

The Modernized Colle-Zukertort Attack

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The Modernized Colle-Zukertort Attack

Milos Pavlovic

Thinkers Publishing 2019



Key to Symbols

!	a good move	±	White stands slightly better
?	a weak move	∓	Black stands slightly better
!!	an excellent move	±	White has a serious advantage
??	a blunder	∓	Black has a serious advantage
!?	an interesting move	+−	White has a decisive advantage
?!	a dubious move	−+	Black has a decisive advantage
□	only move	→	with an attack
N	novelty	↑	with initiative
⊙	lead in development	↔	with counterplay
⊙	zugzwang	Δ	with the idea of
=	equality	△	better is
∞	unclear position	≤	worse is
∞	with compensation for the sacrificed material	+	check
		#	mate

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Preface

Edgard Colle and Johannes Zukertort were both masters and played from late 19th century to the beginning of the next. Though they are rarely mentioned as prominent players of that era, an entire opening carries their name, which is not something that many players can say. Colle certainly contributed enormously in implementing key ideas in this opening. Zukertort lost to Steinitz in the 1872 World Championship Match, and was very strong in the 1870s and 1880s. He often experimented with b3 ideas in various positions.

I would like to clarify that systems presented in this book that start with b3 we call Zukertort, while ideas connected with c3 we call Colle systems. Both systems are analysed in this book in detail. They often transpose into one another in terms of ideas. Moreover, both the Colle and Zukertort can be used against many setups. I have tried to do exactly that: find rare lines that can be deployed against many regular openings. These, of course, have been modernised and tailored to create unique and strong strategical play.

Indeed, this book is a modern twist on some old ideas. While reading some material on the topic, I noticed that this opening is simply out of fashion. Therefore no new games are being played, apart from a couple of Kramnik games which are obviously not enough to reach clear conclusions, let alone build an opening for your own application. I have decided to give it a fresh new look. Not only that, but after some thorough analysis, I also implemented it into my own tournament practice.

The Colle-Zukertort is a deep independent opening in its own right, but is also very flexible. Transpositions to the Queen's Indian or Slav are often possible. The simplicity of placing the bishop on d3, a knight on e5 and following up with f4 and ♖f3 with checkmating prospects is very tempting. Underneath it all though, it is way more than that simplified idea. It is filled with rich positional possibilities and nuances that one should be aware of. I have tried to show as many aspects as possible, pointing out exactly the relevant details and knowledge that are normally only accessible to strong positional players, such as Kramnik. This opening is for fans of classical chess. I wanted to present chess in the "old" style, before players had access to engines to help them with their play and understanding. Before engines, players such as Colle and Zukertort created and innovated to such an extent that we still use their ideas today. I wanted to use this approach, to remind readers that this style of chess still exists.

Other systems are also covered in this book besides the usual 1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.e3 (which can also be reached through the move order 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e3, obviously). I have tried to give some interesting and rare positional lines as possible reactions to some logical Black responses, such as setups with ...c5 or ...g6.

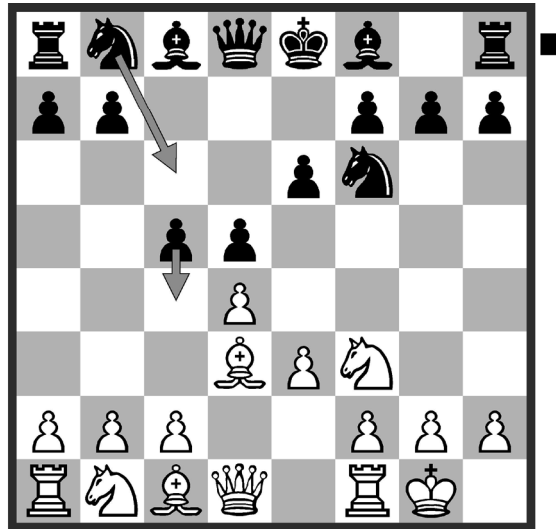
Milos Pavlovic
Belgrade 2019

Part I

Systems with ...d5



1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6
3.e3 e6 4.♙d3 c5
5.0-0 c4, 5...♘c6



