Christian Bauer

the Philidor files

EVERYMAN CHESS

Gloucester Publishers plc  www.everymanchess.com
First published in 2006 by Gloucester Publishers plc (formerly Everyman Publishers plc), Northburgh House, 10 Northburgh Street, London EC1V 0AT

Copyright © 2006 Christian Bauer

The right of Christian Bauer to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 1 85744 4361
ISBN13: 978 1 85744 4360

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

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

Everyman is the registered trade mark of Random House Inc. and is used in this work under licence from Random House Inc.

EVERYMAN CHESS SERIES (formerly Cadogan Chess)
Chief advisor: Byron Jacobs
Commissioning editor: John Emms
Assistant editor: Richard Palliser

Cover design by Horatio Monteverde.
Production by Navigator Guides.
Printed and bound in the US by Versa Press.
Introduction 5

Part 1: 1 e4 e5 2 őf3 d6
1 Early Deviations 10
2 3 d4 exd4: Introduction and Larsen’s Variation 44
3 Antoshin’s Variation: Introduction 83
4 Antoshin’s Variation: 6 őf4 109

Part 2: 1 e4 d6 2 d4 őf6
5 Early Deviations and 3 f3 132
6 3 őd3 147
7 3 őc3 e5 164
8 3 őc3 őbd7: Introduction and 4 f4 175
9 3 őc3 őbd7 4 g4 197

Part 3: The Philidor Hanham Variation
(1 e4 d6 2 d4 őf6 3 őc3 őbd7 4 őf3 e5)
10 Introduction and 5 g4 207
11 5 őc4: Introduction and őxf7+ Lines 218
12 Main Line: 7 őwe2 and 7 a4 232
13 Main Line: 8 őe1 without 8...b6 247
14 Main Line: 8 őe1 b6 280

Final Thoughts 299
Index of Variations 301
In the 18th Century, chess strategy was at its very beginning. Direct attacks against the enemy king were common and romantic players didn’t care about material, particularly about little pawns. The Italian school, whose most famous names are Ponziani and Lolli, excelled in this ultra-sharp style.

At that time, the young André Danican, known as Philidor, regularly played chess at the Café de la Régence, building his reputation around Paris. He soon became an established figure worldwide and, when around 1750 he exposed his new ideas, he provoked a real chess revolution.

The proverb we remember from him, ‘Pawns are the soul of chess’, reflects exactly his way of thinking: never neglect the positioning of the infantrymen and never sacrifice them rashly. In other words, a game can be valued on the basis of the pawn structure, and if this is unhealthy, the whole position can suffer.

We can recognize Philidor’s principles in the defence named after him. At first sight this opening looks passive, but in fact it’s very flexible and it can offer several different pawn structures. Unlike openings such as the Petroff, the Caro-Kann or the Scandinavian, the pawn structure is not set in stone from the beginning; it’s potentially changeable. Therefore, it’s important to study carefully these different structures which influence the rest of the game.

The Philidor Defence has an extensive history, but for a long time it fell into a period of obsolescence, supplanted by the numerous lines of the Spanish Opening which, in theory, promise more chances for Black to level the game.

Nevertheless, it is a solid opening rich in ideas. Maybe this is the reason why the Philidor has enjoyed a revival in recent years, being used notably by great names such as Azmai-parashvili, Beliavsky, Nisipeanu and Hamdouchi - the final Grandmaster even reaching a winning position against Shirov!
A Question of Move Order
If the Philidor is making a comeback, one of the reasons for this is the move order Black is employing. Indeed, the move order 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \( \mathcal{Q} \)f6 3 \( \mathcal{Q} \)c3 \( \mathcal{Q} \)bd7 (or 3...e5) has taken over little by little from the classical 1 e4 e5 2 \( \mathcal{Q} \)f3 d6 3 d4 \( \mathcal{Q} \)f6 (or 3...\( \mathcal{Q} \)d7), which posed Black some problems. So the main variations that worried Black have disappeared, even if this has meant mastering new ones. I invite you to discover and to explore the particularities of the different move orders, as well as, of course, the main lines of this opening.

Frequent Pawn Structures
Here's a brief summary of the characteristic pawn structures arising in the Philidor Defence. Apart from structures ‘A’ and ‘B’, this is mainly related to Part 3 of the book.

A) Symmetrical or quasi-symmetrical structure.

This structure appears almost exclusively from the variation 1 e4 e5 2 \( \mathcal{Q} \)f3 d6 3 d4 \( \mathcal{Q} \)f6. It is of course equal if the black c-pawn is still on its original square, but in the event of the common ...c6, the d6-square is weakened. The superior activity of the white pieces is often a major concern for Black.

B) Structure after a pawn exchange on d4.

This structure occurs throughout the book. Black achieves counterplay by attacking the e4-pawn, while the b-, c- and d-pawns are mobile. This is true both in the event of opposite-side castling (as in the main line of the Larsen Variation, Chapter 2) and both sides castling short.

The ...d5 push, or even the pseudo-combination ...\( \mathcal{Q} \)f6xe4; \( \mathcal{Q} \)c3xe4, ...d5, forking the knight on e4 and bishop on c4, sometimes allows Black to equalize in the centre. The dynamism of the pieces, as with structure ‘A’, will then decide whether White stands better or not.

White's attacking prospects are often based on \( \mathcal{Q} \)d4-f5, \( \mathcal{W} \)d1-f3 etc. if both sides have castled short. This same \( \mathcal{Q} \)f5
is a thematic way to open the g-file if White has castled long in the Larsen Variation.

C) Sicilian structure arising from the main line of the Philidor Hanham, when White plays d4-d5 and the d-pawn is exchanged for Black's c-pawn.

This structure means a weak pawn on d6 for Black, but counterplay linked with the c-file and the possibility of ...f5. The e4-pawn is also a target, and protecting it often slows White down in his quest for his strategical goal, the exploitation of the d5 outpost.

D) Structure arising from the previous example after a further exchange of one or two minor pieces on d5, with White recapturing with the e-pawn.

(see following diagram)

This structure favours Black: the weakness on d6 is masked, and Black's play on the kingside (with ...f5) is normally faster than White's on the other wing.

E) Closed structure after d5 and ...c5. White has an outpost on c4 and tries to open lines on the queenside by arranging the advance b2-b4.

Possibilities of Black counterplay exist with the plan ...±e8, ...g6 and ...f5 (but not ...f5 directly since White would then gain e4 for his knight after exf5) or, more rarely, on the queenside with ...±f6-e8-c7 (and/or ±a8-b8) followed by ...b5.

F) Structure after dxe5, ...dxe5. This structure offers equal chances unless something concrete is happening. In some cases Black may seize the
initiative on the queenside thanks to his mobile pawns. White, on the other hand, often gains the ascendancy if he succeeds in bringing his knight from f3 via h4 to f5.

An Early Encounter
As an appetizer, here’s one of the first games featuring the Philidor Defence, admittedly under quite an unusual form. Playing Black was the great Philidor himself, who quickly seized the initiative as a consequence of his opponent’s timid play.

Comte de Brühl-Philidor
London 1792

1 e4 e5 2 c4
Even at this time some players were so scared they avoided the real Philidor Defence!
2...c6 3 We2?!  
3 f3!, contesting the centre, was more appropriate.
3...d6 4 c3?! f5!  
Philidor’s original idea. If 2...d6 (or here 2...c6 followed by 3...d6) can be interpreted as the armament of the spring, then 4...f5 is the gremlin that jumps out of the hat!

5 d3 d6 6 exf5 xf5 7 d4 e4
White’s insipid play has enabled his revolutionary rival to grab the centre. After five pawn moves out of seven, Black is already in the driving seat!
8 g5 d5 9 b3 d6 10 d2 bbd7 11 h3 h6 12 e3 Wb7 13 f4 h5!

5 d3 d6 6 exf5 xf5 7 d4 e4

Preventing any kind of counterplay based on g4. Black dominates the entire board.
14 c4 a6 15 cxd5 cxd5 16 Wf2 0-0 17 e2 b5 18 0-0 b6 19 g3 g6 20 Ha1 h4 21 xf5 gxf5 22 Wg3+ Wg7 23 Wxh7+ Wxh7 24 x4 bxc4 25 g3 Ha8
26 b3 ²a3 27 ²c2 cxb3 28 axb3 ²f6 29
²xc8 ²xc8 30 ²a1 ²b4 31 ²xa6 ²c3 32
²f2 ²d3 33 ²a2 ²xd2 34 ²xd2 ²xb3
35 ²c2 h4!

Destroying White’s structure before
devouring the pawns.

36 ²c7+ ²g6 37 gxh4 ²h5 38 ²d7
²xf4 39 ²xf4 ²f3+ 40 ²g2 ²xf4 41
²xd5 ²f3 42 ²d8 ²d3 43 d5 f4 44 d6
²d2+ 45 ²f1 ²f7 46 h5 e3 47 h6 f3 0-1

Black’s ambitious play in the opening, initiated by 4...f5, was completely
correct. What followed was a one-sided
counter in which White remained
powerless while Black reinforced his
position.

This particular form of the Philidor
Defence worked very well for Black. In
Chapter 1 we will come across a similar
possibility involving ...f5 which is still
quite virulent but certainly less sound.

The Philidor Defence enables Black
to ‘save energy’ by playing his initial
moves almost automatically, whereas
White can more easily go wrong. In
deed, his space advantage and the ap-
parent slowness of Black’s counterplay
may lull White into a false sense of
security. Even though the Philidor leads
to quieter positions than most other
openings, notably the Sicilian, this
doesn’t mean that White can be content
with routine moves. To gain an advan-
tage, he must take a certain amount of
risk. Then the position becomes more
lively and the Philidor can become
quite bloodthirsty!

These arguments, along with the
avoidance of long theoretical lines, en-
couraged me to employ this opening.
Along with numerous other players,
initially I wrongly considered the
Philidor to be passive, but then I used
it against very strong grandmasters
(for example, versus Onischuk and
Leko) and obtained dynamic and very
playable games. True, I lost those two
games in question, but this is quite a
common phenomenon when the oppo-
nent is stronger! When the opposite is
ture, one can avoid a ‘recital of theory’
from one’s opponent, and postpone the
battle from the opening into the mid-
dlegame.

I hope you enjoy reading the book
and have lots of success with your new
weapon!

Christian Bauer
Montpellier, France
December 2006
Chapter One

Early Deviations

Third Move Alternatives for White

The subject of this section is the possible White divergences at move 3. As we will see, only 3 \( \text{c4} \) presents any real interest.

\[ 1 \text{e4 e5} \ 2 \text{\textsf{f3}} \ d6 \ 3 \text{\textsf{c4}} \]

3 \( \text{\textsf{c4}} \) leads to positions similar to the ones arising from the Bishop’s Opening (1 e4 e5 2 \( \text{\textsf{c4}} \)) or the Italian Game (1 e4 e5 2 \( \text{\textsf{f3}} \ \text{\textsf{c6}} \ 3 \text{\textsf{c4}} \)). The main point is to avoid 3 d4 exd4. Its drawback is that it hardly causes Black any opening problems, and that the second player has a wide range of playable set-ups.

Moves other than 3 \( \text{\textsf{c4}} \) and 3 d4 are legal, but all inferior. Indeed, basic chess principles tell us to occupy (or control) the centre. These very same principles also advise quick development. 3 \( \text{\textsf{c3}} \) obeys these two notions, but White can’t delay the d4-push for long. 3 c4?! would already be faulty in my opinion, as 3...f5 gives Black an excellent version of the Latvian Gambit (imagine White answering 1 e4 e5 2 \( \text{\textsf{f3}} \ f5 \) with 3 \( \text{\textsf{c4}} \)). 3...c5 would also be adequate, because Black prevents d2-d4 while keeping the option of ...f5. As for 3 c3, with the idea of building up a pawn centre after 4 d4, it’s a very optimistic move! White’s plan is indeed idealistic because of 3...\( \text{\textsf{f6}} \), and, once again, the more ‘Philidorian’ ...f5.

3...\( \text{\textsf{e7}} \)

This sometimes transposes into the variation 1 e4 e5 2 \( \text{\textsf{f3}} \ d6 \ 3 \text{d4 exd4} \) 4
\[ \text{\ldots} \text{xd}4 \text{\ldots} \text{f}6 \text{\ldots} \text{c}3 \text{\ldots} \text{e}7, \text{otherwise the position is similar to those that result from 3...\text{\ldots}g4.} \]

Alternatively:

a) 3...\text{\ldots}e6?! 4 \text{\ldots}xe6 fxe6 5 d4 exd4 6 \text{\ldots}xd4 and White has the easier game, as he can try to implement the simple plan of f4-f5.

b) 3...\text{\ldots}g4?! is a perfectly valid alternative. Play traditionally continues 4 d3 \text{\ldots}f6 5 0-0 \text{\ldots}bd7 6 \text{\ldots}bd2 \text{\ldots}e7 7 \text{\ldots}e1 c6 8 c3 0-0, which was equal in Howell-Barua, British Championship 1983. The attempt at refutation with 4 c3?! \text{\ldots}c6 (4...c6 is also good) 5 \text{\ldots}b3?! clearly backfires: 5...\text{\ldots}d7 6 \text{\ldots}xf7+? (or 6 \text{\ldots}g5 \text{\ldots}d8 and everything is under control – and the invader on g5 will soon be repelled by ...h6) 6...\text{\ldots}xh7 7 \text{\ldots}xh7 \text{\ldots}d7 8 \text{\ldots}xa8 \text{\ldots}xf3 9 \text{\ldots}xf3 \text{\ldots}xh3 10 \text{\ldots}f1 \text{\ldots}xe4+ 11 \text{\ldots}d1 \text{\ldots}f3+ 12 \text{\ldots}e1. Black already has a draw in the hand, but by continuing with 12...e4 (or 12...\text{\ldots}f6) he retains a strong initiative.

c) 3...\text{\ldots}f5?! 4 d4 transposes into 3 d4 f5 4 \text{\ldots}c4, which is treated later on.

d) 3...\text{\ldots}f6?! 4 \text{\ldots}g5 d5 5 exd5 h6 (5...\text{\ldots}xd5? 6 \text{\ldots}xf3 \text{\ldots}xg5 7 \text{\ldots}xd5 and the double hit on f7 and b7 costs Black a pawn) 6 \text{\ldots}f3 e4 7 \text{\ldots}e2 \text{\ldots}e7 8 \text{\ldots}e5 and White hangs on to his ‘loot’.

e) 3...\text{\ldots}c6?! returns to an inferior line of the Italian Game (1 e4 e5 2 \text{\ldots}f3 \text{\ldots}c6 3 \text{\ldots}c4 d6) and is therefore outside the scope of this book.

4 0-0 \text{\ldots}f6 5 \text{\ldots}e1

5 d3 doesn’t promise more.

5...0-0 6 c3 \text{\ldots}bd7 7 d4 c6

The presence of a pawn on c3 rather than a knight gives the position a more quiet character. As a consequence Black has more latitude to manoeuvre and has no real worries.

Third Move Alternatives for Black

1 e4 e5 2 \text{\ldots}f3 d6 3 d4

We will now examine variations arising after 1 e4 e5 2 \text{\ldots}f3 d6 3 d4. This move order was for quite a while the only one used in order to reach the basic position of the Philidor Defence, commonly named the Philidor Hanham (see Part 3 of the book). Nowadays, however, lines of this chapter are considered to be of secondary importance. Indeed, White can profit from his opponent’s move order and favourably avoid the position from Part 3. By so doing, White usually gains a risk-free advantage, like in the variation 1 e4 e5 2 \text{\ldots}f3 d6 3 d4 \text{\ldots}f6 4 dxe5, or he is drawn into favourable complications, as after 1 e4 e5 2 \text{\ldots}f3 d6 3 d4 f5. The only other option for Black is releasing the central tension by 3...exd4, which is not to everyone’s taste.

That said, even quiet lines require accuracy to maintain (and increase) the
white advantage, while the cluster of tactical variations are full of hidden traps.

We will look at:

A: 3...Qc6?!
B: 3...Qg4?!
C: 3...We7?!
D: 3...Qd7?!
E: 3...f5?!
F: 3...Qf6

A) 1 e4 e5 2 Qf3 d6 3 d4 Qc6?!

This is a Scotch Game where Black would have contented himself with the too passive 3...d6. If there is no direct refutation to be found, 3...Qc6 is essentially condemnable because it gives White a pleasant choice between:

a) 4 Qb5 which transposes into the Steinitz Variation of the Ruy Lopez, reputedly solid but rather passive; this seems to be the 'normal' choice for 1 e4 players.

b) In the event of 4 d5 Qce7 5 c4 g6 6 Qc3 Qg7 7 Qe2 Qf6 8 0-0 0-0 play would reach a classical position from the King's Indian. However, it seems to me that White can more easily deviate (after 5 c4 g6) than his opponent.

c) 4 dxe5 Qxe5 (4...dxe5?! 5 Wxd8+ Qxd8 6 Qb5, with the idea of spoiling the black pawn structure by means of Qxc6, confers White a pleasant edge) 5 Qe2 (5 Qxe5 dxe5 6 Wxd8+ Qxd8 would be less annoying now that the c-pawn has recovered its freedom. In this eventuality White's advantage, if it exists, would be the tiniest. 5 Qc3 will transpose to 5 Qe2) 5...Qf6 6 Qc3 with a slight plus for White thanks to his spatial advantage.

To conclude, 3...Qc6 is playable, but it concedes an edge without fighting.

B) 1 e4 e5 2 Qf3 d6 3 d4 Qg4?!

4 dxe5 Qd7

4...Qxf3?! cedes the pair of bishops for nothing, and after 5 Wxf3 dxe5 6 Qc4 Black has several continuations at his disposal, but none of them is particularly attractive:

a) 6...Qd7 (the queen will have to move again when a white rook appears on d1) 7 0-0 Qf6 8 Qg5! and there is no satisfactory answer to the threat of 9
1 e4 e5 2 Qf3 d6 – Early Deviations

\[ \text{x} f6, \text{as } 8...\text{g}4 \text{ and } 8...\text{e}7 \text{ both fail to } 9 \text{b}3! . \]

b) 6...Qf6? 7 wb3.

c) 6...Wb6 7 Wb3 b6 8 Qc3 c6 9 Qg5! Wg6 (taking the bishop would of course have run into 10 xf7+ d8 11 d1+ and 12 xg8) 10 d1.

Nearly all of White’s forces are out and he is about to score the point: 10...Qf6 11 xf6 gxf6; or 11...xf6 and now both 12 d3 and 12 d5! give White a clear plus.

7...c5 doesn’t improve Black’s situation: 8 0-0 b6 (or 8...b6 9 a4 a5 10 c3 e7 11 e3 0-0 12 ad1 and Black finds it difficult to move without losing material! The second player also has to reckon with 8 Wxb7 Wxf2+ 9 d1, when it is unclear whether Black has enough play for the sacrificed rook) 9 d3 c6 (9...e7?! 10 b5!) 10 e3 with a clear advantage.

4...Qc6 provides Black with extra possibilities in case his opponent reacts in the same manner as against 4...Qd7, but has got its own drawbacks. 5 exd6 xd6 6 b5! (the correct idea, as 6 c3 We7 7 e2? [7 b5!] 7...0-0-0 is fully satisfactorily for Black) 6...Qge7 7 e3 a6 8 e2 and Black no longer has any compensation for the pawn, Kramnik-Molignier, Lyon (simul) 2001.

In comparison with 4...xf3, the knight move at least gives Black practical chances. The compensation for the pawn isn’t sufficient, but play takes on a double-edged character.

5 exd6

5 e2 sets a small trap: 5...dxe5?! 6 Qxe5 and White snatches a pawn. However, after 5...xf3 6 xf3 Qxe5 (or 6...dxe5) he has to be satisfied with the two bishops.

5...xd6 6 Qc3

6 e2 Qg6 7 Qc3 is a more common move order, but it makes no difference. If Black speeds up long castling by playing 6...We7 7 Qc3 0-0-0, then the very same 8 Qd4 of the main line also yields White a clear edge.

6...Qg6 7 e2 We7 8 Qd4!

Thanks to this move White enjoys a nice advantage.

8 Qg5 h6! (after 8...0-0-0?! 9 Qd4 White has kept his extra pawn under favourable circumstances and his ad-
vantage is quite evident) 9 \( \text{h}4 \) g5 10 \( \text{h}g3 \) and now 10...\( \text{x}g3 \) 11 \( \text{hxg3} \) 0-0-0 isn’t bad for Black. In return for the sacrificed pawn he enjoys a lead in development and direct threats, such as ...\( \text{x}e4 \) and ...\( \text{d}c5 \). After the plausible 12 \( \text{d}d2 \), 12...\( \text{e}6 \) would follow, when the white pieces aren’t too well coordinated.

8...\( \text{x}e2 \)

8...\( \text{x}e4 \)? 9 \( \text{x}e4 \) \( \text{w}xe4 \) 10 f3 is the tactical point that justifies White’s 8th move. Things aren’t as simple as they look, but after 10...\( \text{w}e7 \) 11 fxg4 \( \text{w}h4+ \) 12 \( \text{f}1 \) too few black pieces can join the assault against the white king, so the extra piece should tell.

9 \( \text{w}xe2 \)

...with a healthy extra pawn that White can support with f3, if needed. White can choose where to hide his king, depending on where the danger comes. Finally, Black has to deal with the immediate threat of the knight-jump to f5.

C) 1 e4 e5 2 \( \text{f}3 \) d6 3 d4 \( \text{w}e7 \)?

This move presents similarities to the line 1 e4 e5 2 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 3 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 4 d3 h6 of the Italian Game. Indeed, in this variation Black’s set-up usually consists of ...d6, ...\( \text{w}e7 \), ...g6, ...\( \text{g}7 \), ...0-0 and so on. In our position White has managed the push d2-d4 in one go, but the possibility to play ...c7-c6 is a trump for Black.

This way of protecting the e-pawn is rather constraining for Black: it more or less implies that the dark-squared bishop will be fianchettoed. Black should also refrain from the swap ...exd4 in many cases, as then the queen could prove to be misplaced.

4 \( \text{d}c3 \)

4 \( \text{c}4 \)? is an alternative of a similar strength. White retains the possibility of a c3, \( \text{bd}2 \) development, while he is ready to counter 4...c6 with the customary 5 a4.

4...c6

5 \( \text{g}5 \)

The beginning of a bad plan, even if the move by itself is not to blame. Alternatively:

a) 5 \( \text{c}4 \)?! b5 6 \( \text{b}3 \) h6 (or 6...\( \text{g}4 \)) when pushing the b-pawn ‘with tempo’ (contrary to the line 5 \( \text{e}2 \) b5?!)
has given Black extra possibilities.

b) 5 a4 deserves attention. The idea is to develop the light-squared bishop on its best square, c4. The drawback of such a move is that a subsequent ...\(\text{g4}\) will put indirect pressure on the d4 spot, inducing White to play the unfavourable swap \(\text{dxe5}\).

c) 5 \(\text{\&e2}\) and now:

\(c1\) With 5...b5?! Black is neither exerting any pressure on the e4-pawn, nor is he threatening ...b4. As a consequence this move is erroneous here. White could just ignore it, by 6 0-0 and \(\text{\&e1}\), but he has a stronger continuation at his disposal: 6 a4 b4 7 \(\text{\&b1}\) and the knight will bounce back on the first-class c4-square.

\(c2\) 5...\(\text{\&f6}\) 6 \(\text{\&d2}\) \(\text{\&g4}\) 7 \(\text{\&e2}\) \(\text{\&bd7}\) 8 0-0-0?

8 h3 with a roughly equal game would have avoided the debacle that comes next.

8...h6 9 \(\text{\&h4}\) g5 10 \(\text{\&g3}\) \(\text{\&xf3}\) 11 \(\text{\&xf3}\)??

After 11 gxf3 White doesn’t lose a piece, but the g3-bishop could well be entombed for a while.

11...h5 12 h3 \(\text{\&h6}\) 13 \(\text{\&b1}\) g4

...was Galdunts-Guseinov, Azov 1991. Why this game here? Because taken one by one White’s moves seem natural to me. The other reason is that I also fell for this trap (at around the
same period, if my memory serves me) in a blitz game versus Jacques Elbilia!

D) 1 e4 e5 2 d3 d6 3 d4 \(\text{Q}d7\)!!

3...\(\text{Q}d7\) allows White to delay \(\text{Q}b1-c3\) in favour of stronger possibilities.

4 c4

4 c4?? would most likely transpose into an ‘Indian’ Defence. After the moves 4...\(\text{Q}g6\) 5 \(\text{Q}c3\) g6 6 \(\text{Q}e2\) \(\text{Q}g7\) 7 0-0 0-0 we have a King’s Indian, while 5...c6 6 \(\text{Q}e2\) \(\text{Q}e7\) 7 0-0 0-0 leads to the Old Indian Defence.

If 4 \(\text{Q}c3\) \(\text{Q}g6\) we are back to Part 3, whereas 4 c3?? and 4 dxe5?? both let the advantage slip. The former is too quiet, while the latter releases the central tension too early. As a consequence the f8-bishop is free to land on c5 or b4.

4...c6

There are many alternatives here:

a) 4...\(\text{Q}g6\)? 5 \(\text{Q}g5\)! forces ...d5 and thus wins a pawn.

b) Equally faulty would be 4...\(\text{Q}e7\)? 5 dxe5! \(\text{Q}xe5\) (5...dxe5?? 6 \(\text{W}d5\) is even worse as f7 can’t be efficiently protected) 6 \(\text{Q}xe5\) dxe5 7 \(\text{W}h5\) and the simultaneous attack of f7 and e5 picks up a pawn.

c) After 4...\(\text{W}e7\)?? Black has a worse version of 3...\(\text{W}e7\) since he has deprived himself of the possibility of ...\(\text{Q}g4\).

d) 4...h6? is a radical way of preventing the intrusion of the white knight at g5. Unfortunately for Black, this little pawn move seriously weakens the g6-square and calls for a brutal refutation. Besides, if White calmly continues developing, ...h6 doesn’t always fit Black’s plans. 5 dxe5 dxe5 6 \(\text{Q}xf7+!\) \(\text{Q}xf7\) 7 \(\text{Q}xe5+\) \(\text{W}h6\) (7...\(\text{Q}e8\)?? 8 \(\text{W}h5+\), or 7...\(\text{Q}e7\)?? 8 \(\text{Q}g6+\) \(\text{W}f6\) 9 \(\text{W}f3+\) would give White even fewer chances to go wrong) 8 \(\text{Q}c3!\)

8...\(\text{Q}xe5\)?? 9 \(\text{W}d5+\) \(\text{W}f6\) 10 \(\text{W}f5+\) \(\text{Q}e7\) 11 \(\text{Q}d5+\) \(\text{Q}d6\) 12 \(\text{Q}f4+\) \(\text{Q}c6\) 13 \(\text{W}e6+\) \(\text{Q}d6\) 14 \(\text{Q}b4+\) \(\text{Q}b5\) 15 a4+ \(\text{Q}a5\) 16 \(\text{W}c4\) and it’s mate in six – you can check it!

A little help: on 16...c6, White continues 17 \(\text{Q}d5!\).

e) 4...\(\text{Q}b6\)?? Even if not really bad, this move can’t be recommended. Black repels the enemy bishop, but by doing so he misplaces his own knight. 5 \(\text{Q}b3\) exd4 6 \(\text{W}xd4\) (6 \(\text{Q}xd4??\) c5 and 7...c4 is
the trap White must avoid). After 6 \textsf{\textbf{W}}xd4 her majesty is well posted, as she can't be efficiently removed. White enjoys more space and thus a lasting edge.

f) 4...\textit{exd4?!} 5 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}xd4 (5 \textsf{\textbf{W}}xd4 deserves the attention too, and also gives White the upper hand. In this case White can consider a plan involving long castling and a quick e5 if possible) 5...\textsf{\textbf{Q}}gf6 (or 5...\textsf{\textbf{Q}}b6 6 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}e2 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}f6 7 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}c3 when the knight on b6 again stands badly and White has a spatial plus) 6 0-0 \textsf{\textbf{g}}6 7 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}c3 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}g7 8 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}e1. White has more space, but his opponent's position is quite solid.

g) 4...\textit{g6 is provocative:}

g1) 5 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}g5?! \textsf{\textbf{Q}}h6 6 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}xf7+ \textsf{\textbf{Q}}xf7 7 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}e6 \textsf{\textbf{W}}h4 and the counter-attack on e4 makes the position messy.

8 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}xc7+ \textsf{\textbf{Q}}d8 9 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}xa8 \textsf{\textbf{W}}xe4+ 10 \textsf{\textbf{W}}e2 with chances for both sides, or 8 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}c3 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}b8 9 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}xc7+ \textsf{\textbf{Q}}d8 when White has some compensation for the piece, with two pawns and the initiative, but not more.

g2) 5 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}c3 is a quiet continuation that yields White a slight plus: 5...\textit{h6} 6 \textsf{\textbf{d}}xe5 \textsf{\textbf{d}}xe5 7 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}e3 (7 \textsf{\textbf{W}}d5 \textsf{\textbf{W}}e7 8 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}b5? c6 and White simply loses a piece) when the pawn on h6 renders ...0-0 problematic; for instance 7...\textsf{\textbf{Q}}gf6 8 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}h3 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}g7 9 \textsf{\textbf{W}}d2.

5...\textsf{\textbf{Q}}g7? is rudely refuted: 6 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}xf7+! \textsf{\textbf{W}}xf7 7 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}g5+ \textsf{\textbf{Q}}e8 8 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}e6 \textsf{\textbf{W}}e7 (8...\textsf{\textbf{W}}h4 9 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}g5 is even worse) 9 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}xc7+ \textsf{\textbf{Q}}d8 10 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}d5 \textsf{\textbf{W}}f7 (here, too, 10...\textsf{\textbf{W}}h4?! 11 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}g5+ \textsf{\textbf{W}}xg5 12 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}e6+ loses more material) 11 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}xa8 with a decisive material superiority.

5 0-0!

Or:

a) 5 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}g5?! is objectively not as good as 5 0-0, but a lot more efficient in practice! Rather than a pleasant endgame, White is looking for a direct KO: 5...\textsf{\textbf{Q}}h6 6 a4 (preventing the threat of ...b5 while in the same time setting a trap...) and now:

a1) 6...\textsf{\textbf{Q}}e7? 7 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}xf7+!!

Showing the venom in White's previous move; the a-pawn will play a key role in the following sequence, enabling White to trap the enemy queen: 7...\textsf{\textbf{Q}}xf7 8 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}e6 \textsf{\textbf{W}}a5+ (8...\textsf{\textbf{W}}b6 9 a5 \textsf{\textbf{B}}b4+ 10 c3 \textsf{\textbf{W}}c4 11 \textsf{\textbf{Q}}c7+ \textsf{\textbf{Q}}d8 12 b3 also traps the queen and gives a decisive advan-
tag  e) 9 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{d}}}}2 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{w}}}}b6 10 a5 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{w}}}}xb2 11 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{c}}}}3 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{x}}}}xa1 12 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{x}}}}xa1 and White is winning.

a2) 6...exd4! is the correct reaction. After 7 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{x}}}}xd4 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{e}}}}5 one may note a certain analogy with my game against Vaissier (see Chapter 9, Line A), though circumstances here are less bright for Black, because the e5-knight is not untouchable in the centre.

After 8 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{a}}}}2 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{e}}}}7 9 f4, taking on e5 may not be a threat, as g5 is also hanging. So Black can choose between 9...0-0 and 9...\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{d}}}}e4 with a perfectly playable game: for example, 9...\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{d}}}}e4 10 h3 (10 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{w}}}}xg7?? \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{f}}}}6 11 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{x}}}}f7+ \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{e}}}}7 winning the queen) 10...\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{f}}}}6 with ...d5 coming soon and an unclear position.

a3) 6...\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{f}}}}6 is interesting, too, but probably less sound, as the queen is exposed to the opening of the f-file: 7 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{c}}}}3 (White naturally wishes to maintain a pawn on d4) 7...\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{e}}}}7 8 0-0 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{b}}}}6 (a useful move; the bishop's diagonal isn't shut anymore, and that can be of considerable importance in some cases) 9 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{a}}}}2 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{g}}}}6 with mutual chances in the game Leonhardt-Nimzowitsch, Hamburg (match) 1911. White can by now follow up with either of the moves 10 a5 or 10 f4.

b) 5 dxe5?! dxe5 (5...\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{d}}}}xe5?? 6 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{d}}}}xe5 dxe5 7 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{x}}}}xf7+ wins a pawn while depriving Black of his castling rights) 6 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{g}}}}5 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{b}}}}6 suits Black more than the immediate 5 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{g}}}}5, because the \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{b}}}}-bishop has a broader horizon: 7 0-0 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{c}}}}5 is equal; not 7 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{x}}}}f7+?? \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{x}}}}f7 8 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{e}}}}6 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{b}}}}6 and the extra piece will decide the game.

c) 5 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{c}}}}3?! comes to roughly the same thing as 5 0-0, with some nuances that seem to be in Black's favour. Indeed, if White keeps the option of castling both sides, his knight may prove to be misplaced in some lines: 5...\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{e}}}}7 (5...b5?! 6 \textit{\textit{\textit{b}}})3 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{e}}}}7? 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{x}}}}xb5! and the knight is taboo due to the reply 9 \textit{\textit{\textit{d}}})5, so White has snatched a pawn for nothing. Jarreton-Loukili, Massy 1993) 6 dxe5 dxe5 7 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{g}}}}5 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{x}}}}xg5 8 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{d}}}}5

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess-board.png}
\end{center}

8...\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{w}}}}7 (the best; 8...g6 and 8...\textit{\textit{\textit{f}}})6 give terrible endings with no prospects of counterplay, cf. 5 0-0) 9 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{w}}}}xg5 (9 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{x}}}}xg5?! \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{g}}}}f6 10 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{h}}}}4 [or 10 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{e}}}}2 b5 11 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{d}}}}3 0-0, which is equal] 10...b5! 11


\[ \text{\textbf{d}3?!} \text{ if } 11 \text{\textbf{e}2} \text{ \textbf{d}5 followed by } 12...\text{b}4 \text{ or } 12...\text{\textbf{e}6-d4} \] 11...\text{\textbf{d}5 [threaten-} 

\[ \text{\textbf{e}4} \text{ and } ...\text{\textbf{x}e}4] \] 12 f3 a5 13 a4 \[ b4 14 \text{\textbf{d}b1} \text{\textbf{d}b3 15 cxb3 } \text{\textbf{a}6 and Black} \] 

\[ \text{even enjoyed some initiative in the} \] 

\[ \text{game Magem Badals-Strikovic, Zaragoza} \] 

\[ 1994) 9...\text{\textbf{x}xg5 10 } \text{\textbf{x}xg5 with a small} \] 

\[ \text{edge to White, though his knight} \] 

\[ \text{would be better on } d2, \text{aiming at } c4 \] 

\[ \text{and } d6. \] 

\[ \text{Instead of } 7...\text{\textbf{x}xg5, } 7...\text{\textbf{h}6?!} \text{ is} \] 

\[ \text{playable this time. The reason is that} \] 

\[ \text{White would need to open the f-file in} \] 

\[ \text{some variations, in order to checkmate.} \] 

\[ \text{With his rook still stuck on its initial} \] 

\[ \text{square, however, the assault is not} \] 

\[ \text{decisive. Play might continue } 8 \text{\textbf{e}6 fxe6} \] 

\[ 9 \text{\textbf{x}xh6 } \text{\textbf{d}b6 10 } \text{\textbf{h}5+} \] 

\[ \text{\textbf{d}6 19 } \text{\textbf{d}3+ } \text{\textbf{d}5 and the position is} \] 

\[ \text{unclear; Black's king doesn't feel too} \] 

\[ \text{bad on } d6, \text{while the pair of bishops} \] 

\[ \text{is important.} \] 

\[ 12...\text{\textbf{w}c7?!} \text{ is suspicious but may be} \] 

\[ \text{playable. The conclusion of Van der} \] 

\[ \text{Wiel-Van Maarten, Rotterdam 1977,} \] 

\[ \text{was quite fantastic: 13 } \text{\textbf{x}xh6+ } \text{\textbf{g}8 14} \] 

\[ \text{\textbf{d}3 } \text{\textbf{f}8 15 } \text{\textbf{g}3+ } \text{\textbf{g}7 16 0-0 } \text{\textbf{w}e7} \] 

\[ \text{(Black's pieces are completely unable} \] 

\[ \text{to rescue their monarch; } 16...\text{\textbf{f}8 17} \] 

\[ \text{\textbf{h}4 and then } f4 \text{ would come to the} \] 

\[ \text{same thing) } 17 f4 \] 

\[ 17...\text{\textbf{d}7??} \text{ (17...\text{\textbf{e}4? 18 } \text{\textbf{x}f4} \text{ e5 [pre-} \] 

\[ \text{vents } 19 \text{\textbf{f}g4]} \text{ 19 } \text{\textbf{ff}3 with the double} \] 

\[ \text{threat of } 20 \text{\textbf{x}xg7+ } \text{\textbf{x}xg7 21 } \text{\textbf{g}3 and } 20 \] 

\[ \text{\textbf{d}a4, in order to give a lethal check on} \] 

\[ c4; \text{but } 17...\text{\textbf{d}7? would still be unclear:} \] 

\[ 18 \text{\textbf{f}e5 [18 f5? } \text{\textbf{e}5 19 } \text{\textbf{e}5 } \text{\textbf{f}8} \text{ and} \] 

\[ \text{Black remains a piece up, even if he} \] 

\[ \text{must still take care over } f6 \text{ and } \text{\textbf{e}4]} \] 

\[ 18...\text{\textbf{f}8 19 } \text{\textbf{f}6 and now after } 19...\text{\textbf{e}8!} \] 

\[ 20 \text{\textbf{x}x6 } \text{\textbf{e}5+ 21 } \text{\textbf{h}1 } \text{\textbf{g}6 White has} \] 

\[ \text{three pawns for the piece, but the black} \] 

\[ \text{king is now safely guarded] } 18 f5 \text{\textbf{f}6} \text{ (what else?)} \text{ 19 } \text{\textbf{f}e6!! } \text{\textbf{x}xh6 20 } \text{\textbf{e}7 and} \] 

\[ \text{mate in five thanks to the double threat} \] 

\[ \text{of } e8\text{\textbf{w}+ and } \text{\textbf{c}4+}. \]
d) 5 c3?! doesn’t promise much: 5...\(\text{Qg6}\)! 6 \(\text{Wb3}\) (6 dxe5 \(\text{Qxe4}\) [with the idea ...d5] 7 exd6 \(\text{Qxd6}\) is equal; as is 6 \(\text{Qg5?!}\) d5) 6...\(\text{We7}\) 7 dxe5 \(\text{Qxe5}\) (7...dxe5? is punished by 8 \(\text{Qg5}\), when f7 can’t be defended anymore) 8 \(\text{Qxe5}\) dxe5 was equal in Em.Lasker-Alekhine, Düsseldorf 1908. Black will continue either ...b5, ...\(\text{e6}\) and so on or ...\(\text{wC7}\), ...\(\text{c5}\), depending on what his opponent does.

e) 5 a4?! Black doesn’t threaten ...b5 for the time being. Moreover, the text move deprives White of a key manoeuvre: 5...\(\text{e7}\) 6 dxe5?! dxe5 7 \(\text{Qg5}\) \(\text{Qxg5}\) 8 \(\text{Wf5}\) \(\text{Wa5+}\) followed by 9...\(\text{f6}\) when Black retains his extra piece. The best for White after 5...\(\text{e7}\) is to permit a ‘normal’ Philidor by 6 \(\text{Qc3}\) \(\text{Qgf6}\) 7 0-0 0-0, but in this case he hasn’t gained the maximum benefit from Black’s dubious move order.

5...\(\text{e7}\)

A natural move that, however, fails to solve all problems, but the alternatives fail too:

a) 5...\(\text{h6}\)? neglects development, and logically calls for a tactical refutation.

The insertion of the moves 5 0-0 and ...c6 favours White; it is true that the black king now has the c7-square at his disposal, but the king’s rook coming into play is a major factor: 6 dxe5 dxe5 (6...\(\text{Qxe5}\) 7 \(\text{Qxe5}\) dxe5 8 \(\text{xf7+}\)) 7 \(\text{xf7+}\)! \(\text{xf7}\) 8 \(\text{Qxe5+}\) \(\text{f6}\) 9 \(\text{f3+}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 10 \(\text{f7+}\).!!

Rather than harassing the enemy king with a series of checks, White deprives it of the squares where it could have hidden. This example is all the more instructive, as White’s two next moves also are quite calm. 10...\(\text{Qgf6}\) 11 \(\text{d1}\) \(\text{c5}\) 12 \(\text{d2}\) \(\text{xf2+}\) 13 \(\text{xf2}\) \(\text{Qxe4+}\) 14 \(\text{Qxe4}\) \(\text{f8}\) 15 \(\text{f4+}\) \(\text{xe4}\) 16 \(\text{e1+}\) \(\text{d4}\) 17 \(\text{e3+}\) \(\text{e5}\) 18 \(\text{c5}\) mate, Kr.Georgiev-Pelitov, Pazardzhik 1974.

b) 5...\(\text{Qgf6}\)? 6 dxe5! (on the hurried 6 \(\text{Qg5?!}\) Black has the saving 6...d5) 6...\(\text{Qxe5}\) (6...dxe5 7 \(\text{Qg5}\) and f7 is no longer defensible; 6...\(\text{Qxe4}\) is hardly better: 7 exd6 \(\text{Qb6}\) [after any recapture on d6 the same 8 \(\text{e1}\) is annoying] 8 \(\text{e1}\) with a clear advantage) 7 \(\text{Qxe5}\) dxe5 8 \(\text{xf7+}\) with a clear advantage.

c) 5...\(\text{b5?!}\). A rare case where realizing this push with a gain of tempo is
erroneous. Indeed, Black's priority is to take care of his king's wing, and notably to deal with the threat of \( \text{Qg5} \). Therefore he won't be able to maintain a pawn on b5 without generating weaknesses when a timely a2-a4 comes: 6 \( \text{Ab}3 \text{e}7 \) (on 6...\( \text{Ab}7 \), which aims to meet 7 a4 with 7...a6, the right way to proceed is 7 \( \text{Qg5} \text{h}6 \) 8 c3 and White is visibly better: f4 is imminent, while the h6-knight makes a odd impression) 7 a4! b4 (the least of all evils; allowing axb5 cxb5 would weaken the d5 spot, while ...\( \text{Bxa}4 \) would leave the a-pawn isolated) 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 \( \text{Qg5} \) and play transposes into the main line: 5...\( \text{Be}7 \) 6 dxe5 dxe5 7 \( \text{Qg5} \), except that the black queenside has already been damaged by the preceding moves. This fact should emphasize White's advantage.

d) 5...\( \text{Wc}7 \)!! is an acceptable move which avoids direct refutations based on \( \text{Qg5} \). Indeed, Black could meet this with ...\( \text{Qh}6 \); for example 6 a4 \( \text{Be}7 \) 7 dxe5?! (7 \( \text{Qc}3 \)!! – see Part 3) 7...dxe5 8 \( \text{Qg5} \text{h}6 \) and the pseudo-combination 9 \( \text{Qe}6 \)?? \( \text{fxe}6 \) 10 \( \text{Qh}6 \text{gxh}6 \) 11 \( \text{Wh}5+ \text{Qd}8+ \) doesn't work. The drawback of the queen's move is that it can lead to a worse version of the Philidor Hanham.

6 dxe5!

This good move exploits the poor placement of the enemy pieces.

a) 6 \( \text{Qc}3 \text{Qg}6 \) 7 a4 transposes 'only' into a normal Philidor. The same goes for all of White's sensible alternatives: 6 \( \text{Be}1 \), 6 \( \text{We}2 \) or 6 a4. These moves present no independent interest, since a transposition into the Philidor Hanham (Part 3) is virtually unavoidable. The

move 6 dxe5, on the other hand, guarantees White the pair of bishops, and the enduring advantage that is usually attached to it.

b) 6 c3?! \( \text{Qg}6 \) 7 \( \text{Be}1 \) 0-0, with approximate equality, reaches a position discussed via 3 \( \text{Qc}4 \).

6...dxe5

6...\( \text{Qxe}5 \) 7 \( \text{Qxe}5 \text{dxe}5 \) 8 \( \text{Wh}5 \) wins a pawn for White.

7 \( \text{Qg}5 \text{Qxg}5 \)

7...\( \text{Qh}6 \) loses to 8 \( \text{Qe}6! \text{fxe}6 \) 9 \( \text{Qh}6 \text{gxh}6 \) (or 9...\( \text{Qb}6 \) 10 \( \text{Wh}5+ \text{f}8 \) 11 f4 and Black's final moments are being counted) 10 \( \text{Wh}5+ \text{f}8 \) 11 \( \text{Qxe}6 \) and it's mate next.
8 Wh5 We7

a) 8...g6?! accepts a little weakness. If Black can cope without it, why make such a concession? 9 Wxg5 Wxg5 10 Axc6 is an unpleasant endgame for Black. The assessment of the position oscillates between a slight and a clear edge for White, but in any case a lasting one.

b) 8...Wf6 9 Axc6 Wg6 10 Wh4 Dh6 is a small plus for White. Or there's 10 Wxg6!? hxg6. Having opened the h-file is of course an achievement for Black, but this doesn't bring anything tangible for the moment and the pair of bishops gives White the upper hand.

9 Axc6

Or 9 Wxg5?! Wxg5 10 Axc6 Dh6 (or 10...Ac5 11 f3 Ae6 12 Ae2 Af6 13 Ad2 with an edge, Anand-Ivanchuk, Monaco (rapid) 1996; a surprising choice by the Ukrainian who on this occasion managed to draw) 11 f3 with a small advantage. 11 Ad2?! is inaccurate: 11...h6 12 Ah4 (or 12 Ae3 Dg4) 12...g5 13 Ag3 Dh5.

9...Dh6 10 We2

10 Wh4?!?! is less accurate: for example, 10...h6 (or 10...Df8 11 Dd2 Dg6 12 Wg3 h6 13 Ae3 Dh5 [13...Dg4] 14 Wf3 Dh4 the black knights play an active role; or 10...0-0) 11 Ad2 Ah7 12 Dxf6 is equal; or 12 Ae3 g5 13 Wg3 Df8, while 13...Ah5?! 14 Wf3 Df4 is also worth consideration.

After 10 We2 Black has ceded the two bishops for nothing in return. If he tries to capture one bishop back, by means of 10...h6 11 Ad2 b5 12 Ad3 Ac5 13 b4 Dxd3 14 cxd3 0-0 15 Ac1 Ae7 16 Ae3 (as in Roos-Trevelyan, Cesenatico 2001) the position remains in White's favour. Both sides have backward pawns, at d3 and c6 respectively, but the white bishop is stronger than its counterpart. The white knight, too, has a potentially brighter future than the black one, as it can aim for c5 or a5.

E) 1 e4 e5 2 Df3 d6 3 d4 f5?!

In the following section Black tries to seize the centre with the impulsive 3...f5. This approach constitutes the original idea of the great Philidor, as was seen in the introductory game by the master. This variation suits tacti-
cally-gifted players well but, as practice has shown, remains difficult to handle.

This continuation doesn’t set Black serious problems, even if the ensuing positions remain sharp.

4...exd4

3...f5 appeared for the first time in the encounter Atwood-Brühl, London 1792: 4 dxe5 fxe5 5 Qg5 d5 6 e6 Qh6 7 g3 c6 8 h3 Qa6 9 0-0 Qc7 10 f4 Qc5+ 11 Qg2 0-0 12 f5 Wf6 13 c3 Wh8 14 g4 Qg8 15 Qf4 Qe8 16 Qf7+ Qxf7+ 17 exf7 Qxf7+ 18 Qe5 Qd7 19 g5 Qe7 20 Qf4 Qd6 21 Qc1 Qf8 22 f6 Qxh3+ 23 Qxh3 gxh6 24 gxh6 Wh6+ 25 Qg2 Qxf6 26 Qf4 Qg6+ 27 Qg3 Qf5 28 We1 Qxg3 29 hxg3 Qd6 and White resigned. I thought any comments here would be superfluous. One may just note that Count Brühl learned a great strategic lesson about the importance of the centre from his game against Philidor!

After Black’s third move, his opponent has four sensible continuations:

E1: 4 Qc4
E2: 4 dxe5
E3: 4 exf5
E4: 4 Qc3!

E1) 1 e4 e5 2 Qf3 d6 3 d4 f5 4 Qc4

Or:

a) 4 fxe4? is a mistake because of 5 Qxe5! d5 (5...dxe5 is even worse: 6 Wh5+ Qd7 7 Wf5+ Qc6 8 Wxe5 and White’s attack outweighs the sacrificed piece) 6 Wh5+ g6 7 Qxg6 Qf6 8 We5+ Qe7 9 Qxh8 dxc4 10 Qc3 Qc6 11 Wg5 when an extra exchange, combined with the precarious situation of Black’s monarch, makes the position clearly in White’s favour.

b) 4...c6? is also wrong, since after 5 exf5 e4 (5...d5 6 Qxe5! and the bishop is immune because of the devastating Wh5+: 6...Qxf5 7 Qd3 with a safe extra pawn) 6 Qg5, the double threat of 7 Qf7 and 7 Wh5+ causes Black a headache.

c) 4 Qf6? 5 dxe5 Qxe4 6 Qd5 We7 is mentioned in Line F, albeit by another move order. (7 0-0 c6 8 exd6 gives White a marked plus.)

d) Black can’t keep the central tension by 4...Qc6? in view of 5 dxe5! and:
d1) 5...\(\text{dxe5}\) 6 \(\text{dxe5}\) \(\text{dxe5}\). White is at a crossroads: should he play for an attack by 7 \(\text{f7+}\) \(\text{e7}\) 8 \(\text{g5+}\) \(\text{f6}\) 9 \(\text{wh5}\), with the idea \(\text{c3}\), \(\text{d1}\) (or 0-0-0 if the move becomes legal) and scalp the enemy king, or choose the more positional approach 7 \(\text{wxd8+}\) \(\text{xd8}\) 8 \(\text{g5+}\) (or 8 \(\text{c3}\) \(\text{xe7}\) 9 \(\text{xe7+}\) \(\text{xe7}\) 10 \(\text{c3}\) - ? In the second case an isolani is likely to appear on e5, which should guarantee a small but stable edge. Myself, I would go for the first line, which is wild and a lot more fun to play.

d2) 5...\(\text{fxe4}\) 6 \(\text{wd5}\) \(\text{wd7}\) (if 6...\(\text{we7}\) 7 \(\text{g5}\) and Black has to play 7...\(\text{wd7}\) anyway) 7 \(\text{we4}\) with an extra pawn and a lead in development for White, which means an already close-to-winning position! (7 e6? \(\text{xe6}\) exploits the fact that the f3-knight is en prise.)

d3) 5...\(\text{dxe5}\) 6 \(\text{xd8+}\) \(\text{xd8}\) (or 6...\(\text{xd8}\)?! 7 \(\text{dxe5}\) \(\text{fxe4}\) 8 \(\text{c3}\) and Black has a weak pawn, is behind in development and has to worry about his king – good luck!) 7 \(\text{c3}\) when White will combine play against the enemy king and the future isolani on e5. If Black decides on closing the f-file by playing 7...\(\text{f4}\), then 8 g3 may embarrass him very quickly. In any case White enjoys a clear plus.

5 \(\text{xd4}\)

A rare guest in practice, but worth consideration. Others:

a) After the inaccurate 5 \(\text{wxd4?!}\) Black is in the driving seat: 5...\(\text{dc6}\) 6 \(\text{wd5}\) (other options aren’t any better: 6 \(\text{b5}\) \(\text{we7}\) followed by ...\(\text{df6}\) or ...\(\text{d7}\); 6 \(\text{e3}\) \(\text{xe4}\) 7 \(\text{xe4+}\) \(\text{we7}\) with the ideas ...\(\text{d5}\) and ...\(\text{f5}\), ...\(\text{wd7}\), ...0-0-0) 6...\(\text{we7}\). In all three cases Black can claim a slight edge as the e4-pawn is a concern for White.

b) 5 \(\text{g5?!}\) \(\text{h6}\) and now:

b1) 6-0-0 \(\text{dc6}\) 7 \(\text{exf5}\) (if 7 \(\text{e1}\) \(\text{f4}\)! – Black must keep the e-file closed at any cost – 8 \(\text{xf4}\) \(\text{w6}\) when the game is unclear: Black is ready for ...\(\text{d7}\) and ...0-0-0 followed by a kingside assault) 7...\(\text{xf5}\) 8 \(\text{e1}\) \(\text{d7}\) 9 \(\text{e6}\) + \(\text{xe6}\) 10 \(\text{cxe6}\) \(\text{wh4}\) with mutual chances.

(see following diagram)

White will collect back the d4-pawn, thus restoring the material bal-
ance. The black king isn’t in danger as it can’t be attacked for the time being.

16 $\text{d2}$ with an initiative for the sacrificed pawn was much better) 12...$\text{e5}$
13 $\text{d3}$ $\text{d4}$ 14 $\text{x}e$ $\text{f}xe$ 15 $\text{f}4$ $\text{g}6$
16 $\text{w}d$ $\text{d}2$ 17 $\text{d}d$ $\text{g}8$ 18 0-0-0 $\text{f}8$
19 $\text{h}3?$ $\text{f}7$ 20 $\text{g}3$ $\text{x}a$ 21 $\text{b}3$ $\text{e}6$
22 $\text{c}3$ $\text{e}6$ 23 $\text{c}7$? $\text{x}b$ 24 $\text{x}b$ 25 $\text{d}3$ and White resigned as 24 $\text{c}x$ $\text{b}3$ would be answered by $\text{h}7$.

b2) 6 $\text{x}h7?$! is met by 6...$\text{g}4$! 7
$\text{xf}8$ $\text{xf}8$.

6 $\text{x}e$ 4 6 $\text{d}c$ 3

6 $\text{wh}5+$ $\text{g}6$ 7 $\text{w}d$ 5 $\text{we}$ 7 8 $\text{g}5$ $\text{d}f$ 6 9
$\text{x}f6$ $\text{xf}$ 6 is okay for Black because the queens won’t stay on the board much longer: 10 $\text{xe}$ 4+ (10 $\text{d}c$ 6 $\text{e}4$ 11 $\text{xe}$ 4+ $\text{f}7$ would come to nearly the same) 10...$\text{w}7$ is equal.

6...$\text{xf}6$ 7 $\text{we}$ 2!

7 $\text{g}5$! c6 8 $\text{xe}$ 4 $\text{a}5+$ 9 $\text{w}d$ 2 (forced, since 9 $\text{d}2$?? $\text{e}5+$ loses a piece) 9...$\text{x}d$ 2+ 10 $\text{xd}$ 2 $\text{d}5$ and Black has nothing to fear.

7...c6 8 $\text{xe}$ 4 $\text{xe}$ 4 9 $\text{xe}$ 4+ $\text{w}7$ 10
$\text{xe}$ 7+ $\text{xe}$ 7 11 0-0 $\text{d}5$ 12 $\text{xe}$ 1 $\text{f}7$
12...$\text{d}x$ 4? 13 $\text{g}5$ 0-0 14 $\text{xe}$ 7 with a nice advantage for White.

13 $\text{d}3$

This position is unclear, as Black’s inactive pieces will soon join the battle (...$\text{d}c$ 6, ...$\text{w}h$ 4 etc). Having lost the right to castle isn’t a tragedy here. Indeed, White will certainly not castle short, and may not find time to hide his king on the other wing. The game Sorokin-Maljutin, USSR Championship 1991, finished abruptly: 8 $\text{xd}$ 4 $\text{c}6$ 9
$\text{w}d$ 5 $\text{w}e$ 8 10 $\text{c}3$ $\text{d}f$ 6 11 $\text{w}d$ 1 $\text{xe}$ 4 12
$\text{e}2$? (12 0-0 $\text{xc}$ 3 13 $\text{xc}$ 3 $\text{w}e$ 5 14 $\text{h}$ 3
$\text{wx}$ 3 15 $\text{xd}$ 5 $\text{d}8$ [or 15...$\text{w}f$ 6 16 $\text{g}5$!]

$\text{d}5$ is coming, which means that Black may have to concede the two bishops.
E2) 1 e4 e5 2 ๑f3 d6 3 d4 f5 4 dxe5

Ceding the centre in return for tactical motives: the e-pawn will be a nuisance in Black’s camp.

4...fxe4 5 ๑g5 d5 6 e6 ๑f6!

Or:

a) 6...๑c5?! 7 ๑c3 (apparently better than 7 ๑xe4 dxe4 8 ๑h5+ g6 9 ๑xc5 ๑xe6 with an edge as Black has no good developing move at his disposal; or 7 ๑f7? ๑f6 8 ๑e3 [if 8 ๑d2? ๑xe6 9 ๑xh8 ๑h6 with an initiative comparable to the one Black gets in certain lines of the Latvian Gambit] 8...d4 with unfathomable complications) 7...๑f6 (7...c6? 8 ๑f7! – one more white piece is developed and the picture is radically different! – 8...๑f6 9 ๑e3 d4 10 ๑h5 dxe3 11 ๑d6+ ๑d8 12 ๑e8+ wins) 8 ๑gxe4 dxe4 9 ๑h5+

...and now the struggle lasted 18 more moves in the game Wells-Henris, Antwerp 1995: 11...๑g7 (an improvement over 11...๑d6? 12 ๑d1! ๑xe6 13 ๑c4! and White won in Steinitz-Rainer, New York 1885; some people complain because they have to wait for several years to show their novelty...) 12 e7 ๑d5 (12...๑d7?! runs into the nasty 13 ๑f4 with the threat of ๑d1-d8+, when Black is probably forced to play 13...๑g4, giving back a piece as in the game) 13 ๑xd5 ๑xc3+ (once again the best try; 13...cxd5? 14 ๑xd5 and it is

and here White’s advantage is significant.

b) 6...๑b4+ is rather better than 6...๑c5 since it forces White to content himself with 7 c3 ๑c5 8 ๑xe4 dxe4 9 ๑h5+ g6 10 ๑xc5 ๑xe6 with a risk-free and lasting edge due to the pair of bishops and the weak e4-pawn.

26
difficult to come up with something clever against $\text{Cc7}+$ and $\text{Cxe6}$ followed by $\text{Df6+}$) 14 $\text{bxc3 cxd5}$ 15 $\text{Cxe6 Cxe7}$ (the public enemy number one has vanished but the ensuing ending remains pleasant for White) 16 0-0-0 $\text{Cxe6}$ 17 c4 $\text{dxh4}$ 18 $\text{Dd4 Cc8}$ 19 $\text{Cxe4 Cc5}$? (19...$\text{Dd7}$! 20 $\text{Cg5+}$ $\text{f7}$ 21 $\text{Ce2}$ $\text{Cc5}$ gave better chances to survive) 20 $\text{Cxe3}$ $\text{Cc6}$ 21 $\text{Cg5+}$ $\text{f7}$ 22 $\text{Ce2}$ $\text{Da6}$ 23 $\text{f3}$ $\text{Dg7}$ 24 $\text{Cxe1}$ $\text{Ce8}$ 25 $\text{Dh4}$ $\text{Cc7}$ 26 $\text{Cxe6+}$ $\text{Cxe8}$ 27 $\text{Dd5}$ $\text{f7}$ 28 $\text{Cxe8+}$ $\text{Cxe8}$ 29 $\text{Df4}$ and Black resigned.

7 $\text{Df7 We7}$ 8 $\text{Cxe8 Cxe6}$

Black has a lead in development and a strong centre in exchange for his material deficit. This line hasn’t been tested much in practice and needs further investigations. The game Novak-Janousek, Czech League 1995, continued...

9 $\text{Cc3 Dc6}$ 10 $\text{Cxb5 Cb7?!}$ 11 $\text{Cf4 0-0-0}$ 12 $\text{Dd2 g6}$ 13 $\text{Db3}$

...and bit by bit Black’s compensation for the exchange disappeared. 10...0-0-0, 10...$\text{Dg4}$ and 10...$\text{Cxc5}$ are three possible improvements on Black’s play.

E3) 1 $\text{e4 e5}$ 2 $\text{Df3 d6}$ 3 $\text{d4}$ 4 $\text{exf5}$

Together with 4 $\text{Cc4}$, this move could well justify Black’s risky strategy. It seems, however, that the edge remains White’s.

4...$\text{e4}$ 5 $\text{Dg5}$

Other continuations aren’t dangerous for Black:

a) 5 $\text{Dfd2}$ $\text{xf5}$ 6 $\text{Dc4}$ $\text{Cf6}$ 7 $\text{De3}$ $\text{g6}$ is no problem for Black.

b) 5 $\text{We2}$ (targeting e4 and also b5 in some cases) 5...$\text{We7}$ (5...$\text{d5?!}$ 6 $\text{De5!}$) 6 $\text{Dg5}$ $\text{Df6}$ (6...$\text{xf5?}$ 7 $\text{Wb5+}$) 7 $\text{Dc3}$ d5 8 $\text{De6}$ $\text{xe6}$ 9 $\text{f xe6}$ $\text{We6}$ 10 $\text{Wb5+}$ $\text{Cc6}$ was equal in A.Ivanov-Belokoskov, Russia 2001. 7...$\text{Dc6?!}$ is more dynamic but also less sound: 8 d5 $\text{Dd4}$ 9 $\text{Wd1}$ $\text{xf5}$ 10 $\text{Cxb5}$ $\text{d8}$ (10...$\text{Dd7?!}$ allows the g5-knight to penetrate e6) 11 0-0 a6 12 $\text{Cxe5}$!! profits from the poor position of Black’s royal couple: 12...$\text{exe3}$ 13 $\text{Ce1}$ $\text{dx e2}$ 14 $\text{Wd2}$ with a clear advantage, Vujovic-Destrebecq, La Grande-Motte 1981.

5...$\text{xf5}$

Black has seized the centre. The evaluation of this position depends on White’s capacity to undermine the cen-
tre with f3. If White succeeds in favourable circumstances, he will stand better, otherwise his opponent will equalize.

Instead: 5...d6 6 f3 e7 (6...xf5 7 fxe4 cxe4 8 cxe4 9 c3 is better for White too) 7 c2 exf3? 8 xf3 xf5 9 0-0 d7 10 d5 e7 11 d4 g4 and here two games deviate:

a) 12 xf6 xe2 13 xe2 gxf6 14 h5+ d8 15 e6+ c8 with great play for the invested exchange in Vitolinsh-Arkhipkin, USSR 1975.

b) 12 c4 xe2 13 xe2 0-0 14 c3 with a clear edge to White due to the imminent invasion of e6 in Dvoirys-West, New York 2000.

White’s 12th move saw two different concepts. Should one sacrifice the exchange or not? Black is suffering anyway (and there was – is – no beauty prize awarded at the New York Open), so Dvoirys decided on the negative.

6 f3

Kosten only discussed 6 c3 d5 7 f3 e3!?, estimating that after 8 xe3 h6 9 h3 (g4 hxg5 10 gxh5 d6) 9...xe3 10 xh3 e7...

...Black’s game is acceptable. This is partially true. While Black’s position is playable, White nevertheless has an edge owing to his pair of bishops and extra pawn.

6...d6

6...e7!? is tricky:

a) 7 fxe4?! f6! followed by either h6 or dxe4 (7...h6? is the correct idea but executed too hastily: 8 h5+ g6 9 e2 and White hangs on to his goodies).

b) 7 c3! (difficult to find!) 7...d6 reaches the main text. 7...e3? simply loses a pawn after 8 d4; while 7...exf3? is far too risky: 8 d2 with the threats of 9 b5+ and e1, as well as 9 xxf3 when White’s advantage is already close to decisive.

7 c3 e7

Now a logical continuation seems to be...

8 c2 exf3 9 xd3 bd7

...when White’s edge has been kept to bearable proportions. White will more easily finish his development, while his king is likely to be safer on the kingside than its counterpart on the other wing.
9...\(\text{\=c}6?!\) is less good: 10 0-0 0-0-0 (10...\(\text{\=c}b4\) 11 \(\text{\=a}5++\) \(\text{\=d}8\) – else \(\text{\=e}1\) leads to heavy material losses – 12 \(\text{\=a}4\) and Black also finds himself in trouble) 11 \(d5\) \(\text{\=b}4\) (11...\(\text{\=e}5\) 12 \(\text{\=x}e5\) \(\text{\=w}xe5\) 13 \(\text{\=f}4\) \(\text{\=e}8\) 14 \(\text{\=g}5!\) \(\text{\=w}g6\) 15 \(\text{\=x}f6\) \(\text{\=h}3\) [the obvious threat was \(\text{\=x}f5!\)] 16 \(\text{\=f}2\) \(\text{\=g}x\) 17 \(\text{\=d}3\) \(\text{\=w}g7\) 18 \(\text{\=w}f3\) and 19 \(\text{\=w}x\) takes a pawn) 12 \(\text{\=e}1\) \(\text{\=d}7\) 13 \(\text{\=g}5\) \(h6\) 14 \(\text{\=x}f6\) \(\text{\=g}x\) 15 \(a3\) \(\text{\=a}6\) 16 \(\text{\=x}a6\) \(bxa6\) 17 \(\text{\=w}d4\). Black’s pawn structure is damaged and the manoeuvre \(\text{\=d}3\)-b4-c6 will prove pretty unpleasant.

**E4) 1 e4 e5 2 \(\text{\=f}3\) d6 3 d4 f5 4 \(\text{\=c}3!\)**

This is the most critical test regarding the viability of 3...f5.

4...\(\text{\=f}xe4\)

Black lacks decent alternatives:

a) 4...\(\text{\=f}6\) 5 dxe5 \(\text{\=x}e4\) 6 \(\text{\=x}e4\) \(\text{\=f}xe4\) 7 \(\text{\=g}5\) \(d5\) (if 7...\(\text{\=f}5?!\), 8 \(\text{\=w}d5\) is cunning: White simultaneously threatens mate, while attacking both b7 and e4; there is no satisfactory defence) 8 \(e6\) and play has transposed into a position similar to one arising in the 4 dxe5 line, with the difference that both the b1- and g8-knights have vanished.

This diminishes Black’s aggressive potential in the main line of the above-mentioned variation. And as secondary lines of 4 dxe5 are not improved by the absence of the two knights, the present position should be assessed as clearly in White’s favour.

b) 4...\(\text{\=e}xd4\) is not attractive either: for example, 5 \(\text{\=w}xd4\) (5 \(\text{\=d}xd4\) is good too; after 5...\(\text{\=e}xd4\) \(f\) 4 \(\text{\=x}e4\) \(\text{\=g}5\), and \(\text{\=w}h5+\), or simply move his f1-bishop and castle) 5...\(\text{\=f}xe4\) 6 \(\text{\=g}5\) \(\text{\=f}6\) 7 \(\text{\=x}e4\) \(\text{\=g}7\) 0-0-0 0-0.
Black is ready to repel the centralized queen by means of ...\( \text{xc}6 \), now that the knight can’t be pinned anymore. This will, however, prove to be too slow, as events now develop with an astonishing rapidity: 9 \( \text{xf}6+ \text{xf}6 \) 10 \( \text{c}4+ \text{h}8 \) 11 \( \text{xf}6 \text{xf}6 \) (swapping queens eases Black’s defence, as it considerably slows down White’s attack; on 11...\( \text{xf}6 \), 12 \( \text{g}5 \) would be nasty) 12 \( \text{xf}6 \text{gx}6 \) (directed against the invasion of the seventh rank by White’s rooks) 13 \( \text{d}4 \) (having in mind \( \text{db}5 \), which would force ...\( \text{a}6 \) and thus paralyze Black) 13...\( \text{d}7 \) 14 \( \text{he}1 \text{c}6 \) 15 \( \text{xc}6 \text{xc}6 \) 16 \( \text{e}7 \) (White’s play is simple but efficient, and his edge continues to grow) 16...\( \text{xg}2 \)! (accelerating defeat; the passive 16...\( \text{ac}8 \) was more stubborn) 17 \( \text{g}1 \) (White is about to double his rooks on the seventh rank, and the rest needs no comment) 17...\( \text{d}5 \) 18 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{e}4 \) 19 \( \text{xe}4 \text{dx}e4 \) 20 \( \text{gg}7 \text{fe}8 \) 21 \( \text{xh}7+ \text{g}8 \) 22 \( \text{eg}7+ \text{f}8 \) 23 \( \text{xc}7 \) 1-0, Tseshkovsky-Inkiov, Minsk 1982. From a pleasant endgame White scored a flashy victory. After move 13, Black’s prospects already looked pretty grim.

Black has also tried the immediate 5...\( \text{xc}6 \) 6 \( \text{b}5 \text{xf}6 \) 7 e5 \( \text{dx}e5 \) 8 \( \text{xc}6+ \text{bx}c6 \) 9 \( \text{xd}8+ \text{xd}8 \) 10 \( \text{xc}5 \text{e}8 \) 11 \( \text{g}5 \text{d}6 \) 12 \( \text{xf}6 \text{gx}6 \) 13 \( \text{d}3 \), when Boris Spassky himself couldn’t defeat Destrebecq in their encounter in Lyon, 1983. Black’s position looks ruined – all his pawns are isolated and weak – but the pair of bishops provides counterchances. The two opponents shared the point some 13 moves later, after White obviously missed his chances. I doubt that 5...\( \text{c}6 \) could totally rehabilitate the line for Black.

5 \( \text{xe}4 \)

5...\( \text{d}5 \)!

An attempt to improve on the game Tseshkovsky-Inkiov.

We’ve already seen that 5...\( \text{exd}4 \), doesn’t solve Black’s problems. White can quickly mobilize his forces, and any recapture on \( \text{d}4 \) is good for him.

If 5...\( \text{f}6 \)? 6 \( \text{xf}6+ \) (6 \( \text{g}5 \)\( \text{e}7 \) 7 \( \text{xf}6 \text{gx}6 \) is unclear) 6...\( \text{xf}6 \) (after 6...\( \text{xf}6 \) 7 \( \text{xe}5 \text{dx}e5 \) 8 \( \text{g}5 \text{wd}6 \) 9 \( \text{c}4 \) Black lags behind in development and suffers from an isolani at e5) 7 \( \text{d}3 \). The area surrounding the black king is weakened and White’s plan (0-0, \( \text{h}4\text{f}5 \), \( \text{wh}5 \)) is clear. As a consequence White has an obvious plus.

6 \( \text{dg}5 \)!

a) 6 \( \text{xe}5 \)! only offers Black what he wished for: a wild tactical skirmish!

6...\( \text{dx}e4 \) 7 \( \text{wh}5+ \text{g}6 \) 8 \( \text{gx}6 \text{hx}6 \) (not 8...\( \text{f}6 \)?) 9 \( \text{we}5+ \text{f}7 \) 10 \( \text{c}4+ \) [10 \( \text{hx}8+ \text{g}8 \) 10...\( \text{g}7 \) 11 \( \text{h}6+ \text{hx}6 \) 12 \( \text{hx}8 \text{b}4+ \) 13 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{wh}8 \) 14 \( \text{cx}b4 \) when the rook and two pawns plus the ‘naked’ black king should outweigh the
enemy knights) 9 \text{\texttt{wh6+}} d7 10 \text{\texttt{wh5+}}
\text{\texttt{he8}} 11 \text{\texttt{he5+}} (11 \text{\texttt{wg6+}} is a draw by
perpetual check if White wants it) 11...\text{\texttt{ae6}}! 12 \text{\texttt{whxh8}} (12 \text{\texttt{wxh6+?}} \text{\texttt{de7}} 13
\text{\texttt{we5}} \text{\texttt{fg8}} 14 \text{\texttt{lc4}} \text{\texttt{bxc6}} 15 \text{\texttt{wh5+}} \text{\texttt{lg6}} 16
\text{\texttt{ae3}} kept some initiative and three
pawns for the piece in Zelcic-Doric,
Pula 1995) 12...\text{\texttt{gc6}}.

uncertain whether he has enough for
the other one he sacrificed.

The text move, on the other hand,
'softly' refutes the dubious idea initi-
ated by Black's 3rd move.

6...h6

6...e4 7 \text{\texttt{de5}} \text{\texttt{h6}} 8 \text{\texttt{dxh7+!}} highlights
the weakness of g6 in another way.

The material balance clearly favours
White, but Black has dynamic com-
ensation, with ...0-0-0 next on his agenda.
White's prospects seem better to me,
but I also think that Black's activity
shouldn't be underestimated.

b) 6 \text{\texttt{dg3?!}} leads to a game with bet-
ter prospects for White, but his edge is
reduced in comparison with 6 \text{\texttt{deg5}}.
After 6...e4 7 \text{\texttt{de5}} \text{\texttt{f6}} 8 f3! (8 \text{\texttt{lg5?!}}
\text{\texttt{ed6}} 9 f3 0-0 10 fxe4 c5 led to chaos in
Bezemer-Kamstra, Enschede 1993)
8...\text{\texttt{ed6}} 9 fxe4 0-0 and here, instead of
10 \text{\texttt{lg5}} transposing into Bezemer-
Kamstra, White could claim an edge by
10 exd5 (but not 10 \text{\texttt{ee2?!}} \text{\texttt{exe4}} 11
\text{\texttt{exe4}} dxe4 12 \text{\texttt{lc4+}} \text{\texttt{lh8}} 13 \text{\texttt{lf7+?}} \text{\texttt{xf7}}
14 \text{\texttt{xf7}} \text{\texttt{wh4+ and Black seizes the upper hand}})
10...\text{\texttt{bd7}} 11 \text{\texttt{le3}} (or 11 \text{\texttt{lg4}}).
Black will regain one pawn, but it is

8...\text{\texttt{le4}} 9 \text{\texttt{lxh8}} \text{\texttt{exe5}} 10 dxe5 \text{\texttt{lf8}}
11 \text{\texttt{e4}} d4 12 \text{\texttt{wd2}} and White won only 9
moves later, after destroying Black's
pride: his centre! (Hautot-Stork, Bel-
gian Team Ch. 1997)
7 \text{\texttt{lf7+}} \text{\texttt{xf7}} 8 \text{\texttt{lxh5+}}

All White needs now is accuracy in
the conversion of his clear advantage.

8...\text{\texttt{le6}} 9 \text{\texttt{lg4+}} \text{\texttt{le7}} 10 \text{\texttt{lg6+}} \text{\texttt{le8}} 11
\text{\texttt{le2+}} \text{\texttt{le7}} 12 \text{\texttt{lxh8}}

The h8-knight will escape, despite
all of Black's efforts to prevent it.

12...\text{\texttt{lf5}} 13 \text{\texttt{lg4}} \text{\texttt{le4}} 14 \text{\texttt{f3}} \text{\texttt{lh7}} 15 \text{\texttt{g5}}
\text{\texttt{hxg5}} 16 \text{\texttt{lh3}} \text{\texttt{bxc6}} 17 \text{\texttt{c3}} \text{\texttt{wd6}} 18 \text{\texttt{we6}}
\text{\texttt{lxh6+}} 19 \text{\texttt{lxex6}} \text{\texttt{ld8}} 20 \text{\texttt{lg4}} \text{\texttt{g6}}

Black is at last ready to 'pluck' the
knight, but...

21 \text{\texttt{lh4}} \text{\texttt{lg7}} 22 \text{\texttt{hxg5}} \text{\texttt{lg8}} 23 \text{\texttt{lf4}} \text{\texttt{c5}} 24
\text{\texttt{dxc5}} \text{\texttt{d4}} 25 \text{\texttt{cxd4}} \text{\texttt{lxh4}} 26 0-0-0 \text{\texttt{lxh5}}
27 \text{\texttt{lh1}} \text{\texttt{lf8}} 28 \text{\texttt{lg6}}
4...dxe5?? would obviously be a bad error: 5 \(\text{Wxd8+} \text{Kxd8} 6 \text{Qxe5}\) with a safe extra pawn.

5 \(\text{Wd5}\)

After other moves Black experiences no problems; for example:

a) 5 \(\text{Qbd2} \text{Qxd2} 6 \text{Qxd2} \text{Ke7}\) is equal. The pawn structure is symmetrical and White’s slight lead in development will evaporate. As a consequence, this position has quite a drawish character.

b) 5 \(\text{Qc4}\) (threatening 6 \(\text{Wd5}\) and 6 \(\text{Qxf7+} \text{Qxf7} 7 \text{Wd5}\)) 5...\(\text{c6}\) (with the idea ...\(\text{d5}\) 6 0-0 \(\text{d5} 7 \text{Qd3} \text{Qc5}\) and Black isn’t facing any problems, while 6 \(\text{exd6} \text{Qxd6}\) (or 6...\(\text{Qxd6}\)) equalizes without difficulty.

5...\(\text{Ke6?!}\) is much less healthy. After 6 \(\text{Qxe6 fxe6}\) Bernstein found the refutation of Black’s opening in his game against Tartakower, Paris 1937. He then unfortunately (for him, not for us!) erred, to suffer an undeserved miniature: 7 \(\text{We2!} \text{d5} 7...\text{Qc5} 8 \text{exd6!}\) aiming at isolating the e6-pawn; 8...\(\text{cxd6} 9 \text{b4! Wf6} 10 \text{bxc5 Wxa1} 11 \text{Wxe6+ is very dangerous}) 8 \(\text{Wb5+!}\).
Going pawn-fishing so early is seldom advisable. It was not too late for a natural development, by 0-0 and \( \text{bd}2 \), but paradoxically White’s move is excellent! A rare exception to one of the fundamental principles. The game continued 8...\( \text{c6} \) 9 \( \text{d4?} \) (9 \( \text{xb7!} \) represented the right implementation of White’s brilliant strategy: after the logical sequence 9...\( \text{b4} \) 10 \( \text{b5+ c6} \) 11 \( \text{e2} \) Black’s compensation for the pawn is illusory) 9...\( \text{d7?!} \) (the stronger 9...\( \text{a6!} \) 10 \( \text{x6 axb5} \) 11 \( \text{x8 xd8} \), with an excellent game for Black, would have deprived us of the beautiful conclusion that now arises) 10 \( \text{xb7?} \) (overstepping the point of no return; 10 \( \text{x6} \) still gave mutual chances) 10...\( \text{b4+ c3} \) (11 \( \text{c3}, 11 \text{d2, or even 11 f1 would run into the same thing} \) 11...\( \text{xd4!} \) 12 \( \text{xa8+ f7} \) 13 \( \text{xf8} \) \( \text{b5} \)

\[
\text{\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
\text{F1: 6...\text{d7}} \\
\text{F2: 6...\text{e7}} \\
\text{6...f6?! (or !?) is ugly, but maybe not as bad as it looks. 7 exf6 gxf6 8 \text{e3} was De la Riva-Camora, Canete 1994, and the damaged black pawn structure insures White of an edge.}
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
\]

and White resigned as mate in four is unavoidable. In spite of the reciprocal mistakes, quite an interesting ‘little evergreen’!

5...\( \text{c5} \)

5...\( \text{f5?!} \) contains the idea of ...\( \text{c6}, \) and ...d5. If Black succeeds in cementing his knight on e4 without risking his king’s security too much, he will get a very comfortable game. 6 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{e7} \) 7 0-0 c6 sees Black trying to implement the plan. As White’s purpose is to open the position by exd6, there is nothing stronger here than 8 exd6! when White retains his advantage. Indeed, he has a quantitatively and qualitatively superior development. Furthermore, Black’s king will find it difficult to find a safe place. 8...\( \text{xd6} \) (8...\( \text{x6} \) 9 \( \text{d4} \) and \( \text{e1} \) is coming soon) 9 \( \text{xd6} \) \( \text{xd6} \) 10 \( \text{bd2} \) with an edge: the e4-knight must either exchange itself or retreat, which will leave Black behind in development and with an exposed monarch.

Now Black has:
F1) 1 e4 e5 2 f3 d6 3 d4 f6 4 dxe5
   fxe5 5 Wd5 c5 6 g5 Wd7
   This odd move temporarily blocks the c8-bishop’s diagonal. Black, however, still tries to carry out the plan of ...
   c6 and ...d5, and can quickly remove his queen. This variation aims at recapturing on d6 directly with the bishop and, unlike 6...
   e7, doesn’t imply a trade of queens.
7 exd6
   Else ...
   c6 and ...d5 is okay. White must open the game to emphasize his superior development.
7...xd6 8 c3

...and now:

F11: 8...We6+
F12: 8...0-0 9 0-0-0 c6?
F13: 8...0-0 9 0-0-0 a6!

F11) 1 e4 e5 2 f3 d6 3 d4 f6 4 dxe5
   fxe5 5 Wd5 c5 6 g5 Wd7 7 exd6
   xdx6 8 c3 We6+ 9 e3 Wxd5 10
   xd5
   Threatening both dxc7+ and xxc5, which explains Black’s next. The following moves also seem sensible, and I
   don’t see where Black could have deviated before the position after the 13th move.
10...e6
   10...ba6?! would parry the double threat, but placing the knight on the edge isn’t a smart choice.
11 0-0-0 c6 12 d2! d7 13 e4

We are following the game Chandler-Gulko, Reykjavik 1991. The pawn structure is symmetrical and White has the more active pieces. In such a situation, one’s edge can either vanish, after the swap of pieces, or increase. As exchanges which would ease Black’s position are impossible here, we find ourselves in the latter case.
13...e7 14 e2
   With the idea of h1 and f2-f4, further increasing White’s space advantage.
14...0-0-0
   Losing a pawn, but Black had no valid alternative: if 14...a6 15 f4! or 14...d8 15 h1 and the difference in activity between the two camps speaks for itself; while after 14...f5 15 h5+ g6
   16 df6+ xf6 17 df6+ e7 18 xd7
gxh5 19 \(\text{\#he1}\), the damaged pawn structure and exposed king render Black’s situation undesirable.

15 \(\text{\#xa7}\) f5

If 15...b6? 16 \(\text{\#a6}\) mate; or 15...\(\text{\#xa7}\) 16 \(\text{\#xe7+}\) and White remains a safe pawn up.

16 \(\text{\#xe7+}\) \(\text{\#xe7}\) 17 \(\text{\#c3}\)

The game now enters the technical phase and Chandler’s resolve proves to be excellent.

17...\(\text{\#f4}\)

Or 17...\(\text{\#c6}\)? 18 \(\text{\#e3}\) f4 19 \(\text{\#d2}\) and with a good extra pawn and the two bishops, White is winning.

18 \(\text{\#d4}\) \(\text{\#xe2+}\) 19 \(\text{\#xe2}\) \(\text{\#hg8}\) 20 \(\text{\#f4}\)

\(\text{\#c6}\) 21 f3 \(\text{\#d7}\) 22 \(\text{\#he1}\) \(\text{\#d5}\) 23 \(\text{\#d3}\)

\(\text{\#e7}\) 24 c4 \(\text{\#xe1}\) 25 \(\text{\#xe1}\) \(\text{\#d8}\) 26 \(\text{\#f2}\)

26 \(\text{\#xg7?!}\) \(\text{\#b6}\) 27 \(\text{\#e5}\) \(\text{\#g8}\) would allow some counterplay.

26...\(\text{\#f6}\) 27 \(\text{\#c2}\) h6 28 \(\text{\#e5}\) \(\text{\#e8}\) 29 \(\text{\#c3}\)

\(\text{\#f7}\) 30 \(\text{\#a5}\) \(\text{\#e8}\) 31 \(\text{\#xf5}\) \(\text{\#g6}\) 32 \(\text{\#e5}\)

\(\text{\#d8}\) 33 \(\text{\#f4}\) \(\text{\#b1}\) 34 a3 \(\text{\#d1}\) 35 \(\text{\#e1}\)

\(\text{\#xe1}\) 36 \(\text{\#xe1}\) \(\text{\#d7}\) 37 \(\text{\#d4}\) \(\text{\#c2}\) 38 \(\text{\#b4}\)

\(\text{\#e8}\) 39 \(\text{\#d3}\) \(\text{\#d6}\) 40 \(\text{\#c5+}\) \(\text{\#c8}\) 41 \(\text{\#e6}\)

\(\text{\#f5+}\) 42 \(\text{\#c3}\) \(\text{\#d1}\) 43 \(\text{\#d3}\) h5 44 h4 \(\text{\#b6}\)

45 \(\text{\#f4 1-0}\)

A very strong performance by Chandler, who gave his opponent not the slightest chance of survival.

F12) 1 e4 e5 2 \(\text{\#f3}\) d6 3 d4 \(\text{\#f6}\) 4 dxe5

\(\text{\#xe4}\) 5 \(\text{\#d5}\) \(\text{\#c5}\) 6 \(\text{\#g5}\) \(\text{\#d7}\) 7 exd6

\(\text{\#xd6}\) 8 \(\text{\#c3}\) 0-0 9 0-0-0 \(\text{\#c6}\)

After 9...h6!? 10 \(\text{\#e3}\) \(\text{\#e7}\) Black’s position is obviously inferior, but it remains very defendable. If he were to move, Black would likely continue ...\(\text{\#e6}\) or ...\(\text{\#c6}\), so 11 \(\text{\#d4}\) is logical for White. Then 11...\(\text{\#c6}\)? (anyway!) looks interesting to me, in order to accelerate development and get the b-file semi-open, in the event of 12 \(\text{\#xc6}\) bxc6 13 \(\text{\#xc6}\) \(\text{\#b7}\) 14 \(\text{\#b5}\) \(\text{\#ab8}\).

Another less sharp continuation is 12 \(\text{\#f5}\) \(\text{\#xf5}\) 13 \(\text{\#xf5}\) when White certainly has slightly better prospects. In this latter case, however, Black’s development is finished and his position remains solid.

10 \(\text{\#b5}\)!

A theoretical novelty according to Tiviakov, but the move had in fact already been tested before! Liberzon-Najdorf, Buenos Aires 1979, had seen 10...\(\text{\#g4}\) 11 \(\text{\#xd6}\) cxd6 12 \(\text{\#c4}\) \(\text{\#e4}\) 13
h3 \[f5 14 \[e3 \[e6 15 \[b5 d5 16 \[d3 \\
\[f8 17 \[b1 \[f6 18 \[xe4 and the two \\
grandmasters signed peace agree-
ments.

Alternatively:

a) 10 \[b5?! a6 11 \[xc6 bxc6 12 \[d2 \\
\[b8 with enough counterplay, Palac-

b) 10 \[e3?! \[e7 11 \[d4 (11 \[xc5?? \\
\[xc5 12 \[xd7 \[xe3+ [check!] and an \\
exchange is gone) 11...b6 12 \[e4 \[xe4 \\
13 \[xe4 \[c6 14 \[d3 \[xe4 15 \[xe4 \\
\[b8 when White’s edge, linked with \\
pieces being better placed, is only sym-

\[f4 in the event of 16 \[d4.

10...\[g4

Strange looking, but motivated by 
seeking counterplay. For this purpose, 
Black would like to bring the c8-bishop 
out and shift a rook in its place.

Retreating from the knight’s aggres-
sion wasn’t a solution either, as the 
following variation witnesses: 10...\[e7 
11 \[xd7 \[xd7 12 \[xc7 \[g5+ (or 
12...\[ac8 13 \[f4?! with a safe extra 
pawn) 13 \[xg5 \[ac8 14 \[d5 b6 15 \[a6 

and White’s extra pawn prevails over 
his unusual piece placement.

11 \[d6 \[d6 12 \[e3!

12 \[xd6? is met by 12...\[e4!.

\[e4

The outcome of the opening is that 
White has obtained the pair of bishops 
and created an isolated pawn on d6. If 
he ‘only’ had the edge of the bishops, 
with the pawn structure being sym-
metrical White’s plus would be clear. 
Here, the imbalance due to the d6-
pawn gives Black attacking chances 
along the c-file, as well as a strongpoint 
for his knight on c5. In the present case 
this is insufficient compensation, but in 
general ‘collecting’ pluses can be dou-
ble-edged. We now follow the game 


12...\[e6?!

This accelerates the end by desper-
ately trying to generate some play. 
Other continuations were more tena-
cious, but equally hopeless in the long 
run:

a) 12...\[b4 13 \[c4.

b) 12...\[e4 13 \[d3?! , or 13 h3 and 
\[d3 next, with a clear plus.

c) 12...\[a4 13 \[c4! \[xc4 (forced; if
13...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}a5} 14 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xd6, or 13...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}}b4 14 a3 with a decisive advantage in both cases) 14 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xc4. Without queens the strength of the bishops is easier to emphasize, while the handicap of the weak d-pawn becomes greater.

d) 12...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}}d8 13 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{g}}g5 (13 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}}d4!? also suffices) 13...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}}e6 (or 13...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}}e6 14 h3 with the idea 14...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}a4 15 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}b5 and the harassed queen doesn’t have a good square at its disposal; after running away to h4, White can safely cash in by taking twice on c6) 14 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xe6 fxe6 15 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}c4. The pair of bishops and the fewer pawn islands promises White a clear advantage.

13 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}xd6 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}e4 14 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}a3 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}fd8

If 14...a5 (to counter 15 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}}d3 with ...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}}b4) 15 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}d4! threatens a fork with f3 and maintains a significant plus.

15 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}d3

White has finished his development and has kept his extra pawn. The rest is rather easy...

15...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}f6

15...a5 16 h3 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}g6 (16...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}f5 17 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{g}}g5 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}d5 18 f3 is winning for White) 17 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}h4 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}f6 18 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xe4 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}xh4 with a clear advantage.

16 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{g}}g5! \textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}}b4?!

After 16...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}d5! 17 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xf6 (17 h3? \textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}xg2 18 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xf6 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}xf3 19 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xd8 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}f4+ 20 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}b1 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xh1 is messy) 17...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}f4+ 18 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}b1 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xf6 19 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}e2 Black can still fight with 19...a5, having in mind 20...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}b4. White, however, seems to have a better reply to his rival’s 16th move, namely the aesthetic (and cybernetic!) 17 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}hg1, keeping all the pluses of the position.

17 h3! \textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}xg2?!  

Suicide. Black’s last chance was 17...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xd3+ 18 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xd3 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xd3 19 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xd3 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}d4 (19...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}xg2?? would lose a piece to 20 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}g1 and \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xf6) 20 a3 and White has an extra pawn for nothing.

18 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}hg1

18...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}xf2

None of the other captures would change the outcome of the game: 18...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}xf3 19 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xe7+ \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xe7 20 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xd8+ \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xd8 21 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xf3 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xa2+ 22 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}b1 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xg5 23 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xg5 and d1 is controlled; 18...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xd3+ 19 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xd3 and \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xf6 strangely reminds me of 17...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xd3+; and finally 18...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xd3 19 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xd3!.

19 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xf6 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}e3+ 20 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}b1 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xa2+ 21 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}a1 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}b6 22 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xg7+ \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xf8 23 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}xh7 1-0
F13) 1 e4 e5 2 d4 f6 3 dxe5 dxe5 4 xxe5 xxe4 5 w5 f6 6 g5 w7 7 exd6 xxd6 8 c3 0-0 9 0-0-0 a6 10 e3 w6
11 Wh5
White wisely declines the trade of queens and instead starts an attack against the enemy king.
11...bd7
Reinforcements arrive!
12 d4 f4+ 13 b1 Wh6
A decision guided by good sense: the white queen is too threatening and Black must therefore eliminate it.
14 Wh6 xh6 15 d5 e6 16 e7+ Wh8 17 xxc8 bxc8 18 c3
18 c4?! was Van der Werf-Cifuentes Parada, Wijk aan Zee 1993. This move is a tacit draw offer (and in fact the game did stop here), as after the obvious 18...xd4 the position is dead equal.

F21: 8...We6+
F22: 8...e6
F23: 8...others

The alternative to 6...wd7. Unfortunately for Black, this variation doesn’t bring him more success.
7 exd6 wxd6 8 c3

Developing with gain of time. Now we will consider:

After the superior 18 c3, White has the pair of bishops and the slight edge that is usually associated with it. Black’s task is to activate his knights while trying at the same time to swap one enemy bishop. Thus 18...dxc5 seems to perfectly fulfil this demand.

Even though White keeps the possibility of db5 in the line 8 wxd6 cxd6 9 c3, the move 8 wxd6 helps Black finish his development. The game
Korneev-Yandemirov, Moscow 1996, continued 9...\(\text{Qe6}\) 10 \(\text{Qd2} \text{Qc6}\) 11 0-0-0 \(\text{Qd7}\) 12 \(\text{Qb5} \text{Qe7}\) 13 \(\text{Qe3} \text{a6}\) 14 \(\text{Qc3}\) 0-0-0 and the position was gradually levelled.

\[\text{F21)} \text{1 e4 e5 2 Qf3 d6 3 d4 Qf6 4 dxe5 Qxe4 5 Qd5 Qc5 6 Qg5 Qe7 7 exd6 Qxd6 8 Qc3 Qe6+ 9 Qe3 c6}\]

\(11...\text{Wg4}\)

Or 11...\(\text{Wg6}\) 12 0-0-0 with the idea of \(\text{Qe5}\).

\(12 0-0-0 \text{b5}\)

The whole white army is out, while Black’s queenside is still stuck at home. No wonder then that the ensuing tactical complications favour the first player.

After 12...\(\text{Wxd4}\) 13 \(\text{Qxd4} \text{Qba}6\) 14 \(\text{Qhe1} \text{Qe6}\) 15 \(\text{Qxc5} \text{Qxc5}\) 16 \(\text{Qxe6}\) Black must either allow the rook to access ‘seventh heaven’, or accept a weak pawn on \(\text{e6}\). In the latter case, nothing prevents White from continuing 16...\(\text{fxe6}\) 17 b4 \(\text{Qa6}\) 18 \(\text{a3}\) threatening both \(\text{Qxe6}\) and \(\text{Qd7}\).

The alternative 9...\(\text{Wxd5}\)? would considerably ease White’s task. After 10 \(\text{Qxd5} \text{Qe6}\) 11 \(\text{Qxe7} \text{Qxe7}\) 12 0-0-0 White has gained the two bishops, and the king on \(\text{e7}\) might soon feel uncomfortable.

\(10 \text{Wd4 0-0 11 Qc4}\)

\(13 \text{Qe5!}\)

This centralization is a very strong move.

13 \(\text{Qxb5}\)? was tempting but the following tactical ramifications demonstrate that Black is then very much alive: 13...\(\text{cx}b5\) 14 \(\text{Qd5} \text{Wxd4}\) 15 \(\text{Qxd4}\) (15 \(\text{Qxd4} \text{Qb7}\) 16 \(\text{Qhe1} \text{Qf6}\) 17 \(\text{Qxf6}\) \(\text{gxf6}\) 18 \(\text{Qe7}\) a5! 19 \(\text{Qxb7}\) a4 and White loses an exchange, after which the game is rather balanced) 15...\(\text{Qb7}\) 16
The Philidor Files

\(\square\)xb5 \(\square\)a6 17 \(\square\)xa7 \(\square\)b4! (the saving counter-attack!) 18 \(\square\)xb7 \(\square\)xb7 19 \(\square\)d7 \(\square\)xa2+ 20 \(\Diamond\)b1 \(\Diamond\)c3+ 21 bxc3 \(\square\)xg2 22 \(\Diamond\)g1 \(\Diamond\)f8+ 23 \(\Diamond\)c1 \(\square\)b7 24 \(\square\)xe7 \(\square\)xe7 25 \(\square\)xg2 \(\square\)xe3 26 fxe3 \(\square\)xa7 and this rook ending should result in a draw.

Going back, 18 \(\square\)xc8? would turn the tables completely:

![Chess Diagram]

18...\(\square\)xc8 19 \(\square\)xb7 \(\square\)xc2+ 20 \(\bigdiamond\)b1 \(\square\)xa2 21 \(\bigdiamond\)d4 \(\square\)f6 22 \(\bigdiamond\)he1 \(\bigdiamond\)xb2+! 23 \(\bigdiamond\)c1 (23 \(\square\)xb2? \(\square\)xb2+ and mate follows) 23...\(\bigdiamond\)g5+ 24 f4! (necessary in order to lure the bishop onto a square from where it doesn’t control d8 anymore; instead 24 \(\square\)e3? \(\bigdiamond\)c2+ 25 \(\bigdiamond\)b1 \(\bigdiamond\)ab2+ 26 \(\bigdiamond\)a1 \(\square\)b3 and the combination of threats ...\(\square\)a2 mate and ...\(\bigdiamond\)f6+ leads to a mate in three) 24...\(\square\)xf4+ 25 \(\square\)e3 \(\square\)xe3+ 26 \(\square\)xe3 g6 and Black stands much better thanks to his rooks doubled on the second rank, and of course his extra pawn.

13...\(\square\)xc4?!

Keeping the defensive bishop would not have saved Black: 13...\(\square\)e6 14 \(\bigdiamond\)d3?! \(\square\)d7 15 \(\square\)e4 \(\square\)f6 16 \(\bigdiamond\)xc6 \(\bigdiamond\)d7 17 \(\bigdiamond\)a6 \(\bigdiamond\)xg2 18 \(\square\)e5 when White is clearly more active. He threatens at once to win a piece with 19 \(\square\)xd7 \(\square\)xd7 20 \(\square\)e4. Also the b5-pawn is en prise, while an offensive down the g-file is looming. A logical and rather forced follow-up would be 18...\(\square\)c5 19 \(\bigdiamond\)xc5 \(\bigdiamond\)xc5 20 \(\square\)xd7 \(\square\)xd7 21 \(\square\)e4 \(\bigdiamond\)g5+ 22 \(\square\)b1 \(\bigdiamond\)ad8 23 \(\square\)d5 and \(\bigdiamond\)xb5.

14 \(\square\)xe7 \(\bigdiamond\)b7

Or 14...\(\square\)bd7 15 \(\bigdiamond\)xc5 \(\bigdiamond\)xc5 (15...\(\bigdiamond\)xc5 16 \(\square\)xd7 wins a piece and the game) 16 \(\square\)d4 and after the likely retreat of her majesty to e6, the horse remains unprotected.

Running away with 14...\(\square\)cd7 would leave Black with a terrible endgame after 15 \(\square\)d4 \(\square\)e6 (15...\(\square\)c5?? 16 \(\square\)xd7) 16 \(\square\)xe6 fxe6 17 \(\square\)hd1. All the white forces are well developed, whereas their counterparts are still on the starting blocks. The pawns on e6 and c6 are weak, as well as their surrounding squares (d6, e5, c5).

15 \(\square\)g5!

With the idea of \(\square\)xh7! (or 15...h6 16 \(\square\)h7), so Black’s next move is forced.

15...\(\bigdiamond\)h4 16 \(\square\)d4 \(\bigdiamond\)h5 17 \(\square\)hd1

![Chess Diagram]

White pieces are perfectly coordinated to take part in the final assault.

17...\(\square\)d7
If 17...h6?! 18 Qh7! and White cashes an exchange, gaining a decisive plus.

18 Bxd7 Qxd7 19 Bxd7

White now enjoys a stable material advantage and the rest is easy: 19...b4 20 g4?! Bxh2 21 Qc4 Qa5 22 Bf5 Qc4 23 Qc5 Bxd8 24 Bxf7+! Qh8 25 Bxf8 1-0. Rublevsky-Abramovic, Yugoslav Team Ch. 1996. This game had a much wilder character than Chandler-Gulko, but was still in White's favour.

F22) 1 e4 e5 2 Qf3 d6 3 d4 Qf6 4 dxe5 Qxe4 5 Bd5 Qc5 6 h3 Qe7 7 exd6 Bxd6 8 Qc3 Qe6

Letting White keep the queens on the board, which surely helps him to maintain the initiative.

9 Qxe7 Bxe7 10 0-0-0

10...0-0

10...Qc6?! led to a flashy White victory in the game Ionov-Yandemirov, Russian Championship 1994, which followed some analysis of Moiseev's: 11 Bxe4 Bb4 12 Qc4 0-0 13 Qd5 Qc5 14 Qh4 Qd8? (a serious mistake; 14...b5 15 Qd3 f5 with an unclear position was better) 15 Qhe1 b5 16 Rb3 Bb7? (16...a5? would have given birth to pretty tactical possibilities: 17 Qe5! Qxe5 [17...a4 18 Bxc6 axb3 19 Bxd8+! Qxd8 20 Qe8+ Qf8 21 Qc7+ Qh8 22 Qxf8 mate] 18 Bxe5 Qf8 19 Qc7+ Qh8 20 Qxh7+!! Qxh7 21 Rh5 mate; 16...Qd7, though sad, was necessary). After 16...Bb7 White finished things off with panache: 17 Bxe6! a5 (17...fxe6 18 Qg5 h6 19 Qxe6 is decisive) 18 Qg5 h6 19 Bxh6 and Black threw in the towel.

11 Be4 Qf6 12 Qd5 Qh6+ 13 Bb1 Bb7 14 Bc4 Qf6 15 Qxf6+ Qxf6 16 Qhe1 Qf4 17 Be7 Bxe7 18 Bxe7 Qb6 19 Bxc7 Bxd8 20 Bxd8 Bxd8 21 B3 Bxc4 22 Bxc4 Bxg2 23 Bc7

...and White brought the point home on move 55 (Pap-Markus, Subotica 2001). Black can probably defend better, but my feeling is that White has a persistent initiative.

F23) 1 e4 e5 2 Qf3 d6 3 d4 Qf6 4 dxe5 Qxe4 5 Bf5 Qc5 6 Qg5 Qe7 7 exd6 Bxd6 8 Qc3 c6

Weakening the d6 spot while depriving the b8-knight of its natural square.
If 8...h6 9 e3 keeps an edge, for instance 9...c6 (conceding the pair of bishops by 9...wxd5 10 dx5 dx6 11 dx7 dx7 12 dx4 e8 13 0-0-0 dx4 14 xdx4 x8 may give better chances to hold) 10 wxd6 xdx6 11 0-0-0 e7 12 c4 ba6 13 he1 e6 14 xxe6 xxe6 15 xd4 and White is pressing.

In Rublevsky's game above, Black tried not to cede the two bishops and to avoid creating weaknesses. The price to pay for this is a considerable loss of time.

Here follows a game, Davis-Buck, correspondence 1938, which is quite typical for this line:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{9 wxd6 xdx6 10 0-0-0 e7} \\
\text{10...e7?! 11 c4 e6 12 he1 and Black's prospects look grim: his opponent will likely create a weak pawn, by means of xxe7 xxe7 e6 (or d4 directly) dx6, d4 and dx6. Generally speaking, one may note that all White's pieces are efficiently placed, which gives the first player a virtual lead of three tempi.}
\end{array}
\]

11 c4?!

