



C O L U M N I S T S

## Over the Horizons

Stefan Bucker

## Velvet Revolution in the French Defense

Certain opening moves don't seem to fit together; for instance, combining e6 and g6 can lead to drastic consequences. The game Anderssen – Staunton, London 1851, is often quoted to scare beginners away from this practice: 1 e4 **e6** 2 d4 **g6** 3 Bd3 Bg7 4 Be3 c5 5 c3 cxd4 6 cxd4 Qb6 7 Ne2 Qxb2 8 Nbc3 Qb6 9 Rc1 Na6 10 Nb5 Bf8 11 0-0 d6 12 d5 (1-0, 44). An excellent illustration for the disadvantages of such a risky pawn formation: weak black squares and a delayed development of the c8-bishop.

In some cases you *can* safely play an early e6 and g6, e.g. when you are Black against a Closed Sicilian. Here it seems wise to keep f7-f5 as an option against White's long-term plans on the kingside, and Black has enough time for all these pawn moves: c5, g6, d6, e6, b6. Yet in more aggressive openings, especially when White's e-pawn already threatens to proceed to e5, you will usually avoid weakening the f6-square.

The following lines greatly differ in popularity. The number of games found in *BigDatabase 2005* is in parenthesis:

- 1 e4 **c6** 2 d4 d5 3 **Nc3 g6** (2561), the **Gurgenidze Variation** of the Caro-Kann Defense.
- 1 e4 **c6** 2 d4 d5 3 **Nd2 g6** (654), a rarer Caro-Kann line.
- 1 e4 **e6** 2 d4 d5 3 **Nd2 g6** (43).
- 1 e4 **e6** 2 d4 d5 3 **Nc3 g6** (13).

As you could expect, the two Caro-Kann lines are more popular than the French versions – the move g6 harmonizes better with c6 than with e6. The second line (b) with Nd2 is said to be *worse* than the Gurgenidze Variation (as indicated by the number of games), since White will be able to protect his center by means of c2-c3 and start a forceful attack (h2-h4-h5). Analogously, the fourth line should be better than the third: after an eventual e4-e5 the usual counter c7-c5 profits from the position of the Nc3. Nevertheless, in practice line four is even rarer than the third – a small surprise.





Dr. Maximilian Ujtelly

This article will discuss three games to discover whether the French line **1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 g6** really deserves its bad image. The first was already presented in [\[4\]](#), in a chapter entitled “Mild Provocation: g6 plus e6.” For some of the readers this may sound like an understatement. But I am still convinced that the risk that Black takes is not much bigger than in other lines of the French Defense. To adopt Ujtelly’s ideas to the French Defense is rather a velvet than a bloody revolution. **Maximilian Ujtelly** (1915-1979) usually began his games with the fianchetto, but instead of the standard continuation d6 and Nf6, which often leads to the Pirc Defense, he had his own ideas.

***N. Gaprindashvili – M. Ujtelly***

Wijk aan Zee 1969 (tournament B)

**1 e4 g6 2 d4 Bg7 3 Nc3**

Apparently a normal Modern Defense [B06], but it soon transposes to our strange kind of French Defense. The game Spassky – Ujtelly, Sochi 1967 [\[2\]](#), continued 3 Nf3 d6 4 Bc4 e6 5 Bb3 d5 6 Nbd2 Ne7 7 0-0 0-0 8 Re1 Nd7 9 c3 c5 10 e5 b5 11 Nf1 a5 12 Bc2 b4 13 h4 (1-0, 45). However, the French move order (seen in the two games below) excludes such an “irregular” beginning with a delayed development of White’s queen’s knight.

**3...e6 4 Be3!**

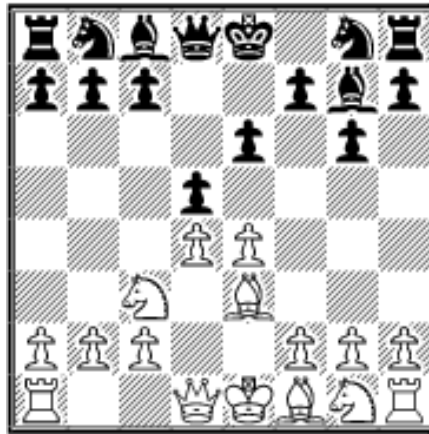
White recognizes that Black intends something unusual, instead of a Pirc Defense, and decides to castle long, intending a pawn storm against

