



# GREAT CHESS GAMES

Masterpieces of Postal  
and E-Mail Chess

**Tim Harding**

**Chess Mall**



# **64 Great Chess Games**

**Instructive classics from the world of  
correspondence chess**

**by Tim Harding**

With contributions by grandmasters Alexander Baburin,  
Hans-Marcus Elwert and Jorn Sloth

Edited by Jonathan Tait

Chess Mail Ltd., Dublin

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Numerous people have sent in games or notes, or provided facts or translations either specifically for this book or for my 'Chess Mail' magazine and my 'Megacorr' series of database CDs. To thank everyone who has assisted me in various ways during the three years this book has been gestating would take too much space and I would be sure to forget some names. So please forgive me if you did assist but do not see your name below.

Many masters and grandmasters provided notes to their games or permission to quote from their published notes, and are acknowledged in the introductions to the games concerned. However, I particularly want to mention here Volker-Michael Anton, Alexander Baburin (for more than one game), Hans Berliner, Hans-Marcus Elwert, Peter Hardicsay, Olita Rause, Jørn Sloth, Gert Timmerman, Mikhail Umansky and Max Zavanelli. In particular, Elwert and Sloth have essentially contributed original notes to their games especially for this book.

The book you are now going to read will, I hope, become a classic of chess literature; if it does, much of the credit will be due to my editor CC-SIM Jonathan Tait who has made countless improvements to my analysis and raw text. When I invited him to perform this role, I expected a keen eye for detail and rigorous checking of my analysis, but his contribution has been immense and far beyond the call of duty. Any mistakes that still remain are entirely my fault.

Philip Penney gets the credit for the cover design. Finally, I wish to thank my wife Joan and daughters, Angela and Claudia, for tolerating my long disappearances into the study over a period of many months.

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## Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of my mother Sandra Harding (1916-2002), who died when it was nearing completion.

# Introduction

This book presents 64 exciting and instructive chess games played by correspondence. Many of these games have extraordinary depth, subtlety and beauty; some are lighter but have moments of high drama. What makes all the games different is that they were played over a period of weeks and months between opponents who were not seated facing one another.

Chess has been played by correspondence since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with the postal service being the usual method of transmitting moves between distant opponents. The actual method of sending the moves does not change the essential nature of correspondence chess (CC) as a mode of play where hours or even days may be spent in analysing the position and selecting the best move.

Many active OTB players participate in CC too, but correspondence play particularly suits people with heavy business or family commitments, or who live in remote locations far from opponents of their skill level. The drink in the pub after the game is replaced by international friendships that develop with messages accompanying the moves.

In recent years, email has become the primary method of sending CC moves (at least in international competition), making the process both faster and cheaper (once you have access to a computer). CC played by Internet web server looks set to become the “next big thing”: it is already very popular for casual games and the software may be adapted to the

requirements of championship play by the end of the present decade.

Traditionally, CC players may consult chess literature and they enjoy the liberty to move the pieces on the board while analysing and make notes of their calculations. These factors and the absence of the clock beside the board enables the CC player to create games of a much higher standard than he or she might be capable of in an ordinary club or tournament context. Deep strategies or complex sacrificial combinations can be worked out in detail, sometimes over days or even weeks, and the intended move double-checked for blunders before it is sent to the opponent.

I have aimed to make this book accessible to chess players of all standards, and to be valuable even to those players who do not play CC. When analysing games, original annotations (where available) were critically re-examined both by me and the book’s editor and we made many new discoveries, in some cases overturning the accepted view of what was going on in some famous games.

The book would be over 400 pages long if I retained in the text all the openings research and critical variations which we examined when trying to find the truth about many of these games. Necessarily, in many places the variations that illustrate or support my assessments have been omitted or truncated. A few games have been left with a lot more detail than the others, to give a flavour of the depth of CC analysis at master level.

If you have not yet tried CC and would like to do so, I recommend that you seek out information and contact addresses on the Internet, starting with [www.chessmail.com](http://www.chessmail.com) and [www.iccf.com](http://www.iccf.com) (which have contact details for national federations) and [correspondencechess.com](http://correspondencechess.com).

### About computers

In the late 1980s, database programs first appeared and soon made a big difference to openings research and preparation for individual opponents. More controversial is the use of programs which analyse positions and suggest moves to the players.

Some CC players consider their use unethical and a few CC organisations even try to ban them, but this is unenforceable. Inevitably, many of the top players do now use analysis engines, but with caution. At the almost infinite time allowances of CC, the machine's advantage over the human in speed of calculation is nullified.

Computers are virtually flawless at short-range tactics but can give very misleading results in quiet positions, where strategy predominates, and in very deep and complex positions too, where their calculations can go wrong at the 'horizon' or where unusual characteristics of a position can cause their assessment algorithms to prefer the wrong move.

The power and weakness of the computer is seen at its most extreme in the endgame, where traditionally the superiority of the master over the aver-

age player is most evident. It is true that certain simplified positions (with only five or six men on the board) have been solved, so that a computer able to access these 'tablebases' will play perfectly. Until the late 1990s, however, most CC players did not have access to these bases, and anyway they are only relevant to a small minority of games. Most endgames cannot be reduced to such positions and many programs still play them like weak club players.

Computers have changed the nature of CC in recent years. To see this, you only have to compare such exciting games as numbers 23 and 27, in which the player with the greater imagination and tactical ability came out on top — but where the attacks would have failed against a computer — with modern games like numbers 48 and 62 where strategy is paramount and computers give little help.

Here I quote CC-grandmaster Gert Timmerman from an interview he gave me just after becoming the world champion at the end of 2001.

"I do not use a chess-program to search for the moves for me. I am constantly looking for a principal running thread to give 'structure' to a game. The difference between CC-players is not made any more by tactical opportunities, but by 'seducing' the adversary into a — for him, wrong — (positional) 'train' from which there is no escape anymore... I think that an opponent who relies only on the choice of a computer, and does not start from his own 'natural' resources, will very quickly reach his chess peak with no room for improvement."



## About this book

This book is a showcase of the best of correspondence chess but I don't claim that my selection is the "64 greatest" CC games ever played. I am suspicious of attempts to rank games quantitatively.

My criteria stressed variety: a good spread of openings, players from many countries, many types of game, and a good spread in time also, but with the emphasis on the period 1990-2002. Furthermore, games had to be at least 25 moves long to qualify; I have already written a book of CC miniatures.

The sequence is roughly chronological, apart from the first game. A word is necessary about dates because CC tournaments usually begin on a specified day but take months or years to complete. It is often uncertain when a game ended and when games are first published, incorrect information is often given. I am confident the start year of all games is correct, but when I do not know (or cannot make a reasonable guess at) the end-year, I have given only the first date.

No player has more than three games in the book and only Timmerman has more than one win. I also avoided (with one exception) games that have appeared in previous books that I have written, and games due to appear in ICCF's jubilee book. I also excluded games from the USSR CC Championships, because a book on that important series of events is being written for Chess Mail at present.

Because I wanted to be able to say something new about every game, I also excluded a few masterpieces that have been very well dealt with by certain

players in books that I recommend in my bibliography. In particular, it is exceedingly difficult to write notes on games by Grigory Sanakoev and Jonathan Edwards that can compare with their own.

Certain games are classics which demanded to be included "warts and all": in particular, Games 13, 19 and 24. Moreover, no chess game would ever be won if the loser did not make a mistake or two, and few 'sound' draws have the same interest as a good decisive game (Game 16 being a notable exception).

In order to arrive at the final 64 games, many apparently strong candidates fell by the wayside when subjected to 21<sup>st</sup> century scrutiny. Hitherto unsuspected blunders, overlooked defences and missed wins were revealed. Such discoveries usually meant a game had to be rejected, but sometimes the reasons why errors were overlooked by the players are in themselves instructive.

So the book does include some less-than-perfect games of an unusual character, such as Game 20 (still fascinating although it should not have been a draw) and Game 32, which was the subject of a notorious controversy. The very best games, however, are probably those in which the loser puts up strong resistance and is outplayed without making any obvious mistake except, perhaps, an unwise opening choice. If I have to pick a 'Top Ten', I offer this subjective selection: 1, 25, 26, 43, 47, 48, 49, 56, 60 and 61.

I hope that readers will derive as much enjoyment and benefit to their practical play from reading this book as I have done from writing it.

# Symbols & Abbreviations

+	check	EU	European event
#	checkmate	WT	World event
!	good move	Wch	World Championship
!!	brilliant move	OL	olympiad
?	bad move	CCOL	Correspondence Olympiad
??	blunder	sf	semifinal
!?	interesting move	zt	zonal tournament
?!	dubious move	izt	interzonal
+−	White is winning	ct	candidates tournament
±	large White advantage	tt	team tournament
±	small White advantage	ICCF	International Correspondence Chess Federation
−+	Black is winning	IECG	International Email Chess Group
∓	large Black advantage	<i>(D)</i>	see next diagram
∓	small Black advantage	<i>W</i>	White to play in diagram
∞	unclear position	<i>B</i>	Black to play in diagram
△	intending/ threatening/ with the idea	1-0	game ends, White wins
CC	correspondence chess	0-1	game ends, Black wins
corr	correspondence game	½-½	game ends in a draw
OTB	over-the-board	‘BCO2’	Batsford Chess Openings (2 <sup>nd</sup> edition)
GM	Grandmaster	‘ECO’	Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings
IM	International Master	‘MCO’	Modern Chess Openings (14 <sup>th</sup> edition)
CC-GM	ICCF Grandmaster	‘NCO’	Nunn’s Chess Openings
CC-IM	ICCF International Master		
CC-SIM	ICCF Senior International Master		
Ch	championship		
Cht	team championship		

# Game 1

**White: Joop J. van Oosterom (Netherlands)**

**Black: Gert Jan Timmerman (Netherlands)**

15<sup>th</sup> CC World Championship Final, 1996-98

*King's Indian Defence (E99)*

**The Players:** These two great Dutch rivals have had parallel careers in CC for two decades. Timmerman, a mathematician, is the current (15<sup>th</sup>) Correspondence Chess World Champion and has also won several other major tournaments.

For several consecutive years, he was the world's highest rated active correspondence player. As Timmerman is world champion, I have made a special exception and he is the only player with two wins in this book.

Van Oosterom (founder of Volmac software, which is now part of the Cap Gemini corporation) is a wealthy man who lives with his family in Monaco. He is well known as a sponsor of both OTB and correspondence tournaments (e.g. the Melody Amber series, named for his daughter, the NBC Millennium email tournament, and the ICCF Jubilee Champions and Elite events).

Van Oosterom was just starting the 14<sup>th</sup> World Championship Final in 1994 when illness forced him to defer his place and so he was fated once more to be thwarted by Timmerman in the next final which began two years later.

**About this game:** This was one of the most important games in the 15<sup>th</sup> World Championship Final, in which van Oosterom was also a contender for a high placing. At the time this game was played, he had never beaten Timmerman, a psychological factor that may have counterbalanced his colour advantage.

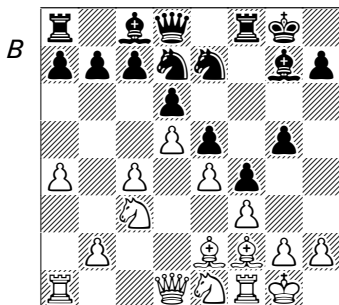
The world champion commented: "Van Oosterom is always a tough opponent, but I had the 'luck' that the outcome of the opening against him turned out favourably for me. The searching for the win remained, however, very difficult." We shall see that luck played very little part. For the annotations, I have drawn on comments that I wrote when the game was first released by ICCF, on GM Hans Ree's annotations for his column 'Dutch Treat' on the Chess Café website, and on world champion Timmerman's own comments for 'Chess Mail' magazine.

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♗c3 ♙g7 4 e4 d6  
5 ♗f3 0-0 6 ♙e2 e5 7 0-0 ♗c6 8 d5  
9 ♗e7 9 ♗e1 ♗d7 10 ♙e3 f5 11 f3 f4  
12 ♙f2 g5 13 a4 (D)

White follows a system introduced

by Viktor Korchnoi. Compared with older lines of the classical King's Indian, White has a ♖ rather than a ♘ on f2. This makes it easier for Black to prepare ...g4 but the ♖ plays a useful defensive role and also is actively placed to help the queenside attack, compared with the older lines where this piece finds itself on d2.

Timmerman did not like set-ups for Black in which White can play an early a4-a5, so he blocked the queenside.



**13...a5 14 ♘d3 b6 15 b4**

In 'The New Classical King's Indian', Graham Burgess recommended 15 ♖e1, but that book only came out in 1997, by which time the game had probably developed beyond this position.

**15...axb4 16 ♗xb4**

16 ♗b5 ♗f6 17 ♗xb4 g4 18 ♖h4 was also suggested in that book.

**16...♗f6 17 ♗c6**

Quite possibly this is not the best move, but theory of the 13 a4 line was at an early stage of development when this game started.

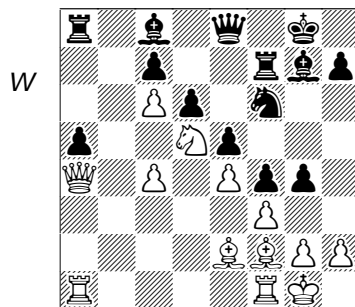
The best-known example was Yusupov-Kasparov, Yerevan OL 1996, which went 17 ♖a3!? ♖d7 18 ♗b5 ♗h8!? 19 ♖e1 ♗g8 20 g4! fxg3 21 hxg3 g4 and the complications resolved themselves to a draw after a few more moves. 17 ♗b5!? and 17 ♗d3 are also sometimes played.

**17...♗xc6 18 dxc6 ♖e8 19 ♗d5 ♗f7**

Timmerman found for himself the defence suggested by Burgess. An example of what White would like is 19...♗xd5 20 cxd5 ♖g6 21 a5 bxa5 22 ♖e1 a4 23 ♖xa4 ♖xa4 24 ♖xa4 g4 25 ♖a7 gxf3 26 ♖xf3 ♖g4 27 ♖xg4 ♖xg4 28 h3 ♖e2 29 ♖xc7 f3 30 gxf3 ♖h6 31 ♖xd6 ♖e3+ 32 ♖f2 ♖xf3 33 ♖e6+ ♗g7 34 ♖g4+ 1-0 J.Irvin-N.Fischer, ICCF EM/C/A009 1996.

**20 a5 bxa5 21 ♖a4 g4 (D)**

GM Hans Ree observed that "It is always a success for Black when he can play this without the preliminary ...h7-h5, for on h5 the pawn would be in the way of his pieces."



**22 ♖b5**

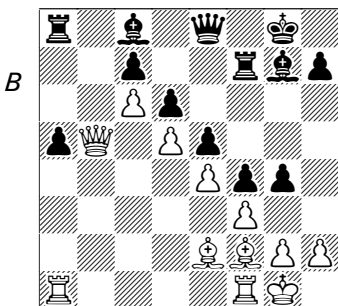
Ree observed that interesting and

difficult lines can also arise after 22 ♘xf6+ ♙xf6 23 fxg4 ♖g6 24 ♕h4 followed by 25 c5.

As he pointed out, van Oosterom's novelty 22 ♖b5 saves a tempo compared with a drawn game played in the Netherlands in December 1996, slightly ahead of the progress of our postal game: 22 ♕h4 ♘xd5 23 cxd5 g3! 24 hxg3 fxg3 25 ♕xg3 ♖e7 26 ♖b5 ♕h6 27 ♙xa5 ♙xa5 28 ♖xa5 ♙g7 29 ♕f2 ♕h3 30 ♖a8+ ♖f8 31 ♖xf8+ ♘xf8 32 ♙b1 ♙xg2+ 33 ♘f1 ♙h2+ 34 ♘g1 ♙g2+ 35 ♘f1 ♙h2+ 36 ♘g1 ♙g2+ 37 ♘f1 ♙h2+ 38 ♘g1 with a repetition of moves (Kiriakov-Lobzhanidze, Groningen 1996).

Timmerman, however, was not concerned about the tempo, saying "it is not necessarily the case that the black ♖ on the 8<sup>th</sup> rank is worse placed (where she is then better protected) than she is on the 7<sup>th</sup> rank."

22... ♘xd5 23 cxd5 (D)



Now comes a line-opening pawn sacrifice, typical of the classical King's Indian.

23...g3 24 hxg3 fxg3 25 ♕xg3 ♕h6

26 ♘f2?!

This is a strange-looking move but 26 ♙xa5 ♙xa5 27 ♖xa5 ♙g7 28 ♕f2 ♕h3 is unsatisfactory for White.

26... ♖e7 27 ♙h1 ♖g5

Ree now commented: "His novelty hasn't helped White much, for Black has a dangerous attack. The exchange sacrifice that White now makes is defensive in nature. He hopes to build a fortress."

28 ♙xh6

If instead 28 ♕h4 ♖e3+ 29 ♘f1 (hoping for 29... ♖xe4 30 ♕f2) then 29... ♕a6! 30 ♕f2 ♖d2 31 ♕e1 ♖c2 avoids the repetition draw and puts White under pressure.

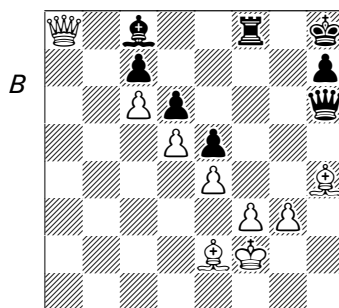
28... ♖xh6 29 ♙xa5 ♙xa5 30 ♖xa5 ♘h8 31 ♖a3 ♖g6

This threatens both 32... ♖xe4 and 32... ♙g7.

32 ♖a8 ♙f8 33 ♕h4

To answer 33... ♖xe4 with 34 ♕f6+.

33... ♖h6 34 g3 (D)



34 ♕e7 is an alternative here. Timmerman then intended 34... ♙e8, pointing out that the more aggressive

34...♖g8 leads to a draw after 35 ♖a7! ♗g7 36 ♖xc7 ♗xg2+ 37 ♜e3 ♗g1+ 38 ♜d2 ♗d4+ 39 ♜c2.

After the move played by van Oosterom, the black ♙ can become more active and the rest is (high-class) technique.

**34...♙f5!**

Ree observes that: “Step by step Black improves his position. He has forced the white ♖ to the 8<sup>th</sup> rank and now makes use of this to free his ♙.”

**35 ♖a4 ♙g6 36 ♖c2 ♜g8 37 ♙d3 ♙h5 38 ♙e2 ♙g6 39 ♙d3**

Black now switches play to the other wing. Timmerman explains: “From now on the heavy black pieces will occupy strategic positions on the queenside which was opened up by White. Ultimately, a zugzwang of the white pieces will play a decisive factor.”

**39...♖b8 40 ♙e2 ♗f8 41 ♙g5 ♖b4 42 ♜g2 ♖b8 43 ♙h6 ♖b2 44 ♖c4 ♖a7**

Black’s pieces take all the strategic heights.

**45 ♙c1 ♖a2 46 ♙e3 ♗a5 47 ♙h6 ♜f7 48 g4 ♖a1 49 ♙f1 ♗a7 50 ♖d3**

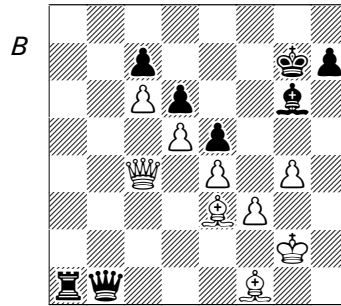
Timmerman found an amusing refutation of 50 ♖b5 by the door-opening 50...♙xe4! 51 fxe4 ♜g6! 52 ♙d2 ♖a2 53 ♖d3 ♗a5 –+.

**50...♖a3 51 ♖c4 ♖a2+ 52 ♙e2 ♖a5 53 ♙c1 ♜g7**

This takes away the square h6 from White’s dark-squared ♙. White’s moves run out now.

**54 ♜f2 ♖a1 55 ♙f1 ♖b6+ 56 ♙e3 ♖b1 57 ♜g2 (D)**

After the immediate 57 ♖d3 Black wins by 57...♖a2+ 58 ♜g3 ♖xd3 59 ♙xd3 ♖a3.



Now the final phase begins: undermining the white pawn chain.

**57...h5 58 gxh5 ♙xh5 59 ♙f2 ♜f7**

This is the final preparatory step. The ♜ has to be near c7 to protect his base after the coming liquidation to a simple endgame.

**60 ♖d3 ♖xf1+ 61 ♖xf1 ♖xf1!**

Contrary to the normal situation, it will be much easier for Black to win the opposite-coloured ♙ endgame than the ♖ vs ♙ ending arising after 61...♙xf3+?, when Black would be in for a lot more work.

**62 ♜xf1 ♙xf3 63 ♙e1 ♜e8! 64 ♙a5 ♜d8 0–1**

Timmerman’s final comment is: “A nice picture after 64 moves (a magic number in chess!). The black ♙ will now remove from the board the whole white pawn chain.”

# Game 2

**White: City of London Chess Club (England)**

**Black: City of Vienna (Austria)**

Inter-city challenge match, 1872-74

*English Opening (A21)*

**The Players:** Such matches between clubs were frequent by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. London's team originally consisted of Blackburne, Horwitz, J.J. Löwenthal, John Wisker, chess journalist William Norwood Potter and future world champion Wilhelm Steinitz. As a contemporary source has it, "For various reasons, Potter and Steinitz were eventually left practically alone to sustain the match". Two signatures of team members were required for a move to be valid.

Vienna originally submitted the following team list: Dr. Meitner, Ignaz Kolisch, Dr. Max Fleissig, O.Gelbfuhs, Josef Berger and Adolf Csank but Csank and Meitner eventually resigned their places on the committee. The final resignation message from Vienna was signed by Berger and Fleissig.

**About this game:** London issued the challenge and after Vienna asked to play for money, the substantial stake of 100 Pounds was agreed. As was customary, two games were conducted simultaneously. The match did not really get under way until late July because of an agreed

adjournment. There was also a break of more than three months in mid-1873 in connection with the Vienna Chess Congress (won by Steinitz).

The match concluded in March 1874 when Vienna proposed a package deal whereby they would resign this game if London agreed a draw in the other (where they stood better). While the draw was tactical, with London defending the Scotch with Steinitz's pet variation 4...♔h4, the present game, which actually decided the match, was played in a very different and actually more modern style. The decisive factor was almost certainly the superior strategic sense of Steinitz who at this time had no equal in the world in positional games.

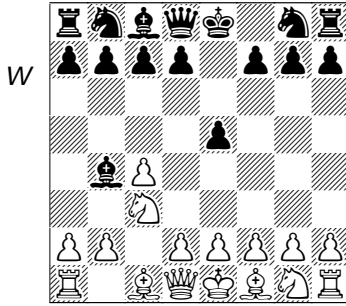
**1 c4**

The English, now one of the most important openings, was then in its infancy. It got its name from Howard Staunton's adoption of 1 c4 in his 1843 match with French champion St. Amant.

**1...e5 2 ♖c3 ♘b4 (D)**

2...♞f6 is normal, when two important variations are 3 g3 ♘b4 and 3 ♞c3 ♞f6 4 g3 ♘b4. Vienna's

move is not deeply studied even today.



### 3 ♘d5

The London team avoid the doubling of their c-pawn and make Vienna reveal their plan.

### 3...♙e7

This is best according to Carsten Hansen's recent 'Guide to the English Opening 1...e5', which has far more detail on the 2...♙b4 line than any other book I have seen.

### 4 d4

Many books do not mention this natural follow-up.

### 4...exd4

This positionally suspect capture has rarely been repeated. Instead, Hansen recommends 4...d6 with the comment: "Black does best to keep the situation in the centre fluid; the alternatives lead to more comfortable positions for White."

Whether Black can equalize is a different matter, e.g. 4...d6 5 e4 ♘f6 (5...c6 6 ♘xe7 ♙xe7 7 ♘e2 f5 8 dxe5 ♙xe5 9 exf5 ♘f6 10 ♙d4 ♙xf5 11 ♙f4 ♙a5+ 12 ♙c3!

♙xc3+ 13 ♘xc3 favoured White in Kasparov-Shirov, Novgorod 1994) 6 ♘xe7 ♙xe7 7 f3 exd4 8 ♙xd4 ♘c6 (8...c5 9 ♙d2 ♙e6 10 ♙d3 ♘c6 11 ♘e2 Karpov-Illescas, Dos Hermanas 1992) 9 ♙c3 0-0 10 ♘e2 ♘h5!? 11 g4 ♙h4+ 12 ♖d1 ♘f6 13 ♘g3 ♙e6 14 ♙e3 gave White an edge in Lalić-Shirov, Moscow OL 1994.

### 5 ♙f4!?

Hansen's book reckons White may get an edge with 5 ♘f3!?, while London avoided 5 ♙xd4 which they thought drawish.

### 5...c6 6 ♘xe7

White cannot win material by 6 ♘c7+ because of 6...♙xc7! 7 ♙xc7 ♙b4+ 8 ♙d2 ♙xd2+. So London simply obtains the ♙ pair and regains the pawn.

### 6...♘xe7 7 ♙xd4 0-0 8 e4

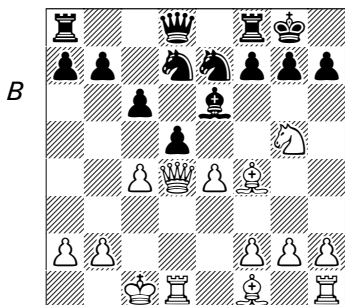
The pawn-snatch 8 ♙xb8 ♖xb8 9 ♙xa7 was rightly rejected because of 9...d5!, after which grabbing the ♖ is fatal: 10 ♙xb8 (10 cxd5 would be somewhat better.) 10...♙a5+ 11 ♖d1 dxc4 12 ♘f3 (12 ♙f4 loses the ♙ to a fork after 12...♖d8+ 13 ♖c2 ♙a4+ 14 ♖c3 ♘d5+.) 12...♖d8+ 13 ♖c1 ♙d5-+.

### 8...d5 9 0-0-0 ♙e6

If 9...♙a5 instead, White can ignore the attack on his a-pawn and play 10 ♙d2! ♙xa2 11 ♙c3 when the mate threat forces a serious weakening of Black's defences by 11...f6. Steinitz and Potter then intended 12 cxd5 cxd5 13 exd5 ♙f5 14 ♙c4 ♙b1+ 15 ♖d2 ♙c2+ 16 ♖e1 "with a winning attack".

### 10 ♘f3 ♘d7 11 ♘g5 (D)



**11...h6!?**

Despite London's ingenious subsequent play, Vienna could have held the balance with this move. Steinitz, however, thought it incorrect: "We should have considered 11...c5 followed by ...d4 preferable, as Black would then have obtained a passed pawn, though White would still have kept a good game even in that case."

**12 exd5 ♙f5**

12...hxg5 loses a pawn to 13 dxe6 while 12...cxd5 13 ♖xe6 fxe6 14 cxd5 will leave Black with a weak isolated pawn in the centre.

**13 ♖e4**

Not 13 d6? ♜g6 14 ♜f3 ♚a5 ♞ because if 15 ♙d3 Black wins material by 15...c5 (and if 16 ♚e3? ♞fe8 17 ♚d2 ♚xd2+).

**13...cxd5 14 ♜c3**

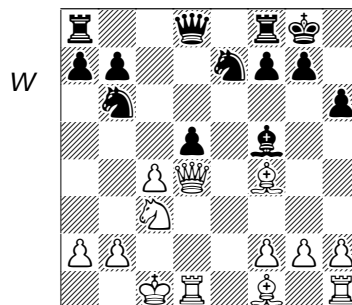
Steinitz explained that 11 ♜g5, apparently creating kingside threats, was a feint by means of which this piece was transferred from f3 to c3 without loss of tempo, in order to protect White's exposed ♚. Thus a 19<sup>th</sup> century world champion devised a concept which is totally beyond

the understanding of today's much-vaunted computers, which either want to play 14 ♜d6 or (at move 12) to exchange the ♜ for the inferior ♙ on e6.

Steinitz was a great man for grand concepts, for which opponents in his heyday could rarely find the antidote at the board, but as we shall see in Game 4, imagination and accurate analysis could sometimes reveal flaws in his thinking.

**14...♜b6! (D)**

14...dxc4 would at best equalise since White can choose between 15 ♙xc4 and 15 ♙d6; Vienna hoped to expose the white ♚ by creating more complications.



The position looks unclear. White's pressure on the d-file and kingside chances will only be of value if he can control the counterplay against his own ♚. It looks hazardously placed since there is no flight square on b1 and therefore opening the c-file is a danger for White. The really critical moment seems to be Black's 21<sup>st</sup> move where there is a tactical flaw

in London's plan, which the Viennese failed to spot but which was found in analysis afterwards.

**15 ♖e5!?**

Steinitz and Potter congratulated themselves on this choice but their analysis of the alternatives was not wholly convincing:

a) 15 cxd5 ♖c8 16 d6 ♗ed5 “with a splendid attack”, but 15...♗exd5 seems better for Black.

b) 15 c5 ♗d7 16 ♖d6 ♖e6 was another line London wanted to avoid but 15...♗c6 seems OK as well.

**15...♗c6**

15...♖e6 16 ♖xg7 ♗f5 would have been of no avail, said Steinitz, because of 17 ♖f6 ♗xd4 18 ♖xd8 ♖axd8 19 ♖xd4 dxc4 20 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 21 ♖e2 when the endgame is dubious for Black because of their many vulnerable pawns.

**16 ♖f4 ♗xe5 17 ♖xe5 ♖g5+ 18 f4 ♖g6 19 c5**

Not 19 cxd5? ♖ac8 20 ♖b5 a6 and Black wins.

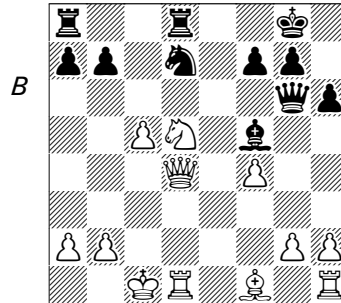
**19...♗d7 20 ♖d4!**

Not 20 ♖xd5?! ♖ac8 21 ♖xb7? ♗xc5 and ...♗e4 “with a fine game” according to Steinitz and Potter.

**20...♖fd8**

20...♗f6 would defend the d-pawn for the time being, but there does not seem to be a good reply to 21 g4! because if 21...♖xg4 (21...♖xg4 and 21...♖e4 are also met by 22 ♖g1.) 22 ♖g1 ♖h4 23 ♗xd5 ♖h8 (23...♗e8? 24 ♖b5) 24 ♗xf6 “and Black must submit to an awkwardly doubled pawn”.

**21 ♗xd5 (D)**



**21...♖f8?**

The decisive mistake; the correct move is 21...♖e6!, when Steinitz and Potter planned 22 ♗c7?! but underestimated Black's counterplay.

They originally printed the following line which cries out for a refutation: 22...♖xa2 23 ♗xa8 ♖e8 (If 23...♖c8 24 ♖d2 but I think 23...♖xa8 and 23...♖b1+ are both good for Black.) 24 ♖d3 ♖xd3 25 ♖xd3 ♗xc5 26 ♖a3 ♗b3+ 27 ♖c2 ♖c8+ 28 ♖d3 ♗c5+ 29 ♖e3 ♖e6+ 30 ♖f2 ♗e4+ 31 ♖g1 “and White are out of danger”.

This all looks like typical Steinitz wishful thinking. Even near the end, as pointed out by the ‘Illustrated London News’, 28...♗c1+! saves Black, e.g. 29 ♖e3 (29 ♖xc1? ♖d5+ 30 ♖e3 ♖e8+ 31 ♖f2 ♖d2+ 32 ♖g3 ♖e3+ 33 ♖xe3 ♖xe3+ and wins.) 29...♖e6+ 30 ♖f3 ♖c6+ 31 ♖f2 (31 ♖e3 ♖e8+) 31...♖c2+ 32 ♖f3 (32 ♖g3 ♗e2+) 32...♖c6+ 33 ♖f2 drawing by repetition.

Perhaps London would have noticed the dangers in time had 21...♖e6! actually been played. Then if 22 ♖c4!

“Black could safely sacrifice the ♖” by 22...♗xc5!, which liquidates to an endgame where White’s pawns are slightly better but Black has ♙ versus ♗: 23 ♖xc5 ♖ac8 24 ♗c3 ♖xd1+ 25 ♖xd1 ♖xc5 26 ♙xe6 ♙xe6 27 ♖d8+ ♖h7. It is hard to see any result other than a draw here, but objectively this is what White should play.

**22 ♗e3!**

This is the key square for the ♗, both for attack and defence.

**22...♖g8**

If 22...♗f6, White would have sacrificed the ♖ for two ♖s, “followed by ♖d6 with a splendid game”.

**23 ♙c4 ♖ac8 24 ♖he1 ♙e4**

If 24...♙e6 25 g4 ♗xc5 (25...♙xc4 26 ♗xc4 ♗xc5 27 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 28 ♖xd8+ ♖h7 29 ♖ee8 ♗d3+ 30 ♖d2) 26 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 27 ♖xd8+ ♖h7 28 f5 ♖f6 29 fx6 ♖xd8 30 exf7 b5 31 ♖f1 ♗d7 32 ♖d1 bxc4 (If 32...♖g5 33 ♖xd7 ♖xe3+ then 34 ♖d1 ♖~+ 35 ♙e2 may ultimately win.) 33 ♖xd7 ♖f6 34 ♗f5 c3 35 b3. Steinitz summed up: “The foregoing variations afford most striking illustrations of a principle... namely that ♖ and one minor piece and a well-supported passed pawn on the 7<sup>th</sup> rank win in the large majority of cases against the ♖.”

**25 b4 b6 26 ♖d6 bxc5**

“This move involves the loss of a piece for three pawns, leaving Black two pawns ahead. Vienna must otherwise either have submitted to the exchange of ♖s, with a bad position, or else, if attempting to win the ♖,

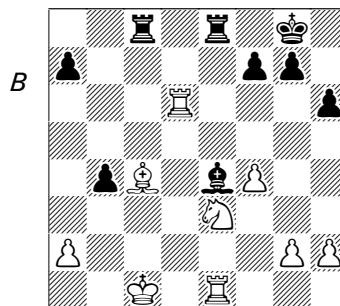
the game would have proceeded thus: 26...♗f6 27 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 28 ♖xd8+ ♖h7 29 c6 ♙xc6 30 ♖d6 ♙e4 31 g4 followed by h4, winning easily.” This variation is not altogether convincing; 29 g4 is stronger, intending 30 f5 ♖g5 31 ♙xf7.

Computers prefer 26...♖xd6 27 ♖xd6 ♗f6 28 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 29 cxb6 axb6 but the tricky endgame that actually arose was maybe Vienna’s best practical chance.

**27 ♖e7 cxb4 28 ♖xd7 ♖e8 29 ♖d6 ♖xd6**

“If Black had played here 29...♖e6 White’s only reply would have been ♖ checks followed by ♖f8, as it would have been fatal for them to have made the more natural-looking move of 30 ♖d4?? ♖xc4+ 31 ♗xc4 ♙b1 32 ♗e3 ♖xe3”.

**30 ♖xd6 (D)**



**30...♙xg2!? 31 ♖d4**

London thought 31 ♖d2!? ♖xe3 32 ♙xf7+ ♖xf7 33 ♖xe3 was too drawish. They calculated that by giving up their kingside pawns they could win with their a-pawn.

31...♔d5 32 ♖xd5 ♖xc4+ 33 ♗xc4  
 ♖xe1+ 34 ♕c2 ♖e4 35 ♖d8+ ♕h7  
 36 ♕b3 ♖xf4 37 ♖a8 g5 38 ♖xa7 h5  
 39 ♕xb4 g4 40 a4 ♖f2 41 a5 h4 42  
 ♖d7! ♖xh2

An important alternative was 42...g3 43 hxg3 hxg3 44 ♖d1 f5!, when London planned 45 a6 ♖a2 46 ♗a3 ♖b2+ 47 ♕a5 ♖b8 (best) 48 ♗b5 f4 49 a7 ♖a8 50 ♖d7+ ♕g6 51 ♗d4 “and wins, as the ♗ and ♖ stop the two pawns, while White brings the ♕ to the support of his pawn and attacks the ♖ at b7”.

43 ♖xf7+

A Viennese newspaper reported that White could not win after 42 ♖d7, overlooking that White would be able to leave the ♖ en prise.

43...♕g6 44 a6 ♖e2

If 44...♕xf7, White plays 45 a7 and Black cannot then stop the pawn from promoting, e.g. 45...♖a2 46 ♗a3 ♖b2+ 47 ♕c3 and wins.

If at once 44...♖a2 London analysed 45 a7 (threatening ♗a3 as above) 45...♖xa7 (best) 46 ♖xa7 h3 47 ♗e3 g3 (If 47...♕g5 instead, White wins by 48 ♖g7+ and ♗xg4!) 48 ♖a1 ♕g5 49 ♖f1 h2 50 ♕c3 ♕h4 51 ♕d3 ♕h3 52 ♕e2 g2 53 ♖f3+ “and wins as ♗ takes g-pawn with a check”.

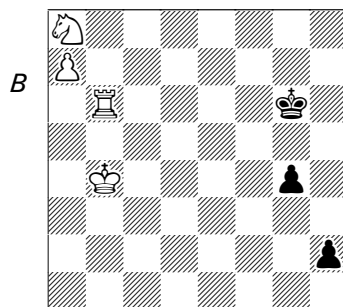
45 a7 ♖e8 46 ♖b7 ♖a8 47 ♗b6 h3

“Several variations arise here from 47...♖xa7 but London wins in all of them, being able to force the same line of play as last above mentioned, by bringing the ♗ to c4 and then to e3.”

48 ♗xa8 h2 49 ♖b6+! (D) 1-0

“Vienna were playing for their last

chance of drawing the game; for if London had not given the check in the last move, Vienna, queening first, would have been able to draw the game by perpetual check”.



The point of White’s last move, and the reason for Vienna’s resignation, can be seen in the variation 49...♕g5 50 ♗c7 h1 ♖ 51 a8 ♖ ♖xa8 (“If Black, instead, here begin to check with the ♖, White will be able to reach the square b7, and afterwards move to a7, where ♖ or ♗ can interpose; for which purpose the ♖ has been removed on White’s 49<sup>th</sup> move.”) 52 ♗xa8 g3 53 ♗c7 g2 54 ♗e6+ and wins, for if Black moves the ♕ to g4 or h4 or f5 White wins by ♗d4, threatening check with the ♖ or with the ♗ accordingly. Against all other moves, ♗f4 wins.

Steinitz and Potter evidently put in hundreds of hours of work on these two games, and also met quality opposition, which accounts for a standard of play that was a good deal higher than most CC games of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

# Game 3

**White: Govert Nielsen & Wilhelm Nielsen (Denmark)**

**Black: Antonius van der Linde (Netherlands)**

Private correspondence game, 1875

*Göring Gambit (C44)*

**The Players:** Govert Nielsen and his cousin Wilhelm were members of the then 10-year-old Copenhagen Chess Society. The chess historian Antonius van der Linde (1833-97), from Arnhem, lived much of his life in Germany. His library formed the basis of the great chess collection at the Royal Dutch Library in The Hague. As a player, however, he was probably below master strength.

**About this game:** The Danish Gambit was very popular at the time. White offers pawns, then a piece and finally a ♖ in the romantic style of that era.

1 e4 e5 2 d4 exd4 3 c3 dxc3 4 ♙c4 cxb2 5 ♙xb2 ♗f6

The position reached after move 7 in the game could also arise via 5...♗c6 6 ♗f3 ♙b4+ 7 ♗c3 or 5...♙b4+ 6 ♗c3 etc. although White can try 6 ♖f1 in that case. Many players prefer to return a pawn by 5...d5 to limit White's attacking ideas.

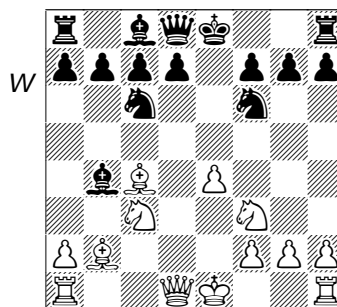
6 ♗c3 ♗c6

Again 6...d5 7 ♙xd5 ♙e7 is a way of avoiding the main lines.

7 ♗f3 ♙b4 (D)

We now have a Göring Gambit, reachable via 1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 d4 exd4 4 c3 dxc3 5 ♙c4 cxb2 6 ♙xb2

♙b4+ 7 ♗c3 ♗f6. Black has eaten two pawns; the question is whether he can digest them. This line is risky to defend OTB but in CC Black may be able to hold the attack.



8 ♖c2

This seems stronger than 8 0-0 as played by Dr K.Göring against W.Paulsen in 1877. The ♖ prepares queenside castling and eyes h7.

8...d6

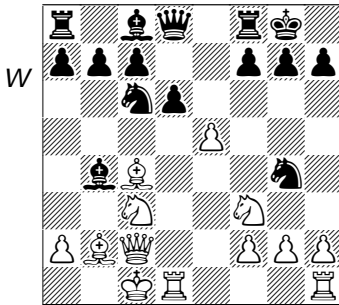
8...♙e7!? is a rare alternative.

9 0-0-0 0-0

Afterwards, 9...♙xc3 was tested, when the critical line goes 10 ♖xc3 ♙e6 (10...♙e7? 11 e5 ♗xe5 12 ♗xe5 dxe5 13 ♖he1 ♗d7 14 f4 0-0 15 ♖xd7!± P.Vinogradov-S.

Antushev, Russia corr 1901) 11 ♖he1! ♙xc4 12 ♖xc4 0–0 13 e5 ♗e8 when there are many aggressive possibilities but nothing clear for White. The ‘Handbuch’ gave 14 h4!? ♖c8 15 e6 fxe6 16 ♖xe6 ♗h8 17 ♗g5 ♗f6 18 ♖d3 (18 ♖f4 ♖d7 19 ♙xf6 ♗d8!?) 18...♖d7 (to meet ♖xf6 by ...gxf6) 19 ♖de1± but the assessment is wrong because of 19...♗b4! 20 ♖b3 ♖c6+ 21 ♗b1 ♗bd5± (from Firnhaber, ‘Nordisches Gambit’). Here 18 h5!∞ looks better but Black has at least a draw.

10 e5 ♗g4 (D)



### 11 h4!

White signals his intention to sacrifice a piece at h7 or g5. Many books later gave 11 ♗d5 ♙c5 12 exd6 cxd6 13 h4 as the refutation of Black’s play, because 13...h6 14 ♗g5! gives White a very strong attack, but I don’t trust it. Not only must White contend with Botterill’s suggestion 13...♗ce5!? 14 ♗g5 g6 15 ♗e4 ♙f5!, and Firnhaber’s line 13...♙xf2!?, but Black can also play 12...♙xd6!?, e.g. 13 ♖he1 (△h3, ♖c3) 13...♗h8 (or

13...♙e6 14 h3 ♙xd5 15 ♖xd5 ♗f6 16 ♖f5) 14 h3 ♗h6 15 g4 f6.

### 11...h6!?

Niels Bohse Hendriksen annotated this game in 1978 for the magazine ‘Nordisk Postsjakk Blad’ in the traditional way, implying all paths lead to White’s victory. For example, he commented here: “To prevent the severe threat ♗g5. The e5-pawn is taboo”.

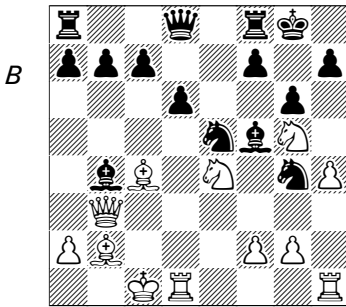
21<sup>st</sup> century players are more sceptical. We shall see later in the game that ♗g5 may still come, in which case ...h6 becomes a weakening loss of tempo. If Black is to refute the attack, surely he must capture the e-pawn either here or next move?

a) 11...♗gxe5 appears to fail. After 12 ♗g5 g6 (12...♗g6? 13 ♗d5 ♙e6 14 f4!) 12...g6 White can consider 13 ♗ce4 (or 13 ♗d5!? ♙f5 14 ♗e4!∞) 13...♙f5 (13...♙g4 14 f4! ♙xd1 15 ♖xd1 ♗xc4 16 ♖xc4 h6 17 ♗f6+ ♗g7 18 ♗g4+-) 14 f4 ♖e7 15 fxe5 ♗xe5 when his extra attacking piece should be more valuable than Black’s four pawns.

b) 11...♗cxe5!? may be right. White must go 12 ♗g5! (12 ♗d5 ♙c5 13 ♗g5 g6 14 ♗e4 ♙f5 15 f4 c6!± Klovans-Suetin, Riga 1962) when:

b1) 12...♗g6 13 ♗xh7 (13 ♗xf7!?) 13...♗xh7 14 h5 shows one point of White’s 11<sup>th</sup> move. Firnhaber gives 14...♖g5+ 15 ♗b1 ♙f5 16 hxg6+ ♗xg6 17 ♙d3 ♗e5 but 18 ♖h3! looks ±.

b2) 12...g6! 13 ♗ce4 ♙f5 (13...c6!? 14 h5 is not entirely clear either.) 14 ♖b3 (D) was given by Schlechter.



This line was once reckoned to give White a very strong attack, but the assessment is not certain:

b21) 14...♙xe4 15 ♗xc4 ♗xc4 16 ♖xc4 ♙a5 (Levy) but Black is in trouble after 17 h5 (or 17 f3 — Botterill) 17...g5 18 f3 b5 19 ♖xb5 1-0 Hälsig-Huybrecht, corr 1980.

b22) 14...♗xc4 15 ♖xc4 when 15...a5 16 f3 transposes to b23 below. Instead 15...c5?! protects the ♙ and stops ♖d4, but concedes control of a key square: 16 ♗xd6 must give White good practical chances.

Finally if 15...♙a5 16 f3 ♗e3 White is probably winning with 17 ♖d4 (not 17 ♗f6+? ♖xf6 18 ♙xf6 ♗xc4) 17...f6 18 ♖xe3 fxg5 19 ♖d4 ♖e7 (19...♖d7 20 ♗de1!) 20 ♗xg5 ♗f6 21 g4 (not 21 ♖xf6?? ♖e3+ and mates).

b23) American master Mark Morss said 14...a5! is -+, but 15 f3 ♗xc4 16 ♖xc4 b5 (16...♙xe4 17 ♗xe4 is like line b21) 17 ♖c6 ♙d7 does not look to me like a winning line for Black. Mairal-Gimenez, Argentina corr 1998, went 18 ♖d5 c6 19 ♖d4 ♗e5 20 a3 f6 21 axb4 d5 22 ♗xf6+ ♖xf6 23 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 24 ♙xe5 ♗fe8 25 ♙b2 axb4 26

h5! gxh5 27 ♗e4 dxe4 28 ♗xd7 exf3 29 gxf3 ♗e3 30 ♗g1+ ♗f8 31 ♗xh7 ♗ae8 32 ♗gg7 ♗e1+ 33 ♗c2 ♗1e2+ 34 ♗b1 ♗8e5 35 ♙xe5 ♗xe5 36 ♗b7 ♗g8 37 ♗hg7+ ♗f8 38 ♗gc7 1-0.

**12 ♗b1!?**

It is not obvious that this precaution (against a later ...♖xg5) is necessary; however, 12 ♗d5 might be met by 12...♙c5 13 exd6 ♙xd6!.

**12...♗e8? (D)**

Although Schlechter praised this move, Black may now be lost. It is true that Black's ♗ gained a flight square but he also weakened f7 and left the e5-pawn alive.

It makes sense to block the long diagonal b2-h8 with a ♗. Nobody seems to have considered 12... ♗gx5!?, but a sample variation is 13 ♗g5 g6 14 ♗d5 ♙a3 15 ♙xa3 hxg5 16 ♖c3 g4 17 h5 b5 and the complications may favour Black.

Old analysts did indeed look at 12... ♗cx5! 13 ♗g5! but they probably overestimated White's attack.

a) It always looks fatal for Black to open the h-file, but 13...hxg5!?! still has to be refuted. After 14 hxg5 g6! 15 ♗e4 ♙f5 Hendriksen gave 16 f4 ♗e3 17 fxe5! ♗xc2? 18 exd6 and White mates in 5. I call this fantasy rather than analysis. After 16...♖e7 or 16...♙a3 White may have difficulty proving his sacrifices sound.

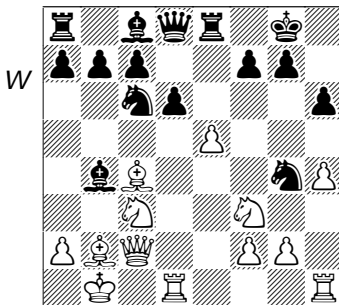
b) 13...♙f5 14 ♖xf5 g6 and White must liquidate by 15 ♙xf7+ ♗xf7 16 ♗xf7 gxf5 17 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 into an unclear endgame with the exchange against two pawns.

c) 13...g6 looks very precarious,

but may be playable. Play could go 14 ♖xf7 ♜xf7 15 ♙xf7+ ♖xf7 16 ♜b3+ (best?) 16...♙e6 (16...♖e8 17 ♜he1) 17 ♜xb4 ♖xf2 18 ♜hf1 ♙f5+ 19 ♖a1 ♖xd1 20 ♖xd1 when White is three pawns down but has attacking chances which are hard to evaluate.

d) 13...♖f6?! 14 ♖d5 g6 15 ♙xe5 ♖xd5 (15...dxe5? 16 ♖xf7!, e.g. 16...♜xf7 17 ♜xg6+ ♖h8 18 ♖xb4±) 16 ♙xd5! (White has little advantage, if any, after 16 ♖xf7.) 16...♙f5 17 ♙e4 and White is on top.

Now we return to the game after Black's 12<sup>th</sup> move.



13 ♖d5 ♙e6 14 ♖g5! hxg5 15 hxg5 ♙xd5 16 ♜h7+ ♖f8 17 exd6 cxd6

Others lose quickly said Hendriksen:

a) 17...♜xd6 18 ♜xg7+ ♖e7 19 ♜xd5 ♜g6+ 20 ♜xg6 fxg6 21 ♜h7+ ♖f8 22 ♜f7+! ♖g8 23 ♜dd7 ♖ce5 24 ♜g7+ (24 ♜h7+ ♖xc4 25 ♜h8#) 24...♖f8 25 ♜g8#.

b) 17...♙xd6 18 ♜xg7+ ♖e7 19 ♙xd5 ♖d7 20 ♜xf7+ ♖c8 21 ♙e6+ ♜xe6 22 ♜xe6+ ♜d7 23 ♜h8+ ♖d8 24 ♜xd7+ ♖xd7 25 g6 and the pawn can't be stopped without material losses.

18 ♜xg7+ ♖e7 19 ♜xd5 ♜c8

If 19...♜g8 20 ♙f6+ ♖xf6 21 gxf6+ ♖e6 22 ♜h7! (♙f5#) is quickest, e.g. 22...♖d7 23 ♜xf7+ ♖c8 24 ♜h7+-.

20 ♜e1+!?

The purpose of the romantic gift is to divert the black ♙ from the defence of d6, because 20 ♙f6+?! ♖xf6 21 ♜xf6+ doesn't work on account of 21...♖d7. However, we shall see later that Black can just answer the ♙ check by moving the ♖. It was unnecessary for White to force matters. Straightforward moves were probably at least as effective: 20 g6! ♜f8 21 gxf7 looks strong and 20 f3!? might also have been better.

20...♙xe1

It is no good declining the ♜: 20...♖d8 21 ♜xe8+ ♖xe8 22 ♜g8+ ♖d7 (22...♖e7 23 ♙f6+ ♖xf6 24 gxf6+ ♖xf6 25 ♜g5+ ♖e6 26 ♜f5+ d5 27 ♜xd5+-) 23 ♜xf7+ ♖d8 (or 23...♖e7 24 ♙b5+ ♖c7 25 ♜xe7+ ♖b8 26 ♙d7+- — Collijn) 24 ♜b5 ♖ce5 25 ♙xe5 ♖xe5 26 ♜f6+ ♖c7 27 ♜xb4 and White is ahead on material, holding all the trumps.

21 ♙f6+ ♖d7

21...♖xf6? allows forced mate starting 22 ♜xf6+ ♖f8 (22...♖d7 23 ♜xd6#) 23 ♜h6+ ♖g8 24 g6.

22 ♜xf7+ ♜e7

Black perhaps should have given up his ♜ here by 22...♖e7 23 ♙b5+ ♜c6 24 ♙xc6+ bxc6 but after 25 ♜d3 White's pawns, together with the possibility of threatening the black ♖, give him winning chances.

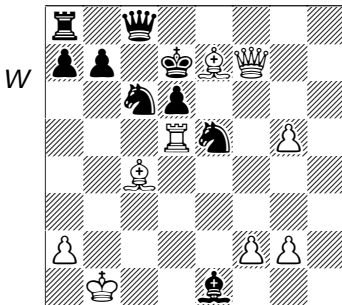
Heemsoth said that 22...♖e7 should be met by 23 ♙xe7 but I am



unsure that White has enough to force a win after 23...♖xe7 24 ♔b5+ ♕c6.

**23 ♕xe7 ♜ge5 (D)**

It is probably now too late for the ♕ sacrifice. 23...♜xe7 24 ♔b5+ ♕c6 25 ♕xc6+ bxc6 26 ♖d4 is hard to meet; if 26...♜xf2 27 g6.



**24 ♖f6?!**

This went uncriticised in the past.

a) Presumably the Niensens rejected 24 ♖f5+!? because it only draws: 24...♕xe7 25 ♖f6+ ♕e8 (25...♔d7? 26 ♖xe5 dxe5 27 ♕e6+ ♔c7 28 ♖f7+.) 26 ♖xd6 ♜xc4 27 ♖h8+ (After 27 ♖e6+ ♖xe6 28 ♖xe6+ ♜e7 White can only take one of the minor pieces.) 27...♕e7 28 ♖f6+ ♕e8 29 ♖h8+ ♕e7 30 ♖f6+ ♕e8=.

b) 24 ♖xd6+! ♕c7 25 ♕d8+ ♔b8 26 ♖f4 offers the best objective chances of victory: 26...♔b4 (26...♖g4 27 ♖xg4 ♜xg4 28 g6 ♕c3 29 ♕e6 looks lost for Black) 27 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 28 ♖xe5+ with ♕ and two dangerous pawns against an undeveloped ♖.

**24...♜xc4**

24...♜xe7? is hopeless: 25 ♖xd6+

♕e8 26 ♖xe5 and now 26...♖d8 allows mate in 8 starting 27 ♔b5+, while 26...♖d7 27 ♔b5 wins the black ♖.

**25 ♕xd6 ♜xd6?**

This is a blunder. Black could have created a more chaotic situation by my new discovery 25...♜d2+!, with two possibilities after 26 ♔c1:

a) 26...♖g8 27 ♖f5+ ♕e8 is not quite sufficient:

a1) 28 ♖e5+!? leads to a draw after 28...♜xe5 29 ♖xe5+ ♔d7 30 ♖e7+ ♔c6 31 ♖c7+ ♔d5 32 ♖c5+ ♔e6 33 ♖e5+ etc. and 28 g6 ♖d8 also looks like it will end in perpetual.

a2) However, White has a spectacular winning try in 28 ♔b8!!, hoping for 28...♖xb8?? 29 ♖d7+ ♔f8 30 ♖f5+ mating, while 28...♖xd5 29 ♖xd5 ♖xb8 30 g6! (30 ♖e6+!?) also looks like a win, e.g. 30...♕e7 (30...♜e7 31 g7!) 31 ♖f7+ ♔d6 32 g7.

Finally, if 28...♜e7 29 ♖d7+ ♔f8 30 ♕d6 should work in the end, e.g. 30...♖g6 (30...♖g7? 31 ♖f5+) 31 ♕xe7+ ♔g8 32 ♖xb7 ♖b1+!? 33 ♖xb1 ♜xb1 34 ♔xb1 ♕xf2; White still has to win the endgame but probably can do so.

b) On the other hand, 26...♜b4+! really does seem to draw, e.g. 27 ♕c5+ ♜xd5 28 ♖d6+ ♕e8 29 ♖f8+ ♔d7 30 ♖d6+ with no significant advantage for White.

**26 ♖xd6+ ♕e8 27 ♖g6+! ♔f8 28 ♖f5+ ♖xf5+ 29 ♖xf5+ 1-0**

I can certainly agree with Hendriksen's final comment on this classic game: "What an Odyssey through the beautiful country of combinations!"

# Game 4

**White: Wilhelm Steinitz (USA)**

**Black: Mikhail Chigorin (Russia)**

Telegraph thematic match, 1890-91

*Two Knights Defence (C59)*

**The Players:** Wilhelm Steinitz (1836-1900), whom we first met in Game 3, was now the first official World Chess Champion. Born in Prague, Steinitz had moved to London in 1862 and to New York in 1882. He defeated Chigorin in matches played in 1889 and 1892, before surrendering the world title to Emanuel Lasker in 1894. Steinitz is generally considered the forerunner of 20<sup>th</sup> century positional chess. However, he had a stubborn dogmatic streak which was thoroughly exposed in this match.

Mikhail Chigorin (1850-1908) was the greatest player of combinational attacks in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as an original thinker where openings were concerned.

**About this game:** ‘Thematic’ events, in which the players agree to play a particular opening, have long been a popular part of CC activity. Here Chigorin challenged Steinitz to uphold his published opinions about two different controversial variations; in each case the Russian gambited a pawn. Steinitz played Black in an Evans Gambit and White in the present game, where the world champion followed a recommendation

from his 1889 book ‘The Modern Chess Instructor’.

As an experienced correspondence player in Russian events, as well as a painstaking analyst of complicated positions, Chigorin was in his element in this contest against his great rival and deservedly won it 2-0. The match ran from October 13, 1890 to April 28, 1891 and created tremendous interest worldwide. It was unusual for a CC event in that it was played by professionals for money: the winner received US\$750.

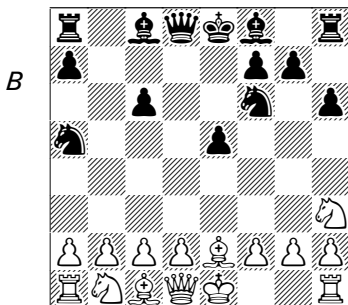
Both games were annotated by Steinitz as a serial while they were in progress; his optimistic comments seem ironic in the light of his eventual crushing defeat. Throughout the match, you get a misleading view of events if you only read what Steinitz thought. For the Russian viewpoint, I studied the extensive analysis of the game in ‘Shakhmatny Bulletin’ 2/1958 (edited by Romanov).

**1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♜c6 3 ♔c4 ♞f6 4 ♞g5 d5 5 exd5 ♞a5 6 ♔b5+ c6 7 dxc6 bxc6 8 ♔e2 h6 9 ♞h3!? (D)**

This was the agreed starting point. Of course the white ♞ normally retreats to f3 but then it is hit with

tempo again in the variation 9 ♖f3 e4 10 ♗e5, a main line about which debate still continues.

Steinitz had written: “Much better than 9 ♗f3 which seems to have been assumed, hitherto, as the only move for White.” His opinion was, however, largely disregarded until Bobby Fischer revived 9 ♗h3 in a famous game against GM Bisguier in 1963, which can be found in Fischer’s book ‘My Sixty Memorable Games’. Nowadays, the move is considered playable, if eccentric.



**9...♗c5**

Black targets f2 and gets ready to castle without delay. Chigorin’s choice has given good results in practice.

9...♗xh3 might seem the obvious reply, but 10 gxf3 ♖d5 11 ♗f3 e4 12 ♗c3 ♖e5 13 ♗g2 was given in Steinitz’ book, e.g. 13...♗d6 14 ♖e2 0-0 15 d3 exd3 16 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 17 cxd3 with the comment “White is a Pawn ahead, and after bringing out his ♗ to e3 he may castle on the queenside or even play ♖e2 and his

two ♗s and the extra pawn on the queenside secure him the advantage”.

Chigorin saw it differently. He didn’t want to capture the ♗ because “my ♗ is needed for the attack, while the ♗ will soon be forced to go back to g1. That seemed to be all the more favourable for me as I could, for a long time, prevent the ♗ coming to f3, and it is only after this move that White can develop properly”.

**10 d3**

10 0-0 was preferred by Steinitz in the 6<sup>th</sup> game of their 1892 match, continuing 10...0-0 11 c3? (For 11 ♗c3 see below, but 11 d3, as in Fischer-Bisguier, is better.) 11...♗b7 12 ♖a4 ♗xh3 13 gxf3 ♖d6 14 d3 ♗d5! and Black won. Note that Chigorin only captured the ♗ after White had castled.

**10...0-0 11 ♗c3**

If 11 c3 (threatening the fork b2-b4) Chigorin considered it to be of paramount importance to prevent White carrying out the manoeuvre ♗h3-g1-f3 followed by 0-0, and so he intended 11...♗b7! to rule out White’s fork tricks. Steinitz would then be unable to play either 12 b4 (because of 12...♗xb4 13 cxb4 ♖d4) or 12 ♗g1 (because of 12...♖b6 13 d4 exd4 14 b4 ♗d6 15 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 16 cxd4 ♗xb4+ when Black regains his pawn with a good position).

**11...♗d5!**

Fischer-Radoičić, played a few rounds later than the Bisguier game in the New York State Open 1973, varied with 11...♖e8?! 12 0-0 ♗xh3 13 gxf3 ♖d7 and now White played

14 ♖g4! ♜xg4 15 hxg4, undoubling the pawns with advantage.

**12 ♜a4?!**

To drive the c5-♙ away from its attack on f2, as a preparation for ♜g1, but better is 12 0–0!, as played in the 20<sup>th</sup> century revival of the variation. Black has several possibilities then.

**12...♙d6**

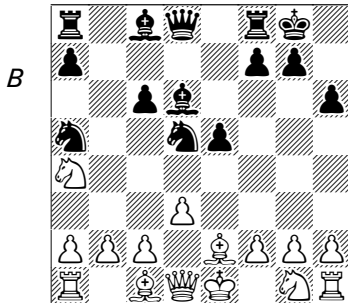
Not 12...♙b6 13 ♜xb6 axb6 14 ♜g1 and, with the dark-squared ♙ eliminated, Steinitz could bring his plan to fruition.

**13 ♜g1 (D)**

If the retreat is delayed any longer, Black would be ready to capture the ♜. For example:

a) 13 c3 ♙xh3 14 gxh3 ♖h4 15 ♙f1 f5 16 ♙g2 e4 17 0–0 ♜f4 ♖ or 16 b4 e4 17 ♙g2 e3!.

b) An attempt to gain space on the queenside by 13 c4 would also fail tactically: 13...♙xh3 14 gxh3 (14 cxd5 ♙d7) 14...♜f4 15 c5 ♙c7 16 ♙xf4 exf4 17 b4 ♜b7 18 0–0 and now 18...♖g5+ 19 ♜h1? f3! 20 ♙xf3 ♖f4 is a clearer win than Romanov's variation. Better is 18 ♙f3, though Black has normal compensation.



Steinitz observed: “Take a look at the board now... I have six pawns on their initial squares which, according to my theory, is a great advantage, especially in the endgame... Furthermore, for a long time not one of my pieces can be attacked by opposing pawns.” Steinitz did foresee that the main danger was Chigorin advancing his pawn to f3.

**13...f5 14 c3**

Central expansion by 14 c4 ♜f6 15 d4? does not work because of 15...exd4 and if 16 ♖xd4?? ♙b4+ winning the ♖. However, Bogoljubow suggested 14 ♜f3 e4 15 ♜d4 e3 16 ♜f3 exf2+ 17 ♜xf2 ♠ ♖f1.

**14...♙d7 15 d4**

The value of Black's last move is seen in the variation 15 ♜f3 e4 16 ♜d4 c5 17 dxe4! cxd4! 18 exd5 ♖e8!.

Now Steinitz envisaged the continuation 15...exd4 16 ♖xd4 ♖e7 17 ♜f1 but Chigorin replied with a completely different idea.

**15...e4 16 c4 ♜e7!**

Steinitz had expected 16...♜f6. The underestimation of Chigorin's ...♜e7 move has a lot to do with Steinitz's difficulties later; his position was already inferior. Afterwards, he said 17 b3 ♙e6 18 c5 would have been better in this position than what he actually played.

If 17 ♜c5 ♙xc5 18 dxc5 ♜b7 19 ♖d4 f4 20 b4 a5 21 a3 ♜f5 — and after the ♖ moves, Black plays ...axb4 or ...♜h4 — White has a bad game.

**17 ♜c3 ♙e6 18 b3**

Bogoljubow suggested 18 ♜h3

intending to meet 18...♞xc4? by 19 ♖b3 ♜b8 20 ♙xc4 ♞xb3 21 ♙xe6+ ♗h8 22 ♙xb3.

**18...♙b4 19 ♙b2 f4! 20 ♖c2**

Steinitz returns the pawn, an admission that his opening has failed. If 20 a3, Chigorin intended 20...♙xc3 21 ♙xc3 ♞f5 22 ♙g4 ♜b8! (and not 22...♗h8 as indicated by Steinitz).

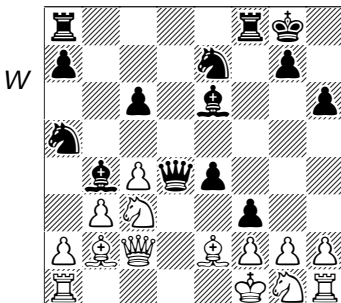
On 20 ♗f1 Steinitz analysed a line beginning 20... f3 but Chigorin hinted that he might have preferred 20...e3, meeting either 21 fxe3 or 21 ♞f3 by 21...♞f5.

**20...♖xd4 21 ♗f1**

a) If 21 ♜d1 ♖f6, followed by ...♖g6.

b) Or 21 a3 f3! 22 gxf3 e3! 23 fxe3 (23 axb4 exf2+ 24 ♗f1 fxg1 ♖+ 25 ♜xg1 ♙h3+ 26 ♜g2 ♖g4+-) 23...♖h4+! as both players saw. Then if 24 ♗f1, Steinitz feared 24...♙f5 or 24...♙h3+ but neither seems deadly. Instead 24...♞f5(!) 25 ♖e4 ♖xe4 26 ♞xe4 ♙e7 when Black is two pawns down but will get one back immediately with more than enough for the other.

**21...f3 (D)**



**22 gxf3**

Here the obvious move for White might appear to be 22 ♞xe4, which discovers an attack by the white ♙ on Black's ♖. However, after 22...fxe2+ 23 ♖xe2 Black can hold the extra piece by 23...♖b6 24 ♞f6+ ♗f7 (or 24 c5 ♖b5 25 ♖xb5 cxb5 26 a3 ♞xb3 27 axb4 ♞xa1 28 ♙xa1 a5!).

**22...exf3 23 ♙xf3**

“Besides the intricacies that will arise with the move actually made, the consequences of 23 ♞xf3 had to be well considered. 23...♙h3+ 24 ♗e1 ♜xf3, which looks very dangerous for my game, was not to be feared in reality,” claimed Steinitz.

Chigorin disagreed; he then intended to meet 25 ♙xf3 by 25...♜e8 (♠...♞d5+) 26 ♙e2 ♞g6 27 ♜d1 (27 ♖d2 ♜xe2+ 28 ♗xe2 ♖g4+!) 27...♖f6 leading to great material advantage for Black.

This bears out my point that, apart from handicapping himself with dubious opening variations that suited Chigorin's style, Steinitz was not his opponent's equal as an analyst in sharp positions.

**23...♙f5 24 ♞e4**

Black now decides the game with a ♖ sacrifice inaugurating a stream of combinations.

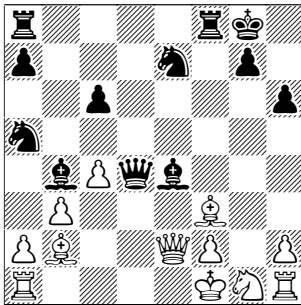
If instead 24 ♜d1 ♖h4 25 ♞e4 (25 ♖e2 ♞g6) 25...♜ad8 26 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 (threatening ...♜d2 followed by ...♙xe4) 27 ♖e2 (27 ♙c1 ♜d4) 27...♞g6 28 h3 ♖f4!, when the threat of ...♞h4 forces White to give up the exchange by 29 h4 ♞xh4 30 ♜xh4 ♖xh4 — Chigorin.

24...♙xe4! 25 ♖e2! (D)

Not 25 ♙xe4 ♜xf2+ 26 ♖xf2 ♖xe4 when:

a) Vasiukov and Nikitin (in their book on Chigorin) give 27 ♘f3 ♜f8 28 ♔g2 ♘g6 (Steinitz gave 28...♘f5 instead.) 29 ♜he1 (29 ♜hf1 ♜xf3) 29...♙xe1 30 ♜xe1 ♘h4+ 31 ♖xh4 ♖xf3+ 32 ♔g1 ♜f4 winning the ♖ or mating.

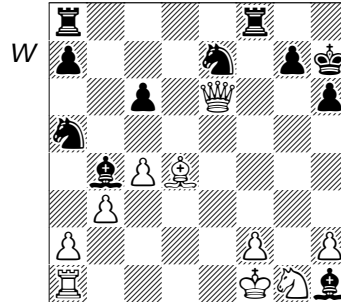
b) Computers prefer 27 ♙xg7!? ♖xh1 (27...♔xg7 28 ♖g2+) 28 ♙xh6 though Black must still be winning with 28...♖e4.



25...♙xf3!!

Black could also have sacrificed his ♖ in a different way, but this is best, keeping more pieces on the board with a stronger attack. After 25...♙c3 26 ♜d1 ♙xf3 27 ♖e6+ ♜f7 28 ♜xd4 ♙xd4 29 ♘xf3 ♙xb2 Black's advantage is relatively small. 26 ♖e6+ ♔h7 27 ♙xd4 ♙xh1 (D)

Numerous pretty variations, stemming from Russian sources, illustrate how Chigorin would have overcome the world champion's resistance if he had tried various



moves in the diagram position above:

a) 28 a3 ♘f5 29 axb4 ♘xd4 30 ♖h3 ♘axb3 31 ♖d3+ ♔h8 32 ♜b1 ♙e4!.

b) 28 ♘e2 ♘f5 29 ♙b2 (29 ♙c3 c5) 29...♜ae8 30 ♖d7 ♜e7 31 ♖d3! ♙e4 32 ♖h3! (32 ♖d1 ♘e3+) 32...♙c5 with a strong attack, e.g. 33 ♙c3 (33 ♔g1 ♙xf2+ 34 ♔xf2 ♘d4+ 35 ♔e1 ♙f3 -+) 33...♘e3+ 34 ♔g1 ♘c2 -+.

c) 28 f3 ♘f5 29 ♙f2 ♜ae8 30 ♖d7 ♘e3+ 31 ♙xe3 ♜xe3 32 ♖d4 (32 ♖xa7 ♜d3 and White cannot meet the threat of ...♜d2 followed by ...♙g2+) 32...♜fe8 33 ♜d1 ♜3e5 34 f4 ♜f5 -+.

d) 28 ♖g4 ♘f5 29 ♘e2 ♜ae8 Δ...♜e4.

e) 28 ♖d7 ♘f5 29 ♙xa7 ♜ae8 30 ♘e2 ♜e7.

Steinitz tried something else.

28 ♖h3 ♘f5 29 ♙e5

Again White had other possibilities but most are hopeless.

a) 29 ♜d1 ♜ad8 pins the ♙, threatening ...c5.

b) 29 ♘e2 c5 (or 29...♙e4) 30 a3 cxd4 31 axb4 ♘c6.

c) 29 ♙b2 ♜ae8 30 ♘e2 ♙f3 31

♞f4 (31 ♖xf3 ♜e3+) 31...♞d4.

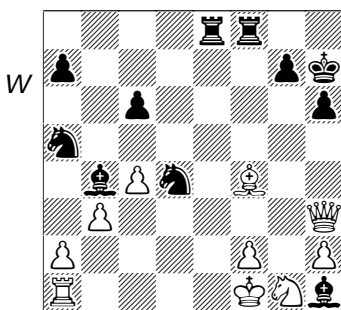
d) 29 ♙c3 might have been somewhat better, e.g. 29...c5 30 ♙xb4 cxb4 31 a3 (but 31 ♙e1!? is some improvement) 31...♙ae8 brings the last attacker into play again, e.g. 32 ♜e2 (32 ♙e1 ♙xe1+ 33 ♜xe1 bxa3 34 ♖c3 ♜c6 35 b4 a2 36 b5 ♜b4) 32...♙f3 33 ♜c1 (33 ♜f4 ♞d4) 33...♜e3+ 34 ♜g1 ♜c2-+ (Soviet analysis from the 1950s).

**29...♙ae8 30 ♙f4**

Not 30 f4 with the pretty finish 30...♙xe5 31 fxe5 ♜g3#.

**30...♞d4! (D)**

Chigorin prefers the most elegant path to victory, but 30...♙e4 31 ♜e2 ♙xe2! is also efficient, e.g. 32 ♜xe2 ♜d4+ 33 ♜d3 (33 ♜e3 ♜c2+) 33...♙xf4 establishing a decisive material advantage.



**31 ♖d3+**

White is also lost after:

a) 31 ♖g3 ♙e4.

b) 31 ♙d2 ♙xd2 32 ♖d3+ ♜f5 33 ♖xd2 ♜e3+.

c) 31 ♙xh6 gxh6 32 ♖d7+ ♙e7 33 ♖xd4 ♙g8 34 f3 (34 ♖d3+ ♙e4 35 ♖h3 ♙eg7 36 ♜f3 ♙d3#) 34...♙g2+ 35 ♜f2 ♜b7 36 ♖d3+ ♜h8 37 ♜e2 ♙c5+ 38 ♜e1 ♙e3-+.

**31...♙e4 32 ♖xd4**

If 32 ♖g3 ♙f6 33 f3 ♙d3+ 34 ♜f2 ♜c2 and, if the ♙ moves, then 35...♙c5+ 36 ♜g2 ♙g6.

**32...♙xf4 33 f3**

If 33 ♖xa7 ♙g4 34 f3 ♙d3+ 35 ♜f2 ♙g5 Δ...♙c5+ (Chigorin).

**33...♙ef8 34 ♖xa7 c5 35 ♖c7 ♜c6 36 a3 ♙xf3+! 37 ♜xf3 ♙xf3+ 38 ♜g1 ♙d2! 0-1**

With the threat 39...♙e3+ 40 ♜g2 ♙f7+. If 39 h4 ♜d4 or if the ♖ hides by 39 ♖b6 then 39...♙e3+ 40 ♜g2 ♙f5+ and mate in 5.

Steinitz wrote “White might spin out the game by 39 ♖g3, but as the result was only a question of time in a correspondence game, and considering that the position was too simple to admit of chances, I deemed it best to resign”.

After 39 ♖g3 Russian sources give 39...♙e3+ 40 ♜g2 ♙f5+ 41 ♜h3 ♙h5+ 42 ♜g4 (or 42 ♖h4 ♙f5+ 43 ♜g3 ♙xh4 44 ♜xh4 ♙f2+ 45 ♜h5 g6#) 42...♜e5+! 43 ♜xh5 g5! forcing a neat mate.

On the basis of this win, Chigorin may be considered the unofficial CC world champion of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

# Game 5

**White: Géza Maróczy (Hungary)**

**Black: Arpad Csipkés (Hungary)**

1<sup>st</sup> Hungarian CC Championship, 1893-96

*Dutch Defence (A85)*

**The Players:** Géza Maróczy (1870-1951) is not known as a CC player, but he and his great but short-lived rival Rudolf Charousek (1873-1900) shared first prize, each scoring 16/18. The event was an important stage in the development of the future GM, who won the Hastings 1895 minor tournament midway through this CC event. His breakthrough to the ranks of the world's top players followed in 1899 while Charousek was dying of tuberculosis. Csipkés finished a respectable fifth with 13/18.

**About this game:** Very few round-robin CC tournaments were held in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (except in Russia) so this was a pioneering event, slow and chaotic though it was. Chess historian V.Charushin states that as Charousek's father was a telegraph operator, he had the advantage of being able to send moves quickly without even leaving home!

In the early middlegame, Maróczy established an advantage. After Csipkés missed a couple of opportunities to create some complications, he was subjected to a demonstration of strategic superiority. This was one of the longest games of the event, not con-

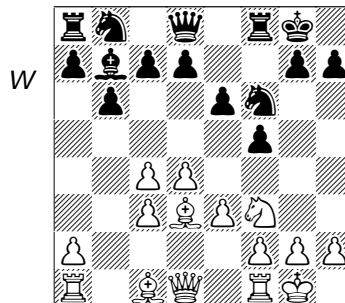
cluding until 1896. Maróczy had to win this game to catch his friend and rival. Afterwards, unfinished games (of which there were many) were adjudicated and the final result was declared in 1897.

**1 d4 e6 2 c4 f5 3 ♖c3 ♗f6 4 e3 ♕b4!?**

This must have all been very experimental in the 1890s. 4...b6 and 4...♕e7 are possible too.

**5 ♕d3 0-0 6 ♗f3 b6 7 0-0 ♕xc3 8 bxc3 ♕b7 (D)**

This line of the Dutch has affinities with the Nimzo-Indian. Many years later, Maróczy reached this position with Black by a different move order (3 e3 ♗f6 4 ♕d3 b6 5 ♖c3 ♕b7 6 ♗f3 ♕b4 7 0-0 ♕xc3 8 bxc3 0-0).





9 ♖e1

This is rather a tame move. Presumably the idea is to play f3 later to eject an invading ♗ from e4, but the prospects for White's own ♗ are not great. 9 ♙a3 is sometimes played here instead, but 9 a4! is probably best. Rubinstein-Maróczy, Teplitz-Schönau 1922, continued 9...♗c6 10 ♗d2 d6 11 ♗b3 ♗e7 12 a5 c5 13 f4 ♗e4 14 ♖c2 ♖c7 15 ♗d2 ♗xd2 16 ♙xd2 ♗h8 17 ♖fe1 ± (1-0, 33).

9...♗c6

Black could also play 9...d6 keeping the option of ...♗bd7 and ...c7-c5, but the fact that Maróczy copied the ...♗c6-e7 manoeuvre against Rubinstein suggests he thought Csipkés' plan was good.

10 ♙a3 d6 11 ♖b1 ♖b8 12 ♖b2 ♗e7 13 ♖b1

White's intention is to crack open the b-file, while the line-up on the b1-h7 diagonal deters ...e5.

13...♖e8?!

This standard Dutch Defence manoeuvre leaves White a free hand in the centre. 13...c5! keeps the position blocked for the ♗s and shows why Rubinstein's treatment was better.

14 f3 ♖h5 15 c5

White dissolves his doubled pawn and starts to probe for weaknesses.

15...dxc5 16 ♙xc5 ♖be8

16...bxc5? 17 ♖xb7 clearly creates new weaknesses and increases the scope of White's pieces.

17 c4 ♖h6! 18 ♖e2

18 ♗c2! ± was obvious and good. Relatively best would be 18...♙a8 19 ♙a3 g5!? or 18...♗d7.

18...♖f7?

Black unpins his ♗ and thinks about ...g5 but he misses the chance of a tactical shot, 18...♙xf3!, taking advantage of the unfortunate position of the ♖ on e2. After 19 ♖xf3 bxc5 20 ♖b7 White still has queenside chances but Black now has kingside counterplay. Other recaptures are more weakening: 19 gxf3 bxc5 20 ♖b7 cxd4 21 exd4 ♗h5 or 19 ♗xf3 bxc5 20 ♖b7?! ♗g4, and certainly not 19 ♙xe7?? ♙xe2-+.

19 ♙a3 ♗h5 20 ♙c1 g5 21 g3!

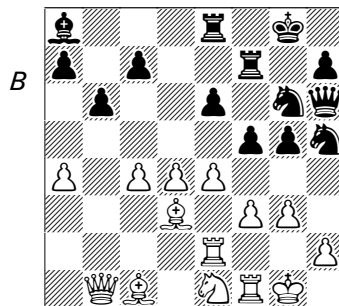
Maróczy avoids unnecessary tactical complications; e.g. 21 e4 f4 22 ♖ff2 ♗g3! 23 ♖b2 (23 hxg3?? fxg3) 23...♖f6! 24 hxg3 fxg3 25 ♖fc2 ♖h2+ 26 ♗f1 ♗f5! is his analysis.

21...♗g6 22 a4 ♙a8?!

This is a complete waste of time and makes it hard to contest the a-file later. Since Black is trying to work up some kingside play, 22...e5!? would be logical, albeit risky.

23 e4 (D)

White starts to take command.



23...f4 24 g4 ♗f6

24...♗g7 may be a bit better but

with the kingside blocked, White now has a free hand.

**25 a5 ♖d7 26 ♖a2 e5?!**

26...c5!? looks like Black's last chance for counterplay, trying to get e5 for the ♖s, while if 27 d5 perhaps 27...exd5 28 cxd5 ♖ge5 △...c5-c4.

**27 axb6 axb6 28 d5 ♖b8**

Black has managed to get his pawns fixed on the opposite colour to his ♕, but it still has no scope; 28...♕b7 would be a marginal improvement.

**29 ♖a7 c5!?**

This anti-positional move leaves Black with a backward b-pawn on an open file; probably not many players understood such concepts in the 1890s. At least it gives him some space; he is strategically lost anyway and no move is really any better.

**30 ♖f2 ♕b7 31 ♕b2 ♖f8 32 ♕c3 ♖d6 33 ♖b2**

With a clear target, Maróczy methodically increases the pressure.

**33...♖f6 34 ♕e2 ♖e7 35 ♖d3 ♖c8 36 ♖a3 ♖e7 37 ♕d1**

The ♕ heads for the a4-e8 diagonal where it threatens to undermine the defence of b6. It is not important actually to win the pawn; the principal objective is to put Black more and more on the defensive.

**37...♖g6 38 ♖a7 ♖g8**

The idea is to have a reserve defender of b6, but Black reduces the defenders of his e-pawn and is now totally passive. There does not seem to be a better defence.

**39 ♖a1**

White now has a masked battery against the e5-pawn.

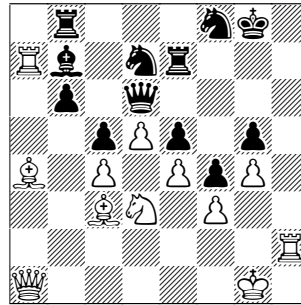
**39...♖f7 40 h4**

A bonus from inducing ...♖f8: White gets some kingside play too.

**40...h6**

40...gxf4 may be better, but 41 ♖h2 ♖e7 42 ♖xf4 is very good for White.

**41 ♕a4 ♖e7 42 hxg5 hxg5 43 ♖h2 (D)**



White dominates the whole board.  
**43...♖f6 44 ♕b5 ♖ee8 45 ♖b2**

Cat and mouse: White could play a combination with 45 ♖xe5!?, e.g. 45...♖xe5 (45...♖xe5? 46 ♕c6) 46 ♕xe8, although 46...♖xf3+ and ...♖d4 prevents an immediate loss, but why take any risks of miscalculation when he has a totally crushing position?

**45...♖e7 46 ♖g2 ♖ee8 47 ♖h3 ♖e7 48 ♖h5**

Now there is another weakness to defend. White just keeps probing and waits for a defensive slip.

**48...♖g6?**

The position was hopeless anyway. 48...♖g7 would be met by 49 ♕c6 ♕xc6 50 dxc6 and it all falls apart.

**49 ♖xe5! ♖xe5 50 ♕xe5 ♖c8 51 ♕f6 1-0**

# Game 6

**White: Karlis Karlovich Betins (Latvia)**

**Black: Emmanuil Stepanovich Shiffers (Russia)**

4<sup>th</sup> Shakhmatny Zhurnal CC tourney, 1894-96

*Petroff Defence (C42)*

**The Players:** Betins (1867-1943) was the father of the great chess tradition in Latvia which culminated in Tal. He was much involved in early analysis of the Latvian Counter-Gambit.

Shiffers (1859-1904) was Chigorin's chief Russian rival. From 1894-98 Shiffers edited the Petersburg periodical 'Shakhmatny Zhurnal'. Grodzensky & Romanov's CC history, 'Khod v Konverte', reports that Shiffers won the third of its tournaments, in 1893-4, with 15½/18.

**About this game:** Betins beat Schiffers 2-0 in this event. With a score of 9/12 he was second behind Romashkevich. From a quiet beginning, the pressure mounts and then White launches a murderous attack with a ♖ sacrifice.

**1 e4 e5 2 ♟f3 ♟f6 3 ♟xe5 d6 4 ♟f3 ♟xe4 5 d4 ♟e7**

5...d5 is more usual.

**6 ♟d3 ♟f6**

The Petroff Defence was developed principally by Russians in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; Black's 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> moves are attributed to Semyon Alapin (1856-1923). Retreating the ♟ instead of defending it avoids weakening the

position but if Black is going to play ...d5 eventually, this would be the logical time to make that move.

**7 ♟bd2**

White's idea is to transfer the ♟ to g3 as a preparation for controlling f5 and an eventual kingside attack.

**7...♟c6**

Since White did not play the usual 7 h3, the move 7...♟g4 would be consistent. Or Black could play simply 7...0-0, as recommended in the Petroff monograph by Forintos & Haag, when if 8 ♟fl ♖e8 9 ♟g3 ♟f8+.

**8 c3 d5**

According to Yusupov's book on the Petroff, 8...0-0 would be better, continuing the waiting strategy.

**9 ♟f1!**

Clearly 9 0-0 is standard but since Black is unready to challenge the e-file, Betins decides to accelerate his plan and save a move (♖e1).

**9...0-0 10 ♟g3 ♟d6 11 0-0 ♟g4?!**

This achieves nothing. Black should try 11...♖e8 or 11...h6. He could double White's g-pawn by 12...♟xg3 but he needs his ♟ to defend the dark squares.

**12 h3 ♟e6 13 ♟g5**

Forintos & Haag suggest that “13 ♖g5 or 13 ♖f5 would have given White a slight advantage”.

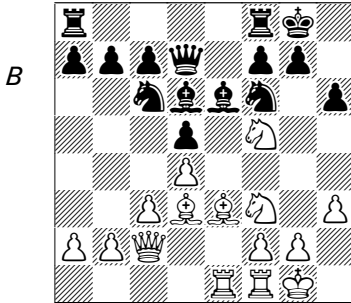
**13...♗e7**

With a symmetrical pawn structure, White has no immediate threats but also nothing to fear, so he is able to build up at leisure.

**14 ♖c2 h6 15 ♗e3 ♗d6**

Black's ♗s and f6-♖ have squandered several tempi and yet there is no sign of real counterplay.

**16 ♖ae1 ♖d7 17 ♖f5 (D)**



Now Black must beware of a sacrifice on h6 or g7. White will at least obtain the ♗ pair.

**17...♖e4 18 ♖xd6 ♖xd6**

If 18...♖xd6 19 ♖e5 ♖xe5 20 dxe5 ♖f5 21 ♗c5 Black starts to feel the lack of a dark-squared ♗. Contemporary sources give the variation 21...♖fe8 22 g4 ♖h4 23 f4 ♗xg4 24 hxg4 ♖xg4+ 25 ♖h2 ♖f3+ 26 ♖xf3 ♖xf3 27 ♖f1 ('Riga Tageblatt') which may be better for White despite his exposed ♖, but he could also play more cautiously and not allow ...♗xg4.

**19 ♖e5**

White offers a pawn sacrifice, which is declined. 19 ♗xe4 dxe4 20 ♖xe4 is a questionable pawn-grab since Black continues 20...f5 21 ♖h4 ♗c4 and wins the exchange on f1.

**19...♖xe5 20 dxe5 ♖c6?!**

Now White has a kingside pawn majority, which gives him the makings of an attack. Shiffers apparently rejected 20...♖xe5 on account of 21 ♗c5, presumably fearful of White's subsequent f2-f3 to exploit the pin on the e-file. In fact the trap is tactically unsound, because after 21...♖fe8 22 f3 Black has 22...♖h5 and if 23 fxe4? dxe4 attacks both ♗s. Therefore 21 ♗d4 is superior, when White has compensation for the pawn but there is a lot of play left.

**21 f3 ♖c5 22 ♗h7+ ♖h8 23 f4**

Betins could have delayed this, keeping control of e4. However, his plan to attack with opposite-coloured ♗s appears correct.

**23...♖e4!**

The 'Riga Tageblatt' said that 23...g6 24 ♗xg6 fxg6? loses to 25 ♖xg6. Black might instead try 24...♗xh3 but then 25 e6! seems the right solution:

a) 25...fxg6? 26 ♖xg6 ♖xe6 27 ♖xh6+ ♖g8 28 ♖xh3+-.

b) 25...♖xe6 26 f5 fxg6 (26...♖g7 27 f6 ♖e6 27 ♗h7) 27 fxe6, e.g. 27...♗f5 28 e7 ♖f7 29 ♗d4+ ♖g8 (29...♖h7? 30 g4!) 30 ♖d2.

c) 25...♗xe6 26 ♗d4+ f6 27 f5 ♗f7 28 ♖e7 ♖g7 29 ♖e2 with a very strong attack for the sacrificed pawn, for if 29...♖ae8 White can choose

between 30  $\text{♙xf7}$   $\text{♜xe7}$  (30... $\text{♜xf7}$   
31  $\text{♞xe8}$ ) 31  $\text{♞xe7}$   $\text{♜xf7}$  32  $\text{♞xc5}$   
winning a piece, or perhaps even  
better 30  $\text{♙e3!}$   $\text{♜g8}$  (30... $\text{♜xe7}$  31  
 $\text{♙xh6+}$ ) 31  $\text{♙xh6}$   $\text{♞e4}$  32  $\text{♞g4}$ .

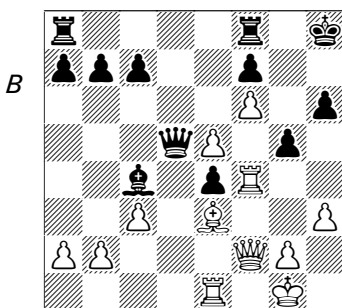
**24**  $\text{♙xe4}$   $\text{dxe4}$  **25**  $\text{f5!}$   $\text{♞c4}$  **26**  $\text{♞f4}$   
 $\text{♞d5}$

If 26... $\text{♙d3}$  then 27  $\text{♞f2}$  prepares  
for a dark square breakthrough,  
against which the d3- $\text{♙}$  is useless.

**27**  $\text{f6}$   $\text{g5}$

Black does not want White to  
capture on g7, exposing his  $\text{♜}$  to  
attack. 27... $\text{g5}$  was presumably played  
to prevent  $\text{♞h4}$ , e.g. 27... $\text{g6}$  28  $\text{♞xe4}$   
and if 28... $\text{♙d3?}$  29  $\text{♞h4}$   $\text{♙xc2?}$   
30  $\text{♙xh6}$  and mates by  $\text{♙g7+}$  etc.  
— but in the game White plays  $\text{♞h4}$   
anyway!

**28**  $\text{♞f2!}$  (D)



**28...♞g8**

Not 28... $\text{gxf4?}$  because 29  $\text{♞xf4}$   
soon mates, while 28... $\text{♞ad8}$  is too  
slow and would also be met by 29  
 $\text{♞h4}$ . Black takes steps to defend  
his loosened  $\text{♜}$  position, but White  
has another  $\text{♞}$  offer to break down  
resistance. Black never does make use

of the queen's  $\text{♞}$ , a consequence of  
the time wasted with the minor pieces  
in the early stages.

**29**  $\text{♞h4!}$   $\text{gxh4}$

Acceptance is forced. If 29... $\text{♜h7}$   
30  $\text{♞xh6+}$   $\text{♜xh6}$  31  $\text{♞h4+}$  and mates,  
while if 29... $\text{♞g6}$  30  $\text{♙xg5!}$   $\text{♞xg5}$  (If  
30... $\text{e3}$  31  $\text{♙xe3}$  and Black has lost  
two pawns for nothing) 31  $\text{♞xh6+}$   
 $\text{♜g8}$  32  $\text{♞h4+-}$ .

**30**  $\text{♞xh4}$   $\text{♞g6?}$

Black should return the spare  $\text{♞}$   
for a little counterplay, even if it is  
insufficient. After 30... $\text{♞xg2+!}$  31  
 $\text{♜xg2}$   $\text{♞g8+}$  the correct reply is 32  
 $\text{♜h1!}$   $\text{♞g6}$  33  $\text{b3}$  when:

a) After 33... $\text{♙d3}$  the futility of  
Black's  $\text{♙}$  is underlined by 34  $\text{♞g1!}$   
 $\text{♞xg1+}$  35  $\text{♜xg1}$  with forced mate.

b) Or if 33... $\text{♙a6}$  34  $\text{c4}$  (not 34  
 $\text{♙xh6??}$   $\text{e3+}$  mates) 34... $\text{♞d8}$  35  
 $\text{♙xh6}$   $\text{♜g8}$  36  $\text{♙g7}$   $\text{♞xg7}$  (the point  
of ... $\text{♞d8}$ ) 37  $\text{e6!}$  ( $\Delta$  38  $\text{e7}$  and 39  
 $\text{fxg7}$ ) 37... $\text{♞g6}$  (or 37... $\text{fxe6}$  38  $\text{f7+}$   
and 39  $\text{♞xd8}$ ) 38  $\text{exf7+}$   $\text{♜xf7}$  39  
 $\text{♞h7+}$   $\text{♜xf6}$  40  $\text{♞f1+}$  wins.

**31**  $\text{♙xh6}$   $\text{♜g8}$  **32**  $\text{♙g7}$   $\text{♞xg7}$

32... $\text{♞c5+}$  33  $\text{♜h1}$  does not alter  
the situation.

**33**  $\text{fxg7}$   $\text{f5?}$

If 33... $\text{♜xg7}$  34  $\text{♞xe4}$  but the text  
is desperation. White can win in more  
ways than one.

**34**  $\text{exf6}$   $\text{♞e8}$  **35**  $\text{b3}$   $\text{♙d3}$  **36**  $\text{♞e3}$   $\text{♜f7}$   
**37**  $\text{♞g3}$   $\text{e3}$

Tantamount to resignation. But if  
37... $\text{♞g8}$  38  $\text{♞g5}$  wins.

**38**  $\text{g8♞+}$   $\text{♞xg8}$  **39**  $\text{♞xg8}$  1-0

Black resigned in view of  
39... $\text{♜xg8}$  40  $\text{♞g3+}$   $\text{♜f7}$  41  $\text{♞g7+}$   
 $\text{♜e6}$  42  $\text{♞e7+}$   $\text{♜f5}$  43  $\text{f7}$ .

# Game 7

**White: J.S. Hale (Canada)**

**Black: Mordecai Morgan (USA)**

Continental Tournament final, 1896-97

*Ponziani Opening (C44)*

**The Players:** I have no information about Hale. Mordecai Morgan (1862-1931) was a leading player of his day in Philadelphia.

**About this game:** The first great North American postal tournament was a two-stage event, starting 1894, organised by Walter Penn Shipley and others for the Continental Correspondence Chess Association. 70 players from the USA and Canada contested five sections, the leaders of which played off for the championship. The final winner was C.W. Phillips from Chicago.

This game is the most interesting one I have seen from the event; Nimzowitsch would have loved to annotate it. It was rediscovered by US chess historian John S. Hilbert, who republished it on The Campbell Report website with contemporary notes by Emil Kemeny (indicated by "EK"), a Hungarian emigrant to the USA. I find these were accurate about the general shape of the game but his attempts at analysing variations were usually poor.

EK's introductory remarks to the game were as follows: "An unusually

interesting game... not until the 29<sup>th</sup> move was Mr. Morgan enabled to obtain any advantage. At that point a brilliant play, apparently involving the sacrifice of a pawn, gave him a winning position. The play from this point to the end abounded in intricate complications, and it required skill and accuracy to force a win..."

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♜c6 3 c3 ♜f6 4 d4 ♜xe4 5 ♙d3

5 d5 is the usual move.

5...d5 6 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 7 dxe5 ♜c5 8 ♙c2 ♙e6 9 0-0 ♙e7 10 f4 g6 11 ♙e3 ♞d7 12 ♞d4

EK: "12 ♞e2, followed by ♜d2 and ♙ad1, was probably better."

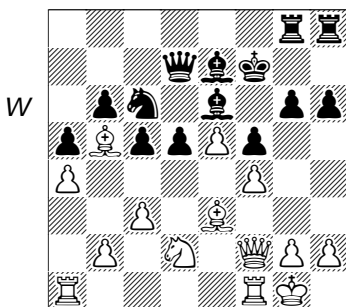
12...b6 13 ♜d2 ♜b7

This introduces a theme persistent throughout most of the game, Black's attempt to play ...♙c5 under favourable circumstances.

14 ♜b3 c5 15 ♞d2 f5 16 a4

Opening the centre would lead to a different type of game but White's weakness on the diagonal g1-a7 would persist.

16...a5 17 ♙d1 ♜f7 18 ♞f2 h6 19 ♜d2 ♜ag8 20 ♙e2 ♜d8 21 ♙b5 ♜c6 (D)



Black has some strategic advantage — chiefly because the pawn levers ...g5 and ...d4 may be prepared, whereas White's options b2-b4 and g2-g4 can be discounted: both moves would be too weakening.

Nevertheless, White is by no means lost. He has ...d5-d4 well under restraint for the time being, with his b5-♙ pinning the ♘ and other pieces eyeing the crucial square. If White can find the best arrangement of his pieces, then perhaps Black will not find a way through, and might sacrifice unsoundly.

**22 ♘f3!**

EK's objection that "the text move invites the advance of Black's g-pawn" seems rather vague; Black is going to play ...g5 soon whatever White does.

The manoeuvre ♘f3-e1-c2 may seem laborious but it does bring the ♘ to a good square for restraining ...d4 without getting in the way of White's other pieces.

EK preferred 22 ♖ad1 saying "Black could hardly answer 22...d4", but it seems to me that this thrust might be Black's best move! At the end of his variation 23 cxd4 cxd4 24

♙xd4 ♗xd4 25 ♙xc6 Black may be temporarily a pawn down but he actually has some advantage! Possible continuations are 25...♗xb2 26 ♘e4 ♗xf2+, 25...♖d8, and 25...♗xf2+ 26 ♖xf2 ♖c8.

**22...g5 23 ♗d2**

23 ♖fe1 would free f1 for the ♙ but in reply to ...g4 the ♘ would have to return to d2.

Now 23 ♖ad1 may well be good, followed by ♘e1-c2 and then ♖fe1. After 23...g4 24 ♘e1 play would probably go 24...♗c7 or 24...h5. The snag about 23 ♗d2 is that Black could consider the pawn sacrifice 24...g3 25 hxg3 ♖g6 (or ...♖g4) followed by the advance of the h-pawn to force open kingside lines rather than blocking the flank.

**23...g4 24 ♘e1 h5**

24...d4 is premature as White can answer 25 cxd4 cxd4 26 ♙f2, while 24...g3? 25 h3 blocks the flank in the wrong way. Black at least wants to force a weakness on the h1-a8 diagonal.

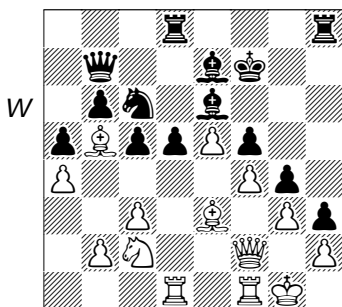
**25 ♘c2 h4 26 ♖ad1 h3**

EK liked this move but my view is somewhat different. Black cannot win the game in one sector of the board alone. Since Black has no immediate threats and can play ...h3 later anyway, it would seem sensible to leave the kingside fluid for the time being and prepare the central breakthrough. That would force White to be watchful on two fronts without the attacker making any irrevocable commitment.

**27 g3 ♗b7 28 ♗f2**

EK suggested 28 ♖fe1, planning ♙f1 and ♙g1.

**28...♖d8 (D)**



### 29 ♖d2

This seems to be the critical moment. EK suggested 29 ♖c1 saying “the advance of the d-pawn would then be less dangerous”.

I do not agree, since after 29 ♖c1 d4 30 cxd4 cxd4!, prospects look rather bleak for White. (Note that Black would rather exchange his ♗ for a white ♖ than the opposing ♗.) 31 ♖f1 may be best but Black stands well with 31...♙c5.

Accepting the pawn seems to lose, e.g. 31 ♖xc6 ♗xc6 32 ♗xd4 ♖xd4! 33 ♖xd4 ♙c8 34 ♖e1 ♙b7 (threatens mate on h1) 35 ♗f1 ♙c5 36 ♙e3 ♙xd4 37 ♙xd4 ♖d8 and wins (38 ♙e3 ♗h1+ 39 ♗g1 ♙a6+ or 39 ♗e2 ♙f3+), or if 36 e6+ ♗g6 37 ♙e3 ♖e8.

### 29...d4!

EK: “This well-timed advance of the d-pawn gives Black a winning position... The move opens the diagonal for the black ♗ and queen’s ♙. Since White is forced to capture the pawn, Black will be enabled to play ...♙c5. White cannot well gain the pawn, for if ♖xc6 and cxd4, Black answers ...♗xc6 and ...♗e4, threatening ...♙d5, followed by mating in a few moves.”

### 30 ♙xc6

EK did not analyse 30 cxd4 in any detail but his view that Black wins is correct. Best is 30...cxd4! when:

a) 31 ♗xd4? ♗xd4 32 ♙xd4 ♖xd4!, e.g. 33 ♖xd4 ♙c5 34 ♖fd1 ♖d8 35 ♙f1 ♖xd4 36 ♖xd4 ♙b3 when White has absolutely no moves (37 ♗e3? ♗d5).

b) The exchange sacrifice 31 ♖xd4 ♗xd4 32 ♗xd4! is unlikely to save White in the long run, but he can fight on, having averted disaster on the light squares, e.g. 32...♙c5 33 ♙c6 ♗c8 34 ♗xe6 ♗xe6.

### 30...♗xc6 31 cxd4 ♗e4 32 ♖fd1 ♙b3! 33 ♖c1

EK thought White had nothing better than this unsatisfactory move. It is true that White cannot allow 33 dxc5 ♙xc2 (winning a piece), but his comment, “Nor can he play 33 d5, for 33...♙xa4 would win”, is hard to understand in view of 34 d6; instead Black obtains a good game with 33...♖xd5 or 33...♙xd5.

If 33 ♗e2 ♙xc2 34 ♖xc2 cxd4 (EK), e.g. 35 ♙c1 d3 36 ♗xe4 fxe4 or 35 ♗c4+ ♖d5 36 ♙c1 d3.

### 33...♖d7 34 ♗e2

If 34 ♗a3, to defend d4 from b5, Black reroutes the ♙ to remove the offending ♗: 34...♖hd8 (34...♙xa4?! 35 e6+! ♗xe6 36 ♗c4 with an outpost at e5) 35 ♗b5 ♙d5! (35...♙xa4? 36 ♗c3) 36 ♗f1 ♙c6 and ...♙xb5.

### 34...♖hd8 35 ♗d3 ♙xc2 36 ♖cxc2 cxd4 37 ♗xe4 fxe4 38 f5

EK: “...quite ingenious. Black cannot capture the ♙ on account of e6+ winning the ♖.”



38...♖d5 39 ♔xd4

If 39 ♔f4 ♔c5 and Black advances the centre pawns (EK).

39...♔c5!?

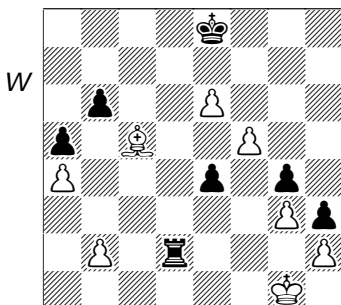
Black cautiously wants to avoid complications resulting from White having a pair of advanced passed pawns following 39...♖xd4 40 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 41 ♖c7. EK then claimed “White was quite sure to regain his piece by f6.” However, Black has 41...♔e8 which, given care, wins whatever White does, e.g. 42 f6 ♔c5 43 ♔f1 (43 e6?? ♖d1#) 43...e3 44 e6 ♖d1+ 45 ♔e2 ♖d2+ 46 ♔e1 ♔b4 47 f7+ ♔f8 48 ♖c8+ ♖d8+.

After the text move, Black has to win a more technical endgame of ♖ versus ♔ without mating threats in the air and White definitely misses his best chance at move 43. Objectively, therefore, 39...♖xd4 must be considered the stronger move.

40 e6+

Similar play arises by 40 ♔xc5 ♖xd2 41 ♖xd2 ♖xd2 42 ♔xb6 ♖d5, unless White tries 43 ♔c7 which would be met by 43...e3 44 ♔f1 ♖d2.

40...♔e8 41 ♔xc5 ♖xd2 42 ♖xd2 ♖xd2 (D)



43 ♔e3

EK: “43 ♔a3, threatening f6 and f7, could not be played, Black’s answer would have been 43...e3 forcing White to play 44 ♔f1 and Black continues 44...♖f2+ and 45...♖xf5, winning easily.” Once more, his analysis was too casual: 44...♖xh2! is more decisive.

The critical line is 43 ♔xb6 (not mentioned by EK) 43...♖xb2 when Black hopes that his ♖, assisted by the e-pawn, will again mop up White’s pawns before they can become dangerous, e.g. 44 ♔c5! (44 ♔xa5? e3 45 ♔f1 ♖xh2) 44...♖c2 45 ♔b6 and now:

a) 45...♖g2+?! does it the hard way: 46 ♔f1 ♖xh2 47 f6 ♖c2 (forced, to stop ♔c5+ after f7+) 48 f7+ ♔f8 49 ♔e3 ♖c8 (Other moves actually lose for Black after 50 ♔h6+.) 50 ♔g5 e3! (50...h2 may win but is less clear.) 51 ♔xe3 ♔e7 52 ♔h6 ♖h8 53 ♔g7 h2 54 f8 ♖+ ♖xf8 55 ♔xf8+ ♔xf8 56 ♔g2 ♔e7 and Black wins the ♔ and pawn ending but there are a few places where he could have slipped up on the way!

b) 45...♔e7 seems to be good enough, preventing the pawns advancing further.

c) 45...♖c3 46 f6 ♖c6! 47 f7+ ♔f8 48 ♔xa5 ♖xe6 and the e-pawn should decide.

43...♖e2 44 ♔xb6 e3 45 ♔xa5 ♖g2+ 46 ♔f1 ♖xh2 0–1

EK: “Causes White to surrender. Black wins easily with ...♖f2+, followed by ...♖xf5 or ...♖xb2 and ...h2.”

# Game 8

**White: Rudolf Mikulka (Czechoslovakia)**

**Black: Ferenc Chalupetzky (Hungary)**

2<sup>nd</sup> Schweizerische Schachzeitung international, 1910-11

*Closed Ruy Lopez (C77)*

**The Players:** Mikulka (1889–1958) came from the Moravian town of Uhersky Brod, east of Brno. In 1946-48 he played on one of the Czechoslovak teams in the 1<sup>st</sup> CC Olympiad. Ferenc Chalupetzky was an active postal player both before World War I and in the 1930s.

**About this game:** I found this game in the excellent book ‘Historie Korespondencniho Sachu 1870–1999’ edited by Jan Kalendovsky and Rudolf Sevecek, dealing with the history of CC in Czechoslovakia.

The game is representative of CC in the last decade before World War I, when most European postal events were organized by periodicals and genuine masters were rarely involved. The opening play is not of a high standard but an interesting middlegame develops.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> international tournament of the Swiss chess paper had 31 players (!) and Mikulka scored 16½ points, finishing 15<sup>th</sup>. The winner was Heinrich von Hennig of Danzig, Poland, with 26/30.

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♜c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4  
♜f6 5 d3

This avoids the Open Variation. White threatens to win a pawn by ♙xc6 followed by ♜xe5, but the slow build-up does not put Black under great pressure.

5...d6 6 c3 ♙e7

Alternatives are 6...g6 and 6...♙d7 breaking the pin on the ♜.

7 ♙xc6+?!

White gives up the ♙ pair for the sake of doubling Black’s pawns. The normal plan would be 7 0–0 or 7 ♜bd2 followed by bringing the ♙ back to c2 and using it to support a gradual central advance or kingside attack.

7...bxc6 8 ♚c2

White prepares d4 by protecting the e-pawn with his ♚.

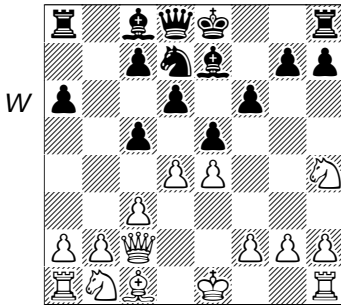
8...♜d7 9 d4 f6

Black strongpoints e5 and avoids the danger of being left with doubled isolated c-pawns after d4xe5. Also worth considering were 9...♙f6, 9...0–0, 9...♚b8 and 9...c5.

10 ♜h4!?

This does have a certain logic. 10 0–0 or 10 ♜bd2 would be a more routine approach.

10...c5 (D)



**11 ♖e2!?**

White threatens ♖h5+. His idea is to force castling, then close the centre and attack on the kingside.

Instead, 11 ♘f5 looks consistent. Black should answer 11...0-0 as 11...g6? 12 ♘g7+ ♕f7 (attempting to trap the ♘) would fail to the pretty shot 13 ♘e6!, when Black must move the ♖ because 13...♕xe6 walks into a mating net by 14 ♗b3+.

**11...0-0 12 d5 ♘b6 13 g4!?**

The notes from ‘Lidove noviny’, 1910, praise this advance but White’s development is backward, so it should have failed. The alternative 13 0-0 is sensible but, on the other hand, it hardly puts Black under any pressure.

**13...g6?!**

A weakening reaction typical of the time; I would prefer 13...c6 (or maybe 13...♗d7 allowing 14 ♘f5 c6) to counter White’s flank attack with a central break in the classic manner.

**14 ♗h6 ♖f7 15 ♖g1!?**

White continues to avoid conventional moves and proceeds consistently with his plan to open the g-file.

**15...♕h8!?**

This is a sensible precaution to

remove the ♖ from the file that White plans to open. Black also sets an “offside trap” to catch the white minor pieces but Mikulka spots the danger.

The original notes gave 15...f5? 16 ♘xf5 with the continuation 16...gxf5? 17 gxf5+ ♕h8 18 ♗h5 ♗e8?? 19 ♗g7+! forcing mate, but Black has 18...♗f8 19 ♗xf7 ♗xh6 instead. White might prefer 16 ♘xg6!?, hoping for 16...hxg6? 17 gxf5, while if 16...fxe4 17 ♘xe7+ ♗xe7 18 g5 ♗f5 19 c4 planning a later h4-h5 and g6 with a dangerous attack.

Of course Black can do better than this. 15...♗f8!? 16 ♗xf8 ♗xf8 17 ♘d2 ♗d7 18 0-0-0 would create a tense situation with opposite side castled ♖s, but Black’s chances should not be worse. 15...♖b8 may be best of all, to start queenside counterplay without delay.

**16 ♘d2 ♗g8**

Both 16...♖b8 and 16...♗f8 once more come into consideration.

**17 ♖g3!**

This is an ingenious move, consistent with White’s plan. Instead 17 0-0-0? allows Black’s threat of 17...g5 18 ♘f5 ♗g6. Now, however, that can be met by 19 ♖h3.

**17...f5!?**

Black unwisely provokes a tactical crisis in the one area of the board where White is really prepared. 17...a5!? or 17...♖b8 come into consideration, to create counterplay if White castles queenside.

17...♗f8 looks safest. After 18 ♗xf8 (18 g5 ♗xh6 19 gxh6 f5) 18...♗xf8 Black will hold the

kingside and seek counterplay on the queenside, using the half-open b-file, especially if White castles. Then:

a) 19 ♖h3 tries to keep the attack going (threatening ♗xg6+), but after 19...♗h6 (threatening ...g5) 20 ♖e3 ♖xe3+ 21 fxe3 ♗xg4 22 ♗xg6+ ♔g7 23 ♖g3 hxg6 24 ♖xg4 ♖h8 Black evidently has the better endgame prospects.

b) 19 ♗g2! ♗d7 20 h4 (20 ♗e3!?) 20...c6 or 20...f5!? gives counterplay but the game remains complex.

### 18 ♗xf5! gxf5?!

Otherwise Black remains a pawn down but accepting the sacrifice immediately is too risky. Instead 18...♗f8 19 ♖e3! and White can then either retreat the ♗ to h4 again, or just leave it there and attack with 0-0-0 and h4-h5. Better possibly 18...♗xd5 19 exd5 (19 ♗xd6 cxd6 20 exd5 g5 and ...♖g6 as planned!) 19...gxf5 20 gxf5 ♖e8 (△...♗xf5) despite 21 f6! ♗xf6 22 ♖e4±.

### 19 gxf5 ♖e8 20 ♖g4

Threatening 21 ♗g7+ ♔g8 22 ♗f6+ and mates.

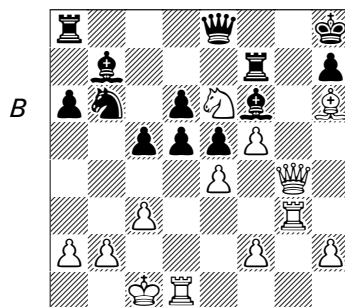
### 20...♗f6 21 ♗f3 ♗b7 22 ♗g5 c6

Black decides to offer some material back. If 22...♖e7 23 0-0-0 with a menacing build-up or 22...♗xg5 23 ♖xg5 ♖g8 24 ♖h5 ♖e8 25 f6 with a very strong attack.

### 23 0-0-0

White is better after 23 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 24 dxc6 ♗xc6 25 0-0-0 and if 25...d5 26 ♗g5!, but it also makes sense for White to complete his development first.

### 23...cxd5 24 ♗e6 (D)



### 24...♗c8?

White threatened ♗f8 to block the back rank, when Black would have to give up his ♖ to prevent mate at g8 (...♖xf8? would lose to ♗g7+ etc.). This is not in itself decisive as Black would get three pieces for the ♖, which in fact would represent his best chance, if he could arrange favourable circumstances.

However, White does not need to play ♗f8 yet as he can first strengthen his attack, e.g.:

a) 24...d4 25 ♖dg1! ♖c8 and now 26 ♗f8! ♖xf8 27 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 28 ♖h3! (△ 29 ♖xh7+ ♔xh7 30 ♖h3#) 28...♖c7 29 ♖g2! ♖cc8 30 ♖g7 followed by 31 ♖xh7+ and mates.

b) 24...dxe4 25 ♖xd6! (better than 25 ♗f8 ♖xf8 26 ♗xf8 ♖axf8 27 ♖xd6±) 25...♖b5 intends 26 ♗f8? ♖axf8 27 ♖xf6 ♖f1+ 28 ♔c2 ♖xf2+ and draws, but White has 26 ♗g5! ♗g7 (if 26...♗xg5 27 ♖xg5 or 26...♗d7 27 ♖h5) 27 ♗d8! ♖d7 (27...♖c7 28 ♗f6) 28 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 29 ♗d2! ♖f1+ 30 ♔c2 ♖d3+ 31 ♗d1!+-.

c) 24...♖g8 25 ♖h5 ♖e8 26 ♖dg1 dxe4 prevents 27 ♗f8?? ♖xf8+-,

but allows the alternative interference 27 ♔f8! and mates after 27...♖xf8 28 ♖xh7+! or 27...♖xf8 28 ♗xf8 ♖axf8 29 ♖xf7!.

d) 24...♖c8 25 ♗dg1! dxe4! allows Black to defend by 26 ♗f8 ♖xf8 27 ♗xf8 ♖fxf8 28 ♖h3 ♖c7 29 ♖g2 ♗d5, but 29 c4! takes control of d5, thus threatening ♖g2 etc., while after 29...♖g7 (not 29...♗xc4? 30 ♖h6 ♖cf7 31 ♖g6! and 32 ♖xf6+-) 30 ♖xg7 ♗xg7 31 ♖b3 wins material; e.g. 31...♗h6+ 32 ♗d1 e3 33 fxe3 ♗f3+ 34 ♗e1 ♗d7 (or 34...♖b8) 35 e4! ♗xe4 36 ♖h3 ♗g7 37 ♖g4+-.

e) 24...♗c6!? may be the best, preparing to defend by 25 ♗dg1 dxe4 26 ♗f8 ♖xf8 27 ♗xf8 ♖fxf8 28 ♖h3 ♖a7, avoiding the ♗+♗ skewer on the b-file (as after 24...♖c8), or with a reasonable position after 25 ♗f8 ♖xf8 26 ♗xf8 ♖axf8. Unfortunately White can improve his position by 25 b3! (△ 26 c4 to take control of d5 again) and after 25...c4 26 bxc4 ♗xc4 27 exd5 ♗xd5 (If 27...♗b5 28 ♗dg1 and 29 ♗f8 etc.) 28 ♗f8 ♖c7 29 ♖xd5 ♖f7 30 ♗e6 White regains his material with a clear advantage.