11 e3!, with the idea 11...e6 12 d4 and d6, is interesting and probably critical. The same goes for 11 d2, aiming to jump to c4 (or e4) and then d6. These two plans underline the main drawback of 8...c6.

The text move, although quite normal, doesn't cause too much trouble in the long run.

11...e6

On 11...e6?! White can advantageously (and very temporarily!) conceed the bishop pair by playing 12 xxe6 xxe6 13 d4, when Black is left with no choice but to allow the capture on e6, as retreating the bishop would allow the crushing he1+.

12 he1 0-0 13 e7 xc4 14 xc5 xc8

The only move; but now if White doesn't act quickly he won't manage to draw any benefit from the strange configuration of his opponent's pieces.

15 d4

15 e7 is a double-edged move, since a subsequent ...e6 will keep the rook locked in. Here's a sample variation: 15...d6 16 d6 e6 17 g5 xdx6 18 xdx6 d5 19 dce4 e8 20 dxe6 fxe6 21 xg7 xg7 (21...dxe4?!)
22 \( \text{ed7 is dangerous for Black} \) 22 \( \text{xf3xc5} \). A second pawn is bound to fall, when material parity will be restored.

15...\( \text{a6} \) 16 \( \text{e4} \) 17 \( \text{d5} \) 18 \( \text{xf6+ gxf6} \) 18 \( \text{g4+ h8} \) 19 \( \text{d4 h5} \) 20 \( \text{xf6+ h7} \) 21 \( \text{g7+ h6} \) 22 \( \text{h4 e6} \) 23 \( \text{xex6 fxe6} \) 24 \( \text{g6+ h7} \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} \)

...and White had to content himself with perpetual check.

**Conclusion**

Nearly all the variations studied in this chapter lead to difficult positions for Black. Some options are practically losing, or at least dubious (3...f5?! and 3...\( \text{g4?!} \), for instance). Others, like 3...\( \text{f6} \) 4 dx \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{exe4} \), result in terrible endings for Black (but ones that can probably be held if the second player defends accurately).

We have realized through numerous examples that Black has a really tough task equalizing in the line 1 e4 e5 2 \( \text{xf3} \) d6 3 d4 \( \text{xf6} \) 4 dx \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{exe4} \) 5 \( \text{xd5} \). This surely explains why so few players are keen on defending the Black cause here and instead look for new horizons.
3 d4 exd4: Introduction and Larsen’s Variation

1 e4 e5 2 d3 d6 3 d4 exd4

With Black experiencing many difficulties with 3...d6, Philidor advocates have turned to an alternative line in 3...exd4 to rescue Black’s hopes. This natural capture actually came before 3...d6 in practice and has never been totally abandoned.

White’s two main moves are:

A: 4 wxd4  
B: 4 dxd4

Before examining the two possible recaptures, let’s take a brief look at White’s other attempts.

4 c4

4 c3?! is a sacrifice analogous to the Scotch Gambit, 1 e4 e5 2 d3 c6 3 d4 exd4 4 c3, with the nuance that the safest line for Black now is 4...d6 rather than 4...d5. In the Scotch Gambit this reply would be erroneous in view of 5 e5, which is senseless here. In fact 4...d6 is annoying for White. Carrying on playing in gambit-style with 5 d3 isn’t great, because after 5...dxc3 6 dxc3 etc. the bishop would be better posted at c4. If White plays differently with 5 g5 (5 wxd4 c6 is equal as the c3-pawn occupies the knight’s place) 5...e7 6 xf6 (or 6 wxd4 c6) 6...xf6 7 cxd4 0-0 then next up is ...c5 and/or ...g4 with good counterplay for Black.

Accepting the offer by playing 4...dxc3 is of course possible too, but not without risks:

a) 5 dxc3 d6 (5...c6 would this
time really transpose into a theoretical position of the Scotch Gambit) 6 \$c4
\$e7 7 0-0 0-0 and White has compensation for the pawn, but not more.

b) 5 \$c4?! is in the spirit of the Danish Gambit, 1 e4 e5 2 d4 exd4 3 c3 dxc3. Black can once more be greedy (but the danger increases!) or wiser. Thus if he calmly continues his development with 5...\$c6 followed by ...\$f6, ...\$e7 etc., he will virtually force White to recapture the pawn by \$xc3.

4...\$f6!

a) 4...\$c6?! gives White a chance to extract an opening advantage with 5 \$xd4, reaching an excellent version of the Scotch Game.

b) 4...\$g4?! allows 5 c3! with the ideas 6 \$b3 and of course 6 cxd4. In this event White gets an advantage, for example 5...\$xc3 6 \$b3 \$e6 7 \$xe6 fxe6 8 \$xe6+ \$e7 9 \$xc3 with better development for White and a black king which is a bit airy.

c) 4...\$e7 5 \$xd4 (5 c3?! \$f6 presents White with similar problems to 4 c3 \$f6; while 5 \$xd4 \$f6 6 \$c3 is Chapter 3) 5...\$f6 followed by ...\$c6, ...0-0 etc., reaches an equal position.

5 0-0

5 e5?! yields nothing but a pawn deficit: 5...\$xe5 (5...d5!? 6 \$xe5 \$e6 7 \$xe6 fxe6 followed by ...\$d5, ...\$d6 and ...0-0, and Black stands better.

5...\$e7

Naturally, 5...\$xe4?! is a perilous continuation:

a) 6 \$e1 f5 (not 6...d5? 7 \$xd5 \$xd5 8 \$c3 \$d8 9 \$xe4+ \$e7 10 \$hxd4 and the imminent pin along the d-file will cause Black problems) 7 \$g5 d5 8 \$xd4 dxc4! (other moves don’t complicate, and they leave White with a clear edge) 9 \$xd8+ \$xd8 10 \$f7+ \$e8 11 \$xh8. The h8-knight is in trouble, but so is the black one – the situation is unclear.

b) 6 \$xd4 banks on a lead in development rather than on the knight’s pin:

6...\$f6 7 \$e1+ \$e7 8 \$g5 0-0 9 \$c3 \$c6 10 \$h4 with good compensation for a mere pawn. The threats are \$xe7 and, above all, \$d3. On the provocative 10...h6, there could follow 11 \$xh6 (11 \$xe7? is too much! 11...hxg5 12 \$xg5 \$xe7 13 \$ce4 \$f5 wins)
11...d5! (11...gxh6? 12 wxh6 and the black kingside is decisively weakened) 12 hxg7 hxg7 13 wg5+ sh8 with perpetual check, or else excellent compensation for the piece after the brave 14 wh6+ sh7 15 edx5 wd6 16 wh5.

6 wxd4

6 edx4?! 0-0?! 7 dc3 transposes to the line 1 e4 e5 2 df3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 edx4 df6 5 dc3 ae7; in this case White has avoided 4...g6, but has had to choose the c4-square for his bishop. However, instead of 6...0-0, Black can seize the upper hand without much risk by playing 6...dc6.

6...dc6

White has nothing from the opening. The position after 6...dc6 could also have arisen from 4 wxd4, with White following up with solid but insipid play.

As a conclusion we can state that attempts other than 4 wxd4 and 4 edx4 don’t promise any opening edge. Black equalizes easily by means of 4...df6 followed by classical development with ...ae7, ...0-0 and ...dc6.

A) 1 e4 e5 2 df3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 wxd4

These days 4 wxd4 is a rare guest in tournament practice. White tries to maintain his queen in the centre and accelerate 0-0-0, often at the price of the two bishops.

An early queen sortie is usually not advisable. In the present case, however, two important factors speak in White’s favour: her majesty can’t be easily dislodged, and the white pieces can be brought out quite quickly.

We will now study:

A1: 4...df6
A2: 4...a6!?
First, a quick look at alternatives:

4...\(\mathcal{c}6\)

Or:

a) 4...\(\mathcal{d}7\) 5 \(\mathcal{g}5\) \(\mathcal{c}6\) 6 \(\mathcal{e}3\) is very slightly better for White. 6 \(\mathcal{d}2!\) is similar to 6 \(\mathcal{e}3\) albeit with one or two differences: on \(e3\) the queen vacates the d-file and following \(\mathcal{c}3\) and 0-0-0 White’s rook and Black’s queen are face to face on the same file – a situation favourable to White; on \(d2\), on the other hand, the queen isn’t subject to an attack by the knight sally \(\mathcal{d}6\)-g4.

5 \(\mathcal{f}4\) and 5 \(\mathcal{e}3\) are playable alternatives but don’t fundamentally alter the character of the position. The latter is less logical, though, since it doesn’t help to prepare the e4-e5 push. Furthermore, Black can gain a tempo by the attack \(\mathcal{d}6\)-g4 in certain cases. Curiously, I couldn’t find any game played later than 1954 with that move!

As for 5 \(\mathcal{c}4\) and 5 \(c4\), they more or less imply short castling. After Black’s traditional development for this kind of position, \(\mathcal{c}6\), \(\mathcal{d}6\), \(\mathcal{e}7\), the game is balanced.

b) 4...\(c5?\) is a serious strategic error. Black accepts chronic weaknesses at \(d6\) and \(d5\) just to chase the enemy queen from its dominant outpost. After 5 \(\mathcal{d}1\) followed by \(\mathcal{c}3\), \(\mathcal{c}4\), 0-0, White enjoys a clear superiority.

c) 4...\(\mathcal{g}4?!\) doesn’t really threaten \(\mathcal{x}f3\), as there would be several arguments in White’s favour: the pair of bishops; mobile e- and f-pawns; the semi-open g-file that would suit the white rook in the eventuality of Black castling short.

4...\(\mathcal{g}4\) should in fact be considered as a useful developing move. Black keeps the option of exchanging on \(f3\) if the circumstances make this swap favourable, but this isn’t a priority: 5 \(\mathcal{c}3\) (5 \(\mathcal{g}5\) only ‘seems’ to gain time; after 5...\(\mathcal{d}7\) Black is ready to repel the white queen and continue with \(\mathcal{e}7\)) and now on 5...\(\mathcal{d}6\) (the most logical, isn’t it?) 6 \(e5\) \(dxe5\) 7 \(\mathcal{xd}8+\) \(\mathcal{xd}8\) 8 \(\mathcal{xe}5\) \(\mathcal{e}6\) White has won a whole tempo in comparison with 4...\(\mathcal{d}6\) 5 \(e5\) etc., which is, in my opinion, only of psychological relevance! Black will hide his king on \(c8\) in the event of 0-0-0, and try to dry up the position by means of exchanges (...\(\mathcal{bd}7\)). This ending resembles a slightly better version (for White) of those that result from 4...\(\mathcal{d}6\), but White’s supremacy is still only symbolic.

5 \(\mathcal{b}5\)

It’s worth noting that this is in fact a transposition to the Steinitz Variation of the Ruy Lopez usually reached via 1 \(e4\) \(e5\) 2 \(\mathcal{f}3\) \(\mathcal{c}6\) 3 \(\mathcal{b}5\) \(d6\) 4 \(d4\) exd4 5 \(\mathcal{xd}4\).

5...\(\mathcal{d}7\) 6 \(\mathcal{xc}6\) \(\mathcal{xc}6\) 7 \(\mathcal{c}3\) \(\mathcal{f}6\)
8 \text{g}5

8 0-0 is equally playable, as in the famous game that follows: 8...\text{e}7 9 \text{d}5 \text{xd}5 10 \text{ex}d5 0-0 11 \text{g}5 \text{c}6 12 \text{c}4 \text{xd}5 13 \text{cx}d5 \text{e}8 14 \text{e}1 \text{a}5 15 \text{e}2 \text{c}8? 16 \text{ae}1 \text{wd}7 17 \text{xf}6! \text{xf}6 18 \text{w}4! \text{wb}5 19 \text{wc}4!! \text{wd}7 20 \text{wc}7!! \text{wb}5 21 a4! (21 \text{xb}7? \text{xe}2 22 \text{xe}2 \text{c}1+) 21...\text{xa}4 22 \text{e}4 \text{wb}5 23 \text{xb}7! 1-0 E.Adams-Torre Repetto, New Orleans 1920. A great example of the themes of deflection and back rank mate!

8...\text{e}7 9 0-0-0

White has been allowed to achieve his goals and he is left with the easier position.

A1) 1 e4 e5 2 \text{f}3 \text{d}6 3 d4 exd4 4 \text{xd}4 \text{f}6

A playable move that, however, permits the \text{e}5 push if White wishes to play it. In that case Black must be ready to enter a dull endgame. All the same, 5 e5 \text{dxe}5 6 \text{xd}8+ \text{xd}8 7 \text{xe}5 \text{e}6 is just equal. The fact that Black has lost the right to castle isn’t enough for his opponent to claim an edge.

5 \text{c}3 \text{e}7

This line gives mutual chances. The game should roughly follow the footsteps of Kotronias-Skembris (see Line A2): White will develop his queen’s bishop on e3, f4 or even g5; he will then castle long and retreat his queen to d2 or e3 when it is attacked by ...\text{c}6. Black will castle short and finish his development by means of ...\text{c}6, ...\text{e}6 or ...\text{g}4, and ...\text{e}8. Even though the position is in equilibrium, it nevertheless remains complicated and requires accurate handling. Here’s a rather recent illustration of this system:

6 \text{g}5 0-0 7 0-0-0 \text{c}6 8 \text{wd}2 \text{e}6 9 h4

9...\text{e}8?!

An inaccuracy which bears heavy consequences. 9...a6, preparing ...\text{b}5 while preventing White’s next move, was better.

10 \text{b}5! \text{a}6 11 \text{xc}6 \text{bxc}6 12 \text{d}4

Now White’s plan becomes crystal clear: f3-g4 and a kingside attack.

12...\text{d}7

12...c5 13 \text{dxe}6 \text{fxe}6 14 e5 obviously wasn’t to Black’s taste: 14...\text{xe}5 15 \text{e}3 with a clear plus.

13 f3 h6?!
Again a dubious decision since this move will create the eventuality of a lever (g4-g5). 13...\texttt{\texttt{Wb}}8, with the idea ...\texttt{\texttt{Wb}}4 (or ...\texttt{\texttt{Wb}}6) and ...\texttt{\texttt{Lab}}8 was preferable and possibly holdable for Black. 14 \texttt{\texttt{Ad}}3 \texttt{\texttt{d}}5 15 \texttt{\texttt{exd}}5 \texttt{\texttt{Qxd}}5

Or 15...\texttt{\texttt{cx}}d5 16 \texttt{\texttt{Qb}}3 when White will combine play on the dark-squared complex d4/c5 with his kingside assault.

16 \texttt{\texttt{Qxc}}6! \texttt{\texttt{Qxc}}6 17 \texttt{\texttt{Qxd}}5 \texttt{\texttt{Qxd}}5 18 \texttt{\texttt{Wxd}}5 \texttt{\texttt{Qxh}}4 19 \texttt{\texttt{Wxd}}8 \texttt{\texttt{Qxd}}8 20 \texttt{\texttt{f}}4

...was Rozentalis-Glek, Budapest 1996. White has a nice edge due to his opponent's dislocated pawns on the queenside.

A2) 1 e4 e5 2 \texttt{\texttt{Qf}}3 \texttt{\texttt{d}}6 3 d4 \texttt{\texttt{exd}}4 4 \texttt{\texttt{Wxd}}4 a6!? 5 \texttt{\texttt{Ag}}5

5 \texttt{\texttt{Af}}4 is less aggressive than 5 \texttt{\texttt{Ag}}5 but follows the same goal: if the queen retreats, its natural square is d2. From there it will either disturb the b1-knight (bound for c3), nor a1-rook (bound for d1), nor finally the c1-bishop if this has already left its initial home. After 5...\texttt{\texttt{Dc}}6 6 \texttt{\texttt{Wd}}2 \texttt{\texttt{Qf}}6 7 \texttt{\texttt{Dc}}3 \texttt{\texttt{Ae}}7 8 0-0-0 0-0 the chances are level. In this final position one may note that the queen would stand better on e3, as e4-e5 would then exploit the \texttt{\texttt{Dd}}1/\texttt{\texttt{Wd}}8 connection. If it had previously withdrawn to that square, however, White would have had to take into account the possibilities of ...\texttt{\texttt{Dg}}4 or ...\texttt{\texttt{Ah}}5.

5 \texttt{\texttt{Ac}}4 once again doesn't cause trouble to Black's development. In contrast to 4...\texttt{\texttt{Ad}}7 5 \texttt{\texttt{Ac}}4; the second player can even move his bishop to e6 or g4 without losing a tempo. After 5...\texttt{\texttt{Dc}}6 6 \texttt{\texttt{Dd}}3 \texttt{\texttt{Df}}6 7 h3 \texttt{\texttt{Ae}}7 was equal in Z.Almasi-Nevednichy, European Championship, Ohrid 2001.

5...\texttt{\texttt{Dc}}6 6 \texttt{\texttt{We}}3!? Or:

a) 6 \texttt{\texttt{Wc}}3 \texttt{\texttt{Df}}6 7 \texttt{\texttt{Db}}d2 \texttt{\texttt{Ae}}7 8 0-0-0 0-0 is equal; the formation of White's pieces is too artificial for the first player to claim an advantage. Also, after 7 \texttt{\texttt{Af}}6 \texttt{\texttt{Wxf}}6 8 \texttt{\texttt{Wxf}}6 \texttt{gx}f6 9 \texttt{\texttt{Dc}}3 f5...

...White must take care in this ending, as the black bishops could soon dictate events.

b) For 6 \texttt{\texttt{Wd}}2 see my comments after 4...\texttt{\texttt{Ad}}7 5 \texttt{\texttt{Ag}}5 \texttt{\texttt{Dc}}6 6 \texttt{\texttt{Wd}}2. The a-pawn is general better placed on a6 than on
a7, whereas the c8-bishop can be more ambitiously deployed than on d7. This means that 4...a6 should be a trifle stronger than 4...d7.

c) 6...\text{xd8} \text{xd4} 7 \text{xd4} \text{xd8} 8 \text{c4 h6} (8...\text{e8}! 9 \text{c3 f6} 10 0-0-0 and the plan of \text{He}1 followed by \text{e}5 is difficult to meet) 9 \text{c3 c6} 10 \text{f3}. The two bishops should guarantee Black an easy life in this endgame. Even though the encounter Rozentalis-Agdestein, Groningen 1993, ended with a White victory, I don’t believe Black has anything to fear here after 10...\text{c7}; he may even have an edge.

6...\text{e7} 7 \text{c3 f6}

The game I’ve chosen to follow is Kotronias-Skembris, Agios Nikolaos 1995. 7...\text{xe6}! is equal according to Kotronias, an opinion I share; swapping pieces is generally desirable for the side who has less space, with Black in the present situation. The continuation chosen by Skembris, however, is not inferior and keeps the game more complex.

8 \text{h3}!

Not 8 0-0-0?! \text{g4} and the queen is overloaded – the drawback of placing the queen on e3.

8...\text{e6}!

Precise timing is important. On the routine move 8...0-0?! then 9 0-0-0 with the idea \text{e}5 is strong. The following game convincingly illustrates this idea:

9...\text{xe6} 10 \text{e5} \text{xe8} 11 \text{h4} \text{c8} 12 \text{d3 f6} 13 \text{f4 f5} 14 \text{f2 dx5} 15 \text{xe5 cxe5} 16 \text{xe7 c3}+ 17 \text{xe7} 18 \text{xf8} \text{xf8} 19 \text{e1 g8} 20 \text{d5 cxd5} 21 \text{xd3 h8} 22 \text{e7 f8} 23 \text{xf5 c6} 24 \text{e5 f8} 25 \text{f3 f7} 26 \text{b3 d8} 27 \text{h5 f8} 28 \text{c4 b6} 29 \text{c2 a5} 30 \text{d5 f4} 31 \text{d1 c7} 32 \text{d1 f6} 33 \text{e1 c6} 34 \text{e7} 35 \text{g4 h6} 36 \text{f8 mate, L.Langner-I.Novak, Marianskie Lazne 1989.}

9 0-0-0 \text{d7} 10 \text{f4}!

Both players seem to tacitly agree to keep a maximum number of pieces on the board, and thus a maximum complexity to the game. 10 \text{xe7 fxe7} (with the idea of ...0-0-0) 11 \text{d5}!? was also worth consideration according to Kotronias, and I agree.

10...0-0 11 \text{b1}

11 \text{d5}!? was still a valid option.
11...\f6!?

12 \g5!

Going for the e6-bishop is mistaken. The swap will provide Black with a semi-open f-file for kingside operations and \d5 will be prevented forever.

Thus 12 g4!? with the idea of g5, h4-h5 etc., was more to the point. In that event Black would have had to look for counterplay on the queenside or on the centre without much hesitation.

12...\w7 13 g4 \ae8 14 \dxe6 fxe6

Covering the d5-square with a pawn while opening the f-file. This will be more useful to Black than the e-file was before.

15 \g3

Freeing the path for the f-pawn, while at the same time parrying the threat of ...\xc3.

15...\xc5! 16 \xe2

If 16 f3, 16...\xc3!? 17 \wxc3 e5 and Black plays against the weakness on f3.

16...\h4?! 17 \xh4?!

After this move White will cede important squares for nothing in return.

17 f4!? was the best choice. The strategy Black uses in the game would backfire: 17...\xg3 18 \dxe5 g5? (18...\w7 is balanced) 19 fxg5 \e5 20 \xe2 and \h5-f6+ leads to a disaster for Black.

17...\w7xh4 18 f4 g5!

A fantastic hammer-blow. Black takes control of the vital e5-square, while the weakening of his king is very relative. Indeed, none of the white pieces can approach the enemy monarch, which is anyway surrounded by its whole army.

19 fxg5?!

19 f5? loses after 19...exf5 20 gxf5 \xe4.

19 \g2 was correct. A possible follow-up is 19...gxf4 20 \dxf4 \w7g5 21
\textbf{The Philidor Files}

\[ \text{Hf1 e5 22 Dd5 Wxe3 23 Dxe3 Dd4 and De6-f4, when I believe the position is slightly in Black's favour.} \]

\[ 19...De5 \]

\[ 20 Dd4? \]

20 Dc3?! would also turn out badly for White after 20...Dxg4 21 hxg4 Wxh1 22 b5 Wxd1+ 23 Dxd1 axb5, when the two rooks are stronger than the queen. Moreover, the white pawns on e4, g4 and g5 are easy targets.

20 Wg3! was forced: 20...Wxg5 21 Ag2 Dc4 gives Black an edge since the g2-bishop looks silly and the dark squares in White's camp are weak.

\[ 20...Dxg4 21 We1 \]

The only move. Now 21...Df2 22 Hh2 Wxe4?? loses to 23 Hxf2.

\[ 21...Wxe1 22 Hxe1 Df2 23 Hh2 Dfxe4 \]

\[ 24 h4 e5 25 Db3 Hf4 26 Dxc5 Dxc5 27 b3 Dg7 28 Db2 a5 29 a3 Hef8 30 Dc4 Hg4 31 He3 Hff4 32 Heh3 c6?! \]

32...h6?? would have increased Black's advantage, for the reason given after move 39.

\[ 33 Ae2 Ah1 34 c4 De6 35 b4 Hd4 36 Dd3 Hxd3 37 Hxd3 Df4 38 Df5 axb4 39 axb4 \]

\[ 39...d5?! \]

The pawn duo had to be dislocated with 39...h6 in order to deprive White of any kind of counter-chances, something that he now cleverly finds.

\[ 40 cxd5 cxd5 41 Ac2 Ag2 \]

Or else the rook invades the 7th rank.

\[ 42 Hg2 Dg2 43 h5 h6 \]

Black's winning chances do not increase much after 43...Dxe3 44 h6+ Wh8 45 Ac8 b6 46 Ac3 Dg2 47 Dd2 Df4 48 Ae3 - the king is out of play, and if the knight moves then Ae6 forces the d-pawn's advance, leaving Black's central duo vulnerable.

\[ 44 g6 \]

Forced.

\[ 44...Df4 45 Ag4 e4 46 Ac3 e3 \]

This is played with the idea of ...d4, winning.

\[ 47 b5! \]

This move keeps White out of danger. Not 47 Dd4?? e2 48 Axe2 Axe2+ 49 Dxd5 Df4+ 50 Ac5 Dxe5 51 Dd2 Dc3 52 Ac7 Ac5 53 b5 Ac3 54 b6 Da4 55 Ac6 Ac6 56 Ac6 h5 and the pawn promotes.
47...b6

47...e2?? is obviously bad due to 48 d2, while after 47...d4+? 48 xd4 e2 49 xe2 xe2+ 50 c5 White has enough counterplay to save half a point.

The best winning attempt is 47...f6! and now:

a) 48 c2?? d4 and Black wins.

b) 48 b6? e7! 49 g7 (or 49 c8 d4+ and wins) 49...f7 50 d4 e2 51 xe2 xe2+ 52 xd5 c1!! 53 d6 b3 54 c7 a5 wins.

c) 48 d4!. The white king must play an active role in the ending, even if White has to sacrifice his bishop for the two black pawns. The reason Black can't win this endgame is that his king has to deal with the passed g-pawn and cannot become active. After 48...e2 49 xe2 xe2+ 50 xd5 the most probable outcome is a draw.

48 d4! e2 49 xe2 xe2+ 50 xd5

The players agreed on peace due to the possible lines 50...c3+ 51 c6 a4 52 c7, and 50...f4+ 51 c6 xg6 52 hxg6.

An instructive strategic lesson from Skembris, unfortunately spoiled by some inaccuracies. His dark-squared concept, even at the cost of some minor weakening, should have brought him victory, if only he had found the break 32...h6 or 39...h6.

B) 1 e4 e5 2 f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 xd4
This variation, named after Danish
Grandmaster Bent Larsen who prom-
oted it in the late 1960s, has almost
disappeared from practice. The posi-
tion reached after the bishop has been
fianchettoed is similar to the Sicilian
Dragon, 1 e4 c5 2 d3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4
exd4 d6 5 e3 e6. The difference lies
in the fact that the e-file is semi-open
rather than the c-file. This seems to
greatly favour White, who doesn’t
need to fear an attack along the c-file
once he has castled long. However,
Black, in return, can use his c-pawn for
the assault against the enemy king.

Before studying 4...g6 in depth, let’s
take a look at Black’s marginal at-
ttempts to deviate at move 4. These sec-
ondary lines can’t be ‘refuted’, but
some common sense shows us they are
inferior:

a) 4...d7?! prepares 4...c6 with-
out allowing the pawns to be doubled
after 5 exd6.

b) In comparison with the line
4...d6 5 c3 e7, which we will dis-
cuss later on, 4...e7?! permits the in-
sertion of 5 c4.

The resulting position is similar to
the Old Indian (1 d4 d6 2 c4 d6 3 c3
d7 4 e4 e5 5 d3 e7), where Black
has prematurely exchanged on d4. As a
consequence White has a larger spatial
advantage than with the pawn on c2.
In return, one might argue that Black
has gained the option of 5...d6 and
6...e7, but such a scheme of develop-
ment seems somewhat artificial to me.

c) 4...d5?! tries to equalize in the
centre, but such a move can’t work!
After 5 exd5 wxd5 6 w2+! (6 c3 b4
doesn’t yield anything tangible) 6...e7
7 b5 a6 8 c3 w6 9 f4 c6 10
d6+ xd6 11 xd6...

(see following diagram)

...White has a clear advantage due
to the pair of bishops and the knight on
a6 being out of play.
d) 4...\(\text{\textit{c6}}\) transposes to the Scotch where Black would have chosen 4...d6. It is, however, unanimously assumed that the developing moves 4...\(\text{\textit{c5}}\) and 4...\(\text{\textit{g6}}\) are more active and stronger in the Scotch Game. Here, 5 \(\text{\textit{c3}}\), 5 \(\text{\textit{c4}}\) and, finally, 5 \(\text{\textit{c4}}\) are all in White’s favour.

In conclusion, tries other than 4...\(\text{\textit{g6}}\) or 4...\(\text{\textit{g6}}\) give White an easy plus. Black increases his opponent’s options by playing 4...\(\text{\textit{d7}}\), 4...\(\text{\textit{e7}}\) or 4...\(\text{\textit{c6}}\), allowing, for instance, 5 \(\text{\textit{c4}}\). The problem with 4...d5?! is of another nature: Black is under-developed and badly prepared for this ‘central equalization’.

Back to 4...\(\text{\textit{g6}}\).

5 \(\text{\textit{c3}}\)

This is the main continuation, but let’s see how White can deviate from 5 \(\text{\textit{c3}}\) as there are many possibilities:

a) 5 h4!?!?

The choice of the coffeehouse player. The exchange sacrifice after 5...\(\text{\textit{f6}}\) 6 \(\text{\textit{c3}}\) \(\text{\textit{g7}}\) 7 h5 \(\text{\textit{xh5}}\) 8 \(\text{\textit{xh5}}\) \(\text{\textit{gxh5}}\) is a bit optimistic, but I don’t really see how to continue after Black’s 6th move.

On the other hand, after the insertion of 5 \(\text{\textit{c3}}\) \(\text{\textit{h6}}\)? (eccentric, but Black wishes to answer \(\text{\textit{e3}}\) with ...\(\text{\textit{g4}}\), while leaving his f-pawn unblocked) the move 6 h4 would be entirely justified.

b) 5 \(\text{\textit{c4}}\) initiates a quieter plan than the one based on queenside castling. Black can finish his development without hindrance: 5...\(\text{\textit{g7}}\) 6 0-0 \(\text{\textit{c6}}\) (or 6...\(\text{\textit{f6}}\), or even 6...\(\text{\textit{e7}}\) with mutual prospects; every way White deals with the question of his centralized knight leads to a comfortable game for Black) 7 \(\text{\textit{xh6}}\) (7 \(\text{\textit{e3}}\) \(\text{\textit{f6}}\) finishes development while attacking e4 and threatening 8...\(\text{\textit{g4}}\); while 7 \(\text{\textit{c3}}\) takes the natural
square from the b1-knight and Black just needs to avoid 7...\(\text{f}6\)! 8 \(\text{xc}6\) \(\text{xc}6\) 9 \(e5\) by playing 7...\(\text{ge}7\) 7...\(\text{xc}6\) gives Black good prospects of counterplay along the b-file.

c) 5 \(c4!\) (the \(c2-c4\) push constitutes the major alternative to 5 \(\text{dc}3\) 5...\(\text{g7}\) 6 \(\text{dc}3\) \(\text{dc}6\) 7 \(\text{ae}3\) \(\text{ge}7\) would transpose to a position that normally arises from a King's Indian, with the knight on \(e7\) rather than \(f6\).

![Chess Diagram]

6 \(\text{g}2\) \(\text{f}6\), into a Pirc Defence with a white kingside fianchetto, something that Black has to bear in mind when playing 4...\(g6\).

Other 5th moves for White are possible, but they restrict his future options and have no real interest. This is true for 5 \(c3\), which makes no sense right now, or for 5 \(\text{ae}2\) and 5 \(\text{d}3\), this final move placing the bishop on an inferior square.

5...\(\text{g7}\)

This system gives Black counterplay based on a quick ...\(f5\), but it's objectively inferior to the classical development and is thus much less common.

Here's a brief example that illustrates a positional trap it contains: 8 \(\text{ae}2\) (8 \(h4!\) is the strongest continuation according to theory) 8...0-0 9 0-0 \(f5\) 10 exf5?! (10 \(\text{wd}2!\)) 10...\(\text{xd}4!\) 11 \(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{xf}5\) 12 \(\text{ae}3\) \(\text{dx}e3\) 13 \(\text{fxe}3\) \(\text{xf}1+\) 14 \(\text{wx}f1\) \(\text{ae}6\) and Black was slightly better in Tal-Azmaiparashvili, Albena 1984.

It should be noted, however, that for those who find 5 \(c4\) annoying, there is no disadvantage in starting with 4...\(f6\) 5 \(\text{dc}3\) and only then 5...\(g6!\).

d) 5 \(g3\) will transpose, after 5...\(\text{g}7\)

![Chess Diagram]

We will now look at:

**B1: 6 \(\text{f}4!\)?**

**B2: 6 \(\text{ae}3\)**

Firstly, a brief summary of the alternatives:

**6 \(\text{c}4\)**

An inferior, but quite playable way to avoid 6 \(\text{ae}3\). White decides to castle short and places his bishop on its most active square. As for Black, he has two satisfactory ways to react: the aggressive 6...\(\text{dc}6\) and the more restrained 6...\(\text{xf}6\).

Or:
a) 6 g3 \( \text{d}6 \) 7 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 8 h3 0-0 (not 8...\( \text{d}5?! \)) 9 \( \text{g}5 \) 9 \( \text{e}2... \)

...leads to a Pirc Defence that promises reciprocal chances.

b) 6 \( \text{e}2?! \) is too mild to keep the initiative:

\[
6...\text{c}6 7 \text{e}3 \text{f}6 8 0-0 0-0 9 \text{e}1 \\
\text{(on 9 \text{d}2, 9...\text{e}8 10 f3 d5 should equalize, while 9 f4?! allows the pseudo-sacrifice 9...\text{d}xe4 10 \text{d}xe4 \text{e}7 when, thanks to the traffic-jam along the e-file, only Black can stand better: 11 \text{f}3 f5 12 \text{d}3 fxe4 13 \text{d}xe4 \text{b}4 14 \text{b}3+ \text{h}8 15 \text{f}3 \text{c}5 with an edge for Black, Yu Shaoteng-Ye Rongguang, Beijing 1995) 9...\text{e}8 10 \text{xc}6 \text{bxc}6 11 ...was equal in Karpov-Keene, Bad Lauterberg 1977.}
\]

c) For 6 h4?! \( \text{d}6 \) see note 'a' to White's fifth move.

6...\text{c}6

White must either retreat or consent to opening the b-file. The third option, 7 \( \text{e}3 \), reaches 6 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 7 \( \text{c}4 \), which tends to equality.

The alternative, 6...\( \text{d}6 \), speeds up Black's castling process before initiating more active operations (6...\text{e}7?! seems less good; true, the f-pawn remains free, but the knight – and often a concealed ...\text{e}8 – doesn't exert pressure on e4). After 6...\( \text{d}6 \) play usually goes this way: 7 0-0 0-0 8 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{d}6 \) (Meijers-Glek, German League 2001) or 8...h6 9 \( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{c}6 \) (Blees-Reinderman, Wijk aan Zee 1998) with mutual chances in either case. It's worth noting that the insertion of the moves ...h6 and \( \text{h}4 \) is 'neutral'. It doesn't favour either side, and as the bishop's retreat at \( \text{h}4 \) is 'automatic', it can be executed at any moment.

7 \( \text{xc}6 \) \text{bxc}6 8 0-0
Here Black has three moves at his disposal (to avoid 8...\texttt{D}f6? 9 e5! dxe5 10 \texttt{W}xd8+ \texttt{W}xd8 11 \texttt{A}x\texttt{f}7 when his pawn-structure is ruined). These are 8...\texttt{D}e7, 8...\texttt{B}b8, and the less ordinary 8...\texttt{W}h4. In all cases chances are shared equally.

B1) 1 e4 e5 2 \texttt{D}f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 \texttt{D}xd4 g6 5 \texttt{D}c3 \texttt{g}7 6 \texttt{f}4?!

This secondary line contains an interesting idea which is revealed if Black treats the position like the main line (B2). On the other hand, the bishop doesn’t defend its colleague on d4, so 6...\texttt{D}c6 becomes critical.

6...\texttt{D}c6!

6...\texttt{D}f6?! 7 \texttt{W}d2 0-0 8 0-0-0 \texttt{B}e8 9 f3 \texttt{D}c6 (threatening ...\texttt{D}xe4) 10 \texttt{D}xc6 bxc6 11 e5 is the above-mentioned nuance. As the capture is forbidden and 11...\texttt{D}h5?! 12 \texttt{g}5 not very appetizing, there only remains 11...\texttt{D}d5 12 \texttt{D}xd5 cxd5, which is double-edged. Black will use the b-file for his attack, while after the e-pawn has vanished, the long diagonal is cleared for the beast on g7. Black is probably going to have to invest a pawn or two, but he will gain decent compensation.

7 \texttt{D}xc6

Consistent, but compromising. The doubled pawns will be no handicap because they are mobile and control the neighbouring squares well. The opening of the b-file clearly benefits Black, and the following example shows how to best utilize this:

7...\texttt{b}xc6 8 \texttt{D}c4 \texttt{B}b8 9 \texttt{W}c1?!

9 \texttt{b}3 was better.

9...d5 10 exd5 \texttt{B}b4 11 \texttt{D}b3 \texttt{W}e7+ 12 \texttt{D}e3 \texttt{g}6

Preventing 0-0. In return for his pawn(s), Black can firmly seize command.

13 \texttt{W}d2?

This accelerates the debacle by losing two tempi. A better test of Black’s gambit consisted of 13 dxc6 \texttt{D}f6 14 \texttt{W}d1, with the idea of \texttt{W}f3 and 0-0-0, or \texttt{D}d1 if the second enemy rook appears on d8.

13...\texttt{D}d4 14 \texttt{W}c1 \texttt{D}f6 15 f3?!

Losing, but good advice is expensive here.

15...\texttt{h}6 16 \texttt{f}2 \texttt{g}4+ 17 \texttt{f}x\texttt{g}4 \texttt{W}f6+ 18 \texttt{g}1
18 \( \text{Ke1} \text{We5} \) 19 \( \text{Qd1} \text{Ke4} \) doesn’t change anything.

18...\( \text{Kd1}+!! \)

...and mate follows (Hazai-Sax, Hungary 1971).

B2) 1 \text{e4 e5} 2 \text{Qf3 d6} 3 \text{d4 exd4} 4 \text{Qxd4 g6} 5 \text{Qc3 Lg7} 6 \text{Le3 Qf6}  

a) 6...\( \text{Qe7}?! \) invites and strengthens the h4-advance in the event of opposite-side castling. Black isn’t ready for ...d5 or ...f5, and doesn’t exert pressure on the e4 spot, as we have already seen before: 7 \( \text{Wd2} \text{Qc6} \) (not ...d5? 8 0-0-0 dxe4 [or 8...\text{c6} 9 \text{exd5 Qxd5} 10 \text{Qdb5}! followed by the capture on d5] 9 \text{Qxe4} 0-0 10 \text{Qb5} and White will soon gain material on the queenside) 8 0-0-0 0-0 9 \text{h4} with a solid White edge, Ivkov-Fallone, Moscow Olympiad 1956.

b) 6...\( \text{Qc6} \) most often transposes to the main line with 6...\( \text{Qf6} \). For purists, since I don’t see any real drawback to 6...\( \text{Qf6} \), I would say that 6...\( \text{Qc6} \) is less precise. Indeed, Black loses the possibility of playing with ...c6 in some (rare) cases, whereas ...\( \text{Qf6} \) is almost compulsory.

7 \text{Wd2}  
a) 7 \( \text{Qc4}?! \) is dubious because Black will then gain several tempi by attacking the bishop, especially in the event of White castling long. One should also bear in mind the simplifying threat of ...\( \text{Qxe4} \) followed by ...d5, as well as the immediate 7...\( \text{Qg4} \).

b) 7 \( \text{Qe2}?! \) suffers from a serious lack of ambition: 7...0-0 8 0-0 (8 \( \text{Wd2}?! \) \( \text{Qe8} \) 9 \text{f3} d5 is at least equal for Black) 8...\( \text{Qe8} \) 9 \text{Qf3} (or 9 \text{f3}?! d5 when the double threat of ...\text{c5}...d4 and ...\text{dxe4} already gives Black the upper hand) 9...\( \text{Qbd7} \).

Black is fully equal here: White’s
light-squared bishop occupies an uncomfortable square, while Black enjoys free piece play and will continue with either ...Qc5 or ...Qe5.

c) 7 f3?! often transposes to the main line, but although f2-f3 is compulsory, the timing of it is important and Black can profit from the inversion of moves: 7...0-0 8 Qd2 (8 Ac4 Qc6 – or 8...c6 – is pleasant for Black; the bishop is going to be harassed by Black’s foot soldiers, which as a consequence will speed up his counterplay) 8...d5! (obviously the routine moves 8...Qc6 and 8...Ke8 lead us back to the ‘right track’, for White that is!).

Had White already castled long, he would have been able to answer 9...d5 with 9 Qb3, gaining a big advantage. Clearly this is no longer the case, and instead White must choose 9 e5 (if 9 exd5 Qxd5 10 Qxd5 Qxd5 with an edge for Black; or 9 0-0-0 dxe4 10 fxe4 c6 11 h3 Qbd7 and again Black is slightly better, Renet-A.David, Clichy 1995) 9...Qd7 (threatening the fork ...c5, ...d4) and then:

a) 10 Qxd5 Qxe5 11 Qb5? (11 Qc3! is almost Ciocalteu-Keene, below) 11...c6 12 Qdc7 Qh4+ 13 Qf2 Qe7 14 0-0-0 cxb5 15 Qxa8 Qb6 was clearly better for Black in Jacek-Bakalarz, Ceske Budejovice 1995. 13 Qf2 would have been stronger, as although the horse remains imprisoned after 13...Qe7 14 Qxa8 cxb5 15 0-0-0 b6, at least it will sell its skin for a higher price! Even so, Black’s position should still be preferable.

b) 10 e6 Qe5 11 e7 Ke7 12 Qxd5 Qh4+ 13 Qf2 Qd8 14 Qc3 was equal in Ciocalteu-Keene, Wijk aan Zee 1974. I was rather recently confronted by 13 Qf2? Qd8 14 Qc3 c5 15 Qb3 b6 16 Qd1 (Tirard-Bauer, French League 2002). Here, instead of 16...Qbd7?! 17 Ke2 when White stood a bit better, 16...Kc7 or 16...Qe7 was to be preferred. The knight sally to d5 doesn’t bring much due to ...Qb7, and Black will roll on with ...Qbc6, ...Ke6 and ...Qad8 with a comfortable game.

7...0-0 8 0-0-0

For 8 f3?! see 7 f3.

After 8 0-0-0 Black’s only two real options are:
1 e4 e5 2  d3 d6 - 3 d4 exd4: Introduction and Larsen’s Variation

B21: 8...  c6
B22: 8...  e8

In contrast with a comparable position in the Sicilian Dragon, 8...g4?! would be wrong here on account of 9  g5, when all of Black’s replies are unsatisfactory.

B21) 1 e4 e5 2  f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4  xd4 g6 5  c3  g7 6  e3  f6 7  d2 0-0 8 0-0-0  c6

The aim of the text move, in comparison with the richer 8...  e8 which we will examine later on, is to simplify the position with a knight swap. Black plans ...xd4, generally followed by ...c5 and ...a5.

9 f3

Not 9  xc6?! (why open the b-file?)
9...xc6 10  h6  xh6 11  xh6  b8 12 f3  e7 13 h4  d5! 14 h5  b4 (or 14...xb2?! 15 xb2  b4+ 16  c1  xc3 with sufficient counterplay for Black) 15 e5 was Filipenko-Vorotnikov, Yurmala 1980, and here 15...xb2+ 16  d2  f5! would have led to an unclear position.

B21: 11  e3
B212: 11 h4?!
B213: 11  b1
B214: 11  g4

B211) 1 e4 e5 2  f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4  xd4 g6 5  c3  g7 6  e3  f6 7  d2 0-0 8 0-0-0  c6 9 f3  xd4 10  xd4  e6 11  e3

Much less popular than the three alternatives, this follow-up nevertheless
contains some venom. Black must play accurately in order to survive.

\[ \text{xc2} \] 19...\text{xd4} 20 \text{xd4} \text{c7} 21 \text{a6} (protecting the knight by 21 \text{b2} or 21 \text{d2} inspires less confidence) 21...\text{xc3} 22 \text{xc8} \text{xc8} although Black still has compensation (but not 22...\text{xa3+}? 23 \text{d2!} \text{xc8} 24 \text{a1} and White wins).

\text{h6}

11...\text{e8}

To keep the fianchetoed bishop, but in order to do this Black must make some concessions. Alternatively:

a) 11...a6 12 \text{h6} \text{hx6} 13 \text{hx6} \text{e7} 14 h4 \text{d7} with an edge for White, V.Gurevich-Klovans, German League 1996. Black is ready to meet h5 with ...g5; his position, albeit a bit inferior, remains quite defensible.

b) 11...c6! is a little suspicious, but the consequences of 12 \text{xd6} \text{a5} 13 \text{c5} b5 deserve a more thorough examination. One may note that had Black pushed his c-pawn one square further, this would have vanished! The game A.David-Pachow, Pardubice 1999, quickly ended after 14 a3 \text{d7} 15 \text{xc6} \text{xc8} 16 \text{xb5} \text{c7} 17 \text{a4} \text{ab8} 18 \text{a6}, when peace was agreed even though 18...\text{xb2} would have been decisive.

Maybe 17 \text{d4} was a better way to consolidate the material advantage: 17...\text{ab8} 18 \text{d3} \text{b7} 19 b4 (19 b3? loses to 19...\text{xb3} 20 \text{g7} \text{c5} 21 \text{d6}

12...\text{hx6}!

After the alternative 12...\text{h8}, 13 \text{g5!} threatens e5, a general trade on d8, and \text{e4} which would win an exchange. Then 13...\text{c8} (13...\text{d7}?) 14 g4 a6 15 h4 b5 16 h5 and White’s attack was faster in the game Isupov-Vorotnikov, Vladivostok 1990.

13 \text{hx6} \text{e7} 14 h4 \text{f8} 15 \text{g5} \text{g7} 16 g4 a6

(Pedzich-Klovans, Pardubice 1995). Black’s queen defends well and carrying on the attack for White isn’t an easy job. The position is roughly equal.

B212) 1 e4 e5 2 \text{f3} d6 3 d4 exd4 4 \text{xd4} g6 5 \text{e3} \text{g7} 6 \text{e3} \text{f6} 7 \text{d2} 0-0 8 0-0-0 \text{c6} 9 f3 \text{xd4} 10 \text{xe4} \text{e6} 11 h4?!

It’s a random choice at first sight, but the advances of the g- and h-pawns
both have their pros and cons. Pushing the h-pawn weakens the g3-square and allows ...h5. Moving the g-pawn leaves f3 vulnerable. This wouldn't matter so much if many variations weren't leading to endings after a continuation such as ...\texttt{W}a5, \texttt{Q}d5 \ldots \texttt{W}xd2, \texttt{R}xd2. After a queen trade a wild attack is out of the question and weaknesses such as this might gain in relevance.

![Diagram](image)

The main continuation – as well as the sub-variations – of the illustrative game \textit{Nicht-Van de Weijer, correspondence 1991}, tend to demonstrate that 11 g4 is more precise.

11...\texttt{c}5

Conceding a target on d6 for the sake of chasing the d4-bishop from its ideal outpost. This seemingly suicidal move is motivated by emergency: if Black couldn't dislodge the dominant bishop at once, the white attack would be much quicker than Black's.

11...h5 would probably call for the reply 12 \texttt{Q}d5 \texttt{Q}e8, after which White is going to prepare the break g4, while if 12...\texttt{R}xd5 13 exd5 then the second white bishop will take part in the assault from d3; in either case White has an edge.

12 \texttt{Q}e3

12 \texttt{Q}xf6? would be a criminal act of greed. To win the d6-pawn White cedes all the dark squares and will no longer have anything to oppose to the mighty g7-bishop. Demonstrating a Black win from that position is of course impossible, but good luck to the fools who wish to defend the White side!

12...\texttt{W}a5

13 \texttt{W}xd6?

13 \texttt{Q}b1 is a more positional treatment, threatening at any moment to kill Black's aggressive inclinations with a knight jump to d5; but then 13...\texttt{R}fd8 14 \texttt{Q}d5 \texttt{W}xd2 15 \texttt{Q}xf6+ \texttt{Q}xf6 16 \texttt{R}xd2 d5! equalizes – the reason why 11 g4 should have been selected. (Instead, White keeps an edge after 16...b6?! 17 c4 a6 18 a4.)

After 13 a3? the ...b5-b4 push will cause more damage: for example, 13...\texttt{R}fd8 14 \texttt{g}5 a6 15 g4 b5 16 \texttt{Q}b1? (walking into the bombs!) 16...b4 17 \texttt{Q}d5 \texttt{R}xd5 18 exd5 \texttt{Q}db8 19 a4 \texttt{Q}d7...
...with a clear advantage to Black in Petruschin-Kimelfeld, USSR 1979; he is reaching his goal whereas White’s counter-attack has only just begun. The moves ...\texttt{wx}a4, ...\texttt{Bc}3 and ...\texttt{Bb}6xa4 are all looming, with a devastating attack.

With the text move White wins a pawn, but generates tactical complications that, in view of his lead in development, favour Black.

13...\texttt{Dd}7?

Opening the bishop’s diagonal, while at the same time defending c5. However, Black has a much stronger option in 13...\texttt{Dxe}4!!. That such an opportunity escaped the attention of two correspondence players is extraordinary. This knight move achieves the same purpose as 13...\texttt{Dd}7, but in a much more efficient way! For example:

a) 14 \texttt{Dxe}4? \texttt{Bd}8 and White has to face up to giving up his queen, as 15 \texttt{Wxc}5 \texttt{Bxb}2+ 16 \texttt{Bxb}2 \texttt{Wxa}2+ 17 \texttt{Bc}3 \texttt{Bxd}1, with the threats ...\texttt{Bc}8 or ...\texttt{Wa}1+, is hopeless.

b) After 14 fxe4 \texttt{Bxc}3 the bishop is taboo in view of 15 bxc3 \texttt{Wxa}3+ 16 \texttt{Dd}2 \texttt{Bd}8. Black, moreover, threatens ...\texttt{Wxa}2 and ...\texttt{Bxb}2+ and enjoys a clear advantage.

One should also note the possibility of 13...\texttt{Bxa}2??, profiting from the immunity of the c5-pawn because of ...\texttt{Bh}6+.

14 \texttt{Wd}2

14 \texttt{Bd}2? is too artificial, as the following variation illustrates: 14...\texttt{Be}5! 15 \texttt{Wd}3 c4 16 \texttt{We}3 b5 17 h5 b4 18 hxg6 fxg6 and Black’s attack proceeds unabated. (Instead 18...\texttt{Bxc}3?! 19 gxh7+ \texttt{Bh}8 20 \texttt{Bxc}3 \texttt{Bxc}3 21 \texttt{Wxc}3+ \texttt{Wxc}3 22 \texttt{Bxc}3 isn’t so clear.)

14...b5

15 \texttt{Bh}6!

15 a3?! is a move designed to slow down Black’s attack. Its drawback is that it creates a hook and can actually have a reverse effect, e.g. 15...b4 16 \texttt{Bd}5 \texttt{Bf}8 17 \texttt{Bf}4? \texttt{Bxb}2+ 18 \texttt{Bxb}2 \texttt{Wxa}3+ 19 \texttt{Bb}1 b3 20 c3 b2 21 \texttt{Bxb}8 \texttt{Bxb}8 22 \texttt{Bb}2 \texttt{Bd}5 when White’s king cannot run away via d3 and succumbs. 15...\texttt{Dd}4!?

A speculative sacrifice in order to keep the ‘monster’ bishop.

Instead, 15...\texttt{Bh}8? is bad on account
of 16 \(\text{Qd5!}\), but the greedy 15...\(\text{b4!}\) would have restored the material balance: 16 \(\text{Qb1 Qfd8!}\) (16...\(\text{fxa2?!}\) passes
the initiative to White after 17 \(\text{Qxg7}\) \(\text{Rxg7}\) 18 \(\text{h5}\)) 17 \(\text{Qxg7}\) \(\text{Rxg7}\) 18 \(\text{h5}\) \(\text{Qf8}\)
19 \(\text{Wf4}\) \(\text{Qxd1+}\) 20 \(\text{Qxd1}\) \(\text{Qg8}\) and Black isn’t worse; he will soon take on a2 and
White’s pieces are strangely placed (although not 20...\(\text{Wxa2??}\) 21 \(\text{h6+}\) \(\text{Qg8}\) 22
\(\text{Wf6}\)).

16 \(\text{Qxb5?}\)

16 \(\text{Qxf8!}\) was better than opening the b-file. Black would have had compensation in this case, but I don’t see any forced win. 16...\(\text{Qxf8}\) 17 a3 \(\text{b4}\) 18
\(\text{Qb1}\) holds for White, who of course has an extra exchange for his suffering. After 18...\(\text{Qxb8}\) Black dominates the dark squares and won’t be worried by an
enemy attack. Following 19 \(\text{b3}\) (19 \(\text{c3}\) \(\text{bxc3}\) 20 \(\text{Qxc3}\) \(\text{Qb3}\)\)) 19...\(\text{Wc7}\) he certainly has some play, but is it enough?

17...\(\text{Qxb5}\) 18 \(\text{Qxb5}\) \(\text{Wxa4}\) 19 \(\text{c3}\) \(\text{Qb3}\) 20 \(\text{Qa3}\) gives White a large plus.

18 \(\text{Qxd7}\) \(\text{Wb4?!}\)

This is an inaccuracy which fortunately doesn’t spoil very much. Instead, Black can win by playing 18...\(\text{Qxb2!}\) and now:

a) 19 \(\text{Qxb2}\) \(\text{Wb4+}\).

b) 19 \(\text{Qxe6}\) \(\text{fxe6}\) 20 \(\text{Qe2?}\) (20 \(\text{Qxb2}\) \(\text{Wb4+}\) 21 \(\text{Qa2}\) \(\text{Qxc3}\) wins) 20...\(\text{Qb1+}\) 21
\(\text{Qxb1}\) \(\text{Wb6+}\) and mate in four.

c) 19 \(\text{Qd5}\) doesn’t save White:
19...\(\text{Qb1+}\) 20 \(\text{Qxb1}\) \(\text{Qb8+}\) 21 \(\text{Qa2}\) \(\text{Qxd5+}\) 22 \(\text{exd5}\) \(\text{Qb2}\) 23 \(\text{Qa3}\) (or 23 \(\text{Qa1}\) \(\text{c3}\)
24 \(\text{Qxc3}\) \(\text{Qxc3}\) 25 \(\text{Qd3}\) \(\text{Qxc2}\) 26 \(\text{Qa3}\) \(\text{Qb4}\) etc.) 23...\(\text{Qc3}\) 24 \(\text{Wf4}\) \(\text{Wb4+}\) 25 \(\text{Qxb4}\) \(\text{Qxb4}\).

An amusing mate, isn’t it!

19 \(\text{Qb5 axb5}\)

19...\(\text{Qxb5??}\) would allow White to escape after 20 axb5 axb5 21 \(\text{Wg5!}\) (21
\(\text{Qb1}\) ? 22 \(\text{Qa4}\) \(\text{Wxa4}\) 23 \(\text{c3}\) \(\text{Qb3}\) and 21 \(\text{Wf4?}\) \(\text{Qxc3}\) 22 \(\text{Qxc3}\) \(\text{Qxc3}\) would
win for Black) 21...\(\text{f6}\) 22 \(\text{Qxd4}\) \(\text{Qa1+}\) 23
\(\text{Qb1}\).

20 \(\text{Wf4!}\) \(\text{Qxa4}\) 21 \(\text{Qxd4!}\) \(\text{Qxb2+}\) 22 \(\text{Qd2!}\)

Or 22 \(\text{Qd1}\) \(\text{Qxc3}\) 23 \(\text{Qd3}\) \(\text{Qd3}\) (it was still possible to go wrong:

16...\(\text{Qfb8}\)

16...\(\text{Qxc3?}\) 17 \(\text{Qxc3}\) \(\text{Wxb5??}\) allows
18 \(\text{Wg7}\) mate.

17 \(\text{a4}\)

17...\(\text{Qxd7}\) loses to 17...\(\text{Wb4}\).

17...\(\text{a6}\)
The Philidor Files

23...\textbf{b}1+ 24 \textbf{e}2 \textbf{w}x\textbf{c}2+ 25 \textbf{d}2 \textbf{w}c4+ 26 \textbf{f}2 \textbf{w}xh1 27 \textbf{w}f6 \textbf{w}f1+ 28 \textbf{g}3! \textbf{w}e1+ 29 \textbf{f}2 \textbf{w}a1 30 e5 and mate is unavoidable) 24 \textbf{w}d2 \textbf{a}xd3 25 \textbf{c}xd3 (25 \textbf{w}xd3 \textbf{w}a1+ 26 \textbf{a}1 a3 with an imminent promotion) 25...\textbf{w}a1+ 26 \textbf{w}c1 \textbf{w}d4 and the a-pawn is a monster.

22...\textbf{cxd4}

\hspace{1cm}

23 \textbf{d}1

23 \textbf{w}f6? loses to 23...\textbf{w}xc3+ 24 \textbf{c}1 \textbf{w}b2+ 25 \textbf{d}1 d3!, covering g7!

23...\textbf{w}b4+ 24 \textbf{e}2

After 24 \textbf{c}1? Black wins with 24...d3!! 25 \textbf{w}f6 d2+ 26 \textbf{a}xd2 \textbf{w}b1 mate.

24...\textbf{a}5?!

24...\textbf{e}5?! 25 h5 allows some swindling chances, but 24...\textbf{e}c4+! 25 \textbf{f}2 \textbf{w}b6 would have simplified Black’s task.

25 \textbf{w}f6 \textbf{w}b5+ 26 \textbf{d}2

Or 26 \textbf{f}2?! \textbf{w}e5 27 \textbf{w}xe5 \textbf{c}xe5 28 \textbf{f}4 \textbf{w}eb5 29 \textbf{c}xb8 \textbf{w}xb8+ with a similar end to the game.

26...\textbf{w}e5

26...\textbf{w}b4+? yields only a draw by repetition after 27 \textbf{c}1! \textbf{w}b1+ 28 \textbf{d}2 \textbf{w}b4+ (but not 27 \textbf{c}3? \textbf{d}xc3+ 28 \textbf{c}xc3 \textbf{w}d6+ 29 \textbf{d}5 \textbf{a}xd5+ 30 \textbf{e}d5 \textbf{w}xd5+ 31 \textbf{e}e2 \textbf{w}a2+ 32 \textbf{e}3 \textbf{b}3+ 33 \textbf{f}4 \textbf{w}d2+ 34 \textbf{g}3 \textbf{w}xh6 and Black wins).

27 \textbf{x}e5 \textbf{x}e5 28 \textbf{f}4 \textbf{e}b5 29 \textbf{x}b8 \textbf{x}b8 30 \textbf{d}3?

After 30 \textbf{f}2 a3 31 \textbf{a}1 a2 32 \textbf{c}1 the paralyzed rook leaves little hope of salvation.

30...a3 0-1

B213) 1 e4 e5 2 \textbf{f}3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 \textbf{x}d4 g6 5 \textbf{c}3 \textbf{g}7 6 \textbf{e}3 \textbf{f}6 7 \textbf{w}d2 0-0 8 0-0-0 \textbf{c}6 9 f3 \textbf{a}xd4 10 \textbf{a}xd4 \textbf{e}6 11 \textbf{b}1

Another possibility that deserves a mention. White considers that his opponent can’t do without ...\textbf{c}5 and thus decides on a useful move that doesn’t weaken anything.

11...\textbf{c}5 12 \textbf{a}3 \textbf{w}a5 13 \textbf{d}5!

13 h4?! is illogical: 13...h5!? (13...b5?! 14 \textbf{d}5! \textbf{w}xd2 15 \textbf{xf}6+ \textbf{a}xf6 16 \textbf{a}xd2 \textbf{f}d8 17 \textbf{f}4! gives White an edge, but 13...\textbf{f}d8! equalizes – cf. Line B214) 14 \textbf{h}6 \textbf{f}d8? (14...\textbf{h}7 15 \textbf{a}xg7 \textbf{x}g7 16 \textbf{e}2 \textbf{a}d8 17 \textbf{f}4! is slightly better for White according to Prandstetter, but why should Black waste a tempo on 14...\textbf{h}7 - ? Instead 14...\textbf{f}b8, planning ...\textbf{b}5, seems more to the point) 15 \textbf{g}5!
\textbf{\textit{1 e4 e5 2 \textit{\textup{d}f}3 d6 - 3 d4 exd4: Introduction and Larsen’s Variation}}}

\textit{\textbf{D7}} 16 \textit{\textup{A}xf6 \textit{\textup{A}xf6 17 \textit{\textup{D}d}5 \textit{\textup{W}d}8 18 \textit{\textup{B}b}5! \textit{\textup{A}xd}5 19 \textit{\textup{A}xd}7 \textit{\textup{A}xa}2+ 20 \textit{\textup{A}xa}2 \textit{\textup{W}xd}7 21 \textit{\textup{W}xd}6 \textit{\textup{W}a}4+ 22 \textit{\textup{B}b}1 \textit{\textup{A}d}4 23 \textit{\textup{D}d}3 \textit{\textup{W}b}5 24 \textit{\textup{B}b}3 \textit{\textup{W}e}2 25 \textit{\textup{W}g}3 \textit{\textup{A}f}2 26 \textit{\textup{W}g}5 \textit{\textup{b}5 27 \textit{\textup{D}d}3 \textit{\textup{A}d}4 28 \textit{\textup{W}d}2! \textit{\textup{W}xd}2 29 \textit{\textup{A}xd}2 and White won in Prandstetter-Plachetka, Trenčianske Teplice 1985.}

Move inversions are common here; 13 \textit{\textup{g}4 transposes to note ‘a’ to White’s 13th in Line B214.}

\textit{\textbf{13...\textit{\textup{W}xd}2 14 \textit{\textup{D}xf}6+ \textit{\textup{A}xf}6 15 \textit{\textup{X}xd}2 \textit{\textup{H}fd}8 16 \textit{\textup{A}e}2}}

If 16 \textit{\textup{c}4 then 16...\textit{\textup{a}6 with the idea of ...\textit{\textup{b}5 and counterplay.}}

\begin{center}
\textbf{We’ve reached the most severe test for the variation 8...\textit{\textup{B}c}6 and 9...\textit{\textup{A}xd}4. In our featured game in this line, White will bravely advance his king towards the centre, where it will be safe and even manage to join the assault against its counterpart!}
\end{center}

\textit{\textbf{11...\textit{\textup{c}5 12 \textit{\textup{A}e}3 \textit{\textup{W}a}5}}}

\begin{center}
\textbf{13 \textit{\textup{A}h}6!}
\end{center}

Or:

\begin{enumerate}
\item 13 \textit{\textup{A}b}1 \textit{\textup{H}fd}8? (losing precious time; 13...\textit{\textup{b}5! with the idea 14 \textit{\textup{D}d}5 \textit{\textup{W}a}6 and Black is fine) 14 \textit{\textup{A}e}2 \textit{\textup{b}5 15 \textit{\textup{D}d}5! \textit{\textup{W}a}4 16 \textit{\textup{A}c}3 \textit{\textup{W}a}5 17 \textit{\textup{h}4 \textit{\textup{b}4 18 \textit{\textup{D}d}5 \textit{\textup{A}xd}5 19 \textit{\textup{exd}}5 \textit{\textup{D}d}7 20 \textit{\textup{h}5 gave White a clear plus in Ernst-Plachetka, Gausdal 1985.}}
\end{enumerate}
Compare this with the game Petruschin-Kimelfeld (quoted in the notes to Line B212) This time White’s attack is by far the more menacing.

b) 13 a3?! also deserves attention: 13...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qd8}}}\) (13...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{Re8}}}?!\) doesn’t meet the demands of the position; after 14 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qb5}}}\) White was much better in Nisipeanu-Djuric, FIDE World Ch., Las Vegas 1999) 14 g5 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{De8}}}\) (or 14...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{Dd7}}}?!\) 15 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qb5}}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Wb6}}}\) 16 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Wxd6}}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Dc5}}}\) 17 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Wxb6}}}\) axb6 18 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Wxd8}}}+\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qxd8}}}\) 19 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qc7}}}\) – giving back the pawn in order to extinguish Black’s activity – 19...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qxf3}}}\) 20 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qxe6}}}\) fx6 21 c3 with a nice edge in the ending, due to the pair of bishops and the possibility of a later king march on the queenside: c2-b3-c4-b5!) 15 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qd5}}}\) and now:

b1) In view of his backward d-pawn – and the strongpoint on d5 associated with it – Black should avoid 15...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{Wxd2}}}+\) 16 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qxd2}}}\), after which a possible continuation is 16...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qxd5}}}\) 17 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qxd5}}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Dc7}}}\) 18 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qd2}}}\) d5 (or 18...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{De6}}}\) 19 c3 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Rc5}}}\) 20 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qc4}}}\) 19 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qxc5}}}\) dx4 20 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qxd8}}}+\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qxd8}}}\) 21 fx4 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{De6}}}\) 22 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qxa7}}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qxg5}}}\) 23 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qg2}}}\) with a large edge for White. 19...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qxe6}}}\) 20 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qe7}}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qe8}}}\) 21 exd5 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qxe7}}}\) 22 dx6 represents a lesser evil, but White has still won a pawn.

b2) 15...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qa4}}}!\) 16 c3 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qxd5}}}!\) (preventing \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Wc2}}}\), as White obviously wishes to recapture with a piece on d5) 17 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Wxd5}}}\) b5 and Black’s (counter) play seems quite decent to me.

13...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qxh6}}}\)

The inferior 13...\(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qd8}}}\) leads to trouble for Black: 14 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qxg7}}}\) \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qxg7}}}\) 15 h4 h5 16 gxf5? \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qhx5}}}\) 17 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qg1}}}\) b5 18 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Wg5}}}\) b4 19 \(\text{\textbf{\textit{Qb1}}}\) with a big advantage to White, Yurtachev-Gulko, Frunze 1985.
concludes that White has a large advantage, but if one carries on the analysis it transpires that Black is okay: 20...\textit{Exe}5! 21 \textit{Qd}3 \textit{Wd}4 (with ideas of ...c4, ...\textit{Qc}4 or even ...\textit{Xxe}4) 22 \textit{Qxe}5 (other moves are worse) 22...\textit{Wxb}2+ 23 \textit{Qd}2 \textit{dxe}5...

22...\textit{C4}

Or 22...\textit{Xxb}2 23 \textit{Xxe}6! and the rook landing on d7 or d8 will be decisive.

23 \textit{h}4! \textit{Xxb}2 24 \textit{Qf}4

But not 24 \textit{Xxe}6? \textit{Wc}5+ 25 \textit{Qf}4 \textit{fxe}6 26 \textit{Xd}7 \textit{Wf}8 when Black has the advantage.

22...\textit{Exa}2?!

Better is 18...\textit{Xxb}2 19 \textit{Qxb}2 \textit{Wb}4+ 20 \textit{Qc}1 \textit{Wxc}3 21 \textit{Qhd}1 c4! 22 e5 (22 \textit{g}5?!

\textit{Qf}5 23 exf5? \textit{Wa}1+ 24 \textit{Qd}2 c3+) 22...h5 (to play ...\textit{Qf}5 in case White captures on h5) 23 \textit{Wd}4 \textit{Wxf}3 24 \textit{gxh}5, although the advantage is still White’s.

19 \textit{Wf}6

After this point an improvement for Black is difficult to find.

19...\textit{Qe}6

19...\textit{c}4 20 \textit{Qhd}1 \textit{Wa}1+ 21 \textit{Qd}2 \textit{Wxb}2 22 \textit{Qb}1 \textit{Wa}3 23 \textit{Xxb}8 \textit{Xxb}8 24 \textit{h}4 and the white king is safe whereas its counterpart can see imminent danger.

20 \textit{Qhd}1 \textit{Wa}1+ 21 \textit{Qd}2 \textit{Wf}5

After 21...\textit{Wxb}2? 22 \textit{Qb}1 \textit{Wa}3 23 \textit{Xxb}8 \textit{Xxb}8 24 \textit{Xxe}6 \textit{fxe}6 25 \textit{Wxe}6+ a check on e5 or d6 will net the b8-rook.

22 \textit{Qe}3!

24...\textit{Qb}6

Or 24...\textit{Wc}7 25 e5 \textit{We}7 26 \textit{Qe}4. Even without queens White has mating ideas.

25 \textit{Qd}8 \textit{Xb}8 26 \textit{Xxb}8 \textit{Xxb}8 27 h5 \textit{gxh}5 28 \textit{gxh}5 \textit{Qe}8

Mate is looming after 28...\textit{Wxh}5 29
\[Ag1+ \text{Qf8} 30 \text{Qd5! Wh2+ 31 Qg3 Wd2+ 32 Qe5!} \]

29 h6 \text{Qf8} 30 \text{Qg1 Wc7+ 31 e5 1-0}

...and Black resigned. This convincing demonstration seems to spell the end of 9...\text{Qxd4}. Black players should thus probably come back to 9...\text{Me8} if they want to persist with the fianchetto variation.

9 \text{f3}

9 \text{Qg5!?} is an original idea tried with success by Hicham Hamdouchi versus yours truly: 9...\text{Qc6} 10 \text{Qde2 b5} 11 \text{Qg3} and now 11...\text{b4} (instead of my 11...\text{a6?}) 12 \text{Qd5 Qb8} 13 \text{h4 Qe6} 14 \text{h5 Qxd5 15 exd5 Qe5 is unclear.}

After 9 f3 we will look at:

B221: 9...\text{a6}
B222: 9...\text{Qc6}

In Van Mil-Reinderman, Sonnevanch 1993, Black deviated with...

9...\text{d5?}

An idea borrowed from the Dragon Sicilian, where the position is almost identical (there is a black pawn on e7 rather than c7), but also radically different! Here the c-file is closed and so White's king will never be worried.

Instead, 9...h5? is a drastic way to

This move forces f2-f3 – which of course was part of White’s intentions in any case, while it could be said that Black could do without ...\text{Me8}. That is
prevent g4, but the remedy is worse than the illness. White can now react by playing 10 h3, having in mind g4 (anyway) and \( \text{Qd5}. \) Once the f6-knight is eliminated, the capture on h5 will cause damage.

10 \( \text{Qb3} \) c6 11 \( \text{Ah6} \) \( \text{Ah8} \)

Revealing an idea behind 8...
Black can decline the disadvantageous trade of bishops. Unfortunately for him, the attack won’t come along the h-file.

12 exd5 cxd5 13 \( \text{Qxd5} \)

13 \( \text{Ac4!?} \) profits from the pin, but the game continuation is convincing enough.

13...\( \text{Qc6} \)

Or 13...
14 \( \text{Qxd5} \) \( \text{Qxd5} \) 15 \( \text{Qxd5} \) \( \text{Qe1+} \) 16 \( \text{Qd2} \) \( \text{Qe8} \) 17 \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{Qc6} \) 18 \( \text{Qc1} \) with a clear advantage.

14 \( \text{Qc3} \)

White has simply netted a pawn for nothing. Moreover, Black’s back rank is weak and the game finished abruptly:
14...
15 \( \text{Qc4} \) \( \text{Qe5} \) 16 \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) 17 \( \text{Qxd7} \) \( \text{Qfxd7} \) 18 \( \text{Qxe1} \) (not 18 f4? \( \text{Qg4} \))
18...
19 \( \text{Qd5} \) \( \text{wa6} \) 20 \( \text{Qb1} \) \( \text{Qac8} \) 21 \( \text{Qb4} \) \( \text{Qc6} \)?? (but 21...
22 \( \text{Wh4} \) \( \text{Qxe1} \) 23 \( \text{Qxe1} \) \( \text{Qe6} \) would only have prolonged the agony) 22 \( \text{Qxf8+} \) \( \text{Qxf8} \) 23 \( \text{Qe7} \) mate.

B221) 1 e4 e5 2 \( \text{Qf3} \) d6 3 d4 exd4 4 \( \text{Qxd4} \) g6 5 \( \text{Qc3} \) \( \text{Qg7} \) 6 \( \text{Qe3} \) \( \text{Qf6} \) 7 \( \text{Qd2} \) 0-0 8 0-0-0 \( \text{Qe8} \) 9 f3 a6 10 g4

10 h4 b5?! (10...
11 \( \text{Qh6} \) \( \text{h8} \) 12 \( \text{Qg5} \) \( \text{b7} \) 13 h5 \( \text{Qbd7} \) 14 g3 \( \text{Qg7} \) 15 hxg6 \( \text{fxg6} \) 16 \( \text{Qh3} \) \( \text{Qf8} \) 17 \( \text{Qd5} \), as given by Khalifman and Semkov in Opening for White According to Anand (Vol.1), when White is much better.

10...b5?!

10...
11 \( \text{Qg5} \)

11 \( \text{Qh6} \) is stronger than the text because the future sacrifice \( \text{Qh5} \) gains in force. Indeed, after... \( \text{ gf5; } \) \( \text{gf5} \), the threat of \( \text{Qg1+} \) will be lethal. 11...
11...
12 h4 \( \text{Qbd7} \) 13 h5 c5

From this position, two practical examples diverge. In the main text we
are following the game Moingt-Levitt, Clichy 1986.

14...gxf5!

Or 14...b3 b4 and now:

a) 15...b2!? c5 16...xd6 (after 16...e2 c4 17...d4 c3 18 bxc3 bxc3 19...xc3 White has grabbed a pawn at the cost of a vulnerable king; following ...wa5 or ...xc8 Black has excellent compensation) 16...xf3 17...xd8 (or 17...f4? xxe4!! 18...xd8+...xd8 when the threat of ...e1+ wins back the queen, leaving Black with the advantageous endgame) 17...xd8 18...xd8...xd8 19...xc5...g5 20...xb7...d4 and Black will regain his pawn and stand a bit better.

b) 15...d5!?...xd5 16...xd5...b6 (16...e5? 17...f4 and Black can’t move a single muscle) 17...xg6 fxg6! and the position is messy. This adds weight to the argument for 15...h6, when 15...fxg6 is met by 16...c4+.

c) 15...h6 is a sacrifice that deserves attention. If Black rejects it with 15...hxg6, then 16...d5 will see the White attack reach its goal first. Instead 15...bxc3 16 gxf7+...xf7 17 bxc3 was Joksic-Lehman, Plovdiv 1975.

The position remains sharp, and even a queen swap, after say 17...we7 18...xd6...xd6 19...xd6, wouldn’t guarantee Black an easy life: White would have three pawns and threats such as...c4+ and...xc5. As well as 17 bxc3, both 17...xd6!?...xb2+ 18...b1...e5 19...xc5...xd6 20...d6...c8 and 17...xc3!? were worth considering. In each case White has reasonable compensation for the small material deficit.

14...gxf5 15...xf5

15...h8?!

After 15...b4! 16...g2...h8 17 h6...f8 18...e2 d5 White doesn’t have enough for the invested piece.
16 \textit{\textbackslash w}xd6 b4 17 h6 \textit{\textbackslash a}f8 18 \textit{\textbackslash w}f4 \textit{\textbackslash w}a5?
18...\textit{\textbackslash e}e7! was still winning.
19 \textit{\textbackslash w}h4 \textit{\textbackslash e}e7?
19...\textit{\textbackslash w}b6 was required, when the position remains unclear.

\textbf{B2221: 10 g4 introduction}
\textbf{B2222: 10 g4 \textit{\textbackslash d}e5?!}
\textbf{B2223: 10 g4 a6!}
\textbf{B2224: 10 h4}

Firstly, a look at other possibilities for White. Joachim-Bauer, Bad Zwesten 2002, continued...

10 \textit{\textbackslash b}1

Alternatively:

a) 10 \textit{\textbackslash d}xc6?!. This move has already been examined without the inclusion of f3 and ...\textit{\textbackslash e}e8, and it is still erroneous here to open the b-file. Black has an easier game, as he can continue ...\textit{\textbackslash e}6, ...	extit{\textbackslash a}b8 or ...	extit{\textbackslash w}b8-b4, and eventually even ...d5. An example: 10...bxc6 11 \textit{\textbackslash a}h6 \textit{\textbackslash a}h8 12 \textit{\textbackslash d}c4 \textit{\textbackslash e}e6 13 \textit{\textbackslash a}xe6 \textit{\textbackslash x}e6 14 \textit{\textbackslash x}e1 \textit{\textbackslash w}b8 15 b3 \textit{\textbackslash w}b4 and Black seized the initiative in Vega Holm-Barbero, Spanish Team Ch. 1993.

b) 10 \textit{\textbackslash c}c4?!. We have already seen that \textit{\textbackslash c}c4 doesn't meet the demands of the position. The bishop will be a target for the enemy pieces and pawns (10...\textit{\textbackslash d}e5), and thus a catalyst for the black attack.

10...a6 11 h4

and now:

11...\textit{\textbackslash d}e5??
11...d5!, contrary to the ...d5-thrust in Van Mil-Remerman, here levels the game. Indeed, the queen is protected well enough this time, so 12...dxe4 is possible on 12 Qb3.

12 Qg5
The only way to conduct the assault on the kingside. After 12 Qe2 the move Qb1 would be a pure waste of time.

12...b5?
I disliked the pin after 12...h5 13 Wf4, but following 13...c6 White is deprived of the d5-square and Black, who can consider ...b5-b4, ...c5 and so on, isn't worse.

13 h5 c5 14 Qb3 c4

...and Black's position falls apart.

15 h6!
A finesse that escaped my attention. This little guy won't be hanging anymore when White grabs on d6.

15...h8
If 15...f8? 16 Qd5 Qed7 17 Qc5!!

16 Wxd6?
16 Qc5! would have given White a superior ending after 16...b4 17 Qd5 dxc5 18 Qxf6+ Qxf6 19 Wxd8 Qxd8 20 Qxd8+ Qxd8 21 Qxd8. Attempts by Black to deviate are even worse.

16...Wxd6 17 Qxd6 cxb3 18 Qxf6
This wasn't my opponent's original intention, but 18 Qxf6 Qxf6 19 Qxf6 bxc2+ 20 Qxc2 Qe6 followed by ...Qd7 and ...g5 traps the rook!

18...Qxf6 19 Qxf6 bxc2+ 20 Qxc2 Qb7
...with an edge that I managed to convert.

Actually, my opponent had started with 6 f3 when, shame on me, I didn't equalize at once with an early ...d5!. To my credit, I should say that my book wasn't finished, and I thus didn't have the opportunity to consult it!
B2221) 1 e4 e5 2 ∆f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 ∆xd4 g6 5 ∆c3 ∆g7 6 ∆e3 ∆f6 7 ∆d2 0-0 8 0-0-0 ∆e8 9 f3 ∆c6 10 g4

White’s most popular choice.

10... ∆xd4?!

10...c5?! is interesting: 11 g5! (11 ∆b5?! ∆xd4 12 ∆xd4 c6 13 g5 ∆h5 14 ∆xg7 ∆xg7 15 ∆xd5 cxd5 16 ∆xe8 ∆xe8 17 exd5 was unclear in Rasmussen-F.Andersen, correspondence 2000) 11... ∆h5 12 ∆xd5 ∆xd4 13 ∆xd4 ∆xd4 14 ∆xd4 ∆xg5+ 15 ∆d2! (15 f4 ∆h4 16 ∆e3 ∆g4 was messy in Pritimaki-Vorotnikov, Lvov 1983) 15... ∆d8 (or 15... ∆e5 16 f4 ∆xe4 17 ∆b5 ∆e6 18 ∆xe8 ∆xd5 19 ∆xd5 ∆xd5 20 ∆xd5 and White won in Kallmeyer-F.Andersen, correspondence 2000 - Black’s position is hopeless for a correspondence game!) 16 ∆h6 ∆d6 17 ∆g1 (17 ∆c4?!) 17... ∆f6 (maybe 17...c6 puts up more resistance, e.g. 18 ∆b6 ∆c5, or 18 ∆xh5 cxd5 19 ∆xd5 ∆f4+ 20 ∆b1 ∆e6 with some play) 18 ∆b5 ∆e5 19 ∆c4 ∆xd5 20 ∆xd5 ∆xh8 21 ∆xg6+! hxg6 22 ∆xg6+ ∆xh8 23 ∆xf7 with a large advantage for White, Dvoirys-Vorotnikov, Moscow 1985.

11... ∆e6

11...c5?! condemns the d6-pawn for the sake of generating counterplay: 12 ∆f2! ∆a5 13 ∆xd6 ∆d7 14 ∆d2 ∆b6 15 ∆b1 ∆e6 16 ∆d5 (Nisipeanu-Negulescu, Romania 1995) gives White a clear plus according to Nisipeanu and Stoica, an opinion that I share.

12 g5

Rajskij-Kagan, Minsk 1985, is an illustration of Black’s chances in this line: 12 h4 c5 13 ∆f2 a6 14 ∆xd6 ∆d7 15 ∆d2 ∆a5 16 a3 b5 17 ∆d5 b4 18 ∆b1 ∆ab8 19 ∆g3 ∆xd5 20 ∆xb8 ∆xb8 21 ∆xd5 bx3 22 ∆c4 ∆xb2+ 23 ∆c1 ∆xc2+ and White resigned.

12... ∆h5 13 ∆xg7 ∆xg7 14 h4

14... ∆e7

Or:

a) 14... ∆h5? is senseless. White plays 15 ∆g1 followed by f4 and ∆e2, after which the knight has to withdraw.

b) 14...c6?! is interesting. Black plans ...b5-b4, followed by the freeing ...d5, so the obvious 15 ∆xd6 is practically forced. After 15... ∆a5 16 a3 ∆ad8 17 ∆b4 ∆xd1+ 18 ∆xd1 ∆c7 Black has
some compensation for the sacrificed pawn. 16...\texttt{Wa3?!} is also possible. The ending resulting from 16...\texttt{Wxa3} 17 \texttt{bxa3 \textbf{Ad8} (or 17...\texttt{Qh5}) is a bit better for White, but Black has fair chances to hold; and there's an alternative in 16...\texttt{Wb6, in order to probe White's kingside via e3 or f2.}

\textbf{15 f4 c6}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{game.png}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{16 \texttt{Be2!}}
\end{center}

16...\texttt{Wxd6?! \texttt{Wxd6} 17 \texttt{Ax6} \texttt{Qh5} is okay for Black.}

\begin{center}
\textbf{16...\texttt{Ad8} 17 \texttt{Af3} f6}
\end{center}

The sharper 17...\texttt{b5} also favours White: 18 \texttt{f5 b4} 19 \texttt{Be2} \texttt{gx5} (or 19...\texttt{d5} 20 \texttt{f6} \texttt{wc5} 21 \texttt{Af4}) 20 \texttt{exf5} \texttt{cxf5} 21 \texttt{Ax6c} with a solid plus in both cases.

\begin{center}
\textbf{18 h5}
\end{center}

White has a clear advantage, Rodin-Meister, Podolsk 1992.

\textbf{B2222) 1 e4 e5 2 \texttt{Qf3} d6 3 d4 exd4 4 \texttt{Qxd4} g6 5 \texttt{c3} \texttt{gg7} 6 \texttt{e3} \texttt{Qf6} 7 \texttt{Wd2} 0-0 8 0-0-0 \texttt{Be8} 9 f3 \texttt{Qc6} 10 g4 \texttt{Qe5?!} 11 \texttt{Be2} a6}

This was considered a very sharp and critical variation until the game Rytshagov-Meijers dismissed it completely (see the next note). In the main text we are following the game \textbf{Sax-Adorjan, Hungarian Ch. 1970.}

\begin{center}
\textbf{12 \texttt{Qg5}}
\end{center}

Or:

\begin{itemize}
\item a) 12...\texttt{g5! is a good move: 12...\texttt{Qh5 (or 12...\texttt{Qd7} 13 \texttt{f4} \texttt{Qc6} 14 h4 with a strong attack, Arkhipov-Klovans, M"unster 1993) 13 f4! \texttt{Qg4} 14 \texttt{Qg1 c5} 15 \texttt{Qb3} \texttt{Qxc3} 16 bxc3 (not 16 \texttt{Wxc3? \texttt{Qxf4!}) 16...\texttt{Qxe4} 17 h3 \texttt{Qg3} 18 \texttt{Af3} \texttt{Qa4} (18...\texttt{Qe7 wouldn't have brought much relief: 19 hxg4 \texttt{Qxh1} 20 \texttt{Qh2, or 19 \texttt{Qxc5} \texttt{Qxh1} 20 hxg4 \texttt{Qg3} 21 \texttt{Qxd6 with a large advantage to White) 19 \texttt{Qxc5} \texttt{Qxh1} 20 \texttt{Qxh1} \texttt{Qxa2} 21 \texttt{Qb1} \texttt{Qa4} 22 \texttt{Wxd6! (22 \texttt{Qd5 brought White a win on move 49 in Rytshagov-Meijers, Mezers 2000) 22...\texttt{Wxd6} 23 \texttt{Qxd6...}}}
\item b) 12...\texttt{h6! \texttt{Qh8} 13 \texttt{Qg5} is more accurate than the text move for reasons we've already discussed. The straightforward 13 h4 is playable as well: 13...\texttt{b5} 14 \texttt{h5 c5} 15 \texttt{Qf5} b4! 16 \texttt{Qd5} \texttt{Qxd5} 17 \texttt{Wxd5} \texttt{Qc6} 18 \texttt{Wxd6 \texttt{Wf6} (with the threat of 19...\texttt{Qd3}) and the position is unclear. A game Cherniaev-}
\end{itemize}
Vorotnikov, Moscow 1996, continued 19 g5 \(\text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{D}}}}}d+3) 20 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{D}}}}}d+2 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{W}}}d+8}} (20...\text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{W}}}xb2??}}) 21 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{W}}}f+8! \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{X}}}xf8}}} 22 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{E}}}e7}} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{M}}}d8}}) 21 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{W}}}xd8}} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{M}}}axd8}} 22 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{C}}}xd3}} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{G}}}xf5}}. \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{W}}}h+e's bishop is blocked in on \textit{h6} whereas its counter-part fires down on the queenside. Black is certainly not worse.}}

c) 12 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{H}}}h4}} b5 13 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{H}}}h6}} transposes to Cherniaev-Vorotnikov above. Conducting the assault with only pawns lacks punch: 13 h5?! c5 14 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{B}}}b3}} c4 15 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{D}}}d4}} b4 followed by 16...c3 and Black’s attack is already well advanced. There’s also 12...c5 13 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{B}}}b3}} c4 14 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{D}}}d4}} b5 when Black’s counterplay is again taking shape.

12...b5 13 h4 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{B}}}b7}} 14 h5 c5 15 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{F}}}f5i?}}

Again we see this sacrifice. Although its worth is hard to evaluate, it at least has the merit of taking the initiative over to White.

15...\text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{G}}}xf5}} 16 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{G}}}xf5}} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{H}}}h8}}

16...b4! gives Black the edge: 17 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{Q}}}a4}} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{A}}}c6}} 18 h6 and now:

a) 18...\text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{A}}}xd4?}} 19 h\text{\textit{\text{\texttt{g7}}}} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{A}}}b5}} 20 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{A}}}h6} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{D}}}ed7}} 21 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{A}}}xh7!!} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{A}}}xh7}} (not 21...\text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{A}}}xh7??}}) 22 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{A}}}xb5}} – threatening 23 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{W}}}h2+} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{G}}}g7}} 24 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{W}}}h6+} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{G}}}g8}} 25 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{G}}}xf6} and 26 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{G}}}g1+ –}

b) 18...\text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{H}}}h8}} 20 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{D}}}b6} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{A}}}xe4!!}} (in order to cover \textit{d6} when taking the knight) 21 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{A}}}xa8} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{G}}}xf3!}}. The knight on \textit{a8} can’t escape and Black will get two minor pieces for the rook, with his king being rather secure.

17 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{G}}}g1}}

17...\text{\textit{\text{\texttt{G}}}g8?!}

17...\text{\textit{\text{\texttt{F}}}f8!} was more apt way to defend, as you can verify yourself! After the inferior text move White has the better of it.

18 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{F}}}c4} b4 19 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{A}}}a4}} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{N}}}xe4}} 20 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{A}}}xd8}} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{A}}}xd2}}

21 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{H}}}h6} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{A}}}axd8}} 22 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{H}}}xg7+} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{G}}}xg7}} 23 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{G}}}xg7}

17...\text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{G}}}g8?!}}

The alternative capture 25 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{F}}}xe5!} was superior, since after 25...\text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{A}}}e4}} 26 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{F}}}f3}} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{A}}}c3}}, White can win by means of 27 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{A}}}xd6}} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{A}}}xf3}} 28 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{A}}}xd8}} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{A}}}xa4}} 29 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{E}}}e6} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{G}}}g6}} 30 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{A}}}c6} 31 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{E}e8}}} 32 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{A}xe8}}} etc. (and if 32...\text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{G}}}xf6??}} 33 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{M}a8)}}.}

25...\text{\textit{\text{\texttt{F}}}f3} 26 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{A}}}xf3} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{F}}}f3}} 27 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{C}}}xc5}} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{E}}}e8}} 28 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{H}}}h2+}} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{G}}}g6}} 29 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{A}}}xa6} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{E}}}e4}} 30 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{F}}}f2?}}

30 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{A}}}d2} h5 31 c3 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{B}}}c3+}} 32 \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{A}}}xc3} \text{\textit{\text{\texttt{\textbf{A}}}xf4}}
33 b4 gave better chances of salvation. It seems in the game that only Black’s time trouble prevented White from losing.

30...\textit{g}4 31 \textit{d}2 h5 32 c3 bxc3+ 33 \textit{x}c3 h4 34 b4 \textit{f}5?

A serious mistake. Black should have played 34...h3 – the passed pawn is very dangerous and must be pushed as soon as possible. In this case the result would probably have been reversed: after 35 b5 \textit{e}2 36 b6 (or 36 \textit{f}1 h2) 36...\textit{xf}2 37 b7 h2 38 b8\textit{W} h1\textit{W} 39 \textit{g}8+ \textit{f}5 40 \textit{g}5+ \textit{e}4 Black escapes checks and wins.

35 b5 \textit{xf}4 36 b6 \textit{f}3+! 37 \textit{c}4 \textit{xf}2 38 b7 \textit{xa}2??

The final error. 38...\textit{c}2+! would have saved the draw after 39 \textit{b}3! (not 39 \textit{b}5?? \textit{e}2+ 40 \textit{a}4 \textit{xa}2+ 41 \textit{b}3 \textit{a}1 42 \textit{b}2 h3 43 b8\textit{W} h2 and Black should win!) 39...\textit{c}1 40 \textit{a}3 h3 41 b8\textit{W} h2 42 \textit{b}5+ \textit{f}4 43 \textit{b}4+ \textit{f}5 44 \textit{b}5+ when a draw by repetition is an appropriate conclusion to this hard-fought game.

39 \textit{b}4 \textit{a}5 40 b8\textit{W} \textit{c}5+ 41 \textit{d}4 \textit{e}5

...and White won.

\textbf{B2223) 1 e4 e5 2 \textit{f}3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 \textit{xd}4 g6 5 \textit{c}3 \textit{g}7 6 \textit{e}3 \textit{f}6 7 \textit{W}d2 0-0 8 0-0-0 \textit{e}8 9 f3 \textit{c}6 10 g4 a6!}

The only way I have found to repair the whole Black system. Now if...

11 \textit{e}2

...then Black continues with...

11...\textit{xd}4 12 \textit{xd}4 \textit{e}6

...intending ...b5 and/or ...c5, which looks playable for Black. (12...c5? drops a pawn to 13 \textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}4 14 \textit{xd}6.) For example:

13 g5 \textit{h}5 14 \textit{xc}7 \textit{xc}7 15 h4 b5 16 f4

If 16 a3 \textit{b}8!?.

16...b4 17 \textit{d}5 \textit{xd}5 18 exd5

The alternative 18 \textit{xd}5 deserves consideration, even though Black seems to obtain a decent position in all lines: 18...\textit{We}7 19 \textit{c}4 (19 h5 \textit{gxh}5 20 \textit{hxg}5 \textit{gxh}5, or 19 \textit{f}3 \textit{We}6) 19...c6 20 \textit{xc}6 \textit{ac}8 21 \textit{wd}5 \textit{xc}5 22 \textit{wd}3 \textit{xe}4 23 \textit{xe}4 \textit{xe}4 24 \textit{xa}6 \textit{xf}4 25 \textit{xc}6 \textit{f}5 with counterplay against White’s kingside pawns.

18...\textit{We}7 19 \textit{de}1 \textit{We}3 20 \textit{g}4 \textit{W}g3

Or 20...\textit{c}5, when White may be a bit better, but probably no more.
B2224) 1 e4 e5 2 d3 f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 
\text{\textcopyright}xd4 g6 5 \text{\textcopyright}c3 \text{\textcopyright}g7 6 \text{\textcopyright}e3 \text{\textcopyright}f6 7 \text{\textcopyright}d2 
0-0 8 0-0-0 \text{\textcopyright}e8 9 f3 \text{\textcopyright}c6 10 h4 

10 h4 represents the alternative way to start hostilities. Essentially White wants to open the h-file, but having g4-g5 at his disposal may prove helpful. However, beginning with g4 prevents defences based on ...h5.

b) 10...\text{\textcopyright}xd4?! is a swap that doesn’t fit in well with ...\text{\textcopyright}e8. Indeed, after the follow-up ...\text{\textcopyright}e6 and ...c5 that this simplification induces, the rook would prove more useful on d8. After 11 \text{\textcopyright}xd4 \text{\textcopyright}e6 12 h5 c5 13 \text{\textcopyright}e3 White retains an edge: for example, 13...\text{\textcopyright}h5 14 \text{\textcopyright}h5 followed by g4 or \text{\textcopyright}xd6, while after 13...\text{\textcopyright}a5 there’s 14 hxg6 fxg6 15 \text{\textcopyright}b5 with the idea of \text{\textcopyright}e2 and \text{\textcopyright}c4 which helps to exploit the d5 outpost.

c) There is no drawback to playing 10...a6 before ...\text{\textcopyright}e5 given the fact that Black doesn’t fear a swap on c6.

10...\text{\textcopyright}e5

Black has some alternatives here:

a) 10...h5!? would be an improved version of 9...h5. Stopping the h-pawn in this way would, however, still be far from ideal:

a1) 11 \text{\textcopyright}g5 (with the idea of \text{\textcopyright}d5; this motif doesn’t appear in the Sicilian Dragon because, with a black pawn still on e7, the f6-knight isn’t pinned) 11...\text{\textcopyright}d7 12 \text{\textcopyright}f4 \text{\textcopyright}e7 with an apparently playable game after, for example:

13 \text{\textcopyright}c4 \text{\textcopyright}xd4 14 \text{\textcopyright}xd4 \text{\textcopyright}e5, 13 \text{\textcopyright}d5 \text{\textcopyright}xd5 14 exd5 f6 15 dxc6 fxe5 16 \text{\textcopyright}c4+ \text{\textcopyright}h7 17 hxg5 bx.c6, or 13 \text{\textcopyright}db5!?.

a2) Another common theme is the breakthrough with g2-g4, but here 11 g4? hxg4 12 h5 fails, as White isn’t well enough prepared after 12...\text{\textcopyright}xh5.

Another point of 10...a6 is to avoid the immediate \text{\textcopyright}h6, which is crucial for the viability of the system. After 11 g4 \text{\textcopyright}e5 12 \text{\textcopyright}e2 one comes back to a position treated in Line B222 (see note ‘c’ to White’s 12th move).

11 \text{\textcopyright}h6

The critical continuation, against which no remedy has yet been found.

11 \text{\textcopyright}b1 is a prophylactic move that is not really required here, but even so, it’s worth checking out the game Hardicsay-Prinz, Böblingen 1985, which provides much excitement: 11...a6 12
\( \text{A}g5! \text{ b5} 13 \text{ h}5 \text{ A}b7 14 \text{ hxg6} \text{ hxg6?!} \) (14...fxg6 was to be preferred, so that the h-file remains only half-open; perhaps Black feared 15 \text{ d}5, but 15...c6 16 \text{ d}x6+ A\text{xf6} seems acceptable) 15 \text{ d}b3! (with the idea of A\text{a}5!) 15...b4 16 \text{ d}d5 A\text{xd}5 17 e\text{xd}5 A\text{wb}8 (17...a5?! would allow A\text{b}5 and A\text{f}4-h4) 18 A\text{f}4 (White has a clear plus) 18...A\text{ed}7 19 A\text{c}4 A\text{wb}6 (Black’s counterplay is far too slow, a bad sign in opposite-side castling situations) 20 A\text{h}6 A\text{h}8 21 A\text{d}4!? (21 A\text{h}4! was stronger, with the threat of A\text{e}3) 21...a5? (here 21...A\text{c}5?! was required, and after 22 A\text{d}5! A\text{h}7?! [if 22...A\text{e}5 23 A\text{f}8!! wins, as does 22...A\text{e}5 23 A\text{g}7!! A\text{h}5 24 A\text{h}6 A\text{g}7 25 A\text{g}x7 A\text{xc}4 26 A\text{xh}5 A\text{a}3+ 27 b\text{xa}3 A\text{c}3 28 a4 b3 29 A\text{xb}3 A\text{ab}8 30 A\text{d}2] then 23 A\text{g}7!

\[ \text{w}3 25 A\text{h}4 A\text{xg}7 26 A\text{xh}7+ A\text{f}6 \] (this is similar to the line with 21...A\text{c}5, but there’s a nuance...) 27 A\text{h}4+ A\text{g}7 28 A\text{de}1 A\text{d}2 (28...A\text{c}5 allows mate in 12. Fasten your seat belt and let’s go!) 29 A\text{h}6+ A\text{f}6 30 A\text{f}4+ A\text{g}7 31 A\text{h}7+! A\text{xh}7 32 A\text{xf}7+ A\text{h}6 33 A\text{h}1+ A\text{g}5 34 f4+ A\text{g}4 35 A\text{xg}6+ A\text{xf}4 36 A\text{h}4+ A\text{e}3 37 A\text{g}3+ A\text{d}2 38 A\text{d}3+ A\text{e}1 39 A\text{f}1+ A\text{d}2 40 A\text{c}1 mate!) 29 A\text{xe}8 A\text{xe}8 30 A\text{b}5 and White wins (the difference!).

\( \text{c} 22...A\text{f}2 \) (the game continuation) 23 A\text{f}8!.

...is the most efficient way to eliminate the h8-bishop! But after 23...A\text{g}7 24 A\text{xg}7 A\text{e}3 25 A\text{h}4 A\text{xg}7 26 A\text{xh}7+ A\text{f}6, thanks to his good control over the dark squares, Black manages to survive) 22 A\text{f}5! and now:

a) 22...A\text{gx}f5 23 A\text{g}5+ A\text{h}7 24 A\text{f}8+ and White wins.

b) 22...A\text{h}7 23 A\text{g}7! A\text{xg}7 24 A\text{xg}7

This pretty move threatens A\text{xh}8+, destroying the main guardian of Black’s king. White is winning now: 23...A\text{g}4 (23...A\text{xf}8 24 A\text{xh}8+, 23...A\text{h}5 24 A\text{h}6+) 24 A\text{e}7 A\text{g}7 25 A\text{xg}7 A\text{xg}7 26 A\text{h}7+ A\text{xh}7 27 A\text{xf}7+ and Black resigned.

\( 11...A\text{h}8 12 A\text{g}5! \)

With 12 h5 A\text{hx}5 13 g4 A\text{g}3 14 A\text{h}3 A\text{xf}1 15 A\text{xf}1 we are following the games Korongy-Tolnai, Budapest 1972, and Emmets-Summerscale, London 1997. The logical, if not obligatory sequence continues 15...c5 16 A\text{f}5 A\text{c}4 17 A\text{d}3 A\text{e}6 and now the games split:

a) The Korongy-Tolnai encounter
continued 18 b3 \(\text{wa5}\) 19 bxc4 \(\text{\textbf{xc}3}\) 20 f4 \(\text{\textbf{x}f5}\) 21 gxf5 \(\text{\textbf{d}4}\) 22 fxg6 fxg6 23 f5 (here 23 c3!, with the idea \(\text{\textbf{d}5+}\) if the bishop withdraws, was better, with a nice advantage for White) 23...gxg5 24 \(\text{\textbf{g}3+}\) \(\text{\textbf{h}8}\) 25 c3 \(\text{\textbf{e}5}\) 26 \(\text{\textbf{g}5}\) fxe4?! (26...\(\text{\textbf{x}a}2\)) 27 \(\text{\textbf{w}xe4}\) \(\text{\textbf{xc}3??}\) (27...\(\text{\textbf{f}8}\) and Black is still doing well) 28 \(\text{\textbf{f}6+}\) \(\text{\textbf{xf}6}\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{29 \(\text{\textbf{w}xh7+!}\) and mate next move.}
\end{align*}
\]

Black can improve on this with 20...\(\text{\textbf{h}8?!}\), with the idea 21 \(\text{\textbf{d}x6}\) \(\text{\textbf{ad}8}\) 22 f5 \(\text{\textbf{xd}6}\) 23 \(\text{\textbf{wd}6}\) \(\text{\textbf{xc}4}\), and the game is messy after 24 fxg6 hxg6 25 \(\text{\textbf{fh}1}\) \(\text{\textbf{xa}2}\). Instead 25 \(\text{\textbf{d}2??}\)...

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{14 \(\text{\textbf{w}e1}\)}
\end{align*}
\]

Instead, 14 \(\text{\textbf{w}f4}\) b4 15 \(\text{\textbf{d}5}\) \(\text{\textbf{xd}5}\) 16 exd5 f6 isn’t clear; while 14 \(\text{\textbf{b}1?!}\) (Santo-Roman-Kosten, Mandelieu la Napoule 1992) allows Black some breathing space, and then 14...\(\text{\textbf{b}7}\) is also unclear.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{14...\(\text{\textbf{b}7}\)}
\end{align*}
\]

If 14...\(\text{\textbf{g}7}\) (planning to counter 15 \(\text{\textbf{w}h4}\) with ...h6) 15 hxg6 fxg6 16 \(\text{\textbf{w}h4}\) with a powerful attack.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{15 \(\text{\textbf{w}h4}\)}
\end{align*}
\]

...and Black is in trouble.
Conclusion
Black has more chances with 3...exd4 than with the options considered in Chapter 1. Firstly, 4 \( \text{W}xd4 \) is insufficient to claim an advantage. That said, White is able to lead the game into complex battles which include opposite-side castling. Recapturing with the queen thus suits tactically-oriented players.