Black's weak kingside. Alternatives:

(a) 4 Be2 d5 5 Be3 Ne7 6 Qd2 h6 7 h4 b6 8 h5 g5 9 g4 c5 10 exd5 exd5 11 0-0-0 Nbc6 12 Nf3 Bxg4 13 dxc5 Bxf3 14 Bxf3 d4 15 Bxc6+ Nxc6 16 Qe2 0-0 17 Ne4 Qe7 18 Bd2 bxc5 19 f4 Rab8 (19...Bxb2+) 20 fxg5? d3! 21 cxd3 Bxb2+ (0-1, 30), de Rooi – Ujtelky, Amsterdam 1969 [3].

(b) 4 f4 Ne7 5 Be3 a6 6 Nf3 b5 7 Bd3 f5 8 e5 Bb7 9 0-0 Scholl – Ujtelky, Wijk aan Zee II 1969, now instead of 9...Nc6? 10 a4! b4 (1-0, 31) Kurajica recommends 9...0-0 [1].

#### 4...d5



Finally reaching the French Defense.

#### 5 e5?!

In general, White pushes his e-pawn immediately, although this gives Black a clear counter plan. It seems stronger to play the flexible 5 Qd2! h6 6 0-0-0 Ne7 7 f3 a6 8 h4 b5 9 Nge2. A critical situation for this opening:



(a) 9...Bb7 10 exd5! exd5 11 h5 g5 (Kurajica – Ujtelky, Wijk aan Zee II 1969). Here Kurajica recommends 12 g4! [1] and ECO later agreed, calling it +/- . This evaluation may be correct, and the alternatives on Black's tenth move don't equalize either. If 10...b4, White can sacrifice a piece: 11 dxe6!? bxc3 12 exf7+ Kxf7 13 Nxc3, and 10...Bxd5!? (my recommendation in [4]) 11 Nf4 is also slightly better for White.

(b) 9...Nd7 could be more precise: 10 exd5 (or 10 h5 g5 11 Ng3 Nb6 12 a3 Bb7 13 Kb1 Qd7 14 e5 0-0-0) 10...exd5 11 Re1 Nb6 12 Ng3 h5!? 13 Bg5 Be6 14 Bd3 Qd6. Black has solved his problems and chances are about even.

#### 5...Ne7 6 Qd2 h6 7 g4 Nd7 8 0-0-0 a6



Black equalizes by moving his c-pawn immediately: 8...c5! 9 f4 (9 dxc5 Nxe5 10 Nb5 Nxc4 11 Nd6+ Kf8; or 9 Nb5 cxd4) 9...cxd4! (avoiding the trap 9...a6? 10 dxc5 Qc7 11 Be2, when Black cannot regain his pawn: 11...Nxc5 12 Bxc5 Qxc5 13 Ne4! +/-) 10 Bxd4 Nc6 11 Nf3 Nxd4 12 Qxd4 Qb6, or 12. Nxd4 g5!?, in both cases Black has no problems.

### 9 f4 h5

9...b5 comes into question.

### 10 f5

At first sight, the less complicated 10 gxf5 Rxh5 11 Be2 Rh8 12 h4 b5 13 h5 seems to give White an advantage, but with precise play Black holds his position: 13...Nb6 14 Nf3 Rxh5 15 Rxh5 gxf5; for example, 16 Rh1 Nc4 17 Bxc4 dxc4 18 Rxh5 Nf5 19 Ne4 (19 Qf2 Bb7 20 Nh4 Nxe3 21 Qxe3 b4 22 Na4 Bf8!) 19...Bb7 20 Nfg5 Bxe4 21 Nxe4 Qd5 =.

### 10...gxf5 11 gxf5

Or 11 gxf5 Nxf5 12 Bf4 c5 with sufficient counterplay.

### 11...Rxh5 12 Nh3!

Direct protection of the e5-pawn wouldn't help against Black's threats: 12 Be2 Rh8 13 Nf3 c5 14 dxc5 Qa5 15 a3 Nc6 16 Rhg1 Bf8; for instance, 17 Nd4 Nxd4 18 Bxd4 Bh6 19 Be3 Bxe3 20 Qxe3 Qxc5 21 Rd4 Rh4 22 Rgd1 Rxh2 23 Qg3 Rh6 24 Kb1 Rg6 25 Qh4 Qe7 =+.

