

Kim Pilgaard – Konstantin Chernyshov

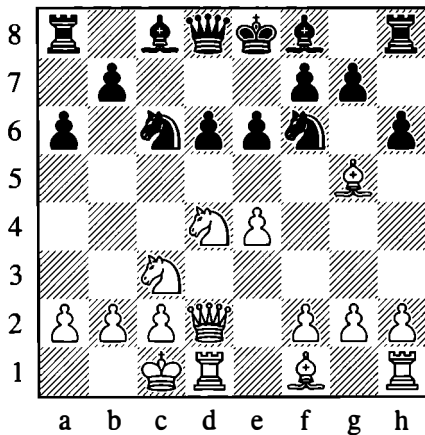
Budapest 2002

Points to look for in this game:

- ♦ A risky pawn grab – 12...♙xd6?!
- ♦ A strong tactical counter – 13...♗d5!
- ♦ Opening further lines of attack – 27...d3†!

Greed is a strong incentive to progress, but also one of the worst sins. This dichotomy applies to chess as well. The pawn sacrifices in this game can be justified on several positional bases: Black gets two pieces out with gain of time, while White has problems on the back rank, a drawback that will cost him another two tempos. However, the programs position themselves on the sinful side – they like material and, of course, they do not have to expiate in purgatory!

1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 d6 3.d4 ♗f6 4.♗c3 cxd4
5.♗xd4 ♗c6 6.♙g5 e6 7.♞d2 a6 8.0–0–0 h6



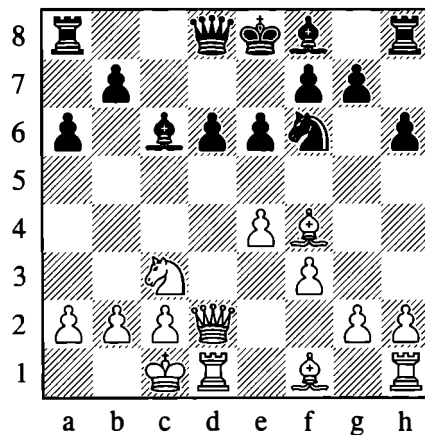
I remember a question of IM Mircea Pavlov's, back in 1977 when my steps in the Sicilian were far from perfected: "What is wrong with Black's position here?" I couldn't find a good answer, but I liked Mihai Ghinda's arguments, preferring the delayed development of the

b8-knight. This has the logic of preserving maximum flexibility. In the Sicilian, Black can rarely compete with White in speed of development; therefore, he must choose the optimal placing for each piece, according to the opponent's set-up, in order to face the first storm with confidence. If he survives intact, then he has good chances for ultimate success. Many readers may be apprehensive: "But we always feel the sword of Damocles above our head. The moment we castle, it falls!" Well... prepare effective counterplay before committing yourself to castling.

9.♙f4

In "my day" 9.♙e3 was played almost exclusively, but fashion changes.

9...♙d7 10.♗xc6 ♙xc6 11.f3



11...♞a5!?

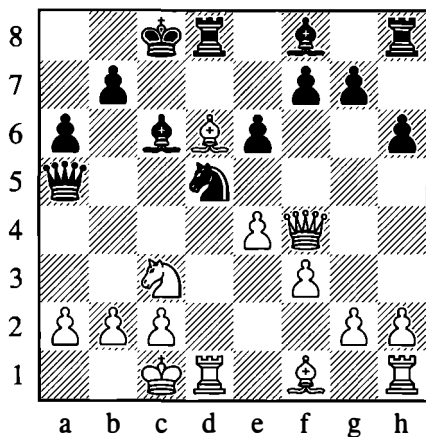
Nowadays, the preference is for 11...d5 12.♞e1 ♙b4, with a very tense position.

12.♙xd6?!

The most solid option is 12.♗b1, to which Chernyshov favours the answer 12...♞d8.

12...0–0–0 13.♞f4 ♗d5!

This tactical stroke provides the justification for Black's pawn sacrifice.

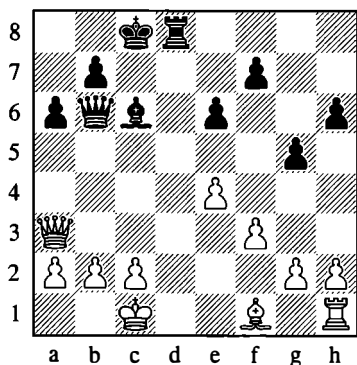


14.exd5

I scored a psychological point in one of my own games, as my opponent was surprised to face the Classical Sicilian instead of my beloved Scheveningen. In this variation of the Rauzer Attack, starting with 11...♖a5, my opponent and I were both reinventing the wheel, as many readers probably do on a regular basis! It is often the case that “shameless predecessors” have stolen all our ideas, even the bad ones! After the game, I found out that the whole variation was a favourite of Chernyshov and I hadn’t invented a thing. My game continued: 14.♘xd5? ♙xd6 15.♘b6† ♗xb6 16.♞xd6 g5!