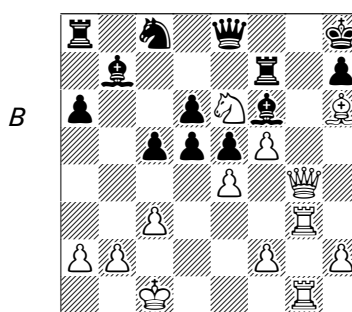
With the text Black intends to answer 25 ♗f8 with 25...♗e7 covering g8, but it allows White a free hand to create new threats with:

**25 ♗dg1! (D)**

Black is threatened with mate in 2 and is now lost.

**25...♗e7**

25...♗b6 only delays the mate because White interferes with the back rank defence by playing 26 ♗f8! again, when after 26...♖xf8



comes 27 ♗g7+ ♗g8 28 ♗xf6+.

**26 ♖h3!?**

White wants mate rather than the crude win 26 ♗c7. 26 ♗f8 is again less effective because 26...♖xf8 collects a lot of material for the ♖.

**26...♗g8**

26...dxe4 illustrates White's principal threat: 27 ♗g7+ ♗xg7 28 ♖xg7 and mate on h7 can only be prevented by giving up the ♖ for a ♖ (i.e. 28...♖g8). Something similar will happen in the game too, but White is forced to find two accurate moves first.

**27 ♗g7+! ♗xg7 28 ♖xg7 ♗f6**

28...h6 fails to 29 ♖xg8+ ♖xg8 30 ♖xg8+ ♗xg8 (or 30...♖xg8 31 ♖xh6+ ♖h7 32 ♖f6+) 31 ♖xh6 ♖h7 32 ♖g6+ ♗h8 33 ♗g5.

**29 ♖h6! ♗c8**

Nothing helps now.

**30 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 31 ♖g7 ♖a7 32 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 33 ♗g5 ♗g8 34 ♗xf7 ♗xf7**

White now has ♖ versus ♗ and ♗; the rest is just mopping up.

**35 exd5 ♗xf5 36 c4 ♗g6 37 ♖h3**

Black stabilised the kingside but a queenside invasion will end the game.

**37...♗e8 38 ♖d7+ ♗f8 39 b4! cxb4 40 c5 1-0**

# Game 9

**White: Professor Albert Becker (Austria)**

**Black: F. Redeleit (Germany)**

Wiener Schachzeitung tournament, 1914

*Queen's Pawn, London System (D02)*

**The Players:** Albert Becker (1896-1984) had a very long career as a writer and player; he was only a teenager when he played this game. He worked with Ernst Grünfeld on the tournament book of Teplitz-Schönau 1922 and participated in various master events between the wars. Becker played board 4, in both the preliminaries and final, of the Austrian postal side that came second in the IFSB team tournament of 1935-39 and he was Austrian OTB champion in 1937.

At the 1939 Olympiad in Buenos Aires, he played board 4 for Germany and he was one of several masters who decided to remain in South America at the outbreak of war. Becker was awarded the FIDE IM title in 1953.

Redeleit was an amateur destined only to be remembered on the losing end of some interesting games.

**About this game:** Before World War I, postal tournaments tended to be organised by chess periodicals or by newspapers and magazines. The series of events organised by the Vienna chess paper began early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the series continued into the 1930s when Becker himself was the journal's editor.

**1 d4 d5 2 ♖f3 c5!?**

Black may be taking on too many commitments with this, so 2... ♗f6 is more popular. If White intends to play ♗f4 anyway, then the first diagram position may ultimately result, e.g. 3 ♗f4 c5 (3...e6 4 e3 c5 5 c3 ♗c6 6 ♗d3 ♗d6 7 ♗g3 0-0 8 ♗bd2 also transposes.) 4 e3 e6 5 c3 ♗c6 6 ♗bd2 ♗d6 7 ♗g3 returning to the game. However, 4... ♗c6 5 c3 ♖b6 is possibly a superior plan for Black and 4... ♖b6!? is also playable.

**3 ♗f4**

Rubinstein liked to reply 3 c4, usually with a transposition after 3...e6 4 exd5 exd5 5 ♗c3 ♗c6 6 g3 into the Tarrasch Defence against the Queen's Gambit. Black also has to be prepared for 3 dxc5!?

**3...e6**

It is extremely risky to win material by 3... ♖b6 4 dxc5 ♖xb2? (4... ♖xc5 is safer) and both players would have known the celebrated miniature Schlechter-Leonhardt, Karlsbad 1911, where Black's greed was punished: 5 ♗e5 ♖b4+ 6 ♗c3 e6 7 ♖b1 ♖xc5 8 ♗b5 ♗a6 9 e3 f6 10 ♗d4 ♖e7 11 ♗xa7 ♗c5 12 ♗xc8 ♖xc8 13 ♗b5+ ♗f7 14 0-0 ♖c7 15 c4! dxc4

16 ♖xc4 ♗e7 17 ♗e5+! fxe5 18 ♖f3+ ♗g6 (18...♗e8 19 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 20 ♖xe6) 19 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 20 ♖xe6 h5 21 ♖f7+ 1-0.

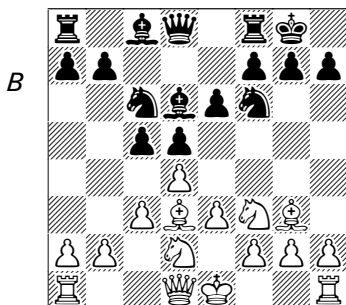
Less well known is GM Schlechter's recipe for Black to avoid this disaster: 3...cxd4! 4 ♖xb8 (If 4 ♗xd4 f6! Δ...e5 or 4 ♖xd4 ♗c6.) 4...♖a5+! 5 c3 ♗xb8 (but not 5...dxc3 6 ♗xc3 ♗xb8 7 e4 and White gets a good attacking game for the pawn) 6 ♖xd4 ♗f6 7 ♗bd2 e6 8 e3 ♖c5=. However, in this game Redeleit is content to let the game transpose into ordinary channels.

4 e3 ♖d6 5 ♖g3 ♗c6 6 c3 ♗f6 7 ♗bd2 0-0

7...♖xg3 8 hxg3 ♖d6 (Δ...0-0) was suggested by Becker & Grünfeld in 1922, but Black is reluctant to open the h-file if he is going to castle. In fact, White may be able to retain an edge by 9 ♖b5, which prevents ...e5 for the time being.

### 8 ♖d3 (D)

If Black does not play an early ...♖b6, then this position is quite likely to arise irrespective of minor move order differences.



### 8...♖e7?!

Although often played, I think this is the wrong place for the ♖, as we shall see from the sequel. It is hard to believe that this position can be bad for Black, but having played both sides of it in recent years, I can testify that it is not as simple as it looks.

Generally speaking, Black must avoid tension-releasing moves like ...c4 and ...cxd4 unless they achieve something definite. He has to play a waiting game, and be ready to meet any threats that arise. White, on the other hand, can quickly find some straightforward moves and launch a fierce attack if Black slips up. That makes this opening quite suitable (as White) for players who have limited time for study, or no taste for modern theory battles.

The flexible 8...b6 is possible, e.g. 9 ♗e5 ♖b7 10 f4 (10 0-0 is perfectly playable.) 10...♗e7 11 ♖f3 ♗f5 12 ♖f2 ♖e7 13 ♗g4 ♗xg4 14 ♖xg4 ♗d6= Rakić-Makarichev, Novi Sad 1983. Black's main problem in this line is that White will develop an automatic attack on the kingside against which Black's queenside pieces cannot contribute much.

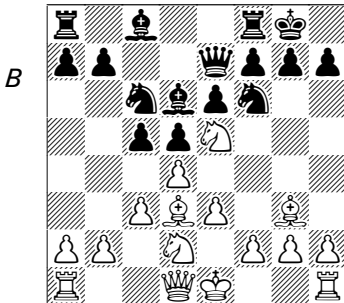
I think that 8...♖e8 9 ♗e5 ♖c7 is a better plan for Black. Now 10 ♗xc6 was ineffective in Harding-M.O'Conneide, Bunratty 1998, but 10 f4 is much more testing. Nevertheless, careful play should hold the balance for Black. After 10...b6 play can go:

a) 11 0-0 h6? 12 ♖h4 ♗d7 and now White can play his programmed attack: 13 ♖h5 ♗f8 14 ♖f3 ♖b7 15

♖g3 1–0 K.Pedersen-F.Christensen, corr 1986. If instead 11...♙e7 White continues to build up by 12 ♘df3, but 11...♙b7 (leading to the next note) is probably OK for Black.

b) 11 ♙h4 ♙e7 12 0–0 ♙b7 should be all right too, although 13 g4!? has to be calculated carefully. Instead I played 12...a5?! in M.Rechtman-Harding, Heidenfeld Memorial corr 2000. This was, in retrospect, a positional mistake but I was worried about White's kingside attacking chances. The game continued 13 ♖e2 ♙b7 14 ♙b5! (This switch of focus would not have been possible had I played ...♙b7 at once.) 14...♘d7 (To provoke a big swap-off as other moves seem unsatisfactory, e.g. 14...♞ec8 15 f5!?± and if 15...♘xe5? 16 dxe5 ♖xe5? 17 ♙g3 traps the black ♖, while 16...♘e4 17 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 18 ♘xe4 dxe4 19 f6 is a nasty attack.) 15 ♙xe7 (15 ♖h5 g6 16 ♖g4 ♘f6 should be OK.) 15...♞xe7 16 ♘xd7 ♞xd7 17 ♘f3. White may have a slight pull but with a little care I was able to draw in 27 moves.

9 ♘e5! (D)



I believe this a position that Black should definitely avoid because it now becomes very hard to develop the queenside.

9...♙xe5

‘ECO’ shows White getting an advantage after 9...♞d8 10 f4 ♘d7 11 0–0 ♘f8 12 ♖e2 f6 13 ♙h4 ♙d7 14 ♘xd7 ♞xd7 15 ♙h1 ♞e8 16 ♞ae1 in Bisguier-Frias, Lone Pine 1981.

10 dxe5 ♘d7 11 f4 f6

In ‘ECO’, this move gets an exclamation mark and an assessment of “slight advantage to White”. I have seen games in which White now played 12 ♖b1 or 12 ♖h5 but Becker does not resort to crude threats. He believes that his advanced e-pawn will cripple Black’s position and so he calmly completes his development.

Puschmann-Szekely, Hungary 1972, varied with 11...f5?! 12 ♘f3 c4? 13 ♙c2 b5 14 ♙h4 ♖e8. Black has a very bad ♙ now with all those pawns placed on light squares. Here 15 ♘d4 is positionally good, but I am not convinced by the actual game continuation: 15 g4?! fxg4 16 ♘g5 h6 (Why not 16...♖h5 here?) 17 ♖xg4! hxg5? (Black must take on e5.) 18 ♖xg5 ♘c5 19 ♙g6 1–0.

12 ♘f3 fxe5 13 fxe5 g6 14 0–0!

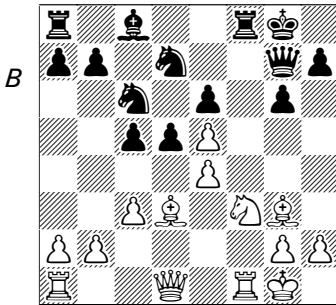
I suspect Black was following the theory of the day. Schlechter-Rotlewski, Karlsbad 1911, had gone 14 h4!? ♖g7 15 h5 gxh5 16 ♙f4 ♘dxe5 17 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 18 ♙xh7+ ♖xh7 19 ♙xe5 ♞f5 with a messy position where Black is holding an extra pawn. After more complications, Rotlewski eventually won.



It looks to me as if Viennese players had worked out an effective system for beating weaker players with this opening. Becker may have thought up the game continuation himself or he could have got it from Schlechter or from Grünfeld.

**14... ♖g7 15 e4! (D)**

So simple! Instead of the risky h-pawn thrust, White just plays in the centre and exploits Black's backward queenside development.



**15... ♗dx5**

Argentinian chess historian Dr Alfredo Lejarza, who compiled the book 'Praxis eines Theoretikers: Ausgewählte Partien von Schachmeister Albert Becker', gave here 15...dx5 16 ♙xe4 ♗dx5 17 ♗xe5 ♖xf1+ 18 ♗xf1 ♗xe5 19 ♙xe5 ♗xe5 20 ♖d1! ♗c7 21 ♗f6 ♙d7 22 ♗e7 ♖d8 23 ♙xb7 and Black cannot stop the killing move 24 ♙c6. However, 20...♗g5! defends, so White should instead play 18 ♗xf1! ♗xe5 19 ♗d8+ ♗f7 20 ♗e2.

A.Becker-Hatscheck, corr 1914, went instead 15...♗e7 16 ♗d2 c4

17 ♙c2 dx5 18 ♗g5 ♗c5 19 ♗d4 b6 20 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 21 ♙xe4 ♖b8 and now instead of 22 ♖f1, more useful is 22 ♙c2! (Δ b2-b4) and if 22...♗f5 23 ♙xf5 gxf5 White has ♗xc4 because there is no skewer with ...♙a6.

**16 ♗xe5 ♗xe5**

If 16...♖xf1+ 17 ♙xf1 ♗xe5 18 exd5 and not now 18...exd5? 19 ♗xd5+ ♗f7 20 ♙c4.

**17 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 18 ♙xe5**

This is good enough but not best. After 18 exd5 exd5 19 ♙b5! Black cannot defend d5, i.e. 19...♙e6 (or 19...d4) 20 ♗e2.

**18... ♗xe5 19 ♗f3+ ♗e7**

19...♗g8 20 ♖f1 ♗g7 21 exd5 ♙d7 22 ♙c4+-.

**20 exd5 exd5**

The alternative 20...♗xd5 is no better, there could follow 21 ♙e4 ♗d7 22 ♖f1.

**21 ♗f2!**

White has threats of ♖e1, ♗xc5+ and ♗h4+. Black finds a move to stave these off for the moment, but the white initiative has grown too strong.

**21... ♗d6 22 ♖e1 ♗g5 23 h4! ♗d8 24 ♙b5! c4**

If 24...♙e6 25 ♗f4+ ♗e7 26 ♗e5 wins (26...♗b6 27 ♗g7+ ♗d6 28 ♗f6).

**25 ♗f4+ ♗c5 26 ♖e8 ♗d6**

If 26...♗b6 (or ...♗a5) 27 a4 threatening 28 ♗e3+ and mate can only be avoided by giving up the ♗.

**27 b4+! 1-0**

Mate is imminent, so Black resigned. His c8-♙ and a8-♖ never moved.

# Game 10

**White: Th. Demetrescu (Germany)**

**Black: Friedrich Becker (Romania)**

Friendly postal game, 1919-20

*Queen's Gambit Accepted (D20)*

**The Players:** Demetrescu was a resident of Berlin who played in several postal tournaments in the 1920s and 1930s. Friedrich Becker (not to be confused with the winner of Game 9) was an amateur player from Stützerbach, in eastern Germany, who wrote a book called 'Fernspiel und Schachschulung' ('CC and chess training', 1926) about his CC experiences and his philosophy of chess.

**About this game:** Demetrescu and Becker met the previous year in a tournament organised by the 'Deutschen Wochenschach'. Afterwards they played this friendly game. It is far from perfect, but entertaining and instructive — watch out for the travels of White's ♔!

**1 d4 d5 2 c4 e5 3 ♖c3**

This is an unambitious move, declining the Albin Counter-Gambit.

**3...dxc4 4 e3 exd4 5 exd4 ♗f6 6 ♙xc4 ♚e7 7 ♗ge2**

White has opted for an isolated d-pawn position with an open e-file, but this follow-up with 7 ♗ge2 is quite unusual. White obviously felt like trying something different in this friendly game.

Instead 7 ♗f3 0-0 8 0-0 is a

well-known (even in 1919!) position arising from the QGA (1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 e5), Exchange French (1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 exd5 4 c4), and also the Petroff (1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 ♗f6 3 ♗xe5 d6 4 ♗f3 ♗xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♙d3 ♚e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 c4 ♗f6 9 ♗c3 dxc4 10 ♙xc4).

**7...0-0 8 0-0 b6 9 ♗g3 ♗c6**

9...♙b7 looks consistent but Becker wanted to keep the ♗ out of f5.

**10 ♖f3**

Becker calls this rash because the ♖ will become exposed to attack. Still, White seems to hold some initiative throughout the early middlegame.

**10...♙d7 11 ♙e3 ♗a5 12 ♙d3 ♙c6 13 ♖f4 ♗e8 14 ♖ad1 ♙d6 15 ♖f5 g6 16 ♖h3 ♙d7 17 ♖h6 ♗f6 18 h3 ♖e8 19 ♙g5 ♙e7**

Best, because after Becker's suggestion 19...♙f8 White gets a big advantage with 20 ♖h4, e.g. 20...♙e7 21 ♖fe1 ♙e6 22 ♗ge4 ♗xe4 (22... ♗d7 23 d5 ♙f5 24 d6) 23 ♗xe4 ♙xg5 24 ♗xg5 h5 25 g4 is probably +-.

**20 ♖fe1**

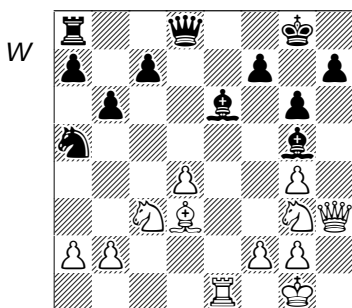
This allows some simplification. Becker observes that White evidently overlooked 20 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 21 ♗h5! when after 21...♙h8 (not 21...gxh5??

22 ♖xh7+ ♖h8 23 ♙g6+ ♖g8 24 ♖h7+ ♖f8 25 ♖xf7# or 21...♙xd4 22 ♙xg6) 22 ♗e4 (△ ♗g5) complications flare up. He gives no continuation but if 22...f5? 23 ♗g5 ♖e7 24 b4! ♖f8 (24...♗c6? 25 ♙c4+ mates) 25 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 26 ♗f4 ♗c6 27 ♗d5 wins the exchange. So 22...♖h4 23 g4 looks the critical line, when 23...♖xe4! 24 ♙xe4 ♖e8 could be the best practical chance.

**20...♗g4! 21 hxg4**

After 21 ♙xe7 ♗xh6 22 ♙xd8 ♖axd8 (Becker) or 22...♖xe1+ 23 ♖xe1 ♖xd8 White's active pieces still compensate for the isolated d-pawn but Demetrescu evidently believed he need to keep ♖s on the board.

**21...♙xg5 22 ♖h3 ♖xe1+ 23 ♖xe1 ♙e6 (D)**



These moves do not deserve much comment; the real fun is yet to come.

**24 ♙e4 ♖b8 25 d5 ♙d7 26 ♗ge2 ♙d2 27 ♗d1 ♙xc3**

Becker gave up the ♙ pair in order to attack the weakened white pawns.

**28 ♗xc3 ♗c4 29 b3 ♗e5 30 f3**

Now the ♖ looks really out of play.

**30...♖g5**

Black takes advantage and threatens to invade on e3. When this is prevented, he makes a speculative ♙ sacrifice for a strong initiative.

**31 ♖f2 ♙xg4!?**

Certainly surprising, as Becker says, but this is not clear. Either 31...♖f6 or 31...h5 would have assured Black of good chances with less risk.

**32 fxg4 ♗xg4+ 33 ♖g1 f5!?**

A risky winning try; 33...h5 gives roughly equal chances.

**34 ♙b1?**

Becker's only note here is that 34 ♙f3 fails to 34...♖e3+ 35 ♖h1 ♗f2+, but White could have played 34 d6! because 34...fxe4?? loses to 35 ♗xe4 ♖f4 36 ♖xg4! with a fork on f6.

The critical reply is 34...cxd6 35 ♙d5+ when the white ♙ is much better placed than in the actual game but both sides have chances. After 35...♖f8 36 ♖g3 ♖e8 there are many complicated possibilities; 37 ♗b5 may be best, and if 37...f4 38 ♖c3. White should have tried this anyway, because after the text move Black could win.

**34...♖e8?!**

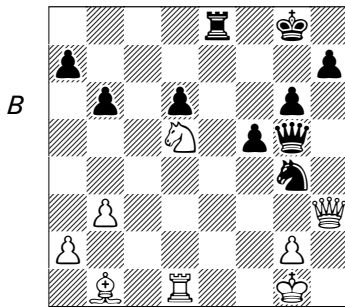
34...♖f4! (△ 35... ♖e8, 36...♖f2+, 37...♖e1+) and if 35 ♖f1 ♖d4+ 36 ♖h1 ♗f2+ 37 ♗xf2 ♖xf2, followed by ...♖e8, looks winning for Black.

**35 d6**

If 35 ♖g3 ♖e3 36 ♖xc7 ♖h4-+ . **35...cxd6**

Not 35...♖e3 36 dxc7 ♖xh3 (36... ♖e8 37 ♖d8) 37 c8♖+, but 35...♖f4! still looks strong. I think Becker did not want to play this because he had foreseen his flashy 36<sup>th</sup> move!

**36 ♗d5 (D)**



Black has three pawns for the ♔, but they are immobile and do not constitute a fighting force equivalent in value to a minor piece. White possibly thought he had refuted the sacrifice, but his ♖ and ♕ are still poorly placed and he had overlooked the point of Becker's combination.

**36...♖d2!!**

Magnificent! White cannot take the ♖ because of 37...♖e1 with an unusual "back rank" checkmate where the black ♜ controls the squares of the absent f- and h-pawns.

If he takes the ♜ instead then 37...♖e1+! 38 ♔h2 ♖xd1 39 ♖xd1 ♖xd1 and White loses either his ♔ or ♜.

37 ♜f6+? is useless because there is no continuation after 37...♔f8! 38 ♜d7+ ♔g7, e.g. 39 ♖f3 ♖e1+ with mate in 5, or 39 ♖f1 ♖e1 (Δ...♖f2+) 40 ♖f3 when Black can win prosaically by 40...♖xf1+ (as given by Becker) or force mate by 40...♖d4+ 41 ♔h1 ♖xf1+ 42 ♖xf1 ♖d2 Δ...♖h6+. So White found his only move.

**37 ♖f3! ♖e1+ 38 ♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 39 ♖f1 ♖e5**

Becker says this lays the basis for a win through the capture of a fourth

pawn. On 39...♖g3 or 39...♖h4, White has a good answer in 40 ♖f4.

**40 ♖c4**

40 ♜f4 takes away the f4-square that the ♖ needs and so would be answered by 40...♖e3+ 41 ♔h1 ♖g3 42 ♖c4+ ♔g7 43 ♜e6+ ♔f6.

**40...♖h2+ 41 ♔f1 ♖h1+ 42 ♔e2 ♖xg2+ 43 ♔e1**

Contrary to the trend of Becker's notes, it is not clear to me if Black's advantage is really that great. The crucial moment seems to come after White's 48<sup>th</sup> (see below).

**43...♖g1+ 44 ♔d2 ♖h2+ 45 ♔c3 ♔g7 46 ♜f4 ♔h6 47 ♖d4 ♖g3+ 48 ♔c4**

This was a mistake; White had to block the check with 48 ♜d3.

**48...♜e3+?**

48...♖e3 (Δ...♖c1+) 49 ♖xe3 ♜xe3+ may be good for Black, but I prefer 48...♖e1 49 ♔d3 ♜e5+! 50 ♔d5 (50 ♔b5? ♖a5#) 50...♜f3 51 ♖f6 ♖e5+ 52 ♖xe5 dxe5 and Black gets the ♖ exchange he wants, and connects the d-pawn with the kingside passed pawns. After Becker's move, White is suddenly back in the game!

**49 ♔b5 ♖e1!?**

An alternative is 49...♔g5 50 ♜e6+ ♔h5 51 ♜f4+ ♔g5 52 ♜e6+ with a draw by repetition.

**50 ♜e6!**

Black overlooked this strong move, which creates mate threats. Becker gives barely any further comment on the game, but he still had chances to save it! Analysing such positions with wide-open walking ♔s, active ♖s and unbalanced material is very hard.

50...♔h5

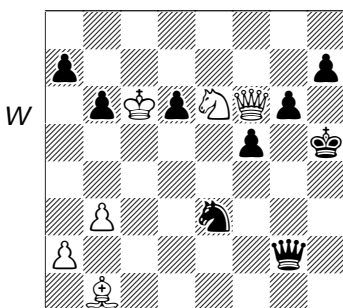
Neither 50...♖xb1?? 51 ♖h4# nor 50...♗g4?? 51 ♖f4+ is playable.

51 ♖f6! ♖f1+

Black can possibly do better here, but even this should not lose if he can keep his pawn chain intact. The best try is 51...♖b4+! and if 52 ♔xb4 ♗d5+ or if 52 ♔a6 ♖h4 53 ♖g7 h6 (no ...♖h1+ this time). So 52 ♔c6 ♖h4! (with ideas of winning the white ♔ with a fork at h1) 53 ♖c3!? ♖h1+ 54 ♔d7 and now not 54...♖xb1?? 55 ♖xe3+-, but 54...♖b7+. However, it is very hard to be certain of anything in this crazy position.

52 ♔c6! ♖g2+ (D)

Perhaps 52...♖f3+ is best, and if 53 ♔d7 ♔g4! 54 ♖g5+ ♔h3.



53 ♔xd6

53 ♔d7 is certainly better, giving the ♔ more cover from checks, e.g. 53...♖b7+ 54 ♔e8 (not 54 ♗c7?? ♖xc7+) 54...♖c8+ 55 ♔f7 ♖d7+ 56 ♔g8 ♖e8+ 57 ♔xh7 is similar to the game. However, it's not easy to prove a win after 53...♖g3.

53...♖d5+?

This is a terrible blunder. The ♖ occupies the square that should have been reserved for the black ♗ to fork. Instead 53...♖d2+! 54 ♔c6 (54 ♔e7?? ♗d5+) 54...♔g4 holds the balance, e.g. 55 ♖g5+ ♔f3 56 ♖f4+ ♔e2 57 ♗d4+ ♔d1 or 55 ♔b7 ♖d7+ 56 ♔a6 ♖c8+ 57 ♔xa7 ♖d7+ etc.

54 ♔e7!

Now White threatens ♖g5# and if ...♖g2 to stop that, it is White who has the ♗ fork.

54...♖b7+?

The last chance was 54...♖g2!? 55 ♗f4+ ♔g4 56 ♗xg2 and now it's Black's turn: 56...♗d5+ 57 ♔e6 ♗xf6 58 ♔xf6. However, I don't think Black could save this against correct play, e.g. 58...f4 59 ♔g7 ♔g3 60 ♗xf4 ♔xf4 61 ♔xh7 (and if 61...g5 62 ♔g6 g4 63 ♔f5 g3 64 ♔h3+-) or 61...♔f6!+-.

55 ♔f8 ♖c8+ 56 ♔g7 ♖d7+ 57 ♔h8

Excelsior!! The white ♔ reaches the 8<sup>th</sup> rank corner and is promoted to a god that eats black pawns. Black is lost.

57...♖e8+

If 57...♔g4 58 ♔e4! (Δ 59 ♖g5+ and mates) 58...fxe4 (if 58...♔h3 59 ♔c6! or 58...♔g3 59 ♖e5+ ♔h3 60 ♔c6!+-) 59 ♖f4+ ♔h3 60 ♗g5+ ♔g2 61 ♖xe4+ ♔f2 62 ♖f3+ and 63 ♖xe3+.

58 ♔xh7 1-0

Black resigns because ♖g5# is threatened. After 58...♔g4 59 ♗g7 White breaks the defence of g6 and soon the f-pawn will also fall. It was sporting of Becker to show the world this amusing defeat.

# Game 11

**White: Alekseev (USSR)**

**Black: Viacheslav V. Ragozin (USSR)**

USSR postal event, 1929

*Dutch Defence (A86)*

**The Players:** I do not know anything about the loser of this game. The winner, 'Slava' Ragozin (1908-62) was one of the few Soviet players involved in IFSB competitions. After World War II he was trainer and second to world champion Mikhail Botvinnik and was awarded the FIDE grandmaster title in 1950. Despite a poor result in the 2<sup>nd</sup> USSR Correspondence Championship 1952-55 (where he scored 8/16), the Soviet Chess Federation nominated him for the place they were granted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Championship Final, which began in 1956. Ragozin duly won this event after defeating the favourite, Lothar Schmid, rather easily.

If this suggests to you that he may have been the 'front man' for a committee of GMs, I will not disagree, but maybe his CC technique was rusty and he needed a warm-up event.

**About this game:** Ragozin's game with Schmid is well known; the German handicapped himself with an inferior opening variation. I prefer a game from his early days that shows Ragozin did have some CC track record and the talent to win the championship unaided.

**1 c4 f5 2 ♖f3 ♗f6 3 g3 d6**

Black rules out a Stonewall formation but he threatens ...e5 and forces White to decide whether he wants an English or a Dutch. He chooses the latter option.

**4 d4 c5!?**

Nowadays Black would choose 4...g6 here, but that line did not start to appear with any regularity until around 1936.

**5 d5**

5 dxc5 might be met by 5...♖a5+, regaining the pawn with 6 ♗c3 ♖xc5, or by the pawn sacrifice 5...e5!? 6 cxd6 ♙xd6 7 ♙g2.

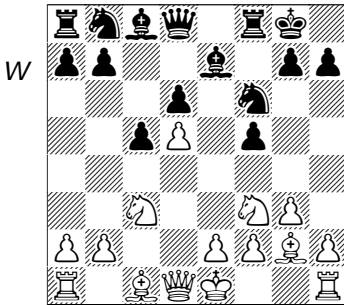
**5...e6**

Black intends to lever open the centre and obtain a half-open e-file.

**6 ♙g2**

If 6 dxe6, as would be normal in the Dutch, then 6...♙xe6 attacks the c-pawn and Black's pieces get active before White is ready. After 7 ♖b3 (7 ♖d3 ♗c6 or 7 b3 ♗e4 8 ♙b2 ♖a5+) 7...♗c6 8 ♖xb7 Black could force a draw by 8...♗a5 9 ♖b5+ ♙d7 10 ♖a6 ♙c8 11 ♖b5+ ♙d7 etc., but I am pretty sure Ragozin would have preferred 8...♗b4!, with excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

**6...exd5 7 cxd5 ♙e7 8 ♗c3 0-0 (D)**



Black is weak on the light squares and his king's ♔ is on the 'wrong' square. Ragozin soon re-routes it to g7. Nevertheless he does exert pressure on the centre.

It is not obvious whether White should try to prepare central play (eventual e2-e4 pawn lever) or a queen-side minority attack (b2-b4 lever) or just get his pieces to good squares and wait.

**9 e3?**

There is no immediate threat of ...f4 and this just encourages the opponent by showing White is rather timid. Also 9 e3 does nothing about solving his main development issue: the future of his ♔ on c1. White has more direct options.

a) 9 ♗g5!? may be over-sharp. After 9... ♖a6 10 ♗e6 ♕xe6 11 dxe6 ♗c7 12 ♕xb7 ♖b8 13 ♕g2 d5 Black is well developed and controls space, which counterbalances White's ♕ pair. The e6-pawn will eventually be absorbed by Black.

b) 9 ♖b3 decentralises, while 9 ♖c2 is met by 9... ♗a6 10 a3 ♗c7.

c) 9 b3?! has a tactical drawback because White is loose on the dark squares: 9... ♗e4! 10 ♕b2 ♕f6 11 ♖c1 ♖a5.

d) 9 0-0, preferred in contemporary notes in the Russian chess paper '64', is simpler and more flexible. Afterwards White can work on the queenside or play for e2-e4, depending on Black's response.

**9... ♗a6 10 0-0 ♗c7 11 a4 b6**

Ragozin is able to carry out his fluid development scheme unchallenged. The d5-pawn is threatened with a third attacker by ...♕b7, while ...♕a6 is also in the air.

**12 ♖b3**

This clears d1 for the ♖ and thereby reinforces the d-pawn but it places the ♖ badly so far as future kingside play is concerned. Instead 12 ♗d2 △ ♗c4 was suggested in '64', but this may be ineffective as White has no pressure against d6 and a later a4-a5 would be met by ...b5. Ragozin might reply 12... ♕b7 (12... ♕a6 13 ♖e1 ♖e8 14 e4) 13 ♗c4 ♖e8, to continue with ...♖f7 or ...♖h5, and Black seems to be doing OK.

**12... ♖e8!**

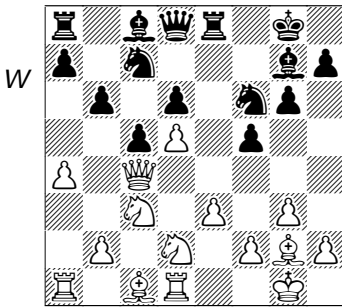
This is a deep move. Ragozin recognises that the obvious moves of the c8-♕ can now be countered and so he decides on a regrouping to bring the other ♕ to a more active post on g7. He will use the ♖ on the half-open e-file instead of dreaming of a later ...f4.

**13 ♖d1 ♕f8 14 ♖c4**

14 ♗g5 is possible, to probe for weaknesses, but Black would simply continue with his plan of 14...g6 and if 15 a5 Black might play for complications by 15...b5 16 ♗e6 (16 ♗xb5? ♖b8) 16...♕xe6 17 dxe6 c4 18 ♖c2 d5.

**14...g6 15 ♗d2?**

Since the d-pawn does not need protection at this time, White should have taken his last chance for queenside activity by 15 b4. Then he is just in time to meet 15...♙g7 by 16 ♖b2, linking his ♖s and avoiding the coming disaster. **15...♙g7 (D)**



The future GM is outplaying the amateur. The question of how to develop the queen's ♙ is clearly going to be easier for Black to solve than White.

**16 e4?!**

White's ♖ on d2 doesn't make much sense without this move, but his kingside is looking too bare for this impatient opening of the position.

16 b4 is too late now that Black is first on the long diagonal, e.g. 16...♗g4! 17 ♖b2 ♗e5 18 ♖b3 cxb4 19 ♖xb4 ♗d3 and ...♗xb2, or 17 bxc5 ♖a6 18 ♖b3 bxc5 19 ♖b2? ♖b8 20 ♖c2 f4! 21 exf4 (or 21 gxf4 ♖h4) 21...♗xf2! 22 ♖xf2? ♖d4+ 23 ♖f3 ♖e3+ 24 ♖g4 ♖c8+ and mates.

**16...♗g4**

16...♖a6 is certainly possible, as suggested in Yudovich's 1984 monograph on Ragozin. However,

the future champion has the measure of his opponent and decides a direct attack will bear fruit. On g4, the ♗ evidently thinks about occupying e5 but there is also a latent threat which White overlooks.

**17 h3?!**

Yudovich recommended 17 exf5. However, rather than a recapture or ...♗e5, 17...♖d4!? might be the reply, and the trap 18 ♖f1 ♖a6 19 ♗b5 ♖d7 could be the reason Ragozin did not want to play 16...♖a6. White must probably answer 18 fxg6 ♖xf2+ 19 ♖h1 (19 ♖f1? loses the ♖ to 19...♖a6 20 ♗b5 ♗e3+.) 19...hxg6 with complications that look like they will go Black's way.

17 ♗f1 would be an attempt to regroup for defence and would enable the forgotten ♖ to play a role. Nevertheless, Black's game is preferable after 17...♖a6 18 ♖b3 ♖d4 19 ♗e3 ♖xe3!? forcing a weakness on the e-file.

**17...♗xf2!**

Doubtless White had expected 17...♗e5, but the sacrifice cracks open the shell, subjecting White's ♖ to an attack he is ill-prepared to counter with his cluster of pieces on the queenside.

**18 ♖xf2 ♖d4+ 19 ♖f1?**

This is probably the decisive error; it costs a tempo as the ♖ has to go to e1 soon in any case. White should have played immediately 19 ♖e1, when after 19...♖a6 20 ♗b5 (20 ♖b3!? Δ ♗c4 is also possible.) 20...♖d7 21 ♖a3 (21 ♖c2!? ♗xb5 22 axb5 ♖xb5 23 ♗c4 fxe4 24 ♖d2 is another try.) 21...fxe4 22 ♗xe4 (If 22 ♖b3 ♖f7 23 ♖e2 ♖xb5 24 axb5



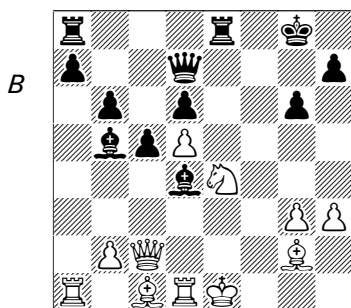
♞xd5.) 22...♞xb5 23 axb5 ♙xb5 24 ♖c2 ♜xe4! 25 ♙xe4 ♖xh3, the extra move (♜a3) means that White can put up a defence with either 26 ♜dd3 ♜e8 27 ♖e2 or 26 ♜f3. Nevertheless, Black is hardly worse in any of these lines, so his sacrifice was perfectly sound.

**19...♙a6 20 ♞b5 ♖d7 21 ♞e1**

Maybe White intended 21 ♞b3 ♞xb5 22 ♞xd4 cxd4 (22...♞c7 23 ♞b5 ♞xb5 24 ♞g1 at least allows White to develop) 23 ♞e1 and if 23...♞c3 24 ♖xa6 or 23...♞c7 24 ♖xd4, but changed his mind in view of 23...♞a3! 24 ♖b3 (If 24 ♖xa6 ♞c2+ and ...♞xa1.) 24...♜xe4! 25 ♙xe4 fxe4 26 ♜xa3 ♖xh3 with a decisive attack.

Instead 21 e5 (△ 21...♞xb5? 22 e6!) would keep the f-file closed, but after 21...♜xe5 Black has two pawns for the ♞ and a growing attack, and ...♞xb5 is again threatened.

**21...♞xb5 22 axb5 ♙xb5 23 ♖c2 fxe4 24 ♞xe4 (D)**



White only needs one more tempo to stave off the attack, but Black makes good use of his spare move to open a

new front. If 24 ♞c4 Black prevents a blockade by 24...e3!, with threats including ...♜f8, ...♖f7 and ...e2.

**24...♜xe4+! 25 ♙xe4**

25 ♖xe4? ♜e8 would be worse, but now the black ♖ invades.

**25...♖xh3 26 ♜xd4**

White decides the only hope is to return some material and try to exchange light-squared ♙s. If 26 ♜d3 ♜e8! 27 ♜f3 ♖g4. Or if 26 ♙f4 ♜e8 27 ♞d2 ♜xe4 and then 28 ♞c1 (28 ♖xe4 allows mate in 3 by 28...♖h2+) 28...♜e2 29 ♙d2 a6 is a good consolidating move. Black has several pawns and an attack for the exchange, while White can hardly move at all.

**26...♖f1+ 27 ♞d2 cxd4 28 ♙d3 ♖f2+**

Black wants his ♖ on a safe square and then he will win by ...♜e8.

**29 ♞d1 ♖g1+ 30 ♞e2**

30 ♞d2 ♜e8 forces mate.

**30...♜e8+ 31 ♞f3 ♙xd3 32 ♖xd3 ♖h1+**

Black has just two pieces left but they are so active that they give him a mating attack which can only be staved off by hopeless sacrifices.

**33 ♞f2**

If 33 ♞f4 ♜f8+ and mates, while after 33 ♞g4 comes 33...♖h5+ 34 ♞f4 ♜f8+ 35 ♞e4 ♖e5#.

**33...♜f8+ 34 ♙f4**

The ♙ gets moving too late. This would have been a good time to resign.

**34...♖xa1 35 ♞g2**

Otherwise 35...g5.

**35...♖xb2+ 36 ♞h3 ♜xf4 0-1**

The last finesse: Black wins easily after 37 gxf4 ♖c3.

# Game 12

**White: Dr Ramon Rey Ardid (Spain)**

**Black: Dr Hans Geiger (Austria)**

IFSB Championship, 1932

*Queen's Gambit, Slav Defence (D18)*

**The Players:** Dr Ramon Rey Ardid (1904-88), a medical doctor from Zaragoza, was one of Spain's strongest players for three decades. He represented his country at the 1924 Paris Olympiad, won the Spanish Championship four times and in 1944 he played a short match with world champion Alekhine, losing only one game. Dr Rey only seems to have played CC for a brief period in the early 1930s and is best remembered in CC literature for a game he lost (Game 13). I have no information about Dr Geiger.

**About this game:** The 1932 'Bundesmeisterschaft' of the IFSB was the first of that series representative enough to be considered a true European CC Championship. Moreover, it is the first major CC event from which all games are preserved, thanks to the publication of a tournament book.

The event was won by Hans Müller, the Viennese OTB master and chess writer, ahead of German CC specialist Dr Dyckhoff and future grandmaster Erich Eliskases, all of whom were unbeaten. In this field, Geiger scored 5/11 and Dr Rey only 4½/11.

**1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♖f3 ♗f6 4 ♗c3 dxc4**

Dr Dyckhoff criticized Black's choice of defence in 'Fernschach' — yet in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Slav is still considered a solid and respectable choice for Black.

**5 a4 ♕f5 6 e3 ♗a6?!**

Black wants to exploit the weakness on b4 but this is the wrong way to do it. Dr Dyckhoff commented: "also 6...♗bd7 or 6...e6 are insufficient". However, that is where a modern reader would disagree with him as 6...e6 is the main line and perfectly playable, as Max Euwe was to demonstrate later in the 1930s.

Smyslov's 5...♗a6 is a better form of the idea, inviting White to play e4 if he wants to. In that case, the ♕ may be developed on g4.

**7 ♕xc4 ♗b4**

Black has a crude threat on c2 but nothing to back it up after White's obvious reply, whereas in the line 5...♕g4 6 ♗e5 ♕h5 7 h3 ♗a6 8 g4 ♕g6 9 ♕g2 ♗b4 10 0-0, Black has 10...♕c2 11 ♖d2 ♕b3.

**8 0-0**

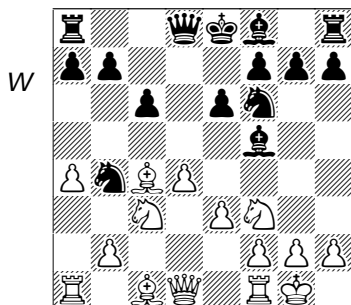
White could even consider 8

♞e5 because Black still cannot play 8...♞c2+ (due to 9 ♖xc2! ♙xc2 10 ♙xf7 mate!), while 8...e6 9 0-0 transposes to the game.

Not, however, 8 e4? ♞xe4 9 ♞xe4 ♙xe4 10 ♙xf7+ ♜xf7 11 ♖b3+ (or 11 ♞g5+ ♜e8 12 ♞xe4 ♖xd4! because of 13 ♖xd4 ♞c2+) 11...e6! 12 ♞g5+ ♜e8 13 ♞xe4 ♖d5! — all analysis by GM Efim Bogoljubow, one of the strongest players of this era.

**8...e6 (D)**

8...♞c2? is no good now because of 9 e4! winning material: 9...♙xe4 (9...♞xe4 10 ♖xc2 ♞d6 11 ♖e2) 10 ♞xe4 ♞xa1 11 ♞xf6+ gxf6 12 ♙e3 — Marchisotti.



If you compare this position with the line considered normal for the past 50 years or more (6...e6 7 ♙xc4 ♙b4 8 0-0 ♞bd7), you can see that Black's ♙ should be on b4, hindering White's e3-e4 advance, while the ♞ stands ready to support central operations. In that case, White has various tries for advantage, but they can be fairly well countered because

that formation is more flexible than the one chosen by Geiger.

**9 ♞e5!**

This is a natural move, since Black does not have a ♞ on d7 to exchange the intruder, yet it took some years of this 6...♞a6 line being played before that was understood.

Instead 9 ♞h4 ♙c2 10 ♖d2 ♞e4 was better for Black in the stem game Morrison-Geo. Marechal, Toronto 1924. 9 ♖e2 was also seen in various games in the 1930s.

**9...♙e7**

9...♙d6 10 ♖e2 ♞bd5 11 f3! ♖c7 12 e4 ♞xc3 13 bxc3 ♙g6 14 ♙a3 ♙xa3 15 ♜xa3 0-0 16 ♞d3! had favoured White in Bogoljubow-Pirc, Bled 1931.

**10 ♖e2 0-0 11 e4 ♙g6 12 ♜d1 ♖a5 13 ♙g5!**

This is sharper than 13 ♙b3 as Bogoljubow had recommended.

**13...♜ad8**

Some other examples from contemporary practice:

a) 13...♜fe8 14 ♞xg6 hxg6 15 e5 ♞d7 (or 15...♞fd5 16 ♙xe7 ♜xe7 17 ♞e4 ♞b6 18 ♙b3 ♜d8 19 ♖g4± Flohr-Chodera, Prague 1931) 16 ♞e4! c5 17 ♙b5 ♞c6 18 ♖g4! cxd4 19 ♙xe7 ♜xe7 20 ♖h4 ♞dx5 21 ♞g5 ♜ee8 22 ♜a3! ♜ad8 23 ♜h3 ♜f8 24 f4 with a strong attack (Peter Korning-Bjorn Nielsen, corr Denmark 1935).

b) 13...♙h5 14 f3 c5 15 d5! exd5 16 exd5 ♞fxd5 17 ♙xe7 ♞xe7 18 ♜d7 ♜ae8 19 ♞e4!± Lorens-Kern, corr 1933-34.

**14 ♞xg6 hxg6 15 e5 ♞fd5 16 ♞e4 f6**

Not 16...♖fe8 because of 17 ♖g4! (preventing ...f6), e.g. 17...c5 18 ♖a3! ♙xg5 19 ♘xg5 ♖c7 20 ♖h4 ♗f8 21 ♖f3! 1–0 Hermann-Engels, Bochum 1937.

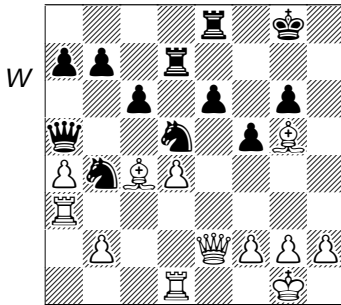
**17 exf6 gxf6 18 ♙h6 ♖fe8**

The square f7 is required by the ♙. If 18...♖f7? 19 ♖g4 and Black cannot defend both e-pawn and g-pawn.

**19 ♖a3!**

This ♖ lift emphasises the failure of Black's opening strategy. With the a3-f8 diagonal clear for Black's dark-squared ♙, this manoeuvre would be impossible.

**19...f5 20 ♘g5 ♙xg5 21 ♙xg5 ♖d7 (D)**



**22 ♙d2!**

Black is forced to give ground on the queenside because this threatens ♙xd5 followed by ♖e1.

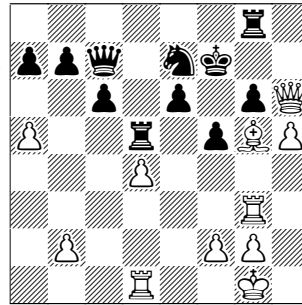
**22...♖b6 23 a5**

23 ♖e5 might be more precise as Black could now have tried 23...♖xd4!? 24 ♙xb4 ♘f4! 25 ♖xd4 ♘xe2+ 26 ♙xe2 ♖xd4, though the ♙s would probably win.

**23...♖c7 24 ♖g3**

White disdains the easy win of a pawn (24 ♙xb4 ♘xb4 25 ♙xe6+ followed by ♖e3) as he expects to gain more by direct attack.

**24...♗f7 25 h4! ♘f4 26 ♖e3 ♘bd5 27 ♙xd5 ♘xd5 28 ♖h6 ♖g8 29 h5 ♘e7 30 ♙g5! ♖d5 (D)**



**31 ♖h7+**

Dr Rey thought the obvious continuation 31 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 32 hxg6+ was not good enough.

However, Black now defends himself in a very skilful way, commented Dyckhoff, obliging White to find a series of strong moves.

**31...♖g7 32 ♖h8 ♖c8!**

Other moves lose quickly, for example:

a) 32...♖d8 33 hxg6+ ♖xg6 34 ♖h7+ ♖g7 35 ♖xg7+ ♗xg7 36 ♙f4+ and ♙xc7.

b) 32...gxh5 33 ♖xg7+ ♗xg7 34 ♙f4+.

c) 32...♖g8 33 ♖f6+ ♗e8 34 h6! ♖f8 35 h7! ♖xf6 36 ♙xf6+–.

**33 hxg6+ ♖xg6 34 ♖h4 f4**

Black finds an ingenious, but

insufficient, resource. The attacked ♖ cannot move: 34...♗g8 35 ♖h7+ ♗g7 36 ♖h5+ ♔f8 (36...♗g6 37 ♕h4!) 37 ♕h6 ♗xh6 38 ♖xh6 and Black cannot save the ♗, because of 39 ♖h8+ in reply to ...♗dd7 or ...♖d7 (according to analysis by Rey Ardid and Dr.Dyckhoff).

Or if 34...♖c7 35 ♕xe7 ♗xg3 36 ♖f6+ ♔e8 37 ♖f8+ ♔d7 38 fxg3 (Marchisotti in 'Joyas del Ajedrez Postal').

**35 ♕xf4 ♖g8 36 ♕e5!**

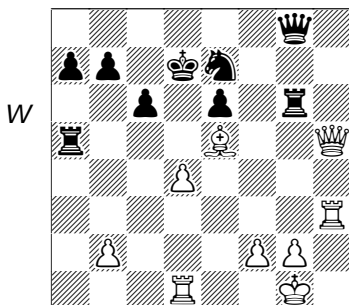
This renews the attack. Now 36...♗f5 forks ♗ and ♖ but White continues 37 ♗xg6 ♖xg6 38 ♖h8! ♗xa5 39 ♖c8! (Rey/Dyckhoff).

So Black regains his sacrificed pawn and thus requires White to play accurately.

**36...♗xa5 37 ♖h5 ♔e8**

If 37...♗f5 38 ♗g5 followed by g4, e.g. 38...♗b5 39 g4 ♗e7 (if 39...♗h4 40 ♗d3! ♠ ♕g3, or 40...♔e7 41 ♖xh4 ♗xg5 42 f4) 40 ♗d3 (♠ ♗f3+, ♗f6) 40...♔e8 41 d5! (to close the rank) followed by ♕d6xe7 winning a piece.

**38 ♗h3 ♔d7 (D)**



If 38...♗f5 39 d5!! breaks through: 39...♗xd5 (39...cxd5 40 ♗c1 ♗e7 41 ♗g3) 40 ♗xd5 cxd5 41 ♗c3 ♔d8 (unpins the ♗) 42 ♖h2! (defends g2 and threatens ♕f6+!) and Black cannot keep out the white ♗.

**39 ♖f3**

Now White's threat is to win the black ♖ by ♗h8.

**39...♖e8**

If 39...♗f5, Marchisotti gives 40 ♗h8 ♖f7 41 ♗b8 ♗b5 42 ♗c1! (♠ 43 ♗xb7+ ♗xb7 44 ♖xc6+) but I think 40 d5! works again because all three captures lose: 40...cxd5 41 ♗h8 ♖f7 42 ♖c3, 40...♗xd5 41 ♗xd5+ cxd5 42 ♗h8 ♖f7 43 ♖b3 and 40...exd5 41 ♖xf5+.

**40 ♖b3 ♔c8**

If 40...b5 41 ♖b4, or 40...b6 41 ♖b4 ♗d5 42 ♗a1 ♖a8 43 ♗h7 c5 44 ♖b5+ ♔d8 45 ♕c7+! ♔c8 46 ♖e8+ ♔b7 47 ♕b8!?. Finally, if 40...♗b5 41 ♖a3 (threatening both ♖xa7 and ♖d6+) 41...♖f7 once more 42 d5! is the killer. This time there are four captures but they all lose: 42...exd5 43 ♗e1, 42...cxd5 43 ♗c1, 42...♗xd5 43 ♗h8, 42...♗xd5 43 ♖xb7+.

**41 ♗h8 ♗g8 42 ♗h7! 1-0**

Black resigned, because of 42...♗xg2+ 43 ♔xg2 ♖g6+ 44 ♕g3 ♖xh7 45 ♖xe6+ ♔d8 46 ♖d6+ ♖d7 47 ♖f8+ ♖e8 48 ♕c7+!. Or if 42...♗b5 (42...♗e7? 43 ♖b4 with a double threat against ♗ and ♗) 43 ♗c7+ ♔d8 44 ♖a3 ♗d5 45 ♖xa7 ♗xe5 46 ♖b8#.

Dr Rey considered this at the time to be "the best and most logical game that I have ever played".

# Game 13

**White: Nils Johansson-Tegelman (Sweden)**

**Black: Dr Ramon Rey Ardid (Spain)**

Sweden-Spain postal match, 1933

*Closed Ruy Lopez (C98)*

**The Players:** Nils Johansson (who later changed his name to Tegelman) was a Stockholm railway official. Born in 1897, he learned chess in 1911 and began his first CC tournament in 1927. In 1930 he won the annual congress of the Swedish Chess Federation and earned the title of Swedish master. Dr Rey Ardid was introduced in Game 12.

**About this game:** This is one of the most famous postal games of the 1930s, and it has appeared in many books. In an article he wrote in 1947, Cecil Purdy even called it “the greatest correspondence game ever played”.

Although critical analysis has revealed flaws in the play of both sides, this classic is worth republishing, primarily for the wild tactical battle that commences around White’s 27<sup>th</sup> move. The advantage shifts back and forth and it is not easy to establish exactly where Black goes wrong.

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♙b3 d6 8 c3 ♘a5

This move is the original Chigorin Defence, but a standard position arises after White’s 12<sup>th</sup> move.

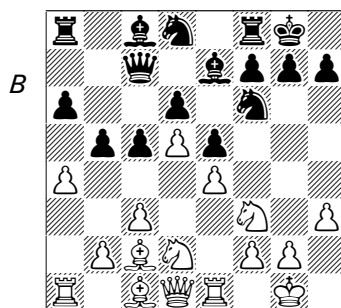
9 ♙c2 c5 10 d4 ♚c7 11 h3

11 a4! (as in Keres-Reshevsky, Stockholm 1937) is the main reason for Black to avoid the early ...♘a5, since the attack on b5 cannot be ignored.

11...0-0 12 ♘bd2 ♘c6 13 d5

Closing the centre: this is an important decision, which went out of fashion for many years but was revived by Spassky and Karpov. Instead 13 dxc5 (introduced by Rauzer in 1936) leads to play with an open central file where White hopes to control d5 and f5 with his ♘s.

13...♘d8 14 a4 (D)



14...b4

This may actually be the best move. Purdy preferred 14...♖b8 but

later games have shown White can then obtain an advantage:

a) 15 axb5 axb5 16 b4 ♖b7 17 ♗f1 ♙d7 18 ♙e3! ♖a8 19 ♖d2± Karpov-Unzicker, Nice OL 1974.

b) 15 b4!? (Geller) keeps the option of a4-a5 as well a4xb5 transposing to 15 axb5 lines; e.g. 15...c4 16 ♗f1 ♗e8 17 axb5 axb5 18 ♗3h2 f6 19 f4 ♗f7 20 ♗f3 g6 21 f5 ♗g7 22 g4 ♙d7 23 ♙e3 ♖a8 24 ♖d2± Karpov-Spassky, USSR Ch 1973.

**15 ♗c4 ♗b7**

This was an attempt to improve upon Capablanca-Vidmar, New York 1927, in which White obtained a clear advantage after 15...a5? 16 ♗fxe5! ♙a6 17 ♙b3 dxe5 18 d6 ♙xd6 19 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 20 ♗xd6±. 15...bxc3!? may be best: 16 bxc3 ♗b7 17 ♖b1 ♗d7 18 ♙d2 ♖a7 19 ♖e2 ♗a5 20 ♗e3 ♖e8 21 c4 g6 22 ♙c3 ♗b7 23 ♖b2 ♗b8 24 a5 ♗d7 25 ♖d2 ♙d8 (The a5-pawn has become weak.) 26 ♖a1 ♗f6 27 ♙h2 ♗h5 28 ♙a4 ♖f8 29 ♙c6 f5 with great complications (0-1, 58) H.Kaiser-B.Bierwisch, Germany corr 1987-90.

**16 a5!?**

This is somewhat risky because the pawn is isolated. According to Golombek's book on Capablanca, White should play 16 cxb4 cxb4 17 b3 ♗a5 18 ♗fd2, and maybe that is better than Johansson's plan of playing with two ♗s and allowing Black to open the b-file.

**16...♖b8 17 ♙g5**

Not 17 ♗b6?! ♗xa5.

**17...♙d7 18 ♙d3 ♙b5! 19 ♙xf6**

Avoiding the trap 19 ♗fd2? bxc3 20 bxc3 ♗xd5!.

**19...♙xf6 20 ♗fd2 ♙d8**

The ♙ had no role on f6; now it joins in the attack on White's a-pawn.

**21 ♗b3**

With the a-pawn thus protected, cxb4 followed by ♖c1 looks like becoming a threat. So Black now exchanges on c3 to close the c-file.

**21...bxc3 22 bxc3 ♖e7?!**

This loses time. The ♖ should go to d7 at once.

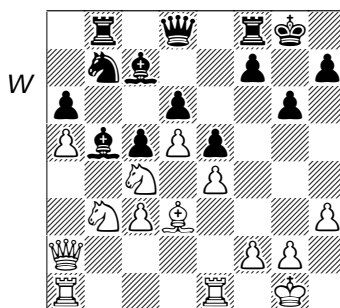
**23 ♗e3 ♖d7 24 ♖c2 ♙c7**

If 24...♙g5 25 ♗d2 ♙xe3 26 ♖xe3 ♙xd3 27 ♖xd3± according to Spanish analysis.

**25 ♗c4?!**

White is not showing much regard for tempi either, having now conceded two with ♗c4-e3-c4. Better was 25 ♙xb5 ♖xb5 26 ♖eb1.

**25...♖d8 26 ♖a2 g6! (D)**



Here the game really begins. Tired of manoeuvring in a cramped space, Black seeks kingside expansion by ...f5 and his opponent takes up the challenge.

**27 g4?**

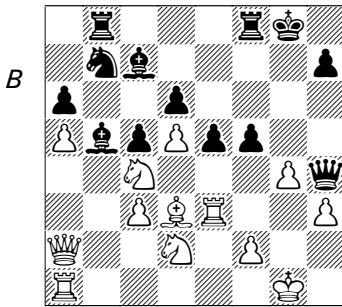
This move is frequently adorned with a '!'; it is certainly a fighting

move but very weakening and might well have been answered by 27...f5.

27 ♖c2!? does seem better, as a line like 27...f5?! 28 exf5 gxf5 29 ♘e3 ♙xd3 30 ♖xd3 f4 31 ♘c4 f3 32 g3 should not be dangerous to White, who gains control of e4 while his ♙ has more protection.

27...♖h4 28 ♜e3 f5 29 exf5 gxf5 30 ♘bd2 (D)

Who really stands better here? Old annotations, which praise this game so highly, pass over in silence the crucial phase of the next few moves — in which Black misses several lines that would possibly have won, spoils his strong position, and lays the foundation for White's beautiful counter-attack.



### 30...f4!?

This gains space without loss of time but, to my way of thinking, it is a superficial move that looks suspect once you have seen the rest of the game. The idea is apparently to take control of g3, so that Black's later breaking move ...h5 will be more effective. The drawback is that after

g4-g5 Black will then have only the g-file to work with.

The move can also be criticized on the grounds that it puts yet another pawn on the same colour as the c7-♙. Probably Black's main mistake is strategic: he tries to win by attack instead of keeping his ♙ as safe as possible and aiming to consolidate a material advantage. What should Black do instead?

a) 30...♙h8 is a reasonable preparatory move, but it seems that Dr Rey did not want to let his opponent capture on f5.

b) 30...e4!? is another idea but Black has no piece ready to take advantage of the vacated e5-square after 31 ♙f1! and the game is unclear.

c) 30...fxg4! therefore looks like the critical possibility, and if 31 ♜g3 ♙h8 (not 31...♜f4? 32 ♘xe5!) 32 hxg4 ♘xa5! wins a pawn (33 ♘xa5? ♙xd3 34 ♜xd3? ♖xf2+-+) and keeps the initiative, while 31 ♘e4 seems to give Black a choice of winning moves. In particular, both 31...♜f3 and 31...♙h8 look like safe ways for Black to play for a win, and even 31...gxh3 may be playable. It is a mystery why previous annotators did not highlight Black's choice of the incorrect plan at move 30.

### 31 ♜f3 ♙h8

This move allows both ♜s to come to the g-file. Note that 31...h5 is premature because of 32 ♘xe5, when Black dare not take on e5 because of d6+. One may ask whether the ♙ really belongs on the h-file when Black evidently needs ...h5 as



a pawn lever, but it does preserve the initiative, whereas the alternatives 31...♖f7!? 32 ♘e4 ♙d7 and 31...♙e8 32 ♘e4 ♙g6 are unclear.

**32 ♘g2?!**

White prevents ...h5g4 and prepares his next move, but as the game shows, this only holds up Black's attack temporarily. 32 ♘e4 h5 33 g5 (now forced) may be a better chance in view of 33...♖g8 (33...♘xa5 34 ♘xe5! dxe5 36 d6 ♙d8 37 ♖e6) 34 ♖h2 which is similar to the game after White's 36<sup>th</sup> move — the differences being in White's favour. However, Black has a better response in 33...♙d7!, to meet 34 ♖g2 by 34...♙f5 or 34 ♖h2 by 34...♙g4, so it seems that White cannot hold the balance whatever he does.

**32...h5!?**

"Opens lines for the attack," says my Spanish source, while Purdy wrote: "Both sides flirt with death". Black encounters problems in driving home his attack because the pawn structure makes it easier for White to feed reinforcements to the kingside, and in particular because Black's 30<sup>th</sup> move ceded the fine e4-square to the ♘. Even so, 32...h5 should probably have won if followed up correctly.

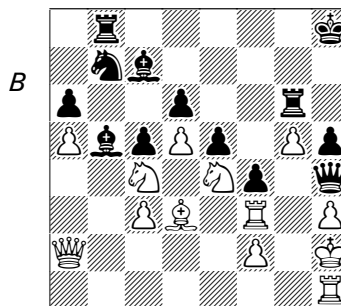
The alternative 32...♙d7 looks sensible, as White has shown himself ready to meet ...h5, but it does not give a clear advantage after 33 ♘e4.

**33 ♖h1 ♖f6 34 ♘e4 ♖h6!**

Black's plan is to provoke g4-g5 and then attack the pawn. After the alternative 34...♖g6, White cannot play 35 g5? ♖xg5+ 36 ♘xg5 ♖xg5+ 37

♖f1 because of 37...e4! 38 ♙xe4 ♘xa5 39 ♙d3 ♖xd5 --+ but he may do better with 35 ♘g3! ♖gg8 36 ♘f5 followed by 37 ♖h2, 38 ♖g1 and the position of the black ♖ on the h-file makes ...hxg4 less effective (due to ♖h3).

**35 g5 ♖g6 36 ♖h2 (D)**



**36...♙d8?**

This usually gets an '!' but is almost certainly a bad move. Not only does Black fail to spot White's combination at move 38; he misses his own last winning chance. The ♙ looks bad on c7 but it was performing a defensive function; the ♘ would be much better on f7, defending d6/e5 and attacking the g-pawn.

There are two reasonable moves: 36...♙d7!? may offer Black winning chances. Considerable complications could arise by 37 ♖b1 (If 37 ♖g1 ♙g4 38 ♘cd2 ♘xa5 ♣) 37...♙g4 38 ♘cd2 ♖xg5 (38...♙xf3?? 39 ♘xf3 traps the ♖.) 39 ♘xg5 ♖xg5 but 37 ♘f6!?∞ is possible.

Even better, 36...♘d8! (Δ...♘f7) was suggested by a Spanish annotator, and it really puts White in trouble.

a) 37 ♖cd2 ♗f7 38 c4 ♔d7 39 ♗xc5? dxc5 40 ♔xg6 ♗xg5 -+.

b) 37 ♗xc5 ♖g7 38 ♗e4 but then still 38... ♗f7! 39 ♖g1 ♗xg5 40 ♖xg5 ♖xg5 41 ♗cxd6 ♗xd6 42 ♔xb5 axb5 43 ♗xd6 ♖bg8! 44 ♗f7+ ♖g7 45 ♗xg5 ♖xg5 46 ♖b1 e4! 47 ♖xe4 ♖h8 48 ♖d4+ ♖g7 -+.

c) 37 ♔b1 ♗f7 38 ♗e3 ♗xg5 39 ♗xg5 ♖xg5 40 h4!? ♖f6! (40... ♖xh4? 41 ♖h3) 41 c4 ♔d7 42 ♔xg6 ♖xg6 43 ♖c2 (43 ♗g2 ♖g4 or ♖e4) 43... ♖xc2 44 ♗xc2 ♖b2 and Black's pieces dominate in the endgame.

d) 37 ♖g1 ♗f7 38 ♖e2 is too slow after 38... ♖xg5!.

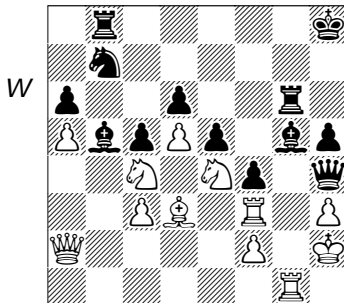
e) 37 ♖e2 may be White's best, intending 37... ♗f7 38 ♗e3! ♗xg5? 39 ♗f5+-, but after 37... ♔xc4! 38 ♔xc4 ♗f7 39 ♔d3 ♖bg8 (not 39... ♗xg5 40 ♗xg5 ♖xg5 41 ♖e4) followed by 40... ♗xg5 Black has a big advantage even if White should hold off the kingside attack.

### 37 ♖g1

37 ♖e2 is also possible.

### 37... ♔xc4?!

37... ♔d7 followed by ... ♔f5



was suggested in a Spanish source, claiming equality. However, White can refute that by 38 ♗exd6 and if 38... ♖xd6 39 ♖e2! followed by the decisive 40 ♖e4.

Another crucial point is that while ... ♗f7xg5 threatened to win by ... ♗xf3+, after ... ♔xg5 Black has no immediate threats. Possibly he should admit his mistake and go back with 37... ♔c7.

### 38 ♗xe5!?

This move, bursting open Black's centre, launches the Swede's fine counter-attack. However, whether Johansson's move is really the best depends on the analysis of Black's correct defence at move 40.

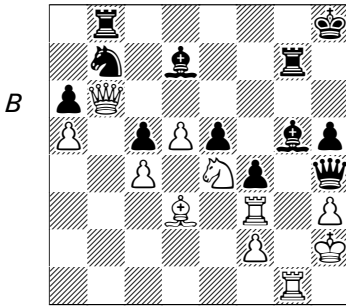
Previous commentators have been so impressed by the finish that they failed to notice that 38 ♗xc5 (discovering on the g6-♖) may be an objectively stronger combination. Thereby White regains his pawn with an indisputable advantage, though a lot of play remains after 38... ♖h6 39 ♗e6.

### 38... dxe5 39 c4

39 ♔xb5 axb5 40 a6 loses to 40... ♗d6 41 a7 ♖a8 42 ♖a6 ♖xa7 according to Spanish analysis, e.g. 43 ♖xa7 ♗xe4 44 ♖b8+ ♖h7 45 ♖c7+ ♖g7 46 ♖xe5 ♗d2.

### 39... ♔d7 40 ♖b2! ♖g7 41 ♖b6! (D)

This is the point of White's last move and indeed it is the only move. White threatens ♗xg5 followed by the arrival of Her Majesty on h6, but Black fights to the death, blocking the g-file and bringing his second ♖ belatedly on to the battlefield.



**41...♙g4?**

In the 'ICCA Monthly Resumé' (1947), Erik Larsson wrote: "On other moves, White wins quicker." Also Marchisotti gives ...♙g4 an '!' and discusses no alternatives.

However, Black missed 41...♙f6! when:

a) 42 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 43 ♜xf6 ♖xg1 44 ♜xg1 leads to a roughly level ending.

b) 42 ♖xg7 does not win either: 42...♙xg7 43 ♜xc5 ♙g4 44 ♖g6 ♜g8 45 ♜e6 ♙xe6 46 ♖xe6+ ♜h8.

c) White surely would have played 42 ♜xf6 ♖xg1 (42...♙xh3? 43 ♖xg7! ♙e6+ 44 ♜g2 ♜xg7 45 ♜xh5+! ♖xh5 46 dxe6+- or 43...♙c8+ 44 ♜g2 ♜xg7 45 ♜h7!+-) 43 ♜xg1 but now comes 43...♙xh3!!, which is equal according to Spanish source. I continue the analysis:

c1) 44 ♖h3 ♖xh3 45 ♖c7 only draws: 45...♖g8+! 46 ♜xg8 ♖g4+ 47 ♜h2 ♖h4+ or 47 ♜f1 ♖d1+ etc.

c2) 44 ♖c7 ♖g8+ (not 44...♖g5+ 45 ♖g3!+-) 45 ♜xg8 ♖g4+ 46 ♖g3 ♖d1+ 47 ♜h2 fxg3+ 48 ♜xh3 and now 48...♖xd3! (48...♖h1+ 49 ♜xg3 ♖g1+ 50 ♜f3 ♖g4+ 51 ♜e3 ♖d4+ 52 ♜e2 e4 53 ♙c2 is less clear) 49

♖xe5+ ♜h7! (not 49...♜xg8 50 ♖b8+ and 51 ♖xb7+) and Black has good drawing chances, e.g. after 50 fxg3 ♖xc4 or 50 ♜f6+ ♜g6.

If this is right, then White should have played 38 ♜xc5.

**42 ♜xg5 ♖xg5**

After 42...♙xf3 43 ♖h6+ ♜g8 44 ♖e6+ ♜h8 45 ♜f7+ ♜g8 46 ♜xe5+ mates, or if 42...♖xg5 43 ♖c7 ♖g7 44 ♖xb8+ ♜d8 45 ♖xe5+-.

**43 hxg4 ♖f8**

Not 43...hxg4? 44 ♖h3+! and wins.

Black's pawns suddenly threaten again. White's answer is surprisingly cool; he creates a queenside passed pawn and waits for Black to fall into the kingside ambush.

**44 ♖xa6!**

The double exclamation mark generally awarded to this move seems excessive. 44 ♖h3 should also win, e.g. 44...h4 45 f3 or 45 ♖xa6.

**44...hxg4?**

44...h4! is better but White is a passed a-pawn up and should win eventually with the kingside closed. He should avoid 45 ♖h3 f3 46 ♖gg3 when 46...e4! creates complications.

**45 ♖h3+ ♜g8 46 ♖e6+ ♖ff7**

If 46...♖gf7 47 ♖xg4 ♖xg4 48 ♖xg4+ ♖g7 49 ♙h7+ mates.

**47 ♖xg4!! 1-0**

Black resigned as 47...♖xg4 allows mate in four: 48 ♖e8+ ♖f8 49 ♖h8+ ♜xh8 50 ♖xf8+ ♖g8 51 ♖h6#. If 47...♜d8 48 ♖e8+ ♖f8 49 ♙h7+ and if 47...♖e7 it is mate in three by 48 ♖xg7+. Finally if 47...♖f6 48 ♖e8+ ♖f8 49 ♙h7+ ♜h8 50 ♙f5+ ♜g8 51 ♙e6+ mates.

# Game 14

**White: Paul Keres (Estonia)**

**Black: Edwin Weiss (Germany)**

IFSB Championship, 1935

*French Defence, Advance Variation (C02)*

**The Players:** Keres (1916-75) was one of the world's top half-dozen players from 1938 to the mid-1960s. The foundations for his success were laid in a few years of intensive postal chess, developing his tactical flair and openings knowledge. The pinnacle of his CC career was his victory in the IFSB Championship, with 10/13 in a true European championship field. His result is all the more impressive when you consider that he was only 19 years old, was playing about 70 games at the same time and was also commencing his illustrious OTB career while this event was in progress.

Weiss was treasurer of IFSB and a Jew. Presumably he did not survive the Holocaust.

**About this game:** It is a sad fact that anthologies of Paul Keres' best games rarely include his best postal games; we have two of them in this book. This was a typical attacking game by the young grandmaster. Black offers a Dutch (2 c4 f5) but Keres switches to his pet line against the French.

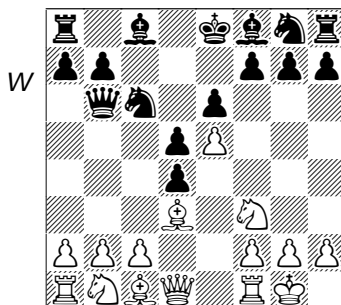
**1 d4 e6 2 e4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 ♘f3**

4 c3 is more usual.

**4... ♖b6**

After 4... ♘c6 5 dxc5 ♙xc5 6 ♙d3 the strongpoint on e5 gives White the somewhat better game, said Keres. After losing as Black against Stalda in this line in a 1934 postal tournament, he played it in several OTB games with White, e.g. against Fine at the 1935 Warsaw Olympiad.

After the alternative 4... cxd4, Keres-Euwe, Zandvoort 1936, went 5 ♖xd4 (5 ♙d3 is the modern gambit treatment, similar to the game.) 5... ♘c6 6 ♖f4?! (6 ♖g4!?) 6... f5 7 ♙d3 ♘ge7 8 0-0 ♘g6=. Keres only played the line as a gambit when Black forced it with this move order; White cannot now reply 5 dxc5 because ... ♙xc5 attacks the f-pawn. **5 ♙d3 cxd4 6 0-0 ♘c6 (D)**



Swedish GM Gideon Stahlberg innovated with 6...♘d7 against Keres at Warsaw 1935. That game continued 7 ♖bd2 ♗e7 8 ♗b3 ♗c6 9 ♖e1 with good chances for White in a complex position.

**7 ♖e1!**

Keres learns from experience. He got this position twice in the championship, winning both games.

7 ♗bd2?! was played in a 1934 game against his regular sparring partner Leho Laurine. Keres won a famous brilliancy: 7...♗ge7? 8 ♗b3 ♗g6 9 ♖e2 ♖c7? (9...♙d7 Kosten) 10 ♗bxd4! ♗gxe5 11 ♗b5! ♗xf3+ 12 ♖xf3 ♖d7 13 ♙f4 e5 14 ♖fe1 f6 15 ♖ad1! ♙e7 16 ♙c4 d4 17 ♙e6! ♖d8 18 ♙xe5! ♙xe6 19 ♗c7+ ♗f7 20 ♗xe6 ♖a5 21 ♙xd4 ♖xa2? 22 ♙xf6!! ♙xf6 23 ♖d7+ ♗e7 24 ♖xe7+ ♗xe7 25 ♖xb7+ ♗d6 26 ♖c7+ ♗d5 27 ♖c5# 1-0.

However, he did not repeat his 7<sup>th</sup> move because Black should have blown up the centre with 7...f6!. Surprisingly, GM Tony Kosten in his 1998 book 'The French Advance' gives that game as his example for the variation; he does not seem aware of the improvements for both players at move 7 which were demonstrated in Keres' own practice and annotations more than 60 years previously.

**7...♙b4**

It seems to me that the position after 7 ♖e1 is just good for White and Black should probably avoid ...♖b6 in this line.

Others:

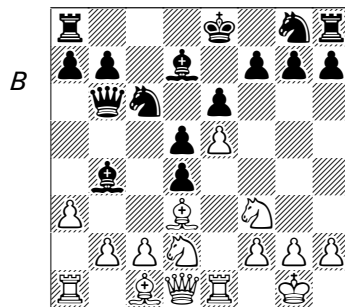
a) 7...f6?! is very suspicious

because of 8 exf6 ♗xf6 9 ♗g5! with strong threats, said Keres.

b) 7...♗ge7 is bad because 8 h4! deprives this ♗ of further development possibilities. Keres-Malmgren, also from the IFSB Ch 1935, continued 8...♙d7 9 a3 a5 10 c3 (not yet 10 a4?! ♗b4) 10 c3 ♖c8? (Black missed the opportunity to get counterplay with 10...a4!.) 11 a4 ♗g8 12 ♗a3 ♙xa3 13 ♖xa3 ♗ge7 14 ♗h2 ♗g6 15 ♗f3 ♖c7? (Black should return with 15...♗ge7 so as to answer 16 h5 with 16...h6; White would then have to find another way.) 16 h5!±. White won in 30 moves.

c) 7...♙c5, followed by ...♗ge7, is better according to Keres; then 8 a3 a5 9 ♗bd2 was played in two Keres-Laurine OTB games in Tallinn around this time. Now we return to the game with Weiss.

**8 ♗bd2 ♙d7 9 a3 (D)**



Now the drawback of 7...♙b4 is apparent. The ♙ lacks a comfortable retreat and when Black captures on d2, White increases his lead in development.

9...♙xd2 10 ♖xd2 0–0–0

Queenside castling is risky in view of the coming attack, but the threats 11 ♖g5 and 11 b4 were irksome, said Keres. For example, if 10...♗ge7 he intended 11 ♖g5 ♗g6 12 h4 etc.

11 ♖g5 g6

It would have been better to return the pawn immediately by 11...♗ge7.

12 b4 a6

This gives White a clear target but otherwise Black cannot defend his ♔, e.g. 12...♗ge7? 13 b5 or 12...h6 13 ♖f4 ♗ge7 14 b5 followed by ♖xf7 after, for example, 14...♗a5.

13 ♙b2 h6

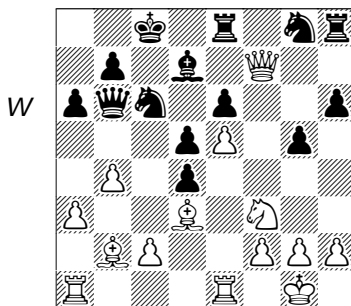
This move surrenders a pawn but it was already difficult to find anything better. Black's opening strategy in this game was evidently unfortunate. 13...♗ge7 might be better but White answers 14 a4!

14 ♖f4 g5

After 14...♗ge7 White simply captures the centre pawn by 15 ♗xd4 with a much superior game.

15 ♖xf7 ♖e8? (D)

Now White can continue the attack in an interesting manner. At this point, 15...♗ge7! was definitely preferable, trying to complete his development. Perhaps Black feared 16 ♙xd4? ♗xd4 17 ♗xd4 ♖xd4 18 ♖xe7 but this is not dangerous for him because of 18...♖hf8! with counterplay. Instead, Keres planned to meet 15...♗ge7 by the continuation 16 ♖h5 ♖df8 17 a4!, for example 17...♖xb4 18 ♖eb1 ♖c5 19 ♙a3 ♖a7 20 a5 threatening ♖b6 with an attack, and if 20...♗f5 21 ♖b6 ♗xa5 22 ♙c5.



16 b5!!

Thus begins a strong attack on the black ♔, involving a second pawn sacrifice.

16...axb5 17 a4! b4

Black decides not to accept the second pawn.

After 17...bxa4 18 ♖eb1! “White has a wonderful attacking position,” wrote Keres in ‘Fernschach’; “for example if 18...♖a5 19 ♙xd4 ♗xd4 20 ♗xd4 with an overwhelming attack, or 18...♖c5 19 ♖xa4, or 18...♖a7 19 ♙b5 with many threats”.

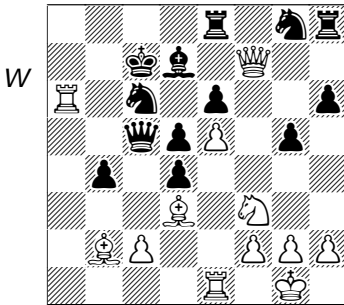
In the first of those lines, I am not sure if the advantage White obtains after (17...bxa4 18 ♖eb1 ♖a5) 19 ♙xd4 ♖e7! 20 ♖f8+ ♖d8 21 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 22 ♙b6 is as great as he could get with 19 ♗xd4!?, e.g. 19...♗xe5 20 ♖g7 ♗xd3 (just opens more lines) 21 cxd3 ♗e7 22 ♖c1+, or 19...♗xd4 20 ♙xd4 ♗e7 21 c3 ♖c7 (21...♗f5? 22 ♖xb7) 22 ♖f3 intending ♖e2, ♙b6, ♙b5.

18 a5! ♖c5 19 a6 bxa6

If 19...♗ge7 the response given by Keres is not convincing: 20 a7 ♗c7 21 ♖xe8! ♖xe8 22 a8♖ ♖xa8

23 ♖xa8 because Black can play 23...♗c8 to stop the ♖ getting at his kingside pawns. White does stand better, however, and the right way seems to be 20 ♗d2! (Δ 21 ♗b3 ♖b6 22 axb7+ ♗xb7 23 ♖a6), while if 20...♖ef8 21 ♖g7!? (or simply 21 ♖h5) 21...♖fg8 22 ♖f6 ♖f8 23 ♗b3! ♖xf6 24 ♗xc5 ♖ff8 25 axb7+ ♗c7 26 ♖eb1 planning 27 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 28 ♖xb4 ♗dc6 29 ♗a6+ ♗d8 30 b8♖+ ♗xb8 31 ♖xb8+ with a winning endgame.

20 ♖xa6 ♗c7 (D)



This enables an elegant finish for White, but if 20...♗ge7 21 ♖eal g4 (21...♖hf8 22 ♖h5) 22 ♗xd4! ♗xd4 (or 22...♗xe5 23 ♗xe6) 23 ♖a5.

21 ♖xc6+!

This exchange sacrifice is the quickest way to win.

21...♖xc6

Not 21...♗xc6? 22 ♗b5+!

22 ♗xd4 ♖a8

If 22...♖c5 23 ♖xe8 or 22...♖b6? 23 ♗b5+ ♗d8 24 ♗d4 ♖b8 25 ♖a1!. So Keres said that the relatively best move was 22...♖e7!, when White would continue the attack by 23 ♖f8 ♖b7 24 c3! ♖b8 25 ♖f3 etc. with decisive opening of lines.

23 ♗b5+ ♗c6

This shortens Black's suffering, but the variation 23...♗d8 24 ♖a1 ♖b8 25 ♗d4 ♗e7 26 ♗c5! ♗xb5 27 ♗xb5 ♖xb5 28 ♗xe7+ ♖xe7 29 ♖a8+ ♗d7 30 ♖a7+ was also hopeless for Black.

24 ♖a1 ♖e7

If 24...♖d8 (24...♖c8? 25 ♗a7+) 25 ♖a6+ ♗b7 26 ♖a7+, or 24...♖b8 25 ♖a6+ ♗b7 26 ♖a7+, or 24...♖b7 25 ♗d6 (not the only way to win) 25...♖c7 (25...♖b8 26 ♗b5+) 26 ♖a6+ ♗c5 27 ♗b5 and mates.

25 ♖xa8!

At first sight, a blunder, but in fact it exploits the bad position of the black ♗.

25...♖xf7 26 ♖a6+ ♗b7

A worthy end to the game would have been 26...♗c5 27 ♗d4# with a pretty mating position.

27 ♗d6+ 1-0

Black resigned because after 27...♗b8 (or 27...♗c7) he will lose both ♖s.

# Game 15

**White: Dr Christian Meyer (Germany)**

**Black: G. Stalda (Italy)**

Deutsche Schachzeitung M-195, 1936

*Nimzo-Indian Defence (E23)*

**The Players:** I have no information about Meyer. Stalda was on the Italian team in the 1<sup>st</sup> postwar CC-Olympiad.

**About this game:** The DSZ tournaments attracted many strong players in the 1930s. There are some fascinating variations and tremendous pawn play by Black in this game, which was included in Marchisotti's book 'Joyas del Ajedrez Postal'.

**1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗c3 ♘b4 4 ♖b3!?**

This move is rare nowadays but it could have surprise value. GM John Emms takes it seriously in his 1998 'Easy Guide to the Nimzo-Indian'. White's idea is not only to avoid the doubling of his c-pawn (as after 4 ♖c2) but also to gain time by attacking the ♙; however, the ♖ proves exposed to attack on b3.

**4...c5**

4...♗c6 (threatening 5...♗xd4, since if 6 ♖xb4?? ♗c2+) 5 ♗f3 d5 was thought a reliable way of equalising, although White can complicate matters a bit with 6 ♙g5.

**5 dx5 ♗c6 6 ♗f3**

Botvinnik's 6 ♙g5 has featured in recent revivals of the 4 ♖b3 line by GMs

Akopian and Malaniuk, but meeting 6...h6 by 7 ♙xf6! ♖xf6 8 ♗f3.

**6...♗e4 7 ♙d2 ♗xc5!?**

Black decides to regain his pawn and hound the white ♖, which commits both sides to a sharp tactical struggle. 7...♗xd2, which obtains the ♙ pair, is often preferred (e.g. by Emms) but I am not convinced it is best. After 8 ♗xd2 play can go:

a) 8...♙xc5 9 e3 (Euwe v Nimzowitsch, Zürich 1934) or 9 ♗de4!? Schaefer-Breuer, corr 1929.

b) 8...0-0 9 e3 ♙xc5 10 ♙e2 b6 11 ♖d1 f5 12 ♗f3 ♖f6= (Christiansen-Speelman, Munich 1992) is current 'book' but 9 g3!? (Trifunović) offers White chances of a slight edge in a position reminiscent of the Catalan and anti-Benoni (1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 c5 3 ♗f3 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 e6 5 g3).

**8 ♖c2 0-0**

Castling is the most flexible move. 8...f5 9 a3 ♙xc3 10 ♙xc3 0-0 just transposes to the game, but once more the kingside fianchetto looks like White's best strategy. 9 g3 0-0 10 ♙g2 d6 11 ♖d1 e5 12 a3 ♙xc3 13 ♙xc3 favoured White in Winter-Sultan Khan, Hastings 1930/31.



**9 a3**

White wants the ♖ pair. Other options here include 9 e3 (maybe best), 9 e4 ♖f6 10 0–0–0 b6 (Stahlberg-Kashdan, Hamburg OL 1930) and 9 g3 d5! (Spielmann-Pirc, 5<sup>th</sup> match game 1931).

**9...♙xc3 10 ♙xc3 f5**

10...a5, to maintain the ♘ on c5, has often been played but White obtains an edge with 11 g3!, as in Stahlberg-Nimzowitsch, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> match games, Göteborg 1934 (both won by White) and Euwe-Evans, Hastings 1949/50. The text move envisages a piece sacrifice to keep the white ♙ in the centre.

**11 b4**

After 11 e3 a5! 12 ♙e2 (12 b4? axb4 13 axb4 ♘xb4!) 12...♗e7 13 ♘d2 e5! Black had good play in Eliskases-Herzog, corr 1932.

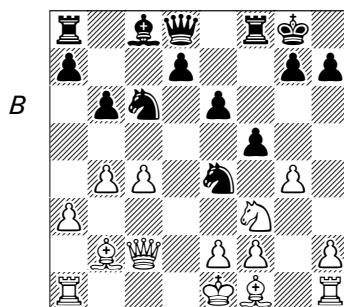
**11...♘e4 12 ♙b2**

White wants to justify his previous play by keeping his ♙. 12 e3 was tried later, e.g. 12...♘xc3 13 ♗xc3 b6 14 ♙d3 ♙b7 (Stahlberg-Alekhine, Hamburg 1939), or 12...b6 13 ♙b2 ♙b7 14 ♙d3 ♗e7! 15 ♙xe4 fxe4 16 ♘d2 (16 ♗xe4 ♘xb4) 16...♗h4 with counterplay (Meyer-Seibold, corr 1948).

**12...b6**

12...d6, to continue with ...e5 and ...♙e6, is given as equalising in 'ECO'. Black has a good share of the centre but his d-pawn is backward and d5 requires watching. The fianchetto, bearing down against the white kingside, appealed more to the players of the 1930s.

12...a5 13 b5 ♘e7 14 e3 b6 15 ♙e2 ♙b7= is also in 'ECO', but why should White develop his ♙ on e2?

**13 g4?! (D)**

This wild move has two objectives: to weaken the black outpost on e4 and to open the g-file for a ♖, to combine with the b2-♙ against the focal point g7. However, it creates weaknesses and gives Black a tempo for action.

a) 13 e3 ♙b7 14 ♙e2 ♖c8 (= according to 'ECO') 15 0–0 ♘e7 16 ♖ad1 ♗e8 17 ♗a4 ♘c6 18 c5 bxc5 19 b5 ♘d8 A.W.Dake-H.Steiner, Mexico City 1935 (0–1, 34) is often cited, but it is not clear to me that White is doing badly here; he just grabbed the a-pawn (not forced) and defended badly later. However, 14...♗e7 is also possible, as in R.Dührssen-M.Seibold, corr 1941.

b) 13 g3! ♙b7 14 ♙g2 ♖c8 15 ♘d2 (Euwe-Mulder, Amsterdam 1933) e.g. 15...♘xd2 16 ♗xd2 ♘a5! 17 ♙xb7 ♘xb7 18 ♙c1 ± Euwe (cited in 'ECO'). H.Meyer-B.Rozinov, USSR-Germany corr 1957–61, continued 18...d5 19 cxd5 ♖xc1+ 20 ♙xc1 ♗xd5 21 ♗xd5 exd5 22 ♙f4 ♖c8 23 ♙d2 ♙f7 (½–½, 43).

**13...♘xf2!**

Black sacrifices a piece for two pawns and White will have to defend against a strong attack. Other tries:

a) 13...♘d6 14 0–0–0 and White gets

the type of game he wants (1–0, 49 in Berthoud-Iliesco, Buenos Aires 1931).

b) 13...fxg4? 14 ♖xe4 gxf3 15 ♖g1 ♜f7 16 0–0–0 and Black is in a precarious position. This was tested in a few games at the time, e.g. Blum-Baron von Feilitzsch, corr 1931.

c) 13...♞g5 14 ♖c3 (14 ♙g2!?) 14...♞xf3+ 15 exf3 ♖e7 (15...e5!?) 16 gxf5 exf5+ 17 ♔d2 ♜f6 18 ♖g1 ♜d6+ 19 ♙d3 ♞d4 20 c5 ♞xf3+ 21 ♔c2 ♞xg1 22 cxd6 ♖g5 23 ♜e1 ♙b7 24 ♜e7 ♜c8 25 ♙c4+ 1–0 Moller-Mezgailis, Stockholm OL 1937; a lively if unconvincing “hack”.

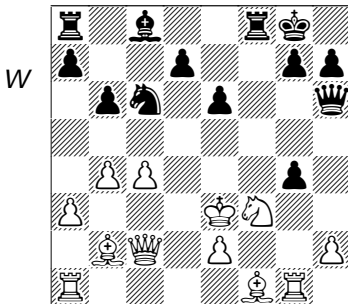
#### 14 ♔xf2

14 ♖g1 ♞xg4 15 h3 ♞f6 16 0–0–0 looks less suicidal but clearly Black is doing OK, whereas accepting the piece forces Black to justify his play.

#### 14...fxg4 15 ♖g1 ♖h4+ 16 ♔e3

Not 16 ♜g3 gxf3 17 ♔g1 ♞d4++, nor 16 ♔g2 gxf3+ 17 ♔h1 ♞d4±.

#### 16...♖h6+ (D)



#### 17 ♔d3!?

17 ♔f2 is safer and sets a trap: 17... ♖xh2+? (not 17...gxf3? 18 ♖xg7+) 18 ♜g2 meeting 18...♖h4+ by 19

♔g1 and 18...♖f4! by 19 ♔e1!. But 17...♖h4+ 18 ♔e3 ♖h6+ 19 ♔f2 is an immediate draw by repetition, so it is likely that 17 ♔d3 was played as a winning try by White!

#### 17...d5!

If 17...e5?! 18 ♖d2! ♖g6+ 19 ♔c3 the white ♔ finds a secure position (Marchisotti).

#### 18 ♜d1

This was a dubious innovation in this game. Also bad are 18 ♜xg4? e5 or 18 ♞e5? d4! 19 ♙xd4 (19 ♞xg4 ♞e5+!) 19...♞xd4 — von Feilitzsch; while 18 ♖d2 ♖g6+! 19 ♔c3 ♖e4 20 ♖d3? (20 cxd5) 20...gxf3! 21 cxd5 exd5! 22 ♖xe4 dxe4 23 ♔d2 g6 gave Black a favourable ending in Egli-Stalda, corr 1933.

Instead 18 ♖c1 is reckoned to be critical. Black has two tries here:

a) 18...dxc4+ 19 ♖xc4 (19 ♔xc4 ♜f4+ 20 ♔b3 e5) 19...♜d8+ when according to ‘ECO’ Black has an attack and a clear advantage. Marchisotti’s view that this line is good for White seems doubtful. Play can go 20 ♔c2 (20 ♙d4? ♜xd4+!) 20...♙b7 21 ♖xg4 (21 ♜xg4 is probably not good against 21...♜ac8 — though White can take on g7, Black will hit back on the c-file.) 21...♞xb4+! and now:

a1) 22 axb4 ♜ac8+ 23 ♙c3 (not 23 ♔b1 ♜d1+ or 23 ♔b3 ♖e3+ and mates) 25...♜xc3+! 26 ♔xc3 ♖e3+ 27 ♔b2 (or 27 ♔c2 ♙e4+) 27...♜d2+! 28 ♞xd2 ♖xd2+ 29 ♔b1 ♖d1+ 30 ♔b2 ♖d2+ with a draw by perpetual check in Botvinnik-Miasodov, Leningrad 1931 (though

with 17 ♖f2 ♖h4+ 18 ♖e3 ♖h6+ inserted before 19 ♖d3).

a2) 22 ♖xb4!? ♖ac8+ 23 ♙c3 ♙xf3 24 exf3 a5 and here Dr Meyer proposed 25 ♖c4 “!” (25 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7) 25...♖xc4 26 ♙xc4 ♖xh2+ 27 ♖b3 g6 28 ♙xe6+ ♖f8 29 a4 with an endgame favourable to White. I don't believe this, because of 25...b5! 26 ♖e2 (not 26 ♖xb5? ♖d2+ or 26 ♖xg7+ ♖f8!) 26...♖xc3+! 27 ♖xc3 ♖f6+ followed by 28...♖xa1 and Black wins. In this line White should prefer 24 ♖d1! which leads to a draw after 24...♖xc3+! 25 ♖xc3 ♙e4+ 26 ♖d3 ♖xd3 27 exd3 ♖xh2+ 28 ♙g2!.

b) 18...♖f4! is stronger. Dührssen-Schmidt, corr 1939, continued 19 ♖e3 ♙a6 20 ♗e1 ♖d8 21 ♙g2 ♖f3 22 ♙xf3 dxc4+ 23 ♖e4 ♖g6+ 24 ♖f4 and now Black could have taken a draw by 24...♖h6+ 25 ♖e4 ♖g6+ says Marchisotti; but in fact Black could have won with either 21...♗d4! or 19...e5!-+. White is also in difficulties after 19 ♗e5 ♙b7, e.g. 20 ♗xc6 ♙xc6 21 ♙e5 ♖g6+ 22 ♖d2 ♖xc4 23 ♖b2 ♖f8, while 19 ♗d2 can be met by 19...♖xh2 or 19...e5.

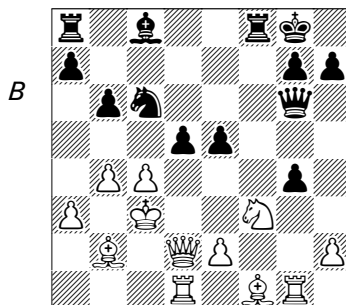
### 18...e5

18...d4 Δ...♖g6+ is also strong; White dare not capture on e5 because of the reply ...♙f5+.

### 19 ♖d2 ♖g6+

19...♖f4!? also comes into consideration, but not 19...e4+? 20 ♖c2 exf3 21 ♖xh6 gxh6 22 exf3 with a superior ending for White — Marchisotti.

### 20 ♖c3! (D)



B

If 20 ♖e3 d4!+ 21 ♖f2 ♖h5 -+.

### 20...d4+! 21 ♖b3

21 ♗xd4 exd4+ or 21...♗xd4 leaves Black a clear pawn ahead.

### 21...♙e6!

The white ♖ becomes a target again. Black threatens 22...♙xc4+ 23 ♖xc4 ♗a5+ and mates, e.g. 24 bxa5 ♖ac8+ 25 ♖b3 ♖e6+ (or ...♖f7+) 26 ♖a4 ♖c6+ and 27...♖c4#.

### 22 ♗g5

This rules out the ♙ sacrifice by preventing a black ♖ check from e6 or f7 (as in the last note). If 22 ♖a2 a5!.

### 22...b5 23 ♗xe6

23 e4 ♖xf1 24 ♖gxf1 ♙xc4+ 25 ♖c2 ♙xf1 26 ♖xf1 h6 regains the piece.

### 23...bxc4+ 24 ♖a2 ♖xe6 25 ♖b1 a5 26 ♙g2

If 26 b5 ♖ab8! 27 a4 c3! 28 ♙xc3 (28 ♖c2? ♗b4!) 28...♖b3+ 29 ♖a1 (29 ♙b2? ♗b4 or 29 ♖b2? ♖xd1+) 29...dxc3 -+.

### 26...axb4 27 ♙xc6

If 27 axb4 ♖a2! and 28...c3.

### 27...c3!

This crushes all resistance.

### 28 ♙xa8 cxd2 29 ♙e4 bxa3 30 ♙xa3 ♖b3+! 31 ♙b2 ♖e3 32 ♙d5+ ♖h8 33 ♖g2 d3! 0-1

# Game 16

**White: Paul Keres (Estonia)**

**Black: Dr Eduard Dyckhoff (Germany)**

IFSB Olympiad preliminary A board 1, 1935-37

*Ruy Lopez, Open Variation (C83)*

**The Players:** Keres was introduced in Game 14. Dyckhoff (1880-1949) was greatly involved as a player, writer and organiser in popularising postal chess in Germany. IFSB champion in 1930, he made several important contributions to the development of Tarrasch's Defence to the Queen's Gambit, 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 c5, which he played all his life. In 1954-56 a large tournament was held in his memory, with about 2,000 players from 30 countries including a top section (won by GM Lothar Schmid) that was as strong as a world championship.

**About this game:** This, one of the most famous drawn games, is also a clash of the generations, and a struggle between a CC specialist and a great talent who was fast approaching one of the first peaks of his career, the 1938 AVRO tournament.

This game has been analysed by many people but never completely "solved". After White achieves a slight opening advantage and launches an attack, Black finds a courageous defensive plan. Keres declines to take an easy draw and the resulting struggle gives both players winning and losing

chances right down to the endgame. My analysis reopens the question of whether Keres missed a win at move 32; I think not, but the reply Dyckhoff said he intended would have lost!

**1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♘xe4 6 d4 b5 7 ♙b3 d5 8 dxе5 ♙e6 9 c3 ♙e7 10 ♙e3 0-0 11 ♘bd2**

Although lines like 9 ♘bd2 ♘c5 10 c3 d4 have become more critical, this position is also quite popular and can arise via 9 ♙e3.

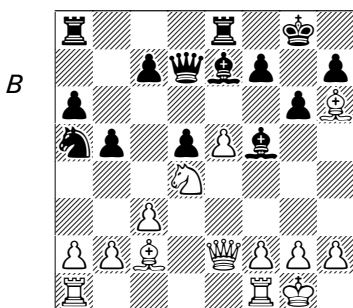
**11...♘xd2**

Black need not fear the immediate exchange on e4 and nowadays 11...♙d7 is more usual. This move was played against Keres in another postal game around the same time: 12 ♙c2 f5 13 exf6 ♘xf6 14 ♙b1 ♙g4? (14...♖h8!) 15 h3! ♙xh3?! 16 ♘g5! (Accepting the sacrifice would be dangerous.) 16...♘g4!? 17 ♘xh3 ♙d6 18 ♙e1! d4 19 cxd4 ♙h2+ 20 ♖f1 ♙b4 21 ♙b3+! ♖h8 22 ♙e4! ♙xd2 23 ♙xg4 ♙xe1 24 ♙xe1 ♙ae8 25 ♘g1 ♙d6 26 ♘f3 with two ♙s for a ♙ (1-0, 36) Keres-G.Friedemann, Estonia corr 1935. Later Keres proposed 12 ♙e1.

12 ♖xd2 ♜d7 13 ♜d3

Many years later, Keres tried both 13 ♜ad1 and 13 ♙g5 in games against Unzicker, but Hungarian writer Egon Varnusz says that Keres himself later regarded the move he had played against Dyckhoff as best.

13... ♘a5 14 ♙c2 g6 15 ♙h6 ♙f5 16 ♜e2 ♜fe8 17 ♘d4 (D)



GM Mikhail Krasenkov in his 1995 book on the Open Spanish assesses this position as follows: “With better chances for White as Black’s kingside is weak”.

17... ♙xc2 18 ♘xc2

‘Chess Mail’ gave FIDE GM Alexander Baburin this game to annotate, without telling him who the players were. His comment here was: “White’s plan is interesting — he is going to play something like ♜ad1, ♘e3 and f2-f4-f5. On e3, White’s ♘ will be much more useful than on f3 and this is the whole point of his 17<sup>th</sup> move. Black has to do something about this plan soon and his reaction seems to be logical.”

18... ♙d6 19 f4 f6

Baburin: “The only drawback of this plan is that Black weakens his kingside while one of his pieces is idle on the opposite wing. This factor begins to influence the game from now on.”

This position does not seem to have occurred in OTB master games, but CC players (knowing this game) have sometimes followed it and a few examples are mentioned below.

20 ♜d3 fxe5

An unsuccessful attempt to improve for Black was 20... ♙c5+ 21 ♖h1 ♙f8 22 ♙xf8 ♜xf8 23 f5 fxe5 24 fxg6 c6 25 ♘e3 ♘c4 26 gxh7+ ♜xh7 27 ♘f5 ♜ae8 28 ♜g3+ ♖h8 29 ♜g5 ♜f7 30 ♘h6 ♜g7 31 ♜h4 ♘e3 32 ♜f6 ♜xg2 33 ♜f7 1-0 A.Poulsen-S.From, Danish CC Ch 1984.

21 f5

Baburin wrote that “if White would be looking for safety, he could have played 21 ♜xd5+ ♜e6 22 ♘e3. Yet, then after 22...exf4 23 ♙xf4 ♙xf4 24 ♜xf4 ♜ad8 Black is OK. Here in a OTB game Black might feel uneasy, but I guess that playing CC he had more time to work out the sequences of his idea with 18... ♙d6 & 19...f6!”.

21... ♙c5+

21...e4 22 ♜xd5+ ♜f7 23 ♘e3 led to a ♜ exchange and a draw in O.Smith-G.Lagland, 4<sup>th</sup> CC World Ch sf 1958-61 (½-½, 52).

Baburin makes the interesting suggestion of 21...c6. “After 22 fxg6 e4 Black is fine. Maybe then White would have to play 22 b3, limiting the a5-♘ for a while.”

22 ♖h1 e4 23 ♜g3 ♙d6 24 ♜g5

White wants to retain the threat of f6 and build up pressure, while Black is trying to create a situation where his passed e-pawn will be significant. Both sides want to improve the position of their queenside ♖s and ♗s without losing time.

#### 24...♖e5!

Not 24...♗e7? 25 f6 ♗d8 26 ♗e3 and 24...♗e7 25 ♗g4! ♗f7 26 ♗e3 ♖e5 (Better 26...♗c4) 27 ♗f4! simply loses Black a tempo.

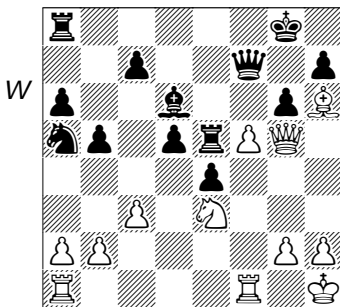
Then Wolfgang Heidenfeld, in his book 'Draw!', gave the variation 27...♖e8 (27...♖e7 28 ♗xd6 cxd6 29 f6 ♖e8 30 ♗f5) 28 ♗xd6 cxd6 29 fxg6 ♗xg6 but here I disagree with his continuation 30 ♗xg6+ hxg6 31 ♗xd5 "and wins" because after 31...♖e5 Black is back in the game.

Instead, White should probably play 30 ♗h4 (30 ♗d1!?) 30...♖e5 and now 31 ♖f6 or 31 ♖ad1.

Also, White might do without ♗xd6, i.e. 27...♖e8 28 fxg6 ♗xg6 29 ♗xg6+ hxg6 30 ♗xd5±, though there's still a lot of play left.

#### 25 ♗e3 ♗f7 (D)

Black needs to bring the ♗ into



the game, but the hasty 25...♗c4? loses in view of 26 ♗g4 ♖xf5 27 ♗f6+ ♖xf6 28 ♗xd5+. If 25...♗e7 White probably does best to play 26 ♗g4! ♗f7 27 ♗f4 transposing to the previous note.

#### 26 ♗h4!

Heidenfeld wrote: "The peak of the attack. White threatens 27 fxg6 ♗xg6 28 ♖f6 followed by ♗g3+". However, since the attack does not win, attempts have been made to find a stronger line for White:

a) Baburin wrote that: "At first it seems that the endgame after 26 fxg6 ♗xg6 27 ♗xg6+ hxg6 28 ♗f4 ♖e6 29 ♗xd5 is better for White, as his pawn structure is more sound. Yet, after 29...c6 30 ♗e3 ♗c5 Black has enough play, threatening to continue with ...♗xe3 and ...♗c4. If White tries to stop it by 31 b3 then after 31...♖d8 32 ♖ad1 ♖d3 Black is fine again."

Heidenfeld gave similar play but instead of 30...♗c5, he suggested 30...♗xf4 31 ♖xf4 ♖d8 32 ♖d1 ♖d3, which seems even better.

This compares unfavourably for White with the 24...♗e7 25 ♗g4 ♗f7 26 ♗e3 ♖e5 variation, as there (27 ♗f4) 27...♖e6! was impossible since he still had a pawn on f5. Furthermore, 26 ♗g4(?) here reaches the same position but with Black to move!

b) Heidenfeld gave quite a lot of space to a scornful rebuttal of 26 b3, which seeks to shut the black ♗ out of c4. This move was recommended by Dr Edmund Adam in the German magazine 'Caissa', May 1949. Now:

b1) Heidenfeld dismisses Adam's 26...♗h8 as "at this stage quite senseless". His opinion is borne out by the continuation of a game Adam may have seen, H.Ahman-H.Brynhammar, Swedish CC Ch 1948: 27 ♖h4 gxf5 28 ♙f4 ♚e6 29 ♙xd6 cxd6 30 ♚xf5 ♖g7 31 ♚af1 ♚h6 32 ♖f4 ♚g6 33 ♚f7 ♖h6 34 ♗xd5 ♖xf4 35 ♚1xf4 ♚g5 36 ♗f6 ♚g7 37 ♗xe4 ♚xf7 38 ♚xf7 ♚e8 39 ♚xh7+ ♗xh7 40 ♗f6+ ♗g6 41 ♗xe8 ♗b7 42 ♗g1 1-0.

b2) 26...♗c6! 27 ♖h4 ♗e7 28 fxg6 (28 f6? ♚h5!) 28...♖xg6 (28...♗xg6) and if 29 ♚f6 ♖h5 30 ♖g3+ ♗g6 31 ♙f4 (31 ♗g4 ♚g5!) 31...♗h8 was Heidenfeld's line, which seems to give Black a good game. The main question is whether White can improve on it by 28 g4 or 29 g4, or earlier by 27 ♚ad1.

**26...♗c4**

Dyckhoff gave his move '!!' and analysed the alternatives as follows:

a) 26...♙e7 27 ♖g3 ♙d6 28 ♙f4 ♚ee8 29 ♙xd6 cxd6 30 ♗g4!. However 30...♗h8 defends, so instead White should play either 30 b3, or else 29 fxg6 ♖xg6 30 ♖xg6+ hxg6 31 ♗xd5 with the same endgame as after 24...♖e7.

b) 26...♗h8 27 ♙g5 ♙e7 28 ♖g3, or 26...♙f8 27 fxg6 ♖xg6 28 ♚f6 ♖h5 29 ♖g3+ ♗h8 30 ♚xf8+, or 26...♚xf5 27 ♗xf5 gxf5 28 ♖g5+ ♖g6 29 ♚xf5 (Dyckhoff), or 26...gxf5 27 ♙f4 ♚e6 28 ♙xd6 cxd6 and here 29 ♚xf5 seems better than Dyckhoff's 29 ♗xf5.

**27 fxg6**

27 ♗g4 ♚xf5 28 ♗f6+ ♗h8 gives

White nothing, said Dyckhoff. 27 ♗xc4 bxc4 28 fxg6 ♖xg6 29 ♚f6 is also met by 29...♚h5 30 ♚xg6+ hxg6 and Black's chances seem better with the ♗s off the board than in the game. **27...♖xg6 28 ♚f6 ♚h5**

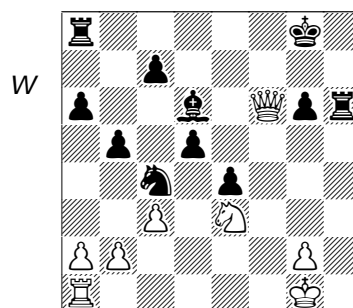
Black allows his ♖ to be captured with check; this is the only saving line. Far from this being a last-minute inspiration, Baburin says: "I am sure that both players foresaw this move a long time ago, perhaps as early as around move 19, when play on the kingside started."

**29 ♚xg6+ hxg6 30 ♖f6**

White plays for more complications because the endgame arising after 30 ♖xh5 gxh5 31 ♗xd5 ♗h7 (31...♗xb2!?) 32 ♙f4 c6! only offers winning chances to Black.

Baburin made the comment that: "As computer analysis shows, in this game both players never really left the 'safety zone', despite all the tactical fireworks." When I mentioned this opinion to Estonian master Valter Heuer, friend and biographer of Keres, he said he was sure Keres was really trying to win this game.

**30...♚xh2+ 31 ♗g1 ♚xh6 (D)**



This is a critical moment to take stock. White has “won” his opponent’s ♖, but in return Black has ♜, ♙ and two pawns which is a full material equivalent. Each side has an insecure ♘ position and an undeveloped ♜. There are also weak pawns on both sides but the passed black e-pawn is a real danger to White.

### 32 ♖g5!

Instead 32 ♘g4 ♙c5+ 33 ♘f1 ♘e3+ (33...♜h1+) 34 ♘e2 ♘xg4 35 ♖e6+ ♘g7 36 ♗d7+ ♘h8 37 ♖xg4 ♜f8 38 ♜f1 ♜xf1 39 ♘xf1 ♙b6 40 ♖e6 ♜h1+ 41 ♘e2 ♘g7 42 ♖xd5 e3 is a line from Heidenfeld’s book.

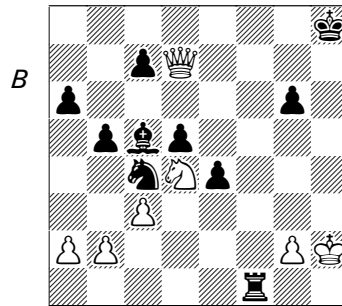
Dyckhoff said Keres’ move 32 ♖g5 was probably best, but his analysis of the alternative 32 ♘f5!? was deeply flawed. Since 32...gxf5? 33 ♖xh6 is out of the question, Black must play 32...♙c5+ and now there are two lines.

a) 33 ♘f1 is worth considering, because after 33...♘e3+ (where Heidenfeld stops) 34 ♘e2 (34 ♘xe3?? ♜f8) 34...♘xf5 35 ♖e6+ Black will lose his ♙! For example, 35...♘h7 (35...♘g7 36 ♖xd5) 36 ♖f7+ (36 ♖xd5?! ♜h2) 36...♘g7 37 ♖xd5 ♜h2 38 ♖xc5 (Not 38 ♖xa8?? ♜xg2+ and ...♙g1+ wins the a1–♜.) 38...♜xg2+ 39 ♘e3. However, Black can obtain sufficient counterplay here by 39...♘f5+ 40 ♘f4 (40 ♘xe4? ♜e8+) 40...♜e8 with a strong passed e-pawn and play against the exposed white ♘.

b) Therefore 33 ♘d4 is the main try, which has received the most attention: Now if 33...♙d6 then 34

♘f5 repeats the position, but instead 34 ♘e6! has a threat of mate and White looks much better here (e.g. 34...♙h2+ 35 ♘f2 ♙e5 36 ♖g5 ♜h7 37 ♘e2!).

So Black would reply 33...♜f8 34 ♖e6+ ♘h7 35 ♗d7+ ♘h8 36 ♜f1! ♜h1+ 37 ♘xh1 ♜xf1+ 38 ♘h2 (*D*) bringing about what I see as the critical position for the 32 ♘f5 line.



Dyckhoff does not have a perpetual check, several of his pawns are vulnerable, and the white ♘ threatens to go to e6 creating mate threats. So Black needs a definite forcing continuation. What should he play?

b1) Dyckhoff said he intended 38...♙d6+? 39 g3 ♘e3 (Not 39...♘e5? 40 ♖h3+ picking up the ♜.) 40 ♘e6 ♘f5 41 ♖e8+ ♘h7 42 ♖f7+ ♘h6, and here previous annotators examined 43 ♖g8 (♠♖h8#) 43...♙xg3+ 44 ♘g2 ♜f2+ 45 ♘g1 ♘h5 46 ♖h7+ ♘h6 when 47 ♘g7+! ♘g5 48 ♘e6+ draws by perpetual check, but overlooking the defence 43...♙e5! stopping all threats (e.g. 44 ♘f8 ♙xg3+ 45 ♘h3 ♜h1+ 46 ♘g2



♖h2+ followed by 47...♗h4) and giving Black good chances.

However, that is academic because it was also overlooked that 43 ♖f6! wins. On f6 the ♖ still threatens 44 ♖h8#, but prevents the 43...♙e5 defence, while 43...♗g7 allows 44 ♖h4#. After 43...♙xg3+ 44 ♖h3 ♖h1+ 45 ♖g2 ♖h2+ 46 ♖g1 Black has run out of useful moves.

This does not mean that Keres would have won the game if he had played 32 ♗f5!. It is well known in chess that players may plan a certain continuation but never critically examine it if the opponent diverges, and so the incorrect analysis appears in their published notes. Yet if the position had actually arisen in the game, they would have taken a deeper look and maybe seen what they had previously missed.

In the diagram position, Black has two other moves worth considering, which I have never seen analysed in print:

b2) 38...e3!? 39 ♗e6 ♙d6+ (If 39...♙f8 40 ♖e8! e2 41 ♗xf8 e1 ♖? 42 ♗e6+ ♖h7 43 ♖e7+ mates, or 40...♗d6 41 ♖xg6 and White is making progress.) 40 g3 ♙e5 41 ♗g5 ♖g8 42 ♖xd5+ ♖f8 (or 42...♖g7 43 ♖d7+ ♖f8) but now 43 ♖d8+ ♖g7 44 ♖e7+ ♖g8 (44...♖h6 45 ♗f7+) 45 ♖h7+ ♖f8 46 ♗e6+ ♖e8 47 ♖xg6+ ♖e7 48 ♗c5! looks good for White.

It seems that Black must eliminate the attacking ♗:

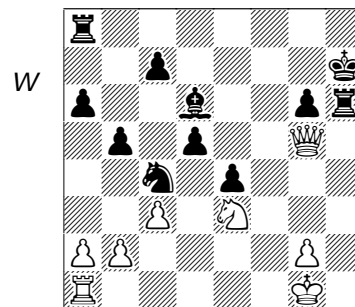
b3) 38...♙xd4! 39 cxd4 ♖f2 40 b3 (If 40 ♖xd5 ♖xg2+! 41 ♖h3

♖xb2) 40...♗d6 41 ♖xc7 ♗f5 may be sufficient to draw, because if 42 ♖e5+ ♖h7 43 ♖g1 (Again 43 ♖xd5? ♖xg2+!) 43...♖xa2 44 g4 ♗e3 White cannot create a passed pawn.

Furthermore, Black has an earlier alternative that may even be better. After 32 ♗f5 ♙c5+ 33 ♗d4 ♖f8 34 ♖e6+ there is 34...♖h8!? 35 ♖f1 ♖h1+ 36 ♖xh1 ♖xf1+ 37 ♖h2 ♙d6+ 38 g3 and now 38...♖g7!≠ although White may be able to draw.

So it seems Keres made the right call again. Let us now return to the actual course of the game.

**32...♖h7 (D)**



Now Black's various strong threats (...♙c5+, ...♖f8 and ...♙h2+) make it hard for White to avoid a draw.

**33 ♗g4!**

This seems to be the only move. Again there are serious mistakes in Dyckhoff's notes, which were republished in the book of his memorial tournament.

a) 33 ♖f1 ♗xe3! 34 ♖xe3 ♙h2+ 35 ♖f2 ♖f8+ 36 ♖e2 ♖xf1 37 ♖xf1 ♙d6≠ seems correct.

b) 33 ♖xc4? bxc4 34 ♗xd5 ♜f8. Here Dyckhoff's notes say the game will end in perpetual check, but Black is winning easily. 34...♜f8 threatens 35...♙h2+ 36 ♖h1 ♙f4+ 37 ♖g1 ♙e3#, while if 35 g4 (or 35 g3) 35...♜h3! followed by 36...♜g3+ and White will soon have to give up his ♗ to avoid mate.

c) 33 ♗xd5? ♜f8 is another line which Dyckhoff says is a draw, but actually wins for Black, for if 34 ♖g4 ♜h5! enables ...♙c5+.

