 25.♙c2 ♖xc1+ 26.♙xc1 ♘xh1.

3) 8.♘b5 In this line Black takes the initiative with 8...d5 9.a3 (In case of 9.cxd5 Black answers with 9...0-0 10.♘c3 ♘fxd5, and after 11.♘xe4 he has a strong attack: 11...♙f5 12.d3 c4! 13.a3 cxd3 14.axb4 ♘xb4 15.♖a4 ♘c2+. The events develop by force. 16.♙d2 ♙xe4 17.♖xe4 ♗a5+ 18.♙xd3 – or 18.b4 ♘xb4 – 18...♖ac8 19.♙e2 ♖fd8 20.♙d2 ♗b5+ 21.♙f3 ♗d5 and White has a hard position, Nguyen Anh Dung – Toh, Genting 1995) 9...♘d3+ 10.♙xd3 exd3. In this variation Black manages again to create a wedge on d3. 11.cxd5 0-0 12.0-0 ♘xd5 13.b4 ♙d7 14.♘c3 ♘xc3 15.dxc3 c4. Although the position has got simplified, Black has a considerable advantage owing to his protected passed pawn on d3, Granda – Eingorn, Zagreb 1987.

7...h6 8.♘h3 d5 9.♗a4+ ♘c6 10.cxd5 ♗xd5 11.♘f4 ♗d6 12.

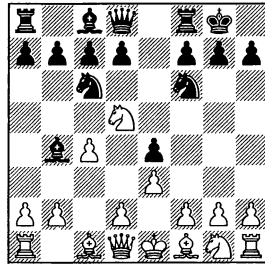
b3 0-0

In this position both sides have mutual chances, for example: 13.♙a3 ♗e5 Sunye Neto – C. Hansen, Thessaloniki 1984.

d1b) 6.♘g1

This continuation leads to an interesting struggle.

6...0-0



7.♗c2

Perhaps it's better for White to continue with 7.a3, Black's most precise answer being 7...♙d6. Now White can provoke f7–f5 and only then perform a breakthrough in the centre 8.♘e2 (The line 8.♗c2 ♖e8 reduces the play to basic considered variations. White can also try 8.d3, undermining Black's outpost in the centre immediately. 8...exd3 9.♙xd3 ♘e5 10.♙e2 – The bishop should be kept. In case of 10.♘f3 ♘xd3+ 11.♗xd3 b6 12.0-0 ♙b7 13.b3 ♘xd5 14.cxd5 ♗f6 Black is slightly better Woerdemann – Weber, Germany 1996 – 10...c6 11.♘c3 ♙c7 Both sides suffer no difficulties. After 12.♘f3 d5 13.cxd5 cxd5 in the game Petrosian – Timman, Niksic 1983, Black had a good

play despite the isolated pawn.) 8...♖xd5 9.cxd5 ♖e5. Black's pieces stand actively, however, he has some problems with the development of the kingside. 10. ♖g3 (In case of 10.♖c3 Black continues in a similar way with 10...f5 11.d3 ♖h4 and gains a good play after 12.d4. White can't exchange on e4 here. After 12...♖g4 Black has an initiative, Milov – Raetsky, Baden 1998) 10...f5 11.d3 ♖h4 12.dxe4 fxe4 13.♗e2. White performs his plan and is ready to proceed to a siege of the e4–pawn. So Black continues with 13...♖d3+!, and after 14.♗xd3 exd3 15.♖xd3 (In case of 15.f4 Black answers with 15...b6 16.♖xd3 a5 with a fine compensation, Seirawan – Sosonko, Tilburg 1983, and in case of 15.0–0 there is a strong 15...♖c4) 15...♗xg3 16.fxg3 ♖h5 he gains a sufficient compensation again. White's pawns are weak, besides it's hard to introduce the king's rook into the game. The opponents continued with 17.e4 d6 18.♗f4 ♗g4 19.♖c1 ♖f7 20.h3 ♖e8 21.♖f2 ♗c8 22. ♖g1 ♖g6 and soon agreed to a draw, Vaulin – Rublevsky, Russia 1997.

7...♖e8 8.♖e2

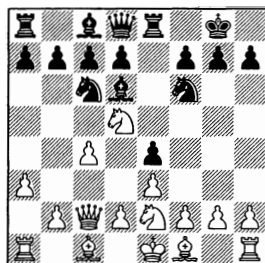
White goes on with the e4–pawn.

8...♗d6

Black prepares 9...♖b4.

9.a3

White defended from the threat.



9... b5! 10.b3

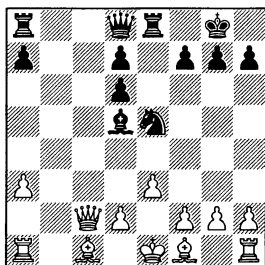
It is dangerous for White to accept the sacrifice: 10.♖xf6+ ♖xf6 11.cxb5 (11.c5 is better as after 11...♗f8 12.♖g3 ♖e5 13. ♗xb5 ♖xc5 14.♖xc5 ♗xc5 ♖e5 Black has only a minimal advantage) 12.♖g3 (In case of 12.♖xe4 there is a simple but efficient 12...♗b7! After 13.♖c2 – or 13. ♖xb7 ♖d3 – there is 13...♖g4 14.f3 ♗xf3! 15.gxf3 ♖h4+ 16.♖g3 ♖xh2 with a crushing defeat) 12...♗b7 13.♗e2 (There is another branch of efficient variations: 13.♖xe4 ♖g6 14.d3 – or 14.f3 ♖xf3+ 15.gxf3 ♖xe4! – 14...♖xd3+! 15.♗xd3 ♖xg2) 13... ♖h4! 14.♖a4 (to castle is dangerous too: 14.0–0 ♖f3+ 15.gxf3 exf3) 14...a6! 15.f4 (15.bxa6 ♗xa6! 16.♗xa6 ♖d3+ 17.♖e2 ♗xg3 18.fxg3 ♖g4+ 19.♖f1 ♖xa6) 15... axb5 16.♖d4 ♖f3+! 17.gxf3 exf3 18.♗xf3 ♗xf3 with a decisive advantage Goldin – Yakovich, Moscow 1992. The abundance of beautiful lines proves that White's strategy is an utter fallacy, after 9...b5 he should strive for an equalisation.

Of course a more accurate play still allows him to hope for

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6

an equality. 10.♘g3 bxc4 11.♙xc4 ♙b7 12.b4 (or 12.0-0 ♘e5 13.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 14.♙e2 ♙h4, threatening with 15...♘f3+) 12...♘e5 13.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 14.♙b2 ♙g6. The play is almost even, but Black has the initiative Adorjan – Romanishin, Riga 1979.

10...bxc4 11.bxc4 ♘xd5 12.cxd5 ♘e5 13.♘g3 ♙b7 14.♘xe4 ♙xd5 15.♘xd6 cxd6



Black's central pawns look ugly, but his bishop is fine. White experiences serious development problems.

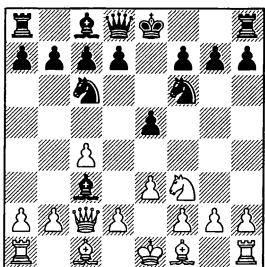
16.♙f5

There was also 16.d4 ♘c6 17.♙b2 ♙g5 with an initiative.

16...g6 17.♙h3 ♙f6=

Even here White failed to maintain a full equality, McNab – Adams, Swansea 1987.

d2) 5.♙c2 ♙xc3



6.♙xc3

Another capture 6.bxc3 looks illogical, even though it helps White to reinforce his control over the central squares. After 6...0-0 White has two plans to choose from: to block up the centre immediately with e2–e4 or, on the contrary, to let Black play e5–e4 and then undermine his outpost. In both cases there is a manoeuvring struggle with approximately equal chances. Consider several examples: 7.d3 d6 8.♙e2 ♙e7 9.♘d2 ♘g4. Black prepares a breakthrough with f7–f5 which is typical of such structures. After 10.e4 f5 11.♙xg4 fxg4 12.♘f1 ♙e6 there was an unclear position, King – Kosten, Hastings 1990. In case of an immediate 7.e4 Black plays in a similar way: 7...d6 8.g3 ♘g4. This plan works here as well. 9.h3 (After 9.♙g2 f5 10.h3 ♘h6 11.d4 fxe4 12.♙xe4 exd4 Black gains an advantage.) 9...♘h6 10.d3 ♙f6 with an equality; the second way is 7.♙e2 d6 8.0-0 e4 9.♘e1 ♙f5 10.♙b2 b6 11.f3. Having completed the development, White starts operations in the centre. The game Suba – Smyslov, Las Palmas 1992, continued with 11...♙d7 12.fxe4 ♘xe4 13.d3 ♘c5 14.♙f4 ♙g6 with a complex play.

6...♙e7

A useful waiting move.

7.a3

The most flexible continuation. 7.d3 is worse – this move which appears so natural creates

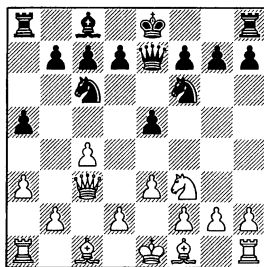
problems for White. 7...d5. Though it is rather strange, but now there is no clear way to maintain the balance, for example after 8.cxd5 ♖xd5 9.♖c2 (an ugly 9.♖d2 is better with a slightly worse position) 9...♗db4 Black suddenly organises a dangerous attack. 10.♖b1 (10.♖c3 is a little better, though after 10...♗d4! 11.♗d1 – or 11.♗xd4 exd4 12.♖d2 ♖c5 – 11...♗xf3 12.gxf3 c5 Black still has a perceptible advantage.) 10...♖c5! 11.♗d1 ♕f5. It seems as if there is no defence already. The game continued with 12. ♕d2 (or 12.a3 ♗xd3 13.♕xd3 ♕xd3 14.♖xd3 ♖d8 with a defeat, for example 15.♗d4 ♗xd4) 12...♖d8 13.♗e1 ♖d5 14.f3 e4!, and soon Black won Pushkov – Scherbakov, Russia 1994; 8.♕e2 gives no equalisation too: 8...dxc4! 9.♖xc4 (after 9.dxc4 ♕g4 10.0–0 e4 11.♗d4 ♕xe2 12.♗xe2 0–0–0 Black has a slight but stable advantage) 9...♕e6 10.♖b5. Black has the initiative, and it's easy to make a mistake. Now after 10...♖b4+ 11.♖xb4 ♗xb4 White has a hard position Aseev – Dvoirys, Vilnius 1984.

7.♕e2 d5 leads to a manoeuvring play with even chances. Following continuations occurred: 8.d4 exd4 9.♗xd4 ♗xd4 10.♖xd4 c5 11.♖d1 (or 11.♖h4 dxc4 12.♕xc4 0–0 13.0–0 ♕e6 with an approximately equal position) 11...dxc4 12.♕xc4 ♖e4 13.♕b5+ ♕d7 14.♕xd7+ ♗xd7

15.0–0 ♖d8= Teske – Baburin, Germany 2000; 8.cxd5 ♗xd5 9.♖b3 ♗b6 10.d3 (there was also 10.0–0 ♕g4 11.d3 0–0) 10...♕e6 11.♖c2 0–0 12.0–0 ♖fd8 13.a3 ♕f5 14.♗d2 a5 15.b3 ♗d7 16.♗e4 ♗f6 17.♕b2, and the game was drawn Hauchard – Bacrot, France 2000.

7...a5

One of most natural responses. White can play energetically now or continue with the manoeuvres.



8.b3

8.b4. An immediate attack on the "own" flank has only one minus: White is underdeveloped. 8...axb4 9.axb4 ♖xa1 10.♖xa1 e4 11.b5 exf3 12.bxc6 fxg2 13.cxd7+ ♖xd7. Both sides made almost forced moves so far, but now there are different variations: 14.♕xg2 (another continuation 14.♖e5+ ♖e6 15.♖xe6+ ♕xe6 16.♕xg2 ♕xc4 17.♕xb7 ♗d7 ensures a slightly better play for Black) 14...♖g4 15.♖e5+ ♕e6 16.♕xb7 (in the line 16.♖xc7 ♖xg2 17.♕a3 ♖xh1+ 18.♗e2 ♕g4+ 19.♗d3 ♖b1+ White simply loses) 16...♖xc4 17.♕a3 ♗d7. Black repelled straight threats and has better

prospects now as it's hard for White to engage the rook in the active play.

Other continuations lead to a manoeuvring struggle where Black's opportunities aren't worse than White's:

8.♠e2 0-0 9.0-0 d5 10.d3 ♖d8 11.cxd5 ♜xd5 12.♗c2 a4 13.♙d2 ♙e6 14.♞fe1 f6= with equal chances, Hort – Sosonko, Waddinxveen 1979.

8.d3 d5 9.cxd5 ♜xd5 10.♗c2 a4 11.♠e2 0-0 12.0-0 ♜b6 13.♙d2 ♖d8 14.♙c3 ♙f5, promising a keen struggle Timman – Gulko, Horgen 1995.

8...d5 9.d4

In case of 9.cxd5 ♜xd5 Black gains an important tempo for the development of his initiative, and in the further struggle he has good chances: 10.♗b2 0-0 11.d3 ♙g4 12.♠e2 f5 13.h3 ♙h5 14.0-0 f4 15.♜xe5 (or 15.e4 ♙xf3 16.♙xf3 ♜f6 17.♙d2 ♜d4 with an advantage) 15...♙xe2 16.♜xc6 bxc6 17.♗xe2 f3 White acquired a pawn, but Black's initiative transformed into a dangerous attack, Grooten – Timman, Netherlands 1981.

1.c4 e5 2.♜c3 ♜f6 3.♜f3 ♜c6

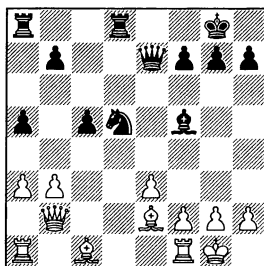
9...exd4 10.♜xd4 ♜xd4 11.♗xd4 c5 12.♗b2

There is also 12.♗f4 which can be followed by 12...♜h5 13.♗f3 ♗e5 14.♞b1 ♗f5 15.♗xf5 ♙xf5 with an unclear position.

12...0-0 13.cxd5

In case of 13.♠e2 Black has an unpleasant response 13...a4.

13...♜xd5 14.♠e2 ♙f5 15.0-0 ♞f8



Generally speaking, this position is approximately equal, but Black has a certain space advantage and more definite prospects owing to his queenside pawn majority.

The game continued with 16.♞e1 ♜f6 17.f3 ♙d3 18.♙d1 b5, and step by step Black managed to win, F. Olafsson – Karpov, Malta 1980.

Summary

In this continuation White has no opportunities for the development of his opening initiative. Black has fine prospects in all lines.

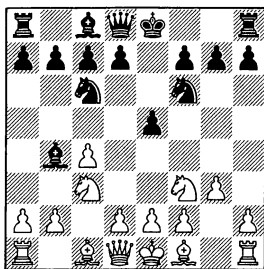
Chapter 20 1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.g3

Four Knights System (Variation with 4.g3)

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6

We know this position from the previous chapter.

4.g3 ♖b4



There is the initial position of the variation on the board.

