



#42 – October 3, 2003

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Kasparov is making headlines in Crete at the Euro Club Cup. First by winning four games in a row and then by losing the shortest game of his career in just 22 moves with a blunder that would barely be fit for the Ninja Tactics section.

But we found some more helpful games on other boards. French #1 Joel Lautier showed that it's not important who starts an attack. What matters is who finishes it!

We put a lot of work into this week's Super Structure section so we hope you enjoy it. It's all about attacking (and creating) typical pawn weaknesses. It goes without saying that this should also teach you to avoid or combat such strategies in your own positions.

Q&A: We need your chess questions and games in PGN for our Ask the Masters sections! Send them to blackbelt@chessninja.com.

Download all the chess material and annotations in this issue in [PGN format](#) (text or reader software). In [ChessBase format](#) (Fritz, etc. format (CBV)). [Online replay page](#).

FEEDBACK: Post your comments in the [Black Belt message board](#) or [e-mail us](#).

The Master Writes



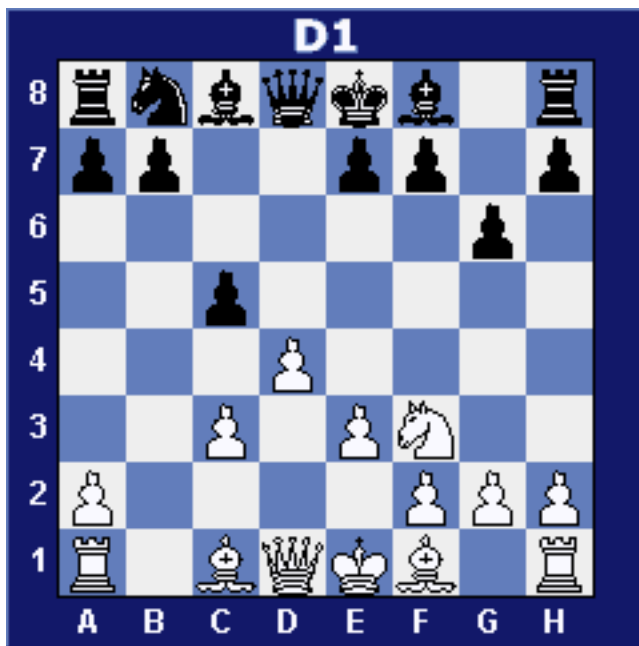
Who's Attacking Whom?

White pushes some kingside pawns, aims his pieces at the black king, sacrifices a knight on g5 for an attack, infiltrates with his queen and... resigns under a mating attack 10 moves later!

One of the oldest saying in chess states that if the initial attack is not successful, the counterattack most likely will be. Very true here. White opens the lines but Black's pieces turn out to be much better placed to take advantage of them. The White queen has to retreat in shame and Black's pieces are hard on her heels.

Filippov,V (2630) - Lautier,J (2677) [A34] ECC Rethymnon GRE (6), 03.10.2003

1.Nf3 c5 2.c4 Nf6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.d4 Nxc3 6.bxc3 g6 7.e3 (D1)



This is an old position, going back to the 20's. White can play 7.e4 and play a main line Grunfeld Exchange by transposition. But English Opening players usually prefer to play e3 at some point, keeping a solid center.

It's interesting that White usually prefers to play e3 immediately instead of first playing his bishop outside the pawn chain to f4 or g5 (although both of those moves are played).

The reason is simply that neither of those squares is particularly attractive for White and the bishop can end up out of the action. Playing the bishop out early allows Black to "play around" it.

Another factor is that White reserves the option of playing e4 at some point later on, as happened in Portisch-Kasparov, Madrid 1988 as well as a recent Kramnik game. Grabbing the c-pawn after 7.Qa4+ has not worked out well. The open diagonal for the g7 bishop is everything a Grunfeld player dreams of.

[7.dxc5? Qxd1+ 8.Kxd1 Bd7=+/+; 7.Bg5 Bg7 8.Qd2 (8.e3 0-0 9.Qd2 cxd4 10.cxd4 b6 1/2-1/2 Kortschnoj,V-Reshevsky,S/Lone Pine 1979/MCL (49)) 8...Qa5 9.e3 Nc6 10.Rc1 cxd4 11.cxd4 Qxd2+ 12.Nxd2 h6 13.Bh4 g5 14.Bg3 0-0 15.Bc4 0-1 Garcia Paolicchi,R-Karkanaque,I/Bled 2002/EXT 2003 (60)

7.Qa4+?! Nc6 8.dxc5 Bg7 9.Bb2 0-0 10.e3 Bd7 11.Qa3 Qc7 12.Be2 Rac8 13.Rd1 Be8 0-1 Kortschnoj,V-Furman,S/Moscow 1973/MCL (39)

