White's situation – on the contrary, it should help Black. \textit{15.\textbf{\textit{\&}}xa6 16.\textbf{\textit{\&}}xa6 e5} Black starts a standard pawn attack on White's centre. Here however, given the fact that the light-squared bishops have been exchanged, Black can also play on the light squares with 16...\textbf{\textit{\&}}e4 17.\textbf{\textit{\&}}d3 f5 with a good game; or he can consider 16...\textbf{\textit{\&}}a5. \textit{17.h3}  

B1) 17...\textbf{\textit{\&}}e4?! is strategically wrong – White now gets a favourable position. \textit{18.\textbf{\textit{\&}}d2} White now has a favourable pawn structure – please analyse the main lines with 9...dxc4 and compare, Timman-Bosch, Netherlands 1996; \textit{B2) Black could have played 17...exd4 18.cxd4 cxd4 19.\textbf{\textit{\&}}xd4 (after 19.exd4 \textbf{\textit{\&}}d5 Black has a good blockade) 19...\textbf{\textit{\&}}d4 20.\textbf{\textit{\&}}xd4 \textbf{\textit{\&}}c3 21.\textbf{\textit{\&}}f1 \textbf{\textit{\&}}ac8 22.\textbf{\textit{\&}}b4 and White's advantage is very small.}  

C) A clever way for White to take advantage of the fact that 9...\textbf{\textit{\&}}e8 has been played instead of 9...\textbf{\textit{\&}}c7 and the e5-square is not covered, may seem to be \textit{10.\textbf{\textit{\&}}e5?!}.  

However, White will find it difficult to move his kingside majority, his double e-pawns being a problem, while Black has the better pawn structure and good play: \textit{10...\textbf{\textit{\&}}xe5! 11.dxe5 \textbf{\textit{\&}}d7 12.f4 dxc4 13.\textbf{\textit{\&}}xc4 \textbf{\textit{\&}}b6 14.\textbf{\textit{\&}}b3 \textbf{\textit{\&}}d7 15.a4 \textbf{\textit{\&}}c6 16.a5 \textbf{\textit{\&}}d5 17.\textbf{\textit{\&}}e1 \textbf{\textit{\&}}e7} – Black has nice play and went on to win in Borisenko-Kortchnoi, Gyula 1965. \textit{\bullet 9...\textbf{\textit{\&}}a5!?} is a possibility deserving attention. Black attacks the centre, asking White to make a decision. White has a tiny road to an advantage (when analysing this position it is useful to compare with the line 9...\textbf{\textit{\&}}c7 10.\textbf{\textit{\&}}b2 \textbf{\textit{\&}}a5): \textit{A) Black is fine in the case of 10.\textbf{\textit{\&}}d2 \textbf{\textit{\&}}c7 11.\textbf{\textit{\&}}e2 b6 12.cxd5 exd5 13.\textbf{\textit{\&}}f3 \textbf{\textit{\&}}e8 as in Bu Xiangzhi-Zhou Jianchao, Xinghua Jiangsu 2011; B) Determining the central situation with 10.cxd5 exd5 does not bring White the desired result since Black gets a favourable version of the line 9...\textbf{\textit{\&}}c7 10.\textbf{\textit{\&}}b2 \textbf{\textit{\&}}a5 11.cxd5:}  