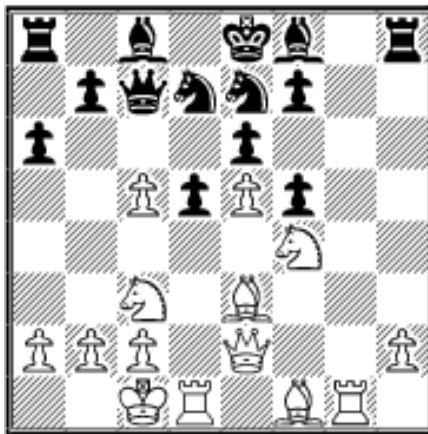
### 12...c5 13 Rg1 Bf8!

13...cxd4 14 Rxg7 dxe3 15 Qxe3 Qc7 was equally reasonable, surely Black isn't worse.

### 14 Qe2

White avoids the aggressive 14 dxc5 Nxe5 15 Nf4 Rh7 16 Be2 N7c6 17 Nh5, and perhaps she was right to do so, as Black is not without resources: 17...Ng4 18 Bg5 f6 19 Bxg4 fxg5 20 Bxf5 exf5 21 Nxd5 Kf7 22 Nh6 Rh3 23 Kb1 Bh6 =+.

### 14...Rh8 15 dxc5 Qc7 16 Nf4

**16...Qxe5**

A difficult decision in a messy position:

(a) 16...Nxc5 17 Nh5 Nd7 18 Nf6+ Kd8 [4] 19 Bg2 +=.

(b) 16...Nxe5?! 17 Nh5 Ng4 18 Rxc4 [4] fxc4 19 Nf6+ Kd8 20 Bg5 Qxh2 21 Qe3 Bh6 leads to an exchange of the queens: 22 Nfxd5 Bxc4 23 Nxe7+ Kc7 24 Qxc4 Qh6 25 Qxh6 Rxh6 26 c6 bxc6 27 Nxc6,

but the resulting ending is still unclear.

(c) 16...Bh6! [4] is probably best, e.g. 17 Kb1 Bxf4 18 Bxf4 Qxc5 19 Be3 Qc7 20 Bg5 b5 21 a3 Rb8 =+.

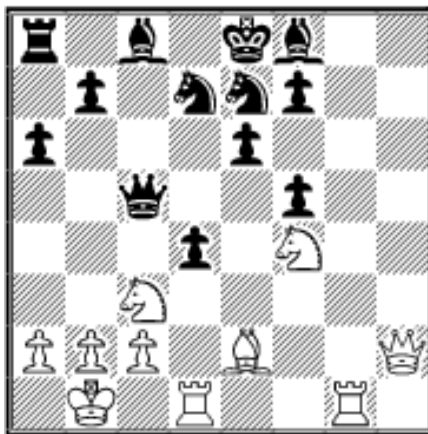
**17 Qf2 Rxh2**

(a) 17...Nc6 [4] 18 Nd3 Qxh2 19 Bg2 Rg8 20 Bf4 Bh6 21 Nxd5 exd5 22 Qe3+ +=.

(b) 17...Bh6 was recommended in [4]. 18 Nfxd5 Bxe3+ (18...exd5? 19 Bxh6 Rxh6 20 Re1 wins for White) 19 Nxe3 Rxh2 20 Bg2 Qxc5 21 Qf4 =.

**18 Qxh2 Qxe3+ 19 Kb1 Qxc5**

19...Nxc5? 20 Bg2 Ne4 21 Bxe4 fxe4 22 Rge1, followed by Nh5, invites a dangerous attack.

**20 Be2 d4?**

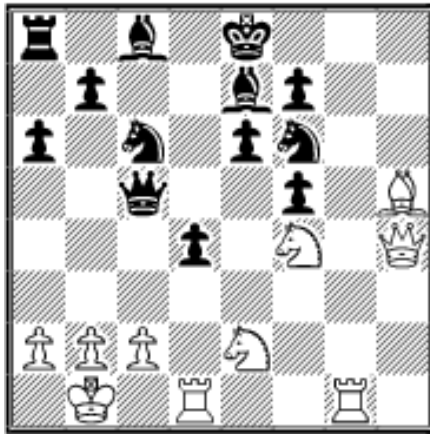
20...Qd6 = came into question. Now White finds an elegant attack:

**21 Bh5! Nf6**

21...dxc3? 22 Bxf7+! wins.

