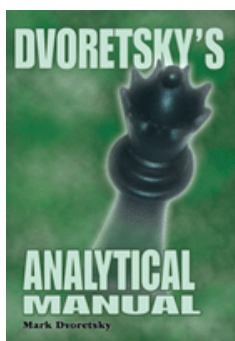




COLUMNISTS

*The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky



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Two Misfortunes

The Filipino grandmaster Eugenio Torre has long been faithful to his favorite opening setups, which he has worked out and carefully prepared. Even the occasional losses have not turned him away from his systems – he just repairs, and then goes on playing them. As a rule, Torre's variations represent slight deviations from the mainline paths of opening theory, and usually involve a fair amount of positional risk-taking. But only his strongest opponents have been able to expose the weaknesses of his opening strategy, as in the two games presented below. Both followed the same variation of the Slav Defense. White played energetically and accurately, and as a result, Black proved unable to resolve his opening problems.

Readers who wish to find the best continuations at key moments of both games are advised to note the question marks following some of the diagrams, indicating that the position may be used as an exercise.

*Yusupov – Torre*  
Leningrad, 1987

1 d2-d4 d7-d5 2 c2-c4 c7-c6 3 Ng1-f3 Ng8-f6 4 Nb1-c3 d5xc4 5 a2-a4 Bc8-f5 6 e2-e3 e7-e6 7 Bf1xc4 Bf8-b4 8 0-0 0-0 9 Nf3-h4

The aggressive choice; the more restrained 9 Qe2 is more common.

9...Bf5-g4

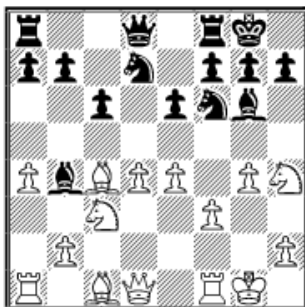
The bishop doesn't have to move here. Vassily Smyslov, and many other players after him, preferred 9...Nbd7.

10 f2-f3 Bg4-h5

In the variation 10...Nd5 11 fg Qxh4 12 Qf3 Nbd7 13 Bd2 a5 14 Rad1, White's pair of bishops secure him somewhat better chances.

11 g2-g4 Bh5-g6 12 e3-e4 Nb8-d7

12...Nxe4? doesn't work; after 13 Nxg6 Nxc3 14 bc Bxc3 15 Nxf8, White comes out a piece ahead, which will prove considerably stronger than the two or three pawns his opponent gets.



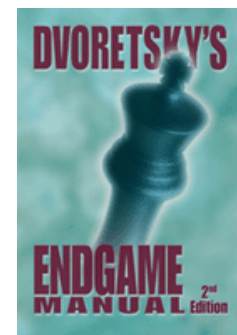
W

The knight has nothing to do on h4, and must either retreat to g2 or exchange itself off on g6.

On 13 Ng2, White must take c6-c5 into consideration. The game Portisch – Hort (Petropolis Interzonal, 1973) continued 13...c5 14 Na2! Ba5 15 dc Bc7 16 Be3, when Hort considers this position better

for White. The grandmaster recommended that Black prepare for this central break by 13...Qe7.

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White usually follows up the exchange g6 with the advance g4-g5, driving the hostile knight from the center. Now the question arises, which is the right order of moves?

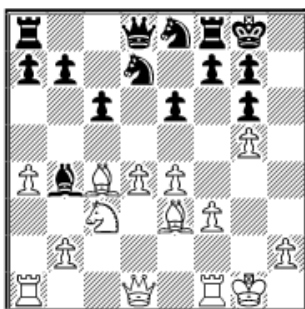
On 13 Nxg6 hg 14 g5, Black can play 14...Nh5, as in Knaak – Meduna, Trnava 1981. White did gain the upper hand there with the continuation 15 f4 c5 16 Na2 (16 f5!? ef 17 ef Nb6 18 Bb3! was worth considering) 16...Ba5 17 Be2! cd 18 Bxh5 gh 19 b4 Bc7 20 Qxh5.

