

Game 102
A. Karpov-A. Beliavsky
 Biel 1992, 5th round
Ruy Lopez C95

1 e4

In the 1990s Karpov would mainly 'serve from the right' only against a specific opponent. Thus in the given instance he probably took into account Beliavsky's predilection for the Breyer Variation, which at one time he himself used to happily play for both sides.

1...e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♗e1 b5 7 ♙b3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♘b8 10 d4 (10 d3 – *Game No.51*) 10...♘bd7 11 ♘bd2 ♙b7 12 ♙c2 ♗e8 13 a4

This move, which first occurred back in 1964 in a game between two Moscow masters, became internationally known only nine years later. But its popularity began to grow starting in 1988, although the main line remained 13 ♘f1 (13 b4 – *Game No.70*) 13...♙f8 14 ♘g3 (*Volume 4, Game No.107*).

13...♙f8

The game Keres-Reshevsky (Petropolis Interzonal 1973) went 13...c5 14 ♘f1 (14 d5! is stronger) 14...♙f8 (14...d5!?) 15 ♘g3 g6 16 b3 ♙g7 17 dxe5 with a quick draw, but after 17 d5! the traditional 'Spanish torture' would have awaited Black.

14 ♙d3

Hoping to restrict the opponent's actions by pressure on the b5-pawn.

14...c6

The position of the bishop at d3 gives Black the opportunity for a freeing advance in the centre: 14...b4 15 a5 d5! 16 exd5 exd4 17 ♗xe8 ♗xc6 18 c4 ♘c5 (Khalifman-Beliavsky, Leningrad 1990). The recent game Haznedaroglu-Short (Izmir 2004) confirmed that this is perfectly acceptable for Black: 19 ♘b3 ♘xd3 20 ♗xd3 c6 21 dxc6 ♗xc6 22 ♘bxd4 ♗c7 with sufficient counterplay for the pawn.

Another version of the pawn sacrifice –

14...exd4 15 cxd4 c5 (Spassky-Karpov, Tilburg 1983) – did not become established in tournament play.

15 b3

After the standard 15 ♘f1 Beliavsky twice successfully solved his opening problems by 15...d5 16 ♙g5 dxe4 17 ♗xe4 ♙e7 – against Balashov (56th USSR Championship, Odessa 1989) and Anand (Linares 1992).

15...g6

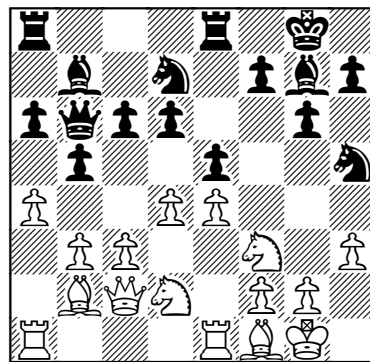
Here 15...d5?! leads to the loss of a pawn after 16 exd5, for example: 16...♘xd5 17 dxe5 ♘c5 (17...♘xc3? 18 ♗c2) 18 ♗c2 ♘xd3 19 ♗xd3 b4 (19...♘f4 20 ♗f5) 20 c4 ♘c3 21 ♗c2! c5 22 ♙b2 etc.

16 ♗c2 ♙g7

16...♗c8!? is interesting: 17 ♙b2 ♘h5 (it is too early for 17...exd4?! 18 cxd4 d5 19 e5 ♘h5 on account of 20 e6! ♗xe6 21 ♗xe6 fxe6 22 ♙xg6 hxg6 23 ♗xg6+ ♘g7 24 ♘g5 ♘f6 25 ♗f7+ and ♗xb7) 18 ♙f1 exd4! 19 cxd4 (19 ♘xd4 ♙g7 20 ♘4f3 is equal) 19...d5, and after 20 e5 b4! Black even seizes the initiative (Bezgodov-Balashov, Perm 1997).

17 ♙b2 ♘h5 18 ♙f1 ♗b6

Up till now both sides have been manoeuvring in accordance with time-tested prescriptions.

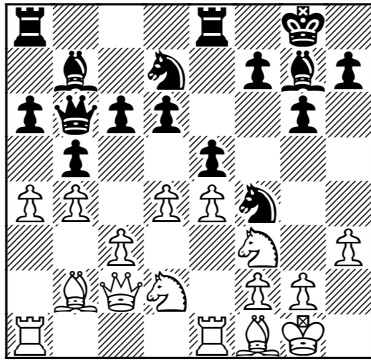


19 b4!