White has two main opportunities: a preliminary attack on the bishop with a) 5.♘d5 or a development move b) 5.♖g2.

a) 5.♘d5

The natural continuation is:

5...♗c5 6.♖g2

Now there are various opportunities but usually the game develops in a single strategic key: White increases his queenside initiative with b2–b4, and Black prepares the advance f7–f5 with

a counterattack on the kingside. On the whole, both sides have no clear positional guiding lines, concrete weaknesses, etc., so there is a manoeuvring struggle with mutual chances. Everything depends on the ingenuity of rivals. In case of 6.d3 h6 7.a3 a6 8.b4 ♖a7 9.♖b2 d6 10.♖g2 0–0 11.0–0 ♘xd5 events develop similarly to the main line. Black was not obliged to exchange on d5, that was simply one of possible ways to set up a counterplay. 12.cxd5 ♘e7 13.♘d2 f5. Black accomplished the fundamental advance and has fine prospects now. The following game illustrates well the trend of this variation: 14.♖c1 ♖f7 15.♖c4 b5 16.♖c1 ♖b7 17.♗b3 ♘h8 18. ♘h1 f4 19.♖e4 ♘g8 . Black's chances seem to be already slightly better, Van Wely – Gelfand, Hoogovens 1998.

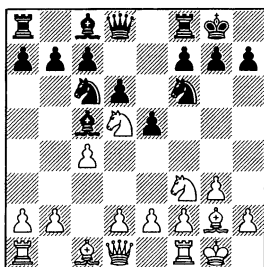
6...0–0 7.0–0

The most natural continuation. The following example shows the diversity of opportunities this position comprises: 7.d3 h6 8.a3 a5 9.♖d2 d6 10.b4 axb4 11.axb4 ♖xa1 12.♗xa1. It looks as if White has gained what he

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.g3 ♗b4

wanted, still after 12...♘xd5 13.bxc5 ♘db4 14.♗xb4 ♘xb4 15.0-0 e4 16.dxe4 dxc5=. Black has an evident advantage on the queenside, and White on the kingside. Though the weakness of the c4-pawn is obvious, the chances of the sides should be estimated as approximately even Korchnoi – Karpov, Tilburg 1991.

7...d6



8.d3

Probably this is the most flexible move. White is threatening to play 9.♗g5. Other continuations pose no problems for Black, and Karpov demonstrated this convincingly. For example, in case of 8.e3 ♗g4 there is 9.h3 ♗h5 10.d3 (In case of 10.g4 ♗g6 11.d4 ♗b6 there is an almost forced variation: 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♘xe5 dxe5 14.♘xb6 axb6 15.♗xb7 ♖b8 16.♙xd8 ♖fxd8 17.♗g2 ♗d3 18.♖e1 ♗xc4 19.b3, and now 19...♗d5. An important moment. White should decide whether he will lose the advantage of two bishops or spoil his pawn structure after e3–e4. In both cases the position is approximately even.) 10...a5 11.a3 ♗a7 12.♘c3 ♖e8

13.♙c2 ♘d7 14.♖b1 ♗e7. Both sides perform manoeuvres. 15.b4 axb4 16.axb4 c6. White has accomplished the planned advance but this does not mean he has an advantage, both sides still have chances. After 17.♙b3 ♗g6 18.♖d1 h6 19.♘h4 ♗h7 20.♗e4 ♗b8 21.♗a3 ♘f8 22.b5 ♗e6 Black had certain initiative in the game Lautier – Karpov, Linares 1994.

Another Karpov's game where White played 8.a3, threatening with the advance b2–b4, developed successfully as well. After 8...a5 9.d3 h6 10.♘c3 ♗e6 11.e3 ♗a7 12.♙c2 ♙d7. Black managed to prevent threats from the queenside, and then he began to increase his initiative on the kingside. 13.b3 ♗h3 14.♗b2 ♗xg2 15.♙xg2 ♖fe8 16.♖ad1 ♖ad8 Black stood slightly better, Huebner – Karpov, Brussels 1987.

8...h6 9.e3

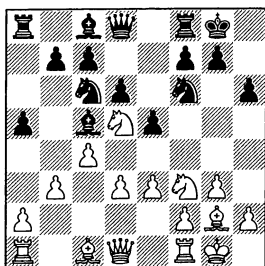
Or 9.♗d2 ♘xd5 10.cxd5 ♗e7 11.b4 ♗b6 12.a4 a6 13.♙b3 ♗d7 with mutual opportunities Gheorghiu – Portisch, Petropolis 1973.

In case of 9.♘c3 (threatening with 10.♘a4) Black has 9...a5.

9...a5 10.b3

Also 10.♘c3 was tested. After 10...♗a7 11.a3 Black begins to arrange a counterplay on the kingside: 11...♘h7 12.♙h1 ♗g4 13.♙c2 f5=. In the coming interesting struggle both sides have equal chances, Korchnoi – Petro-

sian, Ciocco 1977.



10...dxd5

This exchange is not necessary but it does no harm.

11.cxd5 dxe7 12.d4 exd4 13. dxd4

There was a complex position in the game Huebner – Karpov, Bad Kissingen 1980.

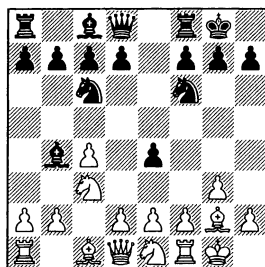
b) 5. g2 0-0 6.0-0

Now in case of 6. d5 Black gains a good play with 6... dxd5 7.cxd5 and 7... d4. After 8. dxd4 exd4 9.0-0 f6 the position should be estimated as even, for example: 10.d3 c5 11.c2 d6 12.a3 a5 13.b3 e8 14.b2, and now 14... g5, escaping the binding. White's pressure on the s-file is not more dangerous than Black's counter threats on the e-file.

6...e4

This advantage is very important for Black in this variation. Now the struggle will develop around the e4-pawn which considerably restricts White's pieces. White's knight has two retreats: b1) 7. e1 or b2) 7. g5.

b1) 7. e1



7...xc3

This exchange is typical of the whole system. White obtains an advantage of the bishop pair and should try to open up the play. If Black manages to neutralise White's bishops, he will obtain good chances owing to his better pawn structure. As practice shows, Black's position is rather solid here.

8.dxc3

Black still has a good play if White captures with another pawn. 8.bxc3 e8 9. c2. (Also an immediate attack on the e4-pawn deserves attention: 9.f3 e7 10.fxe4 dxe4 11. d3 b6 12. f4 b7 13.e3 – or 13. d5 c5 – 13... a5 14.d3 f6 15.e4 c5+ with a complex play. Now after the forced 16. h1 which occurred in the game Neverov – Groszpeter, Pardubice 2000, a sacrifice was possible: 16... dxe4 17.dxe4 cxc4, and in case of 18. d5 xe4 19. e3 e6 there was a compensation as well as after 18. d4 xe4 19. xc4 xc4 20. xb7 dxb7 21. d2 c5 22. d5 e4 23. ad1 c6, Black's three pawns were not weaker than White's piece.) 9... d6 10. e3

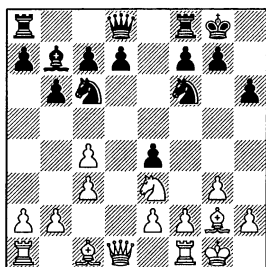
1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.g3 ♘b4

♘d7 11.♖c2 (or 11.d3 ♘a5) 11... ♘a5! 12.d3 ♘c6 13.♘d2 ♖d7 14.♞ae1 b6. Black arranged his pieces very well and is ready to open up the e-file. The game Huebner – Karpov, Baden Baden 1992, continued with 15.f3 exd3 16.exd3, and after 16...h5 (with threats on the kingside) 17.♞f2 Black doubled his rooks on the e-file with 17...♞e7 18.♞fe2 ♞ae8 and gained a good play.

8...h6

Black has to prevent the binding to keep control over d5.

9.♘c2 b6 10.♘e3 ♘b7



11.♘d5

This White's attempt to create an outpost on d5 usually leads to an exchange of White's active knight. In case of an immediate 11.f4 Black exchanges with 11... exf3 12.exf3 and prepares d7–d5 with simplifications: 12...♘e7 13.♖c2 (The events developed in a similar way after 13.a4 d5 14.cxd5 ♘fxd5 15.a5 c5 16.♞e1 ♖c7 17.♖c2 ♘xe3 18. ♘xe3 ♘d5 in the game Uhlmann – Farago, Sarajevo 1983) 13...d5 14.♞d1 ♖c8 15.cxd5 ♘fxd5 16.♘xd5 ♘xd5 17.♘d2 ♞e8= with an ap-

proximate equality, Ribli – Farago, Hungary 1987.

After 11.♖c2 White did not get much too. 11...♘e7 12.b3. (White played here also 12.b4 d6 13.c5, and after 13...bxc5 14.bxc5 d5 there was a complex position with mutual chances; after 12. ♘d2 c5 13.f3 exf3 14.exf3 d5 15. ♞ad1 ♖c7 16.cxd5 ♘fxd5 17.♘d5 ♘xd5 in the game Portisch – Farago, Hungary 1987, the chances were even) 12...♞e8. Manoeuvres with major pieces on the e-file is one of basic methods of Black's counterplay in this variation. 13.♞d1 d6 14.♘b2 ♖c8 15.♞ac1 ♖e6 16.♖d2 ♞ad8 17.♞c2 ♖e5. White contained himself for an undermining of the outpost on e4, and Black's pieces move to the kingside, using the e-file. After 18.♖e1 ♖h5 Black's position is somewhat more active, Sunye Neto – Veskovi, Brazil 2000.

11...♘e5

Black's best opportunity.

12.b3

Or 12.♘f4 d6 13.♖d4 c5 14. ♘xf6+ ♖xf6 15.♘xe5 ♖xe5 with a balanced position.

12...♞e8 13.a4

After 13.f4 exf3 14.exf3 Black makes a useful waiting move 14...♞b8, and after 15.♞e1 an exchange follows: 15...♘xd5 16.cxd5 ♖f6 with a good play, because 17.f4 ♘g4! is in Black's favour and he also does not have any problems in case of 17.♘e3 ♖f5= Uhlmann – Makarichev, Sarajevo 1982.

13...a5 14.f4

After 14.♖a2 d6 15.♗d4 ♜ed7 16.f4 exf3 17.exf3 ♜xd5 18.cxd5 ♗f6 19.♗xf6 ♜xf6 20.c4 ♜d7 21.♙d2 ♜c5, the weakness on b3 created fine prospects for Black, Maus – Farago, Berlin 1988.

14...exf3 15.exf3 ♜xd5=

Black can exchange right now because White has no b3–b4. After 16.cxd5 ♗f6 the chances of the sides are roughly equal, Seirawan – Salov, Brussels 1988.

b2) 7.♜g5 ♙xc3

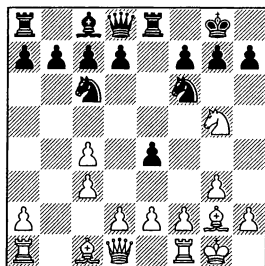
The exchange is forced, but this complies with Black's plan.

8.bxc3

White is going to use his mighty central pawns. Another capture 8.dxc3 is less dangerous for Black. 8...♞e8 9.♗c2 (In case of 9.f3 Black goes on with his development: 9...d6 10.b3 ♙d7, not fearing a capture on e4 now or with the next move because after 11.♜xe4 ♜xe4 12.fxe4 he returns the e4–pawn easily after a transfer of the bishop to c6. The game Smyslov – Portisch, Brazil 1973, continued with 11.♜h3 exf3 12.exf3 ♜e7 13.♙g5 ♜f5 14.♗d3 h6 15.♙d2 ♜e7 16.♞fe1 ♙f5 with a balanced position) 9...♗e7 10.♜h3 h6 11.♜f4 ♗e5. Black's central pawn restricts the mobility of White's kingside pieces and lets him manoeuvre freely, that can be illustrated with the following examples: 12.♞d1 (Or 12.♙e3 g5 13.♙d4 ♜xd4 14.cxd4 ♗f5 15.♜d5 White ventures on an exacerbation, refusing to return

the knight to the edge of the board, but this line leads to simplifications and allows Black to maintain a balance: 15...♜xd5 16.cxd5 ♗xd5 17.♗xc7= Adorjan – Garcia Palermo, Reggio Emilia 1984) 12...♜e7 13.♙e3 c5 14.♜d5 (a sharper 14.♗d2 b6 15.b4 also gains White no advantage, for example: 15...♙a6 16.bxc5 bxc5 17.♗d6 ♗xd6 18.♞xd6 ♙xc4 19.♙xc5 ♜f5= with an equal play, Karlsson – Sax, Hastings 1983) 14...♜exd5 15.cxd5 b6 16.c4 d6 17.♙f4 ♗e7, Black's pieces are placed very conveniently, and the strength of White's bishop pair is restricted, Adorjan – Hjartarson, Reykjavik 1988.

8...♞e8



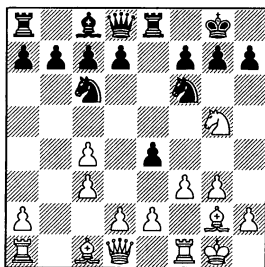
The first crucial position.

9.f3

This is the most active way of struggle in this position. In the quiet line 9.♗c2 ♗e7 10.d3 exd3 11.exd3 b6 Black has no problems as after a transfer of the bishop to b7 he soon accomplishes an exchange of the light-squared bishop: 12.♙d2 (or 12.♜e4 ♜xe4 13.♙xe4 ♙b7 14.♞e1 ♗f6) 12... ♙b7 13.♞ae1 ♗f8 with an inevi-

table ♘a5.

In case of 9.d3 exd3 10.exd3 the events develop in a similar way. Black drives away the active knight with 10...h6, and after any retreat he performs the same exchange, for example: 11.♘e4 b6 12.♙f4 ♙b7 13.♞e1 (or 13.♛d2 ♘xe4 14.♙xe4 ♘a5 15.♙xb7 ♘xb7 16.♞fe1 ♞xe1+ 17.♞xe1 ♘c5 18.d4 ♘e6 with a solid position) 13...♘a5 14.c5!? (14.f3 d5) 14...♘xe4 15.dxe4 ♙c6 with an approximately equal position. Also in case of 11.♘f3 d6 12. ♞b1 b6!? some interesting lines are available for Black. If White allows to seduce himself with a material profit and plays 13.♘d4 ♘xd4 14.♙xa8?, then he loses immediately: 14...♘e2+ 15.♙h1 (after 15.♙g2 there is a showy mate: ♙g4 16.♙f3 ♙xf3 17.♙xf3 ♛a8#) 15...♙g4 with irrefutable threats. Then, in the exemplary line 13.h3 ♙b7 14. ♘h4 ♘a5 Black's position is just good.



9...e3!?

An interesting move. Black prevents his opponent from creating a pawn majority in the centre, and at the same time keeps

the position as closed as he can.

10.d3

A capture of the pawn with 10.dxe3 concedes the initiative to Black, and the extra pawn usually can't be kept because of the evident weakness on c4. After 10...♘a5 11.e4 (The line 11.♛a4 b6 12.c5 ♙a6 13.cxb6 axb6 is dangerous as after 14.♛c2 d5 15.♞d1 ♘c4 the pawn should be returned anyway and White has a worse position, whereas in case of 16.e4 ♛e7 17.exd5 he just loses because of 17...♘e3) 11...h6 12.♘h3 ♘xc4 13.♛d4 d5 14.♘f4 (or 14.exd5 ♛xd5 15.e4 ♛c6) 14...c6 15.exd5 cxd5 16.e4 ♛b6 Black's position is none the worse, Kopilov – Raetsky, Voronezh 1990.

The move 10.d4 occurs infrequently. After 10...♘a5 11.♛d3 b6 Black equalises easily, attacking the c4–pawn, for example: 12. ♙xe3 (worse is 12.c5 ♙b7 13. ♙xe3 ♛e7 14.♙f4 ♙xe2 15.♛f5 h6 with Black's certain advantage, H. Olafsson – Naumkin, Belgrade 1988) 12...♙a6 13.♞fe1 ♘xc4 with an approximately equal position.