An important intermediate move, as we shall see.

17.♞d2 ♞xd6 18.♞xd6 ♞d8 19.♞a3



White has parried the immediate threats, but the story does not end there.

19...♞f2!

The point of the pawn sac; White’s development is paralysed.

20.♞c3 ♘b8 21.b3

21.h3? is refuted by 21...♙xe4!

21...g4! 22.fxg4?

White yields to the pressure. Of course, by this point it is not easy to offer him good advice.

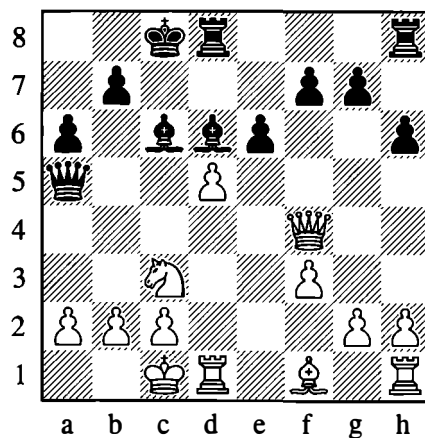
22...♞f4† 23.♘b2 ♞d1 24.♞g3 ♞xg3 25.hxg3 ♙xe4 26.g5

This leads to a lost endgame, but if Black is allowed to play ...♘c7 the situation is even more desperate, as White cannot stop the march of the e-pawn.

26...hxg5 27.♞h8† ♘c7 28.♙e2 ♞d2 29.♙f3 ♞xc2† 30.♘b1 ♙f5 31.g4 ♙g6 32.♘a1 a5 33.♞a8 b6 34.♞a7† ♘d6

0–1 Trepat Herranz – Suba, La Roda 2009.

14...♙xd6



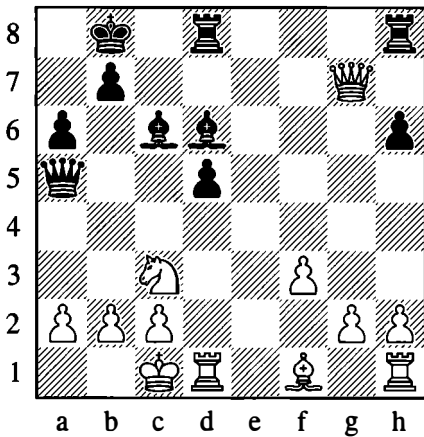
15.♞xf7 exd5 16.♞xg7

This is the most challenging.

Worse is 16.g3?! ♘b8 17.♙g2 ♙e5 18.♞d3 ♞hf8 19.♞h5 d4 20.♙e2 ♙e8 21.♞g4 ♙d7 22.♞h5 ♙e8 23.♞g4 ♙d7 24.♞h5 g6 25.♞xh6 ♞xa2 26.♞a3 ♞c4 27.♞d2 ♙b5 28.♙f1 ♞c7 29.♘b1 ♙d6 30.♞b3 ♙c4 and Black eventually won in Szieberth – Chernyshov, Budapest 2002.

16...♔b8!

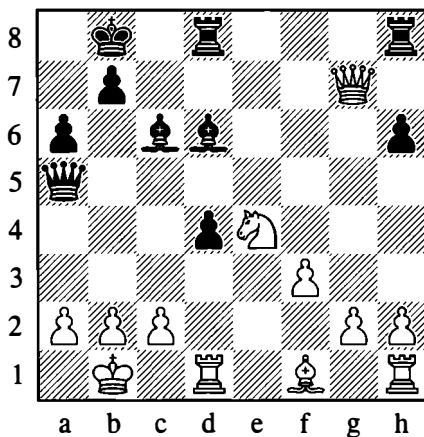
Before taking further action, Black calmly hides his king from any troublesome checks.



