

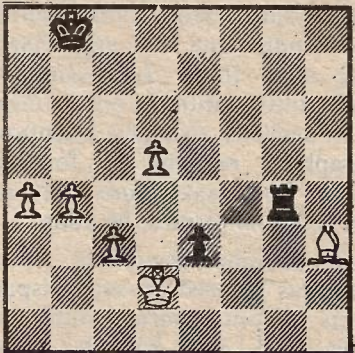
Fluctuating exchange rates

ONE OF THE very first things a beginner will learn, after the rules, is the value of the pieces in relation to one another. Knights and bishops are considered to be worth approximately three pawns apiece, a rook five, and the bounty on a queen's head no less than nine (more pawns than either side has to start!). These values can then be used as a guide for various swaps. For example, if a player wishes to trade a rook (five pawns) and knight (three pawns) for two bishops and a knight (total: nine pawns) he will realise by simple addition that he may well lose out on the exchange.

Things are not always so straightforward of course. Many other factors will influence the situation, and there have been extreme cases — such as in an attack leading to checkmate — where a single, lowly pawn has been worth more than the entire opposing army. More common are situations where a sacrifice of, say, rook for knight (such as the Rxc3 idea frequently used by Black in the Sicilian defence) is perfectly sound on positional grounds because of the havoc wreaked on the opponent's pawn structure.

Piece sacrifices for a number of pawns must always be carefully judged according to their settings. In the opening and early middlegame, the attacking power of a minor piece (bishop or knight) is invariably worth more than three pawns; nearer four, in fact. But come the endgame, either of these pieces may be stretched to contain three passed pawns racing towards the queening square.

This seems to be the general rule with piece sacrifices for pawns, and a good example is the following position.



The game Timman-Deze, Sombor 1974, now continued 1.Kxe3! Rg3 ch 2.Kd4 R×h3 3.c4 and the Dutchman won with his four connected passed pawns against Black's rook: 3...Kc7 4.Kc5 Rh8 5.b5 Rc8 6.b6 ch Kb8 ch 7.Kb5 Rh8 8.a5 Rh1 9.a6 Rb1 ch 10.Kc6 Ra1 11.d6 Resigns.

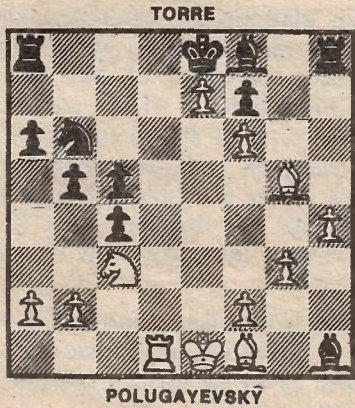
In the early middlegame, however, giving up a rook for four pawns would normally be extremely hazardous. It is this fact that makes the game below, from the recent Moscow super-tournament, so remarkable.

SLAV DEFENCE

L. POLUGAYEVSKY (USSR)	E. TORRE (Philippines)
1. d4	d5
2. c4	c6

3. Nf3	Nf6
4. Nc3	e6
5. Bg5	d×c4
6. e4	b5
7. e5	h6
8. Bh4	g5
9. N×g5	h×g5
10. B×g5	Nbd7
11. e×f6	Bb7
12. g3	c5
13. d5	Nb6
14. d×e6	Q×d1 ch
15. R×d1	B×h1
16. e7	a6

17.N×b5 was threatened.
17.h4!!



A stunning innovation. Polugayevsky told of the midnight oil he burned looking for such new moves in his recent book Grandmaster Preparation, and this is a classic example of the results. White spurns the bishop and remains a rook down, so as to keep a bind with his pawns. A previous game, Plachetka-Bagirov, East Berlin 1979, had given White no advantage after 17.e×f8 ch K×f8! 18.Be3 Rh5 19.Rd6 Rb8 20.Be2 Re5.

17. ...	Bh6
18. f4	b4
19. Rd6	Rb8

Worse is 19...b×c3 20.R×b6 c×b2 21.B×c4 followed by R×b2.

20. Nd1	B×g5
21. f×g5	Nd5!
22. B×c4	N×e7

Torre decides he must give up a knight to free his king's rook, penned in a cage of white pawns.

23. f×e7	K×e7
24. Rf6	Rh8
25. Ne3	Be4
26. R×a6	Rbd8
27. Rf6?	

Stronger was 27.h5, and if 27...Rd6 28.Ra5.

27. ...	Rd6
28. Rf4	Rd4
29. h5	Bd3!
30. Nd5 ch	Kd6
31. R×d4	c×d4
32. Bb3	Bc2
33. B×c2	K×d5
34. Bb3 ch	Ke5
35. g4	Kf4?

The exchange of White's last rook has given Black good defensive chances, but in severe time-trouble Torre misses 35...d3! drawing, eg 36.h6 Kf4 37.h7? Ke3 or 36.g6 f×g6 37.h×g6 Kf6 38.Kd2, etc.

36. g6	Ke3
37. g7	Rc8
38. Kf1	d3
39. Kg2	Kf4
40. h6 and Black lost on time.	

MURRAY CHANDLER