10...d5 11.♛b3

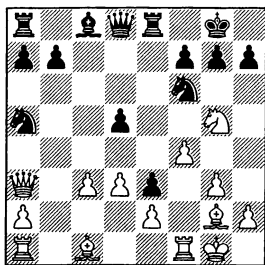
Black's task is simpler in case of an immediate exchange in the centre. After 11.cxd5 ♘xd5 12. ♛b3 (The move 12.♘e4, trying to surround the e3–pawn, brings White difficulties: 12...f5. This advance of the f–pawn refutes White's idea. 13.c4 ♘de7 14.♘g5 – or 14.♘c3 f4 15.gxf4 ♘f5 16.♞b1 ♘cd4 with an overwhelming po-

sition, for example: 17.♖b5 ♖e6 18.♔h1 ♖xf4 with fatal threats: 19.♖g1 ♖g3+ 20.hxg3 ♖g5 with a mate – 14...f4! 15.♖e4 (15.gxf4 ♖g6) 15...♖f5 16.♖b1 ♖cd4 is similar to the above considered variation – Bordas – Naumkin, Budapest 1991) 12...♖a5 13.♖a3 Now Black has an opportunity for a fianchetto: 13...b6 14.f4 (14.c4?! ♖xg5 15.f4 is no good because of 15...♖xf4! 16.♖xf4 ♖b7 with an advantage) 14...♖b7. Black managed to perform the familiar idea, he is ready to exchange the bishops at any moment now. The game continued with 15.♖b2 (or 15.c4 ♖f6 16.♖xb7 ♖xb7 17.♖f3 h6 18.♖h3 ♖d7 19.♖g2 ♖g4 with an initiative) 15...c5 16.c4 ♖b4 17.♖c3 f6 18.♖xb7 ♖xb7 19.♖f3 ♖d6 with Black's good play, Gulko – Ivanchuk, Horgen 1995.

11...♖a5 12.♖a3

In case of 12.♖a4 Black can remember about the main variation: 12...c6 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.f4 ♖g4 15.♖f3 ♖c6 16.♖b2 ♖d7= with an equal play, Grant – Naumkin, France 1993.

12...c6 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.f4



The second crucial position.

14...♖g4 15.♖e1

Also the line 15.♖f3 ♖c6 deserves attention with a possible continuation 16.h3 ♖xf3 17.♖xf3 h5. Note an important moment: Black's chance in this variation is an attack on the king. After 18.♖c5 ♖c8 19.♖b2 b6 20.♖b5 ♖a5 21.♖ac1 ♖c5 the position was unclear in the game Eriksson – Oestroem, Hallsta 1996.

15...h6 16.♖f3 ♖c6 17.♖b1 ♖d7

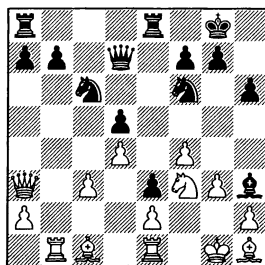
Black prepared the fundamental bishop exchange.

18.d4 ♖h3 19.♖h1

However, White avoids the exchange.

Really, after 19.♖xh3 ♖xh3 20.♖xb7 ♖g4 there is 21...♖xh2, winning the game, and in case of 21.♖f1 Black has 21...♖e6, now if 22.♖c5 ♖d8 23.♖c7, then again 23...♖xh2 with a very dangerous attack.

Perhaps it's better to prefer an immediate 19.♖e5 ♖xe5 20.dxe5 ♖xg2 21.♖xg2 with an unclear position after 21...♖g4, because in this situation it's hard for White to reinforce his play.



19...♖h5!

1.c4 e5 2.♟c3 ♟f6 3.♟f3 ♟c6 4.g3 ♙b4

Black accumulates threats.

20.♟e5 ♟xe5 21.fxe5 ♟g4

A knight sacrifice becomes inevitable.

22.♙xe3

There is also a line with reversed moves: 22.♙f3 ♟g6 23.♙xe3 ♟xg3.

The game continued with 22...♟xg3 23.♙f3 ♟g6 24.hxg3

♟xg3+ 25.♙h1 ♙g4 26.♟c1 ♟h3+

27. ♙g1 ♟g3+ 28.♙h1 ♚e6!, and Black brought the attack to the final victory.

After 29.♙g2 ♟h4+! 30.♙g1

♙h3! 31.♙xh3 ♚g6+! 32.♙g2 ♟g3

White had to part with the queen:

33.♙g5 ♚xg5 34.♟xg5 hxg5—+

Lautier – Illescas, Dos Hermanas 1995.

Summary

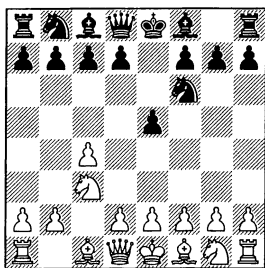
In the main variation Black should exchange on c3 (this exchange is typical of other continuations also) and accomplish the advance e5-e4. This allows him to take control over strategically important squares in the centre and he gets a chance to seize the initiative.

Chapter 21 1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6

Deviations from the Four Knights' System

In the present chapter we shall deal with those variations of the English Opening in which White mostly develops the king's knight to e2. Usually such lines produce positions, typical of some popular variations of the Sicilian Defence with reversed colours. These formations are very solid and White's extra tempo gives him no particular chances in the struggle for an opening advantage.

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6



White has various continuations here, but only two of them deserve a serious examination: a) 3.e3 and b) 3.g3.

3.e4 prevents the advance d7–d5 but weakens the control over

d4 and does not contribute to White's development. Black gets a good play easily: 3...♗c5 4.g3 d6 5.h3 ♗e6 6.♗g2 c6 7.d3. After a series of natural moves Black can struggle for an initiative with 7...b5 8.cxb5 cxb5 9.♘ge2 (no 9.♘xb5 because of 9...♖b6) 9...♘c6 10.0–0 a6 with a certain advantage, Braunberger – Sher, Mendrisio 1989.

3.d3 A possible but passive move. After 3...♗c5 4.♘f3 d6 5.e3 0–0 6.♗e2 (or 6.d4 exd4 7.exd4 ♗b4) 6...♖e7 7.0–0 a5 8.b3 ♘bd7 9.♗b2 ♞e8= the position was approximately equal in the game Wirthensohn – Korchnoi, Bad Kissingen 1981.

a) 3.e3

This continuation occurs more frequently than the above mentioned.

3...♗b4 4.♘ge2 0–0

Now several continuations are possible, and in all lines Black usually manages to perform the advance d7–d5 and takes control over the central squares.

5.a3

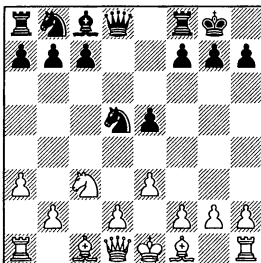
Other moves pose no problems for Black as well. 5.♘g3 c6 6.a3 ♗a5 7.b4 ♗c7 8.♗e2 d5.

Black is well developed, his bishops are aimed at the opponent's kingside. 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.d4 e4 11.a4 ♘c6 12.♙a3 ♙d6 13.b5 ♙xa3 14.♞xa3 ♘e7. White managed to exchange one of the dangerous bishops, but this does not hinder the development of Black's initiative. The cited game continued with 15.a5 g6 16.♖b3 h5 with an unpleasant pressure on the kingside, Milov – Morozovich, Tilburg 1994.

5.♘d5. White prevents d7–d5, starting a complex play with even opportunities, for example: 5... ♘xd5 6.cxd5 c5 7.♘g3 d6 8.♙e2 f5. Black gained control over the central squares again, but the position is unclear. After 9.0–0 ♘d7 10.f4 ♙a5 11.♖c2 g6 12.b3 ♘f6 the main struggle was still ahead in the game Lerner – Gavrikov, Tallinn 1987.

5...♙xc3 6.♘xc3 d5 7.cxd5 ♘xd5

Black allows his opponent to keep the bishop pair but instead he gains a space advantage without any loss of time.



8.♖c2

Also 8.d3 c5 9.♖b3 ♘e7 10.

♙e2 ♘bc6 is possible with mutual chances Morozovich – Rublevsky, Moscow 1993

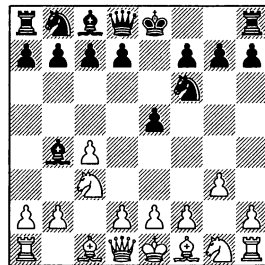
8...c5 9.♙d3 h6 10.♘xd5 ♖xd5 11.0–0 ♖d6=

Black's position is solid, and White's attempt to play actively with 12.b4 after 12...cxb4 13. axb4 ♙e6 results in the creation of a weak pawn. After 14.b5 ♞c8 15.♖b1 ♘d7 16.♙a3 ♘c5 17. ♙h7 ♖h8 18.♞d1 ♖b6 19.♙xc5 ♞xc5 20.♙d3 ♙d7 Black had an advantage in the game Rodgaard – Morozovich, Moscow 1994.

b) 3.g3

As well as in the Four Knights' System, this move leads to an interesting play.

3...♙b4



4.♙g2

A natural move. Other continuations are less popular. Nevertheless, we can mention several alternative opportunities.

An immediate 4.♘d5 guarantees Black a convenient play after 4... ♘xd5 5.cxd5 0–0 6.♙g2 c6. Black has a considerable development advantage, and an attempt to support the outpost on d5 with 7.e4 (in case of 7.dxc6

there is 7...♖xc6) 7...cxd5 8.exd5 d6 9.♖e2 ♙f5 gives Black a fine position, Korchnoi – Timman, Madrid 1995.

4.♖b3 White is preparing a knight intrusion to d5. 4...♖c6 5.♖d5. This line looks more solid, though it also promises White no advantage. After 5...♙c5 6.e3 0–0 7.♙g2 ♖xd5 8.cxd5 ♖e7 9.♖e2 d6 10.0–0 c6 11.d4 exd4 12.exd4 ♙b6 there was a complex position with mutual chances in the game Korchnoi – Karpov, Merano 1978.

It should be mentioned also that on the next move a transition to the Four Knights' System is possible, for example with 4.♖f3 ♖c6.

4...0–0

White has two chief opportunities: b1) 5.♖c2 and b2) 5.e4. Other possible moves either reduce the play to the variations regarded above or simply present no problems to Black.

5.♖b3 ♖c6 after 6.♖d5 produces a position from the above cited game Korchnoi – Karpov, Merano 1978, and the forced line 6.♙xc6 ♙xc3 7.♖xc3 bxc6 gives Black good prospects because the exchange of White's light-squared bishop has weakened his kingside seriously, and in case of 8.♖xe5 (After 8.♖f3 d6 9.d3 e4 10.♖g5 exd3 11.♖xd3 ♙e8 the play is approximately equal, Palatnik – Eingorn, USSR 1977) 8...d6 9.♖c3 c5 Black's compensation for the pawn is more than enough. 10.d4 (or 10.♖f3 ♙h3)

10...cxd4 11.♖xd4 ♙b7 12.♖f3 ♙e8 13.♙e3 c5 14.♖c3 (14.♖f4 loses immediately because of 14...♙e4) 14...♖g4 Black is OK in this position, unlike his opponent.

5.e3 leads to a considerable weakening of the squares d3 and f3, and Black can make use of this fact without delay: 5...♙xc3! 6.bxc3 (White is even worse in case of 6.dxc3 e4 7.♖e2 d6 8.h3 ♖c6 9.b3 ♖e5 and Black has a perceptible advantage) 6...♙e8 7.d4 e4 8.♖e2 d6 9.h3 ♖c6. Black undertakes a typical attack, aimed at the c4–pawn. 10.g4 ♖a5 11.♖a4 b6. White has no sufficient compensation on the kingside for the weakness of his queenside pawns, Kupicek – Hort, Czechoslovakia 1972.

5.d3 (The continuation 5.b3 ♙e8 is of a similar sort, and Black can apply the same manoeuvres. 6.a3 ♙xc3. Practically, only this exchange is obligatory, and Black can choose his further light-squared strategy depending on situation. 7.dxc3 d6. Black arranges his pawns on dark squares. 8.e4 ♖bd7 9.♖c2 ♖c5 10.♙e3 ♙d7. Now he prepares to play on light squares. 11.♙d1 b6 12.♖e2 ♖c8. Black has certain advantage, Pieper – Christiansen, Germany 1990) 5...♙e8 6.e4 (in case of 6.♖f3 Black has an unpleasant 6...e4) 6...♙xc3+. A typical exchange. 7.bxc3 c6 8.♖e2 d5. In this line Black chose a different arrangement of his central

pawns. After 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.exd5 ♘xd5 11.0-0 ♘c6 12.h3 ♙f5 13.♖b3 ♘b6 14.♙d1 ♖d7 Black had an initiative in the game Arbakov – Naumkin, Warsaw 1992.

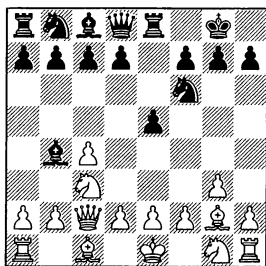
5.a3. This continuation is also admissible, though not very consistent as Black plans the exchange 5...♙xc3 anyway. 6.bxc3. (In case of 6.dxc3 Black can apply a similar pawn arrangement) 6...e4 7.♘h3 ♙e8 8.0-0 d6 9.♘f4 b6 10.f3 e3 11.d3 ♙b7 12.♖e1 ♘bd7 with a complex position which is however quite favourable for Black, Botvinnik – Smylov, USSR 1964.

b1) 5.♖c2

This move brings no fundamental alterations into Black's plans. The only difference is that White can capture on c3 with the queen now.

5...♙e8

After this move White has a wide choice of continuations.



6.d3

The most typical method of struggle in these variations.

In case of 6.e3 ♘c6 7.a3 ♙xc3 8.♖xc3 d5 9.cxd5 there is a sharp

9...♘d4, taking the initiative, so after 10.e4 c6 11.dxc6 ♙e6 Black created dangerous threats in the game Czech – Grund, Stauffer 1998.

After 6.e4 Black equalizes the game with an exchange on c3. 6...♙xc3 7.dxc3 (In case of 7.♖xc3 there is 7...c6 to be followed by d7–d5) 7...d6 8.♘f3 a6. Another standard method of the organisation of Black's counterplay is to begin an active play on the queenside, using the restricted position of the g2–bishop. After 9.0-0 b5 10.cxb5 axb5 11.♘h4 ♙b7 12.♙e1 ♘bd7 13.a4 bxa4 14.♙xa4 ♙xa4 15.♖xa4 ♖a8 there was an even position in the game Bukal – Barlov, Mendrisio 1989.

6.a3 As it has already been shown, the exchange complies with Black's plan. 6...♙xc3 7.dxc3 a5. Black begins to perform another typical plan. 8.a4 d6 9.e4 ♘a6 10.♘e2 ♘c5. The knight stands very well here. 11.h3 ♙e6. Black has arranged some threats, and after 12.b3 b5! he just gains an advantage, Shabalov – Orlov, Minsk 1990, as in case of 13.axb5 a4! White's queenside would be simply ruined.

6...c6 7.a3 ♙xc3+ 8.♖xc3 d5

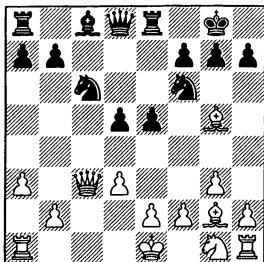
A similar plan was already regarded above.

9.cxd5

White gained nothing from the binding in the game Lahaye – Van der Wiel, Dieren 2000: after 9.♙g5 d4 10.♖d2 ♘bd7 11.b4 a5 12.♙b1 axb4 13.axb4 h6 14.

♙xf6 ♜xf6 Black's position was better.

