play the Grünenfeld
detailed coverage of this Kasparov favourite

EVERYMAN CHESS
play the Grünfeld
# Contents

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Grünfeld Sources

Winning With The Grünfeld, Andras Adorjan & Jeno Dory (Macmillan 1987)
A revolutionary and early book on the Grünfeld, now outdated in some places but still very relevant in others. This is really where it all started!

The Complete Grünfeld, Alexei Suetin (Batsford 1991)
Large reference work, covering all the major systems.

Beating the Grünfeld, Anatoly Karpov (Batsford 1992)
Essentially a collection of Karpov’s best games in the Grünfeld, containing deep and instructive material on his favourite systems.

Fianchetto Grünfeld, Adrian Mikhalchishin & Alexander Beliavsky (Cadogan 1998)
Significant reference work on the g3 systems by two renowned analysts.

Understanding the Grünfeld, Jonathan Rowson (Gambit 1999)
A must-have for all Grünfeld players. This book explains both the basics of the opening as well as more intricate concepts.

The Grünfeld, Nigel Davies (Everyman 2002)
Repertoire book for Black featuring plenty of interesting ideas.

King’s Indian & Grünfeld: Fianchetto Lines, Lasha Janjgava (Gambit 2003)
Large reference work on the g3 systems; very comprehensive and well researched.
Starting Out: The Grünfeld, Jacob Aagaard (Everyman 2004)
Everyman's own introductory guide to the Grünfeld; a very good alternative to Rowson's book.

Challenging the Grünfeld, Edward Dearing (Quality Chess 2005)
A book dedicated to the 7 ëf3 c5 8 ëb1 Exchange Variation; definitely the bible for adherents of this system.

Not just a repertoire book, but perhaps the most comprehensive and remarkable opening work ever! Covers absolutely everything under the sun on the 7 ëc4 Exchange Variation for both sides and includes an incredible amount of original analysis.

Other Sources

Beating the Fianchetto Defences, Efstratios Grivas (Gambit 2006)
Repertoire book for White, covering the 4 ëf3 ëg7 5 ëg5 ëe4 6 ëh4 variation, on which Grivas is the world's leading expert.

Beating the Indian Defences, Graham Burgess & Steffen Pedersen (Batsford 1997)
Repertoire work for White, covering the 7 ëe3 Exchange Variation.

Beating the King's Indian & Grünfeld, Timothy Taylor (Everyman 2007)
Repertoire book for White, covering two offbeat lines against the Grünfeld.

Black is still OK!, Andras Adorjan (Batsford 2004)
Collection of articles about various aspects of chess, including original ideas of the author in several Grünfeld lines.

Dynamics of Chess Strategy, Vlastimil Jansa (Batsford 2003)
A strategic chess tutorial by a legendary grandmaster, with a large and very instructive section on several Grünfeld systems.

Play 1 d4!, Richard Palliser (Batsford 2003)
Repertoire book for White, covering 4 ëf3 ëg7 5 ëg5 ëe4 6 cxd5.

The Soviet Chess Conveyor, Mikhail Shereshevsky (Semko 1994)
An instructional book and not an opening manual, but with a few paragraphs on a
specific line of the $4 \text{f}4$ system.

**Databases, Periodicals and Websites**

*Chess Informant*, ChessPublishing.com (Grünfeld coverage chiefly supplied by Tisdall, Davies and Flear), *Mega Database 2007* (ChessBase), *New In Chess Magazine*, *New In Chess Yearbook*, *The Week In Chess* (1-639) and *UltraCorr* (Chess Mail).
Welcome to the fascinating world of the Grünfeld!

The book you are holding is a repertoire work for players who wish to employ the Grünfeld with Black. It is aimed at players of intermediate level up to that of Grandmaster (hopefully!) and aspires to provide everything you need to know about this dynamic defence which begins 1 d4 ♙f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♙c3 d5.

A History of the Grünfeld

The Grünfeld Defence (I believe that 'counterattack' would be a more appropriate term!) was introduced into the higher echelons of competitive chess in the heyday of the hypermodern movement, namely in the 1920s and 1930s. It bears the name of the Austrian master Ernst Grünfeld who was its first devoted adherent. Nevertheless, like several opening set-ups conceived in those days, it was forced to re-
main rather a theoretical backwater for some time, presumably because it appeared too avant-garde to the more classically-minded spirit that prevailed back then.

The evolution of the Soviet Union as a chess power provided the necessary boost to catapult the Grünfeld to the status of a respectable opening. The more dynamic, less stereotyped way of thinking that characterized the best Soviet players of that time found a fertile field of expression in the Grünfeld. Indeed, the powerful World Champion Mikhail Botvinnik regularly employed the Grünfeld in his games and his example was soon followed by other Soviet stars, most notably his successor to the throne, Vasily Smyslov. The Grünfeld even made its way to the World Championship matches between the two, thus establishing itself as a sound and viable opening.

The Sixties were a decade crucial to the further development of the Grünfeld with the opening being adopted by Bobby Fischer in some high-profile games, in particular two against Boris Spassky. Both those games had a dismal outcome for the American, although the opening itself was hardly to blame. Then the end of the Sixties saw the birth of the two great schools of the Grünfeld. The Hungarian school, led by the innovator Andras Adorjan and Zoltan Ribli, quickly established itself as the leading Grünfeld ‘family’ in the world, followed by the Czechoslovak school, whose leading protagonists were Vlastimil Jansa, Jan Smetkal and Lubomir Ftáčnik. In fact, under the influence of those outstanding players, the two countries developed a whole host of other players who greatly contributed to Grünfeld theory; Peter Leko being the most obvious but by no means only example.

Andras Adorjan was the author (along with his compatriot Jeno Dory) of the first really influential book on the Grünfeld in 1987, but even more importantly he introduced the opening to the young and ambitious Garry Kasparov at the time of his first World Championship match with Anatoly Karpov. It was not until their third match in 1986 that Kasparov actually employed the Grünfeld, but when he did so it came with remarkable success; Karpov proved completely unprepared, tried several systems and was generally unable to trouble Kasparov. Overall, Kasparov’s opening choice was deemed a success and the Grünfeld was back at the top; a position it retained throughout the legendary pair’s further matches in 1987 and 1990.

At the end of the Eighties some young Soviet masters, mainly from St Petersburg, introduced a system against the Grünfeld which would dominate tournament praxis in the Nineties, namely the 7 ²f3 c5 8 ³b1 Exchange Variation. The system was analysed heavily in every corner of the world and at first kept scoring points for White, especially thanks to the efforts of Alexander Khalifman, Boris Gelfand and Vladimir Kramnik. In turn several top players, especially Vishy An-
and, Alexei Shirov and Peter Leko, began to defend the Grünfeld and managed to find some solutions to the $g_2$ b1 problem. Indeed, the variation is currently declining in popularity, whereas 7 $\text{Cc}4$, a popular favourite in the Sixties, has returned to the forefront of fashion.

The Nineties also saw a massive emigration of Soviet chessplayers, with one of the main destinations being Israel. There the third great Grünfeld school was born, largely thanks to the efforts of the legendary Mark Tseitlin. Nowadays there are a lot of Israeli grandmasters who employ the Grünfeld, most notably Emil Sutovsky, Boris Avrukh, Viktor Mikhalevski and Alexander Huzman, and the Israeli school currently represents the most active laboratory of opening ideas in the Grünfeld.

Finally, one cannot sum up the current status of the Grünfeld without mentioning the Russian grandmaster Peter Svidler, at this moment the world’s strongest Grünfeld practitioner. Whereas Kasparov, Anand and Leko eventually dropped the Grünfeld from their repertoires, opting for more solid openings that are less vulnerable to computer-assisted research, Svidler has persistently employed the beloved opening of his childhood and still does, suffering a few painful defeats along the way but also scoring several victories. It is also encouraging to see that, after a brief intermission, the Grünfeld is again appearing regularly at the highest level, in the hands of young and ambitious players such as Alexander Grischuk, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov and David Navara. Indeed, the scene may well be set for a full-scale revival of this great opening!

**My Grünfeld Qualifications**

As for myself, my relationship with the Grünfeld began while I was living in Israel in the 1990s. I was introduced to the opening there, playing and analysing it extensively for a number of years; something which continued when I later moved to Hungary and felt the influence of the first great Grünfeld school. Of late, I have also become a little infatuated with the King’s Indian, but have continued to stay fully up-to-date with the latest Grünfeld developments and to search for new resources for Black. Perhaps having now written this work, it is time for me once again to make the Grünfeld my exclusive defence to 1 d4!

**About This Book**

Rather than focus chiefly on the general themes of the opening, I have aimed first and foremost to supply a complete repertoire for Black with the Grünfeld. En route we will discuss typical tactical motifs and strategic ideas as we come across them, but there is especially plenty of theoretical coverage. Indeed, I can assure
you that, should you study this book comprehensively, your preparation would be on a par with that of almost any IM in the world! Every single significant option at White’s disposal has been covered in considerable depth where necessary, but by pointing out the main concepts and plans for both sides, I believe that this work is also very suitable for the ordinary club player.

Due to the Grünfeld’s very concrete and often quite tactical nature as an opening, I have opted for a variation tree approach within this book. Indeed, most of the time the Grünfeld is all about piece activity and being the first to create threats. Concepts such as fixed pawn structures, slow manoeuvring and long-term planning are fairly rare in the Grünfeld, in contrast to more strategic openings such as the Ruy Lopez. Moreover, both sides usually have several choices at the many theoretical crossroads which we will come across. There is plenty of theory to be discussed, although I will not be advocating any lines which require excessive rote-learning – I’m assuming that the reader isn’t preparing for a World Championship match and so doesn’t want to learn 30+ moves just to force a draw! – and so a variation tree approach, rather than a complete games format, again makes the best sense.

So what can you expect to find in this book? The answer is simple: it contains coverage from Black’s perspective of all White’s reasonable (and some not-so-reasonable) tries against the Grünfeld, offering at least one way to meet each of them successfully. At certain critical junctures I have opted to offer more than one option, primarily in those systems which are very popular and have developed a large body of theory. That should help to ensure that this repertoire will remain viable for many years. I have also decided not to enter the more complex and theoretically-heavy main lines, in favour of more positional schemes and without making any sacrifices in the quality department. Indeed, I believe that the suggested repertoire is the optimal combination of opening ambition, preparatory study and efficiency for the non-professional player!

The Grünfeld contains a number of theoretical lines, but even here understanding the key plans for both sides is very important. Thus our coverage begins with the most natural form of the Exchange Variation, with White playing 7 \( \text{Qf3} \) and then trying to develop normally. It is essential to understand why such an approach does not work out well, so as to better understand the motivation behind the critical 8 \( \text{b1} \) of Chapter Two.

By no means all white players want to take on the Grünfeld with an especially theoretical approach. Unfortunately for us, some of the available quiet set-ups can be rather dull, such as 4 \( \text{Qf3} \ \text{g7} \) 5 \( \text{g5} \) or 4 e3; to use a cliché, watching grass grow can sometimes be more fun! Please note that when a white system falls into this category, I have almost always opted to recommend the particular line that fully neutralizes it. Just learning that accurate response for Black should mean that
you never need worry ever again in your Grünfeld career about the white system in question.

Of late, one can also observe white players turning towards some very new and ambitious systems, especially the 4 cxd5 ćxd5 5 ća4 and 5 ć.d2 variations. Nowadays, the former is almost extinct, for reasons we will see in Chapter Six, but the latter continues to figure in the repertoire of several grandmasters. It chiefly aims to steer play into relatively uncharted territory; an approach rather characteristic of our times, especially in the Grünfeld. All such systems deserve some respect and I have certainly examined them closely, even suggesting some entirely novel ideas when the existing options failed to satisfy me. In Chapter Fourteen, for example, one will find 3 f3!? – a popular move, but also one wrongly neglected by many previous Grünfeld works – met with the dynamic 3...e5!?; a move fully in keeping with our active black approach.

Finally, I would like to inform you, dear reader, that every single line in this book has been checked with at least one analysis engine. However, the Grünfeld is very dynamic and often leads to rather unbalanced positions. That makes it a fascinating opening to play, albeit also a little daunting at times to evaluate. Please note that many lines are assessed as giving Black ‘the initiative’. That does not necessarily mean that Black is better, but rather that he is calling the shots. In practice, though, having to defend accurately against a Grünfeld initiative often proves too much for White, so do strive to gain the initiative!

Acknowledgements

I am very much obliged to my parents, Vladimir Dembo and Nadezhda Fokina, as well as to my husband Sotiris Logothetis, for their immense help in the creation of this book.

My gratitude is also due to John Emms for the help, suggestions and useful material he provided throughout, as well as to Richard Palliser, who successfully turned a complex manuscript into the book you are now holding!

Yelena Dembo,
Athens,
March 2007
Chapter One

Exchange Variation:
Introducing 7 \f3 \c5

1 \d4 \f6 2 c4 \g6 3 \c3 \d5 4 \cxd5 \xd5
5 e4 \xc3 6 bxc3 \g7 7 \f3 \c5

...c5

Apart from the highly-theoretical 8 \b1, the subject of our next chapter, White has tried a few other ideas.

A: 8 \e2
B: 8 h3
C: 8 \b5+

The coverage of Line A shows the motivation behind both Lines B and C, namely to prevent Black from applying pressure against \d4 with \ldc6 and \ldg4. So let’s see first what happens if White tries to develop naturally:

A: 8 \e2 \c6

White must already tread carefully. To see why consider:

a) 9 e5?! is too committal and after 9...0-0 10 0-0 \cxd4 11 \cxd4 \e6 12 \e3 \d5 13 \g5 (H.Grooten-P.Boersma, Amsterdam 1982) 13...f6!, as suggested by Krnic, Black has an excellent game.
b) 9 √b2?! cxd4 10 cxd4 √a5+ 11 √f1 √g4 12 √d3 √d8 13 √c3 √a3 was again quite good for Black in H.Konarkovska-M.Chiburdanidze, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

c) 9 √b1?! cxd4 10 cxd4 √xd4 11 √xd4 √xd4 12 √b5+ √f8 13 √e2 a6 14 √d3 b5 15 0-0 √e6 simply leaves Black with an extra pawn.

d) 9 0-0?! cxd4 10 cxd4 √xd4 11 √xd4 √xd4 12 √b5+ √f8 13 √e3 √xd1 14 √axd1 √e6 15 √xa7 f6 again sees White fail to justify his material investment.

Therefore White’s choice is restricted to the risky 9 d5?! and to shoring up the defence of d4.

A1: 9 d5
A2: 9 √e3

A1) 9 d5?!

A rather premature exchange sacrifice.

9...√xc3+ 10 √d2 √xa1 11 √xa1 √d4
12 √xd4 cxd4 13 √xd4 0-0

Now White can win back the mate-

rial, at the cost of seriously exposing his king, or continue the game an exchange down, with only minimal practical chances of an attack.

14 0-0

White plays for compensation. He can do so too with 14 √c3 f6 15 h4, but 15...√b6 16 √d3 √d7 17 0-0 √ac8 18 √d4 √a5 is very good for Black. Instead 14 √h6 recovers the exchange, but at too high a price: 14...√a5+ 15 √f1 f6 16 √xf8 √xf8

17 f3 (17 g4 √xa2 18 e5 √g8 is better for Black) 17...√d7 18 √f2 √c8 19 √b1 √c2! 20 √b2 √xb2 21 √xb2 √c5+ 22 √g3 (22 √f1 b5 gives Black a clear advantage) 22...b5 23 a3 was R.Hernandez-M.Sisniega, Matanzas 1992, and Black could now have won in the following way, as pointed out by Sisniega: 23...g5! 24 √b4 (or 24 h3 √g1 25 d6 h5 26 dxe7+ √xe7 27 √b4+ √f7 and wins) 24...√e3 25 √f1 h5 26 h3 √g1 with a winning position.

14...√b6 15 √a1

Or 15 √c3 f6 16 √h6 √f7 17 √e3 (S.Mohr-S.Lputian, Altensteig 1989) 17...√d6 18 f4 e6 with an obvious plus.
15...d7 16 b1 c7 17 h6 f6 18 xf8 xf8 19 d4 b5 20 e3 c8

In M.Pein-J.Rowson, British League 2000, Black had the upper hand.

A2) 9 e3 g4!

Immediately forcing a concession from White.

10 e5

Black was better after 10 b1 xf3 11 gxf3 (or 11 xf3 cxd4 12 cxd4 xd4 13 xd4 xd4 14 0-0 b6 with an extra pawn) 11...cxd4 12 cxd4 xd4 13 xb7 0-0 14 0-0 e6 in T.Gezalian-P.Svidler, Leningrad 1990.

10...cxd4 11 cxd4 a5+ 12 d2


12...c7 13 c1 d8 14 a4 d7 15 e3 0-0

White’s problems have only increased, D.Tishin-Y.Zinchenko, Alushta 2006.

B) 8 h3

This little pawn move was used by Kramnik against Kasparov in 2000. Its aim is clear: to prevent ...g4. I can’t help but feel, though, that in such a sharp and dynamic opening, slow moves like 8 h3 cannot really pose any problems, provided Black reacts precisely.
8...0-0 9 ëc2

Instead 9 ëc3 ëa5 10 ëd2 (10 ëd2 ëc6 11 d5 ëe5 12 ëxe5 ëxe5 13 ëb3 ëb8 14 f4 ëg7 15 e5 b5 is quite good for Black) 10...ëc6 11 ëd1 was tried in F.Gomez-A.Zapata, Havana 2001, and now 11...ëe6! would have set White some problems.

9...cxd4 10 cxd4 ëc6 11 ëe3

Now Black cannot further increase the pressure on d4 and White is set to castle. It is thus the moment to exploit White's small loss of time.

11...f5!

12 exf5

White can also play the similar 12 ëb3+ (instead 12 ëc4+ ëh8 13 e5 b5 14 ëe2 f4 15 ëc1 ëb8 is better for Black) 12...ëh8 13 exf5 (13 ëd1 fxe4 14 ëg5 ëxd4 15 ëc4 – 15 ëf7+ ëxf7 16 ëxf7 ëe6 17 ëxe6 ëxe6 18 ëxd8+ ëxd8 does not help White either – 15...ëa5+ 16 ëd2 ëxe2 17 ëf7+ ëxf7 18 ëxf7 ëd7 was a disaster for White in W.Arenobia-P.Elianov, Ubeda 2001) 13...gxf5 14 ëd1 f4 15 ëc1 ëa5 16 ëa3 ëe6 17 d5 ëxd5 18 ëb2 (18 ëg5 ëf5 19 ëe6 ëd6 20 ëxd6 exd6 21 ëxg7 ëxg7

22 ëxf4 ëxa2 23 ëxd6 ëe8 also leaves White in trouble) 18...ëe6 19 ëg7+ ëxg7, which occurred in Y.Kruppa-K.Sakaev, Neum 2000, but Black has already taken the upper hand; for example 20 ëd4 ëf6 21 0-0 ëc6.

12...ëa5+!

This disruptive check highlights the downside to 8 h3 in the best possible way.

13 ëf1

The alternatives are not even sufficient for equality:

a) 13 ëd2 ëxd2+ 14 ëxd2 ëxf5 15 ëc4+ ëh8 16 ëhd1 (B.Grachev-V.Belov, Vladimir 2002) 16...ëxh3 17 gxh3 ëxf3 with an edge for Black.

b) 13 ëd2 ëxf5 14 ëc3 (or 14 0-0 ëxd4 15 ëxd4 ëxd4 16 ëh6 as in T.Halay-A.Van Weersel, Vlissingen 2005, and now 16...ëd8 again leaves White worse) 14...ëe6 15 0-0 ëad8 16 ëd1 (16 ëa4 ëd5 17 ëad1 a6 18 ëd2 ëd6 is also quite good for Black) was played in A.Korobov-A.Goloshchapov, Ordzhonikidze 2001. Now simple and good was 16...ëxa2 17 ëxb7 ëd5 intending ...e5, with an edge.
White has tried several alternatives, without coming close to gaining an advantage:

a) 10 \(b\text{b}1\) \(\text{wc}7\) 11 \(\text{wb}3\) (or 11 \(\text{ae}1\), as in L.Oll-I.Sokolov, Wijk aan Zee (rapid) 1993, and now Black is fine after 11...\(\text{ad}8\) 12 \(\text{a}3\) b6) 11...\(\text{db}6\) 12 \(\text{a}3\) \(\text{ae}6\) 13 \(d\text{5}\) \(\text{dg}4\) 14 \(\text{dd}2\) (R.Damaso-L.Ftacnik, Lisbon 2000) 14...\(\text{ad}8\) 15 \(h\text{3}\) \(\text{c}8\) intends ...e6 gives with good play.

b) 10 a4 \(\text{wc}7\) 11 \(\text{ag}5\) (or 11 \(\text{we}2\) \(\text{df}6\) 12 \(h\text{3}\) b6 13 \(d\text{5}\), P.Van der Sterren-L.Gutman, Wijk aan Zee 1987, and now 13...\(\text{ab}7\) prepares the standard idea of ...\(\text{ad}8\) and ...e6) 11...\(\text{df}6\) 12 \(\text{ae}1\) \(\text{ad}8\) 13 \(\text{wb}3\) \(\text{ae}6\) 14 \(d\text{5}\) \(\text{ag}4\) 15 \(\text{dd}2\) h6 16 \(\text{ah}4\) \(\text{dh}5\) 17 \(f\text{3}\) \(\text{ac}8\) 18 \(\text{af}2\) \(\text{df}4\) 19 \(\text{af}1\) b6 20 a5 \(\text{db}8\) 21 axb6 axb6 22 \(\text{ab}1\) \(\text{ad}7\) gives Black the initiative, A.Shirov-G.Kamsky, Manila Olympiad 1992.

c) 10 \(\text{ad}3\) \(\text{cx}d4\) 11 \(\text{cx}d4\) \(\text{dc}5\) 12 \(\text{ac}2\) \(\text{ag}4\) 13 \(\text{ae}3\) (S.Mohr-J.Van Mil, Budapest 1991) 13...\(\text{xf}3\) 14 \(\text{xf}3\) \(\text{xd}4\) 15 \(\text{ad}1\) e5 with advantage to Black.

d) 10 \(\text{a}3\) b6 11 \(\text{c}6\) \(\text{db}8\) 12 e5 \(\text{wc}7\) 13 \(\text{wa}4\) a6 14 \(\text{le}4\) was seen in Bunakov-V.Timofeev, Kaluga 2000, and now 14...b5 15 \(\text{wc}2\) a5 is a logical way for Black to pursue his initiative.

e) 10 \(\text{le}3\) \(\text{df}6\) 11 e5 \(\text{dd}5\) 12 \(\text{cl}\) \(\text{g}4\) again leaves Black on top.

10...\(h\text{6!}\)

Forcing the bishop to make a decision.

11 \(\text{le}3\)

Instead 11 \(\text{lh}4\) \(\text{df}6\) 12 \(\text{le}1\) \(\text{lh}5!\) 13 \(\text{cl}\) (L.Alburt-L.Ftacnik, Hastings 1980/81) 13...\(\text{lg}4\) 14 d5 g5 15 \(\text{lg}3\) \(\text{dx}g3\) 16 hxg3 e6 is equal according to Ftacnik, while 11 \(\text{le}4\) was tried in
A.Huzman-E.Sutovsky, Pula 2000, and
now 11...\textit{\v{c}}f6 12 \textit{\v{c}}e1 \textit{\v{c}}g4 gives Black
the initiative.
\textbf{11...\textit{\v{c}}f6 12 \textit{\v{c}}d3 \textit{\v{c}}g4}

Now White must allow the ex-
change of his important dark-squared
bishop, although the exchange does
strengthen his centre.
\textbf{13 e5 \textit{\v{c}}xe3 14 fxe3 \textit{\v{c}}e6 15 \textit{\v{c}}e4 \textit{\v{c}}d5
16 \textit{\v{c}}xd5}

Instead 16 \textit{\v{c}}d3 cxd4 17 exd4 (infe-
rior was 17 cxd4 \textit{\v{c}}d7 18 \textit{\v{c}}fc1 \textit{\v{c}}fc8 19
\textit{\v{c}}xd5 \textit{\v{c}}xd5 with an edge for Black in
A.Graf-H.Odeev, Beirut 2000) 17...\textit{\v{c}}c8
18 \textit{\v{c}}xd5 \textit{\v{c}}xd5 19 \textit{\v{c}}ab1 \textit{\v{c}}c7 is at least
equal. After the text, 16...\textit{\v{c}}xd5 17 \textit{\v{c}}b3
\textit{\v{c}}e4 leads to a complicated position in
which Black’s long-term chances are
preferable; he has the superior minor
piece and the more flexible structure.

**Conclusion**

8 \textit{\v{c}}e2 is rightly considered inferior;
after all, if this line was good for White,
the entire Grünfeld would be in trou-
ble! Both 8 h3 and 8 \textit{\v{c}}b5+ contain a
drop of poison and should be met in an
active and accurate way if Black wishes
to fight for an opening advantage: 8 h3
represents a slight loss of time, which
is best exploited with a timely ...
f5 strike, while 8 \textit{\v{c}}b5+ is best countered
by keeping all the pieces on and aiming
to take advantage later of the exposed
position of the bishop.
1 d4 d5 2 c4 g6 3 Cc3 d5 4 cxd5 Cxd5
5 e4 Cx c3 6 bxc3 g7 7 Cf3 c5 8 Cb1

This is one of the most critical tests of the entire Grünfeld. White removes his rook from the long diagonal, thereby preparing to meet the pressure against his centre with the d4-d5 advance, regardless of the fact that the c3-pawn may be left en prise. This line was introduced in the Eighties, most notably by Viacheslav Eingorn, but became really popular towards the end of that decade, thanks to the efforts of Boris Gelfand and Alexander Khalifman, who have both scored numerous victories with this system. Later on, the white side found another prominent supporter in Vladimir Kramnik.

This whole system has been deeply researched for many years and the theory has advanced to alarming proportions. Indeed, the black player is well advised to prepare for it meticulously. To help a little, I have suggested that Black avoids the risky and heavily theoretical main lines. Instead we will explore a system that is both positionally fully sound and has scored well in practice. This does not mean that Black mustn’t prepare well for 8 Cb1, but rather that Black’s survival depends much less on long forced lines and much more on active positional play.

8...0-0 9 Ce2

Instead 9 Ce3?! is inconsistent, as White wants to push d4-d5, not protect d4: 9...Cg4 10 Cd2 (10 Cxb7 Cxf3 11 gxf3 Cc6 gives Black pressure) 10...Cxd4 11 Cxd4 Cc6 12 d5 Cxf3 13 gxf3 Ce5 14 Ce2 Cc8 gives Black the initiative, N.Rashkovsky-M.Ghinda, Lvov 1981.

After 9 Ce2, 9...Cxd4 10 Cxd4 Ca5+ 11 Cd2 Ca2 12 0-0 leads to the main tabiya of the 8 Cb1 system, which has been debated for many years and in countless games. Black has tried numerous schemes, without ever really managing to extinguish White’s initiative. Indeed, the positional aspects of White’s compensation (a strong centre,
a lead in development, the possibility of creating a powerful central passed pawn, the lack of good squares available to Black's minor pieces and the exposed black queen) guarantee lasting pressure and force Black to tread very carefully.

Moreover, the immense amount of theory involved in these lines, as well as the forcing nature of most of the ensuing variations, makes the whole venture of capturing the a2-pawn quite unappetizing for Black. I have a healthy respect for material in general, but in this particular case I believe that, from a practical viewpoint at least, the pawn just isn't worth taking!

Another natural option is 9...\(\text{c6}\), but this falls in with White's plans. After the standard sequence 10 d5 \(\text{e5}\) (10...\(\text{xc3}\)+ 11 \(\text{d2}\) \(\text{xd2}\)+ 12 \(\text{xd2}\) is a very risky pawn-grabbing operation) 11 \(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 12 \(\text{d2}\)! e6 13 f4 \(\text{c7}\) 14 0-0 \(\text{exd5}\) 15 \(\text{exd5}\) \(\text{a5}\) it seems to me that Black is skirting the precipice.

White has many dangerous continuations, while Black's defences are often considered to be crowned with success when they result in a perpetual check or repetition.

Therefore, 9...\(\text{c6}\) is not a good choice for the practical player!

After 9 \(\text{e2}\) there is, however, a third option:

\(9...\text{b6}\!\)

The reader should note that this is not a rare sideline. Indeed, it has actually become the main choice of not just Peter Svidler, but also several very strong grandmasters who regular employ the Grünfeld, such as David Navara and Pavel Eljanov. Furthermore, Garry Kasparov has tried it on occasion in the past, and so has Boris
Avrukh, the Israeli GM who has contributed much to the theory of 8 b1 from both sides of the board. Furthermore, I am fully convinced that this system will continue to figure prominently in modern high-level praxis and, due to its solid and sound nature, will survive any attempts by White to refute it!

Note too that with 9...b6, Black opts for natural development: the light-squared bishop will usually go to b7 or a6, the knight to d7, the rooks to the centre and Black may perhaps play ...e6. In this way he generally succeeds in keeping White’s centre at bay, aiming either to attack it later with his pieces or to break it up with ...f5, taking advantage of his good light square control. The resulting struggle is more positional than tactical and also fits in nicely with the Grünfeld’s general spirit.

10 0-0

By far White’s main move. Instead:

a) 10 e3?! again does not fit in with White’s strategy. Black continues with 10...b7 and now:

a1) 11 e5 (this advance surrenders the central light squares; a typical problem for White in this variation) 11...cxd4 12 cxd4 a6! has the simple plan of transferring the knight to d5 via c7.

Now 13 d2 (or 13 h4 c7 – I don’t like the weakening 13...h5 and also see no reason to waste time on it – 14 h5 d5 15 hxg6 hxg6! – maintaining structural integrity; the attack down the h-file is hardly dangerous – 16 h6 xh6 17 xh6 g7 18 d2 c3 and White’s position is on the verge of collapse) 13...c7 14 h4 d5 15 h5 xe3 16 fxe3 (16 xe3?! d5 gives Black a clear edge, due to White’s loose pawns on a2 and d4) 16...e6 17 d3 c8 left Black better in Nemet-V.Korchnoi, Switzerland 1985; White’s h4-h5 plan has turned out to be a waste of time.

a2) 11 d3 a6 12 d2 c8 13 0-0 (preparing to relieve the some of the pressure with h6) 13...xe2 14 xe2 a6

15 xxa6 (or 15 d2 d8 16 h6 – 16 g5 d7 17 xe7 e8 18 d6 xe4 19 dxc5 xxc5 is equal – 16...h8 17 f4 xxa2 which is unclear according to Golod; this is an arguably better version of the standard pawn sacrifice for Black since a pair of minor pieces has been exchanged and White’s central initiative is still to get rolling) 15...xa6 16 fc1 ac8 (16...cxd4?! 17 cxd4 fc8 18 d5 gives White a slight edge, as d4-c6 is coming) 17 d5 (intending to strengthen the centre with c4) 17...f5! and Black has good counterplay, M.Roiz-V.Golod, Beer Sheva 2001.
b) 10 h4 is an aggressive thrust, but again rather inconsistent with 8 \( \mathbb{d}b1 \). Black can now prevent h5 with the natural 10...\( \mathbb{g}4 \), leading to another divide:

b1) 11 \( \mathbb{f}f1 \) cxd4 (11...\( \mathbb{c}7 \) is another option) 12 cxd4 \( \mathbb{c}6 \) (Rowson) is a simple way to a good position; for example, 13 d5 \( \mathbb{a}5 \) 14 h5 \( \mathbb{x}h5 \) 15 \( \mathbb{g}5 \) \( \mathbb{x}e2+ \) 16 \( \mathbb{w}xe2 \) h6 17 \( \mathbb{f}f3 \) h5 with an edge for Black.

b2) 11 \( \mathbb{e}3 \) \( \mathbb{c}6 \) (Black has switched back to the standard Grünfeld scheme of development and White is under pressure) 12 e5 cxd4 13 cxd4 \( \mathbb{c}8 \)!? (also good is 13...\( \mathbb{w}d7 \) 14 h5 \( \mathbb{x}h5 \) – but not 14...\( \mathbb{x}f3 \)?! 15 \( \mathbb{x}f3 \) \( \mathbb{ad}8 \) 16 hgx6 hgx6 17 \( \mathbb{h}4 \)! and White consolidates his centre, A.Vaissier-S.Mohr, San Bernardino 1989 – 15 d5 \( \mathbb{a}5 \) with an edge; White’s central pawn duo is weak) 14 h5 \( \mathbb{x}h5 \) and I find it rather unlikely that White can fully justify his opening play.

c3) 11 \( \mathbb{g}1 \) \( \mathbb{xe}2 \) 12 \( \mathbb{xe}2 \) sees White insist on his attacking plan, but one can only take so many liberties in the opening phase.

S.Krivoshey-F.Vallejo Pons, German League 2005, continued 12...\( \mathbb{w}d7 \)! (a strong and accurate move, threatening \( \mathbb{w}g4 \), whereas both 12...\( \mathbb{c}6 \) 13 d5 \( \mathbb{e}5 \) 14 f4 and 12...cxd4 13 cxd4 \( \mathbb{d}7 \) 14 d5 give White a slight plus) 13 \( \mathbb{e}3 \) (13 d5?! \( \mathbb{g}4 \) is problematic for White, but he might try 13 f3 when 13...\( \mathbb{c}6 \) 14 dxc5 – 14 d5 \( \mathbb{e}5 \) 15 f4 \( \mathbb{c}4 \) 16 \( \mathbb{d}3 \) \( \mathbb{a}4 \) appears OK for Black – 14...\( \mathbb{c}8 \) is unclear according to Vallejo, but White’s position has certainly been severely weakened) 13...\( \mathbb{c}6 \) 14 \( \mathbb{a}4 \) (or 14 h5 \( \mathbb{ad}8 \) 15 hgx6 hxg6 16 d5 \( \mathbb{g}4 \) 17 \( \mathbb{w}c2 \) \( \mathbb{e}5 \) 18 \( \mathbb{f}1 \) f5! and White suddenly finds himself facing a powerful attack) 14...\( \mathbb{fd}8 \) 15 d5 \( \mathbb{a}5 \) 16 \( \mathbb{xd}7 \) \( \mathbb{xd}7 \) when Black was better, and he can also consider 15...\( \mathbb{e}5 \)!? 16 \( \mathbb{xd}7 \) \( \mathbb{xd}7 \) with an edge.

Returning to 10 0-0:

10...\( \mathbb{b}7 \)

The main move, but there is one worthwhile alternative, namely 10...\( \mathbb{c}7 \)!

The idea of this move order is to avoid the dangerous pawn sacrifice 10...\( \mathbb{x}b7 \) 11 d5 and to transpose to Line
Play the Grünfeld

B1 with 11 \text{\textit{\textsc{wd3 ab7}}}. White's only really independent option after 10...\textit{\textsc{wc7}} is 11 \textit{\textsc{ag5 b7}} 12 \textit{\textsc{wd3 h6}}! (it is important to kick the bishop from its active post, so as to play ...\textit{\textsc{dd7}}) and now:

a) 13 \textit{\textsc{ae3}} leads to very similar positions to Line B1; for example, 13...\textit{\textsc{dd8}} 14 \textit{\textsc{d5 e6}} (14...\textit{\textsc{e5}}? is a clear misunderstanding: 15 \textit{\textsc{dd2! cc6}} 16 \textit{\textsc{ec4 xa6}} 17 \textit{\textsc{wd2 xc4}} 18 \textit{\textsc{xc4 a5}} 19 \textit{\textsc{a6! h7}} 20 \textit{\textsc{f4}} and White was much better in E.Fomichenko-S.Beshukov, Novorossijsk 1995; Black should be playing for ...\textit{\textsc{e6}} instead of blocking the position which here usually allows White to seize the initiative) 15 \textit{\textsc{c4 dd7}} with typically complex play.

19...\textit{\textsc{fc8}} (as Haba points out, 19...\textit{\textsc{fe8}} 20 \textit{\textsc{d6 cc5}} 21 \textit{\textsc{dd4 wd7}} 22 \textit{\textsc{bb5 de6}} is also possible; it is very hard for White to break the blockade on d7 and his pieces are about to be pushed back) 20 \textit{\textsc{d6}} (20 \textit{\textsc{wa4 cc5}} 21 \textit{\textsc{xc5 cc5}} is fine for Black) 20...\textit{\textsc{dd5}} 21 \textit{\textsc{dd4}} and now 21...\textit{\textsc{wd7?! h4}} h5 23 \textit{\textsc{ff3 ff5}} 24 \textit{\textsc{ee3!}} gave White a dangerous initiative. Black should prefer 21...\textit{\textsc{xd4!}} (eliminating the knight and thereby ensuring the viability of the blockade on d7) 22 \textit{\textsc{xd4 cc7}} 23 \textit{\textsc{abc1 ac5}} (Haba) when he has everything under control.

Returning to 10...\textit{\textsc{ab7}}:

b) 13 \textit{\textsc{h4}} is more persistent, but Black has a strong counter with 13...\textit{\textsc{cxd4}} (and not 13...\textit{\textsc{cc6?}} when 14 \textit{\textsc{g3!}} causes a lot of problems) 14 \textit{\textsc{cxd4 wc4!}}, highlighting a lack of coordination in White's camp. P.Haba-G.Feher, Zalakaros 2000, continued 15 \textit{\textsc{d5 xa6}} 16 \textit{\textsc{wd1 xe4}} 17 \textit{\textsc{xa6 xa6}} 18 \textit{\textsc{e1 ff5}} 19 \textit{\textsc{xe7}} (now the main question is: how strong is the white d-pawn?)

Now White has two options:

A: 11 \textit{\textsc{d5}}

B: 11 \textit{\textsc{wd3}}

There are also a couple of rare alternatives:

a) 11 \textit{\textsc{dd3!?}} (White sacrifices a central pawn for some dark square play, but it seems insufficient to me) 11...\textit{\textsc{cxd4}} 12 \textit{\textsc{cxd4 xd4}} 13 \textit{\textsc{xd4 wd4}} 14 \textit{\textsc{b2 wd6!}} (the correct retreat as
Black must play ...e5 at some point to blunt the b2-bishop; White will then aim to remove the e5-pawn with f4 and so Black needs to secure as much dark square control as possible) 15 \textit{W}d2 \textit{Q}c6 and soon ...e5 will follow, while Black can even play ...\textit{Q}d4 later. White has some compensation, but I don’t feel it is especially threatening.

b) 11 e5?! is, as usual in this system, mistaken: 11...\textit{c}xd4 12 \textit{c}xd4 \textit{A}d5! (immediately seizing control of some critical squares, while preparing ...\textit{Q}c6 without blocking the active bishop)

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

13 \textit{W}a4 \textit{Q}c6 14 \textit{A}e3 \textit{W}d7 15 \textit{W}a3 (Black has full central control and is now ready to strike at the advanced e5-pawn) 15...f6! 16 exf6 exf6 17 \textit{K}fd1 \textit{K}ad8 and Black was obviously for preference in G.Michailakis-J.Rowson, Yerevan Olympiad 1996. It’s worth continuing with this game for a while, as Black’s play was very instructive: 18 \textit{K}bc1 \textit{W}d6! 19 \textit{W}a4 \textit{K}f7! 20 h4 \textit{Q}e7 21 h5 \textit{Q}f5 22 hxg6 hxg6 23 \textit{Q}c3 \textit{K}f8! 24 \textit{A}c4 \textit{Q}e7! 25 \textit{W}c2 \textit{A}h7 26 \textit{W}e4 \textit{Axc4} 27 \textit{Axc4} \textit{W}d5! 28 \textit{W}xd5+ \textit{Q}xd5 and Black’s advantage had continued to grow.

A) 11 d5!?

This aggressive pawn sacrifice is fully in the spirit of the 8 \textit{K}b1 system and it is surprising that it has only recently attracted serious attention. Black should meet it with great accuracy and care. The best plan is to accept the pawn and then to immediately retreat the bishop back to g7. After that, Black should aim to exchange the light-squared bishops with ...\textit{W}c8 and ...\textit{A}a6. The expediency of this plan cannot be emphasized enough; any delay may result in White breaking through with d6 or e5-e6, creating serious problems both in the centre and for the black king.

11...\textit{A}xc3

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard2.png}
\end{center}

Now 12 \textit{A}g5 \textit{A}g7 13 \textit{W}b3 \textit{W}d6 is fine for Black, who can continue ...\textit{Q}d7, and so White usually chooses from:

A1: 12 \textit{W}b3

A2: 12 \textit{A}c4

A1) 12 \textit{W}b3

Dangerous, but not objectively
promising. Black should now proceed with the aforementioned plan.

12...\textit{g7} 13 \textit{f4} \textit{c8}!

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

14 \textit{fe1}

Black is better after 14 e5 e6 15 d6 (or 15 dxex6 \textit{exe6}! 16 \textit{c4} \textit{f5} 17 \textit{we3} \textit{cc6} 18 e6 \textit{h8} with advantage – Avrukh) 15...\textit{d7} 16 \textit{fe1} a6. Note that such a blockade of White’s central pawn duo is a common feature of this line. Should it prove successful, Black will gain the time necessary to consolidate and start exploiting his queenside majority.

14...\textit{a6} 15 e5

V.Dobrov-P.Eljanov, Internet (blitz) 2003, deviated with 15 \textit{xa6} \textit{xa6} 16 e5, but after 16...\textit{d7} 17 \textit{g5} (both 17 \textit{e4} h6 and 17 \textit{d2} \textit{b7} 18 \textit{bd1} \textit{ac8} are no improvement for White) 17...\textit{ae8} 18 \textit{bd1} (or 18 \textit{e4} h6, solving Black’s problems and leaving him with the advantage) 18...\textit{c4} 19 \textit{wc2} \textit{xc5} 20 d6 exd6 21 exd6 \textit{xe1+} 22 \textit{exe1} \textit{e8}, Black clearly had the upper hand.

15...\textit{xe2} 16 \textit{xe2} e6!

The final link in Black’s plan: he invites d5-d6, after which White cannot create any serious threats.

17 \textit{d6}

17 \textit{g5?} doesn’t work out well: 17...h6 18 dxex6 (or 18 \textit{e4} exd5 19 \textit{wd5} \textit{cc6} 20 \textit{d6} \textit{d7} with a clear advantage for Black, as Avrukh has analysed) 18...hxg5 19 exf7+ \textit{xf7} 20 e6 \textit{e7} 21 \textit{xc5} \textit{cc6} 22 \textit{xe7} \textit{xe7} and Black was much better in V.Belov-P.Eljanov, Internet (blitz) 2003.

17...\textit{d7}

As Avrukh notes, Black is better.

A2) 12 \textit{c4} \textit{g7}!

A prudent retreat as Black avoids any tempo-gaining moves by the white queen.
Exchange Variation: The Critical 8 b1

13 \( \text{Wd3} \)

White hampers ...\( \text{xa6} \), but he might prefer:

a) 13 \( \text{We2 Wc8} \) 14 \( \text{Ag5} \) (Black is fine too after 14 \( \text{Ab2 xb2} \) 15 \( \text{xb2 Od7} \), intending ...\( \text{Wc7} \) and ...\( \text{Of6} \)) 14...\( \text{f6} \) (time is of primary importance!) and:

  a1) 15 \( \text{d6+} \) \( \text{Wh8} \) (also possible is 15...\( \text{e6!?} \) 16 \( \text{f4 Oc6} \) 17 \( \text{f2 Wd7} \) - Sutovsky) 16 dx\( e7 \) \( \text{e8} \) 17 \( \text{Axe7 Oxe7} \) 18 \( \text{e5 Oc6} \) (Sutovsky) leaves Black better.

  a2) 15 \( \text{f4 Aa6} \) 16 \( \text{Wd1} \) (16 \( \text{d6+} \) \( \text{Axe4} \) 17 \( \text{Wxe4+} \) \( \text{e6} \) 18 \( \text{e5 Oc6} \) is nothing for White) 16...\( \text{xc4} \) 17 \( \text{Wxc4 Wh8} \) 18 \( \text{h3 Od7} \) seems quite comfortable for Black.

  a3) 15 \( \text{Ah4 Aa6} \) 16 \( \text{Afe1 Axc4} \) 17 \( \text{Wxc4 Wh8} \) 18 \( \text{a4 Oc6} \) and the knight will settle on \( \text{b4} \), while White’s initiative is dying; Black is for preference.

b) 13 \( \text{f4 Aa6} \) (of course there's no need for ...\( \text{Wc8} \) here) 14 \( \text{We2} \) (14 \( \text{xa6 Oxa6} \) 15 \( \text{We2 Oc7} \) 16 \( \text{Ab1 a6} \) is fine for Black) 14...\( \text{Wc8} \) sees Black correctly retain the tension between the bishops so as to restrict the movements of the white queen. Now:

\[ \text{14 Aa5} \]

Instead 14 \( \text{e5 Aa6} \) 15 \( \text{Aa5 Axc4} \) 16 \( \text{Wxc4 Ae8} \) 17 \( \text{Afe1 A55} \) is good for Black, as his queen is very active (but not 17...\( \text{a6} \) 18 \( \text{Wh4} \) when White can attack), and similarly 14 \( \text{Ab2 Axb2} \) 15 \( \text{Ab2 Aa6} \) 16 \( \text{Axa6} \) (or 16 \( \text{Ae5 e6} \) 17 \( \text{Ag4 exd5} \)) 16...\( \text{xa6} \) does not seem too dangerous.

\[ \text{14...Ae8 15 e5} \]

White has managed to advance his central pawns side-by-side to the 5th rank and has decent compensation for the sacrificed pawn. Black’s position looks uncomfortable, but appearances can be deceptive! There is actually no easy way for White to break through

b1) 15 \( \text{e5 Axc4} \) 16 \( \text{Wxc4} \) (B.Gelfand-A.Mikhailchishin, Portoroz 2001)
Black’s defences, while Black will force a useful exchange with ...\(a6\).

**15...\(a6\) 16 \(bd1\)**

16 \(fe1\) \(xc4\) 17 \(xc4\) \(f5\) should be OK for Black.

**16...\(xc4\) 17 \(xc4\) \(a6\)**

Probably best, whereas White retains good compensation after the alternatives 17...\(f5\) 18 \(fe1\) \(d7\) 19 \(e6\) and 17...\(d7\) 18 \(fe1\) \(e6\) 19 \(d6\) \(h6\) (19...\(c6\) 20 \(f4\)) 20 \(e7\) \(c6\) 21 \(h4\) \(b5\) 22 \(f4\) c4 23 \(h5\) (Haba).

**18 \(h4\) \(b7\)**

Black is wise to avoid the greedy 18...\(xa2\) 19 \(xe7\) \(d7\) 20 \(fe1\).

19 \(h6!\)

Facilitating White’s main idea in these positions which is to launch an attack after an e6-advance. Black must then defend accurately, but I believe that he can.

**19...\(d7\) 20 e6 \(xe6\)**

21 \(g5!\) \(f8!\)

Haba shows with some nice variations how Black loses after 21...\(f6?\) 22 \(dx6\) \(c5\) 23 \(f4\) \(c4\) 24 \(g7!!\) \(xg5\) 25 \(fxg5\) \(c3\) 26 \(f2\) \(c6\) (or 26...\(dx1\) 27 \(f4!\) \(xg7\) 28 \(c6+\) \(g8\) 29 \(f7\) 27

\(a1!\) \(ed8\) 28 \(c1\) \(xe6\) 29 \(h6\) \(f5\) 30 \(x6\) \(h6\) \(x6\) 31 \(xh6\).

**22 dx6 \(xh6\) 23 \(hxh6\) \(ed8\)**

Black has both defended well on the kingside and retained his extra pawn. Indeed, White’s attacking wave has been brought to a temporary halt. This position was reached in P.Haba-J.Banas, Austrian League 1997, and it’s worth noting that Haba himself feels that Black’s resources are more than adequate, as illustrated by one of his variations: 24 \(f4\) \(c7\) 25 \(f5\) \(xd1\) 26 \(xd1\) \(f4\) 27 \(fg6\) \(hxg6\) 28 \(f1\) \(d4+\) 29 \(h1\) \(h8!\), exchanging queens and leaving Black clearly better.

B\(1\) 11 \(d3\)

With this move White protects both the e4- and the c3-pawns, thereby preparing to push d4-d5 at the first opportunity. We will now consider two options for Black.

**B1: 11...\(c7\)**

**B2: 11...\(a6\)**
B1) 11...\textw{c7}!?  
Aiming for a complicated game, rather than exchange pieces as Black does in B2.

12 d5  
White’s best try, whereas 12 \texth{g}5 h6 transposes to the notes to Black’s 10th move (with 10...\textw{c7}) and shouldn’t be too troubling.

12...\textd{d}7

13 \texth{g}5  
Another option is 13 \textw{c}2 \texte{e}5 14 \textd{x}e5 \textw{x}e5 15 c4 e6 16 \textb{b}2 \textw{c}7 17 \texth{x}g7 \textd{x}g7 which is approximately level; White has established a protected passed pawn on d5, but Black can easily blockade it on d6 and undermine its support with ...b5. I feel that Black has no problems here, as was shown by a recent high-level example: 18 a4 exd5 19 exd5 \textf{f}e8 20 \textd{d}3 \textc{c}8 21 a5 \textb{b}8 22 axb6 axb6 23 \textc{c}3+ \textw{e}5 24 \textw{xe}5+ \textxe{e}5 25 \textb{b}3 \textf{f}5 with complete equality in E.Bacrot-D.Navara, European Team Ch., Gothenburg 2005.

13...e6  
Black should avoid 13...e5? 14 \textd{d}2!, but 13...\textf{f}e8!? 14 \textb{b}d1 \texte{e}5 is possible; Black was then better after 15 \textd{f}4?! \textd{x}d3 16 \textc{c}7 c4 17 \textd{d}2 \textb{b}2 18 \textc{c}1 \texta{a}8 19 \textg{g}3 b5 in F.Handke-A.Timofeev, Halkidiki 2000.

14 \textb{b}d1  
Instructively 14 c4 should be met by 14...e5! (Turov). Note the essential difference with an earlier ...e5, namely that the white knight no longer has access to the c4-square, from where it controls both d6 and e5. After 14 c4 e5, Black can maintain a dark square blockade before slowly preparing ...f5 with good prospects, especially since White’s knight lacks a good role.

14...\texte{e}5

15 \textd{d}2  
Instead 15 \textd{x}e5? \textw{xe}5 16 \textd{e}7 \textf{b}8 simply costs White a pawn.

15...\textx{f}3+  
Another interesting idea is 15...\textw{d}6?!, increasing the pressure against d5. Then, for example, 16 \texth{h}6 \textx{h}6 17 \textw{h}6 \textx{f}3+ 18 \textx{f}3 exd5 19 exd5 \textf{f}e8 leads to equality.

16 \textx{f}3 \textw{e}5 17 \texte{e}7 exd5!  
The simplest path to equality. Instead 17...\textf{f}e8 18 d6 \textw{xc}3 19 \textg{g}5 h6
20 \textit{Wh}4 g5 21 \textit{Wh}5 occurred in A.Lesiege-M.Turov, Montreal 2000, and now Black should play 21...\textit{We}5!? with an unclear position, but I don't see any reason to take this risk.

After the text, Turov has analysed 18 \textit{xf}8 \textit{xf}8! (incorrect is 18...\textit{xf}8 19 exd5 \textit{xc}3 20 \textit{f}4 \textit{e}5 since 21 \textit{a}4! leaves Black facing some serious problems) 19 exd5 \textit{xc}3 20 \textit{f}4 \textit{e}5 21 \textit{Wh}4 (21 \textit{a}4 \textit{d}6 leaves Black in control) 21...h5 22 d6! (White has to really prevent the blockading and strong ...\textit{d}6) 22...\textit{xf}3 23 gxf3 \textit{f}6 24 \textit{a}4 \textit{d}8.

Here Black has promising compensation; he enjoys some positional advantage and the d6-pawn should be rounded up in the near future. White may capture on a7, but his weakened kingside means that he is the only one in any real danger of losing the game.

\textbf{B2)} 11...\textit{a}6

This has always been considered the main line. Black relieves some of the congestion in his camp with the exchange of bishops, although on the other hand he does surrender some dynamism. White now lacks a comfortable square for his queen and must choose between:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\begin{tabular}{l}
\textbf{B21:} 12 \textit{c}2 \\
\textbf{B22:} 12 \textit{e}3
\end{tabular}

\textbf{B21) 12 \textit{c}2}

This retreat has attracted some recent attention. White gets his queen out of the way of his dark-squared bishop.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textbf{12...\textit{x}d4!}

It makes sense to open the c-file in order later to gain a useful tempo on
the white queen.

13 \( \text{\texttt{a}}a6 \)

White must interpose this exchange, because 13 cxd4 \( \text{\texttt{c}}c8 \)! emphasizes the loose state of his position and at least equalizes for Black.

13...\( \text{\texttt{a}}a6 \) 14 cxd4 \( \text{\texttt{d}}d7 \)

Black is very comfortable here. He can centralize his rooks, perhaps bring his knight to e6 and play down the c-file, while White’s centre cannot advance easily.

15 \( \text{\texttt{a}}a3 \)

Instead 15 \( \text{\texttt{g}}g5 \) \( \text{\texttt{a}}c8 \) 16 \( \text{\texttt{we}}2 \) \( \text{\texttt{c}}c7 \) 17 \( \text{\texttt{fd}}1 \) \( \text{\texttt{e}}e6 \) 18 \( \text{\texttt{e}}e3 \) \( \text{\texttt{wa}}4 \) 19 d5 \( \text{\texttt{c}}c2 \) 20 \( \text{\texttt{d}}d2 \text{\texttt{xd}}2 \) 21 \( \text{\texttt{xd}}2 \text{\texttt{c}}c5 \) was fully equal in J.Lautier-P.Svidler, Cap d’Agde (rapid) 2003.

15...\( \text{\texttt{fe}}8! \)

Freesing the queen by protecting the e7-pawn is the correct choice, whereas 15...\( \text{\texttt{ac}}8?! \) 16 \( \text{\texttt{we}}2 \) \( \text{\texttt{c}}c7 \) 17 d5 f5 18 \( \text{\texttt{fd}}1 \) (Krasenkow) gives White an edge.

16 \( \text{\texttt{fd}}1 \)

Or 16 \( \text{\texttt{we}}4 \) \( \text{\texttt{b}}b7 \) 17 \( \text{\texttt{wa}}4 \) (J.Lautier-S.Shipov, Internet blitz 2004), and now 17...\( \text{\texttt{ab}}8 \) intends...b5 and allows Black to take the upper hand.

16...\( \text{\texttt{ac}}8 \) 17 \( \text{\texttt{wb}}3 \) e6 18 h4 \( \text{\texttt{b}}7 \)

Black again has everything under control and can look to the future with confidence. In B.Lalic-V.Tomescu, Porto San Giorgio 2004, White proceeded with his intended central advance: 19 d5 exd5 20 \( \text{\texttt{xd}}d5 \) and now Black can play 20...\( \text{\texttt{c}}c3 \) with the initiative (instead of the game’s 20...\( \text{\texttt{cd}}8 \) 21 \( \text{\texttt{bd}}1 \) \( \text{\texttt{xd}}5 \) 22 exd5 h6 23 d6 \( \text{\texttt{wd}}7 \) 24 \( \text{\texttt{wd}}5 \) \( \text{\texttt{e}}e6 \) 25 g3, although even here 25...\( \text{\texttt{f}}f6 \) would have kept the position unclear).

B22) 12 \( \text{\texttt{we}}3 \)

Keeping the queen centralized and
away from trouble down an open c-file, but this does hamper the development of the c1-bishop. At this juncture Black again has a choice:

B221: 12...e6  
B222: 12...wxd7

B221) 12...e6  
This is a generally useful move, preventing the critical d4-d5 advance. On the other hand, Black is not ready here to play ...wa4, which means that White is justified in exchanging the light-squared bishops.  
13 a6!  
As White has no useful waiting move, he should embark on this exchange in order to regroup his pieces. Instead 13 dxc5 axb2 14 wxe2 wc7 is a typical pawn sacrifice. A.Khalifman-S.Kudrin, New York Open 1998, continued 15 cxb6 axb6 16 e3 c7 17 d4 fc8 when Black was ganging up against White’s queenside pawns, while White lacked a constructive plan.  
13...xa6 14 e2

Forcing the knight to retreat and clearing a path for the c1-bishop. White must play this immediately since otherwise Black can actively protect the knight with ...w7-d4; for example, 14 d1?! w7-d7! 15 w2 wa4 16 g5 cxd4 17 cxd4 fc8 18 d2 ac4 with an obvious initiative.

14...b8  
Prudent, whereas 14...wc8 is rather too passive and Black would prefer to have his queen’s rook on c8.  
15 d1 c7  
Black now intends to develop actively with ...c6 and he appears to have a reasonable game, whereas the less justified 15...cxd4 16 cxd4 w7-d7 17 h4! wa4 18 g5 c6 19 wd2 ac8 20 h5 favoured White in C.Barus-R.Dineley, Bled Olympiad 2002.

B222) 12...wxd7!

Probably Black’s strongest option, and this purposeful move is certainly critical. Black waits for White to exchange on a6 himself, while preparing both ...a6-d8 and ...wa4. White now faces an important decision between imme-
diately advancing with 13 d5, which involves a pawn sacrifice, and exchanging on a6.

**B2221: 13 Æxa6**

**B2222: 13 d5**

Alternatively:

a) 13 Æd1 Æa4 14 Æd2 Æxe2 15 Æxe2 Æc8 16 d5 Æd7 17 Æd3 c4 18 Æd2 Æc5 19 Æb4 Æa5 (preparing ...Æd3) 20 Æxc4 Æa6 favours Black; the e3-pawn will fall after which Black’s pieces are quick to invade the white position.

b) 13 h4 Æxe2 14 Æxe2 Æg4!? highlights the weakening aspect to White’s 13th move.

c) 13 Æb2 looks a little strange and doesn’t contribute much to White’s position:

13...e6 14 h4 Æd8 15 Æd1 cxd4 16 cxd4 Æa4 (Black already stands quite well) 17 Æbd2 Æxe2 (17...Æc6 18 Æxa6 Æxa6 19 h5 Æa5!? is another idea, intending ...Æc4) 18 Æxe2 Æc6 with equality.

d) 13 dxc5 Æxe2 (13...bxc5? is a ser-

ous mistake: 14 Æxb8! Æxb8 15 Æxa6 and White was winning in B.Gelfand-I.Sokolov, Oakham 1988) 14 Æxe2 bxc5 15 Æc4 Æc6

16 e5 (or 16 Æd1 Æd7 17 Æg5 Æb6 18 Æd3 Æfe8 19 Æe3 Æa4 20 Æxc5 Æxe4 21 Æe1 Æc2 22 Æbc1 Æxa2 23 Æxe7 h6 24 Æxe8+ Æxe8 25 Æe3 Æc8 and Black was better in F.Elsness-B.Avrukh, Istanbul Olympiad 2000) 16...Æd7 17 Æe1 e6! (more accurate than 17...Æb6 18 Æh4 Æa4 19 Æxe7 Æxa2 20 Æb5 with an edge for White in L.Van Wely-B.Avrukh, Neum 2000; Black is now ready to kick the white queen with ...Æb6 and then to invade on the queenside) 18 Æg5 (18 Æh4 is now met by 18...Æfb8! avoiding the exchange of dark-squared bishops with Æh6; then 19 Æa1 Æc7 20 Æh6 Æxe5 21 Æg3 Æxh6 22 Æxh6 f6 23 Æxe6 Æe7 24 Æf4 Æf7 25 Æad1 Æd8 left Black’s pieces much more relevantly placed in P.Murdzia-A.Kovchan, Cappelle la Grande 2003) 18...Æfb8 (18...h6 19 Æe7 Æfc8 20 Æd6 Æb6 also gave Black an edge in S.Ivanov-K.Urban, Polish Team Ch. 2001) 19 Æbd1 Æb6 20 Æe2 Æa4 21 Æd6
was seen in J.Markos-A.Greenfeld, European Team Ch., Leon 2001, and now Black can obtain the advantage with Krasenkow's suggestion of 21...\textit{c}c4?! 22 \textit{w}e4 \textit{x}xa2 23 \textit{d}d7 \textit{b}b6 24 \textit{c}c7 \textit{a}5; White's compensation is insufficient.

\textbf{B2221} 13 \textit{x}xa6 \textit{x}xa6

This exchange doesn't really bother Black, since he can now play ...\textit{w}a4.