Even after the move given by Dyckhoff, namely 34...♖e3, White is losing. Presumably he was thinking of 35 ♖xe3 ♙h2+ but this leads to mate, not a perpetual; i.e. 36 ♖h1 ♙f4+! 37 ♖g1 ♙xe3#.

33...♙c5+ 34 ♖f1 ♜h1+

Black could decline the ♜ offer.

After 34...♖e3+ 35 ♖xe3 ♜h5 36 ♗g4 ♙xe3 37 ♖e2 ♙b6 38 ♜f1 it's Black who may need to be careful according to Baburin. Dyckhoff's analysis continues 38...♜g8 39 ♜f7+ (possibly not best) 39...♜g7 40 ♜f8 ♙c5 and his final comment was "but in this variation, White has more winning chances".

So Keres would have welcomed 34...♖e3+ as giving Black an opportunity to go wrong.

35 ♖e2 ♜xa1 36 ♗h6+

36 ♖f6+ ♖g7 37 ♖h5+ ♖h7 is just a draw, as Dyckhoff pointed out.

36...♖g8 37 ♗xg6+ ♖h8!

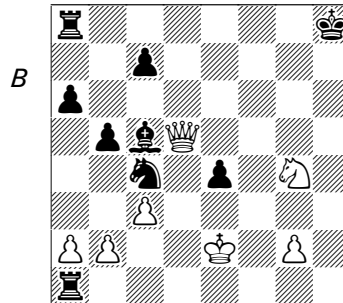
Dyckhoff avoided a trap here: 37...♖f8? 38 ♗f6+ ♖g8 39 ♖h6+ ♖h7 40 ♖f5! ♙f8 41 ♗f7+ ♖h8 42 ♖h4! ♙g7? (42...♖e5 is better

but will also lose after 43 ♗h5+ ♖g8 44 ♗xe5 c6 45 ♗e6+ and ♗xc6.) 43 ♗h5+ ♖g8 44 ♗xd5+ and ♗xa8.

38 ♗f6+ ♖h7 39 ♗h6+ ♖g8 40 ♗g5+ ♖h8

Against correct defence, Keres has been unable to break down the black position. However, he did not want to take the immediate draw since he can probe a bit more. That suited Dyckhoff too, as Black can set his own traps.

41 ♗xd5!? (D)



Keres finds the best way to keep the game going. In other lines it is risky for White to spurn the perpetual check, e.g. 41 ♖e5 ♜f8 and if 42 ♖g6+?! ♖h7 43 ♖xf8+ ♙xf8 44 ♗f5+ ♖g7 (Heidenfeld), or 41 ♗h6+ ♖g8 42 ♗g6+ ♖h8 and if 43 ♖h6? ♜f8 44 ♖f7+ ♜xf7 45 ♗xf7 ♙d6.

The main alternative was 41 ♖f6 ♜h1 42 ♖h5 ♙f8 and now if 43 ♗xd5!? (43 ♗f6+ still draws.) Black can choose between the safe 43...♜b8 44 b3 ♖d6 45 ♗e5+ ♖h7= (Dyckhoff), and 43...c6!? leading to a messy ending where Black has a

nominal material advantage but must cope with White's passed pawns: 44 ♖xc6 ♜xh5 45 ♜xa8 ♜g8 46 ♜xa6 ♜d6, e.g. 47 a4 ♜g5 48 ♜f2 bxa4 49 ♜xa4 ∞.

**41...♜f8 42 ♜h5+ ♜g7 43 ♜xc5!**

Black wanted to tempt his opponent into an unsound winning try with 43 ♜g5+ ♜h7 44 ♜f6+? (44 ♜h5+ still draws.) 44...♜xf6 45 ♜xf6 and now:

a) 45...♜d6! when White no longer has a clear draw because the black ♜ will find refuge on the queenside; e.g. 46 ♜f7+ ♜h8! 47 ♜f6+ ♜g8 48 ♜g6+ ♜f8 49 ♜f5+ ♜e7 50 ♜xe4+ ♜d7, while White does not have time to advance the g-pawn, i.e. 47 g4 ♜xa2 48 g5 ♜xb2+ 49 ♜e1 e3 50 g6? ♜g3+ and mates.

b) 45...♜e3 (given by Dyckhoff) is inferior as White can then again draw by 46 ♜f7+ or 46 g4 ♜xa2 47 ♜f7+ (instead of the blunder 47 g5? ♜xb2+).

**43...♜ff1 44 ♜xc7+**

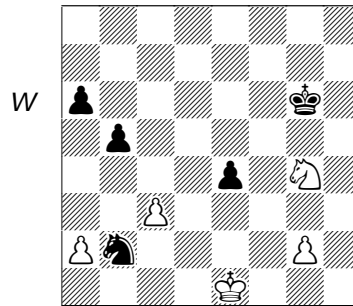
44 ♜d4+? ♜g6 45 ♜xe4+ ♜g5 was another pitfall that had to be avoided.

**44...♜g6 45 ♜g3**

White threatens to break his opponent's coordination with discovered ♜ checks or b2-b3, so the reply is forced.

If instead 45 ♜e5+ ♜xe5 46 ♜xe5 ♜ae1+ 47 ♜d2 e3+ 48 ♜d3 ♜d1+ 49 ♜c2 (49 ♜e2 ♜de1+ repeats the position.) 49...♜d2+ 50 ♜b3 ♜ff2 White has nothing better now than to seek perpetual.

**45...♜ae1+ 46 ♜xe1 ♜xe1+ 47 ♜xe1 ♜xb2 (D)**



**48 ♜d2**

White still tries to create difficulties. 48 ♜e3 ♜f6 49 ♜d5+ ♜e5 50 ♜c7 ♜a4 51 ♜xa6 (or 51 ♜d2 e3+ Heidenfeld) 51...e3 will quickly lead to a draw, according to Dyckhoff.

**48...♜f5**

48...♜c4+ 49 ♜e2 followed by ♜e3 would give White a few chances, said Dyckhoff. Black improves his ♜ position instead.

**49 ♜e3+ ♜f4**

This is more forcing than 49...♜e5 50 g3 when White might be able to make use of his outside passed pawn.

**50 ♜d5+ ♜e5**

50...♜g3? 51 ♜e3! gives White winning chances because his ♜ is much closer to the queenside pawns.

**51 ♜c7 ♜c4+ 52 ♜e2 ♜a3**

This threatens ...a5, so forcing the reply, but either way Black is able to reduce the material.

**53 ♜xa6 ♜b1 54 ♜b4!**

54 c4 bxc4 55 ♜b4 would set up a passed a-pawn but 55...♜a3 blockades it, and White has still not made certain of the draw.

**54...♜xc3+ 55 ♜d2 ♜b1+ ½-½**

# Game 17

**White: Franz Herzog (Czechoslovakia)**

**Black: Professor Dr Milan Vidmar (Yugoslavia)**

IFSB Championship, 1936-37

*Queen's Gambit Declined (D61)*

**The Players:** Herzog (born 1897) was a Sudetenlander (ethnic German) who played in several IFSB Championships. He emigrated to Germany in 1946 and I don't know what happened to him after that.

Vidmar (1885-1962), the chess hero of Slovenia, was a distinguished engineer. He was recognised as a GM after coming second to Rubinstein at San Sebastian 1911 and further excellent results followed after the First World War. He played little postal chess, but won the only major event in which he competed.

**About this game:** The 1936 IFSB Championship took almost two years to complete, and there were complications due to withdrawals, particularly of Paul Keres due to his increasing involvement in professional chess. This helped Dr Vidmar to finish (with 11½/14) a point ahead of Dyckhoff in a field that included eminent masters such as Napolitano, Balogh and Adam.

Vidmar first annotated this game in 'Fernschach' 4-5/1938 and later in his book 'Goldene Schachzeiten'. It also appears in 'Faszination Fernschach' by Ludwig Steinkohl.

**1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 e6**

**5 ♙g5 ♗bd7 6 e3 ♙e7**

Masters now consider Black's variation passive but, as Steinkohl rightly remarks, Dr Vidmar belonged to that generation, along with Lasker and Capablanca, who sought to use their great knowledge of chess in the middlegame and the subtleties of the endgame. Now 7 ♖c1 is a major alternative.

**7 ♖c2 0-0**

Because Black reached this position via the Semi-Slav, he lacks some options available after the standard sequence 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 (or 3...♙e7 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 ♙g5 0-0 6 e3) 4 ♙g5 ♙e7 5 e3 0-0 6 ♘f3 ♗bd7 7 ♖c2. There, 7...c6 is regarded as passive compared with the normal 7...c5 or 7...h6.

**8 ♖d1 a6**

8...b6!? is the modern line.

**9 ♙d3**

Pachman (1963) recommended 9 a3 ♖e8 10 ♙d3 b5 11 c5 h6 12 ♙f4 (12 ♙h4 e5! 13 dxe5 ♘g4=) 12...♙xc5! 13 dxc5 e5 14 ♙g3 e4 15 ♙e2 exf3 16 gxf3! ♘e5 (16...♘xc5? 17 ♘xb5) 17 f4 ♘g6 (17...♘c4 18 ♙h4) 18 ♖g1 ± (Bogoljubow-Spielmann, Sliac 1932). In view of his comment at move

11, below, I think it is safe to assume Vidmar knew that game and had some improvement in mind.

Another plan is 9 c5!? h6 10 ♖h4 ♜e8 11 b4 e5 12 dxe5 ♘g4 13 ♖g3 ♘f8 14 e4 ♘gxe5 15 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 16 ♖e2 and White was better in Curt Hansen-Seitaj, Thessaloniki OL 1984, but Hansen suggested 11...b6!?.

### 9...h6

9...b5?! is premature because of 10 cxd5 cxd5 11 ♘e5 — Pachman.

### 10 ♖h4

Black has little to fear after this retreat. 10 ♖f4 is more testing and 10...dxc4 11 ♖xc4 b5 12 ♖e2 ♗b6 13 g4! was good for White in Pachman-Kholmov, Moscow 1947. However, 'ECO' cites Botvinnik analysis that goes 10...c5 11 cxd5 ♘xd5 12 ♘xd5 exd5 13 dxc5 ♘xc5=; Black's active pieces balance the weakness of the isolated d-pawn.

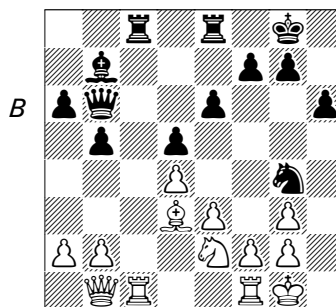
### 10...♞e8 11 0-0 b5

Vidmar said in 'Fernschach' that he studied to learn this variation, "one of the hardest in the orthodox defence to the Queen's Gambit", in detail.

### 12 cxb5

White should play 12 c5, despite Vidmar's 12...e5, as he can continue 13 dxe5 ♘g4 14 ♖g3 ♖xc5 (14... ♘f8 15 e6!) 15 ♘e2! (Δ 16 h3) 15... ♗b6 16 ♖c1 ♘f8 and now either 17 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 18 ♞xc6 ♘gxe5 19 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 20 ♖xe5 ♞xe5 21 ♘d4, or better 17 e6! fxe6 18 ♖g6 ♞e7 (or ...♞d8) 19 ♗xc6.

12...cxb5 13 ♖g3 ♖b7 14 ♞c1 ♞c8 15 ♗b1 ♗b6 16 ♘e5 ♘xe5 17 ♖xe5 ♘g4 18 ♖g3 ♖d6 19 ♘e2 ♖xg3 20 hxg3 (D)



20 ♘xg3 was possibly better but White wanted to play his ♘ to c5.

### 20...♞xc1

Due to the tournament situation at this stage (he was losing to Keres), Vidmar had to avoid a draw. White threatens 21 ♞xc8 ♞xc8 22 ♞c1 and would stand better if Black then conceded the c-file. Therefore Black must play for ...e5 and this determines the choice here.

### 21 ♘xc1

Consistent with his 20<sup>th</sup> move. If White recaptures with the ♞, then the manoeuvre ...♗d8-f6 attacks f2.

### 21...♗d8 22 ♘b3 g6

This waiting move sets a little positional trap. Black cannot play ...e5 at once, because the ♘ could go from b3 into d4, but if the ♘ is on c5 then the ...e5 advance will be more powerful (see move 24).

### 23 ♘c5

If 23 ♖xg6 ♗g5! followed by ...♗h5 after the ♖ goes away.

### 23...♖c8 24 a4 e5! 25 axb5

If 25 dxe5 Vidmar intended 25... ♗e7, but it allows White a trick with 26 e6! (26...♗xc5? 27 exf7+ ♔xf7 28 ♖xg6+ ♔f8 29 ♖xe8 ♔xe8 30

♖c1+-). Better again 25...♗g5! and if then 26 ♙e2 Black has 26...♞xe3! 27 fxe3? ♗xe3+ and ...♗xc5.

**25...♗g5 26 ♙e2**

Forced; otherwise 26...♗h5 etc.

**26...exd4 27 bxa6 dxe3 28 f4**

Black has created a very difficult position with all kinds of threats. White's hopes rest with his queenside passed pawns; Black has the prospect of breaking through in the centre with his central pawns and active pieces.

The text is probably best, Vidmar says, because ...♗h5 would not be so effective now. If instead 28 a7 perhaps he intended 28...♙f5 29 ♖a1 ♖a8 30 ♙xg4 ♙xg4 31 ♗a5 exf2+ followed by ...♗e7 winning the a-pawn.

28 ♙xg4 ♙xg4 29 ♗c2 might be better; e.g. 29...e2 30 ♖e1 ♖c8 31 b4 ♗e5 32 b5 ♗d4 33 a7! and White's pawns start to look dangerous. After 33...♗b4! (to stop b6) White can simplify with 34 ♞d3 ♗a5 35 ♖xe2! ♗xa7 36 ♗a2 to a position where he has some drawing chances. No doubt, however, Herzog was playing for a win.

**28...♗e7! 29 b4 ♞f6**

Vidmar said this retreat was the hardest move of the game. Its purpose was to retain the ♞, guarding d5, and arrange the exchange of the ♙s.

**30 ♗a2 ♙g4! 31 ♖a1**

Not 31 ♙xg4 ♞xg4 32 a7? e2 33 ♖e1 ♗e3+ 34 ♞h1 ♗xg3+-+. 32 ♖e1 is less clear, though probably winning; e.g. 32...♗f6 33 a7 (33 ♗xd5? ♗b2, or 33 ♗e2 ♗f5! Δ...♗h5 again) 33...♖a8 34 ♗xd5 ♖xa7 (Δ...♖a1) 35 ♗d1 ♗c3 36 ♞d3 ♖d7.

If 31 a7, Vidmar originally gave

the complicated reply 31...♙xe2 32 a8 ♗ ♙xf1 but he later decided that 31...♖a8 32 ♖a1 (or 32 ♙xg4 ♞xg4 33 ♗xd5 ♖xa7 34 ♖e1 ♗f6) 32...♙xe2 33 ♗xe2 ♖xa7+ would be a simpler continuation.

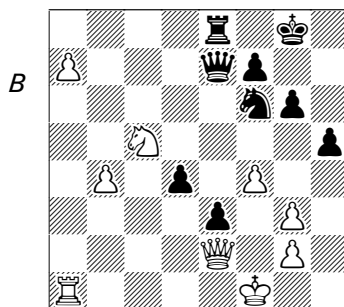
**31...h5 32 ♞f1**

The idea of this is to help blockade the advancing black e-pawn.

**32...♙xe2+ 33 ♗xe2**

Not 33 ♞e2? ♞e4+-.

**33...d4 34 a7 (D)**



According to Steinkohl's book, "Herzog later told Vidmar that when he played 34 a7 he believed he had the win in his pocket. The reply must have been a terrible awakening for him." Unfortunately Steinkohl does not say what White was expecting and it is hard to see how Herzog can have thought he was winning even after 34...♖a8. For example, 35 ♗a6? loses to 35...♞e4!, while if 35 ♗b5 (as in the game) Black is fine after 35...♗d8 intending ...d3, ...e2+ or ...♗d5.

**34...♞e4!? 35 ♗b5?**

The first point is that 35 a8 ♗ ♞xg3+ 36 ♞e1 ♞xe2 is clearly

winning for Black. The win after 35 ♖e1 ♗xg3 is not so straightforward; nevertheless if 36 ♖b5 ♖h7! 37 ♖d1 e2+ 38 ♖e1 ♖a8 39 ♖b7 ♖e3! 40 ♗e6 (40 ♖xf7+ ♖h6) 40...♖c3+ 41 ♖f2 ♗e4+! 42 ♖xe4 ♖xa1 -+.

It probably seemed to Herzog that the text move would lead to a dead drawn ♖ ending, but now Vidmar really displays his GM touch.

White could still have saved the game at this point by 35 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 36 ♖f3. Neither of Vidmar's suggestions wins, so far as I can see:

a) 36...♖e7 leads by force to a ♖ ending after 37 a8♖ e2+ 38 ♖g1 e1♖+ 39 ♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 40 ♖h2 ♖xa8 41 ♖xa8+ ♖g7 (41...♖h7 42 ♖a7) when, despite Black's advanced passed pawn, 42 b5! seems to hold, e.g. 42...d3 43 ♖d8! d2 44 ♖d4+ ♖h7 45 ♖d7 d1♖ 46 ♖xf7+ etc.

b) 36...e2+ 37 ♖e1 ♖e7 is foiled by 38 ♖a3! and if 38...d3 (38...♖a8 39 b5) 39 a8♖ d2+ 40 ♖xd2 e1♖+ 41 ♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 42 ♖c2 and Black has no more than a draw.

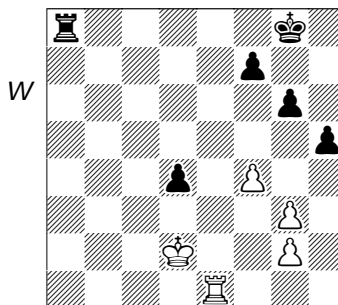
It seems that Black's much-praised 34<sup>th</sup> move should perhaps have been replaced by 34...♖a8= after all.

**35...e2+!**

Computers suggest 35...♗xg3+ but Vidmar had seen a complete liquidation to a winning endgame.

**36 ♖e1 ♗xc5 37 a8♖ ♗d3+! 38 ♖xd3 ♖xb4+ 39 ♖d2 ♖xd2+ 40 ♖xd2 e1♖+ 41 ♖xe1 ♖xa8 (D)**

Black's combination has resulted in a winning ♖ ending with an extra pawn and the superior kingside pawn structure.



**42 ♖d3 ♖a3+!**

At first sight, this is surprising. However, the key factor is that the white ♖ will be cut off from the g-pawn and a zugzwang will ensue.

**43 ♖xd4 ♖xg3 44 ♖e2**

A ♖ ending with 3 v 2 all on the same side and no passed pawn is generally drawn said Fine, but this is no ordinary case. The white ♖ cannot get to h2.

**44...♖g7 45 ♖e5 h4 46 ♖e4 f5+ 47 ♖e5 ♖d3! 0-1**

White resigned after Vidmar sent him his analysis of the final position. The white ♖ cannot leave the e-file because of ...♖e3+ followed by ...♖e4 when ...♖g7-h6-h5-g4 quickly decides the game, e.g. 48 ♖f2 ♖e3+ 49 ♖d6 ♖h6 etc. The ♖ cannot leave the second rank either: 48 ♖e1 ♖d2 49 ♖h1 ♖e2+ 50 ♖d5 ♖xg2 51 ♖xh4 ♖g4 52 ♖xg4 fxg4 53 ♖e4 ♖h6. Therefore it must remain at its post on e2, but that means the ♖ must move.

If 48 ♖e6, Vidmar first gave 48...♖d4 49 ♖e5 ♖d8! 50 ♖e3 ♖d2-+, while later 48...♖d8 (threatening to skewer the ♖) 49 ♖f2 ♖e8+ 50 ♖d5 ♖e4 followed by the ♖ march to g4 via h5.

# Game 18

**White: Gedeon Barcza (Hungary)**

**Black: Dr János Balogh (Hungary)**

Hungarian Jubilee CC tournament, 1943-44

*Réti Opening, Barcza System (A11)*

**The Players:** Gedeon Barcza (1911-86) was a FIDE GM and an IM of ICCF (1966). He was a subtle positional player and a great master of the endgame. From 1952-72 he edited the principal Hungarian chess magazine 'Magyar Sakkelet'.

Although primarily an OTB player (nine times champion of Hungary between 1942 and 1959), Barcza was a member of the Hungarian teams that won the IFSB Olympiad (where he played board 4 in the final, 1937-39) and the 1<sup>st</sup> global olympiad organised by ICCA after World War II (playing board 2 in both rounds).

Dr János Balogh (1892-1980) was one of the world's top postal players for more than 30 years and played the game from his youth until advanced age. He played in the first three CC World Championship Finals, yet Dr Balogh never got the GM title. Unlike later Olympiads, the best result on top board in CC Olympiad I did not qualify. An ethnic Hungarian who found himself a Romanian citizen after the Treaty of Versailles, he moved to Budapest in 1934. He played OTB for both countries.

In style, Balogh was the complete contrast to Barcza: a romantic tacti-

cian who loved unorthodox openings: for example, one of his experiments was 1 e4 d6 2 d4 f5?!. Undoubtedly, this self-handicapping is the main reason why he never became a CC grandmaster but he was a dangerous opponent for anyone.

**About this game:** This battle of chess styles took place in a tournament held, during the difficult years of World War II, to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Hungarian CC event (see Game 5). There was another game, with reverse colours, which ended in a draw.

**1** ♖f3 **d5** **2** g3

In contrast to the traditional Reti opening, 2 c4, Barcza preferred to fianchetto his ♗ first.

**2...** ♘f6 **3** ♕g2 ♕f5

3...c6! is more precise from a defensive point of view and also preserves the option of developing the ♗ at g4.

**4 c4!**

When Black has not played ...c6, there is no reason to delay this move. It needs no more preparation because of the weakness at b7.

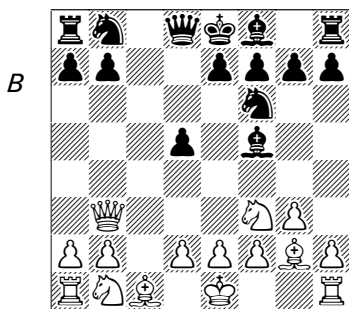
**4...c6**

4...e6 may be better. Or else 4...dxc4 5 ♖a4+ c6 6 ♖xc4 ♗bd7 or



5 ♖a3!? ♙e6!, e.g. 6 ♗g5 ♙d5 7 e4 ♙c6 8 ♗xc4 h6 (Dizdar-Korchnoi, Sarajevo 1984).

5 cxd5! cxd5 6 ♖b3 (D)



Black already faces an awkward choice.

6...♖c7?!

This move soon loses a tempo, and in later years 6...♖c8 was mostly played. You cannot blame Balogh for getting it wrong. This was probably one of the first, if not the earliest, game where what came to be known as the Barcza System was employed. Anyway, Barcza almost always won from this position, whatever Black did. Here are some examples:

a) 6...♖c8 7 ♗c3 e6 8 d3 ♗c6 9 ♙f4 and now:

a1) 9...♙e7 10 0-0 (10 ♗b5 0-0 11 ♗d6 ♙xd6 12 ♙xd6 ♖d8 13 ♙f4± Botvinnik 10...0-0 11 ♖ac1 ♗d7 12 e4 (12 ♗e5!? Korchnoi-Karpov, 15<sup>th</sup> match game 1974) 12...dxe4 13 dxe4 ♗xe4 14 ♗xe4 ♙xe4 15 ♗e5 ♗xe5 16 ♙xe4 ♗c6 17 ♖fd1 ♖c8 18 ♖a4 and Barcza proved that his initiative is worth more than the pawn

against Smyslov (Moscow 1956; 1-0, 40) although, in a later game, Malich got a draw.

a2) 9...♙b4?! 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖ac1 ♗d7 12 e4 ♙g6 13 ♗e5 ♗xe5 14 ♙xe5 ♙xc3 15 ♖xc3 dxe4 16 ♙xf6 gxf6 17 dxe4 e5 18 f4± (1-0, 46) Barcza-Kopetzky, Baden-Vienna 1961.

a3) 9...♗d7 10 0-0 ♗c5 11 ♖d1 f6?! 12 e4 dxe4 13 dxe4 ♙g4 14 h3 ♙h5 15 e5± (1-0, 33) Barcza-E.Nievergelt, Belgrade 1954.

b) 6...♗bd7 7 ♗c3 e5 8 ♗xd5 ♗c5 9 ♗xf6+ ♖xf6 10 ♖e3 ♗e6 11 d3 ♙d6 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♙d2 ♗d4 14 ♖ac1 ♙e6 15 ♙c3 ♗c6 16 a3 h6 17 d4 and Black has nothing for the sacrificed pawn (Barcza-Rossolimo, Leipzig OL 1960).

c) 6...♖b6 7 ♖xb6 axb6 8 ♗c3 ♗c6 9 d3 e6 10 ♙f4 (More energetic is 10 ♗b5! Portisch-Smyslov, Wijk aan Zee 1974.) 10...♙c5 11 0-0 was another line where Barcza won several games, e.g. against Gawlikowski, Szczawno Zdroj 1950.

d) 6...♙c8 7 d3 ♗c6 8 ♙f4 e6 9 ♗c3 ♙d6 10 ♙xd6 ♖xd6 11 ♗b5 ♖c7 12 ♖c1 0-0 13 ♗bd4 ♙d7 14 0-0± (1-0, 48) Barcza-Rossolimo, Venice 1949.

7 ♗c3 e6 8 d3! ♗bd7 9 ♙f4 ♖b6 10 ♖xb6!

10 ♗b5? allows Black to simplify by 10...♗c5! 11 ♗c7+ ♖xc7!.

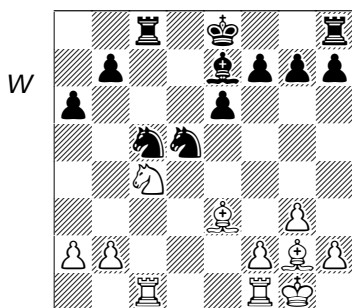
10...♗xb6 11 0-0 a6 12 ♖ac1 ♙e7 13 e4! dxe4 14 dxe4 ♙xe4 15 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 16 ♗d2! ♗c5

If 16...♗xd2 17 ♙xd2 ♗d5 18 ♙xd5 exd5 19 ♖c7 ♖d8 20 ♖xb7

♖d7 21 ♖b6 ♗d6 22 ♖b8+ ♗d8 and White achieves nothing. However, 20 ♙a5! wins the pawn back with a clear advantage since 20...♗d7? 21 ♖c8+ ♙d8? 22 ♖e1+ ♔f8 23 ♙b4+ mates. **17 ♙e3**

According to the book 'Reti Opening' by Viacheslav Osnos, White already has a clear advantage here.

**17...♖c8 18 ♖c4 ♖d5 (D)**



Up to here, it might seem that White has only a minimal advantage, but Barcza was in his element. His first objective had probably been to curtail Black's ambitions and achieve an edge that he could work with in a simplified situation.

**19 b4!**

Since 19...♖d3 is answered by 20 ♖d6+, Black must take on b4 but this costs him the exchange. Black obtains nominally sufficient compensation, but Barcza has judged that this is a position where the ♖s can dominate.

**19...♖xb4 20 ♖b6 ♖c7 21 ♙f4 ♖c6 22 ♙xc6+ ♖xc6**

If 22...bxc6 23 ♙e3 ♖bd3 24 ♖c3±, e.g. 24...0-0 25 ♗d1 ♖b2 26

♗dc1 ♖cd3 27 ♖b1 — Barcza.

**23 ♖fd1**

Black has two pawns for the exchange but the white ♖s are very active and the black ♖s somewhat insecure. Rather than castle, Balogh tries to claim more space and establish an outpost on d4.

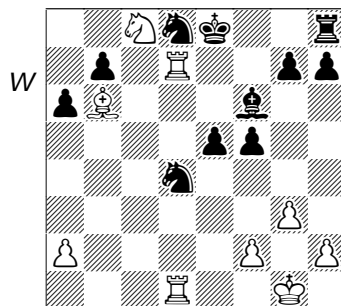
**23...e5!?**

23...♖e4 24 f3 ♖f6 25 ♔f2 h6 was a suggested improvement from Barcza. If 23...0-0 24 ♖d7.

**24 ♙e3 ♖e6 25 ♖d7 ♖ed8 26 ♖cd1 f5**

If 26...0-0 Barcza indicated 27 ♖c7 △ 28 ♖dd7. A more incisive option is 27 ♖d5!, which wins material: 27...♙f6 28 ♙c5 ♖e8 29 ♖c7, or 27...♙b4 28 ♖xb4 ♖xb4 29 ♙c5, or 27...♙a3 28 ♖d3 ♙b4 29 ♖xb4 ♖xb4 30 ♖xd8.

**27 ♖c8 ♙f6 28 ♙b6 ♖d4 (D)**



This strong ♖ placement has been bought at the price of White's queenside piece invasion. Can Barcza make a concrete gain in that region? If Black could liquidate the white a-pawn, he might have a draw but it is

hard to see how he can do this.

**29 ♖c7 0–0 30 ♗e7+ ♔h8**

The ♔ is needed to hold key points like e5 and g7. If 30...♗xe7 31 ♖xe7 and a pawn will soon be lost.

**31 ♗d5!**

If 31 ♗xd4 exd4 32 ♗xf5 ♗e6 33 ♖xb7 ♖d8 (Barcza) and the passed pawn offers some hope, although it is still doubtful whether Black could hold the ending in the long run because of the weakness of his a-pawn (34 ♖b6).

**31...♗8e6**

The outpost must be maintained, even at the cost of the b-pawn. Black will still have one pawn for the exchange.

**32 ♖xb7 h5**

Against 32...♗d8 White intended 33 ♖b1 ♗c6 34 ♗b4.

**33 ♗xd4!**

Barcza decides to let the ♗ live and force off a pair of ♖s instead — excellent judgment, as his remaining ♖ can control the width of the board.

If 33 ♗xf6 ♖xf6 (the point of the last move) and Black may defend his a-pawn along the rank.

**33...♗xd4**

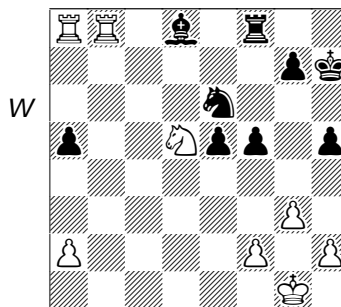
33...exd4? 34 ♖b6 costs a pawn.

**34 ♖db1 ♔h7 35 ♖b8 ♗d8 36 ♖a8 a5 37 ♖bb8 ♗e6 (D)**

White now forces a simpler winning endgame by a typical combinative liquidation.

**38 ♗c7! ♗xc7**

If 38...♗xc7 39 ♖xf8 ♗xa8 40 ♖xf8.



**39 ♖xf8 ♗xf8 40 ♖xf8 ♗d6**

Not 40...♔g6?? 41 ♖c8 and the ♗ is lost; equally 40...g6 is impossible, so Black cannot defend the f-pawn.

40...f4 is also insufficient in view of 41 gxf4 (or 41 ♖f7) 41...exf4 42 ♖f7 and another of the black pawns must fall: 42...♗b6 (42...♗d6? 43 ♖f5) 43 ♔g2 (better than 43 ♖f5 ♔g6) 43...♔g6 44 ♖d7! (44 ♖xf4 would also be good enough) and Black has no good move.

**41 ♖xf5 ♔g6 42 ♖f3 a4**

Balogh makes a final attempt to create a compact formation where everything can be defended but this is doomed once the white ♔ gets into the action.

**43 ♖c3 ♔f5 44 ♖c4! a3 45 f3 g5 46 h3**

In order to take control of g4 (preventing any slight annoyance with ...g5-g4) so that White can force the black ♔ back (with g3-g4+) under the most favourable circumstances.

**46...♗e7 47 ♔f2 h4 48 g4+ ♔e6 49 ♔e3 ♔d5 50 ♔d3 ♗d6 51 ♖a4 ♗e7 52 ♖a5+ ♗c5 53 ♔c3 ♔c6 54 ♔c4 ♗d6 55 ♖a6+ ♔d7 56 ♔d5 1–0**

# Game 19

**White: Cecil J.S. Purdy (Australia)**

**Black: Dr Mario Napolitano (Italy)**

1<sup>st</sup> CC World Championship Final, 1950-53

*Nimzo-Indian Defence (E26)*

**The Players:** Cecil Purdy (1906-79) was born in the Middle East but moved early in his life to Australia, where — as player, writer and teacher — he made an enormous contribution to the game of chess in that region. His place in chess history is secure. Not only was Purdy a FIDE IM and winner of numerous events (including four Australian OTB Championships), he was also the first World CC Champion. After that success, he played only one more postal game.

Dr Mario Napolitano (1910-95) was a major figure, with a career as a postal player spanning half a century starting in the 1930s with IFSB. He played his last major event in the mid-1980s. Joint second place in this world championship was his best result.

**About this game:** This game was the most important one that decided the championship. At move 31, both players faced a crisis. Each player (not knowing the state of the other's positions) feared that a draw would cost him the title. So Napolitano made his fatal error — because as the other results later transpired, a draw in this game would have been sufficient for him to become world champion.

**1 c4 ♘f6 2 d4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♙b4 4 a3**

This Sämisch variation is rarely seen nowadays, because most players consider that the doubling and fixing of White's c-pawns is more serious than gaining the ♙ pair. So spending the tempo 4 a3 to encourage Black to do it is hardly justified!

**4...♙xc3+ 5 bxc3 c5 6 e3 ♘c6**

6...b6 and ...♙b7 is an alternative.

**7 ♙d3 e5 8 ♘e2 d6**

In Spassky-Tal, 25<sup>th</sup> USSR Ch 1957, Black tried 8...e4 but this is probably premature and after 9 ♙b1 b6 (9...0-0!? Kasparov) 10 ♘g3 ♙a6 11 f3! White took the initiative in the centre although Tal eventually won.

**9 e4 ♘h5**

Black wants to install his ♘ on an advanced post. Kasparov-Beliavsky, USSR 1983, went instead 9...exd4 10 cxd4 cxd4 11 0-0 ♙a5? 12 ♙f4 ♙c5 13 ♘c1 ♘a5 14 ♙xd6 ♙xd6 15 e5 although White later missed a win. Kasparov indicated that 11...0-0 12 ♙g5 h6 13 ♙h4 g5 could be unclear.

**10 0-0**

An alternative is 10 d5 ♘a5 11 f4 aiming for some kingside initiative.

**10...g5 11 ♙c2 ♘f4 12 ♙a4 ♙d7 13 ♘g3 (D)**

Both players were aiming for this position, which had arisen in Bronstein-Smyslov, Budapest ct 1950, when Black played 13...♙f6. Bronstein won that game but current theory has swung back to preferring Black's chances here.

**13...cxd4!?**

Napolitano's moves 13–15 followed a suggestion in 'Ceskoslovensko Sach' after the Bronstein game.

**14 ♖xc6 bxc6 15 cxd4 ♗f6 16 ♙e3 h5! 17 dxe5 dxe5 18 ♜b1 ♝d8**

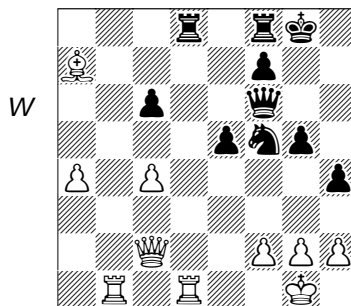
If 18...h4 19 ♘f5 and after exchanges on f5 the white ♗ gets to d6. So Black wants to drive her off the d-file before proceeding with his kingside attack, even though this may cost him his a-pawn.

**19 ♗c2 h4 20 ♘f5 ♙xf5 21 exf5 0–0!**

Purdy observes that, despite the kingside pawn advances, the black king is safer on g8 than in the centre. "Both sides now pursue their own plans, each seeming to ignore the other".

**22 ♜fd1 ♘h5 23 ♙xa7 ♘g7 24 a4 ♘xf5 (D)**

Black did not want to play ...h3 until he had captured this pawn, because g2-g4 could be the reply. Now, however, Purdy wrote: "White faced a question discussed by Tarrasch, whether to let a pawn come to h3 or stop it by h2-h3. He says to let it come and then play g3 is 'better for the endgame' but then makes his famous epigram '...between the opening and the endgame the gods have placed the middlegame'. He concludes with the advice to play h3."



**25 a5?!**

Purdy defies Tarrasch's advice: the wrong decision, as he admitted in his notes later. He wrote that he should indeed have played 25 h3 "with a small but sure advantage". Instead, now "White gets a passed pawn rapidly to the 7<sup>th</sup> rank: but it does not outweigh the disruption of the castled position."

**25...h3 26 a6 ♜a8**

Black has to take a defensive measure because of the threat of 27 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 28 ♜b8 when the ♜ exchanges would reduce Black's attacking potential and make the a-pawn much more dangerous.

**27 ♙c5 ♜fe8 28 a7 e4!**

Black's ♗ and ♘ are troublesome, and now the e8-♜ is not entirely restricted to defence.

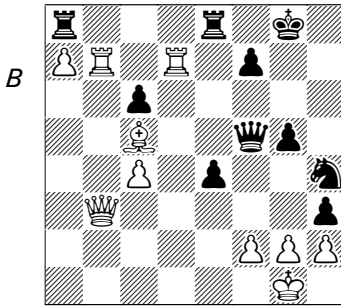
**29 ♜b7 ♘h4**

Threatening ...♘f3+.

**30 ♗b3 ♗f5! 31 ♜dd7!?** (D)

Purdy now realised that his queenside play could not force a win because Black's counterplay was getting too strong. He rejected 31 ♜b8 ♗g4 32 g3 e3! as very good for Black, and indeed it is, although 33 ♙xe3!

(33 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 34 ♖b8+ ♔g7 35 ♖b2+ f6⌘) 33...♗f3 (33...♘f3+ 34 ♔h1) 34 ♔f1 ♘f5 35 ♔e1 (35 ♗d3? ♘xg3+! -+) 35...♘xe3 36 ♖xe3 might give drawing chances.



We now reach a point where the published comments of the players do not easily tally with the realities of the situation as analysed by 21<sup>st</sup> century masters with the aid of computers. In ‘ASPC’s Guide to Correspondence Chess’, Purdy says “in playing this, I almost resigned myself to a draw, and yet I realised that a player of Napolitano’s style is usually optimistic, so I had good hopes of his going after a win”. How is this remark to be reconciled with the true situation that White was close to lost?

Frank Hutchings and Kevin Harrison, the editors of the book ‘How Purdy Won’, explain: “Dr Napolitano thought he could probe a little, still keeping the draw in hand. Purdy welcomed this, since he believed it would turn the scales in his favour”. That is indeed what happened.

However, all these comments

are misleading because Black could now have played a move that not only would have kept the draw in hand but also in practice (if not for certain) would almost certainly have won the game — and the world championship!

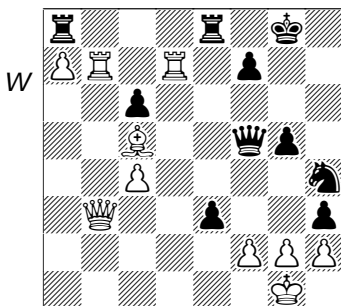
In the diagram position, there are at least four “candidate moves” for Black: 31...e3, 31...♖xc5, 31...♘f3+?! (the fatal move actually played by Napolitano) and 31...hxg2. (Note that 31...♘xg2? is no good because after 32 ♖xf7 ♖c5?? White has a forced mate beginning ♗g7+.) However, in ‘How Purdy Won’ and in other sources where this game is annotated, you will only find analysis of the first three of those moves.

It is evident that neither during the game, nor immediately afterwards nor many years later did either player see 31...hxg2! as a real possibility. Yet it is such an obvious move, which modern computers quickly select as best, that surely they must have examined it?

Can it be that both thought it had an obvious refutation, so obvious that it wasn’t worth mentioning in their annotations? No such refutation exists and it is hard to imagine what it could be. I suspect that subconsciously they both thought Black needed to keep the white ♔ confined to the back rank, to create mating threats there, and ...hxg2 did not fit in with that concept.

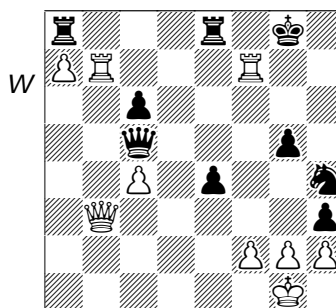
First, let us look at the moves the players did consider. Then I will show the actual end of the game and finally I will analyse 31...hxg2.

a) Napolitano said he should probably have played 31...e3 (*D*). This is the easiest of the possibilities about which to form a firm conclusion. White has few options. The correct reply draws and everything else loses:



have played this move as a winning try. Now if 32 ♖xh3? e3 33 fxe3 ♜xe3+ while if 32 ♖c3 ♜f8 Black has an extra piece.

Purdy planned to answer 32 ♜xf7 (*D*).



a1) 32 ♖b2?? e2! and Black wins.  
 a2) Likewise 32 ♜xf7? e2! 33 ♜g7+ ♔h8 34 ♜h7+ ♖xh7 etc. or 32 ♔xe3? ♖g4+ 33 g3 ♗f3+ 34 ♔h1 ♗e5+ (Harrison & Hutchings).

a3) So White must play 32 fxe3! ♖xc5 33 ♜xf7 ♜xe3 (33...♗f5 also draws: 34 ♖c3 ♖xe3+ 35 ♖xe3 ♗xe3 36 ♜g7+ etc.) 34 ♜g7+ ♔h8 (not 34...♔f8?? 35 ♜bf7+ ♔e8 36 ♖b8+! and White wins) 35 ♜h7+ ♔g8 and now give perpetual check to avoid being mated, e.g. 36 ♜bg7+ ♔f8 37 ♜f7+ ♔g8 38 (either) ♜g7+, since 38 ♖b8+?? loses to the cross-check 38...♜e8+.

b) Napolitano also rejected the obvious 31...♖xc5 because he believed that it only drew. However, I think the published analysis is probably wrong here too; Black could

Now:

b1) 32...e3!? 33 ♜g7+ (33 ♖b2?? exf2+ 34 ♖xf2 ♜e1#) 33...♔h8 34 ♜h7+ ♔g8 when White must give perpetual check with the rooks, because if 35 ♜bg7+ ♔f8 36 ♖b2?? exf2+ 37 ♖xf2+ Black wins by 37...♗f3+!! and 38...♜e1+.

b2) Purdy's notes include the variation 32...♖e5 33 ♜fd7! ♖a1+ 34 ♜d1?! ♜xa7 35 c5+ ♔h8 36 ♜bd7! ♖a3 37 ♖f7 winning for White, but Black's 36<sup>th</sup> in this line is a blunder. Harrison and Hutchings point out the improvement 36...♗f3+ 37 gxf3 exf3 leading to a draw, they say.

Black has an even stronger move — 36...e3! after which the position is a total mess but Black may very well be winning. If 37 fxe3 ♖a3 is strong because now 38 ♖f7 fails to 38...♖xe3+.

In view of this, White might have to play instead 34 ♖d1!, which probably is good enough to draw: 34...♗xd1+ 35 ♜xd1 intending 36 ♜dd7 and (...♞f5) ♜f7 after preventing any back rank tricks (...♞ed8). 34...♗c3 35 ♗d2 or 34...♗f6 35 ♗d4 makes no difference.

To sum up, Napolitano has so far rejected one clear draw and another line where he had at least a draw, if not more, and we haven't even looked at his best move yet! This makes his actual choice even more incredible.

**31...♞f3+??**

Sometimes designated '!?' but this was the blunder that decided the first CC World Championship! At the end of the game, we shall see what Black should have done.

**32 gxf3 exf3 33 ♔f1!**

This was the move that Napolitano had underestimated. His main line went 33 ♙e3 ♜ad8 34 ♗d1 (34 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 35 ♙d4+! may also hold but would be no fun for White.) 34...♗g4+ 35 ♔f1 and now:

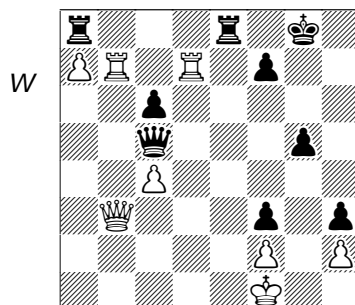
a) Purdy rejected this line because of 35...♗xc4+ drawing.

b) Napolitano believed that 35...♗g2+! 36 ♔e1 ♜xe3! would have been winning for him, but he was wrong about this too. First, T.J.Bogan found a surprising draw by 37 ♔d2 ♜xd7+ 38 ♔xe3! ♜xd1 39 a8♗+ ♔g7 40 ♜xf7+?! ♔xf7 41 ♗b7+ when possibly Black cannot escape perpetual check, but why not instead 40 ♗a7! when Black cannot defend f7, and after his only check (40...♞e1+ 41 ♔d2) the ♗ defends f2, so White

stands better. Anyway, it is academic because Purdy's move wins.

**33...♗xc5 (D)**

The main point is that 33...♗g4, trying to reach the foregoing lines, does not work because of 34 ♙e3 ♜ad8 35 ♗d3!. Purdy has now surmounted the main crisis in the game although he still had much careful analysis to do in order to clinch the full point.



Purdy now rejected 34 ♜xf7 ♗e5! 35 ♜g7+ ♗xg7 etc. because it is not a clear win for the ♗ against the ♜ although he can pick up some loose pawns. However, the improvement at Black's 37<sup>th</sup> in the actual game suggests that he made objectively the wrong decision here.

**34 ♗c3? ♜f8 35 ♗d3! ♗e5!**

"Indirectly parrying the threat of ♜xf7! and starting new devilment," wrote Purdy.

**36 ♗xf3 ♜ae8! 37 ♞b1 (D)**

Although the danger pawn on f3 is gone, White must still be wary of threats to his ♔.

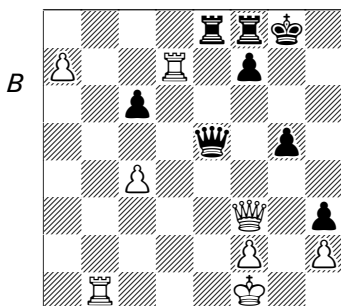
Also around this time, Purdy set up



the wrong position in his game with Graham Mitchell of England, as a result of which he knew he was going to lose that game and really needed to win this one.

Purdy later wrote that, had this game already been out of the way as a draw, "I should almost certainly not have made my subsequent quasi-clerical blunder against Mitchell". That remark does not get to the full truth either. In 'How Purdy Won', Harrison proves that Mitchell was probably winning that game anyway!

At this point, Napolitano made a final error, which eased Purdy's task considerably.



**37... ♖xh2?**

Napolitano is trying to mobilise his h-pawn, but he possibly could have saved the game with 37... ♖e6 when the key move for White is 38 ♖db7! e.g. 38... ♖xc4+ 39 ♔g1 and now:

a) 39...g4 40 ♖f5! ♖e2 41 ♖f1 ♖e5 42 ♖f4 ♖a5 43 ♖b8! ♖f3 44 ♖xf3 gxf3 45 ♔h1!+-.

b) White probably cannot win after 39... ♖e6 40 ♖c3 ♖a8 because if 41

♖e3 (41 ♖g3 does not offer much either.) 41... ♖f5 42 f3 (as given in 'How Purdy Won') Black has 42... ♖fe8 43 ♖c1 ♖d5= or 43 ♖f2 ♖f4= and sets the trap 43 ♖b8?? ♖xb1+! 44 ♖xb1 ♖xe3 45 ♖b8+ ♖e8+-.

**38 ♖b3 ♖e5 39 ♖xh3 ♖f4**

Napolitano later thought there were drawing chances by 39... ♖e2+ 40 ♔g2 ♖e4 41 ♖g3 g4 but 42 ♖h5 (even stronger than 42 ♖h6+-, given in 'How Purdy Won') wins easily, e.g. 42... ♖e6 43 ♖xf7 ♖e4+ 44 ♔h2 ♖xf7 45 a8♖+.

After the text move, wrote Purdy: "I wrote out analysis for 20 possible 40<sup>th</sup> moves. At first I could not make any of them win. Finally I found a curious one." If the queen captures the c-pawn on c5 instead of c4, Black will soon run out of checks.

**40 c5!! ♖c4+**

If 40... ♖c1+ 41 ♔g2 ♖e1 then 42 ♖f3! and if 42... ♖h1 43 ♖xf7+! followed by promoting the a-pawn.

**41 ♔g2 ♖e4**

The 'curious win' was by 41... ♖xc5 42 ♖h6! g4 (to stop ♖h3) 43 ♖g3 ♖e4 44 ♖h4 and if then 44... ♖f5 45 ♖d8. However, 44 ♖f6 (△ 45 a8♖) also works: 44... ♖e5 45 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 46 ♖xg4+ ♔h8 (46... ♔h7 47 ♖xf7+) 47 ♖d3 ♖h5 48 ♖b3 and 49 ♖b8, with an amusing line 48... ♔h7 49 ♖b8 ♖a5 50 a8♖! (50 ♖xf8+-) 50... ♖xa8 51 ♖b3 and ♖h3#.

**42 ♖f5 ♖xb3**

This accelerates the defeat but if 42... ♖g4+ 43 ♖g3 ♖xg3+ 44 ♔xg3 ♖c1 45 ♔g2 and 46 a8♖ decides the game.

43 ♖xc4 ♔g7 44 ♖f5 g4 45 ♖xg4+ 1-0

If 45...♔h7 46 ♖d1 mates or gets ♖ for ♖, or if 45...♔f6 46 ♖d6+ with similar consequences.

Purdy's final comment was: "A wild game. In CC a simple style won't win a world title." (Later, Jørn Sloth was to disprove that theory.)

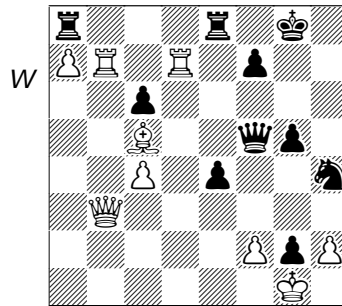
Napolitano, on the other hand, wrote in his contribution to the ASPC booklet that: "Purdy was a very strong CC player. He played his best against me, and justly won. In our game, there was at one time the thought that it was a draw, but I lost. I played all my games in this event without the thought of playing for the draw! My view is: Correspondence chess is not only a school for technique or an academy for virtuosity; it is a discipline of deep thought, of research, of tenacity. There is no place for the easy and convenient draw by agreement, but there is always the search for the best."

There speaks the romantic amateur — highly talented and brilliant, but an amateur nonetheless. Purdy, as chess writer and teacher, was a professional and would not have handicapped himself with the thought that a draw was an invalid aim for the game, had he believed a draw would make him World Champion.

Napolitano's comments, written at least two decades after the event, may contain an element of post-hoc rationalisation. If he had known that Mitchell was beating Purdy, would this not have affected his move

choices? Moreover, his reference to rejecting a draw apparently refers to 31...♖xc5 or possibly to 31...e3.

Surely if Napolitano had seen 31...hxg2 (*D*), he must have reckoned it gave him more practical winning chances than the move he actually played? Here is the position that would then have arisen.



Black threatens ...♔f3+ leading to mate. White's choice is very limited since most moves that stop the mate allow ...♖xc5.

a) 32 ♖g3? e3! 33 ♔xe3 (33 ♖xf7 e2) 33...♖xa7 34 ♔xa7 (34 ♖xa7 ♖b1+) 34...♖e1#.

b) 32 ♖xf7? ♔f3+ 33 ♖xf3 (33 ♔xg2 ♖g4+ and mates) 33...exf3 34 ♖g7+ (34 ♖xf5 ♖e1#) 34...♔h8 White has nothing and will soon be mated.

c) 32 ♖b1? ♖xc5 33 ♖xf7 ♖e5 since if now 34 ♖g7+ ♖xg7 35 ♖xg7+ ♔xg7 White has no threats: 36 ♖b7+ (or 36 ♖b2+ ♔g6) 36...♔g8 37 ♖xc6 ♖ad8+. Or 33 c5 (♠ ♖a2) 33...♖ad8 followed by ...♖d5.

d) 32 ♖d1! is the key line:

d1) 32...♔xc5 33 ♖h5! and White draws.

d2) 32...♔h3 33 ♜xf7 ♘f3+ 34 ♜xf3 exf3 (34...♔xf3?? 35 ♔d7+-) 35 ♙d4! and White has threats, e.g. 35...♔f5 36 ♖a1 or 35...♜ad8 36 ♖b1.

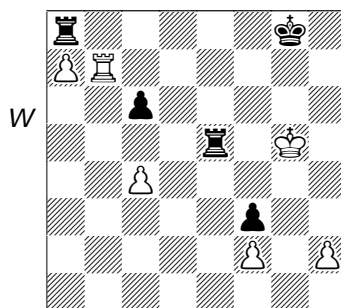
d3) 32...♘f3+ 33 ♚xg2 is therefore critical. ‘Chess Mail’ published analysis on this a few years ago, to which a major contribution was made by American SIM, John Timm. I have further refined these analyses now.

d31) 33...♔xc5? 34 ♜xf7 leaves Black hurrying to draw. It seems that best play is 34...♔e5! 35 ♖d6 ♖xd6 36 ♜g7+ with perpetual check.

d32) 33...♔g4+ is not clear after 34 ♚f1 (34 ♚h1? ♔h3) says Timm, e.g. 34...♘h2+ 35 ♚e1 ♘f3+ 36 ♚f1 ♖h3+ 37 ♚e2 ♘e5! 38 ♜d6 ♘xc4 39 ♜d7 ♘e5 40 ♜d6. Apparently Black cannot win this, given that White still has the a-pawn firmly defended.

d33) 33...♘h4+ 34 ♚g3! was the main line of Timm’s analysis, leading to another fantastic position after 34...♔xc5 35 ♜xf7 ♖e5+ 36 ♚g4 ♖e6+ 37 ♚xg5! ♘f3+ 38 ♜xf3 exf3 39 ♖d4! ♖e5+ 40 ♖xe5 ♜xe5+ (D).

Computers generally say this position is won for Black, but according to Timm it’s a clear positional draw because Black will never find an effective means of getting even one of his three pieces off the 8<sup>th</sup> rank. For example, 41 ♚f6 ♜e2 (41...♜ae8? loses to 42



♜b8) 42 ♜b8+ ♜e8 43 ♜b7 Black is paralyzed, and White will make the bind even stronger by pushing the h-pawn up the board. The extra ♜ is useless except for defence!

One variation is 43...♚h8 (If 43...♜ad8 44 c5 prevents ...♜d6+) 44 h4 ♜g8 45 h5 ♜ad8 46 c5 ♜d2 47 h6 (47 ♜b8?? ♜a2+-) 47...♜a2 (47...♜xf2 doesn’t win because of 48 h7 ♜a8 49 ♜b8+ ♚xh7 50 ♜xa8 ♜a2 51 ♜f8 ♜xa7 52 ♚e5.) 48 h7 ♜g2 49 ♜b8+ ♚xh7 50 a8♖ ♜xa8 51 ♜xa8 ♜xf2. Now Black has an extra pawn in the ♜ ending but he cannot win because of threats to his ♚: 52 ♜a7+ ♚h6 53 ♜a8 ♚h5 54 ♚f5 ♚h4 55 ♚f4 ♚h3 56 ♜g8=.

My personal conclusion about this game, though maybe it’s harsh, is that Napolitano did not deserve to be world champion, because he made such a hash of analyzing the crucial move 31 position (as well as missing the saving chance later). If Napolitano had played 31...hxg2, maybe Purdy would have found John Timm’s line and held the game anyway. So I think justice was done.

# Game 20

**White:** T. Sanz (Spain)

**Black:** K. Gumprich (Germany)

Dyckhoff Memorial 3/M, 1954-56

*King's Indian Defence (E70)*

**The Players:** Gumprich was one of the stronger German postal masters of the 1940s and early 1950s. He won the third section of the Dyckhoff Memorial with 6½/8 ahead of strong masters including Endzelins. I have no information about Sanz.

**About this game:** This was one of the three postal games included in Heidenfeld's book 'Draw!' but I have come to some new conclusions about it. He praised it as a good example of the high standard of play that amateurs can achieve in CC. Although the game has flaws, I agree with that opinion. The positions reached after Black's unusual and courageous ♖ sacrifice are extraordinarily complicated. Even today's powerful computers do not easily find their way through the maze of tactics.

**1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♗c3 ♕g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♕g5**

This variation is rarely played nowadays. If Black replies 5...h6 the ♕ will go to h4, while 5...c5 6 d5 0-0 7 ♖d2 transposes to the game.

**5...0-0 6 ♖d2**

The usual continuation, taking control of h6. Instead 6 ♕e2 would transpose into the Averbakh variation, while Bisguier opts for 6 f4!?

**6...c5 7 d5 e5!?**

Blocking the centre like this is rarely seen in any line of the King's Indian nowadays, as White's straightforward attack with g2-g4 and h2-h4 is faster than Black's queenside counterplay. Nevertheless it is not so easy to break into the black kingside.

Until recently 7...e6 8 ♕d3 exd5 was thought to be a simple equaliser for Black, following Szabo-Fischer, Leipzig OL 1960: 9 ♗xd5 ♕e6 10 ♗e2 ♕xd5! 11 exd5 (11 cxd5? c4! 12 ♕c2 ♗bd7 13 0-0 ♗c5) 11...♗bd7 12 0-0 ♗e5 13 f4?! (13 ♗c3 is even — Fischer) 13...♗xd3 14 ♖xd3 h6 15 ♕h4 ♖e8 16 ♖ae1 ♖b6 17 ♕xf6 ♕xf6 18 f5 g5 19 b3 ♖a5 20 ♖c1? (20 ♖b1 — Fischer) 20...♖xa2 21 ♖c2 ♖e3! 22 ♖xe3 ♖xc2 23 ♔h1 a5 24 h4 a4 0-1. But 9 cxd5 may give White the better chances, e.g. 9...a6 10 a4 ♖a5 11 ♖a3 ♖e8 12 ♗ge2 ♗bd7 13 ♗g3! ♗e5 14 ♕e2± Nikitin-Hausrath, Dortmund 1993.

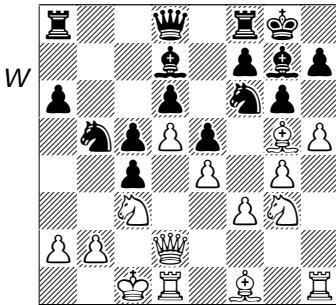
More critical is 7...b5!? 8 cxb5 a6 9 a4 ♖a5 10 f3 transposing to a sharp variation of the Sämisch; e.g. 10...♗bd7 11 ♗ge2 ♗b6 12 ♗c1 axb5 13 ♕xb5 ♕a6 14 ♗1a2 ♕xb5 15 axb5 ♗h5! 16 ♖b1 ♕d4 17 ♕h6 ♖fe8 18 b3 e6 19 dxe6 (Ivanchuk-Kasparov, Linares 1997) and now

19...fxe6 20 ♔e3 e5 21 0-0 ♘f4 or 19...d5!? — Ivanchuk.

**8 0-0-0 ♘a6 9 f3 ♘c7 10 g4 a6**

“With about equal chances,” said GM Ernst Grünfeld in the tournament book. Gumprich commented that: “Both sides are proceeding with urgency because with opposite side castling, speed with the attack is above all necessary.”

**11 h4 ♔d7 12 h5 b5 13 ♘ge2 bxc4 14 ♘g3 ♘b5 (D)**



**15 ♔xc4**

Sanz considered sacrificing a piece by 15 ♘f5?! but he was right to reject this. 15...♘xc3 16 bxc3 gxf5 17 gxf5 ♖a5 followed by ...♗fb8 probably wins for Black.

**15...♘d4 16 ♖e3 ♔b5 17 ♔b3 c4 18 ♔c2 ♖b6 19 ♗dg1 ♗fb8 20 ♗g2**

This could be a prelude to ♗ doubling on the h-file, but ♗g2 is primarily a defensive move designed to hold the weakest spot in White’s position: the b2-pawn.

**20...♗b7 21 ♔d1 ♗ab8 22 ♔h6**

This does not really threaten to exchange ♔s yet because ♔xg7

would be answered by ...♘b3+ winning the white ♖.

**22...♔e8 23 ♘f5!**

The idea is not to take the ♔ on g7 but to rid White of the troublesome d4-♘.

**23...♘xf5**

23...gxf5?? 24 gxf5 would open the g-file for a crushing white attack. 23...♔h8 severely limits Black’s options as he must keep guard against ♘e7#, so ...♘d7 or ...♗xb2, for instance, are now impossible. After 23...♔h8, 24 ♖g5 may be the most accurate, so that 24...♖a5 (Δ 25 ♖h4? ♘xf5 26 gxf5 ♗xb2!) can be answered by 25 ♗hh2.

**24 gxf5**

White’s attack appears to be making the greater progress and a ♖ exchange on e3 or b6 would lead towards a favourable endgame for him, the g7-♔ being restricted by its own pawns and the e8-♔ not having much greater prospects. Therefore Black must take his chances in the middlegame and he finds ingenious tactics.

**24...♖d4!**

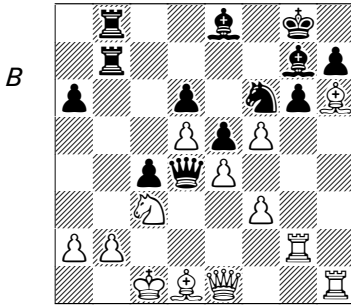
Not 24...♘h5? 25 ♗xh5 ♖xe3+ 26 ♔xe3 gxh5 27 f6+.

**25 hxg6!**

Black would welcome a ♖ swap on d4, opening the long diagonal and giving him a dangerous pawn pair. Thus play could go 25 ♖xd4? exd4 (25...♔xh6+ 26 ♖d2 ♔xd2+ 27 ♗xd2 ♘xh5 is a materialistic variation not mentioned in the notes of Gumprich or Heidenfeld.) 26 ♔xg7 ♘xg7 and in view of 27 ♘a4? ♗b4 28 b3 ♔xa4 29 bxa4 ♗b1+ 30 ♘d2

$\text{Rb2+}$  winning a  $\text{R}$ , Heidenfeld's alternative  $27 \text{ b1 c3}$  actually seems less disastrous.

**25...fxg6 26  $\text{We1}$  (D)**



Heidenfeld praises this move, and there doesn't seem to be anything better. If White prevaricates, Black will strengthen his attack with ... $\text{d7-c5}$ . If  $26 \text{ Wg5}$ , hoping for  $26... \text{d7}$   $27 \text{ fxg6}$   $\text{fxg6}$   $28 \text{ fxe7}$   $\text{c5}$  ( $28... \text{c5}$ ?  $29 \text{ Rxe7+}$  mates)  $29 \text{ Rxe7!}$   $\text{d3+}$   $30 \text{ b1}$   $\text{Rxb2+}$   $31 \text{ Rxb2}$   $\text{Rxb2+}$   $32 \text{ a1+-}$ , then  $26... \text{Rxb2!}$   $27 \text{ Rxb2}$   $\text{Wxc3+}$   $28 \text{ Rc2}$   $\text{Wa3+}$   $29 \text{ c2}$   $\text{Wd3+}$  gets at least a draw ( $30 \text{ c1?}$   $\text{dxe4!}$ ).

**26... $\text{d7!}$ ?**

This move gets two exclamation marks from previous annotators, but is it not too good to be true? I expect that both men were playing for a win! Gumprich's notes say he had sought the coming complications when he played ... $\text{Wd4}$  and it is indeed these that give the game its special character.

I am surprised Heidenfeld did not analyse  $26... \text{fxh6+}$   $27 \text{ Rxe6}$   $\text{d7}$  ( $\Delta... \text{c5-d3+}$ )  $28 \text{ fxg6}$   $\text{fxg6}$ , when

White can force a draw or try for more with no assurance of success:

a)  $29 \text{ Rxe7}$  leads to a fairly straightforward perpetual check:  $29... \text{fxh7}$  (or  $29... \text{Rxb2}$   $30 \text{ Rxe6+}$   $\text{fxh7}$   $31 \text{ Wh4+}$   $\text{fxg6}$   $32 \text{ Wg4+}$  etc.)  $30 \text{ Wh4+}$   $\text{c7}$   $31 \text{ We7+}$   $\text{c8}$   $32 \text{ Rh2+}$   $\text{c8}$   $33 \text{ We6+}$   $\text{c7}$   $34 \text{ We7+}$ .

b)  $29 \text{ d4!}$ ? and now if  $29... \text{c5}$  anyway then  $30 \text{ dxc5}$   $\text{Wxc5}$   $31 \text{ Wc3}$  (threatens a breakthrough with  $\text{f3-f4}$ )  $31... \text{Rg7}$  leaves the  $\text{d1-R}$  restricted by its own pawns. If  $32 \text{ e2?}$   $\text{xe4}$   $33 \text{ Rxe7+}$   $\text{fxg7}$ , but White can target the  $\text{c4-pawn}$  more slowly and maybe get a plus by  $32 \text{ Rh2!}$  followed by  $33 \text{ Rc2}$ . However,  $29... \text{c7!}$   $30 \text{ Rh2}$  ( $30 \text{ Rd2}$   $\text{Wa7}$   $31 \text{ Rdh2}$   $\text{Wd4}$  repeats)  $30... \text{d6}$  may be safe for Black, activating his  $\text{d}$  while White's is offside, e.g.  $31 \text{ Rd2}$   $\text{Wa7}$   $32 \text{ Rc2}$   $\text{b4}$   $\infty$ .

**27  $\text{e3}$   $\text{d5}$  28  $\text{e2}$**

Essential, although it interferes with the defence of  $\text{b2}$ . Not  $28 \text{ exd4?}$   $\text{d3+}$   $29 \text{ b1}$  ( $29 \text{ c2}$   $\text{Rxb2+}$ )  $29... \text{dxe1}$   $30 \text{ Rxe1}$   $\text{exd4+-}$ .

White offered the conditional "if  $28... \text{d3+}$  then  $29 \text{ exd3}$ ", but Gumprich saw the trap (though his analysis was inaccurate). After  $29... \text{Wxd3}$  play can go:

a)  $30 \text{ Rd2??}$   $\text{Wxc3+}$   $31 \text{ bxc3}$   $\text{Rb1+}$   $32 \text{ c2}$   $\text{R8b2\#}$  was the bait.

b)  $30 \text{ Rc2}$  "followed by  $\text{Rh1-h2-d2}$ " (Gumprich), but Heidenfeld pointed out that Black could free his  $\text{W}$  by  $30... \text{gxf5}$   $31 \text{ Rhh2}$   $\text{f4}$ .

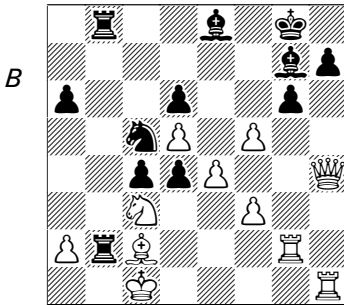
c) White's correct continuation is  $30 \text{ fxg6!}$   $\text{fxg6}$  and only now  $31 \text{ Rc2}$  (Heidenfeld) e.g.  $31... \text{ef6}$   $32 \text{ Rhh2}$   $\text{e8}$   $33 \text{ Rhd2}$   $\text{e4}$   $34 \text{ Wg1+}$   $\text{g7}$   $35$

♖g2 ♜bb7 36 ♜cd2 and the jaws of the trap finally close on the black ♚.  
**28...♜xb2!**

Planned since move 24; White had overlooked the ♚ sacrifice and there is no choice but to accept it.

**29 ♙xd4 exd4 30 ♖h4 (D)**

Black has only a ♙ and pawn for his ♚ at present, but White must still be very careful. For example, 30 ♘d1 would have led to insuperable difficulties after the simple 30...♜xa2+- (Heidenfeld) followed by ...c3. 30...♜xc2+!? 31 ♜xc2 ♘d3+ is less clear.



**30...dxc3**

This is an interesting moment passed over by previous commentators. Gumprich says the ♘ must be captured because it is an important defender in some lines. But it cannot run away and Black could have first played 30...h5!?, with three possibilities:

a) 31 f6! is simplest, transposing to the game after 31...dxc3 or 31...♘d3+ 32 ♖d1 dxc3 33 fxg7 ♙a4. Black can try 31...♙h6+!?, but this seems insufficient after 32 f4! (Better than

32 ♖d1 d3!?! — see 31 ♖d1 below) 32...♘d3+ (If 32...dxc3 33 ♖xh5 ♙xf4+ 34 ♖d1 or 32...dxc3 33 ♜h3.) 33 ♖d1 ♘xf4 34 ♖g5! dxc3 35 ♖xf4+-.

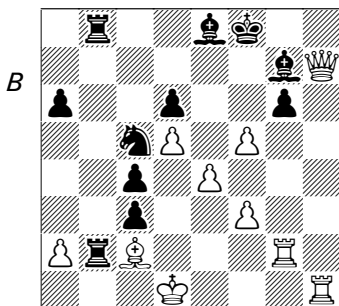
b) 31 ♖e7!?! dxc3 32 ♖d1 (32 ♜hg1? ♙a4!+-) 32...♙d4! (32...♜xa2 33 ♖xd6 ♘d7 34 ♜hg1 ♜bb2 35 ♖e6+ seems good for White) when the position is very messy but Black may have sufficient play to draw, e.g. 33 ♖xd6 ♜b6 34 ♖c7 ♘d3 and perpetual check is in the air after such (unforced) continuations as 35 f6 ♜b7 36 ♖c8 ♜b1+ (36...♖f7!?) 27 ♙xb1 ♜xb1+ 38 ♖c2 ♜b2+. Or if first 33 f6 ♜b7 34 ♖xd6 ♜b6 35 ♖f4 then 35...♜b1+ 36 ♖e2 ♜1b2 37 ♜d1 ♘d3 (not 37...♜xc2+ 38 ♖f1 ♜xg2 39 f7+!+-) 38 ♖c7 ♙xf6 39 ♖f1 ♜b7 and the ♜ will return to b2 after the ♖ retreats.

c) The prophylactic 31 ♖d1!?! is also possible; this side-step will be necessary very soon anyway. Then 31...dxc3 32 f6 reaches the note to White 32<sup>nd</sup> move in the game. Or Black can try 31...d3!? 32 f6 ♙h6 when White does not have an immediate kingside breakthrough so the obscure fight goes on; e.g. 33 f4! dxc2+ (33...♖h7!?) 34 ♜xc2 ♘d3 35 ♜xb2 ♜xb2 (♠...♙xf4 and ♜d2#) 36 ♜h2! ♜xh2 37 ♖xg2 ♙xf4 38 ♖g1 ♙e5, and although Black has two strong ♙s for the ♖, I suspect there should be a way for the ♖ to triumph in the end.  
**31 f6!**

Black allowed the obvious 31 ♖xh7+!?! ♖f8 because he believed it to be a blind alley and White avoided it for the same reason. The

old annotators don't give specific variations, so it is impossible to know how much they actually saw; a clue to the direction of their thinking is Heidenfeld's remark that "f6 must be played while the ♖ is still on h4". 32 f6? ♕xf6 was probably the line they looked at, and if 33 ♖h6+ Black defends with 33...♗g7 or 33...♜e7!? (but not 33...♜g8?? 34 ♖xg6++). Other 33<sup>rd</sup> moves for White gives nothing clear either.

White can instead play 32 ♜d1! (*D*), which is motivated by the important detail that ...♞d3 will now not be check, and in turn means that Black's key shot at move 32 in the actual game does not work. After the ♜ escapes the worst of the danger, White can pursue winning attempts.



Now 32...♞xa2 fails to 33 ♖xg6 ♕xg6 34 ♖xg6 threatening both f6 and ♖xd6+. So 32...♞d3 is probably the best try in the diagram above and then:

a) 33 ♕xd3? cxd3 and Black has forced mate in 9.

b) 33 e5 ♕xe5 (or ...♞xe5) is

unclear, as is 33 ♖h2 ♕e5.

c) 33 ♖gh2!? ♞xa2 34 f6 ♕xf6 35 ♖c7 (threatening mate in two by ♖h8+ etc.) is a rollercoaster ride: 35...♞a1+ 36 ♜e2 ♖xh1 37 ♖xh1 ♖b2 38 ♖xd6+ ♜g7 39 ♖c7+ ♜f8 40 f4 ♖xc2+ 41 ♜e3 g5! 42 fxg5 ♕xg5+ 43 ♜d4 ♕f6+ 44 ♜xc4 ♞e5+ (44...♕b5+ 45 ♜b3 ♖b2+ 46 ♜a3) 45 ♜b4 (45 ♜b3?! ♖b2+ 46 ♜xc3 ♞g4+ 47 e5 ♕xe5+ 48 ♖xe5 ♞xe5 49 ♜xb2 will end in a draw) 45...♖b2+ (45...♞e2!?) 46 ♜a5 ♖b2+ 47 ♜b6 ♞d7+ 48 ♜a7 (48 ♜b7 ♖b2+ 49 ♜xa6 ♞a2+) 48...♕d4+ 49 ♜a8 ♕e5 followed by 50...♖b2 and Black should draw.

d) 33 ♖h4! is critical. Surely Black cannot have enough for the ♖ here?

d1) 33...♖b1+ fails because after 34 ♕xb1 ♖xb1+ 35 ♜e2 c2 36 ♖gg1 ♖xg1 37 ♖xg1 c1 ♖38 ♖xc1 ♞xc1+ 39 ♜e3 Black's three pieces cannot combat the ♖. He is faced with the threat of f5-f6, his pawns are all loose and his ♞ is too far from safety.

d2) 33...♕e5! seems the only try, setting more traps:

d21) 34 ♖hh2? ♖b1+ 35 ♕xb1 (35 ♜e2 ♖8b2) 35...♖xb1+ 36 ♜e2 c2-+.

d22) 34 ♖gh2!? ♕a4!? 35 ♕xa4 (35 f6 ♜f7!) 35...♖xh2 36 ♖xh2 ♖b1+ 37 ♜e2 ♖b2+ and White may have to settle for the draw.

d23) 34 f6 ♖b1+ 35 ♕xb1 (35 ♜e2 ♞f4+ 36 ♜f2 ♕d4+ 37 ♜g3 ♞h5+) 35...♖xb1+ 36 ♜e2 ♖b2+ draws, because if 37 ♜e3 ♕f4+ 38 ♜d4 ♕e5+ 39 ♜xc4?? walks into a surprise mate: 39...♕b5#.



d24) 34 fxg6! ♖b1+ (34...♙a4 35 g7+! ♙xg7 36 ♖xg7!+-) hopes for 35 ♙xb1 ♖xb1+ 36 ♚e2 ♖b2+ 37 ♚f1 ♖b1+ draws, while 37 ♚e3 ♖xg2 is very risky for White. However, 35 ♚e2! spoils the fun; the fatal detail (compared with the previous note) is that 35...♜f4+ does not work because 36 ♞xf4 is check! After 35...♞xh1 36 ♞xh1 ♜f4+ 37 ♚e3 ♜xg2+ 38 ♞xg2 and 39 f4 it will soon be all over: e.g. 38...♖b2 39 f4 ♙f6 40 ♞g4 ♖xc2 41 e5+-.

To sum up, there is a win after 31 ♞xh7+, but it is long and difficult, so Sanz actually played the best move, forcing the reply.

**31...h5 32 fxg7**

White had another option that previous annotators overlooked: 32 ♚d1! — and I don't see any good continuation for Black here. If 32...♙h8 33 ♞xh5 ♙xf6 34 ♖xg6+ or 32...♞xa2 33 fxg7 ♙a4 34 ♞f6 ♙xc2+ 35 ♖xc2 ♖b1+ 36 ♚e2 ♖xc2+ 37 ♚e3+- . So Black plays 32...♜d3 when White can transpose to the game by 33 fxg7 ♙a4 or play 33 ♞hg1!? ♞xa2 34 fxg7 ♙a4 35 ♞f6, which should be good enough to win.

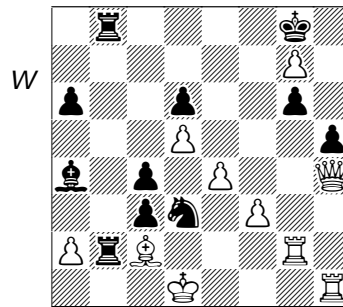
**32...♙a4!**

At last the problem ♙ comes to life and strikes an effective blow. It cannot be captured because of mate; i.e. 33 ♙xa4?? ♜d3+ 34 ♚d1 ♖xg2 with the double threat of 35...♖d2# and 35...♖b1#.

**33 ♚d1! ♜d3 (D)**

33...♞xa2? is too slow; White wins easily by 34 ♞f6 etc. (as after 32 ♚d1 ♞xa2 above).

Now with the black pieces swarming around his ♚, it starts to look as if White could even be losing. Gumprich found out later that his opponent was a chess problem composer — but did Sanz think the task was “White to play and win” or “White to play and draw”?



**34 ♞f6?**

White settles for a draw. This is given an exclamation mark by both Gumprich and Heidenfeld, but in fact it is a mistake because White still had two chances to win:

Firstly — and simplest — 34 ♞h2! (covering c2 and attacking d6) 34...♞b6 35 ♞hg1! ♞xa2 36 ♚e2 ♖xc2+ 37 ♚e3 and White should win, e.g. 37...♖xg2 38 ♞xg2 c2 39 ♞xg6 c1♞+ 40 ♖xc1 ♜xc1 41 ♞xh6+- .

34 ♖f1 should also have won — the point being that by providing further cover to f2, it rules out the game continuation. Now 34...♜b4! seems the best answer and then:

a) 35 ♖fg1 ♜xc2 (or 35...♙xc2+ 36 ♚e1 ♙a4 37 ♞f6! ♜d3+ 38 ♚f1 ♙d7 39 ♖xb2 cxb2 40 ♚g2 ♜c1 41

♖xg6 b1 ♖ 42 ♖xh5 ♖b8 43 ♔h1  
 ♖xg1+ 44 ♔xg1) 36 ♔e2 ♗b4+ 37  
 ♔e3 ♖xg2 38 ♖xg2 c2 39 ♖g1 ♗xa2  
 40 ♖f6 c1+ 41 ♖xc1 ♗xc1 42 ♖xd6  
 and although Black has ♖, ♗ + ♗ for  
 the ♔ his pieces are again so scattered  
 that the ♔ can reap havoc.

b) 35 ♗xa4! is possible now as  
 well; it's an exchange sacrifice but  
 White can afford it as Black's attacking  
 force has been reduced, e.g. 35...♖xg2  
 36 ♖f2 g5! 37 ♖xh5 ♖g1+ 38 ♔e2  
 ♖e1+! 39 ♔xe1 ♗d3+ when, despite  
 Black's ingenious tactical play, he  
 probably has a lost endgame.

After White misses these chances,  
 Black gets to demonstrate his idea in  
 its full glory.

**34...♗xc2+**

Neither player cannot afford to  
 diverge from the straight and narrow  
 path. Not 34...♖b1+?? 35 ♔e2 ♖xh1  
 36 ♖e6+ and mates.

**35 ♖xc2 ♗f2+ 36 ♖xf2**

White draws by a series of accurately  
 calculated moves. 36 ♔e2 ♖xc2+ 37  
 ♔e3 ♗xh1 38 ♖xg6 probably draws  
 as well but is less forcing.

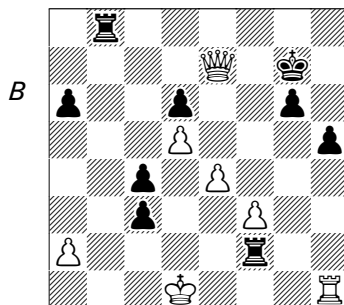
**36...♖xf2 37 ♖e6+ ♔xg7 38  
 ♖e7+ (D)**

The draw would now be obvious  
 after 38...♔g8 39 ♖e6+ ♔g7 40  
 ♖e7+.

**38...♔h6**

Black threatens ...c2+ and forces  
 White to find one last good move.

**39 ♖xh5+! ♔xh5 40 ♖h7+ ♔g5 41**



**♖e7+ ♔h5 ½-½**

Black decides that enough is  
 enough. 41...♔f4!? is less safe, but  
 could have been tried to set one last  
 trap: 42 ♖xd6+?? ♔e3 43 ♖xb8  
 c2+! (Heidenfeld) 44 ♔c1 ♔d3 45  
 ♔b2 c3+ etc, which is more clear-cut  
 than 43...♔d3 (Gumprich), though  
 that should also win.

Instead White would play 42 ♖f6+  
 ♔e3 (42...♔g3? costs a ♖ after 43  
 ♖xd6+) 43 ♖xc3+ and Black has  
 lost a pawn, but it should be a draw  
 anyway after 43...♔f4.

To conclude: this is not a perfect  
 draw, as Heidenfeld supposed,  
 because White missed a clear win —  
 but it is an excellent example of how  
 top amateurs played CC around 50  
 years ago. The ideas that the players  
 and previous annotators missed are  
 the kind of sly moves that computers  
 find almost effortlessly but which the  
 human mind tends to disregard, unless  
 a player penetrates very deeply into  
 the secret logic of a position.

# Game 21

**White:** Yakov Borisovich Estrin (USSR)

**Black:** Horst Robert Rittner (East Germany)

Ragozin Memorial, 1963

*French Defence, Winawer Variation (C17)*

**The Players:** Yakov Estrin (1923-87), was at this time an international master well known for his writings, mostly on classical 1 e4 e5 open games and gambits. Estrin divided his energies between OTB and postal play and his results were therefore somewhat erratic. His main CC achievement up to this time had been a tie for first place in the 5<sup>th</sup> USSR Championship. He later won the 7<sup>th</sup> CC World Championship — under somewhat controversial circumstances, discussed in the notes to Game 32.

Horst Rittner, still an active grandmaster and now in his seventies, went on after this event to become the 6<sup>th</sup> CC World Champion. He has achieved more ICCF grandmaster norms than any other player: 10 so far.

**About this game:** The Ragozin Memorial was an elite tournament held in memory of the 2<sup>nd</sup> CC World Champion. Rittner won it with 8/10, two clear points ahead of Estrin and the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Champion, O’Kelly. Rittner worked as a chess editor for the Berlin publishing house and had access to the latest theory, which made him a very dangerous opponent. However,

this particular clash is memorable for his delicate endgame play. Analysis in this game is based on Estrin’s own notes and the less useful ones by R.Marić in ‘Informator 2’.

**1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 ♙b4 4 e5 c5 5 ♚g4 ♜e7 6 dxc5 ♜bc6 7 ♙d2**

As a professional writer, Estrin was at a disadvantage in that his published views and analysis could be used against him. I know from my own experience that this can lead to the choice of an inferior, or less-explored alternative, in order to avoid the opponent’s preparation, and that is what happened to Estrin here.

In two articles he had examined the possibility 7 ♜f3, as played in a game Bronstein-Boleslavsky, Kiev 1944. Estrin suspected that his opponent was acquainted with this analysis and so he chose a quiet line instead. Indeed, Aarseth-Rittner in the 6<sup>th</sup> World Championship, 1968, saw summary execution by 7...d4! 8 ♙b5 ♚a5 9 ♙xc6+ bxc6! 10 ♚xg7 ♜g8 11 ♚xh7 ♙a6! 12 ♜g5 ♙xc3+ 13 ♙d1 0–0–0 14 ♜xf7 d3! 0-1 (15 ♜d6+ ♜xd6! 16 exd6 ♚a4 17 b3 ♚g4+ and wins).

7...0-0

In the game Batygin-Khasin, Leningrad 1954, there occurred 7...♙xc5 8 ♘f3 0-0 9 ♙d3 f5 10 exf6 ♖xf6 11 ♙g5 with about equal chances. Instead, Rittner follows an idea of his compatriot, and great exponent of the French Defence, GM Wolfgang Uhlmann.

8 ♘f3

In later games, Rittner faced 8 0-0-0 which is probably a better plan for White (e.g. Heemsoth-Rittner, Bernard Freedman Memorial 1985).

8...f5

Black tries to seize the initiative based on his safer ♔ position and mobile pawns.

Now 9 exf6 ♖xf6 10 0-0-0 e5! (Pietzsch-Uhlmann, East German Ch 1963) was known to be unfavourable for White. Estrin improves on that.

9 ♖h4 d4

Later Mednis played 9...♘g6!?, which may be an improvement, avoiding the possibility for White at move 13.

10 ♘e2 ♙xd2+ 11 ♘xd2 ♖d5 12 ♘b3 ♘g6 13 ♖g3?

Estrin had overlooked Black's 15<sup>th</sup> move; he should have preferred 13 ♖h3 although whether this really gives White an advantage, as some books claim, is questionable.

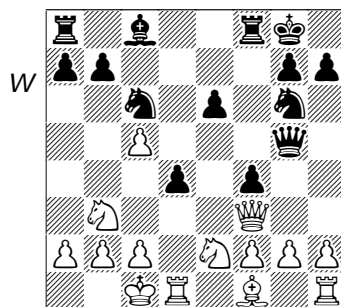
13...f4!

Black must make haste to justify his earlier play, because if White can succeed in completing his development by 0-0-0 he will have a better position as well as material superiority.

14 ♖f3 ♖xe5

Not 14...♖xf3 15 gxf3 ♘gxe5 16 ♘exd4+.

15 0-0-0 ♖g5! (D)



White now has difficulties. He cannot prevent ...e5, which would give Black complete hold of the centre. Therefore White decided on a piece sacrifice.

16 ♘exd4 ♘xd4 17 ♘xd4 ♘h4 18 ♖e4 f3+ 19 ♔b1 fxg2 20 ♙xg2 ♘xg2 21 ♖hg1 ♖xf2 22 c6!

Estrin had hopes in this position. He said that White's threats are very dangerous and now only one move enables Black to maintain his advantage.

22...♖f4!

Computers nowadays suggest either 22...bxc6 or 22...♖g6 (but Black did not want doubled g-pawns). However, Rittner was willing to give up a pawn to get the right endgame. He allowed White's little combination because he had seen further.

23 ♘xe6! ♖xe4!

Not 23...♙xe6 24 ♖xe6+ ♔h8 25 cxb7 and White has the initiative.

24 ♖d8+ ♔f7 25 ♘g5+ ♔e7 26 ♗xe4 ♜f4!

At this point Estrin's notes are a bit strange. He says that, "After 26...♞e2 27 ♘c3 ♜f2 28 c7! or 26...♔xd8 27 ♗xf2 ♗f4 28 cxb7 ♙xb7 29 ♜xg7 ♙d5 30 ♞xh7 White could even play for a win." It would be more accurate to say that he might not be losing, and in the line 26...♞e2 27 ♘c3 Black has a much stronger continuation in 27...♔xd8! 28 ♗xe2 ♙h3!.

Nevertheless, Rittner was probably right to avoid such complications because after 26...♜f4! White's back really was to the wall.

27 ♜g8 bxc6!

Also adequate for a win was 27...♞xe4, but Black's chosen continuation is the best, said Estrin.

28 ♜xg7+ ♔f8 29 ♜7xg2 ♞xe4 30 ♜g8+ ♔e7 31 ♞h8 ♔d6 32 b3

After 32 ♞xh7 ♙f5! Black wins easily. With the text move, White attempts to play on the pin of the black ♙.

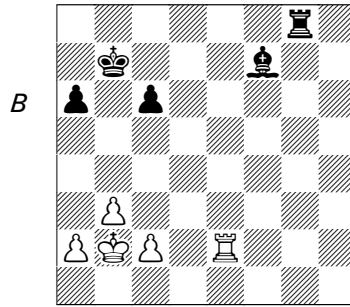
32...♞e7 33 ♜gg8 ♔c7 34 h4 ♔b7 35 h5 ♜c7 36 h6 a6!

An important subtlety! The natural 36...a5? would have deprived Black of the fruits of all his hard labour up to now, as will soon become clear.

37 ♜g7 ♜xg7 38 hxg7 ♙e6 39 ♞xh7 ♜g8 40 ♔b2

If the black pawn now stood on a5, then White would have had good chances of a draw by 40 ♞h5 ♔b6 41 ♜g5.

40...♙f7 41 ♔c3 ♙g6 42 ♞h2 ♜xg7 43 ♜g2 ♜g8 44 ♔b2 ♙f7 45 ♞e2 (D)



Estrin still had hopes of a draw because the a-pawn's queening square is of the opposite colour to the ♙.

"If Black exchanges one of his pawns, he loses all winning chances. But in what way is the white ♔ to reach its ideal position? My opponent conducted this difficult endgame magnificently, discovering a fine and surprising win, which fully deserves to be placed in theory books on similar endings."

"I showed this position to the leading endgame expert, GM Averbakh, who told me that if the position were indeed winning for Black, the method must be very painstaking." I think that was a polite way for Averbakh to tell Estrin he believed the ending was really won.

45...♙d5 46 ♞e7+ ♔b6 47 ♞e2 ♜g2 48 ♞e3 ♜f2 49 ♞e8 ♔c5 50 ♞e3 ♜f3 51 ♞e2 ♜g3

White manoeuvres while Black tries to realise the following plan:

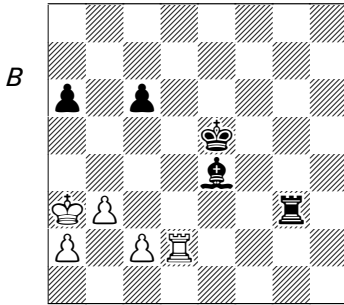
1. To displace the white ♞ from the third rank.
2. March his ♔ to the centre to enable the important move ...♙e4, from where it attacks both c2 and g2.

3. Prepare the decisive ...♔g2.

52 ♖e1 ♕d4 53 ♜d1+ ♕e5 54 ♜d2  
♙e4

Estrin still did not see how Rittner was going to overcome his defence!

55 ♕a3 (D)



55...♔g2!

The decisive move. After 55...c5 56 c4! White achieves a draw.

56 ♜xg2 ♙xg2 57 ♕b4 ♕d6!

Defending the precious c-pawn, while keeping the white ♕ out of c5. Estrin wrote: “The last finesse. It had appeared to me that Black was obliged to play 57...♕d4 but in that case the win would be gone. If the white pawn already stood on c3 then White could be content. Now Black wins the decisive tempo.”

Estrin is correct to say that the position is drawn with the white pawn on c3 (or c4), as then White can win the a-pawn without problems; e.g. (with the pawn on c3) 57...♕d6 58 ♕a5 ♙f1 59 c4 ♕c5 60 ♕xa6 ♕b4 61 ♕b6 ♙g2 62 ♕b7 and Black is tied to the defence of his remaining pawn (62...♕a3 63 ♕b6 ♕xa2 64 b4=).

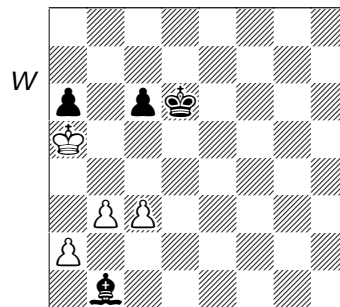
But he is not correct that 57...♕d4 in the game would have drawn. Black still wins after 58 c3+ (58 ♕a5 ♙e4 59 ♕xa6 ♙xc2 50 b4 ♙a4 51 ♕a5 ♙b5 52 a4 ♕c4! 52 axb5 cxb5-- ) 58...♕d3! 59 ♕a5 (If 59 c4 ♕c2 50 ♕c5 ♕b2 51 b4 ♕xa2 62 b5 cxb5 63 cxb5 a5-- or 59 ♕c5 ♕xc3 60 b4 ♙d5 61 a4 ♙e4 62 b5 cxb5 63 axb5 a5-- ) 59...♕xc3 60 ♕xa6 c5 61 ♕b5 ♕d4-- as his c-pawn is out of danger; e.g. 62 ♕a4 (If 62 b4 c4 or 62 a4 ♙d5) 62...♙e4 (△...♙b1-a2) 63 ♕a3 ♙c2 64 ♕b2 (64 ♕a4 c4) 64...♕d3 65 a4 ♙xb3! 66 ♕xb3 c4+ and the pawn promotes.

It seems to me therefore that Estrin was lost anyway, but the win is much clearer after Rittner’s move.

58 ♕a5 ♙e4

The decisive tempo; Black gains time to attack the pawns from behind.

59 c3 ♙b1 0–1 (D)



Here the game had to be broken off and the adjudication was in Black’s favour. It is not hard to see that White’s position is hopeless. After 60 a3 or 60 a4 there follows 60...♙c2.

# Game 22

**White: Piotr Dubinin (USSR)**

**Black: Aleksandr Konstantinopolsky (USSR)**

Ragozin Memorial, 1963

*Caro-Kann Defence (B14)*

**The Players:** Piotr V. Dubinin (1909-83) was already a USSR Championship finalist OTB in the 1930s. He became a FIDE international master in 1950 and an ICCF grandmaster in 1962. His best result was finishing runner-up to A.O'Kelly de Galway in the 3<sup>rd</sup> CC World Championship.

Aleksandr M. Konstantinopolsky (1910-90) won the first USSR CC Championship (1948-51) and he became an ICCF international master in 1966 and eventually a FIDE grandmaster (1983). He was one of the USSR's leading chess trainers and a noted theoretician.

**About this game:** This game, the most exciting in this elite event, featured in the 1985 Russian monograph on Konstantinopolsky's career.

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 ♟f6 5 ♟c3**

White plays the Panov-Botvinnik Attack, which can lead to a great variety of positions. Alternatives here are 5...g6 (which Konstantinopolsky played against Estrin in this event) and 5...♟c6 which can be met either by 6 ♟f3, when Black usually plays 6...♟g4, or by 6 ♟g5.

**5...e6 6 ♟f3 ♟c6**

Black chooses a hybrid system. Konstantinopolsky wrote: "I do not share the popular theoretical opinion that this move loses by force to 7 c5. The resources of the black position seem to me to be fully adequate."

Nowadays the normal moves are 6...♟b4 (transposing to a variation of the Nimzo-Indian) and 6...♟e7, which Konstantinopolsky used to play earlier in his career.

The latter usually transposes to a Queen's Gambit Semi-Tarrasch (7 cxd5 ♟xd5), but his famous win against Keres from the 16<sup>th</sup> USSR Championship (Moscow 1948), which had parallels to the present game, went 7 a3 0-0 8 c5 ♟e4 9 ♖c2 f5 10 ♟e2 ♟c6 11 ♟b5 ♟f6 12 ♟xc6 bxc6 13 0-0 g5 14 ♟e5 ♟xe5 15 dxe5 ♟xc3 16 ♖xc3 f4∞ (0-1, 50).

**7 c5**

Dubinin plays the recommended move and avoids isolated d-pawn positions that result from the normal 7 cxd5 ♟xd5 8 ♟c4 or 8 ♟d3; instead he creates a 3-2 queenside pawn majority. The general plan is ♟f1-b5xc6 to take control of e5, followed by a queenside pawn advance. Black hopes to make use of his majority of

pawns on the kingside but first he has to solve the problem of developing his pieces in a cramped space.

7...♙e7

Konstantinopolsky's move order was probably influenced by a belief that he could improve upon 7...♗e4 8 ♙b5! ♗xc3 9 bxc3 ♙d7 10 0-0 ♙e7 11 ♙f4 b6?! 12 ♖a4 ♗c8 13 c4± (1-0, 23) Dubinin-V.Bergraser, 4<sup>th</sup> CC World Ch 1962. It is often a good idea to encourage opponents to repeat lines where they have had an easy success, because they may be uncritical.

8 ♙b5 0-0

'ECO' and 'NCO' instead recommend an unconvincing line: 8... ♙d7 9 ♙xc6 (White usually prefers 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♗e1 and has had good results with it.) 9...♙xc6 10 ♗e5 (This is also not forced.) 10...♗d7! 11 ♗xc6 bxc6 12 0-0 (Z.Franco-M.Voiska, Zaragoza 1993) 12...e5 13 ♙e3 0-0 14 b4 ♙f6= — Voiska.

9 ♙f4

Instead of this, theory now recommends 9 0-0 ♗e4 when:

a) 10 ♙xc6 ♗xc3 11 bxc3 bxc6 12 ♖a4± (Foltys-Opocensky, Munich 1941) is cited, for example, in the book on the Caro-Kann by Egon Varnusz. However, that example is very misleading and I think Black is OK here. After 12...♖c7 13 ♗e5?! ♙xc5! 14 dxc5 ♖xe5 15 ♖xc6 and here the immediate 15...♖e2!? (and if 16 ♖xa8 ♙a6 or ...♖xf1+) looks stronger than Opocensky's 15...♗b8 16 ♖d6 ♖e2?, which loses the exchange to 17 ♙h6! ♙a6 18 ♖g3.

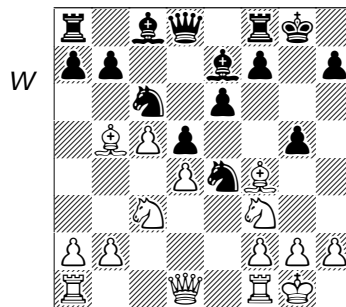
b) 10 ♖c2 f5 11 ♙xc6 bxc6 was

played in Estrin-N.Kopylov, USSR Cht 1953, and many other games. According to the book 'Caro-Kann' by A.Veits and A.Konstantinopolsky (Moscow 1983) "Black can fight for the initiative". Now S.Toldaev-L.Gusev, from the 10<sup>th</sup> USSR CC Cht 1991, continued 12 ♗e5 ♖c7 13 f3!? (a pawn sacrifice to get play on the dark squares and the c-file) 13...♗xc5 14 ♙f4 ♙d6 15 ♗ac1 ♗b8 16 ♖d2. While this is an interesting idea, it is not so clear and I expect that Black would have found something, e.g. 16...♗a6 now, instead of Gusev's 16...♙d7?.

9...♗e4 10 0-0

In an OTB game in Finland, double CC world champion Tõnu Õim played 10 ♙xc6 ♗xc3 (10...bxc6!?) 11 bxc3 bxc6 12 ♖a4 ♖e8 13 0-0 f6 16 ♗fe1 g5 with a messy position, (1-0, 60) Õim-Mertanen, Savonlinna 1990.

10...g5! (D)



Konstantinopolsky wrote that: "Black can thank the move c4-c5 for making this advance possible. Black's centre is very secure and the flank attack is not merely permissible, but necessary."



11 ♖xc6 bxc6 12 ♙g3 f6!

“This is more flexible than 12...f5, which would be met by 13 ♙e5. Black maintains control of the central square e5 and anyway the time has almost arrived to exchange the outpost ♗.”

13 ♖e1 ♗xg3 14 hxg3 ♖b8 15 ♗d2 ♗c7 16 b4 ♖f7!

Not 16...♖xb4? 17 ♗xd5.

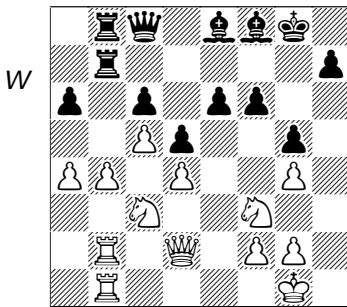
17 ♖ab1 ♙d7 18 a4 a6

Black wants to delay White’s b4-b5 advance while he completes his preparations on the other wing.

19 ♗e2 ♗b7 20 g4

To block Black’s kingside advance by ♗c3-e2-g3-h5 or else ♗f3-h2-f1-g3-h5, and maybe White did not wish to allow ...g5-g4. Black replies by doubling on the b-file to create threats there.

20...♙f8 21 ♗d2 ♗c8 22 ♖b2 ♙e8 23 ♖eb1 ♖fb7 (D)



24 ♖b3

24 a5 was another plan, to block the b-file by ♗a4-b6. Konstantinopolsky said he intended to counter that by 24...♙g6 25 ♖e1 e5 but it seems to me that ...e5 needs more preparation, in view of 26 dxe5 ♙xc5 27 b5! axb5 28 exf6 ∞.

24...♙g7

Black now plans to advance ...e6-e5 using the sacrifice of his a-pawn as a decoy, but the variations in his book don’t all check out with a computer. He rejected 24...♙g6 25 ♖1b2 e5!? 26 dxe5 ♙xc5 because of 27 ♗b5! but 27...♙xf2+ looks like a good reply. Also Black stands well after 27 ♗xd5 cxd5 28 exf6 d4, but 27 b5!? could be more awkward to meet.

25 ♗e2 e5! 26 ♗xa6

Black judges that the absence of the white ♗ from the centre will enable him to get his own attack moving. 26 dxe5 would probably be met by 26...fxe5 27 ♗xg5 ♙g6 28 ♖1b2 e4. 26...e4 27 ♗e1 f5! 28 gxf5

If 28 ♗c2 f4 29 ♗e2 (29 f3 exf3 30 gxf3 ♙g6) 29...f3 30 gxf3 exf3 31 ♗xf3 ♙g6 and Black is better after, e.g., 32 ♖1b2 ♙xc2 33 ♖xb2 ♖xb4. 28...♙xd4 29 ♗c2

This sets a trap or two: 29...♙xc5? 30 ♗xe4! dxe4 31 ♗c4+ ♙f7 32 ♗xc5 ♙xb3 33 ♖xb3 ♖f7 34 ♗d4 and Black’s position is fragmented; or if 29...♙e5 30 ♗e3! Δ ♗g4. Instead 29 ♗xd5 fails to 29...cxd5 30 c6 ♗xf5 31 ♗f3 exf3 32 cxb7 fxg2 33 ♗e2 ♙h5!. 29...♙g7!

In exchange for the a-pawn, Black has gained space in the centre (especially control of d4) and now, to prevent ...♗xf5, White must compromise his kingside. One point illustrated by the next stage of this game is that the player with a space advantage (here, Black) finds it easier to switch play between the wings.

30 g4

30 ♖e3!? is not mentioned in K's notes: 30...♙f7 (30...d4 31 ♗xe4 dxe3 32 ♗d6 exf2+ 33 ♖xf2 ♖d7) 31 b5 and now 31...♙xc3!? is trappy, because of 32 bxc6 ♖xb3 33 ♖xb3 ♖xa6? (better 33...♙e5) 34 ♖xb8+ ♖g7 35 c7±. Instead, 31...d4 is good for Black but very complicated. 31...♖a8 is safer, leading to an advantage for Black without risk.

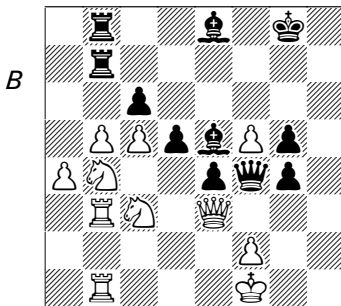
**30...♖c7 31 ♖e2**

31 ♗e2?? (intending the desirable ♗g3) loses the ♖ to 31...♖a7.

**31...♖f4 32 b5 ♙e5 33 ♖f1 h5 34 ♗b4**

34 b6 is too slow (34...hxg4 35 a5 ♖h7) and if 34 gxh5 ♖h4 and ...♙xh5. If 34 gxh5, the best reply is probably 34...♖h7! (similar to the game).

**34...hxg4 35 ♖e3 (D)**



The best defence, preparing to bring a ♗ over to g3. The game is now at a critical moment because White's queenside majority is potentially very dangerous, while Black has mobile pawns. It is hard to get to the bottom of the tactics here.

**35...g3?!**

Previously this was always given a “!” but in view of the next note, Black should find another move here. With 35...♖xf5!, Black avoids the ♖ exchange and retains his threats, White's counterplay apparently being insufficient. For example, 36 bxc6 (36 ♗xc6? ♙xc6 37 bxc6 ♖xb3 or 36 ♗e2 cxb5) 36...g3! and now:

a) 37 cxb7 d4 38 ♖e2 ♖h3+ 39 ♖e1 dxc3 (Δ 40...♖h1#) 40 ♖xe4 (40 ♖c4+ ♙f7 or 40 ♖d1 ♙h5) 40...gxf2+ 41 ♖xf2 ♖g3+ 42 ♖f1 ♙b5+! 43 axb5 ♖f8+ and mates.

b) 37 c7 d4! 38 cxb8 ♖ ♖xb8 and White is lost despite his extra ♖, viz. 39 ♖xe4? ♖xf2#, or 39 ♖e2 ♖h3+ 40 ♖e1 dxc3 etc.

c) 37 ♗cxd5 ♖f7 38 c7 ♖c8 (Δ...♖h3+) 39 ♖g2 gxf2.

d) 37 ♗e2 d4! 38 ♗xd4 (38 ♗xg3? ♖h3+ and 39...dxe3) is the best defence but Black seems to win by 38...♖h3+, viz. 39 ♖e2 (If 39 ♖g1? ♖h2+ 40 ♖f1 g2+ 41 ♖e2 ♙h5+ 42 ♖d2 ♙f4 or 39 ♖e1 gxf2+ 40 ♖xf2 ♖xb4 41 ♖xb4 ♖xb4 42 ♖xb4 ♙g3-+) 39...♖h5+ 40 ♖d2 (40 ♖e1 g2) 40...♖xb4 41 ♖xb4 ♖xb4 44 ♖xb4 ♙f4-+.

**36 ♗e2?**

Konstantinopolsky wrote that “36 ♖xf4 (not 36 b6? g2+) 36...gxf4 37 fxg3 f3 (Δ...♖h7) leads to defeat for White” but unfortunately he published no further analysis to justify that view.

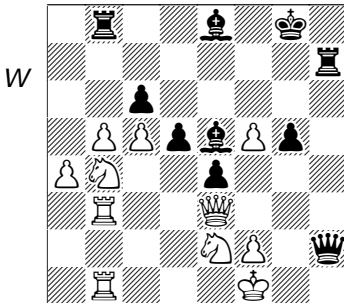
The exchange of ♖s was a better defence than the two players thought. The critical line goes 38 g4! (38 bxc6?! ♖h7! 39 ♗cxd5 ♙d4! threatens mate, and if 40 ♖e1 ♖h1+ 41 ♖d2 ♖h2+ 42 ♖e1 f2+ 43 ♖f1 ♖h1+ 44 ♖e2 ♙h5+

45 ♖d2 ♕d1 –) 38...♖h7 39 ♖f2! which, even if it fails, is much better than the game continuation, which loses by force.

Black only draws by ♕ checks (39...♕d4+ 40 ♖g3 ♕e5+), but 39...♖h2+! 40 ♖e3 f2 seems just good enough to win, e.g. 41 b6 ♕g7 42 ♗a6!? d4+ 43 ♖xe4 ♖h3 and 44 ♗xb8? fails to 44...♖e3+ 45 ♖f4 ♖e1 –+ (analysis with Junior7). There are many other possibilities for both sides, but the massed black forces are strong (especially with the white ♖ so exposed), whereas White's queenside play seems a bit too slow.

36...g2+! 37 ♖xg2 ♖h2+ 38 ♖f1 ♖h7 (D)

38...♖h1+? 39 ♗g1 ♕h2 40 ♖h3!.



39 ♗g1!

“The inventive analyst P.Dubinin, in this difficult situation, found a remarkable counter-chance. The main point is to prepare the diversion sacrifice of the ♖ at move 43. However, Black met the challenge and found on the board a hidden and paradoxical combinational resource leading to a mating finale.”

39...♖h1 40 ♗xc6 ♕f4 41 ♖d4

41 ♗xb8 also fails: 41...♕xe3 42 ♖xe3 ♖h2 (or 42...d4) and if 43 ♖g3 e3! 44 ♖b2 (44 ♖xe3? ♖g2+ or 44 fxe3 ♖e4 or 44 ♖xg5+ ♖f8) 44...exf2+ 45 ♖xf2 ♖xf2 46 ♖xf2 ♖h2+ 47 ♖g2 ♖xb8 –+.

41...♖h2!

Threatening 42...♖g2+ 43 ♖e2 ♕h5+.

42 ♗e7+ ♖h7 43 ♖h3+

If 43 ♗g6 to block the ♕, then 43...♖g2+ 44 ♖e2 ♖g4+ 45 ♖f1 ♕xg6 46 fxg6+ ♖xg6 –+ Δ...e3.

43...♖xh3 44 ♖xd5?!

This permits a quick finish but evidently Dubinin wished to set a final trap rather than “go quietly”. Objectively best was 44 ♗xd5, but it's obviously hopeless after 44...♕c6!, clearing the back rank for the b8-♖ to prevent ♖h8+, so that the ♖ can escape up the h-file and Black can consolidate his extra ♖.

44...♕h5!

Black parries the mate threat on g8.

45 ♖d7

Apparently threatening a dangerous discovered check, but...

45...♖xg1+! 0–1

In fact, two moves force mate.

a) After 45...♖xg1+ 46 ♖xg1 ♕f3 there are several variations, but the black ♖ always escapes the checks, e.g. 47 ♗c8+ ♖h6! 48 ♖e6+ ♖h5 49 ♖e8+ ♖g4 or 47 ♗g8+ ♖h8! 48 ♖d4+ ♖xg8 49 ♖d5+ ♖f8 or 47 ♗d5+ ♖h8! or 47 ♗g6+ ♖h6!.

b) Unfortunately there is a “cook” as 45...♕f3 also wins, and after the checks finish Black can choose between ...♖xg1+, ...♖h1# and ...♖g2+, ...♖xg1#.

# Game 23

**White: Dr Maurice E.M. Jago (England)**

**Black: John E. Littlewood (England)**

English Minor Counties CC Championship, 1964

*King's (Mason/Pärnu) Gambit (C33)*

**The Players:** John Littlewood is a FIDE Master and British Master who represented England many times OTB, especially in the 1960s when he was one of the country's strongest players. (He famously gave Botvinnik a fright at Hastings one year.) I have no information about Jago.

Very aggressive at the chessboard, yet very friendly off it, Littlewood somehow never won an IM title — probably because he tended to prefer lively games to maximising results. He has played on British CC Olympiad teams but most of his postal chess has been played in England.

**About this game:** This is essentially a tactical battle of some theoretical interest, which is very enjoyable to play through and analyse, even if the game has flaws. It represents a style of CC play that was very popular in the pre-computer era.

I consulted the original notes by Littlewood in 'Chess' 487-8, and the opening monograph 'Das angenommene Königsgambit mit 3.Sc3' by Alexander Bangiev and Volker Hergert (Reinhold Dreier 1993). John read a draft of this chapter and added a few comments.

"The interesting background to the game was that I wrote an article in 'Chess' about my idea round about 1954 and answered a few letters about it... When I was asked to play a postal game against Jago about ten years later, it seemed like fate, so I just couldn't resist trying out this wild line knowing that Jago would have read my original article!?"

**1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 ♖c3!? ♔h4+ 4 ♕e2**

This is sometimes known as the Pärnu Gambit because it was developed by the young Paul Keres and his friend Martin Villemson (1897–1933) in their home town in Estonia, but is also called after the Irish master James Mason. It is an attempt to improve upon the Steinitz Gambit, 1 e4 e5 2 ♖c3 ♖c6 3 f4 exf4 4 d4 ♔h4+ etc. In that case after 5 ♕e2 d5 the move 6 exd5 is critical; 6 ♖xd5 is not good because of 6... ♗g4+ 7 ♖f3 0–0–0. On the other hand, in the main line of the Mason Gambit, Black does not have time to castle and White retains the option of playing d3 rather than d4 in many cases.

**4...d5**

This move has received most

attention but may not be best. Those readers who want more detail on this wild gambit should consult my article in 'Chess Mail' 5/2002.

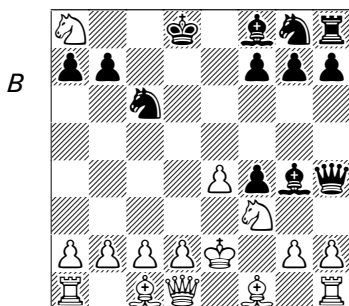
5 ♖xd5 ♙g4+ 6 ♜f3 ♜c6

In Mason-S.Rosenthal, Paris 1878, Black played 6...♜a6, which seems a reasonable move, defending c7. 6...♙d6!? is another way of saving the ♙, when 7 d4 ♜c6 is the critical line.

7 ♜xc7+

This is the typical move of the Mason Gambit. 7 d4 0-0-0 transposes to the aforementioned line of the Steinitz Gambit.

7...♙d8 8 ♜xa8 (D)



8...♜d4!?

This was the move Littlewood had cooked up 10 years previously. 8...f5!? 9 ♙e1 “!” (Bangiev & Hergert) is another hugely complicated line.

Most theory concentrates on 8...♜e5, which is analysed in more detail in my CM article. Then 9 ♙e1!? has been revived recently but White has normally played 9 h3 when:

a) 9...♙h5 was played in a famous CC miniature Keres-Menke, 1933,

where White blundered with 10 ♙g1?. According to his biographer, Valter Heuer, Keres decided to get the game over with quickly as he had “no money for stamps”. Instead, Bangiev & Hergert suggest 10 ♙e1!?.

The game Littlewood knew was M.Jago-A.R.B.Thomas, England 1954, where White innovated with 10 d4!? ♜xf3 11 gxf3 ♙xf3+ 12 ♜xf3 ♙h5+ 13 ♜g2 ♙xd1 14 ♙d3 ♙h5 15 ♙xf4 and Dr Jago won after 15...♜e7 (15...♜f6!?) 16 ♙hf1 f5? 17 ♙ae1 ♜d7 18 ♙f2 fxe4 19 ♙xe4 ♙d5 20 ♙g3 g6 21 ♜c7 ♙xa2 22 d5 a6 23 ♙f7 ♙g8 24 b3 ♙g7 25 ♙exe7+ ♙xe7 26 ♙xg7 ♙a5 27 d6 1-0. However, Arkhipkin-Klovans, Riga 1974, saw an improvement for Black in 16...♜g6! 17 ♙g3 (17 ♙c7+ ♜c8 18 e5 ♜h4+ with counterplay) 17...♙e7 (17...♜h4+! 18 ♙xh4+ ♙xh4∞) 18 a4? (18 ♜c7!∞) 18...♜h4+ 19 ♜h2 g5 20 ♙c4 g4 21 hxg4 ♙xg4 and Black won.

a2) Littlewood pointed out that Black can at least draw by 9...♙xf3+ 10 gxf3 ♙g3, i.e. 11 d4! ♙xf3+ 12 ♜e1 ♙g3+ 13 ♜e2 ♙f3+ with perpetual check is very old analysis (but not 13...f3+? 14 ♜d2 ♙b4+ 15 c3 ♙f2+ 16 ♙e2 fxe2 17 ♙xe2 ♙xd4+ 18 ♜c2+- — Bangiev). 11 d3!? ♙xf3+ 12 ♜e1 (not 12 ♜d2?? ♜c4+!) 12...♙g3+ 13 ♜e2 ♙f3+ draws too, but in this line 12...♙xh1 comes into consideration.

9 ♜d3 ♙f6!

Littlewood wrote that “as a brash young man” he decided Black could do better than the 8...♜e5 line of Jago-Thomas. He had sent in analysis

“trying to show that after 8...♘d4+ White had no way of dislodging this ♘. Now, after all these years, I suddenly had an opportunity to try out my line for the first time in a game... Being older and wiser, I was no longer entirely convinced of my plan.”

### 10 c3!

“The first surprise: this seemingly innocuous move cleverly leads to the displacement of my ♖”.

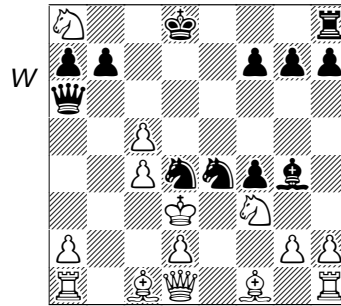
Bangiev & Hergert also suggest 10 b3!? and if 10...♖a6+ 11 c4 White has the extra move b2-b3 on the game, while after 10...♘xf3 (not 10...♘xb3? 11 cxb3! ♖xa1 12 ♖c2) 11 gxf3 ♖xa1 12 fxg4 White will be a pawn up even without the ♘a8. M.Fuegert-M.Barz, corr 1998, saw 10...♗c5 11 ♗b2 (Δ b2-b4) 11...♖a6+ (If 11...♖d6 12 ♗xd4! ♗xf3 13 ♖xf3 ♖xd4+ 14 ♗e2 ♖xa1 15 ♖xf4+- — K.Morrison.) 12 c4 ♘e7 13 b4! f5 14 bxc5 ♘xf3 15 gxf3 fxe4+ 16 ♗c3 ♖a5+ 17 ♗b3 ♗xf3 18 ♗e2 ♗xh1 19 ♖xh1 f3 20 ♗xf3 exf3 21 ♖xf3 ♖xc5 22 ♖xb7+-.

### 10...♖a6+ 11 c4

Not 11 ♗xd4 ♖d6+ and mate in two: 12 ♗c4 ♗e6+ 13 ♗b5 ♖a6#.

Here Littlewood explained: “Black’s game suddenly looks most precarious. If 11...♘e7 12 b4! or 11...♗b4 12 a3! or 11...♘f6 12 ♗xd4! ♖d6+ 13 ♗c3 ♘xe4+ 14 ♗c2 ♘f2 15 ♖e2 ♗f5+ 16 d3 ♗xd3+ 17 ♖xd3 ♘xd3 18 ♗xd3 and White has a won game. This last variation is a good example of the dangers of Black’s position: White is happy to give up his ♖ if sufficient compensation is forthcoming.

