

Andras Adorjan

# Black is Back!

What's White's Advantage Anyway?



New In Chess 2016

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## Foreword – Swan Song

They say swans sing their most beautiful song just before they die.

Well, I'm not planning to leave this life any time soon, but in any case it doesn't hurt to draw up the balance. I hope this is not only going to be my last opus, but also my best. It is a pleasant duty to conclude my 30-year mission of BLACK is OK!. Yes, it was 1985 when I had my first doubts about the dogma that says 'White is better'. All of the 11 books, hundreds of articles and thousands of analyses I've written, have been dedicated to the theme of BLACK is OK!, except for the booklet titled *Quo Vadis Garry?* (German edition 1989, English title 'The Change of a Child'). It is indeed hard to believe that in all of chess history there has been practically nobody who studied this territory of science and philosophy deeply – except me. This may sound Tarzan-like, but it is in fact rather sad that people do not seem to think in depth.

Some great players, like Steinitz, Lasker, Portisch, have declared that the perfect chess game ends in a draw. But all the same, players have descended into prejudice, strengthened by statistics. And all players are crazy about learning new and more new opening variations, but they find it unimportant to occupy themselves with the most important field of theory.

Our royal game is beloved by us, but there are other board games too. In some of them, the right to make the first move is an advantage. But in other cases it's just the opposite! Finally, we also have games where it is just the same either way. I have a large amount of evidence to show that chess belongs in the third group. Just you wait and see!

Well, dear reader, you have a long way to go but it's worth the trip. It may sound dry, but during the process there will be pleasure too. It's a cure which will eliminate all your complexes concerning playing with BLACK.

Either that, or your money back!

Andras Adorjan  
Budapest, March 2016

## Chapter 1

# Wishful Thinking?

Almost every chess player has (major) problems with black. Yet, I am sure that, apart from other crazies such as Alexander Morozevich, nobody uses more than 30-40% of their total training time to study the black side of chess science in general. The late IM Tibor Florian once said: 'People very much like to exercise things they already know well.'

I never expected to see BLACK is OK! clubs all over the world, or an international science movement under that name, but I hoped that the question would be a subject of serious, many-sided debate by the strongest players, trainers and analysts around. After all, the key, and only, question in chess is: what would be the result of a perfect game? Is it a draw? Or does White win? Or – surprise: would BLACK win? In quite a lot of board and other mind games, the 'Nachziehende' (not the 'second player!') is the one who leads in the statistics.

Do you know that this is a world of right-handers? Once I read a serious essay where it was argued, with many examples, that left-handed people are handicapped in the use of many everyday tools and devices. I saw a demo film about it too. Blasphemy! Society doesn't bother too much – left-handers are few, and in schools, for example, they are the subject of bad jokes. They also become victims of an education that forces them to use their 'nice' hand. King George was only one of many famous victims. See *The King's Speech* – a wonderful film.

A left-handed boxer has a clear advantage. Of his potential opponents, the overwhelming majority will be right-handed. They face the usual 'service' in almost all of their matches and are trained that way (right vs. right). But our guy is different. This works in the favour of the left-handed fighter (for whom, by the way, it would also be odd to train only left vs. left), which may be very important between fighters of balanced strength. Now take the Almighty Initiative. Some fighters make a point of being the first to occupy the centre of the ring after the sounding of the gong. This is stupid and has no purpose. It's just a show. Even the achievement of pushing the opponent into the corner is worth nothing, unless the partner is already dizzy. Otherwise, a double-fist defence will cover everything while the defender still has a fair chance to swing some blows himself. You can do the same in chess: with white, play quietly and hope to win, but be objective and don't overdo it. There will be another day, when you can try to win with black. Your opponent will feel obliged to play for a win, and this may give you a good chance to land a counterblow – you don't have to push over your force. If it's going to be a game, you will have your psychological and professional chances too.

Let me conclude with some thoughts about happiness. In Hungary we have a great writer called Zsigmond Moricz, in whose novel 'The Happy Man' somebody asks an old peasant: 'Has your life been happy?' The answer is: 'I never thought about this.' He was a healthy character, who handled his problems only when he was sure to face them. A happy man.

I have always considered that with my talent I had a duty to serve. This is normal, I think. Even so, I sometimes felt that this was too much of a burden on my shoulders. Mahatma Gandhi once said: 'Let everybody have salvation by his own

faith.' The leaders of certain religions, who visited him, were not very happy with this. One of them – guess who – said: 'But I suppose you agree that Jesus was the greatest prophet of all?' The little man just smiled and answered: 'Your words, not mine' (which was JC's answer to Pontius Pilate's question: 'Are you the king of the Jews?') After my near-death experience in a Budapest hospital earlier this year, such reflections naturally went through my head – not for the first time in my life, of course. What will happen when we pass away?

Strangely enough, after this whole chain of intensive suffering, humility and half-death in the first few months of 2016, all of a sudden something else came up. The human race is represented in billions of bodies and minds, but still it is one entity, and I am a part of it. And after passing away physically, I will somehow still be present in this spiritual community, by the things I've done – good or bad – and hopefully by my peak performances. It's difficult to imagine that Lenin, Stalin or Hitler would get away with their track record, but even this cannot be excluded. Clearly I have no reason to pity myself, or appeal for anybody's pity – as they say, everyone has his cross to bear. I won't disappear unnoticed. I did something in return for using up all that oxygen. I got credit for it too. Not enough, I feel. But that happens in every corner.

I don't miss the high official recognitions, the swords of honour, the Order of the Garter. I got a few (international) titles, not given by any jury. World Championship Candidate for one; three-time Hungarian champion. Olympic gold medallist. But I had badly hoped to have a serious influence on chess theory and practice with my true conviction that BLACK IS OK!.

30 years were not enough – I won't see a chain of BLACK IS OK! education centres where pupils are taught that:

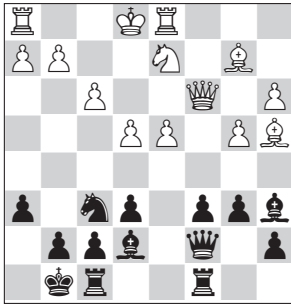
In chess the initial position is equal – or rather, chances are even. The right of the first move offers no advantage and the result of the game is likely a draw.

Wishful thinking? Daydreaming? Instead I have seen in print such things as 'the aim of the chess game is to avoid getting mated'. If you think I'm joking – consult Wikipedia!

## Appetizers

**Peter Hardicsay** 2345  
**Andras Adorjan** 2560  
 Hungary tt 1986

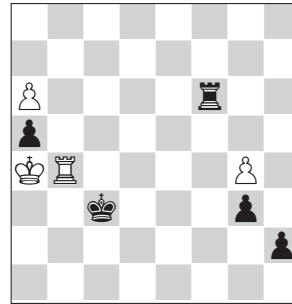
17.f2-f3??



17...♖d5!!

**Robert Hübner** 2600  
**Andras Adorjan** 2550  
 Bad Lauterberg m 1980 (9)

65.♖g8xg5



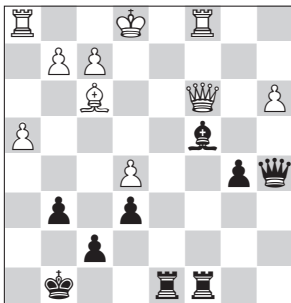
0-1

65...♖c5??  
 65...♖xh3-+.  
 66.♔xh4! ♖xg5

½-½

**Zoltan Ribli**  
**Andras Adorjan**  
 Hungary tt 1983

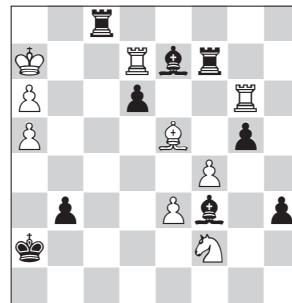
27.♖e3-c3



27...♔f1!!