Chapter Guide

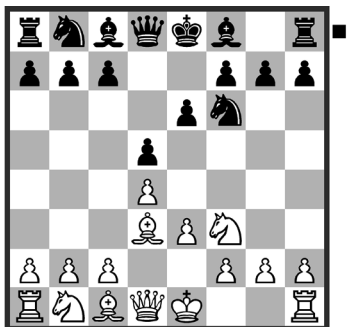
Chapter 1 – 1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.e3 e6 4.♙d3 c5 5.0-0 c4, 5...♘c6

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.e3 e6 4.♙d3 c5 5.0-0 ♘c6 6.c3 ♙d6 7.♘bd2 0-0 8.dxc5 ♙xc5 9.b4

1) 5...c4 alternative	13
2) 9...♙e7.....	17
3) 9...♙d6 10.♙b2 --.....	21
4) 9...♙d6 10.♙b2 e5 11.e4 --.....	25
5) 9...♙d6 10.♙b2 e5 11.e4 ♙g4	29

1) 5...c4 alternative

1. d4 d5 2. ♘f3 ♘f6 3. e3 e6 4. ♗d3



Position after: 4. ♗d3

An important thing to say is that this book is about deeply understanding classical chess based on a modern outlook rather than looking for direct attempts for an advantage using in-depth engine analysis.

Learning chess classically is of the utmost necessity to all competitive players. The Colle and Zukertort lines are not mainstream systems in today's chess, but I think that is because they were not properly analysed. Recently, we've seen a rise of the London system, to such an extent that everybody is now playing it. I think that the lines treated in this book may also be victims to such popularity in coming years. They hold such a variety of ideas, from positional to attacking, which is rarely found in chess nowadays.

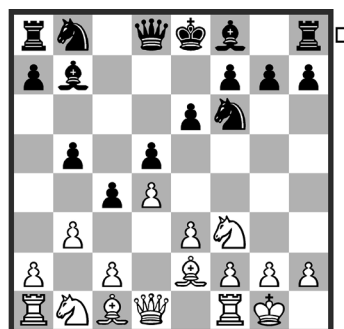
4... c5 5. 0-0!

This is essential: before deciding on c3 or b3, White must castle first. However, this does give Black the interesting possibility to close the position with ...c4 and force matters into a much slower type of game.

5... c4!?

An important line, Black simply wants to gain space and defend it no matter what. A perfectly legitimate idea and something that White cannot neglect.

6. ♗e2 b5 7. b3 ♗b7



Position after: 7... ♗b7

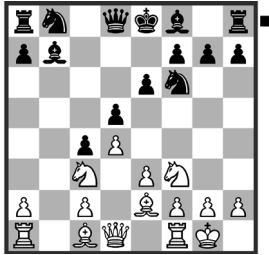
This is the line's starting position.

8. a4!?

White goes for a solid plan, other ideas are also possible:

A) 8. bxc4!? bxc4 [8... dxc4 9. a4 a6 10. c3 ♗bd7 11. ♗bd2 If Black takes with

the d-pawn on c4, White goes for e4. The position then becomes rather imbalanced.] 9. ♖c3

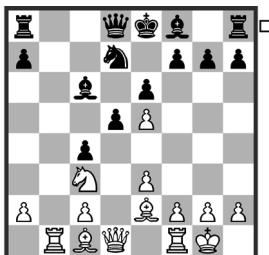


Position after: 9. ♖c3

A1) 9... ♗c6 10. ♖b1 ♕b4 [10... ♖b8 11. e4!? ♕b4 12. exd5 exd5 13. ♖xb4 ♗xb4 14. ♕f4 ♗c6 15. ♕xb8 ♖xb8 16. ♖d2 0-0 17. ♖b1 ♖e8 Black is probably OK here.] 11. ♕d2 0-0 12. ♗e5 ♖b8 13. a3 ♕xc3 14. ♕xc3 ♗e4 15. ♗xc6 ♕xc6 16. ♖xb8 ♖xb8 17. ♕b4 ♖c8 18. f3 ♗d6 19. ♖d2 White might even consider going for an advantage here.

