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1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♖g7 The Modern Defence, the idea of which is to cede the centre momentarily to White, and then to exert strong counterplay from the flanks, and finally against the white centre. In practice it leads to very complex positions, with a board full of pieces and a lot of tension – an ideal variation for playing to win with Black, if you are prepared to play unclear positions!

3.♟c3 c6

[3...d6 It is also possible. The black scheme is very elastic, and can adopt different orders, and a multitude of plans.]

4.♞c4

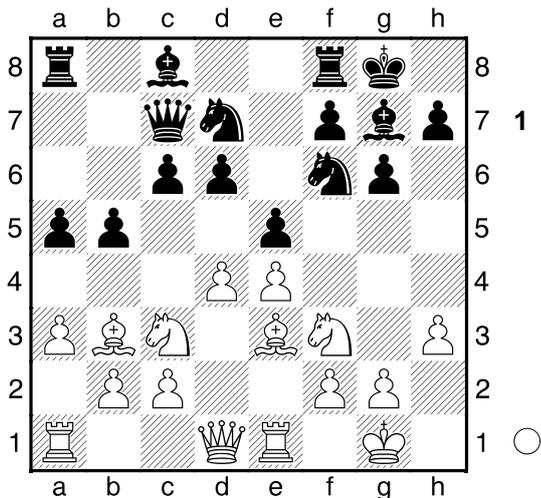
[The most usual continuation is 4.f4 d5 5.e5]

4...d6

[Also interesting 4...b5 5.♞b3 a5 6.a3 ♞a6]

5.♞f3!? A premature attempt. Shouldn't yield much.

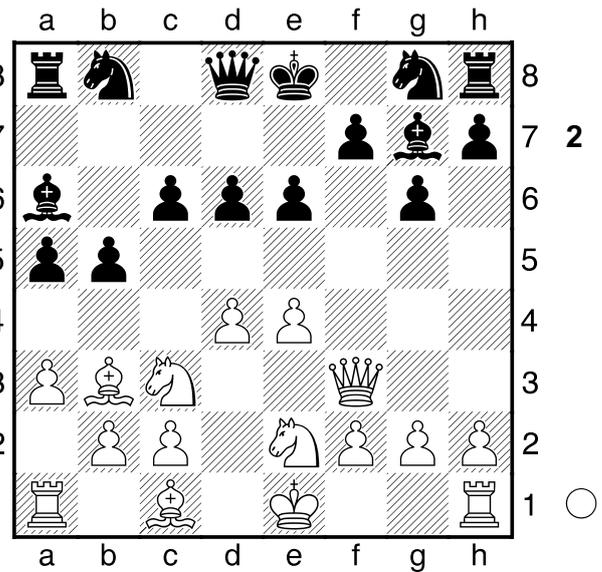
[5.♟f3 It would be more prudent, although Black can develop similarly to the game and achieve good play, for example: ♟f6 6.0-0 0-0 7.♞b3 ♞c7 8.h3 ♟bd7 9.♞e1 e5 10.♞e3 b5 11.a3 a5∞



Black is completing the development with a very good game, similar to the main game.]

5...e6 6.♟ge2 b5 7.♞b3 a5 8.a3 ♞a6

(Diagrama 2)



It is very hard to believe that with such a bishop on "b3" White can have an advantage. 9.0-0

[9.d5 and, after: cxd5 10.exd5 e5 11.♟e4 h6 12.0-0 ♟f6 13.♟2g3 ♟xe4 14.♟xe4 0-0 15.♞e2 f5∞]

9...♟d7 10.♞f4 ♞e7 11.♞ad1

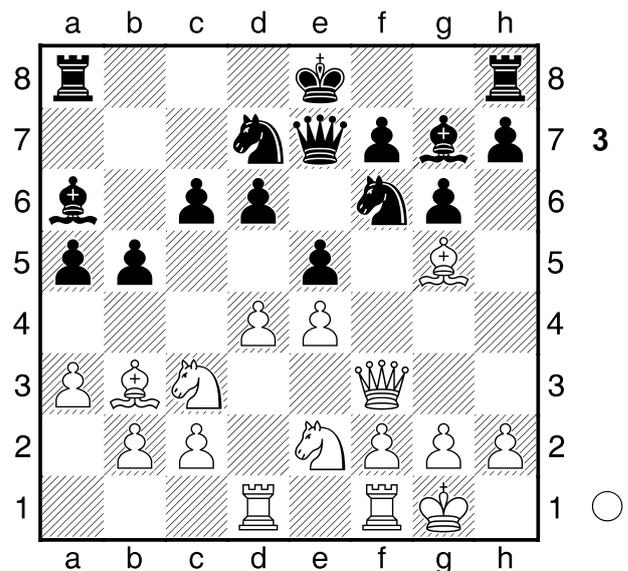
[Interesting it would have been 11.e5!? d5 12.♞e3 as it would have made it harder for Black to complete his piece development. a4 13.♞a2 b4! 14.axb4 ♞xb4 15.♞ab1 ♟e7∞]

11...e5 12.♞g5

[Si 12.dxe5 would be replicated with ♟xe5! with complex position.]

12...♟gf6

[Obviously, if 12...♞xg5 13.♞xf7+ with clear advantage.]