**Vladimir Liberzon** 2550  
**Andras Adorjan**  
 Amsterdam 1977 (15)

45.g3xh4



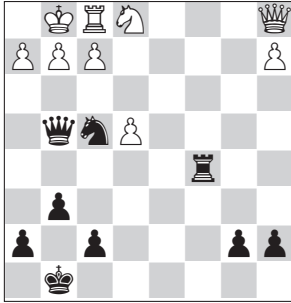
0-1

45...♔e1!

0-1

**Darko Glikzman**  
**Andras Adorjan**  
 Birmingham 1973

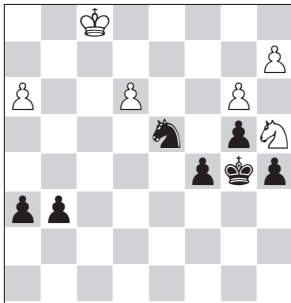
25. ♖f3-e1



25... ♖c1! 26. f3 ♖e2+ 0-1  
 27. ♖f2 ♔h4+; 27. ♖h1 ♖g3+  
 28. hxg3 (28. ♖g1 ♖xa1 29. fxg4 ♖xf1)  
 28... ♔h5+.

**Lajos Portisch** 2630  
**Andras Adorjan** 2465  
 Amsterdam 1971 (15)

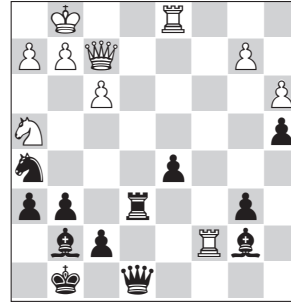
58. f2xe3



58... ♖xb3! 59. axb3 c4 0-1

**Bela Balogh**  
**Andras Jocha**  
 Hungary 1968

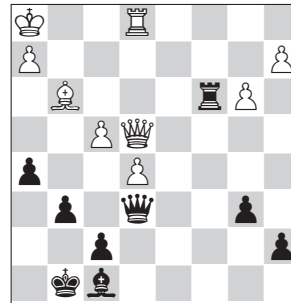
31. ♖e1-d1



31... ♔d4!! 32. ♔xd4 ♖e1+ 0-1

**Roland Sallay**  
**Andras Jocha**  
 Budapest 1966

34. ♔e2-e4??



34... ♖xg3!  
 35. hxg3 ♔h3+ 36. ♖g1 ♔c5+.  
 This game was played in the last round of the semi-final for the Hungarian Championship. I qualified and gained the title of National Master.

## Chapter 2

# The Way It All Started

### **The Continuing Story of 'BLACK IS OK!'**

*Earlier versions of this text were published first in the 'BLACK IS OK!' zero copy in 1992, and then in the book 'Black is Still OK!' (2004). It has evolved over the years and can be regarded as a kind of manifesto. It is also a confession of love and gratitude to my mother, who showed me the way by her life and death.*

My mother died in 1985. When death gathers its crops on a large scale, but at a safe distance, it is – regretfully but true – not such a big deal for us. But the loss of someone close to us tends to shake us deeply. It's not only that we cry for the deceased, as we know from Hemingway that, 'hearing the bell toll, you should never ask for whom it tolls. It tolls for you. It's preceded by the statement that it's me who loses something with every death. That's why you should never ask for whom the bell tolls.' (Actually it was John Donne who wrote this.)

Can there be anything good in losing someone you loved? Isn't it a morbid thought? I managed to tell my mother on her deathbed: 'Don't you be afraid, you of all people. You've done a lot of good to others in your life, and you are doing good to us even at the moment of your death. You're reminding us to keep together, and to leave as little debt as possible.' She was still teaching in a primary school a couple of months before her death (at the age of 70), in rather bad health. But she was happy at the school, surrounded by children, more than anywhere else.

When, in that fateful year 1985, I experienced how ephemeral human life is, it prompted me to ponder the meaning of our being here. After a quite long search for an answer, I figured we should do something in return for the oxygen we breathe in and transform into carbon-dioxide during our presence on earth. We must leave something lasting, something that lives on when we die.

That was the time when I started to think of building up a 'life-work'. I was not quite satisfied with my career in tournament chess, although I had had some big successes in that field. Writing seemed to be the right course of action for me. I had done quite a lot of writing from my teens onwards: chess articles, analyses, reports, prose and poetry (17 poems in English too), lyrics, occasionally even music. I am extremely extroverted, as a psychologist would put it, and so it was natural for me to take pen in hand.

I wanted to create something original, something novel and daring, and what I created had to have a certain common denominator, some kind of 'meaningful harmony', as Vassily Smyslov would put it. After a long while I suddenly realized that many of my most creative games and writings more or less supported Black's case. Then I recalled that I liked playing with black (or at least I wasn't afraid of the 'dark') already at 20 or even earlier, and in many tournaments most of my victories had been with black (as was the case with 5 of my 7 wins in the Riga Interzonal). I didn't actually feel that I had found my mission – it was the other way round. I was probably predestined to do this; it was my calling, all I had to do was listen to the message.

So I got down to work. I started with a 'black' approach to the Keres (IM Endre Vegh was my co-author), which was first published in two articles in *New In Chess*



in December 1985 and January 1986. It was titled 'A Blow to the Keres Attack'. Other magazines followed in quick succession, in almost all the chess countries in the world. As the reception was encouraging, I then decided to pursue the 'BLACK IS OK' mission, committing myself to something that was much larger than just a nice-sounding witticism. It was, and is, something I believe in, and my belief is getting deeper and deeper. In the beginning, however, even my best friends looked at this thesis with – how to describe it – condescending cheerfulness, and regarded it as a strange hobby-horse. Nobody said anything nasty – but it was in the air, and I could smell it. I kept 'building my sand-castle' with persistence and dedication. It is not by chance that the 'logo' of our struggle features Don Quixote, as in the early days our efforts – to make people rethink things day by day instead of following dogmas – seemed just as futile as fighting windmills.



However, as time went on, the army of sceptics lessened, and I saw my pieces published in various chess magazines in 59 countries. The mission was spread in my books *Black Is OK!*, *Black Is Still OK!* and *Black Is OK Forever!*, and these works were favourably received worldwide. But what really matters is not what pleases me. More important is that me and my 'brothers-in-arms' have done our bit to 'straighten out' a little part of the world that had 'gone aslant'.

However, nowadays there are probably very few people left who completely reject the idea that it is quite tolerable to play with black. I received two letters where the writers went even further. One of them wrote that there is a limited number of 'good moves' for each player in the starting position, and if either of them runs out of good moves, he will only make things worse with any further move, and the 'right' to move actually becomes a burden. Now, as White starts the game, he will have to make the first 'bad move'. Therefore, with both players making the best possible moves, Black is the one who must win. Well... it looks a bit far-fetched, but it has its logic too.

My other penfriend challenged the view that it is White who determines the character of the game. I think he is right in saying that Black can also choose from a great variety of answers to White's first move, influencing the position at least as strongly as White does. He also told me that in some board games, e.g. in Nine-Men's Morris, it is disadvantageous to be the one who starts.

What I am claiming, though, is not more than 'BLACK IS OK'. I will probably repeat it on my deathbed, unlike Goethe, who in fact didn't want more Black but more 'light'. I am more like that other 'fellow-heretic', Galileo Galilei, who claimed: 'And yet the earth does move'.