A2) 9... ♕b4 10. ♕d2 ♗c6 11. ♖b1 transposes.

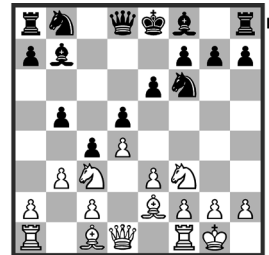
A3) 9... ♗bd7 10. ♖b1 ♕c6 11. ♗e5 ♗xe5 12. dxe5 ♗d7



Position after: 12... ♗d7

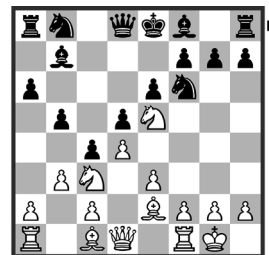
13. e4! An interesting pawn sacrifice in order to disturb Black's logical play. 13... dxe4 14. ♕xc4 ♗xe5 15. ♕b5 ♖xd1 16. ♖xd1 f5 17. ♕f4 a6 18. ♕e2 ♗g6 19. ♕e3

B) 8. ♗c3!?



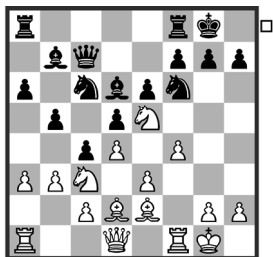
Position after: 8. ♗c3!?

Kramnik's choice. 8... a6! The best and most critical. [8... b4 9. ♗a4 c3 10. ♗e5 ♕d6 11. a3 a5 12. ♕b5+ ♖f8 13. ♗c5 ♖b6 14. ♗xb7 ♖xb7 15. ♖e2 g6 16. e4! ♗xe4 17. ♕h6+ ♖e7 18. f3 ♗d2 19. ♖fe1 ♖d8 20. ♕f4 1-0 Kramnik, V (2808) – Giri, A (2771) Stavanger 2017. Nice miniature by the Ex-World Champion.] 9. ♗e5



Position after: 9. ♗e5

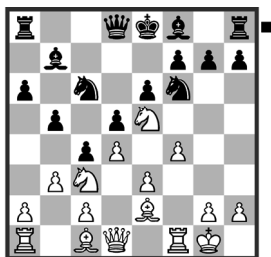
B1) 9... ♖c7 10. ♕d2 ♗c6 11. f4 ♕d6 12. a3 [12. bxc4 dxc4! is good for Black.] 12... 0-0



Position after: 12... 0-0

13. ♖e1! [13. ♙f3 ♘e7 Again, this is a good idea for Black.] 13... ♘e7 14. g4 ♘e8 15. ♖g3 f6 16. ♘f3 ♙h8 17. b4 with the idea to transfer the knight from c3 to f2 and bishop from e2 to c2! It's usually about plans here!

B2) 9... ♘c6 10. f4



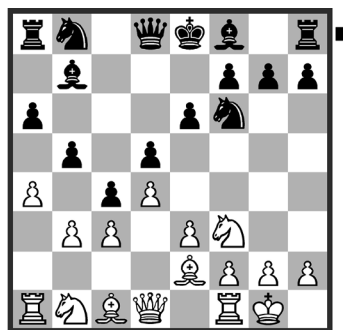
Position after: 10. f4

B2.1) 10... b4 11. ♘a4 c3 12. a3 a5 13. e4 ♘xe4 14. ♙b5 ♖c7 15. f5 exf5 16. ♖xf5 f6 17. ♙f4 ♙d6 18. ♖h5+ White wins.