\textbf{14 \textit{w}e2}

Alternatively:

a) 14 d5 \textit{w}a4 transposes to a position we will consider after 13 d5 \textit{w}a4 14 \textit{b}xa6 \textit{x}xa6, but Black should probably prefer here 14...\textit{c}c7?! (but not 14...\textit{c}4 due to 15 \textit{d}d4 \textit{c}5 16 \textit{c}c6 with advantage) 15 \textit{c}4 \textit{e}5, intending to bring the knight to d6 and later play the move ...\textit{f}5.

b) 14 \textit{w}d3 \textit{w}a4 15 \textit{g}5 \textit{fe}8 16 d5 \textit{c}4 17 \textit{e}3 \textit{c}5 18 \textit{d}d4 \textit{e}6 allowed Black to seize the initiative in P.Hummel-D.Gormally, Oakham 2000; ...\textit{c}4 is not always a bad move, it must just be well timed!

c) 14 h4 \textit{w}a4 15 \textit{b}b3 (or 15 a3 cxd4 16 cxd4 \textit{fd}8 17 \textit{b}b2 \textit{ac}8 18 h5 \textit{c}2 which gives Black good counterplay) 15...\textit{c}c7! (15...\textit{x}xa2? is a mistake in view of 16 \textit{b}a3 \textit{w}c4 17 \textit{d}d2) 16 dxc5 (16 d5? \textit{x}xa2 17 \textit{c}4 \textit{w}c2! highlights the lack of coordination among White's pieces; after 18 \textit{d}d2 \textit{d}4 19 \textit{f}f4 \textit{e}8 20 \textit{h}3 \textit{g}g7 21 g4 \textit{h}6 22 \textit{h}h6 \textit{f}7 Black was much better in R.Lev-V.Golod, Israeli League 2002) 16...\textit{x}xa2 17 \textit{b}b2 \textit{w}c4 18 cxb6 axb6 19 \textit{x}xb6 \textit{w}c3 (or 19...\textit{e}6!?) with decent compensation) 20 \textit{x}c3 \textit{xc}3 is equal according to Golod.

\textbf{14...\textit{c}c7?!}

I feel that this is Black's most accurate move order. He strives to improve the scope of his knight and will transfer it to either e6 or b5. By keeping his queen on d7 for a move, he discourages both 15 \textit{g}5 (which would now be met by 15...\textit{e}6 with tempo) and 15 d5 (now met by an immediate 15...\textit{e}6).

\textbf{15 \textit{d}d1 \textit{w}a4!}

The consistent approach. Another interesting concept is the dynamic 15...cxd4 16 cxd4 f5?! which also seems quite acceptable; for example, 17 \textit{c}4+ (17 \textit{e}5 \textit{w}e6) 17...\textit{e}6! 18 \textit{a}3 \textit{fd}8 19
\( \text{x}e1 \text{f}xe4 \text{20} \text{f}xe4 \text{\textit{Q}}d5 \) with a complex situation, but one in which Black stands fairly well.

16 \text{\textit{G}}g5 \text{\textit{F}}fe8

White's position suddenly appears quite loose. Indeed, 17 \text{\textit{W}}d2?! (Black is also more than fine after 17 \text{\textit{D}}d5 \text{\textit{A}}xc3 18 \text{e}5 \text{f}6, while 17 \text{\textit{W}}e3 \text{\textit{B}}b5! 18 \text{e}5 \text{\textit{A}}ad8 leaves White's centre under serious pressure) 17...\text{\textit{A}}ad8 18 \text{\textit{A}}h6 \text{e}5! is powerful; for example, 19 \text{\textit{A}}xg7 \text{\textit{W}}xg7 20 \text{\textit{A}}e1 (20 \text{\textit{W}}g5? \text{exd}4 21 \text{e}5 - 21 \text{cxd}4 \text{\textit{B}}b5 - 21...\text{\textit{A}}e6! 22 \text{\textit{W}}f6+ \text{\textit{G}}g8 23 \text{\textit{H}}h4 \text{\textit{X}}xa2 24 \text{cxd}4 \text{\textit{W}}d5 was excellent for Black in Y.Ulko-B.Avrukh, Moscow 2002) 20...\text{\textit{A}}xd4 21 \text{\textit{X}}xd4 \text{\textit{C}}xd4 22 \text{\textit{B}}b4 \text{\textit{W}}a5 23 \text{\textit{A}}xd4 (23 \text{\textit{X}}xd4 \text{\textit{B}}b5! is strong) 23...\text{\textit{A}}xd2 24 \text{\textit{X}}xd2 \text{\textit{X}}xd2 25 \text{\textit{X}}xd2 \text{\textit{A}}e6 (Krasenkov) when Black has an edge in the endgame.

B2222) 13 \text{\textit{D}}d5

This is of course the critical test, involving yet another pawn sacrifice.

13...\text{\textit{A}}xe2!

Black must accept the offered pawn, as otherwise White will consolidate his centre. Thus 13...\text{\textit{W}}a4 is inferior: 14 \text{\textit{X}}xa6 \text{\textit{Q}}xa6 (or 14...\text{\textit{W}}xa6 15 \text{e}5?! \text{\textit{W}}xa2 16 \text{\textit{W}}e4 with the initiative – Krasenkov) 15 \text{\textit{W}}e2! \text{\textit{A}}c7 (15...\text{\textit{X}}xc3? doesn’t work in view of 16 \text{\textit{F}}b3 \text{\textit{B}}b4 17 \text{\textit{A}}xe5 \text{\textit{A}}ac8 18 \text{\textit{B}}h3 with a crushing attack, E.Najer-S.Yuferov, St Petersburg 2000, but 15...\text{\textit{C}}d4?! may be possible) 16 \text{\textit{C}}c4 \text{\textit{E}}e5 17 \text{\textit{C}}b3 \text{\textit{E}}e8 18 \text{\textit{A}}b2 \text{\textit{F}}6 (V.Diu-Shomoev, A.Krasnodar 2002) 19 \text{\textit{W}}e3 prepares f4 and gives White an edge.

14 \text{\textit{W}}xe2 \text{\textit{A}}xc3

Again both consistent and accurate, whereas 14...\text{\textit{E}}e6?! 15 \text{\textit{C}}c4 \text{\textit{E}}e8 16 \text{\textit{A}}b2 \text{\textit{X}}xb2 17 \text{\textit{W}}xb2 \text{exd}5 18 \text{exd}5 was good for White in R.Vera-M.Ripari, Malaga 2001.

15 \text{\textit{A}}h6

Alternatively, 15 \text{\textit{C}}d1 \text{\textit{G}}g7 16 \text{\textit{A}}b2 (or 16 \text{e}5 \text{e}6 17 \text{d}6 \text{\textit{C}}c6 intending \text{\textit{A}}ad8 and...\text{\textit{F}}f6, when White will destroy White's central pawn chain) 16...\text{\textit{A}}xb2 17 \text{\textit{X}}xb2 \text{e}6! (breaking up White's centre just in time) 18 \text{\textit{X}}xe6 \text{\textit{W}}xe6 19 \text{e}5 \text{\textit{C}}c6 20 \text{\textit{A}}d6 \text{\textit{E}}e8 21 \text{\textit{W}}e4 \text{\textit{D}}d8 22 \text{\textit{B}}bd2 \text{\textit{A}}xd6 23 \text{\textit{X}}xd6 \text{\textit{A}}d8 and with the consolidating...\text{\textit{C}}d6 and the active...\text{\textit{W}}b5 available, Black is better.

15...\text{\textit{A}}g7
A prudent retreat since 15...\texttt{Ke8}?! 16 \texttt{Kb3}! allows White to switch all of his pieces to a dangerous kingside attack.

\textbf{16 $\texttt{Nxg7}$ $\texttt{Nxg7}$ 17 $\texttt{Nfd1}$}

White’s compensation has a sound positional foundation and Black must now continue actively.

\textbf{17...$\texttt{wa4!}$ 18 $\texttt{bc1}$ $\texttt{d7}$ 19 $\texttt{e5}$ $\texttt{ad8}$ 20 $\texttt{xc4}$}

White has also tried 20 $\texttt{e6}$ $\texttt{f6}$ 21 $\texttt{exf7}$ (now care is required, as White threatens $\texttt{g5-e6}$) 21...$\texttt{we4!}$ 22 $\texttt{we4}$ $\texttt{xe4}$ 23 $\texttt{xe1}$ $\texttt{f6}$ 24 $\texttt{g5}$ $\texttt{xd5}$ 25 $\texttt{h4}$ $\texttt{xf7}$ 26 $\texttt{xf7}$ $\texttt{xf7}$, but at the end of the day Black was better in B.Gelfand-P.Svidler, Monaco (rapid) 2005.

\textbf{20...$\texttt{wa6}$}

We’ve followed V.Mikhalevski-S.Kudrin, Minneapolis 2005. Black is ready to respond to any further aggression from White and may even play $\ldots$\texttt{f6} to clarify the situation in the centre. The position remains complicated, but I see no reason for Black to complain; he has an extra pawn and no immediate danger is apparent.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The aggressive $\texttt{8Nb1}$ is one of the sternest tests of the Grünfeld. By adopting the $9..b6$ variation, Black obtains a solid and flexible position which offers good prospects of counterplay. Play is chiefly based on standard Grünfeld positional and tactical motifs, and many strong players employ the suggested repertoire, which speaks volumes for its inherent soundness.

Particular attention should be paid to the various versions of the $d5$-advance, sacrificing the pawn on $c3$. Black should definitely accept the offer and then play accurately to neutralize White’s initiative. Do note that in these lines, general principles will not suffice; good preparation is necessary. However, this is much less so than in the extremely complex main lines of the $8Nb1$ system.
Chapter Three

Exchange Variation: \(e3\) Systems

1 d4 \(\text{gf6}\) 2 c4 g6 3 \(\text{c3}\) d5 4 cxd5 \(\text{xd5}\) 5 e4 \(\text{xc3}\) 6 bxc3 \(\text{g7}\)

There are two different versions of the \(e3\) system, depending on whether or not White plays \(\text{f3}\):

A: 7 \(\text{f3}\) c5 8 \(\text{e3}\)
B: 7 \(\text{e3}\)

A) 7 \(\text{f3}\) c5 8 \(\text{e3}\)

With this system, White intends to develop his queenside first with \(\text{d2}\) and \(\text{b1}\) or \(\text{cl}\), preparing to meet ...\(\text{c6}\) with \(\text{d5}\). In this way he manages to diffuse Black's standard scheme of applying pressure against his centre. Anatoly Karpov made very efficient use of this system (and especially the more flexible move order 7 \(\text{e3} - \text{see Line B}\) in his time, while Vladimir Kramnik successfully flirted with it for a while.

The drawback to White's set-up is the fact that his king remains in the centre for a long time. Black's best way of exploiting this is with ...\(\text{a5}\), a very annoying move that often forces an exchange of queens on \(\text{d2}\), after which White usually has to misplace a piece as he recaptures. This, allied to White's rather slow development, can leave Black with a dangerous initiative should White be just a little inaccurate.

8...\(\text{a5!}\) 9 \(\text{d2}\)

The other interpositions are less effective:

a) 9 \(\text{d2}\) 0-0 10 \(\text{e2}\) (10 \(\text{d3}\) \(\text{c6}\) 11
d5 ♞e5 12 ♞xe5 ♞xe5 13 ♞b3 ♞c7 gives Black the initiative, as Krasenkow has analysed, and 10 ♞b3 ♞c6 11 ♗d1 ♞c7 is similar) 10...♕g4 11 0-0 e6 (Black's set-up is flexible and quite comfortable) 12 a4 (or 12 ♗b1 when 12...♖xa2 is sound but allows a repetition, and so Black might prefer 12...♕xf3 13 ♕xf3 ♕c6 with pressure against d4) 12...♕c6 13 ♗b1 (neither does 13 d5 exd5 14 exd5 ♞e7 solve White's problems) 13...♖c7 14 d5 exd5 15 exd5 ♞e7 and White's position looks very uncoordinated, while 15...♗a5 was also fine for Black in A.Beliavsky-A.Adorjan, Baden 1980.

b) 9 ♗d2 cxd4! 10 ♗c4 (10 cxd4?! loses control of the position: 10...♕c6 11 d5 ♗d4! 12 ♗b1 ♗d7 13 ♗d3 ♗a4 14 ♗c1 0-0 15 0-0 ♗ac8 and Black has a strong initiative) 10...dxe3!? (a promising queen sacrifice) 11 ♗xa5 ♗xc3+ 12 ♗xe2 ♗xa5 13 ♗a4+ (or 13 ♗xe3 ♗b6+ 14 ♗f3 ♗c6 with excellent compensation – Adorjan) 13...♖c6 14 fxe3 0-0 15 ♗f2 f5 and Black's initiative is very dangerous.

9...0-0

The usual choice here has actually been 9...♗c6, leading to some very complicated positions. Then Black's pressure against d4 prevents White, after an exchange on d4, from recapturing on d2 with his knight, unlike after the text move. Doing so is certainly more comfortable for White than taking with the king, but the resulting positions are still fully acceptable for Black. I have analysed them in detail and feel that Black's resources are fully adequate for equality and perhaps even more, especially should White play inaccurately. Two other positive features of 9...0-0 are that it enables a quick ...♖d8, a very significant gain in case White does recapture with his king on d2, and that the advance d4-d5 does not come with tempo, unlike after 9...♗c6.

White must now decide where to place his rook:

A1: 10 ♗b1
A2: 10 ♗c1

A1) 10 ♗b1

This causes some problems after 9...♗c6, as then 10 ♗b1 b6 is met by the annoying 11 ♗b5. Here, however, it is absolutely harmless – another good reason to prefer 9...0-0.

10...b6 11 ♗d3

Alternatively:

a) 11 ♗b5 is always comfortably met by 11...♖a4, when the queen is actively placed; for example, 12 dxc5 (or 12 ♗b3 ♗g4 13 ♗b5 ♖a5 14 ♗g5 a6 15 ♗d3
\(\mathcal{C}c6\) 16 h3 \(\mathcal{D}d7\) which favoured Black in V.Ikonnikov-P.Carbonnel, Paris 1992; and both 12 \(\mathcal{A}e2\) \(\mathcal{A}b7\) and 12 \(\mathcal{A}h6\) \(\mathcal{A}xh6\) 13 \(\mathcal{W}xh6\) \(\mathcal{A}g4\) are no better) 12...\(\mathcal{B}c5\) 13 \(\mathcal{B}xc5\) \(\mathcal{A}a6\) 14 \(\mathcal{C}d4\) \(\mathcal{D}d7\) when Black has excellent compensation for the pawn in view of his very active pieces and White’s undeveloped kingside.

b) 11 \(\mathcal{C}c1\) \(\mathcal{D}d7\) 12 d5 occurred in T.Hillarp Persson-E.Liss, Copenhagen 1996, and now I think that Black has very good play after 12...\(\mathcal{W}a4!\) 13 \(\mathcal{W}c2\) \(\mathcal{W}xc2\) 14 \(\mathcal{B}xc2\) \(f5\) 15 exf5 gxf5.

11...\(\mathcal{C}c6\) 12 \(\mathcal{B}b5\)

As usual, 12 e5?! is too committal: 12...\(\mathcal{A}d8\) 13 \(\mathcal{B}b5\) (13 0-0? \(\mathcal{C}xd4\) 14 \(\mathcal{C}xd4\) \(\mathcal{W}xd2\) wins a pawn) 13...\(\mathcal{W}a4\) 14 \(\mathcal{B}b2\) (White collapses after both 14 0-0 \(\mathcal{A}a6\) 15 \(\mathcal{B}b2\) \(\mathcal{C}xd3\) 16 \(\mathcal{W}xd3\) \(\mathcal{C}xd4\) 17 \(\mathcal{C}xd4\) \(\mathcal{D}xe5\) 18 \(\mathcal{D}xe5\) \(\mathcal{D}xe5\) and 14 \(\mathcal{W}c2\) \(\mathcal{W}xc2\) 15 \(\mathcal{B}xc2\) \(\mathcal{A}a6\) 16 \(\mathcal{B}b3\) \(\mathcal{D}a5\) 17 \(\mathcal{A}a3\) \(\mathcal{A}b7\)) 14...\(\mathcal{A}a6\) and Black enjoys the initiative, M.Rivas Pastor-V.Epishin, Dos Hermanas 1994.

12...\(\mathcal{W}a4\) 13 \(\mathcal{B}b2\) \(\mathcal{A}a6\) 14 0-0 \(\mathcal{C}xd3\) 15 \(\mathcal{W}xd3\)

We have been following the game

I.Ben Menachem-E.Liss, Ramat HaSharon 1992, and now the simple 15...\(\mathcal{C}ad8\) further increases the pressure on d4 and favours Black.

A2) 10 \(\mathcal{C}c1\) \(\mathcal{C}xd4\) 11 \(\mathcal{C}xd4\) \(\mathcal{W}xd2+\)

White now faces an important decision: recapturing with the king is fairly common, while doing so with the knight is an attempt to exploit the omission of \(\mathcal{C}c6\).

A21: 12 \(\mathcal{A}xd2\)

A22: 12 \(\mathcal{A}xd2\)

A21) 12 \(\mathcal{A}xd2\) \(\mathcal{C}d8!\)

Already one of the aforementioned advantages of 9...0-0 over 9...\(\mathcal{A}c6\) comes to the fore.

13 \(\mathcal{C}c7\)

The most aggressive, but White has several other options:

a) 13 d5?! \(f5\) doesn’t help White at all.

b) 13 \(\mathcal{A}c4\) \(\mathcal{C}c6\) 14 d5?! is also premature and, for example, 14...\(\mathcal{A}a5\) 15 \(\mathcal{A}hd1\) \(\mathcal{C}xc4+\) 16 \(\mathcal{A}xc4\) \(f5!\) 17 \(\mathcal{A}e1\) \(fxe4\) 18
c) 13 h3 is a bit slow: 13...c6 14 c4 (14 d5? e6 15 b5 exd5 16 xc6 dxe4+ 17 e2 bxc6 was winning for Black in H.Barrios-A.Ruiz, Bogota 1991) 14...xd4 15 xd4 xd4 16 xd4 xd4+ 17 e3 e5 and it is White who has to seek ways to equalize.

d) 13 d3 c6 raises the question of how White will defend d4.

K.Sakaev-R.Ruck, Panormo (rapid) 2002, continued 14 d5 (or 14 c4 f5 15 exf5, B.Damljanovic-D.Antic, Subotica 2000, and now 15...gx5 16 c5 e6 17 c4 f8 gives Black comfortable play) 14...b4 15 c5 (it’s easy for White to err here; he was quickly struggling after both 15 b1? e6 16 a3 exd5! 17 axb4 dxe4+ 18 e2 exf3+ 19 xf3 e6, in P.Kekki-J.Aijala, Tampere 2003, and 15 h1? e6 16 e1 exd5 17 exd5 a2 in T.Steiner-G.Trammell, Tulsa 2006), and now Black could have secured an edge with the simple 15...h6+ 16 e3 xe3+ 17 xe3 e6.

e) 13 b5 d7?? 14 xd7 (14 d3?!

16 xe5 (or 16 xb7 xf3+ 17 xf3 xd4 18 xd4 xd4+ 19 e3 a4 with easy equality for Black in S.Pedersen-J.Rowson, Oxford 1998) 16...xe5 and now White must be accurate with 17 xb7 xd4 18 hb1, as he was in O.Ruiz Mata-F.Vera Pons, Santa Coloma 2000, after which 18...e5 is equal. Instead 17 xe7?! xd4 18 xb7 ac8! 19 xd4 xd4+ 20 e3 a4 (the black rooks are more active and the white king somewhat exposed) 21 a1 (or 21 d1 c3+ 22 f4 xa2 23 d8+ g7 with an edge for Black in E.Stephan-V.Petzold, Bayern 2003) 21...c3+ 22 f4 c2 gives Black the initiative; a very important factor in a double rook ending.
f) 13 \(\textit{\text{e}}\textit{e}1\) escapes the pin, but fails otherwise to impress: 13...\(\textit{e}\)6 14 \(\textit{\text{c}}\textit{c}4\) (or 14 \(\textit{\text{g}}\textit{g}5\) \(\textit{f}6\) 15 \(\textit{e}\textit{e}3\) \(\textit{c}c6\), intending ...\(\textit{f}5\), which is fine for Black, as is 14 \(\textit{d}5\) \(\textit{d}5\) 15 \(\textit{d}d5\) \(\textit{d}d7\) and the \(\textit{d}5\)-pawn will surely prove weak, especially with White’s king’s rook shut out of play) 14...\(\textit{c}c6\) 15 \(\textit{g}5\) (15 \(\textit{d}d1\) \(\textit{b}6\) 16 \(\textit{c}e2\) \(\textit{b}b7\) created very unpleasant threats in T.Roussel Roozmon-S.Glinert, Richmond 2002) 15...\(\textit{d}d7\) and White’s problems with the defence of \(\textit{d}4\) continue to persist.

13...\(\textit{c}c6\)

14 \(\textit{d}5\)

White hopes to create counter-threats before Black manages to fully develop his pieces, but this strategy doesn’t quite work out. The alternatives are less ambitious, but not really any better:

a) 14 \(\textit{\text{b}}\textit{b}5\) \(\textit{a}a4\) 15 \(\textit{d}d4\) \(\textit{a}a4\) 16 \(\textit{d}d4\) \(\textit{a}a4\) 17 \(\textit{g}g3\) \(\textit{b}b4\) (17...\(\textit{e}\)5 18 \(\textit{c}c4\) equalizes immediately, but there’s no reason to allow White to equalize so easily!) 18 \(\textit{c}c4\) \(\textit{g}g7\) 19 \(\textit{d}d1\) \(\textit{g}g4\) 20 f3 \(\textit{c}c8\) and White is again seeking ways to equalize, T.Carvalho-L.Tavares da Silva, Brasilia 1985.

b) 14 \(\textit{d}d3\) \(\textit{a}a4\) 15 \(\textit{a}a4\) \(\textit{a}a4\) 16 \(\textit{a}a4\) (White should prefer 16 \(\textit{a}a7\) \(\textit{f}6\) 17 \(\textit{c}c7\) \(\textit{e}6\) 18 \(\textit{a}a4\) \(\textit{e}5\) with equality, N.Stewart-D.Drewelius, Bonn 1998) 16...\(\textit{a}a4\) 17 \(\textit{e}e7\) \(\textit{e}6\) 18 \(\textit{e}e3\) \(\textit{a}a8\) and Black had a powerful initiative in M.Kuhn-S.Grimm, German League 1991.

14...\(\textit{e}\textit{e}6\) 15 \(\textit{\text{g}}\textit{g}5\)

There is no turning back for White now, especially since 15 \(\textit{\text{c}}\textit{c}1?\) \(\textit{d}5\) 16 \(\textit{d}5\) \(\textit{b}4\) loses a pawn. Instead, the other aggressive option, 15 \(\textit{g}g5\), rather backfires after 15...\(\textit{d}d5\) 16 \(\textit{d}x\textit{f}7\) \(\textit{d}d7!\) 17 \(\textit{a}a4\) \(\textit{d}d7\) when White is not too well coordinated and Black remains the more active even after 18 \(\textit{d}d5\) (or 18 \(\textit{d}d6\) \(\textit{e}6!\) 19 \(\textit{b}b7\) \(\textit{e}4\) with the initiative) 18...\(\textit{d}x\textit{f}7\) 19 \(\textit{d}x\textit{c}6\) \(\textit{a}a\textit{c}6\) 20 \(\textit{a}a4+\) \(\textit{e}8\).

15...\(\textit{f}6\) 16 \(\textit{d}d1\)

Instead 16 \(\textit{h}4\) \(\textit{d}5\) 17 \(\textit{e}5\) \(\textit{h}6+\) wins, as ...\(\textit{g}5\)-\(\textit{g}4\) and then \(\textit{f}x\textit{e}\textit{5}\) follows.

16...\(\textit{d}d5\) 17 \(\textit{d}d5\) \(\textit{b}4\) 18 \(\textit{a}a4\) \(\textit{b}5\) 19 \(\textit{b}3\)

White had to avoid losing with both
19 \text{d}2 \text{d}a6 and 19 \text{xb}5 \text{f}xg5, but the text, as seen in G.Kotlyar-L.Ftacnik, Reno 1991, still leaves Black with a clear advantage after the continuation 19...\text{h}8 20 \text{e}5 \text{f}8 21 \text{d}2 fxe5 22 \text{xb}4 \text{xf}2.

\textbf{A22) 12 \text{xd}2}

An important tabiya for both the \text{e}3 system in general and especially our preference for 9...0-0. The position may look too simple, but it’s actually far from that! Indeed, both sides have good chances to outplay the opponent: White by seizing more space in the centre and invading down the c-file; Black by attacking the a-pawn or by forcing White to advance prematurely in the centre.

\text{12...e}6

The most accurate, discouraging d4-d5 which can give White useful control of the c6-square in the event of a queenside fianchetto. Indeed, Black wants to play ...\text{b}6, both to prevent White’s knight from leaping forwards from b3 and to develop the c8-bishop actively.

\textbf{13 \text{b}3}

This is the most flexible.
Alternatively:

a) 13 \text{c}7?! is too ambitious, and after 13...\text{c}6 14 e5 \text{f}6 Black has the initiative.

b) 13 e5?! is again too adventurous. After 13...\text{d}7 14 \text{e}4 \text{c}6 Black has the initiative and the d4-pawn will become a target.

c) 13 \text{b}5 \text{d}7! 14 \text{xd}7 \text{xd}7 is an attempt by White to speed up his development, but it also relieves Black’s congestion: 15 \text{e}2 (15 \text{c}7? is strongly met by 15...\text{fc}8!) 15...\text{fc}8 16 \text{c}4 (or 16 \text{b}3 \text{f}8 17 \text{xc}8 \text{xc}8 18 \text{c}1 \text{xc}1 19 \text{xc}1 \text{b}6 20 \text{d}3 \text{d}6 21 \text{g}3 \text{h}5 and Black equalized in J.Schulz-J.Plachetka, Stare Mesto 2004) 16...\text{f}8 17 \text{d}3 (17 \text{f}4 \text{c}6 was also fine for Black in R.Hübner-A.Adorjan, Bad Lauterberg 1980) 17...\text{b}5 18 \text{a}5 \text{a}3 19 \text{xc}8+ \text{xc}8 20 \text{b}1 \text{a}6 21 \text{b}3 \text{d}6 22 \text{h}3 \text{f}5 23 \text{f}3 \text{f}7 was again equal in R.Akesson-F.Elsness, Gausdal 2001; note the central strike ...\text{f}5, which is a typical idea for Black after the exchange of light-squared bishops.
d) 13 \textbf{\textit{c4}} supports a d5-advance: 13...\textbf{\textit{c6}} 14 \textbf{\textit{d3}} (14 \textbf{\textit{b3}} \textbf{\textit{d8}} 15 d5?! exd5 16 \textbf{\textit{xd5}} \textbf{\textit{b4}} is just weakening and leaves White too exposed) 14...\textbf{\textit{d7}} 15 d5 (instead 15 0-0 \textbf{\textit{a5}} 16 \textbf{\textit{e2}} \textbf{\textit{fc8}} gave Black enough time to prepare ...b5 and ...\textbf{\textit{c4}} in C.Fernandez-K.Garrido, Euskadi 2000; White now took the bull by the horns with 17 d5 exd5 18 exd5, but it didn’t serve him well and after 18...b5 19 \textbf{\textit{xc8+}} \textbf{\textit{xc8}} 20 \textbf{\textit{xa7}} \textbf{\textit{c2}} 21 \textbf{\textit{d3}} \textbf{\textit{xa2}} Black was on top) 15...exd5 16 \textbf{\textit{xd5}} \textbf{\textit{ac8}} 17 0-0 b6 18 \textbf{\textit{fd1}} \textbf{\textit{b4}} and in B.Mcnally-J.Stevenson, Edinburgh 1997, Black had comfortably equalized.

\textbf{\textit{15 \textbf{\textit{xa6}} 16 \textbf{\textit{e2}}}}

The alternative 14 \textbf{\textit{c7}} is again premature, this time in view of 14...a5! which highlights the lack of squares for the b3-knight, while 14 \textbf{\textit{b5}} \textbf{\textit{b7}} (14...\textbf{\textit{a6}}?! 15 a4! is good for White) 15 f3 a6 kicks the bishop away and prevents White from invading on c6.

\textbf{\textit{14...\textbf{\textit{a6}}!}}

Pretty much forcing an exchange of bishops and thereby solving all Black’s problems.

\textbf{\textit{15 \textbf{\textit{xa6}}}} 

In R.Stone-V.Ivanchuk, New York 1988, White preferred 15 \textbf{\textit{e2}} \textbf{\textit{xd3+}} 16 \textbf{\textit{xd3}. The presence of the king in the centre is a mixed blessing for White; it may prove useful if the rooks are exchanged, but it can also become a target. The game continued 16...\textbf{\textit{a6}} 17 a3 (17 a4 \textbf{\textit{b4+}} 18 \textbf{\textit{d2}} \textbf{\textit{ac8}} is equal) 17...\textbf{\textit{f8}} 18 \textbf{\textit{c4}} \textbf{\textit{f8}} 19 a4 \textbf{\textit{ab8}} (preparing to open files with ...b5) 20 \textbf{\textit{e2}} f6! 21 \textbf{\textit{a1}} \textbf{\textit{d6}} 22 h3 \textbf{\textit{f7}} when Black was for preference as White had run out of ideas.

\textbf{\textit{15...\textbf{\textit{xa6}} 16 \textbf{\textit{e2}}}}

White’s best plan is to exchange all the rooks, and the text move prepares this.

\textbf{\textit{16...\textbf{\textit{fc8}} 17 \textbf{\textit{xc8+}} \textbf{\textit{xc8}} 18 \textbf{\textit{c1}} \textbf{\textit{xc1}} 19 \textbf{\textit{xc1}} \textbf{\textit{f8}} 20 \textbf{\textit{a3+}} \textbf{\textit{e8}}}}


This endgame, quite typical of the \textbf{\textit{e3}} variation, is of course equal and should be drawn with best play from both sides, but the structural imbalance gives both players reason to try for more.
B) 7 \( \text{\textit{e3}} \)

White foregoes \( \text{\textit{f3}} \) in order to use the tempo in a better way, namely to move the rook away from a1 one move earlier. This move order is more flexible than 7 \( \text{\textit{f3}} \) c5 8 \( \text{\textit{e3}} \); a variation to which White can always transpose should he wish. White’s newly acquired options deserve respect, but Black shouldn’t have anything to fear and should follow the same plan as in Line A.

\begin{align*}
7...c5 & \ 8 \text{\textit{w d2}} \text{\textit{w a5!}}
\end{align*}

Once again White must make a decision as to where to place his queen’s rook:

\textbf{B1: 9 \textit{w c1}} \\
\textbf{B2: 9 \textit{w b1}} \\

\textbf{B1) 9 \textit{w c1}}

This leads to a very similar queenless middlegame to the ones discussed above.

9...\text{\textit{cxd4}} \ 10 \text{\textit{cxd4}} \text{\textit{w xd2+}} \ 11 \text{\textit{w xd2}}

Instead 11 \text{\textit{w xd2}} is rather unnatural and Black is fine after 11...0-0:

a) 12 \text{\textit{w f3}} e6 13 \text{\textit{w b5}} \text{\textit{w c6}}! 14 \text{\textit{w xc6}} bxc6 15 \text{\textit{w e5}} (15 \text{\textit{w xc6?}} \text{\textit{w b7}} is, of course, horrible for White) 15...\text{\textit{w b7}} 16 \text{\textit{w b4}} (and not 16 \text{\textit{w b1}} \text{\textit{a6}} 17 \text{\textit{w xc6?}} \text{\textit{w d3}}) 16...\text{\textit{w fd8}} 17 \text{\textit{w c5}} f6 18 \text{\textit{w c4}} \text{\textit{a6}} (V.Lazarev-T.Ernst, Oberwart 1991) and Black will occupy the b-file, with at least equality.

b) 12 \text{\textit{w c3}} e6 13 \text{\textit{w f3}} \text{\textit{w d8}} 14 \text{\textit{w c4}} \text{\textit{w c6}} 15 d5 \text{\textit{w xc3+}} 16 \text{\textit{w xc3}} exd5 17 \text{\textit{w xd5}} \text{\textit{w b4}} gives Black easy equality, G.Burgess-B.Ostenstad, Gausdal 1997.

c) 12 d5 e6 13 \text{\textit{w b5}} (13 \text{\textit{w b4}}?! is a misguided attempt to maintain a passed d-pawn: 13...\text{\textit{w e8}} 14 d6 \text{\textit{w c6}} 15 \text{\textit{w a3}} e5 16 \text{\textit{w c4}} \text{\textit{a6}} 17 \text{\textit{w e2}} \text{\textit{f8}} 18 \text{\textit{w d5}} \text{\textit{w xd5}} was much better for Black in A.Vaisser-W.Schmidt, Trnava 1983) 13...\text{\textit{w d7}} 14 \text{\textit{w xd7}} \text{\textit{w xd7}} 15 dxe6 fx6 16 \text{\textit{w f3}} \text{\textit{w fc8!}} 17 \text{\textit{w e2}} \text{\textit{w c5}} 18 \text{\textit{w g5}} h6 19 \text{\textit{w e3}} hxg5 20 \text{\textit{w xc5}} \text{\textit{w xc5}} 21 \text{\textit{w xc5}} g4! and an endgame with equal chances arose in W.Schmidt-V.Jansa, Vrunjacka Banja 1983.

11...0-0

Now the move \( \text{\textit{w f3}} \) at any stage will transpose to Line A21, but White can also continue in independent vein.
12 $\boxempty b5$

Alternatively:

a) 12 d5 e6 13 $\boxempty c4$ exd5 14 $\boxempty xd5$ (or 14 exd5 $\boxempty d7$ 15 $\boxempty e2$ $\boxempty d8$ 16 $\boxempty hd1$, S.Bender-T.Pielmeier, German League 2001, and now 16...$\boxempty e5$ with the initiative) 14...$\boxempty d7$ 15 f3 $\boxempty f6$!? 16 $\boxempty b3$ a5 and Black is on top.

b) 12 $\boxempty c7$ $\boxempty d8$ 13 $\boxempty b5$ (A.Al Khateeb-B.Kouatly, Doha 1993) 13...a6 14 $\boxempty c4$ $\boxempty c6$ is fine for Black.

c) 12 $\boxempty d3$ $\boxempty c6$ 13 $\boxempty e2$ $\boxempty d8$ again raises awkward problems to do with White’s d-pawn. L.Van Wely-E.Sutovsky, Pamplona 1999, continued 14 $\boxempty c4$ (14 d5 $\boxempty e5$ 15 $\boxempty b1$ e6 was better for Black in S.Tennant-L.Cohen, USA 1994) 14...f5 15 $\boxempty b1$ (instead 15 e5 $\boxempty e6$ is good for Black, as is 15 $\boxempty hc1$ $\boxempty e6$ 16 $\boxempty a4$ $\boxempty d7$!?, while after 15 f3 $\text{fxe}4$ 16 $\text{fxe}4$ $\text{gf}4$ 17 $\boxempty b1$ $\boxempty d7$ 18 d5 $\boxempty e5$ 19 $\boxempty cb4$, V.Kostic-S.Dvoirys, Oberwart 1999, and now 19...e6 20 $\boxempty xb7$ exd5 21 $\boxempty xd7$ $\boxempty xd7$ Black has the initiative) 15...$\text{fxe}4$ 16 $\boxempty xe4$ $\text{xf5}$ 17 $\text{xf5}$ gxf5 when Black already enjoyed a promising position, especially after 18 $\text{fe1}$ $\boxempty d7$ 19 f3 $\boxempty ad8$ 20 $\text{gf2}$ $\boxempty f7$ 21 $\boxempty b5$ e6.

12...$\boxempty d8$ 13 $\boxempty e2$ $\boxempty c6$!

An important concept; Black puts activity above structural considerations.

14 $\text{xc6}$ bxc6

15 $\text{hd1}$

Instead:

a) 15 $\text{c5?}$ e5! creates problems for White: 16 $\text{g5}$ f6 17 $\text{e3}$ exd4 18 $\text{xd4}$ $\text{a6}$ and White’s position is collapsing, J.Hjartarson-I.Stohl, Copenhagen 1982.

b) 15 $\text{xc6}$ $\text{xb7}$ 16 $\text{c7}$ $\text{xe4}$ 17 f3 $\text{xf5}$ 18 $\text{hd1}$ (18 $\text{xe7}$ $\text{ab8}$ gives Black too much activity) 18...$\text{h8}$ saw the two bishops and superior structure guarantee Black a lasting plus in N.Kelecevic-J.Smejkal, Sarajevo 1982.

c) 15 f3 e5 16 $\text{xc6}$ exd4 17 $\text{g5}$ $\text{e8}$ 18 $\text{xf4}$ was seen in A.Graf-R.Ruck, Budapest 2004, and now 18...f5! gives Black the edge.

15...$\text{hb8}$ 16 $\text{xc6}$

Or 16 $\text{c2}$ $\text{hb4}$ 17 $\text{e1}$ $\text{a4}$ 18 f3 $\text{a6}$ 19 $\text{dd2}$ $\text{xc4}$ 20 $\text{dc3}$ $\text{a3}$ 21 $\text{xd1}$ $\text{ab5}$ with good counterplay in L.Persson-B.Kyhle, Stockholm 1994, while 16 f3 $\text{a6}$ 17 $\text{e1}$ 18 $\text{d2}$ only allows White to maintain equality.

16...$\text{hb7}$ 17 $\text{c7}$ $\text{xe4}$

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A critical situation. Black has a couple of pawns en prise, but White's king is exposed and his pawns loose. K.Andreev-A.Gubanov, St.Petersburg 1997, continued 18 f3! (as Ftcnik notes, 18 \(\text{axe7? b b2+}\) 19 \(\text{dxe1 axg2}\) 20 \(\text{xa7 f3}\) 21 \(\text{d2 b1+}\) 22 \(\text{d1 axd1+}\) 23 \(\text{xd1 axd4}\) is decisive; White should also avoid 18 \(\text{axa7 b2+}\) 19 \(\text{e1 axg2}\) 20 \(\text{exe7 f8}\) 21 \(\text{c1 axa2}\) 22...\(\text{e5}\) 19 \(\text{axa7}\) (19 \(\text{exe7 b2+}\) 20 \(\text{e1 axa2}\) 21 \(\text{c3 f8}\) is good – Ftcnik) 19...\(\text{c4}\) 20 \(\text{e1 e5!}\) (maximum activity!) 21 dxe5 \(\text{xd1+}\) 22 \(\text{xd1 exf5}\) 23 \(\text{f4 f6}\) and Black had excellent play.

**B2) 9 b1 b6**

However, Black can exploit the extra tempo: 10...0-0 11 \(\text{c3}\) (11 d5 e6 intends ...\(\text{xd8}\) and seems promising for Black) 11...\(\text{b7}\) 12 d5 \(\text{d7}\) 13 \(\text{d3}\) (or 13 c4 \(\text{xd2+}\) 14 \(\text{xd2}\) e6 15 \(\text{d3}\) f5 16 exf5 gxf5 17 dxe6 \(\text{ae8}\) and White regrets his premature central advance)
13...c4! when 14 \=xc4? \=ac8 supplies excellent compensation, while 14 \=b1 \=d5 15 \=h6 e6 16 \=xg7 \=xg7 17 \=d4+ f6 18 0-0 (L.Portisch-S.Samo, Reggio Emilia 1992/93) 18...exd5 19 exd5 \=ad8 20 \=fe1 \=xd5! 21 \=e7+ \=f7 22 \=xf7+ \=xf7 leaves Black clearly better.

Black is much better) 14...\=d8 15 \=wc1 bxc5 (but not 15...\=e5? due to the nasty 16 \=a3!) 16 \=a3 \=wc7 17 f4 \=b7 18 \=e2, as in I.Ibragimov-C.Toth, Dortmund 1992, and now 18...\=a5 favours Black since ...f5 is imminent and e4 weak.

11...0-0 12 \=b5 \=a5

**B21)** 10 \=b5 \=a4

**11 \=b3**

Black is also fine after the others:

a) 11 \=b2 \=a6! 12 \=xa6 (or 12 f3 \=xf1 13 \=xf1 \=c6 with the initiative) 12...\=xa6 13 f3 (13 \=e2?! e5! highlights the weakness of both white central pawns: 14 0-0 \=d8 15 \=w1 \=c4! 16 \=d2 0-0 17 f3 exd4 18 cxd4 cxd4 19 \=xd4 \=b4! and Black was better in Y.Dokhoian-S.Dvoiryk, Helsinki 1992) 13...0-0 with an edge for Black.

b) 11 dxc5?! wins a pawn, but at too high a price in terms of structure. All of a2, c3 and e4 now become rather vulnerable; for example, 11...0-0 12 \=b4 \=a5 13 \=c4 (13 cxb6 axb6 is much better for Black – Adorjan and Feher) 13...\=xc6! 14 \=b3 (or 14 \=b5 \=a4 15 \=e2 \=d8 16 \=c1 \=a6 and as Aagaard notes,

White should avoid 13 \=e2? since 13...a6! 14 \=d3 (14 \=c4 b5 15 \=d5 \=a7 16 dxc5 e6 17 c6 \=c7 18 \=f4 exd5 19 \=xh7 \=xh7 20 exd5 \=d8 21 \=w1 \=e5 22 \=w3 \=d6 wins everything, as analysed by Adorjan and Feher) 14...\=c6 15 d5 \=e5 16 0-0 f5! left Black much better in L.Portisch-A.ADORJAN, Hungarian Ch., Budapest 1991.

13...\=d7!

Quickly mobilizing Black's remaining pieces and now White must be careful just to maintain the balance.

**14 \=xd7**

Instead 14 \=e2 \=c8 15 0-0 (15 d5? c4 16 \=b4 \=a6 wins material) 15...cxd4 16 cxd4 \=xd2 17 \=xd2 \=c2 18 d5 \=xa2 19 \=c4 \=a4 (Adorjan and Feher) is much better for Black.

14...\=xd7
The two most logical retreats are now:

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B221: 11 b3
B222: 11 e2

Retreating the bishop to e2 is White's most common choice, arguing that the black bishop is misplaced on d7, but things are not so simple, as we will see.

White has also tried:

a) 11 bxd7+ bxd7 is too simplistic to cause any problems: for example, 12 e2 (12 f3 f6 attacks e4 in an awkward way) 12...0-0 13 0-0 (13 d5?! wa4 14 f3 f5 once again leaves White over-extended) 13...fd8 (due to the pin down the d-file, the d7-knight acquires further prospects) 14 g5 cxd4 15 cxd4 (or 15 xe7 dxc3 16 c2 e8 17 b4 e5 18 f3 ac8 and Black is better) 15...xd2 16 xd2 c5 17 e5 e6 18 xe3 d7 was better for Black in Wang Yaoyao-S. Atalik, Beijing 1996.

b) 11 c4 leaves the bishop rather loose: 11...c6 12 e2 0-0 13 d1 (both 13 b3 cxd4 14 cxd4 xd2+ 15 xd2 a5 and 13 dxc5 d8 14 xb6 h3 15 c2 e5! are promising for Black) 13...b5 14 d5 e6 15 c6 c6 16 d5 (White is also struggling after 16 f3 fd8 17 0-0 b4 18 xb4 xb4 - Ftacnik) 16...exd5 17 edx5 fd8 18 c4 a4 and Black was a lot better in I. Levitina-M. Chiburdanidze, Shanghai Candidates 1992.

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B221) 11 b3
Seemingly the most logical retreat. However, while this supports e4, it also interferes with the queen’s protection of d4.

11...0-0 12  \textit{d}e2

Instead 12  \textit{f}f3  \textit{c}c6 13  \textit{c}c1 (or 13  \textit{b}b5  \textit{a}a4 14  \textit{b}b2, D.Adla-M.Sion Castro, Zaragoza 1995, and now 14...\textit{ac}8 intends ...\textit{g}4, with pressure) 13...\textit{g}4 14  \textit{d}5  \textit{ad}8 15  \textit{c}c2 (15  \textit{xc}6?!  \textit{xf}3 16  \textit{gx}f3  \textit{c}4 is disastrous for White, but perhaps preferable is 15 0-0  \textit{xf}3 16  \textit{gx}f3  \textit{e}6! 17  \textit{c}4  \textit{xd}2 18  \textit{xd}2  \textit{d}4 with an approximately equal position – Krasenkow) 15...\textit{xf}3 16  \textit{gx}f3  \textit{d}4 17  \textit{w}d1 was seen in H.Olafsson-A.Huzman, Moscow 2004, and now 17...\textit{e}6 18 0-0  \textit{c}c6 leaves Black better.

12...\textit{c}c6 13  \textit{h}4

An attacking gesture that is not fully justified by the position. Alternatively:

a) 13  \textit{xc}5?!  \textit{e}5?! (or 13...\textit{b}xc5 14  \textit{b}b5  \textit{a}a4 15  \textit{xc}5  \textit{e}5 16 0-0  \textit{fc}8? which gives Black good compensation according to Rowson) 14  \textit{xb}6  \textit{axb}6 15 0-0 (15  \textit{xb}6  \textit{a}a2 16  \textit{c}c1  \textit{xd}3+ 17  \textit{xd}3  \textit{xc}3+ 18  \textit{f}1  \textit{a}a4 was excellent for Black in P.Taylor-Jo.Hodgson, Hampstead 1998) 15...\textit{xa}2 16  \textit{b}b2  \textit{a}a3 17  \textit{xb}6  \textit{fd}8 18  \textit{xd}4 (Black is fine, too, after 18  \textit{d}4  \textit{xd}3 19  \textit{xd}3  \textit{g}4) 18...\textit{ac}8 19  \textit{a}a6  \textit{xa}8 20  \textit{xe}2  \textit{ac}8 (Rowson) and Black isn’t worse.

b) 13  \textit{b}b2  \textit{ad}8!? (or 13...\textit{fd}8 14 0-0  \textit{cx}d4 15  \textit{cx}d4  \textit{xd}2 16  \textit{xd}2  \textit{b}4 17  \textit{b}1  \textit{b}5 18  \textit{a}3  \textit{c}c6 and Black equalized comfortably in N.Babu-A.Gokhale, Mumbai 2003) 14 0-0  \textit{e}6 15  \textit{d}5  \textit{e}5 with a complicated position where Black’s chances are certainly not worse. 13...\textit{fd}8!

Gaining central counterplay is the correct response.

14  \textit{h}5  \textit{cx}d4 15  \textit{cx}d4  \textit{ac}8! 16  \textit{xa}5  \textit{xc}6

Black’s accurate play has left White’s h4-h5 advance rather out of place in the position. R.Akesson-J.Timman, Malmo 1997, continued 17  \textit{g}5 (17  \textit{c}c1 was better) 17...\textit{f}6! 18  \textit{d}2  \textit{c}4 19  \textit{b}4  \textit{e}5! 20  \textit{hx}g6  \textit{hx}g6 21  \textit{dx}e5 (or 21  \textit{d}5  \textit{a}5 22  \textit{dx}d5 with the initiative) 21...\textit{ex}e5 22  \textit{a}a6  \textit{e}2 23  \textit{f}4  \textit{c}c6 24  \textit{c}c3  \textit{g}4 25  \textit{c}c4+  \textit{f}8 and Black had a clear advantage.
The most natural, developing White’s last piece and intending to support e4 further with f3, but White has also tried:

a) 13 abyrinth 14 d5 was seen in R.Sherbakov-E.Vorobiov, Moscow 1999, and now 14...Qxe4 15 Qxe4 Qxc3 16 dxe6 Qxd2+ 17 Qxd2 (17 Qxd2 0-0-0 is also great for Black) 17...Qa4 intends 0-0-0 with some advantage.

b) 13 h4 is a bit too rushed: 13...Qd8 14 h5 Qe5! (a recurring motif in this line) 15 dxe5 c4 16 Qd4 cxd3 17 Qf3 Qxe4 (White is positionally destroyed, so it’s no surprise that his kingside aggression comes to naught) 18 h6 Qf8 19 Qg5! Qxg2 20 Qh2 (20 h4?! e6 stops the attack) 20...Qd5 21 Qxd3 (intending f3 to trap the bishop on g2) 21...f6 (the only move) 22 Qb5 (22 exf6? Qxg5 wins for Black) 22...Qc6 23 exf6 exf6 24 f3 (or 24 Qxh7 Qxh7 25 Qxg6+ Qf7 26 h7 Qxd4! 27 Qe5+ Qf8 28 Qe3 Qe7 and Black wins – Timman) 24...Qxg5 25 Qxg2 Qxh6! and Black was much better in J.Timman-A.Shirov, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

c) 13 Qc1 e6 and now:

c1) 14 Qe2 0-0 15 0-0 (or 15 h4, as in S.Oseevitch-V.Belov, Alushta 2000, and now 15...Qad8 16 h5 Qe5 17 dxe5 Qxe4 18 Qxe4 Qxd2 19 Qxd2 Qxe5 is much better for Black) 15...Qfd8 16 Qfd1 Qa4 17 Qc2 (so far R.Akesson-M.Roiz, Cappelle la Grande 2006) and now 17...Qb5 favours Black.

c2) 14 Qf3 Qf6 (logical, now that White has renounced the option of f3) 15 Qe5 Qb5! 16 c4 Qxd2+ 17 Qxd2 (or 17 Qxd2 Qa6 with the initiative)
17...cxd4 18 cxb5 dxe3+ 19 \( \text{Q}e3 \text{Q}h5 \) 20 f4 \( \text{Q}xf4 \) 21 \( \text{Q}xf4 \) g5+ 22 \( \text{Q}xg5 \text{Q}xe5 \) and Black had an obvious advantage in view of White’s horribly-exposed king in R.Sherbakov-E.Vorobiov, Maikop 1998.

13...\( \text{Q}d8! \)

The most accurate. Note that Black ignores castling in favour of more pressing matters, such as creating immediate threats.

14 f3

Other moves have been also tried, albeit without much success:

a) 14 d5 \( \text{Q}e5 \) and Black has the initiative.

b) 14 0-0 cxd4 15 \( \text{Q}xd4 \) (or 15 cxd4?! \( \text{Q}xd2 \) 16 \( \text{Q}xd2 \text{Q}c5! \) 17 dx5 \( \text{Q}xd3 \) 18 \( \text{Q}e3 \) bxc5 19 \( \text{Q}xc5 \) and Black is better, as Aagaard has pointed out) 15...\( \text{Q}b7 \) 16 \( \text{Q}b5 \text{Q}a3 \) 17 \( \text{Q}b3 \text{Q}d6 \) with advantage for Black.

c) 14 h4 cxd4 15 cxd4 \( \text{Q}c5 \) 16 \( \text{Q}xa5 \) bxa5 17 \( \text{Q}b5 \text{Q}xb5 \) 18 \( \text{Q}xb5 \text{Q}xe4 \) is at least equal for Black, V.Epishin-L.Ftacnik, German League 1998.

14...0-0

Black now has nothing better than to castle, but thanks to his accurate play he has managed to obtain sufficient counterplay.

15 h4

This aggressive move is White’s only real plan. The way his pieces are developed leaves him without any constructive central options; for example, 15 \( \text{Q}c1 \text{Q}b7! \) 16 0-0 \( \text{Q}e5?! \) (another example of this standard tactic; the following sequence is now quite forced) 17 dxe5 c4 18 \( \text{Q}d4 \) cxd3 19 e6 \( \text{Q}xd4 \) 20 cxd4 \( \text{Q}xd2 \) 21 \( \text{Q}xd2 \text{Q}xd4 \) 22 \( \text{Q}c7 \text{Q}c8 \) 23 exf7+ \( \text{Q}xf7 \) (Aagaard) leaves Black better.

15...\( \text{Q}h5! \)

It makes sense to prevent h4-h5 altogether. White now struggles to find something else to do.

16 \( \text{Q}g5 \)

Instead Kasparov analyses both 16 \( \text{Q}f2 \) cxd4 17 cxd4 \( \text{Q}e5! \) 18 \( \text{Q}b5 \text{Q}xd2 \) 19 \( \text{Q}xd2 \text{Q}xb5 \) 20 \( \text{Q}xb5 \text{Q}c4 \), with the advantage, and 16 \( \text{Q}b2?! \text{Q}a4! \) 17 \( \text{Q}f2 \text{Q}e5! \) (again!) 18 dxe5 c4 19 \( \text{Q}d4 \) cxd3 20 e6 \( \text{Q}c2 \) 21 exf7+ \( \text{Q}xf7 \) 22 \( \text{Q}c6 \text{Q}xc3 \) 23 \( \text{Q}xd8+ \text{Q}xd8 \), with a powerful initiative, while 16 g4? is powerfully met by
Aagaard’s 16...c4! 17 ¤c2 (17 ¤xc4 ¤e5 wins material) 17...hxg4 18 h5 gxh5 19 ¤h6 ¤e5!.

16...¤e8 17 ¤c1 ¤b7

It's notable how Black slowly improves his position, while White is unable to undertake anything positive.

18 0-0

In the stem game, White preferred the unsuccessful 18 d5? ¤e5 and suffered badly: 19 ¤b1?! ¤c4 20 ¤f4?? (but even the superior 20 ¤d3 ¤a6 21 0-0 ¤a3 22 ¤d2 ¤xb1 23 ¤xb1 ¤xe2 24 ¤xe2 ¤xc3 – Ftacnik – leaves Black with a clear extra pawn) 20...¤e5 and White’s queen was embarrassingly trapped in T.Shaked-G.Kasparov, Tilsburg 1997.

18...¤e5!

Yes, this move again!

19 dxe5 c4 20 ¤d4 cxd3 21 e6 ¤a6!

Black has a clear advantage, according to Ftacnik.

Conclusion

The ¤e3 systems clearly deserve respect, but they have lost much of their appeal. In both variations Black should play an immediate ...¤a5, intending to exchange on d4 and the queens on d2 after White plays ¤c1. The resulting endgames are fine for Black, who retains enough asymmetry to fight for the full point. Instead ¤b1 should be met with ...b6, when ¤b5+ does not disturb Black as much as White would hope. Indeed, what was once the main line now looks decidedly good for Black!
Chapter Four

Exchange Variation:
The Fashionable 7 $c4

1 d4 $f6 2 c4 g6 3 $c3 d5 4 cxd5 $xd5 5 e4 $xc3 6 bxc3 $g7 7 $c4

This move introduces the most popular and critical system against the Grünfeld nowadays. Its immense popularity at the highest levels is slowly being transferred downwards, mostly thanks to a monumental reference work by Konstantin Sakaev. The book in question is the most deep, detailed and comprehensive opening book I have ever seen! The second edition covers the entire body of theory after 7 $c4 from both sides and will be the point of reference for many years to come. In its massive 450+ pages it contains an incredible amount of original analysis and new ideas, reviving forgotten lines and burying others. Understandably, the material in that book forms the core of this chapter, particularly in Line A. Indeed, there I have opted to indicate where I have discovered improvements on Sakaev’s analysis; the rest of the suggested improvements can be attributed to the Russian grandmaster.

One should not ignore both the theoretical danger posed by Sakaev’s book and the popularity of this system in practice. I have taken this into account when writing this chapter, as you will understand when we move on to the main line of 10 0-0. Naturally this chapter is theoretically the heaviest in this book – there simply was no other choice!

The message is clear: this system is very dangerous. White can effortlessly support his centre with $e2, $c3 and f3, while he retains the option of mounting a rapid kingside attack should the opportunity arise. Essentially, Black has only one real target on which to base his counterplay, namely the somewhat loose c4-bishop, but that is enough to give him good queenside counterplay.

7...c5 8 $e2 $c6 9 $e3 0-0

After some logical moves, we reach a major theoretical divide:
A: 10 \( \texttt{c1} \)

B: 10 0-0

Castling is White’s usual approach nowadays, but he can also initiate an immediate kingside attack with a quick h4. Line A is a prophylactic way of beginning that aggressive plan, whereas the direct 10 h4? proved to be premature after 10...cxd4 11 cxd4 \( \texttt{d6} \) 12 \( \texttt{c1} \) \( \texttt{d8} \) 13 d5 \( \texttt{e5} \) 14 \( \texttt{b3} \) \( \texttt{d7} \) in R. Naranja-L. Portisch, Siegen Olympiad 1970; Black is already much better.

More circumspect is 10 \( \texttt{b1} \) when Black can play in a similar vein to how he does in Line B:

10...\( \texttt{a5} \) 11 \( \texttt{d3} \) e5!? (11...b6 is also playable, just as after 10 0-0 \( \texttt{a5} \) 11 \( \texttt{d3} \), but I see no reason to refrain from the immediate 11...e5 as White hasn’t castled yet) 12 d5 (12 dxe5 is interesting, leading to a complicated position after 12...\( \texttt{c7} \) 13 \( \texttt{f4} \) \( \texttt{xe5} \); the white knight has at least found a role) 12...b6 (12...c4!? is another possibility) 13 c4 (13 \( \texttt{c1} \)?? f5 14 \( \texttt{g5} \) \( \texttt{f6} \)

15 \( \texttt{h6} \) \( \texttt{g7} \) 16 \( \texttt{g5} \) \( \texttt{d6} \) 17 f3 c4 18 \( \texttt{c2} \) f4 was quite good for Black in A. Dreev-K. Thorsteins, Reykjavik 1990)

13...f5 14 \( \texttt{c3} \) f4 15 \( \texttt{d2} \) \( \texttt{g5} \) 16 \( \texttt{f1} \) \( \texttt{b7} \) (bringing the knight to the blocking d6-square) 17 f3 \( \texttt{e7} \) 18 \( \texttt{b5} \) g5 19 h3 h5 20 \( \texttt{e2} \) \( \texttt{d7} \) 21 a4 \( \texttt{d6} \) was agreed drawn in A. Dreev-G. Kamsky, Reykjavik 1990; the position has acquired obvious King’s Indian characteristics and, of course, there is still a lot of play left in it.

A) 10 \( \texttt{c1} \)

This is the main alternative to 10 0-0. White does not wish to castle and hopes to use his h-pawn as a battering ram against the castled black king. This aggressive line was very popular in the late Eighties and early Nineties, but has nowadays faded into semi-oblivion, as Black has found ways to highlight the drawbacks to not castling.

10...\( \texttt{cxd4} \)

In this particular position, this exchange and the ensuing check on a5 create certain coordination difficulties for White.
11 cxd4 \textit{a}5+

with his king in the centre of the board, White finds it hard to keep his centre protected:

a) 14 d5 e6 15 \textit{h}d1 (15 \textit{g}5 f6 16 \textit{f}4 \textit{a}5 17 \textit{b}5 \textit{d}7 is fine for Black)
15...exd5 16 exd5 \textit{a}5 17 \textit{e}1 \textit{xc}4 18 \textit{xc}4 b6 gives Black a promising position; his bishops might have their say later on.

b) 14 \textit{c}3 \textit{a}5 15 \textit{b}2 \textit{xc}4+ 16 \textit{xc}4 b6 17 \textit{d}1 f5 18 f3 fxe4 19 fxe4 \textit{b}7 was at least equal for Black in N.Grotnes-F.Elsness, Norwegian Team Ch. 2000.

c) 14 \textit{hd}1 \textit{xd}4 15 \textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 16 \textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4+ 17 \textit{e}3 \textit{xd}1 18 \textit{xd}1 \textit{g}4 19 f3 \textit{c}8 20 \textit{d}5 (J.Juptner-E.Mikuev, Czech League 2000) allows White, after some exertions, to regain his pawn and equalize!

d) 14 \textit{d}5 \textit{xd}4 (also fine and perhaps even preferable is 14...e5 15 \textit{g}5 \textit{d}6 16 dxe5 \textit{xe}5) 15 \textit{xd}4 (after 15 \textit{xd}4 e6 16 \textit{b}5 exd5 17 \textit{c}7 dxe4+ 18 \textit{c}2 \textit{d}7 19 \textit{xa}8 \textit{xa}8 Black had the advantage in S.Lopez Abad-D.Podesta, Buenos Aires 1993; White’s king is exposed and Black has two active bishops) 15...e6 16 \textit{g}7 \textit{g}7 17 \textit{d}4 exd5 18 e5 \textit{d}7 19 \textit{c}3 \textit{e}7 (but not 19...b6?! 20 \textit{hc}1 \textit{a}6 21 \textit{c}7 \textit{ad}8 22 e6 with a clear edge for White) 20 \textit{hc}1 \textit{f}5 with equal chances.

Returning to White’s usual choice, the critical 12 \textit{f}1:

12...\textit{a}3!

A very strong and important move. The black queen, having enticed White to abandon his castling rights, can now return to d6 if necessary, while its con-
tact with the c1-rook creates certain tactical threats on d4. In this way Black develops immediate counterplay and doesn’t give White enough time to get his attack going.

Introducing the aforementioned threat against d4.