7.Bf4 Bg7 8.e3 cxd4 (8...Qa5 9.Qd2 0-0 10.Be2 Nc6 11.Rb1 cxd4 12.cxd4 Qxd2+ 13.Kxd2

Rd8 14.Bb5 Bf5 15.Bxc6 Bxb1 16.Bxb7 Bxa2 17.Bxa8 Rxa8 18.Ra1 Bd5 19.Ra5 e6 20.Bd6 Bf6 21.Ne1 Bd8 22.Ra1 a5 23.f3 a4 1/2-1/2 Portisch,L-Timman,J/Tilburg 1980/MCD (23))

9.cxd4 Qa5+ 10.Qd2 Qxd2+ 11.Kxd2 0-0 12.Bd3 Nc6 13.Be4 Bd7 14.Rhc1 Rac8 15.Rab1 b6 16.Bd3 1-0 Kortschnoj,V-Hutchings,S/Nice 1974/EXT 2000 (40); 7.e4 Transposing into a Grunfeld Exchange.; 7.h4?! Bg7 8.h5 cxd4 9.cxd4 Nc6 10.e3 e5!= 11.h6 1/2-1/2 Olafsson,F-Ljubojevic,L/Buenos Aires 1980/MCL/[Chekhov] (21) (11.hxg6 hxg6 12.Rxh8+ Bxh8 13.dxe5 Qxd1+ 14.Kxd1 Nxe5 15.Bb2 Bg4 16.Bb5+ Ke7 17.Ke2) ; 7.e4 Grunfeld Exchange]

7...Bg7 8.Bd3 [8.Bb5+ Nc6 9.0-0 0-0 10.a4 Bd7 11.Ba3 cxd4 12.cxd4 a6 13.Bd3 Re8 14.Nd2 Be6 15.Rb1 Bd5 16.Bc5 f5 17.Bc4 Rb8 18.Bb6 Qd7 19.Bxd5+ Qxd5 20.Qb3 e6 21.Qxd5 exd5 22.g3 g5 23.Nf3 Bf6 24.Rfc1 Re7 25.Bc5 Rd7 26.Rb2 Na5 27.Nd2 1-0 Arsovic,G-Antic,D/Banja Koviljaca YUG 2002/The Week in Chess 388 (27)]

8...0-0 9.0-0 Qc7 10.Qe2 Rd8

[10...b6 11.Rd1 Bb7 12.e4 e6 13.Be3 Nd7 14.e5 f6 15.exf6 Nxf6 16.Ne5 Nd5 17.Qg4 Bxe5 18.Qxe6+ Kh8 19.dxe5 Nxe3 20.fxe3 Rae8 21.Qd6 Qg7 22.e6 Qh6 23.e4 Qe3+ 24.Kh1 g5 25.Qe5+ 1-0 Gulko,B-Bengtson,M/Philadelphia USA 2003/The Week in Chess 452 (25); 10...Nc6 11.Ba3 b6 12.Rab1 Rd8 13.Be4 Bb7 14.dxc5 Bxc3 15.Rfc1 Bf6 16.h4 Qd7 17.Ng5 Ne5 18.Rd1 Qc7 19.f4 Bxe4 20.Nxe4 Nd7 21.Nxf6+ 1/2-1/2 Kramnik,V-Van Wely,L/Monte Carlo 1999/CBM 69 ext (21)]

11.Rd1 b6 12.Bb2 Nc6 13.Rac1 Bb7 14.e4 It's hard for White to make progress without playing this eventually. Now d4 is under heavy pressure, but White's bet is that his kingside attack with h4-h5 will be more effective. Black hopes to explode the white center before his king becomes a factor.

14...e6 15.Qe3 (D2)

[15.h4 Rac8 16.h5 Qf4 17.hxg6 hxg6 18.Bb1 Na5 19.Re1 Qg4 20.Rcd1 cxd4 21.cxd4 Nc4 22.Bc1 b5 23.g3 Re8 24.Kg2 f5 25.Ng5 1/2-1/2 Kramnik,V-Topalov,V/Wijk aan Zee 1998/CBM 63/[Khalifman] (25); 15.Qe3 Rac8 16.h4 h6 17.Be2 Qe7 18.h5 g5 19.Ba3 Bf8 20.dxc5 Qf6 21.e5 Qf4 22.Qxf4 gxf4 Portisch,L-Kasparov,G/Madrid rapid 1988/EXT 88/1/2-1/2 (69)]

15...Rd7 The first new move of the game, trying to improve on Kasparov's 15...Rac8 from a 1988 rapid game. Lautier immediately plays to increase pressure on d4 by doubling rooks. White responds with the usual plan of pushing his h-pawn.