After the more popular 4 \( \text{Q}xd4 \), the kingside fianchetto offers Black dynamic counterplay, but is quite difficult to handle and probably fundamentally suspicious. Black has two ways to play the position: the simplifying swap ...\( \text{Q}xd4 \) followed, if White allows it, by ...c5 and ...\( \text{W}a5 \); and the more complex ...\( \text{De}5 \), beginning a race of pawn storms against the kings on opposite sides of the board. Both possibilities are experiencing tough times, as illustrated by the games Tseshkovsky-Vorotnikov (Line B214) and Rytshagov-Meijers (Line B2222).
Chapter Three

Antoshin's Variation: Introduction

1 e4 e5 2 f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 cxd4 f6 5 c3 e7

This variation is named after the Russian Grandmaster Vladimir Antoshin, who popularized it as early as the mid 1950s. Instead of putting the bishop where it would be most active, on the long diagonal, Black chooses a more solid, but less ambitious set-up. In return for this he increases his chances of successfully achieving the d5 advance (after ...e7 his queen is defended twice, so tactics down the d-file are more favourable for Black than in the 4.g6 line). One other positive feature of this system is that, with no pawn on g6 to act as a lever, White finds it significantly harder to open a front on the kingside.

White has a wide choice at move 6. In this chapter we will examine:

A: 6 dxe2
B: 6 c4
C: 6 e2
D: 6 g3

6 f4, seen traditionally as the main line, has a chapter of its own. Apart from these five options, few other moves make sense. Indeed, after 6 f3?! 0-0, Black will easily manage ...d5 and achieve a good position. 6 d3 is not to be feared either, since after 6...0-0 7 0-0 c6 or 7...bd7-c5 (or e5), Black will either gain a tempo on the bishop or obtain a semi-open b-file. There only remains the original...
6 $\text{Wf3}$

...which aims to play $\text{Qf5}$ without being forced to recapture with the pawn in the event of $...\text{xf5}$.

6...$\text{Qbd7}$

After 6...0-0 7 $\text{Qf5} \text{xf5}$ (7...$\text{Qe8}$ is a decent alternative) 8 $\text{Wxf5} \text{Qc6}$ Black has a lead in development to compensate for the enemy bishops. Dell'Agostini-Schmidt Schaeffer, Swiss Team Ch. 2005, continued 9 $\text{Qe3} \text{Qe5}$ (9...$\text{Wc8}$?! 10 $\text{Wxc8} \text{Qxc8}$ 11 $\text{Qe2}$ is not disastrous for Black, but no picnic either) 10 $\text{Qe2} \text{c6}$ 11 0-0 (11 0-0-0?!) 11...$\text{b5}$ 12 $\text{f4}$? (anything else was better, as now comes the brilliant trick...)

12...$\text{Qg4}$!! 13 $\text{Qxg4}$ (13 $\text{fxe5} \text{Qxe3}$ leaves even fewer chances to muddy the waters) 13...$\text{g6}$ 14 $\text{fxe5} \text{gx5}$ 15 $\text{Qxf5} \text{dx5}$ with a sizeable advantage to Black, though some caution is still needed.

7 $\text{Qf5} \text{Qe5}$! 8 $\text{Wf4}$

8 $\text{Qxg7}$+? loses to 8...$\text{Qf8}$ 9 $\text{Wg3} \text{Qg4}$ and then 10...$\text{Qh4}$.

8...0-0

...and Black had no real problems in Zelcic-Scalcione, Saint Vincent 2003 (8...$\text{Qh5}$?! is also possible).

7...$\text{Qe8}$
a) 7...b5 is an interesting attempt to show the drawbacks of White’s set-up:
   a1) 8 Qxb5?! Axb7! and now if White hangs on to his pawn by playing 9 f3, then 9...d5 opens up the game and Black’s lead in development gives him sufficient compensation for a mere pawn.

   Note that 8...Qxe4?! is suspicious in view of 9 Wd5 c6 (9...Qc5? 10 Wxa8 Axb7 11 Wxa7 Axc1 12 Wxc7 and two black pawns are missing) 10 Wxe4 d5 11 Wd3 cxb5, although even here ...Aa6-c5 provides the opportunity to complicate matters.

   a2) 8 Aa2 Ab7 9 0-0 b4 (the most principled continuation; on 9...c6 White should avoid the 10 e5?! dxe5 11 Wxd8 Axd8 12 Axb5 Aa6 from Marinkovic-Nevednichy, Petrovac 2004, and prefer the simple 10 a3 Wc7 11 Ad4 Aa8 12 Aa5 Aa6 13 Aa4 with a clear plus, Kovalev-Stevic, Calvia Olympiad 2004) 10 Ad5 Axd5 11 exd5 Aa6 12 a3 a5 13 axb4 axb4 14 Aa8 Axa8 15 Af4 Ad7 when White was only marginally better in Milu-Nevednichy, Romania 2004.

   b) 7...Aa6 often comes to the same thing as the main text, and 8 Aa2 Aa8 9 0-0 Aa6! 10 Aa1 Aa8 11 Aa4 Aa8! 12 f3 Aa6 13 Aa6 c6 14 a4 a5 gave roughly equal chances in Bruzon-Nisipeanu, Decameron 2003.

   Players wishing to use this set-up as Black would be well advised to avoid 9...c6?! which enables White to reach his best formation after 10 h3 Aa8 11 Aa4 (Baklan-Payen, Paris 2004): the knight now goes to g3, while the rook can be used on the f-file for a kingside assault.

   8 Aa2 Aa8 9 0-0 Aa6

   Or 9...Aa6.

   10 Aa1

   ...with a likely transposition to the Bruzon-Nisipeanu game (see above). If White isn’t happy with this, he can try either 10 Dh4 (Baklan-Sandipan, Paris 2004) or even 10 Aa3 Aa6 11 Dh4 is possible (Dreev-Teshkovsky, Russian Ch., Moscow 2004).

   A2) 1 e4 e5 2 Aa3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 Aa4 Aa6 5 Aa5 Aa5 6 Aa2 Aa2 7 g3

   7 a4?! is inaccurate, as it allows Black to push with ...d5 and achieve a nice position: 7...e6 8 Aa4 0-0 9 Aa2 d5 (Timofeev-Bacrot, Moscow 2004) and Black can be satisfied with the outcome of the opening.

   7...b5

   7...Aa6 8 Aa2 Aa7 is a sound alternative: 9 Aa4 0-0 10 0-0 and now either 10...b5 or 10...Aa8. Instead, 9 Aa4 (Fedorchuk-Urbanczuk, Lubniewice 2005) doesn’t really deal with Black’s equalizing threat: 9...d5! 10 e5 Aa4 11 Aa4 and here either 11...f6 or 11...Aa6 0-0 is fully okay for Black.
8 $\texttt{g2}$

If White wishes to avoid the following complications, then $8 \texttt{a3}$!? (Velicka-Ramik, Tatranske Zruby 2005) is called for. As Black easily gains a good position after $8 \texttt{g2}$, this lazy little pawn move may well be best.

$8...\texttt{b4}$

$8...\texttt{b7}$ seems less logical than $8...\texttt{b4}$, though improvements do exist later on in the following sequence: 9 0-0 $\texttt{b4}$ 10 $\texttt{a4}$ 0-0 (if 10...c5 White should refrain from the tempting 11 e5?!), which fails to 11...$\texttt{xg2}$ 12 $\texttt{exf6}$ $\texttt{xf1}$ 13 $\texttt{fxe7}$ $\texttt{wd7}$, but simply continue 11 $\texttt{d4}$, when the e-pawn is taboo) 11 $\texttt{xe1}$ $\texttt{e8}$ 12 $\texttt{d4}$ $\texttt{f8}$ 13 $\texttt{f5}$ c5 14 $\texttt{g5}$ $\texttt{c6}$ 15 f4 $\texttt{e6}$ 16 e5 dxe5 17 $\texttt{fxe5}$ $\texttt{wd1}$ 18 $\texttt{axd1}$ $\texttt{xe8}$ 19 $\texttt{xg7}$ $\texttt{xe7}$ 20 $\texttt{exc5}$ $\texttt{xe5}$ 21 $\texttt{xe5}$ $\texttt{xe5}$ 22 $\texttt{xb7}$ $\texttt{xg5}$ 23 $\texttt{xc6}$ (Naiditsch-Bacrot, Mainz rapid 2005) with a solid extra pawn that White duly converted.

$9 \texttt{db5}$

$9 \texttt{d4}$!? deserves further tests: 9...0-0 (or 9...$\texttt{wa5}$ 10 c3) 10 0-0 $\texttt{b7}$ (10...$\texttt{a6}$?!?!) 11 $\texttt{d4}$ $\texttt{c7}$ 12 $\texttt{d5}$ $\texttt{e5}$ 13 f4 (here 13 $\texttt{xe7+}$ $\texttt{xe7}$ 14 a3 is safer) 13...$\texttt{xf5}$ 14 fxe5 leads to a rare material balance rendering the position unclear after 14...$\texttt{g4}$ 15 $\texttt{exf6}$ $\texttt{xd1}$ 16 fxe7 $\texttt{xe7}$ 17 $\texttt{xd1}$ $\texttt{ad8}$ 18 $\texttt{fl4}$.

$9...0-0$

...with an equal position. ($9...\texttt{b7}$ 10 $\texttt{bd4}$ g6! 11 $\texttt{h6}$ $\texttt{g4}$ is unclear.)

A3) 1 e4 $\texttt{e5}$ 2 $\texttt{d}3$ $\texttt{d}6$ 3 $\texttt{d}4$ $\texttt{exd}4$ 4 $\texttt{d}x$ 5 $\texttt{d}5$ $\texttt{c}6$ 6 $\texttt{d}e2$ $\texttt{d}c6$ 7 $\texttt{g}3$ 0-0

More 'spirited' attempts are also more hazardous, for example:

a) 7...$\texttt{d}7$?! 8 $\texttt{g}2$ $\texttt{c8}$ 9 $\texttt{d}4$ (Brkic-Pavasovic, Rabac 2004). Black's manoeuvre was visibly artificial and White's pieces are better placed. 9 $\texttt{h3}$? is also possible.

b) 7...$\texttt{h}5$?! 8 $\texttt{h}3$ $\texttt{d}e5$ 9 $\texttt{g}2$ and, apart from weakening his own camp, it's unclear what Black has achieved.

c) 7...d5?! 8 exd5 $\texttt{b}4$ 9 $\texttt{g}2$ $\texttt{f}5$ 10 $\texttt{d}4$ $\texttt{g}4$

11 f3?! $\texttt{h}5$? (11...$\texttt{c}8$ is equal) 12 $\texttt{d}5$ 0-0 13 a3 $\texttt{b}xd5$ 14 $\texttt{d}x$ 15 $\texttt{c}4$ (not 15 $\texttt{xd}5$? $\texttt{b}4$! 16 $\texttt{axb}4$ $\texttt{e}8$ 17 $\texttt{e}4$ $\texttt{xe}4$+ 18 $\texttt{xe}4$ $\texttt{xd}1$+ 19 $\texttt{d}2$ $\texttt{xc}2$+ 20 $\texttt{g}1$ $\texttt{wd}1$+ 21 $\texttt{f}1$ $\texttt{f}3$ 22 $\texttt{e}3$ $\texttt{we}1$ 23 $\texttt{g}2$ $\texttt{wb}4$ and the lack of coor-
direction between White’s pieces promises Black a huge advantage.

With 15 c4 we are following the internet game Timofeev-Fridman, 2004. Here 15...Db6 would have been normal, but the Latvian was rewarded for his gambling: 15...Ag6!? 16 Wxd5 Ax5 17 Wxf5 Wd4 (the white king is stuck in the centre – a hopeless situation in a blitz game!) 18 Wd5 Wb6 19 Wb5 Wd4 20 Wd5 Wb6 21 f4 Mad8 22 Wf3 Hxe8 23 Wf1 Ac5 24 b4?? (White’s only mistake, but a decisive one; 24 Hh3! Ac3 25 Hxe3 Hxe3 26 Wf2 and White should manage to digest the piece without too much stomach pain) 24...Wf6 25 Ha2 Wc3!! (a bolt from the blue!) 26 Ad2 Wxc4+ 0-1.

Going back, 11 Ae2! looks more to the point, as after 11...Dbxd5 12 c4 Db4 13 Hxb7 it’s unclear whether Black has enough for his pawn.

8 Hg2 He8 9 h3 Ab8 10 f4 Ad7
10...b5?? of course loses to 11 e5.

11 O-O b5 12 Ad5 Af8

We have been following the game Naiditsch-Nisipeanu, German League 2004. Here Huzman indicates 13 Ae3

Af6 14 Hxf6+ Wxf6 15 Cc3 b4 16 Dd5 with a nice edge for White.

B) 1 e4 e5 2 Hf3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 Hxd4

Af6 5 Hc3 Le7 6 Ac4 O-O 7 0-0

7 Ab3 avoids the pseudo-sacrifice that follows, but runs into the reply 7...Da6 with the obvious intention of 8...Cc5. Now we will consider:

B1: 7...a6
B2: 7...Cc6

a) 7...He8 is also sensible, for example 8 He1 Af8 (or first 8...Dd7) 9 Hg5 c6 10 a4 (10 a3??) 10...a5 with reciprocal chances.

b) 7...Cc6 8 h3 He8 9 He1 h6 10 a4 Af8 11 Df3 Le6 12 Dd5 Dd7 (as in Todorovic-S.Nikolic, Pancevo 1987) is unclear and interesting too. Black keeps a compact position and firm control of the e5-square. He will continue with g6 and Hg7.

Black doesn’t quite manage to equalize by playing...

7...Dxe4 8 Dxe4 d5 9 Dd3 Dxe4 10 Dxe4 Df6
11 c3

11...e3 (Dlugy-Alburt, US Championship, Jacksonville 1990) is interesting, too, and probably sufficient to claim an edge: after 11...xe8 12 wd3 g6 then instead of 13 ...d1?! ...d7, I would suggest 13 c3 ...d7 14 wc2, planning 14...c5 15 ...f3 or 14...e5 15 ...d1, with some pressure.

11...d7?!

11...xd4 12 cxd4 ...d7 was worth attention.

12 ...f4 ...b6

12...c5 gives Black compensation for the pawn after 13 ...xh7+ ...xh7 14 ...h5+ ...g8 15 ...xc5 ...xd4 16 cxd4 c6 followed by ...e6-d5. The opposite-coloured bishops complicate the realization of White’s advantage, but there is no doubt the advantage exists.

13 wc2

![Chess Diagram]

13...g6

Or:

a) 13...d5?! 14 ...g3 (14 ...xh7+?! ...h8, with the double threat of ...g6 and ...xf4) 14...xd4 15 ...d1!.

b) 13...xd4?! 14 ...d1 ...f6 15 ...xd4 c5 16 ...xh7+ ...h8 17 ...e4 and Black can’t profit from his opponent’s far-flung pieces. White will continue with ...e3 or ...g3 and eventually retreat the h7-bishop without any problems, remaining a safe pawn ahead.

14 ...d1 ...e7 15 ...e1

Black’s harassed queen has no satisfactory square and White is clearly on top, Lautier-I. Sokolov, Cap d’Agde (rapid) 1996.

B1) 1 e4 e5 2 ...f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 ...xd4 ...f6 5 ...c3 ...e7 6 ...c4 0-0 7 0-0 a6 8 a4

![Chess Diagram]

Prompted by the desire to prevent ...b5. Indeed, if Black succeeded in achieving this push, he would solve his opening problems by gaining play on the queenside.

8...xe4

a) 8...c5?! 9 ...e2 ...c6 10 ...f4 and Black has no real counterplay in exchange for the weakening of d5.

b) 8...d6 9 ...e1 ...b4 10 ...d5 ...xd5 11 exd5 (White is playing simultaneously for a space advantage, and against the knight on b4) 11...f6 (threatening the obvious ...xd4, which Black plays even after 12 c3) 12 ...e3
c5?! (sooner or later compulsory, as retreating the horse by playing 12...a5 13 c3 Qa6 is a bit passive; but 12...Rxe8 first, was a reasonable alternative: 13 Nxd2 c5 14 dxc6 Qxc6 15 Qxc6 bxc6 16 Qb6! Qxe1+ 17 Qxe1 Qf8 with a similar assessment to the game) 13 dxc6 Qxc6 14 c3 d5 15 e2 and White stood slightly better in Rogic-Morrison, Ohrid 2001.

9 Nxe4 d5

10 Nd3

10 Nbd3!? would be interesting, since if Black captures on c4 the knight pair would restrain the mobility of the enemy pieces. For example: 10...dxc4 11 Nxc4 Nbd7 12 Nf4 Nf6 13 Nxc7 Qxd4 14 Nxe7 Nxf5 15 e3 Nxe4 16 Nxe4 Nxe4 17 Nxb6 Nxc2 is equal, as is 14...Qd5 15 N.ad1 Nc4 (15...Qxd1? loses a pawn after 16 Qxf8+ Qxf8 17 Nd6+ Qg8 18 Qxd1) 16 Ne5 Nxf4 17 Nxf4 Nxc2.

10...dxe4 11 Nxe4 Nf6

Comparing this to the analogous position from the previous section, the inclusion of the moves 7...a6 8 a4 has favoured Black: the b5-square is covered, which prevents a knight sally, while the b4-square is quite a weakness in White’s camp. Nevertheless, Black must be careful in order to achieve full equality.

11 Qd7 is met by 12 c3, intending Nc2, Nbd3, Nfh6 with an edge.

12 Nxe3

12 c3 Nxd4, intending ...Qc6 or ...Qd7, equalizes, as the pair of bishops is counterbalanced by the isolani.

12...Qd7!

After 12...c5? 13 Bb3 Nxb2 14 Nb1 White will recapture on c5 and exert heavy pressure on the queenside.

13 c3 Nf8

Intending 14...Nc5 or 14...Qc5.

14 Qc2 g6

15 Nf1?

After 15 N.ad1!? Qe7 16 Nf1! Qf8 17 h3 Black still experiences some difficulties finishing his development. If he manages ...Qc5, ...Nd7, ...Nad8 and ...Nc8 he will solve his opening problems, but White won’t contemplate this without acting!

15...Qg7! 16 N.ad1 c5!

White wins after 16...Rh4? 17 g3!
\[ \text{\#xe4? 18 \texttt{\#d2}, and maintains significant pressure after 16...c6 17 \texttt{\#f4}. 17 \texttt{\#e2}?} \]

Black meets 17 \texttt{\#f3} with 17...\texttt{\#c7} followed by ...\texttt{\#f6}, ...c4, ...\texttt{\#f5} gaining counterplay; while 17 \texttt{\#b3} doesn't prevent Black from developing similarly with 17...\texttt{\#c7}.

\[ 17...\texttt{\#c7!} \]

After 17...\texttt{\#c7} White plays 18 \texttt{\#g3} with the idea of \texttt{\#f3} and \texttt{\#e4}, aiming at the weaknesses on c5 and d6.

\[ 18 \texttt{\#f4} \]

Or 18 \texttt{\#f4}? \texttt{\#e5}? 19 \texttt{\#g3} followed by \texttt{\#f4} with the initiative.

\[ 18...\texttt{\#f6} \]

Preventing \texttt{\#d5} was a must.

\[ 19 \texttt{\#d5} \]

The inaccurate 19 \texttt{\#f3}? allows Black to equalize with 19...\texttt{\#g4} or 19...\texttt{\#g4} 20 \texttt{\#e2} \texttt{\#xf3}.

\[ 19...\texttt{\#xd5} 20 \texttt{\#xd5} \]

We have been following the game Yudasin-Adams, Dos Hermanas 1993 (some of my comments have been based on the exhaustive notes by Yudasin in Chess Informant). White still enjoys a small but persistent initiative due to his more active pieces and slightly better structure.

\[ B2) 1 \texttt{\#e4} \texttt{\#e5} 2 \texttt{\#f3} \texttt{\#d6} 3 \texttt{\#d4} \texttt{\#xd4} 4 \texttt{\#xd4} \texttt{\#f6} 5 \texttt{\#c3} \texttt{\#e7} 6 \texttt{\#c4} 0-0 7 0-0 \texttt{\#c6} 8 \texttt{\#e1} \]

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\end{center}

A rare case where allowing ...\texttt{\#b5} isn't such a big concession. There are numerous reasons for this:

1) White would directly threaten \texttt{\#a2-\#a4}.

2) Black can't follow up with ...\texttt{\#c5}, as the \texttt{\#b5}-pawn would be en prise.

3) Black's \texttt{c}-pawn requires protection and this renders his development a bit problematic.

As a matter of fact, after saying 'A' Black must say 'B' and expand as much as possible on the queenside, chasing White's pieces while gaining space, but also accepting weaknesses in his own camp.

Alternatives for White include:

\begin{itemize}
  \item a) 8 \texttt{\#a3}? \texttt{\#e8} 9 \texttt{\#a2} \texttt{\#f8} 10 \texttt{\#g5} \texttt{\#bd7} (in the event of the risky 10...\texttt{\#h6} 11 \texttt{\#h4} \texttt{\#g5}? 12 \texttt{\#g3} \texttt{\#xe4} 13 \texttt{\#xe4}
\(1 \text{ e4 e5 2 } \text{ d}\text{f3 d}\text{6} - \text{ Antoshin's Variation: Introduction} \)

\(\text{hxex4 14 c3} \) White obtains excellent compensation for the pawn, threatening notably to set up the battery \(\text{b}1-\text{w}d3\) and open the kingside by \(f2-f4\) \(11 \text{ f4 } \text{d}c5\) (11...\(\text{w}b6!) \(12 \text{ w}f3 \text{e}e6?!\) (the tactical \(12...\text{g}4?!\) was worth consideration), and now instead of 13 \(\text{d}f5\) \(d5!\) \(14 \text{ exd}5 \text{c}7\) (Najer-Mamedyarov, Khanty Mansyisk rapid 2005) White could fight for an edge with 13 \(\text{xe}e6 \text{xe}6 14 \text{d}x\text{e}6 \text{xe}6 15 \text{w}h1.\)

\(\text{b) 8 a4, the traditional way to deal with the }...\text{b}5\) idea, is equally viable:

\(9 \text{ w}f1 \text{b}4\)

Otherwise I don’t see how to follow up, whereas White’s plan is crystal clear: \(\text{w}f3, \text{d}f5, \text{etc.}\) The text move concedes the c4-square in return for activity.

\(10 \text{ d}a4\)

\(10 \text{ b}1!!? \text{c}5 11 \text{d}f5\) (11 \(\text{d}b3 \text{b}7 12 \text{d}1\text{d}2\) 11...\(\text{x}f5\) 12 \(\text{exf}5\) \(\text{d}c6\) is unclear: Black has an extra pawn in the centre, but White has the two bishops and possible aggressive intentions linked with g4-g5.

\(10...\text{c}5\)

\(8...\text{d}xe4 9 \text{w}xe4 \text{d}5 10 \text{d}d3 \text{dxe}4 11 \text{xe}4 \text{d}a6\) with near, but not quite complete equality after 12 \(c3 \text{d}c5\) 13 \(\text{d}c2.\)

\(c) 8 \text{b}3?! \text{d}a6! 9 \text{w}f3\) (after the less cautious 9 \(f4!\) \(\text{c}c5!\) 10 \(\text{w}f3 \text{e}8\) Black seizes the advantage) 9...\(\text{d}c5\) 10 \(\text{d}f5\) \(\text{xf}5!\) (more precise than 10...\(\text{b}5?!\) 11 \(\text{e}3,\) and here 11...\(\text{b}4?\) 12 \(\text{xc}5 \text{bxc}3\) 13 \(\text{d}4\) yields White a clear plus) 11 \(\text{w}x\text{f}5\) \(\text{b}5\) 12 \(\text{e}3 \text{w}c8!\) was equal in Guidarelli-Bacrot, Aix les Bains 2003.

\(8...\text{b}5\)

\(8...\text{a}5 9 \text{a}4 \text{d}a6 10 \text{h}3 \text{d}c5 11 \text{f}4 \text{w}b6\) 12 \(\text{b}3\) gave White a slight edge in Hracek-Piket, Moscow Olympiad 1994.

\(11 \text{d}f5\)

The most logical now that Black has weakened his light squares. After 11 \(\text{d}f3 \text{b}7\) (11...\(\text{d}7?!\)) 12 \(\text{d}d3 \text{d}bd7\) Black has nothing to complain about.

\(11...\text{xf}5 12 \text{exf}5 \text{d}c6\)

A possible improvement over 12...\(d5\) (Zapata-Visepanu, Bled Olympiad 2002), although Black was fine in that game too: 13 \(c4 \text{d}c6\) (13...\(\text{xc}3?!\) 14 \(\text{xc}3 \text{d}c6\) 14 \(\text{e}3 \text{d}4 15 \text{g}5\) and now in place of 15...\(\text{d}6?!\) 16 \(\text{b}3\) etc., which was the beginning of the Romanian GM’s problems, 15...\(\text{w}d6!\) 16 \(\text{w}f3 \text{f}e8\) would have kept the equilibrium.
13 g3 d5 14 ¤g2 wfd7
Possibly 14...c4!?.
15 ¤g5 wxf5?!
15...wad8! 16 xf6 xf6 17 wxc5 wxf5 18 w3 d3 we8 is level.
16 xf6 wxf6 17 wxe5 wac8

Now 18 c3?! wfd8 was equal in M.Adams-Bacrot, European Ch. Internet final (blitz) 2003. White can improve with 18 wad1! wfd8?? 19 wxc6! or, in reply to other Black moves, 19 wfd7 with some pressure.

C) 1 e4 e5 2 ¤f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 ¤xd4 wdf6 5 w3 c3 w7 6 w2
Quiet, but perhaps sufficient to claim a tiny plus.

6...d5?! looks too simple to be good: 7 e5 (7 exd5?! doesn't bring much after 7...wxd5 8 wxd5 wfd7 9 wb5 wxc1+ 10 wxc1—or 10 wxd1—10...w6 11 w3 f6 12 w3 d6+ w6d6 13 w2 d6 w5, when Black’s dynamism compensates for the loss of the bishop pair) 7...w4 8 wxe4 dxe4 9 w3 and White stands a little better thanks to his more active pieces and the possibility of e5-e6 in some circumstances, for instance 9...0-0 10 e6 fxe6 11 wxe6 wxc1+ 12 wxc1 wxe6 13 w8h8 w7h8 14 w6.
7 0-0
The immediate 7 f4, as well as the hyper-aggressive 7 g4?!, invites the central reply 7...d5!.
After 7 0-0,

with both sides having finished development on the kingside, Black now faces the question of how to continue. He has several options, with 7...c5 and 7...w8 being the most critical in my opinion. Indeed, apart from the direct attempt to equalize by playing 7...d5, the other attempts (namely 7...w3c6, 7...c6, 7...a6, and 7...wbd7) don't really distract White from the standard plan of f4, w3 and so on.

It should be noted that many transpositions are possible when Black chooses a set-up with ...c6, ...w8, ...wbd7-c5, etc. As there is no point in analysing Black’s wide range of possibilities at every move, I will try to present the pros and cons for each decent set-up.

We will look at:
\section*{C1: 7...c5!?}
\section*{C2: 7...\texttt{e}e8}

Or:

\section*{7...d5}

As with 6...d5, this hasty push fails to achieve its goal. This time, however, the reason why is different:

\section*{8 exd5}

8 e5 \texttt{\textbackslash}e4 9 \texttt{\textbackslash}xe4 dxe4 10 \texttt{f}f4 (Matejov-Kikinder, Slovakia 2004) is less convincing (maybe 10...g5?!).

\section*{8...\texttt{\textbackslash}xd5 9 \texttt{\textbackslash}xd5 \texttt{\textbackslash}xd5 10 \texttt{f}f3}

...followed by something like \texttt{\textbackslash}f4 and \texttt{\textbackslash}b5, when White's lead in development enables him to exert unpleasant pressure on the queenside.

\section*{C1) 1 e4 e5 2 \texttt{f}f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 \texttt{\textbackslash}xd4 \texttt{f}f6 5 \texttt{c}c3 \texttt{\textbackslash}e7 6 \texttt{\textbackslash}e2 0-0 7 0-0 c5!?}

Black accepts a weakness on d5 in order to ward off the knight. From now on the strategical battle centres around this square.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess-board}
\end{center}

13...\texttt{\textbackslash}b4?! (another step in the wrong direction) 14 \texttt{\textbackslash}g2 \texttt{\textbackslash}ad8 15 c3 when White had succeeded in preventing ...d5 and was clearly better in Boyd-Varrambier, Hyeres 1992.

13...\texttt{\textbackslash}f6 was more to the point: 14 c3 \texttt{\textbackslash}e7 15 \texttt{\textbackslash}g2 d5 16 f4 \texttt{\textbackslash}d6 17 g5 hgx5 18 fxg5 \texttt{\textbackslash}e5 19 f6!? gxf6 20 gx6 \texttt{\textbackslash}x6 21 \texttt{\textbackslash}g4+ \texttt{\textbackslash}g7 22 \texttt{\textbackslash}f4 with enough play for the sacrificed pawn, but perhaps no more than that.

b3) 10 g4?! d5 11 g5 (or 11 \texttt{\textbackslash}f3 d4 12 \texttt{\textbackslash}e4 \texttt{\textbackslash}e8 and Black is absolutely
fine, too) 11...\textit{d}e4 12 f4 \textit{d}d4 13 \textit{g}4 \textit{e}8 14 \textit{x}e4 \textit{x}e4 15 \textit{e}3 \textit{w}b6 16 c3 (Salaun-Nepeina Leconte, St Lorraine 2001) 16...	extit{a}d8!.

\textbf{8...\textit{c}6}

In the event of 8...	extit{e}6, 9 f4 parries the threat of the freeing ...d5, and Black has nothing better than 9...	extit{c}6.

\textbf{9 f4}

9 \textit{f}4 is interesting: 9...	extit{e}6 10 \textit{d}d5 \textit{xd}5?! 11 exd5 \textit{b}4 12 c4 \textit{e}8 13 a3 \textit{a}6 (Karjakin-Tratar, Vienna 2003) and now instead of 14 \textit{d}d2?! \textit{g}5, White should have preferred 14 \textit{d}d3! with \textit{wh}5 up his sleeve. But 10...	extit{x}e4! is stronger: 11 \textit{x}e7+ \textit{x}e7 12 f3 \textit{f}6 13 \textit{xd}6 (13 \textit{xd}6? c4! 14 \textit{c}5 \textit{d}5 and the c5-knight is unstable) 13...	extit{b}6 when White has two bishops, but Black’s knights have some nice squares so the game is balanced.

9...	extit{a}5?! 9...	extit{e}8 should be compared to 7...	extit{e}8 and transpositions are likely.

\textbf{10 a4}

This guy must be blocked! Black has compromised himself even more, but for the moment his knight is ensured of a beautiful outpost.

\textbf{10...\textit{d}4 11 \textit{f}3}

11 \textit{e}3?! is an interesting alternative.

\textbf{11...\textit{w}b6}

...with level chances, Sakelsek-Sebenik, Maribor 2004.

\textbf{C2) 1 e4 e5 2 \textit{f}3 \textit{d}6 3 d4 exd4 4 \textit{xd}4 \textit{f}6 5 \textit{c}c3 \textit{e}7 6 \textit{e}2 0-0 7 0-0 \textit{e}8}

The most frequently seen continuation, allowing the rook to attack the white e-pawn without delay. For the moment Black keeps his queenside flexible.

Now White can play:
C21: 8...\textit{\textbf{N}}e1
C22: 8 f4

\textbf{C21} 1 e4 e5 2 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xd4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f6 5 \textit{\textbf{Q}}c3 \textit{\textbf{B}}e7 6 \textit{\textbf{B}}e2 0-0 7 0-0 \textit{\textbf{N}}e8 8 \textit{\textbf{N}}e1

This normally leads to slower play and fewer tactics than 8 f4.

\textbf{8...\textit{\textbf{N}}f8}

Alternatively:

a) 8...c5?! 9 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f3! \textit{\textbf{Q}}c6 10 \textit{\textbf{B}}f4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e6 11 \textit{\textbf{Q}}g5 d5?! 12 \textit{\textbf{B}}b5 (underlining the difference between the current situation and the one where the rooks are still on f1 and f8; 12 exd5 \textit{\textbf{N}}xd5 seems to be less efficient) 12...\textit{\textbf{N}}c8 13 exd5 \textit{\textbf{N}}xd5 (or 13...\textit{\textbf{N}}xd5 14 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xe6 fxe6 15 \textit{\textbf{Q}}g3) 14 c4 followed by 15 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xe6 (or \textit{\textbf{Q}}xe4) with a large advantage for White.

b) 8...\textit{\textbf{N}}bd7 with a further split:

b1) 9 b3 \textit{\textbf{B}}f8 10 \textit{\textbf{B}}f1 c5! 11 f3 d5! and now 12 exd5 \textit{\textbf{N}}xe1 13 \textit{\textbf{W}}xe1 \textit{\textbf{N}}xd5 14 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xd5 \textit{\textbf{W}}xd5 was level in the clash M.Adams-Bacrot, European Ch. Internet final (blitz) 2003, while 12 e5 \textit{\textbf{Q}}d7 13 f4 \textit{\textbf{C}}6 led to unclear play in Wang Hao-Predojevic, Calvia Olympiad 2004.

b2) 9 \textit{\textbf{B}}f1 \textit{\textbf{B}}f8 10 g3 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e5 (or 10...\textit{\textbf{Q}}c5?! 11 \textit{\textbf{G}}g2 with an edge for White, Baramidze-Thinius, Bad Zwesten 2006) 11 \textit{\textbf{G}}g2 (11 h3?!) 11...\textit{\textbf{Q}}g4 12 f3 c5?! (more dynamic than the retreat to d7) when nearly all the knight sallies, as well as the bishop’s capture, result in double-edged positions:

b21) 13 fxg4 cxd4 14 \textit{\textbf{W}}xd4 d5! (stronger than 14...\textit{\textbf{Q}}xg4?! 15 h3 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e5 16 \textit{\textbf{W}}f2 with the idea of \textit{\textbf{G}}e3-d4)

11 h3 (the d-pawn is immune due to the fork on f3; many White moves would be answered the same way) 15...\textit{\textbf{Q}}c8 16 \textit{\textbf{Q}}h1 \textit{\textbf{Q}}c5, followed by ...d4-d3, when all Black’s pieces are well placed.

b22) 13 \textit{\textbf{Q}}b3 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e6 14 h3, followed by f4.

b23) 13 \textit{\textbf{Q}}db5 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e6 14 \textit{\textbf{G}}g5 a6 15 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xf6 gxf6 16 \textit{\textbf{Q}}a3 b5 17 \textit{\textbf{Q}}d5 b4 18 \textit{\textbf{Q}}b1 \textit{\textbf{Q}}g7 (or 18...\textit{\textbf{Q}}c4). Black’s pawn structure is damaged, but after ...f5 his dark-squared bishop will be powerful.

b24) 13 \textit{\textbf{Q}}d5 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xf5 14 exf5 d5 was equal in Gouliev-Bacrot, Mulhouse 2005. Indeed, the obvious 15 f4?! is faulty as White can’t win his opponent’s d-pawn: 15...\textit{\textbf{Q}}c4 16 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xe8 \textit{\textbf{W}}xe8 17 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xd5 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xd5 18 \textit{\textbf{W}}xd5 (18 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xd5?
\( \text{f1} \) c6

9...\( \text{f1} \) c6

9...\( \text{c6} \) and 9...\( \text{c5} \) are again valid candidate moves. In the final case, if Black wishes to follow the traditional \( \text{d6} \) and \( \text{e6} \), to carry out the \( \text{d5} \) push, he will probably have to throw in \( \text{h6} \) in order to prevent \( \text{g5} \).

10 a4 a5 11 b3

Or immediately 11 b3.

11...\( \text{b7} \) 12 g3 h6 13 \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{e5} \) 14 b3 \( \text{d7} \) 15 \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{w6} \) 16 \( \text{b2} \)

...and a draw was agreed in this balanced middlegame, Dgebuadze-Nevednichy, La Fere 2002.
c) 9...a5!? follows the same goal as the straightforward 9...\(\text{Qa6}\), 9...\(\text{Qbd7}\) or 9...c6; i.e. 10 a4 \(\text{Qa6}\) and so on.

\[ \text{\begin{figure}[h]}
\end{figure}}

Black will increase the pressure on e4 by playing ...\(\text{Qc5}\), and if he finds enough time to complete his development by means of ...c6, ...\(\text{Qb6}\), ...\(\text{Qd7}\) and ...\(\text{Qad8}\) he won't have too many headaches.

\[ \text{\begin{figure}[h]}
\end{figure}}

10 \(\text{Qde2!}\)

More elastic than 10 \(\text{Qf5?!}\) \(\text{Qxf5}\) 11 \(\text{exf5}\) \(\text{Qc6}\), which reveals itself to be insufficient to claim any advantage after 12 \(\text{g4}\) d5! 13 g5 \(\text{d4}\). And grabbing the pawn with 13 \(\text{Qxd5}\) gives Black enough play following 13...\(\text{Qxd5}\) 14

\[ \text{\begin{figure}[h]}
\end{figure}}

\(\text{\textbf{Qxd5}}\) (or 14 \(\text{Qxd5}\) \(\text{Qf6}\)) 14...\(\text{Qd4}\) (or 14...\(\text{Qh4}\)).

10 \(\text{Qb3?!}\) is an interesting alternative. Play continues 10...\(\text{Qc6}\) and now:

a) 11 \(\text{Qh1}\) a5 12 a4 \(\text{Qe6}\), as played more than once, reaches a complex position.

b) 11 \(\text{Qe3}\) d5! (a powerful strike) 12 \(\text{exd5}\) \(\text{Qxe3}\) 13 dxc6 \(\text{Qb6}\) 14 \(\text{Qd2}\) \(\text{Qxf3}\) 15 \(\text{Qxf3}\) (or 15 \(\text{gxf3}\) \(\text{Qxc6}\) with enough compensation for the exchange) 15...c4+ 16 \(\text{Qd4}\) \(\text{Qc5}\) and Black wasn't worse in Smirin-G.Kuzmin, Leningrad 1990. According to my database, Kuzmin has met both 11 \(\text{Qh1}\) and 11 \(\text{Qe3}\) with some success (two points from three games).

c) 11 \(\text{Qe1}\) a5 12 a4 \(\text{Qb4}\) (12...d5?! is premature: 13 e5 d4 14 \(\text{Qb5}\) \(\text{Qd7}\) 15 c3 dxc3 16 bxc3 and Black was in bad shape in the game Yurtay-Payen, Cuttacka 2000) 13 \(\text{Qe3}\) \(\text{Qd7}\) 14 \(\text{Qf2}\) \(\text{Qc6}\) 15 \(\text{Qd2}\) with an edge for White, Santo Roman-Marcelin, French League 1999.

10...\(\text{Qc6}\)

Or 10...\(\text{Qg4?!}\) 11 \(\text{Qg3}\) \(\text{Qxf3}\) 12 \(\text{Qxf3}\) \(\text{Qc6}\), Alcazar Jimenez-Pakleza, Chalkidiki 2003.

11 \(\text{h3!}\)
11 \( \text{Wh}1?! \) eases Black’s defence by giving him an improved version of
10...
\( \text{A}g4 \) after 11...
\( \text{A}g4 \) 12 \( \text{Q}xg3 \) \( \text{A}xh3 \) 13
\( \text{W}xh3 \) \( \text{Q}d4 \) etc., as in Grigoriants-
Tischbiererk, Stepanakert 2005.

As well as the main 11 \( h3 \), White has
the interesting 11 \( f5?! \) at his disposal.
The move 11 \( b3 \), on the other hand,
doesn’t trouble Black: 11...
\( \text{a}5 \) 12 \( \text{A}b2 \) a4
13 e5 a3 with a messy game which
White eventually won in Felgaer-

11...
\( \text{A}d7 \)

After 11...
\( \text{Wb6} \) 12 \( b3 \) \( \text{A}d7 \) 13 \( \text{Q}e3 \)
(T.L.Petrosian-Tischbiererk, Stepanakert
2005), White’s position looks easier to
play. 13 \( \text{A}b2?! \) is also possible.

12 \( \text{Q}e3 \)

This is sounder than 12 \( g4 \) (Renet-
Fressinet, Clichy rapid 2001) when
12...
\( \text{b}5 \) is a good reply: 13 g5 b4 14 \( \text{A}g2 \)
(14 \( gxf6?! \)) 14...
\( \text{A}xc3 \) 15 \( \text{A}xc3 \) \( \text{Q}xe4 \) with
unclear play.

12...
\( \text{b}5 \) 13 \( \text{Q}g3 \)

I dislike 13 \( e5?! \) (Boidman-Seel,
German League 2004), since instead of
the game’s 13...
\( \text{A}b8?! \) Black has two
stronger options: 13...
\( \text{b}4 \) and, even bet-

ter, 13...
\( \text{dxe}5 \) 14 \( \text{fxe}5 \) \( \text{Q}xe5 \) (14...
\( \text{Q}xe5?! \))
15 \( \text{A}xa8 \) \( \text{W}xa8 \) with great play and a
pawn for the exchange.

13...
\( \text{Wb6} \) 14 \( \text{A}h5 \) \( \text{A}xh5 \) 15 \( \text{A}xh5 \) \( \text{e}7 \)
16 \( f5 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 17 \( f6 \) \( \text{g}6 \)

...and Black was more or less okay
in K.Lahno-Tischbiererk, Stepanakert
2005.

D) 1 \( e4 \) \( e5 \) 2 \( \text{A}f3 \) \( d6 \) 3 \( d4 \) \( \text{exd}4 \) 4 \( \text{Q}xd4 \)
\( \text{Q}f6 \) 5 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{A}e7 \) 6 \( g3 \)

White wishes to play a position that
could arise via the move order 1 \( e4 \) \( d6 \)
2 \( d4 \) \( \text{Q}f6 \) 3 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{A}bd7 \) 4 \( g3 \) \( e5 \) 5 \( \text{Q}ge2 \)
(see Chapter 8) 5...
\( \text{exd}4 \) 6 \( \text{Qxd}4 \) \( \text{e}7 \). In
that case the move 5...
\( \text{exd}4 \) gives up the
centre and is condemnable. To avoid
such a transposition, Black must keep
away from standard moves and act
promptly:

6...
\( \text{d}5 \)!

This move highlights the drawback
of \( g3 \): Black is able to ‘equalize’ in
the centre. We shall consider the moves:

D1: \( \text{exd}5 \)
D2: \( \text{e}5 \)
D1) 1 e4 e5 2 d3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 Qxd4 Qf6 5 Qc3 g6 3 7 exd5

This is harmless for Black provided that he reacts adequately.

7...Qxd5

Now none of the numerous White attempts have proven problematic:

8 g3

Or:

a) 8 Qdb5 Qxc3 9 Qxd8+ Qxd8 10 Qxc3 Qf5 (10...0-0 might be good enough as well) 11 Qg2 Qc6! was equal in Spassky-Fressinet, Paris (rapid) 2001. But not 11...c5!? 12 Qe4 (Kacirek-Payne, Pardubice 1998) when Black will have to choose between two evils: tolerating the knight on d6 or eliminating it at the cost of the two bishops.

b) After 8 g3!? Qxc3 9 bxc3 0-0 10 0-0 Qa6 (Sveshnikov-Gabdrakhmanov, Nabereznaya Chelny 1988) White has some compensation for his damaged pawn structure, but he can hardly hope for more than equality. 10...c5!? is possible too.

8...Qb4!

Getting rid of the dominant d4-knight before castling seems the most precise. The main alternative is 8...0-0 9 Qg2 and now:

a) 9...Qf6 10 Qxd5 Qxd4 11 0-0! Qxb2 12 Qb1 Qa3 13 Qf4 Qa6 (13...Qd6? runs into the devilish 14 Qxc7!! Qxc7 15 Qxd8 Qxd8 16 Qxb7 and White nets a pawn, e.g. 16...Qd7 17 Qxd7 Qxd7 18 Qxa8) 14 Qxc7 Qxc7 15 Qxd8 Qxd8 16 Qxc7 with a difficult endgame for Black, Teske-Ekstroem, Montecatini Terme 1997.

b) 9...Qxc3 10 Qxc3 Qf6 11 0-0 c6 12 Qd3 when White has a lead in development and good chances to exploit the weakened d6 spot, Spraggett-Tratar, Andorra 2005.

c) 9...Qb6! 10 Qf4 (more active than 10 Qe3, when 10...Qc4 gave Black good play in Popchev-Chiburianidze, Sochi 1989) 10...c6 (on 10...Qf6, 11 Qdb5 seems promising for White: 11...Qe7+ 12 Qe2 Qe8 13 Qxe7 Qxe7+ 14 Qe4! Qxb2 15 Qb1 with favourable complications) and now, instead of 11 0-0 Qf6 as in Horvath-Sedlak, Sibenik 2005, White could have kept a slight plus with 11 Qd3.

In the game Tompa-Pavasovic, Austrian League 2004, the bold 8...Qc6!? 9 Qxc6 bxc6 saw Black maintain dynamic equality. In return for the doubled pawns he had a strong knight in the centre, coupled with the possibility of pressurizing the queenside by means of ...Qb8 and ...Qf6.

9 Qe3

9 Qf4?? loses to 9...Qxd4!!.

9...c5!

9...Qd5?! is a flawed return to d5 (Vlassov prefers both 9...c5 and the ob-
vious 9...0-0) and then:

a) The artificial 10 \( \text{b5}+?! \) fails 'logically' to 10...c6 11 \( \text{xc6?} \) bxc6 12 \( \text{wd5} \) \( \text{xd7} \) 13 \( \text{wx} 3 \) cxb5 14 \( \text{xa8} \) \( \text{c6} \).

b) 10 \( \text{d3} \) 0-0 11 0-0 0-0 \( \text{xe} 3 \) 12 \( \text{wx} 3 \) and White has some activity to counteract the pair of bishops in McShane-Bacrot, Lausanne 2003.

c) 10 \( \text{xd5}! \) (the reason why 9...\( \text{d5} \) is dubious) 10...\( \text{wd5} \) 11 \( \text{b5!} \) \( \text{wh1} \) (both 11...\( \text{c6} \) 12 \( \text{wd5} \) and 11...\( \text{wd1}+ \) 12 \( \text{xd1} \) leave White with a clear plus) 12 \( \text{xc7}+ \) \( \text{f8} \) 13 \( \text{xa8} \) \( \text{h3} \) (13...\( \text{c6}?! \) 14 \( \text{wd4} \), with the ideas 0-0-0, \( \text{wa7} \) and \( \text{wc4} \), also leaves White on top) 14 \( \text{d3} \) b6 (or 14...\( \text{xf1} \) 15 \( \text{xf1} \) \( \text{wd6} \) 16 0-0-0 with a clear advantage to White, as the a8-knight will escape – thanks to \( \text{wh1} \), if needed!) 15 f3 \( \text{wh2} \) 16 0-0-0 and White enjoys a powerful initiative.

Instead, the natural 9...0-0 deserves consideration, when 10 \( \text{g2} \) c5!? promises level chances.

10 \( \text{b5}+ \) \( \text{f8}! \)

10...\( \text{d7}?! \) 11 \( \text{f5} \) is a bit better for White.

11 \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{wd1}+ \) 12 \( \text{xd1} \) \( \text{f5} \)

...with equality.

D2) 1 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{e5} \) 2 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{d6} \) 3 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{exd4} \) 4 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 5 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 6 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{d5} \) 7 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{g4} \)

Now White’s two main options are:

D21: 8 \( \text{g2}?! \)

D22: 8 \( \text{f4} \)

Alternatively:

a) 8 \( \text{f4} \) c5 followed by 9...d4 with a slight initiative for Black, for instance 9 \( \text{f3} \) d4 10 \( \text{e2} \) f5, Spassky-Fressinet, Paris (rapid) 2001.

b) 8 e6 \( \text{f6} \) 9 \( \text{exf7}+ \) \( \text{xf7} \), followed by \( \text{xe8} \), \( \text{c6} \) and so on. Black will castle by hand, and with an extra pawn in the centre, he has achieved equality.

c) 8 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{c6} \) 9 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{f5} \) 10 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 11 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{gxe5}?! \) 12 \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 13 \( \text{exe7} \) \( \text{exe7} \) 14 \( \text{f5} \) c6 15 \( \text{f4} \) cxd5 16 \( \text{xe5} \) f6 17 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{xc2} \) and a draw was agreed in Grischuk-Fressinet, Enghien-lès-Bains 2001. In the final position Black stands a bit better without any risk of losing, and should thus have continued the fight.

D21) 1 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{e5} \) 2 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{d6} \) 3 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{exd4} \) 4 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 5 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 6 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{d5} \) 7 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{g4} \)
8 \textit{\textipa{g2}}!? \textit{\textipa{c6}}

So far this move hasn't been tested in practice. It may, however, supersede the more natural 8...\textit{\textipa{dx}e}5, after which Black doesn't seem to fully equalize:

a) 9 \textit{\textipa{xd}5}!? \textit{\textipa{ xd}6} (9...0-0-0?, intending 10 \textit{\textipa{db}5} \textit{\textipa{c6}} or 10 \textit{\textipa{dx}e}7+ \textit{\textipa{wx}e}7 11 0-0 \textit{\textipa{xd}8}) 10 \textit{\textipa{db}5} 0-0 (not 10...\textit{\textipa{c6}}?) 11 \textit{\textipa{df}6+ \textit{\textipa{ce}7}} 12 \textit{\textipa{dx}d6 \textit{\textipa{wx}d}6} 13 \textit{\textipa{wx}d}6+ \textit{\textipa{xd}6} 14 \textit{\textipa{de}4+ \textit{\textipa{xc}7}} 15 \textit{\textipa{f}4 \textit{\textipa{f}6}} 16 0-0-0 with a large plus for White, Ivanisevic-Tratar, Ljubljana 2004) 11 \textit{\textipa{xd}6 \textit{\textipa{wx}d}6}, when White has the two bishops but his opponent's piece play is quite free and harmonious (...\textit{\textipa{c}6}, ...\textit{\textipa{f}5}/...\textit{\textipa{g}4}, ...\textit{\textipa{md}8}, etc.).

b) 9 \textit{\textipa{we}2}

9...\textit{\textipa{dc}6} (or 9...\textit{\textipa{vc}6}?) 10 \textit{\textipa{dx}c6 \textit{\textipa{xc}6}}

11 \textit{\textipa{xd}5} when the minimum White can do is to grab the bishop pair and stand slightly better: 11...\textit{\textipa{e}6} 12 0-0 0-0 13 \textit{\textipa{d}d}1, Anand-Aronian, Monaco [blindfold rapid] 2006) 10 \textit{\textipa{e}3} 0-0 (Black can't hold his booty, as 10...\textit{\textipa{e}6} 11 \textit{\textipa{wb}5}! simultaneously attacks d5 and b7, while 10...\textit{\textipa{xd}4} 11 \textit{\textipa{xd}4 \textit{\textipa{xc}6}} 12 \textit{\textipa{x}g}7 \textit{\textipa{g}8} 13 \textit{\textipa{f}6} also favours White) 11 \textit{\textipa{xd}5 \textit{\textipa{xd}4}} 12 \textit{\textipa{xb}4}+! (Black's best bet, keeping White's edge within bearable proportions; 12...\textit{\textipa{g}5}! 13 \textit{\textipa{a}e}5 \textit{\textipa{a}6} 14 \textit{\textipa{d}d}1, and 12...\textit{\textipa{d}6}? 13 0-0-0 \textit{\textipa{c}6} 14 \textit{\textipa{c}3 \textit{\textipa{f}5}} 15 \textit{\textipa{wb}5}!, Hracek-Abeln, Saint Vincent 2005, are less resilient) 13 \textit{\textipa{xb}4 \textit{\textipa{xd}4}} 14 \textit{\textipa{c}3 \textit{\textipa{d}8}} (14...\textit{\textipa{wc}5}?! 15 \textit{\textipa{xd}5 \textit{\textipa{e}6}} 16 \textit{\textipa{b}4 \textit{\textipa{d}6}} 17 \textit{\textipa{d}d}1 \textit{\textipa{xd}5} 18 \textit{\textipa{xd}5} was clearly better for White in Timofeev-Nisipeanu, Denmark 2005, owing to his strong bishop and more active heavy pieces) 15 \textit{\textipa{d}d}1 \textit{\textipa{d}7} (15...\textit{\textipa{wc}8}?! 16 \textit{\textipa{d}5} with a clear advantage, Palac-Stevic, Zagreb 2004) 16 0-0 \textit{\textipa{c}6} 17 \textit{\textipa{f}e}1! (after 17 \textit{\textipa{h}3}? Black successfully solved his problems after 17...\textit{\textipa{e}8} 18 \textit{\textipa{wd}3 \textit{\textipa{wa}5}} 19 \textit{\textipa{xd}7 \textit{\textipa{d}8}} with equality, Landa-Fridman, Dutch League 2005).

---

After 17 \textit{\textipa{f}e}1 Black still must be careful in order to equalize. Indeed, despite the awkwardly-placed knight on b4, White is still clearly more active.

Two more tries for Black:

a) 8...\textit{\textipa{c}5}?! 9 \textit{\textipa{db}5} \textit{\textipa{a}6} 10 \textit{\textipa{d}d}6+ \textit{\textipa{xd}6}

11 \textit{\textipa{exd}6} gave White a clear edge, thanks to his two bishops and Black's weaknesses on the queenside in Smagin-Antoshin, Moscow 1982.
b) 8...0-0 was Nisipeanu’s latest try, but he again failed to achieve equality: 9 0-0 \text{Qxe}5 10 \text{Qxd}5 \text{Qc}5 11 c3 (in order not to be worried by a later ...Qg4, to which \text{Wb}3 now becomes a good reply; 11 \text{Qb}5?! is highly suspicious after 11...c6 12 \text{Qdc}7 \text{We}7 13 \text{Qxa}8 cxb5 followed by ...Qbc6 and ...Qg4) 11...c6 12 \text{Qe}3 \text{Qbd}7 13 b4 \text{Qb}6 14 b5 cxb5 15 \text{Qxb}5 with a White initiative, Shirov-Nisipeanu, Foros 2006.

9 f4

Supporting the e-pawn this way seems logical, now that Black’s central reaction ...c5 and ...d4 is less effective.

9 \text{Qxf}4?! g5 (9...Wb6 comes into consideration) 10 h3 \text{Qxf}2 11 \text{Qxf}2 gxf4 gives a position similar to those arising after 8 \text{Qxf}4 g5. It is unclear to me whether the insertion of Qg2 and ...c6 favours one camp or the other. I would thus label this position as unclear and recommend further analysis!

After 9 f4 Black has many interesting continuations, namely 9...Wb6, 9...Qh6, 9...c5, and 9...0-0. It is unclear to me whether he can gain complete parity, but I believe Black retains better winning chances than after 8...Qxe5.

a) 9...Wb6 10 h3 (10 0-0?! Qc5 11 \text{Qce}2 f6 is less precise) 10...Qh6 11 \text{Qce}2 0-0 12 0-0 Qf5 13 Qh2 and White will try to roll down the kingside by playing g4, f5 etc.

b) 9...Qh6 10 0-0 Wb6 (trying to disturb White’s plan) 11 Qh1 Qg4 12 Wd3 Qd7 13 Qa4 Wa5 14 b3 and White seems on top.

c) 9...c5? (anyway!) 10 Qdb5 a6 11 Qd6+ Qxd6 12 exd6 d4 (12...0-0?! 13 Wxd5 Ze8+ 14 Qf1 shouldn’t give Black enough compensation, though I’d rather refrain from a final verdict on this position) 13 We2+ Qf8 14 Qe4 (14 Qd5?! Wxd6 15 f5) 14...f5 15 Qxc5 Wxd6 with a messy position.

d) 9...0-0 10 0-0 f5, followed by ...Qa6-c7. This drastic way of preventing f4-f5 appeals to me more than 10...Ze8 11 h3 Qh6, intending 12 f5 Qg5. Finally, 10...f6?! is wrong on account of the obvious 11 e6!

D22) 1 e4 e5 2 Qf3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 Qxd4 Qf6 5 Qc3 Qe7 6 g3 d5 7 e5 Qg4 8 Qf4
...and now:

D221: 8...0-0?!  
D222: 8...c5?!  
D223: 8...g5 9 h3?!  
D224: 8...g5 9 e6!

D221) 1 e4 e5 2 ∆f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 ∆xd4 ∆f6 5 ∆c3 ∆e7 6 g3 d5 7 e5 ∆g4  
8 ∆f4 0-0? 9 h3 ∆xe5  
9...∆h6 10 ∆xh6 is too ugly.  
10 ∆xe5 ∆e8 11 ∆e2 ∆b4 12 ∆f4 c5 13 ∆db5 d4

14 0-0?!

Stronger was 14 ∆c7! g5 (or 14...dxc3 15 b3 ∆e7 16 ∆xa8 ∆c6 17 ∆f1 ∆d4 18 ∆d3 when White’s king is safe enough and his extra material should tell) 15 ∆xe8 gxf4 16 0-0 and Black has sacrificed too much material.

14...∆xh3

14...dxc3 would lose after 15 ∆xd8 ∆xd8 16 ∆c7 ∆xh3 17 bxc3 ∆xc3 18 ∆xa8, when White is going to be a piece up for only two pawns.

15 ∆a4 ∆c6 16 ∆d6 ∆xh2?

This was unnecessary. The natural 16...∆xf1 was called for, presenting White with realistic chances to err: 17 ∆xf1!! (the two others recaptures leave Black well alive thanks to the resource 17...g5, e.g. 17 ∆xf1? g5 18 ∆xe8 gxf4 19 a3 ∆a5 20 ∆xc5 ∆xe8) 17...∆e1 18 ∆h5! (18 ∆xe1?? ∆xe1 19 ∆xe1 ∆a5 wins for Black!) 18...∆xa1 19 ∆xf7+ ∆h8 20 ∆xb7...

...and in this chaotic position White is two exchanges down but his threats of ∆f7+ and ∆xc6 prevail. All in all, he stands much better.

17 ∆xe2 c4 18 ∆h5 ∆xf1 19 ∆xf7+ ∆h8 20 ∆xb7

...and Black resigned, Smirin-G.Kuzmin, Lvov 1990.

D222) 1 e4 e5 2 ∆f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 ∆xd4 ∆f6 5 ∆c3 ∆e7 6 g3 d5 7 e5 ∆g4 8 ∆f4 c5?!

This central counter-attack deserves further investigation, even though it may be dubious.

9 ∆db5 d4 10 ∆d5

10 e6!?, as in Sedina-Vasilevich, German League 2002, may be stronger.

10...0-0 and now:

a) 11 ∆c4? was the game continua-
tion: 11...dxc3 12 Qc7 cxb2 13 Bb1
Wxd1+ 14 Axd1 Axe6 15 Qxe6 (no bet-
ter was 15 Axe6 fxe6 16 Qxa8 e5 17
Ae3 Qa6 and the knight is lost)
15...fxe6 16 Axe6+ Wh8 17 Axd4 Qc6 18
0-0 Aed8 19 c3 Af6 20 Ad6 (a blunder,
but the 'b' passer was too strong any-
way) 20...b1W 21 Axb1 Axd6 and White
resigned.

White should have played one of
the following:

b) 11 exf7+ Wh8 (11...Af7?? is bad in
view of 12 Ac4 dxc3 13 Wxd8+ Axd8 14
Qd6, when White wins an exchange for
only one pawn and stands clearly bet-
ter) 12 Qc7 dxc3 13 Wxd8 Axd8 14
Qxa8 cxb2 15 Bb1 Aa5+ 16 Ad2 Axd2+ 17
Wxd2.

I believe White should be able to ex-
tract the knight from the corner and
end up with an extra exchange for just
one pawn.

c) 11 Qc7 dxc3 12 Wg4, or even 12
b3?! Aexe6 13 Qxa8 Ad5 14 Ag1 (not 14
f3? Ag5! and Black wins) 14...Qxh2 15
Ag2.

10...0-0 11 Ag2!

The obvious 11 Qbc7 wins material,
13 \( \text{bc7?} \)

13 h3! apparently leads to a big White advantage, as the following lines suggest: 13...\( \text{xf2} \) 14 \( \text{xf2!} \) (not 14 \( \text{xf2?} \) gxf4 15 \( \text{xe7+} \) \( \text{xe7} \) 16 gxf4 f6 when Black acquires adequate counterplay) 14...gxf4 15 gxf4, and although this present position still looks pretty messy, it transpires that Black’s king is too vulnerable: 15...\( \text{h8} \) 16 \( \text{h5} \) f6 17 exf6 \( \text{xf6} \) 18 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{d7} \) 19 \( \text{bc7} \) \( \text{b8} \) 20 \( \text{e6} \) and Black will have to offload some material; or 15...\( \text{e6} \) 16 \( \text{dc7} \) \( \text{c8} \) 17 \( \text{wh5} \) \( \text{h4+} \) (17...\( \text{xc7?} \) loses on the spot to 18 \( \text{xc7} \) \( \text{xc7} \) 19 \( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{xc6} \) 20 \( \text{h8+} \) \( \text{h8} \) 21 \( \text{h6} \)) 18 \( \text{g1} \) \( \text{h8} \) 19 \( \text{h2} \) with \( \text{e4} \) and/or \( \text{h1} \) to follow.

13...gxf4! 14 \( \text{xa8} \) d3 15 \( \text{xd3} \) \( \text{gx e5} \) 16 \( \text{we4} \) f3 17 \( \text{xf3} \)

17 \( \text{xf1} \) doesn’t save White after 17...f5 18 \( \text{xe7+} \) \( \text{xe7} \) 19 \( \text{wh4} \) \( \text{f7} \).

17...\( \text{xf5!!} \)

We have been following Topalov-Bacrot, Cap d’Agde (rapid) 2003. Bacrot continued with 11...\( \text{c5?!} \), but 11...\( \text{c6!} \) looks stronger. For example, 12 \( \text{e6} \) (12 gxf4 is no better: 12...\( \text{wb6} \) 13 \( \text{ce2} \) \( \text{c5} \) 14 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{xb2} \) when White has no attack, and thus no compensation at all for the lost pawn) 12...\( \text{h8} \) 13 gxf4 \( \text{wb6} \) 14 \( \text{d1} \) \( \text{f6} \) 15 \( \text{e7+} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 16 \( \text{e1}+ \) \( \text{e7} \). White can’t conveniently cover the pinned knight, whereas his own pins on the black pieces are quite bearable. As a consequence Black holds a marked advantage, even though the position is still complex.

105
D224) 1 e4 e5 2 \(\text{\textbullet}f3\) d6 3 d4 exd4 4 \(\text{\textbullet}xd4\) \(\text{\textbullet}f6\) 5 \(\text{\textbullet}c3\) \(\text{\textbullet}e7\) 6 g3 d5 7 e5 \(\text{\textbullet}g4\) 8 \(\text{\textbullet}f4\) g5 9 e6! h5

9...\(\text{\textbullet}xf2\)?! looks very suspicious. In the only game in which this move was tried Black got crushed quite effectively:
10 \(\text{\textbullet}h5\) 0-0 11 \(\text{\textbullet}xh2\) fxe 12 \(\text{\textbullet}d3\) \(\text{\textbullet}f7\) 13 \(\text{\textbullet}f3\) gx f4 14 gxf4 (nearly all White's pieces join the assault and the imminent landing of a rook on g1 will spell the end for the black king) 14...\(\text{\textbullet}c6\) (if 14...\(\text{\textbullet}g7\), 15 \(\text{\textbullet}e2\) avoids ...\(\text{\textbullet}c5\) before continuing with \(\text{\textbullet}ag1\)) 15 \(\text{\textbullet}hg1+\) \(\text{\textbullet}f8\) 16 \(\text{\textbullet}h6+\) \(\text{\textbullet}e8\) 17 \(\text{\textbullet}g8+\) \(\text{\textbullet}f8\) 18 \(\text{\textbullet}h5\) \(\text{\textbullet}f6\) 19 \(\text{\textbullet}g5\) and White was winning in Gasanov-A.Ivanov, Kharkov 2001.

After 9...h5 there's one final split to make:

D2241: 10 exf7+
D2242: 10 h3

D2241) 1 e4 e5 2 \(\text{\textbullet}f3\) d6 3 d4 exd4 4 \(\text{\textbullet}xd4\) \(\text{\textbullet}f6\) 5 \(\text{\textbullet}c3\) \(\text{\textbullet}e7\) 6 g3 d5 7 e5 \(\text{\textbullet}g4\) 8 \(\text{\textbullet}f4\) g5 9 e6 h5 10 exf7+ \(\text{\textbullet}xf7\)

10...\(\text{\textbullet}f8\)? makes no sense here, as Black deprives himself of the important ...\(\text{\textbullet}e8\). Then 11 \(\text{\textbullet}c1\) \(\text{\textbullet}c6\) 12 \(\text{\textbullet}g2\) \(\text{\textbullet}c5\) 13 \(\text{\textbullet}e3\) \(\text{\textbullet}xe3\) 14 fxe3 proved much better for White in the encounter L.Dominguez-Luther, Havana 2004.

Here are three White options from this position:

a) 12 \(\text{\textbullet}e2\) \(\text{\textbullet}c6\) (Black must seek activity; in the event of the seemingly more solid approach 12...\(\text{\textbullet}w6\) 13 \(\text{\textbullet}e3\) \(\text{\textbullet}c6\), White seizes the initiative by means of 14 0-0 \(\text{\textbullet}g8\) 15 \(\text{\textbullet}a4\), intending to open up the game with \(\text{\textbullet}c4\)) 13 \(\text{\textbullet}e3\) \(\text{\textbullet}xe3\) 14 fxe3 \(\text{\textbullet}h4\) with a double-edged position.

b) 12 \(\text{\textbullet}g2\) \(\text{\textbullet}c6\)! (the intermediate check 12...\(\text{\textbullet}e8+\) is less appropriate: 13 \(\text{\textbullet}c2\) \(\text{\textbullet}c6\) 14 0-0, or 13...\(\text{\textbullet}c6\) 14 0-0 \(\text{\textbullet}w6\) 15 \(\text{\textbullet}c3\) or 15 \(\text{\textbullet}f4\)!, and in all cases White retains an edge due to Black's rather unsafe king) 13 \(\text{\textbullet}e3\) (13 \(\text{\textbullet}xg5+\) \(\text{\textbullet}g7\) would be perilous for White) 13...\(\text{\textbullet}xd4\) (after 13...\(\text{\textbullet}xe3\) 14 fxe3 Black should capture on d4; indeed 14...\(\text{\textbullet}xd4\) 15 \(\text{\textbullet}xd4\) \(\text{\textbullet}e8+\) 16 \(\text{\textbullet}e2\) \(\text{\textbullet}b6\) 17 \(\text{\textbullet}d3\) \(\text{\textbullet}g7\) 18 0-0 \(\text{\textbullet}g4\) gives fair chances of equalizing) 14 \(\text{\textbullet}xd4\) \(\text{\textbullet}e8+\), and now both 15 \(\text{\textbullet}e2\) \(\text{\textbullet}xd4\) 16 \(\text{\textbullet}xd4\) \(\text{\textbullet}c6\) and 15 \(\text{\textbullet}f1\) \(\text{\textbullet}xd4\) 16 \(\text{\textbullet}xd4\) \(\text{\textbullet}c6\) are equal.
c) 12 \textit{\underline{\text{\textbf{f}3}}}?, preparing long castling, is perhaps the best choice here. After 12...\textit{\underline{\text{\textbf{e}3}}} 13 \textit{\underline{\text{\textbf{x}e}}}3 \textit{\underline{\text{\textbf{c}6}}} 14 \textit{\underline{\text{d}2}} White's chances are a tad better because of the somewhat exposed black king.

\textbf{D2242)} 1 \textit{\underline{\text{e}4}} 2 \textit{\underline{\text{f}3}} 3 \textit{\underline{\text{d}6}} 4 \textit{\underline{\text{d}4}} 5 \textit{\underline{\text{e}4}} 6 \textit{\underline{\text{e}7}} 7 \textit{\underline{\text{e}5}} 8 \textit{\underline{\text{f}4}} 9 \textit{\underline{\text{e}5}} 10 \textit{\underline{\text{h}3}} \textit{\underline{\text{f}2}}

Or 10...\textit{\underline{x}e}6!? 11 \textit{\underline{x}h}4 \textit{\underline{x}f}4 12 \textit{\underline{d}3} \textit{\underline{f}3} 13 \textit{\underline{g}5} 14 \textit{\underline{x}g}3 15 \textit{\underline{x}e}6+ \textit{\underline{x}e}6 16 \textit{\underline{w}e}6 with a edge for White (Palkovski-M. Stangl, Balatonbereny 1996), Black should have tried 14...\textit{\underline{f}6}.

b) 11 \textit{\underline{w}f}2?! is wrong: 11...\textit{\underline{g}x}f4 12 \textit{\underline{w}e}2 (it is not too late to insert 12 \textit{\underline{e}7}+ \textit{\underline{w}f}7 13 \textit{\underline{w}f}3, which reduces Black's edge to its minimum) 12...\textit{\underline{c}5} 13 \textit{\underline{d}f}5 \textit{\underline{x}e}6 14 \textit{\underline{g}7}+ \textit{\underline{f}8} 15 \textit{\underline{x}e}6+ \textit{\underline{x}e}6 (Delabaca-Seel, Cannes 2001) and Black is going to be an healthy pawn up.

11...\textit{\underline{g}x}f4

This is compulsory. Indeed, both 11...\textit{\underline{x}e}6 and 11...\textit{\underline{x}h}1 lead to defeat, as shown by the following lines:

a) 11...\textit{\underline{x}e}6? 12 \textit{\underline{e}5} \textit{\underline{x}h}1 13 \textit{\underline{a}x}h8 and White is going to win the beast in the corner.

b) 11...\textit{\underline{x}h}1? 12 \textit{\underline{e}5}!...

11 \textit{\underline{w}f}3!?

Alternatively:

a) 11 \textit{\underline{e}x}f7+ \textit{\underline{w}f}8 (11...\textit{\underline{x}f}7 12 \textit{\underline{w}f}3 transposes to 11 \textit{\underline{w}f}3 \textit{\underline{x}f}4 12 \textit{\underline{e}x}f7+ \textit{\underline{x}f}7 12 \textit{\underline{x}e}7 (12 \textit{\underline{e}x}f2 \textit{\underline{g}4} 13 \textit{\underline{g}f}4 is playable too, and gives a balanced position) 12...\textit{\underline{x}e}7 (if 12...\textit{\underline{d}x}d 13 \textit{\underline{d}x}d \textit{\underline{x}e}7 14 \textit{\underline{x}e}7+ \textit{\underline{x}e}7 15 \textit{\underline{x}c}3 \textit{\underline{a}c}5 16 \textit{\underline{e}x}f2 \textit{\underline{e}4} 17 \textit{\underline{h}4}!?) 14 \textit{\underline{g}d}3? (14 \textit{\underline{d}a}4) 14...\textit{\underline{x}d}6 15 \textit{\underline{d}c}5 \textit{\underline{w}e}5 16 \textit{\underline{c}3} \textit{\underline{f}5} with an edge to Black, Michielsen-Abeln, Haarlem 2005.

...and here, despite his extra rook, Black is lost:

b1) 12...\textit{\underline{h}7} 13 \textit{\underline{x}d}5 \textit{\underline{x}f}8 14 \textit{\underline{a}d}3 \textit{g}4 15 \textit{\underline{x}h}1 \textit{\underline{x}e}6 16 \textit{\underline{d}c}7 \textit{\underline{e}7} 17 \textit{\underline{x}g}4, followed by \textit{\underline{w}h}5 and/or 0-0-0, when the attack is decisive.

b2) 12...\textit{\underline{f}8} 13 \textit{\underline{x}d}5 \textit{\underline{x}e}6 14 \textit{\underline{x}c}7+ \textit{\underline{x}c}7 (on 14...\textit{\underline{x}d}7, 15 \textit{\underline{b}5}+ mates) 15 \textit{\underline{x}h}5+ \textit{\underline{d}8} 16 0-0-0 \textit{\underline{d}6} 17 \textit{\underline{b}5} when White regains the invested material with interest and is winning (or more directly, 16 \textit{\underline{x}c}7+ \textit{\underline{x}c}7 17 \textit{\underline{w}h}7 \textit{\underline{e}8} 18 \textit{\underline{w}e}4 \textit{\underline{x}g}3 19 \textit{\underline{w}e}5+ \textit{\underline{d}6} 20 \textit{\underline{b}5}+).
b3) 12...f6 13 Qxd5 g4 14 We4 and Black has no satisfactory reply to both Qxc7+ and Wg6+.

12 exf7+!

A logical and necessary intermezzo. On the immediate 12 Wxf2?, Black would simply take the e-pawn, when he is not only a pawn up, his king is also safer than after 12.exf7+. For example, 12...fxe6 13 0-0-0 fxg3 14 Wxg3 Wd6 and Black slowly but surely converted his extra pawn in Lupulescu-Nevednichy, Targoviste 2001.

14 Wg2 Qc6!

The right way to proceed. 14...c6? leads to an uncomfortable, if not yet lost position after the cunning manoeuvre 15 Qce2! h4 16 Qf4 Wh6 17 Qe1 Wd6 18 Qd3 Qa6 19 Qf5! Wh6 20 Wg4 Qxf7 21 Whf1.

15 Qxc6 bxc6 16 Qd3

In this obscure position White has compensation for the pawn.

Conclusion

White has several ways to fight against the Antoshin Variation. Besides the main line, 6 f4 (see the following chapter), it transpires through recent games that both 6 g3 d5 7 e5 Qg4 8 Qg2 and the seemingly modest 6 Qe2 allow White to battle for an opening edge. The retreat 6 Qde2 and the 'more active' 6 Qc4 also lead to complex positions, but it seems to me that Black’s counterplay is more apparent in these lines.
Chapter Four

Antoshin’s Variation

6  \( \text{\textsc{f}}4 \)

1 e4 e5 2  \( \text{\textsc{f}}3 \) d6 3 d4 exd4 4  \( \text{\textsc{x}}\text{xd}4 \)  \( \text{\textsc{f}}6 \)

5  \( \text{\textsc{c}}3 \)  \( \text{\textsc{e}}7 \) 6  \( \text{\textsc{f}}4 \)

This move traditionally leads to a plan involving a quick 0-0-0. Black must react actively or else he will end up with an inferior position.

6...0-0 7  \( \text{\textsc{w}}\text{d}2 \)

\[
\begin{array}{cc}
    & \\
    & \\
\end{array}
\]

A) 1 e4 e5 2  \( \text{\textsc{f}}3 \) d6 3 d4 exd4 4  \( \text{\textsc{x}}\text{xd}4 \)  \( \text{\textsc{f}}6 \) 5  \( \text{\textsc{c}}3 \)  \( \text{\textsc{e}}7 \) 6  \( \text{\textsc{f}}4 \) 0-0 7  \( \text{\textsc{w}}\text{d}2 \) c6 8 0-0-0

\[
\begin{array}{cc}
    & \\
    & \\
\end{array}
\]

8...b5

8...d5 induces simplifications that turn out better for White: 9 exd5! (without doubt the best here; 9  \( \text{\textsc{d}}\text{f}5?! \)  \( \text{\textsc{x}}\text{f}5 \) 10 exf5  \( \text{\textsc{w}}\text{a}5 \), Lebedev-Ganiev, Kolontaevo 1997, and 9 e5  \( \text{\textsc{e}}\text{e}8 \), Zaychuk-Butsenko, Odessa 2003, only give Black undeserved counterc chances!)

9...\( \text{\textsc{x}}\text{xd}5 \) 10  \( \text{\textsc{x}}\text{xd}5 \)  \( \text{\textsc{w}}\text{xd}5 \) 11  \( \text{\textsc{b}}\text{b}1 \) (probably the strongest continuation;

Now we will consider:

A: 6...c6
B: 6...a6
C: 6...\( \text{\textsc{d}}\text{c}6 \)
D: 6...d5

109
11 c4!? wC5 12 Axd3 brought White a win in Coleman-Rayner, London 1993, but the weakened queenside may prove a nuisance in the future; and 11 Axb3 seems too early: after 11...wxd2+ 12 Axd2 Ad7 two recent games of the Russian IM Mikhail Zaitsev prove that the White edge is only tiny.

Back to 11 Ab1, Black has tried several moves in this given position but none has enabled him to equalize:

a) 11...a5 12 Ae2, followed by Af3 and Aae1, ideally directing all the white forces towards the centre. Grabbing the g2-pawn would be suicidal: 12...Wxg2? 13 Ahg1 Wxf2 14 Ah6 g6 (14...Af6?? 15 Aeg7 Aeg7 16 Wg5 and wins) 15 Adf1 Whx2 16 Af4 Wh4 17 Ah1 and White gets back the material with interest.

b) 11...Ad8 12 Ae2 Af6 (after 12...Wxg2?, this time 13 We3! Af8 14 Axf3 is strong) 13 Ab3 Wxd2 14 Axd2 (Simmelink-Plukker, correspondence 1997). White has an improved version of 11 Ab3 Wxd2: his knight is ready to jump to d6, via either c4 or e4.

a1) 11 Ab5? leads to disaster after 11...Wa5.

a2) 11 Ab3!? c4 12 Adb4 Wa5 13 Ab1 and the situation remains unclear.

a3) 11 Ad5 Axf5 12 exf5 d5! (12...Ac6?! gave White the initiative after 13 g4 Wa5 14 Ab1 Ae5 15 Ag3! in Rodriguez Cespedes-Conquest, Cienfuegos 1996; 12...Wa5, on the other hand, is worth a try: 13 Ab1 [F.Nielsen-C.Hansen, correspondence 1994] and here maybe ...c4-c3) 13 g4 d4, vacating d4 for the knight, with level chances.
b) 10 \textit{D}a4 \textit{D}d7 11 b3 (11 \textit{W}xb4? loses to 11...c5 12 \textit{W}b7 cxd4 13 \textit{W}xa8 \textit{W}c7!, White having to sacrifice material in order to rescue his trapped queen) 11...d5 12 \textit{D}f5 \textit{D}xf5 13 exf5 (Kovalev-Sizykh, Alushta 1997). Again it is difficult to come to a firm verdict on the position, and this remains the case after some more moves: 13...\textit{D}bd7 14 g4 \textit{D}b6 15 \textit{D}b2 a5 16 g5 \textit{D}h5 17 f6 etc. White strikes first, but his attack isn’t that dangerous yet.

10...a5

Black has two other options here:
a) 10...\textit{W}b6 (having in mind ...d5, which was prohibited on this move due to \textit{D}xb8) 11 g4 and now:

a1) 11...\textit{D}d8?! 12 h4 (White judges that he isn’t in a hurry to jump to f5 and thus prefers this useful move; 12 g5 is possible too: 12...\textit{D}h5 13 \textit{A}e3 c5 14 \textit{D}f5 \textit{D}xf5 15 exf5 d5 16 f6 [on 16 \textit{W}g2 \textit{W}a5 17 f4 \textit{W}xa2 18 \textit{A}e2 Black has the cunning 18...\textit{D}f6!, when grabbing the knight isn’t advisable] 16...gx6 17 gx6 \textit{D}xf6 18 \textit{W}g2+ \textit{D}h8 19 \textit{W}h3 \textit{W}e6 and Black was okay in Bindrich-Pakleza, Czech Team Ch. 2005) 12...c5 (an admission of failure) 13 \textit{D}f5 \textit{A}xf5 14 gxf5 \textit{D}c6 15 \textit{W}g2 \textit{D}d4 16 \textit{H}h6 \textit{D}e8 17 \textit{D}g5 (17 \textit{D}g1 \textit{D}f6 18 \textit{A}c4 is also possible) when White stood much better and went on to win in Lanka-Bosboom, Amsterdam 1994.

12 \textit{D}f5 \textit{A}xf5 13 gxf5 \textit{D}c6 14 \textit{D}g1

(Crouan-Gouret, Mans 2001) and White was clearly in the driving seat.

a3) 11...d5 12 e5 \textit{D}e8 13 \textit{D}f5 (if 13 \textit{D}d3?! f6 14 \textit{W}h1, and on account of his well-centralized forces, White stood better in Copie-I.Jensen, correspondence 1992; or 13...\textit{W}a5? [Black is wasting time in order to grab the rather unimportant a-pawn] 14 \textit{D}f5 \textit{A}xf5?! [14...\textit{A}c5] 15 gxf5 f6 16 e6 \textit{W}xa2 17 \textit{W}g1 \textit{D}a6 18 \textit{W}g4 \textit{A}c5 19 \textit{W}g2 – of course the last few moves weren’t compulsory, but they do show the danger Black is under: White’s attack is already decisive here) 13...\textit{A}c5 14 \textit{W}e1 (on 14 h4 Black could well consider 14...f6) 14...a5 15 h4 \textit{D}a6 (here, or on the next move, 15...a4 was more to the point, while the sacrifice 15...b3 also deserved attention) 16 h5
\( \text{Dac7?!} 17 \text{Ag5} \) (A. Poulsen-I. Jensen, correspondence 1984), and with ideas such as h6 g6; e7+ h8; w4, White has seized the initiative.

b) 10...c5?! looks like a very decent alternative. After 11 Qb5 Black has two playable continuations at his disposal:

b1) 11...wa5 12 axd6! (12 Qxd6?! a6 [definitely not 12...wa2?? 13 Aa4 wa1 14 xf7 xf7 15 wd8+ and it's curtains!]) 13 e5 de8 14 Ad3 Qxd6 15 exd6 Ad6 16 Ag5 Ad7 and in return for the pawn, Black has an attack) 12...axd6 13 a3 and White should stand a bit better.

b2) 11...a6 12 axd6 (12 Qxd6 wa5 13 e5 transposes to 11...wa5 12 axd6 etc.; or if instead 12...c6?! 13 Qf5 Qxf5 14 wxd8 Hfxd8 15 Qxd8+ Qxd8 16 exf5 and the extra pawn combined with the pair of bishops should outweigh the temporary activity of Black's pieces) 12...de8 (if 12...axd6?! 13 Qxd6 with a slight edge to White; taking back with the knight is stronger than 13 wxd6?! wa5 14 Aa7 de8 15 Qxe8 Aexe8 with ample compensation for a mere pawn – a2 is hanging and White's pieces are anything but impressive; or 14 a3 Qa6! with ideas such as ...Mfd8 and ...bxa3 Qxa3 Qb4; but not 14...a6?! 15 axb4! cxb4 16 Qd4) 13 Axe7 Axe7 14 Qd6 Ac6

(Al Modiahki-Belkhodja, Casablanca 2002). Black has some compensation for his pawn, but White's game should be somewhat preferable.

White also keeps an edge after 14...Axa2 15 Aa5 we5 (or 15...wb7? 16 b3 Axb1 17 Axb1 with a clear advantage) 16 wd8!.

11 g4 a4

11...wb6?! is now illogical. White was clearly better after 12 g5 Hh5 13 Ae3 c5 14 Aa5 Axf5 15 exf5 in Arakhamia-Orr, Grangemouth 2000.

12 a3

Opening lines in front of one's own king may look peculiar, but White's choice is reasonable. Moreover, he probably wasn't convinced that the customary 12 Axf5 was any better. Indeed, Black would have gained sufficient counterplay after 12...Axf5 (12...d5??) 13 gx5 b3. The alternative, 13 exf5?, would be suspicious to say the least,
after 13...\( \text{Bxd5} \) 14 \( \text{Bg3} \) a3, then 15 \( \text{Bb3} \)
\( \text{Bf6} \) is an immediate disaster, so White must reconcile himself to the unappealing
15 \( \text{Bxa3} \).

12...\( \text{Bxa3} \) 13 \( \text{Bxa3} \) \( \text{Bwb6} \)

...with a complex position, Maze-
E. Moser, Zemplinska Sirava 2004. And
13...\( \text{Be8}?! \) is another possibility.

B) 1 e4 e5 2 \( \text{Bf3} \) d6 3 d4 exd4 4 \( \text{Bxd4} \)
\( \text{Bf6} \) 5 \( \text{Cxc6} \) \( \text{Be7} \) 6 \( \text{Bf4} \) 0-0-0 7 \( \text{Wd2} \) a6 8
0-0-0

Now Black can play:

B1: 8...d5
B2: 8...\( \text{Bb5} \)

After 8...c5? 9 \( \text{Bxf5} \) \( \text{Bxf5} \) 10 exf5 the
d-pawn is bound to fall.

B1) 1 e4 e5 2 \( \text{Bf3} \) d6 3 d4 exd4 4 \( \text{Bxd4} \)
\( \text{Bf6} \) 5 \( \text{Cxc6} \) \( \text{Be7} \) 6 \( \text{Bf4} \) 0-0-0 7 \( \text{Wd2} \) a6 8
0-0-0 d5

9 exd5

9 e5 is not as ‘clean’. After 9...\( \text{Bh5} \)
10 \( \text{Be3} \) c5 11 \( \text{Bb3} \) d4 12 \( \text{Be2} \) the game
is a mess.

9...\( \text{Bxd5} \) 10 \( \text{Bxd5} \)!

10 \( \text{Bf5}?! \) leads either to a pro-
grammed draw, or a symbolic White
dege: 10...\( \text{Bxf4} \) (10...\( \text{Bxf5} \)?) 11 \( \text{Bxd5} \)
\( \text{Bd6} \) 12 \( \text{Bxd6} \) and Black must recapture
sadly with the pawn, since 12...\( \text{Bwd6} \)
13 \( \text{Bg5}! \) wins) and now:
a) 11 \( \text{We3} \) \( \text{Be5}!! \)

12 \( \text{Bxd8} \) \( \text{Bxd8} \) 13 \( \text{We4} \) \( \text{Bxe2}+ \) 14 \( \text{Bb1} \)
\( \text{Bxc3}+ \) 15 \( \text{Bxc3} \) \( \text{Bxd1}+ \) 16 \( \text{Bb2} \) \( \text{Be1}+ \) 17
\( \text{Bb3} \) \( \text{Be6}+ \) 18 \( \text{Bc4} \) \( \text{Bd7} \) (not 18...\( \text{Bxh1}?! \)
19 \( \text{Bd4}! \) \( \text{Bxc4}+ \) 20 \( \text{Bxc4} \) f6 21 \( \text{Bd5}+ \) \( \text{Bf8} \)
22 \( \text{Bxb7} \) – the materialistic approach,
even if it is probably possible to deliver
mate!?) 19 \( \text{Bxe6}!! \) \( \text{Bc5}+ \) 20 \( \text{Bb4} \) \( \text{Bxe6} \) 21
\( \text{Bxd1} \) (we have been following the
game Gipslis-Antoshin, Moscow 1972)
21...\( \text{Bf4} \) and Black should hold.

13...\( \text{Bd3}+ \) isn’t bad either: 14 \( \text{Bb1} \)
\( \text{Bxf2} \) 15 \( \text{We5} \) \( \text{Bxf5} \) 16 \( \text{Bxf5} \) \( \text{Bxh1} \) 17
\( \text{Bxg5} \) \( \text{Bc6} \) 18 \( \text{Be2} \) (White’s task, in or-
der to stay alive, is to prevent the errant
horse from arriving back home)
18...\( \text{Bh8} \) 19 \( \text{We5} \) \( \text{Be5} \) 20 \( \text{Bg1} \) \( \text{Bae8} \) 21 g4
(if 21 \( \text{Bxh1}?! \) \( \text{Bd4} \) wins) 21...\( \text{Bxe3} \) 22
\( \text{Bxh1} \) \( \text{Bxc3} \) 23 \( \text{Bxc3} \) \( \text{Bxe2} \), and while
Black can hardly lose this endgame, I’m
not sure how realistic any winning
chances are.
b) 11 \( \text{Qxe7+!} \) \( \text{Wxe7} \) 12 \( \text{Wxf4} \) \( \text{Ke6} \) 13 \( \text{Axd3} \) with an edge (S. Marjanovic-L. Kalashian, Kirovakan 1978).

10...\( \text{Wxd5} \)

Nearly the same position can occur if Black opts for 7...c6 8 0-0-0 d5 and so on. In that case a pawn stands on c6 rather than a6, and I would recommend playing 11 \( \text{Qb1} \). Here, however, this doesn’t bring much in my opinion, whereas 11 \( \text{Qb3} \) is critical because the c7-pawn often hangs.

11 \( \text{Qb3} \)

11 \( \text{Qb1} \) c5 12 \( \text{Qb3} \) \( \text{Wxd2} \) 13 \( \text{Axd2} \) \( \text{Ac6} \) (Trois-Parente, Brasilia 1969) is more or less okay for Black.

11...\( \text{Wc6} \)

11...\( \text{Wxd2}+ \) 12 \( \text{Axd2} \) c6 13 \( \text{Axd3} \) leads to a White edge. This ending isn’t a worry for Black in the line 7...c6 8 0-0-0 d5 etc., but here he has had to consent to a lost tempo. Against the natural 13...\( \text{Ke6} \) there would follow 14 \( \text{Qd4} \).

12 \( \text{Qe2} \)

12 \( \text{Axd3} \) is also good.

12...\( \text{Wa4} \) 13 \( \text{Ab1} \)

Or even 13 \( \text{Axc7} \) (Kholmov-Garcia Martinez, Havana 1968), since after 13...\( \text{Wxa2} \) 14 \( \text{Wa5} \) White trades queens and maintains a lasting pressure. 13...c5 14 \( \text{Ad6} \) \( \text{Axd6} \)

14...\( \text{Ad8?} \) would accelerate Black’s downfall: 15 \( \text{Axc5!} \) \( \text{Wc6} \) 16 \( \text{Qxe7} \) \( \text{Axd2} \) 17 \( \text{Axd2} \) h6 18 \( \text{Axd8+} \) \( \text{Kh7} \) 19 \( \text{Axd3+} \) f5 20 \( \text{Qe1} \) (or 20 \( \text{Ac4} \)), when Black’s pieces are still parked in the garage and are unable to assist their monarch.

15 \( \text{Wxd6} \) \( \text{Ae6} \) 16 \( \text{Af3} \) \( \text{Ac6} \) 17 \( \text{Axc6} \) bxc6 18 \( \text{Wxc5} \)

...with a healthy extra pawn.

B2) 1 \( \text{e4} \) e5 2 \( \text{Af3} \) d6 3 d4 exd4 4 \( \text{Axd4} \) 

\( \text{Ac6} \) 5 \( \text{Cc3} \) \( \text{Ae7} \) 6 \( \text{Af4} \) 0-0 7 \( \text{Wd2} \) a6 8 0-0-0 b5

8...c5? 9 \( \text{Af5} \) (9 \( \text{Ad3} \) is good too) 9...\( \text{Axh5} \) 10 exf5 and the d-pawn is bound to fall.

9 f3

9 \( \text{Ad5} \) (Kupreichik-L. Kalashian, Kirovakan 1978) may be good enough to claim a small edge. If Black gets rid of the knight, then f3, g4 will be on his opponent’s agenda, and perhaps also \( \text{Af5} \) given the right circumstances. If he doesn’t, then White can simply swap on e7.
9...c5  
a) After 9...d5 10 Qxd5 Qxd5 11 exd5 Wxd5 12 Qb3 Wxd2+ 13 Qxd2 the inclusion of f3 and ...b5 doesn’t really help Black; for instance 13...Qf5 14 Qd4 Qg6 15 Qxc7 (Ermenkov-Lechtynsky, Berlin 1982), or 13...c5 14 Qd3 Qe6 15 Qe4 Qa7 16 Qhd1; in both cases the White position is superior.  
b) 9...b4 10 Qd5 Qxd5 11 exd5 a5 and after 12 Qc4 (Kholmov-Antoshin, Havana 1968) or 12 g4 (Liberzon-Antoshin, USSR 1971) White is dictating events.

10 Qf5  
Or:  
a) 10 Qde2?! b4! 11 Qd5 Qxd5 12 exd5 (12 Wxd5 isn’t any better: 12...Qa7 13 Qb1 Qe6 with fine play) 12...Qd7 13 c4 bxc3 14 Qxc3 Qb8 (Brkic-Tratar, Rabac 2004) and Black is in the ascendancy.  

If I’m not mistaken 10...Qc6?! doesn’t give enough compensation for the loss of the d-pawn: 11 Qxd6 b4 12 Qa4 Wa5 13 Qxe7 Qxe7 14 b3 Qd7 15 e5 Qfd5 16 c4 Qxa4 (16...Qac8?! intending 17 cxd5 c4) 17 cxd5, although Black now has two ways to add fuel to the fire: 17...Qxd5 18 Wxd5 (if 18 bx4? Qad8 ‘with a raging attack for the piece’, to quote Nikolai Vlassov, with whom I can only agree) 18...Qfd8 19 Wc4!; and 17...Qxb3 18 axb3 Wb1+ 19 Qc2 Qa2+ 20 Qd3 Wxb3+ 21 Qd4.

The computer is very happy with White’s position here, but what about you?  
b) 10 Qb3?! c4! (but not 10...b4? since both 11 Qd5 Qxd5 12 Wxd5 Qa7 13 Qxc5! and 11 Qb1 Qe6 [or 11...Qa7 12 Qxc5] 12 Qxd6 net a pawn for nothing) 11 Qd4 b4 12 Qd5 Qxd5 13 exd5 c3 14 bxc3 bxc3 15 Wxc3 Qg5 (Martorelli-Scalcione, Massafra 2005). For the invested pawn, White’s king is going to be permanently vulnerable.  

10...Qxf5 11 exf5 Qc6  
11...b4?! proved to be too hasty after 12 Qe4 in Nestorovic-Ragger, Urgup 2004.  

After 11...Qc6 White is at a crossroads. Out of his four seemingly reasonable options: 12 Qxd6; 12 Qe4; 12 Qb1; and 12 g4, only two are interesting in my opinion.
12 g4

Or:

a) 12 \( \texttt{\textbf{dxd6 \textbf{wa5 13 \texttt{\textbf{dxe7 (on 13 \textbf{df4, then 13...\texttt{\textbf{dxd6 14 \texttt{\textbf{dxd6 \texttt{db4 15 a3 (or 15 \texttt{\textbf{db1 \texttt{ad8] 15...\texttt{\textbf{dxd5 is very acceptable for Black) 13...\texttt{\textbf{dxe7 14 \texttt{\textbf{db1 \texttt{ad8 15 \texttt{wc1 \texttt{xf5 with at least an equal game, Damia-Scalcione, San Martino di Castrozza 2003.}}}}}}}}}

b) 12 \texttt{\textbf{de4? d5! 13 \texttt{\textbf{dxf6+ \texttt{dxf6 14 \texttt{\textbf{wd5 \texttt{wb6 15 c3 (15 \texttt{\textbf{dxe3? \texttt{ad8 saw Black win a miniature in Mrdja-Scalcione, Reggio Emilia 2003) 15...b4 with a powerful initiative, Vitoux-Payen, Val d’Isere 2004.}}}}}}}

c) 12 \texttt{\textbf{db1 \texttt{d4 with sufficient counterplay in Slaby-Luther, Deizisau 2004.}}}

12...\texttt{\textbf{b4}}

12...\texttt{\textbf{d4 was playable too, but 12...\texttt{\textbf{wa5?! is suspicious: 13 g5 b4 14 \texttt{\textbf{gx6 bxc3 15 \texttt{\textbf{wxc3! \texttt{wxc3 16 bxc3 \texttt{\textbf{dxf6 17 \texttt{\textbf{dxd6 with a clear advantage to White, mainly due to the weak black pawns on the queenside. 15...\texttt{\textbf{db4 does not change the assessment much: 16 \texttt{\textbf{a4 \texttt{\textbf{xf6 17 \texttt{\textbf{wa3 and d6 will drop. Instead, after 16 fxe7?! \texttt{\textbf{dxa2+ 17 \texttt{\textbf{d2 \texttt{\textbf{xc3 18 exf8=wf+ \texttt{\textbf{xf8 19 bxc3 d5 White has a nominal material advantage, but with his shattered pawn structure and above all his wandering king, I suspect that he can hardly stand better. 13 \texttt{\textbf{de4 \texttt{\textbf{dd4 14 \texttt{\textbf{xf6+}}}}}}}}}}}

After 14 g5!? \texttt{\textbf{xf6 15 \texttt{\textbf{dxf6+ \texttt{gxf6 (not 15...\texttt{\textbf{xf6? 16 \texttt{\textbf{d5 \texttt{\textbf{d5 17 h4) 16 \texttt{\textbf{d5 \texttt{d5 17 \texttt{\textbf{fxf6 \texttt{gxf6 18 \texttt{\textbf{c4 \texttt{d8 19 \texttt{\textbf{e3 \texttt{d6}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}

...and in this more or less balanced position a draw was agreed in Jakic-Z.Jovanovic, Zadar 2003.

C) 1 \texttt{\textbf{e4 e5 2 \texttt{\textbf{f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 \texttt{\textbf{xd4 \texttt{xf6 5 \texttt{\textbf{c3 \texttt{e7 6 \texttt{\textbf{f4 0-0 7 \texttt{\textbf{wd2 \texttt{c6}}}}}}}}}}}}}}

8 0-0-0 \texttt{\textbf{dxd4}}

a) 8...\texttt{\textbf{de5?! is dubious because the knight becomes a target for the enemy soldiers: 9 \texttt{\textbf{g3 \texttt{d5 (or 9...\texttt{\textbf{e8 10 f4 \texttt{\textbf{g6 11 \texttt{\textbf{e2 \texttt{f8 12 \texttt{\textbf{f3, Fedorchuk-A.Ivanov, Kharkov 2001, planning h4-h5) 10 \texttt{\textbf{e2 \texttt{d5 11 hxg3 12 fxg3 the half-open h-file outweighs the two bishops, Arkhipov-Vorotnikov, Moscow 1995.}}}}}}}}}}}

b) 8...a6 9 f3 \texttt{\textbf{d7?! (returning to}}
8...\(\Box x d 4\) with 9...\(\Box x d 4\) was wiser) 10 \(\Box f 5\) with a clear edge for White, Papp-Vajda, Budapest 2004.

9 \(\text{W} x d 4\)

...and now:

**C1:** 9...\(\text{A} e 6\)

**C2:** 9...\(a 6!??\)

**C1)** 1 e4 e5 2 \(\text{D} f 3\) d6 3 d4 \(\text{e} x d 4\) 4 \(\text{D} x d 4\) \(\text{D} f 6\) 5 \(\text{D} c 3\) \(\text{A} e 7\) 6 \(\text{A} f 4\) 0-0 7 \(\text{W} d 2\) \(\text{D} c 6\) 8 0-0-0 \(\text{D} x d 4\) 9 \(\text{W} x d 4\) \(\text{A} e 6\)

Black has tried knight moves, but each time there follows \(\text{D} d 5\) and White robs Black of the pair of bishops, securing a lasting edge.

However, the prophylactic 10 \(\text{W} d 2\) has some point, as White discourages his opponent from playing ...c5 (d6 would fall): 10...\(\text{D} d 7\) (10...\(\text{E} e 8\) has been tried as well: 11 f3 a6 12 g4 \(\text{D} d 7\) 13 g5 b5 14 h4 \(\text{D} e 5\) 15 \(\text{W} g 2\) \(\text{W} b 8\) 16 \(\text{D} d 5\) with a slight edge for White in Doroshkievich-Lein, Sochi 1964; 10...\(a 6!??\) 11 \(\text{B} b 1\) \(f 5!\) (Black assesses that queenside action would be too slow and thus decides on seeking counterplay on the other wing) 12 \(\text{E} x f 5\) \(\text{A} x f 5\) 13 g3 \(\text{D} b 6\) 14 \(\text{A} d 3\) \(\text{D} x d 3\) (14...\(\text{W} d 7!\) was a bit more precise) 15 \(\text{W} x d 3\) \(\text{A} g 5\) 16 \(\text{D} d 5\) \(\text{A} x f 4\) 17 \(\text{A} x f 4\) \(\text{W} d 7\) 18 \(\text{W} b 3+\) \(\text{H} h 8\) 19 h4 \(\text{W} f 7\) 20 \(\text{W} f 3\) (the ending after 20 \(\text{W} x f 7\) \(\text{H} f 7\) 21 \(\text{H} e 1\) doesn’t promise much: 21...\(\text{D} c 4!\) with the idea of 22...\(\text{D} e 5\) 20...d5 21 h5 \(\text{W} g 8\) 22 \(\text{W} c 3\) c6 23 h6 g6 24 \(\text{D} e 6\) \(\text{H} e 8\) 25 \(\text{D} g 5\) \(\text{W} f 8\) 26 \(\text{D} d 4\) \(\text{W} f 6\) 27 f4 \(\text{H} e 7??\) (Black surely missed his opponent’s witty reply; 27...\(\text{D} e 2!\) was far stronger, keeping the balance) 28 \(\text{H} e 4!!\).

10 \(\text{f} 3\)

Initiating a kingside offensive without using the f-pawn seems less powerful to me: 10 \(\text{A} e 2\) a6 (here or on the next move 10...\(\text{D} g 4\) is perfectly viable too) 11 \(\text{W} e 3\) (threatening e5) 11...\(\text{D} d 7\) 12 h4 \(\text{A} f 6\) 13 h5 (on 13 \(\text{D} d 5\) Black obtains a sufficient counterplay by means of 13...\(\text{A} x d 5\) 14 \(\text{H} x d 5\) \(\text{W} e 7\) 15 f3 \(\text{H} e 8\) 16 g4 \(\text{D} b 6\) 17 \(\text{D} d 2\) d5, but 13 g4!?? was a worthy alternative) 13...h6 with complicated play, Acs-Nevednic, Paks 2004.

A pretty shot!

a) 28...\(\text{W} d 6\) 29 \(\text{H} e 6\) d4 30 \(\text{H} e 7!\) dxc3 31 \(\text{H} g 7+\) \(\text{H} f 8\) 32 \(\text{H} e 1\) and Black resigned, Rublevsky-Kolasinski, Chelia-binsk 1991.
b) 28...\textbf{Wf8} 29 \textbf{Bxe7} \textbf{Wxe7} 30 \textbf{Be1} \textbf{Wd7} 31 \textbf{Wf6} \textbf{Af8} 32 \textbf{We7} with a decisive advantage.

c) The 'obvious' 28...\textbf{Wxc3} was in fact the most stubborn: 29 \textbf{Bxe7} \textbf{Wf6} 30 \textbf{Bhe1} \textbf{Dc4} (30...\textbf{Wf8}? 31 \textbf{Dxh7} and Black must give up the queen in order to prevent \textbf{Dxf8} followed by h7) 31 \textbf{Bxe8+} \textbf{Bxe8} 32 \textbf{Bxe8+} \textbf{Wf8} 33 \textbf{Bxf8+} \textbf{Dxf8} 34 \textbf{Dxh7+} \textbf{Df7} 35 b4!? \textbf{De3} 36 \textbf{Bb2} \textbf{Df5} 37 \textbf{Dg5+} \textbf{Bg8} 38 h7+ \textbf{Dh8} 39 \textbf{Dc3} and the white monarch will penetrate the queenside and cause havoc.