B2.2) 10... ♙d6 11. bxc4!? dxc4 [11... bxc4 12. ♖b1 ♖c7 13. g4 0-0 14. g5 ♘d7 15. ♙g4! White doesn't allow ...f6, and prepares the natural idea ♖f3-h3.] 12. ♙f3 ♖c7 13. a3 0-0 14. ♖e1 ♘e7 15. e4 with yet another complex position.

B2.3) 10... ♙e7 11. a3 0-0 Another idea for White is to transfer the dark-squared bishop from d2 to h4 with 12. ♙d2. The position is unclear but full of potential.

8... a6 9. c3!?

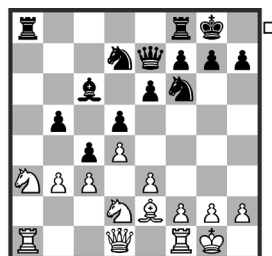


Position after: 9. c3!?

A positional idea for White here is to exchange the dark-squared bishops via a3 and to later on try and build some pressure along the a- or b-file.

9... ♘bd7 10. ♘bd2

10. ♘fd2!? We will see the idea behind this in a few moves... 10... ♙e7 11. ♙a3!? 0-0 12. ♙xe7 ♖xe7 13. ♘a3 ♙c6 14. axb5 axb5

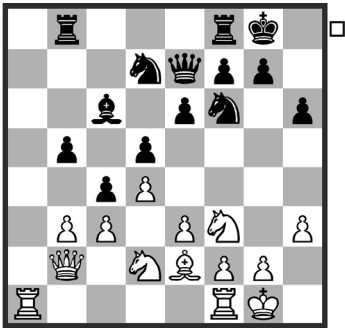


Position after: 14... axb5

15. Nc2! ? That's the point! White wants to occupy the b4-square with a knight. 15... Qd6 16. Nb4 Qb7 17. Qc2 g6 18. h3 with some pressure.

If Black ever goes ...e5, then White can simply take and play Nf3 .

10... Qe7 11. Qa3 0-0 12. Qc2 Qc6
13. Qb2 h6 14. h3 Bb8 15. axb5 axb5
16. Qxe7 Qxe7

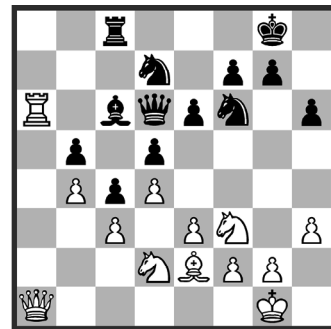


Position after: 16... Qxe7

17. Qa6! ?

17. Qa7 Qd6 18. Qfa1 As in the main line, White has some pressure. 1-0 (84) Kurajica, B (2551) – Bareev, E (2734) Sarajevo 2003.

17... Qfc8 18. b4 Qa8 19. Qfa1 Qxa6
20. Qxa6 Qd6 21. Qa1



Position after: 21. Qa1

White has some initiative here.



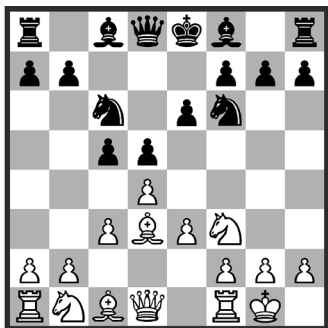
Conclusion

5 ...c4 is a unique attempt. Black is driving the game into a more closed position. It's a solid idea, but White still has good chances to achieve active play. After 6. Qe2 b5 7. b3 Qb7 White has a few ideas: one is

8. a4 to try and exchange the dark-squared bishop and to get control of the a-file. The other is to go 8. Nc3! ?, as Kramnik did. A rather sharp idea that requires a precise reaction from Black.