[15...Rac8 16.h4 h6 17.Be2 Qe7 18.h5 g5 19.Ba3 Bf8 20.dxc5 Qf6 21.e5 Qf4 22.Qxf4 gxf4 Portisch,L-Kasparov,G/Madrid rapid 1988/EXT 88/1/2-1/2 (69)]

16.h4 (D3)



16...h6 A typical stratagem against a wing push. With pawns on g6 and h6, Black can meet any advance by passing and locking the structure, at least for a while. This weakens the squares around the black king, but it's normal for him to live on the edge in these sharp lines.

17.Ba3?! It's hard to imagine White ever having time to capture on c5. With Black's rooks doubled on the d-file it doesn't seem like a very good idea anyway.

17...Rad8 18.h5 [18.dxc5? Ne5 19.cxb6 Qxb6 20.Qxb6 axb6 21.Bc2 Nd3 Black dominates the board.]

18...g5 Black wants to keep things closed on the kingside for as long as possible. This move creates a static target on g5 so Black has to make progress in the center before White crashes through.

[18...cxd4? 19.cxd4 Qb8 20.Bb5+-]

19.e5 [19.dxc5 g4 20.cxb6 Qxb6 21.Qxb6 axb6-/+] **19...Ne7 (D4)** Taking advantage of the now-open d5 square.

20.Nxg5?! A radical way of punishing Black for his kingside pawn moves. This sacrifice is quite unclear because Black's pieces are well developed. The game now enters a tactical phase and Black does a better job of navigating the dangers.

20...Nd5 Somewhat surprisingly, Black has many options here. [20...Bxe5 21.dxe5 **a**) 21.Qxe5? Qxe5 22.dxe5 Rxd3 (**a**) 22...hxg5?! 23.Bc2=) 23.Rxd3 Rxd3-+; **b**) 21.dxc5?? Bf4 (**b**) 21...hxg5?! 22.cxb6 Bh2+ 23.Kh1-/+) 22.Qh3 Bxg5-+; 21...Nf5 22.Qe2 hxg5 23.Bc2+/=; 20...hxg5!? 21.Qxg5 Qc6 22.h6 Qxg2+ 23.Qxg2 Bxg2 24.hxg7 (24.h7+ Kh8 25.Kxg2 Bxe5) 24...Bf3]



21.Qg3

[21.Qe4?! Easy enough for Fritz to play, but the consequences and complications after ..Nf6 aren't going to attract many humans. 21...Nf6 22.Qe2 hxg5 23.exf6 Bxf6 24.h6 Qf4]

21...hxg5 22.Qxg5 (D5)



22...f5! This is the key move. Black plays for counterattack, not just defense. Now it's White who has to be cautious on the kingside! The black heavy pieces are ready to combine with the b7 bishop to counterattack the white king.

23.h6 [23.Bb5 Bc6 24.Bxc6 Qxc6+ /= 25.c4 Nf4!; 23.exf6 Nf4! (23...Nxf6 24.h6)]

23...Kh8! [23...Qc6 24.Bf1] **24.c4** [24.hxg7+? Rxg7 With the threat of ..Rxg2+ and a discovered check with the knight. White is lost. 25.Qh6+ Rh7 26.Qxe6 Rg8 (26...Bc8-/+ 27.Qg6 Rg8) 27.Bxf5 (27.Bf1 Qg7; 27.Qxf5 Rxg2+) 27...Rxg2+! 28.Kf1 (28.Kxg2 Nf4+) 28...Rhh2-+]

24...Bxe5! I know we say it all the time, but it's like Tal said, they can only capture one piece at a time. One of the nice things about being up material is the ability to give it back to break an attack and/or start your own counterattack. Black is now threatening to win in one move with ..Rg8 and death on the g-file.

25.dxe5? White captures the wrong piece. Now the d-file is open and there are just too many open lines for Black's pieces. [>=25.cxd5 Rg8 26.Qh4-/+ Now the h6 pawn shield's Black's king and he has excellent attacking chances. 26...Rg4 27.Qh3 Bxd4]

25...Rg8-+ 26.Qd2? [26.Qh4 Rg4 27.Qxg4 (27.Qh2 Nf4 28.Bf1 Bxg2) 27...fxg4 28.cxd5 Bxd5-+]

26...Ne7?! Still winning, but ..Nb4 discovered the attack on g2 with tempo by attacking the pinned d3 bishop. [26...Nb4! 27.Qe3 (27.Bxb4 Qc6!-+ 28.Kf1 (28.f3 Qxf3) 28...Qxg2+ 29.Ke1 Qh1+ 30.Ke2 Bf3+ 31.Ke3 f4+ 32.Kxf4 Rf8+ 33.Kg3 Qg2+ 34.Kh4 Qg4#) 27...f4 28.Qh3 Nxd3 29.f3 (29.Rxd3 Bxg2 30.Qxe6 Rxd3) 29...Nxc1 30.Rxc1 Qxe5 31.Kh1-+]

27.Kf1 [27.Qe3 Rxg2+ 28.Kf1 Rd4-+] **27...Bxg2+ 28.Ke2 Nc6 (D6)**

White's king is open and all of Black's pieces participate in the attack. It's hard to believe that it was White who recently sacrificed a piece for a kingside attack!