\textbf{10a6}

If 10...\textbf{Dd7} 11 \textbf{Wf3}!? (here 11 g4?! would play into Black's hands due to 11...\textbf{Ag5}!; instead, the move 11 \textbf{Dd5} is enough to claim a small edge, due to the pair of bishops after 11...\textbf{Db6}, or the space advantage in the event of 11...\textbf{Ag5} 12 \textbf{Axg5} \textbf{Wxg5+} 13 \textbf{f4} \textbf{Wd8}; with the ambitious 11 \textbf{We3}, however, White is looking for more) 11...\textbf{Af6} (the highly imaginative 11...\textbf{Wb8}... 12 g4 \textbf{De5} 13 h4 c6 14 g5 b5 15 \textbf{Dg3} \textbf{Wb6} 16 \textbf{Wxb6} axb6 17 f4 \textbf{Dg4} 18 f5 \textbf{Dxa2} 19 \textbf{Dxd6} \textbf{Dxd6} 20 \textbf{Dxd6}) 12 g4 a6 (if 12...\textbf{De5} then 13 \textbf{Dg3} with the idea \textbf{De2}, \textbf{f4} etc.) 13 g5 \textbf{Dxe5} 14 h4 was Lautier-Dorffman, Val d'Isere 2002. Now 14...\textbf{Wf7} was a mistake according to Lautier, who correctly answered 15 \textbf{Dh2}! and firmly held the initiative later on. Although his suggestion of 14...\textbf{f6}!? is indeed interesting, I believe the move actually played was not bad either. An improvement was possible a couple of moves later, namely 15...\textbf{Dxh2} 16 \textbf{Dxh2} \textbf{Dae8}!, intending 17 \textbf{f4} \textbf{Db6}, followed by ...\textbf{f5}.

But let's return to 14...\textbf{f6}!?.

...was seen in Volokitin-Harikrishna, Lausanne 2005; the young Ukrainian wasn't impressed and gained a solid plus in the endgame after the sequence

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\end{center}

White now has three decent options, all leading to a balanced position:

a) 15 g6 hxg6 16 \textbf{Ah3}.

b) 15 \textbf{De2} \textbf{Wf7} 16 \textbf{Hg1}!? \textbf{Wf7}.

c) 15 \textbf{Ah2} \textbf{fxg5} 16 hgx5 \textbf{Dxc3} 17 \textbf{Wxc3} \textbf{Wxg5+} 18 \textbf{f4} and here, instead of 18...\textbf{xf4}?! 19 \textbf{xf4} \textbf{Wxf4+} 20 \textbf{Dh1} \textbf{Dc5} 21 \textbf{Dc4} (Ovetchkin-Kodinets, Internet 2004) with better prospects for White, Black should prefer 18...\textbf{Wc5} 19 \textbf{Ah3} \textbf{Ah3} 20 \textbf{Wxh3} which remains unclear.
Finally, 10...c5 11 w^2 w^a^5 12 b^1
(Mosquera-Barle, Bled Olympiad 2002)
is slightly better for White.

11 g^4 b^5

Or 11...c5 12 w^d^2 b^5 and, since ac-
cepting the challenge by playing 13
\d x d^6 x d^6 14 w x d^6 \w a^5 isn't without
risks, White's safest is 13 \w b^1.

C2) 1 e^4 e^5 2 d^3 d^6 3 d^4 exd^4 4 w x d^4
d^6 5 c^3 c^7 6 f^4 0-0 7 w^d^2 c^6 8
0-0-0 \d x d^4 9 w x d^4 a^6?! 10 f^3 b^5 11 g^4
c^5

Or 11...b^8?! 12 e^5 b^4 (Manakova-
Olarasu, Antalya 2002).

12 w^e^3 b^4 13 d^5 \d x d^5 14 exd^5 d^7
14...w^e^8?! is another possibility.

12...c^5 13 w^d^2 b^4 14 d^5

(see following diagram)

Now both captures give White an
slight edge: 14...\d x d^5 15 exd^5 d^7 16
b^1 b^4 17 d^5 (Korneev-P.Roberts,
Guernsey 2005) or 14...d^x^d^5 15 exd^5
d^7 16 g^5 (T.Sorensen-Granberg, cor-
respondence 1982).

(D.Stern-Ingerslev, correspondence
1985). Black has saved an important
tempo in comparison to lines arising
after 9...w^e^6, and thus his position is
very playable.
The two main moves in this position are:

**D1:** 8 exd5
**D2:** 8 \( \mathcal{Q} \) db5

8 e5?!
...is dubious.

8...\( \mathcal{Q} \) h5

8...\( \mathcal{Q} \) e4?! 9 \( \mathcal{Q} \) xe4 dxe4 10 0-0-0 was better for White in E.Paetz-Vasilevich, Internet (blitz) 2004.

9 \( \mathcal{Q} \) g3

9 \( \mathcal{Q} \) f3 \( \mathcal{Q} \) xf4 10 \( \mathcal{W} \) xf4 (Leko-Svidler, Monaco rapid 2004) doesn’t cause too much trouble either.

9...c5

Or 9...f6?!

10 \( \mathcal{Q} \) b3 d4

...with the initiative, Yurtanov-Antonshin, Frunze 1979.

---

A brilliant discovery that was unearthed in the correspondence encounter Talving-L.Karasek, 1990. This unexpected move promises approximate equality, even though it deserves more.

10...\( \mathcal{W} \) e4+? is interesting too, but more risky: 11 \( \mathcal{Q} \) e2 \( \mathcal{W} \) xg2! (not 11...\( \mathcal{Q} \) a6?! 12 0-0 when White had a very pleasant game due to his far better pieces, Van den Doel-Kovacevic, Leon 2001) 12 0-0-0 \( \mathcal{Q} \) a6 13 \( \mathcal{W} \) h1 \( \mathcal{W} \) xf2 (13...\( \mathcal{W} \) c6?! 14 \( \mathcal{Q} \) c3 is worse: White plans \( \mathcal{Q} \) d5 and has more than enough
for the sacrificed pawn) 14 ¼h6 g6 15 ¼xf8 ¼xf8. Black has two pawns and the pair of bishops for the exchange, but he is behind in development – the situation is unclear.

11 ¼e2

Of course not 11 ¹xd5?? ¼b4+ 12 ¼d1 ¼e1 mate, but 11 ¼e3 deserves consideration: 11... ²e5 12 0-0-0 ³c6 13 ³f4 ³e6 (Boros-Thinius, Budapest 2005) and now 14 ²d5!.

11... ³b4!!

11... ²xg2!? 12 0-0-0 looks like it should lead to a rapid victory for White, but the reality is somewhat different, and 12... ³a6 13 ³e3 ³c6 14 ³d4 ³b6 leads to unclear consequences.

The text move temporarily sacrifices a piece to make use of the pin on the e2-bishop.

12 ²xb4 ³c6 13 ³e3

13 ³b3?! is worse. Black plays 13... ²xg2 and now:

a) 14 0-0-0 ³xe2 15 ³xc7 (or the catastrophic 15 ³hg1?! ³e4 16 ¼h6 ³f5! 17 f3? ³xc2+ 0-1 Monteau-Cornette, French League 2002) 15... ³f5 and Black organizes a mighty counter-attack, for instance 16 ³xa8 ³xc2+ 17 ³xc2 ³xc2 18 ³xe1 ³e4.

b) 14 ³f1 a6 and if the knight withdraws, its counterpart rushes to d4. Instead, 15 0-0-0 ³e4 (15...axb5 is equally satisfactory) 16 ³xc7 ³xe2 17 ³d6 ³e7 leads to a complicated game.

13... ²xb5 14 ³e3 ³b4

(O.De la Riva Aguado-G.Kuzmin, Ubeda 1998). In this final position the activity of Black’s pieces compensates for the loss of the two bishops. White must consent to a disruption of his pawn structure after the swap of queens on c3, as 15 ²xb4 ³xb4 would be too perilous.

D2) 1 e4 e5 2 ³f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 ³xd4 ³f6 5 ³c3 ³e7 6 ³f4 0-0 7 ²d2 d5 8 ³db5

The critical move, against which Black has two options:

D21: 8... ³b4?!

D22: 8...c6!

D21) 1 e4 e5 2 ³f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 ³xd4 ³f6 5 ³c3 ³e7 6 ³f4 0-0 7 ²d2 d5 8 ³db5 ³b4?!
9 0-0-0

The best reaction. Others:

a) 9 exd5?! hxg8+ 10 e2 dxe4 (Filipenko-Antoshin, Togliatti 1985) with adequate play for the pawn.

b) 9 f3 a5 or 9...a6 (Czebe-Urban, Budapest 1993) is okay for Black.

c) 9 dxc7?! d4! (9...dx4?! leads to an unappetizing ending after 10 wxd5 dxc3 [10...dxc3+ 11 bxc3 wxd5 12 dxc4 and 10...wxd5 11 d7xd5 a5 12 d3 are also insufficient] 11 wxd8 a3 13 a5 13 dxa8 d5+ 14 b4 dx4 15 bxa5 and Black had nothing for the exchange in J. Cuartas-Rohl Montes, Medellin 2003) 10 0-0-0 dc6 11 dxa8 wa5 (Kolker-Podolsky, correspondence 1977) with a messy game in which it is Black who will have the fun!

9...dxc4 10 wxd5 is out of the question, while 9...a5 doesn’t solve Black’s problems either: 10 exd5 a6 11 d4 dxc3 (if 11...dxc5 12 db3 we6 13 dxa5 dx4 14 g3, or 11...dxe4?! 12 we3 dx4 13 bxc3 with the idea 13...wxd5? 14 db3 winning) 12 wc3 dxc5 13 wg3 dx4 14 wxf4 with some annoying pressure for White in Istratescu-Gelashvili, Patras 2001 (the position is virtually identical to the earlier Kotronias-Gelashvili – see the note to Black’s 8th move in Line D1).

10 dxc7 dxe4 11 we3

Black now has a wide choice, but nothing really works.

11...dx4

Neither 11...dxc3 12 bxc3 a3+ 13 db1 a6 14 dxa8 b5 15 wg3 dc5 16 dd3, nor 11...dc5 12 we4 wc7 13 dx4 dxe4 14 we4 improves the situation for Black.

12 bxc3 g5

An attempt to improve on 12...we7 13 db2 g5 14 gg3 f5 15 dxa8 f4 16 we1 fxg3 17 f3 a6 18 dxa6 bxa6 19 fxe4 (Shabanov-Vorotnikov, Krasnodar 1991) when Black lacked compensation for his material deficit.

13 gg3

13 dxa8? gxf4 14 wxa7 a6 (D. Pedersen-Seel, German League 2002) was not as good, and indeed Black won quite quickly, but 13 we4 wc7 14 wxh7+ xh7 15 dx4 (Gyimesi-Nedvichny, Nova Gorica 2004) should
be a bit better for White.

13...f5 14 Qxa8 f4

15 Qxf4!

15 Wxa7?? fxg3 is playable for Black, for instance 16 Qd3 (16 Wxb8? loses to 16...Wxa5!) 16...Qxf2 17 Wxb8 Qxd1 18 Qxd1 Qg4 19 Wxg3 Qxd1 20 Wxd1 (Yagupov-M.Kozlov, Tula 2000) and here 20...Qf7! is even much better for Black.

15...Qxf4 16 Wxa7 Qa6 17 Qe1 Wd5 18 Qxe4 dxe4 19 Qc4+ Qg7 20 Qb2

White stands slightly better.

D22) 1 e4 e5 2 Qf3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 Qxd4 Qf6 5 Qc3 Qe7 6 Qf4 0-0 7 Wd2 d5 8 Qdb5 c6! 9 Qc7

White has almost crossed the point of no return: his position can either be excellent or simply losing. One can imagine the difficulties that the Ukrainian GM Brodsky experienced when he was confronted with the novelty 8...c6 in the stem game against Nisipeanu (see Line D222).

Instead, 9 exd5!? is a very fresh try: 9...cxb5 10 d6 Qxd6 (perhaps 10...Qe8 11 dxe7 Wxe7+, though 12 Qe2 b4 13 Qb5 also seems to favour White) 11 Wxd6 Wxa5 12 0-0-0 Qe6 (12...b4 13 Qd5 isn't any better) 13 Qxb5 Qxa2 14 Qe5 a6 15 Qxf6 axb5 16 Qg7 Qxg7 17 Qd3 Qd7 18 Wxd7 Qc4 19 Qg3+ Qh8 20 Wg4 and Black resigned, Kristjansson-Le Roux, Hastings 2005/06.

9...d4!

Now we shall consider the following:

D221: 10 0-0-0
D222: 10 Qe2?!
D223: 10 Qxa8!

10 Qd1?! has been employed only once to my knowledge, and shouldn’t have too many followers: 10...dxc3 11 Wxc3 Qbd7 12 Qxa8 Qxe4 13 Wc4?! (13 Wd3 was better: 13...Wxa5+ 14 c3 Qdf6 15 f3 Qxc3 16 bxc3 Qf5 followed by 17...Qxa8 with fine play for Black) 13...Wxa5+ 14 c3 Qdf6 15 f3 Qe6 16 Wd4? (16 Wd3 would have limited the damage after 16...Qc5 17 Wd2 Qxa8 18 b4 Wxa2 19 Wxa2 Qxa2 20 bxc5 Qxc5) 16...Qc5 17 Qc7 Wxa2 0-1 E.Moser-L.Schneider, Böblingen 2004.
D221) 1 e4 e5 2 d3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 
\texttt{Qxd4 Qf6 5 Qc3 Qe7 6 Qf4 0-0 7 Wd2} 
\texttt{d5 8 Qdb5 c6 9 Qc7 d4 10 0-0 0-\textit{Q}h5} 

Not 10...\textit{Q}xc3?! 11 \texttt{Q}xc3 (11 \texttt{W}xd8? 
turns the tables: 11...\texttt{Q}xd8 12 \texttt{Q}xa8 [12 \texttt{Q}xd8? 
gives fewer chances for Black to go wrong; 12...\texttt{Q}xd8 13 \texttt{Q}xa8 \texttt{Q}d1+! 14 
\texttt{Q}xd1 exb2 winning] 12...\texttt{Q}xe4 13 \texttt{Q}e3 
[or 13 \texttt{Q}xb8 \texttt{Q}f2] 13...\texttt{Q}xb2 14 \texttt{Q}xb2 
\texttt{Q}f6+ 15 \texttt{Q}a3 b5! 16 \texttt{Q}xa7 [16 \texttt{Q}c7 \texttt{Q}e5] 
16...\texttt{Q}a6 and in all these lines Black is 
clearly on top] 11...\texttt{Q}bd7 12 \texttt{Q}xa8 \texttt{Q}xe4 
13 \texttt{Q}e3 \texttt{Q}f6 14 \texttt{Q}c4 (or maybe even 14 
\texttt{W}xa7), when White has the upper hand.

**11 \texttt{Q}e5**

If 11 \texttt{Q}xa8 \texttt{Q}xf4 12 \texttt{W}xd4 \texttt{W}xd4 13 
\texttt{Q}xd4 \texttt{Q}e6 14 \texttt{Q}d1 b5 – the recurring 
theme is the trapped knight on a8 and 
White’s material superiority may not 
last very long; while 11 \texttt{W}xd4?! \texttt{Q}xf4 12 
\texttt{W}xd8 \texttt{Q}xd8 13 \texttt{Q}xa8 b6 14 g3 \texttt{Q}g6 (or 
14...\texttt{Q}e6) is unclear.

**11...\texttt{Q}g5**

a) 11...\texttt{Q}xc3?! 12 \texttt{W}xd8! (12 \texttt{W}e2?!) 
12...\texttt{Q}xd8 13 \texttt{Q}xd8+ \texttt{Q}xd8 14 \texttt{Q}xa8 with 
a large edge.

b) 11...\texttt{Q}d7?! 12 \texttt{W}xd4 \texttt{Q}b8 13 \texttt{Q}d6 
\texttt{Q}xd6 14 \texttt{W}xd6 and White should win.

**12 f4 \textit{Q}xc3?**

Or 12...\texttt{Q}xf4! 13 \texttt{Q}xf4 \texttt{W}xc7 (theme: 
the pin!) 14 \texttt{Q}xc7 (14 \texttt{Q}xg5 \texttt{dxc3} 15 
\texttt{W}xc3 is close to equal, as the isolani 
counterbalances the pair of bishops) 
14...\texttt{Q}xd2+ 15 \texttt{Q}xd2 \texttt{dxc3}+ 16 \texttt{Q}xc3 
\texttt{Q}d7 (or 16...\texttt{Q}g4 first) and Black 
should hold.

With 12...\texttt{Q}xc3?! we are following 
the game \textit{Pavasovic-Nisipeanu, Ljubljana} 
2002. Nisipeanu’s move complicates 
matters, but in White’s favour.

**13 \texttt{W}xd8 \texttt{Q}xb2+**

13...\texttt{Q}xd8?! was perhaps more 
appropriate. Here’s a sample of the analysis 
published in \textit{Chess Informant} which 
shows Black’s hidden resources (of 
course not everything is forced): 14 
\texttt{Q}xa8 \texttt{Q}g4 15 \texttt{Q}d3 (15 \texttt{Q}d4) 15...\texttt{Q}d7! 16 
\texttt{Q}d6 (if 16 \texttt{Q}xc3 \texttt{Q}xf4 17 \texttt{Q}g3 h5 18 
\texttt{Q}d2 \texttt{Q}g5 19 \texttt{Q}c7 \texttt{Q}d8 20 h3 [20 \texttt{Q}e3 
\texttt{Q}e5 21 h3 \texttt{Q}xh3 22 \texttt{Q}xh3 \texttt{Q}xh3 23 
\texttt{gxh3 \texttt{Q}f3} and Black wins] 20...\texttt{Q}c5 21 
\texttt{Q}e3 \texttt{Q}xh3 22 \texttt{Q}xh3 \texttt{Q}xh3 23 \texttt{gxh3 \texttt{Q}c8} 
with a clear plus for Black) 16...\texttt{Q}e8 17 
\texttt{Q}xc3 \texttt{Q}xe4 with an unclear position.

**14 \texttt{Q}b1**

124
At first sight, a reflex move in this kind of position. The b2-pawn can in some cases protect the white king, but with the queens off 14  apoptl looks normal (the white monarch may play an active role in this ending). White, however, anticipates that the king may be misplaced in some specific variations, where a pin on the long diagonal occurs: 14  apoptl 15  apxa8 16  apg4 (not 15...  apf6? 16  aph6  axf6 17  ad4 with a clear plus) 16  ad4 (16  ad3  ad7 or 16  apxa6 is also messy) 16...  ape7 (16...  ad7?! 17  ad6  af6 18  e5  apxa8 19 exf6  aphxf6 is clearly better for White) 17  h3 (17  f5 18  ad6?!) 17...  ag3 18  apg1  ape2! is equal.

14...  apxd8 15  apxa8

15...  aph4

15...  ad7 was no better: 16  ad6  apg8 17  ac7 (or 17  ad3!?) 17...  apxe4 18  apd3  apa4 19  aphel  adf6 20  ape2! g6 21  axh5 gxh5 22  ape5 and White enjoys a big advantage.

16  ad3  apxa6 17  h3

17  apg3? or 17  ad6  apg8 18  apa3! were also possible. The correct idea consists of getting rid of the knight on a6, the guardian of the c7-square. Once it has disappeared, its white counterpart will manage to escape from the corner and the extra exchange will tell.

17...  apn6 18  f5?

It wasn’t too late for 18  aph6! (preceeded or not by 16  ad6  apg8). White will keep the exchange and a clear ascendency after 18...  aph5 19  f5, or 18...  af6 19  axf6  apxf6 20  apxa6 bxa6 21  apc7.

Now, however, Black stays alive.

18...  apc4 19  apxd8  apxd8 20  apxc4  apg8 21  ad1

21 g4! was still promising for White: 21...  apf6 22  axa6 bxa6 23  apxf6 gxf6 24  apd1 with a superior rook ending.

21...  apc5

If 21...  apb5? 22  ape2  apf6 23  apxf6 gxf6 24  ad6.

22  g4

22...  apb5

The bishop must be kicked off the a2-g8 diagonal. On 22...  apf6?! 23  g5  adf7 (23...  apxe4 24  g6 is nasty too) 24  apxb2  apb6 25  apb3 White remains better, for instance 25...  g6 26  fxg6 hxg6 27  apd6  apf8 28  apa3  axb3 29 axb3  apg8 30...
e5 Qd5 31 e6 fxe6 32 Qxe6+ Qf7 33 Qd6.
23 gxf5 bxc4
...and the players agreed a draw.

Play could continue 24 Qg1 g6 25 hxg6 hxg6 26 fxg6 Qe8 (or 26...Qa4!? with simplifications and sufficient counterplay for Black.

D222) 1 e4 e5 2 Qf3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 Qxd4 Qf6 5 Qc3 Qe7 6 Qf4 0-0 7 Qd2 d5 8 Qdb5 c6 9 Qc7 d4 10 Qe2?!
The move chosen in the stem game, M. Brodsky-Nisipeanu, Bucharest 2001, which we shall now follow.

10...g5!
Luring the bishop to e5, which will enable the b8-knight to develop with tempo.

11 Qe5
The alternative is 11 Qxa8 and then:
  a) 11...Qxe4!? is worth a try, when 12 Qc7 We8 13 Wa5 (13 Qxd4? invites the obvious 13...c5) 13...b6 14 Qxb6 (worse is 14 Qxa7? Qb4+ 15 c3 dxc3 16 bxc3 Qxc3 17 a3 Qb5+ 18 axb4 Qxa7 19 Qxa7 We4!), and although the material balance is approximately even, the lack of harmony in White’s pieces makes his position hopeless) 14...axb6 15 Qxb6 c5...

...with pretty good compensation (even though the computer disagrees!): White’s queen and b6-bishop are out of play, while most of his other pieces still occupy their initial squares.

  b) 11...gxf4 and now:
    b1) 12 Wxf4 Qa6 13 Qg3 Qb4 14 0-0-0 Qd5! 15 Wf3 Qxa2+ 16 Qb1 Qdc3+ 17 bxc3 Qxc3+ 18 Wxc3 dxc3 19 Qxd8 Qxd8, followed by ...b5, ...Qb7xa8 and a resulting edge; or 13 0-0-0 c5 14 Qg3 Qg4 15 Qb1 Qd6 (Varga-Bacrot, Mainz rapid 2004), when Black will sooner or later have two minor pieces for a rook and a pawn – even though he still has a tough task ahead, Black should gradually be able to convert his advantage.

    b2) 12 f3 c5 13 Wxf4 Qa6 14 Qg3 Qb4 and Black’s compensation is easy to see: the a8-knight’s days are numbered, the dark squares in White’s camp are seriously weakened, and finally the direct threat of ...Qxc2+ is difficult to parry.

11...Qbd7!
11...\text{Qxe4?!} 12 \text{Wxd4 Qd7} 13 \text{Wxe4!} (not 13 0-0-0?, which turns out badly after the long sequence 13...\text{Qxe5} 14 \text{Wxe5 Qf6!} 15 \text{Qxd8 Qxe5} 16 \text{Qxf8+ Qxf8} 17 \text{Qxa8 Qxf2} 18 \text{Qg1 Qxh2} 19 g3 \text{Qxg1} 20 \text{Qxg1 Qe7}) 13...\text{Qxe5} 14 \text{Qxa8 Qa5+} 15 c3 f5 16 \text{Qc2} is clearly better for White. I think that he will find time to regroup while his opponent rounds up the knight on a8, and then he will be an exchange up for not too much compensation.

\text{\textcolor{red}{12 \text{Qxf6}!}}

This is stronger than 12 \text{Qxa8 Qxe4?!} (here the safe 12...\text{Qxe5} avoids complications while keeping the advantage after 13 \text{Qg3 Qe6} 14 \text{Wxg5+ Qg6}) 13 \text{Qc7 Qe8} 14 \text{Qa5} b6 15 \text{Qa4 Qf6} 16 \text{Wxa7} (or 16 \text{Wxc6} d3! 17 cxd3 \text{Qdc5} 18 \text{Wxe8} \text{Qxd3+} 19 \text{Qd1 Qxe8} with a clear plus) 16...d3 17 cxd3 \text{Qxb2} 18 \text{Qxb6 Qe7!} 19 dxe4 \text{Qb4+} 20 \text{Qd1 Qxa1}. Once again the position is chaotic and White’s pieces are not well placed to rescue their king. The initiative counts for more than the material deficit.

If instead 12 \text{Wxg5+ Qh8} 13 \text{Qxa8} (13 0-0-0?! is even worse: 13...\text{Qxe5} 14 \text{Wxe5 [or 14 \text{Qxa8 Qf4!}] 14...Qd6} 15 \text{Wxd4 Qxc7} and suddenly it is Black who gains material) 13...\text{Qa5+} 14 \text{Qd2 Qxd2+} 15 \text{Qxd2 Qxe5} 16 Qg3 Qd7 17 f4 Qg6 and Black has an edge as the a8-knight is lost.

\text{\textcolor{red}{12...Qxf6 13 Wxg5+}}

After 13 \text{Qxa8 Qxe4} 14 \text{Wxd4 Qa5+} 15 c3 Qf5 Black has ideas of ...Qc5, ...Qd8 and ...Qxa8 and firmly holds the initiative. 14...\text{Wxd4?}, on the other hand, seems to fail to 15 \text{Qxd4 Qb4+} 16 c3 \text{Qxc3} 17 a3 \text{Qe8+} 18 \text{Qd2 Qe4}+ 19 \text{Qc2}.

We have reached the second critical phase of the game. If White still has a chance to escape, it is now or never!

\text{15 f3?}

A mistake. Out of the alternatives, option ‘e’ looks like the best bet.

a) 15 e5? (underdeveloped, White can’t afford a pawn move) 15...\text{Qe4} 16 \text{Wf4 Qa5+} 17 c3 (17 \text{Qd7?} Qg5) 17...dxc3 18 bxc3 Qxc3 19 \text{Wd2 Qb4} and heavy material losses are unavoidable, for instance 20 a3 Qxe2 21 \text{Wxb4 Qxe5} and Black wins.

b) 15 a3? (the previous comment also
The Philidor Files

applies here) 15...\texttt{Qxe4} 16 \texttt{We5+ \texttt{f6}} 17 \texttt{Wc7 \texttt{d5}} (White’s pieces completely lack any harmony; the threat is ...d3) 18 f3 \texttt{Qd6} 19 0-0-0 (19 \texttt{Wb8 d3!}) 19...\texttt{f5} (Black’s whole army is concentrated in direction of the enemy king) 20 \texttt{Qf4} (otherwise ...d3 and the monarch gets slaughtered) 20...\texttt{g5} 21 g3 \texttt{c8}...

...winning the queen and the game.

c) 15 0-0-0?! \texttt{Qxe4} 16 \texttt{Wf5 Qxf2} 17 \texttt{xd4} (not 17 \texttt{Qxd4?} \texttt{g4} 18 \texttt{we5+ \texttt{f6}} and Black wins; or 17 h4? \texttt{g4} 18 \texttt{We5+ \texttt{f6}} 19 \texttt{Wf4 Qxd1} 20 \texttt{Wxg4 Qf2} 21 \texttt{Wf3 Qxh1} 0-1 Karpov-Illescas 1998) 17...\texttt{g5+} 18 \texttt{b1} \texttt{xd4} (her majesty is taboo, but this isn’t the end of the story) 19 \texttt{Wxg5} \texttt{f6+} 20 \texttt{Qc1 Qe4!} (20...\texttt{Qxh1}! 21 \texttt{Wf6+ g8} 22 \texttt{Wg5+ f8} 23 \texttt{Wf6+ c7} 24 \texttt{We7} 25 \texttt{Wf4+} is a draw by perpetual check) 21 \texttt{f3} \texttt{xd3} 22 \texttt{Qxd3} (22 \texttt{Qf4} calls for the ‘iron refutation’, or the royal march, if you prefer: 22...\texttt{Qd2}+ 23 \texttt{a1 Qxc2} 24 \texttt{Wf6+ g8} 25 \texttt{Wg5+ f8} 26 \texttt{Wh6+ e7} 27 \texttt{e1+ d7} 28 \texttt{Wxh7} 29 \texttt{Qd6} 30 \texttt{Wxg6+ \texttt{d5}} 31 \texttt{Qc7+ b4!} 32 b3+ \texttt{c5} 33 \texttt{Qd3+ xd3} 34 \texttt{mc1+ kb6} 35 \texttt{Qa8+ Qa5} with a trivial win!) 22...\texttt{Qxg5} and White will have to be creative to solve the question of the a8-knight.

d) 15 \texttt{Qg3 Qxe4} 16 \texttt{We5+ \texttt{f6}} 17 \texttt{Wxe4 \texttt{f5}} 18 \texttt{Wxe8+ Wxe8} 19 \texttt{Qd1} isn’t clear.

Optically I find the position really disgusting from White’s point of view, but my assessment is probably subjective. He will certainly lose the a8-knight, with Black thus restoring the material balance. During this time White’s task must be to coordinate his forces.

e) 15 \texttt{Wd2! Qxe4} 16 \texttt{Wxcd4+ Wxd4} 17 \texttt{Qxd4 \texttt{b4+} (17...\texttt{c5} doesn’t work: 18 \texttt{Qc7 Qe7} 19 \texttt{Qce6! Qxe6} [or 19...fxe6 20 f3] 20 \texttt{Qxe6 \texttt{xf2+} 21 \texttt{xf6}} \texttt{Qxe6} 22 \texttt{Wf3} and the extra exchange should tell) 18 \texttt{We2 Qg3+} (18...\texttt{Qc5}?! 19 \texttt{Qb3}) 19 \texttt{Wf3} \texttt{Qxh1} 20 \texttt{Qc4 b5} 21 \texttt{Qc7 Qe7} 22 \texttt{Qb3} \texttt{Qc5}! (22...\texttt{Qxf2}?! is wrong due to 23 \texttt{Qxb5}, while 22...\texttt{Qxc7} 23 \texttt{Qxh1} is given by Khalifman and Semkov in Opening for White According to Anand – Black doesn’t have enough for the pawn) 23 \texttt{Qxh1 \texttt{Qxd4} 24 \texttt{Qd1 Qb7} 25 \texttt{Qd5 c5} 26 \texttt{c3 Qe6}! intending 27 \texttt{cxd4} c4 28 \texttt{Qc2 \texttt{Qxd5}+ when I think Black should

128
eventually equalize.

15...\(\text{\textit{Qxe4}}\) 16 \(\text{\textit{We5+}}\) \(\text{\textit{g8}}\)

Black now has a clear advantage (but not 16...\(\text{\textit{Qf6??}}\) which loses to 17 \(\text{\textit{Wc7}}\) \(\text{\textit{Wd5}}\) 18 \(\text{\textit{fxe4}}\).

17 \(\text{\textit{Wxd4}}\)

17 \(\text{\textit{Wxe4}}\) \(\text{\textit{b6+}}\) 18 c3 \(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) 19 \(\text{\textit{fxe4}}\) dxc3 20 bxc3 \(\text{\textit{c5}}\) is similar to the game and equally bad for White, as is 17 \(\text{\textit{Wf4}}\) \(\text{\textit{d6}}\).

17...\(\text{\textit{c5}}\) 18 \(\text{\textit{Wxe4}}\)

Or 18 \(\text{\textit{Wxd8}}\) \(\text{\textit{f2+}}\) 19 \(\text{\textit{d1}}\) \(\text{\textit{xd8+}}\) 20 \(\text{\textit{d4}}\) \(\text{\textit{xd4}}\) and Black enjoys a great advantage.

18...\(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) 19 \(\text{\textit{fxe4}}\) \(\text{\textit{e3}}\) 20 \(\text{\textit{d1}}\) \(\text{\textit{f2+}}\) 21 \(\text{\textit{xf2}}\) \(\text{\textit{Wxd1}}\)

An impressive game and superb preparation from Nisipeanu.

This game perfectly illustrates the risks White is running when he tries to keep an opening advantage. It has, of course, been thoroughly analysed and various improvements for White have been found. Finding the right path over the board, however, was 'mission impossible'.

D223) 1 \(\text{\textit{e4}}\) 2 \(\text{\textit{d4}}\) 2 \(\text{\textit{f3}}\) 3 \(\text{\textit{d6}}\) 3 \(\text{\textit{d4}}\) \(\text{\textit{exd4}}\) 4 \(\text{\textit{exd4}}\) \(\text{\textit{b5}}\) 5 \(\text{\textit{c3}}\) \(\text{\textit{e7}}\) 6 \(\text{\textit{f4}}\) 0-0 7 \(\text{\textit{Wd2}}\) 8 \(\text{\textit{db5}}\) 9 \(\text{\textit{c7}}\) 4 10 \(\text{\textit{xa8}}\)

The most efficient way to proceed. By eliminating the majority of Black's pieces, notably the queen, White reduces the handicap of his poor development.

10...\(\text{\textit{dxc3}}\) 11 \(\text{\textit{Wxd8}}\) \(\text{\textit{xd8}}\)

11...\(\text{\textit{xa8?!}}\) seems to fall short after 12 \(\text{\textit{b3!}},\) intending 12...\(\text{\textit{Qbd7}}\) 13 \(\text{\textit{f3}},\) when I believe in a big advantage for White, as the knight should escape. 12 \(\text{\textit{xb8?}},\) on the other hand, is unsound: 12...\(\text{\textit{xb2}}\) 13 \(\text{\textit{db1}}\) \(\text{\textit{a5+}}\) 14 \(\text{\textit{xe2}}\) \(\text{\textit{g4+}}\) 15 f3 \(\text{\textit{exe4}}\) 16 \(\text{\textit{e5}}\) \(\text{\textit{xe8!}}\) (or 16...\(\text{\textit{xa8}}\)) with a large plus to Black this time.
12 bxc3

12 b3, which remains to be tested, might altogether refute Black’s concept. But 12 axb? is not recommended: 12...cxb2 13 xb1 b4+ 14 xe2 xe4 15 xb2 c5 and despite a whole extra rook, White is in bad shape.

12...xe4

13 d3

This leads to a more artistic position than 13 axb, but also one that is more difficult to evaluate.

After 13 axb8, as in numerous other lines, White has an extra rook which he will try to consolidate: 13...f6 14 d3 xc3+ (14...f5?!) 15 e2 f5 16 ad1 (White can’t afford too much ambition here, as the following variations witness: 16 ab1? xb8 17 f3 d6 with a Black advantage; or 16 c7? e8! 17 ac1 d2+ 18 d1 g4+ 19 f3 xf3 20 e2 g1

[funny, isn’t it?] 21 b1 xe2 0-1 Korneev-Milla de Marco, Campillos 2005; and finally the more reasonable 16 xa7 xa8 17 e3 xa1 18 xa1 xc3+ 19 d2 xd3 20 xc3, which was equal in L’Ami-Pavasovic, Maribor 2004) 16...xb8 17 f3 and now:

a) 17...xa8! (the most precise move) 18 xe4 e6 and Black looks safe enough as 19 b1 runs into 19...f5 20 d3 b5.

b) 17...d6 is inferior and leaves White with an edge: for example, 18 xf5 xf5 19 c7 e5 20 d7 c8 21 g4 dh4 (or 21...d4+ 22 d3 xf3 23 e4) 22 hd1 f8 23 d8+ xd8 24 xd8+ e7 25 e8+ d6 (25...f6? 26 g5+ f5 27 e7 with a clear advantage) 26 a8 followed by b8 and White is in no danger of losing; on the contrary, it is Black who has to battle to save the draw.
13...\textit{\textbf{d}}6

13...\textit{\textbf{d}}d6 14 0-0-0 gives a clear advantage to White.

14 \textit{\textbf{x}}d6

The alternative 14 \textit{\textbf{e}}e3!? may be even stronger.

14...\textit{\textbf{x}}d6 15 0-0-0

15...\textit{\textbf{f}}8

15...b6 has been tried in practice, but without success: 16 \textit{\textbf{he}}1 \textit{\textbf{f}}8 17 \textit{\textbf{c}}c7 g6 (17...\textit{\textbf{d}}d7 only prolongs the agony: 18 \textit{\textbf{f}}f5 \textit{\textbf{x}}c7 19 \textit{\textbf{x}}d6 \textit{\textbf{d}}d7 20 \textit{\textbf{x}}h7 g6 21 \textit{\textbf{x}}g6 fxg6 22 \textit{\textbf{x}}g6 \textit{\textbf{e}}8 23 \textit{\textbf{x}}e8+ 1-0 Bindrich-Lorscheid, Budapest 2005) 18 \textit{\textbf{f}}f1 1-0 Martorelli-Di Caro, Rome 2005, since \textit{\textbf{x}}d6 followed by \textit{\textbf{e}}e8+, winning a piece, is unstoppable.

16 \textit{\textbf{he}}1 \textit{\textbf{d}}7

White is an exchange up, but the knight on a8 is still a concern.

17 \textit{\textbf{c}}4!

Not 17 \textit{\textbf{x}}h7?! \textit{\textbf{f}}6 18 \textit{\textbf{d}}d3 \textit{\textbf{f}}e8! followed by ...\textit{\textbf{d}}d7 and \textit{\textbf{x}}xa8.

17...\textit{\textbf{c}}5 18 \textit{\textbf{c}}7

The animal is alive, even if it still can’t get out! The position, albeit confusing, seems more suspicious for Black, because I can’t really figure out how he will round up the knight on c7.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Nisipeanu’s 8...\textit{\textbf{c}}6 is the move upon which the entire assessment of 7...d5 depends. If Black stands well, then the development of \textit{\textbf{f}}4, \textit{\textbf{d}}2 is harmless; otherwise, as seems to be the case, White enjoys a certain advantage.

White enjoys a clearer plus in the other lines, although 9...a6 in Line C2 is worth further investigation.
Chapter Five

Early Deviations and 3 f3

Because of the difficulties Black has experienced with the lines treated in the first four chapters, another move order to reach the Philidor Defence has arisen in practice.

By playing 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 Black avoids having to accept a persistent disadvantage or a wild but risky position.

This move order also has an independent significance, as White isn’t obliged to go for 4 Qf3. Black thus needs to be aware of the secondary lines 4 g4, 4 f4, and 4 Ke3 with a plan based on 0-0-0, which are still rather unexplored. Deviations at move 3 are also possible for White, mainly with either 3 Qd3 or 3 f3, and these two moves are the subjects of Chapters 5 and 6.

As for Black, he can also opt for 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 e5!? (Chapter 7), the ending resulting from 4 dxe5 dxe5 5 Wxd8+ Qxd8 being fully playable.

Before entering into the heart of our subject, let’s have a quick look at deviations prior to 3...Qf6.

Second Move Alternatives

1 e4 d6 2 d4

2 Qc3 avoids the Philidor – for those who have understood how strong this opening is! Now 2...e5 is a Sicilian Defence; 2...e5 3 f4 a King’s Gambit; and finally 2...Qf6 3 f4 g6 4 d4 Kg7 5 Qf3 transposes into the Austrian Attack of the Pirc Defence.

2...e5

2...Qd7 3 Qf3 e5 transposes to Chapter 1. Instead 3...Qg6?! 4 e5 is unhealthy for Black: the position resembles Alekhine’s Defence where the d7-knight would be misplaced. This gives White attacking prospects based on e6 fxe6; Qg5, but also a good game if he continues more calmly: 4...Qd5 5 c4 Qb6 6 Qc3 etc.

3 dxe5

3 Qf3(!) transposes back to 1 e4 e5 2
$\text{d}f3 \text{d}6 \text{3 d}4$.

3...dxe5 4 $\text{w}x\text{d}8+ \text{c}x\text{d}8$ 5 $\text{c}c4 \text{f}6$ 6 $\text{e}e3 \text{c}6$ 7 $\text{d}d2 \text{d}d7$ 8 $\text{b}b3!$

8 $\text{e}e2$ and 8 0-0-0 are other sensible continuations. In all cases the position oscillates between a slight edge to White and equality.

8...g6

8...$\text{b}b6$ 9 $\text{e}e2 \text{a}a4$ 10 0-0-0+ $\text{c}c7$ 11 $\text{f}f3 \text{e}e6$ 12 $\text{fd}2 \text{g}6$ 13 $\text{f}4 \text{d}d6$ 14 $\text{g}3$ left White with a slight edge in Rezaei-Ardeshi, Tehran 2001.

9 $\text{h}4 \text{h}6$ 10 $\text{x}x\text{h}6 \text{c}x\text{h}6$ 11 $\text{f}f3 \text{e}e7$

$\text{d}4 \text{a}5$ 13 $\text{fd}2 \text{d}f7?!$

Or 13...$\text{b}b6$ 14 $\text{d}d3$...

...with a small plus for White (the knight on h6 is badly placed, and there's a possibility of playing $\text{b}b3\text{c}5$) but it is one that should evaporate against precise defence from Black.

14 $\text{x}f7! \text{x}f7$ 15 $\text{c}c4 \text{b}6$ 16 0-0-0

...with a clear advantage to White, Al. Moreno-Moreira Romero, Latacunga 2000, as Black will experience problems finishing his development.

In conclusion, the endgames resulting from an early dxe5 dxe5; $\text{w}x\text{d}8+$ $\text{c}x\text{d}8$ aren't to be feared by Black in general. White's slight initiative should evaporate bit by bit, leaving the position roughly equal. I thus recommend avoiding these endings by playing 3 $\text{d}f3$ (unless White is an endgame expert or not averse to a draw).

Black Plays 2...$\text{d}f6$

1 e4 d6 2 d4 $\text{d}f6$

Now we will consider:

A: 3 $\text{d}d2$
B: 3 $\text{f}3$

A) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 $\text{d}f6$ 3 $\text{d}d2$
This insipid move doesn’t pose Black real problems. Indeed, compared to 3 \( \text{dxc3} \) many drawbacks are apparent: White’s control of the centre is diminished (d5 is beyond the knight’s horizon); the c1-bishop is blocked in; and the queen’s development options are limited.

Now either 3...g6 or 3...e5 should equalize. Here’s a rather recent example, Esquivel-Bauer, taken from FIDE’s Internet qualifications for the World Championship:

3...e5 4 c3 g6
4...\( \text{\ae}7 \) offers similarities to 1 e4 e5 2 \( \text{\ae}3 \) d6 3 \( \text{\textc4} \) \( \text{\ae}7 \), seen in Chapter 1.
5 \( \text{\textd3} \) \( \text{\textbd7} \)
6 \( \text{\texte3} \) \( \text{\textg7} \) 7 0-0 0-0 8 a4 a5 9 \( \text{\texte1} \) \( \text{\texth5} \)
10 \( \text{\textc4} \) h6 11 \( \text{\texte3} \) \( \text{\textf6} \) 12 \( \text{\textd2} \)

\( \text{\texte8} \) 14 \( \text{\textad1} \) \( \text{\textf8} \) 15 h3 g5
If 15...\( \text{\textxh3?} \) 16 dxe5 dxe5 17 \( \text{\textf5e5} \) and the tactics end in White’s favour.
16 \( \text{\texth1} \) \( \text{\textg6} \) 17 \( \text{\texth2} \) \( \text{\textxh4} \) 18 \( \text{\textc2} \) h5 19 \( \text{\texta3!} \)

Seeking play before the Black attack on the other wing becomes too strong.
19...g4 20 \( \text{\textd5} \) \( \text{\textf7} \) 21 hxg4 hxg4 22 dxe5 dxe5
22...\( \text{\textxh5} \) 23 \( \text{\textd4!} \) followed by \( \text{\textf5} \) is annoying.
23 g3 \( \text{\texth8?!} \)
Optimistic, but 23...\( \text{\texth5} \) 24 \( \text{\texte2} \) \( \text{\textf6} \) 25 \( \text{\textg5} \) didn’t appeal to me.
24 gxf4 exf4 25 \( \text{\textxf4} \)
25 \( \text{\textd4!} \) was stronger, when either 25...\( \text{\texth4} \) or 25...g3 is probably insufficient.
25...\( \text{\textxf4} \) 26 \( \text{\textxf4} \) \( \text{\texte5} \) 27 \( \text{\textd2} \) \( \text{\textg7} \)

12...\( \text{xh7?!} \)
A loss of time (12...g5?!), and moreover the relationship between the d3-bishop and the king on h7 is a bit uncomfortable.
13 \( \text{\textb3?!} \)
Returning the favour with a senseless move.

At this point the whole remaining six minutes of my opponent’s time passed away. He probably didn’t manage to reconnect and lost on time!

The final position is complex and offers level chances. For example, 28 f4 g3 (28...\( \text{\textxf3} \) 29 \( \text{\textg1}+ \) \( \text{\textf8} \) 30 \( \text{\textd8+} \) \( \text{\texte8} \) 31 \( \text{\textxe8+} \) \( \text{\textxe8} \) 32 \( \text{\textd2} \) and White wins) 29 \( \text{\texte2} \) (not 29 \( \text{\textg1?} \) \( \text{\textxf4!} \))
29...\texttt{g}4 30 \texttt{We}3 \texttt{xe}2 31 \texttt{Wxg}3+ \texttt{f}8 with an unclear position.

In conclusion, by choosing 3 \texttt{Dd}2 White can't really expect an opening edge. But this sub-variation shouldn't be neglected. It leads to rather flexible and often complex positions, as few pieces get traded at an early stage.

**B) 1 \texttt{e}4 \texttt{d}6 2 \texttt{d}4 \texttt{Df}6 3 f3**

This moves relies on the spatial advantage White usually gains in several of the ensuing variations. The most frequent Black reply consists of 3...\texttt{e}5 (Line B2), or 3...\texttt{Db}d7 followed by ...\texttt{e}5 (Line B3). One of Black’s strategical goals is then to swap the dark-squared bishops with the manoeuvre ...\texttt{e}7, ...\texttt{Dh}5 and ...\texttt{g}5.

From the diagrammed position we will look at the following moves:

**B1: 3...\texttt{d}5**

**B2: 3...\texttt{e}5**

**B3: 3...\texttt{Db}d7**

3...\texttt{c}5 and 3...\texttt{g}6 are playable continuations too, their drawback being the vast choice of options they leave White. 3...\texttt{c}5 may lead to an Alapin Sicilian after 4 \texttt{c}3, or a Benoni after 4 \texttt{d}5 \texttt{e}6 5 \texttt{c}4 \texttt{ex}d5 6 \texttt{cxd}5. While after 3...\texttt{g}6 Black must be ready to transpose into a King’s Indian Sämisch in the event of 4 \texttt{c}4 \texttt{g}7 5 \texttt{Dc}3 0-0 etc.

**B1) 1 \texttt{e}4 \texttt{d}6 2 \texttt{d}4 \texttt{Df}6 3 f3 \texttt{d}5 4 \texttt{e}5**

Now Black must make a decision:

**B11: 4...\texttt{g}8!?**

**B12: 4...\texttt{Df}d7**

**B11) 1 \texttt{e}4 \texttt{d}6 2 \texttt{d}4 \texttt{Df}6 3 f3 \texttt{d}5 4 \texttt{e}5 \texttt{g}8!?**

Intending to reroute the knight to f5, via \texttt{e}7 or \texttt{h}6.

5 \texttt{Dd}3

Aiming to prevent the development of the \texttt{c}8-bishop while Black hasn’t touched his e-pawn (after ...\texttt{e}7-\texttt{e}6 it won’t be able to develop on its best diagonal, \texttt{c}8-\texttt{h}3).

Instead, 5 \texttt{c}3 \texttt{c}5 6 \texttt{f}4 \texttt{cxd}4 7 \texttt{cxd}4 \texttt{Dc}6 8 \texttt{Dc}3 \texttt{Dh}6, followed by ...\texttt{Df}5 and ...\texttt{e}6, is a good version of the French Advance for Black.
5...c5 6 c3 \((c6\)

![Checkmate diagram](image)

7 \((c)2\)

7 \((c)e3\) isn't enough to claim an edge either, because of 7...\((c)6\) 8 \((c)d2\) \((c)x4\) 9 \((c)x4\) \((c)b4\), when Black either grabs the pair of bishops or manages to develop his 'bad' bishop on f5.

7...\((c)b6\) 8 \((c)x5\)

It was difficult for White to maintain the tension.

8...\((c)x5\)

5...\((c)c4\) 6 \((c)c4\) \((c)e6\)

6...\((c)b6\) 7 \((c)b3\) \((c)c6\) 8 \((c)e2\) \((c)f5\) would this time transpose to a line of the Queen's Gambit Accepted, but where the f-pawn usually stands at f2. Korchnoi-Bauer, Swiss Team Ch. 2005, continued 9 \((c)b3\) \((c)e6\) 10 0-0 \((c)d7\) 11 \((c)e3\), and now Black could have benefited from the above-mentioned nuance by means of 11...\((c)a5\) 12 \((c)c2\) \((c)c4\) 13 \((c)c1\) \((c)x2\) 14 \((c)x2\) \((c)c5\)!

7 f4 c5 8 \((c)f3\)

8 \((c)x5\) was the King's preference in the encounter Kasparov-Cu.Hansen, Svendborg (match) 1990. There followed 8...\((c)c5\) 9 \((c)f3\) \((c)a6\) 10 \((c)c3\) \((c)b5\) 11 \((c)d3\) \((c)b7\) 12 a3 \((c)c6\) and Black should be okay. Note that 9...\((c)b6\) is a loss of time because after 10 \((c)c3!\), 10...\((c)f2+\) 11 \((c)e2\) causes Black more problems than
his opponent: then $\mathcal{D}e4$, targeting $d6$, will gain time by attacking the bishop, and the white king, surrounded by its own pieces, can't be seriously harassed.

8...$\mathcal{D}c6$

With counterplay. On the hasty 9 $d5$?! for example, Black could already claim an edge on account of 9...$\mathcal{D}b6$!

B2)

e1 $4 \mathcal{D}e4$
B21: 4 $\mathcal{D}e4$
B22: 4 $d5$

The dry 4 $\mathcal{D}xe5$ $dxe5$ 5 $\mathcal{W}xd8+$ $\mathcal{C}xd8$ 6 $\mathcal{A}c4$ $\mathcal{A}e8$...

...followed by ...$\mathcal{D}bd7$, ...$\mathcal{A}c5$ and so on, doesn't cause Black the slightest problem (except how to win!). The position is similar to 3 $\mathcal{D}c3$ e5 4 $\mathcal{D}xe5$ $dxe5$ 5 $\mathcal{W}xd8+$ $\mathcal{C}xd8$, with the difference that $f3$ is occupied by a pawn rather than a knight. As a consequence, White doesn't attack $e5$, leaving his opponent with much more time to arrange his pieces effectively.

B21) 1 e4 $d6$ 2 d4 $\mathcal{D}f6$ 3 f3 $e5$ 4 $\mathcal{D}e2$

This move avoids both the boring 4 $\mathcal{D}xe5$ and the main line 4 $d5$. Black can either opt for similar development as after 4 $d5$, or try to achieve the ...$d5$ push under favourable conditions.

4...$\mathcal{Exd}4$ 5 $\mathcal{D}xd4$ $d5$!

The real test of White's system. Instead 5...$\mathcal{A}e7$?! enables the first player to set up the bind e4/c4, after which he can count on a persistent plus owing to his space advantage: 6 $c4$ 0-0 7 $\mathcal{D}c3$ $c6$ 8 $\mathcal{A}e3$ (or 8 $\mathcal{A}e2$ $\mathcal{A}e8$ 9 $\mathcal{D}c2$ $\mathcal{D}bd7$ 10 0-0 $\mathcal{A}f8$ 11 $\mathcal{C}h1$ with an easier game for White in Lautier-Degraeve, Aix les Bains 2003) 8...$\mathcal{A}e8$ 9 $\mathcal{W}d2$ $d5$ (if 9...$\mathcal{A}f8$?! then 10 0-0-0 should be the way to proceed [10 $\mathcal{A}e2$?! allows the freeing 10...$d5$] as after 10...$d5$?! 11 $\mathcal{D}c2$ a pawn drops) 10 $\mathcal{C}xd5$ $\mathcal{C}xd5$ 11 $\mathcal{A}b5$! (better than 11 e5 $\mathcal{A}c5$! 12 $\mathcal{E}xf6$ $\mathcal{A}xd4$ 13 $\mathcal{W}xd4$ $\mathcal{D}c6$ 14 $\mathcal{W}f4$ $d4$ when Black should be more or less okay) 11...$\mathcal{A}d7$ 12 e5 $\mathcal{A}xb5$ (12...$\mathcal{A}c5$?! doesn't work so well this time: 13 $\mathcal{E}xf6$ $\mathcal{A}xd4$ 14 $\mathcal{W}xd4$ $\mathcal{A}xb5$ 15 0-0-0 $\mathcal{D}c6$ 16 $\mathcal{W}f4$ with a tangible advantage) 13 $\mathcal{D}xb5$ a6 14 $\mathcal{D}d4$ when White was better and won a nice
game in Anand-Nisipeanu, German League 2004.
6 e5 Qfd7 7 f4
In this position Black has three continuations, each of which gives fair equalizing prospects in my opinion.

7...Qc6
With the idea of ...Qdxe5; fxe5 Wh4+ and ...Wxd4. Alternatively:
a) 7...c5 8 Qf3 Qb6 9 c3 Qc6 10 Qd3 d4 (10...Qg4?! is worse: 11 h3 Qxf3 12 Wxf3 c4 13 Qc2 d4 14 Qe4 Qc8 15 0-0 Qc5 16 Qh2 and White stands better) 11 Qa3 dx3 12 bxc3 Qe6 13 Qe2 Qa4 with a mess, Piket-Shirazi, Antwerp 1998.

b) 7...Qb6 8 Qc3?! (or 8 a4!? c5, Movsesian-Fridman, Internet blitz 2005) 8...b4 9 Qd2 0-0 10 Qe2 f6 and the initiative passed to Black in W.Rosen-G.Braun, German Senior Team Ch. 1994.
8 Qxc6
Or 8 Qf3 Qb6 9 Qd3 (9 a4!?) 9...Qb4! 10 Qe2 (10 0-0? Qxd3 11 Wxd3 is unclear) 10...Qf5 11 Qa3 (not 11 Qd4? Qc4 and ...c5 is coming) 11...Qc4! and Black was fine in G.Livshits-V.Golod, Israeli Team Ch. 2005.

8...bxc6

9 Qd3 Wh4+ 10 g3 Wh3 11 Wf3 Qc5 12 Qe3 0-0 13 Qd2
Or 13 Qxc5!! Qxc5 14 Qc3.
13...f6 14 exf6
If 14 Qxc5 Qxc5 15 Wf3 Qxd3+ 16 cxd3 fxe5 17 fxe5 Qg4!.
14...Qe8 15 Qf1

15...Qxf6!
The tempting 15...Qxe3? 16 Qxe3 d4 would lead to a debacle after 17 0-0-0 dxe3 18 Wxc6 Qb8 19 Wd5+ Qh8 20 fxg7+ Qxg7 21 Qc4 etc.
16 Qd2 Qg4 17 Wf2 d4 18 Qxd4 Qe2+
19 Qxe2 Qe4+
...and White resigned, Rauzer-Ilyin
Zhenevsky, USSR Ch., Tbilisi 1937. An impressive miniature, in which it is not obvious what White did wrong.

B22) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♙f6 3 f3 e5 4 d5

The most principled continuation, and perhaps the only viable try to gain an opening advantage.

4...♗e7 5 ♕e3 0-0

From this position we will examine:

B221: 6 ♗d3
B222: 6 c4

B221) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♙f6 3 f3 e5 4 d5 ♗e7 5 ♕e3 0-0 6 ♗d3 c6 7 c4 b5!?  

An ambitious plan that aims to undermine White's centre. Black's concept is partly justified by the white king still being stuck in the middle.

8 ♗c3

8 ♗e2 would have rendered the option 8...b4 less appropriate than in the game, and practically forced Black to take on c4. In this case, however, Black would have enjoyed extra possibilities, as the following variations demonstrate: 8...bxc4 9 ♕xc4 cxd5 (9...♗b7 10 ♕bc3 would transpose to 8 ♕c3; this is a better option than 10 dxc6?! ♕xc6 11 ♕bc3 ♕a5 when Black is ready for the freeing ...d5, or if 12 ♕d5?! ♕xd5 13 ♕xd5 ♕c4 with a strong initiative) 10 ♕xd5 ♕xd5 11 ♕xd5 ♕d7! (a trick that renders Black's position playable) 12 ♕xa8 (or 12 ♕bc3 ♕b7 13 ♕d2 ♕a6 14 0-0 ♕c7 and here, too, the ...d5 push is in the air) 12...♕c6 13 ♕bc3 ♕a6 14 ♕xf8+ ♕xf8 and now:

a) 15 0-0 ♕d4 16 ♕xd4 exd4 17 ♕xd4 ♕xf1 18 ♕xf1, and with rook, knight and one pawn for her majesty, White isn't worse. This is all the more true because the knight will occupy a wonderful square on d5, and also because the pawns on a7 and d6 are weak. Judging whether White has any realistic chances to win, however, is another debate.

b) 15 0-0-0?! ♕b4 16 ♕d2 ♕c6 17 ♕b1 (or 17 a3 ♕xe2 18 axb4 ♕c4 19 ♕hd1 a6!? 17...♕d3+ 18 ♕xd3 (or 18 ♕a1 ♕c2+ 19 ♕xc2 ♕xc2 20 ♕c1 ♕d3 21 ♕d5 with full compensation for the queen) 18...♕xd3 19 ♕d1 ♕a6 20 ♕d2 is similar to the previous note.
Again White doesn’t risk much: the ‘bad’ bishop on f8 and the beautiful d5 outpost provide excellent compensation for the small material deficit.

8...bxc4

Black can also play 8...b4!? 9 Qc2 (Qa4 c5 10 a3 Qa6 or 10...a5!? leads to a complex game as well) 9...a5 (9...Qh5? would be pointless: after 10 g4 the sacrifice 10...Qf4 11 Qxf4 exf4 12 Qxf4 is dubious, while the kingside expansion with 10 g4 improves White’s position) 10 Qg3 Qa6 which is unclear. Black has kept intact the possibility of opening the c-file (by playing a later ...cxd5) and has thus retained potential counterplay. Closing the queenside completely would of course be a strategical mistake, since White would be free to attack on the other wing.

9 Qxc4 Qb7

The whole game now revolves around the key square d5. White will try to occupy it with a piece (after the exchange ...cxd5), while simultaneously neutralizing his opponent’s activity.

10 Qb3!

Or 10 Qe2 Qbd7 11 dxc6 Qxc6 and:
a) 12 Qd5 Qxd5 13 Qxd5 Qxd5 14 Qxd5 Qf6 is equal, as ...d5 is next on the agenda.
b) 12 Qd3 Qb6 13 Qb5 Qxb5 (13...Qd7?!) 14 Qxb5 d5 15 Qxb6 axb6 and ...Qa5 follows.
c) 12 Qd2 Qb6 13 Qb3 a5 14 a3 d5 15 Qxb6 Qxb6 16 Qxd5 Qxd5 17 exd5 Qd8! and with the pair of bishops and the enemy king stuck in the centre Black has nothing to complain about.

10...Qc7 11 Qe2

11 Qc1 Qbd7 12 Qe2 transposes to the text, while 12 dxc6 Qxc6 is comfortable for Black: for example, 13 Qb5?! Qb7 or 13...Qa5+ 14 Qd2 Qb6. Instead, 11...cxd5 12 Qxd5 Qxd5 13 Qxd5 Qa5+ 14 Qd2 Qxd5 15 exd5 is a rare case where the recapture on d5 by a pawn isn’t bad, the reasons being the weak c6-square and Black’s lack of development; after 15...Qa6 16 Qe2 Qc8 (or 16...Qd7?!) 17 Qxc8+ Qxc8 18 Qf2 chances are level. Or if 15 Qxd5 Qxd5 16 exd5 Qd7 (or 16...Qa6?!) 17 Qc7 Qd8 18 Qe2 Qf8, planning a knight move, and Black should be okay.

11...Qbd7 12 Qc1!
12...\textit{\textsuperscript{f}f\textsubscript{8}}

12...c5!? was an interesting option, leaving both light-squared bishops misplaced. Black could then slowly prepare the ...f5 thrust.

13 \textit{d\textsuperscript{xc}6} \textit{\textsuperscript{x}c\textsubscript{6}} 14 \textit{\textsuperscript{f}f\textsubscript{7}+} \textit{\textsuperscript{f}f\textsubscript{8}} 15 \textit{\textsuperscript{c}c\textsubscript{4}} \textit{\textsuperscript{xb}2}

Black had a worthy alternative in 15...\textit{\textsuperscript{d}b\textsubscript{6}}!? , bringing huge tactical complications: 16 \textit{\textsuperscript{xb}6} (16 \textit{\textsuperscript{d}b\textsubscript{5}}? nets an exchange but is wrong: 16...\textit{\textsuperscript{d}xc\textsubscript{4}} 17 \textit{\textsuperscript{d}xc\textsubscript{7}} \textit{\textsuperscript{d}xe\textsubscript{3}} 18 \textit{\textsuperscript{d}xc\textsubscript{6}} \textit{\textsuperscript{xf}7} 19 \textit{\textsuperscript{d}xa\textsubscript{8}} \textit{\textsuperscript{d}xg\textsubscript{2}+} 20 \textit{\textsuperscript{h}h\textsubscript{2}} \textit{\textsuperscript{d}f\textsubscript{4}} 21 \textit{\textsuperscript{d}xf\textsubscript{4}} \textit{\textsuperscript{exf}4} 22 \textit{\textsuperscript{d}c\textsubscript{7}} \textit{\textsuperscript{xb}2+} and it’s Black who ends up better) 16...\textit{\textsuperscript{w}xb\textsubscript{6}} 17 \textit{\textsuperscript{d}e\textsubscript{6}} \textit{\textsuperscript{d}b\textsubscript{7}} 18 \textit{\textsuperscript{a}a\textsubscript{4}}! (probably the best way to consolidate the extra pawn; other attempts would give Black more play, for instance: 18 \textit{\textsuperscript{w}b\textsubscript{3}}?! \textit{\textsuperscript{w}e\textsubscript{3}}, 18 \textit{\textsuperscript{c}c\textsubscript{2}} a5, or 18 b4?! d5! 19 \textit{\textsuperscript{d}xd\textsubscript{5}} [or 19 exd\textsubscript{5} \textit{\textsuperscript{d}xb\textsubscript{4}}] 19...\textit{\textsuperscript{d}xd\textsubscript{5}} 20 \textit{\textsuperscript{d}xd\textsubscript{5}} \textit{\textsuperscript{d}xd\textsubscript{5}} 21 exd\textsubscript{5} \textit{\textsuperscript{d}xb\textsubscript{4}+} 22 \textit{\textsuperscript{d}f\textsubscript{1}} \textit{\textsuperscript{w}e\textsubscript{3}} in all cases with an unclear position) 18...\textit{\textsuperscript{w}a\textsubscript{5}+} (on 18...\textit{\textsuperscript{w}e\textsubscript{3}}? 19 \textit{\textsuperscript{c}c\textsubscript{3}} \textit{\textsuperscript{w}g\textsubscript{5}} 20 0-0 White succeeds in solving his main problem, i.e. evacuating his king, and stands much better) 19 \textit{\textsuperscript{d}f\textsubscript{2}}

\textit{\textsuperscript{d}xe\textsubscript{4}+} 22 \textit{\textsuperscript{g}1} when, thanks to the attack on the a8-rook, White keeps his extra piece; 19...d5 20 exd\textsubscript{5} \textit{\textsuperscript{d}xd\textsubscript{5}} 21 \textit{\textsuperscript{d}c\textsubscript{5}} is also in White’s favour) 20 \textit{\textsuperscript{w}c\textsubscript{2}} \textit{\textsuperscript{b}4} 21 b3 and it seems that Black doesn’t have quite enough compensation for the pawn.

16 \textit{\textsuperscript{d}d\textsubscript{5}} \textit{\textsuperscript{c\textsubscript{5}}}

Or 16...\textit{\textsuperscript{c}c\textsubscript{8}} 17 \textit{\textsuperscript{x}c\textsubscript{6}} \textit{\textsuperscript{c\textsubscript{6}}} 18 \textit{\textsuperscript{x}c\textsubscript{6}} \textit{\textsuperscript{a\textsubscript{7}}} with an extra pawn for which Black’s activity doesn’t fully compensate.

17 0-0

17 \textit{\textsuperscript{d}xc\textsubscript{6}}!? \textit{\textsuperscript{w}xc\textsubscript{6}} (17...\textit{\textsuperscript{b}b\textsubscript{4}}? loses to 18 \textit{\textsuperscript{w}xb\textsubscript{4}} \textit{\textsuperscript{d}d\textsubscript{3}+} 19 \textit{\textsuperscript{f}f\textsubscript{1}} \textit{\textsuperscript{d}xb\textsubscript{4}} 20 \textit{\textsuperscript{a\textsubscript{a}\textsubscript{8}}}) 18 0-0 \textit{\textsuperscript{a\textsubscript{b}8} 19 a3 a5 20 f4 \textit{\textsuperscript{w}a\textsubscript{6}} 21 \textit{\textsuperscript{w}xa\textsubscript{6}} \textit{\textsuperscript{d}xa\textsubscript{6}} is equal, as is 19 \textit{\textsuperscript{b}b\textsubscript{1}} \textit{\textsuperscript{b\textsubscript{1}} 20 \textit{\textsuperscript{b\textsubscript{1}} \textit{\textsuperscript{b\textsubscript{1}}}} 21 \textit{\textsuperscript{a\textsubscript{b}1}} d5.

17...\textit{\textsuperscript{b}b\textsubscript{8}} 18 a3

With the idea of f4.

18...\textit{\textsuperscript{d}xd\textsubscript{5}} 19 \textit{\textsuperscript{d}xd\textsubscript{5}!}

19 exd\textsubscript{5} is met by 19...\textit{\textsuperscript{e}e\textsubscript{6}}!.

19...\textit{\textsuperscript{d}xd\textsubscript{5}} 20 exd\textsubscript{5}

We have been following the game Gelfand-M.Adams, Tilburg 1996, a tense strategical and tactical struggle in which Black sought active counterplay from the very beginning by undermin-
ing White’s centre, and in doing so obtained a complex game with level chances.

Here Adams erred with 20...\texttt{\texttt{W}a5}?! 21 f4 e4 22 \texttt{\texttt{A}d4} \texttt{\texttt{B}b3}?, the first real mistake from the Englishman. Instead, after 22...\texttt{\texttt{A}f6}?! 23 \texttt{\texttt{A}xb2} (or 23 \texttt{\texttt{A}xf6} gx\texttt{\texttt{f}6} with the idea of ...\texttt{\texttt{W}d2}) 23...\texttt{\texttt{B}xa2} 24 \texttt{\texttt{C}c2} \texttt{\texttt{W}xa3}, the passed pawn supported by the mighty f6-bishop provides adequate compensation for the exchange.

Also, 20...\texttt{\texttt{A}b8}b3! was stronger, since after Gelfand’s suggestion of 21 \texttt{\texttt{Q}c3} (or 21 \texttt{\texttt{Q}c3} \texttt{\texttt{W}a5}) 21...\texttt{\texttt{B}xa3} 22 f4 e4 23 \texttt{\texttt{A}d4} ‘with compensation’, Black has the nasty 23...\texttt{\texttt{W}a5}!, with the idea of ...	exttt{\texttt{B}b4}.

**B222)** 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \texttt{\texttt{F}f6} 3 f3 e5 4 d5 \texttt{\texttt{E}e7} 5 \texttt{\texttt{A}e3} 0-0 6 c4

6 \texttt{\texttt{W}d2} usually comes to the same thing, as White can’t really do without both moves.

6...\texttt{\texttt{C}c6}?

Or 6...a5!? (with the idea, as in the King’s Indian, of establishing a knight on c5) 7 \texttt{\texttt{Q}c3} \texttt{\texttt{Q}d7} 8 \texttt{\texttt{A}d3} \texttt{\texttt{A}h4}+ 9 g3 \texttt{\texttt{A}g5} 10 \texttt{\texttt{A}f2} with an edge for White in C.Lutz-A.Sokolovs, Moscow Olympiad 1994.

7 \texttt{\texttt{Q}c3} \texttt{\texttt{X}xd5}?!?

With 7...a6 8 \texttt{\texttt{W}d2} b5 Black tries to undermine his opponent’s centre and generate counterplay on the queenside, where he will soon open lines: 9 \texttt{\texttt{D}d1} b4 10 \texttt{\texttt{D}ce2} a5 11 \texttt{\texttt{G}g3} \texttt{\texttt{B}a6} 12 \texttt{\texttt{D}le2} \texttt{\texttt{C}xd5} 13 \texttt{\texttt{C}xd5} \texttt{\texttt{A}d7} 14 \texttt{\texttt{Q}c1} \texttt{\texttt{W}b8} 15 \texttt{\texttt{D}b3} a4 16 \texttt{\texttt{D}a5} (Sakaev-Svidler, Yugoslav Team Ch. 1995) and a draw was agreed in a position still full of life!

7...\texttt{\texttt{X}xd5}?! was played in the game **Sakaev-Nevednichy, European Ch., Ohrid 2001**, which we shall now follow. Nevednichy probably feared an improvement over the Svidler game and thus decided to deviate first.

8 \texttt{\texttt{X}xd5}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard.png}
\end{center}

A King’s Indian position with the significant nuance that the bishop stands on e7 rather than g7. Black gains the possibility of a future ...\texttt{\texttt{A}g5}, but traditional counterplay based on ...f5 is slowed down.

8...\texttt{\texttt{D}h5} 9 g3 \texttt{\texttt{G}g6} 9...\texttt{\texttt{F}g5} doesn’t help Black after 10
\( \text{f2, threatening to grab a piece by playing 11 f4.} \)

10 \text{Wd2 f5 11 exf5 gxf5 12 0-0-0 \text{\textsc{d}d7}}

Strange, as 12...\text{\textsc{d}d7} seemed quite natural. After 13 f4, however, White would enjoy a pleasant position anyway.

13 f4 \text{\textsc{f}f6} 14 \text{\textsc{g}f3}

14 fxe5!? dxe5 would have been unclear (but not 14...\text{\textsc{x}xe5}?! 15 \text{\textsc{d}f3}).

14...\text{\textsc{h}h8} 15 \text{\textsc{e}e2} \text{\textsc{g}g7} 16 \text{h4}

Stronger was central play with 16 fxe5! dxe5 17 \text{\textsc{h}h1}, when the pressure on e5 would have caused Black serious problems.

16...b5?

Here 16...e4! 17 \text{\textsc{d}d4} \text{\textsc{a}a6} led to a complex game, with reciprocal chances. The Romanian’s move is too optimistic (indeed, Black will never see this pawn again!).

17 \text{\textsc{\textsc{x}x}b5} \text{\textsc{\textsc{x}x}b5} 18 \text{\textsc{\textsc{x}x}b5} \text{\textsc{\textsc{d}d}7} 19 \text{\textsc{c}c6}

\begin{center}
\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_diagram}
\caption{Position after 19 \text{\textsc{\textsc{x}x}b5} \text{\textsc{\textsc{x}x}b5}.
The bishop is solidly cemented on c6 and grants White an advantage. Black will still fight, but without real hope of salvation.}
\end{figure}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_diagram}
\caption{This way Black avoids the dull 3...e5 4 dxe5, but purists may find Black’s third move to be inaccurate.}
\end{figure}
\end{center}

C) 1 \text{e4} \text{d6} 2 \text{d4} \text{\textsc{f}f6} 3 \text{f3} \text{\textsc{\textsc{b}d}7}

\text{\textsc{c}c5} 26 \text{\textsc{g}g5} \text{\textsc{w}b6} 27 \text{\textsc{\textsc{x}e}4} \text{\textsc{\textsc{x}e}4} 28 \text{\textsc{\textsc{e}e}2} \text{\textsc{\textsc{g}g}7} 29 \text{h6} \text{\textsc{\textsc{h}h}5} 30 \text{\textsc{\textsc{e}e}4} \text{\textsc{\textsc{f}e}e}4 31 \text{\textsc{w}x}e4

With two extra pawns, White is winning and the rest requires no comment – though Sakaev took his time.

31...\text{\textsc{w}c}5+ 32 \text{\textsc{\textsc{b}b}1} \text{\textsc{w}f}2 33 \text{\textsc{w}e}3 \text{\textsc{w}h}4 34 \text{\textsc{w}f}3 \text{\textsc{w}h}2 35 \text{\textsc{w}e}3 \text{\textsc{w}h}4 36 \text{\textsc{w}e}6 \text{\textsc{w}f}2 37 \text{\textsc{\textsc{c}c}1} \text{\textsc{w}f}3 38 \text{\textsc{\textsc{d}d}2} \text{\textsc{w}xf}4 39 \text{\textsc{w}e}2 \text{\textsc{\textsc{g}g}3} 40 \text{\textsc{w}f}2 \text{\textsc{w}e}4+ 41 \text{\textsc{\textsc{c}c}2} \text{\textsc{\textsc{f}f}5} 42 \text{\textsc{w}f}4 \text{\textsc{w}d}3 43 \text{\textsc{\textsc{b}b}5} \text{\textsc{w}xd}5 44 \text{\textsc{\textsc{c}c}4} \text{\textsc{w}e}5 45 \text{\textsc{w}xe}5 \text{\textsc{d}xe}5 46 \text{\textsc{\textsc{d}d}3} \text{\textsc{\textsc{d}d}6} 47 \text{\textsc{\textsc{a}a}3} \text{\textsc{d}d}5 48 \text{\textsc{\textsc{a}a}2} \text{\textsc{\textsc{h}h}4} 49 \text{\textsc{\textsc{f}f}1} \text{\textsc{\textsc{c}c}8} 50 \text{\textsc{\textsc{f}f}8} \text{\textsc{\textsc{b}b}6} 51 \text{\textsc{\textsc{g}g}7+} \text{\textsc{\textsc{g}g}8} 52 \text{\textsc{\textsc{f}f}5} \text{\textsc{\textsc{e}e}7} 53 \text{\textsc{\textsc{a}a}7+} \text{\textsc{\textsc{e}e}7} 54 \text{\textsc{\textsc{g}g}6} \text{\textsc{\textsc{d}d}5} 55 \text{\textsc{\textsc{h}h}7} \text{\textsc{\textsc{f}f}4} 56 \text{\textsc{\textsc{x}x}f}4 1-0

\text{\textsc{c}c5} 26 \text{\textsc{g}g5} \text{\textsc{w}b6} 27 \text{\textsc{\textsc{x}e}4} \text{\textsc{\textsc{x}e}4} 28 \text{\textsc{\textsc{e}e}2} \text{\textsc{\textsc{g}g}7} 29 \text{h6} \text{\textsc{\textsc{h}h}5} 30 \text{\textsc{\textsc{e}e}4} \text{\textsc{\textsc{f}e}e}4 31 \text{\textsc{w}x}e4

A manoeuvre which aims to exchange the ‘bad’ e7-bishop. In contrast to the Sakaev-Nevednichy game (Line B222), Black doesn’t mix actions on both flanks (...c6 and ...\text{\textsc{h}h}5), and this seems sounder. We will follow the game Baklan-Galdunts, Metz 2000.

143
7 \(\text{\&e2}\)!

7 \(\text{\&d2}\) allows 7...h6 and ...\(\text{\&g5}\). If White insists on preventing the swap with 8 g3 \(\text{\&g5}\) 9 f4?! then 9...exf4 10 gxf4 \(\text{\&h4+}\) 11 \(\text{\&f2}\) \(\text{\&f6}\) seizes the initiative.

7...\(\text{\&g5}\) 8 \(\text{\&f2}\)

White withdraws his bishop, but its black counterpart is more active at present.

8...g6

Planning a future ...f5. Black obviously wishes to recapture on f5 with a pawn, so as not to concede an outpost on e4 to an enemy knight.

9 \(\text{\&bc3}\) a5

If 9...0-0 10 g3 (10 h4!? implies that White won't castle short, but the advantages of this move don't spring to mind after the retreat 10...\(\text{\&h6}\)) 10...f5 11 \(\text{\&g2}\) \(\text{\&d6}\) 12 h3 (parrying 12...fxe4 13 fxe4 \(\text{\&g4}\)) when White has a firm grip on the position and enjoys a long-term space advantage.

10 g3 \(\text{\&c5}\) 11 h4?!

After this White will have to worry about his king. This is the reason why 11 \(\text{\&g2}\) f5 12 0-0 0-0 13 exf5 gxf5 14 f4!, with an edge, was to be preferred.

11...\(\text{\&h6}\) 12 \(\text{\&h3}\)

White also had his bad bishop to get rid of!

12...\(\text{\&xh3}\) 13 \(\text{\&xh3}\) \(\text{\&d7}\) 14 g4

After 14 \(\text{\&h1}\) f5 15 \(\text{\&c2}\) 0-0 Black's prospects are slightly better, and he can consider doubling his rooks on the f-file.

14...\(\text{\&f4}\) 15 \(\text{\&xf4}\) \(\text{\&xf4}\) 16 h5

16...f5?!

A sacrifice designed to exploit the vulnerability of White's king, but 16...0-0 17 \(\text{\&e2}\) \(\text{\&g7}\) 18 \(\text{\&c2}\) and 16...0-0-0! 17 a3 f5 18 b4 \(\text{\&a6}\) were better options.
17 hxg6 fxg4 18 fxg4 0-0 0-0 19 Hxh7

After 19 gxh7 Hdf8, the h7-pawn falling and the white king stuck in the centre offer decent compensation.

19...Hxh7 20 gxh7 Wxh7

20...Hf8 21 Wf3 A.d2+? simply drops a piece to 22 Wxd2 Hxf3 23 h8W+.

21 Wf3 Hh8

Or 21...Hf8 22 Ae2 Ah6 23 Wg2 Ag5 24 Ac5 dxc5 25 Hf1 Af4 and the extra pawn is not easy to convert.

22 Ae2 Wh2 23 Ag1 Ad3?

After 23...Hh3 24 Wg2 Wxg2 (or 24...Ad3??) 25 Wxh2 Hxh2 26 Wxd3 Hxf2 27 Ae2 Ag5) 25 Wxg2 Ag5 the g-pawn is blocked for the moment and White finds it pretty hard to realize his edge. On the other hand, only he has any winning chances.

24 Wxd3 Hh3

25 Wc2?!

Instead 25 Wd1! would have opened the doors to victory, as the following variations demonstrate: 25...He3+ (not 25...Ae3?? 26 Wf1) 26 Wf1 Wh3+ 27 Ag2 Hd3! (27...Wh1+? 28 Ag1 Ag3 29 g5! [passed pawns must be pushed!]) 29...d8 30 g6 Ae7 31 g7 Af7 32 g8W+ Wxg8 33 Wg4+ Wh8 34 Ae2 and White wins) 28 Wd4 b5 (to avoid a later We8 mate) 29 Wxa5 (29 Wxb5?? allows a surprising mate in four:

29...Ad1+!! 30 Hxd1 Hf3+ 31 Ag1 Hxd1+ 32 Ae1 Wxe1 mate) 30...Wh1+ 30 Ag1 Hf3+ 31 Hf2 Ag3 32 Ae2! (32 Ad1? spoils everything by enabling Black to save half a point: 32...Hxf2 33 Hxf2 Wh3+ 34 Ae2 Hf3+ 35 Hf2 Wf3 36 Ac1 Wg2 when White must take the draw: 37 Wa8+ Ad7 38 Wc6+ Ad8 39 Wa8+ Ae7 40 Wc6 Wxg1+ 41 Ad1 and the black monarch can’t escape perpetual check) 32...Hxf2 33 Hxf2 Wg2 34 Ad1 Wxg4 35 Af2 Wxe4 36 Wa8+ Ad7 37 Wc6+ Ad8 38 Ae3. White has consolidated and enjoys a decisive material plus. Furthermore, he threatens to deliver a quick mate starting with Ag5+.

25...Ae3! 26 Axf1?!

After 26 Hf1 Hxf2 27 Ad1 (not 27 Hxf2?? Wxf2+ 28 Hxf2 Hh2+ 29 Ag3 Hxg2 and Black wins) 27...Hf3 28 We2 (28 Wd4 Ad8 is unclear) 28...Ag3 29 Ac2 Hf4 30 g5, White is still a pawn up, but for how long?

26...Hf3 27 Ad1

145
27...\hfill$\text{Wh3+?}$

The losing move. Black still had enough compensation after 27...\text{xf2}!
28 \text{xf2} \hfill$\text{Wh3+} 29 \text{f2} (29 \text{f2} \text{Wh1+} 30 \text{g1} \hfill$\text{Wh3+}) 29...\text{g3+} 30 \text{d2} \hfill$\text{Wf3} 31 \text{e1} \text{f2} 32 \text{a4 f3+} (or 32...b5 33 \text{xb5 f2} 34 \text{e8+} \text{b7} 35 \text{b5+}) 33 \text{b1 f2} 34 \text{xb2 f2+} \text{xf2+} draws, as long as Black avoids \text{f8 mate.}

28 \text{e2!}

28 \text{g2??} \text{xf2} 29 \text{xf2 Wh1 goes back to the previous note.
Chapter Six

3 d3

1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 d3

Qbd7 or 5...g6 is already satisfactory for Black.

4...d5!

This thrust, disturbing White’s plan of Qe2 and f4, is certainly the best option here.

5 dxe5!

The most challenging. 5 exd5 wxd5 6 dxe5 wxe5+ or 6 wxg2 7 w.f3 wxf3 8 Qxf3 is roughly equal and not very exciting.

This bishop move is less natural than 3 Qc3, but also has its merits. The main advantages, in my view, are that the c-pawn remains free, and White can castle more quickly.

3...e5

Black has a wide range of possible replies. Apart from this central thrust, 3...g6 and 3...c5 seem to be the most interesting options.

4 c3

Logical, since 4 Qe2 exd4 5 Qxd4 captures on e4:

147
A: 5...dxe4
11 \(\Box e4 \Box xe4 12 \Box xf6 gxf6 13 \Box xf6 \Box g8\)

...with good compensation for the pawn, Rabiega-Polzin, Dresden 1996.

A2) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \(\Box f6\) 3 \(\Box d3\) e5 4 c3 d5 5 dxe5 dxe5! 6 \(\Box b5+ \Box d7 7 \Box c4\)

Instead, 7 \(\Box xd7+! \Box xd7 8 e6 fxe6 9 \Box h3 \Box c5\) is fine for Black, but 7 \(\Box e2!\) deserves attention. For example:

![Chess Diagram]

Note that 13 \(\Box a4+?!\) c6 14 \(\Box xf4??\) is met by 14...\(\Box d1\) mate.

7...\(\Box g4\) 8 \(\Box xf7+ \Box xf7 9 e6+ \Box xe6 10 \Box xg4+ \Box f7 11 \Box h5+ g6 12 \Box d5+ \Box g7 13 \Box e2\)

After 13 \(\Box g5 \Box e7 14 \Box e5+ \Box f6 15 \Box xf6+ \Box xf6 16 \Box xc7 \Box f8 17 \Box g3 e3!\) (much better than 17...\(\Box d6?!\) 18 \(\Box e3\) with an edge for White; Hamdouchi-Chabanon, Lyon 1993) 18 \(\Box f3\) exf2+ 19 \(\Box xf2\) \(\Box e8+ 20 \Box d1 \Box c6\), the white king will never reach safety.

13...\(\Box c6\)

...with an unclear position, Dolmatov-Karasev, Severodonetsk 1982.

B1) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \(\Box f6\) 3 \(\Box d3\) e5 4 c3 d5 5 dxe5 \(\Box xe4\)

The most popular recapture.

6 \(\Box f3\)

6 \(\Box xe4?!\) dxe4 7 \(\Box a4+ \Box d7 8 \Box xe4 \Box c6 9 \Box g4 h5\) gives Black more than enough compensation for a mere

149
The Philidor Files

pawn: 10 \( \text{Wh}3 \ \text{Wd}7 \ 11 \text{f}3 \) and here, for instance, 11...\( \text{d}5 \); and 10 \( \text{Wg}3 \) h4 11 \( \text{Wh}3 \ \text{Wd}7 \) is even worse, since Black has ...\( \text{h}5 \) in store.

The unusual 6 \( \text{We}2 \)?, immediately questioning the knight and keeping f2-f4 as an option, needs a closer look:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
6...\text{Cc5} \text{ (if 6...\text{Cd}7 7 \text{Cf}3! \text{Cd}5} 8 \\
\text{Cc2 intending both b4 and 0-0, \text{Cf}4, \\
f3-f4) 7 \text{Cc2 and here Black has two}\\n\text{different ways to try to benefit from}\\n\text{his opponent's ambitious set-up: 7...b}6\\n8 b4 \text{Ca}6, and the sacrifice 7...\text{Cf}6 8 b4 \\
\text{Cf}4 9 \text{Exe}4 \text{Exe}4 10 \text{Wxe}4 \text{Ca}6.
\end{array}
\]

6...\( \text{Cc6} \)

The immediate 6...\( \text{Cc6} \) avoids the option 8 \( \text{Cb}5 \) (as in Line B221). Play continues 7 \( \text{Cg}4 \) 8 0-0 \( \text{Cf}7 \) 9 \( \text{Cf}1 \) \\
\( \text{Cc6} \) 10 \( \text{Cbd}2 \) \( \text{Wd}7 \) 11 \( \text{Df}1 \) \( \text{d}4! \) (11...0-0?! would be less appropriate and leads to an inferior game after 12 \( \text{Cf}3 \) or 12 \\
b4!? 12 b4 (12 \text{cxd}4?! \text{Xf}3 13 \text{Xf}3 \\
\text{Xd}4 14 \text{Cc}3 \text{Cxc}2 15 \text{Wxc}2 \text{Wd}3! is already a bit better for Black because of \\
the exposed e5-pawn) 12...\text{Cd}6 13 \text{b}5 \\
\text{Cd}8 14 \text{Cb}2 \text{dxc}3 (if 14...\text{c}5! 15 \text{cxd}4 \\
cxd4 16 a4 0-0 17 \text{h}3 and White will \\
either grab the bishop pair or establish \\
a knight on f5 via g3; Black would like \\
to bring the beast on d8 into play by \\
...\text{Cf}5 and ...\text{Cf}6, but he may not \\
have time for it) 15 \text{Wxd}7+ \text{Xd}7 16 \\
\text{Xc}3 \text{Xf}3 17 \text{gxf}3 \text{a}6 (\text{Smirin-} \\
\text{Dorfman, Tilburg rapid 1993) and} \\
Black soon got the better of things, \\
even if the game ended peacefully.
\]

The position after 6...\( \text{Cc6} \) resembles 
an Open Lopez, where Black hasn't 
'compromised' his queenside by playing 
...a6 and ...b5. As for White, having 
his bishop directly on d3, without need-
ing the Ruy Lopez recycling \( \text{b}5-a4-b3-
\text{c}2, definitely speaks in his favour.

Now we will look at:

\( \text{B1: 7 We2} \)
\( \text{B2: 7 Cbd2} \)

\( \text{7 Cxf4!? is interesting, but leaves} \\
Black with many satisfactory continuations. Apart from 7...\text{e7, he can} \\
consider 7...\text{Cc5 or 7...f6.} \)

\( \text{B1) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Cfd6 3 Cc3 e5 4 c3 d5 5} \\
\text{dxe5 Cxe4 6 Cfd3 d5 7 We2 Cc5 8 Cc2} \\
\text{Or 8 Cb5 Cc7 etc.} \)
8...\textit{g}4

9 0-0

9 \textit{f}4? d4! gives Black the upper hand.

9...\textit{W}d7

Black has a major alternative in 9...\textit{e}7!?, e.g.: 10 \textit{d}1 a5 (securing the knight against b4; if 10...0-0? 11 b4 \textit{e}6 12 \textit{b}3, while 10...\textit{xf}3 11 \textit{xf}3 \textit{xe}5 12 \textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 13 \textit{xd}5 and the pair of bishops grants White a slight plus) 11 \textit{db}2 and now:

a) 11...a4 12 h3 \textit{h}5 13 \textit{df}1 \textit{e}6 14 \textit{g}3 (14 \textit{e}4!? \textit{a}5) 14...\textit{xf}3 (14...\textit{g}6 15 \textit{f}5 with nasty pressure) 15 \textit{xf}3 \textit{xe}5 16 \textit{h}5?! (16 \textit{f}5! \textit{f}6 17 \textit{h}5 was the correct way to proceed) 16...\textit{f}6 17 \textit{f}4 \textit{g}6 18 \textit{e}2 \textit{c}4 19 \textit{f}5 \textit{xf}5 20 \textit{xf}5 \textit{c}6, which was complicated, but objectively not worse for Black in Ibragimov-Agrest, St Petersburg 1993.

b) 11...\textit{W}d7! and then:

b1) 12 \textit{df}1 was seen in R.Mainka-V.Malaniuk, Koszalin 1998: 12...0-0 13 \textit{e}3 (13 \textit{h}3??) 13...\textit{xe}5 14 \textit{xd}5? (14 \textit{xd}4! \textit{xd}4 15 \textit{c}4 \textit{c}6 16 \textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 17 \textit{d}4 gave reasonable compensation) 14...\textit{we}6 15 \textit{xh}7+ \textit{xh}7 16 \textit{wc}2+ \textit{g}6 17 \textit{e}5 \textit{wd}7 18 \textit{xd}4 f5 19 \textit{e}2. And now instead of 19...\textit{xd}8? Black could have secured a large advantage with 19...\textit{fxg}4!, e.g. 20 \textit{e}5 (or 20 \textit{xd}6+ \textit{xd}6 21 \textit{e}5+ \textit{f}6 22 \textit{xd}7+ \textit{xd}7 ... 1-2-3, 1-2-3-4: one white piece is missing!) 20...\textit{f}5 21 \textit{xf}5 \textit{xf}5 22 \textit{yg}6 \textit{d}8 23 g3 \textit{d}1+ 24 \textit{yg}2 \textit{yg}6 25 \textit{xe}7 \textit{d}3 and it's curtains.

b2) 12 \textit{db}3 \textit{e}6! (a venomous move; instead 12...a4 13 \textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 14 h3 \textit{h}5 15 \textit{f}4 revealed itself as only slightly better for White in A.Sokolovs Fridman, Riga 1995, while the greedy 15 \textit{e}4?! runs the risk of indigestion: 15...\textit{a}5 16 \textit{wd}2 \textit{b}6 17 \textit{xd}5 0-0 when White's piece placement doesn't inspire confidence)

13 \textit{e}4 a4 14 \textit{xd}5 \textit{wc}8 and Black's devilish 12th move has netted an exchange: 15 \textit{bd}4 (if 15 \textit{bd}2 \textit{d}4) 15...\textit{cxd}4 16 \textit{xd}4 (or 16 \textit{xd}4 \textit{c}6) 16...\textit{xd}4 17 \textit{xd}4 \textit{c}6 with some advantage to Black.

10 \textit{d}1

Or 10 h3 \textit{h}5 11 \textit{bd}2!? (not 11 \textit{e}1? d4! and Black seized the initiative in Bastian-Lobron, German Ch. 2001;
but 11 b4!? and 11 ¤d1!? are possible) 11...d4 12 ¤c4 d3 13 ¤b1 0-0 0-1 14 b4
¤e6 with a messy position.
10...0-0-0! 11 b4 ¤e6 12 ¤b3 ¤xf3 13
¤xf3 ¤xe5 14 ¤e3

On 14 ¤xd5?!., both 14...¤d6 and
14...¤xd5 are okay for Black.
14...¤d6!

5 ¤xe5 ¤xe4 6 ¤f3 ¤c6 7 ¤bd2 ¤g4 8
0-0

8 ¤xe4 may be a simpler path to a
small, but risk-free advantage: 8...¤xe4
9 ¤xe4 ¤xd1+ 10 ¤xd1 0-0-0+ 11 ¤c2
¤xf3 12 ¤xf3 ¤xe5 13 ¤e2 ¤c5 14 f4
¤g6 15 ¤g4+ ¤b8 16 ¤d2...

...when the two bishops give White
the better prospects.
8...¤xd2?!

8...¤c5 was stronger, as the text
move eases White’s development.
9 ¤xd2 ¤e7 10 ¤e1 0-0

After 10...¤d7 11 ¤c2! ¤xf3 12 ¤f5
¤d8 13 gxf3, White’s kingside pawn
structure is damaged, but the dynamic
factors are more important. Queenside
casting is impossible for Black, and
after a continuation like 13...g6 14 ¤h3
0-0 15 f4 f5 16 exf6 ¤xf6 17 ¤e6+ White
would keep the initiative.

10...¤h5 11 ¤c2 ¤g6 12 ¤xg6 hxg6
13 e6 isn’t satisfactory either.
11 ¤c2 ¤xf3 12 gxf3

The doubled pawns don’t represent
a handicap here either, as White can
get rid of them by playing f4-f5-f6.
Moreover, the g-file and the bishops
pointing at the enemy king augur well for a powerful attack.

28 Wh5+.
27 f3

12...g6 13 f4 Ac5 14 Wd1! f6
14...Wh4 is met by 15 Wf3 – the point of 14 Wd1.
15 b4 Ab6 16 c4 dxc4
16...fxe5? seems attractive, but in fact it simply loses a piece after 17 c5 e4 18 Ae2 Ozd4 19 Ae3 Oxexe2+ 20 Wxe2.
17 Ac4+ Wg7 18 b5
Inviting the knight to a square coveted by the queen.
18...Oxd4 19 a4 Of5
Here 19...fxe5 20 Aexe5 Od5 21 Ac3 Ac4 22 Axd4 Wxd4 23 Wxd4 Oxd4 24 Ae7+ was a bit uncomfortable, but probably holdable after 24...Wh6 25 Ac7 Ac8 26 Axc8 Ac8.
20 Ab4 fxe5
A worthy practical choice: for the exchange Black gets good play on the dark squares.
21 Axf8+ Wxf8 22 Aexe5 Od6
The alternative 22...Wh4?! 23 Wg4 would be worse.
23 We2 Wxf4 24 Ae7+ Wh6 25 Ad3 Ef8
26 Wh1 Wg5
26...Wxf2? loses to 27 Hxh7+ Wh7

We have been following Smirin-Huzman, Wijk aan Zee 1993. Now, instead of the game’s 27...Ef5?, Black should have played 27...Hf4!. Then after 28 a5 Ac4 29 Hf1 Wh4 White keeps a better position, but there is still all to play for.

B22) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Od6 3 Ac3 e5 4 c3 d5
5 dxe5 Oxex4 6 Od3 Oe6 7 Obd2 Oc5
...and now:

B221: 8 Ab5
B222: 8 Ac2
B223: 8 Ab1 Ag4 9 b4
B224: 8 Ab1 Ag4 9 h3

White normally moves the bishop, but it can be left on d3:
8 Od3 Od4
8...Oxd3+ 9 Wxd3 Ae7 10 0-0 0-0 11 Of4 Ae6 (Lalic-Bauer, Lausanne 2001) should be okay as well.
9 0-0 Wd7 10 Ae1 0-0-0

Despite opposite castling, the game keeps a mainly positional character.
left its initial post. This swap eliminates one attacker of e5 and keeps the equilibrium.

21...hxg6 22 h3 g5 23 d4 wf5 24 wh2

...and a draw was agreed in the game Yusupov-M. Adams, Hastings 1989/90.

B221) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 df6 3 d3 e5 4 c3
d5 5 dxex5 dfex5 6 df3 dxex3 7 dxd2 dc5 8 db5

This move reinforces White's control over d4, but loosens the control over e4. You can't have your cake and eat it too!

8...dd7

a) 8...ee7 9 b4 de6 10 db3 gives good control of d4 and, with the bishop still on c8, White can be satisfied with his opening.

b) 8...g4 is more active. In this case White would have a choice between fighting for an edge with either 9 h3 or 9 b4, or levelling the position by playing 9 db3. Thus 9 h3 dh5 10 g4 dg6 11 dd4 wd7 and 9 b4 de6 10 xc6+ bxc6

21 wxg6

Played only now that the rook has
equal chances, for example 13 \textit{D}d4 0-0 14 0-0 \textit{A}b6 15 \textit{W}xc6 \textit{A}xd4 16 \textit{W}xd7 \textit{A}xf2+ 17 \textit{A}xf2 \textit{A}xd7. 9 \textit{W}xe2

After 9 0-0?! \textit{D}xe5 10 \textit{W}e2 \textit{A}xb5 11 \textit{W}xb5+ \textit{D}ed7 12 \textit{A}e1+ \textit{A}e7 Black is a pawn up for nothing.

9...\textit{a}6!

If he is going to lose the battle for d4, Black should at least console himself with the pair of bishops! 9...\textit{D}e6?! lets White organize himself at leisure. After 10 \textit{b}3 \textit{A}e7 11 \textit{A}e3 a6 12 \textit{A}d3 White has a firm grip over d4 and it’s easy to understand that something has gone wrong for the second player. A.Fedorov-A.Gubanov, St Petersburg 1994, continued 12...\textit{D}g5 13 \textit{D}xg5 \textit{A}xg5 14 f4 \textit{A}h4+ 15 g3 \textit{A}e7 16 0-0-0 and White held a clear advantage. Black lacks a tempo to extricate himself with ...\textit{A}e6 and ...\textit{W}d7. 10 \textit{D}xc6 \textit{A}xc6 11 \textit{D}d4 \textit{A}d7 12 0-0 \textit{D}e6 13 \textit{D}d1

Or 13 a4 c5 14 \textit{D}xe6 \textit{A}xe6 15 f4 \textit{W}d7 (Smirin-Chernin, Groningen 1993), and now 16 \textit{W}f2 would have led to reciprocal chances after 16...\textit{f}5 17 \textit{D}f3 \textit{A}e7 18 \textit{e}3. 13...c5 14 \textit{D}xe6 \textit{A}xe6 15 c4 \textit{d}4

15...\textit{A}e7 16 \textit{D}e4 d4 would come to the same thing. 16 \textit{D}e4 \textit{A}e7 17 \textit{a}4

After 17 b4?! \textit{cxb4} (17...b6 also offers mutual chances after 18 \textit{bxc5} \textit{bxc5} 18 \textit{A}b2 0-0 19 \textit{A}xd4 \textit{W}c7 20 \textit{D}d6 the monster on d6 counterbalances the pair of bishops. Moreover, capturing it would awaken the bishop on b2, which would then eye g7. 17...\textit{W}c7 18 \textit{A}f4

On 18 f4 \textit{W}c6 19 b3 h5 threatens...\textit{A}g4 while preventing an appearance of an enemy pawn on this very same square. Black has everything under control and stands a bit better. 18...\textit{W}c6 19 \textit{D}d6+

Eliminating the black pair of bishops. Instead, 19 b3 0-0 would give Black an edge. 19...\textit{A}xd6 20 \textit{exd6} \textit{a}5!

Depriving White of the b4 break. Now Black’s king will be perfectly safe in the centre. 21 \textit{A}a3 \textit{W}d7 22 \textit{A}b3 \textit{A}he8 23 \textit{W}d3 \textit{b}6 24 \textit{A}b5

155
An indirect (and rather peculiar!) way to protect the a4-pawn. Even with this rook temporarily immobilized, the position remains difficult to unbalance. 24...g6 25 f3 h5 26 Wb3 Habb 27 He1 f6
...and here the point was split in A.Fedorov-Korotylev, St Petersburg 1994. (Note that 27...Hxc4?? loses to 28 Hxe8 Hxb3 29 Hxb8.)

B222) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 df6 3 Hd3 e5 4 c3
d5 5 dxe5 Hxe5 6 Hf3 Hc6 7 Hbd2 Hc5
8 Hc2 Hg4 9 0-0 d4

14 De4 is met by 14...Hxf3 and
15...Hxe5, while 14 b5? Da5 15 Wxa7 b6
is dubious for White, to say the least.
11 bxc3 Wd7
11...He7 12 We3 0-0 13 Db3 doesn't
solve all of Black's problems either,
while 11...Dd3? is a pawn-fishing move
that unsurprisingly leads to trouble after
12 We4 Dxc1 13 Wxg4 De2+ 14 He1
Dxc3 15 He1 or 15 Wc4 Dd5 16 Db3
Dxc7 17 De4, in both cases with
tremendous compensation for the pawn.
12 We3 0-0-0
12...De6?! gives up the control of e4,
for the sake of preparing...He5 and...
Hh5-g6: 13 De4! (13 Db1?! would be
inadequate after 13...0-0-0 or 13...He5
14 Wf4 Hh5 15 Hxb7?! Hg6 16 Wa4
Dxc2 17 Wxc2 Hb6 with a clear plus for
Black) 13...Hxf3 14 Wxf3 Dxe5 15 Wg3
Dc6 16 Hd1 We7 17 Hb1 with a mighty
initiative for White.
13 a3 \[D_e6\]

13...\[D_d3\]? was less resilient: 14 \[Dxf8\] \[Hxf8\] 15 a4 \[b8\] 16 d4 and the capture on c6 will do harm to Black’s position.

14 \[Dxf8\] \[Hxf8\]

15 \[D_e4\]!

15 a4? would be faulty in view of 15...\[D_d3\]! 16 \[xc6\] \[xe3\] 17 xb7+ xb7 18 fxe3 \[d3\], when Black collects back his pawn and remains on top with the better pawn structure.

18...\[Dc5\]?

Instead, 18...\[xe4\] 19 \[xe4\] \[Dd5\] deserved serious attention, as after 20 \[g4\] or 20 \[e2\], then 20...\[b8\] seems to hold.

19 \[Dxf5\] \[Dxf5\] 20 \[Wf4\] \[Dxe4\] 21 \[Wxe4\] \[b8\] 22 a5 \[Dd3\] 23 \[Bd4\] \[xe8\] 24 \[xb6\] \[cxb6\] 25 \[Wa4\] \[Dd7\]

25...\[xe7\]? loses to 26 \[Df1\].