2) 9...♗e7

1. d4 d5 2. ♘f3 ♘f6 3. e3 e6 4. ♗d3 c5 10. ♗b2
5. 0-0 ♘c6 6. c3



Position after: 6. c3

We are entering the Colle system, which is defined as the c3-setup. White has a few ideas here, e4 usually being the main one. This is often only achieved when White goes dxc5 and only then e4. Due to the knight being on c6, Black is forced to take with the bishop on c5. Resemblances with the Semi Slav are obvious and we can say that White is a clear tempo up compared to Black's perspective in the Semi Slav, and that is often an important detail in sharp positions.

6... ♗d6 7. ♘bd2 0-0 8. dxc5 ♗xc5 9. b4 ♗e7

A slower approach to this position, but also a more solid one in a way.

For 9... ♗d6, see the next subchapters.

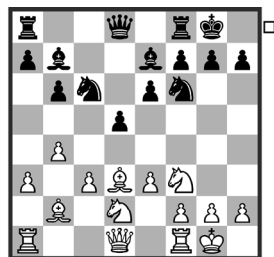


Position after: 10. ♗b2

10... a6

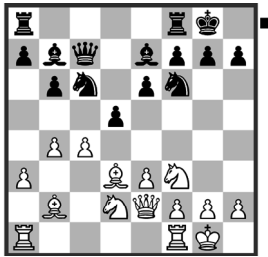
Black's plan is more positional here and involves a more solid approach.

A) 10... b6 11. a3 ♗b7

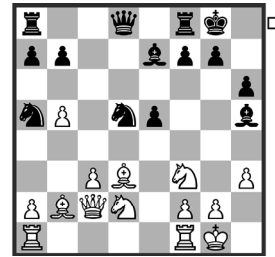


Position after: 11... ♗b7

12. ♖e2 [12. c4 a5 13. b5 ♘b8 14. ♖e2 ♘bd7 15. cxd5 ♘xd5 16. ♘c4 ♘c5 17. ♗fd1? Black's problem is that their queen lacks good squares.] 12... ♖c7 13. c4!



Position after: 13. c4!



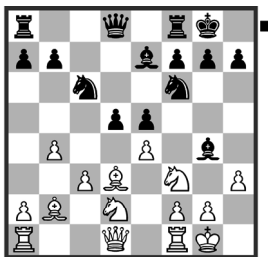
Position after: 15... ♘a5

It is important to push c4 before deciding where to put the rooks. Only after c4 can we have a clearer picture of where each rook belongs. 13... dxc4 14. ♘xc4 ♗g4 15. ♖fc1! Escaping from potential tricks connected with a mate on h2.

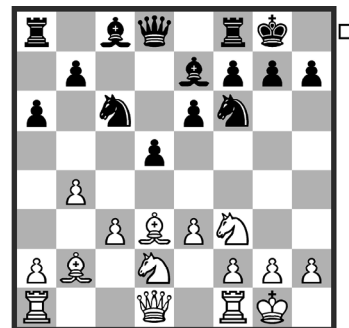
16. ♙h7+! A nice tactical solution. 16... ♔h8 17. c4 ♘b4 [17... ♗f4 18. ♙xe5±] 18. ♚e4! White is better. This motif of bringing the queen to the centre has already been seen in other lines, showing that it is an important asset.

B) 10... e5 11. e4 ♙g4 12. h3

Back to 10... a6.



Position after: 12. h3



Position after: 10... a6

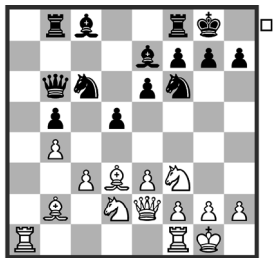
12... ♙h5 [12... ♙xf3 13. ♚xf3 d4 14. a3 dxc3 15. ♙xc3 ♘d4 16. ♙xd4 ♚xd4 17. ♘b3 ♚b6 18. ♖ac1 ♖ac8 19. ♙c4 White is slightly better as the bishop on c4 is rather strong.] 13. exd5 ♘xd5 14. ♚c2 h6 [14... ♙g6 15. ♙xg6 hxg6 16. b5 ♘a5 17. ♘xe5±] 15. b5 ♘a5

11. a4

The most energetic. White does not want to allow ...b5 easily.