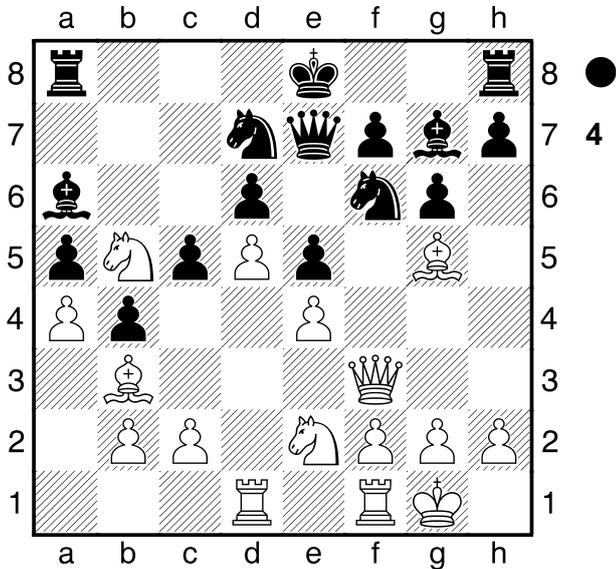


Black's scheme is excellent and very typical for modern defence! Black has initiative on the queenside, and is fighting against the white centre with his good Pa5. A full position of pieces and fighting! 13.d5?! A very uncertain plan, but I don't know what to

recommend to White.

[13.♖fe1 h6 14.♗h4 0-0 15.♜e3 b4! And Black has good game.]

13...c5 14.a4 b4 15.♘b5



♘b6! An ambitious plan, in keeping with Black's playing style.

[The simple 15...♗xb5 16.axb5 ♘b6 would be very good, but it is not certain that a clear advantage could be achieved, after 17.♜d3! with a slight superiority of Black, being able to answer, to a4 with 18.♗c4 The move of the game may be, objectively, even better, but, anyway, it is not as strong as it seems. Now White finds a few very good moves and the game becomes sharp and difficult.]

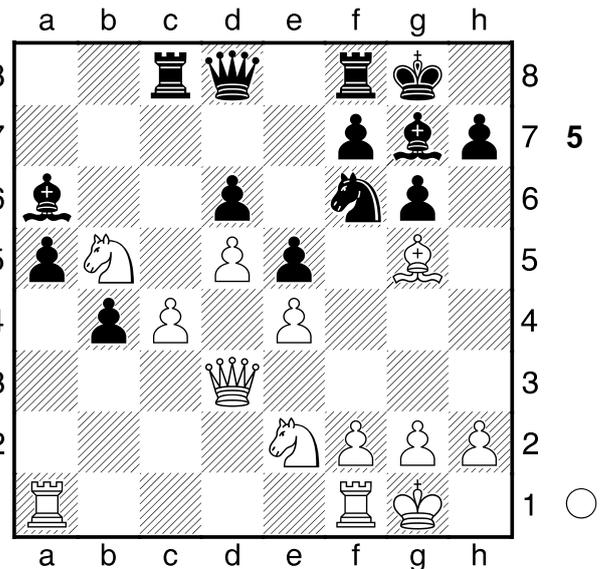
16.♜d3! c4! 17.♗xc4 ♘xa4 18.♖a1! It seems that Black was waiting for

[18.♖b1 ♘c5 19.♗xf6 ♗xf6 20.♜f3 0-0 21.♖a1 ♖fc8! 22.c3 ♗d8! as Black would have an advantage.]

18...♘xb2 19.♜b3 ♘xc4 20.♜xc4 ♖c8 21.♜d3 ♜d8 22.c4! 0-0!?

[22...bxc3 23.♘exc3 ♖xc3 (o 23...0-0 24.♖fb1 with close balance) 24.♜xc3 ♗xb5 25.♗xf6 ♗xf6 26.♖fb1 ♗d7 27.♖xa5 0-0 28.♖a7! and, although Black has a clear material advantage, his pieces do not look to be in an extremely comfortable position, while, at the same time, the activity of the white pieces would give this side a very good chance of a draw.]

(Diagrama 5)



Castling on move 22. In the Modern defence delaying castling, or even not castling at all, is often seen, as it is one of Black's weapons to make the position even more complex. **23.♖a2!** A surprise! Now Black sees an interesting Rook sacrifice, and after several minutes of hesitation decides to play it, because otherwise White would take the initiative. Modern defence is a fertile ground for creativity, because of the difficulty of its positions! **23...♖xc4!!** Variants as

[23...♗xb5 24.cxb5 ♖a8 25.♖fa1 would prove White's positional power, but now the black pawns will be really strong.]

24.♗xf6

[If 24.♜xc4 ♜b6 would lead to the same position of the game.]

24...♗xf6 25.♜xc4 ♜b6 26.♜c7 ♜xb5 27.♜xd6 ♗g7

[With 27...♗d8! Black's advantage would also have been retained. Textual play leads to positions in which a small detail, such as the white pawn being on "h2" and not "h3", can be sometimes a decisive factor.]

28.♖c1! The lack of adequate protection of White's first line would lead to White's defeat if he were to play

[28.♖fa1?! b3! Δ29.♖xa5? because of b2 30.♜xa6 b1♜+-+ winning.]

28...♗d8! 29.♜c6

[If 29.♜c5 b3 30.♖b2 a4 and the position seems clearly favourable to Black, since the Queen's exchange: 31.♜xb5 ♗xb5 32.♖a1 (o bien 32.♘c3 ♖c8! 33.♘e2 ♖xc1+ 34.♘c1 ♗c4! and 35...Bg5.) 32...♖c8 it is catastrophic for White]

29...b3! Not

[It would be bad 29...a4? because in the endgame that would follow after the 30.♖xa4 ♜xc6 31.dxc6 ♗xe2 32.c7 ♖c8 33.♖xb4 only white would have a chance of winning.]

30.♖b2

(Diagrama 6)