26 \[Wf4\] \[We6\] 27 \[g5\] \[Wxe5\] 28 \[Wxe5\] \[Dxe5\] 29 \[Dxf7\] \[Dxe8\] 30 \[Dxe5\] \[xe5\] 31 \[Df1\]

White is winning now and even such a strong defender as Beliavsky succumbs little by little.

31...\[Wf7\] 32 \[Dd5\] \[g6\] 33 \[f4\] \[b7\] 34 \[f2\] \[h5\] 35 \[Dd1\] \[c6\] 36 \[Dc5\] a5 37 \[Dxe7\] \[Dxe7\] 38 \[Dc1\] \[Dd5\] 39 \[Dc5\] 40 \[Dxg6\] a4 41 f5 a3 42 \[Dg8\] \[xc3\] 43 \[Dc8\] \[b4\] 44 \[Df3\] \[Dd5\] 45 g4 \[hxg4+\] 46 \[Dxg4\] \[b5\] 47 \[Dg5\] \[b3\] 48 f6 \[Dxf6\] 49 \[Dxf6\] b4 50 \[h4\] \[c4\] 51 \[h5\] \[b5\] 52 \[Df4+\] 1-0

If 52...\[b5\], 53 \[Dxa3\] b2 54 \[Dc8\] decides. A nice game from Slobodjan.
B223) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♕f6 3 ♚c3 e5 4 c3 d5 5 dxe5 ♕xe4 6 ♕f3 ♒c6 7 ♘bd2 ♔c5 8 ♘b1

A more frequent reply than 8 ♘c2, 8 ♘b5 or 8 ♘b3. I don’t really see the advantage of the text move over 8 ♘c2, apart from maybe that Black won’t win a tempo on the bishop after ...d4-d3. Fedorov seems to have shifted to 8 ♘b1 from his former favourite 8 ♘b5.

8...♗g4

The customary reaction to 8 ♘c2, which is equally appropriate here.

9 ♗b4

This is Fedorov’s idea, and we now follow the game A.Fedorov-E.Agrest, European Ch., Ohrid 2001.

9...♗d7

The other retreat is 9...♛e6!?. Now the game A.Fedorov-Khalifman, Mailkop 1998, continued 10 ♕a4 ♘h5 11 0-0 ♘e7?? (after this move White reaches his goal; instead 11...♕d7 [with the idea of ...♕xe5] 12 b5 ♗e7 13 ♕h4 ♘g6 and Black is okay, while 11...♕a6!? questions the queen’s placement and with it White’s whole concept) 12 b5 ♘b8 13 ♗d4 ♗d7 14 f4.

Even though White’s means seem a bit artificial, he has managed to realize his plan: the f4-push. All his queenside operations in fact constituted a decoy in order to expand on the other wing: 14...♗c5 15 ♗b2 ♗b6 16 ♕c2 ♘e2 (it was to late to retreat; Black has to face the ensuing complications) 17 ♗f2 ♘xb5 18 f5! ♘a4 (18...♕xd4?! 19 cxd4 ♘e7 20 f6 gxf6 21 exf6 ♘xf6 22 ♕f5 ♘d7 23 ♕xd5 and for a mere pawn Black is left in a perilous situation: his king is stuck in the centre (though he wouldn’t feel any happier after ...0-0) and all the white pieces will converge in his direction) 19 ♕d3 ♘g5 20 ♕g3 (White has a clear advantage) 20...♕e7 21 f6 gxf6 22 exf6 ♕e1+ 23 ♗f1 ♗e4 24 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 25 ♗d2 ♘g6 26 ♕c7 ♘c8 27 ♗e1+ ♘f8 28 ♘xb7 ♘g4 29 ♘d5 ♘xb3 30 axb3 ♘d7 31 ♘a6 h5 32 ♘a3 ♘d6 33 ♘fe2 ♘g8 (or 33...♗xa3 34 ♘xc8+ ♘xc8 35 ♘e8 mate) 34 ♘e8+ and Black resigned. The end could have been 34...♕xe8 35 ♘xe8+ ♗h7 36 ♕d3+ ♗h6 37 ♘c1+ ♘f4 38 ♘xf4 mate. Black found himself in trouble quite early on, all due to his faulty 11th move.
10 0-0 \text{e}7

10...\text{d}cxe5!? seems dangerous, but perhaps not that much according to the following analysis, 11 h3 and now:

a) 11...\text{h}5 12 g4 (or 12 \text{w}e1 \text{x}f3 [12...\text{w}e7? 13 \text{d}xe5 \text{d}xe5 14 f4 and g4, f5 locks the bishop in] 13 \text{x}f3 \text{w}e7 but here Black survives, for instance 14 \text{d}xe5 \text{d}xe5 15 f4 \text{c}c4 16 \text{w}f2 \text{w}f6 and Black is even better here!) 12...\text{d}xf3+ (12...\text{g}6 13 \text{d}xe5 \text{d}xe5 14 \text{e}1 wins) 13 \text{x}f3 \text{g}6 14 \text{w}xd5 c6 15 \text{w}d4 \text{f}6 16 \text{e}1+ \text{e}7 17 \text{g}5 0-0 18 \text{x}g6 \text{f}xg6 (18...\text{h}xg6 is playable too) 19 \text{d}d1 with an edge for White.

b) 11...\text{d}xf3+ 12 \text{d}xf3 \text{e}6 (or if 12...\text{f}5 13 \text{w}xf3 with compensation thanks to the pair of bishops and lead in development) 13 \text{d}d4 (13 \text{g}5 \text{w}f6 isn’t clear either) 13...\text{f}6 14 f4 \text{b}6 15 f5 \text{d}7.

11 \text{w}a4 \text{d}b6

12 \text{w}c2

White again intends b5, followed by \text{d}d4 and f4.

12...\text{a}6 13 \text{e}1 \text{w}d7?!?

Avoiding 13...\text{h}5 14 e6 was probably the justification for 13...\text{w}d7, but this shouldn’t have been feared (better would be 14 \text{w}f5 transferring the queen to the side where the black king is going to take refuge). After 14...\text{x}e6 15 \text{w}d7, intending ...\text{g}6\text{xb}1 and ...0-0, I slightly prefer Black; even more so after 16 \text{w}f5?! g6 17 \text{h}3 0-0, since the white pieces badly lack coordination.

14 a3! \text{h}5 15 \text{d}d4 \text{d}xd4 16 \text{c}xd4 \text{g}6
17 \text{w}c3 \text{\text{x}b}1 18 \text{\text{x}b}1

Without counterplay but also with no real weakness, Black stands a bit worse.

18...0-0 19 \text{b}3 \text{e}8 20 f4 \text{d}d8 21 h3
f5 22 \text{\text{w}h}2 \text{e}6 23 \text{g}1 \text{h}5

Possibly 23...\text{d}c8!?, or 23...\text{\text{d}a}8!? in order to reroute the knight to e6, after ...c6, ...\text{d}c7.

24 \text{\text{d}f}3 \text{~d}c4 25 \text{\text{d}e}3 \text{\text{d}e}7 26 \text{~f}2 \text{\text{d}e}8
27 \text{w}e1

Preventing ...h4. On the other hand, White now has to tolerate a knight on e4.

27...\text{d}d6 28 \text{\text{d}h}4 \text{\text{d}\text{h}4} 29 \text{\text{d}x}h4 \text{e}4
30 \text{\text{d}f}3 \text{~c}6 31 \text{\text{d}e}3 \text{\text{d}d}7

Perhaps 31...\text{e}8!?, with the idea of meeting 32 \text{c}1 by 32...\text{\text{d}e}6.

32 \text{c}1 \text{\text{d}c}1 33 \text{w}c1 \text{e}8 34 \text{\text{d}b}2 \text{\text{d}e}6
35 c2 c6 36 a4

Slowly but surely the black fortress breaks down. White has all the levers (b4-b5 and g2-g4), and Black is reduced to waiting.
36...\(\text{\texttt{h7?! \texttt{g5+}}} 37 \text{\texttt{xg5}} \text{\texttt{xg5}} 38 \text{\texttt{fxg5 We7}}
39 \text{\texttt{We2 \texttt{g8}} 40 \text{\texttt{xh2}} \text{\texttt{h4}} 41 \text{\texttt{Wf4}} \text{\texttt{Hg6}} 42
\text{\texttt{Wxh4 \texttt{Wxg5}} 43 \text{\texttt{We2}} \text{\texttt{f4}} 44 \text{\texttt{Hb3 \texttt{Wf5}} 45
\text{\texttt{Hf3 We4}}

46 \text{\texttt{We2!}}

46 \text{\texttt{Hxf4??}} would spoil all the good work: 46...\text{\texttt{xg2+}} 47 \text{\texttt{Wxg2}} \text{\texttt{xf4+}}.
46...\text{\texttt{b6}} 47 \text{\texttt{Wxf4 \texttt{Wxf4+}} 48 \text{\texttt{xh4 \texttt{c5}} 49
\text{\texttt{dxc5 \texttt{bxc5}} 50 \text{\texttt{bxc5 \texttt{Hc6}} 51 \text{\texttt{Wg3 \texttt{Hxc5}} 52
\text{\texttt{Hb4 \texttt{Hf7}} 53 \text{\texttt{Hf4 \texttt{a5}} 54 \text{\texttt{Hb7+ \texttt{We6}} 55
\text{\texttt{Hb6+ \texttt{We7}} 56 \text{\texttt{Hf5 \texttt{d4}} 57 \text{\texttt{Hb7+ \texttt{Hd8}} 58
\text{\texttt{Hf4 \texttt{g5}} 59 \text{\texttt{Hxd4}}

White has two extra pawns, so the rest is a matter of technique.
59...\text{\texttt{Ha2}} 60 \text{\texttt{g4}} \text{\texttt{Hc2}} 61 \text{\texttt{e6 \texttt{Hxa4+}} 62 \text{\texttt{He5}}
\text{\texttt{He3}} 63 \text{\texttt{Hh7 \texttt{Hf3}} 64 \text{\texttt{Hf3 \texttt{Hh3}} 65 \text{\texttt{Hxa5}}
\text{\texttt{Hf3}} 66 \text{\texttt{Hd6 \texttt{Hd3+}} 67 \text{\texttt{He5 \texttt{He3}} 68 \text{\texttt{Hxg5}}
\text{\texttt{Ha3}} 69 \text{\texttt{Hxe5 \texttt{We7}} 70 \text{\texttt{Hg7+ \texttt{Hf8}} 71 \text{\texttt{Hf7+ \texttt{Hg8}} 72 \text{\texttt{Hg5 \texttt{Ha1}} 73 \text{\texttt{Hd7 \texttt{Hf8}} 74 \text{\texttt{g6 \texttt{He1+}}
75 \text{\texttt{Hd5 \texttt{Hd1+}} 76 \text{\texttt{Hc4 \texttt{Hg1}} 77 \text{\texttt{Hf7+}} 1-0

This game wasn’t spectacular, but the way Fedorov always kept pressing is instructive.

B224) 1 \text{\texttt{e4 \texttt{d6 2 \texttt{d4 \texttt{f6}} 3 \texttt{d3 \texttt{e5 4 \texttt{c3}}}
\text{\texttt{d5 5 \texttt{dxe5 \texttt{xe4}} 6 \text{\texttt{f3 \texttt{c6}} 7 \text{\texttt{bd2 \texttt{e5}} 8
\text{\texttt{b1 \texttt{g4}} 9 \text{\texttt{h3 \texttt{h5}} 10 0-0}

10...\text{\texttt{He7}}

In connection with Black’s plans of long castling, in my opinion it seems more relevant to begin with 10...\text{\texttt{Wd7}}, as this bishop move isn’t compulsory.
11 \text{\texttt{He1}}

Contemplating \text{\texttt{He1}}, \text{\texttt{g4}} and \text{\texttt{Hg3}} in the event of Black castling short. We now follow the game Rabiega-Ftacnik, German League 2000.
11...\text{\texttt{d4}} 12 \text{\texttt{We2 \texttt{Wd7}}

After 12...\text{\texttt{Wd5}} her majesty would exert more influence in the centre, but would also be more exposed to enemy attacks.
13 \text{\texttt{Hb3 \texttt{dxc3}}

13...\text{\texttt{d3? 14 \texttt{Hxc5 \texttt{dxe2}} 15 \text{\texttt{Hxd7 \texttt{xf3}}}
16 \text{\texttt{gxh3 \texttt{xd7}} 17 \text{\texttt{Hxe2}} is clearly better for White. However, 13...\text{\texttt{Hxb3}} 14 \text{\texttt{AXB3 \texttt{Hd8}} 15 \text{\texttt{He4}} 16 \text{\texttt{Wd2}} is unclear: the d3-pawn is surrounded but also annoying for White.
14 \text{\texttt{bxc3 \texttt{e4}}} 15 \text{\texttt{Wc4}}

Based on Ftacnik’s annotations to the rest of the game, 15 \text{\texttt{Hd2!}} was to be
preferred because the white queen is going to be harassed on c4. After 15 \( \text{d2} \), both 15...\( \text{d8} \) 16 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{b6} \) 17 \( \text{d1} \) and 15...0-0-0! 16 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{b6} \) 17 \( \text{d1} \) lead to a White edge.

15...\( \text{b6} \)

If 15...\( \text{xc3}?! \) 16 \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{b4} \) 17 e6!? fxe6 18 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{xe1} \) 19 \( \text{xe1} \) 0-0 20 \( \text{e4} \) with a small plus for White; or 17 \( \text{b2} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 18 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{xd2} \) 19 \( \text{xd2} \) \( \text{h5} \) 20 \( \text{e4} \) with good compensation for the pawn.

16 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{d5} \) 17 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{xc3}! \)

The justification of Black’s previous play. The game now takes a very tactical turn, where only calculation counts.

18 \( \text{c2} \)

18 \( \text{xc7} \) is suspicious: 18...0-0-0 19 e6 (the point; 19 \( \text{bd2} \) \( \text{xb1} \) 20 \( \text{xb1} \) \( \text{hg8} \) 21 \( \text{wh6} \) \( \text{xh3} \) and Black wins) 19...f6 20 \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{b4} \) 21 \( \text{we3} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 22 \( \text{f1} \) (or 22 gxf3 \( \text{hg8}+ \) 23 \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{xe1} \) 24 \( \text{exe1} \) \( \text{d4} \) when White has a material advantage, but his king won’t survive) 22...\( \text{d5} \) with a large plus for Black.

18...0-0-0 19 \( \text{b2} \) \( \text{b4} \) 20 e6!

After 20 \( \text{ac1} \) \( \text{xc2} \) 21 \( \text{xc2} \) \( \text{d5} \) 22 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{a4} \) Black has the pair of bishops and an extra pawn, while White has no real threat.

20...\( \text{wd5}! \)

20...\( \text{f6} \) would lose to 21 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{e2}+ \) 22 \( \text{xe2} \) \( \text{wb5} \) 23 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{xc2} \) 24 \( \text{c1} \) \( \text{d1}+ \) 25 \( \text{xd1} \) \( \text{xd1} \) 26 \( \text{wg7} \) \( \text{we8} \) 27 \( \text{c6} \) \( \text{dxc6} \) 28 \( \text{wh8} \).

21 \( \text{xc3} \)

Following 21 \( \text{e5?} \) \( \text{d6}! \) 22 \( \text{xc3} \) (if 22 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{e2}+ \) 22...\( \text{xe5} \) 23 \( \text{we5} \) \( \text{xc2} \) 24 e7 \( \text{xa1} \) 25 \( \text{xd8+w}+ \) \( \text{xd8} \), the queen swap is imminent, when the rook and two pawns will prove much stronger than the two minor pieces.

21...\( \text{xc2} \)

22 \( \text{e5} \)
Again the lesser evil. 22 \texttt{h}4! \texttt{d}d1+! 23 \texttt{x}d5 \texttt{x}d3+ 24 \texttt{x}f3 \texttt{x}d5 was worse.

22...\texttt{d}d3

Compared with 21 \texttt{e}5? above, the circumstances after the continuation 22...\texttt{c}c4 23 \texttt{f}d2 \texttt{w}d3 24 \texttt{h}h5 \texttt{x}g3 25 \texttt{x}xg3 \texttt{d}xh5 26 \texttt{x}xh5 are clearly less favourable for Black. Moreover, he only has a rook and one pawn for White’s two knights.

23 \texttt{h}h5 \texttt{w}xh5 24 \texttt{c}c1 \texttt{f}xe6

Not 24...\texttt{a}a3? 25 \texttt{f}xf7 and the rook is immune due to \texttt{c}c5.

25 \texttt{w}g4?!

Inserting 25 \texttt{a}a5! \texttt{b}b8, and then 26 \texttt{g}4 would have maintained parity.

25...\texttt{a}a3 26 \texttt{w}xh5+ \texttt{w}b8 27 \texttt{d}d1 \texttt{h}e8 28 \texttt{w}g4

28 \texttt{d}d5?! \texttt{d}d6! 29 \texttt{f}f5 was possible too, as long as White watches out for the ...\texttt{h}h2+ and ...\texttt{g}xh5 threat.

28...\texttt{e}e1! 29 \texttt{a}a5! \texttt{x}f3+ 30 \texttt{w}xf3 \texttt{e}1+ 30...\texttt{w}xf3?! was objectively inferior, even if a reasonable choice in time trouble: 31 \texttt{g}xh7 \texttt{c}c8 and now either 32 \texttt{h}h7 or 32 \texttt{x}xb7, when Black’s advantage has decreased.

31 \texttt{h}h1 \texttt{w}e1+ 32 \texttt{h}h2 \texttt{d}d6+

32...\texttt{w}b4? 33 \texttt{c}c5! a6 34 \texttt{x}xb7 is just equal.

33 \texttt{g}3 \texttt{c}6?

Wasting the advantage, which could have been increased with 33...\texttt{w}b1, or else 33...\texttt{w}b4 34 \texttt{f}f5 (34 \texttt{h}h7 is no better: 34...\texttt{f}f8! 35 \texttt{g}g2 \texttt{x}xf2 36 \texttt{w}xf2 \texttt{w}xh7) 34...g6 35 \texttt{f}f7 \texttt{w}b5.

34 \texttt{b}5!!

A bolt from the blue!

34...\texttt{f}f8 35 \texttt{x}xb7+ \texttt{a}a8 36 \texttt{f}f7!

The sacrifice 36 \texttt{b}b8+ doesn’t work after 36...\texttt{x}xb8 37 \texttt{w}b3+ \texttt{c}c7 38 \texttt{w}b7+ \texttt{d}d8 39 \texttt{x}xc6+ \texttt{f}f8 40 \texttt{w}c8+ \texttt{f}f7 and the black king escapes.
36...\textit{xf7}

Or 36...\textit{xe4} 37 \textit{xe4} \textit{xf7} 38 \textit{xf7} \textit{xa5} 39 \textit{gg7} with a likely draw.

37 \textit{xc6}+ \textit{b8} 38 \textit{xd6}+ \textit{c8}

38...\textit{xc7} 39 \textit{d8}+ \textit{c8} 40 \textit{d6}+ leads to perpetual check.

39 \textit{c6}+ \textit{d8}

39...\textit{b8} wouldn't alter the outcome:

40 \textit{b5}+ \textit{c8} 41 \textit{c4}+ \textit{c7} 42 \textit{g8}+ \textit{d7}

43 \textit{gg7}+ \textit{e6} 44 \textit{g8}+ with a draw.

40 \textit{b7}+ \textit{xb7} 41 \textit{xb7} \textit{xf2}+ 42 \textit{h1} \textit{f1}+

...and the players agreed a draw. A nice balancing act!

\textbf{Conclusion}

Variations with 3 \textit{d3} lead to rich positions. Furthermore, chances to extract an opening advantage for White are quite reasonable. The debate frequently centres on the \textit{d4}-square and Black's push with...\textit{d5-\textit{d4}}. If Black doesn't lose its control, his prospects are generally satisfactory.
1 e4 d6 2 d4 Df6 3 Dc3 e5

After 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Df6 3 Dc3 Black has two move orders at his disposal in order to try and reach the Philidor Hanham variation: 3...e5, intending 4 Df3 Dbd7; and 3...Dbd7, with the idea of meeting 4 Df3 with 4...e5. In this chapter we will concentrate on the first move order.

Playing 3...e5 implies that Black doesn’t fear the ending resulting from 4 dxe5 dxe5 5 Wxd8+ Wxd8, which constitutes the main ‘drawback’ of this move order. We will see that Black faces only minor problems here, even though from a practical viewpoint this kind of position is not everyone's cup of tea!

Now we shall consider:

A: 4 f4
B: 4 Dge2
C: 4 dxe5

4 Df3 is the subject of Chapters 10-14, while White has also played:

a) 4 f3 exd4! (this continuation seems to equalize, as the g1-knight is deprived of its favourite square; 4...e7 would ‘only’ transpose to 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Df6 3 Dc3 Dbd7 4 Dxe3 e5 5 f3, leading to tense positions – see Chapter 8, Line B) 5 Wxd4 Dc6 6 Db5 De7 is equal...

...as Black finishes his development without fearing the doubled pawns. 6...Dd7 7 Dxc6 Dxc6 is also level, and the drawback of f2-f3 is highlighted by the gross trick 8 Kg5 De7 9 0-0-0 0-0 10
A) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ∆f6 3 ∆c3 e5 4 f4 g4
4...∆bd7 transposes to 3...∆bd7 4 f4 e5 (see Chapter 8).

B) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ∆f6 3 ∆c3 e5 4 ∆ge2?
An interesting alternative to the usual 4 dxe5 and 4 ∆f3.

Now Black has a broad choice of how to develop, notably with respect to his b8-knight and f8-bishop.

4...∆c6

The three other valid moves, 4...∆bd7, 4...c6 and 4...∆e7, are more ‘Philidorian’. There is no significant difference between them, although 4...∆e7 is the least flexible, since Black deprives himself of the ...g6 possibility (but as he intended to play a Philidor Defence anyway...).

After 4...∆bd7 5 f3 one reaches a position similar to that examined via 3...∆bd7 4 ∆e3 e5 5 f3 (see Chapter 8). Instead, 5 g3 will transpose to a Pirc if
Black opts for 5...g6, or a Philidor in the event of 5...\textit{h}e7 (for which see Chapter 8 again).

\textbf{5 f3}

5 h3?! seems imprecise because, with 5...exd4 6 \texttt{Q}xd4 g6, Black could reach the Larsen Variation where h2-h3 is not particularly helpful to White.

Closing the centre with 5 d5?! doesn’t bother Black. He will withdraw his horse to e7 or b8, and then undermine the centre by playing ...c6, as after 4 d5?!.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\chessboard
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textbf{5...\textit{h}e7?!}

Here, 5...exd4 6 \texttt{Q}xd4 g6 7 \textit{h}e3 \textit{g}7 (see Chapter 2) is more dynamic.

\textbf{6 \textit{h}e3 0-0 7 d5}

Played only now Black has castled, thus creating a target.

\textbf{7...\texttt{Q}b8 8 \texttt{W}d2 c6 9 g4 cxd5 10 exd5}

...with a nice edge to White, Svidler-A.Hoffman, FIDE World Ch., Moscow 2001.

To summarize, if White wants to avoid playing 4 dxe5 or 4 \texttt{Q}f3, then only 4 \texttt{Q}ge2 gives him chances to gain an opening advantage. 4 h3 followed by 5 g4, or 4 f3 and then \textit{h}e3 may transpose into variations we will discuss later on, but Black can look for more.

\textbf{C) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \texttt{Q}f6 3 \texttt{Q}c3 e5 4 dxe5}

Again, 4 \texttt{Q}f3(!) is probably a better try for an opening advantage.

\textbf{4...dxe5 5 \texttt{W}xd8+ \texttt{Q}xd8}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\chessboard
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

With such a symmetrical pawn structure only the relative activity of the pieces can disturb the balance. This is especially true here, since White can hardly change the structure to his advantage. Indeed, using his only lever, f2-f4, causes him more problems than anything, as we will see. Finally, having lost the right to castle constitutes a small inconvenience for Black, but a quite bearable one in these given circumstances.

Now White’s two main moves are:

\textbf{C1: 6 \texttt{Q}g5}

\textbf{C2: 6 \texttt{Q}c4}

Alternatives are not to be recommended:

a) The hasty advance 6 f4?! is not advisable. Indeed, White is less active
here than in the line 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♕f6 3 ♛c3 ♗bd7 4 f4 e5 5 dxe5 dxe5 6 fxe5 ♖xe5 7 ♗xd8+ ♕xd8 (see Chapter 8), which is already fully satisfactory for Black.

After 6...♗b4 or 6...♗d6, I already prefer Black's position.

b) On the imprecise 6 ♗f3?! Black equalizes easily with 6...♗d6 7 ♗g5 (or 7 ♛c4 ♛e6 8 ♗xe6 fxe6 9 ♛e3 ♛c6 when Black has obtained an improved version of the critical line 6 ♛c4 ♛e6) 7...♕e6. In comparison with many lines, Black doesn't need to waste time by playing ...♖d8-e8.

**C1)** 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♕f6 3 ♛c3 e5 4 dxe5 ♖xe5 5 ♖xd8+ ♕xd8 6 ♗g5 ♛e6!

The most reliable reply, which is indeed Black's main choice according to the statistics. Black can now place his knight on d7 without blocking his bishop. Other possibilities include 6...♗d6, 6...c6, and finally 6...♕e7, with a plausible continuation 7 0-0-0+ ♗bd7 8 ♗f3 ♗g4 9 ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 10 ♖d5+ ♖d8 11 ♗g5 ♖h6, followed by ...c6, ...♕e7, ...f6 etc.

7 0-0-0+

Alternatively:

a) 7 f4 exf4 8 ♗xe2 is interesting (but not 8 e5? h6 9 ♗xf4 ♗g4 10 h3 g5! and Black already held the upper hand in De Firmian-Ubilava, Moscow 1989). An appropriate reply, recommended by Stohl, is 8...♕e7 9 ♖xf4 ♗g4 10 ♖xe6+ fxe6 11 ♗f4 ♖8, when the activity of Black's pieces compensates for the loss of the two bishops.

b) There are two ideas behind 7 g3: creating a pawn duo after 8 f4 (with the idea of meeting ...exf4 with 9 gxf4), and swapping bishops with ♖f1-h3. The game may continue as follows:

b1) 7...♖c8 8 ♖xf6 gxf6 9 ♖d5 ♖d7 10 ♖h3 c6 with equality, Rozentalis-Gavrikov, Suhr 1991.

b2) 7...♗bd7 8 f4 h6 9 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 10 0-0-0+ ♖c8 11 ♗f3 exf4 12 gxf4 g6 13 f5!? gxf5 14 exf5 ♖xf5 15 ♖e5 (Santo Roman-Chabanon, French Ch., Nantes 1993) when, instead of the blunder 15...♕e6?? 16 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 17 ♖h3+ and White wins, Black should have played 15...♗c5 with equality.

7...♗bd7 8 f4
After 8 \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{Cc8} \) White lacks targets and the position should be considered as roughly level.

\[ \text{8...exf4} \text{ 9 \( \text{Qf3} \)} \]

9 \( \text{e5?!} \) wouldn’t bring anything tangible, other than the weakening of this pawn, and after 9...h6 10 \( \text{xf4} \) \( \text{Qg4} \) Black is in the ascendancy.

\[ \text{9...h6} \text{ 10 \( \text{xf4} \) c6 11 \( \text{d4} \)} \]

The loss of castling rights counterbalances the isolani on e4, but White can’t claim any edge. Black should play 11...\( \text{b4!} \), for example: 12 \( \text{e5} \) (White cannot hesitate any longer as ...\( \text{xc3} \), followed by \( \text{dx}x4 \), was threatened)

\[ \text{12...Qg4} \text{ 13 \( \text{dx}x4+ \text{fxe}x4 \) 14 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{e7} \) 15 \( \text{He1} \) (a self-pin, but it’s the only way to cover e5) 15...\( \text{ff8} \) 16 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{f5} \) (16...\( \text{xc3} \) 17 \( \text{bxc3} \) \( \text{ff5} \) 18 \( \text{d6} \) \( \text{Cc5} \) with equality was possible at once, but there is no hurry) 17 \( \text{d6!} \) \( \text{Cc5} \) (the rook was taboo: 17...\( \text{xd6?} \) 18 \( \text{exd6+} \) \( \text{d8} \) 19 \( \text{xe6} \) and Black’s position collapses like an house of cards) 18 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{f2} \) (18...\( \text{xc3!} \) 19 \( \text{bxc3} \) \( \text{f2} \) isn’t clear, as the knight doesn’t run any real risks once \( \text{fa8} \) arrives; the e4-square may also become available if the d4-rook withdraws) 19 \( \text{e3} \) (Svidler-Bologan, Novgorod, 1995), and now instead of Bologan’s 19...\( \text{a5?} \), 19...\( \text{xc3!} \) (the last chance this time!) keeps the balance after 20 \( \text{bxc3} \) or 20 \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{fe4} \).

The game Degraeve-S.Kasparov, Bethune 2001, on the other hand, is an illustration of unsuitable play by Black: 11...\( \text{c5?} \) 12 \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{e8} \) 13 \( \text{f3} \)

White patiently strengthens his position before engaging in more concrete operations.

\[ \text{13...Qc8} \]

13...\( \text{g5} \) 14 \( \text{g3} \) doesn’t fundamentally alter the position.

\[ \text{14 e5!} \]
14...exd4

14...Qh7 15 Qxe6 fxe6 (15...Qxe6? 16 Kg4 Qe7 17 Qe4) 16 Qe4 was no improvement.

15 Qxd4 Qh7 16 Qe4 Qc7 17 Qd6 Qe7

18 Qhd1 Qhf8 19 Kg3

Prophylaxis directed against ...Qg6.

19...a5?!

More resilient is 19...Qg6 20 Kh5 Qgxe5?! (or 20...Qd8 and Black is suffering) 21 Qxf7! Qxf7 22 Qxd7+ Qxd7 23 Qxe5+ Qb6 24 Qxd7 Qxh5 25 Qxg7 with a clear White advantage, but also with chances of salvation for Black, due to the presence of opposite-coloured bishops.

20 h4 Qb6?! 21 Qf5!

A crushing move!

21...Qd7

I'll let you guess the fate which awaits Black in the event of the capture...

22 Qxg7 Qxd4 23 Qxd4 Qd8 24 Qf4

...and Black threw in the towel

C2) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 e5 4 dxe5 dxe5 5 Wxd8+ Qxd8 6 Qc4 Qe6 7 Qxe6 Qf6 8 f3

6...Qe7? is inferior as it would block the bishop on f8 and invite Qd5+ in some lines.

C21) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 e5 4 dxe5 dxe5 5 Wxd8+ Qxd8 6 Qc4 Qe6 7 Qxe6 Qf6 8 f3

8 Qe3 doesn't really change the assessment of this ending: White stands a trifile better, but converting his edge into a full point is a hard task. Here's an example where Black managed to hold without much difficulty: 8...Qd6 (or 8...Qb4 9 0-0-0+ Qe7 10 Qge2 Qc6 11 a3 Qd6 12 f3) 9 f3 Qc6 10 0-0-0 Qe7 11 Qh3 a6 12 Qf2 h6 13 Qa4 Qhd8 14 Qd2 (14 Qd3!? is interesting, but after 14...Qd7 Black remains more or less okay) 14...Qb4 (Black doesn't mind some simplification) 15 Qxd8 Qxd8 16 Qc5 (after this the advantage becomes symbolic) 16...b6 17 Qxa6 Qd6 18 a3
(White has to give back his pawn in order to rescue the knight) 18...\texttt{a8} 19 \texttt{\textec{d}b4} \texttt{\textec{x}b4} 20 axb4 \texttt{\textec{x}b4} with equality, Marciano-Maiwald, Austrian Team Championship 1999.

16 \texttt{\textec{c}c5+} would probably have given better chances of maintaining a slight plus: 16...\texttt{\textec{x}xc5} 17 \texttt{\textec{x}c5} \texttt{\textec{d}d7} (or 17...\texttt{\textec{b}b8}!?) 18 \texttt{\textec{d}d1} [with the idea 19 \texttt{\textec{g}g4}, to access the seventh rank after the knight swap] 18...\texttt{\textec{h}h5} 19 \texttt{\textec{h}h3} a5 20 \texttt{\textec{g}g5} \texttt{\textec{d}d8} and Black has made some concessions, though after ...\texttt{\textec{b}b6} and ...\texttt{\textec{c}c6} his position remains acceptable) 18 \texttt{\textec{f}fd3} \texttt{\textec{b}b8} 19 \texttt{\textec{x}xd7} \texttt{\textec{x}xd7} 20 \texttt{\textec{d}d1} \texttt{\textec{d}d6} and White has no dangerous discovered check, so Black’s game should still be in order.

8...\texttt{\textec{c}c5}

Schandorff-V. Georgiev, Nordic Ch., Bergen 2001, continued instead 8...\texttt{\textec{a}a6} 9 \texttt{\textec{a}e3} \texttt{\textec{b}b4} 10 0-0-0+ (in order to install a knight on d3 as soon as possible, while avoiding doubled pawns) 10...\texttt{\textec{e}e7} 11 \texttt{\textec{d}d1} \texttt{\textec{c}c8} (weird; Black wishes to expand on the queenside, but this pseudo-active plan will backfire, and the classical defence ...\texttt{\textec{d}d6}, ...\texttt{\textec{c}c6}, ...\texttt{\textec{d}d7} was more to the point) 12 \texttt{\textec{h}h3} c5?! 13 c3 \texttt{\textec{a}a5} 14 \texttt{\textec{d}d2} c4 15 \texttt{\textec{d}d1} \texttt{\textec{b}bd7} 16 \texttt{\textec{d}d2} b5? (16...\texttt{\textec{f}f8} was more stubborn) 17 \texttt{\textec{g}g4!} \texttt{\textec{c}c6} (or 17...\texttt{\textec{c}c7} 18 \texttt{\textec{g}g5} and Black cannot get rid of the pin easily: 18...\texttt{\textec{h}h6} 19 \texttt{\textec{a}xh6+} and either \texttt{\textec{h}h6} or \texttt{\textec{e}e5} drops) 18 \texttt{\textec{g}g5} \texttt{\textec{c}c7} 19 f4 \texttt{\textec{h}h6} 20 \texttt{\textec{a}h4} \texttt{\textec{e}e8} 21 \texttt{\textec{x}xe5} \texttt{\textec{e}xe5} 22 \texttt{\textec{f}xe5} \texttt{\textec{d}d7} (if 22...\texttt{\textec{d}d4}?! 23 \texttt{\textec{d}d8}+ \texttt{\textec{x}xd8} 24 \texttt{\textec{x}xd8} wins) 23 \texttt{\textec{d}d6} g5 24 \texttt{\textec{x}xe6+} \texttt{\textec{f}f7} 25 \texttt{\textec{x}h6} \texttt{\textec{g}gxh6} 26 \texttt{\textec{e}e6+} \texttt{\textec{g}g7} 27 \texttt{\textec{x}xd7} \texttt{\textec{d}d6} 28 \texttt{\textec{d}d8} and White won.

9 \texttt{\textec{a}a4} \texttt{\textec{d}d6}

9...\texttt{\textec{b}b4}!?, provoking c3 or an exchange of White’s stronger bishop, has its merits. After 10 c3 \texttt{\textec{d}d6} 11 \texttt{\textec{e}e3} \texttt{\textec{f}fd7} 12 b3, however, White remains a tad better.

10 \texttt{\textec{e}e3}

White’s superior pawn structure promises a very slight edge. One understands here why 6 \texttt{\textec{d}f3} was imprecise: it is preferable to cover the e4-pawn by its colleague on f3, so that the knight can freely frolic. The most successful plan for White is to put a knight on d3, usually with the manoeuvre \texttt{\textec{h}h3-f2-d3}. From here this piece exerts pressure on e5, while simultaneously controlling the important squares c5 and f4. Next up is to open the queenside, and \texttt{\textec{c}c2-c4} (threatening c5 if the king stands on e7) forces Black to react.

As for White’s other pieces: the bishop is ideally placed on e3; the other knight is not bad on a4 – if it is chased, it will leap into c5. There are two different plans involving the king and rooks: firstly, the king on e2 and rooks free to support queenside action (the
most promising plan in my opinion); and secondly, queenside castling. In the latter case the presence of the king on the queen’s flank may be a source of counterplay for Black, while the rooks also have fewer prospects, since only the d-file is open (see Schandorff-Georgiev above for a good example).

From Black’s point of view it is usual to expand on the queenside, by playing ...a6, ...b5 etc. The most common formation consists of ...e7, ...c6, ...d7, and ...d6. The rooks, as with their counterparts, have no well-defined posts. Black will have to await further developments before deciding upon their best placement.

Here’s an example of the difficulties Black may experience:
10...\(\text{Bd7}\) 11 \(\text{b3 e7}\) 12 \(\text{f2 c6}\) 13 \(\text{d3 b4}\)

\[\text{Diagram 1}\]

The knight on d3 is ideally placed, so it is justifiable to get rid of it.
14 \(\text{Bxb4}\) \(\text{Bxb4+}\) 15 \(\text{e2 b5}\)!

The less compromising 15...a6 16 \(\text{hhd1}\) and 15...\(\text{Bb6}\) 16 \(\text{c5}\) \(\text{xc5}\) 17 \(\text{dxc5}\) \(\text{d7}\) don’t completely solve Black’s problems either.

\[\text{Diagram 2}\]

24...\(\text{b6}\)

Giving up the c-pawn, but 24...\(\text{b8}\) 25 \(\text{c1}\) wasn’t appealing either.

25 \(\text{xc6}\) \(\text{xe3}\) 26 \(\text{xe3}\) \(\text{c8}\) 27 \(\text{xc8}\) \(\text{xc8}\) 28 \(\text{d3}\)

Black has nothing for the pawn deficit and White went on to win in Vaisser-Epishin, Novosibirsk 1993.

C22) 1 e4 \(\text{d6}\) 2 d4 \(\text{f6}\) 3 \(\text{c3}\) e5 4 dxe5 \(\text{dxe5}\) 5 \(\text{xd8+}\) \(\text{xd8}\) 6 \(\text{c4}\) \(\text{b4}\)

Not a frequent reply, but frankly I don’t see why.

7 \(\text{d2}\)

After 7 \(\text{xf7}\)! \(\text{f8}\) 8 \(\text{c4}\) \(\text{xe4}\) 9 \(\text{ge2}\) it seems that Black can enter the complications arising after 9...\(\text{xf2}\), for instance: 10 \(\text{f1}\) (10 0-0? \(\text{c5}\)) 10...\(\text{g4}\)
11 \textit{g5+} \textit{e8} 12 \textit{xf8+} \textit{xf8} 13 \textit{d1 d6} 14 \textit{d5} \textit{h6}, followed by \ldots\textit{e7} (or if 15 \textit{h4}?? \textit{e3}!).

\textbf{7...\textit{e7}}

If 7...\textit{e6} 8 \textit{xe6} \textit{fxe6} the position is similar to 6...\textit{e6}.

\textbf{8 \textit{f3} \textit{bd7}}

...followed by \ldots\textit{c6} and \ldots\textit{d6}, when the game tends towards equality.

If White allows 7...\textit{xc3+} 8 \textit{bxc3}, for example with 7 \textit{g5} or 7 \textit{f3}, Black isn't troubled either. He can then accept a deterioration of his pawn structure by playing 8...\textit{e6} 9 \textit{xe6} \textit{fxe6}.

\textbf{C23) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \textit{f6} 3 \textit{c3} e5 4 \textit{dxe5 dxe5} 5 \textit{wxd8+} \textit{xd8} 6 \textit{c4 \textit{e8}}} 

Nowhere near as common as 6...\textit{e6}, but this move has the merit of being less committal. If White can't find a way to add pressure, his opponent will gradually equalize.

6...\textit{e8} is a specialty of the Georgian Grandmaster Azmaiparashvili, and with this move he has scored a flattering 3/4, versus no lesser players than Hodgson, Godena, Bareev and Greenfeld!

\textbf{7 \textit{d3}}

Forcing Black's next move, due to the double threat of \textit{xe5} and \textit{g5}.

\textbf{8 \textit{d6} 8 \textit{g5 \textit{bd7}}} 

The first crossroads. Apart from the text move, Black has also tried:

\textbf{a} 8...\textit{e6} 9 \textit{d2}!? (9 \textit{xe6} \textit{fxe6} 10 0-0-0 \textit{c6} is a better version – for Black – of 6...\textit{d6} 7 \textit{xe6} \textit{fxe6}; Black has solved his opening problems here: for example, 11 \textit{d2} \textit{a6} 12 \textit{b3} \textit{g4} 13 \textit{d1} \textit{h6} 14 \textit{f3} \textit{hxg5} \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} Karjakin-V.Georgiev, Chalkidiki 2002) 9...\textit{bd7} 10 0-0-0 \textit{h6} (on 10...\textit{e7} White keeps a slight plus after 11 \textit{d5+} \textit{xd5} 12 \textit{xd5} as the attempt to regain the pair of bishops fails: 12...\textit{c6} 13 \textit{c4} \textit{h6} 14 \textit{h4} \textit{g5} 15 \textit{g3} \textit{h5} 16 \textit{xf7!} \textit{xf7} 17 \textit{c4}) 11 \textit{h4} \textit{e7} 12 \textit{xe6} \textit{fxe6} (or 12...\textit{xe6}!) 13 \textit{c4} \textit{db}6 (perhaps 13...\textit{b4}) 14 \textit{xb6} (14 \textit{a5?} is wrong on account of 14...\textit{b4}! 15 \textit{xb7} \textit{ab8}) 14...\textit{axb6} 15 \textit{f3} and White converted his permanent structural edge into a full point in Rublevsky-G.Hernandez, French League 2004.

\textbf{b} 8...\textit{c6} 9 0-0-0 \textit{c7} (A.Kuzmin-Damljanovic, Brena Baja rapid 2005)
needs further investigation, but should be okay provided that White can’t exploit the weakened d6-square (and I can’t see how he is able to).

9 h3?! 

After the more usual 9 0-0 and 9 0-0-0, the assessment of the position oscillates between a slight edge to White and equality. For example, 9 0-0-0 a6...

...and now:

a) 10 h1 11 h4 h8 (11...b6 may be inaccurate: 12 b3 g4 13 d3 d7 14 h3 xf3 [an unhappy trade but the following sequence wasn’t appealing either: 14 h5 15 g4 g6 16 g3 f6 17 h4 h7 18 f5 xf5 19 exf5 c5 20 d2 xxb3+ 21 axb3 with d4 and/or f4 to follow] 15 xf3 and again White has obtained something concrete: the two bishops, Greenfeld-Azmaiparashvili, European Ch., Neum 2000; however, the drastic 11...g5?! 12 g3 h5 seems playable) 12 b3 d5 13 d5 c5 14 e3 g5 15 g3 f6 etc., Kunte-Wang Rui, Asian Championship, Hyderabad 2005.

b) 10 a4 h6 (10...b6 11 b3 g4 12 h3 xf3 13 gxf3 gave White some pressure after 13...bd7 14 h1 g8 [14...g6?] 15 a5 in Karjakin-Pikula, Biel 2003; while 10...b6?! [M.Adams-Azmaiparashvili, Cap d’Agde rapid 2003] allows 11 xf6! gxf6 [or 11...xf6?! 12 g5! h8 13 d5 wins material] 12 d5 followed by c6, d4-f5 and so on) 11 h4 b6 12 h1 b7...

...with a balanced position, Karjakin-McShane, Tiayuan 2005.

9...h6 10 e3!

The idea of 9 h3 becomes clear: Black can’t continue ...g4. Also prohibited is 10...c5 as the e5-pawn would be hanging.
After 10 \( \text{d}e3 \), the game Illescas Cordoba-Azmaiparashvili, Dos Hermanas 2001, continued 10...\( \text{b}4?!... \\

when White could have achieved an advantage with 11 \( \text{d}d2 \text{xc}3 \) 12 \( \text{xc}3 \text{xe}4 \) 13 \( \text{xe}5 \text{xe}5 \) 14 \( \text{xe}5 \text{d}d6 \) 15 \( \text{b}3 \): long castling and \( \text{he}1 \) are next on the agenda, when the black king may feel unsafe.

Instead of Azmaiparashvili’s move, Black should have played 10...\( \text{c}6 \), intending to meet 11 0-0-0 with 11...\( \text{c}7 \). Black will slowly catch up in development and obtain a decent position.

Conclusion
From the few analysed examples of the ending reached after 1 \( e4 \) \( d6 \) 2 \( \text{d}4 \text{f}6 \) 3 \( \text{c}3 \) \( e5 \) 4 \( \text{dxe}5 \text{dxe}5 \) 5 \( \text{xd}8+ \text{xd}8 \), one can conclude that White stands a trifle better.

However, provided he plays accurately, Black doesn’t have much to fear. Following 6 \( \text{c}4 \), by choosing any of the three valid replies, 6...\( \text{e}8 \), 6...\( \text{b}4 \) or 6...\( \text{e}6 \) 7 \( \text{xe}6 \text{fxe}6 \), his position remains a hard nut to crack.
Chapter Eight

3 \( \text{\underline{c3}} \text{\underline{bd7}} \): Introduction and 4 f4

1 e4 d6 2 d4 \( \text{\underline{f6}} \) 3 \( \text{\underline{c3}} \text{\underline{bd7}} \)

3...\( \text{\underline{bd7}} \) is the move Black plays if he wishes to avoid the endgame arising after 3...e5 4 dxe5 dxe5 5 \( \text{\underline{xd8+}} \) \( \text{\underline{xd8}} \) (see the previous chapter). If White now plays 4 \( \text{\underline{f3}} \) then 4...e5 leads us to Chapters 10-14. In this chapter and the following one, we'll have a look at the independent paths that White can take. 4 g4 is the subject of Chapter 9, while here we will study:

A: 4 g3
B: 4 \( \text{\underline{e3}} \)
C: 4 f4

Before diving into critical variations, let's browse the harmless lines induced by White's less important 4th moves.

a) 4 f3 should be followed up by \( \text{\underline{e3}} \), reaching Line B; it makes no sense if White castles short.

b) White has no reason to limit his bishop by playing 4 \( \text{\underline{e2}} \)?! (this applies also to 4 \( \text{\underline{d3}} \)). A logical continuation is 4...e5 5 \( \text{\underline{f3}} \) \( \text{\underline{e7}} \) (see Chapter 10), which causes Black no problems.

c) 4 \( \text{\underline{g5}} \)?! (if White is probably going to castle kingside, it is more to the point to develop pieces from this wing; 4 \( \text{\underline{g5}} \) isn't bad in itself, but White loses all hope of an edge) 4...e5 5 \( \text{\underline{f3}} \) (after 5 f4?! h6 White must give up the bishop for the knight or lose f4 for nothing) 5...\( \text{\underline{e7}} \) and the position is level, provided that White avoids the trap 6 \( \text{\underline{d2}} \) h6 7 \( \text{\underline{h4}} \)? \( \text{\underline{xe4}} \), which costs him a pawn.

d) 4 \( \text{\underline{c4}} \) is interesting, but after 4...e5 White would be forced to make concessions in order to persist in an original way! It would be wiser to rejoin the trodden paths by playing 5 \( \text{\underline{f3}} \). Black has the extra possibility of 4...c6!? threatening ...b5-b4, or 5...d5 6 exd5 \( \text{\underline{b6}} \), or even 5...\( \text{\underline{xe4}} \) followed by 6...d5.

Finally, let's go back to 4 \( \text{\underline{f3}} \). Instead of the usual 4...e5 Black could try 4...c6?!.
This is unusual, but there is no direct refutation. White can reach normal lines after 5 a4 e5 6 ∆c4 etc., or attempt to punish Black by means of 5 e5 ∆d5 (5...dxe5? 6 dxe5 ∆g4 7 e6 fxe6 8 ∆g5 gives White a clear advantage) 6 ∆xd5 cxd5 7 e6 fxe6 8 ∆g5 wa5+! (8...f6? 9 ∆b5+ ∆d7 10 ∆xe6 wa5+ 11 ∆d2 was much better for White in Damjanovic-Udovcic, Yugoslavia 1974) 9 ∆d2 wb6, but the position after 10 ∆c3 f6 11 ∆d3 g6 (Prié-Chabanon, Aix les Bains 1991) is messy.

A) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ∆f6 3 ∆c3 ∆bd7 4 g3 e5 5 ∆ge2 c6

5...b5!? should be compared to Line B2 in the next chapter, where White's g-pawn stands one square further forward.

6 a4

It makes sense to hinder the thematic ...b5 push. After 6 g2?! b5 7 d5 (7 a3 a5 or 7...b7 wouldn't change much) 7...b7 Black's counterplay arrives faster than in the main text.

6...e7 7 g2 0-0 8 0-0 e8!

Better than 8...wc7? 9 h3 e8 10 g4, when White has obtained the optimal configuration for this system.

With 8...e8 we are following the game Gallagher-Bauer, German League 2000:

9 h3 f8 10 e1

10 g4, as chosen by Grischuk several months later, seems more logical to me: 10...h6 11 e3 b6 12 g3 b7 13 e1 (the immediate 13 f4 was possible too: 13...a6 14 g5 hgx5 15 fxg5 exd4 16 xxd4 h7 with mutual chances) 13...a6 14 f4 b5 15 wd3...

15...b4? (15...wc7 would have kept the position unclear and rich in possibilities; Black isn't ready for the text
move as the pressure against e4 isn’t strong enough) 16...d6 17 dxe4 c5 18 c3! (White obviously maintains a pawn on d4, in order to keep control of the important e5-square) 18...a5 19 f2 bxc3 20 bxc3 cxd4 21 cxd4 d6 (erroneous, as the knight will be needed on the other side) 22 g5 h7 (22...h5g5?! 23 xg5 b7 24 g4 with a nasty initiative) 23 g5 26 e5 25 f6 f6 26 e6 x6 28 x6 x6 e6 29 e1 We8 30 h4 d7 (better 30...b4!) 31 d2 (and here 31 We3! c4! but not 31...c6? 32 xd5) 32 xe6+ xe6 33 xe6 d7 34 xe1) 31...f7 32 xd5 b6 33 xe7+? xe7 34 f1? c4 ½-½ Grischuk-Bauer, French League 2001.

11...a6?! 12 g4! h6 13 g3 gave White an edge in H. Schumacher-Van de Plassche, Belgian Team Ch. 1997.

12 wd2

Or 12 g4! exd4! 13 xd4 c5 and e4 falls.

12...a6 13 g4 exd4 14 xd4 b5!

White wins after 14...c5?! 15 d5 xe4? 16 xe4 xe4 17 g5.

15 axb5 axb5 16 xa8 wxa8 17 g5 b4!

18 gxf6 bxc3 19 wxc3 xxf6 20 g5 d7 21 f5 e6! 22 e3 c5 23 g3 e5

24 h6?

The ugly-looking move 24 f3! would have enabled White to stay in the game.

24...g6 25 xg7 xg7 26 xg7 xe4 27 xe4 xe4 28 e8 f8 29 c7 e7?

In time-trouble, I had simply forgotten that 29...f1+! 30 f1 d4 prevented Wh8+ in my calculations! Now White is alive again.

30 xg6 hxg6 31 f1 d7 32 b5 c6 33 a3 f3 34 w3 xe3 35 fxe3 d2+ 36 e2 e4 37 f3 d5 38 h4 f6 39 c3 d6 40 c2 d2+ 41 xe2 c4 42

Here, while assessing my position as superior (we both had about 1 minute and 30 seconds left), I offered a draw, but regretted it instantly!

This was the only position Grischuk spoiled that weekend; his overall score was 3½/4.

10...b6

10...a5?! is another option.

11 le3 b7

177
In this game the respective operations (on the queenside for Black; on the kingside for White) led to a lively and balanced game. Had White played 24 f3!, the position would have remained unclear.

8) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 Qe3 e5 5 f3

5 Wd2 doesn’t change anything, as sooner or later 12-f3 will be compulsory, while 5...Qg4 6 Qg5 suits White quite well.

5...c6 6 Wd2 Qe7 7 0-0-0 0-0

7...b5? 8 d5! b4 9 dxc6 bxc3 10 cxd7+ (check!) 10...Qxd7 11 Wxc3 leaves White with a clear advantage.

8 g4 b5 9 Qb1 Qb6

9...exd4? is a premature reaction: 10 Qxd4 b4 11 Qce2 c5 12 Qe3 Qe5 13 Qf4 (as a result of his 9th move, Black’s attack has reached a dead end and he has conceded the d5-square) 13...Qb8 14 g5 Qxf3?! (this gives only a semblance of an initiative, although it is true that the alternative 14...Qfd7 15 Qd5 wasn’t a delightful prospect) 15 Qxf3 Qxe4 16 Qc1 Qg4 17 Qe2 is the end of Black’s initiative! He could now grab a third pawn for his sacrificed piece, by means of ...Qxf3 and ...Qxg5, but this wouldn’t solve his problems. Black therefore adds some more fuel to the fire by another speculative sacrifice – a correct choice for a practical game: 17...Qc3+!! 18 bxc3 Qxc3+ 19 Qa1 Wxa5 20 Qd5 Qb2 (otherwise Qd3 and it’s goodbye to the c3-pawn) 21 Qxe7+ Qh8 22 Wxb2 cxb2+ 23 Qb1. White enjoys a huge material advantage and is obviously winning here (though in Boudre-Mensch, French League 2001, he made some mistakes and ended up losing).

10 We1

Directed against 10...b4 11 Qce2 Qc4 and ...Qxe3. We are following the game J.Polgar-Bauer, World Cup of Rapid Chess, Cannes 2001:

10...b4?!

Here 10...Qfd7! deserved serious attention.

The idea of g4-g5 is parried and the horse may be rerouted to e5 after a
follow-up such as 11...exd4 12 axd4 b4
13 c2 c5 14 e3 e5. On the other hand, 10...exd4?! 11 axd4 b4 12 c2
d5 13 g3 would again be erroneous.
11 c2 c4 12 c1 d5?
A gross mistake. 12...b6 was called for, even though the edge would have
remained with White after 13 g5! e8 (if 13...d5 14 gxf6 a3+ 15 bxa3 bxa3+
16 a1 b8 17 c3 wins, as does
13...b8? 14 b3) 14 g3.
13 b3 a3+ 14 axa3 bxa3 15 dxe5 d7
16 f4 d5 17 g2 xg4 18 exd5 cxd5
19 xdx5 c8 20 h3
20 x7+ x7 21 xdx8 fx8d8 was what I was hoping for during the
game.

Black will continue ...f5, ...a6 (or ...
4), and ...b4 (or ...b4), though it seems that Black's compensation is still
a bit light after 22 c3.
20...f5 21 c3 a5 22 ge2 a6?!
Visually it appears that Black has
some play. If only the e7-bishop could jump over that knight...
23 e4 xe4 24 xe4 c7 25 c4 b4
26 g3 b7 27 f6+ h8 28 h1 g6
29 h4 h5 30 g5 g7 31 d7 c7 32

\[\text{\textcolor{red}{xg6+ 1-0}}\]
An abrupt end.

C) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 f6 3 c3 bd7 4 f4

Together with 4 g4, this is a real test
of Black's move order. It certainly looks
sensible to include the f-pawn in the
battle for the centre.
4...e5 5 f3
a) 5 dxe5 (or 5 fxe5) is a harmless
follow-up, as long as Black pays attention over the next few moves: 5...dxe5 6
fxe5 dxe5 7 xdx8+ xdx8...

...and now, for instance, after 8 f4
d6 9 0-0-0 e7 (threatening ...d3+)
White could soon end up worse.
Other White continuations are obviously possible at move 8, such as 8 \( \text{\texttt{Qf3}} \) or 8 \( \text{\texttt{Qg5}} \). But Black has nothing to complain about as long as he keeps controlling e5. For instance:

a1) 8 \( \text{\texttt{Qf3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{d6}} \) 9 \( \text{\texttt{Qg5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c6}} \) 10 0-0-0 \( \text{\texttt{Qc7}} \) 11 \( \text{\texttt{Qd4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{e7}} \) (11...\( \text{\texttt{Qe8?!}} \)?) 12 \( \text{\texttt{Qf5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xf5}} \) 13 \( \text{\texttt{exf5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{Qeg4}} \) 14 \( \text{\texttt{Axc4}} \) ! \( \text{\texttt{h6}} \) (if 14...\( \text{\texttt{Qf2}} \) 15 \( \text{\texttt{Qxd6}} \) \( \text{\texttt{Qxd6}} \) 16 \( \text{\texttt{Qf1}} \) with compensation) 15 \( \text{\texttt{Qxd6}} \) (15 \( \text{\texttt{Qxf6}} \) \( \text{\texttt{gxf6}} \) 15...\( \text{\texttt{hxg5}} \) (15...\( \text{\texttt{Qxd6?!}} \) 16 \( \text{\texttt{Afx4}} \)+) 16 \( \text{\texttt{Qd2}} \) \( \text{\texttt{Qe5}} \) with an equal position, Sedina-Bauer, Swiss Team Ch. 2006.

a2) 8 \( \text{\texttt{Qg5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{e7?!}} \)? (8...\( \text{\texttt{c6}} \) 9 0-0-0+ \( \text{\texttt{Qc7}} \) is valid too) 9 0-0-0+ \( \text{\texttt{Qfd7}} \) 10 \( \text{\texttt{Qxe7+}} \) \( \text{\texttt{Qxe7}} \) 11 \( \text{\texttt{h3?!}} \) (useless) 11...\( \text{\texttt{c6}} \) with an edge to Black in Braeuner-Schmidt Schaeffer, Triberg (rapid) 1991. White had no compensation for his isolani.

b) 5 \( \text{\texttt{Axe3?!?,}} \) to recapture with the bishop in case Black takes on d4, is quite interesting. The drawback lies in the eventuality of a timely ...\( \text{\texttt{Qg4}} \), gaining a tempo. Black can either react by playing ...\( \text{\texttt{g6}} \), or ...\( \text{\texttt{c6}} \) intending ...\( \text{\texttt{b5}} \) and ...\( \text{\texttt{wa5}} \).

C1: 5...\( \text{\texttt{Qe7?!}} \)
C2: 5...\( \text{\texttt{c6}} \)
C3: 5...\( \text{\texttt{exd4}} \)

5...\( \text{\texttt{Qe7?!}} \) obstructs the bishop and therefore isn’t advisable. After 6 \( \text{\texttt{Axc4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{Qb6}} \) 7 \( \text{\texttt{Ab3}} \) White enjoys the more harmonious development and a central supremacy.

C1) 1 \( \text{\texttt{e4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{d6}} \) 2 \( \text{\texttt{d4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{Qf6}} \) 3 \( \text{\texttt{Qc3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{Qbd7}} \) 4 \( \text{\texttt{f4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{e5}} \) 5 \( \text{\texttt{Qf3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{e7?!}} \)

Following the same goal as 5...\( \text{\texttt{c6}} \), but the e7-bishop will have to be redeployed. Basically, controlling d5 is important, which makes 5...\( \text{\texttt{Qe7}} \) inferior to moving the c-pawn. The encounter Conquest-Hodgson, London 1991, continued:

6 \( \text{\texttt{dxex5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{dxex5}} \) 7 \( \text{\texttt{fxex5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{Qg4}} \) 8 \( \text{\texttt{Qf4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{Axc5}} \) 9 \( \text{\texttt{Ag5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{Qe7}} \)

Forced, which means that White can already repeat moves if he wishes.

After 5 \( \text{\texttt{Qf3}} \) Black’s three main moves are:

10 \( \text{\texttt{Qf4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{Ac5}} \) 11 \( \text{\texttt{Qc4}} \) 0-0 12 \( \text{\texttt{We2}} \)

12 \( \text{\texttt{e6?!}} \) seriously deserved consideration. The two plausible Black replies lead to complications that seem to favour White.
a) 12...fxe6 13 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xe6+ \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)h8 14 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xg4 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)x4 15 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)f5 locks the rook in, which induces the following weakening of Black’s castled king: 15...g6 (15...\( \text{\textit{\&}} \)e8 16 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)e2!) 16 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)d5!? \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xf3 17 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xf3 gxf5 18 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)c3+ \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)g8 19 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)g3+, followed by \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xc7 and then 0-0-0 or exf5 with a powerful initiative.

b) 12...\( \text{\textit{\&}} \)f2 13 exd7 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xd1 14 dxe8\( \text{\textit{\&}} \)\( \text{\textit{\&}} \) xc8 15 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xd1. The three minor pieces would ‘normally’ be stronger than the queen, but as the c5-bishop is forbidding White to castle, matters are not as clear cut here: 15...\( \text{\textit{\&}} \)g4 16 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)g3 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)b4 (placing a rook on d8 or e8 may be better) 17 0-0 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xc3 18 bxc3 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xe4 19 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)e5 and White, with his pieces coordinated against f7 and the black king, should have an edge.

12...\( \text{\textit{\&}} \)e8 13 0-0-0 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)gxe5 14 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)b3 a6 15 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)hf1 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)d6 16 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)b1 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)h8

The assessment is unclear at present.

17 h3 f6 18 g4 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)c5 19 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)d5! c6 20 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)b3

White has destabilized the d6-bishop, and the weakness of d6 will play a role later on.

20...\( \text{\textit{\&}} \)c7 21 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)e3 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xb3 22 axb3

22...b6?! 22...\( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xf3 23 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xf3 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)e6 would have been decent for Black.

23 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xe5 fxe5 24 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xf8+ \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xf8 25 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)c4 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)e8 26 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)d5! cxd5 27 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xc7

Opposite-coloured bishops have appeared, but Black’s pawns are weak and his pieces lack good squares.

27...d4 28 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)g1 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)e6

Otherwise \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)h2 and White still collects the pawns.

29 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xe5

Black could have saved himself the following few moves.

29...\( \text{\textit{\&}} \)g6 30 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xd4 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)e8 31 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)d6 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)f7 32 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)d4 a5 33 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)b5 a4 34 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xa4 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)c8 35 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xg7+ \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)g8 36 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)c3 h6 37 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xb6 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)d7 38 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)d5 1-0

C2) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)f6 3 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)c3 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)bd7 4 f4 e5 5 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)f3 c6 6 dxe5 dxe5

7 fxe5

Or:

a) 7 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xe5?! 8 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xe5 8 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xd8+ \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)xd8 9 fxe5 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)g4 10 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)f4 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)c5 11 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)c4 and now:

a1) 11...\( \text{\textit{\&}} \)e7 12 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)f1 b5 (alternatives are not satisfactory either: 12...\( \text{\textit{\&}} \)e6?! is well met by 13 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \)d5+! cxd5 14 exd5 fol-
lowed by d6+; 12...fxe8 13 Qd1 Qd4 14 Qe2! and e5 is immune: 14...Qxe5? 15 c3 or 14...Qxe5 15 Qxg4 13 Qxh7 (13 Qb3 Qf8) 13...Qf2+ 14 Qxf2 Qxf2 15 Qb3 (or 15 e6) 15...Qg4 16 Qg5+ and White stands much better.

a2) 11...Qe8 12 Qf1 Qf8 13 h3 (if 13 Qd1?! Qe3 14 Qg3 Qc5 and there seems to be nothing better than repeating moves; but 13 Qd1??, as in the lines with ...Qe7, may be stronger) 13...Qe3 14 Qxe3 Qxe3 15 Qd1 Qe7 and White stands slightly better on account of his extra pawn. The pawn, however, is a doubled and isolated one; furthermore, Black has the pair of bishops, so he should manage to hold this ending.

b) Out of the three sensible possibilities for White, 7 Qc4?! is the least good. Black must now refrain from 7...Qc5? 8 Qxe5 when he doesn’t have enough for the pawn after either 8...0-0 or 8...Qxe5 9 Qxd8+ Qxd8 10 fxe5 Qg4 11 Qf7 Qxe5 12 Qh5. Instead, 7...Qb4 equalizes easily.

7...Qg4

8 e6?!

The classical recipe in this kind of situation. Rather than ending up with a weak, isolated pawn on e4, White gives back the pawn in a favourable way.

The alternative is 8 Qf4?! Qc5 9 Qc4 and now:

a) 9...Qf2! 10 Qe2 Qxh1 11 0-0-0...

All the white pieces are out and ready to bite. The compensation for the rook is obvious, but still probably insufficient after 11...Qf2!. White can try 11 Qxf7+ Qxf7 12 e6+ Qe8 13 0-0-0 too, but the verdict remains the same: 13...Qf2 14 exd7+ Qxd7 and the extra material should prevail.

b) 9...Qe7 10 e6fxe6 11 Qg5 Qf7 12 Qf1 Qg6 13 Qd2 h6 14 Qf4 e5 15 Qg3 Qe3 16 Qh4 Qxf1 17 Qxg6 Qxd2 18 Qxd2 Qf8 19 Qxf8 Qxf8 20 Qf1 ½-½ A.Graf-Ermenkov, Dubai 2000: and now 20...Qe7 21 Qf7+ Qd8, followed by ...Qf6 and ...Qe7 (Ermenkov) would be equal.

8...fxe6 9 Qg5 Qde5

9...Qge5 is completely wrong: 10 Qxe6 Wh4+ 11 g3 Qf6 12 Qc7+ and White wins material after every move: 12...Qd8 13 Qg5, 12...Qe7 13 Qxd5+, or 12...Qf7 13 Qe2 with the double threat
of $\text{xf1}$ and $\text{xa8}$.

10 $\text{xd8}+$ $\text{xd8}$

A rather tricky endgame has arisen. At first sight White stands much better, for he has more space, can still castle, and Black's $c8$-bishop also looks grim. But Black's prospects shouldn't be underestimated. His king will stand well on $e7$ and he has a classy outpost on $e5$. Moreover, $d5$ is well controlled and the weakness of $d6$ should not be that relevant.

11 $\text{h3}$!

Forcing the knight to the edge is best. After the less energetic 11 $\text{e2}$ $\text{e8}$ or 11 $\text{f4}$ $\text{h6}$ (not 11...$\text{c5}$? 12 $\text{h3}$! $\text{f8}$ 13 $\text{g3}$) 12 $\text{d1}$+ $\text{e7}$ 13 $\text{f3}$ $\text{xf3}$+ 14 $\text{gxf3}$ $\text{e5}$ 15 $\text{c1}$ $\text{f6}$, Black gains equality.

11...$\text{h6}$ 12 $\text{f4}$ $\text{hf7}$

The unsound 12...$\text{d6}$?? is punished immediately after 13 0-0-0 0 14 $\text{xd6}$ $\text{xd6}$ 15 $\text{f3}$ (or 15 $\text{e2}$) 15...$\text{hf7}$ 16 $\text{e2}$ when the pin is fatal, A.Gomez-M.Ostertag, France 1994.

12...$\text{g6}$ is the alternative, the assessment of which depends on the follow-up: 13 0-0-0+ $\text{e8}$

14 $\text{d5}$?! $\text{xf4}$ (Black was smashed after 14...$\text{xb5}$? 15 $\text{xb5}$+ $\text{e7}$ 16 $\text{c7}$ $\text{f6}$ 17 $\text{h4}$ in N.Ong-Oaker, correspondence 2004 – the black king has a bad time of it here) 15 $\text{c7}$+ $\text{e7}$ 16 $\text{xa8}$ $\text{g6}$ 17 $\text{g3}$ $\text{h5}$ 18 $\text{d3}$, defending $\text{g3}$ while preparing $\text{a3}$. This messy position needs further analysis.

14 $\text{c7}$ and 14 $\text{e3}$ are less wild but also give reasonable chances: 14 $\text{c7}$ $\text{c5}$! (stronger than 14...$\text{e7}$ 15 $\text{f3}$ $\text{d7}$ [on 15...$\text{f8}$ 16 $\text{c4}$, intending $\text{d4}$, while if 15...$\text{f7}$ then 16 $\text{e5}$ or 16 $\text{h4}$?] 16 $\text{e5}$, vacating $\text{e4}$ for his knight, gives White the better game, Golod-J.Hodgson, Forli 1992) 15 $\text{d8}$+ $\text{e7}$ 16 $\text{xb8}$ $\text{c3}$+ 17 $\text{b1}$ $\text{xb8}$ 18 $\text{f3}$ (18 $\text{xb7}$ $\text{f7}$) 18...$\text{g6}$, as in J.Nielsen-Oortwijn, correspondence 1997.

13 0-0-0+

On 13 $\text{c4}$ $\text{e7}$ (or even 13...$\text{xc5}$
14 $\text{xe5}$ $\text{f7}$ 15 0-0-0+ $\text{e8}$) 14 $\text{xf7}$ (or 14 $\text{xb3}$ $g6$) 14...$\text{xf7}$ 15 0-0 $\text{g6}$ 16 $\text{ad1}$ $\text{g7}$ (Sumets-Pichugin, Odessa 1995) looks playable for Black.

13...$\text{e7}$

This is better in my view than 13...$\text{e8}$, which allows White to keep a
small plus with 14  \textit{Qxf7}  \textit{Qxf7} 15  \textit{Qc4} (after 15 e5 g5 16  \textit{Bf3}  \textit{g7} 17  \textit{Qe4}  \textit{exf5} 18  \textit{Qxg5}  \textit{Bxg5} 19  \textit{Qxg5} White had all the fun in Storani-Geus, correspondence 2000) 15...\textit{Bb4!} (15...\textit{Cc5} 16 e5! g5 17  \textit{Bd2}  \textit{Qxe5} 18  \textit{Bxe2} [Hallen- 

gren-Mary, correspondence 2004] intending a combination of  \textit{Qe4},  \textit{Cc3},  
\textit{Bf1} and  \textit{h5+} with ample compensation; or 15...g5!? and 16...\textit{Bg7}) 16  \textit{Qd3}  
\textit{Qe7}?! (now or on the next move 16...b5 should probably have been tried: 17  
\textit{Bb3} a6 with the idea of ...c5-c4, or 17  \textit{Qxb5}! cxb5 18  \textit{Qxb5}+  \textit{Qe7} 19  \textit{Cxe6} e5 with unclear consequences) 17  \textit{Bxd1} e5 18  
\textit{Bd2} (L.Arnold-Jonitz, Brno 1995) and White has a clear advantage due to 
the unpleasant threat  \textit{Qd5+}.

14  \textit{Qxf7}  \textit{Qxf7} 15 e5 g5 16  \textit{Bf3} b6 17  
\textit{Qe4} h6 18  \textit{Qd6}  \textit{Qxe5} 18...\textit{Bf7} 19  \textit{Qxf7}  \textit{Qxf7} was a trifle 
better for White in E.Prie-J.Shaw, Oak- 
ham 1994.

19  \textit{Qxc8}+  \textit{Bxc8} 20  \textit{Bc6}  \textit{Bd8} 21  \textit{Qxd8}  
\textit{Bxd8} 22  \textit{Bd4}  \textit{Bg7} 23  \textit{Bf1}  
What else?

23...\textit{Qd3}+ 24  \textit{Qxd3}  \textit{Qxd4} 25  \textit{Bxe6} c5

The position is equal.

C3) 1 e4 d6 2 d4  \textit{Qf6} 3  \textit{Qc3}  \textit{Qbd7} 4 f4 
\textit{e5} 5  \textit{Qf3}  \textit{exd4} 6  \textit{Qxd4}  
Or 6  \textit{Qxd4} and now:

a) 6...\textit{Qc5}?! was an oversight from yours truly before I consulted Janssen and 

Van Rekom's  \textit{The Lion}:

a1) If 7  \textit{Bf3} Black can consider 

7...\textit{Qxe4} 8  \textit{Qxe4} \textit{Bxe7} 9  \textit{Bb5+} \textit{Qd7} 10  
\textit{Qxd7}+  \textit{Qxd7} 11  \textit{Bf3}  \textit{Qxe4} 12 0-0-0  \textit{Bf8}  
13  \textit{Qh3}?!  \textit{Bd8}, which is unclear.

a2) With 7  \textit{Qd3} White gladly allows 

the swap of his bishop for the knight, 

when he would recapture with the c- 
pawn, reinforcing e4, and have nice 

attacking prospects on the kingside; 

while after 7...\textit{Qg4} 8  \textit{Qd2}!,


the bishop is going to be repelled by 

h2-h3, when the queen can be rerouted 

and White can claim a little something 

in my view. Instead, 8  \textit{Qf3}?!  \textit{h5}?! etc., is 

the weird main line suggested in  \textit{The 

Lion}, with the statement that Black 
equalizes. Make up your own mind!

b) 6...\textit{Qe7}?! was chosen by the great 

Aaron Nimzowitsch, in his encounter 

versus Behling, Riga 1910. It is a bit 

passive, however, and gives White an 

edge. The position is similar to the one
arising after 1 e4 e5 2 d3 d6 3 d4 exd4
4 cxd4 Qf6 5 c3 0-0-0, which was
treated in Chapters 3-4. In that line it
would be unusual to continue with
6...Qbd7, which limits Black’s future
choices.

c) Events take a very satisfactory
turn for Black after 6...g6, e.g. 7 d3
g7 8 0-0 0-0 followed by ...e8 and
...c5, with counterplay against e4.

After 6 Wxd4 we shall consider:

C31: 6...c5
C32: 6...c6

6...g6? is a bit of an overkill if Black
wishes to provoke his opponent! 7 e5!
(7 c4?! Intending 7...g7? 8 e5 Qg4
[or 8...e7 9 d5 Qf2+ 12
Wxf2 Qxf2 13 Qxe7 Qxh1 14 Qd5 and
White was winning in Martin Gon-
zalez-Ortega Ruiz, Spanish Ch., Linares
1998: Black can’t defend c7 properly,
but above all he will lose his errant
knight on h1.

9...Nh5 10 Nf5
10 g4! wins a piece immediately.
White may have feared 10...0-0 11 gxh5
Qxe5 12 Qxe5 e8 13 Qf4 Wh4+ 14
d2, but Black hardly has enough
here.

10...f6 11 exf6 Nhxf6 12 0-0-0 0-0 13
Wc4+ Wh8 14 Qxd7 Qxd7 15 Whc5,
White has a decisive advantage,
F.Castaldo-V.Colin, Mitropa Cup, Ay-
mavilles 2000.
C31) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 ♙bd7 4 f4 e5 5 ♙f3 exd4 6 ♙xd4 ♘c5

This line, which includes the idea of 7...♕xex4 8 ♙xe4 ♙e7, is still rather unexplored. Beliavsky assesses 6...♘c5 as dubious in the annotations to his game with Ponomariov in Chess Informant (see Line C312). But curiously, he indicates no moment where he may have stood worse later on!

![Diagram](image)

White's two main options are:

C311: 7 ♘c4
C312: 7 ♘e3

Or:

7 e5

7 f5?! may be playable, but after either 7...♗e7 or 7...♕cxe4 8 ♙xe4 ♙e7 9 ♘d3 d5, Black has nothing to worry about.

7...♕e6 8 ♙c4

After 8 ♙d3 ♙c5 9 ♙d4 ♙e6 a draw was agreed in Prie-Okhotnik, Larange-Monteglin 2001. White can of course deviate, but it is questionable whether he stands any better.

8...dxe5 9 fxe5 ♙d7 10 ♘e3

(1.Cosma-Ianov, Bijeljina 2001) and now 10...♖b6 11 ♙xb6 axb6 12 ♙d1 ♙d7 looks fine for Black. In the game White had some pressure after 10...♗c5 11 ♙xc5 ♙dxc5 12 ♙d1 ♙d7 13 ♙b4 ♙e7 14 ♙xe7+ ♙xe7 15 ♙d5+ etc.

C311) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 ♙bd7 4 f4 e5 5 ♙f3 exd4 6 ♙xd4 ♘c5 7 ♘c4

This is probably sufficient to claim a small plus.

7...♗e7

Or 7...♗e6 8 0-0 ♗e7 (8...c6?!?) and now:

a) White was successful with 9 ♙xe6 ♙xe6 10 ♙c4 c6 11 ♙g5 in the game Wells-Gonzalez Zamora, Oviedo (rapid) 1993. After 11...d5?! 12 exd5 ♙xd5 (not 12...♕xg5? 13 fxg5 ♙xd5 14 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 15 ♙xd5 exd5 16 ♙e3, followed by ♙ad1, ♙f5, and d5 is lost) 13 ♙xe6 fxe6 14 ♙e1 ♙d6, e6 is weak but the knight is excellently placed.

b) 9 ♙g5?! (I.Sudakova-Mirzoeva, Kolontaevo 1998) is interesting.

c) 9 ♙b4 ♙c4 (9...♕a6 10 ♙xe6 fxe6 11 ♙c5 12 ♙a3 ♙b6 13 ♙ad1 was more pleasant for White in Milliet-A.Muller,
Val d’Isere 2004) 10 \( \text{wxc4} \) \( \text{Qcd7} \) 11 e5 \( \text{Qb6} \) (11...\text{dxe5} is more precise as White had the option of 13 \( \text{Qd1} \) later on) 12 \( \text{We}2 \) \text{dxe5} 13 fxe5 \( \text{Qfd5} \) and Black was okay in Dishman-A.Salem, British Ch., Eastbourne 1991.

8 e5!

This energetic approach maintains some pressure; whereas 8 0-0?! eases Black’s task: 8...0-0 9 e5 (or 9 b4?! \( \text{Qxe4} \) 10 \( \text{Qxe4} \) d5, Luckis-P.Trifunovic, Mar del Plata 1950) 9...\text{dxe5} 10 fxe5 \( \text{Wxd4+} \) 11 \( \text{Qxd4} \) \( \text{Qg4} \) 12 \( \text{f3} \) \text{e6} (it’s equal) 13 \text{exe6} \( \text{Qxe6} \) 14 \( \text{De4} \) f5 15 \text{exf6} \( \text{Qxf6} \) 16 \text{Qxf6+} \text{xf6} 17 \text{e3} \( \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} \) Weitzer-M.Shvartz, German League 2001.

8...\text{dxe5}

9 \( \text{Wxd8+} \)

9 fxe5 \( \text{Wxd4} \) 10 \( \text{Qxd4} \) \( \text{Qfd7} \) 11 \text{h4} \text{c6} 12 0-0-0 \( \text{Qb6} \) is approximately level. But not 10...\text{Qg4}?! 11 \( \text{Qf3} \) f6 (11...\text{Qd7} doesn’t solve all Black’s problems after 12 \( \text{Qb5} \) \( \text{Qd8} \) 13 e6 fxe6 14 \text{exe6} \text{Qb6} 15 \text{Qxc8} \text{Qxc8} 16 \text{Qg5}), which was played in J.Campbell-N.Grant, corres-pendence 1985, and here 12 \( \text{Qb5} \) \( \text{Qd8} \) 13 \text{exf6} \( \text{Qxf6} \) 14 0-0 would have been no joy for Black.

9...\text{Qxd8} 10 fxe5 \( \text{Qfe4} \) 11 \( \text{Qxe4} \) \( \text{Qxe4} \) 12 0-0

Threatening \( \text{xf7+} \)...\text{xf7}; \( \text{Qg5+} \). 12 \text{f1}?! was also possible.

12...\text{Qf8} 13 \text{e3}

White has a slight, but enduring edge.

C312) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \( \text{Qf6} \) 3 \( \text{Qc3} \) \( \text{Qbd7} \) 4 f4 e5 5 \( \text{Qf3} \) \text{exd4} 6 \( \text{Wxd4} \) \( \text{Qc5} \) 7 \text{e3}

The critical set-up. By accelerating long castling, White threatens to lay down the law.

7...g6

Other continuations are, frankly, either bad or not to be recommended as they leave White with an easy game:

a) 7...\text{We7}?! 8 e5 \text{dxe5} 9 fxe5 \( \text{Qg4} \) 10 \text{g5}.

b) 7...\text{Qe6}?! 8 \text{Qd2}.

c) 7...c6 8 0-0-0 \text{Qc7} 9 h3 \text{e7} 10 g4 (C.Sanchez-Perelman, Buenos Aires 1996) with a one-sided position.

d) 7...\text{h6} 8 0-0-0 0-0 9 e5 (or 9 h3 when White plans either e5 or g4, Spangenberg-Tempone, Buenos Aires 1999) 9...\text{Qg4} 10 \text{Qg1} \text{e6} 11 h3 \text{Qh6} 12 g4. The White attack is well on its way
and the knight on h6 looks pretty grim, Brailsford-Jaworowski, correspon-dence 1998.

8 0-0-0!

Just as in Prié-Okhotnik, 8 e5 seems to be too hasty after 8...\(\text{Qe}6\) (if 8...dxe5? 9 \(\text{Wxd8+}\) [9 \(\text{Wxe5+}\) \(\text{Qe}6\) is less convincing, but maybe 9 fxe5!?] 9...\(\text{Wxd8}\) 10 0-0-0+ \(\text{Qe}8\) 11 \(\text{Qxe5}\) or 11 fxe5 \(\text{Dg}4\) 12 \(\text{Ag}1\) with not a very appetizing position for Black in both cases) and now:

a) After 9 \(\text{Wc}4!?\) the position remains balanced. Black can choose between 9...dxe5, 9...d5 and 9...\(\text{Dg}4\), and I would be surprised if none of these is satisfactory!

b) 9 \(\text{Wd}2\) \(\text{Dg}4\) 10 \(\text{Ag}1\) \(\text{Ah}6!\) (10...dxe5?! 11 \(\text{Wxd8+}\) \(\text{Qxd8}\) 12 h3 \(\text{Df}6\) 13 fxe5 proved uncomfortable for Black in R.Sultanov-Khokhlov, Dagomys 2004) 11 g3 \(\text{Qxe5}\) 12 \(\text{Qxe5}\) dxe5 13 \(\text{Wxd8+}\) \(\text{Qxd8}\) 14 fxe5 is roughly even.

c) 9 \(\text{Wa}4+\) \(\text{Ad}7\) 10 \(\text{Ab}5\) \(\text{Dg}4\)

11 \(\text{Ax}d7+\) (the ending is level after this cautious choice; following 11 \(\text{Ag}1\) c6 the game remains complicated, but then Black may end up being better) 11...\(\text{Wxd7}\) 12 \(\text{Wxd7+}\) \(\text{Qxd7}\) 13 \(\text{Ad}2\) f5 (13...c6? 14 h3 \(\text{Qh}6\) 15 \(\text{Qe}4\) is bad for Black) 14 h3 \(\text{Qh}6\) 15 0-0-0 c6! 16 \(\text{Qe}2\) (16 exd6 \(\text{Qxd6}\) 17 \(\text{Qe}5+\) \(\text{Qc}7\) doesn’t bring much either) 16...\(\text{Qf}7\) (16...d5?! 17 \(\text{Qd}4\)) 17 \(\text{Ac}3\) (or 17 \(\text{Qd}4\) dxe5 18 fxe5 \(\text{Ac}5\) 17...\(\text{Qc}7\) (not 17...d5? 18 c4 and Black is in serious trouble, for instance 18...\(\text{Qc}7\) 19 \(\text{Qc}3\) \(\text{Qe}6\) 20 cxd5+ \(\text{Qxd}5\) 21 \(\text{Qxd}5\) cxd5 22 \(\text{Qd}4+\) \(\text{Qe}7\) 23 \(\text{Qb}5\)) 18 \(\text{Qd}4\) \(\text{Qe}8\) 19 \(\text{Qxe}6+\) \(\text{Qxe}6\) 20 \(\text{Qd}4\) (not 20 \(\text{Qd}4!\) \(\text{Qe}8\) 21 e6 \(\text{Qd}8\) and the e-pawn has a reprieve) 20...\(\text{Qg}8\) 21 \(\text{He}1\) dxe5 22 \(\text{Qxe}5\) \(\text{Qxe}5\) 23 \(\text{Ax}e5\) \(\text{Ax}e5\) 24 \(\text{Ax}e5+\) \(\text{Qc}8\) 25 c4 \(\text{Ac}5\) 26 \(\text{Qc}2\) \(\text{Md}8\) 27 \(\text{Md}3\) ½-½ was Ponomariov-Beliavsky, Slovenian Team Ch. 1999. It seems that the balance was never broken, and splitting the point was thus a fair outcome.

8...\(\text{Qg}7\) 9 \(\text{e}5\) \(\text{Qg}4\) 10 \(\text{Qg}1\) \(\text{Qh}6\)

10...0-0 was stronger, but even so White retains the upper hand after 11 h3 \(\text{Qh}6\) 12 g4, etc.

11 \(\text{Wb}4\) a5 12 \(\text{Wa}3\) \(\text{Qe}6\) 13 exd6 0-0 14 \(\text{dx}c7\) \(\text{Wxc7}\) 15 \(\text{Qd}5\)

The agony is brief for Black.

15...\(\text{Wb}8\) 16 \(\text{Qb}6\) \(\text{Qxf}4\) 17 \(\text{Qxa}8\) \(\text{Wxa}8\)

18 \(\text{Qd}4\) b5 19 \(\text{Qxg}7\) \(\text{Qxg}7\) 20 \(\text{Qc}3+\) \(\text{Qg}8\)
21 \textit{We}3 \textit{Wb}8 22 \textit{Xd}4

1-0 Y.Yakovich-J.Johansson, Stockholm 1996.

\textbf{C32)} 1 \textit{e}4 \textit{d}6 2 \textit{d}4 \textit{Qf}6 3 \textit{Qc}3 \textit{Qbd}7 4 \textit{f}4 \textit{e}5 5 \textit{Qf}3 \textit{exd}4 6 \textit{Wxd}4 \textit{c}6

\textit{Wd}3 \textit{exd}5 (after 9...0-0? 10 \textit{dxc}6 \textit{bxc}6 11 \textit{Ad}2 White achieves 0-0 more easily than in the line 7 \textit{Ac}4!, but following 11...a5 and 12...\textit{a}6 the position remains unclear) 10 \textit{Qxd}5 0-0 with good compensation for the pawn.

This is Black's main move. Now we will look at:

\textbf{C321)} 7 \textit{e}5
\textbf{C322)} 7 \textit{Ad}2
\textbf{C323)} 7 \textit{Ae}3 \textit{d}5 8 \textit{e}5
\textbf{C324)} 7 \textit{Ae}3 \textit{d}5 8 \textit{exd}5

Alternatively:

a) 7 \textit{Ac}4?! \textit{d}5 8 \textit{exd}5 \textit{Ac}5 9 \textit{Wd}3 0-0 and, with the white king having to stay in the middle, Black has more than enough compensation for the pawn.

b) With 7 \textit{Ae}2?! the transparent idea is to castle kingside. Black has two valid options at his disposal:

b1) 7...\textit{Wb}6 8 \textit{Wxb}6?! (this exchange is anything but forced and rather favours Black) 8...\textit{axb}6 9 \textit{Qd}4 \textit{b}5 10 \textit{Af}3 \textit{g}6 and Black already stood better in S.Djuric-Peyrat, French League 1993.

b2) 7...\textit{d}5 8 \textit{exd}5 (or 8 \textit{e}5) 8...\textit{Ac}5 9

Indeed, the white king is stuck in the centre and the squares around it have been weakened.

c) 7 a4?! (White is mistaken about his opponent's intentions: Black was threatening ...\textit{d}5, not ...\textit{b}5, and this move only creates weaknesses) 7...\textit{d}5! (7...\textit{Qc}5?!) 8 \textit{e}5 \textit{Ac}5 9 \textit{Wd}3 \textit{Qg}4 10 \textit{Qd}1 \textit{We}7! (to continue ...\textit{f}6 or profit from the pin after 11 \textit{h}3 \textit{Qg}6) 11 \textit{Qe}3 \textit{Qxe}3 12 \textit{Qxe}3 \textit{Qxe}3 (12...\textit{f}6! with an edge) 13 \textit{Wxe}3 \textit{Wb}4+ 14 \textit{Qf}2 \textit{Qc}5 (or 14...\textit{Wxb}2? 15 \textit{Qd}3 with compensation) 15 \textit{Wd}4. Now the game was level, until our reciprocal blindness: 15...\textit{Qe}4+ 16 \textit{Qg}1 \textit{We}7 17 \textit{Qd}3 \textit{Af}5 18 a5 0-0 19 \textit{h}3 \textit{Qg}3 20 \textit{Qxf}5?? \textit{Qxf}5?? (20...\textit{Qe}2+!) 21 \textit{Wd}3 (Bo-logan-Bauer, Bastia rapid 1999) and Viorel eventually, as usual, won the game.

d) In my opinion the idea of 7 \textit{f}5 is rather dubious, since White concedes
the important e5-square. His space advantage and the weak d6-pawn should, however, keep the position balanced.

\[ \text{Diagram} \]

\[ \text{Diagram} \]

\[ 11 \text{.0-.0} \]

White also experiences some difficulties after 11 \( \text{Cc4 Ce4} 12 \text{Wxe7+} \text{Wxe7}, \) Jaenig-Bauer, Metz 2000.

\[ 11 \ldots \text{Cc3 12 exf6 Cxf6 13 Wg3 0-0 14} \text{Cd6 We3+ 15 Cb1 Wb6!} \]

15...\( \text{d8?!} 16 \text{Cc7 f8} 17 \text{Cd6 is only a draw.} \]

16 \text{b3 Ce8}

...and Black has a healthy extra pawn.

\[ \text{C322} \] 1 \text{e4 d6 2 d4 Cf6 3 Cc3 Cb7 4} \text{f4 e5 5 Cf3 exd4 6 Wxd4 Cc6 7 Cc2?} \text{Wb6}

The dominant white queen is annoying for Black, and it is therefore quite natural to get rid of it, if possible.

The advance 7...d5? would this time miss the target, as White is ready for long castling: 8 exd5 \( \text{Cc5} 9 \text{Wd3 0-0} \) (9...\( \text{Dg4} 10 \text{Dxe4!} \) 10 0-0-0 when Black’s compensation for the pawn is rather meagre.

8 \text{0-0-0 Wxd4 9 Cxd4 g6}

Black plays this move to protect himself against \( \text{Df5} \) than to fianchetto the bishop.
10  \( \text{c3} \)

10  \( \text{ae3} \) following the same goal, i.e. attacking d6, is valid too: 10...\( \text{dc5} \) 11 \( \text{he1} \) \( \text{ae7} \) and White may be a tad better.

On the other hand, rushing with 10 e5? fails after 10...\( \text{dxex5} \) 11 fxe5 \( \text{dxex5} \) 12 \( \text{he1} \) \( \text{dfd7} \) 13 \( \text{dxb5} \) \( \text{cxb5} \) 14 \( \text{dxb5} \) \( \text{wd8} \) and Black wins.

10...\( \text{h6!} \)

An important intermediate move, since on the careless 10...\( \text{g7} \) White has 11 \( \text{ae3} \).

11  \( \text{g3} \)

Here 11 \( \text{ae3?} \) is met by 11...\( \text{dg4!} \), demonstrating the point of 10...\( \text{h6!} \): f4 is hanging if the bishop moves off the c1-h6 diagonal.

11...0-0

Now Black will find time to counterattack e4, e.g. 12 \( \text{ae3} \) \( \text{he8} \).

C323) 1  \( \text{e4} \) 2  \( \text{d6} \) 2  \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{df6} \) 3  \( \text{dc3} \) \( \text{bd7} \) 4  \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{e5} \) 5  \( \text{df3} \) \( \text{exd4} \) 6  \( \text{wdx4} \) c6 7  \( \text{ae3} \) d5

7...\( \text{ae7?!} \) is too passive, as the game Shirov-Ftacnik, European Club Cup 1998, illustrates: 8  \( \text{g4!} \) d5 9  \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{ac5} \) 10 \( \text{wd3} \) \( \text{dxex4} \) 11 \( \text{dxex4} \) \( \text{dxex4} \) 12 \( \text{wxex4+} \) \( \text{we7} \)

13 \( \text{wxex7+} \) \( \text{wxex7} \) 14 \( \text{d4!} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 15 \( \text{xd4} \) with a clear plus for White, due to his space advantage and the insecure black king.

7...\( \text{wb6?!} \) is also inadvisable. After 8 0-0-0 \( \text{wdx4} \) 9 \( \text{dxd4} \) White has all the trumps.

8  \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{g4} \) 9  \( \text{g1} \) \( \text{h6} \)

A prophylactic retreat.

9...\( \text{wb6?!} \) 10 \( \text{wxex6} \) axb6 (10...\( \text{dxb6} \) is no better) 11  \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{h6} \) 12  \( \text{g4} \) (Wells-Oratovsky, European Club Cup 1999) gives White a clear advantage.

9...\( \text{c5?!} \) is too greedy! After 10 \( \text{wd2} \) \( \text{xg1} \) 11 \( \text{xg1} \) \( \text{wb6} \) 12 0-0-0 \( \text{dxh2}, \) both 13  \( \text{ae2} \) and 13 \( \text{d4} \) offer a tangible initiative for White.

10  \( \text{wd2} \)

Or:

a) 10  \( \text{h3?!} \) would miss the mark, on account of 10...\( \text{df5} \) and ...\( \text{d3} \). Generally, if Black manages to stabilize his knight on f5, by means of ...\( \text{h5} \), he will be fine.

b) 10 0-0-0 \( \text{wa5} \) 11  \( \text{wb1} \) \( \text{bb6} \) (11...\( \text{df5?!} \) was unclear in Lobzhanidze-Summerscale, Koop Tjchem 1996) 12  \( \text{a3} \) \( \text{g4} \) 13 \( \text{wd2} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 14  \( \text{gxf3} \) \( \text{e7} \).
Black has the better pawn structure, White the bishop pair and the g-file. Dynamic play is thus required from White in order to compensate for the long-term weaknesses. We are following W. Watson-Bauer, German League 1996, which now becomes entertaining: 15 $\text{d}3$ $\text{g}6$ 16 $\text{d}4$ (16 h4?! was worth considering, but 16...0-0-0 17 h5 $\text{c}4$ passes the initiative to Black) 16...c5 17 $\text{f}2$ (17 $\text{b}5$+?! $\text{f}8$ 18 $\text{f}2$ d4 would lose a piece) 17...$\text{d}8$ 18 $\text{f}5$! (the tactical stage begins) 18...$\text{xf}5$ 19 $\text{xf}5$ $\text{gxf}5$ 20 $\text{wh}6$ d4 21 $\text{e}6$! $\text{xf}4$! (21...$\text{dxc}3$? 22 $\text{exf}7+$ $\text{xf}7$ 23 $\text{wh}5+$ with a decisive assault) 22 $\text{h}g1$! $\text{c}4$ (22...$\text{dxc}3$? would once again be suicidal: 23 $\text{exf}7+$ $\text{xf}7$ 24 $\text{g}8+$ $\text{f}8$ 25 $\text{we}6+$ $\text{e}7$ 26 $\text{xf}8+$ $\text{xf}8$ 27 $\text{xd}8+$ $\text{g}7$ 28 $\text{g}8$ mate; the text move combines attack and defence) 23 $\text{exf}7+$ $\text{xf}7$ 24 $\text{g}8+$ $\text{d}7$ 25 $\text{xd}8+$ $\text{wd}8$ 26 $\text{d}5$ $\text{wh}8$ 27 $\text{wh}5$ $\text{c}6$ 28 $\text{f}4$ $\text{d}6$ 29 $\text{e}6$ $\text{we}8$ 30 $\text{le}1$ $\text{wd}7$ 31 $\text{g}3$ etc. White soon overstepped the time-limit in a slightly inferior position.

10...$\text{b}4$

10...$\text{wa}5$, followed by ...$\text{db}6$ or ...$\text{dc}5$, is possible too.

11 a3 $\text{wa}5$ 12 0-0-0

12 $\text{d}4$?! is seemingly a suspicious move. Both 12...$\text{df}5$ 13 0-0-0 $\text{xd}4$ 14 $\text{axb}4$ $\text{wa}1+$ 15 $\text{vb}1$ $\text{xf}3$ 16 $\text{gx}f3$, and 12...c5?! 13 $\text{wd}1$! $\text{xd}4$ 14 $\text{axb}4$ $\text{wb}4$ 15 $\text{a}4$?! (15 $\text{xd}4$) 15...$\text{xb}2$ 16 $\text{xd}5$ 0-0 lead to positions with unclear consequences.

12...$\text{xc}3$ 13 $\text{xc}3$ $\text{xc}3$ 14 $\text{xc}3$ $\text{b}6$

I replayed the same ending some years later. The game in question was blitz (3 minutes each) versus Boris Gelfand. I knew the position, he probably didn’t, but that didn’t prevent him from crushing me!

15 $\text{d}2$

Here 15 h3! $\text{df}5$ 16 $\text{f}2$ h5 17 $\text{d}3$ leads to an edge to White, who is ready to play $g4$.

15...$\text{c}4+$ 16 $\text{xc}4$ $\text{dx}c4$

In this equal position, White should play 17 h3!. In J.Koch-Bauer, French Ch., Auxerre 1996, White, looking for a plan, erred with 17 $\text{dd}4$?! and after 17...$\text{xd}7$ 18 $\text{le}1$ 0-0-0 19 $\text{c}1$ c5 20 $\text{df}3$ White’s pieces hadn’t progressed, whereas Black had completed his development and now stood slightly better.
C324) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 £f6 3 £c3 £bd7 4 f4 £e5 5 £f3 exd4 6 £xd4 £c6 7 £e3 d5 8 exd5

After 8 0-0-0? £c5 9 £d3 £e7 10 e5 £g4 the position remains balanced. And 9 £d2 £b4 10 exd5 £xd5 is also equal: ...0-0 or ...£a5 will come soon, when Black has solved his opening problems.

8...£c5 9 £d3!

9 £d2 looks suspicious, but matters aren’t so clear: 9...£e7 10 £d4 £g4 (10...£xd5 11 £xd5 cxd5 and here 12 £f5 should be slightly better for White) 11 0-0-0! £xe3 (11...£xe3?! 12 £e1 0-0 13 £xe3 £f6) 12 £e1 £xd4 13 £d1 £xe1 14 £xe1+ and now 14...£d8 15 £xc6 £xc6 16 £a5+ £b6 17 £g5+ £g6 18 £xg7, or 14...£f8 15 £xc6 (15 d6?!?) 15...£xc6 16 £e4. In both cases Black has rook, bishop and knight versus queen and two pawns, but he experiences difficulties coordinating his forces.

9...£e7

9...cxd5?! would lose dynamism and concede the advantage without a fight; But 9...0-0?! also seems insufficient. This move is actually considered to be the main line by Janssen and Van Rekom in The Lion, who attached a question mark to 9...£e7. After 9...0-0, 10 0-0-0?! is the only continuation examined in the above-mentioned book, concluding that 10...£b6! 11 £xc5 £xc5 12 £d4 cxd5 is okay for Black, which is true. However, I don’t clearly sense Black’s compensation after 10 dxc6! £e8 (10...£xc6 11 £xc5 £xc5 12 £xd8 £xd8 13 £e5 with a sound extra pawn; or 10...£xe3 11 £xd7 £b6 12 £xc8 £xc8 13 £d1 when Black certainly has some compensation for the piece, but I doubt it’s enough) 11 £e5 £xe3 12 cxd7 £xf4 13 £xe8+ £xe8 14 £e2 £xe5 15 0-0 and White’s extra exchange should slowly decide the outcome.

10 £d4

10 £d2?! is risky after 10...£b4 (10...£xe3+?, reaching a dreadful ending after 11 £xe3+ £xe3+ 12 £xe3 cxd5 13 £d4, would be a sign of surrender) 11 £xc6 (11 £e1?! £e4+ 12 £d1 £xc3 13 £xc3 cxd5 is excellent for Black) 11...£xc3+ 12 £xc3 £e4+!...

...preventing £e1 and keeping the initiative.

193
And 12...bxc6!? (Geo.Timoshenko-Oratovsky, Cappelle la Grande 2000) is reasonable too: 13 \textit{He}1 0-0 14 \textit{Ad}4 \textit{Wa}3 15 c4 \textit{Wa}5+ 16 \textit{Wc}3 \textit{Wf}5 17 g3 c5 (not 17...\textit{Qe}4+?, which runs into 18 \textit{Wxe}4 \textit{Wxe}4 19 \textit{Ad}3 and \textit{Axg}7 with a huge attack) 18 \textit{Wxf}6 \textit{Qxf}6 19 \textit{Ad}3 \textit{Wh}3 or 19...\textit{Wd}7, with full compensation.

10...\textit{Qb}6

Boudre-Belkhodja, Créon 2000, saw 10...\textit{Qxd}5!? 11 \textit{Qxd}5 \textit{cxd}5 when White stood a bit better, but not more: 12 0-0-0 0-0 (12...\textit{Qf}6??) 13 \textit{Qf}5 \textit{Wf}6 14 g3 \textit{Qb}6 15 \textit{Qh}6+ \textit{gxh}6 (or 15...\textit{Wxh}6 16 \textit{Ac}5 \textit{Qd}8 17 \textit{Qe}2) 16 \textit{Ac}5 \textit{Qf}5 17 \textit{Wd}4 \textit{Wc}6 18 c3?! (stronger was 18 \textit{Qd}3! \textit{Ab}3 19 \textit{Ad}3 \textit{Ac}8 20 \textit{Cc}3 with an edge: if 20...\textit{Qa}4? 21 \textit{Af}8?) 18...\textit{Qc}8 19 \textit{Ac}3 \textit{Qc}4 20 \textit{Ac}4 \textit{Qxc}4 21 \textit{He}1 \textit{He}8 22 \textit{Wc}5 \textit{Qg}4 23 \textit{Wxc}6 \textit{bxc}6 24 \textit{He}8+ \textit{He}8 25 \textit{Hd}6 \textit{He}1+ 26 \textit{Ac}2 \textit{He}2+ and peace was agreed.

11...\textit{Qxc}6 12 \textit{Qe}2

One who says ‘A’, must say ‘B’.

11 0-0-0?! (Sax-Bauer, European Club Cup 2000) is inconsistent and Black was better after 11...\textit{Qb}xd5 12 \textit{Qxd}5 \textit{Qxd}5 13 \textit{Ab}2 0-0.

