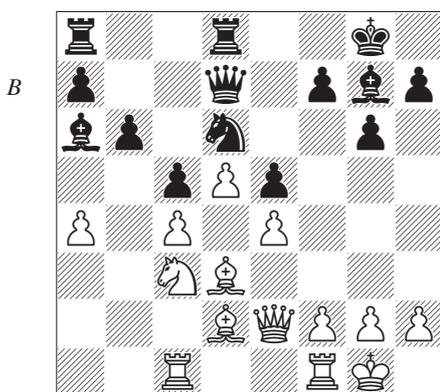


Contents

Preface	4
Introduction	5
1 Pawn-Structure	13
2 Space Advantage	22
3 Strong Centre	39
4 Bishop-Pair	45
5 Blockade	56
6 Isolated Queen's Pawn	66
7 Control of Light (or Dark) Squares	104
8 Attacking a Weak Centre	121
9 Open and Semi-Open Files	138
10 Positional Exchange Sacrifices	152
11 Positional Sacrifice of Two Pawns	170
12 Coordinating a Rook and a Knight	177
13 The Dead Bishop	188
14 Lack of Communication	195
15 The Crazy World of Attacking without Rules	201
16 Knowledge of Positions	210
Symbols	222
Index of Players	223
Index of Openings	224

5 Blockade

The idea of blockading, as a strategic concept, applies mainly to pawns – since these are the easiest pieces to blockade – and it appears when trying to hinder the pawns' mobility and their attacking potential. However, the concept of blockader extends to other pieces, even though the two most effective are the knight, which can attack squares placed behind the pawn, and the bishop, which likewise continues exerting its powerful effect in the diagonal, in such a degree that it can easily watch over several pawns. The queen and the rook, instead, are considered bad blockaders, since they can be threatened by minor pieces at the right moment, and so they must abandon their mission.



Polugaevsky – Gutman
Biel IZ 1985

In this position, a typical Grünfeld Defence middlegame, Black has the advantage. Why? Because the strong blockading knight, together with the immediate possibility of a break on the kingside (and a further one on the queenside) are limiting the power of White's passed d-pawn. White can only envisage hopes with the break f4, gaining territory for his passive pieces, although Black anticipates his intentions:

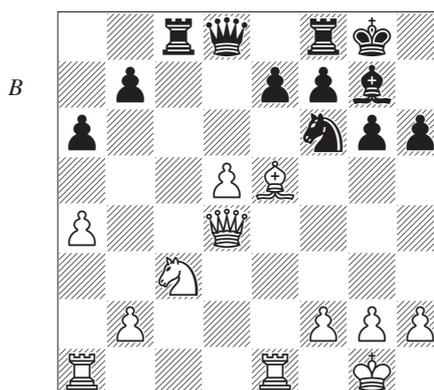
19...f5 20 a5

Making Black's job easy. After 20 f4 ♖e8 and the bad situation of the white queen would be clear.

20...bxa5 21 ♖a1 ♜c7 22 f3 ♜db8 23 ♜fc1 ♜b3 24 ♜b5 ♜xb5 25 ♜xa5 ♜c8 26 cxb5 fxe4 27 fxe4 ♜h6 28 ♜d2 ♜xd2 29 ♜xd2 c4 30 ♜c2 ♜c5+

and Black won.

Here is an example where a blockade saves Black:

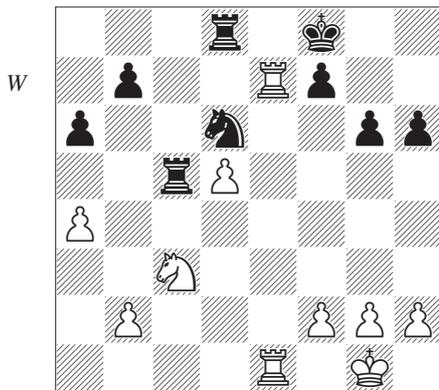


Timman – Salov
Sanghi Nagar FIDE Ct (8) 1994

White has a space advantage and pressure on the backward e7-pawn. How to stop White's initiative? Salov played:

18...♜e8! 19 ♜f4 ♜h7?!