“At this juncture, my thoughts were gloomy. So I decided to take the bull by the horns and blast open the white ♖ position by a fantastic series of moves.”  
11...♗c5 12 b4! ♘f6 13 bxc5 ♘xe4!  
(D)



Littlewood: “White is faced with a difficult choice. Should he capture one of the cheeky ♘s or plump for the apparently safer move of the game?”

### 14 ♖e1?!

Contemporary notes give this “!” but perhaps this is where White missed the win.

If 14 ♗xd4 ♖f6+ 15 ♗d3 ♘f2+ 16 ♗c2 ♘xd1 “is enough to win but there may well be better” — Littlewood. (In this line, White might consider 15 ♘e5.)

14 ♗xe4! is critical line, when:

a) 14...♖f6 15 ♗b2! (15 ♗d3? ♘xf3 16 gxf3 ♗f5+ 17 ♗e2 ♖e8+ 18 ♗f2 ♖d4+ 19 ♗g2 ♖e6 0-1 Dammkoehler-Romanski, IECG 1995) 15...♗f5+ (15...♖e8+!?) 16 ♗xf4 ♗c2+ 17 ♗g3 ♗xd1 18 ♗xd4 and Black has paid too high a price for the white ♖.

b) Littlewood intended 14...♖e8+:

b1) 15 ♖xd4 ♜f6+ 16 ♔d3 ♕f5#.

b2) After 15 ♖xf4 he said he was hoping to find a win but had not yet found it. It looks to me that 15...♕xf3! 16 gxf3 ♜f6+ draws immediately, which is clearer than the Bangiev & Hergert line 15...♜g6!? 16 d3 ♕xf3 17 gxf3 f6 18 h4 ♖e5 (Δ...♞e6#) because 19 ♕h3 prevents the mate and after 19...♞e2+ 20 ♜xe2 Black is unlikely to have better than a draw.

b3) 15 ♔d3! ♕f5+ 16 ♖c3 ♜a5+ and now:

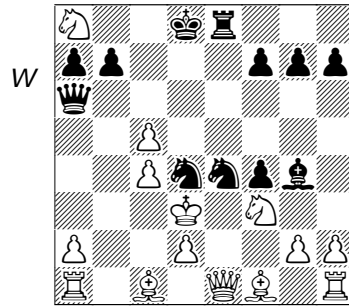
b31) 17 ♖xd4 ♖e4+ 18 ♔d3 (18 ♔d5 ♖c8! -+ — Littlewood) 18...b6! Δ 19...♖e3+ 20 ♔d4 ♜xc5#. If 19 ♖c2 Black mates by 19...♖xc4+ 20 ♖b2 ♜b4+ 21 ♜b3 ♖c2+ 22 ♖b1 ♖xd2+ 23 ♕d3 ♕xd3#. An amusing corollary is that if instead 18...♖e6+? 19 ♖e4 b6 White can try the insane 20 ♕a3!?! and if then 20...♖e4+ (20...♜xa3 21 ♜b3 ♜xc5+ 22 ♖c3 wins) 21 ♔d5 ♜xa3 22 d4!! +- when the white ♖ defends halfway down the board in front of his pawns!

b32) White has 17 ♖b2!, which unfortunately wins for him, e.g. 17...♜b4+ (or 17...♕c2 18 ♜xc2 ♞xc2 19 ♖xc2 ♜a4+ 20 ♖c3 ♜a5+ 21 ♖b3) 18 ♜b3! ♞xb3 19 axb3 ♜xc5 20 d4 and White probably has too much material in the end. I believe this book is the first time that the winning line for White against Littlewood's ingenious idea has been shown.

In the game White also gives up the ♜ (albeit for ♖+♞). But 18 ♜b3, just putting the ♜ en prise, is much more difficult to see. (One example of where computer number-

crunching has the advantage over human selective thinking!)

14...♖e8 (D)



15 ♜xe4

Dr Jago gives up his ♜ for much material but misses Black's 17<sup>th</sup> move. 15 ♜h4+ g5! was also critical:

a) Dr Jago thought afterwards that he should have played 16 ♜xg4 ♞f2+ 17 ♖c3 ♞xg4 18 ♞xd4 with at least ♖ and two ♕s for the ♜. Littlewood said that "I would not be unduly depressed with Black's position. There might even be an improvement with 17...♜a5+ 18 ♖xd4 ♞xg4 when Black has mating threats, e.g. 19 ♕b2? ♞f2 20 ♖g1 ♖e4+ 21 ♔d5 ♖c8 22 ♕e5 ♜a4! 23 ♞d4 ♜d7+ 24 ♕d6 ♜e6+! 25 ♞x6 fxe6#."

In that line, 20...♖c8! is stronger immediately. Another possibility is 17...♞d1+! 18 ♖b4 (18 ♖xd4? ♜f6+ 19 ♔d3 ♜g6+ 20 ♔d4 ♜e4#) 18...♞c2+ 19 ♖b3 ♞xa1+ 20 ♖b4 ♞c2+ with an unusual perpetual.

b) 16 ♞xg5! was the line that worried Littlewood far more, e.g. 16...♞xc5+ 17 ♖xd4 (Not 17 ♖c3

♘a4+ 18 ♖b4? ♔d6+ 19 ♖xa4 ♙d1+ 20 ♖a5 ♚c5#) 17... ♗f6+ 18 ♖xc5 when if 18... ♗e5+? 19 ♖b4 ♗xg5 20 ♗xg5! ♗xg5 “and White has much better chances than in the game. Again I was hoping to find some improvement”. Later it was noticed that Black can draw by 18... ♗e7+! 19 ♖d4 ♗f6+. There is another, prettier perpetual after 18... ♗e5+ 19 ♖b4 a5+ 20 ♖a3 ♚c5+ 21 ♖b2 (or 21 ♖b3 ♙d1+) 21... ♗b4+ 22 ♖c2 and now 22... ♙d1+! 23 ♖d3 (not 23 ♖xd1 ♗a4#) 23... ♗d6+ etc.

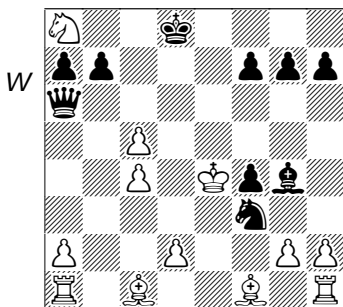
#### 15... ♗xe4

Not 15... ♙f5? 16 ♗xf5 ♘xf5 17 ♙b2 and White holds on to his material advantage — Littlewood.

#### 16 ♖xe4

If 16 ♘xd4 ♗xd4+! 17 ♖xd4 ♗f6+ 18 ♖d3 ♙f5+! 19 ♖e2 ♗xa1 20 ♖d1 (20 ♙a3 ♗xa2 wins the ♙) 20... ♗xa2 21 d3 ♙g4+ 22 ♖e1 g5 followed by 23... ♗c2 wins for Black — Littlewood.

#### 16... ♘xf3 (D)



#### 17 gxf3?!

“Here, if anywhere, Dr Jago had

a chance to justify his 10<sup>th</sup> move by playing the startling 17 ♘b6! shutting my ♗ out of the game for some time.” Littlewood gave no analysis, but it is true that 17 gxf3 makes things easier for Black. 17 ♘b6 gains a couple of moves but White needs at least four moves to get his pieces out.

Rather than 17... axb6 18 gxf3 bxc5 19 fxg4 (19 ♖xf4? ♙h5) 19... ♗c6+ and 20... ♗xh1, when the ♗ has only infantry support, a strong continuation is 17... ♘h4! 18 ♖xf4 ♙e6 for example:

a) 19 ♙b2 axb6 20 ♙xg7 bxc5 21 ♖g5 ♗d6 22 ♙f6+ ♖e8 and 23... h6+ and White is completely lost.

b) 19 ♗b1 axb6 20 ♗xb6 ♗a5 21 ♗b5 ♗a4 22 d3 ♗d1. As long as Black has one piece to support the ♗ (currently he has two pieces) the white ♖ is in great danger.

#### 17... ♗c6+

This was the move that White did not foresee. If now 18 ♖d4 Littlewood intended 18... ♗f6+ (18... ♙xf3 19 ♖c3 ♗xc5 20 d4 ♗a5+ 21 ♖c2 ♙xh1 also comes into consideration) 19 ♖e4! (19 ♖d3 ♙f5+ 20 ♖e2 ♗xa1 21 ♙g2 ♗xa2 — Littlewood) 19... ♗f5+ 20 ♖d4 ♙xf3 21 ♗g1 ♗f6+ 22 ♖d3 ♗xa1 and Black should win. So White gives up his h1-♗ instead.

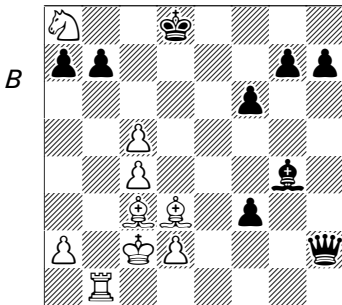
#### 18 ♖d3 ♗xf3+ 19 ♖c2 ♗xh1 20 ♙b2 f6! 21 ♙d3 ♗xh2

“It would appear that Black should have little difficulty in winning this ending, but Dr Jago makes the most of his chances and forces me to play with the utmost circumspection”.



However, modern computer analysis sees extra resources for both sides. Maybe White missed a fighting chance at move 24 and therefore Black should have chosen another 23<sup>rd</sup> move.

**22 ♖c3 f3 23 ♜b1 (D)**



**23...f2!?**

Littlewood explained that if 23...♗c8 24 ♜e1! ♗d8 25 ♜b1! “so I decided to give up the b-pawn rather than play the passive 23...♗c8. From now on, everything is exactly calculated and despite White’s threatening build-up his pieces are always on the wrong squares in each critical variation.”

However, Fritz 7 thinks the immediate 23...♗h3 (△...♗f5) is much better, e.g. 24 ♜xb7 ♗f5 followed by ...f2-f1♗, or 24 ♗d4 ♗f5 25 ♗xf5 ♗xf5+ 26 d3 f2 27 ♜f1 ♗c8 and ...♗xa8, while if 24 ♗a5+ ♗c8 25 ♗c7 ♗f5 26 ♗xf5 (26 ♗b5 ♗xd3+ 27 ♗xd3 ♗f5+ wins the ♜)

26...♗xf5+ 27 d3 ♗xc5 28 ♗b5 a6 wins a piece.

**24 ♜xb7?**

After this move White is definitely lost. He should have taken the chance to get his ♗ back into play by 24 ♗a5+ ♗c8 25 ♗c7, when if 25...♗h3 26 ♗b5 Black cannot play 26...♗f5 because of 27 ♗d6+.

**24...♗h3! 25 ♜b8+ ♗d7! 26 ♗e4**

Littlewood pointed out that if 26 c6+ ♗xc6! 27 ♗e4+ ♗d7! (not 27...♗c5 28 d4+ ♗xc4? 29 ♜b4#). Now if 28 ♜b7+ ♗c8 29 ♜xa7 f1♗ 30 ♗b6+ ♗d8 31 ♜a8+ ♗c7 32 ♗d5+ ♗d7 33 ♜a7+ ♗e8 and the checks soon run out.

**26...♗f5 27 c6+ ♗d6 28 ♗b4+ ♗e5 29 ♜e8+ ♗f4 30 d3 f1♗**

Black has two ♗s and White has none, yet he doesn’t resign. The position is too interesting to give up just yet.

**31 ♗d2+ ♗g4 32 ♗xf5+ ♗xf5 33 ♜d8**

If 33 ♜e3 ♗xe3 34 ♗xe3 ♗g2+ and ...♗xc6.

**33...♗hh1 34 c7**

34 ♜d5+ ♗g6 35 c7 ♗a1! with mate to follow.

**34...♗b1+ 35 ♗c3 ♗a1+ 36 ♗b4 ♗b7+ 37 ♗c5 ♗e5+ 38 ♜d5 ♗xa8 39 ♜xe5+ ♗xe5**

This would have been a reasonable time to draw down the curtain, but maybe White was collecting stamps?

**40 d4+ ♗e6 41 d5+ ♗d7 42 ♗f4 h5 43 ♗d4 g5 44 ♗h2 ♗b7 0-1**

# Game 24

**White: Arvid Sundin (Sweden)**

**Black: Erik Andersson (Sweden)**

WT/M/974, 1964-65

*French Defence, Winawer Variation (C16)*

**The Players:** Sundin (1914-99) was a famous pianist and an enthusiastic postal player, who worked his way up from Third Class to become a CC International Master. He won the tournament in which this game was played (scoring 5½/6) and then tied first in a World Championship semifinal to qualify for the 7<sup>th</sup> CC World Championship Final. There he finished 9<sup>th</sup> with 8½ points from 16 games, which seems to have signalled his retirement from international play. The loser Erik Andersson (born June 8, 1917) was also Swedish.

**About this game:** Everyone loves a ♔ sacrifice and this game, which became known as ‘The Swedish Immortal Correspondence Game’, was widely published when it first became known. For example, it featured in the book ‘Freude Am Fernschach’ by Werner Heinrich as an example of the victory of spirit over material. Certainly the position before the final move — where Black has two ♔s and White has none — cannot have had many parallels outside the world of chess composition. White allows his ♔ to be trapped on the queenside,

distracting the defenders, while the rest of his pieces break through on the kingside.

The fact that Black could have defended much better at one point does not seriously detract from the originality of the winning attack.

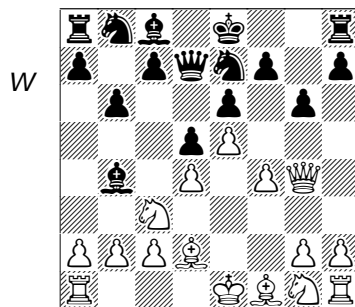
**1 d4 e6 2 e4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♙b4 4 e5 ♚d7 5 ♙d2**

White prevents the thematic doubling of the c-pawn.

**5...b6 6 f4**

One of many moves to be tried here, but not objectively dangerous.

**6...♗e7 7 ♚g4 g6? (D)**



This is usually a serious mistake when the dark-squared ♙ is outside

the pawn chain; better 7...♞f5 8 ♞f3 ♟a6=.

8 ♟b5 c6 9 ♟d3 ♟a6 10 ♟xa6 ♞xa6 11 ♚e2 ♚b7 12 ♞f3 ♚b8?!

Heinrich observes that it is better not to speculate about the meaning of this secretive move. Alex Dunne, in 'Chess Life' (1996), suggested 12...♟xc3 (♠...c5) while 12...0-0-0 was preferred in the Dutch magazine 'Schakend Nederland' and other contemporary annotations.

13 ♞f2 ♟xc3

Not 13...c5? 14 ♞b5.

14 bxc3 c5

Heinrich suggests that it was more urgent to play 14...h5 followed by ...♞c7 to hold the kingside.

15 ♚b5+

This lures the e7-♞ to c6, so making it easier to advance f4-f5.

15...♞c6 16 ♚ab1 0-0?!

Castling into the attack was brilliantly punished in the sequel that redeems the rather poor play in the earlier part of the game. While it is true that improvements for the defence have been found lately, in the pre-computer era it is not surprising that Black could not defend after this move.

A more prudent policy (suggested in several sources) would have been 16...c4 followed by ...♞c7 and the ♚ will find safety on d7, or at once 16...♞c7.

17 g4! ♞a5

Heinrich observes that ...♞e7 would probably not hold the position any longer in view of h4-h5, so Black plays for swindling chances on the queenside. The idea is to obstruct the

white ♚'s return to the centre and thence to the kingside — but White doesn't need the ♚ for the attack!

18 f5! ♞c4 19 f6 ♞c7

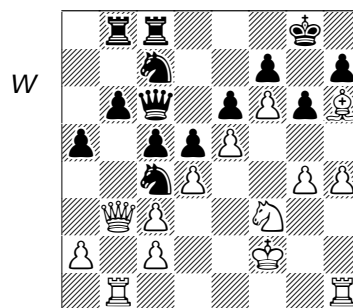
Black must not let the ♚ out of the box: 19...♞a3? 20 ♚e2 ♞xb1? 21 ♚e3 followed by ♚h6 and mates.

20 ♚b3 ♚c6

Dunne and others say 20...♞xd2 was the only move here. The "official" view of the game is that Black makes a poor position worse by failing to eliminate the dark-squared ♟. However, Black may have missed a draw at move 25, in which case that opinion must be revised.

21 ♟h6 ♚fc8 22 h4 a5 (D)

Now there is a direct threat of 23...a4 to trap the ♚ and if White prevents this by 23 a4 then 23...b5 24 h5 g5! when, compared with the game, Black gets play down the b-file after 25...bxa4.



23 h5! a4

23...g5 is ineffective: White will parry the threat of ...a4 (by moving the b1-♚) and then capture the g-pawn at leisure.

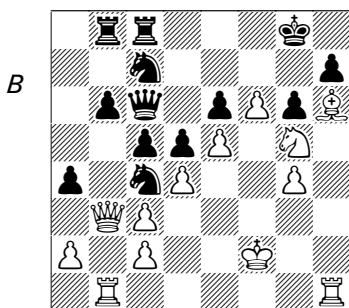
**24 hxg6 fxg6**

Not 24...hxg6 25 ♔g7 or 24...axb3 25 gxh7+ ♚xh7 26 ♔g7+ ♚g8 27 ♖h8#.

**25 ♖g5! (D)**

An interesting alternative way to offer the ♖ is 25 ♔g7!? when 25...axb3? 26 ♖xh7! forces mate and 25...h5? 26 gxh5 gxh5 allows various combinations, e.g. 27 ♖bg1 and the ♖ escapes because 27...axb3 28 ♔h6+ mates in 8. However, Black can minimise the damage with 25...♞d2! (since sacrificial tries now fail for White.) 26 ♖b2 ♞e4+ 27 ♚g1 (or ♚g2) 27...cxd4±.

The question is whether White's advantage is greater here or in note c) to Black's 25<sup>th</sup> move. I still tend to favour the move played by Sundin because it makes it much harder for Black to see the point of the attack, and hence find the right defence.

**25...axb3?**

This is the critical position where Black appears finally to have lost the game. There are various tries of which one is a real improvement.

a) 25...♖d7 is an interesting defensive attempt, met by 26 ♔g7! (not 26 f7+ ♖xf7+ 27 ♞xf7 axb3) when:

a1) 26...♞e8 27 ♖xa4! and if 27...♖xa4 28 f7+ ♚xg7 29 ♖xh7+ ♚f8 30 ♞xe6+ ♚e7 when more elegant than the crude promotion to a ♖ would be 31 f8 ♔+ ♚xe6 32 ♖e7#.

a2) 26...h5 27 gxh5 gxh5 (27...axb3 28 h6!) 28 ♖xh5 ♖xg7 29 ♖xa4.

a3) 26...♞d2 27 ♖a3 and the ♖ lives to fight another day; 27 ♖xh7!? is also quite strong.

a4) 26...♖xg7 with two possibilities for White, both mentioned by Heinrich:

a41) 27 ♖xa4! ♖f8 (27...b5 28 ♖a7 ♗fxg7, ♖xh7) 28 ♚g3 ♖xf6 29 exf6 ♖xf6 30 ♖d7+- — ‘Schakend Nederland’. This shows that 25...♖d7 is insufficient to save Black.

a42) Dunne gives 27 fxg7 which is not so clear-cut, because after 27...axb3 28 ♖xh7 Black need not allow 28...♞e8 29 ♖bh1 ♞xg7 30 ♖h8# or 28...bxc2 29 ♖bh1 c1♖ 30 ♖h8+ ♚xg7 31 ♖1h7#. Instead he can play 28...cxd4, but even so 29 cxd4 ♞b5 30 axb3 should be winning for White.

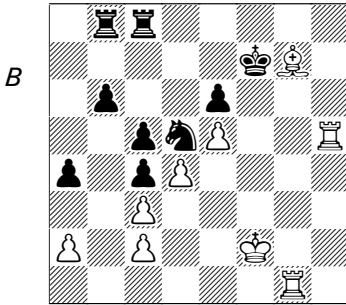
b) 25...♖f8? is no defence because of 26 ♔xf8 (or 26 ♔g7 — Heinrich) 26...♖xf8 27 ♖xh7 and ♖bh1 (‘Schakend Nederland’).

c) 25...♖e8! 26 ♔g7! h5! is the critical line and seems to keep Black's disadvantage to an absolute minimum:

c1) 27 gxh5 gxh5 (27...axb3?? 28 hxg6 forces mate by ♖h8) 28 ♖xc4

dxc4 29 f7+ ♖xf7+ 30 ♘xf7 ♔xg7 (probably better than ...♔xf7) and Black defends.

c2) 27 ♖xc4! dxc4 28 ♖bg1! may give White some advantage: 28...♘d5 29 gxh5 gxh5 30 f7+ ♖xf7+ 31 ♘xf7 ♔xf7 32 ♖xh5 (D).



This is certainly very different from what actually happened in the game. Now if 32...♘xc3? 33 ♖h7 ♔g8 34 ♖h3 and Black is caught in the crossfire: 34...cxd4 (34...♔f7 35 ♖xc3) 35 ♔f6+ forcing mate.

However, Black has chances of reaching a drawn endgame with 32...♖g8 33 ♖h7 ♔e8 if he is careful. Other possibilities are 32...♔e8 at once, or 32...cxd4 33 ♖h7 ♔g8 34 ♖h6 ♔f7 35 ♔f6 ♖f8 36 cxd4 with pressure for White although Black might be saved by having the better

minor piece.

26 f7+!

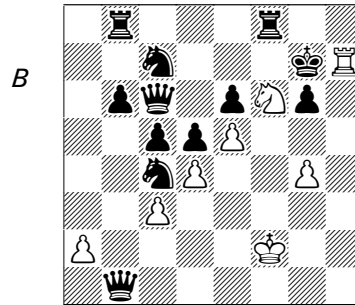
26 ♔g7 would spoil everything: 26...♘d2 27 ♖xh7 ♘e4+ 28 ♘xe4 dxe4 (but not 28...♔xh7? 29 ♖h1+ ♔g8 30 ♖h8+ ♔f7 31 ♘g5#) 29 ♖bh1 e3+ and 30...♖xh1!.

26...♔h8 27 ♘xh7! bxc2

27...♔xh7 28 ♔f8#.

28 ♘f6 cxb1 ♖ 29 f8 ♖+ 1-0

Black resigned because White announced mate in three moves: 29...♖xf8 30 ♔g7+! ♔xg7 31 ♖h7# (D).



Black has two ♖s, ♖ and ♘ more than his opponent but it's checkmate. A variant on the mating position was incorporated in a Swedish 3 kroner postage stamp issued on October 12, 1985, in a series of stamps with other board game motifs.

# Game 25

**White: Yakov Borisovich Estrin (USSR)**

**Black: Dr Hans Berliner (USA)**

5<sup>th</sup> CC World Championship Final, 1965-68

*Two Knights Defence, Fritz Variation (C57)*

**The Players:** Estrin was introduced in Game 21. Berliner (born in Germany in 1929) had a distinguished academic career and was a pioneer in writing games-playing computer programs. A member of the US team at the 1952 FIDE Olympiad, he took up postal chess and three times won the CCLA Golden Knights before winning the World Championship by a record margin of three points. He was recently persuaded out of retirement to meet all the other living CC world champions in an ICCF Jubilee tournament.

**About this game:** GM Soltis judged this enduring classic the best game ever played. It also featured in 'The Mammoth book of The World's Greatest Chess Games' by Burgess, Emms and Nunn while in 1998-9 'Chess Mail' readers voted it the best CC game ever played.

This is a symphony in three contrasting movements, beginning with a sensational sacrificial innovation, which Berliner had prepared specially for Estrin. That was followed by an extremely dynamic middlegame in which White came off worse but managed to simplify to a ♖ ending with

three pawns each, apparently offering drawing chances. After the tempestuous crescendos of the preceding play, Berliner now treated the chess world to a "slow movement" in which he forced the win by delicate manoeuvres. This endgame will repay careful study.

In recent years there have been intensive efforts to "bust" Berliner's variation, which he has resisted by strengthening Black's play in several places. I suspect White is now close to proving a refutation, although Berliner himself denies this. If you show positions from early in the game to a computer running commercial software, you will almost invariably be told White is winning, yet continue down some of Berliner's lines for a few more moves and you may see the program suddenly change its evaluation to 'equals' or 'better for Black'.

I recommend you to play through the whole game, skipping the theory debates, and come back to them later.

**1 e4 e5**

CC means "playing the board, not the man" but if you know your opponent's style and preferences then opening choices can be made accordingly. In his other World

Championship games, Berliner played Alekhine's Defence but he had a special surprise in store for Estrin.

2 ♖f3 ♗c6 3 ♘c4 ♜f6 4 ♜g5

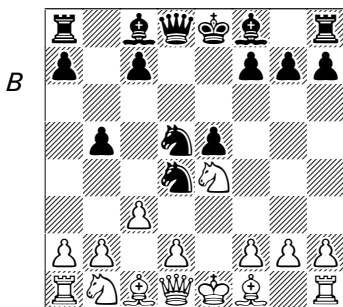
Berliner was fairly confident that Estrin would play this move, on the basis of the Russian master's writings and previous practice.

4...d5 5 exd5 b5!? 6 ♙f1

Paradoxically, this is the best reply because 6 ♙xb5 would be met by 6...♗xd5, but now neither capture on d5 is satisfactory for Black (6...♗xd5 7 ♜c3).

6...♜d4 7 c3 ♜xd5 8 ♜e4 (D)

This is generally reckoned to be the critical move.



8...♗h4!?

With the simpler alternative 8...♜e6, Black only gives up a pawn but his attack is slower. Back in 1946, Berliner had lost a game with White that convinced him "the whole 4 ♜g5 variation was unsound". When he knew he would be playing Estrin, he began to study the line again. "When the tournament pairings were announced about two weeks before

the start of play I was delighted to learn that I had Black in the game in question. My work then began in earnest..."

9 ♜g3 ♙g4 10 f3 e4!

This was the first new move and the start of the special preparation for Estrin. Previously 8...♗h4 was condemned on the basis of 10...♜f5? 11 ♙xb5+ ♜d8 12 0-0! ♙c5+ (12...♜xg3 13 hxg3 ♗xg3 14 ♗e1!) 13 d4 exd4 14 ♜e4.

11 cxd4

11 fxg4!? has been ignored by theory; it should be weak but this requires proof. After 11...♙d6 12 ♜f2 the black ♜ is probably happier on the kingside, so a possible continuation is 12...0-0 (♠...f5!) 13 cxd4 ♙xg3+ 14 hxg3 ♗xh1 15 ♜c3 ∞.

11...♙d6!

Black threatens ...♙xg3+.

12 ♙xb5+

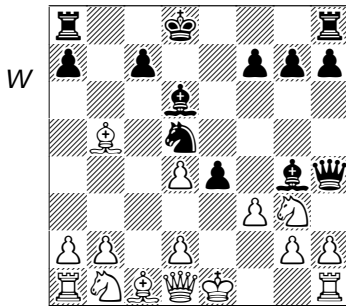
It seems obvious to develop a piece, snatch a pawn and prevent castling.

The alternative 12 ♗e2, which creates a pin on the e-file and vacates d1 for the white ♜, was devised by Walter Muir to avoid the central complications of Black's attack. In practice Black has answered 12...0-0 (not 12...♙xg3+? 13 hxg3! ♗xh1 14 ♗xb5+ and wins), e.g. 13 fxg4 and now if 13...♙xg3+ 14 ♜d1 ♜f6 15 ♜c3 ("White wins quite comfortably" — Berliner) or 13...♜b4 (J.Timman-E.Arikok, Zürich simul 1988) 14 ♗f2 ♜c2+ 15 ♜d1 ♜xa1 16 ♜xe4 "wins handily" (Berliner) but 14 ♜d1 ♙xg3 15 ♜c3+- is also perfectly good.

b) Berliner took up the challenge of

trying to refute 12 ♖e2 and his book 'The System' (Gambit Publications, 1998) has mind-boggling analysis of 12...♙e6! ("the only sensible move") continuing to move 25 and claiming that Black should at least draw.

However, after 13 ♖xb5+ ♔d8 I see nothing wrong with 14 fxg3 ♙xg3+ 15 hxg3 ♖xh1 16 exd5± (Tait). Also, in his main line 13 fxg3 ♗b4! Berliner fails to consider the possibility 14 e5!? ♘c2+ (14...0-0-0 15 d3) 15 ♔d1 ♙g4 (or 15...♗xa1 16 ♖xb5+ ♙d7 17 ♖d5) 16 ♔xc2 ♙xe2 17 ♙xe2 which looks ±. Since practical tests are lacking, this jury will return the Scottish verdict "not proven". I expect detailed analysis of this and some other critical possibilities to be published by Jonathan Tait next year in a book he is writing on the Two Knights. 12...♔d8 (D)



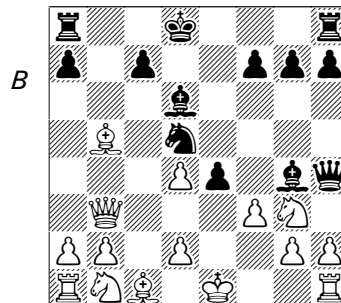
At this stage, Black has sacrificed a piece and a pawn, he has lost the right to castle and a ♙ is en prise. So is Berliner right to be confident that his attack is worth at least a draw?

On the other hand, White has a shattered pawn structure, his queenside development is nonexistent, his own ♔ is not particularly safe and Black threatens ...♙xg3+. Black is preparing to open the e-file for a ♖ check (after driving away the ♙ from b5) and his ♗ is eyeing promising squares on b4 and f4. The next two or three choices for each side will determine the assessment.

### 13 0-0

Castling seems obvious but a huge amount of theory has developed without a firm conclusion in White's favour. Although 13 fxg4? ♙xg3+ 14 hxg3 ♖xh1+ 15 ♙f1 ♗b4! 16 ♘c3 (better 16 d3!) 16...♘d3+ hardly looks playable for White, two other moves that have been getting serious attention recently.

a) The move 13 ♖b3!? (D) is the reason why the Hungarian theoretician József Páلكövi rejects 8...♖h4 in his 1999 book, though he was apparently unaware of Dr. Berliner's privately published 1998 monograph 'From the Deathbed of the Two Knights Defense' which goes deeper.





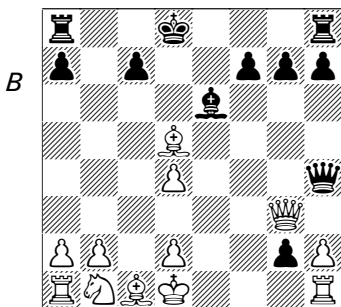
The critical continuation here seems to be 13...♙xg3+ 14 ♖d1 ♙e6 15 ♙c6 (15 fxe4 ♗xe4) 15...exf3 (Berliner) and now:

a1) 16 ♙xa8? fxg2 17 ♖g1 ♗g4+ 18 ♖c2 ♗e4+ wins for Black.

a2) 16 gxf3 ♗xd4 is unconvincingly analysed by Berliner. His more plausible alternative 16...♗e7 may offer Black enough compensation; he gives 17 ♗b7 ♖c8 18 d5 ♙f5 but of course there are many other possibilities.

a3) Even if line a2 can be salvaged for Black, there is 16 ♙xd5!. In his 1960s analysis, Berliner thought that 16...♗h5?! won for Black, but White replies 17 ♗xf3! ♙g4 18 ♙xa8 getting too much material for the ♗. Or if 16...c6 17 ♙xe6! fxg2 18 ♖g1 ♗xh2 19 ♖xg2! ♗xg2 20 ♗b7+- (Tait).

Therefore Berliner now recommends 16...fxg2! and after 17 ♗xg3! (*D*) Pálkövi stops, claiming clear advantage to White — a reasonable assessment since White is material ahead and the ♗s are coming off.



I have only seen one game that reached this position. K.Pilgaard-

N.Pedersen, Danish Ch, Greve 2002, continued 17...gxh1 ♗+ 18 ♙xh1 ♗xg3 19 hxg3 ♖b8 20 d3 h5 21 ♖c2 f6 22 d5 ♙g4 23 ♙e3 h4 24 gxh4 ♖xh4 25 ♗d2 ♖d7 26 ♙e4 f5 27 ♙g2 ♖h2 28 ♖g1 ♖g8 29 ♖c3 g5 30 ♗c4 ♙e2 31 ♗e5+ ♖c8 32 ♙xa7 f4 33 ♙e4 g4 34 ♙d4 ♖h5 35 ♗g6 ♖xg6 36 ♙xg6 ♖g5 37 ♙e4 g3 38 ♙f6 ♖h5 39 ♙d4 ♖g5 40 ♖d2 f3 41 ♖e3 f2 42 ♖xe2 fxg1 ♗+ 43 ♙xg1 ♖d7 44 ♖f1 ♖d6 45 ♙e3 ♖g4 46 ♖g2 ♖e5 47 ♖f3 ♖g7 48 ♙f4+ ♖d4 49 ♙xg3 c5 50 dxc6 1-0.

Dr Berliner would call this a misinterpretation of his intentions. He says Black should continue 17...♗xg3 18 hxg3 ♙xd5 19 ♖g1 when he claims “If Black can keep the white ♖ from crossing to the kingside while he advances his pawns, he gets a fine game”. So he continues 19...♙e8! 20 ♗c3 ♙f3+ 21 ♖c2 ♖b8!.

I think this may be the critical position of the Berliner variation. The most plausible move is 22 d3, when:

a31) 22...h5!? might be considered but clearly White has some advantage.

a32) 22...♖b6 23 ♙f4 (23 ♙d2 ♖g6 24 ♙e1 ♖h6! ♖) 23...h5 seems to fail to 24 ♗e4 f5! 25 ♗c3 ♖g6 26 ♖d2 ♖g4 27 ♖ae1! ♖xe1 28 ♖xe1 h4 29 ♖f2 ♙b7 30 d5 h3 31 ♖e1 g5 32 ♙e5 f4 33 ♖g1 fxg3 (“and Black is in great shape” — Berliner) 34 ♖e4! (Tait) and Black can resign because his pawn masse is going nowhere and will eventually be eaten.

a33) It’s very hard to follow the analysis in Berliner’s monograph but

he now seems to prefer 22...♖b4!? when Black's hopes rest partly on winning back a pawn or two, but principally on supporting the outpost on g2 and trying to break the blockade. Berliner continues 23 ♔f4 ♖xd4 24 ♔xc7+ ♔d7 25 ♔f4 h5 26 ♖ae1 (26 ♖ge1 ♖xe1) 26...♖xe1 27 ♖xe1 h4 28 ♔e3 h3 — but the placement of the ♔ on f4, encouraging this ...h4 tactic, is obviously faulty in my view. A similar objection applies to his alternative line 25 ♖ae1 ♖xe1 26 ♖xe1 ♔g4 27 ♔f4 h5.

After 22...♖b4 I do not see a satisfactory plan for Black against 23 ♔e4! because if 23...h6 (to stop ♔g5) comes 24 ♔d2!? (24 ♔f4!?) 24...♔d5 25 ♔c4 (heading for e3 to mop up the g-pawn) 25...♖e2+ 26 ♔d2 ♖f2 27 a3 ♖b8 28 ♖ae1 with some advantage to White. Or if 23...♖xd4 24 ♔g5+ ♔d7 25 ♔e3 or 25 ♖ae1 and Black seems to be running out of viable tactical ideas.

In my view, 13 ♖b3 is the most critical line of the Berliner variation at present, and could even turn out in the end to be a bust of the whole idea.

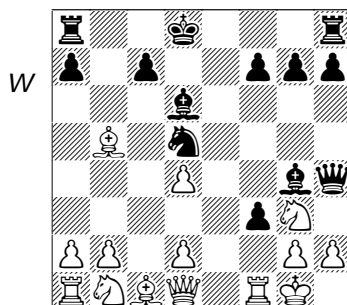
b) Moreover, 13 ♔f2!? cannot be lightly dismissed. The white ♔ is still pinned but the threat ...♔xg3+ is no longer serious because the white ♖ is guarded and next move it can go to e1. Originally, Berliner said that 13...f5 “yields an overwhelming attack” but the move is unsound and White can choose between four promising replies: 14 ♖b3, 14 fxg4!?, 14 ♔c3!?, and 14 ♔c6.

So he has changed his mind and

found a better answer: 13...exf3!. His main line (as of 2001) goes 14 gxf3 ♔d7! 15 ♔xd7 (15 ♖a4 ♔b6 or 15 ♔e2 ♖xd4+) 15...♖xd4+ 16 ♔e1 (16 ♔f1 ♔e3+) 16...♔xd7 17 ♔c3 ♖ae8+ and he gives lots of complicated lines mostly leading to big advantages for Black.

Possibly White can escape although it won't be easy, e.g. 18 ♔ge2 f5 19 ♔e2 ♖xe4! 20 fxg4 ♖xe4 21 ♖g1 ♔f4! 22 ♖xg7+ ♔c8 23 d4 ♔d3+ 24 ♔d2 ♔f4 (Δ...♔xe2 and ...♖xd4+) 25 ♔e1 ♔d3+ with a draw — Berliner.

### 13...exf3 (D)

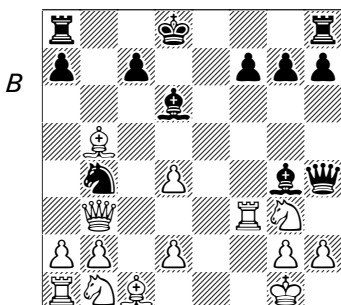


### 14 ♖xf3

Of course not 14 gxf3? ♔xg3. The line 14 ♖e1 fxg2 15 ♖xf7 ♖b8 was analysed by Burgess in the Mammoth book, but he reckoned Black was OK, e.g. 16 ♔a4 (not 16 a4? ♖xb5 17 axb5 ♖e8+) 16...♔f4 17 ♖xf4 (17 ♖e4?? ♔e2+) 17...♔xf4 and if now 18 ♖f2 ♔xg3 19 ♖xg3 ♖f6 20 ♔xg2 ♖f8+) or 16 ♔c6 ♔b4! 17 ♔a4 c6! 18 d3 ♖e8 19 ♔e3 ♖h6! 20 ♔xh6 ♖xe1+ 21 ♔xg2 gxh6±.

There is one important alternative. Estrin claimed after the game that 14 ♖b3! would have won, and in the 7<sup>th</sup> World Championship he easily defeated Julius Nielsen with this move. However, Nielsen reacted badly (with 14... ♟f4?). In 1979 Berliner revealed his 14... ♟b4! idea; critical analysis began and Berliner has had to revise some of his lines as a result.

The critical reply is 15 ♜xf3! (D).



Berliner originally advocated 15...c6!; however, there are one or two problems with it. The most serious is 16 ♜e3! (played successfully by Swedish CC player Mikael Westlund); Berliner's 'Deathbed' monograph analyses seven replies to 15...c6 but this isn't one of them. White does not bother about keeping the b5-♙ and reduces the material advantage to a single doubled pawn, but he removes all Black's attacking threats. The ♜ is very well placed on e3, controlling the e-file and covering the g3-♟. White has excellent chances with the black ♙ stuck in the centre.

Returning to the last diagram,

Berliner now prefers 15... ♜b8! (also the right reply to most of White's other likely moves such as 15 a3 and 15 ♜xf7). Now 16 ♜xf7 ♜xb5 is good for Black, 16 ♜e3 now only draws (16... ♜xb5 17 ♟c3 ♜h5 18 ♟xh5 ♜xh2+ etc.), while the only game I've seen with 15... ♜b8 (E.t' Jong-Markus, Dieren 2000) continued 16 a4? ♟xf3 17 ♜xf3 a6 18 ♟c3 axb5 19 ♟ce4 ♟c2+- (though White won).

The critical line goes 16 ♟a3 (a small victory for Black who has ruled out the ♟-c3-d1 manoeuvre) 16...c6 when:

a) A rapid draw can come about by 17 ♜xf7 cxb5 18 ♜xg7 ♜e8 19 ♜g8 ♟d7 20 ♜g7+! ♟d8! 21 ♜g8 ♟d7.

b) 17 ♟e2 ♜e8 18 ♜e3 ♟xe2! 19 ♜xe8+ ♟xe8 20 ♜e3+ ♟f8! 21 ♜xe2 ♜e8 "and White is in dire difficulties. It was the idea of 20... ♟f8 and its consequences that I overlooked when originally analysing this line" — Berliner, 1999.

c) 17 ♟f1 ♟d5 18 ♜d3 ♟xf3 19 ♜xf3 ♜e8 20 ♟c2 ♜e6 21 d3 (Berliner, 1999) may be ± with the two ♟s, and White also has 20 ♟c4!.

d) 17 ♜e3 (not mentioned by Berliner) is again possible, e.g. 17... ♟d5 18 ♜e5! ♟xe5 (18...a6? 19 ♜xd5! +- or 18... ♟f6 19 ♜e4 ♜~ 20 ♜a4 cxb5 21 ♟xb5±) 19 dxex5 a6 20 ♜c4 axb5 21 ♜xc6 ♟c7 22 ♜e4±.

After all this, the best reply to 14 ♜b3 may in fact be 14...fxg2! when:

a) The standard 'refutation' 15 ♜f2 (Estrin, Pálkövi) is virtually a forced loss after 15... ♜b8! 16 ♜xd5 ♜xb5! 17 ♜xb5 ♜e8 — Pliester.

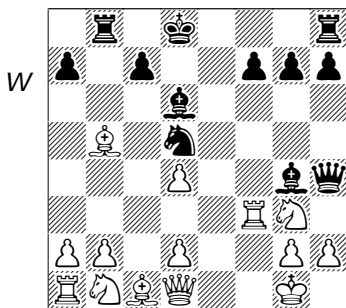
b) 15 ♖xg2 ♕e6! (Δ 16...♗f4+ 17 ♜xf4 ♖h3+ — Heyken, Fette) 16 ♕c4! ♕h3+! 17 ♖h1 ♜e8! is roughly equal.

c) 15 ♜e1!? ♕e6 16 ♜e4 ♖f6∞ Δ...h5-h4 (Tait).

d) 15 ♜xf7! ♕e6 16 ♜d7+! ♕xd7 17 ♖xd5 ♜b8 (better than 17...♕xb5 18 d3! Δ ♕g5+) 18 ♕xd7 ♕xg3 19 ♕h3+! ♕d6 20 ♖f5! and now, rather than 20...♖xd4+ 21 ♖xg2 ♕c5± (Schüler-Leisebein, corr 1998), 20... ♖e1+ 21 ♖xg2 ♖e2+ 22 ♖f2 ♖xf2+ 23 ♖xf2 ♕xh2 (Tait) may not be so bad. White has ♗+♕ for ♜, but Black has two useful connected passed pawns on the kingside.

To summarise, ♖b3 at move 13 looks like a refutation of Berliner's line. At move 14, matters are not so clear although Berliner's case for 14...♗b4!? is unconvincing.

14...♜b8 (D)



15 ♕e2?

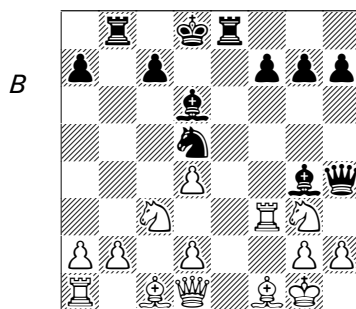
Not surprisingly, confronted by such a complicated and novel situation, Estrin quickly went wrong. Perhaps he thought he was heading

for a drawn endgame. There are four important alternatives here:

a) 15 ♗c3 is discussed by Burgess in the Mammoth book as “an attempt to give back some material to get the queenside developed”. The main line of his analysis continues 15...♗xc3 16 dxc3 ♜xb5 17 ♖d3 ♜h5 (17...♕xf3? 18 ♖xb5 ♕xg3 19 ♕g5+) 18 ♗xh5 ♖xh2+ 19 ♖f2 ♖xh5=. If White tries to vary he gets into trouble, e.g. 18 ♜xf7?! (or 18 ♕f4? ♖xh2+ 19 ♖f2 ♕xf3 20 ♖xf3 ♜b5) 18...♕e6! 19 ♗xh5 ♕xh2+ 20 ♖f1 ♕xf7 21 ♖b5 h6 (stopping ♕g5+ and retaining threats) when if 22 ♖b8+ ♖d7 23 ♖xh8?? ♕c4 is mate.

b) 15 ♕f1 is tougher. In 1999, Berliner commented that both here and in the analogous line below (15 a4 a6 16 ♕f1), “best play has been difficult to find”.

b1) Initially Berliner believed 15...♜e8 was correct but 16 ♗c3 (D) has caused him to revise his view more than once.



b11) The problem with the old recommendation 16...c6?! is 17 d3

♟xc3 (17...f5 18 ♞xd5 cxd5 19 ♙d2) 18 bxc3 ♖b5 and now 19 d5!!, as on 19...♞xd5 20 ♖a4 “pins the g4-♙, and White survives easily” — Berliner, e.g. 20...g5 (20...♞h5 21 ♙f4!) 21 ♖e3 ♙c5 22 ♖xc6 ♙e6 23 ♖b1 ♙b6 24 ♖xb6 axb6 25 c4 ♖d7 26 ♖xb6+ ♖c7 27 ♖e4 1–0 Kroner-Schuhler, DDR corr 1986.

b12) Berliner’s next try 16...♞f6!/? doesn’t quite work after 17 d3! ♙xf3 18 ♖xf3 ♞g4!/? (18...♖xd4+ 19 ♖h1 probably favours White, for if 19...♖h4 20 ♞ce2!) 19 h3 ♙xg3. He had analysed 20 ♖xg4 ♙f2+! 21 ♖h2 ♖xg4 22 hxg4 ♖e1 but 20 ♖d5+! “upsets this”. Now 20...♖c8 is not immediately disastrous but White probably wins in the end.

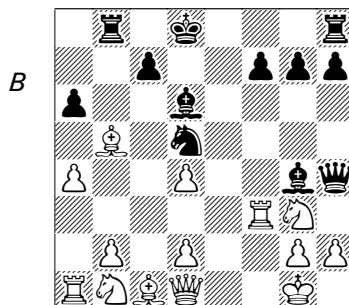
b13) 16...♞b4 17 d3 ♙xf3 18 ♖xf3 ♞c2 19 ♖b1 ♖xd4+ 20 ♖h1 runs into 20...♙xg3 21 ♖xg3 ♖xc3!! (cf. 15 a4 a6 16 ♙xa6 ♖e8 17 ♞c3 ♞b4!/? etc.) 22 bxc3 ♖b1 (Sax-Wagman, Montecatini Terme 1998); but 19 ♞ce4! or 17 ♞b5!/? look good for White.

b2) Berliner later recommended 15...♖b4! in a supplement correcting his 1998 monograph. Now if 16 d3? ♖e8! (but not 16...♞xd4!/?!) “and it is difficult to find a move for White”, so the main line goes 16 ♞c3 ♞xd4 17 ♞xd5 ♞xd5 (“with a very strong attack”) 18 ♖a4 ♞h5! 19 ♖d3 ♖xh2+ 20 ♖f2 ♙d7!. Now if 21 ♞xd6 cxd6 22 ♖d4! ♞h6! 23 ♖xg7 ♖e8 24 ♖g5+ ♖c8 25 ♙a6+ ♖b8 26 ♞f1 ♖h1 27 ♖f4 ♙c6 (Berliner, 1999) but a tougher test seems to be 21 ♖b3 (as in M.Lane-Fabrizi, BFCC Open

corr 1999, won by White). Fabrizi had studied the theory deeply but still lost this game; he suggests that maybe 21...♞h6! now gives Black hope; a possible continuation is 22 ♖b8+ ♙c8 23 ♖f3 ♖h4 24 ♖d3 ♖e8!, or 22 ♖f3 ♖h4! 23 d4 ♖g6, or 22 ♞e2 ♖e8 23 ♖f3 ♞he6.

Instead of 17 ♞xd5, Tait points out that White might try 17 ♞b5!/? and if 17...♙c5 18 ♖h1; or even 17 ♖e1!/? ♙xf3 (if 17...♖e8 18 ♖e3) 18 gxf3 ♖e8 19 ♖f2 ♙c5 20 ♖h1.

c) 15 a4 is also important. White makes his opponent pay a price for driving the ♙ from b5. Black must answer 15...a6! (*D*).



c1) 16 ♙e2? “White loses as in the Estrin game”: 16...♙xf3 17 ♙xf3 ♖xd4+ 18 ♖h1 ♙xg3 19 hxg3 ♖b6 20 d3 ♞e3 — Berliner.

c2) 16 ♞c3 ♞xc3 17 dxc3 axb5 18 axb5 ♖e8 19 ♙d2 f6 — Berliner.

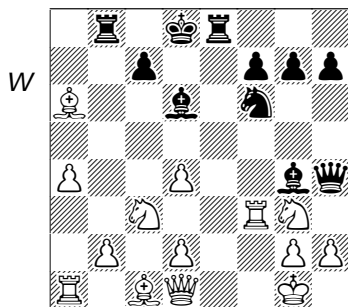
c3) 16 ♙c6 ♞b4 17 d5 ♞xc6! 18 dxc6 ♖e8 19 ♞c3 ♙xf3 20 ♖xf3 ♖e1+ 21 ♖f2 ♖e6! with a draw by perpetual, e.g. 22 ♖g1 ♖e1+ or 22 ♖d5 ♖f4+ — Berliner.

c4) 16 ♙xa6 ♖e8 17 ♘c3 gives Black a wide choice of attacking possibilities:

c41) 17...♙xf3 18 ♖xf3 ♖xd4+ was recommended by E.Heyken & M.Fette in their 1989 edition of Euwe's Open Game book, but 19 ♖h1 ♖e1+ 20 ♘f1 is unclear according Burgess, while Fritz suggests 19 ♖f1!±.

c42) 17...♘b4?! 18 ♙f1! (Kasparov & Keene in 'BCO2') seems to defend successfully. Berliner's old line 18...♙xf3 19 ♖xf3 ♘c2 20 ♖b1 ♖e1 21 ♘ce4 ♘xd4 22 ♖d3 ♘e2+?? misses simply 23 ♘xe2+- (Tait).

c43) In his monograph, Berliner recommends 17...♘f6!! (D).



There are many complicated variations, e.g. 18 ♙e2 ♙xf3 19 ♙xf3 ♖xd4+ 20 ♖h1 ♙xg3 21 hxg3 (21 ♘e2 ♖f2) 21...♖f2 22 ♘e2 (22 ♙e2 ♘e4) 22...♘e4 23 ♖h2 ♘g5 24 ♙h5 g6 25 d4 gxh5 26 ♙xg5+ f6 27 ♙xf6+ ♖xf6 28 ♖a2 h4+- Berliner, 1998. There are some possible improvements here — e.g. 23 d3! ♘xg3+ 24 ♘xg3 ♖e1+ (or 24...♖xg3 25 ♖f1) 25 ♖xe1 ♖xe1+

26 ♖h2 (Tait) seems OK for White — so a draw may be the right result from the last diagram.

c5) 16 ♙f1! (once more, the best square for the ♙) and if 16...♖e8 17 ♘c3, we have a similar situation to line b1 above:

c51) 17...c6 (the old move, about which I have serious doubts) 18 d3 f5! creates a maze of complications again, but 19 ♘xd5!? seems to require attention, e.g. 19...cxd5 20 ♙d2 ♖xb2 21 ♙a5+ ♘d7 22 ♖c1 (an idea of the German CC player Schüler).

c52) 17...♘f6!? (Pliester, 'NIC Yearbook 6') was preferred by Berliner in his 1998 monograph. However, it seems to be afflicted with the same flaw as in the line with an immediate 15 ♙f1, viz. 18 d3 ♙xf3 19 ♖xf3 ♘g4 20 h3 ♙xg3 21 ♖d5+!. Another snag is 18 ♘ce2, when Berliner's 18...♙xf3 19 gx3 ♘h5 (as per 15 ♙f1 ♖e8) fails because White has 26 ♖a3! threatening ♖d3 and wins (Tait).

This brings us back to 16...♖b4!? (by analogy with Berliner's new line against 15 ♙f1, note b2 above) 17 ♘c3 ♖xd4 when the inclusion of 15 a4 a6 rules out some of White's ideas, e.g. 18 ♘b5 or (18 ♘xd5 ♖xd5) 19 ♖a4. However, 18 ♖e1!? is still possible, and also there is the unique try 19 ♙xa6!? ♙xf3 20 ♖xf3 ♙c5 21 ♘xd5 ♖f4+ 22 ♘e3 ♖xf3 23 gx3 (Tait) with three pieces for the ♖.

d) Finally, there is 15 ♙c6; Berliner says the ♙ will get kicked around a lot after this.

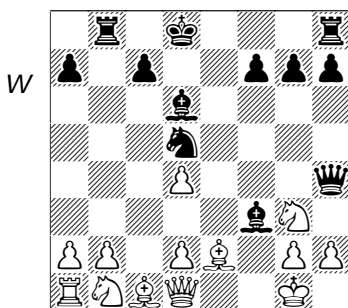
d1) 15...♙xf3!? is the only move

tried in practice, e.g. 16 ♖xf3 ♗xd4+ 17 ♔h1 ♘b4 18 ♙e4 ♙xg3 19 hxg3 ♜b6 20 ♖e3± but Black eventually won in two German postal games: W.Rehe-Bruder, Germany 1974 and K.Behrendorf-P.Leisebein, 1988.

d2) 15...♘b4 (15...♘e7!?) and now 16 ♙a4 c6! 17 ♘c3 ♜e8 18 d3 (not 18 ♘ce4? ♜xe4! 19 ♘xe4 ♙xf3 20 gxf3 ♖xh2+ 21 ♔f1 ♘d3 -) 18...♙xf3 19 ♖xf3 ♗xd4+ seems about equal (20 ♔f1 ♗xd3+), while Fritz's try 18 ♘ce2 looks drawn after 18...♙xf3 19 gxf3 ♘d3 20 ♙c2 ♜b5! 21 ♙xd3 ♜h5 22 f4 ♖xh2+ 23 ♔f1 ♜h3 (Tait).

**15...♙xf3 (D)**

After all that theoretical discussion, Black has a terrific game. We are ready to see how he went on to win.



Berliner wrote that the next 14 moves were forced on each side.

**16 ♙xf3 ♗xd4+**

Actually 16...♜e8! (Tait) is a serious alternative but I cannot find any forced win, or significant improvement for White later in the actual game. So Berliner's 16...♗xd4+ is

probably simpler, even though the endgame took a lot of work.

**17 ♔h1 ♙xg3 18 hxg3 ♜b6 19 d3 ♘e3 20 ♙xe3 ♖xe3 21 ♙g4 h5 22 ♙h3 g5**

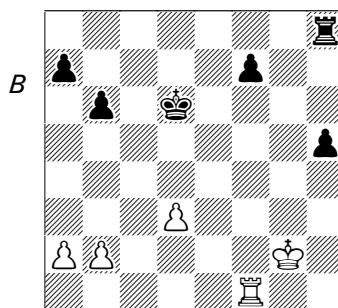
22...h4? worked in a later game but White should have replied 23 ♗d2 when Black is no longer winning.

**23 ♘d2 g4 24 ♘c4 ♖xg3 25 ♘xb6 gxh3 26 ♖f3 hxg2+ 27 ♖xg2 ♖xg2+ 28 ♘g2 cxb6!!**

Black must not allow White to eliminate more pawns by a4-a5.

**29 ♜f1**

A.Lopukhin-A.A.Semeniuk, Cheliabinsk 1975, reached this position too, but how White thought he could improve is a mystery. That game went 29 ♔h3 ♜e8 30 ♜f1 ♜e3+ 31 ♔h4 ♔e7 32 ♔xh5 ♔e6 33 ♔g5 ♜g3+ 34 ♔f4 ♜xd3 (0-1, 50 moves). 29...♔e7 30 ♜e1+ ♔d6! 31 ♜f1 (D)



**31...♜c8!!**

Berliner wrote: "One of the best moves I have ever made... Instead of tying down the ♜ to defend the weak kingside pawns, Black gives up one

of them in order to reach a situation where Black has the outside h-pawn versus the worthless white d-pawn... The rest of the game will be played on the queenside with the white ♖ unable to join the fight there.”

**32 ♖xf7 ♖c7!**

The ♖ and pawn ending would of course be lost for White because Black's ♖ would eat all the white pawns while the white ♖ marched to h5 and back.

**33 ♖f2 ♖e5! 34 a4?**

White has a vague hope of exchanging pawns but this weakening move eases Black's task.

When deciding on his 31<sup>st</sup> move, Berliner had to calculate all the following “extremely difficult” variations: 34 ♖g3! ♖d4! 35 ♖h4 ♖xd3 36 ♖xh5 ♖c2! and now:

a) 37 ♖f3+ ♖d2! when:

a1) 38 b4 ♖c3! 39 ♖f2+ ♖e1! 40 ♖h2 ♖a3! 41 ♖g5 ♖a4 42 ♖b2 ♖d1 and wins.

a2) 38 b3! ♖c1! 39 a4 ♖b2 40 a5 (Otherwise Black plays ...a5) 40...b5 41 a6 b4 42 ♖g4 ♖c2 43 ♖f7 ♖xb3 44 ♖xa7 ♖a3 45 ♖b7 b3 46 a7 b2-+.

a3) 38 ♖a3 a5 39 ♖b3 ♖c5+ 40 ♖g4 b5 41 ♖f4 ♖c2 42 ♖e4 ♖b1 43 ♖d4 ♖h5 44 ♖a3 a4 45 ♖c3 ♖h4!-+ (Berliner). Or 42...a4 since if 43 ♖b4 ♖c4+ 44 ♖xc4 bxc4 45 ♖d5 a3! wins (Tait).

b) 37 ♖f7 ♖c5+! 38 ♖g4 ♖a5 39 ♖f3+! ♖d2! 40 a3! (If 40 ♖f2+ ♖e1 or 40 b3 ♖a3! stopping a4) 40...♖c2

41 ♖f2+ ♖b3 42 ♖f4 ♖b5! 43 ♖e4 ♖a2! 44 ♖f7 a6 45 ♖a7 ♖a5! 46 ♖b7 b5-+.

**34...♖d4 35 a5 ♖xd3 36 ♖f3+ ♖c2 37 b4**

37 axb6 axb6 38 ♖f6 ♖b7 after which the black b-pawn can advance and the white b-pawn can be picked off later.

**37...b5! 38 a6 ♖c4 39 ♖f7 ♖xb4 40 ♖b7**

If 40 ♖xa7 ♖a4 and the black b-pawn gains the ♖'s protection before White is ready with a7-a8♖. For example, 41 ♖b7 b4 42 a7 b3 or 41 ♖c7+ ♖b2 42 ♖b7 (42 a7 b4 43 ♖f2 b3) 42...b4 43 a7 b3.

**40...♖g4+ 41 ♖f3 b4 42 ♖xa7 b3 0-1**

A titanic achievement, especially when you consider that many of the complicated variations in the notes were found by Dr Berliner before the game had even begun! It can hardly be expected that he could anticipate and overcome every later discovery of players and armchair analysts, so even if Black's opening idea is ultimately refuted — which would be rather sad — the game will still remain a masterpiece.

If professional and amateur analysts alike often try to “bust” the Berliner variation, it is not because they want to spoil the game but because the complications represent a massive intellectual challenge: something like the chess equivalent of climbing the North Wall of the Eiger.



# Game 26

**White: Horst Robert Rittner (East Germany)**

**Black: Vladimir Pavlovich Simagin (USSR)**

Eberhardt Wilhelm Cup, Final 1966-68

*Sicilian Defence, Sozin Attack (B88)*

**The Players:** Rittner was introduced in Game 21.

Grandmaster Simagin (1919-68) was a remarkable talent who died too young. After competing in the first USSR CC Championship in the late 1940s, he played virtually no postal chess in the 1950s, when he was probably at his peak as an OTB player. Returning to CC in the 1960s, he won the very strong 6<sup>th</sup> USSR CC Championship with 13/17 and played several other events, while still active as an OTB player. He died during the 1968 Kislovodsk grandmaster tournament, shortly after this game ended.

GM Yuri Averbakh wrote that "Vladimir Pavlovich was a passionate analyst ... This passion was ... a great boon for him as a correspondence player. Here his analytical talent was brought to the fore, and he succeeded in creating a number of splendid works of art, in particular his game with Rittner."

**About this game:** I have seen various sets of notes, some inaccurate or misleading. It was in fact the last game Simagin annotated for publication and

it appeared in 'Chess in the USSR' December 1968, by which time the talented GM was already dead. These notes also appeared later in German in 'Fernschach' 5/1969. The monographs on Simagin by Voronkov (in Russian) and by Woodger (in English but based on Voronkov) are not so reliable.

**1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 ♜c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 d6 6 ♙c4**

Earlier, in the Ragozin Memorial, Rittner had beaten Simagin with 6 ♙g5. The Eberhardt Wilhelm Cup was an event for teams representing cities all over Europe.

**6...e6 7 0-0**

This is the classical interpretation of the Sozin Attack, but 7 ♙b3 and 7 ♙e3 are more flexible moves. Subsequently, Velimirovic's attack involving ♖e2 and 0-0-0 became more popular (see Game 58). Nowadays, when the Sozin variation arises, Black either defends by 6...♖b6!? or plays an early ...a6, leading to positions that also sometimes arise via the Najdorf Variation (5...a6 6 ♙c4 e6).

**7...♙e7 8 ♙e3 0-0 9 ♙b3**

Before starting active operations,

White must withdraw the ♔ to avoid tricks like ...♗xe4 and ...d5. The immediate 9 f4 is bad, as Black has at his disposal the counterblow 9...d5! 10 exd5 exd5 11 ♔e2 ♖e8 12 ♖h1 ♔a3! 13 bxa3 ♗xe3≠ (E.Grünfeld-Taimanov, Sczawno-Zdroj 1950). This is why Bobby Fischer favoured 7 ♔b3 when he could meet 7...a6 by 8 f4!/? or 7...♔e7 with ♔e3 and 0-0.

### 9...♗a5 10 f4 ♔d7

10...b6 is the alternative, when after 11 e5:

a) 11...♗e8 12 f5! (Geller's move, improving on 12 ♖f3 ♗xb3 13 ♗c6 ♖d7!≠ Neikirch-Botvinnik, 1966.) 12...dxe5 13 fxe6 when:

a1) 13...fxe6 should be met by 14 ♖xf8+! according to the recent book on the Sozin by Mikhail Golubev, and not 14 ♗xe6?! ♖xd1 15 ♗xf8+ ♗xb3 16 ♖axd1 ♗d4.

a2) 13...♗xb3! 14 ♗c6 ♖d6 and now, since 15 ♗d5 is refuted by 15...♔h4! 16 exf7+ ♖xf7 17 ♖xf7 ♗xa1 18 ♖fl ♔f6+ (Bilek-Petrosian, Oberhausen 1961) White seemingly must be content with 15 ♖xd6 ♔xd6 16 axb3 ♔xe6 17 ♗xa7!?, with some advantage in the ending (Fischer-Korchnoi, Curaçao ct 1962).

b) 11...dxe5 12 fxe5 ♗e8! is better and has been revived in recent years by Ruslan Sherbakov (but not 12...♗d7? 13 ♖xf7!).

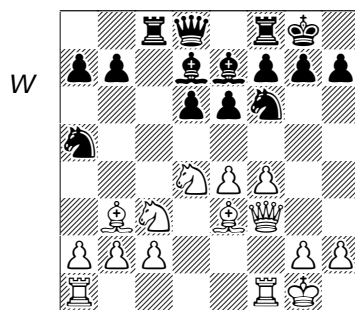
Instead of all this, with which both players were undoubtedly completely familiar, Simagin employs a new continuation, which allows White the possibility of a strong bind on

the opponent's pieces. However, this is but the prelude to a Houdini-like display of escapology!

Rittner, as a professional chess editor and CC specialist, achieved great success by following main lines (especially in the Ruy Lopez and Sicilian) where he knew all the latest theory and regularly refuted misguided attempts by his opponents to avoid, or improve on, the books. In this case, however, he met his match.

Simagin was an original analyst who was often willing to take on the defence of Sicilian positions supposedly bad for Black and, by giving them a new twist, would breathe new life into them. Sometimes these ideas (as is the way with the open Sicilian) might not stand the test of time but would only be effective for a game or two.

### 11 ♖f3 ♖c8 (D)



### 12 g4?!

Simagin wrote: "This continuation gives the game great interest. Does White have the right to launch a pawn attack against the ♔? I believe that

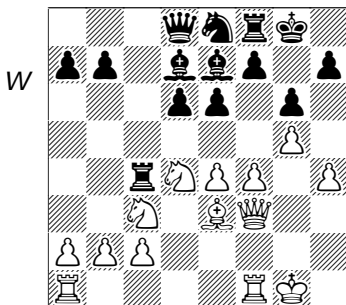
from the positional point of view this decision is mistaken.”

12 ♖ad1 ♘c4 13 ♙c1± is an improvement credited to GM John Nunn by Golubev, but it was actually a post-mortem suggestion by Rittner.

12... ♘c4 13 g5 ♘e8 14 ♙xc4 ♖xc4 15 h4

Again, Rittner said afterwards that 15 ♖ad1 would be better, but not 15 ♗h5 g6 16 ♗h6 e5! 17 f5!? exd4 18 ♖f3 f6!.

15...g6! (D)



Voronkov comments here: “The black minor pieces are thrown back and constrained. A pawn storm is threatened. Black’s previous move looks strange since it seems to weaken the castled position. Simagin analysed the ensuing position for a long time and came to the conclusion that the complications after 16 f5 are favourable to Black.”

16 f5!

Once more Rittner thought with hindsight that he should have centralised his queen’s ♙, although Black could then hold up his pawn

advance by 16... ♘g7. Yudovich, on the other hand, suggested 16 h5.

Instead the threat to win a piece by f5-f6 forces matters and if 16...exf5 17 exf5 (conceding the d5-square to White) looks like an unpleasant position for Black. Simagin, however, had prepared an answer which looked like desperation but was based on a sound plan and precise calculation.

16...gxf5! 17 exf5 e5

Voronkov commented: “So this is the plan! The pawn centre advances, and this gives Black counter-chances.” Golubev stops here, saying the position is unclear. Indeed, White did miss one or two chances after this to stay in the game.

18 ♘d5!

This is certainly the best move in view of:

a) 18 f6 exd4 19 ♘d5 (Voronkov’s suggestion 19 fxe7 is rubbish, e.g. 19... ♗xe7 20 ♘d5 ♗e6.) 19... ♙xf6 20 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 21 gxf6 dxe3 and if 22 ♗g3+? ♖g4 — Simagin.

b) 18 ♘de2 ♙c6 19 ♗g3 (19 ♘d5 ♘c7!) 19...d5± — Simagin.

18...exd4 19 ♗e4

If 19 f6 ♙xf6 20 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 (Simagin) and Voronkov’s proposal 20 b3 is no better: 20... ♖xc2 21 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 22 gxf6 ♙h8.

19...dxe3 20 ♗xc4

Simagin had obviously discussed the game afterwards with his opponent. He wrote here: “Black has two minor pieces for the ♖ but he cannot hold the material advantage. In the light of the following moves of Black, underestimated by him, Rittner

afterwards preferred the continuation  
20 ♖xe7+ ♜h8 21 ♜xc4 ♜xe7.”

**20...♙xg5!**

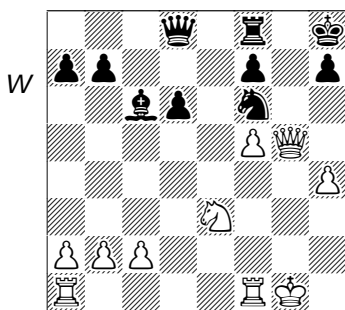
Simagin forestalls the threat of  
21 f6. Now, of course not 21 hxg5?  
♜xg5+ 22 ♜h2 ♜h6+ 23 ♜g3  
♙c6!-+, but White finds a way to  
gain a piece under more favourable  
circumstances.

**21 ♜g4! ♙c6 22 ♖xe3?**

After this error, Black forces the  
win. The right move was 22 c4! ♙xd5  
23 cxd5 with the idea 23...♖f6 24  
♜xg5+ ♜h8 25 ♜xe3 and White  
has adequate defensive resources, said  
Simagin.

Of course, as he pointed out, Black  
doesn't have to play 23...♖f6; he  
might prefer 23...♜h8 24 hxg5 ♜g8  
25 ♜d4+ ♜f6! or 23...e2 24 ♜f2  
♖f6 25 ♜xg5+ ♜h8, but here the  
chances are reciprocal.

**22...♖f6! 23 ♜xg5+ ♜h8 (D)**



At this point we get an apparent  
wide divergence between the contem-  
porary analysis and the view of the  
game in Woodger's monograph. It  
seems that Simagin was aware of, and

avoided, the dangerous lines which  
computers show as good for White.

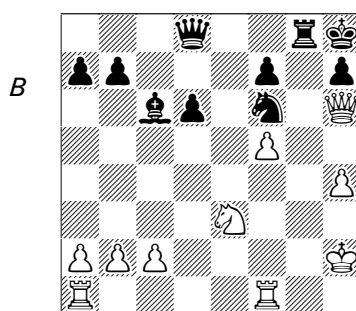
**24 ♜h2**

Not 24 ♜f4 ♜g8+ 25 ♜h2 ♖g4+  
and Black wins (Simagin), while 24  
♜h6 ♜g8+ 25 ♜h2 leads to the same  
position as in the game, as Simagin's  
notes clearly state.

Instead Voronkov, for no good  
reason, wrote that in the event of 24  
♜h6 Black "wins without difficulty"  
by 24...♜g8+ 25 ♜h2 ♖g4+ etc.  
— not only did he overlook the  
transposition but he gives an incorrect  
25<sup>th</sup> move for Black.

Seeing that 25...♖g4+ fails,  
Woodger and his colleague Fabrizi  
try to salvage Black's game by the  
irrelevant 25...♜e7 which only leads  
to equality.

**24...♜g8 25 ♜h6 (D)**



**25...d5!**

Simagin commented: "The only  
possibility to continue the attack.  
White threatened 26 ♜g1 which now  
can be met by 26...d4! 27 ♜xg8+  
♖xg8 when Black wins the ♖."

Black's 25<sup>th</sup> move passes without

comment from Woodger but it was the key move that showed Simagin understood what the position required. Voronkov's 25...♗g4+ could be met by 26 ♖xg4 ♗xg4 27 ♖h3 which looks fine for White (M.Fabrizi).

**26 ♗ad1**

The only move. On 26 c3 Black had prepared 26...♗h5! 27 ♗f4! (27 ♗xh5 ♗d6+ 28 ♖h1 d4+ mates) 27...♗b6! with decisive threats, but now in the event of 26...♗h5 there would follow simply 27 ♗f4! ♗c7 28 ♗d4 and the result is still in doubt.

**26...d4 27 ♗f4**

As before, on 27 ♗g1! ♗d6+ wins (28 ♖h3 ♗e5). On the other hand, the pawn on d4 is now hanging.

**27...♗d6**

By tying down the ♗ on f4, Black keeps the white ♗ out of the game, and this decides matters.

However, contrary to the contemporary notes, 27...♗e7! would also win, because after 28 ♗fxd4 Black plays 28...♗h5! (and not 28...♗e5+ 29 ♗f4!) threatening ...♗e5+ again, and if 29 ♖h3 ♗g3+ 30 ♖h2 ♗e5.

**28 ♗d2**

This modest move provides the best defence, but it leaves Black with a decisive advantage.

White cannot take the pawn by 28 ♗dxd4 in view of 28...♗e5!, when there is no defence to the threat of 29...♗g2+ 30 ♖xg2 ♖g4+ winning the ♗. Other lines are:

a) 28 c3 ♗e5 29 cxd4 ♗xe3 30 ♗xf6+ ♗g7 31 ♗d8+ ♖e8 32 ♗f3 ♗e2+ with mate to follow.

b) 28 ♖c4 ♖g4+ 29 ♖h3 ♖f2+! 30 ♖h2 ♗g2#.

c) 28 ♖h3 ♗e5 29 ♖c4 ♖g2+ 30 ♖h2 ♖g4+.

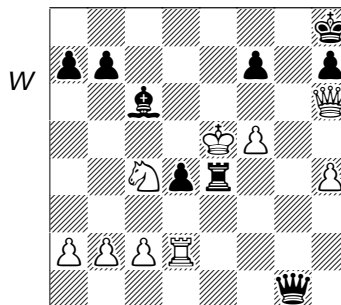
**28...♗e5 29 ♖c4 ♖g4+ 30 ♖h3 ♗e1!**

Ignoring the ♗ and threatening 30...♗h1+. White's reply is forced.

**31 ♗xg4 ♗h1+ 32 ♖g3 ♗g1+ 33 ♖f4**

If 33 ♗g2 ♗xg2+ 34 ♖f4 ♗h2+ and mates.

**33...♗xg4+ 34 ♖e5 ♗e4+ (D)**



**35 ♖d6**

On 35 ♖f6 Black wins by the “klingon” move 35...♗g8! (pointed out by Simagin himself) after which there is no satisfactory defence to the threat of 36...♗d8+ 37 ♖xf7 ♗e7#.

**35...♗g3+ 36 ♖c5 ♗e5+! 37 ♖xe5**

Again forced; if 37 ♖b4 ♗b5+ 38 ♖a4 ♗xf5+.

**37...♗xe5+ 38 ♖c4**

If 38 ♖b4 ♗b5+ 39 ♖a3 ♗a4#.

**38...♗d5+ 0-1**

White resigned, in view of the mate in 6 beginning 39 ♖d3 ♗e4+! 40 ♖c4 b5+.

# Game 27

**White:** Conel Hugh O'Donel Alexander (England)

**Black:** Peter H. Clarke (England)

Sinclair Trophy team tournament, England 1969-70

*Spanish, Centre Attack (C84)*

**The Players:** Alexander (1909-74) was born in Cork, Ireland, but lived nearly all his life in England. He was one of several chess players involved in the WW2 'Ultra' codebreaking operation at Bletchley. When its Cold War successor, GCHQ, was established in Cheltenham, Alexander moved there; he and several colleagues were the nucleus of strong Gloucestershire teams of the 1950s and 1960s. He was twice British Champion and a FIDE IM as well as an excellent writer on the game. In the last decade of his life he concentrated on postal chess and earning the ICCF IM title in 1970, playing on England's olympiad team.

Clarke (born 1933) wrote the first books in English on Petrosian and Tal. A British Master OTB, he played many times for England; he had a reputation for being an extremely hard player to beat. In the 1970s he took up CC more seriously and obtained the ICCF IM title (1976) and then GM (1980) before giving up the game for health reasons.

**About this game:** It first appeared in 'Gloucestershire Correspondence Chess 1954-81', which records the feats of that team in the annual inter-county competition organised by the British Chess Federation. It

was also included in the collection of Alexander's games, edited by Golombek & Hartston. Alexander himself was probably the source for most of the lines cited in both books.

**1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♗c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4 ♗f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 d4**

Nowadays this variation is rare in master chess because it lacks strategic depth compared with the 6 ♖e1 line. In the pre-computer era, however, such sharp opening variations often paid off. First, the opponent's opening knowledge would be tested, and then his analytical abilities. In this game, Clarke passes the first examination but fails the second.

**6...exd4 7 ♖e1**

This move allows Black to castle and retreat his ♗ to e8, but on the principle that you cannot have an attack without development, it gives more prospect of a lasting initiative than 7 e5 ♗e4.

**7...0-0 8 e5 ♗e8**

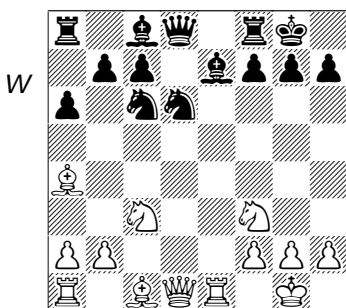
8...♗d5 9 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 10 ♖xd4 ♗b6 11 ♙b3 d5 12 exd6 used to be thought good for White, but the reputation of the move has improved. Instead of 12...♙xd6 13 ♙f4 or 12...♖xd6 13 ♖e4 (△ ♙f4±), 'ECO' gives 12...♙f6! 13 ♖e4 cxd6! 14 ♗c3 ♙xc3 15 bxc3 d5 16 ♖e7

♖xe7 17 ♜xe7 ♞c4= Feistenauer-Donev, Götzis 1990.

9 c3!?

9 ♙f4 is a more solid alternative.

9...dxc3 10 ♞xc3 d6 11 exd6 ♞xd6 (D)



This is now the book main line; White is challenged to justify his gambit. Others, according to the theory of those days:

a) 11...♖xd6 12 ♞d5! ± Castagna-Limbos, Varna OL 1962.

b) 11...cxd6 12 ♞d5 (Kholmov-Lein, 29<sup>th</sup> USSR Ch 1961), but later this was shown to be playable with 12...♙e6 13 ♞xe7+ ♖xe7 in Minić-Masić, Yugoslav Ch 1972.

c) The Alexander book said “11...♙xd6 is safest for Black when 12 ♙g5 ♞f6 13 ♞e4 ♙e7 leads to a very drawish ending”.

12 ♞d5

12 ♙f4 was preferred a few years later, e.g. 12...b5 13 ♙b3 ♞c4 14 ♞d5! ♙d6 15 ♙g5 ♖d7 16 ♜e4 ♞6e5 (16...f6 17 ♙f4 ♙xf4 18 ♜xf4 ♜d8 19 ♖e2! ± Romanishin-Tukmakov, 46<sup>th</sup> USSR Ch, Tbilisi

1978.) 17 ♞xe5 ♞xe5 18 ♖e2! ♞g6 19 ♞e7+! ♞xe7 20 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 21 ♜xe7 ♖c6 22 ♜d1! ♙b7 23 ♙d5 ♖b6 24 ♙xb7 ♖xb7 25 ♜dd7 ♜ac8? (25...♖b6 — Gipslis) 26 ♖e6! ♖b6 27 ♜xf7! ♙h8 28 ♖e7! 1–0 TV viewers-Radio listeners, Latvia corr 1978; now if 28...♜xf7 29 ♜d8+! or 28...♜fe8 29 ♜f8+! ♜xf8 30 ♖xg7#.

12...♜e8

12...♙e6 ∞ is theory today, following Timman-Beliavsky, Moscow 1981.

13 ♞e5

Alexander did not want to capture on c6 — obtaining positional compensation through Black’s split pawns — because he believed it would lead to a drawn endgame at best. I am sure he knew that Clarke would conduct a positional game very ably and so preferred to rely on his tactical powers to exploit what should have been only a temporary initiative.

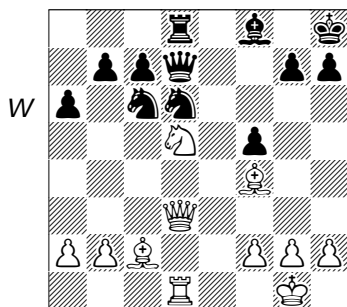
13...♙d7 14 ♞xd7 ♖xd7 15 ♙f4 ♙f8 16 ♖d3 ♜xe1+ 17 ♜xe1 ♜d8

Clarke hopes for counterplay on the d-file rather than simplification by 17...♜e8 18 ♜xe8 ♖xe8 and then:

a) 19 ♞xc7 ♖e1+ 20 ♖f1 “regains the pawn when the ♙ pair gives White the better prospects”, according to Alexander. Computer analysis doesn’t support that view as Black continues 20...♖e4 21 ♙xc6 ♖xf4±, e.g. 22 ♙f3 ♞f5 23 ♞d5 ♖d2 24 ♖b1 ♙c5.

b) 19 ♙f1 is better, e.g. 19...♖e4 20 ♖xe4 ♞xe4 21 ♙xc6!? bxc6 22 ♞xc7 ♞c5 23 ♙e2± K.Howard-A.Tankel, British CC Ch candidates 1987.

18 ♙c2 f5 19 ♜d1 ♙h8 (D)

**20 g4!**

Here the Alexander book explains: “White appears to have a great deal of pressure but it is another matter finding something to do... Thus this thrust is really the only attempt to increase the pressure”. White has a variety of moves that might be marginally better positionally (20 a4 or 20 a3 for example), but which would offer less hope of victory; again the note to White’s 13<sup>th</sup> move applies.

**20...g6?!**

“Having defended well, it was time for Black to be thinking more actively,” say Golombek & Hartston, while the Gloucestershire book here says, “Better 20...♖f7 — the weakening of the long diagonal proves fatal”.

Indeed 20...♖f7! was much better, when:

a) The Alexander book correctly says that 21 gxf5! (21 ♔g5! ♖e8) 21...♟b5! gives Black some initiative through the threats of ...♟b4 or ...♟cd4. 21...♖h5 also comes into consideration.

b) Alexander believed that “White

can still regain his pawn and draw by 21 ♔xd6! cxd6 22 ♖xf5 and this may be the best he has”. Actually, White may be slightly better in that case but 21...cxd6 seems the worst of the three recaptures and after both 21...♔xd6 and 21...♖xd6 Black’s position is certainly not inferior.

Black’s mistakes here and at the next move are forgivable, however. They stem from the same source: Clarke’s failure to see White’s stunning 22<sup>nd</sup> move.

**21 ♔g5 ♖c8?**

Black should have played 21...♖b8 with fairly good chances of escaping with a draw as White’s next move would then not attack the ♖. Alexander could then choose between:

a) 22 ♟e7 ♟e5 23 ♖c3 ♔g7 24 gxf5 and now the computer world champion program Shredder6 comes up with the defence 24...♖e8 (If 24...gxf5 25 ♔xf5 ♖e8 26 ♖xd6!) 25 f4 ♟g4 26 ♟xg6+ hxg6 27 ♖h3+ ♟g8 28 ♖xg4 gxf5 29 ♔b3+ ♟f8=.

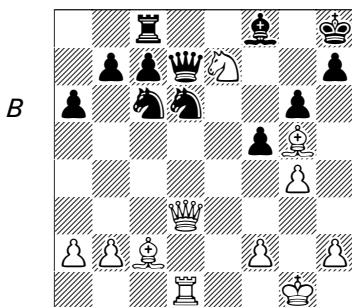
b) 22 ♔f6+ ♔g7 23 g5 could result in a draw after 23...♔xf6 24 ♟xf6 ♖e7 25 ♔a4 ♟e4 26 ♔xc6 bxc6 27 ♟xe4 fxe4 28 ♖d4+ ♟g8 29 ♖c4+ ♟h8= (analysis with Shredder6).

**22 ♟e7!! (D)**

This is the sort of counter-intuitive shot that required imagination and calculating skill before the era of the chess engines.

“A beautiful and totally surprising combination,” wrote Hartston; “a bolt from the blue which wins in all variations,” says the Gloucestershire book.





### 22...♖e8

Alexander demonstrated wins against the alternatives.

a) 22...♙xe7 23 ♖c3+ ♗f6 (23...♗g8 24 ♗b3+ ♗f8 25 ♖h8#) 24 ♗xf6+ ♗g8 25 ♗b3+ ♗f8 26 ♖e1 ♗f7 27 ♗g7+ ♗g8 28 ♗h8!+-.

b) 22...♗xe7 23 ♗f6+ ♗g7 24 ♗xg7+ ♗xg7 25 ♖c3+ ♗h6 26 g5+ ♗xg5 (26...♗h5 27 f4) 27 f4+ ♗h6 28 ♖d3 and he has no defence to the threat of ♖h3#.

c) 22...♗e5 23 ♖c3 ♗g7 24 ♗xc8 also wins for White, e.g. 24...♖xc8 (or 24...♗xg4 25 ♗xd6 ♗xc3 26 ♗xf5! ♖xd1+ 27 ♗xd1) 25 ♖xd6 ♗f3+ 26 ♖xf3 cxd6 and White emerges a piece up.

### 23 ♗f6+ ♗g7 24 ♗xg7+!

White prefers to play for mate; there is still one more surprise in store. The Alexander book says 24 ♗xg6+ hxg6 25 ♖h3+ ♗g8 26 ♗b3+ ♗f8 27 ♖h7 allows Black to fight on with 27...♗xf6 28 ♖xd7 ♖e7! 29 ♖xd6 cxd6 but I think White is winning that.

### 24...♗xg7 25 ♖c3+ ♗f7 26 g5!!

A very pretty echo of the 22<sup>nd</sup> move; the Gloucestershire book points out that “the ♗ is now en prise to four

pieces but cannot be taken by any of them, as analysis shows”.

### 26...♖d8

The Gloucestershire book says that “the plausible 26...♖f8 would be brilliantly refuted by 27 ♗xc6 bxc6 28 ♖f6+ ♗e8 29 ♖e1+ ♗e4 30 ♗xe4! ♖xf6 31 ♗xc6+! and wins”, while 27...♖xc6 28 ♖f6+ ♗e8 29 ♖e1+ ♗e4 30 ♖xc6+ bxc6 31 f3+- is a variation from the Hartston & Golombek book.

Other finishes worked out by Alexander were: 26...♗xe7 27 ♖f6#; 26...♖xe7 27 ♗b3+ ♗f8 28 ♖h8#; 26...♗xe7 27 ♗b3+-; and 26...♖xe7 27 ♗b3+ ♖e6 28 ♖f6+ ♗e8 29 ♗xe6 ♖d8 30 ♖h8+ ♗e7 31 ♗g8!+-.

### 27 ♗xc6 ♖xc6

27...bxc6 leads to long forced mating variations after either 28 ♗b3+ (or 28 ♖f6+) 28...♗e8 29 ♖h8+ ♗e7 30 ♖e5+ ♗f8 31 ♖xd6+- cxd6 32 ♖h8+ ♗e7 33 ♖g7+ ♗e8 34 ♖g8+ ♗e7 35 ♖f7#.

### 28 ♗b3+ ♗e8

Clarke prefers a pretty finish.

### 29 ♖e5+

The Gloucestershire book says Black resigned here, giving the remaining moves in a note, but the book of Alexander’s games says that Clarke “surely felt it would be churlish to deny his opponent the pleasure of giving mate”. I suppose the most likely explanation for this discrepancy in the accounts is that the remaining moves were sent as a conditional.

29...♗f8 30 ♖f6+ ♗e8 31 ♖e1+ ♗e4 32 ♖f7# 1-0

# Game 28

**White: Roman Zinovievich Altshuler (USSR)**

**Black: Sh. Gilezetdinov (USSR)**

2<sup>nd</sup> USSR Team Championship, corr 1971

*French Defence, Tarrasch Variation (C07)*

**The Players:** Roman Altshuler (born 1919) was famous in the USSR for organising a series of CC contests by radio in 1959 between Moscow, where he lived, and teams from Soviet Arctic and Antarctic bases; later he organised similar events for players on Navy ships. He became an ICCF international master in 1967. I have no information about Gilezetdinov.

**About this game:** Apparently Altshuler retired from international play after the 5<sup>th</sup> CC World Championship but played this fine attacking game a few years later. It was published in the Latvian magazine 'Shakhmaty' several years later, on the occasion of his reaching the age of 60.

**1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖d2 c5 4 ♗gf3**

This is often played although 4 exd5 is the main line.

**4... ♗c6**

4... ♗f6 is a common alternative, while 4...a6 transposes to 3 ♗d2 a6 4 ♗gf3 c5, which is a perfectly playable line for Black.

**5 ♙b5**

This was Alekhine's favourite line against the French in his later years. White is determined to maintain

central tension for as long as possible. Instead 5 exd5 leads to standard positions.

**5...cxd4**

Black has many other moves here, though some of them are dubious.

a) 5...♙d6 6 e5! ♙b8 7 dxc5 ♗ge7 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♖e1 is known to be a difficult line to defend.

b) 5...a6 6 exd5 axb5 7 dxc6 bxc6 8 dxc5 ♙xc5 9 ♖e2 ♗f6 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♗b3 ♖e7 12 ♖d1 and White had the initiative (1-0, 34) in Alekhine-B.Rabar, Munich 1941.

c) 5...♙d7 was a move Alekhine met several times and he considered it a serious mistake; Black rapidly gets into difficulties due to the open e-file. Alekhine-M.Bartosek, Prague 1943, went 6 exd5 exd5 (6...♗xd4? 7 ♗xd4 cxd4 8 dxe6! ♙xb5 9 ♖h5 +- ) 7 0-0 ♗xd4 8 ♗xd4 cxd4 9 ♖e2+ ♙e7 10 ♗f3 ♙xb5 11 ♖xb5+ ♖d7 12 ♖e2 0-0-0 (12...♗f6 13 ♖e1) 13 ♙f4!± (1-0, 34).

d) 5...♗f6 is probably best, e.g. 6 exd5 ♖xd5 7 c4 ♖d6 8 dxc5 ♖xc5 9 0-0 ♙d7 (½-½, 48) Alekhine-B.Thelen, Prague 1942.

**6 0-0!?**

Most books nowadays only mention 6 ♖xd4, transposing to 4 ♖g3 cxd4 5 ♖xd4 ♖c6 6 ♖b5, but castling was Alekhine's gambit idea.

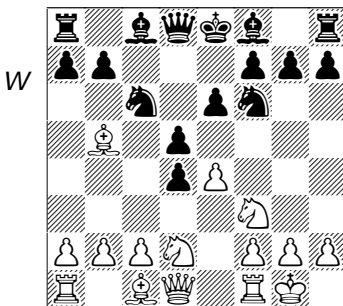
**6...♖f6 (D)**

6...a6 or 6...dxe4 would be better said Altshuler.

For example, GM Suetin's book on the French gives 6...a6 7 ♖xc6+ bxc6 8 ♖xd4 c5 9 ♖4f3 ♖f6 10 exd5 exd5 11 ♖e1+ ♖e7 12 ♖e5 ♖b7= Puč-Matanović, Yugoslavia 1951, although it is worth noting that early in his career, Gert Timmerman won with White from this position in a Dutch postal game.

H.Westerinen-A.Khasin, Moscow 1970, went 6...dxe4 7 ♖xe4 ♖d7 8 ♖e2 ♖f6 9 ♖g5 ♖e7 10 ♖xf6 gxf6 11 ♖ad1 ♖b6 12 ♖xd4 0-0-0∞, but White won in 50 moves; this game may be found in 'Chess Informant' volume 10.

6...♖d6!? has also been tried, e.g. 7 ♖e1 ♖ge7 8 e5 ♖c7 9 ♖xd4± Mik. Tseitlin-Fershter, USSR 1978.



**7 ♖xd4**

Altshuler goes his own way. Alek-

hine had played instead 7 e5 ♖d7 8 ♖b3 a6 9 ♖xc6 bxc6 10 ♖xd4 ♖c7 11 ♖e1 ♖b8 12 ♖d2 c5 13 ♖h4 ♖e7 14 ♖g3 ♖f8 15 c4 ♖b7 16 ♖a5 ♖c8 17 ♖bd2 d4 18 b3 ♖d8 19 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 20 ♖e4 ♖e7 21 ♖ad1 h6 22 ♖d3 and a strong kingside attack was brewing in Alekhine-K.Urbanec, Prague 1943 (1-0, 46).

**7...♖b6**

Altshuler said that 7...♖d7 8 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 9 e5 ♖d7 10 f4 is advantageous to White. This has been seen in a few postal games:

a) 10...♖e7 11 ♖2f3 0-0 12 ♖e3 ♖c5 13 ♖d3 ♖b6 14 ♖g5 g6 15 ♖f2 h6? 16 ♖gx6 and White soon won in A.Wollmann-J.Klinghammer, Germany corr 1986, but Black's play was very poor.

b) 10...♖b6 11 ♖2b3 ♖c5 (L.Mittag-C.Schwieger, DDR CC Ch 1976) and now 12 ♖e3 or 12 f5!? would be more dynamic than 12 ♖h1 which White actually played.

**8 exd5 ♖xd5**

If 8...exd5 then 9 ♖e1+ causes some embarrassment, but now White gains a tempo with his ♖.

**9 ♖c4 ♖c7 10 ♖e5 ♖d7**

Altshuler did not comment on alternatives here. Black could try:

a) 10...♖d6 11 ♖exc6 (instead of 11 ♖dxc6? 0-0 as in M.Trepp-B.Sorensen, Copenhagen 1982) 11...0-0 12 c4 ♖f6 13 ♖g5 and the complications appear to favour White.

b) 10...a6 11 ♖xc6+ bxc6 12 c4!? (If 12 ♖dxc6 ♖d6!) 12...♖xe5 13 ♖xc6 ♖d6 14 cxd5 ♖xd5 15

♖xd5 exd5 16 ♖fe1+ ♕e6 17 ♕f4 when Black looks dangerously undeveloped.

**11 ♘xd7 ♖xd7 12 c4 ♘b6**

It is understandable that Black did not want to block his ♕ but 12...♘de7 would give more support to c6. After White's next move, the attack really revs up.

**13 ♖f3! a6**

Black tries to reduce the pressure by giving up a pawn, since 13...♖c8 14 ♖d1 is very bad for him.

After 13...♖xd4 White would play neither 14 ♕xc6+? bxc6 15 ♖xc6+ ♖d7 nor 14 ♕e3 ♖d7, but once more 14 ♖d1! and there is no defence.

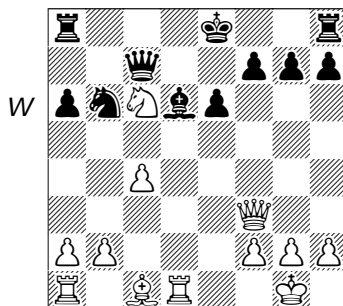
For example, 14...♖e5 (14...♖f6? 15 ♕xc6+ bxc6 16 ♖xc6+ ♔e7 17 ♖c5+ ♔e8 18 ♖b5+ ♔e7 19 ♕g5+-, or 14...♖c5 15 ♕e3 ♖f5 16 ♕xc6+ bxc6 17 ♖xc6+ ♔e7 18 ♕xb6+-) 15 ♕f4 ♖f5 (15...♖c5 16 ♕e3) 16 g4! (Better than 16 ♕xc6+ bxc6 17 ♖xc6+ ♔e7) 16...♖g6 (16...♖c2 17 ♖d2) 17 ♕xc6+ bxc6 18 ♖xc6+ ♔e7 19 ♕d6+ ♔f6 20 ♖f3+ ♔g5 21 h4+ and mates.

**14 ♕xc6 bxc6 15 ♘xc6 ♕d6**

Possibly Black can do a little better with 15...♖b7 (not 15...♘xc4? 16 ♘e5), though he would be a pawn down without compensation. Now he is now utterly overwhelmed.

**16 ♖d1 ♖c7 (D)**

Black escapes the pin on the d-file (15...0-0? 16 ♕f4) and attacks the h-pawn, but in CC, it is perfectly feasible to analyse a combinative position like this to a clear win.



**17 ♖xd6! ♖xd6 18 ♕f4 ♖d7 19 ♘e5 ♖c8**

To prevent ♖c6+.

**20 ♕e3**

The pressure is relentless. White threatens both ♖xf7+ and ♕xb6; the black ♖ cannot assist as it must defend the ♖.

**20...f6 21 ♖h5+ ♔e7 22 ♖f7+ ♔d6 23 ♖d1+!**

The last piece comes into play.

**23...♔xe5 24 ♖h5+**

White has now sacrificed a ♖ but mate is forced. Here 24...g5 lasts longest but is refuted by 25 ♕xg5! fxg5 26 ♖xg5+ ♔e4 27 f3#.

**24...f5 25 ♖g5**

This cuts off the retreat at f6 and threatens ♖xg7 mating. However, 25 ♕f4+! mates quicker, i.e. 25...♔xf4 26 ♖h4+ ♔e5 27 ♖d4# or 25...♔f6 26 ♕g5+ ♔e5 27 ♖e2#.

**25...♘d5 26 ♖xd5+!? 1-0**

This is good enough. Black resigned as his ♖ is lost, e.g. 26...exd5 27 ♖e7+ ♖e6 28 f4+, but sadly Altshuler missed the mate by 26 ♕f4+! ♘xf4 (26...♔e4 27 f3#) 27 ♖xg7+ ♔e4 28 ♖d4#.

# Game 29

**White: Thomas Mueller (USA)**

**Black: Nicolas A. Preo (USA)**

1<sup>st</sup> North American CC Championship, 1971-72

*Open Spanish, Dilworth Variation (C82)*

**The Players:** Thomas Mueller is a very experienced US master. He was the CCLA's Grand National champion in 1964 and 1966 and achieved joint fourth place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> modern series US CC Championship (1978-80).

Russian-born Nicolas Preo (1904-88) won USCF's 1951 and 1952 Golden Knights championships and then became one of the first Americans to win the ICCF international master title. He represented USA with distinction in numerous individual and team events and continued playing into his 80s. After his death, his son Nicolas N. Preobrajensky continued playing master CC for over a decade using the father's identity: an extraordinary story told in the 3/2002 issue of 'Chess Mail' magazine.

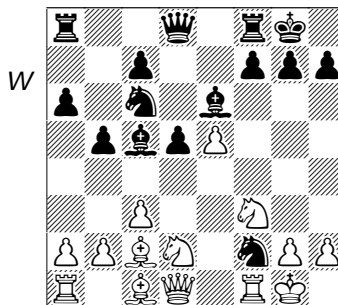
**About this game:** The NAICCC is ICCF's continental championship for North America. Preo finished sixth out of the 15 players in this the first of the series, scoring 8½ out of 14, and Mueller scored 6. In March 2002, I was sent numerous game records discovered by family members among the Preo effects; this previously unpublished game is one of them.

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4

5 0-0 ♘xe4 6 d4 b5 7 ♚b3 d5  
8 dxex5 ♙e6 9 c3 ♙c5

For 9...♙e7 see Game 16.

10 ♘bd2 0-0 11 ♙c2 ♘xf2! (D)



This is the Dilworth Variation, in which Black exchanges (you might say, sacrifices) two minor pieces for a ♖ and pawn to disrupt the white ♙ position and create dangerous chances. The chief drawback from Black's point of view is that he cannot reach this position after the popular modern reply 9 ♘bd2 to the Open Defence, because in that case 9...♙c5 can be answered by 10 ♘xe4.

12 ♖xf2 f6 13 exf6 ♙xf2+! 14 ♙xf2  
♙xf6 15 ♙g1

15 ♘f1! ♘e5 16 ♙e3 ♖ae8

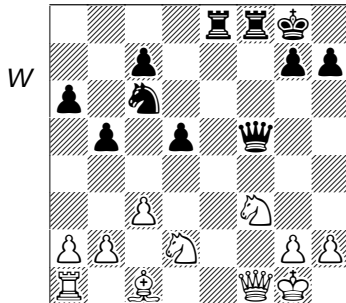
is now considered the critical line, but many experts believe Black has sufficient play. 17 ♖g1 transposes to the next note while after 17 ♔c5 ♘xf3 18 gxf3 ♚f7 19 ♖g2 d4! Black may even stand better.

### 15...♚ae8 16 ♖f1

The dangers White faces are illustrated by the fact that ex-world champion Spassky lost to a German amateur after 16 h3? ♘e5 17 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 18 ♘f3? (18 ♘f1 is necessary.) 18...♗g3 19 ♖d3 ♔f5! 20 ♖xd5+ ♖h8 21 ♔d3 (21 ♔xf5 ♚e2 22 ♘d2 ♖f2+ 0–1 Miranbell-Ecenarro, corr 1969) 21...♔xd3 22 ♖xd3 ♚xf3! 23 ♖xf3 ♚e1+ and Black eventually won in Spassky-Neunhoeffer, Bundesliga 1983.

16 ♘f1 ♘e5 17 ♔e3 ♘xf3+ 18 gxf3 ♖xf3 19 ♖xf3 ♚xf3 20 ♔f2 is a well-known endgame. Theory gives 20...♔h3=, but Potter-Preo, from the NAICCC, went 20...♚ef8!? and after 21 ♔c5 (maybe not best) 21...♚f8f4 22 ♘g3 ♚f7 23 ♚f1 ♚xf1+ 24 ♘xf1 ♔f5 25 ♔b3 c6 26 ♘g3 ♔d3 Black won in 97 moves.

### 16...♔f5 17 ♔xf5 ♖xf5 (D)



### 18 a4

This was possibly a novelty. It is hard to find a good move for White.

a) Recent theory books cite 18 b3 d4! (Ljubojevic-Yusupov, Tilburg 1987), e.g. 19 ♔a3 dxc3! 20 ♔xf8 ♚xf8 21 ♘c4! ♖c5+ 22 ♖f2 ♖xf2+ 23 ♖xf2 bxc4 with a better endgame for Black — Yusupov.

b) 18 ♘b3? ♘e5 19 ♘bd4 ♘xf3+ (19...♗g4 20 b4!) 20 ♘xf3 ♖c2 “...with chronic paralysis of the white camp” as GM Glenn Flear says in his book ‘Open Ruy Lopez’. The cited game (A.Müller-Cruz Lopez, France Cht 1998) continued 21 ♔d2 ♚xf3 22 ♖xf3 ♖xd2 23 ♚f1 ♖e3+ 24 ♖xe3 ♚xe3 25 ♖f2 ♚e4 26 ♚d1 c6 and Black won on move 52.

### 18...b4 19 ♖xa6?

If 19 h3 ♚f6 or 19 a5 ♖c2, so White snatches a pawn but leaves his ♖ weakly defended. 19 ♖xa6 may appear to be the point of 18 a4, but Preo shows that it loses by force.

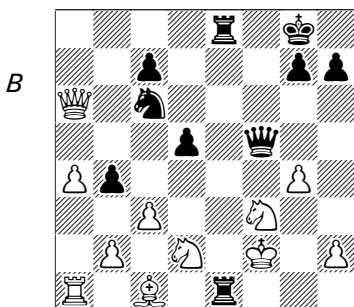
Although this game is 30 years old, it is unknown to theory because, apparently, tournament director John F. Cleeve never received a copy of the game score. Preo’s record was found in 2002 among his son’s papers.

Stapled to it were several slips of paper bearing variations of analysis (without move numbers) in English descriptive notation. They begin at this point, so the inference is twofold. The game was all theory for him up to this point, and now he saw the chance of forcing victory by direct attack. All the lines below are from these notes, unless stated otherwise.

19...♖e1+ 20 ♔f2

If 20 ♗f1 ♗e5 21 ♗xe1 ♖f2+ 22 ♔h1 ♖xf1+ 23 ♖xf1 ♖xf1#. Or 20 ♗xe1 ♖f2+ 21 ♔h1 ♖xe1+ and mates.

20...♖f8 21 g4 (D)



White offers a pawn to unpin the f3-♗. Other possibilities were:

a) 21 ♖xc6 ♖8e2+! 22 ♔g3 ♖g1 23 ♗xg1 ♖g5+ 24 ♔h3 ♖xg2+ 25 ♔h4 g5+ 26 ♔h5 ♖xh2+ 27 ♔xg5 ♖g3+ 28 ♔f5 ♖e5+ 29 ♔f6 ♖g7#.

b) 21 h3 ♗e5 22 g4 (If 22 ♔xe1 ♗d3+ 23 ♔f1 ♖e1# or 22 ♔d1 ♗f2#) 22...♗d3+ 23 ♔g3 ♖f4+ 24 ♔h4 ♖8e6 and “OK” is written on Preo’s note. Actually, it is not OK, because 24...♖8e6 is an error (allowing 25 ♖a8+ and 26 ♖xd5). Black should play either 23...♖g1+ or (after 23...♖f4+ 24 ♔h4) 24...g5+ to force mate, but he would surely have re-analysed more accurately had White in fact played 21 h3.

c) 21 g3 ♗e5 22 ♔xe1 ♗xf3+ 23 ♔f2 (23 ♔d1 ♖e1#) 23...♗xd2+ 24 ♔g1 ♗f3+ 25 ♔g2 ♗e1+ 26 ♔g1 ♗c2 27 ♖a2 ♖e1+ 28 ♔g2 ♖xc1 “followed by ...♗e3#”.

d) 21 ♗e4 dxe4 22 ♔xe1 exf3+ 23 ♔d1 b3! (Δ...♖c2#) 24 ♖c4+ ♔h8 25 ♖xb3 ♖d3+ 26 ♗d2 ♖e1+! 27 ♔xe1 ♖e2#.

e) 21 ♗b3 ♗e5 22 ♗bd4 (After 22 ♔xe1 Preo found another mate starting 22...♗xf3+ 23 ♔f2 ♗d2+.) 22...♗d3+ 23 ♖xd3 ♖xd3 24 ♗xe1 ♖d1 25 ♗df3 ♖e2+ 26 ♔g3 bxc3 27 bxc3 ♖xe1 28 ♗xe1 ♖xe1+ 29 ♔f4 ♖xc3 30 ♖b1 ♖d4+ etc.

21...♖e6!

Preo also looked at the consequences of taking the pawn. He wrote down some variations beginning 21...♖xg4 22 ♗xe1 ♖h4+ 23 ♔g2 ♖xe1 and 23...♖g4+ 24 ♔f1 ♗e5 but at some point, he must have realised the attack was much stronger with 21...♖e6.

22 ♗xe1

If 22 ♖d3 Black’s best is 22...bxc3 23 bxc3 ♖f8! (Δ 24...♗e5) winning. Preo’s notes have 22...♗e5 but White could then escape by 23 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 24 ♗f3 ♖f8 25 ♗f4!.

22...♖xe1+ 23 ♔g2

If 23 ♔f3 ♖f8+ 24 ♔f2 ♖f2+ 25 ♔h3 ♖e3+ and mates.

White’s position is hopeless but according to the scorecard Mueller played on until mate. More likely, when playing his 26<sup>th</sup> move, Black sent a conditional sequence leading to the checkmate and recorded this as played.

23...♖e2+ 24 ♔h3 g5 25 ♖c8+ ♖e8 26 ♖a6 ♖e3+ 27 ♗f3 ♖h4+ 28 ♔g2 ♖xg4+ 29 ♔h1 ♖xf3+ 30 ♔g1 ♖e1+ 31 ♖f1 ♖xf1# 0-1

It was an eerie experience to ‘hear’ a master explaining his game from beyond the grave!

# Game 30

**White: Hermann Heemsoth (West Germany)**

**Black: Dr Charles Hunter (England)**

7<sup>th</sup> CC Olympiad Final, board 4, 1973-74

*English Opening (A25)*

**The Players:** Heemsoth (born 1909) set a record when he became the oldest person ever to become a CC-GM — at the age of 78. The veteran master and chess writer from Bremen had been a strong player OTB and CC for more than half a century, playing his first postal game in 1931 and his last in 1994.

Hunter (1922-82) was one of the first English players to earn the CC-IM title. He found that CC “is ideal for a medical man, whose time for over-the-board matches is too limited, but who can spend evenings and weekends on call analysing games”.

**About this game:** Dr Hunter called this “The best game I have ever lost, a magnificent fighting game”. I have found some flaws in the players’ notes that appeared in ‘Fernschach’ and in the book ‘British Chess’, but few classic games of the period (CC or OTB) are immune to ‘deconstruction’ in this way.

**1 c4 g6 2 ♖c3 ♙g7 3 g3 e5 4 ♙g2  
♜c6 5 e3 d6 6 ♜ge2 ♜ge7 7 ♜b1  
♙e6 8 d3!**

A reversed Closed Sicilian; 8 ♜d5 is more usually seen.

**8...d5?!**

This over-ambitious tempo-sacrifice is the cause of Black’s later troubles. The main line is 8...♙d7 9 ♜d5 0-0 10 0-0 ♜d8 11 b4 ♜xd5 12 cxd5 ♙h3 13 ♙b3 ♙xg2 14 ♜xg2 c6 (Averbakh-Szabo, Budapest 1970) and now 15 e4!±. Black can probably do better with 9...♜d8 although White, in turn, must have an improvement upon Barcenilla-Tiviakov, Singapore 1990, which continued 10 h4?! c6 11 ♜xe7 ♙xe7 12 b4 0-0 13 0-0 ♙f6.

**9 b3!**

Opening the game by 9 cxd5 ♜xd5 10 0-0 ♜db4! or 10 ♜xd5 ♙xd5 11 0-0 ♙xg2 is inferior for White.

**9...0-0**

John Watson proposed 9...a5!/? in his classic work on the English.

**10 ♙a3! ♜e8**

Black meets the threat of 11 cxd5 without committing himself by 10...d4 11 ♜e4.

**11 0-0 a5 12 e4!**

Black must now make an unwelcome decision about his d-pawn. Heemsoth avoided 12 d4 because of 12...exd4 13 exd4 ♙f5! 14 cxd5 (14 ♜c1 dxc4) 14...♜b4! (but not 14...♙xb1? 15 dxc6 ♙f5 16 cxb7 ♜b8



with an unclear position since White has two pawns for the exchange).

**12...dxe4**

If 12...d4 13 ♖d5 when the advances b4 and f4 become positional threats.

**13 dxe4**

After 13 ♖xe4 ♙c8! White's d-pawn remains backward.

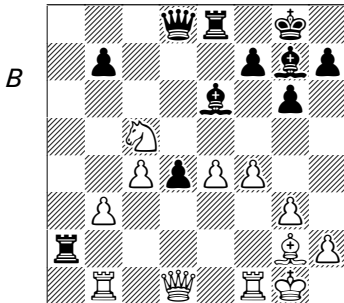
**13...♖d4 14 ♖xd4**

Black loses his outpost but gains a passed pawn which, however, appears to be less important than White's kingside pawn majority which soon gets moving.

**14...exd4 15 ♖d5 ♖c6 16 f4 ♖b4!?**

Black burns his boats with this pawn sacrifice, not liking 16...♙xd5 17 cxd5 ♖e7 (or 17...♖b4 18 ♙xb4 axb4 19 e5 ♖xa2 20 ♙xd4 ♙e7 21 ♖fc1±) 18 e5 ♖xd5 19 ♙xd4 but it seems to me that 16...♙d7, maintaining the tension, is more sensible, with chances of holding the balance. However, this would not suit Hunter — an aggressive player who liked gambits and would have been looking for a way to play for a win.

**17 ♙xb4 axb4 18 ♖xb4 c5 19 ♖d3 ♖xa2 20 ♖xc5 (D)**



**20...d3!?**

Black offers a second pawn in order to enhance the scope of his g7-♙. Instead, Heemsoth thought that with 20...♙a5, which strengthens the threats against the white position, the “margin of draw” would not yet have been overstepped. Here 21 ♖xe6 fxe6 22 e5 seems to give White an edge but he may well be right. Similarly, if 20...♙b6 I suppose that 21 ♖xe6 must give White somewhat the preferable position.

The aggressive computer program Junior 7 suggests 20...b5?! 21 cxb5 d3 which offers a third pawn! This is a very interesting idea to strengthen the Black attack by seizing control of the d5-square, but after 22 ♖xd3 ♙c3 23 f5 gxf5 (hoping for 24 exf5 ♙d4+ 25 ♖h1 ♙d5 26 ♙g4+ ♖f8 with a strong attack for the three pawns sacrificed) 24 ♖f4! is right, e.g. 24...fxe4 (24...♙b6+ 25 ♖h1) 25 ♙h5 or 25 ♖xe6 (but not 25 ♙xd8 ♖xd8 26 ♖xe6 fxe6 27 ♙xe4 ♖dd2) and Black does not seem to have enough compensation.

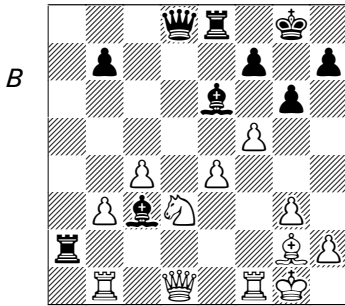
**21 ♖xd3 ♙c3!**

This move not only threatens 22...♖d2 (winning a piece) but also, for example, after 22 ♖f2 Black plays 22...♙b6! followed by ...♖d8 and ...♖dd2 when White's position would be totally paralysed.

After other moves, White soon repulses the attack, e.g. 21...♖e7 (Δ...♖d7) 22 f5 or 22 ♙f3 ♖d7 23 ♖fd1 ♙g4 24 ♙xg4 ♖xd3 25 ♖h1, or 21...♙a5 22 ♙f3 or 21...♙d4+ 22 ♖h1.

## 22 f5 (D)

White's extra pawns are no good for defence (22 ♖f2? ♜b6! △...♞e8-d8-d2) so he must react immediately.



Here is the moment where Black must try to justify his sacrifices.

**22...gxf5?!**

On the immediate 22...♙c8 follows 23 fxg6 fxg6 24 ♜f3 and eventually ♜d3-f4-d5 and White holds the extra material. On 22...♙xc4 there comes 23 bxc4 ♞d2 24 fxg6! fxg6 (if 24...♞xd1 White wins by 25 gxf7+ ♙g7 26 fxe8 ♖+! ♜xe8 27 ♞bxd1 with two ♞s and a ♜ for the ♜) 25 ♜f3 ♞xd3 26 ♜f7+ ♙h8 27 ♞xb7+-.

In view of this, Black played to regain a pawn on the 25<sup>th</sup> move. He also obtains the open e-file and threatens to double ♞s on the 7<sup>th</sup> rank. "It was hardly possible to calculate that the disadvantage of the weakened ♙ position weighs heavier in certain variations," commented Heemsoth.

After the game, Dr Hunter stated that 22...gxf5 was the decisive error, "Seeing no risk of losing — and here lay my mistake — I avoided the

complications of 22...f6 23 fxe6 ♞d2 (or 22...♞d2 23 fxe6 f6)".

Heemsoth claimed to have refuted this idea with the ♜ sacrifice 24 ♜f4!! ♞xd1 25 ♞fxd1 ♜b6+ 26 ♙h1 ♙e5! 27 ♞d7 ♙xf4 28 gxf4 ♞xe6 29 e5 with good chances of victory. An ingenious plan, indeed, but Black's defence could be improved. One possibility is 25...♜a5!?!; others are to play ...♜a6 at either move 26 or 27.

Black has to approach the defence schematically: his aim should not be to exchange ♙ for ♜ but rather to use his ♞ to eliminate the ♜ and passed e-pawn. The black ♜ can achieve considerable nuisance value operating on the a-file, and while the ♙ will be a defensive bastion on e5 it does not have to go there as immediately as Heemsoth supposed.

It is hard to give exhaustive variations, but here is a sample line showing how Black's resistance will be very hard to overcome: 24 ♜f4 ♞xd1 25 ♞fxd1 ♜b6+ 26 ♙h1 ♜a6!?! when:

a) 27 e7 ♙e5! (not 27...♞xe7?? 28 ♜d5) 28 ♞d8 (28 ♜d5 see line b) 28...♜a2 29 ♞f1 ♙f7 30 ♜d5 ♜xb3 31 c5 ♞xe7 32 ♜xe7 ♙xe7 33 ♞fd1 ♜a4 (stopping the mating net).

b) 27 ♜d5 ♙e5 28 e7 ♜a2 or 27 ♞d7 ♜a2 28 ♞bd1 ♜xb3.

**23 exf5!?**

Heemsoth rejected 23 ♜f4 because of 23...♞d2, but this does not work because 24 ♜h5 fxe4 25 ♜xe6 ♜b6+ 26 ♜c5 saves the piece, e.g. after 26...♙d4+ 27 ♙h1 Black cannot take the ♜ because of the threat to f7.

However, White has no certainty of winning the endgame after 23...fxe4 24 ♖xe4 ♗d4+ 25 ♗xd4 ♖xd4+ 26 ♖h1 ♖xc4 27 ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 28 bxc4 b6 29 ♖fe1 ±.

**23...♖c8**

Others are weaker as White can hold his material advantage. Two examples:

a) 23...♖d7 24 ♗g4+! ♖h8 25 ♖f2! ♗b6 26 c5 (26 ♖f1? ♗e3! 27 ♖d1 ♖xf2+!) 26...♗a6 27 ♖f1 ♖b5 28 ♖b4 ♖xb4 29 ♖xb5 ♗xb5 30 ♖xa2 ♖xc5+ 31 ♖g2 ±.

b) 23...♗d4+ 24 ♖h1 ♖xf5 (24...♖d7 25 ♖f4!+-) 25 ♖xf5 ♖d2 26 ♗h5! and, in view of the mate threat, Black has no time to take the ♖.

**24 ♖f4?!**

Heemsoth rejected 24 ♗g4+ because of 24...♖h8 25 ♖f4 ♗d4+ 26 ♖h1 ♖ee2!, but White continues 27 ♗xe2! (27 ♗h5!? is also interesting.) 27...♖xe2 28 ♖xe2 ♗e3 29 ♖xc3 ♗xc3 30 f6!, obtaining ♖s and two pawns for a ♗, with Black's ♖ in dire straits. This must be winning for White, sooner or later. Now Black missed a defensive possibility.

**24...♖d4+?!**

Played to avoid the ♗ exchange, but Black should have welcomed it. Of the various other lines examined by Heemsoth and Hunter, there is only one we need to examine.