Here, with more than one hour spent (against 15 minutes) and with an inferior position, my opponent generously offered a draw! The game continued 14 \textit{Qb}3 \textit{Ab}6 15 \textit{Wg}3 (or 15 \textit{Qb}4 16 \textit{Wc}2 \textit{Af}5!, threatening ...\textit{Qxa}2 mate and forcing 17 \textit{Ab}4 \textit{Wxb}4 when Black has the two bishops, while a draught remains around White’s king) 15...\textit{Af}5 16 \textit{Ad}3 \textit{Wf}6 17 \textit{Axf}5 \textit{Wxf}5 18 \textit{Wf}3 \textit{He}8 19 \textit{He}1 (19 g4?! \textit{We}4 and Black has good chances to benefit from White’s kingside weaknesses) 19...h5! (preventing g2-g4) 20 c4? (20 g3) 20...\textit{Qf}6 21 \textit{Ac}3 \textit{Qg}4 22 \textit{h}3 \textit{Qe}3 (the drawbacks of White’s position begin to tell) 23 \textit{Hd}2 \textit{Had}8 24 g4 \textit{Hxg}4 25 h\textit{xg}4 \textit{Qxg}4 26 \textit{Hxe}8+ \textit{He}8 27 \textit{Hg}2 \textit{Ae}3+ 28 \textit{Ab}2 \textit{Af}4! 29 b3 \textit{Ab}xd2+ 0-1.

11...\textit{bxc}6 12 \textit{Qe}2

12 0-0-0!? would temporarily sacrifice material after 12...\textit{Qa}6 13 \textit{Wd}2 \textit{Ax}f1, but White has a card up his sleeve:

a) 14 \textit{Hxf}1? \textit{Qc}4 15 \textit{Wd}3 \textit{Wxe}3+ 16 \textit{Wxe}3+ \textit{Qxe}3 17 \textit{He}1 0-0-0! wins for Black.

b) 14 \textit{Af}5!!...
...is playable: 14...\textit{Dc}4!! (the acrobatics continue; not 14...\textit{Dxe}3? 15 \textit{Dxe}3 and, because of the double threat of \textit{Df}5 and \textit{He}1, Black will have to give back material: 15...\textit{Dc}4 16 \textit{Dxc}4 \textit{Dxc}4 17 \textit{He}1 \textit{Ee}6 18 f5 and White is much better) 15 \textit{Dxc}5 \textit{Wxc}5 16 \textit{Wd}4 (the best; not 16 \textit{We}1+? \textit{Wf}8 17 \textit{Wxf}1 \textit{Wb}4 18 \textit{Da}4 [forced] 18...\textit{Wxa}4 19 \textit{Dd}4 \textit{Wb}5 [the final point: f5 is still hanging!] 20 \textit{Wxc}4 \textit{Wxf}5 21 \textit{Wxc}6 \textit{Ee}8 with only two pawns for the knight) 16...\textit{Wxd}4 17 \textit{Dxd}4 \textit{c}5 18 \textit{Dxc}4 \textit{xc}4 19 \textit{Dd}6+ \textit{We}7 20 \textit{Dxc}4 and Black stands slightly better, even if his opponent has fair chances to draw.

b) 14 \textit{f}2!!, threatening simply \textit{He}1 and \textit{Wxf}1.

14...\textit{Dc}4 (14...\textit{xd}4?! is worse: 15 \textit{xd}4 \textit{xc}4 16 \textit{He}1 \textit{Ee}6 17 f5 with a sizeable plus) 15 \textit{We}1 \textit{xd}4 (if 15...\textit{Dx}g2? 16 \textit{Df}5! wins) 16 \textit{Wxe}7+ \textit{xe}7 17 \textit{Dxd}4 \textit{c}5 (to avoid having the knight remain en prise) 18 \textit{Dd}1 \textit{Dx}g2 19 \textit{Dxc}5+ \textit{Ee}6 20 \textit{Dh}1 (or 20 \textit{He}1+) and Black is walking on a tightrope here, but I believe he should hold. 12...\textit{a}6

A very similar position was reached in the miniature J.Polgar-Rivas Pastor, Dos Hermanas 1993, with the significant difference that the bishop stood on \textit{f}1 and White had the move. Polgar’s opponent had erred with 11...0-0 12 0-0-0 \textit{bxc}6 13 \textit{Dg}1 \textit{Wc}7 14 g3 \textit{Dd}8?? and Judit didn’t miss (of course!) the decisive 15 \textit{Ddb}5!.

(see following diagram)

In the position after 15 0-0-0, Black can improve on that game by playing 15...\textit{b}7. He threatens to take on \textit{d}4 (which previously failed to 15...\textit{xd}4?)
16 $\text{xd}4$ c5 17 $\text{xe}5$ and after 16 $\text{wf}5$, 16...$\text{b}4$ offers adequate compensation, mainly due to the x-ray $\text{b}7$-$\text{h}1$.

$$
\begin{array}{c}
13 \text{wd}2 \text{g}4!?
\end{array}
$$

13...$\text{bd}5$ 14 $\text{xd}5$ $\text{xd}5$ 15 $\text{xf}5$
$\text{xe}3$ 16 $\text{xe}7$ $\text{xd}2+$ 17 $\text{xf}2$ $\text{xe}7$
18 $\text{xa}6$ $\text{xf}4$ 19 $\text{he}1+$ $\text{xe}6$ 20 $\text{c}4$ was
Fressinet-Belkhodja, French Ch., Marseille 2001. Black eventually held
this grim ending, but as he is facing a tough task without winning chances, I'd
rather suggest 13...$\text{g}4$.

$$
\begin{array}{c}
14 \text{xb}4
\end{array}
$$

14 $\text{g}1$ $\text{c}4$ 15 $\text{xf}5$ $\text{xb}4$! 16 $\text{xb}1$
$\text{wc}5$ 17 $\text{wd}4$ $\text{xf}5$ is unclear after 18
0-0-0!; and note that 18 $\text{xc}7$ loses
18...$\text{xf}4$! Instead, 18 $\text{xc}4$? $\text{d}8$ 19
0-0-0! $\text{xd}4$ 20 $\text{ge}1+$ was played in
Santo Roman-Bauer, Narbonne 2003, when, rather than the game continuation
20...$\text{f}8$ 21 $\text{xd}4$ g6 22 $\text{xa}6$ $\text{xh}2$
with only a small Black plus, I missed the
gorgeous 20...$\text{e}5!!$

$$
\begin{array}{c}
14...\text{c}4 15 \text{d}5!
\end{array}
$$

15 $\text{xc}6$? $\text{xe}3$ 16 $\text{e}2$ $\text{wc}5$ is bad
for White.

$$
\begin{array}{c}
15...\text{xe}3 16 \text{wd}3
\end{array}
$$

Or 16 $\text{e}2$.

Now both 17...$\text{wc}7$ and 17...$\text{wc}5$+ 18
$\text{g}3$ need tests. This position is not for
the faint-hearted!.

Conclusion
The main line 4 f4 (along with 4 g4 of
the following chapter) offers tactical
complications and double-edged
games. This is also true for the plan
$\text{xe}3$, f3, $\text{wd}2$, which often leads to
opposite-side castling and assaults on the
kings.

4 $\text{g}3$ is quieter, but Black seems to
have time for completing his development
by playing ...$\text{e}7$, ...0-0, ...$\text{e}8$,
...$\text{f}8$ on the kingside, and ...b6 (or
...b5) and ...$\text{b}7$ on the queenside. He
then sometimes threatens the capture
with...$\text{xd}4$, followed by ...c5, putting
pressure on the e4-pawn. In that case
White would rather have his pawn on
g4, enabling him to continue with $\text{g}3$.

As a general rule I would like to
stress that Black should refrain from an
early capture ...$\text{xd}4$, if that doesn't
give him anything tangible (such as a
quick ...c5, winning e4).
Chapter Nine

3  \( \text{c3} \)  \( \text{bd7} \)  4  \( g4 \)

1  \( e4 \)  d6  2  \( d4 \)  \( \text{d}f6 \)  3  \( \text{c3} \)  \( \text{bd7} \)  4  \( g4 \)

White's most aggressive option here.

4...h6

It makes sense to prevent \( g4-g5 \), as 4...e5?! concedes too much space. After 5  \( g5 \), both 5...\( \text{d}g8 \) and 5...\( \text{exd}4 \) 6  \( \text{xd}4 \)  \( \text{g}4 \) 7  \( h3 \) (7  \( f4 \)?) 7...\( \text{d}ge5 \) 8  \( f4 \) are equally bad for Black.

Alternatives are not as promising:

a)  5  \( g5?! \)  h\( xg5 \)  6  \( \text{d}x\!g5 \)  \( c6 \) intends ...\( \text{w}b6 ...\( \text{wa}5 \) and ...\( e5 \). Black's pawn structure already guarantees him a slight edge, for example: 7  \( f4 \)  \( \text{w}b6 \) 8  \( e5 \) (8  \( \text{d}b1 \)  \( e5 \) is fine for Black) 8...\( \text{w}x\!b2 \) 9  \( \text{d}ge2 \)  \( \text{d}d5 \) 10  \( \text{xd}5 \)  \( \text{cx}d5 \) (threatening \( f6 \)) 11  \( e6?! \)  \( \text{fxe}6 \) 12  \( \text{d}b1 \)  \( \text{wa}3 \) and White had nowhere enough compensation for the two pawns, Berend-Bauer, Dude-lange (rapid) 1997.

6...\( c5?! \) is much worse: 7  \( d5 \)  \( \text{wa}5 \) 8  \( \text{d}d2 \)  a6 9  \( f4 \)  \( \text{w}c7 \) 10  \( a4 \)  \( \text{d}h5 \) 11  \( \text{w}f3 \) when Black was lacking space and was gradually outplayed Santo Roman-G.Grimberg, French Ch., Toulouse 1995. 6...\( e5 \) followed by ...\( \text{a}e7 \), on the other hand, is acceptable.

b)  5  \( h4?! \) intends to recapture on \( g5 \) with the pawn after \( \text{d}g2 \), but for this privilege White must use up at least one tempo. As a consequence this move doesn't really make sense: 5...\( e5 \) 6  \( \text{d}e3 \) (for 6  \( g5 \)  \( h\!xg5 \) 7  \( \text{d}xg5 \), cf. 5  \( g5?! \) with \( h\!2-h4 \) played instead of a developing move) 6...\( c6 \) 7  \( \text{g}2 \)  \( \text{w}b6 \),

After 4...\( h6 \) we shall look at:

A: 5  \( \text{d}f3 \)
B: 5  \( \text{d}e3 \)
C: 5  \( h3 \)

197
The Philidor Files

opening move) 6...c6 7 g2 wb6!, intending to meet 8 b1 with 8...dxg4! 9 xg4 exd4.

A) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 f6 3 c3 bd7 4 g4 h6 5 f3

Almost a novelty! This move had been tried once only before, in the encounter Dementiev-Sergievsky, Moscow 1966. In the main text we are following the game Vaisser-Bauer, French Ch., Besancon 1999.

5...e5

I quickly rejected dxg4 as being too dangerous, which is confirmed by the following continuation: 5...dxg4? 6 h3 g6f6 7 e5 h7 8 e6 fxe6 9 d3. I stopped here, assuming that my position was 'not cool'! Oratovsky carries on a bit with 9...fh7 (9...df6?? 10 g6+ cd7 11 de5+) 10 dh4 df6 11 dg6 fg8 12 gh1 with the nasty threat of de5+ (or dh8+) and gh6 mate.

6 g5

White has obviously compromised himself and there is no way back. For 6 gh1 see Chapter 10.

6...hxg5 7 dxg5 edx4 8 wxd4 c6 9 ef4

9 ef4?! de5 10 db3 dh7 deflects the knight from its defensive function, the control of f3.

9...dg4

Profiting from the immunity of d6, since the g5-knight is hanging. Black plans to transfer a knight to e5 before repelling the enemy pieces.

10 ef2

If 10 0-0-0 wb6 11 wb6 (11 fc4 de5 12 f3 wxd4 13 xdx4 dx4 14 xc4 de5 followed by ...f6) 11...axb6 12 xd2 ede5 13 f3 f6 is slightly better for Black.

10...wb6

Black has two pawn islands; his opponent has three. White should thus look for tactics and can’t be too happy with the trade of queens.

11 hd1

Or 11 xb6 xb6 (covering g4) 12 xg4 (to prevent the knight from becoming a 'monster' on e5) 12...xg4 13 gh1 fh5! and Black keeps an edge.

11 wxd4 12 xd4 de5 13 gb3 f6 14 df3 xe6 15 0-0

15 de2?!, intending to chase the knights by playing f3 and/or f4, was

198
probably a better defence than the game continuation, since Black's knights can't occupy e5 simultaneously.

15...g5!

Securing the outpost on e5.

16 $\text{Nfd1}$

Now, or at move 20, it was necessary to improve the knight's prospects by carrying out the manoeuvre $\text{Nc3-d1-e3}$.

16...$\text{Nxf3+} \ 17 \text{Nxf3} \text{Ne5} \ 18 \text{Ne2} \text{Le7} \ 19 \text{a4} \text{a5} \ 20 \text{b4?}

Seeking counterplay, but White falls out of the frying pan and into the fire. Seeing that he had blundered, my opponent offered to split the point!

Instead, 20 $\text{Ne1}$, with the idea $\text{Nd1-e3}$, was stronger.

20...$\text{axb4} \ 21 \text{Nxb4} \text{Lc8!} \ 22 \text{Nbd4} \text{Nh5} \ 23 \text{Ndb1} \text{Mc5}$

This manoeuvre was designed to prevent the activation of the white knight. After 23...$\text{Nd8?!} \ 24 \text{Nxd2}$ I had the feeling that White would gain counter-chances by playing $\text{Nd3}$, $\text{a5}$, $\text{c4-c5}$, but this is deceptive and following 24...$\text{Mc7} \ 25 \text{Nd3} \text{Nh7} \ 26 \text{a5} \text{Lc6}$ Black has a large advantage.

Now that the knight was stuck covering a4, I was able to transfer the king to c7 and attack the weakness on c4.

25...$\text{Nd8} \ 26 \text{f3} \text{Cc7} \ 27 \text{Ke1} \text{Nh8} \ 28 \text{a5} \text{Le6} \ 29 \text{La4}$

Losing a pawn. 29 $\text{Nb1}$ was more tenacious.

29...c5 30 $\text{Nd4} \text{Cc4} \ 31 \text{Nb6}$

If 31 $\text{Lxc4} \text{Ndxc4} \ 32 \text{Ka2} \text{Lxa5} \ 33 \text{Nc3}$ (or 33 $\text{Nd5} \text{dx5} \ 34 \text{Nh5} \text{Nxa5} \ 35 \text{Nhxa5+} \text{Lc6} \text{and Black wins}) 33...$\text{Nd6} \ 34 \text{Nd5} \text{Ld8} \ 35 \text{Nda1} \text{b6}$ with a clear advantage.

31...$\text{Lxe2} \ 32 \text{Lxa8+} \text{Nhxa8} \ 33 \text{Nhxe2} \text{Nxf3+} \ 34 \text{Lg2} \text{Lxe1+} \ 35 \text{Nxe1} \text{Nh5}$. 

199
With three pawns for the exchange, the rest isn't too difficult.

36 \text{Ha1} \text{Hb5} 37 \text{Heb1} \text{Hxb1} 38 \text{Hxb1} \\
\text{Cc6} 39 \text{Cf3} c4 40 \text{Ce3} b5 41 \text{Af1} \text{Ed8} \\
42 \text{Cd4} \text{Cdb6+} 43 \text{Cc3} \text{Ca5+} 44 \text{Cc2} b4 \\
45 \text{Hxf6} b3+ 46 \text{Cb2} \text{Cc5} 47 \text{Ca3} \\

Or 47 \text{Hf5+} \text{Cb4} 48 \text{Hxg5} c3+ 49 \text{Cb1} \\
\text{Cb6} 50 \text{Kg3} \text{Ed4} 51 h4 c2+ 52 \text{Cc1} \text{Ca3}. \\
47...\text{Cd2} 48 \text{Hf5+} \text{Cfd4} 49 \text{Hd5+} \text{Cc3} 50 \\
\text{Hxd6} \text{Cc1+} 51 \text{Ca4} b2 52 \text{Cb6} \text{Ce3} 53 \\
\text{Hb5} \text{Cc5} 54 e5 \text{Ce7} 0-1 \\

The transition from the opening to the queenless middlegame was brief 
and in Black's favour. With such an animal on e5 Black was fine, 
and he was able to profit from the g-pawn's advance.

B) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \text{Cf6} 3 \text{Cc3} \text{Cb7} 4 g4 h6 \\
5 \text{Ce3} 6 \text{Cc7} 9 0-0-0 b5 the position was tense 
and offered chances for both sides in Hamdouchi-Campora, 
Santo Antonio 1999.

b) 6 h3 c6 7 a4 and now:

b1) 7...\text{Ce7} 8 \text{Cge2} d5! (the passive 
8...\text{Cf6}?! 9 f4 \text{Ce6} 10 f5 \text{Cg5} 11 \text{Cg2} 
was clearly better for White in \text{Kasimdzhanov-F.Petrov, World Junior Ch., Halle 1995}) 9 exd5 cxd5 10 dxe5 
\text{Cxe5} with level chances.

b2) In comparison with the standard position (\text{Cg2} instead of \text{Ce3}), 
Black has an extra option in 7...d5?!.
After 8 exd5 cxd5 9 dxe5 \text{Cxe5} he has 
to accept an isolated pawn, but the
moves a4 and g4 have generated weaknesses in White's camp.

6 \text{Cg2} e5 7 h3 b5 8 a3! \text{Cb7} 9 \text{Cge2} a5 
10 \text{Cg3} 

A clever move order if White intends to continue aggressively with the
f3, \text{Cf2}, 0-0-0 set-up. Indeed, White has
provoked ...h6, which will help him
open files on the kingside.

5...\text{c6} 

5...e5 first is more common:

a) After 6 f3 c6 7 \text{Cf2} \text{Ce7} 8 \text{Cge2} 

10...\text{exd4}? 

Bad timing: Black doesn't attack e4 
sufficiently and thus isn't ready for this 
exchange. Instead, he should play either 
10...g6! with the idea 11 0-0 h5, or 
10...b4?.

11 \text{Cxd4} c5 12 \text{Cf2} b4? 

12...\text{Cc6} 13 0-0 g6 doesn't lose by
force, but Black's prospects are pretty grim!

13 ²b5 ²e5 14 b3 ²wb6 15 a4 0-0-0 16 c4 g6

The alternative 16...h5 17 g5 h4 18 gxh6 hxg3 19 fxg3 gxf6 20 0-0 is clearly better for White.

17 0-0 h5 18 g5 ²e8 19 f4 ²c6 20 ²ad1

Black is now lost from a strategical point of view: he lacks space and has no satisfactory means of creating counterplay.

20...²g7 21 ²wf2 ²db8 22 h4 ²da6 23 ²xd3 f6 24 f3! fxg5 25 ²xg5 ²d6 26 ²wf4
d5 27 exd5 ²xe8 28 fxg6 ²g4 29 ²hx5
²e5 30 ²h3+ ²db8 31 ²xg7 1-0

(Eliet-Philippe, French League 2000)

This was a massacre, due mainly to Black's erroneous 10th move. He prematurely released the central tension and in doing so lost any hope of counterplay.

C) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ²f6 3 ²c3 ²bd7 4 g4 h6
5 h3

Covering g4 so that White can develop the g1-knight.

5...e5

Now White can play:

C1: 6 ²g2
C2: 6 ²ge2

C1) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ²f6 3 ²c3 ²bd7 4 g4
h6 5 h3 e5 6 ²g2

Preventing the idea of 6...b5, and offering Black an opportunity to go wrong!

6...c6

6...exd4?! again releases the central tension too early, as the white queen will be ideally placed. Topalov-IzetbTxbarri, Madrid 1993, continued 7 ²xd4 g6 8 ²e3 ²g7 9 ²wd2! (preventing...
0-0, which would suit Black well) 9...²b6 10 b3 d5 11 ²d1 c6 12 ²ge2
²e6 13 ²xf4 g5?! (in order not to lose d5 or enter an inferior endgame after 13...²xe4 14 ²xd8+ ²xd8 15 ²xd8+
²xd8 16 ²xe6+ fxe6 17 ²xe4 which, given the turn of events, was the lesser evil) 14 ²xe6 fx6 15 0-0 ²e7 (15...²wd7 intends ...0-0-0, but 16 a4! forbids this due to 16...0-0-0? 17 a5 ²a8 18 ²xa7) 16
exd5 ²bxd5 17 ²xd5 ²xd5 (17...xd5 18 f4! with a powerful attack was also a
disaster for Black) 18 c4 itemName3 19 fxe3!

In this almost symmetrical position Black is lost on account of his weak king. There followed 19...itemName8 20 d3 d6 21 xf6 xf6 22 g6+ f7 23 xf7+ xf7 24 d7+ e7 25 xe7 d8 26 xc6 d1+ 27 g2 d2+ 28 f3 d4 29 e4 f6 30 e8 a5 31 b4 a3 32 c5 a5 33 c6 c3 34 bxa5 c5 35 xf7+ g6 36 f5+ g7 37 xc5 xc5 38 a6 1-0.

7 g2 b5 8 a3!

8 g3 g6 9 e3 b7 10 0-0?! (this was the last chance to play a3) 10...h5 11 g5 h4 12 f4 h5 13 xh5 b4 (the reason why I would have preferred to insert the move pair a3, a5, as in the main text, becomes apparent: White would have played a6, axa8, forbidding long castling...) 14 dxe5 dxe5 15 a4 fxg5 16 xg5 xg5 17 g3 f6 18 g4 f7 19 d1 c8 (...and making this impossible) 20 f3 h4 21 f1 d6 22 g3 Wh5 23 d2 e7 24 Wh2 Wh2+ 25 dxe2 d6 26 e2 d6 27 e1 f5 28 b3 d4 29 bxa4 c4 30 c1 c5 31 f1 d6 32 x2 dxex4 and Black won a few moves later in

10...g6

10...c7 11 e3 (11 ce2?!) 11...g6 12 f4 h5?! (customary in this type of position, but inappropriate here; better was 12 exd4 13 xxd4 g7 with mutual chances) 13 g5 h4 14 gxh6? (14 g2! was much stronger, leading to a clear plus for White after 14...Wh5 [14...Wh7!?] 15 d5 or 15 f5) 14...hxd3 15 fxe5 dxe5 16 d5 e6 17 f3 c4 18 c1 c5 19 h1 h2! and Black seized the initiative in Fernandez Romero-Bauer, San Sebastian 2006.

10...g6 seems a tad better, as Black can hardly do without this move in the long run.

11 e3

11 f4! needs further tests and could well reveal itself to be more effective: 11...g7 (11...exd4?! is tempting, but 12 xxd4 d5 13 h2 c5 14 d1 d4 15 c2, and 13 f2 d4 14 c2 c5 15 d1 are probably in White’s favour) 12 exd4 (12...We7) 13 xxd4 0-0 with a complex game, in which Black is ready
to meet the breakthrough 14 e5 with 14...dxe5 15 fxe5 Qe8.

11...h5!

Forcing White to weaken his kingside, before opening it up. The game Fontaine-Mensch, French League 2001, continued as follows:

12 g5

Otherwise 12...hxg4 13 hxg4 Qh7, followed by ...Wh4.

12...Qh7 13 h4 f6 14 dxe5

Or immediately 14 Qxh5, which doesn't seem to change much.

14...dxe5 15 Qxh5 fxg5 16 h3 Qc8

16...Wc7, planning to castle long, was worth considering, but the text move is correct. Here is Mensch's analysis: (16...Wc7) 17 Qxg5 Qxg5 18 Qxd7+ (keeping queens on the board would be dangerous for White: i.e. 18 Qxd7+? Qe7 19 hxg5 Qxh5 and the white monarch is exposed) 18...Qxd7 19 Qxd7+ Qd7 (or 19...Qxe7??) 20 Qd6+ Qe6 21 hxg5 Qe7 with an equal position.

17 Wf3 gxh4??

A decisive mistake in a balanced position. Stronger is 17...Wc7! 18 Qxg5

Dxg5 19 Qxd7+ Qd8! 20 hxg5 Wxg5+ 21 Wg3 Wxg3+! (21...Wxh5 22 Qg2 Qxd7 23 Qh1 Qh3+ 24 Qxh3 Wxh3+ 25 Wxh3 Qxh3 26 Qxh3 would also be adequate) 22 Qxg3 Qxd7 with an edge for Black.

18 Wg4!

18...We7

After 18...gxh5? the swift 19 Wg6+ We7 20 We6 mate would have shortened the agony.

19 Wxg6+ Wf7 20 Wxc6 Whx5 21 Wxa8 Qd8 22 Qxd7 Qxd7 23 Qad1+ Qd6 24 Qh2 Qf6 25 f3 Qg8 26 Qxb5 Qe8 27 Qxd6 Qxd6 28 Qxd6+ We7 29 Wa7+ Qxd6 30 Qc5+ Qc6 31 Wb6+ 1-0

C2] 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 g4 h6 5 h3 e5 6 Qge2

Delaying Qg2 and playing for d4-d5.

6...c6

6...b5?? profits from the fact that e4 is not covered by a bishop on g2: 7 Qg2 Qb7 8 a3 c6 5 h3 e5 6 Qge2 b5 and Black has avoided the line with 7 a4.

And 7 Qxb5 Qxe4 is more or less okay for Black: if 8 dxe5 Qxe5 9 Wd5?? Qd3+ 10 Wd1 Qxf2 mate...
...is amusing, isn’t it?

7...\textbf{\textit{\textsc{\texttt{a}}\texttt{b}7}}?! on the other hand, is probably dubious on account of 8 f3 d5 (after 8...\texttt{\texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}}e4?! 9 fxe4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}h4+ 10 \texttt{\texttt{d}}d2 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}}e}4 11 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}1 and Black has no real compensation for the sacrificed piece) 9 exd5! \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}xd5 10 \texttt{\texttt{g}2 with the same diagnosis as after 8...\texttt{\texttt{x}}xe4.

7 \texttt{\texttt{\textit{\texttt{e}}}3}

7 a4 slows down Black’s counterplay on the queenside, thus gaining time for operations on the other wing. I don’t think there is much difference between playing a4 now, or waiting for Black’s ...b5 and answering with a3; White must move his a-pawn sooner or later:

a) 7...a5?! 8 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}2 \texttt{\texttt{\textit{\texttt{e}}}7 9 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}3 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\textit{\texttt{x}}}h}7 10 0-0 \texttt{\texttt{g}}5 11 f4 was clearly better for White in Damaso-Strikovic, Dos Hermanas (online blitz) 2004.

b) 7...d5?! 8 exd5 cxd5 9 dxe5 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}xe5 10 \texttt{\texttt{g}2 is slightly better for White.

c) 7...\texttt{\texttt{\textit{\texttt{e}}}7?! 8 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}2 0-0 (or 8...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}8 9 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}6 10 0-0 with an edge for White) 9 0-0 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}8 10 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}3 with a slight plus for White, who has an improved version of a g3 system (Shengelia-Chibukhchian, Batumi 2001).

d) 7...b6 is more urgent than 7...\texttt{\texttt{\textit{\texttt{e}}}7, even though with the latter move Black can consider the manoeuvre ...\texttt{\texttt{f}8-g6, preceded or not by ...g5: 8 \texttt{\texttt{g}2 (8 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}3 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{b}7 9 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}2 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}7 10 0-0 a6 11 \texttt{\texttt{d}2 g5 was unclear in P.Herb-Schrepp, German League 1998) 8...\texttt{\texttt{b}7 with a similar position to Ivanov-Kacheishvili and Fontaine-Mensch.

7...b5 8 a3 \texttt{\texttt{\textit{\texttt{b}7}}

9 \texttt{\texttt{g}3}

Hector-Bauer, European Team Ch., Leon 2001, continued 9 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}2 a5 10 d5 b4 (I rejected 10...\texttt{\texttt{w}8 due to 11 b4, fearing that b5 might become a concern after 0-0, \texttt{\texttt{w}3, dxc6 etc.) 11 dxc6 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}c6 12 \texttt{\texttt{d}5 \texttt{\texttt{w}8 this is identical to the main text, except that the knight stands on e2 and the bishop on g2, rather than g3 and f1 respectively: on one hand White can castle more quickly, but on the other he would have preferred his bishop to be on c4) 13 \texttt{\texttt{w}2 bxa3! (logical, but I don’t see an alternative anyway) 14 bxa3 a surprise, as I expected 14 b3 a4 15 b4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}xd5 16 exd5 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{b}5 when everything is in order for Black; Hector’s move aims}
at exploiting the open b-file at the cost of a shattered pawn structure) 14...\(\texttt{\textbf{b}}\textit{xd5}
15 \texttt{\textbf{exd5 e7}} 16 0-0 (here 16 \texttt{\textbf{g}}\textit{g3} seemed critical to me: 16...
\texttt{\textbf{d}}\textit{d8 17 \texttt{\textbf{f}}\textit{f5 \texttt{\textbf{f}}\textit{f8}} 18 0-0 \texttt{\textbf{b}}\textit{b6 19 \texttt{\textbf{ab}}\textit{1 w}}\textit{c7...}

...and Black has nothing to complain about: after the bishop swap the d7-
 knight may jump to c5, while the f5-
 knight can be driven back by...g6)
16...0-0 17 \texttt{\textbf{g}}\textit{g3 c8} 18 \texttt{\textbf{exh6}}? (enough for a draw but not more) 18...gxh6 19
\texttt{\textbf{wxh6 c4}} (19...\texttt{\textbf{f}}\textit{8? keeps the extra piece but the white attack is too danger-
ous: 20 \texttt{\textbf{w}}\textit{g5+ \texttt{\textbf{h}}\textit{8} 21 \texttt{\textbf{wh}}\textit{4+ \texttt{\textbf{h}}\textit{7}} 22 \texttt{\textbf{e}4 \texttt{\textbf{df}}\textit{6 23 \texttt{\textbf{d}}d3 with threats \texttt{\textbf{de}}\textit{e4 and g5})
20 \texttt{\textbf{dfs}}? (20 \texttt{\textbf{w}}\textit{g5+ \texttt{\textbf{h}}\textit{8}} [20...\texttt{\textbf{f}}\textit{8} 21 \texttt{\textbf{wh6+ \texttt{\textbf{se}}\textit{e8}}? - 21...\texttt{\textbf{g}}\textit{8!} - 22 g5 \texttt{\textbf{dg}}\textit{8 23 \texttt{w}}\textit{g7 with a big edge] 21 \texttt{\textbf{wh}}\textit{4+!}, and as
21...\texttt{\textbf{dh}}\textit{7? drops the e7-bishop, Black has to consent to a draw with 21...\texttt{\textbf{dg}}\textit{8})
20...\texttt{\textbf{f}}\textit{8} 21 \texttt{\textbf{wg}}\textit{5+ \texttt{\textbf{h}}\textit{8} 22 \texttt{\textbf{fb}}\textit{1 w}\textit{a7} (eyeing f2) 23 \texttt{\textbf{wb}}\textit{5 \texttt{\textbf{b}}\textit{8} 24 \texttt{\textbf{f}}\textit{1 \texttt{\textbf{f}}\textit{4 and I con-
verted my advantage on move 40.
9...\texttt{\textbf{d}}\textit{5 10 \texttt{\textbf{d}}\textit{5 b4 11 dx}c6 \texttt{\textbf{xc}}\textit{c6 12 \texttt{\textbf{d}}\textit{d5 w}}\textit{b8!}

12...\texttt{\textbf{exd5}}? is usually a desirable
swap (compare pawn structures), but it’s realized in unfavourable circum-
stances here, and 13 \texttt{\textbf{exd5 b}}\textit{7} 14 \texttt{\textbf{b}}\textit{b5 offers an edge to White; or 12...\texttt{\textbf{exd5}}?
13 \texttt{\textbf{exd5 wb}}\textit{8 14 a4.
13 \texttt{\textbf{a}}\textit{a4
Black was intending ...\texttt{\textbf{bx}a3}. White’s choice keeps the game more complica-
ted than 13 \texttt{\textbf{axb}}\textit{4! \texttt{\textbf{ab}}\textit{4} 14 \texttt{\textbf{xa}}\textit{a8 \texttt{\textbf{xa}}\textit{8} 15 \texttt{\textbf{c}}\textit{c4}, reaching a simplified
position in which Black must still be precise: 15...\texttt{\textbf{exd}}\textit{5} (15...\texttt{\textbf{g}}6?! 16 \texttt{\textbf{xf6+ \texttt{\textbf{xf}}\textit{6}} 17 \texttt{\textbf{w}}\textit{f3 \texttt{\textbf{e}}\textit{7} 18 g5 \texttt{\textbf{hxg}}\textit{5 19 \texttt{\textbf{g}}\textit{g5 \texttt{wd}}\textit{8 20 \texttt{\textbf{xf}}\textit{6 \texttt{\textbf{xf}}\textit{6} 21 \texttt{\textbf{vb}}\textit{3 and a pawn falls, although Black gains some play in return}) 16 \texttt{\textbf{exd}}\textit{5 \texttt{\textbf{df}}\textit{6 17 \texttt{\textbf{xa}}\textit{8 \texttt{\textbf{xa}}\textit{8} 18 \texttt{\textbf{wd}}\textit{3 \texttt{w}}\textit{c6 19 0-0 h}5 20 \texttt{\textbf{a}}\textit{1 \texttt{\textbf{hxg}}\textit{5 21 \texttt{\textbf{a}}\textit{6 \texttt{wb}}\textit{7 22 \texttt{\textbf{a}}\textit{7 \texttt{wc}}\textit{6 and White should
perhaps repeat moves, even if he looks better. (23 \texttt{\textbf{wb}}\textit{3?? d}5 24 \texttt{\textbf{hxg}}\textit{4 \texttt{\textbf{d}}\textit{6 would be double-edged.)

13...\texttt{\textbf{wb}}\textit{7
13...\texttt{\textbf{exd}}\textit{5?! 14 \texttt{exd}5 \texttt{\textbf{wb}}\textit{7 is met by 15 \texttt{\textbf{c}}\textit{c4 with the idea of embedding the
bishop on c6, after having overpro-
ected d5 by means of \texttt{\textbf{wd}}\textit{3 and \texttt{\textbf{dd}}\textit{1}.
14 \texttt{\textbf{c}}\textit{c4 \texttt{g}6
Removing f5 from the white knight
and preparing ...\texttt{\textbf{g}}\textit{7}. The position is
level and will remain so for a while.
The game Dgebuadze-Belkhodja, Cappelle la Grande 2001, continued:
15 \(\text{Wd3} \text{xd5} 16 \text{xd5} \text{xd5} 17 \text{exd5} \text{f6} 18 \text{d1} \text{g7} 19 \text{Wd2} \text{Wd7} 20 \text{b3} \text{h5} 21 \text{g5} \text{g8} 22 \text{e4} \text{e7} 23 \text{Wd3}

Both camps have carried out their manoeuvres. The position is rather closed and has a drawish character.
23...f5 24 \text{d2} 0-0 25 \text{c1} \text{f8} 26 \text{b1} \text{ab8} 27 \text{We2} \text{We7} 28 \text{xd3} \text{b7} 29
\text{c1} \text{Wd7} 30 \text{Wf1} \text{h8} 31 \text{Wf2} \text{f8} 32 \text{f6} \text{Wd8} 33 \text{g1} \text{g7} 34 \text{e4} \text{e7} 35
\text{c1} \text{Wd7} 36 \text{Wf1} \text{d4}

...and Black takes his chance!

37 \text{xd4} \text{exd4} 38 \text{Wg2} \text{he5} 39 \text{f4} \text{hee8} 40 \text{c6d1} \text{Wc7} 41 \text{dd2}

or 41 \text{xd4}?? \text{xd4} 42 \text{xd4} with compensation.
42...\text{g8} 42 \text{Wf3} \text{xc3} 43 \text{xc3} \text{bxc3} 44
\text{d4} \text{We7} 45 \text{f5} \text{Hb8} 46 \text{Wf2} \text{Hb4} 47 \text{a3}
\text{a5} 48 \text{fxg6} \text{f}\text{xg6} 49 \text{ab5} \text{We7} 50 \text{h4}
\text{g7} 51 \text{Wd3} \text{h7} 52 \text{f1} \text{We5} 53 \text{c7}
\text{b7} 54 \text{e6} \text{Wd5} 55 \text{f4}

Here 55 \text{Wxg7}+ \text{Wxg7} (55...\text{Wxg7??} 56 \text{Hf6}) 56 \text{f4}, followed by 57 \text{xd4}, would have favoured White because of the weak c3- and d6-pawns.
55...\text{Wxf5} 56 \text{xf5} \text{xf5} 57 \text{Xh5} \text{d3} 58

\text{cxd3} \text{e5} 59 \text{f4} \text{Xb4} 60 \text{g2} \text{g6}

Now White's pieces are bound to passivity, rendering the defence tough.
61 \text{e1} \text{Xh4} 62 \text{f3} \text{Hb4} 63 \text{c1} \text{g7}
64 d4 \text{xd4} 65 \text{xd4} \text{xd4} 66 \text{xc3}
\text{Xg5} 67 \text{c8} \text{f4} 68 \text{Xg8}+ \text{f5} 69 \text{b2} \text{f3}
70 \text{Xf8}+ \text{g4} 71 \text{Xg8}+ \text{h3} 72 \text{Hh8}+
\text{g3} 73 \text{c3} \text{f2} 74 \text{xd4} \text{f1} \text{Xh7} 75 \text{Xg8}+
\text{h4} 76 \text{Hh8}+ \text{g5} 77 \text{Hb8} \text{Wa6} 78 \text{d5}
\text{f6} 79 \text{Xf8}+ \text{e7} 80 \text{Hb8} \text{d7} 0-1

Conclusion
The aggressive approach with 4 g4, profiting from the temporarily closed c8-h3 diagonal, usually leads to complex positions with few early exchanges. After Black's best move, 4...h6, White should objectively refrain from sacrificing his g-pawn, à la Shirov, and instead opt for a more flexible set-up with \text{h3}, \text{g2, gе2-g3, e3} etc. In general Black is well advised not to release the central tension with ...\text{exd4}, unless he has a good reason and a concrete follow-up.

In summary, Chapters 8 and 9 have shown that Black finds adequate counterplay in the lines arising after 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \text{f6} 3 \text{c3} \text{bd7}. 
Chapter Ten

Introduction and 5 g4

1 e4 d6 2 d4 ∆f6 3 ∆c3 ∆bd7 4 ∆f3 e5

The third and final section of this book deals with the main position of the Philidor Defence, which can be reached via the various move orders from Parts 1 and 2: 1 e4 e5 2 ∆f3 d6 3 d4 ∆f6 4 ∆c3 ∆d7, or 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ∆f6 3 ∆c3 e5

4 ∆f3 ∆bd7, or 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ∆f6 3 ∆c3 ∆bd7 4 ∆f3 e5.

The overwhelmingly popular choice for White from this position is 5 ∆c4, which is the subject of Chapters 11-14. In this chapter we will take a look at the less common moves, including the dangerous 5 g4. White can play:

A: 5 g3
B: 5 g4

Alternatives do not hit really the target:

a) 5 ∆e2?! is too mild to give White a chance to fight for an edge. Why should he restrict his bishop to e2 when it is obviously better placed on c4 - ?

The same remark applies to 5 ∆d3.

b) 5 dxe5?! prematurely releases the central tension, thus losing any chance to claim an edge. 5...dxex5 6 ∆c4 ∆b4 7 0-0 c6 is fine for Black. 7...0-0 is equally sufficient to equalize, but is less ambitious!

c) 5 ∆g5?! is a falsely aggressive move that has no strategic foundation. Black equalizes by simply finishing his development, e.g. 5...∆e7, ...c6, ...0-0, etc. Here’s an example where he even quickly takes the ascendency: 5...c6 6 ∆d2 ∆e7 7 a4 0-0 8 ∆c4 exd4 9 ∆xd4 ∆c5 10 e5 dxex5 11 ∆xe5 (11 ∆xd8 ∆xd8 12 ∆xe5 ∆e6, with an equal position, was better) 11...∆e6 12 ∆xf6 ∆xf6 13 ∆xc5 ∆e7 14 ∆d4 ∆xd4 15 ∆xd4 ∆xc4 and the pair of bishops dictated in S.Rocha-Oratovsky, Lisbon 2000.

d) 5 d5?! would be excellent if White could follow up with c2-c4. Indeed, after ...c6 and a subsequent ...xd5, it would be desirable to recapture with cxd5. Here, however, while Black continues
with ...c6, ...e7 and ...0-0 (and then ...c5 or ...cxd5, depending on the situation), White doesn’t have any real plan.

A) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 Qf3 e5 5 g3

This is almost an inaccuracy, given that the fianchetto is less effective with a knight placed on the f3-square rather than e2.

5...e7

The creative 5...b6!? was tested in Teijjohann-Kosten, German League 1997. Weakening c6 looks unsound at first sight, but it seems that White can’t benefit from this. There followed 6 dxe5 dxe5 7 Qb5 Qd6 (7...b4?! 8 Qxe5 Qe7 is unclear) 8 Qc6 Qa6!? (an exchange sacrifice that suits Kosten’s active style well) 9 Qg5 (cautious; taking up the gauntlet would have forced White to switch to defence after 9 Qxa8 Qxa8 10 Qd2 0-0 or 10...b4?!., when Black’s pieces are very active) 9...0-0 10 Qxd7 Qxd7 11 Qxf6 Qxf6 12 Qh4 with an unclear position, the game eventually ending in a draw.

6 g2 0-0 7 0-0 c6 8 a4 Qc7?!

This was foolish. The automatic ...e8 and ...Qf8 was, of course, more to the point, aiming to put pressure on e4 in some cases. Black would then have a comfortable game, since the white f-pawn can’t move.

9 h3 b6 10 Qe3 Qe8

11 Qd2!

Planning to jump to c4 in the right circumstances, but above all to allow the f4-push.

11...a6 12 g4 h6 13 f4 Qb7 14 Qe2

White keeps some flexibility in his position. The direct 14 g5 doesn’t succeed, but only if Black remains very careful:

a) After 14...exd4? 15 Qxd4 (not 15 gxf6? Qxf6) 15...hxg5 16 fxg5 Qh7 Black has gained the important square e5. He is ready to install a knight there, while leading the White attack isn’t that easy. Nevertheless, White is practically winning here! 17 Wh5 Qxg5 18 h4 c5 19 hxg5 cxd4 20 Qxf7+ Qh8 21 Qd5 Qxd5 22 Wh5+ Qg8 23 exd5 and Qe4 is going to cause devastation. Note that 17...g6? is met by...
...18 $wxh7+!!$ $fxh7$ 19 $fxf7+$ $gxg8$ 20 $gxg7+$ $fxg8$ 21 $xf1+$.

b) 14...exf4!? 15 $xf4$ hxg5 16 $xg5$ and now 16...c5!, aiming to gain the e5-square, is a vital move, after which Black is okay.

c) 14...hxg5 15 fxg5 $dh7$ 16 $wh5$ g6 with a double-edged position.

14...$fxf8$ 15 $dg3$ exd4 16 $xd4$ c5 17 $xf2$ $had8$?

A mistake which will enable White to prevent the ...d5-thrust forever. Instead, 17...d5 18 e5 $dh7$ is messy: Black will get rid of the e-pawn by playing ...f6, while the pile of white pieces on the kingside isn’t that frightening.

18 c4! $db8$ 19 $he1$ $dc6$ 20 $db1$ $da5$ 21 $wc2$ g6 22 b3 $lg7$ 23 $dc3$

This is like a Benoni (White having a pawn on c4 rather than d5) that has gone wrong for Black. White’s prospects are better both in the centre (d5 is weak) and on the kingside. Galdunts-Bauer, Bischwiller 1997, continued:

23...$dc6$ 24 $ad1$ $wb8$ 25 $ge2$ $db4$ 26 $wb1$ $wa8$ 27 $ah4$ $xd7$ 28 $od5$ $xd5$ 29 $cxd5$ b5 30 axb5 axb5 31 $xc3$ $wb8$ 32 $wc1$

32...c4?

Black should play 32...$xa7$, with the idea of exchanging knights with ...$da2$. This would diminish the pressure on b5 and simultaneously increase the pressure on e4.

33 $bxc4$ $bxc4$ 34 $xf1$ $wc8$ 35 $xf2$ $de7$ 36 $db5$ $wb8$

After 36...$exe4$ 37 $exe4$ $exe4$ 38 $xd6$, the c4-pawn falls, leaving White with an extra passed pawn.

37 $xd6$ $xd6$ 38 $es$ $wb8$ 39 $xf6$ $xe1$ 40 $xe1$ $xf6$ 41 $xc4$ $xd5$

A practical decision, but Sergey was up the task.

42 $xd5$ $xf4$ 43 $wd2$ $we5$ 44 $xf2$ $dg7$ 45 $wd6$ $h5$ 46 $xe5$ $xe5$ 47 $dg2$ $hxg4$ 48 $hxg4$ $ea5$ 49 $xd7$ $ea4$ 50 $xe2$ $xe5$ 51 $xd1$ $eb4$ 52 $xc5$ $xf4$ 53 $xd5$ $xc3$ 54 $dg3$ $xe4$ 55 $xd7$ $xe5+$ 56 $xf3$ $xf4+$ 57 $xe3$ $hf1$ 58 $xb3$ $xb2$ 59 $xc4$

60 $xe4$ $xc3$ 61 $xb7$ $xa1$ 62 $xe3$ $xc3$ 63 $g5$ $xf2$ 64 $xf4$ $g5$ 65 $xe3$ $xb2$

My error on move eight led to an unappealing position. My opponent found the correct plan (11 $xd2$ and 13 f4), and never let the advantage slip.
B) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 Qf3 e5 5 g4

A wild attempt to disturb Black’s serene set-up. As is usually the case in similar circumstances, Black has the choice between taking up the gauntlet (5...Qxg4), a solid alternative (5...h6), and... panic (the rest)!

We shall consider:

B1: 5...h6
B2: 5...g6!?
B3: 5...Qxg4!?

Or:
5...exd4?!

Giving up the centre isn’t an advisable reaction to White’s aggressive move. Forecasting g4-g5, Black hurries to make d7 available for the f6-knight, but this passive approach cedes the initiative without a fight.

6 Qxd4

6 Wxd4?! (Kochetkova-Chelushkina, Saint Vincent 2005) is unjustified. After 6...Qxg4, followed by ...Qde5 or ...Qge5, White has absolutely nothing for the sacrificed pawn.

6...Qc5 7 g5

Logical, but 7 Qb5+!? and 7 f3 are interesting too; for example, 7 f3 Qxg4?!?! 8 fxg4 Wh4+ 9 Qd2 Qg5+ 10 We2 Qxg4+ 11 Qf3 with an edge.

7...Qfd7

7...Qfxe4?! leads to at least a pleasant ending for White after 8 We2 d5 (8...We7? 9 Qd5 loses on the spot) 9 f3 Qe6! 10 Qxe6 Qxc3 11 Qxg7+ Qd7 12 We5! We7 13 Bh3+ Qd8 14 Wxe7+ Qxe7 15 Qf5+ Qxf5 16 Qxf5.

8 Qe3

This was played in Gongora Reyes-Moldovan, Marin 2004. I don’t see how Black will manage to generate counter-chances.

B1) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 Qf3 e5 5 g4

It’s worth noticing that the move order 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 Qf3 h6 5 Qf3 e5 leads to the same position but forces Black into the 5...h6 line.

5...h6 6 g5

On 6 Qg1, Black should play the useful 6...c6!, rather than 6...exd4?!.

6...hxg5 7 Qxg5

210
7 hxg5?! hxg5 8 wxd2 c6 (8...exd4?! is again misguided: 9 dx4 dx5 10 f3 and here the combination 10...fxe4 11 ex7 dx2 12 ex8 xf1 13 xc7 culminates in a White edge) 9 0-0-0 b5 (D.Recuero Guerra-F.Remoli Sargues, Mondariz 2004), and now White could have netted a pawn with 10 xxf6 xfx6 11 d5! b4 12 dx6 bxc3 13 cxd7+ xc7 14 wxc3, although the position would remain unclear. Instead 9...wa5 or 9...xc7 is more solid and gives a roughly equal position.

After 7 dxg5, I believe 7...exd4! 8 wxd4 c6 (cf. Vaisser-Bauer, Chapter 9, Line A) to be the best reply, but 7...c6 looks fairly acceptable as well: 8 dx5 dx5 9 f4 (R.James-I.Heppell, Paignton 2004), and here 9...dh7! is a powerful resource: 10 dx3 (not 10 dxh7?? wh4+) 10...xf3+ 11 xf3 wh4+ 12 wg3 dh6 with fine play for Black.

But 7...dh7? (B.Filipovic-A.Jurkovic, Zadar 2003) is probably too risky: 8 dc4 0-0 9 gg1 c6 10 d5 b5 11 db3 b4 12 dc6 bxc3 13 cxd7 cb2 (13...xd7) 14 dxc8 w bxc1 w and here 15 xf7+! would have won on the spot.

B2) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 df6 3 dc3 0bd7 4 ff3 e5 5 g4 gg5!

A reasonable move, even though it is probably not the best reply to 5 g4. Black is mixing prophylaxis (the knight won’t be hanging on h5) and constructive development (putting the bishop on g7).

6 g5

6 h3 and 6 dc4 are interesting, if less logical options. For example, 6 dc4 and now:

a) 6...g7?! gives White realistic chances to emerge out of the opening with an edge: 7 dx5 dx5 8 g5 gh5 9 eh3; or 8 eh3 (N.Ristic-V.Rabrenovic, Serbian Team Ch. 2004), with the idea 8...dg4 9 df7+ xf7 10 gg5+.

b) 6...exd4! 7 wxd4 (7 dx4 de5 7...g7 8 df7+? (P.Roth-C.Weiss, Austrian Ch., Hartberg 2004) is wrong, since after 8...xf7 9 dg5+ ef8 10 de6 de5 Black keeps his extra piece.

6...h5 7 de3 gg7 8 wd2 0-0 9 0-0-0 f5?!

If 9...c6? 10 dx5! dx5 11 wd6 (but not 11 h3? wa5 12 xd7 dd8 and suddenly Black’s game is acceptable)
11...\textit{\texttt{wa5}} 12 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qd2}}} and White was much better, mainly because the enemy queen had no suitable square, in Abergel-Beudaert, Evry 2005.

A sounder option, crucial for the validity of 5...\textit{\texttt{g6}}, is 9...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qb6!}}} intending 10 \textit{\texttt{dxe5 \textbf{Qg4}}} 11 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qe2}}}. Now both 11...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qc4}}} 12 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxc4}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxf3}}} 13 \textit{\texttt{exd6}} and 11...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxf3}}} 12 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxf3}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qc4}}} 13 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{We2}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxe3}}} 14 \textit{\texttt{Wxe3 \textbf{Qxe5}}} 15 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxh5}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxc3}}} look playable for Black.

\textbf{10 \textit{\texttt{exf5}}}

\textbf{10...\textit{\texttt{Qxf5}}}

10...\textit{\texttt{gxf5?!}} is clearly inadequate after 11 \textit{\texttt{dxe5 \textbf{dxe5}}} (or 11...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxe5}}} 12 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxe5}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxe5}}} 13 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qc4+}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qh8}}} 14 \textit{\texttt{f4 \textbf{Qg7}}} 15 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qe2}}}
and Black faces major problems) 12 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qc4+}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qh8}}} 13 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qe6}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{We7}}} 14 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxd7}}}, when both 14...\textit{\texttt{f4}} 15 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxc8}}} \textit{\texttt{fxe3}} 16 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Wxe3}}} and 14...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qd8}}} 15 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qd5}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxd7}}} 16 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxc7}}} are equally disastrous for Black.

\textbf{11 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qe2}}}}

The simplest, but 11 \textit{\texttt{dxe5}} (Lastin-Azmaiparashvili, FIDE World Ch., Tripoli [rapid] 2004) was no picnic for Black either: 11...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxe5}}} 12 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxe5}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxe5}}} 13 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qc4+}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qh8}}} 14 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qb1}}} (14 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qe2?!}}})
14...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qd7}}} (here 14...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qf4}}}! was probably stronger: 15 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qd5}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxd5}}} 16 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxd5}} c6} 17
\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qe4}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qf7}}} 18 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qd4}}}
and then 18...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Wc7}}, 18...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{We7}}} or 18...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Wf8}}}
may be tenable) 15 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qhe1}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qc6}}} (or 15...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qd4}}}) 16 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qd4}}},
intending 16...\textit{\texttt{Wxg5}} 17 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qe4}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{We7}}} 18 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qg3}}}
with a clear plus) 16 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qe6}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qf3}}}! (otherwise f2-f4 comes with great effect) 17 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qg4}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxe3}}}
(a nice exchange sacrifice, dictated by necessity) 18 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Wxe3}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qf4}}} 19 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qf3}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Wxg5}}} 20
\textit{\texttt{Qd5}} (20 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxc6!}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{bxc6}}} 21 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qe4}}}
would still have left White on top) 20...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxd5}}}! 21
\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxd5}} c6} 22 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qh1}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Wf6}}}
and so on.

\textbf{11...\textit{\texttt{Qf4}}} 12 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxf4}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxf4}}}

12...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxf4}}} 13 h4 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qf8}}} 14 h5 isn’t glorious for Black either. Even without his dark-squared bishop, White can create serious attacking chances.

\textbf{13 \textit{\texttt{dxe5 \textbf{dxe5}}}}

13...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Wf8}}} is no improvement because of 14 e6! (not 14 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qd5}? \textbf{Qxf3}}} 15 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxc7}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxe5}}} with complications) 14...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxc3}}} 15
\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxc3}}}! (the queen should focus on the f4-rook; not 15 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Wxe3}? \texttt{Qd5}}} 15...\textit{\texttt{Qxf3}} 16
\textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qe7}}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Wxe7}}} 17 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qxf3}}}
and Black can resign.

\textbf{14 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{Qe3}}}}

White enjoys great superiority in this position. Indeed, Black has big problems finishing his development, and his king is quite vulnerable.
B3) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ∆f6 3 ∆c3 ∆bd7 4 ∆f3 e5 5 g4 ∆xg4!? 6 ∆g1

6 ∆c4? is bad on account of the simple 6...exd4 (Sanchez Dolado-Galgazorri Uli, Erandio 2003), when 7 ∆xf7+? fails to 7...wxf7 8 ∆g5+ ∆g8 9 ∆xg4 ∆f6 or 9...∆e5.

6...∆gf6

In the event of 6...exd4?, White gets sufficient compensation for the pawn after 7 ∆xd4 (or even 7 ∆xd4!? ∆ge5 8 ∆e2 ∆xf3+ 9 ∆xf3 ∆e5 10 ∆e2 when White is ready for ∆e3, 0-0-0 and then f4 or ∆d5, Garcia Benavides-Suuronen, Calvia 2004) and now:

and now:

a) 7...∆ge5? leads to unnecessary problems for Black after 8 ∆g5, with a further split:

a1) 8...f6? 9 ∆e6 wxe7 10 ∆d5 wins.

a2) 8...∆f6 9 ∆xf6 gxh6 (ugly, but forced, as 9...wxf6? allows 10 ∆d5 w8d8
11 ∆b5) 10 w5 or 10 f4, and it is obvious that White’s position is to be preferred.

a3) 8...∆e7 9 ∆xe7 wxe7 10 ∆d5 w8d8 11 ∆b5 0-0 12 ∆bx7 ∆b8, and
now 13 w8e2 followed by 0-0-0 looks promising:

and now:

c1) 8...∆f6 9 f4 (9 ∆e3?!) 9...∆g6 (or 9...∆c6 10 ∆e3 ∆d7 11 w5, Pit-Kunin,
Bad Wörishofen 2004) 10 ∆e3 ∆d7 11 w5 was played in Renteria Becerra-
Campora, Calvia 2004. The f3-square is the best place for her majesty: 11 w2?!
c5 12 ∆f3 ∆c6 13 ∆c4 (M.Llaneza
Veiga-Iglesias Valle, Oviedo 2004) allowed Black the opportunity of 13...∆xe4!
14 ∆xe4 d5.

c2) 8...c5 is playable too, although I personally wouldn’t be keen on weakening the d5-square for no particular reason. Then 9 hxg4 cxd4 10 ∆d5! is unclear, whereas 10 ∆b5?! (Moranda-
Lubczynski, Krakow 2005) is well met by 10...d5! intending 11 exd5? w7.
In conclusion, we can state that after 6...exd4 Black’s game becomes quite cramped in all lines.

7...c4

The other way to parry Qg5 is once more the central swap. After 7...exd4 8 wXd4 Qb6 9 e5 Wxe7 (9...Qxc4?! is good too) 10 Re3 dxe5 11 Qxe5 Qxc4 12 Qxc4 Re6 Black had a clear edge in S.Solovjov-Kirillova, St Petersburg 2004.

9 Qg5! is more appropriate and analysed in detail by Solovjov: 9...Qxc4 (9...d5?! is possible too, though there is no need to give back the pawn) 10 Wxc4 Wxe7 (10...Wd7?! 11 Qd5! Qxd5 12 exd5 h6 13 Qf3 – or 13 Qe4!? – with some compensation, but I doubt Black can be worse) and now:

a) 11 Qe3?! c6 12 0-0-0 h6 (after 12...Qg4?! 13 We2 Qxe3 14 Wxe3 White’s activity and big lead in development provide him with some compensation, but I prefer Black here) 13 Qf3 Re6 14 Wa4!? Qg4! (14...a5 is less cautious: 15 Qd4 b5 [15...d7] 16 Qxb5 cxb5 17 Qxb5 d7 18 Qxd6, and it transpires that White has at least enough for the piece here) 15 e5 Qxf3 16 exf6 Wxf6 17 Qd4 g5 18 h4. In this position Solovjov claims that White has compensation for the two pawns, but after 18...Qe7 19 hxg5 hxg5 20 Qxg5 Qg6! he in fact is in dire straits.

b) 11 Qb5! leads to wild complications that, apparently, should peter out into a drawish ending after 11...c6 12 Qxd6+ Wxd6 13 Qf7+ Qd8 14 Qe3 (14 Qd2? Qd7 15 0-0-0 Qc8 enables Black to sit on his extra material) 14...Qd7! 15 Qd1 Qe7 and now:

b1) 16 Qc5? is erroneous: 16...Qxf7 17 Qxf7+ Qc7 (after 17...Qe8? White can turn the tables and, following 18 Qxh8 Qxc5 19 Qxg7, it is Black who must fight for a draw) 18 Qd4 Qb4+ 19 c3 Qhe8 20 Qe5+ Qxe5 21 Qxe5 Qf8 when, with two minor pieces for rook and pawn, Black is in the driver’s seat.

b2) 16 e5! Qd5 17 e6 Qe6 (17...Qc8?! 18 Wxe7+ Qxe7 19 Qc5+ Wf6 20 Wxf6 Qh5 21 Wd4+ Qxe6 22 Qxg7 Qxd1 23 Qc5+ Qf5 24 Qxh8 Qxc2 with equality is a long sequence, but it’s unclear whether either side can beneficially deviate at any point.
8 \( \text{dxe3} \) c6 9 dxe5
Alternatively:

a) 9 \( \text{We2?! b5} \) 10 \( \text{b3 Wa5!} \) (10...a5 11 0-0-0 \( \text{Wc7} \) was also adequate in O.Boguslavsky-Mietzner, Dresden 2004) 11 d5? (11 0-0-0 was a tad better, but no picnic for White either after 11...a6 12 \( \text{Qb1 c5} \) 11...b4

...with a huge advantage to Black in C.Balogh-Gyimesi, Hungarian Championship, Budapest 2004.

b) White's first attempt in this position was 9 \( \text{Wd3?!} \), as played in Shirov-Azmaiparashvili, Bled Olympiad 2002: 9...\( \text{Wc7?!} \) 10 0-0-0 b5 (maybe Black can afford the preparatory 10...a6?!; after 11 dxe5 \( \text{Qxe5} \) 12 \( \text{Qxe5 dxe5} \) 13 \( \text{Qa4} \) [L.Rodriguez-Moldovan, Pontevedra 2004] Black should have gone for 13...b5! with obscure consequences after 14 \( \text{b6 Qb8} \) 15 \( \text{Qxc8} \) or 14 \( \text{b6 We7} \), but not 14...bxc4? 15 \( \text{Wxc4}! \) 11 \( \text{xb5?!} \) (an opportunity that Shirov doesn't miss!) 11...\( \text{cx} \) b5 12 dxe5 (12 \( \text{Qxb5} \) comes to the same) 12...dxe5 (12...\( \text{Qxe5} \) loses to 13 \( \text{Qxe5 dxe5} \) 14 \( \text{Qxb5 Wa5} \) 15 \( \text{Wc4}! \) ) 13 \( \text{Qxb5 Wa5} \) 14 \( \text{Wc4 Qb8} \) 15 a4! \( \text{Wb4}! \)

16 \( \text{Qxe5!} \) (16 \( \text{Wc7} \) would have brought a neat draw by repetition after 16...\( \text{Wxa4} \) 17 \( \text{Qxe5+ Qe7} \) [17...\( \text{Qxe5??} \) 18 \( \text{Qc7+ Qe7} \) 19 \( \text{Qc5 mate} \) ] 18 \( \text{Wxd7} \) \( \text{Qxd7} \) 19 \( \text{Qd6+ Qd8} \) 20 \( \text{Wxf7+ Qe8} \) 16...\( \text{Wxc4} \) 17 \( \text{Qxc4} \) when, with soon three pawns and the initiative for the piece, White was better.

Going back to move nine, however, analysis has shown that inserting ...b5 is a clever idea: 9...b5!

b1) 10 \( \text{Qxf7+ Qxf7} \) 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 \( \text{Qxe5+ Qxe5} \) (12...\( \text{Qg8} \) 13 \( \text{Qxc6 We7} \) 14 \( \text{Wxb5} \) looks less convincing) 13 \( \text{Wxd8} \) \( \text{Qf3+} \) 14 \( \text{Qd1} \) (not 14 \( \text{Qe2? Qxg1+} \) 15 \( \text{Qxg1} \) \( \text{Qg4+} \) ) 14...\( \text{Qxg1}, \) and if White
doesn’t find anything concrete quickly, the rook, bishop and knight will prove to be superior to the queen and pawn.

b2) 10 b3 c7 (rushing with 10...a5? is suicide: 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 a4 b4 13 c4 e7 14 xc6 and White stood much better in M.Markovic-Runic, Serbian Team Ch. 2004) 11 0-0-0 a5 and Black is clearly better.

dxe5 10 d3 h5

Planning ...f6 followed, at some point, by ...f4, ...c5 and/or ...b5.

The nonchalant 10...c7? was severely punished in Shirov-M.Klinova, Gibraltar 2006: 11 xf7+! xf7 12 c4+ e7 13 h4 b6 (or 13...g8 14 g6+ d8 15 0-0-0 a5 16 f4 with a raging attack) 14 g6+ e8 15 xb6 axb6 16 exh8 g5 17 g6 xc5 18 0-0-0 and Black resigned. However, 10...b5! (cf. 9 wd3 b5) looks stronger and could well refute this whole line.

With 10...h5 we are following the game Shirov-J.S. Shaw, Gibraltar 2005. White had to react urgently, and Shirov obliged with...

11 xf7+! xf7 12 xe5+ xe5!

 Forced, but excellent. 12...e8? 13 g6, followed by 0-0-0, leaves Black with a hard defensive task.

13 xd8 f3+

14 d1

14 e2? xg1+ 15 xg1 g4+.

14...xg1 15 c1 h3 16 f4 c5!

17 c7+

17 xh8? e3+ 18 b1 d3xf4.

17...e7 18 c5 e8 19 f5 f8

19...g5?!.

20 xe7+ xe7 21 wd8+ f7 22 b3

22 wd6?! is worse because the following sacrifice enables Black to free himself: 22...xf5! 23 exf5 e1+ 24 xd1 f2 25 wd7+ (if 25 wc7+ e8! 26 d2 e7, or 25 wg6+ g8 26 d2 f4! or 26
\[ \text{Wh5? Dd8!} 25...Dg8 26 Dd2 Dee8! 27 Dxf2 Dd8 28 Wxd8 Dxd8+ 29 Dd3 Df4 and the f-pawn will fall. } \\
22...Df6 23 Db2 Dg5 24 Hg1
Preparation h2-h4 followed by Hxg7+.

\[ \text{26 Dd8 Dd7 27 Wh8 De7 } \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} \]

\text{Conclusion}

The gambit 5 g4, tried several times by Shirov, looks basically unsound to me. It artificially livens up the game, but analysis has shown that Black can achieve a good position by declining the challenge, with 5...h6, and also with the principled 5...Dxg4. The idea of 5...g6, on the other hand, doesn't seem suitable and rather justifies White's play.
Chapter Eleven

5 \( \textsf{c4} \): Introduction and \( \textsf{xf7+} \) Lines

1 e4 d6 2 d4 \( \textsf{f}6 \) 3 \( \textsf{c}3 \) \( \textsf{bd}7 \) 4 \( \textsf{f}3 \) e5 5 \( \textsf{c}4 \) \( \textsf{e}7 \)

This natural bishop move, preparing short castling, is played in the vast majority of games after 5 \( \textsf{c4} \). It’s easy to see why, as alternatives are unappealing:

a) 5...\( \textsf{c}6 \)? loses material after 6 dxe5 \( \textsf{dx}e5 \) (or 6...dxe5 7 \( \textsf{g}5 \) 7 \( \textsf{dx}e5 \) dxe5 8 \( \textsf{x}f7+ \).

b) 5...\( \textsf{b}6 \)?? 6 \( \textsf{b}3 \) is good for White (compare this with a similar position from Chapter 1 where the \( \textsf{c}3 \)- and \( \textsf{f}6 \)-knights are still at home).

c) Giving up the centre by playing 5...\( \textsf{exd}4 \)?? 6 \( \textsf{x}d4 \) is on principle dubious. In comparison with the variations examined in Chapter 1, Black has lost the active possibility of...\( \textsf{xc}6 \).

d) 5...\( \textsf{h}6 \)?? is possible, as the complications resulting from 6 dxe5 dxe5 7 \( \textsf{x}f7+ \) \( \textsf{x}f7 \) 8 \( \textsf{xe}5+ \) \( \textsf{g}8 \) aren’t necessarily unfavourable for Black.

However, 5...\( \textsf{e}7 \) develops a piece and (as I was told when I was a beginner!) is therefore stronger. Furthermore, the bishop move is ‘compulsory’, whereas Black can usually do without \( \textsf{h}6 \).

After 5...\( \textsf{e}7 \), White normally castles short, and this is the subject of Chapters 12-14. In this chapter, we will take a look at sharp lines involving an early \( \textsf{x}f7+ \). White can play:

A: 6 \( \textsf{x}f7+ \)??
B: 6 dxe5 dxe5 7 \( \textsf{x}f7+ \)
C: 6 \( \textsf{g}5 \) 0-0 7 \( \textsf{x}f7+ \)

218
The unforced retreat with 6 \( \text{b3} \)?! is imprecise. After 6...\( \text{exd4} \) 7 \( \text{wx}d4 \) (or 7 \( \text{dx}d4 \) \( \text{dc}5 \)) 7...\( \text{dc}5 \), the best White has is 8 \( \text{c}4 \), when he has lost precious time. In these circumstances (and in contrast to 5...\( \text{ex}d4?! \)), releasing the central tension is justified for Black and the position after 8...0-0 is equal.

A) 1 \( \text{e}4 \) d6 2 d4 \( \text{df}6 \) 3 \( \text{dc}3 \) \( \text{bd}7 \) 4 \( \text{df}3 \) e5 5 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 6 \( \text{xf}7+?! \)

Trying to refute Black’s opening in this way isn’t justified.
6...\( \text{xf7} \) 7 \( \text{dg}5+ \)

7...\( \text{gf}8 \)!

Venturing the king to g6 is inadvisable and above all unnecessary, since 7...\( \text{gf}8 \) is an excellent move. But note that going to g6 is possible if White exchanges on e5 first (see Line B).

8 \( \text{de}6 \) \( \text{we}8 \) 9 \( \text{xc}7 \) \( \text{wg}6 \) 10 \( \text{xa}8? \)

Stronger is 10 0-0! when, after 10...\( \text{hb}8 \), White has two pawns and some initiative for the piece. Nevertheless, by playing correctly Black has nothing to fear and should even stand a bit better.

10...\( \text{wxg}2 \)

11 \( \text{gf}1 \)

11 \( \text{ge}2 \) is even worse: 11...\( \text{ex}d4! \) 12 \( \text{gg}1 \) (or 12 \( \text{wx}d4 \) \( \text{de}5 \) and, as with 11 \( \text{gf}1 \), this key move enables the knight and bishop to join the attack; White already cannot avoid heavy material losses) 12...\( \text{wh}2! \) (but not 12...\( \text{wh}3? \) 13 \( \text{wx}d4 \) \( \text{de}5 \) 14 \( \text{we}3 \) \( \text{gg}4+ \) 15 \( \text{xg}4 \) \( \text{wx}g4+ \) 16 f3) 13 \( \text{wx}d4 \) \( \text{de}5 \) 14 \( \text{gg}3 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 15 \( \text{gf}3 \) h6 16 \( \text{dd}5 \) \( \text{gg}4 \) 17 \( \text{xe}7+ \) \( \text{wh}7 \) and Black wins.

11...\( \text{ex}d4! \)

12 \( \text{wx}d4 \)

On 12 \( \text{we}2?! \) the punishment would be even more severe: 12...\( \text{dx}c3! \) 13 \( \text{wc}4+ \) d5 14 \( \text{wx}c8+ \) \( \text{ff}7 \) 15 \( \text{xb}7 \) (15 \( \text{wh}8?! \)
leaves the queen further from the action) 15...\textit{W}xe4+ 16 \textit{\Delta}e3 \textit{W}b8 17 \textit{W}xa7 cxb2 18 \textit{\Delta}d2 \textit{W}b4+ 19 c3 \textit{\Delta}e4+ 20 \textit{\Delta}e2 \textit{\Delta}xc3+ 21 \textit{\Delta}f3 \textit{W}e4+ 22 \textit{\Delta}g3 \textit{\Delta}e2+ 23 \textit{\Delta}h3 \textit{W}f3 mate, I.Rabinovich-Ilyin Zhenevsky, Moscow 1922.

\textbf{B) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \textit{\Delta}f6 3 \textit{\Delta}c3 \textit{\Delta}bd7 4 \textit{\Delta}f3 e5 5 \textit{\Delta}c4 \textit{\Delta}e7 6 dxe5}

This move tries to improve on the variations arising after 6 \textit{\Delta}xf7+ or 6 \textit{\Delta}g5. Although Black loses the option of ...\textit{\Delta}xe4 followed by ...\textit{\Delta}e5, he acquires other defensive resources.

\textbf{6...dxe5}

6...\textit{\Delta}xe5 is of course valid too, and after 7 \textit{\Delta}e2 White's edge is symbolic.

\textbf{7 \textit{\Delta}xf7+}

7 \textit{\Delta}g5 is analogous to 6 \textit{\Delta}g5, with new possibilities for Black: 7...0-0 8 \textit{\Delta}xf7+ \textit{\Delta}xf7 9 \textit{\Delta}e6 \textit{W}e8 10 \textit{\Delta}xc7 \textit{W}d8 11 \textit{\Delta}xa8 b5 or 11...b4?!, with a decent game for Black in both cases.

\textbf{7...\textit{\Delta}xf7 8 \textit{\Delta}g5+}

---

\textbf{8...\textit{\Delta}g6!}

More ambitious than 8...\textit{\Delta}g8 9 \textit{\Delta}e6 \textit{W}e8 10 \textit{\Delta}xc7 \textit{W}g6 11 \textit{\Delta}xa8 \textit{W}xg2 12 \textit{\Delta}f1 \textit{\Delta}c5 13 \textit{\Delta}e2 \textit{\Delta}h3 14 \textit{\Delta}e3 \textit{W}xf1+ 15 \textit{W}xf1 \textit{\Delta}xf1 16 \textit{\Delta}xf1 \textit{\Delta}f7 (or 16...\textit{\Delta}g4), when Black will regain the pawn in a roughly level ending.

In comparison with 6 \textit{\Delta}xf7+ \textit{\Delta}xf7 7 \textit{\Delta}g5+ \textit{\Delta}g6, Black has moves like ...\textit{\Delta}c5, ...	extit{\Delta}d6, and ...	extit{\Delta}e5 at his disposal. This radically alters the deal in his favour.

---

220
9 f4

9 h4?! is condemned both by Kosten and Van Rekom/Janssen. Old analysis by Voronov and Keres, given in the books of the aforementioned authors, runs as follows: 9...h5 10 f4 exf4 11 De2 d6 12 e5 Dxe5 13 Dxf4+ Wh6 14 Df7+ Dxf7 15 De6+ Wh7 16 Dxd8 Dxd8 and Black has a winning advantage.

I see no reason to dispute this verdict. In this position the three minor pieces are much stronger than the white queen; they will unite to cause White's king all kinds of problems!

C) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Df6 3 Dc3 Dbd7 4 Df3 e5 5 Dc4 De7 6 Dg5?!

This is much more interesting than 6 Dxf7+. White will win material by force, but at the cost of falling behind in development, so Black must play dynamically in order not to let his opponent consolidate. As a general rule, Black should try to avoid entering an endgame and concentrate his pieces for an assault against the white king.

6...0-0

After the erroneous 6...d5?, White has a pleasant choice between 7 Dxd5 Dxd5 8 Dxd5 Dxc5 9 Wh5 etc., when he will emerge with the bishop pair,
and the probably even stronger 7 exd5, which wins at least a pawn: 7...0-0 8 0-0 \( \text{b}6 \) 9 dxe5 \( \text{xe}8 \)?! 10 \( \text{wh}5 \) h6 11 \( \text{xf}7 \) \( \text{xf}7 \) 12 \( \text{b}3 \), followed by d6.

7 \( \text{xf}7+ \) \( \text{xf}7 \) 8 \( \text{e}6 \) \( \text{we}8 \) 9 \( \text{xc}7 \) \( \text{wd}8 \) 10 \( \text{xa}8 \)

Firstly, let’s briefly check out the alternatives:

a) 11 \( \text{xb}6 \)? \( \text{xb}6 \) (J.Claesen-Vandevoort, Ghent 1989) merely helps Black to activate his queen.

b) 11 0-0?! is also inaccurate, since after 11...\( \text{a}6 \) Black gains an important tempo by attacking the rook.

c) Finally, 11 \( \text{b}5 \)?! is a suspicious attempt to rescue the other knight. Black can now virtually force a draw, though it’s unclear whether he stands better:

After this forced sequence of moves, White is an exchange and two pawns up, but his knight on a8 is bound to be devoured. Black has three sensible tries:

C1: 10...\( \text{b}6 \)?
C2: 10...exd4?!
C3: 10...\( \text{b}5 \)

C1) 1 4 d6 2 d4 \( \text{f}6 \) 3 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{bd}7 \) 4 \( \text{f}3 \) e5 5 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 6 \( \text{g}5 \)?! 0-0 7 \( \text{xf}7+ \) \( \text{xf}7 \) 8 \( \text{e}6 \) \( \text{we}8 \) 9 \( \text{xc}7 \) \( \text{wd}8 \) 10 \( \text{xa}8 \) \( \text{b}6 \)?

This move follows the same objective as 10...\( \text{b}5 \), with the drawback that White will grab the pawn before his knight dies. White now should continue with either 11 \( \text{xe}3 \) or 11 dxe5, and we will look at:

C11: 11 \( \text{xe}3 \)
C12: 11 dxe5 \( \text{xe}5 \)
C13: 11 dxe5 dxe5

C11) 1 4 d6 2 d4 \( \text{f}6 \) 3 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{bd}7 \) 4 \( \text{f}3 \) e5 5 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 6 \( \text{g}5 \)?! 0-0 7 \( \text{xf}7+ \) \( \text{xf}7 \) 8 \( \text{e}6 \) \( \text{we}8 \) 9 \( \text{xc}7 \) \( \text{wd}8 \) 10 \( \text{xa}8 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 11 \( \text{xe}3 \)
11...\(a6\)

11...\(\text{b7}?!\) seems playable as well, although preventing 0-0 looks more to the point than attacking e4: 12 \(\text{\textit{d}xb6}\)
(if 12 \(\text{d5 \textit{w}xa8 13 f3 then 13...\text{\textit{d}h5 is a good way to initiate play}) 12...\text{\textit{w}xb6}}\)
(maybe 12...\(\text{axb6}?! 13 f3 and now either 13...\(\text{d5 or 13...\textit{a6 with decent compensation for the material}) 13 0-0! \text{\textit{w}xb2}}\)
(Black’s best bet; worse was 13...\(\text{\textit{d}xe4? 14 \text{\textit{d}xe4 \textit{d}xe4 15 dxe5, as in R.Ryan-Kujovic, Parsippany 2004, when in view of the threat e5-e6, White was able to consolidate) 14 \textit{h}b1 \textit{w}xc3 15 \textit{d}xb7 with an edge to White.}}\)

Note in this line that the tempting 13 dxe5 doesn’t bring White much after 13...\(\text{w}xb2 14 \textit{d}d2 (or 14 e6 \textit{w}xc3+ 15 \textit{\textit{d}d2 \textit{w}c4 16 exf7+ \textit{\textit{w}xf7 when Black is active and much better developed; he will surely collect one or two pawns, restoring the material balance, especially as 17 f3? is met by 17...\text{\textit{d}xe4 18 fxe4 \textit{h}4+) 14...\text{\textit{d}xe4 15 \textit{h}b1 \textit{w}a3 16 \textit{\textit{d}xb7 (16 \text{\textit{d}xe4 is no improvement: after 16...\textit{d}xe4 17 \textit{e}6 \textit{w}f5 18 exd7 \textit{\textit{d}xg2 Black has plenty of play for the exchange) 16...\text{\textit{d}xc3 17 \textit{w}g4 \textit{w}c5 18 \textit{\textit{d}e3}}\)

\(\text{\textit{d}xe5 19 \textit{d}xc5 \textit{w}xg4 20 \textit{\textit{d}xa7 \textit{\textit{d}xa2}}\) with approximate equality.

12 \(\text{\textit{d}xb6}\)

12 d5!? \(\text{\textit{w}xa8 13 a4 was unclear in S.Sulskis-Abbasifar, Dubai 2002.}}\)

Or 12 dxe5 and now:

a) 12...\(\text{\textit{d}xe5 13 \text{\textit{d}xb6 a\textit{xa6 14 f3 (14 \textit{\textit{w}d2 \textit{g}4) 14...\textit{\textit{d}b4 15 \textit{\textit{w}d2 \textit{w}f8! (stronger than 15...\textit{c}8 16 a3 \textit{f}8 17 0-0-0, A.Lavrov-Lunev, Lipetsk 1993, which was probably better for White, but still quite complex) 16 0-0-0 \textit{d}c4 17 \textit{\textit{d}b1 \textit{w}a8! 18 a3 \textit{\textit{d}xa3 19 bxa3 \textit{w}xa3...}}\)

...and here White’s wisest seems 20 \(\text{\textit{w}c1! \textit{w}xc3 21 \textit{\textit{d}d2 \textit{w}d4 22 \textit{\textit{d}e3}}\) with a draw by repetition.

b) 12...\(\text{\textit{d}xe5 also deserves attention: 13 \text{\textit{d}xb6 a\textit{xa6 14 \textit{w}d4 (14 \textit{d}d4?! was seen in S.Grun-J.Kappler, German League 1993, when instead of 14...\textit{wa8, Black could have gained the upper hand by playing 14...\textit{d}fg4!) 14...\textit{\textit{d}c4 15 \textit{h}3 \textit{\textit{d}xe3 16 fxe3?! (½-½ Velcheva-N.Kostic, Bucharest 1999) 16...\textit{d}d7! with a small advantage for Black. In place of 16 fxe3?! critical was 16 \textit{\textit{d}xe3 \textit{d}5 17 0-0-0 \textit{\textit{d}c5, followed by...\textit{\textit{d}d4).}}\)

12...\(\text{\textit{w}xb6}\)
$13 \text{ } \text{b1}$

13 dxe5? is bad due to 13...\text{\texttt w}xb2 14 e6 \text{\texttt w}xc3+ (but not 14...f8? 15 d4, as in Von Kiedrowski-Deuker, German League 1994, when the threat of 16 d5 \text{\texttt w}b7 17 b1 wins material) 15 d2 \text{\texttt w}e5 16 exf7+ \text{\texttt f}xf7 with a fine game for Black.

13...\text{\texttt w}c7

(C.Ludwig-J.Johansen, correspondence 2001). In the final position White stands much better from a materialistic point of view, but being unable to castle is a serious concern.

C12) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \text{\texttt f}6 3 c3 \text{\texttt b}d7 4

$\text{\texttt d}3 \text{\texttt e}5 5 \text{\texttt c}4 \text{\texttt e}7 6 \text{\texttt d}5? 0-0 7 \text{\texttt d}xf7+ \text{\texttt d}xf7 8 \text{\texttt w}e6 \text{\texttt w}e8 9 \text{\texttt d}xc7 \text{\texttt w}d8 10 \text{\texttt d}xa8 \text{\texttt b}6 11 \text{\texttt d}xe5$

At this point Black has an important choice to make, as both recaptures have their pros and cons. Indeed, taking the pawn back with the knight looks more dynamic, as a further jump to g4 is then in the air. On the other hand, Black could also increase his e7-bishop's scope and get rid of the backward pawn on d6. Let's look more closely at how play can develop:

11...\text{\texttt d}xe5

The alternative 11...dxe5 is seen in Line C13 below.

Now it is White's turn to choose between several possibilities, amongst which developing the c1-bishop is best:

12 \text{\texttt f}4

12 \text{\texttt d}xb6?! \text{\texttt w}xb6 (as in M.Ursic-A.Srebnic, Bled 2004) and 12 \text{\texttt d}d5?! only help Black to activate his pieces. After the latter move, 12...\text{\texttt d}xd5 13 \text{\texttt w}xd5 \text{\texttt h}4, followed by ...\text{\texttt b}7, reaches a position in which Black can already count on some advantage.

12 f4?!, weakening the kingside,
doesn’t look good either: 12...\(\text{Qc6}\) 13 \(\text{Qd5} \text{Qxd5} 14 \text{exd5} \text{Qa5}\) and Black is fine.

Regarding other options for White, that leaves 12 \(\text{Qe3}\) and 12 \(\text{Qg5} \text{Qb7}\) (or 12...\(\text{Qa6}\)!!, Kalaitzoglou-Hadziman-olis, Athens 2004) 13 \(\text{f3}\) (13 \(\text{f4}\) is still inadvisable on account of 13...\(\text{Qxe4}\)!! 14 \(\text{Qxe4} \text{Qxe4} 15 \text{Qxe7} \text{Qxe7} 16 \text{fxe5} \text{Qxg2}\) when White was in serious trouble in C.Evans-Dobrin, correspondence 2000) 13...\(\text{Qxa8}\) 14 \(\text{Wd4}\) with unclear play.

![Chess Diagram]

Andonov, Belgrade 1991) 14 \(\text{Qxb6 axb6}\) 15 \(\text{f3} \text{d5} 16 0-0 \text{Qd6}\) with attacking prospects for Black on the kingside.

13 \(\text{Wd4} \text{Wxa8} 14 0-0 \text{Wc6}\)

White stands a trifle better from a materialistic point of view, but Black can hope to generate some play, for instance after 14...\(\text{Wc8}\), intending 15 0-0-0?! \(\text{Qxe4}\)!

12...\(\text{Qd7}\)

12...\(\text{Qg6}\)!! is a valid option too, for example:

a) 13 \(\text{Qg3} \text{Qb7} 14 \text{f3} \text{Qxa8} 15 \text{Wd4} \text{Qh5}\), or 15...\(\text{d5} 16 0-0-0 \text{Qc5} 17 \text{Wa4}\) which was assessed as unclear by Lalic and Okhotnik in Carpathian Warrior.

b) 13 \(\text{Qe3} \text{Qb7}\) (13...\(\text{Qa6}\) also leads to a position that is difficult to assess after 14 \(\text{Qxb6 axb6}\) 15 \(\text{Wd4} \text{Qh4} 16 0-0-0 \text{Qxg2} 17 \text{Wxb6} \text{Wc8}\), Karaklajic-

This analysis is taken from Carpathian Warrior. Lalic and Okhotnik continue a bit further, stating that Black is okay, and I fully agree with this conclusion.

C13) 1 \(\text{e4} d6 2 d4 \text{Qf6} 3 \text{Qc3} \text{Qbd7} 4 \text{Qf3} \text{e5} 5 \text{Qc4} \text{Qe7} 6 \text{Qg5}!! 0-0 7 \text{Qxf7+} \text{Qxf7} 8 \text{Qe6} \text{We8} 9 \text{Qxe7} \text{Wd8} 10 \text{Qxa8} \text{b6} 11 \text{Qxe5} \text{dxe5} 12 \text{Qd5}\)

12 \(\text{f4}\) is justified for tactical reasons because Black can hardly avoid the ensuing swap of queens: 12...\(\text{Qb7}\) 13 \(\text{fxe5} \text{Qxe5} 14 \text{Wxd8+} \text{Qxd8} 15 \text{Qf4} \text{Qfd7} 16 \text{Qxb6} \text{Qxb6} 17 \text{Qxe5} \text{Qxe5} 18 0-0-0 \text{Qf2}\) when Black’s activity compensates for his material deficit, leaving a balanced endgame.

12...\(\text{Qxd5}\)

a) 12...\(\text{Qc5}\)!! (Prie-F.Saez, Laragne 2002) is interesting too: 13 \(\text{Qe3} \text{Qxe4}\) (in the event of 13...\(\text{Qxe3} 14 \text{Qxe3} \text{Qa6} 15 \text{f3} \text{Wxa8} 16 \text{Wd6}, White can count on a slight edge) 14 \(\text{We2}\)...
...and now instead of 14...\texttt{Wh4??} 15 0-0, which left White well ahead on material for no compensation, Black should have preferred 14...\texttt{Qd6} 15 \texttt{Qxf6+ Qxf6} 16 \texttt{Bxc5 bxc5} 17 0-0 \texttt{e4!}, followed by the knight recapture while White grabs on c5. Despite White's nominal material edge, Black's active pieces should guarantee a roughly level position.

b) 12...\texttt{Qxe4} 13 \texttt{Qxe7}+ (if 13 \texttt{Qe3} Black can transpose to Prie-Saez by playing 13...\texttt{Qc5} or opt for 13...\texttt{Qd6})
13...\texttt{Qxe7} 14 0-0 (14 \texttt{Qe3} is also quite comfortable for Black: 14...\texttt{Qd5} 15 \texttt{b4 Qe6} [15...\texttt{Qa4?!}])
16 0-0 \texttt{Qb7} 17 \texttt{Qxb6 axb6} and Black was by no means worse in S.Faccia-A.Bianchi, Venice 2005)
14...\texttt{a6}! (a little, and rather obvious, finesse over 14...\texttt{a7?} 15 \texttt{Qc7}, which quickly ended in a White victory in Genius 4-Borsavolgyi, Debrecen 1997)
15 \texttt{Qe1 a7} 16 \texttt{f3} (16...\texttt{Qxf2 can't be allowed})
16...\texttt{Qf6} 17 \texttt{Qxb6} (17 \texttt{Qc7? Qc5+})
17...\texttt{axb6} and, as in Faccia-Bianchi, Black can be satisfied with the outcome of the opening.
13 \texttt{Qxd5 a6}

Preventing 0-0 again. The following ten move sequence is sensible, if not forced:
14 \texttt{Qe3 Qd8} 15 0-0-0 \texttt{Qf6} 16 \texttt{Wc6 Qb7}
17 \texttt{Wc7 Wxa8} 18 \texttt{f3 Qc5} 19 \texttt{Qd8+ Qe8}
20 \texttt{Wxa8 Qxe3+} 21 \texttt{Qd1 Qxc7} 22 \texttt{Qxe8+}
\texttt{Qf7} 23 \texttt{Qxe5}

For the moment White has a rook and three pawns for the enemy pair of bishops. The problem is that his rook is sort of trapped in the middle of the board, and if White has to give it up for one of the bishops, he will stand worse. Thus 23...\texttt{Qg6} is at least equal for Black, who was in fact successful in a practical game with 23...\texttt{Qd7+} (Computer Gandalf-Cifuentes Parada, AEGON tournament, The Hague 1995).

C2) 1 \texttt{e4 d6} 2 \texttt{d4 Qf6} 3 \texttt{Qc3 Qbd7} 4 \texttt{Qf3}
\texttt{e5} 5 \texttt{Qc4 Qe7} 6 \texttt{Qg5?} 0-0 7 \texttt{Qxf7+ Qxf7}
8 \texttt{Qe6 We8} 9 \texttt{Qxc7 Qd8} 10 \texttt{Qxa8 exd4?!}

A recommendation by the authors of The Lion, already proposed by Tony Kosten in Winning with the Philidor. The idea consists of quickly attacking f2. According to both sources a logical
course of events now seems to be:

11 \textit{W}xd4 \textit{D}g4  

Clearing the path to c5 for the e7-bishop by playing 11...d5? would be a nice freeing move. Unfortunately, White easily copes with the assault and gets a decisive advantage: 12 \textit{Q}xd5 \textit{A}c5 (or 12...\textit{Q}xd5 13 \textit{W}xd5) 13 \textit{Q}xf6+ \textit{B}xf6 14 \textit{W}d5+ \textit{B}h8 15 0-0 (M.Sadeghi-I.Badjarani, Tehran 2005).

11...\textit{Q}e5? (Busic-M.Müller, German League 1997) is probably too slow, and White can even afford to spend some time rescuing the horse with 12 \textit{W}xa7. After 12...\textit{Q}g4 13 0-0 \textit{A}h4 14 f3, I see no effective way for Black to continue his attack.

After the knight sally, 11...\textit{Q}g4, White has a broad choice of candidate moves. Apart from the obvious main line, 12 0-0, three other moves deserve thorough analysis, namely: a) 12 \textit{Q}d1, b) 12 \textit{W}xa7 and c) 12 \textit{A}e3. Even if these options can be dismissed as inferior to 12 0-0, being respectively: a) passive, b) very greedy, c) an invitation for a future ...\textit{Q}xe3, their consequences remain unclear. 12 f3?, on the other hand, is quite bad due to 12...\textit{A}h4+ 13 g3 \textit{Q}xh2! and Black seizes the advantage.

12 0-0!

Or:

a) 12 \textit{Q}d1 \textit{A}c5 13 0-0 (13 \textit{Q}e3!? is playable too: 13...\textit{Q}xf2 14 0-0 \textit{A}f6 15 \textit{W}b4 \textit{D}xe4 16 \textit{Q}d5 \textit{A}e6 17 \textit{Q}ac7 \textit{B}xc7 18 \textit{Q}xc7 \textit{B}xc7 and Black’s activity compensates for his small material deficit) 13...\textit{A}f6 14 \textit{W}c4 \textit{A}e6 15 \textit{W}e2 \textit{A}e5 (15...\textit{W}xa8 is also fine) 16 h3 (Therkildsen-Depyl, French League 2002) and now instead of 16...\textit{W}h4!?, something like 16...\textit{Q}h2 17 \textit{A}e1 \textit{A}xh3 18 f4 \textit{A}g4 19 \textit{W}f2 \textit{Q}e6 would have resulted in a complete mess.

b) 12 \textit{W}xa7 was seen in P.Fabri-Van Reem, correspondence 2000. As 12...\textit{A}h4?! 13 g3 \textit{A}xf2 14 \textit{A}f1 \textit{A}xh2 15 \textit{A}f4 \textit{A}f6 16 0-0-0 left White very much on top, Black should probably have tried 12...d5!, when the following lines illustrate his attacking potential:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

13 \textit{Q}xd5 \textit{A}c5 14 \textit{W}a4 \textit{A}xf2+ 15 \textit{Q}e2 \textit{A}c5 16 \textit{A}g5 \textit{A}f6 17 \textit{A}xf6 \textit{A}g4+ 18 \textit{A}f1 \textit{A}h4 19 \textit{W}c4 \textit{D}xe4 20 \textit{W}xe4 \textit{A}xf6+ 21 \textit{A}f4 \textit{W}d2 with mate to follow shortly; or 13 f3 \textit{A}c5 14 \textit{W}a4 \textit{A}f2+ 15 \textit{Q}e2 \textit{A}c5
16 \textit{W}^b_4 \textit{dx}e_4.

c) 12 \textit{\textit{\textbf{A}}}_c3 \textit{\textit{\textbf{f}}}_6 (Whitaker-Chajes, Philadelphia 1923, saw Black rushing to swap 12...\textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_xe_3? 13 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_xe_3 and then 13...\textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_g_5 14 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_xa_7 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_e_5, but despite his flash victory, I doubt Black would have enough compensation after the strong 15 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_d_5! when White stops ...\textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_f_4, and simply threatens 0-0 followed by f4) 13 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_xd_6 (13 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_d_3?! \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_xe_5 14 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_d_5 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_xe_3 15 \textit{\textit{\textbf{f}}}_xe_3 was L.Owens-Schalkwijk, correspondence 2001, and now after 15...\textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_d_7!, intending ...\textit{\textit{\textbf{c}}}_6 and ...\textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_xa_8, Black has a pleasant position) 13...\textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_xe_3 14 \textit{\textit{\textbf{f}}}_xe_3 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_e_5 (14...\textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_xc_3? 15 \textit{\textit{\textbf{b}}}_c_3 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_h_4+ 16 \textit{\textit{\textbf{G}}}_3 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_xe_4 17 0-0-0 is better for White, as the second player lacks adequate compensation) 15 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_d_5 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_h_4+ 16 \textit{\textit{\textbf{d}}}_2 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_xc_3+! (16...\textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_b_2+?! looks inaccurate, since after 17 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_e_2 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_f_6 18 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_xe_5 \textit{\textit{\textbf{d}}}_d_7+ 19 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_c_1 \textit{\textit{\textbf{w}}}_xe_3+ 20 \textit{\textit{\textbf{b}}}_1 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_xe_2 21 \textit{\textit{\textbf{b}}}_3 the white monarch will feel safe 'in fianchetto') 17 \textit{\textit{\textbf{b}}}_c_3 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_f_6.

I believe Black has enough for the exchange and two pawns here. Indeed, several factors speak in his favour, such as the vulnerable enemy king, the cornered knight and White's temporary lack of piece coordination. That said, further investigation is needed in order to assess this position definitively.

12...\textit{\textit{b}}_6

12...\textit{\textit{f}}_6 also fails to equalize. White now has 13 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_d_1, 13 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_c_4, and 13 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_xa_7?!, the first two being sounder and good enough for a stable edge:

a) 13 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_d_1 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_xc_3 14 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_xg_4 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_f_6 15 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_d_1 \textit{\textit{\textbf{f}}}_8 16 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_e_3 (16 \textit{\textit{\textbf{f}}}_4) 16...\textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_e_6 17 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_xa_7 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_xa_8 18 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_d_4 etc., Salmon-Pupols, Seattle 1986.

b) 13 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_c_4 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_c_5 (after 13...\textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_de_5?! 14 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_b_3! White is ready to repel the knight by means of f3, while he still has the option of \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_xb_7 in the event of ...\textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_d_7) 14 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_d_5 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_e_6 15 \textit{\textit{\textbf{f}}}_3 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_e_5 16 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_xh_6+ \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_xh_6 17 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_d_4 and Black will have to jettison another pawn, namely d6, in order to capture the knight and avoid the pin \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_g_5. With a rook and three pawns for a pair of minor pieces, White's material advantage will then be decisive.

13 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_b_5!

13 \textit{\textit{\textbf{h}}}_3?! is less striking, and leads somewhat logically to an endgame: 13...\textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_g_5 14 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_d_5 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_a_6 15 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_xh_6+ \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_xh_6 16 \textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}_d_1 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_xa_8 17 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_xd_6 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_xe_4 18 \textit{\textit{\textbf{W}}}_d_5+
\[ \text{Wxd5 19} \text{Qxd5. Even though Black can hold this final position, it does seem obvious to me that White is on top.} \]

13...\text{Qc5}

13...\text{Qa6?? is met by 14 Qac7.} 

14 f3 \text{Qe5 15 b4} 

15...\text{Qc6}

The alternative 15...f6 brings tactical complications which are, however, in White’s favour: 16 \text{Wd1 Qa6 17 Qac7 Qxc7 18 Qxc7 etc., and White will end up with at least one or two extra pawns.} 

16 \text{Wd2 Qe6 17 Qd1}

...and d6 drops, leaving White with a rook and three pawns for knight and bishop – again a technically winning position.

\textbf{C3) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 f3 e5 5 Qc4 Qe7 6 Qg5!? 0-0 7 Qxf7+ Qxf7 8 Qe6 Qe8 9 Qxc7 Qwd8 10 Qxa8 b5} 

A much more dynamic approach than 10...b6. Black acquires the additional option of ...b4 and intends to regain the a8-knight ‘for free’ (White can’t grab the b-pawn). In some lines, though, when White plays 0-0, Black can’t win a tempo with ...Qa6.

11 \text{dxe5}

As was the case after 10...b6, White has several options at this juncture:

a) 11 a3 Qb7 12 d5 Qxa8 13 We2 a6 14 0-0 and the game was in equilibrium, S.Jackson-Rellstab, London 1979. 12...Qxa8 is a bit better, as the bishop eventually has to come back to b7 anyway, while the queen may find a more useful post than d8 (perhaps c8 or f8).

b) 11 Qxb5? is simply bad. After 11...Qa5+ 12 Qc3 Qxe4 13 0-0 Qxc3 14 bxc3 Qb7 (Gunina-M.Fominikh, Smolensk 2001), because of White’s spoiled pawn structure, Black’s minor pieces are stronger than the rook and two pawns. Or 13 Qd2 Qxf2 14 Qe4 Qwd5 15 Qxf2 Qxg2 (M.Sruverink-G.Van Vliet, Hengelo 2002) and White’s position collapses, as the bishops can join the attack from h4 and a6 respectively.

c) 11 0-0 Qb7 (not 11...b4?!), when the knight comes to rescue its colleague after 12 Qb5) 12 Qxb5 Qxa8 13 f3 (if 13 d5 Qxe4) and now both 13...d5 and the al-
ternative 13...\(\text{Wb6}\) give Black decent play, e.g. 13...\(\text{Wb6}\) 14 \(\text{c4}\) \(\text{a6}\) 15 \(\text{Dc3}\) exd4 16 \(\text{Dd5}\) \(\text{Dxd5}\) 17 \(\text{cxd5}\) \(\text{Axf6}\).

d) On 11 \(\text{We2}\) or 11 \(\text{Wd3}\), the simplest reply is 11...\(\text{a6}\). (11...\(\text{b4}\)?! 12 \(\text{Db5}\) is again erroneous.)

e) The solid 11 f3 is best answered by 11...\(\text{Aa6}\)! (but not 11...\(\text{Ab7}\)?) 12 \(\text{Dxb5}\) \(\text{Axa8}\) 13 d5!, as in A.Ericson-W.Schoenmann, correspondence 1964, when White will have time to consolidate with \(\text{We2}, \text{Cc3}\), and if needed \(\text{Ab1}\) before he castles).

For example, 12 dxe5 \(\text{Dxe5}\) 13 \(\text{Dd5}\) (13 \(\text{f4}\) is no improvement after 13...\(\text{Wxa8}\)! 14 \(\text{fxe5}\) \(\text{Dxe4}\) when, due to the numerous threats of ...\(\text{Ah4+}\), ...\(\text{Af2}\) and ...\(\text{Dxc3}\), White is in major trouble) 13...\(\text{Dxd5}\) 14 \(\text{Wxd5}\) \(\text{Ah4+}\) 15 \(\text{Dd1}\) \(\text{Ab7}\) 16 \(\text{Wxb5}\) \(\text{Ac6}\) 17 \(\text{Wb3}\) d5! and the white monarch was struggling in Canneva-Leinel, French League 2003.

11...\(\text{Dxe5}\)

If Black recaptures with 11...dxe5, the following lines are possible:

a) 12 \(\text{Dg5}\) \(\text{Ab7}\) 13 \(\text{Dxh6}\) \(\text{Dxf6}\) 14 \(\text{Dxb5}\) \(\text{Wa5+}\) 15 \(\text{Dc3}\) \(\text{Dc5}\) (not 15...\(\text{Dxe4}\)? 16 \(\text{Dc7}\)! \(\text{Axg2}\) 17 \(\text{Ag1}\) and White keeps his extra material, Negulescu-Shumia- kina, Bucharest 1993) 16 f3 \(\text{Axa8}\) is unclear.

b) 12 \(\text{Dxb5}\)? \(\text{Wa5+}\) 13 \(\text{Dc3}\) \(\text{Dxe4}\)! 14 \(\text{Dd5}\) \(\text{Dc5}\) 15 \(\text{Wxe4}\) \(\text{Dxf2+}\) 16 \(\text{Dd1}\) \(\text{Df6}\) 17 \(\text{Wc4}\) \(\text{Dg4+}\) 18 \(\text{De2}\) \(\text{Wd8+}\) 19 \(\text{Dd2}\) \(\text{Wxa8}\) was winning for Black in Brodda- Secula, correspondence 1996, as White is powerless to prevent ...\(\text{Wxg2}\), collecting back the invested exchange with a raging attack.

c) 12 a4 \(\text{Ab7}\) 13 axb5 \(\text{Dxe4}\) 14 \(\text{Dxe4}\) \(\text{Dxe4}\) 15 0-0 \(\text{Dc5}\), or 12...\(\text{b4}\) 13 \(\text{Db5}\) \(\text{Dxe4}\) 14 \(\text{Dc3}\) \(\text{Aa6}\) with a very acceptable position for Black in either case.

d) 12 f3?! \(\text{Ab7}\), intending to meet 13 \(\text{Dxb5}\)...

...with 13...\(\text{Dxe4}\)! 14 \(\text{fxe4}\) \(\text{Ab4+}\)! and 15...\(\text{Wh4}\), winning.

e) 12 f4?! \(\text{b4}\)! 13 \(\text{Dd5}\) \(\text{Dxe4}\) 14 \(\text{Dc7}\) \(\text{Dc5}\) is good for Black.

f) 12 \(\text{Dd5}\) \(\text{Ad6}\) with mutual chances in Seepling-Schmaltz, German League 1992.