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_diagram}
\end{center}

B1) The attempt to be clever and take advantage of the move order does not bring White a plus. Black has a good dynamic game after \textit{11.dxc5 \textbf{\textit{\&}}c7 12.a4 \textbf{\textit{\&}}e8 13.\textbf{\textit{\&}}a3 \textbf{\textit{\&}}g4 14.\textbf{\textit{\&}}b1} (or 14.h3 \textbf{\textit{\&}}xf3 15.\textbf{\textit{\&}}xf3 \textbf{\textit{\&}}b3 16.\textbf{\textit{\&}}a2 \textbf{\textit{\&}}xc5; or 14.\textbf{\textit{\&}}c2 \textbf{\textit{\&}}xf3 15.gxf3 \textbf{\textit{\&}}c4 16.\textbf{\textit{\&}}xc4 dxc4 17.\textbf{\textit{\&}}ad1 \textbf{\textit{\&}}c6) and now: \textit{B11) Inferior is 14...\textbf{\textit{\&}}e4?! 15.\textbf{\textit{\&}}c2 \textbf{\textit{\&}}xf3 16.gxf3 \textbf{\textit{\&}}g5 (or 16...\textbf{\textit{\&}}d7 17.\textbf{\textit{\&}}g2 \textbf{\textit{\&}}g5 18.\textbf{\textit{\&}}f5) 17.\textbf{\textit{\&}}g2 with a white advantage; B12) 14...\textbf{\textit{\&}}ad8! 15.h3} (or 15.\textbf{\textit{\&}}c1 \textbf{\textit{\&}}xf3 16.gxf3 \textbf{\textit{\&}}c4 17.\textbf{\textit{\&}}d1 \textbf{\textit{\&}}d7) \textit{15.\textbf{\textit{\&}}h5} with a good game for Black.  

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Chapter 3.6: Main Line - 9...dxc4 10...xc4 \(\text{w}c7\) 11.h3

15...\(\text{g}6\) Please compare this position to the comments on Knaak-Kortchnoi in Chapter 3.5 with 11...\(\text{a}2\). Black's seemingly 'active' bishop is in fact far from active. White is going to slaughter Black on the queenside, while the second player fails to create even a glimpse of counterplay on the kingside, his bishop remaining out of play for the rest of the game: 16...\(\text{fc1}\) \(\text{ad8}\) 17...\(\text{a}4!\) White is stronger on the queenside and he comes into action. 17...\(\text{h}5\) 18...\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{fe8}\) 19...\(\text{a}3\) \(\text{g}5\) Black understands that the battle on the queenside will be lost, so he tries a desperate attempt against the white king. 20...\(\text{f}1!\) \(\text{d}7\) 21...\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{g}6\)

22...\(\text{d}1!\) Very instructive. Anand now doubles on the d-file and Black's position cracks. 22...\(\text{a}5\) 23...\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{h}5\) 24...\(\text{ad1}\) \(\text{h}4\) 25...\(\text{dxc5}\)! Just in time. 25...\(\text{x}c5\) 26...\(\text{xc5}\) \(\text{bx}c5\) 27...\(\text{f}1!\) Just look at Black's helpless, disordinated \(\text{a}5\) and \(\text{g}6\). 27...\(\text{b}8\) 28...\(\text{d}7!\) \(\text{xb}5\) 29...\(\text{xc7}\) \(\text{b}2\) 30...\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{eb}8\) 31...\(\text{xa7}\) \(\text{b}3\) 32...\(\text{a}5\) Black is totally paralysed, while White's a-pawn is on its way to queening. 32...\(\text{h}5\) 33...\(\text{e}1\) 1-0, Anand-Bacrot, Nanjing 2010.

* In a number of games, Black developed his bishop to the b1-h7 diagonal, while keeping the central tension, with 12...\(\text{f}5\). With correct play by White this should not equalize.

A) The situation is not clear after 13...\(\text{h}4\) \(\text{d}7\) 14...\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{a}5\) 15...\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{e}4\): A1) 16...\(\text{b}2\) \(\text{ae8}\) 17...\(\text{c}2\) 17...\(\text{f}4?\) is a principled move to open the long diagonal for the \(\text{b}2\), but it fails to a nice queen manoeuvre: 17...\(\text{b}6!\) 18...\(\text{b}1\) \(\text{h}6\) 19...\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{xf}4\) 20...\(\text{xf}4\) \(\text{b}6\) and Black was better in Kantsler-Lautier, Halkidiki 2002. 17...\(\text{f}5!\) Again, it is important for Black to keep his knight on e4. With his h-pawn already on h3 it is difficult for White to evict the \(\text{e}4\), since playing \(\text{f}2-f3\) would create a hole on g3. Black is not worse. One practical example continued 17...\(\text{d}6\) 18...\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{f}6\) 19...\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{e}7\) with a space advantage for White, Gulko-A. Ivanov, Durango ch-USA 1992;