I don't think I could deny it even in a torture chamber. Unless... someone convinced me it isn't true! My 'mission' is actually a scientific experiment to find out how each idea works in practice. It is all very nice that in my own practice playing with black was a bliss rather than a burden, and that my results support my thesis. But it is still rather like someone vaccinating himself with black pox, then with the serum he has invented, and surviving. It doesn't prove that the vaccine

can be used all over the world – only that this particular guy didn't die from it. In clinical practice it takes 5-10 years to legalize a drug, to prove it isn't toxic, to rule out all harmful side effects, etc. Similarly, we can collect thousands of games by organizing theme tournaments, and see how my ideas will stand the test of serious tournament practice. With various friends I have organized theme tournaments on certain openings with black, and also events featuring alternative forms of the chess game, like Rainbow Chess and SwitChess – see my game with against Giorgadze in the chapter 'Black Is Brutal IV'. The statistics for black and white are always interesting to look at, and 99% of (wo-)men treat them as evidence. However, plain statistics don't prove anything, they are just collected findings, supposed to lead to a correct diagnosis. (My wife since 1998, Ilona, is a statistician, by the way...)

The ultimate goal of the experiment is not to confirm my thesis, and definitely not 'by all means' to claim that I am the one who is right, folks. It is to *discover* the truth. If after 5-10 years, it should turn out that BLACK is not OK at all, or maybe only a little bit OK, well, that would be a disappointment for me personally – and it would be quite unexpected for me! But it would still do great service to chess science, as even a refuted hypothesis takes us closer to the truth. So the strongest motivation of this work is (childish) *curiosity*. Curiosity that keeps asking, somewhere inside: What's going to become of all this? Will this be a fresh spring in chess theory, or will White reign until the end of time? Will White score a devastating 8-1 like in the K vs K match for the World Championship in 1986? Or even 7-0, as in the next match? Well, just remember that several 'invincible' empires have also fallen in world history!

So, in the distant future there may come a teacher who tells his amused students about what nonsense people got into their heads a couple of millennia ago. But sometimes I have another bizarre daydream. Centuries from today, triangle-headed, intelligent creatures with plastic legs and green bodies from outer space appear on Earth. These creatures, who are a whole lot cleverer than our proud human race, study the history of our culture. They come across my 'BLACK IS OK' book, and, since they can play chess (it would be a funny part of the galaxy if there were intelligent beings who couldn't play chess, right?), they have a look at it. And after reading it, they conclude with a sigh: 'What a pity! This poor devil was the only one who knew what it was all about. It's a shame he wasn't important and noisy enough to be listened to!'

Well, dear reader, only time will tell. As for me, I will keep 'laying my eggs'. Do you know the anecdote where a lady goes to the psychiatrist for help because her husband thinks he is a hen? The doctor asks 'How long has this been going on?' 'Some three years.' 'And only now you come to me?' 'You know, doctor, we are not well off, and the money for the eggs came in handy.' If you don't mind, I will win quite a few more games as BLACK, whether based on firm scientific grounds or just on the power of faith. In return, I promise that I am not going to push anyone to take my side. I will use only concrete facts, data from experiments, statistics – that is, objective factors, to recruit new 'converts'.

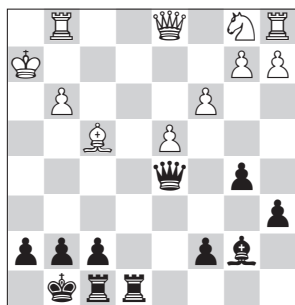
Some say about artists that they are tolerated by the rest of mankind and saved from Hell for their works only. If my BLACK IS OK! mission is successful, perhaps I can also hope for a place in Purgatory...

*Adojo Andre's*

Black is Back!

♖xe1+ 20.♔xg3 ♕g2+-+) 17...♙xd1  
18.♔xh2 ♕xa8 19.♖xd1 ♜e8 20.d5  
♞e2+ 21.♔h3 ♕c8+ 22.g4 h5 and  
White resigned a few moves later.

**16...♕xd5 17.♔xh2 ♙b7 18.♖g1  
♞ae8 19.♙f4**



History repeats itself: the game Belenkij-Pirogov (1959) saw this position first. I did not know this game, and only noticed the diagram among a number of other combination exercises.

The rest of the game was the same. To my great surprise I found another (full) example on this theme: Feco-Pohranc, Slovakia tt B 2003/04. Only 40 years after my game...

After 19...♙d2 Black could have obtained a decisive attack by 19...♞e6 and 20...♞fe8. However, the text allows a powerful finish.

**19...♞e1!! 20.c4**

The only move that doesn't lose at once.

**20...♞xg1!**

20...bxc4?? would run into 21.♗c3+-.

**21.cxd5 ♞xd1 22.♙xc7 ♞c8**

**23.♙b6 f5 24.♙c5 ♞e8**

The d-pawn can wait – Black is going for mate.

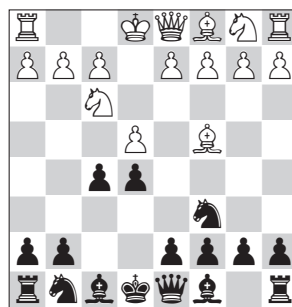
**25.g4 f4 26.g5 ♞e2+ 27.♔h3 ♙c8+**

And White resigned.

**K. Velinszky  
Andras Jocha**

Budapest 1963

**1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.♙c4 f5?**



Jocha? Morphy! My gambit was not quite so original for, as I later learned, Paul Morphy had already played it.

**4.d4 fxe4**

4...exd4 is no better, cf. 5.♗xd4 ♗xd4  
6.♞xd4 fxe4 7.♙xg8 ♞xg8 8.♞d5 ♞h8  
9.♞h5+ g6 10.♞e5+ ♔f7 11.♗c3 ♙g7  
12.♞d5+ ♔f8 13.0-0, which is quite pleasant for White.

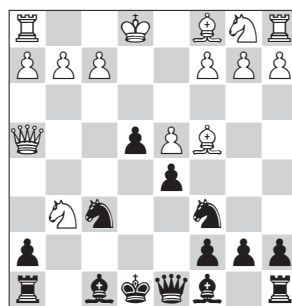
**5.♗xe5 d5 6.♞h5+??**

As they say: patzer sees a check, patzer gives a check. Instead there were several ways for White to get an advantage: 6.♗xc6 bxc6 7.♞h5+ ♔e7 8.♙g5+ ♗f6 9.♙b3= or 6.♙b5! ♞d6 7.c4±.

**6...g6 7.♗xg6**

7.♗xc6 loses a piece to 7...gxh5 8.♗xd8 dxc4 9.♙g5 ♙e7 and the knight is caught.

**7...♗f6 8.♞h4**

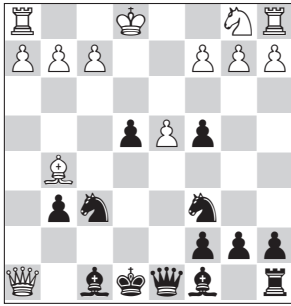


**8...hxg6**

More convincing was 8...♗xd4! 9.♙b3 ♗f5 10.♞h3 ♗e7 – an even more humorous knight catch.

**9.♞xh8 dxc4 10.♙g5?**

Better was 10.c3 ♖f7 11.♙h4, keeping some play.



**10...♗xd4! 11.♘a3 ♖f7 12.0-0-0**  
12.c3 ♗e6 achieves nothing.

**12...♗g4 13.♖b1**  
White had to try 13.f3, after which 13...exf3 14.gxf3 ♗xa3 15.♙xd8 ♖xd8 16.fxg4 ♗e2+ 17.♖b1 ♖xd1+ 18.♖xd1 ♗e4 should win for Black.

**13...♗xd1 14.♖xd1 ♗xa3 15.♙h4 ♗d6**

Taking over the attack.