This move leaves the black king in a precarious situation. It is better to sacrifice the weak pawn in exchange for more freedom of action. For instance: 19...♜d6 20 ♜xg7 ♜xg7 21 ♜e5+ ♜g8 22 ♜xe7 ♜e8! (forcing the exchange of queens; I think this is better than Salov's suggestion 22...♜b6?! since then follows 23 a5! with the idea of 23...♜xb2 24 ♜a4) 23 ♜xd8 ♜exd8 24 ♜e7 ♜f8 25 ♜ae1 ♜c5 (D).



Black has very good chances to draw this ending, due to the passive position of the white pieces, tied to the defence of the passed pawn. Black is threatening the advance ...b5.

20 h4! ♖xe5 21 ♜xe5 ♘d6

Now Timman should have played 22 h5! ♜c4 23 ♚e3 with a great initiative.

In the following game, Kotov and Gligorić become entangled in a fight to the death for the blockading square e5. Black spares no effort to keep his privileged blockade position, sacrificing two pawns, while White tries to create chaos in Black's plans.

Kotov – Gligorić
Zurich Ct 1953

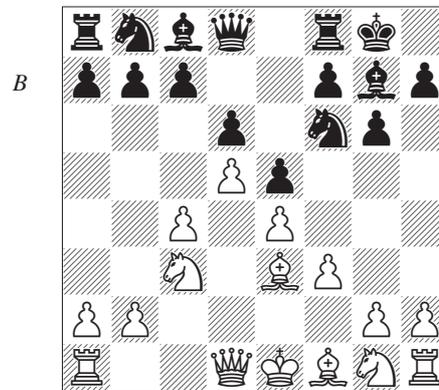
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♖g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 ♖e3 e5

Nowadays, this is the continuation endorsed by Garry Kasparov, although for a while it had been mostly abandoned in favour of more modern set-ups like 6...♘c6, 6...♘bd7 or even 6...c5. This last possibility is without doubt the most creative one, sacrificing a central pawn in return for counterplay on the dark squares and especially, on the weak d4-square. The King's Indian's most enthusiast defenders, Glek, Gelfand, and Judit Polgar, caused a revolution in this opening with their dynamic ideas in lines such as this.

7 d5 (D)

This move is less flexible than 7 ♘ge2, and reminds me very much of those situations in the Closed Spanish where White must choose the

right moment to close the position. We shall take a closer look at 7 ♘ge2 after this game.



7...c5

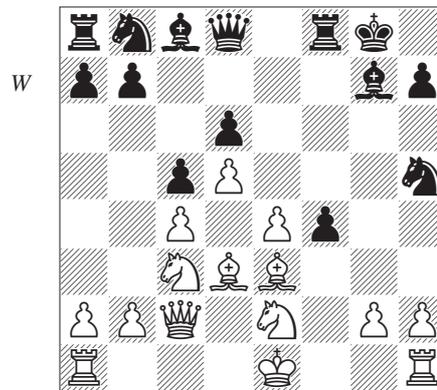
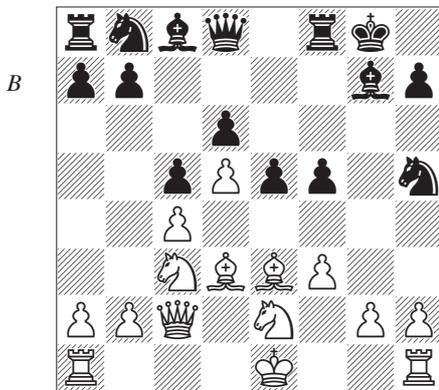
This move is no longer played at master level. Black blocks the centre at a very early stage. In his tournament book, Bronstein explains the reasons for this choice: in his games versus Geller and Petrosian in the same tournament, Gligorić experienced difficulties after 7...♘h5, because of White's continual threat of playing c5 himself. In many King's Indian lines where Black blocks the position with ...c5, White manages to exert pressure following the standard break by a3 and b4. In this line, however, the white king tends to seek protection on the queenside, so it is difficult for him to achieve the b4 break.

8 ♖d3

It is interesting to follow the development of the game Tal-Boleslavsky, USSR Ch (Riga) 1958. White played 8 g4! at once: 8...♘e8 9 h4 f5 10 gxf5 gxf5 11 exf5 ♖xf5 12 ♖d3! e4 13 fxe4 ♚e7 (after 13...♖c8 Tal's idea was to continue 14 e5! ♖xe5 15 ♘f3 ♖g7 {15...♖g3+ 16 ♘d2 ♖g4 allows a brilliant queen sacrifice: 17 ♜g1! ♜xf3 18 ♚xf3 ♖xf3 19 ♜xg3+ ♘h8 20 ♜ag1 ♘f6 21 ♖g5 ♘bd7 22 ♜xf3 with a large initiative} 16 ♘g5 ♘f6 17 ♚d2 h6 18 0-0-0! with a strong attack) 14 exf5 ♚xe3+ 15 ♚e2 ♚g3+ 16 ♘d2 ♘c7 and now, instead of 17 ♚h2?!, as played, White should choose 17 ♘f3 with an advantage.