**14 d5**

Alternatively:

a) 14 h4?! ignores the threat at White’s peril: 14...\(\text{Qxd4}\) 15 \(\text{Qxd4}\) (or 15 \(\text{Qc3}\) \(\text{Qd6}\) 16 \(\text{Kh3}\) e5 with a clear plus) 15...\(\text{Qxd4}\) 16 \(\text{h5}\) \(\text{Qb2}\) 17 \(\text{Qf4}\) e6 and White’s compensation seems insufficient.

b) 14 \(\text{Kh1}\)! (this doesn’t actually prevent ...\(\text{Qxd4}\)) 14...\(\text{Qxd4}\)! (also promising for Black is 14...\(\text{Qa5}!\) 15 \(\text{Qd3}\) \(\text{Qd7}\) 16 \(\text{h4}\) \(\text{h5}\), with the idea of ...\(\text{Qac8}\) and ...\(\text{Qc4}\)) 15 \(\text{Qxd4}\) e5 16 \(\text{Qd5}\) \(\text{Qxd4}\) 17 \(\text{Qxd4}\) \(\text{Qh8}\) 18 \(\text{Qc2}\) \(\text{Qc5}\) and Black was better in M.Laframboise-S.Gravel, Montreal 2003.

c) 14 \(\text{f3}?!\) is similarly irresponsible: 14...\(\text{Qxd4}\) 15 \(\text{Qc3}\) \(\text{Qa5}!\) (15...\(\text{Qd6}?!\) 16 \(\text{Qxd4}\) \(\text{Qxd4}\) 17 \(\text{Qxd4}\) \(\text{Qxd4}\) 18 \(\text{Qxd4}\)) 19 \(\text{Qe2}\) \(\text{Qd7}\) 20 \(\text{Qd5}\) allows White to regain the pawn) 16 \(\text{Qxd4}\) \(\text{Qxd4}\) 17 \(\text{Qxd4}\) \(\text{Qd5}\) \(\text{exd4}\) 19 \(\text{Qe2}\) \(\text{Qd7}\) 20 \(\text{Qd5}\) allows White to regain the pawn) 16 \(\text{Qxd4}\) \(\text{Qxd4}\) 17 \(\text{Qxd4}\) \(\text{Qd5}\) \(\text{exd4}\) 19 \(\text{Qd3}\) \(\text{Qxd2}\) 20 \(\text{Qxd2}\) \(\text{Qe6}\) 21 \(\text{Qxd4}\) \(\text{Qxd5}\) 22 \(\text{Qxd5}\) \(\text{Qac8}\) and in view of White’s weak back rank and the passive h1-rook, Black is better.

**14...\(\text{Qe5}\) 15 \(\text{Qb5}\)**

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**A1: 13 \(\text{Wd2}\)**

**A2: 13 \(\text{h4}\)**

**A3: 13 \(\text{Cc3}\)**

**A4: 13 \(\text{Wb3}\)**

Less critical are:

a) 13 \(\text{d5}\) \(\text{Qa5}\) 14 \(\text{Qd3}\) \(\text{Qd7}\) intending ...\(\text{Qac8}\) and Black has the initiative.

b) 13 \(\text{e5}\) \(\text{Qg4}\) 14 \(\text{Wb3}\) \(\text{Qxb3}\) 15 \(\text{axb3}\) \(\text{Qa5}\) 16 \(\text{f3}\) \(\text{Qd7}\) 17 \(\text{Qf2}\) \(\text{Qac8}\) 18 \(\text{Qd2}\) \(\text{Qxc4}\) 19 \(\text{bxc4}\) \(\text{f6}\) forces the break-up of White’s centre, A.Abdulla-P.Konguvel, Calcutta 2002.

c) 13 \(\text{Qb3}\) e5 14 d5 \(\text{Qd4}\) 15 \(\text{Qxd4}\) exd4 16 \(\text{Qf4}\) \(\text{Qd7}\) 17 \(\text{f3}\) \(\text{Qac8}\) 18 \(\text{Qf2}\) a5 19 \(\text{Qd3}\) b5 20 d6 \(\text{Qc3}\) was horrible for White in V.Kruti-A.Keatinge Clay, Harkany 1999.

**A1) 13 \(\text{Wd2}\) \(\text{Qd8}!\)**
In the case of 15 \textit{\texttt{b3}} \textit{\texttt{b6}} (threatening \ldots\textit{\texttt{a6}} and \ldots\textit{\texttt{d3}}) 16 \textit{\texttt{f4}} \textit{\texttt{g4}} 17 \textit{\texttt{d4}} \textit{\texttt{e5}} (17...\textit{\texttt{xd4}} 18 \textit{\texttt{wxd4}} \textit{\texttt{a6}} 19 \textit{\texttt{xd1 wd6}} 20 \textit{\texttt{e5 wc5}} is also excellent) 18 \textit{\texttt{b2 we7}} 19 \textit{\texttt{h3 df6}} Black gains a strong initiative due to White's exposed king.

\textbf{15...b6}

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Preparing \ldots\textit{\texttt{a6}} and a later invasion on \textit{\texttt{d3}} and/or down the \textit{\texttt{c}}-file. White must now play very precisely to stay in the game.

\textbf{16 \textit{\texttt{wc3}}}

Instead 16 \textit{\texttt{d4 a6}} 17 \textit{\texttt{xa6 wa6}} \textit{\texttt{wa6}} gives Black the upper hand, while both 16 \textit{\texttt{c3 wa5}} 17 \textit{\texttt{a4 a6}} 18 \textit{\texttt{b3 wd2}} 19 \textit{\texttt{xd2 xb5}} 20 \textit{\texttt{axb5 ac8}} and 16 \textit{\texttt{d4 a6}} 17 \textit{\texttt{xa6 wa6+}} 18 \textit{\texttt{we2 wa3}} are plain bad. Finally, the overambitious 16 \textit{\texttt{f4?! g4}} 17 \textit{\texttt{d4}} was met by the strong 17...\textit{\texttt{e5!}} in L.Ftacnik-I.Gurevich, Biel Interzonal 1993.

\textbf{16...\textit{\texttt{xc3}} 17 \textit{\texttt{xc3 f5}} 18 \textit{\texttt{g5 f6}} 19 \textit{\texttt{f3 a6}} 20 \textit{\texttt{e2 b5}} 21 \textit{\texttt{f2 b7}}}

Black now has some obvious moves, such as \ldots\textit{\texttt{ac8}} and \ldots\textit{\texttt{c4}}, which promise him good play.

\textbf{A2) 13 \textit{\texttt{h4 g4!}}}

This reveals another point behind 12...\textit{\texttt{wa3!}}; White cannot play \textit{\texttt{f3}} as then the \textit{\texttt{e3}}-bishop hangs.

\textbf{14 \textit{\texttt{h5}}}

Instead 14 \textit{\texttt{wd2 fd8}} 15 \textit{\texttt{f3 xd4}} 16 \textit{\texttt{fxg4 cf3}} 17 \textit{\texttt{c2 xe3}} 18 \textit{\texttt{gxh3 fxh3+}} 19 \textit{\texttt{g1 we3+}} 20 \textit{\texttt{f1 ad2}} should result in a miniature, while 14 \textit{\texttt{b3 xe2+}} 15 \textit{\texttt{xe2 ac8}} (but not 15...\textit{\texttt{b2+?!}} 16 \textit{\texttt{c2 xd4+}} 17 \textit{\texttt{xd4 xd4}} 18 \textit{\texttt{xd4 xd4}} 19 \textit{\texttt{c7}} and White is better) 16 d5 (both 16 \textit{\texttt{h5 b2+}} and 16 \textit{\texttt{c2 fd8}} are no better) 16...\textit{\texttt{xe5}} gives Black the initiative.

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\textbf{14...\textit{\texttt{xe5!}}}

It's as simple as that! Black's point is that White cannot play 15 \textit{\texttt{hx5 gxh5}}
16 $\text{g3}$ since 16...$\text{xd4}$ (16...$\text{wd6}$ also suffices) 17 $\text{xd4}$ $\text{xd4}$ 18 $\text{xc5}$ $\text{wd6}$ defends and wins.

A3) 13 $\text{xc3}$

This solves the immediate tactical problems but leaves the rook misplaced.

13...$\text{wd6}$ 14 $\text{h4}$

The alternatives are no better:

a) 14 $\text{f4}$? is premature due to 14...$\text{e5}$!

b) 14 $\text{d3}$ $\text{a5}$ 15 $\text{d5}$ (15 $\text{b5}$ $\text{d7}$ is also good for Black) 15...$\text{e6}$ 16 $\text{f4}$ $\text{wa6}$ 17 $\text{b3}$ $\text{d7}$ 18 $\text{h4}$ $\text{b5}$ 19 $\text{e3}$ $\text{xb3}$ 20 $\text{axb3}$ $\text{xd4}$ and Black was winning in C.De Wolf-V.Mikhalevski, Vlijingen 1999.

c) 14 $\text{wd2}$ $\text{d8}$ 15 $\text{d3}$ $\text{b6}$ 16 $\text{f3}$ (16 $\text{f4}$ $\text{wb4}$) 16...$\text{b7}$ 17 $\text{f4}$ $\text{wb4}$ 18 $\text{d5}$ $\text{ac8}$ 19 $\text{f2}$ $\text{e6}$ 20 $\text{xc6}$ $\text{wd2}$ 21 $\text{xd2}$ $\text{xc6}$ was fine for Black in M.Francic-M.Rade, Mravinci 1993.

d) 14 $\text{f3}$ $\text{a5}$ (a simple way to equalize is 14...$\text{xc4}$ 15 $\text{xc4}$ – 15 $\text{e5}$ $\text{xe2}$ 16 $\text{exd6}$ $\text{xc3}$ 17 $\text{wd2}$ $\text{exd6}$ offers excellent compensation for the queen – 15...$\text{e5}$ 16 $\text{d3}$ $\text{exd4}$ 17 $\text{xc4}$ $\text{xe6}$) 15 $\text{d3}$ $\text{e6}$ 16 $\text{f4}$ $\text{b4}$ 17 $\text{d2}$ $\text{b6}$ 18 $\text{c7}$

White now lacks a sensible plan.

15 $\text{wd3}$

Also very good for Black was 15 $\text{wd2}$ $\text{e5}$ 16 $\text{d5}$ $\text{a5}$ 17 $\text{d3}$ $\text{b6}$ 18 $\text{h6}$ $\text{d7}$ 19 $\text{g3}$ $\text{b7}$ 20 $\text{g2}$ $\text{c5}$ 21 $\text{e3}$ $\text{xd3}$ 22 $\text{xd3}$ $\text{f5}$ in F.Elsness-B.Predojevic, Pula 2005. Note how White’s exposed king is a recurring problem for him in this variation.

15...$\text{a5}$ 16 $\text{f4}$

16 $\text{b5}$ $\text{a6}$ 17 $\text{c4}$ $\text{b5}$ 18 $\text{c2}$ $\text{c4}$ is also advantageous for Black.

16...$\text{e5}$ 17 $\text{dxe5}$ $\text{wd3}$ 18 $\text{xd3}$ $\text{xc6}$

White is still to get his king’s rook into the game and Black is better after both 19 $\text{ec5}$ $\text{d8}$ 20 $\text{ec2}$ $\text{e6}$ and 19 $\text{c4}$ $\text{d8}$ 20 $\text{d5}$ $\text{e6}$ 21 $\text{c5}$ $\text{xe5}$.

A4) 13 $\text{wb3}$

A change of plan, but not a bad move because a queen exchange would leave White with the preferable position due to his strong centre.
The journey of the black queen appears ridiculous, but just consider the moves White has made in the meantime. As a result, Black is now firmly in control of the initiative.

16 c5 d7! 17 xxa5 b6 18 d2 bxc5 19 xxa8 cxd4! 20 xxd4 xxd4 21 xd4 xa8

This forced sequence has led to some simplification of the position, but White’s kingside pieces remain misplaced. Significantly, White cannot play 22 xd7? xd8 23 xa4 xe4 24 b3 d2 25 g3 in view of the decisive 25...yd4!, as pointed out by Atalik, but even after 22 f3 b5 23 f2 d8 Black is obviously better.

B) 10 0-0

The absolute main line of this system now runs 10...g4 11 f3 a5

when White has a choice between sacrificing an exchange for good attacking chances (12 d3 cxd4 13 cxd4 e6 14 d5), sacrificing a pawn for promising positional compensation (12 d3 cxd4 13 cxd4 e6 14 cl), and actually winning one while simplifying
the position (12 $\text{axf7}+$). All three lines are extremely complicated and immensely theoretical. Sakaev’s mammoth work covers them all extensively and it would be a foolish task to use up half of this book trying to prove that Black is OK against all of these dangerous plans. Moreover, in several of the ensuing positions, a draw is the most that Black can achieve.

Instead by covering an immediate 10...$\text{a5}$, I have opted for a rare but by no means inferior set-up. Indeed, this has acquired some recent popularity and been played by both Svidler and Ivanchuk. It both offers fertile ground for research and, in the spirit of this book, allows Black to fight on equal terms without having to memorize masses of variations. In addition, I have also opted to cover what is now Black’s most popular alternative to the main line, namely the 10...$\text{d7}$ system. Thus, should any reader feel a little uncomfortable employing a rare and fairly novel system, they can instead prefer a tried and tested variation.

Our coverage now divides into:

B1: 10...$\text{a5}$
B2: 10...$\text{d7}$

B1) 10...$\text{a5}$?

The strategical basis behind 10...$\text{a5}$ is clear: since White’s set-up is designed to absorb central pressure, Black instead focuses on the c4-square. In a sense, this move is also quite logical as the c4-bishop is White’s only loose piece in his otherwise harmonious set-up.

11 $\text{d3}$ b6

Black offers the c5-pawn some support, for reasons which will become clearer after his next move. The intention is not really to develop the light-squared bishop on b7, but rather to play ...e5, trying to force White to clarify the central tension.

The d4-d5 advance is then White’s most obvious response, but this rather plays into Black’s hands; he can bring the a5-knight to the blockading square d6 and prepare ...f5. The resulting positions seem perfectly satisfactory for
Black, which is why White should probably opt for dxc5 instead. That is generally an undesirable move, but also one which can prove strong under the right circumstances.

12...c1

This is, I believe, the only real way to trouble Black, enabling the advance of White’s central pawns.

Instead 12 f3 e5 13 dxc5 (or 13 d5 f5) 13...e6 14 b1 c4 15 xc4 xc4 16 b2 (16 cxb6?! axb6 only serves to enhance Black’s pressure) 16...b5 leaves Black clearly the only side with any positive prospects.

More logical, but also not especially accurate is 12 wd2. Black again responds with 12...e5 and now:

a) 13 dxc5 e6 14 fd1 c7 again offers full compensation for the pawn, as Black is in control of the c4-square. Note that in the positions resulting from dxc5, White’s e2-knight is always a problem piece for him since it lacks a good square to move to.

b) 13 d5 is not really the best approach to the position; then one instructive example was the 13...f5 14 g5 wd6 15 h6 f4 16 xg7 xg7 of P.Nielsen-V.Ivanchuk, Monaco (blindfold) 2006. Black is already very comfortable, as the continuation of the game showed: 17 f3 c4 18 c2 g5 19 h1 d7 20 g3 ae8 21 gxf4 gxf4 22 g1+ h8 with a small but obvious advantage for Black.

c) 13 dxe5 xe5 14 ad1 b7 leaves Black comfortably placed and his pieces with good scope.

12...e5!

Black strikes back in the centre and White must now deal with the threat to d4.

13 dxc5!

I believe that this is White’s only way to fight for an advantage. Notably it was Topalov’s choice when faced with this line in a game against Svidler.

Alternatively:

a) 13 dxe5?! aims for a quick kingside pawn advance, but Black needn’t be worried about this at all: 13...xe5 (Black might even try 13...e6!? 14 f4 xxa2 – but not 14...c4? 15 xc4 xc4 16 e1! – 15 g3 with complicated play, although White’s kingside could prove dangerous) 14 f4 g7 15 e5 (now the g7-bishop is blocked, but that has come at too high a price for White on the light squares) 15...e6 16 c2 c4 sees Black’s pieces easily find their way to good squares and the initiative is on his side.

b) 13 d5?! fails to impress after 13...f5 (or even 13...c4 14 c2 d7 15 b1 b7 16 a4 xa4 17 xa4 d6 18 f3 f5, with good counterplay for Black in V.Seifert-J.Zezulkin, Bayern 1999)
f3 c4 15 b1 f4 16 f2 g5 when Black is better; the future of White's minor pieces, especially the b1-bishop and the e2-knight, seems rather bleak, while Black has an obvious and good plan.

13...e6!

As usual, this eyes the c4-square. Note that while the e5-pawn does block the beloved Grünfeld bishop, it both deprives the white knight of a good future and offers Black's position a high degree of stability; a factor which ensures that he can develop his queenside counterplay at leisure.

Instead 13...c7 looks like a reasonable move, but it is not incisive enough: 14 cxb6 (14 c4!? is also promising) 14...axb6 15 c4 e6 16 c5 bxc5 17 bxc5 d7 18 c1!? and White retains a plus.

White must now decide how to proceed on the queenside:

B11: 14 cxb6
B12: 14 c4

B11) 14 cxb6

This capture is, of course, very significant since Black must now be able to demonstrate sufficient compensation. Due to both his strong central control and White's weakened queenside, he is fully able to.

14...axb6

14...c4?! is not so good in view of 15 b7 b8 16 xc4 xc4 17 c5 e8 18 b1 and White is clearly better.

15 c4

Naturally, White must prevent ...c4 at all costs, as otherwise Black's play unfolds effortlessly and with great vigour.

15...f5!

A dynamic and strong advance, whereas 15...b7? is simply too slow: 16 c3 c5 17 e2 and White accomplishes his main positional task, namely that of bringing his knight to a good square.

16 exf5

16 f3 is more solid, but Black can immediately equalize with 16...fxe4 17 xe4 (or 17 fxe4 xf1+ 18 xf1 c8 and the c4-pawn falls, with at least equality for Black) 17...xc4!, if not actually hope for more.
16...gxf5 17 f3
This is pretty much compulsory; White must restrain Black’s advancing pawn duo.

17...\&b7!
Only now does Black improve the placement of his pieces and with tempo. Instead 17...e4? is a big mistake in view of 18 fxe4 fxe4 19 \&xf8+ \&xf8 20 \&xe4, but 17...\&c8 is playable, albeit slightly better for White after 18 c5 bxc5 19 \&xc5 (and not 19 \&xc5? \&xc5 20 \&xc5 \&b6) 19...\&xc5 20 \&xc5 \&f7 21 \&b1! \&b7 22 \&b6 (22 \&f2 \&xa2! equalizes) 22...\&d6 23 a4 \&c5 24 \&xc5 \&xc5+ 25 \&h1.

18 \&c3 \&a3
Black’s initiative is growing rapidly: the advance ...e4 is now threatened, the knight is coming to c5 and so on. White is rather thrown on to the defensive and there is no question that Black has adequate compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

B12) 14 c4?*
This was introduced by the always well-prepared Veselin Topalov in his aforementioned game with Svidler. In this ambitious way, White prevents the occupation of c4 and prepares to bring his knight to d5 via c3. Accomplishing that manoeuvre would guarantee White a lasting positional advantage and so Black must urgently sharpen the struggle.

14...bxc5! 15 \&xc5 \&h6?*
Svidler’s suggested improvement in Informant 96 (and the following analysis is based on his notes) over the stem game which saw 15...\&e8?! after which the opening battle concluded in White’s favour: 16 \&e3 \&e7 (16...\&c8 17 c5 allows White to safeguard his extra pawn) 17 \&c2 \&d7 18 \&fd1 \&c6 19 a3 \&a5 (19...\&b8 20 \&c3 \&d4 21 \&xd4 exd4 22 \&d5 gives White a safe edge, as Golubev notes) 20 \&c3! (20 \&c3 \&ad8 allows Black counterplay) 20...\&xa3 (20...\&d4 21 \&b2 is also good for White) 21 \&d5 and White had the upper hand in V.Topalov-P.Svidler, Linares 2006.

The text move seems much stronger to me and now the position becomes very complicated.
16 $\text{bxc3}$

This protects the d3-bishop, thereby freeing the white queen.

Alternatively:

a) $16 \text{xf8}$ is obvious, but offers White nothing after $16...\text{xc1} 17 \text{xc1}
\text{xf8} 18 \text{b3} (18 \text{a4} \text{c8} 19 \text{d1} \text{c7}
is similarly fine for Black as c4 drops)
$18...\text{xc4} 19 \text{xa5} \text{xd3} 20 \text{c6} \text{c7} 21
\text{xd3} \text{xc6}$ with equality.

b) $16 \text{c2} \text{e8}$ intends ...\text{c8} and is also fine for Black: $17 \text{f4}$ ($17 \text{c3} \text{xc4}$
$18 \text{d5} \text{xd5} 19 \text{exd5} \text{d6}$ is complicated but seemingly fully acceptable, as
Black has a firm blockade on d6 and is about to meet the e- and f-pawns rolling)
$17...\text{xc8} 18 \text{xa7} \text{e7} 19 \text{e3} \text{d7}$.
White must now return the material to relieve the pressure and after $20 \text{d2}
\text{xc4} 21 \text{xc4} \text{xd2} 22 \text{xd2} \text{xd2} 23
\text{xd2} \text{xc4}$ Black has at least equalized.

c) $16 \text{f4} \text{e8}$ again sets White the problem of how to proceed:

c1) $17 \text{c2}$ transposes to $16 \text{c2} \text{e8}$
$17 \text{f4}$, above.

c2) $17 \text{e3} \text{e7}$ ($17...\text{b8}$? can also be considered) $18 \text{c2} \text{d7} 19 \text{cd1} \text{c8}$
$20 \text{c5} \text{xa2} 21 \text{xa2} \text{xd3}$ $22 \text{xd3}
\text{xd3}$ sees Black regaining his material while retaining some pressure.

c3) $17 \text{c3} \text{c8}$ $18 \text{xa7} \text{xc4} 19
\text{c2} \text{a5} 20 \text{xc4}$ (alternatively, $20 \text{f2}$
\text{a3} $21 \text{xc8} \text{xc8}$ offers Black excellent compensation in view of his very active
pieces) $20...\text{xa7+} 21 \text{h1} \text{xc4} 22
\text{xc4} \text{a6} 23 \text{xc8} \text{xc8}$ forces $24 \text{d1}
exf4 $25 \text{xf4} \text{xf4} 26 \text{xf4} \text{xa2}$ fizzes
out to full equality.

16...\text{e8} 17 \text{a3}$

Preparing to meet ...\text{c8} with c4-c5.

17...\text{c6}!

The knight heads for the d4-square and frees a5 for the queen.

18 \text{a4}!?

Passive play allows Black's initiative to develop unhindered; for example, $18 \text{c5} \text{a5}$! with excellent play for
Black. Therefore I think that White's best option is to embark on the active
text move and the resulting exchange sacrifice.

18...\text{d2} 19 \text{d1} \text{xc3} 20 \text{xc3}$

This position is the result of some critical and ambitious play from both
sides. Black has a slight material advantage, but he is missing his dark-squared
bishop. This is not so much a problem
on the kingside, as the e5-pawn keeps
lines closed there, but rather in the cen-
tre and on the queenside. It is hard to
give a definite evaluation of this posi-
tion and certainly both sides have their
chances, as well as good outposts for
their knights. However, if pushed I
would say that Black probably stands
fairly well after 20...Ec8.

B2) 10...£d7

This quiet move represents a very
solid and positional way of playing.
Black simply prepares to play on the
queenside and he has a very clear plan
of obtaining control of the key c4-
square, with moves such as ...Ec7,
...Ec8, ...b5 (or ...£b5) and, of course,
...£a5-c4. Achieving that plan usually
guarantees him good play. White, in
turn, must try to disturb Black’s afore-
mentioned plan. He has two ways of
doing so: the d5-advance and the cap-
ture on c5. Both options have advan-
tages and drawbacks, but overall I feel
that only d4-d5 can really trouble
Black. Against that, Black should re-
spond by closing the centre with ...e5,
just as in Line B1.

This 10...£d7 system, just like
10...£a5, was introduced into high-
level practice by Peter Svidler and re-
mains the regular choice of the Israeli
Grünfeld aficionados – a good recom-
mandation indeed!

Now White usually elects to remove
his queen’s rook from the long diag-
onal:

B21: 11 £b1
B22: 11 £c1

Many other moves have been tried
here, but they are generally rather ir-
relevant and offer Black excellent play:

a) 11 d5 is premature: 11...£e5 (note
that the knight is actually quite well
placed here, since booting it with f4 is
not an option in view of ...£g4) 12 £b3
£a5 13 £h1 (13 f4?! £g4 14 £d2? c4!
drops material, and also promising for
Black is 13 c4 b5! 14 cxb5 £xb5 according
to Krasenkow) 13...£b5 14 f4 £a6
15 £e1 £d3 and Black was better in

b) 11 f4 is an aggressive but loosening-
move. The most efficient reply is
11...cxd4! 12 cxd4 £g4 13 d5 £a5 14
£d3 e6, breaking up White’s centre.

c) 11 a4 cxd4 12 cxd4 £c8 13 £c1
£a5 14 £d3 £xc1 15 £xc1 (V.Dobrov-
P.Jaracz, Pardubice 2001) 15...£b6
(Krasenkow suggests the interesting
15...£c7?! 16 £a3 £e8 with counter-
play) 16 £e3 £c8 sees Black taking
over the initiative.
d) 11 dxc5 is a capture which usually restricts White’s middlegame potential, since if Black recovers the pawn, White is left with a miserable position. Black’s best approach is again to fight for the c4-square, this time usually with ...\(\Box\)a5 and ...\(\Box\)e6/b5. Alternatively, he may prefer to play ...b6 at an appropriate moment, gaining typical compensation after an exchange on b6.

![Diagram](image)

e.g. 12 \(\Box\)xb5 \(\Box\)xd4 13 \(\Box\)xd7 \(\Box\)xe2+ 14 \(\Box\)xe2 \(\Box\)xd7 and Black is fine.

e2) 11...\(\Box\)a5 12 \(\Box\)b2 (12 \(\Box\)ac1 \(\Box\)ac8 transposes to Line B22) 12...\(\Box\)ab8 (again 12...b5?! 13 \(\Box\)xb5 \(\Box\)xb5 14 \(\Box\)xb5 \(\Box\)xd4 equalizes) 13 \(\Box\)b3 \(\Box\)a6 14 \(\Box\)fd1 cxd4 (14...\(\Box\)a5 is also playable: 15 dxc5 \(\Box\)c6 16 \(\Box\)c2 \(\Box\)xe4 17 \(\Box\)xe4 \(\Box\)xe2 18 \(\Box\)xe7 \(\Box\)xb3 19 axb3 \(\Box\)xc3 is equal, while here 16 \(\Box\)g3 \(\Box\)c4 17 \(\Box\)c1 \(\Box\)xe3 18 \(\Box\)xe3 \(\Box\)a5 gave Black the initiative in S.Williams-B.Macieja, European Championship, Warsaw 2005) 15 cxd4 \(\Box\)bc8 and Black has the upper hand.

**B21** 11 \(\Box\)b1

![Diagram](image)

Play might continue 11...\(\Box\)c7!? (11...\(\Box\)a5 12 \(\Box\)d3 \(\Box\)c7 is similar, but probably less accurate in view of 13 \(\Box\)d4 \(\Box\)fd8 14 \(\Box\)b1 b6 15 cxb6 axb6; Krasenkow believes that Black has good compensation here, but I think that after 16 \(\Box\)e2, intending a nasty \(\Box\)b5, White is definitely better) 12 f4 \(\Box\)a5 13 \(\Box\)d3 \(\Box\)fd8 with good compensation; we will see more of this type of sacrifice in note ‘a’ to White’s 12th move in Line B21.

e) 11 \(\Box\)d2 is not a threatening move and actually offers Black a pleasant choice:

e1) 11...b5!? is a simple equalizing device;
This has emerged as the most threatening continuation, applying pressure down the b-file. While an immediate capture on b7 is impossible due to a ...\( \text{c7} \) fork, White does prevent the desirable ...\( \text{wa5} \) (as the pawn could then be captured) and thus forces Black into a less active deployment of his forces.

11...\( \text{wc7} \)!

Simply protecting the b7-pawn with a useful move. Black is now indirectly attacking the c4-bishop, a factor which forces White’s hand in the centre.

There is another consistent move in this position that I would like to draw your attention to, namely 11...\( \text{xc8} \)!

\( \text{b3 e3} \) was very unclear in P.Cramling-A.Groszperter, Biel 1990.

b) 14 \( \text{wd2} \) (more common) 14...f5 15 \( \text{g5} \) (15 f3 f4 16 \( \text{f2} \) c4 17 \( \text{c2} \) b6 18 \( \text{b4} \) \( \text{f7} \) was quite satisfactory for Black in M.Van der Werf-F.Nijboer, Leeuwarden 2001) 15...\( \text{we8} \) 16 \( \text{exf5} \) (or 16 c4?! b6 17 \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{b7} \) 18 \( \text{be1} \) f4 19 f3 h6 20 \( \text{h4} \) g5 21 \( \text{f2} \) \( \text{f6} \) 22 \( \text{e2} \) h5 23 \( \text{b1} \) \( \text{g6} \) and Black’s kingside attack was in full swing in J.Planas-J.De la Villa, Palma de Mallorca 1991) 16...\( \text{xf5} \) 17 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 18 f4! e4 19 \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{d6} \) (much worse was 19...\( \text{f6?} \) 20 \( \text{h5} \) \( \text{d8} \) 21 c4 b6 22 \( \text{bc1} \) with an attack for White in A.Shariyazdanov-E.Vorobiov, Tomsk 2004) 20 \( \text{h5} \) \( \text{h8} \) 21 \( \text{e3} \) h6 22 \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{xd5} \) and Black is firmly in charge of the initiative.

Overall, I feel that 11...\( \text{xc8} \)! is a fruitful area for research, but do note that Black should avoid the once popular 11...a6?!. The problem is that this creates significant weaknesses on the queenside; a factor best highlighted by 12 dxc5! after which Black has struggled.

12 \( \text{xf4} \)

Surprisingly, this has been quite rare in practice but, in the few examples available to me, the opening phase has concluded quite successfully for Black: 12 \( \text{d3} \) (12 dxc5 \( \text{wc7} \) is very similar to positions we will examine in the notes to White’s 12th move in our main line) 12...e5 13 d5 \( \text{a5} \) and now:

a) 14 \( \text{c1} \) \( \text{e7} \) 15 \( \text{h1} \) f5 16 \( \text{exf5} \) \( \text{xf5} \) 17 c4 b6 18 \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{f7} \) 19 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{b7} \) 20 \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{g6} \) 21 f4 e4 22 \( \text{h5} \) \( \text{d4} \) 23
Harassing the queen is White’s best option here, but he has tried a number of alternatives:

a) 12 dxc5 Qa5 13 a4b5 (or 13 a4 d3 d8 14 c2c2, J.Horvath-D.Boros, Hungarian League 2004, and now 14...e5? intends ...e45 and ...wa5, thereby giving Black his fair share of the play) 13...axb5 14 axb5 c4 15 d4 e5 16 wd3 a6 with good compensation for Black, Kir.Georgiev-B.Predojevic, Zlatibor 2006.

b) 12 wd2 a6 13 ffd1 (13 dxc5 fad8 supplies typical compensation) 13...b5 14 d5 e6 15 c4 wa5 gives Black the initiative, P.Skatchkov-A.Timofeev, Sochi 2005.

c) 12 f4 fad8 13 d5 wa8 14 d4 (S.Citak-I.Kurnosov, Istanbul 2005) 14...h8 avoids White’s threat and leaves his pieces misplaced.

d) 12 d3 removes the bishop from its exposed position on c4. However, Black can increase the pressure against White’s centre with 12...f6 and now:

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   d1) 13 d5 e5 14 c4 e6 15 f4 b6 16 e2 h6 17 wc1 wh7 18 d3 exd5 19 cxd5 f5 gave Black sufficient counter-


d2) 13 wc1 ac8 14 cd1 prepares wa3, both to prevent ...wa5 ideas and force a release of the central tension. However, it does appear somewhat artificial; for example, 14...a6 15 wa3 (15 d5? ae5 16 c4 b5 17 cxb5 axd3 18 axd3 axb5 19 cd2 wa5 leaves Black on top according to Berkes) and now in F.Berkes-E.Sutovsky, Paks 2005, Black should have played 15...cd4! 16 cd4 wa5 17 wa5 axd5 dx5, when he appears to have secured dynamic equality. Berkes offers 18 d5! c4! 19 axb7 ab2 20 cd2 (or 20 axb2 axb2 21 ab6 ab8 with counterplay) 20...d3 21 axd3 ab5 22 cd2 e6 23 dx6 fx6! 24 wc7! wb8 with good compensation for the pawn in view of Black’s activity.

d3) 13 f4 og4 14 d5 e6! (Black’s play is based on this important tactical detail; instead 14...a5? 15 c4 would, of course, be a positional disaster) 15 dxc6 c4 (regaining the piece) 16 cxb7 ab8 (Berkes) and Black already has the initiative. Indeed, after the natural 17 d4 axd4+ 18 cd4 axd4 19 wc2 axd3, Black’s counterplay is rather awkward.

Returning to 12 f4:

12...wc8!

This might look like a waste of time, but the truth is that the white bishop is misplaced on f4. It is both a target for ...e5 and prevents more aggressive plans (f4-f5). The text also sees Black retain tactical threats against the c4-bishop, whereas 12...e5 is somewhat premature; after 13 og3! the central tension cannot be resolved in Black’s favour.
**13 d5**

Instead 13 \( \texttt{wd3 \texttt{d8 14 \texttt{fc1 \texttt{a5 15 \texttt{b5 a6 16 \texttt{xd7 w xd7 17 wg3 \texttt{ac8 equalized very comfortably in J.Kolly-}}}} \texttt{B.Avrukh, Biel 2002, while 13 \texttt{c1 d8 (13...a6!? 14 a4 \texttt{a5 15 \texttt{d3 b5 looks to me like a promising way to grab the initiative) 14 d5 \texttt{e5 15 \texttt{xe5 \texttt{xe5 16 f4 g7 17 wb3 b8 18 a4 b6 19 e5 e8 20 g3 a6 21 cd1 b5 22 axb5 axb5 23 e2 wb7 was seen in M.Rodshtein-}}}} \texttt{A.Huzman, Ashdod 2004; although White’s central presence was quite good, Black had decent counterplay.}}) \texttt{13...a5 14 \texttt{d3 e5}}

Black proceeds with the standard method. Just as in the 10...\( \texttt{a5 variation, the plan is to bring the a5-knight to the strong blockading square \texttt{d6 and to advance on the kingside with ...f5, in King’s Indian style. White must now make a crucial decision: by retreating his bishop to \texttt{g3 he clearly intends to challenge the stability of Black’s centre with a quick \texttt{f4, while the retreat to \texttt{e3 signifies a more patient approach; White will support his centre with \texttt{f3 and aim for queenside play.}}}

\( 15 \texttt{e3}

This approach is endorsed by Sakaev. Instead 15 \( \texttt{d2 c4 16 \texttt{c2 b6 17 f4 f6 18 \texttt{g3 wc5+ 19 \texttt{h1 exf4 20 \texttt{xf4 \texttt{b7 21 a4 eae8 was a surprisingly toothless approach from White in A.Shirov-A.Areshchenko, Foros 2006; Black is clearly fine here.}})} \texttt{The major alternative is 15 \texttt{g3 and now:}}

a) 15...\texttt{f5 16 f4 (of course White must not allow ...f4)}

\( 16...\texttt{fxe4 (16...exf4!? is a viable alternative, after which 17 \texttt{xf4 c4 18 \texttt{c2 wc5+ 19 \texttt{f2 wd6 reaches a complicated position; Black has surrendered some critical squares, such as \texttt{d4, but White’s centre is under attack) 17 \texttt{xe4 xe4 18 wd3 (18 d6!? is an interesting idea; then 18...\texttt{xe3 19 \texttt{xb7 xd1 20 \texttt{xc8 axc8 21 bxd1 \texttt{b5 sees the forcing sequence leave Black with good compensation in view of his powerful bishops on the open board) 18...\texttt{d6 19 fxe5 xe4 20 \texttt{xe4 f5 21 wc4 xb1 22 d6+ \texttt{h8 23 xb1 \texttt{f5 was the course of M.Carlsen-D.Navara, Wijk aan Zee 2007. Here White’s central pawn duo looks fright-}}}}}}}}

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ening, but Black has his trumps as well, most notably the extra exchange; the position is dynamically balanced.

b) Also possible is 15...c4 when Black must make sure that he can maintain his pawn on e5, preventing the white knight from acquiring the excellent d4-square: 16 ♂c2 b6 (16...f5!? is another option) 17 ♙d2 ♙b7 18 f4 f6! (essential) 19 ♙h1 ♙d6 20 ♙g1 ♙d8 with complicated play in K.Sakaev-B.Avrukh, Izmir 2004.

15...f5 16 exf5

Allowing ...f4 will result in a smooth kingside attack for Black, so this is the only reasonable move.

16...gxg5 17 f3

17 ♙g5 just leaves the bishop exposed after the obvious 17...♗e8.

Sakaev reaches this position in his book, suggesting that White has a slight but stable edge. Indeed, any advance of Black's e- and f-pawns will lose control of some key central squares, while White can gradually bring his forces over to the kingside. Positionally, White definitely seems to have things going his way, even if only slightly, but Black's position contains some very dynamic resources which I feel Sakaev has underestimated. Play might continue:

17...b6 18 ♙e1

18 ♙g5 c4 19 ♙c2 ♙c5+ 20 ♙h1 ♙b7 sees Black nicely regrouping his pieces; the knight is coming to d6 and White's position is not very harmonious.

18...f4!

This advance looks rather ugly, abandoning the e4-square and weakening the b1-h7 diagonal, but it does crucially interfere with White's plans. Indeed, White's bishop now really has to retreat to f2, but that prevents the option of ♙h4.

19 ♙f2 c4 20 ♙c2

20 ♙e4 is very similar.

20...♗b7

The black knight is en route to either d6 or c5 (the more aggressive option), after which Black can set his queenside majority in motion. Alternatively, he can even play ...♗f5, trying to wrest control of the e4-square with the intention of later advancing with ...e4 himself. Meanwhile, White's pieces are
distinctly misplaced, particularly the e2-knight, and it's hard to find a good plan for him. Therefore this position seems quite promising for Black.

B22) 11 \textit{\textbf{Ec1 Ec8}}

Instead 11...\textit{\textbf{Da5?!}} 12 \textit{\textbf{Dd3 Wc7}} 13 \textit{\textbf{Df4 Dc6}} 14 \textit{\textbf{Ee5 Dad8}} 15 \textit{\textbf{Eg4}} was promising for White in J.Tarjan-O.Romanishin, Indonesia 1983; a good illustration of White's more aggressive ideas.

The most consistent and combative move, pursuing Black's standard plan, although there is also 12...\textit{\textbf{Bb5?!}} 13 \textit{\textbf{Db5 Dxd4}}, equalizing.

12 \textit{\textbf{Wd2}}

There is one significant but definitely inferior alternative, namely the mistimed 12 \textit{\textbf{Dd5?!}} A.Onischuk-P.Svidler, Halkidiki 2002, continued 12...\textit{\textbf{De5}} 13 \textit{\textbf{Db3 Wa5}} 14 \textit{\textbf{H3}} (14 \textit{\textbf{F4?!}} is, of course, met by 14...\textit{\textbf{Dg4}}) 14...\textit{\textbf{Wa6}} (this whole plan of fighting for the c4-square was introduced by Grünfeld guru Peter Svidler; Black intends \ldots\textit{\textbf{Db5}}, gaining complete control of the light squares in White's camp) 15 \textit{\textbf{Aa4}} (both 15 \textit{\textbf{F4 Db5!}} and 15 \textit{\textbf{C4 Bb5}} are excellent for Black – Svidler) 15...\textit{\textbf{Dc4}} 16 \textit{\textbf{Dg5}} and now, as Svidler notes, Black's best continuation is 16...\textit{\textbf{F6}}! 17 \textit{\textbf{Df4}} (17 \textit{\textbf{Hh4 Dh6}} 18 \textit{\textbf{Cc2 Dd6}}! with the threat of ...\textit{\textbf{C4}} is very good for Black) 17...\textit{\textbf{Db2}} 18 \textit{\textbf{Wd2 Dd3}} 19 \textit{\textbf{Cd1 Dxf4}} 20 \textit{\textbf{Dxf4 C4!}} 21 \textit{\textbf{Cc2 Dh6}} with advantage.

12...\textit{\textbf{Wa5}}
E. Vorobiov, Cappelle la Grande 2003) 17 \textit{Wh}xh6 bxc4 18 \textit{A}c2 \textit{Ab}8 and Black’s position is preferable.

White also has 13 \textit{Af}d1 when Black can maintain the balance with Epishin’s 13...e6 or completely equalize with the forcing sequence 13...cxd4 14 cxd4 \textit{W}xd2 15 \textit{A}xd2 \textit{G}xd4 16 \textit{G}xd4 \textit{G}xd4 17 \textit{A}h6 \textit{Ab}2 18 \textit{A}xf8 \textit{A}xc1 19 \textit{A}xe7 \textit{A}xc4 20 \textit{G}xd7 \textit{A}xe4 21 \textit{Af}1, when White regains his pawn and the resulting ending should be drawn.

13...b6 14 f4 e6

A necessary precaution against the aggressive f4-f5.

15 \textit{Af}d1

Instead, 15 \textit{Ag}3 cxd4 16 cxd4 was tried in A. Kaminik-V. Mikhailovsky, Givatayim 2004, and now after 16...\textit{Af}d8!? 17 \textit{G}f2 \textit{G}a3, intending ...\textit{A}a5, Black has the initiative.

15...\textit{Af}d8 16 dxc5 \textit{Af}8!

Activating the bishop and hoping to weaken White’s dark squares.

17 cxb6

17 \textit{W}b5?! \textit{A}xc5 18 \textit{A}xc5 bxc5 19 \textit{Ab}1 \textit{A}e8 20 \textit{W}xa5 (or 20 \textit{G}f2 \textit{G}xd1 21 \textit{G}xd1 \textit{Gb}8 with the initiative) 20...\textit{G}xd1+ 21 \textit{G}xd1 \textit{G}xa5 was seen in M. Prusin- P. Svidler, German League 2002; Black is better in view of his potentially more active pieces.

17...\textit{Ac}5 18 \textit{W}d2 axb6 19 \textit{G}d4 \textit{Wa}8!?

Krasenkow considers Black to have good compensation. Indeed, White has several weaknesses and his centre, particularly the e4-pawn, seems rather loose, while Black may play, for instance, ...\textit{A}a5 and ...\textit{A}a4. All in all, it looks like White’s pieces are in a bit of tangle.

**Conclusion**

I cannot emphasize enough the necessity of knowing the lines in this chapter well! Black can easily meet Line A by remembering the important manoeuvre ...\textit{W}a5-a3-d6 and its main ideas. Overall, White’s position after 10 \textit{A}c1 seems generally unsound to me. The main line with 10 0-0 is a totally different story. Then 10...\textit{A}a5 has only recently become popular, but seems to offer Black good prospects, at least on the basis of the available material. I have spent a considerable amount of time examining the resulting positions and feel satisfied with Black’s play, but there is no doubt that the theoretical debate will continue – keep an eye on current tournament practice! Meanwhile, 10...\textit{A}d7 has survived several tests at the highest level and is a reliable option. The very fact that it is regularly employed by both Svidler and Sutovsky suggests that it is fully sound.
Chapter Five

Exchange Variation: White's 7th Move Alternatives

1 d4 ¤f6 2 c4 g6 3 ¤c3 d5 4 cxd5 ¤xd5 5 e4 ¤xc3 6 bxc3 ¤g7

We shall now examine four attempts by White to stray from the beaten path:

A: 7 ¤a3
B: 7 ¤a4+
C: 7 ¤b5+
D: 7 ¤g5

While these variations have not acquired mainline status, they do merit attention as they represent logical and strategically sound systems of development. The common thread running through them is the intention to disrupt Black's natural development scheme of ...c5, ...¤c6 and ...¤g4. Achieving this aim enables White to develop without concerns about his pawn on d4, after which his central superiority should ensure a slight but steady plus. Naturally, Black is not helpless against these ideas and, once again, accurate and purposeful play is the key to success.

A) 7 ¤a3

By making ...c5 harder to achieve, White hopes to buy enough time to develop comfortably and support his centre.

7...¤d7

Black in turn argues that although he will be unable to pressurize the centre with ...¤c6 and ...¤g4, the a3-
bishop is badly placed. As Black's position is very flexible, he can seek other means of troubling White.

8 \( \Delta f3 \)

Instead 8 \( \Delta c1 \) c5 9 d5 \( \Delta a5 \) 10 \( \Delta b3 \) 0-0 11 \( \Delta f3 \) was seen in G. Garcia Gonalles-J. Lechtynsky, Cienfuegos 1985, and now 11...\( \Delta f6 \) 12 \( \Delta d3 \) \( \Delta h5 \) gives Black the initiative.

8...c5

White usually now chooses between two aggressive-looking tries:

**A1: 9 \( \Delta c4 \)**

**A2: 9 \( \Delta b3 \)**

Less good than these is 9 \( \Delta d2!! \) since after 9...\( \Delta a5 \) 10 \( \Delta b2 \) \( \Delta b6 \) 11 \( \Delta e2 \) (11 \( \Delta d1 \) is erroneous: 11...\( \Delta g4 \) 12 a3 0-0 13 \( \Delta e2 \) \( \Delta ac8 \) 14 h3 \( \Delta xf3 \) 15 gxf3 \( \Delta a4 \) with a clear advantage for Black) 11...\( \Delta g4 \) White faces some pressure.

**A1) 9 \( \Delta c4 \)**

After this move Black must respond accurately.

9...\( \Delta xd4! \) 10 \( \Delta b3 \)

Instead 10 0-0? \( \Delta xc3! \) 11 \( \Delta xf7+ \) (11 \( \Delta g5 \) 0-0 with two extra pawns) 11...\( \Delta xf7 \) 12 \( \Delta g5+ \) \( \Delta e8 \) 13 \( \Delta e6 \) (or 13 \( \Delta wb3 \) \( \Delta e5 \) 13...\( \Delta b6 \) 14 \( \Delta xg7+ \) \( \Delta f7 \) just wins for Black and 10 \( \Delta xf7+? \) \( \Delta xf7 \) 11 \( \Delta g5+ \) \( \Delta e8 \) 12 \( \Delta e6 \) \( \Delta a5 \) 13 \( \Delta xg7+ \) \( \Delta f7 \) is also very good for Black.

10...0-0 11 \( \Delta xd4 \) \( \Delta b6 \)

Now White has to decide whether or not to allow the exchange of his bishop.

**12 \( \Delta e2 \)**

The alternative is 12 0-0 \( \Delta xc4 \) 13 \( \Delta xc4 \) b6 14 \( \Delta ac1 \) (14 \( \Delta ad1 \) \( \Delta g4 \) is equal) 14...\( \Delta g4 \) 15 \( \Delta e5 \) \( \Delta xe5 \) 16 dxe5 \( \Delta e8!? \) when Black has an equal share of the chances in this unbalanced position. He similarly had no problems after 16...\( \Delta c8 \) 17 \( \Delta d5 \) \( \Delta e6 \) 18 \( \Delta xd8 \) \( \Delta xd8 \) 19 \( \Delta xe7 \) \( \Delta xc1 \) 20 \( \Delta xc1 \) \( \Delta e8 \) 21 \( \Delta c7 \) (or 21 \( \Delta f6 \) \( \Delta xa2 \) 22 f4 a5 with the initiative) 21...\( \Delta c8 \) 22 \( \Delta xc8+ \) \( \Delta xc8 \) in B. Lalic-D. Gormally, British Championship, Torquay 2002.

12...\( \Delta e6 \) 13 \( \Delta b4 \) \( \Delta c8 \) 14 0-0

Black is at least equal after 14 \( \Delta xe7 \) \( \Delta xe7 \) 15 \( \Delta xe7 \) \( \Delta fe8 \) 16 \( \Delta h4 \) (16 \( \Delta d6 \) \( \Delta c4 \) 17 e5 f6 is equal, while Black is
better after both 16 g5 c4 17 e5 f6 and 16 a3 c4 17 e5 f6) 16 c4 17 e5 f6.

14...c4

15 fe1

After 15 xc4 xc4 16 ac1 b5! (Black has achieved a good position) 17 wxb5 (17 wb3 wd7 18 ac5 a6 seems fine for Black) 17...dxa3 18 wa4 e5! (the only move, but a good one!) 19 xc8 xc8 20 wxa3 exd4 21 wxa7 d3 22 we3 the position should eventually be drawn, although there is some play left.

15...xe2 16 xe2 c4 17 c1

Instead 17 ed1 wd6 18 wxd6 (18 xc4 xc4 19 xd6 exd6 is also better for Black) 18...exd6 19 xc1 fe8 20 af4 b5 favoured Black in V.Milov-P.Svidler, FIDE World Ch., Moscow 2001. With the text, though, White should be able to maintain the balance; for example, 17...dxa3 18 xc8 xc8 19 wxa3 ad8 20 e5 a6 21 wxe7 (or 21 h3 e6) 21...exd4! 22 xe1 wd7 is equal.

A2) 9 wb3 0-0

10 xe2

Other tries fail to impress:

a) 10 d3 wc7 11 0-0 zb8! 12 b5 b6 13 ad1 a6 14 d3 b5 15 zb1 zb7 was good for Black in L.Evans-V.Korchnoi, Buenos Aires 1960.

b) 10 c4 zb8 11 e5 (11 0-0 b5 12 xe2 b7 13 wc2 b4 14 cxb4 cxd4 15 ad1 c8 also looks quite good for Black) 11...b5 12 xf7+ xf7 13 e6 xf3 14 exd7+ c4 15 dxc8 wxc8 16 wc2 we6+ 17 ef1 ef7 and White was in trouble in W.Heidenfeldt-A.Tsvetkov, Mianske Lazne 1951.

c) 10 d1 cxd4 11 cxd4 te6 12 d3 (12 e5?! de6 13 wb7 ad5 14 wa6 c8 is again good for Black) 12...g4 13 wb7 wa5+ 14 b4 (Black is better, too, after 14 wb4 wh5 15 0-0 xf3 16 xf3 wxf3) 14...wh5 15 xe7 zb8 16 wc7 xf3 17 gxf3 wxf3 18 0-0 zb5 and White's king is a constant source for concern.

10...wc7

Another idea is 10 zb8!? intending ...b5; for example 11 0-0 b5 12 ad1 a6.

11 0-0 zb8 12 e5 e6 13 zd2
This disruptive check has recently acquired a certain popularity, chiefly due to the efforts of Vadim Milov and Mikhail Gurevich. It is actually a quite dangerous move – dangerous in a sneaky way! White’s aim is to entice Black to misplace his pieces, so that he will later be unable to apply enough pressure on White’s centre. Black needs to react accurately, but should he do so, I believe he is able to highlight the main drawback of the check, namely that the white queen is no longer supporting d4.

7...\textbf{\textit{d7!}}

In my mind, clearly best, whereas other moves allow White to develop comfortably.

Now White must choose between:

\textbf{B1:} 8 \textbf{\textit{xd7}+}

\textbf{B2:} 8 \textbf{\textit{db3}}

Instead 8 \textbf{\textit{wa3}} is similar to 8 \textbf{\textit{wb3}} but, I feel, less accurate. Black should then immediately prepare ...c5: 8...b6 9 \textbf{\textit{df3}} \textbf{\textit{b7}} 10 \textbf{\textit{d3}} c5 11 \textbf{\textit{e3}} 0-0 12 0-0 (instead, the 12 \textbf{\textit{dd1}} of E.Sevillano-A.Yermolinsky, Stratton Mountain 1999, should be met with 12...e6 13 dxc5 \textbf{\textit{wc7}} 14 0-0 \textbf{\textit{dd7}} with equality – Yermolinsky) 12...\textbf{\textit{xd4}} 13 cxd4 e6 14 \textbf{\textit{df1}} \textbf{\textit{c6}} (A.Szeberenyi-D.Howell, Budapest 2004) when Black has developed comfortably and stands fully equal.

\textbf{B1) 8 \textbf{\textit{xd7}+}}

The queen exchange is, of course,
fundamentally critical. Let’s not forget that a strong centre can be an asset, not only in a complicated middlegame but also in a more simplified endgame. Black is able to strike back and secure good play, but he must play consistently.

8...\(\textit{\mathcal{B}}\text{xd7!}\)

This is the best recapture. Black will not be able to pressurize \(d4\) in the standard Grünfeld manner, but he can pursue other plans, particularly the attack on \(e4\), but also the occupation of \(c4\) with ...\(\text{b6}\) and ...\(\text{e6}\). Another idea is ...\(b6\) and ...\(\text{b7}\) when White has either to advance his e-pawn, thereby handing Black the d5-square, or protect it with \(\text{d3}\), leaving the bishop exposed to tactics.

9 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{f3}\)

Definitely not the only move:

a) 9 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{e3}\) intends to meet ...\(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{b7}\) with \(f3\), firmly supporting \(e4\). However, this plan somewhat clogs up White’s kingside development: 9...0-0 10 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{c4}\) c5 11 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{e2}\) \(\text{b6?!}\) (I very much like this idea, gaining time to develop counterplay, whereas 11...\(b6?!\) is inferior due to 12 e5! intending e6) 12 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{b3}\) cxd4 13 cxd4 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{d7}\) and I feel that Black already has the initiative.

b) 9 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{a3}\) c5 10 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{f3}\) \(b6\) leads to equality, as the a3-bishop is shut out of play.

c) 9 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{d3}\) \(b6\) 10 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{e3}\) \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{b7}\) 11 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{e2}\) 0-0 12 0-0 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{d8}\) (now Black has tactical ideas based on the loose state of the d3-bishop) 13 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{ad1}\) (13 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{fd1}\) c5 has the idea of 14 a4 cxd4 15 cxd4 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{c5}\) with advantage, as suggested by Huzman and Vainerman) 13...c5 14 e5 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{ac8}\) (as Huzman and Vainerman point out, no good is 14...\(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{d5?!}\) 15 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{f4}\) \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{xa2}\) 16 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{a1}\) \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{b3}\) 17 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{fb1}\) c4 18 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{e4}\) \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{c8}\) 19 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{xa7}\) 15 f4 cxd4 (15...\(e6\) 16 g4 was agreed drawn here in Y.Piskov-A.Huzman; Huzman suggests that Black has good play after 16...\(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{h6}\) but I think that 17 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{g3}\), intending \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{e4}\), promises White an edge) 16 cxd4 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{d5}\) with comfortable equality.

9...\(b6\)

10 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{c4}\)

Instead 10 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{d3}\) \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{c5}\) 11 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{c2}\) \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{a6}\) 12 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{e3}\) \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{d3+}\) 13 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{d2}\) \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{b2}\) 14 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{c1}\) \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{c4}\) 15 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{a4+}\) \(b5\) (better than 15...\(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{f8}\) 16 \(\text{\mathcal{B}}\text{c6}\) with an edge, although actually agreed
drawn here in I.Khenkin-P.Jaracz, Andorra 2001) 16 \&b3 \&xe3 17 fxe3 gives a complicated position with chances for both sides.

10...\&b7 11 0-0 0-0

Now Black threatens ...\&xe4.

12 e5 e6 13 \&g5 \&fd8 14 f3 c5

Black has fully equalized, S.Volkov-B.Macieja, Batumi 2002.

B2) 8 \&b3

White’s main move. He hopes to benefit from Black’s 7...\&d7, which rules out ...\&g4 and practically forces the light-squared bishop to be developed to b7, to maintain his centre. As we shall see, however, the queen can become a target on b3.

8...0-0

Black should now opt for a queenside fianchetto, followed by a harassing ...\&c6-a5.

9 \&e3

9 \&f3 b6 10 \&e3 transposes, but less good is 10 \&b5 c6 11 \&c4 c5 12 d5 \&a6 13 a4?! \&g4 14 0-0 \&xe4 15 \&xa6 \&xa6 16 \&e1 \&d3 with an edge for Black, S.Volkov-M.Turov, Sochi 2004.

9...b6 10 \&f3

Playing instead for f3 fails to convince: 10 \&d1 \&b7 11 f3 \&c6 12 \&a4 \&fd8 13 \&h3 \&a5 14 \&xd7 \&xd7 15 \&f2 e5 16 \&e2 \&ad8 and Black was better in V.Milov-P.Eljanov, Geneva 2004.

10...\&c6?!

A rare idea that I have investigated and which looks promising to me! Instead 10...\&b7 is more common, but White can then achieve a harmonious set-up with 11 \&d3 \&c6 12 \&d1 \&a5 13 \&b1 c5 14 0-0. In my opinion, 10...\&c6 is the most annoying move order for White, as he would like to meet ...\&a5 with \&b1, but without blocking the
Exchanging a. Furthermore, Black does not commit his bishop to b7; as we shall see, it may find greener pastures!

11...c1

Securing the retreat of the queen to b1. Instead after 11 d3 d5 12 c2 c5 13 d1 b7 14 0-0 c8, the threat of ...cxd4 forces White to move his queen again.

White might also try 11 d1, hoping for a transposition to the 10...b7 variation. However, Black can then remain in independent waters with 11...d5 12 b1 (or 12 c2 c5 13 d3 cxd4 14 cxd4 d6 with good play; note that Black has retained the options of ...g4 and ...e6) 12...c5 13 d3 c7 (again with the idea of ...g4) 14 0-0 (or 14 h3 e6, aiming for the c4-square) 14...g4 15 e1 f3 16 xf3 xad8 and Black stands very well, in view of White’s kingside weaknesses and lack of a good plan.

11...b7

The immediate 11...a5!? is also enticing: 12 c2 (12 b1 c5 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 xxc5 c7 offers the standard compensation) 12...c5 13 d3 b7 and Black, with ideas of ...c4 and ...f5, has assumed the initiative.

12 d3

12 b1 retreats without being prompted, in order to meet ...a5 with b5. However, this further loss of time enables Black, who has practically completed his development, to strike in the centre: 12...e5 13 d5 e7 14 c4 c6 15 d3 f5 and Black is in the driving seat.

12...a5 13 b1 c5

Also promising is 13...g4!? 14 0-0 f5 15 d2 e5 with the initiative.

14 0-0 xad8

This position is rather complex, although the white rook does seem a little misplaced on c1.

C) 7 b5+

Another disruptive check, but yet again Black is not unduly worried, especially since this move, in comparison to 7 a4+, prematurely commits the bishop, while the check can be met in a natural way.

7...c6

Black does not renounce ...c5 at all, but simply delays it until after he has castled. He will then try to argue that the white bishop is misplaced on a4.

8 a4 0-0 9 e2

Of course, f3 would be strongly met by ...g4 at any point.

9...c5

So Black has achieved ...c5 after all! The question now is: how well is the bishop placed on a4?

10 0-0

Unsurprisingly, 10 d5?! is premature: 10...e6! 11 e3 a6 (now the
pawn on d5 will come under heavy pressure) 12 b3 exd5 13 cxd5 e7 14 c4 (14 xc5 e8 15 0-0 xd5 16 exd5 b6 17 e3 a6 gives Black excellent compensation as the white pieces are unpleasantly pinned) 14...we7 15 f3 b5 16 b3 c4 17 c2 b4 (White is already struggling to hold the balance) 18 cxb4 (18 b1?! bxc3 19 0-0 d8 20 c1 a6 21 a4 e6 22 f4 d4 was disastrous for White in M.Ulibin-S.Dvoirys, Geneva 2001) 18...d8 19 c1 xal 20 xal xb4+ 21 f2 a5 and Black is better; he will cover the kingside dark square weaknesses with ...e8, while the passed c4-pawn will become a strong asset after ...e6 and ...ac8.

10...c6 11 e3 a5

The position is almost identical to a very important one examined in the 7 c4 system, except that here the c4-square is open to occupation. Now White has two main options:

C1: 12 dxc5
C2: 12 b1

C1) 12 dxc5 c4

12...g4!? 13 f3 e6 intending ...c4 is a way to play for more than equality; Black has the standard compensation.

13 wxb8 xxb8 14 g5 d7!

Black invites exchanges, as the weak white queenside pawns will provide good endgame targets.

15 b3 a5 16 xe7

Worse is 16 f1?! c6 17 f3 f8 18 e5 xdl+ 19 xd1 e6 20 e3 c8 21 f4 e7 22 c4 e8 23 d3 c6 24 f4 db8! with the advantage for Black, B.Avrueh-I.Sokolov, Amsterdam 1999; after ...a6 the c5-pawn will drop.

16...e8 17 d6 xxe4 18 d4 xb3 19 axb3 xd4

Here a draw was agreed in V.Topalov-G.Kasparov, Linares 1998.

C2) 12 b1?

More ambitious. White tries to hamper Black’s development.

12...b6!

Black replies in tune! This move amounts to a pawn sacrifice, but one which is very promising in my opinion.
Also playable and fully acceptable is 12...\(\textit{D}\textit{c}4\) again: for example, 13 \(\textit{D}\textit{g}5\) \(\textit{h}6\) 14 \(\textit{D}\textit{h}4\) (V.Topalov-P.Svidler, Linares 1998) 14...\(\textit{a}6\) 15 \(\textit{D}\textit{b}3\) \(\textit{D}\textit{a}3\) 16 \(\textit{D}\textit{a}1\) \(\textit{cxd}4\) 17 \(\textit{cxd}4\) \(\textit{D}\textit{b}5\) with equality.