12 0-0

Exploiting the drawback of ...\(\text{b7-b5}\). Apart from 12 f4?! \(\text{Ag4}\), and of course 12 \(\text{Dxb5}\), which clearly passes
the initiative to Black, the alternatives are similar to those after 10...b6 and offer chances for both sides:

a) 12 \( \text{\textipa{f}}4 \text{\textipa{d}}7 \).

b) 12 \( \text{\textipa{d}}5 \text{\textipa{xd}}5 13 \text{\textipa{w}}\text{\textipa{x}}d5 \text{\textipa{d}}7 \).

c) 12 \( \text{\textipa{g}}5 \text{\textipa{b}}7 \), Bessat-Leignel, Bethune 2002

d) 12 \( \text{\textipa{xd}}5 \text{\textipa{a}}5+ 13 \text{\textipa{c}}3 \text{\textipa{xe}}4 14 \text{\textipa{d}}\text{\textipa{d}}5 \text{\textipa{c}}5 \), D.Fricke-Velker, correspondence 1990.

12...\text{\textipa{b}}7

13 \( \text{\textipa{x}}b5 \)

13 f4?! is too committal: 13...\text{\textipa{ed}}7 14 \( \text{\textipa{x}}b5 \) (14 e5?! dxe5 15 fxe5 \( \text{\textipa{c}}5+ 16 \text{\textipa{h}}1 \text{\textipa{w}}a8\), followed by ...\text{\textipa{xe}}5 and wins) 14...\text{\textipa{x}}a8 15 \text{\textipa{e}}3 \text{\textipa{wb}}8! 16 c4 a6 17 \text{\textipa{c}}3 \text{\textipa{xe}}4 gave Black a slight edge in Pilnik-Najdorf, Buenos Aires 1941.

13...\text{\textipa{x}}a8 14 f3 d5

Or 14...\text{\textipa{wb}}6+ 15 \text{\textipa{d}}d4 and only then 15...d5.

15 exd5

So far we have been following A.Huber-Schmidt Schaeffer, German League 1997.

15...\text{\textipa{xd}}5

White has a rook and three pawns for only two minor pieces. Here, however, he is behind in development and Black’s pieces are very active, so I would assess this position as unclear.

Conclusion

The only real test for Black in this chapter is 6 \( \text{\textipa{g}}5 0-0 7 \text{\textipa{x}}f7+ \) (Line C). Black has a good score in the variation starting with 10...b6, because he often succeeds in finding worthwhile compensation for the small material deficit. Looking at the alternatives, 10...b5 is unclear, whereas 10...exd4?! seems inadequate to me.
Chapter Twelve

Main Line:
7 ♝e2 and 7 a4

1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♝f6 3 ♝c3 ♝bd7 4 ♝f3 e5
5 ♝c4 ♝e7 6 0-0

With 6 0-0 we finally reach the main line of the Philidor Hanham. Typically, after a dozen or so moves the arising positions are still quite rich as, usually, all of the pieces have remained on the board. Moreover, the pawn structure isn’t yet fixed, so several plans are possible because of this.

Black essentially chooses between a plan that aims to expand on the queenside by means of ...b5, and one that secures the c5-square for his knight. This second plan is implemented by the move ...a5, preceded or not by the exchange ...exd4.

As for White, he can determine the pawn structure by playing either d5 or dxe5, the latter usually being efficient only if the knight manoeuvre ♝f3-h4-f5 can follow.

With the central swap dxe5 being a constant theme (White can carry it out at any moment), I will mention it only when it’s of particular interest. The natural recapture is ...dxe5, ‘levelling’ the pawn structure. The other capture, ...exd5, is sometimes compulsory, notably to prevent the manoeuvre ♝f3-h4-f5. Its drawback, however, is to concede a spatial advantage to White.

The great flexibility of the Philidor Defence means that there are many inversions of moves orders. It is often possible, for instance, to start with the routine retreat ♝a2, and then follow up with a developing move, or vice-versa. The same goes with the moves a4-a5 from White (when Black has neither played ...a5 himself, nor ...b6) and h2-h3. As these inversions of moves aren’t generally that relevant, and as it would be tedious to examine them in detail, I will try in the following three chapters to expose the hidden ideas, while avoid repetitions.

6...0-0

6...h6?!/? is an appropriate idea if Black doesn’t rush to castle. Indeed, he
can sometimes consider a plan like...c6, ...\texttt{\textbackslash w}c7, ...\texttt{\textbackslash g}5, followed ...\texttt{\textbackslash d}f8-g6. But as the centre isn’t totally blocked, this kind of action seems suspicious to me. White shouldn’t try to refute Black’s concept, but instead just play ‘normal’ moves (such as \texttt{\textbackslash a}e1, a4, b3, \texttt{\textbackslash b}2). In a practical game I believe that Black can foster reasonable hopes of success. What follows here, though, is an example of Black mistreating the opening: 6...h6 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 \texttt{\textbackslash w}e2 c6 9 a4 \texttt{\textbackslash w}c7 10 \texttt{\textbackslash d}h4

17 \texttt{\textbackslash a}e1! \texttt{\textbackslash e}6 18 \texttt{\textbackslash d}d5+ cxd5 19 exd5 \texttt{\textbackslash e}4 20 \texttt{\textbackslash w}h4+ 1-0 D.Frolov-Borsavolgyi, Budapest 1996.

10...g6?! (10...\texttt{\textbackslash d}b6?!, followed by 11...a5, was much safer) 11 f4 exf4? (on 11...\texttt{\textbackslash d}h7?! White should refrain from playing the tempting 12 \texttt{\textbackslash d}xf7+?, which seems to lead only to a draw after 12...\texttt{\textbackslash w}xf7 13 fxe5+ \texttt{\textbackslash g}7 14 \texttt{\textbackslash d}xe6 \texttt{\textbackslash d}xe6 15 \texttt{\textbackslash w}g4+ \texttt{\textbackslash d}g5 16 \texttt{\textbackslash w}f5+ \texttt{\textbackslash g}7 17 \texttt{\textbackslash a}xg5 \texttt{\textbackslash f}8 18 \texttt{\textbackslash d}h6+ \texttt{\textbackslash w}xh6 19 \texttt{\textbackslash w}h3+ \texttt{\textbackslash d}g7 20 \texttt{\textbackslash w}g4+ with perpetual check; instead 12 \texttt{\textbackslash d}f3 exf4 13 \texttt{\textbackslash d}xf4!, intending 13...\texttt{\textbackslash w}xf4 14 \texttt{\textbackslash d}d4, remains favourable for White) 12 \texttt{\textbackslash d}xf4 \texttt{\textbackslash d}e5 (if 12...\texttt{\textbackslash w}b6+? 13 \texttt{\textbackslash h}1 \texttt{\textbackslash w}xb2 14 e5 \texttt{\textbackslash w}xc3 15 exf6 \texttt{\textbackslash w}xf6 16 \texttt{\textbackslash f}3 and Black is dead meat) 13 \texttt{\textbackslash d}f3 \texttt{\textbackslash d}d6 14 \texttt{\textbackslash a}xe5 \texttt{\textbackslash a}xe5 15 \texttt{\textbackslash d}xe5 \texttt{\textbackslash w}xe5 16 \texttt{\textbackslash f}2 \texttt{\textbackslash e}7

After 6...0-0 White’s main move is 7 \texttt{\textbackslash a}e1, which is dealt with in Chapters 13 and 14. Here we will look at White’s two chief alternatives:

A: 7 a4
B: 7 \texttt{\textbackslash w}e2

Other options are unappealing:

a) 7 \texttt{\textbackslash g}5?! h6 8 \texttt{\textbackslash h}4 c6 9 a4 \texttt{\textbackslash d}h5 was equal in Philippe-Shirazi, Paris 1999. Black eases his game by swapping the bishops, gaining in the process the squares f4 for his knight and f6 for his queen.

b) 7 h3?! (Nisipeanu-Bauer, Bastia 2001) is a rare example of such an early inaccuracy from the Romanian GM, probably caused by the exhausting schedule of the tournament: 7...c6 8 a4 \texttt{\textbackslash d}xe4! 9 \texttt{\textbackslash a}xe4 (if 9 \texttt{\textbackslash a}xe4 d5 10 \texttt{\textbackslash d}xe5 \texttt{\textbackslash d}xe5 11 dxe5 dxe4 or 11...dxc4 12 \texttt{\textbackslash d}d6 with a level position) 9...\texttt{\textbackslash d}fx7 10 \texttt{\textbackslash d}xe4 exd4 11 \texttt{\textbackslash d}g5 (otherwise White could end up worse) 11...\texttt{\textbackslash a}xe5 12 \texttt{\textbackslash a}xe5 \texttt{\textbackslash w}f8
13 \textit{Wxd4} d5 with equality. 7 \textit{e3?!} would allow the same ‘trick’.

A) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \textit{gf6} 3 \textit{Cc3} \textit{bd7} 4 \textit{f3 e5} 5 \textit{Cc4} \textit{e7} 6 0-0 0-0 7 a4

The only drawback of 7...a5 is that it implies Black won’t be following the plan including ...b6.

8 \textit{a2}

Black can now answer 8 a5?! with 8...\textit{b8}, with the idea of ...b5.

This move usually leads to a transposition to either 7 \textit{We2} or 7 \textit{He1}. White avoids the line 7 \textit{We2} exd4, but does allow the same idea with the inclusion of a4 and ...c6. As Black’s best replies here are 7...a5 or 7...c6, and because White can hardly do without \textit{We2} or \textit{He1}, 7 a4 has no real independent significance.

7...c6

This offers a transposition to the main lines.

In the event of 7...a6, 8 a5 deserves consideration. After 8...exd4, 9 \textit{Wxd4!} favours White, as in the encounters Topalov-Rivas Pastor, Dos Hermanas 1994 and Emms-R.Hartoch, Isle of Man 1996. 9 \textit{Qxd4?!}, on the other hand, would be unsuitable on account of 9...\textit{Qe5} 10 \textit{Qa2} c5 followed by 11...\textit{Qc6}, 11...\textit{Qe6} or ...\textit{Qxf5}, depending where the knight retreats. The weak a5-pawn ensures Black of a comfortable game.

For example, 9 \textit{We2} b5 10 axb6 axb6 11 d5 \textit{b7} 12 \textit{Qd1} (12 dxc6 \textit{Qxc6} threatens ...b5 when, if White captures, Black can regain the pawn by taking on e4) 12...b5 and ...b4 equalizes.

8...\textit{Qxe4} is analogous to 7 h3 c6 8 a4 \textit{Qxe4}. The difference, white pawns on a5 and h2 in one case, on a4 and h3 in the other, is not important.

8...a5

8...b6?! also deserves consideration, as the thematic 9 dxe5?! dxe5 10 \textit{Qh4} fails to bring White anything concrete. Black can then choose between 10...\textit{Qc5} 11 \textit{Qf3} \textit{Qe6} 12 \textit{Qf5} \textit{Qd4}, and even 10...\textit{Qxe4} 11 \textit{Qxe4} \textit{Qxh4}. In the latter case, 12 \textit{Wh5} \textit{Qe7} 13 \textit{Qd1} offers decent compensation for the sacrificed pawn, but not more.

9 \textit{We2}

9 \textit{He1} transposes to Line D2 of Chapter 13.
9...exd4 10 Qxd4 Qc5!

We are following the recent game

Several weeks earlier I chose the inaccurate 10...e8?! and suffered a 'clean' loss after 11 e3 f8 12 f3 Qe5 (12...d5 fails to 13 exd5 Qc5 14 Qd1 or 14 Wf2 and White retains the edge) 13 Qh1 (Ulibin-Bauer, Bienne 2006). White enjoys a space advantage and slowly reinforces his position without worrying about any kind of counterplay from Black.

11 Qd1!

The immediate 11 h3?! Qe8 12 Wf3 Qe6 13 Qxe6 fxe6 left Black with a comfortable equality in Kazhgaleyev-Elbilia, Paris 2006.

11...Wb6 12 h3

In the event of 12 e5?! dxe5 13 Wxe5 Qe8 14 Qf5 Qxf5 15 Qxf5 Qad8, the activity of Black's pieces outweighs White's pair of bishops.

12...Qe6?

12...Qe8! was to be preferred, with a balanced position after 13 Qf3 Qd8 or 13...Qe6. Indeed, White now missed an opportunity to claim a noticeable advantage.

13 Qxe6?!

13 e3! was the move I feared during the game, and 13...Qxa2 14 Qxa2 Wc7 15 Qf5 Qe8 16 Qg5 promises a pleasant plus for White. But 13...Qxa2 is the lesser evil since 13...Wxb2?! 14 Qxe6 is pretty annoying: 14...Qxe6? 15 Qxe6 Wxc3 16 Qd4 or 15...fxe6 16 Qd3 and the queen is trapped, while after 14...fxe6 15 Qd4 Wxb6 16 Qxe6+ Qh8 17 Qab1 Wa7 Black's position might still be holdable, but it looks quite grim.

13...fxe6 14 e5

14 Qe3 d5 15 Qd4 also led to an equal game.

14...Qd5 15 exd6 Qxd6 16 Qxd5

If 16 e3?! Qxc3 17 bxc3 Wc7 or 16...Qxe3?.

16...exd5 17 c4 Qae8 18 Qe3 Qf4

19 Qxc5

Both my opponent and I thought 19 cxd5? to be erroneous, but in fact it's another path to a draw: 19...Qxe3 20 d6+ (not 20 dxc6+? Qh8 21 fxe3 Qb3! intending 22 Qxb3 Qxe3 with a deadly discovered check to follow), and now
20...\uc70\uc5d0? is bad in view of 21 fxe3 \uc2a0\uc77c 22 d7 \uc2a0\uc77c 23 d8\uc2b5 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9 24 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9+ \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9 25 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9! \uc2a0\uc77c 26 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9, when the cornered knight is bound to be devoured. Correct is 20...\uc2a0\uc77c! 21 \uc2a0\uc77c+ (or 21 \uc2a0\uc77c+ \uc2a0\uc77c 22 \uc2a0\uc77c1 \uc138\uc2b0 23 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9 c5) 21...\uc2a0\uc77c 22 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9 23 \uc2a0\uc77c1 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9 24 \uc2a0\uc77c1 \uc138\uc2b0 with a probable draw.

19...\uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9 20 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9 d4

20...\uc2a0\uc77c gets Black nowhere after 21 cxd5 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9 22 \uc2a0\uc77c1.

21 \uc70\uc5d0?

The fatal mistake. 21 \uc138\uc788? \uc138\uc788! would not have solved White’s problems either, but the far from obvious 21 \uc138\uc788! would have pushed any danger away. White would then continue with \uc138\uc7881 and \uc2a0\uc77c1.

21...\uc2a0\uc77c!! 22 \uc138\uc788 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9

22...\uc138\uc788 worked as well, contrary to what I figured during our mutual time-trouble: 23 \uc2a0\uc77c2 (or 23 c5+ \uc2a0\uc77c 24 fxe3 \uc2a0\uc77c 25 \uc2a0\uc77c1 \uc138\uc2b0 26 \uc2a0\uc77c 27 \uc2a0\uc77c1 \uc138\uc2b03!) 23...\uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9 24 c5+ \uc2a0\uc77c 25 \uc2a0\uc77c1 g6 26 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a95+! was the move I missed; instead 26...\uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9+?? 27 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9 \uc2a0\uc77c3? 28 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9+ would allow White to turn the tables.

23 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a92+ 24 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9 \uc138\uc788 25 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9 \uc138\uc788

White’s monarch is too weak and succumbs to the assault.

26 c5+ \uc2a0\uc77c 27 \uc2a0\uc77c \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a93+ 28 \uc2a0\uc77c \uc138\uc7884+ 29 \uc2a0\uc77c \uc138\uc788 30 \uc138\uc788 \uc138\uc788 \uc138\uc788 31 \uc138\uc788 \uc138\uc788+ 32 \uc138\uc788 \uc138\uc788 \uc138\uc788+ 0-1

B) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \uc2a0\uc77c 3 \uc2a0\uc77c \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9 4 \uc2a0\uc77c
e5 5 \uc2a0\uc77c \uc138\uc788 \uc138\uc788 0-0 0-0 7 \uc138\uc788

Now we will consider:

B1: 7...\uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9d4
B2: 7...\uc138\uc788c6

B1) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \uc2a0\uc77c 3 \uc2a0\uc77c \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9 4 \uc2a0\uc77c
e5 5 \uc2a0\uc77c \uc138\uc788 \uc138\uc788 0-0 0-0 7 \uc138\uc788 exd4 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9

8...\uc138\uc788?? would lose on the spot:

9 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9+! \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9 10 \uc138\uc788 \uc138\uc788 11 \uc138\uc788+ d5 12 exd5+ \uc2a0\uc77c (12...\uc2a0\uc77c5 13 \uc138\uc788+ \uc138\uc7881+ \uc138\uc7886 15 \uc2a0\uc120\uc6a9+ is even worse, or if 12...\uc138\uc120\uc6a9 13 \uc138\uc120\uc6a9 with a deadly discovery check to follow) 13 d6+ \uc2a0\uc77c8 14 dxc7. The queen is captured meaning that White will have an overwhelming material advantage.

9 \uc2a0\uc77c
The critical follow-up, which justifies Black’s decision to release the central tension.

10...f5

10...f3?! g4 isn’t that bad for White, but his opponent has no reason to complain either.

10...exf5 11 exf5 w7d

A controversial position: if it turns out to be good for Black, then 7 w2e deserves a question mark and 7...exd4 is its refutation.

12 f4!

12 d5 hae8 and 12...f4 dc6 are totally satisfactory for Black, notably because of the weak f5-pawn.

12...dc6 13 g4 d5 14 g5 c4 15 gxf6

16 a4

This is the critical position: Black has sacrificed a piece for two pawns and the initiative. Meanwhile White’s kingside is weakened, his bishop is out of play on a4, and finishing development will not be easy for him. Kosten considered this position to be favourable for Black, but practice doesn’t reflect this judgement.

17 w2g2!

Stronger than both 17...xc6 and 17...e1, the only moves examined by the British Grandmaster.

17...f3?! is a worse version of White’s main queen move: 17...e7! (17...ad8? 18 e2 b5 19 xb5 d4 20 xd4 xd4+ 21 h1 xc2 22 f5 and Black’s compensation soon vanished in Nisipeanu-Miltner, German League 1996; 17...a6?) 18 d1 b5 19 xb5 fb8 and now the greedy 20 a4 b4 21 w3a3 leaves the white king too lonely after 21...w6g6+ 22 f2 h4+ 23 e2 f5 with a very dangerous initiative: if 24 wxb4? d4+ 25 d2 w2g+ wins.

17...e7 18 d1

With the idea of c3 and a2, but Black strikes first.

18...b5 19 xb5 fb8

Regaining the piece.

20 a4

20 a4? is worse: 20...b4 21 e3 w6 22 f5 w6d.

20...a6 21 e3 d4 22 h1 e3 23 xe3 a5 24 axb5

...was unclear in Bezem-Rebers, Dutch League 2001.
B21) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 Qf3 e5 5 Qc4 Qe7 6 0-0 0-0 7 Qe2 c6 8 a4

8 Qd1 seems more precise because the ...b5 push is prevented anyway. Indeed, after 8...b5 9 dx e5 dx e5 (or 9...Qxc4 10 exd6 with a clear advantage) 10 Qxe5 bxc4 11 Qxc6 Qe8 12 e5...

B21: Black avoids ...exd4
B22: 8...exd4 9 Qxd4 without 9...Qe8
B23: 8...exd4 9 Qxd4 Qe8

B21) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 Qf3 e5 5 Qc4 Qe7 6 0-0 0-0 7 Qe2 c6 8 a4 b6

Just like ...a7-a5, this is a routine move in the Philidor. 8...h6 and 8...Qc7 represent other possibilities, but they offer White the opportunity to play a4-a5. Therefore 8...a5, followed by either ...h6 or ...Qc7, restricts White’s choice and is more accurate. Here’s an illustration: 9 Qd1 Qe8!? (9...Qc7 is more common) 10 h3 (directed against ...Qb6 and ....Qg4) 10...Qd8 11 Qe3 (11 b3!?) 11...Qe7 12 Qa3 (peculiar, but Black had no problems anyway) 12...Qxd4 13 Qxd4 Qe5 14 Qxe5 dxe5 15 Qe3 Qc7 with an equal position, Hamdouchi-Manouck, French League 1993.

9 Qd1 Qc7

10 d5

10 h3 and 10 Qg5 would both call for the answer 10...a6, which enables Black to react to d4-d5 by playing ....c5.

10...Qxd5
10...c5?! 11 Qh4 a6 12 Qf5 Ne8 13 Qd3?! Qf8 14 Kg3 Qg6 15 Qg5 h6 16 Qxe7+ Qxe7 17 Qd2 Qf4 18 Wf1 Wa7 19 Qb1 Qd7 20 b4 cxb4 21 Qxb4 Qc8 was unclear in J.Polgar-Izeta Txabari, Dos Hermanas 1993. All the pawns on the queenside are weak at present! The most vulnerable seems to be b6, but the c-file provides Black with counterplay.

11 a5! is a more positional treatment which ensures White better prospects (but it is well known that Judit has an inclination for the direct attack!), for example 11...bxa5 12 Qb5 Wb6 13 Qd2 etc., or 11...Qb7 12 a6! Qc8 13 Qb5...

...when the threat of Qc6 and Qb5 forces the retreat...Qb8 and White has a noticeable spatial plus.

10...Qb7?! is equally possible, but after 11 dx6 Qxc6 12 Qb5 Wb7 13 Qxd6 Qxd6 14 Qxd6 Qxe4 15 Qg5 the edge remains with White.

12 Qxd5 Qxd5 13 Qxd5 Qb8?!

12...Qb7! 13 a5 Qxd5 14 Qxd5 is slightly better for White according to Donev; this seems a superficial assessment to me, since after 14...Wc6! 15 Qd1 Wfc8 16 c3 Qc5 17 Qd2 Qg5 Black has enough counterplay. 14...Qf6?!, on the other hand, is too hasty, and after 15 Qd1 Wc6 16 Qg5! White's position is obviously superior.

12...Qb8?! was played in Izeta-Seret, Pampelune 1993, which continued:

13 Ra3 Qf6

White keeps an edge after 13...Qc5 14 Le3, or 14 c3 a5 15 b3, with the idea 15...Qa6? 16 xc5! Qxe2 17 xc7 Qxd1 18 Qxe7 and White is winning.

14 Qc3 Wd8

15 a3

15 a6 c6 a7 16 Qxd7 Qxd7 17 b3 Wc8 18 xc8 Wxc8 19 a3 Qc5 20 Qd2 Wc5?!, aiming for a 'good knight
versus bad bishop’ position, is also interesting.

15...\textit{b}7

After 15...\textit{g}4 16 \textit{h}3 \textit{x}f3 17 \textit{w}xf3 White keeps a small plus thanks to the pair of bishops. Or if 15...\textit{w}e8 16 \textit{x}g5 and once again White will firmly control the crucial d5-square.

16 \textit{e}xe5 \textit{d}xe4

16...\textit{w}e8 17 \textit{d}f3 \textit{x}e4 18 \textit{e}e3 \textit{x}f3 19 \textit{w}xf3 can be compared to 15...\textit{g}4.

17 \textit{c}c6 \textit{a}x\textit{c}6

After 17...\textit{c}xc3? 18 \textit{d}xe7+ \textit{w}h8 19 bxc3 \textit{w}e8 20 \textit{w}e1 d5 21 \textit{a}a3 White will keep the two pieces for the rook. The pin along the e-file is temporary, and anyway, Black can’t attack the knight enough times.

18 \textit{a}x\textit{c}6 \textit{b}c5

18...\textit{d}f6?! 19 \textit{w}g5 \textit{w}e8 20 \textit{w}c4 d5 is much better for White.

19 \textit{d}d5

19 \textit{f}4 \textit{b}7 and only then 20 \textit{d}d5 was possible too, but not 20 \textit{xd}6? \textit{d}d7 21 \textit{w}e5 \textit{d}b7.

White, who has the pair of bishops and targets on b6 and d6. One may note that the c6-rook, though temporarily trapped, is paradoxically well placed: it puts pressure on the b- and d-pawns, while it can’t be effectively attacked.

20 \textit{b}3 \textit{w}h8 21 \textit{a}b2 \textit{f}5

If 21...\textit{w}e8!? 22 \textit{w}f3 or 22 \textit{w}h5 maintains White’s supremacy.

22 \textit{f}3 \textit{b}d8?! 23 a5!

Creating a second weakness in Black’s camp and thus increasing the advantage.

23...\textit{f}6?! 

23...bxa5? loses to 24 \textit{c}xc5 dxc5 25 \textit{x}d7 \textit{w}x7 26 \textit{w}c6!. Instead, the move 23...\textit{b}8! would have kept material, if not positional, parity.

24 \textit{a}x\textit{f}6 \textit{x}f6 25 axb6 axb6 26 \textit{x}b6 \textit{g}5?

Here 26...\textit{e}6 27 \textit{w}d2 \textit{d}e4 28 \textit{w}d4 would, at least, not have exposed Black’s king.

27 \textit{h}3

27...\textit{w}g8?

27...\textit{e}6 28 \textit{w}d2 \textit{w}e7 was more tenacious but a pawn is missing anyway.

28 \textit{x}d6! 1-0
In this game White took control of the d5-square and never let it slip. Black, for his part, didn’t find enough activity to compensate for both his weak d-pawn and the opponent’s pair of bishops.

B22) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ∆f6 3 ∆c3 ∆bd7 4 ∆f3 e5 5 ∆c4 ∆e7 6 0-0 0-0 7 ∏e2 c6 8 a4 exd4 9 ∏xd4 ∏c5!?

Intending 10...∆cxe4 11 ∆xe4 d5 12 ∏xf6+ ∏xf6. The drawback of this move is that White’s queen can move to f3 without being dislodged by a subsequent ...∆e5.

Alternatively:

a) 9...∆cxe4?! is tricky, but bad after 10 ∆cxe4 (10 ∏xe4? d5 11 ∏xd5 [not 11 ∏xd5? ∏xd5 12 ∏xd5 ∆b6 13 ∏xd8 ∏xd8 and Black nets a piece] 11...∆f6 12 ∏xf7+ ∏xf7 13 ∏d3 ∏g4 with some compensation for the pawn, but not more) 10...d5 11 ∏f5 and now we have:

- a1) 11...dxe4 12 ∏d1 ∏f6 13 ∏xe4 with nasty pressure for White.
- a2) 11...∆cxe4? 12 ∏h6! ∏f6 (if 12...gxf6 13 ∏g4+ ∏g5 14 ∏hx6+ ∏g7 15 ∏f5+ ∏g6 16 ∏ad1 and the attack decides, for instance: 16...∆e8 17 ∆g3, or 16...∆e5 17 ∏d6+! ∏e6 18 ∏g3 ∏xf5 19 ∏xd8 ∏xd8 20 ∏g7) 13 ∏g3 ∏xf5 14 ∏xf5 gxf6 15 ∏xe7+ ∏g7 16 ∏e5 ∏b8 17 ∏f5+ ∏g6 18 ∏d6 ∏g7 19 ∏f1 ∏d8 20 ∏ad1 ∏d7 21 ∏d4 ∏c7 22 ∏g4+ 1-0 Tseshkovsky-Lutikov, USSR Ch, Alma Ata 1962.

b) 9...∆e5?! and now:

b1) 10 ∏b3?! c5 11 ∏db5 a6 12 ∏a3 ∏e6 is unclear. White can also play 11 ∏f5 (the sister line of 7 ∏e2 exd4 8 ∏xd4 ∏e5 9 ∏b3 c5 10 ∏f5) and this remains double-edged and difficult to assess: 11...∆xf5 12 exf5 ∏d7 13 f4 (13 ∏d5 is possible too) 13...∆c6 14 g4 d5 (14...∆d4? 15 ∏g2 ∏xb3 16 cxb3 is better for White) 15 g5 c4 16 gx6 ∏xf6 17 ∏a2 ∏xf5 with two pawns and a mighty initiative for the piece.

b2) 10 ∏a2! is similar to 10 ∏b3, but with some nuances that favour White:

for example, 10...c5 11 ∏f5 ∏xf5 12 exf5 and White has the better of it. Black can’t afford to sacrifice a knight, as in the line with 10 ∏b3?!, since he won’t have the crucial tempo ...c5-c4 at his disposal.
10 a2
10 f3 and 10 d1 are worthy of consideration too.

10...a5 11 w3 w6 12 d3
12 of5? xf5 13 wxf5 was the alternative.

12...a6 13 e3 c7 14 d2
Or 14 d4?.

14 db4 15 b3 e6
Black has solved his opening problems, M.Kaminski-Cifuentes Parada, Polanica Zdroj 1992.

B23) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 f6 3 c3 e5 4 f3
da7 5 c4 e7 6 0-0 0-0 7 w2 c6 8
a4 exd4 9 exd4 e8

10 a2
White has some alternatives here:

a) In contrast to 9 xf7+ in Line B1, 10 xf7+?? fails after the inclusion of the moves a4 and ...c6: 10...xf7 11 c6 (or 11 w4+ d5 12 exd5 c6+ and White only has one pawn for the piece)
11...xe6 12 wc4+ d5 13 exd5 cxd5 14
xe1+ wh1 15 wxe5 dxe5 16 wxe5+ w8 and two pieces are missing!

b) 10 a5?! is poor after 10...f8 (10...d5!? 11 exd5 c5 12 w1 e5 13
We2 dxe5 14 dxe5 wxe5 was equal in Inkiov-Garrel, Toulouse 2000) 11 a6
h5 (11...d5??) 12 axb7 xxb7 13 w3

At this stage Black could simply have picked up the e4-pawn, whereas the game took quite a different turn: 13...d7?! 14 d5 cxe4 15 dxe4 xe4
16 d3 e5 17 g5 e7?? (17...d5! is still better for Black) 18 w3 (the threats on h7 and the queen = xf6 and
dh6+ are already decisive) 18...c8
19 dxe7+ xe7 19...xe7 20 w4 wasn't too appealing either) 20 xf6
xf6 21 xa7! and Black resigned.

Other continuations allow immediate equalization: 10 w1 d5 11 exd5
b6 and 12...bxd5; or 10 g5 d5 11
xe7 dxc3 12 w8 dxc2+ 13 xe2
xd8; or finally 10 f4 f8 11 w3 d5
12 xe5 dxe5 12...xe5!? 13 d5 b5
14 w5 w7. 5

10...f8
Practice has seen Black obtaining good results in this given position. Black is now considering ...d5 or ...dxc5, which explains what follows.

11 w3
Luring the knight to e5, which will diminish the pressure on e4.

11 f3 obviously allows 11...d5, but things aren’t that clear-cut after 12 w2f2. If Black then captures on e4, White will obtain a semi-open f-file, and above all the a2-bishop will be woken up. Instead 12 wh1 c5 13 df5 d4 14 d1 de5 15 dg3 de6 16 xe6 xe6 17 b3 was P.Enders-Beckemeyer, German League 1996, and now instead of 17...c4?, the simplest was 17...d3 18 cxd3 wxd3 with a slight edge to Black because of his opponent’s weakened queenside.

11...de5

This is normal, but 11...dc5?!, precisely the move that White discouraged his opponent from playing, is okay too:

12 dg5 (or 12 xe1 d5!) 12...h6 13 xf6 (if 13 h4? g5 14 dg3 dg4 15 we3 dfxe4) 13...wxf6 14 wxf6 gxf6 is unclear.

The damaged kingside pawn structure is counterbalanced by Black’s pair of bishops.

12 wd1

12 wg3 dh5 13 we3 is another possibility, but her majesty may feel uncomfortable on e3. A repetition of moves by 13...df6 (13...wh4!?) 14 wg3 is then quite logical.

12...a5!

On the direct 12...wb6? White would reply 13 a5, when the pawn is taboo in view of xf7+.

13 xe1?!

Or:

a) Black meets 13 h3 with 13...wb6!, impeding White’s development (the c1-bishop must defend b2 for the time being), while preparing to connect the rooks. If Black finds time to play ...dh7, ...ad8, ...c8, all his pieces will be harmoniously placed.
Play could continue:

a1) 14 f4 Qg6 15 He1 d5! with the initiative.

a2) 14 He1? Axh3?! (another cool effect of 13...Wb6!) 15 gxh3 Wxd4.

a3) 14 Ae3 Wb4! (not 14...Wxb2? 15 Qdxe2! intending Ab1-b3).

a4) 14 Qdxe2 Qed7 (the reciprocal knight manoeuvre keeps the balance; 14...Ae6?!, with a level position, also had its merits) 15 Qg3 Qc5 16 Qg5!, and now 16...Qxc4?! 17 Qgxe4 Qxe4 18 Qxe4 Aexe4 19 Axf7+ Wh8! just about kept the balance in Wedberg-V.Nevednichy, Manila Olympiad 1992.

19...Axfl7? leads, as one may suspect, to a quick defeat: 20 Wf3+ Qg6 21 Wxe4+ Qxe5 22 h4+ Wh6 23 Wf4+ Qe7 24 Axe1+ Ae6 25 Wf5.

Going back to move sixteen, Black could have played 16...Wxb2!, providing an exception to the rule stating that one should not be too greedy. While apparently risky, this move is in fact quite correct, as the following variations demonstrate:

\[\]

\[\]

\[\]

\[\]

a41) 17 Afx6 gxf6 18 Wf3 He5 (not 18...f5? [intending ...Ag7] 19 exf5! d5 20

Qh5 Qh8 21 Qf6 He7 22 Ab3!, followed by Aa2, trapping the queen) 19 Qh5 Qe7 20 Qf4!? (20 Qxf6+ Axf6 21 Wxf6 Qe6 is complex too) 20...Qe6 21 Wg3+ Qf8 22 Wg7+ Qf8 is unclear.

a42) 17 Wf3?! Qe7 (not 17...Wxc2? 18 Ac4 and the threat of 19 Aa2 is unstoppable) 18 Qh5 (18 Afb1!? Wxc2 19 Ac4 Qe6 20 Ac1 [not 20 Aa2? Wxb1+ 21 Axb1 Axc4] 20...Wb2 21 Aeb1 Qc2 is equal; if instead 21...Wxa1?! 22 Axa1 Axc4 23 Qd5 and White is worse materially speaking, but his activity on the kingside compensates for this deficit) 18...Acd7 19 Afb1 Wxc2! and the position is unclear because Black has the resource ...Qe5 to give the queen the d3-square. For example, 20 Ac1 Wb2 (not 20...Qe5?! 21 Qxf6+ Axf6 22 Axf7+ Qxf7 23 Wxc2) 21 Aeb1 with a draw by repetition.

b) 13 f4?! would be desirable for White, even though it makes e4-pawn vulnerable. The problem is that it seems to fail tactically: 13...Wb6! 14 Qh1 (14 fxe5 is even worse: 14...f6 15 A3 [or 15 Axf6 gxf6] 15...Ac5 with a clear advantage for Black; while 14 h3 reaches 13 h3 Wb6 14 f4) 14...Aeg4 15 Wd3 (or 15 h3 Aexe4!) 15...d5 16 e5 Ac5 with an advantage to Black. 16 exd5 generates more complications, but again in Black’s favour: for example, 16...Ae1 17 Qg1 Ac5 18 Aexe2 A.f5, or 18 Axe1 Axd4+ 19 Wf1 Axc3 and Black should win.

c) 13 Ag5?! is suggested by Glek.

Returning to 13 He1?!, a move that allows Black to claim an edge, Glek-Bologan, Moscow 1991, continued as follows:

244
13...\texttt{Wb6!}


17...\texttt{Wc5 18 Dce2 Dg6 19 Dg3 Wg5 20 Xe3?!}

Missing a first opportunity to get back into the game with 20 \texttt{Wd1 Df4 21 Xe3 h5 22 h4!}. The pawn is indirectly protected in view of \texttt{Dgf5} and \texttt{Xg3}, winning the black queen; while on the normal follow-up 22...\texttt{Wg4 23 Wxg4+ hgx4 24 Ddf5 Xe5! 25 c4}, Black's advantage is reduced.

14 \texttt{Xg5?!}

Or 14 h3? \texttt{Xxh3!}. The move 14 \texttt{Xb1} doesn't solve the problem either, as Black seizes the initiative with 14...d5! 15 exd5 \texttt{Xg4!}. Now 16 \texttt{Wd2} or 16 \texttt{Dce2} is answered by 16...\texttt{Xad8}, while both 16 \texttt{Dde2 Xc5} and 16 f3 \texttt{Xxf3} are disastrous for White.

14...\texttt{Wxb2 15 Wd2 Wb4! 16 Xxf6 gxf6}

20...\texttt{h5?!}

Played in order to deny the white rook the g3-square after ...h5-h4, but the strange-looking 20...\texttt{Dh4!}, controlling f5 while keeping an eye on g2, was much stronger.

21 \texttt{Wd1?!}

Here 21 \texttt{Df3!} profits from the unfortunate placement of Black's queen, and 21...\texttt{Wh6} (not 21...\texttt{Wc5?? 22 Xc3 Wa7 23 Dxe7) 22 Df5 Xxf5 23 exf5 Xxe3 24 fxe3 Dxe5 25 Dxe5 fxe5 26 Xxb7 d5 is unclear.

21...\texttt{h4} 22 \texttt{Dgf5 d5!}

Black now has an obvious advantage.

17 \texttt{Xab1}

Black's kingside is destroyed, but the edge remains with him anyway, despite White's positional compensation for the pawn.

17 \texttt{Xe3 Wh8 18 Xg3 Wc5} was also
23 \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{Wf4!} \)?

Or 23...\( \text{Wh5!?} \) 24 \( \text{Q3xh4} \) \( \text{Wxd1+} \) 25 \( \text{Qxd1} \) \( \text{Qxh4} \) 26 \( \text{Qxh4} \) \( \text{dxe4} \), with an extra pawn and the pair of bishops.

24 \( \text{Q3xh4!} \)?

\[ \text{We3 Qf5 32 cxd5 cxd5 33 Qxd5 Qd8 34 Qa2 Qd3 35 Qc1 Qd2 36 Qc4 Qc2 0-1} \]

\textbf{Conclusion}

Black should treat the rare 7 \( \text{a4} \) in a similar way to the main line, i.e. 7 \( \text{Qe1} \) c6 8 \( \text{a4} \), which we will discuss in the final two chapters. After 7...\( \text{c6} \) White can still try to lure his opponent onto rather unexplored territory by playing 8 \( \text{Qa2} \), but if Black answers 8...\( \text{a5} \), or even 8...\( \text{b6} \), then moving a major piece to the e-file becomes the only sensible continuation. I believe Black equalizes then by playing ...\( \text{exd4} \) followed by \( \text{Qc5} \), which leads to the conclusion that 8 \( \text{Qa2} \) is inferior to 8 \( \text{b3} \) (cf. 7 \( \text{Qe1} \) c6 8 \( \text{a4} \) a5 9 \( \text{b3} \)).

By choosing 7 \( \text{We2} \) White intends to bring his rook to d1. As we have seen, Black has two possible ways to react. The first option is the straightforward ...\( \text{exd4} \), preceded (or not) by 7...\( \text{c6} \) 8 \( \text{a4} \). Black then finds himself at another junction: he can either carry on by playing ...\( \text{Qe8} \), intending to exploit the placement of the white queen on e2, or use a quite specific method of counterplay with ...\( \text{Qe5} \) and, after the retreat \( \text{Qb3} \), continuing with ...\( \text{c5} \). The other way to handle the position is more common for the Philidor Hanham. Black continues ‘normally’ with ...\( \text{c6} \), ...\( \text{b6} \), and ...\( \text{Qc7} \) when White plays \( \text{Qd1} \). While the first reaction is more active, in my opinion both seem in order and offer mutual chances.
Chapter Thirteen

Main Line:
8 \( \text{xe}1 \) without 8...\( \text{b}6 \)

1 e4 d6 2 d4 \( \text{d}f6 \) 3 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{d}bd7 \) 4 \( \text{d}f3 \) e5
5 \( \text{c}4 \) e7 6 0-0 0-0 7 \( \text{xe}1 \)

7 \( \text{xe}1 \) is the best move here. White parries the equalizing threat of 7...c6 8 a4 \( \text{dxe}4 \) followed by ...d5, while placing his rook on a more useful square. Developing the c1-bishop may look more natural, but one soon realizes that it has no useful post at the moment.

7...c6

Black intends to acquire space on the queenside by playing ...b5. At the same time, pushing the c-pawn vacates c7 for the queen and controls d5.

Alternatively:

a) The extremely rare 7...b6 is less logical, but quite valid too. Indeed, Black loses a tempo if his opponent allows him to play the desirable ...a6 and ...b6-b5, but I don’t see how White can profit from this. In other lines, Black solves his opening problems if he achieves the ...b5 push, and here White should still attempt to prevent it, tempo loss or no tempo loss.

Here’s an original example and a nice display by Black: 7...b6 8 a4 (or 8 \( \text{d}d5! \) \( \text{b}7 \) 9 \( \text{dxe}7+ \) \( \text{xe}7 \) 10 d5 c6) 8...a6 9 b3 \( \text{b}7 \) 10 \( \text{a}3 \) (closing the centre by playing d4-d5 is another option, but in comparison with the Leko-Bauer game – Chapter 14, Line D1 – White will find it significantly harder to open lines on the queenside) 10 h6 11 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 12 \( \text{ad}1 \) f8 (12...b5!) 13 dxe5 (13 d5 was also possible: ...exe4 was becoming a threat, since the b7-bishop is,
for once, not blocked by the c-pawn; one should also note that d6 is not weakened here) 13...\(\text{c}\)xe5 14 \(\text{d}\)xe5 dxe5 15 \(\text{w}\)e3

15...\(\text{a}\)xa3! (a very good practical decision; Black doesn't risk anything and can play for a win at leisure) 16 \(\text{c}\)xd8 \(\text{h}\)xd8 17 \(\text{d}\)d5 \(\text{c}\)xd5 18 exd5 a5 19 \(\text{w}\)g3?! (White starts to err around here; 19 \(\text{d}\)d1 \(\text{c}\)c5 20 \(\text{w}\)e2 \(\text{e}\)e7 21 g3 e4 22 \(\text{e}\)g2 looked like a better set-up) 19...\(\text{a}\)d6 20 \(\text{e}\)e2 e4 21 \(\text{c}\)c3 \(\text{e}\)e5 22 \(\text{w}\)e1 \(\text{c}\)c5 23 c3 \(\text{d}\)xd5 24 \(\text{h}\)xe4 \(\text{x}\)xe4 25 \(\text{x}\)xe4 \(\text{c}\)xc3 26 \(\text{h}\)h3 \(\text{e}\)d1+ 27 \(\text{f}\)f1 \(\text{h}\)d2 28 h3 \(\text{c}\)xf2 29 \(\text{w}\)a8+ \(\text{h}\)h7 30 \(\text{d}\)d3+ g6 when Black was much better and eventually converted his advantage in Blees-Landa, Leeuwarden 1997.

b) 7...a6!? follows the same objective and merely represents an inversion of move order. However, this move does imply that Black won't play a line that includes ...a5. Also, after 8 a4 c6?! (if 8...b6 9 d5!? White can play 9 a5!, when the 9...b5 push would now leave a weak pawn on a6 after the en passant capture 10 axb6.

8 a4

Preventing the aforementioned expansion on the queenside. Generally speaking, if Black succeeds in pushing with ...b5, he solves all his problems, as shown by the following example: 8 \(\text{b}\)b3?! b5 9 d5 (9 a3 is better) 9...b4 10 dxc6 bxc3 11 cxd7 \(\text{b}\)b7! 12 \(\text{w}\)d3 cxb2 13 \(\text{a}\)xb2 \(\text{w}\)xd7 when Black has two pawns islands versus three, giving him a slight structural advantage.

After 8 a4 we will concentrate on the following moves:

A: 8...\(\text{e}\)xd4  
B: 8...\(\text{c}\)e8
C: 8...\(\text{e}\)c7  
D: 8...a5

Black's most common move, 8...b6, is the subject of Chapter 14.

8...\(\text{w}\)e8?!, attributed to the English analyst L.M.Pickett, prepares a very aesthetic manoeuvre that aims to transfer the dark-squared bishop to a better diagonal via ...\(\text{a}\)d8-c7 or ...\(\text{d}\)d8-b6. Its drawback is rather obvious: Black remains passive, and after 9 h3 \(\text{d}\)d8 10 a5 \(\text{c}\)c7 11 d5 White has a clear plus. My
suggestion is that 8...\textit{We}8 should be used with moderation and preferably for rapidplay games!

That just leaves:

\textbf{8...h6}

A rare move which seems designed to prepare ...\textit{Q}h7-g5, while its drawback consists of allowing an eventual \textit{Q}h4-g6. The most common White follow-ups are 9 \textit{a}2, 9 b3 and 9 a5, and in my opinion White can count on an advantage after any of them. For example:

\textbf{9 \textit{a}2 \textit{Q}h7 10 \textit{Q}e2 \textit{Q}g5}

\textbf{11 \textit{Q}xg5 \textit{Q}xg5}

11...hxg5!? accepts a slight ruining of the pawn structure in order to prevent f2-f4. B.Filipovic-V.Spasov, Becici 1994, continued 12 c3 \textit{f}6 13 \textit{Q}e3 \textit{We}7 14 \textit{Q}g3 g6 15 d5 with an edge for White.

\textbf{12 f4 exf4 13 \textit{Q}xf4}

White has a small plus, Slobodjan-Federau, Berlin 1997.

\textbf{A) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \textit{Q}f6 3 \textit{Q}c3 \textit{Q}bd7 4 \textit{Q}f3 e5 5 \textit{a}3 \textit{Q}e7 6 0-0 0-0 7 a4 \textit{c}6 8 \textit{Q}e1 exd4?!?/?!}

This swap is traditionally preceded by 8...a5, but does it really make a difference?

\textbf{9 \textit{Q}xd4 \textit{Q}c5}

If 9...d5!? 10 exd5 \textit{Q}b6 11 \textit{Q}b3 \textit{Q}xd5 12 \textit{Q}xd5 \textit{Q}xd5 13 \textit{Q}xd5 exd5 14 \textit{Q}f4 gives White a slight, but risk-free advantage thanks to Black’s isolated pawn.

\textbf{10 a5!}

The attempt to refute Black’s move order. As ...a5 can hardly be postponed for long, it is possible to transpose to Line D by either 10 b3 or 10 h3.

It should also be noted that 10 \textit{a}2 a5 11 \textit{W}f3 \textit{W}b6 12 \textit{Q}b3 \textit{Q}xb3 13 \textit{Q}xb3 \textit{Q}e6 would be analogous to the encounter Ye-Hamdouchi (see Line D11), with the queen on f3 instead of the pawn on h3. This favours White a bit, but not enough to claim an edge, as the game Slobodjan-Oratovsky, Fuerth 1998, demonstrates: 14 \textit{Q}e3 \textit{W}c7 15 \textit{Q}a2?! (15 \textit{Q}xe6 fx6 16 \textit{Wh}h3) 15...\textit{Q}xa2 16 \textit{Q}xa2 \textit{Q}d7 17 \textit{W}e2 \textit{Q}f6 18 \textit{W}c4 \textit{Q}e8 19 f3 (or 19 \textit{Q}d5 \textit{W}d8 20 \textit{Q}xf6+ \textit{Q}xf6 followed by ...d5 with an edge for Black – the presence of the rook on a2 is a serious
handicap for White) 19...@e5 20 g3? d5 21 exd5 @xg3! and Black won about 20 moves later.

10...@c7 11 h3 @e8 12 @g5 h6 13 @h4
(Z.Ilinicz-Denoth, Budapest 1990). White holds a lasting advantage, and above all his opponent lacks a constructive plan.

B) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 @f6 3 @c3 @bd7 4 @f3 e5 5 @c4 @e7 6 0-0 0-0 7 a4 c6 8 @e1 @e8

9 a5

9 @xh7+ is worth considering, but is less devastating than usual! The position after 9...@xh7 10 @g5+ @g8 11 @e6 @wa5 12 @d2 @d8 (on 12...@b8?! White seems to gain the upper hand, though it is not trivial: 13 @d5 cxd5 14 @xa5 @xe6 15 exd5 @xd5 16 dxe5 dxe5 17 @xe5 @c6 18 @d4 and the queen and two pawns should outweigh the three minor pieces) 13 @d5 cxd5 14 @xa5 @xa5 15 b4 @xe6 16 exd5 @xd5 17 bxa5 @d7f6 or 17...@f4 is unclear.

9...@f8!? An interesting innovation in place of the customary 9...@h6.

9...@b8 (??) is a typical reaction if White plays a4-a5 before Black has touched his b-pawn. Unfortunately for Black, the above-mentioned combination now becomes crystal-clear: 10 @xf7+! @xf7 11 @g5+ @g8 12 @e6 and the queen is trapped.

10 d5 @b5?

A dynamic measure is needed to avoid drifting into passivity. The game Ivanchuk-Azmaipashvili, Montecatini Terme 2000, continued:

11 @b3

After 11 @a2 b4 12 dxc6 bxc3 13 @g5 @c5 14 @xf7 @c7 15 @xd6+ @e6 16 @xe8 @xe8...

...White has a rook and three pawns for the two knights, but c6 is bound to fall and Black's pieces are quite active. All in all, the position is messy.

11...@xd5 12 @xd5

12 @xd5?! @b8 13 @g5 (13 b4!? 13...@xd5 14 @xd5 @f6 15 @xb5 @b7 16 @d2 h6 17 @f3 @xe4 18 @xe4 @xb5 offered mutual chances.

12...h6 13 c3

White can also play 13 @g5!? (Ivanchuk's idea, according to his oppo-
nent’s comments in *Chess Informant*)
13...hxg5 14 hxg5 hxg5 15 Wh3 and now
15...Ae7!, freeing the f8-square for the
knight (or for the king, if it needs to
run away at some stage), or 15..Ac5 16
Wh3 Ae7 17 Aa2, with unclear
consequences in both cases.

13...a6?

This is too slow, and White could
have gained a clear plus, as indicated
by AzaipaParashvili on move 18.
13..Ab7 14 a6 Ac6 15 Ab4 Axex4!
16 Axex4 Axe4 17 Wd5 Ad6 18 Wxf7+
Ah8 19 Axf4 (19 Ad5??) gives White a
dangerous attack. 15...Ac7, with just a
small edge for White, is more solid.

Instead, 20..Wxf3? is met by...

...21 Axb8!! (a very nice intermezzo)
21..Wf6 22 Ac6 Wh4 23 Ad5. Black
position is problematic: he has no tar-
gets to attack; his bishop is very bad;
and White can hit a6 with Ab4, and f7
with Ae3-f3.

21 Wxf6 gf6 22 Ad5 Ae8 23 Ae1
Ae7?!

23..b4 24 c4 b3, followed by ...Ae6,
would have created some counterplay.

24 Ad3 b4 25 c4

After 25 Ag6! Ae8 26 Ag3 Black
must give up f7 by playing 26...Ah7.

25..Ac5?!

Better was 25...Ad8.

14 Ae3 Ab7 15 Ab6 Axex4 16 Ab6
Ab8 17 Wd3 Ac6 18 Ah4?!

Here White should play 18 Ad2!,
preparing Af1, f2-f3 and Ae3.

18..Ad7 19 Wf3 Wf6 20 Ad7

20 Ad5 Wxf3 21 Dxf3 Axex4 22 Ac6
Ac8 23 axb6 Ac6 24 Axa6 Ac8b6 is
still better for White, but probably
holdable for Black, as the white knight
is far away from reaching the dominant
d5 outpost.

20..Axex4!
26 b3?

Instead, 26 Qg6 Qf8 27 Ng3 Qg7 and Black’s defensive task remains grim, even following 28 De7+ Qf8 29 Qxf5 Qxf5 30 exf5 when the difference in activity between the two bishops is clear to see. White can consider Bb3, a4xb4, followed by Bb7xf7.

After 26 b3 Black is able to erect a kind of fortress.

26...Qd8 27 Qd2 Bxa5 28 Bxa5 Qxa5 29 Qa2 Qb6 30 Qa6 Qc5 31 Qf1 Qg7 32 Qe2 Qc8 ½-½

C1) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 Qf3 e5 5 Qc4 Qe7 6 0-0 0-0 7 Qe1 c6 8 a4 Qc7

Moving her majesty so early isn’t always necessary, and this is why 8...Qc7 is less popular than either 8...a5 or 8...b6.

9 Qg5?! is not a great move. As so often in the Philidor Defence, a hasty development of the dark-squared bishop doesn’t bring White much joy. Black can react in two ways: the first option is 9...Qb6 10 Bb3 Qg4 when the pressure on d4 forces simplifications after 11 dx5 or 11 a5 Bbd7 12 d5 Qc5; the second approach is 9...h6 10 Qh4 Qe8, with the idea of ...Qf8-g6. In this case, too, both sides have their chances.

C1) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 Qf3 e5 5 Qc4 Qe7 6 0-0 0-0 7 Qe1 c6 8 a4 Qc7 9 b3 b6

If Black is reluctant to weaken the squares d5 and c6, 9...Qb6?! is a reasonably valid alternative (this is probably the reason why White usually chooses 9 h3). After 10 Qe2 (to meet 10...a5 with 11 h3) 11...Qg4, the game is approximately level.

10 d5

We will now consider the following moves for White:

C1: 9 b3
C2: 9 a2
C3: 9 a5
C4: 9 h3

10...cx5?

10...c5 11 a5! offers White a definite initiative on the queenside.

11 Qxd5!

If 11 Qxd5 Qxd5 12 Qxd5 Qb8, fol-
allowed by ...Qf6 and ...Qb7, offers reciprocal chances.

11...Qb7
11...Qxc3?? loses an exchange to the obvious 12 Qd2.

12 Qb5
Freeing the path of the c-pawn.

12...Qb8 13 Qxb7 Qxb7 14 Qg5 Qxe8!
Now the threat to e4 is real because the bishop on e7 is protected. 14...Qc6? 15 c4 would be much better for White.

15 h3
White should probably play 15 Qxd6! Qxd6 16 Qxd6 Qxe4 17 Qxe4 Qxe4 18 Qxd7 Qxc2.

In this particular position the two minor pieces are only marginally superior to the rook and pawn. Indeed, b3 is weak and Black can get active by playing ...f6 and ...Qad8. White should stand a trifle better, but probably not more.

15...Qxe4 16 Qxe7 Qxe7 17 Qxe4
17 Qxd6 Qxd6 18 Qxd6 Qe6 is equal.

17...Qxe4 18 Qxd6 Qae8 19 Qc7
This position was reached in Morozevich-Tischbierek, German League 2000. Now 19...Qc5! 20 Qxe8 Qxe8 21 Qe1 Qxc2 22 Qxe5 Qf8 is equal according to Tischbierek, an opinion that I share.

C2) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 Qf3
e5 5 Qc4 Qe7 6 0-0 0-0 7 Qe1 c6 8 a4
Qc7 9 Qa2 b6

9...Qe8 is possible; White probably continues with 10 h3 (cf. Line C4).

10 Qh4?!
A dubious idea which doesn’t work; 10 h3 and 10 Qg5, completing development, are more natural.

With the bishop on a2, the move 10 d5?! is also unsuitable. After 10...Qb7
11 Qxc6 Qxc6 12 Qg5 a6, counterplay based on ...b5 is imminent, as shown in the encounter Kruszynski-O.Eismont, Berlin 1997: 13 Qe2 b5 14 axb5 axb5 15 Qxb5 Qb7 16 Qc3 Qxb2 17 Qc4 Qb7
and Black could be satisfied with the outcome of the opening.

With 10 Qh4?! we are following Hjartarson-Malaniuk, Tilburg 1993.

10...Qxd4 11 Qxd4
11 Qf5?! dxc3 12 Qxe7+ Qh8 is unclear.
11...\textit{\&c5!} 12 b4?! 
After 12 h3?! \text{a5 13 \&f3} it becomes apparent that White has spent all these tempi to encourage his opponent to play 10...exd4. Black has thus obtained an improved version of Line D11, in which he voluntarily releases the tension in the centre. Indeed, in that case the white knight usually occupies the d4-square (where it eyes f5) and the queen usually stands on f3, a much more effective placement. After 13...\textit{\&fd7 14 \&f4 \&e6 15 \&xe6 fxe6 16 \&g3 \&c5 (16...e5?! 17 \&c4+ \&h8 18 \&d5) 17 e5 d5} White had no constructive plan, and Black stood better in Smirin-Dorffman (played during the same tournament as our main game!).

12...\textit{\&g4!}

The drawbacks of the impetuous 12 b4 are underlined: White has problems on the a1-h8 diagonal.

13 \&f3
Or 13 bxc5?? dxc5 and h2 explodes!

13...\textit{\&f6}
13... \textit{\&xa4!}?! 14 \&xa4 (if 14 \&xf7+ \textit{\&xf7 15 \&xa4 \&e5 16 \&xe5 dxe5 17 \&c4 b5 18 \&xb5 \&b6} is winning for Black)

14...\textit{\&f6 15 e5 \&xe5 16 \&xe5 \&xe5 17 \&xe5 dxe5 18 \&e4 \&h8} was less accurate. Black stands better positionally, and the easiest way to emphasize the advantage is to keep the material ‘balanced’.

14 \textit{\&d2 \&xa4 15 \&xf7+ \&xf7 16 \&xa4 \&e5! 17 \&xe5 \&xe5}

The smoke clears, with Black enjoying the bishop pair and attacking prospects on the kingside. Furthermore, White’s pieces lack coordination.

18 \&d1 \&h5 19 g3 \&h3
Not 19...\textit{\&f3?! 20 \&g5 as the trade of queens would greatly ease White’s defence.}

20 \&a3

After 20 f4 the best way to exploit White’s lack of king cover is with 20...\textit{\&f3!} 21 \&e3 (if 21 \&a3 \&d4+ wins; or 21 fxe5?? \&f1+ 22 \&xf1 \&xf1 mate; but 21 c3?! – controlling d4 – 21...\&xf4 22 gxf4 \&xf4 remains complicated on account of the resource 23 \&a2+ \&h7 24 \&e3) 21...\&xf4 22 gxf4 \&xf4 23 \&e2 \&xe4, when Black already has three pawns for the piece and White’s king is disastrously exposed.
20...\textit{xf3} 21 \textit{We2} \textit{xf6} 22 \textit{xa7} b5 23 c3
Or 23 \textit{xa3} \textit{g4}.
\textbf{23...h6?!}
Instead, 23...\textit{wg6}! 24 \textit{xa8} \textit{xg3}+ regains the pawn, while keeping the positional trumps.
\textbf{24 \textit{xe3} \textit{g4}}
And here 24...\textit{wg6}! 25 \textit{d4} h5, followed by ...h4, maintains attacking chances. After 24...\textit{g4} White starts to gain the upper hand.
25 \textit{wd2} \textit{wh7} 26 \textit{db2} \textit{wh3} 27 \textit{d3} \textit{xf6}
28 \textit{d4} \textit{wh5} 29 \textit{xe7} \textit{e6}

\textbf{30 \textit{xe5}}
30 \textit{xe3}! was better: 30...\textit{xe3} 31 \textit{xe3} \textit{e3} (if 31...\textit{wd1}+ 32 \textit{e1} [not 32 \textit{g2}? \textit{c4} 33 \textit{e1} \textit{e2}] 32...\textit{c4} 33 f4 \textit{xf4} 34 \textit{xe7}+! \textit{xe7} 35 \textit{xf4} with a clear advantage to White in view of his extra pawn) 32 \textit{wd2} \textit{xd4} 33 \textit{cxd4} \textit{c4} 34 \textit{b2} when Black has compensation for the pawn, but objectively he can only hope for a draw. Also 34 \textit{e1} \textit{wh3} would not be winning for Black, as indicated by Malaniuk, because the simple 35 \textit{g2} avoids mate.
\textbf{30...dxe5} 31 h4 \textit{wg4} 32 \textit{xe3}
32 \textit{xe5}?? \textit{xg3}+ 33 \textit{fxg3} \textit{wg3}+ 34 \textit{h1} \textit{xf2} is a decisive attack for Black.
32...\textit{xe3} 33 \textit{xe3} \textit{f3} 34 \textit{wd2} \textit{xe4} 35 \textit{dc5}?
35 \textit{xe6} \textit{xd3} 36 \textit{xe5} \textit{xe5}+ 37 \textit{xf3} \textit{wh5} would have been equal.
35...\textit{wb1}+ 36 \textit{wh2} \textit{f5} 0-1
The white monarch succumbs.

\textbf{C3) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \textit{df6} 3 \textit{c3} \textit{bd7} 4 \textit{f3} e5 5 \textit{dc4} \textit{e7} 6 0-0 0-0 7 \textit{xe1} c6 8 \textit{a4} \textit{wc7} 9 a5!?!}

This is probably sufficient to fight for an opening advantage.

\textbf{9...\textit{b8} 10 d5}
10 \textit{g5}?! is, like the same idea one move earlier, ineffective. The inclusion of 9 a5 \textit{b8} eliminates the possibility of ...\textit{g6}, but the other Black reply (10...\textit{h6}) remains quite satisfactory:

\begin{itemize}
  \item a) 10...\textit{b5}! 11 axb6 axb6 (11...\textit{xb6} looks better) 12 d5 b5 13 dxc6 \textit{wc6} (13...\textit{bxc4} 14 \textit{cxd7} \textit{xd7} 15 \textit{xe6} \textit{g6} 16 \textit{ed5} isn’t appealing) 14 \textit{h5} 15 \textit{b3} with a decent edge for White.
  \item b) 10...\textit{h6} 11 \textit{h4} \textit{e8} 12 \textit{g3} (preventing the manoeuvre ...\textit{fg8-g6} due to the pressure exerted on e5) 12...\textit{b5} (12...\textit{h5}? runs into 13 dxe5 \textit{xc3} 14 e6}
\end{itemize}
fxe6 15 \( \text{\textit{x}e6} + \text{\textit{h}8} 16 \text{h}xg3 \) with a clear plus for White; 13...dxe5? is even worse: 14 \( \text{\textit{x}f7} + \text{\textit{x}f7} 15 \text{\textit{xe}5} + \text{\textit{xe}5} 16 \text{\textit{wh}5} + \text{\textit{f}6} 17 \text{f}4 \) and White wins) 13 axb6 axb6 with approximate equality, since 14 d5?! has become harmless because of 14...b5 15 dxc6 bxc4 16 cxd7 \( \text{\textit{xd}7} \) with an edge for Black.

**10...b5**

An energetic counter-attack aimed at giving Black some breathing space; not 10...cxd5?! 11 \( \text{\textit{xd}5} \).

**11 axb6 \( \text{\textit{xb}6} \)**

**12 \( \text{\textit{f}1} \)**

After 12 \( \text{\textit{b}3} \)? cxd5, given that White can’t insist on ending up with a piece on d5, he should recapture with the e-pawn as soon as possible. Indeed, trading a pair of knights would let Black’s f-pawn roll. But 13 \( \text{\textit{xd}5} \text{\textit{fxd}5} 14 \text{\textit{xd}5} \text{\textit{xd}5} 15 \text{\textit{wh}5} \text{\textit{xc}2} 16 \text{\textit{xa}7} \text{\textit{e}6} \) is at least equal for Black, while 13 exd5 \( \text{\textit{d}7} \) gives Black a small advantage, as the b3-bishop bites on granite.

**13...cxd5 13 exd5**

13 \( \text{\textit{b}5} \)? (Nevednichey-Vatter, Bad Wörishofen 2000) is possible too. The position resulting from 13...\( \text{\textit{wd}8} 14 \text{\textit{exd}5} \text{\textit{bd}5} 15 \text{\textit{xa}7} \text{\textit{d}7} \) or 15...\( \text{\textit{b}7} \) is, however, unclear.

**13...a6**

13...\( \text{\textit{d}7} \) is valid too, but 13...\( \text{\textit{wb}7} 14 \text{\textit{a}5} \text{\textit{g}4}?! 15 \text{h}3 \text{\textit{h}5} 16 \text{\textit{g}4} \text{\textit{g}6} 17 \text{\textit{h}4} \) led to trouble for Black in Ye Jia-gchuan-Cifuentes Parada, Tilburg 1994.

**14 \( \text{\textit{g}5} \)**

14 \( \text{\textit{xa}6} \)? is punished by the pinning 14...\( \text{\textit{xa}8} \), and after the forced sequence 15 \( \text{\textit{wd}3} \text{\textit{wa}7} 16 \text{\textit{bd}5} \text{\textit{xa}6} 17 \text{\textit{xa}7} \text{\textit{xd}3} 18 \text{\textit{cxd}3} \text{\textit{fxd}5} \), Black has no reason to complain.

**14...\( \text{\textit{bd}7} \)**

(Mkrchian-Gelashvili, Batumi 2001). Now 15 \( \text{\textit{xa}2} \) seems to be slightly in White’s favour.

**C4** 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \( \text{\textit{f}6} 3 \text{\textit{c}3} \text{\textit{bd}7} 4 \text{\textit{f}3} \text{\textit{e}5} 5 \text{\textit{c}4} \text{\textit{e}7} 6 0-0 0-0 7 \text{\textit{e}1} \text{\textit{c}6} 8 \text{\textit{a}4} \text{\textit{wc}7} 9 \text{\textit{h}3} \)

White’s most popular choice. Now we will consider:

**C41: 9...\( \text{\textit{e}8} \)**

**C42: 9...\( \text{\textit{h}6} \)**

**C43: 9...\( \text{\textit{b}6} \)**

256
Despite quite acceptable results for Black, I dislike 9...exd4?! Indeed, the queen isn’t optimally placed on c7, and a move such as ...a5 would have been more useful: 10 Qxd4 Qe8 (or 10...a5 11 Qf5 and White robs Black of the bishop pair) 11 Qf4 or 11 a5?! and White keeps an edge.

C4) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 Qf3 e5 5 Qc4 Qe7 6 0-0 0-0 7 Qe1 c6 8 a4 Qc7 9 h3 Qe8

A rare continuation, but a quite playable one.

10 a5

White has this extra possibility when Black avoids playing ...a5 or ...b6. The drawback of such a move is that the pawn itself may become weak, and that it allows the plan of ...Qb8 followed by ...b5.

After 10 Qg5 Qf8 White can repeat moves, by playing 11 Qf3, or wait until the knight gets expelled with ...h6. The small risk of such a strategy is that Black may manage to do without ...h6 and the knight may become misplaced. 11 Qa2 h6 12 Qf3 is slightly better for White, but 11...exd4?! 12 Qxd4 Qc5 is interesting.

As usual, the moves 10 b3?! and 10 Qa2 are possible and maintain a small plus.

10...Qf8

Or 10...Qb8?! 11 d5 b5 12 axb6 Qxb6 13 Qf1 with an edge for White.

11 Qg5

It may be a clever idea to provoke ...h6, so that White has the manoeuvre Qf3-h4-g6 at his disposal.

11...Qe7 12 Qe3

Owing to his spatial advantage White stands better, but Black’s position is solid.

C42) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 Qf3 e5 5 Qc4 Qe7 6 0-0 0-0 7 Qe1 c6 8 a4 Qc7 9 h3 h6

The weakness of g6 created by 9...h6 doesn’t call for a direct refutation. White has the choice between two different approaches:

a) To continue normally with his development, by playing 10 Qe3, 10 a5 or even 10 Qa2. These three sensible continuations are of equal value and
promise White a slight plus.

One example: 10  \( \text{d}e3 \text{e}8 11 \text{a}5 \text{f}8 \)
12 \( \text{d}5 \text{e}c5 13 \text{d}d2 \text{d}d7 14 \text{b}4 \text{c}x\text{d}5 15 \text{d}x\text{d}5 \text{d}x\text{d}5 16 \text{a}x\text{d}5 \text{e}6 17 \text{c}4 \text{f}4 18 \text{xf}4 \text{exf}4 19 \text{a}6 \text{c}6 20 \text{a}x\text{b}7 \text{a}x\text{b}7 21 \text{a}x\text{b}7 \text{w}x\text{b}7 22 \text{b}1 \text{g}5 23 \text{h}4 \text{e}6 24 \text{h}5 \text{g}6 25 \text{hx}x\text{g}5 \text{hx}x\text{g}5 26 \text{e}5 \text{e}8 27 \text{ex}d6 \text{xe}1+ 28 \text{xe}1 \text{w}x\text{b}4 29 \text{d}7 \text{w}d6 30 \text{a}e4...

![Chess Diagram]

...and Black resigned in Kramnik-Zvjaginsev, USSR Junior Ch., Leningrad 1990, in view of 30...\text{wx}x\text{d}7 31 \text{wx}g6+ \text{fx}xg6 32 \text{d}f6+.

b) To try to profit from the above-mentioned weakening, either by playing the move in the main text below, or by 10 \( \text{d}h4. \) In the latter case, 10...\text{e}8 (10...\text{ex}d4 11 \text{wx}x\text{d}4 \text{d}e5 deserves attention too) 11 \text{dxe}5 (11 \text{g}6 \text{d}8 is unclear) 11...\text{d}x\text{e}5 12 \text{a}2 offers reciprocal chances.

**10 \text{dxe}5 \text{dxe}5!**

This is stronger than 10...\text{dxe}5?! 11 \( \text{d}h4 \text{c}5 \) and now:

a) 12 \( \text{g}6?! \text{d}8 13 \text{dxe}7+ \text{w}x\text{e}7 14 \text{w}3 \text{d}e6! (14...\text{e}6?! 15 \text{f}1 is better for White: the black knight is less active on \text{c}5 than on \text{d}4, and the pair of bishops isn’t totally counterbalanced) 15 \text{w}g3 \text{d}f4! 16 \text{xf}4 \text{d}h5 with an equal position.

b) 12 \text{b}3! \text{d}e6 (or 12...\text{e}8 13 \text{xe}6 \text{d}xe6 14 \text{d}f5, Keres-Penrose, Hastings 1957/58, and now 14...\text{w}h7 15 \text{e}3 with an edge, or 14...\text{d}d4?! 15 \text{w}g3 \text{d}h5 [if 15...\text{dxf}5 16 \text{exf}5 \text{e}5 or \text{h}6] 16 \text{w}g4 and the complications favour White) 13 \text{d}f5

13...\text{d}d4 14 \text{d}x\text{d}4! (14 \text{w}g3?! leads to obscure complications after 14...\text{d}x\text{f}5 15 \text{ex}x\text{f}5 \text{d}xc2 16 \text{d}x\text{h}6 \text{d}h5 17 \text{w}g6 \text{d}e1! [not 17...\text{d}x\text{a}1? 18 \text{w}x\text{h}5 \text{w}d6 19 \text{d}x\text{g}7? \text{d}x\text{g}7 20 \text{d}e4 \text{w}h6 21 \text{f}6+! \text{w}x\text{f}6 22 \text{g}4+ and White wins] 18 \text{w}x\text{h}5 \text{w}d6 19 \text{d}x\text{g}7 \text{d}x\text{g}7 20 \text{d}x\text{e}1) 14...\text{d}x\text{d}4 15 \text{d}e2 and White has the better prospects.

11 \text{a}2

After 11 \text{d}x\text{e}5 \text{d}x\text{e}5 Black has no worries as he has avoided a knight’s incursion into \text{f}5. Tatai-Dominguez Rueda, El Corte Ingles 1990, continued 11 \text{f}1 \text{d}8 (lining up the ...\text{d}5 thrust) 12 \text{w}2 \text{e}8 13 \text{d}d4 \text{d}5 14 \text{f}4 \text{c}5 15 \text{d}f3?! (15 \text{d}b3 is equal) 15...\text{d}d6 16 \text{d}x\text{e}5 \text{d}x\text{e}5 17 \text{d}e5 and a draw was
agreed, though 17...\text{e}xe5 gives Black
the edge here.\hfill \textbf{C43) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \text{d}e6 3 \text{c}c3 \text{b}d7 4
\text{f}3 \text{e}5 5 \text{c}4 \text{e}7 6 0-0 0-0 7 \text{e}e1 \text{c}6 8
\text{a}4 \text{w}c7 9 \text{h}3 \text{b}6}

\textbf{10 \text{g}5}

White has many alternatives here:
a) 10 d5 \text{b}7 11 dxc6 (after the
 prophylactic 11 \text{e}e2!?, the queen isn’t tied
down to protecting c2, and thus in the
event of a mass swap on d5 White
would always be able to recapture with
a piece) 11...\text{x}c6 12 \text{g}5 \text{xe}4 (as in
the game Morozevich-Tischbierek [see
Line C1], Black uses tactical measures
to hold the balance) 13 \text{xe}4 \text{xe}4 14
\text{xe}4 \text{xc}4 15 \text{exe}7 \text{xe}4 16 \text{wd}6 \text{c}5
17 \text{xf}8 \text{xf}8 18 \text{wd}2 \text{f}6 19 \text{a}5 \text{b}5 20 \text{d}1
\text{a}6 21 \text{wc}3 \text{wc}4 and a draw was agreed
in J.Benjamin-L.Christiansen, US
Championship, Chandler 1997.

b) 10 \text{w}e2 \text{a}6 11 \text{a}2 \text{b}8! 12 dxe5
dxe5 13 \text{h}4 \text{c}5 was level in Leko-

c) With 10 \text{a}2 White is intending
to exchange on e5 without allowing
...\text{xe}5\text{xf}3 and ...\text{f}6. He then plans
the traditional transportation of his
knight to f5. Now Black can play:
c1) 10...\text{b}7?!. As in the variation
where the black queen stays on its ini-
tial square, which we will examine
later on, the move ...\text{b}7 is dubious.
Here’s why: 11 dxex5 dxex5 (or 11...\text{xe}5
12 \text{d}4, threatening \text{f}5 and \text{f}4, when
White stands much better) 12 \text{h}4 \text{c}5
13 \text{f}5

\textbf{13...\text{e}6 14 \text{e}3 (directed against
...\text{d}4, but 14 \text{w}f3! \text{d}4 15 \text{xd}4 \text{ex}d4
16 \text{xf}4 \text{wc}8 17 \text{de}2 \text{c}5 18 \text{dg}3 was
surely stronger) 14...\text{ad}8 15 \text{w}f3 \text{d}4
16 \text{xd}4 \text{ex}d4 17 \text{de}2 \text{c}5?? (17...\text{b}4!
would have enabled Black to stay in
the game) 18 \text{g}3! 1-0 Mahdi-Palatnik,
Cattolica 1993.

c2) 10...\text{a}6 11 \text{h}4 \text{ex}d4! 12 \text{f}5 (12
\text{xd}4!? \text{de}5 13 \text{f}4 \text{dg}6 offers mutual
chances) 12...dxc3 13 \text{exe}7+ \text{h}8 with
an unclear position. Alternatively, 11
\text{dxe}5 \text{dxe}5 12 \text{h}4 doesn’t promise
much: after either ...\text{c}5 or ...\text{g}6, in-
tending 13 \text{h}6 \text{d}8 14 \text{f}3 \text{c}5, Black
will prevent \text{dg}5 and equalize.
d) If White chooses to continue with 10 b3 then h3 is useless. The position is level after 10...\textit{b7} 11 \textit{b2} a6 12 \textit{d3} (with the idea of \textit{e2-g3}) 12...\textit{fe8} followed by ...\textit{f8}, ...\textit{g6} and ...\textit{g7}.

e) 10 \textit{e3}?! is inferior to 10 \textit{g5}. The e4-pawn is not covered by the rook anymore, which means that a later ...b5-b4 will gain in strength. Moreover, provoking the weakening ...h6 with \textit{g5} may prove to be useful.

With 10 \textit{g5} we are following \textbf{Akopian-Lima, Biel Interzonal 1993}, which continued:

10...\textit{b7}

Or 10...\textit{a6} 11 d5 \textit{b7} (11...c5?! 12 \textit{h4} should be compared to Polgar-Izeta, Line B21 in Chapter 12) 12 dxc6 \textit{xc6} 13 \textit{we2} when in comparison with Benjamin-Christiansen (see the previous note), the c4-bishop is protected and thus the tactical simplifications don’t work anymore. After 13...\textit{b7} 14 \textit{ad1} \textit{fc8} 15 b3 White stood a bit better in Piket-Ree, Dutch Ch., Hilversum 1990.

The move couple 10...h6 11 \textit{h4} can be inserted if Black doesn’t fear 11 \textit{xf6}?! \textit{xf6} 12 d5.

Finally, there is 10...\textit{e8}!?, after which the critical follow-up again seems to be 11 d5. In comparison to 10...a6, the e7-bishop is defended, but b5 isn’t controlled, but then again the a6-pawn isn’t hanging after \textit{we2}, but... but... In brief, 10...\textit{e8}!? is interesting!

11 \textit{we2}

11 d5!? must be a consideration here; while in the event of 11 dxe5, 11...\textit{dxe5}! is the correct reply. Indeed, the bishop isn’t covering f5, so 11...dxe5?! 12 \textit{dh4} is annoying. Trust me, the correct recapture on e5 will become a reflex action!

11...\textit{a6} 12 dxe5! \textit{dxe5}!?

Akopian assesses 12...\textit{dxe5}! 13 \textit{d4} as with an edge for White, but practice has seen two examples that invalidate this judgement:

13...b5 14 \textit{a2} b4 (and 14...\textit{h6} 15 \textit{h4} \textit{fe8} 16 \textit{f5} \textit{ad8} 17 \textit{we3} \textit{c8} 18 \textit{xe7+} \textit{xe7} 19 \textit{b6} \textit{xh3}! was agreed drawn in V.Potkin-Zablotsky, St Petersburg 2001, just when the game was becoming entertaining!) 15 \textit{b1} \textit{h6} 16 \textit{c1} (undeveloping all the pieces)
16...\textit{f}\textit{e}8 and Black quickly took over the initiative in Yagupov-Hasangatin, Russian Team Ch., Moscow 1994.

Instead of 13 \textit{d}d4 White has tried two other moves, but without much success in either case: 13 \textit{d}xe5 \textit{d}xe5 14 \textit{h}ad1 \textit{b}5 with equality, Vehi Bach-Cifuentes Parada, Platja d’Aro 1994; and 13 \textit{b}3 \textit{d}xf3+ (13...\textit{b}5; 13...\textit{f}e8) 14 \textit{w}xf3 \textit{mae}8 15 \textit{f}4 \textit{dd}7 with maybe even an edge for Black, A.Moroz-Sufiyanov, Decin 1997.

13 \textit{d}h4!

Now Black will have to endure the typical irritation linked with the intrusion of a knight on \textit{f}5.

13...\textit{b}5

13...\textit{g}6? 14 \textit{h}h6 \textit{fe}8 15 \textit{xf}7+! \textit{xf}7 16 \textit{w}c4+ is a recurrent tactical motif with the bishop on \textit{c}4 or \textit{a}2. Black can’t even defend effectively by giving back the piece with 16...\textit{dd}5, since the queen is misplaced after 17 \textit{xd}5.

14 \textit{f}5 \textit{ab}8 15 \textit{la}2

With the idea of \textit{h}ad1 and \textit{dd}6.

15...\textit{g}6

15...\textit{b}4 is met by 16 \textit{bb}1, intending \textit{dd}2. Another defensive plan is 15...\textit{c}5, when Black is considering both ...\textit{ee}6, and...\textit{b}4 followed by ...\textit{xe}4.

16 \textit{h}h6+ \textit{g}7 17 \textit{ad}1 \textit{dg}8

The only move according to Akopian, although 17...\textit{b}4 18 \textit{bb}1 \textit{dd}5 seems interesting to me as well.

18 \textit{w}g4!

18...\textit{cc}5?

A mistake, after which Black is lost. He should look to note ‘c’ for an improvement:

a) 18...\textit{dd}6 19 \textit{wh}4 and Black is almost paralyzed.

b) 18...\textit{xh}6 19 \textit{la}h6+ \textit{wh}6 20 \textit{xd}7 and \textit{f}7 drops, not to mention the problems with the black king.

c) 18...\textit{xg}5! (compulsory) 19 \textit{dg}8! (not 19 \textit{xf}7? \textit{xf}7 20 \textit{xf}7 \textit{dd}6! 21 \textit{w}xg5 \textit{xf}7 and the white rooks have no square on which to penetrate along the d-file, so Black stands a bit better; while if 19 \textit{xd}7 \textit{dh}6 20 \textit{x}x\textit{c}7 \textit{xg}4 21 \textit{xb}7 \textit{xf}6 22 \textit{dd}1 \textit{bb}8 with an equal position; or if in this second line 21 \textit{hxg}4 \textit{bb}8 22 \textit{dd}1 \textit{dd}8! 23 \textit{cd}7 \textit{aa}5!, followed by ...\textit{c}8 chasing the rook, and gaining an edge due to the two

261
bishops) 19...\textit{\textbf{Cc5}}! (the best, although 19...\textit{\textbf{Db6}} isn’t that clear-cut after 20 a5 \textit{\textbf{Dd8}} or 20...\textit{\textbf{h6}}, or 20 \textit{\textbf{Wxg5}} \textit{\textbf{Xg8}} 21 a5; but 19...\textit{\textbf{Dad8}}?! 20 \textit{\textbf{Wxg5}} \textit{\textbf{Xg8}} 21 \textit{\textbf{We7}} is very good for White) 20 b4 (20 \textit{\textbf{Wxg5}} \textit{\textbf{Xg8}}) 20...\textit{\textbf{Dd8}} 21 \textit{\textbf{bxc5}} \textit{\textbf{Cc8}} 22 \textit{\textbf{Wg3}} \textit{\textbf{Xg8}} 23 \textit{\textbf{Md6}} \textit{\textbf{Me8}} 24 \textit{\textbf{Med1}} when the possession of the d-file grants White a strong initiative.

Going back a bit, 20...\textit{\textbf{Dxa4}} seems stronger given the following variation: 21 \textit{\textbf{Dxa4}} \textit{\textbf{bxa4}} (21...\textit{\textbf{Xg8}}? allows White to direct his forces towards the enemy king: 22 \textit{\textbf{Dc5}} \textit{\textbf{Dd8}} 23 \textit{\textbf{Md7}} \textit{\textbf{Cc8}} 24 \textit{\textbf{Med1}}! \textit{\textbf{Xd7}} 25 \textit{\textbf{Xd7}} \textit{\textbf{Wc8}} 26 \textit{\textbf{Wf3}} \textit{\textbf{Ch8}} 27 \textit{\textbf{Xf7}} \textit{\textbf{Ah4}} 28 \textit{\textbf{Dxe6}} \textit{\textbf{Xxf7}} 29 \textit{\textbf{Wx7}} \textit{\textbf{Wg8}} 30 \textit{\textbf{Wc7}} \textit{\textbf{f6}} 31 \textit{\textbf{Dxg5}} and White wins) 22 \textit{\textbf{Md7}} \textit{\textbf{Cc8}} or 22...\textit{\textbf{Wc8}}!? and the position is very murky.

\textbf{19...\textit{\textbf{Df5}}+!}

This treatment of the position radically differs from that after 8...\textit{\textbf{b6}}. Black renounces his counterplay based on ...\textit{\textbf{b5}} in order to ensure a stable square on \textit{\textbf{c5}} for his d7-knight after a capture on \textit{\textbf{d4}}. He will continue his development with a plan such as ...\textit{\textbf{Dc5}}, ...\textit{\textbf{De8}}, ...\textit{\textbf{Df8}}, ...\textit{\textbf{Wb6}}, and subsequently ...\textit{\textbf{Dd7}}, ...\textit{\textbf{Dad8}}, ...\textit{\textbf{Cc8}}.

The most effective way for White to counter this idea consists of fianchettoing the dark-squared bishop and then attacking on the kingside by means of \textit{\textbf{Wf3}}(-\textit{\textbf{g3}}) and \textit{\textbf{Df5}}.

After 8...\textit{\textbf{a5}} we will concentrate on the replies:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}
D1: 9 h3
D2: 9 a2
D3: 9 b3

Firstly, let’s look at less frequent alternatives:

9 We2

Or:

a) 9 b3?! constitutes a loss of time as the bishop will be attacked after 9...exd4 10 Qxd4 Qc5...

...when White has nothing better than to return with 11 Qc4, and now 11...Wb6 is equal.

b) 9 Qg5?! h6 10 Qh4 (or 10 Qe3 Qg4) 10...Qh5 11 Qxe7 Wxe7 doesn’t cause Black any particular problems, especially after 12 Qxe5?! dxe5 13 Wxh5 exd4.

Going back to 9 We2, with the white rook already standing on e1, the queen move doesn’t appear very logical. Black has two ways to deal with it: maintain the tension with 9...Qc7 (or even 9...h6 or 9...Qe8); or release it to reach a position similar to the one that arose in Glek-Bologan (Chapter 12, Line B23), by playing...

9...exd4 10 Qxd4 Qe8

...followed by 11...Qf8, ...Qc5 etc. The inclusion of Qe1 and ...a5 hasn’t changed much. The sacrifice 11 Qxf7+?? Wxf7 12 Qe6...

...is still faulty, because of 12...Wb6, winning for Black. But not 12...Qxe6?? 13 Wc4+ d5 14 exd5+ (double check this time!) 14...Qf7 15 dxc6+ Qg6 16 c7 Wxc7 17 Wxc7 Qd6 (a lucky point that avoids immediate defeat) 18 Qxe8 Qxc7 with a definite advantage for White.

D1) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 Qf3
e5 5 Qc4 Qe7 6 0-0 0-0 7 Qe1 c6 8 a4 a5
9 h3 exd4

Or:

a) 9...Qe8, although playable, suffers from the same drawback as when played one move earlier. 10 Qa2 Qd8 11 Qh4! (targeting f5 and then d6; 11 Qe3 and 11 Qg5 are also natural and good) 11...exd4 12 Wxd4 Qe5 13 Qd3 Wxd4 14 Qxd4 with an edge for White in Van Riemsdijk-Agdamus, Brazilian Ch., Americana 1995.

b) 9...Qb6, followed by 10...Qfd7, has been employed lately.
One recent example continued with the sequence 10 \( \texttt{a3} \texttt{d3} \texttt{d3} \texttt{d7} \texttt{d7} \texttt{c6} \texttt{e8} \) 12 \( \texttt{w} \texttt{d} \texttt{d} \texttt{d} \texttt{2} \) (Baramidze-Bezold, Pulvermehle 2006) when White has more space and has slightly the better position.

c) 9...\texttt{h6} 10 \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{b} \texttt{b} \texttt{1} !? (an original plan, which is duly rewarded; 11 \texttt{d5}!! \texttt{g} \texttt{b} \texttt{6} 12 \texttt{g} \texttt{b} \texttt{3} \texttt{c} \texttt{x} \texttt{d} \texttt{5} 13 \texttt{f} \texttt{x} \texttt{b} \texttt{6} \texttt{w} \texttt{x} \texttt{b} \texttt{6} 14 \texttt{c} \texttt{x} \texttt{d} \texttt{5} \texttt{c} \texttt{x} \texttt{d} \texttt{5} 15 \texttt{w} \texttt{x} \texttt{d} \texttt{5} \texttt{c} \texttt{e} \texttt{6} 16 \texttt{w} \texttt{d} \texttt{3} \texttt{c} \texttt{a} \texttt{c} \texttt{8} 17 \texttt{c} \texttt{c} \texttt{a} \texttt{d} \texttt{1} \texttt{c} \texttt{c} \texttt{6} was between unclear and slightly better for White in Mi.Tzeitlin-Shirazi, Bagneux 1994) 11...\texttt{h} \texttt{h} \texttt{7} 12 \texttt{w} \texttt{a} \texttt{2} \texttt{c} \texttt{c} \texttt{8} 13 \texttt{d} \texttt{a} \texttt{d} \texttt{1} \texttt{c} \texttt{c} \texttt{7} 14 \texttt{d} \texttt{e} \texttt{2} \texttt{g} \texttt{g} \texttt{5} 15 \texttt{d} \texttt{x} \texttt{g} \texttt{5} \texttt{d} \texttt{x} \texttt{g} \texttt{5} 16 \texttt{g} \texttt{g} \texttt{3} \texttt{d} \texttt{x} \texttt{e} \texttt{3} 17 \texttt{d} \texttt{x} \texttt{e} \texttt{3} with a small plus for White, due to his more space and better posted pieces, Rytshagov-Nevednichy, Moscow Olympiad 1994.

After 9...\texttt{exd}4 White has a choice of recaptures:

\textbf{D11: 10 \texttt{c} \texttt{xd}4}  
\textbf{D12: 10 \texttt{w} \texttt{xd}4}

\textbf{D11} 1 \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{d} \texttt{6} 2 \texttt{d} \texttt{d} \texttt{f} \texttt{6} 3 \texttt{c} \texttt{c} \texttt{3} \texttt{b} \texttt{d} \texttt{7} 4 \texttt{f} \texttt{f} \texttt{f} \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{c} \texttt{4} \texttt{e} \texttt{7} 6 \texttt{0} \texttt{0} 0 \texttt{0} \texttt{0} 7 \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{1} \texttt{c} \texttt{6} 8 \texttt{a} \texttt{a} \texttt{4} \texttt{a} \texttt{5} 9 \texttt{h} \texttt{h} \texttt{exd}4 10 \texttt{c} \texttt{xd}4 \texttt{c} \texttt{c} \texttt{5} 

\textbf{D12} 10 \texttt{w} \texttt{xd}4  

\textbf{11 \texttt{f} \texttt{f}4}  
This is the main line of the 9 \texttt{h} \texttt{h} \texttt{3} system. Alternatively:

a) 11 \texttt{a} \texttt{a} ?! is an unfortunate mix of two ideas, and it deprives White of the possibility \texttt{b} \texttt{3}, \texttt{b} \texttt{2}, because the bishop would then be ridiculous on \texttt{a} \texttt{2}. For example, 11...\texttt{w} \texttt{b} \texttt{6} (11...\texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{6} ?!) 12 \texttt{d} \texttt{b} \texttt{3} \texttt{d} \texttt{x} \texttt{b} \texttt{3} 13 \texttt{d} \texttt{x} \texttt{b} \texttt{3} \texttt{d} \texttt{e} \texttt{6} 14 \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{3} (14 \texttt{d} \texttt{d} \texttt{5} is equal) 14...\texttt{w} \texttt{c} \texttt{7} 15 \texttt{d} \texttt{x} \texttt{e} \texttt{6} ?! \texttt{f} \texttt{x} \texttt{e} \texttt{6}...

...and Black converted his advantage on move 55 in Ye Jiangchuan-Hamdouchi, Cannes (rapid) 2001.

The direct 12 \texttt{e} \texttt{5}! may be more to the point: 12...\texttt{d} \texttt{x} \texttt{e} \texttt{5} 13 \texttt{d} \texttt{x} \texttt{e} \texttt{5} \texttt{d} \texttt{6} 14 \texttt{e} \texttt{e} \texttt{1} \texttt{d} \texttt{d} \texttt{8} 15 \texttt{w} \texttt{f} \texttt{3} (on 15 \texttt{g} \texttt{g} ?! Black can consent
to the ruining of his pawn structure for the sake of dynamism: 15...\textit{\textdollar}e6 16 \textit{\textdollar}xf6 gx6 17 \textit{\$}g4+ [otherwise White is going to lose material] 17...\textit{\textdollar}g5 18 \textit{\textdollar}f5 \textit{\textdollar}xb2 19 \textit{\textdollar}e4 \textit{\textdollar}xf5 20 \textit{\textdollar}xf5 \textit{\textdollar}xe4 21 \textit{\textdollar}xe4 \textit{\textdollar}b4! 22 \textit{\textdollar}xf7+ \textit{\textdollar}g7 and Black is fine) 15...\textit{\textdollar}xa4 16 \textit{\textdollar}xa4 \textit{\textdollar}xd4 17 \textit{\textdollar}g5; or 15...\textit{\textdollar}cd7 16 \textit{\textdollar}d5 \textit{\textdollar}e5 17 \textit{\textdollar}h6+ \textit{\textdollar}f8 18 \textit{\textdollar}xe5 \textit{\textdollar}xe5 19 \textit{\textdollar}xf7, in both cases with an strong initiative for White. Black can probably improve after 12 e5, but he is clearly on the defensive.

b) For 11 b3 see Line D32.

c) 11 \textit{\textdollar}f3 \textit{\textdollar}e6 (the pseudo-sacrifice 11...\textit{\textdollar}cxe4!? seems to equalize at once: 12 \textit{\textdollar}xe4 d5 13 \textit{\textdollar}xf6+ \textit{\textdollar}xf6 14 \textit{\textdollar}d3 [14 \textit{\textdollar}d1?! is dubious: 14...\textit{\textdollar}xc4 15 \textit{\textdollar}e6 \textit{\textdollar}xe6 16 \textit{\textdollar}xd8 \textit{\textdollar}xd8 and Black stands better] 14...\textit{\textdollar}xd4 15 \textit{\textdollar}xh7+ \textit{\textdollar}xh7 16 \textit{\textdollar}wd3++; but Black's prospects are no worse after the more complex 11...\textit{\textdollar}e6) 12 \textit{\textdollar}f1 d5 (12...\textit{\textdollar}b6!? 13 exd5 \textit{\textdollar}xd5 with equality, since 14 \textit{\textdollar}xe6 fxe6 15 \textit{\textdollar}g4 \textit{\textdollar}d6 provides Black with enough dynamism.

d) Even the peculiar 11 \textit{\textdollar}f1, seen in Anand-J.Costa, Biel 1988, deserves consideration. White's idea seems to be to discourage ...\textit{\textdollar}e6, as well as the possible equalizer ...\textit{\textdollar}cxe4 and ...d5. After 11...\textit{\textdollar}e8 12 \textit{\textdollar}f3 (or 12 b3?! \textit{\textdollar}f8 13 f3) 12...\textit{\textdollar}b6 13 b3 \textit{\textdollar}b4 (13...\textit{\textdollar}cxe4?! 14 \textit{\textdollar}xe4 \textit{\textdollar}cxe4 15 \textit{\textdollar}xe4 \textit{\textdollar}xc3 16 \textit{\textdollar}d3 g6 17 \textit{\textdollar}f4 should be somewhat better for White) 14 \textit{\textdollar}c4 \textit{\textdollar}cd7, Black keeps the balance.

11...\textit{\textdollar}e6!

Black has tried various methods of counterplay, amongst which 11...\textit{\textdollar}e6 is the most popular. However, Black has a wide choice here, and we will first deal with his less standard replies:

a) 11...\textit{\textdollar}b6!? 12 b3 (12 \textit{\textdollar}d2?! \textit{\textdollar}d7 13 \textit{\textdollar}b3 may be a trifle better for White, whereas 12 \textit{\textdollar}f3 allowed Black a comfortable equalization after 12...\textit{\textdollar}e6 13 \textit{\textdollar}f1 d5 14 exd5 \textit{\textdollar}xd5 15 \textit{\textdollar}e5 \textit{\textdollar}d7 16 \textit{\textdollar}f5 \textit{\textdollar}xe5 17 \textit{\textdollar}xe7+ \textit{\textdollar}xe7 18 \textit{\textdollar}xe5 \textit{\textdollar}g6 in Dervishi-V.Georgiev, Durres 2001) 12...\textit{\textdollar}e8 (and 12...\textit{\textdollar}e6!? 13 \textit{\textdollar}f1 \textit{\textdollar}ad8, L.Vitic-O.Biti, Croatian Team Ch. 2003, is interesting too) and now:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
\textbf{a1)} 13 \textit{\textdollar}f3 \textit{\textdollar}cd7 14 \textit{\textdollar}f5 \textit{\textdollar}e5 15 \textit{\textdollar}xe5 dxe5 16 \textit{\textdollar}xe7+ \textit{\textdollar}xe7 17 \textit{\textdollar}ad1 \textit{\textdollar}e6 18 \textit{\textdollar}xe6 (Hravec-Piket, Moscow Olympiad 1994) 18...\textit{\textdollar}xe6 is level.
\textbf{a2)} 13 \textit{\textdollar}f3?! \textit{\textdollar}e6 14 \textit{\textdollar}d2 \textit{\textdollar}ad8 is also level, Dreiev-Arizmendi Martinez, Albox (rapid) 2003.
\textbf{a3)} 13 e5 dxe5 14 \textit{\textdollar}xe5 (or 14 \textit{\textdollar}xe5 \textit{\textdollar}cd7 15 \textit{\textdollar}e3 \textit{\textdollar}f8 16 \textit{\textdollar}wd2 \textit{\textdollar}g6) 14...\textit{\textdollar}cd7 15 \textit{\textdollar}g3 (worse is 15 \textit{\textdollar}f5?! \textit{\textdollar}xe5 16 \textit{\textdollar}xe5 \textit{\textdollar}b4 with a small edge to Black in S.Ahmed-Magem Badals, Dhaka 2003) 15...\textit{\textdollar}f8 16 \textit{\textdollar}wd3 \textit{\textdollar}g6, when the white pieces are bit better placed, but Black should be able to equalize soon.
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
a4) 13 $h2!? (possibly a clever semi-waiting move) 13...$f8 14 $f3 was Kosteniuk-Striekovic, Dos Hermanas Blitz 2004. White stood better later on and went on to win, but perhaps 14...$cd7 15 $f5 $e5 16 $xe5 $xe5 17 $h6+ g$xh6 18 $xf6 $e6 is alright for Black.

After any of the following, rather passive attempts, White should keep a slight plus:

b) 11...$d7?! 12 $f5 $e5 13 $xe7+ $xe7 14 $f1 (Sermek-D. Novak, Croatian Team Ch. 2000) and White has the two bishops for nothing.

c) 11...$e8 12 $f3 $f8 13 $ad1, Tukmakov-Planinec, Amsterdam 1974.

d) 11...$e8 12 $d2 $d6 13 $e3 $xd4 14 $xd4 $e6 15 $f1 f5, Skripchenko-O. Bartosik, Bratislava 1993.

d) 11...$e6 12 $h2 $xd4 13 $xd4 $e8 14 $ad1 $e6, Ganguly-Elbilia, Turin Olympiad 2006.

Returning to 11...$e6:

12 $xe6

Or:

a) 12 $f1 $b6 (12...$d5!? 13 $f3 (13 $b3 $ad8 14 $f3 $d5 was equal in Kutucovic-Topalovic, Pula 2002) 13...$d5 brings us back to Dervishi-V. Georgiev (see 11...$wb6), but 13...$ad8 14 $ad1 $b4 (Tseshkovsky-Jenetl, Krasnodar 2001) is a valid option as well.

b) 12 $xe6 $xe6 13 $e5 is not too demanding for Black: 13...$d5 14 $xd5 $e5 15 $g3 $h4 was equal in Badamidze-Belikov, Dortmund match 2003, as is 15...$dxe5 16 $xe5 $h4 17 $f3; while after 15 $g4?! $h5 16 $g3 $h4 or 15 $xd6 $xd6 16 $xd6 $xd6, White even ends up worse) 14...$xf4 (if 14...$xd6?! 15 $xd6 $xd6 16 $e4 $xe4 17 $xe4 with an edge) 15 $xe7 $xe7 16 $g4. Now 16...$f6, intending...$af8, ...$g6, and 17 $f5 $e7, seems the most precise, but even 16...$f6 or 16...$ad8 is playable.

12...$f6

13 $e5

Or 13 $e2 $b6 (13...$fd7 14 $e3 $d5 was also fine for Black in V. Karasev-Shabanov, Satka 2004) 14 $e5 (14 $e3 $d5 15 $xd5 $xd5 16 $xd5 $exd5 17 $xe7 $xf4 was at least equal for Black in Beliavsky-Oratovskv, Bugojno 1999) 14...$d5 15 $xd5 $cxd5 16 $xd6 $xd6
17 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 with a roughly equal game. 15...cxd5 is the most solid, but 15...exd5 16 exd6 ♘f6 17 ♗ab1 ♗ad8 also deserves consideration. Black will continue with ...♗b4 and maybe grab on e3. His pieces control many important squares, though it is still unclear how he will deal with the d6-pawn.

13...d5

13...♘d5 leads to positions similar to those after 12 ♗xe6. The difference, the survival of the c4-bishop rather than the d4-knight, doesn’t alter the assessment. After 14 exd6 ♖xf4 (or 14...♗xd6!? 15 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 16 ♗e4 ♞xe4 17 ♞xe4, Reeh-Miltner, German League 2005, and I don’t think White can claim an edge here, as the bishop is not as effective as a knight on d4 would be) 15 dxe7 ♗xe7, Black has enough activity to compensate for the weakness on e6. He will probably follow up by playing ...♖f6, then double on the f-file, and/or continue with ...♗g6, ...♗g5 and so on. His knight on d5 does a good job of blocking the bishop’s attack on e6.

13...♗d7!? is a possibility for Black which is unavailable after 12 ♗xe6. Following 14 exd6 ♖xf4 15 dxe7 ♘xe7 Black should be okay.

The text move is interesting, but also more dangerous for Black.

14 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 15 ♘g4!

15 ♘e3 d4 is equal.

15...♗h5!

After the faulty 15...dxc4?, the right way is 16 ♗ad1! ♗b6 (or 16...♗e8) 17 ♗d6 ♗e7 18 ♞xc4 and the Philidor specialist was quite lucky to escape against a much lower-rated opponent in Alford-N.Mitkov, Mexico City 2006) 17 ♘e3! and Black experiences trouble in every case, e.g. 17...♗xb2 (or 17...♗xc3 18 bxc3 ♗f5 19 ♗d7!) 18 ♘xc5 ♘xc3 19 ♘xe6+ ♗h8 20 ♘b1! ♗xc2 21 ♘xf8 ♘xe1 (if 21...♖xf8 22 ♖f7!) 22 ♘xg7+ ♘xg7 23 ♘xb7+ and mate follows.

16 ♖f3

After 16 ♗g3 dxc4 17 ♗ad1 ♗b6 (17...♗e8?! 18 ♗d6 ♗e7 19 ♖e5 gave White a noticeable edge in Godena-N.Mitkov, Calvia Olympiad 2004) 18 ♗e3 (or 18 ♗d6 ♖f7) 18...♖b4, intending 19 ♗a2 ♗e4!, the position is unclear.

16 ♖xh5? is wrong: 16...♗xc3 17
bxc3 (or 17...g5 f5!) 17...xf4 18 d3 Wh4 with a great advantage to Black, whose pawn structure is clearly favourable.

16...dxc4 17 Wh5 xxc3 18 bxc3 axa4

Maybe 18...Wf5 19 Wg4 b5.

19 Wg4 b5 20 Wxe6+ Wf7 21 e5 Wd7

Under the present circumstances this is an interesting alternative to 10 Oxd4. White can concentrate his forces towards the d6 weakness thanks to his opponent’s previous move, which at least gives him an easy plan.