**16.bxa3 ♙b6+ 17.♖c1 c3 18.♖xd4 ♙xd4 19.♗xf6 ♗d2+ 0-1**

### Terms

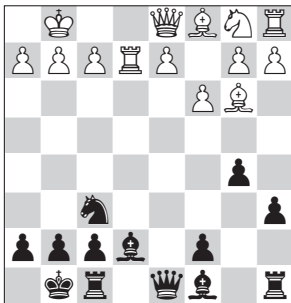
**Andras Jocha**

Budapest 1963

**1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♗f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 0-0 8.c3 d5**

Happy Marshall days...

**9.exd5 ♗xd5 10.♗xe5 ♗xe5 11.♖xe5 ♗f6 12.♖e2!?**



A very careful move, but it has its drawbacks too.

**12...♗d6 13.d4 ♗h5**

A trifle too gung-ho. 13...♗b7!? gives good compensation.

**14.♙d3 ♙h4 15.g3 ♙h3 16.♗d5!**

On 16.♙e4 Black has 16...♗g4.

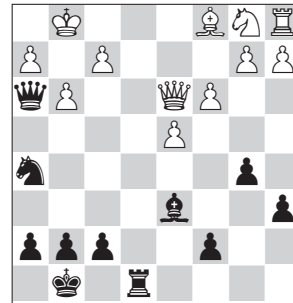
**16...♗f5 17.♗e4?!**

17.♙e3±.

**17...♗xe4 18.♖xe4**

Not consistent. More logical was 18.♙xe4 ♗f6 (18...f5!?) 19.♙f3 ♖ae8 20.♗e3 ♗g4 21.♙g2 ♙h5 22.♗d2 ♖e6 23.♖ae1 ♖fe8, though Black has compensation here.

**18...♖ae8 19.♖xe8 ♖xe8**



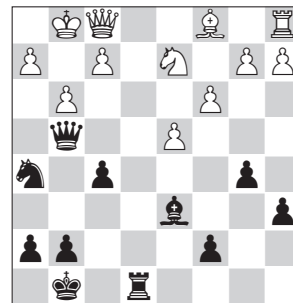
**20.♙f1**

Some thematic shots are 20.♗d2? ♗f4! and 20.♗d2 ♗f4 21.♙f1 ♖e1!.

**20...♙g4 21.♗d2**

21.♗d2 was safer.

**21...f5**



**22.f3?**

A bad mistake. 22.a4 ♗f4 23.axb5 ♗e2+ 24.♖h1 was better. After the text, the white king's position will be easy to breach.

Black is Back!

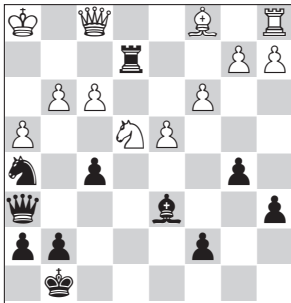
**22... ♖g6—+ 23. ♖f2**

On 23. ♖g2 ♔e1+ 24. ♘f1 Black blasts through with 24... ♗xg3 25. hxg3 ♘xg3 26. ♗g5 ♘e2+ 27. ♖f2 ♗xa1 28. ♖xe2 h6.

**23... ♘f4**

Or again 23... ♗xg3 24. hxg3 ♘xg3, winning easily since after 25. ♘f1 ♘e2+ 26. ♖h1 ♘xc1 White cannot take back due to 27... ♖h6+.

**24. ♖h1 ♔e2 25. ♖f1 ♖h6 26. h4 ♘h5! 27. ♘e4**



**27... ♘xg3+! 28. ♖g1 ♖xh4 29. ♘f2 ♘xf1 0-1**

**Bela Juhasz  
Andras Jocha**

Budapest 1963

This was a romantic game, if not without mistakes.

**1.e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5. ♗g5?! ♗c5**

The play sharpens. The safer option was 5...h6 6. ♗xf6 ♖xf6 7.c3 (7. ♘b5 ♗c5 8.f3 ♖xb2 9. ♘xc7+ ♘d8 10. ♘xa8 ♖xa1 clearly favours Black) 7... ♗c5 8. ♘f3 0-0.

**6.c3**

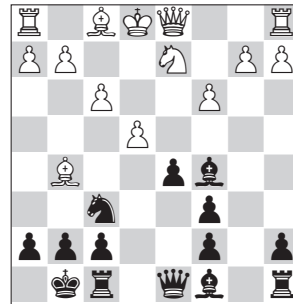
6. ♘xc6 bxc6 7.e5 doesn't work in view of 7... ♖e7 8. ♖e2 ♗d4! 9. exf6 ♖xe2+ 10. ♗xe2 ♗xb2.

**6...0-0**

Also here, safer was 6...h6! 7. ♘xc6 bxc6 8. ♗xf6 (8. ♗h4 g5 just loses a pawn) 8... ♖xf6 9. ♖d2 0-0 10. ♗d3 d5 with lovely play for Black. 6... ♖e7 was another good alternative.

**7.f3 d5 8. ♘xc6 bxc6 9. ♘d2**

9.e5 ♖e8 10. ♖e2 runs into 10... ♗a6!.



**9...dxe4**

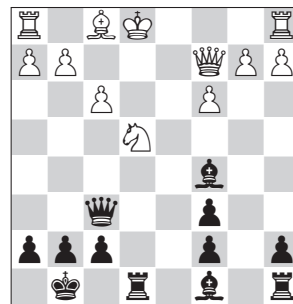
It was stronger to increase the pressure on e4 with 9... ♖e8. There's no safe shelter for the white king.

**10. ♗xf6?**

An amusing line is 10. ♘e4 ♘xe4 (10... ♖xd1+ 11. ♗xd1 ♘xe4 12. fxe4 ♗e6) 11. ♖xd8 (11. ♗xd8 loses to 11... ♗f2+ 12. ♖e2 ♗a6+ 13. ♖d3 ♗xd3+ 14. ♘d3 ♗axd8+) 11... ♗xd8 12. ♗xd8 ♘f2 13. ♗g1 (13. ♗e7! ♗b6 14. ♗g1 ♘h3 15. ♗h1) 13... ♗f5 14. ♗g5 ♘h3 (14... ♖e8+ 15. ♘d2 h6) 15. gxxh3 ♗xg1, which still gives Black something of an edge.

**10... ♖xf6 11. ♘xe4 ♔e8 12. ♖c2**

Black's attack is also strong after the developing move 12. ♗d3 ♖g5 13. ♖f1 ♗xe4! 14. fxe4 (14. ♗xe4 ♗a6+ – again! – 15. ♗d3 ♖e3—+) 14... ♗g4 15. ♖c2 ♗d8—+.



**12... ♗xe4+!?**

There was a simpler win by 12... ♖h4+! 13.g3 ♖h6 14. ♗e2 ♗f5.

**13.fxe4**

On 13.♖xe4 Black has two good possibilities:

A) 13...♙f5!? 14.♖c4 (14.♖e2 ♘f8—+) 14...♞e8+ 15.♙e2 ♖e7 16.♞d1 a5 and the king cannot get away;

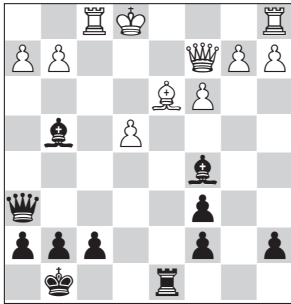
B) But more convincing is 13...♙d7 14.♙e2 ♞e8 15.♖c4 (15.♖c2 ♙f5—+) 15...♖g5 16.g4 h5 17.♞d1 ♙e6—+.

**13...♙g4 14.♙d3**

On 14.♙c4 ♖f4 is strong; I should have played this after the text move as well.

**14...♞d8 15.♞f1 ♖h6?**

15...♖d6!—+.



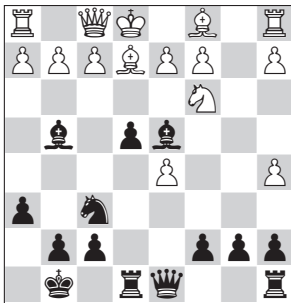
**16.♙e2??**

16.♙c4 ♖xh2 17.♞xf7 ♖h4+ 18.♞f2+ ♘h8 19.b4 ♙e3 wins for Black, but 16.g3 was a better defence; Black should then play 16...♙e3!.

