THE NEW WINAWER REPORT

Editor: Seán Coffey

Winawer Praxis

*T*he New Winawer Report's scope includes the practice of the French Winawer, in addition to the theory and history. There is much to discuss: indeed the opening has never been more popular.

This issue considers two games from the past few months that feature lines considered in earlier issues. The first is of theoretical importance as it breaks new ground in a sacrificial line that has emerged only in the last few years, while the second features a plan for White that, though successful, can hardly be recommended. Both are dramatic and complex struggles—and so are thoroughly representative of the Winawer in practice.

❋   ❋   ❋

Rimkus-Rekhtman
WS/M/428 ICCF corr 2013

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 ♗xc3+ 6 bxc3 ♘e7 7 ♕g4 cxd4 8 ♕xg7 ♖g8 9 ♕xh7 ♕c7 10 ♘e2 ♘bc6 11 f4 dxc3 12 ♘g3 ♗d7 13 ♕d3 d4 14 ♘e4 0-0-0 15 ♘d6+ ♔b8**(1)**
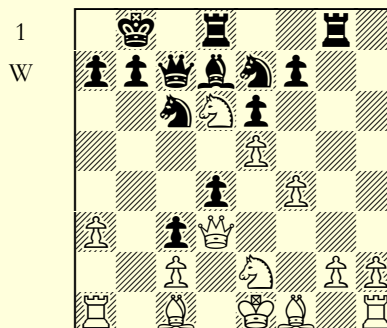
The variation considered briefly at the end of issue 3: almost entirely ignored by theory until Goh's analysis *ChessPublishing.com, February 2009*.

16 ♖b1

Clearly better than 16 ♘xf7?! ♖df8 17 ♘d6 ♘f5 18 ♘xf5 ♖xf5 19 ♖b1, when instead of transposing, Black has 19 … ♗e8!∓, with … ♗g6 to follow, as in **Štika-Schyndel, S-Open/5-pr59 ICCF corr 2012** (0-1, 50).

16 …   b6

1
W

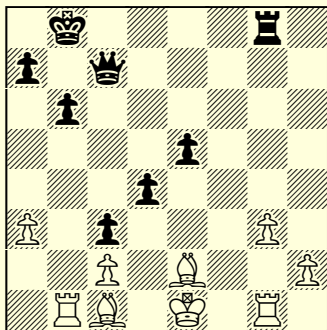| **17** | **♘xf7** | **♖df8** |
18	**♘d6**	**♘f5**
19	**♘xf5**	**♖xf5**
20	**g3?!**	

The ensuing complications lead to difficulties for White. The next few moves follow Goh's analysis.

20	...	♘xe5!
21	fxe5	♗c6!
22	♖g1	♗e4!
23	♕xe4	♖xe5
24	♕e2!	

'With an interesting material imbalance,' Goh, who stops here.

| 24 | ... | ♖xe2+ |
| 25 | ♗xe2 | e5 **(2)** |

2
W

'=,' 'with chances for both sides,' Watson *PtF-4 p. 245.* Cf. also Watson's earlier analysis *ChessPublishing.com, January 2011* of **A. Kovačević-Bukal Jr., 17th Zadar Open A 2010,** which showed that White's 26 ♖g2? could have been refuted by 26 ... ♖f8!∓∓, and gave instead 26 ♗d3 or 26 ♖b5!?, with no further analysis.

26 ♖b5!

26 ♗d3? is bad: 26 ... ♖f8 (threat ... e4) 27 ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 28 ♔xf1 ♕f7+ 29 ♔g2 (*29 ♔g1 ♕a2∓∓; 29 ♔e1 ♕f3∓∓; 29 ♔e2 ♕d5 30 ♔f2* transposes) 29 ... ♕d5+ 30 ♔f2 ♔b7! 31 h4 e4∓∓ or 31 ♖b5 ♕h1∓∓.

| **26** | ... | **♖e8** |
| **27** | **♖f1!?** | |

Instead 27 h4 nips in the bud the problems that will emerge later. After 27 ... ♕c6 28 ♖f1 ♕e4 29 ♔d1 d3 Black's initiative appears to peter out, e.g. 30 ♗xd3 ♕g4+ 31 ♗e2 ♖d8+ 32 ♔e1 ♕xg3+ 33 ♖f2 ♖d2!? 34 ♗xd2 exd2+ 35 ♔f1=. But the text should also be fine.