10...Oc5

After 10...Wb6?! I would rate Black’s equalizing chances much lower: 11 e3 (or 11 f4) 11...Wb4 12 d2 Wc5 13 f4 Oe8 (or 13...Wxd4 14 Oxd4 Oe5 15 b3) 14 Oad1 Wxd4 15 Oxd4 and White enjoyed a persistent edge in Bologan-B.Damljanovic, Calvia Olympiad 2004.

In the event of 10...Od6?!, to follow up with ...d5, White’s bishop would stay on the a2-g8 diagonal. Indeed, 11 b3 d5 12 exd5 Ofxd5 13 Oxd5 Oxd5 14 Oxd5 cxd5 is slightly better for White, as the bishops don’t fully compensate for the isolani.

D12) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Of6 3 Oc3 Obd7 4 Of3 e5 5 Ac4 Oe7 6 0-0 0-0 7 Wc1 c6 8 a4 a5 9 h3 exd4 10 Wxd4

11 f4

Aiming at d6, this is the most consistent follow-up to 10 Wxd4.

Here are some other minor options for White:

a) 11 b3 Oxe4? (11...Oe6) 12 Wxe4

268
(12 \(\text{Qxe4} \ d5\) is roughly equal after 13 \(\text{Qed2} \ \text{dxc4} 14 \text{Wxd8} \ \text{Qxd8} 15 \text{Qxc4}\) 12...\(\text{Qxe4} 13 \text{Qxe4} \ d5 14 \text{Qb2} \ f6 15 \text{Qd1}\) and now, rather than 15...\(\text{We2?} 16 \text{We1} \ \text{Wh7}\) (or 16...\(\text{dxc4} 17 \text{Qd6}\) 17 \(\text{Qd3}\) with a quick White victory in Arakhamia-Giertz, Geneva 1990, Black should have opted for either 15...\(\text{Qh8}\) 16 \(\text{Qeg5} \ \text{Qf5}\) 17 \(\text{Qd3} \ \text{Qxd3} 18 \text{Qxd3}\) c5, or 15...\(\text{Wc7}\) 16 \(\text{Qd3} \ \text{dxe4} 17 \text{Qxe4} \ f5\) with dynamical equilibrium in both cases.

b) 11 \(\text{Qe3}\)?! \(\text{Qe6}\) (11...\(\text{Qxe4}\)?! was insufficient for equality in H.Bastian-Wahls, German League 1988, after 12 \(\text{Qxe4} \ d5 13 \text{Qxf6+} \ \text{Qxf6} 14 \text{Qf4} \ \text{dxc4}\) 15 \(\text{Qad1} \ \text{Wc7}\) 16 \(\text{Qxc4} \ \text{Qe6}\) 17 \(\text{Qc5} \ \text{Qxc4}\) 18 \(\text{Qxe7}\), as Black faced the prospect of either conceding the seventh rank or allowing his pawn structure to be damaged) 12 \(\text{Qad1}\) (or 12 \(\text{Qxe6}\)??, intending 12...\(\text{fxe6}\) 13 \(\text{e5}\) 12...\(\text{Qfd7}\) 13 \(\text{Qxe6}\) \(\text{fxe6}\) 14 \(\text{Qc4}\) \(\text{We8}\) 15 \(\text{Qd4}\) \(\text{d5}\) 16 \(\text{exd5}\) \(\text{exd5}\) 17 \(\text{Qxd5}\) \(\text{cxd5}\) 18 \(\text{Qxd5}\)+

...and now instead of 18...\(\text{Qh8}\)?? 19 \(\text{Qf5}\) (Savic-Damljanovic, Herceg Novi 2002), 18...\(\text{Wf7}\) 19 \(\text{Qf5}\) \(\text{Qd8}\) would have been fine for Black.

c) 11 \(\text{e5}\)?! brought White nothing af-
ter 11...\(\text{dxe5}\) 12 \(\text{Qxe5}\) \(\text{Qe6}\) in Manca-N.Mitkov, Saint Vincent 2003.

11...\(\text{Qe6}\)

Or:

a) The seemingly passive 11...\(\text{Qe8}\) is playable, too.

Black is intending 12...\(\text{Qe6}\), when 13 \(\text{Qxe6}\) \(\text{fxe6}\) 14 \(\text{e5}\) \(\text{d5}\) would be fine for him. Another plan consists of ...\(\text{Qh8}\) followed by ...\(\text{f5}\), which explains White’s next: 12 \(\text{Wf3}\) \(\text{Qe6}\) 13 \(\text{Qf1}\) \(\text{Wb6}\) 14 \(\text{Qad1}\) \(\text{Qd8}\) (14...\(\text{Wxb2}\)?? loses, of course, to 15 \(\text{Qb1}\) \(\text{Wa3}\) 16 \(\text{Qd5}\), or 15...\(\text{Wxc2}\) 16 \(\text{Qd4}\) 15 \(\text{b3}\) with a slight edge to White, Chebotarev-Dudukin, Serpukhov 2004.

b) 11...\(\text{Qe6}\) 12 \(\text{Qxe6}\) \(\text{Qxe6}\) (12...\(\text{fxe6}\)? 13 \(\text{e5}\) supplies an argument for 11...\(\text{Qe8}\); after 13...\(\text{Qd5}\) 14 \(\text{exd6}\) \(\text{Qxf4}\) 15 \(\text{dxe7}\) \(\text{Wxe7}\) 16 \(\text{Qe3}\) White has a nice plus linked with the weak e-pawn and the bad c8-bishop) 13 \(\text{Qad1}\) \(\text{d5}\) (or 13...\(\text{Qe8}\) 14 \(\text{Qe3}\) \(\text{Wc7}\) 15 \(\text{Qd2}\) \(\text{Qd8}\) 16 \(\text{Qed1}\) and White was pressing in M.Pavlovic-Miltner, Biel 2003) 14 \(\text{exd5}\) \(\text{cxd5}\) (14...\(\text{Qxd5}\) would not have solved the problems after 15 \(\text{Qe5}\), or 15 \(\text{Qxd5}\)?? with the tricky idea 15...\(\text{Qxd5}\)?? 16 \(\text{Wf3}\))
15 Qg5 h5 16 We5 xc2 17 Wxe7 Wxe7
18 xxe7 xxd1 19 xdx1 when Black had
 chances to hold, but obviously it was
 White who was having all the fun in
12 xad1 Wb6
 12...Qe8 (Isonzo-N.Mitkov, Saint
 Vincent 2003) is probably worse, but
 it’s also more complicated!
13 xxe6
 After 13 b3!? xxc4 14 Wxc4 (as in
 Luther-N.Mitkov, Plovdiv 2003) White
 may be a tad better, but not more.
13...fxe6 14 xxd6
 Or 14 e5 dxe5 15 Wxe5 (after 15
 xxe5 xad8 16 Wh4 Wb4 Black was
close to equality in Pikula-N.Mitkov,
Pfaeffikon 2003) 15...Qd5 (15...Wxb2?
 16 Qd5! Wxe5 17 Qxe7+ Qf7 18 Qxe5
 and Black found it hard to conveniently
 regain the piece in Battsetseg-
 Sheremetjeva, Manila Olympiad 1992)
16 Qxd5 exd5! and Black is okay.
14...xd6 15 wxd6 xad8 16 We5!
16 We7 xde8 17 Wd6 xdd8 18 We7
 xde8 was agreed drawn in Sermek-
 N.Mitkov, Bled Olympiad 2002.
16...Qd7 17 Wd4 Wxb2

18 We3!
18 Hb1 Wxc2 19 He2 (19 He1?! Qb3
 was already in Black’s favour in S.Cela-
 A.Kizov, Bar 2006) 19...Wd3 20 Wxd3
 Qxd3 21 Wxb7 Qc5 is equal.
18...Wa3
 After 18...Wb6 19 Hd6 (Korneev-
 Mietzner, Böblingen 2003) it is difficult
 for Black to move, since his knights
 and queen are somewhat tangled.
19 Hb1
 (Nedev-Tratar, European Ch., Istanbul
 2003). Black’s position, though very
 playable, is more difficult to handle.

D2) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 Qf3
e5 5 Qc4 Qe7 6 0-0 0-0 7 He1 c6 8 a4 a5
9 a2

Now Black can play:
D21: 9...h6
D22: 9...exd4

Or:
9...He8
Black usually can’t manage without
the preparatory ...h6 if he wishes to
continue with this rook move.
The drawback of 9...Wb6?! is the
The Philidor Hanham Variation – Main Line: 8 e1 without 8...b6

Possibility of 10 h3 exd4 11 wxd4! wb4 (swapping queens provides White with an easy position – compare with Bologan-Damljanovic in Line D12) 12 af4 de5 13 axe5 dxe5 14 wxe5 and Black's compensation was missing in Mukhametov-Genba, Moscow 1996. 12...dh5 leads to complications that turn out well for White: 13 xe3 xe6 14 wd2 xb2? (14...xe5!) 15 dd4 (the queen is trapped and must run away as quickly as possible) 15...wb4 16 ab1 wc5 17 de2 xc3 (if 17...we5 18 g4 wins) 18 xc3 we5 19 g4 dh6 20 af4 with already a close-to-decisive advantage for White. The thematic 9...wc7 is possible, though.

10 dg5

White can keep an edge after 10 h3 dh8 (10...h6 would return to Yakovich-Genba, Line D21) 11 xe3 or 11 dg5 xe7 12 xe3.

10...fh8 11 xe3 h6

12 xf7+?!?

A suspicious attempt to exploit Black's ninth move. Events now take a forced turn, but everything is okay from Black standpoint.

12...xf7 13 de6 wb6 14 dxe5 xb2 15 exf6 xf6 16 ad4 xd4 17 wxd4 de5 18 dd8 ff6

The creative 18...ff3! 19 de2 wd4 20 dx4 ff8 21 be6 xe6 22 dx6 df6 23 dd4 is slightly better for Black, since he has fewer pawn islands.

19 ab1 wxc2 20 xe2

20...ff3+

This sacrifice forces a draw in spectacular fashion.

Black could carry on the struggle by playing 20...wd3!? 21 wxd3 dx3 22 xb7, but the position remains in equilibrium.

21 gxf3 gg6+ 22 bh1 wb1+

Or immediately 22...h3.

23 xb1 bh3 24 wb6 a2+ ½-½


D21) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 af6 3 dc3 bd7 4 ff3 e5 5 dc4 xe7 6 0-0 0-0 7 xe1 c6 8 a4 a5 9 a2 h6 10 h3 xe8 11 xe3 af8 12 dd2!

We are following Yakovich-Genba, Perm 1997.

12...wc7?!

A mistake. 12...db6 13 ff3 (13 f4??)
13...\(\text{\texttt{e}6}\) 14 \(\text{d}5\) \(\text{cxd}5\) 15 \(\text{exd}5\) \(\text{\texttt{d}7}\), or 12...\(\text{exd}4\)?! 13 \(\text{\texttt{x}d}4\) \(\text{\texttt{c}5}\) 14 \(\text{\texttt{w}f}3\) \(\text{\texttt{e}6}\) was better.

13 \(\text{\texttt{c}4}\) \(\text{exd}4\) 14 \(\text{\texttt{x}d}4\) \(\text{\texttt{x}e}4\)? 15 \(\text{\texttt{x}e}4\) \(\text{d}5\) 16 \(\text{\texttt{w}h}5\)!

16 \(\text{\texttt{b}6}\)! would have won more quickly after 16...\(\text{\texttt{x}xb}6\) 17 \(\text{\texttt{d}6}\).

16...\(\text{\texttt{x}e}4\)

Two other possibilities couldn’t save Black: if 16...\(\text{g}6\) 17 \(\text{\texttt{w}h}4\) \(\text{dxe}4\) 18 \(\text{\texttt{b}6}\)\! \(\text{\texttt{x}xb}6\) 19 \(\text{\texttt{w}f}6\) and White wins, while 16...\(\text{dxe}4\) 17 \(\text{\texttt{d}d}6\) is similar to the game continuation.

17 \(\text{\texttt{x}e}4\) \(\text{dxe}4\)

18 \(\text{\texttt{d}d}6\)\! \(\text{\texttt{w}xd}6\) 19 \(\text{\texttt{w}xf}7\)+ \(\text{\texttt{h}7}\) 20 \(\text{\texttt{g}g}8\)+

\(\text{\texttt{g}6}\) 21 \(\text{\texttt{f}f}7\)+\! \(\text{\texttt{f}f}5\)

Or 21...\(\text{\texttt{g}5}\) 22 \(\text{\texttt{x}g}7\) \(\text{\texttt{x}g}7\) 23 \(\text{\texttt{w}xg}7\)+ \(\text{\texttt{f}5}\) 24 \(\text{\texttt{g}g}6\)+\! \(\text{\texttt{e}6}\) (24...\(\text{\texttt{w}xg}6\) 25 \(\text{\texttt{g}g}4\)+ \(\text{\texttt{g}5}\) 26 \(\text{\texttt{h}4}\)+) 25 \(\text{\texttt{w}f}7\)+ \(\text{\texttt{e}5}\) 26 \(\text{\texttt{w}f}5\)+ \(\text{\texttt{d}4}\) 27 \(\text{\texttt{d}1}\)+ and White wins.

22 \(\text{\texttt{w}h}7\)+ \(\text{\texttt{g}5}\)

22...\(\text{g}6\) is no improvement as after 23 \(\text{\texttt{x}g}6\)+ \(\text{\texttt{w}xg}6\) 24 \(\text{\texttt{g}4}\)+ White wins the queen.

23 \(\text{\texttt{h}4}\)+ \(\text{\texttt{x}h}4\) 24 \(\text{\texttt{w}xe}4\)+ \(\text{\texttt{g}5}\) 25 \(\text{\texttt{f}4}\)+ \(\text{\texttt{h}4}\) 26 \(\text{\texttt{f}2}\)+\! 1-0

Mate follows with 26...\(\text{\texttt{g}4}\) 27 \(\text{\texttt{h}5}\)+ \(\text{\texttt{x}h}5\) 28 \(\text{\texttt{w}f}5\)+ \(\text{\texttt{g}5}\) 29 \(\text{\texttt{g}4}\).

D22) 1 \(\text{\texttt{e}4}\) \(\text{d}6\) 2 \(\text{\texttt{d}4}\) \(\text{\texttt{f}6}\) 3 \(\text{\texttt{c}3}\) \(\text{\texttt{bd}7}\) 4 \(\text{\texttt{f}3}\) \(\text{e}5\) 5 \(\text{\texttt{c}4}\) \(\text{\texttt{e}7}\) 6 0-0 0-0 7 \(\text{\texttt{e}1}\) \(\text{c}6\) 8 \(\text{\texttt{a}4}\) \(\text{\texttt{a}5}\) 9 \(\text{\texttt{a}2}\) \(\text{exd}4\) 10 \(\text{\texttt{x}d}4\) \(\text{\texttt{c}5}\)

After this common move White is again at a crossroads. Apart from 11 \(\text{\texttt{f}4}\) and 11 \(\text{\texttt{w}f}3\), he has tried many unconvincing moves: 11 \(\text{\texttt{f}5}\)!, 11 \(\text{\texttt{f}3}\) and 11 \(\text{\texttt{g}5}\) to name a few.

11 \(\text{\texttt{f}4}\)

Or:

a) For 11 \(\text{h}3\)?! see Line D11.

b) With 11 \(\text{\texttt{w}f}3\) White would like to bring his knight to \(\text{\texttt{f}5}\), but without having to recapture with the e-pawn in the event of ...\(\text{\texttt{x}f}5\). Indeed, Black would then continue by playing ...\(\text{d}5\) and, rather than his doubled pawns, it would be the bishop on \(\text{\texttt{a}2}\) that would cause a headache.

Black can play:

b1) 11...\(\text{\texttt{e}6}\)?! 12 \(\text{\texttt{f}5}\) (12 \(\text{\texttt{e}3}\) should also guarantee a slight edge)

\(\text{\texttt{e}3}\) \(\text{\texttt{a}5}\) 13 \(\text{\texttt{x}f}5\) when, in comparison with 11...\(\text{\texttt{w}b}6\) 12 \(\text{\texttt{f}5}\) etc., Black has lost a whole tempo, his queen being quite annoying for White on \(\text{\texttt{b}6}\).

b2) In contrast to Sermek-D. Novak (see Line D11) 11...\(\text{\texttt{d}f}7\)?! is quite in-
teresting here. After 12 \(\text{Qf5} \text{Qe5}\) 13 \(\text{Qxe7+} \text{Wxe7}\) 14 \(\text{Wg3} \text{Qe6}\) (as in R.Watanabe-Scarella, Bariloche 1991) the difference is that White can’t hide his bishop on f1.

b3) 11...\text{Wb6}! is the best reply in my opinion:

b31) 12 \(\text{Qg5} \text{Wh8}\) (12...\text{Wb4}?!?) 13 e5?! dxe5 14 \(\text{Qxe5} \text{Qg4}\) 15 \(\text{Wh4} \text{Qe6}\) 16 \(\text{Qxe6}\) fx6 (Teran Alvarez-Oratovsky, Mancha Real 2000), and White experiences trouble parrying the numerous threats (b2, f2 and... \(\text{Qd6}\)).

b32) 12 \(\text{Qb3} \text{Qxb3}\) 13 \(\text{Qxb3} \text{Qe6}\) 14 \(\text{Qe3} \text{Wc7}\) transposes to Slobodjan-Oratovsky (Line A) and is equal.

b33) 12 \(\text{Qf5} \text{Qxf5}\) 13 \(\text{Wxf5} \text{Qae8}\) (M.Bi
c-O.Bitti, Croatian Ch., Zagreb 2002) and White can’t finish his development properly since b2 is hanging. This should give Black a kind of dynamic equality, provided that he acts energetically (moves like...\text{Wb4},...\text{Qd8},...\text{Qe5}...\text{d5} come to mind).

c) On 11 \(\text{Qg5}\) Black can consider 11...\text{Wb6} or 11...\text{Qe6}!?

Returning to 11 \(\text{Qf4}\).

Once more this move seems to be adequate.

After 11...\text{Qe6}?! (Asrian-Doostkam, Dubai 2004) I would suggest the retreat 12 \(\text{Qe3}\), when White keeps an edge.

11...\text{Wb6} has also been played: 12 \(\text{Wd2} \text{Qe8}\) 13 \(\text{Qb3}\)! (13 \(\text{Wh1} \text{Qg4}\) [13...\text{Wb4}?!?] 14 f3 \(\text{Qe5}\) was not too scary for Black in Daurelle-Piot, Clichy 2001) 13...\text{Qf8} 14 \(\text{Qxc5} \text{Wxc5}\) 15 \(\text{Qe3} \text{Wh5}\) 16 \(\text{Qd4} \text{Qg4}?!\) (16...\text{Wg6}) 17 h3 \(\text{Qe5}\) 18 \text{f4} with a pleasant edge for White, Rodriguez Cespedes-L.Brunner, World Team Ch., Lucerne 1989.

12 \(\text{Wd2}\)

In the event of 12 \(\text{Qxe6} \text{fxe6}\) 13 e5 \(\text{Qd5}\) 14 \(\text{Qxd5}\), Black should avoid 14...\text{Qxd5} 15 exd6 \(\text{Qxd6}\) 16 \(\text{Qxd5+} \text{Qh8}\) 17 \(\text{Qxd6} \text{Wxd6}\) 18 \(\text{Qf3}\) (Sprenger-Lobzhanidze, Belgian League 2005) and rather opt for 14...\text{Qxd5}, when his position is quite acceptable.

12...\text{Wd7}

...was roughly equal, Gaponenko-Mietzner, German League 2005.

D3) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \(\text{Qf6}\) 3 \(\text{Qc3} \text{Qbd7}\) 4 \(\text{Qf3}\) e5 5 \(\text{Qc4} \text{Qe7}\) 6 0-0 0-0 7 \(\text{Qe1} \text{Qc6}\) 8 a4 a5
9 b3

This quiet pawn move currently seems to be the most promising continuation for White.

9...exd4

Or:

a) 9...wc7?! 10 b2 h6 (or 10...e8 11 wd2 h6 12 f1 d8 13 h3 d6h7 14 d5 g5 15 ad1 g6 16 dh2 h5 17 g3 with a small advantage) 11 h3 e8 12 wd2 d8 13 ad1 g6 14 d5! d8 15 a3 d4 16 f1 e8 (16...exd5) 17 wh2 g5 18 g3 g6 (if 18...xh3 19 xh3 g4 20 g2 gxh3 21 xh3 with a clear plus) 19 we3 d6 20 d2 ad7 21 ac4 c5 22 db5 xb5 23 axb5 de8!! (23...b6) was Shirov-Tischbierek, German League 1992, and now 24 b6! wd7 25 ab2 a4 26 a1 leaves White with a clear advantage.

b) 9...h6 10 a3 e8 11 h3 wc7 (11...dh7??) 12 wd2 db6 13 f1 e6 14 ad1 f8 (or 14...ad8 15 db1! dxh6 16 c4 with an edge for White) 15 db1!? exd4 16 dx4 d5 17 exd5 ad5 18 xe8 dxg6 19 xf8 xf8 20 c4 e4 21 dc3 d6 (Kundin-Erenburg, Givataim 1998) and 22 dxg6 dxg6 23 w5!! dc5 24 df5 de6 25 wc3 wf4 26 a3 d3 keeps an edge.

After 9...exd4 we will consider:

D31: 10 wxd4
D32: 10 ad4 ac5
D33: 10 ad4 ab6

D31) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 df6 3 dc3 dbd7 4 df3 e5 5 ac4 ae7 6 0-0 0-0 7 a4 a5 8 xe1 c6 9 b3 exd4 10 wxd4

Although less natural, the recapture with the queen is playable and gives White chances to obtain an opening advantage.

10...de5!

This knight sally, based on a tactical point, seems to solve all of Black's problems. Alternatively:

a1) 11 h3 de5 12 dxex5 dxex5 is equal. 12 de2?! is worse: 12 xf3+ 13 xf3 ef6 14 wxd2 xe5 and, with ...dc5, ...f5, and/or ...wf6 arriving, Black was already slightly better in N.Medvegy-Oratovsky, Budapest 1999.

a2) 11 ab2 de5 12 dxex5 dxex5 13 wxd8 xd8 is again equal.
a3) 11 a3! $6 12 $d2 $de5 13 $ad1! is astonishing!

White allows both 13...$xc4 and...

$xf3+, but then his position would be
better in both cases as $d6 would fall.
Instead, 13 $e2 $b6 14 $f1 $xf3+ 15
$xf3 $d4 16 $xh4 $xh4 17 $b2 $e5 is equal, while after 13 $f1?! $b6 or 13
$xe5?! $xe5 14 $h3 $b6 (Leib-
Orotovsky, Mondariz Balneario 2002)
Black seizes the initiative.

Back to 13 $ad1, and Hamdouchi-
Orotovsky, Mancha Real 2000, continued
13...$b6 (13...$xf3+?! loses $d6 for
nothing: 14 gxf3 $e5 15 $e2; or
14...$e5? 15 fxg4 $xg2+ 16 $g2 and
White won in Gutierrez Lopez-Milla de
Marco, Malaga 2004) 14 $xe5! (or 14
$xd6?! $d8 15 $e2 [Kabisch-Miltner,
German League 2002] and after the
computer-style 15...$d7! Black holds
the balance) 14 $xe5 15 $h3 $xf2
(worse is 15...$xc3?! 16 $xc3 $xf2+
[16...$xf2? 17 $d4 $xd4 18 $xh4 and
the knight is trapped] 17 $h1 $h4 18
$e2 and White collects the pawn back
on $d6 with excellent attacking chances)
16 $xf2 $xf2+ 17 $xf2 $xc3 18 $e3

Swapping the light-squared bishops
would allow an invasion of the seventh
rank, while the a5-pawn requires con-
stant protection.

b) 10...$b6?! 11 $f1 $d5 (Baron Rod-
riguez-Comas Fabreco, Lorca 2005)
offers mutual chances.

c) The automatic 10...$e5?!, on the
other hand, doesn't meet the demands
of the position, and White achieved a
nice edge after 11 $b2 $f8 12 $ad1 in
Del Rio Angelis-Teran Alvarez, Spanish
Team Ch. 2001.

11 $a3

The most recent try.

After 11 $e2 $f4 12 $h3 $xf3+ 13
$xf3 $e5 14 $e2 $f5 Black was by no
means worse in Degraeve-N.Mitkov,
Bled Olympiad 2002. Instead 12 $b2
$e6 13 $d2 $b6 (or 13...$xf3+?! 14
$xf3 $e5) 14 $f1 $xf3+ (14...$e6 and
14...$d8, Glavina Rossi-Orotovsky,
Spanish Team Ch. 2004, are satisfactory
too) 15 $xf3 $e5 16 $e2 $e6 17 $h1
(or 17 $xd6?! $ad8 18 $wa3 $d2 and
Black's activity is more than sufficient

275
to compensate for the pawn) was played in Lahno-Nedev, Istanbul 2003.

Now instead of the hasty jump 17...\textit{D}c4?! Black should have played 17...\textit{D}ad8 first, when the game would have remained roughly level.

In the event of the obvious 11 \textit{D}xe5 dxe5 12 \textit{W}xe5, Black has slightly the upper hand: 12...\textit{D}g4 13 \textit{W}f4 (not 13 \textit{W}g3?? \textit{A}h4) 13...\textit{D}d6 14 e5 \textit{D}xe5 15 \textit{A}a3! (15 \textit{W}xe5? \textit{W}c7 loses material) 15...\textit{D}xc4 and so on.

11...\textit{D}xc4

The alternative is 11...\textit{D}xf3+!? 12 gxf3 and now:

a) 12...\textit{D}xe8?! 13 \textit{D}ad1 d5 14 \textit{A}xe7 \textit{W}xe7 15 exd5 \textit{W}xe1+ 16 \textit{D}xe1 \textit{D}xe1+ 17 \textit{D}g2 and as moving the bishop allows the nasty 18 \textit{W}b6, it seems that Black is in trouble.

b) 12...\textit{D}e6?! 13 \textit{D}ad1 \textit{D}xc4 14 bxc4! c5 15 \textit{W}e3 leads to a position where White has more weaknesses than Black, but also many more active possibilities (\textit{D}b5, \textit{D}d5, f4, etc.) so his prospects are very good.

c) After 12...\textit{W}c7! 13 \textit{D}ad1 \textit{D}d8, for the moment Black is on the defensive.

In comparison with the 12...\textit{D}e6?! line, however, he has kept some elasticity, and, after 14...\textit{D}e6, the freeing ...\textit{D}d5 thrust comes into the equation.

12 \textit{W}xc4 \textit{D}e6 13 \textit{W}d3

In Jones-M.Roos, Cork 2004, Black accepted an isolated pawn with 13...\textit{D}d5?! 14 \textit{A}xe7 \textit{W}xe7 15 exd5 \textit{D}ad8 16 \textit{D}g5 cxd5, and here White can enjoy a persistent and risk-free advantage with 17 \textit{D}b5!? or the game's 17 \textit{W}e2. Instead, 13...\textit{W}c7 14 \textit{D}ad1 \textit{D}ad8 15 \textit{D}d4 may be pleasant for White, owing to his space advantage, but not more than that.

D32) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \textit{D}f6 3 \textit{D}c3 \textit{D}bd7 4 \textit{D}f3 e5 5 \textit{D}c4 \textit{A}e7 6 0-0 0-0 7 \textit{D}c1 c6 8 a4 a5 9 b3 \textit{D}xd4 10 \textit{D}xd4 \textit{D}c5 11 \textit{D}b2

Or 11 h3?! \textit{D}e8 12 \textit{D}b2 \textit{D}f8 13 \textit{W}f3 \textit{D}cd7 14 \textit{D}f1 \textit{D}e5 15 \textit{W}g3 \textit{D}h5 (previously 15...\textit{D}g6 was preferred) 16 \textit{W}e3 \textit{D}f6 (a tacit peace offer, but White was in a fighting mood) 17 \textit{D}ad1 g6 18 f4 \textit{D}ed7 19 \textit{W}f2 \textit{D}c7 20 g4 \textit{D}c5 21 \textit{D}g2 \textit{A}a6 22 \textit{D}h1 \textit{A}g7 23 \textit{A}a3 \textit{D}fd7 24 \textit{W}d2 \textit{W}d8 25 \textit{D}de2 \textit{W}h4 and now the players agreed a draw, De Firmian-Gulko, US Ch., Seattle 2000.

276
11...\textit{\textbf{Ne8}}

The classical plan which targets the e4-pawn.

11...\textit{\textbf{Re6}}?! is another possibility.

I don’t really understand the idea behind 11...\textit{\textbf{Nh8}}?!; but this caused Shirov serious problems in his game against Hicham Hamdouchi: 12 \textit{\textbf{Wd2}} (12 \textit{\textbf{h3 Qfd7}} 13 \textit{\textbf{Qf5}} \textit{\textbf{Qe5}} 14 \textit{\textbf{Qxe7 Qxc4}} was perhaps one of the hidden points of 11...\textit{\textbf{Nh8}}) 12...\textit{\textbf{Qg4}} 13 \textit{\textbf{Qad1}} \textit{\textbf{Wb6}} 14 \textit{\textbf{Qf1}} (prophylaxis against ...\textit{\textbf{Qe5}}) 14...\textit{\textbf{Qf6}} 15 \textit{\textbf{h3 Qe5}} 16 \textit{\textbf{We3}} (16 \textit{\textbf{f4 Qe6}}! is equal; this is better than 16...\textit{\textbf{Qed3}} 17 \textit{\textbf{Qxd3 Qxd4+}} 18 \textit{\textbf{Qh1}} when White will continue with \textit{\textbf{Qd5}} or \textit{\textbf{Qc4}}) 16...\textit{\textbf{Qg6}} was Shirov-Hamdouchi, Spanish Team Ch. 2000, and now instead of Shirov’s 17 \textit{\textbf{Qf5}}?!; the move 17 \textit{\textbf{Qdb5}}! underlines the drawbacks of Black’s idea: 17...\textit{\textbf{cx}}\textit{\textbf{b5}} 18 \textit{\textbf{Qd5}} \textit{\textbf{Wd8}} 19 \textit{\textbf{Qxf6}} \textit{\textbf{bxa4}} (or 19...\textit{\textbf{gx}}\textit{\textbf{f6}} 20 \textit{\textbf{Wxc5}} \textit{\textbf{dx}}\textit{\textbf{c5}} 21 \textit{\textbf{Qxd8 Qxd8}} 22 \textit{\textbf{Qxf6+}} \textit{\textbf{Qg8}} 23 \textit{\textbf{Qxd8}} \textit{\textbf{bxa4}} 24 \textit{\textbf{Qb6}} with a big plus) 20 \textit{\textbf{Qh5}} \textit{\textbf{f6}} 21 \textit{\textbf{Qxf6}}! and Black’s position becomes critical.

12 \textit{\textbf{Wd2}} \textit{\textbf{Qf8}} 13 \textit{\textbf{f3}} \textit{\textbf{Wb6}} 14 \textit{\textbf{Qh1}} \textit{\textbf{Qd7}} 15 \textit{\textbf{Qad1}} \textit{\textbf{Qad8}}

Or 15...\textit{\textbf{Qe5}}?! 16 \textit{\textbf{Qde2}} (16 \textit{\textbf{Qce2}}?

\textit{\textbf{Qxa4}} 17 \textit{\textbf{Qa1}} \textit{\textbf{Qc5}} 18 \textit{\textbf{Qf5}}? \textit{\textbf{Qfxe4}} 19 \textit{\textbf{fxe4 Qxe4}}) 16...\textit{\textbf{Qee8}} 17 \textit{\textbf{Qf4}} with an edge for White.

After 15...\textit{\textbf{Qad8}}, White stands better, but Black’s position remains solid. Concrete operations now begin.

16 \textit{\textbf{Wf4}} \textit{\textbf{Qe6}} 17 \textit{\textbf{Qxe6}} \textit{\textbf{Qxe6}} 18 \textit{\textbf{Qxe6}} \textit{\textbf{fxe6}}

18...\textit{\textbf{Qxe6}}?! 19 \textit{\textbf{Qe2}} \textit{\textbf{d5}}? (19...\textit{\textbf{Qd7}}) 20 \textit{\textbf{Qd4}} \textit{\textbf{Qee8}} 21 \textit{\textbf{Qf5}} is very bad for Black.

19 \textit{\textbf{e5}} \textit{\textbf{Qd5}}

(Shirov-Beliavsky, German League 2000). After 20 \textit{\textbf{Qxd5}}! \textit{\textbf{cxd5}} (or 20...\textit{\textbf{exd}}\textit{\textbf{5}} 21 \textit{\textbf{e6 Wc7}} 22 \textit{\textbf{Wg4}}, with the idea of \textit{\textbf{f4}}-\textit{\textbf{f5}}) 21 \textit{\textbf{exd6 Wxd6}} 22 \textit{\textbf{Qe5 Wc6}} 23 \textit{\textbf{Qe2}}, Black has three pawn islands against
his opponent’s two, but the backward pawn on e6 constitutes his only real weakness, and thus his position remains perfectly defensible.

D33) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Df6 3 Dc3 Dbd7 4 Df3 e5 5 Ac4 Ae7 6 0-0 0-0 7 Ae1 c6 8 a4 a5 9 b3 exd4 10 Dxd4 Db6

The latest trend for Black in this complex variation. The text move aims for more activity than the old jump to c5. It’s true the knight often ends up misplaced on b6, but now White must pay attention to the mobile c- and d-pawn duo.

dxe4 14 Ab2 f5 15 exf6 Dxf6 16 Ab1 Dd6, or 16...De8?! 17 g3 Ag6, Y.Quezada-J.Maiwald, Havana 2004, with a roughly level position in both cases) 13 Ad3 (if 13 Wh5 g6 14 Wh6 Ag7 15 Ad3 Black is a tempo up compared to 11 Ad3!, and 15...c5 16 Df3 De6 gave Black counterplay in De la Paz-Pecorelli Garcia, Havana 2003) 13...g6 14 Ah6 Ag7 15 Dce2 with equal chances, Moreno Carnero-Bologan, Pamplona 2001.

11...Dd5!

Or:

a) 11...Dg4 is interesting, if rather artificial:

![Chess Diagram]

11 Ad3!

Practice has shown that the timid 11 Af1?! is insufficient: 11...d5 12 e5 (or 12 exd5 Dbd5 13 Dxd5 Dxd5 with equality, N.Djukic-Damljanovic, Herceg Novi 2002) 12...Dd8 (but 12...Dg4? is wrong: 13 h3 Ab4 14 Dd3 [14 Df3? is a mistake due to 14...Dxf2!, J.Pinheiro-Milla de Marco, Orense 2002] 14...c5 15 hxg4 cxd4 16 Dxd4 and White was clearly better in N.Kosintseva-Voiska, European Ch., Istanbul 2003; however, 12...De4!? should equalize too: 13 Dxe4

12 Ae2 Df6 13 Ab2 (13 f3 De5 14 f4 Dg6 15 Ae3 d5 looks fine for Black) 13...De5 (13...Dxh2? 14 Dxe2 De5+ 15 Dg1 Df6 fails to 16 f3 Dxd4 17 Dd5!, when the lesser evil is 17...cxd5, as 17...Dxf2+? 18 Dxf2 Dh4+ 19 g3 Dh2+ 20 Ag2 is curtains) 14 Ag4 Ag4 15 Wxd4 16 Rad1 c5 17 Dxd4?! cxd4 18 Db5 was Pavisovac-A.Maier, Salzburg 2004. White will probably grab the two d-pawns and transfer his knight to f5, with plenty of compensation for the exchange.
b) 11...\( \text{Qf} \text{d}7 \) would reach similar positions to those that result from 10...\( \text{Qc}5 \). For example, 12 \( \text{Qf}1 \text{Qc}5 \) 13 \( \text{Qa}3! \) (after the less accurate 13 \( \text{Qb}2?! \) Huzman indicates how Black can gain counterplay: 13...\( \text{We}8 \) 14 \( \text{Wf}3 \text{f}6 \) 15 \( \text{Qad}1 \text{Qe}5 \), or 14 \( \text{Qd}2 \text{Qg}5 \) 15 f4 \( \text{Qf}6 \) with the idea 16 \( \text{Qad}1 \text{Qg}4 \) 13...\( \text{We}8 \) 14 \( \text{Wd}2 \text{Qf}8 \) (at present the desirable 14...\( \text{Qg}5?! \) runs into 15 f4 \( \text{Qf}6 \) 16 e5 \( \text{Qe}7 \) 17 \( \text{Wf}2 \) when Huzman asserts that White is clearly better; this assessment is questionable, however, since after 17...\( \text{Qxe}5 \) 18 \( \text{fxe}5 \text{Qc}7?! \) or 18 \( \text{Qxe}5 \text{Qbd}7 \) 19 \( \text{Qe}2 \text{Qf}8 \) Black doesn’t seem to be in such a bad way) 15 \( \text{Qad}1 \text{Qd}7 \) (15...\( \text{Wf}6?! \) 16 \( \text{Qb}2 \text{Qd}7 \) 17 f3 is an edge for White) 16 \( \text{Qb}2 \text{Qc}7 \).

\( \text{Wh}5 \)

13 \( \text{Qf}4?! \) \( \text{Qb}4 \) 14 \( \text{Qd}2 \text{c}5 \) (B.Muhren-Bosboom Lanchava, Wijk aan Zee 2005) and 13 \( \text{Qb}2 \text{g}6 \) 14 \( \text{Qh}1 \text{Qg}7 \) (Zaragatski-Papa, Deizisau 2003) are less testing for Black.

\( \text{g}6 \) 14 \( \text{Wh}6 \) 15 \( \text{Qf}3 \)

Or 15 \( \text{Qc}e2?! \) (Felgaer-Strikovic, Santa Cruz de la Palma 2005).

15...\( \text{Qe}6 \) 16 \( \text{Qe}2 \text{Qe}8 \) 17 \( \text{Qb}2 \text{Qg}5 \) 18 \( \text{Qed}4 \text{Qxf}3+ \) 19 \( \text{Qxf}3 \text{Qf}8 \) 20 \( \text{Wf}4 \)

(Van den Heever-K.Solomon, South African Ch. 2005). White is a bit better here, but there is plenty to play for.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Positions in the final three chapters are characterized by a White space advantage. The first player has more latitude, but also more chances to go wrong!

If Black plays with \( ...a7-a5 \), the most promising plan for White includes the fianchetto of the dark-squared bishop.

If Black delays the swap with \( ...\text{exd}4 \) and confines himself to a defensive position (as for example, in Shirov-Tischbierek – Line D3), then \( d4-d5 \) followed by pressure on \( d6 \) gives White a clear advantage.

When Black exchanges on \( d4 \), the traditional recapture is with the knight. After the swap of minor pieces on \( e6 \), White usually tries to break Black’s pawn structure by playing \( e4-e5 \).

Some rather recent examples have shown that 10 \( \text{Wxd}4 \) may be sufficient to claim an advantage against imprecise play by Black (see Hamdouchi-Oratovsky in Line D31).
Chapter Fourteen

Main Line:
8 e1 b6

1 e4 d6 2 d4 f6 3 c3 d7 4 f3 e5
5 c4 e7 6 0–0 0–0 7 e1 c6 8 a4 b6

While 8...a5 aims to secure the c5-outpost for a knight, 8...b6 follows a much more ambitious plan in my view. Black believes in his ability to ‘hold’ the centre and repel an eventual kingside attack from White, while preparing counterplay on the queenside by means of ...a6 and ...b5.

Now we will look at five different replies from White:

A: 9 a2
B: 9 h3
C: 9 g5
D: 9 b3
E: 9 d5

A) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 f6 3 c3 d7 4 f3 e5 5 c4 e7 6 0–0 0–0 7 e1 c6 8 a4 b6 9 a2

A prophylactic move, designed to avoid the loss of tempo entailed after dxe5 a5 (trading knights would bring White nothing).

9...a6

10 e3!

This is an idea of Glek’s which deserves attention, but it shouldn’t scare Black.

A more recent game continued 10 h3 b8 11 g5 b5 12 axb5 axb5 13 b4 e8 14 b1 c7 15 h4 exd4 16 xd4 f8 17 d3 e6 18 xe6 fxe6 with an equal position, G.Guseinov-P.Eljanov. Turin Olympiad 2006.

10...c7

280
Or 10...\(\text{Qg}4!\) 11 \(\text{Ad}2 \text{Ab}7\) (against 11...\(\text{Qg}6\) Glek suggests the follow-up 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 \(\text{A}h4\), but here the simple 13...\(\text{Qc}5\) looks equal to me) 12 \(\text{Qe}2\) \(d5\) 13 \(\text{Qg}3\) dxe4 14 \(\text{Xxe}4\) \(\text{Qd}6\) 15 \(\text{Be}1\) (Glek-De Graaff, Holland 1998). The f6-knight occupies its colleague’s place, while White threatens not only to grab e5, but also h2-h3 and/or \(\text{Qf}5\).

11 \(\text{Ah}4\) exd4 12 \(\text{Xxd}4\) \(\text{Qe}5\) 13 \(\text{Qf}5\) \(\text{xf}5\) 14 \(\text{xf}5\) \(\text{Qxe}8\)

This was played in Glek-Mensch, Paris 2000. Black, who will try to play ...d5, is okay here.

B) 1 \(\text{e}4\) \(\text{d}6\) 2 \(\text{d}4\) \(\text{Qf}6\) 3 \(\text{c}3\) \(\text{Qbd}7\) 4 \(\text{Qf}3\) \(\text{e}5\) 5 \(\text{Ac}4\) \(\text{Ae}7\) 6 0-0 0-0 7 \(\text{Qe}1\) \(\text{c}6\) 8 \(\text{a}4\) \(\text{b}6\) 9 \(\text{h}3\)

9...\(\text{a}6\)

9...\(\text{Ah}7!\) is inaccurate on account of 10 \(\text{Aa}2!\), with the idea of 11 dxe5 and 12 \(\text{Ah}4\). This motif will appear again on next move. 10 dxe5?! on the other hand, would return the favour as Black could answer with 10...\(\text{Qxe}5\).

10 \(\text{Aa}2\)

Or:

a) 10 \(\text{d}5\) c5 (after 10...\(\text{cxd}5?!\) 11 \(\text{Qxd}5\) \(\text{Ab}7\), the insertion of the moves h3 and ...a6 favours White when compared to the 9 \(\text{d}5\) \(\text{cxd}5\) variation) and now:

a1) With 11 \(\text{Qf}1\) White is considering \(\text{Qd}2\)-c4, followed by \(\text{hb}1\) and b4, to open the queenside. From Black’s perspective, he plans either play on the queenside, by means of ...\(\text{Qc}7\), ...\(\text{Kb}8\) and ...b5, or, more ordinarily, on the kingside with ...\(\text{g}6\) and ...f5.

a2) After 11 \(\text{hb}1\)

Black started to implement the ‘King’s Indian’ idea in another way in Ye Jiangchuan-Cifuentes Parada, Koop Tuchem 1996: 11...\(\text{eh}8\) 12 \(\text{Qf}1\) \(\text{Qg}8\) 13 \(\text{Qd}2\), but then changed his mind by
playing 13...\textit{\textbf{a}g5}? (13...\textit{\textbf{g}6} 14 \textit{\textbf{d}c4} f5 was the alternative) 14 \textit{\textbf{d}c4} \textit{\textbf{a}xc1} 15 \textit{\textbf{w}xc1} \textit{\textbf{w}c7} 16 b4...

...reaching a position in which White enjoyed a slight initiative.

b) 10 \textit{\textbf{e}e3} is interesting, provided that White maintains the central tension. The encounter R.Weill-Mensch, French League 2000, continued 10...\textit{\textbf{b}b7} 11 dxe5?! (11 \textit{\textbf{d}h4}) 11...dxe5 12 \textit{\textbf{h}h4}? g6? (12...\textit{\textbf{b}5}? 13 \textit{\textbf{d}d3} [otherwise ...\textit{\textbf{b}4} and ...\textit{\textbf{d}xe4}] 13...\textit{\textbf{d}c5} and Black has no worries; 12...\textit{\textbf{d}xe4}? deserves consideration too, even though White has compensation after 13 \textit{\textbf{d}xe4} \textit{\textbf{d}xh4} 14 \textit{\textbf{d}d6}) 13 \textit{\textbf{h}h6} \textit{\textbf{e}e8} 14 \textit{\textbf{w}f3} reaching a position where Black was tied down. This explains why 10...\textit{\textbf{b}b8}? is an adequate reply after 9...\textit{\textbf{b}a6} 10 \textit{\textbf{e}a2}.

c) In the event of 10 \textit{\textbf{g}5} \textit{\textbf{b}b7} 11 dxe5 (11 \textit{\textbf{b}b3), safest is 11...\textit{\textbf{d}xe5}. Instead 11...dxe5 12 \textit{\textbf{d}h4} b5 13 \textit{\textbf{a}a2}? provokes complications after 13...\textit{\textbf{h}6} 14 \textit{\textbf{e}e3} (14 \textit{\textbf{d}xf6} \textit{\textbf{d}xf6} 15 \textit{\textbf{d}f5} is level) 14...\textit{\textbf{b}4} (not 14...\textit{\textbf{d}xe4}? 15 \textit{\textbf{d}xe4} \textit{\textbf{d}xh4} 16 \textit{\textbf{w}g4} with too many threats: \textit{\textbf{d}xh6}, \textit{\textbf{d}ad1}, \textit{\textbf{d}d6}) 15 \textit{\textbf{b}b1} \textit{\textbf{d}xe4} 16 \textit{\textbf{g}6} \textit{\textbf{e}e8} 17 \textit{\textbf{h}h6} \textit{\textbf{d}f6} 18 \textit{\textbf{d}xe7+} \textit{\textbf{w}xe7} 19 \textit{\textbf{e}e3} \textit{\textbf{d}ad8} 20 \textit{\textbf{w}e2} \textit{\textbf{c}5}, when the activity of Black’s pieces counterbalances the pair of bishops. 10...\textit{\textbf{b}b8}!

A strange-looking move, the idea of which is transparent: pushing with ...\textit{\textbf{b}5} while allowing the light-squared bishop to control the square f5. In fact, alternatives show that 10...\textit{\textbf{b}b8} must be played:

a) 10...\textit{\textbf{b}5}? would, of course, be a gross blunder:

11 axb5 axb5?? (but after 11...\textit{\textbf{c}xb5} White has a strong point on d5, as well as a sounder pawn structure) 12 \textit{\textbf{d}xf7+} and White wins.

b) 10...\textit{\textbf{b}7}? and now:

b1) 11 \textit{\textbf{d}h4}? brought White success in Kobalia-Plachetka, Cappelle la Grande 1999, after 11...\textit{\textbf{e}xd4} 12 \textit{\textbf{w}xd4} d5 13 e5 \textit{\textbf{c}5} 14 \textit{\textbf{w}d3} \textit{\textbf{d}e4} 15 \textit{\textbf{d}xe4} \textit{\textbf{d}xe4} 16 \textit{\textbf{w}xe4} \textit{\textbf{d}xf2+} 17 \textit{\textbf{w}xf2} \textit{\textbf{d}c5} 18 \textit{\textbf{w}f3} \textit{\textbf{d}xe4+} 19 \textit{\textbf{w}xe4} \textit{\textbf{c}5} 20 \textit{\textbf{w}g4} \textit{\textbf{d}c8} 21 \textit{\textbf{w}g3}, when the bishop and knight pairings were far superior to the rook and pawn. However, 15...\textit{\textbf{w}xh4}! gives Black excellent chances to equalize.

b2) 11 dxe5! dxe5 (or 11...\textit{\textbf{d}xe5} 12
\( \text{C)} \) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \( \text{Qf6} \) 3 \( \text{Qc3} \) \( \text{Qbd7} \) 4 \( \text{Qf3} \) 
\( \text{e5} \) 5 \( \text{Qc4} \) \( \text{Qe7} \) 6 0-0 0-0 7 \( \text{Kf1} \) c6 8 a4 
\( \text{b6} \) 9 \( \text{Qg5} \) a6

9...\( \text{Qb7}?! \) would again be an inaccuracy, in view of 10 \( \text{Qxf6} \) \( \text{Qxf6} \) 11 d5 c5 12 a5.

Black can’t answer by playing ...b5, and as a consequence he will either have to accept a weak pawn on a6, after 12...a6 13 axb6, or the trade of light-squared bishops after \( \text{Qd3} \) and \( \text{Qa6} \). Black must also be ready for the closing of the queenside, should White play a6, which would possibly leave the second player with a cramped position.

10 \( \text{Qxf6} \)

10 dxe5 \( \text{Qxe5} \) 11 \( \text{Qxe5} \) dxe5, or 10 \( \text{We2} \) h6 11 \( \text{Qh4} \) \( \text{Qh5} \), and 10 \( \text{Qd2} \) \( \text{b7} \) 11 \( \text{Qad1} \) b5 or 11...\( \text{Qc7} \), all reach equal positions.

10...\( \text{Qxf6} \) 11 d5 c5

In contrast to the note to Black’s ninth move, White has conceded the bishops in far less favourable circumstances. Chances are level, with White planning to open the queenside (with a later b4), while Black will find counterplay linked with ...g6, ...\( \text{Qg7} \) and ...f5.

12 \( \text{Qf1} \)

After 12 \( \text{Qb1}?! \) g6 13 c3 \( \text{Qg7} \) 14 \( \text{Qbd2} \) f5 15 b4 (Kharlov-A.Panchenko, Rostov 1993)...
9...\textit{w}c7?! is met by 10 \textit{d}5!, but here 9...\textit{b}7 is interesting. Now 10 \textit{d}5 \textit{cxd}5 11 \textit{\&}xd5 transposes to Line E31, whereas 10 \textit{a}5 \textit{b}5 11 \textit{a}6 is not to be feared, as 11...\textit{bxc}4 12 \textit{axb}7 \textit{\&}b8 is okay for Black. The drawback of 9...\textit{b}7 would be that the bishop is not covering f5 in the event of \textit{\&}h4-f5. However, this idea loses some punch with the bishop on b2, so it seems to me that 9...\textit{b}7 is superior to 9...\textit{a}6.

...each side is following his objective and chances remain level.

\textbf{12...\textit{g}5 13 \textit{g}3 \textit{g}6 14 \textit{h}3 \textit{h}6}

The position is equal, A.Onischuk-Bauer, European Team Ch., Batumi 1999.

\textbf{D) 1 \textit{e}4 \textit{d}6 2 \textit{d}4 \textit{\&}f6 3 \textit{\&}c3 \textit{\&}bd7 4 \textit{\&}f3 \textit{e}5 5 \textit{\&}c4 \textit{\&}e7 6 0-0 0-0 7 \textit{\&}e1 \textit{c}6 8 \textit{a}4 \textit{b}6 9 \textit{b}3}

After 9...\textit{a}6 White normally chooses between:

\textbf{D1: 10 \textit{d}5}
\textbf{D2: 10 \textit{\&}b2}

After 10 \textit{\&}a3?! \textit{\&}b7 Black threatens 11...\textit{b}5, followed by 12...\textit{exd}4 13 \textit{\&}xd4 \textit{b}4 14 \textit{\&}xb4 \textit{c}5, winning. Following 11 \textit{\&}f1 \textit{b}5 12 \textit{dxe}5 \textit{dxe}5 13 \textit{\&}d6 \textit{\&}e8 the position is equal.

\textbf{D1) 1 \textit{e}4 \textit{d}6 2 \textit{d}4 \textit{\&}f6 3 \textit{\&}c3 \textit{\&}bd7 4 \textit{\&}f3 \textit{e}5 5 \textit{\&}c4 \textit{\&}e7 6 0-0 0-0 7 \textit{\&}e1 \textit{c}6 8 \textit{a}4 \textit{b}6 9 \textit{b}3 \textit{a}6 10 \textit{d}5 \textit{c}5 11 \textit{\&}b1}

Logical, as White is preparing to open a front on the queenside. This
novelty was introduced in the game

Leko-Bauer, FIDE World Ch., Las Vegas 1999, which we shall now follow:

11...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{Qe8}}}

11...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{Qh8}}, with the plan of \ldots Qg8,}
\ldots g6 and \ldots f5, was playable too.

12 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{Qf1}}}

12...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{Bb8?!}}}

This is not necessarily useful. I was hoping to get \ldots b5 in after \ldots Qc7, but
this was over-optimistic. I should have
stuck to the plan of \ldots g6 and \ldots f5 with-
out waiting any longer!

13 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{Qd2 g6}}}

After 13...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{Qc7}}, 14 Qc4 b5 15 Qa5}
would be bothersome.

14 b4 f5 15 Qc4 Qxb4

15...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{Qef6?!}} was the alternative.}

16 Qxb4 wC7 17 a3

White's forces on the queenside
seem awkwardly placed, but how to
exploit this?

17...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{Qef6}} 18 exf5 gxf5 19 wD2 Qc5}

Forcing events by giving up the
protection of the b6-pawn. Instead,
19...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{Qh8}} followed by \ldots Qg8, parrying
the threat of \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{Qg5+}} and \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{Qxf5, deserved
attention.}}}}}

20 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{Qeb1 Qe4}}}

And here, perhaps 20...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{Qfd7}}}.

21 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{Qxe4 Qxe4}} 22 Qe1

White has made progress on the
queenside, whereas my counterplay on
the other wing has reached a dead end.
White thus holds the advantage and a
definite initiative.

22...b5 23 axb5 axb5 24 Qe3

Here 24 Qxb5 Qxb5 25 Qxb5 Qa6 26
Qb4 or 26 Qa5 isn't so clear. Black has
compensation for the pawn, but is it
sufficient?

Leko's move is based on the principle
that the b5-pawn is condemned
anyway, so it is more urgent to protect
the kingside than grab it at this precise
point.

24...Qa7

Eyeing f2, as does my next move.

25 Qc1 Qh4?!

I wanted to provoke g2-g3, so that a
subsequent \ldots f4 would gain in strength.
The immediate 25...Qd8 (threatening
\ldots Qa5), followed by \ldots Qb6 in case
White captures on b5, was most likely
preferable.

26 Qd1 Qg7 27 Qxb5 Qxb5 28 Qxb5

285
White has finally gathered the first fruits of his superior play. His advantage is clear, though not yet decisive.

28...\textit{\texttt{a6}}

What else?

29 \textit{\texttt{b4}} \textit{\texttt{xf1}} 30 \textit{\texttt{xf1 \texttt{g5}}} 31 \textit{\texttt{xg5}}

I would have liked to manage without the two preceding exchanges, but how then to achieve ...\textit{f4}?

32 \textit{\texttt{f3! \texttt{wa7+?!}}}

32...\textit{\texttt{Wc7}} was stronger.

33 \textit{\texttt{Wf2 \texttt{wa5}}} 34 \textit{\texttt{Wd2 \texttt{f4}}} 35 \textit{\texttt{h4 \texttt{Qf7}}} 36

\textit{\texttt{Qf2 \texttt{Qh6}}} 37 \textit{\texttt{g4 \texttt{fxg3}}} 38 \textit{\texttt{Qg4+??}}

This could have spoiled everything. Later Peter told me that 38 \textit{\texttt{Wg5+ \texttt{qh8}}} 39 \textit{\texttt{Wxh6 \texttt{gxh2+}}} and now 40 \textit{\texttt{Qh2+!! \texttt{Qf2}}}

41 \textit{\texttt{Wh1 \texttt{Qg3+}}} 42 \textit{\texttt{Qg2 \texttt{wa8}}} 43 \textit{\texttt{Qb7!}} would have finished the job nicely.

38...\textit{\texttt{Qxg4}} 39 \textit{\texttt{Wxa5 \texttt{gxh2+}}} 40 \textit{\texttt{Qf1}}

\textit{\texttt{Qe3+??}}

A final mistake. After 40...\textit{\texttt{Qh2+}} 41

\textit{\texttt{Qxf2 \texttt{Qxf3}}}

\textit{\texttt{(see following diagram)}}

...\textit{\texttt{Qxe4+??}}

...\textit{\texttt{Qxe4+??}}

White no longer has an easy win, as Black will try to construct a fortress with the rook on f6 and the knight on f5.

41 \textit{\texttt{Qxf2 \texttt{Qxc2}}} 42 \textit{\texttt{Wc7 \texttt{Qd4}}} 43 \textit{\texttt{Wxd6}}

\textit{\texttt{Qxf3+ \texttt{Qe1}}} 45 \textit{\texttt{Wc7 \texttt{Qf7}}} 46 \textit{\texttt{Wc8+}}

\textit{\texttt{Qg7}} 47 \textit{\texttt{d6 \texttt{Qf8}}} 48 \textit{\texttt{d7 \texttt{Qe6}}} 49 \textit{\texttt{Qe8}} 1-0

A tense and interesting game.

D2) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \textit{\texttt{Qf6}} 3 \textit{\texttt{Qc3 \texttt{Qbd7}}} 4 \textit{\texttt{Qf3}}

\textit{\texttt{e5}} 5 \textit{\texttt{Qc4 \texttt{Qe7}}} 6 0-0 0-0 7 \textit{\texttt{Qe1 \texttt{c6}}} 8 a4

\textit{\texttt{b6}} 9 b3 a6 10 \textit{\texttt{Qb2}}

The other choice, of course, is to keep the tension with \textit{\texttt{Qb2}}, and play for a spatial advantage.

10...\textit{\texttt{Qb7}}

11 \textit{\texttt{Qd2}}

Or:

a) 11 \textit{\texttt{Qd3 \texttt{Qe8}}} (after 11...b5 12 \textit{\texttt{Qe2}}

\textit{\texttt{Qe8}} 13 \textit{\texttt{Qg3 \texttt{Qf8}}} 14 c4 g6 the position
...and White was pulling the strings in F.Fiorito-Tempone, Argentine Ch., Villa Martelli 1998.

b) 11 $\textit{f}8$?! is too slow, and 11...b5 12 g3 $\textit{e}8$ 13 $\textit{g}2$ $\textit{f}8$ gave me an edge in Zakurdaeva-Bauer, Bad Zwesten 2002. Black is threatening to win the e4-pawn with 14...exd4 15 $\textit{d}x\textit{d}4$ b4 16 $\textit{d}b1$ c5 and ...$\textit{x}e4$, and it looks as if White has run out of ideas.

11...$\textit{c}7$

Alternatives are weaker: 11...$\textit{x}e4$? 12 $\textit{x}e4$ d5 13 dxe5 dxe4 14 $\textit{h}d1$ $\textit{c}5$ 15 $\textit{e}2$ and $\textit{xc}4$ with a clear plus for White, or if 11...exd4? 12 $\textit{d}x\textit{d}4$ d5 13 exd5 cxd5 14 $\textit{d}3$ $\textit{c}5$ 15 $\textit{f}5$ $\textit{e}8$ 16 $\textit{g}5$ with a crushing attack.

12 $\textit{d}ad1$ b5 13 $\textit{d}3$ $\textit{xe}8$ 14 $\textit{e}2$

Intending to jump to g3 and then f5. Now 14...d5 is again premature: 15 dxe5 dxe4 (or 15...$\textit{d}xe4$ 16 $\textit{x}e4$ dxe4 17 $\textit{w}d7$ $\textit{w}d7$ 18 $\textit{x}d7$ $\textit{f}3$ 19 $\textit{b}7$ $\textit{xe}2$ 20 $\textit{xe}2$) 16 $\textit{xe}4$! $\textit{d}xe4$ 17 $\textit{w}d7$ $\textit{w}b6$ 18 $\textit{c}d4$ c5 19 a5! with a decisive advantage. However, 14...$\textit{b}xa4$!, makes sense now that the rook has left its initial place: 15 $\textit{b}xa4$ $\textit{f}8$ or 15...exd4!? 16 $\textit{d}ex\textit{d}4$ $\textit{c}c5$.

Returning to the position after 14 $\textit{e}2$, $\textit{H}enao-Campa\textit{r}ora$, Bogota 1991, continued:

14...$\textit{f}8$ 15 $\textit{g}3$ g6

Or 15...exd4!? 16 $\textit{d}x\textit{d}4$ c5 17 $\textit{d}f5$ c4 18 bxc4 bxc4 19 $\textit{f}1$ $\textit{d}xe4$ 20 $\textit{d}xe4$ $\textit{xe}4$ (not 20...$\textit{d}xe4$? 21 $\textit{d}xe4$ $\textit{x}e4$ 22 $\textit{x}h6$+! $\textit{gx}h6$ 23 $\textit{w}d4$ with a clear plus to White, since 23...c3 24 $\textit{x}c3$ $\textit{d}5$ 25 $\textit{x}e4$ hits the a8-rook, so there is no time for ...$\textit{w}x\textit{c}3$) 21 $\textit{d}x\textit{d}6$ $\textit{w}x\textit{d}6$ 22 $\textit{w}d6$ $\textit{x}d6$ 23 $\textit{x}d6$ $\textit{d}c5$ and Black should hold.

16 h4 h5?!

A weakening move. 16...$\textit{g}7$ would have kept the balance after 17 h5 $\textit{d}ad8
18 hgx6 hxg6, while 16...bxa4 still looks desirable for Black: in this case the a4-pawn would be weaker than its counterpart on a6.
17 axb5 axb5 18 c4!

White enjoys a slight, but pleasant initiative due to his space advantage.
18...exd4 19 Qxd4 bxc4 20 Qxc4 d5
Not 20...Qxe4? 21 Qxe4 d5 when 22 Qf5! is a killer, but 20...Qxe5!? 21 Qf1 Qa2 was quite bearable for Black.
21 exd5 Qxe1+ 22 Qxe1 Qxd5 23 Qd3
All of White’s pieces now cluster together towards the black king, even though nothing concrete is threatened as yet.
23...Wb6 24 Qe6? (a)
Henao attaches an optimistic ‘!!’ to this move.
24...fxe6!
If 24...Qb4? 25 Wh6 fx6 26 Wgx6+ Qf8 27 Qxf6 wins.
25 Wg5 Qa2??
Black should play 25...Qg7!. For example: 26 Qxg6 (if 26 Wxg6? Qf8 27 Wg5 Qa2! 28 Qf5 exf5 29 Qe7 Qe6 and the material surplus triumphs) 26...Qa2! (26...Qxb3? 27 Qxf6 Qxf6 [or
27...Qxf6 28 Wxh5] 28 Qb1 Wc4 29 Qxb7 Qg4 [29...Qa1+ 30 Qb1!] 30 Qxh5! Wxg5 31 Qf7+! and 32 hgx5 gives White a definite advantage) 27 Qf5 (threatening Qf7+) 27...exf5 28 Qe7 Wxf2++! 29 Qxf2 Qxb2+ 30 Qe1 Qb1+ and now:
a) 31 Qf2? Qg4+ and Black wins.
b) Henao stops his analysis after 31 Qd2? Qe4+ 32 Qxe4 dxe4 33 Wxf5, concluding that White stands much better. With hindsight it appears that the contrary is true! i.e. 33...Qf6 34 We6+ Qh8 etc.
c) 31 Qe2!! saves White from defeat: 31...Qa6+ 32 Qd2 Qe4+ 33 Qxe4 dxe4 34 Wxf5 Qh6+ (or 34...e3+ 35 Qc2 Qb2+ 36 Qc1 e2 37 Wd5+ Qh8 38 Wxh5+ Qg8 39 Wd5+ with perpetual check) 35 Qc3 Qg7+ 36 Qb4 Qf8+ 37 Qc3 and the game should logically finish with a repetition of moves.
26 Wxg6+ Qg7 27 Qf5! 1-0
Black resigned, in view of 27...exf5 28 Qe7.

F) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 Qf3 e5 5 Qc4 Qe7 6 0-0 0-0 7 Qe1 c6 8 a4 b6 9 d5
Now that the b-pawn has made one step forward, this move makes sense. White tries to conquer the d5-square, which would be used as a platform for his pieces. Previously Black would always have been able to recapture with the b7-pawn in the event of an exchange on c6, maintaining control of d5 with a foot soldier.

We shall now consider:

E1: 9...b7?!
E2: 9...c5?!
E3: 9...cxd5!

E1) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 Qf3 e5 5 Qc4 Ae7 6 0-0 0-0 7 Qxe1 c6 8 a4 b6 9 d5 Qb7?!

This is again imprecise.

10 dx6 Axc6 11 Ag5

11 Qd5?! is premature: 11...Qc8 12 Ae2 (12 Aa6 seems a bit artificial, and after 12...Ab8 13 b4 Qxd5 14 exd5 Ab7 Black had obtained a welcome structure in V.Dimitrov-Roesch, Wiesbaden 1990; or 12 c3 Ab7 13 Ab3 h6! and White finds it hard to strengthen his position. G.Beikert-A.Sokolov, Viernheim 1992) 12...Qxd5 13 Qxd5 Axd5 14 Wxd5 and now:

a) 14...Ac5 15 Wd3 Wc8 16 Ae3 (16 c3 Wc6, with the idea of...Ac4, is equal) 16...Ac4 17 a5 Wc6 18 axb6 axb6 19 Aa7 Ad8 and the White edge, if it exists, is quite symbolic.

b) 14...Qf6 15 Wd1 d5?! would be an inferior version of the variation 9...cxd5 10 Qxd5 Ab7 11 b3 Ac8 etc. Indeed, White hasn't compromised himself by playing b2-b3, so the c3-square, as well as the a1-h8 diagonal, isn't weakened (if a diagonal can be said to be weakened, that is!).

11...a6

11...Ac8 and 11...Wc7 12 b3 don't alter the assessment: an edge for White.

12 Axf6 Qxf6 13 Ad5 Qxd5 14 Axd5

White has a small but secure advantage, Jansa-Mokry, Trnava 1987.

E2) 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 Qf3 e5 5 Qc4 Ae7 6 0-0 0-0 7 Qxe1 c6 8 a4 b6 9 d5 c5?! 10 a5 bxa5

Black can't keep his pawn structure intact with 10...Ab8 or 10...Ab7 for the same reasons explained in the variation
9 \textit{\textit{g5 \textit{b7?!}}. In fact, if the queenside became closed, he would be lacking even more space since, in contrast to the aforementioned variation, no piece has been exchanged here. The game Miles-Gelashvili, European Ch., Saint Vincent 2000, well illustrates the drawbacks of Black’s ninth move:

\textbf{11 \textit{d2}}

Threatening \textit{b3xa5}.

\textbf{11...\textit{b6 12 \textit{xax5 \textit{xc4 13 \textit{xc4 \textit{e8 14 f4!}}}}}

\includegraphics[width=0.3\textwidth]{chess_diagram.png} \hspace{1cm} Prophylaxis. On 20 \textit{da5}, Miles maybe feared \textit{...f5}, or he simply (and rightly!) thought that Black had no useful move after 20 \textit{f2}.

\textbf{20...\textit{g7?!}}

The knight was required to protect \textit{d6}, as the game continuation proves. However, it is difficult to suggest an improvement.

\textbf{21 \textit{b5 a6 22 \textit{wa5!}}}

An easy move for Miles who had a predilection for queenless endings. After the exchange, White will not only have his hands free for operations, but furthermore \textit{d6} will fall.

\textbf{22...\textit{wxax5 23 \textit{xax5 \textit{e8 24 \textit{g3 \textit{b8 25 \textit{bxd6 \textit{xd6 26 \textit{xd6 \textit{xd6 27 \textit{xd6 \textit{xxb2 28 \textit{xc5 \textit{b7 29 c4 \textit{e2 30 \textit{b1 \textit{g7}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}

30...\textit{xex4} would have lost too: 31 \textit{c7 \textit{a8} (or 31...\textit{c8 32 \textit{b8 \textit{e8 33 \textit{d6 \textit{d7 34 \textit{xe8+ \textit{xe8 35 \textit{c8}}} 32 \textit{b8+ \textit{f8 33 \textit{d8! \textit{e88 (33...\textit{b7 comes to the same thing: 34 \textit{c7 \textit{e1+ 35 \textit{f2 \textit{b1 36 \textit{xb7 \textit{xb7 37 \textit{xb7 \textit{xd8 38 c5 and the c-pawn costs a rook}) 34 \textit{cc8}}} }}}}}}}}}}}}}

14...\textit{exf4} \hspace{1cm} \textit{(a very amusing position!)} 34\textit{\textit{b7 35 \textit{xb7 \textit{xd8 36 \textit{xd8 \textit{xd8 37 c5.}}}}}}
31 \textit{xc7} \textit{xc7} 32 \textit{xc7} \textit{ec8} 33 \textit{bd8} \textit{d7} 34 \textit{a5} \textit{a4} 35 \textit{c5} \textit{xe4} 36 \textit{c6} \textit{xc4} 37 \textit{c7} \textit{d7} 38 \textit{xd8} \textit{f5} 39 \textit{d6} 1-0

\textbf{E3)} 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \textit{xf6} 3 \textit{c3} \textit{bd7} 4 \textit{f3} e5 5 \textit{xc4} \textit{e7} 6 0-0 0-0 7 \textit{e1} c6 8 a4 b6 9 d5 \textit{cxd5}!

The move 9...\textit{cxd5} challenges for the possession of the d5-square, by adding pressure to the e4-pawn. Indeed, practice has shown that White finds it difficult to cover e4 while maintaining a piece on d5.

10 \textit{xd5}

10 \textit{xd5} has been employed, too, but it doesn’t promise any advantage: 10...\textit{xd5} 11 \textit{xd5} (or 11 \textit{xd5} \textit{b8} followed by ...\textit{b7}, ...\textit{f6}, or possibly ...\textit{f5}) 11...\textit{b7}, followed by ...\textit{f6} to repel the undesirable visitor.

10 \textit{exd5}?, as played in K.Spraggett-Bauer, French League 2001, accepts exactly the structure White is supposed to avoid!

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\end{center}

...we will consider the following options for Black:

\textbf{E31:} 10...\textit{b7}

\textbf{E32:} 10...\textit{xd5}

\textbf{E31)} 1 e4 d6 2 d4 \textit{xf6} 3 \textit{c3} \textit{bd7} 4 \textit{f3} e5 5 \textit{xc4} \textit{e7} 6 0-0 0-0 7 \textit{e1} c6 8 a4 b6 9 d5 \textit{cxd5} 10 \textit{xd5} \textit{b7} 11 b3

To develop the bishop on a3, from where it will pressure d6. This move has the added benefit of supporting the other bishop on c4.

11 c3?!, avoiding any future nuisance over c2, deserves attention. The manoeuvre ...\textit{c8-c5}, forcing the d5-

In mitigation, my opponent had just come back from an exhausting tournament in Spain, and realizing his mistake with 10 \textit{exd5}, he committed no other for the rest of the game! 10...\textit{b7} 11 b3 \textit{e8} 12 \textit{b2} a6 13 \textit{d2} \textit{c7} 14 \textit{db1} f5 15 \textit{a3} (what a trip to dissuade Black from pushing with ...\textit{b5}!) 15...\textit{h8} 16 \textit{e2} \textit{f6} 17 \textit{ad1} e4 18 \textit{d2} \textit{e5} 19 \textit{f1} and now 19...\textit{xd5}! would have been the correct way to proceed, but in the heat of the battle I wrongly feared 20 \textit{c4} or even 20 \textit{xd5} \textit{xb2} 21 \textit{c4}. In fact Black would have gained a clear advantage.

Returning to 10 \textit{xd5}...
knight to declare its intentions, seems an appropriate response.

11 $\text{Qxe7+?!}$ would gain White the two bishops only temporarily, in view of the pressure on e4; 11...$\text{Wxe7}$ 12 $\text{Qg5 h6}$ 13 $\text{Qxf6}$ $\text{Qxf6}$ is equal.

11...$\text{Mc8}$

![Diagram]

**12 $\text{Me2}$**

12 $\text{Ma2?!}$ fulfills the same function as 12 $\text{Me2}$, but in a more awkward way. Glek-Bauer, Echternach (rapid) 1996, continued 12...$\text{Qxd5}$ 13 $\text{Axd5}$ $\text{Axd5}$ 14 $\text{Wxd5}$ $\text{Df6}$ 15 $\text{Wd1}$ d5 16 exd5 e4 17 $\text{Qe5}$ $\text{Qxd5}$ 18 c4 $\text{Cc3}$ 19 $\text{Wxd8}$ $\text{Hxd8}$ 20 $\text{Rc2}$ $\text{Ab4}$ 21 $\text{Wf1?!}$ (21 $\text{Wf1}$ was the only move) 21...$\text{f6}$ 22 $\text{Qg4}$ $\text{Md3?!}$ (spoiling Black’s efforts – 22...$\text{Dc1}$! would have won) 23 $\text{Dc3}$ $\text{Cxd8}$ 24 g4 $\text{Dd1}$ 25 $\text{Qxd1}$ $\text{Dxd1+}$ 26 $\text{Qxd1}$ $\text{Dxd1+}$ 27 $\text{Rg2}$ g6 28 $\text{Le3}$ $\text{Rb1}$ 29 c5 bxc5 30 $\text{Qxc5}$ $\text{Qxc5}$ 31 $\text{Qxc5}$ $\text{Rxb3}$ 32 $\text{Mc7}$ a5 33 $\text{Rfa}$ $\text{Me3}$ 34 $\text{Rxa5}$ $\text{Qg7}$ 35 h4 h5 36 gxh5 gxh5 and a draw was agreed.

After 12 $\text{Mc3?!}$ $\text{Qxd5}$ 13 $\text{Axd5}$ $\text{Axd5}$ 14 $\text{Wxd5}$ $\text{Axce2}$ 15 $\text{Axd6}$ $\text{Axce6}$ 16 $\text{Wxd6}$ $\text{Qc5}$ (Yandemirov-Abramovic, Ljubljana 1995) Black stands a bit better, thanks to his infiltrating rook and White’s weaknesses on the queenside.

**12...$\text{Qxd5}$**

The positional sacrifice 12...$\text{Wxc4?!}$ 13 bxc4 is strategically interesting but, in the present case, insufficient. White will be able to jettison his a-pawn, by playing a4-a5, thus creating weaknesses in Black’s camp.

But 12...$\text{Mc5?!}$ is interesting, the idea being to force White to recapture with the pawn after the swap on d5.

13 $\text{Axd5}$ $\text{Axd5}$ 14 $\text{Wxd5}$ $\text{Df6}$

![Diagram]

**15 $\text{Wd1}$**

After the unfortunate 15 $\text{Wd2?!}$, the thematic ...$\text{d5}$-push gains in strength:

a) 15...$\text{d5}$! 16 exd5 e4 17 $\text{Qg5}$ $\text{Qxd5}$ 18 $\text{Qxe4}$ f5 19 $\text{Qd6}!$ (already spotted by Blatny – plus my computer! – in his annotations to the Vaissier-Degraeve game; 19 c4? is met by 19...$\text{Df4}!$) 19...$\text{Wxd6}$ 20 $\text{Aa3}$ and, amazingly, Black can’t keep his extra piece. For example, 20...$\text{Qb4}$ 21 $\text{We1}!$ $\text{Wg6}$ 22 $\text{Rxb4}$ $\text{Axrb4}$ 23 $\text{Wxb4}$ f4 24 f3 $\text{Cc2}$ with an equal position.

b) 15...$\text{Cc7?!}$ is playable too, though White may find a clever way to consolidate his space advantage:

292
Black's game at once. Black can also play in the same fashion as in the previous note, but then he runs the risk of ending up in a passive position.

16 exd5

16...Wxd5!

Or:

a) 16...Qxd5?? 17 Bd2 Qc3 18 Bxd8 Bxd8 19 Bf1 Bxd1 20 Qe1, followed by Bb2, and White wins.

b) 16...e4!? 17 Qg5 Wxd5 (17...Qxd5 18 Qxe4 gave White a healthy extra pawn in Kindermann-Schmalitz, German Ch., Gladenbach 1997; but not 18 Bd2? Qxg5! 19 Bxd5 Wxd5 20 Wxd5 Bxd8) 18 Wxd5 Qxd5 19 Qxe4 f5! 20 c4! (otherwise ...Bf6 comes) 20...fxe4 (20...Qb4? 21 Qg5 was clearly better for White in Khatatgaleev-Philippe, Budapest 1999) 21 cxd5 Qc5! (Maciej-Azmaiparashvili, European Team Ch., Plovdiv 2003), and now Huzman indicates the following sequence as best: 22 Qe3! Qxe3 23 Qxe3 (23 fxe3? Qc3 is equal) 23...Qc2 24 Qf1 Qd8 25 Qxe4 Qxd5 26 Be7 Bb2 27 Qxa7 Qxb3 28 Qe1 h6 29 g3 and Black has quite a bit of work to do before he earns a draw.
17 \( \texttt{Wxd5} \texttt{Qxd5} \texttt{18 Qxe5!} \\
18 \texttt{Qxe5} is bad due to 18...\texttt{Af6}, but 18 \texttt{c4} is a major alternative: 

a) After 18...\texttt{Af6} 19 \texttt{b2!} \texttt{Qf4} 20 \texttt{Ke3} \texttt{Ffd8} 21 \texttt{Axe5} \texttt{Axe5} 22 \texttt{Qxe5} Black doesn’t have enough play for the sacrificed pawn.

b) 18...\texttt{Qc3} 19 \texttt{Ke3} and now:

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess-board.png}
\end{figure}

b1) 19...\texttt{e4}!? 20 \texttt{Ab2} \texttt{Ac5} 21 \texttt{Axc3 exf3} 22 \texttt{xf3} \texttt{Acd8} 23 \texttt{Ac3} is given as clearly better for White by Huzman in his notes to Macieja-Azmaiparashvili. A fresh example from the advocate of this line seems to prove that Black still has enough defensive resources: 23...\texttt{a5} 24 \texttt{Ke1} \texttt{Bd7} 25 \texttt{g3} \texttt{f6} 26 \texttt{Qg2} \texttt{Wf7} 27 \texttt{h4} \texttt{Hfd8} 28 \texttt{h5} \texttt{Md3} 29 \texttt{Cc1} \texttt{We6} 30 \texttt{Ke1}+ \texttt{Wf7} 31 \texttt{Cc1} \texttt{We6} 32 \texttt{Me1}+ \texttt{Wf7} 32...\texttt{Wf7} 1/2-1/2 Asrian-Azmaiparashvili, Greek Team Ch. 2005.

b2) 19...\texttt{Qd1} 20 \texttt{Ke1} \texttt{Ffd8} 21 \texttt{Qxe5 Ac5} (21...\texttt{Ab4}!? is possible too: 22 \texttt{Qd2} \texttt{Qxd2} [not 22...\texttt{Qxd2} 23 \texttt{Qxd1} \texttt{Qac3} 24 \texttt{Qc6}!] 23 \texttt{Qxd1} \texttt{Ab2} 24 \texttt{Ke3} \texttt{Ac5} [24...\texttt{f6}?!] 25 \texttt{Qf3} \texttt{Qe8} 26 \texttt{Qd3} \texttt{Bxb3} 27 \texttt{Qxc5} \texttt{Bxf3} 28 \texttt{gx3} \texttt{bxc5} 29 \texttt{Qd5} \texttt{Qc8} 30 \texttt{Qd7} \texttt{g6} 31 \texttt{Qxa7} \texttt{Hb8} 32 \texttt{Qc7} \texttt{Hb4} 33 \texttt{Qxc5} \texttt{Qxa4} with a drawish rook ending) 22 \texttt{Ma2} \texttt{f6} (the safest) 23 \texttt{Qf3} \texttt{Md3} and Black has full compensation here.

18...\texttt{Qfe8} 

18...\texttt{Qc3}! 19 \texttt{Ke1} \texttt{Qfd8} 20 \texttt{Qc4} \texttt{Af6} 21 \texttt{Ab2} is slightly better for White.

19 \texttt{c4} 

19...\texttt{Qc3} 

Kasparov-Azmaiparashvili, Crete (rapid match) 2003, continued 19...\texttt{Qd6} 20 \texttt{Ab2} \texttt{Qf4} 21 \texttt{Qee1} \texttt{Ab4} 22 \texttt{Qed1} \texttt{Qe2}+ 23 \texttt{Qf1} \texttt{Qc3} 24 \texttt{Qd3} \texttt{Qe4} and here, instead of 25 \texttt{Qad1}, White should have preferred 25 \texttt{Qd4}! \texttt{Qd2}+ 26 \texttt{Qg1} \texttt{f6} 27 \texttt{Qe3} with a big advantage.

20 \texttt{Ke1} \texttt{Qd6} 21 \texttt{Qf3} \texttt{Qxe1}+ 22 \texttt{Qxe1} \texttt{Qe5} 23 \texttt{Qf1} \texttt{Hd8} 24 \texttt{a5} \texttt{Qe2} 25 \texttt{Hb1} \texttt{Qc3} 26 \texttt{Qa1} \texttt{Qe2} 27 \texttt{Hb1} \texttt{Qc3} 28 \texttt{Qa1}

1/2-1/2 Nevednichy-Azmaiparashvili, Nova Gorica 2005. In conclusion, in this line where Black gives up his e5-pawn, it looks pretty clear that he has excellent drawing chances, but can’t win. Therefore, for those looking for more than a point split, I recommend trying their luck in the 10...\texttt{Qxd5} 11 \texttt{Qxd5} \texttt{Hb8} variation that follows.

\begin{itemize}
\item \texttt{E32)} 1 \texttt{e4} \texttt{d6} 2 \texttt{d4} \texttt{Qf6} 3 \texttt{Qc3} \texttt{Qbd7} 4 \texttt{Qf3} \texttt{e5} 5 \texttt{Qc4} \texttt{Qe7} 6 0-0 0-0 7 \texttt{Qe1} \texttt{c6} 8
\end{itemize}
At first sight Black's position doesn't inspire much confidence, mainly because of the weakened d5-square. However, certain dynamic resources exist, such as the pushes ...a6 and ...b5, or ...f5, as well as ...f6 and ...b7.

12 \textit{Wd3!}

A multi-purpose move: White overprotects e4 and prepares the transfer of his queen to g3, and the knight to e3 or g3, via d2 and f1.

The position after 11...\textit{Bb8} is very rich in possibilities and, as well as the text move, White has tried no less than five sensible alternatives:

a) 12 b3 is an approach we are familiar with: White intends to pressure the weakness on d6 by playing \textit{Aa3}. For example:

a1) 12...a6 13 \textit{Cd2 Ef6} 14 \textit{Cc4 Xxd5} 15 \textit{Xxd5 Ab7} (15...\textit{Le6} is adequate too: 16 \textit{Wd3 b5?!} 17 axb5 axb5 18 \textit{De3 Wc7} and White stood a bit better, Macieja-A.Panchenko, Pardubice 1994, but 16...f5! is equal) 16 \textit{Wd3 f5} 17 exf5 e4 with reciprocal chances in Kulaots-Seeman, Estonian Ch., Tallinn 2005. If White hangs on to the pawn with 18 \textit{Wh3?!}, then 18...d5 19 \textit{De3} d4 20 \textit{Cc4} b5 provides Black with considerable activity and ample compensation.

a2) 12...f6 with a further split:

a21) 13 \textit{Ac4 Ab7} 14 \textit{Dd2} (14 \textit{Dd3}!? and now 14...\textit{Dxe4}! followed by 15...d5 equalizes, but certainly not 14...d5! 15 \textit{Exd5 Dxd5} 16 \textit{Ab2} f6 (Y.Hernandez-S.Agrest, European Ch., Warsaw 2001), when after 17 \textit{Be3!} the pin on the d-file will be lethal.

a22) After 13 c4 \textit{Dxd5} 14 \textit{Wxd5 Ab7} 15 \textit{Wd3} (O.Bitri-E.Janep, Bosnjaci 2004) Black should carry out the ...f5-thrust, and the best way to prepare this is with 15...\textit{Cc8}?! 16 \textit{Aa3 We6} 17 \textit{Ad1 Bd8}, etc.

a23) 13 \textit{Aa3 Xxd5} (or 13...a6?) 14 \textit{Wxd5 Ab7} (14...\textit{Le6} is also good: 15 \textit{Wd3 Wc7} 16 \textit{Dd2 Bbd8} 17 c4 \textit{Wc6} 18 \textit{Ab1} f5 with fine play for Black, Krzesaj-Lubczynski, Leba 2004) 15 \textit{Wd3 Wc7} 16 \textit{Ad1 Bbd8} 17 c4 \textit{Wc8} etc., C.Berczes-Mensch, Budapest 2000. Renouncing plans for ...f5 in order to focus on the queenside may be interesting too:
16...\textit{A}fd8 17 c4 \textit{A}c6 18 \textit{A}d2 a6 19 \textit{A}f1 (Kyas-P.Hesse, German League 1992) and here 19...b5 20 axb5 axb5 21 \textit{A}e3 would have kept the position balanced.

b) 12 c3 \textit{A}f6 13 \textit{A}b3 \textit{A}b7 14 \textit{A}d3 h6 (Kaiumov-A. Panchenko, Cheliabinsk 1993) is similar to the main text with 12 \textit{A}d3!, except that White has played 14 c3 instead of the more useful 14 \textit{A}d2 or 14 \textit{A}d2.

c) 12 a5 is probably too hasty:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

12...\textit{A}f6 (12...b5 13 \textit{A}e3 \textit{A}c7, A.Zapata-A.Hoffman, Sao Paulo 2001, and 12...\textit{A}c7 13 axb6 \textit{A}xb6 14 \textit{A}b3 h6, Hakki-Khairallah, Beirut 2004, look playable as well) 13 axb6 axb6 was played in Neukirch-Teumber, German League 2002. Now the following sequence seems rather logical: 14 \textit{A}b3 \textit{A}b7 15 \textit{A}d3 \textit{A}a8 16 \textit{A}xa8 \textit{A}xa8 17 \textit{A}g5 \textit{A}xe4 18 \textit{A}xe4 \textit{A}xe4 19 \textit{A}xe7 \textit{A}e8 20 \textit{A}d5 \textit{A}a1+ 21 \textit{A}f1 \textit{A}xb2 22 \textit{A}xe4 \textit{A}xe7 with approximate equality.

d) 12 c4 and now:

d1) 12...\textit{A}f6 13 a5 (13 \textit{A}e3?! looks a bit slow, and after 13...\textit{A}xd5 14 cxd5 f5 15 exf5 \textit{A}xf5 Black already had the more pleasant position in Lemmers-

Damjanovic, Andorra 2004) 13...\textit{A}xd5 14 cxd5 b5 15 \textit{A}e3 a6 16 \textit{A}b6 \textit{A}e8, and ...f5 is next on the agenda, W.Rosen-C.Fehme, German League 2005.

d2) The double-edged 12...a5!? (Bakre-Denoth, Pula 2002) weakens b5, but secures c5 for the knight.

Moreover, if White wants to make progress on the queenside, he will have to play b2-b4, leaving himself with isolated pawns after ...axb4.

e) The semi-waiting move 12 h3?! is also interesting: 12...\textit{A}f6 13 \textit{A}b3 \textit{A}b7 14 \textit{A}d3 \textit{A}c7 (14...d5 doesn't seem entirely satisfactory, as after 15 exd5 e4 16 \textit{A}xe4 \textit{A}xe4 17 \textit{A}xe4 \textit{A}e8 18 \textit{A}d3 White has a definite advantage, but 14...h6!? is worth consideration) and now instead of 15 \textit{A}h4? d5! (Sosna-I. Markovic, Moravian Team Ch. 2002) White could have retained a plus with the positional 15 \textit{A}g5.

12...\textit{A}h8

Black has other choices here:

a) Black shouldn't be able to solve his problems with 12...\textit{A}f6, as practice has shown: 13 \textit{A}b3 (13 \textit{A}c4?!, H.Hunt-Voiska, German League 2003, is similar)
13...h6 (directed against \( \text{g5xf6} \), which would reinforce White's control over d5; 13...b7 14 g5 h5 15 d2 \( \text{xc7} \) 16 a5 gave White an edge in Cheparinov-C.Garcia Fernandez, Pamplona 2003) 14 d2 (after 14 d2!? b7 15 \( \text{xf1} \) e8 16 \( \text{g3} \) [G.Shahade-Lakdawala, San Francisco 2001] White has nice attacking prospects on the kingside [\( \text{f5}, \text{g3} \) etc.] so the sacrifice 16...d5 17 exd5 \( \text{xd5} \) 18 \( \text{xd5} \) e5 19 \( \text{xd5} \) d5 20 \( \text{xe5} \) b4 looks like Black's best chance in my view) 14...b7

15 \( \text{ad1} \)! (15 a5?! d5, I.Khamrakulov-C.Garcia Fernandez, Spanish Team Ch. 2006, is also better for White, but less clear) 15...c7 16 h4 with a clear plus for White. Other moves are also unappealing: 15...d5 16 \( \text{xe5} \) (16 exd5?) 16...\( \text{dxe4} \)? (16...dxe4 was the lesser evil) 17 \( \text{xh6!} \) gxh6 18 \( \text{xe4} \) dxe4 19 \( \text{g3} \) h7 20 \( \text{xd8} \) \( \text{bxd8} \) 21 \( \text{g4} \) with a clear advantage in the game Parmentier-Seret, French League 2005; or 15...\( \text{c8} \) 16 \( \text{b4} \) and \( \text{d6} \) is bound to fall, Reiss-Rebers, Budapest 2001.

b) 12...c7 13 \( \text{e3} \) (or 13 \( \text{d2} \) 13...\( \text{f6} \) 14 \( \text{b3} \) h6 15 \( \text{d2} \) with a slight, but persistent advantage for White, Kindermann-Schaeffer, Munich 1993.

c) 12...c5 and now:

\( \text{c1} \) 13 \( \text{c4} \) a5 14 \( \text{e3} \) (C.Horvath-Okhotnik, Hungarian League 2000), when instead of 14...\( \text{a6} \), more logical seems to be 14...d7 15 b3 h8, preparing...f5 and intending to meet 16 \( \text{xf7} \) with 16...\( \text{dxe4} \). After 15...h8 White holds a small plus, but there is still plenty to play for.

\( \text{c2} \) 13 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{e6} \) (or 13...a5 14 b3 h8 15 \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{e6} \) 16 \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{xe6} \) 17 \( \text{f3} \), Pavasovic-Srebrnic, Celje 2004, followed by the plan c4, a3, \( \text{ad1} \), when White should stand slightly better) 14 \( \text{d1} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 15 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{c7} \), and at this moment everything seems under control from White's point of view.

It will, however, prove difficult to conveniently avoid any kind of counterplay, as seen after 11...\( \text{b8} \) 16 b3 \( \text{d7} \) 17 c4 \( \text{f6} \) 18 \( \text{d3} \) a6 19 \( \text{a3} \) b5 20 cb5 axb5 21 \( \text{c1} \) \( \text{b7} \) 22 \( \text{xd6} \) \( \text{xd6} \) 23 \( \text{xd6} \) \( \text{xa4} \) 24 \( \text{xa4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 25 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 26 \( \text{dc6} \) f6 in Lahno-S.Collas, Calvia Olympiad 2004. White was only
marginally better thanks to her passed-pawn, and the game eventually ended peacefully on move 39.

13 b3 Qc5

13...f5 14 exf5 Qc5 (14...Qf6?! 15 Le6 e4 16 Lxe4 Qxe4 17 Whxe4 favours White) 15 We2 Lxf5 transposes to the main text.

14 We2 f5 15 exf5 Lxf5

We have been following the game M. Neubauer-Lima, Brasilia 2003. This position has hardly been tested and isn't easy to assess properly, but I think it offers mutual chances.

Conclusion
White has more than one way to fight 8...b6. There are three main scenarios:

White tries to bring the f3-knight to f5, via h4, in order to launch an attack against the black king.
The retreat Lc4-a2 is seen as preparation for the exchange on e5 without allowing the equalizing ...Qxe5. On dxe5, ...Qxe5, there would indeed follow Qd4, and soon after f2-f4. Black should refrain from developing his light-squared bishop on b7 too early. From its initial square, it covers f5 and discourages the invasion of a white knight.

White obtains an outpost on d5, after d4-d5 followed by dxc6 or ...cxd5
White can, in this situation, try to exchange a defender of d5 by playing Lc1-g5xf6. He will then look for a ‘good knight against bad bishop’ type of position. For his part, Black should check to see whether tactical resources can permit him to simplify the position, while the ...d5 thrust should also be considered (see Line E31).

If Black doesn’t find himself in one of these two favourable scenarios, he will have to try to avoid the ‘good knight versus bad bishop’.

The position becomes closed when Black reacts to d4-d5 by playing ...c6-c5
There are two cases to consider here:
1) Black’s a-pawn still stands on a7. In this event a4-a5 usually gives White an indisputable advantage.

2) Black’s a-pawn already stands on a6. In this situation a4-a5 makes no sense anymore (Black would answer with ...b6-b5) and White’s play is based on opening the queenside by means of b2-b4. Black’s customary counterplay is based on the ...f5 push, prepared by ...De8 (or ...Wh8, ...Dg8) and ...g6.
We have seen throughout this book many qualities of the Philidor:

**Its solidity and hidden dynamism**
In the past the Philidor has been mistakenly considered to be somewhat passive. It's true that Black's counterplay can be delayed for some time, but it does arrive. This apparent tranquility makes your opponent feel confident, but that is an illusion!

**Its wealth of ideas**
Many plans can be considered (for both sides), and this avoids the monotony of a stereotypical opening.

**Its elasticity**
The pawn and piece placements are quite flexible.

Another, similar feature is that it can be difficult to get to grips with the nuances that exist between different move orders. This may be particularly true for players who are too preoccupied with opening theory. The Philidor Defence 'suffers' from underestimation, as generally speaking White players study it rather superficially.

Some variations, such as the Larsen (Chapter 2) or those resulting from the old-fashioned move order (1 e4 e5 2 d3 d6 3 d4 d6) have become rare birds nowadays. They may be playable, but have proved too difficult to handle in practical games. That said, an early inaccuracy from White often occurs. Thus, when I employed the Larsen Variation in 2002, my opponents twice made the mistake of playing f2-f3 before \( \text{Wd2} \) and 0-0-0 (I didn't exploit this the first time by the way!). To be added to this is the fact that the position often becomes very sharp fairly quickly, which will overthrow your opponent in many cases! This was especially true in the game Brodsky-Nisipeanu (Chapter 4, Line D222), in which White was drawn into the abyss.
when he searched for an opening advantage. More recent games featuring 5...\texttt{\&}e7 have demonstrated the validity of Black's concept, making this old variation fashionable again.

Positions from Part 2 of the book are still rather fresh. New ideas may appear and a more thorough examination may be necessary to determine where Black is facing problems.

As a final note, I can recommend the Philidor to players of a 'lazy' nature, those who attach more importance to the understanding of strategic themes, rather than the memorization of variations.
Index of Variations

Early Deviations
1 e4 e5 2 ∆f3 d6 3 d4
   3 ∆c4 – 10
3...∆f6
   3...∆g4 – 12
   3...∆c6 – 12
   3...∆e7 – 14
   3...∆d7 – 16
   3...f5
     4 ∆c4 – 23
     4 dxe5 – 26
     4 exf5 – 27
     4 ∆c3 – 29
4 dxe5 ∆xe4 5 ∆d5 ∆c5 6 ∆g5 ∆e7
   6...∆d7 7 exd6 ∆xd6 8 ∆c3
     8...∆e6+ – 34
     8...0-0 9 0-0-0
       9...∆c6 – 35
       9...a6 – 38
7 exd6 ∆xd6 8 ∆c3 ∆e6+ – 39
   8...∆e6 – 41
   8...c6 – 41

Larsen's Variation
1 e4 e5 2 ∆f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 ∆xd4
4 \( \text{Wxd4} \text{ \&f6} - 48 \) (4...\text{a6} - 49)

4...\text{g6} 5 \text{ \&c3} \text{ \&g7} 6 \text{ \&e3}
6 \text{ \&f4} - 58

6...\text{\&f6} 7 \text{\&d2} 0-0 8 0-0-0 \text{\&e8}
8...\text{\&c6} 9 f3 \text{\&xd4} 10 \text{\&xd4} \text{\&e6}
   11 \text{\&e3} - 61
   11 h4 - 62
   11 \text{\&b1} - 66
   11 g4 - 67

9 f3 \text{\&c6}
9...\text{a6} - 71

10 g4
10 h4 - 79
10...\text{\&e5} - 76
10...\text{\&xd4} - 75

**Antoshin's Variation**

1 \text{e4} \text{e5} 2 \text{\&f3} \text{d6} 3 \text{d4} \text{exd4} 4 \text{\&xd4} \text{\&f6} 5 \text{\&c3} \text{\&e7} 6 \text{\&f4}
   6 \text{\&f3} - 84
   6 \text{\&de2} 0-0 - 84 \) (6...\text{c6} - 85; 6...\text{\&c6} - 86)
   6 \text{\&c4} 0-0 7 0-0 \text{a6} - 88 \) (7...\text{c6} - 90)
   6 \text{\&e2} 0-0 7 0-0 \text{\&e8} (7...\text{c5} - 93) 8 \text{\&e1} - 95 (8 \text{f4} - 96)
   6 \text{g3} \text{d5} 7 \text{e5} (7 \text{exd5} - 99) 7...\text{\&g4} 8 \text{\&f4} - 102 \) (8 \text{\&g2} - 101)

6...0-0 7 \text{\&d2} \text{d5}
   7...\text{c6} - 109
   7...\text{\&c6} 8 0-0-0 \text{\&xd4} 9 \text{\&xd4} \text{\&e6} - 117 \) (9...\text{a6} - 119)
   7...\text{a6} 8 0-0-0
   8...\text{b5} - 114
   8...\text{d5} - 113

8 \text{\&db5}
   8 \text{exd5} - 120
   8 \text{e5} - 120

8...\text{c6}
   8...\text{b4} - 121

9 \text{\&c7} \text{d4} 10 \text{\&xa8} - 129
   10 0-0-0 - 124
   10 \text{\&e2} - 126
   10 \text{\&d1} - 123

302
1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♜f6: 3rd move alternatives for White

1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♜f6
2...e5 – 132

3 ♖d3
3 ♜d2 – 133
3 f3
3...♗bd7 – 143
3...d5 4 e5 ♗fd7 – 136 (4...♗g8 – 135)
3...e5
4 ♗e2 – 137
4 dxe5 – 137
4 d5 ♖e7 5 ♖e3 0-0 6 c4 6 c4 – 142 (6 ♖d3 – 139)

3...e5 4 c3 d5 5 dxe5 ♖xe4
5...dxe4 6 ♖b5+
6...♖d7 – 149
6...c6 – 148

6 ♗f3 ♗c6 7 ♖bd2 ♗c5
7...♖g4 – 152

8 ♖b1
8 ♖b5 – 154
8 ♖c2 – 156
8 ♖b3 – 153

8...♖g4 9 h3 – 160
9 b4 – 158

3 ♗c3 ♗bd7 and 3...e5

1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♜f6 3 ♗c3 ♗bd7
3...e5
4 ♗ge2 – 165
4 f4 – 165
4 dxe5 dxe5 5 ♚xd8+ ♙xd8 – 166

4 f4
4 g3 – 176
4 ♖e3 – 178
4 g4 h6 5 h3 (5 ♖e3 – 200; 5 ♗f3 – 198) 5...e5 6 ♗ge2 – 203 (6 ♖g2 – 201)

4...e5 5 ♗f3 exd4
5...♖e7 – 180
5...c6 – 181

6 ♚xd4 c6
6...♗c5 7 ♖e3 – 187 (7 ♖c4 – 186)
7 Ke3
   7 e5 – 190
   7 Kd2 – 190
7...d5 8 exd5 – 193
   8 e5 – 191

Philidor Hanham Variation
1 e4 e5 2 Qf3 d6 3 d4 Qf6 4 Qc3 Qbd7 or 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qbd7 4 Qf3 e5
5 Qc4
   5 g3 – 208
   5 g4 Qxg4 – 213 (5...g6 – 211; 5...h6 – 210)
5...Ke7 6 0-0
   6 Qxf7+ – 219
   6 dxex5 – 220
   6 Qg5 0-0 7 Qxf7+ Qxf7 8 Ke6 We8 9 Qxc7 Wd8 10 Qxa8 – 222
6...0-0 7 Ke1
   7 a4 – 234
   7 We2 c6 (7...exd4 – 236) 8 a4 b6 – 238 (8...exd4 – 241)
7...c6 8 a4 b6
   8...exd4 – 249;
   8...Ke8 – 250
   8...Wc7 9 h3 – 256 (9 b3– 252; 9 Ke2 – 253; 9 a5 – 255)
   8...a5
   9 h3 exd4 10 Qxd4 – 264 (10 Wxd4 – 268)
   9 Ke2 h6 – 271 (9...exd4 – 272)
   9 b3 exd4 10 Qxd4 (10 Wxd4 – 274) 10...Qb6 – 278 (10...Qc5 – 276)
9 d5
   9 Ke2 – 280
   9 h3 – 281
   9 Kg5 – 283
   9 b3 a6
   10 Kg2 – 286
   10 d5 – 284
9...cxd5
   9...c5 – 289
   9...Kb7 – 289
10 Qxd5 Qxd5
   10...Kb7 – 291
11 Ke5 Kb8 – 295

---

304
The Philidor is a dynamic and underrated answer to White’s most popular opening move, 1 e4. Recently it has acquired something of a cult following amongst certain Grandmasters; its supporters include the French number one Etienne Bacrot and the former European Champion Liviu Dieter Nisipeanu. One of its major selling points is its flexibility – Black even has a choice of two opening moves. It also suits a wide variety of playing styles; games can lead to sharp, tactical duels as well as strategic, positional battles.

In this definitive guide, Christian Bauer, himself a renowned expert on the Philidor, uncovers the secrets behind this intriguing opening. Using his own experience and other top-class Philidor games, Bauer identifies both the critical main lines and the tricky sidelines. He also examines the key tactical and strategic ideas for both White and Black, while highlighting crucial issues such as move-order options – a major weapon for the modern Grandmaster.

- Comprehensive coverage of a provocative opening
- Packed with original analysis
- Ideal for club and tournament players

Christian Bauer is a young Grandmaster from France who has a string of tournament successes to his name. He is a former national champion and has represented France in numerous team tournaments, playing top board at the 2000 Istanbul Olympiad. He is a regular columnist for the renowned French chess magazine Europe Echecs, while this is his second book for Everyman Chess; his first was *Play 1...b6!*.