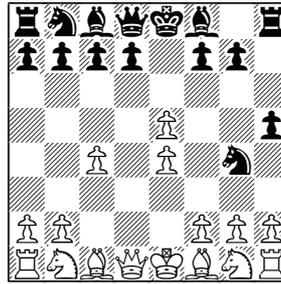


Chapter Five



Réti (4...h5!)

After Réti was crushed by Spielmann in the inaugural game of what would become known as the Alekhine Attack, he must have done some serious thinking! It's clear that if White establishes his big centre—with tempo—after 4...♖xe5 5 f4 then Black has a terrible struggle just to get through the opening alive.

The solution he came up with was both simple and brilliant: Black plays 4...h5, and so keeps the knight in White's territory at least one more move—and the knight can only be removed if White makes concessions.

The true Réti idea will be seen in Games 26-29. Ahead of these I have placed the original, if unsound, Spielmann idea of combining ...h7-h5 with a kingside fianchetto. This Budapest win against a future world champion has to be included in the book for its sheer brilliance, even though I don't recommend that the reader should follow

Spielmann's opening scheme.

Game 25 M.Euwe-R.Spielmann Bad Pistyan 1922

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 ♘g4 4 e4 h5!

Just a year after the infamous "free game", Dr. Euwe finds himself on the opposite side of BG—and follows his conqueror, Alekhine, with...

5 ♗h3

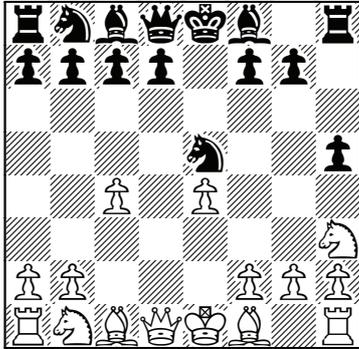
This inferior move!

5...♗xe5

Not best: the idea of Réti's 4...h5 is to keep the knight in action, in White's territory, as long as possible, and only move it when absolutely forced, for example after 5 h3.

However, at this point the BG was not well worked out (in fact it still isn't!) and Spielmann's hypermodern fianchetto idea—though it should have

failed tactically—is worth seeing as a precursor to some modern strategic ideas like the 6...g6 variation given in the notes to Game 21.



That said, if we are looking for best play here, this was already demonstrated by Euwe as Black in the free game (up to a point of course!). As analyzed in detail in Game 4, Black could have obtained the advantage as early as move eight after the correct 5...♖c6 6 ♗c3 ♗c5 7 ♗d5 (one recalls that even on the less extravagant 7 ♗e2 Black would have had good counterplay with 7...♗xc5, maintaining the attacking knight at g4) 7...♗xc5 8 b4 and now, instead of the game's 8...♗e7, Black had 8...♗f8 with the idea of ...c7-c6, when White's overextended position is cracking.

I do wonder where Euwe intended to improve.

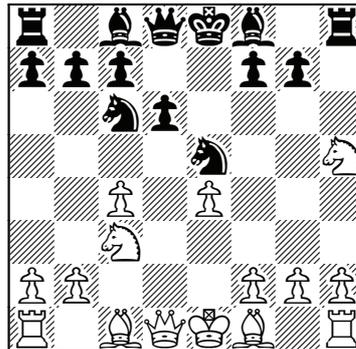
6 ♗c3 d6 7 ♗f4 ♗bc6?!

This move is incorrect for two reasons: one, the sacrifice of the h-pawn is unsound; and two, Black now gives White the d5-square. Correct is 7...g6, defending h5, and keeping ...c7-c6 in

reserve should White move a knight to d5—a modern version of this strategy can be seen in Game 72.

8 ♗e2

This gives White an excellent middlegame, but Euwe might also call Black's bluff and take, 8 ♗xh5, and now:



a) 8...♗h4 9 ♗e2 ♗g4 (even worse is 9...♗xc4 10 g3 ♗h3 11 ♗f4 winning a piece) 10 ♗f4 and White is just up a pawn.

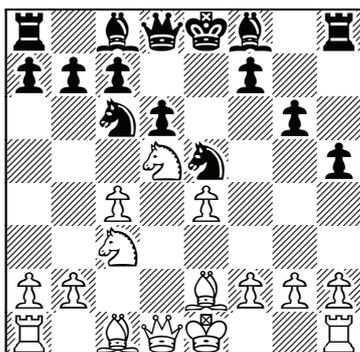
b) 8...♗g4 9 ♗e2 ♗ce5 10 f4 ♗xh5 11 fxe5 ♗xh2 (if 11...♗xe5 12 ♗f4 wins the exchange) 12 ♗xh2 ♗xh2 13 ♗f4 ♗g4 14 ♗xg4 ♗h4+ 15 g3 ♗xg4 16 ♗b5 ♗xd1+ 17 ♗xd1 ♗d8 18 exd6 and White has a pawn plus attack.

c) 8...♗g4 9 ♗e2 ♗xe2 10 ♗xe2 ♗d4 11 ♗d1 ♗e6 (or 11...♗xh5 12 ♗xd4) 12 ♗f4 ♗d7 13 ♗xe6 fxe6 (White would win more easily after 13...♗xe6 14 ♗d5 ♗xc4 15 ♗xb7) 14 ♗e2 and Black has nothing visible for the pawn.