Apparently, Karpov had this novelty in mind when he played 1 e4. White seizes space on the queenside, prepares c3-c4, and above all restricts Black's activity. This is typical of

Karpov, who in almost every game was able to find an arrangement of his pieces which would enable him to restrict the opponent's possibilities and at the same time unhurriedly strengthen his own position.

19...♖f4



20 dxe5

It was possible to maintain the tension – 20 ♖b3 ♜ac8 21 ♜ad1 ♖e6 22 ♖a5 ♙a8 23 ♜b3 ♜cd8 24 ♜a2 (A.Sokolov-Notkin, Elista 1994), but Karpov prefers to clarify the situation. The point of this is revealed slightly later.

20...♗xe5

If 20...dxe5 21 c4 (Karpov) 21...bxa4, then 22 c5 ♜xb4 23 ♙a3 ♜a5 24 ♖c4 ♜c7 25 ♖d6 is good for White, or else 22 ♜xa4, and it is hard for Black to prevent a subsequent bind: 22...a5? will not do on account of 23 bxa5! ♜xb2 24 ♜eb1 ♜c3 25 ♜c1!

21 ♗xe5 dxe5

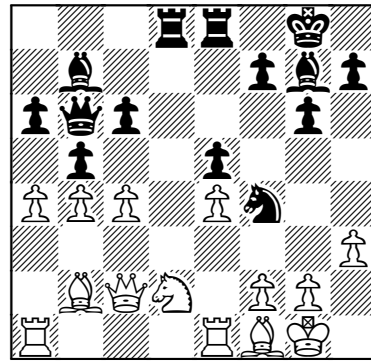
Black is forced to shut in his bishop, since he fails to equalise after 21...♗xe5 22 ♖f3 (22 c4!?) 22...♙g7 23 ♜d2 (Karpov).

22 c4

In contrast to its opposite number, the bishop at b2 becomes active, and Black is faced with some difficult strategic problems.

22...♜ad8

Activating the bishop at b7 by 22...c5 is unfavourable in view of 23 cxb5! cxb4 24 a5 ♜f6 25 b6. Beliavsky is concerned about the uncertain state of his queenside pawns, and he provokes c4-c5, stabilising the pawn structure.



23 axb5!

After 23 c5 ♜c7 24 ♖b3 ♙c8 things would have been easier for Black than in the game. Karpov tries to achieve more, by exploiting the weakness of the b5-pawn.

23...axb5?!

Hoping to find work for the bishop on the c8-h3 diagonal, but this hope is not destined to be realised. 23...cxb5! was bolder, opening up the b7-bishop and enlivening the play. In this case playing against the weakness of the b5-pawn after 24 cxb5 axb5 promises White little. Karpov recommended 24 g3 ♖e6 25 c5 or immediately 24 c5! ♜f6 25 ♜e3 – in my opinion, 25 ♜a3 is more accurate, while if 24...♜e6, then 25 ♖f3!, inhibiting ...f7-f5 (25...f5? 26 ♖g5 ♜e7 27 ♜b3+ ♖e6 28 c6) and maintaining the initiative after 25...h6 26 ♜a3.

24 ♜a5! (now Black has no time to think about the future of his bishop at b7) 24...♙f8

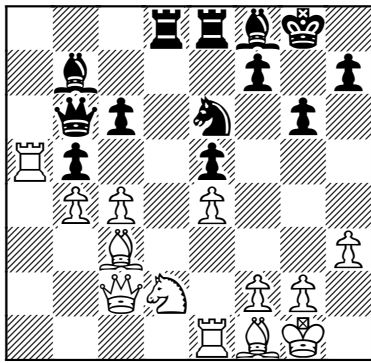
After 24...bxc4 25 ♖xc4 ♜c7 (25...♜xb4?! 26 ♜b1!) Karpov suggested 26 g3 with a '±' sign, apparently reckoning that 26...♖e6 simply loses a pawn: 27 ♙xe5 ♙xe5 28 ♜xe5. However, after 28...c5 29 bxc5 ♖d4 (29...f6 is sharper: 30 ♜xe6! ♜xe6 31 ♜b3, when 31...♙d5? 32 ♜e3 ♜b8 33 ♜a2 ♜a8 34 exd5! ♜xa2 35 dxe6 ♜e7 36 c6! is bad for Black, but after 31...♙g7! 32 ♖d6 by a counter-sacrifice of the exchange he can obtain the same end-game with four pawns against three on one wing) 30 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 31 ♜d3 ♜xc5 32 ♖d2

♖d8 33 ♖e3 ♗e6 it is not easy for White to convert his extra pawn.