Learn from the mistakes of others. The old saying that open lines help the better developed opponent was quite well exemplified here. White went for an attack and outnumbered his opponent on the kingside, but Black's pieces were very well prepared to come over to the kingside quickly once the lines were opened.

[28...Qxe5+?! 29.Qe3 Qf6 30.Kd2-+]

29.Qe3 [29.Bb2 Nd4+ 30.Bxd4 Rxd4-+ (30...cxd4?! 31.Qf4-+)] **29...Rd4 30.f4** [30.Kd2 f4 31.Qe2-+]

30...Be4 31.Qh3 Qd7 [31...Nxe5! 32.fxe5 Qxe5 33.Bb2 Bg2+ 34.Qe3 Bf3+ 35.Kf2 Rg2+] **32.Bb2** [32.Rc3 Rg2+ 33.Kf1-+]

32...Bxd3+ 0-1

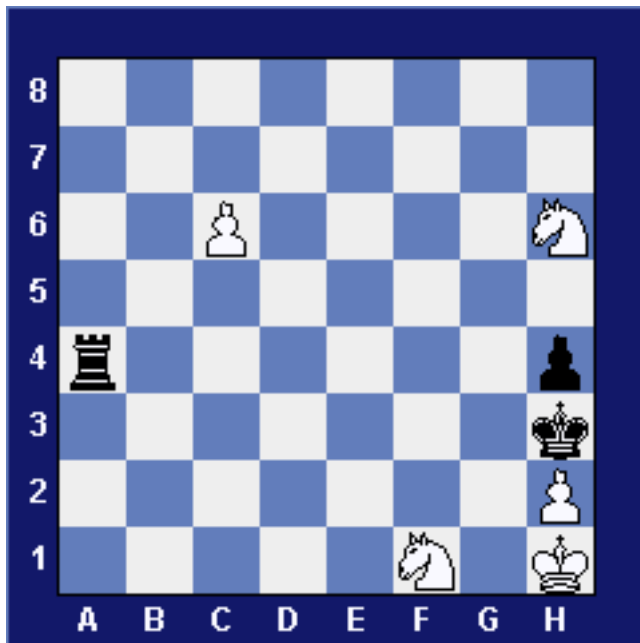
[32...Bxd3+ 33.Rxd3 (33.Qxd3 Rxd3 34.Rxd3 Rg2+ 35.Kf1 Qxd3+ 36.Kxg2 Qd2+ 37.Kf1 Qxb2-+) 33...Rxd3 34.Qxd3 Rg2+ 35.Kf1 Qxd3+]



[Online replay page](#)



Knight Watch



Kondratjev, V – 1978
White to play and win

Is the black king strong or weak? The knights operate with the efficiency of a Swiss watch in order to help the pawn.

Solution below



Snip Those Buttons

There are many structures that appear over and over again. The isolated queen's pawn (isolani) is one of the most important. Another is the c6-d5 pawn pair with a half-open c-file for White. We look more closely at those and have some excellent illustrative games with plenty of annotations.



Example (W. Winter)

A good test position of what NOT to play here for Black. Many players would find it impossible to resist ..c6 here (or soon) to eject the knight. But it's a blunder because then the d6 pawn is weak and will soon be lost.

The clamp from the c4 and e4 pawns (aka the Maroczy Bind) means that ..d5 is basically impossible so the c-pawn should stay on c7 to protect d6.