13 \(\textit{dxc}5\)

Accepting the challenge. Instead 13 \(\textit{D}\textit{b}5\) tries to bring the bishop back to d3 and is rather an admission of failure. B.Avrukh-J.Timman, Amsterdam 1999, continued 13...\(\textit{D}\textit{e}6\) 14 \(\textit{d}5\) \(\textit{D}\textit{d}7\) 15 \(\textit{D}\textit{d}3\) \(\textit{e}5\) 16 \(\textit{f}4\) and now Black should opt for 16...\(\textit{exf}4\)! (and not Timman’s risky 16...\(\textit{f}5\)?! 17 \(\textit{D}\textit{g}3\) \(\textit{c}4\) 18 \(\textit{D}\textit{c}2\) \(\textit{g}5\) 19 \(\textit{fxe}5\) \(\textit{f}4\) since Avrukh could now have played the strong 20 \(\textit{D}\textit{d}4\)! \(\textit{fxg}3\) 21 \(\textit{D}\textit{xf}8+\) \(\textit{xf}8\) 22 \(\textit{h}xg3\) with excellent compensation) 17 \(\textit{D}\textit{xf}4\) \(\textit{D}\textit{g}4\) with chances for both sides, or even 17...\(\textit{D}\textit{e}7\)?!

13...\(\textit{a}6\) 14 \(\textit{b}5\) \(\textit{xb}5\) 15 \(\textit{xb}5\) \(\textit{c}4\)

Black has occupied the target square and stands well; for example, 16 \(\textit{D}\textit{g}5\) (E.Gleizerov-T.Oral, Stockholm 1999) 16...\(\textit{D}\textit{c}7\) 17 \(\textit{D}\textit{a}4\) \(\textit{a}6\)! (or Timman’s 17...\(\textit{D}\textit{a}5\) 18 \(\textit{D}\textit{a}3\) \(\textit{e}5\)?!, with the initiative) 18 \(\textit{b}b1\) \(\textit{b}5\) 19 \(\textit{D}\textit{b}4\) \(\textit{D}\textit{fc}8\) with an obvious advantage, as White cannot save the c5-pawn.

D) 7 \(\textit{D}\textit{g}5\)?

An interesting sideline, introduced by Yuri Kruppa.

7...\(\textit{c}5\)!

As White has forfeited the option of supporting \(\textit{d}4\), this natural move is also the most consistent one.

8 \(\textit{D}\textit{c}1\)?

White prepares to meet ...\(\textit{D}\textit{c}6\) with \(\textit{d}5\) since he cannot support \(\textit{d}4\).

8...0-0 9 \(\textit{d}5\)

Kruppa and Komarov have suggested 9 \(\textit{D}\textit{f}3\), but White cannot maintain the pawn on \(\textit{d}4\) in any case: 9...\(\textit{D}\textit{g}4\) 10 \(\textit{D}\textit{d}5\) (or 10 \(\textit{D}\textit{b}3\) \(\textit{D}\textit{c}7\) 11 \(\textit{D}\textit{a}3\) \(\textit{D}\textit{d}7\) 12 \(\textit{D}\textit{e}3\) \(\textit{D}\textit{xf}3\) 13 \(\textit{D}\textit{xf}3\) \(\textit{e}5\) with both
the initiative and certain positional pluses) 10...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}d7} when Black is all set to break with ...\texttt{f}5 and White is forced on to the defensive.

9...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}}6}?

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}

\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Black has active and good play and stands at least equal.

\section*{Conclusion}

The lines in this chapter are by no means harmless. Simplistic natural play by Black will not suffice for equal chances — concrete knowledge is required, but Black can equalize with correct play without too much effort. After 7 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{a}}3}, Black should insist on playing ...\texttt{c}5, after which the opening debate revolves around the functionality of the bishop on a3; Black usually emerges successful.

The two checks on a4 and b5 are quite different from each other. 7 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}}5}+ is, in my opinion, an overrated line, as Black can obtain a good, normal Grünfeld position with standard counterplay. However, 7 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{a}}4}+ is the most critical line in this chapter. The queen exchange on d7 should not present Black with any problems, but 8 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}}3} is really dangerous. Hopefully, my suggestion against it will stand the test of time and solve the slight problems Black has recently been facing in this line!
Chapter Six

4 cxd5 \( \text{dx}d5 \)
without 5 e4

1 d4 \( \text{gf}6 \) 2 c4 g6 3 \( \text{d}c3 \) d5 4 cxd5 \( \text{dx}d5 \)

Apart from the standard 5 e4, White has a few other ideas at his disposal. These chiefly aim to strengthen the impact of the coming e4 by preventing or discouraging a knight exchange on c3.

A: 5 \( \text{a}a4 \)
B: 5 \( \text{d}d2 \)
C: 5 \( \text{f}f3 \)

This extraordinary idea was introduced by the Armenian grandmaster, Ashot Nadanian. White wants to play e4 without allowing an exchange on c3, while also preventing ...c5. The move is not entirely harmless, but it can hardly prove effective should Black respond dynamically.

5...e5! 6 dxe5

Instead, 6 a3 e4 is not what White wanted, while after 6 e4 \( \text{df}6 \) he comes under some pressure in the centre:

a) 7 \( \text{g}g5 \) exd4! 8 e5 (8 \( \text{gb}3 \) h6 is also very good for Black) 8...\( \text{b}b4+ \) 9 \( \text{c}c3 \) (as Rowson observes, 9 \( \text{e}e2? \) \( \text{wd}5! \) is strong) 9...\( \text{wd}7! \) 10 \( \text{xf}6 \) dxc3 (Rowson) and Black wins.

b) 7 dxe5 \( \text{xd}1+ \) 8 \( \text{xd}1 \) \( \text{exe}4 \) 9 \( \text{e}e3 \) \( \text{d}d7 \) 10 \( \text{c}c3 \) \( \text{xc}3+ \) 11 bxc3 \( \text{a}a4+ \) and Black's positional advantage, due to his better pawn structure, is undeniable.

6...\( \text{c}c6! \)

I believe Black does not need to do anything drastic yet. Simple, active
development should do the job, as any attempt to protect the e5-pawn is bound to be weakening, while White's only developed piece is the knight on a4.

7...\textit{\textbf{f5!}}

7...\textit{\textbf{xe5}} is not in our interests; development is first and foremost the main goal.

\textbf{8 \textit{\textbf{f3 \textit{\textbf{d7}}}}} 

At this point White has two principal continuations:

\textbf{A1: 7 a3}

\textbf{A2: 7 \textit{\textbf{f3}}} 

Instead 7 \textit{\textbf{d2}} should be met by 7...\textit{\textbf{x}}xe5!? 8 e4 (8 \textit{\textbf{b3 \textit{\textbf{e6}}}}) 8...\textit{\textbf{db4}} 9 \textit{\textbf{c3 \textit{\textbf{ed3+}}} 10 \textit{\textbf{xd3 \textit{\textbf{xd3}}} 11 \textit{\textbf{f1 \textit{\textbf{g8}}} intending ...\textit{\textbf{b5}}, with advantage for Black, and 7 e4 \textit{\textbf{b4+}} (7...\textit{\textbf{db4}} can also be played) 8 \textit{\textbf{d2 \textit{\textbf{e3}}!}} also looks promising for Black, with the idea 9 fxe3?! \textit{\textbf{h4+}} 10 g3 \textit{\textbf{xe4}} 11 \textit{\textbf{f3 \textit{\textbf{g4}}} 12 \textit{\textbf{g2 \textit{\textbf{xf3}}} 13 \textit{\textbf{xf3 \textit{\textbf{xd2+}}} 14 \textit{\textbf{dx2d2 \textit{\textbf{xf3}}} 15 \textit{\textbf{f1 \textit{\textbf{xe5}}} 16 \textit{\textbf{wd4 \textit{\textbf{wh5}}} and wins.}}}

\textbf{A1) 7 a3}

This is really taking things a bit too far. I just cannot accept that White can play the opening like this!

It already looks like White is heading for a miniature!

\textbf{9 e3}

Not forced, but in any case Black has fantastic compensation for the pawn and a very strong initiative:

a) 9 \textit{\textbf{g5 \textit{\textbf{h6}}} 10 \textit{\textbf{h4}} (or 10 \textit{\textbf{f6?! \textit{\textbf{xf6}}} 11 \textit{\textbf{exf6 \textit{\textbf{wd1+}}} 12 \textit{\textbf{xd1 \textit{\textbf{0-0-0+}}} 10...g5 11 \textit{\textbf{g3 \textit{\textbf{0-0-0}}} (Kantsler) gives Black promising play.}}}

b) 9 g3 0-0-0 is good for Black.

c) 9 \textit{\textbf{d2 0-0-0} 10 \textit{\textbf{c1 \textit{\textbf{we8}}} was also promising for Black in J.Rukavina-A.Mikhalchishin, Nova Gorica 1999.}}

d) 9 \textit{\textbf{g5 \textit{\textbf{h6}}} 10 e4 hxg5 11 exd5 \textit{\textbf{xe5}} (11...0-0-0!? is suggested by Eingorn; after the logical 12 \textit{\textbf{xg5 \textit{\textbf{e7}}} 13 \textit{\textbf{xc6 \textit{\textbf{xc6}}} 14 \textit{\textbf{c1 \textit{\textbf{a6}}} 15 \textit{\textbf{a5+ \textit{\textbf{lx8}}} 16 \textit{\textbf{xe7+ \textit{\textbf{a7}}} with excellent compensation for Black.}}}

\textbf{9...0-0-0 10 \textit{\textbf{e2}}}
Or 10... \( \text{b}5 \text{ a}6 \) (Eingorn's 10... \( \text{w}e6 \) is also good; for example, 11 \( \text{d}4 \text{ d}4 \text{ xd}4 \text{ exd}4 \text{ f}6 \) with the initiative) 11 \( \text{x}c6 \text{ w}x\text{c}6 \) 12 \( \text{d}4 \text{ w}e8 \) 13 \( f4 \) (13 0-0 \( \text{w}x\text{e}5 \) is much better for Black) 13...\( f6 \) and I would be surprised if White can survive the early middlegame.

10...\( \text{w}7 \) 11 \( \text{b}3 \)

Note that 11 \( \text{d}4 ? \text{ d}4 ! \) is a powerful shot, while 11 \( \text{d}2 \text{ x}e5 \) 12 \( \text{b}3 \text{ g}4 \) is quite good for Black.

11...\( \text{g}7 \)

Black has a powerful initiative, B.Kantsler-B.Avrukh, Israel 1999.

A2) 7 \( \text{f}3 \text{ g}4 ?! \)

Instead 7...\( \text{d}b4 ?! \) was played in the fairly well-known game S.Lputian-A.Shirov, Montecatini Terme 2000, but as Eingorn points out, it is not good. After 8 \( a3 \text{ w}d1+ 9 \text{ x}d1 \text{ a}6 \) Black can only fight for a draw, and in particular 10 \( b4 \text{ e}6 \) 11 \( \text{c}2 \text{ f}5+ \) 12 \( \text{b}2 \text{ g}7 \) 13 \( f4 \) seems very bad for Black to me.

The text move is an interesting suggestion of Eingorn's, while another of his ideas is 7...\( \text{f}5 \) 8 \( \text{c}3 \) (8 \( a3 \text{ w}d7 \)

leads us back to Line A1) 8...\( \text{c}3 \text{ c}3 \text{ w}d8+ \text{ d}8 \text{ bxc}3 \text{ g}7 \), which he assesses as equal. In fact, after a reasonable continuation such as 11 \( \text{g}5 \text{ d}5 \) 12 \( \text{f}6 \) 0-0 13 \( e3 \text{ c}5 \) Black has the initiative. This is reason enough to condemn White's opening play, but 7...\( \text{g}4 \) appeals to me even more!

8 \( a3 \text{ w}d7 \) 9 \( \text{c}3 \)

Black is also rather comfortable after 9 \( \text{h}3 \text{ x}f3 \) 10 \( \text{g}x\text{f}3 \) 0-0-0; for example, 11 \( e4 \text{ f}6 \) 12 \( \text{w}d7+ \text{ x}d7 \) 13 \( \text{g}5 \) (13 \( f4 \) \( \text{d}4 \) is bad for White) 13...\( \text{e}8 \) regaining the pawn, while White is left with an inferior pawn structure.

9...\( \text{x}c3 \) 10 \( \text{w}d7+ \text{ x}d7 \) 11 \( \text{bxc}3 \text{ g}7 \)

Black has excellent positional compensation for the pawn and promising long-term chances.

B) 5 \( \text{d}2 \)

Yet another system which has been popular of late. White intends to recapture on c3 with the bishop, thereby hoping to counterbalance the activity of the Grünfeld bishop on the long diagonal. However, this move is somewhat unnatural and that prompts Black
to avoid the exchange on c3, after which White will have to spend a tempo moving the bishop again.

5...\texttt{\&}g7 6 e4

Note that 6 \texttt{\&}f3 is covered below in Line C1.

6...\texttt{\&}b6 7 \texttt{\&}e3 0-0

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Black has two principal ideas to attack the white centre: he can pressurize the d4-pawn with ...\texttt{\&}c6 and ...\texttt{\&}g4, or strike against e4 with ...f5. The proper selection of plan depends on White’s choice at this important crossroads:

\begin{itemize}
\item B1: 8 h3
\item B2: 8 f4
\item B3: 8 \texttt{\&}b5
\item B4: 8 \texttt{\&}e2
\end{itemize}

Before we move on to White’s main options, let’s take a look at some rare alternatives:

\begin{itemize}
\item a) 8 \texttt{\&}f3 \texttt{\&}g4 9 \texttt{\&}e2 \texttt{\&}c6 transposes to Line B42.
\item b) 8 a4?! weakens White’s position for no reason: 8...a5! 9 \texttt{\&}e2 \texttt{\&}c6 10 d5 \texttt{\&}b4 11 \texttt{\&}f3 (11 \texttt{\&}c1 f5 12 \texttt{\&}b5? c6 13 dxc6 \texttt{\&}xd1+ 14 \texttt{\&}xd1 \texttt{\&}xa4 was a disaster for White in L.Alburt-J.Benjamin, New York 1993) 11...f5 with an edge.
\item c) 8 \texttt{\&}c1 c6 9 \texttt{\&}e2 \texttt{\&}a6 10 \texttt{\&}f3 \texttt{\&}g4 11 0-0 \texttt{\&}c7 12 \texttt{\&}d2 \texttt{\&}xf3 13 \texttt{\&}xf3 \texttt{\&}d7 left the white king under attack in P.Iotti-N.Davies, Porto San Giorgio 1999.
\item d) 8 \texttt{\&}d2 intends to further support d4, but is inefficient: 8...\texttt{\&}c6 9 \texttt{\&}d1 (or 9 0-0-0 e5 10 d5 \texttt{\&}d4 11 \texttt{\&}f3 \texttt{\&}g4 12 \texttt{\&}e2 \texttt{\&}xf3 13 \texttt{\&}xf3, M.Mason-T.Mirabile, Philadelphia 2006, and now 13...c6 with the initiative) 9...e5 10 d5 \texttt{\&}d4
\item 11 f4 (11 \texttt{\&}xd4? exd4 12 \texttt{\&}b5 \texttt{\&}e8 was disastrous for White in Z.Gorecki-F.Windekilde, Copenhagen 2001, as was 11 \texttt{\&}d3 f5 12 \texttt{\&}g5 \texttt{\&}d6 13 \texttt{\&}f3 fxe4 14 fxe4 c6 in D.Kljako-I.Balinov, Bled 1998) 11...\texttt{\&}g4 12 fxe5 \texttt{\&}xd1 13 \texttt{\&}xd4 \texttt{\&}h5 and Black is better, as in the long run White will be unable to support his e5-pawn.
\item e) Finally, the exotic 8 h4 didn’t turn out well in F.Vallejo Pons-P.Svidler, Morelia 2006: 8...\texttt{\&}c6 9 e5 \texttt{\&}f5 (9...h5!? is another option) 10 \texttt{\&}e2 (10 g4 \texttt{\&}e6 11 h5 \texttt{\&}d5 is no improvement) 10...\texttt{\&}b4 11 \texttt{\&}c1 (11 g4 \texttt{\&}c2+ 12 \texttt{\&}f1 \texttt{\&}xe3+ 13 fxe3
\end{itemize}
\( e6 \) was the game, with a clear plus for Black) 11...c5! and White’s centre is collapsing.

**B1) 8 h3?!**

This prevents \( g4 \), but again costs White valuable time.

8...f5!

\[ \text{Diagram} \]

9 exf5

Instead 9 \( \texttt{xf3} \) (9 \( \texttt{w2 fxe4 10 xxe4} \) \( e6 \) and ...\( d5 \) is good for Black) 9...f4 sees Black change direction and focus on d4 once more: 10 \( \texttt{d2} \) (10 \( \texttt{xc6 d5} \) \( e5 \) 12 \( \texttt{xe2} \) e6! was good for Black in I.Bitansky-R.Romon Poves, Aviles 2000) 10...\( \texttt{xc6} \) 11 d5 (11 \( \texttt{xb3+ h8} \) 12 \( \texttt{xe2} \) a5 13 \( \texttt{c3 b4!?} \) 14 \( \texttt{xb4 axb4} \) 15 \( \texttt{xb4 e5} \) is promising for Black) 11...\( \texttt{e5} \) 12 \( \texttt{xe5} \) (or 12 \( \texttt{w3 a5} \) 13 a4 \( \texttt{xzf3} \) 14 gxf3 e6 15 \( \texttt{c4 w7} \) with a clear plus, Y.Zimmerman-C.Pedersen, Budapest 2002) 12...\( \texttt{xe5} \) 13 \( \texttt{b3} \) (Y.Zimmerman-S.Atalik, Bled 1999) 13...\( \texttt{e6} \) 14 dxe6 \( \texttt{we8} \) 15 \( \texttt{e7+ ff7} \) 16 0-0-0 \( \texttt{we7} \) and with ...\( e6 \) coming, Black is better.

9...\( \texttt{xf5} \) 10 \( \texttt{xf3} \)

10 \( \texttt{wb3+ h8} \) 11 g4 \( \texttt{d7} \) 12 \( \texttt{g2 c6} \) 13 \( \texttt{ge2 a5} \) 14 \( \texttt{d1 bc4} \) was very good for Black in S.Peric-L.Milesi, Cannes 1997.

10...\( \texttt{xc6} \) 11 \( \texttt{wb3+} \)

White also comes under pressure after 11 \( \texttt{xe2} \) \( d6 \) (or simply 11...e5!?) 12 \( \texttt{dxe5} \) \( xxd1+ \) 13 \( \texttt{xd1} \) \( xxe5 \) with equality, V.Ruban-P.Leko, Tilburg 1993) 12 0-0 \( \texttt{ad8} \) 13 \( \texttt{c1} \) (S.Weimeier-A.Greenfeld, Lippstadt 2004) and now 13...\( \texttt{wb4} \) prepares ...e5.

11...\( \texttt{h8} \)

\[ \text{Diagram} \]

12 0-0-0

Instead 12 \( \texttt{d5} \) \( \texttt{e5} \) 13 \( \texttt{xe5} \) \( \texttt{xe5} \) 14 \( \texttt{d1 a5} \) 15 g4 (both 15 a3?! a4! and 15 \( \texttt{d3} \) a4! 16 \( \texttt{wb4} \) a3 17 \( \texttt{d4 wb6} \) give Black an edge) was seen in B.Predojevic-M.Rade, Neum 2005, when I think that Black can gain the upper hand with 15...\( \texttt{d7} \) 16 \( \texttt{g2} \) a4 17 \( \texttt{wb4} \) a3. Likewise, 12 \( \texttt{d1} \) a5! 13 \( \texttt{g5} \) (or 13 a3 a4 14 \( \texttt{wa2 c2} \) 15 \( \texttt{d2 b3} \) 16 \( \texttt{wb1 cd5} \) with some advantage) 13...\( \texttt{xb4} \) with the initiative.

12...a5!

Harassing the white queen. Now White must avoid 13 \( \texttt{e5} \) a4 14 \( \texttt{ff7+} \) \( \texttt{xf7} \) 15 \( \texttt{xf7} \) \( \texttt{d6} \) 16 g4 \( \texttt{f8} \) 17 \( \texttt{xf8+ xf8} \) 18 \( \texttt{gxf5} \) a3, but even 14 \( \texttt{wb5} \) a3 15 \( \texttt{b3 wd6} \) leaves him in trouble.
B2) 8 f4

Aggressive, but too loosening.

8...c6! 9 d5

White should avoid 9 f3? g4 10 d5 (or 10 e5 b4 with full control over d5 and an edge) 10...a5 11 d4 xf3 12 gxf3 e6 when his centre comes under pressure.

9...b8 10 a4

10 f3 c6 11 b3 cxd5 12 exd5 cxd5 13 exd5 d7 14 e2 a5+ 15 d2 b6 16 c3 xc3+ 17 bxc3 e3! was better for Black in M.Euwe-S.Reshevsky, Holland 1938, while Black enjoyed very good compensation after 10 d4 h6 11 f3 c6 12 h4 cxd5 13 exd5 e5 14 xe5 d7 15 d4 f6 16 0-0-0 d6 in V.Korchnoi-L.McShane, Igualada 2005.

10...e5!

Correctly fighting for the central dark squares.

11 f5?

Alternatively, 11 fxe5 xe5 12 f3 was F.Gheorghiu-L.Ftacnik, Palma de Mallorca 1989, and now strong is 12 xc3+! 13 bxc3 e8 14 d4 f5! 15 d3 (or 15 g5 xd5! - Ftacnik) 15...fxe4 16 xe4 c5 (Ftacnik), while 11 a5 d6 12 f3 e7! (Black now threatens ...fxe4) 13 d3 exf4 14 xf4 d5 15 xe5 xe5 16 xe5 xe5 17 0-0 d7 18 c1 d4+ 19 h1 e5 left White on the defensive in H.Pilnik-S.Reshevsky, New York 1942.

11...xf5 12 a5

So far we have followed a suggestion of Davies' and now I feel that Black has good play after 12...d6 13 exf5 c6.

B3) 8 b5!?

A recent trend which discourages ...c6. I must say, though, that in my view this is taking the concept of prophylaxis a little too far, even if several strong grandmasters have tried it.

8...d6

A good response, preparing ...c6 as well as ...d8.

9 bge2

9 f3 a6 10 e2 c6 threatens ...g4 and is unpleasant for White.

9...a6 10 d3 d8 11 0-0 c6 12 d5 e5 13 c2 bc4!?

The logical 13...e6 14 dxe6 xe6 was attractive for Black in A.Aleksandrov-
A. Grischuk, Internet (blitz) 2004. After the text, 14 \(\text{c1 d7}\) gives Black a promising initiative.

**B4) 8 e2**

![Diagram](image)

White contents himself with simple development.

8...\(c6\)

Now a decision must be made regarding the d4-pawn.

**B41: 9 d5**

**B42: 9 f3**

**B41) 9 d5 e5 10 d4**

White is threatening f4, so Black must react promptly.

10...c5!

The only move according to Svidler, but also a very strong one; Black buys some time to create threats against b2.

11 xc5 ec4 12 xc4

Black is much better after 12 xb6?! xb6 13 xc4 xb2, and 12 b3 xb2 13 c1 (13 xb2? a4 wins the house) 13...xc3+ 14 xc3 2a4 is also good for Black, D.Palo-A.Jerez Perez, Andorra la Vella 2004.

12 xc4 13 b3

Note that 13 xe2 xb2 will transpose after 14 xb2.

13 xc2! 14 xb2 c7 15 b4

Instead 15 b4 a5 16 a3 b6 17 ge2 bxc5 18 0-0 a6 left Black much better in I.Shliperman-B.Avrukh, Cala Galdana 1996, while 15 a3 b6 16 b4 a5 17 c1 axb4! 18 xb4 (18 xa8? xc3+) 18...a6! 19 ge2 d7 supplies excellent compensation, due to the two bishops and the hanging state of the white knights; Black will further open up the position with ...e6.

15...a5 16 ge2 axb4 17 xb4 g4!
This occurred in G.Kacheishvili-P.Svidler, Szeged 1994. Black is better here, in view of White’s obvious coordination difficulties.

B42) 9 \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{g4} \) 10 d5 \( \text{xf3} \)

White now faces another important decision:

11 \( \text{gxf3} \)

Instead 11 \( \text{xf3} \) avoids structural damage at some cost in terms of time. Then 11...\( \text{e5} \) 12 \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{ec4} \) 13 \( \text{c1} \) c6 14 dxc6 bxc6 gives Black good counterplay; for example, 15 \( \text{c2} \) (15 0-0 \( \text{xd1} \) 16 \( \text{xd1} \) \( \text{fd8} \) leaves Black with a healthy lead in development) 15...\( \text{d4} \) ! (a strong centralizing move) 16 0-0 \( \text{fd8} \) 17 \( \text{b1} \) \( \text{a3} \) ! 18 bxa3 \( \text{xc3} \) 19 \( \text{xc3} \) (Black is also better after 19 \( \text{b3} \) c5 20 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{a5} \)?, intending 21 \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{xb5} \) 22 \( \text{xb5} \) \( \text{d4} \) ) 19...\( \text{xc3} \) 20 \( \text{a6} \) c5 21 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{d2} \) ! and White faced serious problems in I.Sokolov-E.Sutovsky, Hastings 2000.

11...\( \text{e5} \)

White is about to set his central pawn mass rolling, but he must first cover the c4-square and that gives Black just enough time to develop counterplay.

12 \( \text{b3} ! \)

The critical move, taking c4 away from the black knights and preparing f4. Alternatively:

a) 12 \( \text{d4} \) e6! 13 f4 \( \text{ed7} \) 14 \( \text{g7} \)

\( \text{xg7} \)

15 \( \text{d4+} \) (15 dxe6 fxe6 is very good for Black as the f4-pawn is extremely weak) 15...\( \text{f6} \) 16 0-0-0 (Rowson’s 16 e5 \( \text{h4} \) again highlights the weakness of f4, while 16 \( \text{xf6} + \) \( \text{xf6} \) 17 \( \text{f3} \) exd5 18 e5 \( \text{d7} \) 19 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 20 \( \text{xd5} \) c6 21 \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{c5} \) leaves Black better) 16...\( \text{exd5} \) 17 \( \text{xd5} \) (or 17 exd5 \( \text{c8} \) 18 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 19 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{e7} \) 20 \( \text{b1} \) \( \text{b6} \) which was pretty favourable for Black in G.Rojo Huerta-M.Turov, Linares 2000) 17...\( \text{xd5} \) 18 exd5 \( \text{ad8} \) (so far M.Tyrptana-A.Lagunow, Berlin 1994) 19 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{b6} \) ! and Black can organize strong pressure against d5 after the exchange of queens, followed by ...\( \text{d6} \) and ...\( \text{fd8} \).

b) 12 0-0 \( \text{ec4} \) 13 \( \text{g5} \) h6 14 \( \text{h4} \) was tried in R.Sheldon-C.Beaumont, Newport 1999, and now the simple
14...f5 is promising.

12...c6 13 f4!

Instead 13 0-0-0 cxd5 14 Qxd5 (14 Qxb6 Qxb6 15 Qxb6 axb6 16 Qxd5 e6 17 Qxb6 Qxa2 is quite promising, too, for Black) occurred in V.Korchnoi-G.Kasparov, Wijk aan Zee 2000, and now Black could obtain the edge, according to Lagunov, after 14...Qc8+ 15 Qb1 Qxd5 16 Qxd5 e6 17 Qc5 Qd7 18 Qd1 Qe7! 19 Qdc1 Qc6.

13...Qe7 14 dxc6

Black gains good pressure down the c-file after 14 Qd1 Qxc3+ 15 bxc3 cxd5 16 exd5 Qc7.

14...bxc6

15 0-0-0

Various other moves have been tried here, but they don’t promise anything; for example, 15 Qd1 e5 16 fxe5 Qh4 17 e6 Qxc3+ 18 Qxc3 Qxe4 19 exf7+ Qxf7, with a good game for Black, or 15 0-0 Qh6!, followed by ...Qc7 with pressure against f4.

15...e6!? 

Black is now better in every line; for example, 16 Qa3 Qh4 (K.Miton-R.Wojtaszek, Goa 2002), or 16 Qd6?! Qc7!, or 16 Qc2 Qe7 17 h4 Qfb8 18 h5 a5 19 hxg6 hxg6 20 Qd2 a4 21 Qd4 e5 22 fxe5 c5! (R.Sheldon-J.Rowson, Southend 1999).

C) 5 Qf3 Qg7

White can now opt for one of the main lines with 6 e4 Qxc3 7 bxc3 c5 8 Qb1 (see Chapter Two) or prefer to develop his dark-squared bishop.

C1: Qd2
C2: Qg5

C1) 6 Qd2

This is a fairly harmless version of Line B, above.

6...0-0

7 Qc1

The most common, but White might also try:

a) 7 Qb3 Qb6 8 Qd1 (or 8 e3 Q8d7 9 Qe4 a5 10 Qc1 e5 11 Qc3 Qe7 12 dxe5 Qxe5 13 Qxe5 Qxe5 14 Qxe5 Qxe5 15 Qc3 Qe6 16 Qc2 Qfd8 and Black was better in K.Sabri-T.L.Petrosian, Tehran 2005) 8...Qe6 9 Qc2 Qc6 10 Qf4 oc-

b) 7 e4 \textit{d}6 8 \textit{e}3 \textit{g}4 transposes to a sideline examined in Line B and not a very good one for White at that.

c) 7 \textit{c}c1 \textit{d}b4! 8 \textit{d}b5 \textit{c}8a6 9 a3 \textit{c}c6 10 \textit{h}h6 \textit{g}4 11 \textit{x}g7 \textit{x}g7 12 \textit{w}d2 \textit{d}d5 was again good for Black in G.Kuzmin-L.Stein, Sochi 1970.

d) 7 e3 c5 8 dxc5 \textit{d}b4 gives Black obvious compensation; ...\textit{d}d3+ is the intention and it is unlikely that White can even aspire to retain the extra pawn on c5.

7...\textit{d}b6

8 \textit{g}5

The only way to justify White’s \textit{d}d2 idea. Instead 8 e3 is pretty lame and after 8...\textit{c}c6 9 \textit{b}b5 e5 10 \textit{xc}6 exd4 11 \textit{xd}4 bxc6 Black has a very active position, while 8 \textit{f}4 is best met by 8...c5! 9 dxc5 \textit{xc}3+ 10 bxc3 (or 10 \textit{xc}3 \textit{xd}1+ 11 \textit{xd}1 \textit{a}a4 12 \textit{a}a3, J.Partenen-T.Halmeenmaki, Finland 2001, and now 12...\textit{d}d8+ 13 \textit{c}c1 \textit{xc}5 14 e3 \textit{e}4 with the initiative) 10...\textit{xd}1+ 11 \textit{xd}1 \textit{a}a4 12 \textit{h}h6 \textit{e}e8 13 c4 \textit{c}c6 when Black was doing very well in V.Smyslov-H.Ree, Wijk aan Zee 1972.

8...h6 9 \textit{f}4

9 \textit{h}h4 g5 10 \textit{g}3 \textit{c}6 11 e3 transposes.

9...\textit{c}6 10 e3 g5 11 \textit{g}3 g4!

In this forceful way Black ensures that ...e5 will come with some effect.

12 \textit{d}d2

12 \textit{h}h4?! is even worse in view of 12...e5! 13 dxe5 (13 d5? \textit{d}b4 14 e4 \textit{f}6) 13...\textit{xe}5 14 \textit{e}2 \textit{f}6! with a clear advantage.

12...e5! 13 dxe5 \textit{xe}5 14 \textit{c}2 \textit{d}d5

Black has assumed the initiative and now 15 \textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 16 \textit{c}4? \textit{xc}3 17 bxc3 \textit{d}6! left White in big trouble in S.Martinovic-J.Timman, Amsterdam 1985, while even the superior 16 \textit{e}4 \textit{xc}3 17 bxc3 \textit{e}e8 18 \textit{d}4 \textit{f}5 gives Black a powerful initiative.

\textbf{C2) 6 \textit{g}5}

In this very rare line White will follow up with \textit{c}1, aiming to force Black to trade on c3.

6...h6

The inclusion of this move is useful
because it restricts the influence of White’s dark-squared bishop.

7 \( \text{h4} \)

Naturally 7 \( \text{d}2 \) is not very consistent; for example, 7...\( \text{b6} \) 8 e4 \( \text{g4} \) 9 \( \text{e}3 \) 0-0 10 a4 a5 11 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{c6} \) 12 d5 \( \text{b}4 \) 13 \( \text{d}2 \) (J.Stocek-J.Borisek, Nova Gorica 2004) 13...\( \text{x}3 \) 14 \( \text{xf}3 \) e6 and Black is better.

7...c5 8 \( \text{c}1 \)

8 e3 is again inconsistent. Black obtains a good position against an IQP with 8...\( \text{xd}4 \) 9 \( \text{exd}4 \) 0-0 10 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 11 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) (11...\( \text{g}4 \)!! 12 d5 \( \text{a}6 \), intending...\( \text{c}5 \) is another good plan) 12 d5 \( \text{a}5 \) 13 0-0 (T.Taylor-G.Antal, Budapest 2003) 13...\( \text{x}3 \) 14 \( \text{xb}3 \) 14 \( \text{xb}3 \) \( \text{g}4 \), generating annoying threats.

8...\( \text{xc}3 \)

Black must be careful here not to overlook that the obvious 8...\( \text{xd}4 \)?? loses to 9 \( \text{xd}5 \).

9 \( \text{b}xc3 \) \( \text{e}6 \)

An important move. The bishop is going to \( \text{d}5 \), from where it eyes both flanks and controls some important squares. Moreover, the \( \text{a}2 \)-pawn is made to feel a little sensitive.

10 \( \text{a}4+ \)

Similar is 10 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 11 e3 \( \text{d}5 \) when Black was fine in I.Sokolov-L.McShane, Selfoss 2003, while 10 e4?! asks too much from the position and 10...0-0 (10...\( \text{a}5 \) is also strong) 11 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{xa}2 \) 12 0-0 \( \text{e}6 \) hardly gives White any compensation for his pawn.

10...\( \text{c}6 \) 11 e3 0-0 12 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{d}5 \)

Black has equalized and can play for more, perhaps with a kingside advance; for example, 13 0-0 \( \text{c}8 \) 14 \( \text{fd}1 \) \( \text{cxd}4 \) 15 \( \text{cxd}4 \) g5 16 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 17 \( \text{b}5 \) \( \text{xa}4 \) 18 \( \text{xa}4 \) f5 saw White come under pressure in A.Lahiri-T.Vakhidov, Chennai 2004.

**Conclusion**

The Nadanian variation enjoyed some popularity a few years ago, but it has clearly been defanged. However, 5 \( \text{d}2 \) is an important system and the weapon of several grandmasters. Against it, Black must not waste time in purposefully attacking White’s centre and I feel that Black’s chances are by no means inferior, especially since in many variations White’s lag in development is a telling factor. Finally, the two rare lines examined after 5 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{g}7 \) do not present any danger; common sense should suffice to obtain a good position against them.
Chapter Seven

The Russian System

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5

Here we will consider:

A: 4 ♘f3 ♘g7 5 ♙b3
B: 4 ♙b3

Line A is the Russian System, while Line B is a rare transpositional attempt. The Russian System is a critical branch of the Grünfeld since White intensifies the pressure against d5, practically forcing Black temporarily to abandon the centre.

A) 4 ♘f3 ♘g7 5 ♙b3 dxc4 6 ♙xc4 0-0 7 e4

If left unhindered, White will now develop freely, stabilize his central superiority and deprive Black of counterplay. The alternatives are much less critical:

a) 7 g3?! is inconsistent with White’s development scheme: 7...♕e6 8 ♙a4 (8 ♙d3 ♗c6 9 ♘g2 ♘d5 10 ♙d1 ♙b6, followed by ...♗d7, is fine for Black) 8...♘c6 9 ♘g2 ♘d5 10 0-0 ♙b6 11 ♙d1 (so far S.Reshevsky-W.Lombardy, New York 1960) 11...♕xd4 12 ♙xd4 ♙xd4 13 ♙xd4 ♘xd4 14 ♙xb7 ♙ab8 15 ♙a6 ♙c4 leaves Black slightly better.

b) 7 ♘g5 ♙e6 8 ♙b5 ♘c6 gives Black the initiative.

c) 7 ♘f4 is tried on occasion. A simple and sound way to meet it is 7...c6! 8 e4 (harmless is 8 ♙a4 ♘f5 9 e3 ♙bd7 10 ♙e2 h6 11 0-0 ♙h5 with equality, while 8 ♙b3 ♙a5 9 e3 ♙bd7 10 ♙e2 ♙d5 11 ♙g3 ♙c5! intending ...♕e4 gives Black the initiative) 8...b5 9 ♙b3 (9 ♙d3 ♙a5! 10 ♙e2 b4 11 ♙d1 c5! sees White’s centre collapse) 9...♕e6! (planning ...♕a5 and ...b4) 10 ♙c2 (in E.Hadet-C.Marcelin, Issy Les Moulineaux 2000, White preferred 10 d5 cxd5 11 ♘g5, but now 11...♕c6! is promising for Black) 10...♕a5 and again Black has the initiative.

After 7 e4, Black usually opts for 7...♕a6 and then ...c5, or the more ambi-
tious 7...a6, intending ...b5 and ...c5. Overall, I feel that Black is walking a tightrope in these systems (especially so after 7...a6), while the deep theoretical knowledge necessary to employ them is somewhat off-putting. Instead I have opted for a less violent set-up:

First of all with 7...c6, Black eyes d4, greatly restricting White's development options. He intends to gain time by harassing the white queen with the important manoeuvre ...d7-b6, while the light-squared bishop is destined for g4. At the right moment, a central break will occur, with dark square domination often a resultant feature. Sometimes after ...d7-b6, Black will even strike with ...f5; a concept we've already seen in the 5 d2 variation.

Our preferred system can also arise after 7...g4, but like Rowson, I feel that the suggested move order is preferable, as it strongly discourages 8 e3, as we shall see. White has now tried several moves:

A1: 8 e3
A2: 8 d5
A3: 8 g5
A4: 8 e5
A5: 8 f4
A6: 8 h3
A7: 8 e2
A1) 8 \( \text{d4} \) 9 \( \text{g4!} \) positional advantage.

A key idea behind not hurrying with ...\( \text{g4} \).

9 0-0-0

Alternatively:

a) 9 e5 \( \text{d6} \) 10 \( \text{c5} \) (D.Lima-E.Tsuboi, Brasilia 2000) 10...a5 threatens ...\( \text{h4} \) when White is already on the defensive.

b) 9 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{dxe3} \) 10 fxe3 e5 11 d5 (or 11 0-0 \( \text{exd4} \) 12 \( \text{exd4} \) \( \text{dxd4} \) 13 \( \text{ad1} \) \( \text{xf3}+ \) 14 \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{g5} \) with the initiative) 11...\( \text{d7} \) 12 0-0-0 a6 13 \( \text{b1} \) \( \text{d6} \) 14 \( \text{b3} \) b5 15 \( \text{c1} \) \( \text{d7} \) and in J.Murray-F.Olafsson, Reykjavik 1975, Black had the upper hand.

c) 9 \( \text{d1} \) \( \text{dxe3} \) 10 fxe3 e5! sees Black immediately strike on the dark squares: 11 d5 (or 11 dxe5 \( \text{e8} \) 12 \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{dxe5} \) 13 \( \text{dxc7} \) \( \text{h8} \) with excellent compensation as ...f5 is coming – just look at the poor white king!) 11...\( \text{e7} \) 12 \( \text{e2} \) (V.Raceanu-N.Gerard, Bucharest 2002) 12...a6 and Black, who intends ...\( \text{d6} \) and ...f5, has the initiative.

9 \( \text{d3} \)

White has tried a number of other options, but in each case Black strikes quickly at d5 with ...c6 and gains a good game.
a) 9 \( \text{Bc}5 \) c6 10 dxc6 (and not 10 b4? cxd5! 11 e5 \( \text{Be}4 \) 12 \( \text{Bxe}4 \) dxe4 with a clear advantage) 10...\( \text{Dxc}6 \) 11 \( \text{Bx}e2 \) (J.Richardson-S.Ernst, Lichfield 2000) 11...\( \text{Bxd}7 \) 12 \( \text{Bxa}3 \) \( \text{Bxe}5 \) 13 \( \text{Bxe}5 \) \( \text{Bd}4 \) with an edge.

b) 9 \( \text{Bb}4 \) c6 10 dxc6 \( \text{Bxc}6 \) 11 \( \text{Bwa}4 \) \( \text{Bg}4 \) with the initiative.

c) 9 \( \text{Bwa}4 \) c6 10 dxc6 (instead 10 \( \text{Bd}2 \) cxd5 11 \( \text{Bxd}5 \) \( \text{Bxd}5 \) 12 \( \text{Bxa}5 \) b6 13 \( \text{Bd}1 \) bxa5 14 \( \text{Bxd}5 \) \( \text{Bc}7 \) is obviously good for Black, while 10 b4? \( \text{Bxd}5! \) 11 \( \text{Bxd}5 \) cxd5?! 12 e5 (\( \text{Bc}7 \) just wins) 10...\( \text{Dxc}6 \) 11 \( \text{Bxe}2 \) \( \text{Bd}7 \) 12 \( \text{Bxe}3 \) \( \text{Bb}6 \) 13 \( \text{Bwb}5 \) \( \text{Bg}4 \) 14 \( \text{Bd}1 \) \( \text{Bc}7 \) 15 0-0 e6 16 a4 was seen in T.Nemec-D.Koval, Bratislava 1991, and now simply 16...\( \text{Bfd}8 \) ensures equality.

d) 9 \( \text{Bwb}5 \) c6 10 dxc6 \( \text{Bxc}6 \) 11 \( \text{Bxe}2 \) a6 12 \( \text{Bwb}3 \) (M.Pukklia-P.Jantti, Helsinki 2000) 12...\( \text{Bxe}6 \) 13 \( \text{Bwc}2 \) \( \text{Bb}4 \) 14 \( \text{Bwb}1 \) \( \text{Bc}7 \) and Black is better.

9...c6

10 dxc6

Of course, 10 b4? \( \text{Bxe}4! \) is a blunder and White should also avoid 10 \( \text{Bxe}3 \) cxd5 11 exd5 \( \text{Bf}5 \) 12 \( \text{Bd}2 \) \( \text{Be}4 \) 13 \( \text{Bxe}4 \) \( \text{Bxe}4 \) 14 \( \text{Bd}1 \) \( \text{Bc}8 \) 15 \( \text{Bd}4 \) \( \text{Bxf}3 \) 16 \( \text{Bxg}7 \) \( \text{Bxd}1 \) 17 \( \text{Bxf}8 \) (J.Thomassen-K.White, Gausdal 2005) when Black can win with 17...\( \text{Bxf}8 \) 18 \( \text{Bxd}1 \) \( \text{Bh}6 \). Finally, 10 \( \text{Bg}5 \) cxd5 11 exd5 \( \text{Bf}5 \) 12 \( \text{Bd}2 \) \( \text{Bc}8 \) 13 \( \text{Bxf}6 \) \( \text{Bxf}6 \) (T.Kuzmak-P.Staniszewski, Bielsko Biala 1990) is much better for Black, who has two strong bishops.

10...\( \text{Bxc}6 \) 11 \( \text{Bxd}8 \) \( \text{Bxd}8 \)

Black has a slight development lead.

12 \( \text{Bb}2 \) b6 13 0-0 \( \text{Bb}7 \)

Here 14 e5 \( \text{Bd}5 \) 15 \( \text{Bxd}5 \) \( \text{Bxd}5 \) gives Black the initiative. Thus White preferred 14 \( \text{Bf}4 \) in W.Uhlmann-V.Korchnoi, Stockholm Interzonal 1962, but after 14...\( \text{Bb}4 \) 15 e5 \( \text{Bae}4 \) 16 \( \text{Bxe}4 \) \( \text{Bxe}4 \) 17 \( \text{Bfd}1 \) \( \text{Bd}3 \) 18 \( \text{Bxd}3 \) \( \text{Bxd}3 \) Black had a slight edge due to his bishop pair.

A3) 8 \( \text{Bg}5 \) \( \text{h}6 \)

Renewing the problem of where to station the bishop.

9 \( \text{Bh}4 \)

This leaves the bishop away from the centre, which means that White will have to push d5, but the alternatives also fail to impress:

a) 9 \( \text{Bxf}6 \) \( \text{Bxf}6 \) 10 0-0-0 \( \text{Bg}7 \) gives Black good long-term chances with his extra dark-squared bishop; he should continue with ...\( \text{Bd}6 \) and ...a5.
b) 9 e3 g4 10 e5 was seen in V.Epishin-A.Ledger, Gibraltar 2003, and now the typical 10...e6 11 a4 d7 12 b3 a5, intending ...a4 or ...b4, gives Black good play.

9...g4 10 d5

10...xf3

The direct 10...a5 can also be played and is similar: 11 b4 xf3 12 gxf3 b6 (Black can also equalize with the forcing 12...c6! 13 0-0-0 cxd5 14 xf6 xf6 15 xxd5 c8+ 16 b1 c6 17 xf6+ exf6 18 xxd8 xb4 as White’s kingside pawn structure is weakened) 13 b5 a6 14 a4 d6! and Black had the initiative in A.Guseinov-D.Zagorskas, Pardubice 1995.

11 gxf3

Instead 11 dxc6 b5 12 xb5 xe4 13 d1 b8 14 xf6 exf6 is promising for Black, as is 11 xf6 xf6 12 dxc6 b5 13 xb5 g5.

11...e5 12 we2 h5 13 g3 c6

With a typical position for this line and one in which Black stands well; White’s lack of development is a cause for concern.

A4) 8 e5!? d7

9 e3

Black was comfortably placed after 9 e2 b6 10 c5 e6 11 e3 h6 12 d1 d5 in J.Colchado-M.Aguilar, Lima 2002.

9...b6 10 c5

Best, whereas 10 b3 e6 (also promising is 10...a5 11 a3 e6 12 c2 a4, K.Stead-V.Feldman, Gold Coast 2001) 11 d1 (11 c2 b4 12 d1 c4 13 c1 c5 gave Black a clear edge in Z.Birovljevic-M.Podobnik, Pula 2000) 11...d7 gives Black an edge, with ...ad8 and ...f6 being the plan.

10...a5! 11 e2
White should avoid 11 a3? a4! when suddenly a nasty ...a5 is threatened: 12 \textit{b}5 a5 13 d1 (M.Miranda-E.Tsuboi, Curitiba 1999) 13...d7 prepares ...a7 and leaves White in real trouble.

11...b4 12 0-0 c6

12...d7?! is also interesting: 13 w5 (13 w4 b6 14 c5 repeats the position) 13...c6 14 a4 b6 15 d1 d5 was equal in B.Gulko-V.Gavrikov, Tallinn 1983.

After the text, 13 e4 f5 14 fd2? is a serious mistake: 14...d6 15 g3 e6 16 a4 f5 (16...xe3!? 17 fx e3 h6 was also very good for Black in V.Milov-Ma.Tseitlin, Tel Aviv 1994) 17 exf6 exf6 and Black is much better; ...f5 is next. Better is 14 g3, although after 14...g4 Black has equalized.

A5) 8 f4

A critical move. The c6-knight is now pinned and White threatens d4-d5, so Black must react purposefully.

8...h5! 9 e3 g4

In this way Black mangles White's kingside structure and can then hope to gain a positional advantage, particularly on the dark squares. In return White will play for either a kingside attack or a direct central breakthrough, leading to some rather complex and dynamic positions.

10 0-0-0

The most aggressive choice, but also the most risky. Alternatively:

a) 10 d5 e5 11 xe5 xe5 12 g3 f3 13 g1 c6 (S.Pedersen-L.Schandorff, Aalborg 2000) and Black cannot possibly be worse.

b) 10 d1?! xfx3 11 gxf3 e5

12 dxe5 (or 12 d5 d4 13 xxd4 exd4 14 e2 e5 15 b4 f6 with an obvious advantage; here 13 xxd4 exd4 14 xxd4 xxd4 15 bxd4 was an ambitious positional exchange sacrifice in Y.Razuvaev-Y.Kotkov, Moscow 1969, but I don't see the point as 15...c6 opens lines for the black rooks and appears rather promising) 12...h4 13 e2 (13 e6? e5 highlights the weakness of f3) 13...e5 and Black enjoys the initiative.

c) 10 e5 is rather anti-positional, but White hopes to exploit the position of the h5-knight. However, after 10...a5
11 \text{Wa}4 \text{c}5 12 \text{Ed}1 \text{Cc}6, \text{Black was able to dismantle White's centre and to solve all his problems in Z.Kozul-L.Gutman, Graz 1987.}

\textbf{10...xf3 11 gxf3 e5!}

\textbf{Aiming for the aforementioned dark square control.}

\textbf{12 d5}

Instead 12 dxe5 \text{Wh}4 13 e6 fxe6! (13...Exe5 14 exf7+ \text{xf7} 15 \text{Wb}3 \text{c}6 is given as promising by Rowson, but after 16 \text{Ec}4 \text{xc}4 17 \text{Wxc}4 \text{White just seems to be better}) 14 \text{We}6+ \text{Ph}8 gives Black good compensation.

\textbf{12...Ed4 13 f4 Ef3 14 Ae2}

White can also win the exchange, but 14 Ac5 Ef4! (14...Exf4? 15 Wb3! threatens the unpleasant Ae2) 15 Exf8 Exf8 gives Black excellent play on the dark squares. He also gains good prospects after 14 f5 Ed4 15 fxe6 hxe6 16 h4 c6 (16...c5 can also be tried; 17 Wx5 Ec8 18 Wa3 Ec8 19 Ab1 a6 20 Ec1 b5 21 Ec2 Wf6 gave Black promising compensation in R.Markus-C.Lupulescu, Subotica 2003) 17 Ab1 Ed6, intending a pawn-storm on the queenside with...b5 and...a5.

\textbf{14...Exf4 15 Axf3 exe3 16 Axc5 gxc5 17 fxe3}

Or 17 f4 Wh4 with some advantage.

\textbf{17...Wd6}

The great scope of the g7-bishop gives Black excellent compensation for his split kingside.

\textbf{A6) 8 h3}

\textbf{Preventing...Ag4 and facilitating Ae3, but this gives Black a significant tempo.}

\textbf{8...Ed7}

8...e5? is another way to exploit White's loss of time: 9 dxe5 (9 d5? Ed4, intending 10 Edx4? edx4 11 Wxd4 Exe4!, is good for Black) 9...Ed7 (but not 9...Ec6? 10 exf6 Ac4 11 fxg7 Ac7 12 Ac4 and White's pieces outclassed Black's extra queen in J.Van den Berse-Laar-J.Hulin, Bethune 2003) 10 e6 (or 10 Ag5 Edx5! 11 Wd5 Ec8 with unpleasant threats) 10...fxe6 11 Wxe6+ Wh8 12 Wd5 Ed4 (12...Exf3?! also deserves attention, but is ultimately inadequate: 13 Ef3 Ad4 14 Ee3! Ac2+ 15 Ad2 c6 16 Ed6! Exa1 17 Ac1 Wa5 18 Ab1 Ac3 19 bxc3 Ac2 20 Ac1 with a clear advan-}
tage for White) 13 \$b3 \$d3+ 14 \$xd3 \$c5 and Black has good compensation for the pawn.

9 \$e3

9 d5 is inconsistent: 9...\$ce5 10 \$xe5 \$xe5 11 \$b3 e6 12 \$e3 (12 \$e2 exd5 13 exd5 c6 14 \$e3 cxd5 15 \$xd5 \$e6 16 \$xd8 \$fxd8, threatening ...\$c4, was promising for Black in G.Levtechouk-S.Barbeau, Quebec 1987) 12...exd5 13 exd5 (13 0-0-0 c6 14 exd5 cxd5 15 \$xd4 transposes, while 15 \$xd5 \$gf6 gives Black the initiative) 13...c6 14 0-0-0 cxd5 15 \$xd5 was T.Jugelt-S.Joachim, German League 1995, and now after 15...\$c7 16 \$e5 \$b8 and ...\$e6, Black has the upper hand.

9...\$b6 10 \$c5

This is almost always the best response to ...\$b6, as other moves further misplace the queen and lose control of the position. Indeed, 10 \$d3?! f5! threatens ...\$b4 and is awkward for White:

a) 11 \$e2? f4 12 \$d2 \$xd4 was a disaster for White in K.Hjornevik-T.Bae, Oslo 2003.

b) 11 \$d1? \$b4 (or 11...fxe4 12 \$xe4 \$e6, threatening both ...\$c4 and the a2-pawn) 12 \$d2 fxe4 13 \$xe4 \$f5 14 \$xb4 \$xe4 15 \$e2 \$d6 with the advantage, W.Uhlmann-E.Jimenez Zerquera, Tel Aviv Olympiad 1964.

c) 11 e5 f4 12 \$c1 \$b4 13 \$d1 (R.Canaza-H.Retamozo, Lima 2004) 13...\$e6 gives Black an edge.

d) 11 \$d2 fxe4 12 \$xe4 \$f5 13 \$c5 \$d5 (Black is beautifully centralized and has a promising position; e5 is on the cards) 14 \$e2 (or 14 \$c1 e5 15 \$a4 \$h8 which gave Black a clear advantage in I.Bender-M.Konopka, Plzen 2001) 14...\$ab8 15 0-0 \$xh3 16 gxh3 \$xf3 17 \$xf3 \$fx3 with a powerful initiative and great positional compensation for the exchange.

10...f5!

Again, this is the most incisive way to play.

11 \$d1

Instead 11 \$c4+ \$h8 threatens ...f4, while 11 e5 is met by 11...f4! 12 \$d2 a5 (threatening ...\$b4) 13 \$d3 (13 \$b5 \$b4 14 0-0 c6 is better for Black) 13...\$e6 and Black stands well, but not 13...\$d7? due to 14 \$c4+ \$h8 15 \$d5.

11...\$xe4 12 \$e5!

Both 12 \$xe4 \$e6 and 12 \$g5 e6 intending ...\$f5 are better for Black (Suetin).

12...\$d6 13 \$xc6 bxc6 14 \$xe4 \$d5!

Black has equalized, S.Lputian-Y.Balashov, Moscow 1981.

A7) 8 \$e2

White elects simply to develop and refrains from immediate action.
8...\(d_7\)

9 \(d5!\)?

An interesting attempt to achieve a slight edge. Instead 9 \(\triangle e3\) can now be safely played, but Black is in time to obtain counterplay: 9...\(\triangle b6\) 10 \(\triangle \triangle c5\) (or 10 \(\triangle d3\) \(f5\) 11 \(\triangle d1\) \(f4\) 12 \(\triangle c1\) \(g4\) with at least equality for Black, while here 11 \(e5?\) \(f4\) 12 \(\triangle c1\) \(g4\) creates great problems with the d4-pawn) 10...\(f5\) 11 \(\triangle d1\) (alternatively 11 \(e5\) \(f4\) 12 \(\triangle d2\) \(g4\) 13 \(g5\) was seen in S.Bromberger-M.Keller, Bad Wiessee 2003, and now 13...\(d7\) 14 \(h3\) \(xe2\) 15 \(\triangle xe2\) \(ad8\) supplies strong pressure; 11 \(d5\) \(\triangle e5\) 12 \(\triangle xe5\) \(xe5\) 13 \(f4\) \(\triangle xc3+\) 14 \(\triangle xc3\) \(fxe4\) 15 0-0-0 \(d6\) is less clear-cut but still better for Black, although he must be careful about the dark squares around his king) 11...\(fxe4\) 12 \(\triangle e5\) (12 \(d5?\) \(exf3\) 13 \(dxc6\) \(fxg2\) 14 \(\triangle g1\) \(\triangle e8\) is clearly bad for White, but possible is 12 \(\triangle xe4\) \(\triangle e6\) with equality) 12...\(d6\) 13 \(\triangle xc6\) \(bxc6\) 14 \(\triangle xe4\) \(d5\) and Black is fine.

9...\(\triangle ce5\) 10 \(\triangle xe5\)

10 \(\triangle b3\) \(\triangle c5\) intends \(f5\), forcing White on to the defensive.

10...\(\triangle xe5\)

The correct recapture, whereas Black's position was a mess after 10...\(\triangle xe5\) 11 \(\triangle g5\) \(\triangle b6\) 12 \(\triangle c5\) \(f6\) 13 \(\triangle h6\) \(\triangle f7\) 14 \(f4\) in J.Lautier-J.De la Villa Garcia, Pamplona 2000.

11 \(\triangle b3\) \(e6\) 12 0-0 \(exd5\) 13 \(exd5\) \(\triangle e8\)

Also worthy of attention is 13...\(\triangle h4\)?, preparing ...\(\triangle g4\).

14 \(\triangle e3\) \(a6\)

Having prevented an annoying \(\triangle b5\), Black intends ...\(\triangle h4\) with threatening activity.

B) 4 \(\triangle b3\) \(dxc4\) 5 \(\triangle xc4\) \(\triangle g7\)

Play will now normally transpose to the Russian System, but White also has
a few harmless alternatives. **6 e4**

Instead 6 \( \text{\textit{d}d3} \text{ \textit{c}c6} \text{ 7 \textit{f}f3} \text{ 0-0} \) is equal, whereas 6 \( \text{\textit{f}f4} \text{ c6} \) can easily turn out well for Black:

a) 7 e3 0-0 8 \( \text{\textit{f}f3} \text{ \textit{w}a5} \) is fine for the second player.

b) 7 \( \text{\textit{d}d1}?! \text{\textit{w}a5} \) 8 \( \text{\textit{d}d2} \) was played in the famous game M.Euwe-A.Alekhine, World Championship (Game 4), The Hague 1935, and now 8...\( \text{\textit{w}b6} \) 9 \( \text{\textit{c}c1} \text{ \textit{f}f5} \), as suggested by Suetin, is good for Black.

c) 7 \( \text{\textit{f}f3} \text{ 0-0} \) 8 e4 b5 9 \( \text{\textit{w}b3} \) (or 9 \( \text{\textit{w}d3} \text{ \textit{w}a5!} \) 10 \( \text{\textit{e}e2} \text{ b4} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{d}d1} \text{ c5!} \)) 9...\( \text{\textit{e}e6}! \) (Kasparov's suggestion) 10 \( \text{\textit{w}c2} \text{ \textit{w}a5} \) and Black has the initiative.

d) 7 e4 b5 8 \( \text{\textit{w}d3} \text{ b4} \) 9 \( \text{\textit{a}a4} \) (or 9 \( \text{\textit{c}c2} \text{ \textit{a}a6} \) 10 \( \text{\textit{w}c2} \text{ 0-0} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{d}d2} \text{ \textit{w}b6} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{f}f3} \text{ \textit{b}b7} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{g}g3} \text{ \textit{xf}f1} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{x}f1} \text{ c5} \) and Black is much better in view of White's exposed king, E.Werner-I.Zalys, correspondence 1953) 9...\( \text{\textit{a}a6} \) 10 \( \text{\textit{w}e3} \text{ 0-0} \) favours Black.

**6...0-0**

Once again White has a number of lesser options:

a) 7 \( \text{\textit{e}e2} \text{ \textit{c}c6} \) 8 \( \text{\textit{f}f3} \) transposes to Line A7, whereas 8 \( \text{\textit{e}e3} \text{ e5} \) 9 \( \text{\textit{f}f3} \text{ exd4} \) 10 \( \text{\textit{x}d4} \) (N.Vanderhallen-R.Swinkels, Vlissingen 2005) 10...\( \text{\textit{e}e5} \) threatens \( \text{\textit{f}f4} \) and leaves White in trouble.

b) 7 \( \text{\textit{f}f3} \text{ \textit{c}c6} \) 8 \( \text{\textit{e}e3} \text{ e5} \) 9 d5 \( \text{\textit{d}d4} \) is better for Black.

c) 7 e5 \( \text{\textit{f}f7} \) 8 \( \text{\textit{f}f3} \text{ \textit{b}b6} \) 9 \( \text{\textit{w}c5} \text{ \textit{e}e6} \) intends \( \text{\textit{c}c6} \) and \( \text{\textit{a}a5} \).

d) 7 h3 \( \text{\textit{c}c6} \) 8 \( \text{\textit{e}e3} \text{ \textit{d}d7} \) is unpleasant for White, in view of the coming \( \text{\textit{b}b6} \) and \( \text{\textit{f}f5} \).

e) 7 \( \text{\textit{f}f4} \text{ \textit{c}c6} \) 8 d5 (8 \( \text{\textit{d}d1} \text{ \textit{d}d7}! \) 9 \( \text{\textit{f}f3} \text{ \textit{b}b6} \) 10 \( \text{\textit{c}c5} \text{ \textit{g}g4} \) 11 d5 \( \text{\textit{x}f3} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{g}xf3} \text{ \textit{e}e5} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{e}e2} \text{ \textit{w}d6} \) 14 \( \text{\textit{e}e3} \text{ f5}! \) gave Black the initiative in Y.Yakovitch-P.Svidler, St Petersburg 1993) 8...\( \text{\textit{e}e5} \) 9 \( \text{\textit{g}g5} \) (9 \( \text{\textit{e}e3} \text{ \textit{d}d4} \) 10 \( \text{\textit{x}d4} \text{ exd4} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{w}d4} \text{ \textit{e}e4} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{w}xe4} \text{ \textit{e}e8} \) is winning for Black) 9...\( \text{\textit{d}d7} \) and Black was better in T.Jobe-M.Bestvina, correspondence 2000.