**22 Nce2 Nc6 23 Qh4 Be7**

He should have tried 23...Qe7 24 Nxd4 Nxd4 25 Rxd4 Nxh5 26 Qxh5 Bd7 to get his king out of the fire.



**24 Qg5?**

Overlooking 24 Rg7 e5 25 Bxf7+ Kd8 26 Ng6 +-, with excellent winning chances.

**24...Nd8?**

24...Nxb5 25 Qxb5 e5 +=.

**25 Nxd4 e5 26 Nde6?**

Returning the favor. After 26 Rge1! exd4 (or 26...e4 27 Qg7) 27 Qxf6, Black is helpless against White's threats.

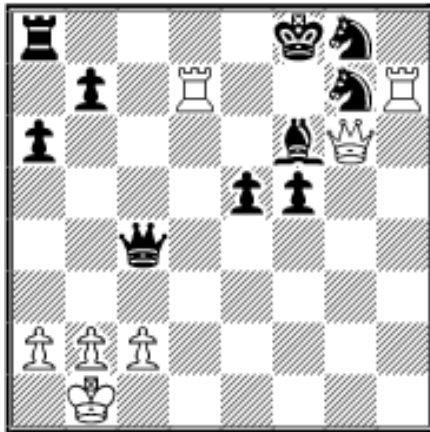
**26...Bxe6**

26...Nxe6? 27 Bxf7+ Kxf7 28 Qg6+ Kf8 [\[4\]](#) 29 Rh1! +-.

**27 Nxe6 Nxe6 28 Bxf7+ Kxf7 29 Qg6+ Kf8 30 Rh1 Ng7**

The alternative 30...Bd8 31 Rh8+ Ke7 32 Rh6 Nd4 33 Qxf6+ Kd7 34 Qf7+ Kc8 35 c3 Nc6 36 Rxc6+ Qxc6 37 Qxf5+ Kc7 38 Qxe5+ also leads to a draw.

**31 Rh8+ Ng8 32 Rh7 Bf6 33 Rd7 Qc4**



**34 b3??**

After 34 a3, Black has nothing better than perpetual check. The text move is more ambitious and Gaprindashvili deserves praise for her courage, but here she wants too much.

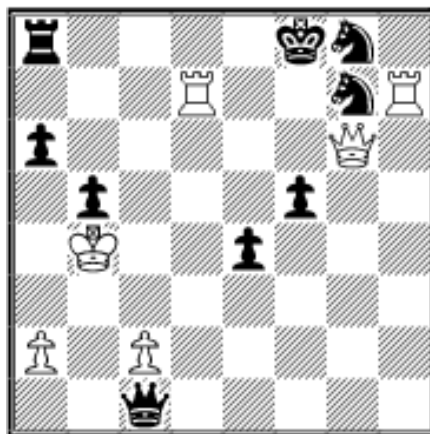
**34...Qf1+ 35 Kb2 e4+ 36 Ka3 Qc1+ 37 Ka4 b5+ 38 Ka5 Bc3+**

Or 38...Qa3+ 39 Kb6 Bd4+! 40 Rxd4 Rb8+ 41 Kc7 Qc5+ --.