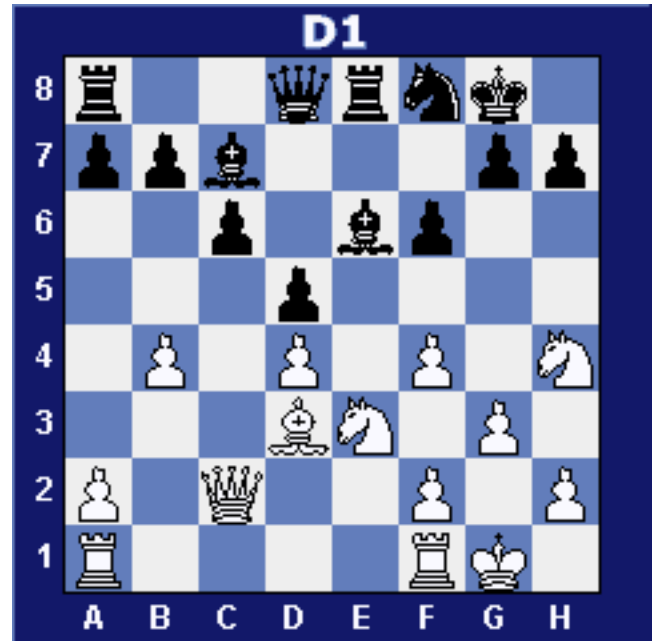
(1) Alekhine,A - Lasker,E [D35]

New York, 1924

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 Nbd7 5.cxd5 exd5 6.Bf4 c6 7.e3 Nh5 8.Bd3 Nxf4 9.exf4 The first structural blow has been struck. The d4 pawn is isolated. **9...Bd6 10.g3 0-0 11.0-0 Re8 12.Qc2 Nf8 13.Nd1 f6 14.Ne3 Be6 15.Nh4 Bc7 16.b4** Alekhine begins typical minority action on the queenside. The goal is to give Black a weak pawn of his own on c6. **(D1)**

16...Bb6 Taking aim at the d4 pawn. This fantastic game between the former and future world champions is a great example of our theme. Weak pawns serve as distractions even when they can be successfully defended. White has to use his forces to watch the d-pawn. This inhibits his own attacking chances and also makes him vulnerable in other areas because his pieces are tied down.

17.Nf3 The first concession. The knight has to retreat. **17...Bf7 18.b5 Bh5** Indirectly pressuring d4 again by threatening to remove its defender. **19.g4 Bf7** The bishop's job is done, a major weakness has been created in the white kingside pawn structure on the dark squares. Note that this is a consequence of the need to protect d4.



20.bxc6 Rc8 21.Qb2 bxc6 Black also has a pawn weakness now, but it's easier to defend than d4 is for White. **22.f5** Or else ..Ng6-f4 is a menace.

22...Qd6 Eyeing the freshly weakened dark squares and the f4 square. **23.Ng2 (D2)** Another concession to keep the queen out of f4.



23...Bc7 The bishop's job on b6 is done. The weakness of d4 allowed Lasker to create other weaknesses on the kingside and now he goes after those.

24.Rfe1 h5! White's delicate kingside is exploded. If the f3 knight is ejected or captured, h2 is next. **25.h3 Nh7** ..Ng5 is a lethal threat.

26.Rxe8+ Rxe8 27.Re1 Rb8 As usual the attacker wants to keep the pieces on the board. **28.Qc1 Ng5**

29.Ne5 Desperation, but there is nothing else. [29.Nxg5 Qh2+ 30.Kf1 fxg5 31.Qxc6 Ba5 32.Rb1 Re8]

29...fxe5 [29...hxg4 30.Nxg4 Nf3+; 29...Nxh3+ There is no need to give Alekhine chances with a pawn storm in the center. 30.Kf1 fxe5 31.dxe5 Qb4 32.e6 Be8]

30.Qxg5 e4 31.f6 g6 32.f4 White has nothing better than to throw everything at the Black king and hope Lasker makes a mistake. [32.Bc2 Qh2+ 33.Kf1 Qh1+ 34.Ke2 Qxg2]

32...hxg4 33.Be2 gxh3 34.Bh5 Rb2! Sharp till the end. **35.Nh4 Qxf4 36.Qxf4 Bxf4 0-1**

(2) Botvinnik,M - Zagoriansky,E [A13] Sverdlovsk (6), 1943

1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 e6 3.b3 Nf6 4.Bb2 Be7 5.e3 0-0 6.Nc3 c5 7.cxd5 Nxd5 8.Nxd5 exd5 9.d4 cxd4 10.Qxd4 Now the isolated queen's pawn master class begins. **10...Bf6 11.Qd2 Nc6 12.Be2 Be6 13.0-0 Bxb2 14.Qxb2 Qa5 15.Rfd1 Rad8 16.Rd2 Rd7 17.Rad1 Rfd8 (D3)**

The battle lines have been drawn. White has total control over the square IN FRONT OF THE PAWN. This is a critical part of the strategy. Isolated queen's pawns can be a pain in the neck if they can advance and disrupt your position.

First you have to control them and then you can play to win them. This is typically true with other types of passed pawns, especially those in pairs. First stop them from advancing. This blockade concept is more effective than just aiming your pieces at them.