**7...\( \text{\textit{c}c6} \)**

Play has returned to Line A.

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**Conclusion**

The Russian System is one of White's most threatening options. Against it I have opted for a positionally-oriented but still dynamic system, focusing on piece play against White's centre and exposed queen. White cannot fully contain Black's counterplay, and even his more ambitious tries do not succeed in reaching more than a complex position with mutual chances.
Chapter Eight

\textbf{\textit{\texttt{W}a4+ Systems}}

\[ 1 \text{d}4 \text{\textit{\texttt{W}}f6} 2 \text{c}4 \text{g}6 3 \text{\textit{\texttt{B}}c3} \text{d}5 4 \text{\textit{\texttt{W}}f3} \]

Should White wish to check, he is recommended to delay it for a move. Quite simply the immediate 4 \textit{\texttt{W}}a4+ is less precise in view of the forceful response 4...\textit{\texttt{C}}d7 5 \textit{\texttt{W}}b3 \textit{\texttt{C}}c6!. 

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Now ...\textit{\texttt{C}}a5 is threatened and after the logical sequence 6 \textit{\texttt{C}}f3 (6 \textit{\texttt{W}}xb7? \textit{\texttt{B}}b8 7 \textit{\texttt{W}}a6 \textit{\texttt{C}}b4 simply wins for Black, while 6 cxd5 \textit{\texttt{C}}xd4 7 \textit{\texttt{W}}d1 \textit{\texttt{C}}b5 8 \textit{\texttt{C}}d2 \textit{\texttt{C}}xc3 9 \textit{\texttt{C}}xc3 c6 10 e4 \textit{\texttt{C}}g7 11 dxc6 \textit{\texttt{C}}xc6 12 \textit{\texttt{C}}d3 0-0 13 \textit{\texttt{W}}e2 \textit{\texttt{C}}h5! leaves Black with much the superior development, I.Kan-P.Dubinin, USSR Ch., Leningrad 1947) 6...\textit{\texttt{C}}a5 7 \textit{\texttt{W}}b4 \textit{\texttt{C}}xc4 8 \textit{\texttt{C}}xd5 \textit{\texttt{C}}xd5 9 \textit{\texttt{W}}xc4 \textit{\texttt{C}}b6 10 \textit{\texttt{W}}c2 \textit{\texttt{C}}g7 Black has the initiative (Botvinnik). 

4...\textit{\texttt{C}}g7 5 \textit{\texttt{W}}a4+ \textit{\texttt{C}}d7 6 \textit{\texttt{W}}b3 dxc4! 7 \textit{\texttt{W}}xc4 \]

Of course, White can't play 7 \textit{\texttt{W}}xb7? due to 7...\textit{\texttt{C}}c6! 8 \textit{\texttt{C}}f4 (8 \textit{\texttt{W}}a6? \textit{\texttt{C}}b4 9 \textit{\texttt{W}}xc4 \textit{\texttt{C}}c2+) 8...\textit{\texttt{B}}b8 9 \textit{\texttt{W}}xc7 \textit{\texttt{W}}xc7 10 \textit{\texttt{C}}xc7 \textit{\texttt{B}}xb2 when Black is much better, T.Sorri-I.Koskimaa, correspondence 1981.

7...0-0

We have now reached a position very similar to the Russian System, with Black having played the extra move ...\textit{\texttt{C}}d7. White hopes that this move is actually harmful for Black, by virtue of releasing some of the pressure against d4 and restricting the light-squared bishop's options. However, a tempo is a tempo and Black can make good use of his extra move with a quick ...b5.

White's main options are now:
A: 8 \textit{\textbf{\textit{a}}f4}
B: 8 e4

Instead 8 e3 \textit{\textbf{\textit{a}}a6?! (8...\textit{\textbf{\textit{e}}}e6 9 \textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}a4 c5 is a simple equalizer) 9 \textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}b3 (9 \textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}e5? is a mistake due to 9...c5! 10 dxc5 \textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}e6 intending ...\textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}d5, while 9 \textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}e2 c5 10 0-0 cxd4 11 exd4 \textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}b6 also gives Black the upper hand) 9...c5 10 \textit{\textbf{\textit{x}}}xa6 bxa6 11 0-0 cxd4 12 \textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}xd4 \textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}a5 13 \textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}d2 \textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}ab8 14 \textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}c2 \textit{\textbf{\textit{f}}}c8 left Black for preference in E.Grünfeld-L.Pachman, Vienna 1949.

A\textit{\textbf{\textit{)}}} 8 \textit{\textbf{\textit{a}}f4

A valid option, just as in the Russian System.
8...\textit{\textbf{\textit{a}}a6

This seems the most logical. Black will play ...c5 next and is ready to follow with ...b5 if needed, while the c8-square is now available for his major pieces.

9 e4

Alternatively, 9 \textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}d1?! c5 10 dxc5 \textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}a5 11 e4 \textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}ac8 (11...\textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}ad8?!?, intending ...\textit{\textbf{\textit{e}}}e6, offers Black good play and is probably a better choice) 12 e5 \textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}xc5 13 \textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}b3 (13 exf6? \textit{\textbf{\textit{x}}}c4 14 fxg7 \textit{\textbf{\textit{e}}}e4+ 15 \textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}e3 \textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}d8 was winning for Black in E.Ermenkov-Ghizdavu, Varna 1973) 13...\textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}e4 14 \textit{\textbf{\textit{x}}}xd7 \textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}xc3 15 bxc3 \textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}ac5 16 \textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}b4 \textit{\textbf{\textit{x}}}xb4 17 cxb4 \textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}xd7 reaches an equal position.

9...c5! 10 e5

The 10 d5 of I.Solomunovic-I.Saric, Pula 2004, should be met by 10...b5! 11 \textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}xb5 \textit{\textbf{\textit{x}}}xe4 12 \textit{\textbf{\textit{x}}}xe4 \textit{\textbf{\textit{x}}}xb5 13 \textit{\textbf{\textit{x}}}xb5 \textit{\textbf{\textit{a}}}a5+ 14 \textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}d2 \textit{\textbf{\textit{x}}}xb5 15 \textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}c4 \textit{\textbf{\textit{b}}}b4+ 16 \textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}d2 \textit{\textbf{\textit{b}}}b7 with an edge in view of the coming ...e6. Note that 10 dxc5 \textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}c8 is also fine for Black.

10...\textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}h5 11 \textit{\textbf{\textit{e}}}e3 \textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}xd4 12 \textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}xd4 \textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}c6 13 \textit{\textbf{\textit{e}}}e2 \textit{\textbf{\textit{xf}}}3 14 \textit{\textbf{\textit{xf}}}3 \textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}xd4 15 \textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}xd4 \textit{\textbf{\textit{b}}}b4 16 0-0-0 \textit{\textbf{\textit{a}}}f4

Black has equalized, A.Riazantsev-E.Sutovsky, Sochi 2005.

B) 8 e4 b5!

9 \textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}c5 c6 plans an awkward ...\textit{\textbf{\textit{a}}}a6, so White usually chooses between:

B1: 9 \textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}b3
B2: 9 \textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}xb5

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Logical, and now we reach an important tabiya for this variation.

10 dxc5

Two critical alternatives are:

a) 10 ¤xb5?! cxb5 11 cxb5 (11 ¤xb5 cxd4 12 ¤e2 a6 13 ¤d3 e5 is just better for Black) 11...¢xe4 12 0-0 cxd4 13 ¤c4 d6 14 ¤d5 ¤d7 15 ¤bxd4 ¤b6 16 ¤b3 ¤bc4 17 ¤d1 was Y.Anikaev-V.Malishauskas, USSR 1983, and now 17...¢c8 leaves Black clearly better.

b) 10 e5 ¨g4 and now:

b1) 11 h3 cxd4 12 hxg4 dxc3 13 ¤xc3 ¤xg4 gives Black the initiative.

b2) 11 ¤d5 cxd4! (11...¢c6?? 12 ¤xc5 ¤e8! is an interesting suggestion of Kasparov's) 12 cxd4 (12 ¤xa8 dxc3 is much better for Black) 12...¢b6 13 ¤xb5 ¤xe5 and, according to Kasparov, Black has a serious advantage.

b3) 11 ¤xb5 cxd4 12 cxd4 ¤xb5 (12...¢xe5!? is also interesting; 13 ¤xd7 ¤xd7 is clearly better for Black and after 13 ¤d5 ¤b6! - Kasparov - White's position looks very loose) 13 ¤dxb5 a6 14 ¤a3 (safer is 14 ¤a4 ¤xe5 with just an edge for Black) 14...¢d4!

15 ¤c2 (Black gains a strong attack after 15 0-0 ¤xe5 16 g3 ¤h5 - Kasparov) 15...¢c6 16 ¤e2 ¤xe5! 17 ¤xe5 (17 ¤c4 ¤xe2+ 18 ¤xe2 ¤b4 19 0-0 ¤ac8 again leaves Black much better) 17...¢gxe5 18 0-0 ¤d3 19 ¤b1 ¤b8 20 ¤d1 ¤fd8 21 ¤f1 f5! and Black was clearly on top in R.Hübner-G.Kasparov, Brussels 1986.

10...¢a6 11 e5 ¤g4

12 ¤xb5

Alternatively, 12 e6 ¤xc5 13 exf7+ (13 ¤b4 ¤xe6 14 ¤xg4 ¤d4 15 ¤xd4 ¤xd4 16 ¤xd4 b4 17 ¤e4 e5 wins for Black) 13...¢h8 14 ¤a3 (U.Osieka-M.Pein, Lugano 1986) 14...¢b6 is clearly better for Black, and 12 ¤f4 ¤xc5 13 ¤d5 ¤b6 14 ¤d2 ¤c6 was again much better for Black in R.Goletiani-M.Neubauer, Port Erin 2005.

12...¢b8

As Adorjan observes, Black has good compensation here; he now threatens...¢c7.

B2) 9 ¤xb5 ¤xe4! 10 ¤xc7

The only way for White to justify his opening play, but a risky venture nonetheless. Alternatively:
a) 10 \( \text{c4} \) 11 \( \text{axb4} \) \( \text{axb4} \) leaves White in big trouble.

b) 10 \( \text{xc7?} \) \( \text{c6} \) 11 \( \text{xa8} \) \( \text{a5+} \) 12 \( \text{xd2} \) (or 12 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{xd2} \) 13 \( \text{xd2} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 14 \( \text{c7} \) \( \text{c6} \) with the advantage) 12...\( \text{xd4} \) 13 \( \text{c7} \) \( \text{f5} \) 14 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe4+} \) 15 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{c2+} \) and Black was already winning in S.Kislev-V.Kozlov, Moscow 1986.

c) 10 \( \text{c2} \) was seen in V.Golod-J.Gustafsson, Dieren 1999, and is best met by 10...\( \text{c6} \) 11 \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 12 \( \text{dxe5} \) \( \text{d6} \) 13 \( f4 \) \( \text{d8} \) with a strong initiative.

d) 10 \( \text{d3} \) is tame and after 10...\( \text{d6} \) Black clearly has no problems.

\begin{center}
\[ \text{10...c6} \]
\end{center}

Davies suggests 10...\( \text{a6} \)? 11 \( \text{xd8} \) \( \text{xd8} \), but I don’t see what to do after the calm 12 \( \text{a3} \), intending \( \text{e2} \) and 0-0.

11 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{d6}! \)

This move makes great sense to me. Black exchanges White’s active pieces and increases his lead in development. Instead 11...\( \text{b4} \) 12 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xb5} \) 13 \( \text{xd8} \) \( \text{axd8} \) is often quoted as a simple equalizer, but I beg to differ. After the accurate 14 \( \text{a3!} \) \( \text{c6} \) (or 14...\( \text{d3+} \) 15 \( \text{xd3} \) \( \text{xd3} \) 16 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{e4} \) 17 \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{xf3+} \) 18 \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 19 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 20 \( \text{h1} \) with an endgame edge; note that the b4-square is unavailable to the black rook) 15 \( \text{xb4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 16 \( \text{xa7} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 17 \( \text{gxf3} \) White can definitely hope for more than a draw.

12 \( \text{xd8} \) \( \text{xd8} \) 13 \( \text{d6} \) \( \text{exd6} \) 14 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{d4} \)

Giorgadze feels that White is much better after 14...\( \text{g4?!} \) 15 0-0-0 \( \text{xf3} \) 16 \( \text{gxf3} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 17 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{xe3+} \) 18 \( \text{fxe3} \) \( \text{b4} \) 19 \( \text{d4}! \) and I have to agree.

15 \( \text{b1} \) \( \text{b5} \)

With the white king stuck, Black has at least good compensation for the pawn. He will most likely obtain the two bishops with ...\( \text{d3+} \), while White has trouble activating his rooks.

**Conclusion**

The lines in this chapter are hardly dangerous for Black. The check must be met by ...\( \text{d7} \) and then Black can make use of his extra move, in comparison with the Russian System, to play a quick ...\( \text{b5} \). It turns out that the tempo gained by Black is more significant than the slight disharmony caused by the position of the bishop on d7.
Chapter Nine

f4 Systems

1 d4 f6 2 c4 g6 3 Cc3 d5 4 f4

Rather than immediately occupy the centre with his pawns, White opts initially for piece play.

4...g7

There are now three main options:

A: 5 Cc1
B: 5 e3
C: 5 Cf3

White also has a number of less important options; a situation typical, I'm afraid, of the f4 systems in general. There is a fair amount of theory, albeit mostly harmless for Black!

Those 5th move alternatives:

a) Immediately capturing on c7 is not advisable: 5 cxd5 Cxd5 6 Cxd5 Wxd5 7 Cxc7 Cc6 8 e5 (8 f4 Wxd4 9 Wxd4 Cxd4 regains the pawn with advantage, V.Kucera-P.Kozak, Prague 2005) 8...Wxe5 9 dxe5 Wxe5 10 Cc2 Cg4 and Black has a strong initiative.

b) 5 e5 is best met by 5...dxc4! 6 e4 (or 6 e3 Cc6 7 Wc4 0-0 8 Cxe6 Cxe6 9 Cxc4, M.Aadrians-J.Dekic, Budapest 1996, and now 9...Cxe4 when Black threatens both ...Cxd4 and ...e5, with a strong initiative) 6...Cc6 7 Cxc4 (7 f4 0-0 8 Cxc4 Cg4 is better for Black) 7...Cxe5 8 dxe5 Wxd1+ 9 Cxd1 Cg4 10 Cb5 Cxe5 11 Cc3 Cc6 12 Cxc6 (Black is also on top after 12 h3 Cc5 13 Cxe5 Cxc5 14 Cc4 Cc4 15 Cd4 Bf4) 12...Cxd6 13 Cc7+ Cc6 14 Cxc6 Bxc6! and Black is better (Uhlmann).
c) 5 \( \text{W}a4+ \text{d}d7 6 \text{W}b3 \text{c}c6! is a}
strong response to the check, just as in
the previous chapter, and comes with a
double threat:

7 e3 (instead 7 cxd5? \( \text{Q}xd4 \) 8 \( \text{W}d1 \text{b}b5 \) 9 \( \text{Q}xb5 \text{xc}b5 \) 10 e4 \( \text{Q}x\text{f}1 \) 11 \( \text{Q}xf1 \)
0-0 was horrible for White in A.Rothman-S.Reshevsky, New York
1946, and very risky is 7 \( \text{W}xb7 \text{b}b8 \) 8
\( \text{W}xc7 \text{xc}7 \) 9 \( \text{Q}xc7 \text{xb}2 \) 10 0-0-0 \( \text{b}b7 \)
11 \( \text{f}f4 \text{e}4 12 \text{xe}4 \text{dxe}4 13 \) e3 e5 with
abundant compensation, since White’s
king is a target and his kingside still
asleep) 7...\( \text{Q}a5 \) 8 \( \text{W}b4 \text{xc}4 \) 9 \( \text{Q}xc4 \)
dxe4 10 \( \text{W}xb7 \text{wb}8! \) 11 \( \text{W}xb8+ \text{xb}8 \) (the
queen exchange has left White with the
difficult task of protecting all his
weaknesses, while Black also benefits
from the bishop pair) 12 0-0-0 \( \text{b}7 13
\text{f}3 \text{g}4 14 \text{e}5 0-0 15 \text{d}2 \text{fb}8 16
\text{b}1 \text{f}5+ 17 \text{a}1 \text{e}4 18 \text{xe}4 \text{xe}4
and Black was at least equal in
N.Spiridonov-V.Jansa, Polanica Zdroj
1979.

A) 5 \( \text{Ac}1 \)
A tricky move, discouraging both
...c5 and ...0-0. However, Black has an
enticing possibility at his disposal.
5...\( \text{Q}h5!? \)

It is surprising just how much dis-
ruption is caused by this move!

6 \( \text{Ag}5 \)
The only good reply. Rowson ex-
plains why simple moves won’t suffice:
  a) 6 e3?! \( \text{Q}xf4 \) 7 \( \text{exf}4 \text{dxc}4 \) and Black
is better.
  b) 6 \( \text{e}5! \text{xe}5 \) 7 dxe5 d4! gives
Black the initiative.
  c) 6 \( \text{W}d2?! \text{Q}xf4 \) 7 \( \text{W}xf4 \text{dxc}4 \) again
with the initiative.
  d) 6 \( \text{G}g3 \text{Qxg}3 \) 7 hxg3 dxc4 8 e3 0-0
9 \( \text{Q}xc4 \text{c}5 \) 10 dxc5 \( \text{Q}d7 \) with good play
on the dark squares.
  e) 6 \( \text{G}d2 \) is relatively preferable,
but also rather passive. A.Lauber-
J.Gustafsson, German League 1999, con-
tinued 6...c5! 7 e3 (7 dxc5 d4 8 \( \text{Q}d5 \) is
well met by 8...\( \text{Q}a6 \), while 8 \( \text{Q}a4 \) can be
met by Krasenkov’s 8...\( \text{Q}d7?! \), followed by
...\( \text{Q}c6 \) 7...cx\( d4 \) 8 ex\( d4 \) dx\( c4 \)! (the
resultant IQP position is promising for
Black) 9 d5 (9 \( \text{Q}xc4 \) 0-0 10 d5 trans-
poses, whereas 10 \( \text{Q}f3?! \text{g}4 \) 11 0-0
\( \text{Q}c6 \) 12 d5 \( \text{Q}d4 \) is good for Black) 9...0-0
10 \( \text{Q}xc4 \text{Qf}6 \) 11 \( \text{Q}ge2 \) (11 \( \text{Q}f3 \) allows
11...g4 12 h3 ∆xf3 13 ∆xf3 ∆bd7, followed by ...∆e5 or ...∆b6 and then ...∆c8) 11...∆bd7 12 ∆e3 and now simple and good was 12...∆e5 13 ∆b3 ∆f5 14 ∆c2 ∆xc2 15 ∆xc2 ∆d6, increasing the pressure against d5.

6...h6!

The bishop must be kicked.

7 ∆h4!

Again the most consistent, whereas 7 ∆d2 dxc4! 8 e3 enables Black to retain the c4-pawn by playing 8...∆e6! (seeing that ∆g5 is no longer possible for White) 9 ∆f3 (Black was better after 9 ∆e4 0-0 10 ∆f3 ∆d5 11 ∆c2 b5 12 b3 cxb3 13 axb3 c6 14 ∆c5 f5 15 ∆e2 ∆d7 in W.Heinig-A.Colovic, Bad Wörishofen 2005) 9...c6 10 ∆e4 ∆d5 11 ∆c2 b5 12 ∆c5 ∆xf3! 13 gxf3 ∆d5 14 b3 cxb3 15 axb3 ∆xf3 16 ∆g1 0-0. With ...e5 coming, I don't see any compensation for White.

7...dxc4! 8 e3 ∆e6

It is not clear how White is planning to recover the pawn on c4.

9 ∆e2

Instead both 9 ∆f3 ∆d7 10 d5 ∆g4 11 ∆xc4 0-0 12 0-0 ∆b6 13 ∆e2 g5 and 9 ∆e4 0-0 10 ∆c5 ∆d5 11 e4 b6 12 exd5 (J.Szabolcsi-J.Chabanon, Eger 1992) 12...bxc5 13 dxc5 ∆f4 leave Black better.

9...f6! 10 ∆f3

Of course 10 ∆a4+? c6 11 ∆xc4? b5 is impossible, while 10 ∆xf6 is well met by 10...exf6! followed by ...f5 (Rowson).

10...c6

White's problem is not only the pawn minus, but also the fact that the extra c4-pawn greatly restricts his pieces.

11 ∆e5

Alternatively, 11 0-0 (J.Horvath-T.Fogarasi, Zalakaros 1994) 11...∆bd7! is fine for Black, as 12 ∆e5? ∆xe5 13 dxe5 ∆xd1 14 ∆fxd1 ∆g4 drops the e5-pawn, while 11 a4 ∆bd7 12 ∆d2 ∆b6 13 0-0 0-0 14 ∆xf6 exf6 15 ∆c4 (I.Stavrianakis-A.Sismanis, Ermioni 2005) 15...∆d5 allows White to recover the pawn, but at the cost of the bishop pair; Black stands well.

11...b5 12 f4

12 0-0 ∆d5! 13 ∆e4 ∆xe5! 14 dxe5 ∆d7 is good for Black.

12...∆d5
Now the 13 \( \text{Wd2} \) of A.Dreev-P.Leko, Wijk aan Zee 1996, can be met by 13...g5!? 14 fxg5 \( \text{Ax} \)xe5 15 dxe5 hxg5 16 \( \text{Ax} \)xg5 \( \text{Qd} \)d7 17 0-0 \( \text{Qxe} \)e5 when Black is better. White might thus try and prepare \( \text{Qe} \)e4 with 13 \( \text{Af} \)f2?!, but after 13...\( \text{Qb6} \)!? 14 \( \text{Qe} \)e4 \( \text{Qd} \)d7! 15 b3 \( \text{Qxe} \)e5 16 fxe5 \( \text{Ad} \)d5 17 \( \text{Af} \)f3 0-0 he is badly struggling for any compensation following Black’s purposeful play.

b) 5 e3 0-0!

The alternative is 5...c5, but that allows White some pretty dangerous possibilities which I prefer to avoid. Furthermore, it seems that Black has no reason to fear the capture on c7, after which he can obtain fully adequate play, as we shall see below.

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

White can now continue developing or grab on c7:

\underline{B1: 6 cxd5}
\underline{B2: 6 \text{Qf3}}

The rare alternatives at this juncture scarcely merit much attention:

\begin{enumerate}
  \item a) 6 \( \text{Le} \)e5 e6 7 \( \text{Qf} \)f3 \( \text{Qbd} \)7 8 \( \text{Ag} \)g3 (M.Botvinnik-V.Smyslov, World Championship, Moscow 1954) 8...c5!? 9 cxd5 \( \text{Qxd} \)5 10 \( \text{Le} \)e2 cxd4 11 \( \text{Qxd} \)5 (or 11 exd4 \( \text{Qf} \)f6 intending ...\( \text{Qh} \)h5xg3) 11...\( \text{Wa} \)a5+ 12 \( \text{Wd} \)d2 \( \text{Wxd} \)5 gives Black an edge; ...b6 and ...\( \text{Ab} \)b7 is the plan.
  \item b) 6 h3 c5 7 \( \text{Qf} \)f3 (7 dxc5 \( \text{Wa} \)a5 8 \( \text{Wb} \)a4 \( \text{Wc} \)c5 is also fine for Black) 7...cxd4 8 exd4 \( \text{Qc} \)c6 9 \( \text{Le} \)e2 dxc4 10 \( \text{Ac} \)c4 \( \text{Wb} \)b6 gives Black a promising position.
  \item c) 6 \( \text{Wb} \)b3 does nothing to discourage 6...c5! and then 7 dxc5 (7 cxd5 cxd4 8 exd4 \( \text{Qbd} \)7 is a line of the Panov-Botvinnik Attack with White having played an unusual and early \( \text{Af} \)f4; that gives Black good play after 9 \( \text{Le} \)e2 \( \text{Qb} \)b6 10 \( \text{Af} \)f3 \( \text{Qf} \)f5 11 \( \text{Qd} \)d1 a5 or 11 \( \text{Qe} \)e2 \( \text{Ad} \)d3!) 7...\( \text{Qe} \)e4! 8 cxd5 (8 \( \text{Qxe} \)e4 dxe4 9 \( \text{Qe} \)e2 \( \text{Wa} \)a5+ 10 \( \text{Qc} \)c3 \( \text{Qa} \)a6 is better for Black, while there are several ways for White to go wrong here: 8 \( \text{Ax} \)xb8? dxc4 9 \( \text{Wc} \)c2 \( \text{Qxc} \)c3 10 bxc3 \( \text{Af} \)f5, 8 \( \text{Qe} \)e2? \( \text{Qxc} \)c5 9 \( \text{Wc} \)c2 e5 10 \( \text{Ag} \)g3 \( \text{Af} \)f5 and 8 \( \text{Qxd} \)5? \( \text{Wa} \)a5+ 9 \( \text{Wb} \)b4 \( \text{Wxb} \)b4+ 10 \( \text{Qxb} \)b4 \( \text{Ax} \)xb2) 8...\( \text{Wa} \)a5 9 \( \text{Qge} \)e2 \( \text{Qxc} \)c5 gives Black the initiative and excellent compensation after both 10 \( \text{Wc} \)c4 e5! and 10 \( \text{Wd} \)d1 \( \text{Qb} \)a6!.
  \item d) 6 \( \text{Ad} \)c1 is more notable, in that it discourages ...c5 and threatens the c7-pawn at a moment when ...dxc4 is not an option. However, Black has a strong riposte in 6...\( \text{Le} \)e6!, after which 7 \( \text{Qf} \)f3 (7 \( \text{Wb} \)b3 b6 8 \( \text{Qf} \)f3 c5 gives Black good and active play; for example, 9 cxd5 \( \text{Qxd} \)5 10 \( \text{Qxd} \)5 \( \text{Ad} \)d5 11 \( \text{Ac} \)c4, J.Michenka- P.Svanda, Czech Team Ch. 1995, and now 11...\( \text{Qxf} \)f3 12 gxf3 cxd4!? 13 \( \text{Ad} \)d5 \( \text{Qa} \)a6 14 \( \text{Qxa} \)8 \( \text{Qxa} \)8 with the initiative) 7...dxc4 transposes to Line C2, below.
\end{enumerate}
B1) 6 cxd5
White takes up the challenge and accepts the offered pawn.

6...\(\text{exd5} \ 7 \text{exd5} \text{wxd5} \ 8 \text{xc7} \)
Unsurprisingly \(8 \text{xf3} \) c5 9 \(\text{xe5} \text{c6} \)
10 \(\text{xg7} \text{xg7} \) just cedes the initiative to Black.

8...\(\text{a6} \)
The best move, developing with tempo. Instead ...\(\text{xc6} \) makes much less sense here as it doesn't gain time against d4.

9 \(\text{xa6} \)
Retreating the bishop is too compliant: 9 \(\text{g3} \) e5! 10 \(\text{xe5} \text{xe5} \) 11 dxe5 \(\text{wa5+} \) 12 \(\text{d2} \text{b4} \) (now ...\(\text{d8} \) is threatened) 13 \(\text{f3} \text{d8} \) 14 \(\text{d4} \text{c2+} \) 15 \(\text{e2} \text{xe5} \) 16 \(\text{xc2} \text{xd4} \) with excellent compensation; the c8-bishop will be developed with tempo and White's king is rather misplaced.

9...\(\text{wxg2} \)
10 \(\text{wf3} \text{xf3} \)
11 \(\text{xf3} \text{bxa6} \)
A very interesting situation has arisen. Black is strong on the light squares, but White can easily evacuate the long h1-a8 diagonal after which he retains a firm hold on the key e5-square, thereby preventing Black from freeing his g7-bishop with ...e5. Before White can consolidate, with something like \(\text{e2} \) and \(\text{d3} \) followed by doubling on the c-file, Black must aim to gain counterplay. In particular, he can enforce the ...e5 break with the help of ...f6, in order to open the position for his bishop pair.

12 \(\text{g1} \)
A necessary precaution, preventing ...\(\text{g4} \) and thus preparing \(\text{e2} \). Alternatively:

a) An immediate 12 \(\text{e2}?! \text{g4} \) leaves White awkwardly pinned; for example, 13 \(\text{h1} \) (or 13 h3 \(\text{h5} \) when ...f5-f4 is on the agenda) 13...\(\text{h5} \) 14 \(\text{g3} \text{ac8} \)
15 \(\text{c1} \) e5 16 \(\text{d2} \text{xf3} \) 17 \(\text{xf3} \text{exd4} \) 18 \(\text{exd4} \text{xd4} \) and Black was much better in Chan Peng Kong-D.Semerene, Turin Olympiad 2006.

b) 12 \(\text{d2}?! \text{b7} \) is another rather unpleasant pin.

c) 12 0-0?! avoids any nasty pins, but does nothing about ...e5: 12...f6 13 \(\text{ac1} \text{b7} \) 14 \(\text{d2} \) e5 15 \(\text{b3} \text{f7} \) 16 \(\text{c3} \text{exd4} \) 17 \(\text{xd4} \) f5 left Black better in N.Karaklajic-S.Gligoric, Belgrade 1962.

d) 12 \(\text{c1} \) f6 doesn't change the situation much: 13 \(\text{g1} \) (13 \(\text{e2}?! \text{g4}! \) is again annoying and after the 14 \(\text{c4} \) of Y.Pelletier-M.Illescas, Pamplona 2003, Black has 14...e5? 15 dxe5 \(\text{ac8} \) 16 \(\text{xc4} \) 16...\(\text{exf6} \) \(\text{h5} \) 17 \(\text{f3} \text{xf3+} \) 18 \(\text{d2} \text{fd8+} \) 19 \(\text{xd8} \text{xd8+} \) 20 \(\text{c3} \text{h1} \) wins for Black – 16...\(\text{xc7} \) with excellent compensation – Illescas)

13...\(\text{b7} \) 14 \(\text{e2} \text{f7} \) 15 \(\text{c5} \) (V.Erdos-T.Fogarasi, Budapest 2005) 15...e5 will be followed by ...\(\text{e8} \) with a strong attack for Black.
12...f6 13 e2 f7 14 ac1 d7!

Now the bishop can move to b5 with check, while it may also block the path of White's d-pawn (after a subsequent ...e5, d5-d6).

15 d2

Note that 15 ac3 does not prevent 15...e5! and after 16 d5 (16 dxe5 b5+ 17 e1 fxe5 leaves Black actively placed in view of 18 dxe5? xc7! 19 xc7 xe5) 16...b5+ 17 d2 f8 (the bishop switches to a better diagonal) 18 a3 c8 19 gc1 d7 20 xe5 (20 e4?? d6+ drops a rook) 20...xd5+ 21 e1 xc3 22 xc3 Black has at least equalized.

15...e5 16 d5 b5+ 17 f3

Despite White's creative play with his king, I feel that Black has a good game here. Now 17...f5 18 b3 e4+ 19 g2 b2 20 c2 d3 21 c6 b5 22 c2 d3 23 c6 was roughly level when T.Radjabov-V.Ivanchuk, Morelia 2006, was agreed drawn here. Black should also consider the untried 17...d7!? when 18 e4 (or 18 d6 f5 with the initiative) 18...f5 threatens ...h6 and gives him good activity.

7 dxc5

The only critical move should White want to prove anything in the opening. Instead, allowing Black to exchange on d4 either results in a typical IQP position with good chances for Black, or in the concession of central space.

7...a5

Black aims to regain the c5-pawn and also threatens ...e4. One may have seen that many games with a 5...c5 6 dxc5 g7 move order also reach this position, but I prefer our 5...0-0 move order: (i) the capture on c7 is then harmless for Black, as we saw in
Line B1; and (ii) in the alternative 5...c5 move order White retains the dangerous option of developing his king's knight to e2.

8 \textbf{Ac1}

The only serious option for White. He has many alternatives, but they are again all rather harmless:

a) 8 \textit{cxd5?!} \textit{Qxd5} 9 \textit{Axe5} \textit{Qxc3} 10 \textit{Qd2} \textit{Qxe5} 11 \textit{Qxe5} \textit{Qxc5} 12 \textit{Qxc3} \textit{Qxc3+} 13 \textit{bxc3} b6 14 \textit{Ae2} \textit{Ab7} 15 0-0 f6 16 \textit{Af3} \textit{Axf3} 17 \textit{Qxf3} \textit{Qa6} 18 a4 \textit{Kc8} gives Black an obvious advantage, as he will double rooks against the c3-pawn.

b) 8 \textit{Ae2} \textit{Qe4} 9 0-0 \textit{Qxc3} 10 \textit{bxc3} \textit{dxc4} 11 \textit{Qxc4} \textit{Qxc5} was also good for Black in A.Kofidis-M.Turov, Halkida 2000.

c) 8 \textit{wa4?!} \textit{Qxc5} 9 \textit{wb5} (9 \textit{Ae2} \textit{Qe4} 10 \textit{Ac1} \textit{Qxc3} 11 \textit{bxc3} \textit{dxc4} 12 \textit{Qxc4} \textit{Ac7} 13 \textit{wb4?} \textit{Ac8} 14 \textit{Qd2} \textit{Qxb4} forced White to resign in A.Bely-E.Gasanov, Kharkov 2004, as 15 \textit{Qxb4} b5 wins a piece, while 9 \textit{cxd5} \textit{Qxd5} 10 \textit{Qxd5} \textit{Qxd5} 11 \textit{Ac4} \textit{Qh5} 12 \textit{wa3} \textit{Qc6} 13 0-0 \textit{Qg4} gives Black the upper hand) 9...\textit{Qxb5} 10 \textit{Qxb5} \textit{Qa6} 11 \textit{Ed1} \textit{Qe6} 12 \textit{Qfd4} (or 12 \textit{Ag5} \textit{Ag4} 13 f3, C.Cacco-E.Arlandi, Cremona 2005, and now 13...\textit{Qd7} 14 \textit{Qxd5} h6 15 \textit{Qe4} \textit{Qxe4} 16 fxe4 \textit{Qc5} gives Black very good compensation for the pawn) 12...\textit{Qd7} 13 \textit{Qe5} \textit{Ed8} 14 \textit{Qe2} (14 \textit{cx5} \textit{Qxd5} 15 \textit{Qxg7} \textit{Qxg7} 16 \textit{Qe2} e5 is also better for Black) 14...\textit{dxc4} 15 \textit{Qxc4} \textit{Qc5} 16 0-0 \textit{Qa4}! and Black was on top in H.Rossetto-S.Gligoric, Mar del Plata 1950.

d) 8 \textit{Qd2} blocks the vulnerable e1-a5 diagonal, but looks rather passive: 8...\textit{dxc4} 9 \textit{Qxc4} (the other options are weaker; for example, 9 \textit{Qxc4} \textit{Qxc5} 10 \textit{Qe2} \textit{Qe6} 11 \textit{Qd2} \textit{Qd5} 12 \textit{Qa4} \textit{Qa5} 13 \textit{Qxb8} \textit{Qxb8} 14 0-0 \textit{Qfd8} won material due to the threat of ...\textit{Qxe3} in A.Dunkelblum-R.Wade, Munich 1954) 9...\textit{Qxc5} (it now becomes clear that White benefits more from the \textbf{Ac1} of our main line than from \textit{Qd2})

\textbf{10 Qe2} (White rather lacks a good move here; for instance, 10 0-0 \textit{Qh5} 11 \textit{Qxb8} \textit{Qxb8} 12 \textit{Qb3} \textit{Qf6} 13 \textit{Qac1}, H.Sorensen-C.Ekeberg, Gausdal 2001, and now 13...\textit{b5} gives Black the initiative, while 10 \textit{Qb3} \textit{Qc6} 11 \textit{Qb5} \textit{Qxb5} 12 \textit{Qxb5} \textit{Qd4} 13 0-0 \textit{Qfd5} 14 \textit{Qde4} \textit{Qxf4} 15 \textit{exf4} \textit{Qf5} was good for Black in A.Dunkelblum-R.Byrne, Leipzig Olympiad 1960) 10...\textit{Qc6} 11 \textit{Qc1} \textit{Qf5} 12 h3 \textit{Qe6} 13 \textit{Qa4} a6 14 g4 \textit{Qc5} 15 0-0 \textit{Qd5} and Black is slightly better, E.Ungureanu-H.Glauser, Lugano Olympiad 1968.

Returning to the more critical 8 \textbf{Ac1}:

\textbf{8...dxc4} 9 \textit{Qxc4} \textit{Qxc5}

White now has several options, but none trouble Black unduly. The black
queen may appear somewhat exposed on c5, but there is no concrete way of exploiting her position.

d) 10 \textit{\textsc{L}}e2 \textit{\textsc{A}}c6 11 0-0 \textit{\textsc{X}}b4 12 \textit{\textsc{Q}}a4 \textit{\textsc{Q}}d8 13 \textit{\textsc{W}}c2 \textit{\textsc{Q}}f5 14 \textit{\textsc{X}}c4 (H.Urday-S.Roa, San Sebastian 1991) 14...\textit{\textsc{A}}ac8 and Black has the initiative.

e) 10 \textit{\textsc{X}}b3!? \textit{\textsc{Q}}c6 threatens ...\textit{\textsc{Q}}a5 and now: 11 \textit{\textsc{Q}}b5 (this would be a serious problem if White's f3-knight was on e2, protecting the \textit{\textsc{Q}}c1, but here Black has nothing to fear; note too that 11 \textit{\textsc{Q}}g5 \textit{\textsc{Q}}h5 12 \textit{\textsc{X}}xf7+ \textit{\textsc{X}}h8 13 0-0 \textit{\textsc{X}}xf4 14 exf4 \textit{\textsc{Q}}d4 leaves a number of White's pieces rather misplaced and liable to drop off) 11...\textit{\textsc{Q}}e6! (renewing the threat of ...\textit{\textsc{Q}}a5 and exploiting the loose rook on c1) 12 \textit{\textsc{Q}}c7 \textit{\textsc{Q}}xc4 13 \textit{\textsc{Q}}xa8 was seen in I.Walch-C.Horvath, Aschach 2002, and now 13...\textit{\textsc{Q}}a5 14 \textit{\textsc{X}}c2 \textit{\textsc{Q}}xa8 15 \textit{\textsc{Q}}d2 \textit{\textsc{Q}}c8 16 b3 \textit{\textsc{Q}}c6 17 bxc4 \textit{\textsc{X}}xg2 gives Black a strong initiative.

f) 10 \textit{\textsc{Q}}b5!? \textit{\textsc{Q}}e6! is once again a good defence against the discovered check and now:

c) 10 b3 \textit{\textsc{Q}}c6 11 0-0 \textit{\textsc{X}}a5 12 \textit{\textsc{Q}}b5 \textit{\textsc{Q}}f5 13 a3 \textit{\textsc{A}}ac8 14 b4 \textit{\textsc{X}}b6 15 \textit{\textsc{Q}}c7 \textit{\textsc{X}}xc7 16 \textit{\textsc{Q}}xc7 \textit{\textsc{X}}xc7 17 b5 (M.Kustanovich-M.Lurie, Petakh Tikva 1997) 17...e5 18 bxc6 bxc6 leaves Black a pawn up for no real compensation.

f1) 11 \textit{\textsc{X}}xe6 \textit{\textsc{X}}xb5 12 \textit{\textsc{Q}}b3 (or 12 \textit{\textsc{Q}}c4 \textit{\textsc{X}}xb2 13 0-0 \textit{\textsc{Q}}c6 14 \textit{\textsc{X}}a4 \textit{\textsc{Q}}d7 15 \textit{\textsc{Q}}b1 \textit{\textsc{Q}}b6 16 \textit{\textsc{X}}xb2 \textit{\textsc{Q}}xa4 17 \textit{\textsc{X}}xb7 \textit{\textsc{Q}}a5 18 \textit{\textsc{Q}}c7 \textit{\textsc{Q}}xc4 19 \textit{\textsc{X}}xc4 \textit{\textsc{Q}}c3 with an edge for Black in M.Boehnke-O.Brendel, Berkel
2003) 12...c6 13 We2 Wb4+ 14 Wd2 Wxd2+ 15 Ox2d2 Oh5 16 Oxd5 Ox4 17 exf4 Db4 18 Ae4 Oxb2 gave Black a clear extra pawn in M.Dlugy-G.Kasparov, Saint John (rapid) 1998.

f2) 11 Ae2 Wb4+ 12 Wd2 Wxd2+ 13 Oxd2 (M.Ruiz Vinals-F.Steenbekkers, Calvia 2004) 13...Ed5 14 b3 Oc6 is again advantageous for Black.

f3) 11 Oc7 (critical, but Black is happy to ‘lose’ the exchange like this!) 11...Oxc4 12 b3! (instead 12 Od2? b5 13 Oxa8 Od5 14 Oxc4 bxc4 15 Wa4 Ox4 16 exf4 Ec8 wins for Black, while here 13 b3 e5 14 Oxa8 exf4 15 bxc4 fxe3 16 fxe3 Wxe3+ leaves him with a clear edge; note too that 12 Oxa8?! Wa5+ 13 Wd2 Wxa2 14 Oe5 Ae6 also favours Black) 12...Ec6 13 Oxa8 Wa5+ 14 Wd2 Wxd2+ 15 Oxd2 was seen in M.Dlugy-M.Chiburdanidze, Brussels 1987; now 15...Od5 16 Oc7 Oxg2 17 Ag1 Ah3 leaves Black with the initiative for Black and good compensation for the exchange.

Returning to 10 Ab3:

12 h3

A necessary precaution since 12 We2 allows the strong 12...Oh5! disturbing the f4-bishop: 13 Ag5 (both 13 Ag3 Oxg3 14 hXg3 Ag4 and 13 Od5 Ox4 14 exf4 e6 15 Oc3 Wb4 are good for Black) 13...Ag4 14 Ah4 (or 14 Od5 e6 15 Oe7+ Oh8 16 Oxc6 Wxg5 17 Od4 Ax4 18 exd4 Wh4 19 Wf4 Wh5+ with equality in T.Roussel-Roozmon-V.Mikhailevski, Montreal 2005) 14...Wb4! (accurate and strong) 15 Wc4 Wxc4 16 Oxc4 Ac8 17 Efd1 Af6 18 Ax6 Oxf6 19 h3 Ax6 20 gxf6 Efd8 and Black was most certainly not worse in M.Petursson-J.Smejkal, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988.

Note, too, that 12 Ag5 h6 13 Agx4 Oh5! (V.Tukmakov-L. Stein, USSR 1970) creates similar problems, while 12 Od5?! Oxd5 13 Wxd5 Axb2 14 Ab1 Ag7 15 Wc1 f5 16 e4 Ag4 was a completely unjustified pawn sacrifice in H.Tikkanen-E.Hermansson, Gothenburg 2005.

10...Wa5 11 0-0 Oc6

Black intends to continue with ...Af5 and the centralization of his rooks, after which his pieces will be the more active and his position the more comfortable. This is why White often decides to unbalance the position, as we will see in the lines which follow.
12...\textit{f5} 13 \textit{we2}

13 \textit{d4} looks like a way to activate White's forces, but things turn out differently after 13...\textit{d7?}. Then 14 \textit{we2} \textit{xd4} 15 \textit{exd4} \textit{e6} 16 \textit{zd2} \textit{wb6} 17 \textit{xd1} \textit{c6} 18 \textit{ae3} \textit{wa5} was equal and agreed drawn here in A.Karpov-G.Kasparov, World Championship (Game 9), London 1986. White has also tried 16 \textit{ae5}, but after 16...\textit{c6} 17 \textit{xd1} \textit{xd8} 18 \textit{we3} (or 18 \textit{d5?} \textit{exd5} 19 \textit{wf3} \textit{d4} 20 \textit{wf4} \textit{zh5!} 21 \textit{xh7+} \textit{zh8} 22 \textit{kh7+} \textit{zh8} 23 \textit{ze2} \textit{zh8} 24 \textit{ch4} \textit{g5} and Black's attack is very strong - Ivanchuk) 18...\textit{d7} 19 \textit{g5} (Black defends and gains the advantage after 19 \textit{d5} \textit{xd5} 20 \textit{xd5} \textit{xd5} 21 \textit{xg7} \textit{xg7} 22 \textit{e4!} 23 \textit{zh4} 24 \textit{eh5}).

13...\textit{d4}

Now Black's pieces are very active and White's queenside is beginning to come under some pressure. Thus White now often opts to sharpen the struggle.

14 \textit{d5}!

This is clearly best. White tries to create counter-threats and intends to sacrifice an exchange on \textit{c6}. Instead 14 \textit{xe4} \textit{xe4} is a little too compliant by White and leaves him the side struggling to equalize:

a) 15 \textit{xd1} \textit{wh5} 16 \textit{ac2} (16 \textit{b4} \textit{d5} 17 \textit{xc3} \textit{xb3} 18 \textit{axb3} \textit{xd8} 19 \textit{e4} \textit{wa5} 20 \textit{cd2} \textit{xd2} 21 \textit{xd2} \textit{d8} 22 \textit{xd8+} \textit{xd8} 23 \textit{g3} a6 gave Black a small structural advantage in U.Andersson-D.Navara, European Team Ch., Gothenburg 2005, although the legendary Swede managed to hold the draw) 16...\textit{xc2}?! (16...\textit{xf3} 17 \textit{xh3} \textit{xf3} 18 \textit{gxf3} \textit{bad8} 19 \textit{f4} \textit{xb2} 20 \textit{exd8} \textit{exd8} 21 \textit{c2} \textit{a8} 22 \textit{xc6} \textit{bxc6} 23 \textit{xc6} f6 equalized comfortably for Black in L.Portisch-K.Arahamaia Grant, Roquebrune 1998) 17 \textit{xc2} \textit{wb5} with good play for Black.

b) 15 \textit{g5} \textit{d5} 16 \textit{c7} (or 16 \textit{xd5} \textit{wh5} 17 \textit{b3} \textit{ad8} 18 \textit{xd1} \textit{f5} with at least equality) 16...\textit{xc7} 17 \textit{xd5} (D.Sahovic-Z.Lanka, Yurmala 1978) 17...\textit{wa5} 18 \textit{xc6} bxc6 is roughly equal, although Black's queenside pressure and superior minor piece gives him some hope of a possible grind.

c) 15 \textit{d2} \textit{d5} 16 \textit{xd5} (or 16 \textit{d4} \textit{xb5} 17 \textit{xd1}, Nguyen Anh Dung-M.Hoffmann, Budapest 1999, and now 17...\textit{xd8} with the initiative) 16...\textit{xd5} and Black was again at least equal in V.Hort-W.Uhlmann, Moscow 1971.

14...\textit{e5}!

A good response.

In this rather theoretical position, White faces an important choice between entering the complications by taking on \textit{c6}, and meekly retreating his bishop:
This operation turns out unsuccesfully, but it took several years to reach such a conclusion. Black used to ignore the rook and instead capture on f4, but my opinion is clear: the gauntlet should be taken up!

15...bxc6! 16 e7+ h8

15 g5?! is rather dubious in view of 15...xg5 16 xg5 d8!; e.g. 17 xf7 (or 17 f3 e4! 18 d2 a5! and Black is better since he can answer 19 g4 with 19...xb3!) 17 xf7 18 c3 d3 19 fd1 (Black is also for preference after 19 xd3 xd3 20 fd1 e4 21 a4 d8) 19...xe2 20 xe2 e8! 21 xf7+ xf7 22 g3 e4 and Black is much better.

17 xc6

Instead 17 xe5? xe5 18 xc6 fails to the pretty 18...d2! when White ends up clearly worse in all lines: 19 xd2 (19 xe5+ f6 is also very good for Black) 19 xd2 20 xe5+ f6 21 c3 (Black wins after 21 d1 xb3 22 axb3 fxe5, while 21 d6 xf1 22 xf8 xf8 23 xf1 c8 24 e7 c1+ 25 e2 e4 leaves him with some advantage) 21 xf1 22 xf1 d3+ and Black was much better in I.Sokolov-A.Shirov, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

17...b6 18 cxe5 e6!

A very important move, neutralizing the powerful b3-bishop. It was this discovery which turned the assessment of this critical variation in Black's favour.

19 xe6
Alternatively:

a) 19 \( \text{c2} \text{xb3} 20 \text{wxe4} \text{xe6} \) was preferable for Black in V.Gavrikov-A.Kochiev, Tallinn 1997.

b) 19 \( \text{Ec1 bac8} 20 \text{xc8} \text{xc8} 21 \text{xf7+} \) (E.Frolik-W.Sauermann, Wuert 1988) 21...\text{xf7} 22 \( \text{xf7} \) g5 with the initiative for Black.

c) 19 \( \text{C4} \text{a6} \) also fails to improve matters for White: 20 \( \text{ad4} \) (20 \( \text{dg5?} \text{xe5} 21 \text{xf8} \text{fc8} 22 \text{ac1} \text{bc5} \) wins material – Ftacnik) 20...\text{d5} 21 \( \text{ac1} \) \text{ac8} 22 \( \text{hf1} \) (22 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{d2} \) 23 \( \text{xd2} \) \text{xc4} is also good for Black) 22...\text{c5} 23 \( \text{a3} \text{xc1} 24 \text{xc1} \text{ac8} \) and Black was on top in I.Shliperman-M.Ashley, New York 1999.

d) 19 \( \text{ad4?!} \) (probably White's best alternative to 19 \( \text{xe6} \))

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19...\text{xb3} 20 \( \text{xb3} \) (instead 20 \text{axb3 ad8} 21 \text{ac1, L.Kwatschewsky-M.Neubauer, Hartberg 2004, and now} 21...\text{d5} \) gives Black the initiative) 20...\text{e6} 21 \( \text{f3} \text{ac8} 22 \text{fd1} \text{fd8} 23 \text{xd8+} \text{xd8} 24 \text{fd4} \text{w7} 25 \text{f3} \text{e8} 26 \text{we2} \) and White, with two pawns for the exchange, was just about holding on to equality in H.Karlzen-M.Carlhammar, Gothenburg 2004.

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19...\text{xe6} 20 \( \text{c2} \)

Similar are both 20 \text{b3} and 20 \text{a3 ac8; White is struggling slightly to demonstrate full compensation.}

20...f5

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\[ \]

21 \( \text{a4} \)

Instead 21 \text{b3?!} \text{g5} 22 \text{h2 ac8} 23 \text{c4} \text{g4} 24 \text{hxg4 f6} 25 \text{c2 c3} 26 \text{b1 f5} 27 \text{xf5} \text{e2+} 28 \text{h1 xf5} \) gave Black an edge in J.Levitt-A.Shirov, British League 2005, while 21 \text{wc4 xc4} 22 \text{xc4 ac8} 23 \text{f5 e5 g8} is not dissimilar to what we have already seen, and after 24 \text{f3 g5} 25 \text{h2} \text{xe5} 26 \text{xe5} \) Black is surely not worse.

21...\text{g5} 22 \text{h2 e8}

Again trying to trade queens and then exploit the extra exchange in an endgame. That would not be desirable for White, but he must be careful in any case; not only are his knights vulnerable, but his bishop can become entombed on h2. An example of that final point is 23 \text{c6 ec8} 24 \text{fd4} (V.Kosyrev-K.Sakaev, Internet blitz 2004) 24...\text{f6} 25 \text{ac1 f4} (Krasenkow), blocking in the \text{h2}-bishop and securing Black a clear advantage. Instead U.Adianto-M.Roiz, Biel
2006, continued 23 \textipa{\mathbb{W}a5} \textipa{\mathbb{B}b8} 24 \textipa{\mathbb{W}xa7} (24 \textipa{\mathbb{D}c4} \textipa{\mathbb{B}b5} 25 \textipa{\mathbb{W}xa7} g4 26 \textipa{\mathbb{D}d4} \textipa{\mathbb{D}d5} 27 \textipa{\mathbb{W}b7} \textipa{\mathbb{D}d7} 28 \textipa{\mathbb{W}b5} f4 was better for Black in A.Iljushin-V.Belov, Sochi 2006) 24...\textipa{\mathbb{B}xb2} 25 \textipa{\mathbb{D}c4} and now Black should have played 25...\textipa{\mathbb{C}c2} 26 \textipa{\mathbb{A}e5} \textipa{\mathbb{F}f7} \textipa{\mathbb{A}cd1} \textipa{\mathbb{W}d8} 20 \textipa{\mathbb{A}c7} \textipa{\mathbb{W}d7} 21 \textipa{\mathbb{A}e5} \textipa{\mathbb{A}e6} 22 \textipa{\mathbb{D}e3} \textipa{\mathbb{A}xc4} 23 \textipa{\mathbb{D}xc4} \textipa{\mathbb{D}d5} with advantage in R.Loetscher-O.Brendel, Swiss League 2003.

b) 17 \textipa{\mathbb{D}d2} \textipa{\mathbb{D}d3} with an edge for Black.

c) 17 \textipa{\mathbb{D}e1} (J.Dobos-T.Hillarp Persson, Recklinghausen 1999) 17...\textipa{\mathbb{D}d3} 18 \textipa{\mathbb{D}xd3} exd3 19 \textipa{\mathbb{A}xd3} \textipa{\mathbb{W}xd5} 20 e4 \textipa{\mathbb{A}xe4} 21 \textipa{\mathbb{A}xe4} \textipa{\mathbb{W}xa2} 22 \textipa{\mathbb{A}xc6} bxc6 23 \textipa{\mathbb{A}xc6} \textipa{\mathbb{F}fe8} and the b2-pawn will fall.

d) 17 \textipa{\mathbb{G}g5} (E.Magerramov-V.Jakovlevic, Abu Dhabi 2006) 17...\textipa{\mathbb{W}d8}! 18 \textipa{\mathbb{D}xf7} \textipa{\mathbb{D}xf7} 19 \textipa{\mathbb{D}c7} \textipa{\mathbb{D}d3} 20 \textipa{\mathbb{D}xf7+} \textipa{\mathbb{D}xf7} 21 \textipa{\mathbb{D}xa8} \textipa{\mathbb{A}xc1} 22 \textipa{\mathbb{D}xc1} \textipa{\mathbb{W}xa8} and again Black has the advantage.

e) 17 \textipa{\mathbb{H}h4} \textipa{\mathbb{A}e6} 18 \textipa{\mathbb{A}c7} (18 \textipa{\mathbb{A}d6}? loses material to 18...\textipa{\mathbb{D}d3}!) 18...b6 19 \textipa{\mathbb{F}fd1} \textipa{\mathbb{B}b4} 20 \textipa{\mathbb{D}xb4} \textipa{\mathbb{W}xb4} 21 \textipa{\mathbb{A}xe6} fxe6 22 \textipa{\mathbb{A}d6} g5! 23 \textipa{\mathbb{D}xf8} \textipa{\mathbb{A}xf8} 24 b3 gxh4 and Black had a clear advantage in the game Bu Xiangzhi-S.Ganguly, Internet (blitz) 2006.

16...\textipa{\mathbb{B}ad8}!

Further undermining the position of the strongly-placed d5-knight.

16 e4

Trying to establish some sort of foothold in the centre, but abandoning control of the d4-square. Instead 16 \textipa{\mathbb{A}c4} is strongly met by 16...e4! when Black is better in all lines:
a) 17 \textipa{\mathbb{D}d4} \textipa{\mathbb{D}xd4} 18 exd4 \textipa{\mathbb{D}d3} 19

17 \textipa{\mathbb{D}xe5}

I believe that this forcing sequence
is White’s best option here, but yet again he has tried a number of other approaches:

a) 17 \( \text{c}c4? \text{xe}4 18 \text{b}4 \text{xb}4 19 \text{xb}4 \text{xf}3 20 \text{f}xf3 \text{xb}4 \) is very good for Black.

b) 17 exf5?! \( \text{xb}3 18 \text{xc}6 \text{xd}5 19 \text{c}7 (19 \text{f}6? \text{d}4 20 \text{xd}4 \text{exd}4 21 \text{f}xg7 \text{fe}8 \) wins for Black) 19...\( \text{d}4 20 \text{xd}4 \text{exd}4 21 \text{f}xg6 \text{fxg6} \) with an obvious edge for Black in view of his powerful passed d-pawn.

c) 17 \( \text{e}e3?! \text{xb}3 18 \text{axb}3 (18 \text{xc}6 \text{xd}5! 19 \text{exd}5 \text{bxc}6 20 \text{axb}3 \text{xd}5 \) is no improvement for White) 18...\( \text{xe}4! \) (a promising queen sacrifice) 19 \( \text{c}5 \text{xc}5 20 \text{f}6+ (20 \text{wc}5 \text{xd}5 \) was much better for Black in P.Lukacs-L.Ftcnik, Stara Zagora 1990) 20...\( \text{xf}6 21 \text{xc}5 \text{xf}3 22 \text{gx}f3 \text{d}4 \) and Black’s advantage is quite serious, especially as the h2-bishop is shut out of play.

d) 17 \( \text{xc}5 \text{xc}5 18 \text{exf}5 \text{xd}5 19 \text{xd}5 \text{xd}5 20 \text{d}1 \text{d}4 21 \text{xd}4 \text{exd}4 \) again leaves Black with an obvious advantage.

e) 17 \( \text{fd}1!! \text{xe}4 18 \text{xc}5 \text{xf}3 19 \text{e}e3 \text{xd}1 20 \text{xa}5 \text{xa}5 21 \text{xd}1 \) (or 21 \( \text{e}7+ \text{h}8 22 \text{d}5 \text{f}6 23 \text{xa}7 \text{c}6 24 \text{xc}6 \text{bxc}6 25 \text{xc}6 \text{a}8 \) with some advantage for Black) 21...\( \text{xd}5 22 \text{f}3 \text{c}4! \) (Rowson suggests 22...\( \text{b}5 23 \text{b}3 \text{c}6, \) but this doesn’t seem so clear to me after 24 \( \text{xc}6 \text{bxc}6 25 \text{xa}7) 23 \text{xa}7 \text{a}5 24 \text{wb}7 \text{a}2 and again Black has more than enough for the queen.

17...\( \text{xe}5 18 \text{e}7+ \text{h}8 \)

The position remains rather unclear, but Black is certainly not worse. After 19 \( \text{xe}5 \text{xe}5 20 \text{exf}5 \text{xb}3 21 \text{axb}3 \text{f}6 22 \text{xf}6 \text{fxg6} \) he gains the advantage, and even White’s best try of 19 \( \text{xf}5 \text{xb}3 20 \text{axb}3 \text{fe}8 21 \text{b}4 \text{xb}4 22 \text{xe}5 \text{xe}7 23 \text{xe}7 24 \text{xe}7 \text{xe}7 25 \text{fxg6 hgx6}! \) (Rowson) leaves Black with the more active rooks and a slight edge in the endgame.

\[ \text{Diagram} \]

\( \text{c}) 5 \text{f}3 \)

This position frequently also arises, of course, via a 4 \( \text{f}3 \text{g}7 5 \text{f}4 \) move order.

5...\( \text{0-0} \)

\[ \text{Diagram} \]

As in Line B, the c7-pawn is not our primary concern, although in this particular case White is ill-advised to capture it.
6...c5!

Dissuading ...c5. Alternatively:

a) 6 e3 c5! transposes back to B2.

b) 6 wb3 dxc4 7 wxc4 transposes to note 'c' to White’s 7th move in the Russian System.

c) 6 exd5 exd5 7 exd5 (Akopian’s 7 a5 is hardly an earth-shattering idea; Black can reply with either Nakamura’s combative 7...h6!? or 7...a5 8 exa5 axb3 9 axb3 d6 10 axd7 ad7 11 a4 c5! already see Black wrestling the initiative) 8...c6 9 e3 a5 f5 sees Black mobilizing very quickly and with threats against the c2-square. Now:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

c1) 10 d3 is a blunder: 10...xd3 11 wxd3 ac8 12 e4 w7d7 (J.Slack-Z.Zvan, Latschach 2001) and Black wins material with ...b4.

c2) 10 a3 ac8 11 a5 c2! 12 w2 a5 13 d2 e5! saw White facing serious problems in S.Shestakov-V.Zilberstein, USSR 1974.

c3) 10 wa4 w7d7 11 a5 (11 a5 axd4! 12 w7d7 axf3+ 13 gxf3 axd7 was similar in J.Ochkoos-I.Zugic, On-
tario 1997) 11...xd4! 12 wxd7 axf3+ 13 gxf3 axd7 with an obvious edge, M.Dietze-P.Keres, Prague 1943.

c4) 10 a2 ac8 11 a3 (11 a4 e5 12 exa5 axe5 13 dxe5 w7xg2 14 f4 wh3 does not help White much) 11...w5+ 12 w7d2 (or 12 w7f1 e5 13 dxe5 wfd8!? 14 w7b3 axe5 15 axe5 axe5 16 axe5 wxe5 with advantage in J.Heltzel-R.Ris, Hengelo 2002) 12...b4 13 0-0 (similarly unpleasant for White was 13 w7d3+ 14 w7f1 w7x2 15 axd2 axb2 in H.Alavi Hour-D.Harika, Tehran 2002) 13...c2 with a significant superiority for Black in Y.Anikaev-T.Georgadze, USSR 1973.

6...dxc4!