9...cxd5 10.♙g5 ♜c6



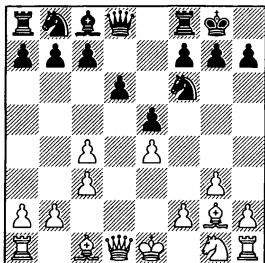
Black arranged pieces very well and took control over the centre. To capture the pawn is dangerous for Black, for example: 11.♙xf6 ♜xf6 12.♙xd5 ♜d4 13.♞c1 ♙e6 14.♙xb7 ♞ab8 15.♝c7 e4 16.dxe4 ♜b5 17.♝c6 ♝xb2. The forced line brought White to a very unsafe position Ljubojevic – Anand, Monaco 1997.

b2) 5.e4

The most fundamental continuation.

5...♙xc3 6.bxc3

Another opportunity 6.dxc3 after 6...d6 gives a position, similar to the lines regarded above (see variation **b1**) 5.♝c2, with the capture dxc3).



Nowever, it's useful to consider several examples of the grandmasters' practice to get a better understanding of some concrete situations.

7.h3 This is very slow, all the more that White is already retarded in development. 7...♙e6 8.♝e2 ♜bd7 9.♙g5 h6 10.♙d2 a6 11.f4 b5. The position is opened up, but White's development problems are still unsolved, and Black has a slight advantage, M. Ivanov – Brynell, Hafnarfjordur 1997.

7.♝c2 ♙e6 8.b3 ♝c8 9.♜f3 ♙h3 10.0–0 ♙xg2 11.♝xg2 b6 12.♜h4 ♝b7=. No particular comments are required. Both sides played accurately and have an equal position, Dittmar – Komarov, Valle d'Aosta 2000.

7.♜e2 b6 The simplest solution. Exerting pressure on the e4–pawn, Black restricts the opportunities of his rival. 8.0–0 (A similar position appeared after 8.h3 ♙b7 9.♝c2 ♝e8 10.b3 ♜bd7 11.♙g5 h6 12.♙e3 ♜c5, and White had to play 13.f3 Yegiazarian – Mirumian, Armenia 1996) 8...♙b7 9.f3 (Or 9.♝c2 ♜bd7 10.♙e3 a5 11.♞ae1 ♜c5 12.f3 ♝d7 13.♜c1 ♝e6 14.b3 a4 with mutual chances, Romanishin – Razuvaev, Moscow 1986) 9...♜bd7 10.g4. Perhaps this activity is untimely. 10...♜e8 11.♜g3 ♜c5 12.b3 a5 13.♙e3 ♜e6. Black took a firm control over all important squares, and some weak points appeared in White's

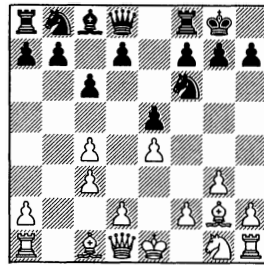
position. Black has an initiative, Alterman – Birnboim, Israel 1986.

7.♙e2 The most interesting continuation in this variation. 7...♘bd7 8.♘f3 ♘c5. White has two opportunities now, but in both cases Black performs the same plan which promises him an equal play: 9.♘h4 (Or 9.♘d2 a6. Black is preparing b7–b5, but in case of 10.a4 he stops White's queenside pawns with 10...a5 and gets an opportunity to conduct an active play on the whole board: 11.0–0 ♗g4 12.f3 ♗e6 13.♞d1 ♘fd7 14.♞a3 f5 16.exf5 ♗xf5 with an initiative, Hauchard – Dautov, Pula 1997) 9...a6. The same plan: the advance b7–b5 is inevitable. White's underdevelopment demands accuracy from his play, and Black seems to have an initiative.

Please, consider several examples:

10.f3 b5 11.♗e3 bxc4 12.♗xc5 dxc5 13.♞d1 (in case of 13.♙xc4 Black plays 13...♙d6 to be followed by ♙b6, taking the initiative) 13...♙e8 14.0–0 ♗e6 15.♞d2 ♙a4 Kiselev – Maljutin, Marianske Lazne 1989; 10.0–0 b5 11.♞d1 ♗e6 12.cxb5 axb5, and Black's position is more active Miezis – Bellin, Gausdal 2000; 10.b3 b5 11.♗a3 (or 11.cxb5 axb5 12.♙c2 ♗e6, threatening to capture on b3) 11...♘fd7 12.0–0 ♗b7 13.f3 ♗c6 with a complex position Korchnoi – Mecking, Augusta 1974.

6...c6



Black prepares the advantage d7–d5.

7.♗a3

This is the simplest way to equalise the play. If White does not hinder Black to perform his plan and continues to develop his kingside with 7.♘e2, then after 7...d5 8.cxd5 cxd5 9.exd5 (or 9.♗a3 ♞e8 10.d3 ♘c6 11.0–0 ♗g4 12.h3 ♗e6, and Black stands better) 9...♘xd5 10.0–0 (10.h3 is too slow owing to 10...♘c6 11.0–0 ♗e6 12.♙h2 ♙a5 with Black's initiative, Voiska – Farago, France 1996) 10...♘c6 White has several opportunities, however he can only maintain an equality at the best, for example: 11.♞b1 (after 11.♗b2 the opponents agreed to a draw, Sokolovs – Lalic, Berlin 1996; after 11.♙c2 ♗g4 12.♞e1 ♙d7 13.a4 ♞ac8 Black had an initiative in the game Padevsky – Kishnev, Gelsenkirchen 1991) 11...♞b8 12.♗a3 ♞e8 with a good play, Budnikov – Naumkin, London 1993.

7.♙b3 The queen's position is unstable here, and after 7...♘a6 8.♗a3 d6 9.♘e2 Black has an interesting opportunity to seize the initiative: 9...♘d7! 10.

0-0. (In case of 10.♔xd6 ♖dc5 11.♔xc5 ♖xc5 12.♖b1 ♖d3+ 13.♖f1 b6 Black is fairly compensated, whereas 10.d4 c5 allows him to get a favourable variation of the Blockade position, for example after 11.♞d1 ♖a5 12.0-0 ♖b6 13.♔c1 ♔e6 14.d5 ♔d7, threatening with 15...♖a4) Now after 10...♖dc5 11.♖c2 f5! Van Osmael – Portilho, corr. 1989 Black takes the initiative, for example in the line 12.d4 exd4 13.cxd4 ♖xe4 14.♔xe4 fxe4 15.♖xe4 ♔f5.

7.d4 Some manuals recommend this move, but after the forced 7...exd4 8.e5 ♞e8 9.cxd4 d6 10.f4 dxe5 11.fxe5 c5 12.♖e2 Black has 12...cxd4! and it turns out that White began too early. 13.exf6 Black encounters with 13...d3, and White can't be envied.

7...♞e8 8.♖b3

8.♔d6 ♞e6 9.c5 b6 is interesting but insufficient. Now in case of 10.♖h3 (After 10.♔h3 ♖xe4 11.♔xe6 ♖xd6 12.♔xd7 ♖xd7 White gains by an exchange but still does not avoid difficulties, for example: 13.cxd6 ♖f6 14.♖f3 ♖xd6 15.d4 ♔g4 or 15.d3 ♔f5) 10...bxc5 11.♔xc5 d5 12.exd5 cxd5 Black manages to accom-

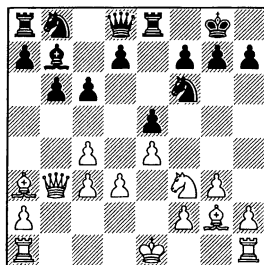
plish the advance in the centre. His position is more active after 13.0-0 ♖bd7 14.♔a3 ♔a6.

8...b6 9.d3

An approximate equality can be achieved with 9.♖h3 ♖a6 10.0-0 ♖c5 11.♖c2 d6 12.d3 ♔d7= or with 9.♖e2 ♔b7 (Bruzon – Sadvakasov, Istanbul 2000) 10.0-0 d5 .

9...♔b7 10.♖f3

In case of 10.♞d1 Black continues with the same 10...d5, and after 11.♖e2 dxe4 12.dxe4 ♖c8 13.c5 (otherwise Black plays 13...c5 himself) 13...♔a6 14.f3 ♖bd7 the position is even L. Portisch – Mecking, Petropolis 1973.



10...d5=

The key advance in this variation. Black has a good play. 11.♖d2 ♖a6 12.0-0 ♖c7 Huebner – Christiansen, Munich 1992.

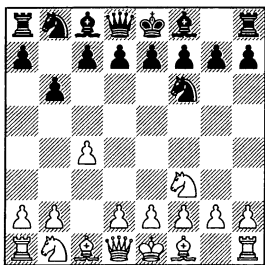
Summary

Black has no problems in any of the lines.

Chapter 22 1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 b6

Queen's Indian System

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 b6



You see the initial position of the system on the diagram. Now after 3.d4 e6 the play transforms into the Queen's Indian Defence, and this is how the System got its name. Yet if White is going to play the English Opening, then he has a choice of two basic plans. White can refuse to open up the centre and proceed to flank operations with f2–f4 or b2–b4. The other plan is more vigorous and implies a keen play, White plays d2–d4 and then either performs a fianchetto of his dark-squared bishop or uses it for kingside operations. In this case, if Black manages to accomplish the ad-

vance d7–d5 at a convenient moment, he has an even play at least.

3.g3

A natural and very flexible move which allows White to proceed to any of the mentioned plans. Other moves also reduce the play to well known formations usually, for example: 3.d3 ♘b7 4.e4 d6 5.♘c3 c5 6.g3 g6 7.♗g2 ♗g7. This position can be obtained with various orders of moves. Other lines that worth to be mentioned are 3.b3 ♘b7 4.♗b2 e6 5.e3 (or 5.g3 ♗xf3 6.exf3 c5 7.♗g2 ♘c6 with an equality) 5...♗e7 6.♗e2 0–0 7.0–0. The position is almost symmetric, and after the thematic 7...d5 8.♘c3 c5 9.cxd5 ♘xd5 Black even excels his opponent in development, though the position is still equal. 10.d4 ♘xc3 11.♗xc3 ♘c6 12.♖c1 ♖c8 13.dxc5 ♗xc5 14.♗xd8 ♖fd8= Averkin – Karpov, USSR 1973.

3.♘c3 ♘b7 4.g3 (White gains no advantage with 4.e3 e6 5.b3 d5. After 4.♗c2?! Black takes the initiative, for example: 4...c5 5.e4 ♘c6 6.e5 ♗g4. In case of 4.d4 e6

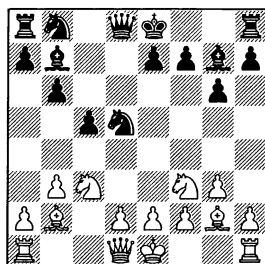
the play is reduced to above considered variations of the Petrovian System and the Centre System of the Queen's Indian Defence. White plays here also 4.d3 g6 5.e4 ♖g7 6.e5 and now after 6...♟g4 7.d4 c5 8.h3 cxd4 White's position is worse, 6.g3 reducing the play to one of main lines is better) 4...♙xf3 5.exf3 c5. Black threatens to play 6...♟c6, gaining an advantage, and the forced 6.d4 cxd4 7.♙xd4 leads to an approximately equal position: 7...♟c6 8.♙d1 e6 9.♙g2 ♜c8 10.0-0 ♙b4 11.♙d2 0-0 12.♜c1 ♟e5 13.b3 ♟d3= Piket – Karpov, Monaco 1998.

3...c5 4.♙g2 ♙b7 5.0-0

5.b3 (or 5.d4 cxd4 6.♙xd4 g6 7.b3) 5...g6 6.♙b2 ♙g7 7.d4 cxd4 8.♙xd4 0-0 9.♟c3 d6 10.0-0 ♟bd7, and the play continues with one of basic variations.

After 5.♟c3 g6 White still can revert to the main line. The move 6.b3 deprives him of this opportunity. (Another minor variation is 6.d3 ♙g7 7.e4 0-0. At this place a transition to one of main lines is possible, but after 8.h3 ♟c6 9.♙g5, having delayed castling, White introduces new motives into the play. 9...d6 10.♙d2 ♜e8 11.0-0 ♟d7 12.♜ab1 ♟de5 13.♟e1 ♟d4. Black arranged his knights favourably and has a promising position. The game McNab – Panno, Manila 1992, continued with a complex struggle.) 6...d5. Solving all problems at once. 7.cxd5 (An equal position

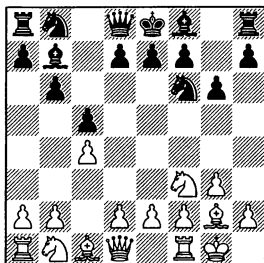
appears after 7.♟xd5 ♟xd5 8.cxd5 ♙g7. An important intermediate move. After 9.♜b1 ♙xd5 10.♙b2 e5 11.0-0 0-0 12.d3 ♙d6 13.a3 a5 14.♙c2 ♟c6 Black had a good play in the game Huzman – D. Gurevich, Israel 1993) 7...♙g7 8.♙b2 ♟xd5.



Now White has two ways of development, but in both cases Black seizes space and has somewhat better prospects, for example: 9.0-0 ♟c6 10.♜b1 ♟c7 11.♟a4 ♙xb2 12.♟xb2 ♜b8 13.e3 0-0 14.♟c4 ♟e6 15.a3 b5 16.♟b2 (nothing in 16.♟ce5 ♟xe5 17.♟xe5 ♙xg2 18.♙xg2 ♙d5, White has serious problems) 16...♙d6 17.♙c2 ♜fd8 with an advantage Andersson – Korchnoi, Sao Paulo 1979.

The move 9.♙c1 brings no equalisation as well: 9...0-0 10.♟xd5 ♙xd5 11.♙xg7 The game Tukmakov – Psakhis, USSR 1985, was drawn after this move, but later the theme was developed, and it turned out that after 11...♙xg7 12.♙c3+ f6 13.0-0 ♟c6 14.♜fe1 e5 15.d3 ♟d4 White still had certain problems Ivkov – Tukmakov, Lugano 1985.

5...g6



6.♘c3

Once more White applies the most flexible move and keeps the opportunity to switch to either of the two plans. In case of a straightforward 6.b3 ♗g7 7.♗b2 0–0 8.♘c3 (there was a retreat to the main line after 8.d4 cxd4 9.♗xd4) Black plays 8...d5 9.♘d5 ♘d5 10.♗xg7 ♗xg7 11.cxd5 ♗xd5 and equalizes easily: 12.d4 ♘a6 13.dxc5 ♘xc5 14.♗xd5 ♗xd5= Tal – Karpov, Wijk aan Zee 1988.

6.e3 This way of development is rather tardy but quite admissible. 6...♗g7 7.d4. Now it's turn for Queen's Indian motives. 7...0–0 8.♘c3 (After 8.d5 b5 Black has a good play, for example 9.♘c3 bxc4 10.♘d2 d6 11.♖e1 ♘fd7 12.♘xc4 ♘e5 13.♘xe5 ♗xe5 14.f4 ♗g7 Giardelli – Rodriguez, Buenos Aires 1989) 8...♘e4. This manoeuvre is typical of the Queen's Indian Defence. 9.♘xe4. (Or 9.♘e2 cxd4 10.exd4 d5 11.cxd5 ♘f6 12.♗g5 ♘xd5 with a complex play, Fedorowicz – A. Ivanov, USA 1992) 9...♗xe4. The bishop stands very actively here

and White can get rid of it only by means of an exchange for his important g2–bishop. After 10.b3 d6 11.♗b2 e6 12.♗e2 ♘c6 13.♖fd1 ♗e7 14.♖ac1 ♖ad8 15.♘e1 ♗xg2 16.♘xg2 cxd4 17.exd4 ♘b4= there was an approximately equal position in the game Strauss – Miles, Gausdal 1980.