### 13 g4-g5!? Nf6-e8

Here, 13...Nh5? 14 f4 is just bad for Black.

### 14 Nh4xg6 h7xg6 15 Bc1-e3

15 f4?! would be inaccurate, because of 15...Nd6 16 Bd3 c5.

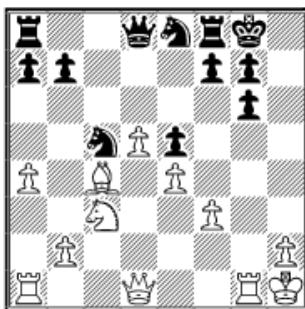


B

### 15...Ne8-c7

On 15...c5, White continues 16 d5, which practically forces the reply 16...e5, since 16...Nb6? 17 Ba2 doesn't work very well for Black – or, even stronger 17 de! Nxc4 (17...Qxd1 18 Raxd1 Nxc4 19 e7 Nxe3?! 20 Rd8!+-) 18 Qxd8 Rxd8 19 e7+-.

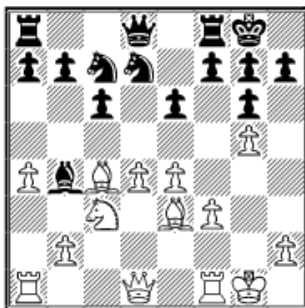
On the other hand, the assessment of this position is far from obvious. After all, Black's knight now has the excellent blocking square d6. The game Ftacnik – Hector, Debrecen 1989, took an instructive course: 17 Bb5 c4!? 18 Bxc4 Bc5 19 Bxc5 Qxg5+ 20 Kh1 Nxc5 21 Rg1 Qd8



W

22 d6!? Nxd6 23 Ba2 g5? 24 Qd5! Rc8 25 Rad1 Qf6 (25...Rc6 26 Qxe5 would also be hopeless) 26 Qxd6 Qxf3+ 27 Rg2 Nxe4 28 Nxe4 Qxe4 29 Qd5, and White won.

For 15...Nd6!?, see our other game (Polugaevsky – Torre).



W

### 16 Qd1-d2!?

At Biel 1988, Vladimir Tukmakov essayed the more natural 16 Qb3 against Torre. According to his notes, Black should have replied 16...c5 17 Rad1 cd 18 Qxb4 de, with unclear play. But in fact, 16...c5? is a pretty weak reply, considering 17 d5! Bxc3 (17...ed 18 Nxd5+/-) 18 de! Nxe6 19 bc, when White has an obvious advantage.

Torre preferred 16...Qe7 17 Kh1 (17 Rad1!?) 17...c5 18 d5 (White gets nothing from 18 Na2 cd 19 Bxd4 Bc5); and here, instead of his 18...Bxc3? 19 de!+/-, he should have continued 18...Nb6+/-.

After 16 Bb3, White would have had to consider a different central break: 16...e5!?.

Yusupov decided that concentrating his heavy pieces on the d-file would

offer him the best chances to oppose any active operations by his opponent in the center.

### 16...c6-c5

16...Qe7!? 17 Rad1+/-.

### 17 Ra1-d1 Qd8-e7?

An obvious, but unfortunate move, as Yusupov convincingly demonstrates. On the other hand, Black was already experiencing difficulties. On 17...Nb6 18 Bb3 cd, White intended to take on d4 with the bishop (the queen defends the g5-pawn from d2). The result of the variation 17...cd!? 18 Qxd4 Nb6 (18...Bc5?? 19 Qxc5+-) 19 Bb3 Qxd4 (19...Qe7? 20 Na2!+/-) 20 Bxd4+/- is an inferior endgame for Black.

### 18 d4-d5 e6xd5

Torre evidently expected White to continue 19 Nxd5?! Nxd5 20 Qxd5 Ne5 (here Black seizes the initiative), or 19 Bxd5 Nb6!? 20 Bxb7 Rab8 21 Bc6 Qe6, with enough activity to compensate for the sacrificed pawn. Yusupov's reply came as an unpleasant surprise.