A2) Or 16...\(\text{c}2\) and now:

A21) 16...\(\text{d}6\) 17...\(\text{e}4\) is a standard slight advantage for White;

A22) 16...\(\text{f}5!\) Once more, with White's pawn on h3 it is difficult to kick
ring blundering a rook or something similar, the worst thing that can happen is that Black will eventually manage to save the game. Sometimes, respect is a beautiful thing and I have occasionally seen many great players escaping from lousy positions with a simple draw offer – the only problem is that Cornette was not playing Kasparov or Anand – he was playing Van Wely!

12.bxc3 \(\text{\textcolor{red}{b7}}\) 13.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{b3}}\)

Aronian prefers to keep his bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal. 13.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{d3}}\) \(\text{\textcolor{red}{c7}}\) 14.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{c4}}\) \(\text{\textcolor{red}{ac8}}\) 15.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{b2}}\) \(\text{\textcolor{red}{fe8}}\) would have led to positions seen under 8...\(\text{\textcolor{red}{cx d4}}\) in Chapter 4.2.

13...\(\text{\textcolor{red}{c7}}\)

Leko plays the most flexible and natural move here.

In one recent game Sasikiran chose a relatively unusual – not often seen, in any case – set-up which can perhaps be applied as an idea in these positions: 13...\(\text{\textcolor{red}{c8}}\) 14.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{c4}}\) \(\text{\textcolor{red}{c7}}\) 15.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{h3}}\) \(\text{\textcolor{red}{fe8}}\)

16.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{e3}}\)!? The point behind White's play. With the bishop on e3, Black's rook on e8 will not be doing much when White pushes d4-d5. 16...\(\text{\textcolor{red}{e4}}\) (a move I am not impressed with) 17.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{a4}}\) \(\text{\textcolor{red}{c6}}\) 18.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{xc6}}\) \(\text{\textcolor{red}{xc6}}\)

19.d5! \(\text{\textcolor{red}{exd5}}\) 20.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{d4}}\) 20.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{cx d5}}\) \(\text{\textcolor{red}{g6}}\) 21.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{b5}}\) (21...\(\text{\textcolor{red}{e5}}\)? 22.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{xe5}}\) \(\text{\textcolor{red}{xe5}}\) 23.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{d7}}\) 20...\(\text{\textcolor{red}{g6}}\) looks good for White) 21.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{cx d5}}\) with White's advantage in Sasikiran-Yu Shaoteng, Subic Bay 2009. 17.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{ac1}}\) \(\text{\textcolor{red}{h6}}\) White can now take immediate action in the centre, which leads to unclear consequences: 18.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{d5}}\)!? Or 18.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{a4}}\) \(\text{\textcolor{red}{ed8}}\), when for both sides it is not easy to improve their position, though for the side with more space it should be easier – this holds in chess in general and here in particular. 18...\(\text{\textcolor{red}{exd5}}\) 19.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{cx d5}}\) \(\text{\textcolor{red}{dc5}}\)