17.♔b1

Some programs suggest 17.a3 ♖he8 18.♘a2 ♙e5 19.♗xh6 ♗b6 20.♘b4, but Black has strong attacking resources. For example: 20...♗d6 21.♗h4 (21.♗d2 a5 22.♘d3 ♙d4 23.♔b1 ♙a4 24.♗f4 ♖c8 25.♖c1 ♖c3) 21...a5 22.♘d3 ♖h8 23.♗e1 ♙d4 24.b3 ♖c8 25.♔b1 ♙a4

17...d4 18.♘e4

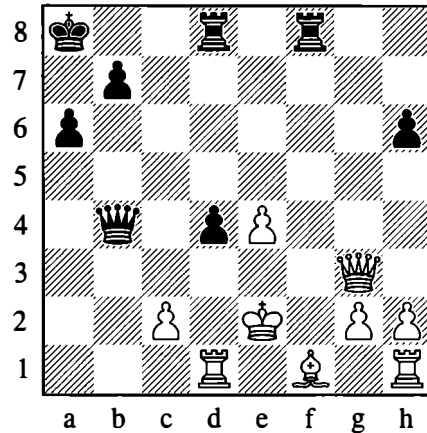


18...♙d5!

Black ups the stakes, investing a bishop to drive the white king into the open. The

following sequence is not entirely forced, but it certainly represents logical play on both sides.

19.♘d6 ♗xa2† 20.♔c1 ♗a1† 21.♔d2 ♗xb2 22.♘e4 ♗b4† 23.♔e2 ♙xe4 24.♗g3† ♔a8 25.fxe4 ♖h8

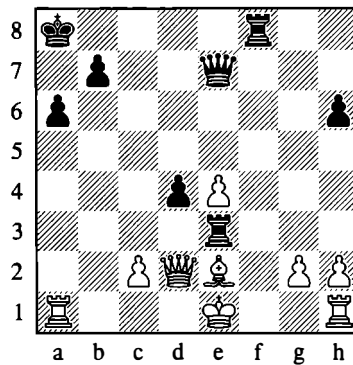


Here the programs abruptly reduce their assessment of White's supposed advantage, which confirms that the true piece sacrifice gives Black excellent practical chances.

26.♗d3 ♖c8 27.♗b3?!

Understandably, White fails to find his way across the tightrope to safety:

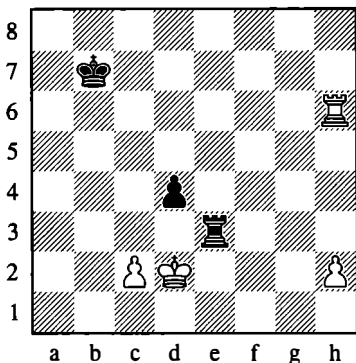
27.♗d2 ♖c3 28.♔e1 ♖e3† 29.♙e2 ♗e7 30.♖a1



30...♗h4†!

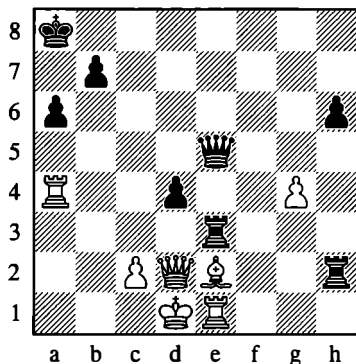
Black must also be precise. Other moves leave White with a clear advantage:

- a) 30... ♖xe4 31. ♖f1 ♜e8 32. ♖f2 ♜e5 33. ♖a4 d3 34. cxd3 ♖xh2 35. ♖e4 ♜3xe4 36. dxe4 ♜xe4 37. ♖d1 ♖h1† 38. ♖f1 ♖h5† 39. ♖f3 ♜e8 40. ♖d7±
- b) 30... ♜g8 31. ♜g1 ♖xe4 32. ♖d1 ♜xg2 33. ♜xg2 ♖xg2 34. ♖xa6 ♖xd2† 35. ♖xd2 bxa6 36. ♜xa6† ♖b7 37. ♜xh6



White can win this endgame in highly instructive fashion: 37... ♜c3 38. h4 ♜h3 39. ♜h8 ♖a7 40. h5 ♖b7 41. h6 ♖a7 42. h7 ♖b7 43. ♖e2 ♖a7 44. ♖f2 ♖b7 45. ♖g2 ♜h6 46. ♖g3 ♜h1 47. ♖f4 ♜h2 48. ♖e4! ♜h4† 49. ♖e5 Black is in zugzwang. 49... ♖a7 50. ♖f6 ♜h1 51. ♜e8 ♜xh7 52. ♜e7† and the pawn ending is winning.