**39 b4**

39 Kb6 Qe3+ 40 Kc6 Ne7+! 41 Rxe7 Rc8+ 42 Kb7 Kxe7, etc.

**39...Bxb4+ 40 Kxb4**



**40...Qb2+?**

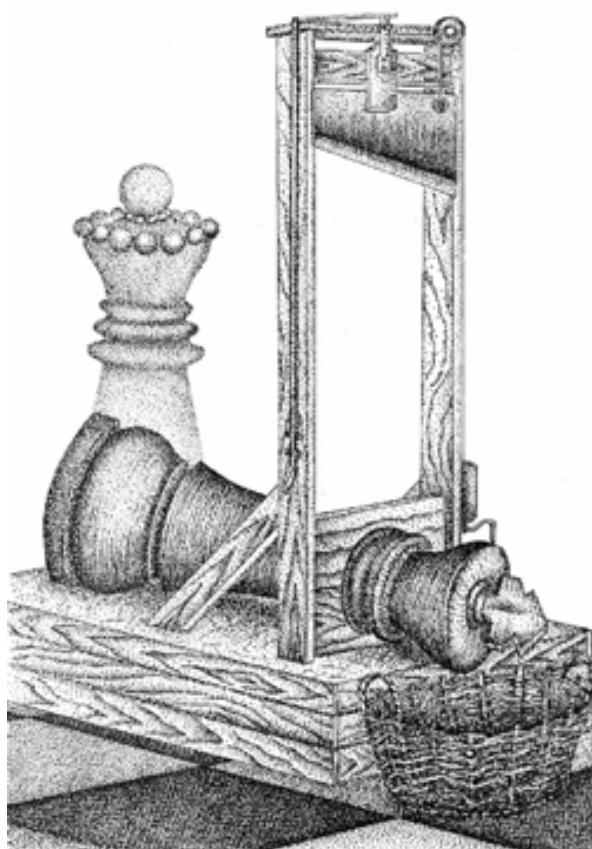
40...a5+ wins easily: 41 Kc5 Qxc2+  
42 Kd4 (42 Kb6 Qf2+) Qd2+ 43  
Ke5 Qxd7—+.

**41 Kc5 Qxc2+?**

The last mistake in a fascinating  
battle. After 41...Qe5+ 42 Kb6 Qe6+  
43 Qxe6 Nxe6 44 Rdf7+ Ke8 45  
Kd8 Rxf5 46 Rd8 Re5 47 Rd6+ Ka5

48 Nf6, Black can still play for a win.

**42 Kb6 ½-½**



A French Revolution  
(c) by Zygmunt Nasiolkowski, Lüdenscheid

The other two games also arose from the French move order.

***P. Acs (2529) – Z. Varga (2495)***  
Balatonlelle 2002

**1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 g6 4 Nf3**

4 Be3 Bg7 could transpose to the position of the first game. White  
doesn't play 4 e5 at once, which would only give Black the welcome

opportunity to leave the bishop at f8 (where it prepares the coming c7-c5).

#### 4...Bg7



#### 5 e5?!

In contrast to the first game, White has already played Nf3. Nevertheless, he should follow a similar plan as in Kurajica – Ujtelky (cf. the note to White's 5<sup>th</sup> move in Gaprindashvili - Ujtelky) and postpone his decision about the e-pawn. There are two main possibilities:

#### (a) 5 Bf4

(a1) 5...a6 6 Qd2 h6 7 h4 Ne7 8 0-0-0 c6? 9 Kb1 h5 10 Bd3 Nd7 11 Rhe1 Nf8 12 e5 b5 13 Bg5 Qc7 14 Qf4 Ng8 15 g4 (1-0, 35), P.

Andersson – O. Appelquist, Swedish Corr. Championship 1971.

(a2) 5...dxe4! 6 Nxe4 Nc6 7 Qd2 Nge7 (and not 7...Nxd4? 8 0-0-0 Nc6 9 Qxd8+ Nxd8 10 Bxc7 +/-) 8 0-0-0 (8 Bg5 f5!? 9 Nf6+ Kf7!) 8...0-0 and Black can be satisfied with his position, e.g. 9 Bc4 b6 10 Bg5 f6 11 Bf4 g5 12 Be3 g4 13 Ng1 Na5 14 Bd3 f5 15 Nc3 Qd6 Nge2 Bb7 17 Nf4 Ng6 =.

(b) 5 Be3 Ne7 6 h4 h6 7 Qd2 b6 offers this choice:



(b1) 8 exd5 Nxd5 9 0-0-0 Bb7 10 Bc4 Nxc3 11 Qxc3 Nd7 12 h5 g5 13 Ne5 Qe7 14 Bb5 Bxe5 15 dxe5 0-0 16 f3 Kb8 +=.