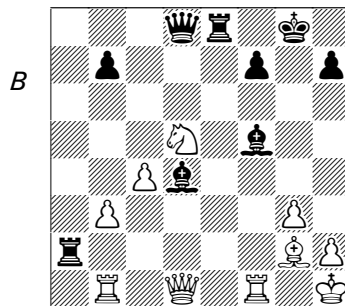
The right line for Black was 24...♖xf5! 25 ♗xd8 ♖xd8 26 ♖bd1 ♖d4+ 27 ♖h1 (threatening both ♖d5 and ♖xb7) when instead of 27...♖c8? 28 ♖d5 (which should lead to a winning endgame for White), 27...♖c2! gives good drawing chances. Neither 28

♖d2 ♖xb3 nor 28 ♖xb7 ♖xb3! set White on the royal road to victory, and 28 ♖de1 ♖xb3 29 ♖d5 is countered by 29...b5! White is left with only the ghost of his advantage.

White can play more subtly but I don't see an obvious way to get real winning chances. For example, if 26 ♖bc1 ♖b2 27 ♖ce1 Black forces exchanges by 27...♖d2, e.g. 28 ♖e2 ♖d4+ 29 ♖h1 ♖xe2 30 ♖xe2 ♖xe2 31 ♖xf5 ♖e1+! when after 32 ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 33 ♖xf1 b6 he finds salvation in an opposite-coloured ♖ ending a pawn down, while if 32 ♖f1 ♖b1 33 ♖f3 ♖b2 and it's not clear how White can improve his position.

Black must have his plan led to a draw by perpetual check, so he saw no need to examine unclear lines leading to endgames a pawn down. White, having won the game, probably never found reason to re-examine notes of variations that never occurred.

**25 ♖h1 ♖xf5 26 ♖d5!! (D)**



White's play is very fine from this point to the end. Now that it is still a middlegame after all, he is back in the

driving seat — but with Black's ♖s and ♙s active, it is no easy matter to find the right line. Logic tells us that the ♘ must be activated to the maximum, but this move offers the exchange and surrenders e2 to the black ♖s.

### 26...♙xb1

Not 26...♖e2 27 ♖xd4 ♖xg2 28 ♖xf5 when Black can resign, but 26...♖xg2! is interesting:

a) Heemsoth planned another ♖ sacrifice: 27 ♖xf5!? ♖g1+ 28 ♖xg1 ♙xg1 29 ♙xg1, which both he and Dr Hunter assessed as strategically won for White because of his central ♘, but instead of Heemsoth's line 29...♖f8 30 ♖b1 ♖a8 31 ♘f6+ ♙g7 32 ♖g5+ ♙h8 (32...♙h6? 33 h4+-) 33 ♖h5! ♙g7 34 ♖xh7+ ♙g6 35 h4! ♖h8 36 h5+ ♙g5 37 ♘e4+ ♙g4 38 ♖f4+ ♙h3 39 ♖h4#, Black has the better defence 29...♙g7 30 ♖b1 ♖d7 because the white queenside pawns become vulnerable if he goes in for a liquidation on f7.

b) If 27 ♙xg2 ♙e4+! 28 ♙h3 ♖g5! Δ...♖h6+ (Heemsoth gave 28...♖e6, but then 29 ♖xd4 ♖h6+ 30 ♙g4 ♖g6+ 31 ♙f4+-) 29 ♖f4 ♖e6 30 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 and Black's activity is worth the pawn. Maybe White should try 28 ♖f3 here.

### 27 ♖xd4 ♙g6

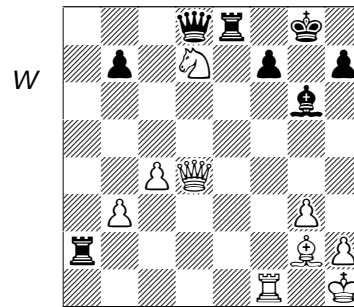
27...♖xg2 does not work: 28 ♘f6+ ♙h8 29 ♘d7+ ♙g8 30 ♙xg2 ♖e2+ (30...♙g6 31 ♘f6+ ♙h8 32 ♖b2!, or 31...♙f8 32 ♘xh7+! ♙xh7 33 ♖h8+ ♙g8 34 ♖h6+ ♙e7 35 ♖e1+, or 33...♙e7 34 ♖e1+ wins) 31 ♙g1 ♙e4 32 ♘f6+ ♙g7 (32...♖xf6 33 ♖xf6!) 33 ♘h5+ ♙h6 34 ♖g7+ and mates. 28 ♘f6+ ♙f8

After 28...♙h8 29 ♙d5! Black can have an early bath, e.g. 29...♖e2 30 ♘g4+! f6 (30...♙g8 31 ♙xf7+) 31 ♖xf6 ♖e1+ (31...♙e4+ 32 ♖f3+) 32 ♖f1+.

### 29 ♘d7+!?

Heemsoth thought White has no win after 29 ♘xh7+ ♙xh7 30 ♖h8+ ♙g8 31 ♖h6+ ♙e7 32 ♖e1+ ♙d7 33 ♖d1+ ♙c8 34 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8. He gave the continuation 35 h4 ♖d1+ 36 ♙h2 ♖dd2, but after 37 ♖f8+ and an exchange of ♙s, the ♖ and passed h-pawn are probably winning in fact.

### 29...♙g8 (D)



This is the position on which Dr Hunter had pinned his hopes, but he totally misjudged it! Consider the statement in 'British Chess' (based on Heemsoth's notes) that: "After 30 ♙xb7 ♖ae2!, threatening ...♖e1, the tables are quickly turned and White must seek the draw".

On the contrary, after the awful 30...♖ae2?! White's winning chances markedly revive by 31 ♘f6+ ♙f8 32 ♖h4 and Black does not have time to play ...♖e1. Instead, given a glass of his favourite whisky, Dr Hunter would

surely have found 30...♙f5! 31 ♖f6+ ♘h8!! (not 31...♗f8? 32 ♗xh7+ ♙xh7 33 ♖h8+ ♘e7 34 ♖e1+ ♘d7 35 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 36 ♙c6+)! 32 ♗d5+ f6!! (not 32...♗g8, hoping for that perpetual, because of 33 ♗g1! and Black's counterplay vanishes) and Black is saved, maybe even with some advantage. For now if 33 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 34 ♗xf6 ♖ee2 with the notorious "blind swine", while if 33 ♗g1 Black sinks his anchor with 33...♖e5.

Also, where is the perpetual check that Dr Hunter expected White to take? True, a draw by repetition could come about via 30 ♗f6+ ♘f8 (30... ♘h8? 31 ♙d5!) 31 ♗d7+ ♗g8 32 ♗f6+ etc. but after the first check White could transpose to the note to White's 29<sup>th</sup> move by 31 ♗xh7+! ♙xh7 32 ♖h8+ ♙g8 33 ♖h6+ ♘e7 34 ♖e1+ ♘d7 35 ♖d1+ ♘c8 36 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 37 h4.

### 30 h4!!

The threat is 31 h5 ♙xh5 32 ♗f6+ etc., so Black's reply is forced.

### 30...h5 31 ♗f6+ ♘f8 32 ♖f4!

Threatening 33 ♖h6+ ♘e7 34 ♗d5+ ♘d7 (34...♘d6 35 ♖xf7) 35 ♙h3+ winning. Black now tries to conciliate White by returning the exchange, but White builds up his position move by move, renouncing distractions.

### 32...♗g7 33 ♖g5!

After 33 ♗xe8+ ♖xe8 the strong black ♖ hinders winning attempts, e.g. 34 ♖f6+ (34 ♙xb7? ♖e2) 34...♘h7 35 ♖f3? (35 ♖f4 ♖e2) 35...♖xg2!.

### 33...♖e7

a) Not 33...♖ee2? 34 ♗xh5+ and 35 ♖xd8.

b) 33...♖f8 34 ♗xh5+ ♗g8 35

♗f6+ ♗g7 is also fatal on account of the discovered check after 36 ♖e5!, e.g. 36...♖b8 37 ♗e8+ ♘h6 38 ♖g7+ ♘h5 39 ♗f6# (Heemsoth).

c) 33...♖h8 fails to 34 ♗xh5+ ♘h7 35 ♖xf7+! followed by mate.

d) 33...♖e7 34 ♗xh5+ ♘h7 35 ♗f6+ ♗g7 and now in the original notes, 36 ♗xe8+ ♖xe8 37 ♙d5! ♘h7 38 h5?? is given, overlooking 38... ♙e4+! and White gets mated. Instead, 36 h5+- as 36...♖h8 does not work because of 37 h6+ ♖xh6 38 ♖xh6+! and a ♗ fork on g8 picks up the black ♖.

e) 33...♖a6! was not considered in the players' notes but may be the lesser evil: 34 ♗xh5+ ♗g8 35 ♗f6+ ♖xf6 36 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 37 ♖xf6 ♖e3. However, the ♖ ending must be winning for White, given the extra pawn on each wing.

### 34 ♗xh5+ ♗g8

After 34...♘h7 Heemsoth found an elegant refutation in 35 ♖xf7+! ♖xf7 36 ♖xd8 ♙xh5 37 ♖d5 ♙g6 38 h5.

### 35 ♙d5! ♘h7

This is the only defence against White's double threat of 36 ♖xg6+ and 36 ♙xf7+, because 35...♖d6 fails to 36 ♗f6+ ♗g7 37 ♗e8+! ♖xe8 38 ♖xf7+ ♗g8 39 ♖d7+.

### 36 ♗f6+ ♗g7 37 ♗g4!

The last and most decisive move of the ♗, threatening 38 ♖h6+ ♗g8 39 ♗f6#.

### 37...♖d6

The mate in two is thus prevented but the h-pawn will strike the decisive blow, as the culmination of the combination begun at move 30.

### 38 h5 1-0

# Game 31

**White: Professor Vladimir Zagorovsky (USSR)**

**Black: Eric Arnlind (Sweden)**

8<sup>th</sup> CC World Championship Final, 1975

*Taimanov Sicilian (B44)*

**The Players:** Zagorovsky (1925-94) was already a master when he took up postal play in the 1950s. He became the 4<sup>th</sup> CC World Champion in the 1960s and was also a FIDE IM. He continued to play at the highest level up to his death, competing in five consecutive world championship finals with a good placing in each. He also led the USSR team to Olympiad success and played in numerous invitational GM tournaments with distinction.

Arnlind (1922-98) had a long career, including two world championship finals many years apart. He earned the IM title in 1959 and became a CC-GM in 1968. His best result was first prize in the BdF-25 German jubilee (1971-74) where he won a classic game against Russian GM Yudovich, which can be found in my earlier book 'Winning At Correspondence Chess'.

**About this game:** Professor Zagorovsky only failed on tiebreak to regain the world title. This game illustrates his logical positional style with the white pieces. (With Black, he preferred unusual variations and was willing to 'mix it' in complications designed to negate White's advantage of the move, which is particularly pronounced in modern master CC.)

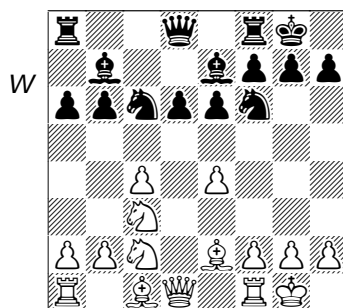
1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4  
♗c6 5 ♗b5 d6 6 c4 ♗f6 7 ♗1c3 a6  
8 ♗a3 ♕e7 9 ♕e2 0-0 10 0-0 b6

This form of the Taimanov Variation was considered at that time to be reliable for Black.

11 ♗c2

Nowadays only 11 ♕e3, 11 ♕f4 and 11 f4 are considered here by theory. White's plan is to hold the e-pawn by f2-f3 and transfer his ♗ to e3 where it restrains Black's ...d5 counterplay. However, this has gone out of fashion compared with lines where White plays f2-f4 and posts his ♕ on e3.

11...♕b7 (D)



12 ♗e3

12 f3 might be met by 12...d5. Earlier, White had failed to get any

advantage by 12 b3 ♖c7 13 ♙b2, e.g. Robatsch-Penrose, Varna OL 1962, went 13...♗fd8 14 ♘e3 ♗ac8 15 ♖c1 ♖b8 16 ♙h1 ♙f8 17 ♘g4 ♘xg4 18 ♙xg4 b5 19 cxb5 axb5 20 ♘xb5 ♙a6 21 a4 d5 22 exd5 ♗xd5 23 ♖e1 ♘b4 and Black has broken out with a temporary pawn sacrifice (½-½, 45).

In a game played shortly after the present one, Zagorovsky tried unsuccessfully to improve for White: 14 ♖c1 ♗ac8 15 ♙h1 ♘e5 16 f3 ♖b8 17 ♖e1 ♘g6 18 ♘e3 ♘f4 19 ♖d2 ♘xe2 and Black held the draw by a waiting strategy in Zagorovsky-M.Roos, Europe-Echecs 20<sup>th</sup> Jubilee corr 1979.

**12...♖c7 13 ♙d2**

Zagorovsky doesn't fianchetto his ♙ but develops more rapidly by delaying b2-b3. He gets sufficient control of d5 but does leave Black free to make an aggressive move with his ♘.

**13...♘d4**

Here the ♘ supports the thematic advance ...b5 but 13...♘e5 looks more obvious, to threaten the e-pawn, and it is surprising that Zagorovsky's notes don't mention the possibility. Then 14 f4 is too loosening after 14...♘g6 so 14 f3! followed by queenside play was probably his intention, keeping the f3-f4 possibility in reserve. Then:

a) 14...♖c5? falls into a trap, 15 b4! ♖xb4? 16 ♘xd5! ♖c5 17 ♙b4+-.

b) 14...♗fd8! may be met by 15 ♖c1 (intending the set-up b4, ♖b3, ♗fd1, ♙e1-f2/g3) though it looks a bit slow.

**14 ♙d3**

Defending the e-pawn while keeping the f-pawn's options open.

**14...♙c6**

The game M.Kopec-V.Palatchik, USSR corr 1991, showed that 14...b5!? is playable immediately: 15 f3 bxc4 16 ♙xc4 ♗fd8 17 ♙h1 d5! 18 exd5 exd5 19 ♙d3 ♙d6 20 ♖c1 ♖b8 21 ♖a4 (21 g3?! ♙xg3) and now Black should have played 21...♙e5! according to Kopec.

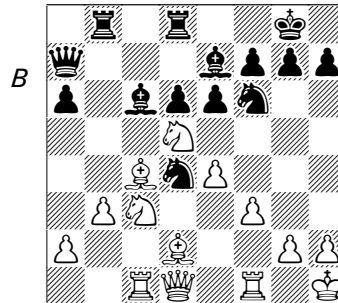
**15 f3 b5**

A good move, said Zagorovsky: "The advance ...d5 was impossible, so instead Black develops a queenside initiative. White cannot count on any opening advantage; the game is approaching equality."

**16 ♖c1 bxc4 17 ♙xc4 ♖a7 18 ♙h1 ♗ab8 19 b3 ♗fd8?!**

This dubious move was suggested as unclear by GM Polugaevsky in an early edition of 'ECO' but Zagorovsky refutes it. He said Black underestimated the effectiveness of the reply and should instead have chosen 19...♙b5 with active play on the queenside.

**20 ♘ed5! (D)**



This is only a pseudo-sacrifice: after 20...exd5 21 exd5 White regains his piece because of the threat ♖e3. Still, Black should have taken the ♗. **20...♗b5?**

20...exd5 21 exd5 (Δ ♖e3) 21... ♗xb3! 22 ♖xb3 ♖d7 23 ♖e1 ♖f5 would have given Black chances of equalizing, according to Zagorovsky. After the text move, White has a clear advantage.

**21 ♗xe7+ ♖xe7 22 ♖g5 h6 23 ♖h4 ♗xc3 24 ♖xc3 ♖b7 25 ♖d3**

White's positional advantage is now evident. If now 25...♖d7? 26 e5. **25...g5**

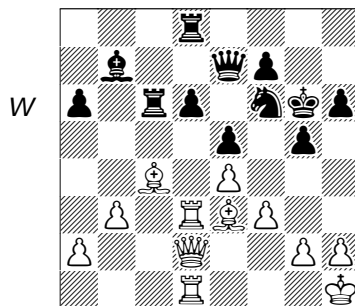
Black tries to complicate in order to loosen the noose around his neck, but his struggle is in vain. He could hold back ...g5 hoping for a better moment — for instance by playing 25...♖bc8. Then:

a) 26 ♖d2 g5! 27 ♖g3 d5 or 26 ♖e1 (not 26 ♖f2? ♗xe4!) 26...a5!? 27 ♖e2 a4 28 ♖ed2 g5! 29 ♖g3 d5.

b) Arnlinde maybe felt he had better chances to defend with the game continuation than after 26 ♖xf6 gxf6 27 ♖d2 ♗h7 28 ♖d1. Note that the trick 26...♖xf6 27 ♖xd6 ♖xe4!?, intending 28 fxe4? ♖xd6 29 ♖xd6 ♖xc4 30 ♖d3 ♖d4 31 ♖xa6 ♖e5 with counterplay (e.g. 32 ♖b7 ♖f4!), fails to 28 ♖xa6 and White's queenside pawns would win. **26 ♖g3 e5**

This further weakening is necessary as otherwise White would soon open the kingside with f3-f4.

**27 ♖d2 ♖bc8 28 ♖d1 ♖c6 29 ♖f2 ♗h7 30 ♖e3 ♗g6 (D)**



**31 a4!**

31 h4 might look strong, but Black could answer 31...g4!, when the complications might favour him. Professor Zagorovsky explained that White's plan is not to get involved in combinations but to use positional threats.

Now if Black tries to sit tight White will prepare a decisive advance on the queenside, e.g. 31...♖d7 32 a5 ♖d8 33 ♖b6 ♖b8 34 ♖e2 ♖c8 35 ♖c3 followed by ♖dc1, ♖d3 and b4-b5.

**31...♗e8 32 ♖d5 ♖cc8 33 ♖b6 ♖d7 34 ♖c4 f5?!**

Weakening, but what can he do?

**35 exf5+ ♗xf5 36 ♖e3!**

This forces material gains.

**36...♖xc4**

If 36...♗f6 37 ♖xe5! ♗xe5 38 ♖d4+ ♗f5 39 ♖d3+ or 36...♗g6 37 ♖d3+ ♗g7 38 ♖xe5!. Or otherwise 37 ♖d3+ ♗f6 38 ♖xa6 and the queenside pawns win.

**37 bxc4 ♗f6 38 ♖de1 ♗g6 39 c5 dxc5 40 ♖c2+ e4 41 fxe4 ♖e5 42 ♖xc5 ♖b2 43 ♖f5+ ♗g7 44 ♖a5 1-0**

Black resigned because of the deadly threat of ♖c3.



# Game 32

**White: Juan Sebastian Morgado (Argentina)**

**Black: Yakov Borisovich Estrin (USSR)**

10<sup>th</sup> CC World Championship Final, 1978-84

*Queen's Pawn, Pereyra System (A48)*

**The Players:** Estrin was introduced in Game 21. Morgado won the GM title by taking second place in this championship. In the mid-1990s he was one of the pioneers of email CC with both ICCF and IECG. His 'Ajedrez de Estilo' is one of the leading Spanish-language chess websites.

**About this game:** I include this flawed battle partly for the unusual opening and middlegame, and partly because of the background story.

**1 d4**

Morgado opened 1 e4 in other games but wanted to avoid Estrin's theoretical knowledge of open games.

**1...♟f6 2 ♟f3 g6 3 ♖f4**

Morgado decided to play an irregular queen's pawn game that was the patent of his countryman, Manuel Pereyra Puebla. This is similar to the Barry Attack, which is popular among British amateurs. The Barry goes 3 ♟c3 when Black must either play 3...d5, or allow White to carry out his "threat" to transpose to a Pirc Defence after 3...♙g7 4 e4 d6.

**3...♙g7 4 ♟c3!?**

This is the Pereyra System. In the normal London System, White plays 4 e3, 5 ♙e2 (or ♙c4) followed by

0-0, h3, c3 and the queen's ♑ is developed on d2 in most cases. 4 c4 would allow Estrin to reach a main line of his favourite Grünfeld Defence after 4...0-0 5 ♟c3 d5.

**4...♟h5!**

Most of Pereyra's opponents chose 4...d5 (transposing to the Barry) and some played 4...d6. Estrin takes the game down independent paths, but this cost him a lot of reflection time.

**5 ♙e5**

5 ♙g5 h6 is the alternative:

a) 6 ♙h4 g5 7 ♙g3 d6 8 ♖d3 ♟xg3 9 hxg3 c6 10 e4 e5 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 ♖xd8+ ♜xd8 13 ♙c4 ♜e7 14 ♟d1! ♟d7 15 ♟e3 ♟c5= and Black eventually won a tough struggle in Pereyra-Rinaldi, LIPEAP-15 Peruvian Jubilee corr 1988-91. White tried 16 ♟d2 (Δ 17 g4!) but Black got in first with 16...g4.

b) 6 ♙d2 d6 7 ♟e4?! (White should have played 7 e4.) 7...e5 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ♙c3 ♖e7 10 ♖d2 ♟c6 11 ♟g3 ♙g4 12 ♟xh5 ♙xh5 13 e4 ♜d8 14 ♖e3 0-0 ♞ was 0-1, 29 in K.Vickers-S.Gerzadowicz, USCF Absolute Ch 1986; that game is in Gerzadowicz's 'Journal of A Chess Master'.

**5...f6 6 g4?!**

Better 6 ♖g3 d6.

**6...fxe5 7 gxh5 exd4 8 ♗xd4 d5**

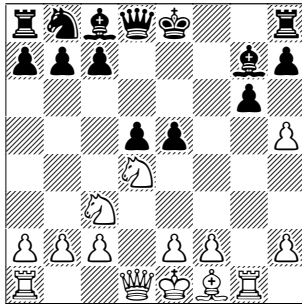
Several unclear alternatives are 8...c5 9 ♗f3 ♖a5 10 ♖d3 gxh5 11 ♖g1 ♖f6 12 ♖h3 ♗c6 13 ♖f1 ∞, or 8...e5 9 ♗f3 d6 10 ♖g1 ∞, or 8...c6 9 ♖g1 e5 10 ♗f3 ∞, or 8...0-0? 9 hxg6 hxg6 10 ♖d3 ±, or 8...♗c6 9 ♗xc6 ∞ (Rinaldi).

Maybe Black's best is 8...e6 9 ♖g1 (9 ♖d3 ♖f6 10 0-0-0 ∞) 9...♖f6 10 ♗db5 0-0 ∓.

**9 ♖g1?!**

Morgado: "This seemed strong to me but the evaluation was incorrect".

9 ♗b3 is probably better, and if 9...c6 10 ♖d3 ♖f5 11 e4 dxe4 12 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 13 0-0-0+ ♖c7 14 ♖g2 ♖xc3 15 bxc3 although in any case Black's game is superior.

**9...e5 (D)****10 hxg6?!**

Morgado was "seduced by the position that arises after move 14 but I did not diagnose the consequences well. It appeared to me that White had compensation because of the

bad position of the black ♖ on h6." He said that "the normal move (if one can speak of 'normal' in this position) would be 10 ♗b3 c6 (or 10...d4 11 ♗e4 ♖f5 12 ♖g2 unclear) 11 hxg6 0-0 12 gxh7+ ♖h8 strongly threatening ...♖f6."

**10...exd4 11 gxh7 ♖f8!?**

Another possibility in what Morgado called "this tactical inferno" is 11...dxc3 12 ♖xg7 and now not 12...cxb2? (or 12...♖e6 13 ♖d4 cxb2 14 ♖xb2 ♗d7 15 ♖h3!) 13 ♖g8+ ♖e7 14 ♖xd8+-, so Black would play 12...♖f8, transposing to the note to Black's 12<sup>th</sup> move below.

Neither player saw at the time the strongest continuation, which is 11...♖f8!.. Then if 12 ♖xg7 ♖f6 when the white position collapses, or 12 ♖d3 ♖f6! with the main point 13 ♗xd5? ♖xf2+ 14 ♖d1 ♖xg1 +- . Or if 12 ♗xd5 ♖h8 13 e4 ♖h4!.

**12 ♖xg7 ♖xg7**

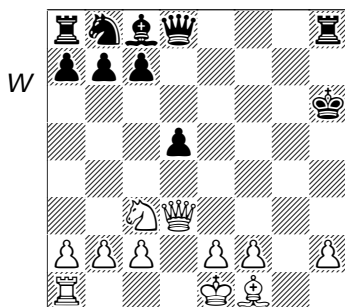
Other fantastic variations are produced by the line 12...dxc3 13 ♖d4 cxb2 14 ♖g8+ ♖xg8 15 h8♖ bxa1 ♖+ 16 ♖xa1 ♖xh8 (16...♖g5 17 ♖hf6+ ♖xf6 18 ♖xf6+ ♖e8 19 ♖e5+ ♖f7 20 ♖h5+ also probably draws) 17 ♖xh8+ ♖e7 18 ♖h4+ with a draw by perpetual check — Morgado.

Also 16...d4!? 17 ♖h6+ and 15... ♖xh8 16 ♖xh8+ ♖f7 17 ♖h7+ ♖e6 18 ♖h3+ ♖d6 19 ♖h6+ ♖c5 20 ♖e3+ d4 21 ♖a3+ ♖c6 22 ♖g2+ ♖d7 23 ♖h3+ are probably draws, but in the latter variation 17...♖d6 seems to offer Black winning chances.

White's 12<sup>th</sup> move had to be repeat-

ed by registered post due to its having got lost in the mails; this was a common frustration when playing against USSR opponents. On account of the serious postal problems, Morgado later requested that both he and Estrin be obliged to play by registered post for the remainder of the game, which was approved by the Tournament Director. After move 21 Morgado sent all his moves by registered post with “advice of delivery”.

13 ♖xd4+ ♜xh7 14 ♖d3+ ♜h6 (D)



This was the position Morgado envisaged at move 10.

15 ♜h3!?

The best possibility. If 15 0–0–0 ♖g5+ 16 f4 ♖xf4+ 17 e3 ♖c4 18 ♖d2 ♖h4±.

15... ♜c6! 16 ♜xc8 ♖xc8 17 ♜xd5

Without this move, the checks of the white ♖ would be ineffectual.

17... ♖g5

A critical moment. The position is extraordinarily rich in possibilities.

18 ♖h3+ ♜g7 19 ♖d7+ ♜e7!

It appears that White has a

perpetual check, but through this return of material Black retains his advantage (White cannot play 20 ♜xe7 ♜hd8 21 ♜f5+ ♜f6 –+).

At this point, Black (who had spent 57 days thinking time so far) originally sent a card with an impossible move, which incurred a 5-day penalty and caused him to exceed the time limit. (In ICCF postal play, it is necessary to exceed the time limit twice before you lose the game.) This meant that a new time count started for Estrin, who had 30 days more to reach move 29.

20 ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 21 ♜xe7 ♜cf8! 22 ♜d1

22 0–0–0 was the alternative, with a similar position.

22... ♜xh2 23 ♜d7 ♜xf2 24 ♜d5+ ♜f8 25 ♜c3 ♜f7 26 ♜d8+ ♜g7 27 ♜d2 ♜e7

The game began at the end of October 1978 and it was now April 1981.

28 b3 b5?!

Here Morgado claimed Black exceeded the time limit again, but this was rejected by the appeal judge. Meanwhile, this move gives White hope. A better plan was 28... ♜f7 and ... ♜e6, preparing ... ♜d7.

29 a3 a5

On this 29<sup>th</sup> move, the last of the new count, Estrin spent one day. On Morgado’s calculations it seems to be irrefutable that the Russian had used 31 days on moves 19–29 and therefore should have forfeited the game. ICCF did not agree, so the game continued with Estrin having a further 30 days to reach move 39, on top of any time accumulated.

29...c5!? was possible because if White captures on b5, his ♔ gets trapped on the back rank by the doubled ♖s and he will probably lose all his pawns. But White would answer 30 b4 as in the game and 30...a5 transposes to the next note.

### 30 b4 axb4

30...c5 was possible here too but after 31 bxc5 b4 32 axb4 axb4 33 ♘d5 ♖exe2+ 34 ♔xd3 ♖xc2 35 ♖d7+ (35 ♘xb4?? ♖hd2+) White probably has a draw. If he is ever able to give a check on d6, then the ♖ is protected and he can play ♘xb4, while if the black ♔ stays back it cannot get out of check.

### 31 axb4 c5?!

Objectively, this is an error that permits the liquidation of the game, but Estrin was presumably concerned chiefly with finding a way not to lose. Forcing exchanges suited that policy.

31...c6 32 ♖d6 ♖c7 would have kept chances for Black, but not 32... ♖h6?! 33 ♖xh6! ♔xh6 34 e4! ♔g6 35 ♔e3 ♔f6 36 ♘e2! followed by ♘d4 with an excellent disposition of the white forces. The white ♔ can go to d3 and threaten c2-c4 (Morgado).

### 32 ♖c8!

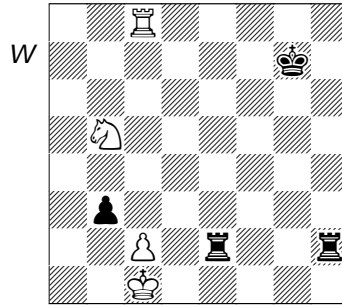
This is a clear drawing variation.

### 32...cxb4 33 ♘xb5

Now the pawn on c2 is defended.

### 33...♖exe2+ 34 ♔c1 b3 (D) ½-½!?

Estrin proposed the continual conditional 35 ♘d4 ♖xc2+ 36 ♘xc2 ♖xc2+ 37 ♖xc2 bxc2 38 ♔xc2 and offered a draw. Simultaneously he exceeded the time limit for the fourth occasion, if you agree that he had



no accumulated time left from the previous count, and apply the time-doubling rule (later abolished) that after 12 days reflection time, every extra day counted double. On this basis, Morgado counted 24 days for Estrin, making a total of 33: exceeding the allowance by 3 days. The three days difference between when Estrin actually received Morgado's move and when he said he received it are doubled to 6 days and that is what makes the difference between exceeding the time limit or not.

Since Estrin's conditional left only bare ♔s on the board, Morgado had to stop playing and make his final claim, which was ultimately refused. Estrin's conditional had its desired effect and ICCF declared the game a draw, presumably on the grounds that you cannot win on time with a bare ♔?

### The row and the decision

Argentina's ICCF vice-president Carlos Germán Dieta made an official complaint but it was rejected. Estrin produced a hand-written certificate from a Russian post office official to support his case. Dieta claimed that Estrin's certificate must be false

because it showed a Sunday receipt date for a registered letter, and asked why ICCF accepted the postal certificates produced by the Russians and not by the Argentinian PO.

Of course in postal chess, where time is concerned, a great deal depends on the honesty of the players. If Estrin was lying, either about when he received Morgado's move 29 or about move 32, then he should have lost on time, and the certificates produced by the Argentinians showed that he was lying in **both** cases.

There was already reason to believe Estrin was dishonest. In the 7<sup>th</sup> World Championship Final (1972-75), which he won by half a point from Josef Boey of Belgium, Estrin's game against his compatriot M.M. Yudovich does not bear serious scrutiny.

At move 13, Estrin made a mistake and stood clearly worse. At move 20, Yudovich exceeded the time limit for the first time and on move 30, still holding some advantage, Yudovich lost on time; this free point helped to ensure a Soviet victory. At that time Yudovich was a senior figure in the USSR chess establishment and co-author with grandmaster Kotov of the propaganda book 'The Soviet School of Chess'.

In Estrin's defence in that case, if an opponent really wants to lose to you, it is hard to stop him — but the evidence of collusion is strong. Most likely, the two Russians had agreed to play slowly in order to see how the event shaped up and which of them would be in a better position to win the tournament. Then they arranged the result accordingly.

There is not room in a book like this to present all the evidence that Morgado later published in his magazine. It is impossible to prove anything conclusively because many of the leading protagonists are dead — not only Estrin himself, but also tournament director Karl-Heinz Boese (West Germany) and appeal judge Dr Vandorffy (Hungary). It must be remembered that this was the time of the Cold War and Dr Vandorffy was living in the Soviet bloc.

ICCF showed — if not political bias — then certainly an excessive reluctance to enforce its own rules in the face of several pieces of evidence that indicated a Soviet player was cheating in the world championship, and not for the first time. Ultimately, they let the matter rest for over a year before announcing their decision in favour of Estrin.

The principal factor, judging from a comment made to me by a senior ICCF official of the time, is that they wanted the world championship to be won "at the board" and not on a technicality, which might have happened in the "worst case" that Morgado was awarded a win and Dr Palciauskas had lost his critical game to Sanakoev. If Morgado had not been in contention, maybe Estrin probably would have been forfeited. As it turned out, Palciauskas saved the crucial game and won the championship by a whole point. Had Morgado been awarded the win that was his right, the top placings in the tournament would not, as it happens, have been altered.

# Game 33

**White: Julio Alberto Muhana (Argentina)**

**Black: Juan Sebastian Morgado (Argentina)**

10<sup>th</sup> CC World Championship Final, 1978

*Bird's Opening (A02)*

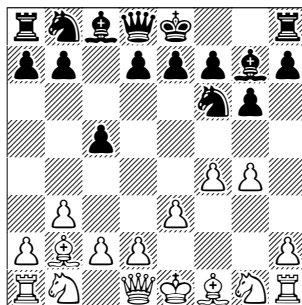
**The Players:** Julio Muhana, who retired from play after the world championship, received the ICCF international master title in 1984, but probably should have received it much earlier when he won the Latin-American (CADAP) zonal tournament to qualify for the final. GM Morgado, who was runner-up to him in that event, has already been introduced in connection with Game 32.

**About this game:** After the controversial Game 32, it is best to see a game showing the positive side of Morgado's play. I saw this game for the first time when I was editing the official book of the first ten CC World Championships. I was considerably surprised by the fierce battle between the Argentinian rivals.

Could one really play in this "coffee-house" style in a world final? The notes are based on analysis supplied by Morgado at that time and when I interviewed him in 1996.

**1 f4 ♘f6 2 e3 g6 3 b3 c5 4 ♙b2 ♙g7 5 g4!? (D)**

*B*



Muhana also played Bird's Opening with an early b3 and g4 against English grandmaster Keith Richardson in the same event, winning eventually, although he got a poor opening. Morgado considers that the idea is quite interesting but questionable because of the loss of time and weakening of the kingside.

**5... ♘c6 6 ♙g2 d5 7 g5 ♘h5 8 ♘c3**

White will later regret that he did not take the opportunity to exchange ♙s on g7. However, he is attacking the black d-pawn and the h5-♘ seems offside. If Black proceeds quietly,

Muhana's ideas could work. Instead Black seizes the initiative.

**8...♔f5!**

"This game was played with the inspiration of Tal, about pawns and attacking the ♔," commented Morgado.

**9 ♖c1**

The first point is that Black wins material in the line 9 ♔xd5 ♖b4 10 ♔xb7 ♖xc2+ 11 ♖f1 ♖xa1. White cannot hope for compensation with his ♔ in the open air.

**9...d4 10 ♖a4**

White loses a pawn in the variation 10 ♖d5 dxe3 11 ♔xg7 exd2+ 12 ♖xd2 ♖xg7. Also 10 exd4 cxd4 and 10 ♖ce2? d3 and 10 ♖e4 ♖a5 11 ♖g3 dxe3! are awkward for him. Exchanging on c6 would weaken Black's pawns but the weakening effect on White's kingside would be more severe. So Muhana probably found the best move.

**10...0-0!**

Morgado rejected 10...♖a5 because of 11 c3! and decided to get his ♔ into safety before opening the game.

**11 ♖e2**

Morgado analysed many complex variations here, favourable to Black. For example:

a) 11 ♖xc5 dxe3! 12 dxe3?? ♖a5+.

b) 11 ♖f3 e5 12 fxe5 (If 12 ♖xc5 dxe3 or 12 exd4 ♖xf4 or 12 ♔a3 exf4 13 ♔xc5 ♖e8) 12...♖xe5 13 ♖xe5 ♔e5 14 ♔xb7 ♖xg5.

c) 11 ♔xc6 bxc6 12 ♖f3 (If 12 ♖xc5 dxe3 or 12 ♖f3 ♔g4) 12...dxe3 13 dxe3 ♔xb2 14 ♖xb2 ♖a5+.

Other possibilities include 11 ♖e2 e5, 11 exd4 cxd4, 11 ♖f3 e5 and 11 ♖f3 c4!.

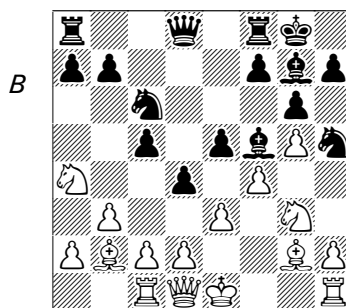
**11...e5**

The alternative was 11...♔g4 but after 12 ♖f1 (♔ ♔f3) the game is not so clear says Morgado.

**12 ♖g3 (D)**

Simple play by 12 0-0 exf4 13 exf4 leaves White at a disadvantage. His b2-♔ is shut out of the game, and his offside ♖ on a4 has more problems (once Black defends c5) than the black ♖ on h5, which is attacking f4.

Therefore, Muhana decides to intensify the complications. If Black now exchanges on g3, White's centre would be bolstered and he might be able to make use of the h-file later.



**12...exf4!!**

This complicated piece sacrifice gives Black a strong attack.

**13 ♖xf5 ♖xg5 14 ♔xc6 gxf5!**

The ♖ is more important than the ♔.

**15 ♔xb7?!**

This was an important moment as

White misses his best chance to make a fight of it by 15  $\text{♙f3}$ . Then Morgado intended 15... $\text{fxe3}$ ; although 15... $\text{dxe3}$  also seems playable, he wanted to keep his king's  $\text{♙}$ .

After 15... $\text{fxe3}$ , White dare not take a second piece by 16  $\text{♙xh5}$ ? because Black replies 16... $\text{♖h4+}$  17  $\text{♚e2}$  and now 17... $\text{d3+!}$  18  $\text{♚xe3}$   $\text{♖fe8+}$  is even stronger than the line in Morgado's note, 17... $\text{♖xh5+}$  18  $\text{♚d3 c4+}$ .

However, it seems to me that 16  $\text{♚f1}$  would be less suicidal. Black still has to prove a win, e.g. Black has three pawns and good play after 16... $\text{exd2}$  17  $\text{♖g1}$   $\text{♗f4}$  18  $\text{♖g2}$   $\text{♜f6}$  19  $\text{♖xd2}$   $\text{♜g4}$  20  $\text{♚g1}$  but his advantage is not as clear as in the game. White's  $\text{♚}$  has reached relative safety and he can play.

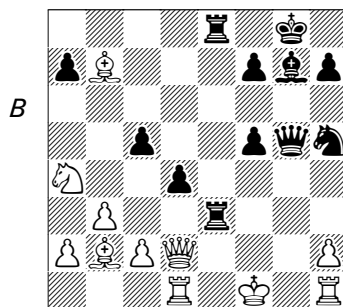
**15...♖ae8**

This was the position Black had aimed for. He now has every piece active on open lines and it would be surprising if White could survive.

**16 ♗f3 fxe3 17 ♚f1**

17  $\text{♚d1 exd2}$  18  $\text{♖a1 ♖e3}$  is very bad for White, whose  $\text{♖}$ s are not contributing to the war effort.

**17...exd2 18 ♖d1 ♖e3 19 ♗f2 ♖fe8 20 ♗xd2 (D)**



**20...♖8e4!**

Black is playing for mate.

Also 20... $\text{♗g4}$ , with the double threat ... $\text{♖f3+}$  and ... $\text{♖e2}$ , would have won. Morgado then gave the variation 21  $\text{♖g1}$   $\text{♖f3+}$  22  $\text{♙xf3}$   $\text{♗xf3+}$  23  $\text{♗f2}$   $\text{♗xd1+}$  24  $\text{♚g2}$   $\text{♗e2}$ .

**21 ♙xe4 fxe4 22 ♗f2 ♗g4**

This is stronger than the immediate ... $\text{♖f3}$ .

**23 ♖d2 ♖f3 24 ♖g1 ♗h3+ 25 ♚e1 ♖xf2 26 ♖xf2 e3 27 ♖fg2 ♚f8 28 ♖e2**

After 28  $\text{♜xc5}$   $\text{♜f4!}$  29  $\text{♖xg7}$   $\text{♗xh2}$  30  $\text{♜e6+!}$   $\text{♚e7!}$ , mate is unavoidable.

**28...♜f4 29 ♖g3 ♗h4 0-1**

This was a highly original game — with White's unorthodox opening matched by Black's daring attack.



# Game 34

**White: Igor Aleksandrovich Kopylov (USSR)**

**Black: Sergey Ivanovich Korolëv (USSR)**

Dobrovolsky Memorial, 1981-83

*Sicilian Defence, Nimzowitsch Variation (B29)*

**The Players:** Both these ICCF grandmasters are often confused with other Russian players having similar names. Igor Kopylov, who won the 17<sup>th</sup> USSR CC Championship (1986-88), was a finalist in the 13<sup>th</sup> World Championship and again in the 16<sup>th</sup> Final, which is still in progress. His namesake, CC-IM Nikolai G. Kopylov died a few years ago; ‘ECO’ incorrectly attributed this game to N.Kopylov.

S.Korolëv (approximate pronunciation “Korolyoff”) has also played in many important events and is in the 17<sup>th</sup> World Championship Final, which began in March 2002. He gets confused with CC-IM A.V. Korolëv and with CC-GM A.P. Korelov.

**About this game:** This is one of the best-known of all modern CC games, but the finish makes it too special to omit. For example, it was one of only three CC games to be included by Burgess, Emms and Nunn in their ‘The Mammoth Book of the World’s Greatest Chess Games’, though they wrongly stated that it was played in a USSR Championship.

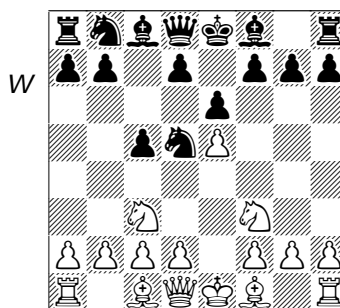
In fact, this was the decisive game in another Soviet event, the Dobrovolsky Memorial. Soviet

cosmonaut-pilot Georgi Dobrovolsky (1928–1971) was commander of the fateful Soyuz 11 mission. Along with cosmonauts Volkov and Patsaev, he perished when a valve on their spacecraft malfunctioned on re-entry.

**1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 ♜f6**

This is the provocative and rare Nimzowitsch Variation.

**3 e5 ♜d5 4 ♜c3 e6 (D)**



**5 ♜e4!?**

Kopylov decides to bypass the critical complications which arise from 5 ♜xd5 exd5 6 d4, when Black usually sacrifices a pawn by 6...♜c6 (6...d6!? 7 ♙b5+) 7 dxc5 ♙xc5 8 ♙xd5 ♙b6 (8...d6!? 9 exd6 ♙b6 is probably the last hope for the

Nimzowitsch variation) in order to detain the white ♖ in the centre after 9 ♙c4 ♙xf2+ 10 ♖e2 0-0 11 ♜f1 ♙c5 12 ♜g5. White probably has some advantage because of the weakness at f7, but to prove it you have to analyse very accurately and Kopylov may have been afraid his opponent would know an improvement.

The main line goes 12...♜d4+ 13 ♖d1 ♜e6 when the critical continuation 14 ♜e4 d6 15 exd6 ♜d8 occurred in D.Bryson-Dr F.Baumbach on first board in the friendly match ICCF v Perthshire played during the 1994 ICCF Congress in Scotland.

Bryson-Baumbach continued 16 ♖f5!? (16 ♙d3 ♙xd6 17 ♖h5 is the line normally recommended in theory books.) 16...♙xd6 17 ♜xd6 ♖xd6+ 18 ♙d3 ♜f8 19 ♖xf7+ ♖h8 20 ♖h5 (△ ♜xf8+; the old move was ♖f4.) 20...g6 21 ♖h6! ♙f5 (21...♙g4+ 22 ♖e1 ♖d4 23 ♖e3!) 22 ♙d2! ♜d7 (22...♙g4+ 23 ♖c1 ♖g8 24 ♙c3 ♜d7 25 ♖h4±) 23 ♙xf5 gxf5 24 ♖xd6 ♜xd6 25 ♜xf5 ♜ad8 26 ♜f2 ♜e6 27 ♖e1 ♜c5 28 ♙f4 ♜e6+ 29 ♜e2 ♜de8 30 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 and now White avoided the traps 31 ♙e3?? ♜d4! and 31 ♙e5+?? ♜g7, Instead Bryson played 31 ♙g3 and Black resigned.

After this digression, we return to Kopylov-Korolëv.

### 5...♜c6

5...f5!? is an interesting idea which was successful in Karker-Hamarat, 15<sup>th</sup> CC World Ch sf2 1984-90.

### 6 c4 ♜db4!?

6...♜b6 is reckoned to be critical

here, e.g. 'NCO' cites 7 d4!? cxd4 8 c5 ♜d5 9 ♙g5∞ Smirin-Bruk, Israel Cht 1996; 6...♜f4 is also possible.

### 7 a3 ♖a5

This move is criticised by Kopylov in 'Informator 36' but despite the result of the present game Korolëv did not abandon his variation.

If 7...♜a6 8 d4± — Kopylov.

### 8 ♖b3

Not 8 ♜b1 ♜a2! and 8 ♙e2 ♜d4 9 0-0 ♜xf3+ 10 ♙xf3 ♜c6! 11 b4!? ♖c7 12 bxc5 ♖xe5 13 ♜b1 ♜d4 14 ♙b2 ♙xc5 turned out OK for Black in A.O'Duill-Korolëv, CCOL 11 prelims 1987-92.

Kopylov said that 8 ♜c3 was better, e.g. 8...d5 9 exd6 ♙xd6 when:

a) 10 d3 ♜e5 11 ♜g5! ♙e7 12 f4! ♜ec6 13 ♙e3 ♜d4! 14 ♙xd4 cxd4 15 axb4 ♖xb4 16 ♜a4 ♖xb2 17 ♜e2 ♙d7∞ led to a draw in 51 moves in D.Barash-Korolëv, 17<sup>th</sup> USSR CC Ch 1986-88.

b) 10 ♜b5 ♙b8 11 b3 ♜d4 12 ♜bxd4 cxd4 13 ♙b2 ♜c6 14 b4 ♖f5 15 b5 ♜e5 16 ♙xd4 0-0 17 ♙xe5 ♙xe5 18 d4 with initiative to White; I am not sure if this is Kopylov's analysis or a later game he played.

### 8...d5 9 exd6 e5

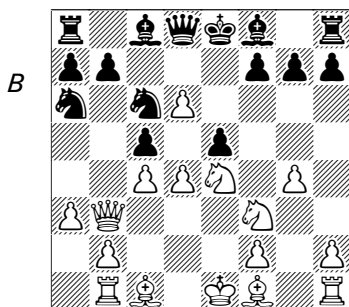
Black should play 9...f5 10 ♜xc5 ♖xc5 11 axb4 ♖xb4 with at best a slight advantage to White said Kopylov. Amazing complications now follow as both players soon forsake the right to castle.

### 10 ♜b1 ♜a6 11 g4?!

Later Kopylov was a bit doubtful about the correctness of his play but no clear refutation has been

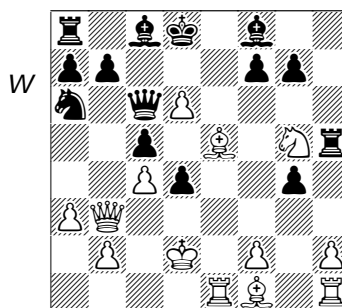
demonstrated yet. White's idea is to maintain the d6-pawn by preventing the move ...f5. If 11...♙xg4? then 12 ♖xb7 is awkward to meet.

11...♖d8 12 d4 (D)



of thing Black wants is 15 g5? h4! 16 ♗xh4 ♖xh4 17 ♙xh4 ♖g4! or 15 gxh5? f5 16 ♙h3 ♖xh5.

15...hxg4 16 ♖e1 ♙d8 17 ♗e5 ♗xe5 18 ♙xe5 ♖c6 19 ♗g5! ♖h5! (D)



12...exd4?!

If 12...cxd4 13 c5 (Kopylov) 13... ♗xc5 14 ♗xc5 ♖a5+ 15 ♙d2 ♖xc5 16 ♗g5 ♖xd6 17 ♖xf7+ (17 ♗xf7? ♖g6 forking the ♗ and the b1-♖) 17...♙d8 18 ♖c4 ♙e8 White can choose between a draw by repetition or 19 ♙g2 with good compensation for the exchange — Nunn.

12...♙xd6 is probably the critical line: 13 d5 ♗d4 14 ♗xd4 exd4 15 ♖b5+ ♙f8 is unclear according to Nunn. Kopylov intended to continue 16 h3 ♖e7 17 ♙g2 f5 18 ♙g5!.

13 ♙f4 ♖d7 14 ♙g3 h5!

Black wants to get another piece into the fight and with his queenside all gummed up, the king's ♖ is the most likely candidate! If 14...♖xg4 15 ♗fg5 ♙ 16 ♙h3.

15 ♙d2!

White also wants to activate a ♖, so he vacates the e1-square. The sort

This ingenious counterplay is a natural sequel to Black's 14<sup>th</sup>. Not 19...♖xh1 20 ♗xf7+ ♙d7 (20...♙e8 21 ♗xh8) when White probably has several winning lines. 21 ♖b5+ ♖c6 22 ♗xh8 (Kopylov) is less conclusive than 21 ♗xh8 ♙xd6 (if 21...♖f3 22 ♖b5+ with a tempo up on Kopylov's line) 22 ♙xd6 ♙xd6 23 ♖g3+ (Nunn). 21 ♙e2! is also strong.

20 ♙xg7!

20 ♗xf7+? ♙e8! traps the ♗.

20...♙xd6!

The only reasonable alternative is 20...♙d7 (covering b5) but after 21 ♙xf8 ♖xh1 22 ♙d3 ♖g2 White has 23 ♖e2! ♙f3 or ♙e4.

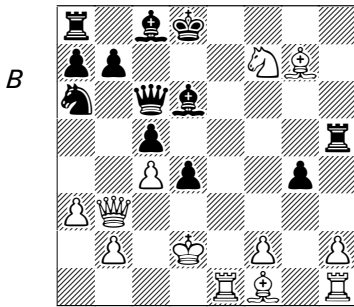
Others look hopeless:

a) 20...♙xg7 21 ♗xf7+ ♙d7 22 ♖e7#.

b) 20...♖xh1 21 ♗xf7+ ♙d7 22 ♖b5+ ♖c6 23 ♙xf8 forces mate.

c) 20...♖xg5 21 ♔xf8 ♖xh1 22 ♕e7+ wins — Kopylov.

d) 20...♕e6 21 ♕xf8 ♖xh1 22 f3 ♖xh2+ (22...♗c8 23 ♖b5) 23 ♖d1 b6 24 ♖b5 ♗b8 25 ♗xe6+ fxe6 26 ♖xe6 ♗d7 27 ♖c6+- — Nunn.  
21 ♗xf7+ (D)



### 21...♖c7?

This fatal error is excusable as it leads to the beautiful finish. 21...♖d7! is counter-intuitive (it blocks the c8-♕), yet was necessary to avoid the ♖ check at move 25. After 22 ♗xd6:

a) Not 22...♖xh1? when I think 23 ♗e8! is much stronger than 23 ♗e4 ♖xh2 24 ♗f6+ ♖c7 25 ♗xh5 ♖xh5 26 ♕e5+ ♖d7 27 ♖b5+ ♖d8 28 ♕xd4± as given by Nunn. For now 23...♖xh2? allows mate in 2 by 24 ♖b5+ ♖d8 25 ♕f6#.

b) 22...♖xd6! 23 ♖g3 (The game continuation does not work because the black ♖ is on a light square.) 23...♖xg3 24 fxg3 ♖d6 25 ♕g2 ♖b8 and, while White retains some advantage through his ♕ pair, it will probably not be enough to win with best play, says Nunn.

The rest of the game is a spectacular exhibition of attacking calculation.

22 ♗xd6 ♖xd6 23 ♕g2 ♖g5 24 ♕h8 ♖h6 25 ♖g3+ ♖b6

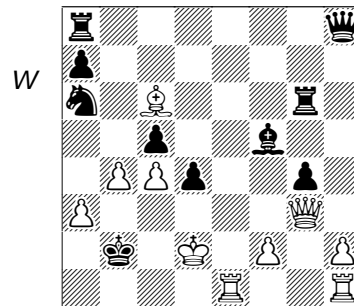
If 25...♖d8 26 ♖d1 ♖xh8 27 ♖d6+ ♕d7 28 ♖e7+ or 25...♖d7 26 ♖f4 ♖g6 27 ♖xh6 ♖xh6 28 ♕e5 — Kopylov.

26 ♖d1 ♖xh8 27 ♖d6+ ♖a5 28 ♖d2!

Threatening 29 b4+ ♖a4 30 ♕c6+! bxc6 31 ♖xc6+ ♖b3 32 ♖b1+ and mates.

28...♕f5 29 ♕xb7 ♖g6 30 b4+ ♖a4 31 ♕c6+ ♖b3 32 ♖g3+ ♖b2 (D)

Or 32...d3 33 ♖b1+ ♖a2 34 ♖a1+ ♖b3 35 ♖hb1+ ♖xc4 36 ♖f4+ ♖d4 37 ♖c1+ ♖b3 38 ♖xd4 cxd4 39 ♕b5 with unavoidable mate — Kopylov.



White now weaves a problem-like mating net.

33 ♖b1+! ♕xb1 34 ♖xb1+ ♖xb1 35 ♖b3+ ♖a1 36 ♖c1! 1–0

Not 36 ♖c2?? d3+ and the black ♖ defends. After 36 ♖c1! it is all over, for if 36...♖h6+ 37 ♖c2 d3+ 38 ♖xd3 and Black has only spite checks left.

# Game 35

**White: Hagen Tiemann (Germany)**

**Black: Abram Iosifovich Khasin (Russia)**

Finjub-20, 1981-84

*French Defence, Exchange Variation (C01)*

**The Players:** Hagen Tiemann, from eastern Germany, is a Senior International Master who first got his IM title in 1967. A dangerous tactician, he likes to experiment with gambits in thematic tournaments.

A veteran of the old Soviet school, Abram Khasin (born in the Ukraine in 1923) is a FIDE IM and ICCF GM (since 1972). After being seriously wounded at the battle of Stalingrad, Khasin worked as a chess coach to many leading players. He won several GM-level CC tournaments.

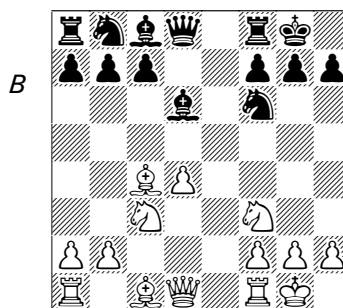
**About this game:** This game demonstrates the class difference between a talented amateur IM and a professional GM. First Khasin defuses a potentially explosive opening variation and then his refined endgame technique brings home the point from a position where a lesser player might have settled for a draw. My notes are based on analysis by Khasin in the Swedish magazine 'SSKK Bulletinen' 4/1984.

**1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 exd5 4 ♘f3 ♙d6 5 c4**

The Exchange Variation of the French Defence used to have a very drawish reputation, because many piece exchanges usually take place

and the pawn structure often remains symmetrical. However, that is not true after White's plan in this game, which involves accepting an isolated d-pawn in exchange for a lead in development and extra space, which can create attacking chances.

**5...♞f6 6 ♞c3 dxc4 7 ♙xc4 0-0 8 0-0 (D)**



The 'Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings' ('ECO') classifies this as a Queen's Gambit Accepted (D20) because the same position can arise via 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 (a deceptively simple move) 3...e5 4 ♙xc4 exd4 5 exd4 ♙d6 6 ♞f3 ♞f6 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♞c3. However, the diagram position more often arises via the French, as in

the QGA Black usually prefers to play ...♙b4+. Game 10 reached a similar position (with B♙e7 and W♘e2) via a completely different move order.

**8...♘c6!?**

In this line the isolated pawn will soon be dissolved after exchanges.

8...♙g4 followed by ...♘bd7 is often played, but White has good chances after 9 h3 ♙h5 10 g4 ♙g6 11 ♘e5.

**9 ♙g5**

White mostly prefers 9 h3 to prevent the pin ...♙g4, when Black replies in kind with 9...h6. This ancient line has been seen recently in high-level games, notably those of GM Morozevich.

**9...h6**

Black puts the question to the ♙. If 9...♙g4 10 ♘d5 ♙e7 11 ♘xe7+ White has achieved a gain with no pain, as in Marshall-Janowski, New York 1924. Surprisingly, Black repeated this in Lputian-Romanishin, Manila OL 1992. White won both games.

**10 ♙h4 ♙g4 11 ♙d5**

11 d5 ♘e5 12 ♙e2 ♘g6 breaks the pin on the ♘, while if 11 ♘d5? g5 wins a pawn. So 11 h3 seems best.

**11...♙xf3 12 ♙xf3**

Instead 12 ♙xf3 ♘xd4 13 ♙d3 c5 14 ♙fe1 (not 14 ♙xb7? ♙b8) might offer White some play for the pawn.

**12...♘xd4! 13 ♙xb7**

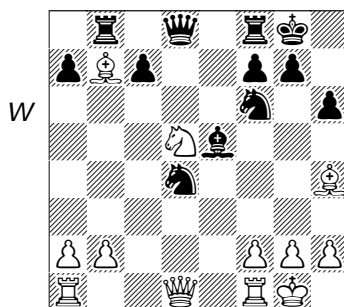
Of course not 13 ♙xd4?? ♙xh2+ 14 ♘xh2 ♙xd4-+.

**13...♙b8 14 ♘d5**

14 ♙d5 looks more natural, but Black obtains good play by 14...c5 ♣.

**14...♙e5! (D)**

Possibly White had underestimated



this move, which protects both ♘s.

**15 ♙e1**

An important point is that Black can meet 15 f4 ♙xb7 16 fxe5 by 16...♙xd5 17 exf6 ♙xb2! which seizes both a pawn and the initiative thanks to the threat of mate on g2.

**15...♙d6 16 f4 ♙xb7!**

16...♘xd5?! is not as good, since after 17 fxe5 ♙c5 18 ♙f2 ♙xb7 19 ♙xd4 Black at best gets equality; while 17...♙b6? 18 ♙xd5 ♘f3+ 19 ♘h1 ♘xh4 is a further mistake, as Black is in danger of losing after 20 e6!.

**17 ♙xe5**

White steers towards an endgame that he hopes to hold. 17 fxe5 ♙xd5 18 exf6 ♙xb2 once again leaves Black a pawn up with the more active game.

**17...♘xd5 18 ♙xd4 ♘xf4! 19 ♙xf4 ♙b4 20 ♙e7!?**

This is his idea. 20 ♙g3 ♙xh4! simply leaves Black a pawn ahead.

**20...♙xf4 21 ♙xd6 cxd6 22 ♙e7**

White offered a draw when playing this natural move, which takes the 7<sup>th</sup> rank with tempo. However, 22 ♙a5! was more precise, and Black's winning chances then really would be minimal, according to Khasin.

**22...a5!**

Despite the reduced material, Black runs no risk in playing for a win and is able to teach his opponent a lesson in technique. Since there would normally be no winning chances in a single ♖ ending with 3 pawns versus 2 on the kingside, Black's plan is to exchange the white queenside pawns for his d-pawn and f-pawn, creating a strong passed a-pawn. This would not have been possible against 22 ♖a5.

**23 ♖d1?!**

23 ♖a7 would have been more consistent with White's previous move, or else 23 ♖c1 seizing the open file.

**23...♖c8!**

Black's second ♖ takes an open line. 24 ♖xd6?? is impossible because of 24...♖c1+ and mates.

**24 g3**

White gives his ♔ a square with tempo. The drawback is that should a black ♖ later control the 7<sup>th</sup> rank (as does occur in the game), the ♔ will not be able to move off the back rank. Possibly 24 ♖e2 was better.

**24...♖a4!**

White still does not have time for 25 ♖xd6 as Black can choose between 25...♖xa2 and 25...♖c2.

**25 a3 ♖c2 26 ♖xd6**

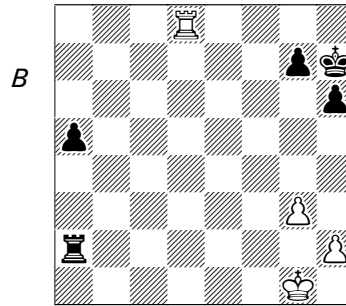
26 ♖f1 was also possible, when Black 26...f6 is probably best. White has some counterplay after 27 ♖f2 ♖xf2 28 ♔xf2 ♖c4 29 ♔e3 ♖c2 30 b4, but probably the kingside pawns win after 30...♖xh2.

**26...♖xb2 27 ♖d8+ ♔h7 28 ♖xf7 ♖xa3 29 ♖f2!**

White correctly goes for the single

♖ endgame because he loses quickly in the line 29 ♖dd7? ♖a1+ 30 ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 31 ♔xf1 ♖xh2.

**29...♖xf2 30 ♔xf2 ♖a2+ 31 ♔g1 (D)**



The key point in this ending is the trapped white ♔. The usual defence would be for White to capture the kingside pawns while the black ♔ is away supporting the passed a-pawn; to sacrifice the ♖ for the a-pawn (at the last possible moment); and rush his own kingside pawns forward (supported by the ♔) to win the ♖ back and draw.

Unfortunately here, the white ♔ cannot advance off the back rank and has nowhere to hide. This means that once the a-pawn reaches a3 the white ♖ must stay in attendance, otherwise Black would win by ...♖b2, ...a2 and ...♖b1+.

**31...♔g6! 32 ♖d5!**

If White uses his ♖ correctly, Black will not be able to advance his pawn beyond a3 without the assistance of the ♔ because the black ♖ is on the "wrong" side of the passed pawn.

**32...♔f6 33 ♖b5 a4 34 h3 a3**

Black threatens 35...♖b2 followed by ...a2, ...♖b1+ and ...a1♗.

35 ♖b3!

White will hold the third rank for as long as possible. 35 ♖a5 is met by 35...♙e6 marching the ♙ to b6 and then down the b-file. White never has time to take the g-pawn.

35...♙e5 36 ♙f1 ♙d4 37 ♙g1

The defending ♙ can only wait for fear of being caught in midstream: 37 ♙e1? ♖a1+ 38 ♙f2 (38 ♙d2) 38...a2 39 ♖a3 ♖h1 40 ♖xa2 ♖h2+ wins.

37...♙c4 38 ♖e3 g5! 39 ♙f1

The ♙ must move as after 39 ♖f3 ♙b4 White has no check on the 4<sup>th</sup> rank.

39...♙b4

This is the start of a triangulation manoeuvre, typical of such endgames where “losing a move” and “gaining a move” can be equivalent.

40 ♖e4+ ♙c3 41 ♖e3+ ♙c4 42 ♙g1

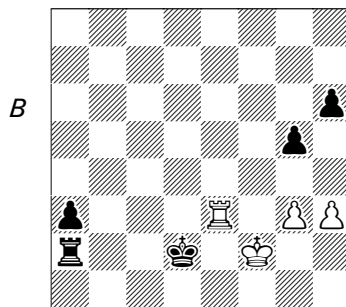
This is what Black was waiting for, but there is nothing better. The position of ♖ can only be disimproved, while if 42 g4 the black ♙ goes round again: 42...♙b4 43 ♖e4+ ♙c3 44 ♖e3+ ♙c4, and now White has to move the ♙.

42...♙b4 43 ♖e4+ ♙c3 44 ♖e3+ ♙d2!

This was unplayable before the white ♙ moved to g1, because of the reply ♖e2+. Now the end is in sight. The final phase involves bringing the ♙ to support the passed pawn so that the ♖ can move out of its way.

45 ♙f2 (D)

White threatens a skewer. After 45 ♖f3 Black wins by 45...♖a1+! 46 ♙g2 ♙c2 47 ♖f2+ ♙b3 48 ♖f3+ ♙b4.



45...♖a1 46 ♖e6

There is nothing better:

a) 46 ♖b3 ♙c2 47 ♖e3 a2 48 ♖e2+ (48 ♖a3 ♙b2) 48...♙d3! 49 ♖e3+ ♙d4 50 ♖a3 ♖h1! 51 ♖xa2 ♖h2+ wins the ♖.

b) 46 ♖f3 ♙c2! when White has no check and now: 47 ♖f6 (47 ♙g2 a2 48 ♖f2+ ♙b3 49 ♖f3+ ♙b4 50 ♖f2 ♖g1+! 51 ♙xg1 a1♙+) 47...a2 (Δ...♖f1+) 48 ♖a6 ♙b3 49 ♖b6+ ♙c4 50 ♖a6 ♖h1.

c) 46 ♖e2+ ♙c3 47 ♖e3+ ♙d4 as in line a).

46...♖b1 47 ♖e2+

If 47 ♖a6 ♖b3 and the black ♙ marches to b2 and promotes the pawn.

47...♙c3 48 ♙f3 ♙b3 49 ♖e3+ ♙a4

Now a check on b4 can be met by interposing the ♖.

50 ♖e6 a2 0–1

White gives up as he has only a few spite checks before Black promotes the pawn: 51 ♖a6+ ♙b3 52 ♖b6+ ♙c4 53 ♖c6+ ♙b5.

This was an instructive ending in which GM Khasin was able to exploit a couple of small inaccuracies.



# Game 36

**White: Eric Arnlind (Sweden)**

**Black: Keith Richardson (England)**

A.E. Axelson Memorial, 1984-86

*Modern Defence (B06)*

**The Players:** Eric Arnlind was introduced in Game 31.

CC-GM Keith Richardson (born 1942) is a typical English amateur, combining chess with family life and a career as a bank manager. He has the best record of any British player in CC world championships: two third places, in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Finals. He has played seldom in recent years.

**About this game:** The Axelson Memorial was an all-GM tournament organised by the Swedish CC federation and the strongest postal event ever held until the mid-1990s.

**1 e4 g6 2 d4 ♖g7 3 ♜c3 d6 4 ♖g5**

This is a slightly unusual move in the Modern Defence but Richardson had played it himself not long before — with White.

**4...♞c6**

Black could transpose to a Pirc Defence by 4...♞f6 but that would lose the point of his move order. Richardson-A.Backlund, NBC-15 Volmac-A 1982, went instead 4...h6 5 ♖e3 ♞f6 6 f3 c6 7 ♞d2 ♞a5 8 ♞ge2 b5 9 ♞c1 ♞bd7 10 ♖e2 ♞c7 11 ♞d3 ♖b7 12 0-0 a6 13 a4 ♞b6 14 b3 ♞fd7 15 a5 ♞c8 16 b4 0-0 17 ♞ad1 e6 18 f4 f5 19 e5

d5 20 g4 and, having quenched any queenside counterplay and blocked the centre, White went on to win on the kingside (1-0, 44). Black's play in the opening was miserably passive.

b) 4...c6 5 ♞d2 b5 is a main line but it had not been doing well at the time. After 6 ♞f3 (6 f4!?) 6...♞d7 7 ♖d3 'The Ultimate Pirc' by Nunn and McNab recommends 7...h6, e.g. 8 ♖e3 ♞gf6 9 h3 e5 10 0-0 a6 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 ♞ad1 ♞e7 13 a4 h5 14 axb5 axb5 15 ♞a1 ♞xa1 16 ♞xa1 0-0= Atanasov-Todorčević, Varna 1977.

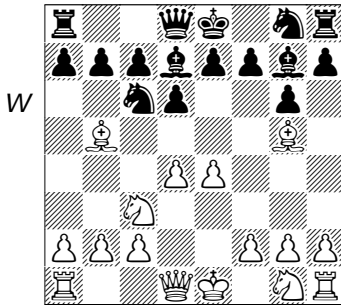
**5 ♖b5**

White meets the counter-attack on his d-pawn with a pin. An original situation has developed already. Other possible moves are 5 d5 and 5 ♞ge2.

**5...♖d7 (D)**

Since Black ends up recapturing with the b-pawn when White takes the ♞, he should have preferred a different move here.

5...a6 accepts the doubled pawn but plans to use the b-file and ♖ pair later: 6 ♖xc6+ bxc6 7 ♞ge2 ♞b8 8 b3 ♞f6 9 0-0 and now 9...♖b7 (Winants-Speelman, Brussels 1988) or 9...h6!? (Nunn).



### 6 ♞f3

White does not want to exchange until Black spends a tempo on ...a6, so he must defend the d-pawn. 'The Ultimate Pirc' gives instead 6 ♞ge2 a6 7 ♙xc6 ♙xc6 8 ♚d2 ♞f6 9 f3 e5 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♞ad1 exd4 12 ♞xd4 ± Itkis-R.Gallego, Yerevan OL 1996.

### 6... ♞f6

The timing of this move is a little strange. Black might have played 6...a6 7 ♙xc6 ♙xc6 and if 8 ♚d2 ♞f6 counter-attacking e4 since, unlike the previous note, White cannot defend the e-pawn by f2-f3 and since he has not castled, he cannot defend it by ♞e1. For this reason, Arnlind would perhaps have played 8 0-0, when Black might reply 8...h6 or even 8...f6!?

### 7 0-0 a6 8 ♙xc6 bxc6?!

Black is trying to create a fluid, unbalanced situation but 8...♙xc6 would have been more consistent. White's next move highlights the fact that d7 is unavailable to the black ♞.

### 9 e5 ♞d5

There is little choice since 9...dxe5 is clearly undesirable from a structural

point of view, leaving Black with doubled isolated pawns. And his structure is even worse after 9...♞g4 10 h3 f6 11 ♙f4! fxe5 12 dxe5 0-0 (or 12...♞xe5 13 ♞xe5 dxe5 14 ♙g3 0-0 15 ♚e2) 13 ♚d2 ♞xe5 14 ♞xe5 dxe5 15 ♙h6 with a clear advantage to White despite his pawn minus; while if 10...♞h6 11 ♞e1! puts pressure on e7 as in the game, e.g. 11...0-0? 12 exd6+- or if 11...d5 12 ♚d2 (12 ♞a4!?) 12...♞f5? 13 g4 h6 14 gxf5 hxg5 15 e6.

### 10 ♞xd5 cxd5 11 ♞e1

This pinpoints a serious weakness in Black's position at e7, preventing castling (11...0-0? 12 exd6+-).

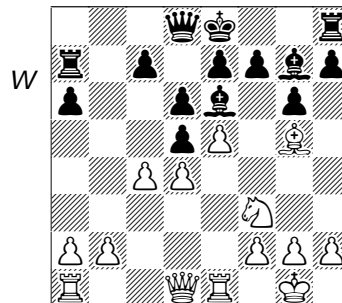
### 11... ♙e6

Black tries to mask the weakness and retain the ♙ pair. However, Arnlind indicates that 11...dxe5 12 ♞xe5 ♙xe5 13 ♞xe5 ♙e6 was the lesser evil, and maybe in this line 12...f6!? might be considered, e.g. 13 ♞xd7 ♚xd7 14 ♙f4 0-0 playing for ...e7-e5.

### 12 c4!

Very forceful play, again preventing castling, i.e. 12...0-0? 13 cxd5 ♙xd5 14 exd6+-.

### 12... ♞a7? (D)



The idea is that if White now tries 13 cxd5 ♟xd5 14 exd6, then 14... cxd6 leaves the ♖ defending e7, after which Black can castle, followed by undermining the white centre and exploiting his ♟ pair. The logic of Black's last few moves is that he was playing for a win and just did not see the danger, a failing for which he is now murderously punished.

Since 12...dxc4? 13 d5 ♟g4 14 exd6 also breaks through to e7, the move 12...h6 looks like Black's last chance. Then at least Black can get castled and fight on with some disadvantage; e.g. 13 ♟h4 g5 14 ♟g3 0-0 (or first 14...dxc4), or 13 ♟f6!? exf6 14 exf6 ♖xf6 (or 14...0-0) 15 cxd5 0-0.

**13 ♖a4+!**

This begins a combination that forces a win, and it is quite possible that Arnlind had worked out a win in all variations before playing 13 ♖a4+. Black has to move the ♔ since 13...♟d7 would block the ♖'s defence of e7, when Black loses a central pawn after 14 ♖a5.

**13...♔f8 14 cxd5 ♟xd5 15 ♖a5 ♖a8**

Another point of Black's ...♖a7 was to allow this move with a counter-attack against f3, which he perhaps hoped would give him time to extricate the h8-♖ by ...h6 and ...♔g8-h7. Unfortunately the Swedish GM totally refutes Black's concept.

**16 ♟xe7+!**

This is an instructive piece sacrifice against the black ♔, which is driven into the centre and subjected to a mating attack.

**16...♔xe7 17 exd6+ ♔xd6**

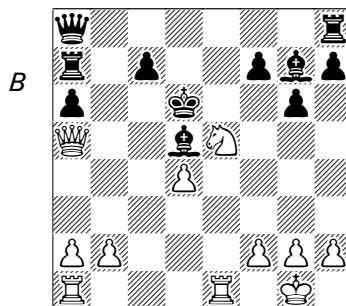
Not 17...♔f8 18 d7 ♟e6 19 ♖c5+ ♔g8 20 ♖xa7+- but 17...♔f6 is tricky:

a) 18 dxc7 "and wins" was given in Arnlind's notes, but is not best because 18...♟h6!, allowing the black ♔ to retreat to g7, is unclear.

b) 18 ♖d2 (preventing ...♟h6) would be met instead by 18...♟f8! and if 19 d7 ♟d6 20 ♖g5+ ♔g7 21 ♖e8 ♖xe8 22 dxe8 ♖ ♖xe8 23 ♖xd5 ♖b5 and Black is still in the game.

c) 18 d7! is the right way: e.g. 18...♟h6 (or 18...♖d8 19 ♖e8 ♖xe8 20 dxe8 ♖ ♖xe8 21 ♖xd5) 19 ♖e8 (or 19 ♖c5 ♔g7 20 ♖e8 ♖xe8 21 dxe8 ♖ ♖xe8 22 ♖xa7) 19...♖xe8 20 dxe8 ♖ ♖xe8 21 ♖xd5 and White is a pawn up with a dominant position, while if now 21...♖b5? 22 ♖d8+ ♔g7 23 ♖e1 ♖e8 and wins, e.g. 23...♖c6 24 ♖e8 ♖c1+ 25 ♔e1 ♟g5 26 ♖b8! ♟d2 27 ♖xa7 ♟xe1 28 ♖xa6+-.

**18 ♔e5 (D)**



**18...♟xe5**

18...c6 looks like a tougher defence at first but it also fails: 19 ♖c5+! ♔c7 20 ♔xc6! ♟xc6 (20...♖xc6?

21 ♖xa7+ 21 ♜e7+ ♘b8 22 ♖d6+ ♘c8 23 ♜xa7 ♖xa7 24 ♜c1 ♖d7 25 ♜xc6+ ♘d8 26 ♖b8+ ♘e7 27 ♖b4+ ♘e8 (27...♘d8 28 ♜d6) 28 ♖c5 △ ♜c8+ and wins.

**19 ♖c5+!**

This is the only winning move here too. 19 ♜xe5 would give Black time to get his ♖ to a more useful square by 19...♖c6.

**19...♘d7 20 ♜xe5 ♜xg2**

If 20...♘e6 21 d5 ♘f5 22 ♜ae1 ♘d8 23 ♜e7 as in the game.

**21 ♜ae1!**

This is another accurate attacking move; if 21 ♜e7+ ♘d8 22 ♖g5 then either 22...♘c8 23 ♖xg2 ♖xg2+ 24 ♘g2 f5 or 22...h6! 23 ♖f6 ♖f3! 24 ♖xh8+ ♘e7 25 ♜e1+ ♘d6 26 ♖e5+ (or 26 ♜e3 ♖d5) 26...♘c6 27 ♖c5+ ♘b7 28 ♜e3 ♖d1+ 29 ♘xg2 ♖g4+ 30 ♘f1 ♖d1+ 31 ♜e1 ♖a4 gives White unnecessary difficulties in the endgame.

**21...♘h3**

Black has the brief enjoyment of threatening mate. 21...♘d8 would be met by 22 d5, blocking the long diagonal and threatening ♘xg2 or ♖e3 (and ♜e8+), when 22...♘h3 (the only move) transposes to the game.

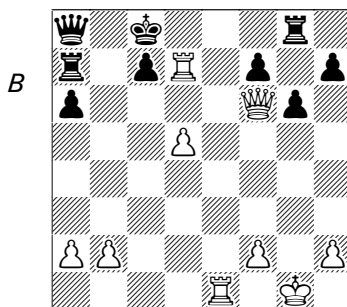
**22 d5 ♘d8**

If 22...♜d8 23 ♜e7+ ♘c8 24 ♜e8 then 25 ♜xd8+ ♘xd8 26 ♖f8+ ♘d7 27 ♜e7+ ♘d6 28 ♜e8+ etc.

**23 ♜e7 ♘d7 24 ♖d4 ♜g8**

If 24...♜f8 25 ♖g7+.

**25 ♖f6 ♘c8 26 ♜xd7! (D)**



**26...♘xd7 27 ♖xf7+ ♘d6**

27...♘c8 28 ♖xg8+ ♘b7 29 ♜e8 wins the black ♖.

**28 ♖e6+**

The Swedish GM has played very well but unfortunately this is not quite the most accurate finish: 28 ♖e7+! ♘xd5 29 b4! (△ 30 ♖c5# or 30 ♖e4+ ♘d6 31 ♖e6#) forces mate slightly quicker.

**28...♘c5 29 ♜c1+ 1-0**

Black resigned in view of mating lines such as 29...♘b5 (or 29...♘d4 30 b3! ♖e8 31 ♜c4+ ♘d3 32 ♖h3+ ♘d2 33 ♖c3+ ♘e2 34 ♜d4!) 30 a4+! ♘a5 (30...♘xa4 31 ♖e4+) 31 ♖e1+ ♘xa4 32 ♜a1+ ♘b5 33 ♜a5+ ♘b6 (33...♘c4 34 ♖c3#) 34 ♖b4# — Arnlind.

# Game 37

**White: Manfred Neumann (Germany)**

**Black: Grant R. Lambert (Australia)**

WT/M/GT/221, 1987-90

*Two Knights Defence (C55)*

**The Players:** Grant R. Lambert is an untitled Australian player with a lot of international experience; his current ICCF rating is 2397. Manfred Neumann, from eastern Germany, is a regular competitor in European and World master class postal tournaments; at the time he was rated 2220 but by early 2002 this rose to 2377.

**About this game:** This was voted the “Best Played Game — 1989” by the Correspondence Chess League of Australia. When ‘Fernschach’ magazine ran a readers’ competition in 1998, where games were published without notes or players’ identities — this game yet again came out top.

I am unconvinced by Lambert’s opening innovation (at move 12) but the decisive ♔ sacrifice is highly original and sound.

**1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♕c4 ♘f6 4 d4**

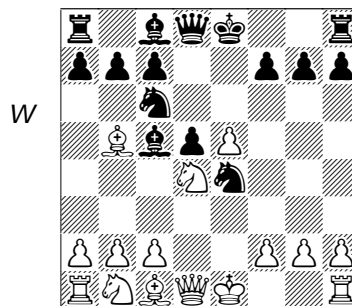
Instead of 4 ♘g5, as in Game 25, White opens the centre.

**4...exd4 5 e5**

After 5 0-0, Black can either choose 5...♘xe4 (see Game 55) or defend the Max Lange Attack by 5...♕c5 6 e5 d5 7 exf6 dxc4. Although the complications in either case hold

dangers for both sides, they have been very deeply explored which, in my opinion, is more to Black’s benefit in CC. 5 e5 has also been deeply analysed but earlier departures from theory are more likely to be possible than after 5 0-0.

**5...d5 6 ♕b5 ♘e4 7 ♘xd4 ♕c5 (D)**



This sharp continuation for Black has largely replaced the older line 7...♕d7. Black does not bother to defend his c-pawn, trusting in tactical deterrents to its capture. Of course 8 ♕xc6+?! bxc6 9 ♘xc6? is not a serious option because of 9...♕xf2+.

Great complications can arise if

White takes up the gauntlet by 8 ♖xc6 ♕xf2+! 9 ♖f1 ♖h4 when:

a) 10 ♖xd5 ♕c5! was analysed by Dr Herman Keidanz in the 'Wiener Schachzeitung' of 1904. A significant American postal game R.Clark-M.Morss, USCF 1992, continued 11 ♕e3! (improving on Keidanz's analysis and previous games) 11...♗g3+! 12 hxg3 ♖xh1+ 13 ♖f2 ♕xe3+ 14 ♖xe3 0-0 15 ♗e7+ ♖h8 and now, instead of 16 ♗xc8? ♖c1+ 17 ♖d2 ♖xb2, White should have played 16 ♖e4! ♖c1+! 17 ♖f3 ♖xb2 18 ♕d3 g6 19 ♖f4 ♗g8 20 ♖f6+ ♗g7 21 ♗xg6+! forcing a draw (Morss). 10...♕b6 is also fine for Black (most lines just transpose to 10...♕c5).

b) 10 ♗d4+ c6 11 ♗f3 ♗g3+ 12 ♖xf2 ♗e4+ 13 ♖e2 ♖f2+ 14 ♖d3 ♕f5 (Keidanz) is given as a winning line for Black in many books, but after 15 ♗d4 ♕g6 16 ♗f1! the most direct line 16...♗d2+ 17 ♖c3 ♖e3+ 18 ♕d3 ♗e4+ 19 ♖b3 ♗c5+ 20 ♖c3! ♗e4+ leads only to perpetual check (analysis done independently by Morss and by GM John Nunn), so the question is whether 16...♖xg2 17 ♖e3 cxb5 (suggested by GM John Emms) is viable as a winning try for Black.

### 8 ♕e3

During the 1980s, this ♕ move began to supersede the older 8 0-0 in practice.

### 8...♕d7 9 ♕xc6 bxc6

Black has the ♕ pair but his queenside pawns are fractured. Control of the c5-square is important in this variation as White would like to exchange dark-squared ♕s and leave

Black with a bad light-squared ♕. In practice, this plan is harder to carry out, if Black is aware of the dangers, than it is in the lines with 7...♕d7.

### 10 0-0

The alternative is 10 ♗d2 — first played by Yugoslav GM Bojan Kurajica in 1982; instead 10 f3?! ♖h4+ creates complications favourable to Black.

### 10...♖e7!

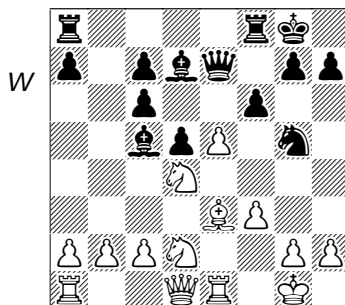
There is no need for automatic castling. White is forced to think about the defence of his e-pawn; another point is that 11 f3 can be answered by 11...♗d6.

### 11 ♗e1 0-0 12 f3 ♗g5

So far this is all a well-trodden route. Theory books overlook White's next, though it appears reasonable, preferring 13 ♖d2 or 13 f4!? (Sax-Smejkal, Vrbas 1977).

### 13 ♗d2 f6!? (D)

In Ljubojević-Averbakh, Palma de Mallorca 1972, Black played 13...♕b6 14 a4 c5 15 ♗e2 c4 (drawn in 26 moves), while Gligorić suggested 14...♗e6≡. Maybe White's space advantage roughly compensates for Black's two ♕s.



Lambert observes that “the pawn on e5 cramps Black’s game, so removing it is the first aim.” However, for tactical reasons, his move is not really as good as 13...♙b6.

**14 exf6?**

Lambert’s notes pass over this moment in silence, so unfortunately we do not know how he would have answered 14 ♘2b3, which is the usual move for White in the variation, putting the question to the dark-squared ♙. Black cannot play 14...fxe5? because the exchange is lost after 15 ♘xc5 ♖xc5 16 ♘e6, while if 14...♙b6 (the normal retreat) the advance 15 e6! lames Black’s position. If instead 14...♙xd4 15 ♙xd4 fxe5 White can either play 16 ♜xe5 with an edge, or accept Black’s speculative sacrifice by 16 ♙c5 ♘h3+ 17 gxh3 ♖g5+ 18 ♔h1. Other possibilities for Black are 14...♘e6 and 14...♙b4 but I do not see a fully satisfactory position for him.

**14...♖xf6 15 c3**

Lambert does say that 15 ♘2b3 would be more active, but it’s a move too late and Black’s game is already more than satisfactory.

**15...♞ae8**

Here Lambert thought Black stood better, having mobilised his troops more rapidly.

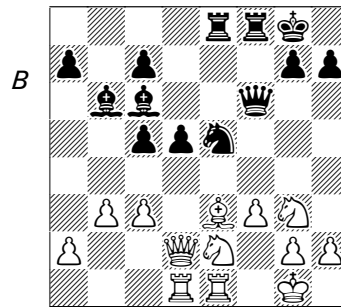
**16 ♘f1**

This is a very strange square for the ♘ and if this was why White did not play ♘2b3 earlier, it shows he did not understand the variation. Against 16 ♘2b3 Lambert intended 16...♙d6!?, with a battery against the white ♔.

**16...♙b6 17 ♖d2**

Lambert explains: “A standard move in this variation, interrogating the ♘ on g5. In this type of position Black usually retreats the ♘ to e6, to exchange the centralised white ♘ on d4. Analysis convinced me that 17...♘f7 was a much better plan. The black ♘ now comes to e5, from which square it is difficult to dislodge. By contrast, the white ♘ on d4 can easily be repulsed by a timely ...c5.”

**17...♘f7! 18 ♞ad1 ♘e5 19 b3 c5 20 ♘e2 ♙c6 21 ♘fg3 (D)**



The black pieces have all reached their best squares and a sacrifice is now needed to open up the white ♔’s position.

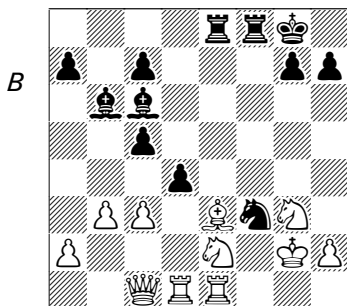
**21...♖xf3! 22 gxf3 ♘xf3+ 23 ♔g2 d4**

This genuine sacrifice of the black ♖ is clearly the strongest continuation but maybe it is not the only way to play for a win.

Lambert’s comment here, that 23...♘xd2? 24 ♙xd2 d4+ 25 ♔g1 leaves Black a piece for two pawns down in the ending, seems strange

since the piece can be regained by 25...d3 with a favourable position. White loses if he tries to save the ♘: 26 ♗f4 (not 26 ♗c1 c4+ with mate in 4) 26...c4+ 27 ♖f1 g5 and the piece is won back anyway.

24 ♖c1 (D)



Lambert wrote: “Reasoning that since his ♔ will suffer anyway, he may as well have a ♚ to show for it. The alternative is 24 ♖h3 (to avoid the discovered check) when 24...♗xd2 25 ♔xd2 ♖f2 now gives a strong attack. Here I was unable to calculate a forced win, but White’s position is unenviable. A possible continuation is 26 ♗f4 ♔d7+ 27 ♖h4 ♖xh2+ 28 ♖g5 ♖f8!, when the noose has tightened around the white ♔ on g5. The threats include ...h6+ followed by ...♖f6# or ...c6 followed by ...♔d8+.”

The computer program Fritz7 thinks 26 ♗f4 is a blunder and gives instead 26 ♗xd4 cxd4 27 ♖xe8+ ♔xe8 28 ♗h1 ♖e2 29 cxd4 ♔xd4

30 ♔f4 c5, but clearly Black stands to win with his extra pawn and superior pieces. Also note that 24 ♔g1 is no good; Black does not even take the ♚ because 24...♗g5+ 25 ♗e4 ♖xe4 forces mate.

24...♗xe1+!?

This is a sure sign that the game was played before the computer age in CC: Black does not play the forced mate!

Lambert wrote: “Tempting here is 24...♗g5+ instead, so as to answer 25 ♖g1 by 25...♗h3#. However, with the reply of 25 ♗e4, White prolongs the game by giving up a piece to make a flight square on g3 for his ♖.” However, 25 ♗e4 fails to 25...♖xe4! 26 ♗f4 (or 26 ♖g3 ♖f3+ 27 ♖g2 ♖g4+ 28 ♗g3 ♖f8+ 29 ♖g1 ♗h3#) 26...♖xf4+ 27 ♖g3 ♖f3+ 28 ♖g4 ♔d7+ 29 ♖xg5 h6+ 30 ♖h5 ♖h3+ 31 ♖g6 ♔e8#.

By technically imprecise play, Lambert actually managed a quicker mate, because his opponent did not play the most tedious defence at move 27.

25 ♖g1

The alternative 25 ♖h3 ♔d7+ 26 ♖h4 ♗g2+ 27 ♖h5 ♗xe3 leaves Black with a mating attack against the lonely white ♖.

25...♗f3+ 26 ♖f1 dxe3 27 c4

27 ♗g1 would have prolonged the game — albeit hopelessly.

27...♗xh2+ 28 ♖e1

28 ♖g1 ♖f2 with a mating attack.

28...♖f1+ 29 ♗xf1 ♗f3# 0–1



# Game 38

**White: Dr Jonathan Penrose (England)**

**Black: Richard Goldenberg (France)**

13<sup>th</sup> CC World Championship Final, 1989

*Scandinavian Defence (B01)*

**The Players:** Penrose (born 1933) is a grandmaster of both ICCF and FIDE (being awarded that title retrospectively). An academic psychologist by profession, he holds the record for winning the greatest number of British OTB championships (ten). He took up postal play in the mid-1970s, winning several master tournaments and becoming ICCF's top-rated player. Dr Penrose retired from CC soon after coming third in the 13<sup>th</sup> World Championship.

Goldenberg has been an ICCF IM since 1986.

**About this game:** Penrose, typically for his style of play with White, finds a direct and aggressive line which is still of theoretical relevance today. His original notes were greatly expanded in 'Chess Mail' 6/2000. Most of the variations below stem from him.

**1 e4 d5**

Goldenberg was a specialist in this defence — not as popular then as it later became.

**2 exd5 ♟f6 3 d4 ♟xd5 4 ♟f3 ♟g4 5 c4**

White can also play this at move

4 but wanted Black to show his hand first (4...g6 is a major alternative).

**5...♟b6 6 ♟e2 ♟c6 7 0-0 e6 8 ♟c3 ♟e7 9 d5! exd5 10 cxd5 ♟b4**

If 10...♟b8 White can choose between 11 ♟f4 and 11 ♟e5. If 10...♟xf3 11 ♟xf3 ♟e5 12 ♟e4 is somewhat better for White.

**11 ♟d4 ♟xf3 12 ♟xg7**

GM John Emms wrote in 'The Scandinavian' (1997) that: "This leads to fantastic complications, which seem to favour White."

The quieter alternative for White is 12 ♟xf3 when:

a) 12...♟c2? 13 ♟xg7 ♟f6 14 ♟g4 ♟xa1 15 ♟e1+ ♟e7 16 ♟g5 ♟c8 (16...♟g8 17 ♟xe7! ♟xg4 18 ♟c5+ ♟d7 19 ♟xg4+ and mates) 17 ♟e4! (Δ 18 ♟f6+ ♟f8 19 ♟h6#) 17...♟xg5 18 ♟f6+ ♟f8 19 ♟xg5 h6 20 ♟h7+ and ♟xd8+.

b) 12...0-0 13 ♟d1 ♟c4 14 ♟e1 ♟e8 15 a3 ♟a6 16 ♟e2 ♟d6 17 ♟c2 ♟f6 18 ♟e3± (Lau-Bücker, Bundesliga 1993-94) was discussed in Stefan Bücker's German history-and-theory magazine 'Kaissiber' (1/1996 page 13).

12...♙f6 13 ♘b5+ c6 14 ♖e1+ ♔d7  
15 dxc6+!

White's alternatives include:

a) 15 ♖g3 ♙xd5 16 ♖g4+ ♙e6  
17 ♖xb4 ♙xc3 18 ♖d1+ ♘d5 19  
bxc3 ♔c8 20 ♖c4 ♖e8 21 ♙a6  
(Kukk-Kularts, Estonia Email Ch  
1999) 21...♖b8 ∞ — Penrose.

b) 15 ♖xf7+ ♔c8 16 ♖e6+ ♘d7  
17 dxc6+ and now:

b1) 17...bxc6 18 ♙c4 and White has  
compensation thanks to the exposed  
position of Black's ♔ according to  
Karen Babachanov (Armenia) in  
'Kaissiber'. He gives the following  
continuation: 18...♙xc3 19 bxc3 ♙d5  
20 ♙xd5 ♘xd5 21 ♖xc6+ ♘c7 22  
♖d1 ♖b8 (22...♖e8? 23 ♙g5) 23 ♙g5  
♖e8 24 ♙f4 ♖d8 25 ♖d4 ♖b6 26 ♖c4  
(26 ♖a4! ♖a6 27 ♖c4 Bückler) 26...  
♖e8 27 ♖ad1 ♖be6 28 ♔f1 threatening  
to win material by ♙xc7.

b2) If 17...♙xc6 (Goldenberg) then:

b21) Bückler recommended 18 ♙f4  
(△ ♘e4-d6+) but Penrose suggests  
18...♖g8 ∞ in reply.

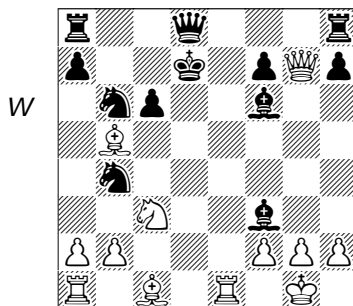
b22) 18 ♙xc6 ♘xc6 (18...bxc6?  
19 a3) and now the possible moves  
include:

b221) 19 ♘b5 (Babachanov)  
19...♖e7! (Penrose) 20 ♘d6+  
♔c7 21 ♙f4 ♖xe6 22 ♖xe6 ♖hf8  
(Bückler).

b222) 19 ♘d5 ∞/± — Penrose.

Black's moves were coming back  
almost by 'return post' so, Dr Penrose  
remembers, "I was looking for a line of  
play that might be unexpected for him,  
while **still** being reasonably good for  
White."

15...bxc6 (D)



16 ♖g3!

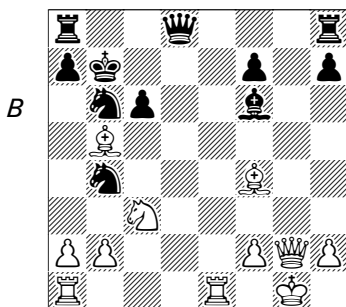
Babachanov criticized this move,  
but Penrose's analysis vindicates his  
choice.

He thought his opponent might  
have met the obvious 16 ♖xf7 in  
previous games. After 16...♔c8 17  
♖e6+ gives nothing on 17...♔b7  
(Babachanov), while if 17 ♙c4 ♘xc4  
18 ♖e6+ ♔b7 19 ♖xc4 a5 20 ♖f7+  
♔a6 21 ♖c4+ ♔b7 22 ♖f7+ ♔a6  
23 ♖c4+ ½-½ P.Kerkhof-J.De Wolf,  
Belgium Cht 1996/97. Or 17 gxf3  
♖g8+ 18 ♖xg8+ ♖xg8+ 19 ♔f1  
cxb5. Bückler suggests 17 ♙f1!?

16...♙xc3

a) Not 16...cxb5 17 ♖h3+! when  
if 17...♔c7 18 ♙f4+ ♔b7 19 ♖xf3+  
♔a6 (19...♔c8 20 ♖ac1!+-) 20 a4!  
with a very strong attack. Or 17...♔c6  
18 ♖xf3+ ♘4d5 (18...♔c7 19 ♖f4+  
△ ♖b4) 19 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 20 ♙h6  
♙xb2 21 ♖ad1 ♖g8 22 ♖e2 ♙c3 23  
♖e3! ♙b4 24 ♖e5! "seems to win"  
(Emms), and White has other tries too.

b) Babachanov's suggestion 16...  
♙xg2 is interesting and may be  
Black's best hope in this line. After 17  
♖g4+ ♔c7 18 ♙f4+ ♔b7 19 ♖xg2  
(D), Penrose's assessment is ±.



From the analysis diagram above:

b1) 19...♞d5 20 ♙xc6+ ♜xc6 21 ♜ad1 (Penrose) or 21 ♜ed1, leaving the other ♜ to go to c1; or else 21 ♙g3!? leaving all options open (the black ♙ isn't going anywhere!).

b2) 19...♙xc3 20 bxc3 ♞4d5 (the end of Babachanov's analysis) and now Penrose gave 21 ♙xc6+! (21 c4 ♞xf4 22 ♚xc6+ ♜b8 23 c5!± Bücker) 21...♜xc6 22 c4 ♜g8 23 ♙g3 ♞xc4 24 ♜ac1 ♜c5 (or 24...♜g4 25 ♜e4) 25 ♜xc4+ ♜xc4 26 ♚e4+ ♜c5 27 ♜c1+ ♜b6 28 ♜b1+ ♜a5 (If 28...♜c6 29 ♚a4+ or 28...♜c5 29 ♚c2+) 29 ♚e1+ ♜a4 30 ♚d1+ ♜a5 31 ♚d2+ ♜a4 32 ♚c2+.

b3) 19...♞4d5 is harder to refute although White evidently has more activity and can consider various tactical ideas, but I don't want to fill several paragraphs with inconclusive analysis. If you intend to play this line, look at it for yourself.

Penrose's line 20 ♜ed1!? ♙xc3 21 bxc3 cxb5 22 a4 does not quite convince after 22...♜g8! 23 ♙g3 ♜g5 — having protected the d5-♞ Black can answer 24 a5 with 24...♞c4, while if 24 axb5 ♜c8, or 24 h4 ♜f5,

or 24 ♜ab1 ♚d7 25 ♜xb5 ♚c6. It's a big mess, but there doesn't seem anything devastating for White.

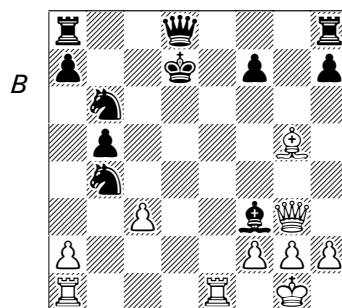
Instead of this, 20 ♙xc6+!? ♜xc6 21 ♜ad1 can be considered. Another possibility is 20 ♞e4!? (Δ 21 ♞c5+ ♜c8 22 ♙a6#) 20...♙e7 21 ♜ad1! but maybe Black can hold with 21...♜c8! 22 ♞c3 ♜g8! 23 ♙g3 ♙b4! 24 ♞xd5 ♙xe1! 25 ♞b4! ♙xb4 26 ♜xd8 ♜gxd8 27 ♚f3±.

So maybe Babachanov's 16...♙xg2 is a reasonable try but I think the whole 5...♙g4 line is looking unhealthy for Black.

**17 bxc3 cxb5**

17...♙xg2 18 ♚g4+ ♜c7 19 ♙f4+ ♜b7 20 ♚xg2 transposes to line b3) just above.

**18 ♙g5 (D)**



This attack on the black ♚ is an essential zwischenzug in order to stop Black playing ...♚f6 at some appropriate moment, observes Penrose. If instead 18 ♚xf3 ♞4d5 19 ♚xf7+ ♜c8.

We are now at the really critical

juncture of the game, though you would never guess from reading Emms' book, which has no comments on any of the moves from numbers 17 to 21.

### 18...f6

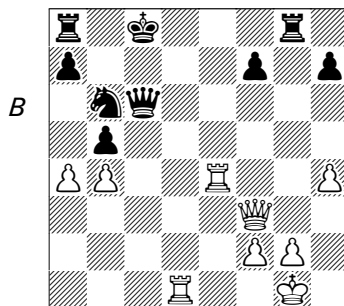
Bücker's 18...♖g8! 19 ♖xf3 ♖xg5 20 cxb4 ♘c7 is the critical reply, as analysed in 'Kaissiber' and 'Chess Mail'. I have no space for all the ramifications, but here are the salient points arising from White's best line 21 h4!.

a) 21...♖d8 22 ♖xf7+ ♘d7 (or 22...♗b8 23 ♖e7 ♖f8 24 ♖g7 ♖g8 25 ♖e5+ ♗c8 26 ♖c1+) 23 ♖a1+ ♗b8 24 ♖ed1.

b) 21...♖xh4 22 ♖xf7+ ♘d7 23 ♖a1+.

c) 21...♖g4 22 ♖a1+ ♘c4 (22...♗b8 23 ♖e8+) 23 ♖xf7+ ♗b8 (23...♗d8 24 ♖d5+) 24 g3! ♖g6 (Other moves are no better: 24...♖g7 25 ♖e8+; or 24...♖c8 25 ♖e7 ♘d6 26 ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 27 ♖d5 ♖d8 28 ♖g7; or 24...♖d8 25 ♖e7 ♘d6 26 ♖b7+ ♘xb7 27 ♖c7#) 25 ♖f4+ ♗c8 (If 25...♖d6 26 ♖xc4, or 25...♘d6 26 h5 ♖d3 27 ♖ed1, or 25...♗b7 26 ♖e7+ ♗a6 27 ♖xc4.) 26 ♖xc4+ bxc4 27 ♖xc4+ ♗d7 (27...♗b8 28 ♖e7 ♖c8 29 ♖f4+) 28 ♖d5+ ♖d6 29 ♖b7+.

d) 21...♖d5 22 ♖e7+ ♗d8 (If 22...♗c8 23 ♖c1+ ♗d8 24 ♖e4 or 22...♗c6 23 ♖c1+ ♘c4 24 ♖c7+ ♗d6 25 ♖d7+.) 23 ♖e4 ♗c8 (If 23...♗c7 24 ♖d1 ♖c6 25 ♖e7+ or 23...f5 24 ♖d1 fxe4 25 ♖xd5+ ♘xd5 26 ♖d1±.) 24 ♖d1 ♖c6 25 a4! (D).



Now Penrose's main line goes 25...bxa4 (If 25...♘xa4 26 ♖c4 or 25...a5 26 axb5 or 25...♖e8 26 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 27 a5) 26 b5 ♖c7 (or 26...♖xb5 27 ♖e7 ♖b8 28 ♖xf7 or 26...♖c5 27 ♖f4 ♗b7 28 ♖xf7+) 27 ♖de1 ♖d8 (or 27...♗b8 28 ♖e7 ♘d7 29 ♖e8+) 28 ♖e7 ♖d7 29 ♖e8+ ♖d8 30 ♖1e7 ♖xe8 31 ♖xe8+ ♗d7 32 ♖xf7+ ♗d6 33 ♖e6+.

There is one other possibility, namely 25...♖d8.

Against this, Penrose gave 26 ♖f5+ ♖d7 27 axb5 but Bücker showed that Black has the resource 27...♖xe4, and he suggests instead 26 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 27 ♖d4+ ♗c7 28 ♖xf7+ ♘d7 29 axb5 ♖xb5 30 ♖d5 winning ('Kaissiber' 15, page 8).

Now we return to the actual finish of the game after 18...f6.

### 19 ♖xf3 ♘d4d5 20 ♖e3

Threatening ♖xb6 and ♖ad1. If 20...♘xe3 21 ♖b7+ ♗d6 22 ♖xe3 ♗c5 23 ♖e6 and the black ♗ is surrounded.

### 20...♗c7 21 ♖ad1 ♖e8 22 a4!

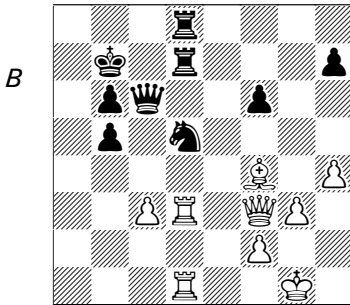
White's whole plan (starting with 16 ♖g3) depended on this a-pawn thrust to disrupt the black queenside.

White soon regains his piece, and Black will still have problems because of his weakened pawn structure and slightly insecure ♔ position. However, White must be careful not to let his back rank become weak, e.g. 22 ♙xb6+? ♜xb6!.

22...♙d6

If 22...bxa4 23 c4!.

23 a5 ♖ed8 24 axb6+ axb6 25 g3 ♗c6 26 ♙f4+ ♗b7 27 ♖d3 ♖d7 28 ♖ed1 ♖ad8 29 h4 (D)



29...h5?!

Penrose observed that: “Black continues to have difficulty finding playable moves. It is unfortunate for him that 29...♞c7 does not work

because of the variation 30 ♙xc6+ ♗xc6 31 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 32 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 33 ♙xc7 ♗xc7 34 g4 ♗d6 35 f4 ♗d5 36 ♗f2 ♗c4 37 g5 fxg5 38 fxg5 ♗xc3 39 h5 b4 40 g6 hxg6 41 h6 and White queens with check.”

Black might have just waited with his ♗ but White can make gradual progress, e.g. with 29...♗c8 White can play 30 ♗e4 ♗b7 (30...♞e7 31 ♗xh7) 31 ♖d4 and/or h5-h6 followed by preparing the advance of his g-pawn.

30 ♗e4

The h-pawn cannot be captured yet but it will become a target after some consolidation.

30...♗c8 31 ♖d4 ♗b7 32 ♗h2 ♗c5 33 ♗f5 ♗c6 34 ♖d2 ♗c4 35 ♗xh5

It can be taken now, since Black’s counterplay proves to be insufficient. 35...♗e4 36 ♗g4 f5 37 ♗g6 ♞xf4 38 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 39 ♖xd7+ ♗c8 40 ♖d8+!

This final tactic enables White to avoid disruption of his pawn structure in the ♗ ending.

40...♗xd8 41 ♗d6+ ♗c8 42 ♗xf4 ♗e6 43 h5 1-0

# Game 39

**White: Ove C. Ekebjærg (Denmark)**

**Black: Gert Jan Timmerman (Netherlands)**

NBC-25, 1991

*Vienna, Frankenstein-Dracula Variation (C27)*

**The Players:** Ekebjærg was runner-up in the 14<sup>th</sup> CC World Championship, a few years after this game. Timmerman is the 15<sup>th</sup> CC World Champion.

**About this game:** NBC-25 was a mammoth tournament held to celebrate the Dutch CC Federation's 25<sup>th</sup> jubilee. Timmerman was the winner and Ekebjærg was fourth. The game features a famous variation, in which Black sacrifices his ♖ on a8.

1 ♖c3

The Danish GM always opens with this move, which is also a favourite of Dutch CC-GM van Geet. Timmerman makes the most flexible reply.

1... ♗f6 2 e4

White offers the choice of an Alekhine's Defence (2...d5), a Pirc (2...d6) or a Vienna.

2... e5 3 ♙c4 ♗xe4 4 ♖h5 ♗d6 5 ♙b3 ♗c6

This line is really an exchange sacrifice by Black. A quieter game can result from 5... ♙e7.

6 ♗b5

White has a crude threat to capture on d6 and then checkmate on f7. Obviously the ♗ cannot be taken and if 6... ♖e7 White wins the ♖ at

once. First Black gains a little space and time.

6... g6 7 ♖f3 f5 8 ♖d5 ♖e7 9 ♗xc7+ ♗d8 10 ♗xa8 b6 11 d3

A book like this cannot discuss the intricacies of such a wild variation. The unbalanced nature of the position makes computers an unreliable guide to what is going on. Ekebjærg follows a plan pioneered in the 1960s by his countryman, Julius Nielsen, who had some impressive wins with White.

11... ♙b7 12 h4

The idea of this move is to avoid being cramped on the kingside, but the less explored 12 ♖f3 ♗d4 13 ♖h3 is also playable.

12... f4 13 ♖f3 ♗d4

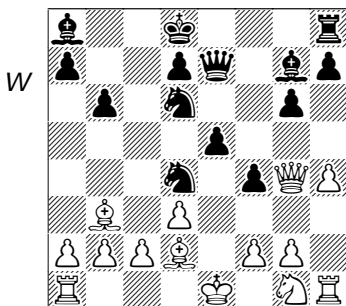
An alternative is 13... ♙h6 14 ♖g4? e4! as in J.Ost Hansen-J.Nunn, student olympiad, Teesside 1972, but 14 ♙d2 is an improvement for White. Timmerman prefers to post his ♙ on the long diagonal.

14 ♖g4 ♙g7 15 ♙d2

In T.Wibe-Timmerman, from NBC-25, White played 15 ♗xb6 axb6 16 ♙d2 ♗f5 17 c3 and managed to draw.

15... ♙xa8 (D)

At last there is nothing better than to capture the trapped ♖ and see what White intends.



### 16 0–0–0

M.V.Fiorito-Timmerman, 10<sup>th</sup> Dutch CC Ch 1981-82, had gone instead 16 h5?! g5 17 c3 ♗4f5 18 ♖h2 ♗h6 19 ♗e2 g4 20 0–0–0 ♗df5 21 d4 ♙b7 22 ♖e1 ♖e8 23 d5 ♙f6 24 ♙c2 and Black took the initiative by 24...g3 25 fxg3 ♗xg3 and went on to win.

In J.J.Carleton-Timmerman, 15<sup>th</sup> Wch Final 1996, White instead tried 16 ♗h3 hoping to follow Carleton-J.A.Tait, British Postal Cht 1994, which went 16...♗6f5? 17 ♗g5 h5 18 ♗h3 ♖f8 19 c3 ♗xh4 20 ♗xh4 ♗xb3 (20...♗f5 21 ♗e6+!) 21 axb3 ♙f6 22 ♖xa7 and White stood better.

Timmerman's comment on this is that Tait sought a tactical solution whereas Black should trust his positional compensation for the exchange. So he improved by 16...♙f6! (attacking h4 and guarding g5) 17 ♙b4 ♖c7 18 c4? (18 c3 ♗4f5 is critical.) 18...a5 19 ♙a3 ♗g7 20 ♗g5 h5 21 ♙xd6+ ♖xd6 22 ♗h3

♙xg5 23 hxg5 ♗e7 24 ♙a4 ♖h7! 25 0–0–0 ♗xg5 26 f3 ♗g3!. Black aims for an ending that emphasises the advantages of his position: the potential ...g5-g4 break, active ♖ on the dark squares and the passivity of the white ♖s. He won in 40 moves.

### 16...♙f6 17 ♙b4

Possibly 17 h5 first is better, as Wibe played against J.van Oosterom in NBC-25.

A more recent idea for White is 17 ♖e1 when:

a) 17...♗6f5 18 h5 g5 19 ♗e2 ♗h6 20 ♗h3 g4 (Again, Black is looking for tactical solutions.) 21 ♗h2 g3 22 ♗g1! ♗g4 23 f3 ♗xb3+ 24 axb3 ♗f2 25 ♗xf4 ♗c5 26 ♙e3 ♗c7 27 ♗e2 ♗xd3+ 28 ♖b1 ♗xe1 29 ♗xe1 ♖g8 30 ♖h3 and White, having returned the exchange, is now winning the g-pawn (M.Larsson-J.A.Tait, North Sea tt corr 1998-99).

b) An OTB team game M.Okkes-Timmerman, Amstelveen-Volmac2, 1993 went instead 17...♗g7 18 ♖b1 (18 h5 g5 19 h6!? may be stronger.) 18...h5 19 ♗h3 ♗6f5 20 ♗e2 ♗xe2 21 ♖xe2 ♗xh4 22 g3! ♗f3 (22...♙g2 23 ♗h2) 23 ♙c3 ♗g5 24 ♗h2 ♙xh1? (24...♗f3 25 ♗h3 ♗g5 repeats.) 25 gxf4! ♙f3 26 fxe5 ♗f8 27 exf6 ♗c5 28 ♖e5 ♗c7 29 ♗f4 1–0. No doubt Timmerman has found an improvement on this, perhaps involving 22...g5 or 22...♙f3.

### 17...a5 18 ♙xd6

After 18 ♙a3 b5 19 c3 ♗xb3+ 20 axb3 b4! 21 cxb4 ♗b5 Black is much better.

### 18...♗xd6 19 ♗h3 ♗c6

Timmerman does not fall for the naïve 19...e4? 20 ♖g5 ♗xb3+ 21 axb3 ♖d4 when 22 ♗e6+! dxe6 23 dxe4 wins the black ♖.

**20 ♗g5**

After 20 c3 ♖xg2 21 ♖xg2 ♗xb3+ 22 axb3 ♗xg2 23 ♖h2 ♗f3 24 ♖e1 h6 (not 24...♗xh4? 25 ♗g1 attacking both ♗s) 25 ♗g1 ♗g4 26 ♗e2 ♖e8 Black's two ♗s and pawn are at least the equal of White's ♖ and ♗.

**20...a4! 21 ♗c4**

It would be unwise for White to repeat the trick of capturing a ♖ in the corner. After 21 ♗f7+ ♔c7 22 ♗xh8? axb3 23 c3 bxa2 24 ♔d2 ♗b3+ 25 ♔e2 ♗xh8 Black is winning. Now Black insists on giving up the second exchange.

**21...b5! 22 ♗f7+**

White may as well accept the offer, since after 22 c3 bxc4 23 dxc4 ♖xc4 the square f7 is guarded.

**22...♔c7 23 ♗xh8 ♗xh8 24 h5! g5!**

The Dutchman comes off better from the struggle but to win against his tough opponent is far from easy.

If instead 24...bxc4 White must not play 25 hxg6?? (as given in the tournament book) because of the strong reply 25...c3!, but 25 c3! g5! transposes to the game.

**25 c3**

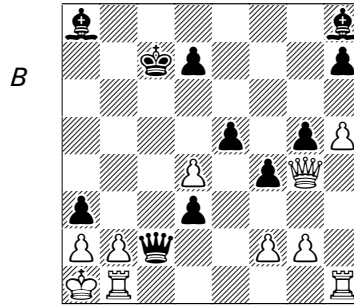
Probably best because if 25 ♖xg5 bxc4 26 dxc4 ♖xc4 27 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 28 ♖g8 e4 29 c3 ♗d5! 30 ♖xh7 (or 30 cxd4 ♗xg8?) 30...♖e5 31 ♖d1 e3 Black has all the winning chances.

**25...bxc4 26 cxd4 cxd3+ 27 ♔b1**

27 ♔d2? ♖c2+ 28 ♔e1 f3! -+.

**27...♖c2+ 28 ♔a1 a3! 29 ♖b1 (D)**

Not 29 bxa3? e4-+. Instead the Danish GM sets a devious trap; Black could even lose this position.



**29...♗e4!**

Timmerman avoids 29...d2? 30 ♖d1! ♗e4 31 ♖xc2+ ♗xc2 32 ♖hc1! dxc1 ♖ 33 ♖xc1 when after the simplification Black would have a bad ♗ v ♖ endgame.

**30 ♖d1 exd4!**

Now a subsequent ...d3-d2 can be backed up by ...d4-d3.

**31 ♖f1! d6!**

Yet another trap had to be circumvented. 31...d2? is still premature because of 32 ♖b5! axb2+ 33 ♖xb2 and ...d3 is prevented because the h8-♗ would be en prise. The idea of the text move is to place the ♗ on the protected square e5. White is running out of defensive resources.

**32 f3 ♗f5 33 ♖c1 d2 34 ♖xc2+ ♗xc2 35 ♖hd1 d3 36 ♖xd2 ♔b6! 0-1**

White is still two exchanges ahead but his situation is hopeless in view of 37 h6 ♔b5 38 ♖f2 ♔b4 39 ♖d2 axb2 40 ♖xb2 ♔a3 -+.



# Game 40

**White:** Peter J. Sowray (England)

**Black:** Gerardus C. van Perlo (Netherlands)

11<sup>th</sup> CC Olympiad Final, 1992-93

*King's Gambit (C36)*

**The Players:** Sowray is a FIDE Master and a strong CC player although he has no ICCF title. Ger van Perlo is a very experienced Dutch player who earned the ICCF IM title in 1977. He got the GM title in 1985 after his best result, second prize in the Bernard Freedman Memorial.

**About this game:** The ancient King's Gambit has made a comeback in recent years. This complicated battle, featuring a positional ♔ sacrifice, is still highly relevant to theory a decade after it was played.

**1 e4 e5 2 f4 d5 3 exd5 c6 4 ♖c3**

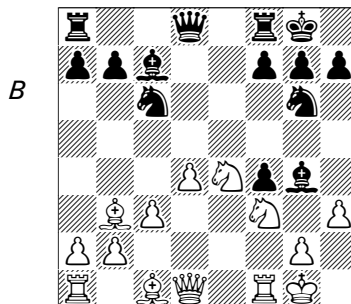
4 dxc6 is rarely seen because Black gets free piece play after 4... ♗xc6. People don't play the King's Gambit to go on the defensive at move 4.

**4...exf4 5 ♗f3 ♕d6 6 d4 ♗e7 7 ♕c4 cxd5 8 ♕xd5**

8 ♗xd5?? ♗xd5 9 ♕xd5 ♖a5+ wins the ♕.

**8...0-0 9 0-0 ♗bc6 10 ♕b3 ♕g4 11 ♗e4 ♕c7 12 c3 ♗g6 13 h3 (D)**

Now Black has to decide what to do about his threatened ♕. Both players probably studied Joe Gallagher's book on the King's Gambit which was published around the time this game began. He said that two moves in this



position seemed to offer White good chances, but Sowray made the wrong choice! In the light of the present game, he should have followed Hebden-Nunn, London 1987, with 13 ♗f2 ♕f5 14 ♗d3 ♗a5 15 ♗fe1 to round up the f4-pawn.