### 19 e4xd5! Nc7-e8

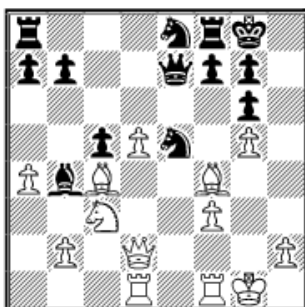
The queen is not a good blockader, as the variation 19...Qd6 20 Bf4 Ne5 21 Qe1! Rfe8 22 Qg3 Bxc3 23 bc Re7 24 Rfe1 Rae8 25 Re4 demonstrates: the pin on Black's knight decides the game. And if 19...Ne5, then 20 d6 Qe8 21 Ba2+/-.

### 20 Be3-f4

Of course not 20 d6? Nxd6.

### 20...Nd7-e5

20...Nd6 21 Rfe1 Nxc4 22 Rxe7 Nxd2 23 Rxd2 would have been hopeless.



W?

If the knight gets to the blockading square d6, Black's position solidifies; for example, 21 Qe2? Nd6! unclear, or 21 Rde1 Nxc4 22 Rxe7 Nxd2 23 Bxd2 Nd6+/-.

### 21 d5-d6!!

With this pawn sacrifice, Yusupov opens lines and achieves a great advantage. The threat of a pin on the e-file plays a major role. Note that this is the same technique Lubomir Ftacnik would employ two years later, in the game we examined in the note to Black's fifteenth move.

### 21...Ne8xd6

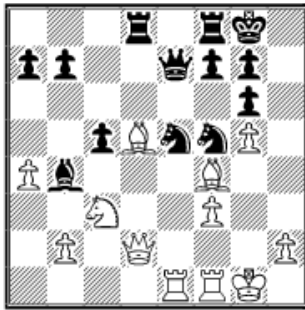
21...Qxd6? 22 Qc1 would lose at once.

### 22 Bc4-a2

White did have an alternative that might even have been a bit stronger: **22 Bd5!**, with the idea of continuing with Qe2 and Rfe1; for example, 22...Rfe8 23 Rfe1 Ndc4 24 Qe2 Nb6 25 Bxe5 (but not 25 Qxe5? Qf8 26 Qd6 Rxe1+ 27 Rxe1 Qxd6) 25...Qxg5+ 26 Kh1 Nxd5 27 Rxd5, and if 27...f6, then 28 Qc4!+/-.

22...c5-c4?!

Now the game ends at once. But even the more stubborn **22...Nf5 23 Rde1 Rad8** (hoping for 24 Qf2? Nd3-+) would not have gotten him out of trouble, as Yusupov had prepared the reply **24 Bd5!**



B?

The grandmaster indicates the line 24... Nc4 25 Bxc4 Rxd2 26 Rxe7 Rxb2 (26... Rd4 27 Re4+-) 27 Nd1! Rc2 28 Bb3+- (and there is also 28 Re4!? Nd4 29 Ne3 +-).

24...Nxf3+ 25 Bxf3 Rxd2 26 Rxe7 Rxb2 27 Nd1! would not be much better. Here, too, in my view, White's win is

only a question of time.

Black probably had to give up his queen by **24...Nc6!? 25 Rxe7 Ncxe7**. Now 26 Bxf7+ Kh7! 27 Qe2 Rxf7 would be inaccurate. A stronger line would be 26 Qd3!? Kh7! (26...Bxc3 27 Bxf7+ Kxf7 28 Qc4+ Nd5 29 bc+-) 27 Qb5 Bxc3 28 Bxb7 Bd4+ 29 Kh1+/-.

**23 Nc3-d5! Bb4-c5+ 24 Kg1-h1 Qe7-e6 25 Bf4xe5! 1-0**

Black resigned, in view of 25...Qxe5 26 Rfe1 Qf5 27 Ne7+.