Because 6...c5 is not enticing, as is usually the case when White has played a5, this is the correct way of beginning counterplay.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

White now has a choice between an ambitious central advance and a more restrained approach.

\begin{center}
\textbf{C1: 7 e4}
\textbf{C2: 7 e3}
\end{center}
C1) 7 e4

With this White ensures the immediate recovery of the pawn, but allows pressure against d4. That results either in the mangling of White’s kingside structure or the ceding of the d4-square to the black knight. In both cases Black obtains good play on the dark squares.

7...g4! 8 xc4

White must capture, as both 8 e3 c5 9 dxc5 w a5 and 8 d5 c6! 9 xc4 cxd5 10 exd5 bd7 11 0-0 c8 12 b3 c5 (Adorjan and Dory) leave Black on top.

8...xf3

White now faces a critical choice:

C11: 9 wxf3
C12: 9 gxf3

C11) 9 wxf3

Maintaining structural integrity at the cost of allowing Black plenty of activity.

9...c6

9...xd4? is unplayable, of course, due to 10 b5.

10 d5 d4

11 w3

Alternatively, 11 w1 c5 12 0-0 a6 13 e1 b5 14 f1 e6 15 g5 h6 16 e3 (F.Lipinsky-D.Gross, Melk 1999) 16...e8 is fine for Black, while 11 w3 c5 12 dxc6 (12 0-0 a6! 13 a4 w6 gives Black the initiative on the queenside) is a logical approach, but Black need not abandon his central outpost: 12...bxc6 13 0-0 h5 14 g5 (I.Farago-M.Szekely, Budapest 1969) 14...w6 15 fd1 ad8 16 e2 c5 gives Black good play; the d4-knight is a powerful piece.

11...d7!

The knight aims to later gain a tempo on the white queen and crucially e4-e5 is now prevented.

12 0-0 c5

I feel that Black has a good position here. He has a strong foothold in the centre and can expand on both wings.

13 b3

13 dxc6 bxc6 14 w3 a5 15 fd1 b6 gives Black great activity, while 13 a3 a6 is no improvement for White.

13...c8 14 g3

14 e2 xb3 15 wb3 wb6 is fine for Black.
14...a6 15 f4 b5

Black's initiative grows after 16 e5 Qf5, threatening ...c4 and ...Qc5, but 16 f2 allows Black to strike back powerfully at White's seemingly imposing centre: 16...e5! 17 dxe6 c4! 18 exf7+ Qxf7 19 Wd1 (as Adorjan and Dory observe, 19 Wd2? Qc5! 20 Qcd1 Qd7 wins material) 19...b6 20 c2 Qxf4 and Black is for preference due to his active pieces, A.Feuerstein-V.Simagin, correspondence 1966.

C12) 9 gxf3

A more ambitious choice. White retains his central influence by keeping his queen on d1, but now Black can initiate play against the split white kingside with ...Qh5 and ...e5, eying the f4-square.

9...Qh5! 10 e3 e5 11 dxe5

11 d5?! Qf4 followed by ...c6 and ...Qd7 is not what White wants.

11...Qxe5

Now the struggle revolves around whether White will be able to advance his e- and f-pawns or whether Black will succeed in keep them blockaded.

12 Wxd8

In view of his weakened kingside, White is well advised to exchange queens. Otherwise, ...Qf6 or ...Qh4 greatly improves Black's chances; for example:

a) 12 Wb3 Qc6 13 Wxb7 Wf6 14 e2 Qd4 15 Qd5 Wd4 saw Black's pieces invade with some effect in A.Dreev-B.Alterman, Elista Olympiad 1998. That continued 16 Qb4 (both 16 b3 a5 17 Qxc7 Wxb8 and 16 d1 Qe6 are also good for Black) 16...Qxe2 17 Qxe2 and now 17...Wh3 would have left White under serious pressure; ...f5 may well follow.

b) 12 h6 Qc6!? is a promising exchange sacrifice: 13 Qxf8 Wxf8 14 e2 Qf4 15 Qxf4 Qxf4 16 Qc3 (I.Rogers-A.Timofeev, Amsterdam 2005) 16...Qd8 and Black has excellent long-term compensation due to his superb dark square control.

12...Qxd8
since the strong reply 13...\textit{d}f4! 14 \textit{d}d5 \textit{g}g2+ 15 \textit{f}f1 (15 \textit{e}e2? \textit{c}6! 16 \textit{e}e7+ \textit{f}f8 17 \textit{c}c5 \textit{f}f4+ 18 \textit{e}e3 \textit{d}d6 gives Black some advantage) 15...\textit{d}xe3+ 16 fxe3 \textit{c}6 leaves Black better in all lines, S.Lputian-V.Ivanchuk, Elista Olympiad 1998.

White has also tried 13 0-0, which is reasonable but not really incisive enough: 13...\textit{c}c6 14 \textit{d}d5 (or 14 \textit{d}d5 \textit{a}a5! 15 \textit{g}g5 \textit{d}d7 16 \textit{b}b5 \textit{c}6 17 \textit{b}4, M.Bosboom-J.Van de Mortel, Rotterdam 1999, and now Ftacnik’s suggestion of 17...\textit{c}xb5 18 \textit{b}xa5 \textit{e}e8 gives Black an edge) 14...\textit{d}d4 15 \textit{a}a4 \textit{a}xd4 16 \textit{b}b5 (16 \textit{f}fd1 \textit{a}xa3 17 \textit{f}xc3 \textit{c}6 18 \textit{b}b3 \textit{a}xd1+ 19 \textit{a}xd1 \textit{d}d8 20 \textit{a}b3 \textit{f}f4 left Black with some advantage due to his control of the d-file in S.Nagle-D.Musanti, Dos Hermanas 2003) 16...\textit{c}c6 17 \textit{a}a4 \textit{c}xd5 18 \textit{f}fd1 \textit{f}f4 with at least equality for Black.

\textbf{13...\textit{c}c6 14 0-0}

14 \textit{f}4 is more critical, but not really justified: 14...\textit{a}xb2 15 \textit{b}b1 \textit{a}a5 (15...\textit{a}a3? is suggested by Rowson, but it fails to 16 \textit{a}xb7 \textit{a}ab8 17 \textit{a}xc7! \textit{b}b1+ 18 \textit{a}c1 \textit{a}xc1 19 0-0 and White wins) 16 \textit{a}xb2 \textit{a}xc4 17 \textit{a}xb7 was seen in E.Relange-M.Palac, Bastia (rapid) 1998, and now 17...\textit{f}f6 18 \textit{g}g3 \textit{a}ab8 gives Black a powerful initiative.

\textbf{14...\textit{d}d4!}

Black has occupied the central outpost and clearly stands well.

\textbf{15 \textit{a}xd4 \textit{a}xd4}

Now any exchange of bishops on d4 would, of course, leave Black with complete control over the dark squares, and the presence of a knight on f4 would be a telling factor in any end-

\textbf{game. Thus White must continue accurately, as he did with 16 \textit{d}d5! \textit{a}xe3! 17 fxe3 \textit{c}6 18 \textit{b}b3 \textit{d}d2! 19 \textit{f}f2 \textit{a}ad8 20 \textit{c}c2 \textit{a}xc2 21 \textit{a}xc2 \textit{f}f8 when the position was about level in A.Beliavsky-P.Leko, Dortmund 1998.}

\textbf{C2) 7 \textit{e}e3}

In my opinion this is a more critical line. Should White recover the pawn on c4 with ease, he will have prevented both ...\textit{c}5 and ...\textit{e}5 while maintaining a firm hold on the centre. Black must not allow himself to be forced into a passive position and so should fight to hold on to the pawn.

\textbf{7...\textit{e}6!}
8 \( \text{g}5 \)

Taking up the challenge, and now a fairly forced sequence follows. The alternatives are harmless; for example:

a) 8 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{e}2 \text{c}5 \text{ \textit{\&}} \text{0-0} \) (9 \( \text{dxc5} \text{ \textit{\&}} \text{bd7} \) is equal) 9...\( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{d5} \text{10} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xd5} \text{ \textit{\&}} \text{xd5} \text{11} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xc4} \text{cxd4} \text{12} \text{exd4} \text{ \textit{\&}} \text{c6} \) gives Black useful pressure against the IQP.

b) 8 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{e}5 \text{c5} \) 9 \( \text{dxc5} \) (or 9 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xc4} \text{ \textit{\&}} \text{xc4} \) 10 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xc4} \text{cxd4} \text{11} \text{exd4} \text{ \textit{\&}} \text{c6} \) with an edge for Black – I.Gurevich) 9...\( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xd1+} \) 10 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xd1} \) (Black is also better after 10 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xd1} \text{ \textit{\&}} \text{h5} \text{11} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xc4} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xf4} \text{12} \text{exf4} \text{ \textit{\&}} \text{a6} \) 10...\( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{c8} \text{11} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xe4} \) was seen in I.Rogers-I.Gurevich, Hastings 1993/94, and now Black could have obtained an obvious edge with 11...\( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xc5} \) 12 \( \text{b}3 \) (12 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{e}6 \)?) \( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xc1} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xf7} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{f8} \text{14} \text{e4} \text{ \textit{\&}} \text{a1} \text{15} \text{e5} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{e4} \) is even worse for White) 12...\( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xc4} \text{13} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xc4} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{a6} \).

8...\( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{d5} \text{9} \text{e4} \)

White is essentially committed to continuing his forcing strategy. Instead 9 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xd5} \) \( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xd5} \) hits the f4-bishop and is good for Black; for example, 10 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{g3} \text{c5} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xc4} \text{cxd4} \text{12} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{b3} \) (S.Furman-V.Korchnoi, USSR Ch. 1954) 12...\( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{a5} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{e2} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{b6} \) leaves Black clearly better, as pointed out by Efim Geller.

9...\( \text{h}6 \) 10 \( \text{exd5} \text{hxg5} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{g5} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xd5} \text{12} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xc4} \)

Instead 12 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{f3} \) ? \( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{b6} \) 13 \( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xb7} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xd4} \text{14} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{b5} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xb2} \text{15} \text{d1} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{d7} \text{16} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{xc7} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{b8} \) was a disaster for White in A.Schneider-P.Hardiscay, Debrecen 1975.

12...\( \text{\textit{\&}} \text{b6} \text{13} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{b3} \text{\textit{\&}} \text{c6} \! \)

Black has the more compact structure and strong pressure on the dark squares, which fully compensates for White’s bishop pair and central space advantage, and now White must solve the problem of the d4-pawn.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{C21: 14 d5} \\
\text{C22: 14 \textit{\&}e2} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{C21: 14 d5} \\
\text{This abandons d4 and e5, but increases White’s spatial advantage and aims to later drive back Black’s centralized knight.} \\
\text{14...\textit{\&}d4 \text{15 0-0} \text{\textit{\&}d7}} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{\textit{\&}d4 \text{15 0-0} \text{\textit{\&}d7}} \\
\text{Black’s plan is obvious: he will bring his rooks to d8 and e8, after} \\
\end{array}
\]

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which a capture on b3 will leave d5 hanging. The text counters that by immediately harassing the d4-knight, but White can also aim for counter-pressure against e7:

a) 16 \texttt{Be1 Be8} 17 h4!? (Xu Jun’s idea; both 17 \texttt{Be3 Qxb3} 18 \texttt{Wxb3 dx3} 19 bx3 \texttt{Wxd5}, as in S.Halkias-J.Borisek, Terme Zrece 2003, and 17 a4 Qxb3 18 \texttt{Wxb3 a5} 19 \texttt{Bcd1 Qxc3} 20 \texttt{Bxc3 Qxd5} see White lose his d-pawn without gaining any real compensation) 17...a5 18 a4 Qxb3 19 \texttt{Wxb3 Qxc3} 20 \texttt{Bxc3 Qxd5} 21 Bh3 Ba6 and White has some compensation for the pawn, but there is no immediate threat and Black’s resources seem entirely adequate to me.

b) 16 h4 (G.Giorgadze-A.Shirov, Cala Galdana 2001) 16...\texttt{Be8} 17 \texttt{Be1} a5 is fine for Black, who intends to further advance the a-pawn.

c) 16 a3 Qxb3 17 \texttt{Wxb3} was seen in I.Rogers-P.Wolff, San Francisco 1991, and now Rogers points out that Black could have equalized with 17...\texttt{Qxc3} 18 \texttt{Bxc3} (18 \texttt{Wxc3 Qxd5} 19 \texttt{Wd4} f6 is good for Black) 18...\texttt{Wxd5}.

\textbf{16...Qf5}

The downside to White’s last move is that he must now allow the exchange of his dark-squared bishop, although doing so does at least enables him to keep d5 fully protected.

\textbf{17 Be1 Qxe3 18 Qxe3 a5 19 a3 a4}

This position was seen in the computer game \textit{Isichess-Deep Sjeng}, Reykjavik 2005. After the forced 20 \texttt{a2}, Black should have played 20...\texttt{Bh6} 21 \texttt{Bh3 Bh5!}, followed by ...\texttt{Bh8} to extinguish White’s kingside play; Black’s better bishop and superior structure should have their say in the future.

\textbf{C22) 14 Be2}

Trying both to retain some influence on the dark squares and restrict the black knights.

\textbf{14...a5!}

Black wastes no time in dynamically gaining his knights some squares.

\textbf{15 a4}

Practice has shown that White must block the further advance of the a-pawn in this way, but now he also has weaknesses on the queenside. Instead 15 0-0? a4 16 \texttt{Cc4} (R.Hartoch-J.Timman, Leeu-
17 dxe5

Again White cannot hope for anything more than equality, so exchanges are the way to go. Instead 17 d5 Qd4 gives Black a strong centralized knight, and after the 18 Qe3 (18 Qxd4? exd4 19 exd4 Qxd4 20 Qxd4 Qe8+ 21 Qf1 c5 22 Qg4 Qf6 leaves White in a quandary; Black is attacking the b2-pawn and ...c4 is also a threat) 18...Qh4 19 Qa2 c6 20 dx6 Qxc6 21 0-0 of A.Dreev-Ni Hua, Shanghai 2001, the simple 21...Qc4 22 Qxc4 Qxc4 ensures Black of an edge.

17...Qxd1+ 18 Qxd1 Qxe5

White must now give up his bishop to prevent ...Qec4, and after 19 Qxb6 cxb6 20 0-0 Qfd8 the position is equal, G.Giorgadze-S. Atalik, European Team Ch., Batumi 1999.

Conclusion

We’ve covered several highly dynamic lines in this chapter. Black must be prepared to sacrifice the c7-pawn, although its capture always gives him good compensation. However, should White play less incisively, Black can counter quickly with ...c5, activating his pieces and often gaining a useful initiative. Line C is perhaps the most critical, but by switching his approach to capturing on c4, followed by playing actively on the kingside and in the centre, Black still gains a good game. Overall in these Qf4 lines, a certain accuracy is required from Black in the opening phase, but if he knows his theory, he can count on a fairly promising position.
Chapter Ten

g5 Systems

1 d4 ¤f6 2 c4 g6 3 ¤c3 d5
White can now develop his bishop to g5 immediately or first wait a move:

A: 4 ¤f3 ¤g7 5 ¤g5
B: 4 ¤g5

A) 4 ¤f3 ¤g7 5 ¤g5

This system does not threaten the viability of the Grünfeld, but it is a sound and solid way of meeting our ambitious opening. White aims for simple yet somewhat annoying development, as he increases the pressure against d5 by threatening to exchange on f6. In response, Black is best advised to counter with ...¤e4xc3. White then hopes that his central bastion on d4, further reinforced by e3, will neutralize the Grünfeld g7-bishop. However, there are some downsides to White's method of development: his pieces find themselves not especially well coordinated and his dark-squared bishop can become loose.

5...¤e4
Clearly the most principled move, and Black will now gain counterplay, no matter what White does about his dark-squared bishop.

A1: 6 h4
A2: 6 w.c1
A3: 6 f.f4
A4: 6 cxd5
A5: 6 h.h4

A1) 6 h4?!
This is rather overambitious, since White will sorely miss his dark-squared bishop once Black attacks in the centre.

6...d.xg5 7 h.xg5 dxc4!

8 e3
Alternatively, 8 w.a4+ c6 9 w.xc4 e.e6 10 w.d3 d.a6 11 g3 d.b4 12 w.d2 c5 13 d.e4 d.xd4!? (seemingly a risky pawn-grab, but tactically justified) 14 a3 c.c6 15 e3 d.d5! 16 h.h4 g.g7 17 0-0-0 w.b6 18 w.e2 0-0 19 w.b5 w.xb5 20 h.xb5 h6 21 g.xh6 h.h6 22 h.h6 h.xh6 23 d.fd2 d.d4 24 c.c4 d.e6 25 x.d5 d.xd5 and Black was winning in J.Granda Zuniga-


8...c5 9 d5
Instead both 9 d.xc4 cxd4 10 d.xd4 0-0 and 9 dxc5 w.a5 10 w.a4+ d.xa4 11 d.xa4 d.a6 are better for Black.

9...b5?! 10 d.xb5 w.b6 11 d.xc4 a6 12 d.a3 w.xb2
Black obviously has some advantage.

A2) 6 w.c1
Another rather unnatural move.

6...h.h6!
Simple and good. Play will now resemble Line A3, but with the white queen misplaced on c1. On the other hand, Black has some difficulty castling in view of the hanging pawn on h6, although this turns out to be of less importance.

7 d.f4 d.xc3 8 b.xc3 c5 9 cxd5
Instead 9 d.e5 dxe5 10 d.xe5 cxd4 11 cxd4 (but 11 d.f4 f6 12 d.xg6 d.g8 13 d.xh6 w.a5 14 w.c1 dxc3 15 cxd5 c2+ 16 w.d2 wxd2+ 17 w.xd2 d.xg6 is good for Black) 11...d.c6 leads to equality, according to Adorjan.

9...d.xd5 10 e3 d.c6 11 h3
White should avoid 11 \( \text{\&}e2 \)?! g5! 12 \( \text{\&}g3 \) g4 13 \( \text{\&}h4 \) \( \text{\&}f6 \) (Adorjan), especially since he cannot then play 14 0-0? due to 14...\( \text{\&}h5 \).

11...\( \text{\&}f5 \) 12 \( \text{\&}e2 \) \( \text{\&}c8 \)

13 \( \text{\&}a3 \)

Inferior is 13 \( \text{\&}d2 \)?! g5 14 \( \text{\&}g3 \) cxd4 15 cxd4 0-0 16 \( \text{\&}c1 \) e5 (I.Zaitsev-V.Tukmakov, Yerevan 1982) when Black is better, while 13 0-0 g5 14 \( \text{\&}g3 \) 0-0 (Adorjan) gives Black the initiative.

13...0-0

Black has fully equalized.

A3) 6 \( \text{\&}f4 \)

This retreat aims to prevent the ...\( e5 \)-break. It is more solid than the retreat to \( h4 \) (Line A5), but also less annoying for Black since he can now quickly counter in the centre.

6...\( \text{\&}xc3 \) 7 bxc3 \( e5 \) 8 \( e3 \) 0-0 9 cxd5

Alternatively:

a) 9 \( \text{\&}e2 \) dxc4 (9...\( \text{\&}c6 \) 10 0-0 cxd4 11 cxd4 dxc4 12 \( \text{\&}xc4 \) occurred in L.Portisch-V.Kramnik, Biel Interzonal 1993; a model game for handling such positions, but it seems to me that White can prove a slight edge in this line) 10

\( \text{\&}xc4 \) \( \text{\&}c6 \) (or 10...\( \text{\&}a5 \)?) 11 0-0 \( \text{\&}d7 \), L.Gofshtein-Z.Kozul, Zagreb Zonal 1993) 11 0-0 \( \text{\&}a5 \) 12 \( \text{\&}e2 \) b6?! with good play, especially in the case of 13 dxc5? \( \text{\&}d7 \).

b) 9 \( \text{\&}b1 \) hopes to hinder Black’s queenside development, but is hardly problematic: 9...cxd4 10 cxd4 \( \text{\&}c6 \) 11 \( \text{\&}a4 \)!? (or 11 \( \text{\&}e2 \) dxc4! 12 \( \text{\&}xc4 \) \( \text{\&}a5 \) 13 \( \text{\&}d3 \) \( \text{\&}e6 \) 14 \( \text{\&}e2 \) \( a6 \) and Black will follow with the standard plan of ...\( b5 \) and then occupy c4) 11...\( \text{\&}d7 \) 12 \( \text{\&}f3 \) (if 12 \( \text{\&}xb7 \) e5!) 12...\( \text{\&}g4 \) (E.Bareev-A.Beliavsky, Linares 1992) and White’s centre is under pressure, while it is not clear whether he will manage to castle anytime soon.

9...cxd4 10 cxd4 \( \text{\&}xd5 \) 11 \( \text{\&}e2 \) \( \text{\&}c6 \) 12 0-0

Both sides have developed sensibly so far and now Black’s play focuses around the ...\( e5 \)-break. Should White prevent that, Black can always switch to the alternative plan of occupying \( c4 \).

12...\( \text{\&}f5 \)!

In my mind, clearly the best move; Black both prevents \( \text{\&}b1 \) and increases his central control.
13 \( w_a 4 \)

With this move, White intends to kick the black queen away from the centre with \( a_c 1-c 5 \) and then either pressurize Black’s queenside or advance in the centre. This is quite a dangerous plan, so Black has to respond accurately. The alternatives are less challenging:

a) 13 \( w_b 3 \) \( a_e 6 \)! (the bishop will be excellent on \( d 5 \)) 14 \( w_x d 5 \) (14 \( w_x b 7 \)?! \( w_x d 4 \) 15 \( w_x d 5 \) \( w_x e 2 + \) 16 \( w_h 1 \) \( w_x d 5 \) is good for Black) 14...\( w_x d 5 \) is equal, although Black can prepare \( ...e 5 \) and the long-term chances are with him.

b) 13 \( a_c 1 \)?! is met by 13...\( w_x a 2 \) 14 \( d 5 \) \( w_x a 8 \) 15 \( w_c 4 \) \( w_a 3 \)! and Black is on top; \( ...w_x a 5 \) follows, leaving White without any real compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

c) 13 \( w_h 4 \)?! is a favourite of Zvjaginsev. White aims to strike back in the centre, but this plan has two significant drawbacks: \( d 4 \) is weakened and the white minor pieces are rather loose.

Play might continue 13...\( a_e 6 \) (instead 13...\( a_c 8 \)!? threatens \( w_x d 4 \) and practically forces White to retract his last move and repeat the position; for example, 14 \( w_a 4 \) \( w_x d 4 \)?! 15 \( e_x d 4 \) \( w_e 4 \) 16 \( w_x g 6 \) \( h_x g 6 \) 17 \( a_3 \) \( a_g 4 \)! gave Black the upper hand in V.Zvjaginsev-P.Leko, Tilburg 1998) 14 \( a_f 3 \) (this was White’s idea, but now his knight is rather offside; Black is also fine after Rowson’s suggestion of 14 \( a_b 1 \) \( w_d 7 \)?! when 15 \( w_a 4 \) fails to 15...\( w_x d 4 \) 14...\( w_a 5 \) 15 \( d 5 \) (or 15 \( a_b 1 \) \( a_c 4 \)?! 16 \( a_e 1 \) \( a_a 6 \) – Rowson) 15...\( a_d 8 \) 16 \( e_4 \) \( f_5 \) when Black breaks up White’s centre and has excellent play.

13...\( w_a 5 \)!

An endgame is more than acceptable here to Black. Not only does he have a queenside pawn majority, he is also quite likely to achieve \( ...e 5 \), liberating the \( g_7 \)-bishop. Furthermore, that piece will often spring to life should White advance his own central majority.

14 \( w_x a 5 \)

Less accurate is 14 \( w_b 3 \)?! \( w_b 4 \)! (intending to plant the knight on \( b 4 \) after an exchange of queens) 15 \( w_c 1 \) \( w_c 8 \)! (and not 15...\( w_f c 8 \)?! 16 \( w_x c 6 \)!) 16 \( h_3 \) \( a_6 \) 17 \( w_d 1 \) \( w_f d 8 \)! which is good for Black since \( ...e 5 \) is on the cards.
In P. Van der Sterren-A. Huzman, Wijk aan Zee 1993, White radically tried to prevent that break, but ...e5 actually followed in any case: 18 g4? (instead Rowson offers 18 d3 xd3 19 xd3 e5 20 g5 d7! 21 ab1 wa5 22 wb3 exd4 23 exd4 xd4 24 xd4 wxg5 with a clear advantage, and 18 wf1 wa5! also favours Black) 18...e4 19 d2 e5! 20 g5 (White was probably counting on this, but having won the central battle, Black can afford to sacrifice some material to pursue his initiative) 20...exd4!! 21 c4 (White also loses after both 21 xe4 xe3 22 d3 xa1 23 xa1 e5 and 21 xd8 xd8! 22 c4 wb2 23 wc1 dx3 24 xb2 xb2 25 xd1 xd4) 21...wb2 22 ac1 dx3 23 xex3 d5 24 x4c2 e5 25 wf1 wf6 26 c4 b4 27 xc3 xa2 0-1.

14...xa5 15 c7

Alternatively, 15 fc1 ac8 16 xc7 (or 16 d3 c6! 17 f3 e5! 18 dxex5 xex5 19 xb7 cd8! when White was unable to parry the threat of ...d3 and was in huge trouble in G. Hertneck-V. Anand, Munich 1996) 16 xc7 c6 17 xex5 cb4!? and Black is still creating small problems, even in this simplified position. Indeed, Black’s superior piece activity means that, while this and similar positions may be objectively equal, he is the side with the better practical chances.

15...c6

With equal chances, but also plenty of play left.

A4) 6 cxd5

This line is rather different to the others in this chapter as White does not waste any time protecting his bishop. While this may seem a serious concession on his part, one must not forget about White’s lead in development.

6...xg5 7 xg5 e6

The pawn sacrifice 7...c6 does not convince me at all. Instead the logical text move should be played, and now White can continue tactically or positionally:

A41: 8 wa4+
A42: 8 h3
A43: 8 f3
A44: 8 d2

A41) 8 wa4+

This tricky sideline, full of tactics, actually results in a tedious, equal endgame almost by force!

8...c6!

I would love to suggest the romantic 8...d7?, but it seems badly insufficient to me: 9 wb3 xg5 10 xb7 0-0 11 xa8 xd4 12 d1! c6 13 b7 e5
14 \( \text{x}d4 \text{\textbf{\textit{x}}d4} \) 15 e3 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{f}}}f5 \) 16 d3 with a clear advantage for White.

**9 dxc6 \text{\textbf{\textit{xc6}}} 10 \text{\textbf{\textit{f3}}} d7!**

I'm not convinced by 18...\( \text{\textbf{\textit{d}}}7 \)?! as an attempt to play on: 19 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{e}}}e3 \text{\textbf{\textit{x}}}e3+\) 20 fxe3 c8 and it's not clear how Black can play for a win.

19 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{x}}}d5 \text{\textbf{\textit{x}}}d5 \) 20 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{e}}}7+! \)

The only move. 20 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{xd}}}5? \text{\textbf{\textit{xb}}}2+\) 21 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{d}}}1 \text{\textbf{\textit{b}}}1+\) 22 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{e}}}2 \text{\textbf{\textit{b}}}5+\) wins for Black.

20...\( \text{\textbf{\textit{xe}}}7 \) 21 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{xd}}}5+ \text{\textbf{\textit{d}}}6 \) 22 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{xb}}}6 \text{\textbf{\textit{axb}}}6 \)

**Threatening \( \text{\textbf{\textit{x}}}d4 \).**

11 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{d}}}1! \)

A good test of Black's resources. Instead 11 0-0-0?! is too risky due to 11...b5! 12 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{x}}}xb5 \) 0-0 13 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{a}}}a3 \text{\textbf{\textit{b}}}8! \) 14 e3 c8 15 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{c}}}3 \) a5 with excellent counterplay for Black, M.Cebalo-B.Lalic, Zagreb 1993.

11...\( \text{\textbf{\textit{b}}}6 \) 12 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{d}}}2 \text{\textbf{\textit{x}}}d4 \)

The start of the aforementioned equalizing sequence. Should Black wish to keep the game more alive, the following idea of Hartston's may be worth a punt: 12...0-0-0!? 13 e3 e5 14 d5 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{d}}}4?! \) (inferior is 14...\( \text{\textbf{\textit{b}}}4 \) 15 a3 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{a}}}6 \) 16 e4) 15 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{e}}}2 \) (or 15 exd4 exd4 16 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{e}}}2 \text{\textbf{\textit{ae}}}8 \) 17 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{d}}}1 \text{\textbf{\textit{e}}}4 \) with dangerous play for the piece) 15...\( \text{\textbf{\textit{xe}}}2 \) 16 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{xe}}}2 \) e4 17 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{d}}}4 \) f5 and Black has good practical compensation for the pawn.

13 0-0-0 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{d}}}8! \) 14 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{x}}}d4 \text{\textbf{\textit{c}}}6 \) 15 e3 e5 16 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{w}}}e1! \)

White's idea, but Black is scarcely troubled by the check.

16...\( \text{\textbf{\textit{exd}}}4 \) 17 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{exd}}}4+ \text{\textbf{\textit{f}}}8 \) 18 d5 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{xd}}}5! \)

This was all played (and agreed drawn at this point) in A.Shirov-B.Ostenstad, Gausdal 1991. Black even has a very slight initiative, but it would take quite some effort to convert it.

**A42) 8 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{h}}}3 \)**

This was once popular as a means of pressurizing the pawn on d5 and thereby preventing any ...c5 ideas. However, this knight manoeuvre doesn't actually prevent ...c5 at all!

8...\( \text{\textbf{\textit{xd}}}5 \) 9 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{f}}}4 \) 0-0 10 e3

10 g3?! is the alternative plan but leaves d4 at Black's mercy; for example, 10...\( \text{\textbf{\textit{e}}}8 \) 11 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{g}}}2 \text{\textbf{\textit{c}}}6 \) 12 0-0 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{x}}}d4 \) 13 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{fxd}}}5 \) c6 14 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{f}}}4 \text{\textbf{\textit{g}}}4! \) 15 f3 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{d}}}7 \) 16 e4 \( \text{\textbf{\textit{wb}}}6 \) was very promising for Black in V.Kovacevic-V.Jansa, Amsterdam 1973.
10...c5!
Accepting the challenge – and why not?!
11 dxc5 d4! 12 exd4 cxd4 13 e2 c6
14 0-0 g5
Black’s activity definitely compensates for the pawn and may even count for more.

15 g3
If 15 d3 f5 and c5 will drop eventually, while 15 fd5 e6 is equal.

15...f5 16 c1 ad8 17 b3 e5

Now 18 fd5 d7 19 f4 d4 20 h1 d8 21 f3 xc5 is good for Black (Gutman), and after 18 h4 h6 19 g2 (White should avoid both 19 cd5?

...e4 and 19 fd5 d7) 19...d7!? (improving over the 19...d2?! 20 xb7 of J.Hebert-L.Gutman, Hastings 1984/85), Black prepares ...d4 and it is clear that White has been forced on to the defensive.

A43) 8 f3

With this retreat, White opts for quiet play along the lines of the Queen’s Gambit Declined. In fact, the resulting positions are very reminiscent of the Tartakower Variation of that opening. However, I believe that White’s position is rather bad in practical terms; his only real plan is a minority attack on the queenside, but Black can stop that without undue effort. Black, on the other hand, can easily complete his development and will then look to attack on the kingside; an aggressive plan which has often scored well in practice.

8...exd5 9 e3
An important alternative is 9 b4 which is actually White’s last chance to play this advance unhindered, but he doesn’t prove ready to back it up after
Play the Grünfeld

9...\textit{d}6!:

a) 10 a3 0-0 11 e3 c6 12 \textit{e}2 \textit{f}5 13 0-0 \textit{d}7 (the benefit of Black’s 9th move is smooth development, as well as White’s inability to set his queenside pawns in motion) 14 \textit{a}4 (watch how Black now puts a stop to White’s queenside play) 14...a5 15 \textit{b}3 b5 16 \textit{c}5 a4 17 \textit{c}3 \textit{b}6! was Y.Seirawan-G.Kasparov, Dubai Olympiad 1986. Black will follow up with ...\textit{c}4 and it is obvious to the naked eye that his position is the more pleasant.

b) 10 \textit{b}3 (a more risky choice and one suggested in Palliser’s \textit{Play 1 d}4!) 10...\textit{c}6! and now:

b1) 11 \textit{b}5 \textit{e}7 12 \textit{c}1 \textit{g}4 13 \textit{e}3 \textit{x}e3 14 \textit{x}e3 0-0-0 and Black is much better.

b2) 11 \textit{c}1 a6! 12 a3 (12 e3 \textit{x}b4 13 a3 \textit{x}c6 14 \textit{xd}5 – and not 14 \textit{xd}5?? \textit{xa}3 – 14...0-0 15 \textit{c}3 is safer and approximately equal) 12...\textit{xd}4 13 \textit{xd}4 (Black wins after 13 \textit{xd}5? \textit{c}2+!! 14 \textit{d}1 \textit{xa}3) 13...\textit{xd}4 14 e3 \textit{g}7 15 \textit{xd}5 c6 16 \textit{b}6 \textit{e}6 with an edge for Black.

c) 11 e3 \textit{xb}4 12 \textit{xb}4 \textit{xb}4 13 \textit{d}2

reaches a critical position in which I quite like the natural 13...\textit{f}5!; for example, 14 a3 \textit{c}6 15 \textit{xd}5 (15 \textit{b}5 a6 16 \textit{xc}6+ \textit{xc}6 17 \textit{a}4 \textit{e}7 18 \textit{hc}1 \textit{hb}8! is also good for Black) 15...0-0-0 and Black’s lead in development gives him the advantage; ...\textit{a}5, with tempo, and ...c5 may follow.

9...\textit{a}5

White will now find it hard even to push b4.

10 \textit{e}2 0-0 11 0-0 \textit{e}8 12 a3 \textit{f}8!

Black insists on preventing b4 and transfers his dark-squared bishop to its best square, namely d6. The following play is rather unforcing so I’ve elected to highlight a few standard plans and ideas:

13 \textit{e}1

Instead 13 \textit{c}5 c6 14 \textit{g}4?! (a typical mistake; White wants to reduce Black’s attacking possibilities, but this both costs too much time and weakens White’s light square control) 14...\textit{d}6 15 \textit{xc}8 \textit{xc}8 16 \textit{d}3 \textit{d}7 17 \textit{f}3 \textit{d}8 (Black has fully equalized) 18 b4?! (and here comes the other common error: White weakens c4) 18...\textit{b}6 19 \textit{c}5
\( \text{w}c7 \ 20 \ h3 \ \text{d}c4 \) gives Black a pleasant edge, R.Vaganian-P.Wolff, New York Open 1990.

13...c6 14 \( \text{d}d3 \ \text{d}d6 \) 15 b4

This weakens the c4-square, and maybe now is the time for 15 \( \text{a}a4 \ \text{f}f5 \) 16 \( \text{g}4! \).

15...\( \text{w}e7 \) 16 \( \text{b}b3 \) b5! 17 \( \text{f}c1 \)

17 \( \text{f}e1 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 18 \( \text{c}c5 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 19 \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{b}6 \) (or even 19...\( \text{xc}5! \) 20 bxc5 \( \text{c}7 \) with a clear plus) 20 bxa5?! \( \text{c}c4 \) 21 a4 b4! saw Black instructively take over the queenside initiative with some effect in A.Kakageldiev-I.Gurevich, Biel Interzonal 1993.

17...\( \text{f}f5 \) 18 bxa5 \( \text{xa}5 \)

Both sides have some coordination difficulties, but Black enjoys a clear target on a3, the bishop pair and some chances on the kingside.

A44) 8 \( \text{w}d2 \)

Clearly the most critical try.

8...\( \text{exd}5 \) 9 \( \text{we}3+ \) \( \text{f}8 \) 10 \( \text{f}4 \)

The only dangerous move; for example, 10 g3 \( \text{f}6 \) 11 h4 \( \text{g}7 \) gives Black no problems.

10...\( \text{f}6 \)

Unfortunately 10...\( \text{w}f6?! \) runs into some tactical problems: 11 \( \text{wx}c7 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 12 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{b}4 \) 13 \( \text{c}1! \) \( \text{f}5 \) 14 e3 with a solid edge.

11 h4 h6!

The knight should be kicked back.

12 \( \text{f}3 \)

The tactical shot 12 \( \text{xd}5?! \) has claimed some victims, but I really doubt its soundness. Let’s see how to meet it: 12...\( \text{xg}5 \) 13 \( \text{we}5 \) \( \text{h}7 \) 14 hxg5 \( \text{c}6 \) 15 \( \text{we}4 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 16 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 17 \( \text{a}3+ \) \( \text{g}7 \) 18 \( \text{e}3 \)

18...\( \text{wxg}5! \) (the correct capture; inferior is 18...hxg5 19 \( \text{xh}7+ \) \( \text{xh}7 \) 20 0-0-0 \( \text{f}6 \) 21 \( \text{c}3 \) c5 22 \( \text{xf}5 \) \( \text{xf}5 \) 23 e3 \( \text{c}6 \) when according to Rowson Black is clearly better, as in S.Skembris-J.Smejkal, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988, but after 24 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{g}8 \) 25 \( \text{d}6 \) White has a lot of pressure) 19 \( \text{wc}3 \) \( \text{d}8 \)! (a clear improvement over the oft-suggested 19...\( \text{w}f6 \) 20 0-0-0 c5 21 \( \text{xf}5+ \) \( \text{xf}5 \) 22 e3 when White has good compensation) 20 \( \text{d}1 \) (Black stands very well after 20 \( \text{xf}5+ \) \( \text{xf}5 \) 21 c3 or 21 \( \text{d}1 \) c5 22 e3 \( \text{c}2 \) 21...\( \text{c}2 \) 22 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{xc}3+ \) 23 bxc3 \( \text{e}6 \) 24 \( \text{xd}8 \) \( \text{xd}8 \) 20...c5 21 \( \text{xc}5 \)

135
\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{\textit{Play the Grünfeld}}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{\textbf{12...\textit{g7}}}
\text{Black must aim to catch up in development as much as possible before White breaks with e4 or advances with g4-g5. If White continues slowly, Black regroups with ...\textit{d7}, ...c6 and ...\textit{b8}.}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{\textbf{13 \textit{0-0-0 e6}}}!
\text{Black is now all set for ...c5, as well as to counter the e4-break.}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{14 \textit{e4}}
\text{Alternatively, 14 g4?! c5! 15 e3 \textit{c6} 16 \textit{d3 cxd4} 17 \textit{exd4 b8}! is better for Black, but White has also tried 14 e3 and now:}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
a) \text{The intended 14...c5 leads to a draw: 15 \textit{dxc5 wma5} 16 \textit{d4 wxc5} 17 \textit{d3 c6} 18 \textit{exe6+ fxe6} 19 \textit{g4 xc3} with perpetual check, as White cannot play 20 \textit{wxg6+? due to 20...\textit{xf8}} 21 \textit{bxc3 xc3+ 22 \textit{xb1 b4+ 23 xc2 xc4+! 24 exd4 cc8+ and Black wins.}}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
b) \text{14...\textit{d7} 15 g4 \textit{e7}! 16 \textit{g3} (16 e4 is suggested by Chandler but just looks bad to me after 16...\textit{dxe4} 17 \textit{exe4 \textit{d6}} 18 \textit{xb7 \textit{b8} or 17 \textit{d2 d6 18 \textit{xe4}}}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{\textit{d6}} 19 \textit{xb7 \textit{b8} with some advantage in both cases} 16...\textit{d6} 17 \textit{g2 c6} and Black is better; his queenside play, with ...a5-a4-a3 the immediate intention, is much more potent than anything White can drum up on the kingside.}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{\textbf{14...dxe4}}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{15 \textit{xe4}?!}
\text{Instead 15 \textit{dxe4?! \textit{xa2}}! (Black can and should grab this important pawn) 16 g4 (16 d5 \textit{d7} 17 \textit{xf6 xf6} is great for Black) 16...\textit{d7} 17 \textit{d3 c5}! (a powerful move which virtually refutes White’s concept) 18 \textit{b5} (Black is much better after both 18 dxc5 \textit{c8} and 18 g5 \textit{xd4}) 18...\textit{d5}! 19 \textit{dxc5 (19 \textit{xd7 xe4 20 \textit{xe4 xd7} 21 g5 \textit{xd4} 22 \textit{xd4}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\textit{d4} gives Black a clear plus) 19...\textit{xe4 20 \textit{xd7 wa5} is excellent for Black, G.Schroll-V.Epishin, Vienna 1991.}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{\textbf{15...c6}}
\text{Black mustn’t be too ambitious here: 15...c5?! 16 \textit{a4} \textit{xc4} 17 dxc5 is good for White.}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{\textbf{16 \textit{e5 d7}}}
\text{I believe this is White’s best option in the whole 8 cxd5 variation, but it’s still nothing great. There are some}
\end{array} \]
prospects of a kingside attack, particularly on the light squares weakened by ...h6, but that is fully counterbalanced by Black’s strong central influence.

A5) 6 h4

White aims to exploit the fact that the e7-pawn must be protected in order to force Black to surrender the centre. The pressure against e7 does prove annoying at times, but on the other hand, the bishop’s inability to return to the queenside leaves that sector of the board very exposed.

6...dxc3 7 bxc3 dxc4!

In my view, definitely the best way of gaining counterplay.

![Chess Diagram]

Since 8 b1?! a6, intending ...b5 and ...c5, is good for Black, White’s choice is really between:

A51: 8 e3
A52: 8 e4
A53: 8 a4+

A51) 8 e3

This pretty much turns White’s opening play into a pawn sacrifice.

8...b5!

Holding on to the pawn in the most straightforward manner.

9 a4

9 e2 will generally transpose as White cannot really make do without a4.

9...c6

As Rowson points out, this defence is playable only here, and not in the 4 \textit{g5} system (in the analogous position axb5 ...cxb5, \textit{f}f3 would just win material) or in Line A3 (when the attack on the b8-knight would result in the collapse of Black’s queenside).

10 e2

Alternatively:

a) 10 d2 a6 11 e2 is another route into our main line.

b) 10 axb5 cxb5 11 e5 b7 (but not 11...xe5? 12 f3 c6 13 xc6+ d7 14 e4 and White has too much compensation) 12 b1 (or 12 b1 a6 13 xc4 c7 14 d2 xc3 15 c1 xc1+ 16 xcl d7 which favours Black) 12...d5!? (12...xe5? is a mistake in
view of 13 Bxb5!, but Black can also consider 12...a6 13 Bxc4 Be4 14 Bd2 Bxb1 15 Bxb1 0-0 with advantage) 13 f3 f5 and Black is clearly on top.

10...a6 11 Bd2 0-0 12 Bf3 Bxa7 13 0-0

Both sides have continued logically since the pawn sacrifice, but already White's compensation doesn't look too convincing.

13...h6!?

A waiting move which slightly improves Black’s position while waiting to see what White is up to. Instead Kasparov, when faced with this line, opted for 13...Bf5, intending either to place his bishop on d3 or provoke e4, and that is a good alternative: 14 Be1 (14 e4 Bc8! 15 e5 Bxe6! is good for Black) 14...h6!? (similar to my main suggestion, whereas 14...Bd3 15 Bb3 Bf5 16 Cc2 Bd3 was A.Sorin-G.Kasparov, Buenos Aires simul 1997; now White should have continued to repeat, while Black should have preferred 16...h6 – he is better, after all!) 15 e4 (15 Bg3 e5! 16 Bxe5 Bxe5 17 dxe5 Bd7 18 Ba2 Bc7 is very good for Black) 15...Be6 and Black threatens ...b4; White really feels the absence of

With ...e5 coming, Black is clearly for preference.

A52) 8 e4

This, in comparison with 8 e3, leaves d4 less well covered and thus more vulnerable to ...c5 or ...e5 breaks.

8...b5
9 a4 c6 10 e2

Another option is 10 b1!? a6 11 e2 d7 12 0-0 b6 13 b4 (13 a5 d7 14 d1 0-0, with the idea of ...e8 and ...e5, is promising for Black) 13...xa4 14 xc4 c5 15 b3 0-0 16 d5 a7 17 fd1 a5 18 dxc5 e6 19 c4 xc3 20 xa4 which was rather unclear in N.Ristic-V.Tukmakov, Cetinje 1991.

10...d7

Black can also play 10...0-0 11 0-0 d7! 12 c2 b6 13 a5 d7, when he is again somewhat better.

11 0-0 b6 12 a5

Now Black should avoid getting involved in 12...a4?! 13 xa4! bxa4 14 xa4 when White's strong centre gives him good compensation for the exchange. Instead the simple 12...d7 13 d2 0-0 leaves White with insufficient compensation for the pawn.

A53) 8 a4+

White opts for the immediate recovery of the pawn. This line forms the core of White's anti-Grünfeld repertoire in Grivas' recent and very detailed book. Grivas himself has played this line several times with success and is its leading theoretician. Nonetheless, having spent quite some time analysing this line, I have come to the conclusion that it is perfectly satisfactory for Black, as the following analysis will prove.

8...d7!

The correct interpolation, otherwise White regains his pawn with the more harmonious position.

9 xc4 b6!

Black will now both gain time with ...a6 and eventually force White to lose his castling rights, due to the very likely possibility of an exchange on f1. Note, too, that the key element in Black's strategy is the ...c5 break.

10 e3

Alternatively:

a) 10 b3 a6 11 e3 transposes to our main line.

b) 10 e5 xe5! 11 dxe5 a6 12 e4 c6 13 d4 (or 13 xc6+ xc6 14 f4 0-0-0 and White's development difficulties grant Black lasting compensation) 13...0-0 14 xe7 e8 15 h4 (or 15...
Play the Grunfeld

\[ \&f6? \&d7 16 \&d1 \&xf6 17 \text{exf6, T.Sielski-P.Bobas, Internet blitz 2003, and now 17...\&e4! with a large advantage) 15...\&d7 16 \text{f4 \&c5 with good compensation; Black has strong pressure and White faces ongoing problems both developing and coordinating his pieces.} \]

c) 10 \&g3 is too tame and leads to trouble: 10...c5!

11 e3 (or 11 \&xe5 \&xe5! 12 \&xe5 \&a6 13 \&b3 0-0 14 \&xb8 -- White hardly benefits from either 14 e3 \&xf1 15 \&xf1 \&c6 or 14 \&d1 \&c6 15 \&g3 \&fd8 -- 14...\&xb8 15 e3 \&xf1 16 \&xf1, A.Aliferenko-V.Nedeko, Alushta 2005, and now 16...e5! leaves Black a little better) 11...\&a6 12 \&b3 \&xf1 13 \&xf1 (Black was better after 13 \&xf1 \&c6 14 \&e2 \&a5 15 \&b2 0-0 16 \&fd1 \&ac8 17 \&ac1 \&a4 18 \&f1 \&fd8 19 \&e2 \&c4 20 \&g1 b5 in D.Sahovic-J.Dorfman, Lvov 1984) 13...0-0 14 \&d2 \&c6 15 \&hd1 (15 a4 \&ac8 16 \&hd1 \&a5 17 \&b5 \&e6 18 \&f1 \&c4+ 19 \&xc4 \&xc4 20 \&d2 also gave White nothing in L.Bass-A.Mikhailchishin, Budapest 1989) 15...\&d5 is equal.

10...\&a6 11 \&b3 \&xf1 12 \&xf1 0-0

Note that 12...c5?! is inaccurate in view of 13 d5! 0-0 14 \&d1! as Grivas’ games have shown; for example, 14...e5 15 dxe6 \&xe6 16 \&xe6 fxe6 17 c4 gave White an edge in E.Grivas-W.Schmidt, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990.

13 \&e2

White must now resort to artificial castling, which is quite time-consuming, but Black must act energetically to exploit it.

13...c5!

14 dxc5

This is Grivas’ main line, but Black has some improvements, as we will see. Note that White cannot play 14 d5? due to 14...c4 15 \&xc4 \&c8 when he faces serious problems. Instead, objectively best and definitely safest is 14 \&hd1, even though after 14...\text{cxd4} 15 \text{cxd4} \&c6 16 a4 (or 16 \&ac1 \&a5 17 \&b4 e6 18 a4 \&fc8 and Black was fine in F.Gheorghiu-K.Sundararajan, Biel 1999; he can follow up with ...\text{w7-e4}) 16...\&ac8!?? (or 16...e5!?? 17 dxe5 \&e8 with equal play; instead 17 d5? e4 18 \text{dxc6} \text{exf3+} 19 \text{gxf3} \&h3 is bad for White, while 17 \&xe5? \&xe5 18 dxe5}

140
g4+ just loses) 17 \(c_1) \ 18 \ b_5 \ \ w_7 19 \ f_1 \ e_6 \) Black has equalized effortlessly.

14... \(d_6!\)

Black typically ignores the pawn in order to speed up his development, whereas 14...bxc5?! 15 \(h_1 \ c_7\) 16 \(a_5\) just gives White some advantage.

15 \(h_1\)

White cannot solve his problems by simple means: both 15 \(c_6 \ d_5\) and 15 \(c_6 \ c_7\) followed by ...\(d_5\) are good for Black.

Grivas has suggested instead 15 \(d_1\)?, but it seems very risky to me. White’s queenside is now abandoned and, moreover, any king retreat to \(f_1\) may well block the \(h_1\)-rook; I don’t think that White can afford this waste of time. After 15...\(c_7\) 16 \(c_6\) (16 \(cxb6 \ axb6\) 17 \(g_3 \ c_6\) is also unappetizing for White) 16...\(c_5\) 17 \(c_4\), Black must decide how best to prepare the recapture on \(c_6:\)

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\text{Diagram}
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\]

when the white king is in some danger; Black will attack with moves like ...\(d_7\), ...\(e_4\) and ...\(h_5\), and I would be surprised if White can survive the onslaught.

b) 17...\(f_8!\) appears to give Black excellent play. After 18 \(d_4\) a6 (but not, of course, 18...\(e_5?!\) 19 \(b_3 \ c_6\) 20 \(x_5 \ x_5\) 21 \(e_4\) when White is better) 19 \(g_3\) e5 20 \(b_3 \ c_6\) 21 \(x_5 \ bxc_5\), White has managed to implement his plan, but both his king and \(h_1\)-rook remain misplaced. Indeed, even exploiting his control of \(d_5\) doesn’t really help White; for example, 22 \(d_5\) (or 22 \(d_5 \ b_5+\) 23 \(c_4 \ a_5\) 24 \(d_2\) 25 \(c_1 \ d_8\), intending ...\(c_6\) and ...\(f_5\), with an obvious edge for Black) 22...\(b_5!\) 23 \(x_5 \ b_2+\) 24 \(f_3\) \(d_2\)

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(White should also avoid $18 \text{d}2? \text{wxc6}$
$19 \text{xe7 wb7!} 20 \text{xc5 wxc5} 21 \text{a4 b5}$
$18...e5 19 \text{g3 we7} 20 \text{f3!}$ (White's only chance is to attack e5, otherwise he will have to suffer with his king stuck in the centre; for example $20 \text{b5? a6} 21 \text{d6 xc6} 22 \text{d5 w7} 23$
$\text{h4 a4 24 e4 c8 25 d8 wb8} 26$
$\text{d7 f8 27 g5 xc3+} 28 \text{f1 h6c7} 29$
$\text{xc7 xc7} 30 \text{d8 wb7}$ and White remains hampered by his inactive king's rook) $20...\text{we8} 21 \text{d5 wxc6} 22 \text{xe5}$
(and not $22 \text{xe5? b5} 23 \text{d4 f6} 24 \text{d6}$
$\text{xa4} 25 \text{c4 wxc4+} 26 \text{wxc4 xc4}$ which is very good for Black) $22...\text{we8} 23 \text{xc1}$
b5 24 \text{d4 a4 intends...b6-c4 and gives Black excellent compensation for the pawn (analysis by Dembo/Grivas).}$

Returning to $15 \text{hd1}$:

$15...\text{wc7}$!

Less accurate was $15...\text{wb7?!} 16 \text{c6! wxc6} 17 \text{xe7}$ in E.Grivas-P.Leko, Dortmund 1992.

$16 \text{xb6}$

Note that $16 \text{c6 0c5} 17 \text{wc4 e6!} 18$
$\text{f1} (18 \text{d4 wxb2}) 18...\text{xc6} 19 \text{ac1}$
$\text{xc8}$ regains the pawn with advantage.

$16...\text{axb6}$

$17 \text{g3}$

Alternatively:

a) $17 \text{ab1 0c5} 18 \text{xb6 wxb6} 19$
$\text{xb6 0a4} 20 \text{b3 0xc3+} 21 \text{xc3 0xc3}$
$22 \text{xe7}$ with a slight edge for Black.

b) $17 \text{f1 0c5} 18 \text{b4 0a4} 19 \text{g3}$
$\text{c6} 20 \text{wb2 0e4} (20...\text{fa8?!} 21 \text{d4}$
$\text{wb7}$ also makes a lot of sense) $21 \text{e5}$
$\text{c4+} 22 \text{g1 xe5} 23 \text{xe5 wxc3}$ leads
to full equality.

c) $17 a4 0c5 18 \text{b4 a5} 19 \text{g3} (19$
$\text{f1 fa8} 20 \text{g3 wa7}$ is equal) $19...e5!$
(shutting the white minor pieces out of play) $20 \text{f2} (20 \text{d2 fa8} 21 \text{c4?}$
$\text{xa4!} 22 \text{f1!} 38! 23 \text{d6 xc3} 24$
$\text{ac1 c5} 25 \text{d3 e4!} 0-1$ was the famous game J.Lautier-V.Ivanchuk, Terrassa 1991, but here White can again maintain equality with $21 \text{f1 xa4 22}$
$\text{ac1) 20...fa8} 21 \text{ab1 xa4} 22 \text{c4}$ is
also fairly level, albeit perhaps a touch more pleasant for Black.

$17...\text{xc3}$

Black must avoid $17...e5?!$, since $18$
$\text{f1 0c5} 19 \text{we4! a4} 20 \text{d5}$ is somewhat better for White, but he can also consider $17...\text{wc6?!} 18 \text{f1 0c5} 19 \text{d5}$
$(19 \text{wb4 a4} 20 \text{wb2 xe4} 21 \text{e5 wc4+}$}
22 \( \texttt{\textit{g1}} \texttt{xe5} \) 23 \( \texttt{\textit{dxe5}} \texttt{xc3} \) is also equal) 19...\( \texttt{\textit{xd5}} \) 20 \( \texttt{\textit{xd5}} \texttt{xc3} \) 21 \( \texttt{\textit{c1}} \texttt{f6} \) 22 \( \texttt{\textit{c2}} \texttt{a6} \) with equality, as in T.Bosboom Lanchava-J.Gustafsson, Amsterdam 2001.

\[ \texttt{\textit{18 xc3 xc3 19 ab1 b4}} \]

The position is completely equal, F.Gheorghiu-E.Liss, Biel 1994.

\[ \texttt{\textit{B) 4 g5}} \]

The most consistent reply.

\[ \texttt{\textit{5 h4}} \]

White's main choice by far.

Alternatively:

a) 5 \( \texttt{\textit{dxe4?!}} \texttt{dxe4} \) leads to trouble as the g5-bishop is exposed: for example, 6 e3 h6 7 \( \texttt{\textit{h4}} \texttt{c5} \) gives Black the initiative, while 6 \( \texttt{\textit{a4+}} \texttt{d7} \) 7 \( \texttt{\textit{xd7+}} \texttt{dxc7} \) 8 0-0 0-0 \( \texttt{\textit{g7}} \) 9 f3 h6 10 \( \texttt{\textit{e3 e5!}} \) 11 d5 f5 (C.Crouch-J.Rowson, London 1997) is promising for Black.

b) 5 \( \texttt{\textit{cxd5?!}} \texttt{\textit{dxc5 6 h4 e4 7 dxe4 xd5 8 c3 a5}} \) already gives Black already the better prospects thanks to his bishop pair.

c) 5 \( \texttt{\textit{f4 fxc3}} \) 6 \( \texttt{\textit{xc3}} \texttt{g7} \) usually leads back to Line A3; for example, 7 e3
c5! (Black must be ready to answer cxd5 with ...cxd4) 8 Qf3 or 7 cxd5 Qxd5 8 Qf3 c5 9 e3 cxd4 10 exd4 0-0 and in both cases play has transposed.

5...Qxc3 6 bxc3 dxc4!

Note that 7 a4+ d7 8 xxc4 b6 leaves White with nothing better than to transpose with 9 Qf3 to Line A53. In Wang Yue-A. Timofeev, Taiyuan 2006, he tried the independent 9 g3 c5 10 e5, but Black was fine after 10...a6 11 b3 f6 12 xb8 xb8 13 Qf3 cxd4 14 cxd4 e6 15 e4 f1 16 xfl a5.

7...e6!

White will now have a hard time regaining his pawn. However, he tends to view his opening play as a long-term positional pawn sacrifice: his solid central structure blunts the g7-bishop and Black can’t easily strike back in the centre. For his part, Black should make the recovery of the pawn as difficult as possible, while also interfering with White’s development and trying to create counter-threats.

White must now avoid both 8 xc4?? xc4 9 a4+ b5 and 8 a4+?? c6, and so usually chooses between:

B1: 8 Qf3
B2: 8 Nb1
B3: 8 w1
The alert reader will have noticed that we have transposed to Line A51, but with White having enticed Black into meeting 8 e3 there with 8...\(\text{g}6\), rather than our preferred 8...\(\text{b}5\). However, even with the bishop on e6 this line is pretty harmless for Black.

9 \(\text{w}b1\)

Instead 9 \(\text{b}1\) \(\text{b}6\) transposes to Line B2, while 9 \(\text{e}2\) 0-0 10 \(\text{g}5\) \(\text{d}5\) 11 e4 \(\text{h}6\) 12 exd5 hxg5 13 \(\text{x}g5\) \(\text{xd}5\) 14 h4 \(\text{c}5\) gave Black the initiative in I.Ivanisevic-E.Sutovsky, Internet (blitz) 2006.

9...\(\text{b}6\)

Clearly mistaken are both 9...\(\text{c}5?!\) 10 \(\text{xb}7\) \(\text{xd}4\) 11 \(\text{xa}8\) and 9...0-0?! 10 \(\text{xb}7\) \(\text{d}7\) 11 \(\text{g}5\) when White is much better.

10 \(\text{g}5\)

Attacking the e6-bishop is the most critical move. White can aim to regain his pawn immediately with 10 \(\text{d}2\), but after the 10...0-0 (another good option is 10...\(\text{c}5\)) 11 \(\text{e}2\) (White's only serious option is to continue developing without paying attention to the c4-pawn; instead both 11 \(\text{x}c4?\) \(\text{x}c4\) 12 \(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{d}5\) and 11 \(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{c}5\) are good for Black according to Yermolinsky and A.Livshits) 11...\(\text{c}5\) 12 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{c}xd4!\) 13 \(\text{c}xd4\) of A.Huzman-A.Yermolinsky, Tbilisi 1985, Black can obtain very good play with 13...\(\text{c}3\) 14 \(\text{b}3\) \(\text{a}6\).

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

Black should not allow the exchange of this bishop; for example, 10...

11 \(\text{e}4\) \(\text{h}6!\)

12 \(\text{f}3\)

Black is not troubled by either 12 \(\text{h}3\) \(\text{b}7\) 13 \(\text{xc}4\) 0-0 14 0-0 (or 14 \(\text{e}5?\), D.Arutunian-T.Sanikidze, Tbilisi 2006, and now 14...\(\text{c}5\) is better for Black) 14...\(\text{c}5\) or 12 exd5 hxg5 13 \(\text{b}5+\) \(\text{c}6\) 14 dxc6 \(\text{a}6\); in both cases he has a good position.

12...\(\text{e}6\) 13 \(\text{e}2\) 0-0 14 0-0 \(\text{a}6\) 15 \(\text{a}4\) \(\text{c}6\)

16 \(\text{b}4\) \(\text{c}5\) 17 \(\text{a}3\)

17 dxc5 bxc5 18 \(\text{xc}5\) \(\text{g}5\) 19 \(\text{g}3\) \(\text{xc}3\) is fully equal for Black.

17...\(\text{g}5\)
Now 18 \( \text{g}3 \text{ g}4 \text{ 19 \text{e}5} \text{ cxd4} \text{ 20} \text{ cxd4} \text{ w}xd4 \text{ was very good for Black in J.Obsivac-T.Oral, Czech League 2002, but even 18} \text{ d5 \text{ xd}5 \text{ 19 \text{f}d1} \text{ g}xh4 \text{ 20 \text{xd}5 \text{ w}c8} \text{ most certainly doesn’t leave Black any worse.} \)

**B2) 8 \text{b}1**

This is a fairly popular move, but not one which creates any real problems for Black. He is often able to retain the extra pawn on \( c4 \) or will use the time White spends recapturing it to strike back in the centre.