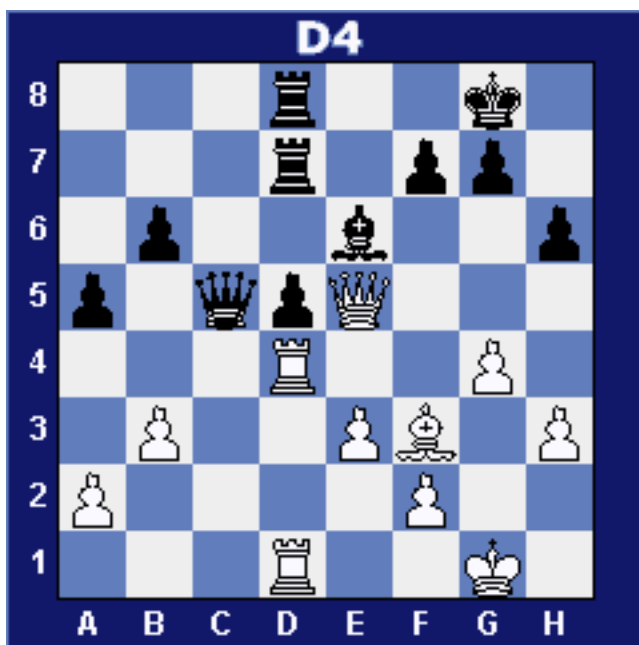
One reason this is true is that while the defender's pieces are tied down protecting the pawn, the attacker's pieces can also become uncoordinated if all their force is directed at one point. Then that point moves, even sacrificing itself, and that can cause chaos. (See move 30 of game four below.)



18.h3 h6 19.Ne5 Nxe5 20.Qxe5 Qc5 21.Bf3 White has maximized the pressure. All four of his pieces are attacking the pawn and all four of Black's are defending it. As the saying goes, now what? This is where the principle of two weaknesses comes in.

Black has succeeded in defending his one weakness, the d4 pawn. In order to win White will need to create another weakness in the Black position. First Botvinnik gets his rook to a more active post on d4.

21...b6 22.Qb2 Rc8 23.Qe5 Rcd8 24.Rd4 a5 25.g4!! (D4)



Fantastic! Black is stuck defending d4 and White shifts to a kingside attack. g5 will create open lines and more weaknesses in the black position. True, White's king position is also weakened, but there is nothing Black's pieces can do about it.

25...Qc6 26.g5 hxg5 27.Qxg5 f6 28.Qg6 Bf7 29.Qg3 f5 [29...Qc2] 30.Qg5 Qe6 31.Kh1 Qe5 32.Rg1 Rf8 33.Qh6 Threatening Rh4 with mate. b6 is also weak...

33...Rb8 34.Rh4 Kf8 35.Qh8+ Bg8 [35...Ke7 36.Qxg7 Qxg7 37.Rxg7 Kf6 38.Rhh7 Rbb7 39.Kg2]

36.Rf4 Rbb7 37.Rg5 You have to love the way Botvinnik goes after one weak pawn after another. Black's pieces have to keep scrambling around. It reminds me of a tennis game in which one player keeps hitting the ball corner to

corner, making his opponent run all over while he just stands there.

37...Rf7 38.Qh5 Qa1+ 39.Kg2 g6 40.Qxg6 Bh7 41.Qd6+ Rfe7 42.Qd8+ [42.Qd8+ Re8 43.Rgxf5+ Bxf5 44.Rxf5+ Rf7 45.Rxf7+ Kxf7 46.Bh5+] 1-0

**(3) Lipke,P - Schiffers,E [B45]
Vienna, 1898**

1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.Nf3 e6 4.d4 cxd4 5.Nxd4 Nf6 6.Nxc6 bxc6 7.e5 Nd5 8.Ne4 f5 9.exf6 Nxf6 10.Nd6+ Bxd6 11.Qxd6 Qe7 12.Bf4 Qxd6 13.Bxd6 Ne4 14.Ba3 d5 15.Bd3 Nf6 16.0-0 Kf7 17.Rae1 Rb8 18.b3 Bd7 19.Re3 a5 20.Rfe1 a4 21.Bd6 Ra8 22.b4 Rhe8 23.a3 Bc8 24.Rf3 Kg8 25.Rg3 Ba6 26.h3 Bxd3 27.cxd3 (D5)

Although it didn't come around in the usual way via a minority attack in the queen's gambit, we have the typical backwards c6 pawn on a half-open c-file. It's instructive how White slowly exploits this weakness, and the one on a4, in the endgame.

27...Rac8 28.Be5 Kf7 29.Bd4 Again, blockading first. **29...Re7 30.f4** Freezing the e6 pawn. **30...Ne8 31.Rc1 g6 32.Be5! Rb7**

33.d4 The bishop is locked in, but White doesn't mind because it dominates the night. Black has placed all his pawns on light squares so the bishop doesn't have any good targets anyway.