8...g6 9 ♗fd5

While Spielmann's idea was interesting, in the specific situation he has found himself in a bad tactical position,

where he risks being blown out in the opening. Because Black retreated his active knight (and because Spielmann's idea is to fianchetto, so knight and king's bishop cannot combine together against f2), the white knight was *not* pinned down defending said square. Euwe has profited from his experience to immediately reposition his knight away from the rim to the central square it now so splendidly occupies—and because of the inaccuracy on move 7, Black can't kick the knight out with ...c7-c6. Furthermore, with the f2-pawn unimpeded, White has the f2-f4-f5 attack in hand, levering hard against Black's fragile kingside and the point of attack at g6.



9...e6 10...b5 11...c8

If 10...xd5 11 cxd5 with a big advantage for White no matter where Black retreats the knight—this is not very surprising in view of White's two bishops and central pawn majority, not to mention the weak dark squares on Black's kingside:

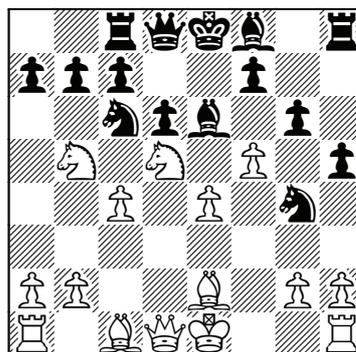
a) 11...b4 12 f4 d7 13 e2 a6 14 e3 and Black is dead.

b) 11...b8 12 f4 a6 13 c3 g4 14 0-0 g7 15 h3 h4 16 hxg4 hxg4 17 xg4 g3 18 f2 d7 19 f3 and White holds the extra piece.

c) 11...e7 12 f4 g4 13 d4 and again White takes over the long black diagonal with a big advantage.

11 f4 g4 12 xa7?

Resolute play is required, not pawn grabbing! Any Bird player would see the devastating 12 f5! here.



Black can't dream of saving the game, but can he even make it out of the opening alive? Let's take a look:

a) 12...d7 13 fxg6 fxg6 14 0-0 g7 15 dxc7+ xc7 16 xd6+ e7 17 f7+ e6 18 d5 mate! A mild illustration of the dangers facing Black!

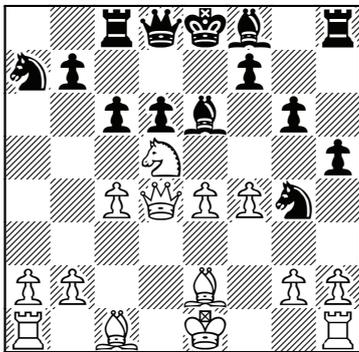
b) 12...xd5 13 exd5 ce5 14 fxg6 fxg6 15 0-0 (Black's king is caught in the centre) 15...c6 16 d4 b6 17 h3 h6 18 e3! hf7 (or if 18...xb2 19 b1 a3 20 b3 a6 21 b1 with a winning attack) 19 b1 (White has no need to rush; he has the two bishops and Black can't coordinate) 19...h6 20 f2 a5 (even worse are 20...0-0 21 xc6 and 20...c7 21 e6) 21 b3 with

a decisive positional advantage.

c) 12...gxf5 13 exf5 and Black's prognosis is terminal, for example 13...xf5?! (but if 13...d7 14 f4 with an overwhelming position, and the same can be said for 13...xd5 14 cxd5 ce5 15 0-0) 14 0-0 e6 15 xg4 xg4 (if 15...hxg4 16 f6+ e7 17 g5 wins the queen) 16 e1+ e7 17 g5 e6 18 c3 g8 (18...0-0 19 xe7 xe7 20 f6+ h8 21 xh5+ f6 22 xf6 wins a piece at least) 19 xe7 xe7 20 f6+ f8 and one of the prettiest of White's many ways to win is 21 h7+ e8 22 d4 g6 23 f6+ e7 24 f5+ xf5 25 xf5 e5 26 xe5+ xf6 27 e8+ with a fatal discovery.

And no, I don't see a way Black can make it out of the opening alive—but apparently Euwe did not realize how big his advantage was—or perhaps he was looking on the wrong side of the board!