**8...b6**

9 \( \text{f}3 \)

Alternatively:

a) 9 \( \text{e}2 \text{ h}6 \) (but not 9...c5?? which is a blunder: 10 \( \text{f}3 \text{ d}5 \text{ 11 \text{a}4+ \text{ c}6 \text{ 12} \text{ wxc6+})} \) 10 \( \text{f}3 \text{ 0-0} \text{ 11 0-0} \text{ c6 \text{ 12 w}c2} \text{ b5} \) with the initiative for Black.

b) 9 \( \text{e}2 \text{ h}6 \text{ 10 \text{g}3 \text{ 0-0} \text{ is also good for Black} \)

c) 9 \( \text{h}3 \text{ h}6 \)! (less accurate is 9...\( \text{g}7 \text{ 10 \text{f}4 \text{ d}5 \text{ 11 f}3?? \text{ with the initiative, while 9...\text{h}xh3 \text{ 10 g}xh3 \text{ w}d5 \text{ is the critical approach but not the most effective, since 11 \text{g}4?! f5 12 \text{g}2 \text{ w}a5 \)}\)

13 \( \text{w}e2 \text{ wxc3+} \text{ 14 \text{d}2 \text{ w}xd2+} \text{ 15 \text{xd}2 \text{ c6 16 \text{hc}1 gives White good compensation}) \text{ 10 e}4 \text{ (or 10 \text{g}5 \text{ g}7 \text{ 11 \text{f}4 \text{ d}5 \text{ 12 w}c2 \text{ d}6 \text{ 13 \text{e}2 \text{ c6 14 e}4 \text{ h}}6 \text{ which was fully equal in N.Feddersen-V.Varadi, Budapest 2006, while Black stands very well in the case of 10 \text{g}5? \text{ d}5 \text{ 11 e}4 \text{ xg5} \text{ 10...f6!?) 11 d5 \text{ xh}3 \text{ 12 gxh3 w}d7 \text{ with complicated play, but good prospects for Black.} \)

9...\( \text{g}7 \text{ 10 \text{g}5 \text{ w}a5 \text{ 15 c}2 \text{ c5} \) with the upper hand for Black.

**10...\text{d}5 \text{ 11 e}4**

Instead 11 \( \text{w}a4+ \text{ c6 12 \text{xc}4 \text{ (Black is somewhat better after both 12 e}4 \text{ h}6 \text{ 13 exd5 h}xg5 \text{ 14 \text{g}3 \text{ w}d5} \text{ and 14 \text{g}5 \text{ w}x} \text{d5} \text{ 15 \text{e}3 \text{ b}5) \text{ 12} \text{ 0-0} \text{ 13 \text{xd}5 \text{ c}xd5 \text{ 14 0-0 \text{ w}d}7 \text{ 15 \text{a}3 \text{ c}6 \text{ left Black better in L.Garcia Galeote-I.Valles Moreno, Collado Villalba 2004.} \)

11...\text{h}6!\)

The standard reaction in this type of situation. Now 12 \text{exd5 h}xg5 13 \text{g}xg5 (or 13 \text{g}3 \text{ w}d5 14 \text{e}2 \text{ c6 15 0-0 f5 with advantage}) 13...\text{w}xd5 14 \text{e}3 \text{ c6} \text{ gives Black a clear advantage, E.Kahn-T.Fogarasi, Budapest 2000.} \)

**B3) 8 \text{b}1**

White's most popular and challenging choice. The queen takes aim at Black's weakened queenside light
squares and hopes to help White regain his pawn on c4.

8...\texttt{Wd5}

A seemingly very risky move, as it exposes the queen to harassment either by e4 or \texttt{Qe2-f4}. However, the queen can move away to a5 with tempo if necessary. We must not forget, too, that Black is bringing another piece into play and he can now play ...\texttt{Af5}, taking control of the b-file. Overall, it transpires Black has enough resources to prevent White from consolidating his position.

9 \texttt{Af3}

White can again turn his attention to the bishop on e6 with 9 \texttt{Qe2}, but this is now well met by the paradoxical 9...\texttt{Cc8}! This rather unnatural retreat in fact completely takes the sting out of White’s set-up, due to the threat of ...\texttt{g5} should \texttt{Af4} be played:

a) 10 \texttt{Af4? Wa5 11 Wb4 (11 Wb2? g5 just wins a piece) 11...Wxb4 12 cxb4 b5! is very strong in view of the possible continuation 13 \texttt{Cxd5 Ca6 14 a4 c6 15 axb5 cxd5 16 bxa6 Cb8.}}

b) 10 a4 \texttt{Cf6 11 Cg3 (this position was prematurely agreed drawn in A.Dreev-B.Avrukh, Gibraltar 2005) 11...c5 12 \texttt{Wb5+ Cc7 13 Wxc5 Wxc5 14 dxc5 Ca6 15 Cd4 Cxc5 16 Cxc4 Cg7 leaves Black better.}}

c) 10 \texttt{Cg3 Cg7 11 Cxc7 0-0 gives Black a lead in development and the initiative; ...c5 will follow.}

Finally we should note that 9 a4? \texttt{Cd7 10 Cf3 Wa5 11 Wb2 Cb6 12 Wb5+ Wxb5 13 axb5 Cd7 transposes to the note to White’s 11th move, below.}

9...\texttt{Wa5}

I like this forcing move more than the usual 9...\texttt{Cd7}. It is true that Black has also been doing fairly well after that, but White can generate some play; for example, 10 \texttt{Cc2 Cf5 11 Wb2 Cg7 (11...Cb6 12 a4 a5 13 0-0 Cd3 14 Cxd3 Cxd3 15 e4 Wxe4 16 Cfe1 gave White very good compensation in T.Radjabov-E.Sutovsky, Rishon Le Zion (blitz) 2006) 12 0-0 e5 13 Wb4 c5 14 Wxc4 Wxc4 15 Cxc4 Cc8 saw Black go on to win in L.Aronian-P.Svidler, Dormund 2006, but at this stage I feel that White was a little better.
Retaining some influence on the b-file. Less incisive is 10 \textit{Wc2 \textit{Qd7 11 \textit{Qd2 Qb6 12 \textit{Qe2 0-0-0 and after ...h5 White's dark-squared bishop will be in trouble, in view of the threat of ...g5 and ...h4.  

\textbf{10...Qd7 11 Qe2} 

Instead 11 a4? is a mistaken idea. White wants to exchange queens, but his queenside pawns remain targets and his development backward: 11...Qb6 12 \textit{Wb5+ (or 12 \textit{Qd2 0-0-0 13 \textit{Qe2 g5 14 \textit{Qg3 h5 with the initiative for Black) 12...\textit{Wxb5 13 axb5 \textit{Qd7 14 \textit{Qg3 \textit{Qxb5 15 \textit{Qe5 f6 16 \textit{Wxc7 \textit{Qd5 17 \textit{Qa5 e6 and Black's positional advantage is unquestionable, not to mention his extra pawn.  

11 \textit{Qg5 is also insufficient: 11...\textit{Qd5 12 e4 h6 13 exd5 hxg5 14 \textit{Qxg5 \textit{Wxd5 with a clear plus; Black will follow up with ...0-0-0 and a central break. 

\textbf{11...Qb6 12 0-0 Qg7 13 Qd2 c5 14 Qb3 Wb5 15 Wa3 Wa4} 

16 \textit{Wxa4+? was seen in G.Sargissian-M.Vachier Lagrave, Turin Olympiad 2006, but this seems entirely wrong. The game continued 16...\textit{Qxa4 17 \textit{Qxc5 \textit{Qxc5 18 dxc5 and now Black should have simply played 18...0-0-0 when c3 is hanging and ...\textit{Qd2 imminent. However, even after 16 \textit{Wxc5 f6 Black has the initiative. He will play ...\textit{Qf7 next and then centralize his rooks, while White must attend to his b3-knight and his pieces are uncoordinated. 

\textbf{Conclusion} 

We've covered a number of lines in this chapter. Black must respond accurately to the \textit{Qg5 systems, but should he do so, he can obtain plenty of counterplay. After 4 \textit{Qf3 \textit{Qg7 5 \textit{Qg5 \textit{Qe4, 6 cxd5 is tricky since White obtains a lead in development, but with careful play Black should be the one to benefit should a sharp skirmish ensue. More demanding is 6 \textit{Qh4, after which Black really has to capture the c4-pawn. White can then immediately recapture the pawn, albeit at some cost in terms of development, or consider his opening play a pawn sacrifice. However, in the safer former case, Black fully equalizes, while the latter gives him good play.  

More troublesome, at least for an unprepared black player, is the immediate 4 \textit{Qg5. Black should again respond with ...\textit{Qe4 and an exchange on c3 after which the resulting positions are pretty complex. Following up with the popular 8 \textit{Wb1 is probably White's best try, but is still quite risky for him and currently 8...\textit{Wd5 looks like an excellent response. 

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Chapter Eleven

The Solid 4 e3

1 d4 ¤f6 2 c4 g6 3 ¤c3 d5 4 e3

With this solid choice White essentially refrains from any kind of theoretical discussion. He intends simply to develop and relinquishes any hope of gaining a theoretical advantage. Most of the lines examined in this chapter either involve natural and unambitious development or a specific (but usually artificial) scheme to discourage the standard ...c5-break. Almost any legal move is available to White at every step and it is naturally impossible, as well as rather pointless, to cover every possibility. Instead we will focus only on specific set-ups where a less obvious treatment is required. Black players should just remember that their main idea is to castle and play ...c5; in most cases that should be enough to give you a good position!

One very important point about these lines is that, after Black plays ...c5, there often occurs a total clearance of pawns from the centre. In that case Black is often left with the initiative, thanks to his actively-placed pieces and particularly the g7-bishop. Therefore, do not fear this simplification of the position!

4...¤g7

White usually now continues to develop solidly, although he can also pressurize d5:

A: 5 ¤b3
B: 5 ¤f3
The alternatives are rather rare:
a) 5 \&d2 aims to bring a major piece to the c-file and thereby discourage ...c5, but what is the bishop doing on d2? A.Aleksandrov-V.Ivanchuk, Halkidiki 2002, continued 5...0-0 6 \&c1 (or 6 \&c2 \&c6, intending ...\&b4 and ...\&f5, when 7 \&xd5 \&xd5 8 cxd5 \&xd5 9 \&f3 \&f5 10 \&d3 \&xd3 11 \&xd3 \&ad8 leaves Black on top; 6 c5 mechanically prevents ...c5, but is met by 6...b6 7 cxb6 axb6 and an even stronger ...c5 follows) 6...c5! 7 dxc5 \&a6 8 \&xd5 (instead 8 \&a4 is well met by 8...d4 9 exd4 \&xd4 10 \&f3 \&e4+ 11 \&e2 \&d8 with advantage, while 8 cxd5 \&xc5 9 \&c4 \&f5 10 \&ge2 \&d3 11 \&b3 was seen in R.Cusi-A.Yermolinsky, Oak Brook 2003, and now 11...\&b6 threatens both ...\&a6 and ...\&xb3; Black is better) 8...\&e4 9 \&f3 \&xd2 10 \&xd2 e6 11 \&c3 and now Ivanchuk could have obtained good compensation on the dark squares after 11...\&h4+ 12 g3 \&f6 or 12 \&f2 \&h6.
b) 5 b4 is an idea seen more often after 5 \&f3 0-0. Here it can be effectively countered by 5...0-0 6 \&b3 (or 6 \&b2 b6! 7 \&b3 c5! 8 \&xd5 \&xd5 9 cxd5, as in J.Johansson-N.Crickmore, Olomouc 2002, and now 9...cxd4 favours Black) 6...a5! 7 b5 (7 bxa5? dxc4 8 \&xc4 \&c6 is much better for Black) 7...\&bd7 intending ...dxc4 and/or ...e5, and the immediate 7...e5!? is also possible.

A) 5 \&b3
This is a respectable move, with ideas similar to those in the Russian System. Here White is able to recapture on c4 with the bishop, so ...dxc4 is not a good idea. On the other hand, 4 e3 has greatly restricted White's possibilities allowing Black simply to strengthen d5 and complete development.

5...e6 6 \&a3
With this very unnatural move, White intends to disrupt Black's smooth development by preventing castling, and this system is covered in great detail by Timothy Taylor in his recent Beating the King's Indian and Grünfeld. In my opinion, White cannot possibly treat a chess opening like this especially one as dynamic as the Grünfeld! White's idea violates all the cardinal rules of the opening and its nature is very one-sided; the queen is misplaced on a3 for any other purposes the minor pieces still at home...

Botvinnik liked to meet this idea with ...\&e7, which of course should suffice for equality, but I feel that it's a crime to exchange the white queen! Black should gradually prepare the ...c5 break and not allow himself to be provoked by White's play. Indeed, White should really prefer 6 \&f3 transposing to Line B1.

6...\&c6!
The very simple idea behind this move is ...\((e 7\), facilitating casting. Black, it is true, cannot break with ...c5 anytime soon, but he has all the time in the world to prepare it.

7 \((d 3\)

7 cxd5 exd5 brings about a Carlsbad structure, but this particular version cannot possibly be good for White. One example went 8 \((b 5\) d7 9 \((f 3\) e7 10 \((d 7/\) d7 (10...\((x d7\) is also fine) 11 \((d 2\) 0-0 12 0-0 d6 13 b3 \((f 5\) 14 \((b 2\) e8 with at least equality in A.Kotov- K.Honfi, Sarajevo 1966.

7...\((e 7\)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Black} \\
\text{White}
\end{array}
\]

Black will now castle, perhaps exchange on c4 to free d5 for the e7-knight, and prepare ...c5 with ...b6 and ...\((b 7\). In all the lines that follow Black easily equalizes the play, and in practical terms these ‘equal’ positions offer Black excellent long-term chances and much the easier play.

8 \((d 3\)

The most natural development and Taylor’s main preference.

Alternatively:

a) 8 \((e 2\) 0-0 9 0-0 (or 9 \((d 2\) b6 10 0-0 \((b 7\) 11 cxd5 exd5 12 \((a 6\) \((a 6\) 13 \((x a 6\), O.Jovanic-B.Predojevic, Kusadasi 2006, and now 13...c5 followed by ...\((e 4\) is equal) 9...b6 10 cxd5 \((x d 5\) 11 \((x d 5\) (11 e4? \((x c 3\) 12 \((x c 3\) \((x e 4\) 13 \((c 6\) \((d 5\) 14 \((x c 7\) \((b 7\) is excellent for Black) 11...exd5 12 b4 \((e 4\) 13 \((b 2\) \((g 4\) 14 \((f 1\) (I.Khenkin-B.Alteman, Tel Aviv 1994), and now Black should play either 14...c6 or 14...a6 with equality.

b) 8 \((d 2\) 0-0 9 \((c 1\) \((e 4\) 10 \((d 3\) (or 10 \((x e 4\) dxe 4 11 \((g 5\) f5 12 \((c 3\) e5 13 dxe 5 \((c 6\) with the initiative) 10...\((x d 2\) 11 \((x d 2\) b6 12 0-0 \((b 7\) looks promising for Black, who is about to blast open the position.

c) 8 \((a 4+\) c6 9 \((c 2\) 0-0 10 \((e 2\) (I.Farago-V.Jansa, Baie Herculane 1982) 10...dxc 4 11 \((x c 4\) c5 is equal.

8...0-0 9 0-0 b6

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Black} \\
\text{White}
\end{array}
\]

10 cxd5

Again not the only try, but 10 e4 dxe 4 11 \((x e 4\) \((b 7\) 12 \((g 5\) \((f 5\) 13 \((a d 1\) h6 14 \((x f 6\) \((x f 6\) 15 \((x f 6+\) \((x f 6\) 16 \((x f 5\) \((x f 5\) is at least equal for Black, and 10 c5 bxc 5 11 \((x c 5\) \((d 7\) 12 \((a 3\) c5 13 \((d 2\) (13 dxc 5 \((c 7\) 14 b4 a5 is problematic for White, as Taylor notes)
13...c4 14 e2 e5 leaves Black the one pulling the strings.

**10...exd5 11 d2**

This occurred in the game T. Taylor-V. Mikhailovski, Las Vegas 2006. Instead 11 e4 dxe4 12 dxe4 cxd5 intends ...h6 and ...e6, with an initiative for Black, while 11 b4 hopes to prevent ...c5 for good, but it doesn’t promise anything: 11...a6 12 wb3 (12 b5?! ef5! 13 xf5 axb5 14 wb3 xf5 15 xb5 is just better for Black) 12...f5 13 xf5 xf5 14 a4 c6 15 a3 (15 b5 axb5 16 a3 bxa4 also fails to solve White’s problems) 15...b5 16 e5 wb6 and with ...d6-c4 coming, Black is better.

**11...xf5 12 xf5**

Also promising is 12 e2 e4.

**12...xf5 13 ac1 d6!**?

---

B1: 6 wb3
B2: 6 b4
B3: 6 cxd5
B4: 6 d2
B5: 6 d3
B6: 6 e2

---

Note that 6 c5?! is, of course, met by 6...b6 7 b4 a5 when White’s pawn chain collapses.

**B1) 6 wb3 e6**

Black stands well and will follow up with ...e8 and ...c6. He can later play a knight to e4 and seek to expand on the kingside, whereas White does not have any obvious way to proceed.

**B) 5 f3 0-0**

White now has a choice of several set-ups. Most of these have a specific idea behind them and should be treated with some care.
White again discourages ...c5, as his pressure on the d5-pawn keeps Black's pieces tied up. Thus Black should opt to complete development with ...b6 and ...\( \text{\#b7} \), slowly preparing ...c5.

7 \( \text{\#d2} \)

Quickly completing queenside development. The alternatives have also failed to impress; for example:

a) 7 \( \text{\#e2} \) b6 8 cxd5 exd5 9 0-0 \( \text{\#b7} \) 10 a4 a5 11 \( \text{\#d1} \) \( \text{\#bd7} \) 12 \( \text{\#d2} \) \( \text{\#e7} \) and Black stands well.

b) 7 \( \text{\#d3} \) c5! 8 dxc5 \( \text{\#a6} \) 9 \( \text{\#a3} \) b6 10 cxb6 axb6 11 0-0 \( \text{\#b7} \) leaves White's pieces rather loose and Black with good compensation.

c) 7 cxd5 exd5 8 \( \text{\#d3} \) b6 9 0-0 c5 sees Black effortlessly achieve his break.

7...b6

8 \( \text{\#c1} \)

Again White has several alternatives:

a) 8 cxd5 exd5 9 \( \text{\#c1} \) (or 9 \( \text{\#e5} \) \( \text{\#e6} \) 10 \( \text{\#e2} \) \#fd7 11 \#xd7 \#xd7 12 \#a4 c5 13 \#xd7 \#xd7 14 0-0-0 cxd4 15 exd4 \#xd4 16 \#h6 \#g7 17 \#xg7 \#xg7 18 \#xd5 \#ac8+ 19 \#b1 \#c5 and Black was better in D.Jacimovic-I.Nepomniachtchi, Feugen 2006) 9...\( \text{\#b7} \) 10 \( \text{\#e2} \) \#bd7 11 0-0 c5 12 dxc5 \#xc5 13 \#a3 \#fe4 14 \#fd1 (S.Nikolic-V.Jansa, German League 2001) 14...\#e7, intending to centralize the rooks, is equal.

b) 8 \( \text{\#e2} \) \#b7 9 0-0 \#bd7 10 cxd5 (10 \#ac1 c5 11 cxd5 \#xd5 is equal) 10...exd5 11 \#fd1 (Black managed to wrest the initiative after 11 \#a4 \#e4 12 \#ac1 \#b8 13 \#b4 \#e8 14 \#b5 a5 15 \#e1 \#e6 in M.Bertok-P.Benko, Stockholm Interzonal 1962) 11...\#e8 12 \#e1 c6 with typical and easy play for Black.

c) 8 \#d1 \#b7 9 \#e2 \#bd7 10 0-0 c5! 11 cxd5 \#xd5 (G.Barbero-M.Ghinda, World Team Ch., Lucerne 1985) and Black has achieved his aims.

8...\#b7 9 \#e2 \#bd7 10 c5 c6 11 0-0

Instead 11 cxb6? axb6 12 a3 c5 13 h4?! \#e4 was horrible for White in I.Kincs-M.Konopka, Hungarian Team Ch. 1994. The text is better and was seen in G.Stahlberg-J.Iliesco, Mar del Plata 1943, but after 11...\#e4 12 \#xe4 dxe4 13 \#e1 e5 Black again has the upper hand.

B2) 6 b4
Makagonov’s variation, which has received some recent attention.

6...e6!?  

I like this move, forcing a clarification of White’s plans. Instead 6...b6 is the traditional move, but 7 a3 c5 8 bxc5 bxc5 9 🜔c4! has been causing some problems of late.

7 c5  
Committal, but best. Instead:

a) 7 ♗g5 ♘f5! 8 e2 (8 cxd5 h6 9 e4 hxg5 10 exf5 ♘xd5 11 e2 e5 gives Black a clear advantage) 8...a5 9 b5 c5 10 bxc6 ♘xc6 gives Black the initiative.

b) 7 e5 dxe5 8 dxe5 (8 ☩xc4 ♘d5 9 ♘b2 ♘d7 is fine too) 8...♗c4 9 ♘xc4 ♘d5 10 ♖b3 ♗c6 11 ♘xd5 (11 a3? ♘xd4 12 exd4 ♘xc3 13 ♖xc3 ♘xd4 14 ♘c1 a5! 15 ♖xa5 ♖d3 was disastrous for White in V.Rabrenovic-S.Atalik, Vrnjacka Banja 1999) 11...♖xd5 12 0-0 a6 is comfortable for Black.

c) 7 ♖b3 a5 8 b5 (or 8 c5 ♘e4! 9 ♘b2 as in I.Drasko-I.Sokolov, Sarajevo 1987, and now 9...AXB4 10 ♖xb4 ♘a6 11 ♘xa6 bxa6 gives Black a small edge) 8...c5 (so Black achieves his break after all!) 9 bxc6 (9 ♘a3? dxc4 10 ♘xc4 a4! nets a
piece and 9 dxc5 ♘bd7 10 ♘a3 ♘e4 is also very promising for Black) 9...bxc5 10 c5 (10 ♖b7 ♘bd7 11 ♖xc6 ♘c8 recovers the pawn with a good position 10...♘bd7!? 11 ♖a3 ♘g4 12 ♘e2 ♖c7 intends ...e5 and Black has no problems, to say the least.

7...♗g4  

8 h3  
8 e2 allows Black to prepare ...e5 at ease: 8...♗d7 9 0-0 c6 10 ♘b2 ♖c7 11 a4 b6 12 cxb6 axb6 13 ♖b3 ♘e4 14 ♖fd1 e6 15 h3 ♘xf3 16 ♘xf3 ♘d6 and the idea of ...f5-f4, as well as control of the c4-square, gave Black the advantage in B.Crane-M.Micklethwaite, correspondence 1998.

8... ♘xf3 9 gxf3  
White preferred 9 ♖xf3 in M.Bensdorp-N.Narnings, Amsterdam 2005, and should have been punished by 9...e5! 10 dxe5 ♘e4 11 ♘xe4 ♘xe5 12 ♖b1 dxe4 13 ♖xe4 ♘c3+ 14 ♘e2 ♘c6 with a powerful initiative.

9...c6 10 f4  
10 e4 ♘h5 (or 10...dxe4 11 fxe4 e5) 11 ♘e3 e5 intends ...f5 and leaves Black on top.
10...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{bd7}}} 11 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{d2}}}}}

Instead 11 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{c2}}} b6} is good for Black, as is 11 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{b5}}} cxb5} 12 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xb5}}} a6} 13 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xd7}}} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xd7}}}}} intending ...b6.

The text was preferred in V.Akobian-J.Rowson, Philadelphia 2002, and now after the logical 11...b6 once more, Black intends \textit{\textbf{\texttt{wc7}}} and ...a5 with good play.

**B3) 6 cxd5**

This line, Taylor’s other suggestion, was played by Keres and remains quite dangerous for the unwary.

6...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xd5}}}}

7 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{c4}}}}

Obviously the only critical move. Instead 7 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xd5}}} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xd5}}} 8 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{d3}}} c5}} equalizes very easily and 7 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{d2}}} c5} also fails to impress: 7...c5 8 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{b3}}} (or 8 dxc5 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xc3}}} 9 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xc3}}} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xc3+}}} 10 bxc3 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{wa5}}} 11 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{b3}}} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xc5}} 12 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{c4}}} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{d7}}}}}} and Black was fine in R.Dujin-L.Van Wely, Dutch League 2001) 8...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xc3}}} 9 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xc3}}} (9 bxc3 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{c6}}} 10 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{e2}}}}}} was preferred in I.Gavrilov-S.Petrov, Struga 2002, but after 10...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{cxd4}}} 11 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{cxd4}}} e5} 12 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{dxe5}}} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{exe5}}} 13 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{f1}}} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{e6}}} 14 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{wb7}}} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{b8}}} 15 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xa7}}} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{d3+}}} Black has excellent compensation) 9...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{cxd4}}} 10 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xd4}}} (or 10 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{d4}}} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xd4}}} 11 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xd4}}} e5} 12 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{f3}}} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{c6}}} with advantage) 10...e5 (improving over the 10...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{d7}}} of J.Bosch-E.L’Ami, Dutch Ch., Hilversum 2006) 11 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{f3}}} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{c6}}} 12 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{d1}}} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{e7}}} and Black intends ...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{e6}}} or ...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{g4}}}}, with a good game. 7...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xc3}}} 8 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{bxc3}}} c5 9 0-0}

Note that 9 h3 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{e2?}}} in view of 10...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{cxd4}}} 11 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{cxd4}}} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{e6}}} 12 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{xe6}}} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{c3+}}}.

9...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{blue}{\texttt{c7}}}}!

The most accurate, highlighting the loose position of the c4-bishop. It is surprising how much this simple move
Play the Grünfeld
disorganizes White.

10...\textit{d2}

Alternatively:

a) 10...\textit{e2} allows the annoying pin 10...\textit{g4} and then, for example, 11...\textit{a3 d7} 12...\textit{b5} (or 12...\textit{ab1 d6} 13...\textit{d3 c4} 14...\textit{c2 d5} with the initiative – Gipslis) 12...\textit{a6} 13...\textit{xd7} 14...\textit{xd7} 14...\textit{xc5 b6}! 15...\textit{a3 b5} 16...\textit{c4 xc4} 17...\textit{fc1 fc8} and Black has the advantage (Bagirov).

b) 10...\textit{b3} leaves the bishop misplaced: 10...\textit{c6} 11...\textit{a3 b6} 12...\textit{e2 a5} 13...\textit{a4 b7} 14...\textit{e4 a6} 15...\textit{ad1 ac8} with easy equality.

c) 10...\textit{e2} 11...\textit{a3 b6} 12...\textit{c1 d7} is also fine for Black.

10...\textit{d7} 11...\textit{e2} b6 12...\textit{b2 b7} 13...\textit{ac1}

This was seen in V.Ilinsky-M.Konopka, Elista Olympiad 1996. Now Black can play 13...a6 and with ...b5 coming, he has the upper hand.

B4) 6...\textit{d2}

Karel Opocensky's line and one which Black should meet head-on.

6...c5!

7...\textit{xc5}

Instead 7...\textit{xd5 cxd4} 8...\textit{xd4 xd5} is simply equal.

7...\textit{a6} 8...\textit{xd5}

White cannot play to hold on to the c5-pawn: for example, 8...\textit{a4 d7} 9...\textit{b4 e4} 10...\textit{c1 xd2} 11...\textit{xd2 xb4} 12...\textit{b3 a5} 13...\textit{a3 a6} 14...\textit{xc3 d4}! was superb for Black in A.Fodor-Z.Timar correspondence 1984.

8...\textit{xc5} 9...\textit{c4}

So White holds on to the d5-pawn with all his might. Black cannot immediately regain it, but he can exploit the placement of White's pieces to generate a very dangerous initiative.

9...\textit{a6} 10...\textit{a4}

Preventing ...b5. Indeed, the forceful 10...\textit{b4?!} meets with retribution in the form of 10...\textit{b5}! 11...\textit{bxc5} (11...\textit{e2 ce4} 12...\textit{b7} – Adorjan – is very good for Black, who regains d5) 11...\textit{xc4} 12...\textit{e4} (or 12...\textit{a4? xd5} 13...\textit{xc4 xc3} 14...\textit{xc3 e6} 15...\textit{b4 b8} 16...\textit{a3 wd3} and Black wins) 12...\textit{e6}! when White has many weaknesses as Black opens the position with crushing effect; for example, 13...\textit{d6 b7} 14...\textit{c1 c8} 15...\textit{a4 xe4} 16...\textit{b4} (or 16...\textit{xc4 xd6! 16...\textit{xc5}! 17...\textit{xc5 xc5} leaves Black with some initiative and advantage.

10...\textit{gd4} 11...\textit{0-0}

Alternatively, 11...\textit{h3 xf3} 12...\textit{xf3} (12...\textit{xf3 b5} 13...\textit{axb5 axb5} 14...\textit{xa8 xa8} 15...\textit{xb5 a4!} 16...\textit{b3 xb3} 17...\textit{xb3} is much better for Black) 12...\textit{e6?} 13...\textit{dx6 fx6} gives Black good compensation in view of White's weakened kingside and the threat of ...\textit{d3+}.

11...\textit{c8} 12...\textit{h3}
Instead 7 cxd5 cxd4 8 Qxd4 Qxd5 9 Qxd5 (and not 9 Bb3?? Qxc3 10 Qxc3 e5 11 Bb5 e4, winning a piece) 9...Qxd5 10 0-0 Qd8 already gives Black some pressure, while 7 dxc5 dxc4 8 Qxc4 Qxd1+ 9 Qxd1 Qe4 10 0-0 Qd7 11 c6 bxc6 12 Qe2 a5 leaves him with the initiative.

7...cxd4 8 exd4

8 Qxd4 allows the dynamic 8...e5 9 Qb3 e4 10 Qe2 dxc4 11 Qxc4 Qc7 12 Qe2 Qc6 with an edge.

8...Qc6

We have reached a reversed Tarrasch. Now 9 c5 Qg4 gives Black good play, as does 9 h3 dxc4 10 Qxc4 Qf5 11 Qg5 Qc8, while the aggressive 9 cxd5 Qxd5 10 Qe4 Qe6 11 Qg5 (R.Perisic-Z.Licina, Bosnjaci 2003) fails to impress: 11...Qxd4 12 Qxe6 Qxc3 13 Qxd8 (13 bxc3 Qxe6) 13...Qxd1 14 Qxf7 Qxf2 15 Qxf2 Qxf7 16 Qxf7 Qxf7 with an edge for Black.

B6) 6 Qe2

In view of ...Qg4 possibilities, this is the most accurate way of entering the reversed Tarrasch.
6...c5! 7 0-0 cxd4 8 exd4 0-0

9 0-0

White has tried a whole host of other moves, but none really troubles Black:

a) 9 h5 10 e3 dxc4 11 xc4 c8 12 e2 d7 and Black is pressurizing the d4-pawn.

b) 9 e1 dxc4 10 xc4 b6 11 g5 b7 12 a3 h6 13 f4 e6 was fine for Black in G.Giorgadze-V.Ivanchuk, Minsk 1986.

c) 9 e5 dxc4 10 xc6 bxc6 11 xc4 d6 with an edge for Black, as d4 is weaker than c6.

d) 9 c5 g4 intends ...e4.

9...dxc4 10 xc4

10 d5 a5 11 b4 cxb3 12 axb3 g4 is promising for Black, in view of the standard tactic 13 b4 c8!, or simply 13...xf3.

10...g4


### Conclusion

The e3 systems are pretty harmless for Black. White’s plan of simple development is not aggressive enough and allows Black to employ the standard ...c5-advance without any problems. More interesting are White’s attempt to discourage ...c5 or to prevent it altogether, with moves such as 6 b4 and 6 b3. Black can then shore up d5, and slowly prepare ...c5, or try to clarify the central tension; he has nothing to fear in either case.
1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♛c3 d5

Some very rare moves have been tried here, mostly in an effort to avoid theory. However, these moves are hardly threatening; in fact Black is usually able to obtain the better chances.

A: 4 g4
B: 4 h4
C: 4 f3

A) 4 g4?!

...Black is happy to resolve the central tension, and now the g4-pawn is en prise.

5 h3

Instead Black is better after 5 g5 ♟d5 6 ♟a4+ (6 e4 ♟b6 7 ♟e3 h6 8 f4 hxg5 9 fxg5 ♟g7 was also excellent for
Black in R.Moravec-J.Pribyl, Sala 1995) 6...c6 7 ∆xc4 g7, while 5 e4
∆xg4 6 f3 c8 7 ∆xc4 dg7 8 e5 ∆fd7

5...d5! 6 e4

Note that 6 g2 c6 is just bad for White, and 6 wa4+ c6 7 wc4 ∆b6 8 ∆d3 dg7 9 ∆f3 da6 gives Black a serious initiative.

6...b6!

Black simply holds on to the extra pawn in view of 7 ∆xc4? ∆xc4 8 wa4+
∆c6 9 wc4 wxd4.

7 e3 g7 8 f4 c6 9 f3 e6 10 wd2
we7 11 e2 d7 12 0-0 d8 13 ad1
ac8 14 we1 f5

This logical sequence left Black clearly better in J.Obsivac-J.Pribyl,

B) 4 h4?

More of a test than our previous variation.

4...c5!

I feel this is best. White's 4th move
doesn't contribute to the central struggle in any way and so Black is fully

justified to strike there.

5 cxd5

White has often preferred 5 dxc5,
but after 5...d4 6 cd5 dc6 7 e3 e5

8 exd4 (or 8 df3 ∆xc5 9 exd4 exd4
10 ∆d3 a6 11 da3 0-0 and Black is clearly better, J.Bertin-A.Rodier, French
League 2002) 8...exd4 9 df3 (instead 9
b4 a5 10 ∆g5 ∆e7 11 ∆xd4 exd4 gave
Black excellent compensation in
M.Cebalo-M.Sebenik, Pula 2004, while
after 9 ∆xd4 exd4 10 ∆d3 ∆g7 11 ∆f4
0-0 12 df3, Y.Gozzoli-K.Van der Weide,
La Fere 2004, Black can play 12...wa5+
with the initiative) 9...exd5 10 dbxd4
exd4 11 ∆d3 ∆g4 Black is on top,

5...exd5 6 dxc5

Black also gains the initiative after 6
h5 ∆g7 7 hxg6 hxg6 8 ∆xh8+ ∆xh8 9 e3
(G.Kundrak-G.Kosa, Szombathely 2003)
9...cx4 10 exd4 dc6 11 df3 ∆f5.

6...dc3 7 wxd8+ wxd8 8 bc3 ∆g7 9
d2

Or 9 ∆d2 da6 10 c6 bc6 11 e4 dc5
12 f3 fe6 again with the initiative for
9...a6!?  
9...f5 10 f3 d7 11 e4 e6 12 c6 bxc6 was played in A.Zaitsev-V.Smyslov, Sochi 1963, and also looks promising; as does 9...d7!?, intending 10 c6 h6 11 f3 h5 with compensation.

10 c6 c5!  
Davies’ idea. White’s position looks decidedly unharmonious and Black has good compensation.

C) 4 f3  
The most serious option in this chapter. White aims to build a big pawn centre, although the way he goes about it looks somewhat ugly.

4...c5!  
Again I believe that this direct central counter is best. Black aims to exploit the weakened dark squares in White’s camp. Now 5 g5 g7 6 e3 (or 6 dxc5 d4 7 b5 c6 8 e3 h6 9 f4 e5 10 d6+, as in J.Jambrich-D.Schwarz, Bratislava 1998, when 10...f8 11 g3 a5+ 12 d2 b4 leaves White in a bad way) 6...cxd4 7 exd4 c6 8 ge2 dxc4 leaves Black with an extra pawn.

M.Lopes-A.Ferreira de Souza, Juiz de Fora 1966. Therefore, White must choose a capture in the centre.

C1: 5 cxd5  
C2: 5 dxc5

C1) 5 cxd5 xd5 6 e4  
Alternatively, 6 a4 g7 7 xc5 c6 8 b3 b6 9 e3 (I.Botvinnik-A.Greenfeld, Israeli League 2002) 9...e5 and Black has the initiative.

6...xc3 7 bxc3 g7

8 b5+  
Instead 8 e3 c6 9 b5 (9 e2
cxd4 10 cxd4 w a5+ 11 w d2 wxd2+ 12 wxd2 0-0 is simply an inferior version of the Exchange Variation; White's kingside development is seriously hampered by the need to keep d4 protected) 9...0-0 10 axc6 bxc6 11 wd2 (D.Dela Rosa-V.Di Fonzo, Geneva 1994) 11..a6 keeps the white king stuck in the centre and should thus be very good for Black.

8..c6 9 axc6+

Also good for Black is 9 e2 cxd4 10 axc6+ bxc6 11 cxd4 0-0 12 a3 a6, I.Kincs-L.Vadasz, Balatonbereny 1995.

9..bxc6 10 e2 a6 11 e3 0-0 12 dxc5 w a5 13 0-0 fd8 14 w c2 d3


C2) 5 dxc5

The most critical move.

5..d4 6 b5 c6!

7 e3

Alternatively, both 7 g5? a6 (Rowson) and 7 f4 e5 8 g5 e7 9 xf6 xf6 10 d6+ f8 (Davies) are very good for Black, as is 7 e4? a6 8 a3 e5 9 d3 d7! (Lechtynsky).

7..e5 8 exd4 dxd4

Black stands well in the centre. Indeed, he will emerge with some advantage should he be able to recapture on c5 with impunity.

9 g5

Another suggestion of Rowson's is 9 b4 b6! 10 g5 e7 leading to complex play, while Black has the initiative after 9 wxd4 exd4 10 d3 xxd5 11 e2 0-0 12 d7 13 g3 (V.Lainburg-M.Konopka, Augsburg 1997) 13..h4, intending ...f5.

9..x5!? 10 xf6

White preferred 10 wxd4 in D.Nestorovic-N.Misailovic, Budva 2003, but now 10..xd4 11 e2 h6 12 wxd4 hxg5 13 b5 wxd1+ 14 xdl e7 favours Black.

10..xf6 11 c7+ f8 12 x a8

White's knight raid has won a rook, but all his other pieces are on their starting squares and his king is very exposed. Black enjoys very dangerous compensation.

12..b4+

12..g7?! is also interesting, as after 13 d3 e7! with the idea of ...d5.
Black has a strong attack.

13 $\textit{f}2$

13...\textit{e}4!

Suggested by Lechtynsky and a very strong move. Now 14 $\textit{w}c1$ $\textit{e}3+$ 15 $\textit{w}xe3$ $\textit{g}f5$ should just be winning for Black, as I don’t see a defence to the threats of $...\textit{c}5$ and $...\textit{w}xb2$, and no better is 14 $g3$ $\textit{xf}3$! 15 $\textit{xf}3$ $\textit{c}5+$ 16 $\textit{e}1$ $\textit{xb}2$. Relatively best is probably 14 $\textit{e}2!$ $\textit{f}5$ 15 $\textit{fx}e4$ $\textit{g}3+$ 16 $\textit{f}3$ $\textit{xe}4+$ 17 $\textit{g}1$ $\textit{g}4$ when Black remains a rook down, but White’s survival task is immensely difficult, if not impossible. White’s king position, lack of dark square control and poor coordination continue to cause him serious difficulties. Indeed, Black is surely for preference here!

\section*{Conclusion}

Only 4 $f3$ can trouble Black in any way, since both 4 $g4$ and 4 $h4$ are weakening and obscure at best. After 4 $f3$ Black must react vigorously with 4...\textit{c}5! and fight for the centre. White can then suffer from a lack of development and dark square weaknesses; key factors brought to light by our critical main line in which Black obtains a very strong attack for the rook.
1 d4 ♞f6 2 c4 g6 3 g3

The fianchetto system sees White not displaying any early ambition in the centre, preferring to develop quietly. However, this solid choice should not be underestimated as Black can often be left without any counterplay. Black has a little time at his disposal to disturb the balance, before White castles, and he must aim to exploit it.

We should note that White can also play g3 after 3 ♞c3 d5 4 cxd5 (then 4...♕xd5 5 g3 ♞g7 6 ♞g2 transposes to a position we will consider after 3 g3 ♞g7 4 ♞g2 d5 5 cxd5 ♞xd5 6 ♞c3), but in that sequence 4 g3?! is inaccurate and can be met by the immediate 4...dxc4!.

White must now act immediately to recover the pawn, but Black gains excellent counterplay with 5 ♞a4+ (5 ♞g2 c6 allows Black to retain the extra pawn) 5...♕d7! (this is always the correct response to the check from a4) 6 ♞g2 (the 6 ♞f4 of K.Schulz-L.Ftcnik, Altensteig 1987, is well met by 6...♕c6 7 ♞xc4 ♝b6
8 \text{\textit{wd}}3 \text{\textit{ag}}7 9 \text{e}3 0-0 intending ...e5 and/or ...\text{i}xd5) 6...\text{i}g7

(11 \text{\textit{wc}}2 \text{i}b4 threatens ...\textit{c}4) 11...\textit{c}4 12 \text{i}d2 \text{i}d3 13 a3 \text{i}xd4! and Black had snatched a pawn in P.Machacek-V.Jansa, Havirov 1970.

3...\text{\textit{g}}7 4 \text{\textit{g}}2 d5

and now:

a) 7 \text{e}3 0-0 8 \text{\textit{wc}}4 c5! (Black exploits the exposed position of the white queen to wrest the initiative) 9 \text{\textit{ge}}2 (or 9 \text{\textit{gf}}3 cxd4 10 \text{i}xd4 \text{\textit{e}}5 11 \text{i}e2 \text{i}bc6 12 \text{i}xc6, as in A.Kotov-P.Keres, Zürich Candidates 1953, and now the correct recapture is 12...bxc6! 13 0-0 \text{\textit{b}}6 with a serious initiative, in view of the coming ...\text{\textit{a}}6; while 9 dxc5 \text{\textit{e}}5! sees Black jump into d3) 9...\text{\textit{c}}6 10 0-0 cxd4 11 \text{i}xd4 (11 exd4 \text{\textit{b}}6 12 \text{\textit{wb}}3 \text{\textit{ag}}4 13 \text{\textit{e}}3 \text{\textit{wd}}7 is again good for Black) 11...\text{i}xd4 12 exd4 \text{\textit{b}}6 13 \text{\textit{wb}}2 \text{\textit{e}}6 14 \text{\textit{id}}1 \text{\textit{wd}}7 15 \text{\textit{ag}}5 \text{h}6 16 \text{\textit{le}}3 \text{\textit{d}}5 17 \text{\textit{ac}}1 \text{\textit{ac}}8 18 \text{\textit{wd}}2 \text{\textit{h}}7 19 \text{b}3 \text{\textit{fd}}8 and Black was obviously better in H.Steiner-P.Trifunovic, Mar del Plata 1953.

b) 7 \text{\textit{gf}}3 \text{\textit{ce}}6 8 \text{\textit{wc}}4 (8 \text{\textit{le}}3 \text{\textit{bb}}6 9 \text{\textit{wc}}2 \text{\textit{lf}}5 10 \text{\textit{wd}}2 0-0 11 0-0 \text{\textit{wd}}7 12 \text{\textit{fd}}1 \text{\textit{fd}}8 13 \text{\textit{ac}}1 \text{\textit{ab}}8 was great for Black in E.Ragozin-D.Bronstein, Moscow 1947) 8...\text{\textit{b}}6 9 \text{\textit{wb}}3 0-0 10 \text{e}3 (or 10 d5 \text{\textit{da}}5 11 \text{\textit{wb}}4 \text{\textit{ac}}4 12 0-0 a5! 13 \text{\textit{wb}}5 a4 and, with ...a3 threatened, White is in trouble) 10...\text{\textit{le}}6 11 \text{\textit{wd}}1

Now White has a major choice between exchanging on d5 and allowing Black to take on c4.

A: 5 \text{\textit{gf}}3
B: 5 cxd5

In both cases we will focus on a modern approach for Black: delaying castling in favour of more pressing matters. This approach, first brought to my attention by Vlastimil Jansa's excellent \textit{Dynamics of Chess Strategy}, is entirely justified by the relative slowness of White's set-up: he doesn't seize the centre at once, leaves the c4-pawn unprotected and is not trying to mount a kingside attack. White's play may be solid and sound, but it's also somewhat loose; a factor we will exploit with some concrete play!

Finally, White also has the rare 5
\( \square c3 \). This should be met in similar vein to 5 \( \square f3 \): 5...dxc4 6 \( \square a4+ \) \( \square f6 \) 7 \( \square x e 4 \) (or 7 \( \square f3 \) \( \square c6 \) 8 0-0 \( \square b6 \) 9 \( \square c2 \) 0-0 10 \( \square f4 \) \( \square g4 \) with a clear advantage, E.Guseinov-Ni Hua, Artek 1999, while 7 \( e 3 \) 0-0 8 \( \square x c 4 \) e5 9 \( \square g e 2 \) exd4 10 exd4 \( \square b6 \) gives Black an edge) 7...\( \square b6 \) 8 \( \square b 3 \) (8 \( \square d 3 \) \( \square x d 4 \) 9 \( \square x d 4 \) \( \square x d 4 \) 10 \( \square f 3 \) \( \square g 7 \) 11 \( \square b 5 \) \( \square a 6 \) holds on to the extra pawn) 8...0-0 9 \( \square f 3 \) \( \square e 6 \) 10 \( \square c 2 \) \( \square c 6 \) 11 0-0 \( \square x d 4 \) 12 \( \square x d 4 \) \( \square x d 4 \) 13 \( \square x b 7 \) \( \square a 8 \) 14 \( \square g 2 \) \( \square c 4 \) 15 \( \square d 1 \) \( \square a 3 ! \) 16 \( \square d 2 \) \( \square x d 2 \) 17 \( \square x d 2 \) \( \square c 4 \) 18 \( \square c 2 \) \( \square x b 2 \) 19 \( \square x b 2 \) \( \square x b 2 \) 20 \( \square x b 2 \) \( \square x c 3 \) and Black again enjoyed an extra pawn in B.Dantas- E.Tsuboi, Brazil 1998.

**A1** 6 \( \square a 3 \)

The most common move in the position with both sides castled, but Black can directly exploit the difference:

6...c5!

Immediately challenging White’s central presence. Black intends to follow up with ...\( \square c 6 \), when the importance of not wasting time on castling becomes obvious.

7 0-0

Relatively best. Instead:

a) 7 \( \square x c 4 ? ! \) \( \square c 6 ! \) 8 \( \square a 4 \) (8 \( \square x c 5 ? ! \) \( \square x d 1 + \) 9 \( \square x d 1 \) \( \square e 6 \) 10 \( \square f d 2 \) – or 10 \( \square f e 5 \) 0-0-0+ 11 \( \square d 2 \) \( \square g 4 \) 12 \( \square x g 4 \) \( \square x c 4 \) with fantastic compensation due to the many open lines – 10...\( \square d 7 \) 11 \( \square x c 6 \) \( \square x c 6 \) 12 \( \square a 5 \) \( \square x c 5 \) 13 \( \square f 3 \) \( \square c 8 \) 14 \( \square c 2 \) 0-0.
15 \text{\texttt{e1}} was seen in A.\text{\texttt{Karpov-V.Tkachiev}}, Bastia (rapid) 2002, and now 15...\text{\texttt{a6}} leaves White in trouble as Black intends ...\text{\texttt{b4+}} and ...\text{\texttt{d8}}
8...\text{\texttt{cxd4}} 9 \text{\texttt{cfe5}} (or 9 \text{\texttt{cxd4}} \text{\texttt{wxd4}} 10 \text{\texttt{dxc6+ bx6}}! 11 \text{\texttt{wxc6+ wd7}} 12 \text{\texttt{wa8 0-0}}
13 \text{\texttt{a5 wb5}} 14 \text{\texttt{wa7 a6}} which was good for Black in A.\text{\texttt{Marc-A.Brustman}}, Yerevan Olympiad 1996) 9...\text{\texttt{d7}} 10
\text{\texttt{c6}} \text{\texttt{bxc6}} 11 \text{\texttt{c5 d5}} 12 \text{\texttt{cxd4 c7}} 13
\text{\texttt{f4 g5}} 14 \text{\texttt{cxd5 wa5+}} 15 \text{\texttt{d2 xd5}} 16
\text{\texttt{xd5 cxd5}} 17 \text{\texttt{d7 xd7}} 18 \text{\texttt{d5 g5}}
\text{\texttt{xb2}} was L.\text{\texttt{Debnar-D.Navara}}, Par-
dubice 2001; Black is better in view of his central superiority and more active
pieces.

b) 7 \text{\texttt{wa4+ d6}} 8 \text{\texttt{e5}} (8 \text{\texttt{dxc6 c3}} 9
\text{\texttt{b5 d5}}! is good for Black, as pointed
out by Jansa) 8...\text{\texttt{d7}} 9 \text{\texttt{dxc6 xc6}} 10
\text{\texttt{dxc6+ bx6}} 11 \text{\texttt{dxc5 c3}} 12 0-0 0-0 13
\text{\texttt{bxc3}} (I.\text{\texttt{Balino-A.Brustman}}, Aschach
1997) 13...\text{\texttt{d5}} intends ...\text{\texttt{wh5}} when
Black has good attacking chances, as the
absence of the fianchettoed bishop
weakens White's king position.

c) 7 \text{\texttt{dxc5? xd1+}} 8 \text{\texttt{xd1 e4}}
(Jansa) is excellent for Black.

Critical; White prepares to recapture on c4, whereas 8 \text{\texttt{wa4 0-0}} 9 \text{\texttt{dxc5 c3}}
gives Black the initiative.

8...\text{\texttt{wa5}}!
Thus Black sets out to recover the
c5-pawn.

9 \text{\texttt{d4}}
This hits c6, but Black can ignore it.
Instead 9 \text{\texttt{xc4 xc5}} 10 \text{\texttt{b3 wh5}} intending...
\text{\texttt{h3}} is equal (Savon).

9...0-0!

\textbf{10 e3?!}
The most dangerous move. White
indirectly protects c5 and is set to
emerge a pawn up ahead, but Black
crucially retains some dynamic re-
sources. Otherwise 10 \text{\texttt{xc6 bx6}} 11
\text{\texttt{xc4}} (11 \text{\texttt{xc6 b8}}! 12 \text{\texttt{f4 xc5}}! 13
\text{\texttt{xb8 xc6}} 14 \text{\texttt{xa7 h3}} 15 \text{\texttt{f3 wa6}}! 16
\text{\texttt{f2 g4}}! leaves Black much better)
11...\text{\texttt{xc5}} 12 b3 (now \text{\texttt{a3}} appears
somewhat awkward, but Black should
remember that the c6-pawn is often sac-
ificed in this line) 12...\text{\texttt{wh5}} (intending a
primitive attack with ...\text{\texttt{h3}} and ...
\text{\texttt{g4}})
13 \text{\texttt{b2}} (13 \text{\texttt{xc6?! g4}}! is promising
for Black – Jansa) 13...\text{\texttt{h3}} (White must
now seek a way to extinguish Black's

7...\text{\texttt{c6}} 8 \text{\texttt{dxc5}}
initiative) 14 \$xh3 \$xh3 15 \$xf6 \$xf6 16 \$c1 \$ad8 17 \$c2 \$d5 18 \$e4 \$fd8 19 \$g2 \$we6 led to equality in V.Dydyshko-V.Jansa, Czech League 2002.

10...\$g4 11 \$xc6 bxc6 12 \$d4

12 \$xc4 \$wa6 13 \$c1 \$e6 14 \$wc2 occurred in M.Gagunashvili-D.Navara, Athens 2001, when Black should have played 14...\$xa2 with good prospects.

12...\$d8 13 e3 \$e6

14 \$c1

Instead 14 \$xc6 \$ac8 15 \$a4 (or 15 \$g2 \$xc5 with an edge, as Jansa points out) 15...\$xa4 16 \$xa4 \$xd4 17 \$xd4 \$xd4 (Marin) is good for Black. Thus he preferred the text move in M.Marvin-V.Jansa, Andorra 2000, and now Black should play 14...\$e5 15 \$e2 \$ab8 16 \$xe5 (16 \$c2 \$f5 is also good for Black) 16...\$xe5 17 \$xc4 \$xc4 18 \$xc4 \$xb2 19 \$xc6 \$xa2 (Jansa) with the advantage.

A2) 6 \$a4+ \$fd7?

A typical reaction to the check. Black will now gain time against the white queen after ...\$c6 with ...\$b6, speeding up his development and thus seizing the initiative.

7 0-0

Other possibilities:

a) 7 \$xc4 \$b6 8 \$c2?! (instead 8 \$c5?! \$a6 9 \$a3 \$xd4 10 \$xd4 \$xd4 11 0-0 \$c6 12 \$b3 \$f6 13 e3 \$c5 14 \$b2 \$h5 was very good for Black in A.Minasian-P.Nikolic, European Ch., Kusadasi 2006, and even after 8 \$wd3 \$xc6 9 \$c3 0-0 10 \$f4 \$f5 11 \$wb5 \$g4 Black’s ongoing pressure is very awkward) 8...\$xc6 9 e3 (or 9 0-0 \$g4 10 e3 0-0 11 h3 \$e6 12 \$f1 \$b4 13 \$c5 a5 14 \$b3, J.Jirka-S.Ganguly, Nakchivan 2003, and now 14...\$d6 intends ...a4; the a-rook is a serious liability for White) 9...0-0 10 0-0 \$f5 11 e4 \$g4 12 d5 \$xf3 13 dxc6 \$xg2 14 \$xg2 bxc6 15 \$xc6 \$wd6 16 \$c2 \$fd8 17 \$c3 \$wd3 18 \$xd3 \$xd3 with a strong initiative, E.Kahn-J.Horvath, Budapest 1995.

b) 7 \$bd2 c5 8 dxc5 (8 \$xc4 cxd4 9 \$g5 0-0 10 \$a3 \$c6 11 \$d1 h6 was good for Black in V.Poddubnyi-A.Yermolinsky, St. Petersburg 1987) 8...\$c6 9 \$xc4 \$a5 10 0-0 \$xc5 11 \$e4 \$xe4 12 \$xe4 0-0 was agreed drawn.
here in O.Romanishin-M.Palac, Ljubljana 1997; Black clearly has no problems.

c) 7 e3 0-0 8 \text{\textit{\$xc4 Cc6 9 0-0 e5 10 dxe5 Cdx5 11 Cxe5 Cxe5 12 Cc2} (12 \text{\textit{\$b3 c6 13 Cc3 \textit{\$b6 14 Cc2 e6} 15 b3, T.Kottmair-Z.Szabo, Balatonelle 2004, and after 15...\text{\textit{\$c5 the c3-knight is very unstable and Black much better) 12...c6 13 Cc3 \textit{\$d3 14 \textit{\$xd3 Cxd3 15 Cxd1 Cxc1 16 axc1 Cg4 17 f3 Cc6} with an obvious long-lasting edge, L.Reutova-V.Grebionkin, Ekaterinburg 1996.}}}}}}

\text{\textit{\$c6}}

Threatening to keep the pawn with ...
\text{\textit{\$b6.}}

8 \text{\textit{\$xc4 \textit{\$b6 9 \textit{\$c2 0-0}}} 10...Cf5

This does not waste time as the e4-advance is loosening.

11 e4

Black seized the initiative after 11 \text{\textit{\$b3 a5 12 Cc3 a4 13 \textit{\$c3 e5 14 Cg5 exd4 15 \textit{\$d2 \textit{\$d7 16 \textit{\$h6 \textit{\$fd8 17 \textit{\$xg7 Cxg7 18 \textit{\$b5 d3 in V.Smyslov-M.Stein, Teesside 1975.}}}}}}}}

11...Cg4 12 d5 Cxf3 13 Cxf3 Cc4 14 \text{\textit{\$d3}}


A3) 6 0-0

A more ambitious approach; White disregards the c4-pawn for the time being.

6...C6!

With this move (instead of the standard reply 6...0-0), Black prepares to retain the pawn on c4 or at least to greatly inconvenience White with its recovery. Once again we will see the advantage of concrete opening play in this line.
7 \( \text{c3} \)

A gambit continuation which, however, is hardly promising. Instead:

a) 7 \( \text{d}a3 \) b5 simply leaves the a3-knight offside: 8 \( \text{e}e5 \) \( \text{d}d5 \) 9 \( \text{c}c2 \) (Black was also somewhat better after 9 e4 \( \text{d}c7 \) 10 \( \text{e}e3 \) 0-0 11 \( \text{w}c2 \) c5 12 \( \text{ad}1 \) cxd4 13 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{d}e6 \) 14 \( \text{xa7} \) \( \text{w}c7 \) 15 \( \text{xb}8 \) \( \text{zb}8 \) 16 \( \text{f}f3 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 17 \( \text{fe}1 \) b4 in P. Lüchtmeier-M. Ivanov, Baunatal 2002) 9...\( \text{b}7 \) 10 e4 \( \text{b}6 \) 11 \( \text{f}f3 \) 0-0 12 \( \text{g}4 \) \( \text{w}e8 \) 13 \( \text{h}6+ \), \( \text{h}8 \) 14 e5 \( \text{d}d7 \) 15 \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{d}5 \) and Black was a healthy pawn up in A. Kharlov-J. Horvath, Vienna 1996.

b) 7 \( \text{w}c2 \) b5 8 \( \text{bd}2 \) (8 \( \text{e}e5 \) \( \text{d}5 \)) 8...0-0 9 b3 cxb3 10 \( \text{xb}3 \) \( \text{b}7 \) 11 a4 a6 12 \( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{bd}7 \) 13 e4 \( \text{b}6 \) 14 a5 \( \text{a}4 \) 15 \( \text{ac}1 \) \( \text{c}8 \) 16 \( \text{fe}1 \) c5 17 dxc5 \( \text{w}a5 \) 18 c6 \( \text{xc}6 \) 19 \( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{xc}6 \) with a big advantage for Black, Su. Polgar-V. Anand, Monaco (rapid) 1994.

c) 7 a4 0-0 8 \( \text{a}3 \) (or 8 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 9 e4 \( \text{b}4 \) 10 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{g}4 \) 11 h3 \( \text{xf}3 \) 12 \( \text{xf}3 \) c5 13 d5 \( \text{d}3 \) 14 \( \text{d}2 \), A. Matnadze-E. Ziać, Antalya 2002, and now 14...\( \text{a}6 \) with some advantage) 8...\( \text{a}6 \)!

(Black develops freely and prepares ...c5) 9 \( \text{xc}4 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 10 b3 c5 11 \( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{c}8 \)

12 \( \text{c}1 \) \( \text{d}5 \) leaves Black with the more active pieces, A. Petrosian-I. Ibragimov, Kazan 1997.

d) 7 \( \text{e}5 \) is powerfully met by 7...\( \text{g}4 \)!

which destabilizes White’s central control. White is now worse in all lines: for example, 8 \( \text{f}3 \) 0-0 9 \( \text{c}3 \) e5 10 dxe5 \( \text{xd}1 \) 11 \( \text{xd}1 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 12 \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) as in A. Raetsky-I. Glek, Zürich 2001, or 8 \( \text{xc}4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 9 \( \text{wc}2 \) 0-0 10 \( \text{ba}3 \) (V. Bologan-A. Volokitin, Sarajevo 2005), and now Ftacnik notes that 10...\( \text{wc}5 \) 11 \( \text{f}4 \) (11 h3 \( \text{f}6 \) 12 e4 \( \text{wh}5 \) is similar) 11...\( \text{a}6 \) is good for Black.

7...0-0
Black can finally afford to castle!

8 e4

Black was obviously better after 8 h3?! b5! 9 de5 a6! 10 e4 (10 dxc6 dxc6 11 dxc6 dxh3 is a clear extra pawn, and 10 a4 b4 11 a2 a5 12 dxc4 de6 13 b3 d5 – Jansa – gives Black the initiative) 10...b7 11 e1 (or 11 e3 d6 12 d7 dxd7 13 e5 e6 14 e4 c5 15 f6+ xf6 16 dx7 eb8 17 exf6 eb7 18 dx5 dxf6 with a clear advantage) 11...d7 12 d7 d7! 13 e5 e6 14 e4 c5!! (Anand’s powerful play deserves admiration and is fully in the spirit of the Grünfeld) 15 d6+ (15 dx5 dxc5 16 dxc5 wxd1 17 xd1 xg2 18 xg7 xe5 wins for Black) 15...fxe6 16 xb7 a7 in O.Romanishin-V.Anand, 3rd matchgame, New York 1994.

Likewise, 8 e5 e6 9 e4 f6 10 d7 (10 f4 dxe5 11 dxe5 wxd1 12 xd1 a6 13 e3 f6 14 exf6 exf6 15 h3 f8 16 h2 f8 17 d4 f5 was more of the same stuff in D.Kopec-K.Sasikiran, Hampstead 1998) 10...wxd7 11 e3 a6 12 d2 d8 13 d1 b4 14 e2 d3 gives Black a huge advantage, J.Richardson-A.Whiteley, London 1996.

8...g4 9 h3

9 e3 bd7 (threatening...e5) 10 e5 d5 (Jansa) is much better for Black.

9...xf3 10 xf3 a6 11 e3 c7! 12 a4 e5!