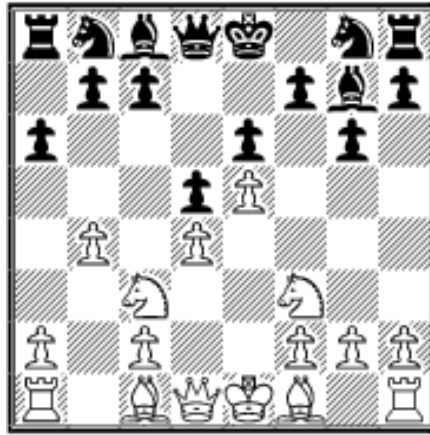
(b2) 8 0-0-0 dxe4 9 Nxe4 Bb7 10 Bb5+ Nd7 11 Ne5 Bxe4 12 Bxd7+ Kf8 13 f3 Bb7 14 Qb4 Kg8 15 Ba4 Qd6 16 Qe1 Bxe5 17 dxe5 Qxe5 18 Bd4 Qxe1 19 Rhxe1 Rh7 20 c4 +=. In both lines (b1) and (b2) Black has lasting difficulties. Perhaps instead of the passive move 7...b6, the more

ambitious 7...a6!? (intending b5 and Nd7-b6) deserves a look. Black's practical chances should not be underestimated.

#### 5...a6

The immediate 5...c5 is interesting, but 6 Nb5 cxd4 7 Qxd4 Nc6 8 Qf4 Nh6 9 Nd6+ Kf8 10 Bb5 Kg8 11 Bxc6 bxc6 12 Be3 += seems slightly better for White.

6 b4



Stops any plans connected with c7-c5, at least for a few moves.

6...Ne7

I'd be tempted to play 6...f6. Of course, this move involves some risk, in respect to Black's obvious weaknesses. But hasn't White weakened his queenside as well?

7 Rb1 Nd7 8 Bd3 b6 9 Ne2 c5 10 c3

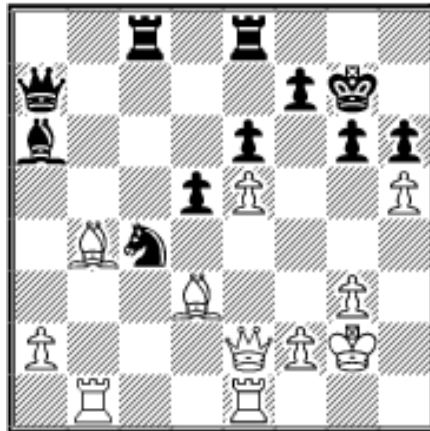
cx d4 11 cxd4 b5 12 h4 h6 13 Bf4

13 a4 comes into question.

13...Nb6 14 Nc1 Nc6 15 0-0 Bf8 16 Bd2 Nc4 17 g3 Be7 18 Kg2?! Kf8

After 18...g5! =+, White's d4-pawn suddenly would be in some danger of getting lost.

19 Be2 a5 20 bxa5 b4 21 Nb3 Ba6 22 Be1 Kg7 23 Bd3 Rb8 24 Qe2 N6xa5 25 Nfd2 Rc8 26 Nxa5 Qxa5 27 Nb3 Qb6? (27...Qa4) 28 Nc5 Bxc5 29 dxc5 Qxc5 30 Bxb4 Qa7 31 Rfe1 Rhe8 32 h5 +/-



32...gxh5? 33 Qf3 (simpler is 33 Qxh5) 33...Qd4 34 Qf6+ Kg8 35 Rbd1 (35 Bg6!) Qg4 36 Qxh6 Qg7 37 Qxh5 Bb7 38 Re2 d4+ 39 f3 Ne3+ 40 Rxe3! dxe3 41 Rh1 Rc7 42 Rh4 Rd8 43 Bh7+ Kh8 44 Bb1+ Kg8 45 Rg4 f5 46 exf6 1-0

The last game doesn't add much. Once again, White immediately advances his e-pawn instead of the stronger strategies discussed above.

*T. Huesmann (2315) – St. Bücker (2350)*

Aachen - SK 32, Br 4, 17-12-2006

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 g6 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 e5?! a6 6 Ne2 c5 7 c3 Nc6 8 g3 Qa5

Intending to gain a tempo (9 Bd2 Qb6). There was nothing wrong with 8...cxd4 9 cxd4 f6 =.

## 9 dxc5

Or 9 Bg2 cxd4 10 b4 Qb6 11 cxd4 f6, about equal.