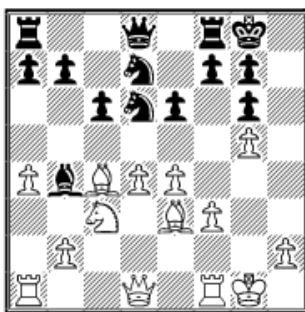
*Polugaevsky – Torre*

Biel 1989

**1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 dc 5 a4 Bf5 6 e3 e6 7 Bxc4 Bb4 8 0-0 0-0 9 Nh4 Bg4 10 f3 Bh5 11 g4 Bg6 12 e4 Nbd7 13 g5 Ne8 14 Nxg6 hg 15 Be3**

15...Ne8-d6!?

And here is Torre's prepared improvement. White now has to resolve a subtle positional task on the theme of "prophylaxis."



W?

White should choose his bishop's retreat square, taking into consideration Black's central counterstroke c6-c5. White's standard reaction to 16...c5 would be 17 Na2!. Thus, the bishop should not take up the square a2.

On 16 Bb3?! c5 17 Na2 Ba5 18 dc, Black has the tactical shot 18...Nxc5!,

securing him an excellent position (19 Bxc5 Qxg5+ and 20...Qxc5).

**16 Bc4-e2!+/=**

Now 16...c5? is bad, in view of 17 Na2! Ba5 (17...cd 18 Nxb4 de 19 Qxd6+-) 18 dc Nxc5 19 b4+-.

**16...Bb4-a5**

Dealing with the unpleasant threat of 17 Qb3, Black forgoes breaking in the enemy center, and accepts a somewhat inferior position. The same evaluation holds true for a different quiet move: 16...Qe7!+/=.



19...Bc7 20 f4+/-.

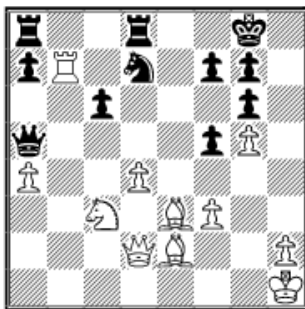
### 20 Rb1xb4 Nd6-f5 21 e4xf5 Qe7xb4 22 Qd1-d2! e6xf5

The reply to 22...gf is simply 23 Rb1, followed by 24 Rxb7+/- . In Polugaevsky's notes, there is the line 23 g6 fg 24 Bg5 (this move mistakenly receives an exclamation point – here, too, 24 Rb1 would be better) 24...Nf6 (24...Re8 25 Rb1) 25 Bxf6 gf 26 Qh6, and the grandmaster's opinion was that White has the advantage. But in fact, Black easily repels the attack: 26...Qf8! 27 Qxg6+ Qg7 28 Qh5 Qh7 29 Rg1+ Kh8 30 Qxh7+ Kxh7 31 Bc4 Rd6=+.

### 23 Rf1-b1 Qb4-a5

Not much changes after 23...Qa3!? 24 Rxb7+/- . But if Black had played 18...Rfe8, he could now have retreated the queen to e7 with tempo.

### 24 Rb1xb7



B?

### 24...Ra8-b8

It seems to me that 24...Nc5!? would have given Black greater practical chances. Polugaevsky intended 25 Re7, indirectly defending the a4-pawn (25...Nxa4?? 26 Qa2+-), but in response, Black could have played either 25...Qb4!?, or simply 25...Ne6!?, when the

rook may be in trouble on e7.

**25 Rb2** would be safer. On 25...Ne6 26 f4 is strong, since the line 26...Nxd4 27 Bxd4 c5 28 Nd5! Qxd2 29 Rxd2 cd (29...Rxd5? 30 Bf3+-) 30 Rxd4 gives White a significant advantage, while 26...Rd6 would be met by 27 Rb7 (intending 28 Bc4), when 27...Nc5 allows White to force – spectacularly! – a favorable endgame of two pieces vs. rook: 28 Rxf7!! Kx7 29 Ne4! Qxd2 30 Nxd6+ Ke7 (30...Ke6 31 Bc4+ Kd7 32 Bxd2 Nxa4 33 Nf7+-) 31 Bxd2 Ne6 (31...Nxa4 runs into the same reply) 32 Nc4 Nxd4 33 Bd3+/-.