At last, an early opening of the centre with 6.d4 cxd4 7.b3 after 7...♗g7 8.♗b2 (of course there is already no 8.♗xd4 because of 8...♘h5) 8...♗xf3 9.exf3 ♘c6 gives a position with slightly better chances for Black, for example: 10.f4 0–0 11.♘a3 d5 12.♗f3 e6 13.♘b5 ♖c8 14.cxd5 ♗xd5 15.♗xd5 ♘xd5 16.♗xd5 exd5 Djuric – Kengis, Adelaide 1990. The best option 7.♗xd4 (or 7.♘xd4 ♗xg2 8.♗xg2 ♗g7 9.♘c3) 7...♗g7 8.♘c3 reduces the play to main variations. It can be mentioned also that after 8.♗h4 h6 9.♘c3 ♘c6 10.♘d4 (after 10.♘d5?! ♖c8 11.♗d2 e6 Black has a slight advantage) 10...g5 11.♘xc6 dxc6 12.♗h3 ♗d7 the position is well balanced out.

6...♗g7

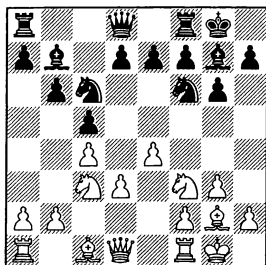
Now White finally has to choose the plan for the further play. We have already mentioned that there are two fundamentally different plans, he can either refuse to open up the centre with a) 7.d3 or open it up with b) 7.d4. Let's consider the first plan in detail.

a) 7.d3

7.♖e1. Another interesting

idea. White prepares an advance of the e-pawn. The essence of this variation is clear in case of 7...d6 8.e4 e5 9.d4! with an advantage. Nevertheless, White gains practically nothing after 7...♘c6 8.e4 (or 8.d4 ♘xd4 9.♘xd4 ♙xg2 10.♙xg2 cxd4 11.♗xd4 0-0 12.♙g5 ♖c8 13.♞ad1 ♖c5 with a draw in the game Volzhin – Staniszewski, Poland 2000. The position is really even, for example 14.♙xf6 ♙xf6 15.♗xd7 ♗a8) 8...0-0 9.e5 (An equality is maintained after 9.a3 d6 10.♞b1 ♘d7 11.d3 ♘de5 12.♘e2 ♘xf3+ 13.♙xf3 ♗d7 14.♙g2 ♘d4 15.♘xd4 ♙xd4 16.♙h6 ♞fe8= Ruzele – Ionescu, Istanbul 2000) 9...♘e8. This standard knight transfer gives Black a good play. 10.d4 (or 10.d3 ♘c7) 10...♘xd4 11.♘xd4 ♙xg2 12.♙xg2 cxd4 13.♗xd4 d6 14.♙f4 dxe5 15.♗xd8 ♞xd8 16.♙xe5 ♙xe5 17.♞xe5 e6=. A forced operation allowed to equalize the position, Tolstykh – Kaiumov, Cheliabinsk 1993.

7...0-0 8.e4 ♘c6



In this position White has many different opportunities, though all continuations imply

the advance f2–f4 sooner or later, whereas Black arranges his knights on d4 and e5, and then plays f7–f5, restricting White's initiative on the kingside. In this manoeuvring struggle the chances should be estimated as approximately equal.

9.♙e1

White can also play in a different way: 9.♙f4 d6 10.♗d2, preparing an exchange of the dark-squared bishops. 10...♘g4 11.h3 ♘ge5 12.♘e1 ♘d4. Black has accomplished the first part of his plan. 13.♙h6 ♙xh6 14.♗xh6 f5 15.f4 ♘f7. White's initiative is extinguished, Black's position is even slightly better, Litmanowicz – Porath, Helsinki 1952.

9.♞b1 ♘e8 The knight should be transferred to e6 via c7 to reinforce the control over d4, this manoeuvre is typical of the variation in question. 10.♙e3. White has to oppose something to Black's plan. (In case of 10.♙d2 ♘c7 11.♘d5 ♘e6 the strategically important square d4 is under total control of Black's knights, and after 12.b4 d6 13.♘e1 ♘ed4 14.bxc5 dxc5 15.f4 e6 16.♘c3 f5 White's position is worse, Bellon – Dorfman, St.Barbara 1992) 10...♘d4 White was threatening with d3–d4. 11.♙xd4. The best continuation. (After 11.♘e2 e5 12.b4 d6 13.bxc5 dxc5 14.♘exd4 cxd4 Black has a space advantage, and he can organize an excellent stand for his knight on c5, for example: 15.♘e1 ♘a6 with a

slight advantage or an approximate equality after 11.♞h4 ♞c7 12.f4 f5 13.♣d2 d6 14.exf5 ♙xg2 15.♣xg2 gxf5 16.♙xd4 ♙xd4+ 17.♜h1 e6 18.♞be1 ♣d7= in the game Pachmann – Keene, Germany 1975) 11...cxd4 12.♞e2 e5 13.♞d2 f5 14.f4 d6. Both sides have fulfilled their plans and have mutual chances, Krogius – Pokojowczyk, Sochi 1976.

9.♞h4 d6 10.f4 a6 11.g4 (In other lines Black is OK also: 11.f5 b5 12.♙g5 ♞e5 13.b3 h6 14.♙xf6 ♙xf6 15.♞c1 e6 16.♞f3 ♣a5 with a certain advantage, Alburt – Speelman, London 1986; 11.a4 ♞b8 12.♙e3 e6 13.♙f2 ♞e8 14.♞f3 ♞d4= with a complex and approximately equal position, Lerner – Tseshkovsky, USSR 1986) 11...♞b8 12.a4 ♞d4 13.♜h1 ♞d7 14.♞f3 ♙c6 15.♞xd4 cxd4 16.♞a2 ♞c5 with Black's initiative, Romanishin – Rodriguez, Moscow 1985.

9.h3 d6 Another typical trick. Now Black's knight can be transferred via d7 to reinforce the control over d4 and e5. 10.♣e2 (Other possible continuations 10.♙e3 ♞c8 11.♣d2 ♞d7 12.b3 ♞de5 13.♞e1 ♞d4 14.♞b1 f5 15.f4 ♞ec6 16.♞e2 ♞c7 17.♜h2 e5 Sofrevski – Planinec, Skopje 1971 or 10.♙g5 ♞e8 11.♣d2 ♞c7 12.♞ae1 ♞e6 13.♙h6 ♙xh6 14.♣xh6 ♞e5 15.♣d2 ♞xf3+ 16.♙xf3 ♞d4 17.♙g2 e5 McNab – Kosten, Hastings 1989 give Black better chances) 10...♞d7 11.♞h2 ♞d4 12.♣d1 a6. One more plan. Black

uses the g7–bishop to start active operations on the queenside. After 13.♙e3 b5 14.cxb5 ♞xb5 15.♞c1 ♣a5 there was a position with mutual chances in the game Korchnoi – Adams, Roquebrune 1992.

Following examples provide additional illustrations of possible plans and do not require any special comments: 9.♞e1 d6 10.f4 ♞d7 11.♞f3 ♞d4 12.♞xd4 cxd4 13.♞e2 (or 13.♞b1 f5 14.♞d2 e6) 13...f5 14.exf5 ♙xg2 15.♜xg2 gxf5 16.♞g1 e5 17.♞f3 ♣f6 18.b3 e4 with Black's advantage, Uhlmann – Hecht, Vrsac 1973; 9.a3 ♞e8 10.♙d2 ♞c7 11.♞b1 ♞e6 12.b4 d6 13.♞e2 ♣c7 14.♙c3 ♞ed4 15.♞fxd4 cxd4 16.♙d2 ♞ae8 with a complex position, Taimanov – Stean, Montilla 1977; 9.♙g5 ♞e8 10.♣d2 ♞d4 11.♞h4 d6 12.♞ae1 ♣d7 13.b3 e6 14.♙h6 ♙xh6 15.♣xh6 f6 16.f4 ♣g7 17.♣xg7+ ♞xg7 with an approximately equal play, Vaganian – Kosten, Esbjerg 1988.

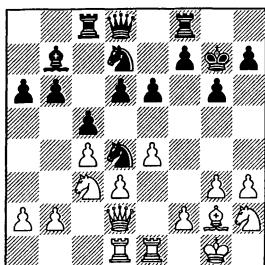
9...d6 10.h3

Or 10.♙f4 ♞e8 11.♣d2 ♞c7 12.♙h6 ♞e6 13.♞e2 ♞e5 14.♙xg7 ♞xf3+ 15.♙xf3 ♞xg7 16.d4 e5 17.d5 f5 with a balanced position Ksieski – Gizynski, Poland 1981.

10...♞d7 11.♙e3

11.♙g5 ♞de5 12.♣d2 ♞xf3+ 13.♙xf3 ♣d7 14.♙g2 ♞fe8 15.♞d5 ♞d4 16.♞ab1 b5. Black took the central squares and has an initiative, Villamayor – Dizdarevic, Elista 1998.

11...♖c8 12.♗d2 e6 13.♕g5
 ♗c7 14.♞ad1 a6 15.♕h6 ♘d4
 16.♙h2 ♗d8 17.♕xg7 ♗xg7

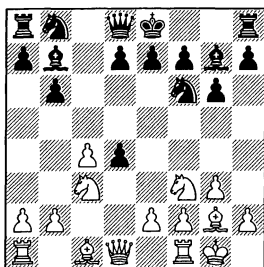


Despite the exchange of the bishops Black holds a firm control over the central squares.

18.♘e2 b5 19.♘g4 ♘e5

Black's position is more promising than White's, Ljubojevic – Karpov, Monaco 2000.

b) 7.d4 cxd4



Now White has two opportunities: b1) 8.♘xd4 or b2) 8.♗xd4.

b1) 8.♘xd4

This move leads to some simplifications, though interesting variations are still possible here.

8...♕xg2 9.♗xg2 0-0 10.e4

♗c7 11.b3

The most fundamental continuation. Complications which arise after 11.♕e3 ♗xc4 12.♞c1 ♘c6 13.♙cb5 ♗xa2 result in a repetition of moves: 14.♞a1 ♗xb2 15.♞b1. In case of 11.♗e2 Black also holds the position after 11...♙c6 12.♙c2 a6 13.♕g5 e6 14.♞fd1 (Or 14.♞ac1 ♞fc8 15.b3 ♗b7 16.f3 with a typical position. After 16...♙e8 17.♙a4 b5 18.♙c5 ♗c7 19.♕e3 d6 Black had a good play in the game Vukanovic – Marinkovic, Yugoslavia 1993) 14...d6 15.f3 (After 15.♞ac1 ♙e5 16.♙a3 ♞fd8 17.f3 h6 there is a similar play with mutual chances King – Kosten, London 1984) 15...h6 16.♕e3 ♙e5 17.♙a3 ♞fc8 18.♞ac1 ♙xc4 19.♙xc4 ♗xc4 20.♗xc4 ♞xc4 21.♞xd6 b5 22.b3 ♞xc3 23.♞xc3 ♙xe4 24.fxex4 ♕xc3 25.♕xh6. The complications resulted in an equal endgame Kaidanov – Kengis, USSR 1984.

11...♙xe4 12.♙xe4

Or 12.♙d5 ♗d8 13.♞e1 e6 14.♞xe4 exd5 15.cxd5 ♙a6 with an approximate equality.

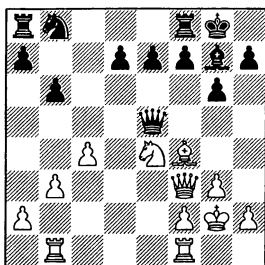
12...♗e5

Black wins a pawn but White has a sufficient compensation.

13.♗f3 ♗xd4 14.♞b1

Simplifications after 14.♕a3 ♙c6 15.♞ad1 ♗e5 16.♞xd7 ♗a5 17.♕xe7 ♙e5 18.♗d1 ♙xd7 19.♗xd7 ♗xa2 20.♕xf8 ♞xf8 produced an equal endgame in the game Karpov – Kasparov, Moscow (m/13) 1984

14...♗e5 15.♕f4



This position occurred in another duel held between the old rivals. The sides agreed to a draw here Kasparov – Karpov, Moscow (m/20) 1984. Later White ventured on a sharp play, having gained by an exchange after **15... ♖e6 16. ♗f6+ ♗xf6 17. ♖xa8 ♗c6 18. ♖b7 g5 19. ♖be1 ♖f5**. Black had a sufficient compensation but still the position was unclear. The game continued with 20. ♗e3 ♖b8 21. ♖a6 ♗c3 22. ♖b5 ♗e5 23. ♗d2 ♖f3+ 24. ♗g1 a6 25. ♖xa6 ♖c6 26. ♖xe5 ♗xe5 27. a4 ♖a8 28. ♖b5 ♖xb5 29. cxb5 f6 with a complex endgame Vadasz – David, Zalaegerszeg 1992.

b2) 8. ♖xd4

This continuation is the most dangerous for Black.

8...d6 9. ♗e3

Another way of development is absolutely different and begins with 9. ♖d1 (Or 9. b3 ♗bd7 10. ♗b2 ♖c8 11. ♖e3 0–0 12. ♖fd1 a6 13. ♗d4 ♗xg2 14. ♗xg2 ♖e8 15. ♖ac1 ♖c5 16. ♗a3 ♖a8+ 17. ♖f3 ♖c7 18. ♖xa8 ♖xa8 19. e3 ♖ac8 with an equality, Tal – Lerner, New York 1990) 9... ♗bd7 10. b3 (Perhaps 10. ♗d5 ♖c8 is untimely as in this

case White has to spend a tempo for the unnecessary 11. ♖b1. In the game Van Wely – Karpov, Monaco 2000, an approximately equal position was reached after 11...h6 12. b3 0–0 13. ♗b2 ♖e8 14. e4 e6 15. ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 16. ♗d2 ♖c7 17. ♗f1 ♖ed8 18. ♗e3 h5) 10...0–0 11. ♗b2 ♖c8 12. ♖ac1 (The line 12. ♗d5 ♗xd5 13. cxd5 ♖c2 is no good for White, and in case of 12. ♖d2 a6 13. ♗d4 ♗xg2 14. ♗xg2 ♖c7 15. f3 ♖b7 16. e4 e6 there is a complex position, Korchnoi – Andersson, Wijk aan Zee 1984) 12...a6 13. ♖e3 ♖e8 14. h3 (Or 14. ♗a1 ♖c5 15. a4 ♖a8 16. ♗e1 ♖f5 17. ♗xb7 ♖xb7 with an approximate equality, Karpov – Kasparov, Leningrad (m/23) 1986) 14...♗c6 15. ♗d4 (the play develops similarly in case of 15. ♗e1 ♗xg2 16. ♗xg2 ♗c5) 15... ♗xg2 16. ♗xg2 ♖c7 17. ♗a1 ♖b8 with a balanced position, Rotstein – Adams, Wijk aan Zee 1993.

9. ♖h4 h6 (delay the castling here to escape an attack after 9...0–0 10. ♗h6) 10. ♖d1 ♗bd7 11. ♗e1 ♖c8 12. ♗xb7 ♖xb7 13. ♗e3 ♖c8 14. ♖ac1 g5 the position of White's queen proves to be not very good. The game continued with 15. ♖d4 ♗h5 16. ♖g4 ♗hf6 17. ♖d4 ♗h5 and was draw by the repetition of the position, Korchnoi – Gulko, Hastings 1988.

9...♗bd7 10. ♖ac1 ♖c8 11. ♖fd1

After 11. b3 0–0 12. ♖d2 a6

13.♔h3 ♖c7 14.♘d4 ♖a8 15.♗fd1 ♗fc8 16.f3 ♗d8 there was a complex position in the game Eingorn – Basin, USSR 1988.

11...0-0 12.♖h4

White still managed to create threats on the kingside.