**16... ♖h4+!—+ 17.g3 ♖xh2 18.♙d3 ♖xg3+ 19.♞f2 ♞xd3 0-1**

**Mihaly Gombi  
Andras Jocha**

Hungary tt 1963



With the king still on e1, there can only be one move here:

**14...e3! 15.dxe3**

15.fxe3 ♞xe3—+.

**15...♙xc3+ 16.♙d1 ♖xd5+ 17.♙d2 ♖xd2#**

**Janos Havasi**

**Andras Jocha**

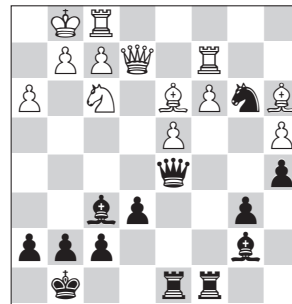
Budapest jr 1964 (7)

Today we even see categories like Under-8 in junior tournaments. In our time we all played in one under-20 group. I was only 14 in this Championship, probably the youngest ever to win the competition – ahead of Tompa (17) and Szel (18), among others. It's funny, but later on my best result would be second place.

**1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.e3 e6 4.c4 c5 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♙e2 dxc4 7.0-0 cxd4 8.exd4 ♙e7 9.♙xc4 0-0 10.a3 ♘d5 11.h3 ♘xc3 12.bxc3 ♙f6 13.♙f4 b6 14.♖e2 ♘a5 15.♙d3 ♙b7 16.♘e5 ♞c8 17.♞ac1 ♘b3 18.♞c2 ♖d5 19.♘f3**

19.♖g4.

**19...♖a5 20.♙d6 ♞fd8 21.♙b4 ♖d5 22.a4 a5 23.♙a3**



**23...♙xd4??**

Bad, but winning. That's what happens in must-win situations.

Nice and fine was 23...♞xc3! and now:

A) 24.♙xh7+ ♘xh7 25.♞xc3 ♘xd4 26.♖d3+ ♖e4 27.♖xe4+ ♙xe4 28.♞c7 ♘e2+ (28...♙g6) 29.♙h1 ♞d3!

(threatening mate in a few) 30.♖e1 ♖xf3 (a less romantic soul would win with 30...♖xa3 31.♗xe2 ♖xa4) 31.♗xe2 ♖xh3+ 32.♔g1 ♖xa3 33.♗xe4 ♖a1+ 34.♔h2 ♖xa4!! 35.♗e3 (35.♖xa4 ♕e5+) 35...♕g5 36.♖h3+ ♔g6, winning in the endgame;

B) 24.♖xc3 ♖xd4 25.♕xh7+ ♔h8 (or 25...♔xh7 as in line a) 26.♗e3 ♖xf3+ 27.gxf3 ♔xh7 (why give up that nice bishop on f6?) 28.♖c7 ♗xf3 29.♗xf3 ♕xf3 and Black is much better in the endgame after either 30.♕e7 ♕xe7 31.♗xe7 ♔g6 or 30.♖xf7 ♔g6 31.♖f8 ♖d4!.

The prosaic 23...♗c6! 24.♕b2 ♗xa4 is highly unclear after 25.♕b5.

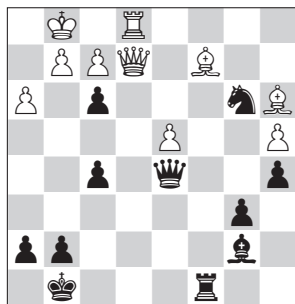
**24.♖d1 e5 25.cxd4 e4?**

The best chance was 25...♖xd4 26.♗e3 ♖xc2 27.♕xc2 ♗c6±.

**26.♖xc8 ♖xc8 27.♗e1 f5 28.♕c2**

28.♕a6! was winning.

**28...exf3**



**29.♗e5??**

Still winning was 29.♗e7! ♖xd4 30.♕b2 and Black can't take either way because of mate.

**29...♖xd4 30.♗xd5+ ♕xd5 31.♕d3 fxd3**

**0-1**

**Bela Vigh  
Andras Jocha**

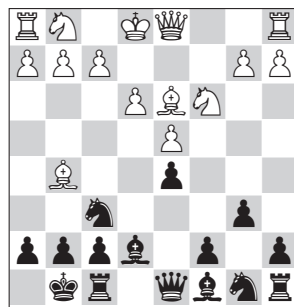
Budapest blindfold 1964

I still remember this game very well. We were part of the 'crowd and soldiers' for a movie they were making

called 'White resigns'. Chess played an important part in the story. But we were rather bored and tired after a while and then started playing a blindfold game, which is given below.

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♖c3 ♖f6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♕g5 ♕e7 6.e3 0-0 7.♕d3 b6??**

7...c6.



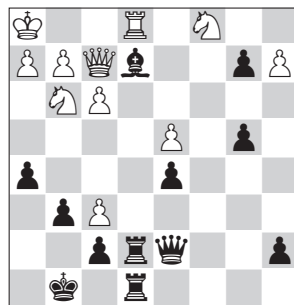
**8.♖ge2?**

Both of us didn't 'see' 8.♕xf6 ♕xf6 9.♗h5+-.

**8...♕b7 9.0-0 ♖bd7 10.♗c2 ♖e4!  
11.♕xe7 ♗xe7 12.♖ae1 c5 13.f3  
♖ef6 14.♖g3 c4 15.♕f5 g6 16.♕h3  
♖ae8 17.♕xd7?**

17.e4!.

**17...♗xd7 18.♔h1 b5 19.♗f2 b4  
20.♖ce2 ♗e7 21.♖c1 ♖fe8 22.♗e2  
h5 23.♖fe1 ♕a6 24.e4 c3 25.e5  
♕xe2 26.exf6 cxb2**

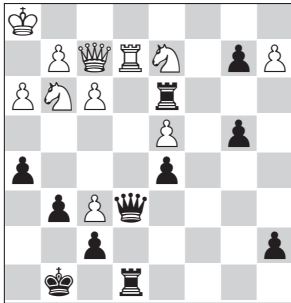


**27.♖b3**

27.♖cxe2 loses to 27...♖xe2 28.♖xe2 ♗e6 (or also 28...♗f5 29.♗f1 h4+-) 29.♗f1 ♗e3.

27...♖e3 28.♘d2 ♕e6 29.h3 ♖d3  
30.♗xe2

This loses, as do the alternatives 30.♘b1  
♗xf3 and 30.♘b3 ♖xb3 31.axb3 ♘d3  
32.♗xe6 b1♕+.



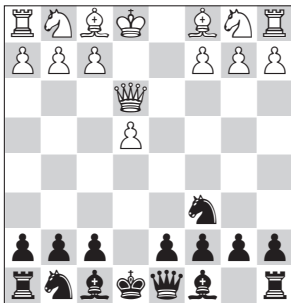
30...♕xe2! 31.♗xe2 ♖xd2 32.♕f1  
♗dx2 33.♘h2 ♖e1 0-1

Comment by the winner: ‘Nice game. Both the refutation of White’s e3-e4 break and the way Black takes advantage of the back-rank weakness are pretty.’

**Laszlo Antal**  
**Andras Jocha**

Hungary tt 1965

1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.♕xd4 ♘c6  
4.♕e3



White plays the Centre Gambit the way Bela Bacsi played it – like myself, Laszlo was his pupil. I’ve never understood why it is called a gambit. A decent gambit involves some sacrifice, while here White regains the pawn immediately, giving two tempi to Black. In addition, e3 can hardly be the

final station for the queen. It becomes a target again after my real gambit move.