27	...	♕h7
28	♔d1	♕xh2
29	♖d5	♕g2

Keeping the rook out of d7 leads to no advantage after 29 ... ♔c8 30 ♗a6+ ♔b8 31 ♖d7 or 29 ... ♔c7 30 ♖f7+ ♔c6 (*30 ... ♖e7!? 31 ♖xe7+ ♔c6 32 ♗f3 ♕f2=*) 31 ♖dd7.

| 30 | ♖d7 | ♖h8 |
| 31 | g4? | |

An initial choice of engines, this condemns White to a passive and probably doomed defence. With 31 ♗h6! followed by ♖ff7 White prevents the black rook from reaching h1, and neither side can avoid a quick draw.

31	...	**♖h1**
32	**♖df7**	**b5**
33	**g5**	

Instead 33 ♖xh1 ♕xh1+ 34 ♖f1 ♕g2 is similar to the game.
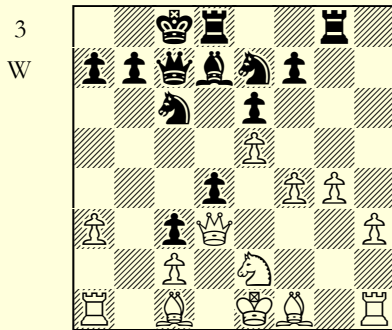
| **33** | ... | **a6** |
| **34** | **♖f8+** | **♔c7** |

White now faces a gruelling defensive task: advancing the g-pawn requires cumbersome preparations, and in the meantime Black is able to advance in the centre and on the Q-side. Certainly engines prefer Black more and more with increasing evaluation time: ∓ at least, and probably there is no defence even with best play. In the game White was unable to find a solution (0-1, 53).

Objectively **(2)** appears indeed to be equal, but there is more pressure on White to play accurately.

Diepeveen-Meessen
Interclubs Nationaux (Belgian Team Ch) '12-'13, Eupen 2013

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 ♗xc3+ 6 bxc3 ♕c7 7 ♕g4 ♘e7 8 ♕xg7 ♖g8 9 ♕xh7 cxd4 10 ♘e2 ♘bc6 11 f4 dxc3 12 ♕d3 d4 13 h3 ♗d7 14 g4 0-0-0 **(3)**

3
W

Byrne's idea: see issue 6.
15 ♗g2

Byrne thought 15 ♖b1 'necessary,' to prevent 15 … ♕b6 'when White's entire queenside is tied up' *Chess Life 23/8, August 1968, pp. 291-3*. Uhlmann's 15 … ♘xe5 was thought a strong response (wrongly, as it turns out), prompting other suggestions, e.g. '15 ♘g3 or 15 ♗g2 was preferable', Zeuthen & Jarlnæs *FPP p. 66*.

On 15 ♘g3? Moles *MLW p. 34* suggests 15 … ♘g6, with … ♘gxe5 to follow. But this version of the sacrifice is also unsound, since after 16 ♗e2/g2 ♘gxe5 17 fxe5 ♘xe5 White has the straightforward 18 ♕xd4±.

Moskalenko *tWW p. 222* finds a much better idea: 15 … ♘xe5 '!' 16 fxe5 ♕xe5+! 17 ♗e2 f5! 'with initiative,' indeed a very strong one, ∓ at least. White may be forced into 17 ♘e2,

though it's difficult and unpleasant after 17 … ♗b5 18 ♕f3 ♗c6 19 ♕g3 ♕e4 (*20 … ♕xg3? 21 ♘xg3 ♗xh1 22 ♘xh1 is about =*) 20 ♖h2 ♕xc2 21 ♘xd4 (∓ if defended accurately?). Also fine are 15 … ♕b6∓ or 15 … ♔b8∓.

All untested: the only known example **Fernandez-Sánchez Almeyra, Alicante Open-2 1989** went 15 … ♘a5?! 16 ♘e4?! (*16 ♕xd4 ♗c6 17 ♕xc3 ♗xh1 18 ♕xc7+ ♔xc7 19 ♘xh1=*) 16 … ♗c6 17 ♖h2 (*17 ♘d6+∓*) 17 … ♗xe4 18 ♕xe4 ♘c4 19 ♕d3? (*19 ♖b1∓*) 19 … ♘b2∓ and 0-1, 27.

15 …   ♕b6
Uhlmann's suggestion *Schach 22/6, June 1968, p. 175*. Others, e.g. 15 … ♗e8 or 15 … ♔b8, usually transpose into 15 ♖b1 lines, for which see Watson's survey *ChessPublishing.com, February 2010*.

16 ♗e4?!
New, but no improvement. By covering c2, this prepares a4, planning to meet … ♘b4 with ♕f3. Here White isn't ready for a4, so a move of more general use should be preferred.