**13...♕f5**

If 13... ♕h5 White unpins by 14 ♖d3, while 13... ♕xf3 gives up the ♕ pair without a fight and leaves White in possession of a strong centre.

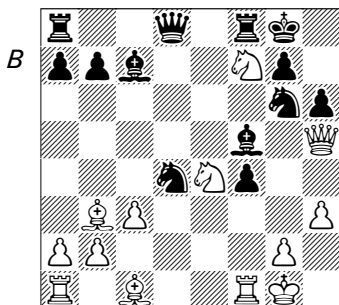
**14 ♗fg5**

14 ♗c5 is quieter but not King's Gambit style says van Perlo.

**14...h6 15 ♖h5 ♗xd4!**

Instead 15...hxg5? 16 ♗xg5 ♗h8 17 ♗xf7! ♗xf7 18 ♖xf5 gave White a strong attack in Westerinen-Motwani, London 1988.

**16 ♗xf7 (D)**



White must play this, wrote Gallagher, because 16 cxd4 ♖xd4+ is good for Black, and if 16 ♖d1 hxg5 then 17 ♜xg5 ♜e2+! (-+ Gallagher) or 17 ♖xd4 ♙b6 18 ♜xg5 ♙xd4+ 19 cxd4 ♖xd4+ 20 ♜h1 ♜e5 21 ♜xf7 ♜xf7 22 ♖xf5 ♖f6 and White doesn't have quite enough for the exchange.

On the other hand, GM Neil McDonald's 1998 book on the King's Gambit advises White to play 16 ♙xf7+ ♖xf7 17 ♜xf7 since after 17... ♜xf7 we transpose to Gallagher's idea in the note to Black's move 16, which seems to be good for White.

However, the transposition can be avoided by 17... ♖h4!! "and the complications are enormous" (van Perlo). Thomas Johansson, in his much superior book, 'The King's Gambit for the Creative Aggressor', actually prefers Black and I agree with him.

a) 18 ♜xh6+ gxh6 19 cxd4 ♙xe4 20 ♖xh4 ♜xh4 21 ♙xf4 ♙b6 22 ♙e5 (♠♖f4) 22...♖d8 23 ♖f4 ♜g6 24 ♖xe4 ♜xe5 25 ♖ae1 ♜c6 — Johansson.

b) 18 ♖xh4 and now:

b1) Not 18... ♜xh4 19 ♜xh6+! gxh6 20 ♜f6+ ♜f7 21 cxd4 ♜xf6

22 ♙xf4 ♙xf4 23 ♖xf4 ♜g6 24 ♖f3 and White won the ending in Asquith-Sardella, EU/H/1248 corr 1997.

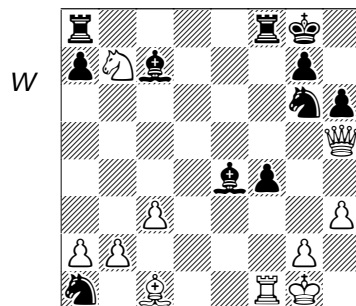
b2) 18... ♜e2+! 19 ♜f2 ♜xh4 20 ♜fd6 (20 ♜xe2 ♖e8) 20... ♜g3 21 ♜xg3 fxg3+ 22 ♜xg3 g5 23 ♙f4 gxf4+ 24 ♜xh4 ♙xd6 — Johansson.

16... ♜xb3!

Gallagher did not mention this possibility! Sowray said he had this position several times before but nobody dared the ♖ sac until now.

The line White is trying to get goes 16... ♖xf7 17 ♙xf7+ ♜xf7 18 ♜g3!! which Gallagher was able to test in a game after he wrote his book: 18... ♙d3 19 ♙xf4 ♜g8 20 ♙xc7 ♖xc7 21 cxd4 ♙xf1 22 ♖xg6 ♙b5 23 ♜f5 and White duly won in J.Gallagher-A.Sorin, Biel 1992.

17 ♜xd8 ♜xa1 18 ♜xb7 ♙xe4 (D)



"Black has more than enough for the ♖" — McDonald. It can seem hard to believe, until you actually try to find a way for White to get out of jail. For example, 19 b4 loses to 19... ♙xb7 20 ♖xg6 ♖ae8 or 20... ♖f6.

19 ♖c5 ♙b6 20 ♚h2 ♙xc5 21 ♜xc5 ♚h7 22 ♜d4

22 ♜e1 might be considered.

22...♜ae8! 23 ♜xa7 f3 24 gxf3

White probably hoped his opponent would now capture on f3 with ♙ or ♜, but van Perlo wants to capture with the ♖ to set up stronger threats.

24...♖h4!?

While it is not clear that it forces a win, it creates more complications than 24...♙xf3, which is also playable. Simplification helps White, so 24...♜xf3? would not be good.

25 ♖g3

If 25 ♙xh6 ♚xh6 26 ♜xa1, trying to avoid the terrible bind that arises in the game, then 26...♙d5! (Δ...♜e2+) 27 ♜a6+ ♜e6 28 ♜d3 ♖xf3+ 29 ♖g3 ♜g6+ and White must give up the ♜. If instead 25 f4 ♖c2 threatens ...♖e1!, and all the troops are massing for the final assault.

25...♙d3

Black keeps up the pressure by avoiding exchanges. Black does not want to play an endgame in which White has a ♜ and connected queen-side passed pawns. 25...♖xf3 might give White a rescue opportunity with 26 ♜d7! (preventing ...♜e6, and also ...♜f6) 26...♖c2 27 ♙f4 and there seems nothing conclusive for Black, e.g. 27...♖ce1 28 ♙d6 or 27... h5 28 h4.

26 ♜f2 ♖f5+ 27 ♚h2

If 27 ♖g2, inviting Black to take a draw by repetition, he would avoid that with 27...♖c2 or 27...♜e7, working on improving the placement and coordination of his pieces.

27...♖c2 28 ♜d7

28 b4 is an alternative but not a clear improvement.

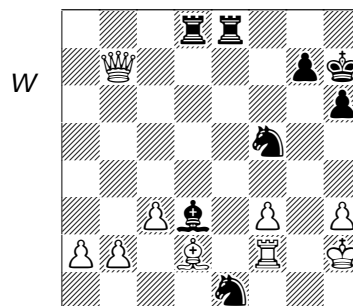
28...♜d8 29 ♜b7 ♖e1

The black minor pieces swarm around the white ♚ and ♜ like hornets, but how is Black to break through and win? Van Perlo conducts the latter phase of the game superbly. Probably there is no defence against best play by Black from this point.

30 ♙d2

30 b4 ♖h4 31 f4 ♙f5 sets up a new target at h3: 32 ♜e7 (not 32 ♖g3? ♜d3+ 33 ♖xh4? ♜xh3#) 32...♖ef3+ 33 ♖g3 ♜fe8 (Δ...♜d3) and White is becoming encircled.

30...♜fe8 (D)



31 ♙xe1

White takes the chance to exchange a pair of pieces but Black now gets an entry for his ♜s to the 8<sup>th</sup> rank. Maybe White was afraid of a collapse on f3, but this is equally serious.

However, there seems no way for White to get his pawns moving without allowing a breakthrough:

If 31 b4 ♙b1! (frees d3 while protecting the f5-♖) then:

a) 32 ♖f7? ♜xf3+ wins.

b) 32 a4 (or 32 b5) 32...♞d3 (32...♞e7 33 ♖xe7! ♜xf3+ 34 ♖g2 ♜xe7 35 ♖xf3 ♞d3+ 36 ♖g2 is less conclusive.) 33 ♞g2 ♜e5 34 ♖h1 (After 34 a5 ♞e7 White can no longer defend f3.) 34...♞e7 35 ♖b6 ♞d3 36 a5 (36 ♖g1 ♞a2 △...♞d5) 36...♞xf3 37 ♖g1 ♞xh3-+.

c) 32 ♞xe1 ♞xe1 33 ♞b2 (or 33 h4 ♞dd1 34 ♖h3 ♞d3) 33...♞dd1 34 ♖a7 (to cover g1) 34...♞h1+ 35 ♖g2 ♞d3 (△...♞df1, ...♞h4+ winning) 36 b5 ♞df1 37 ♞b4 ♞e2 38 ♞f4 ♞xf3+ 39 ♞xf3 ♜h4+ 40 ♖g3 ♞xf3+! 41 ♖xh4 ♞hxh3+ 42 ♖g4 when 42...h5+ 43 ♖g5 ♞hg3+ 44 ♖xh5 ♞g6 45 ♖h4 ♞f1 46 ♖a8 ♞h1+! 47 ♖xh1 ♞h6+ and ...♞xh1 is one way to win.

Instead 31 ♖c7 ♞d5 (31...♞h4? 32 ♞xe1) 32 ♖f7 tries to harry Black but it fails to 32...♞de5 (32...♞xf3+ 33 ♞xf3 ♞e2+ 34 ♖g1 ♞e4 also wins.) 33 a4 (33 ♞xe1 ♞xe1 34 ♞g2 ♞8e3 will win as in the game.) 33...♞8e7 34 ♖h5 ♞d4 followed by the capture on f3.

**31...♞xe1 32 ♖c7**

Or 32 ♞g2 ♞b1 followed by ...♞dd1 and wins.

**32...♞de8**

White's situation becomes critical. Once Black doubles ♞s on the 8<sup>th</sup> rank, he will create mating threats before the white pawns can become dangerous, e.g. 33 b4 ♞d1 34 a4 ♞ee1-+.

Also 33 ♞d2 is useless because of 33...♞f1! 34 ♖g2 (34 ♞xd3? ♞e2#) 34...♞h4+ 35 ♖g3 ♞xf3+ 36 ♖xh4

(If 36 ♖g4 ♞e4+ and 36 ♖h2 ♞f5 is not much better.) 36...♞e4+ 37 ♖h5 ♞xh3#.

**33 ♖d7**

This threatens two pieces but there is a simple answer.

**33...♞8e3**

Black has everything defended. The ♜ defends the one weak spot in his game, g7, while controlling g3. In turn the ♞ defends the ♞ and the transfer of ♞s to the deadly d1-e1 line-up cannot be long prevented.

White's best defence is 34 ♖a4! (preventing ...♞d1) and if instead 34...♞b1 (say) 35 ♖a7 ♞ee1 36 ♞d2 and the ♖ covers g1. Then 36...♞h1+ 37 ♖g2 ♞hg1+ 38 ♖xg1 ♜h4+! 39 ♖f2 ♞xg1 40 ♞xd3 (40 ♖xg1 ♜xf3+ 41 ♖f2 ♜xd2 42 ♖e3 ♞b1 is easier) 40...♞g2+ and ...♞xb2 should win, or similarly 38 ♖h2 ♜h4 39 ♖f2 (39 ♞f2? ♞e2!) 39...g5! forces 40 ♞xd3 ♞h1+ 41 ♖g3 ♞bg1+ 42 ♖xg1 ♞xg1+ 43 ♖f2 ♞g2+ and ...♞xb2.

**34 b4 ♞d1 35 ♖c7 ♞e7?! 36 ♖c5 ♞ee1 37 ♞b2 ♞h1+ 38 ♖g2 ♞df1! 0-1**

White resigned although he can stave off mate for a while with 39 ♖f2.

Therefore 35...♞ee1! was a more precise finish, forcing mate in 10 moves at most. The threat is 36...♞h1+ 37 ♖g2 ♞dg1#, and if White makes room with 36 ♞b2 (as in the game) then 36...♞h1+ 37 ♖g2 ♞dg1+ 38 ♖f2 ♞f1+ 39 ♖g2 ♜h4+ 40 ♖g3 ♞xf3+ etc. as in the 33 ♞d2 note; here 41 ♖g4 ♞g1+ 42 ♖xh4 (42 ♖h5 ♜g6) 42...♞f4+ 43 ♖xf4 g5+ is the prettiest mate!

# Game 41

**White: Jørn Sloth (Denmark)**

**Black: Károly Honfi (Hungary)**

11<sup>th</sup> CC Olympiad Final, board 1, 1992-94

*Polish Defence (A46)*

**Notes by Jørn Sloth**

**The Players:** Jørn Sloth (born 1944) won the 8<sup>th</sup> European CC Championship, which qualified him for the 8<sup>th</sup> CC World Championship Final (1975-80). He won that too, on tie-break from Zagorovsky, after tough opposition from USSR players. Sloth has remained an active player but rarely plays more than one tournament at a time. He is also a FIDE Master.

Károly Honfi (1930-1996) was an IM of both FIDE and ICCF. He was twice runner-up in the Hungarian OTB championship.

**About this game:** I am grateful to Jørn Sloth for providing extensive original notes especially for the book. We chose this game, as a contrast to the many tactically complex games in this book, as a little-known example of the positional and endgame skills that won him the World Championship.

The Olympiad Final started on December 15<sup>th</sup> 1992, but only one move was played in 1992. Honfi

resigned the game in mid-August 1994. Thus Sloth got his revenge. They had met once before, but OTB — “in the Nimzowitsch Memorial in Copenhagen 1965, a strong GM tournament, which I (very young) was lucky to qualify for. I missed getting the IM title by only half a point — and I lost with White against Honfi in 59 moves (making the decisive mistake at move 58).”

**1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 g3 b5!**

I agree with Dr Berliner that 2 c4 is the correct move for White. But I'm not always in the mood to fight for principles...

**4 ♘g2 ♘b7 5 ♘g5 c5 6 ♘xf6**

In the Axelson Memorial, 1984-85, I had a good experience with 6 c3 against Klaus Engel: 6...♖b6?! 7 ♘xf6 gxf6 8 0-0 h5?! (1-0, 26). Against Sanakoev in the ICCF-50 Champions tournament, I returned to 6 c3, but could prove no advantage after 6...cxd4 7 ♘xf6 gxf6 8 cxd4 d5 9 0-0 ♘d7 10 ♘bd2 ♘e7 11 a4!? bxa4.

6...♖xf6

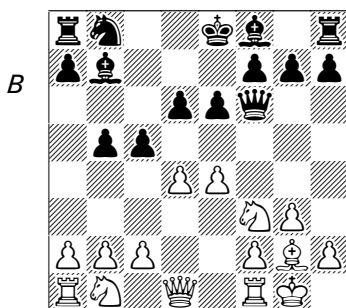
6...gxf6 7 c3 usually returns to the previous note.

7 0-0 d6?!

7...cxd4! 8 ♖xd4 ♙xg2 9 ♔xg2 a6 is good enough for Black.

I looked at it again before choosing 6 c3 against Sanakoev. Also 7...♗d8 is better than Honfi's move.

8 e4! (D)



Now 8...♙xe4 9 ♗c3 ♙c6 10 d5 is very promising for White, I think.

8...♗d7 9 ♖e1 ♗d8! 10 d5!

Starting long-term play against the badly placed ♙ at b7. Curiously enough, the ♙ never gets into play...

10...e5 11 a4!?

Trying to 'win' c4. Honfi gives in at once, but if 11...a6 12 ♗a3!?

11...bxa4 12 ♗c3 ♗b6?! 13 ♙f1!

With the threat of ♙b5+. And the ♙ was now without work at g2.

13...a6

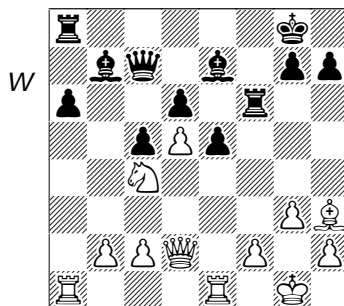
Making the b7-♙ a little more unhappy.

14 ♗xa4 ♙e7 15 ♗xb6 ♖xb6 16

♗d2! 0-0 17 ♗c4 ♖c7 18 ♗d2 f5

He is anxious to get counterplay. I am not sure if this is a mistake. If White gets f2-f4 in first, Black could be in trouble.

19 exf5 ♖xf5 20 ♙h3 ♖f6 (D)



21 ♖e4

A very difficult move; after 19 days I decided on a slow approach. 21 f4 exf4 22 ♗a5! looks good, but I didn't like 21...♖h6. 21 ♗a5 was also interesting, but here I considered 21...c4!?

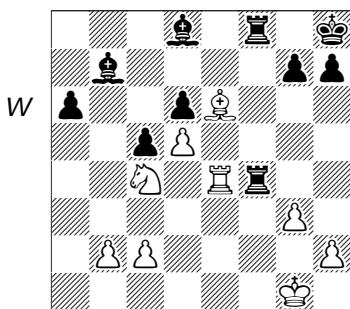
21...♖af8 22 ♖f1 ♗h6 23 ♙g4 ♖h8 24 f4!?

I convinced myself that this was the only chance to play for a win. Black's problem with the b7-♙ should become more serious after the exchange of ♗s and ♖s (one pair or both).

24...exf4 25 ♖xf4 ♖hf6 26 ♗a5! ♗d8

26...♗xa5? 27 ♗xa5 and both ♙s are hanging. Maybe 26...♖xf4!?

27 ♗xd8 ♙xd8 28 ♙e6 ♖xf4 (D)



29 ♖xf4

At first my plan was 29 gxf4 — to have one ♖ left to do the winning job (if possible).

However, here Honfi proposed the conditional sequence 29 ♖xf4 ♗xf4 30 gxf4 and now 30...♙e7. I had only expected 30...♙c7!, and 30...♙e7? could be the decisive mistake.

29...♗xf4 30 gxf4 ♙e7? 31 ♔g2 g6

Here (or on the next move) Black should probably play ...a5, giving up the pawn to free the ♙. But Honfi was not that desperate yet.

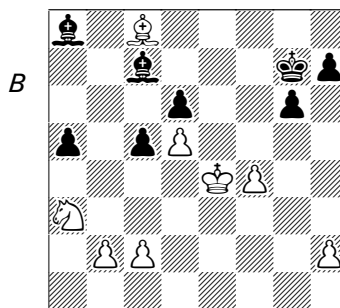
32 ♔f3 ♔g7 33 ♖a5

33 ♔e4 is possible — with the threat 34 ♖a5 ♙a8 35 ♙c8 winning a pawn — but Black then has another chance to try 33...a5!?

33...♙a8 34 ♔e4 ♙d8

The only way to prevent ♙c8.

35 ♖c4 ♙c7 36 ♙c8 a5 37 ♖a3!  
(D)



With the idea 37...♔f6 38 ♖b5 ♙b8 — and both ‘proud’ black ♙s are unable to move! White should win, I think. In some variations the white ♔ goes after the black a-pawn...

37...a4 38 ♖b5 ♙d8

He doesn’t want to stalemate both ♙s with ...♙b8, but this is hopeless.

39 ♖xd6 ♙f6

He was hoping maybe for 40 ♖c4? ♙xb2!.

40 ♖e8+ 1–0

With the proposal 40...♔f7 41 ♖xf6. The ♙ endgame after 41...♔xf6 is very easily won, for instance with 42 c4 (♔e7 43 ♔e5); the black ♙ is still trapped in the corner.

# Game 42

**White: Gottardo Gottardi (Switzerland)**

**Black: Vladimir N. Gritsaenko (Russia)**

Konstantinopolsky Memorial, 1993-95

*Sicilian Defence (B22)*

**The Players:** Despite his name, Gottardi (born 1961) is actually from the German-speaking part of Switzerland. He joined the CC elite when he won the Konstantinopolsky Memorial with 13/14 and then scored an unbeaten 11/15 in the 15<sup>th</sup> World Championship Final. He is currently taking a break from competition but I expect to see a strong comeback from him in future.

Gritsaenko is a CC-IM.

**About this game:** Gottardi's play is characterised by imaginative combinative attacks and deep openings preparation, but theory has moved on since the game was played. I particularly like the instructive final attack with reduced material.

**1 e4 c5 2 c3**

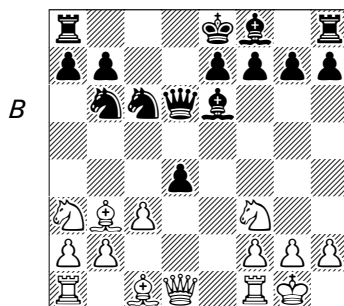
Despite its quiet appearance, this move can lead to complications. **2... ♖f6 3 e5 ♗d5 4 d4 cxd4 5 ♗f3 ♗c6 6 ♙c4 ♗b6 7 ♙b3**

White offers a gambit instead of recapturing on d4. Black can avoid this line playing ...e6 at move 5 or 6.

**7...d6**

This reaches the same position as after the usual 7...d5 because White captures en passant in that case.

**8 exd6 ♗xd6 9 0-0 ♙e6 10 ♗a3 (D)**



**10...dxc3**

Black can also decline the offer with 10...♙xb3, meeting 11 axb3 by 11...a6, and 11 ♖xb3 by 11...e6 or 11...♗d5.

**11 ♖e2 ♙xb3 12 ♗b5 ♖b8 13 axb3 e5**

In the same event, Gottardi-Brzózka went 13...e6 14 g3 (Δ 15 ♙f4) 14...♖c8!?, but Gottardi found a way forward: 15 ♗g5!? a6 16 ♖h5 ♗d8 (16...g6 17 ♖f3 ♗d7 18 ♗e4! ♗d5 19 ♗d1 ♙g7 20 ♗xd5!) 17 ♗xc3 h6 18 ♙e3 ♗d7 19 ♗fd1 ♗e5? 20 ♗xd8+! ♗xd8 (20...♖xd8 21 ♗xe6) 21 ♗xf7+ ♗xf7 22 ♖xf7 1-0.

**14 ♗bd4 ♗xd4**

Alternatives are:

a) 14...f6!? as in Rytshagov-Sadler, EU Cht Pula 1997.

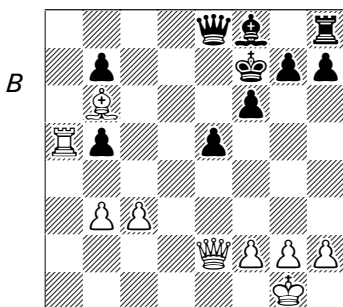


b) 14...♙d6 15 bxc3!? (Rüfenacht-S.Jardorf, 4<sup>th</sup> EU Cht Final corr 1994-95) 15...f6 16 ♖f5 g6 17 ♖xd6+ ♗xd6 18 ♙a3 ♗e6∞.

**15 ♖xd4 f6 16 bxc3 ♖f7**

White gets a strong attack after 16...♙d6 17 ♖f5 — Chandler, e.g. 17...g6 18 ♖xd6+ ♗xd6, as the exchange of ♖s means that White can attack straight away with 19 f4!

**17 ♖b5 a6 18 ♙e3 axb5 19 ♙xb6 ♖xa1 20 ♖xa1 ♗e8 21 ♖a5 (D)**



**21...♗c6**

This move, suggested in 'Informator 47', would appear to be inferior, but that was not clear until after the present game. The main line then and now was 21...b4 22 c4 (22 cxb4 brought White no advantage after 22...♗e6! in Luther-Sadler, Gausdal 1994.) 22...♗c6 23 ♖b5 ♙e7 24 ♙a5 ♖a8 25 h3 and now:

a) 25...♖g8 26 ♗e1 ♙c5 27 ♙xb4 ♙d4 led to a draw in Lautier-Gelfand, Linares 1994.

b) 25...♙c5 26 ♙xb4 was played by Gottardi's Swiss team colleague, GM Matthias Rüfenacht, reaching a

pleasant endgame after 26...♙xb4?! 27 ♖xb4 ♙d8 28 c5! ♗xc5 29 ♖xb7+ ♖g8 30 ♗g4 ♗c1+ 31 ♖h2 ♗f4+ 32 ♗g3 ♗xg3+ 33 ♖xg3± Rüfenacht-D.Orseth, 4<sup>th</sup> EU Cht Final 1995, and 1-0, 45 as Black missed a draw.

A more recent game, D.Marciano-I.Nataf, French Ch, Vichy 2000, saw instead 26...♙d4!, after which Black defended carefully and was eventually rewarded with a full point as White tried too hard to win a ♗ endgame. However, I do not rule out the possibility that Gottardi has some idea in reserve against that possibility! When you look at Black's deficit in development in the diagram, it is hard to believe he can have simple equality within two moves.

**22 ♗xb5!**

This seems much stronger than 22 ♖xb5 as played in Rozentalis-Dydyshko, Poland Ch 2001, with an early draw. This is yet another example of FIDE professionals being ignorant of CC discoveries.

**22...♗xc3 23 ♗d5+ ♖g6**

Black threatens checkmate on e1.

**24 h4!**

This move was judged the Best Novelty of the tournament. Former theory was 24 g4 ♗c6! (½-½, 30) Blauert-Jirovsky, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bundesliga 1993.

**24...♗c6**

There may be nothing better:

a) 24...♙b4 25 h5+! ♖xh5 26 ♗f7+ g6 27 ♗xf6! ♙xa5 28 ♙e3!!+- (Gottardi, 'Chess Mail' 3/1999).

b) Inserting 24...♗c1+ 25 ♖h2 makes little difference. A later game won by a Swiss CC master continued on parallel lines: 25...♗c6 26 h5+!

♙xh5 27 ♖f7+ g6 28 ♜e3 ♜h6  
29 ♜c5! ♖d6 30 ♜d5 ♖f8 31 ♖e6  
♜xe3 when White took advantage of  
his extra ♙ move to win by 32 ♖h3+  
♙g5 33 ♖xe3+ ♙h5 34 ♖h3+ ♙g5  
35 ♖g3+ ♙f5 (35...♙h5 36 f4!)  
36 ♖d3+ ♙e6 (36...♙g5 37 f4+ or  
36...♙g4 37 ♖e4+ ♙h5 38 ♜d3)  
37 ♖c4 ♙f5 and now 38 g4! ♙g5  
39 ♙g3 1-0 G.Walker-A.Backlund,  
NBC-30 1997-98.

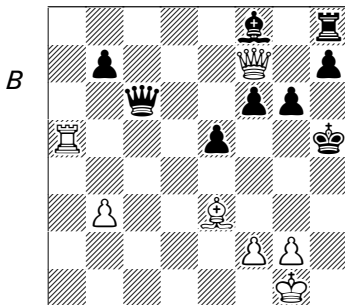
### 25 h5+! ♙xh5?

25...♙f5 looks a better defence.  
Gottardi says: "White can play 26 ♖d8  
followed by the options 27 ♜c5, 27 ♜a4  
and 27 ♜a8". However, after 26...♙e6!  
(26...g6 27 b4!? ♙e6 28 ♜c5) 27 ♜c5  
(27 ♜a8 g6 28 ♜c8 ♖d7) does not work  
because of 27...♜xc5! 28 ♖xh8 ♜xf2+  
29 ♙h2 ♖c3, so 27 ♜a1 may be the  
best continuation. White's game remains  
preferable but there is no win in sight.

### 26 ♖f7+ g6

Gottardi showed ♙ moves fail:  
26...♙g5? 27 ♜xe5+! fxe5 28 ♜e3+,  
or 26...♙h4? 27 ♜xe5! fxe5 28 ♖f5!,  
or 26...♙h6? 27 ♜e3+ g5 28 ♜a4+-.

### 27 ♜e3 (D)



White is still a pawn in arrears but  
he will try to proceed with his attack  
where possible. Two major factors are  
in his favour: the perilous situation of the  
black ♙ and the absence of a defensive  
contribution from Black's ♜ and ♜.

### 27...♜h6!?

This sets a very nasty trap. Other  
lines analysed by Gottardi were:

a) 27...♜b4? 28 ♜a8!! +- ♜xa8?  
29 ♖xh7+ ♙g4 30 ♖h3#.

b) 27...b6?! 28 ♜d5 (△ ♜d8) and  
if 28...♜h6 29 g4+ ♙xg4 30 ♜xh6  
♜a8 31 ♜e3 ♜a1+ 32 ♙h2 ♙f5 33  
♖xh7! ♖xd5? 34 ♖h3+ ♙e4 35  
♖g2+ wins.

c) 27...b5 when 28 ♜a7? ♜h6 29  
♜c7 (Gottardi) does not seem to win  
after 28...♜h6. Instead 28 ♜xb5!  
♜h6 (28...♖xb5? 29 ♖xf6 mating, or  
28...♖d6 29 ♜b6 ♖e7 30 ♖c4+-)  
29 ♜c5 and White wins as in the  
game (the absent black b-pawn makes  
absolutely no difference).

d) 27...♖d6!? 28 g4+! ♙h4 (28...  
♙xg4 29 ♖c4+ ♙f3 30 ♖f1!+-) 29  
♙g2! ♖c6+ 30 f3 ♖c2+ 31 ♜f2+ ♙g5  
32 ♖e6! (threatening to mate by 33 f4+  
♙xf4 34 ♖xf6+) 32...b5 (32...♖b2 33  
f4+ or 32...♖d2 33 ♜d5) 33 ♜a6 ♜c5  
34 f4+! ♙h6 (34...♙xf4 35 ♖xf6+) 35  
g5+ fxg5 36 fxg5+ ♙xg5 37 ♖xe5+ and  
38 ♖xc5 winning.

### 28 ♜c5!

White cannot win a piece by 28  
g4+? ♙xg4 29 ♜xh6 because of 29...  
♙h3! (threatening mate on g2) and  
if 30 ♖d5?? ♜d8! (31 ♖xc6 ♜d1#)  
or 30 f3?? ♖b6+ 31 ♙f1 ♖xa5+-  
though White can just escape with 30  
♜d5 and get a draw.

28...♖d6

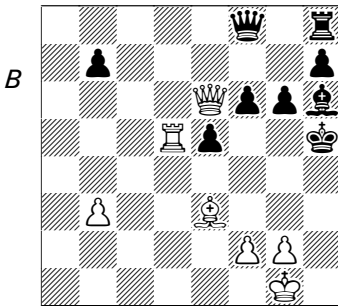
If 28...♖e8? 29 ♗xf6+- or 28...♖a6? 29 ♜xe5+! ♙g5 (29...fxe5 30 ♗f3+ ♘h4 31 ♗h3#) 30 ♜xg5+ fxg5 31 ♗f3+ ♘h6 32 ♗h3+ ♙g7 33 ♙d4+ and wins.

29 ♜d5

This not only threatens the ♗ but makes the threat of g2-g4+ effective, forcing the reply. It is still too soon for 29 g4+? because of 29...♘h4! 30 ♙xh6 ♗d1+ 31 ♘h2 ♗f3! 32 ♙e3 ♗h3+ 33 ♙g1 ♗xg4+ with perpetual check, while on 29 ♜c3 Black has a choice between 29...f5 and 29...♙f4.

29...♗f8 30 ♗e6! (D)

It might seem that White has insufficient firepower to win but Gottardi demonstrates otherwise. His centralised force of ♗+♜ is concentrated against the black ♘ while the black ♞ never gets into the fight.



30...♙xe3 31 ♗h3+ ♙g5 32 ♗xe3+ ♙f5

If 32...♘h4? 33 ♜d3+- or 32...♙g4? 33 f3+ ♙f5 34 ♗e4+ ♙e6 35 ♗c4!. On 32...♘h5 White wins with 33 f4! (with the double threat 34 fxe5

and 34 ♗h3#) 33...g5 (33...♗c8 34 fxe5 ♗e6 35 ♗e2+ ♘h6 36 ♗d2+ g5 37 exf6+-) 34 ♗h3+ ♙g6 35 f5+ ♙f7 36 ♜d7+ ♙g8 37 ♗h5! ♗c5+ 38 ♘h2 ♗f8 39 b4! “and Master Zugzwang decides the game” — Gottardi.

33 ♗d3+ ♙g5?

This blunder shortens the game; either Black overlooked the reply or else just wanted to get it over quickly. However, as Gottardi comments: “The black ♘ can no longer cope with the alarming activity of the white ♗”.

If 33...♙g4 34 ♗e4+ ♘h5 (or 34...♙g5 35 g3 h5 36 ♗f4#) 35 g3 g5 36 g4+ ♘h6 37 ♜d7 or 33...♙f4 34 g3+ ♙g5 35 ♗e4 ♘h6 36 ♗h4+ ♙g7 37 ♜d7+-.

Black could have fought much harder with 33...♙e6! 34 ♗c4 ♙f5 35 f3! and now Gottardi gives:

a) 35...h5 36 g4+ ♙g5 37 ♗c1+ ♘h4 38 ♗e1+ ♙g5 39 ♗e3+ ♘h4 40 ♜d2+-.

b) 35...g5 36 g4+ ♙g6 37 ♗c2+ e4 (37...♙f7 38 ♜d7+ or 37...f5 38 ♗c7!) 38 ♗xe4+ ♙g7 (38...♘h6 39 f4!) 39 ♜d7+ ♘h6 40 ♙g2!! and there is no answer to the threatened manoeuvre ♗b1-h1 (if 40...♗c8 41 ♗f5!).

c) To those lines, I would add 35...♙g5 36 ♗c1+ ♙f5 (36...♘h5 37 g4+ ♘h4 38 ♗e1+ ♙g5 39 ♗e3+ ♘h4 40 ♙g2 followed by ♜d1-h1 mate) 37 g4+ ♙e6 38 ♗c4 and wins because this time around ...♙f5 is illegal.

34 f4+! 1-0

Black resigned in view of 34...♙xf4 35 g3+ ♙g5 36 ♗e4 ♘h6 (or 36...h5 37 ♗f4#) 37 ♗h4+ ♙g7 38 ♜d7+ ♙g8 39 ♗c4+.



12...♖xh4 (Makarichev) is an alternative given in 'ECO'.

**13 ♖d2**

In his book 'Chess at the Top', Karpov analysed 13 ♖e2 0-0?! but he showed Black can improve by 13...♖a5+ 14 c3 ♗xd4 15 ♙xd7+ ♕xd7 16 ♙xd4 ♖he8 17 ♖f1 ♙f6 18 ♖f3 ♖e6. Also possible is 14...0-0-0 (H.Niedermaier-V.Hort, Bundesliga 1987).

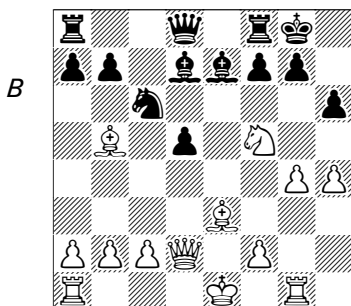
**13...0-0!**

Until this game, theory followed Karpov-Spassky, Tilburg 1980 (White got the advantage after 13...♙xh4?! 14 0-0-0 ♙f6 15 ♗f5) and Black's attempts to improve with 13...♗xd4 14 ♙xd7+ ♖xd7 (as in Marjanovic-Cebalo, Yugoslav Ch 1962, and Kindermann-Vogt, Baden-Baden 1993).

Andersson prefers to castle, which threatens ...♗xd4. This move was dismissed in analysis by Karpov in 1980, and by Krnić in 'Informator'.

Andersson's novelty is in showing it to be playable; instead of capturing White's h-pawn, he will sacrifice his own for the initiative, based on fantastically deep calculation.

**14 ♗f5 (D)**



**14...d4!**

Andersson always prefers to go his own way in the openings and while he often does not know what other players have written, he probably knew Karpov's book very well. This pawn advance is the move which the former world champion Karpov, Yugoslav analyst Krnić and many others missed.

Old theory following Karpov was 14...♙xf5 15 gxf5 ♖h7 16 0-0-0 with a clear advantage for the first player. On 14...♙f6, Karpov's mysterious claim that 15 ♗xh6+?! gxh6 16 g5 gives a decisive attack for White has never been tested but simply 15 0-0-0 looks good.

**15 ♙xh6!?**

Most people might stop analyzing after seeing this; White's attack looks dangerous. Inferior alternatives are:

a) 15 ♗xe7+ ♖xe7 16 0-0-0 (16 ♙xc6? dxe3 17 ♖xd7 ♖b4+ 18 ♖f1 ♖xb2 19 ♖d1 ♖f6 20 ♖f5 ♖xc6 and Black has a clear advantage.) 16...dxe3 17 ♖xd7 e2!.

b) 15 ♙xd4 ♗xd4 16 ♗xd4 ♙xb5 17 ♗xb5 ♖b6 18 c4 ♖ad8 19 ♖c2 ♙xh4 and one can't be envious of White's position.

c) 15 ♗xd4? ♗xd4 and White loses a piece.

**15...♙b4**

This is the point of Andersson's play: he counter-attacks against White's ♖. Capturing on h6 is not good because after 15...gxh6? 16 ♖xh6 ♙f6 17 g5 ♖e8+ 18 ♖f1 ♙e5 19 g6 Black will be mated.

**16 c3 dxc3 17 bxc3 ♗e5**

The threat of the family fork by the ♖ and the second threat to b5 give White no time to take on g7 or b4.

### 18 ♙e2

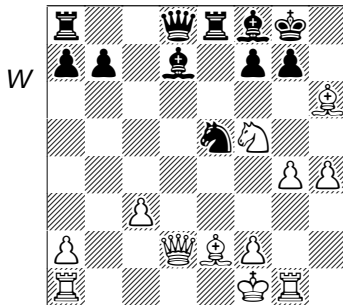
Obviously not 18 ♜d4?? ♙xb5 19 cxb4 ♜d3+. So Timmerman tries to control the square f3, as 18 ♖g3 fails to 18...♙xb5 19 cxb4 ♜d3+, or if White exchanges the ♖s at d8 instead, the ♙ at h6 gets lost, e.g. 19 ♖xd8 ♖axd8 20 ♙xg7? ♖fe8 and Black wins.

### 18...♖e8

This renews the threat of ...♜f3+ and forces White's ♙ to move.

### 19 ♙f1 ♙f8 (D)

The first phase of direct threats is over; everything is protected, White has lost castling rights, and for the pawn Andersson has great piece activity. Now it is time for the active ♙s to retire.



### 20 ♙f4 ♖a5 21 ♖g3 ♖ad8 22 ♜d4 ♙a4 23 h5

White tries to generate some attack but this move gives Black the opportunity of an advantageous exchange on d4. So perhaps this tempo

should have been used to improve the position of one of the ♖s or, as Grahn suggests, to move the white ♖ out of the reach of the black ♖: 23 ♖b2 ♖d5 24 ♙g1 ♙c5 25 ♙e3 b6, with just a small advantage for Black.

### 23...♜c6 24 ♙e3

Grahn pessimistically thinks this is forced because after 24 ♜xc6 ♙xc6 25 ♖d3 ♖xe2! Black wins easily, e.g. 26 ♙xe2 (26 ♖xe2 ♙b5 27 ♖ad1 ♖a6) 26...♖a6 27 c4 (27 ♖d1 ♖xd3 28 ♖xd3 ♙b5) 27...♖xc4 28 ♖d1 ♖xd3 29 ♖xd3 ♖xf4.

In 'Chess Mail' 1/1997, I suggested that with 24 ♖d3 White has chances of equality despite the difficulties on the light squares. This was seen in O.Lorentzen-E.Sterud, Norway corr Ch 1997: 24...♜xd4 25 ♖xd4 ♙c5 26 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 27 ♖b2 ♙d6 28 ♙xd6 ♖d5 29 f3 ♖xd6 30 ♖xb7 ♖h2 31 ♖xa7 ♖e8 32 ♖e1 ½-½.

### 24...♜xd4 25 ♙xd4 ♖e4 26 ♖b2 ♙c5 27 ♖b1

If instead 27 ♙xc5 ♖xc5 28 ♖d3 ♖de8 (Harding, 1997) when Portuguese CC-GM Alvaro Pereira analysed further in 'Peao Distante': 29 ♖e1 (29 ♖d2 ♖xe2 30 ♖xe2 ♙b5 31 ♖ae1 ♖d5-+ or 29 ♙f3 ♙b5! 30 ♙xe4 ♖xe4 31 ♖ad1 ♖xg4-+) 29...♙b5 30 ♖e3 ♖xe3 31 fxe3 ♙c6 with clear advantage to Black.

### 27...♙xd4 28 cxd4 ♙c6 29 ♖d1 ♖f4 30 d5?

White returns the extra pawn in the hope of simplification but Andersson keeps the initiative. At this point, White had a better move that could have kept his chances alive.

30 ♖d2! is a better way of giving up the pawn. After 30...♗xd2 31 ♖xd2 ♜fxd4 32 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 Black surely has a better position, but will it be enough to win the game?

Black can try for more by 30...♗g5 when the threat is ...♙a4 and if the ♖ leaves the square d1 then Black can play ...♗xf2+ as well as ...♖dx4. However, Timmerman could reply 31 ♙c4! and the ♙ tries to go to b3 and put pressure on f7; for example:

a) 31...♗f6 32 g5! ♗xd4 33 ♗xd4 ♖dx4 34 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 and White's ♙ is much more active than in the 30...♗d2 variation.

b) If 31...♙d5 32 ♙xd5 ♖xd5 33 ♖e1 the black ♙ is in danger. Also not 31...♜fxd4? 32 ♗xg5 ♖xd1+ 33 ♙e2. So maybe there would be nothing better than 30...♗xd2 after all.

30...♖xd5 31 ♖gd3 ♗c5 32 f3 ♖xd3 33 ♖xd3 ♗g5

Black threatens ...♗xg4 and definitely stands better now. White's kingside pawns are meant to be an offensive weapon in the Keres Attack but now they are his problem. If the black ♗ can filter in behind them, then the game is over.

34 ♙e1 ♖c4

Andersson begins the final assault.

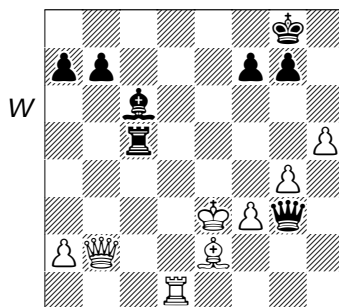
35 ♙f2

The ♙ returns to the kingside because 35 ♙d1 ♙a4+ 36 ♙e1 ♖c2 37 ♗d4 ♗h4+ is even worse for White.

35...♗h4+ 36 ♙e3

Not 36 ♙g2?? ♖xg4+ and checkmate.

36...♖c5 37 ♖d1 ♗g3 (D)



Pereira comments: “The white ♙ cannot get back under cover. Andersson plays the attack very well.” Now that the retreat to f2 is cut off, Black's threat is 38...♖e5+, followed by ...♙xf3.

38 ♖d8+ ♙h7 39 ♙d3+ f5! 40 ♗d4 40 ♙xf5+ fails to 40...♖xf5 41 gxf5 ♗g5+ and ...♗xd8.

40...♗xf3+ 41 ♙d2 ♗g2+ 42 ♙e3

After 42 ♙e2 ♖d5 43 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 44 ♗xd5 ♙xd5 Black has a winning ♙ endgame — Grahn.

42...♗g3+ 43 ♙d2 ♗h2+ 44 ♙e2

Not 44 ♙e3? ♖e5+ but Black demonstrates a forced win against the text move also.

44...♖e5 45 ♗c4 ♙f3

This wins a piece, so the game could have ended here.

White still has a series of checks but the pawns on g4 and h5, meant to attack the black ♙, now serve as his shield.

46 ♗g8+ ♙h6 47 ♗h8+ ♙g5 48 ♗xg7+ ♙h4 49 ♗f6+ ♙h3 0-1

The black ♙ reached safety and White resigned. This was a fine win by Andersson who revealed that he mostly analysed in his local cafe.

# Game 44

**White: Viktoras Milvydas (Lithuania)**

**Black: Sergey Muravyev (Ukraine)**

5<sup>th</sup> European Cht Preliminaries, 1994-97

*Spanish, Marshall Attack (C89)*

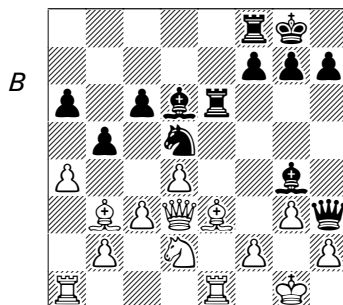
**The Players:** Muravyev was a finalist in the 20<sup>th</sup> USSR Championship and is an ICCF international master. Milvydas is also a CC-IM. His best result was fourth place in the 27<sup>th</sup> European Championship in the mid-1980s.

**About this game:** Theory battles frequently decide high-level CC games. Both players gladly enter well-known sharp lines in the Sicilian Defence, King's Indian or (in this case) the Spanish Marshall with a view to a complicated struggle and a good chance of a decisive result.

The player who does his research better and/or analyses most accurately can expect to win. Sometimes the player who gets his theoretical improvement first is the one with the greatest hope of victory but points are often scored by refuting dubious innovations.

Paradoxically, the result of this theory battle is a draw. Black's brilliant novelty — improving on analysis by that great Marshall expert Dr John Nunn — is matched by defensive tactics of extraordinary ingenuity that save White just when he seems to be doomed.

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4  
♘f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♙b3 0-0  
8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5  
11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d4 ♙d6 13 ♖e1 ♗h4  
14 g3 ♗h3 15 ♙e3 ♙g4 16 ♗d3  
♖ae8 17 ♘d2 ♖e6 18 a4 (D)



This is a standard position in the Marshall Attack.

**18...f5?**

Black should play 18...♗h5!, as introduced by Spassky against Tal in the 1965 Candidates Final; 18...bxa4 and 18...b4 are less reliable, but safer than 18...f5 which many books give as the main line although Spassky never played it.

**19 ♗f1?**



White follows accepted theory. A few years later, a big improvement for White was analysed by an American expert, Daniel Quigley, on the Internet. After 19 axb5! f4 (the supposed refutation) he found 20 ♖xf4! sacrificing a piece to break the attack and obtain dangerous queenside pawns. After 20...♗xf4 21 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 White's most accurate line is 22 bxa6! ♗xd2 23 ♖xd2 ♘c7 24 ♖c2! ♖a8 (24...h5 25 ♖e1!) 25 a7 ♖h6 26 ♗xe6+ ♖xe6 27 c4 ♖d6 28 ♖e4 ♖b4 29 b3 ♖c3 (29...♖xb3? 30 ♖b1) 30 ♖a4 ♖xb3 31 ♖xc6 and he went on to win in M.Barbosa de Oliveira-U.Maffei, 4<sup>th</sup> Coppa-Latina Europe-America tt 2000.

**19...♖h5 20 f4 bxa4 21 ♖xa4**

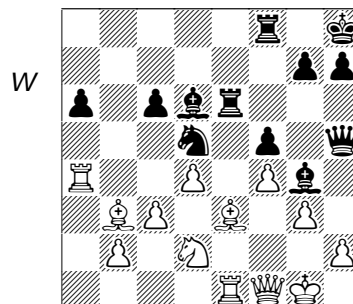
Many critical positions formerly considered by theoreticians under 18 a4 f5 can still be reached via 18 ♖f1 ♖h5 19 a4. This is one of them: the Old Main Line in the Marshall. It is like a railway junction because many routes lead to it and many lines stem from it. Black now has a wide choice.

**21...♗h8!? (D)**

In recent years, Black has mostly played 21...♖fe8 but there are some problems with it. Also 21...g5 and 21...♖b8 have been deeply analysed and played in the past.

As in other lines of the Marshall, CC players have made important contributions to the theory of this move, for example 21...♖fe8 22 ♖f2 g5 23 fxg5 f4 24 gxf4 ♗h3 (thought good for Black 10 years ago) 25 ♘c4!! ♗xf4 26 ♘e5 ♗xe5 27 dxe5 ♖xe5 28 ♖g3! ♖xg5 29 ♖xa6!

♖xg3+ 30 hxg3 ♗e6 31 ♗f2 ♖xe1+ 32 ♗xe1 ♘c7 33 ♗xe6+ ♖xe6 34 ♖a1. After a sequence virtually forced since 25 ♘c4!, Black has to grovel in an endgame a pawn down; White won in J.Nemec-V.Talla, Czech Cht corr 1997.



Returning to our game at the diagram above, Muravyev succeeds in reviving the ♗ move that had been written off by GM John Nunn a few years earlier. CC theory battles often proceed in this way. The best chance of springing an effective surprise on an opponent in a sharp opening is to find a move which changes the evaluation of a condemned line. In this case, Muravyev had found a novelty at move 24.

**22 ♘c4?!**

As is often the case in the Marshall, when Black unpins by moving his ♗ into the corner, White has to weigh up which minor piece is superior, his ♗ on b3 or the black ♘, which is now free to make attacking moves or to capture on e3.

Milvydas decided to retain his ♗,

but in view of the present game 22  $\text{♙xd5}$  seems to be necessary. After 22... $\text{cxd5}$  23  $\text{♖xa6 ♗fe8}$ , a position arises which used to be treated in theory books as a transposition to 21... $\text{♗fe8}$  22  $\text{♖xa6 ♖h8}$  23  $\text{♙xd5 cxd5}$ . After 24  $\text{♞b5!}$ , Black needs an improvement upon 24... $\text{♗h6!?$  25  $\text{♜f1 ♙f3}$  26  $\text{♙c1 ♗f8}$  27  $\text{♞e3 ♙e4}$  (Unzicker-Nunn, Bundesliga 1991) because of 28  $\text{b3!}$ , which still awaits practical tests.

Fortunately, it is by no means a death-blow to the Marshall if this line fails for Black, because he has 18... $\text{♞h5}$  as well as interesting sidelines such as 15... $\text{♖a8}$ , 15... $\text{♖a7}$  or 11... $\text{♙b7}$  to fall back on.

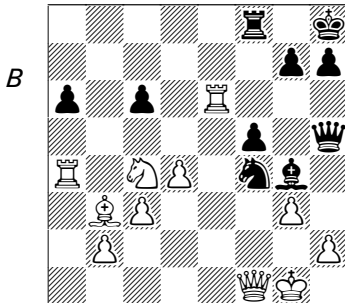
### 22... $\text{♙xf4!?$

This ingenious move was analysed by GM John Nunn in 1989. He thought it was inadequate but Muravyev's shocker at move 24 seems to mean Black draws and could easily win if White goes wrong. 22... $\text{♞xe3}$  23  $\text{♞xe3} \pm$  was prior theory.

### 23 $\text{♙xf4}$

If 23  $\text{gxf4? ♗g6}$  — Nunn.

### 23... $\text{♞xf4}$ 24 $\text{♖xe6 (D)}$



White cannot take the  $\text{♞}$  yet because of 24  $\text{gxf4? ♙h3}$  ( $\Delta$ ... $\text{♗g6+}$ ) and if 25  $\text{♞e5 ♗xe5}$  26  $\text{dxe5 ♞g4+}$  or 25  $\text{♗xe6 ♞g4+}$  26  $\text{♖h1}$  (26  $\text{♖f2 ♞xf4+}$ ) 26... $\text{♙xf1}$ .

### 24... $\text{♞h3+!!}$

Nunn only analysed 24... $\text{♞xe6}$  25  $\text{♞e5! f4}$  26  $\text{♙xe6 ♙xe6}$  27  $\text{♖xa6 ♖g8}$  28  $\text{♞xc6! ♙h3}$  29  $\text{♖a5! ♞h6}$  (29... $\text{♞g4}$  30  $\text{♞e5}$ ) 30  $\text{♞f3+-}$ .

### 25 $\text{♖g2 ♞g5!}$

Black is a whole  $\text{♗}$  down but this does not matter for the moment with the white  $\text{♗}$  offside on a4. Black's minor pieces are generating tremendous firepower. The most obvious threats are 26... $\text{♞xe6}$  and 26... $\text{♙h3+}$  followed by ... $\text{♙xf1}$  but these are not the only ideas Black has.

### 26 $\text{♞f2!}$

26  $\text{♖g1 ♞f3+}$  would be very unpleasant for White, who would have to choose between giving up his  $\text{♞}$  or else playing 27  $\text{♖f2}$  when the black  $\text{♗}$  also enters the attack by 27... $\text{f4}$ .

### 26... $\text{♙f3+!}$

Black could take the  $\text{♗}$  on e6 but that would give White time to get organised. Given his success in the game so far, Black will certainly be trying to win this position and he may have other ways of trying to do so, here or over the next few moves.

Care is required, however. For example, after 26... $\text{f4!}$  White has the amusing 27  $\text{♗e3!}$  when Black may be losing (27... $\text{♞h3}$  28  $\text{♞f1 ♞d5+}$  29  $\text{♗f3}$ ).

### 27 $\text{♖f1 f4}$

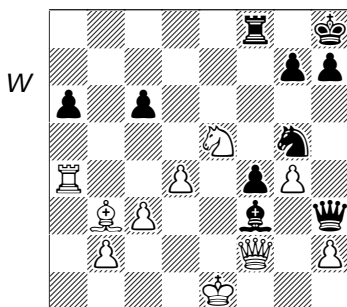
27... $\text{♞xe6!?$  28  $\text{♖xa6 f4}$  29  $\text{♖e1}$

♖e8 30 ♘d2 fxg3 is a suggestion from Dutch chess journalist John Elburg.

**28 g4**

28 ♖e1 comes into consideration but after 28...♗xe6 (28...fxg3!? 29 ♖xg3 ♗xe6) 29 ♖xa6 ♖e8 30 ♘d2 ♗g5 31 ♗d6 (as in a computer test game Nimzo-Rebel, 1999), Black can improve by 31...♖h6.

**28...♖h3+ 29 ♖e1 ♗xe6 30 ♗e5 ♗g5 (D)**



Things look bleak for White but now he comes up with an amazing drawing idea.

**31 ♖xa6!! ♕xg4 32 ♕c4!!**

Surprisingly, in view of Black's options to vary in the latter stages, this whole game was later repeated in a game from the Slovak CC Championship.

One of the players involved, CC-IM Pavel Eiben, then published the following variations that he had analysed, which show the traps White must circumvent:

a) 32 ♗xc6?? ♖d3 33 ♖a1 ♗f3+ 34 ♖xf3 ♖xf3 35 ♘d2 ♖e2+ 36 ♘c1 ♖e1+ 37 ♘c2 ♕f5#.

b) 32 ♖xc6?? ♗e4.

c) 32 ♗xg4?? ♖xg4 33 h3 ♖e8+ 34 ♘d2 ♖g3 35 ♖xg3 fxg3-+.

**32...♗e4**

Black can still try to win in other ways but it may be risky. If 32...g6 (to stop the perpetual check) 33 ♗xg4 ♖xg4 34 ♖e2 and 32...f3 33 ♖a7! are unclear (but here not 33 ♕d3 ♕e6 34 ♖xc6 ♖g2 nor 33 ♖xc6?? ♗e4-+ nor 33 ♗xg4 ♖xg4-+).

**33 ♖f3!!**

White puts his ♖ en prise to two black pieces but she cannot be captured because of White's 'drawing machine' involving a deflection from the c8-h3 diagonal. Thus if 33...♖xf3 (33...♕xf3 34 ♗f7+ is essentially the same.) 34 ♗f7+ ♘g8 (not 34...♖xf7?? 35 ♖a8+ and mates, because Black now lacks sufficient control of c8.) 35 ♗h6+ etc. again draws by repetition.

**33...♖h4+ 34 ♖g3!! ½-½**

This time the ♖ can be captured in three different ways, but it makes no difference: 34...fxg3 35 ♗f7+ ♘g8 36 ♗h6+.

A complete overview of the Marshall, and as much detail as you could want on the theory of this exciting gambit variation, can be found on the CD-ROM electronic book 'The Total Marshall' by Janis Vitomskis, Tim Harding & Martin Bennedik (Chess Mail, 2002).

# Game 45

**White: Grigory K. Sanakoev (Russia)**

**Black: Tõnu Õim (Estonia)**

14<sup>th</sup> CC World Championship Final, 1994-99

*Spanish, Classical Defence (C64)*

**The Players:** Grigory Sanakoev was the 12<sup>th</sup> CC World Champion, while Tõnu Õim had won the 9<sup>th</sup> Championship and the Axelson Memorial, which was of comparable strength to a world final. Winning the 14<sup>th</sup> Final, he became the first man ever to regain the world title.

**About this game:** This was the decisive game of the championship. Õim had never beaten Sanakoev, and twice lost, so here he made a special effort, beginning with an opening surprise.

The notes are based on comments Tõnu Õim submitted to 'Chess Mail' just after the game ended. I also looked critically at the comments in the book 'Sajandi Parim Kirimaletaja Tõnu Õim' edited by Taivo Kastan (Tallinn, 1999) where the game was analysed by computers.

**1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♜c6 3 ♚b5 ♚c5 4 c3 ♚b6 5 d4**

White can't win a pawn by 5 ♚xc6 dxc6 6 ♜xe5 because of 6...♙g5= attacking e5 and g2. White can play 5 0-0 but it leaves Black a freer hand after 5...d6 6 d4 ♚d7.

**5...exd4 6 cxd4 ♜ce7!?**

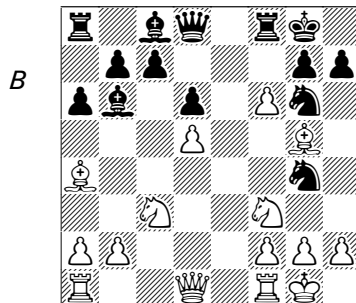
This move was revived a few years ago by Jonny Hector; Õim prepared

it specially for the 14<sup>th</sup> Final. The point is to advance in the centre after, for example, 7 ♚g5 c6 8 ♚a4 d5 9 e5 ♚g4 "with interesting play" says GM Glenn Flear in his book 'Offbeat Spanish'. White's next move forestalls this plan.

**7 d5! a6 8 ♚a4 ♜f6 9 ♜c3 0-0 10 e5**

The critical alternative is 10 d6 when Õim indicates 10...cxd6 11 ♙xd6 ♚c7 12 ♙d3 b5 (12...d5!?)∞. Instead 10...♜g6 11 0-0 cxd6 12 ♚g5 (Timmerman-Õim, won by White) and 12 ♙xd6 ♚c7 13 ♙d4 (Franzen-Õim, both from the Hans-Werner von Massow Memorial 1996-99) are somewhat in White's favour.

**10...♜g4 11 0-0 d6 12 ♚f4 ♜g6 13 ♚g5 f6 14 exf6 (D)**



**14...gxf6!**

The new idea. It is clear that after 14...gxf6 White's position is better.

**15 ♖c1!?**

This looks a bit odd at first sight as 15 ♖d2 (△ ♖c2, ♗e4, ♖c3) is the obvious retreat although it restricts the scope of the ♖. It makes sense on the assumption that Sanakoev had decided to develop his ♖ via a3 and therefore reasoned that the ♖ would interfere less with his other pieces by going to the long diagonal via c1-b2 rather than d2-c3. Öim would presumably have continued much as in the game.

**15...♗h8 16 ♖c2 ♖g8 17 ♗e4 ♖f8 18 a4!?**

The immediate 18 b4 followed by ♖b2 is better according to Öim; Sanakoev perhaps rejected this because 18...♖d7 19 ♖b2 ♗4e5 blocks the diagonal and leaves Black in control of f4. Now, however, Black switches focus and attacks the d5-pawn. Maybe 18 h3 also came into consideration.

**18...♗e7 19 b4 ♖f7 20 ♖b2 ♗e5 21 ♗xe5 fxe5 22 ♗h1! ♗xd5 23 f4**

"Now we see why a2-a4 was a waste of tempo for White," wrote Öim. He meant White is not quite ready for the complications that are breaking out. Some variations favour White, but not the most important ones.

**23...♖g7!**

There are two complicated alternatives that Öim did not mention.

a) 23...♖xg2! is possible, but probably premature since Black is trying to win this game.

Of course White won't fall into 24 ♗xg2?? ♗e3+ and ...gxd1 in a world

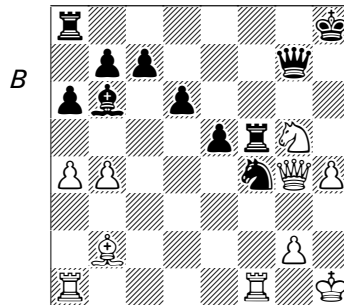
championship. He would play 24 fxe5 ♖g7 25 exd6 ♖xb2 26 ♖xd5 ♖h3 27 d7 with the point that if 27...♖xc2 the game ends in a draw: 28 d8♖+ ♖xd8 29 ♖xd8+ ♖g8 30 ♖f6+ ♖g7 31 ♖f8+ with perpetual check.

b) 23...♗e3?! would fall into a trap: 24 fxe5 ♖g7 25 ♗g5 ♗xd1 26 ♗f7+ ♖xf7 27 ♖xf7. Now the line 27...♖xg2 (not 27...♗xb2?? 28 ♖xh7#) 28 ♗xg2 ♗xb2 29 ♖xh7+ ♗g8 30 ♖a3, where this ♖ comes strongly into play, may indicate why Sanakoev wanted to play 18 a4. Instead 27...♗f2+ is relatively best but after 28 ♖xf2 ♖xf2 29 exd6+ ♖g7 30 dxc7 Black, despite his extra ♖, must fight hard even to draw.

**24 ♗g5 ♗xf4! 25 h4 ♖f8**

Preparing the sacrifice ...♖f8-f5xg5.

**26 ♖xh7 ♖f5 27 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 28 ♖g4 (D)**



**28...♖xg5!**

This sacrifice gives Black a long-lasting initiative.

**29 ♖xg5 ♖xg5 30 hxg5 ♗g7!**

With the point that 31 ♖xf4 fails to 31...♖h8+ and mate.

31 ♖h2 ♜d5 32 ♖a3 ♙e3

Õim said maybe 32...♜xb4 is better, but it is risky after 33 g6 and ♖a3-h3!. This comment is unclear to me; after 33...♖h8+ 34 ♖h3 ♖xh3+ 35 ♖xh3 ♖xg6 Black may have good winning chances. Instead, 33 a5 is the only move analysed in the Estonian book, e.g. 33...♖h8+ 34 ♖g3 ♙c5 35 ♖af3 ♜d5 36 ♖f7+ ♖g6 when White's counterplay may be insufficient.

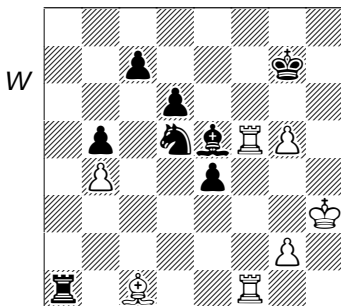
33 ♙c1 ♙d4!

The ♙ takes up its ideal position. Now if 34 ♙d2 e4!

34 ♖b3 b5 35 axb5 axb5 36 ♖h3 ♖a1?

Õim says that this move is inaccurate because it gave White a chance of saving himself at move 39. The Estonian book only analyses 36...♖a4 and 36...c6, but Õim told me that the best move is 36...♖a2.

37 ♖bf3 e4 38 ♖f5! ♙e5 (D)



39 ♖h4?!

Now the e-pawn becomes very strong and White is probably lost. White should try the very complicated

39 ♙b2 when play could go 39...♙xb2 (39...♖xf1 40 ♙xe5+ dxe5 41 ♖xf1 ♜xb4 42 ♖c1 is not a winning endgame for Black either.) 40 ♖xa1 and now:

a) 40...♙xa1 41 ♖xd5 ♙c3 42 ♖g4 ♙xb4 43 ♖xb5 (43 ♖d4 is another possibility.) 43...♙c5 and now Estonian master Harry Pohla overrules his computers and suggests 44 ♖xc5! dxc5 45 ♖f4 with an inevitable draw.

b) 40...♜e3 (or 40...♜e7 leading to the same position next move) 41 ♖b1 ♜xf5 42 ♖xb2 ♜d4 43 ♖g4 e3 44 ♖b1 e2 (Δ...♜c2) 45 ♖e1 c5 46 ♖f4 ♖g6 47 bxc5 dxc5 48 ♖e5 ♖xg5 49 ♖d5=.

39...♖g6 40 ♖f8 ♖a2

Finally the ♖ found its right place. 41 ♖g8+ ♖h7 42 ♖b8 ♖xg2 43 ♖xb5 c6 44 ♖b7+

44 ♖xd5 cxd5 45 b5 d4 46 b6 ♖g3!-+.

44...♖g6 45 b5 e3 46 ♖f3!

46 bxc6 e2 47 ♖e1 ♙g3+ 48 ♖h3 ♙xe1 49 ♖xg2 ♙a5-+.

46...e2 47 ♙d2 ♖g1 48 bxc6 ♖d1 49 ♙a5 ♜c3! 50 ♙xc3

The final disappointment for Sana-koev. Against 50 ♖e3, Black prepared 50...♖d4+ 51 ♖h3 ♖d3!-+.

50...♙xc3 51 ♖e7 e1♙+ 52 ♖xe1 ♙xe1+ 53 ♖g4 ♖d4+ 54 ♖f4 ♖xf4+ 55 ♖xf4 ♙a5 56 ♖e4 ♙c7 0-1

White resigned. After 57 ♖d5 ♖xg5 58 ♖e6 ♙b8! (not 58...♖f4? 59 ♖d7! =) and the black pawn queens while the ♙ eliminates White's pawn: 59 ♖d7 d5 60 ♖c8 (60 c7 ♙xc7) 60...♙f4 etc.

# Game 46

**White: Hans-Marcus Elwert (Germany)**

**Black: Heinz-Erich van Kempen (Germany)**

17<sup>th</sup> World CC Championship ¾-Final-4, 1995-96

*Catalan Opening (E04)*

**The Players:** Grandmaster Elwert, from Hamburg, has been one of the most successful correspondence players in the past ten years. In 2000-01, he won the NBC Millennium Email tournament ahead of five great opponents, earning the distinction of being the only player so far to defeat GM Ulf Andersson in a correspondence game. The author of a theoretical openings book 'Das Tschechische System', Elwert is qualified for a World Championship Final but as yet he has not played in one.

Van Kempen is also a very experienced postal and email player who has held the CC-GM title since 1999. His best result is second prize in the Pappier Memorial A email tournament.

**About this game:** Elwert kindly responded to my request to submit a previously unpublished game to include in this book. This was one of the games that brought him second place in the tournament. After the opening notes, the variations are almost entirely by him; the text is almost entirely by me.

1 ♖f3 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 a6 4 ♕g2 d5

4...b5!? is a playable alternative but Black prefers a transposition to Reti/Catalan lines.

**5 d4**

The Catalan Opening is seen more frequently in master chess than in amateur games. This position can also come about via, for example, 1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 d5 4 ♕g2 dxc4 5 ♗f3 when 5...a6 is the most popular move in recent years, whereas 5...♕e7 is the old move.

The characteristic formation, seen after White's fifth move, is a hybrid of the Queen's Gambit pawn structure with a kingside fianchetto. In many lines White allows his c-pawn to be captured without an immediate return, trusting to the increased scope of his light-squared ♕ after ...dxc4.

Black can also adopt closed formations, but the a-pawn move is a clear signal that he intends to capture and try to hold the pawn, because it rules out the immediate recapture by ♖a4+ and ♖xc4.

**5...dxc4 6 0-0**

For 6 ♗e5 see Game 64.

**6...♗c6**

This is "the most popular and it

seems the strongest move” according to GM Janjgava in his recent book on the Queen’s Gambit and Catalan. This game is at the cutting edge of new ideas in the variation.

6...b5 7 ♖e5 ♗d5 8 a4 ♙b7 9 e4 is another possibility.

7 e3!

The point of this move is to defend d4 so that 7...♖b8 can be met by 8 ♗fd2 making ...a6 look very silly, Black must first protect c6. 7 ♗c3!? ♖b8 8 e4 is the alternative.

7...♙d7 8 ♗c3 ♙d6

Here 8...♗d5?! is suspect as after 9 ♗d2 ♗xc3 10 bxc3 the white centre is strengthened and Black might miss this ♗ on the kingside later.

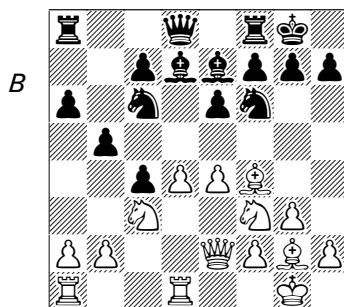
8...♖b8!? is possibly better, but the relevant games were played long after Elwert and van Kempen passed this point, e.g. 9 ♗e5 ♗a5!? 10 e4!? (10 ♖e2 b5) 10...♙e7 (10...b5 11 g4!, e.g. 11...b4 12 g5 bxc3 13 bxc3! Sosonko-Piket, Dutch Ch 1997) 11 ♗xd7 (11 ♙e3 0–0 12 ♖f3 b5 13 ♖ad1 b4 14 ♗e2 ♙b5 15 ♖fe1 ♗c6! Bernard-Korneev, Paris 1996) 11...♗xd7 12 ♖g4 h5 13 ♖e2 h4 14 ♙e3 h3 15 ♙h1 b5 16 ♖ad1 ♙b4 17 ♖g4 ♙xc3 18 ♖xg7 ♖f6 19 ♖xf6 ♗xf6 20 bxc3 b4 21 ♙f4 (½–½, 32) Gulko-Korneev, Mondariz 1997.

9 ♖e2 b5 10 e4 ♙e7

It was well known that 10...e5 11 dxe5 ♗xe5 12 ♗xe5 ♙xe5 13 f4 led to a quick win for White after 13...♙d4+ 14 ♙e3 ♙c6 15 e5! ♙xg2 16 ♖xg2 ♙xc3 17 exf6 ♖d2 18 ♖f2! in Khalifman-Basin,

Minsk 1985, although 13...♙xc3 14 bxc3 c6 (leading to a 35-move draw) was subsequently seen in Tkachiev-Beliavsky, Enghien-les-Bains 1999.

11 ♖d1 0–0 12 ♙f4! (D)



A strong move, which earlier had been played against Elwert. He varies from 12 ♗e1 e5 13 dxe5 ♗xe5 14 h3 c5 15 f4± (Krzyszton-Sterud, CCOL10 Final, 1988-93). Elwert’s plan is more direct. He intends to advance in the centre where he has a space advantage, while Black opts for queenside counterplay.

12...♗a5

Black does not like the idea of passive defence with an extra pawn and seeks, with his next move, to disrupt White’s flow with a queenside demonstration. However, this plan puts the ♗ on a poor square and loosens Black’s pawn structure.

12...♖c8!? (getting the ♖ off the line of White’s ♖) is very interesting, as played in R.Sielaff-Elwert, 47<sup>th</sup> EU CC Ch 1992 and earlier, unconvincingly, in Levin-Novikov, Ukrainian Ch 1986 (½–½, 30).



**13 d5 b4**

If 13...exd5 White does not recapture but continues 14 e5 ♖g4 (14...♗h5 15 ♗xd5) 15 ♗xd5 ♙c5 16 ♗e3 ♗xe3 (16...♙c8 17 ♙d2! with a double attack on the d7-♙ and a5-♗) 17 ♙xe3 ♙xe3 18 ♙xe3 when Black has serious weaknesses.

13...♙c8 comes into consideration still, but after 14 ♗e5 (or 14 ♗d4!? c5 15 ♗c2±) 14...b4 (14...♙e8 15 ♙h3±) 15 dxe6 (15 ♗xd7!?) 15...♙xe6 (15...fxe6 16 ♙h3±) 16 ♗d5 ♙xd5 (16...♙e8!?) 17 exd5 ♙d6 18 ♗xc4 ♙xf4 19 ♗xa5± White has regained the pawn.

**14 dxe6**

White creates a new weakness on e6 and sets up a pin on the d-file.

The alternative was 14 e5 at once:

a) 14...♗h5? 15 ♙d2! bxc3 (15...♙b8 16 dxe6 fxe6 17 ♗e4) 16 ♙xc3 exd5 17 ♙xd5 ♗b7 18 ♙ad1 ♗c5 19 e6+-.

b) 14...bxc3? 15 dxe6 cxb2 16 ♙xb2 fxe6 (16...♙b8 17 ♙c2±) 17 exf6 ♙xf6 (17...gxf6 18 ♙d2 ♙a4 19 ♙e1 ♙xd1 20 ♙xd1+-) 18 ♗e5 ♙b8 (not 18...♙b8? 19 ♙xb8 ♙axb8 20 ♗xd7+- nor 18...c6 19 ♙ab1±) 19 ♙a3 ♙xe5 20 ♙xe5 ♙b5 21 ♙c3±.

c) However, Black can defend better by 14...♗xd5! 15 ♗xd5 exd5 16 ♙xd5 c6 ∞.

**14...fxe6 15 e5**

The focus of play starts to shift towards the kingside, where Black hopes the half-open f-file gives him some activity. If instead 15 ♗b1 ♙c5!

**15...♗h5**

If 15...bxc3 16 exf6 ♙xf6 17 bxc3 with massive control of the centre.

**16 ♙d2**

Of course White does not want his ♙ to be captured on f4. This temporary piece sacrifice exploits Black's pair of "♗s on the rim". If Black captures the white ♗, he will soon lose the material back with a worsening position: 16...bxc3? 17 ♙xc3 ♗c6 18 ♗g5 (18 ♗e1!?) 18...♙e8 19 ♙xd7! ♙xd7 20 ♙d1 ♙e8 21 ♗xe6+-.

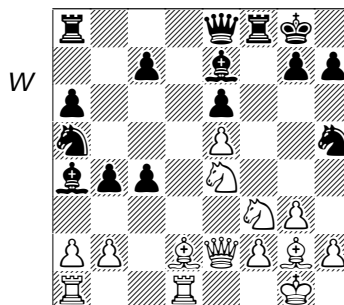
**16...♙e8!**

This is the best defence. Black protects the h5-♗ and unpins his ♙. Now if 17 ♗d4 (to open the long diagonal) he has 17...c5!

Instead 16...♙c6?! would be met by a neat ♙ switchback: 17 ♙g5! ♙e8 18 ♙xe7 (or 18 ♗e4) 18...♙xe7 19 ♗e4 with an attack.

**17 ♗e4 ♙a4 (D)**

Elwert points out that this move is a loss of time — however, Black must calculate extremely far in order to see why. White anyway has a clear advantage after 17...♙c6 18 ♙g5 or 17...♙b5 18 ♗d4.



**18 ♖eg5!?**

White had a choice of aggressive continuations. Elwert also analysed 18 ♗fg5 (18 ♖h3 ♖xd1 19 ♜xd1 ♜g6! 20 ♗fg5 transposes.) 18...♖xd1 19 ♜xd1 ♜g6 (19...♖xg5 20 ♗xg5 ♜b8 21 ♖h3± or 19...♜f5 20 ♗xe6) 20 ♖h3 (After 20 ♗f6+!? gxf6 21 exf6 ♖xf6 22 ♖xa8 ♜xa8 23 ♜xe6+ ♖g7 White probably only has perpetual check.) 20...♗c6!! (20...♖xg5 21 ♗xg5 c3 22 bxc3 bxc3 23 ♖c1±) 21 ♜xc4 (Better than 21 f4 c3! 22 bxc3 bxc3 23 ♖xe6+ ♖h8∞ or 21 ♖xe6+ ♖h8 22 ♖g4 ♗xg3 23 hxg3 ♗xe5∞) 21...♗xe5 22 ♜xe6+ ♜xe6 23 ♖xe6+ ♖h8 24 f4 ♗d3 25 ♗f7+ ♜xf7 26 ♖xf7 ♗f6 27 ♗xf6 ♖xf6 28 b3±.

**18...♖c5!**

18...♖xd1? should lose: 19 ♜xd1 ♖xg5 (19...♖c5 20 ♖h3) 20 ♗xg5 (20 ♖xb4!?) 20...♜b8 21 ♖h3 ♖h8 (21...g6 22 ♗xe6 ♜f7 23 ♖xb4!+- or 21...♜b6? 22 ♗xe6 ♜xe6 23 ♖xe6+ ♜xe6 24 ♖xb4+-) 22 ♗xe6 ♜g8 23 ♖g4+-.

**19 ♖h3! ♖c6! 20 ♖g4!!**

It is important to play this at once and not be tempted by the e-pawn: 20 ♖xe6+?! ♖h8 21 ♖g4 h6! (21...♗f6 22 ♖h3 ♗d5 23 ♜e4+-) 22 ♗e4 (22 ♗e6 ♖xf3 23 ♖xf3 ♜xe6∞) 22...♖xe4 23 ♜xe4 ♗f6 24 ♜f5 ♗xg4 25 ♜xg4∞.

Other lines Elwert looked at were 20 ♜ac1?! ♖d5∞, 20 ♗e4? c3!! 21 bxc3 bxc3 22 ♖xc3 ♜g6! with an attack, and 20 ♖e3? ♖xe3 21 ♜xe3 h6∞.

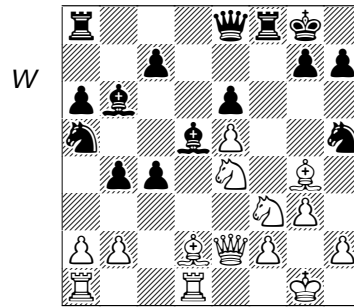
**20...♖d5**

Not 20...♜d8? 21 ♖e3 ♖xe3

22 ♜xe3+- . If 20...h6!? 21 ♗xe6 ♖xf3 (21...♖d7 22 ♖xb4 ♖xb4 23 ♗fd4) 22 ♖xf3 ♜xe6 23 ♖e3 ♜xe5 24 ♜d5 ♜f6 25 ♜xc5 ♜xf3 26 ♜xf3 ♜xf3 27 ♜xa5 White stands clearly better.

**21 ♗e4 ♖b6 (D)**

Not 21...♜g6? 22 ♗fg5+- nor 21...♖xe4 22 ♜xe4 g6 (22...h6 23 ♖e3) 23 ♖g5 with an attack.



Black has held on to his queenside majority until now. Here he sets a trap: if the b-pawn is captured then Black gets tactical chances on the kingside (22 ♖xb4 ♗f4!).

**22 ♗fg5**

White unleashes the battery against the ♗, which must be sacrificed. 22 ♜e1! also came into consideration.

**22...♗xg3**

22...g6? saves the ♗ but costs the exchange: 23 ♖xh5 gxh5 24 ♗f6+ ♜xf6 25 exf6.

Also if 22...♜b5 23 ♖xh5 ♗c6 (23...h6 24 ♜g4+-) 24 ♖f4 h6 25 ♜c2+-, or 22...♗c6 23 ♖xh5 ♗d4 24 ♜g4 g6 25 ♖xb4 gxh5 26 ♜h4 with an attack.

23 **hxg3** ♖c6

Now White has a piece against two pawns but must be on his guard against counterplay.

24 **♙e3!**

White starts to neutralise Black's activity. Not 24 ♙h5? ♜d4 25 ♖g4 g6∞.

24...♙xe3

24...♖g6 fails to 25 ♙xb6 cxb6 26 ♙xe6+!, e.g. 26...♙xe6 27 ♜xe6 ♖xe6 28 ♜d6 winning material (28...♖xe5 29 ♖xc4+).

25 **♖xe3 h6**

After 25...♜xe5 26 ♙e2 Black has three pawns for the piece, but ♜c5 is going to be hard to meet.

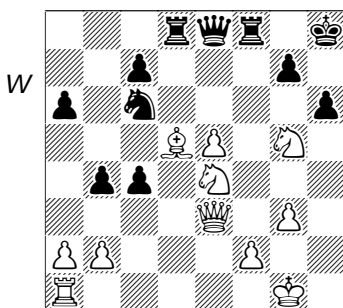
26 **♜xd5!**

In order to protect and increase his gains, White must sacrifice the exchange. 26 ♜f3 would be a tactical error because 26...♖g6 threatens two pieces.

26...exd5

Not 26...hxg5 27 ♜c5+-.

27 **♙e6+ ♜h8 28 ♙xd5 ♜d8 (D)**



If 28...hxg5?? 29 ♜g2 and the ♜

comes to the h-file to give checkmate.

Or if 28...♖xe5 29 ♙xc6 ♜ad8 30 ♖c5 ♖xc5 (30...♖xb2 31 ♜f1+-) 31 ♜xc5 ♜d6 32 ♜ge6+-.

29 **♜d6!!**

Black probably expected 29 ♙xc6, but White finds a spectacular move to create mating threats.

29...cxd6 30 **♖e4 g6**

If 30...hxg5? 31 ♖h1+ and mates.

31 **♙xc6 ♖e7**

31...♖xe5 leaves Black a piece in arrears in the endgame after 32 ♖xe5+ dxе5 33 ♜e6+-.

32 **♜f3 ♜h7**

Also 32...♜xf3 33 ♖xf3 ♖xe5 will not save Black after 34 ♖f7, for if 34...d5 35 ♜d1 or 34...♖xb2 35 ♜e1 and the last piece comes strongly into play.

33 **e6**

The material balance is now slightly in White's favour (♙+♜ v ♜+pawn) but — more to the point — White commands the strategic heights: d4, d5 and e4.

Moreover, he has a strong passed pawn whereas numerous black pawns are vulnerable. The rest is just mopping up.

33...♜f6 34 **♜d4 h5**

If 34...c3 35 bxc3 bxc3 36 ♜b1+-, or 34...♜df8 35 f4+-.

35 **♜c1 ♜df8 36 f3 c3 37 bxc3 bxc3 38 ♜xc3 ♜b8 39 ♜b3 ♜xb3 40 axb3 ♜f8 41 ♖h4 1-0**

Black resigns because he obviously cannot exchange ♖s (due to e6-e7 etc.) while after 41...♜f6 White wins with 42 ♙d7 and 43 ♜c6.

# Game 47

**White: Mikhail M. Umansky (Russia)**

**Black: Heinrich Burger (Germany)**

Hans-Werner von Massow Memorial, 1996-98

*Fianchetto Grünfeld (D72)*

**The Players:** Mikhail Umansky can reckon, like Kasparov, that 13 is his lucky number. He won both the 13<sup>th</sup> USSR Correspondence Championship (a very strong event) and later the 13<sup>th</sup> World Championship in which he was the “dark horse” who outpaced the favourites, Bang and Penrose. Umansky, who is also a FIDE International Master, has now emigrated with his family to Germany.

Dr Hans Berliner has compared Umansky’s style to Mikhail Tal; the Russian’s best games are very sharp and finely calculated but also have strategic depth.

Heinrich Burger emigrated from West Germany to the East during the Cold War. After the reunification of the country he found himself back in the Federal Republic and playing on the German national team! He became a CC grandmaster in 1996.

**About this game:** When I first met Umansky in 1996 — at that time the new World Champion — I made a short interview with him, which was published in ‘Chess Mail’ 2/1997.

Probably the most striking comment that he made on that occasion was: “I think that in CC the outcome of the game mostly depends on the opening”.

Important opening ideas are not the sole preserve of sharp openings like the Sicilian and King’s Indian. Novelties of a strategic character are very important in high-level correspondence chess. The following game, which began shortly after our meeting, was played in the strongest postal tournament ever held. It shows how Umansky applied his philosophy to beat a tough opponent.

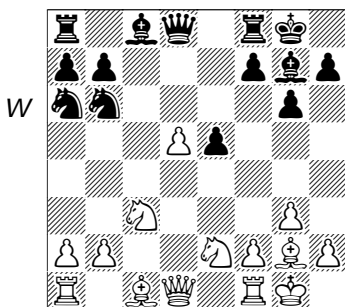
**1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 ♙g7 4 ♙g2 d5  
5 cxd5 ♜xd5 6 e4 ♜b6 7 ♜e2 e5**

This possibility is not even mentioned in the book ‘Fianchetto Grünfeld’ by Mikhailchishin and Beliavsky but a known position soon arises by transposition.

**8 d5 0–0 9 0–0 c6 10 ♜bc3**

This position more usually arises from 7...0–0 8 0–0 c6 9 ♜bc3 e5 10 d5.

**10...cxd5 11 exd5 ♜a6 (D)**



**12 ♖b3**

A novelty. 12 b3 is known from Antoshin-Tukmakov, USSR 1972, while 12 a4 has also been seen. Now if 12...♙g4 13 ♙e3 ♜c8 14 ♞fd1.

**12...♞c5**

12...♙g4 13 ♙e3 ♜c8 14 ♞fd1 ±.

**13 ♖a3 ♞a6 14 ♞d1 ♞c4 15 ♖b3 ♞a5**

15...♞d6 16 ♙e3 ♙d7 17 ♞e4 ±.

**16 ♖c2 ♙f5**

If 16...f5 17 d6 ± or 16...♙d7 17 d6 ♞b4 18 ♖e4 ±.

**17 ♙e4**

Note how, whenever a black piece seems to come to an active square, Umansky drives it back or (in this case) exchanges it, gradually gaining control of more of the board.

The potential energy of White's passed pawn and the fact that it controls key squares (especially c6) limits Black's possibilities.

**17...♙xe4**

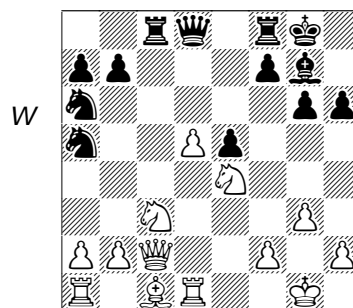
If 17...♙d7 18 d6 f5 19 ♙d5+ ♖h8 20 a3 ♜c8 21 b4 ♞c6 22 ♖a2 ♞ab8 23 ♙b2.

**18 ♞xe4 ♞c8**

If 18...h6 19 b4 ♞xb4 20 ♖a4 ♞a6 21 ♙a3 ♜e8 22 d6+.

White has a very powerful central passed pawn which breaks the opponent's position into two halves and all White's pieces are better placed than their opposite numbers: Black's ♙ has no target and his ♞s are particularly badly situated on the edge of the board.

**19 ♞2c3 h6 (D)**



Black prepares ...f5, ...e4 to bring his position to life. White, however, has seen further.

**20 b4 ♞xb4**

Not 20...♞c4 21 d6 f5 22 d7 ♜c7 23 ♞b5 and wins, but now if 21 ♖a4 ♜c4 22 ♙a3 ♞xa2.

However, Umansky found what Kotov called a "creeping move": a short ♖ sidestep which significantly alters the tactical possibilities.

**21 ♖b1 ♞a6 22 ♙a3!**

With the point that if 22...♜e8 then 23 d6 ♖d7 24 ♞d5 is winning. Instead 22 d6?! f5 23 ♞d5 doesn't work because of 23...♖h7! 24 d7 ♜a8! (Umansky). The move chosen effectively gives up two minor pieces for a ♜ but retains the strong

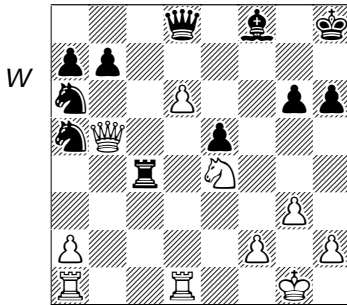
d-pawn and creates serious kingside weaknesses.

**22...f5 23 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 24 d6 ♖c4**

It's all tactics now. Black presumably did not like the look of 24...fxe4 25 ♗xe4 b6 26 ♖d3 ♗b4 27 ♖b5, e.g. 27...♗bc6 28 ♖d5+ ♔g7 and now maybe 29 d7 ♖c7 30 ♖ac1 △ ♖e6, ♗d6.

**25 ♖b5 fxe4 26 ♗xe4 ♔h8!?** (D)

The idea is to prevent the ♖ invading on f7 with check: 26...♔h7 27 ♖d5 ♗b4 28 ♖f7+ ♖g7 29 d7 ♖xe4 30 ♖d6 ♖g4 31 ♖e6 wins according to Umansky.



Now White undoubtedly had to do a lot of calculation to find the correct route through a maze of tempting variations.

Umansky rejected 27 ♖xe5+ ♖g7 28 ♖e6 ♖xa1 29 d7 because after 29...♗c7 30 ♖xg6 ♖xe4 31 ♖xh6+ ♔g8 32 ♖g6+ ♖g7 33 ♖xe4 ♗c6 34 ♖d6 ♖e5 Black's pieces cooperate well, despite the denuded kingside. **27 ♖d5! ♗b4 28 ♖xe5+ ♖g7 29 ♖e6 ♖xa1 30 d7**

By comparison with the previous

variation, the ♗ is further from the passed pawn and if 30...♗bc6? then 31 ♖e8+ ♔g7 32 ♖d6 wins.

**30...♖xe4!?** 31 ♖xe4 ♗ac6

31...♗bc6? 32 ♖e8+ ♔g7 33 ♖xa1 ♗c4 34 ♖e1+-.

**32 ♖xg6!**

This strips the black ♔ of more cover. After 32 ♖e8+?! ♔g7 33 ♖xa1 ♗d3! Black has chances of achieving a blockade.

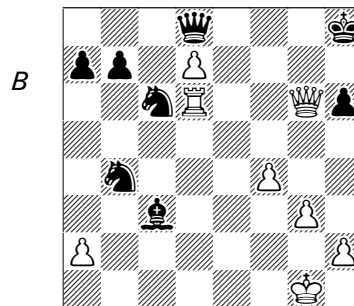
**32...♖e5**

The white ♖ can beat three black minor pieces after 32...♖g7 33 ♖e1 ♖xd7 34 ♖e8+ ♖xe8 35 ♖xe8+ ♔h7 36 f4 etc.

**33 f4 ♖c3**

Against 33...♖b6+ 34 ♔g2 ♗d8 35 ♖e8+ ♔g7 the best line appears to be 36 ♖e7+ ♔g8 37 ♖xe5 ♗bc6 38 ♖f6 and White should win. If instead 36 fxe5 ♗bc6 37 ♖d6 (Umansky), Black may hang on by 37...♖b1!.

**34 ♖d6 1-0** (D)



Black resigned. The final point is a mating attack after 34...♖f8 35 ♖e6 ♖c5+ 36 ♔g2 ♖d5+ 37 ♔h3 ♖xd7 38 f5 ♗e7 39 ♖f7.

# Game 48

**White: Volker-Michael Anton (Germany)**

**Black: Dr Dick D. van Geet (Netherlands)**

Hans-Werner von Massow Memorial, 1996-2001

*Leningrad Dutch (A81)*

**The Players:** Volker-Michael Anton has suffered since his youth from muscular dystrophy, which seriously handicaps his lifestyle. Nevertheless, he has made friends all over the world through CC, at which he excels.

Dr van Geet is a FIDE IM and CC -GM with a highly original style.

**About this game:** The Hans-Werner von Massow Memorial, organised by Germany in memory of the long-time ICCF President, was the strongest postal chess event ever played (in terms of rating). Every one of the 15 players was a grandmaster, and Anton finished in first place ahead of seven world champions.

Mr Anton kindly gave me permission to base the notes to this game on the comments that he wrote for 'Chess Mail' magazine. From move 17 onwards, most of the notes are his.  
**1 d4 f5 2 g3 g6 3 ♖g2 ♗g7 4 ♜f3 c6 5 0-0 d6 6 b3 ♜h6!?**

Black intends a rapid ...e7-e5 and the ♜ — going to f7 instead of f6 — will not block the action of the fianchettoed ♗; the downside

is the extra tempo expended on its development. The idea of playing a Leningrad Dutch with ...♜h6 was pioneered in the 1970s by the highly original English IM Michael Basman.

Van Geet, too, is unafraid of original concepts. His habitual opening is 1 ♜c3 (he even played it against Spassky) and he once beat a CC-GM with 1 e4 ♜a6!? (Dünhaupt-van Geet, BdF-40 1986-92).

**7 ♗b2 0-0 8 ♖c1!?**

Anton avoids routine moves like 8 c4. He protects his b2-♗ and prepares to bring his ♖ to the d-file.

**8...♜f7 9 ♖d1 ♜d7**

D.Komljenović-J.Bosch, Barcelona 1993, went instead 9...♖c7 10 d5 ♗h6 11 e3 e5 12 dxe6 ♗xe6 13 c4 ♜a6 14 ♜c3 ♖ad8 15 ♖d2 ♜c5 16 ♜d4 ♗c8 17 b4 ♜e6 18 ♜b3 ♜e5 19 ♖e2 g5 20 f4 and White eventually won. Anton's approach is completely different; he keeps his pawn on d4 so that after ...e5 and the exchange of pawns, Black has an e-pawn not a d-pawn.

**10 c4 e5 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 ♜c3 ♖b6**

12...e4 would be ineffectual and lead to holes in Black's position; such pawns are usually stronger when they stand abreast.

13 ♖a4 ♖c7

Of course Black could have played his ♖ to c7 on move 12 but he hopes that the white ♖ will be worse placed on a4 than on c3. Also, 12...♖c7 might have been met by 13 e4 which now would lose a pawn.

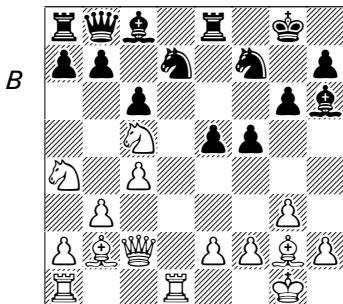
14 ♖g5 ♖h6!

This is more active than 14...♖xg5 when after 15 ♖xg5 f4 16 ♖e7, for example, Black has development problems and a 'hole' on d6.

15 ♖e6

On the other hand, this is only possible because the ♖ is on a4 protecting the ♖ in the line 15...♖xc1? 16 ♖xc7.

15...♖b8 16 ♖c2 ♖e8 17 ♖ec5 (D)



17...♖f8

Van Geet said later that it would have been safer to exchange ♖s.

18 b4 ♖c7 19 ♖b3 ♖e6 20 a3 ♖eg5 21 ♖c3 ♖g7

Black said afterwards that 21...f4

followed by ...♖h3+ might have been more appropriate.

However, Anton considers that after 21...f4 22 ♖c5 ♖h3+ 23 ♖f1 White's chances are definitely preferable because of his control of the square e4.

22 ♖c5 ♖f8

There are many possibilities here, for example 22...♖d6 comes to mind. Black chooses confrontation right away.

23 ♖b3 ♖d7

After 23...♖g7 White has to consider the question, whether to allow a draw by repetition of the position, or not?

I suspect he would have avoided the draw.

24 ♖d2 ♖e6 25 e3 ♖ac8

"Here I should have tried 25...e4 with complications, but I was overconfident and made a poor move choice," wrote van Geet in the players' post-mortem analysis.

26 c5 b6 27 cxb6 axb6 28 ♖ac1 ♖ed8 29 ♖b3

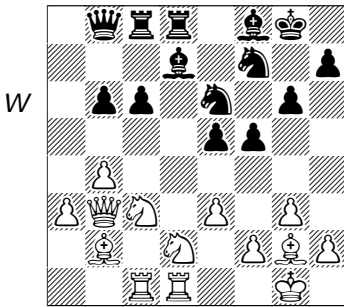
White's advantage has steadily increased since move 23 and now Black makes the losing move.

To avoid the invasion of the white c3-♖, exploiting the pin on the c-file, Black must move his ♖ but he chooses the wrong square for her. 29...♖a7 was best now, says Anton.

29...♖b8? (D)

"Now I am terribly punished," wrote van Geet; "I had completely overlooked White's next move. Yet at first I was not so pessimistic. Only





after 35 h4 did I realise how tragic my situation was.”

**30** ♖de4!!

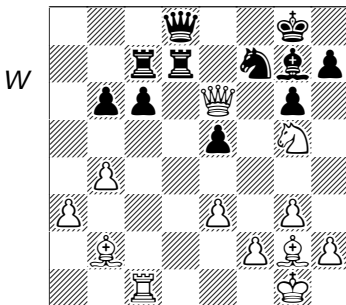
Anton said that to be able to play such a shock move against an opponent as strong as Dick van Geet makes it that much more special.

“I discovered this sacrifice, perhaps the best in all of my games, when I chose 29 ♖b3. I was at first surprised by the combination, and also by the nice follow-up move 35 h4 which I found.”

**30...fxe4 31** ♖xe4 ♙g7

This is a better try than 31...♖g7 or 31...♙e7 according to Anton.

**32** ♜xd7 ♜xd7 **33** ♚xe6 ♜cc7 **34** ♖g5 ♚d8 (D)



**35 h4!!**

“I kept thinking that I have a little light, but White always sees more and deeper. A surprise in the following play is that Black has no chance and is lost,” commented van Geet.

Anton left to readers the task of analysing the different variations and possibilities, so I will try to explain; but you can really understand that White is better only by looking for something for Black to do, slowly realising (as van Geet did) that Black cannot do anything.

Black has the nominal material advantage of the exchange for a pawn, but his ♖ is awkwardly pinned. The h-pawn advance, protecting the ♖, creates a threat to capture on c6 and there are also various manoeuvres by which the light-squared ♙ could move from g2 to reinforce the pin on the a2-g8 diagonal. Here are a few sample variations:

a) Wholesale exchanges in which White regains his material will leave Black a pawn down in a hopeless ♙ endgame, e.g. 35...♜d1+ 36 ♜xd1 ♚xd1+ 37 ♖h2 ♚d7 38 ♙h3 ♚xe6 39 ♙xe6 ♖f8 40 ♖xf7 ♜xf7 41 ♙xf7 ♖xf7 42 a4.

b) 35...♜d2 36 ♜xc6 ♜xb2 37 ♜xc7 ♚xc7 38 ♙d5. Black can sacrifice his ♜ on f2 but he won't get a perpetual check.

c) 35...h6 36 ♖xf7 ♜xf7 37 ♙e4 building an attack against the black ♖ on the weakened light squares.

d) 35...♖h8 36 ♖xf7+ ♜xf7 37 ♙xe5 winning a second pawn for the exchange and heading for a superior

endgame. If ♖s are exchanged, White can advance his passed e-pawn and Black's c-pawn is weak.

e) 35...♖d6 (or 35...♖e7) 36 ♖b3 maintaining the pin.

Van Geet tried for counterplay on the queenside but this also failed.

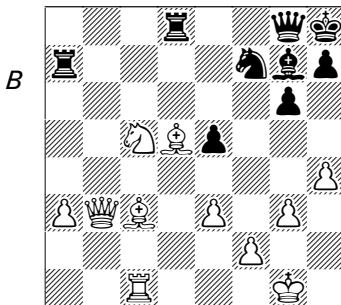
35...c5 36 bxc5 bxc5 37 ♖c3

Black has to meet the threat of ♖a5 and his passed pawn is firmly blockaded.

37...♖a7 38 ♖b3!

The ♗ comes to e6 and then eliminates the danger pawn.

38...♗h8 39 ♗e6 ♖g8 40 ♗xc5 ♖d8 41 ♖d5 (D)



41...♖b8

According to Black afterwards, returning the exchange by 41...♖xa3 was perhaps better. However, it does not save the game because White has an extra pawn and superior piece activity (42 ♖xa3 ♖xd5 43 ♗e6).

42 ♖b4 ♖c7 43 ♖c4 ♖c8 44 ♖e6 ♖e8 45 ♗a6 ♖xc4 46 ♖xc4 ♖b7 47 ♗g2!

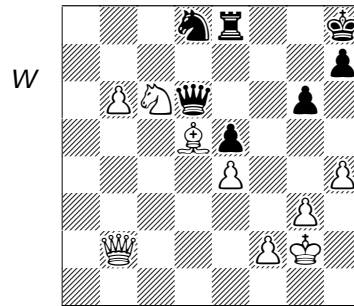
White is in no hurry and improves

his ♗ position. This will prove wise later on.

47...♖f8 48 ♖d5 ♖xb4 49 axb4!

This is much stronger than winning back the exchange. White now has a powerful passed pawn.

49...♖e7 50 b5 ♗d6 51 ♖c5 ♖d7 52 ♗b8 ♖c7 53 ♗c6 ♖e8 54 b6 ♖d7 55 ♖b4 ♗b7 56 e4 ♖d6 57 ♖b2 ♗d8 (D)



58 ♗xd8!

The simplest. Naturally 58 ♗a5 is also good, and the b-pawn will cost Black a piece.

58...♖xd8

If 58...♖xd8 59 f4.

59 ♖c6 ♖e6 60 b7 ♖b8 61 ♖a1 ♖f6 62 f4 ♗g7

On 62...♗g8 comes 63 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 64 fxe5 ♖f8 65 e6.

63 ♖xe5 1-0

Black resigned because of the inevitable moves 63...♖xe5 64 fxe5 ♖f8 65 ♖d7. He was the first to congratulate Anton on winning the tournament, remarking that the game deserved the beauty prize.

# Game 49

**White: Erik B.H. Bang (Denmark)**

**Black: Mikhail M. Umansky (Russia)**

Hans-Werner von Massow Memorial, 1996-98

*Nimzo-Indian Defence (E42)*

**Notes by Grandmaster Alexander Baburin**

**The Players:** Erik Bang (born October 25, 1944) has been an ICCF international master since 1974 and a grandmaster since 1979; he also played many times for Denmark 'over the board'. His wins in strong CC tournaments include the Canadian 60<sup>th</sup> Jubilee tournament and best result on top board in 8<sup>th</sup> Correspondence Olympiad Final. He was runner-up in the 13<sup>th</sup> World Championship and before that in the Axelson Memorial.

Mikhail Umansky was introduced in Game 47.

**About this game:** Here Bang takes revenge for his loss to Umansky, which decided the top two places in the World Championship a few years earlier. On that occasion an almost imperceptible strategic error by Bang in the opening was punished. This time it is Umansky who makes the slight but fatal error. I am grateful to FIDE grandmaster Alexander Baburin for permission to reproduce the notes he wrote specially for my magazine

'Chess Mail'. A few additional opening references have been added.

**1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♙b4 4 e3 c5 5 ♘ge2 b6**

I am not an expert on this line, but I believe that here Black is currently experiencing some difficulties.

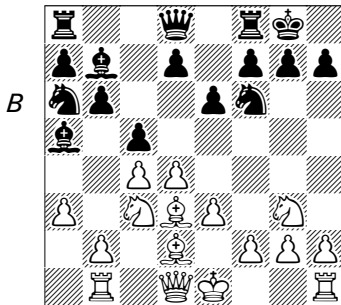
**6 a3 ♙a5 7 ♖b1 ♘a6 8 ♙d2**

The latest fashion here is 8 f3, for example 8...0-0 9 d5 ♖e8 10 ♔f2 exd5 11 cxd5 d6 12 ♘g3 ♙xc3 13 bxc3 ♘c7 14 c4 b5 15 e4 bxc4 16 ♙xc4 with complicated play, as in the game Aleksandrov-Serper, New York Open 1998.

**8...0-0 9 ♘g3 ♙b7**

This is the first important moment. Instead of the text move, 9...d5!? looks like a better try. For example, in the game Knaak-Christiansen, German Team Cup Final, Porz 1997, Black obtained a reasonable position after 10 cxd5 cxd4 11 exd4 ♙xc3 12 bxc3 exd5 13 f3 ♘c7 14 ♔f2 ♖e8 15 h4 ♙a6 16 ♙xa6 ♘xa6 17 h5 ♔d7.

**10 ♙d3 (D)**



### 10...Rc8?

I don't quite understand the point of this move. It seems that Black is wasting a valuable tempo, jeopardising his counterplay in the centre.

Black later tried 10...d5 here. After 11 cxd5 cxd4 12 exd4 ♙xc3 13 bxc3 ♖xd5 14 ♗e2 ♜c7 15 f3 White stood better in the game Lautier-Beliavsky, Ubeda 1997. Then in Shulman-Marin, Excelsior Cup, Göteborg 1999, Black improved with 14...♞b8 15 f3 ♖a2 16 ♞e4 ♞xe4 17 fxe4 ♙a6! 18 0-0 ♙xd3 19 ♖xd3 ♖xa3 20 ♖g3 f6 21 ♙f4 e5 22 dxe5 ♖c5+ 23 ♙h1 ½-½.

### 11 ♖e2!

Now ...d5 is no longer an option for Black.

### 11...cxd4 12 exd4 ♙xc3 13 bxc3

This is not a trivial decision. Obviously White counts on the kingside attack and therefore wants to keep his ♙ on the c1-h6 diagonal. Still, I would probably have played the more elastic 13 ♙xc3. Then Black cannot play 13...d5 because of 14 cxd5. If he prepares it with 13...♞c7, then ...d5 can be met with c4-c5.

Of course, it's important to make sure that Black cannot just snatch the pawn with 13...♙g2. However, just a glance at the position arising after 14 ♖g1 ♙b7 15 ♞h5! confirms that White's attack is very strong and more than compensates for a minor material loss. White's c3-♙ can join the offensive after timely thrust d4-d5, while Black has major problems with defence, where the awkwardly placed a6-♞ does not play any role.

I believe that the following analysis is quite instructive: 15...g6 (15...♞xh5? 16 ♙xh7+! ♞xh7 17 ♖xh5+ ♙g8 18 ♖h6+-) 16 d5 ♞xh5 17 ♖xh5 ♖e8. Now White can win some material with 18 ♙f6 exd5+ 19 ♙f1 ♞c6 (19...♖e6 20 ♙xg6!+-) 20 ♞e1 ♞xf6 21 ♞xe8 ♞xe8 but the final position is very unclear.

It's better to play 18 ♞g3! and then after 18...f5 19 ♙d2! e5 20 ♞e1 d6 (20...e4 21 ♞eg1+-) 21 ♙xf5 ♞xf5 22 ♖xf5 ♞xc4 23 f4, White is winning.

I would be interested to know why White preferred the strategically riskier text move to 13 ♙xc3. Probably, though, this is a matter of style.

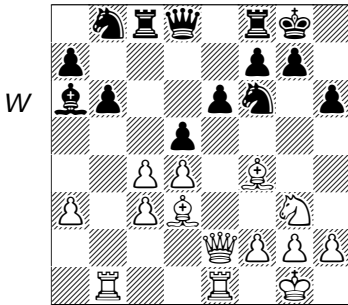
### 13...♞b8

Of course the line 13...♙g2? 14 ♖g1 ♙b7 15 ♙g5 gives White a winning attack for a mere pawn.

### 14 0-0 d6 15 ♙g5! h6

This move seriously compromises Black's kingside, but after 15...♞bd7 16 ♞h5 h6 17 ♙h4 it would be almost impossible to break the pin.

### 16 ♙f4 ♙a6?! 17 ♞fe1 d5 (D)



Here Black probably thought that he was doing OK. Yet, the revelation was just around the corner.

**18 ♖d2!!**

This is a brilliant concept: White gives up a pawn to preserve his light-squared ♕, which soon will play a key role in the kingside attack. I wonder whether White had foreseen this idea when he played 13 bxc3, though.

**18...♙xc4 19 ♙c2 ♜h7**

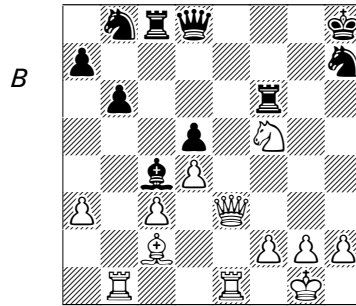
At first glance Black's defensive task does not look too difficult, but a closer examination shows that it's nearly impossible to stop White striking on h6, for example 19...♞bd7? 20 ♙xh6 gxh6 21 ♖xh6 and Black cannot do anything about the threat of 22 ♜h5. Probably Black had to return a pawn by playing 19...♞e4 20 ♞xe4 dxe4 21 ♙xe4 with better chances for a defence.

**20 ♙xh6! gxh6?**

This is probably where Black crossed the borderline. Better was 20...♖f6 21 ♙f4 ♞c6 when Black is still in the game.

**21 ♖xh6 f5 22 ♖xe6+ ♔h8 23 ♞xf5 ♜f6**

After 23...♖f6 White has a pleasant choice between 24 ♖xf6+ ♜xf6 (24...♞xf6 25 ♞e7) 25 ♜e7, or 24 ♞e7 ♖xf2+ 25 ♔h1 ♖xc2 26 ♞xc8, or (possibly the best) 24 ♖e3. **24 ♖e3 (D)**



Maybe when Black played 19...♞h7, he believed that he would still have reasonable chances here.

However, now he must have realised that his position was beyond repair: his ♔ has been stripped of his pawn shield, while his pieces on the queenside are absolutely idle.

**24...♞c6 25 ♖h3! ♖d7 26 ♖h5! 1-0**

This nice ♖ manoeuvre concludes the attack, as now Black cannot prevent 27 ♞e7. Since the line 26...♖f7 (26...♜e6 27 ♞h4!) 27 ♖xf7 ♜xf7 28 ♞d6 ♜cf8 29 ♞xf7+ ♜xf7 30 h4 is too grim, Black resigned.

This was a fine game where White built up his attack on better strategy, successfully exploiting Black's not very obvious mistakes.

# Game 50

**White:** Janis R. Vitomskis (Latvia)

**Black:** John J. Carleton (England)

15<sup>th</sup> CC World Championship Final, 1996

*French Defence, Albin-Chatard-Alekhine Attack (C14)*

**The Players:** Janis Vitomskis, from Riga, is a very experienced player with a penchant for attacks and gambits. He became an ICCF IM in 1993 and CC-grandmaster in 2001. He is a co-author with me of the theory CD, ‘The Total Marshall’.

John Carleton lives in Lancashire. He became a CC-IM in 1986 and Senior International Master in 1999.

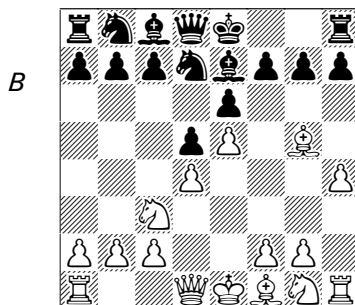
**About this game:** This game is lightweight compared with many in the book, but I think readers need a varied diet and it is significant for the theory of the opening. The players test a 40-year-old suggestion to improve on a Spassky game. Vitomskis finds some brilliant moves to prove that the idea is correct — which in turn means that the whole variation begun with Black’s 6<sup>th</sup> move is probably in doubt. I consulted the notes Vitomskis wrote for his Latvian magazine and ‘Informator 72’.

**1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♙g5 ♙e7**

This is the Classical variation of the French Defence where Black generally aims for queenside counterplay with a blocked centre.

**5 e5 ♞fd7 6 h4!?** (D)

This gambit, which is usually declined, aims to force the game into more tactical channels than the slower, strategic game that normally arises after 6 ♙xe7 ♞xe7 7 f4 0-0 (or 7...a6).



**6...f6**

“Probably too sharp,” comments Byron Jacobs in ‘French Classical’ (Everyman Chess, 2001). This move was introduced by Maróczy as a way of counter-attacking in the centre without loss of time.

Accepting the pawn by 6...♙xg5 7 hxg5 ♞xg5 is a high-risk option because White has long-term pressure

on the h-file and his pieces develop rapidly after 8 ♖h3 (Hector's 8 ♖d3!? is also interesting.) 8...♗e7 9 ♗f4 (or 9 ♗g4!?).

Theory may say Black can survive, but one slip will be fatal and 6...♗xg5 cannot be recommended to most players. Ironically, Carleton had played this in an earlier game with Timmerman but went wrong, so understandably did not want to risk the line again.

The critical continuation is 9...♗c6 10 ♗g4 ♗xd4 (10...g6!?) 11 0-0-0 ♗f5 12 ♗fxd5 exd5 13 ♗xd5 and now after 13...♗xe5! 14 ♗b5 Black should play 14...0-0 instead of 14...♗e3?? 15 ♗xe3 c6 (15...♗xb5 16 ♗d5+-) 16 ♖de1+- (Vitomskis-K.Koistinen, Baltic Sea tt5 1986).

Black has other ways of declining the pawn — for instance 6...c5 or 6...a6 — but I have no space to review all the theory here.

**7 ♗h5+!**

The reputation of 6...f6 was good in the days when White normally answered 7 ♗d3, after which 7...c5 leads to wild complications, or 7 exf6 ♗xf6 8 ♗d3 c5.

For a time 6...f6 was even considered the refutation of 6 h4. However, this view changed after C.H.O'D.Alexander discovered the strength of the ♗ check, which costs Black his castling rights.

**7...♗f8**

Black would prefer to play 7...g6 but 8 exf6! is a problem, e.g. 8...♗xf6 (8...gxh5? 9 fxg7 ♗xe7 10 ♗xe7 ♗xe7± Alexander) 9 ♗e2 c5 10 dxc5

♗c6 11 0-0-0 0-0 12 ♗h3 (The Belarus master Silich recommended 12 ♗f3 ♗d7 13 g3 ♖e8 14 ♗h3.) 12...♗d7 13 ♗h6 ♖e8 14 f4 ♗xc5 15 h5± Sanguinetti-F.Benko, Buenos Aires 1954.

**8 exf6 ♗xf6**

Not 8...♗xf6 9 ♗h3! ♗e8 10 ♗g4±, e.g. 10...c5 11 ♗b5 ♗a6 12 ♗f4 e5 (12...♗b6 13 ♗xf6 gxf6 14 ♗h5 ♗e7 15 ♗f4!) 13 ♗d6 (Suetin) or 13 ♗e6+-.

**9 ♗e2!**

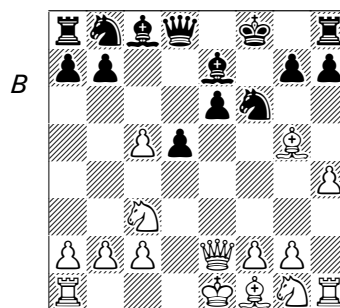
White targets the weak e5-square — the square in front of the backward pawn — and leaves his ♗ a choice between f3 and h3.

Perhaps surprisingly, until recent years White has usually preferred 9 ♗f3 c5 10 dxc5, when Black's best reply is probably 10...b6!? offering a pawn for rapid development.

**9...c5**

This is probably best.

**10 dxc5 (D)**



**10...♗a6?**

After the present game, this move can be considered refuted.

The pawn sacrifice 10...b6!? 9 ♖f3) was suggested by Zlotnik in 1982, but there is little experience with it.

After 11 c6 ♜xc6 12 ♜f3 ♖f7 13 ♜f4 Black needs to improve on H. Stefansson-E. Bricard, France-Iceland 1993: 13...♜d6 14 ♜xd6 ♖xd6 15 0-0-0 ♜e8 16 ♜b5 ♖b8 17 h5 h6 (17...e5!? — Knaak) 18 ♜bd4 ♜xd4 19 ♜e5+ ♖g8 20 ♜xd4 ♜d7 21 ♜g4 ♖d6 22 ♖d3 ♖f8 (22...♜e7 23 ♖g6 ♖h8 24 ♜xh6 gxh6 25 ♜g4+-) 23 ♖g6 1-0.

If instead 10...♜c6 GM Suetin recommended 11 0-0-0 ♖a5 12 ♜f3 to be followed by ♜f4.

### 11 ♜f3 ♜xc5 12 0-0-0

If Black plays passively, one plan for White is g3, ♜h3 and ♜he1 building up against the e6-pawn. Hence Black seeks counterplay against the white ♖.

### 12...b5 13 ♖e3!

Spassky-Guimard, Göteborg izt 1955, went instead 13 ♜xb5?! ♜b8 14 ♜bd4 ♖a5! (threatening both ...♖xa2 and 15...♜xb2 16 ♖xb2 ♜a4+) 15 ♜c6 ♖xa2 16 ♜xb8 ♜ce4 17 c4 (17 ♜d2? ♜c3!) 17... ♜c3 18 ♖d3 ♖a1+ 19 ♖c2 and now Black should have forced the draw by 19...♜xd1 20 ♖xd1 ♖a4+ 21 ♖c1! ♖a1+ 22 ♖c2 ♖a4+.

Afterwards, Spassky's trainer GM Bondarevsky suggested the move played by Vitomskis.

### 13...b4 14 ♜b5!

This is the first new move. Bondarevsky's analysis went 14 ♜xf6 gxf6 15 ♖h6+ ♖f7 16 ♜b5±.

Y.Smolensky-E.Epelman, 7<sup>th</sup> USSR Corr Ch sf (circa 1964) continued 16...♖a5 17 ♖b1 ♜e4 18 ♜e2! ♜d7 (If 18...♜xf2 19 ♜e5+! fxe5 20 ♜h5+ ♖g8 21 ♜d6 ♜xd6 22 ♖g5+ mates.) 19 ♜d2! ♜xf2 20 ♜h5+ ♖g8 21 ♜h3! ♜xh3 22 gxh3 ♖b6 (22...♜c5 23 ♜e4!) 23 ♜d6! 1-0 (White is better but resignation seems a bit premature).

Instead 17...♜d7! was a contemporary suggestion, mentioned by Vitomskis as the reason for avoiding this line.

### 14...♜d7 15 ♜e5 ♜e8

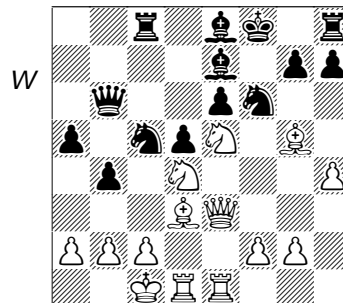
If 15...♜xb5 Vitomskis gives 16 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 17 ♖xc5+ ♖e7 18 ♜xb5 ♜xe5 19 ♖c6 ♜f4+ 20 ♖b1 ♜d8 21 ♜he1 with an attack.

Black can also try 16...gxf6 17 ♖h6+ ♖g8 18 ♜d4 f5 19 ♜h3 ♜g5+! 20 hxg5 ♜xf1 but would not have full compensation for the exchange.

### 16 ♜d4 ♖b6 17 ♜d3! ♜c8

Not 17...h6? 18 ♜g6+ ♜xg6 19 ♜xg6 hxg5? 20 hxg5 ♜xh1 21 ♜xh1 ♜g8 22 ♖f4+ ♜f6 23 gxf6 gxf6 24 ♜h7+-.

### 18 ♜he1 a5 (D)





Black needs just two more moves (...a4, ...b3) to set the queenside on fire, but his h8-♖ is an idle bystander. Now White has all his pieces in position and it is time to explode the kingside.