**4...f5!?**

I am sure that this brainchild of mine is at least as playable as any other healthy move, but strangely enough, 21 years would pass until somebody repeated it. With success.

**5.exf5+**

5.♘c3 ♘f6 (5...fxe4 6.♕xe4+ ♕e7  
7.♕xe7+ ♘xe7 8.♘f4 gives White an edge) 6.♘f3 fxe4 7.♘xe4 ♘xe4  
8.♕xe4+ ♕e7=.

**5...♘e7 6.♘d3 ♘f6 7.♘e2**

7.♘f3 0-0 8.0-0 d5 looks like a good reversed King’s Gambit for Black.

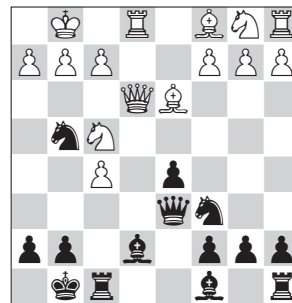
**7...0-0 8.0-0 d5**

Also possible is 8...♘b4 – see Havasi-Füsty, Hungary tt 1986 in the ‘Connections’ chapter at the end of this book.

**9.♘f4 ♕d6**

The immediate 9...♘g4 doesn’t work very well due to 10.♕h3 ♘ge5 (10...♘ce5 11.♘e6 ♘xe6 12.fxe6±) 11.g4 ♘h4 12.♘d2 and White consolidates.

**10.♖e1 ♘g4**



**11.♕f3??**

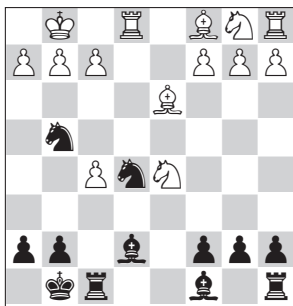
Now Black’s set-up is justified. White could win by making use of the pin on the h2-b8 diagonal with 11.♕g3! ♘ce5 12.♘c3 c6 (12...♘xd3 13.cxd3 ♘xf5 14.♘fxd5 ♖ae8 15.♘f4 ♕d7 16.h3 ♘f6 17.♗xe7 ♗xe7



18. ♖xe7+ ♔xe7 19. ♕xc7+—) and now, even stronger than 13.h3 is 13. ♖fxd5! cxd5 14. ♕f4 ♕f6 15. ♖xg4+—.

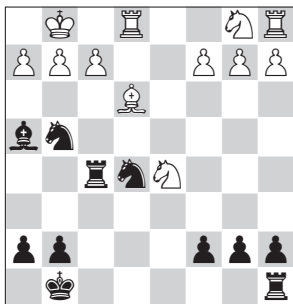
The text move wins a second pawn on d5, but after that Black gets fantastic piece play even (or should we say 'precisely?') without the queens.

**11... ♖ce5 12. ♖xd5+ ♖xd5 13. ♖xd5**



**13... ♕c5?**

Strong was 13... ♕h4! 14. ♕e3 ♕xf5 15. ♕xf5 ♖xf5 and now:



- A) 16. ♕c5 ♖xf2!;
- B) 16. ♖e2 c6 17.h3 cxd5 18.hxg4 ♖xg4 19. ♖c3 ♖xe3 20.fxe3 ♕f6 or 19. ♕d4 ♕xf2+! followed by ... ♖af8;
- C) 16. ♖f1 c6 17.h3 cxd5 18.hxg4 ♖xg4 and Black remains a little better.

**14. ♕e3 ♖xd3?**

The wrong exchange. After 14... ♖xe3 15.fxe3 c6 16. ♖c7 ♖b8 17. ♖e6 ♕xe6 18.fxe6 ♖bd8 19. ♖c3 ♖xd3 20.cxd3 ♖xd3 21. ♖ad1 ♖xe3 22. ♖h1 ♖xe1+ 23. ♖xe1 ♖d8 24.g3 ♖f8 Black has his pawns back, with an edge.

**15.cxd3 ♕d6**

15... ♖xe3 16.fxe3 ♕xf5 17.d4 ♕d6 18.e4 ♕e6 19. ♖bc3 doesn't give enough compensation for the pawn.

**16.h3**

Or first 16. ♕f4 ♕c5 17. ♕g3 ♕xf5 18. ♖e7+ ♖h8 19.h3 and White is slightly better.

**16... ♖e5 17.d4?**

17. ♕f4±; 17.f6±.

**17... ♖d3 18. ♖e2 ♕xf5**

More accurate may have been 18... c6 19. ♖dc3 ♕xf5 20. ♖d2 ♖ae8 with pressure for the pawn.

**19.b3**

White could have freed himself with 19. ♖a3! ♖xb2 20. ♖b5 ♖c4 21. ♖dxc7 ♕xc7 22. ♖xc7 ♖ac8 (22... ♖ad8) 23. ♖d5=.

**19... ♖ae8 20. ♖d2 c6 21. ♖c4 ♕b8**

**22. ♖c3 ♖e6 23. ♖d1**

Or 23. ♕g5 ♖g6 with initiative.

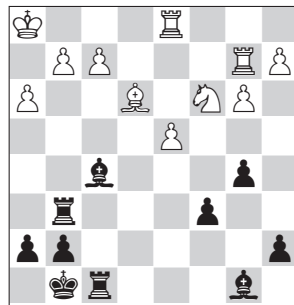
**23... ♖g6 24. ♖h1**

24.g4 h5 25.f3=; 24. ♖f1.

**24...b5 25. ♖b2?**

White cannot really disentangle in this way. He might have done so with 25. ♖e5 ♖xe5 26.dxe5 ♕xe5 27. ♕d4=.

**25... ♖xb2 26. ♖xb2**



**26...b4**

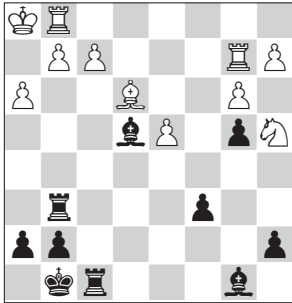
With the nice 26... ♕xh3 27.f3 (27.gxh3 ♖f3 is the point) 27... ♖e8 28. ♕c1 ♕f5 Black could have obtained an advantage with his two bishop versus not a minus pawn.

**27. ♖a4 ♕e4**

Again, 27... ♕xh3! was possible.

**28. ♖g1?**

This allows an immediate decision. White would also be in trouble after 28.f4 ♖g3 29.♞e1 ♜xh3+ 30.♔g1 ♞h4, winning the f-pawn.

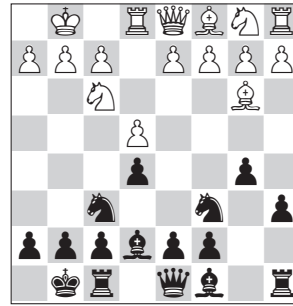


**28...♞f3 29.♞c1 ♞xh3+ 30.♔g1 ♞f3** **0-1**

The victim in this game was a talented player, but he did not become a professional. Forty years later, he told me why (half a bottle of whiskey makes you sincere): ‘You know, when I realized that chess can be played the way you played it, I saw no reason to hope for a shining future. I sold my chess books the next day to a second-hand shop’ (Ervin Nagy became sad when he heard this story and added ‘Unfortunately, mine too, which I had lent him’). Instead, Laszlo Antal became a well-known name in the circles of European economists. And that’s not the end of the story. We have a saying in Hungary: ‘Blood doesn’t turn into water’. Today we have a grandmaster called Gergely Antal – his son. I wish we had more parents with such sane self-criticism and more talented children. But give up chess? No! Chess can be played for fun as an amateur, and many people play it with pleasure until a high age.