Best play seems to lead to equality: 16 0-0 ♗e8 (Watson's suggestion *PtF-1 p. 163* of *16 … ♘xe5 17 fxe5 ♗b5 18 ♕f3 ♗xe2 19 ♕xe2 d3+ 20 ♕f2 d2* gives White a better ending after *21 ♕xb6 axb6 22 ♗xd2 cxd2 23 ♖ad1±*) 17 ♘g3 ♔b8 18 ♘e4, about = since it is hard for either side to make progress. Instead **Jensen-Jorgensen, Danish Team Ch '06-'07 2007** went 17 ♔h2 ♖h8 18 ♗e4?! ♔b8 19 a4? ♘b4 20 a5 ♕c7 20 ♕f3 ♗c6∓ (though 1-0, 53).

16 …   ♗e8
17 g5?
A strange decision. Was White planning to roll the h-pawn? This is (or should be) too slow. Better 17 ♔f2∓

when White is still not too badly placed.

17	**…**	**♘a5**
18	**a4**	**♗c6**
19	**♘g3?**	

This should be a losing error. Better and more consistent 19 h4∓.

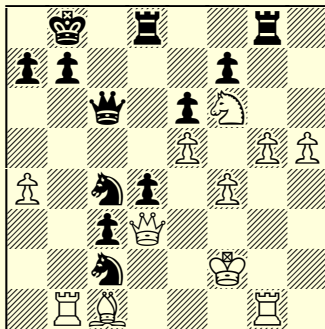|		
19	**…**	**♗xe4?!**

19 … ♘d5!, which could previously have been met by ♕xd4, allows the knight to transfer to b4 with … d3 to follow, ∓/∓∓.

20	**♘xe4**	**♕c6**

With a clear advantage to Black. The continuation was **21 ♔f2 ♘f5 22 h4 ♘c4 23 ♖b1 ♔b8?** (too slow; *23 … ♘fe3 24 ♖b4 ♖h8∓ 25 h5? ♘d2∓∓*) **24 h5 ♘fe3 25 ♖g1?** (*25 ♖b4!,* neatly preventing Black's next, about =) **25 … ♘xc2!∓∓ 26 ♘f6(4).**

4
B

26	**…**	**♕xa4?**

A pity. Instead 26 … ♖h8! wins, as then 27 g6 would allow a fatal opening of the h-file, while the knight is still immune: 27 ♕xc2 d3 28 ♕xc3 ♕c5+∓∓.

27	**♘xg8**	**♖xg8?**

The win is gone and only the *zwischenzug* 27 … ♕a2! holds the balance: 28 ♔g3 ♖xg8 29 ♕h7 ♖c8 30 g6 ♘e3 (or *30 … ♕xb1*) with tremendous complications but apparently equal.

28	**g6**	

More accurate 28 ♕h7±±, e.g. 28 … ♖c8 29 g6 ♕a2 30 gxf7.

28	**…**	**fxg6**
29	**♖xg6**	**♖c8**
30	**♖g7**	**♘b6**
31	**h6**	**♕a2**
32	**♕e4!**	

The only move to win: except for 32 ♕f3, all others lose.

32	**…**	**♖c7**
33	**♖xc7?**	

Greatly complicating White's task, if it doesn't throw away the win entirely. After 33 h7 it's all over.

33	**…**	**♔xc7**
34	**h7**	**♕xb1**
35	**h8=♕**	**♕xc1**

After **36 ♕hh7+ ♘d7 37 ♕xc2 ♕xf4+ 38 ♔e2 ♕e3+ 39 ♔f1** Black made the final error with **39 … b5? 40 ♕he4±±** and White won easily (1-0, 48).

The natural 39 … ♕f3+ leaves the result in doubt, e.g. 40 ♕f2 ♕d1+ 41 ♔g2 ♕g4+ 42 ♔h1 ♕d1+ 43 ♔h2 ♕g4 44 ♕g2 ♕f4+ 45 ♔g3 ♕d2+ 46 ♔h3 ♕d1 47 ♕gd3 ♕h1+ 48 ♔g3 ♕e1+ 49 ♔f3 ♕xe5, with two lone queens versus queen, knight and five pawns: a draw with best play? Or similarly 39 … ♕xe5, e.g. 40 ♕he4 ♔d6 41 ♕cd3 ♕xe4 42 ♕xe4 e5∞.

An eventful game: White's plan of 17 g5? and a h-pawn march won the day after all. ▶

MLW   MOLES, John L., *The French Defence Main Line Winawer* (Batsford 1975)—*see issue 3.*
tWW   MOSKALENKO, Viktor, *The Wonderful Winawer* (New in Chess 2010)—*see issue 3.*
PtF-4   WATSON, John L., *Play the French* (4th edition) (Everyman 2012)—*see issue 1.*