**19 ♖g4! h5**

If Black accepts the piece by 19...♗xg4 there comes 20 ♕xe7+ ♖xe7 21 ♖g5+ ♖f8 (21...♗f6 22 ♖xg7+ ♕f7 23 ♗f5+ wins) 22 ♖xg4 with a strong attack, e.g. 22...♕f7 23 ♖e5 ♖e8 24 ♖de1 ♗e4 25 ♕xe4 ♖xd4 26 ♕f5!±.

There is no time for 19...a4 because of 20 ♕xf6 gxf6 (or 20...♕xf6 21 ♗xf6 gxf6 22 ♗xe6+) 21 ♗xe6+ ♖xe6 22 ♖h6++-. Now the black ♖ covers h6 and the ♗ is en prise, so White needs a new line of attack.

**20 ♕f5!**

The pressure on the e-file reaches breaking point.

**20...♗xg4**

If 20...hxg4 21 ♗xe6+ ♖f7 the most convincing line is 22 ♕xf6! ♕xf6 23 ♗g5+ ♕xg5 24 hxg5+-, while if 20...♕d7 or 20...♕f7 then 21 ♗e5 is strong. The text move sets the trap 21 ♕xg4?? ♕xg5+ but this is easily sidestepped.

**21 ♗xe6+ ♖xe6**

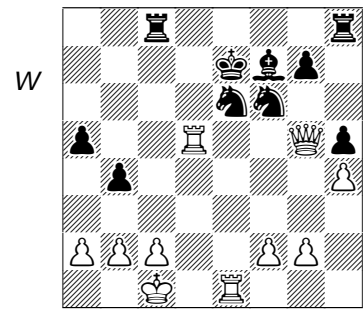
Black could have made more work for his opponent by 21...♖g8

(or ...♖f7) 22 ♕xg4 hxg4 23 ♕xe7, but after exchanges on e6, Black has too many weak pawns to survive, despite the opposite coloured ♕s. So he prefers to hope for a middlegame swindle.

Now if 22 ♕xe6 ♗xe3 23 ♕xe7+ ♖xe7 24 ♕xc8 ♖d8 25 ♖xe3 ♖xc8 26 ♖xd5 White has ♖ + two pawns versus ♕+♗, but he wants more.

**22 ♕xe7+! ♖xe7 23 ♖g5+ ♗f6 24 ♕xe6 ♗xe6 25 ♖xd5 ♕f7 (D)**

If 25...♖f7 26 ♖e5 ♖c6 27 ♖xa5+-.



Black has three minor pieces for the ♖ — but not for long!

**26 ♖xe6+! 1-0**

Black resigned for if 26...♖xe6 27 ♖e5#, or 26...♕xe6 27 ♖xg7+ ♕f7 28 ♖e5+, or 26...♖f8 27 ♖xf6 gxf6 28 ♖xf6+-.

# Game 51

**White: Joop J. van Oosterom (Netherlands)**

**Black: Professor Robert I. Reynolds (USA)**

15<sup>th</sup> CC World Championship Final, 1996

*Budapest Defence (A52)*

**The Players:** I introduced van Oosterom in Game 1.

Professor Reynolds won the 6<sup>th</sup> US CC Championship Final (1985-87) with the amazing score of 13½ out of 14. He lost only one game on his way to the World Championship Final, qualifying for the IM title in 1994. However, his subsequent performances at the highest international level have been disappointing.

**About this game:** To do well in a world championship, the contenders must score heavily against the back markers. Reynolds handicaps himself with an inferior opening variation and his attempts to complicate the early middlegame are refuted by an imaginative, yet essentially quite simple, concept by White.

**1 d4 ♟f6 2 c4 e5**

The Budapest is considered not entirely 'respectable' because it aims at piece play without a deep strategic foundation. While it can be very effective at rapid and blitz chess, its positional shortcomings are liable to be exposed in CC by a quality

positional player like van Oosterom. However, Reynolds had played the Budapest on his way to qualifying for the final and perhaps believed he understood it well.

**3 dx e5 ♟g4 4 ♟f4 ♟b4+**

4... ♟c6 5 ♟f3 ♟b4+ 6 ♟c3 ♞e7 7 ♞d5 ♟xc3+ 8 bxc3 is another move order to the first diagram below.

**5 ♟c3**

5 ♟d2 is an important alternative, avoiding the doubled c-pawn, but after 5... ♟c6 6 ♟g3 ♞e7 7 e3 (not 7 a3 ♟gxe5 8 axb4?? ♟d3#) 7... ♟gxe5 8 ♟xe5 ♟xe5 Black has regained his pawn with a fairly satisfactory position. For example, 9 ♟e2 and then:

a) Morgado-Reynolds, CNEC-15 corr 1993, went 9...d6 10 0-0 ♟d7 11 a3 ♟xd2 12 ♞xd2 g5! 13 ♟g3 h5∞ (1-0, 30, after a complicated struggle) while S.Stolyar-Reynolds, Russia-Rest of the World corr 1993, varied from that with 11 ♟b3 ♟a4 12 ♞c2 g5 and again White won in the end. However, I don't think these games were published until some time after

the World Championship Final began, and anyway, Reynolds presumably would have improved upon them.

b) A more standard treatment is 9...0-0 10 0-0 a5 (10...d6 11 ♖b3 b6 12 a3 ♙c5 13 ♗xc5 bxc5 14 b4 ♗d7 15 ♙g4± Karpov-N.Short, 1<sup>st</sup> match game, Linares 1992) 11 a3 ♙xd2 12 ♖xd2 d6 which has been used by the one postal player to have success with the Budapest at a high level of competition, Swiss CC-GM Gottardo Gottardi.

b1) 13 b4 ♖e8 14 ♖c3 ♖f6 15 ♗h1 ♙f5 16 c5 axb4 17 axb4 ♗d3 18 ♖xf6 gxf6 19 ♙xd3 ♙xd3 20 ♖fd1 dxc5 21 bxc5 ♙c2 22 ♖dc1 ♖xa1 23 ♖xa1 ♖d8 24 ♙xc7 ♖d1+ 25 ♖xd1 ♙xd1 26 h3 h5 ½-½ in view of the opposite-coloured ♙s (P.Kindl-Gottardi, Wch16 3/4F 1992).

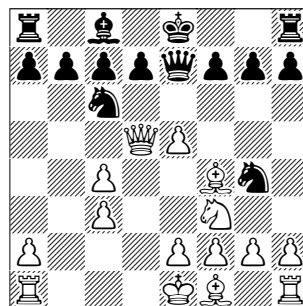
b2) 13 b3 b6 14 e4 ♙b7 15 f3 ♖e6 16 ♖fe1 f5 17 exf5 ♖xf5 18 ♙g3 ♖fe8 19 ♙f1 ♖f6 20 ♖ad1 ♖e6 21 ♖e3 h5 22 h4 ♖ae8 23 ♖del ♖g6 and Black has managed to develop all his pieces actively (½-½, 54) van Oosterom-Gottardi, Wch15 Final.

Possibly van Oosterom did not want to “put all his eggs into one basket” by playing the same 5<sup>th</sup> move in both games — often a wise policy in CC events where games start simultaneously.

Maybe his game with the Swiss opponent developed more rapidly so he decided to switch variations after failing to achieve an advantage with 5 ♗d2 against Gottardi.

5...♙xc3+ 6 bxc3 ♗c6 7 ♗f3 ♖e7 8 ♖d5 (D)

B



8...♖a3

GM Bogdan Lalić, in his 1998 book on the Budapest, said this move is a waste of time. Black should not be interested in winning the unimportant a-pawn. However, Reynolds’ plan is not to win the pawn but — he hopes — to disrupt White’s optimal set-up.

The alternative is the gambit-style 8...f6 9 exf6 ♗xf6, reckoning the extra white c-pawn is not worth much, but White has 10 ♖d3 d6 11 g3 0-0 12 ♙g2 ♗e4 13 0-0 ♗c5 14 ♖e3!±. Compare the note to Black’s 12<sup>th</sup> move below. I think the immediate 11...♗e4 is Black’s best try.

9 ♖c1! f6

9...♖xa2?! leaves Black too undeveloped after 10 h3 ♗h6 11 e4. Instead of 11...♗g8 12 c5! ♖a3 13 ♙c4 ♗d8 14 ♙e3 ♗e7 15 ♖d1± (Gligoric-Westerinen, Venice 1971), Mik.Tseitlin and Glaskov suggested 11...♖a3!? 12 c5 b6 in ‘The Budapest for the Tournament Player’ (1992). They analysed 13 e6? but Berliner recommended the very strong reply 13 ♗d4! in ‘Kaissiber 13’, e.g. 13... ♖xc5 (or 13...0-0 14 ♗b5) 14 ♗b5! 0-0 15 ♗xc7 ♖b8 16 ♗b5! when

“White holds all the trumps”.

### 10 exf6

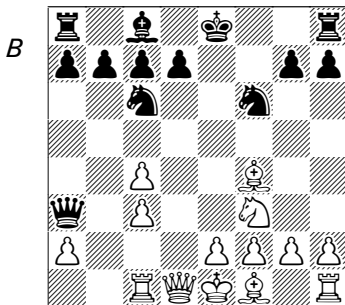
White has another option here in 10 ♖c2!?, but van Oosterom opts for a more straightforward continuation, first played by the Uzbek GM Alexei Barsov.

### 10... ♘xf6 11 ♖d1! (D)

This move “makes a lot of sense if White wishes to avoid any unpleasantness with ... ♘e4 and ... ♙f5,” wrote Lalić. Older moves are:

a) 11 ♖d2 d6 12 ♘d4 0-0 13 e3? (13 f3) 13... ♘xd4! 14 cxd4 ♘e4 15 ♖c2 ♖a5+ 16 ♙e2 ♖xf4!! 17 exf4 ♙f5 18 ♖b2 ♖e8 19 ♙f3 ♘d2+ 20 ♙g3 ♘e4+ 21 ♙h4 ♖e6 22 ♙e2 ♖h6+ 23 ♙h5 ♖xh5+! 24 ♙xh5 ♙g6+ 0-1 is the classic Black win in this variation (Rubinstein-Vidmar, Berlin 1918). However, White can be a lot more sophisticated in his handling of the line, as the present game shows.

b) 11 ♖d3 0-0 12 g3 d6 13 ♙g2 ♖xa2 (13... ♖c5? 14 ♘g5!± van Wely-Sorin, Buenos Aires 1995) 14 c5!? dxc5 15 ♙xc7 (Y.Yakovich-Coret Frasquet, Seville 1992) 15... ♙e6! ∞ — Yakovich.



### 11... ♘e4

The black ♘ gains a tempo by attacking c3 but really it is heading for c5 where it will blockade the white queenside. Instead 11...0-0? just loses a pawn to 12 ♙xc7, while 11...d6 cuts the black ♖ off from the centre and both 12 ♘d4 and 12 ♖b3 are promising for White. Finally, 11... ♖xa2 12 ♙xc7 ♖xc4 restores material equality but Black has terrible holes in his position and it is hard for him to complete his development. Barsov-S. Kagirov, Uzbekistan 1993, continued 13 e3 ♖f7 14 ♘g5 ♖g6 15 h4 d5 16 c4± and 1-0, 26.

### 12 ♖c2 ♖e7

The black ♖ returns to e7, with a position similar to the 8...f6 9 exf6 ♘xf6 main line mentioned above; White's ♖ and ♖ are on c1 and c2, rather than the usual a1 and d3. The main difference is the position of the white ♖ which, on c2, is not disturbed by ... ♘c5, but Black has at least avoided the possibility of ♖e3!, and he hopes to regain lost time with a later ... ♙f5.

### 13 g3 d6 14 ♙g2 ♘c5!?

14...0-0 looks natural but presumably Black wanted to avoid the possibility of 15 ♘d4 (which can now be met by ... ♘e5) — the sharp line 15... ♘xf2!? 16 ♘xc6 bxc6 17 ♙xf2 g5 appears ineffective after 18 e3!.

The ♘ retreat chosen by Reynolds also tempts White with some immediate tactical possibilities:

a) 15 ♘g5!? prevents Black from castling, and if 15... ♘e5 16 0-0 ♘g6

17 ♖e3 0-0 18 h4! c6 (18...♙f5 19 ♖d1! △ 20 ♙xc5 dxc5 21 ♙d5+ ♗h8 22 e4 ♙d7 23 ♖h5+–) 19 ♙xc5 dxc5 20 ♖e4±, or 15...♙g4 16 ♖b1! (△ ♖xb7; not 16 ♗xh7 ♙xe2! 17 ♖xe2? ♗d3+) 16...♖d7 17 0-0 ♙f5 18 e4 ♙g6 19 ♙e3±. However, 15...♖f8!? 16 ♖xh7 (not 16 ♗xh7? ♙f5 or 16 0-0 h6 17 ♖g6+?! ♗d8 18 ♗h3 ♙f5) 16...♙f5 17 ♖h5+ g6 18 ♙xc6+ bxc6 19 ♖f3 ♗d7 seems to offer Black good compensation. White might come to regret his pawn-grabbing excursion as his opponent has active pieces and should be able to regain at least one of the sacrificed pawns.

b) 15 ♙g5 ♖f7 16 ♗d4 looks quite good for White, e.g. 16...0-0 17 ♙d5 ♗e6 18 ♙e3 or 16...♗e5 17 ♙d5 followed by 18 f4!?

Van Oosterom decides to ignore these complications, preferring a longer-term plan to eliminate the blockading ♗ from c5.

**15 0-0! 0-0 16 ♗d4 ♗e5 17 ♗b3!**

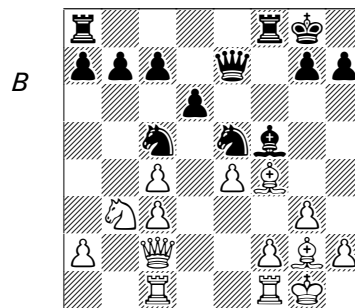
From a strategic point of view, this is the key move as it challenges Black's strongest piece, which can no longer be maintained at c5. From a tactical point of view, White had to see at move 15 that the coming transaction is in his favour.

**17...♙f5**

This is the critical moment of the game. Exchanging on b3 would just improve White's pawns so, consistent with his opening strategy Black attacks the exposed ♖, with the idea 18 e4 ♗xe4 19 ♙xe4 ♗f3+!, while if 18 ♖d1 he might continue either

18...♗ed7 to reinforce the ♗c5 or 18...♗xc4!?. Unfortunately White has made a more accurate assessment of the position.

**18 e4! (D)**



White trades his ♖ for three minor pieces and a pawn. If you go on the old reckoning that a pawn=1, ♗=3, ♙=3, ♖=5 and ♖=9 you might think this is a good transaction for Black, but remember that he was already one pawn down and most masters reckon that, other things being equal, ♙+♙+♗ is worth a good bit more than a ♖. I recall English CC-GM Adrian Hollis saying he believed that ♖=4.5 and ♖=8.5 is closer to the truth.

**18...♗xe4 19 ♙xe4 ♗f3+ 20 ♙xf3 ♙xc2 21 ♖xc2 c6**

If Black could play ...b6 here he might not stand so badly, but of course the b-pawn is pinned to the ♖a8; while if 21...♖ab8 White can smash up the queenside with c4-c5, e.g. 22 ♖e2 ♖f6 23 c5 dxc5 24 ♗xc5 ♖xc3 25 ♙d5+ ♗h8 26 ♖c1±. Therefore Black has to play 21...c6

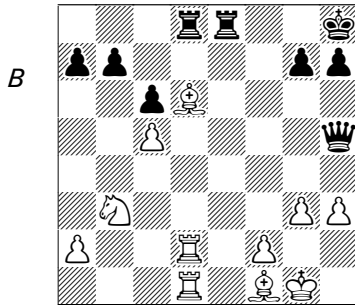
which, although reducing the scope of the g2-♔, more significantly creates a new weakness at d6.

22 ♖d1 ♕f7 23 ♔g2 ♖xc4 24 ♔xd6 ♜fe8 25 ♔f1 ♖g4

The exchange phase is over. The rest of the game is a demonstration of why three minor pieces should beat a ♖ if all else is equal.

Three fighting units are more useful than one for attacking defended spots in the enemy position. The ♖ might be stronger if White had loose pawns or an exposed ♖, but neither is the case here.

26 ♜cd2 ♜ad8 27 c4 ♖h8 28 h3 ♖h5 29 c5 (D)



White anchors his ♔ and keeps ♜s on the board while he improves his position.

29...h6?!

I fail to see the point of this, which creates a hole on g6. However, Black doesn't have any useful moves: he cannot find a target for his heavy pieces, and 29...b6 would weaken c6.

30 ♘d4 ♜d7 31 ♘e2 ♜e4 32 ♘f4 ♖e8 33 ♖h2

The immediate 33 ♔d3 ♜e1+ 34 ♖g2 would be sufficient, but as Black cannot do anything White moves the ♖ first, threatening 34 ♔d3 ♜e1? 35 ♜xe1 ♖xe1 36 ♜e2+-.

33...b6?!

This is even worse now as it costs the exchange.

34 ♔g2 ♖h7 35 ♔e5 ♜xe5 36 ♜xd7 ♜e1 37 ♜d8 ♖e5 38 ♜1d6 1-0

Black has no defence to 39 ♘g6 and 40 ♜h8# — if 39...♖xc5 40 ♘g6 ♜e8 41 ♜xe8 ♖xd6 42 ♔e4+- . This game is quite a good example of how a grandmaster can win economically against an IM who tries too hard to make something happen.

# Game 52

**White: Christophe Léotard (France)**

**Black: Gheorghe Rotariu (Romania)**

'Amici Sumus LADAC/CAPA' GM tournament, 1998

*English Opening (A35)*

**The Players:** Christophe Léotard won the French correspondence championship three successive times in 1995-96-97 and has also been very successful on the international stage. Victory in this tournament earned him the ICCF grandmaster title.

Ing. Gheorghe Rotariu is a veteran competitor in high-level postal events. He became a CC-IM in 1975 and grandmaster in 1981. His best result was second place in the 32<sup>nd</sup> European Championship (1985-91), losing only on tie-break.

**About this game:** Léotard has won many fine games with his favourite English Opening. The notes are based on his analysis in 'Le Courrier des Echecs', the magazine of the French CC organisation.

The tournament name requires some explanation. 'Amici Sumus' ("we are friends") is the Latin motto of the ICCF and this event was organised to seal a peace treaty between Argentina's two discordant CC bodies, LADAC and CAPA. The tournament was a success but the peace was not so lasting.

**1 c4**

Léotard gives this an exclamation mark and says "only move". That is Gallic hyperbole but certainly many players who are comfortable against 1 e4 and 1 d4 are not so well prepared to meet the English.

**1...c5 2 ♖f3 ♜c6 3 ♜c3 g6 4 e3 ♙g7 5 d4 d6 6 ♚e2 cxd4 7 exd4 ♜f6**

Black chose a poor variation that cedes a lot of central space and free piece play to his opponent. His idea is to induce d4-d5 and then regroup the ♜ to c5 but this costs a lot of time.

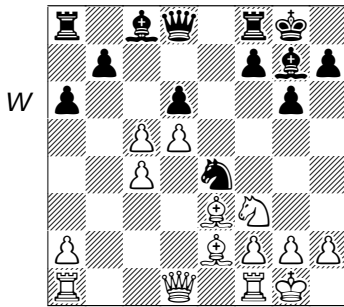
**8 d5 ♜b8 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♚e3 ♜a6 11 ♜b5 ♜c5!?**

The game leaves the books. Black has the idea to improve on the well-known game 11...b6 12 ♜fd4 ♙b7 13 ♙f3 ♜d7 14 ♚d2± Portisch-Petrosian, San Antonio 1972.

**12 b4**

Black wants to anchor his ♜ by 12...a5 so this must be prevented at once. The following play is the tactical justification for the move.

**12...a6 13 ♜xd6 exd6 14 bxc5 ♜e4 (D)**



No doubt Black has relied on this move which opens the long diagonal and controls c3, but we shall see that it is very risky for Black to exchange his fianchettoed ♗, even for a ♖, because of the weakened dark squares remaining near the ♔.

### 15 cxd6

Léotard writes: "This is not the kind of decision one takes lightly in CC. I already had this in mind when I played 12 b4 and I had analysed it as far as 31 c6. I don't like to engage in variations, the outcome of which seem too uncertain to me. Strangely, I often have the occasion to sacrifice the exchange."

He justifies his decision by the fact that Black would have no problems in the alternative variation, 15 ♗d4 ♘xc5 16 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 17 ♖d4+ ♖f6 18 ♖xf6+ ♔xf6. Then the c8-♗ is better than its opposite number on g2 and the c5-♘ is very well placed.

### 15...♘c3

Not 15...♗xa1 16 ♖xa1 ♖e8 17 ♗d3 ♖xd6 18 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 19 c5 and White has the initiative, because 19...♖xd5 loses to 20 ♗h6.

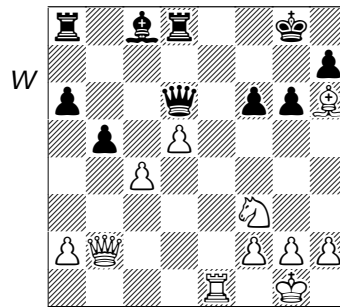
16 ♖d2 ♘xe2+ 17 ♖xe2 ♗xa1 18 ♖xa1 ♖xd6

After 18...♖e8 19 c5 White's pawns give him a clear advantage, but now he has a direct attack.

19 ♗h6! ♖d8 20 ♖b2 f6 21 ♖e1!

Léotard comments: "I like in this game the way the white moves are connected together naturally and simply, so the rhythm of the attack never weakens. It is important not to let Black regain the e-file, by which route his ♖s could enter the game."

21...b5! (D)



### 22 ♘g5!!

Of course Black cannot capture the ♘ because of checkmate on g7 and now the main idea is ♘e4. On that dominating square, the ♘ will not only drive away the black ♖ and threaten f6 but also stand ready to support the central pawns.

22 ♘d2 might seem to accomplish the same end, but it is less threatening in other ways. Léotard analysed 22...♗f5 23 g4 ♗d3 24 ♖b3 ♗xc4 (not 24...bxc4 25 ♖b7+-) 25 ♘xc4 ♖xd5 ∞, or if 24 ♗e6 ♖d7 25 ♖xf6



♙xc4 then 26 ♖e7 forcing a draw, e.g. 26... ♗xg4+ 27 ♕h1 ♗d1+ (not 27... ♙xd5+ 28 f3 ♙xf3+ 29 ♘xf3 ♙d1+ 30 ♚e1+-) 28 ♖g2 ♗g4+ 29 ♕h1=. In the latter line, White might try 26 ♘xc4 bxc4 27 f3 ♗f7 28 ♗e5 with compensation, but probably not enough for more than a draw.

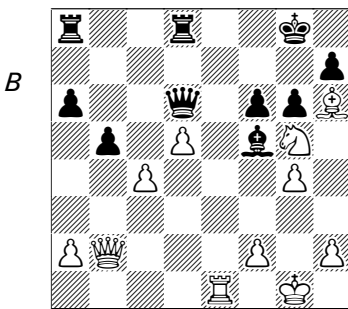
**22... ♙f5!?**

According to Léotard's original notes, the last hope for Black would be 22... ♖a7 23 ♚e4 ♖e7 when:

a) 24 ♘xf6+?? is a blunder because of the back rank mate following 24... ♗xf6 25 ♗xf6 ♖xe1#. 24 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 25 ♘xf6+ ♖f7 26 ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 is also unsatisfactory as a winning attempt for White, who may even stand worse.

b) 24 f3! is correct, but after 24... ♖xe4 25 fxe4 bxc4 the presence of opposite-coloured ♙s means White must be careful about what endgames he reaches.

**23 g4! (D)**



White offers a pawn and risks exposure of his ♔ in order to keep up the momentum of his attack.

**23... ♙d3?!**

The black ♙ must continue to prevent the killing move, e.g. 23... ♙xg4?? is impossible because of 24 ♚e4 ♗e5 25 ♘xf6+. White is also much better after 23... ♙d7 24 gxf5 fxg5 25 ♖e6 or 23... ♗f4 (trying to exploit the open air around White's ♖) 24 ♗xf6! (24 gxf5 ♖e8 might offer some swindling chances.) 24... ♗xg4+ (24... ♙d7 25 gxf5 ♗g4+ 26 ♕h1 is not much better.) 25 ♕h1 ♙d7 26 ♗e5+- (Léotard).

Therefore he called ... ♙d3 the only move, but with the benefit of knowing how White refutes it, I think that Black might have done better.

23... ♖e8! is a tougher defence, in my opinion. When I sent him analysis below, GM Léotard confirmed it was accurate and said that "this move leads to a better endgame for White, but it is difficult to win". Now 24 ♘e6 ♙xe6 25 ♗xf6 is possible, but after 25... ♖a7 26 dxe6 bxc4 Black gets counterplay with his c-pawn. Therefore the main line goes 24 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 25 gxf5 when:

a) 25... ♗e5 26 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 (26... fxe5? 27 f6) 27 ♘f3 ♖xf5 28 ♘d4± but still with work to do.

b) 25... ♗f4 26 h3 ♖e5 27 ♗b4 (threatening mate on f8!) 27... ♖e8 28 d6 ♖e2 (28... ♗xf5 29 ♗c3) 29 ♗c5 (This protects f2 and threatens ♗c8+.) 29... ♖e1+ 30 ♖g2 ♗xc4. Now after 31 ♗xc4+ bxc4 32 ♘f3 White can hope the passed pawn will win the game, but he must still overcome resistance by 32... ♙d1 or 32... ♖e8 33 ♙d2 ♙d8 34 ♙b4 a5.

**24 c5!**

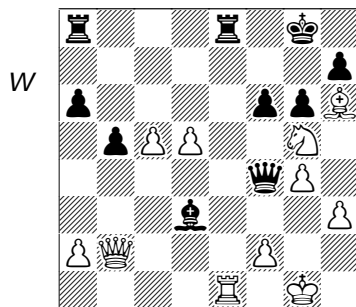
Black has no time to get organised and now faces a choice of two ways to lose. He can either let White's ♖ into f6 and be rapidly mated, or else let the c-pawn live and be strangled by the passed pawn duo.

**24... ♖f4**

This is the only move to cut across White's plans. If 24... ♖xd5 25 ♜e7+- or 24... ♖xc5 25 ♖xf6+-.

**25 h3**

White must protect against the check on g4 before beginning the final assault.

**25... ♜e8 (D)**

If instead 25... ♜xd5 26 ♜xh7 ♖xh6 27 ♜xf6+ ♜f7 28 ♜xd5+- . So at last, Black challenges the open file but it is too late. Now White lets off the dynamite.

**26 ♜e4!**

A very satisfying unpin move, with a discovered attack on the ♖. Black can capture the ♜ in three different ways but they all lose; he must take the ♙ instead.

**26... ♖xh6**

If 26... ♜xe4 27 ♙xf4 ♜xe1+ 28 ♜h2 and White threatens both ♖d2 and ♖xf6.

**27 ♜xf6+ ♜f7 28 ♜xe8!**

White could still make things difficult for himself with the slip 28 ♜xe8? ♜xe8 29 ♜xe8 ♖xh3! 30 ♜e3 (30 ♖e5 ♖f1+ and Black draws) 30... ♖xg4+ 31 ♜g3 ♖d1+ 32 ♜g2 ♙e4+ 33 f3 ♙xd5 when White's winning chances are reduced.

**28... ♜xe8 29 ♜xe8 ♜xe8**

If now 29... ♖xh3 30 ♜d6+ ♜g8 31 ♖d4+-.

**30 ♖e5+ ♜f7 31 c6**

The two passed pawns are too far advanced for Black to have any hope of escape.

**31... ♖c1+**

If 31... ♖xh3 32 ♖f4+ ♜g7 33 c7+-.

**32 ♜h2**

Not 32 ♜g2? ♖f1+ 33 ♜g3 ♖g1+ 34 ♜f3 ♖h1+ 35 ♜g3=.

**32... ♖c2**

32... ♖c5 is not much better. White can answer 33 ♜g3 or 33 ♖e6+.

**33 ♜g3 1-0**

Black resigned. Now 33...h5 34 c7 h4+ 35 ♜xh4 ♖xf2+ 36 ♜g5 ♖d2+ 37 ♖f4+ would have been a neat finish. On 33... ♖c1 there could have followed 34 ♖e6+ ♜g7 (34... ♜f8 35 ♖f6+ ♜g8 36 d6 ♖g1+ 37 ♜h4+-) 35 ♖e7+ ♜g8 36 c7 ♖g1+ 37 ♜f4 ♖xf2+ 38 ♜e5 and Black will soon run out of checks. The white ♜ and passed pawns provide mutual protection and the black ♙ is useless.

# Game 53

**White: Jonny Hector (Sweden)**

**Black: Curt Hansen (Denmark)**

Peter Korning Memorial, 1998-99

*Caro-Kann Defence (B19)*

**The Players:** This game features a CC clash between two active FIDE grandmasters who both are also now ICCF GMs. Hansen had earlier played several postal events in Denmark but this was his first international tournament; he finished second on tie-break to van Oosterom. Hector finished fourth, making the grandmaster norm.

**About this game:** Any prejudice that the Caro-Kann is a dull defence would be challenged by the attack that Black develops after a long theoretical introduction. Hansen finds a remarkably delicate manoeuvre ...♞b6-d5-b4-a2-c1-e2, ultimately sacrificing the ♞ to wreck the white ♔'s defences.

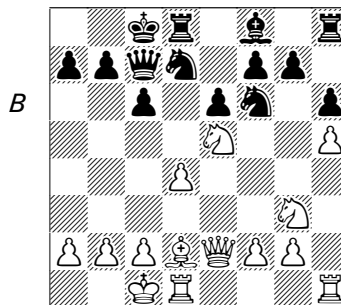
**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5**

The Caro-Kann is a good choice against a gambit-lover like Hector.

**3 ♞d2 dxe4 4 ♞xe4 ♙f5 5 ♞g3 ♙g6 6 h4 h6 7 ♞f3 ♞d7 8 h5**

This has been main line theory for decades; White gains space with tempo and makes the kingside an unattractive home for the black ♔.

**8...♙h7 9 ♙d3 ♙xd3 10 ♚xd3 ♚c7 11 ♙d2 e6 12 ♚e2 ♞gf6 13 0-0-0 0-0-0 14 ♞e5! (D)**



This move became popular when Spassky employed it successfully in his 1966 world championship match against Petrosian. Since after 14...♞xe5 15 dxe5 followed by f2-f4, White has a clamp on the kingside, Black generally prefers to avoid the ♞ exchange and go for counterplay against the white d-pawn.

**14...♞b6 15 ♙a5**

White pins the ♞ and threatens c2-c4; Black's response challenges the ♙ to prevent this.

**15...♞d5 16 ♙xb6**

The normal response; White rarely accepts the invitation to win the exchange because 16 b4 ♞xa5 (not waiting for c2-c4) 17 bxa5 ♙a3+

18 ♖b1 ♘a4 19 ♔f3 ♙b4 20 ♚d3 ♜xa5 21 ♞e2 ♞d5! gives great complications which is not what White wants normally in this opening.

The ramifications were analysed in detail by Kasparov & Shkarov, in their 1992 book 'The Classical Caro-Kann'. 22 ♜h3?! is rejected by them as too risky after 22...♙e7 or 22...f6.

Their main line, improving on erroneous analysis in 'ECO', goes 22 ♜xf7! ♞ac3+ 23 ♞xc3 ♞xc3+ 24 ♜xc3 (24 ♖c1? ♜xa2) 24...♙xc3 25 ♜xe6+ ♖c7 (25...♖b8? 26 ♜b3! Δ ♞xc6+) 26 ♜f7+ ♖c8 "and White has no reason to avoid 27 ♜e6+ repeating moves".

#### 16...axb6 17 f4

This move was introduced by GM Romanishin in 1978 instead of the older 17 c4 which deprives d4 of a defender.

After 17...♜a5 18 ♖b1 ♙d6 19 f4 ♚d8 White has tried a wide range of moves in both CC and OTB play, e.g. 20 ♞e4 ♞xe4 21 ♜xe4 f5 22 ♜e2 b5 (∞ 'NCO', following Tiviakov-Galkin, Russian Ch, Elista 1996) 23 ♜he1 ♖b8 24 c5 ♙xe5 25 fxe5 ♜a4 26 ♜xc7+ ♖xc7 27 ♜xe6 ♜axd4 simplified to a drawn ending in J.Barlow-V.Maes, 15<sup>th</sup> CC World Ch Final 1996.

#### 17...♙d6

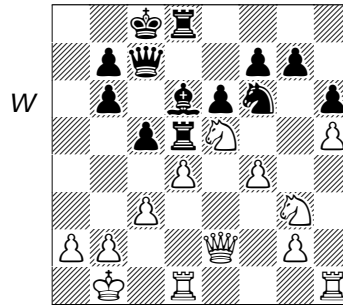
17...b5 is an alternative which Hector had faced in an OTB game.

#### 18 ♖b1 ♚d8 19 c3

19 c4 ♜a5 transposes to the 17 c4 line.

#### 19...c5! (D)

This active move was recommended



by Kasparov and Shkarov, instead of 19...♖b8 20 ♞f1 ♙xe5 21 fxe5 ♞h7 22 ♞e3 ♜5d7 23 ♞c4 ♞g5 24 ♜hf1 c5 25 ♞d6± (½-½, 35) Romanishin-Bagirov, Lvov zt 1978. The idea is to undermine the e5-♞ or (if White allows...cxd4) to give him an isolated d-pawn, with Black solidly controlling the blockading square d5 in front of it.

#### 20 ♚d3

Hector tries a new plan.

a) 20 ♞f1 cxd4 21 cxd4 ♙c5! 22 ♞f3 ♜xf4 23 ♜h4! (23 ♜c1 ♜xd4 24 ♞xd4 ♜xd4 following Kasparov's recipe, led to a hard-fought 42-move draw in I. Teran Alvarez-F. Izeta Txabarri, Spanish Cht 1999.) 23...♜f5+ 24 ♖a1 ♞g4! 25 ♜c1 ♜xd4 26 ♞xd4 ♜g5! 27 ♜e1 ♜xd4 28 ♞e3 ♖b8 "with chances for both sides" — Kasparov & Shkarov.

b) 20 ♜c1 ♖b8 21 ♜hd1 cxd4 22 cxd4 ♜e7 23 ♞f1 ♙xe5 24 fxe5 ♞e8 (Kasparov & Shkarov). Black has a strong build-up on the d-file.

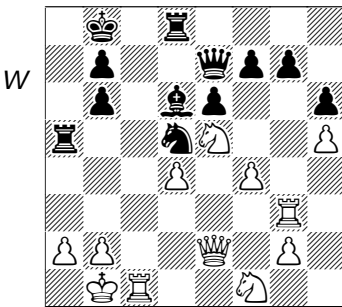
#### 20...♖b8 21 ♜c1 ♜e7 22 ♞f1 cxd4 23 cxd4 ♜a5 24 ♜g3

Although consistent with White's 20<sup>th</sup> move, it appears from the sequel

that this plausible move is a mistake. White wastes time with this ♖ as it turns out he cannot carry out his threat. Alternatives to consider are 24 ♗e3, 24 ♖b3 and 24 a3.

**24...♗d5! (D)**

Black has doubled isolated b-pawns but, as they are not on an open file, this is less significant than his chances against the white ♖.



**25 ♖f3**

This concedes the initiative but if 25 ♖xg7 ♗xf4 26 ♗f3 ♗xe5 27 dxe5 ♗f8! (Hansen) is very strong, as Black follows with 28...♗d3 and 29...♗xe5, or if 28 ♖h7 ♗g8 29 ♖xh6 ♗d3.

**25...f6 26 ♗g6**

This is the ♗'s final contribution to the game; with hindsight, it might have been better to retreat 26 ♗d3.

**26...♗d7 27 ♗d2 ♗b4 28 ♗c4!?**

Looking for counterplay as after 28 a3 ♗c6 both d4 and h5 are en prise, while if 29 ♗d3 ♖d5 30 ♗b3 ♗c5 wins the d-pawn.

**28...♗xa2 29 ♖e1 ♖a6 30 ♗xe6 ♗a4 31 ♗a3**

Black's attack is getting too strong. If 31 ♗xd6 ♗b4! 32 ♖a3 ♗c2+ 33 ♖a1 ♖xa3+ 34 bxa3 ♗c3+ 35 ♖b1 ♗d3+ 36 ♖b2 ♗xd4+ 37 ♖b1 (37 ♖b3 ♗d3 and...♗c5+) 37...♗d3+ 38 ♖b2 ♗d2+ 39 ♖b1 ♗d3 wins the ♖.

**31...♗b4 32 ♖e3 ♗c1! 33 ♖f1**

This is the natural move, challenging Black to prove his idea sound.

a) 33 ♖xc1 ♖c8+ 34 ♖c3 (34 ♖b1? gets mated in 10 after 34...♗d1+ 35 ♖a2 ♖c1, and 34 ♗xc8+ ♖xc8 is evidently hopeless for White in the long run.) 34...♗xc3 35 ♗d6+ ♖a8 36 ♖xc3 ♖xc3+ 37 bxc3 and now 37...♗b3! is best as it wrecks White's structure, i.e. 38 ♗b4 (38 ♗c2? ♖a2) 38...♗xb4 39 cxb4 ♖xa3-+.

b) 33 ♗c4 costs a pawn after 33... ♖c8 34 ♗b5 ♗d1 (34...♗xb5 35 ♗xb5 ♖a5±) 35 ♖f1 ♗xd4 36 ♖e8 ♗xa3 37 ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 38 ♖xc1+ ♗c5 and Black should win the endgame.

**33...b5!**

Tempting alternatives here:

a) 33...♗d2?! loses the initiative after 34 ♗e7! ♖c8 (Not 34...♗xd4 35 ♗b5 ♗d5 36 ♗c7+ ♖a8 37 ♗xd8+! ♗xd8 38 ♖e8 ♗xe8 39 ♗c7+ and 40 ♗xe8±.) 35 ♗d6+ ♖a8 36 ♗e7! ♗xe3 37 ♗xc8 with a messy, and roughly level, position.

b) 33...♗xa3!? must have come into consideration, e.g. 34 ♖xa3 (34 ♖xc1!?) 34...♗b5 (attacking both ♖s) 35 ♖ff3 (35 ♗e7 ♗f5+ 36 ♖xc1 ♖c8+ 37 ♖d2 ♗c2+ and 38...♗xb2-+) 35...♖xa3 36 ♖xa3

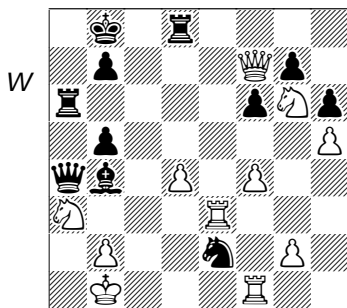
♘d3. Black will win the d-pawn and has the more active ♘.

c) 33...♘e2 34 ♖xe2 ♙xa3 looks similar to the game; e.g. if 35 bxa3 ♖xa3 36 ♖a2 ♖d3+ 37 ♖c2 ♖xd4 wins, but White might put up more resistance with 35 ♖c1 ♙d6 (or 35...♙b4 36 ♖c4) 36 ♖c4 or 36 ♖e3 ♖xd4 37 ♖e4.

By inserting 33...b5! Black limits the white ♖'s defensive options and gains more possibilities for himself: the ♖, currently limited to the a-file, gains access to more of the board, and the black ♘ can go to b6 to escape checks in some variations.

Also, if now 34 ♖h3 (or 34 ♖e4 ♘b3) 34...♙d2 35 ♖e7 b4 wins, so White's reply is forced.

**34 ♖f7 ♘e2 (D)**



The black ♘ now offers itself to decoy the white ♖ from its defensive post. White must act as his d-pawn is threatened by both 35...♘xd4 and 35...♙xa3 36 ♖xa3 ♖xd4, but this means he can no longer use the a3-♘ as a dyke to hold back the flood.

**35 ♖xe2**

An important detail is that 35 ♖e8 is refuted by the culmination of the ♘ manoeuvre, 35...♘c3+! when:

a) 36 bxc3 ♖xa3 37 ♖xd8+ ♔a7 38 ♖f3 (38 cxb4? ♖a1+ 39 ♔c2 ♖c6+-+) when Black can choose between 38...♙xc3 39 ♖a8+ (the only move) 39...♔xa8 40 ♖f8+ ♖xf8 41 ♘xf8 ♙xd4 with two extra pawns (albeit doubled) in the endgame, or 38...♖a1+ 39 ♔c2 ♖a2+ 40 ♖xa2+ ♖xa2+ and the black ♖ dominates the board.

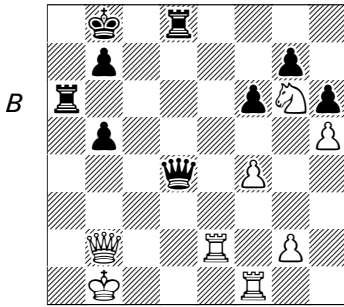
b) 36 ♔c1 ♖xe8 37 ♖xe8+ ♔a7 38 ♘e7 (38 d5 ♙xa3 39 ♖e3+ b6 40 ♖xc3 ♙xb2+! 41 ♔xb2 ♖a2+ 42 ♔c1 ♖a1+ or 41 ♖xb2 ♖c4+-+) 38...♙xe7 39 ♖xe7 ♖c6 40 bxc3 ♖xc3+ and White cannot save the ♘, e.g. 41 ♔d2 (41 ♔b2 ♖b3+) 41...♖xd4+ 42 ♔e2 ♖d3+ 43 ♔f2 ♖xa3 and Black should win.

**35...♙xa3 36 bxa3**

Now if 36 ♖c1 (as in the 33...♘e2+ variation) Black wins by 36...♙b4! 37 ♖c7+ ♔a7 38 ♖xd8 (38 ♘e7 ♖e8 39 ♘c8+ ♖xc8 40 ♖xc8 ♖a2+ 41 ♔c2 ♖c6+) 38...♖a2+ 39 ♔c2 ♖c4+ 40 ♔b1 (40 ♔d1? ♖d3+ mates) 40...♖xe2 (Δ...♖d3+ or...♖e6) 41 ♖c8 ♖e4+! 42 ♖c2 ♖d5 43 b3 ♖a3-+.

**36...♖xa3 37 ♖a2 ♖d3+ 38 ♖c2 ♖xd4! 39 ♖b2 (D)**

At first sight, it looks as if White has saved the game; he has a ♘ for two pawns and 39...♖d3+ 40 ♖c2 ♖d4 41 ♖b2 ♖d3+ only leads to a draw by repetition. However, Black has seen further.



**39...♖a4! 40 ♜c1**

If 40 ♜e1 ♜d3 Δ...♜b3 (or ...♜d4-b4) is a recurring theme in the final phase of this game.

In fact 40...♜d3 would win against 40 ♜c1 as well, since White's tricks are easily quashed. For example: 41 ♜e8+ ♔a7 42 ♜e7 ♔b6 43 ♜b8 is refuted by 43...♞e4! while 43 ♜d5+ (or 43 ♜c8+ ♔a5) 43...♜xd5 44 ♜e6+ ♔a7 45 ♜xa6+ bxa6 46 ♞f2+ ♔b7 is clearly hopeless for White.

However, in a CC game, the advice "when you've found a good move, try and find a better one" should certainly be taken, as there is no ticking clock to worry about. And there is indeed a better move:

**40...♜c6!! 0-1**

White resigned a little early. When this game was about to be published in 'Chess Mail' 8-9/1999, Hansen told me "I found a forced win at the time, but I don't have the time to piece it together again at the moment".

I have reconstructed Black's winning method as follows:

a) 41 ♜e1 ♜d3 (or 41...♜d4) threatening to pin ♞ against ♔.

b) 41 ♜c2 ♜d3 and now 42 ♜xc6 bxc6 43 ♜c3 ♜d1+ 44 ♜c1 comes to the same as the 41 ♜xc6 line, while if 42 ♜c3 ♞e4 43 ♜xd3 ♞xd3+ 44 ♜c2 b4 (Δ...b3) 45 ♜e5! (hoping for 45...fxe5 46 ♞xe5+ with counterplay) then simply 45...♞d1+ followed by ...♞xc1+, ...♜xc1+, ...fxe5 and Black wins trivially in the ♔ and pawn endgame.

c) 41 ♜xc6 bxc6 42 ♜c2 is the best defence, but Black can force a win by switching back and forth with ♞ and ♜, threatening variously mate and pins against White's ♞ and ♜, while the out-of-play ♜ is just a spectator. One way — there may well be others — for Black to win is 42...♜d1+ 43 ♜c1 ♞e4+ and now:

c1) 44 ♞c2 ♜d3 (Δ...♜b3+) 45 ♔a2 ♞d5+ 46 ♔b2 ♜d2-+.

c2) 44 ♔a2 ♜d4 45 ♞c3 (or 45 ♜c3 ♜a4+ 46 ♜a3 ♞d5+ 47 ♔b1 ♞d1+ 48 ♔a2 ♜e4) 45...♜d3 46 ♞c5 ♜d2+ 47 ♔b3 ♞a4+ 48 ♔c3 ♞a5+ 49 ♞b4 ♜d3+ and 50...♞xb4.

c3) 44 ♔a1 ♜d3 45 ♜c3 ♜d4 intending 46...♞e1+ 47 ♔a2 ♜a4+ 48 ♜a3 ♜e4 49 ♜c3 ♞d1 50 ♞c1 ♜e2+ 51 ♔b1 (or 51 ♔a1 ♞d4 and 52...b4) 51...♞a4 52 ♜c2 ♞e4 53 ♔b2 ♞b4+ 54 ♔a2 ♜e1-+.

White has no defence. 46 f5 (hoping for a timely ♞f4+) does not help after 46...♔b7, while if 46 ♞c1 (46 ♞c2 ♞e1+ 47 ♔b2 ♜d2 or 46 ♜c1 ♜a4+) 46...♜a4+ 47 ♜a3 (47 ♔b2 ♞b4+ 48 ♜b3 ♞d4+ 49 ♞c3 ♞f2+ 50 ♔c1 ♜e4) 47...♞d4+ 48 ♔a2 ♜c4 49 ♞b2 ♞d1 and 50...♜c2 wins.

# Game 54

**White: Peter Hardicsay (Hungary)**

**Black: Hans-Werner May (Denmark)**

Denmark-Hungary email match, board 4, 1999

*Sicilian Sveshnikov (B33)*

**The Players:** Peter Hardicsay (born 1952) was Hungarian under-20 champion in 1972 and has been a FIDE IM since 1986. He took up international email chess in 1999 and this game was played in one of his first events.

H-W. May was a very experienced CC master; runner-up in the 55<sup>th</sup> European Championship, he got the CC-IM title in 1997. May died in March 2002, aged 59.

**About this game:** A book of this kind without an example of the Sveshnikov Variation would be unthinkable; in the past 10 years it has been one of the most popular variations of the Sicilian Defence in CC, rivalling even the Najdorf and Dragon. I cannot attempt here to give an overview of the complex and rapidly-changing theory of the variation, but I shall mention a few of the significant CC games played with the Sveshnikov.

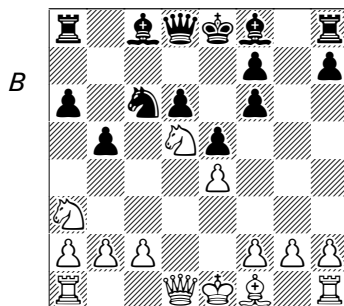
Hardicsay improves on earlier games played by both himself and May, who is soon forced to sacrifice a piece in the hope of promoting a pawn on the queenside. White keeps tactical control with some effective moves and conducts an attractive ♔ hunt, culminating in a ♖ sacrifice.

Gábor Gyuricza translated for me the notes by Hardicsay in the Hungarian magazine 'Távsakk', where this game first appeared, and Peter sent some extra comments on the opening.

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♖c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 e5 6 ♗db5 d6 7 ♕g5 a6 8 ♗a3 b5 9 ♕xf6**

9 ♗d5 leads to a different set of problems for both players. It may be somewhat easier for White to keep the draw in hand then but I suspect the winning chances are also reduced.

**9...gxf6 10 ♗d5 (D)**



**10...f5**

10...♕g7 leads to yet another nexus of complications. One recent example is 11 ♕d3 ♗e7 12 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 13



0-0 0-0 14 c4 f5 15 ♖f3 ♖b7! 16 exf5 ♖xf3 17 gxf3 e4! 18 ♙xe4 d5!∞ P.Hertel v Chessy Forum, Internet exhibition corr match 2002.

**11 ♙d3**

11 exf5 ♙xf5 12 c3 ♙g7 is an important main line position which can be reached by various move orders, including 10...♙g7. Black has reasonable chances, e.g. 13 ♗c2 0-0 14 ♗ce3 and now one idea is 14...♙d7!? 15 g4 (15 ♙d3 f5) 15...b4!?, offering the b-pawn to get control of d4 (Harding-E.Bösenberg, Heidenfeld Memorial 2000). I did not take the pawn and the game was soon drawn. Also relevant here is R.Bar-Hardicsay, Budapest 2000: 15 g4 e4 16 ♙g2 ♗e8 17 ♖c2 b4!? (17...♗c8) 18 ♙xe4 bxc3 19 bxc3 ♗c8 20 0-0± ♗d4 21 ♖d3 ♙b5 22 c4 ♙d7 23 ♗ab1 ♖h4 24 f3 ♙e6 25 ♗f2 ♗b8 26 ♗bf1 ♗c6 27 ♖h1 ♖h8 28 ♖a3 ♙xd5 29 cxd5 ♗b4 30 ♗f5 ♖f6 31 ♗b1+- (1-0, 46).

**11...♙e6 12 ♖h5**

This is an aggressive move but in view of Winkelmann's improvement for Black (note d to his 13<sup>th</sup> move), 12 0-0 now looks more dangerous for Black. For example, 12...♙xd5 13 exd5 ♗e7 14 c3 ♙g7 (14...♗g8!? and 14...♖d7!? may be improvements.) 15 ♖h5 ♖d7? (15...e4 is critical.) 16 ♗ad1 ♗c8 17 ♗c2 0-0 18 f3! h6 19 ♖h1 f4 20 ♗g1! f5!? (Better is 20...♗c7 21 g4 f6± accepting a passive game — Hamarat.) 21 g4 ♗f6 22 g5 hxg5 23 ♗xg5 ♗c8 24 ♗dg1 ♗f7 25 ♗b4 ♖b7 26 ♖h3 a5 27 ♗h5 ♗g6 28 ♗xg6 ♗xg6 29 ♗c6!

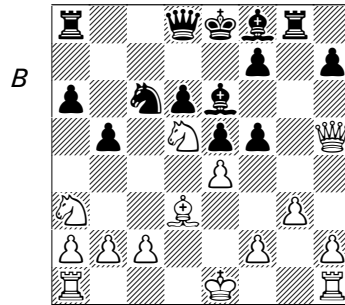
♖b6 30 ♗g5 ♖e3 31 ♙xf5 ♗xf5 32 ♗xg6 ♗f7 33 ♗d8 ♖d3 34 ♗g1 ♗e7 35 ♗c6! ♗f7 36 ♖g4 ♗d7 37 h4 1-0 Readers of Chess Mail v Hamarat, Internet exhibition corr 1999-2000.

**12...♗g8**

Black forgoes castling and attempts to make use of the half-open g-file, counter-attacking against g2. The h-pawn is left undefended but after White's reply Black must do something about it. 12...♙g7 was the older move, while 12...f4 13 g3 ♗g8 transposes to the game.

**13 g3 (D)**

13 c3 ♗xg2 14 ♖f3 ♗g4 is another critical line.



**13...f4?!**

To play these sharp openings in CC, you really have to keep up with theory, and this move has been superseded. Hardicsay mentions:

a) 13...h6 was seen regularly in the early days of the variation — Hardicsay considers it unclear.

b) 13...♙xd5 14 exd5 ♗g5 15 ♖xh7 ♗e7 16 0-0-0 ♖b6 ∞ — Zezulkin, 1993.

According to Jacob Aagaard's 'Easy Guide to the Sveshnikov Sicilian' (Everyman, 2000), Black should move his king's ♖.

c) 13...♗g4 14 f4 exf4 15 ♘xf4 (15 0-0-0!?) 15...♗xf4 16 gxf4 ♖a5+ 17 c3 b4 (Krasenkow) has been played successfully by Chilean CC-GM Guillermo Toro Solís de Ovando. Hardicsay intended 18 ♘b1 ♖g7 (18...♗b8 19 ♖e2 ♖g7 20 0-0± or 18...bxc3 19 ♘xc3 ♗b8 20 ♖e2 ♖g7 21 ♗c1) 19 0-0 bxc3 20 ♘xc3 which indeed proved good for White in D.Evtin-H.Ivanov, SEMI email 1999: 20...♗b8 21 ♖e2 ♖b6+ 22 ♖h1 ♖xb2 23 ♖xb2 ♗xb2 24 exf5 ♘b4 25 fxe6 ♘xd3 26 exf7+ ♖xf7 27 ♘e4 d5 28 ♘g5+ ♖f6 29 ♘h3 ♘b4 30 ♗ab1± (1-0, 62).

Probably Black has better with 19...♖d7!? 20 ♖xh7 ♖c5+, e.g. 21 ♗f2! (21 ♖h1 ♖e2 22 ♖xg7 ♖xd3 23 ♗e1 fxe4 24 cxb4 ♖f3+ 25 ♖g2 ♖xg2+ 26 ♖xg2 ♘xb4= Deforel-Toro, CADAP zt11 Final 1996) 21...♖f6 22 exf5 ♖d5 23 ♘d2!! ♗h8 24 ♘e4 ♗xh7 25 ♘xf6+! ♖d8! 26 ♘xh7∞ (Toro).

d) 13...♗g5! 14 ♖xh7 and now a new idea since Aagaard's book appeared is 14...♘d4!! 15 c3 (If 15 0-0-0 ♗g6 or 15 ♖f1 ♗g7 16 ♖h4 ♖xh4 17 gxh4 ♗c8!) 15...♘f3+ 16 ♖e2 ♖xd5! 17 exd5 (17 ♖xf3 ♗g7 18 ♖h4 ♖xh4 19 gxh4 ♖b7) 17...e4 18 ♗ad1 ♖f6 19 ♖h3 (19 ♖c2? ♖h6! -+) 19...b4! 20 ♘b1 bxc3 21 bxc3 ♗b8! 22 ♖g2 ♖e5! 23 ♖xa6 ♗b2+ 0-1 A.Satici-T.Winckelmann, ICCF Email Wch sf 2001 (24 ♖f1 ♘h4 25 ♖h3 e3).

**14 gxf4!**

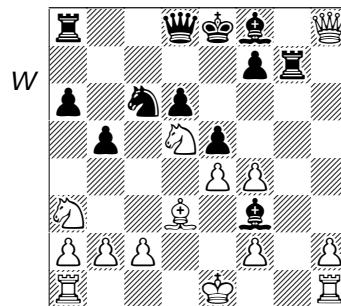
Hardicsay was dissatisfied with 14 c3 which he had played against P.Horváth, Hungary OTB Ch 1992.

**14...♖g4 15 ♖xh7 ♗g7 16 ♖h8 ♖f3 (D)**

This move had already been seen in some postal games before Krasenkow suggested it. Neil McDonald's assessment in his 1999 book ("Black is still struggling") seems accurate in the light of the present game. Other moves for Black are unattractive too:

a) 16...♘d4 17 ♖f1! ♗g6! 18 h3!! ♗h6 (18...♖f3 19 ♗g1 ♗h6 20 ♖g8±) 19 hxg4 ♗xh8 20 ♗xh8 (C.Horváth-P.Horváth, Hungary 1989) and "White has more than enough compensation for the ♖," says Hardicsay.

b) 16...exf4 17 ♗g1 and if 17...♘e5 18 ♗xg4!? ♘xg4 (18... ♗xg4 19 ♘f6+) 19 ♘xb5! ♗c8 20 ♘bc3 (Δ ♖xa6, ♖b5+) 20...♗c6 21 0-0-0 ♘xf2 22 ♗f1 ♘xd3+ 23 cxd3± — McDonald.



**17 ♗f1 ♘d4**

Hardicsay could not find this move in his database but in fact May had played it previously and Black's 18<sup>th</sup> move was his own invention. Others:

a) 17...♖g6 18 f5! ♜h6 19 ♖g8±  
— McDonald.

b) 17...f5 18 ♖h6 ♘d4 19 c3 fxe4 20 ♙xe4 ♙xe4 21 ♗f6+ ♚e7 22 ♗xe4 ♗f3+ 23 ♚e2 ♜f7 24 ♖g6 ♜xf4 25 ♜ad1 d5 26 ♗c2 ♜xe4+ 27 ♚xf3 ♜f4+ 28 ♚e2± (1-0, 38) H.Borchers-G.Engelhardt, MN10 corr 1996.

c) 17...exf4 18 ♗b1 (18 ♚d2!?) 18...♗e5 (18...♖a5+ 19 ♗d2 0-0-0? 20 c3+- △ 21 ♗xf3 or 21 ♗b3.) 19 ♗d2 ♙g4 20 ♗xf4 ♖g5 21 ♗d5 ♗g6 22 h4! ♗xh4 23 ♜g1 0-0-0 24 ♙e2 ♗g6 25 ♖h2 f5 26 ♙xg4 fxg4 27 ♗f3 (winning the black ♖) 1-0 K. Schreiber-R. Pfretzschner, ICCF World Cup 6-7 sf9 1990.

**18 c3 f5!?** **19 ♗c2!**

Probably the winning move, says Hardicsay. “Since the whole idea of the game revolves around the control of the light squares, White sacrifices his two-pawn advantage and annihilates the black ♙ which takes care of those squares.”

19 ♙b1 fxe4 20 ♖h6 ♚f7 21 ♙c2 ♜g6 22 ♖h7+ ♜g7 23 ♖h6 ½-½ (E.Barfoed-May, Danish CC Ch 1994) was hardly a serious test of Black’s idea. Not 19 cxd4? ♖a5+ 20 ♗c3 exd4± — Hardicsay.

**19...fxe4 20 ♗xd4 exd4 21 ♙e2! dxc3!**

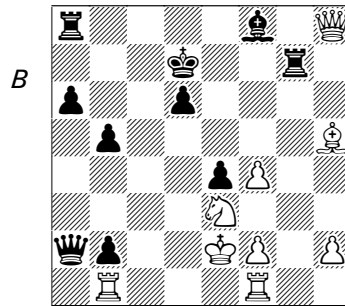
Or 21...♙xe2 22 ♚xe2 ♖c8 23 ♖h5+ ♜f7 (23...♚d8 24 ♗b6 d3+ 25 ♚d2+- Hardicsay) 23...♜f7 24 b3 ♙g7 25 ♜g1 ♚f8 26 ♜g5 d3+ 27 ♚e3! and if 27...♖c5+ 28 ♚xe4! ♜e8+ 29 ♚xd3 ♖xf2 30 ♜f5 ♜xf5 31 ♖xf5+ ♚g8 32 ♖h5+-.

**22 ♙xf3 cxb2**

22...exf3 23 0-0-0 cxb2+ 24 ♚xb2 ♚f7 25 ♜de1 ♜g6 26 ♖h5+-  
— Hardicsay.

**23 ♙h5+ ♚d7 24 ♜b1 ♖a5+ 25 ♚e2 ♖xa2 26 ♗e3! (D)**

Hardicsay: “The white ♚ is in a very vulnerable position and must be protected against an infinity of checks.”



The position looks random. White has a ♗ for two pawns; the opposite-coloured ♙s contribute to the imbalance, but what is really striking is that all but two of the eight pawns on the board are passed. However, only one of Black’s pawns is far enough advanced to be significant, while his ♙ is pinned and all his ♜s are doing is a temporary holding action to keep the white ♖ confined.

More importantly, the white ♚ is actually quite comfortable on e2, whereas the black ♚ has little hope of survival. The only possible shelter is on the a-file so it heads in that direction.

**26...a5**

The try 26...♜c8 27 ♜fd1 ♜c2+! (△ 28 ♗xc2? ♖c4+ 29 ♚e3 ♖c3+ with perpetual) fails to 28 ♚f1, since

if 28...♙xb1 29 ♖xb1 ♜c1+ 30 ♔e2 ♖xb1 31 ♗xf8 ♜e1+ 32 ♔d2! b1♗ then White wins by 33 ♗xg7+ (or 33 ♙e8+) 33...♔c8 (33...♔c6? 34 ♙e8+ ♔c5 35 ♗c3+ ♔b6 36 ♘d5+ and 37 ♗c7+) 34 ♙g4+ ♔b8 35 ♗f8+ ♔a7 36 ♗e7+ ♔a8 (36...♔b6 37 ♗d8+) 37 ♗d8+ ♔a7 38 ♗c7+ ♔a8 39 ♗c6+ ♔a7 40 ♘d5!+- as Black has no useful check.

**27 ♜fd1 a4 28 ♙g4+ ♔c7**

The ♔ races to support the b-pawn, which in turn creates a possible hiding place for the ♔ at a5. Black would like to get his pawn to a3, creating a threat of ...♙xb1 followed by ...a2, soon making a new ♗.

**29 ♙f5!**

“Exactly at the right moment,” says Hardicsay. Now 29...a3 walls in Black’s own ♗, so that after 30 ♙xe4, White threatens to trap her with 31 ♙d5; the ♗ sacrifice (30...♙xb1) of course fails now to 31 ♙xb1.

**29...♜e8 30 ♗h5 ♜ee7**

The only square to keep e4 protected, but now d6 is no longer guarded by the ♙. Now “the white ♗ advances towards her goal with elegant dancing steps,” comments Hardicsay.

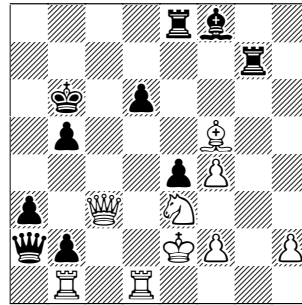
**31 ♗h6! ♜e8 32 ♗f6**

In two moves, White’s ♗ went from the oblivion of h8 to the very strong square f6 while Black achieved nothing; he never had time for ...♙b3. **32...a3**

This is necessary to protect the b-pawn but now comes a direct attack on the black ♔.

**33 ♗c3+ ♔b6 (D)**

W



The stage is set for the final combination. White is able to show that the Black ♔ is too exposed.

**34 ♙g6!!**

Very precise. 34 ♗d4+ and 35 ♙xe4 would allow Black some small counterplay after 35...♙b3 or 35...♗e6, while 34 ♘d5+ ♔b7 is not immediately conclusive either.

Now if 34...♜e6 35 ♗d4+ and 36 ♙xe4 wins more easily (e.g. 36...♙b3 37 ♙d5! forking ♗ and ♜), while if 34...♜c7 35 ♗d4+ followed by 36 ♙xe8+- . So Black takes the ♙.

**34...♜xg6 35 ♘d5+**

With the black ♜ decoyed off the 2<sup>nd</sup> rank, 35...♔b7 can now be met by 36 ♗c7+ and mate next move, so the black ♔ must advance to its doom on the 8<sup>th</sup> rank.

**35...♔a6 36 ♗c6+ ♔a5 37 ♗b6+ ♔a4 38 ♜d4+ ♔b3 39 ♗xb5+ ♔c2 40 ♘e3+ ♔xb1 41 ♜d1# 1-0**

The winner’s final comment on this game is: “The dream of every chess player is to give a forced mate, and this time the goal was achieved! My only regret is that this variation (with Black) is also one of my favourites.”

# Game 55

**White: Professor Max Zavanelli (USA)**

**Black: Dr Jaromir Canibal (Czech Republic)**

Reg Gillman Memorial E, 1999

*Two Knights Defence (C56)*

**The Players:** Professor Zavanelli — respectfully known in American CC circles as ‘Max the Axe’ because of his decisive solution to organisational problems there some years ago — returned to active play recently. He immediately won the Gillman ‘E’ with a huge score and qualified for a long overdue IM title.

Dr Canibal is ICCF delegate for the Czech Republic.

**About this game:** Max is a very dangerous attacking player who likes original situations. Highly unbalanced positions that arise after Black is forced to give up his ♖.

**1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♗f6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♗f3**

Recently there has been a considerable revival of interest in Sergei Urusov’s gambit idea.

**4... ♗c6**

Zavanelli-R.Pope, corr 1987, went  
4... ♗xe4 5 ♖xd4 ♗f6 6 ♖g5 ♖e7  
7 ♗c3 c6 8 0-0-0 d5 9 ♖he1 ♖e6 10  
♖h4 ♗bd7 11 ♖d3 ♗c5 (11...c5) 12  
♗d4 ♗g8 13 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 14 ♖g3  
♗f6?! (14...g6) 15 ♗f5 ♖f8 16 ♖c7  
♖d8 17 ♖xe6+! ♗xe6 18 ♖xb7 g6?  
(18...♗d7) 19 ♖xc6+ ♖d7 20 ♖c8+  
♗d8 21 ♖e1+ ♗e4 22 ♗xe4 gxf5  
23 ♗d6# 1-0.

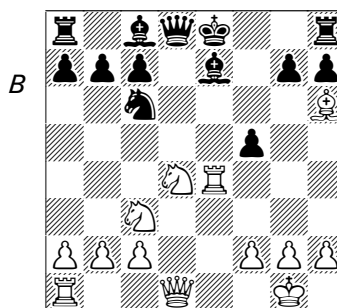
Canibal heads for the Two Knights instead, but he gets a crazy position in a few moves anyway!

**5 0-0 ♗xe4 6 ♖e1 d5 7 ♖xd5 ♖xd5  
8 ♗c3 ♖d8**

8... ♖a5 and 8... ♖h5 are more popular but also complicated.

**9 ♖xe4+ ♖e7 10 ♗xd4 f5 11 ♖h6!  
(D)**

Zavanelli had been waiting 20 years to play this move: White develops at high speed, threatening ♖xg7; he will wreck the black ♖ position by 12 ♖h5+ if the ♖ is captured. Black is fine after the standard 11 ♖f4 0-0 12 ♗xc6 ♖xd1+ 13 ♗xd1 bxc6.



The ♖ shot is known from the Canal Variation, 7 ♗c3!? (instead

of 7 ♖xd5) 7...dxc4 8 ♜xe4+ ♙e7 9 ♜xd4 f5 and now 10 ♙h6!?. In that line Black has a c4-pawn, but in our game it is absent which improves White's chances considerably.

### 11...fxe4

After 11...gxf6? 12 ♖h5+ ♜f8 13 ♜xf5 White has a very strong attack, while 11...♜g8 12 ♜f4 gxf6 13 ♖h5+ ♜f8 is no real improvement, White winning quickly after 14 ♜xf5+! ♜xf5 15 ♖xf5+ ♜e8 16 ♜e6 in Oren-Mishnayevesky, Israel corr 1997.

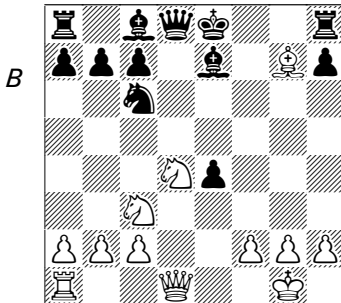
Zavanelli analysed 11...0-0 without knowing the precedents. After 12 ♜xc6 bxc6 (not 12...♖xd1+ 13 ♜xd1 fxe4 14 ♜xe7+) 13 ♜d4 ♖e8 14 ♙f4 ♙f6 15 ♜d3! (Not possible with the black pawn on c4!) and now:

a) 15...♜f7 16 ♜e3 ♜e7 17 ♜d5! ♜xe3 (or 17...cxd5 18 ♜xe7 ♖xe7 19 ♖xd5+) 18 ♜xf6+ gxf6 19 ♙xe3± L.Schmid-Hooper, Hastings 1951/52.

b) 15...♖f7 16 ♖f3 ♜b8 17 ♜b1 g5 18 ♙e3 ♙a6 19 ♜dd1 (½-½, 40) J.Mestel-D.Bronstein, London rapid 1976.

### 12 ♙xg7 (D)

Threatening both ♖h5+ and ♙xh8.



### 12...♜f8

Pálkövi suggests 12...♜f7, following Keres' 11...♜f7 in the Canal, with a draw after 13 ♙xh8 ♖xh8 14 ♖h5+ ♜f8 15 ♜xc6 bxc6 16 ♖h6+ and now 16...♜f7! 17 ♖h5+ ♜f8 etc.

Black can also play 12...♜xd4!?, when 13 ♙xh8 ♜f5!? is possible or White can try 13 ♖h5+ ♜d7 14 ♜d1! and now:

a) 14...♜f8? 15 ♜xd4+ ♙d6 16 ♖xh7 ♜f7 17 ♖h3+ ♜c6 18 ♜c4+ ♜b6 19 ♜d5+ ♜a6 20 ♜a4+ ♜b5 21 ♖b3+ ♜c6 22 ♜c4+ ♜d7 23 ♖h3+ ♜e8 24 ♜xe4+ ♙e7 25 ♖h5 ♖xd5 26 ♖xd5 ♜xg7 27 ♖h5+ 1-0 A.Llopis-Palau Viol, corr 1988.

b) 14...♙d6 15 ♜xd4 ♜e8 may improve, e.g. 16 ♜xe4 ♜e6 17 ♜c5+ ♜e7 18 ♙f6+ with a draw by perpetual being the likely result.

c) 14...c5 15 ♙xd4 cxd4 16 ♜xd4+ ♜e6 (16...♙d6 17 ♜b5+-) 17 ♜xe4+ ♜d7 18 ♖b5+ ♜c7 19 ♖e5+ (following analysis by Estrin) and now Black can defend by 19...♙d6! 20 ♜b5+ ♜b6 21 ♜xd6 a6! and if 22 ♜f7 ♖d1+ 23 ♙e1 ♜d8!∞.

### 13 ♖h5+ ♜f7

If 13...♜d7 14 ♜xc6 bxc6 15 ♜xe4 and White wins on either 15...♙d6 16 ♜e1 or 15...♖e8 16 ♜d1+ ♙d6 17 ♖g4+ ♜d8 (17...♜e7 18 ♖g5+ ♜e6 19 ♜e1) 18 ♖g5+ ♖e7 19 ♙xf8.

### 14 ♜d1! ♙d7

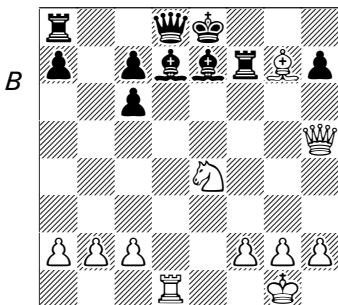
14...♖d6 may be correct, e.g. 15 ♜db5 ♖f4 16 ♜d5 ♖xf2+ 17 ♜h1 ♙d7 18 ♜f6+ ♙xf6 19 ♜xc7+ ♜e7 20 ♜d5+ ♜e6 21 ♜c7+ ♜e7 22 ♜d5+ ♜e6 with a draw by repetition.

Similarly, Black may have a draw with 14...♙d6 15 ♘xe4 ♘xd4! 16 ♗f6+ ♖e7 17 ♗d5+ etc.

Zavanelli says that chaos results from Black's more radical try 14...♗b4!?, e.g. 15 ♘xe4 ♗d5 16 ♗b5! "and every piece including White's ♗ and Black's ♗ is in the breeze".

**15 ♗xc6 bxc6 16 ♗xe4 (D)**

Zavanelli had analysed this position before the game: "My plan was to win a third pawn for the ♖ and then march my kingside pawns to glory".



**16...♖b8 17 c4**

To prevent ...♖b5.

**17...c5 18 ♗xh7 ♙f8 19 ♖e1!**

White keeps to the basic theme. Black obviously cannot take the pinned ♙ (19...♙xg7 20 ♗d6# or 19...♙xg7 20 ♗f6+) and 19...♙e6 loses to 20 ♗h5 and 21 ♗g5. So he must give up his ♗.

**19...♗e7 20 ♗f6+ ♖d8 21 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 22 h4!**

"I thought I would win this easily but now Black puts up stiff resistance sending us into deep tactics and miraculous moves..."

**22...♖xg7 23 ♗h8 ♖e7**

23...♖f7 is very complicated but Zavanelli found a White win "after two pages of analysis". The best continuation seems to be 24 ♗h7!, e.g. 24...♖e8 (or 24...♖e7 25 ♗e5+! ♖d8 26 ♗xf8 ♖xf8) 27 ♗g7 ♖e8 28 h5 ♙e6 (28...♖e7 30 ♗g5) 29 b3 ♖g8 30 ♗e5 ♖d7 31 ♗xc5±.

**24 ♗d5+ ♖d6**

24...♖e8 also fails after 25 h5.

**25 h5 ♙e6**

The best move. If instead 25...♙h3 (Not 25...♙c6? 26 h6 ♖f7 27 ♗g8+-) 26 ♗f4! ♙f5 (26...♙e6 27 h6 ♖f7 28 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 29 h7 ♖b6 30 f4 ♙g7 31 ♗xg7+-) 27 h6 ♖f7 (27...♖e7 28 ♗f6+) 28 ♗g8 ♖e7 29 ♗d5+ ♖e8 30 g4! and White "will win by the slow death march of the pawns", e.g. 30...♙e4 (30...♙h7 31 ♗h8 or 30...♙c2 31 ♗h8!) 31 f3! ♙b1 32 g5 ♙h7 (32...c6 33 g6 ♙xg6 34 ♗xg6 cxd5 35 h7 ♖b6 36 ♗xf7+) 33 ♗h8 ♖d8 34 g6 ♙xg6 35 ♗g8.

**26 h6 ♖f7**

26...♖g6 27 ♗h7 forks g6 and c7.

**27 f4 ♖d7 28 h7**

"Passed pawns must be pushed."

**28...♖c8!**

Other moves lose, e.g. 28...♖g7 29 ♗f6+ ♖e7 30 ♗h5 ♖f7 31 ♗g8 or 28...♙xd5 29 cxd5 c4 30 d6!! ♖g7 31 ♗g8 ♖xb2 32 g4+- etc. (Zavanelli). Now 29 ♗f6+ falls short after 29...♖c6 because the ♖ is defended, so that if 30 f5 ♙g7 31 ♗g8 ♙xf6 and Black has at least a draw, e.g. 32 g4 ♙d4+ 33 ♖g2 ♖xg8 34 hxg8 ♙xc4.

**29 f5 ♙xd5**

29...♖xf5 takes the eye off the ball:

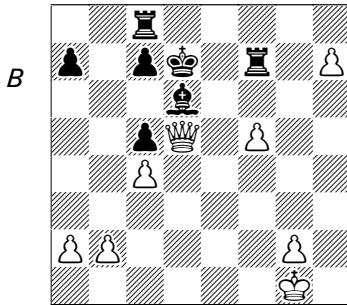
30 ♖f6! is followed by promotion on h8 because 30...♗xf6 31 ♜xf6+ is check. Also hopeless is 29...♙xf5 30 ♖g8 ♗xh7 31 ♜f6+ and ♜xh7.

### 30 ♖e5 ♙d6

Not 30...♗xh7? 31 ♖xd5+ ♙e8 32 ♖e6+ ♙d8 33 ♖g8 ♗e7 34 f6+-.

### 31 ♖xd5 (D)

Normally, two ♗s and a ♙ would outgun a ♖ but here there is the little matter of White's three connected passed pawns and also the fact that his ♙ has much more protection than its opposite number. Nursing the pawns to victory is no easy matter, though.



### 31...♗ff8

31...♗xh7? would cost a ♗ because of 32 ♖e6+ ♙d8 33 ♖g8+.

However, Black can do better with 31...♗e7!. Now if 32 ♖g8 ♗ce8! draws, while 32 f6 makes the pawn too vulnerable after 32...♗e1+ 33 ♙f2 ♗e6 and 34...♙e5. Therefore Zavanelli intended 32 b4! and then:

a) 32...cxb4 33 c5 ♗e1+ 34 ♙f2 ♗e5 35 ♖f7+ ♗e7 36 ♖c4 “winning later”.

b) 32...♗ce8 33 ♖d3 and on 33...

♙c8 34 f6 or 33...cxb4 34 c5 White is again probably winning. The key defensive move is 33...♗e3! since if 34 ♖xe3 ♗xe3 35 h8♖ ♙g3! Black threatens mate by ...♗e1 and White must keep checking. So 34 ♖d2 ♗3e5 35 bxc5 (If 35 ♖h6 ♗xf5= or 35 ♖g5 cxb4=.) 35...♗xc5 36 ♖g5 looks like White's best try. “The position still makes me dizzy; it would take hours to figure out” — Zavanelli.

c) 32...♗e1+! 33 ♙f2 ♗e5 is Black's best defence, and now 34 ♖f7+ ♗e7 35 ♖g8 ♗ce8! draws, since if 36 g3 ♗e2+ 37 ♙f1 ♗e1+ 38 ♙g2 ♗8e2+ 39 ♙h3 ♗h1+ 40 ♙g4 ♗e3! 41 ♙g5 ♗xg3+ 42 ♙f6 ♗gh3 when White must take the perpetual by 43 ♖e6+ ♙c6 44 ♖e8+. After 34 ♖d3 a possible line is 34...♗f8 35 g4 cxb4 36 ♖d4 c5 37 ♖d1 but I find it hard to believe that White can win this.

So 31...♗e7 would have saved the game but it is very understandable that a player can become disoriented given the unbalanced material situation, multiple passed pawns and almost infinite checking possibilities.

### 32 ♖e6+ ♙c6 33 g4 ♗ce8 34 ♖h6

Black draws if White slips, e.g. 34 ♖g6? ♗e1+ 35 ♙g2 ♗fe8 and White cannot escape the perpetual since if 36 ♖h6 ♗1e2+ 37 ♙f3? ♗h2! ♣.

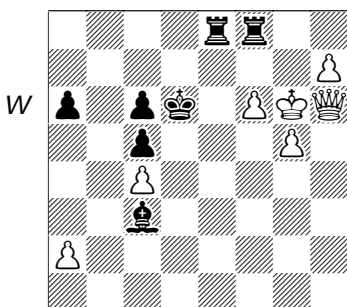
### 34...♙d7 35 f6!

Otherwise ...♙e5 prevents the advance of the f-pawn.

### 35...♙e5 36 g5 ♙xb2

To drive his pawns forward, White needs some support. Send for the ♙! 37 ♙f2 a6 38 ♙f3 c6 39 ♙g4 ♙d4 40 ♙f5 ♙c3 41 ♙g6 ♙d6 (D)





This is the critical endgame position. White has advanced his pawns as far as he can and his ♔ has come up to support them. The question now is, how does White advance them further?

Currently Black has the pawns restrained: the ♖s control h8, the pressure on f6 prevents the g-pawn advancing, while f6-f7 would lose the pawn after ...♗e7 and, in any case, the f-pawn is not dangerous unless it can be supported by g6-g7.

Rearranging the white ♔ and ♚ — e.g. ♚f5, ♔h6 — is ineffective since after f7 and g6 then ...♗e6 prevents the g-pawn going on. One formation that would work is with ♚g8 and pawns on f7 and g6, but that is impossible unless a black ♖ leaves the back rank.

It is no use White sacrificing his ♚ for a ♖ to promote the h-pawn, e.g. 42 ♚xf8 ♖xf8 43 ♔g7 ♗d8 (or 43...♖xf6!) 44 h8♚ ♖xh8 45 ♔xh8 since Black's ♔ and ♕ will mop up the f and g-pawns and win — though this does mean the black ♔ cannot wander off to the queenside.

Fortunately White has another

target — the black a-pawn — and if he can capture it then the ♚ sacrifice will work, since Black cannot cope with the passed a-pawn as well as the kingside pawns.

At the moment White cannot make progress against Black's optimum configuration, so he must force the black pieces onto less effective squares. He starts with a useful probing move.

**42 ♚g7! a5**

Already White forces a concession. Since Black cannot defend the pawn on a6 (43 ♚a7 ♖a8? runs into 44 ♚e7#) he advances it into the protection of his ♕. Nevertheless, the pawn is not safe on a5 either, as it can now be attacked along the e1-a5 diagonal as well as the a- and b-files. Thus Black will have to defend it with ...♖a8 at some point.

Black might give up the a-pawn and use the time taken for ♚a7 and ♚xa6 to organise a counter-attack against the white kingside. For instance, 42...♕d4 43 ♚a7 ♕e3 44 ♚xa6 ♖e5 45 ♔g7 ♗d8 and now if 46 g6 ♖h5 (Δ 47...♕h6+ 48 ♔f7 ♖f8#) 47 ♔f7 (48 f7?? ♕d4#) 47...♗d7+ 48 ♔e8 ♖e5+ 49 ♔f8 ♗d8+ draws. But White plays 46 ♚b7! ♖xg5+ (46...♕xg5 47 ♚b1+-) 47 ♔f7 ♖e5 48 ♚e7+! ♖xe7 49 fxe7 ♖h8 50 e8♚ ♖xe8 51 ♔xe8 ♕d4 52 ♔d8! and the ♕ cannot stop both pawns.

If 42...♖h8 the counter-attack succeeds after 43 ♚b7 ♖e5 44 ♚xa6? ♕d2 45 ♔g7? ♖xg5+ 46 ♔xh8 ♕c3 and mates, but this time White plays 44 ♚f7! ♖ee8 (or 44...♕d4 45

♖g8!) 45 ♔g7 followed by g6, ♖h6, ♖xe8, g7 and wins. The alternative 43...♗d2? also fails to 44 ♖b2! ♗e3 45 f7! ♗e5 46 ♔g7 or 45...♗ef8 46 ♖h2+ and ♖h3+ or ♖e5+ wins the ♗. Thus Black has nothing better than 43...a5, with lines similar to those in the next note.

#### 43 ♖h6?

Now 43 ♖a7 (or 43 ♖b7) doesn't achieve anything as Black simply passes with 43...♗b4, so the ♖ returns to make manoeuvres.

As noted above, Black will have to play ...♗a8 to defend the pawn at some point — if 43...♗h8 44 ♖h2+ ♗e5 45 ♖d2+ ♗d4 46 ♖xa5 ♗a8 47 ♖e1 ♗a7 48 ♖h4! and ♖h6-g7 wins — so we may as well make him play it immediately: i.e. 43...♗a8 44 ♖h2+ ♗e5 45 ♖d2+ ♗d4, but now White plays his key move, 46 ♖e1! Δ ♖e7# — the point being that 46...♗fe8? loses at once to 47 h8♖!, and 46...♗ae8 drops the a-pawn.

Blocking the e-file by 46...♗e5 fails to 47 ♔f5, while 46...♔c7 47 ♖e7+ ♔b6 allows the sacrifice 48 ♖xf8! ♗xf8 49 ♔g7 since the black ♔ is too far away to stop the pawns.

This leaves only 46...♗a7, but then 47 ♖g3+ ♗e5 48 ♖d3+ ♗d4 49 ♔h5! Δ g6-g7 etc., and if Black defends against that, e.g. by 49...♗af7, then 50 ♖g6! and White finally achieves the winning formation after 50...♗d7 51 ♖g8! ♗dd8 52 f7.

The one spoiler in all this is 43...a4!, removing the a-pawn from

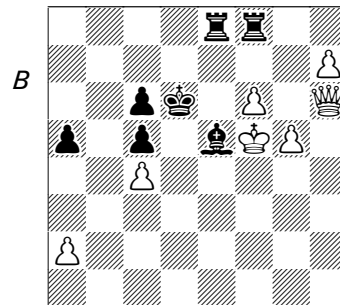
the e1-a5 diagonal, so that ♖e1 can be met by ...♗ae8!, while if 44 ♖g7 ♗h8 45 ♖a7 ♗d2! 46 ♖xa4 ♗e5 succeeds again.

This is why 43 ♖h6 received '?'. White should have first played 43 a4!, fixing the black pawn at a5 before commencing his ♖ manoeuvres. Fortunately Black replies with an even more careless move.

#### 43...♗e5?

Now White doesn't have to bother with subtleties since he has an immediate win.

#### 44 ♔f5! (D)



Exploiting the black ♗ as a target. Now if 44...♔d7 45 ♖xf8! ♗xe5 46 ♔xe5 and the pawns overcome the ♗. 44...♗d4 45 f7+ ♔c7 46 g6 ♔d7 47 ♔g4! 1-0

If the attacked ♗ moves along the back rank White wins by 48 g7! ♗xg7 49 ♖xg7 and 50 ♖g8 etc., while if 47...♗e4+ 48 ♔h3 ♗e3+ 49 ♖xe3 ♗xe3 50 g7 “with three pretty pawns like peas in a pod.”

# Game 56

**White: Garry Kasparov (Russia)**

**Black: Players of the World**

Internet Challenge, Microsoft Gaming Zone, 1999

*Sicilian Defence (B52)*

**The Players:** Garry Kasparov (born 1963) needs little introduction. FIDE World Champion from 1985-93 and unofficial world champion until his loss to Kramnik in 1999, he has achieved the highest rating of any chess player so far in history. In this, his only true correspondence game, his opponent was — the World!



**About this game:** CC matches between GMs and teams of amateurs have been played for many years, with varying formats, but the Internet has made them especially popular. Players vote for their preference and the move that receives the most votes by the deadline is played. Game 63 is another example of this type of contest.

This game was played from June 21 to October 25, 1999, on the Microsoft Network Gaming Zone, with sponsorship from a bank, FirstUSA. It received enormous publicity and attracted more than 50,000 individuals, from over 75 countries worldwide, to register and participate; many more followed the progress of the game.

Kasparov's moves were posted every 48 hours, with the World having 24 hours thereafter to post its votes. I think this fast rate of play

helped Kasparov but it also made the event much more valuable for the promotion of chess than a slower pace would have been.

GM Alexander Baburin annotated this game for 'Chess Mail' and the notes presented here are partly a synthesis of his comments (marked AB), information on the official MSN site and my own views on the game. However, the most important source is the in-depth analysis and commentary presented by Irina Krush at the [www.smartchess.com](http://www.smartchess.com) website. Krush — at the time a teenager, though already US Ladies Champion — was one of the expert advisers to the World during the match. Other advisers included young French GM Etienne Bacrot, and as the game progressed, more and more players joined in, including numerous GMs.

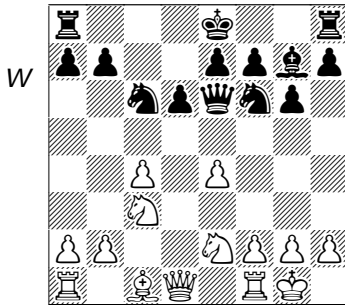
**1 e4 c5 2 f3 d6 3 b5+**

In such events, it is more enjoyable for everyone if long theoretical main lines are avoided and an original situation arises early on. Not only did he not want to show future GM opponents his preparation in a main line, the World Champion probably reckoned that the opposition would be

analysing with computers extensively (as he did himself). In a quiet line, where strategy was more important than tactics, his experience and judgment were more likely to tell.

Especially after being surprised at move 10, Kasparov did well to steer the game to difficult positions where it was not easy for his opposition to agree on the right course of action.

3...♙d7 4 ♙xd7+ ♚xd7 5 c4 ♘c6  
6 ♘c3 ♘f6 7 0-0 g6 8 d4 cxd4 9  
♘xd4 ♙g7 10 ♘de2 ♚e6! (D)



Unluckily for Kasparov, the World came up with a novelty that complicated the game after all.

AB: “I am sure that the quality of Kasparov’s moves would be somewhat better than that of his opponents in a positional struggle, such as arises after 10...0-0 11 f3 a6 12 a4, e.g. 12...♖fc8 13 b3 ♚d8 14 ♙h1 ♘d7 15 ♙g5 ♚a5 16 ♚d2 ♘c5 17 ♖ab1 e6 18 ♖fd1 ♖ab8 19 ♙h4 ♚b6 20 ♚xd6 ♙e5 21 ♚d2 ♘xb3 22 ♚b2 ♘ca5 23 ♘d5 exd5 24 ♚xe5 ♘xc4 25 ♚xd5 and White eventually came out on top in the 3<sup>rd</sup> game of the Kramnik-

Gelfand match, Sanghi Nagar 1994. The World did very well to avoid such scenarios.”

11 ♘d5

11 ♚b3 has been tried but looks quite artificial and Black was fine after 11...0-0 12 ♘f4 ♚c8 (12... ♚d7!? — Krush) 13 ♘fd5 e6 in B. Damljanović-I.Stohl, Batumi 1999.

11...♚xe4

AB: “Obviously this is the whole point of playing 10...♚e6. Black will eventually have two pawns for the exchange. Should Black cover the c7-square with 11...♖c8?!, he would allow White to protect his central pawn and after 12 f3 0-0 13 ♙e3 White stands better.”

12 ♘c7+ ♙d7 13 ♘xa8 ♚xc4 14  
♘b6+!?

White wants to upset the opponents’ pawn structure, but as the resulting position turns out fine for Black, he should maybe use the tempo more constructively. In R.Antonio-M.Rytshagov, Istanbul OL 2000, White tried 14 ♘c3 ♖xa8 15 ♙e1 and went on to win. Probably best is 15...♖d8! (Krush) overprotecting d6.

14...axb6 15 ♘c3 ♖a8

This was Speelman’s idea, planning to activate the ♖ via a5. Black has many alternatives, such as 15...♖d8, 15...e6!?, or 15...b5!? (Krush) which has been seen in several games since the match. For example (15...b5!?):

a) 16 ♙e3 ♖a8 17 ♖c1 ♙e8 18 b3 ♚g4 (Krush later preferred 18...♚h4 with ideas of ...♘g4, or if 19 ♚e2 ♚h5 20 ♚xb5 ♚xb5 21 ♘xb5 ♖xa2.) 19 f3 ♚h5 20 a4 b4 21 ♘b5

♔f8 22 ♕f2 ♖d5 23 ♗c2 ♖f5 24 ♗xf5 gxf5 25 ♜fd1± S.Rublevsky-B.Vucković, Herceg Novi 2000.

b) 16 ♕g5!? ♜e4 17 ♜xe4 ♖xe4 18 a4 b4 (18...bxa4!? — Krush) 19 ♜e1 ♖f5 20 ♖d2 ♜a8 21 ♕e3! ♔e8 22 h3 ♜a5 23 ♕b6 ♜d5 24 ♖e2 ♖d3 25 ♖g4 e6 26 ♖ad1 (Not 26 ♜xe6+? fxe6 27 ♖xe6+ ♜e7 28 ♜c1 ♕c3! 29 bxc3 ♜e5! 30 ♖b3 ♖d2=) 26...♖b3 27 ♜xd5 ♖xd5 28 ♜d1 ♖b3≠ Fritz6 v Stephen Ham computer challenge match, corr 2000.

#### 16 a4

AB: “White has no open file for his ♜s so he fixes the b6-pawn and creates a post for his ♜ on b5.” This also negates Black’s ♜ lift to the kingside (...♜a5-f5), which ♜b5 would now thwart.

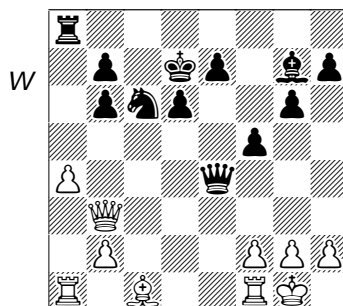
#### 16...♜e4

GM Baburin commented: “This is quite logical — Black opens up his ♕ and exchanges one pair of pieces, after which his ♔ will be safer. Another approach would be to advance his d-pawn with 16...d5. Then Black might try to play ...e6 and, let’s say, ...♔e8-f8. Still, after 17 ♕g5 e6 18 ♜c1 play is very complicated and it’s hard to say whether it is a preferable strategy for Black to keep the ♜s on or trade them.”

#### 17 ♜xe4 ♖xe4 18 ♖b3!?

Aggressive, forking two pawns. 18 ♜e1 would be calmer, to see where the black ♖ is going, but after 18...♖d4 White should probably avoid the ♖ exchange, so it seems better to move the ♖ immediately with a threat.

#### 18...f5!? (D)



Although it looks loosening, this is very logical. White can no longer win a pawn on f7 (the doubled b6-pawn would be a less serious loss), and the f-pawn may advance again to f4 or f3, enhancing Black’s counterplay.

Another possibility was 18...e6 (Baburin) and if 19 ♖xb6 ♜d4 Black has a playable, though less dynamic position. If immediately 18...♜d4?! White can seize the initiative by returning the exchange: 19 ♖xf7 ♜c2 20 ♕d2! ♜xa1 21 ♜e1 ♖h4 22 ♖d5 ♜f8 23 ♖xb7+ ♔e8 when White can defend b2 by 24 ♖c6+ ♔f7 25 ♖d5+ ♔e8 26 ♖b5+ and then 26...♔f7 27 ♜xa1 gives him the better chances (Krush).

English GM Danny King acted as moderator for the match, coordinating the advice of the young experts and making comments of his own. In his overview of the game, he wrote that 18...f5 “was by far the most aggressive of a complex set of options. Nevertheless, Garry Kasparov knuckled down to his task, found counterplay with his ♖, and by move 28 could have forced a repetition of the position.”

## 19 ♖g5

AB: “After 19 ♖xb6 Black would probably have played 19...♗d4 with a very unpleasant threat of 20...♖a6 (21 ♖b4 ♗e2+). In this case White might seriously fall behind in deployment of his forces. Kasparov immediately addresses this issue.”

Also if 19 ♖f7?! ♗d4 20 ♖xh7 (20 ♗g5 ♖e6! forces the ♖ exchange.) 20...♖h8 21 ♖xg6 ♗e5 followed by 22...♗g4 gives strong counterplay. Kasparov rules this out by playing 19 ♗g5 first, when the threat of 20 ♖fe1 forces Black to move the ♖.

## 19...♖b4

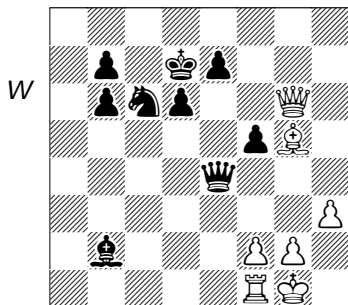
19...♗d4 can be met quietly by 20 ♖d1, as 20...♗e2+ 21 ♗h1 ♗xb2 22 ♖e1 ♗xa1 23 ♖xe2 ♖xa4?! 24 ♖xe7+ should favour White (AB).

## 20 ♖f7 ♗e5

Blocking the e-file, with further possibilities of ...f4 to strand the white ♗, or to attack h2 after 21 ♖xh7?? ♖h8 or 21 ♖fe1? h6! 22 ♗xh6 ♖h4. Kasparov now scotches h-file counterplay, preparing to capture on h7.

21 h3 ♖xa4 22 ♖xa4 ♖xa4 23 ♖xh7 ♗xb2 24 ♖xg6 ♖e4 (D)

The exchange of white a&b-pawns



for black g&h-pawns has given each side a dangerous passed pawn, around which the battle now revolves.

## 25 ♖f7 ♗d4 26 ♖b3 f4

Before activating his prime asset, the h-pawn, White sought to neutralise Black's queenside counterplay. With 26...f4!, Black prepares for action on the other side, creating possibilities of ...♗e5 and ...f3, while if 27 ♖b1? ♗xf2+! wins a pawn (28 ♗xf2? ♖e3#). So the white ♖ returns.

## 27 ♖f7 ♗e5 28 h4

Kasparov is not interested in forcing a draw by 28 ♖b3 ♗d4 29 ♖f7 in an exhibition game.

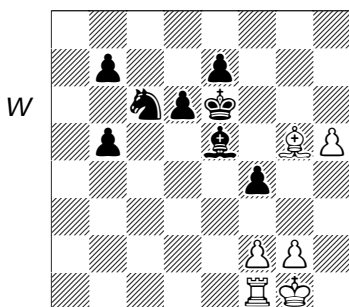
## 28...b5 29 h5 ♖c4

The obvious 29...b4?! 30 h6 ♖c2 is met by 31 ♗xf4! ♗d8 32 h7 ♗e5 33 ♖xe5 dxe5 34 h8♖ and White has a superior endgame — the black pawns are a shambles and the exchange of ♗s reduces Black's counterplay, while White now has another passed pawn (the g-pawn) to advance.

Now after 29...♖c4 Black is ready to push the b-pawn; e.g. 30 ♖f8 b4 31 h6 b3 32 ♖f5+ e6! 33 ♖f7+ ♗c8 34 h7 b2 35 ♖g6 ♗c7 36 ♖b1 ♗h8 and both sides' pawns are under control (if 37 ♗f6 ♖c1+ 38 ♗h2 ♗e5! 39 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 defends). So White forces transposition into the endgame.

## 30 ♖f5+ ♖e6 31 ♖xe6+ ♗xe6 (D)

Black has two pawns for the exchange but this nominal material advantage is reduced for two reasons: firstly, the b-pawn is doubled and secondly, White has a passed h-pawn, which in some cases can also be supported by a passed g-pawn.



Both sides can play for a win, but the situation favours Kasparov because he can make all his own decisions, whereas Black's many heads will not always agree.

**32 g3!**

Otherwise White's ♕ might be in trouble; he also tempts Black with a pawn.

**32...fxg3 33 fxg3 b4!**

Now White has connected passed pawns but grabbing the g-pawn would give Kasparov valuable time; the ♕ would have to be sacrificed: 33...♕xg3?! 34 h6 ♕e5 35 h7 (Δ 36 ♕f6! ♕xf6 37 ♖xf6+ etc.) 35...♕g7 36 ♖f8 b4 37 h8♖ ♕xh8 38 ♖xh8 with a ♖ against four pawns.

Krush & Henley thought 38...♔d5!, might hold, but the line is unnecessarily difficult for Black. Instead of getting involved in such dubious adventures, the majority of the World players followed the advice of their 'minders' and got their own pawn moving.

**34 ♕f4 ♕d4+**

According to King, 34...♕h8 followed by...♔d4 was "good enough to draw", e.g. 34...♕h8 35 g4 b3 36 g5

b2 37 g6 ♔d4 38 h6 ♔e2+ 39 ♔h1 b1♖ 40 ♖xb1 ♔xf4 41 ♖g1 (or 41 g7 ♕xg7 42 hxg7 ♔f7) 41...♔xg6! 42 ♖xg6+ ♔f7= (Kasparov).

**35 ♔h1!**

This unexpected ♔ move has two purposes: to avoid ♔ checks in some lines (e.g. after ...♔b4-d3xf4), while leaving the g-file open for the ♖. 35 ♔h2 is inferior, as shown most simply by the line 35...b3 36 g4 ♔b4 37 g5 ♔d3 38 h6? ♔xf4 39 ♖xf4 ♕e5 and the ♖ is pinned to the ♔.

**35...b3**

35...♔e5 36 ♕xe5 dxe5! was better said Kasparov. Black advances the e-pawn to distract the ♖, allowing the black ♔ to cross the f-file and capture the white pawns; e.g. 37 g4 b3 38 g5 e4 39 h6 e3 40 g6 e3 41 ♖e1 b2 42 ♔g2 ♕e3 43 h7 ♕d4 44 ♔f3 ♔f5 45 ♔xe2 ♔xg6=.

After the text, Kasparov began to believe he was winning. However, the World found a way to bring their ♔ to blockade the white passed pawns and gain time to push their own.

**36 g4 ♔d5**

The plan of ...b2 and ...♔b4-d3 now fails, and the variations reveal the purposes of White's 35 ♔h1! instructively, e.g. 36...♔b4 37 g5 ♔d3 38 h6 b2 39 g6 ♔xf4 (no check) 40 g7 ♔f7 41 ♖xf4+ ♕f6 42 ♖f1 ♔g8 43 ♖g1! (open g-file) and if 43...♕g5!? 44 h7+ ♔xh7 45 g8♖+ ♔xg8 46 ♖xg5+ and 47 ♖b5 wins.

**37 g5 e6!**

Making room for the ♔ to go to the kingside via e7. The natural 37...e5? would be a mistake as it

does not support f5 as an outpost for the ♖; e.g. after 38 ♖c1 ♗e7 (not 38...b2? 39 ♖xb2 ♖xb2 40 h6 ♗e7 41 ♖f6+-) 39 ♖f7! ♗e6 40 ♖f6+ ♗d7 41 ♖a3 b2 42 ♖f1 ♖e3 (42...♗f5 43 ♗h2!) 43 g6 ♖c1 44 ♖xb2 ♖xb2 45 g7+-.

37...b2? also fails, as shown by the following attractive line from Krush: 38 g6 ♗d8 39 ♖e3! ♖e5 40 h6 ♗e6 41 ♖g5 ♗g7 42 hxg7 ♖xg7 43 ♖xe7 ♗c4 44 ♖xd6 ♗b3 45 ♗g2 ♗a2 46 ♗f3 b1♖ 47 ♖xb1 ♗xb1 48 ♗e4 ♗c2 49 ♗f5 ♗d3 50 ♗e6 ♗e4 (If 50...♗c4 51 ♖e5 ♖h6 52 ♗f7 b5 53 ♖f4+-) 51 ♗f7 ♖d4 52 ♖f8 b5 53 ♖g7 ♖xg7 54 ♗xg7 b4 55 ♗f8 b3 56 g7 b2 57 g8♖ b1♖ 58 ♖h7+ and wins.

### 38 h6

AB: “White probably rejected 38 g6 because of 38...♗e7, where White’s pawns are stuck, while Black is ready to support his b3-pawn with the ♗”; e.g. 39 ♖d1 ♗c4 40 ♖xd6 ♗f5 41 ♖a3 ♗g3+ 42 ♗g2 ♗xh5 draws.

If 38 ♖c1 Krush gives 38...b5! 39 g6 ♗e7 40 ♖f7 ♗f5! 41 h6 ♗xh6 42 ♖xh6 b2 43 ♖f1 ♗c4 44 g7 (44 ♖b1 ♗c3) 44...♖xg7 45 ♖xg7 e5 blocking the long diagonal long enough for Black to promote the front b-pawn.

### 38...♗e7 39 ♖d1

By pressuring the ♗ White forces Black to advance the e-pawn and relinquish the f5 outpost. If now 39...♗f5? White wins by 40 h7 b2 41 ♖e5! b1♖ 42 ♖xb1 ♖xe5 43 ♖b5+ and 44 ♖xe5, while 39...b2? is again premature due to 40 ♖e3! b1♖ 41 ♖xb1 ♖xe3 42 ♖xb7 ♗g6 43 ♖g7+-.

### 39...e5 40 ♖e3

If instead 40 ♖c1 the black ♗ can stop the white pawns: 40...♗e6! 41 ♖a3 ♗f5 (Khalifman), e.g. 42 ♖xd6 ♗g6 43 h7 ♗xg5 44 ♖f8! b2 45 ♖g7 b5 46 h8♖ ♗xh8 47 ♖xh8 ♗g6! shuts the white ♖ out of the game, when the further ...b4, ...♖c3, ...e4 forces White to give up the ♖ on b2.

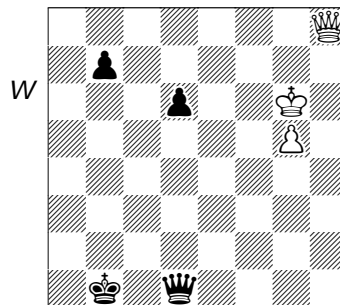
### 40...♗c4 41 ♖xd4 exd4 42 ♗g2 b2 43 ♗f3 ♗c3 44 h7 ♗g6 45 ♗e4 ♗c2 46 ♖h1 d3

After 46...b1♖? 47 ♖xb1 ♗xb1 48 ♗xd4! b5 49 ♗e4 Black is helpless — Baburin.

### 47 ♗f5 b1♖

Baburin noted that in the line 47...d2 48 ♗xg6 d1♖ 49 ♖xd1 ♗xd1 50 h8♖ b1♖+, queening with check is less significant than the misplacing of Black’s ♗. He explained that in ♖ endings, if your ♗ cannot blockade the opponent’s passed pawn, it is usually best to have it as far away as possible, in order to avoid cross-checks. In this case, that means a1. The same principle should have guided Black at the crucial move 51.

### 48 ♖xb1 ♗xb1 49 ♗xg6 d2 50 h8♖ d1♖ (D)





AB pointed out that without Black's pawns it would be a draw, as tablebases would verify. As it is, White can use them to escape checks.

The complications of this endgame are almost unfathomable so it is not surprising that both sides made mistakes. However, Peter Farrer's new ♖ endgame tablebases have enabled IMs Regan & Krush to probe this endgame in great depth and with seeming accuracy — anyone interested should visit the [smarthess.com](http://smarthess.com) website. I give just the most salient points below.

**51 ♖h7!**

Kasparov conceded that the game would have been drawn after 51...♔a1!, e.g. 52 ♖xb7 (52 ♖g7+ ♔a2 53 ♖f7+ d5 is the main line) 52...d5 53 ♔f7 d4 54 g6 d3 55 g7 ♖f1+ 56 ♔e8 ♖e2+ 57 ♔f8 d2=.

Further, this was the first time in 40 moves that The World had rejected the advice of Irina Krush and colleagues. This was the moment when allegations of “vote-stuffing” began to arise. I am not in a position to adjudicate on allegations of “dirty tricks” in this game; people will believe what they want to believe.

**51...b5?! 52 ♔f6+ ♔b2?**

A second weak move — intending to support the black pawns as they advance, but in fact the ♔ just gets in the b-pawn's way. This time 52...♔c1! was correct, e.g. 53 ♖e4 (53 ♖c7+ ♔b1 54 g6 ♖f3+ 55 ♔g7 b4) 53...b4! 54 ♖xb4 ♖f3+ 55 ♔g7 d5 56 g6 d4 and now 57 ♖xd4 is a ‘database draw’.

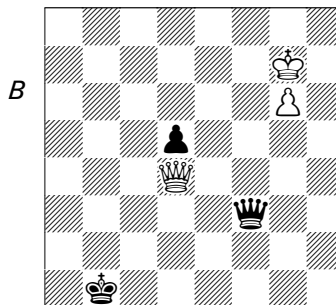
After the text, according to Regan & Krush, 53 ♖e4! now wins by force — one simple but crucial aspect is that after 53...b4? White captures the pawn with check. Instead Kasparov played:

**53 ♖h2+? ♔a1! 54 ♖f4 b4?**

Black goes wrong for a third and apparently decisive time. The idea is to activate the ♖ while trying (as after 52...♔c1) to reach a database draw by giving up the d-pawn as well. But since this plan fails in the game, Black should have preferred either 54...♖d5 (Bacrot) or 54...♖d3 with good chances to hold; e.g. 55 g6 ♖c3+ 56 ♔f7 ♖c7+ 57 ♔f8 ♖b8+ 58 ♔g7 b4 59 ♔h7 ♖a7+ 60 g7 b3 61 ♖c1+ ♔a2 62 ♖c4 ♔a3 63 ♔h8 ♖e3! △ 64 g8♖? ♖h6+ 65 ♖h7 ♖f8+ 66 ♖cg8 ♖f6+ with a draw, or if 64 ♖a6+ ♔b2 65 ♖xd6 ♖h3+ 66 ♔g8 ♖f5.

**55 ♖xb4 ♖f3+ 56 ♔g7 d5 57 ♖d4+ ♔b1 58 g6 (D)**

White's passed pawn is well advanced, whereas Black's d-pawn, blockaded by the centralised white ♖, is now just in the way. Black might have prevented ♖d4 with 56...♖e3,



but White would still win according to Regan & Krush (the main line begins 57 ♖a5+ ♘b2 58 ♖b5+!).

**58...♖e4?**

This was the second controversial moment. Irina Krush suggested a better move — 58...♖f5 — but it was not posted on the match website in time to influence voters. After this, she refused to participate any more, but the Microsoft Network organizers said that she was late submitting her analysis to the MSN site.

Later, Kasparov provided detailed analysis to prove he was winning anyway after 58...♖f5, saying “This position has more to do with geometry and mathematics than chess.”

Baburin explains: “White can gradually force his pawn up the board, using the enemy pawn as a shield and also exploiting the fact that Black cannot afford to trade ♖s. For those interested in this line, Kasparov’s main line goes like this: 58...♖f5 59 ♘h6 ♖e6 60 ♖d1+ ♘b2 61 ♖d2+ ♘b1 62 ♖d4! ♘a2 63 ♘g5 ♖e7+ 64 ♖f6 ♖e3+ 65 ♖f4 ♖g1+ 66 ♘f6 ♖b6+ 67 ♘f7 ♖b7+ 68 ♘g8 ♖c8+ 69 ♖f8 ♖e6+ 70 ♘g7 ♖e5+ 71 ♖f6 ♖c7+ 72 ♖f7 ♖c3+ 73 ♘f8...”, which concludes in a win for White at move 96.

However, Regan & Krush (using the tablebases) criticise this variation, saying that 68 ♘g8 ♖c8+ 69 ♖f8 ♖e6+ 70 ♘g7? fails to win after 70...♖e5+ 71 ♖f6 ♖c7+ 72 ♖f7 ♖e5+! 73 ♘g8 ♖b8+ 74 ♖f8 ♖e5 75 g7 d4!. Instead they give a winning

line for White with 68 ♘e6!, when after a lot more obscure manoeuvres, the white ♘ captures the black d-pawn and the database says “mate in 53”.

**59 ♖g1+ ♘b2**

The official website for the match noted that: “On move 59, the Gaming Zone found indication of quite significant ballot stuffing (improper ratio of votes to unique PCs) for the sacrificial move ...♖e1. ... We disqualified this move from voting and recomputed the votes accordingly.”

This is one of the hazards of organizing such matches with a large number of participants and I believe there have been cases in other matches where organizers overruled the apparent majority choice for a similar reason.

MSN’s statements are disputed by Krush, who suspected vote-stuffing at move 51, but here says 59...♖e1 was chosen by The World as a protest against MSN’s failure to post her recommendation for 58...♖f5.

**60 ♖f2+ ♘c1 61 ♘f6 d4 62 g7 1-0**

Kasparov announced a forced mate, discovered by the computer program Deep Junior. The World team was given an option to vote for resignation and 51% opted to do this, ending the game after four months of intensive analysis.

“It is the greatest game in the history of chess. The sheer number of ideas, the complexity, and the contribution it has made to chess make it the most important game ever played.” — Garry Kasparov.

# Game 57

**White: Arild Haugen (Norway)**

**Black: Colin Anderson McNab (Scotland)**

6<sup>th</sup> European Cht Prelims, 1999-2000

*Modern Defence (B06)*

**The Players:** Haugen is a Senior International Master. McNab is both a FIDE GM and ICCF SIM; he has been a member of Scottish postal and over-the-board teams for many years, including Scotland's bronze medal-winning team in CC Olympiad XI.

**About this game:** McNab is a positional player who rarely varies his solid opening repertoire. Haugen tackled the challenge of winking him out of his shell with great creativity and created a position with enormous problems for both players. Black survived the first wave of the attack but the second washed him away.

**1 e4 g6 2 d4 d6 3 ♖c3 c6**

Haugen's research showed that it wouldn't be possible to surprise McNab. The Scotsman has faced for example 4 a4, 4 ♗e3, 4 ♗c4, 4 ♖f3, 4 g3 and 4 h4 in this position.

**4 f4 d5 5 ♖f3**

Although McNab has been playing 1 e4 g6 2 d4 d6 3 ♖c3 c6 since 1992, his book 'The Ultimate Pirc' (with GM John Nunn) says almost nothing about this line except the explanation that after 4 f4 d5 5 e5 h5 "the benefit to Black from not having played ...♗g7 slightly outweighs

the loss of time with his d-pawn." Clearly McNab wanted to keep his own secrets!

**5...dxe4 6 ♖xe4 ♗g7 7 ♗c4 ♖h6 8 c3**

8 h3 ♖f5 9 c3 0-0 10 ♗b3 ♖d7 11 g4 ♖d6 12 ♖f2 c5 13 ♗e3 b6 14 ♗d5 ♗b7 15 ♗xb7 ♖xb7 16 ♗e2 cxd4 17 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 18 ♖xd4 e5 19 fxe5 ♗e8 and Black was OK in N.McDonald-McNab, Hastings II 1993/94 (0-1, 29).

**8...0-0 9 ♖e5 ♖d7 10 h4!?**

At last White is able to go his own way. Haugen thought this direct approach with the h-pawn was justified in view of the three tempi expended by Black on the manoeuvre ...d7-d6-d5xe4. So he varied from 10 0-0 ♖f6 11 ♖f2 ♖f5 12 ♗f3 ♖d6 13 ♗b3 a5 (A.Zanetti-McNab, CNEC-15 corr 1993); Black seems OK there although White eventually won.

Instead 11 ♗e2 ♖xe4 12 ♗xe4 ♗d6 13 f5!? ♖xf5 14 g4 ♗xe5 15 dxe5 ♗c5+ 16 ♗f2 ♖g7 17 b4 ♗b6 18 ♗e3 ♗c7 19 ♗h6 ♗e6 20 ♗xe6 fxe6 21 ♗af1 ♗xf2 22 ♗xf2 ♗f8 23 ♗xf8+ ♖xf8 24 ♗d4 b6 25 a4 c5 led to a draw in a 1992 OTB game Shirov-McNab.

**10...♗f6**

Haugen reckoned that 10...♗xe5 11 fxe5 would give him a winning attack after 11...♙g4 (or 11...♙f5 12 ♗f2) 12 ♖d3 ♖d7 13 h5 gxh5 14 ♗g3.

**11 ♗g5! ♗d5**

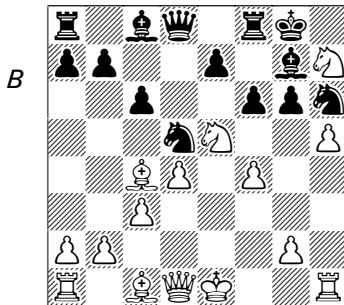
11...e6 would negate of Black's strategy, leaving his c8-♙ a very limited future after 12 ♖c2!

**12 h5**

Now the real fight begins. The Viking plans to sacrifice his "wild horses"! Black has little choice but to accept what is thrown at him and hope to survive.

**12...f6**

Now 13 hxg6 fxe5 14 gxh7+ ♖h8 15 fxe5 is possible, with three pawns for the ♗, but White had a more dramatic idea in mind.

**13 ♗xh7!! (D)****13...♖xh7 14 ♗f7!!**

This is the point.

14 hxg6+? might seem obvious but at the end of the sequence 14...♖g8 15 ♖xh6 ♙xh6 16 ♖h5 ♖g7 17 f5 ♖h8 18 ♙xh6+ ♖xh6 19 ♖xh6+ ♖xh6 20

♗f7+ ♖g7 21 ♗xd8 ♙xf5, Black probably has some advantage.

**14...♖xf7**

After 14...♗xf7 15 hxg6+ ♖g8 16 ♖h5 White's attack is very strong, as Haugen shows:

a) 16...♗h6 17 f5 ♖d7 18 g4 e6 19 ♙xh6 ♙xh6 (If 19...exf5 20 ♙xg7 ♖e8+ 21 ♖f2 ♖xg7 22 gxf5 b5 23 ♙xd5+ cxd5 24 ♖f3 followed by invasion on d5 or h7.) 20 ♖xh6 ♖g7 21 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 22 ♖h7+. Now Haugen just says White wins; presumably he means 22...♖g8 23 ♖d2 exf5 24 ♖e1 (not 24 ♖ah1 fxg4 25 g7 ♖f7) 24...♖d8 (24...fxg4 25 g7 ♖f7 26 ♖e8+) 25 ♖ch1 (25 ♖ee7 only draws.) 25...♙e6 26 ♙d3 ♖f8 27 ♖xb7.

b) 16...♗g5 17 fxg5 ♖e8 18 ♙f4! ♖f8 (To get out of the pin on the ♗, because if 18...b5 19 ♙xd5+ ♖xd5 20 0-0 ♖f8 21 ♙e5 followed by an explosion on f6, or 18...♙f5 19 0-0+-) 19 ♙e5 ♙e6 (19...♗e3 20 ♙f7 fxe5 21 ♖h7 and mate on g8) and now White has time to bring up the reserves: 20 0-0 ♙g8 21 ♖ael+-.

So instead of accepting a whole piece, McNab tries to calm the attack by taking two minor pieces for the ♖. Positions with unbalanced material and insecure ♖s are very difficult to judge and calculate exhaustively.

**15 hxg6+ ♖g8**

15...♖xg6 also looked interesting (for White) said Haugen, e.g. 16 ♖h5+ ♖h7 17 ♖xf7 ♖f8 18 ♙xd5 cxd5 19 ♖xd5 ♖e8 20 f5. Now after 20...♖c6 (the only move) White plays for a bind with 21 ♖xc6 (Not

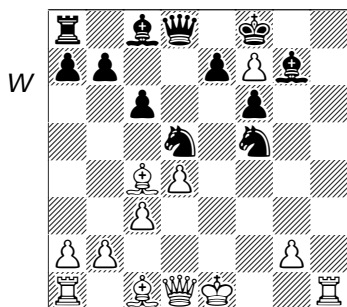
21 ♖xh6+ ♙xh6 22 ♖f7+ ♙g7 as White can't get the other ♖ to the h-file) 21...bxc6 22 ♙xh6 (22 g4 e6) 22...♙xh6 23 ♖h5 ♖g7 24 ♖f2 ♙d7 25 ♖e1! ♖e8 and now 26 c4 or 26 a4 or 26 g4.