Therefore 26 ♖b3!, continuing to build up the initiative, is preferable, for example: 26...♗c8 27 ♖ea1 ♗e6 28 ♖e3 f6 29 ♖a7 ♖b8 30 ♗a5!? (30 ♗xe5!? is also interesting: 30...fxe5 31 ♖xg7+ ♗xg7 32 ♖xf4 ♗f7 33 ♖a5, or 30...♗xh3+ 31 gxh3 fxe5 32 ♖c5) 30...♖xb4 31 ♗c3 ♖f8 32 ♗xc6 ♖d7 33 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 34 ♗b4 ♖f7 35 ♖a7.

25 ♗c3! (but not 25 c5? ♗xc5) **25...♗e6!**

Black was pinning his hopes on this move. Capturing on c4 would have led to the loss of the e5-pawn without any compensation.



26 ♗f3!

If 26 cxb5, then 26...♗d4!, initiating active play in the centre at the cost of a pawn. It is true that after 27 ♗xd4 both 27...♖xd4 28 ♗f3! ♖xb4 29 ♖a7 (29...♖e7 30 ♖b1! ♖d6 31 b6) and 27...♖xd4 28 ♗c4 ♖d8 (28...♖c7 29 b6 ♖b8 30 ♖c3) 29 bxc6 ♗xb4 30 cxb7 (Karpov) are insufficient for Black. But 27...exd4! 28 ♗c4 d3! 29 ♖xd3! would lead by force to one of the two following endings, where Black retains real chances of saving the game:

1) 29...♖xd3 30 ♗xb6 ♗xb4 31 ♖a7! (Karpov) 31...♖a3 32 ♖xa3 ♗xa3 33 ♗c4 ♗c5 34 ♖c1 cxb5 35 ♗a5 ♖c8 36 ♗xb7 ♗xf2+ 37 ♗xf2 ♖xc1 38 ♗xb5;

2) 29...♖xa5 30 bxa5 ♖xd3 31 ♗xd3 cxb5 32 ♗b6 ♗b4 33 ♖a1 ♗c3 34 ♖a2 ♖e6 35 ♗d5 ♗xd5 36 exd5 ♖a6 37 d6! ♖xd6 38 ♗xb5 ♖d1+ 39 ♗h2 ♖a1 40 ♖xa1 ♗xa1 41

a6 ♗d4 etc.

Karpov found a more interesting possibility, involving the strategic plan of shutting in the bishop at b7 and exploiting his spatial advantage. At the same time Black even acquires a passed pawn in the centre, supported by the rook at d8, and the rook at e8 comes into play. But Karpov calculated that the activity of the black pieces would be temporary, whereas White's activity, in view of the threat of advancing the e-pawn and opening up the position of the black king, would be far more long-term and dangerous.

26...♗d4 27 ♗xd4 exd4 28 c5 ♖c7

For complete happiness Black only needs to make one more move – ...♗c8, and it is hard to imagine that he will not in fact manage to make it.

29 ♖a7! ♖b8

To inhibit the advance of the white e-pawn, Beliavsky tries to activate his d-pawn. In fact 29...♗g7 30 e5 (Karpov) would have been quite acceptable for Black: 30...♖b8 31 ♖a2 ♖d5 (31...d3? 32 e6), and the invasion 32 ♖a5 ♖e7 33 ♖b6 is not fatal for him – 33...d3 34 ♖d1 d2 35 g3 (it is no better to play 35 ♖xd2 ♖xd2 36 ♗xd2 ♗xe5, and if 37 ♗e4?, then 37...♗h2+ 38 ♗h1 ♖xe4 39 ♖xb7 ♖f4) 35...♖c7 36 ♖xd2 ♖xd2 37 ♗xd2 ♗xe5 38 ♗b3 (or 38 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 39 ♗b3 ♗c3 40 ♗a5 ♗xb4 41 ♗xb7 ♗g7 42 ♖a6 with equality) 38...♖d7! 39 ♗a5 ♗xg3! 40 ♗xb7 ♗xf2+ with perpetual check.

However, White would not have been obliged to force events, and 30 ♗d3! ♖a8 31 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 32 ♖a1 would leave him with an obvious positional advantage.

30 ♖a2 d3

Consistent, although a more restrained course of action was still possible: 30...♗g7 31 ♗d3 ♖d7 32 ♖a5 ♗f6 33 g3 ♗d8 34 ♖a2 with advantage to White.

31 ♖a3! (31 e5?! was weaker: 31...d2 32 ♖d1 ♗h6! Karpov) **31...d2**

With this and his next move Beliavsky maintains material equality, but this leads to a