(see analysis diagram next column)

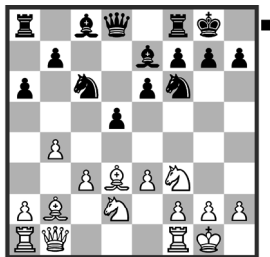
A) 11. a3 b5 12. a4 ♖b8 13. axb5 axb5 14. ♚e2 ♚b6



Position after: 14... ♙b6

15. ♘d4 ♘xd4?! [15... e5!] 16. exd4 ♘e8 17. ♘b3 ♘d6 18. ♙c1! An important aspect of this idea: White manoeuvres his pieces into better positions, improving coordination.

B) 11. ♙b1!?

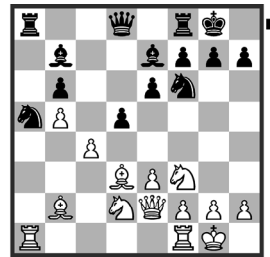


Position after: 11. ♙b1!?

11... b5 [11... e5 12. e4 dxe4 13. ♘xe4 ♘h5 14. ♙d1 ♙c7 15. ♘g3 ♘xg3 16. hxg3 g6 17. ♙c1 ♙e6 18. ♙e3 ♙ac8 19. ♙b2 with unclear consequences.] 12. a4 ♙b8 13. axb5 axb5 14. h3 ♙b6 15. ♘d4 ♙d7 16. ♘2f3 ♙fc8 17. ♙a3 ♙e8 18. ♙a2 ♙d8 19. ♙a1 with a complicated game ahead.

11... e5

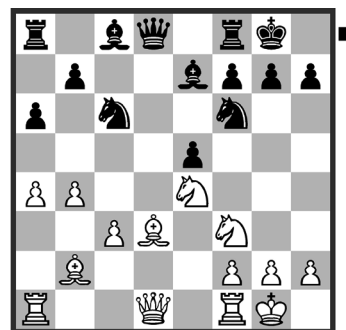
11... b6 12. ♙e2 ♙b7 13. b5 axb5 14. axb5 ♘a5 15. c4



Position after: 15. c4

15... ♘d7 [15... dxc4 16. ♘xc4 ♘xc4 17. ♙xc4 ♙xa1 18. ♙xa1 ♙c7 19. ♙c1 ♙c8 20. ♙d1 ♙b8 21. ♘d4 h6 22. ♙f1 ♙xc1 23. ♙xc1 ♙c5 24. ♘c6 Although Black is close to equality, the weakness on c6 helps White to generate some pressure.] 16. cxd5 ♘c5 17. e4 exd5 18. ♙b1 ♙e8 19. ♙d1 ♙c7 20. e5 g6 21. ♙a2 ♘e6 22. ♙ac1 ♙c5 23. g3 ♙ed8 24. ♙a1 ♙e7 25. h4 An unclear position.

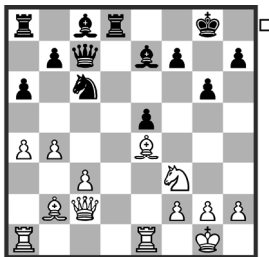
12. e4 dxe4 13. ♘xe4



Position after: 13. ♘xe4

13... ♖h5

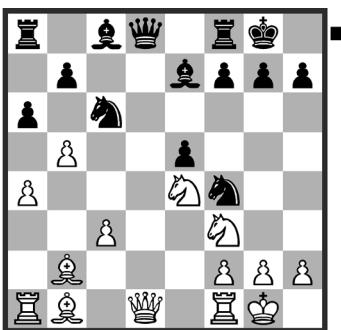
13... ♖c7 14. ♜e1 ♜d8 15. ♚c2 ♘xe4 [15... g6 16. ♘eg5!? ♘g4 17. ♙c1 ♙g7 18. h3 ♘h6 19. ♙c4 f5 20. ♚b3 e4 21. ♘d4 ♘xd4 22. cxd4 ♙f6 23. ♙e6 White has the initiative.] 16. ♙xe4 g6