White is just waiting for Black to move the knight so he can capture it and go to work on the weak pawns with his rooks. This move freezes all the black pawns. It's not too hard to work out the entire winning plan for White from here.

33...Ke7 34.Rgc3 Kd7 35.Rc5 Rb5 36.Kf2 (D6)



Illustrating the other problem Black has. With his king defending c6, the white king has a clear path to the kingside on the dark squares. He'll just walk up and capture the h7 pawn.

36...Rxc5 37.Rxc5 Ra8 The weakness of the a4 pawn makes this necessary. It also means that the black king can't wander too far from the queenside or Ra5 Rxa5 bxa5 will give White a winning passer.

38.Kg3 h6 39.Kg4 Nd6 40.Bxd6 Kxd6 41.h4 Preparing to break the wall with h5.

41...Ra7 42.g3 Getting everything ready before making the break. When your opponent has no useful moves, make sure you make of your own before embarking on a no-turn-back plan.

42...Ra8 43.h5 gxh5+ 44.Kxh5 Rg8 45.Kh4 Ra8 46.g4 Rf8 47.Kg3 Ra8 48.Ra5 There's the trick. If Black captures White will have a passed a-pawn and then a passed g-pawn after g5. **48...Rh8 49.Rxa4 h5 50.g5 h4+ 51.Kh3 Rf8 52.Ra7 Rxf4 53.g6 Rf6 54.g7 Rg6 55.Kxh4** The rest only requires minimal precision.

55...e5 56.Kh5 Rg1 57.dxe5+ Kxe5 58.Kh6 d4 59.Ra8 Kd5 60.g8Q+ Rxg8 61.Rxg8 Kc4 62.Rd8 d3 63.Kg5 Kc3 64.Kf4 1-0

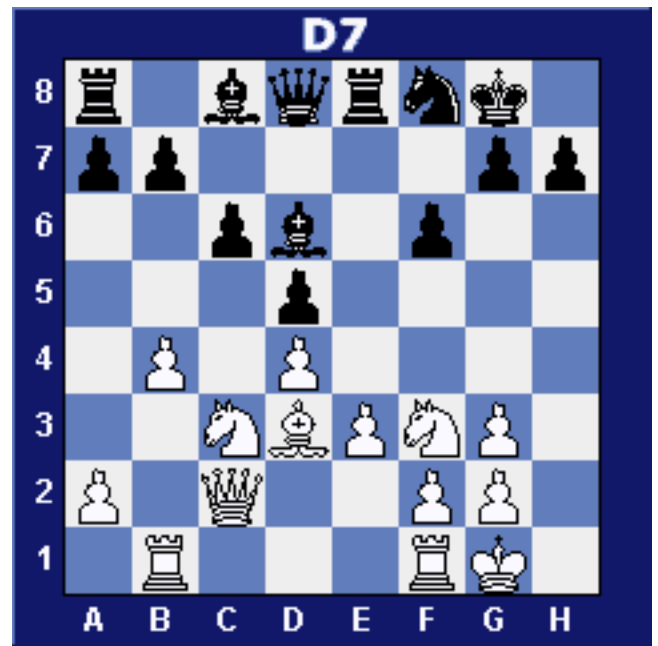
**(4) Alatortsev, V - Grechkin, D [D35]
URS-sf Kiev, 1940**

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 Be7 5.cxd5 exd5 6.Bf4 c6 7.Qc2 0-0 8.e3 Nbd7 9.Bd3 Re8 10.0-0 Nf8 11.Rab1 Nh5 12.Be5 f6 13.Bg3 Nxc3 14.hxc3 Bd6 15.b4 (D7)

Beginning the usual minority attack play. Two pawns attack three in order to give Black a backwards c-pawn. This seems like a rather unambitious plan and is certainly less spectacular than a sacrificial kingside attack.

But it was a revolution of positional play 100 years ago and is very effective to this day. This game shows both sides of the coin and even includes instructive play with two different weak pawns. First White works against the backwards c6 pawn.