8...♘h5 9 ♘ge2 f5 10 exf5 gxf5 11 ♚c2 (D)

With this move White is trying to prevent the typical manoeuvre ...♘d7-f6.



11...e4!

This game shows the advantages of 7...c5. Black has secured a firm grip on d4 and thanks to this he can advance his e-pawn. With this surprising sacrifice, Gligorić paves the way for a blockade. After the pawn captures on e4, White's light-squared bishop appears severely imprisoned on d3. Because of this, Black wants to put a blockading piece on e5 until the end of the game. Another advantage, and not a lesser one, is the clear activity displayed by the 'Indian' bishop.

We can state that Gligorić has paid a very low price to get a promising position. Obviously, the opening hasn't proved a strategic success for White.

After the sequence played in the game, one could think that the move 11 ♖c2 is the reason for White's trouble. So, one could believe that the prophylactic 11 ♖d2 is better, and in case of 11...e4 12 fxe4 f4 13 ♖xf4 ♖h4+ 14 g3 ♖xg3 15 ♙f2 White escapes unscathed from this tactical mess. Black could try to carry out the blockade by playing 11...♖h4+ 12 ♙f2 ♖e7 13 0-0 e4 14 fxe4 f4 but White has the break 15 g3! solving matters. Accordingly, Black should be satisfied with natural development, without forcing the course of the events, as in Hort-Gligorić, Nikšić 1978: 11...a6 12 a4 ♖d7 13 ♙g5 ♖e8 (13...♙f6!?) 14 0-0 ♖df6 15 ♙c2 ♙d7 and Black is now ready to continue ...e4. Twenty-five years after the main game, and despite all the doubts about this line, Gligorić repeated it!

12 fxe4 f4! (D)

13 ♙f2

White naturally retreats the bishop, but he had another more interesting option, which would have changed the whole battle: 13 e5!?. This possibility appeared nearly 20 years later: White ignores the threatened bishop, taking into account another complex strategic issue to which we shall refer later (**lack of communication between our forces**). Then:

a) In case of 13...fxe3:

a1) White could capture a second pawn at once: 14 ♙xh7+ ♖h8 15 e6 ♖h4+ (15...♙f2 16 g3 ♙xc3+ 17 bxc3 ♖f4 18 gxf4 ♖h4 19 0-0-0 ♖xh7 20 ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 21 ♙de1 with compensation) 16 g3 ♖xg3 17 ♖xg3 ♖xh7 18 ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 19 ♖ge4! ♙e5 20 ♖e2 with good prospects in the ending.

a2) The alternative is to maintain the threats by 14 e6. In case of the passive 14...♖f6 White's pieces would display their best abilities and the e3-pawn would not be safe; White could play 0-0 and ♖g3-f5.

b) 13...♙xe5 14 ♙xh7+ ♖h8 15 ♙f2 and then:

b1) The instructive game Knaak-Velimirović, Sombor 1972 continued 15...♖g5? (giving up in the theoretical duel) 16 ♖g6 ♖xg6 17 ♙xg6 ♖f6 18 g3 f3 19 ♖f4 ♖g4 20 h3 ♖xf2 21 ♖xf2 ♖d7 22 ♙ae1 ♙d4+ 23 ♖xf3 ♖e5+ 24 ♖g2 ♙xf4 25 gxf4 ♖xg6 26 ♙e8+ ♖g7 27 ♖g3 ♖f7 28 ♙he1 ♙f6 29 ♖b5 ♙h4+ 30 ♖f3 ♙xe1 31 ♖xd6+ ♖f6 32 ♖xc8 and the d-pawn cannot be stopped.

b2) Much better is 15...♖f6 16 ♙f5 (16 ♙h4 ♖b6 gives Black compensation) 16...♖xd5 17 ♙xc8 ♖b4 18 ♖g6 ♖xc8 19 a3 ♖4c6 with active play.