Position after: 16... g6

17. b5 axb5 18. axb5 ♜xa1 19. ♜xa1 ♘b8 [19... ♘a5 20. c4! ♘xc4? 21. ♘xe5 wins for White.] 20. c4 ♘d7 21. h4!? White's chances are preferable.

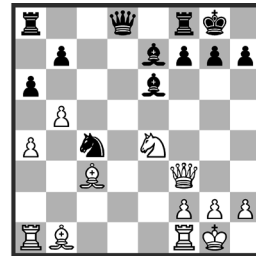
14. b5 ♘f4 15. ♙b1



Position after: 15. ♙b1

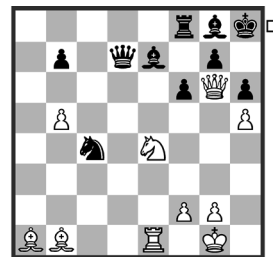
15... axb5

The alternative is also rather complex: 15... ♘a5 16. ♘xe5 ♙e6 17. ♚f3 ♘g6 18. c4 ♘xe5 19. ♙xe5 ♘xc4 20. ♙c3



Position after: 20. ♙c3

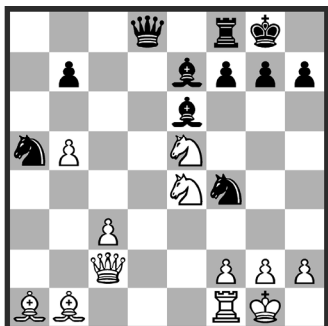
White has more active pieces and this leads to easier play: 20... axb5 [20... ♚c7 21. ♘g3 ♜ad8 22. ♘f5 ♙xf5 23. ♙xf5 axb5 24. ♜ab1 g6 25. ♜xb5 White has some edge here.] 21. axb5 ♜xa1 22. ♙xa1 ♚d5 23. ♚g3 f6 24. ♜e1 ♚d7 25. h4 ♙h8 26. h5 h6 27. ♚g6 ♙g8



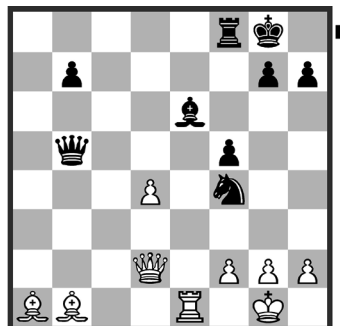
Position after: 27... ♙g8

28. ♘g5! Nice idea, but probably only leads to a draw. It still indicates that Black is under some pressure in such positions. White risks nothing, while Black has to show precise play.

16. axb5 ♖xa1 17. ♙xa1 ♘a5 18. ♘xc4 ♙xc4 23. ♘d4 ♙c5 24. ♖e1 ♘xe5 ♙e6 19. ♙c2!?



Position after: 19. ♙c2!?



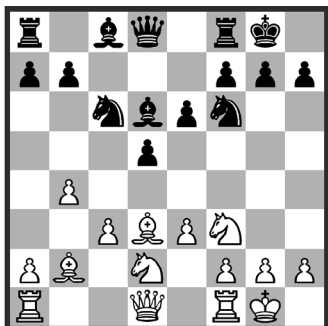
Position after: 26. ♙d2

19... f5 20. ♘d2 ♙d5 21. ♘df3 ♘c4 This is slightly better for White.