**Kakoczki**  
**Andras Jocha**  
Hungary tt 1965

**1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.♗b5 a6**  
**4.♗a4 ♗f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♞e1 b5**  
**7.♗b3 0-0**



**8.c3**

8.d4 ♗xd4!? (8...d6=) 9.♗xf7+ ♞xf7  
10.♗xe5 ♞f8 11.♞xd4 gives Black interesting play for the pawn after 11...♗b7 12.♗c3 c5 13.♞d1 ♞c7 14.♗g4 ♗xg4 15.♞xg4 ♗d6 16.♞h4 ♗e5, with compensation. Also nice is 9.♗xd4 exd4 10.e5 ♗e8 11.♞xd4 ♗b7 (11...d6 12.♗d5 dxe5 13.♞xe5 ♗f6 (13...♗d6!? 14.♗xf7+ ♔h8) 14.♞h5 ♗g4! 15.♗xf7+ ♞xf7 16.♞xg4 ♗d4 with compensation) 12.♞d3 d6 13.e6 d5 14.♗c3 fxe6 15.♞xe6 c6=.

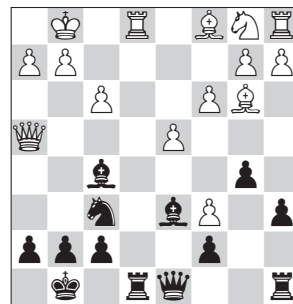
**8...d5 9.exd5 e4!?**

At best dubious, like Frank Marshall’s original idea 9...♗xd5 10.♗xe5 ♗xe5 11.♞xe5 ♗f6?!. It’s funny, but 11...c6 has become drawish these days, although it’s pretty sharp.

**10.dxc6 exf3 11.♞xf3**

11.d4 fxg2 12.♗g5=.

**11...♗g4 12.♞g3 ♗d6 13.♞h4 ♞e8 14.f3 ♗f5 15.d4**



**15...♗xh2+!?**

A move with a shock effect. Since chess is played by human beings, the psychological

side to the game is always important. My weaker opponent sees ghosts and falls victim to his own timidity:

**16. ♖h1??**

16. ♖h2! ♗g4+ 17. ♖g3 (17. ♖xg4 ♕xg4 18. ♖e8+ ♖xe8 19. fxg4 ♖e1 offers roughly equal chances) 17... ♖xh4+ 18. ♖xh4 ♖xe1 19. fxg4 ♖xc1 (19... ♕xb1 20. ♖xb1 ♖ae8 21. d5+-) 20. gxf5 ♖e8 21. d5 ♖f1 22. d6 cxd6 23. g4 was better for White as Black is tied to the c6-pawn.

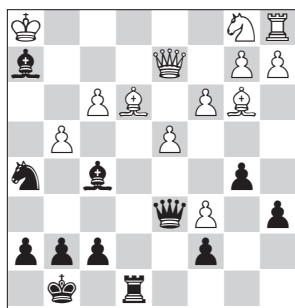
**16... ♖xe1+ 17. ♖xe1 ♖d6**

Winning.

**18. ♕e3**

18. ♖h4 ♖e8 19. ♕d2 ♕g3--.

**18... ♖e8 19. ♖d2 ♗h5! 20. g4**



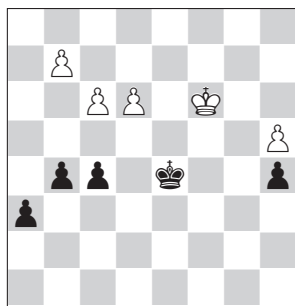
White cannot survive such a weakening of his position.

**20... ♕f4! 21. ♕xf4 ♗xf4 22. ♕d1 ♕xb1 23. ♖g1 ♖h6**

**0-1**

**Istvan Somogyi  
Andras Jocha**

Hungary tt 1965



**38. ♕d3**

38. g4 fxg4 39. fxg4 ♖e4 40. ♖c4 ♖f3 41. ♕d4 ♖xg4 42. e4 h5 leads to a queen ending with a plus pawn for Black.

**38... f4!!**

It's almost incredible that this move, which gives White a protected passed pawn, not only wins, but is also the only move that wins.

On the other hand, 38... h5? 39. e4+ fx4+ 40. fxe4+ ♖c5 (40... ♖e5? 41. ♖e3 ♖c4 42. ♖e2 ♖d4 43. ♖f3 ♖c5 44. ♖e3 ♖c4 45. ♖e2 is only a draw.

**39. e4+**

39. exf4 loses to the simple 39... gxf4 40. ♖c3 ♖c5 when Black has the opposition; and if 39. ♖c3, ♖c5! wins.

**39... ♖c5**

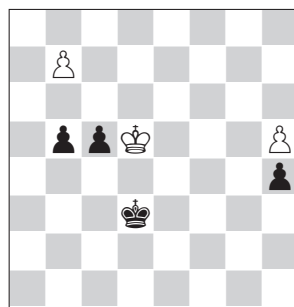
Good enough. But simpler and quicker was 39... ♖e5! in view of 40. ♖c4 h5 41. ♖b5 (41. ♕d3 g4 42. ♖e2 g3 and the a4-pawn falls.

The white king is paralysed by the threat of ...h4-h3) and now the well-known breakthrough 41... g4 42. ♖xa5 h4 43. ♖b6 h3 44. gxh3 gxf3 or 44... g3.

**40. ♖c3 h5 41. ♕d3 g4 42. fxg4**

42. ♖e2 g3 43. ♕d3 h4 44. ♖e2 ♖b4 is the same story. If 42. e5 gxf3 43. gxf3 h4 wins.

**42... hxg4 43. e5 ♖d5 44. e6 ♖xe6 45. ♖e4**



**45... f3! 46. gxf3**

46. ♖e3 fxg2 47. ♖f2 ♖d5--.

**46...g3 47.♔e3 ♕f5 48.♔e2**

On 48.f4 ♔g4 49.f5 ♕h3! decides the issue.

**48...♔f4 49.♔e1**

49.♔f1 ♕xf3–+.

**49...♔e3!**

Not 49...♕xf3?? 50.♔f1=. Now the g-pawn is under control, and if Black gives it up for the a-pawn, the white king still reaches the queenside in time.

**50.f4**

50.♔f1 ♕xf3–+.

**50...g2**

White resigned.

Here 50...♕xf4 51.♔e2 ♔g4 52.♔f1 ♕h3 would also have won.

**Andor Lilienthal  
Andras Jocha**

Budapest simul 1966

Andor Lilienthal was born in Hungary, but he travelled a lot and lived in the Soviet Union for thirty years. However, he often visited his native country Hungary, giving lectures and simul. Nobody likes to lose, not even in a simul. The game given below is one which he lost and I won.

He knew he was playing against the Junior Team of Hungary, but maybe he still wasn't careful enough. However, instead of flying into a rage he said: 'But my dear boy, you are a very good player already. Congratulations!'

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5 4.♗f3 ♕g7 5.♖b3 dxc4 6.♖xc4 0-0 7.e4 ♘a6 8.e5 ♘d7 9.e6?**

Too optimistic. Uncle Lili should have continued his development instead.

**9...fxe6 10.♖xe6+ ♔h8 11.♖b3**

In the event of 11.♖e2 ♘b4 (11...c5 12.♕e3) 12.♕g5 (12.♕e3) 12...♗f6 13.a3 ♘bd5 Black already has an edge due to his better development.

**11...e5 12.d5**

12.dxe5 is dangerous after 12...♗ac5.