Black needs to eliminate the a-pawn at once: **25...Nxa4 26 Nxa4 Qxa4**. After **27 Kg2**, the position unquestionably favors White, but it's not clear just how large his advantage would be.

The text move weakens Black's control of the central squares, which his opponent immediately exploits.

### 25 Rb7xb8 Rd8xb8 26 d4-d5! c6xd5 27 Be2-b5 Nd7-b6?

A passive continuation, allowing White to establish complete control of the entire board. 27...Nf8? was also unsatisfactory: 28 Nxd5 Qxd2 29 Bxd2 a6 30 Bf4!+-.

He should have tried 27...Ne5!, attacking the f3-pawn. Here 28 Nxd5 Qxd2 29 Bxd2 a6 unclear, would be useless, so Polugaevsky intended to play 28 Bf4!. But after 28...Nxf3!, he would have had a hard time finding the appropriate square for his queen.



W?

29 Qxd5?? would even lose: 29...Qxc3! 30 Bxb8 Qe1+ 31 Kg2 Qg1+ 32 Kxf3 Qh1+, and White loses the queen.



If 29 Qe3?!, then 29...Rxb5! 30 ab (30 Nxb5 Qxa4) 30...d4 31 Qxf3 dc 32 Qf1 Qb4, and this position is probably drawn.

Polugaevsky indicated 29 Qd3?!, having in mind the variations 29...Rc8 30 Nxd5! Qe1+ 31 Kg2 Nh4+ 32 Kh3+- and 29...Rxb5 30 ab Qa1+ 31 Nd1+/- . But the weird move 29...Ne1! would have sowed confusion in White's ranks. In all lines, Black obtains unpleasant counterplay:

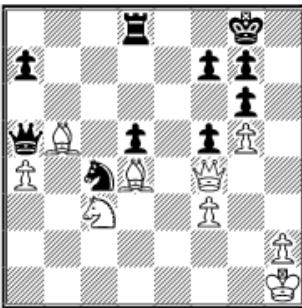
30 Qxd5 Rc8.

30 Qe3 Rd8 31 Qxe1 d4 32 Bd2 dc 33 Bxc3 Qb6.

30 Qg3 Rxb5! 31 ab Qa1 (31...d4) 32 Nxd5 Nd3+ 33 Qg1 Qa2.

The only correct queen move would have been **29 Qd1!**+/- . On 29...Rxb5, White now has 30 Nxb5; and if 29...Qxc3, then 30 Bxb8 a5 31 Bf4.

### 28 Be3-d4! Nb6-c4 29 Qd2-f4 Rb8-d8

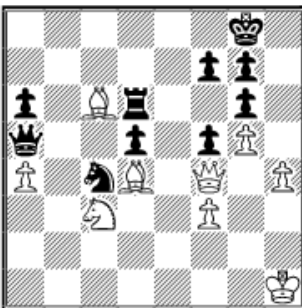


W?

The simple 30 Nxd5! Rxd5 31 Bxc4 would have ensured White an overwhelming advantage. Trying to squeeze the maximum possible out of the position, Polugaevsky rejected a favorable transformation of the position in favor of what looks like a useful preparatory move, which in fact he awarded an exclamation point.

### 30 h2-h4? Qa5-b4?

Black misses his chance. He had to play **30...a6! 31 Bc6** (31 Bxc4 dc 32 Kg2 Rd7 gives White nothing) **31...Rd6**. Unexpectedly for White, he now has problems with his light-squared bishop.

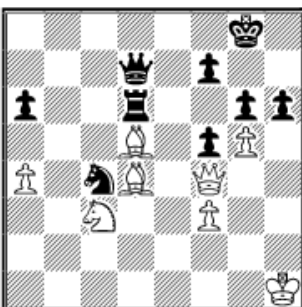


W

After **32 Bb7 Qd8!**, Black threatens 33...Qd7, and after 33 Bc5, Black would take over the initiative by 33...d4! 34 Ne2 Re6 35 Nxd4 (35 Qxd4 Qc7 36 Qxc4 Qxb7) 35...Re5! 36 Bb4 Qc7.