20.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{c4}}\) 20.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{d4}}\)?! \(\text{\textcolor{red}{d7}}\) 21.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{c6}}\) \(\text{\textcolor{red}{xb3}}\) (after 21...\(\text{\textcolor{red}{xc6}}\) 22.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{dx c6}}\) \(\text{\textcolor{red}{xc6}}\) 23.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{d5}}\) White's bishops provide enough compensation) 22.axb3 \(\text{\textcolor{red}{xf6}}\) 23.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{f3}}\) leads to a draw: 23...\(\text{\textcolor{red}{ex d5}}\)! 24.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{xd5}}\) \(\text{\textcolor{red}{e6}}\) 25.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{e5}}\) \(\text{\textcolor{red}{xe5}}\) 26.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{xe5}}\) \(\text{\textcolor{red}{xc1+}}\) 27.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{xc1}}\) \(\text{\textcolor{red}{xf3}}\) 28.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{xf3}}\) a5 and Black's queenside passed pawn will be difficult to stop. 20...\(\text{\textcolor{red}{d6}}\) 21.\(\text{\textcolor{red}{b2}}\)
for White's $\text{c}e5$ in this position. 13.$\text{a}4$ $\text{c}c8$ A better move order for Black was 13...a5! 14.$\text{d}d2$ $\text{c}c8$. 14.$\text{d}d2$ 14.a5 $\text{bd}5$ 15.$\text{d}d2$ looks a bit better for White. 14...a5 15.$\text{d}f3$ $\text{c}c7$? This allows White to take the initiative. Better was 15...$\text{c}xd4$ 16.$\text{exd4}$ $\text{h}6$ followed by ...$\text{c}c6$, and White would have had just a very small advantage. Later, after White takes $\text{xc}6$ and Black responds with ...$\text{bxc}6$, we will have a pawn structure from the $7.a4$ line of the Queen's Gambit Accepted, and that structure is OK. White has just a very small advantage. 16.$\text{dxc}5$ $\text{xe}5$ 17.$\text{c}d3$ $\text{c}c4$ 18.$\text{xc}5$ $\text{xc}5$ 19.$\text{d}d6$ 19.$\text{d}d6$ More precise for White was 19.$\text{b}b5$ $\text{xb}5$ 20.$\text{xb}4$ $\text{axb}4$ 21.$\text{xb}5$. 19...$\text{d}d6$ Better was 19...$\text{xb}2$. 20.$\text{b}5$ $\text{xb}5$ 21.$\text{axb}5$ $\text{b}6$ 22.$\text{b}4$ White had the advantage and went on to win in Alexandrov-Gashimov, Moscow 2007.

Also not to be recommended for Black is 9...$\text{cxd}4$.

Again, this capture, which defines the central pawn structure, is premature here because it only helps White to develop more quickly:

A) 10.$\text{xb}4$? is wrong, as after 10...$\text{dxc}3$ 11.$\text{xc}3$ $\text{c}7$ general logic tells us that due to his bishop pair White should be having an advantage here, but actually White has problems finishing his development and things can easily go wrong for him here: 12.$\text{b}3$ $\text{b}6$ 13.$\text{e}2$ Or 13.$\text{d}d2$ $\text{b}7$ 14.$\text{e}2$ $\text{c}5$. 13...$\text{b}7$ 14.$\text{d}4$? 14.$\text{d}2$ 14...$\text{c}5$ 15.$\text{a}3$ $\text{e}5$ 16.$\text{b}3$ $\text{xb}3$ 17.$\text{axb}3$ $\text{fd}8$ White still cannot develop - Black was better and went on to win in Kamsky-Elianov, Montreal 2007.

B) 10.$\text{exd}4$ $\text{xc}3$ 11.$\text{bxc}3$ $\text{b}6$ Here Topalov has demonstrated an interesting idea: 12.$\text{g}5$ $\text{e}8$ 13.$\text{e}1$ $\text{f}8$ 14.$\text{f}3$ This pawn will be useful, controlling the e4- and g4-squares, while at the same time freeing the f2-square for his knight. 14...$\text{b}7$ 15.$\text{f}1$ The immediate 15.$\text{e}4$ is also good for White. 15...$\text{c}8$ 16.$\text{b}2$ $\text{c}7$ 17.$\text{c}4$ $\text{ed}8$ 18.$\text{ac}1$ White simply has a good version of the standard centre with connected hanging pawns. 18...$\text{f}4$ 19.$\text{h}3$ $\text{c}7$ 20.$\text{f}2$, as in Topalov-Ponomariov, Vitoria Gasteiz 2007.

Popular and also enough for equality, provided the right plan is followed on move 10, is 9...$\text{a}6$ and after 10.$\text{a}4$