A well-timed central break. Now 13 dxe5 d7 regains the e5-pawn with a big plus, but even after 13 e2 g4! 14 hxg4 exd4 15 dx4 d4 16 xc4 wb6 17 a1 a8 Black was clearly for preference in F.Vallejo Pons-Z.Almasi, Pamplona 2000.

B) 5 cxd5

The most challenging move, eliminating any possibility of...dxc4.

5...xd5

White now has three different approaches to the position:

Firstly, he can play as in a normal Exchange variation with 6 c3, practically forcing the exchange on c3. However, this is the least troublesome line for Black, as he can then develop quickly and comfortably. White counts on a strong central set-up (c3, d4, e3) and pressure on the queenside, but this plan is not dangerous and Black can neutralize it without much effort.
Alternatively, White can play the direct and aggressive 6 e4, exploiting the fact that Black cannot exchange knights on c3. He will then follow up with \textit{\text{\text{\text{De2}}}}, avoiding any pin with \ldots\texttt{\text{\text{g4}}}. This line is quite threatening and requires precise handling by Black, but the resulting positions are very double-edged.

Finally, White can opt for the most popular move, 6 \textit{\text{\text{Df3}}}, with which he aims first to complete his development and only then to advance in the centre. In my view, this approach is the most difficult for Black to meet, as it combines ambition with solidity. White often ends up with a space advantage in the centre and piece pressure on Black’s position, so I propose to meet this system head-on with a dynamic central break advocated also by Jansa. Here the importance of delaying castling, prevalent throughout the 5 \textit{\text{\text{Df3}}} dxc4 variation, is again a key feature.

On to the theory!

\textbf{B1: 6 \textit{\text{\text{c3}}}}
\textbf{B2: 6 e4}
\textbf{B3: 6 \textit{\text{\text{Df3}}}}

\textbf{B1) 6 \textit{\text{\text{c3}}} \textit{\text{\text{Dxc3}}} 7 bxc3 \textit{\text{\text{c5}}}}

Black’s main task in this position is to counter the pressure applied by the g2-bishop. A second important aspect of the position is the weakness of the c4-square in White’s camp; a weakness caused by the development of the light-squared bishop on g2. While playing to occupy c4 is standard in several lines of the Exchange Grünfeld, here it is even more effective than usual: Black can set about occupying this square with moves such as \ldots\texttt{\text{\text{\text{a5-a6}}}}, \ldots\texttt{\text{\text{e6}}}, and \ldots\texttt{\text{\text{c6-a5}}}.

\textbf{8 e3}

Preparing \textit{\text{\text{De2}}}. A different set-up occurs with 8 \textit{\text{\text{Df3}}} and now 8\ldots\texttt{\text{\text{c6}}} 9 a3 (no other move fits in well with White’s chosen set-up: for example, 9 d5 \texttt{\text{\text{a5}}} is already better for Black, as pointed out by Rowson, and 9 0-0?! is a dubious pawn sacrifice since 9\ldots\texttt{\text{\text{xd4}}} 10 \texttt{\text{\text{xd4}}} \texttt{\text{\text{xd4}}} 11 \texttt{\text{\text{xd4}}} \texttt{\text{\text{xd4}}} 12 \texttt{\text{\text{xd4}}} \texttt{\text{\text{xd4}}} 13 \texttt{\text{\text{b1}}} \texttt{\text{\text{b6}}} is good for Black) 9\ldots0-0 10 0-0 \texttt{\text{\text{xd4}}} 11 \texttt{\text{\text{xd4}}}
(a typical recapture in this line, releasing the g2-bishop at the cost of some structural damage; 11 cxd4 \( \text{h}6 \) 12 \( \text{d}5 \) 13 \( \text{b}1 \), as in A.Beliavsky-C.Balogh, Austrian League 2005, is just equal after 13...\( \text{f}d7 \) 11...\( \text{c}5 \) 12 \( \text{c}1 \) (trying to evacuate the bishop from e3 in a natural and productive way; both 12 \( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{c}4 \) 13 \( \text{c}1 \) e5 14 \( \text{b}5 \) \( \text{a}5 \) and 12 \( \text{d}3 \) a6 13 \( \text{ac}1 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 14 c4 \( \text{d}7 \) 15 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) are equal) 12...\( \text{d}7 \) (simply aiming to pile up on the c-file) 13 \( \text{h}6 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 14 \( \text{x}g7 \) \( \text{x}g7 \) 15 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 16 \( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{f}e8 \) 17 \( \text{ac}1 \) occurred in J.Hajtun-L.Polgar, Hungarian Ch. 1966, when 17...\( \text{b}5 \) would have left Black with an obvious initiative.

\[ 8...\( \text{c}6 \) 9 \( \text{e}2 \) 10 0-0 \( \text{c}8 \) \]

11 \( \text{d}5 \)

Critical, and White often accepts a weak c-pawn in return for bringing his knight to d4, but we will now witness an instructive method of play for Black. Thus White might try something else – not that the alternatives are especially impressive:

a) 11 \( \text{d}2 \) 0-0 12 \( \text{c}1 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 13 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 14 \( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 15 c4 e5 16 \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{x}c4 \) 17 \( \text{e}6 \) \( \text{x}d2 \) gave Black a decisive material advantage in Gilb.Garcia-V.Smyslov, Havana 1962.

b) 11 a4 \( \text{a}5 \) 12 e4 0-0 13 d5 e6 14 \( \text{a}2 \) exd5 15 exd5 \( \text{e}8 \) saw Black have the better of it in S.Gligoric-V.Korchnoi, Yugoslavia-USSR match 1967. Indeed, Gligoric was probably impressed by Black’s play in this game, as the later 12 d5 0-0 13 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 14 \( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 15 \( \text{fb}1 \) \( \text{fd}8 \) favoured Black, who had obtained control of c4 in M.Cuellar-S.Gligoric, Sousse Interzonal 1967.

c) 11 \( \text{f}4 \) 0-0 12 \( \text{b}1 \) cxd4 13 cxd4 (13 \( \text{x}b7 \) e5 14 \( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{e}6 \) is given as very good for Black by Adorjan and Dory) 13...\( \text{b}6 \) 14 \( \text{d}2 \) e5! 15 dxe5 \( \text{x}e5 \) 16 \( \text{b}4 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 17 \( \text{d}5 \) a5! was another successful outing for Black in Iskov-V.Jansa, Svendborg 1981.

d) 11 \( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 12 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 13 \( \text{f}4 \) b6 14 \( \text{fe}1 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 15 \( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{c}4 \) was typically great for Black in E.Geller-D.Bronstein, Amsterdam Candidates 1956.

e) 11 \( \text{b}1 \) b6 12 dxc5 bxc5 13 c4 \( \text{a}5 \) 14 \( \text{c}2 \) 0-0 15 \( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{f}5 \) with easy equality, V.Kirillov-A.Suetin, USSR 1961.

\[ 11...\( \text{a}5 \) 12 \( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{b}5 \) \]

I believe this to be Black’s most reliable set-up. Note that Black has immediately opted for this regrouping of his queenside pieces rather than castle: time is important in chess and, as we have already seen, that is especially so in the Fianchetto Grünfeld! The point of Black’s move order is to be ready to respond to White’s plans, as will become apparent.
Ensuring that the knight will never reach d4.

13 $\text{Re1}$

Instead 13 $\text{Wxd8+ Xxd8 14 Xf1 Xxe2 15 Xxe2 Oc4}$ left Black with a large advantage in Hausner-I.Stohl, Zlin 1995, while Stohl notes both 13 $\text{f3? Oc4}$, intending ...$\text{e5}$ with some advantage, and 13 $\text{Od4 Xxf1 14 Wxf1}$ 0-0 15 $\text{b5 Oc7}$ when Black is again better.

13...$\text{Wxd1 14 Maxd1 Oc4}$

Now 15 $\text{c1}$ is met by 15...$\text{c6!}$, intending 16 e4 $\text{a4}$ with a clear plus, and 15 $\text{b4}$ a5 16 $\text{xb7 Oc7}$ 17 $\text{g2}$ axb4 18 cxb4 0-0 leads to a complicated position in which Black is certainly not worse, having an extra piece!

B2) 6 e4 $\text{b6}$ 7 $\text{e2}$ e5!

I much prefer this central counter to the other popular option, 7...c5, as it makes more sense. White will push d4-d5 in either case, after which Black will challenge the d5-pawn and an exchange will take place on d5. Following that, the outcome will be decided primarily by the viability of the passed d5-pawn.

Having played ...e5, Black will at some point be able to blunt the g2-bishop with ...f5 and ...e4, whereas in the case of the 7...c5 line the scope of this bishop is greatly enhanced. I feel that this factor alone should be enough to tilt the balance in favour of 7...e5.

8 $\text{d5}$ c6 9 0-0 0-0

White's other problem in this variation is what to do with his e2-knight: the e5-pawn greatly restricts this piece and moving it to c3 leaves the other knight without a good option. Meanwhile, after an exchange on d5, Black's main positional aim is to blockade the passed d5-pawn with a knight, most
usually with ...\*b6-c4-d6. He then has nothing to fear and can proceed actively with a pawn advance on the kingside and in the centre. An unhurried approach to the position by White would, of course, enable Black to accomplish this aim. Thus White must play aggressively and apply all his might to advancing his passed pawn; a strategy which dominates the resulting variations.

10 \*bc3

Alternatively, 10 \*ec3 cxd5 11 exd5 \*f5 12 a4 \*d7 13 \*e1 \*a6 sees Black clearly untroubled: 14 a5 (or 14 \*a3 \*fc8 15 \*e3, B.Jobava-L.Valdes, Ubeda 2001, and now 15...\*c5 with the initiative) 14...\*c4 15 \*e4 \*xe4! (establishing a dark square blockade is the top priority!) 16 \*xe4 \*ac8 17 \*e1 \*c5 18 \*c3 f5 19 \*f1 \*d6 20 \*d2 e4 and in J.Fedorowicz-P.Wolff, New York 1998, Black had fully accomplished his plan and stood better.

Likewise, 10 \*b3 \*a6 11 \*e3 cxd5 12 exd5 \*g4 13 \*bc3 \*c8 14 h3 \*xe2 15 \*xe2 \*c5 16 \*c2 \*cd7 was at least equal for Black in N.Edgveradze-J.Rowson, London 1999; the long-term chances are on his side.

10...cxd5 11 exd5

11 \*xd5 \*c6 gives Black simple equality.

11...\*a6!

The correct way to develop, eyeing the b4- and c5-squares as well as leaving the path of the c8-bishop unblocked.

12 b3!

Clearly the most dangerous move.

White intends to support the advance of the d5-pawn with \*a3. Note also that with this move White prevents the typical ...\*c4-d6 manoeuvre. Instead, the immediate march of the d-pawn fails to convince: 12 d6 \*c5 13 \*e3 \*e6 14 b3 f5! 15 f4 (15 \*d5 \*f4 16 \*xb6 axb6 17 \*e7+ \*h8 18 \*xc8 \*xc8 was much better for Black in L.Johannessen-J.Gustafsson, Hengelo 1999; Black will play ...\*d4 at some point and the d6-pawn will drop) 15...e4 and here a draw was agreed in J.Lipka-J.Banas, Slovakian Team Ch. 1995, but of course Black is for preference.

12...f5!

Black must meet White’s aggression with some of his own! This move also clears a square for the soon-to-be-attacked rook.

13 \*a3

Instead 13 a4!? aims to show that the b6-knight is misplaced. Black should again play actively with 13...f4! 14 a5 (14 gxf4? exf4 15 \*xf4? \*xc3 16 \*xc3 \*xf4 – Rowson – just wins for Black, while 14 f3 \*b4 15 \*a3 \*d6d5!? 16 \*xd5 \*xd5 17 \*xf8 \*xf8 is a very
interesting exchange sacrifice; Black’s prospects are surely greater, in view of both the coming ...\(\text{e}3\) and the passive white pieces) 14...\(\text{f}3\)! 15 \(\text{axb6}\) \(\text{fxg2}\) which gave him the better chances in D.Rogozenko-L.Ftacnik, Hamburg 1998.

**13...\(\text{f}7\)** **14 \(\text{d}6\)**

The only efficient way of keeping the pawn protected since 14 \(\text{b}5\) \(\text{e}4\) 15 \(\text{c}c3\) (or 15 \(\text{c}c1\) \(\text{h}6\) 16 \(\text{c}c2\) \(\text{xd}5\) and Black has captured the important pawn) 15...\(\text{c}7\) 16 \(\text{c}c1\) \(\text{xb}5\) 17 \(\text{xb}5\) \(\text{a}6\) again sees White lose it for insufficient compensation.

**14...\(\text{e}6\)** **15 \(\text{d}5\)** **16 \(\text{xd}5\)** **\(\text{we}8!\)**

This idea was suggested by Rowson and seems quite promising to me: Black intends to increase the pressure against \(\text{d}6\) with ...\(\text{d}8\) and ...\(\text{f}8\). At the moment White’s pieces appear quite active, but no concrete blow is apparent and the e2-knight is still a problem. Overall, I’d rather play Black.

**B3) \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{b}6!\)**

As will become clear, this immediate and unprovoked retreat is correct for several reasons.

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**B31: 7 \(\text{c}3\)**

**B32: 7 \(0-0\)**

There’s also 7 \(\text{a}4!\)?, a rare but interesting idea, aiming to secure the b5-square for a knight. Black does best to ‘succeed’ with 7...\(\text{a}5\)! when 8 \(\text{c}c3\) \(\text{c}6\)

9 \(0-0\) (or 9 \(\text{b}5\) \(\text{b}4\) 10 \(0-0\) \(\text{c}6\) 11 \(\text{c}3\)

0-0 and now 12 \(\text{f}4\) \(\text{g}4\) is equal, whereas 12 \(\text{a}2!\) \(\text{a}2\) 13 \(\text{xa2}\) \(\text{g}4\)

14 \(\text{e}3\) \(\text{e}5\) 15 \(\text{dxe5}\), as in E.Eliskases-

B.Larsen, Beverwijk 1959, and now
15...cxd7 is simply better for Black) 9...0-0 10 f4 cxd4 11 cxd4 e5 12 db5 (R.Ruck-Y.Pelletier, Buk 1996) leads to an interesting and complicated position. This idea deserves more tests.

B31) 7 c3 c6 8 e3

Actually 8 d5?! doesn’t lose a pawn, but is still not to be recommended:

8...dxc3+ 9 bxc3 wxd5 10 f4 (otherwise White struggles for compensation: 10 0-0 wxd1 11 wxd1 f6 12 d4 cxd4 13 cxd4 g5 14 f4 h6 15 d3 d5 16 c3 0-0-0 didn’t give him much in S.Lindblom-L.Ogaard, Norwegian Ch. 1975, and 10 wxd5 cxd5 11 d4 cxd4 12 cxd4 c6 13 h6 f6 14 h4 f7 15 c1 d8 16 d2 e6 17 h5 g5 left him struggling in C.Guimard-J.Rubinetti, Buenos Aires 1977) 10...wxd1+ 11 wxd1 e6 (White can now regain his pawn, but at some expense in terms of time) 12 xc7 (12 ce5 a5 13 c4 f6 14 c5 a4 15 d2 0-0-0 16 xa5 wxd1+ 17 wxd1 fxe5 was simply good for Black in J.Yrjola-J.Ehlvest, Kuopio 1992) 12...d5 13 e5 xe5 14 xe5 0-0-0 15 0-0 f6 16 d3 c7 17 c5 d5 and Black was clearly on top in V.Milanovic-D.Antic, Kecskemet 1990.

Note, too, that 8 0-0 will be examined via 7 0-0 c6 8 c3, while 8 f4 sees White try to prevent ...e5, but the bishop is not well placed on f4 and falls prey to tactics: 8...0-0 9 0-0 (instead 9 e3 e6 10 0-0 h6 11 h4 d5 12 xd5 xd5 13 wc2 f5 14 wc5 e6 15 fd1 f7 16 a3 a5 17 ac1 was solid and logical play from White in O.Moisieev-A.Cherepkov, Moscow 1949, but Black has his fair share of the play after 17...a4) 9...xd4! 10 cxd4 e5 11 c6 (White preferred 11 db5 exf4 12 wxd8 xdx8 13 fd1 in M.Chiburdanidze-A.Brustman, Yerevan Olympiad 1996, and now 13...g4 would have been strong) 11...bxc6 12 wxd8 xdx8 13 g5 f6 (Y.Schwartz-R.Ruck, Zürich 2005) and Black already stands well; his pieces are well placed and the possibility of ...c4 can be awkward.

8...e5

White must now make a fundamental decision: allowing an exchange of pawns on d4 is not very promising as Black is well placed to deal with the
IQP, but on the other hand, the d5-advance may well prove premature.

9 d5

The alternative is 9 0-0 exd4 (9...Ng4!? will be covered in line ‘B322’) 10 exd4 (10 Qxd4 is just too complacent; for example, 10...Qxd4 11 exd4 0-0 12 d5 f5 13 f4 Qd7 14 Ke1 Ke8 15 Wb3 Qd3 16 Qxe8+ Qxe8 and Black had assumed the initiative in P.Masak-M.Smistik, Moravian Team Ch. 2003) 10...0-0, and now 11 Qg5

11...f6 (this has been condemned in some sources, but I believe it is best, whereas 11...Ng6?! is surely bad; Black will sorely miss his dark-squared bishop around his king and, for example, 12 d5 Qxg5 13 Qxg5 Wxg5 14 dx{c6 bxc6 15 Qxc6 16 Qxa8 Qxf1 17 Wxf1 Qxa8 18 Qd1! should be at least somewhat better for White) 12 f4 (or 12 Wb3+ Qh8 13 Qe3 Qa5 14 Qd1 Qac4 15 Qc1 Qe6 and White hadn’t got anywhere in Z.Jasnikowski-R.Palus, Zakopane 2000) 12...Qe6 13 Ke1 Qf7 14 Qc1 occurred in O.Cvitan-B.Jaracz, Nova Gorica 2004, when Black enjoys a very sound position after the natural 14...Qd7.

9...Qe7

Other knight retreats are tried occasionally, but throughout this chapter I will focus on this natural move. Black attacks d5, thereby forcing e3-e4 (which temporarily blocks the g2-bishop and concedes some dark squares); then plays ...c6 and exchanges on d5, eventually aiming for the blockade on d6. White can prevent the full realization of this plan, but only at the cost of his prized d-pawn.

10 e4 Qg4

Exchanging the light-squared bishop on f3 is an important part of Black’s plan.

11 h3

Alternatively, 11 0-0 (as in J.Murey-Z.Ribli, Reykjavik 1975) 11...0-0 12 Wb3 (or 12 a4 Qc4) 12...c6 13 Qg5 h6 leads to equality, while 11 a4 c6 12 a5 Qbc8 13 a6!? (13 0-0 cxd5 14 exd5 was also interesting in C.McNab-M.Bakalarz, European Team Ch., Gothenburg 2005; Black should now play 14...0-0 with complex play) is critical, but ultimately not so effective: 13...b6 14 Wa4 b5 15 Wb3 0-0 16 h3 Qxf3 17 Qxf3 cxd5 18
$\text{xd5} \text{xd5} 19 \text{xd5} \text{xd5} 20 \text{exd5} \text{d6}$ and Black had both realized his plan and retained good chances in V.Borovikov-S.Voitsekhovsky, Barlinek 2001.

11...$\text{xf3}$ 12 $\text{xf3}$
Black easily equalized after 12 $\text{xf3}$
c6 13 $\text{g5}$ h6 14 $\text{xe7} \text{xe7}$ 15 a4 a5 16
$\text{a3}$ 0-0 17 0-0 $\text{fd8}$ in J.Horvath-
P.Popovic, Gleisdorf 2000.

12...c6 13 0-0 $\text{xd5}$

14 exd5
Recapturing with the knight is less incisive, as an exchange of pieces makes the resulting d-pawn weaker: 14
$\text{xd5} \text{bxd5} 15 \text{d1}$ (or 15 exd5 $\text{f5}$! – the blockade on d6 is the top priority –
16 $\text{a3} \text{d6} 17 \text{b3} \text{xa3} 18 \text{xa3}$, as in
N.Pert-A.Zhigalko, Turin Olympiad 2006, and now the simple and logical
18...$\text{d7}$ suffices for equality) 15...0-0
16 exd5 (16 $\text{e3}$ was preferred in A.Adly-K.Van der Weide, Wijk aan Zee
2006, when 16...f5!? 17 exd5 $\text{d6}$ 18
$\text{ac1} \text{ac8} 19 \text{xc8} \text{xc8}$ is unclear, but
Black has maintained the blockade on
d6) 16...$\text{d6} 17 \text{d2} \text{f5} 18 \text{b3}$ was seen in O.Cvitan-D.Navara, Pula 2003,
and now simply 18...$\text{d4}$! would have given Black a promising position.

14...$\text{f5}$
A critical moment. Black threatens
...$\text{d6}$, after which his positional super-
iority will never be in doubt, as was
shown in several games in the Sixties
and Seventies (in similar positions).
Therefore, White has only one option:
15 $\text{d6}$ $\text{b8} 16 \text{d1} 0-0$
We have reached a very sharp posi-
tion. Black is planning to round up the
d6-pawn after blocking the d-file with
...$\text{d4}$, and so again White must act.

17 $\text{e3}$
Black is already better after 17 $\text{e4}$
$\text{d4} 18 \text{xd4 exd4} 19 \text{g5} f6$ intending
...$\text{c8}$, while the 17 $\text{d3}$ of L.Van Wely-
P.Leko, Wijk aan Zee 2001, should be
met by 17...$\text{d7}$!?.

17...$\text{d4} 18 \text{xd4 exd4} 19 \text{b5} \text{c4} 20$
$\text{wd5}$
The key test; 20 $\text{ab1} \text{xd6} 21 \text{xd4}$
(Krasenkow) would be both equal and
an admission of failure from White.

20...$\text{xb2}$

Now 21 $\text{d2} \text{a4} 22 \text{xd4} \text{c3}$! 23
$\text{f3} \text{b5} 24 \text{xb5} \text{xa1}$ shows that
White cannot afford to play anything; Black is better. Thus the ever-creative Levon Aronian preferred 21 \textit{cxd4!} against Bologan (in Merida 2005), but ultimately this, too, is insufficient for advantage. Bologan accepted the offered material and had to suffer for it, but Krasenkov has pointed out the way for Black to fully extinguish White's pressure: 21...a6 22 \textit{c7 b5} 23 \textit{e1 c4}! (the start of the round-up!) 24 \textit{dd1 b6} 25 \textit{c5 cxd6} 26 \textit{cxd6 wxd6} 27 \textit{wxd6 d6} 28 \textit{dxa6} with equality.

\textbf{B32) 7 0-0 c6}

In this theoretically-important position, we have a final divide:

\textbf{B321: 8 c3}
\textbf{B322: 8 e3}

\textbf{B321) 8 c3}

This pawn sacrifice has been tried several times, but unsuccessfully: Black is not greatly troubled by White's slight initiative. Naturally, the proof is in the eating!

8...\textit{dxd4!} 9 \textit{dxd4 wxd4}

10 \textit{b5}

The trickiest move, although still nothing special. White now manages to regain his pawn, but only by exchanging several pieces.

Alternatively:

a) 10 \textit{wxd4 dxd4} 11 \textit{d5} 12 \textit{f4 xf4} 13 \textit{gxf4 d8} 14 \textit{fd1+} has been a popular choice, but now White's pressure comes to a standstill: 14...\textit{d7} 15 \textit{d2} (15 a4 a6 does not impress; neither did 15 \textit{ac1 c6} 16 \textit{d4 e6} 17 \textit{b4 a6} 18 a4 \textit{e7} 19 b5 axb5 20 axb5 c5 21 \textit{d3 d8} 22 \textit{a1} in L.Pantsulaia-A.Areshchenko, Yerevan 2004, and now with the simple 22...\textit{xa1} 23 \textit{xa1} c4 24 \textit{a5 d6} 25 \textit{xb7 d2} Black achieves a large advantage) 15...c6 16 \textit{d4} (or 16 \textit{h3 e6} 17 \textit{e6} \textit{e7} 18 \textit{ad1}, as in U.Rohde-R.Swinkels, German League 2005, when 18...\textit{xf6} ends White's initiative) 16...a5 17 \textit{c1 e6} 18 \textit{c3} \textit{e7} 19 a3 \textit{f6} leaves White with insufficient compensation for the pawn, Z.Sturua-M.Makarov, Helsinki 1992.

b) 10 a4 \textit{wxd1} 11 \textit{xd1} c6 12 a5 \textit{c4} 13 a6 0-0 14 axb7 \textit{xb7} 15 \textit{d7 c8} 16
\(\text{e}x\text{e}7 \text{b}8\) was fine for Black in N.Davies-E.Liss, Rishon Le Zion 1994.

10...\text{\texttt{c}}5! 11 a4

And not 11 \textit{b}3?! \textit{d}7! (Rowson) which is very good for Black.

11...\textit{xa}4! 12 \textit{xa}4

Instead 12 \textit{xc}7+ \textit{xc}7 13 \textit{xa}4+ \textit{d}7 14 \textit{f}4 \textit{xa}4 15 \textit{xc}7 \textit{c}6 is much better for Black, as pointed out by Rowson, and 12 \textit{d}5 (V.Filippov-R.Kempinski, Swidnica 1999) 12...0-0! 13 \textit{xa}4 \textit{xd}5 14 \textit{xd}5 \textit{d}7 15 \textit{xa}7 \textit{xb}5 16 \textit{xb}7 \textit{c}6 is fine for Black.

12...\textit{d}7 13 \textit{xb}7

White can abandon any hope of an advantage in order just to regain his pawn with 13 \textit{a}5 \textit{xb}5 14 \textit{xc}7 0-0 15 \textit{d}7 \textit{xb}7 16 \textit{xb}7 \textit{a}8.

13...\textit{xb}5 14 \textit{e}3

Black also equalized after 14 \textit{a}5 \textit{b}8 15 \textit{e}3 \textit{f}5 16 \textit{xc}7 (16 \textit{f}3 a6! 17 \textit{xc}7 0-0 18 \textit{xe}7 \textit{xb}2 19 \textit{ad}1 \textit{ff}6!?) saw Black successfully come out of the complications with an advantage in M.Grabarczyk-R.Kempinski, Polish Ch., Sopot 1997) 16...0-0 17 \textit{a}5 \textit{e}5! in R.Skomorokhov-A.Mikhalchishin, Lviv 1996.

14...\textit{xa}4 15 \textit{xc}5 \textit{b}8 16 \textit{f}3 \textit{b}3!

With a few accurate moves Black has equalized. 17 \textit{c}6+ \textit{f}8 18 \textit{xa}7 \textit{e}5 19 \textit{f}4 \textit{d}6 20 \textit{d}4 \textit{f}6 was agreed drawn in R.Ruck-P.Szekely, Hungarian Team Ch. 1997, while 17 \textit{xa}7 \textit{d}8 18 \textit{c}6+ \textit{f}8 19 \textit{c}5 \textit{f}6 is also equal.

B322) 8 e3 e5

9 \textit{c}3

White can also exchange on e5, hoping to profit from his central pawn majority. Ulf Andersson has often played like this, but Black has nothing to fear, providing he doesn’t just play any random move that comes to mind!
R. Hübner-G. Kasparov, Cologne 1992, instructively continued 9 dxe5 (9 Qxe5 Qxe5 10 dxe5 Qxd1 11 Qxd1 Qxe5 is the same, of course) 9...Qxd1 10 Qxd1 Qxe5 11 Qxe5 (11 Qd4 c6 was equal in L. Polugaevsky-Letelier, Mar del Plata 1962) 11...Qxe5

12 Qd2 (plenty of other options have been tried; for example, 12 f4 Qg7 13 e4 Qg4 14 Qd3 Qe2 15 Qd2 Qa6 16 e5?! was somewhat overambitious in Elarbi-M. Bakalarz, Turin Olympiad 2006, and was punished by 16...f6 17 exf6 Qxf6 18 Qc3 c5 19 Qd5 Qxd5 20 Qxd5 0-0-0 when Black was much better; 12 Qc3 can be met by 12...0-0 or 12...c6!!, intending to keep the king in the centre – we are, after all, close to an endgame – and 13 e4 Qg4 14 f3 Qe6 15 Qh6 Qd8 16 f4 Qxd1+ 17 Qxd1 Qxc3 18 Qxc3 Qf5 was fine for Black in A. Garcia-J. Fernandez Aguado, Spanish Ch., Lleida 1991) 12...c6 13 Qf3 Qg7 14 Qd4 Qg4! 15 f3 Qd7 16 Qd2 c5 17 Qb3 Qa4 and White was already under serious pressure.

After 9 Qc3, play has returned a well-known position (well-known to us, that is!), where the fully adequate 9...exd4 was examined above (see the note to White's 9th move in line 'B31'). However, that is not Black's only option and he can also try the following: 9...Qg4!?

The pressure on d4 is now almost unbearable and White must act.

10 h3

The alternative 10 d5 is well met by the counterblow 10...e4! 11 dxc6 (11 Qxe4 Qxd5 12 Qxd5 Qxd5 13 h3 Qxf3 14 Qxf3 0-0-0 15 Qc5 b6 16 Qb3 a5 17 e4 Qdb4 18 Qg5 a4 19 Qxd8 Qxd8 was a simul game of Kasparov's as Black and a good illustration of Black's possibilities) 11...Qxd1 12 Qxd1 Qxf3! (the correct recapture, aiming to later exploit the weakened light squares in White's position) 13 Qxf3 (13 cxb7 Qb8 14 Qxf3 exf3 15 e4 Qc4! sees Black wrest the initiative) 13...exf3 14 Qb5 0-0 15 cxb7 Qab8 16 Qxc7 (16 Qxa7 c5 is similar) 16...Qxb7 17 Qb5 Qa4 when Black has good compensation for the pawn; White's queenside is under strong pressure and the f3-pawn causes his king problems. I feel that Black's
chances are preferable.

10...\(\text{\textit{xf3}}\) 11 \(\text{\textit{xf3}}\)

Or 11 \(\text{\textit{xf3}}\) exd4 12 exd4 0-0 13 d5 \(\text{\textit{d6}}\) 14 \(\text{\textit{e5}}\) \(\text{\textit{e5}}\) 15 a4 \(\text{\textit{bc4}}\) 16 b3 \(\text{\textit{d6}}\) 17 \(\text{\textit{f5}}\) \(\text{\textit{e6}}\) 18 \(\text{\textit{e4}}\) \(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) 19 \(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) \(\text{\textit{ad8}}\) and Black had centralized well without any problems in K.Langeweg-V.Hort, Wijk aan Zee 1975.

11...\(\text{\textit{exd4}}\) 12 \(\text{\textit{exd4}}\) 0-0

White is now forced to advance his d-pawn, thereby blocking his light-squared bishop and conceding the central dark squares to Black’s knights.

13 d5 \(\text{\textit{d4}}\) 14 \(\text{\textit{g2}}\) \(\text{\textit{e8}}\)!

15 h4

After 15 \(\text{\textit{f4}}\)? \(\text{\textit{c4}}\) 16 b3 g5 17 \(\text{\textit{d2}}\) \(\text{\textit{d6}}\) 18 \(\text{\textit{h5}}\) h6 19 h4 gxh4 20 \(\text{\textit{xe6}}\) \(\text{\textit{xe6}}\) 21 \(\text{\textit{hxh6}}\) \(\text{\textit{c4f5}}\) 22 \(\text{\textit{f4}}\) hgx3 23 \(\text{\textit{fxg3}}\) \(\text{\textit{f6}}\) 24 \(\text{\textit{ac1}}\) \(\text{\textit{g7}}\) 25 \(\text{\textit{f3}}\) \(\text{\textit{e7}}\) White was struggling in K.Urban-V.Jansa, German League 2000; his pieces are badly coordinated, unlike Black’s which are dangerously placed.

15...\(\text{\textit{c4}}\) 16 b3 \(\text{\textit{d6}}\)

Establishing the standard blockade. L.Janjgava-A.Mikalchishin, Pavlodar 1987, continued 17 \(\text{\textit{g5}}\) \(\text{\textit{d7}}\) 18 \(\text{\textit{c1}}\) h6 19 \(\text{\textit{f4}}\) \(\text{\textit{e7}}\) 20 \(\text{\textit{d2}}\) \(\text{\textit{h7}}\) 21 \(\text{\textit{ce1}}\) \(\text{\textit{ae8}}\) and with simple and logical moves Black had obtained the advantage.

**Conclusion**

The concept of delaying castling has dominated this chapter and is, in my opinion, an essential tool at Black’s disposal to disrupt White’s smooth development. Black should take on c4 if allowed and then either comfortably hold on to the extra pawn or, should White spend time recovering it, immediately strike in the centre with \(\ldots\)c5.

After an exchange on d5, inviting a structure similar to the Exchange Variation is unappetizing for White; Black is able to fully extinguish White’s pressure with accurate play. The line 6 e4 \(\text{\textit{b6}}\) 7 \(\text{\textit{e2}}\) is more dangerous: Black should meet it with \(\ldots\)e5, rather than \(\ldots\)c5, and aim to blunt White’s fianchettoed bishop. Finally, in the main line with 6 \(\text{\textit{f3}}\) Black again does best to delay castling, preferring a quick \(\ldots\)e5. It seems to me that the crucial tempo gained by this enables Black to obtain good play.
Chapter Fourteen

Angling for a
Sämisch: 3 f3

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 f3

There is nothing deep about this move: White wants to play e4 and take play into a Sämisch King’s Indian. Black can of course reply with 3...d5 and after the exchange there and 5 e4, retreat the knight to b6. Then a position similar to the 5 ♖d2 variation arises. However, I feel that f3 is a much more useful move than ♖d2 and that this difference gives White some aggressive and dangerous options.

Retreating the knight to b6 is by no means the end of the world for Black, but I would like to suggest in this book a very different, visually stunning, and apparently quite sound way of meeting this dangerous system:
3...e5!?

The originator of this outrageous idea is, I believe, the great Grünfeld guru Andras Adorjan. It came to prominence when Peter Leko employed it in 1997 against Vladimir Kramnik, even succeeding in winning the game. Unsurprisingly, therefore, much of the analysis in this chapter stems from Adorjan and Leko.

Black’s idea is to strike at the dark squares, which have been weakened by 3 f3, and to exploit the fact that the f3-pawn significantly hinders White’s natural development. In a sense, it feels like replying to 2 c3 in the Sicilian with 2...d5, although here, of course, things are much more complicated. Still, I have great faith in this move!
4 dxe5

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Though the most natural, there are other moves. Practice has also seen:

a) 4 d5 is not a very good idea, I feel, as it allows Black to develop his dark-squared bishop actively on c5: 4...e4! 5 \( \text{\&}c3 \text{\&}c5! \) with promising play. Black even has other options, including 5...d6?! 6 \( \text{\&}g5 \) h6 7 \( \text{\&}xf6 \) (7 \( \text{\&}h4 \)? is perhaps better) 7...\( \text{\&}xhf6 \) 8 \( fxe4 \) \( \text{\&}g7 \) 9 \( \text{\&}f3 \) 0-0 with good dark square compensation, and 5...exf3 6 exf3 d6 7 \( \text{\&}e2+ \text{\&}e7 \) 8 \( \text{\&}xe7+ \) \( \text{\&}xe7 \) is a simple equalizer.

b) 4 e4 allows Black to develop quickly: 4...exd4 5 \( \text{\&}xd4 \) \( \text{\&}c6 \) 6 \( \text{\&}d2 \) \( \text{\&}g7 \) 7 \( \text{\&}c3 \) 0-0 8 b3 d6 9 \( \text{\&}b2 \) \( \text{\&}e7! \) (9...\( \text{\&}d7 \), intending ...\( \text{\&}c5 \) and ...f5, is also fine) 10 0-0-0 f5, with counterplay, is the standard reaction and a sound one at that, but even better might be 6...\( \text{\&}c5 \)! 7 \( \text{\&}c3 \) 0-0 and I feel that Black already has the upper hand.

c) 4 \( \text{\&}g5 \) h6 5 \( \text{\&}h4 \) \( \text{\&}c6! \)

(hitting where it hurts most, namely on the dark squares, but Black can consider, too, both 5...exd4 6 \( \text{\&}xd4 \) \( \text{\&}g7 \) 7 \( \text{\&}e3+ \) \( \text{\&}h8 \) 8 \( \text{\&}c3 \) d6 9 \( \text{\&}d2 \) \( \text{\&}e6 \) 10 e4 \( \text{\&}c6 \) when ...\( \text{\&}xe4 \) is threatened and Black has good play, and 5...g5 6 \( \text{\&}f2 \) \( \text{\&}c6 \) 7 d5 \( \text{\&}e7 \) 8 e4 d6 9 h4 g4, which led to complicated play in M.Luch-T.Studnicka, Czech League 2004) 6 d5 (instead 6 e3? is just bad in view of 6...exd4 7 exd4 \( \text{\&}e7 \) 8 \( \text{\&}c3 \) d5!, and 6 dxe5 \( \text{\&}xe5 \) 7 \( \text{\&}d4 \) \( \text{\&}b4+ \) 8 \( \text{\&}c3 \) d6 does not really trouble Black) 6...\( \text{\&}d4 \) and:

1) 7 e4 c5 8 \( \text{\&}e2 \) d6 leaves Black with a well-placed knight on d4.

2) 7 \( \text{\&}c3 \) c6?! with pressure against White's centre (but not 7...\( \text{\&}c5 \)? 8 g4! or 7...c5?! 8 d6!).

3) The ambitious 7 g4 is very risky since 7...h5! 8 e3 (8 g5? \( \text{\&}h7 \) wins the g5-pawn) 8...hxg4 9 \( \text{\&}xf6 \) \( \text{\&}xf6 \) 10 exd4 \( \text{\&}b4+ \) (the best move, although 10...exd4 11 \( \text{\&}e2+ \) \( \text{\&}d8 \) 12 \( \text{\&}d2 \) \( \text{\&}h4+ \) 13 \( \text{\&}d1 \) d6 can also be considered, with compensation for the piece) 11 \( \text{\&}d2 \) (other moves are clearly bad: 11 \( \text{\&}c3? \) exd4 12 a3 \( \text{\&}h4+ \) 13 \( \text{\&}e2 \) dxc3 14 axb4 cxb2 15 \( \text{\&}b1 \) g3 with a winning position or 11 \( \text{\&}f2? \) e4! with a clear plus) 11...gxf3 (11...\( \text{\&}h4+ \) 12 \( \text{\&}e2 \) exd4 is also promising) 12 \( \text{\&}xf3 \) \( \text{\&}h4+ \) 13 \( \text{\&}e2 \) \( \text{\&}xd4 \) 14 \( \text{\&}e3 \) \( \text{\&}xe3+ \) 15 \( \text{\&}xe3 \) f5 and Black has quite good compensation for the piece.)
White must now meet the threat of ...\(\text{Wh}4+\), and not with \(5 \text{f}4 \text{Wh}4+ 6 \text{g}3 \text{\&}xg3 7 \text{\&}f3 \text{Wh6} 8 \text{\&}g1 \text{\&}xf1 9 \text{\&}xf1 \text{\&}c6\), which leaves him too exposed.

\begin{align*}
\text{A: } & 5 \text{ g}3 \\
\text{B: } & 5 \text{ \&}h3
\end{align*}

\textbf{A) 5 g3}

Simple and logical, but now White’s position looks even more loose.

5...\(\text{\&}c6!\)

Another move order is 5...d6 6 exd6 (or 6 \(\text{\&}c3 \text{\&}c6\) 7 exd6 \(\text{\&}xd6\) 8 \(\text{\&}g2 0-0 9 \text{\&}h3 \text{\&}e6 10 \text{\&}d5 \text{\&}b4!\) and Black is already better) 6...\(\text{\&}xd6\) 7 \(\text{f}4 \text{\&}c6\), transposing to the note to White’s 7th move below.

\textbf{6 f4}

After the 6 e4 \(\text{\&}xe5\) 7 \(\text{\&}e3 \text{\&}g7\) 8 \(\text{\&}c3\) d6 9 f4 \(\text{\&}g4\) 10 \(\text{\&}d4 0-0 11 \text{\&}ge2\) of D.Mergvelashvili-M.Vachier Lagrave, Chalkidiki 2003, Black should seize the initiative with 11...f5.

\textbf{6...d6!}

By means of this pawn sacrifice Black opens up the position to exploit White’s multiple weaknesses. Indeed, it looks like a very favourable version of From’s Gambit (1 \(\text{f}4 \text{e}5 2 \text{fxe}5\) \(\text{d}6\)).

\textbf{7 \(\text{\&}g2\)}

Or 7 exd6 \(\text{\&}xd6\) 8 \(\text{\&}g2\) (8 \(\text{\&}c3 \text{\&}e6\) 9 \(\text{e}4 \text{\&}e7\), followed by ...0-0-0 is promising for Black, and 8 \(\text{\&}f3 \text{\&}g4\) 9 \(\text{\&}g2 \text{\&}e7\) 10 0-0 0-0-0 11 \(\text{\&}d2 \text{\&}c5+\) 12 \(\text{\&}h1 \text{\&}f6\) is also good) 8...0-0 (8...\(\text{\&}e6\)! is another option) 9 \(\text{\&}c3 \text{\&}e8\) 10 \(\text{\&}f3 \text{\&}e6\) 11 \(\text{\&}d5\) \(\text{\&}c5\) 12 \(\text{\&}e3 \text{\&}f6!\) 13 \(\text{\&}xf6+\) (or 13 \(\text{\&}g5\) \(\text{\&}xd5\) 14 \(\text{\&}xd5\) \(\text{\&}b4\) 15 0-0 \(\text{h}6\) 16 \(\text{\&}f3\) \(\text{\&}bxd5\) with a clear advantage for Black; Predojevic’s 15...\(\text{\&}xd5\) 16 \(\text{\&}h1 \text{\&}xe3\) is good too) 13...\(\text{\&}xf6\) 14 \(\text{\&}b3 \text{\&}a5\) 15 \(\text{\&}b5\) \(\text{\&}xe3!\) leaves Black much better.

7...\(\text{\&}e6!\)

Ignoring the pawn for the sake of development, and preferable to 7...\(\text{dxe}5?!\).

8 \(\text{\&}xc6+!\) \(\text{bxc6}\) 9 \(\text{\&}xd8+\) \(\text{\&}xd8\) 10 \(\text{fxe}5\) \(\text{\&}g7\) 11 \(\text{\&}f3 \text{\&}g4\) 12 \(\text{\&}f1 \text{\&}e8\) 13 \(\text{\&}c3\) (Predojevic) with an edge for White.

\textbf{8 exd6}

Again White has some not particularly inspiring alternatives:

\begin{enumerate}
\item[a)] 8 \(\text{\&}b3? \text{\&}d4!\) 9 \(\text{\&}xb7 \text{\&}b8\) 10 \(\text{\&}xa7\) (10 \(\text{\&}e4 \text{dxe}5\) wins) 10...\(\text{\&}c2+\) 11 \(\text{\&}f2\) \(\text{\&}d7\) with some advantage for Black.
\end{enumerate}
b) 8 \texttt{\textsf{wa4}} dxe5! (also possible are 8...\texttt{\textsf{wd7}} and 8...\texttt{\textsf{ad7}} 9 exd6 \texttt{\textsf{axd6}} 10 \texttt{\textsf{zf3}} 0-0 11 0-0 \texttt{\textsf{af6}} 12 \texttt{\textsf{ec3}} \texttt{\textsf{we7}}, with compensation in both cases) 9 \texttt{\textsf{axc6+ bxc6}} 10 \texttt{\textsf{wc6+ d7}} 11 \texttt{\textsf{we4 f6!}} (11...\texttt{\textsf{g7}} is possible, but the text is stronger) 12 \texttt{\textsf{xe5+ e7}} 13 \texttt{\textsf{f3}} 0-0 14 0-0 \texttt{\textsf{e8}} and Black’s initiative is growing rapidly.

c) 8 \texttt{\textsf{axc6+ bxc6}} 9 \texttt{\textsf{wa4}} dxe5 10 \texttt{\textsf{wc6+ d7}} 11 \texttt{\textsf{we4 f6!}} 12 \texttt{\textsf{xe5+ e7}} was promising for Black in Magalashvili-B.Predojevic, Kallithea 2003.

8...\texttt{\textsf{xd6}}

The most ambitious move, defending against the check (which is now met by g3) and preparing \texttt{\textsf{bg5}}.

5...\texttt{\textsf{c6}} 6 \texttt{\textsf{g5}}

Instead, 6 e4 \texttt{\textsf{xe5}} 7 \texttt{\textsf{e3}} (or 7 \texttt{\textsf{ec2 c5}} with the initiative) 7...\texttt{\textsf{g7}} 8 \texttt{\textsf{f2}} (8 \texttt{\textsf{ec3 d5}} 9 cxd5 \texttt{\textsf{axh3}} 10 gxh3 0-0 gives Black good compensation) 8...f5 leaves Black very active; 6 e3 d6 7 \texttt{\textsf{f2 e6}} is similar to what we’ve already seen; and 6 \texttt{\textsf{c3 xe5}} 7 g4 (Black has the initiative after both 7 \texttt{\textsf{g5 f6}} 8 \texttt{\textsf{h4 c5}} and 7 e4 \texttt{\textsf{c5}} 8 f4 \texttt{\textsf{c6}} 9 \texttt{\textsf{dd5 0-0}}) 7...\texttt{\textsf{g7}} 8 \texttt{\textsf{f4 c6}} gives Black good play after the regrouping...\texttt{\textsf{e6}} and ...\texttt{\textsf{g7}}.

6...\texttt{\textsf{e7}} 7 \texttt{\textsf{xe7}}

Black gains at least equality after 7 \texttt{\textsf{h6 xe5}}, intending ...d6 and ...\texttt{\textsf{e6}}.

7...\texttt{\textsf{xe7}}

A critical position. If Black recovers the e5-pawn he will obviously stand well, but preventing this is not easy at all for White.

8 \texttt{\textsf{c3}}

Once again 8 f4? is too weakening: 8...d6! 9 exd6 \texttt{\textsf{we6}} 10 dxc7 \texttt{\textsf{axh3}} 11 gxh3 \texttt{\textsf{h4+}} 12 \texttt{\textsf{d2}} \texttt{\textsf{xf4+}} 13 e3 \texttt{\textsf{xc7}} with a clear advantage.
In H.Stefansson-M.Krasenkow, Antalya 2004, White preferred 8 g4?! which is best met by 8...\(\text{\textit{\text{\text{Q}}}}\text{xe5!} (8...\text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{g7 9 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{c3 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xe5} 10 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{d5 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{h4+ 11 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{f2 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{e6} 12 \text{\textit{\text{e3 was the game, when Black should have played}} \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{f5 13 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xf5} \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xf5 threatening} \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{f4 with good play – Krasenkow; while}} \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{f4} \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{d6 10 exd6 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{h4+ 11 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{f2 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xg4} 12 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xc7 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{e6} 13 \text{\textit{\text{e3 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}}}\text{c8} 14 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{c3 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xc7 gave Black good compensation in A.Kuzmin-M.Krasenkow, Amsterdam 2004) 9 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{c3 (9 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{gxf5} \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{d6 gives Black a strong attack and another enticing possibility is}} 9...\text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xf3+!?} \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}...\text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{f6 with an edge.}}

8...0-0!

It is better to delay the capture on e5, since 8...\(\text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xe5} 9 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{d5 is unpleasant, as is 8...\text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xe5?! 9 g4.}}

\[\text{Diagram 1}

9 e4

Some important alternatives:

a) 9 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{d5 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xe5} 10 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{d2 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{e7! 11 f4 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{d6 does not allow White to establish control: 12 g3 (or 12 e4 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xd5 13 cxd5 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{e8} 14 e5 – 14 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{d3 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xd5} – 14...\text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{b6! 15 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{e2 d6 16 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{hxg5} \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{g5 with an obvious advantage) 12...\text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{c6! 13 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xe7+ (13 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{c3 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xd2+ 14 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xd2} d5! with a clear plus) 13...\text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xe7} 14 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{g2} d5! 15 cxd5 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{hx3} 16 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{h3} \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{ad8! 17 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{g2 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{f6} 18 0-0 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{fe8 is given by Leko and Adorjan as favouring Black, which seems correct, and they also offer 18...\text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{c5+ 19 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{h1 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xd5 as an alternative.}}

b) 9 f4 is now met with 9...\text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{b4! 10 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{d2} (instead 10 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{b3 d6 11 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xb4 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xb4} 12 0-0-0 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xe5 13 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{c6} 14 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{f2 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xe5} 15 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{b5 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xc4 16 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xc7 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{b8 was equal in E.Postny-A.Szeberenyi, Budapest 2000, but Black might consider 15...\text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{d7?) 10...\text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{d6! 11 exd6 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{hxh3} 12 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{gxf3} \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{ad8 when Black has the initiative and intends 13 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{d5 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xd6.}}

c) 9 g4 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{g7 10 f4 d6 is a by-now-typical motif, as is the similar 10...\text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{b4 11 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{d2} d6.}

d) 9 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{d2 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xe5} 10 e4 d6 11 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{f2 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{e6 leads to a normal position for Black, and 11...\text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{f5 12 f4 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{c6} 13 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{g3 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{f6} 14 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{g2 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{e6 15 b3 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xe4 16 0-0 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xc4 17 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{e1 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{f7 18 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{fxe4 was also fine for the second player in V.Mihajlovic-M.Rabenovic, Sutomore 2004.}}

\[\text{Diagram 2}

9...\text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xe5}

Inferior is 9...\text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{xe5 10 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{d5 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{d8 11 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{f4 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{c6} 12 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{e2 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{f6 13 \text{\textit{\text{Q}}}}\text{f2 d6 14 0-0 according to Moiseenko.}
10  \( \text{d2} \) d6

Black is ready to strike with ...f5, while White is lagging in development.

14 g3  \( f6 \) 15  \( f2 \)  \( g4! \)

Ensuring that Black quickly completes his development. Predojevic now analyses 16  \( \text{fxg4} \)  \( \text{fxg4} \) 17  \( \text{d2} \) a6 18  \( g2 \)  \( \text{ae8} \) and concludes that Black has good counterplay.

11 f4

Critical, but Black's resources are fully sufficient. However, it's not clear what White should prefer:

a) 11  \( \text{f2} \) f5 12 0-0-0  \( \text{fxe4} \) 13  \( \text{fxe4} \)  \( \text{f5} \) 14  \( \text{f2} \)  \( \text{f6} \) 15  \( g4 \)  \( \text{d7} \) 16  \( g5 \)  \( \text{h5} \) 17  \( \text{d5} \)  \( \text{xf3} \) 18  \( \text{e1} \)  \( \text{xf2} \) 19  \( \text{xf2} \)  \( \text{xe5} \) 1+ (Predojevic) gives Black excellent compensation for the exchange.

b) 11  \( g4 \)  \( \text{f6} \) was pointed out by Leko and Adorjan (and is superior to 11...  \( \text{g7} \) 12  \( \text{d5} \)?  \( \text{fxg4} \) 13  \( \text{fxg4} \)  \( \text{xe4} \) + 14  \( \text{e3} \)  \( \text{hx1} \) 15  \( \text{f6} \)  \( \text{h8} \) with a very complicated and unclear position), when play might continue 12 0-0-0  \( \text{c5} \), with a good game for Black.

11...  \( \text{d4} \)!

Not 11...  \( \text{c5} \) 12  \( \text{f2} \) f5 13  \( \text{d5} \) with an edge.

12  \( \text{xd4} \)  \( \text{xd4} \) 13 0-0-0  \( \text{c5} \)!

A further accuracy; 13...  \( \text{h3} \) ?! 14  \( \text{xd4} \)  \( \text{e6} \) 15 f5! leaves Black in trouble.

This is correct in view of the excellent knight on d4 and the possibility of ...f5.

**Conclusion**

3 f3 is an ambitious move, but Black can hit the nail on the head with the amazing 3...e5?! White's weakened dark squares and stilted development justify Black's approach. Indeed, White must be careful not to end up in a hopeless situation, and even with best play he cannot reach anything more than a normal position.

This whole line is under-researched and there is plenty of scope for further independent analysis. Best of all, 3...e5 works!
Introducing 7 \( \text{f3} \) c5

1 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 2 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{g6} \) 3 \( \text{c3} \) d5 4 cxd5 \( \text{xd5} \)
5 e4 \( \text{xc3} \) 6 bxc3 \( \text{g7} \) 7 \( \text{f3} \) c5
8 \( \text{e2} \)
   8 h3 – 14
   8 \( \text{b5} \) – 16
8...\( \text{c6} \) 9 \( \text{e3} \) – 14
   9 d5 – 13

The Critical 8 \( \text{b1} \)

1 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 2 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{g6} \) 3 \( \text{c3} \) d5 4 cxd5 \( \text{xd5} \)
5 e4 \( \text{xc3} \) 6 bxc3 \( \text{g7} \) 7 \( \text{f3} \) c5 8 \( \text{b1} \)
8...0-0 9 \( \text{e2} \) b6 10 0-0 \( \text{b7} \)
   10...\( \text{c7} \) – 21
11 \( \text{d3} \)
   11 d5 \( \text{xc3} \)
   12 \( \text{b3} \) – 23
   12 \( \text{c4} \) – 24
11...\( \text{a6} \)
   11...\( \text{c7} \) – 27
12 \( \text{e3} \)
   12 \( \text{c2} \) – 28
12...\( \text{d7} \)
   12...e6 – 30
13 \( \text{d5} \) – 33
   13 \( \text{xa6} \) – 32

\( \text{e3} \) Systems

1 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 2 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{g6} \) 3 \( \text{c3} \) d5 4 cxd5 \( \text{xd5} \)
5 e4 \( \text{xc3} \) 6 bxc3 \( \text{g7} \)
7 \( \text{f3} \)
   7 \( \text{e3} \) c5 8 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{a5} \)
   9 \( \text{c1} \) – 42
   9 \( \text{b1} \) b6
   10 \( \text{b5} \) – 45
   10 \( \text{b5} \) – 45
   11 \( \text{d3} \) – 46
   11 \( \text{e2} \) – 48
7...c5 8 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{a5} \) 9 \( \text{d2} \) 0-0 10 \( \text{c1} \)
   10 \( \text{b1} \) – 36
10...cxd4 11 cxd4 \( \text{xd2} \) + 12 \( \text{xd2} \) – 40
   12 \( \text{xd2} \) – 37

The Fashionable 7 \( \text{c4} \)

1 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 2 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{g6} \) 3 \( \text{c3} \) d5 4 cxd5 \( \text{xd5} \)
5 e4 \( \text{xc3} \) 6 bxc3 \( \text{g7} \) 7 \( \text{c4} \)
7...c5 8 \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{c6} \) 9 \( \text{e3} \) 0-0
10 0-0
   10 \( \text{c1} \) cxd4 11 cxd4 \( \text{a5} \) + 12 \( \text{f1} \)
   \( \text{a3} \)
   13 \( \text{d2} \) – 54
   13 h4 – 55
   13 \( \text{c3} \) – 56
Index of Variations

13 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}b3 – 56

\textbf{10...\textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}a5}

10...\textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}d7

11 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}b1 – 64

11 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c1 – 69

11 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}d3 b6 12 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c1 e5 13 dxc5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}e6 14 c4 – 61

14 cxb6 – 60

\textbf{White’s 7th Move Alternatives}

1 d4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f6 2 c4 g6 3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c3 d5 4 cxd5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}xd5

5 e4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}xc3 6 bxc3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}g7

7 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}b5+

7 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}a3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}d7 8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f3 c5

9 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c4 – 72

9 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}b3 – 73

7 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}a4+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}d7

8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}xd7+ – 74

8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}b3 – 76

7 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}g5 – 79

7...c6 8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}a4 0-0 9 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}e2 c5 10 0-0 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c6 11 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}e3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}a5 12 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}b1 – 78

12 dxc5 – 78

\textbf{4 cxd5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}xd5 without 5 e4}

1 d4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f6 2 c4 g6 3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c3 d5 4 cxd5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}xd5

5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}d2

5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}a4 e5 6 dxe5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c6

7 a3 – 82

7 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f3 – 83

5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}g7

6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}d2 – 89

6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}g5 – 90

5...\textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}g7 6 e4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}b6 7 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}e3 0-0 8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}e2

8 h3 – 85

8 f4 – 86

8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}b5+ – 86

8...\textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c6 9 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f3 – 88

9 d5 – 87

\textbf{The Russian System}

1 d4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f6 2 c4 g6 3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c3 d5 4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f3

4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}b3 – 100

4...\textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}g7 5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}b3 dxc4 6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}xc4 0-0 7 e4

\textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c6 8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f4 – 97

8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}e3 – 94

8 d5 – 94

8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}g5 – 95

8 e5 – 96

8 h3 – 98

8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}e2 – 99

\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}a4+ Systems}

1 d4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f6 2 c4 g6 3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c3 d5 4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}g7 5

\textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}a4+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}d7 6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}b3 dxc4 7 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}xc4 0-0 8 e4

8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f4 – 103

8...b5 9 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}b3 – 104

9 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}xb5 – 104

\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f4 Systems}

1 d4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f6 2 c4 g6 3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c3 d5 4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}g7 5

\textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f3

5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c1 – 107

5 e3 0-0

6 cxd5 – 110

6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f3 c5 7 dxc5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}a5 8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c1
dxc4 9 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}xc4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}xc5 10 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}b3

\textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}a5 11 0-0 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c6 12 h3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}f5 13

\textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}e2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}e4 14 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}d5 e5

15 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}xc6 – 116

15 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}h2 – 118

5...0-0 6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}c1 dxc4 7 e3

7 e4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}g4 8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}xc4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{A}}xf3

9 \textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}xf3 – 121

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9 gx{f}3 – 122
7...e6 8 {g}5 {d}5 9 e4 h6 10 exd5 hxg5 11 {x}g5 {x}d5 12 {x}c4 {b}6 13 {b}3 {c}6 14 d5 – 124
14 {e}2 – 125

{g}5 Systems

1 d4 {f}6 2 c4 g6 3 {c}3 d5 4 {f}3
4 {g}5 {e}4 5 {h}4 {x}c3 6 bxc3
dxc4 7 e3 {e}6
8 {f}3 – 145
8 {b}1 – 146
8 {w}b1 – 146

4...{g}7 5 {g}5 {e}4 6 {h}4
6 h4 – 128
6 {w}c1 – 128
6 {f}4 – 129
6 cxd5 {x}g5 7 {x}g5 e6
8 {a}a4+ – 131
8 {b}h3 – 132
8 {f}3 – 133
8 {d}2 – 135

6...{x}c3 7 bxc3 dxc4 8 {a}4+ – 139
8 e3 – 137
8 e4 – 138

The Solid 4 e3

1 d4 {f}6 2 c4 g6 3 {c}3 d5 4 e3
4...{g}7 5 {f}3
5 {b}3 – 150

5...0-0 6 {e}2 – 157
6 {w}b3 – 152
6 b4 – 153

6 cxd5 – 155
6 {d}2 – 156
6 {d}3 – 157

Offbeat 4th Move Alternatives

1 d4 {f}6 2 c4 g6 3 {c}3 d5
4 f3
4 g4 – 159
4 h4 – 160
4...c5 5 dxc5 – 162
5 cxd5 – 161

The Fianchette System

1 d4 {f}6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 {g}7 4 {g}2 d5
5 cxd5
5 {f}3 dxc4
6 {a}3 – 166
6 {w}a4+ – 168
6 0-0 – 169

5...{x}d5 6 {f}3
6 {c}3 – 172
6 e4 – 174

6...{b}6 7 0-0
7 {c}3 – 177
7...{c}6 8 e3 – 181
8 {c}3 – 180

Angling for a Sämisch: 3 f3

1 d4 {f}6 2 c4 g6 3 f3
3 e5 4 dxe5 {h}5 5 {h}3 – 187
5 g3 – 186
play the Grünfeld

The Grünfeld is an exciting and dynamic answer to 1 d4, and has become very popular at all levels of chess. It relies on the principles of the hypermodern school of chess: Black allows White to erect an impressive-looking centre on the assumption that in the long run it could prove to be more of a liability than an asset. Play often becomes extremely complex and tactical, and this is clearly one of the reasons why the Grünfeld appeals to ambitious players. It has been a long-time favourite of arguably the World’s strongest-ever chess player, Garry Kasparov, who utilized it many times in his numerous World Championship battles.

Despite its attractions, some prospective Grünfeld players are discouraged by the necessity of needing to learn many different variations in such a multifaceted opening. In *Play the Grünfeld*, however, opening expert Yelena Dembo circumvents this problem by producing a comprehensive and yet workable repertoire for Black, offering a solution against each of White’s tries, whether it’s a critical main line or a tricky sideline. After reading this book, you will have the required knowledge and confidence to begin playing the Grünfeld in your own games.

- Written by a Grünfeld specialist
- Covers all of White’s main tries
- Reveals the tactical and positional ideas for both sides

Yelena Dembo is an International Master from Greece with many tournament successes to her name, including the bronze medal at the 2005 European Women’s Championship and one Grandmaster norm. She’s a renowned chess coach, who has taught students from over 30 countries. She’s also an experienced chess writer and a regular contributor to the quality publication *Chess Informant*. This is her first book for Everyman Chess.