So White would have to throw himself into a desperate attack by **33 h5! Qd7! 34 h6!?** Now, 34...Qxb7? loses to 35 hg

f6 36 gf Kf7 37 Qh6 Qb8 39 Ne2! and 39 Nf4 (Polugaevsky). So he would have to play **34...gh 35 Bxd5!**



B?

Now the rapid advance of the h-pawn becomes understandable: Black cannot reply 35...Rxd5? 36 Nxd5 Qxd5 37 Qb8 +; nor does 35...hg? 36 Qh2+- work. On 35...h5, Polugaevsky gives 36 Bf6! Nb6 37 Qe5, but after 36...Nxd5 37 Nxd5, both 37...Re6 and 37...Qe6 38 Qb2 Rd8! 39 Bxd8 Qxd5 lead to unclear positions. On the other hand, 37 Bb3!?

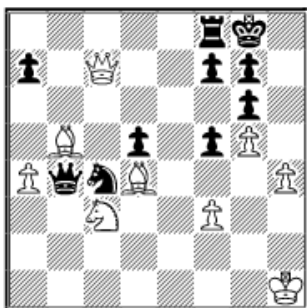
(instead of 37 Qe5) also leaves Black with counterplay, beginning with 37...Rxf6! 38 gf Qd3.

Black also has a safer defense at his disposal: **35...Kh7! 36 Bf6 Rxd5 37**

**Qxc4** (37 Qb8? Rd1+ 38 Nxd1 Qxd1+ 39 Kh2 Qd6+) **37...Rd2!**, and now it is White who has to hunt for the saving line.

Since the results of this variation could hardly have been satisfactory to White, I sought, in the position from the next-to-last diagram, a way to stir up the attack with the bishop on c6: **32 h5!?** (instead of 32 Bb7) 32... Rxc6? is bad: 33 Qb8+ Kh7 34 Qf8; on 32...gh?, 33 Bb7 is strengthened by the new threat of 34 Qxf5. But the same reply saves Black: **32...Qd8!** **33 h6** (33 Bb7 leads to positions we examined earlier) **33...gh!** (and we know the 33...Rxc6? 34 hg f6 35 gf Kf7 36 Qh6 Rd6 37 Ne2! already, as well) **34 Bxd5 Qxg5 35 Qxg5 hg**, and the endgame is not better for White.

**31 Qf4-c7! Rd8-f8**



W?

**32 Bb5xc4**

Perhaps 32 Nxd5! Qe1+ 33 Kg2 Qd2+ 34 Bf2+/-, or even 32 Qc5!+- would have been simpler.

**32...d5xc4**

32...Qxc4!/? offered greater practical drawing chances: 33 Qxc4 (33 Qe5? f6 34 gf gf 35 Qxd5+ Qxd5 36 Nxd5 Rd8 37 Nxf6+ Kf7+/- was a bit less convincing) 33...dc 34 Bxa7 Rd8 35 Bc5! Rd3 36 Bb4 Rxf3 37 Kg2 and 38 a5. Still, the ending reached is joyless for Black. The passed a-pawn is too strong.

**33 Qc7-e5 f7-f6 34 Qe5-e6+ Kg8-h7 35 g5xf6 Qb4-b7**

If 35...gf, then either 36 Nd5 or 36 Bxf6 Qb7 37 Nd5 Qf7 38 Qd6, followed by Bc3.

**36 Nc3-d5 g7xf6**

If 36...Qf7, White has the elegant solution 37 fg! Qxe6 38 gfN+.

**37 Kh1-g2 Kh7-h6 38 Nd5xf6 Rf8-d8 39 Nf6-g8+ Kh6-h5 1-0**

Black resigned, without waiting for the obvious reply 40 Qf6.