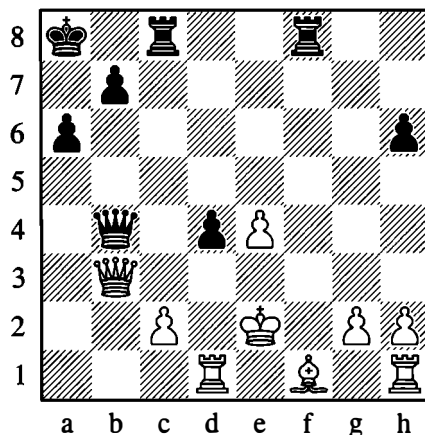
31. ♖d1 ♖f2 32. ♜e1 ♖xe4 33. ♖a4 ♜e5 34. g4 ♜xh2



35. ♖a5

35. ♜xd4?? ♜exe2 36. ♜d8† (or 36. ♜xe2 ♜h1†-+) 36... ♖a7 37. ♜xe2 ♖a1†-+ 38... ♖d6 36. ♜h5 ♖a3! 37. ♖a5 d3 38. ♜xa3

dxe2† 39. ♜xe2 ♜h1† 40. ♜e1 ♜xe1† 41. ♖xe1 ♖xa3 42. ♖d8† ♖a7 43. ♖d4†
With perpetual check.



27... d3†!

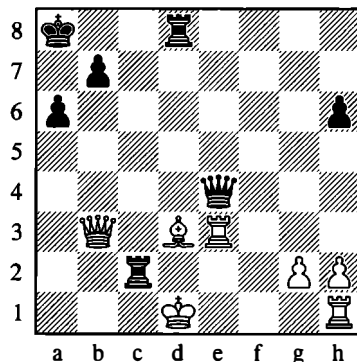
Exploiting the position of the white queen to open further avenues of attack.

28. ♜xd3

28. ♖xd3? ♜cd8† wins immediately and 28. ♖xd3 ♜c4 is also decisive.

28... ♖xe4† 29. ♜e3 ♖d4?!

Black misses a clear win: 29... ♜xc2† 30. ♖d1 ♜d8† 31. ♖d3

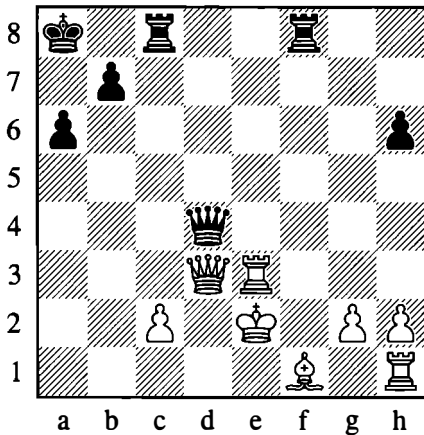


31... ♜b2!-+

30. ♖d3

White could have kept the game going with

30.c3! when the main line continues: 30...♟f4
 31.♞f3 ♞ce8† 32.♔d1 ♞d8† 33.♞d3 ♞xd3†
 34.♙xd3 ♞d8 35.♔c2 (35.c4? ♟e4) 35...♟f2†
 36.♔b1 ♞xd3 37.♞d1 ♞xd1† 38.♟xd1 ♟xg2
 39.♟d8† ♔a7 40.♟d4† b6 41.♟d6 h5
 42.♟d7† ♟b7 43.♟f5 h4 44.h3 a5 with a
 clear advantage for Black.



30...♟b2!

Now it is all over.

31.♔d2 ♞fd8 32.♟xd8 ♟xc2†

0-1

Post-game reflections

White's early pawn grab seems rather risky, and upon seeing the game continuation I suspect that most strong human players would reject it on intuitive grounds. When analysing the game, I found it interesting to observe the reactions of various programs. Over the years, computers have become rather more adept at assessing positions with material imbalances, and yet in this game they continue to rate White's position as clearly better for many moves. Eventually even the silicon beast gives up and admits that Black was doing okay all along – a triumph for human intuition!

Sergey Karjakin – Viswanathan Anand

Wijk aan Zee 2006

Points to look for in this game:

- ♦ A temporary knight sacrifice – 16.♘bd4!?
- ♦ A glorious sacrifice – 24...♘c7!!
- ♦ White misses a route to an advantage – 23.♟b4! in the notes

The English Attack, whose most characteristic move is a defensive one (f2-f3), aims to play for a win with minimal risk. White castles long and avoids making weaknesses on the queenside. Little by little, he gains space on the kingside and eventually breaks through, often with a pawn sacrifice on g6. But this may only work given the condition that the black pieces are not orchestrated by Kasparov or Anand!

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6
 5.♘c3 a6 6.♙e3 e5

The principal alternatives are 6...e6 and 6...♘g4.

7.♘b3 ♙e6 8.f3 ♙e7 9.♟d2 0-0 10.0-0-0
 ♘bd7 11.g4 b5 12.g5 b4

The players are debating one of the most topical battlegrounds in the English Attack. This is not a theoretical manual, but I have pointed out a few notable directions that the game might take.