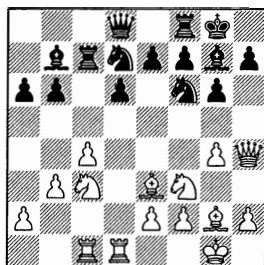
12...a6 13.b3

In case of an immediate exchange of the dark-squared bishops Black creates a counterplay very soon: 13.♘e1 ♔xg2 14.♘xg2 ♗e8 15.b3 ♖c7 16.♔g5 ♖b7 17.♘e3 b5, and after 18.♘ed5 bxc4 19.bxc4 h5 he stands OK, Kramnik – Kasparov, London 2000.

13...♗c7 14.g4

In case of 14.♔h3 there is 14...♖b8, preparing b6–b5. The move 14.♘e1 looks dangerous (or 14.♔h6 ♖a8 15.♔xg7 ♖xg7 16.♖d4 Yermolinsky – Ehlvest, USA 2000, and then 16...b5 with a good play, for example after 17.cxb5 axb5 18.♘xb5 ♗xc1 19.♗xc1 ♖xa2 20.♗c7 ♖b1+ 21.♔f1 ♔xf3 22.gxf3 ♘e5 Black has an advantage). But here Black has an interesting response: 14...♖b8. The exchange on g2 should not be advanced as it helps to

develop the e1-knight. Besides, this move prepares the planned b6–b5, for example: 15.♔h6 b5 16.♔xg7 ♖xg7 17.cxb5 axb5 with mutual chances.



14...h6!

A solution for all problems.

15.h3

Or 15.♔xh6 ♔xh6 16.♖xh6 ♘xg4 17.♖g5 ♘df6 18.h3 ♔xf3 19.♔xf3 ♘e5 with a good play.

15...g5 16.♖g3 b5 17.h4

Black has an equal play. Of course there is no 17.cxb5 because of 17...♗xc3 18.♗xc3 ♘e4.

The game continued with **17...bxc4 18.hxg5 hxg5 19.b4 ♖a8 20.♔xg5 ♗e8 21.♔e3 ♘f8** with an approximate equality Kramnik – Karpov, Dos Hermanas 1999.

Summary

In the main variation White keeps an opening initiative for a long time. Black should play very accurately to equalize. In general, the struggle in the main line has a very concrete character. Finally, Black achieves a satisfactory play.

Part 6. Various

Chapter 23 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5

Trompowski Attack

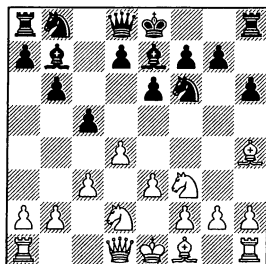
This chapter regards those lines in which White rejects classical continuations in favour of less explored systems that often include an early ♗g5.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5

In case of 2.g3 Black plays 2...d5. Now after 3.c4 e6 there is the Catalan Opening on the board (Chapters 17,18), and 3.♗g2 c6 brings to positions, considered in Chapter 24 under the line b).

The move 2.♘f3 allows to proceed to various opening systems. 2...e6 3.♗g5 (In case of 3.c4 b6 the Queen's Indian Defence appears on the board, and if White develops by means of 3.♗f4, then Black continues with natural moves: 3...b6 4.c3 ♗e7 5.e3 ♗b7 6.♘bd2 d6 7.♗d3 ♘bd7, and after 8.♖e2 he applies a typical manoeuvre 8...♘h5 9.♗g3 c5 with an approximately equal position, Kamsky – Rosentalis, Manila 1992. In case of 3.g3 there is 3...c5 4.♗g2 ♘c6

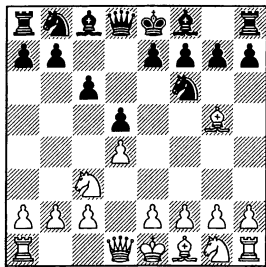
5.0–0 ♖b6 6.dxc5 ♗xc5 7.♘bd2 d5 with a good play) 3...h6 4.♗h4 (Or 4.♗xf6 ♖xf6 5.g3 – White can play also 5.e4 and return to the main line – 5...c5 6.c3 d5 7.♗g2 ♘c6. Karpov's play requires no comments, Black's moves are simple and natural. 8.0–0 ♗e7 9.dxc5 ♗xc5 10.♘bd2 0–0 11.e4 ♗d8. There is an equal position on the board, both sides stand very solidly. The game continued with 12.♖e2 dxe4 13.♘xe4 ♖e7 14.♖ad1 ♗d7 15.♘xc5 ♖xc5 16.♗d2 ♗e8 17.♖fd1 ♖xd2, and the opponents agreed to a draw, Timman – Karpov, Dortmund 1994) 4...b6 5.e3 ♗b7 6.♘bd2 ♗e7 7.c3 c5



White's margin of safety is very high in this position, but he

has no opening initiative. 8.h3 (The play develops in a similar way after 8.♔d3 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♖c6 10.a3 0-0 11.0-0 ♖h5 12.♙xe7 ♖xe7 13.♖e5 ♖f6 14.♙e2 d6 15.♖ef3 ♙d7 16.♙fc1 ♙fc8 with an equality, Mantovani – Karpov, San Giorgio 1995) 8...0-0 9.♔d3 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♖c6 11.a3 ♖h5. Please, note this manoeuvre which Karpov applies regularly and which releases some tension on the kingside. After 12.♙xe7 ♙xe7 13.0-0 ♙fc8 the position is even, Hort – Karpov, Biel 1990.

2.♖c3. This line is called the Veresov Attack. White begins the struggle for e2–e4, but Black has many ways to get a good play. 2...d5. A natural response, and after 3.♙g5 Karpov chooses 3...c6.



This advance helps to support the d5–square and gives an access to a5 or b6 for Black’s queen. White has several opportunities here.

Black does not need to fear 4.♙xf6 (in case of 4.f3 there is an unpleasant 4...♙b6. After 4.♖f3 White refuses from his initial

idea and does not claim anything. A mere 4...♙f5 5.e3 ♖bd7 6.♔d3 ♙xd3 7.♙xd3 e6 8.0-0 ♙e7 9.h3 0-0 produces an approximately equal position, the same refers to the variation with 4.e3. Consider a useful line: 4...g6 5.♙xf6 exf6 6.♔d3 ♙g7 7.♖ge2 f5. This move guarantees Black against opening up of the centre, so he easily gets a convenient position, for example: 8.h4 h5 9.♖f4 b6 10.♙e2 a5 11.♖d1 ♖a6 12.a3 ♖c7 13.c4 ♙f6 14.g3 0-0 15.0-0 ♙e8 with a good play, Fomina – Piarnpuu, Estonia 2000. Now in case of 4.♙d3 ♖bd7 5.e4 dxe4 6.♖xe4 a position from the Caro–Kann Defence, which was examined in the beginning of Chapter 1, occurs suddenly, Goldin – Karpov, Moscow 1993) 4...exf6 5.e3 (opening up with 5.e4 dxe4 6.♖xe4 is not dangerous for Black because his pair of bishops has bright prospects. He can continue, for example, with 6...♙e7, followed by a castling). Now Black can play f5 and then g7–g6, proceeding to the arrangement, considered above.

2...e6 3.e4

A “solid” preliminary 3.c3 leads to a variation, similar to the main continuation. 3...b6 4.e4 h6 5.♙xf6 ♙xf6 6.e5 ♙e7 7.♙f3 (better is 7.♖f3 ♙b7 8.♖bd2 with mutual chances) 7...♖c6 8.♙g3 ♙b7. Black has a good position with prospects of a counterplay. 9.♖d2 0-0-0 10.f4 g5. This method of struggling against

White's pawn centre is typical of this variation. 11.fxg5 ♖xg5 12.♗f2 ♗e7 13.♘h3 ♖g7 14.♗e2 f6. An undermining of the central pawn gives Black an advantage: 15.exf6 ♗xf6 16.♗f3 ♖hf8 Qi Jingxuan – Karpov, Luzern 1985.

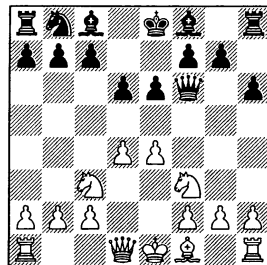
3...h6 4.♗xf6 ♖xf6 5.♘f3

The continuation 5.♘c3, planning castling queenside, does not change Black's plan: 5...d6 6.♗d2 g5. Almost in any position of this variation such move is helpful for a quick organization of counterplay. 7.0-0-0 (Or 7.g3 ♗g7 8.0-0-0 ♗d7 9.f4 gxf4 10.gxf4 ♘c6. A standard continuation; White's mighty pawn centre is balanced out with Black's solid position and bishop pair. 11.♘f3 0-0-0 12.♖e3 ♘b8 13.♖g1 ♖hg8 14.a3 a6 15.e5 ♖e7 16.♗d3 ♗h8 17.♖g3 dxe5 18.fxe5 ♖xg3 19.hxg3 f6. We already know this undermining of the central outpost. 20.exf6 ♗xf6. Black is preparing the advance e6-e5 to let the bishops show all their might, Topalov – Karpov, Frankfurt 1997. One more exemplary line: 7.♗c4 ♘c6 8.♘ge2 ♗g7 9.♖d1 ♗d7 10.0-0 0-0-0 11.♘b5 a6 12.♘a3 g4 with c complex play) 7...♗g7 8.e5. Believing that he has an advantage, White starts an attack. 8...dxe5 9.dxe5 ♖e7 10.f4 ♘c6. Black's position is solid and promising. 11.♘f3 (11.g3 is better, and after 11...♗d7 there is a position with mutual chances) 11...♗d7 12.h4 (in case of 12.fxg5 hxg5 13.♘xg5

0-0-0 the e5-pawn gets lost) 12...gxf4 13.♖xf4 0-0-0 14.♘e4 ♘b8 15.♗e2 ♗c6. Black has accomplished a successful rearrangement, so his bishops are active now, and the e5-pawn becomes a chronic weak point in White's position... 16.♘f6 ♘d7 17.♘h5. Feeling that his initiative is expiring, White goes for tactical complications, however after 17...♗xf3 18.♗xf3 ♗xe5 19.♖e4 c6 20.♖xd7 ♗xb2+ 21.♗xb2 ♖xd7 Black stands a better chance, Adams – Karpov, Las Palmas 1994.

5...d6 6.♘c3

In case of a refrained 6.c3 Black can response in the same spirit: 6...g6 7.♘bd2 ♗g7 8.♗c4 (or 8.♗d3 ♘d7 9.♖e2 e5. Black applies the typical technique. 10.♘c4 0-0 11.0-0 ♖e8 12.dxe5 dxe5 with an approximately equal position Timman – Karpov, Villarrobleto 1997) 8...♘d7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♖e1 e5. We already know this way to create a counterplay. 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.♖c2 a5 13.a3 a4, and Black's position is quite promising, Seirawan – Karpov, Monaco 1994.



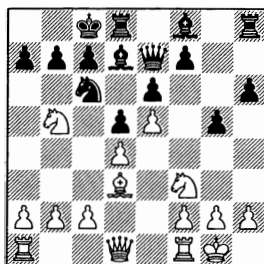
6...g5

Now this is the right moment to show an activity.

7.e5

Or 7.h3 ♖g7 8.♙c4 ♘c6 9.d5 ♘e5 10.♘xe5 ♚xe5 11.0-0 h5. Making use of the fact that it's hard for White to open up the centre, Black begins a flank operation. 12.♘b5 ♘d8. The d-file is locked up, and Black's king feels comparatively safe. 13.c3 g4 14.♙d3 exd5 15.exd5 gxh3 16.♖ae1 ♙g5. Black's threats are dangerous Speelman – Karpov, Roquebrune 1992.

7...♙e7 8.♙b5+ ♙d7 9.0-0 d5 10.♙d3 ♘c6 11.♘b5 0-0-0



There is a sharp position with mutual chances on the board. After 12.c3 h5 13.a4 ♚b8 14.b4 ♙g7 15.♘a3 ♜df8 16.♙e2 g4 17.♘d2 Black accomplished the planned advance 17...f6 18.exf6 ♙xf6 and got a promising position in the game Timman – Karpov, Netherlands (m/9) 1993.

Summary

The common feature of the considered variations is the weakening of White's queenside, connected with an early development of the bishop from c1, so Black can easily organize a counterplay on the queenside.

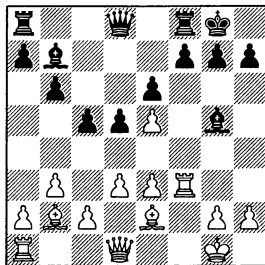
Chapter 24 1.♘f3 ♘f6

Reti Opening & King's Indian Attack

The present chapter regards positions in which White, as a rule, applies an early fianchetto of the king's bishop. The main struggle develops around the supported d5-square which White can attack with the c4-pawn (Reti) or e4-pawn (King's Indian Attack). White often disguises his opening plans, using various opening transitions, so Black should take counter measures in due time. We shall consider one of the most solid formations in which Black safely supports the square d5.

In response to the rarely used 1.b3 in which White tries to take control over the e5-square, Karpov applies a simple plan, aimed at a quick development: 1...d5 2.♙b2 ♘f6 3.e3 e6 4.f4 b6 5.♘f3 ♙b7 6.♙e2 c5 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.♘e5 ♙e7 9.d3 0-0 10.♘d2 ♘d7. Having completed the development, Black proceeds to the struggle for the key square. 11.♘df3 ♘dxe5

12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.fxe5 (in case of 13.♙xe5 there is 13...d4 with the threat of f7-f6) 13...♙g5 14.♙f3



14...d4!

This thrust is rather characteristic of the opening in question. Black already has an advantage, for example: 15.exd4 ♙xf3 16.♙xf3 ♙e3+ 17.♙h1 ♙xd4 18.♙xd4 ♙xd4+ Larsen – Karpov, Roquebrune 1992.

Also 1.g3 d5 2.♙g2 is possible, though in this case the play usually proceeds to variations that will be considered below as it's hardly in White's favour to delay the development of the king's knight, so after 2...c6 3.d3 ♘f6 4.♘d2 e5 5.♘gf3 e4 6.♘d4 ♙c5 7.♘2b3 ♙b6 Black had initiative in the game Norwood – Arkell,

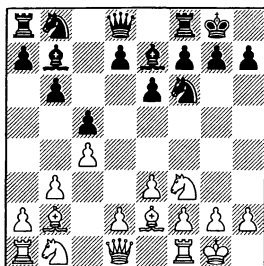
Great Britain 1991. Better is 5.e4, and after 5...♙d6 6.♘gf3 0-0 7.0-0 there is a position from the Caro-Kann Defence on the board which was examined in Part 1.

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.g3

Those lines in which White puts his king's bishop on e2 lead to a quiet play with even chances. Usually after exchanges on central squares Black achieves a total equalization. 2.b3 b6 3.♙b2 (the double fianchetto 3.g3 ♙b7 4.♙g2 g6 will be regarded below) 3...♙b7

4.g3 A transition to the double fianchetto presents no problems to Black, for example: 4...g6 5.♙g2 ♙g7 6.0-0 (or 6.d4 c5 with an equality) 6...c5 7.c4 (or 7.d3 d5 8.♘bd2 0-0=) 7...0-0 8.♘c3 e6 9.d4 cxd4 10.♘xd4 ♙xg2 11.♙xg2 d5 12.cxd5 ♘xd5 13.e3 ♘a6 14.♘xd5 ♙xd5+ 15.♙f3 ♚fd8 16.♙xd5 ♚xd5= Taimanov – Yudasin, Oviedo 1992.

4.e3 e6 5.♙e2 (5.c4 c5; 5.d4 c5 6.♙d3 ♙e7 7.0-0 0-0=) 5...♙e7 6.0-0 0-0 7.c4 c5



The initial position of the vari-

ation is presented on the diagram. White applied various continuations here.