**9...Nxe5**

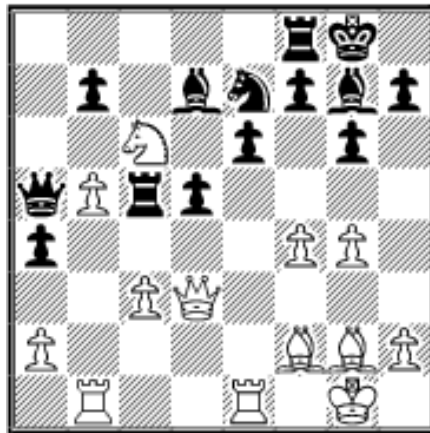
Avoiding the complications after  
9...Qxc5:

(a) 10 Be3 Qa5 (Qb5!? Huesmann)  
11 Bg2 Nge7 12 0-0 0-0 13 Bf4 Qc7  
=.

(b) 10 Nf4!? Nxe5 11 Nxe5 Bxe5 12 Nd3 Qc7 (12...Qc4? 13 Be3 Qe4 14 Rg1 Bd6 15 Bg2 Qf5 16 g4 Qf6 17 Bd4 +/-) 13 Nxe5 Qxe5+ 14 Be2 Qd6 15 0-0 Ne7 16 Bh6 Nf5. White

has some compensation for the sacrificed pawn, but Black has a solid position.

**10 Nxe5 Bxe5 11 b4 Qd8 12 Be3 Bg7 13 Bg2 Ne7 14 f4 0-0 15 0-0  
a5?! 16 b5 Nf5?! (loses time) 17 Bf2 a4 18 Nd4 Ne7 19 Rb1 Qa5 20  
Qd3 (20 Rb4) Bd7 21 g4 Rac8 22 Rfe1 Rxc5 23 Nc6**



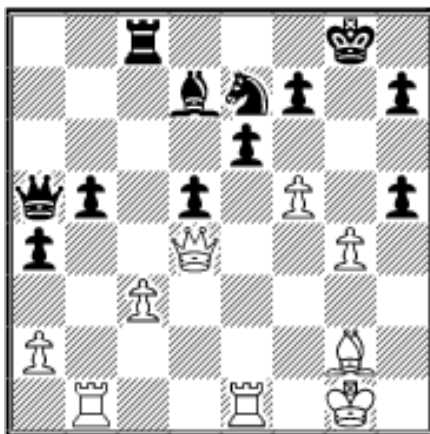
## 23...Rxc6

During the post-mortem I tried to prove that 23...Rxc3 would have given Black good prospects for a draw. In reality, he is simply lost after 24 Nxe7+ Kh8 25 Qd2 Qd8 26 Bh4! Qb6+ 27 Kh1 Rc4 28 Rec1! +-; for example, 28...Rd4 29 Qe2 Qd6 30 Bf2 Rb4 31 Rxb4 Qxb4 32 Bc5 Qxf4 33 Rf1 Qb8 34 Nxd5.

**24 bxc6 Bxc6 25 Bd4 Rc8?**

25...Qa6! offered good chances for a draw.

**26 Bxg7 Kxg7 27 Qd4+ Kg8 28 h4 b5 29 h5 gxh5? (29...Bd7 30 hxg6 Qxc3) 30 f5! Bd7**



**31 f6?** (31 Qf6 +/-) **31...Rc4??**  
 (31...Nc6 32 Qe3 Kh8 =) **32 Qe3 +- Rxb4 33 fxe7 Qc7 34 Rb4 Rg3 35 Qe5 Qa7+ 36 Kh2 Rg6 37 Rd4 Qa8 38 Bxd5! exd5 39 e8Q+ 1-0**

The outcome of the three games was clear, but certainly clearer than the actual events over the board. Conversely, I admit that some critical lines have to be studied in more detail. One day we may be able

to prove that 5 Qd2 (first game) or 5 Be3 / Bf4 (games 2 and 3) completely refutes the whole idea **1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 g6 4 Be3/Nf3 Bg7**. But for now, those with an interest in "applied psychology" should perhaps note the fact that too many players cannot resist the temptation to play the thundering, but harmless move **5 e5?!**.

#### Sources:

- [1] B. Kurajica, in *Chess Informant* 7/115.
- [2] Damjanovic/Maric, in *Chess Informant* 4/146.
- [3] *Deutsche Schachzeitung* 10 (1969), p. 325.
- [4] St. Bucker: *Groteske Schacheröffnungen*, Stuttgart 1990.

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