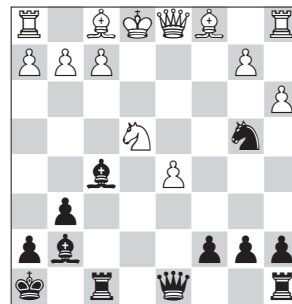
**12...♗dc5**



**13.♖d1**

13.♖a3 e4 14.♕xa6 exf3 15.♖xc5 fxg2 16.♗g1 b6! 17.♖c4 (17.♖c6 ♕xa6 18.♗xg2 ♖e8+ 19.♕e3 ♖xc6 20.dxc6 ♗f6–+) 17...♕xa6 18.♖xa6 ♕xc3+ 19.bxc3 ♗f6 gives Black a winning attack; After 13.♖c4 c6! the position is opened up, which will be disastrous for White's undeveloped position.

**13...e4 14.♗g5 ♘b4 15.♗gxe4 ♘xe4 16.♗xe4 ♕f5 17.a3**



17...♖e7 18.axb4 ♖xe4+ 19.♕e3 ♕xb2 20.♕e2 ♕h3 21.gxh3 ♖xh1+ 21...♕c3+–+.

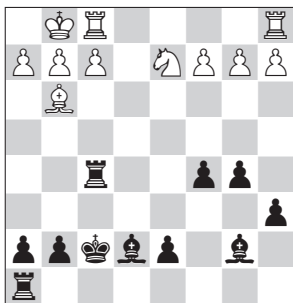
**22.♕f1 ♗ae8 23.♔d2 ♖xh2 24.♕e2 ♖e5 0-1**

**Zoltan Ribli  
Andras Jocha**

Balatonszéplak 1967 (6)

**1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♘c6 3.♕b5 a6 4.♕a4 ♗f6 5.0-0 b5 6.♕b3 ♕b7 7.d4 ♗xd4 8.♕xf7+ ♔xf7 9.♗xe5+ ♔g8 10.♖xd4 c5 11.♖e3 ♖c7 12.♗f3 ♗e8 13.e5 ♗g4 14.♖f4 ♗xe5**

15. ♖xe5 ♜xe5 16. ♜xe5 ♝xe5  
17. ♙f4 ♜f5 18. ♙g3 ♚f7 19. ♖d2 ♙e7

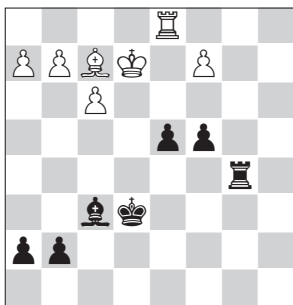


Since Zoltan and I were already friends at the time, and worked together, we avoided the variations we had analysed in our mutual games. My choice was luckier: Black is not only OK, he is already better here.

20. a4 c4 21. axb5 axb5 22. ♜fe1 ♜e8  
23. ♖e4 ♙xe4 24. ♝xe4 ♙f6  
25. ♝xe8 ♚xe8 26. ♜e1+ ♚f7  
27. ♖d1 d5 28. b3 d4 29. ♚f1 ♝c5  
30. ♚e2 ♚e6!

It's still too early for 30...d3+ 31. ♖d2 ♝d5 32. bxc4 bxc4 33. ♚c1 ♙e7 (33...♙c3!?) 34. cxd3 cxd3 35. ♖d2 and White can contain the passed pawn.

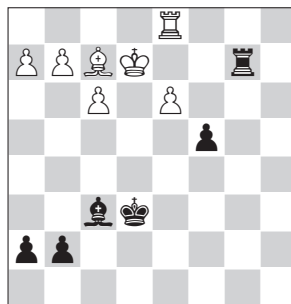
31. bxc4 bxc4 32. f3 ♜b5 33. ♙f2



33...d3+! 34. cxd3

Now 34. ♖d2 fails tactically to 34...♜b2 35. ♜c1 ♙g5+ (35...♜a2!?-+) 36. ♙e3 ♜xc2+ 37. ♜xc2 ♙xe3+.

34...♜b2+

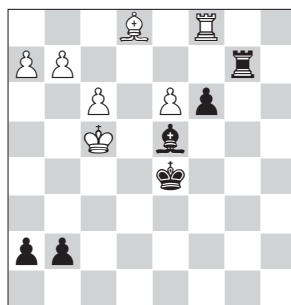


35. ♚e3

35. ♖d2 loses immediately to 35...c3.

35. ♚f1 c3 36. ♙e3 c2 (36...♖d5 37. ♜a1 c2 38. ♜a5+ ♖d6 39. ♜c5 ♙e5 40. d4 ♙xd4 41. ♙xd4 ♜b1+ 42. ♚f2 c1♜ 43. ♜xc1 ♜xc1 44. ♙xg7=) 37. ♜c1 ♙e7 38. ♙f4 ♙a3 39. ♜e1+ ♖d5 40. ♙c1 ♖d4 41. ♜e4+ (41. ♚e2 ♜a2-+) 41...♚c3 42. ♚e2 ♜a2 43. ♙d2+ ♚b3 44. ♚f1 c1♜+ and wins – the power of the passed pawn!

35...c3 36. ♜c1 ♖d5 37. ♙e1 ♙d4+  
38. ♚f4



38...♜e2 39. ♜xc3

39. ♚g3 c2-+; 39. ♙xc3 ♙e3+-+.

39...♙e5+! 40. ♚g4 ♜xg2+ 41. ♚h3 ♜xh2+ 42. ♚g4 h5+ 43. ♚g5 ♙xc3 44. ♙xc3 h4 45. ♚f4 h3 46. ♙xg7 ♜e2 0-1

Now the other passed pawn decides – 47. ♚g3 ♜g2+.

## Chapter 4

# The Dogma is Dead – BLACK is BACK!

It is not only that fresh material has come up ever since my previous book *Black is OK forever!* (2005). No, it is simply that I have finally found a convincing refutation of the dogma (or, as the dogmatists believed it to be, the ‘axiom’) of hundreds, maybe even thousands of years: that White has any advantage. It is not true. Not in the beginning position, and not in the further development of the game. I have worked on this subject for over 30 years. Already in the beginning, in 1985, I declared that starting the game with white in no way means taking the initiative. Stating that White is the one who chooses the direction of the opening and, consequently, the rest of the game, is false. Every single move on either side gives a player the opportunity to find his own way.

(See *Black is OK*, Batsford 1988)

Years ago, my wife Ilona discovered a nice discussion on Wikipedia about the following question: is there a first-move advantage in chess? One argument in this discussion was that the perfect chess game naturally ends in a draw. It is good that Steinitz, Lasker, Capablanca and many great players supported this opinion, but what we still need is concrete evidence.

Well, the first piece of evidence – which I have hardly seen mentioned anywhere in serious chess literature – is that ever since chess has been played, nobody has ever won a game without a mistake by the opponent. This mistake may be identified and corrected, and then everything is in order. It’s so easy to understand, and nobody has ever refuted or even questioned this basic truth. It is not in accordance with the ‘official’ standpoint, so they keep schtum about it.

The more I studied this key subject, the less I understood the nature of White’s so-called advantage. Grandmaster Sveshnikov and another reader drew my attention to the fact that it is *much easier to create a repertoire for Black than for White*.

A simple example: if White plays 1.e4 he must be prepared – and very carefully too; after all ‘White should be better’ – for at least 9 return moves, followed by a lot of different defences! If Black wants to play the Sveshnikov, he only has to know the target opening plus the Sicilian sub-variations (2.f4, 2.b3, 2.g3, 2.c3 etc). Only the last of this list is considered to be (relatively) serious, the rest may even be better for Black already. And, I never realized this before, but in case of 1.d4 the balance turns out to be approximately the same!

So, surprisingly enough, it turns out that *White has to prepare at least twice as many lines as Black*, who can choose his direction without learning a hell of a lot of other variations.

A good combination, for example, is the Sveshnikov with the Caro-Kann. This allows you to play in quite different styles, depending on the opponent and your ranking in the tournament.

We will illustrate this further on in the book, in Chapter 9, with a complete overview of *all* the possible opening lines after 1.e4 and 1.d4, assembled by Endre Vegh.