In case of 8.♘c3 Black answers with 8...d5, and simplifications are inevitable, for example: 9.cxd5 ♘xd5 10.d4 (or 10.♘xd5 ♙xd5 11.d4 cxd4 with an equality, Andersson – Sosonko, Hoogovens 1981; or 10.♘e5 ♘d7 11.♘xd5 ♙xd5= Kozul – Tukmakov, Kastel Stari 1997) 10...♘d7 11.♘xd5 ♙xd5 12.♚c1 ♙b8 13.♙b5 ♚d8 14.♙e2 ♙b7 15.♙a6 ♙xf3 16.gxf3 ♙d5. Black has no problems, Andersson – Miles, Luzern 1982.

8.d3 d5 9.♘bd2 ♘c6 also presents no serious problems to Black.

8.d4 is more interesting. Now after 8...cxd4 9.♘xd4 (9.exd4 d5 produces a position which is slightly worse for White, for example: 10.♘bd2 – the same in case of 10.♘e5 10...dxc4 11.bxc4 ♘bd7 12.♘xd7 ♙xd7 13.♘d2 ♚ac8 – 10...♘c6 11.♙d3 – or 11.♚c1 dxc4 12.bxc4 ♙d7 13.♚e1 ♚fd8 14.♙d3 ♚ac8 15.♙b1 ♙d6 16.a3 ♙f4 17.h3 ♙d6 18.♘e4 ♘a5 19.d5 ♘xc4 20.♙xf6 gxf6= Kacheishvili – Ramesh, Bratislava 1993 – 11...♘b4 12.♙b1 ♚c8 13.♘e5 dxc4 14.bxc4 ♘c6 15.♘ef3 ♙c7 16.♙d3 ♘b4 17.♙e2 ♚fd8 Milov – Pelletier, Suisse 1997. In all cases Black exchanges on c4 and White has no compensation for the weak points of his queenside.) 9...a6 Black builds the hedgehog structure in a conven-

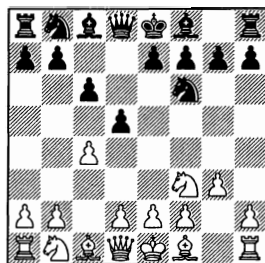
ient manner which has already been considered above. Following lines show that Black gains satisfactory play in all variations: 10. ♖f3 (10. ♗c3 d6 11. ♖c2 ♗bd7 12. e4 ♖c7 13. ♖ad1 ♖ac8 14. ♖b1 ♗c5 15. ♖f3 ♖fd8= Kveinys – Zaimansky, Groningen 1990) 10... ♖c7 11. ♗c3 (11. ♗d2 ♗c6 12. ♗xc6 ♖xc6 13. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 14. ♖f3 ♖fc8= Taimanov – Razuvaev, Paris 1989) 11...d6 12. ♖c1 (12. e4 ♗bd7 13. g3 ♖ac8 14. ♖e2 ♖b8 15. ♖g2 ♖fe8 16. g4?! d5! with an advantage, Shrentzel – Kaspi, Tel Aviv 1993; 12. ♖e2 ♖e8 13. ♖xb7 ♖xb7 14. ♖f3 ♖xf3 15. ♗xf3= Jurek – Pelletier, Baden 1997; 12. ♖xb7 ♖xb7 13. ♖f3 ♖xf3 14. gxf3 ♖c8 15. ♖fd1 ♗c6 16. ♗xc6 ♖xc6= Glienke – Tregubov, Berlin 1996) 12... ♗bd7 13. ♖xb7 (13. ♖e2 ♖xf3 14. ♗xf3 ♖b7 15. ♖fd1 ♖fe8= Messmer – Grathwohl, Germany 1994) 13... ♖xb7 14. ♖f3 ♖xf3. It should be noted that in all examples White failed to find anything more efficient than exchanges on the long diagonal, leading to a calm and approximately equal endgame. 15. ♗xf3 (15. gxf3 ♖fc8 16. ♖fd1 ♗c5=) 15... ♖ac8 16. ♖fd1 ♖fd8 17. ♗d4 ♖f8= Andersson – Ribli, Reggio Emilia 1991.

2...d5

White can play either a) 3. c4 or b) 3. ♖g2.

a) 3. c4 c6

In this line Black builds the main formation.



4.b3

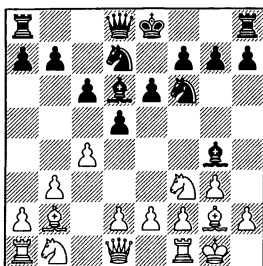
The same position can be achieved with a different order of moves: 3. b3 ♖g4 4. ♖b2 e6 5. ♖g2 c6. Apart from 4.b3, there are also some alternative continuations:

4. ♖c2 (the move 4. ♖g2 reduces the play to variations, considered under the main line) 4... ♖g4 5. ♖g2 (5. ♗e5 ♖h5 6. ♖g2 ♗bd7) 5... ♗bd7 6. d3 (6.0-0?! isn't good because of 6... ♖xf3! 7. ♖xf3 ♗e5 with Black's considerable advantage. Also 7. exf3 dxc4 is none the better) 6... dxc4!? 7. dxc4 (after 7. ♖xc4 Black gains a slightly better position by force: 7... ♖xf3 8. ♖xf3 ♗e5 9. ♖f4 ♗xf3+ 10. ♖xf3 e5) 7... e6 8. 0-0 ♖f5 9. ♖d1 ♖e7 10. ♗c3 ♖c7 with a promising position, Spraggett – Miles, Cuba 1997.

An exchange on d5 is perhaps the only way to alter the character of the game. However, after 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. ♖g2 ♗c6 Black develops his pieces with comfort and builds a solid position, for example: 6.0-0 (or 6. d4 ♖f5 7. ♗c3 e6 8.0-0 ♖e7 with an equality) 6... e5 7. d3 (In case of 7. d4 e4 8. ♗e5 ♖d6 9. ♖f4 0-0 10. ♗c3 ♖e8

11.♟xc6 bxc6 Black takes the initiative, Foisor – Glek, Italy 2000. Black stands with certain advantage also after 7.a3 ♖d6 8.b4 e4 9.♟e1 h5 10.b5 ♟e5 Dorsch – Alburt, USA 1991) 7...♖e7 8.♟bd2 (or 8.♟c3 0–0 with an equality) 8...0–0 9.b3 (9.a3 a5 10.e4 d4 11.♟c4 ♟d7 12.♖b3 ♟c5 gave Black an excellent position, Barlov – Semeniuk, Poland 2000) 9...♞e8 10. ♖b2 ♖f8 11.e4 with a complex play Bursteinas – Dalecky, Mlada Boleslav 1995.

4...♖g4 5.♖g2 e6 6.♖b2 ♟bd7 7.0–0 ♖d6



The play develops in a natural way.

8.d4

White reinforces his control over e5 but this move restricts the mobility of the b2–bishop at the same time. The advance 8.d3 has occurred in this position also. In this case White prefers to keep the piece pressure upon the central squares, however after the natural 8...0–0 he fails to prove his advantage: 9.♟c3 ♖e7 10.a3 (in case of 10.♖c2 Black has 10...♖a3) 10...a5 11.♖c2 ♞fd8, and Black's position is firm and

solid.

9.♟a3 ♖e7 10.♟c2. White has prevented a bishop exchange on a3, but now 10...♟xf3!? 11.♟xf3 ♖e5 becomes possible.

9.♟bd2 ♖e7 In this line Black also has good chances. 10.a3 (if 10.♖c2, then 10...♖a3) 10...a5 11.♖c2 (or 11.h3 ♖h5 12.♟d4 ♖g6) e5 12.h3 ♖h5 13.e4 dxe4 14.dxe4 ♟xf3!? 15.♟xf3 ♞fe8 with an approximately equal position.

8...0–0

The chances are roughly equal.

9.♟bd2

9.♟e5 ♖f5 10.♟d2 ♖e7 is no more than a line with reversed moves.

9.♟c3 ♖e7 10.♖c1 (In case of 10.♞e1 Black can perform a useful exchange with 10...♖a3) 10...♞ac8.

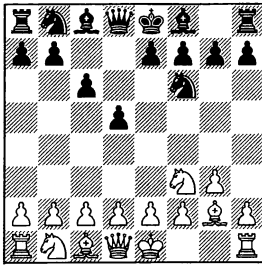
9...♖e7 10.♟e5

If 10.a3, then Black plays 10...e5 which is favourable for him in this situation, and after 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.dxe5 ♟xe5 13.h3 ♟d7 he has fine prospects.

10...♖f5 11.c5

This attempt to develop pressure on the queenside gives Black a good counterplay. In case of 11.h3 (if 11.a3, then 11...a5) 11...h6 12.♖c1 ♞ad8 13.c5 ♖c7 14.b4 ♟xe5 15.dxe5 ♟d7 Black also has a good play Karlsson – Grabarczyk, Stockholm 2000.

11...♖c7 12.b4 ♞fd8 13.♖b3 ♟xe5 14.dxe5 ♟d7 15.♖e3 a5! with an initiative Minasian – Hracek, Yerevan 1996.

b) 3.♙g2 c6

White has two main continuations: b1) 4.c4 or b2) 4.0–0.

4.d3 ♙g4 5.♟bd2 (5.h3 ♙h5) 5...♟bd7 6.h3 ♙h5 7.0–0 e5 brings the play to a position from the main line.

4.d4 ♙g4 5.♟e5 An attempt to prepare c2–c4 without pawn sacrifice. 5...♙f5 6.0–0 e6 7.c4 ♟bd7 Black's position is very solid, White can't arrange any complications. 8.♟d2 (8.♟c3 ♙e7 9.♖b3 ♖b6; 8.cxd5 cxd5 9.♟c3 – or 9.♖b3 ♖b6 10.♖xb6 ♟xb6 11.♟c3 a6 12.♙f4 ♙b4 13.♞fc1 0–0 with an even play – 9...♙e7 10.♙g5 0–0 11.♟xd7 ♖xd7 12. ♖b3 h6 also with an equality, Godes – Stisis, Israel 1994) 8...♙e7 9.♟df3 h6 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♖b3 (no better is 11.♟h4 ♙h7 12.♖b3 ♖b6) 11...♖b6 12.♖xb6 axb6. Note the standard response ♖b6 to the thrust of White's queen ♖b3.

b1) 4.c4

Leading to an interesting play in which Black's chances are none the worse at least.

4...dxc4 5.a4

This is White's most promis-

ing continuation, but Black still has good chances here.

5.♟a3 b5. In this line neither the pawn can be returned, nor White is sufficiently compensated, for example: 6.♟e5 (or 6.b3 cxb3 7.♖xb3 e6 with an advantage) 6...♖c7 7.d4 ♙b7 8.0–0 e6 9.b3 c3 10.♖d3 ♟bd7!, and Black stands better. 5.0–0 ♟bd7. In this line Black keeps the extra pawn as well: 6.♖c2 ♟b6 7.♟a3 (Or 7.a4 a5 8.♟a3 ♙e6 9.♟g5 ♖d7 Hug – Huebner, Switzerland 1999) 7...♙e6 8.♟g5 ♖d7 9.♞d1 ♙f5. White's attempts to create complications soon resulted in a hard position: 10.d3 cxd3 11.♖b3 0–0–0 with Black's advantage, Dizdar – P.Nikolic, Sarajevo 1983.

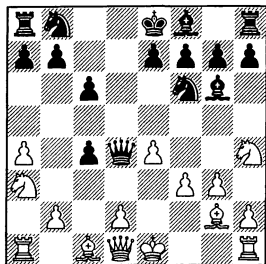
5.♖c2. This continuation leads to an interesting play with approximately equal chances. 5...♖d5 6.♟c3 (After 6.♟a3 ♙e6 7.♟h4 ♖d4 8.♟f3 ♖d5 there is a repetition of the position; but after 6.0–0 ♙f5 7.♖c3 e6 8.b3 cxb3 9.axb3 ♙xb1 10.♞xb1 a5 11.d4 ♙e7 12.♟e5 ♖d8 13.♙b2 0–0 14.e4 ♟a6 the tension remains, though White probably has no sufficient compensation anyway, Makarov – Aseev, Russia 1994) 6...♖h5 7.♟e4 (7.b3 is too early, 7...cxb3 8.♖xb3 ♟bd7 9.d4 e6 with better chances for Black, but there is 7.♟d1 with an interesting play, for example: 7...e5 8.♟e3 e4 9.♟h4 ♙e6 10. ♙xe4 ♟xe4 11.♖xe4 ♟d7 12. ♟hg2 ♟c5 13.♖c2 ♖g6 14.♖c3 ♟e4 15.♖c2

♖c5 16. ♖c3, and the game ended with the repetition of moves, Ma. Tseitlin – Pinter, Israel 1991) 7... ♖xe4 8. ♖xe4 ♙e6. White has a certain compensation, though Black's chances are none the worse, Hug – Adams, Luzern 1991.

5... ♙f5 6. ♖a3 ♖d5 7. ♖h4 ♙e4 8. f3 ♙g6 9.e4

Or 9. ♖xg6 hxg6 10. ♖c2 e6 11. ♖xc4 ♖a6 with a complex play, Weyrich – Slobodjan, Germany 1994.

9... ♖d4



Key position of the variation, rather unclear. White manages to return the pawn and gains the advantage of the bishops pair, but Black has a better pawn structure and a harmonious arrangement of pieces.

10. ♖e2

In case of 10. ♖c2 Black also plays 10... ♖a6, and the position is approximately equal.

Or 10. ♖c2 ♖d8 11. ♖e3 e6 12. ♖xc4 ♙c5 13. d3 ♖a6. This way to develop the b8-knight is typical of the variation in question. 14. ♖xg6 hxg6 15. e5 ♖d5 16. d4 ♖b6 with a good play, Tosic

– Onischuk, Alushta 1994.

10... ♖a6 11. ♙f1

11. ♖xc4 is no good as after 11... ♖b4 12. ♖e3 ♖d3+ Black stands with a great advantage.

11... 0-0-0 12. ♖xc4 ♖b4 13. ♖xd4

Or 13. ♖xg6 fxg6 14. ♖xd4 ♖xd4.

13... ♖xd4 14. b3

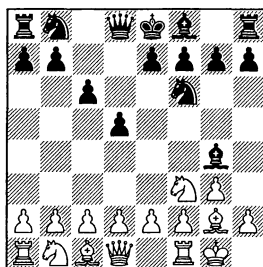
In the line 14. ♖g2 ♖d7 15. ♖e3 ♖e5 16. ♙h3+ (bad is 16. ♙e2 ♖bd3+ 17. ♙xd3 ♖xd3+ 18. ♙e2 ♖xc1+ 19. ♖hxc1 ♖xa4) 16... e6 17. 0-0 ♙c5, Black takes the initiative.

14... e6 15. ♙b2 ♖d3+ 16. ♙xd3 ♖xd3 17. ♙c3=, and White equalizes the play. Generally, it should be noted that Black takes the initiative in this variation as a rule.

b2) 4.0-0

The most flexible move. White keeps an opportunity to proceed to various formations.

4... ♙g4



5.d3

Another very flexible continuation, though others are possible too. 5. ♖e5 after 5... ♙f5 6. c4 e6

7.d4 reduces the play to above considered variations.

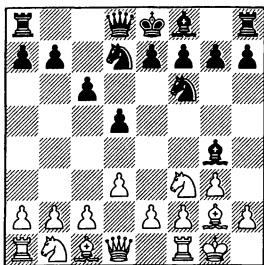
5.b3 ♟bd7 6.♟b2 e6 7.d3 (the position after 7.d4 ♟d6 8.♟bd2 ♟e7 9.c4 0-0 10.♟e5 ♟f5 was regarded above as well) 7...♟d6 8.♟bd2 (In case of 8.e4 0-0 9.h3 there is 9...♟xf3 10.♟xf3 ♟e5 with an equality, for example: 11.d4 dxe4 12.♟e2 ♟d6 13.♟d2 ♟e8 14.♟xe4 ♟xe4 15.♟xe4 ♟a5= Miles – Karpov, Biel 1996) 8...0-0 9.h3 ♟h5 10.e4 (Or 10.c4 a5 11.a3 b5 12.♟c2 bxc4 13.bxc4 e5 with Black's initiative, Timoshchenko – Sax, Bolzano 2000) 10...e5 11.♟e1 ♟e8 12.♟h4 ♟c7 13.♟f5 ♟f8 with a complex play, Kacheishvili – Grischuk, Istanbul 2000.