Whether Black sits tight or plays for ...e6 and a ♖ exchange, White will obtain at least one passed pawn on the queenside and the defence will be arduous.

**16 f5**

More fuel on the fire: the dark-squared ♙ now enters the game.

**16...♗xf5 17 gxh7+ ♖f8 (D)**



The black ♖ hopes to hide behind the pawn and capture it later. 17...♖xf7 might have been possible, as after 18 ♖h5+ ♖g8 19 ♖h7+ ♖f7 20 ♙d3 e6 21 g4 ♗fe7 22 ♙d2 Haugen gives 22...f5! (better than 22...♖g8 23 ♖h5+ ♖f8 24 c4 ♗b6 25 ♙b4±) 23 ♖h5+ ♖f8 24 gxf5 exf5 (24...♗f6 25 ♖g5 ♗xf5 26 0-0-0+-) 25 0-0-0 ♖e8, calling the position unclear.

**18 ♖f3**

Haugen said there were many interesting variations with both short and

long castling, but in the end he did neither.

**18...♖d6**

18...♖c7 was the most difficult possibility for White to analyse, if after 19 ♖f2 (to cover g3) Black sought counterplay with 19...e5!, similarly to the game.

Haugen analysed other lines to advantage for himself:

a) 18...♖c7 19 ♖f2 e6? 20 ♙d3 ♖xf7 21 ♖h7 ♖g8 22 ♖h3 ♖g6 23 ♖h5 ♖f7 24 ♙d2 ♗de7 (24...♖c7 25 ♙xf5 exf5 26 ♖h1 ♖b6 27 b3+-) 25 ♖h1 ♗g6 26 ♖f3 ♗fe7 27 ♙h6 f5 (27...♙h8 28 ♙f8!) 28 ♙xg7 ♖xg7 29 ♖g3 ♖f6 (29...♖f8 30 ♖h7 ♖g8 31 ♖1h6+-) 30 ♖h7 f4 31 ♖g4 e5 32 ♖h5.

b) 18...e5 19 ♙d3 ♗d6 20 b3! exd4 21 ♙a3 ♖e7+ (21...♖xf7 22 ♖h5+ ♖f8 23 0-0-0 ♖c7 24 ♖df1 with a strong attack) 22 ♖f2 ♙e6 (22...♖xf7 23 ♖a1 ♙e6 24 ♖h7 ♖d7 25 ♖h5+ ♖g8 26 ♙xd6+-) 23 ♖h7 ♗e3 24 ♖e1+-.

c) 18...e6 19 ♖h7 ♖xf7 20 g4 ♖g8 21 ♖h3 and now:

c1) 21...♗fe7 22 ♙d2 ♖d7 23 0-0-0 ♗g6 (23...e5 24 ♖h5) 24 ♖h1 ♗f8 25 g5 f5 (25...♗xh7 26 ♖xh7+ ♖f8 27 ♙xd5) 26 ♖h8+ ♖f7 27 ♖h5+ ♖e7 (27...♗g6 28 ♖h7) 28 ♖g8+-.

c2) 21...♗d6 22 ♙d3 ♗f7 (22...f5 23 ♙h6 ♙xh6 24 ♖xh6 ♗f7 25 ♖g6+ ♖f8 26 ♖h7 ♖e7 27 ♖g7+-) 23 ♖h5 f5 24 g5 ♗d6 (24...♖c7 25 g6 ♖g3+ 26 ♖e2 ♖g2+ 27 ♖d1 ♗f6 28 gxf7+ ♖f8 29 ♖h1 ♖xh1+ 30 ♖xh1 ♖xf7 31 ♖e2 with a clear advantage) 25 ♖e2 ♖e8 26 g6 ♗f6

27 ♖xg7+ ♔xg7 28 ♕h6+ ♔g8 29 ♕g5 ♖e7 30 ♖h1 ♕g7 31 ♕xf6 ♖xf6 32 ♕h7+ ♔f8 33 ♖c7+-.

### 19 ♔f2 e5

Others are worse:

a) 19...♖d7?! 20 ♖h7 e5 21 ♕d3! exd4 22 ♖g4 ♔xf7 23 ♔g1! (not yet 23 ♕h6 ♔de3!) 23...♖e6 24 ♕h6 ♔de3 25 ♕xf5 ♔xf5 26 ♔f2 and 27 ♖e1+-.

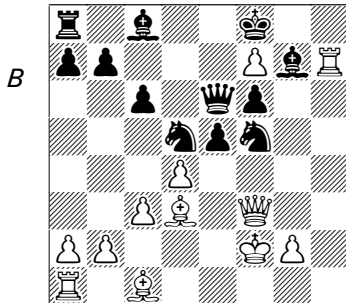
b) 19...♖e6 20 ♖h7 ♖xf7 21 ♕d3 ♖e6 22 ♕d2 ♔d6 23 ♖ah1 ♖g8 24 ♕g6+-.

c) 19...e6 20 ♕d3 (20 ♖h7!?) 20...♔xf7 21 ♖h5+ ♔e7 22 ♕xf5 exf5 23 ♖h7 ♔f7 24 ♕h6 ♖f8 25 ♖ae1+-, threatening 26 c4 or 26 ♕xg7 ♖xg7 27 ♖h5+ ♖g6 28 ♖h8? ♖g3+) 26...♔e3 27 ♕xf4 ♔g4+ 28 ♔g3 ♕d7 29 ♖h5+ (29 c5? ♖h8) 29...♔g8 30 c5 f5 31 ♖h7+ ♔f7 32 ♕d6+-.

### 20 ♕d3 ♖e6

20...♔de7!? is also possible. It is not obvious if White can play for a win, e.g. if 21 g4 ♔xd4! 22 cxd4 ♖xd4+.

### 21 ♖h7 (D)



### 21...exd4?!

At last Black loses his way, perhaps dreaming of playing for a win? 21...♔d6! would lead to equality according to Haugen, for after 22 ♕g6 Black has two fair possibilities:

a) 22...♕d7 23 ♕h6 ♕xh6 24 ♖h8+ ♔g7 25 ♖xa8 ♔xg6 26 f8 ♖ ♕xf8 27 ♖xf8 exd4 28 ♖e1 (28 ♖g3+ ♔f5) 28...♖f5 29 cxd4 ♔g7 30 ♖d8 ♔f7 31 ♖xf5 ♕xf5 with a roughly level endgame, he believes.

b) 22...♔xf7 23 ♕xf7 ♖xf7 24 ♕h6 ♖g6 25 ♕xg7+ ♔g8 26 ♖ah1 ♕g4= because after 27 ♖g3 Black has perpetual check.

### 22 b3! b5

To stop the light-squared ♕ having access to c4.

### 23 ♖g4 ♔de7 24 ♕f4

White wins the battle to control the e3-square and opens the way for his second ♖. The attack is reborn.

### 24...♖xf7 25 ♖ah1 ♖g8

Once more the long variations start to unwind in White's favour. An example given by Haugen is 25...♖g6!? 26 ♖f3 ♕e6 27 ♖h5! ♖e8 28 g4 ♕f7 (28...♕g8 29 gxf5 ♕xh7 30 ♖xh7 ♔g8 31 ♖h4 dxc3 32 ♕h6+-) 29 ♖h8+ ♔g8 30 ♕xf5 ♕xh5 31 ♖xh5 and now:

(a) 31...♔e7 32 g5 ♖f7 33 g6 ♖d5 34 ♕e4 ♖e6 35 cxd4 ♖d8 36 ♕e3 ♔g8 37 ♖h1 ♔f8 (37...♔d5 38 ♕d2) 38 ♖h7 ♔f5 39 ♖xg7 ♔xg7 40 d5+-.

(b) 31...dxc3 32 ♕d6+ (32 ♖xc3 is also possible.) 32...♔e7 33 ♕e6 ♖g6 (33...♖d8? 34 ♖d3) 34 ♖xc3 ♖e4 35 ♕f5 ♖d5 36 ♖b4 ♖e8 37

♙g6 ♖e6 38 ♗xe8 ♜xe8 39 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 40 ♖xe7+ ♜xe7 41 ♜e3 with a winning endgame for White.

**26 ♖h5 ♗d5**

Neither 26...dxc3 27 ♗xf5 ♜xf5 (or 27...♗xf5 28 ♖xg7) 28 g4 ♗e7 29 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 30 ♗h6+-, nor 26...♖d5 27 c4 ♖d7 28 cxb5 ♗e3 (28...cxb5 29 g4+-) 29 ♖xg7+- will do. Also if 26...b4 27 ♗xf5 ♗xf5 28 g4 ♖f7 29 ♖h8+ ♗xh8 30 ♖xh8+ White wins.

Finally, 26...♗e3 27 ♗d6 ♗d7 28 ♗xe7+ (If 28 ♖c5 ♖e8 29 ♗g6 f5! 30 cxd4 ♗3d5 31 ♗xe8 ♜xe8 32 ♗xe7 ♗xe7 and Black is still in the game) 28...♜xe7 29 ♖e1+- intending simply cxd4 and ♖xe3.

Moving the ♜ doesn't help: 29...♜f8 30 ♖c5+, 29...♜d8 30 ♖g6 ♗g4+ 31 ♜f1, or 29...♜d6 30 cxd4. Nor does 29...c5 30 ♖xc5+ ♜d8 31 ♖xd4 ♗g4+ 32 ♜g1 followed by 33 ♗f5+-, while if 29...♗e8 30 ♖c5+ ♜d8 (If 30...♜f7 31 ♗g6+! ♜xg6 32 ♖h5#) 31 ♖xd4+ ♗d5 32 ♖g4 wins the g7-♗.

**27 ♗c1**

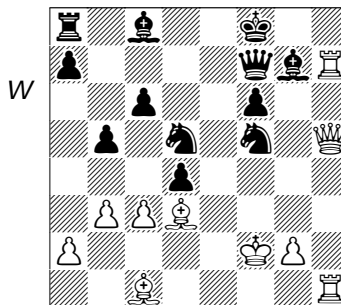
Revealing another point of 22 b3: there can be a ♗ check on a3.

**27...♖f7 (D)**

At last White could analyse to the final victory. If now 27...♗fe3 28 ♗a3+ b4 29 ♗xb4+ ♗xb4 30 ♖c5+ ♜e8 (30...♜f7 31 cxb4+-) 31 ♗g6+ ♜d8 32 ♖a5+ ♜d7 33 ♖xb4+-.

**28 ♖h2!!**

White has a new invasion route: d6.



**28...dxc3**

Black also loses after 28...♖e6 29 g4, or 28...♗fe3 29 ♗a3+ b4 30 ♗xb4+ ♗xb4 31 ♖d6+ ♖e7 32 ♖h8+ ♜f7 33 ♗g6+, or 28...♖g8 29 g4 ♗fe3 30 ♗a3+ ♜e8 31 ♗g6+ ♜d8 32 ♖d6+ ♗d7 33 ♗f7 ♖f8 34 ♖h8.

28...b4 was the move Haugen had expected, and he would have continued 29 cxb4 to be followed by ♗xf5, ♖d6+ etc., unless Black prefers to lose by 29...♗fe3 30 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 31 ♖d6+ ♗e7 32 ♖d8+ ♜f7 33 ♖h7 or 29...♜e7 30 b5 c5 31 ♗a3.

**29 g4 ♖c7 30 ♖h8+ ♜f7 31 ♖h5+ ♜e7 32 ♖e8+ ♜d6 33 gxf5**

Not 33 ♗xf5? ♜c5= (Haugen). Actually this is not a clear draw but the move he played is much stronger. The difference is that 33 gxf5 ♜c5 34 ♖g8 threatens 35 ♖h7+- (or 35 ♖g1), but after 33 ♗xf5 ♜c5 34 ♖g8 ♜b6 (say) 35 ♖h7 fails to 35...♗xf5 (and ♖g1 is obviously pointless).

**33...♜c5 34 ♖g8! ♗b7 35 ♖xa8 1-0**

Black resigned in view of 35...♗xa8 36 ♖g4 ♗f8 37 ♖h8.

# Game 58

**White: Vytautas V. Palciauskas (USA)**

**Black: Vytautas Andriulaitis (Lithuania)**

USA-Lithuania match, board 1, 1999-2001

*Sicilian Sozin (B89)*

**The Players:** Palciauskas, a physicist, was the 10<sup>th</sup> CC World Champion. He was born in Kaunas, Lithuania, in 1941, but has lived in America since he was 8 years old. He was delighted to be offered top board in the match for his adopted country against his native land. Andriulaitis was untitled when this game began but in 2000 he became an ICCF IM and in 2001 he got the CC-GM title after winning the Reg Gillman Memorial B tournament.

**About this game:** This game first appeared in the French CC magazine, 'Le Courier des Echecs'. The football commentators' cliché "It's a game of two halves" really applies here. After 17 moves of theory, White offers a ♘ followed by a ♖ to launch a direct attack on the black ♔. In this intensely complicated tactical phase (moves 18-26), Black avoids numerous traps and White misses a tactical chance (move 21) that might anyway not have turned out well.

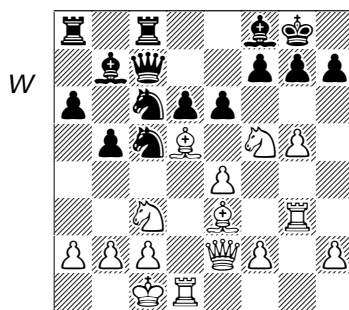
In the second half (move 27 onwards), White skilfully exploits his advantage. The big question, not raised by the winner in his notes, is whether Black missed an equaliser in first half injury time (move 26).

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4  
 ♗c6 5 ♗c3 d6 6 ♘e3 ♗f6 7 ♘c4 ♘e7  
 8 ♖e2 a6 9 0-0-0 ♖c7 10 ♘b3 0-0

Castling is a big commitment in this variation. 10...♗a5, to eliminate the white ♘, is perhaps more prudent, thinks Palciauskas.

11 ♖hg1 ♗d7 12 g4 ♗c5 13 ♗f5  
 b5 14 ♘d5 ♘b7 15 g5 ♖fc8 16 ♖g3  
 ♘f8 (D)

16...♗e5 and 16...b4 are also known. Now at last the game is about to depart from theory.



17 ♗h6+

17 ♖h5 g6 18 ♗h6+ ♔h8 19 ♖h4  
 b4 was OK for Black in Onischuk-Shirov, Germany 1996. The move 17 ♗h6+ was analysed by V.Bagirov



but his suggestion 17...♖h8 18 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 19 ♔f3?! did not convince Palciauskas, who found an improvement.

**17...♖h8 18 ♜g4!**

“On studying this position closely, one discovers several important little details: the h-file is a royal road towards the black ♖ isolated on h8. White must sacrifice the d5-♙ and/or the c3-♞ and Black requires several tempi to capture them. How should White utilise this precious time? The key is to isolate the ♖ from the queenside pieces in order to attack it down the h-file, and this can be accomplished by posting the ♜ at f6!”

**18...b4**

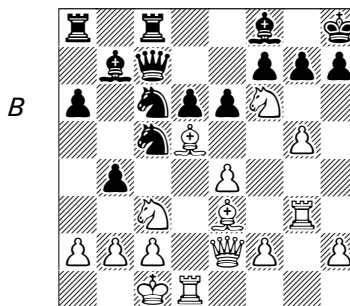
This is apparently best since Black cannot afford to weaken his centre by capturing the ♙. Palciauskas analysed:

a) 18...exd5 19 ♜xd5 ♔d8 (19... ♔a5 loses rapidly to 20 ♙xc5 dxc5 21 ♖h3 ♠ ♖xh7+) 20 ♖h3 (Again with the threats of 21 ♙xc5 and 21 ♖xh7+) 20...♜d7 21 f4 ♜e7 (21... ♔a5? 22 ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 23 ♜gf6+ ♜xf6 24 ♜xf6+ gxf6 25 ♔h5+ ♖g7 26 f5+-) 22 ♙d4 ♜xd5 (22... ♜c5? 23 ♖xh7+) 23 exd5 ♖g8 24 ♔d3 h6 25 ♖g1 and the black ♖ is doomed!

b) 18...♜a4 19 ♜f6 with the same theme: 19...gxf6 (19...♜b4 20 ♔h5 gxf6 21 ♖h3 h6 22 gxf6+-, or 19...♜xc3 20 bxc3 exd5 21 ♜xh7!) 20 gxf6 ♜xc3 21 bxc3 ♜e5 22 ♖dg1 ♜g6 23 ♖h3 exd5 (or 23...♔xc3 24 ♖xh7+) 24 ♔h5 mates.

c) 18...♙e7 19 ♖h3 b4 20 ♖g1 bxc3 21 ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 22 ♜f6+ ♙xf6 23 ♔h5+ ♖g8 24 gxf6 and mates.

**19 ♜f6! (D)**



**19...h6**

Two pieces are en prise but neither can be taken, so Black finds what seems to be the only defence. Here are some sample variations.

a) 19...bxc3 20 ♜xh7! (The ♜ is sacrificed to open the h-file.) 20...cxb2+ (20...♖xh7 21 ♔h5+ mates) 21 ♖b1 wins in all variations: e.g. 21...♜e5 22 ♔h5+-, 21...♜a4 22 ♜f6+-, 21...f5 22 g6 ♖g8 23 ♜g5+-, 21...♙e7 22 ♔h5 g6 23 ♔h6+-, or 21...g6 22 ♜f6 followed by ♖h3+-, e.g. 22...♙h6 23 ♖h3 exd5 24 ♖xh6+ ♖g7 25 ♙xc5 bxc5 26 ♖h7+ ♖f8 27 ♔f3.

b) 19...gxf6 20 gxf6 (not 20 ♔h5 f5!) 20...♜e5 21 ♖dg1 (21 ♖h3!? is also very good) and now 21...♜g6 22 ♖h3 (not 22 ♔h5? ♜xe4!) 22...bxc3 (22...exd5 23 ♔h5 h6 24 ♙xh6) 23 ♔h5 mates, while if 21...♜cd3+ 22 cxd3 ♜g6 23 ♖h3 bxc3 (or 23...♙h6 24 ♖xh6 bxc3 25 ♖xh7+-) 24 ♖xh7+! (not 24 ♔h5? cxb2+) 24...♖xh7 25 ♔h5+ ♖g8 26 ♖xg6+ also leads to mate.

c) 19...g6 20 ♖h3 h6 21 ♔g4 bxc3 22 ♖xh6+ ♙xh6 23 ♔h4 and mate in three.

To these variations by Palciauskas, I would add: if 21...♖e7 (hoping for 22 ♖xh6+ ♕xh6 23 ♗h4 ♗f8) then 22 ♕xc6! bxc3 (or 22...♕xc6 23 ♕d4 e5 24 ♕xc5 dxc5 25 ♖cd5) 23 ♕d4 e5 24 ♕xb7 cxb2+ (or 24...♗xb7 25 ♕xc3) 25 ♕xb2 ♖xb7 26 ♖d5 ♗e6 27 ♖xh6+ etc.

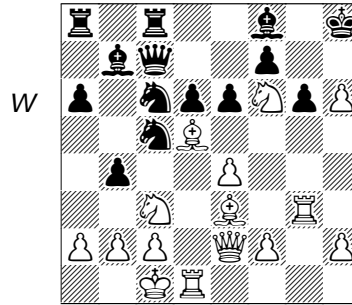
d) Also 19...♖e5 20 ♖xh7! g6 21 ♖h3 ♖g7 22 ♖f6 is an imaginative defence but it can be refuted: 22 ♖f6 ♕e7 23 ♖h7+ ♖f8 24 f4! bxc3 (if 24...exd5 25 ♖cxd5+- or 24...♖cd3+ 25 ♖xd3 ♖xd3 26 ♗xd3 bxc3 27 ♕b6!+-) 25 fxe5 cxb2+ (if 25...exd5 26 ♕xc5 wins by 26...♗xc5 27 ♖d7+ or 26...dxc5 27 ♗f3; and 25...♕xd5 26 exd5 does not help Black) 26 ♖b1 ♖a4 27 ♕d4 dxe5 28 ♗f2! (Δ ♖d7+).

The rest is forced: 28...♕xf6 29 gxf6 ♖g8 (29...♖e8? 30 ♕b3) 30 ♖g7+ ♖f8 31 ♕b3 (Δ ♕xa4, ♗h4) 31...exd4 (or 31...♕xe4 32 ♕xa4) 32 ♕xa4 ♕xe4 33 ♖xd4 ♕xc2+ 34 ♕xc2 ♗c6 35 ♖d7!+-, i.e. 35...♗h1+ 36 ♖d1 ♗c6 37 ♗d2.

The situation with 19...h6 is not so clear. Despite all White's spectacular play, it is not really clear that he has any significant advantage. If he has, then he must still prove it.

### 20 gxf6 g6 (D)

Not 20...gxf6 because 21 ♕xc6 eliminates Black's last defensive chance of ...♖e5/♖e7 followed by ...♖g6, so that if 21...bxc3 22 ♗g4 mates, while if 21...♕e7 22 h7, or 21...f5 22 ♖dg1 (22 exf5 is also strong) 22...♕xc6 (or 22...bxc3 23 h7) 23 h7 wins.



### 21 ♕xc6

White accepts that the explosive phase of the game is now over and seeks positional clarification.

21 ♕xe6!/? would be an interesting attempt, not mentioned by Palciauskas, to continue the attack. The sacrifice works well after 21...♖xe6 22 ♖cd5 ♗a5 23 ♖b1 (Δ h4-h5) or 21...fxe6? 22 ♖xg6 (threatening mate on g8 and forcing concessions) 22...♕e7 (22...♗f7 23 ♖g8+ ♗xg8 24 ♖xg8 bxc3 25 ♕xc5 ♖xg8 26 ♗h5+-) 23 ♗f3 (23 ♖cd5!?) 23...♖xe4 (23...bxc3 24 ♖g7 or 23...♖e5 24 ♖g7!) 24 ♗xe4 ♕xf6 25 ♗xe6.

However, 21 ♕xe6 might be risky after 21...bxc3! 22 ♕xc8 cxb2+ 23 ♖xb2 (23 ♖b1 may be safer.) 23...♖xc8, when Black has two minor pieces for ♖ and two pawns, the white ♖ is also insecure and many complications lie ahead.

On the other hand, in the actual game, Black missed a chance to do better at move 26.

### 21...bxc3!

Once again, Black avoids bad variations: 21...♕xc6 22 ♕d4 e5 23 ♖cd5 ♕xd5 24 ♖xd5 with a

powerful bind for the sacrificed piece; White threatens to break open the black ♔ position by h4-h5 or f4-f5. Or if 21...♖xc6 22 ♖h5! and now:

a) 22...bxc3 23 ♖xg6 ♕e7 24 ♖g7+-.

b) 22...♗xe4 23 ♖xg6 ♗xf6 24 ♖xf6 bxc3 25 b3 ♖e8 (25...♖c7 26 ♖g1) 26 ♖g4!+-.

c) 22...♕e7 23 ♖xg6 ♖f8 (23...♕xf6 24 ♖xf6 bxc3 25 ♖xf7 cxb2+ 26 ♔b1 ♖xe4 27 f3) 24 ♖g8+ ♖xg8 25 ♖xf7 ♕xf6 26 ♖xf6+ ♔h7 27 ♖e7+ ♔h8 28 ♖xd6+-.

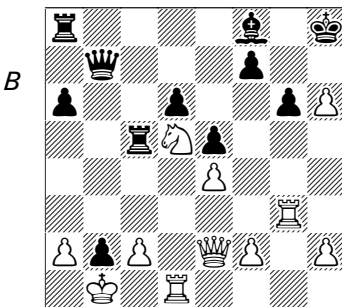
**22 ♕xb7 cxb2+ 23 ♔b1 ♖xb7**

If 23...♗a4 24 ♕d4 ♖xb7 25 f4 with a strong attack.

**24 ♕d4 e5**

Black cannot live constantly with the threat of a discovered check, but now the ♗ has the ideal square d5 available to it.

**25 ♕xc5 ♖xc5 26 ♗d5 (D)**



Material is level, except that White's ♗, occupying the hole at d5 (forced by 24 ♕d4) is superior to Black's ♕. Both sides have some weak pawns and slightly insecure ♔s.

Note that 26 h4 would not be as good because of 26...♖ac8! 27 ♖b3 ♖c6 28 ♖xb2 ♕e7 29 ♗d5 ♕xh4. The white ♖ on b2 then only plays a defensive role.

**26...♖ac8?**

This appears to be a serious mistake. Black should be thinking in terms of eliminating the mighty ♗ without delay.

26...♕xh6 was his best chance to hold the game.

Now Palciauskas gives 27 ♖h3 ♔g7 28 ♖g4! ♖h8 (28...♖xd5 is similar.) 29 ♖h4 ♖xd5! (29...g5 30 ♖h5 ♖c6 31 ♖f3 ♖e8 32 ♗e3+-) 30 exd5 but does this position really favour White at all? His line is 30...♖c8 31 ♖b3 ♕f4 32 ♖e7 ♖xh2 33 ♖b7 ♖f8 34 ♖c7 ♖b8, but 30...♖d7 or 30...♖c7 (both preventing ♖e7) are possible improvements for Black.

**27 ♖b3 ♖a7 28 c3**

The c-file is effectively closed. Black belatedly decides to destroy the c-pawn's protector with an exchange sacrifice.

**28...♖b5**

28...♕xh6 29 h4 ♖b5 transposes to the game, although 29...f5!? comes into consideration.

**29 h4! ♕xh6**

The pendulum swings back to White. Only now does Black begin the defensive scheme that he should have instituted at move 26. Alternatives are worse:

a) 29...♖b7 30 h5! ♖xb3 31 axb3 ♖xb3 32 ♖f3! g5 33 ♖f6+ ♔h7 34 ♖e1 ♖c4 35 ♖xg5+-.

b) 29...♖cb8 30 h5! ♗xb3 31 axb3 ♗xb3 32 ♖f3! ♕xh6 33 ♖f6+ +- .

c) 29...♗xb3 30 axb3 a5!? (an interesting try) 31 h5 a4 32 b4! a3 (32...gxh5 or 32...g5 would meet the same reply) 33 ♖f3! ♗a8 (or 33...a2+ 34 ♖xb2 ♕xh6 35 hxg6 fxg6 36 ♖h3) 34 ♖f6+ ♖h7 35 hxg6+ fxg6 36 ♖a2+ - .

### 30 h5!

White plays to open the h-file, while also undermining Black's defensive thrust ...f5 which could complicate the game after, for example, 30 ♖f3 f5! 31 exf5 ♖f7.

Now Black cannot keep the kingside closed with 30...g5 because of 31 ♖f3 followed by 32 ♖f6+ or 32 ♖f5, while his queenside play is too slow in the face of White's kingside attack. For example:

a) 30...♖b7 31 ♖f3! ♗xb3 32 axb3 ♗f8 (If 32...♖xb3 33 hxg6 fxg6 34 ♖f6+ ♖h7 35 ♖f7+ ♖h8 36 ♗h1, or 32...f5 33 hxg6 fxe4 34 ♖h3 ♖g7 35 ♖e3+-, or 32...♗g8 33 ♖f6+ ♕g7 34 ♖xd6 ♖xb3 35 ♗h1 g5 36 h6) 33 ♖f6+ ♕g7 34 ♖g5 or 34 ♖xd6 ♖xb3 35 ♗h1+- .

b) 30...♗g8 31 ♖f3! gxh5 (or 31...f5 32 fxg6 ♗xg6 33 exf5) 32 ♖f6+ ♖h7 (32...♕g7 33 ♖g5) 33 ♖e7 ♗g7 34 ♗xd6+- .

Black decides that the only way to prolong the game is to eliminate the dominant ♖.

30...♗xd5 31 ♗xd5 ♗c6 32 hxg6 fxg6 33 ♖xb2 ♖f7 34 ♗b8+ ♖h7

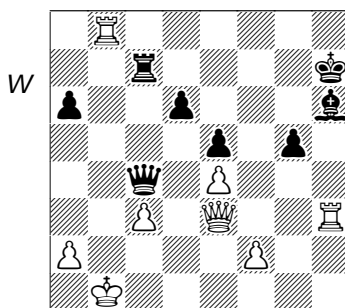
If 34...♕f8 35 ♗d3 ♖g7 (35...♖f4 36 ♗h3+) 36 ♖b3 ♗c7 37 ♖xf7+ ♗xf7 (37...♖xf7 38 ♗f3+) 38 f3+- .

35 ♖b7 ♗c7 36 ♖b6 ♕g7 37 ♗d3

White must continue to take care; for instance 37 ♗xd6 ♗xc3 38 ♗d1 ♖f3 would give Black more chances than he deserves.

37...♖c4 38 ♗h3+ ♕h6 39 ♖e3 g5 (D)

If 39...♖f1+ 40 ♖b2 g5 41 ♖f3.



At last, White can wrap things up with a combination forcing a ♖ and pawn endgame that is hopeless for Black.

40 ♗xh6+! ♖xh6 41 ♖h3+ ♖g6

If 41...♖g7 42 ♖h8+ ♖g6 (42...♖f7 43 ♗f8+ ♖e6 44 ♖g8+ ♖d7 45 ♗d8+ mates) 43 ♗g8+ and Black must give up his ♖ to avert checkmate.

42 ♖f5+ ♖g7 43 ♖xg5+ ♖f7

Or 43...♖h7 44 ♖h5+ ♖g7 45 ♖h8+ as in the previous note.

44 ♖g8+ ♖f6

44...♖e7 45 ♗e8+ ♖f6 46 ♖h8+. 45 ♗f8+! ♗f7 46 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 47 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 48 ♖c2 ♖e6 49 ♖d3 d5 50 exd5+ ♖xd5 51 c4+ ♖c5

If 51...♖c6 52 ♖e4 ♖d6 53 c5+ ♖xc5 54 ♖xe5 ♖b4 55 f4+- .

52 ♖e4 1-0

# Game 59

**White: Ingo Firnhaber (Germany)**

**Black: D. Schade (Germany)**

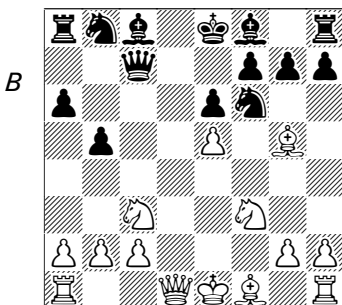
German CC Cht, Division 1, 1999-2001

*Najdorf Sicilian, Polugaevsky Variation (B96)*

**The Players:** Ingo Firnhaber is a very experienced CC International Master whose postal chess career goes back to the 1970s. He played this game on board 4 for the winning team, SV Osnabrück, in the 1999-2001 Fernschach-Bundesliga. His opponent was on the team SG Niederelbe.

**About this game:** CC players have made numerous theoretical contributions to the theory of sharp openings, especially the Sicilian Defence. This game, which is another recent example of this fact, turns the spotlight on a promising sideline against the extremely complicated Polugaevsky Variation.

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♜f6 5 ♗c3 a6 6 ♕g5 e6 7 f4 b5 8 e5 dxe5 9 fxe5 ♖c7 10 ♗f3!?** (D)



Instead of playing the well-known 10 exf6 ♖e5+, White protects e5. He retains his dark-squared ♕ and and forces Black to take a difficult decision immediately.

In the late GM Lev Polugaevsky's own book about the variation ('Grandmaster Preparation'), he makes only passing mention of this move — probably because it was never played against him in a significant game. On the other hand, GM John Nunn wrote in 'The Complete Najdorf 6 ♕g5' (Batsford, 1996) that: "This move has been unfairly neglected — in fact it appears to be quite dangerous for Black".

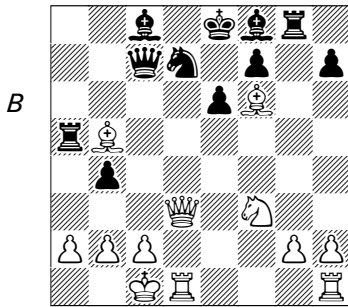
**10...b4**

10...♗fd7 is the alternative. Then "White has a choice between several dangerous moves," wrote Nunn. These include 11 ♕d3, 11 ♗e4 (as in Tolush-Coolen, 4<sup>th</sup> CC World Ch Final 1962) and Tal's recommendation 11 ♖d2 ♗xe5 12 0-0-0.

**11 ♗b5 axb5 12 exf6 ♗d7 13 ♕xb5 ♜a5 14 ♖d3! gxf6 15 ♕xf6 ♜g8**

Now Nunn's book recommended 16 ♗d4 ♖b6 17 ♖c4! but White has a new idea.

**16 0-0-0!!** (D)



Firnhaber explains in 'Fernschach' that he had planned this improvement for a long time after studying previous games in which 16  $\text{♙xd7+}$  was played, e.g. 16... $\text{♙xd7}$  17 0–0–0? (better 17 0–0) 17... $\text{♖xg2}$  18  $\text{♜e5}$ ? (18  $\text{♝b1}$  was necessary) 18... $\text{♞d5}$  19  $\text{♞e4}$ ? b3! 0–1 Firica-Berbecaru, Romania Ch 1965. He also rejected 16  $\text{♜e5}$   $\text{♖xb5}$  17  $\text{♞xb5}$   $\text{♖xg2}$  18  $\text{♞d1}$  (Tolush-Gipslis, Vilnius 1960) because of 18... $\text{♞a7!$  –+.

### 16... $\text{♖xg2}$

Black faced a wide and difficult choice in replying to the novelty 16 0–0–0. As so often happens, he did not find a good solution. The lines given by Firnhaber are as follows:

a) 16... $\text{♖xb5}$  (or 16... $\text{♞f4+}$  17  $\text{♝b1}$   $\text{♖xb5}$  transposing) 17  $\text{♞xb5}$   $\text{♞f4+}$  18  $\text{♝b1}$   $\text{♞xf6}$  19  $\text{♞c6}$   $\text{♞d8}$  20  $\text{♜e5}$   $\text{♖g5}$  21  $\text{♞he1}$   $\text{♙e7}$  22  $\text{♞e4}$  h5 (White threatened to dislodge the  $\text{♞}$  by 23 h4 and 24 g4.) 23  $\text{♞a8}$   $\text{♖f5}$  24  $\text{♞c4}$   $\text{♜b6}$  25  $\text{♞c6+}$   $\text{♙d7}$  26  $\text{♜xd7}$   $\text{♜xd7}$  27  $\text{♞cd4}$   $\text{♞d5}$  28  $\text{♞xd5}$  exd5 29  $\text{♞xd5+}$  –.

b) 16...b3 17  $\text{♞xb3}$   $\text{♞f4+}$  18  $\text{♝b1}$   $\text{♖xb5}$  (18... $\text{♞xf6}$  loses to 19  $\text{♙xd7+}$   $\text{♙xd7}$  20  $\text{♞xd7!$   $\text{♝xd7}$  21  $\text{♞xb7+}$

etc.) 19  $\text{♞xb5}$   $\text{♞xf6}$  20  $\text{♞c6+}$  –.

c) 16... $\text{♞xa2}$  17  $\text{♝b1}$   $\text{♞a7}$  18  $\text{♙d4}$   $\text{♞b7}$  19 g3+ –.

However, it seems to me that a different move, not mentioned by Firnhaber, may be Black's best try.

d) 16... $\text{♞g6!}$  probably does not equalise but there are so many possibilities it is hard to exhaust them. For example, after 17  $\text{♜e5}$  Black would probably be unwise to play 17... $\text{♞xf6}$ ? 18  $\text{♜xd7}$ , but he could look into 17...b3 when there are many traps and the critical line seems to be 18  $\text{♙xd7+}$   $\text{♙xd7}$  19  $\text{♞xb3}$ . Also 17  $\text{♙h4}$  leads to considerable complications. Let us just say that 16... $\text{♞g6}$  is a theme for a new game in the future.

### 17 $\text{♝b1}$

Firnhaber observes that White has all the time in the world because Black's  $\text{♝}$  can never be safe.

### 17... $\text{♞b7}$ 18 $\text{♜d4!$

18  $\text{♙xd7+}$  is less good, e.g. 18... $\text{♙xd7}$  19  $\text{♞f1}$   $\text{♖xc2!}$  20  $\text{♝xc2}$   $\text{♖f5}$  and Black has counterplay.

### 18... $\text{♞g6}$

Black is lost after 18... $\text{♞d5}$  19 a3 bxa3 20  $\text{♞c3}$  or 18... $\text{♞f2}$  19  $\text{♞hf1}$   $\text{♞xf1}$  20  $\text{♞xf1}$ .

### 19 $\text{♞hf1}$

At this point, White has sacrificed no material and — man for man — his pieces appear more actively posted than their opposite numbers.

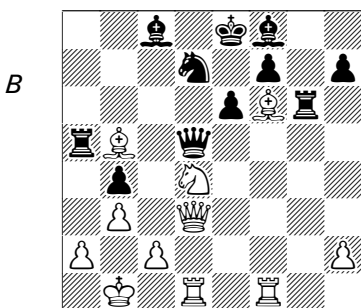
Black's chances of counterplay lie in the vulnerability of a2 and the fact that he might be able to win material if he can break the pin on the a4–e8 diagonal.

19 ♕c6!? also comes into consideration for White.

**19...♖d5**

Neither 19...♕c5 20 ♕c6 ♖a6 21 ♗b3 ♗xc6 22 ♗xa5 nor 19...♕g7? 20 ♕xg7 ♗xg7 21 ♗c6 (or 21 ♗c4) 21...♗b5 22 ♗d6 will save Black.

**20 b3 (D)**



White has to spend a tempo to defend his ♖, but he can afford the time.

**20...♗xf6**

Black gives up the exchange in a freeing attempt as “normal” moves are no use in this desperate situation.

For example, 20...♕b7 unguards the ♗ and White plays 21 ♗xe6 fxe6 (21...♗xd3 22 ♗c7#) 22 ♕xd7+. Or if 20...♗a7 the ♗ itself will be a target: 21 ♗e3 ♗c7 22 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 23 ♗f4 ♗b7 (23...♗xf6 24 ♗xc7) 24 ♗fe1.

**21 ♕xd7+ ♗xd7**

21...♕xd7 22 ♗xf6 ♕g7 23 ♗ff1 ♕xd4 (23...e5 24 ♗xh7) 24 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 25 ♗xd4 and White has ♗ for ♕ in the endgame.

**22 ♗xf6 ♗d5**

This threatens to win a piece by ...e5 but White simply allows it.

**23 ♗xh7! e5 24 ♗df1 ♗xd4**

Not only has White sacrificed a piece, but he must also cope with the threat of ...♗d1+. However, he has calculated the solution.

**25 ♗h5!**

The square d1 is protected without losing sight of the target at f7.

**25...♗e4 26 ♗xf7 1-0**

Black resigned in view of 26...♗e1+ 27 ♗xe1 ♗xf7 28 ♗xe5+ ♖d7 (28...♕e7 29 ♗b5+ ♖f8 (29...♕d7? 30 ♗b8+) 30 ♗f1 ♕f6 31 ♗c5+) 29 ♗e4 when his unsheltered ♖ cannot be satisfactorily protected.

A sample line from Firnhaber goes 29...♕d6 (29...♕g7 30 ♗d4+ leads to mate.) 30 ♗b5+ ♖d8 (or 30...♖c7 31 ♗c4+ ♖d8 32 ♗a5+ ♕c7 33 ♗g5+ ♖e8 34 ♗e4+ ♕e6 35 ♗b5+ ♖d8 36 ♗xb4 ♕f5 37 ♗e1) 31 ♗a5+ ♖d7 32 ♗a7+ ♕c7 33 ♗xb4, for example 33...♗f1+ 34 ♖b2 ♕a6 35 ♗d4+ ♖c6 36 a4 ♕d6 37 a5 ♗b5 38 ♗c4+ ♕c5 39 ♗xc5+ ♗xc5 40 ♗xa6+ ♖d7 41 ♗d3+ and in the ♗ ending, White leads 4-0 on pawns.

# Game 60

**White: Tunc Hamarat (Austria)**

**Black: Erik B.H. Bang (Denmark)**

16<sup>th</sup> CC World Championship Final, 1999-2002

*Spanish, Closed Defence (C99)*

**The Players:** Turkish-born Hamarat tied for 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the 14<sup>th</sup> CC World Championship and, at the time this book went to print, he was leading the 16<sup>th</sup> Final with an excellent chance of ultimately becoming World Champion. After university, he moved to Austria where he worked in nuclear physics and now in electronic engineering. He is also a master at the ancient game of backgammon. Bang was introduced in Game 49.

**About this game:** At the start of the tournament, both players were considered among the favourites. Bang trusted in an opening variation he had played in the past but it let him down, though it required some highly original play by Hamarat to overcome his resistance. I am grateful to the winner for checking my notes and adding some important details.

**1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♙b3 0-0**

Bang often plays this as a feint, but he doesn't continue with a Marshall Attack (8 c3 d5). Some players use this move order to invite 8 a4 — if they think that is less dangerous than the main line closed Spanish.

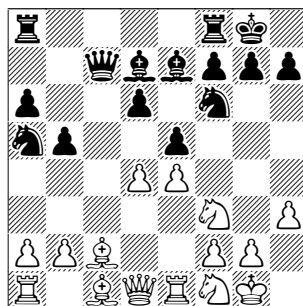
**8 c3 d6 9 h3 ♘a5**

Sometimes Bang has played 9...♙b7, while other times he has chosen 9...♘d7.

**10 ♙c2 c5 11 d4 ♖c7 12 ♘bd2 ♙d7**

This move has been one of Bang's mainstays over the years but it came unstuck in this event. White is invited to open the d-file by 13 dxe5 but instead Hamarat transposes to the old main line. For 12...♘c6 see Game 13. **13 ♘f1 cxd4 14 cxd4 (D)**

B



**14...♖ac8 15 ♘e3 ♘c6 16 d5**

In Morgado-Bang, Axelson Memorial 1984, the position was repeated by 16 ♙b3 ♘a5! 17 ♙c2 ♘c6 and then



White tried 18 ♖b1 but it proved harmless: 18... ♗xd4 19 ♗xd4 exd4 20 ♖xd4 ♜fe8 21 ♖d2 ♖b7 22 ♖d3 ♖d8 23 ♗f5 ♖xf5 24 exf5 ♖b6 25 ♖xd6 ♜ed8 26 ♖a3 ♖d5 27 ♖e3 ♖xd3 28 ♖xd3 ♜xd3 29 ♖xb6 h5 and ½-½, 42.

16 a3 ♗xd4 17 ♗xd4 exd4 18 ♖xd4 was thought to be good until Black discovered 18...d5!.

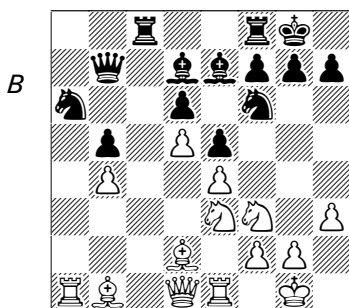
**16... ♗b4 17 ♖b1 a5 18 a3 ♗a6 19 b4 axb4**

19...a4 20 ♖d3 would leave Black passive. Black sometimes holds off on ...axb4 for a few moves; e.g. 19... ♜a8 20 ♖d2 axb4 (or 20... ♖b7) 21 axb4 ♖b7, while 19...g6 20 ♖d2 axb4 21 axb4 ♖b7 transposes to the game.

**20 axb4 ♖b7**

20... ♗xb4? loses the ♗ to 21 ♖d2.

**21 ♖d2 (D)**



This is a standard position. For the first time in several moves, Black has a choice. 21... ♖d8 (Δ... ♖b6) has usually been played while 21... ♜a8 and 21... ♗c7 have also been tried. Bang prefers a move played by Icelandic GM Johann Hjartarson.

**21...g6 22 ♖d3! ♗c7**

On 22... ♖d8 or 22...g6 Hamarat planned 23 ♗h2! while if 22... ♗e8 23 ♖b3. White stands better in all these cases, he says.

**23 ♗c2!**

This is a flexible idea from Tal. According to Black's response, the ♗ can go to a3 to attack the b5-pawn or it can be routed to a5 via a1 and b3.

**23... ♗h5 24 ♖e3**

Another Bang game from the 16<sup>th</sup> Final followed the course of a different Hjartarson game, viz. 24 ♖h6 ♗g7 25 ♗d2 f5 26 ♗b3 f4 27 ♗a5 ♖b6 and now:

a) Stefansson-Hjartarson, Reykjavik 1999 (played around the time Wch16 was starting) continued 28 ♖e2 ♖h4! 29 ♜f1 ♗ce8 30 ♖d3 ♗f6 31 ♗e1 ♜c3! 32 ♖xc3 (32 ♖b1 ♗xe4 33 ♖xe4 ♖f5 traps the ♖) 32... ♗xe4 33 ♖f3 ♗d2 34 ♖d3 ♗xf1 35 ♖xf1 ♖xf2+ 36 ♖h2 ♗f5! 37 ♖xf8 e4 38 ♖a3 ♖g1+ 39 ♖h1 ♗g3+ 40 ♖xg3 fxg3 41 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 42 ♖xg1 ♖b6+ 0-1.

b) In Mohrlok-Bang, White improved upon this by 28 ♖d2 ♖h4 29 ♜ec1 ♗a6 but now the correct line was 30 ♜a2 ♜c7 31 ♜ca1 ♜fc8 32 ♗b3 ♗b8 33 ♗e1 according to Dieter Mohrlok. Instead he lost a pawn by 30 ♗e1? ♗xb4 (since if 31 ♖xb4? ♖xf2+ 32 ♖h1 ♜xc1 33 ♜xc1 ♖c5 34 ♖c3 b4≠), though Black eventually won went wrong in the complications that followed.

**24... ♜a8 25 ♖d2 f5**

Bang's idea is to improve on a line in the contemporary notes to

Tal-Hjartarson, which had continued 25...♖xa1 26 ♗xa1! f5 27 ♕h6 ♗g7 28 ♗b3 f4 29 ♗a5 ♖b6 30 ♖c1 (30 ♗h2!?) ± △ ♕e2-g4 — Tal) 30...♖a8 31 ♖c2 ♗ce8 32 ♖b3 ♕f6 33 ♗c6 ♗h5 34 ♖b2! ♕g7?! (34...♖c8±) 35 ♕xg7 ♖xg7 36 ♖c5! ♖a6 37 ♖xb5! ♗c7 38 ♖b8 ♖xd3 39 ♗cxe5! ♖d1+ 40 ♖h2 ♖a1 41 ♗g4+ ♖f7 42 ♗h6+ ♖e7 43 ♗g8+ 1-0 (43...♖f7 44 ♗g5#).

**26 ♕h6 ♗g7!**

This is Bang's novelty. He is playing as in Tal-Hjartarson, but by not exchanging on a1 the white ♗'s path to b3 is decelerated. Rather, by leaving White to exchange on a8, the black ♗ rushes to b6.

26...♖fb8 27 exf5 gxf5 allows 28 ♗xe5 dxe5 29 d6 ♕xd6 30 ♖g5+ which Tal said was clearly better for White. After 30...♖h8 31 ♖xh5 material is level, but Black's ♖ is exposed and he has vulnerable pawns.

**27 ♖xa8 ♗xa8**

27...♖xa8 loses a tempo: after 28 ♗e3 the f5-pawn requires protection.

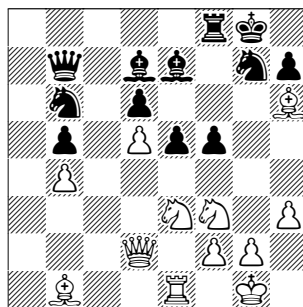
**28 ♗e3**

As Black solidly defends b5 the ♗ has no immediate prospects on the queenside and so it comes back. If Black releases tension by ...f4 he opens a new square for the ♗ at g4 and White might later sacrifice on e5.

**28...♗b6 29 exf5 gxf5 30 ♕b1 (D)**

This is a typical move in the Spanish. White must protect d5 but he doesn't choose to play ♕c2 since there could be lines where he would like to put the ♖ on that square, creating a battery against f5 and h7.

B



**30...♖f7**

Black has the problem of how to improve his position — essentially split into two forces, separated by the ♕ on d7, which cannot move without losing a pawn. Rather than defend passively, he decides to offer White the ♕ pair. Hamarat says that 30...♕f6 would be well met by 31 ♖c1, while if 30...♖f6 31 ♕xg7 ♖xg7 32 ♗h4 White's advantage is very big.

**31 ♗g5 ♕xg5 32 ♕xg5 ♗c4**

Black's idea is to transfer this ♗ from b6, where it is doing little, to a potentially strong square on e5.

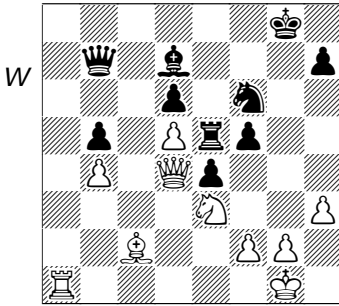
In the opinion of the computer program Fritz7, this is a mistake and should have been replaced by the pawn-grab 32...f4 33 ♗g4 (33 ♖d3!?) 33...♕xg4 34 hxg4 ♖xd5.

However, the endgame after 35 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 36 ♕a2 ♗xb4 (36...♗c3!?) 37 ♕xf7+ ♖xf7 38 ♖b1 ♗d3 (or 38...♖g6 39 ♕e7 ♗c6 40 ♕xd6 b4 41 ♕xb4 ♗xb4 42 ♖xb4) 39 ♖xb5 ♗e6 40 ♖b7+ ♖g6 41 ♕h4 is probably winning for White.

**33 ♖d3 e4 34 ♖d4 ♗e5 35 ♕f4 ♖e7 36 ♕c2**

The ♕ moves again, to give the ♖ access to the a-file.

36... ♖h5 37 ♕xe5 ♖xe5 38 ♖a1 ♖f6 (D)



Black appears to have made some progress since White no longer has the ♕ pair and there is a cluster of black pieces pressurising d5. Hamarat points out that if 38... ♖c8 39 ♖b6 attacks the d-pawn, with a big advantage.

**39 f4!!**

When he showed me this game, Hamarat wrote: “A crazy move; everyone would play here 39 g3 with a sound positional advantage.” After 39 g3 Black cannot win the pawn with 39... ♖xd5? because of 40 ♖a7 ♖c6 (40... ♖b6 41 ♖xb6 ♖xb6 42 ♖b7) 41 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 (41... ♖xd5? 42 ♕b3) 42 ♖xd5+ ♖xd5 43 ♖xd7. The object of 39 f4, which needed careful calculation, is to break up Black’s defensive cluster. The pawn must be taken to avoid the loss of a piece.

**39...exf3 40 gxf3**

Now f3-f4 is threatened so Black must react.

**40... ♖c8 41 ♕d3**

Once more f4 threatens, so again Black counter-attacks the white pieces.

**41... ♖e8 42 ♖f2 ♖h5**

By the manoeuvre ... ♖c8-e8-h5 Black hopes to attack a weak point in the white ♖ position.

**43 ♖a6**

Black is committed to his counter-attack so White brings his ♖ into action with a temporary pawn sacrifice. Not 43 f4? ♖e4+ and if 44 ♕xe4 ♖h4+ (not 44... ♖xe4? 45 ♖g1+-) 45 ♖g2 (or 45 ♖e2 ♖xf4!) 45... ♖xe4.

**43... ♖xh3?!**

If 43... ♖h6 Hamarat planned to give back the exchange by 44 ♖xd6 ♖e4+ 45 fxe4 ♖xd6, and after 46 exf5 White has an good endgame advantage, according to his analysis, but he thinks Black should have tried this. 43... ♖e8 would be only passive defence and could be met by 44 ♖f4 or 44 h4 (but not 44 ♖xd6?? ♖xe3).

**44 ♖f4!**

To give a check at the critical moment! Some tactics had to be calculated here. After 44 ♖xd6? ♖xe3! 45 ♖xe3 (45 ♖xe3?? ♖h2+ and ... ♖xd6) 45... ♖g4+ 46 ♖d2 ♖h2+ 47 ♕e2 ♖xd6 48 fxe4 ♖h6+ Black should escape with a draw.

**44... ♖h5?!**

Is this the best defence? Not 44... ♖xd5? 45 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 46 ♕c2 ♖b3, but the Fritz7 computer program suggests that 44... ♖xe3!? was a better try. Then after 45 ♖xe3 (Not 45 ♖xe3?? ♖xd5+) 45... ♖h4+ (If 45... ♖xd5 46 ♖g5+ or 45... ♖h2+ 46 ♖f1 ♖xd5 47 ♖g5+.) 46 ♖f1 ♖xd5 (46... ♖h3+ 47 ♖e2 ♖h2+

48 ♖d1 ♜h1+ 49 ♜c2 helps White.)  
47 ♜g1+ ♜f7 it comes up with such variations as:

a) 48 ♖a7 when:

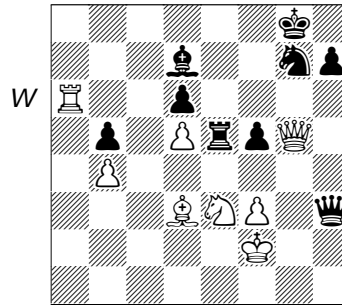
a1) 48...♜e7 49 ♜h2 (Not 49 ♜d4? ♞e3+ 50 ♜f2 ♞d1+ 51 ♜g2 ♜g5+ and Black escapes with a draw, since if 52 ♜f1? ♞e3+ 53 ♜e2 ♜g2+! 54 ♜xe3? ♜g1+.) 49...♜g7 (Now if 49...♞e3+ 50 ♜f2 ♞d1+ 51 ♜g2 ♜g5+ 52 ♜f1 wins.) 50 f4 (denying g5 to the black ♜) 50...♞e3+ 51 ♜g1 ♞g4 52 ♜g3+- Δ ♙xf5.

a2) 48...♜h3+! 49 ♜e2 (Not 49 ♜g2?? ♞e3+) 49...♞f4+ 50 ♜e3 (50 ♜d2 ♜xf3) 50...♞d5+ 51 ♜d4 (or 51 ♜d2 ♜xf3 52 ♜xd7+ ♜e6 53 ♜xh7 ♜f4+) 51...♜xf3 52 ♜xd7+ ♜e6 53 ♜g8+ ♜xd7 54 ♜xd5 ♜f2+ 55 ♜c3 ♜e1+ draws.

b) Hamarat says that due to a computer crash he no longer has the analysis that he made during the game, but he looked at many lines “and I remember it was OK for White”. He thinks that the correct response begins 48 ♜xd6 ♙e6 49 ♖a6, which does seem to give winning chances, although the position is very complicated despite the reduced material.

Now 49...♞xb4?? is a blunder because of 50 ♖a7+ mating or winning a piece, and 49...♜xb4 is dangerous because after 50 ♖a7+ ♞e7 51 ♜h2 the h-pawn will fall and Black’s ♜ is very exposed. The best defence is 49... ♜f6 50 ♖a7 (Δ ♜g7#) 50...♙f7 and if 51 ♙xb5 ♜xb4 when Black has drawing chances but no certainty of survival.

45 ♜g5+ ♞g7 (D)



#### 46 ♙f1!!

Hamarat says that of course White stands better, but he cannot see a clear win for White after other moves. A few ideas:

a) 46 ♜xd6 ♜h2+ 47 ♞g2 ♖e2+ 48 ♜xe2 ♜xd6 is inconclusive.

b) 46 ♞g2 f4!? — Hamarat.

c) 46 ♖a8+ ♖e8 (or 46...♜f7!? 47 ♜d8 ♙e8 48 ♖a7+ ♜g8 49 ♜g5) 47 ♜xe8+ (47 ♖a7 h6 48 ♜g6 f4 49 ♞g2 ♜g3+ 50 ♜xg3 fxg3+ 51 ♜xg3 ♞h5+ 52 ♜f2 ♞f6) 47...♙xe8 48 ♞xf5 ♜h2+ 49 ♜f1 (49 ♜e3 ♜e5+ 50 ♙e4 ♜f8) 49...♜e5 (or 49...♜h1+ 50 ♜e2 ♜h2+ 51 ♜d1 ♜e5) 50 ♞h6+ ♜f8 (50...♜h8? 51 ♜xe5 dxe5 52 ♞g4+-) 51 ♜xe5 dxe5 52 ♙xh7 ♜e7.

“Maybe these variations might also win, but I was not sure. After 46 ♙f1, which makes the white ♜ position secure, I couldn’t find any way for Black to save this game.”

#### 46...♜h2+ 47 ♞g2 f4

Black discovers an attack on the white ♜. He prefers to give up the f-pawn and gets some scope for his pieces. 47...♖e8 allows the ♜ to defend d6 but the second rank collapses: 48

♖a7 h6 49 ♖g6. Or 47...♙e8 48 ♖f4 and the d-pawn falls.

**48 ♖xf4 ♖h5**

48...♖xf4 49 ♘xf4 ♖f5 50 ♖xd6 ♖xf4 51 ♖xd7 ♖xb4 52 ♙d3 wins in all variations.

**49 ♘e3 ♖e8**

49...♖g6 permits a liquidation to a minor piece ending: 50 ♖xe5 dxe5 51 ♖xg6 hxg6 52 ♘g4 ♙xg4 (52...e4? 53 ♘f6+ or 52...♙f7 53 ♘xe5+ ♙e7 54 ♘xd7 ♙xd7 55 ♙xb5+ ♙d6 56 ♙c6) 53 fxg4 ♘e8 54 ♙xb5.

**50 ♙d3**

50 ♖xd6 was still dubious because after 50...♖xe3 51 ♖xe3? ♖xe3+ 52 ♙xe3 Black has the fork 52...♘f5+. Here 51 ♖xd7 is better but the premature simplification jeopardises the win.

After 50 ♙d3, Black must defend his d-pawn.

**50...♖e7 51 ♖a8+ ♘e8 52 ♖h6 ♖f7**

Black hardly has any moves. If 52...♖g7 53 ♖xg7+ ♙xg7 54 ♖a7 ♖e7 (54...♘f6 55 ♙xb5) 55 ♘f5+.

**53 ♖d8**

White wants to tie up his opponent to extract the maximum concession in the endgame. 53 ♖xd6 allows too much counterplay after 53...♖f4.

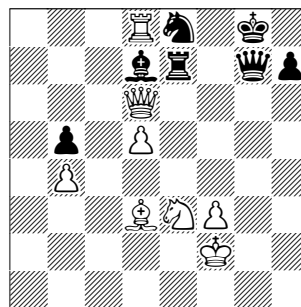
**53...♖e7 54 ♖xd6**

Now the pawn can at last be captured because f4 is under control.

**54...♖g7 (D)**

Here 55 ♙f5 looks strong but Black's ♖ might get active, Hamarat

W



calculates that he can force off the ♖s and have a clear endgame win.

**55 ♖g3!! ♖xg3+**

55...♙f8!? can be met by this nice variation pointed out by Hamarat: 56 ♖xg7+ ♙xg7 57 ♖b8 ♘d6 58 ♖b6 ♘c8 59 ♖b7 winning the b-pawn and the game, because if now 59...♘d6 60 ♘f5+!!.

**56 ♙f8! ♖xe3 57 ♙e4!**

The first point. Black cannot save his ♙ but the key finesse is at move 60.

**57...♙f8 58 ♖xd7 ♘f6 59 ♖a7 ♘xe4+ 60 ♙f4!**

This had to be seen before 55 ♖g3. White obtains connected passed pawns with the black ♙ cut off.

**60...♘f6**

If the ♖ moves, the central passed pawns (after 61 fxe4) will be decisive.

**61 ♙xe3 ♘xd5+ 62 ♙e4 ♘xb4 63 ♖xh7**

White is always winning because he will collect the black b-pawn, and indeed Black is in danger of losing his ♘.

**63...♘a6 64 ♙d4 1-0**

# Game 61

**White: Olita Rause (Latvia)**

**Black: Roberto Álvarez (Argentina)**

CAPA-X Jubilee email, 1999-2002

*Najdorf Sicilian (B90)*

**The Players:** Olita Rause is to CC what Judit Polgar is to OTB chess: the first female player to compete successfully with male players at the highest level. A FIDE women's GM married to FIDE GM Igors Rausis, she turned to postal chess when she started a family. She won the three-stage ICCF World Cup VI and, more recently, the SSKK-60 and CAPA-X Jubilee events, earning the ICCF GM title and obtaining a CC rating above 2700, which puts her in the world's top five players on recent results.

Roberto Álvarez was one of the pioneers of email chess, and one-time secretary of IECG. He obtained the ICCF GM title in 1998 after winning the Jiri Pelikan Memorial 'A' email GM event, and he afterwards won the Pappier Memorial 'A' too.

**About this game:** The CAPA-X Jubilee was a double-round elite event for six GMs celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of CAPA, one of Argentina's CC organisations. The last game to finish, this decided the tournament in favour of Olita Rause who scored 7½ points from 10 games, ahead of Álvarez 6, Morgado 5½, Sanakoev 5, Elwert 4½ and

Berdichesky 1½. It is a theoretically significant game in one of the main lines of the Najdorf variation.

Olita Rause kindly supplied some general remarks about the ideas and main turning points of the game, and I have added some extra comments, mostly on the opening and the last phase of the ending, without trying to second-guess her analysis. Some critical moments in the middlegame and double ♖ ending are left for readers to explore for themselves.

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 a6 6 ♕e3**

In the era when the Najdorf was popularised by GMs like Fischer and Polugaevsky, 6 ♕e3 (now the main line) was barely considered.

**6...e5**

This is one of three moves here. If Black plays the Scheveningen-style 6...e6, White has the English Attack, involving 7 f3 followed by g4, sometimes preceded by ♖d2, and eventual 0-0-0. 6...♗g4 7 ♕g5 h6! 8 ♕h4 g5 9 ♕g3 ♕g7 is a complicated alternative.

GM Najdorf's original idea was to follow 5...a6 with ...e5 when possible, and the system chosen by GM Álvarez follows his ideas.

## 7 ♖b3

In the early days of the Najdorf White played the slow 7 ♖de2, e.g. 7...♙e7 8 h3 ♙e6 9 ♗g3 g6 10 ♙d3 ♗bd7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♖f3 ♕h8 13 ♖ad1 b5 with counterplay (0-1, 69) Rossolimo-Fischer, USA Ch 1966-67. In 'The Complete Najdorf: Modern Lines' by Gallagher & Nunn, there is lots of theory on both 7 ♖b3 and 7 ♗f3 (the reasons why 6 ♙e3 was revived) but 7 ♖de2 is not mentioned. 7...♙e6 8 ♖d2 ♗bd7 9 f3 h5

Najdorf theory develops fast. This game (started in December 1999) features a move not even mentioned in the book written a year earlier (principally by Gallagher). There 9...b5 and 9...♙e7 are the main lines while 9...♖c8 also gets a mention. By playing 9...h5 Black rules out White's principal idea of g2-g4 and forces a rethink.

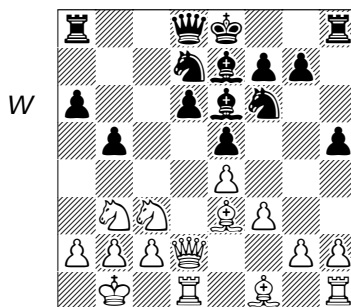
## 10 0-0-0

a) Álvarez had the same position with White against Sanakoev in the CAPA Jubilee, but preferred 10 ♙e2 ♗b6 11 0-0-0 ♖c7 12 ♕b1 ♙e7 13 ♙xb6 ♖xb6 14 ♗d5 ♙xd5 15 exd5 0-0 16 g3 ♖fe8 17 ♖hf1 ♖c7 18 g4 ♖ac8 19 c4 e4 20 g5 exf3 which is unclear (½-½ in 59 moves).

b) 10 a4 has also been seen in several games, to take advantage of the fact that Black delayed ...b5.

c) 10 ♗d5 is a totally different plan, e.g. 10...♗xd5 11 exd5 ♙f5 12 ♙e2 a5 13 0-0 ♙e7 14 f4! when White had a good position and went on to win in J.Neumann-R.Maliangkay, CCOL12 Final 1998-99.

## 10...b5 11 ♕b1 ♙e7 (D)



W

## 12 f4!

Olita Rause explains the context of this game as follows: "The Najdorf Variation is not only extremely topical in very high-level OTB games, but also in CC. This variation leads to very unbalanced and complex positions. The last few years of debates around 6 ♙e3 (or 6 f3 followed by ♙e3) provided a huge collection of high-rated games but they showed that White's plan involving 0-0-0 was not safe at all. Maybe 12 f4 (a novelty in this game) could slightly change this statistic."

"Very soon in the game, White obtains a dangerous initiative against the black monarch, so Black's next move seems dubious."

12 g3, 12 ♖f2, 12 ♗d5 have also been played.

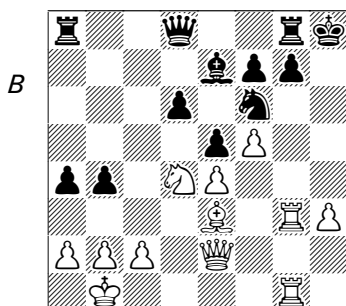
## 12...0-0?! 13 f5 ♙c4 14 h3 ♙xf1

Olita Rause said in a recent interview that when starting a new event she always consults her husband about opening theory trends. Since 14...h4 ½-½ occurred in Rausis-A.Sokolov, Schacknytt GM 2000, I guess there were non-chess reasons why White did not play for a win there.

15 ♖hxfl b4 16 ♘d5 ♗xd5 17 ♖xd5 h4 18 g4 hxg3 19 ♖g1 ♘f6 20 ♖d3 a5 21 ♖xg3 ♖h8!

Black plays very well in defence, says Olita Rause.

22 ♖dg1 ♖g8 23 ♖e2 a4 24 ♘d4! (D)



24...♖e8!

Black has found a good scheme to hold the kingside; on e8 the ♖ supports the next move ...g6. Rause believes she went wrong with her next move.

Note that it is far too dangerous to accept the ♘ sacrifice: 24...exd4?? 25 ♗xd4 (Δ ♗xf6, ♖h5 and mates) 25...g6 26 fxg6 fxg6 27 ♖xg6 and soon mates as the ♘ is pinned. 25 ♖g2?!

With a direct threat to g7, also vacating e2 for the ♘, but Black is ready for this. Instead, White could consider 25 ♗g5 and 25 h4.

25...g6!

Not 25...♘h5 26 ♖f3, e.g. 26...♘xg3 27 ♖xg3 g6 28 f6 ♗d8 29 ♖g5 and 30 ♖h5+ wins. 26 ♘e2 ♖c8 27 fxg6 fxg6 28 ♗g5

♖h7 29 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 30 ♖f3 ♖e6 31 h4 ♗e7 32 ♘g3 d5

With this advance, gaining some scope for his ♗, Black managed to minimise White's advantage. Olita Rause explains that "in the resulting complex heavy-pieces ending, White's initiative was not very stable, and I had to take care by keeping all of my ♖s on the board (38 ♖c1!? and 39 ♖f1!?)."

33 exd5 ♖xd5 34 ♘e4 ♖c4 35 ♘g5+ ♗xg5 36 hxg5 ♖g7 37 ♖f2 ♖d4 38 ♖c1!? ♖h8 39 ♖f1!? ♖hh4!

"After the game Mr Álvarez wrote to me that somewhere here, he made a decisive mistake, but I guess he played excellently. For example, 39...♖hh4! prevents any deadly concentration of White's heavy pieces around his ♗. So finally we had to enter a double ♖ ending, which I managed to win."

Presumably, if 39...♖d8 (ceding the h-file) then 40 ♖h3! and the pressure can start to build, e.g. 40...♖d6 (not 40...♖d1?? 41 ♖f6+) 41 ♖h1 (Δ ♖h3) and if 41...♖e6 42 ♖g2 (Δ ♖h2) 42...♖d2 43 ♖b7+ and ♖xb4.

40 ♖f6 ♖c4 41 ♖e1 ♖de4 42 ♖f2 ♖d4 43 b3 ♖d5 44 ♖a6 ♖f7 45 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 46 bxa4 ♖hg4

Olita Rause told me that she did not know if there were any drawing chances for Black in the game after this, but she could not find a win if Black continued by 46...e4!?. On the other hand, if that move had been played, no doubt she would have analysed deeper and maybe found something.



Probably Black didn't want to allow 46...e4 47 ♖f1+ ♔g7 48 ♖ff6, but he can play instead 47...♙e7! 48 ♖xg6 e3 followed by ...e2 and ...♖he4. For example, 49 ♖e1 ♖he4 50 a5 e2 51 ♙c1 (only move) 51...♗d5 52 a6 ♖a5 53 ♙b2 ♙d7 when swapping a6 and g5 for b4 and e2 (with a ♖ exchange on e2) should be a drawn ♖ + a&c-pawns v ♖ endgame.

**47 ♖h1!**

One of the golden rules of ♖ endings is to avoid a purely defensive role for the pieces. Now the g-pawn falls and c2 is potentially vulnerable, but more importantly the white pieces cooperate to drive the black ♙ to a dangerous position on the edge.

**47...♖xg5 48 ♖h7+ ♔g8 49 ♖b7 ♗d8 50 ♖e6 e4**

White threatened to march the a-pawn so Black must make a sacrifice in order to enable the g5-♖ to stop a4-a5.

**51 ♖xe4 ♖c8 52 ♖bxb4**

White has three pawns against one, but the fact that the pawns are split on the a- and c-files (the hardest files to gain a win in ♖ endings) means that there is still a lot of technical work to do.

**52...♙f7 53 ♙b2 ♖c6**

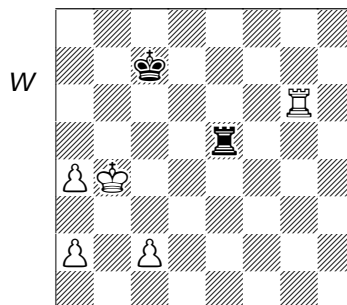
Black needs to get his ♙ in front of the pawns to have drawing chances, and would like to get counterplay with ...♖g2. White forces off a pair of ♖s before attempting to advance the pawns.

**54 ♖ec4 ♖xc4 55 ♖xc4 ♙e6 56 ♙b3 ♖a5 57 ♖c6+ ♔d7**

Black must sacrifice his last pawn

as a decoy to get his ♙ across to the queenside.

**58 ♖xg6 ♙c7 59 ♙b4 ♖e5 (D)**



In the classic ending with only two pawns, it is known that the stronger side often cannot win (unless the pawns are far advanced or the defending ♙ and ♖ badly placed). Here, however, the third pawn gives additional winning chances.

**60 c4 ♖e2 61 a3 ♖b2+ 62 ♙c3 ♖a2 63 ♙b3 ♖a1 64 a5 ♖b1+ 65 ♙a4 ♖c1 66 ♙b5 ♖b1+**

White would like to use the extra a-pawn to shield the ♙ from vertical checks, but Black insists that she plays the ♙ to the c-file.

**67 ♙c5 ♖h1**

Álvarez follows the general advice of Botvinnik that the defending ♖ should be stationed in the corner opposite the advancing pawns. A variation illustrating how the backward a-pawn can be of use is 67...♖a1 68 ♖g7+ ♙b8 69 ♙b6 (threatening mate) 69...♖b1+ 70 ♙c6 ♖a1 71 ♖b7+ ♙a8 72 ♖b3 and the black ♖ cannot defend on the a-file.

**68 a6**

White's objective is to drive the ♖ from its optimum defensive position to the a-file. The position becomes critical once a pawn reaches the 6<sup>th</sup> rank.

**68...♗b8**

The manoeuvre to a7 cannot be delayed by 68...♖a1 because of 69 ♖g8! (cutting off the ♗) 69...♖xa3 70 ♗b5 and then:

a) 70...♖b3+ 71 ♗a4 ♖c3 72 a7 ♖xc4+ 73 ♗b5 and wins.

b) 70...♖a1 71 a7! ♖xa7 72 ♖h7+ followed by ♖xa7 and ♗c6 with a winning ♗ and pawn ending.

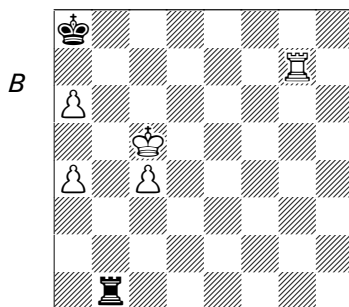
**69 a4 ♗a7 70 ♗b5 ♖b1+ 71 ♗a5**

This is an option not normally available to White when there are only two pawns. Normally the only plan is to sacrifice the a-pawn to get ♗c8, ♖c7 with the black ♖ misplaced (it stands best on h1), but the second a-pawn greatly increases the winning chances. Compared with the situation at move 67, the a-pawns are one rank further down the board and mating threats come into play.

**71...♖c1 72 ♖g7+ ♗a8**

If 72...♗b8 White does not play 73 a7+?, allowing stalemate tricks (73...♗a8 74 ♗a6 ♖g1!), but makes progress with 73 ♗b6 ♖b1+ 74 ♗c6 ♖a1 75 a5!, e.g. 75...♗a8 (75...♖xa5?? 76 ♗b6 and mates) 76 c5 ♖c1 77 ♗b6 ♖b1+ 78 ♗c7 with a standard win after 78...♗a7 79 ♗c8+! ♗xa6 80 c6 ♖c1 81 c7. In this line Black cannot save himself even with

the ♖ on its ideal square because of the second a-pawn: 80...♖h1 81 c7 ♖h8+ 82 ♗d7 ♗b7 83 a6+.

**73 ♗b6 ♖b1+ 74 ♗c5 (D)**

Now the black ♗ is on a8, it is OK to block the c-pawn. If 74...♗b8 then 75 ♖b7+! and if 74...♖h1 75 ♗c6 ♖h4 (75...♖h6+ 76 ♗b5 ♖h5+ 77 c5) 76 c5! ♖xa4 77 ♗c7 ♖xa6 78 ♖g8+ ♗a7 79 c6 with a book win. Also sufficient, but slower, is 77 ♗b5 (The black ♖ has lost its checking distance.) 77...♖a1 78 c6 with a position that is known to be won even if the defending ♗ is on b8.

**74...♖a1 75 a5 1-0**

White makes use of her extra pawn. It cannot be taken because of ♗c5-b6, while otherwise the ♗ will crawl down the board with the c-pawn, winning as in the note to Black's 72<sup>nd</sup> move. So finally Black resigned, after about 26 months play, which is a very long duration for a game played by email at the time limit of 10 moves in 40 days.

# Game 62

**White: Dr Harald Tarnowiecki (Austria)**

**Black: Joop J. van Oosterom (Netherlands)**

NBC Millennium Email Tournament, 2000

*King's Indian Defence (E90)*

**The Players:** Van Oosterom was introduced in Game 1. Dr Tarnowiecki got the CC-IM title in 1991 and became a GM in 1998. His best performance so far is his second prize (behind Elwert) in the very strong double-round Millennium Email Tournament organised by the Dutch CC federation, NBC. He finished ahead of Andersson, Bang, van Oosterom and Timmerman.

**About this game:** This was the decisive game for second prize and it was van Oosterom's only loss in the tournament. I have annotated this game largely in terms of general ideas with a minimum of tactical variations. White plays a new idea in a rare variation of the King's Indian and quenches his opponent's play on both wings. By a little combination, he establishes a middlegame bind that leads logically to an endgame win.

**1 c4 ♘f6 2 d4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♙g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 h3!?**

White's plan resembles the Petrosian System (6 ♙e2 e5 7 d5) in which 7...a5 8 h3 ♘a6 9 ♙g5 ♚e8 10 g4 ♘d7 is superficially similar to the position reached after 10 moves in this game. However, there is a big difference: van Oosterom does not

advance his a-pawn before developing his ♘ on a6, because he intends to bring the other ♘ to c5.

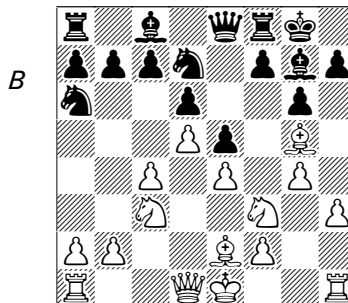
**6...e5 7 d5 ♘a6 8 ♙g5 ♚e8**

8...h6 is the other way to unpin but van Oosterom does not want to expose his pawn on h6. He hopes the g5-♙ will turn out to be misplaced.

**9 g4 ♘d7**

Despite White's g2-g4, Black prepares his ...f7-f5 break, as otherwise he would have a passive position. The alternative method, 9...♙h8 followed by ...♘g8, and ...f5, might encourage White to charge down with h4-h5. Reverting to ...♘c5 and ...a5 is now inferior, since 9...♘c5 10 ♘d2 a5 11 ♚f3! is good for White.

**10 ♙e2!?** (D)



In his 1996 book 'Beating the Anti-King's Indians', GM Joe Gallagher examines this variation in his second chapter. The moves considered in this position are 10 ♖d2, 10 ♜g1 and 10 ♘d2. Most often White inserts 10 ♜g1 ♘h8 and then decides what to do. But there's no harm in holding back ♜g1, and it's a clever choice by Tarnowiecki. Already we have an almost unknown position where Black has yet to find a good plan; in particular, he must be careful he does not find himself in an inferior line should White throw in ♜g1 after all.

**10...♘dc5 11 ♜b1**

White prepares b2-b4 and waits for the thematic ...f5 advance. Then Tarnowiecki hopes to gain control of the square e4 for his pieces while Black will not have the use of the corresponding f5-square because of the pawn on g4.

The usual method is a2-a3. By playing ♜b1, White moves the ♜ off the long diagonal (so that later tricks with ...e5-e4 are eliminated), accelerates his queenside play (he can now play a2-a4 in one go), and the ♜ might even be further activated via b3. The drawbacks are that White cannot castle on the queenside, and if (when) Black plays ...f7-f5, the usual plan of taking twice on f5 is ruled out as ...♙xf5 would attack the ♜.

**11...♙d7**

Black decides to play around the blocked centre rather than concede e4. However, in view of the difficulties he experiences, perhaps he should play the obvious 11...f5 after all, especially as White has now committed his ♙ either to remain in the centre or to

castle into a compromised kingside.

I think Tarnowiecki must have intended to meet 11...f5 by 12 b4! when 12...fxe4! might be met by 13 ♘d2 ♘d3+ 14 ♙xd3 exd3 15 ♘de4 followed by 16 ♖xd3. Or if 12...♘xe4 13 ♘xe4! fxe4 (13...h6 14 ♙e3 fxe4 15 ♘d2 or 14 ♘f6+!?) 14 ♘d2! and now, since 14...h6 15 ♙e3 ♖e7 16 ♘xe4 is not too promising, Black might consider 14...♘b8, or the exchange sacrifice 14...♜f4!? 15 ♙xf4 exf4, although I am sceptical of its soundness in a CC game. White probably does best to answer 15 ♖b3 deferring the capture of the ♜.

**12 b4 ♘a4 13 ♘b5**

White does not want to exchange a good ♘ for a poor one.

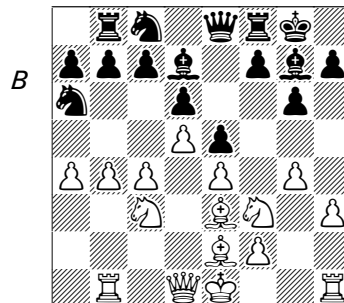
**13...♘b6**

13...♙xb5 ruins Black's position after 14 cxb5 ♘c3 15 ♖d3 ♘xe2 16 bxa6.

**14 a4 ♘c8**

Black is still reluctant to play ...f5 but his attempts to improve his queenside jumble of pieces are laborious. The ♘ defends the a7-pawn so that the ♜ may move to b8, after which ...c6 and eventually ...b5 might become possible.

**15 ♘c3 ♜b8 16 ♙e3 (D)**



This move eyes a7 and clears the way for a kingside pawn advance.

**16...c5!?**

On 16...c6, White chooses between 17 ♖d2 and 17 c5 cxd5 18 ♖xd5.

**17 b5**

White prefers a blocked centre for his ♔ while he plays on the wings.

**17...♟b4**

The ♟ ends up being badly placed here, but Black is cramped and does not see much future in a retreat either.

**18 g5**

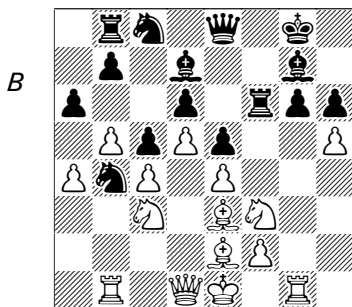
In order to exchange his poorest piece — the light-squared ♗ impeded by its own pawns — White clears g4. When Black plays ...f5, White will now be able to capture en passant and keep the central structure rigid.

**18...f5**

If Black still refuses to advance this pawn, White can build up with h3-h4, ♟h2 and ♗g4, after which the ♟ has the useful square g4, and h4-h5 can follow after preparation.

Black cannot easily manoeuvre one of his ♟s into contact with f6 to challenge this plan.

**19 gxf6 ♖xf6 20 h4 h6 21 ♖g1 a6 22 h5 (D)**



**22...g5?!**

This could be the losing move. Not 22...gxh5? 23 ♟h4 but Black might have done better with 22...♟e7, avoiding what happens now.

**23 ♟xg5!**

White exchanges two pieces for ♖ and pawn in order to establish a bridgehead and put Black on the defensive.

**23...hxg5**

If the black ♖ moves away White follows with 24 h6 and 25 ♗h5 +-. .

**24 ♗xg5 ♟h8 25 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 26 ♗g4!**

At last White exchanges his 'bad' ♗. **26...♗xg4 27 ♖xg4 ♖f8 28 ♟e2**

White links his ♖s in order to transfer the full weight of his forces to the kingside.

**28...♟e7**

28...♟b6!? looks like a good spoiling move since White can no longer defend the c-pawn by ♖e2, but White might have sacrificed it, e.g. 29 ♖h3 ♟xc4 (or 29...♗e7 30 h6 ♟xc4 31 ♖g7) 30 ♖g6 and 31 ♖bg1 looks very strong.

**29 h6 ♖f7 30 h7**

A clever move, preventing Black from challenging on the g-file with his ♖. Obviously the pawn cannot be taken as this would expose the black ♔ to White's heavy pieces.

**30...♖f8 31 ♖bf1 ♖g7 32 f4 ♖xg4+ 33 ♖xg4 ♗g7**

33...exf4? 34 ♖gxf4 ♟g7 35 ♖xf6.

**34 ♖fg1 ♖f7 35 f5 ♗f8**

If 35...♟xh7? 36 f6! wins a piece or mates (36...♗xf6? 37 ♔h1+).

**36 ♟d1 ♟c2**

For the time being, the advanced pawn is still taboo. If 36...♟xh7? 37

$\text{Bh4+}$   $\text{Sh6}$  38  $\text{De3}$  threatening  $\text{Dg4}$  and  $\text{Bgh1}$  to win the pinned  $\text{S}$ . Even worse is 36... $\text{Bxh7?}$  37  $\text{f6}$  with mate on  $\text{g8}$  if the  $\text{D}$  moves.

**37  $\text{Dd3}$   $\text{Db4+}$  38  $\text{Cc3}$   $\text{axb5}$  39  $\text{axb5}$**

Strategically, Black is lost. White can use his passed pawns and piece activity to force kingside concessions and then invade on the queenside.

**39...  $\text{Dc8}$  40  $\text{Df2!}$   $\text{Db6}$**

This concedes control of  $\text{a7}$ , where the white  $\text{B}$  will later penetrate, but what can Black do instead? If 40... $\text{Sg7}$  41  $\text{Dh3}$  and 42  $\text{Dg5}$ , or 40... $\text{De7}$  41  $\text{Dh3}$   $\text{Sh6}$  42  $\text{Dg5}$   $\text{Bf6}$  43  $\text{De6}$   $\text{b6}$  44  $\text{Bg8+}$   $\text{exh7}$  45  $\text{Bb8+-}$ .

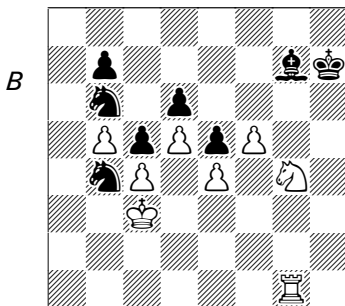
**41  $\text{Bg8+!}$**

White decides to clarify the h-pawn situation. He will simplify and win Black's b-pawn by means of  $\text{Ba1-a7}$ .

**41...  $\text{Cxb7}$  42  $\text{B8g3!}$**

The threat of 43  $\text{Bh3+}$   $\text{Sh6}$  44  $\text{Bgh1}$   $\text{Bf6}$  45  $\text{Dg4}$  forces Black to exchange  $\text{B}$ s.

**42...  $\text{Bg7}$  43  $\text{Bxg7+}$   $\text{Sxg7}$  44  $\text{Dg4}$  (D)**



White has  $\text{B+pawn}$  vs  $\text{S+D}$ , a material balance which tends to favour

the minor pieces in the middlegame, but is often good for the  $\text{B}$  in an endgame where it can attack enemy pawns. Qualitative factors are always important: the scope of Black's pieces is restricted by the pawn structure and White can set up a queenside threat which, in conjunction with his passed f-pawn, overstretches the defences.

**44...  $\text{Dd7}$  45  $\text{Ba1}$   $\text{Cg8}$  46  $\text{Ba7}$   $\text{Cf7}$  47  $\text{Bxb7}$   $\text{Ce8}$  48  $\text{Ba7}$**

48  $\text{b6}$   $\text{Da6}$  49  $\text{Ba7}$   $\text{Dab8}$  would give Black some hope of setting up a blockade on both wings.

**48...  $\text{Cd8}$  49  $\text{f6!}$**

By this pawn sacrifice White forces transposition into a  $\text{C}$  and pawn ending, in which his protected, passed and extra b-pawn ensures no more defence is possible.

**49...  $\text{Shf6}$**

If 49... $\text{Dxf6}$  50  $\text{Bxg7}$ , so Black has no choice.

**50  $\text{Bxd7+}$   $\text{Cxd7}$  51  $\text{Dxf6+}$   $\text{Ce7}$  52  $\text{Dg4}$**

Heading to  $\text{d3}$  for the final piece exchange, which Black cannot avoid as his  $\text{D}$  is corralled by White's  $\text{b5}$ -pawn and  $\text{C}$ .

**52...  $\text{Cd7}$  53  $\text{Df2}$   $\text{Da2+}$  54  $\text{Cd2}$   $\text{Db4}$  55  $\text{Dd3}$   $\text{Dxd3}$  56  $\text{Cxd3}$**

White only needs to force penetration with his  $\text{C}$  to win.

**56...  $\text{Cc7}$  57  $\text{Ce2}$   $\text{Cd7}$  58  $\text{Cf3}$   $\text{Ce7}$  59  $\text{Cg4}$   $\text{Ce8}$**

Black's  $\text{C}$  must not leave the square of the protected passed pawn. So it cannot roam on to the f-file to keep the white  $\text{C}$  out (59... $\text{Cf6}$  60  $\text{b6}$ ).

**60  $\text{Cf5}$  1-0**

At last Black resigned.

# Game 63

**White:** Yin Hao (People's Republic of China)

**Black:** Players of the World

Internet match at [www.gamers.com](http://www.gamers.com), 2001

*Symmetrical English Opening (A36)*

**The Players:** Yin Hao (born January 28, 1979) is an IM who was rated 2576 by FIDE at the time of the game. His country has many strong OTB masters but no tradition of CC, although a few players recently began entering ICCF email events. He was assisted by American CC player Richard P. Fleming, so I refer to them sometimes as "YH+".

**About this game:** The match, which those involved describe as "a serious game among friends", was coordinated by Tom Hendricks, who has helped me a lot in compiling a digest of the players' analysis from the game. Further games are sometimes in play at the [gamers.com](http://boards.gamers.com) chess strategy site; the URL <http://boards.gamers.com/messages/overview.asp?name=WTChess&page=1> may still work.

Unlike Game 56, this one involved a relatively small team of 33 players who kept in constant touch, exchanging ideas and analysis on a bulletin board. This set-up makes it very hard for the master to win because the players consult about the analysis and decision-making instead of being isolated. Participation

averaged at 20 players per move.

A previous game had ended in a fairly short draw, so when this game also looked as if dull equality might arise, Yin Hao took the brave decision to complicate the game. With a fast time-limit and the normal majority voting, this might have succeeded but the rate of play was slower than the Kasparov match, with a basic three days per move. The game spun out of White's control and the World team found a strong attacking line, which YH+ were unable to withstand.

**1 c4 c5 2 g3 g6 3 ♘g2 ♘g7 4 e3 ♗c6 5 ♗c3 e6**

It is very hard for White to play for a win in this 5 e3 line. YH+ expected 5...e5, but a game that apparently influenced the voters against choosing the move was A.Anastasian-B.Alterman, Rostov 1993, which then continued 6 ♗ge2 ♗ge7 7 0-0 0-0 8 d3 d6 9 a3 a5 10 ♖b1 ♙e6 (10...♖b8 is more accurate, to answer ♗c3-d5 with ...b7-b5.) 11 ♗d5 ♖b8 12 ♗ec3 b6 13 ♙d2 ♗d7 14 ♗a4 ♖fd8 15 b4 axb4 16 axb4 ♙f5 17 bxc5 dxc5 18 ♙e4 ♗b4 19 ♗xd7 ♖xd7 20 ♗xb4 cxb4 21 ♗d5 ♗xd5 22 cxd5 ♙xe4

23 dxe4 ♖c7 24 ♙xb4 and White won the endgame.

6 ♖ge2 ♖ge7 7 d4 cxd4 8 ♘xd4 0-0

Books tend to give 8...d5 but there seems nothing wrong with the text move, which several GMs have played. Now White could return to standard positions with 9 0-0.

9 ♖de2!? d5!

Instead of the known 9...a6, but the World offered a pawn! They considered they had a tempo which they should use immediately, and were already looking ahead at the games mentioned in the note to move 14.

10 cxd5 ♖xd5 11 ♖xd5 exd5 12 0-0

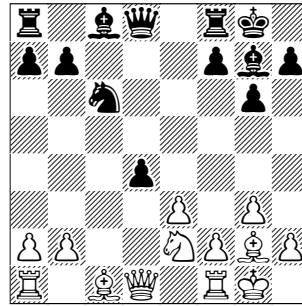
White cannot win the d-pawn:

a) 12 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 13 ♙xd5 ♖b4 when after 14 ♙b3 ♖d3+ 15 ♖f1 ♙h3+ 16 ♖g1 White is struggling for survival and Black has several dangerous moves, e.g. 16...♖e1!?, Δ...♖f3# or ...♙g2. Also 14 ♙e4 ♖e8 gives Black a very strong initiative for the pawn, because on 15 a3 ♖xe4 16 axb4 ♖xb4 Black regains the pawn with the ♙ pair and better structure, while after 15 ♙b1 Black can choose between two promising moves, 15...♙g4 and 15...♙h3!?

b) 12 ♙xd5 ♖b4 exposes the white ♖ to even more danger, e.g. 13 ♙g2 (If 13 e4 ♙h3 and White cannot castle.) 13...♗xd1+ 14 ♖xd1 ♖d8+ 15 ♖d4 (15 ♙d2 ♖d3) 15...♙g4+! and White is in big trouble, e.g. 16 f3 (16 ♖d2 ♖ac8) 16...♙xd4 17 ♖e2 ♙f5 18 exd4+ ♖e8+.

12...d4!? (D)

W



Black must not become tied to defending an isolated d-pawn. White was probably hoping to make something of the ♙ pair after 12...♙g4 13 h3 ♙xe2 14 ♗xe2 although here too Black probably stands well with 14...d4 15 ♖d1 (or 15 ♗b5).

13 ♙xc6?!

Theory in this line goes 13 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 14 exd4 ♗xd4 15 ♗xd4 ♙xd4 16 ♖d1 ♙g7 17 ♙e3 and now:

a) Botvinnik-Stein, Moscow (USSR Cht) 1966, went 17...♙xb2 18 ♖ab1 ♙c3 19 ♙xb7 ♙xb7 20 ♖xb7 a5 21 ♖d3 ♖ac8 22 ♙h6 ♙g7 23 ♙xg7 ♖xg7 24 ♖b5 ♖c7 25 ♖xa5 ♖b8 26 ♖g2 ♖b2 27 ♖f3 h5 28 ♖f4 ♖d7 29 h3 ♖c2 30 g4 hxg4 31 hxg4 ♖dd2 32 ♖g3 ♖c3+ 33 ♖g2 ♖c1 34 a4 ♖c8 35 ♖g3 ♖c1 36 ♖a6 ½-½.

The Team was aware of that game, but they considered Black had a 'cleaner draw' by following:

b) 17...♙g4 18 ♖d2 ♖ad8 19 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 20 ♙xb7 ♙xb2 21 ♖b1 ♙d4 ½-½ R.Weyerstrass-J.Wright, CCOL11 Final 1992. (In these games White only retreated his ♖ to e2 at move 12.)

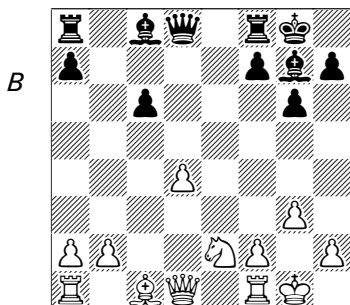
YH+ recognized that playing 13



♙xc6 involved some risk of losing, but after all this was an exhibition game: “Our choice was a rather ‘uneventful’ draw in the symmetrical English or an exciting, analysis-filled game with ♙xc6 ... We wished to keep the game in a positional struggle and move toward an endgame where we could have a slight edge.”

**13...bxc6 14 exd4 (D)**

This leaves White with an isolated d-pawn, but it closes the long diagonal, restrains ...c5 and prepares to develop the queenside. If 14 ♖xd4 the Team liked 14...♙b6 — not the most obvious reply, because 14...c5 and 14...♙h3 also came into consideration.



Now, in exchange for the sacrificed pawn, Black has the ♙ pair and a lot of open lines for his pieces: the b-file, the e-file and a choice of diagonals for the c8-♙. Finding the most effective plan is quite a challenge, however, because it is a little too early to speak of forcing variations leading to clear gains.

**14...♙e8! 15 ♙e3**

YH+ began to feel some pressure here. They were worried about the variation 15 ♙d2 ♙h3 16 ♙e1 ♙g4 17 ♙c3 ♙e7 18 ♙c1 ♙e4 19 ♙d2 ♙f3 but thought the move played was satisfactory.

**15...♙g4 16 ♙d2**

16 ♙e1 was rejected because of 16...♙f6 17 ♙c1 ♙f3 ♣.

**16...♙f3!**

The Team used its first time extension here. 16...c5 had some support but they decided that this was a draw trap after 17 d5!.

To quote one of them: “The most difficult point was when we decided early on to prevent f3 with ...♙f3. His ♙ was far weaker on e3 than b2 and it allowed us to take over the e-file and lever against that ♙”.

**17 ♖f4 ♙d7 18 ♖g2 ♙e7**

Black plans to double ♙s with great pressure on the e-file. A critical moment has arisen.

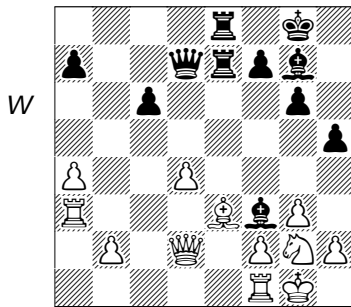
**19 a4?!**

The plan begun with this move may be to blame for White’s defeat, because the ♙a3 follow-up compromises White’s back rank. YH+ was expecting Black to adopt an attacking strategy involving ...h6 and ...g5, against which this would have been effective.

Instead 19 ♙h6?! returns the pawn without equalizing after 19...♙xd4, while White is certainly uncomfortable after 19 ♙g5 ♙e2.

19 ♙c3 is probably best and the Team planned to meet it by 19...♙ae8.

**19...♙ae8 20 ♙a3 h5! (D)**



The Team used their second time extension to find this move, proposed by former Canadian CC champion Kurt Widmann. Most attention had focused on 20...f6 but ultimately they considered it to be another draw trap after 21 ♖c3!, and they also found 20...h6 to be a dead draw.

#### 21 b4

Since the position of White's pieces cannot be improved, this is probably best, trying to create some counterplay and awaiting developments.

a) The Team half-expected 21 ♗h4 which attempts to drive Black back; they would have answered 21... ♕d5 with the threat of ...♖h3, then ...g5, and ...h4. If White pushes his queenside pawns, Black just presses on with the attack, while if 22 f3 ♖b7! preparing the ...c6-c5 pawn lever at the right moment.

b) 21 d5 also seems inadequate, with 21... ♕xd5 22 ♗f4 ♕c4 probably being the optimal reply.

c) 21 ♖c3, with minimal disadvantage, is favoured by Fritz7, which had not been released at the time of the game. There is a threat of ♕g5 attacking the f3-♕ and e7-♖ but Black has many

ways to counter this and putting the ♖ on the long diagonal means that it can be vulnerable to Black's dark-squared ♕. Then 21... ♖h3 threatens mate and play could go:

c1) 22 ♗e1 ♕d5 (Δ 23...h4 followed by 24...hxg3 25 hxg3 ♕h6!), e.g. 23 f3 h4 24 ♖f2 hxg3 25 hxg3 and now 25...c5! explodes the white centre: 26 ♗c2 cxd4 27 ♗xd4 (27 ♕xd4 ♖e2) 27...♖xe3 (or 27... ♕xd4 28 ♕xd4 ♖e2) 28 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 29 ♖xe3 ♖xg3+ 30 ♗h1 ♖h4+ and wins the ♗.

c2) 22 ♗f4 ♖g4 (22... ♖c8!?) 23 h3! (23 h4 g5 24 hxg5 h4 fractures the white ♗ position.) 23... ♖d7 and the position is complicated although Black obviously has a lot of compensation.

#### 21... ♕xg2!

This was a unanimous choice by the Team; as one of them put it: "his ♗ was peskier than our ♕ was strong". Yin Hao admitted he underestimated it. Only after Black's next move did he realise what had happened. "However, it was too late to save the game."

#### 22 ♗xg2 h4 23 d5? (D)

I would assess this as the choice that turns a difficult position into a clearly lost one but it was hard to find a move here. For example, Yin Hao pointed out that if 23 ♖d1 h3+ 24 ♗f3 ♖e4-+ or 23 ♖g1 ♖d5+ 24 ♗f1 h3 and "the ♖ on g1 is really stupid".

Possible improvements are:

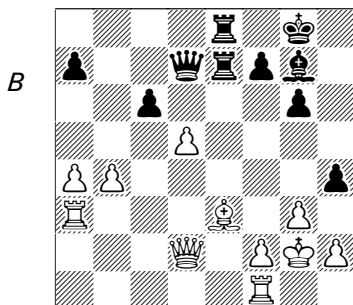
a) 23 ♖d3 (Fritz7), but YH+ could not find a way to hold after 23...h3+ 24 ♗h1 ♖d5+ 25 f3 ♗h7!, which threatens 26... ♖xe3 27 ♖xe3 ♕h6.

b) 23 f3! looks like the best defence but YH+ say it is not enough to hold the position as it leaves the ♕ unsupported. Black continues 23...h3+ 24 ♖f2 (If 24 ♖h1 ♜d5 “White is tied up completely”) 24...♜d5! which maintains the tension and attempts to extract further concessions.

White’s problem is that the attempt to hold all the weaknesses (e.g. the d4-pawn and the ♕ on e3) almost creates a zugzwang. For example:

b1) 25 ♖d1 g5 26 g4 a5 27 ♖d3 ♜d6 28 ♖f1 axb4 29 ♕xg5 ♜e2-+ . Instead White could try 26 ♖d3 g4 27 ♕f4 (and if 27...gxf3 28 ♜e3) but it is not too hopeful in the long run.

b2) 25 ♜e1 ♕xd4 (25...g5! is also strong.) 26 ♖d3 c5 27 ♕xd4 when YH+ gave the variation 27...♜xe1 28 ♕e3 ♜xd3 29 ♜xd3 ♜8xe3 30 ♜xe3 ♜xe3 31 ♖xe3 cxb4 32 a5 “=”. Actually Black can reach a winning ♜ ending after 32...♖g7 33 ♖d4 ♖f6 34 ♖c4 ♖e5 35 ♖xb4 ♖d4 36 ♖b5 ♖e3 37 ♖a6 by leaving the f3-pawn to block the long diagonal: 37...♖f2! 38 ♖xa7 ♖g2 39 a6 ♖xh2 40 ♖b6 ♖xg3! 41 a7 h2 42 a8♜ h1♜-+ .



**23...h3+**

23...cxd5 would be an attempt to win on technique but Black believed in their attack. A Team member wrote here: “The pawn on h3, combined with the fact that our dark-squared ♕ is so much more mobile than White’s, leaves White with a bucketful of problems with all the heavy pieces still on the board.”

**24 ♖g1 cxd5 25 ♕c5**

Black has regained the gambit pawns and all his pieces are better placed than their opposite numbers.

**25...♜e2 26 ♜d3**

26 ♜f4 (Fritz7) transposes to game after 26...d4 27 ♜f3.

**26...d4 27 ♜f3 ♜e1 28 ♖d3**

If 28 g4 (trying to eat the h-pawn) then 28...♜xf1+ 29 ♖xf1 a5 30 g5 (If 30 bxa5? ♜c8 or 30 ♜xh3? axb4 31 ♕xb4 ♜b7) 30...axb4 31 ♕xb4 ♜c7-+ .

**28...♜e6 0-1**

YH+ decided to resign in view of 29 ♖d1 ♜xd1 30 ♜xd1 (30 ♜xd1? ♜e1+ mates) 30...♜d5 31 f3 d3 and White is helpless, e.g. 32 ♕xa7 ♕d4+ 33 ♕xd4 ♜xd4+ 34 ♖h1 (34 ♜f2 ♜e2 35 ♜f1 ♜e3) 34...♜b2 35 ♜g1 ♜e2 mates, or 32 ♕f2 ♕d4 (△...♜e2) 33 ♖h1 d2 34 ♕g1 ♜e1 wins. They summed up: “The World Team did a tremendous job of finding the best move in each situation.”

The Team admit that YH+ set them a lot of tricky problems and that the computers showed no clear path to victory: “had we followed them, it would be 1/2-1/2”.

# Game 64

**White: Tim Harding (Ireland)**

**Black: Alan Borwell (Scotland)**

ICCF Officials IM-A, 2001-2002

*Catalan Opening (E04)*

**The Players:** Tim Harding is the author of this book: ICCF IM (1997) and now Senior International Master (2002). He played on the Irish team at the 1984 FIDE Olympiad.

Alan Borwell has been President of ICCF since 1997, doing a great job guiding the transition of the world's most important CC organisation from the postal into the Internet era. An active player (CC-IM since 1993), Alan was board 6 and captain of the Scottish team which won the bronze medals in the 11<sup>th</sup> CC Olympiad Final.

**About this game:** I found an opening novelty involving a surprising positional piece sacrifice which belies the commonly-held view that CC has been killed off by computers.

**1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 d5 4 ♖g2 dxc4 5 ♗f3 a6 6 ♗e5!?**

I thought White was not scoring as well lately with 6 0-0 (see Game 46).

**6...♖b4+**

6...♖a7 7 0-0 b6 (7...b5? 8 a4 or 7...c5 8 ♖e3) 8 ♗c3 ♖b7 9 ♗a4+ ♗fd7 10 ♖xb7 ♖xb7 11 ♗c6! was good for White in Ya.Neishtadt-G.Scheffer, 2<sup>nd</sup> EU CC Ch 1964.

b) 6...c5!? was thought bad but improvements for Black have been

found in recent years. The sharp reply 7 ♖e3!? is possible but 7 ♗a3 seems to be played more often.

**7 ♗c3**

Neishtadt, in 'Katalonskoye Nachalo' (1969), observed that Black is obliged to defend his extra pawn in a way that strengthens White's centre.

**7...♗d5 8 ♖d2 b5 9 a4!**

9 0-0 is possible but I preferred to strike against Black's pawn structure.

**9...♖xc3**

Neishtadt and 'ECO' warn against 9...♖b7 because of 10 ♗xd5 ♖xd2+ 11 ♗xd2 ♖xd5 12 e4 ♖b7 13 axb5 axb5 14 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 15 ♗a5, attacking both the a8-♖ and the b5-pawn. However, this is not clear after 15...0-0 (15...f6!?) 16 ♗xa8 ♗xd4 when White's best is 17 ♗g4!±.

**10 bxc3 f6?**

I expected 10...♖b7 11 e4 when:

a) Neishtadt-Prokopp, ICCF M/54 corr 1959, went 11...♗b6? 12 ♗g4 ♗f8 13 f4 ♗8d7 14 0-0 c5 15 f5 ♗xe5 16 dxe5 exf5 17 ♗xf5 1-0.

b) Neishtadt & 'ECO' like White after 11...♗f6 12 ♗b1. Black eventually won in V.B.Quist-D.Bryson, CCOL9 1977, after 12...0-0 13 ♗xc4 (13 0-0!?) 13...c5 14 0-0 (Better 14

dx5) 14...cxd4 15 ♖f4 dxc3 16 ♗d6 ♖c6 but Alan did not want to see what improvement I had in mind; his actual choice was a disaster.

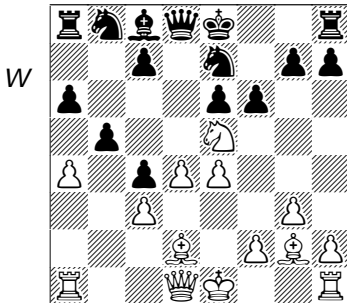
I suspect my opponent looked for an interesting sideline and his search turned up Tukmakov-Lputian, Rostov 1993, with the novelty 10...f6 to chase away the ♗. In that GM game, Black drew fairly comfortably and ‘Informant 57’ did not suggest any major improvement for White.

To me, 10...f6 smelled fishy. Neishtadt did not mention it although he had personal experience of the line; and why had neither Lputian nor anyone else ever repeated the move?

This situation in professional chess can mean that a refutation was pointed out in the post-mortem but kept secret, in the hope of scoring an easy point in future. Maybe that wasn’t the case, but once you start on this line of thinking (which is completely outside computer terms of reference) it is evident where the refutation (if one exists) must lie.

**11 e4 ♗e7 (D)**

11...fxe5 maybe should have been tried, despite 12 exd5.



Tukmakov played 12 ♗g4 and after 12...♖b7 13 ♖b1 c6 14 ♗e3 ♖c8 15 0-0 0-0 he had no real advantage. Retreating the ♗ to f3 does not seem to offer much either but there is a third move. It was not possible, even in CC, to analyse all the possibilities in the position after the ♗ sacrifice. At first I thought it was just a very interesting idea, which Black would find it hard to counter, but soon I was convinced Black was lost.

**12 ♖h5+! g6 13 ♗xg6! ♗xg6 14 f4!**

I have looked at my attack with several computer programs but most do not seriously consider 12 ♖h5+. An exception is Junior 7.0 but it does not find the best continuation, wanting to play 14 axb5 here, after which Black escapes the worst consequences.

White has no pawns at all for the sacrificed ♗ but he threatens to regain the piece by f4-f5 and fxg6. There are threats on the queenside too and the black ♖ is vulnerable. It is hard to appreciate just how bad Black’s position is until you try to defend it.

**14...♖b7!**

This was expected. However, there were other possibilities that had to be examined before taking the plunge:

a) 14...0-0 gets out of the pin, but 15 f5 ♗e7 16 ♖h6 puts the black ♖ in a lot of danger. The critical line is 16...exf5 (If 16...♖f7 17 ♖g4+ ♖h8 18 fxe6 ♗g6 19 axb5 ♖e7 20 d5.) 17 exf5 c6 18 ♖g4+ ♗g6 when after White takes back the exchange on f8 Black is under a lot of pressure for a very small material advantage.

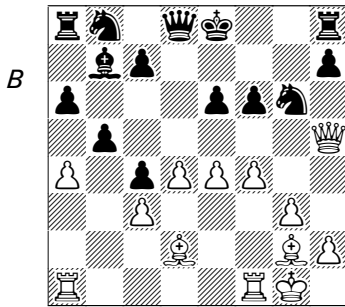
b) 14...♗c6? 15 f5 is hopeless for

Black, e.g. 15...♗ce7 16 fxg6 ♗xg6 17 axb5 e5 18 ♕h6 ♖e7 19 0-0 or 15...♗xd4 16 fxg6 ♗c2+ 17 ♖d1 ♗xa1 18 g7+.

c) 14...♗e7 is an attempt to hold the extra piece after 15 0-0 ♖f7 16 f5 ♗e7 but I intended to play for all-out attack by 15 f5! exf5 16 0-0 where Black must try to keep files closed to protect his ♖, ♗ and g6-♗. After 16...f4 (not 16...fxe4? 17 ♕xe4 nor 16...♗f7? 17 exf5) 17 e5 c6 18 exf6 ♖f7 19 ♖ae1+ White brings enormous firepower to bear against Black's ♖ in the centre.

### 15 0-0! (D)

This is not only to safeguard the ♖. A vital point is that White threatens f4-f5 once his ♕ is guarded.



### 15...♖f7

Other possibilities:

a) 15...♖f8? does not save the ♗ because after 16 f5 it cannot move without disaster, e.g. 16...♗e5 17 dxe5 ♖xd2 18 fxe6, or 16...♗e7 17 ♕h6+ ♖g8 18 ♖g4+, while if 16...exf5 17 ♕h6+ ♖f7 play continues similarly to the game with 18

exf5 ♕xg2 19 ♖xg2.

b) 15...f5? loses material after 16 exf5 ♕xg2 17 fxg6 ♕xf1 18 g7+.

c) 15...0-0 would be a natural 'human' defence. I was confident White's attack would be sufficient after 16 f5, e.g. 16...♗e7 17 ♕h6, 16...♗e5 17 ♕h6, 17 exf5 ♕xg2 18 fxg6 ♖e7 19 ♕h6!, or 16...♗e8 17 fxg6 ♖xg6 18 ♖h3.

d) 15...♖e7 unpins the ♗ but White has a strong attack with 16 f5 against the ♖ in centre that has lost castling rights, e.g. 16...exf5 17 exf5 ♕xg2 18 ♖e2+ followed by 19 ♖xg2 regaining the piece.

### 16 f5!?

Since Black cannot break the pin on his ♗, the worst that can happen to White now is to be a pawn down with obvious compensation; the potential upside is huge. 16 axb5 may be technically superior, e.g. 16...c5!? 17 ♖xc5 and White will soon have three pawns for the piece, plus a strong central pawn mass and an initiative, but I saw nothing conclusive.

### 16...exf5

16...e5 is no good because of 17 fxg6+ hxg6 18 ♖xe5.

### 17 exf5 ♕xg2 18 ♖xg2 c6?

This is the only point where Black might have significantly improved on his defence after my ♗ sacrifice.

a) The obvious 18...♖d5+ pins the f-pawn so that Black can unpin his ♗ after 19 ♖g1, but actually the black ♖ has nowhere to go to do this!

b) 18...b4 seeks to undermine the white centre while also closing the a-file, but gives White another

tempo for his attack: 19 ♖ae1 bxc3?! (19...b3 20 ♖g1) 20 ♙xc3 ♖d5+ 21 ♖g1 ♖g7 22 ♖g4 ♖f8 23 fxg6 hxg6 24 ♖e7+ ♖f7 25 ♖xf6!+-.

c) 18...♗d7! is best, but understandably Black did not want to return all the material and be left with doubled isolated pawns. However, White has few winning chances if he liquidates, e.g. 19 axb5 axb5 20 fxg6+ hxg6 21 ♖xb5 ♗b6! Δ...♖d5, or similarly 19 ♖g1 ♗b6 20 axb5 axb5 21 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 22 fxg6+ hxg6 23 ♖xb5 ♖d5.

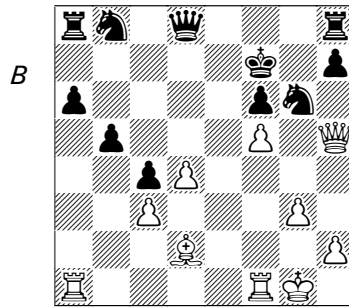
Instead, I would probably have played for the attack with 19 ♖f4!, e.g. 19...c6 20 ♖e1! ♗b6 21 ♖g4 ♖d5+ (21...♖g8 22 ♖e6) 22 ♖g1 ♖ag8 23 ♖ge4 ♗c8 24 ♖e6 Δ g4-g5. While if 19...♗b6 20 ♖g1! ♗d5 (20...c6 21 ♖g4 ♖g8 22 ♖e1 Δ ♖e6. or 20...♗xa4? 21 ♖af1!+-) 21 ♖g4 ♗de7 22 ♖e1 Δ 23 fxg6+ hxg6 24 ♖xe7+!. Although as yet I did not find anything really clear here, it is certainly more fun to be White; if Black makes one slip he will be dead.

**19 axb5 cxb5**

If 19...♖d5+ 20 ♖g1 (renews the threat of fxg6) 20...♖g8 21 ♖fe1 and it's murder if his ♗ tries to escape, while if 21...♖f7 22 ♙h6 is strong, or 21...♗d7 then 22 ♖xa6 should win.

**20 ♖g1! (D)**

It may seem strange that White can follow up his sacrifice so calmly but ♖g1 underlines Black's helplessness. He is deprived of play based on ...♖d5, which is no longer check, and White retains all his options like ♖ doubling on the e-file or f-file or ♙h6.



**20...♗d7**

Black offered a draw! I wondered whether he did not see he was lost, or just hoped that I did not know I was winning.

20...♖a7 is met by 21 ♖f4 or 21 ♖ae1, while 20...♗c6 gets crushed by 21 ♙g5! ♖a7 22 fxg6+ hxg6 23 ♖g4.

**21 ♖f4! ♖b6**

Black cannot cope with the full range of White's threats, e.g. 21...♗b6 22 ♖g4 ♖g8 23 ♖f1! and Black cannot hold (23...♖a7? 24 fxg6+ hxg6 25 ♖xf6+! mates). 21...♗df8 22 fxg6+ ♗xg6 23 ♖af1 also looks grim.

**22 ♖e1! ♖d6**

He cannot allow White to follow up fxg6 with ♖d5+. If 22...♖b7 23 ♖fe4 or 22...♖d8 23 ♖g4 ♗de5 24 ♖xe5! fxe5 25 fxg6+ with a winning attack.

**23 ♖fe4 ♗df8**

To counter the threat of ♖e6. 24 ♙f4 ♖d7 25 fxg6+ ♗xg6 26 ♖e7+ ♖xe7 27 ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 28 ♖c5+! 1-0

Black temporarily has ♖+♖+♗+ pawn versus ♖+♙ but whatever he does, either ♗ or a ♖ will be lost, after which he will be mated or lose his pawns.

## Select Bibliography

It would take far too much space for me to list every CC publication and general chess source that I consulted when preparing this work. Moreover, a fairly thorough CC bibliography is available at <<http://www.chessmail.com>> and several CC titles are mentioned in this book in the annotations. The following should be taken principally as suggestions for further reading.

**MegaCorr2 CD-ROM** edited by Tim Harding, Chess Mail 2001. The largest and most authoritative CC database currently available, with much supplementary material in PDF and HTML. See also page 304.

**Winning at Correspondence Chess** by Tim Harding, Batsford 1996. Although written when the email chess scene was just beginning, I think this is still the best overview of CC with advice on technique and rules, plus games and pen-pictures of the world champions.

**Startling Correspondence Chess Miniatures** by Tim Harding, Chess Mail 2000. A slim companion to the present volume, this has over 100 games of 25 moves or fewer, and tactical exercises, plus advice on avoiding errors and how to exploit opponents' mistakes.

**ICCF Jubilee Book** edited by Pedro Hegoburu, ICCF 2002. Due out in October 2002, I expect this to be the most complete historical and organizational reference work on the

CC game yet published, together with many excellent games, articles about the various national CC bodies, etc.

While there are still relatively few readable books about CC (as opposed to reference works), certain correspondence masters and GMs have annotated their own games excellently. For this reason, they are not represented in this book; go to the originals! In order of unmissability, these are:

**World Champion at the Third Attempt** by Grigory Sanakoev, Gambit Publications 1999 (also available in German and Russian editions). Simply the best book ever published on CC before the year 2002. A new edition with extra games is on the way, I believe.

**The Chess Analyst** by Jon Edwards, Thinkers' Press 1998. Princeton academic Edwards tells how he won the 10<sup>th</sup> US CC Championship in erudite and entertaining fashion.

**52-54-Stop Fernschach, Tips und Tricks vom Weltmeister** by Fritz Baumbach, Sportverlag 1991 (in German). The 11<sup>th</sup> CC World Champion on his rise to the throne.

**Journal of a Chess Master** by Stephan Gerzadowicz, Thinkers' Press 1992. A highly original book with a literary flavour.

**34-mal Schach Logik** by A.O'Kelly, Walter de Gruyter 1963 (in German). The third CC world champion annotates his most interesting postal games.



# Index of Openings

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