3) 9...♙d6 10.♙b2 --

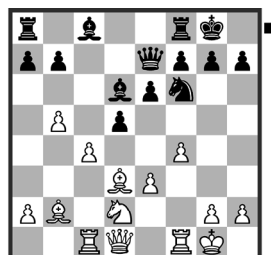
1. d4 d5 2. ♘f3 ♘f6 3. e3 e6 4. ♙d3 c5 5. 0-0 ♘c6 6. c3 ♙d6 7. ♘bd2 0-0 8. dxc5 ♙xc5 9. b4 ♙d6 10. ♙b2

We are now dealing with other possible ideas for Black, and there are lots of them. For 10...e5 see the next two sub-chapters.



Position after: 10. ♙b2

A) 10... ♙c7 11. b5 ♘e5 12. ♘xe5 ♙xe5 13. f4 ♙d6 14. c4 ♙e7 15. ♖c1



Position after: 15. ♖c1

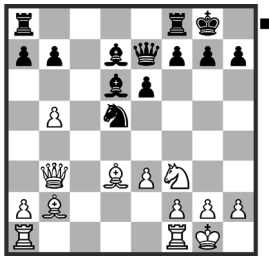
10... ♘g4

15... ♖d7 [15... b6 16. ♙xf6 ♗xf6 17. cxd5 exd5 18. ♗h5 h6 19. ♗xd5±] 16. e4 dxe4 17. ♙xf6! ♗xf6 18. ♘xe4 ♗d4+ 19. ♔h1 ♙c5 20. ♗c2 f5 21. ♘xc5 ♗xc5 22. ♙e2 White may be slightly better here.

♗f6 20. ♗xc4 ♖e7 21. g3 ♙c5 22. ♖fd1 e5 23. ♘d2 with another complex middlegame position.] 14... ♙d6 15. c4 ♙b7 16. cxd5 exd5 17. ♖e1 ♖c8 18. ♙f5 ♖c7 19. ♘f3 ♙c5 20. ♙e5 ♖e8 21. ♖c1 ♖ce7 22. ♙d4∞

B) 10... ♙d7 11. b5 ♘e5 12. ♘xe5 ♙xe5 13. ♘f3 ♙d6 14. c4 ♗e7 15. cxd5 ♘xd5 16. ♗b3

D) 10... a6



Position after: 16. ♗b3

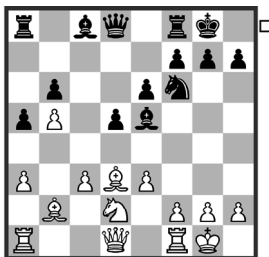
White has slightly better chances.

C) 10... b6 11. a3 a5 [11... ♙b7 12. c4 gives White easy play in the centre.] 12. b5 ♘e5 13. ♘xe5 ♙xe5



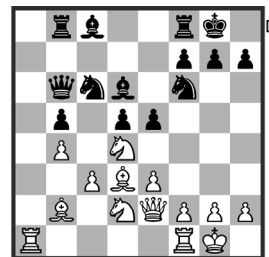
Position after: 10... a6

Again, White now has a choice between allowing ...b5 or not: 11. a3 [11. a4 ♗e7 12. b5 ♘e5 13. ♘xe5 ♙xe5 14. ♗c2 ♙d7 15. c4 ♙xb2 16. ♗xb2 ♖fd8 17. ♖fc1 dxc4 18. ♙xc4 h6 19. ♙e2 ♙e8 20. h3 axb5 21. axb5 ♖xa1 22. ♖xa1 ♗d6 23. ♘c4 ♗c5 24. ♘e5 ♖d5 25. ♘f3 with equal play. That was just one possible example.] 11... b5 12. a4 ♖b8 13. axb5 axb5 14. ♗e2 ♗b6 15. ♘d4 e5!?



Position after: 13... ♙xe5

Now White has two possible paths: 14. f4 [14. ♘f3 ♙d6 15. c4 dxc4 16. ♙xf6 gxf6 17. ♙e4 ♖a7 18. ♗c2 f5 19. ♙c6



Position after: 15... e5!?