5.c4 e6 6.♟b3 (the moves 6.♟e5 ♟f5; 6.b3; 6.d3 ♟bd7 produce above considered variations, and after 6.cxd5 Black has 6...♟xf3! 7.♟xf3 cxd5, maintaining an equality, for example: 8.d3 ♟c6 9.♟c3 ♟e7 10.♟g2 – or 10.e4 dxe4 11.dxe4 0-0 12.♟e3 ♟d7 – 10...0-0 11.♟d2 ♟d7) 6...♟b6 7.d4 (Also 7.d3 ♟bd7 8.♟e3 ♟c5 is possible with mutual chances; worse is 7.♟xb6 axb6 8.d3 ♟bd7 9.♟c3 ♟xf3 10.♟xf3 ♟e5 with a slight advantage to Black, Peelen – Geller, Amsterdam 1986) 7...♟bd7 8.♟c3 ♟e7 9.♟g5 (Or 9.♟f4 0-0 10.c5 ♟a6 11.♟fc1 b6 12.cxb6 axb6 with a good play Yegiazarian – Lputian, Yerevan 1994; after 9.c5 ♟xb3 10.axb3 a6 11.b4 ♟c8 the position is unclear Leski – Prie, France 1997) 9...h6 10.

♟xf6 ♟xf6 11.e3 0-0 12.♟a4 ♟xb3 13.axb3 ♟fc8, and Black gains a promising position, Thinnsen – Lputian, Los Angeles 1991.

5.d4 ♟bd7 6.♟bd2 e6. Black continues the development in a natural way. As usual, he has a solid position. 7.♟e1 (A decisive 7.c4 ♟d6 8.♟e1 0-0 9.e4 after 9...♟b4 creates difficulties only for White, for example: 10.a3 ♟xf3 11.♟xf3 ♟xd2 12.♟xd2 dxe4 13.♟xe4 ♟b6 with inevitable material losses, Maghami – Prakash, Udaipur 2000) 7...♟e7 8.e4 0-0 9.c3 (Black is OK in case of 9.e5 ♟e8) 9...♟h5!? An interesting idea. Black is preparing ♟g6, forcing his opponent either to exchange on d5 with a total equality or to play e4–e5, creating the French structure in a favourable for Black aspect. Examples from tournament practice show that Black obtains good play in all lines: 10.h3 (10.e5 ♟e8 11.♟f1 ♟c7 12.h3 c5 13.g4 ♟g6 14.♟g3 h6 15.♟e3 Draw. Smejkal – Kuczynski, Germany 1998; 10.♟b3 ♟b6 11.exd5 cxd5 12.♟e5 ♟xe5 13.♟e5 ♟g6 with mutual chances Dizdarevic – Kir. Georgiev, Sarajevo 1998) 10...♟g6 11.exd5 (11.e5 ♟e8 12.♟f1 c5, and Black is none the worse, Sulava – Feletar, Croatia 1998) 11...cxd5 12.♟e5 ♟xe5 13.dxe5 ♟d7 14.♟b3 ♟c5 with an approximate equality, Speelman – Gausel, Slough 1997.

5...♟bd7



6. ♖bd2

White still can proceed to various structures.

6. ♖e1. This move prepares e2–e4 and is a part of one of chief plans. In this case it demonstrates White's intentions too early. After 6...e5 7. e4 dxe4 8. dxe4 ♗e7 9. ♖bd2 0–0 10. ♖c4 (also 10. h3 ♗h5 is possible, transposing the play to the variation 6. ♖bd2 e5 7. h3) 10...♙c7 11. ♖e3 ♗h5 12. ♖f5 ♗c5 13. b4 ♗b6 14. c4 a5 15. c5 ♗a7 to be followed by b7–b6 Black obtains a sufficient counterplay, Nikolaidis – Kummer, Graz 1995.

6. c4. This deviation from the main line is also no trouble for Black: 6...e6 7. cxd5 (Or 7. b3 ♗d6 8. ♗b2 0–0 with a position from the above regarded variation; there is also 7. ♖c3 ♗e7 8. ♗e3 0–0, but Black's position is still very solid. White can continue with 9. ♙b3 ♗xf3! 10. exf3 ♖b6 with an equality; also 7. ♗f4 ♗e7 8. ♖bd2 0–0 9. a3 a5 10. ♖e5 ♖xe5 11. ♗xe5 ♖d7 12. ♗c3 ♙b6 occurred in the game Poplavsky – Biriukov, Kharkov 2000, with a good play for Black) 7...cxd5. The simplest response. The rest is

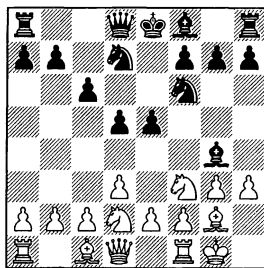
clear and consistent: 8. ♖c3 ♗e7 9. ♗f4 0–0 10. ♖c1 ♖c8 11. h3 ♗xf3 12. ♗xf3 a6 13. ♗d2= with an absolute equality, Loginov – Epi-shin, Seefeld 1996.

6...e5 7. e4

At last White defines his plan, but Black is well prepared for this. Other continuations either are similar to the main line or give White a worse play. We bring here just several of them.

7. c4. A possible way of development, promising a calm play, for example: 7...♗d6 8. h3 (Or 8. a3 a5 9. h3 ♗h5 Todorcevic – Ciric, Belgrade 1991) 8...♗h5 9. cxd5 (after 9. ♖h4 0–0 10. ♖f5 ♗c7 the play is even as well) 9...cxd5 10. e4 (or 10. ♖h4 0–0 11. ♖f5 ♗c7 with an approximate equality) 10...dxe4 11. dxe4 0–0.

7. h3



7...♗h5 This bishop should protect the kingside, besides, its opponent is passive now, and the square d5 is well covered. Following continuations are possible:

8. g4. An untimely thrust (It can be mentioned that 8. e4 dxe4 9. dxe4 ♗c5 leads back to the main line; in the variation 8. a4

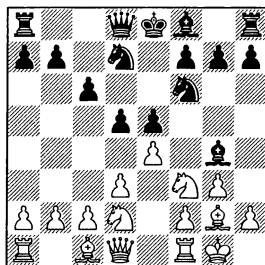
♙c5 9. ♖b3 ♙e7 10. ♖h4 ♙g6 11.e4 dxe4 12. ♖xg6 hxg6 13.dxe4 ♖c5 14. ♗xd8+ ♗xd8 15. ♖a5 0–0 the play is even, Conquest – Pelletier, Barcelona 2000) 8... ♙g6 9. ♖h4 (after 9.e3 ♙c5 Black is slightly better) 9... ♙c5 10.c4 (better is 10. ♖xg6 hxg6 11.e3 ♗e7 12.b3 a5 13. ♙b2 ♙a3 with a certain Black's advantage) 10... dxc4 11. ♖xc4 ♖xg4! Black does not hesitate and gains profit from the inaccurate play of his opponent. 12. ♖xg6 ♖xf2 13. ♗xf2 ♙xf2+ 14. ♗xf2 hxg6 with a considerable advantage, Amendola – Blees, Athens 1992.

8. ♖h4. A less vigorous continuation. White is going to play g3–g4 at the right moment. 8... ♙c5 9.c4 (In case of 9.c3 there is 9...a5, and in the line 9. ♖b3 ♙b6 10.c4 dxc4 11.dxc4 a5 12.a4 0–0 13. ♗c2 ♖c5 14. ♙g5 ♙g6 15. ♖xg6 hxg6 16. ♗ad1 ♗c7 the play is approximately equal Romanishin – Dolmatov, USSR 1981) 9...0–0 10.g4 ♙g6 11. ♖xg6 hxg6 12. ♖b3 ♙b6 13.g5 (or 13. cxd5 ♖xd5 14.e4 ♖5f6 15. ♗c2 with an equality) 13... dxc4 14. dxc4 (Black has a good play also after 14.gxf6 cxb3 15.fxg7 ♗xg7) 14... ♖e8 15. ♗d3 ♗e7 with a rather promising position for Black, Ubilava – Sturua, Protvino 1993.

8.b3 ♙d6 9. ♖h4 (It's dangerous to leave the centre as it is, for example: 9. ♙b2 0–0 10.g4 ♙g6 11. ♖h4 ♗e8 12.e3 ♖f8 13.f4 exf4 14.exf4 ♖6d7 15.g5 f6, and

Black has a considerable advantage, Danielian – Asrian, Linares 1998) 9...0–0 10. ♖f5 ♙c5 11. ♙b2 ♗e8 12. ♗e1 ♗c7 13.e4 dxe4 14.dxe4 ♙f8 15.a4 b5. Black has an equal play again, Anastasian – Kacheishvili, Linares 1996.

Let us revert to the main line after the move 7.e4.



7...dxe4.

As well as in previous lines, it's better for Black to exchange on e4 to reduce the influence of the g2–bishop upon the centre. Now the position in the centre is stable.

8.dxe4 ♙c5 9.h3.

9.c3 calls forth the standard response 9...a5. Black has an even play in all lines, for example: 10. ♗c2 (10.a4 0–0 11. ♗c2 h6 12. ♖h4 ♗c7 13. ♖f5 = Yandemirov – Lempert, Orel 1995) 10...0–0 11. ♗b1 (11. ♖c4 ♗c7 12. ♖e3 ♙h5=) 11... ♗e7 12.h3 ♙e6 13.b3 ♖e8 14. ♖h4 g6 15. ♖df3 f6 16. ♗h2 ♖g7 = Kapanen – Taimanov, Finland 2000.

9...♙h5 10. ♗e1

In this way White gets rid of the binding, however now the co–

ordination of the rooks is impeded.

10.c3. Another way to annihilate the binding. Black plays 10...a5, and after 11.♖c2 0–0 12.♘c4 (or 12.a4 ♜c7 13.♘c4 ♜fe8 14.♘h4 ♜ad8 15.♘f5 ♙f8 16.♙e3 ♘c5 with an approximately equal play) 12...♜e8 13.♘h4 b5 14.♘e3 ♘f8 the position is balanced out.

10.♖e2. In this line White prefers to keep the king's rook mobile, but the binding of the knight still remains. 10...0–0 In this situation White tried various continuations, but the character of the play does not change considerably because the position in the centre is settled. Usually Black puts his king's rook on e8 to protect the e5–pawn safely and free f8 for the knight or in some cases for the bishop. The play develops calmly with approximately equal chances. Consider several examples from recent games:

11.a4 a5 12.c3 (12.♞d1 ♜e8 13.♘c4 ♜c7 14.g4 ♙g6 15.♘h4 ♘f8 16.♘f5 ♘e6 Gurieli – Shumiakina, Manila 1992) 12...♜c7 13.g4 ♙g6 14.♘h4 ♜fe8 15.♘c4 ♘f8 16.♘f5 ♘e6= Terekhin – Ibragimov, St.Petersburg 1997.

11.g4 ♙g6 12.♞e1 ♜e8 13.♘h2 ♘f8 14.♘df1 ♘e6 15.♘g3 ♘d7 16.♘f5 ♜c7 17.c3 ♜ad8= Lainburg – Taimanov, Rowy 2000.

11.♘b3 ♙b6 12.a4 a5 13.♙d2 ♜e8 14.♙c3 ♜e7 15.♜c4 ♙c7= Bischoff – Dautov, Baden–Baden 1990.

10...0–0 11.♘c4

They played also as follows:

11.♘b3 ♙b6 12.a4 a5 13.♙e3 (or 13.♙d2 ♘c5 with an equality) 13...♙xe3 14.♜xe3 ♙xf3 15.♙xf3 ♜c7 16.♞fd1 ♞fd8 17.♞d2 b6= Smejkal – Kuczynski, Polanica Zdroj 1991.

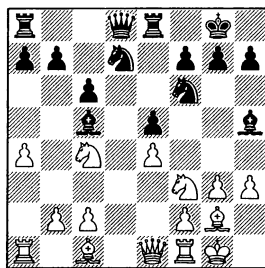
11.a4 ♘e8 12.♘h4 a5 13.♘b3 ♙b6 14.♙e3 ♙xe3 15.♜xe3 ♘d6= Damljanovic – De la Villa, Pamplona 1992.

11.♘h4 ♜e8 12.♘f5 (also 12.a4 a5 13.♘c4 ♘f8 is possible with mutual chances) 12...♙g6 13.g4 ♘f8 14.♘b3 ♙b6 15.♜h1 ♘e6 16.♙e3 ♜c7 17.♞d1 ♜ad8= Christiansen – Beliaevsky, Brussels 1992.

In all these lines Black gained an equal play.

11...♜e8 12.a4

White's attempt to sharpen the play was unsuccessful: 12.b4 ♙f8 13.♙b2 ♙xf3 14.♙xf3 ♜e7 15.g4 h5! 16.a3 ♜e6 17.♖e2 ♘b6 with a clear advantage to Black, Phillips – Timman, Breda 1998.



12...♘b6!?

A strong move, based on a precise calculation.

13.♘a5

Now 13.♘fxe5?! ♘xc4 14.

♟xc4 is no good because of 14... ♟xe4 15.♙xe4 ♙g6; and 13. ♟cxe5? is simply bad owing 13...♙xf3 14.♟xf3 ♟xe4 with multiple threats.

13...♟b8 14.♟h4

There is a complex struggle after 14.♙d2 ♟c8 15.♙c3, and Black can continue with 15...♙d4 with good chances.

14...♟c8 15.b4

Or 15.♟b3 ♙b6.

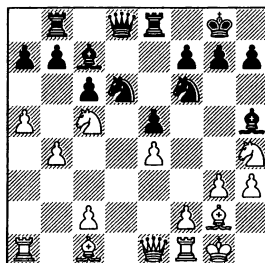
15...♙b6 16.♟b3

Also 16.♟c4 ♟d4 17.♟b2 is possible with mutual chances.

16...♟d6 17.a5 ♙c7 18.♟c5

An unclear position appears

after 18.g4 ♙g6 19.♟xg6 fxg6 20.♟c5.



18...♟d7

This move occurred in the game Akopian–Beliaevsky, Ubeda 1997, and Black eventually had a victory in an exciting struggle.

Summary

White's plan is to attack the well-supported d5-square. Black has enough time to move his bishop to g4 and can respond flexibly to White's attempts to develop an opening initiative. If the attack on the centre begins with c2-c4, then Black will fortify his position with e7-e6; and if White plays e2-e4, then Black will apply an exchange on e4, thus restricting the mobility of the g2-bishop. In both cases Black takes a firm control over the d5-square and has good chances in the forthcoming struggle.

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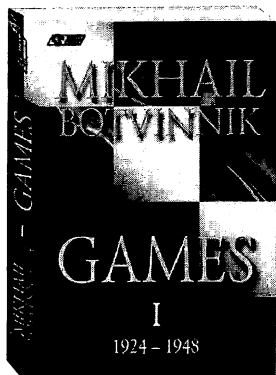
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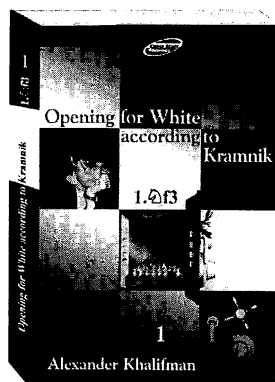
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