12...xa7 13 d4 c6!



Spielmann rises to the occasion! He removes Enemy Number One, the big knight on d5, and disregards the material balance.

14 xg4

The position has undergone an amazing, even magical transformation in just two moves. Now if 14 xh8 cxd5 15 exd5 f5 16 d4 h4+ 17 g3 e7 18 xa7 g7! Black reaches a typical Spielmann attacking position—look at the white queen, and the white king stuck in the centre. Even Mr. Fritz agrees Black is better here, as White has no way to coordinate his position, despite his material advantage.

14...hxg4 15 xh8

15 f6+ e7 doesn't worry Black.

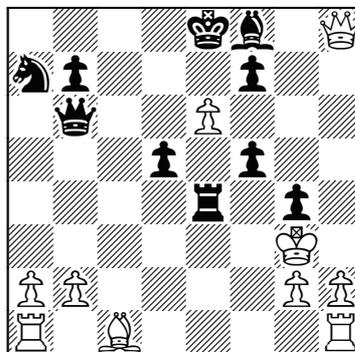
15...cxd5

White's best piece perishes, and his only "developed" piece now is his queen on h8.

16 f5

If 16 exd5 xd5!? 17 cxd5 a5+ 18 d2 xd5 and Black has good compensation for the material, as White's king is stuck in the centre.

16...gxf5 17 exd5 xc4 18 dxe6 e4+ 19 f2 b6+ 20 g3 d5!



The Art of Sacrifice maestro is in his element! Black's last move means his queen communicates with the king-

side, and the diagonal d6-g3 opens up for a deadly check.

21. ♖f4

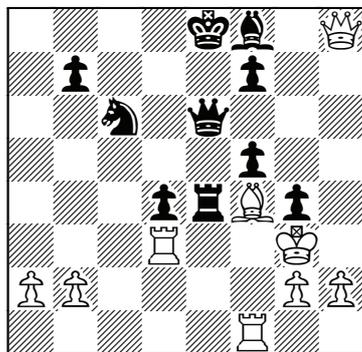
Fritz has rethought its brief flirtation with sacrificial shenanigans, and now claims that White is better, but the variation offered is far from convincing: 21 exf7+ ♕xf7 22 ♖h7+ ♖e8 23 ♖h5+ ♕d8 24 ♖g5+ ♖c8 25 ♖ac1+ ♖c6 26 ♖h8 ♖c7+ 27 ♖h4 and it looks to this human like Black still has a lot of play against White's plank-walking king after 27...♖d6.

In any case, in a practical game White's problems after 15...cxd5 are virtually insoluble.

21...♖xe6 22 ♖hf1 ♖c6 23 ♖ad1 d4 24 ♖d3?

24 h3 was necessary, when Black would play 24...♖e7 with a continuing attack.

But now you can test your tactics: Black to play and win!



24...♖xf4!!

Decisive! Either the white king is lured to a forking square, or the black queen penetrates with check.

25 ♕xf4

If 25 ♖xf4 ♖e1+ 26 ♖f2 ♖e5 27 ♖dd2 (or 27 ♖a3 f4+ 28 ♕xf4 ♖g6+ 29 ♕xg4 ♖xh8 30 ♖a8+ ♖e7 and White can't even get one of his two missing pieces back) 27...♖e3+ 28 ♕h4 ♖g6+ 29 ♕h5 d3! (the white queen can't go anywhere important, e.g. 30 ♖c3 ♖h6 mate!) 30 ♖h7 ♖f4+ 31 ♖xf4 ♖xf4 32 ♖xd3 ♖xh2+ 33 ♖h3 gxh3 and Black comes out at least a queen ahead.

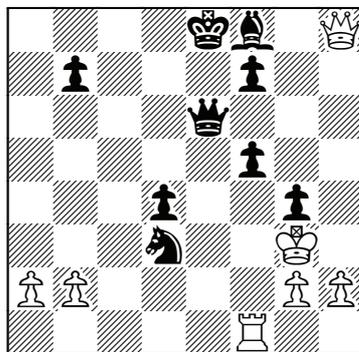
25...♖e5

The knight is immune, the threat is ...♖g6+, and the white rook is hanging! Too much, even for a future World Champion.

26 ♕g3

If White wants to test Black's immunity, first the queen falls and then the king: 26 ♖xe5 ♖h6+ 27 ♕g3 ♖xe5+ 28 ♕f2 ♖e3+ 29 ♖e2 f4 30 ♖b3 ♖e4 31 ♕d1 ♖b1+ 32 ♖e2 ♖c2+ 33 ♖e1 ♖d2 mate.

26...♖xd3 0-1



Black has a material advantage and a winning attack—even though the king's bishop never quite got fianchettoed! A truly fabulous attacking game by Spielmann.