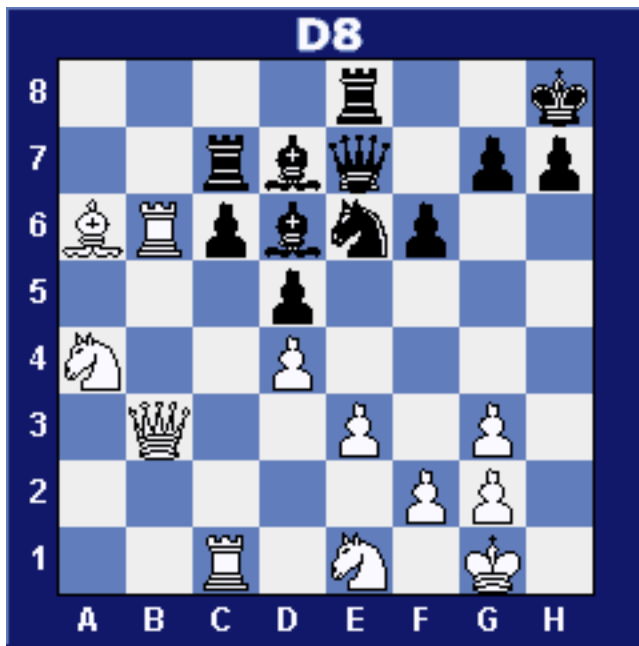
But Black, largely thanks to his still having his dark-squared bishop, succeeds in playing c5 and breaking free. He is then left with an isolated queen's pawn.



Black has a fleeting chance to eliminate it and play for an advantage with a typical sacrifice of the isolated pawn but he misses his chance. Then White slowly closes in on the pawn, combining that pressure with threats against the black king.

15...a6 16.a4 Bg4 17.b5 axb5 18.axb5 Rc8 19.bxc6 bxc6 20.Na4 Immediately playing against the c5 square. Black has enough forces to be able to play ..c5 at some point, but White wants to make sure he gets other concessions in exchange. In this case that means a weak isolated pawn on d5.

20...Qe7 21.Rfe1 Bb4 22.Red1 Bd6 23.Rb6 Bd7 24.Ba6 Rc7 25.Rc1 Ne6 Now it's clear that Black can put more protection on c5 than White can. The fact that White doesn't have his dark-squared bishop is noticeable here. **26.Qb3** Knowing that he can't prevent ..c5 White takes aim at what will soon be a vulnerable d-pawn. **26...Kh8 27.Ne1 (D8)** Now Black has to play ..c5 before the knight comes into d3 and lands on c5.



27...c5! Eliminating the weakness and freeing his pieces. **28.Nxc5 Bxc5 29.dxc5 Nxc5 30.Qd1** [30.Qxd5? Nxa6 Winning a piece.]

30...Ba4? No! Black needed to continue the freeing operation with ..d4. Now White can blockade the d4 pawn and Black has only exchanged one weak pawn for another.

[30...d4!-/+ A great example of how an isolated queen's pawn can wreak havoc when it is allowed to advance. White can't capture it without losing a piece. 31.Qxd4 (31.exd4 Nxa6 32.Rxa6 Rxc1 33.Qxc1 Qxe1+ 34.Qxe1 Rxe1+ 35.Kh2 Kg8; 31.Nc2 Ba4) 31...Nxa6]

31.Qd4 Nxa6 32.Rxc7 Nxc7 33.Qxa4 With each exchange the d5 weakness gets uglier. **33...Ne6 34.Nf3 Rd8 35.Qc6 Nf8 36.Nd4 (D9)**

A dream position compared to what would have occurred after 30...d4! The black pawn is blockaded by the best possible blockader, a knight.

Knights are best because the pawn doesn't interfere with their movement at all. This is also true of bishops. Rooks are terrible because the pawn blunts their power.

36...Qe4 37.Qc7 Re8 38.Rb7 White combines pressure on the pawn with mate threats.

38...Qg6 39.Qc6?! [39.Nf5! This would have finished things quickly. 39...Ne6 40.Qd7 The threat is Nh4 and g4.]



39...Ra8 40.Qc1 Qd3 41.g4 Qg6 42.Qd1 Qe8 43.Qb3 There's that pawn again. **43...Rd8** [43...Qe5 44.f4] **44.Qb6 Rc8 45.Nf5 Rc6 46.Qa7 g6** [46...Qe5 47.f4 Rc1+ 48.Kh2 Qa1 49.Qxa1 Rxa1 50.Rxg7] **47.Rxh7+! 1-0**

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PIECE & HARMONY

Study by Kondratjev, V – 1978

1.c7 Rc4 [1...Ra8 2.Nf7 Rc8 3.Ne3 Rxc7 4.Ng5#] **2.Ng4! Rxg4** [2...Rxc7 3.Nf2#;
2...Kxg4 3.Ne3+]

3.Nd2! [3.c8Q?; 3.c8R Rc4 4.Rg8 Rf4 5.Kg1 Rf2 6.Re8 Rg2+ 7.Kh1 Rf2 8.Re3+] **3...Rg8**
4.Ne4! Kg4 [4...Rc8 5.Nf2#; 4...Rf8 5.c8Q+ Rxc8 6.Nf2#] **5.Nf6+ 1-0**

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